

**The Malaise of the Modern Self and the Search for Wholeness:  
A Review of Walker Percy's Fiction**

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...for the self that finds itself lost in the desert of theory and consumption, there is nothing to do but set out as a pilgrim in the desert in search of a sign.

—Walker Percy (“*Why Are You a Catholic?*”)

**Introduction**

Walker Percy is a twentieth-century writer who has diagnosed the sickness of the modern self. He not only recognizes the deep alienation and irony that plagues people in today's Western world, he also provides a meaningful answer that offers them wholeness in relation to themselves, to others and to God. Percy's work has proven highly relevant for a previous generation of readers, and remains important for readers today who have yet to encounter it. Through the following introduction to his fictional work, a sketch of the main contours and literary themes therein, the hope is that even more readers may be able to name the sickness of our time, discover themselves and perhaps meet God on the pages of these novels.<sup>1</sup>

Percy was born in Birmingham, Alabama, in 1916 and was orphaned by the age of sixteen. Taken in by an extended family member, Percy pursued a medical career that was cropped short when he contracted tuberculosis. He then turned to the writing life, married and settled in Covington, Louisiana, where he wrote his first published novel, *The Moviegoer*, which won the National Book Award in 1962. Throughout his writing career Percy penned numerous philosophical articles and non-fiction works, in addition to the five novels written after *The Moviegoer*: *The Last Gentleman* (1966), *Love in the Ruins* (1971), *Lancelot* (1977), *The Second Coming* (1980) and *The Thanatos Syndrome* (1987), the last one being published only three years prior to his death in 1990.<sup>2</sup>

Any reader of Percy's novels is immediately struck by the sheer weight he gives to what he terms “the *predicament* of modern man, afflicted as he is with feelings of uprootedness,

estrangement, anxiety, and the like.”<sup>3</sup> Given his penchant for existentialist philosophy, it is no surprise that in all of Percy’s fictional works his protagonists are afflicted with a deep “malaise” brought on by a disjunctive existence. For Percy, the malaise is a kind of living death that overshadows his characters; it is a deep fragmentation within the “self” which renders them exiles from both earth and heaven. As fully human subjects, they are marked by a longing, a *Sehnsucht*, for an undisclosed quarry: integration, wholeness, “at-home-ness” within their own selves and the world. For Percy it is in fact God who places this anxious longing within the human breast, and it is a desire that compels people to pilgrimage, to a search for meaningful existence apart from a “death dealing” culture that would anesthetize and finally abort the self.<sup>4</sup> Thus in all of Percy’s books the protagonist (male, often middle-aged) has at least a sense that something is wrong and so sets out on a search for a way out of this “death-in-life,” because where there is a sickness there must also be a source and a solution. In what follows, we will examine this malaise in more detail, identify how Percy diagnoses its peculiar twentieth-century shape and uncover his prescription for its cure.

### **The Source**

A fundamental and unspeakable longing is certainly not unique to the denizens of the twentieth-century; it is the common experience of humanity. For Percy, this longing is of divine origin, aimed at providing intimations of the sickness as well as the possibility for a cure. Yet this God-given longing can become twisted, malignant, filled with the content of the times in which people live. Percy sketches a vivid portrait of the particularly disturbing malaise and longing of this century, drawn as it is from what he calls “scientific humanism.” Thus in order to grasp the nature of the sickness as experienced in late modernity, we must grapple with its source, as the latter fuels the particular manifestations of the illness in the lives of Percy’s protagonists.

In the first place the modern malaise finds its source in the Enlightenment, which, in the words of Percy’s character, Dr. Tom More, has created a “dreaded chasm that has rent the soul of

Western man ever since the famous philosopher Descartes ripped body loose from mind and turned the very soul into a ghost that haunts its own house” (*Love in the Ruins* [LR], 181). Indeed for Percy, at the root of the twentieth-century malaise is humankind’s dependence on a strictly scientific worldview, the very heritage of Descartes. The average person in American society surrenders the self and knowledge of the self to “them,” the sovereign “experts,” who know better. In *The Thanatos Syndrome* (TS), Dr. More notes that his psychiatric patients are terrified of being “stuck with themselves,” unable to know who they are or what they should do: “They are frightened out of their wits that they are not doing what, according to experts, books, films, TV, they are supposed to be doing. They, the experts, know, don't they?” (TS, 88). For Percy, the surrender of self to “the experts” brings about a creeping anesthetization of the populace which earns the “Age of Enlightenment” a new title: “the Age of Not Knowing What to Do” (TS, 75). While people find they have every possible physical, social and technological desire met, they are also left dreamily oblivious:

After reading Stedman in the Bluebird and stepping out into the fragrant Florida sunshine and discussing current events with my knowledgeable, up-to-date neighbors, who even with their knowledgeability—unlike me they're up-to-date—still look fond and stunned even as they speak, I experience the sensation that the world really ended in 1916 and that we've been living in a dream ever since...

... We stand about in the Florida sunshine of Jack Rabbit Run, under the minaret of Cinderella's Castle, they fresh from the wonders of Tomorrowland—Tomorrowland!—We don't even know what Todayland is!—fond, talkative, informative, and stunned, knocked in the head, like dreamwalkers in a moonscape (TS, 339–340).

The concern over large-scale placidity is indeed a huge theme throughout Percy’s novels, yet his stories move forward on the basis of one who is awake, privy to the madness and in search of a way out. From the mouths of these alert, though malaise-ridden, protagonists, Percy levels his most scathing critiques of the sicknesses of our time. In *The Moviegoer* (MOV), Binx Bolling provides some telling reflections:

...[I have] inherited no more from my father than a good nose for merde, for every species of shit that flies—my only talent—smelling merde from every quarter, living in fact in the very century of merde, the great shithouse of scientific humanism where needs are satisfied,

everyone becomes anyone, a warm and creative person, and prospers like a dung beetle, and one hundred percent of people are humanists and ninety-eight percent believe in God, and men are dead, dead, dead; and the malaise has settled like a fall-out and what people really fear is not that the bomb will fall but that the bomb will not fall—on this my thirtieth birthday, I know nothing and there is nothing to do but fall prey to desire (*MOV*, 181).

In the age of scientific humanism, the self has been either lulled to sleep or lies awake in the mire of malaise, unable to relate in a holistic way to itself. Percy demonstrates throughout his novels what the result of this situation is, and thus we will look at the sickness itself and the symptoms evident in the lives of his main characters. Like Binx, these characters at least have the advantage of being *aware* of the world's absurdity, yet they struggle to find a way through it as they continue to “fall prey to desire.”

## **The Sickness**

### *Angelism-Beastialism*

Perhaps the most common symptom arising from the above situation is the splitting of the self between the poles of transcendence and immanence, which issues in such caustic behaviors entitled by Dr. More as “angelism” and “beastialism” (*LR*, 26). For Percy, human beings are at once transcendent and embodied creatures intended for self-integration, yet they often operate on one pole at the expense of the other, causing fundamental imbalance and “dis-integration.” To illustrate this, Percy involves his characters either in self-distancing abstractions, or in impulsive bodily lusts. For instance in *The Second Coming* (*SC*), Will Barrett entertains complex conspiracy theories about the Jews leaving North Carolina as a sign of the Last Days (*SC*, 14), rapturously rants about all the ways he will cheat death (*SC*, 271–74) and crawls into a cave on a gnostic quest to “prove” God's existence (*SC*, 221–25). Reveling in these rapid flights of intellectual gluttony, Will is largely caught on the pole of self-abstraction—angelism. On the other end of the spectrum is the beastialism exhibited by the women in *The Thanatos Syndrome*, who are sexually promiscuous and,

in the likeness of female primates, “present” themselves to men from behind in a kind of automated mating call (*TS*, 20).

However, far more common in Percy’s characters is the dysfunctional *misrelation* between transcendence and immanence. Dr. More explains: “The two conditions are not mutually exclusive. It is not uncommon nowadays to see patients suffering from angelism-beastialism. A man, for example, can feel at one and the same time extremely abstracted and inordinately lustful toward young lovely women who may be perfect strangers” (*LR*, 26). Ironically, Dr. More himself suffers from this condition. He refers to himself in hindsight (in *TS*) as a megalomaniac messiah entertaining complex theories about science and the world’s ruin (angelism), while also indulging in fantasies about motel encounters with three women (*LR*, 4) and habitually self-medicating with alcohol (22). The misrelation of self is also the case for Will Barrett in *The Last Gentleman (LG)*, who indulges in extreme self-abstraction as he theorizes about malignant particles settling over cities (*LG*, 44), yet at the same time spies on female strangers in the park with his telescope and finds that he is “in love at first sight and at a distance of two thousand feet” (*LG*, 14).

### *Evacuated Symbols*

A second symptom exhibited by the self caught in the twentieth-century malaise emerges in relation to linguistic symbols. For Percy, a uniquely human ability is the act of naming and signifying reality through the construction of symbolic worlds, within which fellow “symbol-monger[s]” can commune one with another and celebrate shared access to being. However, in the age of scientific humanism, words are evacuated of meaning and lose their signifying power as selfhood is surrendered to “the experts.” In addition, people who operate either in angelism or beastialism (or both), as we’ve examined above, are thoroughly cut off from authentic communion with self, others and thus God, and the sure symptomatic sign is the lack of meaningful symbolic language.

This lack of significant symbolic intersubjectivity is most evident in *The Thanatos Syndrome*. Dr. More examines his patients and finds they have lost their old phobias and maladies, only to gain a new form of sickness that is difficult to diagnose:

They are not hurting, they are not worrying the same old bone, but there is something missing, not merely the old terrors, but a sense in each of her—her what? her self? The main objective clue so far is language. Neither needs a context to talk or answer. They utter short two-word sentences. They remind me of the chimp Lana, who would happily answer any question any time with a sign or two to get a banana (*TS*, 21–22).

In this particular case the connection with the source-problem of scientific humanism is explicit. In *The Thanatos Syndrome* these patients are all “losing selfhood,” losing the capacity for linguistic signification and communion due to a sodium ion additive placed by “expert” scientists into the water supply in an attempt to “cure” the maladies of the human race. While people are no longer violent or depressed and possess an infallible memory, they are becoming primates.

#### *Dysfunctional Contentment*

One final symptom is related to the divided self, and it is the mysterious way that people in Percy’s books seem miserable in “good” environments and thrilled in bad ones. They also take secret delight in the misfortune of others and are genuinely put off when others are doing well. In an age of mass-anesthetization, the need for novelty and sardonic delight is heightened while the prospect of “living through an ordinary Wednesday morning” terrifies people (*LG*, 26). In *The Last Gentleman*, Will Barrett has noticed this tendency and resolves to amend it:

No more for him the old upside-down Manhattan monkey business of rejoicing in airplane crashes and staggering around museums half out of his head and falling upon girls in hurricanes. Henceforth, he resolved, he would do right, feel good when good was called for, bad when bad. He aimed to take Kitty to a proper dance, pay her court, not mess around.

Once they were outside in the storm however, he felt better despite himself, though he had sworn not to feel good in bad environments (*LG*, 138).

Another way Percy draws out this dysfunctional contentment is through addiction. His characters often crave the temporary escape their addictions bring them; they experience

“normalcy” only through the habits that sunder them even further from themselves and others. These are two representative cases of Percy’s use of the “good in bad environments” theme, and they serve to point out the magnitude of the self’s illness. However, he also uses such upside-down situations to bring genuine truth into the lives of his characters. Throughout the novels, such situations and events set the characters off on a search for a culprit and fuel a growing awareness of self and movement toward wholeness and God. Here we must turn to the unique way that Percy sets his characters on a pilgrimage, on a search to discover what has gone wrong.

## **The Search**

### *The Traumatic Catalyst*

Nearly all of Percy’s protagonists have some inkling of the malaise; they all experience a profound dissatisfaction with the “farcical” shape of life and the bland “everydayness” of the malaise (*SC*, 4; *MOV*, 118). Yet even as they experience the symptoms belonging to the divided self, they nonetheless experience an awakening: often a traumatic catalyst event jars them out of stasis and sets them on a wandering search. For Binx Bolling it is the memory of a clairvoyant moment in a Korean War ditch that keeps him going: “Everydayness is the enemy. No search is possible. Perhaps there was a time when everydayness was not too strong and one could break its grip by brute strength. Now nothing breaks it—but disaster. Only once in my life was the grip of everydayness broken: when I lay bleeding in a ditch” (*MOV*, 117–118). Lancelot Lamar, on the other hand, who reads Raymond Chandler novels repeatedly just to be able to swallow the blandness of his “moderate” life (*LAN*, 25), has a very abrupt awakening that sets him on the search:

How strange it is that a discovery like this, of evil, of a kinsman's dishonesty, a wife's infidelity, can shake you, knock you out of your rut, be the occasion of a new way of looking at things!

In the space of one evening I had made the two most important discoveries of my life, I discovered my wife's infidelity and five hours later I discovered my own life. I saw it and myself clearly for the first time (*LAN*, 53).

For others, these jarring events involve bizarre episodes of being shot at in the garage (*SC*, 17) or at the breakfast table (*LR*, 59). In all cases then, there is at least a partial exhilaration, a stirring up of things by one event or a series of events, that sets the characters on a search for the culprit and, whether consciously or not, for God and wholeness as well. For Percy, as noted above, this awakening work is not coincidental—it is often the divine means of drawing a person out onto the road.

### **The Solution**

Amidst the search and out on the road, Percy's characters receive clues not only of the scientific humanistic culprit, but also of the possibility for the fractured self to be made whole. The characters are not always conscious of this happening, but it happens to them nonetheless, often in the last places one might expect: mental hospitals, hospices, greenhouses and prisons. This is a point at which Percy puts his "good in bad environments" theme to a different use. While passing the time in places generally considered to be highly undesirable, Percy's characters discover incarnational gifts, linguistic-symbolic communion with others, and ultimately they discover God himself.<sup>5</sup>

### *Incarnational Gifts*

It is the very curse of angelism-beastialism which prevents Percy's characters from being truly integrated human beings. They spend all of their time either in abstractions or lusts and are thus unable to enjoy the present moment in a holistic way. In these situations, one balm administered by Percy consists of incarnational gifts, the salve of happenstance encounters, tasks or situations. The term "gifts" is appropriate because the characters themselves often (but not always) recognize the sheer *gratuity* of these happenings; incarnational gifts are often unrelated to the protagonists' merits or efforts in bringing them into a new reality of presentness, wholeness and



attentiveness to self, others and creation. These gifts might even be termed “sacramental signs”—insofar as these characters sometimes suspect the giver to be God—as they open up opportune moments for the efficacious influx of divine grace.<sup>6</sup>

Along these lines, Dr. Tom More reflects on his two-year prison sentence, which “restored” his humanity and his faith (*TS*, 81) through incarnate gifts:

Prison does wonders for megalomania. Instead of striking pacts with the Devil to save the world—yes, I was nuts—I spent two years driving a tractor pulling a gang mower over sunny fairways and at night chatting with my fellow con men and watching re-runs of *Barnaby Jones*.

Living a small life gave me leave to notice things—like certain off color spots in the St. Augustine grass which I correctly diagnosed as an early sign of chinch-bug infestation. Instead of saving the world, I saved the eighteen holes at Fort Pelham and felt surprisingly good about it (*TS*, 67).

In this case Dr. More simply experienced a physical task that curbed his habits of self-abstraction.

Here, as in so many of Percy’s incarnational moments of “gift,” grace comes to his character unannounced and arises from an unlikely source such as a prison sentence. In another reflection, Dr. More speaks of being gifted with attentiveness to the present:

I sit down. I am able to notice things, like a man just out of prison, which I am, and glad of it. I sit in a chair, feet on the floor, arms on the arms of the chair, and watch the reflection of the late-afternoon sun off the bayou. I had never noticed it before. It makes parabolas of light on the ceiling which move and intersect each other.

Here’s the mystery: Why does it take two years of prison for a man to be able to sit still, listen, notice his children, watch the sunlight on the ceiling? (*TS*, 43).

### *Linguistic-Symbolic Communion*

While a prison sentence affords a glimpse of restored humanness, a trip to the mental ward or insane asylum exposes this prospect to full view. Percy frequently uses situations within mental hospitals to depict the most human of relationships and events, and he does this in order to emphasize the “farcical” insanity of a modern age in which the crazy people are the most sane. In these asylums Percy taps into the significance of language, symbol and their relatedness to a

uniquely human mode of communion with self, others and God. In *Love in the Ruins*, Dr. More reflects on the wholeness and communion he experiences in the “madhouse”:

Here I spent the best months of my life. In a few days my high-lows leveled out, my depression-exaltation melded into a serene skimming watchfulness. My terror-rage—cowardly lion-heartedness and lionhearted cowardice—fused into a mild steady resolve. Here in the day room and in the ward we patients came to understand each other as only fellow exiles and prisoners can. Sane outside, can’t make head or tail of people. Mad inside, we signaled each other like auctioneers, a wink here, a wag of finger there. I listened and watched. Outside there is not time to listen (*LR*, 100).

### *God Hidden in the Other*

While the “sane” mental wards serve as a foil to the insanity of the modern world in general, one-on-one relationships offer a contrast to the fractured self in particular. In most of Percy’s novels the protagonist finds himself falling into love in a personal, incarnational and symbolically integrated way; this in contrast to the lustful bestialism and self-abstracting angelism of the divided self. However, these romances move Percy’s characters further than either mental wards or prisons. They comprise Percy’s chief tactic, in a strangely subtle way, of drawing his characters toward God. Lancelot Lamar alludes to the goodness of this incarnational gift and its power to integrate the self, though ironically, as an unbeliever, he is unaware of its true source:

Did I love her? Why are you asking about love? Isn’t your God’s love enough for you? Margot’s love was enough for me... There is no joy on this earth like falling in love with a woman and managing at the same time the trick of keeping just enough perspective to see her fall in love too, to see her begin to see you in a different way, to see her color change, eyes soften, her hand of itself reach for you. Your saints say, Yes but the love of God is even better, but Jesus how could this be so? Even if you are a believer as you are, tell me how this could be so? Well?... Doesn’t your own Jewish Bible say that there is nothing under the sun like the way of a man with a maid? (*LAN*, 129–130).

Lancelot is clearly “on to something,” and often that is as far as Percy takes his characters; they are surreptitiously moving, being moved. Only in his fifth novel, *The Second Coming* (*SC*), does Percy attempt to move beyond mere suggestion in order to tell a story that culminates in full symbolic-linguistic communion, and explicitly results in conversion to God. Will and Allie (*SC*) are

lovers who find in each other a shared symbolic world of meaning; they understand each other, lift each other up and are the incarnational gift of presence to one another. Will, who has been trying throughout the book to find a sure “sign” that can prove God’s existence, suddenly realizes that he’s been missing the singularly unambiguous sign God had dropped into his life. Throughout the novel Will is transformed from a malady-ridden, self-abstracting, solitary conspiracy theorist to a congruent self in relationship with another self; the two together experience a unique intersubjective communion that may be just the sign Will had been looking for. Yet it did not come to him through his superior intellect, complex theories or God-quest in a cave. It came, rather, as an incarnational gift; it came as a sacramental sign that would lead him into meaningful relationship with Another. He only fully recognizes this reality on the last page of the novel:

Will Barrett thought about Allie in her greenhouse, her wide gray eyes, her lean muscled boy’s arms, her strong quick hands. His heart leapt with a secret joy. What is it I want from her and him, he wondered, not only want but must have? Is she a gift and therefore a sign of a giver? Could it be that the Lord is here, masquerading behind this simple silly holy face? Am I crazy to want both, her and Him? No, not want, must have. And will have (*SC*, 360).

### **Conclusion**

With uncanny diagnostic precision, Walker Percy exposes the malaise of the modern self throughout his fictional work. Yet, though his insights ring compelling true, we must acknowledge that his critique of scientific humanism is hardly a new one; there are countless voices describing the maladies of this age. Perhaps, then, the greatest contribution Percy makes is twofold. First, he not only censures with language, he envelops the malaise in a narrative world. There are many critical voices, but few which can expose with the power of story and indirection; few which can map the ills of our time onto the life of a person with whom we can sigh, relate and discover new possibilities. Second, and perhaps most significant, is the fact that Percy does not stop with despair. With profound imagination he offers the reader a way forward, a path out of their “death-in-life” and into the promise of life amidst death. Through bizarre and powerful catalyst events, a realist

approach to the shades of human transformation and through the discovery of God in the gift of the other, Percy's fiction truly awakens his readers and invites them to embark on a search of their own.

In the words of Dr. Tom More, Percy reveals his own desire for those who encounter his fiction:

“Some day a man will walk into my office as ghost or beast or ghost-beast and walk out as a man, which is to say sovereign wanderer, lordly exile, worker, waiter and watcher” (*LR*, 360).

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<sup>1</sup> Please note my intentionally exclusive use of primary sources for this thematic piece, since it serves as a point of departure for a much deeper investigation in my forthcoming Th.M. Thesis, “At the Heart of Anthropology: Søren Kierkegaard and Walker Percy on the Nature and Shape of Creational Selfhood” (Vancouver B.C.: Regent College, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> Walker Percy, *The Moviegoer* (New York: Knopf, 1961; London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1963); *The Last Gentleman* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1966; London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1967); *Love in the Ruins: The Adventures of a Bad Catholic at a Time Near the End of the World* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1971; London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971); *Lancelot* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1977; London: Secker and Warburg, 1977); *The Second Coming* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1980); *The Thanatos Syndrome* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1987; London: Andre Deutsch, 1987).

<sup>3</sup> Judith Serebnick, “First Novelists,” interview in *Conversations with Walker Percy*, ed. Lewis A. Lawson and Victor A. Kramer (Jackson, MI: University of Mississippi Press, 1985), 3.

<sup>4</sup> Walker Percy, *The Message in the Bottle* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux: 1978), 140–149.

<sup>5</sup> Though a number of Percy's characters (especially Lance Lamar) do not overtly “find God” or consciously realize the incarnational gifts or possibility of linguistic communion that come their way, it is clear that through these things each of his characters are at least set on a pilgrimage that opens them to the possibility of the transcendent.

<sup>6</sup> For more on the way that such “sacramental signs” are understood in the Catholic Church (post Vatican II), see *Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Washington, D.C.: USCCB Publishing, 2006), 71 (#237). Here “sacramental signs” are said to be “made bearers” of Christ's “saving and sanctifying action.” Also see 68 (#224), where the sacraments are defined as “efficacious signs of grace perceptible to the senses.”

Walker Percy, a Southern author who wrote about modern man's search for faith and love in "The Moviegoer" and other novels, died yesterday at his home across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans. He would have been 75 years old on Monday. Mr. Percy, with compassion and without sentimentality or the mannerisms of the clinic, examines the delusions and hallucinations and the daydreams and the dreams that afflict those who abstain from the customary ways of making do." In the years that followed, various aspects of his writing won praise. Walker Percy's first novel remained the best-known of his six fiction and two nonfiction works. The Moviegoer, 1961. The Last Gentleman, 1966. Walker Percy "at once an heir of Southern Stoicism and also a Christian convert who rejected it" stands in a uniquely well-suited place to comment satirically and constructively upon the shortcomings of Southern culture. Raised by his Stoic uncle Will, a Southern aristocrat-planter, and converting later on to Catholicism and realizing his calling as a writer, Walker Percy offers in both his fiction and his nonfiction a well-informed historical, ethical, and theological perspective from both the Stoic and Christian traditions. In this thesis, I bring Percy's reflection from his essays and novels Percy and deep ecologists agree that we must search for a more authentic realization and appreciation of our place in the world. In Percy's terms, he eagerly gives up the "sovereignty" of the experience to an expert who may then return the experience as genuine (49). In The Moviegoer, Walker Percy offers another example of the artifice that is imposed upon a setting by historically and socially-imposed preformulations of place. Binx clearly exhibits the confusion, the alienation, and the malaise that Percy believes to plague society, and he struggles to distract himself through his pursuit of money, women, and place-- none of which will satisfy a search for greater self awareness. Percy presents Binx as an example of mankind's isolation from. 7. PDF | In this essay, Kip Kline and Kathleen Knight Abowitz use Walker Percy's novel The Moviegoer to examine the existential plight of young Americans | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate. Walker was a "nonpracticing physician. and self-taught philosopher in early middle age" at the time he wrote the novel, which deals with "the search for authenticity in a scripted, stylized, mediated. world." Of the novel, one critic has recently written "Through this. exploration, we argue that the idea of the malaise, a concept introduced by the. 10. Alan H. Goldman, Philosophy and the Novel (Oxford: Oxford Scholarship Online, 2013), 3, DOI:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199674459.001.0001.