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CONFLICT OF CONVICTION IN THE NOVELS OF FLANNERY O'CONNOR

Dr. SHITALBABU A. TAYADE

Assistant Professor, Ramkrushna Mahavidyalaya, Darapur

Tal- Darypaur, Dist- Amravati

e-mail-sayatade@gmail.com

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Dr. SHITALBABU A. TAYADE

ABSTRACT

Mary Flannery O'Connor American novelist has effect of the literary figures like writers like Robert Penn Warren, John Crowe Ransom, Austin Warren Robbie Macaulay, Andrew Lytle reflects in his writings. She is ironic and scornful in her writing and deal with the grotesque. Her novel *Wise Blood* centered on the loss of faith with the religious theme which acclaimed as a novel with the low comedy and high seriousness. Hazel Motes a central character of the novel is unkind and inhuman in approach to the humankind. He doesn't have any specific aim in his life. Since childhood he born and brought up under the cover of religious preaching. He wants to throw away the shallow bearings of the religious covers. When he was child he walked a mile to redeem for the wrong done at the fair when he Novel digs out the survival enmity of the of the protagonist. It is observed that 'hazel who is the protagonist seems to rebel against the traditional God, but a careful study can show that what Hazel does all his life is to pursue him, which leads to his disillusionment and his miserable death at last. *The Violent Bear It Away* deals with the story of a fourteen-year-old boy who is trying to escape the framed destiny by his uncle from him with the religious catholic themes and dark images reflect her cult for the gothic literature. O'Connor based her writing around the Christianity. The continuous flux of the conflict of the thought is very visible in her writing. In the work of O'Connor we can find the staunch supporter of Catholicism with the continuous recurrence of the religious themes and images leads to frame the individual destiny.

Key Words – Christianity, Conflict, Salvation Redemption, Baptism, Catholicism

Introduction

Mary Flannery O'Connor American novelist with the two novels and thirty two short stories on credit create her distinguished place on the horizon of English literature. Enormous effect of the literary figures like writers like Robert Penn Warren, John Crowe Ransom, Austin warren Robbie Macaulay, Andrew Lytle reflects in his writings. Her inscriptions breed ironic and scornful comments on

the contemporary society which apparently deal with the grotesque characters confronts with ferocious situations. The surrounding endeavors with which the characters are associated never accept situations by heart. There is impassive reception and agreeable rejection of the circumstances. She took stance on religious beliefs and questioned decency of religion. For her

contribution to literature she has been awarded by the National Book Award for Fiction in 1972.

Discussion

Her very first novel *Wise Blood* published in the year 1952. The novel centered on the loss of faith with the religious theme which acclaimed as a novel with the low comedy and high seriousness. The plot of the novel revolves around the warrior of the World War II. The seriousness of the plot made it possible to place on sixty two rank in *The Guardian* list of 100 great novels. The novels also transformed in to film with the same name. Her stance of writing she made clear through the summery she wrote for the publishers, she wrote:

The principle [sic] character, an illiterate Tennessean, has lost his home through the breakdown of a country community. Home, in this instance, stands not only for place and family, but for some absolute belief which would give him sanctuary in the modern world. All he has retained of the evangelical religion of his mother is a sense of sin and a need for religion, which eventually torments him into taking up with a blind man and his wife, members of a small religious sect called in the novel, *David Aspirants*. This sense of sin is the only key he has to finding a sanctuary and he begins unconsciously to be search for God through sin. The ultimate sin becomes the seduction of the blind man's wife. An explanation of this at and of the realization, it brings him to can only be had through the novel itself (O'Connor, 98-99)

Commenting on her writing Martha Stephens calls the novel a "bitterly serious, if sometimes outlandishly comic, version of the Christian travail." (Stephens, 49)

Hazel Motes a central character of the novel got discharge from the service in World War II due to war wound which are not explicit. He returns to his home located in Tennessee in U.S. to live uncontrolled life. After his return he puts one note on is property states do ot steal or you will b hunted down or killed. This reveals his unkind and inhuman

approach to the humankind. He wants to do something different than he never done before. He doesn't have any specific aim in his life. He has not any faith in the religion. Since childhood he grew with the great questions regarding the religious belief and Christian belief of original sin responsible for the fall of a man which creates in him absence of belief in the existence of deities. His attitude since infantile stage creates in him the leading anti religion voice.

"... What you need is something to take the place of Jesus, something that would speak plain. The Church Without Christ, don't have a Jesus but it needs one! It needs is a new Jesus! It needs one that's all man, without blood to waste, and it needs one that don't look like any other man so you'll look at him. Give me such a Jesus, you people. Give me such a new jesus and you'll see how far the Church Without Christ can go!

...

"Show me where this new Jesus is," Hazel Motes cried, "and I'll set him up in the Church Without Christ and then you'll see the truth. Then you'll know once and for all that you haven't been redeemed. Give me this new Jesus, somebody, so we'll all be saved by the sight of him!" (O'Connor, 80)

Since childhood he born and brought up under the cover of religious preaching. He want to throw away the shallow bearings of the religious covers. He took a clear stance against the blind follow up of the Christianity

"'If you had been redeemed,' Hazel Motes was shouting, 'you would care about redemption but you don't. Look inside n yourselves and see if you hadn't rather it wasn't if it was. There's no peace for the redeemed,' he shouted, 'and I preach peace, I preach the Church Without Christ, the church peaceful and satisfied!'" (O'Connor, 80)

In the beginning Motes gets the address of Leora Watts a prostitute which leads him to her

house also he became befriended with her and with Enoch Emery a irreligious zookeeper of eighteen years old who introduce him the concept of Wise Blood which means knowledge of direction of life without any emotional and spiritual guidance. At one instance both Emery and Motes witness a blind religious preacher Asa Hawks who with her daughter Sabbath Lily demands dollar for Jesus sake saying Jesus saves. Father and Daughter initiates the idea of religious salvation and redemption, but the angry Motes shouting against the concept and decides to initiates his own religion and Church of truth. He says he don't want Christ, he want to find church without Christ. Asa self-declare preach became blind to avoid all worldly pleasure and lead her daughter on the way of religion, Motes pursue her to dilute her intensity of religion but on the contrary he found that she is interested in him.

Hazel has continuous struggle and disliking for the existence. He never gets the favor conditions to live within. He always mistook by the others a preacher due to his hat. Though this be true he never willing to follow the belief of Christianity. There are number of instance which clears his survival enmity. He always argues that everyone is clean and denies the first sin of man responsible for the downfall. Internally he never remains untouched with the salvation or redemption. He repent with physical harm to repay for wrong. When he was child he walked a mile to redeem for the wrong done at the fair when he witnesses an erotic show. At the end it is revealed that he continuously punish him for the salvation from the wrong done in the novel. This digs out the survival enmity of the of the protagonist. The novelist validates the personal Christianity of the contemporary world which creates enmity towards the society It is observed that 'hazel who is the protagonist seems to rebel against the traditiona God , but a careful study can show that what Hazel does all his life is to pursue him, which leads to his disillusionment and his miserable death at last. Through Hazel's spiritual exploration O'Connor demonstrates that the pursuit of and reliance on the traditional God can only lead to the disillusionment and despair of human beings. The absolute absence of traditional God on Hazel's spiritual pursuit declares O'Connor's view of

theology. Human being must try to set up a new and harmonious relationship with the transcendence' (Jiping, n.pag.)

Her second novel *The Violent Bear It Away* published in the year 1960. It deals with the story of a fourteen-year-old boy who is trying to escape the framed destiny by his uncle from him with the religious catholic themes and dark images reflect her cult for the gothic literature . 'Flannery O'Conner's fictional strategies are varied and interesting. Accordingly she was described as a writer of Gothic romance, a Christian allegorist, a prophetic poet, author of grotesque and a Roman Catholic Erskine Caldwell (Muller, 1972). The action in the novel happens in seven days with the flashbacks of the past events based on the psychological and spiritual crisis of the main characters. Old Mason Tarwater dies leaving nephew protagonist Francis Tarwater. Old Tarwater disagree to provide formal education to Francis , instead he wants to take him as a prophet. Real conflict starts with the death of the Old Tarwater. Before the death Mason suggests him to provide him proper Christian funeral with the cross mark on the grave. Francis refuses it and instead he put his coffin on fire without keeping any sign of cross on it.

Since childhood Francis confronts with the religious practices. He never allowed to follow social upbringing and common practices by his uncle. On his journey he comes in contact with Rayber, a school teacher to whom he is associated in his childhood and his low intelligent son who now became Bishop. Francis has contempt over Bishop and he never thinks Bishop as a human being and finds him repulsive. Rayber even tries to provide him formal education and social teaching but he even refuse the attempts of Rayber same way as he refused the Old Tarwaters attempt of religious reforms. But the Rayber is possessive to transform Francis with social upbringing. Francis has staunch impression of religion on his mind. It was difficult for him to come out of it.

There is continuous flux of conflict between Rayber and Francis. Francis continuously hears the ancestral religious sound. At one moment Rayber carries his son and Francis to the old place so that he

can bring him out of the Christian belief and will become easier for him to nurture as a civil citizen. One night Francis listens to the sound of his Old Uncle to baptize Raybers son, so he carries him out in the boat and drown Bishop in water till death to fulfill the wish of his uncle Old Tarwater. In the heat of passion Francis runs in wood. The continuous running makes him thirsty, Tarwater's great-uncle had correctly prophesied: "You are the kind of boy that the devil is always going to be offering to assist, to give you a smoke or a drink or a ride, and to ask you your bidnis. You had better mind how you take up with strangers." And keep your bidnis to yourself' (O'Connor, 367.) He drink wine, falls asleep and got raped by the stranger. Being conscious he hurriedly dressed up and moves to the powderhead the old farm of his uncle Old Tarwater. At the end he realizes that he can no longer run away from his calling to be prophet

Conclusion

O'Connor based her writing around the Christianity. The continuous flux of the conflict of the thought is very visible in her writing. Commenting on her Howe says, O'Connor...could bring into play resources of worldliness such as one might find in the work of a good many sophisticated modern writers Except for an occasional phrase, which serves partly as a rhetorical signal that more than ordinary verisimilitude is at stake, there are no unavoidable pressures to consider these stories in a strictly religious sense. They stand securely on their own, as renderings and criticisms of human experience.(Howe, 16)

In the work of O'Connor we can find the staunch supporter of Catholicism with the continuous recurrence of the religious themes and images leads to frame the individual destiny. Commenting on it says that 'her continued exposure to irritating southern matrons and Jesus-haunted backward preacher kept her fiction gritty and eccentric'(Pollack, 546)

Her novels deals with the conflict between the secularism and the religion. Characters are passionate toward the cluster formation of the religious movements counter checked by the antireligious philosophy. Characters with the firm

conviction for religion face internal and external conflict.

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