

The Emergence of Walker Percy's Radical Anthropology

Kenneth Laine Ketner

In past years, while attempting to access everything Percy had published, I began to notice a nagging feeling that some important features of his general plan of research and writing were not yet mentioned in his publications. The factor appeared while reading across his novels, then intensified while assimilating his other works. All these writings were connected at some basic level, but what were these elusive unifying underlying features? A stroke of good fortune brought an opportunity to correspond¹ with him about our mutual interest in the research of Charles Peirce. Near the end of that process, the nagging feeling intensified as Percy began to mention a "book project" he was preparing, variously identified as *Contra Gentiles* or *Tertium Quid* or by way of a nameless conjunction of vague hints.

Then, recently, came an opportunity to participate with an editorial team to issue *Symbol and Existence: A Study in Meaning: Explorations of Human Nature*, by Walker Percy (*SE*) (Mercer UP, 2019). Percy wrote this book in the 1950s, but was refused by publishers, so it lay in waiting within Percy's *Nachlass* until finally appearing in 2019. Would that it had been published in 1960, for it contains the missing systematic interconnections and principles that unify the remainder of Percy's writings. (See the References section for a list of his works related to the unifying vista provided by *SE*.) Of Percy's output, *SE* is the most recent on the calendar, yet it is the first in terms of presuppositional order. Among these "new" systematic components in *SE*, one theme in particular is noteworthy. Therein Percy originated a general approach for the study of human nature that he designated "Radical Anthropology" (*RA*), radical in the sense of "well-rooted" or "well-founded," but not in the sense of "politically extreme" or "excessive."

A full summary here of that development is inappropriate because it is present within *SE*. Comments, however, on some features and their important relations to previous and current objective researchers, would be proper. Especially: What is different about *RA* that might be of interest, particularly for scholars of literature? Percy proposed that literary study could be objective, in the sense it could make observations, even develop experiments. This is in distinction to C. P. Snow's (1959) famous lament about a chasm between the humanities and the sciences. If Percy's point be conceded as worthy of consideration, what factors constitute its defense?

Here, we are in the zone of methodology. From that perspective, a *Basic Scientific Method* requires: (1) a community of *objective* persons who possess character traits rendering them capable of learning from experience about a common reality; (2) good communication practice therein that avoids ambiguities and promotes an agreed common terminology; (3) an openness to new sources for observational input; and (4) a willingness to look up from a familiar and comfortable project space to encounter the research of another objective colleague, perhaps even within another county on the disciplinary map of researchers—possession and use of interdisciplinary consciousness, in other words.

A pause for terminology clarification is in order. In *SE* Percy employs the word "objective" in at least two ways. First, it has a negative sense, meaning an over-reliant and confining usage that eliminates the possibility of a *Basic Science* study of the Arts and Humanities. This sense is parallel with the discussion of Scientism² below. A second sense is just the meanings associated with *Basic Science* as described above. That method can be pursued for any phenomenon or datum that is found within the realities such a community examines. Thus, we can summarize with this chart:

Objective Method

| | |
|--|--|
| Objective Method | |
| Sense One | Sense Two |
| | |
| "Objective" in the sense of <i>Scientism</i> | "Objective" in the sense of <i>Basic Science</i> |
| Too restrictive in terms of realities | Can study realities of any type, including relations |
| (limits admissible phenomena to matter and causation). | |

With this clarification we shall see that Percy's proposal for a Radical Anthropology amounts to a rejection of Scientism—"objective" sense one—and then an adoption of *Basic Science* ("objective" in sense two) plus an expanded account of reality to make possible *RA* within sense two.

Next is an extension of the foregoing, followed by examples that will illustrate some aspects of Percy's *RA* in use:

1. A Starting Point

Early in *SE*, Percy announced his hopes for *RA*.

A Radical Anthropology: The Objective [sense two] Science of Man as an Asserting Animal. The critical area of reality that cries out for study, therefore, is not the subhuman level where the method [scientism] works so well, or the superorganic level of culture, the activities of man considered in themselves, where the method [scientism] issues in an antinomy³—but man himself, the asserting animal. A radical anthropology must treat as its primary datum, not man as a responding organism—though this treatment is a legitimate science—but man as the organism that makes assertions, who makes a society and a culture possible. What is needed is an anthropology that will embrace man in his most universal

trait, not merely the totemist tribesman with his fetishes and magic but the scientist-observer as well with his hypotheses and verifications.

The science that is presently called anthropology is really culturology, an objective non-radical science mounted within the same framework as any other objective [sense one] science. The hypothesis that the culturologist induces from his survey of cultures is not meant to apply to him, the scientist. (*SE* 30)

Using the wider resources of *SE*, the following discussions will fill out a better understanding of the principal types and inter-relationships presupposed in the above comments about *RA*. Starting from Percy's beginnings in *SE* and later works, I aim to enhance and support his proposal for a paradigm shift in the scope that an objective science can encompass, a scope that also places arts and humanities within an objective, experimental science setting. The best strategy appears to be a comparative listing of components of the two candidates: (1) *Scientism* and (2) *Percy's Expanded Science* (within which *RA* is a component). In Percy's writings, those two versions compete for an account of Science-in-any-proper-sense; and we shall find that scientism loses the race.

Scientism

- a. By choice of researchers, the only real objects of study allowed are functional relations (dyadic relations), such as cause-effect or stimulus-response, plus application of those relations to existing material physical items in the context of instances within classes of items.
- b. The totality of real items consists exclusively of functional relations and/or material existents.
- c. Communication is understood as a functional (dyadic) activity.
- d. Scientism employs (but is not equivalent to) the *Basic Scientific Method*—to wit, results obtained through convergence via public and repeatable tests within a community of persons capable of learning about reality from experiments—but only as that applies to dyadic relations and material existents.
- e. This account of method and permissible objects of study is raised to the status of an all-encompassing worldview, with the following results.
- f. Scientists stand apart from their data (that which is studied), an attitude when in its fully functioning form constitutes an ideal that seeks a god's-eye view of reality.
- g. Arts and Humanities (*Kulturwissenschaften*/Cultural Sciences) are emotional expressions or entertainment activities that offer no factual truths or insights based in reality—those activities cannot be studied by *Basic Science*.
- h. Scientism has no resources for studying a human being as an individual—it only studies them as members of a class, as specimens.

- i. *Thus, there is no basis in scientism for a scientific study of Arts and Humanities; such activities are emotive or entertainment phenomena not accessible to study by a Basic Science Method. (Therefore, there is no Basic Scientific study of Arts and Humanities).*

Percy's *RA* within *Expanded Science*

- a. Scientifically supportable results of research conducted with the resources of Scientism are acceptable, but do not encompass all phenomena and results that can be studied using *Basic Scientific Method*
- b. Functional relations and material existents are real, but do not exhaust the totality of reality. If, after additional examination, one concludes that reality is composed of those items that are independent of biased or arbitrary personal factors such as desires or wishes, then in addition to material existents (*Existent Reals*) there will be another subclass of realities (not recognized by Scientism) that could be designated as *Non-Existent Reals*, that *can* be studied with *Basic Scientific Method*. Dyadic, triadic, quadradic (and so forth) relations are real and can be studied using *Basic Scientific Method*. A relation is a fact about some number of items. Thus a monadic relation is a fact about one item (example, a property of an item such as a blue bird); a dyadic relation is a fact about two items (example, Della hates chocolate); a triadic relation is a fact about three items (example, George agreed the physician's right to release medical information). Here "fact" means "a real (nonarbitrary) result of a proper test."
- c. Communication is not a dyadic process—instead, it is composed of various series (semeioses) of triadic relations, each involving an Object, a Representamen, and an Interpretant—basically the science of Semeiotic of Charles Peirce or of Semiotic as developed by Percy.⁴
- d. Arts and Humanities as well as the Natural Sciences are constituted by series of semeioses or other relational realities. That means that both areas *can* be studied with the *Basic Scientific Method* when a full account of reality is included along with a

- logic of relations incorporating dyadic *and* triadic relations plus an account of interpretation provided by the science of Semeiotic.
- e. *Basic Science* is not an all-encompassing worldview. It is a fallible and self-correcting process that can develop wider and well-grounded understandings of realities of all types, including relational realities.
 - f. Practitioners of *Basic Science* are not isolated or independent from their studies, and as such *their* activities and predilections can be studied with *Basic Scientific Method*. That method cannot attain a god's-eye understanding; it can only proceed with one predesignated research question at a time through a self-correcting cumulative yet fallible process.
 - g. After adjustment of the understanding of reality types to include both *existent* and *nonexistent reals* as found in *Kulturwissenschaften*, that area is also open to study by the *Basic Scientific Method*. Furthermore, opportunities for interdisciplinary science are now supported in an *Expanded Science*, in that Snow's Humanities/Science chasm is no more. Expanded Science make possible *Basic Science* research in *both Kulturwissenschaften and Naturwissenschaften* (natural sciences). (These Germanic terms are particularly appropriate because the word "Wissenschaften" basically describes *Basic Science/Expanded Science* as applicable to any form of reality.)
 - h. There are realities pertinent to individual human beings that can be studied through an *Expanded Science*.
 - i. Thus, there is a solid basis for *RA* as the *Basic Scientific* study of mankind as enabled through the features of *Expanded Science* (namely, basic science dealing with both existent reals and non-existent reals).

There remains one other pressing issue resting within Percy's description of *RA*: What are the details of the "asserting" concept? We find his understanding of it in his personal annotated copy of volume five of Peirce's *Collected Papers (CP)* wherein he heavily marked the following passage:

What is the nature of assertion? We have no magnifying glass that can enlarge its features, and render them more discernible; but in default of such an instrument we can select for examination a very formal assertion, the features of which have been rendered very prominent, in order to emphasize its solemnity. If a man desires to assert anything very solemnly, he takes such steps as will enable him to go before a magistrate or notary and take a binding oath to it. Taking an oath is not mainly an event of a setting forth, *Vorstellung*, or representing. The law, I believe, calls it an "act." At any rate, it would be followed by very real effects, in case the substance of what is asserted should be proved untrue. This ingredient, the assuming of responsibility, which is so prominent in solemn assertion, must be present in every genuine assertion. For clearly, every assertion involves an effort to make the intended interpreter believe what is asserted, to which end a reason for believing it must be furnished. But if a lie would not endanger the esteem in which the utterer was held, nor otherwise be apt to entail such real effects as he would avoid, the interpreter would have no reason for believing the assertion. Nobody takes any positive stock in those conventional utterances, such as "I am perfectly delighted to see you," upon whose falsehood no punishment at all is visited. At this point the reader should call to mind, or, if he does not know it, should make the observations requisite to convince himself, that even in solitary meditation every judgment is an effort to press home, on the self

of the immediate future, and of the general future, some truth. It is a genuine assertion, just as the vernacular phrase represents it; and solitary dialectic is still of the nature of dialogue. Consequently it must be equally true that here too there is contained an element of assuming responsibilities, of "taking the consequences."

...To this an eager adversary of pragmatism might make answer to the effect that if there be an assumption of responsibility in a judgment, it can only be in a ripe judgment.... But the reply will be that the answer quite mistakes the aim of the argument. For it is no pragmatic doctrine that responsibility attaches to a concept; but the argument is that the predication of a concept is capable of becoming the subject of responsibility, since it actually does become so in the act of asserting that predication.

Thereupon it follows that the concept has a capability of having a bearing upon conduct; and this fact will lend it intellectual purport. For it cannot be denied that one, at least, of the functions of intelligence is to adapt conduct to circumstances, so as to subserve desire. If the argument is correct, this applies to any conduct whatsoever, unless there be a concept that cannot be predicated. (*CP* 5.546 f. circa 1903)

It is important to note that an assertion is an act of an agent within a community of commonly shared interpretations. An assertion is not a material object, and since interpretation is involved, it is not a process involving only dyadic relations such as cause-effect or stimulus-response. Reality, other than only material reality, is also involved, because assertions have consequences and apply to the future: "Did Bob really assert *that*? Because if he did, he will go to jail."

2. Some Experiments in Radical Anthropology

On the basis of the foregoing overview, through the expanded resources featured in Percy's contra-Scientism, *RA* has access to *Basic Science Method*. Experimentation is a prime feature of *Basic Science*, so if that function can be realized in *RA*, we should find confirming instances of successful use of *RA* in the Cultural Sciences. Percy does find such realities and experimentation within Cultural Science via *RA*.

Case One: Helen Keller

One of his favorite examples, the "Helen Keller Phenomenon," will be taken as a relevant case study. Here is his description from *SE*.

When Miss Sullivan [Keller's instructor] ... tried to teach her pupil words by spelling them into her hand, she encountered a characteristic difficulty. Helen "learned" the ["word"] d-o-l-l quickly enough, but as a trick to show off to her mother—"I didn't know that I was spelling a word or even that words existed [were real]".... But the great moment did at last come. As ... water flowed over one hand Miss Sullivan spelled w-a-t-e-r into the other, first slowly, then rapidly. "I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought, and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that 'w-a-t-e-r' meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, ... set it free! (55)

The phenomenon that deeply interested Percy here is constituted by transition from Helen's initial state as contrasted with her later condition when she became aware of the *meaning* of w-a-t-e-r. Helen *learned* the meaning of w-a-t-e-r—not through conditioning—either through

Pavlov's classical form or B. F. Skinner's operant form—but by gaining understanding, which was a change initiated within Helen, an individual.

We note that prior to the "phenomenon" event, Helen was a creature of stimulus and response in the manner of Pavlov/Skinner. If she was provided a particular stimulus, then she would perform a particular action to which she had been conditioned, an action not backed up with any understanding, not a free self-initiated action. Percy compared this point in her life to the actions of Pavlov's dog that would—at the end of the experiment—salivate when stimulated by the sound of a bell. Initially, as Helen first experienced the finger-tappings that Miss Sullivan began to perform in her hand, they served as a stimulus that eventually could produce some definite fixed response from her. At that stage, Keller was functioning as a creature behaving according to dyadic relations, or functional relations, as Percy designated in *SE*. (Or he would comment that Helen was in an *environment* instead of a *world*.) Percy's scrutiny then focused on this question: What changed for her between the early stimulus-response (non-symbolic) modality and the later triadic meaning-events or semeioses?

To grasp her discovery of another aspect of reality, we need additional terminological efforts. A Symbolic Semeiosis (or Symbol) is one in which there is a triadic relation linking an Object, a Representamen, and an Interpretant, the latter being constituted by some habitual relation⁵ between the Object and Representamen. To clarify these terms, a Semeiosis is a process wherein an Object is Represented to an interpreting function (Interpretant). The Object is what the semeiosis is "about." Some aspect of the Object is represented by the Representamen to the Interpretant, which is a habit whereby the Representamen explains the Object. If one employs only the terminology of "signs," one risks confusion between two important different senses: "sign" as the representing aspect only, and "sign" as a name for the semeiosis

Object/Representamen/Interpretant triadic relation. To avoid that ambiguity, we employ "Representamen" for the representing sense of "sign" as a co-relate within a triadic semeiosis relation, and "Semeiosis" for the relational process sense of "sign" wherein a semeiosis is a triadic relation between three co-relates: Object, Representamen, and Interpretant. In effect, the "theory of signs" is better understood as semeiotic—the theory of semeioses⁶ instead of as the theory of representations (Representamens). The principal reason for this preference is that a Theory of Representamens tends to leave out the role of a logic of relations that is an essential component of a viable semeiotic, the study of triadic semeioses. There are four realities in a semeiosis: an Object, a Representamen, an Interpretant, and the triadic relation bringing those three into a single relational unit that requires a Logic of Relations for its study. So there are four real components in any semeiosis.

For example, in the United States, if a licensed driver comes to an intersection with a blinking red traffic light, by previously established community habit the driver *understands/interprets* that the meaning of the light is "stop, then proceed with caution." The Object is "stop at this blinking red light," the Representamen is "blinking red traffic light at this intersection," and the Interpretant is *understanding* that there is a cultural habit such that the Representamen *means* the Object. The Object/Representamen/Interpretant process is a tripartite relation which, according to the Logic of Relations, is not reducible to subsets consisting exclusively of dyadic relations.⁷ The result that a genuine triadic relation cannot be composed (compounded, constructed) exclusively from only dyadic relational resources has come to be known as the "Peirce-Percy Principle" or Peirce's NonReductionTheorem (NRT).

In this episode, Helen transitioned from state (I), consciousness composed of stimulus/response dyadic temporal sequences, to state (II), a consciousness that also included

acquisition of the triadic Symbol with its important community-shared Interpretant habit. While in state (I), she perceived hand-tapping for w-a-t-e-r, and over a period of time, she experienced water flowing over her other hand. They are just two temporally-related but otherwise distinct experiences. *Somehow*, with Miss Sullivan's assistance, she moved from state (I) to state (II) wherein she gained an understanding, by way of comprehending the habit that a particular finger-tapping means (symbolizes) the flowing water. Thus, she transitioned from a *stimulus/response* environment into a world of *semeioses*. After her initial understanding of a symbolic semeiosis, she quickly became capable of comprehending additional semeiosis types such as Indexes and Icons, plus various other types not mentioned here. In an Iconic Semeiosis, the Representamen (sign) is related to the Object by means of a shared Interpretant habit consisting of similarity or analogy. Within an Indexical Semeiosis, the Representamen (narrow sense of "sign") is related to the Object by understanding of a shared governing Interpretant habit consisting of a generalized cause-and-effect relation. Other semeiosis types are possible, but not mentioned here. Percy described Helen's insight under the heading of *naming*: finger-tapping w-a-t-e-r names actual water. But readers of *SE* will quickly observe that Percy regarded *naming* as an important sub-type of *Symbolical Semeiosis Processes*.

As a side note, I suspect one reason Percy was impressed by these events is that Keller's account reveals a change within an individual's understanding through interpretation rather than a controlled causation of a class of beings, one of which is this particular individual. One could describe external causal control as a loss of sovereignty, whereas in this event Helen acquired (or perhaps re-activated) sovereignty through triadic semeiosis that includes interpreting. Oppose this to Pavlov's recently conditioned dog that, after conditioning, can now be *controlled* in a new way *by Pavlov* (not by the dog). If Pavlov wants the dog to salivate, he sounds the bell. Other

equivalently conditioned dogs, as good specimens of the class, can similarly be controlled. So, Pavlov would have had means to establish a "Dog Saliva Factory," by obtaining a herd of dogs conditioned to salivate into a communal collection trough when a big bell was sounded. The dog, like Helen in state (I), understands nothing more in the post-conditioning state; indeed, dogs or children, after conditioning, can be more readily controlled by others. Conditioning *is not learning*, for the individual being conditioned, and the processes of Helen's state (II) are *not control* (not conditioning) but constitute *learning*. Indeed, by reviewing this "experiment," Percy made a point!

Students of Percy's writing will acknowledge that he was an opponent of *Nominalism* who argued for *Realism*. Helen's transition to symbols provides additional means for grasping that important distinction. As a stimulus/response creature in stage (I) Helen was only remembering *past* occasions of finger-tapping and flowing water. Such is nominalism: one remembers the limited list of past events of that sort, but that is the end of it. It is in the past. When stage (II) arrived, and the Interpretant habit shared with Sullivan enabled "w-a-t-e-r means water" was somehow acquired, the past was still as remembered, but the future became available, because (as Peirce had demonstrated) the Symbol Interpretant habit is *general*—that is, it will govern as yet unrealized future identical finger-tappings among persons who share in common the appropriate Symbolic Interpretant habit. Thereby, with this symbol acquisition, Helen's future actions and *expectations* concerning water became predictable and communicable. Anticipation and planning—and eventually self-control—also became possible for her. Now Helen could assert, to another human being in need of water, that water is available at a particular place. Moreover, she guessed (performed an Abduction inference, as Peirce analyzed it) that there might be other symbols. That guessing operation quickly produced a hypothesis that

she and Miss Sullivan soon confirmed by getting many other symbols. And, for a bonus, Helen also learned that the two of them *together*, or even with other persons or other agencies, in the *future*, could *expect* water, *ask* for water, *swim* in water, *drink* water, *get* water for the dog, *give* another person a drink of water, *irrigate* water for drying crops, *learn* about water as H₂O, and so on. Thus did Helen transition from being controlled within a stimulus/response closed *environment* to self-control in an open *world* of inter-related semeioses. In state (I) Helen was probably close to philosophical solipsism, which is a condition of entrapment within a closed pseudo-self, whereas in stage (II) she entered a world of dialogue between responsible, sovereign persons. In *SE* Percy liked to describe that condition as *co-celebration*.

Perhaps we now have sufficient tools to begin to unpack the "*Somehow*" of Helen's transition as mentioned above. Her recent memories of Sullivan's efforts lead to a questioning moment within her consciousness. She guessed (performed an Abductive inference) that w-a-t-e-r applied to *both past* experiences of the fluid *as well as* to possible similar *future* fluid experiences. So, her hypothesis would be that the finger-tappings also apply to the future experiences of fluid water. Because of the experience of tappings with such a fluid, along with continuity of experience, a quick experiment occurred that confirmed that hypothesis. This confirmation created the new Interpretant habit that covers the past as well as the future, both for her and the shared co-interpreter. With that Interpretant comes a new understanding/learning about w-a-t-e-r and meaning. Helen has *learned* within her individual consciousness, an event that concomitantly yields expectation/understanding/control of self/communication. Here individuals as such are involved, but in a wider social/communicative context. The fact that *RA* takes note of individuals does not eliminate interpersonal or social factors. Semeiosis (genuine communication) essentially incorporates both social and individual components.

This business about the Interpretant aspect of Symbolical Semeioses being a cultural or conventional habit is a superbly excellent item. A newborn child has few of them, but possesses a strong ability to learn [millions of] them. Within this setting, we could reflect on enculturation, socialization, schooling, indoctrination, or similar processes.

I suspect one reason Percy was impressed by these events is that Keller's account reads like a laboratory report about a successful experiment in Radical Anthropology wherein one can understand Helen's transition into a new world that is not at all comprehensible with the tools and techniques of Scientism.

If *RA* is a more comprehensive anthropology, it should include ways of understanding the nature and processes of novel-writing, poeticizing, essay composition—in short, literature. Percy proposed, in *SE*, to show that his Radical Anthropology would indeed be able to study literature by means of *Basic Science* (science considered broadly, along the lines of an objective *Kulturwissenschaft*⁸) that admits and can deal with expanded realities.

Case Two: Novel Writing

What are the details of a Radical Anthropological research project on literature? To that purpose, consider a dialogue between two persons (*Percy* and *Reader*) along the following lines. (Remembering Percy's novel, *The Second Coming*, is the context underlying this mini-drama.)

Percy: I have been imagining a person (*Will*) so trapped within himself that he has poor social relations and a troubled life. (Many other imagined details about *Will* are elaborated by *Percy*). Also, I imagine another person (*Allie*) who, by some inappropriate medical procedures, has been almost reduced to the condition of being a non-person, but who (like a little child) still has the courage and capacity to learn (recover) a full personhood, and has resolved to do so. Then I have considered,

within my imagination, what would happen if such rather polar opposites were to meet, converse, interact.

Reader: I am attracted to the possibility. How would they get along? It is a tantalizing issue. Could you describe your imagination for me? Writing it out would give me access.

Percy: Very well. I will do that and send you a copy.

[time passes]

Reader: I read your account. While doing so, I recognized that similarities within the imagined actions of your characters correspond (analogically) to some previous factors that have concerned me about my situation in life. The recognition was a helpful life-changing experience for me. As an individual—not as a specimen—I learned from that.

Here some broadly scientific aspects (in the frame of Radical Anthropology) of novel-writing and novel-reading are displayed. **Percy** is manufacturing some imaginary “habits” as Interpretants to create symbols for cooperative readers. **Reader** is receptively accepting, for the moment, those Interpretants/habits/symbols and working through **Percy's** imaginings and eventually comparing them analogically (structurally) with **Reader's** own prior set of cultural and personal Interpretants/habits/symbols. From that process, **Reader** discerns a component missing (or inappropriately present) in **Reader's** personal *system* (world) of habits, but it is present (or inappropriately absent) in what **Percy** described of his imagination. **Reader** then considers how adapting the analogous element from **Percy's** imaginings to **Reader's** personhood might function—would it produce a personal improvement or the opposite?

Reader's exploration of the analogies between *Percy's* imagined world and *Reader's* own world is a fine example of Iconic Semeiosis. The Interpretant of an Icon is an understood general relation of analogy or similarity between Object and Representamen. This kind of thought-experiment suggests that Percy's hypothesis can indeed show that literature is objectively encompassed within a science of Radical Anthropology as a sub-set of *Basic Science*. (Isn't this to propose that for a properly receptive and thoughtful individual reader, a proper kind of literature can operate as a component of a virtual lapsometer as in his third novel *Love in the Ruins*?)

So maybe Percy's novels are experiments in Radical Anthropology. Yet there is a big *HOWEVER*—Percy is not experimenting *on* the reader, as Pavlov experimented *on* gaining control of his unwitting dog or as Helen's family might have experimented *on* her, prior to her break-through, the better to control her "difficult" activities. (Prior to Miss Sullivan's arrival, some members of the family thought Helen would not be capable of rising above the level of a pet dog.)

No, a novel *sets* the experiment. The experimenter *is the reader*—an individual—who explores the semeioses between the world of the novel and the prior world of the reader. This factor might explain why it is often said that a work is genuine literature if, after seriously reading it, the reader—that *particular* person—becomes a different person.

Note also this important difference between (a) classical and/or operant conditioning versus (b) understanding within the context of novels. Conditioning produces, from the standpoint of a controller, a predictable same response for any specimen within the class of individuals that have been conditioned in a particular manner. After a proper reading of a novel, the content of a reader's improved personal self-understanding may differ from that of another

such reader; however, the processes each navigated will be similar or analogous from a methodological perspective, and those real processes can be objectively comprehended using *Basic Science*. One consequence of the additional triadic feature of interpretation being involved (as compared to the case of dyadic conditioning) is that there is no specific outcome for any given genuine reader of a novel. There can be differences or similarities in reader "outcome," because each individual as an interpreter, may not have the exact same resources for interpretation as another reader. No such differences are seen in conditioning. As we know, readers may engage in further fruitful dialogue about their interpretations, a process that often leads to additional individual interpretations. Within the bounds of scientism, interpretation in the triadic sense is not possible, simply because practitioners have *chosen* to avoid it; within that worldview an interpretation is something like a personal preference. Here one remembers the proverbial expression that "Hammers see only nails, so for such, a loaf of bread would be a terrible nail."

Yet we clearly note that in an expanded science, interpretation in a semeiosis within a *Basic Science* context can indeed lead to grasping communal non-arbitrary realities.

I venture that in *SE*—and his other writings—Percy, aided by the tools provided by Peirce's semeiotic, the objective study of semeioses, with help from the logic of relations, is finger-tapping *our* hands hoping that we will realize the fruitful potentialities of an expanded, more fundamental, yet still *Basically Scientific* Radical Anthropology.

ENDNOTES

1. This correspondence is published in *A Thief of Peirce*.
2. See also, Ketner, "Rescuing Science from Scientism."
3. "Culture: The Antinomy of the Scientific Method" in *The Message in The Bottle*

4. See Savan, *Peirce's Semiotic*; also *ISP* "Biology of Mind."
5. On the useful concept of "habit," see *ISP*, "Biology of Mind," 17-57. Smolin, *Time Reborn* (at 147) shows the usefulness of habit terminology in physics.
6. "Peirce's General Theory of Signs," in Fisch, *Peirce, Semeiotic, and Pragmatism*.
7. See *Thief of Peirce* and *SE*. Note also *ISP*, "Peirce's NonReduction and Relational Completeness Claims."
8. Bisanz, "Peirce's Semeiotic." See also Cassirer, *Logic*. It is interesting that the original title of this volume was *Zur Logik Der Kulturwissenschaften: fünf Studien*. Krois, *Cassirer* provides a fine overview.

Works Cited and Works Consulted

While Radical Anthropology as a working hypothesis for a basic scientific study of human nature, indeed, is Percy's creation in *SE*, there are, to be sure, earlier relatives of the new birth. Some of those works are listed here, marked with " * " with a few comments to indicate relationships that provide context for the development of Radical Anthropology.

*Austin, J. L. *How to Do Things with Words*. Oxford University Press, 1962.

An early classic of speech act theory that a colleague recommended to Percy.

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*Brock, Jarrett. "Peirce's Theory of Speech Acts." *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, volume 17, number 4, 1981: 319-326).

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*Collins, James. *The Existentialists: A Critical Study*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company. Percy's principal reference on the existentialists. 1952.

*Howland, Mary Deems. 1990. *The Gift of the Other: Gabriel Marcel's Concept of Intersubjectivity in Walker Percy's Novels*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press. Marcel was a major influence on Percy within *SE* and later. This volume provides an excellent account of the connection between the two scholars.

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*Krois, John Michael. *Cassirer: Symbolic Forms and History*. Yale University Press: New Haven. 1987.

An excellent overview of Cassirer.

*Landmann, Michael. *Philosophical Anthropology*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. 1974. A fine introduction to the European Philosophical Anthropology tradition that bears relation to the foundations of Radical Anthropology.

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*Other Percy works related to *RA*.

Various essays that followed *SE* were evolved from it, and these are further elaboration of details of *RA*.

The Message in the Bottle (1975) [especially: "The Delta Factor," "The Mystery of Language," "Toward a Triadic Theory of Meaning," "The Symbolic Structure of Interpersonal Process," "Culture: The Antinomy of the Scientific Method," "A Theory of Language"].

Lost in the Cosmos (1983) [The center section on semiotic further evolves *RA*.]

*Poinot, John (John of Saint Thomas). 1632. *Tractus de Signis: The Semiotic of John Poinot*. University of California Press. 1985.

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*Patrick Samway S.J. (Editor). *A Thief of Peirce*. University Press of Mississippi. 1995.

Covers many issues relevant to Percy's connection to Peirce.

*Savan, David. *An Introduction to C. S. Peirce's Full System of Semiotic*. The Semiotic Circle, Victoria College in the University of Toronto. 1988.

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*Searle, John R. *Speech Acts*. Cambridge University Press. 1969.

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A leading contemporary theoretical physicist employs Peirce's habit terminology within *Naturwissenschaften*.

Snow, Charles Percy. *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. Cambridge University Press. 1959.

*Veatch. *Intentional Logic*. Yale University Press. . 1952.

Percy was heavily influenced by Veatch's work, especially concerning the relation of "quasi-identity" as found in *SE*.