

The theme of illusion and deception in good country people

Literature



Good Country People

In "Good Country People" by Flannery O'Connor, the hidden truth is reflected unambiguously through the reality in the story. The story addresses foolishness of intellectuals, good versus evil, and the most important, the theme of reality versus illusion. There is a lot of illusion in the story where characters and events turn out to be very different from what they are assumed to be. The theme of illusion versus reality is widely manifested in this story in various incidences.

An important character's daughter is well educated with a PhD but tends to behave as if she does not have common sense. She falls victim of a young man who is a "Bible Salesman" and finds herself in a binding situation. She thinks that country people are ignorant and dumb. This turns out to be wrong. Her education makes her think she is smart and her work is to liberate people from their illusions believing she does not have some for herself. She falls prey of seduction by the "Bible Seller" and finds her mother and herself victims of what some believe they cannot fall prey.

The "Bible Seller" appears as just a poor country boy who has a heart condition that would kill him soon and prefer not to go to college, instead choose to sell Bibles. He ends up seducing a woman who had plans to seduce him earlier, and reveals he is a "Con artist" not a "Bible seller". He puts an illusion that he is a "good country man" by changing his behavior but he is actually a "con artist". By falling victim of this, it makes her believe that evil does really exist.

The change of name by Joy to an ugly name is to reflect her feelings about her injured body and self. The ugly name is an opposite manifest of her real

name and personality. Though injured as a child and conscious, she rejects her body and decides to live a different life. Though she seems to have a cold as ice heart, it later emerges that she is vulnerable. She is always in disagreement with her mother about the life decisions she makes. The mother lived in a world of self-made illusions filled with pseudo philosophy, which separated her further from her daughter who had a PhD in philosophy. Since she could not understand her daughter's acts, she termed them as rebellion.

The events of this story are a display of situations where people live in illusion. Most events in the story turn out to be totally opposite of the expectations of many. The bible seller turns to be a con artist, Hulga ends up falling prey of con artist proving she is not as smart as she thought of herself because she is educated and her mother always disagree with her life decisions. Reality only comes out on turn of events. The theme of illusion versus reality is widely manifested in this story in various incidences.

Works cited

Orvell, Miles. Flannery O'Connor: An Introduction. Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1972. Print.