



Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

Supervisor's Review

Gabriela Petrušová, "Flannery O'Connor as Satirical Priest" BA thesis

Choice of Topic:

The proposed topic of this BA thesis is certainly a central issue in the work of Flannery O'Connor whose idiosyncratic blend of humour and religious conviction remains a focus of critical concern. The thesis works methodically with the satirical motifs in a selection of O'Connor's short stories and the novel, *Wise Blood* with reference to Henri Bergson's theory of humour and in a contextually sensitive manner.

Thesis statement / aims and objectives:

The project is constructed around a clearly articulated set of objectives, at the core of which is the goal of analyzing the ways in which Flannery O'Connor's characters illustrate her attitude to nihilism and her use of satire as a tool to unmask its follies. The work successfully brings together more theoretical on the uses of comedy and laughter with some perceptive close analysis of protagonists in the selected works.

Structure and development:

The first chapter briefly addresses the history of Southern Literature and its uses of comedy, and attempts to position O'Connor within that history. It then offers a succinct overview of the project's objectives. Chapter two engages with theories of humour, zoning in on Bergson's *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* and applying his observations to O'Connor's work. As Ms Petrušová rightly observes, "like Henri Bergson, Flannery O'Connor sees the role of humor not only in the aesthetic sphere, but also in a social sphere, more importantly, its corrective role in the social sphere." Chapters three, four and five take pairs of characters each of whom, it is argued, exemplify particular types in O'Connor's satirical scheme: the would-be nihilist, the would-be intellectual and "good country people." Ms Petrušová carefully illustrates how O'Connor works with humiliation to achieve forms of epiphany and to point to the need for self-awareness and higher understanding in a world of grotesque distortions and moral evasion. Overall the work is logically structured and quite well developed.

Research:

Research throughout is deployed effectively. Mr Petrušová's research shows a good deal of initiative and effort at BA level.

Use of sources:

There are no major formal or stylistic issues concerning the use of sources. Materials have been carefully cited throughout.

Stylistics and language:

Ms writing style is fluent and consistent. There are a few minor grammatical errors but these are rare.

Format:

A great deal of care has been taken with format of the project.



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I recommend the thesis for defence and propose to grade the work “very good” / 2 depending on the result of the defence.

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Clare Wallace, PhD