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Literary Dialect In Flannery O'Connor's "The Lame Shall Enter First" And "Good Country People"

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LITERARY DIALECT IN FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S "THE LAME SHALL ENTER

FIRST" AND "GOOD COUNTRY PEOPLE"

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by

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ABSTRACT

Flannery O'Connor is known for her widely read and loved short stories. By employing sociolinguistic, quantitative, qualitative, and corpus linguistic methods along with R Studio to gather data about literary dialect utilized in Flannery O'Connor's short stories "Good Country People" and "The Lame Shall Enter First", I argue that not only was O'Connor a gifted author in her portrayal of African American English and Southern English, but that her writing was also accurate in comparison to language use in the South. The findings suggest that O'Connor's characters were true to life in the Southern US at the time of her writing and further lend credence to arguments of literary critics who applaud her strength in writing.

Keywords: *literary dialect, Flannery O'Connor, Southern literature, sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, quantitative methods*

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my husband, Luke Kuiper, and to my family and parents, Dr. and Mrs. Tom Ireland, without whose encouragement this work would not have been possible.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

TLSEF	"The Lame Shall Enter First"
GCP	"Good Country People"
FO	Flannery O'Connor
AAE	African American English
SE	Southern English
AE	Appalachian English

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Scholars, critics, and readers alike have been absorbed with Flannery O'Connor's writings since the publication of her first short story. She is "considered one of America's greatest fiction writers" (Georgia Encyclopedia 2015). O'Connor wrote that "a story is a way to say something that can't be said any other way, and it takes every word in the story to say what the meaning is" (O'Connor 1969: 96). Thus, language is an integral part of her work, especially in light of the representations within her written world. O'Connor died tragically from her battle with lupus at the young age of thirty-nine (Georgia Encyclopedia 2015), and one can only wonder what other masterpieces she might have produced. Her closest friends recalled her "shy humor, disdain for mediocrity, and her often merciless attacks of affectation and triviality" (Georgia Encyclopedia 2015). It is these themes and much more that underlie "The Lame Shall Enter First" and "Good Country People". Her use of dialect provides a conduit for the masterful representation of her world. Although her writings defy concise descriptions, what follows is my analysis of her work through both quantitative and qualitative methods, with the help of literary criticism, literary linguistics, corpus linguistics and sociolinguistics. The following papers underscore different aspects of the same works: the first, Literary Dialect in Flannery O'Connor's "Good Country People" and "The Lame Shall Enter First", provides a more

thorough quantitative review of her character's use of dialect. The second paper, "I ain't going to the moon and get there alive": dialect representation and performance in Flannery O'Connor's "The Lame Shall Enter First" and "Good Country People" provides an overview of different types of dialect items used, as well as implications for representation and performances of dialect.

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CHAPTER II:

LITERARY DIALECT IN FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S "THE LAME SHALL ENTER

FIRST" AND "GOOD COUNTRY PEOPLE"

1. INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, linguistics and literature were connected under philology; however, this tradition has fallen away, and many of those who study literature are not required to have a background in linguistics (Freeman 2015). I would argue that linguistics provides not only a valid but also important addition to the study of literature, and vice versa. One of the most important ways that these disciplines are connected is through literary dialect. Thus this research will explore literary dialect in the work of Flannery O'Connor through both quantitative and qualitative means to discover exactly how often O'Connor's characters use dialect and how they relate to spoken language.

Flannery O'Connor, a Georgia native, wrote many short stories in which she employed literary dialect. Her works have been characterized as a complex picture of the South; however, literary critics have failed to provide explicit examples of her dialect use other than stating its importance for communication and representation of themes and characters. By specifically investigating O'Connor's use of literary dialect, this paper provides specific linguistic evidence of her strengths in writing and dialect

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literary dialect offers much insight into our considerations of why authors represent characters in specific ways, and how those representations connect to variation in spoken language. By examining literary dialect, both "issues that define the American experience, and by extension, the national literature" (Shorrocks) are revealed. Literary dialectal representation exposes widely held attitudes concerning language and the overall cultural discourse. This literature review spans many topics concerning O'Connor, literary dialect, and quantitative means for studying characters' use of dialect and connections to language variation.

2.2 Literary Dialect

Literary dialect is an exemplary subject of both linguistic and literary study. Robert Burns wrote in Scottish vernacular and provides one of the first English language examples of literary dialect (Pound 1945: 152). Since then, many other authors have used literary dialect for a variety of reasons and purposes. Because an author's word-choice "is central to whatever is distinctive" about his or her specific works, it is an important topic of study (Toolan 1998: 162). Dialect literature in the USA specifically gained

prominence after the Civil War (Hall 2002: 206). Many authors began writing in local vernacular or dialect and combined this with local folklore in many different dialects of the Southern US, including Louisiana Creoles, Appalachian English, and African American Vernacular English (Hall 2002: 206). Flannery O'Connor is a more recent author in this tradition, who like her southern literary predecessors, employs literary dialect in her works.

Although there is a wealth of literary criticism available on Southern literature, and more particularly, the works of Flannery O'Connor, there is a critical gap in focus on literary dialect. This void is not insignificant because dialect is used throughout her works. Literary dialect in itself is worthy of consideration as it both participated and helped to create a discourse surrounding American national identity, which ultimately underscores "roles of gender, race, and linguistic diversity" (Minnick 2010: 163). Despite the fact that British authors were among the first to employ literary dialect for various purposes, American writers used dialect to help build a uniquely American identity by "mapping social and political contexts in public consciousness" (Minnick 2010: 163). The use or lack of literary dialect also reflects the establishment and acknowledgement of a standard American English, despite the fact that literary dialect at the same time may provide a written representation of how many Americans in the past and present actually use language.

Because literary dialect often reflects the attitudes held concerning cultural norms (Shorrocks 399), a comparison of how Flannery O'Connor's characters employ dialect in relation to their various roles will reveal actual communities of practice (Coupland 2007).

If not, this will still provide an interesting question of why dialect representations occur in the text in comparison to real speakers.

2.3 Language and Flannery O'Connor

Schlager (1975) studied Flannery O'Connor to understand how linguists use dialect literature to reinforce understandings about how dialects sound in reality (Schlager 1975: 3). In order to accomplish this, he completed an "analytical review" of her stories, including tallying 150 items of literary dialect and comparing this to field-collected material and Tidwell's dissertation (1947), *The Literary Representation of the Phonology of the Southern Dialect* (1975: 39). Using an index card system, he created a corpus of all dialect items and transcribed them into IPA for all possible pronunciations of the words. Schlager emphasized O'Connor's background as a native Georgian with a "strong accent" (Schlager 1975: 35) as evidence of the linguistic reality from which her characters were inspired. This reality was one that O'Connor did not wed to prestige, as she included characters from different ethnicities, vocations, and socioeconomic classes of people. Schlager also lists examples of phonemic shifting, phonemic losses, phonemic intrusions, and assimilation (1975: 41). His work provides a helpful framework from which to compare my analyses.

Kinnebrew discusses the implications of the author's choice to employ dialect in the work of several female Southern authors (Kinnebrew 1983: 2). She also compares the types of O'Connor's characters and their idiolects. For instance, the highly educated,

Northern intellectual adheres to standard English (Kinnebrew 1983: 80) while southern female characters also use standard English (Kinnebrew 1983: 80) but at the same time "superficially embrace Christianity" (Kinnebrew 1983: 81). This is connected to cultural and social views of the South as the "Bible belt". Kinnebrew considers the possible reasons for this (Kinnebrew 1983: 80), arguing that, in general, O'Connor establishes each character with "at least one or two" distinguishable linguistic traits to help readers situate characters "socially and linguistically" (Kinnebrew 1983: 101).

Kinnebrew points out an important effect of O'Connor's use of dialect, explaining that the characters' voices create both irony and humor (Kinnebrew 1983: 101), often in comparison to which characters use standard and which characters use non-standard English. Kinnebrew asserts that O'Connor herself employed literary dialect not just for the sake of it but also to allow the individual characters to stand out (Kinnebrew 1983: 105). This goal is important for many linguists, because language use and social meanings are not limited to the speaker's adherence to "the establishment" but identities are "constructed" through speaking (Coupland 2007: 45). A snapshot of this phenomenon is in the writings of O'Connor. Finally, Kinnebrew mentions several ways in which O'Connor uses dialect "inconsistently" (Kinnebrew 1983). It is here that knowledge from sociolinguistics can inform the study of literature, as I would argue that this seeming inconsistency is, in reality, reflective of how actual speakers use language. Real speakers use language with multiple levels of styles, possibly multiple dialects, and registers; no one consistently uses language the same way.

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Although both Kinnebrew and Schlager provide interesting studies relating to dialect in O'Connor, they fail to consider whether her writing also reflects real language use (beyond attributing her ear for dialect to her Southern Georgia roots). Both quantitative and qualitative linguistic methods will contribute further to literary study of Flannery O'Connor by providing a novel way of analyzing and understanding her work. This follow what Eckert argues: "language does not exist simply in the abstract, untouched and untouchable; it is used and reproduced in the service of local communities" (Eckert 2009: 151).

2.4 Criticism of Flannery O'Connor

Literary critics have found O'Connor's writings to contain a considerable number of themes and topics to discuss; however, their commentary generally leans toward vague observations rather than linguistic facts. Some of these themes are addressed in the following paragraph.

One of the main reasons O'Connor's work is appealing is its emphasis on the "grotesque" which is defined as: "anything having the qualities of *grotesque* art: bizarre, incongruous, ugly, unnatural, fantastic, abnormal" (Harmon 2009: 244). Her writing is considered grotesque because of the many bizarre characters that fill her writings, called by another literary critic O'Connor's "penchant for caricature" (Di Renzo 1993: 3). Neither critic describes specifically how her characters show the grotesque in character qualities. They also debate whether her writing is filled with the ridiculous and absurd, grounded in mystery, or in the real. Evans argues that O'Connor's goals for writing were

not to write about the ridiculous, absurd, or "pointless aspects of existence" (Di Renzo 1993: 7) simply for its own sake, but rather to underscore her viewpoint on life, which is grounded in her belief in a God whom "she regards as the source, guarantor, and judge of everything (and everyone) that exist" (Evans 2009: 77). Evans also says that O'Connor wrote less to mirror society than to "jar and jolt society awake", using the "violent, sometimes comic, and sometimes both at once" for this purpose (Evans 2009: 78).

Others prominent critics argue that O'Connor's writing was not only grounded in the grotesque but also the real (Barnes 1987: 134). O'Connor herself wrote, "Fiction is about everything human" (O'Connor 1969: 68), including language. Kinnebrew concurs, arguing that O'Connor used dialect not only to create interesting characters but also to draw from the real, from an actual "social context" created through language (Kinnebrew 1976). Barnes writes, "a primary feature of the grotesque of Flannery O'Connor is its instructional purpose" (Barnes 1987: 133). Although she plays off "mystery" and the "grotesque" (Barnes 1987: 133) her work is grounded in reality. Kinnebrew takes this a step further by arguing that part of O'Connor's realism is created through her language use and strength of writing in dialect. Both Schlager and Kinnebrew were the only writers who provided multiple examples of her literary dialect and neither of them is a literary critic. Literary critics have missed an integral part of her work by excluding dialect representations from their discussions.

This problematic gap in critical literature is underscored by the fact that "descriptions of southern writing seldom mention" Southern dialect (Hopkins 2002: 4). "Although the social context of Flannery O'Connor's fiction has been studied in some

detail, especially the racial social context, relatively little O'Connor criticism has detailed the linguistic patterns of politeness" and, I would add, dialect (Hardy 2010: 524).

2.5 Sociolinguistic Sources

Sociolinguistics has contributed a large number of studies on Southern American English and African American English. Studies such as Michael Montgomery's "study of the language of blacks and whites in the American South" (1980) looked at grammatical and phonological linguistic features. Also Montgomery and Bailey's overview of cultural and linguistic diversity in the South has contributed work on complexities and examples of linguistic behavior. Studies such as these provide an empirical linguistic background against which we can evaluate authors' use of literary dialect. The chart that follows contains examples of Southern and African American English grammatical features that are used in O'Connor's two stories, "Good Country People" and "The Lame Shall Enter First". The scope of the present investigation is limited to grammatical features because they were the most frequent examples in the aforementioned stories.

Figure 1 Dialectal Features

Feature	Example	Source
a-prefixing	It's a-snowing down South	Hazen 2013: 57-58
Nonstandard Past tense with four categories: 1. Present for past 2. regularized 3. past participle for past 4. past for past participle	1. She come home yesterday 2. We knowed you wouldn't care 3. If I done something wrong she'd tell me 4. they've tore that down	Hazen 2010 Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 376-7
Multiple negation	"I didn't do nothing"	Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 52
[n] for ing	Nobody's tellin'	Hazen 2013: 64
Double modals	I might could go with you	Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 52
Subject-verb agreement/nonconcord	My nerves has been on edge. Some people likes to talk a lot.	Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 376

Although these features are listed for both Appalachian English (AE) and African American English (AAE), they are also considered part of Southern English, as the geographical range of these dialects overlaps (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 231). Furthermore, linguists are not arguing that the difference between these dialects is based on ethnicity, but rather, that changes develop because of the communities who utilize language (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 230).

Historically African American English is "rooted in a Southern-based, rural, working class variety" of language and thus parallels similar or even the same features as other varieties of Southern English (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 219). The enduring results of "slavery, Jim Crow laws, and segregation" as well as the migration of many African Americans to the North, have influenced the foundations of contemporary development of AAE and paved the way for the continuation of a "unique linguistic heritage" (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 225). Wolfram & Schilling-Estes also point out that because of this unique heritage, many features of AAE overlap with other varieties of SE (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 380) and influence each other, including features studied in this paper such as "ain't", multiple negation (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 380), and differing variations of subject-verb nonconcord (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 370-384). Although Southern English and African American English have many overlapping features, this does not constrain them to continue developing similarly, and as exemplified by Lumbee English in North Carolina and Gullah in South Carolina and Georgia, where separate varieties have developed altogether (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 222). Even so, the features listed above and

many others of AE and AAE may occur in other minority dialects and often carry similar negative associations (Hazen 2010).

Other sociolinguistic works have explicated the background concerning the sources of several dialect features listed here. For instance, Nielsen provides an overview of issues in the evolution of English with nonstandard past tense and subject verb nonconcord (Nielsen 1985). Many speakers of Modern English regularize irregular verbs, derivatives of Old English (Nielsen 1985: 41). He also references the fact that strong verbs are the biggest group that create the Modern English irregular verbs. The rest are from a variety of weak verbs, Old Norse and Old Finnish loans, preterit-present verbs, anomalous verbs, and new formations. In Old English weak verbs were already beginning to increase in number, and this trend has continued into Modern English usage today (Nielsen 1985: 48). Nevalainen traces the beginnings of multiple negation, which he terms "negative concord" (Nevalainen 2006: 257). He argues that current types of multiple negation do not "necessarily require the presence of the sentential negator *not*" (Nevalainen 2006: 260).

2.6 Applying Linguistic Methods for Literary Study

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terms "negative concord" (Nevalainen 2006: 257). He argues that current types of

multiple negation do not "necessarily require the presence of the sentential negator *not"*

(Nevalainen 2006: 260).

3. METHODOLOGY

First, I created a corpus of O'Connor's stories "Good Country People" and "The Lame Shall Enter First", coding each text for instances of literary dialect and creating a database of feature occurrences, characters, socioeconomic status, gender, and ethnicity. Using R Studio, tallies of each feature were compiled for each character's use of dialect, to find which types of dialect are used most frequently and characters' feature use.

Then I calculated index scores for each individual character, using the total word counts for each, thereby determining density of dialect use per character, social variable of characters, and dialect type. Index scores provide a way to look at speakers for comparisons on an individual level, thus allowing analysis between O'Connor's characterizations. Frequency distributions analyze comparisons of different groups by gender, socioeconomic class, or ethnicity. Thus, by calculating frequency distributions for each individual character one may examine language use across the different character types O'Connor employed in these stories. These point to different themes and connections to real language use in the South, based on comparisons with data from other examinations of Southern English and African American English. Finally, a Fischer's exact test was utilized to include the variables dialect and socioeconomic class as

interactants in these two works, ultimately proving that O'Connor utilizes dialect as a way of underscoring depictions of her characters as southern and differentiating between levels of socioeconomic class. The Fisher's exact test allows for analysis of the null hypothesis, showing that there is no statistical significance of the usage of dialect versus the non-usage of dialect between characters of middle class and characters of lower class. This explains how random the distribution is between the aforementioned variables.

4. RESULTS

All seven characters from "The Lame Shall Enter First" use dialect to some degree, and all six characters from "Good Country People" use dialect at different times in the story. It should also be noted that the length of "The Lame Shall Enter First" is nearly double that of "Good Country People", which creates interesting comparisons in looking at the index scores of each character. Figure 2 shows the raw numbers of characters by frequency of dialect use. Figure 3 provides these rankings according to each character's index score, or how many instances of dialect they use per one hundred words of their speech.

Figure 2 Raw Scores

Character	Raw Score
Rufus	80
Manley Pointer	57
Mrs. Freeman	25
Mrs. Hopewell	7
Policeman	6
Sheppard	5
Mr. Freeman	3
Norton	3
Chiropractor	2
Police Sergeant	2
Shoe clerk	2
Joy	1
Policemen	1

The data for index scores is listed in descending order in comparison to the characters'

raw scores.

Figure 3 Index Scores

Character	Raw Score	Index Score
Manley Pointer	57	3.29/100
Rufus	80	7.3/100
Mrs. Freeman	25	2.18/100
Mr. Freeman	3	5.89/100
Mrs. Hopewell	7	2.01/100
Policeman	6	5.13/100
Sheppard	4	.173/100
Norton	3	1.14/100
Police Sergeant	2	12.5/100
Shoe clerk	2	3.03/100
Joy/Hulga	1	.33/100
Policemen	1	1.85/100

Both figure 2 and 3 were included to show the misleading nature of the raw scores in comparison to index scores. Because index scores are calculated based on the number of words spoken by each individual character, they provide a more accurate picture of the density and likelihood of occurrence of dialect per character in each given story. This in turn, shows that O'Connor employs dialect realistically when considering the overall work as a whole. The instances of dialect that are found are accurately portrayed on a micro level, despite the fact that the numbers are not statistically significant. For example, although Rufus has the highest raw score, the Police Sergeant has a higher likelihood of using dialect because he has a higher index score. The index scores of minor

characters are perhaps different than they would be, if the minor characters were main characters in the story. They do have a similar likelihood in comparison to how often they speak. Figures 4-7 catalog frequency distributions per character for several of the most frequent dialect items.

Figure 4 *Ain't* Frequency Distributions

Character	Occurrences of *Ain't*/Total Instances of Linguistic Feature	Frequency Distribution
Rufus	22/22	100%
Manley Pointer	9/9	100%
Mrs. Freeman	2/2	100%
Policeman	1/1	100%
Shoe Clerk	1/1	100%

Figure 5 S/V Nonconcord Frequency Distribution

Character	Occurrences of S/V Nonconcord/ Total Instances of Linguistic Feature	Frequency Distribution
Rufus	11/15	73.3%
Manley Pointer	5/9	55.6%
Mrs. Freeman	4/7	57.1%
Policeman	2/3	66.7%
Shoe Clerk	1/1	100%
Joy/Hulga	1/8	12.5%
Mrs. Hopewell	1/7	14.3%
Mr. Freeman	1/1	100%

Figure 6 Nonstandard Past Tense Frequency Distributions

Character	Occurrences of Nonstandard Past Tense/Total Instances of Linguistic Feature	Frequency Distribution
Manley	16/24	66.7%
Rufus	11/24	45.8%
Mrs. Freeman	3/5	60%
Policeman	1/3	33.3%
Sheppard	3/36	8.3%

The most frequent examples of dialect between both stories were *ain't*, nonstandard past tense, multiple negation, and subject-verb nonconcord. As mentioned in the literature review, these features are recognized as part of Southern English, Appalachian English, and African American English. Because *ain't* is used in every possible instance by the characters who use *ain't*, this could be a way of distinguishing the text as a representation of southern identity. It could be a general indicator for the setting of the story, which makes sense because *ain't* is considered a stereotypical feature of southern speech across the USA (Preston 1999). Figures 5 and 6 show frequency distributions for nonstandard past tense and s/v nonconcord with greater variances in usage. This means that the characters who use these features did not use them in every possible instance. Therefore, this provides a realistic connection to spoken language because in general, people do not use the same linguistic resources consistently. Figure 7 lists the most frequently used features in "The Lame Shall Enter First" and "Good Country People".

Figure 7 Most Frequent Features

Feature	Number of Occurrences
Ain't	36
Nonstandard Past tense	34
Subject Verb Nonconcord	27
Multiple Negation	16

Figure 7 lists the most frequently used features in "Good Country People" and "The Lame Shall Enter First". All of these features are dispersed across both stories and provide examples of O'Connor's connection to spoken language. In comparing these to their frequency distributions, it is true that O'Connor does not use each feature in every possible way, but this provides differentiation that is true to spoken language and makes her characters more real and thus relatable. Figure 8 shows the numbers utilized in the Fisher's Exact Test.

Figure 8 Fisher's Exact Test

	Usages of Dialect	Non-usages of Dialect	Total
Middle Class	5	46	51
Lower Class	90	37	127
Total	95	83	178

The Fisher's exact test has a p value of less than .0001. This is extremely significant because it shows that O'Connor differentiates dialect use by class (almost) perfectly. Her writing distributes dialect across characters by class for each story. This provides a quantitative measurement for previously held assumptions that O'Connor's

representations are well written and a basis to interpret her variation in dialect features as based on social classes of speakers in her stories.

5. DISCUSSION

The aforementioned results are evidence not only for the fact that O'Connor employed quantifiable examples of Southern (including African American English) features, but also that each of these features varied according to the story and characters within. The Fisher's Exact test provides evidence that O'Connor strongly differentiates dialect use between speakers of middle and lower class. This mirrors expectations found for real speakers of African American English and Southern English.

Manley Pointer, the character who is most often characterized by his use of dialect was white and lower-middle class. Some examples of his speech include: "had got along", "who ever says it ain't a hell" and "I known it". Many other examples of his speech span other dialectal features, including g-dropping and a-prefixing. A major part of his identity as a character is his use of dialect, which he uses to his advantage to play up his identity in relation to Joy/Hulga, the female character he attempts to woo in the story "Good Country People".

The character that uses dialect the second most often is Rufus, an African American teenager who is lower class and still in grade school. Some examples of his language use include, "he don't know his left hand from his right", "I don't care a thing what all you

done", "you been wrong before", and "you ain't got no confidence". Rufus is another

character whose identity is inextricably tied to the story, especially in relation to

Sheppard, the overly optimistic father who helps Rufus in "The Lame Shall Enter First".

Mr. and Mrs. Freeman are next in users of dialect and are characters from "Good

Country People". They are both white and lower class. Because they are minor characters

in the story they have the potential for higher dialect distributions than Rufus or Manley.

Mrs. Hopewell is next by amount of dialect and does not think of herself as one who

associates with "good country people" (her term), but is closer to her friend Mrs.

Freeman in dialect usage. The next characters on the list are all minor, aside from three

characters: Norton, Sheppard, and Joy/Hulga, who are white and middle class. It is

notable that O'Connor appears to use dialect more according to social class and education

level rather than differentiating between ethnicities. However, that does not mean that the

characters actually used more SE and AAE features according to these variables, and

more tests would need to be done to determine whether there is a significant correlation

between the social and linguistic variables. Finally, the most frequent examples of dialect

are *ain't*, nonstandard past tense, S/V nonconcord, and multiple negation. These are all

well recognized features of SE and AAE (Wolfram & Schilling- Estes 2006: 390) and are

numerical proof of O'Connor's writings as a connection to the South and to real language

use there. Therefore, these features correspond with how people used language at the

time of O'Connor's writings.

6. CONCLUSION

O'Connor employs dialect in her short stories that is both rooted in Southern English and African American English, as well as being statistically verifiable as highly frequent, but not occurring one hundred percent of the time. This is important because the way O'Connor uses dialect features is closer to reality than having the characters utilize dialect in every possible instance. No one's speech is always adheres to certain norms or dialects all of the time; in fact, speech is constantly a process rather than finished product (Coupland 2007). Because of this O'Connor's writing suggests this process of identity. Also, she does not base dialect use on ethnicity; the majority of the characters in these two stories are white and use comparable amounts of dialect to the main African American character, Rufus.

Finally, the frequency distributions explain how often a character uses dialect in each situation where nonstandard dialect is comparable to standard English. The characters that were not included did not use the particular dialect feature. It is interesting that the frequency distributions for *ain't* are 100% for every character who uses *ain't*. Every character who uses *ain't* is all lower class, providing more evidence for O'Connor

using class as an indicator for linguistic use of SE. However, this does not follow for the other two dialect features.

The frequency distributions for nonstandard past tense and s/v nonconcord reveal that characters these features, do not always utilize this dialect all the time. This lends itself to the conclusion that O'Connor's characters reflect real language speakers, as no one speaks the same way every time he or she uses language. Employing literary dialect allows O'Connor at once to characterize her speakers as southern by using nonstandard past tense and subject-verb nonconcord for every character but does not leave all characters with the same characterization or identity. She differentiates characters utilizing *ain't* according to social class. These characterizations provide incredible literary purposes as well as make them sound like real people.

By taking a closer look at the frequencies of dialect features employed by each character, and comparing these with sociolinguistic data for similar answers, we find that her characters used actual spoken features of both African American English and Southern English, but not all the time. Although these characters predominantly used ain't, nonstandard past tense, multiple negation, and s/v nonconcord, O'Connor still includes a wide variety of features and is not limited to the most frequent four types. The characters who used *ain't* most often were designated by socioeconomic class, rather than any of the other speaker variables. As well, the other characters still used different features of SE and AAE, perhaps as a way to characterize them as being from the South. This speaks to her strength as a writer and lends credence to literary critics' arguments

that O'Connor's language use points to realities in the Southern United States and that

her writing presents a particularly realistic view of language use in the South.

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CHAPTER III

"I AIN'T GOING TO THE MOON AND GET THERE ALIVE":

DIALECT REPRESENTATION AND PERFORMANCE IN FLANNERY

O'CONNOR'S "THE LAME SHALL ENTER FIRST" AND "GOOD COUNTRY

PEOPLE"

1. INTRODUCTION

In Flannery O'Connor's preface to the second edition of *Wise Blood in Three*, she writes, "Freedom is a mystery and one which a novel can only be asked to deepen," and perhaps, one that short stories can only be asked to deepen, as well. Although *Wise Blood* was O'Connor's only novel, she managed to produce a vast amount of work during her life, which was tragically shortened by her battle with lupus (Browning 1974). O'Connor's works are shocking, riveting, and exciting, but they are also deep, speaking to the core of human experiences. O'Connor's creative ability as an author has been widely recognized, as she uses many literary and linguistic devices to create the unique worlds of her stories. Many critics have focused on her combinations of irony and satire, along with poetic, religious, and grotesque imagery, yet O'Connor's dialect use strengthens the intensity of her works as a whole. This paper will demonstrate that O'Connor's representations of dialect provide a wide range of linguistic options, thereby creating a performance of southern identity that enables the dramatic events within each story.

The following literature review provides an overview of orthography as informed by standard and nonstandard writing representation, which ultimately illuminate how authors and readers interact with and perceive texts. The ideological debate between standard and nonstandard English contributes to negative perceptions of dialect representation. Following this is a brief discussion of O'Connor's life and legacy as well as an overview of literary criticism and linguistic studies that are the foundation for this paper.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As Eckert underscores, language is not simply an abstract notion, but rather it is real and living, "used and reproduced" in communities, in which the "local deployment of linguistic resources [are] imbued with social meaning" (Eckert 2009: 151). This means that not only are linguistic resources never static, but they may be used differently in various situations, localities, communities, and ultimately individuals. Meaning in spoken language is created and recreated through practice (Eckert 2009: 151). O'Connor's unique "practice" and "deployment of linguistic resources" (Eckert 2009: 151) are intimately connected to the depth of her short stories (Eckert 2009: 151).

The interaction between author and reader and text is certainly set apart from spoken language in communities of practice, which creates a continued "dialogue" between all involved. These interactions and dialect representations have not been widely studied, especially in the work of Flannery O'Connor. O'Connor is well known for her wit, humor, and bite in her short stories, and a major part of this is the way she uses language. Joel Chandler Harris also recognized this when he said "dialect is part of the legends themselves, and to present them in any other way would be to rob them of everything that gives them vitality" (Harris 1883: xxvi). The same is true of Flannery

O'Connor's work; her writing would not be as powerful without representations of African American English and Southern English, dialects that are related and use often overlapping features.

2.2 Orthographic Linguistic Representation

This section discusses the underlying topics surrounding orthography, the written forms, and representations of language and linguistic use. Language is fundamental to the human experience and connected to written representations, whether they are literary or not (Lehtonen 2000: 22-23). Language is "a central part of humanity" and encompasses all aspects of human existence, from "the simplest to the most complex" (Lehtonen 2000: 23). Therefore, written language is "simultaneously a *producer, an instrument and a product*" (Lehtonen 2000: 22-23). These unique characteristics are fundamental for both readers and authors in the experience of creating, reading, and interacting with literature. As author and reader bring personal understandings and identity to these interactions, their interpretations and representations of dialect may differ. Our "concepts of reality are inevitably linguistic and textual by nature", and the meanings conveyed through language are tied to our experiences (Lehtonen 2000: 11). If language is the system in which our categories and viewpoints interact (Lehtonen 2000: 25), it can also provide contexts for layering identities. This may differ among social and cultural groups (Lehtonen 2000: 31).

"Nonstandard forms are often deployed selectively (and in many cases inconsistently) in texts that are otherwise in standard spelling" (Jaffe 2000: 501).

O'Connor's ability is underscored in her consistency of dialect orthography and representation. Even so, because writing systems are tools of identity formation (Decrosse 1987), orthography gives the impression that any given language is a distinct, unified unit (Jaffee 2000: 501).

All writing forms are similar in that they are all *"representations"* (Lehtonen 2000: 79). Even so, a given orthography system is unable to completely account for spoken language, much less provide the best ways for understanding and interpreting underlying meanings (Jaffe 2000: 501). In light of this, if orthographies are unable to represent standard language, then it is also possible they are unable to account for dialect diversity as well (Jaffe 2000: 502).

Miethaner points out that all representations of dialects are not founded on a "neutral" orthography but instead need to be interpreted in relation to reference systems (Miethaner 2000: 554). "Written representations of speech…encode a great amount of 'pre-analysis', not only in terms of what features are selected for non-standard representation but…in how these features are represented" (Miethaner 2000: 552-3). In other words, representations of speech are compared to the standard orthography. This brings up many issues, including whether dialect representations are fair and accurate and whether the author needs to be a speaker of the dialect to represent it well. Miethaner also emphasizes recognizing the limitation of text, being specifically designed by an author, with the possibility that actual pronunciation and use (Miethaner 2000: 554) may not be agreed upon.

Finally "orthography selects, displays, and naturalizes linguistic difference, which is in turn used to legitimize and naturalize cultural and political boundaries" (Jaffe 2000: 502-3). This creates a community united by adherence to and the orthographic representation of the commonly used language. For instance English has a well-established standard orthography, with "undisputed, official, institutional status" (Jaffe 2000: 499). Therefore nonstandard forms stand out on the written page, yet we must take into consideration that nonstandard speech is a "socially constructed and historically contingent category rather than a linguistic fact" (Jaffe 2000: 499). Both categories are defined by ideological boundaries (Coupland 2000). As well, there is no standard writing representation for any dialect that is considered nonstandard (Jaffe 2000: 500).

Dialects are "composites of idiolects" that are classified according to a variety of criteria, including geography and social, economic, and cultural differences between groups of people (Reed 1967: 3). Bell argues that "the south is the most interesting and the most fertile in dialect of all the regions" and mentions the two dialects Southern English and African American English (Bell 1925: 26) utilized by O'Connor, which are closely related (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006: 370).

2.3 Flannery O'Connor and the South

Although at first glance, O'Connor's life may seem relatively simple, it was not, and like her writing, "it has depths which beckon" (Browning 1974: 1). Flannery O'Connor was born in Savannah, GA, on March 25, 1925 (Browning 1974: 1). Her parents were both from long-established Georgia families in Milledgeville and Savannah

(Browning 1974: 2). An only child, her proximity to adult aunts and other relatives in Savannah and later Milledgeville probably enhanced her ear for dialect, dialogue, and storytelling (Gooch 2009: 15, 21). Her vivid imagination and keen observational skills were also sharpened by her preference for domesticated birds as pets (Gooch 2009: 56). Creatively naming and describing the individual peculiarities of chickens, guineas, and especially peacocks became a life-long source of delight for Flannery (Gooch 2009: 8, 39). As a young adult she enjoyed drawing and writing, especially for her high school yearbook and newspaper (Gooch 2009: 76, 78). She graduated from Georgia State College for Women in Milledgeville in 1945 and then attended the University of Iowa creative writing program (Browning 1974: 3). In December 1950, she was diagnosed with lupus, the debilitating illness that killed her father in 1941. Flannery moved home to live with her mother in Andalusia, close to Milledgeville, where she continued writing for the next fourteen years of her life. Throughout this time she published many stories, including her only novel *Wise Blood*, and the stories that would make up the posthumous collection, "Everything that Rises Must Converge".

To describe the influences on O'Connor's literature and writing as a whole, one must include the South along with the effects of her Catholic faith. This is described well by Browning: "religion has meaning only to the degree that it bears upon… the heart of her stories— human experience" (Browning 1974: 19). She "demonstrates…that religious meaning emerges via human behavior and psychology, as men struggle with their experience in an effort to wrest from it some significance" (Browning 1974: 20). So although her writings were not overtly religious, these themes inform her work.

O'Connor is also considered by some to be one of the most controversial of all contemporary American authors (Browning 1974: 23). Yet the heart of her works is focused on human experience, which for O'Connor is deeply ingrained in the South. Another way in which O'Connor is a subversive author is because her writings "suggest a reality more comprehensive than their specific circumstances and more mysterious than many modern readers are accustomed to" (Johansen 1994: 2). Her work points to "personal and collective histories" which draw on past stories and writing traditions (Johansen 1994: 2). Johansen focuses on many aspects of O'Connor's writing, but underscores an important fact concerning her use of writing for illuminating

> the double tendencies of human language through which transformations become possible. On the one hand, language erects boundaries, conventions, systems, institutions- in short, a cultural cannon- to secure people from freedom or the threat of chaos. On the other hand, language can playfully subvert the canon regularly, to challenge it with freedom, by returning it to its wild, forgotten origins for renewal (Johansen 1994: 11).

Johansen also argues that O'Connor's organizing structures are influenced by space (Johansen 1994: 19). "Within the woods or wilderness and the carnival environments O'Connor embodies symbolically the mythic dimensions of her region—and of human beings in general—in a concrete location"(Johansen 1994: 20). Thus, her writing is grounded in the South (Johansen 1994: 20) and still connected to all human experience through language and space.

2.4 Southern Literary Tradition: Where Does O'Connor Fit?

O'Connor once wrote:

you don't write fiction with assumptions. The things we see, hear, smell, and touch affect us long before we believe anything at all, and the South impresses its image on us from the moment we are able to distinguish one sound from another. By the time we are able to use our imaginations for fiction, we find that our senses have responded irrevocably to a certain reality (Browning 1974: 7).

O'Connor's "preoccupation with the spiritual condition of modern man thus led her to write fiction of a peculiar cast" (Browning 1974: 9) that was lauded as one of the best collections of short stories to be published in America in her time (Browning 1974: 10). O'Connor is a subversive author in that she utilizes themes and narratives, along with traditions of the South to express common human experiences.

In *Dirt and Desire*, Yaeger explains that although southern literature is concerned with family life, storytelling, and tragedy, southern female authors are also concerned with themes of "whiteness", "arrested systems of knowledge", and "repetition, stories that will not go away, that keep repeating themselves endlessly" (Yaeger 2000: 12) among others. O'Connor is one prominent author she discusses who is a major part of this critical conversation. Yaeger also says that for writers such as O'Connor, the focus on "sense of place" (Yaeger 2000: 13) and connection to the "landscape" is key to their work (Yaeger 2000: 13). Yaeger points out the grotesque as a stereotype of southern fiction, which O'Connor refutes as being a sole characteristic of southern writing and all too often emphasized by critics (Yaeger 2000: 24). Even so, it was not until recently that

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southern female writers were included (with Faulkner) as representatives of larger themes in southern writing (Yaeger 2000: 116). Yet these are the very themes, "cultural, racial, and political", inspiring them to write (Yaeger 2000: 116).

2.5 Literary Linguistics and Literary Dialect

The study of literary dialect is both controversial and debated, especially for questions of authenticity (Leigh 2011: 10). Minnick reasons that studying literary dialect specifically in the United States is important, in that it informs cultural discourses and the formation of a "uniquely American identity" (Minnick 2010). Local color stories were written partly to show a continued desire for independence from England (Bell 1925: 47). Despite questions over the validity of including literary dialect in linguistic study especially, Minnick points out its usefulness for uncovering "social determinants and consequences of variation" and "perceptions and attitudes" surrounding linguistic variation (Minnick 2010: xvi). Stubbs agrees, claiming that literary dialect functions to expose wider cultural perspectives (Stubbs 1983: 7).

Bell studied literary dialect in local color stories across the USA, which is an essential part of the tradition that O'Connor follows. She argues that they provide a snapshot of the current "mood" of that time period and develop the personalities of characters and settings of the story, all created and enhanced by "the conversation" (Bell 1925: 47). She ultimately concludes that the use of dialect is what completes the "mood" of the stories (Bell 1925: 47). This is where linguistics comes in, providing an empirical foundation for pinpointing how dialect completes the literary world.

2.6 Corpus Linguistics and Sociolinguistics

Corpus linguistics is a method of analysis utilized by discourse linguists to incorporate large amounts of text (Fisher-Starcke 2010: 1). This allows for the examination of more materials and finding patterns within the larger bodies of work or corpora (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen 1998: 2). This is a method occasionally used to study literary dialect because of the aforementioned properties and may provide a different perspective and way of analyzing literature.

As well, sociolinguistics supplies a number of studies on African American English and Southern English as a foundation on which to compare the actual grammatical, phonological, and informal features found in O'Connor's works. For example, Wolfram and Schilling-Estes studied African American English and other minority dialects and found many overlapping features (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes 2006, 370). Nevalainen studied the beginnings of the dialect feature multiple negation (Nevalainen 2006: 257), while Neilsen found that nonstandard past tense may have been used when weak verbs increased in Old English (Nielsen 1985: 48). Barbara Johnstone also studied features on the level of discourse in Southern English and African American English (Johnstone 200: 173).

Other studies of grammatical features of southern speech in both African American English and Southern English found many features, some of which are included in O'Connor's work but not all, including double or multiple modals (Cukor-Avila 2003: 89), which are used once in "The Lame Shall Enter First" and "Good

Country People". However, Bernstein and Cukor-Avila also studied other prominent grammatical features of these dialects, including "irregular verbs", "stressed been", and "a-prefixing" (Bernstein 2003 & Cukor-Avila 2003:89), all of which are utilized by O'Connor, and are addressed in the results section.

2. METHODS

By creating a corpus of "The Lame Shall Enter First" and "Good Country People", I was able to query for examples of dialect. These were saved in a separate excel file and coded by type, character, and social variables of the speaker (socioeconomic class, ethnicity, and gender). From here I created a database of the counts and types of dialect O'Connor utilizes throughout both stories. I also used R Studio to create tables by character and counts for individual usage of dialect.

Utilizing literary criticism about Flannery O'Connor along with linguistic methods allowed me to locate examples of dialect in her writing and compare this to standard orthography. Part of O'Connor's strength as both an illuminator of human experience and as a subversive author is grounded in her ability to represent local dialects well and provide an accurate picture of language use in the South that she inhabited.

3.1 RESULTS

The following results are of linguistic examples throughout O'Connor's stories.

Figures 9 and 10 provide raw scores of dialect use per character for each story, as well as

classify them according to socioeconomic classes, gender, ethnicity, and literary role as

minor or major characters.

Figure 9 Character Roles and Dialect Counts in "Good Country People"

Character	Role in Story	Gender	Ethnicity	Socioeconomic Class	Dialect Raw Score
Joy/Hulga	Major	Female	White	Middle	1
Mrs. Hopewell	Major	Female	White	Middle	7
Mrs. Freeman	Minor	Female	White	Lower	25
Mr. Freeman	Minor	Male	White	Lower	3
Chiropractor	Minor	Male	White	Middle	2
Manley	Major	Male	White	Lower	57

Figure 9 shows the changes across characters by sociolinguistic variables of

gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class, as well as the individual character's role in

the story as minor or major. The raw dialect scores represent instances of dialect, thus

showing that O'Connor does not limit dialect use to main characters, but rather disperses

dialect representations across characters for literary purposes. In "Good Country People",

Manley has the highest amount of dialect use, which is contrasted with Joy/Hulga, who

uses dialect once. As will be further discussed, this creates a dramatic dichotomy between the two characters along with overall impressions relating to Manley's personality and attitude.

Figure 10 Character Roles and Dialect Counts in "The Lame Shall Enter First"

Character	Role in Story	Gender	Ethnicity	Socioeconomic Class	Dialect Raw Score
Rufus	Major	Male	African American	Lower	80
Norton	Major	Male	White	Middle	3
Sheppard	Major	Male	White	Middle	4
Police	Minor	Male	White	Unclear	9
Shoe clerk	Minor	Male	White	Unclear	2

Figure 10 distinguishes roles and sociolinguistic variables for "The Lame Shall Enter First". As discussed in the previous chapter, even though Rufus has a higher dialect score than Manley Pointer, his index score is lower. Also, Rufus is the only major character in this story to use a higher amount of dialect. There are several linguistic and literary reasons as to why this may occur: first, it is possible that O'Connor is differentiating characters in this story by socioeconomic class or by ethnicity. These are not necessarily opposing options. O'Connor uses the differences in dialect use per character to create suspenseful tension between Rufus and Sheppard. Both of these characters serve meaningful literary purposes throughout the unfolding story of "The Lame Shall Enter First".

Sociolinguistic studies have categorized speech according to register and use of formality (Wolfram & Christian 1976: 149), and O'Connor uses levels of formality in her characters' speech. There is also a continuum of formality in comparisons of written to

spoken language (Wolfram & Christian 1976: 149). Figure 11 provides examples of

informal features, which are not necessarily dialectal but are examples of the particular

character's least formal speech. Figure 11 categorizes these informal speech

representations by character.

Figure 11 "Informal" Examples

Character	Example
Manley	Ain't there somewheres we can sit down
Mrs. Freeman	I was walking along minding my own bidnis
Manley	I'll read you where it says so
Manley	It sure felt sacred to him
Mr. Freeman	Me nor my wife
Rufus	You make out like you got all this confidence in me

Figure 12 provides an overview of dialect examples from the stories. O'Connor

uses many different types of dialect, including a-prefixing and s/v nonconcord. A-

prefixing is a recognized feature of not only African American English and Southern

English but also Appalachian English (Wolfram & Christian 1976: 70). A-prefixing has

"historical roots in the history of the English language" (Wolfram & Christian 1976: 69).

S/V nonconcord is also a feature that is most likely to occur with "be" rather than other

verbs (Wolfram & Christian 1976: 77).

Figure 12 Dialect Overview

Dialect Type	Examples
A-prefixing	Kept on a-popping
Auxiliary deletion	I got ways of getting
Consonant deletion	Lemme see that boy
Eye dialect	Naw
G-dropping	Quit hoggin it
Irregular pronoun	Him and some others
Irregular preposition	Listen at him
Multiple negation	There wasn't no witnesses
Nonstandard past tense	If I was you I wouldn't responsible for any bastard
Perfective Done	I don't care a thing about what all you done
R insertion	Gonter rock, rattle, and roll
Stressed been	I been here all the time
S/v nonconcord	Yes, most people is
Deletion of unstressed syllable	O'er the hills and far away

Figure 13 provides examples of dialectal features in the representation of Rufus's speech. Rufus is a main character in "The Lame Shall Enter First" and also uses dialect the most frequently in that story. His speech examples are O'Connor's biggest representation of African American English between the two stories, and it is important that O'Connor does not limit his speech to several types of dialect features, but rather includes a wide variety as seen in the table below.

Figure 13 Dialectal Features in the Representation of Rufus's Speech

Type	Example
S/V nonconcord	I don't want none of your food
ain't	He ain't right
Nonstandard past tense	He don't have as much sense
Auxillary deletion	I got ways of getting
Irregular preposition	Listen at him
Multiple negation	You don't know nothing about me
R insertion	Gonter rock rattle and roll
Irregular preposition	I don't care a thing
Diphthongization	Study it and git your fill
Compounding	Thisyer must be her saddle
Multiple negation	Don't make no plans

Figure 14 provides examples of dialect features in the representation of Manley Pointer's speech. Manley is the primary character from "Good Country People" who uses dialect the most frequently in both stories overall. His language use contributes to the depiction of his duplicitous nature, which is not revealed until the end of the story.

Figure 14 Dialectal Features in the Representation of Manley's Speech

Type	Example
s/v nonconcord	I thought you was some girl
Nonstandard past tense	You ain't said you loved me none
ain't	Then you ain't saved?
Consonant deletion	Inraduce myself
compounding	Not many people want to buy one nowadays
G- dropping	Quit hoggin it
Multiple negation	Didn't believe in nothing
Reflexive pronoun	Let's begin to have us a good time

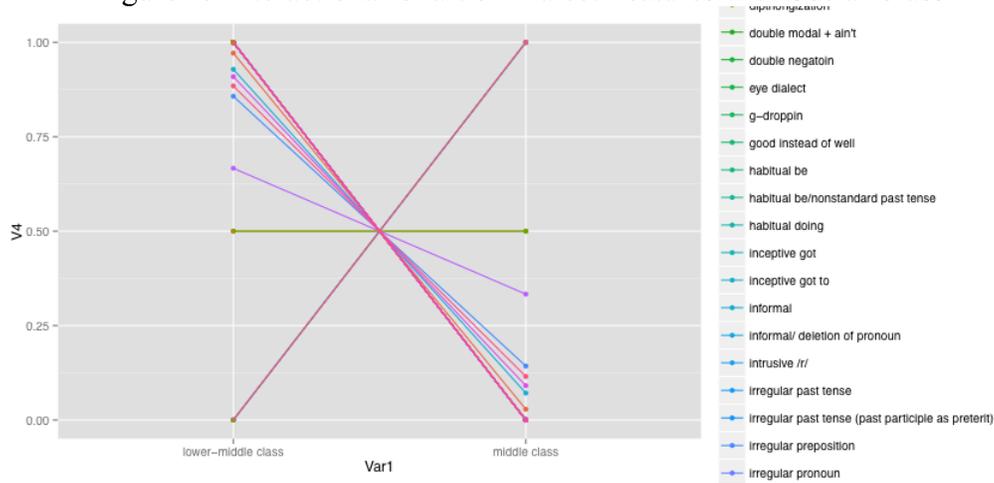Figure 15 Interactional Chart of Dialect Features with Social Class

Figure 15 is an interactional chart showing the difference in dialect use by type and social class, including all types of dialect found in O'Connor's "Good Country People" and "The Lame Shall Enter First". This chart shows that the lower class speakers are more likely to use dialect than middle class speakers, regardless of the speaker's ethnicity and type of dialect used. This means that O'Connor utilizes dialect features to characterize her speakers according to class, as shown above.

4.1 DISCUSSION

Figures 9-14 provide different classifications of O'Connor's dialectal representations in "Good Country People" and "The Lame Shall Enter First". The examples of characters' various uses, roles in stories, socioeconomic variables, and possible reasons for interactions, reveal a range of possible to interpret her linguistic patterns. The following sections describe and analyze plot details alongside linguistic representations, finding overarching differences and similarities between "Good Country People" and "The Lame Shall Enter First".

4.2 "Good Country People" Discussion

"Good Country People" has been characterized as a superficial allegory of O'Connor's Catholic faith, with each character maintaining a personality similar to his or her name (Holmes 2015). However, I would argue that O'Connor is both subversive and writes about characters that are deep on many levels. One of the ways she achieves these qualities is through using literary dialect to create characters that embody her world. At the opening of "Good Country People", O'Connor highlights the importance of speech,

of storytelling, and of narratives through her use of dialect. The first character introduced is one of the minor characters, Mrs. Freeman, who

> could never be brought to admit herself wrong on any point. She would stand there and if she could be brought to *say* anything, it was something like, "Well, I wouldn't of said it was and I wouldn't of said it wasn't," or letting her gaze range over the top kitchen shelf where there was an assortment of dusty bottles, she might remark, "I see you ain't ate many of them figs you put up last summer". (O'Connor 1945: 271, emphasis mine)

By framing the beginning of the story around speech, the reader is primed, perhaps subconsciously, to recognize that language is an important facet of the story that follows. Because this is all narrated from the perspective of Mrs. Hopewell, who hired Mrs. Freeman and her husband to help on her farm, there are several layers of interactions unfolding, including Mrs. Hopewell's perspective of the Freemans as just "good country people" which she repeats throughout the story.

As the narrative action continues, Mrs. Hopewell's daughter, Joy/Hulga, is introduced. Mrs. Hopewell views her as a "highly educated little girl" even though she is thirty-two (O'Connor 1945: 274). She has a wooden leg, due to a shooting accident as a young girl (O'Connor 1945: 274). Perhaps this affected her so much that she changed her name:

> Her name was really Joy but as soon as she was twenty-one and away from home, she had had it legally changed. Mrs. Hopewell was certain that she had thought

and thought until she had hit upon the ugliest name in any language. (O'Connor

1945: 274)

These details and conversations in the story further explain the relationship between Mrs.

Hopewell and Joy/Hulga, as well as unfolding connections between other characters.

Thus, O'Connor uses the power of language to create interactions in her literary world.

Manley Pointer then enters the scene

carrying a large black suitcase that weighted him so heavily on one side that he

had to brace himself against the door facing. He seemed on the point of collapse

but he said in a cheerful voice "Good morning, Mrs. Cedars!" and set the suitcase

down on the mat. He was not a bad-looking young man though he had on a bright

blue suit and yellow socks that were not pulled up far enough. (O'Connor 1945:

277)

Manley continues his introduction "pretending to look puzzled" and claims he

thought Mrs. Hopewell was named Cedars because that was on the mailbox (O'Connor

1945: 277). This is the beginning of Manley's domination of the story, and his interesting

relationship with Joy/Hulga, who is at once disgusted and intrigued by him. Manley, as

listed in the earlier charts, is a character that uses dialect predominantly. He utilizes this

to his advantage and continues this persona throughout the story, until the very end,

maintaining his way of speaking and personality, ""I didn't inraduce myself," he said. "

'I'm Manley Pointer from out in the country around Willohobie, not even from a place,

just from near a place.'" (O'Connor 1945: 279). This provides a distinct persona that

could be characterized along with many stereotypes of southerners as friendly, polite, and affable (Johnstone 2003: 190).

In "Good Country People", main characters Joy/Hulga and her mother, Mrs. Hopewell use dialect the least, but this is not because they are minor characters. In fact, their interactions with each other and with Manley Pointer create the backbone for the entire story. They use dialect comparably to minor characters but speak far more because they are important facets of the story. They are also middle class speakers, whereas Manley Pointer is lower class and is a main character that utilizes dialect to his advantage. He parades as a traveling Bible salesman, and plays off of previously mentioned cultural views of southern speakers as being welcoming, kind, and affable (Johnstone 2003: 190). This immediately charms Mrs. Hopewell, but it interests Joy/Hulga. Here O'Connor continues to unfold the layers of her main characters' identities.

Ultimately, Manley invites Joy/Hulga to have a picnic with him, and she agrees, planning to seduce him, but not sexually. He intrigues her because of his overwhelming simplicity and seeming positivity. Joy/Hulga, who has a PhD in philosophy, reasons that she believes in nothing and will be able to convince him of this when they meet together. As their outing begins it is clear that O'Connor has saved the emphasis of the plot for their interactions, which is underscored through their differences, including differences in speech. When they begin discussing their views on religion and life, and Manley says, "You ain't saved?" to which Joy/Hulga responds, "In my economy…I'm saved and you are damned but I told you I didn't believe in God" (O'Connor 1945: 286). Here their

speech differs by formality, along with Manley's use of ain't, a feature of SE and AAE that emphasizes their different views even more.

From here, Manley leads her to the barn where they climb into the loft and his true character is revealed. He opens his Bible briefcase to pull out a flask of liquor, which he offers to the already astonished Joy/Hulga, and responds saying, " 'I hope you don't think,' he said in a lofty indignant tone, 'that I believe in that crap! I may sell Bibles but I know which end is up and I wasn't born yesterday and I know where I'm going!' " (O'Connor 1945: 291). Here he is discovered to be more than the simpleton traveling Bible salesman that Joy/Hulga imagined, and it is clear that his tone and speech have also changed from O'Connor's earlier descriptions. Thus O'Connor's dialectal representations in "Good Country People" become the conduit through which the dramatic action and themes unfold, both figuratively and literally.

4.3 "The Lame Shall Enter First" Discussion

Like "Good Country People" O'Connor uses dialect to help develop the personalities of the characters involved and the world in which this is occurring. There are three main characters in "The Lame Shall Enter First". Sheppard, a young adult whose wife has recently passed away, narrates the majority of the story. His ten-year-old son Norton also plays an important role in this story but does not speak as much as Rufus, the other main character. Sheppard is determined to help Rufus throughout the narrative, while blindly ignoring his son and his own mistakes. Throughout the story, Rufus is the primary user of dialect; however, he defies trite description.

Rufus uses the most dialect throughout the story, and although he is in a lower socioeconomic class, I do not think that O'Connor is utilizing dialect in a pejorative sense that many authors have been accused of doing. In fact, Rufus is described as being sharp of mind and quick-witted (O'Connor 1945: 447, 449) despite being abandoned by his family. He also has a clubfoot (O'Connor 1945: 450), making him a complex, sympathetic character, especially in comparison to Sheppard. After their initial meeting in the reformatory, they met every "Saturday for the rest of the year"(O'Connor 1945: 451). What are they doing during all this time spent together? O'Connor writes that they talked, and in particular, Sheppard talked "at random, the kind of talk the boy would never have heard before" (O'Connor 1945: 451).

Linguistically, Rufus utilizes a large variety of AAE and SE features but does not use them all the time. This in turn enables a characterization that both linguistically and dramatically creates a real, believable character. In comparison, Sheppard uses dialect four times throughout the story. Two of these instances are "informal" (see also figure 11). The other examples are s/v nonconcord and nonstandard past tense. These sentences occur when he is frustrated and conversing with Rufus, which also points to O'Connor's use of different levels of formality in Sheppard, because he speaks in "standard" English except when he is angry. Thus, they are contrasted with one another both linguistically and characteristically. O'Connor also emphasizes their clashing views through personal differences and personalities. Rufus defies Sheppard's encouragement throughout the story, and his use of dialect increases the dramatic effect. The first time Rufus goes to Sheppard's house, he is met by Norton, who says, " 'He's [Sheppard's] been expecting

you, he's going to give you a new shoe because you have to eat out of garbage cans!'" he said in a kind of mouse-like shriek. 'I eat out of garbage cans,' the boy said slowly with a beady stare, 'because I like to eat out of garbage cans. See?' " (O'Connor 1945: 453).

Rufus is a thoroughly defiant character; he initially rejects Sheppard's "hospitality" but then eventually understands why he is treating him the way he does: it is all about Sheppard and not anyone else. Johnson says that everything that comes out of Sheppard's mouth is "gas" (O'Connor 1945: 454). Rufus is the antithesis to Sheppard, emphasized through their differences in speech.

4.4 Overall Discussion

As shown in figure 12 above, O'Connor utilizes over fourteen types of dialect features, along with various levels of formality. These linguistic devices deepen the stories by creating distinctive characters and a more intense, realistic experience for the reader. O'Connor uses dialect for different purposes in each story; however, both stories provide a dramatic fluctuation between two characters, contrasted by how often each character uses dialect. Manley and Joy/Hulga are the contrasted characters in "Good Country People" while Rufus and Sheppard are contrasted in "The Lame Shall Enter First". Their linguistic variation emphasizes other differences and personal characteristics.

In addition to the variety of features used, there are some features that I categorized as "informal" items of speech. These informal features are used by O'Connor throughout both stories and lend to the creation of a world that is both "southern" and intensely connected to each story. This plays off of Johnstone's work and Preston's

findings about stereotypes of southerners, widely held by the middle of the nineteenth century (Johnstone 2003: 190). Johnstone argues that southern cultural discourses are utilized by speakers when they use features like "yes m'am" and "yes sir" which create emphasis and express "deference…and friendly solidarity [among peers]" (Johnstone 2003: 192). Manley Pointer employs these features for his devious deceptions. O'Connor's use of different levels of formality in her stories is consistent with spoken language because people use different registers, dialects, and levels of formality when necessary for different situations.

Because O'Connor is writing within the confines of a short story, her characters must be developed quickly. O'Connor varies dialect representations throughout the stories, depending on her characters' personalities and roles in the literary world. In "Good Country People", the main characters Joy/Hulga and Mrs. Hopewell use dialect the least, but this is not because they are minor characters. In fact, they create the overarching layout for the entire story, setting up interactions with Manley Pointer. They use dialect comparably to minor characters but speak far more because they are important facets of the story. Even so, the use of dialect creates similar dramatic effects through both stories, setting up a dichotomy between two characters in each. In "Good Country People" the main dramatic action centers around Joy/Hulga, who hardly ever uses dialect, and Manley, who uses dialect the most out of any characters. In "The Lame Shall Enter First", Rufus and Sheppard are juxtaposed as personalities with clashing views. In both cases, a middle-upper class speaker uses few instances of dialect and a lower-class speaker uses more dialectal features. Even so, this also brings up issues of dialect

performance, as many of the aforementioned features are features of rural dialects across the United States and are not limited to the South. O'Connor's writing included these features not simply as examples of speech from her surrounding southern environment, but were also specifically written as a dialectal performance, which is inherently important to her work. O'Connor once said,

> The great advantage of being a southern writer is that we don't have to go any where to look for manners; bad or good, we've got them in abundance. We in the South live in a society that is rich in contradiction, rich in irony, rich in contrast, and particularly rich in speech. (O'Connor 1969, 103)

This emphasis on speech provides a unique juxtaposition between representations of spoken language, performance, and the dramatic dichotomies that occur between her characters. These would ultimately not be as emphatic or important to the story without her use of literary dialect.

5.1 CONCLUSION

There are several reasons for studying dialect in O'Connor's work, both linguistic and literary, which influence and strengthen each other. O'Connor's extensive use of dialect creates the literary world in which her characters flourish and their personalities are made known. She also writes in several frames, organized by space, place, and by different levels or frames created through language. There is an overarching location of the South and a specific setting of the narrative action for each story. The narrators create the frames. Mrs. Hopewell is the primary narrator of "Good Country People", and Sheppard narrates "The Lame Shall Enter First". Another level of frames is created by the characters' conversational interactions. Tables 9-14 provide examples from these dialogues of distinct linguistic details with conversations unfolding, in a particular way: most often through nonstandard dialects. These create the space of the South through speech, and they create the characters themselves, show their personalities, and give insight into how they view their world. This ultimately occurs differently in both stories because the overall themes are not entirely the same.

Authenticity is often a question for authors of literary dialect, and I hope to have demonstrated that not only is O'Connor a subversive author, but her representations of human experiences connect with readers. Ultimately O'Connor's use of dialect provides a

written representation of language and of the way southerners may use language. I am not saying her specific choices of dialect were perfect, or present a complete and total overview of Southern English or African American English, but instead, that her use of these features can be traced to current and past linguistic usage and make her characters more real, and thus poetic. The choice to include dialect in her stories was vital to her work and literary world, not just an effort to demonstrate linguistic variety (Tamasi 2001: 4). Without her use of dialect, the stories would be missing a vital instrument in the creation of her world.

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CHAPTER IV:

CONCLUSION

OVERALL CONCLUSION

Through quantitative and qualitative analysis, I have shown that O'Connor's writing and dialect representation was true to how people actually use language, and more specifically consistent with the southern world that she inhabited. Through her accurately dispersed application of Southern English and African American English, her characters and their personalities are demonstrated and dramatic dichotomies unfold, most specifically between Sheppard and Rufus in "The Lame Shall Enter First" and Joy/Hulga and Manley Pointer in "Good Country People". O'Connor herself has referenced the importance of language to creating believable characters (O'Connor 1969) which is ultimately proven through linguistic analysis. The study of literary dialect is reinforced by language variation, which provides empirical support for this analysis. There are several literary and linguistic reasons for studying dialect representations, including implications for performance and cultural discourses. Yet these questions and more, I hope, will continue to develop in this larger conversation. Finally it is through linguistic analysis of O'Connor's work, employing both qualitative and quantitative data, that empirical support is provided for widely held critical views of O'Connor's strength as an author and her depictions of the South.

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