

FEMINISTS ASSAULT FLANNERY O'CONNOR

INTOLERANCE OF HER RELIGION

“The task of the objective critic,’ [Allen D.] Lackey writes, ‘is to identify clearly his criteria for judgment without resorting to the subterfuge of presenting his own philosophy (or opposition to Miss O’Connor’s theology) under the guise of objective literary criticism’.” [Feminist critics routinely overlay their own contrary dogmas on everything, falsifying texts.]

John R. May
The Pruning Word: The Parables of Flannery O’Connor
(U Notre Dame 1976) xvii

BIGOTED LIBERALS ENFORCE POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

“Only in her longest story, ‘The Displaced Person,’ does ferocious Flannery weaken her wallop by *groping about* for a symbolic *second-story* meaning—in this case, *something about* salvation.” [Italics added.]

Anonymous illiterate reviewer
Time (9 June 1955)

“Mustered with the regularity of battalions on parade, [her] complex ironies have a way of crystallizing into simple and even smug [Christian] conclusions.”

Irving Howe
smug atheist
New York Review of Books (1965)

“I propose to view her fiction not for the dogma it illustrates, but [to ignore its meanings and impose my intolerance of her beliefs].”

Josephine Hendin
The World of Flannery O’Connor
(Indiana U 1970) 17

“Since she knows that her audience does not hold her beliefs...” [This implies that nobody agrees with her and that no Christians read her fiction.]

David Eggenschwiler
The Christian Humanism of Flannery O’Connor
(Wayne State 1972) 102

“Her vision is essentially that of another age.”

Dorothy Walters
Flannery O’Connor (Twayne 1973) 154

“Many of us are simply too far gone in anthropocentric irreligiosity.”

Martha Stephens
The Question of Flannery O’Connor
(Louisiana State 1973) 40

“A statement of faith is easier for an agnostic reader to accept than O’Connor’s usual tendency toward oblique insult, which ensues from the intimation that her fictional world is fraught with portentous meanings that we could see if only we were not such monstrous readers, and too limited to understand.” [This Feminist reveals that she is unable to understand “portentous meanings.”]

Carol Shloss
Flannery O’Connor: The Limits of Inference (LSU 1980)

"This [novel by Anne Tyler] is O'Connor cartooning without the cruelty, without the pinpoint tunnel to Jesus at the end of all perspectives." [Yet Updike claimed to be a Christian. Liberals want themselves to be at the end of all perspectives.]

John Updike
Hugging the Shore: Essays and Criticism
(Random House/Vintage 1984) 291

"*The Habit of Being* [collection of her private correspondence] is filled with O'Connor's ill-tempered [she is gracious] responses to reviewers, critics, and even friends who she believed misunderstood her work. Yet except for early misreadings, unfounded accusations of her fiction shamefully indulging in the 'gratuitous grotesque,' she generally fared rather well with her commentators."

Melvin J. Friedman, ed.
Critical Essays on Flannery O'Connor (1985)

"Her pious admirers to the contrary, O'Connor would have bequeathed us even stronger novels and stories, of the eminence of Faulkner's, if she had been able to restrain her spiritual tendentiousness." [Bloom is an Gnostic blowhard.]

Harold Bloom, ed.
Flannery O'Connor (1986)

"To claim contact with transcendence is to leap outside of the [politically correct] rules which govern the conventional discourse of unbelievers and to speak a language which from without must be indistinguishable from nonsense...[making] interpretation, or even appreciation...impossible." [This politically correct Atheist in effect dismisses Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Donne, Blake, Hawthorne, Emily Dickinson and most of the other classic writers in American literature.]

John Burt
Flannery O'Connor (1986)

CRITICS OF

"A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (1953)

Evidence confirming the moral vision of O'Connor and the corruption of American higher education: Three of the following critics ignore O'Connor and deny that the grandmother is saved. *Seven* critics actually *identify with The Misfit!* In effect they are Satanists: W. S. Marks, III says that "Where the alternative to nonadjustment is Bailey Boy, one may agree that man does well to remain a 'misfit'"; Robert Drake says The Misfit "does win from many of us a grudging admiration which the murdered family does not command"; Dorothy Walters argues that "the wholesale slaughter of the grandmother and her family through their chance meeting with a maniacal stranger might well support a nihilistic world view"; Michael O. Bellamy declares that "the Misfit must be given credit for acting in conformity with his nature" [like Satan?]; Martha Stephens describes herself as "too far gone in anthropocentric irreligiosity" and concludes that "The Misfit is really the one courageous and admirable figure in the story"; the atheist Frederick R. Karl believes The Misfit "finds a form of salvation everlastingly denied to the grandmother, who seeks it in unfulfilling [Christian] ways... The Misfit is a prophet of sorts, a dark Jesus"; Mary Jane Schenck argues that the story is meaningless: "There is no firm ground of meaning" and by the end the characters "are totally deconstructed and no longer exist"--her way of rejecting the Christianity of the author. Schenck claims "The reader falls into 'the infinite nothingness of irony'" because she does not understand irony, believing falsely that irony cancels all meaning rather than implying opposite meanings.

J. Peter Dyson is Politically Correct by avoiding religious terms and secularizing the implications of the grandmother's transformation. Redemption is not mentioned. Instead, "The breaking of her heart moves her towards the disinterested maternal love that becomes both her nemesis and her glory"; "Her gentility has seen her through; however, it is gentility now made authentic...by its disinterested acknowledgement of kinship with The Misfit, acceptance of his pedigree as one of her 'own children'." Dyson censors O'Connor by changing the spiritual goal implied in the story from redemption to becoming "authentic"--as if the

author was an Existentialist rather than a Catholic. According to Dyson it is not the grace of God that has "seen her through" to the salvation of her soul, it is merely "gentility" and "kinship" on the earthly plane. Agape is replaced by "pedigree."

William S. Doxey is so hostile to Christians he accuses them of being criminals like Faulkner's white-trash Snopeses: "At the risk of having my garage burned (in lieu of a barn) by her faithful admirers, I am going to show why I am convinced that Flannery O'Connor's 'A Good Man Is Hard to Find' is a flawed short story.' He goes on to claim that the story is flawed because he is confused by it. Additional misreadings include Irving Malin's view that the grandmother has only "false love." Frederick Asals thinks we should "ignore O'Connor's comments" and see the grandmother's heartfelt expression of spiritual love for all people "as one last self-serving grasp at survival, or as...an attempt to 'adopt' The Misfit into her smothering, diminishing superficiality."

Michael Hollister (2013)