

Chapter 1

Wise Blood and Lacanian Concept of Mirror Theory

This thesis studies Flannery O'Connor's novel *Wise Blood* (1952) from the perspective of psychoanalysis specifically Lacanian concept of mirror theory, to find out the reason for the self-blinding of the protagonist, Hazel Motes, and his regaining spiritual peace. The process of Hazel Motes' self-blinding and his seemingly regaining peace is actually a struggle of finding his subjectivity. Hazel Motes becomes a split personality due to his fighting with the corrupt reality and the patriarchal symbolic order. He refuses to accept the rules and restrictions of the symbolic order, so he cannot accept the corrupted modern life. Eventually, what he can do is only return to his imaginary field, the order he thinks has lost.

The imaginary world of Hazel Motes is destroyed by his symbolic law, symbolized by his mother and grandfather, the world destroyed by the war and the devastation he cannot accept until death. Thus, Hazel Motes chooses to alienate from both the symbolic and real world by self-blinding, while paradoxically gains his rebirth in the heart of the lord lady – Mrs. Flood, symbolized by the pin point of light. Mrs. Flood sees the corrupt reality and the patriarchal symbolic order. He does not accept the rules and restrictions of the symbolic order, yet he cannot accept the corrupt modern life, that is the visual field. So finally, he returns to his imaginary field by self-blinding.

Hazel Motes is not a normal person; he seems quite psychotic in his behaviour because he has no ordinary sense of sociability, no ordinary understanding of sexuality, no ordinary sense of the immorality of murder. Without any context, He goes on telling everyone he meets that he does not believe in God. Due to the fact that Motes behaves extraordinarily against the norms of the society and his total deformity

and his strictness and stability on his will makes him a person of obsessive-compulsive behavior.

Hazel Motes, who is alienated and fragmented person as opposed to the society's dominant religious view, preaches his own church: a church without Jesus Christ. So in a twisted spiritual quest, he ends up blinding himself. Hazel Motes, raised in a family that 'saw' God as a stern judge who kept meticulous records of each human being's mistakes and misdemeanors and whom they believed would punish all of them severely. This gives rise to the young man's fear of God and starts his own church.

Wise Blood is a complex novel which deals with several issues. It explores fragmentation, alienation and obsession of the protagonist Hazel Motes, a young man from the Southern part of America. It deals with the ways in which people are displaced and marginalized, the arrogance that keeps people from seeing themselves, the centrality of Christ in the salvation of mankind, and the suggestion that one's awareness of Christ is the mark of one's very character. Through violent, perverse and monstrous images, O'Connor depicts a landscape characterized by alienation, guilt and judgment. She looks boldly at social evil and through the eyes of Hazel Motes. He feels himself an object in the commodified world and tries to escape it. In an act of seeking order and harmony and self, he becomes an object or the other.

When O'Connor's *Wise Blood* appeared in print in 1952 for the first time, there was a great rush to oversimplify it because of the provenance of the writer and the southern aspect of her characters. Commentators tended, in the light of their own prejudices and preconceptions, to see her as another chronicler of southern grotesqueries. They disliked the book for what they saw as mockery of themselves and of Protestantism. In her own locale, it was regarded as a shockingly immoral

book. Some critics dismissed the novel as a most deficient book as they found its ending unconvincing.

Wise Blood has drawn the attention of a number of critics since its publication. Viewing the novel as imbued with the theme of God's redemptive act of mankind in the depraved world, Jonathan Baumbach writes, "*Wise Blood* explores the world of corrosion and decay invested with evil, apparently god-forsaken, but finally redeemed by God through men's renunciation and extreme penance" (87). Baumbach sees the novel infused with spirituality.

The 1950s were a period of widespread cultural stasis and neurosis. The American authors at the time showed that they were very uncomfortable in the post-war world. In their works, the sad, heavy weight of the past can be felt. The central theme of their work is often loneliness, the 'search for self' and spiritual values. While comparing the novel, *Wise Blood* with Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Sally Fitzgerald finds striking similarities between the two works in terms of setting and theme. She writes:

In *Wise Blood* O'Connor's counterpart of Eliot's London is the debased city of Taulkinham, inhabited by rootless individuals, sleazy, hostile, self-seeking, untrustworthy, cut off from each other and from every source of spiritual, intellectual or emotional nutrient. The figure she planned to set against this background was a young country boy, dragged by the army from his home in Eastrod, Tennessee [. . .] and sent half way around the globe to fight in some corner of the second World War; then returned, wounded in body and soul, to a broken down society, his family and home gone and his bearings hopelessly lost. (qtd. in O'Connor, Intr. x)

Frederic Asatryan reads the novel in a more secular way as he remarks that "As

Enoch, the protagonist's parallel plunges downward into bestiality, the protagonist Hazel Motes rises upward into a desperate spirituality" (24). Similarly, Richard Ruland and Malcolm Bradbury take the novel as the reflection of moral pain and rising alienation as they write, "*Wise Blood* offered a dismayed, disturbing moral vision" (375). So the characters in the novel suffer from every kind of alienation as they focus only on material and finite aspect of the reality. Comparing the hero, Hazel Motes to Saint Anthony, Lewis A. Lawsan writes: "Both are possessed with an overpowering sense of the importance of religious belief . . . and both use self-abasement to express their realization of the gulf which separates the human from the spiritual" (39). Hazel Motes disturbed psyche seems similar to that of Saint Athony.

There has been a tendency to describe O'Connor as a religious fanatic and an ideal writer who looks upon heaven rather than earth as a site where human wellbeing is to be achieved. But she believes in the metaphysical conception of man as a synthesis of the finite and infinite. She sees the holistic development of man in this synthesis. In this regard, reading the novel, from a revised understanding of the relationship between eschatological and socio-historical frames of reference, Susan Edmunds writes:

Wise Blood sets up an analogical or "mirroring" relationship between contemporary history and Christ's second coming in order to measure communities of the present day by divine standards. This analogical relationship is dynamic and open-minded, allowing humans the freedom to participate actively in the fulfillment of God's historical vision. (5)

Some reviewers and critics have charged O'Connor with sociological, psychological and religious provincialism. According to David Eggenschwiler,

“These critics neglect the humanism which was central to Miss O’Connor’s background, and accordingly is essential for an understanding of her writings” (14). So, O’Connor’s fiction is concerned with the historical and religious division of society and mankind, the loss of physical and spiritual place. She has depicted man as one of the major complexities of the world. In this regard, Thomas M. Carlson observes: “It can be seen that the enveloping action in all her fiction follows the archetypal pattern of traditional myth, the fall of the divine man into the rational world and his subsequent struggle with the conflicting multiplicities of the world” (44).

As the critics found O’Connor’s setting and characters strange and horrific, they rated her as another one of the grotesque writer of the South. But she has a special purpose in distorting the events in her fiction that is to make her readers see the reality. In this regard she writes:

To this end I have to bend the whole novel, its language, its structure, its action. I have to make the reader fed in his bones if nowhere else, that something is going on here that counts. Distortion in this case is an instrument; exaggeration has a purpose and the whole story or novel has been made what it is because of belief. This is not the kind of distortion that destroys, it is the kind that reveals or should reveal. (qtd. in Fitzgerald 162)

This O’Connor’s typical technique has been observed in the same light by Robert E. Spiller in the novel.

The hero, Hazel Mote’s denial of God is his grotesque act. Blasphemer, murderer, penitent and ascetic without god, he still remains a pin point of light in a society that knows only spiritual sloth. Freakish though he

may be, the grotesque seeks desperately to express spirit, denying the practicalities of daily life, in favour of an outlandish hope. (1422)

Miles Orvell begins his treatment of O'Connor's writing by usefully placing it within the American tradition of satiric romance. She creates a fiction of surfaces, which concomitantly reflects the aspect of psyche's investigation of reality.

From the above mentioned critics and criticism regarding O'Connor's novel, *Wise Blood*, it is pretty obvious that most of them have focused on the relevance of spirituality, morality, harmony and religion. The issue of Lacanian psychoanalysis has not been explored. Hence, this study tries to examine the novel from the Lacanian concept of mirror theory.

The mirror stage is a very early step in a child's development of its own identity. According to Lacan, the stage begins when the child is six months old. Lacan writes, "It suffices to understand the mirror stage . . . as an identification . . . namely the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes [assume] an image" (Ecrits 76).

The stage starts when the human child first recognizes its own image in a mirror. At this point in the child's life, it is helpless, relying exclusively on its caretaker for everything. The child also doesn't have full control over its motor skills. While the child cannot always exercise control over its own body, it quickly realizes that by making whatever motions it can, it can exercise a sort of control over the image in the mirror, which gives it great pleasure.

Another important factor in the mirror image is that prior to it, the child only recognizes itself in parts, (hands, toes, etc). However, all of that changes in the mirror stage. As Sean Homer points out:

While the infant still feels his/her body to be in parts, as fragmented

and not yet unified, it is the image that provides him/her with a sense of unification and wholeness. The mirror image, therefore, anticipates the mastery of the infant 'sown body, and stands in contrast to the feelings of fragmentation the infant experiences. What is important at this point is that the infant identifies with this mirror image. The image is him/herself. This identification is crucial, as without it – and without the anticipation of mastery that it establishes – the infant would never get to the stage of perceiving him/herself as a complete or whole being. (25)

But that is not the end of the story. While the mirror stage helps the child to develop a sense of identity in a narcissistic way, it also has an alienating effect. In Lacan's words:

The mirror stage is a drama whose internal pressures pushes precipitously from insufficiency to anticipation – and for the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, turns out fantasies that proceed from a fragmented image of the body to what I will call an —orthopedic form of its totality—and to the finally donned armor of an alienating identity. (Ecrits 78)

In other words, although the child starts to identify itself as a complete being during the mirror stage, it also starts to feel a sense of hostility towards the image that's representing itself. Sean Homer writes that "from the moment the image of unity is posited in opposition to the experience of fragmentation, the subject is established as a rival to itself" (26). Homer then takes it a step further by saying, "The same rivalry established between the subject and him/herself is also established in future relations between the subject and others" (26).

Joan Copjec explores the narcissistic angle of a subject's hostility towards its mirror image. She writes:

Narcissism, too, takes on a different meaning in Lacan, one more in accord with Freud's own. Since something always appears to be missing from any representation, narcissism cannot consist in finding satisfaction in one's own visual image. It must, rather, consist in the belief that one's own being exceeds the self-image, with which the subject constantly finds fault and in which it constantly fails to recognize itself. What one loves in one's image is something more than the image. (37)

Copjec seems to be suggesting that the hostility that one finds in one's own image continues on beyond the mirror stage, as the subject believes that the image is more flawed than itself. What this means is that the hostility that the subject starts to feel towards its alienated image as a toddler continues on throughout the subject's lifetime.

The imaginary is the field of images and imagination and deception according to Lacan, and the imaginary is structured by the symbolic order: in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Lacan argues how the visual field is structured by symbolic laws. Thus the Imaginary involves a linguistic dimension. If the signifier is the foundation of the Symbolic, the signified and signification are part of the Imaginary order.

Language has Symbolic and Imaginary connotations. The Symbolic is also the field of radical "alterity," that is the other: the unconscious is the discourse of this other. In his Seminar IV "La relation objet" Lacan asserts that the concepts of Law and Structure are unthinkable without language: thus the Symbolic is a linguistic dimension. Thus, it is the Symbolic which is determinant of subjectivity, and the

Imaginary, made of images and appearances, is the effect of the Symbolic. The Real, according to Lacan, refers to a true being-in-itself. Unlike the Symbolic, which implies the possibility that something may be missing from the Symbolic, the Real is always in its place. That is, we can say, if Symbolic is a set of differentiated elements, signifiers, the Real in itself is undifferentiated, it bears no fissure. Lacan defines the Real as “the impossible” because it is impossible to imagine and impossible to integrate into the Symbolic, being impossibly attainable. Finally, the Real is the object of anxiety, for it lacks any possible mediation, and is “the essential object which is not an object any longer, but this something faced with which all words cease and all categories fail, the object of anxiety par excellence” (Norton 91).

Lacan depicts the process of the configuration of the subject as operating by a strict economy. For every gain, there is an equal loss. When one moves into the mirror stage, one loses touch with the enjoyment of the primal state, but one gains a rudimentary sense of self. When the subject moves into the stage of language acquisition, one further loses touch with enjoyment but gains an, albeit false, sense of control over it.

The final transition occurs through the functioning of the name of the father, the phallus figure. Just as strings of words become meaningful sentences only when they end, at the point where the period is placed so, too, life can only have meaning when referred to its final punctuation point, death. When the subject enters language at the oedipal stage, it is placed between the possibility of original enjoyment and its opposite, death. As with all opposites, these two are related. It is the original enjoyment represented by the mother that is denied by the name of the father, imprisons the subject in the realm of language and places it under its law. This realm is what Lacan calls the Symbolic, and its law is the law of language in which words

function metonymically and metaphorically.

The subject now is provided, in the realm of language, bits and pieces of enjoyment and substitutions for it. It can never be fully satisfied but must exist in a condition of perpetual desire. This desire is experienced as a lack and a burden that must be borne. In return, though, the subject gains the possibility of meaning. The primal object, by denying the subject the possibility of looking backward toward the enjoyment of the womb, forces it to look forward toward the enjoyment of death. As it does so, in a manner of speaking, everything falls into place. Life becomes meaningful, and the subject is able to make every day count in the manner of *carpe diem*. Note, though, that the meaning that can be created in the realm of language depends entirely on the operation of the curious opposition that emanates from the primal stage. Despite the abstract nature of this theoretical formulation, we experience the essence of it in numerous everyday aphorisms.

Human mind properly channelizes primal desires so that they do not become abnormal. When this process fails or goes wrong, the ominous jeopardy of mental illness looms. Neurosis occurs when the primal desire only partly takes, and it does not attain its full symbolic force in the subject. When the phallic signifier is foreclosed entirely, psychosis results; there is no mediating barrier of consciousness between the subject and the realm of the symbolic. In psychosis, the Other, residing in the symbolic, speaks directly into the subject, and subject seeks to enact the desire of the Other. Neurosis is thus a refusal of death and secretly held belief that one can “go back” and can somehow retain primal enjoyment. Psychosis is, in a sense, to enact death, to be identified with it and collaborate with it, to “do what it says.” Psychosis is based on the kind of uncaring that only comes to those who have experienced them as identical.

Lacan sees human subjects as tragic and imprisoned in their egos. It is the ego's demand for clarity so that it is able to bring the text under its control that Lacan purposefully resisted in his work. He wanted to give his interlocutors no way out but in, that is to say, to refuse the demand of the ego and thus push the reader into the realm of the unconscious, of the Other. Remember also that this is psychoanalytic theory – a body of thought where, as Freud once remarked, money, fears, and sex are all the same thing – and as such is bound to appear to non-psychoanalytically oriented readers as quirky and esoteric. The necessary starting place for understanding how Lacan accounts for the human subject is to note that he rejected the standard developmental orientation.

Jacques Lacan, inspired by Heidegger and Saussure, built on Freud's psychoanalytic model of the subject, in which the “split subject” is constituted by a double bind: alienated from enjoyment when he or she leaves the Real, enters into the Imaginary (during the mirror stage), and separates from the Other when he or she comes into the realm of language and difference in the Symbolic or the Name of the Father. Lacan points out that every child, no matter a boy or a girl, has to give up his desire of being the mother's desire in the Oedipus complex in order to enter and be accepted in the world of the Symbolic. Once the child passes through the Oedipus phrase, he is forever impossible to regain the union with his mother as he experienced in the Mirror stage. He has to face the difference, absence and inconsistency in the Symbolic world. However, in such a world of language, he can never fully and completely represent himself. The subject is split by the very fact that “he is a speaking being, since speech divides the subject of the enunciation from the subject of the statement” (Evans 192). It means that a subject cannot be fully represented by language in the Symbolic Order. He cannot completely know himself, and nor can he fully express himself. So, the subject becomes mentally split. Here the split denoted

“the impossibility of the ideal of a fully represent self-consciousness; the subject will never know himself completely” (Lacan 109).

Moving into the realm of language in this way configures the unconscious, thus the famous often quoted Lacanian utterance, “The unconscious is structured like a language” (Lacan 98). The subject is split off from itself and begins to experience itself, on one hand, as the “conscious I” of identifications in the world and of an ego idealization, and, on the other hand, as inextricably connected to an Other (the unconscious) that is coterminous with the source of language. Typically, the I is identified with the ego and becomes, in a sense, lost in it. When people describe themselves, that is, “I am . . . and I am . . .” they experience such descriptions as capturing and representing “who they are” (Lacan 101). Such identifications, however, miss the essence of subjectivity, which is the part hinted at by what is left out of such descriptions and indeed cannot be described at all.

In this way, man loses his subjectivity and feels lack as he cannot find primal joy of childhood when moves from mirror stage to symbolic stage. The following chapter analyzes the protagonist's loss of subjectivity as a result of his reaching symbolic stage.

The thesis has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the work – a short introduction to the research and a short literature review. Moreover, it gives a general outline of the whole research work. The second chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length, taking theoretical support from psychoanalysis, especially Lacanian concept of Mirror theory. It analyzes how the novel *Wise Blood* explores fragmented self of the protagonist, Hazel Motes. Finally, the third or the last chapter sums up the main points of the present research work and the findings of the researcher.

Chapter 2

Hazel's Imaginary and Symbolic World

In O'Connor's *Wise Blood*, the protagonist Hazel Motes is an alienated person. He is captured by his imaginary hometown Eastrod and especially his fundamentalist grandfather who serves as his "mirror self." The grandfather's extreme and distorted interpretation of the Scripture initiates Hazel's misunderstanding of Christianity. As a result of the lack of maternal love in the imaginary, Hazel is gradually "castrated" by the father (the corrupted modern world). Hazel is forced to leave for the symbolic Taulkinham where he finds himself become a fragmented subject who is caught between the symbolic and the imaginary order because of his rejection of the law of the symbolic world. Therefore, Hazel tries to escape from isolation and fragmentation through redemptive activities and death.

As a child, Hazel was planning to be a preacher like his grandfather who had traveled three countries in a Ford automobile. Every fourth Saturday he would drive into Eastrod as if he were just in time to save people all from sin. People would gather around his Ford. So as a child, Hazel Motes plans to become a preacher like his grandfather. But later he is reluctant to surrender to the symbolic order, that is being faithful to God, and following his grandfather to be a preacher. Hazel Motes' redemption lies only on satisfying God, or the other, while in his imaginary world, he is exactly Jesus himself, because Jesus is the image he sees in the mirror. This feeling is deeply rooted in his heart. His faithful preacher grandfather set the good example for him, and he has nothing to choose but follow him. Moreover, his conservative mother is a strict person. He seems to see God everywhere around him. However, he is disappointed as his sacrifice, his redemption and his torture cause no sign of God.

After several disappointing acts, and no sign of God appears, he becomes a skeptic man, and finally a nihilist. His subjectivity is trapped between imaginary and symbolic world, with the former symbolized by God, the latter symbolized by his grandfather and his strict mother respectively. The grandfather is a powerful influence on Hazel, imprinting Hazel's consciousness with the image of a traveling evangelist who preached from the nose of an automobile. O'Connor writes: "There was already a deep black wordless conviction in him that the way to avoid Jesus was to avoid sin. He knew by the time he was twelve years old that he was going to be a preacher" (22). This shows that Hazel's mind has been filled with Jesus, sin, redemption and so on. As a result, he becomes a cynical person.

The Essex, the old car functions for Hazel as the "emblem of his absurd motion, his symbolic home, pulpit, and coffin" (264). Haze's ownership of the car signifies his inability to escape the legacy of his grandfather. Hazel, who says he "wanted this car mostly to be a house for me" (37), uses his car much as his traveling preacher grandfather did his, with the Essex serving as a constant throughout his evangelical travels. Also, Hazel's practice of preaching from the hood of his car comes directly from his grandfather. The car, which Haze says "will get me anywhere I want to go" (65), becomes not a means of escape but a symbol of entrapment, as Allen points out:

. . . as fast as he runs from these terrifying memories, he repeatedly finds himself boxed in symbolic coffins: his berth on the train, the toilet stall at the station, Leora Watts's tiny room, his car. As a means of escaping his past, Haze's motion is as futile as a rat's on a treadmill, or a rat-colored car's down a highway that seems to be "slipping back under. (207)

All these absurd activities of Hazel Motes reflect his longing for childhood desire and influence of his grandfather. Haze's embracing of this symbol of entrapment further shows his inner drive to return to the Christian ideology of his youth.

After the army releases him, Hazel Motes becomes a man with lack and empty in both physical and spiritual sense. He has neither home nor any ideology to rely upon. He roams without any objective and destination. When the story begins we find Hazel on the train with the fellow passengers one of whom is Mrs. Wally Bee Hitchcock. We find her match in Hazel himself. As the elderly woman searches him for what she does not know she lacks, so Haze searches elsewhere for what he himself lacks and feels as a lack. Like the woman's, his quest focuses on others. Instead of regarding the woman who tries to gain his attention, what Haze is "looking at was the porter" (11). This man represents to Motes much that he knows is quite literally missing from his life. Hazel imagines that the porter, despite his denials, is from his home town, Eastrod, and so, association, represents for Haze the things lost from that hometown. In Eastrod he had once had a family and a community, though small. Now, the town, with its people, is gone. Once "there must have been twenty-five people in Eastrod" (20), but now there is no one. Moreover, he has lost each parent and both his brothers, and brother and both father and mother. In their suggesting the focus of Haze's desire (desire for the childhood that represents his lack, itself always the phallus), the dreams have powerful Lacanian resonances. The dream about his mother is perhaps the most powerful, for it most directly represents the phallus in the mother as phallic mother. It does so by representing what Lacan calls the "anamorphic" power of phallus when associated with the mother as still possessing the phallus (Lacan 77). In that disguise as phallic mother, she represents once more the youth's demand to be punished, his need to satisfy the desire of the other, and a

desire that, of course, can never really be satisfied.

Hazel's trauma begins he happens to follow his father to a carnival tent where he sees for the first time of his life a naked woman. This event reminds him of the site of his mother's 'washpot' and backyard fire where he expects to be punished for his sin and relieved of his guilt. The most important are the textual reminder of the references Lacan calls the Symbolic. These reminders become actualized in various ways of their affiliations with Hazel's pathology and the language of O'Connor's text. Therefore, Hazel Motes' life is heavily affected by his mother, grandfather and by God (the other) as he is destined to sacrifice his life for redemption.

Hazel Motes has a strong confidence in his power to resist evil; it is something he inherited from his grandfather. The only things from Eastrod he took into the army with him were a black Bible and a pair of silver-rimmed spectacles that belonged to his mother. He went to a country school where he learned to read and write. But it was the Bible, the only book he read. He didn't read it often but when he did he wore his mother's glasses. He meant to tell anyone in the army who invited him to sin that he was from Eastrod, Tennessee, and that he meant to get back there and stay back there, that he wasn't going to have his soul damned by the government or by any foreign place it sent him to (23). Hazel Motes is strict to himself, and he tries to remain clean as in the symbolic world, supervised by his strict mother. He tries to live entirely clean of the soul and spirit. He tries to comply with the Symbolic order, as demanded by his mother and grandfather – a clean faithful Christian preacher.

After experiencing all these hardships, after resisting such attractive worldly life, he wants the recognition and praise of his hometown people. But when he rushes home, what he finds is only the skeleton of a house. There is nothing left in the house but his mother's robe, which his mother always kept in the kitchen. He tries to look

for trace of his hometown in reality, but in vain. On the train to Taulkinham, Hazel Motes looks at the porter to trace the porter of their common birthplace – the deserted Eastrod, but the porter denies that he is from Eastrod. The misery he has is a desire for home; it has nothing to do with Jesus. O'Connor writes about his longing for home and family:

When the army finally lets him go, he is pleased to think that he is still uncorrupted. All he wants is to get back to Eastrod, Tennessee. The black Bible and his mother's glasses are still in the bottom of his bag. He doesn't read any book now but he keeps the Bible because it came from home. He kept the glasses in case his vision should ever become dim. (24)

Hazel Motes is a victim of the war, and he is taken advantage of by the government but is forgotten when the war ends. He finds no hometown to secure his clean and sensitive soul. He is lost in the mess in the materialistic and commodified world. He strongly resists sin and evil in the army as well as everywhere in the corrupt city of Taulkinham. He now has no option other than to follow his mother and grandfather. But the values he insists on with great effort are collapsed slowly and gradually. His subjectivity is split in the corrupt real world.

O'Connor offers another world of signs, that of the material, in opposition to the internal world of Haze and that of religion. Arriving in Taulkinham, for no particular reason other than to indulge in all the things he has previously resisted. "Something on your mind?" Mrs. Watts asked, pulling his rigid figure a little closer. Listen," he said, keeping his voice tightly under control, "I come for the usual business" (35). This shows Hazel Motes' surrendering to his sexual desire by sleeping with a dirty prostitute. After jumping into Mrs. Watts's bed, Hazel Motes remembers

going to the fair with his father and seeing a naked woman in a show. His mother asks him what he saw but he remains silent until he is hit and he mutters "I never ask him" (57) when she tells him Jesus died to redeem him. After this, he walks about in the woods with his shoes filled with stones and small rocks as a penance. He later repeats it after blinding himself. He believes this would satisfy God, but nothing happens.

The carnival event in the age of twelve makes his subjectivity split from his imaginary, fulfilled world of his childhood. So, he insists on his symbolic, faithful, uncorrupt world in the army, while the corrupt world after war makes his subjectivity split again from his symbolic religious world of his youth. Hazel Motes spends his first night in Taulkinham on a prostitute's bed, and his second night in the street.

When he walks along the stores carelessly, Hazel comes across a boy named Enoch Emery, and is attracted by a blind preacher. After arriving in Taulkinham, Hazel Motes is determined to give in to all his sexual desire, and to indulge in all the things he has previously resisted. He sees electric signs blinking frantically saying things like CANDY and HOTEL. This is a whole new world, where pleasures can be found immediately, where his inner world can be destroyed. He wants to leave the inner world behind. According to Freud in "The ego and the Id," the super-ego performs the same function of protecting and saving that was fulfilled in earlier days by the father and later by Providence or Destiny. Hazel Motes's determined removal of belief surpasses all other belief and the terror of this connected to Freud's terror of the Id, which Kristeva has linked to the "maternal unconscious," something the later Freud grew obsessed with, the death instinct (Kristeva 65). Therefore, when the taxi driver mistakes him for a preacher, or rather recognizes his blood, he shouts at the driver that he believes in nothing at all and taxi driver exclaims back that the trouble with preachers is that they believe they are too good to believe in anything. The driver

remarks, "That's the trouble with you preachers. You've all too good to believe in anything' and he drove off with a look of disgust and righteousness" (26). The character here plays the part of cynical critic, who pretends to look objectively at the world but does so in a distorted religious fashion that denies reality.

One's subjectivity can never be anything other than divided or split. In other words, one cannot have one single self, but has many sides in the unconsciousness. Hazel, in his childhood and early youth, identifies himself with his ideal ego – his grandfather in Eastrod, his hometown. He has no ability to distinguish himself from other people of his hometown. He accepts that he will be a preacher as his grandfather and will be clean forever, but the Carnival event in his age of twelve becomes a trauma of his childhood. Thus, his imaginary order is ready to surrender to the reality of symbolic order. However, in the army, he must face with lots of temptations and terror of death. His faith on God ensures him to be against all of the temptations.

O'Connor writes:

When he was eighteen and the army called him, he saw the war as a trick to lead him into temptation, and he would have shot his foot except that he trusted himself to get back in a few months, uncorrupted. He had a strong confidence in his power to resist evil; it was something he had inherited, like his face, from his grandfather. He thought that if the government wasn't through with him in four months, he would leave anyway. (65)

Returning from army after the war, he intends to return to his original hometown to continue his ideal life, while finding his hometown and the people have disappeared. Thus, in the corrupt materialistic city of Taulkinham, Hazel becomes a split subject. Trapped in the gap between the symbolic and the real order, Hazel is lost among the

many selves he wants to be. Hazel does not know which one to choose. Therefore, he chooses to give in to his sexual desire by sleeping with a prostitute.

Hazel has not had a childhood or a typical American teenage period of dating girl and driving a car and having fun. It is in Taulkinham that he becomes a rebel without a cause, resisting the Law, establishing a sexual relationship with a fifteen years old and a prostitute, and murdering an old man, Solace Layfield who looks like him. The fake preacher Solace Layfield is actually Haze's mirror image, and he is hired by Hoover Shoats to begin preaching. O'Connor relates what Layfield says, which reflects Hazel's ideas: "I love everyone of you people and I want you to listen to him and me and join our church, the Holy Church without Christ, the new church with the new Jesus, and then you'll all be helped like me" (189). At this Hazel gets infuriated and murders the fake preacher.

Haze's murder of Layfield is unnecessary, since he apparently sees Layfield as an embodiment of his own conscience. Part of him knows Christ is true and he has all along been struggling to satisfy himself in his preaching. Now, different people can be the same person, just as an identical man can appear in the same clothes as Hazel Motes and set himself up as a prophet. Solace Layfield, whom Hazel Motes kills, is identical to Hazel Motes. The irony is that Hazel Motes, although he does not preach or beg for money when blind, ends up becoming that which he hates, just as Enoch Emery, the boy who works at the zoo and abuses animals, become a false beast, stealing a gorilla outfit and becoming an animal. The other irony is that these are people with nothing to do, and knowing nobody. Within this physical abandonment they need to create a space that orders their lives, that gives a moral code and that keeps them within a form of constructed destiny. O'Connor writes Emory's ambition: "He [Emory] wanted to become something. He wanted to better his condition until it

was the best. He wanted to be THE young man of the future, like the ones in the insurance ads" (215). This shows how Emory wants order and harmony in life. But his desire always remains a lack. Similarly, despite Hazel Motes's originally denying the existence of any morality, his act of murdering the fake preacher proves that he does not favour immoral activities as he talks about truth and morality. When he hears the fake preacher, he says, "this man is true" and "this man is liar" (207, 211). This can be read as O'Connor's attack on false religion. Therefore, what Hazel kills is not Solace Layfield, but his other self, and this satisfies him by the imagination of extinguishing in his preaching. Haze is so devoted to God in heart, but pretends to rebel God. This fierce conflict makes him upset and he appears mad. In other words, he becomes split personality.

Therefore, Hazel Motes loses himself between imaginary, symbolic and real order, and becomes mad. There is a cycle here, a spiraling into "madness," where each event in the outer world is scripted and each society condemns someone as mad who steps outside the moral framework. Hazel Motes tries to move away from destiny and by doing so falls straight into its hands. It seems that his early fall from grace was his looking at the woman at the fair which he had first thought was a skinned animal, but was a woman in a casket. O'Connor writes:

He slid the money on the platform and scrambled to get in before it was over. He went through the flap of the tent and inside there was another tent and he went through that. All he could see were the backs of the men. He climbed up on a bench and looked over their heads. They were looking down into a lowered place where something white was lying, squirming a little, in a box lined with black cloth. For a second he thought it was a skinned animal and then he saw it was a

woman. She was fat and she had a face like an ordinary woman except there was a mole on the corner of her lip, that moved when she grinned, and one on her side. (56)

Hazel knows it is something taboo, even before he enters, asking the man on the door “is it a nigger?” (55). Both women and “niggers” are the “other” and they haunt the young Hazel and these desires need to be removed. It is his mother who punishes him, who, like Jesus, stares at him through the trees, as if he has attempted some form of incest.

After finding no sign of God, Hazel Motes and Enoch Emery try to look for meaning in their lives.' What happens is that he steals the dried dead body from the museum and gives it to Sabbath Hawks who is now sleeping with Hazel Motes. He does this because he must. "Enoch Emery knew now that his life would never be the same again, because the thing that was going to happen to him had started to happen. He had always known that something was going to happen, but he hadn't known what" (123). Because he has done something for the new Jesus, Enoch Emery believes that it is "going to do something for him" (185). It is this belief that makes him believe that destiny is behind him when he reads of Gongga, Giant Jungle Monarch visiting the various theaters around town. Gongga, or rather the actor dressed as a giant gorilla, has already humiliated Enoch, who shook his hand outside a theater and was told to “go to hell” by the beast. For months Enoch has been mocking real beasts at the zoo where he works guarding a gate. In this way he has worked as a critic of the animals but becomes one himself. Thus, his time has come and he sneaks into the van where the actor in a suit is being transported, steals the suit and becomes the beast himself. In this act, he transforms himself into something which he has denied and hated. Meanwhile, Sabbath Hawks has taken the stolen dried dead body

and has turned him into a little baby, as if he is the offspring of Haze and herself, saying "Call me Momma now" (181) but Haze breaks the thing against the wall.

Enoch eventually joins the animal kingdom when he is finally rejected by the humans, but before he does so, he tries to share the strength of the Gorilla. In the first place, the Gorilla is the common ancestor of the mankind; at the same time it is their guardian spirit and helper. The animated character is natural, not in some individual animal or entity, but in all the individuals of a given class. Within a Freudian interpretation concerning taboos, Haze's behavior is predictable, given that in "almost every place where we find totems we also find a law against persons of the same totem having sexual relations with one another and consequently against their marrying" (Lacan 86). If the blind man is both Enoch's and Hazel's adopted grandfather then Sabbath is their sister. Even though Enoch lusts after her and arrives at her house just after Haze and Sabbath have consummated their relationship in the form of sexual intercourse, there is an unconscious desire by Enoch to preserve the Law of the clan— that is he acts like an animal which establishes sexual relations with their clans – as he tries to have sexual relations with Sabbath Hawks.

Hazel's actions are concerned with denying the power of the Law. He breaks the shriveled object given by Enoch as Sabbath Hawks calls it to say daddy and mommy. He "lunged and snatched the shriveled body and threw it against the wall" (256). Before blinding himself Hazel Motes argues with the supposed blind man, saying that Jesus came to heal the blind so why he blinded himself. He says, "If Jesus cured blind men, how come you don't get Him to cure you?" (245) The blind man replies God used blindness to convert a man, who in return converted thousands, thus the blind man claims to be following in his footsteps.

Hazel Motes ultimately functions as the 'Other,' as, perhaps, the new Jesus

who can bring extraordinary grotesques to the truth of the ordinary subject. But in the Lacanian theory also opens to us more horrifying; desire operates in O'Connor's text and in the relation of Haze and Mrs. Flood. This other desire is that not of the Oedipal Father, but of the "anal father," the grotesque figure, as of the "little man" residing at the core of the subject and who represents the stumbling block of the Freudian sexual relation and the Christian redemptive act.

Both Mrs. Flood and Hazel Motes not only fulfill their desires, but those desires are acceptable. Both characters achieve "redemption." If redemption is a kind of truth, and truth for Lacan is "the truth of the subject," then Lacanian "redemption" is the subject's accepting its truth, its knowledge that one is split, lacking, alienated. Thus Mrs. Flood seems finally to reach that redemption. If so, moreover, she is the subject who demonstrates Hazel's "redemption" through his transcendence of ordinary humanity because he is the agent of her ascendance to humanity and to knowledge.

Hazel Motes' self-blinding is part of his further alienation from the world, the world he has come back to after the "Great War." On the opposite, Asa Hawks is a fake faithful blind preacher, whom Hazel Motes tries to fight against for the false preacher's religious part, but at last find that it is meaningless, for Hazel Motes finds nothing to revolt, and this is the most miserable and the most absurd thing in the world. Therefore, he blinds himself for both redemptions for his former evil activities and showing his final separation from the evil reality.

Paradoxically, the desire behind the eyesight lost, and the sight is closed completely, the previously searched subject is regained. It is like something absurd. In reality, we can never gain what you desire for, but whenever we are completely disappointed and give it up, we gain it with no effort. The absurd philosophy happens

on the blind hero Hazel Motes. In fact, as what Lacan said, subjectivity can never be found, for it is lost once we see ourselves in the mirror. Because we must comply with the image in the mirror, then the image demanded by Symbolic order, the image distorted by real order. In this way, we can never find the true selves. As the case of Hazel Motes, his subjectivity must submit to his strict mother, his faithful preacher grandfather first. So in this way he lost his original true self even in his immature childhood. Then in the army, he insists on his formed subject – nearly an image of Puritan. But when he leaves the army, and cannot return to his hometown, he gets lost between Symbolic and Real orders. Thus his worldly desire, which he tries to depress with great effort awakens. In the corrupt city of Taulkinham, he does almost everything that he previously avoided. He says, “Nobody with a good car needs to be redeemed” (105). He challenges religion by preaching his own “church without Jesus Christ” (35) and attacks the materialistic society; he sexually tempts the daughter of the fake preacher, but on the contrary is tempted by her. The false mask of the fake blind preacher Asa Hawks is finally unveiled, and he finds that in fact he is more loyal and faithful than the preacher. Completely disappointed with the reality, he finds nothing to be for or against, even nothing to rebel, but himself. Thus, finally he abstains himself from any worldly pleasure. In this way, he tries to regain peace and fulfillment, but in vain.

Before the trauma of the tent event, Hazel Motes is happy and self-fulfilled, and he feels no limit or rule from the society or authority. He has his subject in his imaginary world – Jesus Christ or the Other. So he feels peaceful and happy. However, the tent event makes him feel the power of authority in the Symbolic order. His father literally intervenes while he was watching the naked woman, which acts as an authority and power. O’Connor notes:

Had one of them there built into ever' casket" his father, up toward the front, said, "be a heap ready to go sooner. Hazel recognized the voice without looking. He slid down off the bench and scrambled out of the tent. He crawled out under the side of the outside one because he didn't want to pass his father. (42)

His faithful mother and preacher grandfather stand for the Other or Jesus Christ in reality, and they make strict regulation or rules on him. This is quite different from his imaginary world of his childhood. Yet the power of the Symbolic Order is so intense, he has to adjust his subject to succumb to it in order to be accepted by the society.

In this way, his subject is trapped between imaginary and symbolic order, and gets split. While later, his subject is trapped between symbolic and real order in the corrupt city of Taulkinham, and gets split again. So throughout the whole life of Hazel Motes, he has to adjust himself from time to time to comply with the others and then he can be accepted by the society. While in his inner heart, he is reluctant to do so, for he wants something fixed, that is he is searching for subject all the time. Absurdly, whenever he finally insists on something, the environment changes, and he has to change accordingly. He tries to find his true self, which he believes is fixed in the changing world, but what he is trying to search can never be found and it is doomed in vain. He wants to rebel or attack, but nothing to rebel or attack but himself, so what he can do is only to himself – torture for redemption. After blinding himself, he puts on shoes which are filled with sharp rocks inside, wears warped wires around his chest and eats outside in the filthy places. Moreover, after catching influenza, he frequently goes out in bad weather despite Mrs. Flood's warning, who admonishes him saying, "Nobody in their right mind would like to be out on a day like this, you will pick up an infection. No sane person eats there. A dark and filthy place" (269). All these

Hazel's acts reflect his attempt to liberate himself from materialistic life by torturing himself – for seeking redemption as his life lacks substance.

When his landlady Mrs. Flood questions him why he blinded himself he says to pay, and when asked to pay for what, he replies it does not matter what. At times he behaves so cynically that the landlady does not follow what he possesses in his "skull." O'Connor writes:

He sat on her porch a good part of every afternoon, but sitting out there with him was like sitting by himself; he didn't talk except when it suited him. You asked him a question in the morning and he might answer it in the afternoon, or he might never. He offered to pay her extra to let him keep his room because he knew his way in and out, and she decided to let him stay. (221)

Mrs. Flood is frightened of death, particularly death being one long blind existence, and Hazel Motes is a reminder to her of her destiny. This can be read as judgment of life also. Yet she eventually decides to take care of him, for both unselfish and materialistic reasons, believing that his widow would inherit his war pension.

Once Hazel Motes has returned to Mrs. Flood and dies in the police car, she sits opposite to him, with her eyes shut and tries to see what it is that is in him. She wants to know how she had been cheated or what had cheated her. O'Connor writes:

She [Mrs. Flood] leaned closer and closer to his face, looking deep into them, trying to see how she had been cheated or what 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 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. (225)

The tragedy and irony is that it was because she would not admit she was concerned about him generally, and told the police that he was behind on his rent, that the police beat him. The question of the meaning of human existence in the "totality of Being, this fundamental question of philosophy, gains its true and practical importance through man's total discovery of death" (Lacan 89). Being in such situation, Hazel Motes meets the extreme pains and the woman clarifies about it to the authority. The ultimate reality is the death which everyone should accept this inevitable truth.

Hazel Motes discovers that blasphemy is not the way to salvation because there is nothing to blaspheme against, if Jesus did not exist in the first place and only insane folk believe in him. We can argue that this is all an attempt to kill the father figure, to usurp him, and certainly Enoch Emery's devotion to the dried dwarf he believes to be new Jesus, whom he steals from the museum for Hazel Motes, is close to Freudian views on the origin of religion. Freud makes the point that the "totem" bond is deeper than that to family or community, and both Enoch Emery and Hazel Motes have nobody, no friends or relations. It seems that Enoch Emery wants to please Hazel Motes, to create a father figure out of him who approves of him and by offering him his totem he rewards him with a gift that symbolizes a peace between them. Hazel Motes wants nothing to do with Emery but everything to do with Asa Hawks, the fake blind man. It is as if he must resist Hawks but eventually he becomes him, blinding himself, actually doing what Asa Hawks did not have the courage to do:

Ten years ago at a revival he had planned to blind himself . . . with

courage enough then, he had thrust his hands into the bucket of wet lime and streaked them down his face; but he hadn't been able to let any of it get into his eyes. (198)

Thus, in a desperate attempt to seek redemption and order in his life lacking meaning, Hazel completes what Asa Hawks has not been able to do, that is blind himself.

Death is ultimate truth. Without death there is no need for religion, philosophy, judgment or criticism. Shutting her eyes, Mrs. Flood cannot hold onto the pinpoint of light and sees him moving further and further away until Hazel Motes himself is the pinpoint of light. All she ever wished for was a companion and she felt she had this in Hazel Motes as he is totally dependent on her. Mrs. Flood reveals her heart to Hazel:

'I got a place for you in my heart, Mr. Motes' she said. I can't allow you to stay here under no circumstances. I can't climb these stairs. I don't want a thing,' she said, 'but to help you. You don't have anybody to look after you but me. Nobody to care if you live or die but me! No other place to be but mine!' (229)

But it seems that in the Gothic world created by O'Connor, there is no real happiness, Mrs. Flood only attempts to run away from the darkness, or the pinpoint of light that accentuates the darkness. Whether he runs away from darkness or light, he always feels the lack. He never achieves the order and peace and redemption in life. This is the full terror of the lives of her characters that also, philosophically, is crucial to human existence.

Both the names of Hazel Motes and Mrs. Flood have connotations. Motes means dirt in a word, so Hazel Motes has a strange ability to see the motes in his own eyes more than those in the eyes of others. That is Haze's self-mortification. Hazel

does indeed demonstrate evolution from nihilism because of his denial of self – first of comfort, then of sight, then of very life. One of the examples of his abandonment of comfort includes his act of "put [ting] on his shoes that are lined with rocks" (245). He wraps the wire around his chest in order to torture himself as Mrs. Flood sees "three strands of barbed wire wrapped around his chest" (251). His act also saves Mrs. Flood. Mrs. Flood has been held as too negative a character to matter enough to redeem. She thinks it strange at Hazel not enjoying his life. She says, "What possible reason could a sane person have for wanting to not enjoy himself any more?" (238). She is old, alone, poor, and mean. Her desires are like flood, and she is greedy. Having young and vital Hazel sacrifice his life for her sake has been too unattractive to occur to the community. When she tries to follow his blind eyes to the pinpoint of light where he disappears in death, it is shocking.

Both Mrs. Flood, when she looks at the blinded Haze Motes, and Haze Motes when he looks at the dark glassed of the fake blind man, want to see what is behind the darkness, they attempt to look into hell, to fathom meaning. But it seems that through this hell there may be light. After Hazel Motes' death, Mrs. Flood embraces him in her arms:

What she could only imagine is the outside in, the whole black world in his head and his head bigger than the world, his head big enough to include the sky and planets and whatever was or had been or would be. How would he know if time was going backwards or forwards or if he was going with it? She imagined it was like you were walking in a tunnel and all you could see was a pin point of light. She had to imagine the pin point of light; she couldn't think of it at all without that. She saw it as some kind of a star, like the star on Christmas cards.

She saw him going backwards to Bethlehem and she had to laugh.

(218)

Eventually, however, in *Haze*, Mrs. Flood recognizes her own desire: she wants him or what he represents. Her story is clear. At first, she finds herself unable to think of anything else but Haze. For a time, as she becomes devoted to him and attends to his needs more unselfishly than even she might imagine, she would stare at him at length, but she still saw “nothing at all” (222). Soon, though, her devotion becomes like an office, a way of life – “Watching his face had become a habit with her,” perhaps even a “habit of being.” (169). Finally, like Haze when he watched the face of Asa Hawks, “she wanted to penetrate the darkness behind it and see for herself what was there” (225). “What was there” is the issue for analysis. In psychoanalysis, the hidden “what” is desire, the subject’s desire of the other, the father or the Father. Mrs. Flood, in her relation to Haze, represents both objects of desire. Imagining Haze as the master possessing some master plan, she herself had probably planned “to marry him and then have him committed to the state institution for the insane” (228). But that plan changes to include marrying and keeping him. Ultimately the plan dissolves and she loses herself in that selfless devotion to him. In her devotion she has thrown Haze totally into the Symbolic. O’Connor shows that Symbolic role when his body is returned to Mrs. Flood by the policemen who have killed him. But she does not know he is dead. Haze is death, the symbolic other who, Lacan says, as Freud before him had said, always “knows.” In that role, Hazel leads this old woman to the place to which he had come when he had lost everything. In death, as a symbol of the Symbolic, he brings her to her own knowledge of the other.

We find that knowledge in the two signifiers that neither Mrs. Wally Bee Hitchcock nor Hazel Motes had grasped – “the death’s head” and the “pin point of

light." In these images we see that the "new Jesus" Haze had sought and Enoch thought he had found in the mummy is now to be found in Haze himself. Observed by Mrs. Flood, his face shows the "outline of a skull," "plain under his skin" (231). Moreover, O'Connor tells us, "the deep burned eye sockets seemed to lead into the dark tunnel where he had disappeared" (237). But as long as Mrs. Flood looks with her eyes she sees nothing. Closing her eyes, finally, and "looking" into that face she sees what Haze had seen. She sees that she herself is nothing in the eyes of the Other.

Despite the ridiculous nature of much of his behavior, Hazel Motes is in fact a deep philosopher, the critic, in many ways like Lacan, who is a preacher in Hazel Motes' style. "I always speak the truth," says the opening sentence of Lacan's television speech. 'Not the whole truth, because there's no way, to say it all. Saying the whole truth is materially impossible: words miss it. Yet it's through this very impossibility that the truth holds onto the real" (Lacan 67). Hazel Motes tells the blind man, who immediately says he smells the blasphemy and fornication on him, that these "ain't nothing but words" and that "If I was in it [sin] I was in it before I ever committed any" (47). This shows how logically and philosophically Hazel addresses any issues he comes across.

In this way, Hazel's desire for the mirror image results in his isolation. So, finally he tortures and blinds himself. The reason for the self-blinding of is as his struggle to find his subjectivity in the form of redemption. Hazel Motes becomes a split personality due to his disdain towards the corrupt reality and the patriarchal symbolic order dominated by Catholicism. He refuses the rules and restrictions of the symbolic order, yet he cannot accept the corrupt modern materialistic life. Nor can he returns to his imaginary stage for the spiritual peace and redemption, which is already displaced by symbolic order. So, Hazel Motes struggles to search for his lost self by

oscillating between mirror/imaginary stage and symbolic stage. In this oscillation, Hazel Motes becomes a psychotic or fragmented personality.

Chapter 3

Hazel Motes' Search for Redemption and Order

The research on *Wise Blood* reveals that the protagonist Hazel Motes, while being trapped between imaginary and symbolic order, searches for order and redemption from this corrupt materialistic world. He becomes a fragmented and displaced person. In other words, he becomes a split personality according to the Lacanian notion of psychoanalysis. Hazel's subject first splits off from his ideal imaginary image of Jesus to find itself a place in symbolic order in Eastrod, then splits off from the symbolic ego of his grandfather after leaving the army in order to adapt the real order. Having broken away from the ideal image of God, the symbolic ego of a clean faithful preacher, Hazel still cannot find his place in the real because he cannot accept the reality rules of the corrupt society. Thus, Hazel Motes becomes a split subject, and we can see this from his attitude towards purity, woman, and religion. He cannot submit his will to the symbolic regulations. The conflict between his imaginary and symbolic order, and the conflict between his symbolic order and real order finally results in his madness. Hazel Motes tries desperately to struggle with his lack of belief, his total denial of his past. Thus, Haze, as O'Connor significantly calls him, lives in a world in which he tries to clear himself of the demons and angels of his past. He becomes like a mist, but only succeeds in emphasizing this fundamentalist theology through his resistance.

Hazel Motes develops a religion to replace the lost religion of his childhood. The church without Jesus is taken advantage by materialistic fake preacher, and all of Hazel's other pursuit of subjectivity fails. In Taulkinham, Hazel tries to search his subjectivity by following the fake blind preacher Asa Hawks, by creating a new

church without Jesus, by purchasing a car, by searching for his 'wise blood,' by keeping a shrunken statue as the symbol of his new religion. But all in vain, his new religion is taken advantaged by a fake preacher, so he murders the fake preacher. His pursuit of new symbol of his new religion is echoed by Emery, so he brings him a mummy from the zoo, which is destroyed by the daughter of Asa Hawks; his car is destroyed by policeman.

Hazel Motes becomes mad because he feels a deep sense of alienation in a world of corruption. Hazel Motes becomes the blind preacher. The irony is that Hazel Motes, although he does not preach or beg for money when blind, ends up becoming that which he hates, just as Enoch Emery, the boy who works at the zoo and abuses animals. Enoch becomes a false beast, stealing a gorilla outfit and becoming an animal. The other irony is that these are people with nothing to do, and knowing nobody. Within this physical abandonment they need to create a different world that orders their lives, that gives a moral code and that keeps them within a form of constructed destiny, despite Hazel Motes' originally denying the existence of any morality. This can be analyzed as O'Connor's attack on false religion.

So, finally what Hazel can do is only to hurt himself. He alienates himself from the disappointing world by blinding himself, and tortures himself by avoiding any comfort and luxury in his life. His image is exactly what he tries to avoid Jesus Christ. The story ends by the death of Hazel Motes and Mrs. Flood's misery on him and a pin of light, which symbolizes rebirth of Hazel Motes in his imaginary order. That is Hazel Motes gains rebirth in Mrs. Flood, whose name indicate her great desire like flood, but at the end of the story she is moved by Hazel Motes' selfless redemption.

The imaginary world of Hazel Motes is destroyed by his symbolic law,

symbolized by his mother and grandfather, while the symbolic world is destroyed by the war, and he cannot accept the real world until death. Thus, Hazel Motes chooses to alienate from the symbolic and real world by self-blinding, while gains his rebirth in the heart of the intimate deeply-influenced lord lady, symbolized by the pin point of light Mrs. Flood sees while having the dead body of Hazel Motes in arms. All desires, like flood, disappear in the end, but the pure spirit of a sacred Jesus Christ, as the ideal image in the child –Hazel Motes’ imaginary world remains forever in both spiritual sense and the others’ heart.

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