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Summary and Response Essay: Part 1: Three Sources

Source #1:

Flint, Thomas P. *On The Significance Of The Civil War References in Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard To Find"*. *Renaissance*, vol. 70 no. 2, March 2018, pp. 119–128.

Summary:

In this written piece, Flint delves into the Civil War References in Flannery O'Connor's piece: "A Good Man Is Hard To Find". In this Flint goes into not only the references regarding the Civil War, but also how they tie into the story as a whole, and aid in pushing the story's message(s) and questions of things like morality. The essay explores the Civil War as a rippling reflection to O'Connor's piece and the story's characters. The pain, the questioning, the violence, and outlook the characters share with the masses that experienced the Civil War, as well as the intrinsic human nature of questioning a higher power and divinity. Flint, in this essay, highlights how the Civil War references within O'Connor's piece deepen the story's themes for the reader as well as bringing the emotional, and mental wounds the characters face higher to the surface. Flint does this by structuring his essay in a way that highlights how O'Connor's characters are reminiscent of the conflict during the time of the Civil War and how it shaped the masses internally and externally during that time.

Rhetorical Analysis:

- **Author:** Thomas P. Flint is a literary individual with interests in literature and philosophy, with credits in having written accounts on divinity and philosophy.
- **Audience:** This piece was written for those interested in O'Connor's work, and readers interested in Gothic literature in general. It is targeted for those who would like to learn more about the references made within the piece, along with how these references build upon the story and its characters.
- **Purpose:** The purpose is to analyze the significance behind the Civil War references within O'Connor's work of: 'A Good Man Is Hard To Find'.
- **Tone & Context:** The tone is very analytical and examining as the context lies in the year 2018 for *Renaissance*; a peer reviewed journal.
- **How This Source Will Help My Essay:**
This source will assist me in writing my essay via helping me overall understand the references made in O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard To Find" better, as well as helping me understand the historical significance the Civil War may have on the story as a whole

like how it uses the Civil War to explore its various themes, and how it therefore affects the story, its characters, and message(s).

Source #2:

Mohamad, Hani. "Analysis of Social Problem in *A Good Man Is Hard to Find* by Flannery O'Connor." English Community Journal, vol. 3, no. 1, 2019, pp. 342–349.

Summary:

Hani Mohamad analytically unwraps the social problems and issues that are intrinsic to the Flannery O'Connor's piece: "A Good Man Is Hard To Find". In this analysis Mohamad delves into these societal issues within O'Connor's piece, going into familial issues, social status, and how society can craft misfits.

Rhetorical Analysis:

- **Author:** Hani Mohamad is someone focused on analysis, and exploring themes of social issues, and social messages through a scope of sociology and psychology.
- **Audience:** This is written for students and readers who want to delve deeper into the social problems in O'Connor's story: 'A Good Man Is Hard To Find', and better identify them.
- **Purpose:** The purpose of Mohamad's piece is to examine societal intricacies within O'Connor's 'A Good Man Is Hard To Find', such as social status, social relations, and bring about discussion on how various social problems in O'Connor's story may connect to the story as a whole, and its message(s).
- **Tone & Context:** The tone is analytical, written in 2019, and written to examine various perspectives on such issues within the story.
- **How This Source Will Help My Essay:**
This source would aid me in completing my essay by helping me better understand any social commentary going on within the story, and how that may tie into its bigger theme(s). This better helps me both understand and identify the social critiques, and the story's message(s).

Source #3:

Rea, Robert & Robert W. Rea. "Flannery O'Connor's Murderous Imagination: Southern Ladyhood in *A Good Man Is Hard to Find*." Southwest Review, vol. 102, no. 2, 2017, pp. 168–181.

Summary:

Rea highlights the ladyhood within O'Connor's piece that lies in characters like the grandmother featured. Rea also touches on the Southern history that is found in Flannery O'Connor's piece: "A Good Man Is Hard To Find", and how O'Connor both stays within the conventional realm of Southern Gothic literature while also breaking from it at times in her own way. In this she

explores O'Connor's use of deadpan humor, and Southern norms and deviations from such norms that are used to elevate the story and more so build on its themes of good and bad, etc.

Rhetorical Analysis:

- **Author:** Rea Robert or Rea W. Robert is a writer who explores themes of historical, gender, and even medicine in her past works. Her credibility lies in her past in writing about English literature in relation to politics.
- **Audience:** The audience is people who enjoy literature of the Southern Gothic persuasion, and who are enamoured with the science or artform behind writing a Southern Gothic piece, and what is intrinsic to writing one.
- **Purpose:** To analyze how O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard To Find" utilizes gender, femininity, and Southern Gothic structuring within the piece to push her themes of morality, hypocrisy, and good/evil.
- **Tone & Context:** The tone stays analytical, as well as attention grabbing in its looser tone that makes it sound more like a conversation between Rea and the reader. Written in 2017 it also lies within the realm of exploring Southern Gothic design in terms of written work.
- **How This Source Will Help My Essay:**
This can help me write my essay in terms of helping me better understand the Southern Gothic genre, the themes O'Connor is portraying, as well as helping me to understand the gender roles, and Southern nature that are both heavily intrinsic to the story, so that I can better digest and interact with it in my essay.

Part 2: One Source Response - "Flint, Thomas P. On The Significance Of The Civil War References in Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard To Find"

In Thomas P. Flint's essay: 'On The Significance Of The Civil War References in Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard To Find"', Flint explores the Civil War references within O'Connor's story. Flint explores how these references support the themes of the story, and the story's overall message of inspecting and questioning things like morality, grace, and humanity as a whole. I thought this essay was informative and enlightening from a historical standpoint as the Civil War was a time of a mass breakdown, reflection, and critique of society and humanity as it attacked what was 'normal' at the time. Discrimination and awful abuse from those put in positions of power upon those they saw as less than. It was a darker time, where values and people clashed, as those oppressed were doing everything they could to both be heard.

O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard To Find" utilizes this time as a metaphor for familial conflict in terms of values, the questioning of higher powers, humanity being inherently good or inherently evil, and even nihilism. From this essay, I learned how it all ties together to become a testament to human critique during times of violence. O'Connor's rich piece calls for analysis which not only expands on the piece, but is also satisfying for its readers to explore. Parts I agree with are the parts speaking on how conflict, intrinsic to everyday life during the Civil War, can be used as a reflection of the pain experienced by the characters in O'Connor's story, which is central to the story. Strokes of existential, physical, and emotional woes being a focal point. "(...) and conflict remains the order of the day virtually until their end.", Flint states. Within the piece, I liked that Flint also focused on the emotional wreckage that infected masses during the Civil War, and also how that's reflected in O'Connor's characters—their pain being properly focused on. Within my family, there are members who have been oppressed in their work environments or discriminated against. Such as my grandmother being wrongfully denied opportunities, but still prevailing despite it in order to curate a better life for her daughters. The deep history, with the Civil War taking place in the late 1800s, still follows African Americans and Black people around to this day, never leaving our histories of fighting for our freedoms. The bigger picture here can encapsulate how humans struggle with finding meaning in this world, and what we are willing to do to try to create it. Humans often get caught up in societal concepts as a means of pursuing meaning such as racism, capitalism, and other self-inflicted cruelties in search of meaning. In doing this we lose our true path, as true meaning is in how we affect others and the world. This is when violence, cruelty, and unnecessary viciousness can prosper and eat one alive. This reading hasn't altered my thinking, as I enjoy researching such topics of the human condition, however it does add to my thoughts on the human condition and how it connects with existentialism. Long ago I heard of discussions surrounding if humans had grand meaning. The conclusion I came to was that humans were meant to curate their own meanings during their time alive, in the big and small moments. Lastly, I end with a quote from Flint: "So conflict, injustice, war, and violence are introduced repeatedly well before The Misfit and his crew commit the shocking acts of murder in which the story culminates. The Civil War is the central, recurrent image that leads us toward that ending, but the story is redolent with so many memories of evil that the conclusion seems all but foreordained." - *Flint; 'ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CIVIL WAR REFERENCES IN FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S "A GOOD MAN IS HARD TO FIND"*