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## The Performance of Southern Hospitality within Flannery O'Connor

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## ABSTRACT

Flannery O'Connor once wrote, "every writer, when he speaks of his own approach to fiction, hopes to show that in some crucial and deep sense, he is a realist" (*MM* 37). In O'Connor's short stories she depicts her observations, with a particular eye for regional manners, of the American South and the culture of Southern hospitality. Hospitality as a culture is present within Jacques Derrida's work, he hypothesized hospitality in two factions: conditional and unconditional. Conditional hospitality functions as a performative contradiction, leaving hospitality inherently connected with its opposite, which is hostility. Any time conditional hospitality is given to a guest and enacted by the host, hostility is incorporated within that action, creating a systemic power control between host and guest. Derrida's notion of unconditional hospitality is separate from this created power control of conditional hospitality; however, he cannot demonstrate the reins of unconditional hospitality. Derrida believes unconditional hospitality is not fully understood and is out of our reach of comprehension. With O'Connor's keen observance of manners and the culture of Southern hospitality, this project explores encounters in her short stories that express the manners of Southern hospitality as conditional, examining if the specific gestures creates division between and further divides insiders and outsiders. More specifically, the encounters within her works will be examined to identify the masking hostility towards her characters, in order to maintain control within gender/class, race, and religion. This project will also examine if O'Connor's works present a new

narrative against conditional hospitality and a viable depiction of unconditional hospitality through grace.

The Performance of Southern Hospitality within Flannery O'Connor

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of The Department of Language and Literature

Abilene Christian University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

By

Anna Elizabeth Lawson

May 2020

This thesis, directed and approved by the committee for the thesis candidate Anna Lawson, has been accepted by the Office of Graduate Programs of Abilene Christian University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in English

*Donnie Snider*

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5.5.2020

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER II: NAVIGATING GENDER NARRATIVES IN “GOOD COUNTRY PEOPLE” AND “REVELATION” .....	23
CHAPTER III: RACIAL INEQUALITIES WITHIN O’CONNOR’S SHORT STORIES .....	51
CHAPTER IV: RELIGIOUS CONFLICT WITHIN O’CONNOR’S PERFORMANCE OF SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY .....	81
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION .....	109
WORKS CITED .....	119

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Hospitality, in a predominately westernized culture, is associated with the tradition and obligation of accommodating guests and the protection of guests. Hospitality is difficult to fully define due to the varying codes of manners stretched across different traditions, religions, and cultural, and physical boundaries. Jacques Derrida poses the thought, in his lecture entitled “Hostipitality,” that “we do not yet know what hospitality is” (6), and due to this nebulous understanding of what hospitality is, how it is framed, and the shifting of its influence between differing regions, there are many different ways to approach our conception of hospitality. A more modern understanding of hospitality is situated in transactional and economic exchanges. This consumeristic approach is manifested through the accommodation of guests in restaurants, hotels, hostels, etc., designated to a travel culture. However, hospitality has the potential to be located outside of the hospitality industry and within small social, semi-ceremonial acts, of sharing a meal with friends, colleagues, and strangers. Hospitality can be attributed not only in the categories of social and economic but in the political as well, through the relations of the hospitality of a State or between States. Despite its vast meanings and categories, the concept and idea of hospitality is highly integrated within American’s Southern identity, whether that be through the economic, social, or political. This is especially prevalent within how Southern communities treat and accommodate the foreigner, the guest, or the non-Southerner.



Judith Still also questions the domain of hospitality and its defining qualities. She attempts to divide hospitality into three categories: the psychic, the social, and the political. These three categories all function on the ethical and moral concerns of crossing thresholds and entering/welcoming the foreign—whether that be between the unconscious associations within the individuals (psychic), between individuals (social), or between States (political) (Still, *Derrida and Hospitality* 7). Derrida aligns with Still's theory of the domain of hospitality; however, he does not limit hospitality to interactions. In his work *On Cosmopolitan*, Derrida describes how hospitality "is a culture itself . . . insofar as it has to do with the ethos, that is, the residence, one's home, the familiar place of dwelling, inasmuch as it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners" (16-17). Hospitality is not a question of manners, or interactions, alone, but how moral-ethical compasses are created and how those ethical compasses are showcased through the principles of interactions. The performance of hospitality highlights the ethical values of the region and within the Still's three categories: psychic, social, and political.

Derrida's association of hospitality as a culture speaks into the moral-ethical compasses from countries to individuals. Within Derrida's work, there are two different conceptualized ideas of hospitality. When referring to hospitality as a culture, he is speaking into a conditional hospitality that is used for navigating borders. Derrida believes in the universal right to hospitality which dictates an obligation of hosts to welcome the stranger and to treat that stranger without hostility within their territory. Welcoming, or to welcome, thus functions on a border, or threshold: "To take up the figure of the door, for there to be hospitality, there must be a door" (Derrida,

“Hostipitality” 14). Without a door, there cannot be hospitality according to Derrida, because inherently to have a door means someone has the key and consequently controls the conditions of hospitality. As much conditional hospitality needs a threshold, the existence of such means “there is no longer hospitality,” or in Derrida’s case an unconditional notion of hospitality (“Hostipitality” 14).

Due to these conditions, hospitality is inherently connected to its opposite hostility. Derrida points out that “hospitality is a word which carries its own contradiction incorporated into it, a Latin word which allows itself to be parasitized by its opposite, ‘hostility’ the undesirable guest which it harbors as the self-contradiction in its own body” (“Hostipitality” 3). When enacting conditional hospitality, one is also enacting moments of hostility. The guest is subjected to maintain the position of guest in their hospitable situations, and if they act outside of these conditions, they will experience hostility. Hospitality and hostility are in an intrinsically connected relationship, which is the paradox of conditional hospitality. In his lecture, Derrida’s explains that conditional hospitality is enacted by the politics of hospitality, or the way we define the threshold and negotiate borders between us and others. Just as conditional hospitality is showcased as a door with a key, the politics of hospitality implies that every individual act of hospitality is also an act of hostility. The politics of hospitality is situated in a stance of determining who belongs and who does not belong. The paradox of conditional hospitality then has no room for the ethics of hospitality, to which he believes is a universal right.

As the politics of hospitality, or conditional hospitality, is situated in deciding a stance of belonging, the ethics of hospitality dictate the welcoming of all equally. Derrida’s claim, “we do not know what hospitality is” (“Hostipitality” 6), is not

questioning conditional or the politics of hospitality but the ethics of hospitality, or unconditional hospitality. He is stating that we do not yet know what unconditional hospitality is, or the unconditional ethical standard of infinite hospitality. In the same vein, we “do not know what ‘welcome’ means” because we cannot experience true unconditional hospitality. To welcome unconditionally is to accept anyone, despite their background. It is a house without doors or windows, allowing anyone at any time to become present within the space. More importantly, unconditional hospitality is an acceptance of risk or negating risk, when approaching the foreigner. Derrida hypothesizes that “we do not know what hospitality is” because “hospitality awaits its chance . . . its chance beyond what it is” (“Hostipitality” 14). Unconditional hospitality is not a present place, but a future that we cannot know, or a “future without horizon . . . that does not present itself or will only present itself when it is not awaited as a present or presentable” (“Hostipitality” 14). This unconditional stance, according to Derrida, cannot exist because it exists only the possibility of the future. He also indicates, through his central statement, unconditional hospitality does not exist because we do not know what it is. In its place, we are left with the performative contradiction of conditional hospitality, and the performance of this hospitality with its built opposite of hostility.

Without achieving unconditional hospitality, as we do not know what it is, we are left with the performance of conditional hospitality. Not only does conditional hospitality question belonging it also brings up questions of identity. Seeing hospitality as is culture indicates both a threshold as a specific place, but also a specific identity: “The question of hospitality is also the question of ipseity, the being oneself” (Derrida, “Hostipitality” 15). The master of the house, or the owner of the key, has their own identity, just as there is an

identity within the expression of the other. Dictating who can belong or not is situated on the essence of self-identity, of self and other. The importance of identity not only creates implications over who will receive welcome but indicates implications on the multifactional identities of insiders and outsiders alike. The larger identity of culture, specific area, then demands limitations created to be upheld, or hostility will be enacted.

The ethics of hospitality does not deal with manners, gestures, codes of conduct, etc., but the performance of hospitality or the politics of hospitality is showcased through these different modes. When thinking about hospitality a performance and as culture, specifically within the United States, the customs and expectations of the Southerner come to my mind first. There is a wave of discourse surrounding the Southerner, who is typically seen as hospitable. The Southerner is associated with the idea of hospitality through providing food and means of entertainment to all company, and ultimately through the highest form graciousness to their guests. In Anthony Szczesiul's *The Southern Hospitality Myth: Ethics, Politics, Race and American Memory*, Szczesiul attempts to trace the origins of Southern hospitality, starting from the antebellum South, to examine American memory's valorization of this cultural practice. While the actual practices of gestures are diminutive, and may continue to diminish, Southern cultural memory seems to continue to claim this narrative as a fundamental aspect of living and visiting the South, as well as a cornerstone of being Southern. Szczesiul examines "how Southern hospitality has functioned in the national imaginary, both as a form of persuasion and as a meaning-making story" (Szczesiul 6). While Szczesiul approaches Southern hospitality as a discourse, looking at the significations of Southern culture through narratives, he also is interested in how Southerners and non-Southerners have

been defined and understood within the history of the South. Overall, Szczesiul argues that the myth of Southern hospitality is a master narrative about insiders versus outsiders, functioning as a regressive form of politics regarding the exclusion of race.

The discourse surrounding exclusion, using Southern hospitality, becomes particularly interesting when reading and analyzing literature that includes or showcases life within the South. Szczesiul's previous work regarding America's public memory of Southern culture not only sparks interest in how hospitality is utilized within Southern American literature but is extremely helpful when approaching texts that include narratives that discuss the performance of hospitality. Specifically, searching how these traditional Southern texts can showcase encounters and moments where the manners of Southern hospitality participates in exclusion, privileging individuals who uphold the language, narrative, images, and social practices that signify as hospitable, per Southernness.

As mentioned previously, Derrida expresses that the manners and gestures of conditional hospitality, as a performance of political belonging, speak in tune with values of the particular region in which they are employed. Connecting manners of specific regions to the political values can be, and is, recorded through cultural artifacts like fiction. Within her *Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose*, Flannery O'Connor explores the task of fiction, especially the task of the fiction writer in the South. O'Connor, a Southern novelist, short story writer, and essayist, relied heavily on regional settings within her work. In her essay "The King of Birds," O'Connor begins her article on peacocks by discussing a visitor she once had:

When I was five, I had an experience that marked me for life. Pathé News sent a photographer from New York to Savannah to take a picture of a chicken of mine. This chicken, a buff Cochin Bantam, had the distinction of being able to walk either forward or backward. Her fame had spread through the press, and by the time she reached the attention of Pathé News, I suppose there was nowhere left for her to go—forward or backward. Shortly after that she died as now seems fitting. (3)

For the remainder of the essay, O'Connor spends a great deal of time distinguishing the characteristics of her male and female fowls, their different ages, and their different breeds. In an amusing introduction to the essay, O'Connor not only introduces its attempt to describe why she raises peacocks, but she also begins to explore the importance of manners within the Southern culture surrounding her. There are many layers to this essay, first the invitation of a stranger into her home with motive, but also the layer showcasing O'Connor's heightening and in-depth understanding toward analyzing and depicting manners of individuals that surround, fowl and human alike. How she describes how her fowl interact, their physical and behavioral characteristics, and their communication with each other and constant audiences begins to highlight not only the importance of manners to O'Connor, but also her ability to observe, represent, and recreate gestures within her writing. Overall, her in-depth fowl descriptions, especially regarding their extremely specific manners, seem to begin to speak in harmony with the subject of manners explored within other essays of this collection.

Within her essay entitled "The Fiction Writer and His Country," O'Connor comments: "The country that the writer is concerned within the most objective way is, of

course, the region that most immediately surrounds him, or simply the country, with its body of manners, that he knows well enough to employ” (*MM* 28). O’Connor places extreme importance on the fiction author’s use of their surrounding community, with its manners when writing. She even goes as far as to say that “bad manners are better than no manners at all” (*MM* 29). However, in a later chapter, O’Connor notes that while the fiction writer must use his surrounding community and manners when writing, these surface-level observations do not account for the identity of the area. Instead, the gestures and body of manners are only a means in which to observe and locate qualities of the culture surrounding the author. It is these “qualities that endure, regardless of what passes, because they are related to truth. It lives very deep. In its entirety, it is known only to God, but of those who look for it, none gets so close as the artist” (*MM* 57-58). Southern identity is not found in the body of manners, much like how Derrida’s hospitality as ethics is not only seen through the symbolic gestures. Instead, the way these gestures are employed speak to what the individual, community, or regional value as it relates to both moral principles. O’Connor seems to believe we can begin to understand the meaning behind manners—uncovering the moral and ethical principles—through the work of the artist, or the writer.

On a considerably basic level, hospitality itself is sustained through specific gestures, or manners, created to support the individual and their actions within their community. While O’Connor does not explicitly use the term “Southern hospitality” in her work, manners, and gestures so prevalent in her writing are the performance of Southern hospitality. In her stories and essays, the performance of hospitality through manners are both important and significant in her depiction of the South. Therefore, the

performance of Southern hospitality communicates more than just gestures between individuals but also communicates belonging within O'Connor's community and region. The performance of Southern hospitality also showcases internal acceptance, as well as the internal limits, of the individuals who do not know or agree to the specific codes of manners. Within the performance of hospitality, through Derrida's politics of hospitality, individuals willing to conform or play the role of guest are given belonging through their guest role. However, this position limits power within the community, as they only belong temporarily. In many cases, the performance of hospitality enacts a stance of the host, or a stance of power, over people deemed foreigner or stranger to the body of manners. The dichotomy created within conditional hospitality, from the host and guest, subjugates individuals and groups who are considered outsiders.

My understanding of Southern culture and the definition of Southern hospitality references multiple meanings. Immanuel Wallerstein in his essay "What Can One Mean by Southern Culture?" investigates the different scholars who have written about the South as a culture. The most prominent understanding, he notes, is that Southern "culture is a description of a set of traits, culture as 'tradition.' Culture, in this sense, meant some sum of institutions and ideas/values that are thought to be long-existing and highly-resistant to change" (qtd. in Szczesiul 5). Wallerstein continues by including other views of Southern culture as a "binary counterpoint" to the North, which is also in opposition to change and modernization (Szczesiul 5). Szczesiul bears resemblance to this never-changing Southern culture, as he writes: "To speak of Southern hospitality is always to gesture to the past, to link the present to the past in an ongoing, seemingly unchanging tradition" (6). The manners associated with Southern hospitality, as stated before, are



difficult to list, due to the vast amount of discourse, representations, and images that are connected to the culture of the South. Southern hospitality, or the performance of such, is a system of representations that speak in harmony to the narratives linked back to the past and in collective recognition. This leads me to believe that when looking with works, situated in the South, the gestures of Southern hospitality are linked to remembrance. Specifically, within Flannery O'Connor's works, the performance of Southern hospitality is typically associated with utterances of the past and recoding gestures through the referencing of what should be/was. The performance of Southern hospitality is also showcased through moments of direct welcoming, questions on thresholds of belonging/(un)belonging or addressed through some sort of inner dialogue. However, much like Szczesiul and Wallerstein's concern in their works, it is less of a concern "with what this culture is supposed to be" but "whether and in what sense it is meaningful to suggest that it exists" (Szczesiul 6).

Within this project I will explore encounters in O'Connor's work that express the manners of Southern hospitality and examine if the specific gestures create and further divides between insiders and outsiders in her text. More specifically, I will identify whether the mystery surrounding the performance of Southern hospitality and its manners mask the enacting of hostility over her characters to create and maintain these systematic powers of social control. Perhaps the masking of hostility, through Southern hospitality, participates in the politics of hospitality that issue feelings of belonging through gender/class, race, and religion. This project will also examine O'Connor's depiction of the South and her characters to see if a viable depiction of unconditional hospitality is represented.

## Literature Review

Hospitality itself is a word that carries its contradictions, inherently connected by its opposite, ‘hostility.’ Derrida further deconstructs the paradox of hospitality within his philosophical text *Of Hospitality*. Within this text, Derrida explores what it means to be hospitable, as well as constructing a duality between stranger and host. This duality notes that the individual in the role of the stranger has the universal right to hospitality and has the right not to be treated with hostility when entering into foreign lands—marking the role of the guest as a privilege. This politics of hospitality questions who we define as ‘native’ or ‘foreigner’ and how to negotiate these thresholds of space and roles. Through the negotiation of these borders, the notion of hospitality is ultimately contradicting the underlying notion of unconditional hospitality which is to welcome all equally. “Pure, unconditional or infinite hospitality cannot and must not be anything else but an acceptance of risk,” but this acceptance of risk becomes unmet by most (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 149). The pragmatic performance of hospitality for the host could easily be rooted within fear of its opposite, hostility. The enacting of hospitality towards the foreigner could be a positioning of power and control for the acceptor over the strangers seeking acceptance. Within the bounds of unconditional hospitality, there is no struggle of power and questions of who the host and guest are.

The limitations surrounding risks of a stranger, lack of unconditional hospitality, and power of the host are found in connection within Judith Still’s “Language as Hospitality: Revisiting Intertextuality via Monolingualism of the Other.” In this article, the limitations of hospitality surround the simple naming of the other. According to Still, thinking of the “foreigner ‘as a family,’ represented and protected by his or her family

name, is at once what makes hospitality possible, or the hospitable relationship to the foreigner possible, but by the same token [is] what limits and prohibits it” (Still, “Language” 117). In other words, unconditional hospitality, also referred to as radical hospitality, allows for complete openness when inviting but the act of inviting becomes a limitation to hospitality. Unconditional hospitality allows entrance to those without names, but the limitations placed on hospitality, through invitations, require the contract of naming before a place is offered. “What is your name?” questions more than just the name. It also questions identity and legitimacy. There is a purpose behind knowing the stranger and “intimacy” within the name, bringing the foreigner and host into question and showcasing the host’s need for context, “language here is understood not purely linguistically but as ethos. It includes social class or backgrounds, and culture” (Still, “Language” 118). Where radical hospitality functions on unconditional openness and acceptance of a stranger, the pragmatic performance of hospitality demands that the guest have both a name and behave appropriately in the host’s home, enacting levels of tolerance and limits to maintain control.

There is a current study of hospitality in the field of rhetoric that accesses the radical openness between rhetor and audience, as well as writer and audience. The rhetoric of hospitality, according to Dale Jacob’s article “The Audacity of Hospitality,” rests on the radical openness to all relationships, which is “simply the gracious reception of the guest, any guest” (Jacobs 566). This type of rhetoric proposes radical openness for the ability to engage in deeper understanding, listening, and acceptance of ideas between rhetor (host) and audience (guests), arguing for a rhetorical device and atmosphere that is both neutral and productive spaces for equal learning. While this rhetorical theory might

provide avenues to discover and navigate differences through discourse, this will not be the theoretical framework I will be using within this paper. Instead, I will be taking elements, proposed with articles like Judith Still and Dale Jacobs' "The Audacity of Hospitality," to access areas of unconditional hospitality and conditional lie within Southern hospitality.

From my understanding of Derrida's and Still's work, unconditional hospitality is a radical openness to any and every guest. Unconditional hospitality is not hinged on the superficial gestures of performance, but instead is the manifestation of the internal acceptance of all and any strangers, establishing an understanding of the inherent worth of each individual. For "hospitality can only take place beyond hospitality . . . overcoming the hospitality that paralyzes itself on the threshold" (Derrida, "Hostipitality"14). Derrida's work surrounding unconditional hospitality seems to align with the function of the nation's borders, where nations should participate in enacting unconditional hospitality through the radical openness of their borders. Unconditional hospitality allows individuals the opportunity to come in and reside without question or retaliation. Most importantly it is establishing an equal, two-way relationship for the fostering of dialogue between different nations or participants—allowing for love and affection to be presented through mutual kinship and faith.

Overall, the theoretical frameworks presented by Derrida, and other scholars like Judith Still, claim that conditional hospitality is a culture itself and can be used as a metaphor for thinking through encounters with the stranger. In many ways, conditional hospitality becomes a gesture of the acceptance of the other but also as a gesture of sovereign power—lending hospitality to allow parties the right to welcome or refuse the

other. Every instance in which one needs to be welcomed, invited, is the operation of this power and reiterates the normative limits and conditions of hospitality, while also cementing them within the surrounding community. These differing levels of power, coded in Southern hospitality, are showcased through the performance of gestures. The creation and normalization of these performative roles within the O'Connor's South create issues within gender/class, race, and religion and affect how these things are approached and experienced. The limits and conditions of hospitality also can be insights into O'Connor's depiction of Southern tradition and allow for moments of reflection when discussing these different performative roles. By examining the limits of hospitality in performances, we can attempt to conceptualize how the discourse and actions surrounding Southern hospitality are masking of hostility utilized as a vehicle of power in relationship to the outsider.

According to Szczesiul's article, "Re-mapping Southern Hospitality: Discourse, Ethics, Politics," Southern hospitality is "unquestioningly accepted as a natural cultural attribute of the South" (128). Szczesiul further explores how *The Encyclopedia of Southern Culture* "emphasizes the historical origins and 'intensely real' quality of Southern hospitality, concluding that 'if the circumstances of Southern hospitality have changed, the spirit remains the same,'" which indirectly creates a continuously developing narrative associated with the, what he calls, myth of Southern hospitality (Szczesiul, "Re-mapping" 128). Adding to this developing hospitable narrative of the South, Szczesiul quotes Harvey Newman: "While individuals in other regions could certainly be hospitable, this characteristic is firmly rooted in the unique history of the South, forming part of the way of life for most residents there" ("Re-mapping" 128). The examples given

by Szczesiul emphasize the persuasive force of Southern hospitality as a natural and essential cultural attribute of the South, paralleling Jacques Derrida's notion that "hospitality is a culture itself" (*On Cosmopolitan* 16). However, Szczesiul is not attempting to define the culture of the South through its hospitable nature, but attempts to re-map Southern hospitality away from the traditional virtuous culture, prompting his readers to question the myth of Southern hospitality and the "unresolved regional conflicts and resentments" it has created (Szczesiul, "Re-mapping" 141). In this article, Szczesiul begins to set up the idea that Southern hospitality is contingent on the notion of defining the South through the comparison of the un-hospitable North. Richard Gray writes, "The South has customarily defined itself against a kind of photographic negative, a reverse image of itself with which it has existed in a mutually determining, reciprocally defining relationship. The South is what the North is not, just as the North is what the South is not" (xvi-xvii). What is interesting about this signifying difference is the stance in which it implored. Gray continues by noting that difference is usually constructed outside the control of the defined, yet the conception of the South comes from "a consciousness of its own marginality, its position on the edge of the narrative . . . a piquant reversal of customary cultural self-positioning" (xvii). The South's self-positioning, or self-fashioning, speaks to the fictive, very unstructured and imaginative discourse surrounding what is and what is not the South, the Southerner, and the culture of Southern hospitality.

Defining what the South is by what it is not leads to the conceptual idea lent by Szczesiul: Southern hospitality as a continuously changing narrative, with social practices and discourse "divorced from [its] specific history, as a meaning-making story told about

the South and Southerners” (“Re-mapping” 130). The particular “utterance of ‘Southern hospitality’ is like a performative speech act—” a simple expression and performance of such continuously defines and creates the concept of the South (Szczesniul, “Re-mapping” 130). The continuous and repeated utterances become the self-fashioned history of the South, and could add new layers of meanings and connotations or allow for the open “possibility of re-signification” (Szczesniul, “Re-mapping” 131). To be co-narrator of this self-fashioned history, a sense of belonging must be first defined. The performative aspect, as well as the self-marginalization of the South’s identity and culture, sets up a framework of insider and outsider. There is a natural inclusion and exclusion present when the defining feature of the region is in the conceptualized understanding of “what it is not.” Szczesniul and Gray’s self-defining South connects well with Derrida’s notion of hospitality as a culture, for hospitality itself deals not with the particular one’s physical space, but how “we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners” (*On Cosmopolitan* 17). Culture of the South, and the performance of Southern hospitality, leads insiders to define their identity base on outsiders. Insiders, or the host position of hospitality, then become dependent on their guests, both positioning a need for guests and power over them through the discourse of the culture. Through this host and guest dichotomy, the visitor becomes victim to the concept of Southern hospitality, but also a physical victim within the South. And although the host holds the most power over the narrative of Southern hospitality, the nature of utterances keeps them steadfast in their performance of the Southern code of manners.

Southern hospitality seems to function as base level expectations when maneuvering through all encounters in the South, at least through the appearance of how

we approach encounters within the South. The expectation of Southern culture not only resides in the performance but also through Southern discourse. Within this project, I will examine Southern hospitality as a culture within O'Connor's South, using conditional hospitality as a lens to make sense of a social phenomenon. Examining O'Connor's Southern literature, published seventy years ago, will help connect Southern regions of the past to the present regarding discourses, narratives, and social practices of Southern hospitality—especially regarding that Southern hospitality discourse is situated in moments of remembrance. There have been few works conducted in Southern literature using hospitality as a lens, especially when looking at traditional Southern encounters. Using older texts within the canon of Southern literature will hopefully showcase how the signifiers of Southern hospitality were both created in a system of representation between outsiders and strangers. Using a wide array of diverse mediums from one Southern author provides a limited but manageable base of material to explore the cultural discourse and the enacting of this cultural discourse surrounding inclusion and exclusion within the aspects of Southern hospitality. O'Connor's works will question the power of Southern hospitality when navigating between host/guest and familiar/stranger, specifically when these gestures function between borders and presumptions of gender/class, race, and religion. How O'Connor's Southern hospitality functions and is manifested through all aspects of her depiction of Southern life. Moreover, I use the following research questions to guide my project on Southern hospitality within O'Connor's Southern culture:



- To what extent is unconditional hospitality present within the performance of Southern hospitality, and how is this performance used to solidify division within cultures?
- How does the performance of Southern hospitality affect the construction of womanhood in Southern culture?
- When performing Southern hospitality, what racial divides are created and imposed?
- Does religion underline this Southern culture? What does this mean for the performance of Southern hospitality through Christianity?

### **Chapter Outlines**

This project explores Southern hospitality as a culture, as it functions as gestures of acceptance of the foreigner, guest, other, non-Southerner, etc., through the encounters O'Connor experienced and created within her written works. Specifically, questions of how the performance can be used to express unequal levels of power coded in her South and the possibility of unconditional hospitality. The following chapters will cover how this performance affects issues and creates divides within gender/class, race, and religion. While class is heavily involved within the spheres of gender, race and religion, with the body of literature and secondary sources, gender and class will be examined together.

#### *Chapter II: Navigating Gender Narratives in “Good Country People” and “Revelation”*

The performance, as it relates to gender and the construction of womanhood will be subject of chapter II. Questions of the performance of Southern hospitality's effect on gender, explicitly women, will be explored, and the expectations to perform Southern hospitality between the different gender constructs. O'Connor's “Good Country People”

explores how women are subjected to their performance of Southern hospitality, and when performing outside of this role, they are punished. More specifically, through encounters within “Revelation,” observations on the way women interact between women of different classes, inwardly and outwardly, will highlight power creation and limitations between each other, as well as the overarching gender divides. This section will also include encounters between women of different classes, their created relationships, how that affects their gendered constructs, and if the performance of Southern manners influences the regional perception of their womanhood through interactions between different classes.

### *Chapter III: Racial Inequalities within O’Connor’s Short Stories*

In the heat of O’Connor’s picturesque Southern manners, her fictions’ depiction of the performance of Southern hospitality is extended into race relations. Her stories showcase encounters where Southern manners are used, consciously and unconsciously, as a vehicle to create and keep racial divisions. O’Connor’s letters discuss the “foul underbelly” of violence that underlies the Southern code of manners, hidden by the opportunity to extend hospitality to foreigners and guests (Harris 329). She also showcases the internal stature of individuals who are experiencing, enacting, or observing encounters where there is a clear divide between host and guest, guests being the foreigner—the non-Southern native and non-white individual. The divide is created when the foreigner’s presence is noticed and the right to exist in the space is called into question. In O’Connor’s short story, “The Displaced Person,” her two main characters experience this host/guest relationship struggle through their interactions. Encounters that create and show moments where the Southerner participates in acts of tolerance towards

the foreigner will also be explored. Tolerance, in this chapter, is defined by the extending of temporary hospitality to the foreigner in public and private spaces, to mark or create otherness through the virtue of inclusion. Tolerance of hospitality brings in questions of belonging and (un)belonging, that is explored through her short stories: “The Geranium” and “The Artificial Nigger.” Through the action of separation, or establishing these temporary roles of host and guest, the perception of the non-Southerner as the foreigner is created. Traditionally these temporary roles are present in “The Displaced Person” and “Everything That Rises Must Converge,” but O’Connor flips the dichotomy of power in “The Geranium” and “The Artificial Nigger.” O’Connor chooses to place the individual abiding by the rules of Southern culture in a place foreign to them, showcasing the inherent power given to individuals who belong, as well as the displacement created by Southern hospitality and its codes of manners.

*Chapter IV: Religious Conflict within O’Connor’s Performance of Southern Hospitality*

The presence of theological understanding, as O’Connor notes, is present with the way she views the South: “I think it is safe to say that while the South is hardly Christ-centered, it is most certainly Christ-haunted” (MM 44). O’Connor’s conception of the South as “Christ-haunted” influences the way she goes about constructing the situations, characters, and their interactions within her texts. The focus of chapter IV will center around how the performance of Southern hospitality can also be used as a gesture of sovereign power within religious communities and how encounters within O’Connor’s work showcases these power struggles within religious individuals and within religious groups toward outsiders. This section will also focus and explore intersections and interventions within acts that seem to be based on a Christian performance of

unconditional hospitality, but how those are enacting a conditional acceptance situated within civil religion. The performances of Southern hospitality within religious groups, explored in the previous sections, can function as operations of power, creating divides between regional identity and true religious understanding. O'Connor's three women within "The Displaced Person," "Greenleaf," and "Revelation" frequently portray moments of grace that act as a transformative experience. I am defining these moments of grace as moments of revelation, in which O'Connor's characters experience a transformational spiritual and cultural growth. Alice Walker believes grace, for O'Connor, is about "prophets and prophecy, 'about' revelation, and 'about' the impact of supernatural grace on human beings who don't have a change of spiritual growth without it" (qtd. Wood 108). In this sense, grace is a divine or supernatural interference that offers growth, revelations, or redemption; "it is a sign of divine courtesy that, by reconciling us to both God and each other, offers the one true and radical remedy for our unmannered, unjust, and deeply discourteous society" (Wood 113-114). These moments of grace and revelation unwind O'Connor's conceptions of Southern hospitality, leaving the women paralyzed and unable to function within their societies. These moments of grace tend to reference not just regional manners, or manners of Southern hospitality, but instead capture some level of an attempt of divine hospitality, or unconditional hospitality, that they must choose to accept.

This project, overall, will explore the many ways in which hospitality functions as a gesture of the acceptance of the foreigner, guest, other, non-Southerner, etc., through the encounters O'Connor experienced and created within her written works. This project examines how these encounters use hospitality as a gesture of sovereign power over the

right to welcome or refuse the foreigner. It will also make note of the operation of power, reiterate the normative limits and conditions of separation of guest/host, and explore the levels of roots they have taken within the surrounding community in which they are used. O'Connor's Southern hospitality is not just a question of how to treat a guest, but also a question of where power is allocated and to whom. Examining Southern hospitality within O'Connor's texts provide insight into the of the unequal levels of power that coded in her depiction of Southern manners—as hospitality is used as masking of hostility—and showcases the divide created within gender/class, race, and religion. The performance of hospitality, or the manners surrounding or performance of these sets of rules, affect how gender/class, race, and religion are approached and experienced. More importantly, it affects the way others are treated, viewed, and interacted within different communities, and what happens when individuals do not perform to conditions of Southern hospitality. By examining the limits of Southern hospitality in O'Connor's characters, we can attempt to conceptualize how the discourse and actions surrounding her understanding of Southern hospitality can be a vehicle of power and control. This examination could also bring forth further discussions on moments when O'Connor attempts to present a dialogue of unconditional hospitality, or vision of the ideal hospitality Derrida claims does not exist.

CHAPTER II  
NAVIGATING GENDER NARRATIVES IN “GOOD COUNTRY PEOPLE” AND  
“REVELATION”

Flannery O’Connor’s depiction of women, specifically White women, speaks to the performative power of Southern hospitality. For White women, Day writes, “the Southern code of manners reserves a kind of pre-articulate, vernacular model of feminine virtue that might be called ‘gracious living’” (3). Gracious living “is a particular kind of moral sensibility, an ethos that is expressed by the habits of choice,” manners, and the “personal microcosm[s]” of everyday life (Day 3). The portrait of a good Southern woman, or graceful woman, as “one who has cultivated an unflappable sense of propriety and decency,” and demonstrates that they were “brought up right” (Day 3). The performance of Southern hospitality for women is conflated with these feminine virtues, through habits of choice, demonstrating manners associated with graciousness, charity, and poise. It is through these habits of choice for women that create and define who is and who is not an insider, whether that be through the conceptual idea of the South or through class. The main women in O’Connor’s short stories “Good Country People” and “Revelation” shows how they are defined by these performances, both by men and women alike, and are subjected to either perform accordingly or to be punished for their defiance. These women showcase the cultivated portrait of a Southern lady that is connected with the performance of Southern hospitality and the mixing of hostility that is inherently connected within this conditional performance. The conditional hospitable

actions of Southern hospitality performance, by these women, are also the conditional hostile reactions against those who question their identity, whether that be through class differences or others who do not conform to the surrounding culture.

In Anya Jabour's "The Privations & Hardships of a New Country," she recounts Laura Wirt's letters from 1827, a young newlywed moving from the Upper South to a new, lonely plantation in the Florida territory. Jabour notes, "Southern women and Southern hospitality helped to transform the 'new country' of the Florida frontier into the plantation of society of the Old South" (260). The transforming the Florida frontier into the "society of the Old South," according to Jabour, rested on the unique role of women and slaves, and their "creation and maintenance of a tradition of Southern hospitality" (260). The extension of Southern hospitality into Florida, demonstrated through Laura Wirt's letters, gives insight into the performance of the hospitality and its associated gestures. Laura's letters especially deal with the duties revolving "entertaining," for "receiving visitors graciously was the keystone of orderly society" (Jabour 264). In her work 128 years later, "Good Country People," O'Connor seems to echo the posture of entertaining as a cornerstone of Southern hospitality for women. The Hopewell women within O'Connor's story both construct and deconstruct notions of Southern womanhood. This deconstruction primarily occurs through the entertaining of a Bible salesman, Manley Pointer, who comes to visit them in their home. Mrs. Hopewell is actively depicting the traditional Southern woman, performing levels of Southern hospitality throughout this encounter, and advising her daughter on the narratives she should perform as a Southern lady. Mrs. Hopewell's daughter, Joy, in contrast does not depict the traditional Southern woman. Joy instead is an unmarried, thirty-two-year-old atheist

who has changed her name to “Hulga.” In addition to her social differences, Hulga was involved in a hunting accident at an early age and had lost her leg. This physical difference, and developed heart condition, inhibits her ability to perform as a Southern lady and confines Hulga to the farm. The differences in performance between mother and daughter, especially regarding the performance levels of Southern hospitality, spark a strange family dynamic, indicating the stress that the performance of Southern hospitality has on women.

One evening Manley Pointer comes to visit the Hopewell’s home to sell them a family Bible. Out of pity and comfort from the young man, Mrs. Hopewell invites him but is “none too pleased because her dinner was almost ready” (O’Connor, *CS* 278). Mrs. Hopewell does not refuse Manley and entertains his salesman’s pitch, despite the fact she had no intention of buying a Bible from him. Mrs. Hopewell’s act of hospitality towards Manly is the Laura Wirt’s conception of graciously living, “the keystone of the orderly society” (Jabour 264). As Mrs. Hopewell performs the role of a gracious host, she is conditionally accepting Manley as a momentary guest within her home. In her performance as a gracious host, she is also indicating a condition of her performance as a Southern woman. Mrs. Hopewell’s Southern performance is then solidified when she goes to check on her dinner and Hulga is waiting for her to get rid of the salesman. In response, “Mrs. Hopewell gave her a pained look and turned the heat down under the vegetables. ‘I can’t be rude to anybody,’ she murmured and went back into the parlor” (O’Connor, *CS* 279). It is within these short moments that Mrs. Hopewell and Hulga experience disunion. Refusing to send out Manley would be rude and uncharacteristic for a Southern lady and gracious host. Mrs. Hopewell must abide by these expectations to



uphold her own identity and to teach Hulga how a woman is to behave. This exchange between mother and daughter parallels Wirt's experience, especially regarding Laura and her own mother's relationship. In a letter from Elizabeth Wirt, Laura's mother, she advises her daughter: "Set out with the resolution to make the best of everything—being determined, with the blessing of God, to discharge your duties to the best of your ability, and to encourage others to do the same" (Jabour 264). While Laura takes her mother's advice to heart, Hulga participates in a persistent denial of her mother's lifestyle and choices. Hulga actively refuses to participate in her mother's Southern self-fashioning, rejecting the performance of Southern hospitality. Unlike her mother, Hulga has no quarrels with outwardly presenting as rude and refusing to entrain a salesman's pitch, especially one she has no interest in investing in. Overall, Hulga actively takes a stance against the narrative of womanhood in the South and positions herself against her mother.

Mrs. Hopewell's name seems to give some sort of suggestion to her internal dialogue, at least in connection to her daughter, as she can only hope well for the safety, security, and at times societal obedience for Hulga. *The Plantation Mistress*, Catherine Clinton writes "The image of the Southern lady was more of a product of fable than fact, but her incarnation had a more vital impact on ante-bellum life than her legend" (xv). The cultural manners prescribed onto the Southern lady are created, shifted, and maintained through the utterances of nature and performance of Southern hospitality. Clinton's work, among others, first notes the cultural creation of the concept of "women," but she further unpacks how the cultural and practical conditions inflicted upon women in the South were created by Southern women themselves. The narrative of gracious living and the performance of Southern hospitality is uttered by both the "planter patriarchs" and the

White women of the South. In O'Connor's short story, Mrs. Hopewell's narrative expresses that she still thinks of her daughter "as a child though she was thirty-two years old and highly educated" (O'Connor, *CS* 271). Later she unpacks why she wishes to think of her daughter as a child: "It tore her heart to think instead of the poor stout girl in her thirties who had never danced a step or had any *normal* good times" (O'Connor, *CS* 274). The normalcy she craves for her daughter is the performance of Southern hospitality and for her to act in accordance with the narrative of Southern womanhood. Mrs. Hopewell wants to inflict the cultural concept of Southern women upon both herself and her daughter. Subjecting her daughter to the codes of Southern hospitality is a hostile act in itself, which is not far off from the hostile responses Hulga endures outside of her mother's sphere. Hulga's performance is situated on her actions alone, and this performance is not separated from her physical appearance. After the hunting accident, Mrs. Hopewell sees Hulga's lost leg as a very prominent physical difference in her unconformity. Her daughter's inability to even just dance "a step" becomes Mrs. Hopewell's indication of Hulga's inability to fit into these Southern narratives. While clearly not a child, Mrs. Hopewell conceives of Hulga in this form to grant her child freedom to explore the narratives of Southern womanhood, while still allowing Mrs. Hopewell limited control over her daughter's actions. Overall, Mrs. Hopewell participates in this mind exercise of exploration so that Hulga might experience "normal good times" granted to Southern women (O'Connor, *CS* 276).

Despite Mrs. Hopewell's dreams and efforts, Hulga fails to meet her mother's expectations and actively rejecting these narratives of a Southern lady. When Hulga turned twenty-one she changed her name, to which "Mrs. Hopewell was certain that she

had thought and thought until she had hit upon the ugliest name in any language” (O’Connor, *CS* 274). The changing of names, from “the beautiful” Joy to Hulga indicates her daughter’s active rebellion against proper Southern woman-ness. When she thinks about her new name, Mrs. Hopewell pictures a “broad blank hull of a battleship,” associating her daughter not with the image of a Southern lady but of a large, bulky piece of war. In Clinton’s exploration of the Southern women she writes: “While visiting the home of an ante-bellum Southern planter, one visitor was charmed by the grace and hospitality of the mistress. She was warm, gentle, and refined in her manner. He found her a genial hostess and a model of what he expected ‘the Southern lady’ to be” (16). The expectation of a Southern lady is to be warm, gentle, and refined, but as Mrs. Hopewell believes Hulga does not depict these characteristics. Hulga the “battleship” signifies images of cold, aggression, and manly, opposite of her mother’s desire for her. Hulga’s name is only one portion of strife that her mother has with her, for she believes that her child was brilliant “but didn’t have a grain of sense” (O’Connor, *CS* 276). The older Hulga became “she grew less like other people and more like herself—bloated, rude, and squint-eyed” (O’Connor, *CS* 276). In other words, Mrs. Hopewell’s daughter grew more and more like herself, independent from societal narratives and willed herself against the expectations of Southern womanhood.

Hulga’s decision to pursue her education in philosophy and obtain a Ph.D. left her mother “at a complete loss” (O’Connor, *CS* 276). The main contingency of Mrs. Hopewell’s frustration towards her way of living strands from her inability to be proud of her daughter’s choices, education included. She believes “you could say, ‘my daughter is a nurse,’ or ‘my daughter is a school teacher’. . . [but] you could not say, ‘my daughter is

a philosopher”” (O’Connor, *CS* 276). Although her daughter received schooling far more than what is needed to be a nurse or schoolteacher, Mrs. Hopewell cannot be proud of her daughter as a philosopher because the occupation does not exist in her mind. In addition, her Ph.D. added to Hulga’s difference. Hulga is not only physically different but also educated differently than other women in her community, affecting both how she was perceived and how she maneuvered socially. Hulga spent most of her day reading, shying away from walks, dogs or cats, birds, flowers, and, most importantly to Mrs. Hopewell, young men: “She looked at nice young men as if she could smell their stupidity” (O’Connor, *CS* 276). Overall, Hulga’s difference, in relation to how her mother wishes to perform, takes a toll on their relationship, as they both become hostile towards each other, affecting their ability to communicate and understand one another. Hiding behind the façade of Southern hospitality, Mrs. Hopewell cannot accurately communicate her love for her daughter. Instead, the expectations of the conditions of Southern hospitality enact a hostile response to her daughter differences, driving a wedge between them. While her mother only hopes to showcase how a woman should act, as an attempt to be gracious and welcoming of her daughter, the simple inaction of hospitality becomes their separating force, driving Hulga away.

Their contrasting differences are also a way O’Connor deconstructs the culture surrounding the performance of Southern hospitality and womanhood. For, “philosophically considered, hospitality is central to questions of identity, for the site of hospitality is always the threshold between difference, the site at which boundaries are both crossed and maintained” (Szczesniul, “Re-Mapping” 20). The main conflict between Mrs. Hopewell and Hulga center on the boundaries of womanhood. Mrs. Hopewell’s

teachers her daughter the narratives to repeat and utter to signify the life of gracious living for Southern women through her own performance of Southern hospitality. In doing so, and through her distrust of Hulga, she also shows her daughter the boundaries limited to individuals who do not perform these Southern hospitality narratives. Hulga ignores the boundaries through her name, educational choices, and overall demeanor. Hulga actively rejects these narratives, attempting to reconstruct her identity outside of Southern hospitality by performing a noticeably clear and outward position of hostility towards her mother and others who are performing in accordance with the Southern code of manners.

Hulga crosses the boundaries of Southern hospitality through her defiance. The performance of hospitality, and the clear performance of not abiding by these boundaries, “both confirm and challenge [her] identity” of womanhood (Szczesniul, “Re-Mapping” 20). On why Hulga changed her name: “One of her major triumphs was that her mother had not been able to turn her dust into Joy, but the greater one was that she had been able to turn herself into Hulga” (O’Connor, *CS* 275). She regarded her name as a “personal affair” and first arrived on the name Hulga “purely on the basis of its ugly sound” (O’Connor, *CS* 275). Ultimately, she felt it was her “highest creative act” (O’Connor, *CS* 275). The question of names finds itself within Derrida’s text *On Hospitality* and is explored in Judith Still’s article “Language as Hospitality.” Still writes “question of the name, and the possible policing of names, is important in [this] context, and also raises a number of general issues relating to identity, legitimacy, inheritance” (117). Hulga’s choice to “turn herself into Hulga” speaks to this idea of crossing boundaries, as she is using this threshold of change as a hostile act against her mother. Also, through denying

her given identity as Joy, she takes a stance of defiance of overarching boundaries of Southern womanhood, since she cannot physically remove herself from her Southern landscape. The choice of Hulga, as both she and mother agree, is not a beautiful name nor one that could be considered becoming of a young Southern woman. Already existing as different, she attempts to live beyond the threshold of the Southern womanhood performance and attempts to participate in Richard Gray's "Southern self-fashioning" (11).

Hulga's self-fashioning is not only met with contempt by her mother, but she is also punished by the end of the short story for her hostile stance towards Southern womanhood. After meeting Manley, Hulga commits to go on a walk with him the following day. His invitation is prompted by his observance of her wooden leg. This outward difference intrigued his fascination, as well as her ability to navigate such a difference: "I think you're brave. I think you're real sweet" (CS 283). Besides her mother, the only other comments about her leg came from the Hopewell's tenant worker, Mrs. Freeman. Mrs. Freeman is described to be obsessed with "secret infections, hidden deformities, assaults upon children," and she is described as hypersensitive about Hulga's prosthetic leg (O'Connor, CS 275). Hulga does not shy away from the attention Mrs. Freeman gives. She basically demands attention regarding her prosthetic leg as she stumps around the kitchen, despite the fact she "could walk without making the awful noise" (O'Connor, CS 275). Jess Libow comments on "Hulga's unusual gait," noting how "she embraces her prosthesis and its effect of distinguishing her embodiment and habits from those of her homemaking mother" (394). Hulga's visibility towards her leg is also a defining feature of her difference, creating the act of walking as a critical performance of

her non-conforming identity against the Southern White women narrative of homemaking. However, Hulga does not seem to welcome Manley's gaze. His ability to notice her difference, and calling her both "brave" and "sweet" because of this difference, left Hulga "blank and solid and silent" (O'Connor, CS 283). Her leg, signifying her hostile stance against Southern womanhood, cannot be considered brave or sweet and leaves her shocked by Manley. While Mrs. Hopewell and Mrs. Freeman approach Hulga with reproach, to which Hulga had never stayed silent, Manley's observation and comment left her speechless.

Natalie Wilson believes "to be truly American (or Southern) in early to mid-twentieth century America, one needed a certain type of body, namely, one that was white, heterosexual, and productive" (98). Defined by Wilson, Hulga's body could not be considered "truly Southern" due to her unproductive body, making her prosthetic leg the physical embodiment of her differences and her non-conforming performance against the narrative of womanhood in the South. While Hulga believes this physical representation is a tool of self-expression, highlighting the difference she finds to be freeing, it is the lack of and ease by which she lost her prosthetic that leaves her immobile physically and isolated in an outsider position. In their first encounter, Manley's generosity and hospitality leave Hulga both silent and shocked. Manley repeats, "You're a brave sweet little thing and I liked you the minute I seen you walk in the door," to which "Hulga began to move forward," walking to the gate with him but staying silent in the conversation (O'Connor, CS 283). His welcoming acceptance of her difference's intrigues Hulga, especially as she has always been approached with hostility regarding these differences. It is Manley's performed open hospitality towards Hulga that makes

her agree to a walk with him the next day. After he leaves, Hulga dreams “that she seduced him” and “imagined that she took his remorse in hand and changed it into a deeper understanding of life” (O’Connor, *CS* 284). To Hulga, her prosthetic leg did not turn Manley away, and neither did her non-Southern narrative. Hulga believes that she has agency and control in the relationship, despite barely speaking to him in this encounter. She thinks, “True genius can get an idea across even to an inferior mind” (O’Connor, *CS* 284). Hulga has confidence in her hostile approach to Southern hospitality and outsider position. She believes this position gives her a certain wisdom outside of Manley’s simplistic religion. Hulga also believes she can influence him away from these simplistic worldviews and find communion with another outsider.

On the walk Hulga takes Manley into a two-story barn and he remarks, “Too bad we can’t go up there” (O’Connor, *CS* 286). To prove him wrong, Hulga gave “him a contemptuous look” and climbs up the ladder first (O’Connor, *CS* 286). In the loft, Manley asks to see where her wooden leg joins because it is what makes Hulga different. At first, she declines, but then finally allows him to see. Allowing herself to be fully open and accepting of Manley, Hulga even shows him how to take her wooden leg on and off. In return for her hospitality, Manley takes off her leg and leaves it off, an action that makes Hulga “entirely dependent on him” (O’Connor, *CS* 289). Shortly after Hulga’s gesture of openness, Manley abandons Hulga, taking her prosthetic leg with him. Manley’s decision to steal enacts hostility directly associated with Hulga’s difference and leaves her stuck in a position of immobility. It is in Manley’s hostile response to Hulga’s first attempt of hospitality that her “sharp wit and strong sense of self dissolve” fades into the “submissive demeanor her mother has long desired of her” (Libow 396). This act of



thievery takes away not only the physical leg but, as the embodiment of her difference, Manley also steals Hulga's narrative of difference she believed she had control over. Using the performance of Southern hospitality and masking behind the façade of "good country people," Hulga is deceived by Manley. Yelling "You're a Christian," Manley responds, "I hope you don't think . . . that I believe in that crap!" (O'Connor, *CS* 290), insinuating both a lack of truthfulness to him and indicating that there was a strategic othering for control.

Hulga's leg enacts different gestures and manners to further divides between her and her mother; her leg is also the manifestation of difference sought out by Manley. Using the performance of hospitality to navigate as an insider, Manley targeted Hulga based on her position as an outsider to further victimize her position. By stealing her leg, Manley metaphorically steals her control over her non-performance. Leaving Hulga immobile both physically and narratively, unable to construct her identity outside of what the Southern womanhood allows her to be. Her active hostile response towards these narratives leaves her subjected to a performance of Southern hospitality and woman-ness. As Manley leaves her in the loft, he reveals she is not his only victim, "I've gotten a lot of interesting things . . . one time I got a woman's glass eye this way" (O'Connor, *CS* 291). Manley's repeated offense speaks to the use of the performance of hospitality as a means to victimize outsiders and to solidify insider and outsider dichotomies through the enforcement of a Southern code of manners. It is through violence, or a metaphor of violence, that these hostile actions are imposed on outsiders. Manley's action also speaks to the performance of insiders of Southern culture, insinuating both the persuasive control insiders have over the narrative of the South but also the inherent lack of control women

seem to have over these stories and identities. As Manley's name is not a coincidence, Hulga's defiance may have been tolerated by her mother and her mother's workers. Yet, outside of her mother's space of protection, Hulga is submitted to the Southern code of manners that are enacted by men.

The ending scene of "Good Country People" finds Mrs. Hopewell and Mrs. Freeman in the back pasture looking out at Manley. While most of this story focused on Hulga and her mother's life, Manley becomes the subject of the ending. Not only does Manley force Hulga out of her voice, leaving her immobilized, he also steals her main character position in the short story. Even within their interactions throughout their walk, Hulga believes she is in control, yet Manley plots and controls their movements. This is very evident as she is persuaded by him and allows him to take off her prosthetic leg, the first-moment Hulga is aware she is fully dependent on Manley's treatment towards her. Ending the story focused on Manley solidifies his power over her, and his power over both women who conform, and women do not conform to the performance of Southern womanhood. Manley's presence reemphasizes Hulga's lack of control and dissolves her contribution to the narrative of this specific story, displaying the lack of control women seem to have in their own narratives within the performance of Southern hospitality.

The performance of Southern hospitality is not limited to Hulga and her various relationships. The utterances from her mother showcase the divides she feels and experiences raising a daughter who is physically and actively different. Manley presents the control Hulga does not have over her differences, and the control women lack over their own performances. However, the interactions between Mrs. Hopewell and the "good country people" also bring to question these unique traditions of graciousness within

Southern hospitality. Early on, Mrs. Hopewell explains how she likes to tell people about her tenant workers: “Mrs. Freeman was a *lady* and that she was never ashamed to take her anywhere or introduce her to anybody they might meet . . . The reason for her keeping them so long was that they were not trash. They were good country people” (O’Connor, *CS* 272). Once Mrs. Hopewell establishes this foundational understanding that Mrs. Freeman is a lady, a good country lady, she then implores the remainder of their hiring story. The Freemans were not highly recommended by their previous employer, and to discredit negative claims about her “good country people,” Mrs. Hopewell made it noticeably clear that the Freemans “were a godsend to her” (O’Connor, *CS* 272). Their previous employers felt Mr. Freeman was “a good framer but that his wife was the nosiest woman ever to walk the earth” (O’Connor, *CS* 272). Without another applicant, Mrs. Hopewell was forced to hire the family and decided “she would not only let her be into everything, she would *see to it* that she was into everything” (O’Connor, *CS* 272). In the retelling of this story, the reader can get glimpses of Laura Wirt’s mother, Elizabeth, advising Southern women to be “determined, with the blessing of God” and “to discharge your duties to the best of your ability, and to encourage others to do the same” (Jabour 264). Because “Mrs. Hopewell had no bad qualities of her own,” she was able to use Mrs. Freeman’s bad qualities in a “constructive way” (O’Connor, *CS* 272) and encouraging her to “discharge [her] duties to the best of [her] ability” (Jabour 264). Through her relationship with Mrs. Freeman, Mrs. Hopewell upholds Wirt’s notion of Southern womanhood and passes a hospitable acceptance of them as her tenant workers. Yet, their acceptance is not without conditions, as they must act in accordance with her demands. Ultimately, Mrs. Hopewell embarks in a self-fashioning narrative, positioning herself in

control of a situation she had no control over, all while maintaining a deposition of Southern hospitality in her performance as a lady.

Mrs. Hopewell also attempts to present the Freemans as “good country people” for she fears their lacks are a reflection of her status. To control her narrative, a juxtaposition of Southern hospitality and Southern hostility occurs between the White Southern lady and the role of good country people. This “juxtaposition can be seen as symbolic of the violent ethical paradox inherent in the concept of hospitality itself” (Szczesniul, *Myth* 138). In regard to the philosophical conception of hospitality, Derrida’s description of hospitality as “sometimes ungraspable differences between the foreigner and the absolute other” is formative for understanding this paradox (*On Hospitality* 3). The Freeman’s exist in a boundary separate from Mrs. Hopewell, as both a member of a lower class and as a member of her performance of Southern hospitality. In terms of the performance of Southern hospitality, Mrs. Hopewell must continually utter the narratives of a good Southern lady while establishing the boundaries between her tenant workers and herself. She actively participates in defining who Mrs. Freeman is through the term “good country people,” differentiating herself from the lady she describes. Through these utterings, she attempts to maintain control over their performance of Southern hospitality, or the perception of their performance. Arguing for their distinguishing qualities as good country people because they are an extension of her. Often, Mrs. Hopewell finds some of their behavior and work less than, as she discharges these actions flippantly through noting “nothing is perfect” (O’Connor, *CS* 273) in order to keep up appearances. Following up on these remarks, Mrs. Hopewell attempts to sound self-supportive of her workers, regarding her own hospitable nature through being “a woman of great patience”

over their lacks (O'Connor, *CS* 273). Southern hostility is performed by Mrs. Hopewell through these gestures and flippant remarks. If she did not attempt to control the narratives of her workers and herself, they would be subjected to Southern hostility outside of her own comments.

O'Connor explores class struggles within her work, especially regarding White women, as depicted between Mrs. Hopewell and Mrs. Freeman. The Southern hospitality invoked between these women, from different class backgrounds, signifies the Southern hostility juxtaposed with Southern hospitality. Mrs. Hopewell approaches Southern hospitality or views Southern hospitality differently than Mrs. Freeman. Having "plenty of experience with trash," Mrs. Hopewell knows what kind of women are considered up to her standard. In its opposite, hostility, "the undesirable guest which it harbors as the self-contradiction in its own body" (Derrida, *On Hospitality* 3), is evoked between women of different classes based on their own self-fashioning narrative of Southern hospitality. Mrs. Hopewell does exhibit moments of Southern hostility towards the Freemans, ultimately, she is more hospitable towards her tenant workers than O'Connor's Ruby Turpin in the short story "Revelation."

The performance of Southern hospitality and hostility regarding Southern womanhood and class is also present in O'Connor's short story, "Revelation," as her main character Ruby Turpin and her husband go to the doctor's office. Ruby Turpin expresses and explores the various levels of the performance of Southern hospitality between different classes of women. As she and husband enter a crowded doctor's office, it is apparent that she regards herself as superior to individuals she calls "White trash." Walking in, Ruby, the large Southern woman, has difficulty finding a place to sit. As she

sizes up the waiting room, she spots a “vacant chair and a place on the sofa occupied by a blond child in a dirty blue romper who should have been told to move over and make room for the lady” (O’Connor, *CS* 488). Believing the child is not going to move over, she says “in a voice that included anyone who wanted to listen, ‘Claud, you sit in that chair,’” while she, herself remains to stand (O’Connor, *CS* 488). Dwelling on the lack of empty seats, she purposely scans the room, making eye contact with a “well-dressed gray-haired lady . . . whose expression said: if that child belonged to me, he would have some manners and move over—there’s plenty of room there for you and him too” (O’Connor, *CS* 488). Extending this situation, and noticing his wife’s unhappiness at the situation, Claude, Ruby’s husband, offers to stand. She declines, explaining to the room his medical situation. The pleasant lady with whom Ruby already felt a connection, speaks loudly: “Maybe this little boy would move over” (O’Connor, *CS* 489). The child, in fact, did not move over.

Ruby Turpin performs the portrait of a good Southern woman, a graceful woman, through her habits of choice. Through this opening scene, Ruby’s internal dialogue allows for the reader to experience a woman performing Southern hospitality, while also enacting Southern hostility toward individuals who are not conforming to the fictional landscape of the Southern code of manners. Entering the crowded doctor’s office, she expects the “blond child” to move and allow her a place to sit on the sofa. When the child does not perform the actions she wishes, Ruby passive-aggressively announces what she wishes the child to do. The child still does not move. The performance of Southern manners not enacted left Ruby irritated, and she finds identification with the “well-dressed gray-haired lady” (O’Connor, *CS* 488). Both women attribute the lack of

Southern gentry shown in the boy's lack of manners, insinuating the child has not been raised right. Ruby's individual performance of Southern hospitality masks her act of hostility toward the child and is matched by the stylish lady.

Derrida's emphasis on the right to hospitality, or the ethics of hospitality, is not situated in the situations. Instead, Ruby's conditional hospitality is a representation of Derrida's politics of hospitality. The ethics of hospitality dictate the unconditional welcoming of all equally, while the politics of hospitality involve the way we define the threshold and negotiate the borders between us and others. "Pure, unconditional or infinite hospitality cannot and must not be anything else but an acceptance of risk" (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 149), and the politics of hospitality is about determining who does and does not belong. In terms of Ruby's frustration, she expects hospitality will be granted to her, as a Southern woman who is performing her role. When the child does not move over or act according to the manners accepted, she begins to believe he does not belong. She later expresses her opinion of the child's mother: "She could tell by the way they sat—kind of vacant and white-trashy as if they would sit there until Doomsday if nobody called and told them to get up" (O'Connor, *CS* 490). Ruby participates in the politics of hospitality by taking a hostile stance towards the White trash mother and her son. Her comments continue a theme of non-belonging for these individuals, on the bases they were 'not raised right,' but also through their White trash differences, she observes.

O'Connor depicts Ruby as very observant, or at least Ruby believes herself to be very observant, as "without appearing to, Mrs. Turpin always noticed people's feet" (*CS* 491). Through her ability to notice and assess the people around her, Ruby participates continuously in the politics of hospitality, establishing who belongs and who does not

belong in the discourse of Southern-ness. Ruby notes the shoes of each individual in the waiting room: “The well-dressed lady had on red and gray suede shoes to match her dress. Mrs. Turpin had on her good black patent leather pumps. The ugly girl had on Girl Scout shoes and heavy socks. The old woman had on tennis shoes and the white-trashy mother had on what appeared to be bedroom slippers, black straw with gold braid thread through them” (O’Connor, *CS* 491). While shoes are not necessary a noticeable performance of hospitality, they are a means for Ruby to establish a difference between her and the other clients in the waiting room. The “white-trashy mother” wore shoes that Ruby believes is “exactly what you would have expected her to have on” (O’Connor, *CS* 491), expressing that there are narratives at play in the social-cultural spheres of the South, especially regarding the “white-trash” class that disgusts her.

Ralph Wood’s article “Where is the voice coming from?” quotes an old Southern saying: “‘In the North,’ so runs the saying, ‘they don’t care how high the black rises, so long as they don’t get too close. In the South, we don’t care how close blacks get, so long as they don’t rise too high’” (107). Integration within the South would, according to O’Connor, complicate the Southern society through interracial economic competition between Blacks and Whites. O’Connor, according to Wood, declared “for the rest of the country, the race problem is settled when the Negro has his rights, but for the Southerner, whether he’s white or colored, that’s only the beginning” (108). Wood’s racial concerns regarding the “competition between Blacks and Whites” are resounded within Ruby’s notion that being White trash is “Worse than niggers any day” (O’Connor, *CS* 490). Ruby is less concerned with being Black as long as she is “classy” rather than “trashy” (O’Connor, *CS* 491). This also indicates her obsession with her performance of Southern



womanhood, as it situated in a conditional acceptance of her performance of Southern hospitality rather than an unconditional acceptance of others. For her, the performance is about status, which is shown through her clear desire to be/perform anything but be put into a trashy role.

Ruby is also obsessed with defining and understanding the different classes of the South, so that they may understand their place better. She often “occupied herself at night naming the classes of people” (O’Connor, *CS* 491). The bottom “of the heap were most colored people . . . then next to them—not above, just away from—were the white trash” (O’Connor, *CS* 491). According to Dani Smith, in her article “Cultural Studies’ Misfit: White Trash Studies,” White trash is “at once white and trash, a metonym for blackness, the term historically designated a border position between white privilege and black disenfranchisement” (370). Smith’s article nods to Theresa Malkiel’s novelized diary, *The Diary of a Shirtwaist Striker*, commenting that “the term ‘white trash’ was a uniquely Southern idiom,” used as a term for Southern poor whites living as a buffer, “an inanimate virgule, between black/white and feminine/masculine cultures” (371). These two works, in connection to Wood’s claim, indicate both the class differentiation between the Southern lady and White trash, and the boundaries of performance of these classes, for the conception of White trash is signified and operates within its own class, racial, and regional embodiments. Ruby’s Southern hospitable stance clarifies the boundaries between the Southern hospitality culture she belongs to and the White trash culture she does not. On the basis of privilege, through the insider language, she reaffirms her distance away from the woman and her son on the bases of cultural manners Ruby knows.

Through the politics of hospitality, White trash is conflated with ignorance and poverty. This can be seen as the child is unaware that he must move over, just as his mother is either too poor or too unaware you should not wear house slippers outside of the house. While Ruby is depicted as somewhat of a visionary, she is blinded by her performance of Southern hospitality and is unable to achieve the unconditional openness of Derrida's ethical hospitality claim. "Revelation" speaks to the blindness created through the performance of Southern hospitality, or lack of vision Ruby implores through her encounters as she creates and maintains divides between Ruby and others. Ruby, from the opening lines, believes she can see through others and class. From her pious stance, she believes she can observe and understand the people around, knowing who is and is not worthy of class, Christ, etc. It is this stance that inhibits Ruby to see real grace at the end of the story and to fully understand the nature of true hospitality, charity, and God. As it seems, from her encounters within the doctor's offices, she believes that she is all-knowing and is beyond reproach. From the doorway Ruby looks for an open seat, views the feet of the people surrounding her, and looks for solidification and identification for people performing her same code of manners.

In many ways the White trash woman becomes Ruby's separate but defining other. The White trash woman denies the performance of Southern hospitality and any notions of a Southern lady that Ruby believes in. Throughout the conversation with the waiting room, Ruby and the White trash woman disagree, especially regarding the positive treatment of Black workers. Ruby, attempting to present her character higher than those around, speaks diligently positive remarks regarding her Blacker workers. This positivity is then met with contempt by the White-trash woman, and Ruby and the

pleasant lady exchange a “look” indicating “they both understood that you had to have certain things before you could know certain things” (O’Connor, *CS* 494). Ruby believes the other woman’s White trash status inhibits her ability to be in the conversation, or productive and appreciated discussion, with Ruby and the pleasant lady. Her status as White trash, as shown through this statement, defines her as ignorant and poor in understanding. These exchanges not only showcase how Ruby self-positions herself over individuals in different classes but also shows how she uses the narrative of Southern hospitality as a façade of her hostility towards this individual. Through her created performance of being open and welcome to all, she disguises her lack of humility and her overabundance of pride. This lack of humility, and lack of true acceptance of the other, creates space for hostility to be utilized within their differences. Like Manley and Hulga, Ruby uses the performance of Southern manners as a hostile weapon against those they do not agree with.

The looks passed between Ruby and the pleasant lady do not go unnoticed: “Every time Mrs. Turpin exchanged a look with the lady, she was aware that the ugly girl’s peculiar eyes were still on her” (O’Connor, *CS* 494). While the White trash lady is Ruby’s opposite, Mary Grace, the ugly college girl, is her character double. Joseph Hendon points out the use of doubles as central to this short story because they reveal the “gap between one’s self and one’s self-image” (Hendon 136). For Ruby, who believes she can see and identify others clearly, her vision of herself is warped. Ruby’s perception of the room is jaded through her lens of Southern hospitality. Her inability to treat the White trash woman’s perspectives with consideration and thought indicates that she

believes her preferred perspectives are without reproach. Ruby's degrading treatment of the White trash women does not go unnoticed Mary Grace.

Ruby's acts of hostility and lack of humility are not only directed towards the White trash woman, but also at Mary Grace. Ruby not only commented on Mary Grace's outward appearance but also "felt an awful pity for" her: "It was one thing to be ugly and another to act ugly" (O'Connor, *CS* 492). Mary Grace's inhospitable stance towards Ruby is a reaction to Ruby's own hostile approaches to others. Yet, it is Mary Grace's sneering and hostile response that begins to highlight the shallowness of Ruby and her performances of these Southern narratives. Seeing through Ruby's Southern performance, Mary Grace

looked straight in front of her, directly through Mrs. Turpin and on through the yellow curtain and the plate glass window which made the wall behind her. The girl's eyes seemed lit all of a sudden with a peculiar light, an unnatural light like night road signs give. Mrs. Turpin turned her head to see if there was anything going on outside that she could see, but could not see anything. (O'Connor, *CS* 492-93)

These deep looks continue in the story and begin unraveling Ruby's conception of Southern hospitality. Mary Grace's presence in the beginning that indicates the falsehood Ruby believes to be Southern hospitality.

As the story progresses, Ruby becomes more aware of Mary Grace's eyes upon her. Her eyes begin Ruby's unraveling, deconstructing and commenting on her self-fashioned narrative of a gracious and welcoming nature, and questions her identity as a respectable, hard-working, churchgoing woman. These hostile eyes come to a head when Ruby,

ignoring the White trash lady's conversation, directly asks Mary Grace if she was in college. Refusing to participate in Ruby's conversation, Mary Grace just "continued to stare and pointedly did not answer" O'Connor, *CS* 498). The pleasant lady, and mother of Mary Grace, "blushed at this rudeness" and urged her daughter to answer (O'Connor, *CS* 498). Shifting conversation, her mother comments on the White trash woman, "I think people with bad dispositions are more to be pitied than anyone on earth" (O'Connor, *CS* 498). She continues by addressing her belief that "the worst thing in the world . . . is an ungrateful person," insinuating her own daughter (O'Connor, *CS* 499). In Ruby's response, she notes on her respectable nature and is proud of her performance of her Southern-ness: "if it's one thing I am, it's grateful. When I think who all I could have been beside myself and what all I got, a little of everything, and a good disposition besides, I just feel like shouting, 'Thank you, Jesus, for making everything the way it is'" (O'Connor, *CS* 499). This expression of thanks is met with violence, as Mary Grace attacks Ruby and her Southern performance. She throws a book at Ruby, proceeding to choke Ruby on the ground.

Ruby's inability to see through her blinding performance of Southern hospitality is affected by this assault. In retaliation, Ruby frantically tries to justify her hostile and attempts to prove the validity of her Southern performance. All at once Ruby's "vision narrowed and she saw everything as if it were happening in a small room far away, or as if she were looking at it through the wrong end of a telescope . . . Mrs. Turpin's vision suddenly reversed itself and she saw everything large instead of small. The eyes of the White-trashy woman were staring hugely at the floor" (O'Connor, *CS* 499). According to Larue Love Sloan, "this physical reversal of vision prefigures Mrs. Turpin's spiritual

reversal . . . when she finally sees herself not as the ‘top rail’ but the bottom” (140-41). Ruby’s reversed vision is the beginning of Ruby’s unraveling as a character, but also an indication of her reversed disposition towards Southern hospitality. At the moment “her power of motion returned” Ruby asks the girl, “What you got to say to me? . . . waiting, as for a revelation” (O’Connor, *CS* 500). As Mary Grace raises her head, she tells Ruby: “Go back to hell where you came from, you old wart hog” (O’Connor, *CS* 500). This insult rocks Ruby and her own understanding of her identity as a Southern, Christian lady and questions the self-fashioning narrative of Southern hospitality she performs. Mary Grace questions Ruby’s inhospitable performance, as it is a conditional form of hospitality.

Through her short story “Revelation,” O’Connor showcases the internal processes of the politics of hospitality regarding who belongs and who does not in O’Connor’s view of Southern hospitality. O’Connor is also juxtaposing hospitality and hostility through the violent paradox inherent in the performance of Southern hospitality, which is seen through Ruby. O’Connor’s character Mary Grace is the force against the performance of Southern hospitality. She challenges Ruby’s façade of hospitableness, hoping to expose Ruby’s conditional Southern performance as it is—acts of hostility. Although violent herself, Mary Grace challenges Ruby to question her narrative of a Southern lady, urging her to see how inhospitable she is, and areas where she is alienating others. A result of this assault prompts Ruby to question if her performance of a gracious lady, asking if she is performing actions in line with unconditional hospitality and pure graciousness. Her reversed vision allows her to assess her performance: however, I believe it is ultimately unclear the long-lasting effect this has on Ruby. Mary Grace’s action is the blunt start to

Ruby's unraveling, and it is only through this violent and hostile act that Ruby begins to experience moments of clarity and perhaps also experience moments of unconditional hospitality.

Hulga Hopewell and Ruby Turpin have many similarities, despite their relationship to the performance of Southern hospitality. While Hulga actively rejects the narratives of a Southern lady, Ruby performs her role flawlessly. Derrida's claim that conditional hospitality is a culture, one where the processes of welcoming or not welcoming, is present with O'Connor's South. As much as Hulga wishes she was not connected to Southern hospitality, she is still subjected to the culture of Southern hospitality that surrounds her. Through rejecting her performance, Hulga chooses to not welcoming others, imposing a hostile response to those surrounding her. Hulga is performing Southern hospitality through her hostility, though now in a way that is unacceptable to the culture. Ruby, on the other hand, believes she is hospitable, or the best at being hospitable. Through this posture she believes she is qualified in expressing who is also hospitable and who is not, or who belongs and who does not. This posture hides her hostile response to those who do not belong behind a gesture and assumption of the performance of hospitality. Ruby and Hulga's approach to Southern womanhood and Southern hospitality expresses conditional hospitality. It is through these conditional expectations that O'Connor depicts the inherent paradox of hospitality and hostility within these inactions.

Hulga and Ruby also undergo an unraveling within these stories. Both subjected to their performance of Southern womanhood, in their particular ways, they experience moments where these worldviews are called into question. Hulga experiences what she

believes are moments of acceptance. Manley's response to her differences allows her to feel, if only for a moment, fully welcomed. In response, Hulga fully accepts Manley. This acceptance is shattered when Manley exposes his true motive of hostility, leaving her alone and taking her leg with him. For Ruby, Mary Grace's violent response to her performance quite literally hits her and challenges her to question her self-identity. While these violent actions against Hulga and Ruby are not necessarily categorized as hospitable actions, the moments, or "moments of grace," jolt the character metaphorically awake. These hostile situations allow for Hulga and Ruby to deconstruct their identity, away from their performances, and allow the chance for unconditional hospitality to take place. Just as Derrida believes "we do not know what hospitality is" ("Hostipitality" 6), it is in these moments of deconstruction that allow Hulga and Ruby to see a glimpse of what it could be. Unconditional hospitality does not represent a performance, as it is not necessarily something we know. Unconditional hospitality is not the juxtaposition of hostility and hospitality, and it is a future that only presents itself when "it is not awaited as a present or presentable" (Derrida, "Hostipitality" 14).

The narratives of Southern hospitality, according to Szczesiul, are a "powerful and particularly adaptable story, one with real consequences in the ways individuals have seen themselves within their region and nation" (139). Self-definitions, or narratives, are manifested through the performance of Southern hospitality, as the conditions of the culture O'Connor creates. Particularly relating to questions of womanhood and class, and the performance of a Southern lady, in O'Connor's short stories "Good Country People" and "Revelation," explore the constructions of these narratives. Hulga and Ruby's performances help uphold the control conditional hospitality has over both insiders and



outsiders, highlighting the perpetuating violent paradoxes inherent within hospitality and hostility. However, O'Connor attempts to present moments for her characters to relocate their performances, or question their identity, in relation to an unconditional hospitable stance. The unraveling of Hulga and Ruby represent their acknowledgment of their conditional performance, one that urges these women to find a deeper understanding of their position.

## CHAPTER III

### RACIAL INEQUALITIES WITHIN O'CONNOR'S SHORT STORIES

Flannery O'Connor's depiction of the performance of Southern hospitality showcases encounters where Southern manners are used to create and maintain racial divisions. In articles and interviews, O'Connor refers to these manners as the "foul underbelly" of violence that are coded within Southern hospitality and enacted on all individuals (Harris 329). Carole K. Harris, in her article "On Flying Mules and the Southern Cabala," tends to agree with O'Connor's view of Southern manners as "collective, coded, and political, a baffling and secretive 'cabala' designed to exclude outsiders" (Harris 327). O'Connor's short stories depict the internal stature of individuals who are experiencing, enacting, or observing the self-other divide created within the performance of Southern hospitality. O'Connor's letters, life, and writing also showcase the real and unavoidable conditions created in the Southern hospitality, and how embedded they become within lives. The performance of Southern hospitality's conditional nature exhibits the hostile response of an other, concealed through a shallow welcome. The shallow acceptance within these performances maintain a systematic social control over both insiders and outsiders. The conditional hospitality, and the mixing hospitality and hostility, is depicted through O'Connor's works "The Displaced Person," "The Geranium," "Everything that Rises Must Converge," and "Revelation." This systematic social control also is very prevalent within O'Connor's personal life through letters and in her writing style.

Tolerance is a condition of Southern hospitality. In Ien Ang's article, "The Curse of the Smile: Ambivalence and the 'Asian' Woman in Australian Multiculturalism," she discusses the paradoxical understanding of tolerance. Ang expands on the idea that tolerance is dependent on intolerance, a binary that itself is established "through a fundamental intolerance towards intolerance" (Ang 39). In other words, societies function on the limits of tolerance, placed through the discourse surrounding the Other. The hierarchy between the dominant majority and the subordinate minority is not broken down by the act of tolerance, instead, the position of power (the tolerator) grants the power to tolerate the subordinate minority (tolerated). If, for some reason, the subordinate minority begins breaking clear cultural rules, they will no longer be tolerated by the dominant majority and will be treated with hostility. This binary opposition, presented by Ang, correlates with Derrida's hospitality/hostility, simulating to a certain extent the dominant/subordinate binary opposition of Southern American/Other showcased through O'Connor's short story, "The Displaced Person." Within her short story, she dramatizes the levels of tolerance given by the host to her guest, as well as showcases the explicit violence positioned upon outsiders who do not conform to the Southern code of hospitality and manners.

"The Displaced Person" centers around Mrs. McIntyre, a white, Southern landowner, and her acceptance and employment of a Polish immigrant, Mr. Guizac. Displaced by the war, Mr. Guizac and his family find refuge on the dairy farm. It is clear from the beginning of this story that Mrs. McIntyre has an attitude of reluctant acceptance towards the displaced person, also known as Mr. Guizac: "These people who were coming were only hired help, like the Shortleys themselves or the Negroes. Yet here

was the owner of the place out to welcome them. Here she was, wearing her best clothes and a string of beads, and now bounding forward with her mouth stretched” (O’Connor, CS 194). Her relationship with Mr. Guizac functions on an estranged mode of hospitality, limited by the hierarchy of worker and boss. It is important to note that hospitality, in its structure, functions on the binary oppositions between inside and outside. According to Judith Still, in her book *Derrida and Hospitality: Theory and Practice*, the laws of hospitality cannot occur between an employer and employee. If an employee stays in the home, then there is not a difference of inside and outside physically. The employee, who is staying in the home, becomes aligned as an entity inside the household and not outside. Still goes on to describe that the “relation between employer and employee is not to be judged by the laws of hospitality or of the gift in so far as each keeps strictly to the terms of their contract” (O’Connor, CS 12). As the story develops, Mrs. McIntyre speaks of the expected terms and contract between her and this displaced person. However, her first general acceptance of him into her home functions as a gift to him, a gesture of goodness. Mrs. McIntyre was not actively searching for a new tenant farmer, but was approached by a local Priest, who wanted to find someone willing to welcome a refugee family to America. Mrs. McIntyre agrees, and opens up space on her dairy for the Guizac family. She consciously preparing their way, scraping together a place for them to belong, and providing an avenue for Mr. Guizac to make a living. Mrs. McIntyre acceptance of Mr. Guizac is an act of conditional hospitality, one that can be revoked at any moment.

The arrangement between Mrs. McIntyre and the displaced person is a grey area of hospitality, because as an employee they are not technically in the guest position within her home. She clearly expresses that these people are “only hired help”

(O'Connor, *CS* 194), but their presence is ultimately an act of welcoming of an other. Mrs. McIntyre struggles with their hybrid role and is divided on whether or how hospitable she must be towards the displaced family. While Mrs. McIntyre experiences an inward struggle of employer and host, Mrs. and Mr. Shortley, a White couple and long-term farmhands, perceive her continuous welcoming of the displaced person as favoritism. Mrs. McIntyre's treatment of the displaced family, treating them with as both guest and employees, creates strife between the other workers. More specifically, this jealousy becomes present between Mrs. and Mr. Shortley, who soon become seen as obsolete in comparison. Mr. and Mrs. Shortley, heavily influenced by their relationship to the displaced family, are not gracious or accepting. Upon his arrival, it is made clear by Mrs. Shortley that Mr. Guizac is a foreigner to their home. Despite his role as guest and Mrs. McIntyre's charity, his lack of understanding of the Southern culture's codes and manners is evident, and Mrs. Shortley begins crafting and speaking into the narrative of an evil other.

From the start, Mr. Guizac is labeled as foreigner, without any prior communication or interaction. Mrs. Shortley often thought, before their arrival, that these displaced people would be like three bears dressed like Dutchmen and wearing sailor hats. Much to her shock, "the first thing that struck her as very peculiar was that they looked like other people" (O'Connor, *CS* 195). Upon meeting them, "Mrs. Shortley had the sudden intuition that the Gobblehooks, like rats with typhoid fleas, could have carried all those murderous ways over the water with them directly to this place" (O'Connor, *CS* 196). The Guizac family's foreignness is manifested in two prominent ways, through their name, which sounds inherently different than the typical, and their lack of

understanding of Southern culture and manners. In this specific scene, the embedded intuition for Mrs. Shortley is situated in a stance of belonging. Within conditional hospitality, the right to welcome or not welcome is explored. For Mrs. Shortley's performance of such, she is practicing this conditional experience, evaluating if the Guizac family should be welcomed or not. Mrs. Shortley makes certain that this is communicated through the deliberate use of the wrong name. In Derrida's *Of Hospitality*, he claims that the "right to hospitality offered to a foreigner 'as a family', represented and protected by his or her family name, [and] is at once what makes hospitality possible, or the hospitable relationship to the foreigner possible" (*Of Hospitality* 23). Hospitality, in this situation, is not being offered by Mrs. Shortley. Instead, Mrs. Shortley is making her hostility through her Southern performance. In the same passage, Derrida notes that the "objective morality" regarding hospitality and comes from the possibility "for them to be called by their name . . . to be equipped with memorable identities and proper names" (*Of Hospitality* 23). Mrs. Shortley refuses to grant them their name, but instead prescribes a name that used to articulate their difference. The use of a pejorative alternative name, based on the mispronunciation and lack of effort to change such, becomes a symbol of ease in which hospitality can be switched to hostility. It also becomes a representation of how closely hospitality and hostility are within the performance of Southern-ness.

The performance of Southern hospitality and the position of Mrs. Shortley inhibits her from calling them "Gobblehook to their face" (O'Connor, *CS* 197). For the sake of saving face, as woman and Southerner, she is bonded to the expectation of being polite and extending gestures of kindness, charity, and acceptance, despite seeing these foreigners as intruders. Mrs. Shortley, and Mrs. McIntyre, are subjected to present

themselves hospitable and tolerant of the Guizac family. Mrs. McIntyre's performed hospitality must also extend into simulating a sense of temporary belonging for the displaced family. According to Ang, "Raw and direct expressions of racism are no longer condoned," instead she indicates that tolerance is an attempt to eliminate these direct expressions through inclusion and tolerance (40). Yet, Ang points out that tolerance itself "paradoxically perpetuates the self-other divide which is the epistemological basis of the very possibility for racism in the first place" (40). Mr. Guizac's foreign presence is tolerated because of his role as a guest, at the extension of charity through Mrs. McIntyre. He is granted hospitality through the performance of Southern manners, defining his role both as guest and foreigner. However, his role as guest and foreigner exemplify to Mrs. McIntyre, and her surrounding community, his cultural difference. Despite his inclusion, which becomes both faulty and costly, others only accept and tolerate his presence temporarily. Yet, as Ang points out, the tolerance he receives is hinged on his ability to perform Southern manners, and any performances that do not align result in the annulling of his gift of tolerance, prompting directed intolerance. The tolerance/intolerance Mr. Guizac receives then is an illustration of racism, in a Southern hospitality context, that showcases the "self-other divide" of insider and outsider presented by Ang. Tolerance/intolerance is a symptom the conditional expectation of Southern hospitality, as he is expected to perform Southern manners or his welcoming/tolerance will be retracted.

As mentioned before, Ang's tolerance/intolerance binary opposition is similar to Derrida's hospitality/hostility opposition, both of which function on the premise of power for the tolerator and host, to extend hospitality/tolerance or enact hostility/intolerance. In

O'Connor's story, Mr. Guizac's ability to perform under the Southern landscape and manners affect whether hospitality or tolerance will be enacted towards him and his family or if hostility and intolerance will be directed. Unfortunately, Mr. Guizac's unfamiliarity with the culture surrounding Southern hospitality, and the performance of such, is noticeable and becomes an issue in integrating into his new community. The displaced person will and does face grave consequences when he breaks the Southern code of manners. Through the eyes of Mrs. Shortley, Guizac has no chance of integrating. In the first scene, when Mr. Guizac is introduced to Mrs. McIntyre, he kisses her hand. Mrs. Shortley, shocked and personally violated by this action, "jerked her own hand up . . . and rubbed it vigorously on her seat" to showcase her outward disgust towards this action. She continues by addressing that if her own husband had tried to kiss her hand, "Mrs. McIntyre would have knocked him into the middle of next week, but then Mr. Shortley wouldn't have kissed her anyway. He didn't time have time to mess around" (O'Connor, *CS* 195). This scene identifies the presence of an insider's language used to control the actions of insiders and showcases the hostile response to outsiders who do not perform the proper cultural idioms of the region. According to Harris, "The fact that the gesture would never be made [by Mr. Shortley] proves how effectively the mere threat of punishment helps maintain the code" (335). This threat is present, with or without the displaced person, but this scene elevates the hospitality presented by Mrs. McIntyre towards the foreigner and begins crafting Mrs. Shortley's hostile responses towards the foreigner.

In the first encounter mentioned above, Mrs. Shortley's hostile response is mirrored in a conversation she has later with Astor, one of Mrs. McIntyre's Black



workers. Astor, confused on what a displaced person is, asks Mrs. Shortley for clarification, to which she responds: “It means they ain’t where they were born at and there’s nowhere for them to go” (O’Connor, *CS* 199). Her explanation is met with Astor’s “illogic[al] Negro-thinking”: “If they here, they somewhere” (O’Connor, *CS* 199). Dissatisfied by Astor’s comment she continues by saying that the displaced person “ain’t where they belong to be at . . . They belong to be back over yonder where everything is still like they been used to” (O’Connor, *CS* 199). Mrs. Shortley’s inability to accept the displaced person with a sense of belonging showcases her lack of temporary tolerance but also alludes their welcome is on abbreviated time. She even expresses a vision of “ten million billion more just like them” wandering to their home and attempting to claim their belonging there (O’Connor, *CS* 199). After Astor leaves, she images these billions traveling over, forcing not her family and people like them out of jobs and their homes, but the people like Astor.

Despite Mrs. McIntyre’s initial preference towards the displaced person, her hospitality and charity begin fade as Mr. Guizac begins to continuously break the unstated, but highly prevalent, gestures of their Southern culture. In the story, Mr. Guizac crosses a racial taboo by planning to bring his White cousin over from Poland to marry Sulk, one of the Black workers on the farm. Finding out about their arrangement, Mr. McIntyre explodes onto Mr. Guizac: “You would bring this poor innocent child over here and try to marry her to a half-witted thieving black stinking nigger! What kind of monster are you!” (O’Connor, *CS* 222). Mr. Guizac’s response dodges the racist epithets and attempts to explain the situation from his Eastern European perspective. His reply is met with contempt and anger, as Mrs. McIntyre responds: “Mr. Guizac, that nigger cannot

have a white wife from Europe. You can't talk to a nigger that way. You'll excite him and besides it can't be done. Maybe it can be done in Poland but it can't be done here and you'll have to stop" (O'Connor, *CS* 222). Mr. Guizac's crossing of cultural boundaries, through denying the unspoken cultural gestures assumed between Whites and Blacks, switches Mrs. McIntyre's previous posture of hospitality to hostility. Up until this point, she has given grace to her displaced person, recognizing both the cultural and language barrier present. Yet, this action is too much and he does not belong. Mr. Guizac is upset by Mrs. McIntyre's lack of compassion. He was only trying to save his thirteen-year-old cousin, who is stuck in a prison camp. He does not understand why she could not marry Sulk in exchange for her safety. In response, Mrs. McIntyre says two things: "I am not responsible for the world's misery" and "This is my place . . . I say who will come here and who won't" (O'Connor 223), laying down both the limit of her hospitality and the laws regarding racial relations of Southern culture. Ultimately, it showcases the control that the laws surrounding Southern culture have on who is welcomed who is not welcomed.

Harris notes the "heart of the taboo in 'The displaced person' is miscegenation, a contamination or crossing of boundaries in the old world order" (336), which is echoed in Mrs. McIntyre's comment to Mr. Guizac: "Maybe it can be done in Poland but it can't be done here" (O'Connor, *CS* 223). Mrs. McIntyre's emphasis on performing under the set of Southern manners is seen here. Mixing and crossing of these cultural boundaries are not and will not be accepted. In her article, "No Place Like Home," Deborah Madsen notes of the concept of home "as a place of security and acceptance" which becomes "compromised and rendered ambivalent for the migrant subject when hospitality is

always conditional, and tolerance is inseparable from a process of othering” (Madsen 119-20). The Shortley’s patronized Mr. Guizac with and left him facing grave consequences. Yet, Mrs. McIntyre’s conditional hospitality in this scene questions more than just acceptance, but his ability to physically stay in this temporary home. The crossing of the social taboo becomes the turning point for Mrs. McIntyre, shifting what once was hospitality towards the foreigner to hostility. Mr. Guizac threatens the culture surrounding the hospitality nature of the Southern way of life, or at least threatens Mrs. McIntyre’s shallow understanding of hospitality.

For the remainder of the story, Mrs. McIntyre feels at war with the displaced person. Harris points out that despite the fact Mrs. McIntyre “was the one who resorted to using aggressive language with him,” she felt attacked and felt as if she needed to defend her way of life (336). She then “turns her former graciousness into a weapon against Mr. Guizac” and repeatedly sets out to fire him (Harris 336). However, she is torn and does not want to get rid of Mr. Guizac for fear of disturbing her “self-image as a good woman” (Harris 336). Mrs. McIntyre battles this internal confrontation between firing and keeping the displaced person employed and is stuck in the performance of a good Southern lady. In the end, she does not end up firing the man, but he is killed in the final scene. For Harris, Mr. Guizac as a “stand-in for Sulk: whatever punishment he receives for breaking the code would happen to Sulk were he to marry the white girl” (336). This scene then, which could be arguably staged by Mrs. McIntyre, Mr. Shortley, and Sulk, is a “kind of lynching” (Harris 336). Harris continues expressing that Mr. Guizac “not only plays the role of the black man; he also dies by the same kind of mob violence that Sulk would have suffered had he crossed a racial taboo and married a white woman” (Harris 337).

While Mr. Guizac is the physical victim of violence, not Sulk, the true crime is the racial taboo crossed his intent to marry Sulk to a White woman. Mr. Guizac's inability to understand this taboo gesture makes him the target of violence, while also depicting the violence inherently built within Southern hospitality and hostility towards Black individuals. Tolerance and hospitality in this story, once given, is flipped due to the fact Mr. Guizac will not conform to performance of Southern gestures in Mrs. McIntyre's South.

Conforming to the performance of Southern manners can also be heard within O'Connor's letters. In a letter to Maryat Lee, O'Connor describes why she refuses to meet with James Baldwin: "No I can't see James Baldwin in Georgia. It would cause the greatest trouble and disturbance and disunion. In New York it would be nice to meet him; here it would not. I observe the tradition of the society I feed on – it's only fair. Might as well expect a mule to fly as me to see James Baldwin in Georgia" (O'Connor, *HC* 1094-95). By declining this invitation, O'Connor mirrors Mrs. McIntyre's voice: "But it can't be done here" (O'Connor, *CS* 223) and showcases her own deep bond to the Southern codes of her time. According to Harris, O'Connor reluctantly consented to an interview in June of 1963, during such "she confirms the value of Southern manners: in the past, they provided the formal structure and 'social discipline' necessary under segregation for Blacks and whites to interact harmoniously and extend to each other both 'privacy' and charity'" (368). Refusing to host Baldwin, in its own way, was an act of charity towards her community and towards Baldwin. However, this refusal also speaks to the culture surrounding life in the South and the inherent game of who deserves Southern hospitality and who does not. O'Connor's response to Lee, regarding Baldwin, is understandable,

given the context, but also speaks to O'Connor's inability to perform outside of what is expected in her role as a White Southern lady.

Derrida's concept of conditional hospitality explores the binary relationship of welcoming and exclusion, or at least the ability to exclude those deemed a foreigner. He also explores the dependent relationship between the duty (*devoir*) of hospitality and the right (*droit*) to hospitality, each parallel closely with Derrida's ethics and politics of hospitality. For O'Connor, while she may believe in the ethics of hospitality, or one's unconditional right to welcome equally, she is stuck with the politics surrounding hospitality. Her Southern culture demands her to perform in according to the politics of hospitality. In her attempt to describe the state of ambivalence of hospitality in Australian literature, D. L. Madsen notes "hospitality is a right to visitation only, a temporary sojourn" rather than a "permanent residence," thus approaching not only the right to visitation but right of occupation (119). Madsen continues by addressing hospitality as a human right, like Derrida's belief in the universal right to hospitality. This human right, Madsen concludes is manifested through "the public nature of the public space, which is regulated by the State through the law" (120). The clauses that dictate right, according to Madsen's notions of hospitality, subjects hospitality to be conditional. Madsen's claims on the nature of public space ring true to with the politics of hospitality, as it up to individuals like O'Connor who are in charge of negotiating the borders between insiders and outsiders. Home is needed to enact hospitality, which is often offered and withheld based on the "nature of the public space," and therefore becomes inseparable from the process of othering and expressing who does not belong/who is not welcome. O'Connor

finds herself in her home, in Georgia, under conditional laws demanding she must perform a process of othering in a highly racialized public space.

O'Connor's inability to perform outside the role of Southern hospitality, as well as the limitations placed on her relationships created through the politics of hospitality, influences her works. One of her first published short stories, "The Geranium," follows Old Dudley, an old man, who has moved from the South to New York City at the request of his daughter. O'Connor's story depicts Dudley's struggle dealing with the loss of control he has over his body physically, but also the loss of control he now has as a foreigner in New York City. This loss of control is displayed through his loss of belonging and his inability, much like O'Connor, to not perform his role as a White Southern man. The conditions of his hospitable culture have changed, and he finds himself lost within these new codes. Throughout the story, Dudley reflects on the back hills of the South and the riverbanks of Georgia, contrasting his old memories with his new views in the city. Moving into his daughter's home he attempts to hold onto his Southern ideals, the ease he once felt through a sense of belonging, and the control he once had both physically and mentally through the space of his "home."

The physical space of his daughter's home was uncharted waters. The physical space of her home was different because "his daughter didn't even live in a house. She lived in a building—the middle in a row of buildings all alike" (O'Connor, *CS* 6). This is only one element of his daughter's home, and new codes of manners that is alien to Dudley. His depiction of his son-in-law as a "a queer one," also indicates his inability to understand his new space. Dudley's son-in-law drove a truck "and came in only on the weekends" (O'Connor, *CS* 6), and for him, this did not equate to his conception of being a father and

man. After his wife died, before moving to New York, Dudley lived in a boarding house for old ladies, protecting them and doing “the things a man in the house was supposed to do” (O’Connor, *CS* 5). His performance as Southern man, as the performance of hospitality is a culture, indicate his world views. The differences he finds between his conception of a true man, in comparison to his son-in-law, blind him from embracing him and his daughter’s home. Dudley’s Southern performance also immobilizes him to keep moving forward. He becomes stuck on the threshold of difference and is unable to identify a new mode of identity or manners. Dudley outwardly expresses his lack of belonging to his daughter, as she tells him to “come on . . . you’ll feel better when we get home” (O’Connor, *CS* 7). Struck by her comment, Dudley questions her flippant use of the term home, repeating “Home?” (O’Connor, *CS* 7).

Home should be a place of security, but for individuals seeking refuge or individuals who are given conditional hospitality, they are living in a space of betweenness. Their differences place them on the threshold with questions of identity and belonging. Unlike Mrs. McIntyre, Dudley is the Southerner who exists outside of his home, outside a space of belonging, and inside a new set of conditional hospitality rules. Dudley is now subject to a new “nature of public space” to which he is very aware. Yet, he had difficulty stripping away his Southern performances of hospitality, and attempts perform his Southern manners in a highly different system. Sitting in his daughter’s apartment he can hear a radio “bleating the worn music to soap serial” and the slamming of the apartment next door with “sharp footsteps clip[ing] down the hall” (O’Connor, *CS* 8). Dudley notes the cause of sound: “That would be the nigger, the nigger with the shiny shoes” (O’Connor, *CS* 8). Dudley’s identification of his daughter’s neighbor spirals this

next passage into his expectations of the culture surrounding him, and the manners that are no longer in place in his new space. At first, Dudley identified the new neighbor as the servant, lacking understanding of the real nature of the situation: “You mean, he’s gonna live next to you?” (O’Connor, *CS* 9). After confirming this fact and telling him he has no business addressing his neighbors’ ideals, he expresses to his daughter: ““You ain’t been raised to live tight with niggers that think they’re just as good to you”” (O’Connor, *CS* 9). Dudley, shocked by his daughter, had known how “yankees let niggers in their front doors and let them set on their sofas but he didn’t know his own daughter that was raised proper would stay next door to them—and then think he didn’t have no more sense than to want to mix with them” (O’Connor, *CS* 9).

In this short story, O’Connor places Dudley, the White Southern male, in the role of the inferior guest. He is having to navigate as a guest in his daughter’s apartment and foreigner in New York City. After his explosion about the new neighbor, Dudley is asked to go down to a lower level of the complex to retrieve something for his daughter. On his way down, Dudley runs into this new neighbor, who reminds him of his old Black fishing and hunting worker, Robbie. Dudley’s association between his daughter’s neighbor and his old worker attempt to insinuate inherent racial power structure of Southern culture. Yet, this time-travel is cut short as the neighbor interrupts his flashback: “What are you hunting, old-timer?” (O’Connor, *CS* 12). Uncomfortable and shocked by this friendly gesture, Dudley compares himself to feeling like a child, “with his mouth open and his tongue rigid” (O’Connor, *CS* 12). He shows his immobility to navigate his new space and foreign manners by falling, prompting the Black man to help back up to his feet and offer to assist him to his daughter’s apartment. If the roles happened to be reversed, taking



place in Dudley's social climate, the conditional Southern hospitality would have indicated a choice between hospitality or hostility. However, as indicated by Dudley's own performance, as his Southern culture seems inherently racially coded, he would have chosen the latter. However, this friendly stranger chose the avenue of a hospitable approach, one Dudley is unable to refuse.

In an attempt to make small talk, clearly understanding that Dudley is not from around these parts, the man asks Dudley "You from around here?" (O'Connor, *CS* 13). Much like "what is your name?" there are implications when asked "where are you from?" Madsen notes that this is "not an innocent question" and "encodes a set of assumptions about 'here' and 'there,' (non)belonging" (119). The neighbor's question insinuates the sender (himself) as an insider and receiver (Dudley) as an other. This question locates the individual and addresses them as a subject based on their foreignness, as they are perceived to belong somewhere else. Dudley's foreignness, a position opposite of Mrs. McIntyre and Mrs. Shortley in the South, does not go unnoticed. However, instead of receiving hostility, like Mr. Guizac received from Mrs. McIntyre and Mrs. Shortley, Dudley receives kindness, charity, and a welcome. Although he is positioned as an other, subordinated and within power in this social climate, he is received openly. This welcome is given by individual who Dudley would consider an other, nameless figure, and is someone who he has already enacted a posture of hostility toward. The neighbor's question and his hospitality is the focal point of this story. Through this encounter Dudley begins his own unraveling. Since he was already struggling with belonging and immobility in his new space, this encounter forces him to come face to face with the hostility embedded within his performance of Southern

culture. In addition, this hospitable enlightenment could not have occurred within the South, as he would not have seen beyond his own position as an insider. He no longer is the one providing for his daughter, he is no longer the one enacting the performance of hospitality or hostility towards strangers, he is no longer the one who can ask where someone is from, and is no longer the one blinded by power and privilege.

Back in the apartment, Dudley begins to unravel: “The pain in his throat was all over his face now, leaking out his eyes . . . his throat was going to pop on account of a nigger—a damn nigger that patted him on the back and called him ‘old-timer’” (O’Connor, *CS* 13). Dudley, in this scene, begins to break down on the account that he feels a sense of entrapment through his physical and social place. Despite the amount of time between the first publication of this short story, and her 1959 letter to Lee, regarding Baldwin, it is clear O’Connor struggles with the limits of Southern manners or the performance of hospitality as it relates to racial divisions. While she feels she cannot escape her Southern-ness while living in the South, in Georgia, she begins to critique this Southern dedication to the code through Dudley, as well as the racist qualities this code perpetuates. It is no doubt that O’Connor believed in the importance of a code of manners, especially as she declared, noted by Ralph Wood in “Where is the Voice Coming From?”: “It requires a considerable grace for two races to live together, particularly when the population is divided about fifty-fifty between them and when they have our particular history. It can’t be done without a code of manners based on mutual charity” (Wood 105). However, Dudley’s character seems to be more of a critique of the racist power structures embedded within Southern hospitality and Southern manners, like O’Connor’s refusal to host James Baldwin in her hometown. Dudley and O’Connor both

struggle with removing the obligation and need to perform Southern hostility towards outsiders. O'Connor, different than Dudley, is able to shed pieces of this performance based on her physical space, as she wrote about Baldwin "In New York it would be nice to meet him; here it would not" (O'Connor, *HC* 1094-95). As quoted by Harris. Baldwin seems to accurately depict O'Connor unraveling of Southern hospitality: "I talked to many Southern liberals, who were doing their best to bring integration about in the South, but met scarcely a single Southerner who did not weep for the passing of the old order" (Harris 207-08). O'Connor writes Dudley, in New York City, unable to move on and adapt a new code of manners because she wanted to critique the deep legacy individuals felt towards, as Baldwin put it, "the old order."

O'Connor showcases how the performance of Southern hospitality and hostility has the power to create and keep racial divides, but also, she crafts the weight these divides carry on individuals who abide by these codes. In "The Displaced Person," the power dichotomy situated between host and guest, Mrs. McIntyre and Mr. Guizac, places the primary control in the hosts' hands. Much like how O'Connor feels she must refuse to host Baldwin in Georgia and Dudley's inability to feel at home in New York, O'Connor demonstrates how the performance of Southern hospitality not only gives power to the host but itself makes the host subjected to the social manners it has created. Southern hospitality is not only conditional for the guest, but conditional the host as well. Mrs. McIntyre, after enraged by the crossing of the social taboo, feels she must fire Mr. Guizac. Her desire to fire Mr. Guizac is reaffirmed by Mr. Shortley reappearance. After being fired, Mr. Shortley presents the conditions of Southern-ness that Mrs. McIntyre must perform. His case to be rehired is not situated on his abilities as a good employee

but on his authority as a Southerner who “fought and bled and died in the service of his native land” (O’Connor, *CS* 228). Although Mr. Shortley and others in her community lay out the conditions of her Southern culture, Mrs. McIntyre still finds herself battling between a moral and legal obligation towards Mr. Guizac. While she says, “her moral obligation was to her own people” like “Mr. Shortley who had fought in the world war for his country,” she knows that Mr. Guizac needs refuge. Her indecisiveness is her internal battle between conditional hospitality and an unconditional hospitality she seems to be learn through the foreigner’s presence.

Mrs. McIntyre, notably the character granted the most control in this story, is still subjected to the conditions surrounding the performance of Southern hospitality. She is indebted through charity to receive Mr. Guizac and then, in turn, stuck between firing or not firing him based on his inability to conform to the Southern way. Her frustration is manifested through her comment: “Of all the things she resented about him, she resented most that he hadn’t left on his own accord” (O’Connor, *CS* 234). For Dudley, his Southern manners are so embedded within his life that he has no concept of belonging or home outside of the South. The performance of hospitality in this sense, like Madsen suggests, draws beyond just the social relationship that Dudley creates with his new neighbor. Instead, in his new space the performance of Southern hospitality would instead evoke different conditions within his new situated culture. As O’Connor sets up Dudley’s character as negative and aggressive man, who in the face of what could be real charity, reacts with shock. Dudley’s Southern-ness is the conditional hospitality that masks hostile and exclusive actions through seemingly hospitable gestures. Since his identity is conflated with Southern culture of difference, he does not extend unconditional

hospitality towards anyone. Instead, he receives a gesture of hospitality from the unnamed man in the staircase. Sill notes that “hospitality touches on that fundamental ethical question (since it is itself an ethical foundation) of boundaries of the human, and how we set these up” (O’Connor, *CS* 4). Crossing the boundaries, Dudley’s position of guest allows O’Connor to critique Southern hospitality and presumably racial hierarchies present within Southern culture.

“The Geranium” attempts to question how the performance of Southern hospitality approaches boundaries of different manners and modes, in contrast to the functioning models that ingrained into the individuals subjected to these codes. In his article “Where is the Voice Coming From,” Wood comments that “The Geranium” is “nothing less than a liberal’s critique of Southern racial attitudes” (“Where is the Voice” 98). Wood continues later concluding that “the ending of O’Connor’s story enforces its rather heavy-laden moral: just as the potted geraniums crash to the ground below Dudley’s window, so must the bigotry of his generation be shattered on the fact of racial equality” (“Where is the Voice” 99). While this story is a critique of Southern racial attitudes, it also depicts how this systemic power structure constrains insiders and outsiders alike within Southern hospitality. Instead, the geraniums crashing to the ground could be equated with Dudley’s inability to perform outside of the position of a host and his inability to cross the ethical and political boundaries of his new residence. Prompted by his failure to perform outside the conditions of his Southern identity, the geraniums shattering on the sidewalk represents Dudley’s violent demise. His new neighbor’s generosity undoes his understanding of what hospitality is, ultimately making him

question who he is. Since he no longer understands these narratives, other than what has always been told he ought not to do, Dudley implodes.

The power of Southern hospitality not only limits individuals in the guest/outsider role but also seems to limit the crossing of boundaries from host/insider to guest/outsider. The actions associated with, or conflated with, the crossing of the boundaries of these hospitable roles seem to end in violence, or at least a metaphor for violence. O'Connor's "Everything That Rises Must Converge" resonates the violence subjected to individuals who attempt to cross boundaries of the culture set up by the hospitality of their region. O'Connor's short story portrays the relationship between a traditional Southern mother and her liberalized son as they ride together to the YMCA. The story is told from the perspective of the son, Julian, a recent college graduate who still lives with his mother. Julian's inner dialogue and outward dialogue comments on his mother's faulty worldview regarding race and her Southern culture. Julian's thoughts of his mother showcase a hostile stance towards her lack of intellectual growth, love for the South, and blatant racism. Julian, much like Hulga in "Good Country People," is steeped in the performance of Southern hospitality. His view of his mother is still a performance of Southern hostility, one that is not congruent with social standards. Near the end of the story, Julian's hostile rage seems to boil when his mother decides to give a penny to the Black child, a gesture "natural to her as breathing" (O'Connor, *CS* 417). This gift was met with contempt and Julian's mother is struck down by the child's mother. In a heated rage, Julian tells his mother "You got exactly what you deserved," and "What all this means is that the old world is gone. The old manners are obsolete, and your graciousness is not worth a damn" (O'Connor, *CS* 418-19). Degrading his mother continuously after she had

been struck, causes her to fall to the ground and die. While the mother physically receives the act of violence and ultimately death, Julian is the one who is deeply affected and moved by this situation. His mother's death causes himself to question his performance of Southern hostility.

Julian and his mother clash constantly throughout this short story. Judgmental, Julian condescends when he talks to his mother, whether it be about her "hideous" purple velvet hat or her giving the small child a nickel (O'Connor, *CS* 405). Yet, Julian character presents a Southern identity that is a critique of the old order, one of which his mother performs. Like Dudley's geranium falling and shattering on the ground, Julian's mother's death can be her only escape from the dichotomy of insider/outsider set up in Southern culture through violence. There is no way she can pass into a new set of codes and manners, especially dealing with race, that her son demands she follows. Yet Julian himself is also stuck in his performance of Southern-ness. In a search for help, his feet "carried him nowhere" and he is ultimately unable to help his mother, take back his final words, or be separate from the rage of righteousness he feels towards this particular situation. His patronizing belief of his mother ruins their relationship, despite the fact his mother continuously presented him with charity and love. While he knows his mother's, hospitable posture is shallow and a façade of hostility, his posture of Southern-ness is also not the ideal solution. Much like Hulga, Julian does not know answer to this riddle, and is stuck in within moment of grace given to his mother. The death of his mother is a grace to her, but it also allows for Julian to critique his own worldviews.

Within these short stories mentioned, O'Connor portrays her perception of racialized power imbalances through the performance of Southern hospitality. The way in

which she depicts these imbalances are centered in an anti-racist lens, but within the material world, she seems to be fully subjected to the manners of Southern culture, rejecting these anti-racist claims she depicts. One of O'Connor's short stories became controversial in its naming. According to Wood's article, O'Connor was asked to change her short story title, "The Artificial Nigger," before its publication in the *Kenyon Review*. However, O'Connor refused. Wood also notes how O'Connor has received much criticism for her use of highly racially charged language and her personal views, where she is often seen to "be a rank racist in her private opinions" ("Where is the Voice" 91). In her letter refusing to meet Baldwin in Georgia, these claims could be seen as close to the truth. Yet, Wood seems to argue "the problem lies not so much with O'Connor's use of the demeaning term . . . but with the way she uses it. Racial epithets can be employed by insiders both to vilify and to compliment" (Wood, "Where is the Voice" 95). To have changed her short story name would have "sanitized the title would have robbed the story of its real power, the power to invert racist intention into anti-racist redemption" (Wood, "Where is the Voice" 111). Wood notes "her liberal use of the term discloses an illiberal numbness to the evils that blacks suffered in the segregate South," which seems to be vastly different from his previous comments on O'Connor's abundant use of racial epithets within her work. Continuing, he addresses how O'Connor never mentions horrors surrounding the Black individual, but instead, she focuses on her complaint against Northern journalists, the Northern depiction of the South, and her thoughts on integration—which she believed only serve to "increase the number of places where races would 'mill about' together" (Wood, "Where is the Voice" 95). As there is a clashing



between Julian and his mother, Dudley and his new physical space, there is a clashing between the discourse surrounding O'Connor's approach to race in her works.

What I find fascinating about Wood's claim is that O'Connor's literary voice is less interested in human dilemmas and human solutions than in stories of grace. Wood believes that O'Connor's South is "not moralistic accounts of blacks breaking free from the fetters of racist injustice, nor of whites being condemned for their inability to accept the brave new world of racial equality. They are stories about the grace that makes clowns of us all, liberals no less than reactionaries, the old no less than the young, the genteel no less than the uncouth" (Wood, *The Christ-Haunted South* 113). While these stories maybe about grace, her snapshots of the South do vilify and demonstrate a deeply felt and performed sense of racial inequality. The ways in which O'Connor crafts her stories resonate the deeply felt racial inequality through her characters and the way she approaches grace, especially as she simultaneously both critiques anti-racist claims and reaffirms them throughout her work.

While attempting to critique these anti-racist claims of the South, dramatizing the Southern hospitality culture, O'Connor also, in turn, reinforces the power dynamics she attempts to break down. Primarily, this is done through how she writes her Black characters. Toni Morrison, in her book *Playing in the Dark*, points out the need to reexamine how White men and women use Black characters, or a Black persona, to move their narrative forward. Morrison argued that there is "a dark and abiding presence that moves the hearts and texts of American literature with fear and longing. This haunting, a darkness from which our early literature seemed unable to extricate itself, suggests the complex and contradictory situation in which American writers found themselves during

the formative years of the nation's literature" (33). This idea rests on the concept that White-ness was and is only formed and contrasted through what it is not: Black-ness or the "Africanist presence." She later continues through the concept of freedom, since "nothing highlighted freedom—if it did not, in fact, create it—like slavery" (Morrison 38). She continues by noting: "Black slavery enriched the country's creative possibilities. For in that construction of blackness and enslavement could be found not only in the not-free but also, with the dramatic polarity created by skin color, the projection of the not-me" (Morrison 38). This projection of the "not-me," based on Morrison's argument, resonances with the dominant cultural traditions of the Southern-ness presented within O'Connor's work.

In "The Displaced Person," "The Geranium," and "Everything That Rises Must Converge," O'Connor's Black characters are not given much spotlight. Most of them are nameless, and considered lacking personality, and are only used to push forward the agenda of the story. According to Morrison, "Africanism is the vehicle by which the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free . . . not helpless, but licensed and powerful . . . not damned, but innocent" (52). Africanism, as Morrison describes, is what allows White America to understand itself by what is not. In "The Displaced Person," Sulk and Astor, although named, are only depicted in contrast to Mrs. Shortley and Mr. Guizac, and are presented less than throughout. When confronting the social taboo crossed, Mrs. McIntyre approaches Mr. Guizac, critiquing his choices in the situation and not placing blame on Sulk, for he did not know any better. Mrs. McIntyre, in a later passage, shifts her praise of Mr. Guizac, noting he is no longer satisfactory because "he doesn't understand how to get on with my niggers and they don't like him" (O'Connor,

CS 225). The scene not only deepens the self-other divide between Southerner and non-Southerner but speaks to Mrs. McIntyre's inclusion of Sulk and Astor as conflated with her self-identity. They are included in the realm of Mrs. McIntyre as part of her farm, which is especially interesting because of the ways she does not include the Shortleys and her previous White workers into the conception of her space. Her White workers were mostly sorry people and White trash, to which she does not include, but for her Black workers she does. When talking to an older Black worker, she expresses her frustration over the Shortleys' abnornement, but also discloses that this old worker has never left: "And me and you,' the old man said, stooping to drag his hoe under a feed rack, 'is still here'" (O'Connor, CS 214). Internally, Mrs. McIntyre thinks: "you might have been here before I was . . . but it's mighty likely I'll be here when you're gone" (O'Connor, CS 214). This scene specifies both her lumping of her Black workers as a part of the space of her farm, and her control over their working ability on the farm. More importantly, her control over them and the physically space becomes affected by the presence of the displaced person, who continually challenges the code of manners. Her Black workers then become a tool in which to blame the displaced person as she fights only for their wellbeing as it is conflated with her farm.

"The Geranium" uses Dudley's nameless Black neighbor, paralleled with his old semi-friend Rabie, a Black worker who lived in the basement of the boarding house and fishing partner. When describing his partner, Rabie, and their fishing trips, Dudley notes that Rabie "could steal cleaner than a weasel but he knew where the fish were. Old Dudley always gave him the little ones" (O'Connor, CS 5). Rabie, a better fisher than Dudley, must cover up Dudley's failures. Dudley memory attempts to rationalize his

inabilities and solidify him as more powerful than Rabie. Dudley conceptualizes his relationship with Rabie as situated within a power dichotomy, similar to that of master-slave present in Southern traditions. Living in the South, Rabie is forced into playing the role Dudley prescribes him due to the manners of performance in the South. Therefore, when Dudley's attitudes towards his daughter's new neighbor begins to parallel with Rabie, O'Connor begins critiquing the code of manners of the South which is inappropriate in the new space of the North. Paralleling these two Black characters moves Dudley to the climax of the story, when he realizes he is no longer home anymore. O'Connor's story presents a role reversal in order to dissect the racial inequality present within the Southern performance, but in doing so she uses Black characters to achieve her overarching goal. Although Black characters are present, they have little to do with the story and are only used as a vehicle to unravel the old man's identity and conception of himself outside of the South.

"Everything That Rises Must Converge" focuses on the issues surrounding race but deals little with the interactions between the Black and White mother-son pair and instead focuses in on Julian and his mother's relationship and reactions through these encounters. Julian and his mother are defined or being defined by each other, through their gestures towards the Black individuals they meet on the bus. Julian attempts to attack his mother by making conversation with a Black man. His mother, through her performances and her interactions with the young boy infuriate Julian. Even the agency and violence of the mother's death does not fall on the Black woman who inflicted the violence but Julian's judgmental attitude. It is also in this story, the nameless Black

figure, like Morrison suggests, becomes the vehicle for which O'Connor can explore both the plot and the critique of Southern racial inequality.

As mentioned earlier, Wood believes O'Connor's stories are less about navigating racial inequities than about grace. While this claim is true, I also believe the way O'Connor chooses to depict this grace demonstrates the deeply ingrained racial inequalities within her own Southern culture. Her stories showcase the dichotomy of insider verses outsider, and the Southern hospitality masking of Southern hostility, through how she writes her characters on the bases of race. Due to her inability to deconstruct Southern hospitality within her real life, O'Connor's moments of grace allow for her to be in control of who presents and receives this grace. In the three short stories mentioned above, moments of grace are only prompted through her Black characters: Mrs. McIntyre is given a kernel of grace by her Old Black worker, Dudley by his new neighbor, and the Black Woman for Julian. It is not through the actions of her White characters that they achieve their own grace, but is presented through their Black counterparts. How O'Connor depicts Southern hospitality, especially through the depictions of her Black characters, can and does undergo moments of deconstruction as it relates to the crossing of boundaries. According to Still, this can be done "physically, or through threshold between the self and other, private and public, inside and outside" (4). Perhaps O'Connor attempts to provide forgiveness and grace to her White characters through her Black characters, just as Southern hospitality demands a performance of particular conditions. Or perhaps she is just focusing less on who her Black characters are altogether, unless it is needed to describe her White characters, especially since her Black characters not only defined her main characters, through what they are not, but also are

the characters that give the most support and grace despite their hostile positions against them. Since “hospitality touches [the] fundamental ethical question (of the boundaries of the human, and how we set these up)” (Still 4), O’Connor could be continually upholding the systematic power placed through host/guest divide through depicting her Black characters this way.

O’Connor systematically supports racial inequities with her Black characters. As such, these stories speak to the difficulty of escaping our cultural conditions, whether they be Southern hospitality or other cultural conditions. All O’Connor’s characters in “The Displaced Person,” “The Geranium,” and “Everything that Rises Must Converge” believe that they are right or that they are the most hospitable. Mrs. McIntyre, Old Dudley, and Julian are subjected to their Southern-ness and perform such with ease until these moments of grace. It is within these moments that they begin questioning their identity and begin becoming unraveled. These moments of grace, much like for Hulga and Ruby, provide a vision into their conditional and hurtful stance. These characters come face to face with their earthly failings and get a glimpse into their shallow understanding of their world. These moments show how each character will never be able to live up to the grace that they are given, nor will they be able to achieve unconditional hospitality. Like grace, unconditional hospitality as concept cannot be fully grasped. However violent these moments are for O’Connor’s characters, it has no comparison to the very glum lives they will live knowing they have to endure their human failings.

O’Connor depiction of the conditional performance of Southern hospitality, as it relates to the racial inequities present within Southern culture is seen her short stories “The Displaced Person,” “The Geranium,” and “Everything That Rises Must Converge.”

The insider versus outsider present within the dichotomy of conditional hospitality, as hostility and hospitality are equally enacted to maintain the code of manners. While the guest is situated in a lower position of power, having to navigate new and old landscapes, the host is equally subjected to the performances of Southern hospitality. O'Connor breaks down this conditional and shallow Southern hospitality in short stories, but she also unintentionally depicts how hard it is to separate oneself from these cultural modes and manners through the way she writes and uses Black characters.

CHAPTER IV  
RELIGIOUS CONFLICT WITHIN O'CONNOR'S PERFORMANCE OF SOUTHERN  
HOSPITALITY

Flannery O'Connor once wrote that the south is "hardly Christ-centered" but it is "certainly Christ-haunted (*MM* 44). In his article "The Curse of Christ in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction," Robert Detweiler begins unpacking O'Connor's words, focusing on how her detailed exploitation of ghosts, as "they cast strange shadows, very fierce shadows, particularly in our literature" (*MM* 45). Detweiler claims these ghosts, with their "stranger shadows," are a great description to her fiction: "For it is there, in her stories and novels, that the specters of sin, guilt, and judgment are incarnated and quickened in violent, perverse, and monstrous form to plague our uneasy, godless era" (235). While O'Connor's stories are "permeated by religious material" (Detweiler 235), she showcases the manipulation of these religious materials through language and images, used within the "Christ-haunted South." Inner conflicts within Mrs. McIntyre, in "The Displaced Person," addresses the issues surrounding how the "Christ-haunted South" conflates the ideal unconditional hospitality found within Christian faith with the conditional hospitality of Southern performance, and how this creates disillusionment for its performers. Mrs. May, in "Greenleaf," struggles with control over the narrative of her Southern Christian performance as she is continually compared to the overly religious tenant worker on her farm. In "Revelation," Ruby Turpin also questions her identity as it relates to her Southern hospitality performance, and the inherent hierarchical power



structures she sees within religion and Christianity. All three of these women in O'Connor's stories portray the strange shadows of Christ, or Christianity, lurking within their Southern performance.

These three women in her stories attempt to position themselves as unconditionally open individuals, as their religious identity calls them to be. However, their conditional Southern performance inhibits their ability to be fully welcoming and hides their inherent hostility towards others. Their Southern-ness blinds their ability to navigate different, especially when approaching religious differences. O'Connor's shows this paralyzing and blinding conditional Southern hospitality through the way Mrs. McIntyre, Mrs. May, and Ruby approach religious language and imagery, permitting divides between their Southern religion and the other, as well as religious and non-religious individuals between different classes.

O'Connor's depiction of religion in the South, and her views of the South are embodied within her phrase "Christ-haunted South." Her stories seem to reject a South that is "Christ-centered," creating one separate from religious ideology and only alludes to such. The performance of Southern hospitality is embedded within the performance of faith. In his article, "A Roman Catholic at Home in the Fundamentalist South," Ralph C. Wood writes that O'Connor's faith and art were "deeply concerned about the homogenizing ethos of the Eisenhower era" (15), a time that was both pro-American and anti-Communist. O'Connor's reaction to American life and idealism also heavily impacted her views of the South and her stories. Wood expands by writing that the "'American Way of Life' became the talismanic phrases for hailing all that was virtuous about our system of government and for damning all competing systems" (Wood 15).

This age of Americanism witnessed moments of triumph economically, which filtered down into daily life, and created the “homogenizing ethos” both political and religious (Wood 15). O’Connor was openly against the “American Way of Life” and the self-sufficient, materialistic, and conformed creation of identity centered within economic development, rather than religious principles. She expresses her fears for the Southern writer against the “American Way of Life” in her essay, “The Fiction Writer & His Country.” For O’Connor, the South’s anguish is not for the alienation between the North and the South, “but by the fact that it is not alienated enough, that every day we are getting more and more like the rest of the country, that we are being forced out not only of our many sins, but of our few virtues” (*MM* 28-29). In this essay, she is prompting writers to continually draw inspiration from their regional culture, so that may protect this culture of the South. However, O’Connor is speaking against this “homogenizing ethos” of the newly and growing American way of life, believing that the way of life does not come from one large conforming identity, but from small, regional cultural sins and virtues.

As mentioned before, manners of regions are particularly important to O’Connor, so much so that “bad manners are better than no manners at all, because we are losing our customary manners” (O’Connor, *MM* 29). However, what is particularly interesting between the fight she sees between Southern manners and Americanism is the conflated Southern identity that is used within her stories regarding religion. Not only did O’Connor reject the “newly emerging American civil religion” (Woods 17), she felt this approaching American civil religion as a threat to the Southern culture and Southern hospitality as a culture. As Anthony Szczesiul writes: “Southern hospitality more often

than not is unquestioningly accepted as a natural cultural attribute of the South” (128). But with the growth of civil religion, placing American identity over faith and over Southern-ness, the inherent conditional structures of hospitality are more prevalent between insider and outsider. Conditional hospitality and hostility is revealed within Southern religious belief, especially if that religious belief is constructed outside of the traditional Southern church. However, it seems that like Americanism, Southern-ness does not lie within a specific church, but within that idea of a church. Wood quotes Will Herberg’s 1955 book, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew*: ““Each of the religions is equally and authentically American,” which he believes to be a clear “articulation of American civil religion” (Wood 18). For Americans “are first of all Americans, and only secondarily are [they] Jews or Muslims, Protestants or Catholics or Orthodox” (Wood 18). O’Connor echoes this belief, insinuating something deadly occurs when a national or regional identity is created to trump religious faith. Through this conflation, faith then becomes religiously thin for specific believers but also deeply felt by the religious-less. Faith essentially becomes watered down, “once the substance of ‘faith’ no longer needs to be specified, as long as it is ‘deeply felt,’ then the public atheist has no more function and virtually vanishes from the American scene” (Wood 19).

“The Displaced Person” challenges Southern hospitality’s inherent racial inequalities and challenges issues relating to permeating the faithless religiousness within conditional Southern hospitality. Throughout this story, O’Connor’s characters conflate their religious identity and regional identity, turning the performance of Southern hospitality into Southern hostility. Mrs. Shortley, noted in the previous chapter, is performing acts of hostility towards the displaced person based on the premise he does

not belong. Yet, his non-belonging was not physically shown. Mr. Guizac and his family were not physically different than Mrs. Shortley, as his wife “had on a dress she might have worn herself” and the children “were dressed like anybody from around” (O’Connor, *CS* 195). Unlike how she would position herself against the Black workers on the farm, Mrs. Shortley must only differentiate herself from Mr. Guizac on his foreign customs and his religion. When thinking about the displaced person, she often found his religion to be dangerous to her and her surrounding community: “But with foreigners on the place, with people who are all eyes and no understanding, who had come from a place continually fighting, where the religion had not been reformed” (O’Connor, *CS* 204-5). Mrs. Shortley’s concern for the displaced person’s religion, as in the danger of its presence, follows in the next passage: “Every time Mr. Guizac smiled, Europe stretched out in Mrs. Shortley’s imagination, mysterious and evil, the devil’s experiment station” (O’Connor, *CS* 205). Ultimately, Mrs. Shortley believes that “they,” others from Europe, are “full of crooked ways. They never have advanced or reformed. They got the same religion as a thousand years ago. It could only be the devil responsible for that” (O’Connor, *CS* 206). To articulate a difference that she cannot see, she parallels Mr. Guizac’s identity with Europe, which she believes is place full of fighting and unreformed religion. Mrs. Shortley’s highly descriptive comments show the associations she creates between the displaced person’s regional identity, a regional identity embedded with its own religion, and its connection with devil. Viewing Europe as “unadvanced,” “unreformed,” and “full of crooked ways” (O’Connor, *CS* 205) allows for Mrs. Shortley to begin creating distance between her and Mr. Guizac, especially regarding a religious difference that she assumes makes him evil.

The difference she believes exists between herself and the displaced person is through cultural and religious beliefs. However, Mrs. Shortly does not claim to be religious herself, “for she felt that religion was essentially for those people who didn’t have the brains to avoid evil without it” (O’Connor, *CS* 203). Religion to her is not a higher belief, but a way to function in society, which is in harmony with Wood’s statements about faith and civil religion. This also allows a deeper understanding towards the terminologies she uses against the uncivilized displaced person, to whom she conflates with the devil. She not only believes these differences to be true but speaks them outwardly to Mrs. McIntyre and her husband. In comparison between Mr. Shortley and Mr. Guizac, Mrs. Shortley believes that no man could work as hard as her husband, but also no man is “more of a Christian” (O’Connor, *CS* 205). Despite the unreligious level she claims, O’Connor inadvertently conflates the performance of Christianity and the performance of Southern hospitality as one. To perform the Southern hospitality is to be a Christian, or at least perform the role of Christian.

The Christian performance as a part of Southern culture is also present for Mrs. McIntyre. Before helping the displaced person, Mrs. McIntyre “had never known a priest until she had gone to see this one on business” (O’Connor, *CS* 225), demonstrating her disconnect between religious practice and her Christian identity. Mrs. McIntyre had not thought much about religion, despite expecting others, like Mr. Guizac, to perform as a Christian. When Mrs. McIntyre becomes upset that Mr. Guizac would marry his white cousin to Sulk, she claims she “cannot understand how a man who calls himself a Christian could bring a poor innocent girl over here and marry her to something like that” (O’Connor, *CS* 223). Mrs. McIntyre’s condemnation for his actions is a response to the

crossing of a racial taboo but also showcasing the boundaries of difference between religious ideology present between them. For Mrs. McIntyre, Christianity is a performance so deeply embedded within the performance of Southern hospitality that when social boundaries of the South are not included, that performance is inherently wrong. As Mr. Guizac fails to participate particularly in this performance of Southern hospitality, with its racial equalities present within the White Christian conception, his Christian performance becomes called into question. His lack of conforming is turning point for Mrs. McIntyre. Moving forward in the story she demands he understands their social manners and begins using her power over him on the farm. If he chooses to not perform a Southern Christian man's role, one separate from inter-racial relationships, then he will be removed from her farm.

Mrs. McIntyre's conversations speak into the construction of a good Southern, hospitable, individual as it is conflated with a preconceived religious identity, reverberating O'Connor's "Christ-haunted South." The power that the performance of Southern hospitality has over Mrs. McIntyre, and the conditional acceptance this grants Mr. Guizac, appears in their differing opinions on how to help his cousin. Mrs. McIntyre is appalled that he would marry off her to Sulk and cannot see past her own social cultural boundaries to the larger implications this has on his young cousin. She is blinded by her own conditional Southern performance. This indicates not a true welcoming to Mr. Guizac, but a conditional openness towards the displaced person. As Derrida writes "We do not yet know what hospitality is" ("Hostipitality" 6), he is referring to the unconditional hospitality that Mrs. McIntyre is not able to give Mr. Guizac and his cousin. Unable to fully know or grasp unconditional hospitality and pure, infinite

welcoming, Mrs. McIntyre cannot extend such to Mr. Guizac and his young, and helpless cousin. Her discrepancy with her own hospitality as elevated as she unable to comprehend a way to save this child who is in imminent danger. Clearly distressed and worried for her safety, Mr. Guizac was only attempting to find a way to rescue her. However, the blinding force of Southern hospitality, as it is synonymous with Christian identity, inhibits her to see past the social implications of his plan, negating the displaced persons true caring motive. In response to him, Mrs. McIntyre claims “I am not responsible for the world’s misery” (O’Connor, *CS 223*), showcasing a performative contradiction of her hospitality, as she is not openly accepting all who seek refuge, and solidifying her inability to be truly hospitable. For Mrs. McIntyre, it is not about an open welcome, but instead a conditioned openness that still allows her to maintain control over her space. One can only assume that a truly Christian response would be to help this child, instead is not situated in an open Christian acceptance of the other, but one on situated in the illusion of such. Her conditional acceptance of Mr. Guizac not only affects his ability to navigate the Southern boundaries, but also inhibits his cousin’s ability to receive any help or her own hospitality.

After Mr. Guizac’s racial taboo, Mrs. McIntyre finds herself in the company of the priest, Father Flynn, trying to convince him, and herself, that she must let him go: “‘There is no moral obligation to keep him,’ she was saying under her breath, ‘there is absolutely no moral obligation . . . I’m not theological. I’m practical! I want to talk to you about something practical!’” (O’Connor, *CS 225*). It is important to note that until this encounter, interactions between the priest and had been relatively pleasant. Yet, in this moment, there is contempt between them, due to Mrs. McIntyre’s inability to graciously

and openly accept Mr. Guizac. Despite her earlier opinions of Mr. Guizac, Mrs. McIntyre no longer finds him satisfactory because he does not fit the conditions of the culture. Experiencing disunion in the thought of retracting her hospitality, she seeks guidance from the priest. While she claims to wish to get rid of him for practical reasons, as it is definitely not a theological issue, she is immobilized in making a decision. Her meetings with the priest have created within her an inner conflict between her conditional performance of Southern hospitality and newfound relationship with a higher theological unconditional acceptance of others. Through this conversation, her distaste for the displaced person begins to create disinterest between Mrs. McIntyre and the priest as it also increases the internal conflict she faces regarding her conditional performance. Outwardly she addresses that she does not want to talk about the theological, but the practical, and attempts to display her relationship with the displaced person as purely transactional. Mrs. McIntyre's belief is that Mr. Guizac's difference removes any "moral obligation" for her to keep him, and she can, at least through her words in this scene, relinquish her hospitality at any moment. However, this scene indicates an inward struggle created by the conflation of Southern hospitality and Christian performances.

When talking to the priest, it seems that Mrs. McIntyre feels convicted and called to a higher authority, as she is looking for affirmation from him. She tries to dismiss this call, diminishing her internal conflict through her comment "after [Father Flynn] had got her the Pole, he had used the business introduction to try to convert her—just as she had supposed he would" (O'Connor, *CS* 225) This comment is Mrs. McIntyre's hope to regain control over the narrative of Southern performance, away from theological principles, as she targets the priest for this new and unwanted conviction. In response to



her hostile threat, the priest says to her, “Dear lady, I know you well enough to know you wouldn’t turn him out for a trifle” (O’Connor, *CS* 226). Upset by this notion, she tries to argue with Father Flynn, “[Mr. Guizac] didn’t have to come in the first place,” to which the priest responds, “he came to redeem us” (O’Connor, *CS* 226). In this very odd scene, Mrs. McIntyre and the priest are on two different wavelengths. Where Mrs. McIntyre is speaking into a conversation targeted at relieving guilt for limiting her hospitality, the priest is speaking on a higher plane, one that regards unconditional hospitality as it relates to radical openness of acceptance of a foreigner as a truly divine experience. Mrs. McIntyre’s relationship with the priest and conversations with him showcase this “deeply felt” national faith, exemplifying the religious-less manners associated with the performance of Southern hospitality.

Hospitality, steeped in its own contradictions, creates what Derrida refers as the paradox of hospitality, as the ethics of hospitality is positioned against the politics of hospitality. The politics of hospitality is the “*greeting* of the foreign other as friend but on the condition that the host, the one who receives, lodges or *gives asylum* remains the *patron*, the master of the household” (Derrida, “Hostipitality” 4). The ethics of hospitality deals more with the unconditional acceptance of the guest, equal to that of the host. This radical openness is what is lacking within Mrs. McIntyre’s hospitality and understanding of her Christian belief, as she unaware of how to navigate a complete and open acceptance of the other. She is uncomfortable by these notions, as the priest begins talking about Christ, “Mrs. McIntyre’s face assumed a set puritanical expression and she reddened. Christ in the conversation embarrassed her the way sex had her mother” (O’Connor, *CS* 226). Mrs. McIntyre’s approach to religion, in the way true religion made

her feel, expresses the conflated identity of being both Christian and a Southerner, despite the fact these narratives are only a performance and not genuinely believed or enacted. While welcoming was a pivotal role of women's identity in the South, as well as a Christian principle, Mrs. McIntyre's discomfort is her lack of true experience with religion, as well as her lack of understanding the unconditional hospitality rooted within the theological understanding. Before meeting Father Flynn and inviting the displaced person to live with her, she had only known a politically based version of hospitality, situated within the Southern conditional performance. Learning theologically based reasoning through her conversations with the priest introduced her to the ethics of hospitality. This initiated her internal conflict of theological versus practical, and the deconstruction of her concept of Southern hospitality.

Mrs. McIntyre's internal conflict and the deconstruction of her conception of Southern hospitality continues throughout the short story. After the death of his wife and Mr. Guizac's crossed boundary, Mr. Shortley returned to Mrs. McIntyre's farm to look for work. As he expresses how his wife had died, Mr. Shortley blames the displaced person: "I figure that Pole killed her . . . she seen through him from the first she known he come from the devil. She told me so'" (O'Connor, *CS* 227). Mr. Shortley's association of non-Southerners and non-Americans as a devil is a performance of hostility and echoes his wife's conflation of region and religion. The false god of civil religion being the South and the body of manners surrounding Southern life, and the opposite on these borders is the competing villain tearing these worlds down. Paralleling Mrs. McIntyre's early conversation with the priest, Mr. Shortley "had said there was no legal obligation for her to keep the displaced person if he was not satisfactory, but he had brought up the

moral one. She meant to tell him that *her* moral obligation was to her people, to Mr. Shortley, who had fought in the world war for his country and not to Mr. Guizac who had merely arrived here to take advantage of whatever he could” (O’Connor, CS 228). Mrs. McIntyre’s internal conflict, as she is being pulled between a moral obligation to her region or a moral obligation to faith, becomes manifested in these two characters. Father Flynn and Mr. Shortley present flipped moral obligations, leaving Mrs. McIntyre stuck deciding on whether or not to express a radical openness of hospitality towards the foreigner or to end her graciousness on the account he has not performed according to the conditions of the culture.

Unable to make a decision, she pushes both her moral and obligations claims aside and internalizes the decision. Yet this decision continually haunted her, looming over her in her sleep. In a nightmare, the priest came to her, saying, “Dear lady, I know your tender heart won’t suffer you to turn the porrrrr man out. Think of the thousands of them, think of the ovens and the boxcars and the camps and the sick children and Christ Our Lord” (O’Connor, CS 231). In a hasty response to the dream, she lists off the reasons why she should let him go, explaining “I’m a logical practical woman” and that there are “no camps and no Christ Our Lord” here in the South. She ends this statement with “he’ll work at the mill and buy a car and don’t talk to me—all they want is a car” (O’Connor, CS 231). Mrs. McIntyre’s uncomfortable stance connects back to Derrida’s hypothesis that the concept of hospitality will implode itself: “Hospitality is a self-contradictory concept and experience which can only self-destruct or protect itself from itself, auto-immunize itself in some way, which is to say, deconstruct itself—precisely—in being put into practice” (“Hostipitality” 5). Mrs. McIntyre’s moral quandary, between if she should

fire the displaced person, pivots on the two men who are persuading her one way or another: the priest, representing an unconditional hospitality situated in belief, verses to Mr. Shortly, who feels a conditional hospitality and hostility should be enacted based on the indication that Mr. Guizac does not belong. Both views immobilize her decision making and she becomes aware that her questioning was countercultural as “everyone was critical of her conduct” (O’Connor, *CS* 233). It is this immobilization that Mrs. McIntyre begins to self-deconstruct. Her dream is prompted by her lack of performance of Southern hospitality which positions herself against her community. While she had already discussed with Mr. Guizac his place on the farm, she negates to fire him immediately, and self creates the critical eyes and opinions of the community. With the help of Mr. Shortley, these critical eyes continually feed her indecision. Despite the ending for Mr. Guizac, her inability to take stance leads to her being ostracized at the end of the story. Her hospitality inner conflict leads to her own self-destruction, as Mrs. McIntyre is left not only mentally immobile but also physically.

Mrs. May, in O’Connor’s short story “Greenleaf,” has similarities with Mrs. McIntyre, regarding how she approaches others through Southern hospitality. She presents herself as “a good Christian woman with a large respect for religion” and much like Mrs. McIntyre’s stance, “she did not, of course, believe any of it was true” (O’Connor, *CS* 316). In one scene, Mrs. May hears “out of nowhere a guttural agonized voice groan[ing], ‘Jesus! Jesus!’ In a second it came again with a terrible urgency. ‘Jesus! Jesus!’” (O’Connor, *CS* 316). Forcing herself to go outside, she finds her worker’s wife, Mrs. Greenleaf, performing a prayer healing. As Mrs. Greenleaf shouts Jesus, “Mrs. May winced. She thought the word, Jesus, should be kept inside the church building like other

words inside the bedroom” (O’Connor, *CS* 316), echoing Mrs. McIntyre’s uncomfortable stance towards religion. In response to witnessing Mrs. Greenleaf’s prayer exclamation, Mrs. May asks her sharply “What’s the matter with you?” (O’Connor, *CS* 316). Like Mrs. McIntyre, Mrs. May conflates her own Southern hospitable identity, as a Southerner, with a Christian identity, despite not actually believing in religion itself. She approaches individuals who participate in seemingly Christian rituals with annoyance, hesitation, and hostility. Her posture of conditional Southern hospitality has no room with prayer or Jesus.

Mrs. May also threatens Mrs. Greenleaf’s “prayer healing” with violence, as she “bent forward, her mouth open and her stick raised off the ground as if she were not sure what she wanted to strike with it” (O’Connor, *CS* 317). For the majority of this short story, Mrs. May despises Mrs. Greenleaf’s existence. She finds her presence agitating and blatantly undermines her character through her first-person narrative. When first disclosing who the Greenleaf’s were, she comments: “And of the wife, she didn’t even like to think. Besides the wife, Mr. Greenleaf was an aristocrat” (O’Connor, *CS* 313). She later calls Mrs. Greenleaf “large and loose” (O’Connor, *CS* 315). However, what perturbed her the most about Mrs. Greenleaf was her dedication to her religious rituals. When describing what she did, or mostly what she did not do, Mrs. May felt Mrs. Greenleaf only had devoted her time to religious practice: “Instead of making a garden or washing their clothes, her preoccupation was what she called ‘prayer healing’” (O’Connor, *CS* 315). From Mrs. May’s stance as the boss, she looks down upon her workers, especially regarding the performance of religion. She feels they are not acting appropriately to the set standards of Christian principles, at least within her application of

Southern hospitality. After coming upon her prayer healing, Mrs. May “felt as furious and helpless as if she had been insulted by a child” and proceeded to tell Mrs. Greenleaf: ““Jesus . . . would be *ashamed* of you. He would tell you to get up from there this instant and go wash your children’s clothes!”” (O’Connor, *CS* 317). There is a religious-less faith peering through Mrs. May’s vision as she assesses Mrs. Greenleaf’s prayer. To her, Mrs. Greenleaf is not performing her Christian belief because she is neglecting her duties as a Southern woman in nurturing her children. Mrs. May does not see how excessive public prayers can or could be nurturing to her children. She also does not believe that these prayer healings are productive for her religious walk, even though Mrs. May does not believe in religion herself.

Mrs. May’s performance of Southern hospitality is conflated with a Christian identity, or at least the shell of religious faith. Like expressed earlier, one indication is her conception of herself as “a good Christian woman” despite her lack of belief in any religion. In a later scene, Mrs. May is discussing with her two boys Mrs. Greenleaf’s slow physical aging. Her intellectual son, Wesley, “said reason Mrs. Greenleaf had not aged was because she released all her emotions in prayer healing. ‘You ought to start praying, Sweetheart’” (O’Connor, *CS* 319). He later jokes with his mother, asking her to do something “practical” and asks for her mother to pray for him like Mrs. Greenleaf would (O’Connor, *CS* 320). In a hasty response, Mrs. May responds, ““I don’t like to hear you boys make jokes about religion . . . If you would go to church, you would meet some nice girls”” (O’Connor, *CS* 320). This scene showcases two different associations Mrs. May has with religion. While she does not believe in religion, she still holds it in to high regard, or at least in her performance. Condemning her son’s flippant jokes regarding

Mrs. Greenleaf's prayers showcases how his religious jokes cross a social taboo, or at least expressing negative remarks and jokes regarding prayer is not appropriate for her sons. She secondly also exposes her views on the church, as a place to meet an acceptable partner. Meeting girls in church insinuates the assumption that they, based on their perceived history, could not find "nice" or "acceptable" girls outside of the church. This indicates an insider verse outsider dichotomy between who would be considered a suitable partner on the bases of their performance of Southern hospitality with Christian identity and performance.

The performance of Southern hospitality as a means of division, through religion and the Christian identity conflation, is also heavily influenced by class distinctions. Mrs. May, in the position of power economically and as the narrator, continually tries to separate herself from the Greenleafs. To get the Greenleaf boys' bull removed from her farm, Mrs. May visits their home. She notes that "nothing marked it as belonging to Greenleafs except three dogs, part hound and part spitz, that rushed out from behind it as soon as she stopped her car. She reminded herself that you could always tell the class of people by the class of dog" (O'Connor, *CS* 323). Besides these dogs, she is not welcomingly received. From the door, she sees "several children" standing and looking at her, "making no move to come forward" (O'Connor, *CS* 323). Mrs. May "recognized this as a true Greenleaf trait—they could hang in the door, looking at you for hours" (O'Connor, *CS* 323). Irritated she calls out to have one of these children welcome and help her. These "true Greenleaf" traits position these children below Mrs. May, as they do not perform Southern hospitality in this encounter. This is only one example to which Mrs. May can and does identify the Greenleafs as White trash. For Mrs. May, this lack of

performance comes from both their class and their upbringing, which Mrs. May believes is affected by their grandmother's religious background. Earlier, she revealed that "whenever she thought of how the Greenleaf boys had advanced in the world, she had only to think of Mrs. Greenleaf sprawled obscenely on the ground and say to herself, 'Well, no matter how far they *go*, they *came* from that'" (O'Connor, *CS* 317). For Mrs. May, the success the Greenleaf boys achieve, especially in contrast to her boys' lack of success, means little to nothing regarding their mother's religious practices. These boys are defined by their class, as positioned through their mother's lack of regard for the traditional Southern Christian performance, and therefore are subjected to Mrs. May's hostile and violent response to their loose bull. Mrs. May looks down on the two Greenleaf boys, their family and property, and assumes their position is lower in comparison to of her level Southern hospitality status. They can only be subjected to conditional hospitality but not enact it themselves.

Amongst other irritations for Mrs. May in this story, the plot centers around the Greenleaf boys' unwanted bull on her property. The loose bull feels like a personal attack to Mrs. May and her farm. The bull also is physically attacking her farm, and it continuously becomes destructive to all that she has built, which feels like an attack on her Southern status. While leaving the Greenleaf boys' farm, she asserts her anger through the statements like, "I might as well be working for them . . . they are simply going to use me to the limit" (O'Connor, *CS* 326). Mrs. May's anger does reach its limit when her sons, Wesley and Scofield, question her ability to be a mother. At dinner, Mrs. May declares she is "the victim. [She's] always been the victim" (O'Connor, *CS* 327), attempting to gain sympathy from her sons. This sympathy is ill-placed, as her sons begin



unraveling her identifications as a Southern Christian mother. In a comment regarding her irritation with the bull, Scofield says “with the Mamma I got it’s a wonder I turned out to be such a nice boy!” (O’Connor, *CS* 327). Wesley, in response, tells Scofield: “You ain’t her boy, son” (O’Connor, *CS* 327). Sparking curiosity, Wesley continued his statement: “neither you nor me is her boy” (O’Connor, *CS* 327). Scofield’s statement gives insight to an unfamiliar perspective of Mrs. May, one outside of her control, and indicates that she neither a victim nor could be called a nurturing mother. This verbal revelation discredits her previous comments, but also specifies her deep disconnection between who she believes herself, as she performs as a Southern Christian lady, and the reality of that performance.

Unfortunately, Mrs. May’s boys end up in a physical altercation that has Mr. Greenleaf “peering eagerly through the screenwire” hoping to help with the commotion he heard (O’Connor, *CS* 328). Attempting to save face, Mrs. May tells him that “nothing happened” and “the table turned over” (O’Connor, *CS* 328). She also attempts to conceal her fading perception as a Southern Christian lady by expressing to Mr. Greenleaf that she wants the bull removed tomorrow at once. She transfers her negative emotions presented by her boys onto Mr. Greenleaf: “I’m surprised at O.T. and E.T. to treat me this way. I thought they’d have more gratitude” (O’Connor, *CS* 328). When Mr. Greenleaf did not respond to this claim, she continued by expressing the hospitality she extended to the boys through the “nice little things” she did for them (O’Connor, *CS* 328). Mr. Greenleaf, “quick as a snake striking,” said ““You got two boys. They know you got two men on the place”” (O’Connor, *CS* 329). His statement stops her, reminding her of her unwinding performance as a Southern Christian mother, resounding Scofield’s words

“neither you nor me is her boy” (O’Connor, *CS* 327). This scene also disconnected with Mrs. May’s narrative of herself and discredits her perceived generosity and acts of hospitality towards the Greenleafs. Instead of reevaluating her hospitable posture, she questions their lack of acceptance of her generosity. From her position of power, she says “some people learn gratitude too late, Mr. Greenleaf, and some never learn it all” (O’Connor, *CS* 329). This statement is hypocritical, due to her own lack of gratitude towards the Greenleafs. Like Mrs. McIntyre, Mrs. May is blinded by the conditions of her culture and is unable to see the disconnect between hospitality and hostility.

Enraged by the encounters with her sons, who question her performance and identity, and Mr. Greenleaf’s perceived hostile response to her hospitality, she sets out in the morning to kill the bull. To reiterate her power over Mr. Greenleaf, she forces him to kill the bull. Mr. Greenleaf, she discloses, would “like to shoot me instead of the bull,” and upon this thought, Mrs. May “turned her face away so that he could not see her smile” (O’Connor, *CS* 330). Insisting to kill the bull is a hostile stance towards the Greenleafs, but also is Mrs. May’s attempt to regain control over her performance and power structures embedded within the hospitable stances of Southern class. Her self-fashioning narrative regarding her hospitality is positioned against Mrs. Greenleaf, who she heavily despises and who has put her performance into question. Controlling her husband and forcing him to kill their sons’ bull is a hostile charge she feels she needs to enact in order to regain control over her slowly impending Southern hospitable narrative. Just as the bull is ruining her physical space, the Greenleaf’s defiance is ruining her perception of control she has over her performance of Southern hospitality. The bull is a

manifestation of who she truly is, an inhospitable and hostile lady who raised her boys worse off than the God-crazed, class-less hired help.

In this story, Mrs. May's only control left is forcing Mr. Greenleaf to kill his sons' bull. However, her holier-than-thou disposition does not fade on while she drives Mr. Greenleaf out to kill animal. While Mr. Greenleaf searches for the bull, she realizes she "was so tired" and "decided she had every right to be tired" (O'Connor, *CS* 332). Resting her eyes on the hood of her truck, she recalls a lifetime of work, only to be able to picture the Greenleafs and their lives occupied with farming tasks she had assigned. Specifically, in this flashback, she sees Mrs. Greenleaf "flat on the ground, asleep over the holeful of clippings" (O'Connor, *CS* 332). During Mrs. Greenleaf's prayer healings, she would cut up "morbid stories out of the newspaper" and take these clippings, dig a hole, and bury them (O'Connor, *CS* 316). It was over these holes that she would lay down mumbling and groaning, eliciting anger within Mrs. May. She also remembers once when, actually believing Mrs. Greenleaf to be demented, told Mr. Greenleaf: "'I'm afraid your wife has let religion warp her . . . everything in moderation, you know'" (O'Connor, *CS* 332). Her judgmental stance towards his wife's religious beliefs participates in the politics of hospitality, dictating not only nonbelonging but also the belonging of religious beliefs and practices. Mrs. May believes Mrs. Greenleaf's faith, in comparison to her conditional hospitality and faith-less religion, is "so simple" and regards them as "poor souls" (O'Connor, *CS* 333). Her moments of reflection, while forcing Mr. Greenleaf to work, allow for the reader to see her conditional notions of hospitality.

Her flashback ends as her hostility comes to a head. She begins to turn violent when Mr. Greenleaf finds the bull and forces him to be the one who kills the animal. In

the ending scene of this story, Mr. Greenleaf “shot the bull four times through the eye” (O’Connor, *CS* 334). While Mrs. May did not hear the shots, “she felt the quake in the huge body as it sank, pulling her forward on its head, so that she seemed, when Mr. Greenleaf reached her, to be bent over whispering some last discovery into the animal’s ear” (O’Connor, *CS* 334). The death of the bull highlights the paradox within conditional Southern hospitality, indicating that Mrs. May will never be able to escape the true version of herself. She appears to be stunted as “she felt the quake” of the shots in the bull (O’Connor, *CS* 334). The bull’s death should have given her the control she wanted, and the validation of her hospitable Southern Christian performance, as both a mother and woman, but instead she is left unsatisfied. Her control over the Greenleafs will not change their perception of her, showcasing her ineffective performance of hospitality and speaks to the perverse falsehoods embodied within the performance of conditional hospitality. Although she was the one who forced him to kill the animal, she exhibits no control over their perception of her and no control over the perception of her performance (O’Connor, *CS* 334). Unlike Mrs. McIntyre, who is experiencing an internal conflict of unconditional hospitality verses conditional hospitality, Mrs. May is experiencing the effects of the limits of her performance. Not only does she enact Southern hostility towards the Greenleafs and others who she does not have control over, she also can enact hostility towards herself. She has no control nor comfort in this Southern performance, as it continuously alienates her from others.

Mrs. May’s performances within this short story echoes President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s declaration, as quoted in Wood’s article, “our government makes no sense

. . . unless it is founded in a deeply felt religious faith—and I don't care what it is" (Wood 19). Mrs. May's identity was constructed based on the hospitable Christian Southern women, like Mrs. McIntyre. However, her conception of Christianity is not based on Christian principles, or the religion itself, but the shell performance of the term. The "substance of 'faith'" for Mrs. May, and O'Connor's Christian women, is not "specified" because its religiously thin faith is "deeply felt" through the embodiment of Southern performance (Woods 19). Mrs. May claims the performance of Christianity, or Southern Christianity, which is not based out of a heart of faith but enacted out of a need to function culturally within the Southern scene. She is a Christian for the sake of her sons and for herself. Her performance of Southern hospitality, as conflated with an enacting of religious sentiments, is only a means of control for her over her sons and the Greenleafs. Mrs. May and Mrs. McIntyre's conception of Southern hospitality, in relationship with Christianity, is also seen within Ruby Turpin.

From the moment Ruby Turpin enters the doctor's office in "Revelation," she is sizing up the room. Her presence in the space, presumably in any space she occupies, demands control, order, and the systematic power hierarchies that she believes to be true. Class, gender, and race are crucial factors when she assesses other's societal worth, as well as their assumed religiousness. As the reader, we have access to her inner dialogue performance in addition to other outward performance of Southern hospitality. Internally she constructs her Southern identity on the bases of class, gender, race, and religion, manifested in how she depicts herself and others in the waiting room. While sitting, "the gospel hymn playing was, 'When I looked up and He looked down,' and Mrs. Turpin, who knew it, supplied the last line mentally, 'And wona these days I know I'll we-eara

crowns” (O’Connor, *CS* 490). Her ability to recognize and finish the line is the first indication to the reader that Ruby is a “religious” woman, or at least has prior knowledge of religious hymns. Her performance of conditional Southern hospitality, like Mrs. May and Mrs. McIntyre, conflates with her Christian identity through simple gestures of knowing hymns. After pleasant chatter, Ruby hears another chorus in the background. Hymns from the radio “kept the room from silence” (O’Connor, *CS* 496) and allow Ruby to feel the “spirit of the song[s]” within this space (O’Connor, *CS* 497). Although she could not hear every word of the second hymn mentioned, Ruby is emotionally moved by it as the melody and harmony allows her to ponder her “philosophy of life” (O’Connor, *CS* 497). Ruby believes she must “help anybody out that needed it,” never sparing her help “whether they were white or black, trash or decent” (O’Connor, *CS* 497). Ruby’s philosophy of life is not as hospitable or generous as she depicts it to be, because she limits her audience through naming. It also becomes noticeably clear that her philosophy of life is not unconditional but is performed for the sole purpose of making her feel and present as a good woman. She goes as far as to say, “and of all she had to be thankful for, she was most thankful that this was so” (O’Connor, *CS* 497), to which she meant thankful she was a good White Southern Christian woman.

Ruby often daydreams conversations with Jesus. These conversations allow Ruby the opportunity to self-fashion her good Christian women narrative, and affirms her belief that she is treating others with Christian generosity and hospitality. However, these conversations only solidify her hypocrisy in the reader’s mind. In one passage, she imagines if Jesus presented her with an ultimatum: “You can be a high society and have all the money you want and be thin and svelte-like, but you can’t be a good woman

with it” (O’Connor, *CS* 497). Ruby believes she would deny this opportunity, despite the fact she has clearly expressed her deep desire to be thinner and her deep adoration towards class hierarchies and structures. In another passage, Ruby is having an out-loud conversation with Jesus, where she is thanking him “for making everything way it is” (O’Connor, *CS* 499). Her praise becomes interrupted by Mary’s book striking her in the eye, beginning her unraveling of self-imagined identity. This violent act is also the beginning of her enlightenment regarding the reality of her hostile approach through others that is masked by her Southern hospitableness. When Mary calls her an “old wart hog” from hell (O’Connor, *CS* 500), Ruby becomes even more offended but is pushed into an internal dialogue surrounding ways Mary is wrong. Through her attempt to disprove Mary, she becomes aware of the conditional hospitality and judgmental position she performs through her Southern-ness.

Ruby, like Mrs. May, has difficulty coming to terms with the reality of her performance, which others see as hostility. She becomes afraid to admit to her husband what the girl had said because she did not “wish to put the image of herself as a wart hog from hell into his mind” (O’Connor, *CS* 502). While Claud sleeps, she images “the girl’s eyes and her words, even the tone of her voice, low but clear, directed only to her, brooked no repudiation” (O’Connor, *CS* 502). Ruby feels signaled out by Mary and does not understand why this message was just for her, because there “was trash in the room to whom it might justly have been applied” (O’Connor, *CS* 502). Ruby refuses to understand or accept this statement because she is “a respectable, hard-working, church-going woman” (O’Connor, *CS* 502). She continuously spirals for the remaining story, unraveling much like O’Connor’s women in “The Displaced Person” and “Greenleaf.”

Finding herself by the pigpen, she asks aloud “How am I a hog and me both? How am I saved from hell too?” (O’Connor, *CS* 506). Ruby questions why she is experiencing these feelings of disillusionment because there is “no trash around” that she hadn’t given too, and nothing she hadn’t done but break her “back to the bone everyday working” and doing for the “church” (O’Connor, *CS* 507). Even in her break down, asking how she is like a hog, she presents an insider and outsider dichotomy, believing that since she is not trash, she is not a wort hog from hell. To an unknown audience, Ruby expresses to them that if they prefer her to be trash, they should go get themselves some trash elsewhere. This comes to head as she screams: “Call me a wart hog from hell. Put that bottom rail on top. There’ll still be a top bottom” (O’Connor, *CS* 507). Insinuating her belief that trash or no trash, there will always be power structures present within religious performance on the bases of difference. Furthermore, religious identity, as conflated with Southern hospitality, then assumes the stance that the performance of Southern hospitality is inherently hierarchical.

Ruby’s question is met with silence, and she becomes silenced: “she opened her mouth, but no sound came out of it” (O’Connor, *CS* 508). Instead, she is left glaring into a “visionary light” where a “vast horde of souls were rumbling towards heaven (O’Connor, *CS* 508). Leading the way are all the individuals she looks down on, and “marching behind” were others of “great dignity, accountable” who had “always been for good order and common sense and respectable behavior” (O’Connor, *CS* 508). These, coming in last, “alone were on key” and were the “tribe of people whom she recognized at once as those who, like herself and Claud, had always had a little of everything and the God-given wit to use it right” (O’Connor, *CS* 508). Yet, “she could see by their shocked



and altered faces that even their virtues were being burned away” (O’Connor, *CS* 508). Ruby’s last vision in this story is auditory, blinded by the visionary light, she hears the choruses of crickets to which she interprets as “the voices of the souls climbing upward into the starry field and shouting hallelujah” (O’Connor, *CS* 509).

Through this vision, Ruby experiences a grand illusion signifying an order to those entering heaven—and it was an order she had not before envisioned. The ones leading the way to heaven are those she finds physically ugly, socially lower, and all those who she deems inferior and unworthy. Following this crowd of individuals, who she thinks higher of, are those people who she identifies with and relates herself too. Ruby’s moral superiority and the performance of Southern hospitality comes into question in this vision. Much like Mrs. McIntyre’s treatment the displaced person causes her internal conflict on the bases of Southern performance and religious identity, this vision leads Ruby to reevaluate her conception of religious performance and her performance of Southern hospitality. O’Connor uses this moment to allude Ruby’s approach to religion, through her conflation with Southern narratives, as an ultimately moot experience. Her feelings of superiority and holier-than-thou posture mean nothing in relationship towards God. As she hears souls traveling up into heaven, unable to see their faces, her pious Southern woman’s self-fashioned narrative is undone.

The performance of conditional Southern hospitality is antithetical to Christian relationships, or at least the unconditional hospitality she believes she implores. By hiding her ugliness and judgment through the codes of Southern hospitality, she exacts hostility towards others who do not conform to the conditions of their culture. Separated from her earlier embarrassment, and from being called out on the hypocrisy of her

performance, she becomes aware of how her human manners are incomparable to God. The physical ugliness of others, like Mary Grace, or the improper actions of others do not inhibit their relationship with God, as they are the ones leading her to heaven in her vision. This is solidified as the visionary light blinds her and she is unable to see the exact faces of the people marching up to heaven. Their human identity, social status, and performances do not matter. Instead only the praises of voice, singing hallelujah, are important.

Ruby, Mrs. May, and Mrs. McIntyre all experience the conditional hospitality present within their Southern culture. Hiding behind notions of conditional hospitality, they enact a hostile posture inherent within these notions. Their hospitality is façade of a systematic power of division created to determine belonging and nonbelonging, as well as to keep these individuals subjected within the code. However, all three of these characters are presented a “moment of grace,” or a moment in which they experience the hypocrisy and conditions within their hospitable performances. The moments position these characters to reflect on their actions, but they also present a narrative of unconditional hospitality absent within their lives. Following these events, despite whether they believe in this unconditional hospitality, they are deeply changed and affected. Mrs. McIntyre becomes physically and mental immobile within her cultural conditions, Mrs. May is unsatisfied by her performance, and Ruby is left in stance of humility regarding her position in society.

The three women within O’Connor’s short stories, “The Displaced Person,” “Greenleaf,” and “Revelation,” present the inherent hierarchies prevalent within the performance of Southern hospitality through the lens of religion. Mrs. McIntyre, Mrs.

May, and Ruby all participate in othering on the bases of religion, deeming who is either worthy of hospitality or worthy of their participation in religion. O'Connor also uses these women to showcase the "Christ-haunted" South," and the "strange shadows" this casts on their understandings of religion and the cultural gestures it creates. Within these stories, the women experience an unraveling of their Southern narrative and identity, questioning their motives and conception of Christianity as it is based on cultural performance rather than Christian/religious principles. The religious shell embodied within Southern performance finds a home within a need to function culturally, rather than from a heart of faith. Mrs. McIntyre, Mrs. May, and Ruby all experience different unrevealing, each ending quite different than each other, yet all undergo the pervasive influence of the performance of Southern hospitality as it relates to religious ideologies.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

Questions about hospitality are intriguing, especially focused within the way Southern culture approaches notions of hospitality. Southern performances seem to be experienced with utterances of the past, re-coding gestures through what should be/was, but also through how we assess others' performances. Jacques Derrida's theoretical concept of conditional hospitality speaks to into the pragmatic performative levels enacted within specific cultures. The conditions of hospitality and hostility, as they are inherently connected, can help deconstruct cultural values through the way individuals approach encounters with the stranger, as well as with encounters between insiders. Conditional hospitality is a performative contradiction which bids the acknowledgement that we do not know what it means to be truly hospitable, or to be truly welcoming. The performance of Southern hospitality, as illustrated within Flannery O'Connor's characters and stories, is a conditional notion of hospitality. However, O'Connor's stories also present and question what it means to be truly hospitable, if we can know what it means to be truly welcoming to foreigners, and provide an answer to Derrida's belief that "We do not know what hospitality is" ("Hostipitality" 6),

O'Connor's South subverts the depiction of Southern hospitality, especially on the bases of gender, class, race, and religion. Hospitality, or hospitality not of morality but of politics and the negotiation of borders, citizenship, and rights, is conditional. Insiders and outsiders alike are subjected to this conditional hospitality, given only

temporary acceptance within a particular place. This situates Southern hospitality as not an open acceptance of anyone, but rather a sovereign power that dictates who does and does not belong. The performance of Southern hospitality within O'Connor's South permits the host/insider the ability to welcome or refuse the guest/other. In every instance when the performance of hospitality is enacted, an operation of control is created or reiterated over the outsider, further showcasing various levels of power over them and cementing their position as an outsider within that space. As O'Connor depicts the conflation of Southern hospitality to insider's identity, this inherently connects Southern performance within this conditional acceptance of a guest. Yet, through this systematic power performance we can see the inherent binary structure of conditional hospitality, as it cannot exist without its opposite hostility. This performance of Southern hospitality is not only an enacting power over the outsider, but a hostile response to their presence. Conditional hospitality, as it deciding who does and does not belong, cannot be invoked without its own contradiction.

Encounters within O'Connor's short stories exhibit hospitality as a culture, signified through this conditional performance of Southern-ness. As she writes in "Some Aspects of the Grotesque in Southern Fiction," "Every writer, when he speaks of his own approach to fiction, hopes to show that in some crucial and deep sense, he is a realist" (O'Connor, *MM* 37). In this sense, O'Connor's notion of realism, or a deeper kind of realism, can be found in the body of manners surrounding a specific region. For O'Connor, this region is found in the South and its body of manners. It is these Southern codes of manners that she engages with and engages with the performance of hospitality. Within her depictions of Southern hospitality, through her hospitable characters, she

showcases the inherent connection of conditional hospitality and hostility. Most moments that focus in on a character's Southern performance, O'Connor also focuses on how it is a tool of hostility that creates and maintains a culture of power structures keeping insiders and outsiders in their place. The topics explored through the preceding chapters depict the manners of Southern hospitality as it used to create and keep further divides between insiders and outsiders. Just as hospitality is a culture, the expectations of insiders and outsiders, through these performances maintain systemic powers of social control that prohibit belonging for those subjected to Southern-ness in the spheres of gender, class, race, and religion.

A key takeaway in this project is finding that hospitality bleeds together through these three spheres of gender, race, and religion. O'Connor's characters exemplify Derrida's theoretical approach to hospitality as a culture through the emphatic narrative of Southern-ness conflating Southern identity and worth. Performance is demanded not separately through each of these spheres, but rather as a performative whole. Mrs. McIntyre, in "The Displaced Person," is a fitting example of how the performances within these three spheres cause holistic stress. Accepting the displaced person is out of a Christian duty of charity, conflated with not just her Southern identity but her Southern woman-ness to be a "good Christian woman." Her hospitality only extends as far as the displaced person confines himself within the performance of Southern hospitality, which is already systematically coded with racial inequalities. As Mr. Guizac denies the racially constructed conceptions of Southern performance, he is then subjected to Mrs. McIntyre's hostility towards him. These separate spheres can be broken down individually, as done in these three body chapters, but combined speaks to the greater

power presented in the performance of hospitality and the deeply complex codes embedded for both insiders and outsiders.

The encounters within O'Connor's writings not only reaffirm Derrida's claim that hospitality is a culture full of complex codes, but they depict the highly pervasive performance of hospitality as inherently hostile and inhospitable. The juxtaposition of Southern hospitality and Southern hostility is an ethical paradox inherently present within the concept of hospitality. Showcased through her writings, O'Connor presents Southern hospitality as this inhospitable performance masked through a hospitable appearance. O'Connor's depiction of White Southern women is an embodiment of these claims against the conditional hospitality present within Southern narratives, as seen within Ruby Turpin ("Revelation") and Mrs. May ("Greenleaf"). These women actively present and identify as Southern Christian women of class but subvert unconditional hospitality through their identities and hostile stance against outsiders. The hostile and conditional hospitality, utilized by Ruby and Mrs. May, is the politics of hospitality that allow insiders to decide who belongs and who does not belong. These two characters are not the only ones who participate, yet they are the vibrant examples of the hypocritical stance of Southern hospitality. Ruby and Mrs. May are used as examples to showcase the blinding effect Southern hospitality has on its performers, as they honestly believe they know best. It is also through these characters' revelations, or moments of grace, that O'Connor allows their subversion of true or unconditional hospitality to be explored.

While highly pervasive and powerful over insiders and outsiders alike, Southern hospitality for O'Connor seems to be both rebuked for its hypocrisy and highly praised. In *Mystery and Manners*, O'Connor discusses the value of Southern culture and

importance for regions to have their own body of mannerisms. Yet, her characters, like Mrs. McIntyre, Mrs. May, and Ruby Turpin, showcase clearly negative depictions of Southern mannerisms. The Southern performances of these three women, within O'Connor's short stories, present a duality that vilifies and victimizes those who are subjected to the code. Perhaps through these negative depictions in her work, we are shown an internal conflict against and for the performance of Southern hospitality. As she struggles with these notions of hospitality as a performance, I believe she might take the stance that hospitality is not inherently negative and that there is an element that allows one to be able to welcome unconditionally, open one's home to a stranger, and perform gifts of charity out of a pure heart. O'Connor's character, Mrs. McIntyre, who is steeped in this performance of Southern-ness, struggles this line of performance and unconditional hospitality as she contemplates whether to let Mr. Guizac go. Mrs. McIntyre is in a moral quandary through the last half of the story, trying to navigate her decision on if she should extend unconditional hospitality towards the displaced person or retract her conditional hospitality as it connected to social performance. There is a push and pull, shown through Mrs. McIntyre's inner dialogue, questioning conditional versus unconditional hospitality, while she is continuously prompted to behave in adherence to the code, although she does not drift away from the conditional notions, it ultimately leads to her demise.

O'Connor deals with this internal conflict herself, as she feels tied to the performance of Southern hospitality and refuses to host James Baldwin in Georgia. Critiquing these notions of hospitality in her literature, she portrays her perception of the racialized power imbalances through Southern-ness, while still upholding these



boundaries within her own life. Her own inability to perform outside of what is expected of her role, despite how she wishes to deconstruct the concepts of Southern hospitality, speaks to a larger issue of the socially constructed understanding of how we use language surrounding hospitality. While there is the insider versus outsider narratives used within the broader term of Southern hospitality, insinuating its conditional acceptance through tolerance, there seems to be no way to escape these controlling notions. O'Connor herself cannot separate the deep and complex codes embedded within Southern hospitality and cannot separate and distance herself from the performance. This is the conflict manifested within her characters, like Mrs. McIntyre, who, at times, attempt to navigate this term with a different ideologic working of unconditional hospitality, yet can only achieve the very temporary tolerance of such performative hospitality.

O'Connor and her characters struggle with the performance of Southern hospitality. It is only through assessing their performances, through moments of reflection, that both the reader and character are to even be able to attempt an understanding of the conditional and shallow enacting of their hospitality. While O'Connor is not fortunate enough to experience the direct moments of grace she writes for her character, it is through these moments that mark change within her characters, questioning who they are and calling into question discrepancy between their supposed belief and actions. These moments of grace occur differently for all of the characters, but violence is the brute connection all of them. It is as if she attempts to jolt attention to Mrs. McIntyre through the death of Mr. Guizac, or the force of a thrown book for Ruby Turpin. Yet, when we conceive of grace, violence is usually not depicted. Or at least, our understanding of grace always will fail in comparison to a presentation of grace. Our lack

of understanding of grace connects without lack of understanding of what unconditional hospitality is. Both terms exist in something not as an object of knowledge and any questions regarding their nature can maybe only be answered within another dimension. Derrida believes unconditional hospitality is “beyond this history and this thought of history” (“Hostipitality” 10), which not only indicates that it does not exist in our past but also does not exist in our future. It is an uncacheable goal. In moment when we believe unconditional hospitality is to exist, it implodes itself in the paradox of conditional hospitality. When Derrida claims, “we do not know yet what hospitality is,” he is also saying we will never know what unconditional hospitality is. O’Connor’s stories allow for the exploration of grace and unconditional hospitality.

Within these violent moments of grace, there is an undoing of her characters. Her characters are shown, or attempted to be shown, their human failings. For Hulga, her hostile and judgmental posture towards her mother and community is broken down through the same hostile performance she enacts on others. Her separation from her physical difference, through the theft of her leg, showcases how she is forever changed. The breaking down hostile posture, and higher-than-thou position, exists within Ruby Turpin and Mrs. May in their respective stories. These women navigate through their lives based on who they are not and who does and does not belong within their spheres of life. They each undergo a moment in which these positions are questioned and subverted. For Mrs. McIntyre, she felt a continuous inward struggle over the displaced person, as she felt solely responsible for his presence and felt she must constantly be deciding if he truly belonged in her community. As she struggled with the conditions surrounding her hospitable nature towards him, it is quickly solved through his very violent death. Within

all of these stories, O'Connor's characters struggle with their performance of Southern hospitable-ness, but they are also all given moments in which to deconstruct these performances beyond the hospitality that they know.

Perhaps O'Connor's moments of grace are not only critiquing Southern hospitality through these characters but providing moments of grace as an antidote to conditional hospitality failures. Through divine intervention, these moments of grace allow for her characters to fully experience the ramifications of their conditional hospitality experiences. However, these are also moments of grace, given through some divine intervention, that allow for the presentation or an attempted of vision of unconditional hospitality. Derrida's approach to unconditional hospitality rests on the caveats that we cannot fully understand unconditional hospitality, much less perform this type of hospitality. However, he also wrote that we do "not yet" know. While Derrida believed that humans have a deep lack in our ability to enact these levels complete open and unconditional stance of welcoming, he also indicated the possibility of such explanation existing within a different plane. O'Connor's moments of grace, or a divine intervention, could be this different plane needed to understand unconditional hospitality.

O'Connor's characters' experiences, after these moments, signify deep internal change and are presented very bleakly on how they attempt to navigate their lives moving forward. Just as her characters are blinded to their performance of Southern hospitality and to their hostile stances, these moments are just as blinding. After they experience the violent inactions, they present and indicate an inability to reconstruct themselves afterward these moments. These inabilities and immobilizations are experienced physically by Mrs. McIntyre and Hulga. However, they seem to also be experienced by

Mrs. May, Ruby, and Julian, as the story ends and you are left to predict how they will move forward within their highly conditioned culture and performance expectations.

These moments could also be an attempt to absolve the culture of guilt that surrounds her and her performance of Southern-ness. O'Connor's writings do not condemn others who perform Southern hospitality; instead, her stories condemn the conditional culture surrounding Southern hospitality, as it is inherently divisive and leads to oppression. O'Connor displays results of the performance of Southern hospitality while also showing the inescapability of these performances. The only escape present within her stories, or only narrative against the failure of hospitality, is through her simulation of divine intervention—the only way redemptive grace can be achieved.

The push and pull of Southern hospitality, and the internal conflict O'Connor seems to present, exists today. Hospitality is a culture itself that needs a deep social-cultural understanding and definition to lead individuals away from its shallow performance, to a place where unconditional hospitality can be understood and offered. Exploring hospitality, or the performances of hospitality, presents us a chance to understand this paradox of violence and performative power we cannot escape, and hopefully allow new narratives to be created to help relieve this inner tension. Flannery O'Connor is only one example of the persuasive power of conditional hospitality, as it is inherently connected with its opposite of hostility and used as a systematic apparatus of social control. Through O'Connor's short stories, there is an opportunity to see how hospitality shapes our behaviors and through cultural expectations. Her work also presents the effect these conditional expectations have within our internal processes of the world, and within our internal struggles and dialogues regarding our

hospitable/hostile actions. More importantly, O'Connor's moments of grace also allow for the opportunity to explore whether unconditional hospitality could be understood or become an achievable goal.

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