FLANNERY O'CONNOR AND NEO-ORTHODOXY

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PREFACE

Placing Flannery O'Connor in historical perspective by identifying her with neo-orthodoxy helps explain the emphasis on evil in her stories and also refutes the contention that she was a religious anachronism. In other words, my thesis will illuminate an intellectual context (and indebtedness) which has been neglected by, to my knowledge, all students and critics of O'Connor's fiction.

I thank Dr. Peter Rollins for his determination to get me finished. Thanks also to Dr. Gordon Weaver and Dr. Clinton Keeler. Finally, I thank myself for surviving Peter's determination.

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Flannery O'Connor's stories are, on one level, truly terrifying: the female owner of a dairy farm is gored to death by a bull; a closet-bound intellectual shoots his mother while attempting to murder a nymphomaniac; an enraged old man murders his grandaughter and then dies of a heart attack. This bizarre violence has become a focal point for O'Connor scholarship over the past 15 years. During this time two distinct schools of criticism--two ways of interpreting the violence--have emerged. The first school sees the horror in O'Connor's fiction as indicative of a world view that is humorous, absurd and Godless. Josephine Hendin has claimed that "O'Connor conveys a sense of consuming meaninglessness," and goes on to maintain that O'Connor's characters have "neither soul nor depth."[1] Irving Howe has written of the stories in Everything That Rises Must Converge that "there are no pressures to consider these stories in a strictly religious sense."[2] John Hawkes has concluded that "as writer [Flannery O'Connor] was on the devil's side."[3] This school emphasizes the absurdity of O'Connor's fiction and finds a saving grace in the author's humor. O'Connor, so these critics imply, is able to laugh at man's Godless and therefore ridiculous condition.

The second school sees the violence in O'Connor's fiction as the workings--albeit strange workings--of God. Carter Martin has maintained that O'Connor's stories "show the working of . . . illuminating grace, by which God enlightens men to bring them nearer to eternal life."[4] Martha Stephens has asserted that O'Connor was "a highly doctrinal writer with a

marked evangelical strain," and also that "to find so bleak, so austere and rigid, so other-worldly a Christian view of life as hers, one is forced back into the distant past of English religious literature."[5] David Eggenschwiler's contention is that "these literary qualities, for which Miss O'Connor has often been praised, seem but the expression of her Christian humanism."[6] The critics of this school see basic Christian truths in O'Connor's fiction. They emphasize salvation rather than absurdity, grace rather than violence.

The debate continues today, with no end in sight, although the second school, the Christian school, is the larger.[7] Moreover, it should be a commonplace that the problem of suffering and violence in the fiction of Flannery O'Connor admits no easy solution. O'Connor made this point herself in an early story, "A Temple of the Holy Ghost." In this tale a 12 year old girl comes face to face with the reality of evil in the world--the same evil which has occupied the critics. The girl also comes face to face with two motifs which recur in the fiction of Flannery O'Connor with striking regularity: the twin ideas of inscrutable God and imperfect man.

In its most obvious aspect, "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" is a catalogue of human imperfection. The child, who is never named, is a 12 year old brat. She has "fat cheeks," and wears braces that glare "like tin" (237).[8] Most of her pleasure in life comes from laughing at the equally imperfect figures about her. Susan is skinny; Joanne talks through her nose and turns purple when she laughs. The school teacher, Miss Kirby, is an old maid who seems incapable of teaching anybody anything. Her eccentric suitor, Mr. Cheatam, is bald and his face is "nearly the same color as the unpaved roads and washed like them with ruts and gulleys" (237). The two young country boys are studying to be Church of God preachers because

they aren't smart enough to do anything else. Alonzo Myers, the taxi driver, is perhaps the most comic, and most imperfect, character of all. Alonzo is eighteen years old, weighs two hundred fifty pounds, and is the only taxi driver in town: "He smoked or rather chewed a short black cigar and he had a round sweaty chest that showed through the yellow nylon shirt he wore. When he drove all the windows of the car had to be open" (238).

The story centers around the report of a carnival sideshow freak whom the girl does not see. Joanne and Susan go to the fair with the two Church of God "big dumb oxes," and when they return that night, the girl goads them into telling what they have seen. Susan tells her in a low solemn voice: "It was a man and woman both. It pulled up its dress and showed us. It had on a blue dress" (245). The audience was separated by a curtain, men and women on opposite sides, and the freak gave the same speech to each group: "God made me thisaway and if you laugh he may strike you the same way. This is the way He wanted me to be and I ain't disputing His way. . . . I never done it to myself nor had a thing to do with it but I making the best of it. I don't dispute hit" (245).

O'Connor once remarked, "The Freak in modern fiction is usually disturbing to us because he keeps us from forgetting that we share in his state."[9] This sums up one of the major motifs of "A Temple of the Holy Ghost." All the characters are freaks in one way or another. Man is imperfect. And the child comes to realize this in a dream deep in religious significance. She imagines that the men are solemn, as if "they were in church," and that the women are eager and expectant, as if "waiting for the first note of the piano to begin the hymn" (246). The hermaphrodite's speech is delivered like a sermon, with the crowd shouting "amen" at the proper intervals.

But this notion of imperfect man is not the only major idea presented in the story. The reader is also presented with a vivid image of an inscrutable God. What the child comes to understand in her dream is that there is no rational or humanly comprehensible reason for the freak's condition, just as there is no scientific or categorical explanation of man's condition. O'Connor is replying to those who ask why man must suffer: "This is the way He wanted me to be." Human knowledge offers no logical explanation to the problem of evil; however, "I ain't disputing His way." Evil is a mystery which man cannot understand; he can only endure it as part of God's incomprehensible will. This is the answer that Job heard out of the whirlwind, and, O'Connor implies, it is the only honest answer to which the Christian can subscribe. The only theism worthy of respect believes in God not because of the way a fallen world works, but in spite of it.

These twin notions of imperfect man and inscrutable God, as expressed in "A Temple of the Holy Ghost," are particularly important to the study of Flannery O'Connor's fiction, for they help illuminate a critical context which has heretofore been neglected by most students of O'Connor's writing. Neo-orthodoxy, the tough-minded tradition in twentieth century American religious thought, emphasized strongly these same two ideas in rebellion against the optimism which dominated American religion during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As writer and Southerner, O'Connor was heir to this rebellion against religious "modernism." Both her non-fiction and fiction are filled with the two ideas central to the neo-orthodox revolt: man is sinful and God is responsible for the evil in the world as well as the good. In this respect, O'Connor stood in the tradition of Reinhold Niebuhr, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate,

Thomas Merton, and other advocates of pre-Enlightenment Christianity. O'Connor, however, went beyond the neo-orthodox rebellion by claiming that the mysterious and disruptive experience of God's grace was worth the highest price, even death. These three ideas--sinful man, inscrutable God, and the high cost of salvation--help establish Flannery O'Connor's close relationship with neo-orthodoxy and also help explain why her stories are filled with such forceful and bizarre expressions of evil.

The religious optimism against which Flannery O'Connor rebelled had its beginnings in the resurgence of revivalism which swept America in the 1820's. Preachers such as Lyman Beecher and Charles Finney did much to popularize the notion that God's love, rather than His wrath, was the central message of the Gospels. This doctrine asserted that not only could all men be saved--a renunciation of Calvinism--but also that all men could actually perfect their own nature by their own efforts. "Perfectionism," as this optimistic assessment of man's capabilities came to be called, offered a neat solution to the problem of evil. When man had perfected his nature, then suffering would be eliminated. Throughout, the emphasis of perfectionism was away from the traditional Christian ideas about grace as a supernatural force surprising fallen men and blinding them with its light. Modernism put grace in the hands of reasonable men.

Nineteenth century humanitarian movements attempted to put this idea into practice. Through the efforts of such wealthy philanthropists as Arthur and Lewis Tappan, such organizations as the American Temperance Society (1826) were formed. Methods which the evangelists had employed to win converts to Christ were now being used to win converts to sobriety, often with remarkable results. The anti-slavery movement championed by

William Lloyd Garrison was a more significant practical application of perfectionism. The radical abolitionists did not merely seek to end slavery. The American Colonization Society had pursued this goal by attempting to return blacks to Africa. Rather, Garrison and his group wanted to rid the nation of imperfection by baptising all in the saving grace of Christ. Slavery was an outgrowth of man's imperfection. Abolish the imperfection, and you abolish slavery. When Garrison made the Biblical phrase "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" the foundation of his philosophical mansion, he was in effect repudiating the doctrine of original sin.

In another sector of pre-Civil War America, the idea that man could eliminate the world's evil by perfecting his nature found vigorous advocates in the Unitarian movement and the circle of New England Transcendentalists who sprung from it. Theodore Parker, one of the more sanguine Transcendentalists, explained that "All the evil of the world is something incident to man's development, and no more permanent than the stumbling of a child who learns to walk. . . . It will be outgrown, and not a particle of it nor is consequences shall cleave permanent to mankind. This is true of the individual wrongs which you and I commit; and likewise of such vast wickedness as war, political oppression and the hyposcrisy of priesthoods."[10]

The notion of perfectable man was central to the various attempts to reconstruct religion in the image of the intellectual and technological revolutions which so deeply influenced America in the last half of the nineteenth century. Equally important was the idea of a benevolent God. The proponents of radical religion--Shailer Mathews, Brooks Frothingham and others--were by no means in agreement on all points, but by and large their

efforts were an attempt to make religion conform to reason, and their writings often made God look like a kind-hearted Master Chemist. Belief in the goodness of God was especially dear to Parker, who saw the universe as the work of a morally perfect deity and assumed that man's goal should be to live in harmony with this peaceful creation. Parker labeled this idea the corner-stone of his theological structure; to emphasize its importance, he often referred to God as "Mother."[11]

These twin optimistic notions of perfectable man and beneficent God, in important aspects, managed to survive even the agony and slaughter of the First World War, when Walter Rauschenbusch emerged as a leading spokesman for the Social Gospel. For Rauschenbush, the Kingdom of God was the ultimate aim of both religion and society. The Kingdom meant, he said, "a growing perfection in the collective life of humanity, in our laws, in the customs of society, in the institutions of education, and for the administration of mercy."[12] It remained only for John Dewey to transform Rauschenbush's abstract idealism into concrete proposals. In a series of books written in the 1920's, Dewey asserted man's ability to achieve beneficent social change through experiment and education. Social progress, Dewey emphasized, could be obtained through the kind of rational investigation which had proved so successful in the natural sciences. And if society was still abysmally far from man's ideal, it was only because of ignorance, a handicap which Dewey's many educational reforms were designed to dispell.

The result was a prevailing optimistic climate which Reinhold Niebuhr in 1936 sought to reduce to a set of propositions:

1. That injustice is caused by ignorance and will yield to education and great intelligence.

2. That civilization is becoming gradually more moral and that it is a sin to challenge either the inevitability or the efficacy of gradualness.

3. That the character of individuals rather than social systems and arrangements is the guarantee of justice in society.

4. That appeals to love, justice, good-will and brotherhood are bound to be efficacious in the end. If they have not been so to date we must have more appeals to love, justice, good-will and brotherhood.

5. That goodness makes for happiness and that the increasing knowledge of this fact will overcome human selfishness and greed.

6. That wars are stupid and can therefore only be caused by people who are more stupid than those who recognize the stupidity of war.[13]

This was religious modernism. Two notions were central to its foundation: first, that man had the ability to perfect his nature; second, that God was the benevolent force which governed the universe. The modernists believed that man could perfect himself by learning to adapt to this beneficent system. So modernism was, and is, a religion of optimism.

Yet life was not nearly so cheerful in the early twentieth century as religious optimism suggested. The Great Depression, two World Wars, the genocide practiced by Nazi Germany, the purges of Stalin--these and other events led to great disillusionment with modernism. A reassessment was clearly needed, and many thinkers began to question openly the ideas of man's perfectability and God's goodness. As Dean W.W. Fenn of the Harvard Divinity School wrote: "To a serious thinker, Modern Liberalism often seems too jocund for life as it actually is. . . . A religious doctrine which cannot bear the weight of the heartbreaking disasters of life will prove a broken reed piercing the hand of him who leans upon it. Every fall is a

fall upward--tell that to a man who by his sin has fallen from a position of honor and power into deep and damaging disgrace. If all's right with the world, something is wrong with man's moral sense."[14] This flame of revolt grew to an inferno with the publication of an American translation of Karl Barth's Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie.[15] One of Barth's major points was his insistence that the Christian religion had nothing to do with natural theology, the theology of the modernists. Barth reasserted the Reformation doctrine of salvation by grace through Jesus Christ, a doctrine which stated in the strongest terms that fallen man could not achieve salvation by his own powers, that grace was an unmerited gift of a mysterious omnipotent deity. Barth's theology was a return to the doctrines of Jonathan Edwards which American theologians such as Beecher and Finney had worked so hard to palliate.

This reaffirmation of man's sinfulness was given forceful application by the American Reinhold Niebuhr. In one sense Niebuhr's involement in the revolt against modernism was highly ironic, for as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. has pointed out, Reinhold Niebuhr was, in a very real sense, a child of religious optimism.[16] As a young 23 year old fresh from the Yale Divinity School, he went to industrial Detroit to become pastor of a small church. Soon he was a member of the Mayor's Commission on Inter-racial Relations and the Detroit Council of Churches' Industrial Relations Commission. He joined the Fellowship for a Christian Social Order and the Fellowship of Reconciliation. He gave impassioned speeches at colleges and universities and was a major contributor to the World Tomorrow and the Christian Century. In short, Reinhold Niebuhr was a believer in perfecting the world by perfecting man.[17]

Like John Dewey, Niebuhr supported America's entry into the First World

War, justifying his position on optimistic, pragmatic grounds: "I think that if Wilson's aims are realized the war will serve a good purpose. . . . If we must have war I'll certainly feel better on the side of Wilson than on the side of the Kaiser."[18] Yet Niebuhr was far too honest to blind himself to the human cost of that conflagration. By 1923 he was prepared to admit that the war had taught him as much about the collapse of civilization as it had the secular writers of what is now called the "lost generation": "The war made me a child of the age of disillusionment."[19]

The ugliness of industrial life in Detroit also left its mark. Niebuhr came to feel that his preaching bore little relevance to the ugly reality of industrial America. "Simple little moral homilies" he called his sermons, and he began to lash out at the "sentimental optimism" which so blithely assumed that human history was marching to the beat of a beneficent drummer. As Niebuhr wrote in what is perhaps his most revealing book, Leaves From the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic, "Human sin seems much worse in its consequences than its intentions."[20]

Niebuhr's disillusionment with religious optimism--an optimism which Flannery O'Connor would later call "excusing human weakness because human weakness is human"[21]--soon came to be labeled "neo-orthodoxy." Reinhold Niebuhr's importance lies in his contribution to the neo-orthodox portrait of man. Where modernism saw man as basically good, the neo-orthodox rebellion saw man as basically sinful. Niebuhr strongly criticized religious optimists for their naivete: "The utopian illusions and sentimental aberrations of modern culture are all derived from the basic error of negating the fact of original sin."[22] Niebuhr admitted that man could do much to improve himself and his world, but he strongly denied that man's evil impulses could ever be completely subdued.

Neo-orthodoxy was not, however, simply a kind of adolescent pessimism; the new orthodoxy did not emphasize man's baseness. Rather, Niebuhr and others were calling for a realistic assessment of man's potentialities. Men could do great things; but men could do very evil things as well. Indeed, Niebuhr objected to Communism not because of totalitarian brutality; instead, he saw it as an untenable utopian illusion, similar to the illusion of religious modernism.

One of the most interesting aspects of the rebellion against religious optimism--and the aspect which relates most directly to Flannery O'Connor--was the literary echo sounded by Southern poets. John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate and others felt a close affinity to neo-orthodoxy, perhaps because it embraced the Southern heritage of conservative Calvanism, as well as the experience of debilitating war. God Without Thunder, Ransom's contribution to the neo-orthodox rebellion, unleashed a vigorous attack against the religious modernism of his day. However, where Reinhold Niebuhr was more concerned with the first tenet of modernism, that man had the ability to perfect himself, John Crowe Ransom was more occupied with modernism's second tenet, that God was good and only good. In place of the benevolent God of modernism, Ransom called for a return to the "God With Thunder." This Old Testament God ruled by fiat. He was mysterious, powerful, awe-inspiring, and "His large aims were not simply the benefit of man, since they entailed very seriously, and invariably, our human sufferings."[24] Or, to relate this idea directly to a neo-orthodox theme found in the fiction of Flannery O'Connor, the theme of divine inscrutability: "God is the author of evil as well as good, and one can never be sure which of the two is coming next."[25]

Ransom's book brilliantly illuminated the "archaic" religious views of

the South. The South was relatively untouched by the Social Gospel currents which swept across the North. In the South, when a man sinned, he was held accountable; and the results often took on catastrophic form. This was the fundamentalism which the Social Gospel ridiculed so savagely; yet it was a fundamentalism which seemed to make sense in the context of world war.

It was to illustrate this point, as well as to rebuke critics of Southern "backwardness," that Allen Tate wrote his provocative essay, "Remarks on the Southern Religion," a part of the Agrarian manifesto I'll Take My Stand. According to Tate, religious modernism was a "religion of the half-horse," a religion which saw only the rational and predictable side of the universe and therefore assumed that "everything works." Tate argued that if the modernists would open both eyes they would see the "whole horse," they would realize that the world was not all good, but rather a perplexing combination of good and evil: "The religion of the whole horse [the religion of the South] predicts both success and failure. It says that the horse will work within limits, but it is folly to tempt the horse providence too far. It takes account of the failures--that is, it is realistic, for it calls upon the traditional experience of evil which is the common lot of the race."[26] Thus the Southern Agrarians and neo-orthodoxy shared common bonds. Both found perfectionism untrue. Both found the conception of a benevolent deity unfaithful to traditional Christianity. As Southerner, O'Connor's kinship to the Agrarians was close. Moreover, as writer, she genuinely appreciated such Protestant apostles of neo-orthodoxy as Niebuhr, for as she herself commented, Protestants seemed to her to lend themselves more easily to dramatic portrature than Catholics: "If you are a Catholic and have intensity of belief you join the convent and are

heard no more; whereas if you are a Protestant and have it, there is no convent for you to join and you go about the world getting into all sorts of trouble and drawing the wrath of people who don't believe anything much at all down on your head. This is one reason why I can write about Protestant believers better than Catholic believers--because they express their beliefs in diverse kinds of dramatic action which is obvious enough for me to catch."[27]

The important point here is that neo-orthodoxy was tough-minded (as modernism was not); neo-orthodoxy recognized evil--both the evil of imperfect men and the apparent evil of an inscrutable God--and presented it in concrete and vivid terms. And this, of course, is precisely what O'Connor did in her fiction. "I think," she said, "that if writers with a religious view of the world excel these days in the depiction of evil, it is because they have to make its nature unmistakable to their particular audience."[28] Flannery O'Connor, therefore, emphasized evil in her fiction because, as writer and Southerner, she was heir to the neo-orthodox rebellion against religious modernism, a rebellion whose primary aim lay in making the nature of evil unmistakably plain to an eudaemonistic world.

An inspection of Mystery and Manners, O'Connor's posthumous collection of essays, makes clear just how close her view were to those of neo-orthodoxy. O'Connor's perception of the twentieth century temperment encompassed two levels. Firstly, modern man had lost sight of the imperfection of humanity because of the advances of science. This theme is repeatedly emphasized by Ransom in God Without Thunder,[29] and it caused O'Connor twenty-five years later to remark that "since the eighteenth

century, the popular spirit of each succeeding age has tended more and more to the view that the ills and mysteries of life will eventually fall before the scientific advances of man, a belief that is still going strong even though this is the first generation to face total extinction because of these advances."[30] This increasing faith in the power of science to solve the world's problems was, both in Ransom's and O'Connor's view, the greatest evil facing modern man.

Secondly, since the South had not been as affected by industrialization as the North, the South's vision was not as clouded concerning human sin: "To be able to recognize a freak, you have to have some conception of the whole man, and in the South the general conception of man is still, in the main, theological. . . . I think it is safe to say that while the South is hardly Christ-centered, it is most certainly Christ-haunted."[31] O'Connor then was opposed to the perfectionist ideals of Rauschenbush and Dewey, whose Social Gospel programs of reform relied on education and technology to bring about change. Like Niebuhr, O'Connor insisted that modernism was too dangerously unrealistic to deal with the problems of life. Moreover, as Southerner, O'Connor felt peculiarly suited to pointing out the evils of modernism: "Whenever I'm asked why Southern writers have a penchant for writing about freaks, I say it is because we are still able to recognize one."[32]

Certainly this is a unique way of expressing the idea of original sin; it vividly demonstrates O'Connor's distrust of the doctrine of man's perfectability. A common complaint raised against Flannery O'Connor is that her characters are unbelievable because they are too "strange." Yet if O'Connor's writing has any point, it is surely that <u>all</u> men are "strange." As the author said in "The Grotesque in Southern Fiction," "I hate to think that in twenty years Southern writers too [like writers from the

industrial and melioristic North] may be writing about men in gray-flannel suits and may have lost their ability to see that these gentlemen are even greater freaks than what we are writing about now."[33]

O'Connor's ties with neo-orthodoxy, however, lay not merely in distrust of perfectionism. Along with Ransom and Tate, O'Connor also shared an intense dislike for what she termed a "smiling Jesus with a bleeding heart." She held a firm belief in the God with Thunder and looked aghast upon the sentimentality of twentieth century Christianity. In her introduction to A Memoir of Mary Ann, the story of a nine year old child who dies from a hideous tumor on her face, O'Connor discusses in detail the problems of belief in an inscrutable God. There are at least two major points in the essay. First, good and evil are bound inextricably together; they cannot be separated into neat categories. Secondly, God may appear to be cruel, because He is responsible for the evil as well as the good in creation, but He really knows what He's doing. This is not something which can be "proven"; rather, it is part of the "mystery" of existence. As O'Connor put it: "Evil is not simply a problem to be solved, but a mystery to be endured."[34] Yet modern rational man, who no longer realizes his fallen condition, will have nothing to do with problems which cannot be solved: "Ivan Karamazov cannot believe, as long as one child is in torment; Camus' hero cannot accept the divinity of Christ, because of the massacre of the innocents. In this popular pity, we mark our gain in sensibility and our loss in vision. If other ages felt less, they saw more, even though they saw with the blind, prophetical, unsentimental eye of acceptance, which is to say, of faith."[35] One cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of faith in O'Connor's writings. Faith holds firm when reason fails. God may be--in Ransom's terms, God is--responsible for the tormenting of children and the massacre of innocents, but faith supplies the believer with

patience, in the Latin sense of the ability to endure great suffering.[36] The "patience of Job" was for O'Connor the true and fulfilling relationship between man and God, a relationship which modern man no longer appreciated.

O'Connor was a Southerner writing about original sin and inscrutable God to readers who believed in perfectable man and assumed that if God did exist, then he must be beneficent. Thus O'Connor perceived herself as isolated from the mainstream of sophisticated urbane America. This idea reverberates through the essays of Mystery and Manners: "Since we live in a world that since the sixteenth century has been increasingly dominated by secular thought, the Catholic writer often finds himself writing in and for a world that is unprepared and unwilling to see the meaning of life as he sees it. This means frequently that he may resort to violent literary means to get his vision across to a hostile audience."[37] The modern reader, in other words, is unprepared to accept the twin religious truths of traditional Christianity, truths which were never lost sight of in the South, truths which neo-orthodoxy reasserted with vigor: man is sinful and God inscrutable.

O'Connor's solution to this problem, as the passage implies, was to shock her readers into realization. Tate's essay on Southern religion is notable for the outrageousness of its conclusion: "How may the Southerner take hold of his Tradition? The answer is, by violence."[38] This is the device which O'Connor used again and again in her stories. To portray an inscrutable God, she portrayed the Holy Ghost "emblazened in ice instead of fire." To portray imperfect men, she portrayed escaped criminals and one-armed tramps. In an early review of Wise Blood, Isaac Rosenfeld commented that O'Connor's world was simply "insane . . . peopled by monsters and submen."[39] But O'Connor was not attempting to create "submen" when she developed such characters as Hazel Motes. She was simply

portraying the most startling, most shocking, member of rural Southern society she could find, the backwoods itinerate preacher. She liked to call her characterizations of these rural Southern Protestants "the Georgia part of being a Georgia writer."[40]

Ultimately, what stand out starkly in O'Connor's essays are the twin notions of sinful man and inscrutable God, the notions which were the focal point for the neo-orthodox rebellion. Of course, O'Connor's reputation was not built on her essays. Still, it would not do to ignore them. More importantly, her fiction--upon which her reputation does rest--is also filled with these same twin notions.

Nowhere is this fact more graphic than in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." This tale concerns a family which takes an automobile trip to Florida, has a wreck along the way, is confronted by an escaped convict and eventually is massacred. Needless to say, it is a gruesome story, and it is also a perplexing one. The heart of the narrative lies in the conversation between the grandmother and the convict, who calls himself the Misfit, while the grandmother is awaiting her turn to die. The grandmother tells the Misfit that if he will pray, Jesus will help him. The Misfit agrees, but says he doesn't want any help. "I'm doing all right by myself" (130), he assures her. He apologizes for not having a shirt, then sends her son Bailey off into the woods to be shot. He questions whether Jesus really raised the dead, all the while sending the rest of the family off to be slaughtered. Finally, only the grandmother is left. She commences to shout Jesus' name, and then she does a strange thing. She reaches out and touches the Misfit and says, "Why you're one of my own babies. You're one of my own children" (132). This does not please the psychopath. He springs away, "as if a snake had bitten

him" (132), and shoots her three times in the chest.

The perplexing thing about this story is the grandmother's action prior to her death. She is obviously frightened. What could cause her to reach out and touch the maniac? And why the cruel reward? In this case speculation is unnecessary, because the author has anticipated potential confusion: "The grandmother is at last alone, facing the Misfit. Her head clears for an instant and she realizes, even in her limited way, that she is responsible for the man before her and joined to him by ties of kinship which have their roots deep in the mystery she has been merely prattling about so far."[41]

This is a Southern echo of Reinhold Niebuhr's assertion that modern society has forgotten the fact of original sin and has suffered because of it. What the grandmother comes to learn in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" is the fragility and fallibility of human relations, plans, memories and finally, life itself. In realizing this she also comes to understand how necessary it is for her to accept the grace offered by God. She cannot save herself. This is the doctrine which created such a commotion when Karl Barth reasserted it in 1928 and explains why the story's title is meant literally. In O'Connor's terms, a good man is not only <u>hard</u> to find, he is <u>impossible</u> to find. (The only good man was Jesus.) That the grandmother comes to realize this is indicated by her supplications to Christ and by her admission that she is related to the Misfit (through the common experience of human limitation). In Flannery O'Connor's own words, when the grandmother realizes the fact of original sin, she is granted her "moment of grace."[42]

Yet "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" does not merely dramatize the doctrine of fallen man which Niebuhr emphasized so strongly; it also paints a vivid picture of John Crowe Ransom's God with Thunder. The

grandmother does ultimately realize the fact of original sin, but she is killed in the process. Her salvation carries an extremely high price tag. Moreover, the grandmother's redemption through disaster still leaves the deaths of the other family members unresolved. What rational purpose in the story do their murders serve? The only answer can be that they serve no rational purpose. In other words, the ways of the world, and of God, are inscrutable. The Misfit brilliantly evokes this notion in one of his monologues: "I said long ago, you get a signature and sign everything you do and keep a copy of it. Then you'll know what you done and you can hold up the crime to the punishment and see do they match and in the end you'll have something to prove you ain't been treated right. I call myself The Misfit because I can't make what all I done wrong fit what all I gone through in punishment" (131).

The Misfit clearly understands the human condition; man's punishment often does not fit his crime. Babies born without noses and the victims of earthquakes seem tormented by capricious cruelty. Yet, why should God permit such suffering? The neo-orthodox answer to this question--and the answer which O'Connor appears to present in her fiction--is that the ways of God are incomprehensible to finite men. One can only endure God's actions; one cannot understand them. This is the idea which Ransom was spelling out when he wrote that "God's large aims are not simply the benefit of man, since they entail very seriously, and invariably, our human sufferings."[43] From the neo-orthodox point of view, God and the ways of the world are essentially and finally mysterious.

The two key doctrines of neo-orthodoxy are vividly drawn in another O'Connor story, "Revelation." In many respects, "Revelation" is like "A Temple of the Holy Ghost," a vivid catalogue of human imperfection. The story takes place in a doctor's waiting room filled with a homely lot of

people: there is Mrs. Turpin, a respectable hard-working farm woman; her husband Claude; a blonde child with a runny nose; the child's mother, wearing dirty pants; the child's grandmother, who has on a print dress which reminds Mrs. Turpin of a feed sack. The worst looking character, however, is a young girl reading a book entitled Human Development. "The poor girl's face was blue with acne and Mrs. Turpin thought how pitiful it was to have a face like that at that age" (490). Mrs. Turpin, through whose consciousness the story is presented, fancies herself superior to the other waiting room occupants, yet her interior monologues indicate that she is just as imperfect. She occupies herself by "naming the classes of people" (491). On the bottom are poor blacks. Next come poor whites, "not above, just away from" (491). Above the poor whites stand the home owners, and above them the home and land owners, the category to which Mrs. Turpin and Claude belong. "But here the complexity of it would begin to bear in on her, for some of the people with a lot of money were common and ought to be below she and Claude and some of the people who had good blood had lost their money and had to rent and then there were colored people who owned their homes and land as well" (491). Ultimately the mysterious nature of the human condition leaves Mrs. Turpin confused and insecure. Yet she is still convinced of her own righteousness.

Mrs. Turpin's optimistic facade is shattered, however, when the pimple-faced girl hits her in the eye with a well-thrown book. The girl then attacks Mrs. Turpin, plunging fingernails deeply into the woman's neck, shouting, "Go back to hell where you came from, you old wart hog!" (500). Thus Mrs. Turpin is identified with hogs, a common Biblical symbol for spiritual uncleanliness. Yet she feels she has been unjustly treated. She is hard working. She and her husband own property. To see Mrs. Turpin as only a buffoon and hypocrite lessens the story's impact. The point is

that property owners are as imperfect as impoverished share-croppers. Mrs. Turpin, in her ironic pig parlor vision, sees herself and Claude and all the other property owners of the world bringing up the rear of a vast procession ascending to heaven. "She leaned forward to observe them closer. They were marching behind the others [freaks and half-wits] with great dignity, accountable as they had always been for good order and common sense and respectable behavior. They alone were on key. Yet she could see by their shocked and altered faces that even their virtues were being burned away" (508). "Revelation" does not deny human virtue. Yet human virtue, when compared to the magnificence of God, pales. Mrs. Turpin is imperfect; human virtue is imperfect. That is the human condition.

Moreover, it is an inscrutable God who is responsible for this condition. Mrs. Turpin cannot understand why she has been called a wart hog. She denies the girl's accusation, "but the denial had no force" (502). Finally, enraged, she screams aloud in defiance of God: "How am I a hog and me both? How am I saved and from hell too?" (506). This is the human question; why must man suffer? Job confronts God with this same question, and indeed, "Revelation" clearly alludes to Job. While Mrs. Turpin is lying in bed, depressed, she scowls at the ceiling. "Occasionally she raised her fist and made a small stabbing motion over her chest as if she was defending her innocence to invisible guests who were like the comforters of Job, reasonable-seeming but wrong" (503). The answer which Mrs. Turpin ultimately receives from God sounds remarkably similar to the answer which Job received out of the whirlwind: "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the world?" In her frustration, Mrs. Turpin shouts at God, "Who do you think you are? . . . The question carried over the pasture and across the highway and the cotton field and returned to her

clearly like an answer from beyond the wood" (508). Who do you think you are? Mrs. Turpin's ultimate realization, like Job's, is that God is truly inscrutable; all she can do is patiently endure, in wonder and awe.

However, it would be simple-minded and unfair to label O'Connor as merely a spokeswoman for neo-orthodoxy. Significantly, O'Connor transcended her age. Nowhere is this fact clearer than in her early story "The River," a narrative which adds a third idea to the twin neo-orthodox ideas of sinful man and inscrutable God. "The River" distinctly and forcefully presents the idea that the disruptive and mysterious experience of God's grace is worth the highest price, even death.

The protagonist of this story is Harry Ashfield, a four year old child whose parents are too busy with their social set to give their son the attention he needs. Harry doesn't understand his parents; he merely tolerates them, in childish submission, for lack of better alternatives. In the course of the story, however, an alternative is presented, an alternative young Harry ultimately decides to accept.

This action is brought about by his baby sitter, Mrs. Connin, who shows Harry a book (which he later steals) entitled The Life of Jesus Christ for Readers Under Twelve. She later takes Harry to a faith healing at the river outside of town. At the camp meeting Harry is baptised by the preacher and told that he now belongs to the Elect, that he now "counts." But on his return home, his parents mock his religious experience. They discover the baby sitter's book, which Harry has hidden inside his coat. Deciding that it must be valuable--worth a lot of money--they take it away from the child. The next morning Harry runs away from home. He doesn't take a suitcase because "there was nothing from there he wanted to keep" (172). He returns to the river, determined "to keep on going this time until he

found the Kingdom of Christ" (173), and ultimately drowns himself.

That the boy's suicide is meant to be his salvation is indicated by two motifs which begin developing early in the story. First, when Harry finds out from the baby sitter that the preacher's name is Bevel, he adopts the name as his own. The sitter assumes that this is a remarkable coincidence, while the boy's parents consider it a joke. "Whoever heard of anybody named Bevel?" (169), the mother says. But the boy's identification with the preacher, and the religious beliefs for which the preacher stands, is apparent. Second, a series of swine images is introduced in contrast to the religious values symbolized by the preacher. As Harry is playing with the baby sitter's children, he removes a board in the pig pen and is attacked by a wild shoat. He runs crying into the house, where Mrs. Connin shows him the book about Jesus: "It was full of pictures, one of the carpenter driving a crowd of pigs out of a man. They were real pigs, gray and sour-looking, and Mrs. Connin said Jesus had driven them all out of this one man" (163). O'Connor, it seems, intended for the hogs and hog images in "The River," as in "Revelation," to stand as symbols of spiritual uncleanliness. The hog image reappears at the camp meeting when Harry encounters the ironically named Mr. Paradise, an old fellow with a cancerous ear who goes to the faith healings to prove that they don't work. Harry is terrified, for the old man's grotesque appearance reminds him of the shoat. At the story's end, as the boy is drowning in the river in his attempt to embrace "the Kingdom of Christ," he sees above him on the river bank the figure of Mr. Paradise, struggling vainly to rescue him. To the boy the old man looks "like a giant pig bounding after him" (174). But Mr. Paradise is too late. The preacher had told the boy to choose either God or the devil. In the final scene, it appears that Harry has chosen God.

The neo-orthodox assertion of man's fallen condition is certainly present in this story. In creating Mr. Paradise, O'Connor, like Hawthorne, indicated a character's inner deformity by giving him a clearly visible outer one, in this case a cancerous left ear.[44] As representatives of urban society, Harry's parents are equally as fallen as the old man. They spend their time either throwing wild parties or else recuperating from them. They have no time for their son, who desperately needs guidance. Mrs. Connin, the fundamentalist, is equally unappealing; her major talent lies in finding fault with everything around her. "I wouldn't have paid for that," she remarks of a painting hanging on Harry's parents' wall. "I would have drew it myself" (158). However, while engaging the boy's father in a brief mindless conversation, she has time to reconsider. Ultimately, she gives the watercolor another glance and mumbles, "I wouldn't have drew it" (158).

O'Connor's vision of a God with Thunder also looms large. If Harry's suicide really is meant to be his salvation, then one is tempted to remark that not only is O'Connor's God inscrutable, He is also just plain terrifying. Sensing such a reaction, O'Connor once said, "Bevel hasn't reached the age of reason; therefore he can't commit suicide. He comes to a good end. He's been saved from those nutty parents, a fate worse than death. He's been baptised and so he goes to his Maker; this is a good end."[45]

In "The River" the reader is jolted by the essential mystery of life and leaves the story with the feeling that God and salvation are far too complex matters to fit into simple categories--because what reverberates throughout this tale (and throughout "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" as well) is the clear implication that salvation is a high voltage, supernatural experience which does real damage as well as a great deal of good. It wounds as well as heals. When O'Connor asserts that the boy's death is

a "good end," she is going way beyond even the tough-mindedness of neo-orthodoxy. Reinhold Niebuhr wrote that modern man had forgotten his sinful nature, but nowhere did he suggest that the one way modern man could recognize sin was by staring down the barrel of a loaded gun. John Crowe Ransom insisted that God is responsible for evil as well as good, but never did he suggest that salvation might take the form of a four year old child's drowning. This is where O'Connor went beyond the neo-orthodox rebellion. She added a third idea to the twin notions of sinful man and inscrutable God: if it is necessary to wound--even kill--a man to save him, then that wound is a good thing, because redemption is worth the enormous cost.

Seen in this light, almost all of Flannery O'Connor's short stories portray the idea that salvation is worth the highest price. Mrs. Cope in "A Circle in the Fire," Hulga in "Good Country People," Mrs. Shortley and Mrs. McIntyre in "The Displaced Person," Julian in "Everything That Rises Must Converge," Mrs. May in "Greenleaf," Asbury in "The Enduring Chill," Sheppard in "The Lame Shall Enter First," Tanner in "Judgement Day"--these characters are either granted salvation through disaster, or else are pushed right to the edge of grace through some sort of catastrophic event. Mrs. May, for instance, finds salvation only after being gored by a bull. Tanner has his head and arms thrust between the spokes of a bannister, where he dies. Mrs. May's farm burns down. And poor Hulga has her wooden leg stolen.

"Good Country People" demonstrates vividly O'Connor's belief that salvation is worth the highest price. In this story a Ph.D. has her wooden leg stolen by a Bible salesman whom she has tried to seduce. The girl, Joy Hopewell, has a weak heart and lives on a farm with her mother and a country woman named Freeman. Having failed in her attempt to escape to

the outside world, Joy has come to accept her rural existence with contempt: she stomps about the house to make her wooden leg (the result of a hunting accident) just that much more grotesque; she changes her name from Joy to Hulga to irritate her mother; and she repeatedly makes rude remarks to Mrs. Freeman. She has no friends and no outside interests. She looks at young men "as though she could smell their stupidity" (276). Her only companion is her atheism. As she tells the young Bible salesman in the hayloft: "I'm one of those people who see through to nothing. . . . We are all damned . . . but some of us have taken off our blindfolds and see there's nothing to see. It's a kind of salvation" (287-88).

In comparison to Hulga, Manley Pointer, the Bible salesman, is a picture of innocence. He comes from deep in the country, "not even from a place, just near a place" (279). He makes a point of proclaiming his virtue to the family and accuses Mrs. Hopewell of disliking him because of it: "I know I'm real simple. I don't know how to say a thing but to say it. . . . People like you don't like to fool with country people like me!" (278). He proudly tells the family that he is devoting his life to "Chrustian service" (279).

Consequently, when Hulga decides to seduce the boy, she assumes that the union will be one of complete experience with total ignorance. And it does work out that way, although not in the manner that the girl has forseen. In the hayloft she discovers that the rube has come prepared for the adventure with a bottle of whiskey, a deck of pornographic playing cards, and a pack of prophylactics, all of which he pulls out of a hollow Bible. After taking Hulga's glasses off, the boy commences to arouse her sexually. Hulga suddenly finds herself at his mercy. Finally, in terror more than anything, she pleads, "Aren't you . . . just good country people?" (290). The boy snickers loudly and replies, "I hope you don't think that

I believe that crap! I may sell Bibles but I know which end is up and I wasn't born yesterday and I know where I'm going!" (290). After making a few more advances, he steals her wooden leg and runs away, completing the ironic reversal. Hulga is shown to be sadly deficient in her knowledge of the world, while Manley turns out to be more canny, crafty and worldly than anyone had dreamed.

"Good Country People" is one of O'Connor's most acerbic stories, one of her most tough-minded. The author once remarked that although "the average reader is pleased to observe anybody's wooden leg being stolen . . . the story does manage to operate at another level of experience, by letting the wooden leg accumulate meaning."[46] According to O'Connor, there is a wooden part of Joy's soul which corresponds to her wooden leg. Consequently, when Manley steals it, "the reader realizes that he has taken away part of the girl's personality and has revealed her deeper affliction to her for the first time."[47] Once again, it seems, O'Connor has indicated a character's inner deformity by giving him a clearly visible outer one. And if Hulga's wooden leg is the physical manifestation of her deformed soul, then "Good Country People," in a very literal sense, may be said to illustrate the doctrine that a man must first lose his soul, his life, before he may find it.

Perhaps this is what Thomas Merton had in mind when he said, "When I read Flannery, I don't think of Hemingway, or Katherine Anne Porter, or Sartre, but rather of someone like Sophocles. . . . I write her name with honor, for all the truth and all the craft with which she shows man's fall and dishonor."[48] Like the Greek tragedian, O'Connor perceived man as an imperfect creature, and her fiction implies that no matter how hard man tries, he will always end up a failure in his earthly pursuits, a viewpoint quite in keeping with the spirit of great tragic literature.

Marlowe's Dr. Faustus fails, as do Oedipus and Captain Ahab. That some readers view Ishmael as the true hero of Moby Dick is merely a symptom of what O'Connor termed modern man's "loss of vision." The paradox of tragedy is that failure is a positive virtue. Indeed, in the tragic vision, and in O'Connor's stories, the "successful" characters are often portrayed as somehow small, less than admirable--Mrs. Turpin in "Revelation," before her vision, or Ismene in Antigone. Thus, O'Connor can maintain that God's gift of redemption is a wounding experience, an experience of failure, an assertion to which Thomas Merton must surely have subscribed. The discipline of a Cistercian monk can hardly be understood in any other terms. The monks at Gethsemani (the Kentucky Abbey where Merton lived and served) led, and still lead, an existence that strikes most people--the very readers whom O'Connor considered her "hostile audience"--as nothing short of self-torture. Trappist monks never hold conversations, except rarely with their superiors and confessors. Instead they use sign language. They rise four hours before dawn and spend about ten hours each day in prayer. The rest of their time is devoted to manual labor, usually in the fields. They sleep on straw. Monks never eat meat, unless they are ill. They survive on macaroni or turnips or some other simple item, for the sake of the closeness to God their combined physical and spiritual sacrifices will yield.

The reader does not have to look far in Flannery O'Connor's fiction to find a counterpart to the life of a monk. In Hazel Motes, the protagonist of her first novel, Wise Blood, the author created a character who becomes so oppressed by the sense of his own enormous sin that, after having been granted a vision from God, he blinds himself with lime so as never to look on imperfect man again. But Hazel is not content simply to reenact the harsh penance of Oedipus: he also fills his shoes with rocks and

broken glass, then goes for long walks about town. He also wraps barbed wire about his chest so that he may even more forcefully renounce earthly pleasure. Many modern readers have found in Hazel's self-inflicted tortures the marks of a madman. In an early review of the novel, Isaac Rosenfeld wrote that it was hard to take Hazel's plight seriously because he was "little more than a lunatic."[49] But O'Connor anticipated this melioristic response; she mimicked it in an interior monologue of Mrs. Flood, Hazel's landlady: "She [Mrs. Flood] was not religious or morbid, for which every day she thanked her stars. She would credit a person who had that streak with anything, though, and Mr. Motes had it or he wouldn't be a preacher. He might put lime in his eyes and she wouldn't doubt it a bit, because they were all, if the truth was only known, a little bit off in their heads. What possible reason could a sane person have for wanting to not enjoy himself anymore?" (211).[50]

This is the response, in comic fashion, that O'Connor assumed most of her readers would have. And, not surprisingly, she was correct. The early reviews of the novel all concluded that Wise Blood was simply too violent a book to sustain the reader's interest. One reviewer complained that Hazel was "so repulsive that one could not become interested in him."[51] And, of course, there is the view already mentioned concerning "monsters and submen." Ironically, both these views echo Mrs. Flood's monologue. O'Connor was attempting to get across a message to readers who didn't care to listen, primarily because, in O'Connor's view, modern man was weak-hearted, hazy-minded and compassionate: "Compassion is a word that sounds good in anybody's mouth and which no book jacket can do without. It is a quality which no one can put his finger on in any exact critical sense, so it is always safe for anybody to use. Usually I think what is meant by it is that the writer excuses all human weakness because

human weakness is human."[52] O'Connor saw compassion as a symptom of modern man's failure of vision, rather than a sign of his improvement. Since the modern reader no longer recognized man as fallen, his vision was clouded and his compassion misplaced.

So what is the point of Mrs. Flood's interior monologue? The answer to the landlady's question is, of course, salvation, and the point is that Hazel Motes does not want to stop enjoying himself, nor is he "so repulsive that one cannot become interested in him." Rather, Hazel Motes puts lime in his eyes to come closer to God. Merton said, "Men who enter Trappist monasteries may seem to be throwing their lives away, and in a sense they are: but only to find them again, immediately and more perfectly. Because this is one sacrifice which terminates in the perfect fulfilment of everything for which we were created."[53] This is the paradox which character after character in O'Connor's stories eventually comprehends: before you can find God, it is necessary to lose yourself. The difference is that monks spend years of asceticism preparing themselves for God, while O'Connor's imperfect characters, such as Hulga Hopewell, wallowing in original sin, must be made ready all at once. Therefore, means more startling than ten hours of daily prayer are necessary.

Hulga Hopewell, of course, visibly bears the brunt of the neo-orthodox ideas in Flannery O'Connor's fiction. Blind not only to the mystery of God's creation, but also to her own imperfection, Hulga finds herself helpless when confronted with the evil she thought an illusion. O'Connor was not a philosopher; she did not condemn Hulga for "negating the fact of original sin." Instead, O'Connor arranged to have the girl's wooden leg stolen. In so doing, O'Connor created an action which uniquely symbolizes her rebellion against the twentieth century temperment of beneficent gods and perfectable men.

NOTES

[1] The World of Flannery O'Connor (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1970), pp. 153-54.

[2] New York Review of Books (30 Sept. 1965), p. 16.

[3] "Flannery O'Connor's Devil," Sewanee Review, 70 (1962), p. 403.

[4] The True Country: Themes in the Fiction of Flannery O'Connor (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1969), p. 87.

[5] The Question of Flannery O'Connor (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1973), p.4.

[6] The Christian Humanism of Flannery O'Connor (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1972), p. 173.

[7] A growing scholarly industry has dedicated itself to explicating the Christian themes in O'Connor's fiction. Some of the more interesting articles and monographs include Bob Dowell, "The Moment of Grace in the Fiction of Flannery O'Connor," College English, 27 (1965), pp. 235-39; Leon Driskell and Joan Brittain, The Eternal Crossroads (Lexington: The Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1971); Kathleen Feeley, Flannery O'Connor: Voice of the Peacock (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1972); Robert Fitzgerald, "The Countryside and the True Country," Sewanee Review, 70 (1962), pp. 380-94; Caroline Gordon, "Heresy in Dixie," Sewanee Review, 76 (1968), pp. 261-97; Granville Hicks, "Holy Kind of Horror," Saturday

Review, 49 (2 July 1966), pp. 21-22; Thomas Merton, "Flannery O'Connor," Jubilee, 12 (1964), p. 53; and Gilbert Muller, Nightmares and Visions (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1972).

[8] All quotations from O'Connor's stories are taken from The Complete Stories (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972). Page numbers are cited in text.

[9] Mystery and Manners, ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1961), p. 133.

[10] Quoted by Smith, Handy and Loetscher, American Christianity (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 126.

[11] American Christianity, p. 123.

[12] See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Reinhold Niebuhr's Role in Political Thought," in Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social and Political Thought, ed. Charles Kegley and Robert Bretall (New York: MacMillan, 1950), p. 128.

[13] Schlesinger, Reinhold Niebuhr, p. 130.

[14] American Christianity, p. 432.

[15] The Word of God and the Word of Man, tr. Douglas Horton (Boston, 1928).

[16] Schlesinger, Reinhold Niebuhr. The entire volume on Niebuhr provides valuable information to the student of twentieth century American culture.

[17] Niebuhr's first book, Does Civilization Need Religion, while pointing out some of the dangers of modernism, nevertheless sounded

a clear Social Gospel chord.

[18] Leaves From the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic (Chicago: Willet, Clark and Colby, 1929), p. 14.

[19] Ibid., p. 42.

[20] Ibid., p. 85.

[21] Mystery and Manners, p. 43.

[22] The Nature and Destiny of Man (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1941) I, p. 373.

[23] God Without Thunder (1930: rpt. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965), p. 105.

[24] Ibid., p. 43.

[25] Ibid., p. 39.

[26] "Remarks on the Southern Religion," in I'll Take My Stand (1930: rpt. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), pp. 158-59.

[27] Quoted by Miles Orvell, Invisible Parade (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1972), p. 43.

[28] Mystery and Manners, p. 168.

[29] See, for instance, Ransom's discussion of Bertrand Russell's "geographical machine" on pp. 233 ff.

[30] Mystery and Manners, p. 41.

[31] Ibid., p. 44.

[32] Ibid., p. 44.

[33] Ibid., p. 50.

[34] Ibid., p. 209.

[35] Ibid., p. 227.

[36] Ad patientem.

[37] Mystery and Manners, p. 185.

[38] Tate, p. 174.

[39] "To Win By Default," New Republic, 77 (7 July 1952), p. 19.

[40] Mystery and Manners, p. 57.

[41] Ibid., pp. 111-12.

[42] Dowell, p. 236.

[43] Ransom, p. 43.

[44] See Mystery and Manners, pp. 225 ff.

[45] "An Interview with Flannery O'Connor," Censer (Fall, 1960), p. 29.

[46] Mystery and Manners, p. 98.

[47] Ibid., p. 99.

[48] Quoted by Robert Giroux in his introduction to The Complete Stories, p. xv.

[49] "To Win By Default," p. 20.

[50] Wise Blood (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1952), p. 211.

[51] "Manic Gloom," Saturday Review, 34 (24 May 1952), p. 22.

[52] Mystery and Manners, p. 43.

[53] The Waters of Siloe (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1949), p. xxi.

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