

Tamara Pospíšilová

## Moments of Grace: Redemption in Flannery O'Connor's Selected Short Stories

BA Thesis

Supervisor's Report

In her B.A. thesis, Ms. Pospíšilová decided to explore the idea of the moment of grace in Flannery O'Connor's selected short stories. In order to do that, she focused on the author's life, her views, the Southern region and religion first (namely on the idea of Divine Grace, as seen in the works of St. Augustine). She thus managed to establish a theoretical framework that proved to be extremely useful for her analysis. At this point, I feel I need to stress the fact that even though her work has no ambition to be theological, her discussion of the moment of grace, based on the sources she has chosen (admittedly, as she points out in the acknowledgement, with the help of an expert) is both detailed and persuasive.

In her own analysis, Ms. Pospíšilová is interested in three closely connected phenomena: the manifestation, outcome and significance of the moment of grace. Her reading of the selected stories, together with the classification she is suggesting, makes perfect sense. The only question I have relates to other possible readings of those stories (such as psychological or feminist); would they strengthen her argument, that is do they go hand in hand with what she is saying, or would they complicate her line of thought? I would appreciate a brief answer during the oral exam.

And a few minor questions concerning the other writers she is mentioning. On p. 18, she is briefly referring to the possible influence of Franz Kafka – does she actually see it in the stories of her choice, and if so, where and how exactly? And in her conclusion, she is listing

a few other authors who might deserve attention in further research – but rather randomly, if I may say so. While Ralph Ellison is a distinctly African American writer and could be considered Southern only in the widest sense of the word, I do not quite see the moment of grace in any of his works, be it the novel or the essays, so why is he included? And, on the other hand, some important and relevant (that is both Southern and Catholic) names seem to be missing: how about e.g. Walker Percy?

This being the case, I propose a preliminary grade of 1 / výborně / excellent. The final verdict, though, will depend on the review of the opponent, and Ms. Pospíšilová's performance during the oral exam.

Dr. Hana Ulmanová

Prague, Aug 16, 2024