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The Lonely Voice: A Study Of The Short Story (Harper Colophon Books)



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Synopsis

The legendary book about writing short stories, by the Irish master of the form, is back in print! A virtual master class in which the witty O'Connor discusses technique and his favorite writers, including Chekhov, Hemingway, and Joyce. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"It's unsurprising that this book should prove so hardy: O'Connor was compelling when voicing an opinion. What Richard Ellmann calls the "assumptive tone" of his criticism can inspire, thrill and infuriate, but will never bore."Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •The GuardianÃ¢â ¬Å“A dazzling and provocative introduction to talking about what people do when they sit down to write short stories.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •from the introduction by Russell BanksÃ¢â ¬Å“This is a brilliant book on a subject about which little has been written. It carries, besides, the authority a critical work always possesses when its author is a distinguished practitioner of the art he is criticizing.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •The New York Times Book Review --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

FRANK O'CONNOR is widely recognized as one of IrelandÃ¢â ¬â„¢s greatest writers and cultural figures. He lived in the United States off and on after 1952, teaching at Harvard and Stanford, and writing stories for The New Yorker magazine. His most popular works include his Collected Stories, Guest of the Nation, and An Only Child. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

I wish I had read all the stories that O’Connor uses to make his points on the short story; I would have profited much more from the reading. But he presents enough examples of successful and failed stories by writers such as Maupassant, Turgenev, Kipling, Chekhov, Dostoievsky, Joyce, Mansfield, Hemingway, Anderson, Coppard, and several others that inspire one to read all the ones he mentions as well as entire collections to try one’s judgment at the art of literary analysis that O’’Connor masters so splendidly.

Since this little volume first appeared in 1963, there probably hasn’t been a single book written on the topic of the short story that doesn’t make some mention of it.O’Connor was a noted short story writer in his own right as well as an essayist and literary critic. His central premise in this book, that short stories tend to arise out of "submerged populations" (i.e., minority groups, immigrants, etc.) may not have gained wide acceptance in academic circles, but that doesn’t diminish the interest or the charm of this book in the least. It’s a thoroughly fascinating examination of the short story as an art form, and a rollicking fun read to boot.Much of the "fun" part comes from O’Connor’s unabashed and delightfully expressed opinions. Here he is on one of Ernest Hemingway’s short story classics:"In ’The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber’ Francis runs away from a lion, which is what most sensible men would do if faced by a lion, and his wife promptly cuckolds him with the English manager of their big-game hunting expedition. As we all know, good wives admire nothing in a husband except his capacity to deal with lions, so we can sympathize with the poor woman in her trouble. [...] To say that the psychology of this story is childish would be to waste good words. [...] Clearly, it is the working out of a personal problem that for the vast majority of men and women has no validity whatever."This may not represent the consensus opinion on Hemingway’s story, but what fun it is to see someone stand up to the old pugilist and tweak his nose!This is not to say that all of O’Connor’s comments are snarky; he freely calls other Hemingway stories works of genius. And he bubbles over with enthusiasm when discussing many, many other authors as well. For example, regarding two Chekhov stories, "The Dependents" and "Misery," he says:"Never in the history of literature has human loneliness been described with such passion as in these two stories."Speaking of passion, it’s clear that O’Connor has a tremendous and joyful love for the short story. Read this book for the pleasure of hearing a true artist practicing his art as he speaks about his chosen art form.

I got this as a gift and it’s very very late arriving. However, I have read this myself and think it’s a

must have - not only for the instruction but for the pleasure.

Thoughtful study on the form of the short story with insightful commentary on such authors as Joyce, Hemingway, Flaubert, and Chekhov.

Excellent study by a master. O'Connor's insights are both instructive for the writer and illuminating for the reader. "The Lonely Voice" enhances the short story experience for all.

Highly recommended for all lovers of the short story. O'Connor was a gift from Ireland.

A recommendation of my favorite English Lit professor. It has taken more than thirty years for me to find a copy!

THERE ARE SEVERAL STORIES EACH STORY IS BETTER THAN THE ONE BEFORE IT, I LOVE READING HIS WORKIN SEVERAL STORIES I FELT LIKE IT WAS A FAMIY EXPERIENCE

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