He cites the young evangelist in *Wise Blood* (1952): "He doesn't believe in Christ but still thinks the church has betrayed Christ's message. If he had written a book, it would be taught [today] in the divinity schools."

O'Connor's evangelist says simply, "Either Jesus was God or he was a liar." This kind of black-or-white position does not comport easily with our age of grays. "So it happens," says Elie, "that the Catholic writing of our time is not written out of faith, but out of an aspiration. . . . The writer would like for the Catholic religion to be true, indeed yearns for it to be revealed as such. . . . If it can be made believable in writing, maybe it really can be believed in."

Elie himself is an editor at Farrar, Straus and Giroux. His book on O'Connor, Percy, Merton, and Day will be published next year.

The Gift That Keeps on Giving

"Intellectual Property" by Frederick Turner, in *American Arts Quarterly* (Fall 2001), P.O. Box 1654, Cooper Station, New York, N.Y. 10276.

One great irony in the recent furor over Napster—the Internet-based company that allowed users to freely exchange copyrighted musical works—is that the fight to enjoin the company was led by Metallica, a heavy metal rock group that succeeded during the 1980s largely by encouraging fans to make "bootleg" recordings of their live performances and share them with others.

Turner, a professor of arts and humanities at the University of Texas at Dallas, sees a crucial difference between Napster and Metallica. Even though the group freely bestowed its "art"—the music it created—on its fans, it retained "a kind of ghostly ownership" of the music. This ethereal presence hovers over every transmission of art, including art that is purchased. According to Turner, if the buyer is willing to acknowledge that presence—in essence, honoring the maker of the art as its creator—the work will "continue to appreciate in value."

Another example may make this conundrum clearer. No one would purchase a signed painting by Pablo Picasso, scratch out the painter's signature, and replace it with his own name. Why? Because along with the painting's purchase came "a gift that the artist gave," a "gift not entirely the artist's own in the first place." The artist's signature carries the artist's "giftedness," which "came to him as the legacy of his genes and of the artistic tradition in which he worked." It is this "compound spiritual presence" that makes the painting valuable, and that value—a "gift that keeps on giving" to both the purchaser and his heirs—disappears with the erasing of the signature.

In Turner's view, Napster invited trouble by desecrating what he calls this "shrine of the gift." But similarly flawed, he believes, is the action of Bill Gates, "who has reportedly bought the reproduction rights to a large fraction of the world's works of art." What Gates has purchased "is a real economic asset, but it is also a sort of zombie, bereft of its connection with its maker and with the maker's own makers."

The choices for artists are profoundly murky. Allow greater access to their work, and become like poetry, which, says Turner, has struggled "unsuccessfully with the problems of copyright for over 400 years, and is a poverty-stricken profession as a result." Or adopt elaborate strategies to ensure the uniqueness of the art—as modernists and postmodernists did, which leads to "disgusting styles or content, bottling oneself up in spiritual contemplation, [or] using transient and fragile materials." Somewhere in the middle lies the complicated solution to what must become a new kind of transaction between artist and owner, which has "something to do with reproduction—in both senses," in a new world where "a valuable object can be perfectly reproduced."

Turner sees hopeful signs in the emergence of the new classicists in the late 20th century—artists such as the painter Audrey Flack and the late sculptor Frederick Hart—who consciously "customize their work for their buyers, so that any work cannot be alienated from maker and purchaser and the relationship between them." This is the only way, Turner believes, that artists can truly "embody intellectual property in market property."