

Annotations for Walker Percy's *Love in the Ruins*

Keyed to the Picador USA edition, 1999

First version by Thomas F. Gossett, 1973; second by Ralph C. Wood, revised 1996-2012

The structure of the novel is first backward to the point of origin and then forward again to the end: from the immediate prospect of apocalypse, to the earlier events which prompted Dr. More's fear of a final holocaust, then to its failure to happen, and finally to the surprising new prospect that this failure opens up. The main events occur July 1-3, which dates also coincide with the Battle of Gettysburg during 1863. Though the Civil War would last another two years, this battle was the turning point whereat the same Yankees who are now destroying the Union (see p. 342) once saved it. Hence the following outline:

- p. 3. July 4, 1983. 5 p.m. More prepares for the final end, alone in a pine grove
- p. 56. July 4, 1983. 7 p.m. More hears fireworks and assumes that the holocaust has begun.
- p. 61. July 1, 1983. 9 a.m. More receives the first sniper-fire while sitting on his patio and returns to the hospital in order to put together his lapsometer.
- p. 173, Sunday, July 2, 1983. 10 a.m. He attends Catholic mass with his mother then returns home, pondering the death of the West and drinking heavily all night.
- p. 195, July 3, 1983. 11 a.m. More receives the good news about his article and invention.
- p. 245, July 4, 1983. 8:30 a.m. More is captured by his enemies but makes his escape.
- p. 353, July 4, 1983. 7:15 p.m. More, still in the pine grove on the interstate, now recognizes that the end of the world has not come, but can't decide what to do about his women.
- p. 381, December 24, 1988. 9:00 a.m. Barbecuing in sackcloth and attending midnight mass.

Annotations

- 3. I came to myself. An echo of the Prodigal Son, who in Luke 15: 18 "came to himself" about the dreadfulness of his own plight as a rebel against his father. Perhaps also an allusion to the opening lines of Dante's *Inferno*, where in the midst of his life's journey the poet "woke to find myself in a dark wood, for I had wandered from the straight path."
- 3. broken out in hives. Skin welts that may have both physical and spiritual causes.
- 5. Principalities and powers.... Wickedness flourishes in high places. The first two are demonic angels, the latter a reference to pagan places of worship; both are quotations from Romans 8:38 and Ephesians 1:21. By "high places" Tom More also means powerful governmental and scientific centers.
- 5. roam the world like Ishmael. He is the son of Abraham by his concubine Hagar, exiled because he was not the chosen "son of promise." See Genesis 16:11; 21:14-21. Herman Melville also makes Ishmael a central symbol in *Moby Dick*.
- 5. Cicero, Illinois. These Catholics who would make their church serve the cause of right wing politics would choose Cicero as their headquarters because it is a blue-collar suburb of Chicago, which fanatically resisted the movement of blacks into the city. White citizens threw bricks at Martin Luther King, Jr. when he led integration marches there in the 1960s, even though he was accompanied by nuns. Cicero was also the home of Al Capone.
- 5. St. Michael's church, empty now, abandoned. The prayer offered to St. Michael seems especially appropriate:

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle.
Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil.
May God rebuke him, we humbly pray.

And do thou O Prince of the Heavenly Host
 By the power of God
 Cast into hell Satan and all the other evil spirits who prowl this world seeking the ruin of souls.
 Amen.

6. Dutch schismatics. Many Dutch Catholics, both clergy and lay, have attempted to liberalize the teachings of the Catholic church, particularly on such issues as papal infallibility, birth control, the marriage of priests, and the ordination of women. The liberal tendencies of the Dutch church were first revealed in the Dutch Catechism of 1966. Such reformers are here called “schismatics,” i.e., those willing to split with the Church of Rome and be excommunicated in order to further their theological cause.
6. retained the Latin mass. As a result of the reforms mandated by the Second Vatican Council (1963-65), the Catholic church has allowed the Mass be said in the language of the people. This permission soon became a permanent practice, driving out a centuries-long tradition of the Latin Mass and thus angering traditionalists. Michael Novak speaks for such disgruntled Catholics: “I did not expect a mandatory Latin Mass to be replaced by a mandatory English Mass; nor the virtual disappearance of Gregorian chant and the classical music patrimony.... I did not expect ... Catholic preaching and practice to become evermore untheological and uncritical, in favor of the experiential and fervent ways of Baptists and Methodists; nor the charismatic style so to replace the style of realism; nor easy prophecy so thoroughly to dominate the tradition of prudence” (*Confessions of a Catholic* [1983], p. 170).
6. elevation. In this important moment of the Mass, the priest lifts high the Host, the sacrificial bread now consecrated as Christ’s true body, for the praise and adoration of the people.
6. signs and portents. Celestial phenomena—comets, for example—having prophetic significance. Perhaps also a reference to John 4:48: “Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe.”
6. A man, wrote John. I John 2:4: “He who says ‘I know him’ but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”
7. Pasteur. Louis Pasteur (1822-96) was a French chemist whose experiments with bacteria at work in wine, vinegar, and beer led also to the *pasteurizing* of milk. He devised chemical methods for controlling silkworm disease and chicken cholera, as he also developed a vaccine against anthrax and extended its effectiveness to hydrophobia.
7. Copernicus. Polish founder (1473-1543) of modern astronomy who insisted that the sun is the center of a great solar system that has the earth and other planets revolving around it. Together with Galileo, he helped overturn the Ptolemaic geocentricism that had ruled Western cosmogony for centuries.
7. Archimedes ... lever. Greek mathematician and inventor (287?-212 B.C.) who discovered the principle of the lever, a mechanical advantage potentially without limit. He declared that, if he had a point of location outside the earth and a large enough lever, he could displace the whole world. Archimedes also discovered that a solid body immersed in liquid is buoyed up by a force equal to the weight of the liquid it displaces. This principle is used in determining ship displacement, the lifting force of balloons, and the specific gravity of substances. Archimedes is said to have shouted “*Eureka!*” (I’ve found it!) upon making this great breakthrough.
8. Moira. The Greek word for “fate,” perhaps suggesting that Ms. Schaffner is a proverbial *femme fatale*, a gorgeous woman who allures men magnetically but just as surely resists and holds them at a distance.
8. “Sing, O Goddess, the anger of Achilles.” The conventional translation of the opening line of Homer’s *Iliad*. The text literally reads: “Of rage sing, Goddess, that of Pelius’s son Achilles.”

9. Impala convertible. A once-popular sport model (now again revived) of the Chevrolet.
9. Scuppernong. A Southern vine of the muscadine family that produces grapes, sometimes used for making wine.
9. rent ... like the temple veil. At the crucifixion of Christ, the veil guarding the Holy of Holies in the inner court of the Jerusalem temple was torn apart (Mark 15:38, Matthew 27:51, Luke 23:45). There the symbolism suggests that Christ's death is the sacrifice that gives humanity direct access to the mercy of God. Here the ripping apart of the Rotary banner suggests that our trite civic club morality and culture have been devastated.
9. gringo. Mexican word of contempt for Anglos, especially Americans. It derives from the Spanish *griego*, which means "Greek" but which applies to anyone who speaks an unintelligible language.
11. Physician heal thyself. A parody of the taunt Jesus predicts others will use against him (Luke 4:23), and perhaps also a reference to Jesus' own saying, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick" (Luke 5:31).
11. Van Gogh and Beethoven. Both the artist and the composer suffered from melancholia. Beethoven went deaf and Van Gogh cut off his ear in a fit of madness.
11. Hosea. The Old Testament prophet whose wife Gomer was utterly faithless to him, a symbol of Israel's own unfaithfulness to God; Hosea, in turn, represents God's patient and untiring love for his people.
11. island of Cozumel. Located off the eastern coast of Mexico and near Cancun on the Yucatan Peninsula, it is a refuge for artists and others seeking fashionable identification with things Mayan and non-Western. It was the seat of the goddess Ix Chel and the trade center of feathers from Honduras, gold sheets from the Aztecs of Mexico, and obsidian from further south. After Jacques Cousteau filmed several documentaries about nearby Paradise Reef, Cozumel became one of the hottest diving and snorkeling sites on the globe, second only to the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Australia.
11. like old Doc in Western movies. A familiar type in cowboy films, the genial fellow who is friend to all and enemy of none. Hence the figure of Doc Adams played by Milburn Stone in the long-running TV series, *Gunsmoke*.
11. Bantus. A South African people whose name the novel's outlaw blacks have adopted in order to stress their anti-American identity.
12. Valley Forge. A place name symbolizing fervent patriotism because George Washington's army was camped there in Pennsylvania at its lowest point in the Revolutionary War, the winter of 1777-78.
13. King David before the Ark. In a moment of sheer religious ecstasy, Israel's king stripped almost naked, wearing only his linen ephod, and danced before the Ark of the Covenant (2 Samuel 6:14).
13. *The Wonderful World of Color*. NBC's early telecast that marked the end of the old black-and-white transmissions.
13. Finch' han dal vino [calda la testa]. "As long as they have some wine [that warms the head]," an aria from *Don Giovanni*, Mozart's opera about the Spanish character Don Juan, a man whose unbridled sexual adventures take him into Hell.
13. "Holy God We Praise Thy Name." An 18th-century Austrian Catholic hymn now also used by Protestants. It was sung so often in Catholic churches that it became a virtual cliché, the one hymn every Catholic knew.

13. Kerman rug. A particularly fine carpet from Persia; also spelled Kirman.
14. Love Clinic. A satire of the Washington University (St. Louis MO) medical team, William H. Masters and Virginia Johnson. They sought to study sexual experience by wiring couples who were engaged in intercourse, thus tracing the glandular and erogenous changes prompted by sexual stimulation. Their most famous book was *Human Sexual Response* (1966), and its thesis was stated by Masters himself: "When things don't work well in the bedroom, they don't work well in the living room either." Masters and Johnson were eventually married, only later to divorce, thus proving themselves to be apt targets of Percy's prophetic satire: physicians in need of a cure.
14. "Senior Citizens' anomie." *Nomos* is Latin for law, rule, order. *Anomie* thus means "without law," having no norms. It is a general feeling of helplessness and worthlessness, of indifference and apathy, in the face of a society and culture that have lost their moral moorings, and perhaps even of a world that has no meaning at all. Kierkegaard likens the feeling of anomie to being "a marble in the mud."
15. ivory-billed woodpecker. This tremendous bird, nearly twenty inches long, is as large as a crow. It was last definitely sighted in 1935, but David Kulivan (a forestry student at Louisiana State University) claims to have seen a pair in the Pearl River wildlife refuge 30 miles north of New Orleans in the summer of 2000. More recently it has been sighted in Arkansas and other places, usually in swamplands. The pileated woodpecker is a quite similar bird, but has a black crest; it and can still be seen in the Southeast U.S. On p. 96 the ivory-billed woodpecker is called "the Lord-to-God," a Negro name for this regal bird.
16. cannabis. The dried flower tops of the hemp plant, the source of both hashish and marijuana.
16. a few old graybeard Kerouac beats. Jack Kerouac was a member of the Beat Generation, a group of American writers inspired by Herbert Huncke, a charismatic pimp, drug junkie, and petty thief who lived in the netherworld of Times Square during the 1940s. Writers alienated from the right-thinking and clean-living conformity of the 1950s were taken with Huncke's dropout from bourgeois life and his use of the carnie term "beat," meaning dead tired and beaten down. In addition to Kerouac, the other chief Beat writers were Allen Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, William S. Burroughs, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, and Gary Snyder. The Beatniks, as they were called, served as heroes to the counter-culture Hippies of the 1960s. Kerouac's most famous novel, *On the Road* (1957), became the inspiration for the 60s writer Ken Kesey, who wandered about the country with his followers in a beat-up bus. Huncke died at age 81 in 1996.
16. sourdoughs. Mining prospectors in the American west who were so-called because sourdough was the bread they carried with them.
16. sutras. Hindu and Buddhist teachings, written primarily in Sanskrit.
16. proctologists. Medical doctors who treat disorders of the colon, they are (in Percy's estimate) the scientists of the future because the condition of our bowels reflects the state of our souls. Conservatives are constipated because they can let go of nothing, says Percy; liberals are diarrhetic because they can hold onto nothing. Prophetic though he was, Percy failed to anticipate the emergence of phalloplasty, the newly triumphant California science of penile enlargement.
16. Bob Jones University. A fundamentalist Baptist school named after its founding president and located in Greenville, South Carolina, it is sometimes called the Buckle on the Bible Belt. It is a gated school where armed guards keep out troublemakers, but it is also home of one of the best Renaissance art collections in the Southeast. Though the school admitted blacks as early as 1948, it has a strict policy against interracial dating and marriage, which policy led the U. S. government to deny the school student loans and other funds. President George W. Bush created a small firestorm when he visited the campus during his campaign for the presidency in 2002.

16. Kenosha, Sheboygan, and Grosse Pointe. The first two are industrial, blue-collar, bratwursty cities located along Lake Michigan in Wisconsin, the last is a swank suburb outside Detroit.
17. “totin’ privileges.” A scheme allowing black servants to carry home food from the white houses where they work. This arrangement allegedly makes up for low wages. Yet because the food is not officially given, it amounts to a system of sanctioned stealing that corrupts both whites and blacks.
17. “Christmas gifts.” A Southern custom of saying “Christmas gift” to the first people one greets on Christmas Day, thus exacting of them a small gift, often a kiss, in return. The practice can be extended throughout the whole year and, when uttered by blacks to whites, the phrase would garner a gift of money or some other token of gratitude.
17. like Rome during the Black Plague. A bubonic plague (spread by rats) ravaged Europe from 1347 to 1351, killing one-third of the population. Pope Clement VI envisioned its end when he saw the Angel of Death hovering over Hadrian’s Mausoleum and sheathing his sword. The tomb, which had already been converted into a papal stronghold, was renamed Castel San’ Angelo, and a large bronze statue was erected there to commemorate the pope’s vision. It can still be seen today.
17. Montgomery. The capital of Alabama is an appropriate site for the convention of the Christian Conservative Constitutional Party since it was also the first capital of the Confederacy, later transferred to Richmond.
18. “No Man Can Be Too Knotheaded in the Service of His Country.” In his San Francisco speech accepting the Republican nomination for the U. S. presidency in 1964, Barry Goldwater declared that “Extremism in defense of liberty is no vice, and ... moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue.” This declaration got Goldwater labeled a knuckle-brained extremist, though the phrase was suggested to him by Harry Jaffa, Professor of Political Science at Claremont Men’s College in California, as a paraphrase of Cicero: “I must remind you—Lords, Senators—that extreme patriotism in defense of freedom is no crime, and let me respectfully remind you that pusillanimity [cowardice, small-mindedness] in the pursuit of justice is no virtue in a Roman.”
18. The center did not hold. An echo of the opening line from the first stanza of William Butler Yeats’ apocalyptic poem, “The Second Coming”:
- Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.
18. *Flubber*. *The Absent-Minded Professor* was a Disney film about a nutty scientist played by Fred MacMurray. He invents a chemical compound that enables people to fly. Its sequel was entitled *Son of Flubber* and starred Dean Jones.
19. Jewish masturbatory novel. Philip Roth’s *Portnoy’s Complaint*, published in 1969, features a protagonist who is addicted to self-pleasuring, sometimes using a piece of liver to stimulate himself.
19. WASP homosexual novel. A reference to Gore Vidal, the product of so-called White Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture who, in both his fiction and his life, turned against this tradition to celebrate his pagan homosexuality.
19. Harold Robbins and Jacqueline Susann. Authors of immensely popular, sleazy novels in the 1960s, rather like the works of Danielle Steele in our time.

19. Birchers. The John Birch Society was an ultraconservative organization founded in 1958 to oppose federal interference in social matters, most of which it regarded as Communist-inspired. Birchers became notorious for their efforts to impeach the Chief Justice of the United States, Earl Warren, because he issued the Supreme Court's 1954 decision ordering the racial desegregation of the nation's public schools. When Robert Welch, the founder of the John Birch Society, charged that President Eisenhower was himself afflicted with the Red disease, the political commentator Russell Kirk famously replied that Ike was not a Communist but a golfer.
19. The war in Ecuador. A satiric reference to the war in Vietnam, which was well into its seventh year when the novel was published in 1971.
20. satyriasis. Uncontrollable sexual desire, from *satyr*, a mythological god or demon who is half human and half horse or goat.
22. Sir Thomas More. English Catholic churchman, poet, scholar, martyr, and saint (1478-1535). He is best known for his *Utopia* (1516), a satire comparing an ideal human community with the sorry state of affairs then existing. More was beheaded by Henry VIII for refusing, as Lord Chancellor, to support the king's divorce from Catherine of Aragon and his re-marriage to Anne Boleyn. More is the subject of Robert Bolt's play and movie, *A Man for All Seasons*. So confident was More in his faith that he bantered with his executioner as he approached the scaffold: "If you will help me up, I will shift for myself coming down." Such integrity amid both life and death led Pope John Paul II, in late 2000, to declare More the patron saint of politicians.
22. Bardstown, Kentucky. In 1785, groups of Maryland Catholics began to journey west to the American Frontier and settled in Kentucky. Within 25 years, Bishop Benedict Joseph Flaget was entrusted with the first diocese of the West, which spanned from the Great Lakes to the deep South and from the Alleghenies to the Mississippi. Bishop Flaget chose Bardstown, then larger than Louisville, to be the capital of this new religious region. Starting at St. Thomas church and Seminary just outside the city limits in 1812, Flaget moved downtown and began construction on the first "Western" cathedral in 1816, the Basilica of St. Joseph Proto-Cathedral. A museum at nearby Nazareth celebrates the story and mission of the Sisters of Charity of Nazareth, which were founded there in 1812. Also located nearby is the Trappist monastery of Gethsemani, made famous by its writer-monk, Thomas Merton, author of *The Seven-Storey Mountain* and many other books of mystical devotion. Bardstown is also the home of Stephen Foster, the 19th century song writer, the author most notably of "Oh, Susanna," "My Old Kentucky Home," and "Old Folks at Home." Yet in recent years, Bardstown has become known chiefly as the bourbon capital of the world because of its many distilleries. That the latter-day Mores are credited with founding one of these bourbon works suggests a caustically ironic contrast with their religious forebears.
23. Knights of Columbus. Catholic lay order given to good works and social occasions, established in part to combat the influence of the Masons, a secret society forbidden to Catholics.
23. Beauregard next to old blue-light Presbyterian Stonewall Jackson. Both were Confederate generals during the Civil War, the former valued as an engineer more than a field commander, the latter second only to Lee in military greatness. His fellow General Barnard Bee remarked at the first battle of Manassas: "Look, men, there is Jackson standing like a stone wall! Rally behind the Virginians!" Jackson was also called "Old Blue-Light" because the term suggests strict abstinence from alcohol and fanatical religious faith. As a rigid Calvinist, he assigned all things to God's providential hand, acting fearlessly on the battlefield and expecting his fellow Confederates to do likewise. But his religious fervor also made him the object of scorn; it was said that he preferred good Presbyterians to good soldiers. When Jackson attributed one particular victory to God's blessing, a lieutenant remarked, "I suppose it may be true, but we would have had no victory if he we hadn't fought like the devil."

23. where are the Catholic Einsteins, Salks, Oppenheims? This question was asked by Catholic theologian John Tracy Ellis in a 1950 address, often anthologized. American Catholics have sometimes been troubled at not having produced a large number of intellectuals, perhaps because so many Catholics were lower-class immigrants who had no long tradition of education. Albert Einstein was a Swiss-American physicist who formulated the special and general theories of relativity. Jonas Salk discovered one of the two vaccines for polio. (Albert Sabin devised the other, an oral vaccine generally used today.) Robert Oppenheimer was instrumental in developing the atomic bomb. These eminent men of science were all Jewish émigrés, achieving greatness despite belonging to a religious group who constitute a tiny minority of the world's population. Although a Maryland Catholic signed the Declaration of Independence, John Kennedy's election to the presidency made him the first Catholic to occupy a truly prominent place in American public life. Percy was devastated by the president's assassination, spending a largely wasted year of artistic effort trying to come to terms with it.
25. Toynbee ... the Return. Arnold Toynbee is an influential 20th century philosopher of history. His massive ten-volume *A Study of History* was much touted in the 50s and 60s, though it is not so highly regarded now. Toynbee argued that civilizations flourish or perish according to their ability to make creative responses to a series of challenges—not chiefly material threats from without, but spiritual dangers from within. The catalyst for such creativity usually comes from an exceptional personality who sparks the inert masses to rise above their usual self-contentment. These remarkable personalities develop their creative insights by withdrawing from society into solitude and suffering and self-examination. Thus transfigured, they *return* to their native grounds and prompt others to follow their inspired lead.
25. Vieux Carré. Literally the “Old Square,” it is the French Quarter of New Orleans, famed now for fine food and decadent entertainment.
25. John Locke. English philosopher (1632-1704) who held that the mind is a *tabula rasa*, a blank tablet upon which human experience inscribes all knowledge. Against the Platonic tradition that he held sway for centuries, he denied all innate ideas. He also formulated the doctrine of individual rights—life, liberty, property—and he held that governments are instituted to secure these rights by law.
25. Heavy Sodium and Chloride in their blood. Because these are the main ingredients in common table salt, the reader's leg is perhaps being pulled, and not too gently.
27. Brodmann Area 32. The Brodmann areas of the brain's cerebral cortex are distinguished by differences in the arrangement of their six cellular layers.
27. thalamus. This is the main relay center for both sensory impulses as well as cerebellar and basal ganglia projections to the cerebral cortex.
27. *J.A.M.A.* Journal of the American Medical Association, a prestigious scientific publication.
29. Edward Jenner's dream of eradicating the great pox. Jenner (1749-1823) was an English physician and medical pioneer who first developed an inoculation for smallpox. When people feared that it would infect rather than immunize them, he vaccinated his own son as proof of his confidence to the contrary.
29. the pineal body. A pine-coned shaped body situated behind the third ventricle of the brain, and containing sand-like particles. Percy is perhaps ridiculing the rationalistic René Descartes (see p. 191), who so little believed in our divine ensoulment that he sought to locate the meeting place of mind and matter in the pineal gland.
30. Ontological Lapsometer. Percy was indebted to the work of Norman Geschwind, who sought to locate human uniqueness—the phenomenon of language—in the inferior parietal lobule, including the angular and supramarginal gyri, which approximates roughly to Brodmann areas 39 and 40. Dr. More is also

convinced that bestial and angelic tendencies have brain-sources, even if such physicalism does not explain why these tendencies predominate in some people and not in others. Ontology is the science of being as such, the branch of metaphysics that investigates the nature of first principles. Since *lapsus* is Latin for “fall,” this machine purports to measure how far we have fallen from our proper being. Later he calls his little machine “the first caliper of the soul” (91). Perhaps it is also a parody of B. F. Skinner’s behavior modification machine called the Skinner Box (see note to 100).

30. Ellen Oglethorpe. Even if her name does not suggest Helen of Troy, the face so beautiful that it “launched a thousand ships” in the war between the Trojans and Athenians, it certainly alludes to James Edward Oglethorpe (1696-1785), the English general who founded the colony of Georgia as a refuge for imprisoned debtors and voluntarily indentured servants. For the latter, seven years’ service was given in exchange for passage to America and the prospect of economic and political freedom. Oglethorpe was also opposed to the introduction of slavery into Georgia. In 1739 his supporters filed the following petition in Darien, Georgia: “It is shocking to human nature, that any race of mankind and their Posterity, should be sentenced to perpetual slavery, nor in justice can we think otherwise of it, than that they [Negro slaves] are thrown amongst us to be our Scourge one day or other for our Sins: and as freedom to them must be as dear to us, what a scene of horror must it bring about! and the longer it is un-executed, the blood Scene must be the greater.”
30. P. T. Bledsoe. His name no doubt suggests P. T. Barnum, the 19th century American showman and circus owner whose motto declared that “There is a sucker born every minute.” Barnum was a reformed drunk who gave public lectures advocating teetotalism and who even refused the offer of a drink from the singer Jenny Lind.
31. “Bildebergers.” Yiddish parlance for self-made men, usually a derogatory term used to denigrate Jews.
34. the Flying Dutchman. A legendary ghostly ship that is said to appear in stormy weather or just before a catastrophe. It was supposed to have been a vessel on which a horrible murder had been committed. The crewmembers became infected with the plague, and no port would let them come ashore. One version of the legend also held that the Dutch captain of the ship was the Wandering Jew, the man who mocked Jesus on his way to the Cross and who was thus doomed to live in perpetual exile until the Last Judgment. Richard Wagner wrote an opera, *The Flying Dutchman*, based on this legend.
36. as a speckled trout, a dappled thing. A reference to “Pied Beauty,” a poem whose first four lines are quoted on page 134. It was written by Gerard Manley Hopkins, the English Jesuit poet (1844-89) who composed sonnets of extraordinary splendor and terror about God’s work in both the natural and human orders.
37. fellatio. Oral sex performed upon a man by either a male or a female. Cunnilingus is oral sex performed upon a woman by either a male or female. Percy regards the resurgence of such sexual perversions as a sign of our end-of-the-world decadence.
38. J. C. Junior Chamber of Commerce, commonly called the Jaycees.
41. sapsucker. A derisive Southern term derived from a species of woodpecker called the yellow-bellied sapsucker and applied to white people of low moral quality or social standing. These much-despised folks are also called “peckerwoods,” “crackers” (from the sound of whips lashing the backs of blacks), and “rednecks” (from prolonged exposure to the sun while bent over working in cotton fields).
41. his little yehudi. A slang term for a Jew, akin to “hymie.” It was popularized by Bob Hope’s question “Who’s Yehudi?” in protest against the poor reviews received by the violinist Yehudi Menuhin.
43. Battle above the Clouds atop Lookout Mountain ... Ruby Falls. During November 23-25 of 1863, Union troops under U. S. Grant took control of this high peak near Chattanooga in what was called “The Battle above the Clouds.” The Union victory cleared the way for General William Tecumseh Sherman’s

infamous march through Georgia. Ruby Falls are a nearby natural wonder that have been made the site of a kitsch tourist attraction.

45. like GM's famous Charley Kettering. A noted automotive inventor, he devised the electric self-starter. It was bought by General Motors and first installed on the 1912 Cadillac; it gradually replaced the old (and dangerous) crank starter. With money earned from his invention, Kettering founded the Dayton Engineering Labs, where Delco batteries were manufactured. He also became vice-president of General Motors and a noted philanthropist who established the Kettering Foundation to fund medical research and other humanitarian causes. Together with General Motors president Alfred Sloan, he also founded the Sloan-Kettering Cancer Hospital in New York City.
46. Fletcher Christian ... the Pitcairn. A reference to the celebrated "Mutiny on the Bounty," the commandeering of a British naval ship in 1789. Some of the mutineers took multiple Tahitian wives and settled on Pitcairn Island in the South Pacific, where some of their descendants still live.
47. Verdun. A key French fortress. Here occurred, in 1916, the longest and deadliest battle of World War I. Two million men were engaged in this horrible blood-letting between the Allies and the Central Powers, half of them dying. Stedman's *History of World War I* contains a carefully detailed account of the carnage.
47. Jeb Stuart. James Ewell Brown Stuart (1833-64) was the youthful genius of the Confederate army, a cavalry commander famed for his brilliant raids and his ability to obtain secret information about the enemy. He also figures importantly in Percy's *The Last Gentleman* and *Lost in the Cosmos*.
47. Bogalusa. A town in southeast Louisiana, near the Pearl River, noted for its sawmills and paper mills, once the world's largest.
48. Gene Sarazen. He was an uncommonly handsome golf champion who, despite his name, was descended from Italians. He hit the most famous shot in golf history, a four-wood for a double eagle to win the 1935 Masters. Sarazen was also Eisenhower's sports hero and a subject of the president's amateur paintings. Percy himself was an avid golfer.
48. Phoebus Apollo. In Greek religion, he was the Olympian god of music and poetry and (above all else) of reason, thus identified with the sun and attended by the muses.
48. Sir Lancelot. In Arthurian legend, he was a gallant but faithless knight, the lover of King Arthur's faithless queen, Guinevere. "Their love waxed hot," says Sir Thomas Malory, who famously recorded this story of illicit love in *Morte D'Arthur*.
48. the salt mine that supplied Dick Taylor during the Red River campaign. The son of President Zachary Taylor, Richard Taylor (1826-79) was a Confederate general who commanded Rebel forces in western Louisiana and the Lower South toward the end of the Civil War.
48. Erle Stanley Gardner's first novel, *The Case of the Velvet Claws*. This is also the first novel in the Perry Mason detective series. Percy often refers to readers of Mickey Spillane, Raymond Chandler, and other crime writers as seekers of relief from their own vexed humanity.
49. Hester. Perhaps a reference to Hester Prynne, the sensuous heroine of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, though this latter-day Hester is hardly worried about adultery. As the novelist Peter De Vries declares in one of his novels, a contemporary Hester would not receive an A for adultery but only a C+.
50. prothonotary warbler. "Prothonotary" means chief secretary, but here it refers to a handsome bird found in the southeastern U. S. It has a brilliant golden head, an olive-green back, and a distinctive song; it likes to live near water. The bird also figured strangely in the Alger Hiss-Whittaker Chambers case before the special hearing of the Un-American Activities Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives in

August, 1948. Hiss not only rebutted the claim that he was a fellow Communist together with Chambers, he also denied that he even knew the man. Chambers exposed this lie by reporting Hiss's delight in spotting a prothonotary warbler along the swamps of the Potomac. Chambers later wrote that "silence crept over" members of the Committee when then-Rep. Richard Nixon (R-CA) asked the fatal question that thus indicted Hiss.

51. like a Choctaw at the jibiya dance. ????

53. a shaman. A priest or medicine man of northern Asian and American Indian tribes, he is master of the spirit-world. Again, Percy is making fun of those who reverence anything and everything non-Christian, no matter how little it

53. post-Puritan Holyoke. Mount Holyoke, located in South Hadley, Massachusetts, is one of the oldest and most prestigious of the New England women's colleges; it was not founded by Puritans but as a 19th century religious school for women. It is not only post-Victorian but also post-Christian, almost completely secular.

54. The dirty salt on the bank spits and smokes.... Brimstone. There are huge salt domes underneath southern Louisiana and Texas, where much of the nation's emergency oil supply is stored. But the notion that sulfuric fumes emanate from these gigantic caverns, periodically leaking through the sub-sea level soil of New Orleans, is entirely Percy's invention. Even so, Ethel rightly likens them to brimstone, the acidic gases of hell. See Genesis 19:24 and Revelation 19:20.

57. Moon Mullins. Also the name of a low-life comic strip character popular through the 1950s.

57. Visigoths. The name means West Goths, the barbaric German tribe that swept southward in the 4th and 5th centuries, sacking Rome in 410 A.D. and then moving into Gaul and Spain. In the latter region they became what we know today as Spaniards, accepting Roman Catholicism and merging with the Hispano-Roman population. Their last king, Roderick, was defeated in 711 by Tarik, leader of the Moors, thus beginning the long Muslim domination of Spain.

58. Back to history and Bosnia-Herzegovina. More wrestles here with the question of Western exceptionalism: whether Western civilization (and especially this nation) are uniquely blessed and cursed by God, and thus an *exception* to the regular rise and fall of empires and cultures, or whether we are yet another bit of ground clutter on the radar sweep of history. The assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, sparked World War I. This war shattered the 19th-century illusion of permanent progress in matters both material and spiritual. It seemed to prove that Christendom is a civilization as mortal and fallible as all others. That Bosnia and Sarajevo again loom large in current events seems to confirm More's sour doubts.

63. St. Francis [of Assisi]. This hugely influential Christian saint (?1182-1226) founded the first mendicant order, a Franciscan brotherhood of Christians who did not live in cloistered seclusion from the world but who traveled about Europe preaching, teaching, and performing works of charity—receiving their bread and bed from the largesse of others. St. Francis lived with such thoroughgoing humility that during his later life he received the stigmata, the agonizing wounds of Christ being replicated in his own hands and feet and side during Lent. Despite his rigorous asceticism and poverty, this Italian holy man was so joyfully attuned to nature that he even preached sermons to birds. Hence the many sentimental statues of Francis found in gardens.

64. *Siddhartha*. This is the given name of Gautama Buddha; it is Sanskrit for "he who has attained his object." It is also the title of a novel of spiritual quest often used in America to justify the rejection of everything Western and Christian. See note about its author Herman Hesse on p. 60.

64. *Atlas Shrugged*. Huge and humorless novel by Ayn Rand, also the author of *The Fountainhead*. Rand was a militant atheist, a ruthless materialist, and the advocate of an extreme individualism. As a Nietzschean worshipper of the will-to-power, she hated altruism and promoted selfishness. Getting and spending are the whole aim of human existence, she taught, together with loveless sexual pleasure. Rand wanted literally to replace the cross with the dollar sign, flaunting her worship of capitalism by wearing dollar-sign earrings and pendants.
64. *ESP and the New Spirituality* ... Dr. Rhine formerly of Duke University. Extra-sensory perception was the research topic of this famous Duke scientist who during the 1950s sought to perform experiments in altered states of consciousness. Already in 1971 Percy prophesied the rise of New Age spirituality in its fascination with magical shortcuts past the rough and narrow path of the Cross.
64. Gnostic pride. The Gnostics were early pagans and then later Christian heretics who believed that secretly revealed *gnosis* (knowledge) is the way to salvation. This esoteric knowledge, which is said to free the spiritual element in man from its entrapment in the evil material world, denies the soul's essential relation to the body. The Gnostics flourished during the first three centuries but are also alive and well in our own age.
65. To the lake isle of Innisfree. A reference to the first stanza of a poem by William Butler Yeats, written in tribute to Henry David Thoreau's life at Walden Pond:

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,
And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:
Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honeybee,
And live alone in the bee-loud glade.

66. More stately mansions. A reference to "The Chambered Nautilus," a poem by the Boston physician-poet Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-94), father of the famed Supreme Court Justice. The poet picks up a pearly nautilus, which has built itself successive chambers as it grew larger, forming a marvelously spiraled shell. In the last stanza, the anti-Calvinist and agnostic poet makes the sea-creature serve as a sign of our own onward and upward call to self-sufficiency:

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

67. Brahmin, Buddhist, Sikh, Zoroastrian ... *I Ching*. The first are Eastern religions, the last is *The Book of Changes*, a classic work of Chinese Confucianism that teaches the philosophy of yin-yang, the correlation and interaction of all cosmic forces—heavenly and earthly, masculine and feminine, human and natural—in a perpetual intermingling and interfusion. Again, Percy is not ridiculing Eastern philosophy and religion but rather those who espouse them faddishly, in flight from their own Western traditions.
69. East of the sun and west of the moon. A nonsense phrase from an Edward Lear nursery rhyme, it was also a popular ballad of the 1930s composed by _____ Bowman and sung by Sarah Vaughan, among others. It is also the title of a book by Teddy Roosevelt, Jr. recounting his hunting adventures in the Himalayas during the late 1920s. He argued that polyandry (the taking of many husbands) served to ameliorate the impoverished condition of Tibetan women. Dr. More's wife Doris feels not physically but spiritually constrained to have only one husband.

69. fakir. A Hindu holy man, here punningly linked to the word “faker.”
70. the choice between having the truth and searching for it. The German humanist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81) declared that he had rather pursue the truth than possess it. Here this sentiment is linked to Herman Hesse, the 20th-century German novelist. Hesse argues that the human quest must always be pursued for its own sake, never for any transcendent end or goal. We must stay always on the move. Whatever evils we encounter or commit along the way must be regarded as necessary moments in the journey, not as sins.
- It is also tied to Soren Kierkegaard, the eminent 19th century Danish Christian thinker. In his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, there is a section entitled “Something About Lessing” and it includes a chapter entitled “Theses Possibly or Actually Attributable to Lessing.” There SK deals very critically—perhaps in ways that instructed Percy himself—with the notion that the quest for truth is more important than the possession of it.
72. We thought no more of Herman Hesse that day. An allusion to the Paolo and Francesca episode in Canto V of Dante’s *Inferno*. After a book of romance had aroused their sexual desire for each other, these adulterous lovers “read no further that day.” Their tempestuous passion lands them in Hell, where they are condemned to cling to each other eternally in the Circle of Lust.
72. like a two-eyed Picasso profile. Samantha’s brain tumor has so disfigured her face that she resembles one of Picasso’s several Cubist portraits seeking to show how women’s faces would appear from several different angles.
72. She took the high road and I took the low. A reference to the Scottish song, “Loch Lomond”: “You take the high road and I’ll take the low road, and I’ll be in Scotland afore you.”
73. Max Gottlieb. Also the name of the utterly dedicated scientific researcher in Sinclair Lewis’s novel, *Arrowsmith*. The name literally means “God-love” and is here used to satirize this Jewish doctor’s obliviousness to the love of God, even though he belongs to God’s chosen people and though he loves his friend Tom More.
73. Milton Cross. The long-time commentator on the Texaco-sponsored radio broadcasts of the Saturday matinees of the Metropolitan Opera Company of New York City. Also the author of a popular opera guide.
75. Tara. Tara was the home of Scarlett O’Hara in Margaret Mitchell’s novel and the subsequent film, *Gone with the Wind*. The fictional Southern mansion was named after Tara, the pre-British capital of Ireland.
75. the Liberty Lobby. An extreme right-wing organization funded by the oil tycoon H. L. Hunt, one of Texas’ wealthiest billionaires. He was a trigamist who traveled on all-fours around his Texas mansion, a replica of Mt. Vernon, because he thought crawling was good for the back. He regarded President Eisenhower as a Communist, advocated the military invasion of Cuba to liberate it from Castro, sponsored a right-wing radio program called *Life Line*, and wrote a utopian novel entitled *Alpaca*. There he argued that votes should be apportioned according to one’s wealth, the rich being given a huge majority over the poor. When the conservative columnist Russell Kirk heard that Hunt had accused the president of being Red, he replied that the Ike was not a Communist but a golfer.
76. the Hippocratic oath. Hippocrates was an ancient Greek physician who drew up a series of moral rules for doctors. The oath often taken by medical students upon receiving their doctoral degree is distantly derived from these principles. To Percy’s bitter regret, however, the physician’s promise not to perform abortions or assist suicides has been deleted.

76. *wood and brass like Jules Verne vehicles*. A 19th-century French writer whose anticipation of submarine travel was recounted in *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1870). Percy may refer to the interior of Captain Nemo's submarine.
77. *a Jules Verne gondola*. Verne described a fictional navigation of the globe via a heavier-than-air flying machine in both *Robur the Conqueror* (1886) and *Master of the World* (1904). In the film version of Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*, the world is circumnavigated by hot-air balloon.
77. *Wienerblut*. Viennese Blood, the title of a Johann Strauss waltz.
78. N.I.M.H. The National Institute of Mental Health, a huge government-sponsored research center and funding-granting agency now located in Rockville, Maryland.
79. *Wine, Women, and Song*. Another Strauss waltz.
79. General Patton. World War II American general who wore a flamboyant uniform and who carried an ivory rather than a pearl-handled revolver. He was known as "old blood and guts" and was said to have gained more ground with fewer losses than any other general. He was also suspected of madness, and he was disciplined by General (later President) Eisenhower for slapping two weeping, "shell-shocked" soldiers whom Patton regarded as shirkers when he encountered them at Army field hospitals in Sicily during August of 1943. When asked whether he regularly read his Bible, Patton replied: "Yes, every God-damn day." President Nixon watched the movie *Patton* over and over again in the last months before his resignation in 1974, perhaps seeing a good deal of himself in this general whose greatness was besmirched by a single unfortunate incident.
79. Victor Herbert. A popular Irish-American composer (1859-1924) who was known for such songs as "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life" and for such operettas as *Naughty Marietta* and *Babes in Toyland*.
84. Cliff Barrow Junior is preaching. Cliff Barrow was Billy Graham's chief music leader and close associate for most of the famous evangelist's long career. The name of this fictional son suggests that American revivalism will continue in its present form for decades to come.
85. he's not afraid of no-thing. The idea that anxiety is a fear of nothing is borrowed by the 20th century German philosopher Martin Heidegger via Kierkegaard's *Concept of Anxiety*. There SK attempts to absolve God from the sinfulness of human beings by arguing that the fall is a consequence of the synthetic nature of the human self given by God but is not a necessary result of that synthetic nature. Anxiety is thus a fear of "no-thing" in the sense that it is a fear of the freedom inherent in human nature, the possibility that we can be radically other than what we are. Unlike Kierkegaard, Heidegger that the cosmos and our consciousness of it are encircled by an all-encompassing Nothingness. To confront this primordial and unimaginable Void that negates everything is, for Heidegger, to know the basis of all thought. Yet once such non-being is acknowledged in all of its horrible and unthinkable otherness, Heidegger argues, we are returned to the strangeness and mystery of the world's being.
86. vagal rage. The vagus is the pneumogastric nerve that controls the abdomen.
90. Newton hitting on his principles and Einstein on his field theory. Isaac Newton (1642-1727) was an English physicist, mathematician, and philosopher who used a prism to break white light into the colors of the spectrum, invented a reflecting telescope, devised the calculus, and formulated the laws of gravitation and motion. Though he was a devout Christian who regarded space and time as the infinite sensoria of God, Newton was instrumental in fixing in the public mind a conception of the universe as a system of uniform and inexorable mechanical laws—thus making the universe a self-enclosed thing. Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was the German physicist whose general theory of relativity—first published in 1916—helped

supplant Newtonian physics by showing how a ray of light would be deflected when passing through a gravitational field.

91. Perry Como's Christmas show. A singer at the peak of his fame in the 1950s, this silken-voiced ex-barber turned many of the great Christmas songs into sweet sentimentalities during his annual holiday special. Como's rendering of "Silent Night" became his virtual trademark. He sang Christmas songs while wearing a cardigan sweater and sitting on a stool, thus adopting a stance of utter casualness while crooning about the ultimate mystery of the Incarnation. No wonder, Percy suggests, that More slits his wrists after watching this show.
91. the Dvorák cello concerto. Antonín Dvorák (1841-1904) was a Czech composer who in 1892 came to the U.S. to direct the New York Philharmonic. His music is imbued with Czech nationalism, and much influenced by Brahms and Wagner. He is best known for his Slavonic Dances and for his Symphony in E Minor, *From the New World*.
91. Ramos gin fizzes. Fragrant cool drinks named after a California (?) bartender. They are made by shaking beaten egg, milk (or cream), sugar, and lemon juice together with gin and served over ice in tall frosted glasses. The albumen in egg white was also the source of Percy's own allergic reactions.
91. *Don Quixote* theme. An 1898 tone poem by the composer Richard Strauss, who makes the French horn bleat like sheep in this piece. One of the last German romantics, Strauss was influenced by Wagner and Liszt, and was a master of the grand, orchestral effect. *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Death and Transfiguration* are among his other notable compositions.
92. Kilimanjaro. The extinct volcanic cone of the highest peak (nearly 20,000 feet) in Africa, located in northeast Tanzania, near Kenya. It is also the setting for Ernest Hemingway's short story, "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (1938).
93. Schubert's trout. The *Trout* is the title of a sunny and joyful piano quintet by Franz Schubert (1797-1828), one of the foremost composers of the Romantic movement and a songwriter of unparalleled accomplishment. The quintet's second movement develops the song's melody and is thus named after it. *Die Forelle* (The Trout) is also the title of a folk tune that Schubert adapted for one of his songs.
93. Popocatepetl. Aztec for "smoking mountain," a dormant and perpetually snowcapped volcano in central Mexico, nearly 18,000 feet in height.
93. Fuji. Fujiyama, sacred volcanic mountain and highest point in Japan at 12,389 feet.
94. sclerae. The sclera is the tough outer covering of the entire eyeball.
94. Gullah accent. African dialect brought by slaves to the coast of South Carolina and Georgia, still occasionally used by Negroes living on these sea islands. Here Percy seems to suggest the English style of Gullah speakers.
94. Out into the gloaming, [O, my darling]. A phrase from "In the Gloaming," a glee-club sort of song by Meta Orrel. "Gloaming" is a poetic term for the evening twilight, the dusk.
94. fat little calypso clouds. Clouds that twist and curve in the fashion of a Negro dance from the West Indies.
95. Juilliard summer-festival style of kissing. A reference to the famous New York City music school whose summer series is held at Lincoln Center. Perhaps More is thinking of the Berkshire Festival featuring the Boston Symphony at Tanglewood near Lenox, Massachusetts. In either case, Percy is suggesting that such artistic events often lead to lewd behavior.

95. Fiery Betelgeuse. One of the brightest stars in the sky, a “shoulder” in the constellation of Orion. It’s the largest object visible to the naked eye, larger even than our entire solar system, and thus an important star for navigation, sometimes comically mispronounced Beetlejuice.
96. Santa hood pushed back on his shoulders like a Carmelite’s. The Carmelites are a mendicant order of friars founded in the 12th century at Mt. Carmel (the abode of the prophets Elijah and Elisha in Palestine) by a Crusader named Berthold. Their monks wear a robe with a cowl that covers the head but is often pushed back on the shoulders. The order has produced great mystics, including St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross.
96. epinephrine. A hormone produced by the human body and also an adrenaline drug used to treat severe allergic reactions such as hives; it speeds up heart beat and sugar secretion.
97. succubi. Female demons, evil spirits. A succubus has sex with a sleeping man; an incubus is a male devil who has intercourse with a sleeping woman.
99. Natchez-under-the-hill. A town created for ex-slaves on the banks of the Mississippi near Natchez, which is located on the cliffs above the river, it was known in the 19th century as a place where white citizens could indulge in various vices without penalty.
100. tilted like an Andes farm. The terraced mountainsides of South America.
102. some old uncle from Memphis. An Uncle Tom is a submissive black, a paradigm figure taken from a misreading of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s anti-slavery novel of 1851-52, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*.
104. you mothers being castrated. Uru is not referring to Victor Charles’s maternal lineage, of course, but using an abridgment of the m-f expletive that this soul-clean member of the Starlight Baptist Church doesn’t recognize.
105. gauzy green and pointillist. Pointillism is a style used by certain post-Impressionist painters, especially Seurat, in 19th century France. It is a stippling technique using thousands of tiny points of color, each surrounded by white.
105. the Blue-Gray game. A post-season football game featuring senior stars from the North and the South and thus named after the colors of Union and Confederate uniforms; it is played on Christmas day in Montgomery, Alabama. It is usually an anti-climactic event with meager viewers; here it is a sign of the massive irrelevance of American television to the aches and pains and joys of the soul.
106. St. Thomas Aquinas. Widely regarded as the greatest theologian of the Catholic tradition, he lived from 1224-1274, mainly in Italy and France. His *Summa Theologiae* is a systematic conspectus of Christian theology in its entirety.
106. their best work in prison or exile, men like Dostoevsky, Cervantes, Bonhoeffer, ... Genet. Fyodor Dostoevsky was the 19th century Russian novelist who wrote *The Brothers Karamazov* and *Crime and Punishment*; he was imprisoned for his anti-czarist activities but wrote nothing of great importance there. Miguel de Cervantes (1547-1616) was the greatest figure of Spanish literature, author of *Don Quixote de la Mancha*; he spent five years as a slave in Algeria. Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-45) was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian imprisoned and hanged by the Nazis; his most well known book is *Letters and Papers from Prison*. Jean Genet was a 20th century French playwright and novelist in the tradition of the Marquis de Sade; he spent much of his life in prison, and his work celebrates violence, sadism, and homosexuality. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Jawaharlal Nehru also wrote notable works while jailed.
107. AWOL. Absent without leave, a term for those who abscond from the U. S. Army.

108. a regular black Leonardo. Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) was an Italian poet, painter, sculptor and engineer famed not only for his *Mona Lisa* and *Last Supper* but also for his work in hydraulics, mechanics, anatomy, geology, and botany. Pre-eminently from him comes the phrase “a Renaissance man,” one endowed with such great genius that one can make gigantic achievements in almost any endeavor.
108. like Toulouse-Lautrec he doesn’t rise much. At four-feet-eleven, the French artist (1864-1901) couldn’t stand tall; he was a genetically deformed dwarf who walked awkwardly with a cane, spoke with a lisp, suffered from alcoholism and syphilis, and lived a decadent life in the art dens of Paris. Yet his images of the bohemian world made him one of the world’s most famous printmakers. He described himself as “a thoroughbred hitched up to a rubbish cart.” Paul John described him as follows: “He limped, had very large nostrils, bulbous lips, a thickened tongue and a speech impediment. He sniffed continually and drooled at the mouth.” He was said to do quite well with women.
109. Walpurgis night of witches, devils, pitchforks, thorns in the flesh. The night preceding May 1st, the feast of St. Walburga (710-777), an English missionary nun who aided St. Boniface in converting Germany to Christianity. According to German legend, witches and warlocks perform their Black Mass on this night. There are two important Walpurgis Night scenes in Goethe’s *Faust*, later set to music by Mendelssohn. St. Paul also spoke of suffering from a “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7).
111. the annual Donnybrook. An Irish fair known for so many fights that it has become a proverbial expression for any riotous event.
111. Manolete taking on Belmonte. Manolete was a Spanish bullfighter much admired by Ernest Hemingway. A native of Córdoba named Manuel Rodriguez, he was a skinny *torero* who was not strong enough to fast before fighting (and thus to reduce the bleeding if hooked). He was killed by goring at age 30 in 1947. In Hemingway’s story, Manolete and the bull kill each other amidst much blood. Juan Belmonte was such a famous bullfighter that in 1918 a group of leading Spanish cultural and literary figures honored him with a banquet to show that they considered him a fellow artist.
117. “It means that you don’t have life in you.” Without the sacrament of penance, More will also be ineligible to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist. As a Catholic, he does not regard these things as mere signs or symbols pointing to some vague spiritual reality: they are the very means of divine grace, the actual embodiment of what they declare and perform. Without Holy Communion, therefore, More is a dead soul, a man who is alive only in appearance. Such sacramentalism is not unique to Catholics, however, since most liturgical Protestants also believe that baptism and the Lord’s Supper are more than mere memorials: Christ is uniquely and decisively present in them. There Christians objectively and communally receive the gifts of Christ’s Body, rather than merely subjectively and individually affirming their own faith. Tom More is clearly echoing one of the chief Scriptural justifications for such sacramentalism: “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live for ever” (John 6:53-58).
118. The Skinner Box. B. F. Skinner was an influential Harvard behaviorist whose book *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* sought to liberate Americans from traditional humanistic ideals; there he insists that human behavior can be better shaped by operant conditioning, a system of rewards and punishments that he demonstrated by the use of his famous Skinner Box, where children were made to sit in isolation when they had misbehaved.

119. Mazo de la Roche. A Canadian novelist (1885-1961) best known for *Jalna* (1927), the story of three generations of a tempestuous family ruled by a strong-willed matriarch. Her work is pseudo-historical, pseudo-romantic, decidedly Book-of-the-Month Club and *Readers' Digest* stuff.
119. *Scheherazade*. A tone poem by Rimsky-Korsakov celebrating the Arabian woman who kept the sultan from killing her by telling him tales over *A Thousand and One Nights*. They include the stories of Ali Baba and Aladdin. Many of the stories originated in India but were first collected in Persia.
119. like Darwin and Mrs. Darwin in Kent. In 1836 at age 27, Darwin had just returned to England from his five-year voyage on the *Beagle*. He was on the cusp of one of the most brilliant careers in science, but he began to suffer heart palpitations, trembling, shortness of breath, and "swimming in the head." His acute sense of anxiety developed into what today would be called agoraphobia (social phobia) and panic disorder. Darwin became a legendary recluse who rarely ventured from his country home in Kent 18 miles south of London, leaving only when absolutely necessary and then traveling in a carriage with darkened windows. Because of his nervous ailment, Darwin wrote *On the Origin of Species* and his other works on evolution from his rural home. A rare trip in 1861, to give a brief speech to the Linnaean Society, prompted a 24-hour vomiting episode. His wife read contemporary (i.e., Victorian) novels aloud to him, but he liked only those with happy endings. After his death, she censored some of his writings because they seemed anti-Christian. Darwin himself confessed that "ill-health, though it has annihilated years of my life, has saved me from the distraction of society and its amusements."
120. St. Petersburg Blues. The melancholia of old age, named after the Florida city inhabited by many retirees.
122. whether to add the *que* to the *filio*. The word *filioque*, which means "and the Son," was added to the Nicene Creed (325) at Spanish church council held in Toledo in 589. Seeking to defend the church from sectarian overemphasis on the gifts of the Spirit, King Reccared proclaimed that the Holy Spirit should be confessed and taught to proceed from the Father *and the Son*. This doctrine of "double procession" gradually spread throughout Western church, and it became a major point of division over against the Eastern church, which holds that the Holy Spirit "proceeds" from the Father alone. Seeking reconciliation between the two churches, the Anglican communion has recently recommended the deletion of the *filioque* clause from use in its worship and teaching. Not only does it seem to demean the work of the Spirit, it also contradicts the second clause of Jesus' own declaration: "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, *which proceedeth from the Father*, He shall testify of me" (John 15:26).
123. reading *Commonweal*. A lay-edited, left-leaning Catholic journal published in New York City to which Percy himself contributed but which he here parodies because of its predictable liberalism.
123. Pat O'Brien. An Irish-Catholic actor in sentimental movies of the 1940s. His brawn and brass enabled him to play the roles of both priests and athletes, e.g., Knute Rockne.
123. Anna O. A hysterical woman whom Sigmund Freud treated early in his career. He was convinced that her hysteria was rooted in sexual frustration.
125. *Zwei Herzen*. "Zwei Herzen in drei-viertel Takt" ("Two Hearts in Three-Quarter Time") was the title of the first German sound-film (1931), as well as the first line of the movie's title song, which became a hit also in English.
- 126-7. *She never told her love
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud
Feed on her damask cheek.*

William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, II, 4, 112-14.

*Her cheek like the rose is, but fresher, I ween,
She's the loveliest lassie that trips on the green.*

From "O, saw ye the lass," a poem by Richard Ryan (1796-1849). *Ween* is Old English for "know."

129. *Nicht*. German for "not."

129. Palo Alto, Berkeley, Copenhagen. Eminent scientific research centers: Stanford University is at Palo Alto, the University of California at Berkeley, and Niels Bohr's atomic research center is located in Copenhagen.

129. *Che gelida manina*. What a cold little hand. In Puccini's opera *La Bohème*, Rodolfo is an impoverished Bohemian artist who lives in a Paris garret and who loves the equally poor and tubercular Mimi. She dies in the opera's last scene. Rodolfo sings these words over her dead body, a reprise of the full aria he had sung upon their first meeting in Act I.

130. Dry Tortugas again? Chichen Itza? Tombstone? Exotic places all: the first is an island off the coast of Florida, the second is the ruins of an ancient Mayan civilization in the Yucatán, and the third is an Arizona frontier town so named because so many people were killed there in shoot-outs.

130. her Lois Lane hat. Lane was a fellow reporter alongside Clark Kent, a.k.a. Superman, and she wore a rather prim hat. The irony here is heavy.

131. *Mach schnell!* German for "Faster," "Hurry up," "Make haste." The love couples must perform their sexual experiments quickly. Medical sex has no time for the slow motions of eros.

133. It's like Pompey! Probably not a reference to the Roman general who was the enemy of Julius Caesar but to Pompeii, the flourishing Roman port city located near Naples at the foot of Mt. Vesuvius. It was devastated by an earthquake in 63 A.D. and then buried by the mountain's eruption in 79. Yet the volcanic ashes and cinders served to preserve the city's ruins, which were discovered in 1748 and subjected to a major archeological excavation.

135. "The lion and the lizard keep/The courts where Samson gloried and drank deep.... The wild ass/Stamps o'er his head, but cannot break his sleep."

These lines are altered from "The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám," an elaborated and improved translation into English of a long, melancholy Arabic poem ridiculing asceticism and celebrating the glories of carnal love, by Edward FitzGerald (1800-1883). Percy substitutes the name of the Biblical hero Samson in this quotation from Stanza 18. It deals with the transience and evanescence of all things human, even the great Persian capital city of Persepolis, where the courts of Jamshyd were located. Bahrám was a Persian ruler who lost his life in a swamp while hunting a wild ass.

They say the Lion and the Lizard keep
The Courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;
And Bahrám, that great Hunter—the wild Ass
Stamps o'er his Head, but cannot break his sleep.

135. Miss Clairol of olden times. A girl who colored her hair with a shampoo by the same name and then tossed it dry to a glossy sheen in a series of TV commercials in the 1960s.

135. Cupid's Quiver. Apparently a contraceptive device, a diaphragm. Later in the novel it is called a sachet. In Greek myth, Cupid's quiver is filled with arrows which prompt love in the wounded ones whom they strike.

136. the Gideon Bible. The Gideon Society, a Protestant men's group dedicated to the distribution of the Scriptures, places Bibles in hotels and motels.

136. *The Laughing Cavalier*. A painting by the Dutch artist Frans Hals (?1580-1666) showing a randy figure decked out in 17th century finery and leering with a drunken grin, often seen in motel rooms.

136. Far from the maddening crowd. The slightly mangled title of the novel that launched Thomas Hardy's career in 1874, *Far from the **Madding** Crowd*. The original phrase is from Stanza 19 of Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* (1750):

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;
Along the cool sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

136. a quaint little hotel in Merida. The capital of Yucatán in southeast Mexico, Mérida was founded on Mayan ruins in 1542; in recent years it has become a major gateway to the nearby tourist attractions at Chichén Itzá and Uxmal. Mérida is also the name of a city in western Spain.

137. "A jug of wine, a loaf of bread, and thou." More lines from "The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám". "Enow" is a poetic rendering of "enough".

A Book of Verses underneath the Bough,
A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread – and Thou
Beside me singing in the Wilderness –
Oh, Wilderness were Paradise enow!

137. *Stanyan Street*. A collection of poems by Rod McKuen, a popular writer of the 1960s. The title is taken from a street in Haight-Asbury, which later became the center of the San Francisco drug scene.

138. *Tantum Ergo*. "So great, therefore," the first words of a medieval hymn to the Eucharist attributed to St. Thomas Aquinas. The opening lines are sometimes translated as follows: "Down in adoration falling,/This great sacrament we hail."

138. Deh vieni alla finestra. "O come to the window," another aria from Mozart's opera *Don Giovanni*.

138. *Gentle Ben*. A television series about a friendly grizzly.

140. treated for liver flukes. They are parasitic worms that infest cows, swine, sheep, and fish, making their way also into the human liver through the ingestion of undercooked meat.

140. a copy of Fanon. Frantz Fanon was an African writer, an apostle of Negritude, and the author of *The Wretched of the Earth*, a book he published in 1961 to denounce the evils of French colonialism in his native Martinique and revolutionary Algeria.

147. Flowers of darkness. A reference to Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*?

151. Kingfish Huey P. Long. First governor (1928-32) and then senator from Louisiana, Long was a free-spending dictator and benevolent demagogue (1893-1935) who promoted a "Share the Wealth" program. His motto was "Every man a king," and he was thus known as the Kingfish. He was assassinated inside his recently built state capitol in Baton Rouge. Long inspired Robert Penn Warren's novel *All the King's Men* and the resulting prize-winning movie of 1949 starring Broderick Crawford. The name "Kingfish" may also have been derived from a black character in the "Amos and Andy" radio series of the 1930s and 40s.

152. Soon the bullbats will be thrumming. Bullbat is a popular name for the nighthawk, a bird which is neither bat nor hawk but a relative of the whippoorwill; they both make a haunting night call.
152. Tougaloo College. Negro school in Jackson, Mississippi.
153. “Victor, do you love me? Leroy, do you love me? Then y’all help me.” A parody of the risen Christ’s thrice-asked question to Simon Peter after appearing to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias: “Simon, son of John, do you love me...?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.... Tend my sheep” (John 21: 15-17).
156. my girl Friday. On his deserted island, Robinson Crusoe discovered an escaped native whom he named Friday because he found him on that day of the week. Because Friday became Crusoe’s devoted slave, the name came to describe anyone who performs another’s wishes without question. Charles MacArthur and Ben Hecht applied it to a dutiful secretary in their play entitled *The Front Page*. It was later made into the movie called *His Girl Friday* starring Cary Grant and Rosalind Russell.
158. *a branded cow*. The word has been mistakenly altered from *brinded*, which in turn is Hopkins’s altered spelling of “brindled.” A brindled cow partakes of nature’s pied (variegated) beauty by being both black and brown.
161. Remember Robert the Bruce! He was the Scottish king who lived from 1274-1329 and who led the successful struggle for national independence from England after being crowned at Scone in 1306. Legend holds that Bruce learned courage and hope from watching a spider spin its web while he was in hiding. He also liked to boast that a Scot was a Scyth. The Scythians were a tribe of nomadic and warlike horsemen whom the ancient Greeks had to fend off from invasion.
166. the German ace and inventor of the Immelman turn. Immelman was a German aviator who discovered this complicated air maneuver. The pilot avoids an attacker by flying straight up and over until he is upside down, and then righting his plane to fly off in the opposite direction. Art Immelman’s name also suggests the German word for heaven, *Himmel*. He may be an emissary from the “high places” described on p. 4.
168. Arcturus’ light bent a little as it swept past the sun. Arcturus is a very bright navigational star that can be found by following the curve of the Big Dipper. That its light bent a little proved Einstein’s theory that space is not infinitely expanding but finite and curved.
168. the sadness of hubris. *Hubris* is a Greek word meaning overweening pride; it is often used in Greek tragedies to describe those whose greatness made them reach too far, even to their own destruction.
173. St. Pius XII Church. Eugenio Pacelli (1876-1958) was pope from 1939 until his death. His alleged “silence” in the face of Nazi atrocities has brought him much criticism, but it has been argued that he sought to relieve the distress of prisoners in quieter ways that would not provoke worse persecutions. The novel’s right-wing American Catholic Church would have named itself after Pius XII perhaps because his pontificate defined the doctrine of the Virgin Mary’s bodily Assumption into heavenly glory upon her death. Pius XII is also the last pope to be recognized by the A.C.C., one suspects, because he issued an edict in 1949 declaring that any Roman Catholic assisting Communism in any way would be excommunicated. He was succeeded by Pope John XXIII, the liberalizing pope who convoked the Second Vatican Council and who followed a policy of *aggiornamento*, an attempt to “update” the church’s doctrines in relation to modern questions.
175. Ginger Rogers and Red Skelton. The former was a popular movie star of the 1930s, especially as a dancer with Fred Astaire in musical comedies. Red Skelton was a popular comedian on radio and television through the 70s.

176. Henry Miller, seedy and stove-up, sitting in a park in Jacksonville. A writer who became disgusted with America and moved to Paris, where his pornographic novels *The Tropic of Cancer* and *The Tropic of Capricorn* were published after being denied public sale in the U. S., Miller took refuge in the U. S. during the Second War, and wrote an account of his cross-country trip entitled *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*. Perhaps he got unhappily stranded in this city on the northeast coast of Florida.
177. the Infant Jesus of Prague. A Czech image of the Christ child revered for its power to work miracles but also noted for its maudlin sweetness, always inscribed with the first three letters in Greek for Jesus: IHS.
178. novena. A Roman Catholic devotion consisting of special prayers or services for nine consecutive days.
178. a dragon fighting a bear. Perhaps an allusion to Malory's *Morte d' Arthur*, where Arthur has an identical dream at the beginning of his campaign against Emperor Lucius, the dragon being Arthur and the bear being a giant.
178. Marva. She is Percy's parody of a superstitious "gnostic" Catholic who discerns signs and marvels everywhere, and whose faith thus has little to do with the rigorous moral practices of the Christian life. Her name is thus an echo of her character.
179. Ricardo Montalban playing a lithe priest. This Mexican-American actor played the role of a priest in *A Bell for Adano*, a sentimental movie set in World War II. The American Army destroys the tower of a church in an Italian village but then heroically provides the people a new bell. But Montalban has also played more serious roles, including Myrna Loy's counterpart in G. B. Shaw's *Don Juan in Hell*.
180. *The Good Earth*. The 1931 novel by Pearl S. Buck, who was once regarded as a great writer, winning the Nobel Prize in 1938. This is the story of a Chinese family that encounters plague, drought, warfare, and an assortment of other evils, but nobly survives because of its final trust in the land, "the good earth."
182. Grant us we beseech Thee a *locum refrigerii*. A prayer from the Catholic funeral liturgy asking God for deliverance into "a cool place"—i.e. into Paradise, the only refuge from the heat of Hell.
184. the *Lawrence Welk Show*. A television program featuring sentimental dance music, especially the polka, still to be seen and heard on re-runs. Welk grew up in South Dakota but spoke only Polish until he was 21 and retained a noticeable accent when he appeared with his orchestra.
188. Olive Oyl. A movie cartoon character in the Popeye series. He is a sailor-man whose proverbial strength is fueled by eating spinach, usually ingested through his pipe. She is his girlfriend, a skinny, angular woman with a high voice.
191. Descartes ripped body loose from mind and turned the very soul into a ghost that haunts its own house. The founder of modern philosophy, René Descartes (1596-1650) was a French scientist who sought to apply mathematical methods to philosophy. His motto was *Cogito, ergo sum*: "I think, therefore I am." Descartes sought to make abstract human thinking—with the mind completely distinct from the body—serve as the sole basis for knowing the reality of God, the self, and the world. Arthur Koestler argued, in *The Ghost in the Machine* (1968), that Cartesianism so bifurcates body and mind that the human soul becomes a virtual ghost haunting the mechanism it inhabits. See also the Jekyll-Hyde allusion on 383.
195. *Christianity Without God*. A reference to the Death of God movement which swept over American mainline theology during the mid-1960s, claiming that the time had come when Christians must give up all notions of God as transcendent, personal, and sovereign. Yet these same theologians wanted to retain belief in Jesus as heroic example of one who lived and died in radical devotion to the well being of others. One of the movement's main exponents, Thomas J. J. Altizer, thus wrote a book entitled *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*.

198. well executed *escotada* by an obscure matador. The impeccably timed death-thrust given to the bull during a moment of deadly danger to the matador.
208. *Eins zwei drei*. German for one, two, three. except that *ein* has no *s*.
209. like the man in St. James's epistle. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself and goes away and forgets at once what he was like. But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing" (James 1:22-25).
211. Drink this drink and you'll never want a drink. A parody of Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman at the well: "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst; the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life" (John 4:14).
213. Loves her as one loves music. This idea is borrowed directly from Søren Kierkegaard's important book of 1843, *Either/Or*. Certain kinds of music, Kierkegaard argued, enable one to experience exalted and abstract truth concretely yet impersonally. This 19th-century Danish philosopher thus held that Don Juan, like all other romantics, is not in love with particular women but with the idea of woman as abstract beauty concretely relished. His "thousand and three in Spain alone"—the famous phrase from the catalogue aria sung by Leporello in *Don Giovanni*—are faceless and forgotten women whom he never knew as individual persons but rather as pleasurable occasions for expressing his abstract and godlike spirituality.
218. a dance, at old Saint Anthony's Hall. St. Anthony is the patron saint of lost articles, in this case perhaps also of lost souls.
219. Spiro Agnew. A former governor of Maryland and vice-president to Richard Nixon, he was a vehement scold of all things liberal in behalf of an angry conservative Republicanism until he resigned in shame over his financial malfeasances. He vaunted himself as a vehement scold of all liberals, whom he called the "nattering nabobs of negativism from the effete east."
219. Justice William O. Douglas. The longest-serving justice (1939-75) in the history of the Supreme Court, he was often charged with caring more about the environment than human beings. His liberal rulings so angered conservatives that he was thrice the target of congressional impeachment attempts. The final attempt, in 1970, was led by Rep. Gerald Ford (R-MI) and was endorsed by 100 members of Congress. They were upset at Douglas's seeming advocacy of both political revolution and pornography. He was also famed for his four marriages, the last one (in 1965) to a woman 44 years his junior.
220. like Captain Queeg. A character in a novel by Herman Wouk entitled *The Caine Mutiny*, he was a psychotic commander of a Navy destroyer in World War II. In his incompetence Queeg comes near to sinking his ship, yet the novel makes the reader ask whether the crew's mutinous act to save their vessel did not also endanger the important principle that subordinates must obey orders. Humphrey Bogart played the role in the movie version.
222. Perry Mason beating Hamilton Burger. Defense and prosecuting attorneys, respectively, in the Erle Stanley Gardner novels and the long-running TV series. Mason always wins.
223. Art Linkletter III. He is the fictional descendant of a television host of the 1950s and 60s whose program featured interviews and prizes for gawking, hyperventilating guests, including children. This actual Art Linkletter, an adopted son of a Canadian preacher and his wife, was also the author of books with such titles as *Kids Say the Darnedest Things*.

224. hooked me with his claws like the ancient mariner. In Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem called *The Ancient Mariner*, the sailor insists on telling the wedding guest his long story by holding onto his coat so he can't escape.
227. the great white whale. Melville's *Moby Dick*, of course, but with an obscene use of whaling language.
227. *Voilà! Ça va*. Mild exclamations in French: "There you are!" and "So it goes."
228. a coat upon a stick. William Butler Yeats' disturbingly apt metaphor for the withering effects of time from "Sailing to Byzantium":
- An aged man is a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress....
229. The fountain of youth. As a sick old man unafraid to die, Mr. Ives uses the term with bitter irony. Legend holds that the 16th-century conquistadors Ponce de León and Hernando de Soto explored Florida searching for a fabled spring of longevity, but it was really gold that they sought and did not find.
230. Fray Bartolomeo who was with the original Narvaez expedition. The Franciscan friar (fray = brother) Pámfilo de Narváez (c. 1470-1528) was a Spanish conquistador who, together with Diego Velásquez, brutally conquered Cuba. Having later failed to make Cortés, the conqueror of Mexico, submit to the governor of Cuba, Narváez was commissioned to conquer and settle Florida. He landed near Tampa with 400 men in 1528, seeking a wealthy kingdom called Appalachen deep in the interior forests. It turned out to be a village of 40 clay huts filled with hostile Indians who joined others to drive Narváez and his men back where they came from. Heading for Mexico, most of them died in a sea storm near Galveston, Texas. Osceononta may have been the Appalachen chief. Recounting this event in his *Relación*, Cabeza de Vaca says that only he and four others survived.
233. "the difference between he and I." The mistaken use of the nominative pronoun instead of the accusative is the unfailing mark of one who seeks to be grammatically correct but knows not how.
235. *liebchen*. A German term of affection, "little dear one."
236. Brunhilde. Brünhilde is the Valkyrie warrior and goddess heroine of Wagner's opera-cycle, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. She is usually played by a large soprano who wears a metal breastplate and who can out shout a hundred-piece orchestra, but Kirsten Flagstad, who has often sung the role, does not fit the caricature.
236. *Alles ist Geist*. German for "Everything is Spirit."
238. in a circle like a monstrance. A receptacle, usually made of silver or gold, for displaying the consecrated Host. It is also used in sacred processions, as at the feast of Corpus Christi.
238. a clean-living athletic Baptist type like pole-vaulter Bob Richards. He won an Olympic bronze medal in 1948 as well as the gold in 1952 and 1956. During the 1952 Olympics—when athletes from the Soviet Union participated for the first time—Richards insisted that the fostering of friendships should take precedence over Cold War politics and athletic rivalry. He later used his all-American good looks and fetching smile to advertise for Wheaties, "the Breakfast of Champions." His picture remained on the cereal boxes from 1957 until 1970, a record length. Richards is an ordained minister in the Church of the Brethren. He served a congregation in Long Beach, California, and he taught at the nearby Brethren school, the University of La Verne. Yet Percy was essentially right in thinking of Richards as a Baptist, since he

resides in Waco, Texas, where he continues to give motivational speeches and can sometimes be seen at Baptist Baylor University.

239. All we feared was fear itself. An echo of Franklin Roosevelt's first inaugural in 1933 amidst a severe Depression and many bank failures: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Roosevelt wrote this speech after reading Thoreau's *Walden* the night before.
240. *Nola*. This rinky-dink tune was the theme-piece for a 50s band led by Vincent Lopez; it exemplifies what Percy calls "the cult of the naughty-nice": the encouragement of alley-cat behavior behind a facade of seeming wholesomeness.
240. a den of vipers. Perhaps a conflation of two denunciations by Jesus: "a den of thieves" (Mark 11:17) and "a generation of vipers" (Matthew 3:7). Perhaps also an echo of Francois Mauriac's novel entitled *A Tangle of Vipers* (in English.)
240. blows Sen-Sen in my face. Licorice lozenges once used as a breath-freshener by people who smoked and drank, but who wanted their indulgence of these vices to be hidden from family and friends.
241. the dream of summer. A reference to Albert Camus?
242. "A fair woman is a lovely thing, truth lovelier still, but a fair youth is the fairest of all." Juvenal, the Roman satirist (60-140) coined these lines—not to sanction homoerotic lust, but to denounce the decadent nobility of his day.
242. Sewanee. The popular name of the distinguished Episcopal college located near Monteagle, Tennessee; its official name is the University of the South. William Alexander Percy, Walker's adoptive father, was graduated from Sewanee and later taught English there. Percy himself often vacationed in the family summer retreat located nearby. It is also the fictionalized setting of his fourth novel, *The Second Coming*.
245. Clay lies still but blood's a rover. From "A Shropshire Lad," by A. E. Housman (1859-1936):
- Clay lies still but blood's a rover,
Breath's a ware that will not keep,
Up lad: when the journey's over
There'll be time enough to sleep.
250. *Wien, Wien, du du allein*. A Strauss waltz whose title should read *nur du allein*: "Vienna, Vienna, you alone are everything to me."
252. sing *Louisiana Lou*. A popular love-song of the 1890s???
253. considers Mantovani "classical." To regard as "classical" the music of this popular conductor, whose orchestra ("101 Strings") specialized in pure schmaltz, is to be identified as a cultural climber.
253. humming *There's a Small Hotel with a Wishing Well*. The next words are "I wish that we were there—together." For six consecutive weeks during the summer of 1936 it was on the Hit Parade.
256. the tiny ropes that bound Gulliver. The minuscule Lilliputians captured the sleeping hero of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* by lashing him to the ground with tiny ropes.
258. Aeschylus. The first of the three great Greek tragedians (Sophocles and Euripides were the others), he lived from 525-486 B.C. He won the annual Athenian drama prize 13 times and authored perhaps 90 plays, seven of which are extant, including the *Oresteia* trilogy.

258. *The Death of a Salesman*. The title of Arthur Miller's celebrated American play about a typical traveling salesman and well-intentioned loser named Willie Loman.
259. *Seven Flags over Texas*. An amusement park between Dallas and Fort Worth, here perhaps accidentally misnamed because the flags of only six nations have flown over the Lone Star State: Spain, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the United States, the Confederacy, and the U. S. once again.
260. Shiva. The androgynous Hindu god of creation and destruction who dances the cosmos into and out of being.
260. *Gunsmoke*. Long-running TV series featuring Sheriff Matt Dillon, Doc, and Kitty.
260. watched Miss Nebraska recite "If" in the talent contest. A poem by Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) full of moralistic wisdom and sentimental uplift, once popular at public school commencement ceremonies. That a Midwestern beauty queen recites it does not attest to its profundity. These are the first and last stanzas:

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise....

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings—nor lose the common touch;
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you;
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run—
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

260. needed only a potsherd and dungheap. God allows his heavenly prosecutor named Satan to test Job's faithful-ness—whether he will "serve God for nought"—by taking away his possessions, his children, and finally his health. Amidst such physical and spiritual misery, Job sits atop a pile of ashes and scratches his loathsome sores with a broken piece of pottery.
261. in a bathtub like Marat. French revolutionary politician (1743-93) who was assassinated in his bath by Charlotte Corday.
267. the huge Esso oval. Exxon, a fragment of the Rockefellers' massive Standard Oil monopoly before it was broken up by the federal government, was once called Esso and later Humble. Hence the Humble geologist on p. 354. Esso service stations were marked by large oval signs.
271. Michelangelo's Adam touching God's hand. The central scene in the Renaissance artist's rendering of the Creation on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican.
271. *The world is too much with us*. The opening lines of one of William Wordsworth's most famous sonnets, lamenting the spirit-numbing materialism of 19th-century England.

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:

Little we see in nature that is ours;

We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The Winds that will be howling at all hours
Are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune;
It moves us not—Great God! I'd rather be
A pagan sucked in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus coming from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn.

273. Origen ... reincarnation ... we kicked his ass out.... he cut off his own member ... 'is ruddy whacker. Origen (c.185-254) was one of the greatest theologians of the early church, second in importance perhaps only to St. Augustine. He was the bishop of Alexandria in Egypt before fleeing to Palestine and finishing his work in Caesarea. Though he was himself never excommunicated, some of his teachings were condemned in the West (though not in the East) after his death. Among his anathematized doctrines were the pre-existence of all souls, their continuing development beyond death, and their final salvation at the end of time—every-one's, including even the devil's. According to the early church historian Eusebius, the young Origen was so severely tempted by the young women whom he instructed in the Christian faith that he castrated himself.
273. reverence for life. The ethical motto of Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965), an Alsatian humanitarian genius who held quadruple doctorates in theology, music, philosophy, and medicine. He gave up his academic career to spend the last 52 years of his life working in a jungle hospital at Lambaréné in French Equatorial Africa. Believing in the sacredness of all living things, he sought to avoid killing anything, even mosquitoes. Alistair Fuchs-Forbes' taste for Tom More's rib-eye steaks—"reverence for steers"—reveals that, like Doris, he uses the noblest of ethical concepts to mask his own self-interest.
274. blue-white Hadassah hair. Hadassah is a Jewish women's synagogue group, but the blueness of their hair is common to many elderly ladies who use a similar rinse.
279. David O. Selznick's set designer. Selznick was a movie mogul, the producer of *Gone with the Wind*.
280. Là ci darem. Another aria from *Don Giovanni*, "Give it to me [your hand], Zerlina."
281. the colonel's armored Datsun. This was the first of the Japanese high-efficiency automobiles, now called Nissan.
291. pirogue. A dug-out, canoe-like boat indigenous to the Cajun culture of south Louisiana. In Hank Williams' country-music song of the 1950s, "Jambalaya," one takes "the pirogue down the bayou."
295. Saint Thomas Aquinas on killing in self-defense. More has his reference wrong, but who could blame him under the circumstances? In the *Summa Theologiae* II-II.64.7, St. Thomas teaches that acts of self-defense are indeed permissible as long as they are meant for self-preservation and not the malicious harm of others. Even so, there are safeguards: the kind and degree of one's self-defense must be proportional to the attack, so that one must not use more violence than necessary in defending oneself. St. Thomas also warns against taking the law into one's own hands, denying that private individuals can kill in self-defense; they must rely, instead, on those entrusted with the defense of the common good. Thomistic teaching thus restrains More from killing Uru, though he seems justified in doing so.

295. long on Zane Grey. American writer (1875-1939) of many Wild West tales, most notably *Riders of the Purple Sage* (1912).
295. would Richard Coeur de Lion let Saladin have it in the back? Richard the Lionheart (1157-99) was king of England and a Crusader who sought to retake the Holy Land from the Saracens. In Sir Walter Scott's novel, *The Talisman*, he does combat with Saladin, leader of the Muslims. Richard in fact took his troops to the gates of Jerusalem and was prepared to retake it, but knowing that he couldn't maintain control of it at great length without a huge expenditure of troops and materiel, he met Saladin outside the city and they called a truce.
299. the Fifth Symphony, the *Principia Mathematica*, the Uranus guidance system. Great works of art and science accomplished by geniuses: the first by Beethoven, the second by Bertrand Russell and Alfred North Whitehead, but is the third perhaps a punning in-joke?
300. George Washington Carver. Eminent Negro chemist and inventor (1864?-1943) who worked at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama and who discovered many uses for peanuts, sweet potatoes, soybeans, etc.
304. "The fool says in his heart there is no God." A quotation of Psalms 14:1 and 53:1.
304. her sorrel mare Yellow Rose. A reddish-brown color, the horse perhaps named after the popular song, "The Yellow Rose of Texas."
304. sulcus. An anatomical fissure, especially between two convolutions of the brain. The word is Latin for "trench."
304. How lovely are the daughters of men! A reference to Genesis 6:2: "the sons of God saw that the daughters of men were fair." These heavenly beings lusted after earthly women and fathered on them a bastard race of giants, the *nephilim*. Such defiant disorder helped prompt God's decision to destroy the world.
306. Holy Name men... prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father. The Holy Name Society is an organization, now much in decline, of deeply pious Catholics. Devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus was first popularized by the Franciscans in the 16th century. A Holy Name feast was officially granted to them in 1530, prescribed for the whole Roman Catholic church in 1721, but suppressed in 1969. Intention is a technical term in Catholic theology referring to the special object of prayerful intercession. When a priest—in this case the Pope himself—conducts for the sake of someone living or dead, it is called a special intention.
309. their gear and tackle and trim. Another reference to Hopkins' "Pied Beauty" and its celebration of the wonder inherent in the radical specificity or "thisness" of everything created and creative, including the human crafts and their accouterments: "And áll trádes, their gear and tackle and trim."
311. the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. Babylon was an ancient Mesopotamian city on the banks of the Euphrates River in present-day Iraq. The Babylonian Empire reached its artistic and cultural heights under Nebuchadnezzar (d. 562 B.C.), who made its luxurious Hanging Gardens one of the wonders of the ancient world.
315. old Duke Wayne up yonder on the giant screen. The macho star of many Western films, John Wayne.
316. Twilight of the gods! The title of an opera by Wagner, *Götterdämmerung* is the fourth and final part of the famous Ring cycle. In Nordic myth, the gods themselves are finally defeated by the forces of chaos at the battle of Ragnarök, after which everything returns to primordial and permanent night.

325. Professor Coffin Cabot. Perhaps a conflation of William Sloan Coffin, the liberal Protestant chaplain at Yale during the 1960s, and Henry Cabot Lodge, the distinguished Massachusetts statesman.
326. Jorge Rojas ... the George Washington of Ecuador. Since the war in Ecuador (a futuristic successor to the war in Vietnam) is still raging, this name may allude either to Ho Chi Min, the Communist leader of the Viet Cong, or else to Che Guevara, the Argentine revolutionist. The latter was a charismatic medical doctor who moved to Mexico in 1953 to assist in planning the Cuban revolution, who fought alongside Castro and served in his cabinet from 1961 to 1965, and who was killed in 1967 by the military of Bolivia while trying to foment revolution in the remote jungles. Guevara and Min were regarded as heroes by many Americans who protested the U. S. government's support of dictatorships in Latin America as well as the war in Vietnam.
327. Fiddling while Rome burns. An allusion to the emperor Claudius Caesar Nero (37-68 A.D.) whose behavior was so brutal that he murdered both his mother and one of his wives (Octavia). Rumor blamed him for the great fire of A.D. 64, which was said so to have inspired Nero's aesthetic impulses that he played his violin as he watched Rome go up in flames. Just before committing suicide, he declared, "What an artist the world is losing in me!"
330. Cotton Mather knee-britches. Mather (1663-1728) was the lineal descendant of the great Puritan theocrats Richard and Increase Mather; he served as pastor and influential writer in Boston, but played only a behind-the-scenes role in the Salem witch trials of 1692. Puritans pants stopped just below the knee, but here such britches serve decidedly non-Puritan purposes.
336. *Everybody's talking at me,
I can't hear a word they're saying,
Only the echoes of my mind.*
- These lyrics, written by Fred Neil and recorded most notably by Harry Nilsson, served as the theme music for the 1969 film, *Midnight Cowboy*, the only X-rated (now R-rated) movie to be given the Academy Award for Best Picture.
339. an agreeable H. G. Wells nineteenth century scientist type. Wells (1866-1946) was an immensely popular writer of science fiction whose *Outline of History* interpreted all of human history as a steady march of progress toward human self-mastery through "emergent evolution" and the abandonment of belief in God. His most famous novel is *The Time Machine*. Percy is suggesting, perhaps, that beneath the façade of "agreeableness" there lurks sinister danger, for Wells was also a strong advocate of eugenics, the science that would supposedly improve the human race by eliminating the "unfit," the retarded, perhaps even members of "inferior" races.
339. Rhett Butler and Scarlett [O'Hara]. The hero and heroine of *Gone with the Wind*.
341. Van Cliburn. An internationally known pianist from Kilgore, Texas, he won the Tchaikovsky competition in Moscow as a teenager in the 1950s and now sponsors his own internationally acclaimed piano competitions. He returned to the concert stage in the 1990s only to retire once more.
344. Abraham had several wives. Actually he had only one, his half-sister Sarah. When she proved barren, Sarah offered him her maid Hagar, and she bore their son Ishmael. More seeks to justify his own lechery on the grounds that the ancient Israelites practiced polygamy. In I Kings 11:3, for example, King Solomon, is described as having seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. He must have been a busy man.
347. "It's a matter of intention." Here More uses the term "intention" in its Catholic *ethical* sense: the free act of will whose desired aim or end determines, in part, the morality of an action.

347. the Vermeer look ... Dutch doors with the top open, everything light and airy, tile. Jan Vermeer (1623-75) was an eminent Dutch painter who caught subtle gradations of light in intimate interior settings. But it was Rembrandt who painted the famous “Girl at the Open Half-Door.”
348. Shaker tableware. Mother Ann Lee as an offshoot of the Quakers founded the Shakers in 1776; they took in orphans, practiced communal ownership of property, made elegantly simple furniture and practical goods, and observed strict celibacy. Their most famous hymn is “Tis a Gift to be Simple, Tis a Gift to Be Free.” Their last survivors died out only in recent years.
348. *There was a girl in Portland
Before the winter chill
We used to go a’courting
Along October hill.*
- From Rod McKuen’s poem “Love’s Been Good to Me,” also sung by Frank Sinatra.
358. Blow hot or cold. An allusion to the judgment pronounced on the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:14: “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth.” Percy regards tepid faith as one of the great evils of our time.
359. objective correlative. A technical term in literary criticism used by T. S. Eliot to designate those images and sounds which give outward embodiment to some inward emotional or spiritual state. Here it is used as another dodge-term to deny the frightening moral implications of the lapsometer.
361. into anaphylaxis again. Anaphylaxis is the reaction More experiences when he receives an injection for his allergies.
361. transubstantiation. The Roman Catholic belief that, in the Eucharist, the whole substance of the bread and wine are converted into the Body and Blood of Christ, so that only the “accidents” (the appearances) of the two elements remain. The notions of “substance” and “accident” derive from Aristotle and medieval metaphysics.
372. like a Scotsman’s sporran. A pouch or purse, usually made of skin with the hair left on and decorated with ornamental tassels, worn by Scottish Highlanders in front of the kilt.
373. she is protected by Invincible Ignorance. In Roman Catholic moral teaching, those who act in good conscience, unaware of the sinful nature of their deed—or else those children and mentally retarded adults who are constitutionally unable to comprehend the nature of sin—are regarded as immune from divine judgment. Here More wittily applies the term to a spiritually opaque adult, his own wife.
374. Lourdes. A French pilgrimage site where, in 1858, a 14-year old girl experienced visions of the Virgin Mary declaring that she had indeed been engendered by the Immaculate Conception—the doctrine that Mary was conceived without the taint of original sin. [It was not promulgated as official Catholic doctrine until 1854, having in earlier centuries been opposed by Thomas Aquinas among others.] A spring of water burst from the ground and miraculous healings were soon reported. The faithful have flocked there ever since, both in Marian devotion and in seeking cures for seemingly incurable ailments. Flannery O’Connor took the baths there only with great reluctance, declaring that the great miracle of Lourdes is that so little disease is communicated in its filthy waters and saying that she prayed more for her novel than her legs. “I’m the kind of Catholic,” she added, “who had rather die for his religion than take a bath for it.”
381. hoeing collards. The leafy Southern vegetable akin to turnip greens and mustard kale, but with larger and thicker leaves, and with a bitter taste beloved by blacks and whites alike.

381. charterhouse. The British term for a Carthusian monastery. The Carthusians are an order of hermit monks noted for their vow of silence and for other austerities of both body and soul. Many of the English charterhouses were later turned into Anglican secondary schools.
382. Velasquez's weaver girl. A well-known painting by the Spanish master who lived from 1599 to 1660.
382. Meg and Thomas More, Jr. Margaret was the faithful and devoted daughter of Sir/Saint Thomas More. She fetched her father's severed head from the Thames after it fell into the river off a pike, where it had been displayed for public ridicule after More's execution.
383. poor lonesome ghost locked in its own machinery. Another allusion to the Cartesian split between body and soul.
383. hate science, bomb laboratories, kill professors. The anti-Vietnam War movement was opposed to the so-called "military-industrial complex" because it was supported by scientific research at American universities. Campus ROTC chapters were often banned and, at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, a laboratory was bombed, killing several people.
387. *Rudolf Friml*. (December 7, 1879 - November 12, 1972) He was a composer of operettas, musicals and songs, as well as a pianist. Born in Prague, at that time part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and now capital of the Czech Republic, Friml showed aptitude for music at an early age. His abilities gained him acceptance into the Prague Conservatory where he studied music composition with Antonín Dvořák. He completed the six-year course in three years. While studying at the conservatory he began to compose light songs and airs. After graduation he took a position as accompanist to violinist Jan Kubelik. He toured with Kubelik twice in the United States and at the end of the second tour remained there to compose rather lush music often featured in Hollywood films of the 30s and 40s. He had made his American piano debut at Carnegie Hall in 1904 and premiered his *Piano Concerto in B-Major* in 1906 with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Walter Damrosch.
389. The *Anvil Chorus* is not from Tchaikovsky's musical fantasy *Romeo and Juliet* but from Verdi's opera *Il Trovatore*.
392. *mirlatons*. A vegetable pear whose vine grows so fast that you can almost literally SEE it growing. It will climb into the tallest of trees, like kudzu.
395. *Merry Longh6*. That Percy's rebel blacks have invented their own counter-Christian celebration is perhaps a prophetic anticipation of Kwaanza, the holiday invented by a California professor as an African-American substitute for Christmas.
396. Bessie Charles. A forerunner of Ella Fitzgerald and Della Reese, this black jazz singer also gave powerful renderings of Negro spirituals.
396. Catholics join in self-consciously and off key. Congregational singing was returned to Catholic worship only with the reforms of Vatican II, and thus it often seems awkward and unmusical. So awful were many of these liturgical innovations that Thomas Day was prompted to write a 1990 book entitled *Why Catholics Can't Sing: The Culture of Catholicism and the Triumph of Bad Taste*.
398. the outer circle of hell ... where these sad sins are punished. The vestibule of Dante's Hell is reserved for the neutral and indifferent, for those uncommitted souls who (rather like Tom More) have lived only for themselves, *sanza infamia e senza lodo*, without blame and without praise. They are unworthy to be included in Hell proper. Percy here suggests, together with T. S. Eliot and others, that most modern men and women are too small souled to commit sins egregious enough for real damnation.

398. ‘Oh, for heaven’s sake, are you here?’ Perhaps an allusion to Dante’s discovery, in Canto XV of the *Inferno*, that his old teacher Ser Brunetto Latini inhabits the circle of Hell reserved for sodomites. “Voi siete qui?” Dante politely asks him, “Are you here?”
399. John XXIV recently revived public penance. This mythical pope has inherited the moral and spiritual laxity resulting from the Second Vatican Council convoked by Pope John XXIII in 1962. His latter-day “successor” seeks to restore the religious rigor that Catholicism lost in the liberalizing reforms of Vatican II.
400. St. Aloysius Gonzaga. This patron saint of Catholic youth was a Jesuit who lived from 1568-91, dying at age 23 from his labors among the plague-stricken residents of Rome.
400. *scapulars*. Small strips of cloth resembling the cloak of a monk worn over the shoulders. They can mark one’s association with a particular religious order, or they can serve as the sign of individual piety. When officially bestowed, they grant the wearer certain privileges, including indulgences, but only if worn at all times.
400. “Hurrah for Jesus Christ! ... Hurrah for the United States!” At the end of Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*, the novel’s hero, Alyosha Karamazov, gathers a group of hell-bent boys whom he has sought to redeem. They are united at the grave of another boy whom they had once persecuted. The most vicious of these former hoodlums, Kolya Krassotkin, salutes Alyosha for enabling their victory over viciousness by crying out, “Hurrah for Karamazov.” For Percy the Catholic, religious and political affirmations are deeply linked.
401. SOUP. A take-off on POAU, the acronym for “Protestants and Other Americans United for the Separation of Church and State.” As its title made clear, Catholics were not welcome to this organization of the 1950s and 60s that sought to prevent public aid for parochial schools, the sending of an American ambassador to the Vatican, the election of a Catholic president, etc. It has been more ecumenically reconstituted as Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, and it has ties with the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and People for the American Way.
401. the same old funny fouled-up coalition. A reference to the awkward political alliance that once united Northern liberals and Southern conservatives within the Democratic party. Hence Percy’s conviction that diversity is admirable only when the diverse are joined in common and noble cause: John Kennedy, the Catholic senator from Massachusetts and later U.S. president; Medgar Evers, the martyred Negro dentist and Baptist NAACP leader from Mississippi; Arthur Goldberg, the Jewish Supreme Court justice from Chicago; Adlai Stevenson, the Unitarian governor of Illinois and twice (1952 and 1956) the Democratic “thinking man’s candidate” for the presidency; and L.Q.C. (Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus) Lamar, the enlightened 19th-century senator and Supreme Court justice from Mississippi. This coalition reflects Percy’s hope for a national recovery that will restore a wholeness that is both religious and political.
402. the *Salve Regina*. A Catholic hymn that begins *Salve, regina, and mater misericordiae*: “Hail, Queen, mother of Mercy.”
402. like Walter Huston. A movie director and actor who, in *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, dances a comical bow-legged jig when he and his fellow prospectors discover gold in California.