



## The church of truth without Christ portrayed by Flannery o' Connor in her novel "*Wise Blood*"

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### Abstract

Marry Flannery O' Connor was born in 1925 at savannah in Georgia. Sothern States of America She moved to Atlanta with her family as a teenager but moved to Milledgeville, Georgia. When O' Connor was a young woman she began studying at Georgia state college for women. Since childhood she worked for the student newspaper and literary magazine and also wrote stories. These stories won her a place in the master's program at the University of Iowa. Where she was publishing fiction. When she was twenty one she published her first story "the geranium" that earned her an award. O' Connor received her degree in 1947 then worked as a teaching assistant at the University of Iowa while beginning to write her novel, *Wise Blood*.

A good man is hard to find is one of the most famous examples of Southern Gothic literature. This Gothic writing focuses on strange events, eccentric characters, and local color to create a moody and unsettling depiction of life in the South America.

**Keywords:** preacher, sin, soul, holy, spiritual, Catholicism, extremism, violent, new Jesus

### Introduction

#### O'Connor and Catholicism

Flannery O'Connor's Catholicism influenced almost all her fiction sometimes harsh portrayal of religion. O'Connor's great-grandparents had been some of the first Catholics to live in Georgia and her family stood out in the predominantly protestant south. Although her stories and novels are often violent and gruesome, they are rooted in her belief in the mysteries of belief and divinity. Moreover, her characters often face violent situations that force them into a moment of crisis that awakens or alters their faith. She also attributed her desire to write to her Catholicism, O'Connor says that I feel that if I were not a Catholic, I would have no reason to write, no reason to see, no reason ever to feel or even to enjoy anything. Protestant church building are so present throughout the south that O'Connor finds it safe to say that while the south is hardly Christ-centered, it is most certainly Christ-haunted.

O'Connor's creation of Haze Motes, whose grandfather was a shouting travel preacher, fundamentalist, evangelist preacher, and arrives every fourth Saturday "Just in time to save them all from hell"(10), make sense within her orthodox views as well as within the background of her region. O'Connor employs a secular use of religion to call attention to its abundant visibility and often surface meaning in the lives of Southern people. So powerful is the code of Southern manners that it often dwarfs religion, dominating the nature of its potential capacity for ultimate good. The references to "Jesus" or "Christ" and the Christian trinity represented by the number three proliferate throughout the novel.

#### "*Wise Blood*"

The novel is to introduce the True prophet after Haze rejects Holy's scheme for money. Motes goes through the characters

for each of them denotes something that he must reject if he is to reach his spiritual home. Motes strongly attracted to hawks needs to follow him everywhere knocks on is door throughout the day and "could not understand why the preacher did not welcome him and act like a preacher should when he sees... a lost soul"(82). When motes finally breaks into his room, lights a match in (blind preacher) hawks' face and discovers the sham, the moment is so shocking for motes that he temporarily ceases to be human. Hawks throws a punch in the direction of the impostor's face but "it moved back expressionless under the white hat, and was gone in a second" (92).

The movement from third person sterilizes happens several times in the novel and it is always deliberate. Motes rejects the approach to religion that would use it to obtain money and speak about Christ without believing the ideas behind the words. Sabbath is comfortable as a bastard who will not enter the kingdom of heaven and because of her already doomed afterlife she seeks out lusty earthly benefits. Motes violently rejects the "new jesus" and he realizes that his own literal words preached on the street are an exact description of his call for a "new jesus". "One that's all man, without blood to waste,... that don't look like anyother man"(80). Motes understands that what he has called for is not what his church needs, and not what he needs or believes. Perspective through his own vision, physical violence is also the manner through which motes destroys both Hoover Shoats and Solace Layfield. Shoats recognizes a potential monetary windfall from motes's Church Without Christ, immediately moving in on motes's message in order to collect money from the listeners, he sees the "new jesus" idea as full of possibilities, only in need of "a little promotion"(90). Motes slams Shoats's thumb in the car door and kills Layfield and his own Church without Christ.

When Haze becomes a preacher, the car is his means to reach the indiscriminate church site, his place to preach from, and his way to depart. Haze denies original sin at this point, he advocates innate goodness. Haze listens to what he wants to hear, not truth. Motes has nothing else to discover from the world around him or the people in it. Now it is his landlady, Mrs. Flood, who becomes obsessed with what it is that Motes knows. She feels as though she has been cheated somehow. When she discovers that he walks on rocks and wraps barbed wire around his chest, she is entirely baffled, likening his actions to something. In an exchange in which the literal Mrs. Flood talks with the figurative Motes, O'Connor demonstrates how the same words move in opposite directions: Motes explains that he does these things because he is not clean. Mrs. Flood responds, "I know it ... you got blood on that night shirt and on the bed" (127).

When Motes explains that he means another kind of clean, she tells him there is "only one kind of clean" (127). O'Connor suggests with this powerful and mysterious conclusion that death has some answers that life simply cannot give, but those who are willing to make the sacrifice, who are willing to center their lives in Christ, go into that life after life. Redemption by Christ and what I see in the world I see in its relation to that. O'Connor uses the words Jesus or Christ 133 times in this novel, and references to Jesus by pronoun. The use of the word in a negative manner dominates the text. When Motes becomes a preacher to "the church of truth without Jesus Christ Crucified" (31). Name he later shortens to "Church without Christ" (59). His message on the streets is one of denying Christ: "Nothing matters but that Jesus was a liar" (59). However, once Motes creates his church and becomes its preacher, he does not use the word Jesus as a cuss word again. Before his decision to preach, he is partial to "My Jesus" (27). The obsessive play on the word Jesus calls attention to its paradoxical tension. The word is recognized as irreverent but because of the repetition and the content of the story, the word takes on multiple meanings.

### Conclusion

O'Connor uses America's obsession with prosperity and its love affair with cars to provide a basis for the spiritual chaos the characters in *Wise Blood* experience. O'Connor presents motifs and images portraying a prosperous society. Money reigns as king: Mrs. Hitchcock checks the price tag on Mote's coat; street vendors and used-car salesmen haggle over prices; and fake preachers brag about their salaries. In addition, commercial advertising takes over the landscape in the form of signs on buildings, billboards along the roadside, and the business establishments themselves. The novel's characters focus so intently on money-related issues and prosperity that their spirituality disappears and their morals disintegrate.

Hazel Motes denies religion as vehemently as people of the 1950s embraced it. Mote's acts of violence suggest extremism, as does the seemingly blind adoption of religion by Americans living in the 1950s. O'Connor draws the parallel between the novel and real life with images of a prosperous society and of people who lack spiritual purpose as a result of it.

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