

# MLA - Third Example

JOURNAL ARTICLES  
(Photocopies)

# Layout of Slides

- Slide 1 – Type of Citation
- Slide 2 – Pictures of Source
- Slide 3 – Rules, Step by Step
- Slide 4 – Picture with Step Circled
- Slide 5 – Citation, Piece by Piece
- Repeated Until Citation Complete
- More Examples Follow

## The Function of Signature in “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”

by Mitchell Owens

*Sometimes a man says things he don't mean.*

(O'Connor 127)

In her fatal encounter with The Misfit, the grandmother in Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" confronts a particularly lethal manifestation of her changing social order. Throughout her life, this woman has been struggling with the shift from the ante-bellum values of lineage and gentility to those of a cash-oriented culture, and with the implications this shift has for the assumptions that underwrite her vanishing system of beliefs. While she does not accept or even fully comprehend these implications, in her behavior she acknowledges them and attempts some adjustment. The grandmother's handling of signatures, while clearly demonstrating the tension involved in this ongoing negotiation of adaptation and denial, also indicates that her difficulties are related to her failure to recognize fully the arbitrariness of the sign. The story she tells of Mr. Edgar Atkins Teagarden and his edible initials illustrates this failure. Moreover, The Misfit's subsequent discussion of signature, coupled with his threat of murder, cause the grandmother to repeat this error; she retreats back into the assumptions whose erosion she has been attempting to deny, but these assumptions, which have been dismantled throughout the story, offer her no protection from her killer.

The grandmother's value system is founded upon particular notions of aristocracy and heredity. According to this system, there is a specific, superior class of people, the gentility, in which one can locate certain finer qualities. This class and its attributes cannot be separated from each other by a change in outward appearances, even one as severe as the Confederacy's crippling defeat in the Civil War: these qualities are fixed in the blood and are passed directly from one generation to the next. A certain social order follows from the assumption that blood is the guarantor of worth, an order in which ladies are treated as ladies, gentlemen behave as gentlemen, and those of less fortunate lineage remain in their appropriate, subordinate places.

*Studies in Short Fiction* 33 (1996): 101-06. © 1996 by Newberry College.

"Jesus!" the old lady cried. "You've got good blood! I know you wouldn't shoot a lady! I know you come from nice people! Pray! Jesus, you ought not to shoot a lady . . ." (132)

This retreat is unsuccessful because the structure to which the grandmother turns for shelter has been dismantled by that from which she flees: the assumptions that give validity to the value of blood have been pulled out from under her.

Recognizing that her shaken beliefs will not sway The Misfit, the grandmother turns to the mercantile values that have displaced those beliefs: she offers The Misfit money. The Misfit, however, realizes that the dollar sign is just as arbitrary as the sign of blood, and the offer has no effect on him. The grandmother has been divided between two opposing structures, and now both structures have collapsed.

The grandmother ends her life with a desperate effort to re-inscribe that which has been lost in this double collapse. In this attempt she experiences one last manifestation of the arbitrariness of the sign, by undergoing a final confusion of signifiers. The Misfit has by this time had Bailey shot, and has donned Bailey's colorful shirt. The grandmother is reminded by the shirt of something she cannot name (130); the sign fails to communicate the information it should. The sign fails, and then it misfires: in the moment before her death, the grandmother sees The Misfit as "one of [her] babies," as "one of [her] own children" (132). The concept of familial linkage has become attached to the signifier-shirt by Bailey's wearing of it. When The Misfit wears the shirt, the grandmother sees this notion transmit and connect itself to The Misfit. She fails in this final moment to recognize the arbitrariness of this attachment, and it is from this that The Misfit recoils when he steps back to shoot her.

### WORKS CITED

- Derrida, Jacques. "Signature Event Context." *A Derrida Reader*. Ed. P. Kamuf. New York: Columbia UP, 1991. 82-111.
- O'Connor, Flannery. "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." *The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor*. New York: Noonday, 1971. 117-33.

# Journal Article – Step 1

## Author/Authors

- First Person: Last Name, Then First Name
  - Johnson, Marie
- Second/Others: First and Last Name
  - Smith, Paul, and Diane Reed
- Just the Name (except for “Jr.” or “IV”)
- More Than Three, Can Use First & “et al.”
- Not All Articles Have Authors

## The Function of Signature in “A Good Man Is Hard to Find”

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*Sometimes a man says things he don't mean.*

(O'Connor 127)

In her fatal encounter with The Misfit, the grandmother in Flannery O'Connor's “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” confronts a particularly lethal manifestation of her changing social order. Throughout her life, this woman has been struggling with the shift from the ante-bellum values of lineage and gentility to those of a cash-oriented culture, and with the implications this shift has for the assumptions that underwrite her vanishing system of beliefs. While she does not accept or even fully comprehend these implications, in her behavior she acknowledges them and attempts some adjustment. The grandmother's handling of signatures, while clearly demonstrating the tension involved in this ongoing negotiation of adaptation and denial, also indicates that her difficulties are related to her failure to recognize fully the arbitrariness of the sign. The story she tells of Mr. Edgar Atkins Teagarden and his edible initials illustrates this failure. Moreover, The Misfit's subsequent discussion of signature, coupled with his threat of murder, cause the grandmother to repeat this error; she retreats back into the assumptions whose erosion she has been attempting to deny, but these assumptions, which have been dismantled throughout the story, offer her no protection from her killer.

The grandmother's value system is founded upon particular notions of aristocracy and heredity. According to this system, there is a specific, superior class of people, the gentility, in which one can locate certain finer qualities. This class and its attributes cannot be separated from each other by a change in outward appearances, even one as severe as the Confederacy's crippling defeat in the Civil War: these qualities are fixed in the blood and are passed directly from one generation to the next. A certain social order follows from the assumption that blood is the guarantor of worth, an order in which ladies are treated as ladies, gentlemen behave as gentlemen, and those of less fortunate lineage remain in their appropriate, subordinate places.

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“Jesus!” the old lady cried. “You’ve got good blood! I know you wouldn’t shoot a lady! I know you come from nice people! Pray! Jesus, you ought not to shoot a lady . . .” (132)

This retreat is unsuccessful because the structure to which the grandmother turns for shelter has been dismantled by that from which she flees: the assumptions that give validity to the value of blood have been pulled out from under her.

Recognizing that her shaken beliefs will not sway The Misfit, the grandmother turns to the mercantile values that have displaced those beliefs: she offers The Misfit money. The Misfit, however, realizes that the dollar sign is just as arbitrary as the sign of blood, and the offer has no effect on him. The grandmother has been divided between two opposing structures, and now both structures have collapsed.

The grandmother ends her life with a desperate effort to re-inscribe that which has been lost in this double collapse. In this attempt she experiences one last manifestation of the arbitrariness of the sign, by undergoing a final confusion of signifiers. The Misfit has by this time had Bailey shot, and has donned Bailey's colorful shirt. The grandmother is reminded by the shirt of something she cannot name (130); the sign fails to communicate the information it should. The sign fails, and then it misfires: in the moment before her death, the grandmother sees The Misfit as “one of [her] babies,” as “one of [her] own children” (132). The concept of familial linkage has become attached to the signifier-shirt by Bailey's wearing of it. When The Misfit wears the shirt, the grandmother sees this notion transmit and connect itself to The Misfit. She fails in this final moment to recognize the arbitrariness of this attachment, and it is from this that The Misfit recoils when he steps back to shoot her.

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- O'Connor, Flannery. “A Good Man Is Hard to Find.” *The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor*. New York: Noonday, 1971. 117–33.

# Journal Citation – Step 1

Owens, Mitchell.

First Line – Normal

Each Line After – Tab or Indent  
(Roughly 5 Spaces)

# Journal Article – Step 2

## Title of Article

- Give Full Title
- Use Quotation Marks (“ ”)
- Use Single Quotes (‘ ’) If Needed
  - “Daddy” (not needed)
  - “Sylvia Plath’s ‘Daddy’” (needed)
- Use Italics When Needed
  - “Studying *Little Women*” (needed)

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- O'Connor, Flannery. “A Good Man Is Hard to Find.” *The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor*. New York: Noonday, 1971. 117-33.



# Journal Citation – Step 2

Owens, Mitchell. “The Function of  
Signature in ‘A Good Man is Hard  
to Find’.”

First Line – Normal

Each Line After – Tab or Indent  
(Roughly 5 Spaces)

# Journal Article – Step 3

## Title of Journal & Journal Information

- Give Full Title & Use Italics
  - Use colon (:) for Clarity
  - *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*
- Give Volume and Issue Numbers
  - Example – 16.3 = Volume 16, Issue 3
  - Note – If Missing – Give What You Can Find
- Use Year Only for Scholarly Articles
- Give Page Numbers ('2') for Full Article

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- O'Connor, Flannery. “A Good Man Is Hard to Find.” *The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor*. New York: Noonday, 1971. 117–33.

# Journal Citation – Step 3

Owens, Mitchell. “The Function of Signature in ‘A Good Man is Hard to Find’.” *Studies in Short Fiction* 33.1 (1996): 101-06.

First Line – Normal

Each Line After – Tab or Indent  
(Roughly 5 Spaces)

# Inside Book – Step 4

## Medium

- For print reference books or anthologies, use “Print.”
- For online examples, see 5.6.2

# Journal Citation - Completed

Owens, Mitchell. “The Function of Signature in ‘A Good Man is Hard to Find’.” *Studies in Short Fiction* 33.1 (1996): 101-06. Print.

First Line – Normal

Each Line After – Tab or Indent  
(Roughly 5 Spaces)

Slides Created  
October 27 - December 6, 2006

Last Updated  
June 9, 2009

Please note that these are basic examples. There are many different types of resources. Check with the manual, your professor, or a librarian if you have any questions.