

"a good man is hard
to find" by flannery
o'connor essay



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In "A Good Man is Hard to Find" by Flannery O'Connor, the grandmother believes that they used to do things right when they were young. For instance, she laments that a Negro child standing outside has not put on his britches. She is apparently amazed and disturbed by the boy's image to an extent of affirming that if he can be painted, he "would make a good picture" (O'Connor 1977, par. 11). The grandmother asserts that she could paint the picture of the black boy if granted the chance.

Second, plantations have been cleared and burial grounds left bare. The grandmother seems to be complaining about the dramatic destruction of the environment since plantations that used to add beauty to the burial site are no longer visible. In addition, the grandmother points out that during the good old days, children would not be allowed to "throw the box and the paper napkins out the window" (O'Connor 1977, par. 10). Environmental hygiene has been ignored since people no longer value the importance of protecting and preserving the immediate environment. Her idea of "doing it right" is drawn from the fact that the current generation is ignorant and deviates from the expected moral standards.

Although the grandmother claims to be following the right path of doing things, she also finds herself 'doing it wrong' either deliberately or accidentally. For example, Misfit and the grandmother adopt and abide by certain codes of moral standards. Consequently, their perceptions, actions and decisions are affected by the same moral codes. It is crucial to mention that the term 'moral' does not always possess the same meaning as 'good.' It refers to a code of conduct that individuals have mutually agreed to obey. The actions and ideas of the grandmother affect Misfit in several ways. The <https://assignbuster.com/a-good-man-is-hard-to-find-by-flannery-oconnor-essay/>

codes embraced by the grandmother are evidently misguided and weak (O'Connor, 1977). Her definition and practice of moral standards are not consistent at all. She has constructed her unique moral rules based on the features that she affirms make individuals appear 'good' enough.

For example, the grandmother emphasizes the importance of being a lady. According to her personal convictions, appearance is better than inherent traits or personality of an individual. At some point, she diverts her argument by emphasizing the importance of character over appearance. She also lacks basic knowledge of her immediate environment and deceives her household several times. She cannot pray for herself when in a challenging situation. Inability to pray contradicts her staunch passion for Christian ideals. Her Christian faith completely disappears when a crisis strikes. To make matters worse, she even questions the spiritual authority of Jesus Christ. As a result, she confuses those who are around her (O'Connor, 1977).

Perhaps, several 'wrongdoings' of the grandmother are clearly brought out in her character. For instance, she is quick to judge others. A character like Bailey is presumably brainwashed by the grandmother who frequently asserts that her conscience is always right and equally a powerful tool that she fully trusts. She laments that Misfit has failed to offer proper guidance to children. Even though she complains that the children lack adequate exposure (a failure on the part of their mother), the grandmother apparently lacks rudimentary awareness of her surrounding (O'Connor, 1977).

Finally, the grandmother uses abusive language severally in reference to people and situations she does not like. For instance, claiming that the

mother's face is similar to the appearance of a cabbage is a gross misconduct and lack of respect. Eventually, she disgusts individuals around her and for those who have no choice to keep off, they are compelled to tolerate her presence.

O'Connor, F. (1977). *A Good Man Is Hard to Find and Other Stories*. San Diego, CA. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.