

FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG FAILURE

BY DAVID AIKEN

IN "THE ENDURING CHILL" Flannery O'Connor refers four times to James Joyce, more than she mentions him in all her published essays and critical writings. Surprisingly, however, no one has followed up on these allusions by making a detailed exploration of the relationship between the story and Joyce's works. Such an exploration reveals that the four explicit references to Joyce are only the most obvious of an elaborate series of correspondences between Asbury Porter Fox and the Stephen Dedalus of both *Portrait* and *Ulysses*: correspondences involving not only major events and images but even details of diction and syntax and providing the basis for a sharply satiric portrait of the self-conscious artist-hero.¹ O'Connor frequently uses satire as an instrument of moral judgment, but "The Enduring Chill" is unique among her stories because its satiric object is a specific literary character. Taking Stephen's distinguishing characteristics and exaggerating them to create a caricature of the modern hero who vows to serve nothing except art, O'Connor presents her view of the would-be artist as a personal failure. By revealing her attitude about Joyce's artistic techniques and about the young Stephen as a cultural hero, "The Enduring Chill" becomes an important index of O'Connor's own central esthetic tenets and incidentally also helps to illuminate both the great change that

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¹ Page references for all quotations from *Portrait* (New York: Viking Press, 1964), *Ulysses* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961), and O'Connor's "The Enduring Chill" (*Everything Rises Must Converge* [New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1965]) and *Mystery and Manners* (ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald [New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1969]) will be hereafter cited in the text as *P*, *U*, *E*, and *M*, respectively.

occurs in Stephen during his fourteen-month exile and Joyce's changed attitude toward his young hero.

Like Stephen Dedalus, who for the sake of his vocation adopted a *non serviam* stance against country, family, and church, Asbury perceives his home, his family, and his religious tradition as constricting limitations which he must defy in the name of art. He apparently acquired his "alienated artist" role — a natural outgrowth from his overindulged, immature character — when away at college (*E*, p. 84). In "The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South" O'Connor makes a comment which suggests an explanation for Asbury's role-playing: "Alienation was once a diagnosis, but in much of the fiction of our time it has become an ideal" (*M*, p. 199); Stephen Dedalus is traditionally seen as the model of this ideal.² Aspiring to prove himself a Dedalus-like artist, O'Connor's grown Southern rebel adopts alienation as his life stance, seemingly emulating the pattern of Stephen's career.

Just as Stephen exiled himself from Dublin — calling upon his mythical namesake, the hawk-like man Dedalus — and fled to Paris, Asbury fled from the "collapsing country junction" of Timberboro and traveled to New York, seeking to disentangle his imagination from the nets of family and tradition and to let it soar, hawk-like, with what Stephen would call "unfettered freedom" (*P*, p. 246). In the self-justifying letter he intends his mother to read at his expected imminent death, Asbury speaks of his exile to New York in images that recall the young Stephen of *Portrait*: "I came here to escape the slave's atmosphere of home . . . to find freedom, to liberate my imagination, to take it like a hawk from its cage . . ." (*E*, p. 91).

That Asbury sees Joyce as a kindred spirit is underscored by the scene in which the Irish Jesuit, in response to Asbury's request,

²In "Southern Writers in the Modern World: Death by Melancholy," *The Southern Review*, 6 (1970), 907-19, Walter Sullivan designates a "Joyce-Dedalus-Faustus camp" of mancentered art in opposition to the traditional genius of the Southern renaissance, which is God-centered. Sullivan claims that Southern literature has declined since World War II because it has abandoned a transcendent god for the worship of art itself, following the secular leadership of Joyce's hero Stephen Dedalus. But Sullivan does not compare any particular fictional Southern character with Dedalus.

visits the sick young man. Expecting the priest to be an ally, Asbury immediately tries to start a conversation about Joyce:

"It's so nice to have you come," Asbury said. "This place is incredibly dreary. There's no one here an intelligent person can talk to. I wonder what you think of Joyce, Father?"

The priest lifted his chair and pushed closer. "You'll have to shout," he said. "Blind in one eye and deaf in one ear."

"What do you think of Joyce?" Asbury said louder.

"Joyce? Joyce who?" asked the priest.

"James Joyce," Asbury said and laughed.

The priest brushed his huge hand in the air as if he were bothered by gnats. "I haven't met him," he said. "Now. Do you say your morning and night prayers?"

Asbury appeared confused. "Joyce was a great writer," he murmured, forgetting to shout. (*E*, p. 105)

To the old man's repeated questions about prayer and the Holy Ghost, Asbury ventures a Dedalus-like statement, "The artist prays by creating," but the priest snaps, "Not enough!" Shortly Asbury's *non serviam* self-image begins to weaken under the "battering voice" of this priestly advocate of the Holy Ghost: "The Holy Ghost will not come until you see yourself as you are — a lazy ignorant conceited youth!" (*E*, pp. 106-7). Beneath the old man's judgment, Asbury lies "pale," "drawn," and "ravaged."

This judgment on Asbury has sources in both *Portrait* and *Ulysses*. When only nine years old, young Stephen is accused by Father Dolan, the Clongowes School prefect of studies, of being a "lazy little schemer" and a "lazy idle little loafer" for breaking his glasses on the cinderpath: "I see schemer in your face," Dolan says, and Stephen is summarily pandied by the Jesuit (*P*, p. 50). Thirteen years later this accusation echoes in the *Ulysses* Stephen's mind as he talks with the editor of the *Freeman's Journal*, Myles Crawford, about Mr. Deasy's article. Asking the would-be artist to write something special for the newspaper, the editor says, "I want you to write something for me . . . Something with a bite in it. You can do it. I see it in your face." Perceiving a connection between the windy old editor and the blustering Jesuit of his youth, Stephen thinks, "See it in your face. See it in your eye. Lazy idle little schemer" (*U*, p. 135). O'Connor echoes both the rhythm and the content of this judgment on Stephen when she

has her Irish Jesuit accuse Asbury of inadequate self-knowledge and of being "a lazy ignorant conceited youth!" Whereas Joyce's hero defies the church's call for obedience, however, Asbury is judged by this half-blind, half-deaf Irish priest who, though satirized himself, functions in this scene as O'Connor's satiric norm.

The name O'Connor chooses for her self-deceiving protagonist may be traced to the complex fox imagery in Joyce's two novels. Asbury's feverish dream of his burial, from which he wakes "shivering" (*E*, pp. 103-4), reflects the nine-year-old Stephen's self-pitying reverie of his own death and burial as he lies "shaking and trembling" with fever in his school infirmary (*P*, pp. 24-25), and Asbury's insistence to his mother that he is really dying recalls Stephen's own insistence: "He was not foxing. No, no: he was sick really. He was not foxing" (*P*, p. 22). Asbury is not "foxing" about being sick either, but he is foxing himself when he imagines that art is bringing him death because he has been such a "faithful servant." Asbury's dream of himself in his shallow grave near a dead tree in the pasture under the moon also echoes the older Stephen's insignificant riddle about the fox burying its grandmother, which it had probably killed, on a heath under a holly bush (*U*, pp. 26-28). Stephen mentally identifies the death of his own mother with the grandmother in the riddle and later in the Circe episode links himself with the fox (*U*, p. 558). This identification perhaps reminded O'Connor of the younger Stephen's so-called spiritual weapons against his home, country, and church. His three "defenses" of his "unfettered freedom" are the specifically fox-like characteristics of "silence, exile [flight], and cunning" (*P*, p. 246), all of which O'Connor links not with a soaring bird but with a low-running fox, an appropriate satiric image which could well have inspired her to give the name Fox to her insignificant hero.³

³In choosing Asbury's name, O'Connor might also have been thinking of Francis Asbury (1745-1816), the frail, often ill, and unmarried organizer and driving power in the early growth of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America and of George Fox (1624-1691), the founder of the Quakers, who left home as a youth for a religious quest that resulted in his

Further parallels with Stephen appear in Asbury's relationship to his parents. Like Stephen's father — "A medical student, an oarsman, a tenor, an amateur actor, a shouting politician, a small landlord, a small investor, a drinker, a good fellow, a storyteller, somebody's secretary, something in a distillery, a taxgatherer, a bankrupt and at present a praiser of his own past" (*P*, p. 241) — Asbury's father was also diversely talented: "a lawyer and businessman and farmer and politician all rolled into one" (*E*, p. 87). One of the Achaean backslappers, Mr. Dedalus was most at home in a bar with his drinking companions; and Asbury is convinced that his "old man," who has been dead for twenty years, would also have been one of the "courthouse gang," no more intelligent or sensitive than anyone else in the rural wasteland. Like Stephen, however, Asbury rebels most vigorously against his mother. Compared with the pious, sentimental, and possessive Mrs. Dedalus, who appears as a suffering, victimized woman, Mrs. Fox is industriously independent, proud, mannered, and indulgent toward her children, especially the younger, Asbury. But even though the two women are very different, Asbury's rebellion against his mother is an exaggerated reflection of Stephen's *non serviam* toward his. Asbury's expression is pleasant "for the first time since he had come home" when he thinks of having his Protestant mother call a priest to his bedside, partly because he believes a priest would be "a man of culture" to converse with before he dies, but also because "nothing would irritate his mother so much."⁴

at last seeing the light when he came to realize that the Holy Spirit could indeed speak to his individual condition. O'Connor's allusion to major religious rebels in naming her protagonist recalls Joyce's naming his youthful hero after Stephen, the first Christian saint known to suffer death for his faith. Whether intentional or not, the correspondences underscore Asbury's relation to Stephen and O'Connor's religious emphasis.

I am indebted to the editor of the ARIZONA QUARTERLY, who also suspects that the middle name may have come from Noah Porter, the nineteenth-century Calvinist and opponent of Darwinism, for suggesting these possible sources.

⁴*E*, pp. 101-2. Another Joycean correspondence appears in Mrs. Fox's suggestion that Asbury begin work on a "book about down here." Although she does not use the words "you can do it," her suggestion is reminiscent of Myles Crawford's similar request to Stephen in the Aeolus episode, when the editor tries to persuade Stephen to join his press-gang and to write "something with a bite in it." "Put us all in it," he says to Stephen, "Father Son and Holy Ghost and Jakes M'Carthy" (*U*, p. 135). Echoing Crawford, Mrs. Fox

The most significant correspondences to Stephen, however, relate to Asbury's self-awareness and general disposition. In terms of both art and essential character, Asbury is more similar to the Stephen of *Ulysses* than to the Stephen of *Portrait*. That the latter achieves an artistic triumph over his surroundings is revealed from the first in his sensitivity to language and style, in the precision with which he names the objects of the world, and in the attention he gives to proper names (*P*, pp. 155, 156, 188). His epiphany in Chapter 4 identifies Stephen with "the great artificer whose name he bore" (*P*, p. 170), establishes the hawk-god as his true emblem, and confirms his artistic vocation in the accidental meeting with the young girl on the beach. After this major event, no one questions his vocation as an artist. Stephen's commitment to art and his artistic talents are recognized by both his peers and his elders, both before and after his exile. In *Ulysses*, however, Stephen returns from exile, bringing back not works of art, but only French newspapers: "Rich booty you brought back; *Le Tutu*, five tattered numbers of *Pantalon Blanc et Culotte Rouge . . .*" (*U*, p. 42). If Stephen leaves Dublin as Icarus, calling upon Dedalus — "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead" (*P*, p. 253) — he returns very much fallen, both literally and symbolically traveling steerage: "Fabulous artificer, the hawklike man. You flew. Where to? Newhaven-Dieppe, steerage passenger. Paris and back. Lapwing. Icarus. *Pater, ait.* Sea-bedabbled, fallen, weltering. Lapwing you are. Lapwing he" (*U*, p. 210). In *Ulysses*, therefore, Joyce reverses the myth paralleling Stephen's identity, casting the young artist as the fallen Icarus rather than the creative Dedalus. This older Stephen's increased self-mockery is directly related to his being not a hawk-like bird, as he at one time believed, but a lapwing; and as he well realizes, his return to his family mocks the legend of flying.

recommends that her son write another "good book, like *Gone with the Wind*": "Put the war in it . . . That always makes a long book" (*E*, p. 99). Stephen's *non serviam* response of ignoring his Irish solicitors is echoed in Asbury's groan of pain to his mother: "I am not going to write any book." Mrs. Fox's answer, "Well, . . . if you don't feel like writing a book, you could just write poems. They're nice," again recalls the situation of the older Stephen, who failed to write his dreamed-of books with letters for titles, writing only a few lines of a poem instead (*U*, pp. 40, 48, 132).

Intentionally or not, O'Connor adopts a tone toward Asbury more nearly resembling Joyce's tone toward the lapwing Stephen of *Ulysses* than that toward the soaring Stephen of *Portrait*. Like the older Stephen, Asbury returns from his self-imposed exile a young Icarus fallen from the glory of his aspirations. Having tried in New York to write every possible kind of imaginative literature, he had produced only "lifeless" novels, "stationary" plays, "prosy" poems, and "sketchy" short stories (*E*, p. 92). In one of her critical essays, O'Connor remarks that "There is no excuse for anyone to write fiction for public consumption unless he has been called to do so by the presence of a gift" (*M*, p. 81); Asbury clearly lacks both call and gift. At last even the blind and humoring Mrs. Fox calls her son not a "poor poet," as Cranly addresses Stephen (*P*, p. 247), but "a poor sick boy" (*E*, p. 107). In his first self-confrontation Asbury realizes that he is not the creative spirit he had imagined:

I came here to escape the slave's atmosphere of home, . . . to find freedom, to liberate my imagination, to take it like a hawk from its cage and set it "whirling off into the widening gyre" (Yeats) and what did I find? It was incapable of flight. It was some bird . . . sitting huffy in its pen, refusing to come out! . . . I have no imagination. I have no talent. I can't create.⁵

The younger Stephen's hawk-god of art has become in Asbury a huffy bird pinioned in its cage, a self-admitted lapwing with no illusions about future creative flights; but unlike the older Stephen, who distances himself from his failure with self-mockery, Asbury assumes a "tragic" stance, entering what he tritely calls the "pit of despair."

Ultimately, O'Connor identifies Asbury's failure (and, by implication, Stephen's) not with his failed art but with his flawed character, the result of his peculiar mind-set and one of the most

⁵*E*, pp. 91-92. The pseudo-literary foundation of Asbury's rebellion in an attempt to achieve Dedalus-like "unfettered freedom" is seen in his allusion to the first line of Yeats's "The Second Coming." In Yeats's poem the image of the falcon "turning and turning in the widening gyre" is a symbol of anarchy and directionless freedom, which the poet views as destructive of all order and meaning. Ironically, Asbury misquotes Yeats in support of a position which the poem presents as appalling. Even Asbury's self-justifying letter has a source in the life of a modern alienated artist: it "was such a letter as Kafka had addressed to his father" (*E*, p. 91). O'Connor's allusion in "The Enduring Chill" to three twentieth-century writers is a fitting device to characterize Asbury's self-image, which is based upon alienated "types" in modern literature.

important objects of O'Connor's satire. Asbury's temperament and attitude are exaggerated reflections of Stephen's distinguishing personal characteristic, his coolly aloof and seemingly disinterested disposition, which Davin calls "sneering" (*P*, pp. 177, 202) but which by the time of *Ulysses* is labelled "hyperborean" (*U*, p. 5). A brief review of the shift which occurs in Joyce's treatment of Stephen will help to suggest the nature of O'Connor's emphasis.

As a weapon of war against his enemies to protect his artistic integrity in the wasteland of Dublin, Stephen's disposition is decidedly effective, but when overused it becomes self-centered lovelessness. By the end of *Portrait*, having rejected ecclesiastical love, love between son and biological father, and a kind of blind chauvinistic love for country, Stephen is confronted with the question of a son's love for his mother. He begins a conversation with Cranly by confessing that he and his mother had "an unpleasant quarrel" about religion because, contrary to her wishes, he will not make his Easter duty: "I will not . . . I will not serve" (*P*, p. 239). To Cranly's questions "do you love your mother?" and "Has your mother had a happy life?" Stephen is elusive, but by June 16, 1904, the ambiguity has been resolved; for Stephen has once again defied his mother, this time by rejecting her last wish before death, and even the betrayer and mocker Buck Mulligan is appalled: "I'm hyperborean as much as you. But to think of your mother begging you with her last breath to kneel down and pray for her. And you refused. There is something sinister in you . . ." (*U*, p. 5). *Portrait* ends, therefore, with Stephen saying no to his mother, and *Ulysses* begins with Stephen's having made another negation.

Only suggesting the possibility of a personal failure in Stephen's response to his mother in *Portrait*, Joyce deepens this emphasis in *Ulysses*. In contrast to Bloom, whose exile in Dublin is one of attempted involvement and suffering perseverance, the hyperborean Stephen empties himself of emotions toward practically everyone he meets. Whereas Bloom, whose whole being is a heroic,

if paradoxical, defense of loving the world in the midst of a loveless mankind, is driven to an almost banal statement about love in Barney Kiernan's pub (*U*, p. 333), Stephen's hyperborean defense against a crass and squalid world has so encompassed him that he has become incapable of loving anyone: he is no more moved by birth and death on June 16, 1904, than he was by Paris. Throughout the day he gradually but systematically isolates himself by abandoning the Martello Tower, planning to resign his teaching position in Mr. Deasy's school, and proudly scorning newspaper work even though he is homeless and in debt. Later, he walks away from his sister at the bookstall, leaving her alone with a French grammar which she was probably motivated to purchase by his recent exile in Paris. Even Bloom cannot overcome Stephen's isolation, largely because of the young man's wall of egocentricity. Late at night, having been betrayed by his drinking companions and having failed with Bloom, Stephen walks into the darkness utterly alone. Significantly, his nickname, Kinch, suggests not only the knife-blade weapon of his aloof, defensive wit, but also the childish egocentricity of his lovelessness.

In *Portrait* Joyce painted not a moral picture, but a portrait of the artist as defined by his own awareness and social situation. Primarily interested in the artist's changing consciousness, Joyce does not imply a crisis of identity in Stephen, who knows what and who he is. His defiance is an act of transcendence over his world rather than a simple refusal, and his call to become an artist — the epiphany of the girl on the beach — prevents his defiance from being petty. In *Ulysses*, however, Joyce intimates that Stephen's art is no consolation for his personal failure: the youth is still a withdrawn, rigid son and an unworthy, distant brother; he is clearly inadequate in Bloom's world, being blind to the one man who could overcome his isolation and touch his secret self. As Bloom emerges, Stephen recedes as the focus of attention, fading out, as it were, before his moral and spiritual superior. Having been interested primarily in Stephen's artistic consciousness, Joyce drops Stephen once a superior embodiment of character emerges

in the person of Bloom. In contrast to Stephen, Bloom is an admirable person with a few idiosyncracies, one of those profoundly good men so hard to find in O'Connor's world of fiction. Beside him, every other character in Dublin — including even Stephen — is a moral and personal failure.

Such a personal failure is exactly what most interests O'Connor. Omitting the epiphany of vocation in order to emphasize the revelations of self-knowledge, she settles the question of her hero as an artist before the story even begins, thus creating not a portrait of the artist as a young man but a portrait of a young man using art for his own purposes. Whereas Joyce maintains a dual, if uneven, focus between Stephen's vocation and personality, O'Connor focuses almost entirely on the childish self-centeredness of her protagonist.

The nature of Asbury's disposition, which is no secret to anyone except himself, is revealed in his "irritable," "ugly," and "fretful" voice. Whereas he sees himself as an artist defiant against a stupid, insensitive world, O'Connor satirizes him as merely an indulged child who was insufficiently disciplined when growing up. When one of Mrs. Fox's black workers says, "Howcome [Asbury] talks so ugly about his ma?" the other answers, "She ain't whup him enough when he was little" (*E*, p. 98). The quality of Asbury's defiance is especially notable in his adolescent rebellion against his mother's authority regarding the dairy. By drinking the unpasteurized milk there, he contracts the chronic chill which O'Connor makes the symbolic correlative of his hyperborean disposition.

So attached is Asbury to his self-image that even after his failure he continues to deceive himself. In order to continue seeing himself as he wants to, he not only has persuaded himself that art is bringing him death, but also must convince his mother that his failure to soar as an artist is her fault, not his own. Reflecting the unyielding Stephen, who refused to kneel down beside his mother's deathbed, Asbury thinks that "His mother, at the age of sixty, was going to be introduced to reality and he supposed that if the experience didn't kill her, it would assist her in the process of

growing up" (*E*, p. 83). His hyperborean nature is best seen in the long letter which he intends as a "private revelation" for his mother, planning as his last act before death to leave her the key to the drawer where the letter is hidden. Speaking of his impoverished imagination, he accuses her:

It was some bird you had domesticated, sitting huffy in its pen, refusing to come out! . . . I have no imagination. I have no talent. I can't create. I have nothing but the desire for these things. Why didn't you kill that too? Woman, why did you pinion me? (*E*, pp. 91-92)

Cherishing a protective image of himself as a type of Joycean hero, Asbury has used the modern role of the sensitive artist at odds with his materialistic and unknowing surroundings to justify his own egocentricity. But O'Connor's character of petty defiance is not who he thinks he is: he is not part of the intellectual and artistic vanguard of society; and he is not Stephen Dedalus. His adoration of exile is more a manifestation of his willful character than an artistic transcendence over a crass and squalid world; his *non serviam* defiance is mere petulance. Having erected a pseudointellectual wall as protection from true self-knowledge and exposure to maturity, he has both prolonged and glorified his self-centeredness by worshipping it as dedication to art. In O'Connor's terms, what Asbury must recognize is that he is not the artist at odds with a philistine society, but that in his egocentric childishness he is simply at odds with everyone and everything — Mary George, Dr. Block, Mr. Bush, the two black farm workers, his mother, the priest, indeed even nature — and most of all with himself and with God. Before Asbury gains true self-knowledge, however, he has to be kicked by a cow; ridiculed by his sister; scorned by the blacks; prodded and examined by a country doctor; in his dreams licked in the face by a spotted cow as if his head were a block of salt; accused and judged by a one-eyed, partially deaf priest; and attacked by both the fevers of nature and the purifying chill of the Holy Ghost.

Unlike Stephen, Asbury returns from exile not to his mother's death, or even to his own as he expects, but rather to the death of his hallowed, false self-image. Only at the end of the story, after

Asbury learns the true source of his fever, does he with "shocked" eyes take back the key to the drawer containing the letter to his mother. At this point his wall of egocentricity has been breached, his old self-image is crumbling, and he sees himself as he truly is — thereby, in O'Connor's vision, opening himself to the mysterious power of the Holy Ghost. Like the younger Stephen, Asbury experiences an epiphany which is "the call of life" (*P*, p. 169); but whereas Stephen's epiphany is vocational, Asbury's is the vehicle of potential personal transformation. O'Connor presents this revelation in figures of violence and natural catastrophe — "earthquakes," "gunshot," "whirlwind," and a "purifying terror" — emphasizing the natural resistance of Asbury's old self, which can be destroyed only by a vastly superior force. In her world such a power is necessary to overcome the natural man's barrier of self-protection.

To the older Stephen's drunken question, "Where's the third person of the Blessed Trinity? . . . The reverend Carrion Crow" (*U*, p. 595), O'Connor responds by satirizing the lapwing artist who makes art the justification for loveless isolation. But to her fine satire of lovelessness, which captures the older Stephen's major personal fault, she adds a final statement which shouts her response to Stephen's question so loudly that it impairs the end of her story. The paragraph includes her often-used symbolic setting: "a blinding red-gold sun" moves "serenely from under a purple cloud"; the treeline forms "a brittle wall, standing as if it were the frail defense he had set up in his mind to protect him from what was coming." Lying on his bed, Asbury looks with eyes "shocked clean as if they had been prepared for some awful vision about to come down to him." O'Connor also adds explicit statements: "The old life in him was exhausted. He awaited the coming of new." The "fierce bird" that had been "waiting mysteriously" is suddenly in motion, and Asbury blanches as "the last film of illusion was torn as if by a whirlwind from his eyes." O'Connor climaxes her didacticism in the last sentence, ending her portrait of the young would-be artist with an explicit answer to Stephen's

question about the "reverend Carrion Crow": "the Holy Ghost, emblazoned in ice instead of fire, continued, implacable, to descend" (*E*, p. 114).

The conclusion of "The Enduring Chill" is flawed by O'Connor's heavy-handedness. By blatantly entering the story herself and identifying her epiphany with the Holy Ghost, perhaps she wished to confess that all epiphanal experiences are God-centered rather than man-centered events. What Asbury receives he is clearly given, for never did a recipient in O'Connor's stories have less initiative than the pale invalid lying feverish in his bed. Or perhaps she wanted to say that revelation is necessary before one can meaningfully defy his own tradition.

The objects of O'Connor's satire in "The Enduring Chill" are many. She portrays Asbury in his childish "foolishness" as a ludicrous and comic figure. But in deflating Asbury's self-image, she also satirizes the youthful type that rebels against his tradition and alienates himself from his family in the name of absolute dedication to art. She is, then, addressing those artists and intellectuals who see Stephen Dedalus not just as the young artist but as the model of the hero most precious. They, like Asbury, fail to perceive Joyce's ironic treatment of the youthful errors of the sometimes maudlinly romantic adolescent and instead identify with the young defier, seeing in his alienation from family, country, and religion a personal model of behavior for artistic and intellectual freedom, a model which should be gospel for all knowing persons. O'Connor is, then, satirizing the popular reading of Stephen Dedalus as a cultural hero, an image which she — like many others — derives from a limited understanding of Joyce's attitude toward the character of Stephen, especially in *Ulysses*. ✓

O'Connor felt that a narrative was flawed if the author failed to reveal a clear moral judgment. Speaking of the disappearance of the author from the modern novel, she says, "By the time we get to James Joyce, the author is nowhere to be found in the book. The reader is on his own, floundering around in the thoughts of

various unsavory characters. He finds himself in the middle of a world apparently without comment" (*M*, p. 74). O'Connor undoubtedly had Stephen — and probably even Bloom — in mind when she spoke of "various unsavory characters," and her satire of Stephen Dedalus reveals a close reading of his distinguishing characteristics, including the nature of his failure. Yet despite her admirable familiarity with both the younger and the older Stephen, she did not realize that Joyce's attitude toward Stephen and the nature of his exile for art shifted considerably in *Ulysses*; nor did she recognize the similarity of her criticism of Stephen with Joyce's own criticism of his young hero. Far from leaving the reader "floundering" without authorial comment, Joyce communicates Stephen's personal failure primarily in relation to the character of Bloom, who, far from being an "unsavory character," is one of those truly good men whom O'Connor had such a hard time finding. Because O'Connor's reading of Joyce stopped with the character of Stephen, she overlooked one of Joyce's central means of expressing his authorial voice, particularly as it relates to Stephen's personality and exile. Despite the differences between the wasteland of Dublin and the rural provinciality of Timberboro, both religiously informed writers ultimately see egocentric exile from the world as loveless and sterile; both ridicule extreme hyperborean defensiveness, making it the source of personal failure. At any rate, there is no "floundering around" at the end of "The Enduring Chill," as O'Connor provides the clear judgment and comment which she thought Joyce failed to offer. If anything, in her zeal to correct what she considered a Joycean flaw she errs in the opposite direction and overwrites. One of the few times that O'Connor lost control of her fine tension between seeing and believing was surely the result of misreading.

Satire is the sword thrust O'Connor uses to puncture her reader's defensive worldly values, in this case the general adoration and emulation of a hero who, at least in her eyes, makes art a rival to God. Resembling the younger Stephen's hawk-god, the fierce bird in O'Connor's world is not art but the Holy Ghost,

which stands in stark contrast to the huffy bird that is Asbury's emblem. O'Connor does not, of course, reject art; but the old priest, in his response to Asbury's affirmation that "the artist prays by creating," is surely her mouthpiece. For O'Connor art is indeed "Not enough": she clearly confesses that God, not art, is the mysterious source of creativity and the foundation of fulfilled personal existence. In her theocentric world, even to the young artist, the last word is God's.