

が二人連れ立っているのを見た記憶はあるだろうか。街角、アイスクリーム屋、映画館などで。一度もないはずだ。

あるときハリエットにそう言ったら、馬鹿らしいと言われた。人が私たちを見たことがないのは、あそこ私たちが家から出られなかったからよ。ポーチから降りられなかったり、歩道の縁や階段を上げられなかったりしたから。それだけ。

「並んでいるところを見たことがない？」そう言ってハリエットは笑った。「私たち自体、見たことがないのよ。見ようにも、いなかったんだもの」

これは作品終盤からの引用（拙訳）である。この時点で、「ポリオ」という言葉はまだ使われていない。語り手が病気になり、それが夏に特に恐れられていた病気で、湖やビーチと関わりがあるとされていたこと、ワクチンが開発されて病気がたちまち消えてなくなったように見えたことは記されているが（ただし「ソーク」という名は出てこない）、「ポリオ」という言葉は一度も使われていない。

この作品に「ポリオ」という言葉は三度しか使われていない。作品のほぼ終わり近く、1980年の夏にハリエットの家を語り手が訪ね、二人で過ごす夜にハリエットが三回言うのだ。それは、自分たちがこれからなるかもしれないポストポリオ症候群というものについて医師から聞いた、と語り手に説明するときのことだ。そこまでは、かつて夏に子どもを大勢襲い、1959年の夏にティーンエイジャーだった二人を襲った病は、文章のなかで前面に出ることとはなく、言葉にされないまま、静かに存在しているのである。

\*クロウリーの作品のタイトルは、1959年にハリエットが図書館で借りる、メアリ・カウデン・クラーク(Mary Cowden Clarke, 1809-98)の著書『シェイクスピアのヒロインたちの少女時代』(*The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Heroines*, 1850年から1852年にかけて3巻を刊行)からとられている。

## Living in the Shocking Moments: Hazel Motes in Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood*<sup>i</sup>

KUBO Naomi

### Characteristics of Flannery O'Connor's Novels

In her short stories and novels, Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964) describes people in the modern secularized world, where “the mysteries of life will eventually fall before the mind of man.”<sup>ii</sup> As a Catholic novelist, in spite of her ultimate intention to “write about a man’s encounter with this God” and to indicate the “sense of Mystery” in her work, she faces the fact that her unbelieving and indifferent characters live far from encountering with God (*MM* 160, 153). In O'Connor’s works people must take at least two steps before accepting this encounter: first they need to detect the possible existence of mysteries, noticing their own state of unbelief, and second they need to believe in the existence of mysteries even if they cannot physically see them, overcoming their urge to disbelieve. While O'Connor’s short stories focus on the first initiation, her novels render the struggle in the second stage.

What the reader repeatedly finds in the last scenes of O'Connor’s short stories is the possibility of encountering the Other, something beyond one’s understanding.<sup>iii</sup> The narrator tries to render the moments in which the characters seem to be experiencing something incomprehensible.<sup>iv</sup> This experience violently breaks their comfortable views of the world, which physically causes their eyesight to waver; spiritually this seems to create something extremely shocking in their minds. But the reader cannot know exactly what is happening in their minds. Many stories close without any revealing explanation by the narrator. Although religious connotations are sometimes implied in these scenes, it is not explicit whether the characters’ shocking experiences lead their eyes toward the ultimate Other, God, or not.

In her novels, O'Connor describes characters suspended in the state after the initial shock: Hazel Motes in *Wise Blood* (1952) and Francis Marion Tarwater in *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960) are both suspended between doubt about and belief in the spiritual world, haunted by the possibility of the existence of the ultimate Other. As if living in the shocking moments, they desperately try to get rid of the possibility. In this paper I would like to examine *Wise Blood*.

First, I will discuss the hardship which the protagonist undergoes because of his spiritual confusion. Second, I will focus on the narrative structure of the novel and the behavior of the narrator, underscoring how O'Connor's first novel is related to her short stories in terms of her narrative strategy in rendering the "sense of Mystery" (*MM* 153).

## **Vestige of the Other: "The Nameless Unplaced Guilt"**

*Wise Blood* is a novel about Hazel Motes, who lives in the wavering perspective, unsuccessfully struggling to justify his dis/unbelief. From the beginning of the novel, Hazel clearly lacks a stable clichéd understanding of the world. This is because he is already in the state of the wavering, disbelief or unbelief, a state where many of the characters end up by the stories' conclusions. Hazel Motes does not see the world as other secular people do; in this he resembles the Misfit in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (1953). The conversations between Hazel and other characters are always abrupt, tense, and one-sided like those between the Misfit and the grandmother. *Wise Blood* opens with a light conversation between Hazel and Mrs. Hitchcock, who sits in front of him on a train. When she complacently talks on and on about her family, he suddenly interrupts, saying, "I reckon you think you been redeemed."<sup>v</sup> Mrs. Hitchcock then makes a clichéd riposte, "yes, life [is] an inspiration" (*WB* 14). As the Misfit makes unilateral statements to the grandmother about Jesus, Hazel remarks about Redemption to Mrs. Hitchcock out of context. In both cases, they talk past each other. Also, Hazel oddly declares his disbelief in Jesus to invite a conversation with a woman who happens to share the table with him in the dining car. "If you've been redeemed," he says to her all of a sudden, "I wouldn't want to be" (*WB* 16). Then he breathlessly continues, "Do you think I believe in Jesus?" and "Well I wouldn't even if He existed. Even if He was on this train" (*WB* 16). In response to his remarks, the woman curtly says, "Who said you had to?" (*WB* 16). These conversations reveal that Hazel's concern is exclusively about Jesus while the other characters seem to be indifferent to the issue, like most characters in short stories.

The way of seeing is a crucial indicator of the characters' mindset in O'Connor's short stories.<sup>vi</sup> When the characters' eyes function differently, the change can be considered as the reflection of the change in their mind. However, Hazel does not see the things in the way he is supposed to see in the first place. When a policeman questions him about crossing a street against the light, he answers, "I didn't see it" (*WB* 45). When Enoch Emery, who tries to make friends with Hazel, takes him to a zoo, he is "not looking at the animals" (*WB* 94). When Sabbath Lily Hawks, who annoyingly hangs around him, tries to get his attention by showing

her legs, he “[doesn’t] look at her feet” (*WB* 122). However, Hazel does not intentionally look away from these things. His eyes seem to be searching for something else beyond the material world. When Sabbath points out that “[Hazel’s eyes] don’t look like they see what he’s looking at but they keep on looking” (*WB* 109), her remark is pertinent. Through his unusual way of seeing Hazel still tries to see something.

As the opening conversations exhibit, from the beginning of the novel, it seems to be apparent that Hazel is different from other characters in terms of religious concern. Although his approach to the issue later takes various forms, such as concluding that he has no soul, preaching “Church Without Christ,” and insisting to have “a new Jesus” for his church, all of his attempts derive from a strong aversion to facing and accepting the ultimate Other. I would like to identify the core of his concerns, especially about the existence of Jesus, in his childhood experience: his mother and his grandfather force him to face his dis/unbelief in Jesus.

The first crucial incident in Hazel’s upbringing happens when he is ten years old. His mother inscribes a sense of unconditional guilt on him. One day, he gets into a carnival tent of the “SINsational” show, where he sees a naked woman lying in a casket-like box but does not seem to understand the meaning (*WB* 60). After he comes home, his mother senses his guilty behavior, and closely questions him. First, she asks, “What you seen?” three times (*WB* 63). Then she hits him with a stick in her hand:

She hit him across the legs with the stick, but he was like part of the tree. “Jesus died to redeem you,” she said.

“I never ast him,” he muttered.

She didn’t hit him again but she stood looking at him, shut-mouthed, and he forgot the guilt of the tent for the nameless unplaced guilt that was in him. (*WB* 63)

As we can see in this quotation, while Hazel cannot answer his mother’s question, perhaps not knowing the exact implication of her reproach, she declares that he has been redeemed by the death of Jesus. Marshall Bruce Genrty suggests that “his mother taught Hazel to associate sin with sex” (126). However, what I would like to pay particular attention to here is that he replaces “the guilt of the tent,” which can be considered as guilt in our daily life, with “the nameless unplaced guilt that was in him,” which can refer to original sin. His curt remark, “I never ast him,” reveals Hazel’s frustration about being indebted and even being redeemed outside of his own intention. The crucifixion of Jesus supposedly took place in advance of any sin Hazel may have committed, even before he was born. His “guilt” is “nameless” and

“unplaced” because there is no way to *know* its origin unless he *believes* in Jesus as the redeemer of original sin.

In spite of his insolent retort of “I never ast him” and the “nameless”-ness and “unplace”-ness of the guilt, Hazel’s mother’s strong assertion so deeply inscribes the possibility of his having been redeemed in Jesus that Hazel cannot but try to pay his debt. On the next day of the “SINsational” show, he puts stones and small rocks in his shoes and walks on them “to satisfy Him” (*WB* 63-64). His attempt to repay ends in one of the crucial anti-climaxes in this novel in which “nothing” happens:

The next day he took his shoes in secret out into the woods. . . . He took them out of the box and filled the bottoms of them with stones and small rocks and then he put them on. He laced them up tight and walked in them through the woods for what he knew to be a mile, until he came to a creek, and then he sat down and took them off and eased his feet in the wet sand. He thought, that ought to satisfy Him. Nothing happened. If a stone had fallen he would have taken it as a sign. (*WB* 63-64)

This passage reveals Hazel’s serious and uncompromising nature. He tries to take responsibility of discharging the debt in his own way. However, his expectation that something will happen as a sign of His satisfaction, which can also be proof of His existence, is not fulfilled. In other words, in Hazel’s eyes, or in the frame where he prepares for something to happen, nothing happens. What Hazel sees here, however, is not nothingness but rather an absence of a sign. He sees the emptiness with which he is afflicted throughout the novel. Another point which we should pay attention to in this quotation is that what Hazel wants to take “as a sign” is not something internal but external, such as a falling stone which he can see with his eyes. He needs to see to be convinced.

Hazel’s grandfather is the other person who implants Hazel’s sinfulness and the fearfulness of Jesus deeply in his mind. His grandfather, who is “a circuit preacher, a waspish old man who had ridden over three counties with Jesus hidden in his head like a stinger,” tells Hazel about how Jesus is inescapable, employing the expression “the waters of sin” as a metaphor (*WB* 20). During that sermon, his grandfather vehemently preaches about the crucifixion of Jesus, repeatedly pointing to Hazel as an example of a sinful human being:

Did they know that even for that boy there, for that mean sinful unthinking boy standing there with his dirty hands clenching and unclenching at his sides, Jesus would die ten million deaths before He would let him lose his soul? He would chase him over the waters of sin! . . . That boy

had been redeemed and Jesus wasn't going to leave him ever. Jesus would never let him forget he was redeemed. . . . Jesus would have him in the end! (*WB* 22)

The terrifying image of Jesus who “would chase him” and “would have him in the end” paints Jesus as a relentless pursuer to be avoided. It is also obvious that the images of water and sin become connected in Hazel’s mind through this discourse.

Although Hazel cannot find any evidence to confirm either the existence or the inexistence of Jesus, by the time he is twelve years old, he has “a deep black wordless conviction in him that the way to avoid Jesus was to avoid sin” (*WB* 22). This seemingly confusing formula is consistent when we read his image of Jesus entrenched “in the back of his mind”: “a wild ragged figure motioning him to turn around and come off into the dark where he was not sure of his footing, where he might be walking on the water and not know it and then suddenly know it and drown” (*WB* 22). When we think of the “waters of sin” in his grandfather’s sermon, this ominous image can be read as the core of his fear. Once he “turn[s] around” to follow the figure, he would drown into the “waters of sin.” For Hazel, admitting his own sinfulness means that he has been indebted and will ever be indebted to Jesus, and that he should pay his debt without seeing any sign of His satisfaction as he learned at the creek when he was ten years old. Hazel’s formula, “the way to avoid Jesus was to avoid sin,” means that admitting his sinfulness entails the existence of Jesus, and vice versa.

Hazel’s original plan for avoiding sin and Jesus was to become a preacher in his hometown Eastrod. The narrator describes Hazel’s desire of staying at home, where he can be surrounded by his familiar things: “Where [Hazel] wanted to stay was in Eastrod with his two eyes open, and his hands always handling the familiar thing, his feet on the known track, and his tongue not too loose” (*WB* 22). His adherence to his hometown inversely illuminates that the kernel of his terror resides in his strong fear of something intangible, something unknown.

However, Eastrod, his only remaining hope, had been deserted. Nobody lived there when Hazel went back from the army, where he converted “to nothing” (*WB* 24). As if mocking Hazel’s plan to stay there, his house was *empty*: “The house was as dark as the night . . . he didn’t realize all at once that it was only a shell, that there was nothing here but the skeleton of a house. He twisted an envelope and struck a match to it and went through all the empty rooms, upstairs and down” (*WB* 25-26). Losing a place to belong and a plan to follow, Hazel was forced to find somewhere else he could go and some other strategies he could take in order to turn away from the haunting emptiness. Having lost his hometown, now he newly has to negate the possibility of having been redeemed without his footing.

Since childhood Hazel spends all his effort to keep his face turn away, unconsciously ignoring the emptiness he experienced when he tried to ascertain Jesus' satisfaction for his penance. In other words, he tries to circumvent the issue concerning the spiritual world, suspending his decision whether he believes in Jesus without seeing any tangible evidence or not. The emptiness, however, haunts Hazel as if telling him that he strives in vain.

## **Spinning His Wheels: "The Church Without Christ"**

This is the situation which Hazel Motes has been in by the opening of the novel. When we see Hazel in the train in the first scene, he has just discovered that his hometown was empty and left. This opening scene is important because significant motifs, such as his fixation on the idea of Redemption, his characteristic back-and-forth movement, and the haunting emptiness, which repeatedly appear throughout the novel, are introduced here.

In the train car Hazel tries to provoke his fellow passengers by talking about Redemption. His impetuous behavior, which bewilders or upsets the people around him, reveals to the reader that he is still attached to the issue of Jesus despite how much he declares that he is not. Although the narrator does not directly depict Hazel's internal plight, his urgent aspiration to dispel this preoccupation causes his restless movements. For example, in the first sentence of the novel, his eyes busily wander around: "Hazel Motes sat at a forward angle on the green plush train seat, looking one minute at the window as if he might went to jump out of it, and the next down the aisle at the other end of the car" (*WB* 9). His restless movement symbolizes his lack of and longing for a sense of belonging. In spite of his eagerness, however, the reader can anticipate that his movements would not take him anywhere. The back-and-forth movements ultimately result in running in place, with each movement canceling the other out. His posture after dodging a porter in the narrow aisle of the train is symbolic: "Haze got up and hung there a few seconds. He looked as if he were held by a rope caught in the middle of his back and attached to the train ceiling" (*WB* 12).

Also the emptiness, which reminds him of the unknowableness of God, still haunts him. When he looks outside the train window while thinking about Eastrod, he sees the empty fields there: "Eastrod filled his head and then went out beyond and filled the space that stretched from the train across the empty darkening fields" (*WB* 12). Or when "he turned his head to the window" after his profession of not wanting to be redeemed, he "saw his pale reflection with the dark empty space outside coming through it" (*WB* 16). These sentences subtly foretell that he will never find anything but emptiness in the outside world just as he couldn't see any sign of

His existence which he expected when he was a child.

Hazel is totally forlorn about his destination when he steps out onto the platform of Talkinham, the city where most of the novel's events occur. From this platform, he starts his quest to find his plan and place, alternatives to Eastrod, where he is supposed to be able to avoid sin and Jesus, negating the possibility of having been redeemed. His quest, however, proves vain in the end. He heads back in a big loop to his first doubt, the possibility of having been redeemed, that he desperately tries to deny or ignore. But until the moment of his final recognition of his inescapability from the doubt, he keeps intending to go somewhere to preach about the Church Without Christ driving his Essex car, without noticing that he is frantically spinning his wheels.

As can be seen from his abrupt remarks to his fellow passengers in the train, Redemption is Hazel's overriding concern, which he is constantly striving to deny. What he fears is the belief that he has been redeemed, which would entail the existence of Jesus and attest to his sinfulness. At the same time, this would mean that he is permanently in debt to Jesus; in one of his sermons he epitomizes his dilemma: "There's no peace for the redeemed" (*WB* 140).<sup>vii</sup> The erratic idea of establishing the Church Without Christ can be understood in the sense that Hazel's ultimate purpose is to negate the possibility of having been redeemed and to do so, Jesus, who is said to have redeemed mankind with his blood, must be denied. Thus when Hazel starts to preach, he says, "I'm going to preach a new church—the church of truth without Jesus Christ Crucified" (*WB* 55). Hazel begins his attempt to dislodge Jesus from the status of the Redeemer whatever it takes.

Later Hazel names the church "the Church Without Christ," but in the first sermon, one of five sermons in the text, he tentatively calls it "the church of truth without Jesus Christ Crucified." As the change of the name implies, Hazel's doctrine is crude when he starts preaching and is to be elaborated over time.<sup>viii</sup> However, each time he animatedly adds a new theory to his doctrine, such as "a new jesus" or "blasphemy as the way to salvation," he comes to notice its unfruitfulness and becomes frustrated. Although his doctrine appears to be gradually developing with his seemingly self-assured attitude, in fact it is not. More precisely, he is approaching a stalemate, losing his means one by one through his trial-and-error method. I would like to sequentially follow the transition of his ideas in his sermons. In the improvised first sermon, we can draw out some common threads which run through his later idea:

"Sweet Jesus Christ Crucified," he said, "I want to tell you people something. Maybe you think you're not clean because you don't believe. . . . Every one of you people are clean and let me tell



you why if you think it's because of Jesus Christ Crucified you're wrong. I don't say he wasn't crucified but I say it wasn't for you. . . . Don't I know what exists and what don't?" he cried. "Don't I have eyes in my head? Am I a blind man? Listen here," he called. "I'm going to preach a new church—the church of truth without Jesus Christ Crucified. . . ." (*WB* 55)

The first point of this sermon is to introduce his theory regarding faith and cleanness: you are "clean" if you "don't believe," a notion which exhibits his fear of unconditional sinfulness. The second point is his fixation on sight. He insists that because he is not "a blind man," anything that he cannot see does not exist. This fixation, of course, leads to his self-blinding with lime later in the novel. Also, while he repeats "I AM clean" in Chapter Five, he declares "I'm not clean" in the last chapter, which signals a significant change (*WB* 91, 95, 224).

In the second sermon, Hazel declares that his church is "the church that the blood of Jesus don't foul with redemption" (*WB* 105), but he cannot verify his theory without any convincing evidence. Thus by his third sermon Hazel realizes that his church needs "a new jesus" as his solution, "one that can't waste his blood redeeming people with it, because he's all man and ain't got any God in him" (*WB* 121). Here again the significance of sight for Hazel is underlined. A "new jesus" should not "look like any other man" for people to tell the new jesus just by sight. Also when you look at him, you "see the truth" (*WB* 141). Then everybody is to be saved "by the sight" of him (*WB* 141). However, Hazel later denies the idea of having a "new jesus," confessing that "[t]here's no such thing or person" and "[i]t wasn't nothing but a way to say a thing" when he is persistently asked about the new jesus' whereabouts by his rival fake preacher (*WB* 158-59). What he tries to say in the third sermon is consequently that he needs something visible which will justify his negation of Jesus, and of Redemption.

Although Hazel's fourth sermon is overtly interrupted and nearly hijacked by another preacher Hoover Shoats, we can still find Hazel's newly accentuated strategy in his fragmented sermon: he suggests "blasphemy" as "the way to the truth" (*WB* 152). As if demonstrating blasphemy, he denies Fall, Redemption, and Judgment in his fifth and final sermon. However, this strategy is also soon frustrated. Later he plainly disaffirms his own idea when he talks to a gas station employee, admitting that "he had only a few days ago believed in blasphemy as the way to salvation, but that you couldn't even believe in that because then you were believing in something to blaspheme" (*WB* 206). Although he admits this seemingly on a light note, this deconstructionalistic awareness is crucial because it implies that every attempt that he has made, and every attempt he will make, will be trapped in the same binary system, the system which cannot be constructed without assuming the existence of Jesus Christ. As long as Hazel wants

to be sinless in the context of Christianity, he cannot be sinless without Him because He is the norm. However, at this point Hazel still does not notice, or admit, the paradox of his *conversion* to “nothing.”

What barely upholds his conversion, lying in the center of his sermons, is his Church Without Christ. He tries to maintain a church, which is premised and requisitely built upon the faith, without any faith. In other words, he conceives an empty church which works with its frame alone. What makes Hazel’s church and his journey narrowly possible—and even, he thinks, justified—is the mobility and the goodness of his Essex car despite its fatally bad condition. It serves as the means of his journey, as his home, his pulpit, his church, and even as the justification for his being. First, the car ensures his mobility and freedom. As Hazel says, “This is a good car . . . and since I’ve had it, I’ve had a place to be that I can always get away in” and “That car’ll get me anywhere I want to go” (*WB* 115, 126). Second, he intends to make this car the alternative to his home, the alternative to Eastrod. When he impulsively buys the junked car without even having “any license,” he tells the dealer that he wants the “car mostly to be a house” because he doesn’t have “any place to be” (*WB* 67-73). Just as Eastrod meant everything for him, where he believed he could be a sinless preacher, so does his car now become everything for him. Third, Hazel uses the Essex as his pulpit and also as his movable church. Like his grandfather, who “would climb up on the nose of [a Ford] and preach from there,” Hazel gets “out of the Essex” and climbs “up on the nose of it” when he delivers sermons in front of movie theaters (*WB* 21, 104).

Finally, Hazel believes that his car, not God, justifies him. When Sabbath tells Hazel how her father Asa Hawks tried to blind himself, she says, “Anybody that blinded himself for justification ought to be able to save you” (*WB* 113). In response Hazel murmurs, “Nobody with a good car needs to be justified” (*WB* 113). Hazel, who in fact desperately longs for an excuse, or a justification, for negating Redemption, wants to believe that the goodness of the car can be stretched into the authorization, or justification, of his church and his being. If the car is “good,” as he repeatedly says to many people, then his church is “good.” Because he has a good approved church, he does not need any justification, any pronouncement of innocence and guiltlessness by God.

The car, however, almost mockingly mimics Hazel’s characteristic fruitless back-and-forth movements, which implies that it will not get him anywhere: “The Essex had a tendency to develop a tic by nightfall. It would go forward about six inches and then back about four” (*WB* 154). Also the boy working at the gas station informs Hazel that the Essex has “a leak in the gas tank” and “two in the radiator” (*WB* 207). So the boy explains that even if he puts

water in it as Hazel asks him to, it is useless “because it won’t hold it” (*WB* 207). But Hazel’s reliance on the car remains to the last. He insists, “this car is just beginning its life. A lightning bolt couldn’t stop it!” (*WB* 207). He clings to the Essex like a lifeline or a buoy over the “waters of sin” which Hazel unknowingly “might be walking on” (*WB* 22). When his strategies of finding “a new Jesus” and believing in “blasphemy” as “the way to the truth” are both frustrated and leave him empty-handed, Hazel still declares to the gas station employee that he is “a preacher for the Church Without Christ,” that he is going to “another city to preach,” and that “nobody with a good car needed to worry about anything” (*WB* 206). He believes that he still has a place to go in his Essex.

In losing his car, his last resort is gone. On his way to another city to preach, he is asked to pull over his car by a patrolman, who demands his license. On learning that Hazel does not have it, the patrolman tells Hazel to drive his car up on the hill, saying, “I want you to see the view from up there, puttiest [sic] view you ever did see” (*WB* 208). Once they arrive at the top of the hill, the patrolman urges him to park close to the embankment and get off the car, saying “I think you could see better if you was out” (*WB* 208). Once Hazel is out of the car, the patrolman suddenly pushes Hazel’s car over the embankment.

The conversation between Hazel and the patrolman is suggestive. After pushing Hazel’s car off the embankment, the patrolman says, “Them that don’t have a car, don’t need a license” (*WB* 209). This remark immediately reminds the reader of Hazel’s signature phrase, “Nobody with a good car needs to be justified” (*WB* 113). A “license” in the patrolman’s statement can be applied to the “justification” in Hazel’s formula. Concerning the condition of not requiring a “license,” or a “justification,” the difference between the patrolman and Hazel is apparent. Hazel claims that the owner of a good car does not need a justification, or metaphorically a “license.” In contrast, as if he flatly refuses Hazel’s sophism, the patrolman states that every car owner needs a license, which is the official “justification” to drive a car, and only those who do not have a car do not need a license: Owning a car and having the justification are inseparable. If the reader regards, therefore, Hazel’s car as a representation of his church, the patrolman’s statement assumes the implication that promoting a church and needing the justification should be inseparably related to each other. In other words, the empty church without faith, which is a justification for its existence, or without Christ, does not work. Thus when the patrolman destroys Hazel’s Essex, he smashes Hazel’s insubstantial church and his sophistic theory all together.

Until this moment Hazel’s church has provided him with a theoretical framework which he can condemn for its lack of visible evidence of Jesus, or the Fall, Redemption, and Judgment.

However, even though he may be able to deny each of the contents based on their invisibility, he cannot discard the framework itself. Seeing the world through the frame of the church, Hazel claims that he does not see anything and so he believes in nothing. However, in the first place, he assumes and thus believes in the validity of the framework of a church. But he does not notice about that because he is *in* the church. Like a person who wears glasses cannot see the glasses themselves, Hazel cannot see the frame which regulates his view. Now the patrolman's earlier remark, "I think you could see better if you was out," becomes highly suggestive because the view which Hazel sees without his car is precisely the first scenery he sees with his bare eyes (*WB* 208).

Although the patrolman tells Hazel that he will see the "puttist view," what Hazel sees over the embankment is not beautiful or gorgeous (*WB* 208). When his car is destroyed and the frame of Hazel's view of the world is cleared away, the sheer emptiness confronts Hazel:

Haze stood for a few minutes, looking over at the scene. His face seemed to reflect the entire distance across the clearing and on beyond, the entire distance that extended from his eyes to the blank gray sky that went on, depth after depth, into space. His knees bent under him and he sat down on the edge of embankment with his feet hanging over. (*WB* 209)

Without the Essex, his home and his church, Hazel's forlornness is highlighted against the profound emptiness of the space. The nothingness, which he has confined within his church, now spreads out and fills his view. A closer reading of this scene shows us that the blankness which is reflected on Hazel's face is almost projected from his own eyes. This closed circular image underlines his incessant desire to *see* the truth and its impossibility. In other words, the blank scenery thrusts to Hazel's face the fact that the reason why his eyes always end up in seeing nothing is that his eyes are seeking for the truth beyond the visible world. Thus as long as his eyes are open, he cannot but see the nothingness. Consequently, he may admit that the seeking eyes for the truth do not work without faith in God, just as his church does not work without Christ.

The description of his feet in the quote is also suggestive. His feet dangling from the edge of an embankment symbolize his loss of footing. Physically he cannot move to any other city without his car. This image also reminds us of Hazel's fixation on his hometown, where he can stay "with his two eyes open, and his hands always handling the familiar thing, his feet on the known track" and of his fear for the dark place where "he was not sure of his footing, where he might be walking on the water and not know it and then suddenly know it and drown" (*WB* 22). Noticing that he has no footing now, he might be soon drowning into "the waters of sin"

(WB 22).

The following conversation with the patrolman shows that a significant change has occurred in Hazel's mind. When the patrolman sees him sink down on the ground and asks if he is going anywhere, he answers "No" (WB 209-10). When the patrolman again asks if he "planned to go anywheres," Hazel shakes his head (WB 210). He loses not only his physical traveling device but also his conviction that he has somewhere to go in the Essex, in his church. When he is asked these questions, Hazel's face does not even turn toward the patrolman. Instead, his face "seemed to be concentrated on space" (WB 210). Absorbed or drawn into the space, he may realize that what he sees now is all that he can see with his eyes open. The emptiness presses him for a decision, which he has postponed or evaded since his childhood. After these struggles, he finally finds himself in the same place where his journey began. In the blank unknowingness, without any signs, he has to decide whether he believes in the existence of the spiritual world or not. What he experiences here may not be the Revelation as God's direct manifestation or communication to people, which he is eager to *see*. This is, however, a revelation for Hazel that he cannot help searching for the unknowable.

## **Accepting the Possibility of the Existence of the Other**

Right after the demolition of his car, Hazel blinds himself as if to settle the pending question by doing it. Through impairing the faculty of his sight, he turns off his eyes, which he has relied on in seeking for the visible truth. He realizes that his sight never gives him any sign concerning the existence of the spiritual world, either positive or negative. Even so, his eyes cannot help searching for the sign as long as they are open. His expectant eyes have set the frame in which he only sees "nothing." Therefore, he impairs his eyes to destroy the frame of his sight and annihilate the home of "The Church Without Christ." Sight itself does not matter to him anymore. Without the hindrance of eyes, he has no choice but to consult with the inside of himself to decide his attitude toward the world. The final chapter of the novel describes his deeds after his self-blinding.

Before I discuss the final chapter in detail, I would like to mention an extrinsic factor that will help examine the meaning of Hazel's self-blinding from a different perspective. It is reasonable to recognize some association with Sophocles' Oedipus plays as one of the sources of the self-blinding motif.<sup>ix</sup> In 1949 O'Connor lived at Robert and Sally Fitzgerald's house, where she worked on the draft of *Wise Blood*. According to Sally Fitzgerald's chronology, O'Connor "decide[d] on resolution of novel after reading Robert Fitzgerald's translations of

Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and *Oedipus at Chlonus*" (CW 1244). Also, in a letter to Ben Griffith, O'Connor writes:

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Although O'Connor does not give specific details about "obvious resemblances" and "a lot of thinking" regarding Oedipus, I believe that the connection between *Oedipus Rex* and *Wise Blood* is not limited to the motif of the protagonist's climactic self-blinding.

In terms of the plots, there are several similarities between *Oedipus Rex* and *Wise Blood*. Both Oedipus and Hazel receive prophecies concerning their destinies during the early phases of their lives; Oedipus receives Apollo's prophesy that he is destined to kill his father and marry his mother; Hazel receives his grandfather's prophetic claim that "Jesus would never let him forget he was redeemed" and "Jesus would have him in the end" (WB 22). In order to avoid the fulfillment of the prophecies, they quest for the truth, which should disprove those prophecies. The truth which they finally reach, however, lets them know that the prophecies have already been fulfilled and they have been blind to the truth. In response to the outcomes of their long quests, they decide to blind themselves. In this sense, their self-blinding can be considered as self-punishment for not being able to see right.

More than that, for both Oedipus and Hazel, self-blinding is a sturdy assertion with which they accept and bear the unbearable truth. When we consider the fact that they do not choose to kill themselves, the singularities of their behavior become more distinct. Comparing Oedipus and his wife and mother Jocasta, Richard B. Sewall points out, "Unable to accept the terms of so horrible a reality [Jocasta] makes the supreme evasion of taking her life. Oedipus lives on to bear out his destiny to the end" (39). Jocasta's response to the unbearable situation parallels the response of Hazel's landlady when she learns his intention of self-blinding. When she finds Hazel carrying a bucket which contains water and lime, the landlady Mrs. Flood asks him his purpose. Hazel curtly answers, "Blind myself" (WB 210). On hearing that, Mrs. Flood disbelievingly thinks that "instead of blinding herself, if she had felt that bad, she would have killed herself" (WB 210-211). In both works, self-blinding seems to be the manifestation of accepting the truth, which one cannot see with one's eyes open. Although the truths they

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discover as the result of their quests are different, Oedipus and Hazel are similar in terms of their response after the truth is known. They accept it and decide to live with it.

Let us now return to the last chapter. After the self-blinding, Hazel does not elaborate on his thoughts and the narrator does not enter his inside to reveal his intentions. Yet Hazel's words and deeds explicitly show his decision about the question of God. When we see him contradict what he claimed before, it is clear that he has decided to believe in the existence of the spiritual world. While he persistently insisted that he was "clean" before, now he says, "I'm not clean," when he is accused of his self-torment by Mrs. Flood (*WB* 224). This shift exhibits his definitive recognition of his own status as a believer because in his theory "cleanness" can be applied only to non-believers. The belief in Jesus is directly coupled with the acceptance of the unconditional indebtedness of being redeemed. The following conversation with Mrs. Flood distinctly shows his altered awareness. When she finds "gravel and broken glass and pieces of small stone" (*WB* 221) in Hazel's shoes, Hazel sharply answers her questions:

"Mr. Motes," she said that day, when he was in her kitchen eating his dinner, "what do you walk on rocks for?"

"To pay," he said in a harsh voice.

"Pay for what?"

"It don't make any difference for what," he said. "I'm paying."

"But what have you got to show that you're paying for?" she persisted.

"Mind your business," he said rudely. "You can't see." (*WB* 222)

When he was ten, he did a similar penance, filling his shoes with stones. But at that time, he performed this action believing that it "ought to satisfy Him" and looked for a visible sign of His satisfaction (*WB* 64). Now, however, he is just "paying," apparently believing that there is no complete payment for being redeemed, no complete satisfaction of the Redeemer.

Hazel has blinded himself, in order not to search for the sign anymore. In other words, he seems to unconditionally accept his eternal indebtedness to Jesus. His seeing eyes have limited his sight just to searching for the visible truth, and he has rejected anything invisible that he cannot see here and now. Now, however, with his blinded eyes, he may be able to gain limitless space in which to accept and contain his eternal debt; he says, "If there's no bottom in your eyes, they hold more" (*WB* 222). Hazel now exhibits all his devotion to "pay." Besides filling his shoes with stone and glass, he tightly wraps barbed wire around his body, roaming around even in "a driving icy rain," until he is found almost dead in a ditch (*WB* 228). Hazel's last words are said to the policemen who find him in the ditch. When they tell him that they are

taking him back to Mrs. Flood's place "to pay [his] rent," he says, "I want to go on where I'm going" (*WB* 230). Although his final remark is not suggestive or explanatory enough to confirm his spiritual status, we can assume that he has been "paying" in his own way and is still halfway to his destination wherever it is. Although there is much scholarly discussion concerning whether Hazel is saved or not in the end,<sup>xi</sup> or whether his manner of payment is religiously appropriate or not,<sup>xii</sup> what is happening in Hazel's mind is not explicit because the narrator does not reveal Hazel's thoughts or feelings in the last scenes.

## The Shift of Narrative Perspective in *Wise Blood*

Toward the conclusion of *Wise Blood*, a drastic shift in the narrative perspective occurs.<sup>xiii</sup> The narrator shifts his focus from Hazel to Mrs. Flood, even though she has been a minor character up until this point. Throughout the final chapter, the narrator tells us her responses and her inner thoughts as if she were the main character of the ending. In fact, the change which takes place in Mrs. Flood, a self-complacent secular woman, is crucial. When she sees Hazel blind himself and do his penance, she first thinks that it is "not natural" and "not normal," and it is "like one of them gory stories" like "boiling in oil or being a saint or walling up cats" (*WB* 224). But the otherness and incomprehensibility of his behavior cracks her stereotypical and hardheaded perception of the world. She starts to think that "there might be something valuable hidden near her, something she couldn't see" because "[t]o her, the blind man had the look of seeing something" in spite of his blindness (*WB* 214), even though her initial motive in her attempt "to penetrate the darkness behind [Hazel's face] and see for herself what was there," is simply to collect more money from him (*WB* 225).

However, her attitude towards him changes, even if gradually and slightly. Her feelings turn from pure greed to a mixture of compassion, companionship, and appreciation. She also thinks that "[i]f she was going to be blind when she was dead, who better to guide her than a blind man?" (*WB* 229). The last sentences of the novel describes her first attempt to see what she cannot:

She leaned closer and closer to his face, looking deep into [the deep burned eye sockets], trying to see how she had been cheated or what had cheated her, but she couldn't see anything. She shut her eyes and saw the pin point of light but so far away that she could not hold it steady in her mind. She felt as if she were blocked at the entrance of something. She sat staring with her eyes shut, into his eyes, and felt as if she had finally got to the beginning of something she couldn't begin, and she saw him moving farther and farther away, farther and farther into the

darkness until he was the pin point of light. (*WB* 231-32)

Even though we cannot tell if she has gained any religious revelation or not, she certainly tries to see as Hazel sees with his blinded eyes, which signals her initial recognition of the existence of something unknown. Now Mrs. Flood, who once described herself as “so clear-sighted, could never stand to be blind” and who “liked the clear light of day” and “liked to see things.” tries to stare at something vague and farther “with her eyes shut” (*WB* 211, 218, 231).

## The Narrator of *Wise Blood*

The abrupt change in the narrative of *Wise Blood* appears not only in its focus but also in its distance from the focal character. When the narrator switches the focus from Hazel to Mrs. Flood, the distance of the narrator to the character greatly changes: while Hazel’s internal thoughts are hardly revealed, Mrs. Flood’s thoughts, feelings, and intentions are described in considerable detail. Until this shift of the point of view, the narrator shows the focal character’s thoughts at a minimal level. Frederick Asals precisely points out, “[Hazel’s] internal drama is presented almost entirely from outside, projected into various forms of action, image, and metaphor” and therefore, “[a]lmost never do we see from Haze’s point of view. Rarely, indeed, are we made privy to his conscious thoughts, and when they are given, they are merely reported, briefly and objectively” (20). The difference in the speech level marks a clear difference of the narrator’s attitude: the sudden flow of free indirect speech in describing Mrs. Flood’s feelings implies the narrator’s unconstrained accessibility to her internal thoughts.

Why does this shift occur at this particular moment of Hazel’s self-blinding? To clarify the meaning of the significant change in the narrative perspective and the narrator’s attitude to the focal character, I would like to mention some similarities between the narrator of *Wise Blood* and the narrators of O’Connor’s short stories. Even though Asals claims that “*Wise Blood*, for instance, seems to me to stand alone: it could not have been predicted from the stories that precede it, nor does it have any real successors in her work,” I would like to suggest that there are some distinctive manners of the narrator which are developed from *Wise Blood* and applied to the short stories (5).

O’Connor’s short stories show consistent narrative features.<sup>xiv</sup> First, to adumbrate the existence of and the events in the spiritual world, the narrator carefully uses similes. Second, when a character, often the focal character of the story, seems to experience something in the spiritual world, the narrator ceases to step into the character in question. Also, the narrator

keeps a certain distance from a character, such as the Misfit, who has already had some recognition of the possibility. Third, toward the endings of many stories, the narrator shifts the focus from the main character to other characters, who may witness something mysterious beyond their understanding, to depict their responses and judgments. In sum, the narrator draws the outline of the divine world and indicates the possibility of its existence, but does not, or cannot, reveal its inside.

We can find a basic pattern of these features in the narrator's behavior of *Wise Blood*. Although the difference in the length between the novel and the short stories affects the density and the pace of the narrative, the narrator of *Wise Blood* shares a similar attitude toward the spiritual world. The greater a character's recognition of it grows, the farther the narrator's distance from the character becomes. When the narrator of *Wise Blood* is reticent about Hazel's internal thoughts, the restricted attitude displays the relative inaccessibility to this religiously suffering character. Then the narrator finally stops describing any of Hazel's thoughts and feelings after the moment of his self-blinding. Just as the narrator of "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" is suddenly excluded from the grandmother's interior in the last moment, the narrator of *Wise Blood* cannot step inside Hazel's mind. In other words, Hazel transcends the range of the narrator's perspective, which leads the narrator to shift the focus to Mrs. Flood.

If we think of Hazel as a prototype of the characters who experience an encounter with the Other, Mrs. Flood can be a prototype of the witnesses of the encounter. Through witnessing Hazel's conversion, she herself starts to feel the existence of something unknown. The spiritual awareness in Mrs. Flood is crucial because it is she, and not Hazel, who has successors in the short stories. In fact, most of the characters in the short stories can be viewed as descendents of Mrs. Flood. Gentry points out that Mrs. Flood is "the greediest person in the novel and the closest thing to a normal citizen of Taulkinham," but "she still manages something of a spiritual awakening at the novel's end" (124). The normal citizens of Taulkinham are secular people, who do not care about religion seriously, and contemptuously disdain Hazel as just "a preacher" (*WB* 105). Mrs. Flood is a secular person, who is "not religious or morbid, for which every day she thank[s] her stars" (*WB* 211) and believes that she is as good "not believing in Jesus as a many a one that does" (*WB* 221). However secular, worldly, and unreligious they are, these are the people who constantly appear in O'Connor's short stories, and what she repeatedly describes there is the moments in which they are forcefully faced with the possibility of encountering with the Other, which make their eyesight waver.

O'Connor may have identified with the anguish of Hazel, who strives for faith in the midst of the secularized world, and she may have initially believed that her contemporary

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O'Connor may have identified with the anguish of Hazel, who strives for faith in the midst of the secularized world, and she may have initially believed that her contemporary

readers could share Hazel's view. *Wise Blood*, however, was not understood as she expected. Hazel's tense, urgent, but quixotic behavior seemed mostly odd to readers, and he seemed to be a fanatic "preacher" to them just like to the people in Taulkinham. The commentaries on Hazel were far from O'Connor's intention.<sup>xv</sup> In response to the situation, when the second edition of *Wise Blood* was published, she reluctantly added "Author's Note to the Second Edition," in which she, in a sense, protects Hazel, representing his inner conflict.<sup>xvi</sup> The readers could not read about Hazel's experience, living in the total uncertainty, as their own. Just like the citizens of Taulkinham, the readers never thought or dreamt of facing such an uncertainty, disregarding Hazel as just "a preacher." While O'Connor tries to show the world seen from Hazel's wavering perspective in *Wise Blood*, in the short stories she depicts the process toward the characters' wavering. If so, what is happening in the short stories may be a preliminary step to prepare for encountering the Other, or at least to get "to the beginning of something" the reader "couldn't begin" (*WB* 232). Just as the grandmother in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" suddenly realizes the Misfit's anguish through having her clichéd view broken down, readers need to experience something violently shocking, which forcefully makes them face the possibility that their own belief system can be shaken down.

#### Notes

<sup>i</sup> An early form of this paper first appeared in Naomi Kubo, "Rendering the Possibility of the Encounter with the Other: Shocking Moments in Flannery O'Connor's Works," diss., Claremont Graduate U, 2011.

<sup>ii</sup> Flannery O'Connor, *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose*, ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald (1969. New York: Farrar, 2000)158. Hereafter I will use *MM*, referring to this book.

<sup>iii</sup> I will use the expression the Other with the capital letter when it refers to Emmanuel Levinas's concept, as it is employed in Colin Davis's study. See Davis. Although O'Connor's literary approach to the incomprehensible is ultimately different from Levinas's philosophical approach, Levinas's discussion of the Same and the Other will help us to read O'Connor's works in a larger context. As for other philosophical approaches to the relationship with the other in O'Connor's fiction, see Doriza; Mellard.

<sup>iv</sup> As for a further discussion on O'Connor's short stories, see Kubo.

<sup>v</sup> Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood* (1962. New York: Farrar, 1998), 14. Hereafter I will use *WB*, referring to this book.

<sup>vi</sup> As for a detailed discussion concerning the eyesight of characters in O'Connor's works, see Hatanaka; Kubo.

<sup>vii</sup> O'Connor writes in a letter to Carl Hartman, "The Redemption creates a debt that has to be paid. (This is a fact to anybody who believes he has been redeemed by Christ.) The Redemption simply changes everything. The fact is that try as he will Haze cannot get rid of his sense of debt and his inner vision of Christ" (O'Connor, *Collected Works* 920). Hereafter I will use *CW*, referring to this book.

<sup>viii</sup> Glenn Settle points out in his "Sermon on the Hood of an Essex: Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood*" that "[t]o date, scholars have underscored neither the centrality of the sermon nor its relationship to the novel's rhetors" and emphasizes its importance as "the major vehicle of spoken expression for Hazel" (184, 185). He considers Hazel's five sermons as "a single, developing dialogue sermon" (184).

<sup>ix</sup> For other discussions of the association between Oedipus and Hazel Motes, see Burns 147; Lake 88-90; Mellard 116; Modellmog 36-37.

<sup>^</sup> Flannery O'Connor, *The Habit of Being* (1979. New York: Farrar, 1999), 68. Hereafter I will use *HB*, referring to this book.

<sup>^</sup> Concerning Hazel's salvation, O'Connor claims that he is saved. She writes in a letter to John Hawks: "Haze is saved by virtue of having wise blood; it's too wise for him ultimately to deny Christ." But in the same letter she expresses her mixed feelings and observations: "The religion of the South is a do-it-yourself religion, something which I as a Catholic find painful and touching and grimly comic" (*HB* 350). Also, in a letter to Carl Hartman, she underlines the Protestant context in which Hazel is included: "When Haze blinds himself he turns entirely to an inner vision. Now one irony is that where he started out preaching the Church without Christ he ends up with Christ without Church. . . . I have directed the irony against this Protestant world or against the society that reads the Bible and Sears Roebuck catalogue wrong, but Haze himself is in it and of it, he is the ultimate Protestant; he transcends it though" (*CW* 921). From these statements, we can assume that even though O'Connor believes that Hazel is saved, she senses a huge distance in his Protestant way to reach it.

<sup>^</sup> As for a detailed discussion concerning Hazel's penance, see Ingraffia 78-86; Srigley, "Penance and Love in *Wise Blood*" 94-100; Wood 87-93; O'Connor writes in a letter to Carl Hartman that Hazel's "penances are certainly acts of assertion even though they are instinctive. Haze is here asserting his wise blood in the ultimate way. When he says he does it to pay, he means to pay his part of the debt of Redemption" (*CW* 921).

<sup>^</sup> As for the shift of the point of view in *Wise Blood*, also see Brinkmeyer. □

<sup>^</sup> As for a detailed discussion concerning the narrative characteristics in O'Connor's short stories, see Kubo.

<sup>^</sup> Sally Fitzgerald summarizes the "initial rush of oversimplif[ing]" after the publication of *Wise Blood*: "Commentators tended, in the light of their own prejudices and preconceptions, to see her as another chronicler of southern grotesqueries or, more often, to use a term she loathed: another 'Southern Gothic' writer, an eccentric writing about eccentrics. Southerners disliked it for what they saw as mockery of themselves and of Protestantism, and in her own locale it was regarded as a shockingly immoral book." See Sally Fitzgerald, introduction xiv. □

<sup>^</sup> In a letter to Sally and Robert Fitzgerald, O'Connor writes about "Preface to the Second Edition": "I would just like to prevent some of the far-out interpretations" (*HB* 473).

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readers could share Hazel's view. *Wise Blood*, however, was not understood as she expected. Hazel's tense, urgent, but quixotic behavior seemed mostly odd to readers, and he seemed to be a fanatic "preacher" to them just like to the people in Taulkinham. The commentaries on Hazel were far from O'Connor's intention.<sup>xv</sup> In response to the situation, when the second edition of *Wise Blood* was published, she reluctantly added "Author's Note to the Second Edition," in which she, in a sense, protects Hazel, representing his inner conflict.<sup>xvi</sup> The readers could not read about Hazel's experience, living in the total uncertainty, as their own. Just like the citizens of Taulkinham, the readers never thought or dreamt of facing such an uncertainty, disregarding Hazel as just "a preacher." While O'Connor tries to show the world seen from Hazel's wavering perspective in *Wise Blood*, in the short stories she depicts the process toward the characters' wavering. If so, what is happening in the short stories may be a preliminary step to prepare for encountering the Other, or at least to get "to the beginning of something" the reader "couldn't begin" (*WB* 232). Just as the grandmother in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" suddenly realizes the Misfit's anguish through having her clichéd view broken down, readers need to experience something violently shocking, which forcefully makes them face the possibility that their own belief system can be shaken down.

#### Notes

<sup>i</sup> An early form of this paper first appeared in Naomi Kubo, "Rendering the Possibility of the Encounter with the Other: Shocking Moments in Flannery O'Connor's Works," diss., Claremont Graduate U, 2011.

<sup>ii</sup> Flannery O'Connor, *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose*, ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald (1969. New York: Farrar, 2000)158. Hereafter I will use *MM*, referring to this book.

<sup>iii</sup> I will use the expression the Other with the capital letter when it refers to Emmanuel Levinas's concept, as it is employed in Colin Davis's study. See Davis. Although O'Connor's literary approach to the incomprehensible is ultimately different from Levinas's philosophical approach, Levinas's discussion of the Same and the Other will help us to read O'Connor's works in a larger context. As for other philosophical approaches to the relationship with the other in O'Connor's fiction, see Doriza; Mellard.

<sup>iv</sup> As for a further discussion on O'Connor's short stories, see Kubo.

<sup>v</sup> Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood* (1962. New York: Farrar, 1998), 14. Hereafter I will use *WB*, referring to this book.

<sup>vi</sup> As for a detailed discussion concerning the eyesight of characters in O'Connor's works, see Hatanaka; Kubo.

<sup>vii</sup> O'Connor writes in a letter to Carl Hartman, "The Redemption creates a debt that has to be paid. (This is a fact to anybody who believes he has been redeemed by Christ.) The Redemption simply changes everything. The fact is that try as he will Haze cannot get rid of his sense of debt and his inner vision of Christ" (O'Connor, *Collected Works* 920). Hereafter I will use *CW*, referring to this book .

<sup>viii</sup> Glenn Settle points out in his "Sermon on the Hood of an Essex: Flannery O'Connor's *Wise Blood*" that "[t]o date, scholars have underscored neither the centrality of the sermon nor its relationship to the novel's rhetors" and emphasizes its importance as "the major vehicle of spoken expression for Hazel" (184, 185). He considers Hazel's five sermons as "a single, developing dialogue sermon" (184).

<sup>ix</sup> For other discussions of the association between Oedipus and Hazel Motes, see Burns 147; Lake 88-90; Mellard 116; Modellmog 36-37.

<sup>^</sup> Flannery O'Connor, *The Habit of Being* (1979. New York: Farrar, 1999), 68. Hereafter I will use *HB*, referring to this book.

<sup>^i</sup> Concerning Hazel's salvation, O'Connor claims that he is saved. She writes in a letter to John Hawks: "Haze is saved by virtue of having wise blood; it's too wise for him ultimately to deny Christ." But in the same letter she expresses her mixed feelings and observations: "The religion of the South is a do-it-yourself religion, something which I as a Catholic find painful and touching and grimly comic" (*HB* 350). Also, in a letter to Carl Hartman, she underlines the Protestant context in which Hazel is included: "When Haze blinds himself he turns entirely to an inner vision. Now one irony is that where he started out preaching the Church without Christ he ends up with Christ without Church. . . . I have directed the irony against this Protestant world or against the society that reads the Bible and Sears Roebuck catalogue wrong, but Haze himself is in it and of it, he is the ultimate Protestant; he transcends it though" (*CW* 921). From these statements, we can assume that even though O'Connor believes that Hazel is saved, she senses a huge distance in his Protestant way to reach it.

<sup>^ii</sup> As for a detailed discussion concerning Hazel's penance, see Ingraffia 78-86; Srigley, "Penance and Love in *Wise Blood*" 94-100; Wood 87-93; O'Connor writes in a letter to Carl Hartman that Hazel's "penances are certainly acts of assertion even though they are instinctive. Haze is here asserting his wise blood in the ultimate way. When he says he does it to pay, he means to pay his part of the debt of Redemption" (*CW* 921).

<sup>^iii</sup> As for the shift of the point of view in *Wise Blood*, also see Brinkmeyer. □

<sup>^iv</sup> As for a detailed discussion concerning the narrative characteristics in O'Connor's short stories, see Kubo.

<sup>^v</sup> Sally Fitzgerald summarizes the "initial rush of oversimplif[y]ng" after the publication of *Wise Blood*: "Commentators tended, in the light of their own prejudices and preconceptions, to see her as another chronicler of southern grotesqueries or, more often, to use a term she loathed: another 'Southern Gothic' writer, an eccentric writing about eccentrics. Southerners disliked it for what they saw as mockery of themselves and of Protestantism, and in her own locale it was regarded as a shockingly immoral book." See Sally Fitzgerald, introduction xiv. □

<sup>^vi</sup> In a letter to Sally and Robert Fitzgerald, O'Connor writes about "Preface to the Second Edition": "I would just like to prevent some of the far-out interpretations" (*HB* 473).

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## 揺らぎのなかで生きる

フラナリー・オコナーの『賢い血』におけるヘイゼル・モーツについての考察

久保 尚美

フラナリー・オコナー(1925-1964)の短篇小説のなかで、登場人物たちの視界は不意に揺らぐ。それはその人物たちが抱いていた独善的な信念が、理解不能な他者の存在に直面することによって打ち砕かれる衝撃的な瞬間だと捉えることができるだろう。しかしほとんどの作品において、その先に何が起きたのか、揺らいだ視界が次に目にしたものは何なのかは描かれない。オコナーは長編小説において、その先に起きることを描いているのではないか。本稿では、オコナーの最初の長編『賢い血』(1952)を取り上げる。主人公ヘイゼル・モーツは、キリスト教信仰における有責性の受け入れの重みに圧倒され、それを回避すべく、キリストの非在を証そうと「キリストのいない教会」を説く人物である。圧倒的な他者としての神の問題に苛まれ、信仰と不信の狭間でもがき苦しむ主人公は、あたかも衝撃のなかで生きる者のようであり、その苦悩から浮かび上がるのは、他者の存在の可能性に直面しながら生きることの困難である。本稿では、ヘイゼルがその可能性を受け入れまいと足掻く姿を仔細に追いながら、他者の存在の可能性を受け入れることの意味を探るとともに、語り手のふるまいにも着目し、『賢い血』とオコナーの他の短篇小説とのつながりを指摘する。