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Lonely Voices of the South: Exploring the Transnational Dialogue of Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor

Dissertation submitted in candidacy for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the School of English, Faculty of Arts, National University of Ireland, Cork, by

Victoria Kennefick MA

Under the supervision of

Dr. Lee M. Jenkins

Chair of the School of English: Professor James Knowles

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Declaration

This is to state that this thesis submitted is my own work and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere.

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Victoria Kennefick

List of Abbreviations

CS - Collected Stories. O'Connor, Frank. NY: Vintage, 1982.

CW- Flannery O'Connor: Collected Works: Wise Blood, A Good Man Is Hard to Find, The Violent Bear It Away, Everything that Rises Must Converge, Essays & Letters. O'Connor, Flannery. NY: Library of America, 1988.

HB- The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor. Ed. Sally Fitzgerald. NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988.

LV- The Lonely Voice: A Study of the Short Story. O'Connor, Frank. 1962. London: Macmillan and Company, 1963.

MM- Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose. Ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald. NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000.

WB- Wise Blood. O'Connor, Flannery. NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990.

Introduction:

Reading the Short Story as a Genre – A Transnational Approach

> I'm a failed poet. Maybe every novelist wants to write poetry first, finds he can't and then tries the short story which is the most demanding form after poetry. And failing at that, only then does he take up novel writing.
> William Faulkner[1]

> You see I would call myself a spoiled poet. I write my stories, as I've suggested, as a lyric poet would write his poems – I have to grasp all my ideas in one big movement, I am a violent, emotional man, and novels require meditation and a more plodding day-to-day kind of energy.
> Frank O'Connor[2]

In Short Story: The Reality of Artifice (1995) Charles E. May notes the particular and perennial popularity of the short story in America and in Ireland. Frank O'Connor, in his seminal and groundbreaking 1962 study The Lonely Voice, observed that the short story seems to flourish best in a fragmented society with a "submerged population." O'Connor shows that in the short story there is no character with which the reader can identify, "unless it is that nameless horrified figure who represents the author." In essence, he maintains, the short story does not and cannot have a hero, what it has instead is "a submerged population group" (4). This group is not simply submerged, O'Connor argues, by material considerations, but also by the absence of spiritual ones. There is, he says "a sense of outlawed figures wandering about the fringes of society" (5).

Wendell Harris in 1975 expands on this notion by suggesting that the essence of the short story "is to isolate, to portray the individual person, or moment, or scene in isolation – detached from the great continuum – at once social and historical" (11). With this fragmentation, it is perspective which becomes most critical in the short story. It does not present a world to enter, but

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[1] Excerpt from Jean Stein, "William Faulkner: An Interview" (The Art of Fiction. Spec. issue of The Paris Review 12 1956) 1-27.

[2] Michael Longley, "Frank O'Connor: An Interview" (Twentieth Century Literature. 36.3 1990) 273.

rather endeavours to create a scene to contemplate. The short story then attempts to straddle the distance between the real and the imaginary, between form and content and between place and placelessness.

In his 1924 study of the modern American and English short story, Alfred C. Ward observes that short story writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries "meet in the region of half-lights, where there is commerce between this world and the other world" (16-17). This chimes with Hawthorne's definition of American romance in the preface to The House of Seven Gables (1851) and more so still with "The Custom House" introduction to The Scarlet Letter (1850). For Hawthorne, romances have "more to do with the clouds overhead than with any portion of the actual soil of the County of Essex" (vi). For short story writers after him, this region of half-lights exists within what Henry James has termed Hawthorne's "deeper psychology" (51). Graham Clarke in Henry James: Critical Assessments (1992) alludes to this "deeper psychology" and concludes that both James and Hawthorne had a "kind of sense, a receptive medium, which is not of sight. Not that they fail to make you *see*, so far as necessary, but sight is not the essential sense" (307). While this is accurate there is also, undoubtedly, a lacuna in short story criticism that permits an alternative theoretical framework to emerge, a generic interpretation of this "region of half-lights."

Hawthorne describes the author of a romance tale as "manag[ing] his atmospherical medium as to bring out or mellow the lights, and deepen and enrich the shadows, of the picture" (iii). Romance tales, in his view, attempt to unite times past with an intangible and fleeting present to create a legend which transcends time and place:

> our own broad day-light, and bringing along with it some of its legendary mist, which the reader, according to his pleasure, may either disregard, or

> allow it to float almost imperceptibly about the characters and events for the sake of a picturesque effect. (iv)

He goes on to delineate the differences between romance and realist fiction, particularly noting that realist writing, and the novel in particular, predominantly concerns itself with a moral, "namely that the wrong-doing of one generation lives into the successive ones," while romances, if they do instruct, tend to do so far more subtly (iv). Yet, rather than concentrating, as many critics and commentators have done, on the contrast between realist and romantic short fiction, this project aims to explore this region of half-lights from a different perspective. I will argue that this region is necessarily a shadowy place, that the genre itself defies definition precisely because it is the form of "the submerged population" and a mode of rebellion for its practitioners (O'Connor The Lonely Voice 5). Rather than lending itself all too readily to classification, analyses concerning this genre demand constant reconsideration and reinterpretation, as do the stories themselves. There is, then, an echoing between the form of the short story and the study of the genre itself which creates space for an examination of the short story from fresh perspectives.

Indeed, perhaps no other genre invites, and deserves, substantial critical reconsideration as much as the short story. In "On Defining Short Stories" (1991) Allan H. Pasco remarks that "compared to the novel, the short story has had remarkably little criticism devoted to it, and what theory exists reveals few definitive statements about its nature" (407). However, as Charles E. May attests, it is misleading to assume that the short story, as a genre, has been largely neglected and side-lined by generic criticism and literary criticism alike: the reality is that the form of the short story has not been subjected to theoretical examination and little has been done without some sort of comparison with the novel. The problem

seems to be both of definition and of status. Moreover, many critics have failed to come to a consensus on what precisely constitutes a short story and, more importantly, on the question of whether the form is a significant one, that can contribute to the literary canon.[3]

This thesis will address these issues utilising genre theory, transatlantic theory and theories of belonging as means of classifying the short story. This exploration will begin with an examination of the history and present positions in genre theory associated with the form. May, in The Short Story: The Reality of Artifice, explains how the genre has been received as a tangential one:

> In 1901, in the first full-length study of the form, Brander Matthews noted the "strange neglect" of the short story in literary histories, but for all his efforts to justify the suggestive comments Poe made about the form sixty years earlier, Matthews only succeeded in solidifying critical reaction against the genre. (107)

The purpose of this thesis is to reconsider and re-evaluate the modern short story, transporting it from a discussion concerning romance and realism or debates as to how to define its form, to one which attempts instead to assess the genre from a transatlantic and transnational perspective. It aims to analyse the work of two of the short story's most prolific and loyal practitioners, investigating

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[3] There are, of course exceptions to this approach, most notably Ambrose Bierce's definition of the novel, radically classified in relation to the short story, in The Devil's Dictionary (1899):

> NOVEL, n. A short story padded. A species of composition bearing the same relation to literature that the panorama bears to art. As it is too long to be read at a sitting the impressions made by its successive parts are successively effaced, as in the panorama. Unity, totality of effect, is impossible; for besides the few pages last read all that is carried in mind is the mere plot of what has gone before. To the romance the novel is what photography is to painting. Its distinguishing principle, probability, corresponds to the literal actuality of the photograph and puts it distinctly into the category of reporting; whereas the free wing of the romancer enables him to mount to such altitudes of imagination as he may be fitted to attain; and the first three essentials of the literary art are imagination, imagination and imagination. The art of writing novels, such as it was, is long dead everywhere except in Russia, where it is new. Peace to its ashes – some of which have a large sale (177).

the connection between the genre of the short story in the American South and in Southern Ireland, specifically Cork, with reference to the fiction of Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor. My study begins with a generic comparison of the two O'Connors' treatment of the short story and addresses the relative neglect of this genre in literary studies. An exploration of this kind, addressing the short story as firstly a provincial, Catholic model and secondly a form of transatlantic exchange and reverberation, has much to add not only to the study of the genre itself but also to Flannery O'Connor studies, Frank O'Connor studies, American studies, Irish studies and Transnational enquiry and Southern studies. Indeed, the possibilities yielded by the study of the short story are such that the subject itself is amenable to analysis in all of the critical contexts outlined.

This project seeks to examine past and current theories of the short story completed by critics such as May, author of The Short Story: The Reality of Artifice and editor of The New Short Story Theories (1994), Susan Lohafer, author of Short Coming to Terms with the Short Story (1983), and Jo Ellyn Clarey, Story Theory at a Crossroads (1989). Lohafer explores reader-response theory which, as I will argue later in this discussion, is particularly relevant to Flannery O'Connor, especially when it is coupled with Lohafer's explication of discourse analysis and theories of marginality. In Reading for Storyness: Preclosure Theory, Empirical Poetics, and Culture in the Short Story (2003), Lohafer singles out the phenomenon of imminent closure as the genre's defining trait; she identifies "preclosure points" in order to access hidden layers of the reading experience (4). This presents a compelling argument for the uniqueness of the short story which is particularly apposite to transatlantic, transnational literary explorations in relation to both O'Connors.

Charles E. May and Ian Watt suggest that the short story is an attempt to be authentic to the immaterial reality of the inner world of the self in its relation to eternal, rather than temporal, reality. Lionel Trilling in The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society (1950) had earlier argued that the field of research for the short story is the primitive, antisocial world of the unconscious. This analysis, however, pre-empts the revolutionary nature of the story as a means of, as I will argue, "Southern" dissent and exchange. Trilling and his contemporaries are also arguably ahistorical in their approach, and so very much out of step with contemporary critical fashion. Trilling's position on literature and his self-styled critique of liberalism from within provoked adverse commentary. Critics such as Delmore Schwartz and Irving Howe defined Trilling's position as fashionable opposition for its own sake. For these commentators, Trilling lacked any real historical justification for the opposition he so strategically espouses.[4] Lohafer and May's methodologies, however, can provide us with a starting point for our reading of the transatlantic short story. I aim, then, to contextualise and historicise the critical approaches I will discuss in light of recent turns in short story analysis, Southern studies and transnational theory.

This project will engage with and challenge aspects of these theories in order to reassess the study of the evolution of the genre and its emergence as a distinctively Catholic and provincial mode through an examination of the short stories of both Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor. It will highlight the lack of emphasis on comparative studies in the field of short story theory and address this deficiency in close readings of the short stories of both writers, accenting the satirical, religious, rebellious and colloquial aspects of their work. It will

[4] Daniel T. O'Hara, Lionel Trilling: The Work Of Liberation (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1988). O'Hara reads Trilling's career as a complete work of self-fashioning and deploys a variety of competing contemporary discourses of criticism in order to showcase a practical demonstration of his theory.

concentrate on how their characters often succeed in embodying the figure of the homo sacer, allowing for the internalisation of marginality and "Southernness" felt by these Irish/American writers.

This thesis complements this analysis of the short story with an assessment of the transatlantic and transnational elements in the work of both O'Connors and an exploration of how their work exposes the experience of the "South." In my discussion of transatlantic and transnational frameworks, I will employ the work of the most significant critics in the field, including Paul Giles, C. L. R. James, Donald and Donald Pease. I will combine their findings with those of Southern studies scholars including as Fred Hobson, Jon Smith, Barbara Ellen Smith, Richard Gray and Michael Kreyling in exploring how the "South," as a fictive and imaginative locale, provides a means by which the confining qualities of regionalism can be transcended. In so doing, a new form of provincial transnationalism can be defined and engaged as a corrective, workable and flexible alternative to previous scholarship on the short story and on the South.

In December 2006, a special issue of the journal American Literature entitled "Global Contexts, Local Literature: The New Southern Studies" was published by Duke University Press. This special issue foregrounds debates relating to globalisation and how these have profitably transformed the positioning and the cultural geography of Southern studies – an area traditionally marked by a conflict between the national and the regional and more recently typified by tensions between the local and the global. Sharon Monteith's 2007 essay, "Southern like US: The Globalizing trend in Southern Studies" also investigates the movement in Southern studies towards a more globalised imagining of the South and criticises it. In line then with this global project, I propose to focus on the American South in a global context and attempt to reconceptualise it from various

literary, theoretical, and cultural perspectives. As an area studies programme, American Studies supplies an interdisciplinary methodology for studying the literature, history, politics and territorial geography of America. However, I aim to extend these boundaries by exploring the transnational nature of the U.S. South, employing it in wider readings of the "South," particularly in relation to literatures of the Irish "South."

As part of this interrogation, I utilise the transatlantic theories of Giles and Pease and challenge the sufficiency of their stance with reference to the parameters of my own project. I seek to expand this paradigm by comparing the American South to Southern Ireland, challenging long-established views on the Irish-American connection by moving it away from the East coast context. In transatlantic theory, the Irish angle has largely been relatively sparse, with the important exceptions of Kieran Quinlan's Strange Kin: Ireland and the American South (2005), James P. Cantrell's problematic How Celtic Culture Invented Southern Literature (2005) and Grady McWhiney's Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South (1988), which became "the Bible of the extreme right-wing League of the South" (Helen Taylor "The South and Britain: Celtic Cultural Connections" 354).

This thesis also considers the purported "problems with regionalism" as outlined by transnationalists and explores the benefits of re-imagining writers of the American South from a transnationalist perspective. It is clear that the possibly fabricated perception of the "South" needs to be reconsidered to establish an alternative to ideas of exceptionalism and to allow for an analysis of these Southern writers which has the potential to re-evaluate their work from previously unexplored standpoints. Therefore, one of my primary objectives is to reconfigure certain central ideas relating to Southern critical theory, particularly concerning

objecthood, identity, space, nation and region. As such I will interrogate the U.S. South by cross-examining the theories of Houston A. Baker among others, as well as "American exceptionalism" itself, particularly in relation to the Southern story as it is defined here.

The South has tended to resist transnational enquiry, but I would argue that by its refusal to overtly engage with transnationalism and in remaining so staunchly regional, the work by Flannery O'Connor is, paradoxically, transnational in and of itself. While both O'Connors appear to maintain and preserve traditional boundaries through their apparent regionalism and provincialism, in doing so they create – by means of their characters, themes, language and setting – a unique form of literary exchange: provincial transnationalism.

In order to explore this provincial transnationalism and to define it for the first time my comparative textual analysis of the short stories of Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor will concentrate on locating the "loneliness" inherent in their "south" which is expressed so often through their characterisations in stories such as "The Displaced Person," "Good Country People," "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," "Judgement Day," "The American Wife," "Ghosts" and "The Long Road to Ummera." I identify and locate within the stories themselves the presence of what Agamben calls the homo sacer – the locus of global loneliness.

My project attempts to develops a theory of narrative, linking empirical, cultural, and aesthetic approaches to literary short fiction with a new reading of the short story as a transatlantic, Catholic mode. It provides a re-evaluation of the short story as the appropriate medium for the Catholic imaginations of Frank O'Connor and Flannery O'Connor. Consequently, my study demonstrates that

criticism of the genre of the short story can proceed in a multiplicity of directions even as the genre itself continues to present problems of definition.

In terms of single-author criticism, Flannery O'Connor studies is, at present, polarised at the expense of an objective reading of her work. A lack of scholarly attention, too, has been paid to Frank O'Connor both in Ireland and abroad. My analysis points to a new departure in Flannery O'Connor studies, moving beyond contemporary criticism as it focuses, for the first time, on her Irish connection, her place within short story theory and the Catholic, provincial, "Southern" aspects inherent in this genre as handled by both O'Connors. Her transatlantic links with Irish writer Frank O'Connor, as I will prove, demonstrate how the short story transcends national boundaries, as in the work of both it is a form of "southern" rebellion and transatlantic dissent.

Appropriately, University College Cork is leading this renaissance by recently appointing Hilary Lennon, editor and contributor to Frank O'Connor: Critical Essays (2007) as the first Frank O'Connor Post-Doctoral Fellow. In addition, The Boole Library's Frank O'Connor Website[5] was inaugurated on May 22, 2007 and the Frank O'Connor Holdings at the Boole Library have been re-housed in Special Collections, and are newly searchable on the Library's online catalogue. As a result of renewed international interest in O'Connor, Richard Ford gave the Inaugural Frank O'Connor Lecture at UCC in November 2007 and The Society for the Study of the Short Story held their biennial conference in UCC in June 2008, which shared its title and its focus with one of O'Connor's most famous critical works on the short story, The Lonely Voice[6]. The conference focused on Frank O'Connor's literary and critical legacy for the first time and vitally

[5] Can be accessed at Frank O'Connor Website, ed. Boole Library, May 2008, University College Cork, <http://frankoconnor.ucc.ie/>.
[6] First published in the U.S.A. by World Publishing Company, 1962 and in the U.K. by Macmillan and Company Limited, 1963.

rejuvenated Frank O'Connor's fiction and invigorated O'Connor scholarship. A project of this kind, addressing both the short stories of Frank O'Connor and his literary criticism in The Lonely Voice and The Mirror in the Roadway: A Study of The Modern Novel (1956), is particularly timely considering the re-emergence of Frank O'Connor as a significant and influential literary figure. My project assists in the recovery of Frank O'Connor by a wider exploration of the short story as a provincial yet transatlantic form.

This thesis not only attempts to extend existing scholarship concerning the short story, its theory and its practice, as exemplified by two of its major practitioners, but also to examine how transatlantic and transnational frameworks offer a corrective to analyses steeped in myths of uniqueness. I show that national identity can extend beyond natural geographical obstacles by highlighting broader patterns of exchange, and by tracing the fraught ties of colony to metropole. My project allows for an analytical examination of the interrelatedness of the short story genre, literary multidirectional flow and webs of influence. It opens discussions by encouraging the crossing of traditional boundaries and by examining resonances in the short stories of these two writers whose work has heretofore been considered in isolation.

It is necessary, before embarking on a specific and close reading of the short stories of both O'Connors to examine firstly the current state of short story research, then transatlantic theory and how it is applicable to the short story itself (particularly, as I will demonstrate, the Irish and American models) and finally how these theories apply to the short stories in question. This discussion intends to provide a space for debate concerning the global and local, the regional, national and transnational in American and Southern studies. It intends, for American and transnational studies alike, to extend current scholarship concerning the

transnational American South by presenting a model of the provincial transnational at work.

Chapter One then introduces theories relating to the genre and attempts to distil them so as to form a transnational framework within which to examine the stories of both O'Connors. It goes on to consider debates relating to the area of New Southern Studies, highlighting the ways in which these arguments could usefully pertain to the transnational short story. This chapter also discusses current scholarship relating to both Flannery and Frank O'Connor and considers how these writers and their work provide a means by which to approach an examination of the Southern story.

Chapter Two utilises the work of Americanist and Southern studies theorists to read and explore the imaginary communities created by Flannery O'Connor in "The Displaced Person," "Good Country People," "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" and the "Artificial Nigger" and by Frank O'Connor in "The American Wife," "Ghosts," "The Rebel" and "The Man of the World." It attempts to delineate and define provincial transnationalism by relating it to the Southern story and by reconceptualising theories pertaining to the work of both O'Connors, as well as scholarship relating to the short story, Southern, American and Irish studies.

In Chapter Three, I explore the cross-currents inherent in the work of both O'Connors, an echoing across the ocean. I will chart the disintegration of their respective regions through specific characterisations and dialogue using the theoretical framework provided by transatlantic and transnational theorists. I will outline the disjunction between the imagined geography and actual region which consequently ensures that both Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor are internal exiles of imaginary regions, a status mirrored in their creation of certain

characters like Hazel Motes, Joy/Hulga, Mrs. Hopewell and Tom Barry, among others.

Chapter Four surveys the specific stories listed above in terms of current short story theory and exposes them to an alternative interpretation. This, in turn, leads to a discussion of displacement, and of how these authors succeed in articulating the alienation inherent in their respective Souths through the mode of the short story and as a result, how the model of provincial transnationalism can be applied in this instance. I will compare and contrast the characters created by Frank O'Connor and Flannery O'Connor, paying particular attention to their portrayals of priests, mothers, daughters and children. These characters, these figures, are marginalised from a non-existent mainland, they survive in the borderland and, as the stories show, internalise their feelings of displacement with interesting and significant results. Consequently, I will provide a close reading of the stories in order to provide a workable map of transatlantic displacement and recognition within the genre of the short story.

In Chapter Five I combine the conclusions reached in the preceding chapters to advance a theory of the transnational short story, highlighting once again the literal figures that require transnationalism and transatlanticism in order to become interpretable. In this chapter, I will endeavour to provide a different form of visibility for these figures by returning once more to Frank O'Connor's The Lonely Voice, locating in it an appropriate blueprint for this explication of the imaginary South, along with theories of the short story, transatlantic exchange and an alternate use of the concept of the South. The chapter will also comprise discussions of, and alternatives to, exceptionalism in Ireland and the American South, concepts of internal exile in the American South and in Ireland, an analysis of the homo sacer and how it can be used as a means of mapping internal exile in

the stories of both O'Connors. In conclusion, I will speculate on the ways in which this theory of transnational provincialism can be applied to short story theory in general, and indeed to any exploration of transatlantic literatures, as a means by which these literatures can be expanded, developed and exposed to radically new and expansive modes of discussion.

Chapter One:

The Short Story: A Region of Half-Lights

> The short story is indeed the natural vehicle for the presentation of the outsider, but also for the moment whose intensity makes it seem outside the ordinary stream of time…or outside our ordinary range of experience.
> Wendell Harris[7]

The Short Story: The Story So Far…

Historically, as we have seen, the short story has often been inauspiciously compared to the novel and rarely seen as an art form in its own right. Indeed, Charles E. May mentions that one of the many inconsistencies of the short story is "that from its nineteenth-century beginnings it has been the most generically defined of all literary forms, yet it has at the same time been the most neglected by serious theoretical critics" (108). The issue, then, is not that the short story has been neglected per se, since it has been extensively classified, demarcated, and explicated, but rather that there remains a lacuna of influential academic and theoretical research in this area.

Indeed, the majority of recent scholarship on the short story has been led by May himself, one of the most important contemporary theorists of the genre, along with Susan Lohafer. In light of this relative paucity of critical overviews of the short story, not to mention the dearth of enquiry in relation to its theoretical and cultural possibilities, I am assessing May's contribution, The Short Story: The Reality of Artifice and qualifying his conclusions, at some length. In the comprehensive essay that concludes his volume, May notes that the definitive and critical history of the short story remains to be written. Yet, while May's discussion is undoubtedly helpful, providing as it does a synopsis of the short story and its

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[7] "Vision and Form: The English Novel and the Emergence of the Short Story" (Victorian Newsletter 47 1975) 11.

development as a literary form, there is an obvious concentration on the American experience. It is therefore necessary to query this stance while, at the same time, acknowledging its relative importance in charting the particular progress of the American short story, its relationship with stories of other nations and genre criticism.

May contends that "[b]ecause of a more theoretical approach to the study of literature originated by Russian formalism in the 1920s, European critics have often taken the short story more seriously than the Americans" (115). In contrast, Brander Matthews assembles several suggestions about the form that have since been reiterated and legitimised by other writers and critics. He maintains, for example, that the short story has always been popular in America because Americans are more concerned with things unseen than are the English (110). These by now relatively redundant concerns overemphasise national difference and indicate a wider failure to date to look beyond a nativist and exceptionalist genre-specific discussion, to one which examines instead the many and varied connections between stories themselves. Yet, as Robert M. Luscher asserts in his review for Studies in Short Fiction:

> [b]y problematising the notion of realism, invoking the genre's origins in myth, and devoting consistent attention to the notion of artifice, May transcends the limitations of previous historical surveys and focuses instead on the various ways in which writers have confronted the genre's challenges. (1)

However, the exclusion of particular writers from this study does raise certain questions. While May includes few non-Western writers, he does acknowledge the thriving field of multicultural writing; remarkably however, writers such as Flannery O'Connor and John Updike, who have both made major and demonstrable

contributions to the genre, receive inadequate reference, except in the annotated index of "Recommended Titles" and in the chronology of significant birth and publication dates.

May's volume divides his historical exploration into a general analysis of the development of the short story over time, a detailed narrative concerning the gradual evolution of the form through its four most important historical and/or generic periods and concludes with a survey and critique of criticism and commentary. He begins with a treatment of the form's mythic origins and outlines the dichotomy between romance as epitomised in the work of Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe and the rise of realism with its proponents Herman Melville[8], Gustave Flaubert and Sherwood Anderson. The basic difference between the American romancers and realists – a difference which May argues adversely affected the development of the short story during this period – was the philosophic disagreement about what constitutes significant "reality." For realists, the novel was far better equipped to contain and create an illusion of quotidian reality whereas the short story required more artifice and patterning. Hawthorne's analysis of this antithesis is as enlightening as it is engagingly expressed:

> The author has considered it hardly worth his while...relentlessly to impale the story with its moral, as with an iron rod, -- or rather, as by sticking a pin through a butterfly, -- thus at once depriving it of life, and causing it to stiffen in an ungainly and unnatural attitude. (The House of The Seven Gables v)

[8] Melville is more often read as a romancer than as a realist; see Brian Higgins and Hershel Parker, eds. Herman Melville: The Contemporary Reviews (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995). This volume anthologises virtually all the known contemporary reviews of his writings from the 1840s until his death in 1891. These materials document the response of the reviewers to specific works and show the course of Melville's nineteenth century reputation as travel writer, romancer, short-story writer, and poet.

So, there were those who were nonetheless committed to the short story and to the American romance tradition, "[a] high truth, indeed, fairly, finely, and skilfully wrought out, brightening at every step" (v). May notes a return to Poe by such writers as Ambrose Bierce, O. Henry and Frank Stockton. Later again, Joseph Conrad pioneered the modern tale with a narrative technique that looks backward to Poe and forward to Joyce. James Joyce, particularly in his short story "The Dead," innovated upon the modern tale by conveying to the reader mysterious suggestiveness through concrete situations in the real world. It is clear that Joyce was profoundly influenced by the "new" realism of Anton Chekhov. Chekhov's perception of the short story as a lyrically charged fragment in which characters are less fully rounded realist figures than embodiments of mood had had significant impact on the majority of twentieth-century practitioners of the form.

The shift that took place between the end of the nineteenth century and the rebirth of short fiction in America in the 1920s has been attributed largely to a loss of confidence in the authority of social reality. Bonaro Overstreet has insinuated that, perhaps because of the First World War, criticism of the short story, and indeed the genre itself, has been "thrown back upon a study of human nature – human motives, fears, wants, prejudices." The drama of the twentieth century continues Overstreet, is "the drama of what goes on in the mind" and the short story is an "expert medium for the expression of our deep concern about human moods and motives" (4). Austin Wright, in The American Short Story in the Twenties (1961), pronounces Faulkner, Hemingway and Anderson superior writers because of the manner in which they wrestle with the loss of certainty in the social system and the new reliance on the individual self. The world of the 1920s was "fragmented both socially and morally, with each man isolated, obliged to din or

make for himself his appropriate place in society and the appropriate principles to guide him" (149-51).

Accordingly, two varieties of the short story arose in the first half of the twentieth century: on the one hand, a bare new realistic style epitomised by Hemingway and his Russian forerunner Isaac Babel, and, on the other, a more mythic style evinced by such writers as William Faulkner, who shaped a fabled world in the American South, and Isak Dinesen, who created the contemporary Gothic fairy tale. Both styles amalgamated lyricism with allegory, and both were increasingly pushed to such extremes: to the more drastically realised fantasies of Franz Kafka and to what Malcolm Cowley called, in his introduction to The Portable Hemingway (1944), Hemingway's "nightmares at noonday" (viii). The moral folklore of Isak Dinesen seemed to allow for the grotesque romances of Flannery O'Connor, whose stories are not, as I assert, entirely compatible with that definition.

Much work has been done on the form's liminal position between the novel and the lyric poem. Poe positioned the short story next to the lyric as the supreme practice of literary art. May accedes, stating that, "[a]lthough the short story is committed to a prose fictional presentation of an event, it makes use of the plurasignification of poetry" (114). By the 1950s, critics were increasingly observing the lyrical quality of the short story and its efforts to evade formula plots. On the one hand, Herschel Brickell claimed in "What Happened to the Short Story?" (1951) that the proliferation of good short stories, especially those that were psychological and poetic, was due to the new gush of creative writing classes in colleges and universities. Falcon O. Baker, in 1953, argued on the contrary that the New Criticism had fashioned a discrete formula to replace the old one, and claimed

that the short story was restrictively the province of the professors and the literary quarterlies (24).

In a chapter of The Short Story: The Reality of Artifice, "Implications of the Form's Shortness," May demonstrates that there was a disparity in the treatment of the short story in popular literary magazines such as Atlantic Monthly relative to the treatment received in scholarly journals and literary quarterlies. Academic consideration tended to focus on the exposition of individual short stories rather than on the generic disposition of the mode itself. As previously noted, May contends that due to the more theoretical approach taken by Russian formulism in the 1920s on the study of literature; European critics have tended to take the short story more seriously than the Americans do.

However, many leading critics and short story writers see America as the originator of the modern short story as we recognise it today. One of the theorists May uses to exemplify this divergence between Europe and America is B. M. Éjxenbaum, the Russian formalist critic. In his treatise of O. Henry (1968) and the model of the short story, Éjxenbaum declares that the novel and the short story are not disparate in kind but rather "inherently at odds" (4). He goes on to explain that the dissimilarity between the two forms is one of essence. Éjxenbaum states that there are essential deductions arising from the variations in dimension between "big and small forms" and that this pivots principally on the distinction between the conclusions of novels and short stories (4). He professes that the novel is arranged by the linking of disparate materials and the paralleling of machinations and as a result, the ending usually entails a "point of let-up." In antithesis to this, the short story is composed on the basis of "a contradiction or incongruity" and according to Éjxenbaum "amasses its whole weight toward the ending" (4).

May concurs that the shortness of the form inescapably commands some sense of potency or reinforcement of construction and credence on the end, a constraint that is lacking in the novel. As Kermode comments in his The Sense of an Ending (1967):

> Men, like poets, rush 'into the middest,' in *medias res*, when they are born; they also die in *meis rebus*, and to make sense of their span they need fictive concords with origins and ends, such as give meaning to lives and to poems. The End they imagine will reflect their irreducibly intermediary preoccupations. They fear it, and as far as we can see have always done so; The End is a figure for their own deaths. (7)

The short story, to use Kermode's expression, "thrive[s] on epochs" and as such makes images of moments which have seemed like ends (7). The genre can be seen to "project...past the End, so as to see the structure whole, a thing we cannot do from our spot of time in the middle" (8). As such, it is as much a beginning as it is an ending. The short story contains vignettes of life, fragments of the past, present and future, single moments crystallised in a ceaseless cycle of moments.

Georg Lukács' critique of the form of the short story in his Theory of the Novel (1920) supposes that the short story as an imaginary form deals with a "fragment of life," pinched out of life's entirety (49). The presumption of this delimitation is that the mode is fixed by the author and the author's intention. In fact, Lukács avows that the intrinsic lyricism of the genre lies in "pure selection": just as a poet chooses an appropriate theme, so too does the short story writer (51). The most radical variation between the two forms is perhaps that the short story, as Lukács sees it, must centre on the outlandish and exceptional nature of human incident and communication. May's reading of Lukács outlines the effect of the form's focus on "[a]bsurdity in all its undisguised and unadorned nakedness." The

lyricism is obscured behind the "hard outlines of the event" and thus the view of irrationality is granted the "consecration of form" (51-52).

Lukács's discussion invites comparison with Frank O'Connor's study of the short story, The Lonely Voice.[9] Here, the short story does not only involve itself with the absurdity of life but it also deals, as Frank O'Connor argues, with the very real issue of human loneliness. May, among other critics, is aware of the chiefly instinctive and uncorroborated mode of Frank O'Connor's contention, as from his perspective it lacks a sustainable and rationally reliable speculative system. He also affirms that due to the fact that O'Connor's observations are predominantly thematic, few critics have felt they warranted additional scrutiny. An exception is Bernard Bergonzi's The Situation of The Novel (1971). Bergonzi takes O'Connor's concept regarding loneliness in the short story a step further. He suggests that the short story writer is "bound to see the world in a certain way, not merely because of our customary atmosphere of crisis, but because the form of the short story tends to filter down experience to the prime elements of defeat and alienation" (215-16). May argues that what is important here is that, the short story's shortness has frequently been intimately related to a sense of loneliness and alienation. While this is surely accurate, I would develop this point further by surmising that the scarcity of criticism and theoretical engagement with the short story, as well as the critical tendency to isolate it as a distinctly national form, has further encouraged this definition of estrangement.

The logical advancement of this argument concerns the nature of character and how characterisation subsists in the form. Bliss Perry dedicated a chapter to the short story in his 1902 study, A Study of Prose Fiction. In it, he notes that the shortness of the form requires that the character must be "unique, original enough

[9] O'Connor repeatedly uses the term "storytelling" to describe the process of writing both stories and novels, calling the former "pure storytelling" and the latter "applied storytelling" (27).

to catch the eye at once": a product of this necessity to select exceptional rather than normal characters is that the short story is "thrown up on the side of romanticism rather than of realism" (310). As Hawthorne states in the preface to The House of Seven Gables, "[w]hen a writer calls his work a romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume, had he professed to be writing a novel" (iii).

Henry James referred to the short story as a genre in which something "oddly happened" to someone (Theory of Fiction 102). Flannery O'Connor professed that the form is one in which the writer makes "alive some experience which we are not accustomed to observe everyday, or which the ordinary man may never experience in his ordinary life…Their fictional qualities lean away from typical social patterns, toward mystery and the unexpected" (Mystery and Manners 40). Of her own work, she says that it takes its character from "a reasonable use of the unreasonable." She goes on to comment that the challenge is how to make action "reveal as much of the mystery of existence as possible…how to make the concrete work double time for him" (98).

May alleges that due to the fact that their focus is the abnormal and the unexplained, short story writers are obliged to control their materials very tightly. He cites Edith Wharton in "Telling a Short Story": "the greater the improbability [that is, the further the situation seems to be from real life], the more studied must be the approach…The least touch of irrelevance, the least chill of inattention, will instantly undo the spell" (38). There is a level of intensity and concentrated experience in this form. Yet, few critical studies have been written about the dreamlike, "romantic" nature of the short story. Mary Rohrberger's 1966 study is perhaps one of the few which argues that the genre exemplifies a romantic

conception of a reality that lies beyond the everyday world with which the novel has always been conventionally concerned. In fact, much of the most helpful work on Flannery O'Connor has engaged with the romance nature of her stories and the fact that she identified herself as part of the American Romance tradition, mingling as she does "the marvellous rather as a slight, delicate, and evanescent flavour, that as any portion of the actual substance of the dish offered to the public" and not meddling "with the characteristics of a community for whom [s]he cherishes a proper respect and a natural regard" (House of the Seven Gables i, v).

It was, of course, Edgar Allan Poe who first articulated the principles that underpin the genre; his critical observations on the form in the 1830s were responsible for the birth of the short story as a distinct genre. Many of these notions were derived from the practice and critique of the German novella in the early part of the century by Goethe, A. W. Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck, and E. T. A. Hoffman. Poe first refers to Schlegel's notion of "totality of interest" in an 1836 review where he argues that although in long works one may be pleased with particular passages, in shorter pieces the pleasure derives from the perception of the oneness, uniqueness, and overall unity of the work that constitutes a totality of interest or effect (118).

In his 1842 review of Hawthorne, Poe further claims that harmony is realised only in a composition that the reader can hold in the mind all at once. After the poem, traditionally the highest form of literary art, Poe says that the short story has the most promise of being unified. The effect of the tale is equivalent to its complete pattern or plot, which is also indistinguishable from its theme or idea (124-26). Poe takes this concern with unity even further in "The Philosophy of Composition," where he asserts the magnitude of beginning with the end or effect of the work (127-29).

Brander Matthews' The Philosophy of the Short-Story in 1901 further entrenched Poe's theories concerning the exceptionality of the short story within American literary criticism. Matthews initially called the form "Short-story" instead of simply "short story" and also tapered Poe's "single effect," thus arguing for the uniqueness of the form by allowing this to mean "a single character, a single event, a single emotion, or the series of emotions called forth by a single situation" (16). May deliberates on how Matthews, in conjunction with the popularity of short story writers like O. Henry, paved the way for a vast number of imitators, those wishing to emulate Matthews in literary theory and O. Henry in short fiction. Again, criticism of the short story seems to be mirroring issues in its composition, highlighting the co-dependent relationship between the practice and critique of the short story. This is perhaps a result of many short story scholars also being practitioners of the form, pertinent examples being Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor. These two areas are, perhaps, more than in other genre related studies, inextricably linked.

A number of "how-to" books were also published in the 1910s which equalled and were perhaps fuelled by the booming magazine market in short fiction in the US. These instructive texts included Carl H. Grabo's The Art of the Short Story (1913) and Blanche Colton Williams's A Handbook on Story Writing (1917). Conversely, the result of this seems to have been a decline in the quality of both short story writing and criticism. Many serious readers and critics called for the end of the genre, filling periodicals with articles on the "decline," "decay," and "senility" of the short story (May The Short Story: The Reality of Artifice 110). This may have been because the short story had still not detached itself from its popular origins and established itself as an art form. The form appeared to have

had no real tradition or guidance and any attempts impose such structures, as May outlines, were met with failure:

> being a half-breed offspring of both eighteenth century restraint and nineteenth-century imagination; for all these reasons it is all the more unfortunate that Brander Matthews's early attempt to give it respectable literary guidance focused too much on restraint and too little on imagination. (110)

The short story as a "half-breed" genre, and as a form representative of in-betweenness, has challenged critics to transcend traditional approaches to genre. Frequently, short story critics, seeing themselves as defenders of an underappreciated form, construe the genre's legacy, or lack thereof, in storytelling as key in determining its treatment on the larger literary scene. The handling of the story's lineage chronicles the manner in which the short story is esteemed in contemporary American culture.

It is clear, then, that not only does the short story itself require balance between the rational and the imaginative, but so too does the criticism it inspires. The short story demands a new approach, one which will revolutionise its reading, interpretation and, perhaps most importantly, future theoretical study on the subject. The method I propose, a transatlantic framework, aims to achieve this by reading short story theory, and indeed the short story itself, from a previously unexplored position. Employing the American short story as May and Lohafer survey it, and more particularly the American Southern story, I will differentiate my approach, assessing it in concurrence with the Irish model.

This transnational model has much to offer in a discussion of the short story. It is, after all, the study of "in-betweeness" and, as such, echoes the current situation in genre studies of the short story. The short story is often located in-

between poetry and the novel; it is "a half-breed offspring of both eighteenth-century restraint and nineteenth-century imagination," a form which endeavours to straddle the realism/romance divide. Thus, the possibility of the short story as a form of dissent and dissonance can be charted by the divergences outlined and also by employing the transatlantic paradigm. The short story, I will argue, is a point of "in-betweenness," and by virtue of its liminality we can reconceptualise the short story as a productive mode of transnational enquiry and exchange, a method employed by contemporary writers like Richard Ford and Zadie Smith.

Issues of form are crucial to criticism of the short story, and this debate appears to be inextricably linked to notions of national difference, particularly in relation to America. Matthews, as outlined, did make some suggestions about the form that have since been echoed and endorsed by other writers and critics. As long ago as 1891, William Dean Howells, in his Criticism and Fiction claimed that Americans are the finest practitioners of the short story, although he had a different explanation for the popularity of the form:

> It might be argued from the national hurry and impatience that it was a literary form particularly adapted to the American temperament but I suspect that its extraordinary development among us is owing much more to more tangible facts. The success of American magazines, which is nothing less than prodigious, is only commensurate with their excellence. (41)

American magazines certainly played a significant part in supporting and developing the literary output of the O'Connors. Flannery O'Connor's work was frequently published in Sewanee Review, Partisan Review, Kenyon Review and Harper's Bazaar, as Frank O'Connor's stories appeared in The New Yorker. While the actualities of the "national hurry" decanted easily into the short story form,

American magazines, as Howells suggests, provided a concrete and material space for the American short story to flourish in a multitude of ways. The fragmented nature of the genre itself seemed to reflect the disparate nature of the American experience.

May cites Katherine Fullerton Gerould's contention that American short story writers have dealt with peculiar atmospheres and singular dispositions because America has no centralised civilisation. She claims that "[t]he short story does not need a complex and traditional background so badly as the novel does" (642-63), a point which I will challenge later in this discussion. Ruth Suckow, in 1927, suggests that the chaos and unevenness of American life had made the short story a natural expression (317-18). It is productive, once again, to relate this to the notion of the "submerged population" explored by Frank O'Connor and used to explicate the reasons why the short story does require a complex background and a particular experience of defeat in order to succeed as a form, even if that tradition be one of alleged "chaos."

Soon after Matthews' study of the short story, the first histories of the form appeared, as did a few additional critical-scholarly studies. H. S. Canby's The Short Story in English (1909) is a useful generic exploration of the form that sketches the development of short story prose from the Decameron and the Canterbury Tales up to the short stories of O. Henry. Barry Pain also produced a small pamphlet titled The Short Story in 1916 including comments on the short story's essentially romantic nature that are still valuable, particularly in relation to the O'Connors.

Many critics have also made optimistic declarations concerning the future of the short story, only to retract their observations later. Edward J. O'Brien completed his Advance of the Short Story (1923) by calling short story writers the "destined interpreters of our time to itself and our children" (qtd. in May 112).

The very instantaneous nature of the short story allows for an interrogation of the present, there is no space for the past or the future. Short stories are united in and by their presence in the "now." May claims that O'Brien's disenchantment and cynicism came only six years later with his book The Dance of the Machines (1929) in which he blasted the mechanical formulae that had taken over short story writing, a situation with which both Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor criticism has had to contend. O'Brien was reacting to the plethora of formalistic rules and formulaic stories that followed Brander Matthews's The Philosophy of the Short Story and Henry's popularity, finally forcing the most influential champion of the form to condemn the short story as a mechanized, mass-produced metaphor of the machine age. Later, H. E. Bates (1941) and Ray B. West (1952) lament the failure of the short story to live up to financial and conjectural prospects, though all concur it is the most artful fictional form. It is a mystery then as to why the short story has not managed to capture and secure its rightful location.

What is ostensibly absent is any kind of critical consensus in relation to the short story, a method of developing consequential and significant criticism. As early as 1927, Suckow affirmed that no distinguishing characteristic or group of characteristics could be agreed upon by critics that singled out the short story from other fictions (317-18). The form, as I have outlined, has been eclipsed by critical attention to the novel: as Pratt observes, "the novel was born affirming its own writtenness" (107). The novel would retain its ascendant status, and the short story its relative minor rank, as a result perhaps of the short story's seeming ties to restrictive nativism, orality and static criticism, as opposed to the novel's obvious physicality as a written object.

It is necessary too to consider the generic implications of Flannery O'Connor's two novellas, Wise Blood (1952) and The Violent Bear It Away (1960) which could be classified as American long stories, as Richard Ford attempts to define them in his introduction to The Granta Book of the American Long Story (1998). Ford argues that novellas or long stories are extended short stories and continually challenge our perceptions regarding genre. He categorises a novella as:

> the Latin-y sounding word long in use to refer to prose fictions of a certain, intermediate length; intermediate 'between' the modern prose forms that had achieved if not reliable definition, at least scholarly and readerly acceptance as entities – novel and short stories"(xi).

So in many respects, the long story or novella dwells in an even more shadowy place than the short story, and provided Flannery O'Connor with another means by which to explore issues relating to internal exile, place and religion. "But all these novellas" as Ford attests "seemed substantial. All represented life's density and importance in ways that made the stories thematically weighty. They were simply not as long as novels" (xi). Ford goes on to examine how novellas differ from short stories, finding that they "somehow gained part of their excellence from being 'free' of the constraining length that typified regulation short stories" (xii). He surmises that novellas allow for more characters, more scenes, deeper analysis and for the development of themes of great importance, "yet without getting caught up with the heavy lumber of a full-fledged novel" (xii). This hardly, as Ford admits, comprises a workable theory of the novella.

Ford does however reference Goethe's rather minimal, definition of 1827, that a novella simply involves "one authentic unheard-of event" (xx). The consensus between nineteenth-century German critics was that novellas should be concise and focus on one dramatic, seemingly authentic situation, one which is

more fated than willed, but discloses modern, ordinary, real characters in spiritual and ethical conflict. Yet, common features among novellas remain difficult to find and, as a result, critical interest and accord in the form began to dwindle, with Goethe's spare definition seeming the safest. Ford also outlines how many American writers "are notoriously slippery when it comes to following literary rules" (xxi). Indeed, genre titles multiplied in relation to the novella. Katherine Ann Porter wrote "short novels," while Henry James, Edith Wharton, Nathanael West and F. Scott Fitzgerald all wrote what they or their reviewers called novellas. Not only that but American writers do not appear to have written extensively about novellas and so widespread debate over the novella did not really occur among significant American writers before the 1940s.

During the epoch of literary renaissance which followed World War II and Americans' subsequent exposure to Europe, new interest in the novella was ignited. This sought to do for the American novella what Europeans, and particularly Germans, had failed to do with their own: define what a novella is. They argued that in order for novellas to qualify as a genre, they should engender unique effects and should handle their subjects differently to other literary forms. Much critical thought has been expended as to whether novellas are unique, and not just stories of indeterminate length. For Ford, novellas exist between novels and short stories in length and are judged by theorists to be generic as they succeed in creating effects which are both intense, like short stories, but have extensive implications, like novels. Yet contemporary observers, European and American alike, have admitted "definitional defeat" on the matter (xxvii). As Ford demonstrates, the words "nebulous," "insoluble," "protean," "chameleon-like," even "nonsensical" have been used regularly in critical literature on the subject (xxviii). Walter Pabst wrote in 1949, "but there is no such genre as a novella" (xxviii).

In The Granta Book of The American Long Story Ford chose not to include "certain standards such as…Wise Blood" because he felt that "they are likely to be available elsewhere and to be well-known already by British readers" (xxx). It is evident that Wise Blood and The Violent Bear it Away are representatives of the long story or novella form. Given that critics have often referred to Wise Blood in particular as a long short story, for the purposes of this thesis I will refer to both these works as such. In many respects, they are as useful in a transnational context as the more traditional short stories in O'Connor's oeuvre, given that they exist on the periphery of generic theory. Short stories too, as outlined, inhabit a similar space.

It was only with the publication of Short Story Theories in 1967 that scholarship of the short story was first compiled. The genre is therefore unsettled by its own inherent contradictions; as May delineates, it has been called the oldest verbal form and the youngest, the most conventional and artificial, the literary form that most precisely reflects the human circumstance, as well as the mode that exemplifies only an arbitrary view of human actuality. These ambiguities are more apparent than real and they are perhaps the consequence of a failure by critics to construct and craft essential historical distinctions. Critics of the short story genre accomplish little, I would argue, by debating the origins of the form. A transatlantic reading may offer a solution in this regard.

Transatlanticism and Transnationalism in American Studies

Transatlanticism and more recently transnationalism are integral components of the American Studies tradition, yet they are often a submerged element, as paradigms of American exceptionalism have until relatively recently, occluded a transatlantic or transnational perspective. Paul Giles observes that as a

result of "the increasing demographic presence of Hispanics within the USA itself" the borderland has supplanted the Atlantic "as a site of transnational exchange" in American Studies (Atlantic Republic 9). Wai Chee Dimock develops this idea, remarking that "[the] premise of exceptionalism translates into a methodology that privileges nation above all else. The field can legitimize itself as a field only because the nation does the legitimizing" (Shades of the Planet 2). In my investigation I will partly draw upon a selection of the assessments found in The Futures of American Studies. This collection grew out of a series of conferences that Donald E. Pease hosted at Dartmouth College in the late 1990s. It is obvious that these essays are not intended to be read by a wide audience, nor should they be, as the authors often seem to be directly addressing their professional colleagues; frequently they debate with each other. They are interested in the theoretical issues that shape the field. As Ann Fabian outlines in her review of the volume in The Journal of American History:

> The field is haunted still by its rise to prominence in the Cold War States, by a legacy of the American exceptionalism that shaped the scholarship of an earlier generation of writers, and by its complicity with universities that exploit workers and train students to be passive consumers (1).

Fabian also alludes to the fact that these scholars are aware of the actuality of writing in an area with so troubling a past, so problematic a present, and such uneasy bonds to a nation-state. As a result, it appears appropriate that the majority of their attitudes and estimations appear to be moderately speculative, suggestive, and operate at a high level of abstraction.

Intriguingly, and perhaps unexpectedly, these rather fluid hypotheses provide the space in which paradigms relating to the short story, the American South and Southern Ireland can productively be explored. By their very nature,

these theories permit continual recontextualisation, rearticulation and recodification in the transnational sphere. However, it is worth noting that the Futures collection presents articles almost exclusively by American scholars in the field. It is clear that the voices of those virtually absent from the collection need to be acknowledged more directly, particularly as their opinions are also equally important in connection with the futures of the corpus of research, especially when American studies is internationalised. This project attempts to bridge this gap, by rethinking and resituating these theories critically and furthering the debate, not necessarily regarding the future of American studies, but indicating one of the ways in which it might develop.

In the introduction, "Futures," editors Pease and Robyn Wiegman make clear that the context for this volume is the essay by Gene Wise, "'Paradigm Dramas' in American Studies: A Cultural and Institutional History of the Movement" (1979). While the majority of the study deals, often specifically, with the nature of American Studies and the challenges faced by that discipline, many of the observations are nevertheless applicable and apt in exploration of short story criticism, particularly relating to the 1950s and 1960s. By the late 1960s, as Pease and Wiegman outline, the aspiration for radical social transformation produced with the new social movements, the Civil Rights Movement, Black Power, Feminism as well as the cultural turns away from the myth and symbol school in American literary criticism, led to the repudiation of the American studies movement precisely for its complicit identification with the exceptionalist state apparatus that the field purported to interpret (Futures 16).

For Jay Mechling, in his 1999 re-evaluation of Wise in Lucy Maddox's Locating American Studies: The Evolution of a Discipline, "Paradigm Dramas" was "an exercise in minor prophecy"(1) and he selected the following list of

calculations from the essay as confirmation of Wise's forethought: a pluralistic rather than holistic approach to American culture, the rediscovery of the particular, the repudiation of American exceptionalism, and the rise of comparativist and cross-cultural approaches to American studies. What is most useful here, for the purposes of exposing the short story to transatlantic theories is that pluralistic, anti-exceptionalist, comparativist and cross-cultural approaches are exactly what the study of the short story requires at this juncture. As I will demonstrate later in this chapter, Flannery O'Connor studies, Frank O'Connor criticism and Southern studies benefit from this re-imagining.

So what does it mean when we look at the South and the short story from a variety of different, often competing perspectives? Wise calls for a "different quality of mind, a connecting mind which can probe beyond the immediacy of the situation to search for everything which rays out beyond it" (336), a mind that challenges exceptionalist and reductive approaches, and I would argue that the short story is fertile ground for such a position. The form itself, as I will demonstrate, allows for such possibilities. Yet, many of the arguments relating to the possibility of transatlantic exchange though the medium of the novel are also applicable and useful when endeavouring to establish a similar, if not still more convincing, model regarding the short story. In his essay, "C. L. R. James, Moby Dick, and the Emergence of Transnational American Studies," Pease reinvestigates James' interpretation of Moby Dick (1847) from the perspective of the subordinated populations who were the victims of the state's temporal as well as economic and geographical colonisation. In this instance of "displacement" Pease acknowledges that James composed his re-reading of Moby Dick whilst awaiting deportation on Ellis Island in 1953. Due, in some part, to this perspective of "Americanness," James articulated the figures of the "mariners, renegades, and

castaways" from the pages of Moby Dick and identifies with them as "un-Americans" of the kind who pass through Ellis Island.

Interestingly, as Pease notes, James does not yearn after Americanisation, rather he finds in Moby Dick "the prediction of a future that constitutes an alternative to the present" (26). Pease asserts that by substituting the necessity for national belonging with the openness to unassimilated otherness represented by the "mariners, renegades, and castaways," James constructs an open-ended circuit of transnational and international relations that were then excluded from the official national narrative, turning this work from the historical past towards the postnational future that has emerged within our historical present (26).

In The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic (2000), Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker outline how merchant sea captains would collect new sailors wherever they could locate them. As a result, these ships had the potential to become both breeding grounds for rebels and meeting places where multiple traditions were wedged together in a hot-bed of forced internationalism. English ships were therefore worked by not only English sailors but "African, Briton, quashee, Irish, and American (not to mention Dutch, Portuguese, and lascar (sailors)" (151). Piracy was rife, with governments proclaiming that pirates "had no country" and the pirates emphasising their own rejection of nationality by boldly announcing that they came "[f]rom the Seas" (165).

These arguments and discussions have much to lend to this examination of the short story, and in particular the Southern story, as I will define it. Both Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor, while belonging to their respective regions, still succeeded in using the language of displacement and dislocation and, more importantly, endeavoured to expose the experience of those who had been

internally colonised and those who were very much at odds with their environment. It is apparent that the short story has a particular facility; it can provide a vehicle for discussions that are not necessarily suitable for other modes. These writers, while part of their particular and individual communities, can at once highlight the plight of the unexpectedly disenfranchised population. So, the O'Connors provide us with a means by which to access the experience of the internal refugee, the character that belongs, but yet does not belong. The character is acutely aware of the concept of "belonging" in an abstract sense and of the fact that they should belong. It is, however, as a result of this very knowledge that they succeed in distancing themselves from the core or supposedly indigenous population.

In other words, artists have to be exiles in order to see the truth; they must detach themselves from the actuality of the majority. Yet this is a troubling predicament as it means that anyone who desires to observe a region critically must exclude themselves from that region to secure a certain perspective. The mariners, renegades and pirates are outside all dominion yet they are part of a fluid and ever mobile community, just as artists are, in an intellectual sense, inhabiting the space between belonging and not. By observing their surrounds they must also be at variance with them. The conflicted relationship of the internal exile is an aspect of reality for authors and characters alike.

There is nonetheless a need for place, or at least an awareness of place, within this theoretical framework. Even the renegades had a community to sustain their desire to assimilate, though they still remained beyond the conventional boundaries of place. This band of renegades shaped its own mobile population, and as a result subsists both inside and outside "the norm." As renegades they place themselves beyond society, but they are still part of it as they provide a foil against which to measure acceptable modes of behaviour. Yet, belonging to the

renegades, they inhabit an alternate societal structure. Does this interpretation of transnationalism suggest that 'place' is an abstract, if not constantly altering, conception?

This concept can be related to Winfried Fluck's "The Humanities in the Age of Expressive Individualism and Cultural Radicalism" and his analysis of the New American studies, which is grounded in the differences between the scholarship in American studies that grows out of the European American Studies Association, and what Fluck describes as the new Americanists' expressive individualism. Fluck proposes that expressive individualism is premised on the European Enlightenment's privileged addressee – the liberal individual. Indeed, Fluck goes on to claim that expressive individualists turn the overvaluation of differences into the primary form of value which can be valuably explored in relation to the O'Connors and their experiences with individualism (28).

Therefore, place and space are at one time integral elements of identity and at another, cloying concepts to transcend and dissolve. As Eudora Welty proclaims in her essay "Place in Fiction" (1957):

> Place in fiction is the named, identified, concrete, exact and exacting, and therefore credible, gathering spot of all that has been felt, is about to be experienced…Location pertains to feeling; feeling profoundly pertains to place; place in history partakes of feeling, as feeling about history partakes of place. (The Eye of the Story 122)

According to Welty, place has "a more lasting identity than we have," and claims that "we unswervingly tend to attach ourselves to identity" (119). Place is what we cling to, crushingly aware of our mortality and fleeting influence upon our environment. Place, as Yi-Fu Tuan argues is different from space due to locational qualities associated with the contemplation of place. He therefore endows place

with values and complex emotions relating to security and stability in a similar manner to Welty. Flannery O'Connor pre-empts Welty's sentiments:

> I want to talk…about the peculiar problem of the Southern writer who, without removing his attention from the provincial scene, wishes to write about life as a whole. I might call this the problem of the Southern writer and his country, but by country I don't mean America. I mean something more like vision or world but I prefer the word country because it includes more and is closer to us. I mean by it everything from the actual countryside that the writer describes, on to and through the peculiar characteristics of his region and his nation, and on through and under all of these to what I consider his true country, the eternal and absolute. Now you'll admit that this covers considerable territory, and you will perhaps think that instead of saying country, I should say countries - - but it is the peculiar burden of the fiction writer that he has to make one country do for all, and that he has to evoke that one country through the concrete particulars of a life that he can make believable. ("Untitled typescript [re: The Problem of the Southern Writer]")

To write about "life as a whole," it is necessary to acknowledge the provincial, to articulate the experiences of a region and of a country. But, as O'Connor outlines, underneath these territories lies a timeless one, a country to "do for all." This eternal landscape must be excavated, however, by employing tangible aspects of real life.

In her compelling article, "Deep Time: American Literature and World History," Dimock summons historical depth to redraft the map of American literature. Though her focus is on Emerson, her conceptual rendering of "deep

time" is useful in this instance.[10] For Dimock, dates and "periodization" presuppose that there can be a distinct, enclosed unit of time corresponding with a detached, bounded unit of space: a chronology overlapping with a terrain. Dimock then proposes a more extensive duration for American literary studies, planetary in range; this is "deep time." She maintains that "if we go far enough back in time, and it is not very far, there was no such thing as the US" (759). The emergent history of that existence, serving as a time frame both ancestral and in progress, takes American literature outside the nation's borders. "Deep time is denationalized space" (28) and this scale enlargement, Dimock attests, enlarges our sense of composite affiliation. This is temporal transnationalism, and when coupled with spatial transnationalism it provides a new map ready for new modes of literary exploration.

There is a need, too, to reconceptualise transnationality along intersectional lines (Pease Futures 31). Coupled with this, Günter Lenz in "Towards a Dialogics of International American Culture Studies: Transnationality, Border Discourses, and Public Culture(s)," describes American culture as itself the product of a range of complex processes. "American culture is not the homogenised powerful, imperialising or globalising Other," Lenz remarks, "but it is in itself multiplicitous, inherently differentiated and conflicted, and always changing in active response to alternative multicultural and intercultural discourses and experiences" (Pease and Wiegman 35). So too is the transnational short story. Following the intention of Pease and Wiegman in their Futures of American Studies this thesis is an attempt to re-imagine the past of the Souths and to re-examine the transatlantic and transnational aspects of the history and practice of the short story. I intend to

[10] For Dimock "[Deep time] produces a map that, thanks to its receding horizons, its backward extension into far-flung temporal and spatial coordinates, must depart significantly from a map predicated on the short life of the US" (759).

create a new space where regional concerns are one with the dynamic, intersectional qualities of the transnational 'Southern' story.

New Southern Studies

> that the South plays a leading role in the globalization processes within the United States may be difficult for those who still dwell on southern victimisation to accept – as indeed it may be for those nonsoutherners who still hold prejudices about southern backwardness. Donald M. Nonini [11]

New scholarship on the globalised South will, no doubt, serve to further and transform interpretations of Southern history and culture in a multiplicity of ways, principally regarding the re-evaluation of Southern distinctiveness, discerning the causation and archetypes of southern economic development over a particular period and encapsulating the nature of the developing tone of southern life. Moreover, investigating the effect of globalisation on the South could simultaneously expose the implication and consequence of discrete regional alterations arising internationally. As Peacock, Watson and Matthews note in their introduction to The American South in a Global World (2005), "the U.S. South may also be taking its place in a world of regions, not simply of nation-states" (2-3). Meanwhile, Globalization and the American South (2005) is largely founded on the concept that "there is more value in studying the South as part of the world than as a world apart" (xi). All the contributors to this volume are historians, and each surveys the South tussling with the acute impact of globalisation, which the editors define as "the transnational flow of people, capital, technology, and expertise that is initiated and sustained by the desire to capitalise on natural and human resources or attractive investment opportunities available somewhere else" (xii).

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[11] "Critique: Creating the Transnational South" The American South in a Global World. Ed. James L. Peacock, Harry L. Watson and Carrie R. Matthews (Chappell Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2005) 256.

Globalization and the American South provides a critical historical approach to a number of the most essential regional aspects of globalisation. These historians are engaged with both sketching the impact of globalisation on the South over time and foreseeing the role the South will take in a swiftly altering world. The volume attempts to discuss the experience and meaning of globalised change in the South in ways "that should be useful to those who would chart the course of any region, nation or community in the much wider and increasingly fluid global context where the future is always now" (xv). South to a New Place: Region, Literature, Culture (2002) edited by Suzanne W. Jones and Sharon Monteith succeeds in surveying, mapping and situating the South within a comparative framework and, as the editors outline, it seeks to "extend our understanding of the South beyond traditional conceptions of regionalism" (2). This collection interrogates and expands concepts of "the South" and attempts to recast it, even as its very contours appear to blur and transmute under the weight of globalisation, demographic changes and progressively more vociferous disputes over historical recollections. In his foreword Richard Gray stresses that what southern communities share is "the act of imagination" and "the need to make a place in the world with the aid of talk and ceremony, language and communal ritual" (xxiii) which lends itself to the possibility, I would argue, of a "provincial transnational" South(s).

In The American South in a Global World, the authors emphasise "the transnational South as it emerges" (3). In many respects, the focus of this project – connections between the global and the local, transnational citizenship of the South(s) and the fundamentals of place – allies itself with the burgeoning field of Southern studies. However, this treatment will distinguish and investigate the broad resonance the South has for an other region(s), specifically Ireland, also a

casualty of nativist and exceptionalist approaches. It will also, crucially, consider whether globalisation leads us to reassess the very concept of the South itself. This will raise questions as to the coherence of the very idea of the South when we contemplate the region on a global scale. It will interrogate the U.S. and Irish Souths as discrete regions, basing these discussions on the short stories of Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor.

In December 2006 the journal, American Literature published a special issue regarding the American South, "Global Contexts, Local Literatures: The New Southern Studies." Its editors

> [sought] to probe the academic possibilities of "a new Southern studies" as an intellectual enterprise that aims to be…less preoccupied with exhausted images of patriarchal whiteness and rural idyll and more concerned with understanding the U.S. South as "thick" with border-crossings of every sort: racial, gendered, regional, transnational. (1)

This is, without doubt, a fruitful and worthwhile endeavour as this field is historically marked by conflicts between the national and the regional, increasingly concerned with the opposition between the local and the global. In this special issue the editors, Kathryn McKee and Annette Trefzer, distilled a series of questions out of the complexities in the current theory and practice of Southern studies, which are entirely relevant to a transnational dialogue between the American South and Southern Ireland: how can we situate Southern studies in a global space while at the same time revealing its regional specificities? How do texts participate in the (de)construction of a geopolitical locale such as the South? By discussing these questions McKee and Trefzer intend to both unsettle conventional understandings of what is meant by "the South" and what can be achieved in Southern studies.

Barbara Ellen Smith, in "Place and the Past in the Global South," explores how place in diverse struggles concerning globalisation becomes a symbol "of all that is worth fighting for" (693). These conflicts do not simply shield a static geographic place, they create place by invoking selective constructs of what a specific place represents. Smith argues that the place that is both defended and created is rarely the region, for what is at stake is far more specific, concrete, and personal. The South, she maintains, is too large and ambiguous to be mobilised as a meaningful place in these contexts but nonetheless she argues the struggles are in the South and of the South. These conflicts are the South, "in the sense that even as they resist the prescriptions of the powerful, they imagine and construct the region's future" (693). Smith also considers the arrival of globalisation in the South with the influx of new immigrants. Migrants from Italy, Germany, Sweden, Hungary, Denmark, Poland, French Canada, India and Mexico she outlines, become in many Southern areas the embodiment of globalisation, thereby symbolising all of its threats as well as, at least for some, promise[12]. For Smith immigration sets in motion a conflict that is both about place and the past, especially to that most central theme in the Southern past: race.

In "On Wal-Mart and Southern Studies" Tara McPherson asserts that we need to move beyond identity politics and fetishising sameness in Southern culture by expanding the repertoire of Southern studies to include a variety of subjects and practices which might not, at first glance, seem all that Southern. "We needn't preserve the South as much as we need to animate it and move it elsewhere" she claims (698). We need, she says, to think in terms of transit zones and not closed-off borders, an approach which is conducive to a discussion of alternate Souths.

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[12] For a relevant contemporary source on the issue of immigration in the American South at the turn of the last century see Robert DeCourcy Ward, "Immigration and the South" (The Atlantic Monthly 96.5 November 1905) 611-617.

For Jon Smith in "The Rhetoric of Uneven Modernization: Hybrid Cultures in 'The South,'" no idea has influenced the postcolonial turn in Southern Studies more than a single sentence by C. Vann Woodward in 1952: "[T]he South has undergone an experience that it could share with no other part of America – through it is shared by nearly all the peoples of Europe and Asia – the experience of military defeat, occupation, and reconstruction" (707). Leigh Ann Duck maintains in "Space in Time" that thinking about the American South in global contexts constructively challenges ideas about Southern exceptionalism (710), while Natalie J. Ring contends that Americans have also located the U.S. South with other foreign countries as deviant geographical spaces in the broader transitional world (712). Susan V. Donaldson, in "Visibility, Haitian Hauntings, and Southern Borders" is concerned with "examining the region in a global context" (714), an aspect of Southern studies this project particularly wishes to address.

In his "On American Cross-Pollination," George B. Handley refers to Édouard Glissant's argument that "[p]assion for the land where one lives…is an action we must endlessly risk" (717, 151). Handley enlarges this impression of risk by asserting that if the history of regionalism teaches us anything, it is the ease with which devotion to the local can escalate and evolve into full-blown exceptionalism. John T. Matthews surveys the concept of modernism in "Globalising the U.S. South: Modernity and Modernism" and concludes that many Southern writers in the interwar period shared an unforeseen and remarkable degree of determination to "tell about the South" (722). He maintains that the fact that they responded by writing in highly distinctive ways about their region should not obscure the broad conditions of modernity that challenged them to describe it.

Suzanne W. Jones in "Who Is a Southern Writer?" appraises the way in which contemporary writers, and particularly Southern writers, experience a similar

sense of displacement or detachment regarding place. She mentions Richard Ford's response to a query at the symposium "The U.S. South in Global Contexts" in which he avowed that he *is* a Southerner but *not* a Southern writer. This of course naturally leads us to pose the question, if someone from the South is not a Southern writer, then who is? What defines a Southern writer if not physical location? What does being a Southern writer even mean? For Ford it certainly seems to be a conflicted identity, a split or chasm in his experience. He is Southern, but not Southern. Jones elaborates on this by saying that Ford is one of the latest in a long line of distinguished writers who grew up in the South but have "refused to be corralled in to a regional stall" (725). Jones maintains that,

> [w]hereas an earlier generation of Southern writers challenged the mythic unity of Southern communities in order to lay bare racial divisions, contemporary writers about the U.S. South challenge the mythic sameness of racial communities and question Southern regional distinctiveness by employing a comparative transnational lens. (725)

Jones argues that is not necessarily important to ascertain who qualifies as a Southern writer, rather it is more useful to ask questions about who is writing about the U.S. South, regardless of their birthplace or residence, and explore what stories they are telling, what images they are creating and, most importantly, why?

Jay Watson in "Globalising a Southern Classic: An Example of Colonial Virginia" argues that scrutinising the U.S. South in a more global context will doubtless mean expanding the Southern literary canon to accommodate writers and texts not usually associated with the region. Watson believes that we must globalise the existing Southern canon in order to move forward by revisiting its classics with fresh eyes and new theoretical and historical tools. Certainly, re-

imagining Flannery O'Connor and particularly Frank O'Connor in a transatlantic context would complement this approach.

Significantly for our purposes, Watson cites William Byrd and his Histories of the Dividing Line betwixt Virginia and North Carolina (1728) in which Byrd compares the borders to the Irish and the Indians, two other groups who were subjected to the racialising thrust of the English colonial experiment. Eric Gary Anderson in "Rethinking Indigenous Southern Communities" wonders how, if at all, indigenous nations in and of the South (be it the U.S. South, the hemispheric South, or the global South) can construct and maintain self-determined and self-determining communities today. It would seem that Southern literature, with "its often relentless obsession with a flawed but remembered past intertwined with a dysfunctional or otherwise malformed understanding of community," is perhaps part of the problem and possibly, as this project will outline, part of the solution too (731).

With reference to the O'Connors, this is a fruitful line of enquiry. Both writers, as I have suggested and will subsequently explore, were and still are considered regional by many scholars and critics. The O'Connors did not appear to evade or circumvent this, rather they employ their locales specifically, strategically and with particularity in their stories. Nonetheless, neither writer wished to be considered simply a "Southern" writer or an "Irish" writer because both classifications could be construed as confining and/or reductive, with their work consequently judged on the basis of their location. Moreover, this situation seems to arise very much as the result of a particular experience of place, a sense of conflict and complication. Why is the fact that these writers are "Southern" (by which I mean in an Irish and American context here) so integral to interpretations of their work? Their sense of place and their identification of themselves as writers

merge to create a rather uncomfortable paradigm for these authors—a dependency and resentment all at once. So in re-imagining their placing, we must at once create space and also a sense of interconnectedness where we are free to examine the intersectionality of their writing experiences.

True Believers versus Apostates or "The Isolated Imagination": The real versus the abstract in Flannery O'Connor criticism

It is common in contemporary Flannery O'Connor criticism that discussions and debates often seem to stem from her own critical writings. While on one hand this allows for an exploration of her often brilliant criticism, on the other it lends itself to a relative stagnancy in scholarly work relating to her. I will argue that transnationalism allows for a radical departure in Flannery O'Connor studies, moving away from the present dichotomy between self-styled Apostates and True-Believers.

In order to explore these divergent and at often times confining approaches and definitions it is necessary to first briefly examine O'Connor's own literary criticism. What were her attitudes in relation to her own work and to the South? Are her perspectives useful and relevant within a transatlantic paradigm? The term "isolated imagination" is used by O'Connor in her essay, "The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South." She says:

> The isolated imagination is easily corrupted by theory. Alienation was once a diagnosis, but in much of the fiction of our time it has become an ideal. The modern hero is the outsider…The borders of his country are the sides of his skull. (Collected Works 856)

This essay is included in Flannery O'Connor: Collected Works (1988), compiled by the Library of America and edited by Sally Fitzgerald, a close friend of O'Connor's.

Mystery and Manners: Occasional Prose (1969), also edited by Sally Fitzgerald and her husband Robert, contains a very different version of this essay. The Fitzgeralds explain the difficulty of collecting O'Connor's critical material in the Foreword to Mystery and Manners. They mention that O'Connor published very few of her critical pieces and instead presented them to diverse audiences. As a result there are widely differing versions of these talks as O'Connor tended to tailor her work to suit University groups, Catholic organisations, her fellow Georgians, writing classes, or women's circles. This provokes a discussion of the critical works, but also requires a certain amount of caution lest we treat any one version as "definitive."

"The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South" is one of the pieces that was not revised for publication, therefore no definitive version exists. This obviously proved be problematic for the Fitzgeralds as O'Connor left at least fifty typescripts for lectures, bearing little indication as to where they had been delivered and often none as to when (vii). The Fitzgeralds admit "[i]t was difficult or impossible to discover any "original" or "master" talk in any category" (viii). Her work was fluid so therefore our readings of it must be equally as flexible and cater to the fact that she was constantly reworking and reinventing her critical perspective.

The Fitzgeralds decided to edit the body of writing as they felt Flannery O'Connor herself would have desired. They were, by their own admission "scrupulous to retain Flannery O'Connor's thought and phrasing, not to intrude [their] own" (viii). So the mixture of formality and casual speech in O'Connor's papers is due to the fact they were intended to be presented orally. The Fitzgeralds maintain, however, that despite the complexity of anthologising these essays they "not only complement her stories but are valuable and even seminal in themselves"

(iix). This work should not, however, form the basis for a critical evaluation of O'Connor – rather, these critical works should serve as another example of her literary flexibility and skill.

Douglas Robillard Jr., in his useful introduction to The Critical Response to Flannery O'Connor (2004), discusses the reaction to Mystery and Manners upon its publication. It consists of fourteen essays on various topics and "[f]or academicians seeking insight into her work, the most valuable pieces are concerned with the writing of fiction" (10). For the most part, he reports, responses to the book were positive. Granville Hicks observed that "until they were all brought together [he] had not realised what an impressive body of literary criticism they constituted" (147). Richard Gilman's response, according to Robillard, is an even more pertinent one for our purposes: "she suffered" he says "from being categorised by place and theme: as a 'Southern writer', a writer of the 'grotesque'…Against this tendency there was the temptation to see her as a wholly strange, an unfathomable eccentric who sent off her dark comic tales from the isolation of her Georgia farm" (24). Miles D. Orvell states that critics have often misconstrued O'Connor's work and suggests that Mystery and Manners will "serve as an indispensable antidote to that criticism of her fiction which is mostly beside the point, or downright misleading" (185). Orvell also observes that they are marked by a "rigorous consistency of thought" that clearly sets forth O'Connor's thinking (185).

In this section, then, it is my intention to focus on Flannery O'Connor's critical material, and the response to same, as a means of exploring her view of her own writing and of the "isolated imagination" with which she is so concerned. However, it is necessary to proceed with caution, to avoid the pitfalls I have indicated. It is clear that these critical writings sparked a debate that still continues

in contemporary O'Connor criticism and that this is based firmly in her "theory," something which, ironically, O'Connor wished to avoid. In this discussion I will be referring to Mystery and Manners specifically, as well as other versions of the work. In her critical compositions O'Connor is forthright and persistent in her arguments concerning the role of the writer, the writer as a Catholic and Catholic writers inhabiting the South, as she states in her talk at the Southern Literary festival in Converse, 1962:

> The Catholic novelist in the South is forced to follow the spirit into strange places and to recognise it in many forms not totally congenial to him. He may at first feel that the kind of religion that has influenced Southern life has run hand in hand with extreme individualism for so long that it has become grotesque, but when he penetrates to the human need beneath it, he finds that it is the same as his own. (271 a O'Connor Special Collections, GC&SU)

It is however, the way in which these writings have been interpreted by critics in the past and the way in which O'Connor herself viewed them, that is most relevant to a transatlantic investigation. I have already mentioned that Flannery O'Connor had a "horror of making an idiot of [herself] with abstract statements and theories" (Coles 111). Why then would she write such a substantial body of critical work?

Critics are divided when discussing O'Connor's intentions in composing her non-fiction material. A transnational approach may provide an alternative to these conflicting viewpoints. Tim Caron, speaking at Georgia College and State University in 2006, was candid in his views relating to this matter.[13] In "What

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[13] O'Connor and Other Georgia Writers Conference, Georgia College and State University, Milledgeville, Georgia, March 30-April 1 2006. Georgia College & State University, from which O'Connor graduated (it was then Georgia State College for Women), is the designated liberal arts university in the University System of Georgia. GC&SU is the home of the Flannery O'Connor

happens when Toni Morrison reads 'The Artificial Nigger'[14]: Christian Witness and Political Activism in O'Connor Criticism," he asserts that O'Connor's criticism is a form of "literary fundamentalism" in that she closes off readers' interpretations of her stories and creates what he terms an "enclosing circle" (31 March 2006). However, as a relatively prolific writer she read widely from a huge variety of international theology, fiction and contemporary criticism; the "literary fundamentalism" and "enclosing circle" Caron speaks of seems more accurately to relate to the critics of her work than to O'Connor herself.

According to Caron there are blind spots in O'Connor's theoretical practice because of her deeply held theological views. O'Connor was conversant in Catholic theology — a glance at her library, on display in the Flannery O'Connor Room at Georgia College and State University, reveals works by Thomas Aquinas, St. Augustine, Jacque Maritain, Leon Bloy, Ronald Knox, St. John of the Cross, and Baron von Hugel, among others (Neil Scott), highlighting the breadth, variety and transatlantic nature of her reading. This issue of self-criticism is an interesting one and relates as much to her correspondence in The Habit of Being (1979) (a compilation of her letters also edited by the Fitzgeralds) as much as to the Mystery and Manners collection. The matter of self-analysis impacts upon how O'Connor's work has been interpreted by critics in the past.

Caron believes that O'Connor took up criticism for the express purpose of evangelising or correcting her wayward readers, a notion I challenge and question.

Review, the world's longest-running journal devoted to the study of a woman writer; of Arts & Letters Journal of Contemporary Culture, published by the MFA Program in Creative Writing; and The Center for Georgia Studies, which promotes the study of the state's history, arts, literature, and culture. The conference was sponsored by the Department of English, Speech, and Journalism at GC&SU, by the Flannery O'Connor Review, and by The Center for Georgia Studies.

[14] See Martyn Bone, The Postsouthern Sense of Place for a detailed discussion of "The Artificial Nigger" in terms of the urban/rural, black/white divide as witnessed by O'Connor. 150-165.

Patrick Galloway, in his essay "The Dark Side of the Cross: Flannery O'Connor's Short Fiction," does precisely what Caron says by limiting O'Connor's self criticism as a basis for the interpretation of her stories, to the exclusion of any other interpretation. He states:

> While secondary sources are included for perspective, I have focused primarily upon Miss O'Connor's own essays and speeches in my examination of the writer's motivations, attitudes, and technique, most of which are contained in the posthumous collection Mystery and Manners. Unlike some more cryptic writers, O'Connor was happy to discuss the conceptual and philosophical underpinnings of her stories, and this candor is a godsend for the researcher that seeks to know what makes the writer tick.

To view O'Connor's "candor" as a "godsend" is to close off alternative analyses. Yet, although a close textual reading of the short stories and critical writings is essential, this must not form the only basis of discussion. Indeed to suggest that O'Connor is not "cryptic" as Galloway does is ultimately to do a disservice to the complexity of her artistic vision and critical abilities. Galloway does, acknowledge that considerations of authorial intent are discounted or discouraged in literary study, but he argues that "with O'Connor awareness of such issues is a prerequisite for understanding her craft …we are fortunate to have plenty of her own candid discussions to help enlighten us in our attempts to interpret her writing." Caron's methods are in complete antithesis to this – thus further widening the chasm in Flannery O'Connor studies.

Caron believes that in her critical writings, O'Connor leaves a trail of crumbs for readers, like eager and bewildered Hansels and Gretels, to follow. For example, when critically responding to the reaction to her short story "A Good

Man Is Hard to Find," O'Connor wishes that readers were not so easily distracted by the pile of bodies at the end and instead encourages readers to look beyond the carnage at a deeper, more fundamental meaning, a meaning that transcends the obvious, transcends the local: "You should be on the lookout for such things as the action of grace in the Grandmother's soul, and not for the dead bodies" (Mystery and Manners 113). Lately, however, critics have begun to disavow O'Connor's long-term, efficacious control of her reception by refusing to ignore the "dead bodies." Almost pre-empting this tactic, O'Connor wrote in a letter:

> The stories are hard, but they are hard because there is nothing harder or less sentimental than Christian realism…When I see these stories described as horror stories, I am always amused because the reviewer always has told of the wrong horror. (Habit of Being 90)

In the same way, perhaps, Flannery O'Connor critics concentrate almost solely on her religious imagination, ignoring completely significant alternate elements such as the transatlantic and transnational aspects of her work.

It could be argued here that O'Connor suggests any unorthodox interpretation of her story is "wrong," and therefore Caron's thesis is accurate. However, if we read the quotation again we find that O'Connor is merely "amused" by the reviewer's misinterpretation and certainly does not seem to be the authoritarian Caron would have us believe her to be. Caron goes on to declare that it is impossible for reader and critic alike to ignore the carnage at the end of "A Good Man is Hard to Find." He contends that while O'Connor's self-criticism is illuminating we all follow her down the same well-trodden path. But what is it about O'Connor's self-criticism that seems to blinker critics and readers alike so easily? How can we move beyond this impasse when reading her work?

Ralph Wood acknowledges in his essay "Defending Christian Disbelief in an Age of Sentimental Spirituality" that O'Connor knew that "dogma" was a negative expression for most Americans but he argues that O'Connor capitalised on this rather audaciously, professing "in the upper case that 'My stories have been watered and fed by Dogma'"(2). Dogma, Wood believes, is central to O'Connor's work and as result banishes anything approaching sentimentalism, which O'Connor abhorred. He quotes O'Connor: "Dogma is an instrument for penetrating reality…it is about the only thing left in the world…that surely guards and respects mystery" (2).

It is clear then that O'Connor's mission was to use dogma and with it faith, but in real and concrete ways. In essence her purpose was to use an abstraction like faith and convert it into something tangible through dogma and acts of charity. As Henry T. Edmondson maintains, "O'Connor believed that such a practice of charity cuts through intellectual rationalisation" ("Flannery O'Connor, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Silence" 2). The Old Testament scholar, Claude Tresmontant, whom Wood quotes, describes this mystery as being for St. Paul and early Christian thinkers "the particular object of intelligence, its fullest nourishment…it is an eternal delectation of the mind" (2).

This, it could be argued, is where the mind, the intellect and faith meet, at the junction between dogma and mystery: it is "so exhaustibly full of delectation for the mind that not contemplation [of it] can ever reach its end" (2). Wood goes on to argue that the Gospel liberates us from "subjective emotionalism giving us new lenses for perceiving both ourselves and our world, delivering us into the great unexplored realm of the Not Merely Me" (9). I would argue that Wood's words can be used in another context, emphasising the Catholic nature of O'Connor's inspiration, yes, but also its possible transatlantic and transnational dimensions.

This is the "realm" that O'Connor valued the most, the place where one can transcend one's individuality and achieve unity and communion through others with God beyond the imposed geographical and historical boundaries of what it means to be "Southern."

To consolidate this point, Wood quotes Martin Luther in his 1535 lectures on the Galatians where Luther declared that the Gospel of God "snatches us away from ourselves, so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person or works but depend on that which is outside ourselves, the is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive" (9). This may be aligned with the quotation from O'Connor with which this chapter opens. Rather than relishing rebellious individualism, O'Connor disparages it by creating displaced loners who are desperately in need of salvation and in need of a place, trapped as they are in their own consciences. These quotations too, can be reworked and used to describe a different manner of communion, a transatlantic one. These loners are outside the mainstream, isolated socially and spiritually, constrained often by their "Southernness" and made to feel guilty because of their situation.

Catherine Belsey insisted in 1985 that "[Jacques] Lacan's theory of the subject as constructed in language confirms the decentring of the individual consciousness so that it can no longer be seen as the origin of meaning, knowledge and action" (45). Nonetheless, critics such as Edmondson persist in treating O'Connor as an author, whose consciousness is indeed the origin, uniting her letters, lectures, essays, stories, novels, and actions into a coherent whole. But does this approach indulge O'Connor's desire for interpretative control? Is O'Connor really preventing any genuine dialogue from taking place because she is so dogmatic? And more significantly how do Christian and secular critics view her work as a result?

Robert C. Cheeks, in his review of Ralph Wood's Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South states that,

> These days, many of the literary critiques of Flannery's work are inherently secular, predicated on contemporary multicultural fads, and filled with the garbled psycho-babble that has become the trademark of the Deconstructionists, who require the author to be a supplicant at the alter of political correctness. For these folks, the spawn of academe, Flannery does not fare well. She's been accused of being a closet lesbian, a feminist, a racist, and, perhaps worst of all, a pre-Vatican II Catholic. (California Literary Review Online)

This extract emphasises the level of impassioned debate on this topic. Concerning O'Connor's sexuality, Jean Cash in her biography of O'Connor, Flannery O'Connor: A Life (2002), explores how O'Connor's matriarchal upbringing led to her developing into a wickedly funny, almost sequestered prodigy. She also discounts suggestions that O'Connor was a closeted lesbian or a frustrated heterosexual, and instead depicts a woman who realised that she would not live into old age and so devoted herself entirely to her art. This is more than a little presumptuous on Cash's part; regardless of O'Connor's writings on the matter or her comments to others, there is certainly a sense of this loss of sexual and romantic engagement and independence in her writing, particularly in her short stories, that cannot be ignored or sanitised. However, O'Connor did know that she would not live long, that she would never be "a little old lady in tennis shoes" and therefore perhaps had little choice but to dedicate what time she had to writing ("The Failure of Aesthetic and Moral Intelligence in Recent Criticism of Flannery O'Connor" Wood 3). As a confessed celibate, itself a sacrifice, she astutely avoided discussion of any subject of which she had no direct experience.

It is clear that the critical division concerning O'Connor's work is violent and uncompromising, much like her own vision. This has meant that often the debate has been closed to non-American readers and critics (the religious division in this instance is a distinctly American one). The argument is therefore circular. John R. May in his review of Susan Srigley's Flannery O'Connor's Sacramental Art (2004) in the Journal for Southern Religion criticises Srigley's readings for being almost "exclusively ethical and theological." This, he argues, results in "there being a high degree of abstraction in her readings of O'Connor's fiction." It would seem that May is taking the side of O'Connor who professed to abhor abstraction above all else. It appears that while May decries the fact that Srigley is taking an abstract approach to the very concrete and real worlds of O'Connor's fiction, he is also critical of her closing off any possibility of debate in the area, a charge brought against O'Connor herself. In fact, even though she insists that "often what scholars find objectionable are religious interpretations of O'Connor's work that use her prose as a religious template to determine or finalise the meaning of her fiction," he believes that Srigley "ultimately succumbs to that same tendency" (11).

May ultimately states the concerns of the majority of O'Connor critics when he says:

> The traditional sources, I fear, are running dry. Mystery and Manners has become a kind of sacred text that must be referred to chapter and verse by O'Connor scholars. I wonder whether, after more than a quarter-century, it isn't time to lay to rest both O'Connor's reflections on her art and her obviously very dated Catholic sources.

May neglects to mention who these critics might be. Instead he imagines he can

> hear a chorus of objectors saying, how is it possible to ignore any part of her oeuvre? To which I respond, it isn't, but don't impose her theology on

> her fiction. When she got around to talking about what was Catholic or Christian in her works in literary terms, it was in very general terms—the fall, judgment, and redemption, not mystical communion, charity, and *kenosis*. (The Journal for Southern Religion Online)

This is what a flexible transatlantic reading can offer; an opportunity to extend discussions relating to O'Connor by exploring the nature of her inspiration in broader terms. It is clear that May wishes his conclusion to be taken as constructive criticism of theological literary criticism of O'Connor in general. Wood is more salutary in his review of Srigley, stating, "Susan Srigley has written a book on O'Connor like no other. In this gracefully written and massively researched work, she lays out the distinctively Catholic character of O'Connor's artistry as no one else has done" (U of Notre Dame P, 13 Oct 2007 http://undpress.nd.edu/book/P00974/). "The Failure of Aesthetic and Moral Intelligence in Recent Criticism of Flannery O'Connor" deals with this matter. Wood mentions Frederick Crews's acknowledgement of the "thorny confessionalism of O'Connor's literary imagination" (Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South 6) and the assertion that "some form of deconstructive loosening whereby the offensive content [of O'Connor's work] can be represented as neutralized or altogether negated by subversive forces" ("The Power of Flannery O'Connor" 49). It could be argued that O'Connor's critical material is her attempt to rally against this sanitising of her fiction by creating even more scholarly debate, forcing us in one way to return to the stories, the primary sources, to find the ultimate truth. This may be revealed, in part, through a transatlantic and transnational dialectic.

Indeed, Wood himself does not escape comment from his fellow critics. In his review of Wood's book, Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South

(2005) in the Journal of Religion and Society, Jason Peters explains that "Wood's book collects into a single volume the exemplary intellectual deeds and follies of the author's favourite friends and foes. O'Connor is not the object of his study; she is its occasion" and he reports that the book, while a "delight" often "unapologetically…serves as his pulpit" (3). Wood's article, however preachy, attempts to chart how these critics have anesthetised Flannery O'Connor's fiction and how, as a result, the writer felt it necessary to defend her work. It is possible that O'Connor was forced to become more emphatic in her criticism because of the countless letters she received from fans offering bogus interpretations and felt that she had to take control in order to prevent her stories from being ravaged. When she does encounter a reader in her own time, like "A" (Betty Hester) for example, who accepts her work for what it is, then she allows for an open analysis. However, this too is troubling as it could be construed that the author's engagement with a reader or with a critic rests upon the reader "accepting" O'Connor's terms.

Wood, for his part, issues a call to arms, stating that these books should "prompt a keen desire in Christian scholars to integrate their faith with their reason, their learning with their belief, their literary and religious sensibilities" ("The Failure of Aesthetic and Moral Intelligence in Recent Criticism of Flannery O'Connor" 1) Undoubtedly, Wood believes that American scholarship has failed O'Connor. Indeed, upon further examination of the critical discourse it becomes evident that academics in the United States are torn between a sociological and psychological analysis of O'Connor's work and a more theological, and dogmatic one. Prown, Caron, and Gordon fall into the first category, while Wood himself, Edmonson and Mark Bosco belong to the latter.

Wood does concede that Gordon offers a fascinating reading of Flannery O'Connor's work linking her with other satirists in the modern American literary tradition: Nathanael West, Dorothy Parker and James Thurber. Gordon illustrates how humour and sardonic wit were central to the 1950s literary scene and embodied in the work published in The New Yorker at the time and also practiced by O'Connor. This drollness allowed O'Connor to exemplify her disdain for, as Wood terms it, "the suffocating complacency of the Eisenhower era" (2). Gordon examines O'Connor's time in the Iowa Writer's Workshop and the help she received from Robert Penn Warren, Caroline Gordon, Allen Tate and John Crowe Ransom. These writers believed that the rise of industrial and commercial civilisation had produced a void. It had led to the disappearance of community, custom and tradition and to the further isolation of the individual symptomatic of the problematic nature of displacement, a state with which O'Connor was fascinated.

Lewis P. Simpson in The Brazen Face of History (1980) argues that, as a result of this barrenness, modern literary culture lacks the bardic expression of any larger collective good. It is entirely a historical phenomenon "that takes its character from an isolation – an interiorizing – of history in the individual consciousness (and particularly in the consciousness of the writer)" (239). Wood, in "The Aesthetic of Memory and the Aesthetic of Revelation in William Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor," contends that this American historicising of consciousness is most ardently found in the South's development of literary modernism. These writers are determined to recall the allegedly rich social and religious history of the South in order to transfigure it into art. They "inwardly assimilate history to memory by sifting it through the sieve of their own personal consciousness" (2). Though Simpson admits that O'Connor, along with Walker

Percy, represented a counter-tradition in twentieth-century Southern literature, this education, according to the critic Sarah Gordon, allowed O'Connor to perfect the revolutionary narrative techniques employed by writers such as James Joyce, Joseph Conrad and Henry James. However, for Sarah Gordon this proves a double edged sword.

Gordon's chief concern seems to be to reprimand O'Connor for not living up to the principles of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in No Man's Land: The Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century (1988) (2). Gordon is uncritical, or so Wood would have us believe, in her acceptance of Gilbert and Gubar's thesis, a luxury Flannery O'Connor is denied as Gordon believes that O'Connor embraced a male literary tradition with its stress on objective narrators, withering satire, impersonal tone, and cold anti-sentimentality. Wood, for his part, refers to the poet and mystical writer Kathleen Norris whom he says "protests the removal of the fierce psalms of lament and imprecation from contemporary lectionaries." "These cursing psalms remind us," says Norris, "that wickedness cannot be conquered by mere niceness" (6). "Niceness" is something that O'Connor utterly and laudably rejected, a facet of her writing Gordon apparently laments. However, it is possible to understand Gordon's approach, especially if one allows for it to be influenced by the reality of Flannery O'Connor's condition – being sickly and living with her mother at Andalusia.

Gordon maintains that O'Connor submitted her imagination to the institution of the Roman Catholic Church as its obedient daughter willing to readily accept that which is as "monologic" and "oppressive" as Protestant fundamentalism, since it comprises "a closed system, a closed worldview" (45). Arguably, however, O'Connor challenges this in her short stories. As this obedient servant however, Gordon suggests, O'Connor had no option but to construct a

fiction that is "harsh" and "mean-spirited," a point I will later contest. What is sadly lacking in O'Connor's work is what Gordon terms "the plain old milk of human kindness, of love in any human relationship, of simple friendship" (95) (not so if you look at Carole Harris's work on cliché in O'Connor).[15] Wood believes that Gordon seems to contradict herself and overlook the transcendental quality in O'Connor's work. Surprisingly, though she has apparently set up O'Connor as a satirist by comparing her with writers like West and Parker among others, Gordon fails to recognise O'Connor's subversive qualities. O'Connor is a satirist, one who exists in the world she challenges, while simultaneously writing about it. Gordon, however, reads O'Connor's satirical talent as arising not from a wish to deflate pretenders or poseurs, but from her desire to master a masculine medium. She even goes so far as to say that satire is a "tough, traditionally male strategy" (71). Wood's reaction to this is to exclaim, "Jane Austen and Emily Dickinson would have been immensely surprised at such news" ("The Failure of Aesthetic and Moral Intelligence in Recent Criticism of Flannery O'Connor" 4).

From the very beginning of O'Connor's literary career, criticism of her novels and short stories has been conservative and unnecessarily narrow. For example, her first novel, Wise Blood, was met with mixed reviews upon its publication in 1952 with one reviewer claiming that it "consists chiefly of the private twitching of several almost totally dislocated individuals" (Lewis 150). O'Connor herself described the initial reception of her novel as that of "just another dirty book" (Stephens 3). Upon the reissuing of Wise Blood in 1962, one critic actually congratulated O'Connor "for producing a Lolita five or six years before Nabokov" (HB 491). Until quite recently this had been the only attempt at

[15] "The Echoing Afterlife of Clichés in Flannery O'Connor's 'Good Country People'" a paper given at the O'Connor and Other Georgia Writers: A Scholarly Conference, Georgia College and State University, Milledgeville, Friday March 31 2006. This paper is part of a larger project by Harris, Cliché Language and the Provincial Grotesque: Gustave Flaubert and Flannery O'Connor.

feminist criticism of Wise Blood. As this is O'Connor's first published novel, it is an interesting one to examine, to ascertain whether there is any residue of the feminine voice that Gordon speaks of. Is that feminine voice representing the displaced person/homo sacer? And how is the loneliness of the homo sacer investigated through a possibly transatlantic experience?

Many critics have concentrated on O'Connor's seemingly stereotypical caricatures of women. Katherine Hemple Prown argues that O'Connor "[denies] her female self...using the masculine" (11) and Sarah Gordon references to O'Connor's "attacks on female culture" (26). Superficially, it is easy to see why O'Connor's characters have proven problematic for feminist critics. Many have argued that in her fiction, women are confined to supporting roles, when in fact, in stories such as "Good Country People," women and their domestic and intimate relations with one another are explored in minute and sympathetic detail. In assessing critics' reaction to O'Connor, it is useful to consider this feminist perspective: here, as in the secular versus the religious view, the spectrum is equally divided. This schism challenges readers and critics of Flannery O'Connor's work – commentators on O'Connor need to find a way to combine both readings of her work, to come to a compromise of sorts that will provide a method of further developing and expanding O'Connor scholarship. This will ensure that we do not further close the debate, but rather open it up and expand it to include new interdisciplinary interpretations of O'Connor's work. It is essential then that we avoid viewing her religious beliefs, her gender and her illness as exclusive means of interpreting her work but rather as separate aspects of her oeuvre.

It is certain that both sides in Flannery O'Connor scholarship, both True-Believers and Apostates, have valuable contributions to make to O'Connor criticism. Adopting another approach, however, and applying this to a study of

O'Connor may succeed in opening up a dialogue in which it is at present impossible to engage. By moving away from an exclusively American-based analysis, it is possible to allow interpretations to grow and change, allowing O'Connor's work to exceed current expectations of interpretation. This is where a comparison with Frank O'Connor is not only useful, but essential to our understanding of the theory and the practice of the short story.

Considering Frank O'Connor

> All that the artist knows is that he is a sort of transformer station for them; that his place is in the doorway between the two rooms with the lights of consciousness partly dimmed…He is the half medium, half critic."
> Frank O'Connor [16]

Frank O'Connor's seminal analysis of the short story, The Lonely Voice (1962), argues that it is a sense of segregation that leads writers to adopt the subgenre of the short story. Flannery O'Connor was a Roman Catholic, a minority religion in the predominantly Protestant South. Frank O'Connor would maintain that it was this spiritual distance that allowed Flannery O'Connor to be so apparently unsympathetic and unsentimental in her portrayal of the American South.

Furthermore, the American South served as the nation's "other," becoming the repository for everything from which the nation wanted to disassociate itself. Frank O'Connor speaks of a "submerged population" in his criticism and it is clear that Flannery O'Connor's estranged population in her short stories is not "submerged" entirely by material considerations: it is also submerged by deficiency in the realm of the sacred. As a consequence, there is, in the short story, something we do not tend to find in the majority of novels, an intense and all-pervasive awareness of human loneliness and displacement.

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[16] "Charles Dickens." Irish Times 8 Sept. 1945.

As Hilary Lennon points out in her introduction to Frank O'Connor: Critical Essays, "It would appear that the vast majority of scholarly work on O'Connor was published between the late 60s and early 80s and was chiefly under American authorship" (15). As a Cork scholar, it is particularly appropriate then that I should approach Flannery O'Connor by means of Frank O'Connor. In her published letters, Flannery O'Connor expresses strong admiration for Frank O'Connor's stories. These writers were contemporaries and died within two years of each other, Flannery O'Connor in 1964 and Frank O'Connor in 1966. Both were exponents of the short story and both deal with the themes of religion, loneliness and violence. Their hometowns were, in many respects, similar, sharing a violent and controversial past, and an often stifling provinciality.

Furthermore, in Flannery O'Connor's personal library, it is clear that the O'Connor-O'Connor connection has a very tangible basis. The textbook that Flannery O'Connor used for her classes in what was then Georgia State College for Women, Harold Blodgett's The Story Survey (1939), includes Seán O'Faoláin's "Lonely Lives," James Joyce's "A Little Cloud" and James Stephens's "The Horses," though they are categorised under "English Stories."[17] Arthur F. Kinney, in Flannery O'Connor's Library: Resources of Being (1985), mentions that the collection is missing Frank O'Connor's The Mirror in the Roadway, one of forty review books misplaced after O'Connor's death.[18] O'Connor also owned a copy of Stories By Frank O'Connor (1956), which contains "Guests of the Nation," "The Long Road to Ummera" and "Uprooted" amongst others. She also had in her

[17] O'Connor has placed an asterix beside "A Little Cloud" and "The Horses" on the contents page of this volume.

[18] O'Connor was evidently keen to read Frank O'Connor's study of the novel. In a letter to Betty Hester dated 5 August 1961 she says, "Never read Spengler and never read Mirror in the Roadway, but I reckon I must read both sooner or later" (HB 447).

possession Nikolai Gogol's Dead Souls (1961) with a foreword by Frank O'Connor, along with The Stories of Liam O'Flaherty (1956), O'Faoláin's The Man Who Invented Sin: Fifteen Short Stories, Daniel Corkery's The Wager (1938) and Liam O'Flaherty's Two Lovely Beasts (1950).

Similarly, upon examination of The Frank O'Connor Collection held in the Special Collections in the Boole Library, University College Cork, it is evident that Frank O'Connor was widely read in the literatures of the U.S. South. Of the six hundred and forty books in this collection quite a number are by Southern authors. His library contains Eudora Welty reading from her works [sound recording] (1952) which was recorded in October of that year in New York and comprises stories from the author's book A Curtain of Green (1941) as well as Welty's The Robber Bridegroom (1963). He also owned Faulkner's Go Down, Moses (1942) and New Orleans Sketches, Life on the Mississippi (1961) by Mark Twain, Poems (1960) by Allen Tate and most significantly a copy of Flannery O'Connor's Everything That Rises Must Converge (1965).

American reviews of Frank O'Connor's fiction were predominantly glowing, with Robert C. Evans quoting James Stern's article in New Republic, suggesting that the collection Guests of the Nation, as well as collections by Joyce and O'Flaherty, "probably contain the highest achievements in the art of the contemporary short story in the English language" (Lennon 85). The Irish publication, The Dublin Magazine (Summer 1966), carries a review of Flannery O'Connor's Everything That Rises Must Converge by Hilary Reynolds, who describes it as "a brilliant and profound meditation" on "life in the southern states of American, violence and colour and the supernatural mingl[ing] with compassionate and loving description of ordinary living with a naturalness arising

from a deeply mature outlook on both life and death" (90).[19] She also maintains that O'Connor has "a remarkable feeling for the dignity and majesty that belongs to a man quite independent of his social position, learning or wealth" and concludes with the comment that the stories "are full of different facets and grow with repeated reading, which alone is an unusual merit in a short story" (90).

The connection between Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor, a heretofore unexamined transatlantic dialogue, is a fascinating one and I aim to construct an analysis loosely modelled after Frank O'Connor's The Lonely Voice as a methodology for reading Flannery O'Connor's short stories. I will deploy this work in an original reading of the Southern story, American and Irish. I will also stress the underestimated significance of Frank O'Connor's monograph. It is hoped that this approach will rehabilitate Frank O'Connor studies and add to the already established criticism on Flannery O'Connor. Indeed, thus far the only cross-over in criticism amounts to a rather flippant and astonishingly reductive remark made by Michael Steinman where he states that

> [Frank O'Connor's] work does not announce itself as obscure and therefore worthy of study; unlike his bookshelf neighbour Flannery O'Connor his stories are not gleefully grotesque, populated by tattooed husbands and one-legged women named Hulga. (Lennon 194)

[19] See Waldemar Zacharasiewicz's, "Flannery O'Connor Among Creative Readers Abroad: A Late Encounter With The Georgia Writer." (Studies in the Literary Imagination, Vol. 20, No. 2 (1987): 51-65) which examines O'Connor's contemporary critical reception in Europe and Canada; however, no mention of Ireland or criticism of O'Connor's work in Ireland is made. Also of interest is Zacharaziewicz's paper presented at the Transatlantic Exchanges: The American South in Europe and Europe in the American South – An International Colloquium under the auspices of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the British Academy, September 28-October 1, 2006, "Antecedents and Trajectories of Two Twentieth-Century Writers from Georgia in Europe." His paper charts the influence of Europe on each writer and their differing receptions there. The volume based on this colloquium is also useful, with more than thirty essays providing analyses of the long-standing cultural exchange between this region and Europe from the 18th century to the present with the resulting cross-fertilisation in literature and in the cinema.

Steinman, the author of several books on Frank O'Connor including Frank O'Connor at Work (1994), A Frank O'Connor Reader (1994) and The Happiness of Getting It Down Right: Letters of Frank O'Connor and William Maxwell, 1945-1966 (1996), recently highlighted the lack of new and existing scholarship relating to Frank O'Connor. This thesis, like the recent work of Hilary Lennon, addresses and seeks to redress this lack. Much of the scholarship which does exist deals exclusively with Frank O'Connor or with one particular story. This has meant that Frank O'Connor studies lacks any real engagement with international literature, and considering that O'Connor spent much time in the United States lecturing, seems wilfully myopic. It is my intention, then, to explore the Irish-American experience in the stories of Frank O'Connor, as well as examining The Lonely Voice, to interrogate transatlantic discourse between the American South and Ireland.

In his Introduction to A Frank O'Connor Reader, Steinman lists the roster of Frank O'Connor's contemporaries who supported and praised his work, including W.B. Yeats, Seán O'Faoláin, George Russell, William Maxwell, V.S. Pritchett, Elizabeth Bowen and Thomas Flanagan. This, by any standard, is an impressive list of mid twentieth-century writers. We can include Flannery O'Connor here as one of Frank O'Connor's many admirers. She expresses her respect for his work in The Habit of Being, where he is mentioned three times. She writes: "Of foreigners living I like Frank O'Connor. I keep waiting for some club lady to ask me if I am kin to Frank O'Connor. At which I hope to reply, 'I am his mother.' So far no opportunity" (121). But in many respects the O'Connors are "kin," as I will demonstrate in later chapters. Flannery also said of Frank and his book The Mirror in the Roadway (1957), in which he analyses the novel as a form, that "[h]e expresses many of my prejudices perfectly but he does go off on wild explanations á la the true life and oddities of various authors" (HB 200). It is

noteworthy that Flannery O'Connor uses the term "prejudices" and the fact that Frank O'Connor expresses hers "perfectly." From this alone we can deduce a certain level of shared understanding, a way of looking at the world from the margins and this is articulated, I believe, not only in their stories but also in their mutual recognition of violence and alienation in their respective Souths.

Yet, Steinman maintains that though Frank O'Connor's work has been read in Ireland, America, Great Britain, Germany, Denmark and Japan, it has been inexplicably less celebrated since his death in 1966. Steinman has no explanation for this, only that the reasons for his relative unpopularity have little to do with his achievement, but rather that the form of the short story seems to be an evanescent one, "finding only brief fame before vanishing in a readers' Limbo between its first publication and the eventual collection or anthology"(xi). Indeed, Steinman maintains that the periodicals and weekly magazines in which Frank O'Connor published his work were too transitory and disposable, and loyal editors harder to come by in later years.

Steinman argues that O'Connor's fame was affected by his early success and those popular stories like "Guests of the Nation," "My Oedipus Complex," and "First Confession," though "brilliant", may have precluded examinations of O'Connor's darker and more subtle work. In fact, Steinman notes that Frank O'Connor wrote more than two hundred stories, published in ten collections. These stories, like Flannery O'Connor's, chronicle "loss, loneliness, and estrangement, yearnings that cannot be spoken, exiles, solitary figures amid crowds and conversations" (xii). Yet, many critics and writers alike appear to have judged, and indeed still judge, Frank O'Connor's fiction as simplistic, unfashionable and even dated. Steinman endeavours to explain this unfortunate phenomenon by demarcating how Frank O'Connor's stories are often not deemed to be

"contemporary" and that they do not deal with popular modern topics but rather are emotionally frank, deceptively simple rather than sympathetic and real. Indeed, to further this point Steinman cites William Maxwell's comment about O'Connor: "In speaking of him I cannot bring myself to use the past tense" (Michael/Frank 147).

In addition to fiction, memoirs and translations O'Connor also wrote a biography, an autobiography, three travel books, two novels, six books of literary criticism, five plays and nine books of poetry as well as more than two hundred and fifty essays and articles. Steinman quotes Seán O'Faoláin and his impression of his friend's "intuitive processes":

> He was like a man who takes a machine gun to a shooting gallery. Everybody falls flat on his face, the proprietor at once takes to the hills, and when it is all over, and cautiously peep up, you find that he has wrecked the place but got three perfect bull's-eyes." (Vive Moi! 369)

Like Flannery O'Connor, Frank O'Connor was not given to sentimentality and was equally as rooted in a long tradition of story-telling. Like the priests, housewives and loners in Flannery O'Connor's South, narrators in Frank O'Connor's Southern Ireland are minutely and constantly aware of "what the neighbours think." Like Flannery O'Connor too, he employed the French and Russian masters and his own rich, native oral tradition, "domestic and civic…concentrate[d] on the study of the society and the place of the individual in it" (The Mirror in the Roadway 12). Hilary Lennon alludes to the fact that "it is mainly because of American interest (which includes nearly all of the unpublished postgraduate theses on him) that O'Connor's work has managed to survive into the new century of scholarly criticism" (16). Yet, for all this, academic scholarship on Frank O'Connor is sparse.

Michael/Frank: Studies on Frank O'Connor (1969), edited by the late Maurice Sheehy, is perhaps the most significant of the few extant collections of essays on the writer; it includes the most accurate and comprehensive bibliography of O'Connor. Yet, with the exception of Hilary Lennon and Michael Steinman's contributions, scholarship on Frank O'Connor remains largely inadequate. Hilary Lennon's volume investigates unexplored areas of Frank O'Connor's work; his accomplishments as a translator of poetry in the Irish language, his position in discussions regarding Irish literary modernism, his reception in America, his associations with contemporary writers and intellectuals, his autobiographical writings, his fictional depictions of the Irish Civil War, and Denis Johnston's film adaptation of Guests of the Nation (1935). In general, however, Frank O'Connor studies remain underdeveloped and require an innovative impulse of the kind a transnational appraisal may provide.

Chapter Two:

Does the Southern Story Exist? Re-imagining 'the South':

Towards a definition of Provincial Transnationalism

Southern Fictions/Fictional Souths: The South in discussions of American exceptionalism and classifying "Provincial Transnationalism"

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "provincial" as "relating to a province or the provinces; unsophisticated or narrow-minded; an inhabitant of the regions outside the capital city of a country." "Regionalism" is defined as "commitment to regional rather than central systems of administration; loyalty to one's own region in cultural and political terms; a linguistic feature peculiar to a particular region" while in seeming opposition, transnationalism relates to "extending or operating across national boundaries." I will argue that, although these terms appear to be antithetical, when combined they form a hybrid, the definition of which paradoxically provides a space by which we can re-evaluate the seemingly nativist literatures of the twentieth-century South and thus expand our understanding of the South as a global locus.

This chapter, in part, calls for a reconsideration of the significance of the South to discussions of American exceptionalism. As I will outline, a command of the American South and its literature is essential to understanding the contours of modern U.S. American history and the nature of its global, cultural, ideological and literary connections. To this end there have been two major recent intellectual trends in the study of the American South. First, the scholarship of those whose work has elucidated the continuing distinctiveness of the US American South as a region, noting its internal differences and sub-cultures, while concurrently revealing the vast influence of southern social, political, cultural and economic developments

on the broader domestic and international history of the contemporary US. Second, the "New Southern Studies," an interdisciplinary movement embedded in cultural and literary studies which stresses the parallels and relationships between the American South and other societies, particularly those located in the Atlantic World, which have had largely comparable experiences.

This chapter suggests that methodological innovation is required in both American Studies and Southern Studies to promote a more complex understanding of the key aspects of what is considered to be "Southern" literature. A renovated methodology would foster greater appreciation of the relationships between the South as a locus for transnational interchange and other national and global sites, particularly Ireland. Benedict Anderson points out that identity is not an innate phenomenon, rather it is a product which is culturally and historically fabricated to local specifications by narratives that are more or less cooperative and more or less conscious (205). Michael Kreyling, in Inventing Southern Literature (1998), indicates that "readings of individual novels [and I will include here, short stories,]…are not intended primarily as acts of interpretation but rather as illustrations of the fabricating process at work" (ix). I take this further by focusing on the short story, and suggesting that this approach may allow for greater flexibility in a transnational and transcultural context.

This is certainly a challenge, particularly as concepts of Southern regionalism are so imbricated with the very notion of what the "South" means. This, however, has not always been the case: in 1922 a group of writers and students at Vanderbilt University, who had been meeting regularly to discuss philosophy and literature, began publishing The Fugitive, a small poetry magazine, "the title of which referred, among other things, to the self-conscious cosmopolitanism of the contributors and their opposition to the idea of a regional

literature as such" (Gray The Literature of Memory 40). Allen Tate even went so far as to declare in his foreword to the first issue of The Fugitive (1922) "[t]he Fugitives flee from nothing faster than from the high-caste Brahmins of the Old South" (1). The magazine ceased publication in 1925 and many of its contributors left the South either for New York or Europe. As Gray outlines in his chapter "The Nashville Agrarians," "[t]he South, once these ex-Fugitives were separated from it, was translated into what Louis D. Rubin has called "a faraway country" – an alternative, apotheosised by distance, to the urban complexes of New York, Paris, and London" (The Faraway Country: Writers of the Modern South 41).

As a result, ironically, the contributors ultimately became preoccupied with the very regionalism they so vehemently resented and rejected while at Vanderbilt, with Tate declaring that he had "attacked the South for the last time" (Cowan 244). This led to the formation in 1926 or 1927 of a group who identified themselves as Southern and who shared the belief that the Southern and rural way of life was preferable to the urbanised, industrialised existence experienced in the North.[1] The Fugitives became the Southern Agrarians. Their manifesto, I'll Take My Stand: The South and The Agrarian Tradition by Twelve Southerners, published in 1930, became a cornerstone of the renaissance in Southern regionalism. Donald Davidson, John Gould Fletcher, Henry Blue Kline, Lyle H. Lanier, Andrew Nelson Lytle, Herman Clarence Nixon, Frank Lawrence Owsley, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, John Donald Wade, Robert Penn Warren, Richard M. Weaver and Stark Young argued that the South, having held on to its agrarian culture longer than the remainder of the country, could serve as a model for society in which human beings, rather than machines, were dominant. They celebrated the

[1] Both dates are cited as possibilities in Gray – he footnotes 1927, according to Cowan (Fugitive Group 244); 1926, according to Virginia Rock, "The Making and Meaning of I'll Take My Stand: A Study of Utopian Conservatism, 1925-1939" (Diss. of U of Minnesota, 1961) 222-23.

South as a region "in which agriculture is the leading vocation, whether for wealth, for pleasure, or for prestige" (Ransom xix).

If I'll Take My Stand was sociological in its emphasis, it also contributed to what has become known as the Southern Literary Renaissance whose writers stressed the importance of a regional setting and tradition to individuals' lives, deploying the traditional rhetoric of their region and using this language to diminish the schism between metaphor and fact and "so encourage a belief in the *possible* existence of all that is being celebrated" (Gray 43). What Tate termed the Southern Renascence in I'll Take My Stand was to become the mirror in which the literature issuing from the region was reflected for years to come. This prompted an inward looking, exclusive, short-sighted and restrictive way of approaching Southern literature. The writing, reading and criticism of Southern literature spun around the pivot of Southern Agrarian Regionalism – with Tate and co. acting "as cultural producers *and*, quite separately, as cultural commodifiers, supplying the ideal critical mediation for the sorts of stories, poems, and plays that they themselves had written" (Gray Southern Aberrations 98). The effect was a vicious circle of sorts.

Kreyling interrogates the position taken by the Twelve Southerners and sees the project itself as a form of cultural propaganda, designed and disseminated by the privileged to manage their defined concept of "the South." He maintains that these writers consciously excluded aspects of the South which detracted from their overall vision, that they "knew full well there were other 'Souths' than the one they touted; they deliberately presented a fabricated South as the one and only real thing" (xii). By deliberately appropriating and manipulating exaggerated versions of Southernness the Agrarians were performing the South, acting out their roles as the cultural elite, the defenders of the region – a place they themselves seem to have

invented. "Southern Literature" he says, is "an amalgam of literary history, interpretive traditions, and a canon," it is "a cultural product, or "artefact," to be understood just as Anderson understands the "nations" that fill up the history of the modern era" (ix).

Benedict Anderson's seminal 1991 study of the formation of "imagined communities" through what he terms "print capitalism" in Europe looks primarily at a history of European nationalism. However, when Anderson turns his attention to the Americas and what he calls "The Last Wave," we see how the idea of nation itself has become an object of transnational exchange for the past few centuries. It is thus a useful springboard for Kreyling's treatment of Southern Literature and his critique of the Fugitive-Agrarians.

The Fugitive-Agrarians, armed with their manifesto, commandeered their strain of provinciality, sealing it tight and ultimately using it as a way to exert and retain power over the South they had created. Kreyling proposes "that the Agrarians produced the South in the same way that all historically indigenous social elites produce ideological realities: out of strategies for seizing and retaining power (cultural, political, sexual, economic, and so on) that are then reproduced as 'natural'" (6). His argument is broadly comparable to Roland Barthes's analysis of myth: "what the world supplies to myth" he suggests, "is an historical reality, defined, even if this goes back quite a while, by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth given in turn is a *natural* image of reality" (Mythologies (1957) 142).

Barthes' notion that myth transforms history into nature is useful, particularly as Michael O'Brien observes in "The Endeavour of Southern Intellectual History," the Introduction to Rethinking The South (1988), that "all cultures are provincial; that is, their ideas are indigenously fashioned for local

usages" (2). Tate then, more openly than the other Agrarians, fashioned provincialism to suit the needs of this intellectual elite. Tate altered the Southern narrative, wishing to rewrite his culture, imposing a particular blueprint on the recent literary past of his, by now indeed mythical, region. Eight years after Tate's essay on "the Southern Renascence," Louis D. Rubin and Robert D. Jacobs edited The Southern Renascence: The Literature of the Modern South in 1953,[2] remarkable not only for its moments of, what Gray terms, "regionalist piety" but also for instances of exclusion which also indicate how intimately tied its essays are to the ideas of Tate and the other Fugitive-Agrarians.[3] Eight years later the same editors produced South: Modern Southern Literature in Its Cultural Setting, which, though it allowed for brief considerations of McCullers, O'Connor, Capote and Styron, still praised the region for "the coincidence of a sense of the concrete, a sense of the elemental, a sense of the representative, and a sense of totality" (Heilman 48).

These volumes lack any real acknowledgement of the difficulties relating to the selection of authors and texts, and do not reflect upon the selection process itself, which is palpably flawed and reductive. In Southern Aberrations, Gray expands on this idea by noting "where the difficulty occurs here is in the evident reluctance to admit selectivity as a guiding principle: the assumption, and in some instances argument, that the essay collected together in the 1953 volume and then the 1961 one are somehow inclusive – describing not *a* literary South but *the* literary South" (108).

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[2] The occasion of the fifth printing warranted a new introduction in 1965, "What we did in 1953 was to publish the first attempt at an inclusive examination of the literature of the modern South" (Gray 99).

[3] This volume omitted work by Carson McCullers, Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams, James Agee, Lillian Hellman, Richard Wright and Zora Neale Hurston.

In contemporary criticism of Southern literature, there has been a certain restlessness, which has proved enabling insofar as it has broken the self-reflecting mirror of an earlier Southern Studies and allows Southern literature freedom to look outward. Dana D. Nelson and Houston A. Baker Jr., co-editors of the special issue of American Literature dedicated to "Violence, the Body and The South," are clear about their desire for innovation in the field. They describe their intentions in the Preface (231-44), maintaining that they want this symposium to educe a "new Southern studies" that is both intellectually and ethically scrupulous, a project, after it had been introduced, "giving testimony, scholarly acumen, and evidence to the substance of things unseen by all previous projects in such outmoded categories as 'Southern literature' or 'Southern architecture'" (237).

In his review of the Special Issue, Kreyling warns that "less concern that contact with traditional Southern literary studies might impede their project, more scepticism about the apparent 'newness' of their approach would have helped the AL editors steer a course less perilously close to the rocks of old categories" (3), and maintains that this concentration on newness places the effectiveness of the contents in jeopardy. Kreyling critiques each of the six essays in the Issue for valuing ostensible newness over literary and theoretical self-questioning that would, inexorably, lure the hoped-for new Southern studies into a discourse with the old categories still very much allied with Southern literature. New Southern Studies does, and should, as Jon Smith suggests in a letter responding to an article by Barbara Ladd, "[push] the boundaries of American and inter-American studies, postcolonial theory, queer studies, cultural studies, and media, visual culture, and globalisation" (in Bone "New Southern Studies and the Race-Sex-Gender Spiral" 120) albeit, I would add, with due reference to the value of existing work in the field.

Sarah Ford concurs with Kreyling's diagnosis that the articles in the 2001 Special Issue are not successful in negotiating the fraught landscape between old and new. However she moves the argument forward by asking:

> Which new? Which old? A new generation of southern literary critics might not define "old" as William Faulkner, the Fugitive-Agrarian critics, the Civil War, or the plantation romance but instead the authors and stories previously unread and untold, ignored and repressed. (23)

It is not just "obscure" texts which have met this particular fate. There is now an opportunity, however, to combine the "old" and "new" by reassessing the categories in existing Southern literature. By using the past in this way, unpacking it, as means of dealing with the present it is possible to highlight the way in which, even in contemporary criticism, these texts are still pushed behind the borders of an imaginary territory, often as isolated as they characters they contain.

Contemporary scholars necessarily look back at early, foundational texts like Rubin and Jacobs's Southern Renascence (1953) to further interrogate the ideology of Southern literary studies. These critiques most certainly clear a space for what Ford refers to as "new constructions built on different ideas, previously unread authors, and overlooked intersections" (Ford 19), allowing for the discussion of alternative constructions. The challenge for New Southern studies is to straddle the difficult distance between old and new and indeed between the South and other places, other sites, in order to find new ground to sustain and support further developments in the field through examinations of convergence and mixing - which may even give rise to new disciplines.

Martyn Bone's 2005 essay "The transnational turn, Houston Baker's new Southern studies and Patrick Neate's Twelve Bar Blues" reflects specifically on Baker's analysis of "New Southern studies" in his Turning South Again: Re-

thinking Modernism/Re-reading Booker T. (2001). Bone also meditates in more general terms on the transnational turn in American Studies. Bone's article outlines how the dream vision of "the South" originated in Southern literary studies in the 1950s and how it subsequently jarred with the nationalism and exceptionalism fundamental to the advancement of American Studies. Bone also exposes the way in which many Southern writers and critics developed their own exceptionalist and nativist modes of identity but they place these in a particularly transnational context, examples include Donald Davidson's "autochthonous ideal" and what Bone terms the "Quentissential fallacy" in William Faulkner's Absalom! Absalom!. This concerns Quentin Compson's claim that "you would have to be born" in the South in order to fully comprehend it (289). Bone highlights the ways in which Baker's approach to transnationalism and the South become problematic, facilitating as it does the "Quentissential" negation of Paul Gilroy's theory of "the Black Atlantic," which illustrates how numerous nationalist models for considering cultural history fail when met by the intercultural and transnational formation of a "Black Atlantic."

In his opening chapter Gilroy informs us that "commentators from all sides of political opinion" have "systematically obscured" the existence of the very evident cultural hybridity that he outlines in The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness (1993). Through his use of the metaphor of "the black Atlantic" he demonstrates that concepts of exceptionalism are not only reductive and restrictive, but that any authentic perception of black culture must distinguish and account for its very hybridity:

> Regardless of their affiliation to the right, left, or centre, groups have fallen back on the idea of cultural nationalism, on the overintegrated conceptions

> of culture which present immutable, ethnic differences as an absolute break in the histories and experiences of "black" and "white" people. (388)

Gilroy describes black identity in Europe and the New World as an ongoing process of travel and exchange across the Atlantic that attempts to understand its position in relation to European modernity:

> The specificity of the modern political and cultural formation I want to call the Black Atlantic can be defined, on one level, through [a] desire to transcend both the structures of nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity. These desires are relevant to understanding political organising and cultural criticism. They have always sat uneasily alongside the strategic choices forced on black movements and individuals embedded in national and political cultures and nation-states in America, the Caribbean, and Europe. (19)

Gilroy offers a model both for reconsidering the history of ideas in the modern West and for understanding how a putative margin moves to the centre by inverting "the relationship between margin and centre as it appears within the master discourses of the master race" (45). In There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack (1991) Gilroy had demonstrated the centrality of the experience of blacks to British politics and culture; in this later study, "he goes transnational" and succeeds in illustrating "the transnational melded yet polyvocal nature of the black Atlantic world, and the ways the spaces between us also bind us" (Iverson 399). Gilroy maintains that for well over a century, black intellectuals have travelled and worked in a transnational framework that excludes anything but a superficial alliance with their country of origin. He argues, therefore, for a long, complex history of African-diasporic intellectual culture that is particularly transnational.

In Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary (2002), Paul Giles attempts to establish a transatlantic dialogue among different conceptual approaches in the Americanist field, in the expectation of opening up new critical perspectives "neither circumscribed entirely by a politics of location nor commensurate, either explicitly or implicitly, with the boundaries of the nation-state" (xi). But where Giles's concern is with points of intersection between the United States and Great Britain, and Bone explores the debate from a British context, I focus instead on the Irish-American paradigm, with particular reference to the South in both locations. Giles's Anglo-American model is nonetheless useful as a means by which to approach the Irish-American paradigm. His use of virtualisation is particularly apposite in this context, as it allows the observer to see native landscapes "refracted or inverted in a foreign mirror" (2). This mirroring succeeds in divesting the objects reflected of their customary security of depth and perspective. These illusions, claims Giles, traditionally sustain their privileged position with regard to natural representation. Through the mirroring process these objects are "flattened out into replicas of themselves in a process of aestheticization that highlights the manifestly fictional dimensions of their construction" (2).

Giles then investigates the cultural narratives of America from this situation of reflection and rupture, a position through which American fictions are brought into juxtaposition with those of other countries; it becomes easier to "appreciate the assumptions framing these narratives and the ways they are intertwined with the construction and reproduction of national mythologies" (2). Giles does, however, point to the need for an alternative to ideas of exceptionalism, which is applicable to my discussion of Ireland and the American South. It is a promising approach and is particularly relevant in mapping projections of American Southern

culture on Irish subject Frank O'Connor and Irish Southern culture on the American Flannery O'Connor in an attempt to move towards a workable definition of what I will term provincial transnationalism.

It can be argued of course that works by writers such as Frank O'Connor and Flannery O'Connor are universal in their implications though their fiction is firmly rooted in the South. This notion, however, does little to dispel the inherent problems of regionalism, such as Giles' assertion that the nature of Southern experience prevents transnational discussion. This is certainly a significant argument in any discussion of Southern regionalism, yet, for these writers, I would contend that this apparent provincialism was, paradoxically, the distinctive method by which they articulated their unique strain of transnationalism. Their existence in the "South", as an imaginative and borderless locale, provided them with the specifics – the language, the characters and even the genre, to explore transnationalism from "home". So, as I have outlined, it is feasible that certain Southern writers became unlikely and potential exemplars of transnational literature by using their writing to move towards a discussion of literary transnationalism and another way of reading their intentional literary provincialism.

Amy Kaplan and Richard Brodhead have argued that regionalism in the American South, as a literary movement, was an attempt to contribute to the reunification of the country after the Civil War and to the building of a national identity toward the end of the nineteenth century, though it was an invention even then. According to Brodhead:

> regionalism's representation of vernacular cultures as enclaves of tradition insulated from larger cultural contact is palpably a fiction…its public function was not just to mourn lost cultures but to purvey a certain story of contemporary cultures and of the relations among them. (121)

The South, from this perspective, is undoubtedly a construct, an idealisation about how things were before the war, the South "as it might have been." Southern Studies has indeed tended to mimic the methodological approach of American Studies by reading Southern literature as emblematic or allegorical of the South itself as a socio-historical and socio-spatial entity and identity (190). The South is pitted against the North, studied against it as an imaginary emissary or viewed entirely as object – the South as the nation's "other," just as in much short story theory, where the short story is measured against the novel. The possibility of the short story, and indeed its criticism, being viewed as the regional equivalent of the novel's national narrative will be explored later.

C. Vann Woodward's "The Search for Southern Identity" (1958) maintains the South is the exception to American exceptionalism and that "Southern myths" challenged "national myths"' (13, 19). This sense of "otherness" is then furthered by Tate and the Agrarians who, attacking American literary nationalism, ensured that countless Southern literary critics during and after the 1950s would likewise define Southern literature through tropes of regional identity.

If we view the South as a construct, we have to ask what impelled its creation as such. It would seem that the South, as it has seemingly been constructed by critics and scholars alike, takes pride in what the North would consider "negative," a laid-back attitude, a certain relationship with the land and a parochial, polite approach. This view of the South has proven to be remarkably resilient; indeed it was reworked as recently as 1991 when Fred Hobson published The Southern Writers in the Postmodern World and in Sharon Monteith's Advancing Sisterhood (2000). Yet the rapid Southern transformation to modernity had produced a sense of disorder and conflict and, as Hobson remarks, more recent Southern writers locate their fiction "in a world of popular or mass culture,

and their characters' perceptions of place, family, community and even myth are greatly conditioned by popular culture, television, rock and roll, and so forth" (10).[4]

Southern Irish exceptionalism as part of the Provincial Transnational paradigm

> Nationalism stands between Ireland and the light of the world.
> George Bernard Shaw.[5]

The Irish Literary Revival, in many respects, parallels the Fugitive-Agrarian movement excepting perhaps the relative lack of theoretical engagement in the Irish context. In "Constructing the Canon: Versions of National Identity," Luke Gibbons argues that "Irish creative writers are more than adequately represented in the pantheon of world literature, but in the case of critical or intellectual enquiry, the Irish contribution, with a few notable exceptions, seems conspicuous by its absence" (Field Day Anthology Vol. 2 950). He also makes mention of Herbert Moore Pim's A Short History of Celtic Philosophy (1920), which sought to determine an uninterrupted tradition of idealist thought in Ireland, with the insistence that "all intellectual activity, even at the most rarefied level, was an expression of an underlying Celtic *mentalité*, a manifestation of 'the Irish mind'" (951). According to Gibbons, it is this attitude which is primarily to blame for the arrested development of an intellectual tradition in Ireland along with the fact that from the nineteenth century onwards, significant advancements in Irish intellectual life were evaluated by where they stood on the on-going matter of the national question.

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[4] Jeffrey J. Folks & James A. Perkins, eds. Southern Writers at Century's End (1997) Lewis P. Simpson addresses Hobson's point that African American fiction retains "quintessential" Southern and even "agrarian qualities."

[5] "Preface for Politicians." John Bull's Other Island. 1904. Arms and the Man and John Bull's Other Island by George Bernard Shaw Ed. Rodelle and Stanley Weintraub (New York: Bantam Classics, 1993).

For Patrick Pearse, nationalism was not just a political ideology but revealed itself "in all the arts, all the institutions, all the inner life, all the action and goings forth of the nation" (302). The very fact that "all the inner life" of the Irish nation must continuously express its own nationhood is a troubling notion, and one almost impossible to achieve without dangerous and far-reaching consequences. To the critic John Eglinton this approach surely designated a rudimentary absence of authenticity in Irish culture in general. He wrote that "it is by a 'thought movement'" rather than by a "'language movement' that Ireland will have to show that it holds the germs of true nationality" (11).

Indeed, many viewed the situation from a rather unsophisticated and naïve perspective, as purely what D. P. Moran termed a "battle of civilisations" between Irish nationalists advancing a brand of cultural isolationism, a limited provincialism, and the Anglo-Irish who appeared to encourage a more outgoing engagement with the rest of the world (953). Evidently, as Gibbons points out, this is far too neat an opposition, principally because many of the most intense attacks on cosmopolitanism came from leading Anglo-Irish figures such as W. B. Yeats and A. E. (George Russell). Those termed "Irish Irelanders," like Arthur Clery, argued to the contrary that nationalism and cosmopolitan were not incompatible ideas. Most applicable to this discussion however, and particularly so in relation to the Fugitive-Agrarians of the American South, is the argument put forward by Eoín MacNeill, whose research provides the basis for the shift in rationale from viewing Ireland as a state to acknowledging it as a nation. MacNeill contended that Irish nationality was not in fact a political hypothesis, but was instead the legacy of "an enduring nation that had existed in Ireland before the Norman Conquest" (Gibbons 953). The concept of continuity is central to MacNeill's theory, which stresses an unbroken tradition and supported the legitimacy of Ireland's claim to be a separate

nation. Problematically for MacNeill, this notion runs counter to another fundamental article of faith in nationalism, that the English conquest had deracinated and splintered a previously flourishing and successful native Irish culture.

However, MacNeill does reject the idea of an indestructible Irish race as did one of his supporters, Aodh de Blacam, and instead propagates the notion of a continuous, spiritual Irish nation. Aodh de Blacam was one of a number of agrarian reformers, including A. E. and the socialist W. P. Ryan. The mystical possibility of an essential and exceptional Irish identity which endured throughout all social disruptions proved attractive to these agrarian reformers, who were intent on material restructuring, with particular interest in preserving an impression of continuity in the midst of substantial and often chaotic social transformation. Like their counterparts in the American South, these agrarians were enthralled by the cooperative potential of Irish agriculture and looked to the existence of a pre-conquest Gaelic commonwealth as a native derivation for their collaborative principles.

MacNeill's initial idea of a porous version of the nation, however, became more difficult to sustain, particularly with the cultural retrenchment which followed the founding of the State in 1922. Literary figures such as Daniel Corkery, a significant influence on Frank O'Connor, also firmly rejected the alleged Anglo-Irish view. As Lennon points out, it was Corkery, Frank O'Connor's national schoolteacher, who stirred in O'Connor a curiosity in European and Irish literature and language. His 1924 book, The Hidden Ireland, is an essay in retrieval, averring that Munster writing, writing of the South, of Cork, should hold a central place in Irish history, an apparent mirroring of Allen Tate's call to arms in I'll Take My Stand. The opening chapter of Corkery's Synge and Anglo-Irish literature (1931)

could be viewed as an offensive on the colonial character of Anglo-Irish literature and is exclusivist and exceptionalist in its approach. The thrust of his redefinition of the Irish cultural canon can be seen as further evidence of the protectionist mentality prevalent in the Ireland of the 1930s. Corkery perceived not just a lack of native forms in literature, but also the lack of a foundation on which to shape them:

> Everywhere in the mentality of the Irish people are flux and uncertainty. Our national consciousness may be described, in a native phrase, as a quaking sod. It gives no footing. It is not English, not Irish, nor Anglo-Irish…[an Irish person's English] education, instead of buttressing and refining his emotional nature, teaches him the rather to despise it, inasmuch as it teaches him not to see the surroundings out of which he is sprung, as they are in themselves, but as compared with alien surroundings: his education provides him with an alien medium through which he is henceforth to look at his native land! (14-15)

In "Post-Colonial Ireland: 'Being Different'" Declan Kiberd considers Corkery's introduction which, he says, "ends on a note of near-farce, virtually denying the existence of Anglo-Irish literature, except as an exotic offshoot of the English parent plant" (103-04). In closing, Corkery's sense of disappointment is levelled at the fact that the literary revivalists failed to develop a body of criticism which might account for their limitations and show the way ahead, a point Kiberd maintains could justifiably be applied to Corkery himself.

Movements such as the agrarian movement, the women's movement and the labour movement have, in David Lloyd's words, "been occluded by the dominant forms and debates of Irish history" and this "is an effect of the organising concerns of official history; the formation of the nation and state; the

narrative of political institutions and state apparatuses; in short, the modernisation of Ireland" (37). In his foreword to Ireland in Proximity: History, Gender, Space (1999), Shaun Richards outlines the current trends and positions in the realm of Irish studies. In his view, the discipline is certainly fraught. For example, in the Spring 1997 issue of Bullán Terry Eagleton asserted that "[it] is now surely time to take [the] project forward" (5), while in the conclusion of his review article on Eagleton's Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture (1995), Lloyd purports that "[a]t its best…[it] performs a kind of rearguard action for Irish studies" (91).

For Richards, it is Gibbons whose writing makes evident the existence of a subtler agenda. Gibbons acknowledges a certain critical current in Irish nationalism, one which is opposed to a "narrow, exclusivist interpretation of Irishness" ("Challenging the Canon: Revisionism and Cultural Criticism" 562-63). For Gibbons, it is this productive "rethinking of tradition" (Transformations in Irish Culture 5) which supplies the present motivation to the discipline. Kevin Whelan, however, is critical of this "rethinking," particularly when it becomes revisionist in its approach (23). He castigates the revisionists' attempts to eliminate any impression of national consciousness from all but the most modern period, since from his perspective this annihilates any possibility of a coherent national identity and leads to "an alienation of Irish people from their ancestors, [making] them strangers in their own country, cut off from a nourishing sense of identity" (23).

Irish Studies is clearly a dynamic but contested intellectual arena. As briefly outlined, present-day criticism and analysis both attempt to engage fully with debates on the topic which are informing the humanities on a global scale. The difficulty lies, however, in achieving a necessary and healthy employment of

nationality free from the reductive and disquieting exceptionalism which so often accompanies it. As noted by Seamus Deane,

> the structure of most essentialist positions is highly vulnerable to criticism…And most of what I've been doing with Field Day…has been to argue against an essentialist version of Irish nationalism...[but] To say this is not to deny the need people have to construct an historical identity, or the viability of essentialist arguments as political strategies. (Callaghan 40)

In his review in Radical Philosophy, Francis Mulhern argues that the entire Irish Studies venture was dedicated to the meta-narrative of nationalism and endeavoured to hold all facets of culture and history within the structure of the undividable nation. Mulhern asserts this circumstance troubled the nation's very identity in its exclusion and marginalisation of its alternative voices because it insisted "on closure, on the ultimate sublimation of class and gender antagonisms in the sameness of national 'difference'" (26). Observance of the national meta-narrative ventured to eradicate domestic, interior diversity for the sake of a specious and suppressive unity. This apparent concord would serve to propagate "national identity" in a perpetual fortification of solidifying dual oppositions. Richards's view that the "valorisation of Irishness as the main collective identity is more often than not repressive" (27) remains central to Mulhern's review and, indeed at the very hub of contemporary discussions within Irish Studies.

In 1991, Christopher Morash supposed that "if Irish cultural debate is to move forward, a new vocabulary must be found" (122). This new mode of articulation must take into account the variety of voices, from the past and from the present, whose authenticity has been deprived by monological national narratives. It is apparent then that the theoretical situations in relation to national discussions concerning Ireland's exceptionality, in many ways echo those of the

American South. Without wishing to be reductive, and while acknowledging their obvious differences, it is still useful to note the ways in which the agrarian contingents in both locations utilised the rural in similar ways, taking the land to be indicative of a unique and exceptional sensibility. Not only that, but the level of current debate in Irish Studies mirrors a parallel movement in American and Southern Studies, a questioning of place, hybridity and expansion. Morash calls for "a new vocabulary" in Irish Studies, a vocabulary which could include discussions of the provincial transnational and the ways in which it opens up area studies to innovative and challenging methods of investigation and engagement.

Irish and American Southern Writers on aspects of "Southern" exceptionalism

Southern exceptionalism's greatest advocate is Quentin Compson in William Faulkner's Absalom! Absalom!. As Compson's roommate at Harvard, Shreve McCannon, has a provocative position as voyeur, as the South is, once again, the exotic "other." Shreve explains that, as a Canadian, he doesn't "live among defeated grandfathers and freed slaves" (289). The irony here is the fact that Southern exceptionalism is created through military defeat. Quentin takes exception to Shreve's assertion by saying "You can't understand it. You would have to be born there" (289). Quentin, dislocated and alienated in Boston, is threatened and therefore utterly rejects a possible international exchange or dialectic. This, in turn, limits and precludes dialectical national or transnational perspectives beyond the South itself. But why should Quentin deny Shreve's comment so vehemently?

I would argue that Quentin's outburst reflects the reactionary and protective stance held by many writers of the South concerning their locality. As writers, they have a

conflicted relationship with their area, comparable to that of Irish writers such as James Joyce, Patrick Kavanagh and Frank O'Connor. On the one hand, they can see the limitations of their region clearly, yet on the other they consider themselves duty-bound to defend their region. Kreyling, for his part, "resist[s] the verdict of Quentin Compson. If one must be born in the South to participate meaningfully in its dialogue, then there is in fact only a monologue.

Flannery O'Connor too, while at once admonishing the colloquial and stifling aspects of her home in Milledgeville GA, also writes of her love for the South and her regret at how the South is losing its apparent uniqueness in light of the expansion of a "Northern" way of thinking. She laments its assimilation into the remainder of the nation:

> The anguish that most of us have observed for some time now has been caused not by the fact that the South is alienated from the rest of the country, 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 not only out of our many sins, but of our few virtues. (Orvell 16)

Yet in critical readings of her work scholars are endeavouring, like transnationalists, to move beyond exceptionalism and nativism: "Let's stop romantising the South" writes Robert Coles in the introduction to his book Flannery O'Connor's South (1980 xx).

Robert Gross, in his landmark essay "The Transnational Turn: Rediscovering American Studies in a Wider World," acknowledges that peoples and cultures have been continually in motion, trading, influencing, appropriating from one another and the South is no exception. Culture as such is marked by this mixing, this hybridity of people, of goods and of ideas. A transnational turn in studies of the South, as well as American studies in general, facilitate us moving

beyond exceptionalisms of both US nationalism and Southern provincialism. This position challenges any inclination to examine the South as merely a regional microcosm of the nation and the South itself as a sub-genre of American studies.

Certain Southern writers, however, appear to thrive creatively by accessing this, their alleged otherness and by avoiding a transnational dialectic. As a result their work often inadvertently implies a defensive and exceptionalist outlook as their inspiration emerges in the terms of this subjugation. In other words, their sense of alienation and disparity seems to inform their vision. This oppression is strangely unifying, in only the way an oppressor, a common enemy, can bring people and communities together, a reason why the American South and the Irish South, I would argue, have much in common. Kreyling, indirectly, hints at this possibility:

> [Faulkner] had Quentin choose suicide…giving his survivors in the study of the South our central, agonistic, split-personality model. Quentin swings from sacred memory to profane present, consistently failing to imagine a community save one riven by miscegenation, incest, racial guilt and shame. (5)

Yet, for Irish writers in the South, America has provided an unexpected means by which to engage with global sites, expanding their often rather limited horizons and sense of isolation. The Irish poet Paula Meehan claims that "American [writing] has been a salvation because we are a small island. The available models are smaller than we think and it can be very claustrophobic if we are all working out of the same worlds" (Hurtley Ireland in Writing 80). Meehan upholds that the American landscape provides a space, both literal and figural, which allows the Irish writer to usefully move beyond the island perspective. "In Ireland," she says, "you cannot talk about the wilderness, except a psychic or

spiritual wilderness. The land itself has been sowed and owned and fought over. Every little inch is named and placed whereas… [In] America, you get the sense of coming into contact with these unbelievable landscapes and horizons" (80). For Meehan, the very act of looking outwards from Ireland to an "unbelievable" America provokes an internalisation of these feelings of placelessness and leads to a subsequent examination of inner space; an emotional wilderness, rather than a physical one. "For some of us" she articulates, "the journey is now inwards" (80).

When the Northern Irish novelist Glenn Patterson lived in Cork for a period, he admits to being "amazed because it was more European than anywhere else I'd lived in Ireland. It was more American than anything else" (Hurtley 105). Patterson, like Meehan, does not see this "cross-fertilisation" as dissolving the essence of belonging. In fact, for both of these writers it is nationalism, nativism and exclusivity which alienates and displaces them from their local sites. So, rather than enforcing national identity, this form of constrictive cultural nationalism detaches writers in particular from their surroundings, and consequently they internalise the nature of their isolation and dislocation. Where these writers diverge is in relation to cities. Meehan is distanced from Dublin, which has been claimed by the writers who preceded her, "the sense of place, it can be very narrow, even if you live in a city like Dublin, which is so much a literary setting, it is very difficult to find your own part in it" (80). She goes on to relate this situation to gender, because women, she argues, do not have the same "sense of owning". Patterson, on the other hand has "an understanding of what a city is but [he doesn't] understand nations…Cities seem to entail a mixture, whereas the nation state and the language of nationalism is about purity, exclusion. That's what I fear most" (Irish Times 17 August 1995).

It is clear then that both Ireland and the American South have struggled with issues relating to exceptionalism and that this circumstance has been transmitted through the scholarship and literary output of both areas. What is most compelling, however, is that the majority of these experiences of unease have been expressed through the medium of the short story. As such, Robert Hogan outlines, most Irish short stories produce in the reader "an overall feeling of intolerable depression and dreariness [for they tend to] end in failure, futility, fatality, meanness, madness, misery or a wide variety of appalling and fertile beastliness" (169). I would argue that this is not the case; rather the Irish short story, along with the Southern American short story provide a facility for the transmission of these contained and internalised incidents, allowing the reader to encounter the provincial transnational at work, through an unexpectedly exilic character. The short story diffuses and propagates this intangible and unknowable condition most evidently through its theme, but also in its very form and language. As Frank O'Connor put it, "[h]owever depressing the facts may be, the story will always be excellent" (The Bell May 1942).

Short story theory as an element of Transnationalism and Provincial Transnationalism

> All the books on the short-story form I distrust
> Flannery O'Connor[6]

Susan Lohafer elucidates that "[w]hatever a story *is*, however it *behaves*, the important thing is what it *reveals*" (Reading for Storyness 2003 1-2). Discussing Coming to Terms with the Short Story (1983), an earlier volume relating to the genre, Lohafer divulges that she endeavoured to find a language and set of reference points specific to the mode and to locate a rhythm "longer than the line

[6] The Habit of Being: Letters of Flannery O'Connor. Ed. Sally Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988) 283.

and shorter than the book" (2). Moving through theories relating to reader-response, formalism and phenomenology, and observing and drawing from the findings of scientists in the fields of psychology and cognitive science, Lohafer came to realise that "the end of a story was only the most obvious of its closure points" (2). Consequently, she co-edited Short Story Theory at a Cross-roads (1989), which intended to remap the field of short fiction theory and explore the very idea of the genre itself. She explains that short stories have rhythms, and in contrast to the lyric poem to which they are so often compared, this rhythm is classified by the reader's experience of entering, stepping through, and departing the text. She argues that the episodic sentence is a model for the periodicity of the short story, which is identified and implemented by its impending closure:

> [W]e pay attention to sentences in stories because we have to, because if we dally over the nuances of a word, if we skim for the drift, either way we are missing literally the sentience of the story. We are missing the experience of being acclimated to the story-world, of assimilating all that it interposes between the beginning and the closure we want—and yet don't want—to reach." (Coming to Terms with the Short Story 34-35)

Lohafer argues that studying preclosure, as she defines it, can be an effective and an occasionally extraordinary means of surmounting obstacles to elucidation. Her book, Reading for Storyness, is divided into three stages: preclosure study in nontechnical terms combined with a number of preclosure experiments, a survey of forty-five canonical American short stories, a comparative application of preclosure theory to a short story and a narrative essay on the same subject. Lohafer circumvents and often contests what she terms "dominant critical discourses of the day," while simultaneously and accurately describing the field of short fiction theory as "undernourished" (5).

Lohafer makes only a passing reference to Frank O'Connor in this volume and none at all to Flannery O'Connor, a glaring omission. I would argue, however, that Lohafer's preclosure theory is a useful paradigm in theories of the short story and is relevant to how they relate to Transnationalism and, indeed, Southern Studies. The discontinuity inherent in the very form of the genre, along with its historically "minor" classification, means that while it is at once unified, it is also, concurrently, fragmented and incomplete. Unlike the novel, which demands wholeness and can often be encumbered by it, the short story is emancipated from such restrictions. As Lohafer points out, novels "do not depend so directly on the sense of storyness, nor do they modulate emotions through putative stories that rest within each other, yet operate serially" (166). Short stories are both whole, in that they exist as unified entities, but are also by their inclusion in a collection, literary periodical or indeed magazine, part of another, more encompassing, whole. They are both the sum and its parts or, in the words of John McGahern, "any single story in a collection of stories can lean on the variety and difference of the others, receiving as well as casting light"(5). To this degree the genre is the most obvious choice for transnational engagement and for those speaking from places of marginality or otherness.

Each chapter in Reading for Storyness revolves around an experiment in which readers distinguish sentences within a story where the text could end. In so doing, Lohafer argues, they "tap a deeply ingrained ability to recognise narrative wholeness, which [she] call[s] *storyness*" and maintains that "preclosure study brings assumptions about storyness to light, no matter how relative they may be to their corner of the world" (3). Storyness, by such means, is a potentially transnational concept where the option of preclosure points is generated by the text but is, as Lohafer outlines, "independent of any one text, drawing upon inherited and

learned strategies for recognising storyness" (4). Each selected sentence, or "preclosure point," becomes relevant not just in itself but as the end of a putative story within the actual one the author wrote. They are "reader-detected" stories inside the "real" story (4). So, just as stories themselves have their own form both in and outside a collection or magazine say, inside the very story itself there is a fluidity, transient and ephemeral, allowing for a variety of classifications and interpretations, so many in fact that it is famously impossible to define. This eschewing of a definition is not necessarily a negative, which explains why the short story is the modus operandi for so many writers. Without this cataloguing, the short story is an open and inclusive medium, it makes itself available by virtue of the fact that it lacks rules and regulations. The only thing it asks of the writer is unity, but even this unity is fragmented in ways that provide the writer with a means of engaging with the absence of unity. The wholeness is at once whole, yet incomplete, allowing for explorations of marginalisation that are not so isolated so as to prevent interpretation, and as such it is the genre of the in-between, giving form to the dispossessed.

For Lohafer, "[s]torying is a form of cognitive management. Closure is proof that storying has happened" (55). She identifies three different phases in preclosure; anterior closure which is the preclosure point nearest the beginning of the story, penultimate closure which is closest to the end of the story and finally closure itself, or the actual last sentence of the story. Using particular sentences from specific short stories Lohafer analysed them in a multiplicity of ways, "cataloguing their features, global and local, syntactic and lexical" (59). If this interpretation is successful, the amassed support surrenders some acuity into those features of storyness that remain perpetual over time and those that vary by historical period.

What is most suggestive about this method however is Lohafer's use of the terms "local" and "global" to define the stages of closure and storyness. By these classifications alone she is, perhaps unconsciously, tapping into the transnational paradigm. For her, global syntactic interpretation relates to signals occurring when the target sentence completes a narrative structure such as "the overcoming of an obstacle, the return to an earlier state or event, the achievement of equilibrium, or the rendering of antithesis or paradox" (59).[7] Global lexical signals transpire when the target sentence incorporates an end state concerning the story as a whole, what John Gerlach calls "natural terminations" (8). Local syntactic signals then relate to the design of the target sentence itself, while local lexical indicators concern closural words and words which have been privileged in the given text because of natural prominence, "loading" or repetition. Lohafer calls these "key words" (60).

Consequently, preclosure points could be evidenced as examples of the way the reader encodes storyness, that the reader is staging their own reception of the story. Therefore, we modify the structure of the short story even as we go through the process of reading it and in return it modifies and enriches our perception of the story and of life. This interaction is intensely exclusive and requires an active reader, whether entirely conscious of this act or not. This encoding of storyness suggests that stories, particularly cognitively, are vital elements of our own experiences. We enter into stories, and they, in turn, enter into us. It is an equal and intimate borderless transaction.

While Lohafer's preclosure studies are useful as an interpretive tool for individual stories, as well as being helpful in ascertaining how the genre differs from other modes, they also unexpectedly expand and elucidate the possibility of the short story as a transnational mode, technically, interpretatively and physically.

[7] Here Lohafer loosely adapts several of John Gerlach's five "signals of closure" (Toward the End 8).

As Lohafer points out, "in the configuration of its movement toward closure, the short story models most closely the neural basis of storytelling" and I would argue the most neutral, too, while simultaneously managing to represent a certain form of literary rebellion as I will outline later. Furthermore, Lohafer's study is applicable to aspects of the homo sacer which will be fully explored in Chapter Five, particularly in the light of Lohafer's remark that "[She has] learned from the story grammarians that the perception of storyness is a gestalt; each of us as a human story processor, has internalised a story schema, a set of expectations about what stories offer" (57-58).

Flannery O'Connor's Dark Comedies: The Limits of Inference (1980) is concerned with the author's "sense of audience" and exploring the way in which O'Connor does not succeed in anticipating fictionally the assumptions of her readers. Carol Shloss's dilemma therefore, much like Lohafer's, is with reader response. For Shloss, the text is the appropriate venue for genuine communication between writer and reader to occur. She explains:

> To require that the reader share the artist's beliefs or that he construe the meaning of a story from extrinsic commentary is to insist on bypassing the fiction as a linguistic construct with inherent meanings. Is the biographical information gleaned from these essays the most effective starting point of criticism? It seems better to remember that language is communal, effective to the extent that writer and reader construe it similarly. Consequently, a writer's "sacramental view" is immaterial unless it can be embodied in, that is, translated into, writing techniques that permit its discovery by readers. (15)

Though it is evident from her letters and critical writings that O'Connor expected and desired esoteric responses from her readers, this of course was not necessarily

forthcoming. Readers with more secular persuasions could only experience such anagogic reactions if a view of the sacred is "discoverable from the text itself" (136). Shloss' approach is a useful one, but her view is still bound to the religious and sacramental in O'Connor's oeuvre. While thematically this is undeniably an integral part of understanding O'Connor, it is necessary at this juncture to free O'Connor criticism from the Apostate versus True Believer binary.

Paul Giles has argued in American Catholic Arts and Fictions that O'Connor, in looking for her inspiration in the landscapes of Georgia, finds little to relate to her "Catholic sense of purpose" (364). As a result, Giles maintains that with O'Connor there is a persistent inducement to distort this nature and to reorder it in terms of patterns more in agreement with her own theological beliefs. Giles continues that "such distortion itself becomes a rebellion against the objective 'good of that which is made'" (364). He also cites Walker Percy, who suggests that O'Connor's stories sometimes have more of a "univocal" tendency than the author herself may have intended. O'Connor's stories are far more nuanced and multi-layered than this definition allows, her work has the ability to transcend her Georgia location, just as Frank O'Connor's stories speak to those who have never visited Cork. Rather than being "univocal" in her approach, I would argue that O'Connor's writing is open to a more equivocal interpretation.

Though Shloss attempted this in 1980, it is discernible that her methodology is more a reaction to this more traditional scholarship. However, her attempts at exploring reader response in the short stories point to a welcome chink in the armour of O'Connor studies. This chink can be further expanded by employing short story theory and the possibilities offered by reader response, consequently providing and indicating a movement towards critical intersectionality and extension.

Lohafer is unusual among the small number of dedicated short story genre theorists in that her studies of the short story transcend more traditional discussions and debates and instead look to science as a means of uncovering the nature of the genre. I use her work here very particularly to demonstrate that even in the newest and most radical of short story interpretation and reading it is possible to include a transnational reading, particularly when the very terms of this study include "global" and "local." Of course I am not suggesting that a transnational, or more specifically a provincial transnational, reading will magically solve the problems of definition and analysis relating to the short story itself, rather it provides another way, often in parallel with other modes of investigation, which allows for a multiplicity of theories and methods, but one which loosely binds stray aspects relating to the genre together:

> Short stories, unlike novels or poems, by their very nature, compete with the rhythms that keep us functioning as organisms. Stories complete themselves in our experience between other cycles of need—for food, sleep, and the releases of the body. Unlike longer fictions—even the most artful and word-conscious novels—short stories do not offer vicarious experience of a surrogate world. They haven't the time. Rather … they put us through something … that happens to us with as much authority as a delayed meal or an overdue nap. (Lohafer Coming to Terms with the Short Story 159)

Short stories "complete themselves in our experience" and, significantly, "do not offer vicarious experience of a surrogate world" but rather serve to confront the reader, and prove that place itself can be reconstructed, yielding new grounds, new perspectives. This is particularly valuable in relation to the American South and the Irish South as through short stories a reconstruction is possible, resulting in vastly

significant implications for what have typically been regarded as the limits of place, the limits of region and indeed the notion of the limit itself.

Towards situating Provincial Transnationalism in the Southern Story

In The Invention of Tradition (1983), Eric Hobsbawm and Terence O. Ranger classify "invented traditions of the period since the industrial revolution" according to,

> three overlapping types: (a) those establishing or symbolising social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, (b) those establishing or legitimising institutions, status or relations of authority, and (c) those whose main purpose was socialisation, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems, and conventions of behaviour. (9)

This directs us back to the title of this chapter: does the Southern story exist? How can we usefully re-imagine the South as a locus for transnational debate? We have already seen how Southern studies has traditionally resisted and now embraced transnational enquiry, but does this provide us with a means in itself to reconsider the South from a transnational perspective? I would argue that by its refusal overtly to engage with transnationalism and in remaining staunchly regional, the work produced by these writers is, oxymoronically, transnational in and of itself. In order to succeed creatively, in order to be authentic, writers like William Faulkner and Flannery O'Connor had, intentionally or otherwise, to appear to alienate themselves from the North. They seem to maintain and preserve this traditional boundary through their regional literary transnationalism. For example, when Flannery O'Connor was asked why she was not adequately outraged by the civil rights abuses in the South of her time, she said that she was not indifferent but was more concerned with the timeless structure of spiritual salvation or damnation.

The O'Connors' writing certainly depicts instances of accommodation in the American South; it can be a collusive country, with all sorts of secret understandings which are invoked when needed. This collusion is very much a result of violence and aggression wrought upon a region, and relates to the necessity for deeper understanding between survivors. It concerns the difficulty of communicating in a country or locale that is conflicted and contentious, particularly as experienced by those who are alien to that region. Coles states that "O'Connor believed that the South is inevitably distorted in the minds of the Northern reader" (1). This distortion need not inevitably be negative but what is important is that it remains undeniably a distortion. As a result the South can become a mediated and imagined area, one which can be seen and interpreted as unreal and inauthentic by those who feel they do not belong.

It is clear that the Southern story does exist imaginatively, often appearing to mimic the imaginary South created by the Fugitive-Agrarians, bound by this mirage but struggling to expand beyond it, to solidify. As a defeated area, the South had no choice but to close its fictive borders and endeavour to establish a genuine, authentic voice, a voice that would survive assimilation. So a writer like Flannery O'Connor articulated her vision through the language, customs and people of the South, in one sense to preserve it and in another to show us, as readers, how the South works, how it is, ostensibly, a locus for the human experience.

O'Connor accesses the vernacular of her South and, more particularly, locates it within a genre which engages with alternate geographies, a paradoxically regional and transnational script. She succeeds in purveying "a certain story of contemporary cultures and of the relations among them" (Brodhead 121). She does not deny us entry to this world, she does not, like Compson, exclaim "You

can't understand it. You would have to be born there" (289). Rather, through her explorations of region, she gives us a key to understanding the human condition, Southern or otherwise: "I use the idiom and the manners of the country I know, but I don't consider that I write *about* the South" (133).

While transnational debates and those relating to New Southern studies as advanced by Gilroy, Pease and Giles are certainly applicable in this context, this discussion of the dialogue between the two O'Connors, and indeed between the two Souths, the one Irish and the other American, is genre specific and necessarily so. What I think is at work in the transatlantic and transnational writings of the two O'Connors as well as other contemporary writers such as O'Faolain, O'Flaherty, Percy and Welty is subtle and complex. It is this intricacy which has lead many commentators to focus solely on the regional or provincial aspects of the work of these authors to the detriment of a transnational or transatlantic approach.

Flannery O'Connor, Frank O'Connor and the Irish-American Southern Story

In American Notes, Charles Dickens remarks that Southern slave culture reminds him of the "ignorant peasantry of Ireland" (36). In Virtual Americas Giles discusses Frederick Douglass' first visit to the then British Isles. In his 1845 Narrative Douglass mentions "Sheridan's mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation" (42) thus, for Giles, implicitly linking the circumstances of Irish Catholics under British rule with the plight of slaves in the American South. Commenting on the miserable social conditions in Ireland, Douglass remarked that the poor Irish lived "in much the same degradation as the American slaves" and

that he "sees[s] much here to remind me of my former condition" (36). A Cork connection may be traced, too.[8]

County Cork is known as the "Rebel County" and not just for its past links with Irish Republicanism; it was actually named so by the Crown in 1499. The label was meant to be derogatory but was embraced by the people of Cork with pride. This in itself exposes the attitude Corkonians allegedly possess - an unwillingness to accept any kind of criticism or, in this case, insult. Richard Ellmann states in his introduction to Frank O'Connor's Collected Stories, for example, that "Cork [is] a city that prides itself on being unlike Dublin" (ix) and, one could argue, on being unlike anywhere else in the world, which is itself a form of Irish exceptionalism. The moniker of "Rebel County" is also ascribed to Cork due to its history of involvement in the fight for Irish Home Rule, the movement led by Charles Stewart Parnell attempting to re-establish an Irish parliament responsible for internal affairs in the 1880s.

Cork born writer Seán O'Faoláin in his essay, "William Faulkner: more genius than talent," refers to Faulkner as a "natural genius" and remarks that when geniuses such as Faulkner or the Irish playwright Seán O'Casey write, the "Holy Ghost talks through their mouths; when the divine current is not working they talk through their hats" (75). The fact that O'Faoláin invokes holy "ghost" in this context is particularly relevant in relation to Flannery O'Connor, as her work has been described as "Christ-haunted" by the critic Ralph C. Wood (Flannery O'Connor and The Christ-Haunted South 3). It is, in essence, the "Holy Ghost" that works through both O'Connors' fiction.

The "talk[ing] through their hats," I would argue, facilitates and supports the intimate, quotidian and immediate interactions experienced by characters in

[8] Explored by Lee M. Jenkins in her essay "Beyond the Pale: Frederick Douglass and Cork" (Irish Review 24, 1999) 80-95.

their short stories. Without "talking through their hats" these writers would not have the opportunity to discover the "Holy Ghost" in their writing; through this freer and more common-place dialogue they expand the literary potentialities of their respective locales. Often in these stories the majority of the dialogue that seems on the surface to be quite ordinary is actually the most potent of all. Flannery O'Connor scholar Carole K Harris' work is focused on exploring this language of cliché. She argues that O'Connor's use of apparently prosaic dialogue in stories like "Good Country People" highlights a way of acknowledging life-long intimacy. These conversations are shorthand for expressing the nuances of deep connection and shared humour.[9]

The language of cliché is also an element of Frank O'Connor's writing and of the Irish experience. Seán O'Faoláin claims that we are familiar with this kind of genius in Ireland and so too are those who inhabit the American South. O'Faoláin does, in fact, go on to compare the American South and Southern Ireland: "from what little I have seen of Mississippi and all I have read about it, life there sounds very much like life in County Cork" (75). O'Faoláin argues that the American South shares much with Ireland's largest county. Both places seem to have what O'Faoláin terms the same "passionate provincialism." This experience was "passionate" as, while often being marginalised, these locales also benefited from the fact that they had shown a long cultural lag behind great commercial centres like London and New York. This situation gave them, however misguided, a sense of history and of a living tradition. These locations existed as a stubborn criticism of prevailing commercial and urban culture.

The two Souths share local patriotism and a sense of Southern nationalism.

[9] Harris makes use of theoretical reflections on the cliché including Alexander Gelley's "idle talk" where he identifies it as a productive and often overlooked site of inquiry in fiction. She also utilises Marshsall McLuhan on the cliché, Christopher Prendergast on quotation and Umberto Eco.

He highlights the inflated sense of self-importance prevalent in each of these locales; the idea that whatever happens has never happened anywhere else before. The event is, what's more, more important than "anything that happened in any period of history in any part of the cosmos" (The Vanishing Hero 1957 75). This is embodied in Mrs. Freeman in Flannery O'Connor's "Good Country People" for whom "nothing had been arrived at by anyone that had not first been arrived at by her" (Flannery O'Connor: The Complete Stories 273).

O'Faoláin goes on to discuss how both groups possess the pride of an established race, a comparable sense of bitter defeat, a similar capacity for unrelenting hatred. There is also a good deal of common harsh folk humour and the same escape mechanisms of sport and drinking in both cultures. O'Faoláin identifies a common oscillation in these locales between unbounded self-confidence and despair. This, he says, together with other similarities, make one sympathise profoundly with any writer born into such a community, and "admire any writer who, as Faulkner had not been, is not silenced by the disadvantages of birth, education and tradition" (75).

In their short stories, Frank O'Connor and O' Faoláin attempt to attend to the actualities of Irish life: "we see an Irish provincial world, in Cork, in the small towns, in the countryside, where inhibition is disguised as economic prudence, land hunger and stolid conservatism as patriotic duty, subservience to church authority as piety" (O'Connor Ireland 146). In the 1930s and 1940s the Irish short story registered a communal truth which was at variance with frequently robust nationalistic self-congratulation. Yet in spite of the candidly austere portrayal of Irish society in the aftermath of civil war presented by short story writers, the Irish short story, as Seamus Deane has observed, registers alienation; however it is not necessarily a literature of disaffection.

The Irish short story of O'Connor and O' Faoláin is redolent of speech in its prose rhythms, and in its eager acquiescence to anecdote and discursive deviation. It is intimately involved in Irish life, noticeably adapted to its tempo and disposition, as the American short story is to America. It is reminiscent of the tradition of Gaelic storytelling with unquestionable dependence on traditional narrative technique, often eschewing fashionable experimentation. "The Irish short story of the 1930s and 1940s therefore was an enactment of humanist faith in the Irish reality that it explored ostensibly as a condition of hopeless privation" (147).

The Irish short story as an enactment must, however, be attentive to form. In a Southern context, Flannery O'Connor was particularly articulate in describing the organic relationship between form and content: "When you can see the theme of a story, when you can separate it from the story itself, then you can be sure the story is not a very good one. The meaning of a story has to be embodied in it, has to be made concrete in it" (MM 96). Yet, in the Irish case, Flannery O'Connor's compositional infatuation with the inseparability of form and content, if not the definite pre-eminence of form over content, has pertained with equal weight. Frank O'Connor's favoured treatment of architecture as opposed to materials is very apparent: "It's the design of the story which to me is most important…I'm always looking at the design of a story, not the treatment" (Paris Review Interviews 151). Similarly, region cannot be divorced from individual experience. Region provides the individual with borders, often begging to be transgressed.

Kieran Quinlan argues however that the Irish "presence" in the American South is far more varied and complex than that recognised by O'Faoláin or C. Vann Woodward, who noted that James Joyce and William Faulkner "were conscious of the provinciality of their culture and its subordinate relation to a

dominant one" (263). Any discussion of the South, he maintains, requires a search for "the lost Irish tribes of the South" (Quinlan 5). Quinlan's Strange Kin: Ireland and the American South, is one of the few books which deals exclusively with the relationship between Ireland and the American South. He shows how a major component of the Southern population has Irish origins that are far more intricate than the rather simplistic distinction between Protestant Scotch-Irish and Catholic Irish. Quinlan examines the links between Irish nationalists and the Confederate plight, exposing parallel historical trajectories in Ireland and the U.S. South. Both areas have endured defeat; both have long been seen as difficult, if also greatly romanticized, areas of otherwise "progressive" nations; both have been renowned for religious prejudice; and both have observed embittered disagreements as to the elucidation of their particular "lost causes."

In her essay "The South and Britain: Celtic Cultural Connections," Helen Taylor outlines how the earliest census in 1790, though disputed by some historians, determined that the majority of European settlers in the South were Celtic in origin, rather than English. These included Scottish, Irish, Scotch-Irish, Welsh and Cornish. It indicates that by the time of the Civil War the South's white population was over three-quarters Celtic. Taylor illustrates how the Southern backcountry was flooded with the Scotch-Irish and

> it is said that their heritage and style are characteristics most associated with white southerners over the last two centuries: herding rather than tilling, leisurely, musical, tall-taletelling, violent, clannish, family-centred, fiercely Protestant, with a strong sense of honor." (South to a New Place 340)

However, what Taylor describes and charts, with the exception of her useful piece on Gone With the Wind (1936), is a rather generalised "Celtic" experience, with little or no real engagement with any one particular grouping. Indeed, it could be

viewed as challenging that these diverse ethnic identities are so easily and uncritically classified as "Celtic." Taylor does profitably employ Gone With the Wind and The Wind Done Gone (2001) to demonstrate and explore issues of race. Her discussion relating to Alexandra Ripley's Scarlett: The Sequel to Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind" (1991) is particularly illuminating. Taylor outlines how The Mitchell Literary Estate's commissioning of a sequel to Margaret Mitchell's novel in the 1980s played the most significant part in ensuring new life for the work. Ripley, when asked by a Newsday reporter about how she dealt with the issue of race in her novel, replied "I couldn't lie about what things were like in the Nineteenth Century...so I just tiptoed around it." "Things" as Taylor responds, "were of course the contest over the freed slaves' rights in the Reconstruction South, followed by the "Redemption" of white power" (353).

Ripley acknowledged to her interviewer: "I'm sure there was also a lot of long-suppressed anger [among former slaves], but I didn't bother with that. It's not my story...I'm not a sociologist. I'm a novelist." Most significant of all however, halfway through the novel Ripley removes Scarlett to Ireland, where she retraces her roots and re-establishes her plantation home in the Anglo-Irish estate of Ballyhara. The political struggle on which she focuses is that between the Anglo-Irish and the Irish nationalists in the shape of the Fenian Brotherhood. "[M]ercifully," she said, "everybody is white, so I don't run into that minefield" (Jacobson 61).

For his part, Quinlan recognises the fact that African and Native Americans have also identified with the Irish through comparable experiences of subjugation, displacement and starvation. Both regions, Quinlan outlines, suffered defeat and both have long been branded as problematic, if also highly romanticised, areas of otherwise "progressive" nations as well as notorious as sites of religious prejudice.

Quinlan also focuses on the notion of kin and kinship in the American South and how this relates to Ireland. Yet "few of the standard histories of the South make even passing reference to Ireland or the Irish" (3). What he terms the "plain, unhyphenated Irish" are seemingly not part of the Southern story. He furthers this claim by highlighting the problematic use of the term "British," which of course is different from "English": "It would be odd indeed if the long historical drama played out between English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish peoples at home should not have transferred in some degree to the American colonies they founded" (3).

The writings of Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor speak to this marginal position, this in-betweenness. While they certainly used their regions as a focus in their writing, they also succeed in transcending the confines of nativism and exceptionalism precisely through their portrayals of their respective Souths. Even if one inhabits a seemingly nativist and exceptional locale, the two Souths in this instance, one can still experience an uncanny misrecognition in relation to the surrounding environment, which is supposed to be "home." It is possible to expand further this concept in relation to imagined geographies, internal exile and regional fragmentation. This discussion attempts to provide a locus from which to move forward in transnational studies and theories of the New South, as well as debates relating to the short story.

Exploring the connections between the American South as represented by the fiction of Flannery O'Connor and the Irish South epitomised in the work of Frank O'Connor, it is evident that both authors employ their Souths in suggestive ways. Their hometowns of Cork and Milledgeville were, in many respects, similar in their brutal and controversial pasts and often stifling localness as well as sharing broadly similar experiences of plantation and post-plantation economies, military

defeat and occupation, in which racial and gender issues have been particularly important in defining political, economic, social and cultural affairs.

These are regions, then, that pride themselves on their "otherness," on being unlike their particular Norths, on being rebellious and different in respect of their religion and otherwise. I believe that it is this otherness, this Southerness, which permits these writers to explore the more unsettling aspects of the human condition. Using their respective Souths as backdrops, or sometimes even as a character in their stories, creates space and allows for a different, more disquieting dialogue to take place. Louise Westling in Sacred Groves and Ravaged Gardens: The Fiction of Eudora Welty, Carson McCullers, and Flannery O'Connor (1986) maintains that "[p]lacing the fiction and facts of [Flannery] O'Connor's life in their Southern context helps to suggest some less negative ways of accounting for these problems" (Robillard 238). The problems she refers to are those of violence, darkness and modes of distinctly "unladylike" rebellion.

Rebellion is also part of Frank O'Connor's Irish South. Indeed, one of the most remarkable flowerings of Cork literary production occurred during the revolutionary period, although its greatest productions were not to appear until the 1930s and after, once the young state had settled into a new establishment. The greatest achievements were to fall to Frank O'Connor and Seán O'Faoláin, pupils of the legendary Cork figure Daniel Corkery. Frank O'Connor, an acknowledged twentieth-century master of the short story, was raised in the small streets of Cork's inner-city. Corkery's influence led Frank O'Connor into nationalist politics with the result that he fought on the Republican side in the Irish Civil War during the early 1920s. He was a POW for a year and he said of his time in the army: "My soldiering was rather like my efforts at being a musician; it was an imitation of the behaviour of soldiers rather than soldiering" (Paris Review 4).

The Republicans favoured rejection of the Treaty which brought peace between Ireland and Britain but at the cost of a divided island. They lost the Civil War so the treaty's division of Ireland into a twenty-six county "Free State" and a six-county British territory in Ulster was made permanent. Frank O'Connor's distress at this outcome was directed not only against the British or the Free Staters but also against those with whom he had fought. Their romantic naiveté and spirit of repression and ignorance as inhumane as their enemies was laid bare and it is this that informs O'Connor's first collection of stories, Guests of the Nation (1931). Terence Brown in Ireland: A Social and Cultural History (1981) attests that Frank O'Connor, Liam O'Flaherty and Seán O'Faoláin expressed a profound disenchantment concerning the type of Ireland that independence had instantiated. O'Connor, writing in 1942, speaks for the revulsion they all felt in the Ireland of the 1930s:

> After the success of the Revolution…Irish society began to revert to type. All the forces that had made for national dignity, that had united Catholic and Protestant, aristocrats like Constance Markievicz, Labour revolutionists like Connolly and AE, began to disintegrate rapidly, and Ireland became more than ever sectarian, utilitarian, the two nearly always go together, vulgar and provincial…Every year that has passed, particularly since de Valera's rise to power, has strengthened the grip of the gombeen man, of the religious secret societies like the Knights of Columbanus, of the illiterate censorships…The significant fact about it is that there is no idealistic opposition which would enable us to measure the extent of the damage. ("The Future of Irish Literature" 56-57)

The Irish also played a part in the American Civil War as charted in Cal McCarthy's Green, Blue and Grey: The Irish in the American Civil War (2009), the

title referring to the colours worn by the Irish on both sides of the conflict: Union blue and Confederate grey. He attempts to recover the crucial role the Irish played in shaping how the campaign was fought and ultimately won. McCarthy explores each battle, Antietam, Fredericksburg and Gettysburg, and the involvement of Irishmen, with particular reference to Patrick Ronayne Cleburne from Cork (a celebrated Confederate general who earned the nom de guerre "Stonewall of the West") and Thomas Francis Meagher from Waterford, a Union army general and commander of the Irish Brigade. [10] Most compellingly, McCarthy includes accounts of growing disillusionment among the Irish troops, particularly as they were combatants for a country that still perceived them as a minority and a stereotype. Their legacy however is still very much alive in the United States, with monuments dotted all over the South. It is in Ireland that their contribution and bravery is largely forgotten, a situation McCarthy's book seeks to redress.

Flannery O'Connor, of course, did not experience the American Civil War first hand, in the way that Frank O'Connor experienced the Irish Civil War as a combatant. Indeed she was jaded by its legacy, admitting "I sure am sick of the Civil War" (HB 426). Her story "A Late Encounter with the Enemy," with its sardonic account of a fake Confederate general at the "preemy" of the film Gone With the Wind, is a vigorous attempt to put an end to any lingering nostalgia for the Lost Cause. Introduced at the premiere as General Tennessee Flintrock Sash of the Confederacy, George Poker Sash "had not actually been a general in that

[10] The Flag which was later to become the symbol of the Irish Republic was first introduced by Meagher in 1848: "The white in the centre signifies a lasting truce between the 'Orange' and the 'Green', and I trust that beneath its folds the hands of the Irish Protestant and the Irish Catholic may be clasped in generous and heroic brotherhood" Thomas Francis Meagher: On presenting the flag to the people of Dublin, April 1848 (McCartney 37).

war. He had probably been a foot soldier; he didn't remember what he had been; in fact, he didn't remember that war at all" (CW 135).

However, the O'Connors' attitudes to these comparably cataclysmic events are analogous. Richard Ellmann describes Frank O'Connor's standpoint, stating that "unthinking obedience was not his way" (CS x). In a prisoner of war camp, O'Connor also showed his unwillingness to conform to any stereotype when he bravely refused to join his comrades in a hunger strike. It was, Ellmann says, his "farewell to obsessional politics" (CS x). He goes on to surmise that martyrdom on orders was not the course O'Connor had mapped out for himself. The O'Connors shared a particular attitude, not only to the Civil War in their respective countries but also to their reception as "Southern" writers. They refused to be stereotyped and railed against it in both their fiction and non-fiction. Flannery O'Connor rejected the idea that Catholic writers should be sentimental and gushing, while across the Atlantic Frank O'Connor bucked the notion that atheists could not be emotionally expressive.

So Frank O'Connor rebelled against the rebels – not only practically, by refusing to obey orders during the Irish Civil War, but also in his resolve in so doing. And fixity is indeed often the theme of both O'Connors' stories. When Ellmann says "hearts harden when they might be expected to soften"(x), he could be describing Flannery rather than Frank O'Connor. In Frank O'Connor's story "The Luceys," a father declines to take his brother's hand because of misplaced pride over his dead son. In "The Mad Lomasneys" a young woman who has lived by whim suddenly faces irreversible desolation because an impulse has gone wrong. And, as in Flannery O'Connor's stories, not all fixities are annulled. Both authors, after all, could understand the virtues of stubbornness. In "The Masculine Principle," a suitor sticks to his intention of marrying his girl only when he has

saved two hundred pounds. Years pass in the process, and he comes near to losing her altogether. In the end though, his stubbornness is respected and rewarded.

The two O'Connors inherit histories of violence, both locations have experienced bitter Civil Wars and their stories investigate how a young boy with an oedipal complex, a first confession, a woman gored by a bull, a Bible salesman stealing a girl's artificial leg, become universal events though they often occur in small, seemingly insignificant locations. As the Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh states in "Epic," "Gods make their own importance," and so it would seem in the case of the characters that inhabit the "South" as an imaginative focus in the fiction of both O'Connors (Kavanagh 136).

Chapter Three:

Loyalties of Place, Habit of Place: The Irish South and the American South in the work of the O'Connors

> To write – as to read – is to enter a sort of exile from the world around us.[1]
> Declan Kiberd

Entering Exile Twice: Processes of exile for writers of the American South and Ireland

Both southern Ireland and the American South have experienced intense and sustained periods of emigration but, in the case of Ireland in particular, the real experience of exile seems to extend to the country's writers in a profound and particular way. Declan Kiberd examines this phenomenon in The Irish Writer and The World, maintaining that "to go into exile from the world around us may well be a signal to write." Yet this exile is only one part of the process for the Irish writer: "[i]t is almost as if Irish writers found that they had to go out into the world in order to discover who exactly they were" (1). Therefore, Irish writers are subjected to a double exile – not only through the act of writing but also by the very fact of their Irishness. Kiberd's explanation for this dual separation relates to the fact that the Irish, like Southerners, have been "defined, derided and decided by others," (1) particularly the English, an attitude that is formulated by their fear of the "other", leading to what Kiberd describes as "perpetual image-making" on both sides (2).

These binary forms of displacement seem to solidify and manifest themselves in the genre of the short story: "[o]f all literary forms, the short story seems to tap most fully into the energies unleashed by fusing the oral tradition of tale-telling with the writerly virtues of English narrative" (Kiberd 4). It is the form

[1] The Irish Writer and The World (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005) 1. This relates to the opening line of Kiberd's Introduction.

which emerges from the collision between British and Irish cultural relations. The Irish short story offers a third fictional space, a new geoliterary landscape. Kiberd argues that so-called classic Irish novels, such as Gulliver's Travels, Castle Rackrent, Ulysses, and At Swim-Two-Birds are really collections of what he terms "micro-narratives" and mark, along with many others, a significant and continuous persistence of the short story as the "base-narrative" of Irish literary works, regardless of genre (4). The short story seems to provide a home for these Irish writers, a base from which to jump off and explore other literary genres, but from which they find it difficult to escape – an experience shared by their conflicted attachment to/detachment from their native country.

In his preface to South To A New Place: Region, Literature, Culture (2002), Richard Gray quotes Raymond Williams's comment that "The life and people of certain favoured regions are seen as essentially general, even perhaps normal, while the life and people of certain other regions are, well, regional" (xiii). Gray maintains that regionalism of this nature can be viewed as an indicator of a centralised cultural dominance and in this context, the American South has struggled with the widely held opinion that the writing of this place is distinctly regional, a "writing somewhere of and from the periphery" (xiv). This allegedly marginal status only serves to intensify the Southern attachment to the land, a situation echoed in its literature; Flannery O'Connor's characters are perpetually reclaiming, protecting or endeavouring to retain their Southern soil, and this instinct, as Gray outlines, "has always been taken as a determining feature of what it means to be southern" (xv). However, this regional self-identification and defensiveness must eventually give rise to an awareness of pluralism. Within this comparative paradigm we can see how Ireland's sense of exceptionalism, as expressed in its hunger for land, is not exclusively "Irish" at all. One need only

look at Frank O'Connor's stories, like "The Long Road to Ummera," for instances of Ireland's intense relationship to the land, not to mention dramatic representations like John B. Keane's The Field or poetic ones like Patrick Kavanagh's "Epic". This othering, in both southern Ireland and the American South, ensured that those who inhabited these locations closed the borders to those who objectified them, and as a result, their literature flourished in a fictive vacuum, seeming, to the untrained eye, only to teeter on the edge of urbanisation, expansion and modernity.

Indeed, in The Short Story (1951), Seán O'Faoláin remarks that "the Americans and Irish do seem to write better stories" (43). He explains that these countries were drawn to the form because the short story is "an emphatically personal exposition" and that it flourished in both the United States and Ireland because of the "unconventional" nature of these two locations (44). Kiberd takes this argument further by insinuating that the short story has prospered in those countries where a lively oral tradition is abruptly confronted by the arrival of a more sophisticated literary practice. The short story, he says, "is the natural result of a fusion between the ancient form of the folk tale and the preoccupations of modern literature" (42). In fact, Kiberd, uses the examples of O'Faoláin and Frank O'Connor to highlight how the genre has been championed by what he terms the "risen people" – the Catholic bourgeoisie based in regional Irish towns (43).

O'Connor and O'Faoláin were ideally placed on the fault line between, on one hand, the world of contemporary literature accessed easily through Cork City Library, and on the other the world of the folk tale, still alive in the city's rural hinterland. So the short story, as a consequence, reflected Ireland's own struggle as it moved towards modernity. Thus, the short story is, as Frank O'Connor maintains, ideally suited to this society in which revolutionary turmoil has

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> as she said of Joyce's Catholicism, 'can't get rid of it no matter what he does.' (90)

O'Connor claims that she is "concerned with the religious individual, the backwoods prophet" (Saturday Review 22).[10] Here we see a very real correspondence with Joyce; his characters too are haunted by a remembered religion and region: "They walk the streets of Dublin at once casting away their beliefs only to reach out in moments of agony to find them again, and with them moments of vision Joyce called epiphanies" (90).

Atlanta as an urban "mistake" for O'Connor is mirrored by Joyce's attitude towards Dublin. Their fictional plunges into the South and Dublin respectively highlight a search for self as well as for God in a setting which was both hostile and alien yet simultaneously provided inspiration and created memories. Though O'Connor maintained she was not an alienated writer, "all deeply modern writers are at some times alienated not only from places but from time itself" (Spivey 91). This alienation was symbolised for both Joyce and O'Connor by the modern city, an urban sprawl freed from earlier centres of cultural development upon which they had once been based. Indeed, as Spivey outlines, O'Connor, as influenced by Joyce, holds both of her cities, Savannah and Atlanta, in tension with her modernist vision along with the image of a decaying rural South.

It would appear that Joyce and O'Connor, and indeed Frank O'Connor, are inextricably bound to their origins; Joyce's Dublin, Flannery O'Connor's Georgia and Frank O'Connor's Cork are the centres of their universes. Flannery O'Connor's location within debates relating to the South, America and Ireland are as troubling as they are enlightening. O'Connor does predominantly choose the medium of the short story to express her stance, albeit with Protestant characters

[10] Granville Hicks, "A Writer at Home with Her Heritage," (Saturday Review XVL May 13, 1962).

that she seems to regard with a certain modicum of sympathy. Yet, for many critics, scholars and readers the short story remains a minor form, and in a Southern context this is complicated by it being seen as representing a minor region. This is in antithesis to the way in which, in full acknowledgement of how their respective locations were viewed, culturally as well as politically, Frank O'Connor and Flannery O'Connor moved beyond restrictive and reductive paradigms and used the allegedly minor keys to create a major and transnational concerto – the music of which is still heard all over the world. Joyce said: "I can always write about Dublin, because if I can get to the heart of Dublin I can get to the heart of all cities of the world. In the particular is contained the universal" (Magalaner 19).

Chapter Four:

Telling Transnational Tales: Minor Literature and the Religious Imagination

The Short Story: A Minor Literature?

> When I was taking up literature as a career I told Osborn Bergin and he asked "What are you going to write?" I said "Novels." Bergin shook his head. "There isn't a novel in this country." "Short stories, so," I said. "You might get some short stories out if it."
> Frank O'Connor. [1]

> First of all (I would say), my young friend, you should choose a truly American subject. All the critics say that this is essential. Americanism is what the age demands; and it must be produced even if we have to invent a machine to do it. Do not go abroad for your theme. Do not trifle with the effete European nightingale or ramble among Roman ruins. Take a theme from the great Republic; something that comes close to the business and bosoms of the Democracy; something unconventional and virile.
> Henry Van Dyke.[2]

Peter Prescott, in his introduction to the Norton Book of American Short Stories (1988), writes that the short story is "ours," meaning it is a purely American art form. Similarly, A. Robert Lee attests that the short story has been viewed, studied, read and written as "if not uniquely then most markedly American," even in the twenty-first century (7). This nationalist claim seems to have weathered and survived even the most vitriolic objections, and often has seemed to incorporate them. In The Culture and Commerce of the American Short Story, Andrew Levy maintains that,

> the most interesting aspect of the nationalist claim is how it has limited short story criticism to an expressive but strangely restricted debate over whether or not (and how) the short story has performed the one function

[1] Reader 308.

[2] From an address delivered before the Periodical Publishers' Association of America, Washington, D.C., April 17, 1904 (qtd. in Esenwein Writing the Short Story 41).

> for which it was apparently designed: to advertise American life, and to advertise a particular set of assumptions about Americans in general. (29)

Levy surmises that the nationalist claim has inhibited real discussion concerning the nature of the short story and authorised a national rhetoric that has spilled into anthologies, magazines, workshops and graduate programmes in the United States, and indeed elsewhere. Levy's book was published in 1993, but at the same time, critics and short story writers including Richard Ford, were questioning the validity of this exceptionalist approach to short story theory. Ford begins his Introduction to The Granta Book of the American Short Story (1992) by referring to a remark made by Frank O'Connor. He says:

> I've always supposed that Frank O'Connor, the great and beloved Irish short story writer, was only taunting us back in 1962 – the year I wrote *my* first short story – when he said that we Americans have handled the short story so wonderfully, one could say that it is our national art form. (vii)

He goes on "Why, I've thought, would as good a story writer as there ever was from a country where the short story was already the national art form decide to cut us in unless it was to make fun with fulsome praise." And while it is almost certain that O'Connor wasn't "mak[ing] fun," what is clear is that there appears to be little discernible difference between what Ford terms the "moods, hues, tones, effects, forms and narrative strategies" in the Irish and American models, except perhaps in relation to "place names" (vii).

Yet simultaneously, as Levy outlines, a belief in the short story's flexibility in accommodating otherwise unpublishable voices has proven to be highly durable (42). In their anthology American Short Stories (1990), Eugene Current-García and Bert Hitchcock assert that the abundance of "regional, ethnic, or gender-

based" voices within the short story in America had created among its readers a new awareness of "non-highbrow/non-literary establishment kinds of writing" (659). It is certainly true that the short story has been closely linked with literary movements such as regionalism, local colour and dialect fiction, which attempted to bring previously disenfranchised communities in touch with the crucial mechanism of publication and canonisation (Levy 42). However, by the mid-to-late twentieth century many commentators suggested that the brevity of the short story meant that it was fundamentally more suited to documenting a distinct, heterogeneous culture of equal voices – "Poe's emphasis on "unity" turned inside out" (42).

This is precisely what Seán O'Faoláin in his 1948 study, The Short Story, wanted his "The Art of Writing" students at the London County Council Evening Institute to explore. He recounts the story of a particular young man who wrote "nothing about [the] kind of life" he knew. The man tries to defend himself by exclaiming:

> But I work in a bank! I got there every morning at nine and leave it at five, and return to my lodgings and, perhaps, go to a cinema, or play squash, and so to bed. It's all very well to talk to me about Coppard. He lives in Hertfordshire or some such place. He is continually meeting quaint characters, villagers and game-keepers, or in and out of the Blue Boar where they tell tall stories. What experience have I to tell? (14)

O'Faoláin laments the youth's lack of self-awareness and blindness to the multiplicity of creative possibilities presented to him by his own place. William Carlos Williams also recognises the possibilities of the short story in this regard in A Beginning on the Short Story (1950), where he maintains that he chose to compose a short story because the genre fitted his topic so well: he wanted to write

about poverty, "its brokenness and heterogeneity – isolation, color" (11). Williams as an experimental modernist writer appears to have regarded the short story as an intrinsically modernist form. Though this could be seen to run counter to O'Connor and O'Faoláin, Williams shares the notion that the form so effectively contains concepts of isolation and loneliness. This brings us back to Frank O'Connor's "submerged population groups" and his discussion of Gogol's "The Overcoat" and, indeed, also recalls Ruth Suckow's statement that the short story was the genre best suited to reproduce the heterogeneity of the American melting pot:

> It was chaos, the unevenness, the diversity of American life that made short stories such a natural artistic experience…roving, unsettled, restless, unassimilated, here and gone again – a chaos so huge, a life so varied and so multitudinous that its meaning could be caught only in will-o-the-wisp gleams…It was the first eager, hasty way of snatching little treasures of art from the great abundance of unused, uncomprehended material. (318)

This propensity of the short story to represent authentically the "unsettled" nature of existence puts it in a suggestive position in relation to issues of transnationality. The form and situation of the genre itself, as well as its theoretical dimensions, seem to echo those of the Southern story. Yet it is also apparent that discussions relating to the short story often assume that an individual story from any given time obtains its conventions and its potential from other stories, for example the manner in which writers of the Southern Gothic tradition are considered to be disciples of Faulkner. And while this is accurate to a degree, it is also the case that for all its economy and singleness of purpose, the short story is remarkably diverse and widely derivative, drawing its inspiration from all aspects of general culture that have no obvious connection with it.

However, as Mary Rohrberger attests in her essay "The Question of Regionalism: Limitation and Transcendence," "critics and scholars need to categorize, to arrange like alongside of like, and thus bring into control unruly, because numerous, fictional pieces that may or may not easily lend themselves to matched groupings" (Stevick 147). So the very situation the short story is purported to encapsulate, the "roving" and "unsettled" nature of experience, problematises definition. It appears that the very act of attempting to classify the genre creates further confusion and debate. Suckow argues that "we entertain the fallacy that America is the land of the short story, without too much dangerous inquiry into the possibility of its being the land of the definition of the short story" (317) and "if America continues to be the land of the Short Story, it will ultimately lose its short stories" (318). The short story, then, serves as an artefact of sorts, or its collection provides a means by which to scrapbook the past, reorder and contain it.

If the American South needed to rewrite its past, then the Irish were no less preoccupied with their disenfranchised history. In The Backward Look (1967), his work of translation and treatise on the state of Irish literature in English, Frank O'Connor laments that "no nation in the world is so divorced from its own past as Ireland" (151). He maintains that the nineteenth century obliterated "every mark of cultural identity," leaving almost irreparable historical gaps, ones which short stories often seemed to fill (1). Indeed, this alienation from the past leads to obsession and destruction in equal measure. O'Connor considered it reprehensible, for example, that in spite of the rhetoric of the government at the time about the Irish language, "thousands of students pass through our universities each year with less knowledge of their own culture than one would expect to find among American students" (1), not to mention the eventual demolition of sites of

historical and cultural significance to the country, like Bowen's Court in Co. Cork and Coole Park in Co. Galway.

Kiberd discusses O'Connor's linguistic conflict, and in an Irish context, compares it to the experience of James Joyce's Stephen Dedalus in that "the words *home*, *Christ*, *ale* and *master* sound very differently on an Englishman's lips and on his own" (Introduction to An Only Child x). He refers to O'Connor's acknowledgement of the difficulty in writing in the language of the oppressor or coloniser, "his language, so familiar and so foreign, will always be for me an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words. My voice holds them at bay" (A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man 145).

John A. Murphy in his The College: A History of Queen's/University College Cork 1845-1995 credits Corkery as being "a seminal ideological and literary influence in Ireland" (232). Daniel Corkery was a teacher, writer, dramatist, artist, and critic, whose views on Irish culture were to have a profound impact on his followers. As a primary school teacher he inspired students including Frank O'Connor and sculptor Seamus Murphy with his eclectic cultural vision. The Hidden Ireland (1924), a highly influential work about the riches of eighteenth-century Irish poetry, attempted to reconstruct a worldview preserved by Gaelic poets amongst the poor and oppressed Catholic peasantry of the Penal Laws era, virtually invisible in the Anglo-Irish tradition that had appeared to dominate the writing of Irish history. Corkery's reputation has dipped in recent years due to his association with "Irish Ireland" and a seemingly dogmatic, nationalist viewpoint.

Corkery complained in a famous passage that a colonial education created a variance between intellect and emotion in children, between what they read and the world they lived in, so that under its distorting influence, their own immediate environs increasingly seemed "unvital, second-rate, derivative" (Kiberd x). This

situation would be acknowledged and reported by many other writers coming from a colonised background, "whether in a poem by Derek Walcott about growing up in St Lucia or an essay by V. S. Naipaul about reading the English literary canon on Trinidad" (Kiberd x).

The transnational model, however, provides a space in which to explore these dilemmas, as well as casting a new light on specific writers whose work has been interpreted in as closed and as paralysed a manner as has the genre itself. This approach proves challenging, but ultimately allows for a re-examination of the genre as something more than a regional or minor form. Regionalism, like nationalism, while a progressive and even a necessary political movement at one stage in history, tends at a later stage to become entirely reactionary, both by way of its obsession with a deliberately exclusive concept of racial identity and, more significantly, by virtue of its formal identity with imperial ideology (Lloyd Nationalism and Minor Literature x). Therefore, adopting regionalism as a means of reading the short story is often a counter-productive methodology.

To this end, it is useful to employ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature (1986). In her foreword to the edition Réda Bensmaïa quotes from Michel de Certeau's L'Ecriture de l'histoire:

> Writing is born from and deals with the acknowledged doubt of an explicit division, in sum, of the impossibility of one's own place. It articulates an act that is constantly a beginning: the subject is *never authorised* by a place, it could never install itself in an inalterable cogito, it remains a stranger to itself and forever deprived of an ontological ground, and therefore it always comes up short or is in excess, always the debtor of a death, indebted with respect to the disappearance of a genealogical and territorial "substance," linked to a name that cannot be owned. (327)

In many respects this could be seen to echo Hazel Motes' manifesto of the internal exile. Writing, as a possible expression of internal exile, acknowledges that its subject comes from "no place" (90) and, as such, this subject remains alienated from its location, a site it cannot possess, or be possessed by. Within this framework, language can be manipulated according to the requirements of the internal exile. Often times, language is the only means of expression available to such a figure. Deleuze and Guattari introduce the hypothesis of a "minor literature" – employing a major language and subverting it from within – as "[a] minor literature does not come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language" (16). They allege that Kafka, writing as a Jew in Prague, made German "take flight on a line of escape" and gladly became a stranger within it (26). They conclude that his work therefore acts as an exemplar for comprehending all critical language that must function within the margins of the dominant language and culture. Yet for Deleuze and Guattari literature, and especially minor literature, cannot be a sanctuary, rather they see such writing as essentially political in nature, and intimately entwined with issues relating to language and power.

Conflict arises between conceptual specificity and universality, regionalism and transnationalism which are intricately bound up with language, identity and versions of minor literature. In his essay "Mapping Identities," Timothy J. Reiss refers to Seamus Deane's introduction to Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature and in particular points out that Deane, like many other theorists, rebuffs any perspective that claims a precise art as universal. It is a,

> specific activity indeed, but one in which the whole history of a culture is deeply inscribed. The interpretation of culture is so predicated on the notion that there is some universal quality or essence that culture alone can

> successfully pursue and capture. That is itself a political idea that has played a crucial role in Irish experience. (qtd. in Prendergast 7)

He discusses how these universalist claims let one national culture inflict itself on another, with the imposed culture inescapably imitating the other (7-8). Edward Said, in the same collection, maintains that the first step is consequently to reclaim a language of culture. This procedure is a shared one; however, it is lived and experienced in individual cases and "often begins with the demolition of the false stereotypes within which it has been entrapped. This is an intricate process, since the stereotypes are successful precisely because they have been interiorised" (12). It is this interiorisation process which is particularly relevant to the short story as a form of transnational engagement. This interiorisation of stereotypes is something with which the O'Connors were familiar and is a crucial aspect of their work, with religion providing the catalyst for their exploration of inner exile, its language an embodiment of minor literature.

The Irish were, to use Deleuze and Guattari's paradigm, a minority constructing a language within their own country as a result of colonialism. Within America, the Irish minority also created alternative forms of communication, attributable to mass immigration. In an open letter to United Ireland (14 May 1892), Yeats remarked, "Ireland is between the upper and the nether millstone – between the influence of America and the influence of England, and which of the two is denationalising us most rapidly it is hard to say" (qtd. in Paulin 157). This reveals the difficulty in preventing an exceptionalist stance in the wake of previous colonisation. In The Irish Writer and the World, Kiberd states, "[i]t is well known that colonialism always makes it subjects seem theatrical so that even their gestures of revolt seem 'literary' rather than 'real'" (170). The Irish define themselves by what they are not, in this case, English: "Irish people were so busy being not-

English that they had scarcely time to think of what it might mean to be Irish" (171). This is "knee-jerk nationalism," once again bringing us back to the difficulties faced by those cultures which have been, for all intents and purposes, subsumed and colonised.

In "Irish America," John V. Kelleher also outlines the difficulties faced when one is both inside and outside a particular culture, in this case Irish culture:

> There are a lot of Irish shorts stories or novels about which I used to congratulate myself that I knew exactly what they meant, because I too was "Irish." I felt quite familiar with Ireland, before I saw Ireland. It was an illusion, of course, produced by the fact that I had heard stories at home in the same manner and the same dialect. What I forgot was that I had heard the stories third hand, from my father or mother, who had them from older people. (130)

The Irish of Kelleher's generation held onto their stories as though they were, in some way, a blueprint for understanding the peculiarities of the race and a means by which to teach "Irishness" to their offspring. This difficulty, then, of inhabiting one space while learning the stories of another did not produce, as might be expected, an understanding of concepts of transnationality, but rather engendered in those to whom the stories were told a sense that they knew "exactly what they meant." This, it could be argued, is a form of inverted exceptionality, yet also a tactic of a minority within a larger system. It was a way perhaps of reclaiming language and therefore of reclaiming power. Kelleher goes on:

> The stories – they were very like some of Frank O'Connor's in Bones of Contention – dated back to the 1860s or 1870s, when you could go from Cork City to any New England mill town without noticing the difference, if you squinched your eyes a bit and ignored the Yankees and the climate and

> anything that happened outside the "Patch." The town I was born in probably had the heaviest concentration of Cork and Kerry Irish in America, though by no means the largest. From the outside it might have seemed a cosmopolitan city – fifty-three languages were recorded there in the 1920 census – but you know the Irish won't tolerate cosmopolitanism, and the Irish ran this place. (130)

There was, in this example, a very real attempt to try to maintain the alleged integrity of Irish identity. Though New England is often referred to as a "melting pot", in reality the area was carved out between different emigrants, each with their own stories to tell. The onus fell on these stories to provide a link to the homeland – creating a third space – which could act as either a point of interconnectivity or exceptionality, transnationality or nativism. Martin Scofield maintains that:

> The short story is perhaps the exemplary form of the perception of crisis, crux, turning point; and as such it has proved ideal for recording decisive moments, intimately private but often with broad social resonances, in the swift development of the psyche of post-independence America. (238)

For Deleuze and Guattari the characterising elements of a "minor" literature include the deterritorialisations of a major language through a minor literature written in the major language from a marginalised position. The short story provides a voice for disenfranchised communities within America, and indeed a defiant voice within Ireland, precisely by assuming the language of the majority. Frank O'Connor reclaims Ireland's past, studying Irish in order to translate ancient Irish poems into English, deciphering the quashed minority language and creating minor literature in a major language, recovering and repossessing the past. Yet when discussing the first element of a "minor literature," Deleuze and Guattari explain that it does not arise from a literature written in a 'minor' language, or in a

formerly colonised "langue". Rather, a "minor literature" is written in a major language, or as in the case of formerly colonised countries, the colonisers' "langue." According to Deleuze and Guattari, "the first characteristic of a minor literature in any case is that in it language is affected with a high coefficient of deterritorialisation" (16).

The individual is inextricable from the society, the subject linked to the political: "its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating in it" (17). They explain the inextricability of the political and the collective: what each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political, even if others are not in agreement. But above all else, because collective or national consciousness is "often inactive in external life and always in the process of break-down," literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of the collective and even revolutionary, enunciation (17).

A Fragmented Minor Consciousness: The Short Story and Religion

Declan Kiberd and John V. Kelleher's observations provide a means by which we can approach the Southern short story as a form of "minor literature." Kiberd investigates the glosses of cultural memory, arguing convincingly that Ireland is England's unconscious, and that each culture defines itself in terms of the other.[3] Ireland's adoption of the English language, then, and its co-option as a means of insurgence makes way for the adoption of the short story as a significant "minor" form. In the American South too, exiles, or indeed descendants of exiles,

[3] See Angela Ryan, "Memetics, metatranslation and cultural memory: the literary imaginaries of Irish identity" (Michael Cronin and Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin. The Languages of Ireland Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003).

have the liberty of using English in different ways, placing the individual and the community in conversation. In his 2003 essay "The Celtic Tiger – a cultural history" Kiberd refers to Oscar Wilde's remark that the only way to intensify personality is to multiply it.[4] He alludes to Wilde in the context of Charles Stewart Parnell's "proclaiming the link between the ideal of a pluralist nation on the one hand and the expressive potential of the individual on the other" (269). This is applicable to a discussion of the characters in the short stories of both Flannery O'Connor and Frank O'Connor, particularly their employment of priests, preachers and "freaks." These figures are indeed "multiplied" by the O'Connors, often combining isolation with belonging, religion with rebellion.

This echoes Kelleher's experience as for Kelleher "Irishness," and his learned understanding of what that might encompass, is not formulated by being in Ireland, rather it comes about through the experience of exile. It goes beyond territory or indeed extends it by claiming parts of New England as Irish, just as Frank O'Connor claimed St. Paul's Church on Broadway as part of that nation in "A Walk in New York." Indeed, Joyce wrote most of his major texts in European exile, yet every one of them describes his native Dublin, which proved, to his satisfaction at any rate, "that there is more than one way in which to live a national life"(Kiberd The Irish Writer and the World 313).

In an entirely different context, Nadine Gordimer also asserts that the short story is perfectly placed as a literary form to express the restless, uprooted and fragmented consciousness of modern men and women. She has said that writers "see by the light of the flash; theirs is the art of the only thing we can be sure of – the present moment" (264). This "present moment," as expressed by the O'Connors, has much to do with the possibilities offered by the "submerged

[4] Also quoted by Richard Ellmann, ed., Oscar Wilde: The Artist as Critic (London, 1970) 234.

population," which is at once bound by the past, while still inexorably existing in the extreme present. In his chapter on Joyce, "Work in Progress," Frank O'Connor outlines the deterioration of autonomy in Joyce's "submerged" population, "no longer being submerged by circumstances but by Joyce's own irony" (Reader 81). He argues that Joyce begins to exclude certain material from his short stories and, in so doing, makes a mistake that is, according to O'Connor, fatal for the short story writer. He has robbed the characters of their autonomy. O'Connor takes an example of "Ivy Day in the Committee Room" to argue that a story like this is different in kind, even anathema to, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man:

> In the Christmas Day scene in that book we have the subject of "Ivy Day" but treated with almost hysterical violence; and it is as impossible to imagine transferring "Ivy Day" to that context as it is to imagine Dubliners with the Christmas Day scene in place of "Ivy Day in the Committee Room." (120)

Both Frank O'Connor and Flannery O'Connor make their submerged populations to express themselves in bizarre and often humorous ways. This is partly, as Frank O'Connor argues, what makes them a submerged population in the first instance (79). They should have, Frank O'Connor states, "skill and wisdom of their own" (80). In "The Dead," according to Frank O'Connor, Joyce creates personalities rather than characters and thus loses sight of the submerged population that was his original subject. Joyce, like Frank O'Connor, renounced the Catholic faith, yet his writings frequently refer to the rich tradition of the Church. Joyce, too, compares the artist and the writer to the priest, as both perform certain social and aesthetic functions. In her two novellas, The Violent Bear It Away and Wise Blood, Flannery O'Connor, a devout and practising

Catholic, expresses sympathy with her peculiar and often prophetic characters. As a Southern Catholic artist, healing spiritual division seems to be the very basis of her vocation.

So for the O'Connors place and religion are inexorably intertwined, as de Certeau outlines, with writing. This enables a confrontation with these states to occur, permitting the author to explore the possibilities of "a name that cannot be owned" (Deleuze and Guattari 6). Religion here could be seen to mirror, or indeed to replace, politics. O'Connor, an Irish-American, was technically writing in a minority "language" given that she writes predominantly about Protestants, though she is a member of a minority religion, and in what many consider a minor genre, that of the short story. In her collection of essays, Mystery and Manners, O'Connor writes, "Christ didn't redeem us by a direct intellectual act, but became incarnate in human form" (176). The fiction writer's main concern, she asserts, is with such mystery as it is incarnated in human life: "The fiction writer represents mystery through manners, grace through nature" (153). Joyce called some of his early sketches and the stories gathered in Dubliners epiphanies; Flannery O'Connor's short fiction, too, is centred on a sudden manifestation of essence or meaning. Her characters often gain a unique perception of reality by means of a sudden intuitive realisation. Yet epiphanies, as these writers show us, can be dangerous, dramatic and often demand significant sacrifice, as in Frank O'Connor's "Guests of the Nation" when "anything that ever happened me after I never felt the same about again" (CS 12).

Flannery O'Connor's Faith and "the impossibility of one's own place"[5]

> The notion, with so much that has been written about [O'Connor] and her work assumes – that the author of these novels and stories was a detached, dispassionate Roman Catholic observer set down in an exotic and alien Middle Georgia wilderness and left to proclaim certain strange affinities with the native Protestants – is a dangerous one for criticism to adopt. She was a Middle Georgian, too, as well as a Catholic communicant, and more than that, she was a modern Southern writer, and a great many other things besides.
> Louis D. Rubin Jr [6]

At the 1977 Flannery O'Connor Symposium, Louis D. Rubin Jr. lamented the prevalence of theological readings of O'Connor's work and professed that her fiction should not be flattened to fit such restrictive methodologies. An essay outlining this position appeared some months later in the Flannery O'Connor Bulletin. Ed Piacentino in The Enduring Legacy of Old Southwest Humor (2006) maintains that this approach remains pertinent to criticism on O'Connor, whose opus "is still violated by those who comb the narratives in search of spiritual guidance" (73). Piacentino asserts that theological scholars ignore O'Connor's artistry and are party to critical reductionism, not paying due attention to hyperbole, irony, timing and use of the vernacular. Yet an examination of her use of religion, pursued in an objective and non-exceptionalist manner, has much to offer in discussions relating to O'Connor's transnational possibilities by locating it as a means by which O'Connor utilises the short story as minor literature.

Many of O'Connor's stories concern Protestant characters, ministers or preachers, engaged in or victims of extreme actions, often leading to moments of pure grace. O'Connor, as outlined, adopted this majority religion but dressed it shrewdly in the draperies of Catholicism. A few of O'Connor's stories include Catholics, most particularly "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" which concerns two girls, Susan and Joanne, who are on a weekend trip from their high school, Mount

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[5] Michel de Certeau, L'Ecriture de l'histoire (qtd. in Kafka : Towards a Minor Literature) 6.

[6] "Flannery O'Connor's Company of Southerners: Or, "The Artificial Nigger" Read as Fiction Rather than Theology" (Flannery O'Connor Bulletin 6 1977) 47-71.

Saint Scholastica. The narrator, a young girl, ponders happily the title phrase, while slightly older girls Susan and Joanne ridicule the tiresome lecturing of an old nun at the academy. Throughout the story objects have religious associations; the sun is "a huge red ball like an elevated Host drenched in blood" (CS 248). It is an initiation tale of sorts, the stream-of-consciousness of a child who appears to be striving after a life of grace, caught at the moment between childhood and adolescence, a lonely and transitory place, a waiting room for the body.

Two of O'Connor's stories also include priests, "The Enduring Chill" and "The Displaced Person." In the former, there are two priests, the intellectual Father Vogle and the pompous Father Flynn who scolds Ashbury Fox, a non-Catholic, for not saying his prayers and knowing his catechism after Ashbury has summoned him, on an impulse, to his supposed deathbed. In spite of the manner in which the Jesuit Fathers attack Ashbury's arrogance this does, in turn, prepare the way for grace and makes closure possible, both literally and figuratively.

In "The Displaced Person" Father Flynn is described: "He was a long-legged black-suited old man with a white hat on and a collar that he wore backwards, which, Mrs. Shortley knew, was what priests did who wanted to be known as priests" (CS 195). For Mrs. Shortley, religion is indeed necessary only for people who, unlike herself, do not have the gumption to avoid evil without it. Mrs. May, much like Mrs. Shortley, is "a good Christian woman with a large respect for religion, though she did not, of course, believe any of it was true" (203). O'Connor speaks through the language of Protestantism both to deconstruct Catholicism and its shortcomings and to illuminate what she, as a Southern Catholic in the minority, sees as the hypocrisy of Southern religion in general.

In her work, Flannery O'Connor discusses religion (as do her characters) and the South. These elements for O'Connor are not mutually exclusive. Flannery

O'Connor deliberated her roles of Catholic and fiction writer, and her written reflections on the matter reveal that she had developed a literary philosophy dedicated to reconciling the two, to "prove the truth of the Faith" (145-46). In her book Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism (1993), Jenny Franchot maintains that "anti-Catholicism operated as an imaginative category of discourse through which antebellum American writers of popular and elite fictional and historical texts indirectly voiced the tensions and limitations of mainstream Protestant culture" (xvii). O'Connor understands the South and reproduces it so accurately because she maintains a critical distance; principally, it could be argued, because she is Roman Catholic. Catholicism, however, gave O'Connor a way to investigate these contradictions and emerge with a vision of completeness.

Tate goes on to argue that Southerners "vacillate between self-destroying naturalism and practicality, on one hand, and a self-destroying mysticism on the other" (163). This dichotomy is explored in this oscillation between rationality and irrationality, earth and heaven. Motes, in Wise Blood, blinds himself physically in order to achieve mystical insight. In The Violent Bear It Away, Tarwater murders Bishop in order to free the child, and to ensure his place in the afterlife. The same is true of Sarah Ruth in "Parker's Back" who articulates her Manichaean feelings about God most acerbically when she declares, "He's a spirit. No man shall see his face" (CS 674). In the story, O'Connor parallels Sarah Ruth's failure to acknowledge the divine presence in creation with her failure to observe her own husband in any kind of human terms.

Flannery O'Connor asserted, "I doubtless hate pious language worse than you because I believe the realities it hides" (HB 227). Beneath the "rationality" of the South there lies the "irrationality" of faith and beneath that the "rationality" of

belief. In Allen Tate and the Catholic Revival, James Huff reveals that Tate's agenda of cultural criticism was not stationary, but evolved from one form of religious criticism to another, arriving ultimately at the Catholicism of the international Catholic Revival. Huff outlines how Tate found Southern fundamentalism lacking, turning to the Catholic Revival as a more suitable link between the Southern agrarian imperative and a larger and more enduring past. By 1930, under the influence of G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, the leaders of the English Catholic Land Movement called "Distributism," Tate was objecting to what he perceived to be the restrictiveness of the Southern Agrarian programme itself, and seriously undercutting that programme in his work by depicting the Old South as a "feudal society with a feudal religion," and the New South, by implication, as a land without a spiritual legacy.

Tate goes on to discuss Protestantism, Flannery O'Connor's primary subject or vessel of transmission. He states, "Its religious impulse was inarticulate simply because it tried to encompass its destiny within the terms of Protestantism in origin, a non-agrarian and trading religion; hardly a religion at all, but a result of secular ambition" (168). For her part, O'Connor commented that "I can write about Protestant believers better than Catholic believers – because they express their belief in diverse kinds of dramatic action which is obvious for me to catch. I can't write about anything subtle" (HB 26-7). This "dramatic action" provides her with distance between her Catholicism and the Protestantism of her characters, to tread new ground and endeavour to transcend the superficialities of sectarianism.

Andrew Greeley examines the notion of Catholic and Protestant imaginations in his book The Catholic Myth: The Behaviour and Beliefs of American Catholics (1990), arguing that these imaginations differ considerably:

> The Catholic "classics" assume a God who is present in the world, disclosing Himself in and through creation. The world and all its events, objects, and people tend to be somewhat like God. The Protestant classics, on the other hand, assume a God who is radically absent from the world, and who discloses (Himself) only on rare occasions (especially in Jesus Christ and Him crucified). (45)

This poses a difficulty in relation to O'Connor's work. She is a Catholic writer who admits to writing in the Protestant tradition. Protestant conventions better suits her literary sensibilities. Greeley defines the difference between the two imaginations in this way: "[T]he Catholic imagination is 'analogical' and the Protestant imagination is 'dialectical'" (45). In this context, the Catholic mind-set tends towards analogy, in that churches are filled with objects of the world like candles, flowers and oils, each signifying a deeper mystery of faith. According to the Catholic imagination, God lurks everywhere. It views creation as God in disguise. This is in marked contrast to the Protestant emphasis on biblical revelation as the primary source of God's truth. According to Protestant imagination, God is found only in the revelation of Jesus Christ. Therefore, in Andrew Greeley's view, Protestants are never at home on earth but are pilgrims on their way. Eleanor Heartney argues in the New Art Examiner that:

> The tension between Catholic and Protestant sensibilities…can be summed up as a conflict between the Catholic culture of the image and the Protestant culture of the word. Catholicism values sensual experience and visual images as essential tools for bringing the faithful to God. By contrast, American Protestants depend for their salvation almost exclusively on God's Word as revealed through the Holy Bible.

Flannery O'Connor's work appears to transcend such classifications. She maintains the sensual and vivid imagery that Catholicism has to offer, while deploying the Protestant domain of language. Her sensibilities and personal faith are profoundly Catholic, yet her means of expression is definitively Protestant. Clearly, O'Connor was attracted to the idea of pilgrimage, to that yearning for something significant and spiritual in life. This was obviously better expressed from a Protestant perspective, as it seems to encapsulate, in Greeley's opinion, the pursuit of the supernatural. Protestants are waiting for revelation and it is this sense of impatience, this restlessness, which pervades O'Connor's work. Her characters are the very embodiment of this tension, and could not exist if they were at one with the divinity of God's creation. This echoes the alienation from place experienced by O'Connor's characters. Her use of religion reflects her feelings of not quite belonging – a position faced by Frank O'Connor, too, and highlighted in stories such as "Guests of the Nation," "Uprooted," "The Long Road to Ummera." His is a minor literature elucidating a certain level of displacement and "the impossibility of one's own place," or, indeed, faith.

Flannery O'Connor delves into both traditions, taking what she needs from each, and in so doing generates a productive opposition which permeates her fiction and provides it with moral authority. She often remarked, however, on the difficulty of writing in a relatively secular world, in a world that is "unprepared and unwilling to see the meaning of life as [s]he sees it" (MM 181). T.S. Eliot, in his essay, "Religion and Literature," claims that not only literature, but literary criticism, too, should emanate from an ethical and theological viewpoint:

> What I do wish to affirm is that the whole of modern literature is corrupted by what I call Secularism, that it is simply unaware of, simply cannot

> understand the meaning of, the primacy of the super-natural over the natural life: of something which I assume to be our primary concern. (52)

Eliot believes that the greatness of literature cannot be determined exclusively by aesthetic principles. This distinction makes it possible for some, like John Crowe Ransom and Allen Tate, who have the moralist's fascination with the greatness of literature, to concentrate their critical explications on "solely literary standards" (44). Indeed, as a Catholic convert, Tate looked to Eliot as a model while O'Connor, it could be argued, is Eliot's literary ideal. She manages to unite religion and literature, creating a moral yet inherently subversive reality. Eliot writes: "Though we may read literature merely for pleasure, of "entertainment" or of "aesthetic enjoyment," this reading never affects simply a sort of special sense: it affects us as entire human beings; it affects our moral and religious existence" (103). O'Connor was intensely aware of this aspect of her fiction and refused to create work that could be defined solely in aesthetic terms.

The relationship between church and culture is symbiotic, and clearly fascinated both Flannery and Frank O'Connor. Flannery O'Connor, unable, as she admits herself, to write effectively about those of her own faith, used characters from other denominations to illustrate the difficulties of combining faith (the supernatural) with being from the South or, indeed anywhere (the physical or geographical). Eliot argues that "[fiction] is written for us by people who have no real belief in a supernatural order" (54). O'Connor, however, combines intellect and Christian morality to create a modern literature that is seemingly uncorrupted by secularism. In O'Connor's fiction, morality cannot exist without reality and vice versa. As a Christian, she maintains, "consciously certain standards and criteria of criticism over and above those applied by the rest of the world" (53).

Flannery O'Connor's fiction endeavours to show that religion communicates via experience to imagination and from imagination via stories to community. Faith is experience, imagination, stories, and, to some degree, the community that is built out of these. In The Jesus Myth (1971), Greeley argues that truth, according to faith, is not facts but stories, out of which experiences and imagination shape communities. This, it could be argued, is O'Connor's manifesto. She sees Protestantism as a dramatic faith in itself, which allows her to highlight the South's own spectacle of violence and conflict while permitting her, as a writer, to remain at a relative distance. Tate goes further in his discussion of religion in the South by claiming that "Southern politicians would merely quote scripture to defend slavery" (I'll Take My Stand 168). A conflict arises between reason (politics) and faith (religion). Here, both are engaged to endorse slavery, to justify abuse and violence. This, it could be argued, is itself a form of dogma, one of violence and abuse. Tate argues further that the South, as a region, never generated a suitable religion; consequently its social and economic structures mirrored religious formation and constructions. Southern society became a secular representation of religion.

According to Tate, the South's position was "self-sufficient and self-evident; it was European where the New England was self-conscious and colonial" (171). The South was, he contends, less complicated in that it identified with images loosely gathered from the past, comparable to a traditional European community responding to very simple stories with a moral. Early colonial literature, for example Washington Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," combined European folklore with ancient Native American myth. Paul Giles contends in American Catholic Arts and Fictions that significant about American writers in the nineteenth-century is the extent to which they seemed to

be obsessed with the Old World, "nearly every major American author reveals a compulsion to rewrite the story of escape from European bondage" (14). Edgar Allan Poe, often considered a Southern writer, recognised this and adopted a similar approach though by this time American literature (thanks to Irving and Brockden Brown amongst others) had allegories, parables and fables all of its own. These stories were, for the most part, Gothic and, as many critics maintain, this is the tradition in which Flannery O'Connor works.

There are several factors which add to the ambiguous status of American Gothic; there is no definitive time period and no specific group of authors. Even when authors such as Poe, or periods such as the twentieth-century Southern Renaissance are associated with the Gothic, they reveal the difficulty of defining the genre in national terms. Predominantly, Goddu argues, the Gothic is most recognisable as a regional form, "[i]dentified with Gothic doom and gloom, the American South serves as the nation's "other," becoming the repository for everything from which the nation wants to disassociate itself" (3-4). This Southern Gothic has served to define Flannery O'Connor, a definition with which she was uncomfortable, particularly as it contributed to the labelling of her work as regional. Moreover, as Franchot notes, there is abundant historical evidence that Catholicism functioned as the Other in nineteenth-century Protestant America. Flannery O'Connor, as a single, white, Southern, Catholic woman with a disability articulated her sense of otherness by assuming that which was the utmost other, questioning the subject in its own language, creating an outward looking dialogue internally.

America's national identity is seemingly undermined by the Gothic. Goddu maintains that the very notion of Gothicism upsets the ideal of America, and America, the modifying power, destabilises our understanding of the Gothic. If

this is the case, then surely O'Connor's work has been too narrowly defined. Yet if the gothic mode is viewed instead as a destabilising influence, it is possible to reinterpret it as anti-regional in an American context. In many respects, O'Connor's allegedly Gothic stories seem to move beyond nativism and exceptionalism to allow for discussions of place. Yet this is a problematic paradigm. Charles Brockden Brown asserted in his preface to Edgar Huntly (1799) "the field of investigation, opened to us by our own country, should differ essentially from those which exist in Europe" (3). American writers had to contend with assimilating colonial influence, Native American myth and their contemporary experience to create a seemingly distinctive and relevant American literature. Yet Brockden Brown's call for a different, distinctly American voice appears to be a forced expression of a rather artificial sense of nationality, particularly as he is manipulating the structures of the colonisers to make this point, creating a minor literature in the process.

Gothic literature, when imported to America and adopted by American authors, transformed and hence dislocated European models of the Gothic (Goddu 4). American Gothic succeeded in internalising the experience of a national identity crisis – a similar situation was faced by the O'Connors, who internalised their feelings of exile. They open up these internalised experiences to new investigation and interrogation which, in turn, serves to transform their fiction from the regional to the transnational in outlook and focus. As seemingly exceptionalist as early American Gothic works appear, by the time Poe wrote the majority of his short stories, America had become an aside to his internal struggles. In fact, America, as a country or often a concept, does not feature directly in many of his stories. William Carlos Williams suggests that Poe is "a genius intimately shaped by his locality and time" (In the American Grain 80), yet he is himself a

writer whose themes both derive from and transcend his own locality. Flannery O'Connor's situation is made the more complex because she is a Southerner and, as such, is aware of how the American South helped create writers such as Poe. O'Connor's work, I would contend, extends beyond the regional, though she deals predominantly with Southern issues and characters. This is reflected in her critical writings on the subject:

> I doubt if the texture of Southern life is any more grotesque than that of the rest of the nation, but it does seem evident that the Southern writer is particularly adept at recognising the grotesque; and to recognise the grotesque, you have to have some notion of what is not grotesque and why. (Everything That Rises Much Converge xxiii)[7]

It is clear that this position lends itself to conflict, that of writing about one's own experiences while ensuring that those experiences are also collective.

Furthermore, it is clear that O'Connor was influenced by poetry and in particular by poetic language. Poets such as Robert Lowell and Elizabeth Bishop claimed O'Connor as one of their own, as she seems to displace history and community as primary subjects for fiction. Additionally, she disparages social and economic forces; she chooses "to elevate poetic metaphor beyond its usual position in customary prose" (Kessler 11). O'Connor subverts conventional forms and it could be argued that, for her, the short story resembles a biblical parable. In a similar way to the manner in which she uses Protestantism and the South, O'Connor displaces poetic language, re-commissioning it unexpectedly in her stories. Her stories are a jigsaw of unpredictable combinations, familiar pieces placed together to form a peculiar and uncanny whole.

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[7] Introduction by Robert Fitzgerald, the quotation is from a talk at Notre Dame University, Spring 1957 given by Flannery O'Connor.

It becomes clear from reading the work of Flannery O'Connor that while the South itself is a culture and indeed a character in her work, the Church, it appears, is not. O'Connor empathises with those who are, perhaps due to their faith and idiosyncrasies, estranged from the South, yet conversely are precisely those who give it its identity and colour. In this respect, O'Connor's work is influenced by the local colour movement. The literature of this movement may be defined by the peculiarities of speech, quaint local customs, distinctive modes of thought and stories about human nature which it contained. It was often, and problematically, considered to be a woman's mode and therefore deemed by commentators less "worthy" than more "literary" texts. The South, having an abundance of all these qualities in the popular American mind, spawned a new generation of writers. Often, as these stories were written primarily for the marketplace, they fed popular stereotypes, and thus popular misconceptions were propagated.

American audiences relished stories about Southern life before the War, so much so that some Southern writers began a movement to reject that heritage for the concept of a New South that would be industrialised, modernised, and adapted to the larger pattern of American economic and social development. At the turn of the century, however, authors such as Mary Johnston, Ellen Glasgow and James Branch Cabell created an ironic, disguised commentary on the manners and mores of the South as it was. O'Connor, in many respects, combines the frankness and realism of frontier humour with the more humorous qualities of the local colour movement. Rather than emulating either, she parodies and subverts these forms, co-opting them and adapting them to move beyond the restrictive possibilities of nativist art forms. She rejects the often cartoonish representations of the South and replaces these with even more exaggerated and disturbing figures to highlight

the inadequacy of these portrayals. Like those in the local colour movement, she creates an odd and often quirky environment for her characters, which serves to counteract the inadequacies of previous depictions. She creates a South that defies categorisation.

In Wise Blood O'Connor creates a world populated with characters that so exemplify dimensions of evil that they seem to be allegorical in nature. They are frequently one-dimensional and seem to exist on an ethereal plane. Hazel Motes is obviously trying to distract himself from these spectres and it is often through physical pleasure that he tries to find momentary solace. He moves in with the prostitute, Leora Watts, when he first arrives in the city. As he has been celibate during his service in the army, Motes expects his new carnal adventures to bring about untold changes in his life, yet, after his disappointing encounters with Leora, he is left distinctly unsatisfied and embarrassed.

His next paramour is Sabbath Lily Hawks. She lives in a boarding house with her father Asa, a preacher who has failed in an attempt to blind himself with quicklime. However, Asa has acted the part of the blind preacher to attract crowds and fool them with his handicap. Hazel has no knowledge of this and believes his blindness and his faith to be genuine. Motes decides to seduce the "innocent" daughter; in despoiling her he believes he will justify his belief that virtue has no claim upon him. With this action he will progress from simple sin to sacrilege, a premeditated profanation of the sacred. He hopes to bring the preacher to despair and thus obliterate what he presumes to be the condemning reality of the man's faith.

Sabbath, however, is far from innocent and is equally intent on seducing Motes. However, as Sabbath acknowledges, she is comfortable with her obvious lack of morality, whereas Hazel is not. Hazel tries desperately to deny sin, but

Sabbath's triumph and his dealings with the other characters in Wise Blood only serve to confirm the truth of sin for him. Essentially, Hazel Motes' logic is profoundly flawed. Christ redeemed a sinful and selfish world by leading a virtuous life and dying, not for his sins, but for ours. Hazel believes that he can save humanity by committing sins with grievous moral implications, thus wiping out the distinction between good and evil. Unfortunately for him, however, he is constantly hampered by the world's inherent corruption and so his lack of moral experience is essential to the story. Motes is trying to get to the bottom of sin, an impossible task.

Motes's message, expressed through his Church Without Christ, is unattractive to the madding crowd. They, like Hazel, do not want to admit their own intrinsic depravity, but unlike him, they insist on more soothing, calming forms of belief. The one apostle Motes does attract is Hoover Shoats, a former radio preacher by the name of Onnie Jay Holy. O'Connor employs him as a parody of the various bogus religions that appeal to his feebleness, much like Manley Pointer in "Good Country People." Onnie Jay Holy is far more successful with the crowd, much to the disdain of Hazel. To make matters worse, Onnie renames Hazel's church the Holy Church of Christ without Christ, doubling the absurdity.

Onnie needs Haze, for he believes that Haze has "good idears" but that he requires an "artist type" like Onnie to restructure (Three 81). Onnie echoes Haze's call for a new deity or new Jesus. However, he believes that Haze has this new Jesus stashed away and plans to steal him to use in his own sideshow. But for Hazel Motes, this new Jesus is a way "to say a thing," to praise man's ability to shake his fist in the face of a god who is not there, though this attitude is constantly and frustratingly misinterpreted by those who appear to want to facilitate Motes in

his endeavour. Enoch Emery, for example, takes Haze's call for a new Jesus literally, and in so doing moves the action onto a different plane by stealing a Mummy from the museum, his version of a saviour.

Mrs. Flood, an emphatically allegorical figure, seems to be in a position to offer this support but she also represents the rising tide of secularism. She appears to be the most obviously ordinary person in the book yet she is quite possibly the most grotesque inhabitant of this wasteland. In Hazel's company, she begins to wonder if there is something valuable that she does not see, something "hidden near her but out of her reach" (115). The more she finds out about Haze, the more fascinated she becomes. Her conviction that the darkness in which he dwells is the real treasure he possesses leads her to desire to penetrate this obscurity to "see for herself what was there" (117). Ironically, it is when Haze dies that Mrs. Flood sees the light: "and she saw him moving farther and farther into the darkness until he was the pin point of light" (120). Thus, Haze has performed the miracle of awakening Mrs. Flood's once dormant religious sensibilities; he has led her to the entrance of eternity. Haze has become the one thing he was desperately trying to find, a saviour.

The Violent Bear It Away has nothing of the symbolic slimness of Wise Blood or the routine which A Good Man Is Hard to Find uses to convey its sense of place. The Violent Bear It Away has an immediacy and vitality that at once place its world around us, yet, in contrast to A Good Man Is Hard to Find, its power to do so carries with it an ever-present sense of danger. It delivers us to a world in which everything seems to be at stake at every moment. Violence is a condition of being. Yet everything in the book essentially rests on whether Tarwater will choose belief or unbelief, as manifested in the litmus test of baptising

Bishop (the name of the child here obviously being of significance). Everything in the book rests on this baptism.

The Violent Bear It Away has a consistent system of imagery. Images that appear frequently are elemental; these include fire, water, hunger, bread, silence, the city, and the country (Fickett 71). We must note them, as their transformations during the course of the novel carry the weight of meaning. This action of poetic association does not merely provide a commentary on the events of the novel, because the action of the novel takes place in the rendering of it: description is made one with event. Fickett suggests that the poetic structure of the novel almost entirely replaces the machinery of conventional prose narrative; thus, I would argue, aligning it with the genre of the short story, just as O'Connor's poetic language subsumes more predictable expressions. We can see this illustrated most clearly in the case of Bishop's baptism. In this tale, O'Connor wishes to subvert our wish for closure rather than lead it to fruition, a common technique used in the short story, one particularly explored by Lohafer as outlined above. We want to know if Tarwater will eventually baptise Bishop, but the event itself is highly complex. Tarwater drowns the child, but he recites the words of the baptismal rite at the same time. We have to imagine this event, however, from a distance, as we do not experience it directly. Rather, we must rely on Rayber's reconstruction of the event and Tarwater's warped re-experiencing of it in a dream. But how does O'Connor view this event? Though Tarwater's subsequent actions are determined by what he has done, authorial commentary on the matter is lacking.

The ending of the novella itself brings O'Connor's images to their consummation. By repeatedly using an image, she foreshadows the novel's culmination, making it a proleptic narrative similar to "The River," where Bevel's baptism prefigures his eventual drowning. This is a characteristic of water imagery,

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