

What was the significance of violence in Flannery O'Connor's stories essay examples...

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



All O'Connors' stories have instances of violence. In the story *A Good Man Is Hard to Find*, the author introduces a mysterious grand mom who is dissatisfied by the son's choice of holiday to Florida instead of her preferred destination of Tennessee. On their way however, the grandmother disturbs the cat and it responds with a terrified cry. The cry makes Bailey who is driving to slide and land into a ditch on the sides of the road. The children who are also travelling in the same car get happy and to them it looks like an adventure. The elderly woman however complains of internal injury to make other sympathize with her.

The author uses violence to explain the theme of conflict in his stories. This conflict is both internal and external. Internally, it exists within the personality of main actors. In the above example where Bailey almost caused an accident, and the grandmother pretends to have developed internal injury, to attract attention, this can be classified as an example of an internal conflict. The internal conflict is also a sign of low self esteem (O'Conner 238).

Another instance physical violence arises after Bailey pulls back and gets on the road and they are waiting for anybody who offers them assistance. A car comes immediately and contrary to expectations, three men come out of the car, each one of them has a gun. The leader of the gang talks to Bailey in a low talk. Later, 'Misfit' the name of the gang leader according to grandmother, orders his cohorts to start killing the family one person at a time. The grandmother starts witnessing about Jesus for Misfit to spare her life. This angers the gang leader kills the family.

This is another instance of violence in the story, *A Good Man Is Hard to Find*,

and it signifies the lack of conscience among the gang under the leadership of Misfit. Despite the family's pleas for mercy, the gang goes a head and kills each one of them ruthlessly. The gang does not have any respect for human life. To emphasize this ruthlessness, Misfit commends that ' she would have been a good woman, if it had if it had some body there to shoot her every minute of her life.' P 182 This shows that the gang even after committing murder, they do not feel remorse about it. In fact Misfits accomplice feels happy that they have killed and Misfits commends that, ' It's no real pleasure in life.' P 233

Violence is also used satirically in the story, A Good Man Is Hard to Find, to show that sometimes the people we consider very stubborn and we think they can not change can turn around and act selflessly. For example, when the grandmother is just about to die, she acts gracefully and generously. In the beginning she was a hypocrite Christian and insists on going to Tennessee and not Florida. In addition, she tried to save her own life and not that of her folks. In this case violence is used to show that bad people can transform to good people. It is for the same reason that Misfit observes that if there was someone to shoot her daily; grandmother would have been a fine lady (O'Conner 189).

Initially, grandmother is a very selfish woman. However, after being subjected to violence, she starts showing some positive manners. She turns into a charitable and graceful woman. This is satirical because violence makes a previously selfish woman to graceful and generous. This is an example of a situation when violence changes a bad person into a better one. In the beginning, grandmother is very selfish and is only concerned

about her well being alone. For example, she forces other family members to go to Tennessee against their wishes. She does not care about their happiness. Other members wanted Florida as their holiday destination. They were forced to go with her to Tennessee where they are even involved in an accident, though they are not injured. When they are attacked by the gangs, she attempts to save her life first by declaring divine words of Jesus. These are the words that angers Misfits who kills the whole family. All her life, grandmother was a self seeking woman but violence softens her more generous.

Violence also leads to mistrust in the family. The people who fall victims of violence tend to lack trust with people they are supposed to trust. In the story, Good country people, Hopewell does not trust the gentleman who pretends to be a Christian and sells bibles, Manley Pointer. After Joy takes him on a date, he persuades her to climb up on the barn. This mistrust is confirmed when the pretending bible seller disappears with Joy's artificial leg because she rejected her sexual advances. This was very inhuman because Joy could not move without her leg.

Work Cited

O'Conner, Flannery. *A Good Man Is Hard To Find And Other Stories*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1955. Print.