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



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

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.

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