

analysis of everything that rises must converge

Analysis of "Everything That Rises Must Converge": A Deep Dive into Flannery O'Connor's Masterpiece

Introduction:

Flannery O'Connor's "Everything That Rises Must Converge" isn't just a short story; it's a potent social commentary wrapped in a deceptively simple narrative. This post offers a comprehensive analysis of the story, delving into its complex themes of racial prejudice, social change, pride, and the inevitable confrontation between opposing forces. We'll explore the characters, their motivations, and the powerful symbolism O'Connor employs to deliver her unsettling yet insightful message. Prepare for a journey into the heart of the American South during a period of profound transformation. We will unpack the title's meaning, analyze the key symbols, and ultimately understand the story's enduring relevance in today's world.

I. Unpacking the Title: "Everything That Rises Must Converge"

The title itself, taken from a statement by Thomas Aquinas, hints at the story's central conflict. It suggests an inexorable force, a cosmic inevitability, where opposing elements – in this case, the entrenched racism of the old South and the burgeoning civil rights movement – are destined to collide. The "rising" represents the assertive rise of Black consciousness and the challenge to the established social order. The "converging" signifies the unavoidable clash and the consequences that arise from this confrontation. O'Connor masterfully uses this title to foreshadow the tragic yet necessary encounter between Julian and his mother, mirroring the broader societal shift.

II. Julian and His Mother: A Study in Contrasting Personalities

The story's central characters, Julian and his mother, are polar opposites yet inextricably linked. Julian, educated and cynical, represents a younger generation grappling with the changing social landscape. He harbors a complex mixture of resentment and condescension towards his mother's blatant racism and clinging to outdated Southern traditions. His mother, on the other hand, embodies the stubborn resistance to change, clinging to a past she believes is superior. Her racism isn't simply prejudice; it's rooted in a deep-seated fear and insecurity stemming from her perceived loss of status in a rapidly evolving society. Their relationship, marked by contempt and unspoken resentment, forms the core of the story's dramatic tension.

III. The Significance of Setting and Symbolism

O'Connor expertly uses setting and symbolism to enhance the narrative's impact. The setting itself – the post-Civil Rights era South – is crucial, highlighting the lingering tensions and the struggle for social equality. The bus ride, a seemingly mundane event, becomes a charged microcosm of the broader societal conflict. The overweight Black woman, with her stylish hat and defiant demeanor,

represents the rising tide of Black assertiveness. The significance of the hat, a symbol of pride and self-expression, underscores the woman's refusal to be marginalized. Julian's condescending attitude towards the woman highlights his own internal conflict; his intellectual understanding of racial injustice clashes with his ingrained prejudices.

IV. The Inevitable Confrontation and its Aftermath

The climax of the story is a brutal confrontation between Julian's mother and the Black woman on the bus. This pivotal moment serves as a powerful metaphor for the collision of opposing forces. The seemingly minor incident of a spilled Coca-Cola escalates into a heated exchange, culminating in the mother's fatal stroke. This sudden and unexpected death isn't merely a tragic event; it represents a symbolic breaking point, a shattering of the old order. Julian's final realization, his acknowledgement of his own complicity in his mother's prejudiced beliefs, is both poignant and unsettling.

V. Themes of Pride, Prejudice, and the Inevitability of Change

The story masterfully explores several interwoven themes. Pride, particularly the entrenched pride of the old South, is a significant factor in the conflict. Both Julian and his mother are victims of their own pride – his intellectual pride and her social pride. Prejudice, of course, is a central theme, explored through the actions and attitudes of both characters. Finally, the inevitability of change is powerfully conveyed through the story's tragic climax. The confrontation on the bus signifies the inevitable clash between the past and the future, highlighting the impossibility of clinging to outdated social structures and beliefs in the face of progress.

VI. O'Connor's Southern Gothic Style and its Impact

O'Connor's mastery of Southern Gothic style contributes greatly to the story's impact. The grotesque elements, the dark humor, and the unsettling realism create a narrative that is both compelling and disturbing. The unexpected and violent conclusion is characteristic of her style, emphasizing the unpredictable nature of life and the consequences of unchecked prejudice. Her use of irony, particularly dramatic irony, keeps the reader constantly engaged, highlighting the characters' flaws and the tragic irony of their situation.

VII. The Enduring Relevance of "Everything That Rises Must Converge"

Despite being set in a specific historical context, "Everything That Rises Must Converge" retains remarkable relevance today. The themes of racial prejudice, social change, and the clash between generations continue to resonate. The story serves as a potent reminder of the enduring consequences of prejudice and the importance of confronting our own biases. It challenges us to examine our own complicity in systems of oppression and encourages us to actively engage in the ongoing struggle for social justice.

VIII. Conclusion:

"Everything That Rises Must Converge" is a powerful and unsettling exploration of human nature and social change. Through its memorable characters, potent symbolism, and masterful use of the

Southern Gothic style, O'Connor crafts a story that is both disturbing and deeply insightful. Its enduring relevance lies in its exploration of universal themes that continue to challenge and provoke us to confront our own biases and participate in the ongoing quest for a more just and equitable society.

Book Outline: "A Critical Analysis of Flannery O'Connor's 'Everything That Rises Must Converge'"

Author: Dr. Evelyn Reed

Introduction: Briefly introduces Flannery O'Connor and the story's significance.

Chapter 1: Deconstructing the Title: Explores the meaning and implications of the title.

Chapter 2: Character Analysis: Deep dive into the personalities and motivations of Julian and his mother.

Chapter 3: Symbolism and Setting: Analysis of key symbols and the significance of the setting.

Chapter 4: The Climax and its Aftermath: Detailed examination of the pivotal bus scene and its consequences.

Chapter 5: Themes and Motifs: Discussion of recurring themes (racism, pride, change).

Chapter 6: O'Connor's Southern Gothic Style: Analysis of O'Connor's writing style and its impact on the narrative.

Chapter 7: Contemporary Relevance: Discussion of the story's enduring significance in today's world.

Conclusion: Summarizes the key arguments and offers final thoughts.

(The article above expands on each point of this outline.)

FAQs:

1. What is the central conflict in "Everything That Rises Must Converge"? The central conflict is the clash between the older generation's entrenched racism and the emerging civil rights movement, embodied in the relationship between Julian and his mother.
1. What is the significance of the spilled Coca-Cola? The spilled Coca-Cola is a catalyst for the confrontation, a seemingly insignificant event escalating into a major conflict, mirroring larger societal tensions.
1. What does Julian's final realization signify? Julian's final realization signifies his understanding of his own complicity in his mother's prejudice and the limitations of his own cynical detachment.

1. How does O'Connor use irony in the story? O'Connor uses dramatic irony, where the reader understands the implications of events before the characters do, to heighten the tension and highlight the characters' flaws.
1. What is the significance of the Black woman's hat? The hat is a symbol of the Black woman's pride and assertion of self-worth in the face of prejudice.
1. Why is the setting important? The post-Civil Rights South provides the crucial context for the story, emphasizing the lingering tensions and the struggle for racial equality.
1. What are the main themes of the story? The main themes include racial prejudice, pride, the inevitability of change, and the complex dynamics between generations.
1. How does the story relate to Southern Gothic literature? The story embodies many characteristics of Southern Gothic, including grotesque elements, dark humor, and unsettling realism.
1. What is the overall message of the story? The story emphasizes the devastating consequences of prejudice, the inevitability of social change, and the importance of confronting our own biases.

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analysis of everything that rises must converge: *Flannery O'Connor and Robert Giroux* Patrick Samway S.J., 2018-03-30 Flannery O'Connor is considered one of America's greatest fiction writers. The immensely talented Robert Giroux, editor-in-chief of Harcourt, Brace & Company and later of Farrar, Straus; Giroux, was her devoted friend and admirer. He edited her three books published during her lifetime, plus *Everything that Rises Must Converge*, which she completed just before she died in 1964 at the age of thirty-nine, the posthumous *The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor*, and the subsequent award-winning collection of her letters titled *The Habit of Being*. When poet Robert Lowell first introduced O'Connor to Giroux in March 1949, she could not have imagined the impact that meeting would have on her life or on the landscape of postwar American literature. *Flannery O'Connor and Robert Giroux: A Publishing Partnership* sheds new light on an area of Flannery O'Connor's life—her relationship with her editors—that has not been well documented or narrated by critics and biographers. Impressively researched and rich in biographical details, this book chronicles Giroux's and O'Connor's personal and professional relationship, not omitting their circle of friends and fellow writers, including Robert Lowell, Caroline Gordon, Sally and Robert Fitzgerald, Allen Tate, Thomas Merton, and Robert Penn Warren. As Patrick Samway explains, Giroux guided O'Connor to become an internationally acclaimed writer of fiction and nonfiction, especially during the years when she suffered from lupus at her home in Milledgeville, Georgia, a disease that eventually proved fatal. Excerpts from their correspondence,

some of which are published here for the first time, reveal how much of Giroux's work as editor was accomplished through his letters to Milledgeville. They are gracious, discerning, and appreciative, just when they needed to be. In Father Samway's portrait of O'Connor as an extraordinarily dedicated writer and businesswoman, she emerges as savvy, pragmatic, focused, and determined. This engrossing account of O'Connor's publishing history will interest, in addition to O'Connor's fans, all readers and students of American literature.

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analysis of everything that rises must converge: *A Prayer Journal* Flannery O'Connor, 2013-11-12 I would like to write a beautiful prayer, writes the young Flannery O'Connor in this deeply spiritual journal, recently discovered among her papers in Georgia. There is a whole sensible world around me that I should be able to turn to Your praise. Written between 1946 and 1947 while O'Connor was a student far from home at the University of Iowa, *A Prayer Journal* is a rare portal into the interior life of the great writer. Not only does it map O'Connor's singular relationship with the divine, but it shows how entwined her literary desire was with her yearning for God. I must write down that I am to be an artist. Not in the sense of aesthetic frippery but in the sense of aesthetic craftsmanship; otherwise I will feel my loneliness continually . . . I do not want to be lonely all my life but people only make us lonelier by reminding us of God. Dear God please help me to be an artist, please let it lead to You. O'Connor could not be more plain about her literary ambition: Please help me dear God to be a good writer and to get something else accepted, she writes. Yet she struggles with any trace of self-regard: Don't let me ever think, dear God, that I was anything but the instrument for Your story. As W. A. Sessions, who knew O'Connor, writes in his introduction, it was

no coincidence that she began writing the stories that would become her first novel, *Wise Blood*, during the years when she wrote these singularly imaginative Christian meditations. Including a facsimile of the entire journal in O'Connor's own hand, *A Prayer Journal* is the record of a brilliant young woman's coming-of-age, a cry from the heart for love, grace, and art.

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the unexpected turns of events that leave people vulnerable and struggling to puzzle out the consequences of their abrupt reversals of fortune. As in the title story, in which a married couple find their controlled life irrevocably altered by a stranger's visit, the fiction in this new collection is punctuated again and again by mysterious, perhaps unanswerable, questions: Out of what does our life arise? Out of what does our consciousness arise? Why are we here? Where is here? Like the questions they pose, these tales -- at once elusive and direct -- unfold with the enigmatic twists of riddles and, often, the blunt shock of tragedy. Where is Here? is the work of a master practitioner of the short story.

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analysis of everything that rises must converge: *The Man to Send Rain Clouds* Kenneth Rosen, 1992-12-01 Fourteen stories about the strength and passion of today's American Indian—including six from the acclaimed Leslie Marmon Silko. Anthropologists have long delighted us with the wise and colorful folktales they transcribed from their Indian informants. The stories in this collection are another matter altogether: these are white-educated Indians attempting to bear witness through a non-Indian genre, the short story. Over a two-year period, Kenneth Rosen traveled from town to town, pueblo to pueblo, to uncover the stories contained in this volume. All reveal, to varying degrees and in various ways, the preoccupations of contemporary American Indians. Not surprisingly, many of the stories are infused with the bitterness of a people and a culture long repressed. Several deal with violence and the effort to escape from the pervasive, and so often destructive, white influence and system. In most, the enduring strength of the Indian past is very much in evidence, evoked as a kind of counterpoint to the repression and aimlessness that have marked, and still mark today, the lives of so many American Indians.

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of Sententia Gamification, GamiCon Gamemaster

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analysis of everything that rises must converge: **Collected Works** Flannery O'Connor, 1988 Contents: Wise Blood - A Good Man is Hard to Find - The Violent Bear It Away - Everything That Rises Must Converge - Stories and Occasional Prose - Letters.

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analysis of everything that rises must converge: **On Reading Well** Karen Swallow Prior, 2018-09-04 □ Publishers Weekly starred review A Best Book of 2018 in Religion, Publishers Weekly Reading great literature well has the power to cultivate virtue, says acclaimed author Karen Swallow Prior. In this book, she takes readers on a guided tour through works of great literature both ancient and modern, exploring twelve virtues that philosophers and theologians throughout history have identified as most essential for good character and the good life. Covering authors from Henry Fielding to Cormac McCarthy, Jane Austen to George Saunders, and Flannery O'Connor to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Prior explores some of the most compelling universal themes found in the pages of classic books, helping readers learn to love life, literature, and God through their encounters with great writing. The book includes end-of-chapter reflection questions geared toward book club discussions, original artwork throughout, and a foreword by Leland Ryken. The hardcover edition was named a Best Book of 2018 in Religion by Publishers Weekly. [A] lively treatise on building character through books.'--Publishers Weekly (starred review)

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analysis of everything that rises must converge: The Terrible Speed of Mercy Jonathan Rogers, 2012-09-17 "Many of my ardent admirers would be roundly shocked and disturbed if they realized that everything I believe is thoroughly moral, thoroughly Catholic, and that it is these beliefs that give my work its chief characteristics." —Flannery O'Connor Flannery O'Connor's work has been described as "profane, blasphemous, and outrageous." Her stories are peopled by a sordid caravan of murderers and thieves, prostitutes and bigots whose lives are punctuated by horror and sudden violence. But perhaps the most shocking thing about Flannery O'Connor's fiction is the fact that it is shaped by a thoroughly Christian vision. If the world she depicts is dark and terrifying, it is also the place where grace makes itself known. Her world—our world—is the stage whereon the divine comedy plays out; the freakishness and violence in O'Connor's stories, so often mistaken for a kind of misanthropy or even nihilism, turn out to be a call to mercy. In this biography, Jonathan Rogers gets at the heart of O'Connor's work. He follows the roots of her fervent Catholicism and traces the outlines of a life marked by illness and suffering, but ultimately defined by an irrepressible joy and even hilarity. In her stories, and in her life story, Flannery O'Connor extends a hand in the dark, warning and reassuring us of the terrible speed of mercy.

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them. Brad Gooch brings to life O'Connor's significant friendships -- with Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Hardwick, Walker Percy, and James Dickey among others -- and her deeply felt convictions, as expressed in her communications with Thomas Merton, Elizabeth Bishop, and Betty Hester. Hester was famously known as A in O'Connor's collected letters, *The Habit of Being*, and a large cache of correspondence to her from O'Connor was made available to scholars, including Brad Gooch, in 2006. O'Connor's capacity to live fully -- despite the chronic disease that eventually confined her to her mother's farm in Georgia -- is illuminated in this engaging and authoritative biography. Praise for Flannery: Flannery O'Connor, one of the best American writers of short fiction, has found her ideal biographer in Brad Gooch. With elegance and fairness, Gooch deals with the sensitive areas of race and religion in O'Connor's life. He also takes us back to those heady days after the war when O'Connor studied creative writing at Iowa. There is much that is new in this book, but, more important, everything is presented in a strong, clear light.-Edmund White This splendid biography gives us no saint or martyr but the story of a gifted and complicated woman, bent on making the best of the difficult hand fate has dealt her, whether it is with grit and humor or with an abiding desire to make palpable to readers the terrible mystery of God's grace.-Frances Kiernan, author of *Seeing Mary Plain: A Life of Mary McCarthy* A good biographer is hard to find. Brad Gooch is not merely good-he is extraordinary. Blessed with the eye and ear of a novelist, he has composed the life that admirers of the fierce and hilarious Georgia genius have long been hoping for.-Joel Conarroe, President Emeritus, John Simon Guggenheim Foundation

analysis of everything that rises must converge: *A Political Companion to Flannery O'Connor* Henry T. Edmondson III, 2017-07-21 Acclaimed author and Catholic thinker Flannery O'Connor (1925--1964) penned two novels, two collections of short stories, various essays, and numerous book reviews over the course of her life. Her work continues to fascinate, perplex, and inspire new generations of readers and poses important questions about human nature, ethics, social change, equality, and justice. Although political philosophy was not O'Connor's pursuit, her writings frequently address themes that are not only crucial to American life and culture, but also offer valuable insight into the interplay between fiction and politics. *A Political Companion to Flannery O'Connor* explores the author's fiction, prose, and correspondence to reveal her central ideas about political thought in America. The contributors address topics such as O'Connor's affinity with writers and philosophers including Eric Voegelin, Edith Stein, Russell Kirk, and the Agrarians; her attitudes toward the civil rights movement; and her thoughts on controversies over eugenics. Other essays in the volume focus on O'Connor's influences, the principles underlying her fiction, and the value of her work for understanding contemporary intellectual life and culture. Examining the political context of O'Connor's life and her responses to the critical events and controversies of her time, this collection offers meaningful interpretations of the political significance of this influential writer's work.

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