CHAPTER VI
REVELATION AND REDEMPTION

Miss O'Connor was a devout Catholic herself and a fine essayist on the craft of fiction whose statements are posthumously collected in *Mystery and Manners*. She defines her subject as the "action of grace in territory held largely by the devil." (M.N., p. 113). The phrase expresses her belief that evil springs wherever the spirit refuses mediation in forms of communal existence or in gestures of love. Thus death becomes the conclusion of her stories. The stories dwell on horrors that make human condition intolerable without Grace. They serve less as the evidence of man's fall and dishonour than as invocations of his Redemption.

Miss O'Connor's imagination was absorbed by the central Christian mysteries — Man's fall from innocence and his Redemption by Christ. Her characters are, therefore, grotesque because she viewed all reality as marked by an original fall. Flight of man in the "World of guilt and sorrow" starts in "Everything that Rises" and ends in "Judgement Day". The search for a good man starts in the title story "A Good Man is Hard to Find" and ends in the last story "The Displaced Person." In "Blood"," Hazel Notes blasphemes, rages, mortifies himself; he goes so far as to kill a fake prophet. This negation ultimately turns into twisted divine love, and he manages to achieve Salvation.
Similarly in *The Violent Bear It Away*, the boy Tarwater holds out fanatically against his fate until he experiences evil first hand. Finally, he turns away from pride.

Thus we find in her books and short stories, her characters fighting their way through religious denial usually in the face of violence, to an acceptance of Christ.

Human existence caught between a righteous Christ and Satan is the dilemma depicted by Miss O'Connor in her entire work. The contestants, Christ and Satan, are envisioned as cosmic forces in a battle over the possession of a soul. In both her novels and stories Salvation is portrayed as a struggle between Christ and the devil where the character must choose one to the exclusion of the other. In her book *Mystery and Manners*, Miss O'Connor herself states:

The Catholic novel can't be categorized by subject matter, but only by what is assumed about human and divine reality. It can't see man as determined; it cannot see him as totally depraved. It will see him as incomplete in himself, as prone to evil, but as redeemable when his own efforts are assisted by grace. And it will see this grace as working through nature, but as entirely transcending it, so that a door is always open to possibility and the unexpected in the human soul. Its centre of meaning will be Christ. Its centre of destruction will be the devil. No matter how this view of life may be fleshed out, these assumptions form its skeleton (H.M., pp. 196-197).

Horton Davies and Marie-Hélène Davies while comparing Flannery O'Connor to Frederick Buechner mention that "they are both prophetic voices crying in the wilderness of our
modern secular society and insisting that Christ is the only oasis in that desert .... For both God is the central actor in the human drama." Miss O'Connor pointedly stresses, in her stories and novels, original sin and the fall, and the loss of innocence, and the advent of guilt which are the pre-requisites for Salvation. The focus of Salvation is the crucifixion of Christ which for Miss O'Connor is a haunting image appearing every time as the sun behind the dark line of trees which marks the moment of judgement and Grace.

Miss O'Connor's own vision ranged from the visible to the invisible and her vocation was to see past surface realities to absolute truths. She herself says, "If the writer believes that our life is and will remain essentially mysterious .... then what he sees on the surface will be of interest to him only as he can go through it into an experience of mystery itself" (ibid., p. 41). The deepest mystery for her is the mystery of Grace and it provides the true subject matter of her novels and stories.

II

Miss O'Connor's first novel Miss Blood presents its hero Hazel Notes as one who is unable to escape from the Redemption by Christ. Hazel ultimately rid himself of his animistic self and arrives at a "pin point of light." Her novel portrays a world in which the contending
forces are Christ and the devil. Hazel is raised by his harsh, morally righteous mother and his fanatically religious grandfather. Thus for him Christ becomes the image of sinlessness and Hazel hopes to avoid sin in order to escape from the judgement of Christ, which he is unable to do. James Gosse analyses Hazel's behaviour and says, "His extreme behaviour throughout the novel results from his acceptance of the sinless Christ as the only true image of the redeemed man, on the one hand, and Hazel's own inability to accept his instinctual self, on the other .... his instincts strive in diverse directions while his mind attempts to repress his bodily needs." The novel thus portrays Hazel's initiation into the unconscious realm of his "wile Blood" which refers to the beastly passions and instincts that emerge in him in the form of sexual perversity and his struggle with those demonic forces.

At the age of eighteen Hazel enters the army where he uses his time "to study his soul in and assure himself that it was not there" (M.B., p. 24). After his discharge he comes home and discovers that his parents are dead, and from there he proceeds to the city of Taalkinham to preach the Church without Christ. In order to prove that there is no sin he yields to the temptation of living with Leora Watts, a prostitute. His fall from innocence is confirmed by his statement "What do I need with Jesus? I got Leora Watts" (M.B., p. 56). From here the battle of Hazel's soul between
Christ and the devil has begun. Thereafter the characters that Hazel encounters are all either false prophets or beastly manifestations and must be eradicated for him to become the believer and to achieve Grace.

Mise Blood is Miss O'Connor's clearest statement of the necessity for accepting Redemption. It is her argument that therein lies our hope. Hazel Notes is the man who tries to deny and escape Jesus but who is saved because he cannot. Speaking of Mise Blood Miss O'Connor says: "That belief in Christ is to some a matter of life and death has been a stumbling block for readers who would prefer to think it a matter of no great consequence. For them Hazel Notes' integrity lies in his trying with such vigour to get rid of the ragged figure who moves from tree to tree in the back of his mind. For the author, his integrity lies in his not being able to." (E.H., pp. 114-115). Thus, although Hazel Notes fights the idea and image of Christ, yet he is so obsessed by the challenge of Christ that it is clear that he will surrender to it. Hazel wants to build a Church without Christ and in doing so he destroys himself — by blinding himself, exposing himself to the cold and thus dying.

Hazel Notes had been haunted by the apparition of Jesus since his childhood when his preacher grandfather had affirmed that Jesus would have him. Moreover, because his grandfather always associated Jesus with Sin and
Redemption, Hazel decides that "the way to avoid Jesus was to avoid Sin" (W.B., p. 22). From that point his religious practice became one of avoidance. But later Hazel Notes feels that the solution to the problem of Jesus was to believe in the non-existence of Jesus and hence of Sin, because if only Jesus was real there could be such a thing as Sin. However, he tries to convince his fellow men that there is no Jesus or at least Jesus is not necessary to the moral life in accents similar to those in Nathanael West's Miss Lonelyhearts. Thus Hazel Notes fights the idea and the image of Christ, but in so doing he also competes with a variety of other prophets. Throughout the book he confronts one person after another with, "I reckon you think you been redeemed." (W.B., p. 14). He keeps on insisting "I am clean." (W.B., p. 91). To prove his cleanliness and his disbelief in Christ, he finds it necessary to commit adultery with Leora Watts.

Another personification of evil and temptation is Asa Hawkins, a fake blind preacher and his daughter to whom Hazel is drawn. Asa Hawkins insists "you can't run away from Jesus. Jesus is a fact" (W.B., p. 51). For Hazel this is tantamount to saying that sin is fact and that he had sinned. But Hazel has decided to solve the problem of moral conscience without the aid of Christ figure, and for this purpose he wants to preach his doctrine to the people. However, both the blind man, Asa Hawkins, and his daughter are fake. The revivalist is not blind and his daughter is a common
cheap slut. Although Hazel affirms to the non-existence of Jesus, he follows Hawks who represents to him to be the believer, the man who would even blind himself to justify before Christ; and Hawks, though a hypocrite, can detect Hazel's intensity and "can hear the urge for Jesus in his voice" (M.R., p. 50). Like a sharpnel which, though, removed from his chest was "in there rusted and poisoning him" (M.R., p. 24), the idea of Jesus was embedded in his mind permanently.

Yet another evil element is an old Essex car which Hazel buys to help him escape from Jesus. This car is to become the vehicle for preaching his own doctrine. Consequently, he preaches the Church without Christ "the blind don't see, the lame don't walk and what's dead stays that away" (M.R., p.105) from the top of the car. This rat-coloured old dilapidated car is to become his pulpit and like his preacher-grandfather he preaches his doctrine from the hood of the car that behind all truths there lies only one truth that there is no truth.

Jerry H. Bryant says that "The irony of his position is symbolized by his old Essex, "a rat coloured" broken down relic of a car which is on the 'verge of collapse, but which Hazel declares will run forever. It represents the deterioration of rationalism as "edifying knowledge". But for Hazel Notes the car is the embodiment of clear-sightedness, "built by people with their eyes open that
knew where they were at" (M.B., p. 127). Although the car is to be the symbol for the new Church, it becomes the murder weapon Hazel uses to kill Solace Layfield, a preacher. He runs over the man because Solace has replaced him as the prophet for preaching the doctrine of the new Church, and thus become another fake prophet who must be eradicated before Hazel finally achieves the moment of Grace. Hazel denounces him for telling lies and pretending not to believe in Christ when he really does. Actually this is what Hazel himself has been doing and the dying words of the fake prophet "Jesus Help me" (M.B., p. 205) go deep in his heart, and from then on Hazel is without rest.

In fact Solace is Hazel's alter-ego, his other self. Thereafter Hazel makes his last attempt to escape to a place where he can preach his new religion but he does not seem to be "gaining ground". Both he and his car have nearly reached the end of the line. When a policeman pushes the old car over an embankment and orders Hazel to "See the view" (M.B., p. 208) he seems to experience his moment of Grace and Revelation. When the policeman asks him if he was going anywhere, he answers in negative. Once his pulpit - the car is gone, Hazel is, it seems, utterly undone. Having faced the agnosticism and unconcern and decadence of the world, there is nothing left for him to do but to destroy his capacity to see anything more. The end of the car means recognition of guilt and a necessity
for penance. So he does what Asa Hawkes had years before only pretended to do: he blinds himself with quicklime.

His passage again from rejection of faith offered him in his childhood, through self-inflicted mutilations to a final peace is a series of violent events. Jerry H. Bryant sees this gesture of Hazel to be one last gesture of defiance, one last proof that he does not believe in Jesus, but Mr. Bryant does affirm that the symbolic nature of that gesture is that Hazel cannot escape his belief. In this connection he says, "Having fled from Christ's darkness to the light of truth, he (Hazel) turns at last, almost panting and at bay and plunges into that very darkness." 4

When he puts rocks and broken glass in the bottom of his shoes and binds barbed wire around his chest, his land-lady points to the obvious conclusion "you must believe in Jesus or you wouldn't do those foolish things" (K.B., p. 225). Hazel has not been able to escape that ragged figure in the back of his mind. In order to achieve the moment of hope and Salvation Hazel purges himself clean of all evils and temptations that come his way and thus becomes one of the characters of Miss O'Connor who are granted grace and Salvation. According to Frederick J. Hoffman, the novel describes three stages of journey to death: (1) Recognition of death (Images of Coffin), (2) Rebellion against idea of supernatural being (violence against grandfather), (3) Self-immolation or move towards
Redemption.  

About Hazel's reversal, Hoffman rightly says, "He has gone the full route toward preaching the inutility of Christ; now he will move back to the point of self-inflicted nobility which enables him to join his relatives in the coffins he has remembered and dreamed about. There is so much of the extreme in Miss Blood that it appears to be disjointed and all too simply plotted. Actually every detail is part of a plan to portray the journey towards redemption." Leon V. Driskell and Joan T. Brittain have compared Hazel Notes to Oedipus who blinded himself in expiation of Carnal aims and spiritual blindness. Both Oedipus and Hazel discover a truth unlike any they had expected and both seek inward sight through loss of external sight. The story shows Hazel's spiritual displacement but finally he becomes a "pin point of light" and understands the Mystery of Redemption.

III

Miss O'Connor, although a devout catholic, was deeply influenced by southern fundamentalism and with its overwhelming religious view of life. About her own work she says "I see from the standpoint of Christian orthodoxy. This means that for me meaning of life is centered in our Redemption by Christ and that what I see in the world I see
in its relation.<sup>6</sup> That (M.M., p. 32). Miss O'Connor's second novel *The Violent Bear It Away* also suggests such a relation between the ordinary and the transcendent. Sallie Mifague TeSelle while comparing Miss O'Connor to Pascal, Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky remarks that "Her Catholicism is in many ways old-style, Pre-Vatican, good and evil, the battle, often violent, of god and the devil for the individual soul is central. She is not concerned with salvation of the soul in social or economic terms, but with the baptism of idiots. Tarwater's first and despised duty as a fledgling prophet is to baptise the idiot boy, this counts in her scheme of things. This is a sort of religiosity that is difficult for modern secular people to understand and appreciate."<sup>8</sup> Thus the same theme of conflict between good and evil is repeated in Miss O'Connor's novel *The Violent Bear It Away* in which Baptism becomes the central action and through the act of Baptism young Tarwater achieves Grace. She herself says that, "When I write a novel in which central action is baptism, I am very well aware that for majority of my readers, baptism is a meaningless rite, and so in my novel I have to see that this baptism carries enough awe, mystery to jar the reader into some kind of emotional recognition of its significance." (M.M., p. 162).

The conflict between God and the devil for the human soul is freely present in Miss O'Connor's fiction
but perhaps at no point can it be felt with such force as in this novel. At no other point in her fiction does she develop the function of the prophet so thoroughly as in this novel. But before undergoing initiation into his vocation, Tarwater delights in the evil he sees in the city to which he has travelled from the farm. This is the novel about a fourteen-year-old boy, Francis Tarwater, a self-proclaimed prophet, with the task of baptizing his cousin, the idiot son of his uncle Rayber in the city. The two lessons which the old man has year-in and year-out enjoined upon his grand-nephew are the necessity of giving him a decent burial and of baptizing of his idiot cousin Bishop. The stages of Tarwater's resistance and submission to his great-uncle's vision pass through a torturous route.

The split within young Tarwater's personality between the godly and the satanic is voiced as an internal debate between the boy and a stranger. Reared by his great-uncle to be a prophet, Tarwater first rebels by getting drunk and burning down the house instead of decently burying the old man. Then he leaves that isolated place and goes off to the city to look up his uncle Rayber, but the old man like the "ragged figure of Christ" in Mise Blood cannot be so easily disposed of. In fact, the central idea of the novel develops out of the fierce competition between old Tarwater and Rayber for the boy's possession.

In fact, some years earlier when Francis Tarwater had
been living with his uncle Rayber as his ward, his great-uncle old Tarwater had kidnapped him and taken him to powderhead, a backwoods place in the country, in order to rescue him from being a piece of information in Rayber's head. "I saved you to be free, your ownself," he likes to shout at the boy.... "not a piece of information inside his head." (The Violent, p. 16). All along old Mason Tarwater teaches the boy about the history from Adam's days and about evil in the world. Like St. Peter he warns Francis Tarwater that "the devil will ask you your business and give you smoke and drink." (The Violent, p. 58) and tells him "to beware the lion of the Lord set in the path of false prophets." (The Violent, p. 24). But Tarwater repudiates his grand-uncle's warnings and after taking a few swishes of liquor he takes the advice of his friend (the voice) and sets the house on fire with his grand-uncle's body in it.

At each stage young Tarwater denies the old man's message, but his uncle Rayber knows that despite young Tarwater's asserted disbelief, the old man's "seed" has fallen into him and that he intends to try to baptize his cousin Bishop. Young Tarwater, on the other hand, wants to remain free both from his grand-uncle and his uncle Rayber who opposes the old-time religion with his rationalism. However, in spite of his repudiations he is quick to seize the first real chance that comes along to perform the duty laid upon him by his fanatical grand-uncle. Ultimately he both
baptizes as well as drowns the child, yielding momentarily to one demand, then in anger reacting violently to it.

Rayber had taken both the boys, his son and young Tarwater, out of the city to a motel on a lake for a holiday, and there young Tarwater after taking Bishop to the lake in a rowing boat baptizes the child and in doing so drowns him, but before that Tarwater has a revelation which frightens him.

"Then the revelation came, silent, unplaceable, direct as a bullet....He knew that he was called to be a prophet and that the ways of his prophecy would not be remarkable." (The Violent, p. 91). But even at this point young Tarwater is unwilling to accept the Divine mission. It takes an encounter with the devil in person who actually gives him smoke and doped drink and rapes him that Tarwater finally is freed from the physical and secular conflict. None of his rebellious acts has been a success. The drowning was a baptism, and his grand-uncle's body was not cremated in house-burning. The Negro neighbour had buried him. Then only he understands the power of faith. The vision of his grand-uncle feeding on fishes and leaves makes him realize that he too is hungry for the same food. His eyes "They looked as if, touched with a coal like the lips of the prophet, they would never be used for ordinary sights again" (The Violent, p. 233). Sister M. Bernetta Quinn rightly comments that "Like Oedipus and Lear, however, prophets Dazel Notes and
Later Frances Marion Tarwater came to the truth through suffering, or at least to a realization of where faith will lead them.  

On the other hand, Frederick J. Hoffman emphasizes his point by saying that "The figure of Jesus haunts almost all her characters. They are, half the time, violently opposed to Him (or in His Image, opposed to some elder who has tried to force His necessity upon them), because they cannot see beyond themselves to a transcendent existence. Hazel Motes and Tarwater are both haunted by the rank and stinking corporeality of their elders, whom they have seen dead and - in dream or in reality- have been obliged to bury. These experiences serve to make them resist the compulsions of grace and turn away from the prospects of redemption." However, in this connection it may be stated that as opposed to Mr Hoffman's views a number of critics have commented on Tarwater's acceptance of vocation through denial and suffering and of his achieving Grace and Redemption. It is only through suffering and violent actions that Miss O'Connor's characters come back and accept Grace. Young Tarwater is not different from the others. James J. Farnham in his essay advances the idea that Miss O'Connor considers Tarwater so warped by disavowal of grace that she cannot conceive of his being saved. But Sister M. Bernetta Quinn has contradicted this point and rightly indicates that Tarwater gets his Redemption. She says: "It takes an introduction into evil (he had known
that before) but into a special kind of evil soiling his own flesh to bring him to grips with his prophetic future. Beck at the farm he resigns himself grimly to his vocation.\textsuperscript{12}

IV

In her entire works Miss O'Connor places emphasis on Revelation and experiencing Grace. She says that "Catholic writer insofar as he has the mind of the Church, will feel life from the standpoint of the central Christian mystery...." (\textit{E.M.}, p. 146). In her essay "Writing Short Stories" she makes a similar comment and says that "The meaning of fiction is not abstract meaning but experienced meaning, and the purpose of making statements about the meaning of a story is only to help you to experience that meaning fully." (\textit{E.M.}, p. 96). Thus Miss O'Connor places importance on the relationship between the story and the ultimate Reality. This is clearly indicated in all her stories.

In many of her stories Miss O'Connor highlights the negative. She looks at her world with wide open eyes and speaks about both crude and the ugly. The title story of her first collection \textit{A Good Man is Hard to Find} illustrates these traits. The grandmother is able to receive her apocalyptic vision because of a right gesture at the right moment. Miss O'Connor herself says, "The action or gesture I'm talking about would have to be on the analogical level,
that is, the level which has to do with the Divine life and our participation in it." (M.M., p.111). Only when the grandmother sets aside her own selfishness and becomes a general mother by accepting the responsibility of the Hiafit's sins, that she achieves Grace. About Miss O'Connor's negative attitude John Hawkes in his celebrated article has said that she is on the devil's side, and Stanley Edgar Hyman calls her the most "Christian dualist since Dostogoezy". There are no doubt Christ's and anti-Christ's in her work as in "A Good Man", but Carter W. Martin rightly refutes this point and explains Miss O'Connor's sacramental view of reality through which grace and matter are joined. He compares Miss O'Connor's ideas to those of Jesuit priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin who expresses his belief in an evolutionary process towards an ultimate Omega point. Carter W. Martin insists that Miss O'Connor too believed in this theory. Hence even the most bened and the most devilish character is capable of achieving grace, and can become an agent for Redemption as in this story.

Miss O'Connor's conscious purpose is no doubt to reveal the need for Grace in the modern world and she wrote "I have discovered that what is needed is an action that is totally unexpected, yet totally believable. . . . . And frequently it is an action in which the devil has been the unwilling instrument of grace" (M.M., p.118). Her characters like The Hiafit in "A Good Man is Hard to Find" attempt to live autonomously before Grace is finally offered to them. The Hiafit, escaped convict, wrestles with theological problems
in the intervals of murdering a father, a mother, their three children and the grandmother of the family. This tale relates the story of a Georgia family (parents, grandmother and the children) on a vacation trip to Florida and tells how the family meets the Misfit a psychopathic killer. From the events it becomes clear that grandmother a shallow woman with false pretensions is unable to grasp reality, and thus she does not understand the Mystery. Her false gentility produces an honest reaction to life, and the naked Negro child whom they see in the doorway is "a cute little pickaninny that she'd like paint." The Misfit on the other hand, has an honest conception of reality which embodies all reason and no faith. The Misfit's philosophy is clear. Because he 'wasn't there' when Jesus raised the dead he couldn't "know". He refuses to open his mind to Belief and Mystery. "Jesus" the Misfit declares, "thown everything off balance" *(C.S.* , p.132).

Uncertain about life and anxious about death, the Misfit must make a radical choice between believing and not believing. He goes to the core of the problem of Redemption when he says "If He did what He said, then it's nothing for you to do but throw away everything and follow Him, and if he didn't then it's nothing for you to do but enjoy the few minutes you got left the best way you can—by killing somebody, or by burning down his house or doing some other meanness to him. No pleasure but meanness..." *(C.S.* , p. 132). Thus he takes the matters in his own hand
and chooses violence. He does not remember why he was imprisoned and wants now to balance out his punishment with the crimes. Hence he calls himself "The Misfit." Many critics have placed the Misfit over Bailey boy, the grandmother's son, and Red Sammy, the tavern owner, in politeness and decency because the Misfit has the capability to achieve Grace. It is a different matter that he has chosen the wrong path and can wipe out the family of six members without any qualms.

The conflict between the grandmother and the Misfit ultimately moves towards Redemption. The Misfit can only believe what he actually sees, whereas the grandmother can change reality to suit herself. She says, "We turned over twice," but the Misfit corrected "Owse we see it happen" (G.S., p. 126). She could adjust even the Supernatural Reality to her own liking and say "May be He didn't raise the dead." (G.S., p. 132). The grandmother in all her exhortations to him to pray never turns to Christ herself. He rejects the hysterical old woman's plea that he pray. "I don't want no hpr" he said, "I'm doing all right by mself" (G.S., p. 130). A chance for Redemption is offered to him but the Misfit does not feel the need. He feels that life has already punished him more than he deserves, whereas others who deserve far more have got off without any punishment. Hence he wants to balance out the things. When her confrontation with the Misfit becomes more intense, the
gentility of the grandmother is stripped away. Her concern shifts from herself to the Misfit. The Misfit's polite veneer begins to crack as he says in anger that he should have been an eyewitness to the miracles of Christ so that he could have followed him. It is here that the grandmother despite her mediocrity reaches out to him in compassion calling him one of her children.

In the final moment of absolute reality all pretense is over and vision fills the void. "The grandmother's head cleared for an instant," (CaS, p. 132) and her heart embraces the criminal in a moment of perfect charity. It is this gesture which transforms the grandmother from a 'lady' to a 'good woman'. The Misfit, however, does not need compassion. Springing back at her touch, he shoots her three times through the chest. The moment of grace is extended by the description of the dead woman "With her legs crossed under her like a child's and her face smiling up at the cloudless sky." (CaS, p. 132).

Sister M. Bernetta Quinn analyses the grandmother's achieving grace and says "Like Father Urban of Power's novel, who is converted by a golf ball (hit by a bishop) which strikes him on the head, the grandmother has taken the last part of her life to turn away from self and think of others. She realizes that Hell, even in this world, is not as Sartre says "other people" but as Tennessee William says; "when you ignore other people completely, that is Hell."
The grandmother by her last act of charity steps through the reality of Mystery and the Misfit though he rejects that Mystery because of the lack of faith is still capable of achieving grace. He may be evil but he is fighting a religious battle within himself about his belief or disbelief in Christ. The change, though very slight, is obvious when the Misfit corrects his statement "no pleasure but meanness", (C.E., p. 132) with "It is no real pleasure in life" (C.E., p. 135).

In Miss O'Connor's fiction effects of grace are rarely visible on the surface, and redemption does not seem to happen in this world. In the modern world of corrupting environments, God provides young and innocent children with a natural faith and a thirst to reach Him and get to Him quickly. "The River" is an example of this process. Harry Ashfield achieves grace through his innocence. His loveless parents live in the city apartment amidst cocktail parties and hangovers. He is thus completely ignorant of Christianity. His parents, who are recovering from the hangover on a Sunday morning, send him out to spend the day with a babysitter Mrs Conin who lives on the outskirts of town. According to his parent's vision everything is a "Joke" but his first introduction to faith through Mrs Conin is no joke. Unable to avoid being tricked by the Conin children he is trampled by an ugly, gray pig. He had anticipated some cute fat little pink creature, which he had seen in the books, but this is the first time that he sees a real pig.
In Mrs Conin's house Harry sees a picture of a man wearing a white sheet whom he does not know. Thus through Mrs Conin he gets his first introduction of Jesus. She reads to him from a book called "The Life of Jesus Christ for Readers under Twelve." One picture in the book interests him. It is one with a Carpenter driving "a crowd of pigs out of a man" (G.B., p. 163). The pigs in the picture are the same which he had just seen - grey and dirty. This gives him some idea that the book about Jesus must contain the truth.

Earlier on hearing that the evangelistic preacher and healer whom they are going to see and hear at the river is named Reverend Bevel Summers, the child changes his name to Bevel. This renouncing of name is quite significant as it suggests his rejection of his parents and thus his passage from ignorance to knowledge and faith. At the healing near the river where Mrs Conin takes Harry to listen to the preacher, Reverend Bevel Summers explains the effect of baptism to Harry Ashfield and tells him "You will be able to go to the kingdom of Christ .... you will go by the deep river of life" (G.B., p. 168). The preacher assures him "You won't be same again .... you will count." (G.B., p. 168). The entry to faith and truth is already provided by Mrs Conin, and now Reverend Bevel Summers offers a total vision of life that his materialistic parents are incapable of providing.

Harry now understands that he counts and thinks
the Kingdom of Christ under the river to be a better place than the dimly-lit apartment of his parents. Next day he goes back to the river alone, to be someone to be an individual. He does not want "..... to feel with preachers any more but to Baptize himself and to keep on going until "he found the Kingdom of Christ in the river." (C.S., p. 173). When the current finally takes him and "he knew he was getting somewhere, all his fury and his fear left him." (C.S., p. 174).

In Miss O'Connor's fiction, the religious vision is markedly apocalyptic. According to this vision, everything in life leads to death. In her stories, as Stanley Edgar Hyman suggests that Mr Paradise who follows the boy in the river with a peppermint candy cane is the symbol of a mock pastor to lead children to evil. In fleeing from the imagined hog in the form of Mr Paradise Harry Ashfield completes his mission begun at his baptism. The division between the purity of the child's vision and the diseased intellect of the adult is apparent in this story. It is evident that Miss O'Connor thought that the child was capable of perceiving moral and spiritual chaos better than the adult because his experience is never exclusively intellectual. Hence Miss O'Connor has written a number of stories with child as protagonist.

In "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" Miss O'Connor has changed the usual pattern of showing an innocent child
achieving grace in death. Rather in this story a twelve-year-old girl passes from innocence to a state of Grace and knowledge that bodies are temples and even a body of a hermaphrodite contains a spirit sacred to God. Carter W. Martin considers "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" much more than a story in which deformity demonstrates simply "that man's condition is normally corrupt and that he is better off in accepting it." David Eggenschwiler also gives the same view when he says that "The central theme of the story is Paul's teaching that man is a temple of the living God. No matter how deformed in body or soul, he is habitation of the spirit." 

The story is focussed through a twelve-year-old Southern Catholic girl. The child is proud and hateful but a dreamer who thinks of her two visiting cousins from the Convent as grotesque. The girls have been told in the Convent that the bodies are the temples of Holy Ghost and should be kept pure. To entertain the girls the mother invites two local boys, and the child convulses with laughter at their behaviour and at their ignorance. She calls one of them "you big dumb ox" (C.S., p. 241) when he does not understand The Tantum Ergo ("a hymn for the Feast of Corpus Christi" written by Thomas Aquinas in the 13th C) and calls it "Jew singing" (C.S., p. 241). Later the cousins go to see a fair where they see a freak (a hermaphrodite) about whom they tell the child on their return
from the fair. She is greatly disturbed by the hermaphrodite and cannot understand how a person can have both the sexes without having two heads. On the other hand, the phrase "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" appeals to her imagination, and she finds it wonderful. She says to herself that she too is a temple and feels "as if somebody had given her a present" (C.S., p. 236).

The child indulges in her day-dreams which indicate her sexual and religious pre-occupations. In her dreams she associates the freak with the early Christian Martyrs and also with the preachers. In the dream-scene the hermaphrodite acknowledges that he was made that way by God and he doesn't dispute it. She thus associates the freak with the temple of the Holy Ghost and evidently finds in him someone who has accepted his condition. The situation is like the Catholic Benediction ceremony in that the Temple of the Holy Ghost is revealed to the people.

In the concluding part of the story the mysterious identity of man's body with God's being is presented in the child's mind at the Catholic Service of benediction. The freak is linked with the elevated Host at the Chapel Service. "When the priest raised the monstrance with the Host shining ivory colored in the centre of it, she was thinking of the tent at the fair that had a freak in it" (C.S., p. 246). In this sense the child's Revelation results in a renewal of faith. The last image suggests both child's beginning of
religious awareness and her sexual awareness (blood being the symbol). When finally she comes to pray she is concerned about the deformity of her own heart. She has received the grace of benediction, a supernatural gift and her "ugly thoughts" stop, she is thus able to gain this insight and accept the gift of vision.

Miss O'Connor's story "The Artificial Nigger" is one of the cleanest statement of her literary theology and an explicit parable of Redemption. It was Flannery O'Connor's own favourite among her short stories. More her frequently negative witness yields to an affirmative one and grace is experienced without horror or death as its instrument. The story concerns a backwoods Georgian, Mr Head, left with the responsibility of raising his grandson Nelson. Mr Head, a stubborn, proud and self-sufficient man feels he is a good guide for his grandson. He cares only for his self-image but all that is shattered when the spiritual guide loses his way and disowns his grandson.

To show his grandson Nelson the city of Atlanta and to teach him the lesson that to be born in Atlanta was nothing to boast about as Nelson often did, Mr Head takes him on the train for a trip to the city which is "full of Niggers" (C.S., p. 252). However, Mr Head does not realize his own pride and believes the description on the card ejected by the weighing machine to be quite accurate, "You are upright and brave and all your friends admire you" (C.S., p. 259), disregarding the weight of 130 pounds written
on the card. Gilbert H. Muller has associated the theme of "The Artificial Nigger" with Dante's *Divine Comedy* and has compared the journey to Atlanta to Dante's trip through Hell.\(^{21}\) Although Mr. Head is equated with Vergil, the old man suffers from the sin of overwhelming pride, and Nelson (who is not like Dante) disclaims the advice about the evils of the city. But later, he becomes aware of the evil in his own heart and of God's healing mercy of which he had never before thought himself in need.

All along the journey the grandfather's confidence as well as his smugness keep on increasing, only when they reach the city and he realizes that he had lost the lunch sack, as well as the directions back to the station, does he feel a stab of fear. They wander through the maze of the city streets subjected to unbearable hunger and heat. They ultimately reach the Negro section of the city. Nelson's one cause of pride is that he was born in the city and his claim that he will recognize "a nigger" is put to test by his grandfather right on the train and Nelson has failed in it. But he has not yet learnt the lesson of humility. Only when he encounters an enormous Negress, he is transfixed by her and feels that he is "reeling down through a pitch black tunnel" (C.S., p. 262), connected with hell and Dante's *Divine Comedy*.\(^{22}\) This encounter teaches him more than his grandfather had anticipated and drains all his pride. He takes his grandfather's hand proving his dependence
on him, but Mr Head is unaware of this reality and he subjects the boy to the final test in which the grandfather himself fails.

While the boy naps momentarily, Mr Head hides. When Nelson wakes up and finds himself alone, he panics and starts running knocking over a lady who screams that her ankle is broken, calls for the police and tells Mr Head that he will have to pay the expenses. It is here that Mr Head fails the boy. In panic he denies kinship "This is not my boy" he said, "I have never seen him before" (C.S., p. 265). Immediately, "he felt Nelson's finger fall out of his flesh" (C.S., p. 265). Having repudiated his grandson he realizes for the first time the extent of his sinfulness. Indeed, he feels the pangs of agony for he sees "nothing but a hollow tunnel that had once been a street." (C.S., p. 265).

For Nelson this was an experience of being betrayed and his humility turns to hatred. Mr Head tries to emulate his act and reunite himself with Nelson by proposing that they drink from the spigot, a symbolic baptism of his own devising. But Nelson is not ready to forgive. Movement towards purgatory is excruciating. "With all sight of the direction lost and the "depth of denial" (C.S., p. 266). Killing him, Mr Head "lost all hope" (C.S., p. 266) and when he cries out "Oh Gawd I'm lost! Oh hap me Gawd I'm lost" (C.S., p. 267), he is confessing more than his
physical helplessness, but even then Nelson is unreconciled.

The old man now realizes the hopelessness of the situation and the futility of secular help "He felt he knew now what time would be like without seasons, and what heat would be like without light and what men would be like without salvation" (C.S., p. 268). It is there that they both see the small plaster figure of a Negro boy. The statue had originally represented a Negro boy happily eating a watermelon, but now this bent and chipped figure had a wild agonized appearance. This is the moment of mercy for both of them. The statue is a revelation and it is a symbol of universal suffering. Standing before it Nelson and Head are literally transformed. "Mr. Head looks like an ancient child and Nelson like a miniature old man." (C.S., p. 268). Mr. Head suddenly knows "what mercy felt like". Arriving home and feeling the action of mercy touch him again, "he understood that it grew out of agony which is not denied to any man and which is given in strange ways to children... He saw that no sin was too monstrous for him to claim as his own, and since God loved in proportion as He forgave, he felt ready at that instant to enter paradise" (C.S., p. 270).

Ruth M. Vandekieft says that "The artificial nigger is an image of Christ crucified."23 George M. Boyd also says that "It functions in the same way as Christianity has understood the cross, for it symbolizes (or rather conveys) at the same time both judgement and mercy."24 Analysing this story Sr. Kathleen Feeley says "The artifact which is the
and product of this experience presupposes an artistic vision which sees far beyond the surface." In this connection it may be stated that this vision allows Miss O'Connor to move from a plaster of Paris figure to the depth of the heart of man because she herself says, "The novelist writes about what he sees on the surface, but his angle of vision is such that he begins to see before he gets to the surface and he continues to see after he has gone past it." (L.M., pp. 131-132).

In the entire first collection search for a good man continues till he is found in "The Displaced Person." This story clearly symbolizes the guilt for the death of Christ on the evil and sinful ways of man, but it offers hope and grace also. It is one of the finest stories and the most significant manifestation of grace. Mr. Guizac who is the displaced person and is brought by Father Flynn to work at Mrs. McIntyre's farm symbolizes Christ who suffers and is ultimately slain. In contrast to the Pole, Mr. Guizac and his family are the Shortleys, hired hands, who feel threatened by the industry of the displaced person. Thus the arrival of the Polish D.P. Mr. Guizac, with his family, on the farm of Mrs. McIntyre where Mr. Shortley works as dairyman brings danger for Mrs. Shortley. She sees the vision of a news-reel in which she has seen the atrocities of Nazis on the Jews and heaps of bodies of dead naked people with their arms and legs tangled together, so she connects
Mr Guizec with that scene. Moreover, Mrs Shortley in her ignorance considers Catholic religion and Guizec as unadvanced. Hence the intrusion of the Guizec family kindles Mrs Shortley's inner life to great intensity. She sees "the ten million billion of them pushing their way into new places over here and herself, a giant angel with wings as wide as house, telling the Negroes that they would have to find another place." (C.M., p.200). But before long she perceives that the Negroes are not the only ones who may have to find another place; in fact she herself becomes the displaced person. She overhears Mr McIntyre telling the priest that she is going to give Mr Shortley the notice. Mrs Shortley packs up with fury all night and loading their old car, they move early in the morning. It is in the car that the prophecy she had uttered comes true for her own self and she dies of a stroke. But before dying she gets the Revelation and she "seemed to contemplate, for the first time, the tremendous frontiers of her true country." (C.M., p. 214).

The D.F. who unknowingly became the agent of Mrs Shortley's displacement soon appears to imperil the social order of Mr McIntyre's farm. The Pole has promised his sixteen-year old cousin to the Negro boy Sulk, if Sulk would pay half the expenses of bringing her to America from the refugee camp. This discovery shocks Mrs McIntyre and at this point her attitude changes. When Mr Shortley turns up later she tells him that she will give the Pole the notice
on the first of the month, but she keeps on delaying. This ultimately leads to Guizac's being crushed under a tractor—a death for which Mr Shortley, Mrs McIntyre and the Negro boy are all responsible.

It is Mrs McIntyre who eventually suffers. Her hired helpers leave her, she sells the farm and she lives as bedridden with a nervous ailment.

About Mrs McIntyre Carter W. Martin says that her chief concern in life are money, her property and possession. In the story the displaced person represents an opportunity for her to accept grace, but that opportunity is passed by her. At first Mrs McIntyre says about him "that man is my salvation" (Car. p. 203). Later she says, "He didn't have to come in the first place" (Car. p. 216). Old Priest mistaking her reference says "He came to redeem us" (Car. p. 226). Earlier when Mrs McIntyre accuses Mr Guizac of exciting the Negroes by offering to marry his cousin to the Negro boy Sulk she says "I am not responsible for the world's misery." (Car. p. 223). So according to Carter W. Martin there is clear indication of rejection of Grace by Mrs McIntyre. About Mrs Shortley too he finds a justification for irony and humour in it that "Mrs Shortley cannot pass mildly away as virtuous men do; she struggles against death, grasping at everything within reach as if to preserve life by holding on to material things—somewhat in the manner of everyman in the medieval morality play."
Louise Cossett also gives similar view about Mrs Shortley and Mrs McIntyre. She says that Mrs Shortley's primitivist solution (for the displaced person) is a vision which instructs her to prophesy the destruction of the wicked, the foreign, but she dies twisted by a paralytic stroke. About Mrs McIntyre she says that she is destroyed by her refusal to be concerned about the refugees. \(^{28}\) But in this connection Leon V. Driskill and Joan T. Brittain refute Carter W. Martin's analysis and remark rightly that although Martin gives full account of the images in describing the grotesque death, yet he omits the point about Mrs Shortley's eyes opening on "the immense frontiers of her true country." \(^{29}\) Thus Miss O'Connor in spite of Mrs Shortley's ignorance depicts hope for Salvation. Similarly Mrs McIntyre finally realizes men's common guilt which disables her physically and thus provides the ultimate hope.

Robert Fitzgerald calls the story a tale of "The human person displaced". \(^{30}\) However, Fitzgerald is of the opinion that Mrs McIntyre rejects not only the salvation offered in terms of farm work by the Pole, but that other Salvation that she finds so exasperating to hear of from the priest. But the fact that Mrs McIntyre continues to see the priest, who visits her - may be out of charity - and she keeps on suffering, which will ultimately burn her clean, leaves an ample scope of grace for Mrs McIntyre.
She has paid the price for her sins and it is assumed that she will now be ready to receive grace when offered.\textsuperscript{31}

About Miss O'Connor's stories Robert Fitzgerald remarks "that vices are fathered by our heroism, virtues forced upon us by our impudent crimes, and that neither fear nor courage saves us (we are saved by grace, if at all, though courage may dispose us toward grace). Her best stories do the work that Eliot wished his plays to do, raising analogical meaning over literal action."\textsuperscript{32}

V

The title of the second collection "Everything That Miss Must Converge" comes from Teilhard de Chardin whose works Miss O'Connor had read well and admired. 'Rising' and 'Convergence' in these stories are shown in classes, generations and colours. Fitzgerald says about this collection that "her vision will hold us down to earth where the clashes of blind wills and low dodges of the heart permit any rising or convergence only at the cost of agony."\textsuperscript{33}

In the title story the conflict between mind and heart is personified in the interaction of Julian and his mother. Julian considers himself an enlightened genius and his mother's attitude appalls him. She uses the glorification of her family's slave-owning past to define her sense of who she is now. She has always used it to give herself
the courage to support her son and send him to college and to ignore the poverty and ugliness of her present way of life. She is the product of the now faded aristocratic past, and she has adapted to her present reduced condition only through the innocence and ignorance. It is her innocence that keeps her defenses impervious to a present that she cannot accept because it would mean giving up the identity and security of past which keep her going. "Her eyes, sky blue, were as innocent and untouched by experience as they must have been when she was ten." (E.S., p. 406).

Julian's mother wants to separate herself from the common humanity with the help of purple and green hat and the sales girl's remark "With that hat you won't meet yourself coming and going" (E.S., p. 407). Julian, on the other hand, accepts the world as an end in itself which eventually results in his disenchantment with life. He hates his mother's platitudes "Rome wasn't built in a day" (E.S., p. 406) when she defends her son's lack of success and "...... the bottom rung is on the top" (E.S., p. 407) when she explains the world events. Although Julian, posing as an intellectual, talks about liberalism and toleration for all, but in truth his liberalism is only a reactionary response to his own ambivalent feelings towards his family history. As such Julian's intellectual culture is as much of a pretense as is his mother's aristocracy. He uses his liberalism simply as a means of revenge against a past that
he idealises and admires in his heart. He sees himself liberated from her, and wants to teach her a lesson, as well as rescue her from prejudice, but he is actually dependent upon her. Although he takes no identity or security from the past, yet longs for it secretly.

In the desegregated bus Julian likes to sit next to Negroes because he knows it will hurt his mother. He has "an evil urge to break her spirit" (G., p. 409), and her blood pressure apparent in her "unnaturally red" face literally rises. The large Negro woman who boards the bus with her little son wears the same hat and the Negro child sits with Julian's mother. But she refuses the lesson of likeness and condescends from her superiority to play games with the Negro little boy whom she considers cute. In spite of Julian's warnings she continues the role of a white mistress and while getting off the bus gives the Negro boy a shining penny. The next moment the Negro woman strikes her a harsh blow.

For Julian the defeat of his mother is a triumph and a confirmation of his self-righteousness and intellectual hatred of her values. But the effect of this violent convergence upon his mother is a fatal stroke and as she dies she retreats into her past. Her death brings to Julian for the first time the reality of "the world of guilt and sorrow". His feeling of superiority is ripped away by the terrifying guilt and helplessness
he experiences at her death. Although Julian tries to postpone his entry into the "world of guilt and sorrow," (v. 420), yet he has learnt his lesson. Her death reveals Julian's shallowness and his unreal detachment from the real. John F. Desmond remarks "The God he has served has been idolatrous one of self and his gospel one of social progress through human means, which Miss O'Connor found inadequate to overcome real human condition of the Fall. Only redemption through Christ could transform the "world of guilt and sorrow" and cause man's humble acceptance of his true place." 34

Miss O'Connor thinks that a good novelist makes a judgement on how a man feels, that judgement may be sunk in his work because in a good novel judgement is not separated from vision. Through her characters and their situation a reader has to find that judgement. In "Greenleaf" Mrs. May, a hardworking, proud, class conscious widow runs a dairy farm against huge internal threats. She is obsessed with the evil and unjust nature of the world. Mr. Greenleaf who has been her tenant farmer for fifteen years annoys her with his vague manners and his shiftlessness. Her two fully grown sons, both unmarried, are ineffectual and useless for farm work. In juxtaposition Mr. Greenleaf's twin sons have turned out to be co-operative and successful dairy farmers. They are happily married with steadily
growing families. All these factors are a threat to her farm, and Mrs Greenleaf constitutes the threat to her peace of mind. She seems to Mrs May a filthy example of "white trash" who practices a primitive faith-healing religion and Mrs May considers this practice repulsive.

The fourth factor - the bull - which threatens her belongs to the Greenleaf's son. It roams about her pasture by day and by night, and munches at the shrubbery outside her bedroom window. She is troubled by dreams and is unable to control the bull's power and pleasure. The bull stares at her like "an uncouth country suitor" (C.3., p. 312). She gets a nightmare that something "had been eating as long as she had had the place" (C.3., p. 312) and would continue to eat everything that was hers, herself and her boys.

Throughout the story the bull instigates the action. The bull first appears as a god. He stands "silvered in the moonlight..." and listens "like some patient god come down to woo" (C.3., p. 311). The bull is presented as the wild lover and saviour as well as a destroyer. But Mrs May's preoccupation is with the land and the financial aspect, so she is afraid that the Greenleaf bull will be "ruining her herd" (C.3., p. 314) by mating with her cows. Mrs May's method to achieve mastery over natural world is through materialism and the bull is a threat to her power. She seeks to justify her
way of life through right action rather than right faith. She is a good Christian woman with a large respect for religion but she thinks the word Jesus, "should be kept inside the church building like other words inside the bedroom" (C.E., p. 316).

The next day she intends to destroy the bull and asks Mr Greenleaf to accompany her to the field in her car where she wants him to shoot the bull. Anticipating her victory over the Greenleafs she is gay and happy, but Greenleaf is reluctant to shoot the bull. However, in the sequence of events, the bull instead of being destroyed, bounds from the woods and races towards her. His horn pierces Mrs May's heart as the bull "buried his head in her lap - like a wild tormented lover" (C.E., p. 333). She dies with "the look of a person whose sight has been suddenly restored but who finds the light unbearable" (C.E., p. 333). The violent lover - destroyer brings Revelation to her. Unbearable though it may be, but Mrs. May's sight is no doubt restored. Ruth M. VanderKieft finds "a parallel suggesting that death is supremely valuable in its effect of blasting the sinner into the truth of eternal reality".35 Miles Orvell also gives the same view and rightly suggests that, "despite the horrible image of a woman impaled on the horns of a dying beast, one also feels that this is a happy ending, the persistent suitor has at last gained his mark".36 But John R. May
contradicts this view and says that "there is little evidence in the text for asserting that Mrs May "comes to understand" it that specifically; nor is it reasonable to project "a happy ending" from the tone of the love imagery."\textsuperscript{37} However, May at least agrees that "if the conclusion does not grant Mrs May the grace of an affirmative response, it leaves little doubt that she has at least received unbearable message."\textsuperscript{38}

"Parker's Back" is the last story that Miss O'Connor wrote, and in it she explores the mystery of divine direction. Men is free to accept or reject that divine direction, and this story illuminates the communication of that choice and the effect it has on E.C. Parker's life. Thomas E. Carlson calls this story as the "most humorous attack upon puritanism"\textsuperscript{39} But seeing in its proper perspective it is clear that E.C. Parker gets an apocalyptic vision through a strange combination of circumstances. His spiritual inheritance is revealed in the name Obadiah Elihue (Obadiah was the Sixth Century B.C. minor Prophet) but he suppresses it. At the age of fourteen he sees a man with tattoos on his body, and since then he feels uneasy. He is searching for a new life and tattoos become physical mask of his transformation. Tattoo Parlour becomes a temple for him and tattooing the ritual. Finally he has only his back left for tattooing.

Under a strange compulsion Parker marries Sarah Ruth
Cates, the daughter of a gospel missionary. After his marriage he undergoes a change, but his wife flings the judgement of God in his face and scorns his collection of tattoos. He is like the scapegoat upon whom she can heap the sins of the world thereby cleansing herself of those impurities. But Parker desires a recognition of his true nature and he gets the vision which comes upon him as he is beling hay on the farm where he does day-labour for an elderly woman. He is thinking of a design of a tattoo for his back to please his puritan wife when his tractor crashes into the tree. Earlier his language was a series of oaths, but when while working, his tractor crashes into the tree and "a ferocious thud propelled him into the air, he heard himself yelling in an unbelievably loud voice "GOD ABOVE" (C.S., p. 520). This is the moment of his change. "He only knew that there had been a great change in his life, a leap forward into a worse unknown, and that there was nothing he could do about it" (C.S., p. 521).

Parker now envisions a different kind of tattoo for his back. His choice of subject matter is the head of a Byzantine Christ with "all demanding eyes". The coming of Christ into his life completes the design on his body which earlier had the effect "not of one intricate arabesque of colors but of something haphazard and botched" (C.S., p. 514). After completion of the tattoo he sees it in the mirrors and is transfixed by those penetrating eyes, that left him
feeling "as transparent as the wing of a fly" (C.s., p. 524). He knows "the eyes that were now forever on his back were eyes to be obeyed" (C.s., p. 527). When he reaches home he is admitted to the locked house only after whispering the name 'Obediah' and "all at once he felt the light pouring through his turning his spider web soul a perfect arabesque of color, a garden of trees, and birds and beasts" (C.s., p. 528). However, his fundamentalist wife can only cry out 'Idolatory' when Parker tells her that the face tattooed on his back is the face of God. She begins to beat him over the shoulders with a broom and he suffers a kind of martyrdom as he passively allows his wife to punish his idolatry. Thomas N. Carlson compares Parker with Jonah and says that "like Jonah Parker runs from the responsibility but like Jonah he accepts the consequences of that discovery - the difficult role of a hero who must sacrifice his innocence in order to be reborn out of the greater knowledge of himself." 40 Richard N. Rupp also gives the same view and says "Thematically, Miss O'Connor has shown the rebirth of a dead soul." 41

Miss O'Connor's last story "Judgement Day" in the 2nd collection is the rewritten work of her earlier story "The Geranium". In the earlier version an old Southerner living in New York tastes humility in an encounter with a sophisticated but mildly patronizing Negro. But in "Judgement Day" the character of the Negro has been
changed. Carter W. Martin comments about this story that "Miss O'Connor's sacramental view surveys the countryside and illuminates it so that her readers may see the True Country in it, and above it; the outward features and the natural actions are the signs of inward and spiritual grace as they are in "Judgement Day."42

The story is a parable about an exile's return to his homeland. Old T. C. Tanner's daughter finds him living in a slum area with his Negro companion Coleman and takes him home to New York with her. In New York apartment he feels as if he is in a cage, and wants to return to Corinth, Georgia "dead or alive". When he sees that the occupant of the opposite apartment is a Negro, he identifies him with Coleman and tries to patronize him, and that is where his Original Sin lies. His patronizing attitude towards blacks stems from his victory over Coleman about thirty years ago. Tanner's sin is the sin of pride and he accepts exile rather than work for Dr Foley, half black and half Indian and white. John R. May says about Tanner's attitude "On the deepest level of meaning Tanner's sin like Everyman's is the Original Sin of denial of human brotherhood."43

The Negro actor is, however, cynical and proud. Tanner's attitude brings out his violent nature, and this brings about Tanner's first stroke. Misjudging the nature of his illness he plans to go home to Corinth, and his
wishful thinking turns into a dream. He sees himself arriving in Corinth in the coffin and then getting up to scare his two friends with a cry "Judgement Day! Judgement Day!" Ill as he is, he staggers down the stairs to go back home and on the way he confuses the black actor with Coleman who pushes his head in the banister rungs because he misunderstands Tanner's appeal to Coleman as coalman. The actor mocks and says "ain't any coalman......" (C.S., p. 549) "ain't no judgement day, old man - Capt this. May be this here judgement day for you." (C.S., p. 549).

John R. May says that his final plea to his estranged neighbour "Hep me up Preacher. I'm on my way home" (C.S., p. 549) captures of pathos of conflict and resolution, of sin and forgiveness, of time and eternity. The theme of the story is the certainty of resurrection at Judgement Day of those who kept their promises, did their best and honoured their parents. It shows the suffering of the soul and removing the last vestige of pride before achieving Grace.

Each story in this collection deals with Original Sin, but affirm the fact of redemption. The physical terms of man's existence prove the fall from Grace, but God's redemptive plan enables him to transcend the physical. While analyzing these stories, Leon V. Driskell and Joan T. Brittain remark that "The collection bound together with numerous convergences and revelations, proceed from
a young man's entry into the world of guilt and sorrow to an old man's vision of resurrection. Julian, in a real sense, is Adam, for his guilt and sorrow promise their own rewards; Tanner transcends Adam by his recognition of his brotherhood with Coleman.\(^{45}\)

In Miss O'Connor's stories there is a definite pattern of action leading to some quest. The narrative of the quest provides on the one hand clearly delineated stages of action through which the protagonist passes and on the other hand an image of man who is forced to confront the ambiguities of existence. To understand the nature of quest motif one has to be aware of a special variety of theological movement operative in the narrative. Miss O'Connor living in the South amidst fundamental Protestantism was fully aware of the theological movement. For her, communal life in the South should have a spiritual basis, yet its very absence forced her not only to attack this dissociation but also to locate the divine in the extreme. Thus people like the Misfit, the Bible-Salesmen and the insane Singleton of "The Partridge Festival" are necessary in order to force a recognition of man's radical dependence on God.
Notes and References


4. Ibid., p. 261.


6. Ibid., p. 89.

7. Driskell and Brittain, The Eternal Crossroads, p. 45


17. Hyman, Flannery O'Connor, p. 35.


22. Ibid.


27. Ibid., p. 212.


32. Ibid.

33. Ibid.


38. Ibid., p. 101.


40. Ibid., p. 273.


44. Ibid., p. 123.