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Truncated Families, Dysfunctional Relationships, Defective Communication
An Intersubjective Approach to Flannery O'Connor's Fiction

Csonka családok, diszfunkcionális kapcsolatok, félresiklott kommunikáció
Flannery O'Connor interszubjektív megközelítésből

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1. Preface

Flannery O'Connor's fiction features abundant depiction of complex family relationships, unresolved family conflicts, and personal life crises. Truncated families and their ineffective functioning often bring about important turns in the plots, and in many cases the dysfunctionalities are related to defective communication between the family members. This dissertation focuses on how unsuccessful communication and conflict resolution affects family relationships in O'Connor's short stories. In my research I investigate whether the conflicts are caused entirely by the lack of effective communication or whether there are other interpersonal issues that need to be taken into account in analyzing the role of communication in O'Connor's representations of family dynamics.

To conceptualize psychological relationships and communicative situations, this dissertation utilizes intersubjectivity theory. Intersubjectivity theory has developed methodologies in several disciplines to determine psychological relations and interpersonal communication between people. I wish to show that it can effectively be used to understand literature as well. Furthermore, intersubjectivity theory can serve not only as a tool for additional understanding but more broadly as a critical approach to literature as well.

Finally, this analysis of O'Connor's short stories will pay special attention to the idea of lifeworld, in its different interpretations. While analyzing and criticizing O'Connor's works, I will draw on the original idea of lifeworld, as coined by Husserl and used by Habermas as well. The concept of lifeworld helps us understand a character's past and identity in terms of his or her cognitive horizon. Vast majority of O'Connor's fiction take place in the South, presenting characters with strong and complex Southern identities.

Her characters' identities are presented in direct correlation with their Southern background, making for a fruitful analysis via the lifeworld concept.

By utilizing intersubjectivity theory and the social theory of lifeworld, I argue for new interpretations of O'Connor's writings that emphasize dysfunctional family communication and regional identity.

In my research I focus on three different types of family relationships: mother and daughter, mother and son, male parental figure and child or grandchild. In the dissertation I analyze short stories that are widely presented in the American literary canon and I also work on pieces of writing that are not very well-known even in academic circles. The short stories I work on are: "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," "Good Country People," "A Circle in the Fire," "Everything that Rises Must Converge," "The Comforts of Home," "A Good Man is Hard to Find," "The Geranium," "Judgement Day," "The Artificial Nigger," "A Late Encounter with the Enemy."

1.1. A happy family is hard to find

The fiction of Flannery O'Connor abounds in depictions of Southern characters from different socio-cultural backgrounds. The characters differ in age, occupation, sex, and education. Nevertheless, there is one common element in almost every character: in Louise Westling's words, they all come from "truncated" families or they have some relationship with such a family (*Mothers* 511). Through O'Connor's stories we encounter different families, single parents, orphans, grandparents living with their grandchildren, and boys raised by great-uncles or even grandfathers. Even though in many cases we see single fathers, most frequently the only parent figure is a woman, usually a mother who is left alone to raise bad-tempered, "truculent, unruly," and rebellious sons and daughters

(511). O'Connor's Southern identity, personal experience, and Catholicism all contributed to her treatment of truncated families in her writings.

Family has long been a key characterization of Southern culture. In *Southern Culture—An Introduction*, John Beck, Wendy Frandsen, and Aaron Randall argue that the Southern family has traditionally been much more patriarchic than families in other parts of the country. This changed to a certain extent during World War II, when many women entered traditionally male occupations, but when veterans came home after the war these women usually left the workforce and returned to domestic pursuits, undoing some of the changes of the wartime era (215). Flannery O'Connor's most prolific time as an author was following World War II and it lasted until 1964, the year she passed away. O'Connor started her professional writing career in the second half of the 1940s, as the old social order was being reinforced.

Some changes persisted, however. As Beck points out, the number of single people living unmarried started growing after World War II. This is partly due to the fact that people started marrying later, which is partly the result of the feminist movement (216). In addition, the decline in numbers of men can be attributed to death in the war. According to the final report prepared by the Statistical and Accounting Branch Office of the Adjutant General for the of the Department of Army in 1953, the number of all army deaths in World War II was 318.274 between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1956 (96). From the state of Georgia, where Flannery O'Connor was a resident for most of her life, altogether 5.810 people never came back from the war (118). But this number, compared to the total population of the state -- 3.123.723 in 1940 according to the Resident Population Data collected by the United States Census -- is not particularly significant and cannot be the reason behind all the truncated families represented in O'Connor's short stories.

Even though in many ways the South is one of the most traditional parts of the USA, lived reality there does not always conform to perceived traditional values. For example, many of the Southern states reported high rates of divorce in the second part of the 20th century. What is even more, as Beck points out, "the region also leads the nation in the incidence of female headed households and the percentage of children living in households headed by grandparents" (220).

In the South, the decline of traditional family structures is often linked to poverty and social problems, such as low rates of education, youth crime, teenage pregnancy, and drugs. The Southern region of the USA has the highest rates of incarceration within the country and also the highest rates of childhood poverty. Households headed by single parents are the most likely to live in poverty (220).

Another element to understanding family and society in the South is the region's agrarian heritage. As Beck explains:

> In the agrarian world that characterized much of the South well into the twentieth century, the family was an all-encompassing institution that provided people with work, leisure, friends, job training, rules to live by, and identity and a sense of stability. Each member of the family served an important and necessary function in the family, even the children. Men led, women followed, and honor, shame, and religion enforced the rules …. The agrarian culture did not prepare people, particularly less affluent people, to be flexible, autonomous, and rational, and it relied on shame and sometimes physical force to "make people do right" rather than self-control. (222-3)

Beck clearly states that family was the center of the Southern culture and community because of the agrarian tradition of the region. However, as the agrarian attributes of the South were constantly changing, the social structures did not keep up with the changes. As young people were less and less required to stay with their parents to work for them and found jobs for themselves outside the household, traditional family structures eroded and non-traditional families proliferated. As large corporations took over family farms after World War II, family farms were no longer the essential blocks of Southern society, as they had been in previous centuries. Changes in the structure of Southern families are the direct consequences of the corporatization of agriculture in the second part of the 20th century.

These Southern conditions must be taken into consideration in the analysis of Flannery O'Connor's fiction for several reasons, especially as they intersected with her own life. O'Connor spent most of her life in Georgia. She was deprived of the opportunity for extensive travel because of the autoimmune disease she suffered from in her entire adulthood. At the same time, she was deeply interested in life in the South and tried to keep her attention on the issues of the region, especially her home state Georgia. O'Connor spent much of her life living with her mother, who took care of her in her illness. She herself suffered from the same auto-immune disease as her father -- lupus -- and she died at the age of 39, at the height of her career as a writer. Thus, O'Connor herself grew up in a truncated family, as her father died when she was 15. Growing up primarily with her mother certainly contributed to the overrepresentation of truncated families in O'Connor's fiction. Knowing the importance of the value of family in Southern culture while facing her own truncated family must have made her consider it a topic that might be interesting to write about.

O'Connor's Southern identity and her own truncated family experience were joined by another marker that defined her life and her fiction: Catholicism. "The two circumstances that have given character to my own writing have been those of being Southern and being Catholic," O'Connor wrote in her essay entitled "The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South," posthumously published in a volume titled *Mystery and Manners* (196). It is important to point out that she identified as a Catholic in a part of the country that is predominantly Protestant. It is well known how important the concept of family is for the Catholic Church; O'Connor was indeed a professed believer, suggesting that her beliefs about Catholic family life were not merely casual but internalized and spiritualized. The stark differences between the idealized Southern or Catholic family and her own atypical family likely resulted in her deep interest in depicting complicated and sometimes even disturbing family relationships.

Turning to O'Connor's short stories, a common feature of her single mother stories is that the mother has often been widowed or divorced sometime in the past, and in most cases this female figure has only one child, either a daughter or a son. Josephine Hendin believes that their relationships cannot be called ideal; these children, who most frequently have already reached adulthood when we encounter them in the stories, "are locked in a struggle" with their mother, whom they can neither love nor leave (98). These mothers have maintained homes for their children and tried to do their best raising them, yet the children could not mature successfully (Westling, *Sacred* 146). In a way, both the sons' and the daughters' situation can be considered hopeless: they cannot get away from their mothers and they cannot start their lives on their own.

Most of these children are at an age when they would usually be expected to be living their own life. Some of them are over 30 and could have families and children. However, none of these characters are parents. This indirectly suggests that because these

children could not forge a functional relationship with their mothers, they were not able to be parents themselves. They had experienced a parent-child relationship that failed, and so somehow now they cannot experience the very same relationship from the other's point of view. The title of one of Flannery O'Connor's most well-known short stories, "Everything That Rises Must Converge," can be seen as an emblem of her stories: "everyone who grows up must confront his parents" (Hendin 98).

The stories in which we encounter widowed or divorced mothers with single children can be distinguished into two main categories. In the first one there is a daughter who lives with her mother, and in the second category there is always a son who has a very unique relationship with his mother. Although the situations of these children are similar, their conflicts with their mothers and with life are very different. The relationship with a parent of the same gender includes different feelings than a relationship with an opposite-sex parent. Because of this basic difference, these two types of relationships are best analyzed separately. I also devote a separate chapter to male parental figures for this reason. However, I start my dissertation with a solid theoretical background on intersubjectivity to provide an adequate ground for the analysis of the short stories.

2. Intersubjectivity – The theoretical background

2.1. Husserl's intersubjectivity

Starting in the 1960s, the idea of intersubjectivity entered and gained ground in the social and behavioral sciences in the United States and in Europe. The advent of intersubjectivity theory was made possible by the publication of several books that were inspired by the available writings of Edmund Husserl, writings that were influential in expanding ways of thinking about the self, society, and communication. Husserl is often quoted as the first philosopher presenting the idea and coining the term intersubjectivity. As the term and its several interpretations are used in many disciplines to conceptualize the psychological relations between people, it can also be seen as an approach of understanding and analyzing arts, including literature as well. More specifically, intersubjective theory is a possible way to analyze and conceptualize relationships between fictitious characters of novels and short stories. As Alessandro Duranti points out, when intersubjectivity entered the social sciences in the 1960s, it was interpreted simply as *shared* or *mutual understanding* of a certain issue. But beyond that, he points out, intersubjectivity itself is a basic condition that can lead to shared or mutual understanding. This can be considered an important achievement, rather than being itself such an understanding. Building upon Husserl's foundations, intersubjectivity can now be used to construct a theoretical frame of thinking about the ways in which people interpret, understand, organize, and reproduce forms of social life and cognition (Duranti, 2-7).

Husserl presented the idea of intersubjectivity in two volumes of *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. One of the most important paragraphs reads as follows:

I have an Objective reality as the conjunction of two sides, i.e., the man as inserted into Objective space, into the Objective world. I then posit with this reality an analogon of my Ego with its "subjectivities," its sense data, changing appearances, and things appearing therein. The things posited by others are also mine: in empathy I participate in the other's positing. E.g., I identify the thing I have over and against me in the mode of appearance with the thing posited by the other in the mode of appearance. To this belongs the possibility of substitution by means of trading places. Each person has, at the same place in space, 'the same' appearances of the same things – if, as we might suppose, all have the same sensibility. And on this account, even the 'view' of a thing is Objectified. Each person has, from the same place in space and with the same lighting, the same view of, for example, a landscape. But never can the other, at exactly the same time as me (in the originary content of lived experience attributed to him) have the exact same appearance as I have. My appearances belong to me, his to him. (177)

By intersubjectivity Husserl means a condition in which I have the assumption that the world, as it presents itself to me, is the very same world that presents itself to the Other. I assume that if the Other were in my place, he or she would see the world the way I see it. Both of the parties have the possibility of seeing the world from the point of view of the Other, of exchanging places, so to speak. In Husserl's world, others are experienced by me as subjects like me, who have similar relationship with their surrounding world. Since people see the world from other points of view with different degrees of clarity, for each of us things have different physical appearances; however, I assume that we end up with the same objective world (176-178, *Ideas Pertaining First* 90-103).

Husserl's idea about intersubjectivity had a huge impact on European social

sciences and scholars continue to use and analyze his ideas. Among the most significant

scholars building on Husserl's work is Alessandro Duranti. In Duranti's view,

intersubjectivity was basically the vital quality of human existence, which forms the

essential part of the Subject and the notion of the objective world as well. Husserl saw

intersubjectivity as a domain of inquiry that encompasses the full scope of human

experience . The idea of intersubjectivity presented by Husserl stretches from human acts

in which the acting person is at least minimally aware of the presence of an Other to

human acts in which the acting person works to make sure that the Self and the Other are

coordinated around a particular task. Based on this, language is likely to be involved in

these acts; however, the involvement of language is not a requisite of a communicative

action as the absence of language usage cannot mean that there is no communication (1-2).

Analyzing intersubjectivity and Husserl's interpretation of the term require a deep

understanding of the idea of lifeworld. In his volume entitled *Experience and Judgment:*

Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic, Husserl details his idea of lifeworld. He believes

that the lifeworld is basically "the world in which we are always already living and which

furnishes the ground for all cognitive performance and all scientific determination." In his

understanding, a lifeworld means a surrounding where operation is logical for the self. It is

a realm of cognitive activity, but it is also "the world of experience in the wholly concrete

sense which is commonly tied in with the word 'experience'." This sense, he believes, is

related to a habituality, which provides assurance for the given person of their actions and

decisions. This way, the whole sensation of the world around the person becomes a

commonplace as itself (41, 52).

The lifeworld, according to Donn Welton's summary of Husserl's idea, is basically

"what we know best, what is always taken for granted in all human life, always familiar in

its typology through experience." The lifeworld functions and works as subsoil; it becomes

universality and the ultimate ground of thinking (364-5). As Sebastian Luft points out,

lifeworld is the field where "life in general carries itself out in its everydayness" (203).

Sometimes Husserl uses the expression natural worldlife, referring to the same idea; in

both of the cases "Husserl conceives of the life-world[1] as the totality of life in its

multitudinous facets." For Husserl, lifeworld is the horizon, the beginning and the end for

all kinds of actions an individual might perform. Luft's commentary on Husserl's idea calls

attention to an important fact: if the world by which someone is surrounded is not framed

within the lifeworld, that given world cannot be understood (217). "The life-world is hence

the world of the pre-scientific attitude; indeed, it is nothing but the world the natural

attitude has as its correlate," he adds; furthermore, he states that life-world itself is "the

basis of all human action" (218).

Husserl was undisputedly one of the leading founders of the idea of

intersubjectivity, among others. Husserl's contributions to the field of philosophy include

the idea of lifeworld as well, with which he established the base for 20th-century

philosophers to advance in the study of phenomenology. Husserl's understanding of

intersubjectivity emphasizes the relationship between the self and the other party that the

given person is talking to, thus his idea can fruitfully be applied when discussing

embodiment or performativity.

2.2. Habermas and his ideas of lifeworld and communication

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[1] The spelling of the expression "lifeworld" varies in case of certain authors. However, as all of the authors cited in this particular dissertation mean the same by using the expression, I will stick to the spelling where the expression is written as one word, without a hyphen.

Husserl and his idea of intersubjectivity have been inspiring for many social scientists following him[2]. One of the most significant is Jürgen Habermas, for whom the idea of intersubjectivity and the lifeworld are immensely important. In his understanding, these two ideas are essential to understanding social relations and can also be seen as starting points for understanding social life and social theory as well. Although he bases his analysis of the lifeworld on Husserl, he has his own interpretation of the idea. Habermas believed that the intersubjectively shared lifeworld is "bounded by the totality of interpretations presupposed by the members as background knowledge." He also believed that the world is the locale where intersubjectivity takes place, also, where public debate is present (*Theory 1*, 13, 43, 71-72).

In analyzing communication, Habermas believed that the communicative action itself should be oriented towards success, otherwise communication can never be successful. If we had to epitomize Habermas's idea about communication, the definition could be this: communication is the successful, mutual understanding of what the other wanted to suggest. For Habermas, the communicative action requires two actors, the speaker and the hearer. He believed that a successful communicative action is one where argument is used to work out disagreements and where consensus is achieved by using the best argument. For Habermas, then, it is not enough if the speech or communicative action is designed to reach understanding from the other party; he demands that the other understand what *I* wanted to say, otherwise he believes the action cannot rightly be considered communication (305-311).

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[2] The authors whose ideas about communication and intersubjectivity are discussed in this dissertation do not necessarily belong to the same schools of philosophy. For example, while Husserl is usually associated with phenomenology, Habermas is considered to be part of the Frankfurt school (Gutting 2). While they share views about certain issues, intersubjectivity cannot be considered a distinct school of cultural theory like, for instance, structuralism was. The fact that many authors from different philosophical background use intersubjectivity to try to understand the world around us proves, I believe, that intersubjective theory is a highly relevant meta-theory, and a valid approach to analyzing literature as well—even if these authors do not form one unified and coherent school of philosophy in any sense.

Habermas's views provide new insights to the discourse about intersubjectivity and communication. His understanding about validity and the claim for validity are something which we did not see in Husserl's works. In his understanding, when the speaker and the hearer communicate, they make claims about their own subjectivity as speakers, they assert themselves as subjects. These claims are intersubjectively barren, and all the communicative actions are possibly contestable, he believes (305-307).

When discussing the term "reaching understanding," Habermas believes that two people speaking must be able to understand the linguistic expressions in the conversation the very same way. In his words, "The meaning of an elementary expression consists in the contribution that it makes to the meaning of an acceptable speech act. And to understand what a speaker wants to say with such an act, the hearer has to know the conditions under which it can be accepted." In this interpretation, the hearer and the speaker accept an agreement when they start communicating so that they behave as acting and speaking subjects. In most of the cases it is the intention of the speaker to produce such a text either in writing or speech which is understandable for the hearer; furthermore, we should expect the speaker to produce such a text, otherwise there is no point in communication (307).

In *The Theory of Communicative Action, Volume 2*, Habermas lays out the idea of three worlds that can be used as reference systems for communicative actions; these serve as basic grounds of mutual understanding. The three worlds are the objective, the social, and the subjective worlds. The objective world is the "totality of entities about which true statements are possible." Social world refers to the "totality of legitimately regulated interpersonal relations. The subjective world, lastly, is "the totality of experience to which a speaker has privileged access and which he can express before a public" (120).

In Habermas's understanding, a communicative action heavily relies on the cooperative process of participants' interpretations, where they try to relate through at least one of the three worlds in order to make themselves understood. In most cases, according to him, participants thematically stress only one of those worlds in their utterances. The worlds work as reference systems for the speaker and the hearer and it is this reference system in which an interpretive framework is set up to work out their definitions for common situations, which are the basis for mutual understanding (120). Coming to an understanding in a communicative situation means that parties try to reach some kind of an agreement regarding utterances they are making with the help of one of the three worlds. For Habermas, agreement is "the intersubjective recognition of the validity claim the speaker raises for" (120).

Habermas also argued that communication can only take place in language when speaker and hearer enter two levels of communication with each other. This entering must happen at the same time. These two levels are the level of intersubjectivity, where they become interested in interpersonal relations, and the level of propositional content. The emphasis from one level to the other might shift in different communicative situations, but they both remain existentially important. Habermas also distinguishes two different uses of language. The interactive use helps thematize relationships in which the communicative parties enter, while the cognitive use helps thematize the content of the expressions as a proposition referring to something that is happening in the world, dealing with interpersonal relations only indirectly (*Communication and Evolution of Society* 53).

Habermas believed that any person acting communicatively must raise validity claims if they want to participate in the process of reaching understanding. He proposes four validity claims. First, the speaker should utter something understandably. Second, the speaker should give the hearer something to understand, thus, the speaker should make

himself or herself understandable and they should come to an understanding with the hearer. It is immensely important that the speaker choose a comprehensible expression when deciding to speak so that the two parties participating in the communicative action understand each other. Third, the speaker needs to have the intention of telling a true proposition and content, because this way the hearer can share the knowledge of the speaker. In order that the hearer could believe the utterance of the speaker, they should express their intentions truthfully. Fourth, the hearer and the speaker need to have a shared background -- Habermas calls it a "recognized normative background" -- so that they can mutually agree on the meaning of the utterances. He believes that the communicative action can only go on undisturbed as long as speaker and hearer both suppose that their validity claims are all present and accepted (2-3).

The goal of coming to an understanding, according to Habermas, is to accomplish an agreement underpinned by reciprocal understanding, mutual trust, and shared knowledge. Agreement is based on the acceptance of the validity claims of truth, rightness, and comprehensibility. Habermas believes that the expression "understanding" can have a minimal and an extended meaning as well. The extended meaning suggest that between the speaker and the hearer there is an accord about the rightness of the utterance, which is connected to a normative background recognized by both of them. The participants in the communicative situation can come to and understanding about something in the world by making their intentions understandable to the other person (3).

As we have seen, Habermas emphasizes speaking and speech when discussing communication. He is deeply interested in speech-act theory because he believes that it is important to clarify the meaning of certain utterances. When uttering a promise, a warning or an assertion through a sentence and with other corresponding sentences the speaker executes an action – they try to make a promise, warning or statement. It is done by saying

something. The illocutionary mode of employing the language is the foundation on which this usage rests. "To be understood in a given situation, every utterance must, at least implicitly, establish and bring to expression a certain relation between the speaker and his counterpart …. The illocutionary force of a speech action consists in fixing the communicative function of the content uttered" (34).

Habermas also believes that speech acts have another kind of power, which he calls generative force. It is through the generative force that the speaker can have an influence on the hearer in a way that the hearer can enter an interpersonal relationship with the speaker (35).

Like many of the influential social scientists of the 19th and 20th century, Habermas had an enormous impact on subsequent generations of scientists. Many library shelves are full of interpretations of his works. The works of Nick Crossley are particularly valuable to highlight Habermas's influence and significance.

In Crossley's interpretation, Habermas believes that language is a kind of symbolic order that fundamentally changes the relationship of humans to both themselves and their environment "by mediating those relations and constituting them as relations of meaning" (*Intersubjectivity* 100). Habermas also believes that every social theory that deals with human behavior must base itself at the above detailed symbolic level. He also believes that human beings can be in communicative situation with each other, thus it is possible for them to communicate. Furthermore, he also considers dialogues and communicative processes irreducible.

As Crossley pointed out for us, Habermas believed that the earliest and thus the most basic societies on Earth were "exclusively constituted in the form of the lifeworld" (101). However, the progress and the changes in society lead to the relegation of lifeworld, meaning that it only become a subsystem within the system, according to him. This does

not mean that for Habermas the notion of lifeworld became less important – on the contrary. He still believes that social systems are always and necessarily "anchored in the lifeworld, such that the lifeworld remains the primordial societal constituent" (99).

Habermas coined the term of communicative interworld. Through Habermas's ideas we can see that the communicative interworld is a step further from individual consciousness. Communicative interworlds are based on speech communities and they put much less emphasis on individual consciousness and as a result of it, it further prioritizes communication above consciousness. Speech acts are put in the center of this idea as social acts, thus prioritizing interworld over consciousness again. Habermas believes that the lifeworld is indeed a cultural system which has its own conditions of reproduction and also operation.

According to scholar Nick Crossley, intersubjective experience allows us to contest the claims of others when we feel that what they say might be far from reality or truth, so we can point to facts or aspects in the intersubjectively experienced world to go against the claims or assumptions. These claims and assumptions might be directly about the intersubjective world as well. But it is important to point out that even though we can contest the claims of others, it does not change the fact that communicative action is present in this interaction and despite the contest, we can still recognize these people as speakers. What is even more; by disagreeing with them we actually recognize them as interlocutors.

Habermas's views emphasize rationality, as he believes that it is an important phenomenon that needs to be addressed when talking about lifeworld and philosophy. In his view, consensus, especially a reasonable consensus, are the basis of rationality, given that communicatively achieved consensus needs to be reached in order to reach rationality as well. Communication for him "satisfies the presuppositions for rational utterances or for

the rationality of speaking and acting subjects" (86). Communication and lifeworld are bridged because communicative acts supervise social interactions and are also responsible for maintaining social lifeworlds (86), Crossley believes.

As for consensus, Habermas believed that it is an essential element of communication. However, his definition of consensus is so complex and affects so many aspects of communication that it is difficult to grasp. Consensus, for Habermas, does not come about if the sincerity of what has been said is doubted or, for example, when a command is received but the validity or seriousness is doubted by the hearer. Here, according to Habermas, mutual understanding is not reached, unless the hearer expresses his or her doubt in some way (86).

Habermas believes that actions that aim at mutual understanding can be translated into the rationalization of a social group's lifeworld where language has a plural function. Firstly, it aims at reaching understanding, secondly, it coordinates actions, and last, but not least, it socializes individuals. As a result, language and lifeworld become media through which socialization, social integration, and cultural integration can all take place (86).

Habermas believes that language has three different kinds of usage: cognitive, interactive, and expressive. Cognitive usage is related to utterances; it is concerned with prepositional content. Interactive language or mode of communications makes interpersonal relations using regulatives like commands, promises, or recommendations. Expressive usage conveys the speaker's intentions. These functions are connected to the validity of one's claims regarding its appropriateness, validity, or truthfulness (*Communication and the Evolution*, 51-59).

Habermas's framework is presented in this table (see fig 1.):

Mode of communication	Type of speech action	Theme	Thematic validity claim
Cognitive	Constantives	Prepositional content	Truth
Interactive	Regulatives	Interpersonal relation	Rightness appropriatenes
Expressive	Avowals	Speaker's intention	Truthfulness

Fig. 1: Habermas's cross-definitions about communication, speech, and theme

The figure above clearly details Habermas's cross-definitions about communication and speech. We see that, cognitive, interactive, and expressive modes of communications are available for humans to pick from; however, they all bring about different types of speech actions. In short, cognitive communication requires constantives, interactive needs regulatives, and expressive communication comes with avowals. Cognitive communication concentrates on prepositional content and the thematic validity claim that comes with it is necessarily truth. Interactive communication, however, is present in interpersonal relations and its claim is rightness and appropriateness. Expressive communication aims at truthfulness and its main theme is the speaker's interaction (9).

Habermas's significance in the discussion of intersubjectivity lies in his comprehensive theory of communicative action. The connection between intersubjectivity and communication is an important intervention in intersubjective theory and it also helps understanding the idea of lifeworld.

2.3. Speech act theory

Speech act theory is likewise valuable in analyzing communication. It was developed by J. L. Austin as part of his performative paradigm. Austin distinguished three types of speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary.

Performing a locutionary act is saying something simple, or, in other words, performing acts such as stating an intention or verdict, answering a question or asking, giving information or a warning, describing or identifying something, making a criticism, or simply pronouncing a sentence (99). Austin points out that there are much higher levels of speech acts that we perform day by day and finds it important distinguish between them:

> It makes a great difference whether we are advising, or merely suggesting, or actually ordering, whether we are strictly promising or only announcing a vague intention, and so forth. These issues penetrate a little but not without confusion into grammar (…), but we constantly do debate them in such terms as whether certain words (a certain locution) *had the force of* a question, or *ought to have been taken* as an estimate and so on. (99)

Thus, Austin establishes a second category of speech acts: the illocutionary act which, in his phrasing, is "a performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to performance *of* an act of saying something" (99-100). Based on this definition, illocutionary acts are warning, ordering, undertaking, and utterances that might have some kind of force (109). Austin also points out that this kind of act is conventional in a sense that it is always performed to conform to a convention (105). He also adds the idea of illocutionary force to his theory. According to him, the act that is performed is called illocution and he refers to the "the doctrine of the different types of function of language here in question as the doctrine of 'illocutionary forces.'" Austin also points out that we

can use the word meaning "with reference to illocutionary force—'He meant it as an order'," but he distinguishes force and meaning by saying that "meaning is equivalent to sense and reference, just as it has become essential to distinguish sense and reference" (99-100).

Thirdly, Austin establishes the category of perlocutionary acts. He realizes that saying certain things often have consequences on thoughts, feelings, or even actions of those who are listening to a speaker. These consequences might be planned or designed ones that were made intentionally (101). He also believes that these are acts that might trigger or make someone reach something just by saying a certain thing. Actions like this might include convincing, deterring, persuading, or maybe even misleading or surprising (109).

To illustrate the three different speech acts established by Austin, let us consider an example. A locutionary act is to tell person A to shoot person B; an illocution is to urge or advise person A to shoot person B; a perlocution is to persuade or make person A to shoot person B (102).

By distinguishing between speech acts and arranging them into three major categories, Austin constructs a hierarchy of speech acts whereby an illocutionary act is superior to locutionary ones and a perlocutionary act is superior to both other kind of speech acts because their nature implies a higher level of consequence. This, I believe, is important not only because it might help us understand communication on a much higher level, but also might make us more conscious in our everyday communicative situations.

The theory of acts was further developed by John Searle, who wrote extensively on speech acts. In his work *Speech Acts*, Searle states that linguistic acts are necessary for linguistic communication and he also explains that unlike other linguists, he believes that the unit of linguistic communication is not a word, a sentence, or a symbol, but rather a

speech act. He believes that intentions play a crucial role in this process; in fact, he asserts that the intention is a central element of linguistic communication. According to Searle, if he takes a mark on a piece of paper or a noise as linguistic communication, he needs to assume that the mark or the noise was produced with a certain kind of intention (16).

Searle also uses the Austin's ideas about illocutionary and perlocutionary acts, referencing Austin extensively. In his work he presents a whole set of verbs that denote illocutionary acts, including to "state," "describe," "assert," "command," "remark," "demand," and "request" (23). At the same time, Searle confirms Austin's idea about perlocutionary acts as well by saying that expressions like "persuade," "convince," or "alarm," denote perlocutionary acts (25).

In Searle's work with Daniel Vanderveken, he digs deeper into the idea of illocutionary acts and forces. They have different definitions of certain speech acts, as they believe that illocutionary acts are actually the "minimal units of human communication" and argue that some examples of such acts are questions, statements, commands, apologies or promises. According to this understanding, whenever someone says a sentence with certain intentions in an appropriate context, that person performs an illocutionary act, or even multiple acts. In their work, they also state that an illocutionary act consists of two important components: an illocutionary force and a propositional content (109).

> In general an illocutionary act consists of an illocutionary force F and a propositional content P. For example, the two utterances "You will leave the room" and "Leave the room!" have the same propositional content, namely that you will leave the room; but characteristically the first of these has the illocutionary force of a prediction and the second has the illocutionary force of an order. Similarly, the two utterances "Are you going to the movies?" and "When will you see John?"

both characteristically have the illocutionary force of questions but have different

propositional contents. (109)

While this excerpt illustrates how we might differentiate between illocutionary

forces and propositional content, it also highlights the linguistic nature of the work of

speech act theorists. They approach speech acts from the point of view of syntax while

they incorporate ideas into their work that might be immensely useful for communication

theory as well.

The authors believe that illocutionary acts rarely occur alone in real life, as they are

usually part of a conversation or a discourse. As for conversation, the expression that

Searle and Vanderveken seem to prefer would be "ordered speech act sequences" that

constitute discussions, arguments, changing notes or letters, and even buying and selling.

They believe that it is important that the speaker has the ability to make and understand

illocutionary acts in order to participate in proper conversations. The illocutionary acts

create possibilities for other illocutionary acts to follow as replies. In certain cases, the

sequences of the illocutionary acts following each other is quite simple, for example when

one is a question and the other is an answer; however, in many of the cases it is more open,

like a casual conversation between friends. They note that in a conversation, one

illocutionary act constrains and creates the pool of possible and appropriate responses, just

like in a game (118).

Searle and Vanderveken also point out that it is not sure that illocutionary acts will

succeed; they can just as easily fail as well. As an example, they mention the process of

excommunication: if the one who wants to excommunicate the other person does not have

the institutional power to do so by their utterance, then the excommunication might not be

successful. Furthermore, illocutionary acts are also subject to defects and faults, for

example failure of presupposition or dishonesty, so even if they succeed, it is not sure that they will deliver what they were performed for. As a conclusion of their work we might say that ideally a speech act is both successful and nondefective.

While the understanding of certain terms of speech act theory might vary from author to author, we can see that both Austin and Searle and Vanderveken rely heavily on the participants of a conversation, meaning that they always refer to more than one person when they describe their theory about speech acts.

Following the idea of the conversation as a series of illocutionary acts, I will summarize Paul Grice's views on cooperation within a conversation. Grice believes that whenever we have a conversation with someone, it is not just random remark occurring in a disconnected order. Rather, he believes, our talk exchanges are cooperative efforts:

> Each participant recognizes in them, to some extent, a common purpose or set of purposes, or at least a mutually accepted direction. This purpose or direction may be fixed from the start (e.g. by an initial proposal of a question for discussion) or it may evolve during the exchange; it may be fairly definite, or it may be so indefinite as to leave very considerable latitude to the participants (as in a casual conversation). […] We might then formulate a rough general principle which participants will be expected (ceteris paribus) to observe, namely: Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange which you are engaged." (45)

Grice refers to this idea as the "cooperative principle," and shows how a conversation requires contribution from the participants and mutuality as well (45). This

idea is in line with what I discussed earlier about successful communication in this dissertation. It is also resonates with what Searle and Vanderveken believes about a conversation, namely that it is not just certain sentences coming up in a random order, but speech acts indeed follow an order. What Griece adds to this discourse is that he emphasizes the importance of cooperation and the participation of those who are part of the conversation. While he does not talk about intersubjectivity explicitly, his idea about cooperation is highly relevant to intersubjective theory as it helps communication become mutually more effective.

2.4. Merleau-Ponty's intersubjective ideas

In his book entitled *Phenolmenology of Perception*, French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty discusses the idea of sense experience in great detail. Merleau-Ponty is deeply interested in the question of how different habits develop at the levels of sense experience and how people can convert them into experiences that are actually meaningful for the given person. Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the importance of perception, stating that "all knowledge takes its place within the horizons opened up by perception." He believes that the self, which is involved in sense experience, is a prepersonal, anonymous self who does not have the unique characteristics that people usually use to distinguish one person from another. He believes that perception is a way to ratify and renew people. He asserts that "the perceiving subject is the place where these things occur" and also believes that if a person is not aware of what he or she is able to perceive, the perceiving subject and the perception will refute what he says by perception in general (207-210).

Merleau-Ponty believes intercommunication happens between senses even if a sensory experience is an unstable one. In his understanding, by opening the structure of

things, senses do indeed intercommunicate with each other. To illustrate this statement, he offers several examples in his works: we can actually see the softness of wood shavings, we can perceive sounds through seeing an object, and we can feel the sensation of warmth whenever we start writing the word itself or simply see the world *warm* written somewhere. In his understanding, "the subject does not say only that he has the sensation both of a sound and a colour: it is the sound itself that he sees where colours are formed." He believes that senses allow people to access many separate different worlds, and help people resonate with each other and themselves as well (224-229).

Merleau-Ponty elaborates on the interconnectedness of consciousness and sensation. He emphasizes that first the person should get in touch with the sensory life which he lives from within. He believes that in order to be able to know what senses we are using in certain situations, we need some kind of prior knowledge or experience of it. For instance, a person must have experience with physically interacting with people to know what sensation a touch of the arm can bring about. Also, the body must be adapted to this kind of notion so that it knows how to move the hand in order to reach and touch someone. (215-220).

When talking about the self and the formation of the self, Merleau-Ponty explains that the self is a phenomenon that has been made and that can be unmade as well. Despite the possibility of unmaking the self, he stresses that "I am, as a sentient subject, a repository stocked with natural powers at which I am the first to be filled with wonder." He believes that perceptions take place in an atmosphere that is determined by generality and perceptions are always presented to us anonymously. Merleau-Ponty states that the incompleteness of the sensation can be the reason why a sensation can be anonymous (215).

As a remarkably active and wide-ranging thinker in the study of phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty contemplated the idea of embodiment as well. In his understanding, embodiment does not have much to do with perception; it concentrates, rather, on the connection between the human self and the human body. He argues that these two ideas, consciousness and body, are inseparable; they cannot exist without each other (130-132, 174-190).

Merleau-Ponty sets up a scheme of multiple consciousnesses, making a sharp distinction between intellectual and sensible consciousness. He believes that a given person's perception interprets a given situation, whereas a personal act creates the situation. For example, he explains, a person can see the color because he is sensitive to colors, while if someone wants to become a mathematician that must be a result of decision made by a conscious person. This is what he calls intellectual consciousness. For Merlau-Ponty, the most important difference between a sensible consciousness and an intellectual consciousness is the will or decision: intellectual consciousness requires decisions by the individual and is not the result of an innate characteristic (215).

Merleau-Ponty puts much emphasis on the idea of experience, as he believes it is the most effective way to get to know the world and others around us. He believes that experience helps humans create, understand, and interpret the world. However, he recognizes that interpretation can change from one day to the next. This is due to the fact that each day people go through experiences that can fundamentally modify their views about certain things in life. With more experience, people understand certain happenings differently and can even reinterpret the past in completely different ways. Because of this constant change, a person will never have a truly clear understanding of anything, since their understanding will most probably change as time passes. In short, he states that "I am never at one with myself" (346-347).

In his chapter entitled "Other People and the Human World," Merleau-Ponty makes a crucially important observation about people we are surrounded by: "The very first of all cultural objects, and the one by which all the rest exist, is the body of the other person as the vehicle of a form of behaviour." He believes that conceptualizing this other person is a difficult task for everyone; however, he also states that the other persons are just pieces of a mechanism just like myself and we all get to know the mechanism through experience. It is the experience that leads our consciousness to realize the world we live in and also it is the consciousness which helps us realize that we are different form the other person (348-349).

Merleau-Ponty also sets up an idea regarding the worlds one can live in. In his interpretation, there is obviously a physical world in which one person can be surrounded. This physical world consists of the settlements around me, the air, and many objects. However, we should never forget about another kind of world, the cultural world, which does not put much emphasis on physical features. It is a world determined by the civilization in which the person lives and plays their part. The cultural world is more ambiguous than the physical one; it allows for interpretations and understanding that are brought about by experience. Merleau-Ponty believes that "it is through the perception of a human act and another person that the perception of a cultural world could be verified." Significantly, he states that first the self should understand its own acts in order to be able to assess other people's deeds and acts. The actions of other people, in this way, will be understood by the person's understanding of their own previous actions, essentially understanding "the 'one' or the 'we' through the 'I'" (347-348).

The idea of the cultural world that Merleau-Ponty espouses clearly coincides with what Husserl and Habermas thought about the lifeworld. The cultural world puts much less emphasis on the physical presence through its focus on all the shared values and

civilization of a certain group of people. The interpretation of the cultural world is brought about by experience, which also helps the verification of the culture.

Merleau-Ponty had a strong opinion about language and language usage as well. He believes that being able to speak is made possible through the existence of verbal images that we use while speaking. However, these verbal images are not necessarily understood perfectly. It is not certain that there will be other stimuli to help the other understand what I want to say in a communicative situation. Verbal images are a secondary tool because without the existence of the speaker's initial thoughts, no speech action can bring about any success. As an example let us just think about a situation when we discuss a color with a painter but they eventually use another color, just because two people cannot easily express in words what color they are actually thinking about. This proves the role of language as a secondary player in the game of communication (174-175).

2.5. Merging the understanding of Husserl, Habermas, and Merleau-Ponty

There are clear parallels between Husserl, Habermas, and Merleau-Ponty. All of the three authors have been exceptionally prolific writers when discussing intersubjectivity and their impact is still traceable in present-day social sciences.

We might easily assert that Husserl, writing much earlier, had a great effect on Habermas and Merleau-Ponty. It was Husserl who introduced the idea of the lifeworld, which is one of the most important elements in the works of Habermas. While for Husserl lifeworld is more about experiencing the world through living it, Habermas believed that lifeworld itself represents the background of habits, competences, and attitudes present in someone's cognitive horizon. Habermas used many of Husserl's works for research and study and it is quite probable that without the volumes of Husserl, he would not have been

able to reach such academic success. In most of the cases, however, Habermas does not disagree with Husserl; he rather adds to and complicates the research conducted by one of the most remarkable philosophers of the 20th century.

Merleau-Ponty's ideas also echo Husserl's in many ways. Both of them believe the other person is an immensely important cultural object and understanding this other is of key importance in the theories they later build up. Merleau-Ponty was not that concerned about the idea of the lifeworld, focusing more on the issue of embodiment; however, he frequently cited Husserl as the source of his ideas and Husserl's impact is clearly evident.

One of the most important connections between the three theorists is the idea of consciousness. All three believe that in order for the self to understand the other person and vice-versa, deliberate actions must be made. They all believed that communication cannot happen without wanting it to happen. Parties must be aware of their actions in order to reach mutual understanding.

2.6. Being "face to face" with Levinas and the Other

Descriptions of the encounters between a given person and other people are at the center of much of philosopher Emmanuel Levinas's works. In *Totality and Infinity,* he expresses his belief about confrontation, which he believes to be a critically important experience for everyone, thus he makes this act of meeting the center of his research.

Levinas believes that in order to be able to understand relationships between individuals, first it is necessary to be aware of the exact relationship between the person and a world (37). In Levinas's interpretation, the world, which is often unknown, hostile, and even foreign, has an effect on the person, the I. The world can easily alter the I. He believes that there is a distinct relationship between the world and the I, and that the

relationship between the I and the world is "produced as a sojourn in the world" (36-37).

Levinas put much emphasis on how the relationship between the world and the I can be

conceptualized and found that identifying oneself as someone who exists in the world *at

home with oneself* is of key importance in this procedure. He believed that home is the

place where the I can be free. "It is enough to walk, to do, in order to grasp anything, to

take. In a sense everything is in the site …. everything is at my disposal, even the stars, if I

but reckon them, calculate the intermediaries or the means." Possession is another central

concept related to the home and the I. Levinas believes that a person can only be at home

with themselves in the world because the world offers the possibility to resist possession

(36-37).

Levinas also discusses the binary opposition of exteriority and interiority, which he

connects to the idea of the self. He believes that exteriority is actually produced by nothing

else but interiority. Interiority, he argues, is a subjective relation and the tool that helps

someone refer to themselves. It is the subjectivity that enables the self to distinguish itself

from anything that is not them, so from the Other. With the help of exteriority, the self

stops themselves from merging into totality, he claims. Through distinguishing itself from

the other, the self no longer assumes that it is perceived the same way that the Other is. The

separation of the self from the Other derives from the self being itself and no longer the

part of the Other. The self, this way, becomes everything that is not the Other. Levinas

argues that the self needs to be separated from the Other so that the self can envision

infinity, which itself is a form of transcendence of the relationships of the self to the Other.

He believes that exteriority can be achieved once the self has an idea of infinity (27-40,

199-205).

As an idea closely connected to the issue of the Other, Levinas coins the term "face

to face" to conceptualize the relationship between the self and the Other. He argues that

even though language is an excellent tool to exchange ideas about the world, it is not enough for complete communication. He believes that at the bottom of every speech there always is another kind of expression that helps us understand the other person and makes communication more integrated. This expression is produced through the help of the face. The face, according to him, is the presentation of the self by the self. To be able to understand and find truth, the self must know its face, which can also convey honor. It is not enough for him to verbally express honor, he needs the signifier of the face also. The face is the tool of the Other to present itself for the self (202-203).

Levinas believes that face to face contact is an immediate contact between two persons, making both of them a little vulnerable as the frontier between the self and the Other become thin, almost incomprehensible. This face to face relationship with the other is exactly what can bring about successful communicative situations, as a face to face conversation allows fewer opportunities to hide and not tell the truth than other ways of communication (202-207).

Levinas, just like all the other major philosophers of the 19-20th centuries, goes back to questions of language and thought. He believes that language is indeed necessary for thought, because without language meaning cannot be achieved. "Meaning is the face of the Other, and all recourse to words takes place already within the primordial face to face of language," he argues (206).

In his essay entitled "On intersubjectivity: Notes on Merleau-Ponty," which was published in the volume *Outside the Subject*, Levinas expounds on his interpretation of Merleau-Ponty and also elaborates on the idea of the other person, improving the thoughts of Merleau-Ponty. In his understanding, the other person and I can be seen as two hands that belong to the same body and this presence is extended from one person to the other.

This community, according to Levinas, is not only the foundation of intersubjectivity, but also the premise of intellectual communication (100-101).

In this way, intersubjectivity for Levinas is community, the face to face, hands touching each other, a community built through intimacy. The major difference between Levinas and Merleau-Ponty regarding intersubjectivity is that for Levinas intersubjectivity is inevitably determined by the mutual knowledge between the self and the other (96-102).

2.7. Donald Davidson's approach to subjects and intersubjectivity

The American philosopher Donald Davidson presents another approach to intersubjectivity. Davidson believes that I can only understand the speech of another person if I am able to think of the same things the other person does, so I must share her world. Sharing the world of the other is of key importance, even if I do not agree with the other in all matters, but "in order to disagree we must entertain the same propositions, with the same subject matter, and the same concept of truth" (105). The act of communication depends on both (or all) of the communicators: each communicator must have, and must correctly think that the other has, the concept of a shared world that Davidson calls "the intersubjective world" (105). However, the idea of an intersubjective world is the concept of an objective world, about which each communicator can have his or her own subjective beliefs. In Davidson's opinion, "in order to have a belief, it is necessary to have the concept of belief" and "in order to have the concept of belief one must have language" (102). Beliefs are prerequisites for the existence of language.

The thesis that he sets up in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective* is that "a creature cannot have a thought unless it has language" (100). He believes that a creature must be able to express many thoughts in order to be a thinking creature; furthermore, the creature

must be able to interpret the speech and thoughts of others. While accepting that some scholars might have different points of view on the same issues, he states that without language there probably cannot be much thought.

Davidson's analytical views are somewhat in contrast with Husserl's and Duranti's, ideas, as they believed that there can actually be communication even without language. The example here can be a baby who has just been born by the mother –Davidson would argue that their first shared glimpses are not thoughtful communication, but would be disputed by Husserl and Bruner.

Davidson puts much emphasis on the issue of rationality as well. As a basic example, he states that neither an infant nor a snail is considered a rational creature; however, an infant is often seen as a rational creature because he will most probably become a rational creature later and because he belongs to a species with the capacity of rationality (96). He considers rationality a social trait that only communicators possess (105).

While discussing the issue of language and language use, Davidson states that people with their various acoustical and written products make themselves understood by others (108). For him, to speak a language means that the given person's utterances or written products are consistent with some language, which is needed for that person to be understood (110). He argues that there must be countless languages that no one has ever spoken or will ever speak. When we say that someone speaks French, for instance, that only means that the given person's utterances and writings are "tokens" of French expressions (108). What is important for Davidson is that in practice we want to make our utterances understood by others and we want to understand others' utterances. (109).

When discussing communication, Davidson builds up the idea of the second person, which is a real second person/people here and not the word used to address them

(107). Davidson identifies two parties: the speaker and the interpreter. He believes that once the interpreter is able to understand the speaker for some time, he will become more confident; although the interpreter usually does not know what the other will say, he is *prepared* to interpret what that person might say (111). Furthermore, he states that the interpreter will only be able to understand the utterances of the speaker if he knows that the speaker intends the interpreter to assign some truth conditions to the speaker's utterances; for communication to succeed there must be such intention on behalf of the speaker (111-112).

Davidson explains that two persons not speaking the same language can make themselves understood if they provide the other with something as understandable as a language. Thus, speaking a language requires the presence of an interpreter; however, it is not necessary that all the participants speak the same language (114). In this case, it is important that the speaker intentionally make himself/herself interpretable to the other. According to Davidson, this is a crucial condition in order to reach successful communication (115). He also points out that in order to be understood, the speaker speaks as his listeners would, so the speaker intends to speak as he believes the listeners would (116).

In *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Davidson coins the "triangle principle." According to the principle, a communicative situation requires a triangle: one point is oneself, the second point is another creature, and the third one is an object that is located in a space and thus made common (see fig. 2). The only way of knowing that the second person (the second point in the triangle), is reacting to the same object as oneself is to know that the second person has the same object in mind. The second person/point, must also be aware that they constitute to the same triangle with the first point. To find out if they are related or not, that their thoughts are so related, it is required that they

communicate with each other. It is not necessary that the two of them mean the same thing by using the same expression; however, they must be the interpreters of each other (121).

Self

Another creature   Object
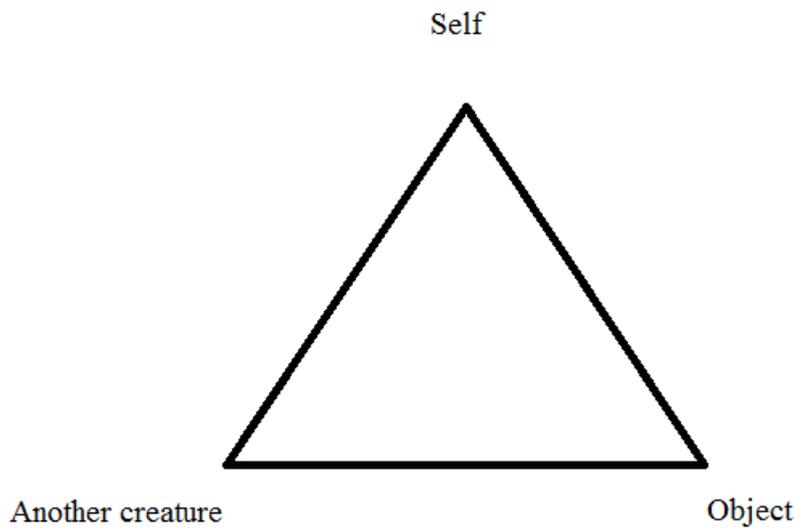
Fig. 2. Davidson's "Triangle Principle"

2.8. Minimal communicative situation

While presenting a similar interpretation as Davidson's "triangle principle," Carlos Cornejo questions the necessity of the intersubjective theory by pointing out some vulnerable aspects of it.

In Cornejo's interpretation the "Minimal Communicative Situation" includes three points, just like Davidson's idea; however, here they represent the speaker, the hearer, and the reference, making up the expression itself (see fig. 3).

Self
Speaker

Another creature
Hearer

Object
Reference

Fig. 3. Cornejo's "Minimal Communicative Situation" and Davidson's "Triangle principle"

Cornejo argues that this situation represents the vital element of many pragmatic theories of language, both implicit and explicit. Cornejo directly references Davidson, citing him as someone who talks about this theory in an explicit way while building up his own theory of communications (174).
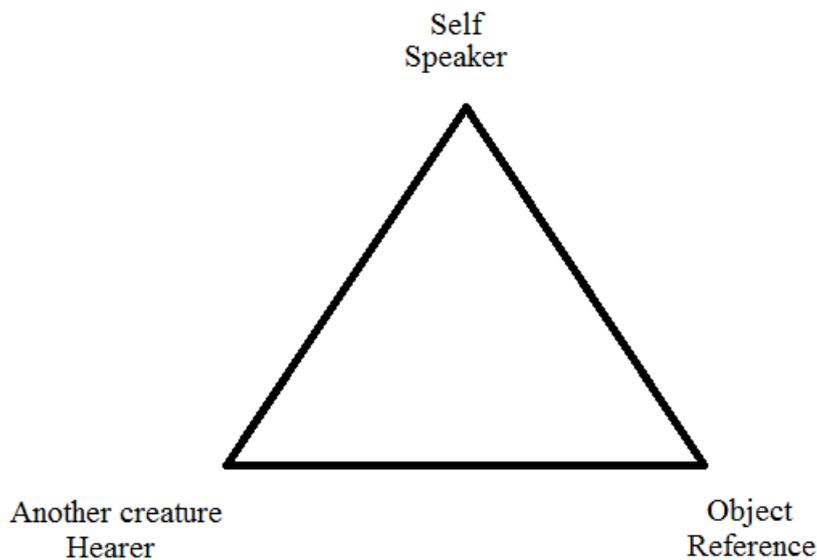
Cornejo's "Minimal Communicative Situation" is present in micro-social interactions, forming the meaning of construction processes that take place between communicative situations. According to his idea, the hearer's and the speaker's phenomenological experience as well as the social interactions that take place between them are also involved in the situation, just like the environmentally situated reference. In his words, "approaching the minimal communicative situation therefore requires realizing that the phenomenological dimension is always implied in any intersubjective encounter" (174). Accordingly, intersubjectivity is defined "as the space when we are being-in-the-

world-with-others"; thus, understanding each other or simple language comprehension can only be achieved if there is a "common experiencing" between the hearer and the listener.

Cornejo also critiques certain aspects of intersubjective theory. He believes that formulating theories cannot be seen as a starting point for human development, nor can it be seen as the basic form of "being-in-the-world." In his interpretation, humans are able to understand essences and entities. For example, they can comprehend things that are "present-at-hand." This knowledge of the environment, or, as he puts it, "knowledge *of* the world," requires an attitude that is built on reflection. Furthermore, humans are able to understand signs and instruments that are "ready-at-hand," so the "knowledge *in* the world." While explaining this term, Cornejo turns back to Heidegger's idea that this latter kind of knowledge is the result of a natural attitude in the world, and it can be a fundamental mode of the "being-in-the-world" (175).

2.9. Judith Butler and the intersubjective encounter

In the literature of intersubjectivity, a number of authors and critics who applied the theory or added some new aspects to it emphasize the importance of the subject. Judith Butler's many works investigate the issue of the subject with special emphasis on gender-related creation of the subject. Butler's Adorno Lectures focus instead on the intersubjective constitution of the subject.

Butler believes that it is indeed important for the self to admit that he or she is not able to know himself or herself completely because the subject is produced through concrete relations with others. The process of self knowledge takes on a completely new meaning once this limitation is admitted. There is a dynamics of recognition but this

dynamics do not directly result in the rediscovery of oneself, it is rather a discovery of oneself as someone else remembers to be (50-54).

Butler believes that in subject formation, the person's social role plays an important part. For example, it is immensely important to recognize the person whom I am going to address in order to know how to address them. "The capacity of a subject to recognize and become recognized is occasioned by a normative discourse whose temporality is not the same as a first-person perspective," Butler explains (42). Beginning in childhood, social context greatly influences how a subject is formed. Humanization of the other, a vital social skill, can happen with the help of the second person pronoun, for example by simply asking "What is your name?" or "Where do you live?" In this sense, addressing someone can only happen if I recognize the other person as someone who can be addressed. However, this is not possible without social context and norms, which are not just mine but also everyone else's (23, 62).

Butler particularly emphasizes the question of "Who are you?" because she believes that it is an important element in creating the self. She argues that just by asking the question we immediately admit that there was another person before us whom we cannot fully comprehend or we just simply do not know (31).

Butler's ideas link back clearly to Davidson's writings about intersubjective theory. Davidson's theory, which includes the speaker and the interpreter, is based on the same recognition of the other that Butler discusses in her work. They both agree that without recognition, addressing the other or communicating with them is highly problematic, though recognition of the other alone is not enough for successful communication.

Butler's discussion of the "other" also returns to Husserl's idea. In Husserl's world, others are understood as subjects like me, who have a similar relationship with their surrounding world. But first the other must be recognized (as stated in Butler's work), and

then their surrounding world should be investigated to see if the two will be able to share ideas with each other within the same social context. In this way, Butler's ideas about normativity and society can be seen as a more specific and societally grounded elaboration of Husserl's world.

The process of recognition presupposes a situation in which reciprocal interrogation is present. Butler believes that when I encounter someone, "I offer myself as an 'I' and try to reconstruct my deeds, showing that the deed attributed to me was or was not, in fact, among them." These are the parameters within which the account that I make of myself takes place; it might be not entirely correct and true, but this is how I present myself when I encounter someone. This opens a possibility for a narratable self, which can be a key component in determining "who I am," or to describe self-identity (11).

Butler also discusses the issue of interchangeability. She says that language and habit, which structure recognition, make subjects interchangeable. To make oneself recognizable, the person must make themselves replaceable, she argues. This can be seen as an advancement of Husserl's notion of "trading places." Although Butler only talks about replaceability, it can correspond with Husserl's view that the ability of substitution allows the person to become not only recognizable but also a partner in a communicative situation. The idea of "trading places" can bring about mutual understanding in practice, which can be crucial to an intersubjective encounter (30-34).

According to philosopher Kathy Dow Magnus, Butler insists on the replicability of the subjects that participate in the intersubjective encounter. "Indeed, Butler's entire ethics is based precisely upon the recognition that the other is *like* me in its inability to justify itself. Since each subject is 'subject' to the same rules and shares in the same inability to know herself, each shares in a common structure." Furthermore, she adds, "Butler's work implies that a subject's healthy self-relation depends upon her ability to suspend judgement

of other." As a result, discourse is not "an abstract entity to which subject must submit;" it is rather the formulating element of the space in which "subject may stage their communicative interaction" (98-100).

Butler's views clearly correlate with other researchers' ideas about the other and trading places. As Cronick points out, for several thinkers the other is indeed recognized as a fellow person and they also admit that this other person is similar to me, even if there might be several things we do not agree on. The importance of accepting the other as a fellow human being is of key importance to intersubjective theory, as without it, community formation and communication cannot materialize (535).

2.10. The idea of embodiment

Social scientists have long been researching the human body and there is a consensus to consider the human body an object of anthropological study. Thomas Csordas and some new research suggest that embodiment, as a paradigm, can be refined to study the self and culture as well (5).

In a widely accepted interpretation, the body and its relation to culture is not just an object of study, but should be seen as the subject of culture as well. This results in the concept of embodiment, defined as the notion of understanding the body as something that defines the relationship of the self with the world while also being an element of the universe. When the mind recognizes the difference between mind and body, embodiment takes place and the body-mind distinction becomes relevant for the self. Bodies are not perceived as objects, according to Csordas, but subjects, They are also defined as other myselves. The idea of another myself helps the self to distinguish itself from others in social interactions.

An intersubjective being is made up due to the embodiment that takes place during social interactions. Intersubjectivity between two subjects makes it possible for intersubjectivity to facilitate successful and real communication (36-37).

In his essay entitled "Emotional Metamorphoses: The Role of Others in Becoming a Subject," Kym Maclaren elucidates the relationship between embodiment and emotions. She argues that emotions are necessary elements of humans' development towards autonomous beings and they are not opposed to reason. Emotions and the expressions of emotions become tools for people to display their attempts to show that they are trying to make sense of their world (26-27).

In Maclaren's understanding, emotion is an experience of a tension taking place within our reality that puts our place in reality into question. Expressions of emotions are actually ways through which we would like to make sense of certain situations. Emotion is not a conscious and internal event, she argues, stating that behavior that is sometimes brought about by escalated emotions should not be explained as irrational, rather, it should be seen in a situation where the person is not able to interpret or make sense of the given situation (26-43).

Maclaren holds a distinctive view about the idea of *being in the world*. She believes that how the world presents itself to us matters, because it will help us understand different emotions as well. The ways we perceive things around us depend on us and our actual mood. She believes that the world that presents itself in our perception is emotionally meaningful and shows how we are coming along and how we are situated within this world. Thus, emotions are always unique feelings given someone's personality and their current state of mind, which can also result in the difficult categorization of certain emotions. What can be considered sad and happy? The key is always in the understanding of someone's current situation in addition to their background. Emotions propel our

becomings, no matter what kind of emotions we are talking about, argues Maclaren (28-29, 43).

2.11. Embodiment and communication

The theoretical foundation of this dissertation argues for a connection between intersubjective theory, communications theory, embodiment, and intersubjective encounter, and its utility in literary analysis. Nick Crossley clearly argues how these theories connect to each other, stating that "the mind is a distinct substance, separate from the (substance of the) body." Furthermore, in his understanding, minds must be transparent for themselves and also, as distinct form of bodies, "constitute the essence of who we are." Crossley agrees with fellow social scientists that interaction between people and communication are the basic elements of society and history, and he goes so far as to assert that they are necessary "for our understanding of the social world more generally" (*Communication* 46).

Crossley draws on Merleau-Ponty, as I did above, to highlight that speech is a secondary process, the translation of thought without which language does not make sense. Crossley compares it to the car and its key – they key is needed for the car to get into motion; however, the key itself alone will not make the car move, no matter what. "We can only know what it is that we think by way of speech; by formulating our thoughts in words," he explains. "This process may be sub-vocal but sub-vocalization is dependent upon and derivative from normal speech such that we can rightly say that we know our own thoughts only by the embodied means of speech" (46).

In Crossley's point of view, we do not experience thoughts or ideas independently of or without their formulation in language. There is no base to state that one precedes the

other. As an example he mentions an idea which "appears to elude us until we have managed to put it into words" and "this putting into words must be understood as the accomplishment of the thought itself." To epitomize it: we cannot think something until we say it (46).

This idea is completely in line with what Davidson described in *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*–that "a creature cannot have a thought unless it has language." Furthermore, Davidson also believes that a creature must be able to express thoughts; furthermore, he or she must be able to interpret the speech and thoughts of others. According to him, without language there probably cannot be much thought (100).

Crossley acknowledges that this statement challenges Cartesian philosophy on many levels. First of all, it suggests that in the process of speech thought must be embodied. Secondly, "it suggests that the subject's relationship to herself, her knowledge of her own thought, is mediated by the act of speech and the rules and resources of language, which speech necessarily draws upon" (*Communication* 46-47).

The American philosopher George H. Mead believed that thinking, as an act, is conversational in nature, which, according to him, might mean that it is a kind of genuine dialogue between two people in which the individual is able to stimulate themselves while they make claims, anticipate counter-claims, respond to those counter-claims etc. For Mead, thinking means that the person can take the attitude of others toward him or herself and it allows them to play a role of a simulated and internalized interaction. This process might take place without vocalization; it is extremely private and individualized. However, Mead believes that this has to do with both social and embodied processes Mead believes that the capacity of taking roles is acquired in childhood when we play at being them (368-378).

Mead does not believe that speech and thought are the same. He believes that speech is needed to reflect thoughts and ideas. To speak we must use language and to do so, we certainly must understand language, which is obviously not possible within language. As an illustration: children learning a first language have to do that without the help of another language. The case is a bit different when it comes to adults: speakers who respond to questions or comments have to mobilize language in a knowing way to do so. This is possible because of the affinity that is present between speech and gesture, and, according to Mead, between language and affect as well (68-75). Crossley, one of Mead's most prominent interpreters, believes that in Mead's point of view, gestures, including speech, express emotions. However, expression is not meant as an "outward translation or effect of something which belongs to an inner realm." For instance, a man who shakes his fist embodies his anger in shaking his hand, so "his anger consists in and of his fist shaking." His anger is apparent to everyone, including himself. In Crossley's interpretation, the man communicates more about his own self with his actions than he is aware of. He also believes that there are many other embodied states that can be seen as public, for example love, jealousy, dread, or worry.

Based on his research, Crossley reveals the wonderful epitome of interconnectedness or embodiment and intersubjective communication. His observation about embodiment, speech, and communication can be used to comprehend the world around us, including interpersonal relationships:

> If our embodiment is integral to our subjectivity, however, if thought presupposes
> the physical act of speech and emotion consists in embodied activity, and if we only
> become aware of our thoughts and emotions through observation of these embodied
> activities then our subjective lives are knowable to others (at least in principle) in

much that same way as they are knowable to us, ourselves, and our subjectivities genuinely make contact and affect one another in the space of social interaction. It is important to add here … that this also presupposes a particular practice of perception; particular ways of looking and seeing. To say that the other is knowable to us is not to say that we relate to them as an object of our thought, carefully deducing, as some philosophical accounts might suggest, that their corporeal shell really does 'contain' conscious experience. We might step back from ordinary perception in an effort to engage in such analysis, not least for philosophical purposes, but in ordinary perception … the actions of the other (speech, gesture and other activities) communicate directly to us in ways which trigger immediate responses from us. We do not think about and reflect upon what the other does, ordinarily, we respond to it. (47-48)

Crossley points out an immensely important factor of communication: ultimately the goal of thoughts and emotions, which later result in speech, are not only to express the state of mind the given person is in, but also to provoke reaction to it. Just like Husserl and Habermas, Crossley also believes in the significance of response, which is the essential element for communication. In Habermas's idea of mutual understanding, we can see that his theory also emphasized the importance of the response, which must be understood by the other party in order for real communication to take place. Perception in itself is not enough; it must be able to bring about some kind of a response so that communication becomes successful.

Elaborating on the idea of communication with gestures, Mead coins the "conversation of gestures" which, according to him, is a process common to many animals as well. In the conversation of gestures one of the parties acts, triggering a response from

the other party, triggering a response in the first party, and so on. However, for humans, this process is obviously more complex, mainly because humans are actually aware of their own linguistic gestures: the human hears what they say to the other and responds to their own gesture on the next turn, as well as the other's. However, Crossley believes that after a while communication is no longer a back-and-forth but a single shared system. "In the experience of dialogue there is constituted between myself and the other person a common ground; my thought and his are interwoven into a single fabric, my words and those of my interlocutor are called forth by the state of the discussion, and they are inserted into a shared operation of which neither of us is the creator" (48). What is important to emphasize here is that Mead and Crossley also point out that humans are dual beings, they co-exist through common words and through communication people make each other think and thinking might have a serious effect on the way communication continues (42-51). Intersubjective theory, communications theory, and embodiment, are, in all of these ways, interrelated.

2.12. Intersubjective theory in practice

2.12.1. The psychological approach to intersubjective theory

Intersubjective theory is interdisciplinary and is not constricted to the fields of communication studies, philosophy, or literature. In the 1970s, when the idea of intersubjectivity was first raised in American and European scholarly communities, it was more a social and psychological approach, in addition to a wing of philosophy. Many psychologists used and discussed the idea in their works to understand personal

relationships between certain people. It has been used to understand and criticize art as well.

While most of the psychologists who work with intersubjective theory are not rooted in philosophy, Husserl and Habermas's philosophical ideas are evident in psychological works. Psychologists put more emphasis on practical usage of the theory, which can prove useful for literary criticism as well, since it models framing of some characters' relationships to one another within a psychological context.

The cognitive psychologist Jerome Bruner defined the idea of intersubjectivity as "how people come to know what others have in mind and how they adjust accordingly" (161). Bruner also believed that intersubjectivity was merely "the human ability to understand the minds of others, whether through language, gesture, or other means." Turning to the issue of non-verbal communication, Bruner argues that this ability is made possible not only by words, by language, but by "our capacity to grasp the role of settings in which words, acts, and gestures occur." He also believes that intersubjectivity is especially important for humans, as it permits us to negotiate meanings when words miss their way (20). Interestingly, as a psychologist, Bruner believes that intersubjectivity begins in the first weeks of life when an infant makes eye contact with his or her mother and moves quickly into their sharing joint attention of common actions (57-58). This is in line with Husserl's previously discussed idea according to which no words are necessary for communication.

Bruner's interpretation is considered a bit problematic by many as, in Duranti's interpretation, one simply cannot really know what another person is thinking about or what is in the mind of that given person. Thus, Duranti and others consider the psychological interpretation of intersubjectivity reliant on "matching of one's mental state

with another's mental state," and that by doing so the force of intersubjectivity is reduced (5).

The social scientist Alfred Schutz also studied intersubjectivity, adopting and expanding some of Husserl's ideas. Schutz coined a new term for intersubjectivity, referring to it as "we-relationship," a condition of possibility and not an effect of communication. According to Schutz, intersubjectivity will always be the foundation for all other categories of human existence. "The possibility of reflection on the self, discovery of the ego, (…) and the possibility of all communication and of establishing a communicative surrounding world as well, are founded on the primal experience of the we-relation" (80-82).

Robert Prus, researcher of pedagogy, points out that human group life is intersubjective (11). He believes that people are born into social lifeworlds that preexist them and that every human group possesses a language or a set of symbols that help group members communicate and also helps the newcomers to gain comprehension of that particular world. Prus's theory is obviously in line with what Husserl and Habermas believed about intersubjectivity and lifeworld. All of them hold that social lifeworlds preexist the birth of a given person. Prus's new contribution is that language not only helps communication between the members of a certain group, but also helps newcomers gain comprehension of the group's existing world that the newcomer is entering. This refers not just to newborn babies (as they are not able to master the language for years), it must refer to outsiders of the society, who need to learn the customs and lifeworlds of given communities or nations.

Psychology, as a field of study, has fruitfully utilized intersubjective theory and the idea of lifeworld, especially the subfield of community psychology. As O'Connor's texts usually take place in a particularly distinctive community of the United States, it can be

immensely important to study theories regarding community psychology to gain deep understanding of intersubjective theory and its applicability to analyzing fiction in which communication and community matter.

2.12.2. Community intersubjectivity

Community and the sense of community is of key importance when discussing the literature of a distinctive region. As we see, community theory is closely connected to intersubjective theory and a branch of community psychology pays special attention to the idea of intersubjectivity.

Research by O'Donnell and Tharp suggests that community psychology puts much emphasis on the importance of context. According to them, whenever we discuss context, we must also turn to culture, as they are deeply interconnected. Obviously, culture itself is often a disputed and discussed term that has thousands of definitions; for community psychology, O'Donnell and Tharp believe that it is sufficient to refer to culture as something which "is formed and continues to evolve through the context of history, geography, human development, and social, political, and economic systems. Culture is expressed in language, speech patterns, artifacts, music, values and behavioral norms. Different cultural patterns can be considered variations displaying arrays of human characteristics." They also state that culture and cultural communities are never static, they all change due to historical, social, political or even economic effects (23).

O'Donnell and Tharp also state that people who share experiences, communicate with each other, or even live or work together might also develop a shared view of world and culture or social worlds. In this way, social contexts cannot exist without people, communities, and culture. O'Donnell and Tharp are in perfect line with what Husserl and

Habermas believed about lifeworld. They might all agree, without using the same expressions, that a shared view of world is a key component of successful communication; furthermore, they all emphasize the importance of the presence of other people besides the given individual (24). It is important to briefly reiterate here that Habermas believed that the possibility of subjectivity and also intersubjectivity are already widespread in culture.

According to O'Donnell and Tharp, members of a community can develop common experiences by engaging in shared activities. These experiences can affect their cognitions, behavioral development, emotions, and even their social networks. If community is defined by shared activities and shared meaning refers to culture, then we can see that community and culture are embedded into each other, their integration is strong and obvious. However, they believe that this integration can only happen with the help of the concept of intersubjectivity (23).

> Intersubjectivity develops in activity settings during joint productive activity, facilitates the activity, and becomes the shared meanings of culture through semiotic processes (largely linguistic) that accompany the members' shared activity. Intersubjectivity results from the shared experiences among people engaged in collaborative interactions: their history, values, thoughts, emotions, and interpretations of their world. Intersubjectivity is the psychological commonality that provides meaning in their lives. As intersubjectivity is developed, their activities are facilitated and culture propagated (24).

Thus, we can see now that the sense of community is clearly connected to intersubjectivity. Furthermore, O'Donnell and Tharp believe that communication is actually facilitated by intersubjectivity. "The higher the level of intersubjectivity, the greater is the likelihood of

feelings of belonging or sense of community," they added (25). Another community psychology approach towards intersubjectivity is put forth by Karen Cronick, whose main research focus is the development of communities and the behavior of individual members of community. Cronick's works are based largely on the idea of the subject itself. In her understanding, the subject is "the source of consciousness and agency"; the subject can be seen as the manifestation of awareness, liberty, will, morality, and reason as well. She believes that subjects often make use of shared awareness in order to define the surrounding world and also to act intentionally in it. In her understanding, this world is transmitted through language and has historical origins. Because of this transmission, people might have the ability to act in an intersubjective way even before entering real, person-to-person relationships, she believes. "The capacity that people have for understanding other people's intentions is more than the simple perception of movement, sound waves …. People know that the behavior of others signifies something, and that there is something behind (a mind) that is not apparent only on the basis of that behavior" (531-535).

In Cronick's understanding the concepts above are necessary to talk about community psychology, and community intersubjectivity, as such. Community intersubjectivity requires awareness of others (other subjects) and also concerns regarding their wellbeing. It is immensely important that "community members see each others' needs as extensions of their own without being identical to them" (535-536).

Psychological and community psychological approaches put emphasis on two basic issues: interaction between the members of a given community and sharing something within the community. These ideas clearly show that community formation and shared understanding require a tremendous amount of interaction between the members so that they get to know each other better. The emphasis is always twofold: on both sharing and

interaction. These community dynamics complicate theories that focus on communication between two individuals without a community context.

2.12.3. Intersubjective home

The notion of home can become critical when it comes to discussing intersubjective relationships between people or characters. Being home and being far from home can result in a completely different psychological status, which might also bring about change in interpersonal relationships and in means of communications. Furthermore, the idea of home is not necessarily objective, it might constructed by each individual in his or her own way. However, the idea of home is not something exact or easy to define, thus it opens up the floor for academic debate.

Emmanuel Levinas, discussed earlier in the chapter, dealt extensively with the idea of home. Levinas believed that identifying oneself as someone who exists in the world at home with oneself is of key importance in figuring out the relationship between the self the world. He believed that home is the place where the I can be free. He emphasized the idea of possessing, as he believed that a person can only be at home with themselves in the world because the world offers the possibility to, and to resist possession (36-37).

Philosopher Joona Taipale also investigates the issue of intersubjectivity and the notion of home. Taipale draws readers' attention to the idea of empathy. Taipale's work suggests that we are able to abstract a sense of home and belonging that is familiar for us against alternative home-worlds which might be perceived at aliens to one's own. The basis of this idea is the group of concretely experienced others, which eventually encompasses a quite broad dimension of intersubjectivity. It can be understood as the

appropriation of narratives and even historical traditions. Taipale's idea becomes applicable for not only personal relationships, but the idea of home as well (90-98).

I would like to provide some widely-accepted definitions regarding homes. According to the social theorist Barrington Moore, home in literature in many cases equals haven and refuge. He believes that home is often depicted as a place or space where characters can relax and retreat (71-80). Contemporary social theorist Julia Wardaugh observes that this understanding of home is founded on related ideas, most notably the distinctions between private and public, along with the inside and outside world (93-94). According to this "dichotomy," in Shelley Mallett's interpretation, the enclosed or inside "domain of the home represents a comfortable, secure and safe place." In contrast, the outside is perceived as a threatening or dangerous space and a more diffused, less defined one. Mallett also points out that in the outside world different rules are in effect in case of engagement with people and places (71). As the inside is often identified as private, it is clearly differentiated from public space and is removed from public surveillance and scrutiny. The public space is in many cases associated with work and non-kin relationships. On the other hand, the private sphere of home is typically seen and depicted as a space that offers among many other things, security, freedom, and control.

2.12.4. Intersubjective sense of community

The notions of a sense of community and sense of belonging are often present in criticism regarding Southern authors and intersubjective theory. As a general and widely accepted definition, the idea of community means an array of institutions that are related to each other in either a formal or an informal way. Community, this way, is much more than just a geographical or maybe political area, it is composed of thousands of groups which

have various purposes -- sometimes similar, in other cases different -- and can also alter in size, style, capability, and function as well. The groups of a given community might vary in capital, power they already have or seek, size, and even goals. It is enormously important that a community have a distinctive history, which is essential for the understanding of the community's qualities and characteristics, let them be economic, political or even religious (Sarason 131).

As Seymour B. Sarason points out, "a community has changed, is changing, and will change again" (131). How this change is brought about and how it happens, always depends on two factors. The first one is the larger society in which the community exists, the influence of the extended surroundings is always worth of note. However, the second factor, the characteristics of the given community, will always be much more significant in the phase of change. Communities always face external impacts, but the way they respond to these forces matters to the outcome. Even though it is widely accepted that communities share some characteristics, they also possess uniqueness, distinctive features, and particularity (131).

Religion and religious institutions can be features of communities. It is important to note that every community has its own way of expressing how important they find religion in their everyday operations; in some communities religion is neglected, while in case of others it is crucial element. "Communities vary in the extent to which they bear the stamp of religion," according to Sarason (132).

Turning back to the idea of home, Cronick explains that a sense of community is "the product of the collective representations of community members" (538). The essence of this sense is a collective project which is often defined by psychologists as "we-ness." The "we-ness" and the community might be built around the binary oppositions of 'us' and 'them' as well, so the identification of the 'others' might be immensely important. Cronick

concludes that the sense of belonging can be epitomized in two phases: "This is our space" and "We are not alone" (538).

The vast majority of communities have shared identity and traditions. Even if social roots are often present when a sense of community is formed, some of them define themselves exclusively in either mythical or ethnic terms (538). The size of the communities might vary – from the smallest places, like villages, to larger areas, for instance the South as a cohesive American region.

Historical identities can be an especially important part of expressing a sense of community. These historical identities often times include stories about the community's almost mythical or heroic origins. As an example, Cronick mentions the Founding Fathers for the heroic origins of the USA. Several examples can be found in Southern history as well, such as the Confederate heroes of the Civil War, whose statues can still be seen all around the South. Historical origins might also include less explicit, even hidden or self-defeating parts as well, for example when members of a given community internalize some kind of prejudice, even if it originates from outside their community. According to Cronick, an example for this might be the negative self-image of certain minorities in the US, such as African-Americans and Native Americans. In such cases, community members might work on redefining themselves and their community; however, in some cases it takes an outsider to make it happen (539).

David McMillan's research also emphasizes the sense of belonging and the sense of community. According to McMillan, the sense of community "is a *spirit* of belonging together, a feeling that there is an authority structure that can be *trusted*, and awareness that *trade*, and mutual benefit come from being together, and a spirit that comes from shared experiences that are reserved as art" (315). As McMillan notes, for many other social psychologists, the sense of community often comes together with the expression of

"membership," which results in the delimitation between "us" and "they." Membership's role is also to create emotional safety, which results in privacy. Membership, then, might also refer to the senses of belonging and confidence; furthermore, membership is a way to guarantee the acceptance of other group members as well (315).

If we take a look at Moore and Wardough's definitions of home, we can see that their vision has a lot in common with what McMillan says. They all emphasize intimacy, regardless which meaning of the world we talk about. A common expression used by all of these authors is "shared;" they all believe that home and/or community cannot exist without shared spirit, experiences, or values. The expression "shared" is also key in intersubjective theory: without shared and mutual understanding, communication can never be successful.

McMillan goes further with his interpretation of membership, stating that cognitive dissonance is often associated with the responsibility of one member's sacrifice for the sake of the community. This cognitive dissonance, he believes, can enhance the confidence of certain members and it can also create the sense of entitlement, so it eases the coming about of the sense of community. What might be even more important, it can build loyalty within the group to the group (315).

The connection between intersubjectivity and the theory of community might not be obvious for the first sight; however, some researchers' ideas about community reveal the relationship between them.

Sarason's work *The Psychological Sense of Community* gives a detailed picture of what social scientists in general consider community. In Sarason's words, community is

the sense that one was part of a readily available, mutually supportive network of relationships upon which one could depend and as a result of which one did not

experience sustained feelings of loneliness that impel one to actions or to adopting a style of living masking anxiety and setting the stage for later and more destructive anguish. It is not merely a matter of how many people one knows, or how many close friends one has, or even the number of loved ones – if they are not part of the structure of one's everyday living, and if they are not available to one in a "give and get" way, they can have little affect on one's immediate or daily sense of community (1-2).

Saranson's structure of the everyday living can be seen as the lifeworld itself. Here, through Sarason's explanation, we can clearly see the obvious connection between intersubjectivity and the sense of community. The structure of everyday living and lifeworld operate on the same level at every individual – they are both quintessential elements of a person's everyday life. Sarason's definition includes the expression "mutual," which is often present when an author discusses intersubjective theory. This proves that mutual understanding and operations are immensely important for both theories, making a bridge between them.

Steven L. Thorne has a similar understanding of community and community formation. In his research he gives one of the most important, relevant, and acclaimed definitions of community, highlighting the permanent presence of concepts like membership, shared features, belonging, mutual benefit, and commitment. Furthermore, he believes that the definition of community should touch upon important elements and ideas like collectivity and "the tendency to refer to social configurations that are somewhat durative." Throne also believes that community itself is "a reminder of our collective interdependence" (304).

However, Thorne's work also points out some issues on which general academic interpretations vary. Normalization and conformity, attitudes and contributions towards collective goals might differ in certain communities, just like the understanding and approach towards shared contexts. He also believes that when discussing community theories, it is important to mention enculturation and acculturation as well. Enculturation refers to the process through which a person or community adapts to surrounding communication and/or cultures, while acculturation is the "intentional learning of new linguistic-cultural practices." Both enculturation and acculturation help the shaping of a given individual's maturation and his or her conforming into the given society of community (304).

Thorne also points out that when describing the term community, many scholars refer to different sizes of such social entities. We can hold an expansive definition of community, which might include a cohort of friends, classmates, survivors of a certain disease (for instance cancer), individuals living close to each other, or people with similar experiences that they might have gone through together or in completely different times (for example veterans or alumni). What is important to emphasize here is that community might refer to several different bunches of people, whether it is just a dozen of them or several thousand (304-305).

"Rather than conceptions of community that reside fundamentally in the sociological imagination," Thorne argues, "community might be usefully reframed as an emergent and performative process rooted in the object-orientedness of specific social-material actions and interactions" (305).

2.12.5. Community and communication

The American philosopher and intellectual John Dewey is mostly well-known for his ideas about education and the way we should treat children in school; however, he was a remarkable thinker about community and communications as well. As he points out in his 1916 classic *Democracy and Education*, there is much more than an etymological tie between the words common, community, and communication. In his understanding, humans live in a community based on the things they share in common and they use communication (communicate in the verb form) as a way to possess those things which are actually in common. Humans must have knowledge, beliefs, aims, like-mindedness, common understanding, and aspirations in common to form a community. Societies can only exist with communication, otherwise they die, Dewey believes. Commonalities are passed from one person to the other through communication; however, it is not as easy as passing a brick from one person to the other. Communication is the means through which sharing takes place and it is also the action that insures common understanding. Communication can also secure "emotional and intellectual dispositions–like ways of responding to expectations and requirements" (4).

Dewey emphasizes that people do not become part of a society or community simply because of physical proximity. People can be socially influenced or included from a far distance as well. In his understanding, reading the same books and exchanging letters are excellent ways of keeping someone in a given community, because they foster an intimate relationship between a community and an individual. Dewey believes that if individuals are interested in a common goal and are involved in specific activities regarding that particular goal, they will likely form a community. However, all this cannot happen without communication. Individuals need to know as many things about the others as possible, and they also need to keep the others updated about themselves, their plans,

purposes, preferences, etc. Put simply, Dewey states that "consensus demands communication" (4-5).

The correlation between consensus and communication is widely discussed in philosophy and communications theory, and by Dewey as well. As discussed earlier in this chapter, Habermas believed that consensus is needed for successful communication and he insisted that consensus must be achieved by the best argument. He believed that consensus is an essential element of communication and communicatively achieved consensus needs to be reached in order to reach rationality (86). What Dewey says about consensus and communication clearly correlates with Habermas's point of view. Dewey's "consensus demands communication" statement is basically the paraphrase of what Habermas argued.

Turning back to community and communication, Dewey also points out that not all relationships between members of societies are social in nature. In his understanding, there are several social groups in which relationships are rather mechanical: people talk to each other, take orders from other people; however, they do not share emotions or intellectual interests. Dewey believes that in such cases we cannot really talk about communication. He observes that such situations mainly occur in relationships where one of the parties is in a superior position compared to the other. It can be a parent-child, teacher-student, boss-employee, governor-governed relationship. What is common in these nexuses, is that their activities touch one another, but they do not necessarily end up being meaningful communicative activities that build community, consensus, or intimacy (Dewey 5).

Dewey goes so far as to state that social life is one and the same as communication. He also believes that communication always has some kind of an educational purpose, and because of the connection between social life and communication, social life itself must also bear educational purposes.

To become a recipient of a communicative action, Dewey argued, the individual must have changed or enlarged experience. "One shares in what another has thought and felt and in so far, meagerly or amply, has his own attitude modified" (5). However, he also points out that the person who communicates will not stay unaffected. Communication changes people. Whether they are the speakers or the hearers, the attitudes and experiences of human individuals change due to the communicative actions. "The experience has to be formulated in order to be communicated. To formulate requires getting outside of it, seeing it as another would see it, considering what points of contact it has with the life of another so that it may be got into such form that he can appreciate its meaning" (5-6).

Dewey's views align with the theory of intersubjectivity, regardless of the fact that he interpreted communication and communicative actions from an educator's point of view. Dewey himself also believed in the mutuality of communication and he points out the importance of exchanging places – the idea which is critical in Husserl's works. Dewey describes intersubjectivity without actually using the expression itself. By applying this theory and charting its practice as an educator, Dewey helps us conceptualize intersubjectivity from a practical point of view.

2.12.6. Community and the South

In the discussion of intersubjective theory, communication, and community studies, we have now reached a point when our attention can be directed towards the American South, where vast majority of Flannery O'Connor's fiction take place.

It has been a literary commonplace that community has a particular importance in the South, thus in the literature of the Southern states as well. The idea of a Southern community is relevant for many authors who work on Southern literature. In *The History*

of Southern Literature, Cleanth Brooks expresses his opinion about Southern community in his chapter discussing William Faulkner. Brooks believed that "a true community … is held together by manners and morals deriving from a commonly held view of reality. The common values that bind the community may be defective, even wrongheaded. In such case, all praise to the individual who tries to amend them" (339).

As Scott Romine points out in his book entitled *The Narrative Forms of Southern Community*, manners basically mean a way of "deferring conflict on an everyday basis," and he also adds that the presence of manners indicate the unique nature of the South that perceive reality as a form of manner. (1-3). Also, Romine believes that "from the beginning of southern literary studies as an academic discipline, the community has served as a critical touchstone," going so far as to assert that saying that community as a central element of Southern literature actually became a commonplace, a cliché in the study of the US South (1-3).

While southern community is cohesive, Romine argues that it is coercive at the very same time. It might be used as a force to make people part of a particular community, for example by emphasizing or enforcing norms and conformity, even if they do not really fit in it. He also calls attention to the dangers of representing the community in only positive factors, as the shared values that make up a community can be both positive and deeply negative. This is immensely important in examining Southern culture, as communities shared values condoned and perpetuated segregation. "Communities cohere not by means of values, but norms, which can be comprehensive in a way that values never can" (3).

The American social imagination is rich in clichés about the South and southern community. Besides emphasizing the importance of the community, there is an impression that in the South a person who lives in a neighboring county is a stranger, while someone

from another state (even another Southern one) is a foreigner. In Romine's point of view, this cliché suggests the importance of drawing and enforcing boundaries when defining a community, the inside and outside of the community, "its conditions of insiderhood and outsiderhood" (4).

Community has three important conditions in Romine's framework: boundary, structure, and image. As he points out, the first two are structural conditions; however, they might not be perfectly stable. They can maintain the integrity they gained through opposition and difference. However, he does not consider image a structural condition. He believes that it is probably the least tangible and exact part of the community, image "permits mimetic orientation in which the positive attributes of community (cohesiveness, order, stability, interdependence, and so on) are lent a kind of iconic integrity, or … are displaced into things. A given community's icon allows a way of thinking about that particular community that "effaces its status as thinking, since the community appears in this configuration as an object there to be perceived rather than as a product of collective or quasi-collective projection." These icons are notoriously selective (8).

Communities, including southern communities, are never objective, as real, changing people actually live in them. When we encounter the South in written materials, the expression "sense of place" is in many cases present in them, says Romine. Southerners who actually live in that part of the United States obviously have a subjective image of the South and their community. The concept of "sense of place" is immensely important when it comes to the discussion of community studies, even if it is not an objective term to analyze. Romine points that Habermas also dealt with this particular issue: "As Jürgen Habermas says of the lifeworld (…), the community's social roles and norms can never be perceived as being instrumental or strategic, as having a *purpose* such as distributing material wealth or social prerogatives in a certain way." This might suggest the notion of a

community that is always present, there to help members. Romine declares that this perception is relevant in the Southern states of the US (8).

O'Brien's research concentrates much on the society and different communities of the South, beginning from already the 19th century and on. In his interpretation, individuals in a given community go on with their affairs and gain knowledge through personal experiences and -- maybe even more importantly -- relationships. Face-to-face relationships are immensely important on the everyday level; however, at wider levels of society, people often need to relate on impersonal bases (266). Wider level in American standards might refer to a particular state or a given region (e.g. the South).

O'Brien writes about "human wholes" as places "where individuals carry on virtually all life-sustaining activities," suggesting that "human wholes" might refer to the lifeworld itself. In his opinion, personal or primary relationships are the key elements of all local communities, and such communities "give rise to power arrangements" that are basically made up of primary relationships. The face-to-face relationships originate from a simple fact: most communities are characterized by narrow physical movement, thus there are only limited opportunities to distance oneself from the local community (266).

O'Brien points out the importance of personal relationships in the South, emphasizing their importance especially in smaller, rural communities. On a wider level, relationships can be maintained in written forms; however, it is important to mention here that in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, illiteracy was rampant in the region and a significant portion of Southern society was not able to read or write. This makes verbal communication even more important and significant for both the wider Southern community, and also for small communities like villages or townships.

The South has had to face notational boundaries in addition to physical boundaries. Geographical boundaries, of course, slice up the region into several smaller entities, but

boundaries exist between different layers of society as well. An important difference between the two types of divisions is that communication between different strata does not seem as difficult as it might be between geographically separated regions of the South (266-267).

As Vance Rupert points out in *Regionalism and the South,* the family, as a part of community and society, was much more significant in the South than in any other regions of the United States, beginning from the Civil War. According to his research, divorce rates were traditionally lower in this region, while fertility rates remained higher. Rupert believes that "the emphasis on kinship made family status and heritage a sure avenue to social rank" (149). According to Vance's research, the importance of the family did not decline in the 20th century either. He believes that from the Civil War through the first half of the 20th century, family was basically the core of the Southern society. One researcher observed family meals as immensely important parts of family life, which was significant for non-family members as well: "No one recognized to be a Southerner's social equal dines anywhere other than in his own house or in that of a friend" (149). Especially in rural areas of the South, family homes become quintessential centers of the community and the family. While Southern cities seemed to be abandoned and even ugly for outsiders, Southern homes remained vital parts of Southern everyday life as people concentrated much more on the orderliness of personal spaces than on the tidiness of public spaces. That might be one reason why many visitors found the Southern states of America a strange place, especially if the visitor came from a context where family and kinship do not bear the same level of significance (149).

Fred Hobson largely agrees with this view of Southern family culture, but also points out that in 20th century Southern literature, a heavy emphasis is put on the characteristics of the South that distinguish the region from other parts of America. These

supposedly representative Southern characteristics include the proximity of nature, religion, affection towards place, and the importance of family relations. To connect his ideas with literature itself, Hobson points out that many notable Southern writers are much more conscious about family, community, place, and religion and the social demonstration of those concepts than their non-southern colleagues (3-4). Hobson also emphasizes how Southern authors pay a great deal of attention to the relationship between past and present. In his research, he also calls readers' attention to the idea of regional history, in which both the Southern past and the individual past of the given characters are included (3-4).

Hobson believes that Southern authors are usually quite knowledgeable about their literary ancestors, keeping in mind what and how they did in the decades which precede their literary activities (4). One might even be able to consider them a self-conscious community of Southern writers through text. The relevance of this research to O'Connor's fiction will be discussed below.

The issue of Southern identity is also vitally significant when discussing the region's literature. *The History of Southern Literature* emphasizes from the beginning the importance of identity. As the author of the volume, Louis D. Rubin Jr., puts it, it cannot be said that the entity of the South existed and is existing within the American society and "that for better or for worse the habit of viewing one's experience in terms of one's relationship to that entity is still a meaningful characteristic of both writers and readers who are or who have been part of it." According to Rubin, the South itself is much more than a geographical grouping. In his understanding, history remains an identifying characteristic of southern identity and literary imagination. History is a "mode for viewing one's experience and one's identity" thus the identification of the self cannot be made possible without understanding and accepting southern history (5).

3. Single mothers and only daughters

When we discuss the relationships between family members in the fiction of Flannery O'Connor, several patterns are worth noting. The daughter-mother relationship is one of the most significant of all these patterns. The most important element of this pattern is that a single mother raises her daughter alone since she is either widowed or divorced (the latter is not so frequent). The mother is in most of the cases a hard-working and rigorous woman who lives on a farm with her daughter and often it is only the mother, without the help of the daughter, who actually does all the work.

Sustaining a household with a farm is not an easy job for a single woman, even if there are some people around who help. Louis Westling believes that O'Connor did not consider farming to be an unnatural role for a woman because through this kind of work the mother figure could be a useful part of society (*Mothers* 518). In most of the cases, however, the daughters do not provide much help for the mother; if they do, it is within the house and not outside on the farm. The reader associates the mother figure with a role that is traditionally considered masculine and in this way the mother becomes even more dominant within the household.

This breadwinning seems to be intransigent in her dealings with the outside world and she usually wants to provide a comfortable, if modest, home environment for her daughter (511). The mother wants to care for her daughter and in a way that supports her; however, she cannot totally understand her behavior, manners, and soul. The households O'Connor describes sometimes function as real homes, but people living in the same household do not always form a real community. According to Scott Romine, community has three required conditions: boundary, structure, and image. The first two are clearly shown and accepted by all the female characters in these stories; however, the image factor

is not always achieved (8). The most important difference between different characters is the way they think about their household. For the mothers, usually the most important element is what others think about it, how the outside world perceives the household; whereas the daughters are much more interested in the way they experience the family home, sometimes significantly differ from the image being projected by the mother figure.

A common element in the stories is that the daughter usually has some kind of a disability—either physical or mental—and has a kind of "perversity" or "oddness" that her mother cannot truly understand (Westling, *Mothers* 511). Nevertheless, the mother is utterly devoted to her daughter or makes every effort to be devoted to her. The appearance of the girl is never attractive in the traditional sense; in most cases she is overweight and sometimes requires eyeglasses, all distinguishing her from the image of the ideal Southern woman.

While O'Connor's fictional daughters have a wide range of medical problems, Clara L. Verderame believes that their shared characteristic is their heavy bodies. "The adult daughters, with a range of bodies from the diseased to the disabled, illustrate all that is vintage O'Connor. That is, the large, pathetic women who frequently inhabit O'Connor's stories personify social isolation and depict severe physical limitations that yield tremendous personal loss and professional failure," she explains. These shortcomings might signal the pride or pretension of the given character, or her shortsighted vision about the world (144).

The daughters in these short stories are sometimes educated and learned; their mothers consider them smart, if bookish. These girls or women are always single; they never have any kind of romantic relationship with men. Their chances to find a mate is presented as slight, since they are not only unappealing by conventional standards, but also too "sourly independent to ever assume 'normal' roles as wives and mothers" (Westling,

Sacred 146). They diverge significantly from the image of the traditional Southern belle, a divergence that O'Connor makes abundantly clear. When the daughters are first presented to readers, O'Connor mentions their bad hearts, wooden legs, and their enthusiasm for ludicrous shirts and out-of-place shoes; so that immediately upon meeting them the reader knows that they are considered weird. The typical daughter of these stories is misfit in a social sense, who is always compared and contrasted to girls who have relationships with men and who will probably soon have children (146). The mothers always want their daughters to start families but somehow all of the daughters fail to live up to these expectations.

Another common pattern in O'Connor mother-daughter stories is some element of aggression, often by male characters. The aggression is not always physical, but physical aggression is often represented. Many male characters are portrayed as aggressive people, whereas "females are rendered passive by punishment" (145). Whenever there is aggressive action happening in the stories, the victim of the aggression is almost always a woman.

The men who release aggression are usually young ones and a complete stranger to the women living on the farm. Since he is a stranger, the mother immediately thinks of him as a potential spouse for her daughter, regardless of whether they would be suitable partners for each other or not. Unsurprisingly, it is not only the mother who gets excited about the arrival of the male character; usually the daughter does, too. The stranger makes himself out to be a nice and honorable man. To emphasize traditional masculinity, the man always has some sort special skill needed at the house or farm through which he can get closer to the women living in the household. But at some point it is revealed that the man is maybe not as honorable as he first appeared. Usually the men sense that the mother and/or

the daughter are deeply intrigued by him and some form of seduction takes place, triggered by either the male figure or one of the women, and then the stranger's trickery is revealed.

There are several different explanations why these women let these stranger men enter their property and stay there for long. We know that the men are always from the South but in many cases they are not from the area where the women live. The fact that they are Southerners is, in many of the cases, enough to establish some kind of trust between the characters. From the dialogue that take place between the mothers and the male newcomer, it quickly becomes clear that they share the same lifeworld, in the sense put forward by Husserl and Habermas, discussed in previous chapters of this dissertation. The characters share common understanding of the South and the men try to present themselves as people whose values coincide with the values the mothers represent. The mothers' trust stems largely from a common Southern background, by which the women are overly trusting of the men.

The male disrupts the daily routine of the women and becomes the central element of their lives. Furthermore, he triggers a change in the relationship between the mother and daughter. Although he suddenly becomes the most important character in the women's world, we never get to know his background and the reader never sees anything from his point of view. After the deceit or crime is committed, the author might bring the person into focus; yet, in general, he is usually not the pivotal figure of the story.

With these patterns and shared elements in O'Connor's mother-daughter short stories established, we can proceed to examine specific examples. In this chapter, I will discuss the relationships between mothers and daughters in the stories "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," "Good Country People," and "A Circle in the Fire."

3.1. Mother and daughter in "The Life You Save May Be Your Own"

Understanding the communication between O'Connor's characters is of key importance to understand the stories themselves. The communication between mothers and daughters is often times ineffective and one of the most salient examples can be seen in the relationship between Mrs. Crater and Lucynell Jr. in "The Life You Save May Be Your Own." If thinking and speaking are co-dependent, as Davidson suggests, where cognitive faculties suffer if linguistic faculties are compromised, then linguistically disabled Lucynell Jr. cannot be considered a thinking creature. The issue of communication gets into focus in the very beginning of the story when the reader finds out that the daughter figure, Lucynell Jr., is mentally handicapped. Upon the arrival of the stranger, Mr. Tom T. Shiftlet, we learn that the daughter is not able to speak; she can only express herself through making "excited speechless sounds" (O'Connor, *The Complete Stories,* hereafter referred to as *CS* 145).

According to Donald Davidson, "a creature cannot have a thought unless it has language" (100). His belief is shared by many analytical philosophers, who concentrated on the idea of language in the first half of the 20th century. He believes that a creature must be able to express not only one but many thoughts in order to be a thinking creature and must be able to interpret the speech and thoughts of others. He also believes that without language, thought is also limited (100). As I claimed earlier, by Davidson's definition, by not being able to express her thoughts in the form of speaking or writing, Lucynell Jr. is not a thinking creature. Turning back to Davidson's discussion of intersubjectivity, without language, we cannot confirm the existence of a shared world between either the mother and the daughter or Mr. Shiftlet and Lucynell Jr. In *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, Davidson coined the "triangle principle." As discussed above, according to the principle, a

communicative situation requires a triangle in which one apex is oneself, the second apex is another creature, and the third is an object that is located in a space and thus made common. The only way of knowing that the second person -- the second apex of the triangle -- is reacting to the same object as oneself is to know that the second person has the same object in mind. The second apex must also be aware that they constitute to the same triangle with the first apex. To find out if they indeed occupy the same triangle, they must communicate with each other. It is not necessary that the two people mean the same thing by using the same expression; however, they must be interpreters of each other (121).

In "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," the three characters make up several triangles. Once the mother gets used to the presence of Mr. Shiftlet, she decides to make him marry her daughter. She becomes obsessed with this, as "She was ravenous for a son-in-law" (O'Connor, *CS* 150). In all conversations, she tries to direct focus on her daughter. In one of these conversations between Mr. Shiftlet and the mother, we see their communication go completely awry while the man is repairing her car:

> "How old is she?" Mr. Shiftlet asked casually.
>
> "Fifteen, sixteen," the old woman said. The girl was nearly thirty but because of the innocence it was impossible to guess.
>
> "It would be a good idea to paint it too," Mr. Shitflet remarked. "You don't want it to rust out."
>
> "We'll see about that later," the old woman said. (151)

While Mr. Shiftlet is talking about the car, Mrs. Crater is still thinking about her daughter; they do not occupy the same triangle. In English, cars can colloquially be referred to by the pronouns "she" or "it." Here the man is interested in the car's age and

not in Lucynell Jr.'s. The miscommunications suggest that he is fascinated by the car, not the girl. However, Mrs. Crater does not seem to realize at first time that they are not talking about the same object. She is focused intensely on forging a marriage between her daughter and the man, not on the object at hand.

Accepting Davidson's claim, this conversation illustrates that there can be situations in which speakers occupying the first or the second apex of Davidson's triangle are able to communicate using language. Nevertheless, it turns out that they are not interpreters of each other, since they did not make clear in the beginning what the third apex of the triangle is. With the third apex of the triangle radically compromised, it is no wonder that communication between Mrs. Crater and Mr. Shiftlet is defective.

If we take a look at what Habermas believed about successful communication, we can also see that the car conversation between Mrs. Crater and Mr. Shiftlet does not meet his standards of that definition either. Habermas argued that for successful communication to take place, the parties must be able to understand each other mutually in a successful way. Clearly that is not the case here; even though there is an exchange of thoughts between parties, under no circumstances can it be considered successful.

Viewed from the perspective of Husserl's model of intersubjectivity, one can also see here that both Mrs. Crater and Mr. Shiftlet believe that the world presents itself to them in the same way that the world presents itself to the Other. They both assume that if the other party were in her or his place, each would see the world as the other sees it, yet these assumptions prove to be invalid for both parties.

The malfunctioning communication in "The Life You Save May Be Your Own" is definitely an issue and has not been critically addressed before. Using Davidson's triangle principle along with others' insights into intersubjectivity, we now have a much clearer picture about what is actually happening within this particular truncated family. Through

the example of Mrs. Crater and Mr. Shiflet's conversation, I have proven that poor communication is a critical feature to understanding O'Connor's fiction and the relationships she portrays.

3.1.1. Thinking creatures and the "humanization" of Lucynell Jr.

As we have seen, due to her clinical imbecility and deafness, Lucynell Jr. does not talk in the beginning of "The Life You Save May Be Your Own." The first thing we learn about Lucynell Jr. when we meet her in the short story is that her eyesight is very poor. When she realizes that Mr. Shiftlet is coming, she becomes so excited that she jumps up and makes "speechless sounds" (145), identifying to the reader that she is mute and suggesting that communication with her must be challenging. After moving in with the two women, Mr. Shiftlet becomes the part of their everyday life to such a point that he is able to teach Lucynell Jr. to say the word "bird," which she pronounces as "burrttddt ddbirrrttdt" (150). Significantly, it was Mr. Shiftlet who taught Lucynell Jr. the word, and he must have been aware that the mother is the only other person around them who might be able to interpret it. The word "bird" itself can symbolize many different ideas, from freedom to getting away from your certain place. I believe that when Mr. Shiftlet chose to word to teach Lucynell Jr., he chose "bird" intentionally, to deliver meaning to Mrs. Crater through the medium of Lucynell Jr. It seems that Mrs. Crater indeed understand the significance of this word in the end, since she lets her daughter go away with the man. However, Mr. Shiftlet might have something else on his mind when choosing the word, as he abandons the girl after the marriage, letting her go on her own as a bird. It is possible that the interpreter understood what she wanted, not what the speaker indeed meant, thus the communication between them is potentially defective again.

To use a language, a person must speak, Donald Davidson explicitly claims in his book *Subjective, Intersubjective, Objective*, arguing that language is a necessary component of thought. Yet Lucynell Jr. is not able to perform speech acts. However, while her mother seems to be content with limited communication with her daughter, it seems that Mr. Shiftlet is not, and wants to teach Lucynell Jr. how to speak. He realizes that this will be a limited function for her, unable to produce cognitive or interactive communication, but may still increase verbal connectedness. By trying to teach her some expressions, Mr. Shiftlet aims to "humanize" Lucynell Jr., that is, to turn her into a more thinking-speaking subject so that she becomes more capable of interacting with other people.

In addition to her inability to speak, Lucynell Jr.'s appearance is one of O'Connor's defining characteristics of her. The first adjective she uses to describe her is the word "large." As she is described, Lucynell is overweight and she likes to eat; however, we do not get the impression of an ugly, hefty woman, just big. Lucynell Jr.'s mother clearly wants to build a positive image about her daughter, but others also seem to view her positively. At the end of the story Mr. Shiftlet stops with Lucynell Jr. at The Hot Spot and the server working there notes that Lucynell Jr. "looks like an angel of Gawd" (O'Connor, *CS* 154). She is "rosy-faced" and has "long, pink-gold hair and eyes as blue as a peacock's neck" (146). During the story Mrs. Crater uses the word "innocent" twice describing her daughter and it is also mentioned that because of Lucynell Jr.'s innocence it is difficult to guess her real age. These little details depict Lucynell Jr. as a lovely girl who never becomes a "real" adult and somehow always remains a child. Thus, her "humanization" is never completed: she cannot exhibit herself as a thinking-speaking subject, and the perceptions of others further hold her in childhood.

Lucynell Jr.'s lack of an independent, adult identity is reinforced by the fact that she shares the same name with her mother: both of them are named Lucynell Crater. Their shared name can be seen as a symbol of the harmony they were living in before the arrival of Mr. Shiftlet (Westling, *Sacred* 147). However, it can also be seen as a reason why Lucynell Jr. has never been able to make a clear distinction between herself and her mother. Judith Butler believes that asking the name of someone is crucially important when we want to humanize the other person. In the volume *Giving Account of Oneself*, Butler emphasizes the question of "Who are you?," because she believes that it is an important element of creating the self. However, as we can see in the case of Lucynell Jr., she is not able to answer this question; she is not able to embody herself this way. It is always her mother who speaks for her. As a result, at the end of the story, when the girl is left alone without her mother, she is not able to take responsibility for herself. She is almost instantly lost because she is left behind only with Mr. Shiftlet.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that that the "humanization" of Lucynell Jr. was only partly successful. Even though she took remarkable steps towards behaving like a thinking-speaking creature, her mental state does not really allow full awareness of self and world, therefore her "humanity" suffers.

3.1.2. Significance of names and addressing from the point of view of intersubjectivity

The names O'Connor gives her characters can be associated, in many cases, with their personality or life situation. A "crater" in English means a large depression in the ground and once someone gets into such a crater it is difficult to get out of it. The physical disabilities of Lucynell Jr. can be seen as a crater in her life. Her mother's overbearing love can also be considered a burden for her, although she may not realize it. For Mrs. Crater

the main burden could be her daughter; however it seems that she does not think of Lucynell Jr. herself as the problem of her life, rather the quest to find her a husband. It seems that Mrs. Crater does not realize that her strong devotion to her daughter can be a burden on her. By giving the exact same name to her daughter as herself, in a way she passes on the burden of the crater on to her daughter.

Our knowledge of character's names, however, remains somewhat incomplete. Mrs. Crater's real name is not mentioned often in the story. Throughout the narrative we encounter the expression "old woman" forty-five times, always referring to the mother. Whenever we see this expression in the text it is used by the narrator with one exception. If we take a look at how Mrs. Crater is addressed in the story we can see that Mr. Shiftlet always calls her "lady." It is probably not because of a lady-like appearance -- she wears a man's hat and has a "broad and toothless" smile (150) -- but to make a good impression on her. The expression "Mrs. Crater" is not present in the story and the word "mother" never refers to her. By prioritizing the descriptor "old woman" over other options, she is characterized primarily by her age. O'Connor wanted the readers to get the impression that this is her most defining characteristic. A complex and fascinating character, she is worthy of sustained analysis.

3.1.3. Mrs. Crater, the "stupid mother"?

"The Life You Save May Be Your Own" begins with "The old woman" (O'Connor, *CS* 145), suggesting that Mrs. Crater will be the main figure for the whole narrative. The mother does not conjure the image of the meek, genteel traditional Southern lady. When Mr. Shiftlet arrives at their yard, she stands up "with one hand fisted on her hip" (145). The image of the fist can be seen a gesture of aggression; however, it can also

suggest firmness or grit. When the mother first meets this Mr. Shiftlet, she is wearing a man's hat and then starts to watch him "with her arms folded across her chest" (146). When they start their conversation she is watching "without taking her eyes off him" (146), which can also suggest that she is a bit distrustful. It is mentioned in the story that Mrs. Crater's husband died 15 years before (the same year the car broke down) so she has been in charge of the farm for over a decade, which must have played a part in making her a very tough and "hard-bitten" personality (Westling, *Mothers* 513).

Carter W. Martin believes that Mrs. Crater is a "stupid mother" (209), but I argue that Mrs. Crater is the opposite of stupid. In my interpretation, she is a smart woman who slowly develops a plan for the future of her daughter once the stranger arrives. Taking a closer look at her behavior, we can distinguish three attitudes concerning the relationship of Mr. Shiftler and her daughter: treating her as a valuable treasure, scheming her marriage, and full resolution to marry her off.

In the first stage Mrs. Crater talks about Lucynell Jr. as a valuable treasure; a treasure she does not want to lose. "I would not give her up for a casket of jewels" (O'Connor, *CS* 149), she states, although she is "ravenous" for a son-in-law. As soon as Lucynell Jr. is mentioned in the narrative it becomes clear that she is devoted to her daughter: "she is the sweetest thing on earth," Mrs. Crater says; "I would give her up for nothing on Earth" (149). As the two women spent an incredibly long time together alone on the farm, there must be a very intimate relationship between them, especially if we consider that Lucynell Jr. is strongly depending on her mother's help. For years they have been each other's only companions, but now the arrival of the man changes several things.[3]

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[3] For a fuller discussion of single mother and only child relationships in O'Connor's short stories, see Szokonya, István. "The Single Mother – Only Child Pattern in the Short Stories of Flannery O'Connor." Master's thesis, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, 2010.

The second phase is scheming for Lucynell Jr.'s marriage. The first indication that the mother might have some kind of a plan with Mr. Shiftlet appears when they talk about the only word the daughter is able to pronounce, the only expression which humanizes her. Mrs. Crater suggests that the next word to be taught should be "sugarpie," she says with a "suggestive" smile on her face (150). "Mr. Shiftlet already knew what was on her mind" and was aware of the mother's intentions to couple him up with Lucynell Jr. (151). At this point the mother explains her view on her daughter's future:

> "If it was ever a man wanted to take her away, I would say, 'No man on
> earth is going to take that sweet girl of mine away from me!' but if he was
> to say, 'Lady, I don't want to take her away, I want her right here,' I would
> say, 'Mister, I don't blame you none. I wouldn't pass up a chance to live in
> a permanent place and get the sweetest girl in the world myself. You ain't
> no fool,' I would say" (151).

Here we can see that Mrs. Crater is not against the idea of her daughter marrying someone but against being left alone. Mr. Shiftlet spent just a few days at the Crater farm before having this conversation with her so he had probably made a good impression on her. Richard Giannone points out that maybe Mrs. Crater expects that this man will not only be the husband of her daughter but, being an especially skillful handyman, he might also be able to "get the place into a profitable place"; she could find "cheap labor for herself" (54-55).

The third stage in the mother's attitude toward Lucynell is full resolution to marry her off. The very next day she tells Mr. Shiftlet that he is going to wed Lucynell Jr. It is important to highlight that she does not ask him to marry her daughter; she states it as a

fact. Furthermore, she does not consult with Lucynell Jr. about this, which again dehumanizes her daughter. As Flannery O'Connor describes Mrs. Crater's resolution: "the old woman began her business, at once" (O'Connor, *CS* 151). The word "business" has several meanings in English but in this particular context the most appropriate synonym would be "task" or "goal"; at the same time, the situation bears some resemblance to the more traditional definition of economic exchange. What follows is a bargain: when Mr. Shiftlet ignores her request she offers him more and more money, humiliating herself and her daughter as well. Although Mr. Shiftlet is trying to take advantage of Mrs. Crater, she does not allow him to verbally control the negotiation. To show who the boss is in this situation, she says "it isn't any use you trying to milk me" (153). She probably says this to humiliate him, and since the man is wounded, it seems that she chose the right tone.

The prudence, shrewdness, and resolution of the mother is unquestionable. When the man is unwilling to marry her daughter, Mrs. Crater drives him to the wall by saying: "there ain't any place in the world for a poor disabled friendless drifting man" (152). She makes him realize that he actually does not have many opportunities outside of marrying her daughter. In the beginning of the narrative when we meet Mr. Shiftlet he is described as a disabled man. His coat sleeve is folded up suggesting that he has only one arm and thus "his figure formed a crooked cross" (146). Although he is an excellent handyman, Mrs. Crater calls his attention to his disability and the fact that people would value him much elsewhere. She is aware of the value of the hard-working man and actively uses humiliation to bend him to her will. It appears that Mr. Shiflet does what Mrs. Crater wants him to do when he marries Lucynell Jr., though in the end Mr. Shiftlet is successful at deceiving her. Nevertheless, the expression "stupid" is not appropriate to describe the character of Mrs. Crater.

Mr. Shiftlet has an enormous effect on the women; somehow he becomes the central part of their days and an obvious part of their lifeworlds. Through his own maneuvering and Mrs. Crater's, he does a lot of work on the farm and "the change he made in the place was apparent" (150). He is able to teach Lucynell Jr. how to pronounce the word "bird," which has a symbolic meaning to her. All these prove that Mrs. Crater had allowed Mr. Shiftlet to become an indispensable person in the household. The trust which was present from the very beginning of the story and the shared values encouraged his quick integration, but also reveals how Mrs. Crater played a significant role in making her own place at the head of the household and as Lucynell Jr.'s guardian insecure.

Mrs. Crater's verbal communication also shows that she is not that stupid of a person. When she decides that she wants to marry off her only daughter to Mr. Shiftlet, she persuades him with smart phrases. Applying Austin's views on speech acts, the mother uses perlocutionary acts to convince Mr. Shiftlet that it would actually be a great choice to marry her daughter: "You want you and innocent woman, don't you?" "You don't want none of this trash." "One that can't talk . . . can't sass you back or use foul language" (151). The man is quickly convinced and the mother selects a date for the wedding immediately.

Despite Mrs. Crater's initial proclamations to never give up Lucynell Jr., the end of the story features just that. After Lucynell Jr. and Mr. Shiftlet eventually marry, the trio drives back home and Mrs. Crater gives some lunch to the newlyweds. Then the mother bids farewell to them and seems to be really moved, but her daughter does not realize what is happening around her and does not show any sign of grief or sorrow – maybe because she doesn't "seem to see her at all" (154). Here the poor eyesight comes into focus again: her eyesight and her innocence can be connected to each other as she is able to stay innocent because she cannot see what is happening. She may not have understood the

wedding ceremony and probably does not understand that she and her mother will be pulled apart. Lucynell Jr.'s innocence has an effect on Mr. Shiftlet too. Louise Westling points out that when he drives away in the direction of Memphis after abandoning her, he feels more and more depressed and probably guilty as well. When he talks to a hitchhiker, the reader gets the impression that he identified the girl with his own mother, of whom we have not heard before (*Sacred* 154). As the story ends, Lucynell Jr. is the victim of both her mother's and Mr. Shiflet's decisions.

Mrs. Crater proves throughout the story that she is not a specifically stupid mother. However, at a key point of the story she makes the wrong decision and marries her daughter to Mr. Shiftlet. Her Southern background and lifeworld might have played an important part in this decision of hers; however, she seems naïve and not sharp-sighted in this particular case, despite exhibiting strength and acuity in other situations. Martin's assertion that Mrs. Crater is "stupid" is an incomplete characterization of the mother.

"The Life You Save May Be Your Own" is just one of several of Flannery O'Connor's stories that feature fascinating relationships and ineffective communication between mothers and daughters. Examining additional stories draws many similarities and a few differences to the Craters.

3.2. Mother and daughter in "Good Country People"

One of O'Connor's most often anthologized, canonized, and taught short stories is "Good Country People." The story features many of the typical characteristics of O'Connor's stories: there is a single mother living with an only child, some of the characters are perceived as grotesque, there is a villainous figure that brings about major shifts in family's life, and the end of the narrative has a huge surprise. In her essay titled

"Flannery O'Connor's Mothers and Daughters," Louise Westling observes that "Good Country People" is in fact the best example of O'Connor's pattern (510). Furthermore, Westling claims that Mrs. Hopewell, the mother in the story, can be seen as the pattern mother figure for all the other stories with single mothers and only kids, the ultimate example.

It is evident from the very first page of the story that the relationship between characters is highly problematic and the communication between them is defective. It seems fairly obvious that even though the characters, especially Mrs. Hopewell and her daughter Hulga (originally named Joy), spend a lot of time together, they do not share each other's lifeworld. Sometimes it seems that they do not even live in the same universe, as their intellectual background, everyday habits, and approaches to life are completely different.

The mother in "Good Country People," Mrs. Hopewell, is a hardworking divorced woman who lives together with Hulga, her thirty-two-year-old daughter, on a desolate farm. The relationship between Mrs. Hopewell and her daughter is the central issue of the mother's life. Mrs. Hopewell seems to love her daughter in her own way, but somehow she is not able to come to terms with her personality and behavior; she fundamentally does not accept her as she is. Throughout the narrative we see several times that she likes to think of her daughter as a child, since it tears her heart to think of Hulga as an adult woman who "had never danced a step or had any *normal* good times" (O'Connor, *CS* 274).

Mrs. Hopewell wants to believe that it is Hulga's artificial leg that is responsible for the way her daughter's life ended up, but it alone cannot explain the situation. She feels pity for her daughter because of the supplementary limb. However, it is important to point out that Mrs. Hopewell does not understand several aspects her daughter's life and is not

able to share in an understanding of Hulga's world. Hulga is disabled, but also educated, emotionally wounded, and much more.

First of all, Mrs. Hopewell simply does not know what her Ph.D. in philosophy is good for. As O'Connor explained:

> You could say, "My daughter is a nurse," or "My daughter is a schoolteacher," or even, "My daughter is a chemical engineer." You could not say, "My daughter is a philosopher." That was something that had ended with the Greeks and Romans. (276)

Hulga reads a lot. To Mrs. Hopewell, reading is a futile activity. Furthermore, when she reads a few lines from one of her daughter's books she becomes embarrassed because she is not able to understand it. By Davidson's triangle principle, we can clearly see that Mrs. Hopewell and Hulga do not have a common object that they can discuss when it comes to philosophy; they cannot share their worlds as described by Habermas. It is no surprise, then, that the communication between them becomes utterly unsuccessful.

Mrs. Hopewell's idea of a happy and successful child is dictated by "the expectation of a patriarchal order" and the mother's steps towards shaping the daughter's behavior bring about wrath and vulnerability from Hulga, according to Carol M. Andrews. Hulga is not able construct a traditional feminine identity despite all of her mother's expectations, which, again, clearly shows the differences between the lifeworlds of these women (136).

"Good Country People" not only provides us with the clearest example of O'Connor's mother-daughter pattern; it has become one of her most frequently anthologized short stories for other reasons as well. It depicts complex and difficult human

relationships in an especially smart and witty way. Hulga's character offers excellent material of analysis from several points of view -- embodiment, gender studies and intersubjectivity -- as we will below.

3.2.1. Hulga's embodiment

In this section, I will discuss Hulga's intellectually engendered embodiment. I will claim that the process of embodiment was fulfilled when Hulga was in an intellectual environment. Hulga was most fulfilled when she was pursuing her PhD far away from home, proving that, in her case, embodiment is less connected to the Southern environment than to academia. I will use the ideas of Thomas Csordas, discussed in the second chapter of my dissertation, to support my claims about Hulga's embodiment. In particular, I will claim that Hulga's embodiment remains truncated, just like her family life.

In order to prove my statement and gain a deeper understanding of this particular O'Connor story, let us examine the philosophical works mentioned in the story and Hulga's embodiment. When Mrs. Hopewell reads the Heidegger quotations in one of Hulga's books, she reacts strongly and believes that the text itself is "like some evil incantation in gibberish" (269). Elizabeth Hubbard points out that the words could even be gibberish as well, Hulga could easily comprehend it herself and probably she would be really proud of herself is she figured out what reactions her mother had for the reading. In Hubbard's opinion, Hulga misreads the Heidegger passage when she supposes that the Heidegger expresses her own perspective. "In 'What Is Metaphysics?' Heidegger critiques the modern scientific mindset for its narrowness in only taking an interest in beings and not in being itself. Ironically, throughout 'Good Country People,' we witness Hulga's concern 'solely with what-is,' which corresponds to her disdainful rejection of the spiritual, and so

what Hulga takes from this passage is exactly what Heidegger is arguing against," Hubbard explains. In her interpretation, this episode aligns the character of Hulga with the mindset that Heidegger criticizes. Although this reference to Heidegger is brief in the story, it serves to "extend that critique beyond Hulga in the sense that she embraces a pervasive and coercive (rather than individual or isolated) way of seeing in postwar American culture with which Heidegger–and O'Connor–find fault," she adds (53).

At another point of the story Hulga references the philosopher Malebranche, giving further insight into her philosophical worldviews. Mrs. Hopewell remarks that "a smile never hurt anyone," criticizing Hulga's everyday behavior. Hulga reacts with a complete explosion: "Woman! Do you ever look inside? Do you ever look inside and see what you are *not*? God! … Malebranche was right: we are not our own light. We are not our own light!" (268). As Hubbard points out, by quoting Malebranche, Hulga links herself with a truly sophisticated and specific mode of scientific thinking that might be traced back to Descartes. "Malebranche is representative of the type of rationalistic thinking that prevailed with the rise of modernity. This rationalistic basis for knowing is, for Hulga, a religious fundamentalism, fundamentalist in its intolerance of any contradiction or questioning, which indicates why Hulga would align herself with a professing Christian philosopher even though she is a professing atheist," she explains. One might consider Hulga's reference to Malebranche ironic as well, "considering that she appropriates his methods of thinking and knowing without acknowledging or accepting any of the philosophical conclusions he reaches based upon a rational application of these methods" (58).

Whenever Hulga references philosophy, either in a direct or in an indirect way, her mother is not able to understand such sophisticated ideas. This might make the reader believe that Mrs. Hopewell is a bit simple-minded and not considered a smart person.

Other information in the short story also proves this. In the beginning O'Connor reveals that Mrs. Hopewell loves using clichés in her everyday speech. Her favorite sayings include: "Nothing is perfect," "that is life!," "well, other people have their opinions too," and "a smile never hurt anyone" (272-276). However, it seems that Hulga has gotten used to these banal and simplistic expressions because whenever her mother uses them she does not react. Hulga's "constant outrage had obliterated every expression from her face" and she has "the look of someone who has achieved blindness by an act of will and means to keep it" (273). When the author describes these actions O'Connor always expresses the past action with "would," as though she wants to emphasize that these actions happened the same way every time and that Mrs. Hopewell used these clichés extremely frequently. Josephine Hendin argues that Hulga is "locked in a struggle" with her mother whom she can neither love nor leave (98), and evidence in the story clearly supports this. We know that Hulga's is poor and her artificial leg also prevents her from leaving home; otherwise she would most probably teaching philosophy somewhere where more people actually shared her lifeworld.

Philosophy and her physical disability both play important roles in Hulga's embodiment. According to Csordas, an intersubjective being is achieved through embodiment, which takes place through social interactions (36-37). In his understanding, social interactions are essential for an individual's embodiment. Based on my reading of the story and literary criticism regarding "Good Country People," I argue that Hulga's embodiment might have taken place when she went to college and graduate school, where she was able to meet people who shared her understanding about certain aspects of life. It is evident from the short story that Hulga's personality was dramatically shaped by two experiences: losing her leg and her education in philosophy and the humanities. While reading philosophical works, Hulga became a learned and sophisticated human thinker,

who starts seeing rural Southern life from a completely different point of view. However, I also find it important to mention here that we have no evidence that Hulga's social life was more active in her college years; this is only something we might assume, since Hulga merely hints at this. For example, we know from the text that Hulga "had made it plain that if it had not been for this condition, she would be far from these red hills and good country people. She would be in a university lecturing to people who knew what she was talking about" (*CS* 276). This suggests that she might have kept company in college and graduate school that was much more open to the ideas that Hulga was pursuing.

A major turning point in Hulga's life was the childhood hunting accident that precipitated her losing her leg. Richard Giannone's interpretation of Hulga's personality centers squarely on this moment. A gunshot fractured not only Hulga's leg but also her "image of her body as a whole;" from the time of the accident onward she feel the need to defend herself because she is not a "whole" person, he argues (63). He also states that Mrs. Hopewell feels shame over her daughter's condition and Hulga can sense this shame. This sense is "reinforced by pitying niceties" and together they produce a "similar sense of shame at her failure to be the girl she was supposed to be" (63). Hulga wants to compensate for her "maimed" body by earning a PhD in philosophy, proving that she is a person who lives in her mind and "there she can prove herself a full person" (63). Her renaming act, changing her name from Joy to Hulga, can also be seen as a way to become a "full person." Part of the tragedy of the situation is that it might have only been Hulga and her mother who thought of a one-legged girl as a non-full person. Eventually, through the act of embodiment, Hulga succeeded in defining herself in a completely different way, but her mother is not able to share this defining of personhood with her, deepening the conflict between them.

Hulga's renaming of herself after losing her leg can also be seen as a result of her own embodiment: she recreates her identity giving herself an unusual name. As I discussed earlier, answering the question "Who are you?" is, in Judith Butler's interpretation, of key importance in the process of creating the self and embodiment because this way subjects can humanize other subjects. In this short story, Joy is the one who humanizes herself by changing her first name to Hulga.

It seems that Joy Hopewell's name did not reflect her character at all. She is not joyful, she is not hopeful, and she is not well. It seems that her only source of joy is reading or dealing with philosophy. Since she cannot share her lifeworld with her mother, she finds another kind of companion in her books, which seem to be adequate for her. We might say that there is a paradox between Hulga's character and her name and between Mrs. Hopewell and Hulga as well. Flannery O'Connor probably wanted to emphasize the misunderstanding between the mother and her daughter by creating such a contradiction in their names: their family name expresses Mrs. Hopewell's situation pretty well; nevertheless, it contradicts her daughter's character.

Joy's life took a new direction after losing her leg and this change was reinforced when she changed her name to Hulga, according to Kathleen Feeley. However, as Kate Oliver points out, Hulga's physical afflictions, including her wooden leg and poor eyesight, can still symbolize her emotional and spiritual impairments (233). From a philosophical point of view, to name somebody means to "encompass" and to control the given thing and indicates some kind of power as well (Feeley, 25). Giving a name is traditionally the duty of the parents and with this name change Hulga emphasized her transition into adulthood; she can replace her mother by shedding the name her mother gave her. In choosing a name for herself, she emphasizes her control over her own embodiment, which needs no outside help from her mother. Hulga knows that her new

name might sound ugly to some people and this is actually one of the main reasons she chose it. She considers her name a truly "personal affair" (O'Connor, *CS* 275) and feels insulted whenever someone does not call her Hulga. In the story only two people address her this way: Mrs. Freeman, a tenant on the farm with her husband, and Manley Pointer, a Bible salesman who shows up at the Hopewell farm. Whenever Mrs. Freeman calls "Joy" Hulga they are on their own and are not accompanied by Mrs. Hopewell. Mrs. Freeman is not daring enough to use Hulga's new name when Hulga's mother is present, since she knows that the mother does not like it. The conflict between Hulga and her mother over her name is emblematic of the problems in their relationship and communication.

Comparing the Crater and Hopewell mothers and daughters, we can see that in both stories the last names of the women express their situation, though they are by no means simply identical characters with different names. The Craters are in a crater in their lives; Mrs. Hopewell ardently hopes that her life and her daughter's life will somehow change. However, it seems that in contrast with Mrs. Crater, Mrs. Hopewell is not "ravenous" for a son-in-law. When the stranger Manley Pointer arrives at their garden, at first she does not want to let him in but she is nice to him because she "can't be rude to anybody" (281). At this point she does not think of this man as a possible spouse for her daughter. When Manley Pointer (whose surname is also significant, as he points out very cleverly what Hulga's weak points are) arrives, he makes a pun of the women's name: "'Mrs. Hopewell!' he said and grabbed her hand 'I hope you are well!' and he laughed again and all at once his face sobered completely" (279). Mrs. Hopewell's facial expression likely made Manley sober up. But as soon as Manley tells her that he has "this heart condition" (281), her eyes fill up with tears, her attitude towards him changes completely, and she invites him for dinner. At supper Hulga is rude, as usual, and her mother tries to compensate her rudeness by being particularly nice to Manley. She asks him about his family, as though she wanted

to check whether he was good enough for her daughter or not. At this point she may think that this man could be a possible spouse for Hulga, especially when she sees them walk together.

Hulga's own motherhood, or lack thereof, is part of her embodiment path. She is the perfect age for having babies. According to Preston M. Browning's interpretation, the following sentence about Manley can carry important meaning: "His breath was clear and sweet like a child's and the kisses were sticky like a child's" (O'Connor, *CS* 287). Breath can be considered as a symbol of spirit and Browning thinks that Hulga deliberately tries to "draw into herself" Pointer's spirit (Browning 49). When he says something about his love Hulga becomes motherly at the sound of his murmurings, which are "like the sleepy fretting of a child being put to sleep by his mother" (O'Connor, *CS* 287). When Pointer starts to play with Hulga's prosthetic leg, he talks like a child and this behavior resembles kids when they treat a situation as a kind of game. According to Browning, Hulga indulges in this "image of life-as-endless-play" (49), expressed in her fantasy of running away with the boy to a place where "every night he would take the leg off and every morning put it back on again" for her (O'Connor, *CS* 289). In her interactions with Pointer, Hulga is "both mother and child, protectress and protected, lover and beloved" (Browning 49). Here she can experience an actual relationship with a man as well as motherhood. He appears to fulfill Hulga's human desire for joy and unity and exhibits her need for something to trust and to believe in. Browning argues that Joy-Hulga does not only think that she found a partner in Pointer but that this affair can also be her chance at motherhood (49-50).

Hulga's embodiment, as we have seen in this chapter of the dissertation, is a complex issue, defined by her academic identity, her disability, and her familial impulses with Pointer. However, Hulga's embodiment remains truncated, just like her family life. The conditions that forced her back to her childhood home made it nearly impossible to

keep company that would be suitable for her intellectual needs. Defined by a lack of understanding for each other's lifeworlds, her relationship with her mother is strained.. And her actions and emotions regarding Manley Pointer toggle between the contradictory sentiments of motherliness towards him and protections from him. These flaws in her embodiment play an important part in the rest of the story.

3.2.2. The religious interpretation—Grace and embodiment

There is a connection between grace and embodiment in "Good Country People." I wish to use Kym Maclaren's ideas about emotions and embodiment which say that emotions are necessary elements of humans' development towards autonomous beings and they are not opposed to reason. Through this theory, I wish to point out that what happens between Hulga and Manley Pointer is an important element of Hulga's embodiment because she then has to question her own reality.

A number of years after O'Connor's death, a volume of her collected essays and her typewritten lectures was published. In 1962 O'Connor had visited Hollins College in Virginia, where she read "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" with several students. She made a few remarks concerning her own works, which are available in her volume *Mystery and Manners,* in the essay "On Her Own Work." Here she argues that each and every "great short story" has a moment "in which the presence of grace can be felt," "even though the reader may not recognize this moment" (118). She believes that grace "waits to be accepted or rejected," so when characters in her short stories encounter the "moment of grace," they do not always adapt it (118). O'Connor gives her characters the opportunity to receive grace, although the moment when this chance arises often coincides with violence or death.

In "Good Country People" there could be two "moments of grace." When Hulga walks alone to the Hopewell farm's barn with Manley Pointer, she becomes more honest and puts an end to her usually pretentious behavior. Alone with the Bible salesman, she shows her real self and her real identity. Throughout the short story, she exhibits her embodiment through being an intellectual, a philosopher, not allowing feelings or emotions to enter her daily life, which, we can only assume, would make it insufferable. Now, in this critical moment, she behaves like a human. By letting Pointer remove her fake leg, she shows her vulnerability as well. This scene is shortly followed by Pointer leaving, abandoning Hulga in the barn, stealing her leg. I believe that this can be seen as a second moment of grace. Hulga believes in the philosophy of nothing and, alone in the barn without her prosthetic limb and glasses, she has what she believes in: nothing. However, it is questionable whether this nothingness is satisfactory to her and whether the parallel between her philosophy and her situation dawn on her.

Kym Maclaren elaborates on relationship between embodiment and emotions. She argues against the traditional understanding of emotions saying that they are opposed to reason and believes that emotions are necessary elements of humans' development towards autonomous beings. Emotions and the expression of emotions become tools for people to show that they are trying to make sense of their world (26-27). In this sense, when Hulga allows Pointer to remove her glasses and artificial leg and reveals her true emotions, she takes another step in her own embodiment. This experience becomes an important part of not only her lifeworld, but also her view of her own self. This is in line with Maclaren's point that emotion is an experience of a tension which puts our place in reality into question. At this point in the narrative, Hulga must question her own reality, facing her moment of grace. Even though we do not know what happens to her character after the

story ends, we can safely speculate that this experience will have a lasting impact on her process of embodiment.

Hulga's embodiment is a complex issue, but scholars' works in different veins allow us to approach this issue from several angles. The examples above clearly illustrate that two aspects of Hulga's life -- her intellectual lifeworld and her disability, symbolized by her artificial limb -- play a pivotal role in her embodiment. All interpretations of the story must keep in mind these two things to understand Hulga's character and her relationship with her mother.

3.2.3. Defective communication and differences in the lifeworld

After a quarrel with her mother, Hulga summarizes their relationship in a single sentence: "If you want me, here I am– LIKE I AM." (O'Connor, *CS* 274). It seems to the reader that Hulga understands perfectly that her mother does not accept her and her lifestyle as they are and that this is the crux of their relationship.

Hulga knows that Mrs. Hopewell loves her in her own way, but she also realizes that her mother's love is not all-accepting. Throughout the short story, Mrs. Hopewell and her daughter hardly ever talk to each other, and when they do it is just a few words to each other. We can actually never see any act of intersubjective communication between them which would be considered successful by either Habermas or Davidson. Their conversations are not real communicative actions; mother and her daughter only talk because they live together by circumstance.

The only exception is Hulga's outburst with her mother featuring Malebranch, discussed above. But even this scene still cannot be considered a real communicative situation, since Mrs. Hopewell responding to the situation with another cliché, saying,

again, that "a smile never hurt anyone" (276). It seems that she does not even want to think about the issue her daughter is alluding to. The difference between the lifeworlds of the two characters prevent them from engaging in meaningful communication, because they usually do not have a common object to talk about. If we revisit Davidson's triangle principle, we see that the two women face a dearth of common objects that they both understand the same way. While works of philosophy are immensely important for Hulga, her mother is unable to understand them and considers the books a source of embarrassment, not a source of positive knowledge. They hold incompatible images of the object, making effective communication completely impossible.

Mrs. Hopewell definitely finds more pleasure in Mrs. Freeman's daughters than her own. She likes to tell people that "Glynese and Carramae were two of the finest girls she knew" (272). This annoys and likely hurts Hulga: she sees that her mother does not understand her and takes more pride in other girls. Furthermore, she daily has to face that girls who are much younger than she is get married and having children. The Freeman sisters exhibit conspicuously successful examples of traditional female gender roles, pushing her farther and farther away from her own mother. Once again, the root of the issue can be seen in the idea of the lifeworld: the mother is able to share the view of the Freeman sisters, but she is not able to do the same with her daughter.

The difference in the lifeworld is salient again if we take a look at religion in the story. Mrs. Hopewell does not understand her child's atheism and sees it as a source of shame. Although her own Bible is never in use, she still finds Hulga's open atheism a disgrace. O'Connor's stories take place in the Southern Bible Belt, one of the most religious areas of America. Mrs. Hopewell is afraid of what people living around them might say about a girl who likes to stress that she does not believe in God. This belief lies utterly outside of the perceived lifeworld of their community. When Manley Pointer is

introduced in the narrative and tells Mrs. Hopewell that he cannot see any Bibles in the house, she is ashamed to admit to him that Hulga does not allow her to keep a copy in the parlor.

On the other hand, Hulga's atheism is important to her. Tied to her philosophical education, it forms an essential part of her embodiment. The fact that her mother does not understand or accept it is further evidence of their incompatible lifeworlds. Hulga's "aggressive atheism" (Wehner 309) can also be seen as an explicit protest against the values of her mother and the values of the Bible Belt, her native land. Through atheism, Hulga is able to find a way to distinguish herself from others in the South, identifying her own self. Hulga does not care about any kind of consensus, not the ones which are described by Habermas. She lives her life according to her own rules, even if it means that she will have to live it alone. As Louise Westling points out, being a "fat, bespectacled" woman and a "crippled adult," she has none of "the feminine beauty or charm which might have helped" her "find a normal place in Southern life" (*Mothers* 518). Hulga is thirty-two and by this age the chance of a normal life as a woman has passed her by and her frustration has already turned into "bitterness and perverse eccentricity" (518).

Through atheism she can choose to be an outsider, rather than being considered one for physical characteristics that she feels she cannot control. Her mother does not accept her as she is -- atheist, disabled, learned, eccentric -- anyway.

3.2.4. Mrs. Freeman as a mother figure

While we find in "Good Country People" an example of a complex and multi-level mother-daughter relationship between Mrs. Hopewell and Hulga, there is one other mother figure in the story to look at. We learn from O'Connor that Mrs. Freeman has a fascination

with "secret infections, hidden deformities" (*CS* 275), probably the reason why she feels close to Hulga. She thinks that by using the name "Hulga" she can get closer her, but actually the opposite happens: Hulga gets irritated with Mrs. Freeman but she does not want to engage in confrontational behavior with her since she can use her as a shield against her mother. When Mrs. Freeman is visiting the Hopewell home, Hulga can direct her mother's and Mrs. Freeman's attention to Glynese and Carramae by asking questions about them, diverting the two women's attention that would be otherwise directed at her. When Hulga first meets Manley Pointer, they have a conversation that Mrs. Hopewell witnesses and later becomes curious about. The next morning, when Mrs. Freeman drops by, Hulga deliberately asks her questions about her daughters when "for any reason she showed inclination to leave," essentially trying to hold her hostage so she would not have to talk with her mother alone (282). Hulga "could perceive her mother's eyes on her" (282) and she knows that the first question would be about the events of the previous day. She tries to avoid communication with her own mother, although she knows that she could please her by talking with her. Hulga explicitly uses Mrs. Freeman to avoid direct talks with her own mother, feeding Mrs. Freeman's fascination with her artificial leg in return. Although Hulga talks more easily with Mrs. Freeman than her own mother, there is still a degree to which it is not genuine.

Mrs. Freeman's dialogue with Mrs. Hopewell opens and closes the short story. Kathleen Feeley points out that Mrs. Freeman thus bookends the "encounter" between Hulga and Manley Pointer (26). She is the first character we met in the beginning of the story, described, along with her husband, as "good country people." Indeed, readers might easily mistake her for a main character. Feeley also asserts that Mrs. Freeman "knows Hulga better than the girl's own mother does," but I do not wholly agree with this statement. Feeley's evidence for this idea is the fact that she starts calling her Hulga,

although Hulga herself comes to see this as an invasion into her privacy (26). We know that "It was as if Mrs. Freeman's beady steel-pointed eyes had penetrated far enough behind her face to reach some secret fact" (O'Connor, *CS* 275); however, it turns out that she is only interested in Hulga's fake leg and not in her as a person. Feeley also calls the attention to the similar behavior of Mrs. Freeman and Manley Pointer. She believes that both of them "show an interesting kinship" to Hulga's deformity (26). Furthermore, throughout the whole story only these two people call Hulga the name that she chose when she turned twenty-one. Interestingly enough, when Pointer uses this name Hulga does not find it intrusive.

O'Connor clearly presents Mrs. Freeman as a mother figure. As we just saw, Mrs. Freeman is better at communication with Hulga than Mrs. Hopewell. We can also see that Hulga uses her as a tool to mediate issues with her own mother. The addition of another mother figure in the story provides an even clearer image of how problematic the relationship between Mrs. Hopewell and Hulga is.

3.3. Mother and daughter in "A Circle in the Fire"

In this section of my work I wish to examine O'Connor's short story "A Circle in the Fire." As in other O'Connor stories, embodiment is an important feature, together with the dysfunctional relationship between a mother and daughter. Throughout the narrative, the mother, Mrs. Cope, and her daughter, Sally Virginia, hardly ever talk to each other and when they do they just talk about hitchhiking intruders on their farm. We can sense that they simply cannot stand each other and their conflict is almost tangible. Just like "Good Country People," "A Circle in the Fire" does not contain a single successful communicative situation between mother and daughter. When they do talk, they always

finish their conversation in a quarrel or disagreement. This is clearly due to the fact that the lifeworlds of these two female characters are not shared. We can clearly see that these are not communicative situations as defined by either Habermas or Husserl discussed in this dissertation. Without actual communication taking place between characters, no real relationships can develop between Sally Virginia and Mrs. Cope.

3.3.1. The embodiment of Mrs. Cope

Mrs. Cope is a relevant character to examine how the cultural world is experienced through the physical world, in the sense described by Merleau-Ponty. He believes that the physical world consists of the settlements around us and all the objects that we can perceive. However, the cultural world also exists and it does not usually concentrate on physical features. The cultural world is determined by the society in which the person lives and plays the person's part. I argue that in "A Circle in the Fire," Mrs. Cope is only able to experience the cultural world through the physical world; there is no way for her to escape it. This echoes the limitations that the physical world imposes on characters in other examples of O'Connor's fiction.

Louise Westling believes that Mrs. Cope in "A Circle in the Fire" follows the pattern of Mrs. Hopewell of "Good Country People" (*Mothers* 511). As in the two stories previously discussed, we again meet a mother raising her only daughter alone. The pivotal element of the widowed woman's life is her farm: it takes all her time to handle the farm's issues. O'Connor describes her as a "very small and trim" woman, "with a large round face and black eyes that seemed to be enlarging all the time behind her glasses as if she were continually being astonished" (175). When we first meet her she is squatting outside, pulling grass out of the ground. The reader immediately gets the image of a hard-working, assiduous, tough woman, just like Mrs. Crater. However, the story reveals that there are

instances in which Mrs. Cope can be interpreted not as a strong woman, but rather a helpless one. Walter Elder, for instance, believes that in this particular story the men enjoy total power, while all the women are completely helpless (28).

Indeed, "A Circle in the Fire" raises several observations about gender. Mary L. Morton argues that, along with "The Displaced Person" and "Greenleaf," "A Circle in the Fire" dramatizes "the ludicrosity of women who have denied the spirit of femininity, the *anima*." Furthermore, she also believes that the sympathy which is generated by the author for the main characters can be seen as a kind of trick on some of the readers (57). Peter A. Smith observes, instead, that these characters actually do not deny their femininity, rather, they take advantage and exploit it. However, they do it in such a way that might sometimes seem to be a parody of femininity. Smith argues that no matter how unlikeable of a character Mrs. Cope is, she is able to survive in "a man's world." O'Connor mother characters frequently have to handle the seemingly impossible task of handling both of the gender roles while running a farm alone (35). Indeed, Mrs. Cope must be the "managerial type," in Morton's words; otherwise she would simply not be able to survive (58).

In the theoretical chapter of my dissertation I reviewed Merleau-Ponty's idea about the physical world and the cultural world. Taking a close look at "A Circle in the Fire," we can see that in case of Mrs. Cope, the emphasis is strongly on the presence in the physical world. Her character and personality are strongly determined by the fact that she needs to conduct work that is usually associated with men and masculinity, making her connection to the physical world extremely strong, yet, at the same time her relationship with the cultural world, determined by the society, is less strong. In Merleau-Ponty's understanding, the physical world consists of the settlement around the self, the air, and also the objects all around the given person. However, the cultural world is much more ambiguous, he argues,

as it allows different understandings and interpretations. Yet, for Mrs. Cope, the cultural world is experienced *through* the physical world and not the other way around.

Besides being a person who is deeply connected to the physical world, Mrs. Cope's other defining characteristic is that she is obsessed with talking about being thankful. Throughout the narrative, she is portrayed to be on her knees many times, symbolizing the act of humbling oneself. Whenever she is on her knees, she is doing some kind of physical work on the ground. The reader gets the impression of a person who not only talks about being grateful, but also shows it with this symbolic act. Mrs. Cope says "we ought to spend half our time on our knees" (O'Connor, *CS* 174), encapsulating her view of the world pretty well. In her case, this saying can refer to worshipping the Lord constantly and the physical act of being on the ground.

Mrs. Cope likes to talk about being grateful to God, but at the same time she is a very fearful person. As Margaret Whitt points out, there are only two things in her focus: "Work hard and be thankful" (*Understanding* 70). Her daughter is conspicuously absent from these priorities.

> "Every day I say a prayer of thanksgiving," Mrs. Cope said. "Think of all we have. Lord," she said and sighed, "we have everything," and she looked around at her rich pastures and hills heavy with timber and shook her head as if it might all be a burden she was trying to shake off her back (O'Connor, *CS* 177).

But as the owner of the farm Mrs. Cope has an exaggerated, unrealistic fear of damage, accidents, and fire. She is "always afraid someone would get hurt on her place and sue her for everything she had" (180). She emphasizes her deep fear of fire on many occasions and it seems that this well-founded fear is the other pivotal element of her life,

part of her character and embodiment. When she finds a trespassing boy on the farm smoking she calls him "Ashfield," although his real name is Garfield. This slip of the tongue proves her dreadful fright. When three hitchhiker boys, Powell Boyd, Garfield Smith, and W.T Harper arrive on the farm, her greatest fear becomes fulfilled when a fire takes place in the adjacent forest. Before the arrival of the trespassing boys Mrs. Cope is able to balance her world, but they disrupt her balance.

The contradictions here are noteworthy: Mrs. Cope is grateful for the physical world around her but her daughter is not a significant feature of her world. We can also see that she is thankful for all the physical objects that she has, but they are also a burden. This might make the reader believe that she likes to project how to behave in a proper way and praise God, but she "actually worships at the altar of her own resourcefulness" (Browning 51). Mrs. Cope is prone to indulge in the sentiment that she has "the best kept place in the country" (O'Connor, *CS* 178) and she also likes to present it as her own doing.

As unexpected as it sounds, Mrs. Cope can fruitfully be compared to Hulga. As Preston M. Browning Jr. pinpoints, Mrs. Cope is like Hulga in "Good Country People" in a sense that they both created their own world and they do not want to leave this particular world under any circumstances (52). Furthermore, as Richard Giannone points out in his book *Flannery O'Connor: Hermit Novelist*, for both of them their constructed world is the source of their identity (76). Mrs. Cope believes that she created "Eden" on her property and she considers the intruders "evil forces." The narrator mentions early in the story that she pulls out weeds "as if they were an evil sent directly by the devil to destroy the place" (O'Connor, *CS* 175). This phrase suggests a particularly rigorous personality and foreshadows a threatening plot for the narrative.

In another comparison, Mrs. Cope and Mrs. Hopewell share a love of clichéd sayings. Just like Hulga's mother, Mrs. Cope also enjoys changing the topic of discussion

to cheerful subjects and she uses phrases to avoid uncomfortable situations. Mrs. Cope's clichés seem to be more sophisticated than Mrs. Hopewell's as they are not as meaningless; nevertheless they get on the nerves of other characters.

3.3.2. Sally Virginia and Hulga's lifeworld

Mrs. Cope's daughter, Sally Virginia, is a significant character even if she does not seem important to Mrs. Cope. In this way, the relationship between them diverges a little from comparable relationships in O'Connor's other stories, but still features unsuccessful communication and a complicated process of embodiment. I argue that Hulga of "Good Country People" and Sally Virginia of "A Circle in the Fire" share each other's lifeworld, as it is described by both Husserl and Habermas. At the same time, they do not share the lifeworlds of other characters in their families, particularly their mothers.

The similarities between Sally Virginia and Hulga are easy to identify. According to Louise Westling's paper entitled "Flannery O'Connor's Mothers and Daughters," Hulga of "Good Country People" and Mrs. Cope's daughter, Sally Virginia, are examples of the same type; she believes that Hulga is the mature version of Sally Virginia (512). (Hulga is thirty-two whereas Sally Virginia is only twelve.) Their physical appearance seems to be their most significant common feature: just like Hulga, O'Connor describes Sally Virginia as a "pale fat girl" (O'Connor, *CS* 181). Although she does not suffer from a physical disability like Lucynell Jr. or Hulga, Sally Virginia has "a frowning squint and a large mouth full of silver bands" (181). Like Hulga, she also has spectacles and reads a lot, suggesting that intellectually they are in a similar situation. Through a close reading of these stories we can see that the two characters actually share each other's lifeworld, in the sense as it is described by both Habermas and Husserl.

In Husserl's point of view, the lifeworld is the horizon, the beginning and the end for all kinds of action an individual might perform. In both Hulga's and Sally Virginia's case, the beginning and the end of the action can be connected to two aspects: the first is the importance of the intellectual world, and the second is a culturally atypical relationship to the other sex. Habermas, however, argues that the intersubjectively shared lifeworld is "bounded by the totality of interpretation presupposed by the members as a background knowledge" (*Theory 1*, 71-71). In both stories, the daughters have no real relationship with their mothers; they do not share deep mutual understanding. A shared world only exists in case of the two girls, drawing continuities across different O'Connor stories.

3.3.3. Gender issues in "A Circle in the Fire"

Turning to the issue of gender, Sally Virginia is on the verge of adolescence and we might say that this story tells how this bespectacled girl struggles with becoming a woman. Sally Virginia is always referred to as "the child," neutralizing her gender; the narrative positions her as a kid. Furthermore, in the first several paragraphs we do not even know the gender of the child because the author does not use personal pronouns to identify gender. A possible reason is that O'Connor wants to emphasize that this child is not a woman yet. Later, when we get to know her better, her appearance suggests a tomboyish girl. She goes into the forest wearing a man's hat and "was arming herself with two pistols in a decorated holster that she had fastened around her waist" (O'Connor, *CS* 190), not showing her as a traditionally feminine character.

As Giannone points out, Mrs. Cope does not "exemplify the kind of woman the girl wants to be" (*Mystery* 84). She goes against her mother when she decides to go to the forest and she furiously shouts at her "Leave me be. I ain't you" (O'Connor, *CS* 190). Sally

Virginia feels her mother's attitude towards her and she can sense that the physical world is much more important to Mrs. Cope than their relationship. She wants to clearly distinguish herself from her mother and by the end of the narrative she realizes that her mother has not only failed as a parent but also as the manager of the farm. She and her farmhands are not capable of getting rid of the three boys before they cause lasting damage, and thus they destroy the image of the farm owner as an omnipotent person. Mrs. Cope first tries to make the boys leave the farm with nice requests as she has a "positive view of human nature" (Browning 52), but Sally Virginia is smart enough to realize that this technique fails and wants to physically force the boys to leave. It seems that she "has more sense than her mother" (Giannone, *Hermit* 77) and perhaps when she realizes her mother's failure she becomes disappointed.

And yet, reminiscent of the way that Mrs. Hopewell did love Hulga deep down, there is a bond between Mrs. Cope and Sally Virginia as well. At the end of the short story Sally Virginia goes back to her mother and identifies with Mrs. Cope. She heads directly to her mother crying in despair and this is the first moment of the story when Sally Virginia really looks at her mother. What the girl sees is desperate: she "stared up at her face as if she had never seen it before. It was the face of the new misery she felt, but on her mother it looked old and it looked as if it might have belonged to anybody, a Negro or a European or to Powell himself" (190). At this point the two women show their true identities as they share the same despair; furthermore, we see that the fear on the face of the mother is the fear of Sally Virginia. Through this reconciliation, O'Connor suggests that these women belong together. The mother's face looks like anyone else's, her guise of confident superiority over. There is no use pretending that she invincibly runs the place, with the farm ablaze. As her deep fear becomes true and her property, the physical world, is on fire, she loses her pretense and shows her real self and real feelings. In the last paragraph we

reach the moment of grace in this story: she is compared to an "enemy" who destroyed her artificial Eden and who brought about the whole problem. With using expressions like "prophet" and "angel," O'Connor clearly indicates that this is an important moment in Sally Virginia's life, which will live on in Sally Virginia as the one that forms a stronger bond between her and her mother. As a child, she realizes that her mother is and always will be a quintessential figure in her life.

The issue of gender is also an important one from the point of view of the intruders. When the hitchhiker boys realize that Sally Virginia lives on the farm with her mother and a Mrs. Pritchard, the large boy stares at her and says: "another woman" (185). Sally Virginia's reaction shows that she is wounded by these words and takes this remark as an offense. She gets exasperated, wanting to beat him, but her mother calms her nerves. For the first time in the story, she is identified as female. According to Mrs. Cope, "Ladies don't beat the daylight out of people" (185); with this sentence she gives gender and also a gender role to her daughter, who had none before. However, a couple of days later, when Sally Virginia decides to go into the woods Mrs. Cope talks to her in a pretty humiliating way. Her questions all try to wound Sally Virginia: "Why do you have to look like an idiot?" "When are you going to grow up?" "What's going to become of you?" (190). At the end of this monologue she explodes in frustration: "I look at you and I want to cry! Sometimes you look like you might belong to Mrs. Pritchard!" (190).

When discussing gender in "A Circle in the Fire," the male characters offer opportunities for analysis as well. As Louise Westling points out, these boys hate the women in the story. Unlike, say, Manley Pointer, they are not looking for sexual union; rather, they long for revenge. Authority becomes the subject of male retribution and by burning the woods, the boys eventually humiliate the women, wreaking havoc on the farm. Westling also believes that Mrs. Cope acutely feared this kind of devastation throughout

the story, worried that the boys would destroy the "female integrity of the land" (Demeter 105).

3.3.4. Employers and Employees

In "Good Country People" the first person we meet is Mrs. Freeman, the tenant famer's wife, and in "A Circle in the Fire" the position of the first person we encounter is also the same, foreshadowing the relationship between employers and employees on the Georgia farm. Although Mrs. Pritchard's presence in the beginning of the story is not as significant as Mrs. Hopewell's, she is the first one who talks Mrs. Cope's remark that her daughter sometimes seems the child of Mrs. Pritchard shows Mrs. Cope's real feelings about the woman who lives on the farm as one of the tenants. Although Mrs. Cope seems to be nice to her—as she is to everyone—she considers herself superior to Mrs. Pritchard and she tries to ignore her; she finds her irritating as well.

In the very first paragraph of the short story, O'Connor juxtaposes the employer and the employee: "Both women had on sunhats that had once been identical but now Mrs. Pritchard's was faded and out of shape while Mrs. Cope's was still stiff and bright green." (O'Connor, *CS* 175). This line determines our view of these women and hints at Mrs. Cope's feeling of superiority. Mrs. Pritchard is described as a "large woman with a small pointed face and steady ferreting eyes" (175), suggesting a similarity between Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Freeman. Another common element is that both of them have a fascination with disabilities and maladies, although this affection is not so significant in Mrs. Pritchard. In the beginning of the narrative Mrs. Pritchard mentions a woman who has iron lungs and although Mrs. Cope tries to change the subject, she goes on talking about that lady. Although she is being looked down upon by Mrs. Cope throughout the whole

story, Mrs. Pritchard seems to be more sensible than her boss. Mrs. Prichard makes several pessimistic remarks concerning the boys, but these remarks are actually realistic assessments. There is no special relationship between Mrs. Pritchard and Sally Virginia, but her similarities to Mrs. Freeman are still significant.

3.3.5. Significance of names and homes

As in other works of Flannery O'Connor, we find significance and controversy between the pivotal characters' names and their meanings in "A Circle in the Fire." Mrs. Cope simply cannot cope with either the boys or her eccentric daughter. She lives in a world of self-delusion: she is positive that she is able to manage the farm, raise her daughter, get rid of the boys, and handle "the type of mind that Mrs. Pritchard had" (189). However, at the end of the story it turns out that she cannot cope with any of these issues. The paradox in her name can symbolize her reign in her imaginary Eden, where everything turns out to be self-deception.

Whenever her daughter is not called "the child," she is always called Sally Virginia. The name Virginia can refer to her innocence and, by naming her such, the author can emphasize once more that she is a child and not a woman yet. It seems that the girl has no real contact with men before she sees them in the forest and her first experience with men is characterized by "assault and violence" (Westling, *Mothers* 516), just like in the case of Hulga. Frequently in O'Connor's fiction, daughters have a romantic or sexual encounter with the opposite sex and are then assaulted. Hulga goes to the barn with Mr. Pointer and there she experiences the passion of kissing. Sally Virginia glimpses the boys naked while they are washing and, although we do not know what her reaction is, we can presume that this is the first time that she sees boys this way. In both of the stories the girls

have no time to "digest" what they have just seen or experienced and the shock shapes their memories of the encounter with the other gender, and sometimes deletes any traceable signs.

Sally Virginia's compound names compounds the potential meanings. According to the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary,* the verb "sally" means "to leave a place in a determined or enthusiastic way" (1342). When Sally Virginia leaves for the forest, we might say that she sallies out of the house, although we cannot know whether she knows she would meet the boys there. Before this scene in the narrative, she does not leave the building of their home at all unaccompanied by her mother. Thinking, that the boys have left, Sally Virginia runs into the woods to be alone, to be away from her mother, only to find trouble.

3.4. Daughters and mothers and O'Connor

Comparing "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," "Good Country People," and "A Circle in the Fire," we can conclude that in O'Connor's stories daughters always face male violence or trickery when they venture away from their mothers and their homes, regardless of whether their mothers encouraged it or forbade it. These girls live an uphill struggle and they want to leave home and their deficient mothers, yet their homes always provide safety for them. Home indeed means haven and refuge for the young characters of these stories, but soon as they leave both the physical and theoretical boundaries of home, they expose themselves to danger and this way become vulnerable.

In the detailed critical analysis of "The Life Your Save May Be Your Own," "Good Country People," and "A Circle in the Fire," we could see that in many of the cases communication is a major issue between the characters depicted by Flannery O'Connor.

We could also see that the issue of the differences between lifeworlds is also an immensely important one, considering the fact that in all the three cases the differences within the lifeworld cause conflicts and problems within the characters of the story.

No matter how difficult and complex their relationships are with their mothers, their parent and the idea of home provides a kind of shelter for all the three daughters. When they are accompanied by their mother, men do not seem to be brave enough to violate the daughters, suggesting the regard for mother figures in Southern society. In all of these stories the mothers are shown as strong women whom men are perhaps a little afraid of. However, they all lead the daughters away from their mothers. When Sally Virginia realizes that the boys set the woods on fire she runs back to her mother to feel safe again. Hulga will face enormous difficulties in getting back home again. Lucynell Jr. probably cannot get home on her own, but even with her limited cognitive abilities the absence of the stalwart figure in her life, her mother, is possibly evident. For all of the three characters, home provided safety for a long period of time and they realize this fact only after they experience defenselessness away from home and their mothers, even though their mothers failed them in significant ways.

When discussing mother-daughter relationships in the works of Flannery O'Connor, one must devote some reflection to the life of O'Connor herself. She was born on March 25, 1925 in Savannah, Georgia. Not having any brothers or sisters, she grew up as a solitary child. Edward O'Connor, Flannery's father died in 1941 of lupus, an auto-immune disease. His daughter was only sixteen years old then. For the next 9 years O'Connor exhibited no sign of any illness; however, in 1950 she was hospitalized and was diagnosed with the same disease as her father. She had to spend several months in hospital but it initially seemed that they could stop her disease from further proliferation. However,

after serious medical treatments and blood transfusions she became extremely weak, so weak that she was not able to climb stairs alone.

After the diagnoses she and her mother moved to a farm near the family's hometown, Milledgeville, Georgia. Andalusia became O'Connor's home for the rest of her life and she spent most of her time with her mother. They had a fixed daily routine at Andalusia: the daughter spent the morning writing, then they drove into Milledgeville where they had lunch, then returned to the farm for reading, painting, and preparing for the work the next day. It was Regina O'Connor who actually did most of the work on the farm, along with a hired couple. Flannery's condition prevented her from doing physical work. In 1964 a benign abdominal tumor appeared and unfortunately the lupus became reactivated. It was evident to her that she would die soon, but she was hoping that she would be able to finish enough stories for her last book. She passed on August 3, 1964 (Hyman 5-10).

In her study entitled "Flannery O'Connor's Mothers and Daughters," Louise Westling points out that "the parallels between Flannery O'Connor's own life and those of the daughters in her stories are so obvious that they need hardly be mentioned" (521). She also mentions that Sally Virginia in "A Circle in the Fire" may reflect the author's image of her own childhood self (521). In the story, we see Sally Virginia looking out of the window of her room watching what the others do. This "spying" can be seen "as the natural activity of the budding female novelist," Westling believes (515).

Westling interviewed one of Flannery's schoolmates after O'Connor died. In that conversation Mimi Johnson, the old friend, describes Hulga as representing what Flannery might have thought of herself, "as she saw herself through the eyes of the 'normal' middle class people of her home town" (521). Both Flannery and Hulga considered themselves intellectuals who spent most of their lives in non-intellectual settings with their mothers.

Hulga's obsession with books and her single life can also be seen as autobiographical elements.

Flannery O'Connor began dealing with mother-daughter relationships in her early fiction. "The Life You Save May Be Your Own," "Good Country People," and "A Circle in the Fire" were all published in her 1955 book titled *A Good Man is Hard to Find*, only five years after she had been diagnosed with the illness. In her later works this pattern is not the central element; in the short stories of *Everything that Rises Must Converge* (1965) she deals more with other types of family relationships. In this way, perhaps writing mother-daughter stories helped O'Connor process her new circumstances, and then coped and graduated to other material.

As Mark Bosco points out, the way art imitates or mediates life is a common question in postmodern culture. Many people wonder how autobiographical O'Connor's works were. In "Good Country People," he believes there are obvious and clear parallels between Hulga and the author herself. He also believes that O'Connor's correspondence, which was published after her death, might reveal some features of Hulga (283). O'Connor's life and literary legacy continue to provide readers and scholars with fascinating guesses about families and the self to explore.

4. Single mothers and only sons

As I detailed in the third chapter of my dissertation, several of Flannery O'Connor's works feature patterns in the relationships between mothers and daughters. The mother-daughter pattern has its counterpart: several short stories feature a similar mother figure accompanied by a grown-up son, with whom she shares her life. As in the stories with daughters, most of the mothers are widows. But unlike her mother-daughter stories, which

overwhelmingly take place on desolate farms, many of the mother-son stories are set, instead, in the cities of the American South. In O'Connor's mother-son stories, the sons are often in their twenties or thirties and have already grown well into adulthood. A common characteristic in these men is that they have college education and much emphasis is placed on their intellectual attributes.

In analyzing O'Connor's stories featuring daughters, I elaborated on the way these women are somehow forced to live with their mothers. But in case of the mother-son pattern, there is no obvious hardship that forces the boys to live together with their elderly mothers. These men are, in Josephine Hendin's words, "locked in a struggle with a parent they can neither love nor leave" (98). Hendin clearly summarizes their situation: even though they have close relationships with their mothers, they also long for freedom from them; however, they are not able to start their new lives without them. In the short stories where we encounter mothers and sons, the parent figure is always a powerful woman. She is often presented "from the point of view of a helpless child" to whom the mother seems superior and also omnipotent (99). Even though these men are adults based on their age, they are like teenagers in how they interact with their mothers; had their age not been stated the reader could easily assume that they are much younger based on the conflicts they experience with their mothers. However, if these conflicts had taken place in adolescence, they might not have been as significant as they are now. They might not have become fatal as they are in these stories.

In this chapter of my dissertation I will analyze three stories from the point of view of intersubjective relations between mothers and sons depicted there: "Everything that Rises Must Converge," "The Comforts of Home," and "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." I will focus on communications theory, intersubjectivity theory, and the idea of the lifeworld in analyzing these stories.

4.1. Mother and son in "Everything that Rises Must Converge"

According to Hendin, the title of Flannery O'Connor's second short story collection *Everything That Rises Must Converge* perfectly represents her stories about family conflicts: "everyone who grows up must confront his parents" (99). In this posthumous volume, there are two short stories that concentrate on the troubled relationship between a mother and son. In both "Everything That Rises Must Converge" and "The Comforts of Home," we meet characters who completely fulfill the mother-son pattern outline above, and who experience some traumatic events in the narrative.

One of the most significant aspects of "Everything That Rises Must Converge" is that the mother character is not named. Whenever she is referred to in the story, she is always called "Julian's mother," "his mother," or "the old lady." She is the first character the reader encounters in the story, referred to immediately as "Julian's mother." As Margaret Whitt points out, she is defined exclusively by her relationship with Julian (*Understanding* 116). This form of address clearly defines their relationship as well: she raised Julian alone while she "struggled fiercely to feed and clothe and put him through school" (O'Connor, *CS* 406). It is still the mother who supports the son.

One of the reasons Julian cannot leave his mother is that he depends on her financially. We know that he has been out of college for a year and, while he daydreams about becoming an author, he sells typewriters. Even though he explicitly says that he will start making money, the narrator quickly comments that "he knew he never would" (406). After mentioning the possibility of making money, Julian also elaborates on the idea of moving; however, the plural structure of the sentence suggest that he cannot really imagine leaving without his mother: "first they would move" (406). This example excellently illustrates how these two people do not exist independently; even Julian cannot think about

anything else but them together. This one sentence captures the extremely strong bond between mother and son, despite all or their conflicts and their differences.

It is also apparent from the story that the mother is able to influence the deeds of the son with her words, which can also mean that this is a reason they live together. I believe that the mother figure is a master of perlocutionary acts, as described by Austin; she is able to convince her son to do what she wants him to. One example of this comes early in the story when the two of them are about to leave their home and Julian removes his tie. The mother does not feel comfortable about it and she uses emotional force to influence him: "Who must you look like *that* when you take me to town?," "Why must you deliberately embarrass me?" she asks. "You look like a—thug.," "You can't do a little thing like that for me," she explains (409). While these are not explicit perlocutionary speech acts, I believe she uses them to persuade her son to put the tie back on. This example illustrates the power of words and also the influence of the mother on her son, which will be an important element throughout the narrative.

4.1.1. Lifeworlds and fantasy worlds in "Everything That Rises Must Converge"

In this section of my dissertation I prove that the idea of lifeworld, as proposed by Husserl and Habermas, can be fascinatingly applied in "Everything That Rises Must Converge." I claim that although Julian is aware of the differences between the lifeworld of his mother and his own, his mother does not seem to be aware of it. While Julian is the child of the modern society, his mother seems to have remained in the old South, tied to traditional values and customs, including support of racial segregation. At the same time, while O'Connor acknowledges that the mother character lives in a fantasy world, I will argue that Julian also lives in his own fantasy world as a self-styled intellectual. These two

places do not overlap, however. While Julian's fantasy world overlaps the society that he lives in, the mother's fantasy world stays in a far bygone era. While much scholarly attention has been paid on the issue of race in this story, Julian's mother puts just as much emphasis on her Southern heritage as her race itself, even if these two cannot be completely separated from each other. The main strain of her identity and her lifeworld, as she sees it, is Southern.

Jenn Williamson approaches "Everything That Rises Must Converge" from the point of view of trauma and traumatic recurrences. She believes that the short story links the inheritance of Southern cultural guilt and historical loss to the dysfunctional mother-son relationship and also to a traumatic racial encounter. Williamson argues that race and family history play an immensely important role in the development of the narrative. She notes that there is an obvious connection with the mother's family identity and the family's intergenerational historical ties, pinpointing that the combination of these two actually results in the elimination of the mother's individual identity. Throughout the narrative, Julian's mother is presented as a person who lacks personal identity and who can only identify herself through her connections to the past (her father and her grandfather and all that they stand for), Williamson argues (750).

Williamson also believes that the mother does not want to separate herself from history because she cannot move past the trauma of the Lost Cause, the ideology in the post-war South that their side in the Civil War had been a noble cause. She is presented as a person who simply cannot let the past go and "can't comprehend the depth to which its loss has affected her, and she repeats the narrative in order to re-establish the historical boundaries of her identity" (750-751). The repeated references that she makes to the family's historical background are a central part of her fantasy world. When she has a

stroke towards the end of the narrative, she calls out for home – her grandfather and her old black nurse—clearly showing what kind of world she still lived in mentally (751).

In Williamson's point of view, Julian is unable to comprehend his mother's narrative because he himself is also the part of that same narrative, even though his racial views diverge from his mother's. Julian is not capable of becoming an empathetic listener of all the stories that her mother wants to share with him, she argues (760). I can only partially agree with this statement, pointing out that Julian actually *is* aware of the difference in the worldview of himself and his mother. It is clear from the very beginning of the story that mother and son do not share the same lifeworld, but Julian is acutely aware of these differences. He fails to become an empathetic listener not because he cannot, but because he chooses not to. Julian is greatly influenced by the social movements of the second half of the 20th century and that he despises the region's old worldview, the lifeworld of the mother. Julian has internalized the changes and new rules of modern society: he knows it is an offense to randomly give change to a black kid, but he also knows how his mother's lifeworld suggests that she behave. Thus, aware of their different vantage points, he warns his mother not to offend the black family they encounter with a patronizing gift of money. His understanding of his mother's intentions and his willingness to steer her away from taboo behaviors shows that he is an empathetic person, otherwise he would not do so. As Husserl argued, intersubjective communication requires empathy. In this particular instance, Julian displays successful intersubjectivity, but his mother does not. We cannot identify mutual understanding due to the fact that the mother is living in an outdated imaginary world where confrontation with reality is quite rare.

4.1.2. Laws of fantasy worlds

The plot of "Everything That Rises Must Converge" centers around Julian's mother wanting to go to an exercise class but not wanting to ride the recently integrated public bus alone, requesting Julian's company for the trip. The integration of the buses is an excellent excuse for the woman to have time with her son. The scenario highlights both the racism of the mother as well as the strong bond between the characters. She wants to make Julian feel guilt, stating that she expects Julian to accompany her, "considering all she did for him" (O'Connor, *CS* 406). We know about all the sacrifices she made for her son—for example, she has rotten teeth, having prioritized Julian's expenses over her own. "She lived according to the laws of her own fantasy world, outside of which he had never seen her set foot. The law of it was to sacrifice herself for him after she had first created the necessity to do so by making a mess of things" (411). The mother wants to seem important and constantly sacrifice for her son, but in reality that sometimes amounts to contriving scenarios to make herself need. It is obvious that her son is the only person in the mother's life and she is "blinded by love for" him (413), an abnormal love towards him. However, she is not the only one who tries to escape reality with a fantasy world; her son has his own. Julian does not really like the idea of being thankful to his mother, and deludes himself both about becoming an author and being independent of and more enlightened than his mother. They both created fantasy words for themselves and are both of them are cut off from society in different ways. However, as Feeley points out, neither of them wants to see or admit this (101).

The most dramatic difference between the imaginary world of Julian's mother and the real world she is surrounded by are the norms of class and racial deference. According to Feeley, the mother's "unreal world is the cultural world of the Old South" (102). In Browning's point of view, she behaves as if she was still a "legendary Southern matron of aristocratic birth," behavior that has become completely unacceptable in their community

(101). Raised by a wealthy family, she was brought up as a Southern belle. By the 1960s

there were no aristocratic families around, only pretentious descendants. Her grandfather's

two hundred slaves, which the mother often refers to, have long been freed and their

descendants are members of American society. The mother is fundamentally unable to

recognize this change. She remains stubbornly rooted in the antebellum South.

Furthermore, the mother acts as though they still belonged to the upper class of society, but

this is clearly not true. The house they live in stands in what used to be one of the more

elegant neighborhoods of the city, but suburbanization dramatically changed the structure

of American cities and the area where they live is now in decay. The neighborhood has lost

is old-fashioned charm, and now all the buildings have "a narrow collar of dirt around it in

which sat, usually, a grubby child" (O'Connor, *CS* 406). However, she has not given up on

being pretentious and wanting to show how different she is from supposedly lower folks.

She purchases an ostentatious hat hoping it will make her stand out above others the

neighborhood, which Julian ridicules. In the mother's fantasy world, conspicuous class

symbols like a hat would define elite status, but not in reality.

  The mother intensely wants to uphold her old family values and status, but the

decline of their family is clearly evident. Having no transportation or means to hire any,

she has to take the public bus to exercise. Furthermore, she goes to the YWCA (Young

Women's Christian Association). As Alice Hall Petry points out, one of the most telling

details that indicates the mother's lowered socioeconomic status is that she has to

participate at a YWCA program. Rather than being an elite sponsor of the YWCA

programs as her wealthy ancestors might have been, the fact that she participates in the

programs shows the decline of her family (51-52).

  There is a moment of recognition in the story when Julian's mother is forced to face

the real world around her, eventually resulting in catastrophe. When a black boy, Carver,

sits next to her on the bus she smiles at him -- for her, all children are lumped together into the category of "cute" (O'Connor, *CS* 415) -- but with a smile that is used to be "particularly gracious to an inferior" (417). Carver's mother, "a large, gaily dressed, sullen-looking colored woman" (417), takes the empty seat next to Julian. Julian's mother realizes that she and the black woman swapped sons in this seating arrangement, and that the other woman is wearing the same hat as she has. The hat was quite expensive (she could pay the gas bill for the price of the hat), but a woman of color is wearing the same one, diminishing it as a marker of her social and racial superiority. This pushes her to confront that her imaginary word does not exist. I believe that in "Everything That Rises Must Converge," we reach a moment of grace at this point, when the mother has to confront her equality with a black woman. Julian suggests that his mother does not realize the "symbolic significance" (415) of this event, but she feels it. However, she does not *accept* the proffered grace. According to O'Connor, the moment of grace is just an opportunity that a person can accept or not. She goes on being pretentious, offering the black woman's son a penny, which results in the black woman slapping her across the face with her purse.

The past, the family, the Old South—these markers of values played an important role in not only the evolution of the lifeworld of Julian's mother, but also her embodiment. She explicitly states that "You remain what you are…. Your great-grandfather had a plantation and two hundred slaves" (408). This example clearly shows that for her, embodiment and identity can only be understood in a Southern context framed by family and heritage. As I already elaborated in previous chapters of the dissertation, history and family are foundational elements of Southern identity. The example of Julian's mother clearly illustrates how a person can get trapped in a lifeworld that is completely and utterly imaginary.

However, it is not only the mother who lives in an imaginary world, secluded within her own lifeworld; Julian also lives in his own imaginary world. The two fictitious worlds share some common attributes. As Browning points out, both of the characters' imaginary worlds are centered around the South; however, while the mother wants to tie herself to the Old South, Julian wants to distance himself from everything the Old South represents to him: the "morally, intellectually, and aesthetically repugnant" values and the lifeworld of his mother. He despises its racism, "nostalgia for the glorious past," "petty concern with manners, its barren intellectual life," and "insufferably banal social intercourses." Julian deeply desires to differ from his mother, denying all the values that she cherished and insulting her values many times (100-101). In Brian N. Wyatt's point of view, Julian's imaginary world of rejection comes to an end when his mother dies of a heart attack at the end of the story: "It is his rejection of her, his figurative killing of her, that projects 'real world' that he must enter after death" (71). Julian's rejection of the South was a fictional world dependent on his mother's Old South; his constant daydreaming of ways to ridicule his mother's outdated views likewise depended on her. Once she was gone, his imaginary world had to, as well. According to Hendin, the woman's slap shattered his mother's "sense of who she is" as well as Julian's "illusion about his own strength" (Hendin 107).

There is one major difference in the imaginary world of Julian and his mother: the son admits that he has one. While riding the bus, he knowingly detaches himself from the surrounding and retreats into his mental bubble:

Julian was withdrawn into the inner compartment of his mind where he spent most of his time. This was a kind of mental bubble in which he established himself when he could not bear to be a part of what was going on around him . . . It was the only

place where he felt free of the general idiocy of his fellows. His mother had never

entered it but from it he could see her with absolute clarity (O'Connor, *CS* 411).

From his bubble Julian judges and condemns his mother's character, but not

perfectly; "his insensitivity toward his mother appears in his harsh misjudgement of her."

As Feeley points out, from his "mental bubble" he cannot form objective opinions about

the world he lives in and in this way "he effectively withdraws from life" (103).

However, Julian's imaginary world is closer to the real world than his mother's.

Shannon Russell believes that "real knowledge of one's place or space in synonymous with

self-knowledge" (83). This is particularly important in Julian's case. Even though his inner

space plays an important role in his life, he does realize that it is set apart from reality and

he possesses a clearer picture of the actual world surrounding him. Thus, based on

Russell's statement, unlike his mother, Julian does have self-knowledge.

Throughout the entire narrative Julian behaves in a displeasing way toward his

mother, but at the end of the story when the black woman slaps his mother with her purse

and his mother begins having a medical crisis, his approach to her changes. He is now able

to express his emotions, calling his mother "Darling," "Sweetheart," and "Mamma" (420).

As discussed in the theoretical chapter of my dissertation, Kym Maclaren believes that

emotions and the expressions of emotions become tools for people to display their attempts

to make sense of their world. Julian's reaction towards the possible loss of his mother can

be understood as an act of trying to comprehend the world in which he will need to live

without her. Maclaren also believes that emotions and the expression of the emotions are

truly unique, they are never the same. Flannery O'Connor is a master of describing

complex emotions and we can see an excellent example of an emotional apocalypse at the

end of the story:

"Wait here, wait here!" he cried and jumped up and began to run for help toward a cluster of lights he saw in the distance ahead of him. "Help! Help!" he shouted, but his voice was thin, scarcely a thread of sound. The lights drifted father away the faster he ran and his feet moved numbly as if they carried him nowhere. The tide of darkness seemed to sweep him back to her, postponing from moment to moment his entry into the world of guilt and sorrow (420).

Here, Julian's emotions become visible and the dynamics of the relationship between mother and son change. The mother becomes utterly powerless, while it becomes Julian's job to handle the crisis. Julian compares his mother to a child, clearly showing the sudden reversal in their relationship. As Hendin points out, the mother becomes like a child as she is not able to protect or control Julian anymore and she is not able to "provide him with something to hate" (107).

Due to the slap and the stroke, her mind is confused and she starts raving, saying "Tell Grandpa to come get me" and "Tell Caroline to come get me" (O'Connor, *CS* 420). In her mind, she returns to the Old South and to her childhood, where she can experience other people sharing her lifeworld with her. She looks at her son but it seems that she cannot recognize who Julian is. Her face distorted, she fixes one of her eyes on her son, trying to figure out who he is, but she "found nothing" (420). This is a kind of denial: she returned to her real world, but cannot identify her real son.

The very last sentence of the short story suggests a new birth: "The tide of darkness seemed to sweep his back to her, postponing from moment to moment his entry into the world of guilt and sorrow" (420). In Hendin's point of view, this moment is the "moment of birth." Julian's sense of self was stunted by "his mother's suffocating love;" now his

birth as an adult is again postponed by the "equally shattering absence of her protection."

The title "Everything That Rises Must Converge" receives a meaning at the end of the

story when we indeed see an "almost entirely literal" convergence. Julian can hear his own

child-like voice while at the same time the mother becomes like a child again. They both

become powerless against loss. One of them is dying and the other is "barely born." Both

of them stand defenseless, "engulfed in darkness" while they "confront each other with a

kind of equality" (107).

Lykourgos Vasileiou approaches O'Connor's short story from a Jungian point of

view, keeping in mind the importance of the imaginary worlds. Vasileiou believes that

some concepts of Jung's writing appear in "Everything That Rises Must Converge," like

the idea of the double, which is present in the short story several times. The critic believes

that Julian's Jungian double in the narrative is actually the black woman wearing the hat

that eventually brings about his mother's tragedy (41-47). I believe that it is not only

people who can be doubled in this sense, but also lifeworlds as well. The doubling of the

lifeworld, alternatively described as the making of an imaginary world, is an important

element in the understanding of the story, because Julian and his mother share this issue.

The idea of the Jungian doubling might be O'Connor's allusion to their problems,

suggesting an interpretation that has been discussed in this section of my dissertation.

Identity, particularly racial identity, is central to the mother in "Everything That

Rises Must Converge." Doreen Fowler argues that the mother character insists on the

division of races—she refuses to ride alone the bus because of the integration, and she

approves the white woman's moving when an African-American passenger gets on the

bus. (82). However, I believe that the self-identity of the mother is about more than her

race alone. Julian's mother identifies with the Old South, while Julian wants to believe that

he belongs to the New South. Their lifeworld and embodiment are deeply embedded in

these regional identities, which contain an important element of racial views but are not built on race alone. The first paragraph of the story perfectly epitomizes the mother's point of view: "if you know who you are, you can go anywhere," she says (407). Right after this she also asserts: "I know who I am" (407). While we might argue that this statement is not entirely true, when Julian contradicts her she immediately starts describing what is indeed important to her: family and her ancestors and the values that she got from them. She sketches her lifeworld for the reader, the world she belongs to and does not want to let go of. However, while explaining her point of view about the world, it becomes clear she does not want to recognize the changes that took place in American society in the 20th century. She goes on telling stories about her family, mentioning a mansion that used to belong to the Godhigh family and that Julian's "grandfather Chestny paid the mortgage and saved it for them" (408). Here we can see O'Connor's unique and ironic sense of humor: the mother wants to show off by saying that her family is so generous and so noble that they helped a family who were as high as God. However, Julian destroys this aura of superiority in the next paragraph: he reveals that the place is actually a ruinous building and when he last saw it blacks were living there. This example clearly shows how easy it is for Julian to contradict the imagined world that her mother lives in.

Both characters, in fact, struggle to define their own identity in relation to reality. Even though the mother thinks that she clearly knows who she is, Julian contradicts her once again: "You haven't the foggiest idea where you stand now or who you are" (407). Julian also wants to believe that he knows who he himself is -- throughout the narrative we can find several allusions suggesting that he firmly believes that he is familiar with his own self -- however, I do not think that is true. He is so obsessed with his mother and fighting the world she symbolizes that he has not time to deal with himself. He asserts that despite his mother "he turned out so well" and that he could "cut himself emotionally free of her

and see her with complete objectivity" (412). He also asserts that "He was not dominated by his mother" (412). These statements are far from true; they were made within Julian's imaginary world and actually this world prevents him from encountering his real self. Feeley suggests that the solution could be the relief of the sexual tension he experiences. Julian fantasizes about finding a spouse, specifically a black one for himself; he wants to choose a colored girl "to replace his mother in his life" and uses this imaginary girl "to express his contempt for" her (106).

The conflict between mother and son in "Everything That Rises Must Converge," triggered by identity issues, eventually result in a tragedy; this becomes one of the recurring features of O'Connor's stories about mothers and sons.The short story that I will discuss in the following section, "The Comforts of Home," also comes to a tragic ending partially because of the tension between mother and son.

4.2. Mother and son in "The Comforts of Home"

In her second collection of short stories, *Everything That Rises Must Converge*, there is a shift in the family structure of O'Connor's characters. While the short stories that are published in *A Good Man Is Hard to Find* mostly focus on mothers and daughters (except for the title story of the book), the second collection puts much more emphasis on sons, as we could see in "Everything That Rises Must Converge" as well. In "The Comforts of Home," we once again encounter a truncated family with a single mother and only son; however, the long-dead father figure also plays a crucial role in the narrative. Yet, the focus remains on the mother throughout the narrative to such a point that some critics like Hendin believe that "The Comforts of Home" is the author's "most explicit

description of the bond between a powerful mother and her effeminate, dependent son" (115).

What is utterly distinct between "Everything That Rises Must Converge" and "The Comforts of Home" is that the difference between the lifeworlds of mothers and daughters are not as significant as the differences in the stories focusing of sons. In "The Comforts of Home" the intersubjective home is much more violated; that is more the source of the conflict than the lifeworld itself. However, many examples show in this case as well that the communication between mother and son are not successful in the Husserlian sense.

While pointing out the differences between characters' lifeworlds in "The Comforts of Home," I would also like to show how the issue of embodiment is put into focus in a new way in the short story. While in many of O'Connor's stories it is usually the protagonist whose embodiment bears significance, in "The Comforts of Home" it is the petty criminal, Star Drake (legally Sarah Ham), who comes to live with Thomas and his mother, who embodies herself through renaming, thus embodying herself in the Butlerian sense. Thomas's mother sets out to be Star's protector and advocate in her life troubles, inviting her into their lives and home against Thomas's wishes, where she proceeds to complicate their relationship.

As I pointed out earlier in the dissertation, many of the conflicts in the short stories involving single mothers and only daughters are triggered by the arrival of an outsider male figure, unveiling issues between the mothers and daughters. "The Comforts of Home" fits this particular pattern, as the seemingly uneventful life of mother and son is completely shaken by the arrival of Star, triggering a conflict that ends in tragedy. Giannone believes that before the arrival of intruder, "the love between Thomas and his mother sustains a cozy universe of two" (194). The thirty-five-year-old man -- who by some critics like Magistrale is referred to as a middle-aged intellectual (52) -- enjoys all the comforts of his

home, which are provided by his own mother. The bond between the two of them is extremely strong and the comforts of home cover everything he needs. As a historian, Thomas spends vast majority of his time at home, enjoying the company of his books. Home, presented in this story, is both a public and private place for the man, the reason behind some of the conflicts later in the story when his mother welcomes an outsider in.

4.2.1. Intersubjective home and community in "The Comforts of Home"

The idea of home can be critical when it comes to discussing intersubjective relationships between people or characters. Being home can result in completely different psychological state, which might also bring about change in interpersonal relationships and in means of communications as well. Furthermore, the idea of home can be constructed for each individual in his or her own way. As I detailed earlier, Moore believes that home in literature often equals haven and refuge; home is often depicted as a place or space where characters can relax and retreat. As Julia Wardaugh points out, the understanding of home is often built on the distinction between private and public, along with the inside and outside world. According to this dichotomy, the enclosed or inside domain of home might be a comfortable, secure, and safe place, while the outside is perceived as a threatening or dangerous space, a more diffused, less defined one. The emphasis in these definitions is often on the differentiation between public and private, critics usually elaborate on this idea when the issue of home comes up.

What we see in case of Thomas, however, is that for him there is no boundary between public and private regarding home in the sense used by Wardaugh. Home for him represents not only intimacy and security but also work; thus, home for him is somewhat

public as well, even before the arrival of the intruder. But it remains intensely personal, especially in his favored rooms.

> Thomas kept to his room or the den. His home was to him home, workshop, church, as personal as the shell of a turtle as necessary. He could not believe that it could be violated (O'Connor, *CS* 395)

The importance of home and privacy is clearly illustrated through this quotation from the text. He reacted violently to the intrusion of Star into his world: "His flushed face had a constant look of stunned outrage," O'Connor explains (395). Later in the narrative we encounter additional occasions when the privacy of the home is disturbed by Star. When Thomas discovers that his gun is missing from its usual place, he is greatly disturbed by the intrusion into his private effects.

> He had not the vaguest hope that the girl would get the gun and shoot herself, but that afternoon when he looked in the drawer, the gun was gone. His study locked from the inside, not the out. He cared nothing about the gun, but the thought of Sarah Ham's hand sliding among his papers infuriated him. Now even his study was contaminated. The only place left untouched by her was his bedroom. (398)

However, home for Thomas does not only mean the house itself (even if it is an important element of it), but also the larger community that he belongs to. The woman spoils everything which ever had significance for him, resulting in a catastrophe.

It is a commonplace that home and community bear a special significance in Southern literature, in "The Comforts of Home" as well. Even though we do not have any

information regarding his status in the local community, we do know that Thomas researches the history of the county that they live in and he is actually the president of the local historical society. Even though Thomas does not seem to be a lively part of the local community, we do know that he devoted his life to it. No doubt that this short story, which can be seen as a personal, family-focused piece of O'Connor's heritage, is a truly Southern and significantly local story, without pointing out the exact location.

Thomas is not the only character in this short story who has a strong conception of home and community; through the mother's stories, we get to know Star as well, with all the miserable details of her life. She never actually had a real home and was forced to go from one place to another in order to find security and eventually she always ended up being in trouble. Thomas's mother tries to point this fact out to her son on several occasions, emphasizing what a comfortable and easy life Thomas had, while the girl had to suffer. The mother extends the home-external world dichotomy to cover everything and nothing: "'Think of the poor girl, Thomas,' his mother said, 'with nothing. Nothing. And we have everything'" (394). What Thomas has been fearing since the beginning of the problem: the mother wants to completely integrate the girl into their home. "'She doesn't need a jail or a hotel or a hospital,' his mother said, 'she needs a home'" (394).

The trouble of belonging is significant to Star as well, so troubling, in fact, that she contemplates suicide:

> The girl screamed with laughter. Then she stopped abruptly, her face puckered and she began to shake. "The best thing to do," she said, her teeth clattering, "is to kill myself. Then I'll be out of everybody's way. I'll go to hell and be out of God's way. And even the devil won't want me. He'll kick me out of hell, not even in hell…" she wailed. (396)

This passage clearly illustrates Star's desperation. She admits to herself that all she needs is to belong to somewhere, connected with the notion of home as well. However, this belonging never materialized; she never has a real home. In a sense, she is the loser of the narrative: she not only loses the only patron she has ever had, but also her best chance of really finding a home as well.

Joseph Millichap believes that the two women in the life of Thomas are far from perfect, yet they are morally superior to the man throughout the story. Even Star, who lives a morally questionable life by her society's standards of behavior, remains on an even level of moral standards throughout the narrative. It is Thomas, as he becomes more and more obsessed with getting rid of her, who declines to lower and lower standards for moral behaviors: jealousy, framing, and manslaughter (98). Thomas's actions eventually result in the destruction of home for *all* of the characters.

4.2.2. Naming and embodiment in "The Comforts of Home"

The assigning of names and embodiment play a crucial role in "The Comforts of Home." Hendin critiques the short story from a psychological point of view and believes that Star's name conveys a significant meaning. She believes that she is "a projection of two aspects of a single personality." On the one hand, she is "the shining sexual fantasy of Hollywood" as a Star. On the other hand, the name Sarah is a reference to the Biblical Sarah, "who punishes the sexuality of her husband with Hagar by casting out his mistress and unborn son." In this way, Star can also be seen as the abstract expression of Thomas's mother's sexuality. The fact that Thomas's mother brings Star home can be seen as "sexual longing and her ambivalence," Hendin believes (117). By letting the attractive and young

Star enter the house, she wants to provoke her son and confront him with his inactivity; the mother wants to enhance the traditional sense of masculinity of her son. At the same time, she might enjoy the company of a young woman who can remind her of her own femininity.

Like in the case of Hulga Hopewell, in Sarah/Star we also encounter a female character who chose to rename herself. To name somebody means to encircle and to control the given object and indicates some kind of power. Giving a name is traditionally the duty of the parents, but by renaming herself Star likely sought to distance herself from the family background that provided unhappiness throughout her whole life. It can be an important factor in her own embodiment and humanization. Judith Butler believes that the question "Who are you?" is of key importance in the process of embodiment because it is a quintessential element in creating the self. She argues that just by asking the question we immediately admit that there is a person before us we cannot fully apprehend or we just simply do not know. Based on this idea, Star's renaming is even more significant: she exchanges Sarah Ham, a simple and not very sophisticated name, to Star, representing her wish to one day become more significant than she actually is.

The lack of the a first name for the mother character is also a pattern for those who are familiar with O'Connor's fiction. Just like in several other stories, the name of the mother is never mentioned; she is always referred to as "Thomas's mother" or "the old lady." In "Everything that Rises Must Converge," we saw the same thing, but there, at least, the mother mentioned the name of the family several times. In "The Comforts of Home," the mother does not even have a last name. It might suggest that her name and her ancestry are not important at all; she is just the mother of Thomas and she lives for her son. Neither Thomas nor Star address the mother directly, leaving the reader with no name for her at all.

The main character, Thomas, also bears a significantly Christian name, from Jesus's apostle known as "Doubting" Thomas. After the crucifixion of Jesus, when he appears to the apostles for the very first time, Thomas is not present; thus, he does not initially believe that Jesus resurrected. On the eighth day Jesus appears to him and from then his eyes are opened. Like the Biblical Thomas, the "sad extravagance of his mother's death is essential to Thomas's beginning understanding of the potential comforts of an eternal home" (Whitt, *Understanding* 137). Throughout the whole story, Thomas is full of doubts concerning his mother's feelings towards Star. However, the Biblical Thomas is wrong to doubt since Jesus was resurrected, whereas in O'Connor's short story Thomas is right to doubt as Star's intrusion brings about an awful ending. The original meaning of the name Thomas is twin. Accord to Whitt, Thomas has "doubling implications with literally every character of the story" (136-137). In a way he duplicates both his father and his mother, as he "inherited his father's reason without his ruthlessness and his mother's love of good without her tendency to pursue it" (O'Connor, *CS* 414).

Turning back to the issue of embodiment, just like in other O'Connor stories, we can see here that the mother loves using clichés and it is an important part of her personality. She keeps repeating: "it might be you" (O'Connor, *CS* 385). This can be seen as another form of duplication The mother constantly "equates" Star and Thomas "by repeatedly reminding Thomas and herself" that, if they were less lucky, they could have lived Star's life instead of their own comfortable one (64). Thomas, of course, cannot stand such a comparison. The mother's basic reason for taking Star into her home is the empathy that her own son could theoretically be in her place if Thomas were not such a "brilliant smart person" (385). Her embodiment as the mother of Thomas is so strong that she feels compelled to exhibit motherhood toward Star as well. Bruce Gentry analyzes Sarah Ham as a symbolic sister to Thomas. He admits this might seem "odd," but there are several

clues that suggests a role for Star as a sister figure is the story. In addition to the mother's

equating of them, both characters manifest a kind of "self-disgust," a clear connection

among them (64).

Turning back to the embodiment of Thomas, it is clear from the beginning of the

narrative that his father plays a crucial role in this particular process. We encounter the

nameless character on almost every page of the short story, making him one of the pivotal

figures of the narrative despite never being physically present; he is symbolically always

there. But the imaginary father cannot be interpreted purely as the father himself; there is

the real father and the father as imagined by Thomas. Hendin believes that the voice of his

dead father can be "the voice of the dead, potent male in himself" (117). Elaborating on

this, I argue that is indeed the father who guides Thomas's connection to traditional

notions of masculinity, but which play out in aggression. The voice of the dead father

forces Thomas to "put his foot down" (O'Connor, *CS* 393) and to prepare a firm action

against the intruder, Star. It is because of his father that Thomas believes a household

should have a loaded gun. The father's voice -- as channeled through Thomas himself --

tries to use his masculine potency to destroy the girl. It seems that Thomas does not realize

the difference between a manifestation of manliness and a display of aggression.

Thomas's most sexual act, according to Hendin, and one of the most significant

plot points is Thomas deciding to put the gun into Star's bag. This action "is described in

images of blood, pain and guilt" (118). When he gets caught he stands "slightly hunched,

his hands hanging helplessly at the wrists as if he had just pulled them up out of a pool of

blood" (O'Connor, *CS* 403). The text itself here suggests that he is "caught red-handed,"

the color red also potentially referring to the "blood-bond" with his own mother, the blood

of wounding, and sexuality (Hendin 118). When Thomas unexpectedly fires the gun he

was trying to plant on Star to have her arrested, Thomas construes it as "a sound meant to

bring an end to evil in the world," to end "the laughter of sluts" (O'Connor, *CS* 403). Hendin controversially argues that Thomas wants to kill the Star who is in his mother. But in almost killing her in fact kills his mother. Hendin believes that through this murder he subconsciously wants to finish and destroy everything threatening to him (118). When firing, he wants to kill the Star in his mother so that the matriarch's qualities can be rid of Star's dirt. Thomas's thinking here is muddled between the metaphorical cleansing of his home and mother and the violence taking place in reality; even the pistol's sound conjures the comforts of home for him, just as it in ruining that comfort and home forever.

At the end of the story, when the sheriff enters the room, "the killer and the slut were about to collapse into each other's arms' (O'Connor 404). Hendin believes that the collapse means that these two people were both so dependent on the mother that they can only fall down without her (118). But I disagree with Hendin, as O'Connor does not say anything about Thomas after the murder. Maybe O'Connor does not want to make Thomas a sympathetic character in the last paragraph. He has just committed an act of senseless aggression. She does not describe his despair or sorrow, which could make him a bit more pitiable, and she unites him with the hated Star, rather than preserving his longstanding opposition to her. The very last sentence of "Everything That Rises Must Converge" would be a fitting closing sentence of "The Comforts of Home": "The tide of darkness seemed to sweep him back to her, postponing from moment to moment his entry into the world of guilt and sorrow" (O'Connor, *CS* 420). Thomas, just like Julian, enters a world suddenly full of sorrow and guilt, but Thomas's situation is even more pitiable than Julian's since he caused the death of his mother with his own hands, however accidentally. After the shot, the dead father does not appear again in the story either. Thomas has to endure the consequences alone. The comforts of home are over.

"The Comforts of Home" is in a sense an exception in O'Connor's single mother-only son patterns in that Thomas's bother is a much less obviously powerful mother than in the other stories. But, in line with the pattern, Thomas exhibits instances of being powerless and childlike. He threatens his mother several times that he will leave unless Star leaves their home, although he never does so. Both he and his mother know that these threats are just words, but it it makes Thomas childish. Since he does not leave home, all his words and acts become helpless. As Gilbert put is, Thomas feels "martyred at home" (119), but he is not strong enough to give up the comforts of home and leave. The very first words of the short story define Thomas's actions throughout the whole narrative: "Thomas withdrew" (O'Connor, *CS* 383). The image of this "overwhelming passivity" immediately shows that Thomas is a powerless person (Hendin 116). Tragically, Thomas compensates for all of his previous inaction with a truly desperate and agonized deed, resulting in the death of the mother.

4.2.3. Intersubjective psychological relationship in the narrative

Thomas and his mother's relationship can fruitfully be analyzed for intersubjectivity. Based on all the information that we get from the narrative, before the arrival of Star the relationship between mother and son was sufficient for both of them, displaying intersubjectivity between them in the sense it is used by Husserl and Habermas. They knew what the other needed and were able to provide those needs for each other. Thomas needed his books, fresh food every day, and a comfortable home, while his mother needs only his love, which she receives: "Thomas loved his mother. He loved her because it was his nature to do so" (285). However, this kind of love is reminiscent of the love of a

newborn or a toddler, not a grown man with an adult appreciation and true affection for her.

Despite the trouble-free relationship, we see no sign that these two people share similarities, except for the fact that they are relatives. We know that Thomas is obsessed with history and we also know that his mother is very proud of him for it, but it is not a shared passion or pursuit. Although Thomas is an intellectual, the fulfillment of his basic needs are the priority and his sexuality is never presented in any ways in the story. As it is his mother who satisfies his needs, he shares all his love with her. Obviously it is questionable whether it is normal for a 35-year-old man to not have any kind of company but his mother, like many of the other sons and daughters in O'Connor's stories. When a stranger of the opposite gender arrives (just like in "Good Country People" and "The Life You Save May Be Your Own"), the equilibrium between mother and child is disturbed

In several of O'Connor's stories, characters and situations can be better analyzed with the help of psychological theses. According to Fredrick Asals, "The Comforts of Home" in particular demands a "psychological reading." Thomas's behavior and affection towards his mother must be read through a psychological lens to become understandable. Asals believes that Thomas's attachment towards his mother and the "hatred of this father" is "thunderingly Oedipal." This narrative basically emerges as a kind of "psychic drama with Sarah Ham as its catalyst and center." With her "congenital amorality" and "her repeated schemes and stratagems for seducing" Thomas, "she seems an almost comically literal embodiment of Jung's 'anima, that female component of the male psyche that a man ignores at his peril.'" As Asals describes the idea of the anima, it is a kind of "elfin being" "full of snares and traps" that "lives beyond all categories and can therefore dispense with blame as well as with praise." We might suggest that the anima is a dangerous and ambiguous figure "beyond consciousness or control" that brings about chaos. But within

this chaos there may lie wisdom or purpose that can reveal a "deeper meaning." Asals

thinks that Star herself is "the 'anima-projection' of which Thomas is the 'persona'"; "the

two characters are complementary figures, obverse doubles, alter egos." When Star arrives

she activates the psychological tensions "lain dormant beneath Thomas's bland exterior."

The Oedipal attachment to Thomas's mother experiences "an ominous shifting" with her

intrusion. According to Asals, it is mothers who first bear a male child's anima-image and

"protect him against the dangers that threaten from the darkness of his psyche." In "The

Comforts of Home," Thomas feels that he lost his mother's undivided protection when Star

appeared, making him enraged and desperate. Star's sexuality shatters Thomas's childish

world and she is the "instrument of this upheaval" in his relationship with his mother.

Thomas begins to believe that his mother gave up on him and, because of their strong

affection, he reacts outrageously (109).

  Other scholars, too, find the story classically Oedipal. Thomas M. Lorch believes

that the story is a dramatized version of an oedipal relationship in utterly sexual terms.

"The painfully repressed central character, Thomas, both loves and hates his mother, who

in term personifies both his repression, by dominating him and his sublimation of the sex

drive, in her irrational desire to serve others." Star, on the other hand "represents the

emergence of his sexual desires in their ugliest form, lust" (105). Lorch's interpretation of

Thomas's mother makes her out to be a more powerful figure than other scholars'

readings of her. His interpretation of Star adds a significant reason for Thomas's rejection

of her. O'Connor's stories are rather rarely discussed from the point of view of gender and

sexuality. However, the "The Comforts of Home" presents characters for whom the issue

of sexuality is obvious to such a point where it cannot be neglected. Asals and Lorch's

analyses are valuable for emphasizing considerations of family and sexuality in the way

that the characters relate to one another, both in an intersubjective manner and in ways that erode the intersubjective understanding between mother and son.

4.3. Mother and son in "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

The title story of the collection *A Good Man Is Hard to Find* presents a unique and somewhat different mother-son relationship than the works previously discussed in this chapter. The most significant difference between the mother and the son in this story is that the son, Bailey, is somewhat older and has a family on his own. This produces two mother figures in the narrative: a grandmother (the protagonist's mother) and her daughter-in-law (his wife). The first sentence immediately establishes the main character of the story and the background to the plot: "The grandmother didn't want to go to Florida" (O'Connor, *CS* 117). Bailey's wife has a much less important role in the narrative, whose only duty in the family is to feed the children and let the mother and son do whatever they want, even if they usually do not want to do the same thing.

Many critics point out the importance of the first sentence of this short story. Jessica Hooten, for instance, analyses O'Connor's narratives from the point of view of individualism, pointing out that in this particular piece the grandmother exemplifies self-righteousness and self-focus; she is the one who initiates all the problems and conflicts in the narrative. She consistently disregards the desires of her family by prioritizing her desires and needs, which eventually ends up in a catastrophe, Hooten adds (198).

In this chapter I first wish to elaborate on the idea of perfor*mance* in a "Good Man Is Hard to Find," pointing out that the grandmother constantly and consistently presents herself through social interactions that are somehow related to her Southern heritage. All critics of O'Connor agree that the central character of "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" is the

grandmother, thus she is going to be the focus of my analysis as well in this sub-chapter. I will show how the grandmother's lifeworld is separate from the society that she lives in. I also argue that Butler's claim regarding the relationship between the question "Who are you?" and embodiment is not a requirement for the act of humanization, furthermore, I will prove that in this short story, recognizing the other does not necessarily mean knowing that person, in this case The Misfit. Even though intersubjective communication does not take place between family members, I argue the grandmother exhibits intersubjectivity while talking to a character outside of the family.

4.3.1. Perfor*mance* in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"

Perfor*mance,* with the last syllable of the word always italicized, refers to a specific mode of performativity which is always represented by the replaying of norms and rules when creating the subject itself. The interpretation of Enikő Bollobás of "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" puts Southern womanhood in focus and coined the term perfor*mance*. The idea of perfor*mance* allows us to point out examples where "expressive citationality is dominant in making subjectivities;" furthermore, "these processes appeal to existing conventions, and invoke existing traditions." Certain instances of these expressive perfor*mances* can express already existing identity conventions and can also reproduce ideologies "to which society subjected the subject." Perfor*mance*, then, is a mode of expressing conventions that produce certain types of identities. The perfor*mance* of identity is anticipated by traditions and sets of norms that help produce those particular identities, like Southern identity. Furthermore, Bollobás argues, perfor*mances* are also excellent ways of expressing the speaker's motives to provide a background for the discourse in a specific convention, or according to a particular tradition (21, 85-86).

"A Good Man is Hard to Find" is built around the grandmother, specifically, as Bollobás points out, her self-construction as Southern belle. Like Julian's mother in "Everything that Rises must Converge," the ideal that she wishes to identify with is completely isolated from reality. Her perfor*mance* presents her as a lady and she believes that the embodiment of a lady means knowing what to say and do with proper womanly grace, even in unforeseeable situations. Ironically, though, Bollobás adds, her perfor*mance* contributes to the brutal death of her whole family. Bollobás lists more than a dozen examples to support her thesis about the perfor*mance* of the grandmother, including her pretentious behavior, references to *Gone With the Wind*, inventing a legend at a plantation to pique her grandchildren's interest in her world, and the outdated language that she uses. The grandmother's identity in this short story is based on myths of the South and, ironically, brings about her fall at the end of the narrative (127-128).

The idea of embodiment can be connected to Bollobás's idea of perfor*mance*. In the previous chapter of my dissertation I explained that embodiment addresses the body and its relation to culture. According to Csordas, an intersubjective being is created by embodiment, which takes place through social interactions. In his understanding, social interactions are essential to the embodiment of an individual (36-37). What we encounter in the short story is that the grandmother consistently presents herself through social interactions that are somehow related to her Southern heritage. She never identifies herself culturally as a mother or a grandmother; it is always her Southern roots that she emphasizes. The only point of the narrative when she actually identifies as a mother is when she has a conversation with The Misfit; however, here we can only talk about motherhood in a metaphorical sense. In pleading for her life, she cries out, "Why you're one of my babies. You're one of my own children!" (O'Connor, *CS* 132). Other than that moment, she indulges in her own construction of herself as a Southern belle. Her social

interactions all reflect on this identification and her perfor*mance* also focuses on this part of her personality.

The moment of grace of this particular story comes at the end, after Bailey, his mother, and his wife and children wreck their car traveling on vacation and are attacked by a killer on the lose, The Misfit, and his two associates. As discussed earlier, Flannery O'Connor believed that every short story contains a moment of grace, as she described in her work *Mystery and Manners*. O'Connor always includes "some action, some gesture of a character that is unlike any other in the story, one which indicates where the real heart of story lies." This action must happen on an "anagogical level," referring to "the Divine life and our participation in it." According to her, this point in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" appears when the grandmother is left alone with The Misfit. She realizes that "she is responsible for the man before her and joined to him by ties of kinship which have their roots deep in the mystery she has been merely prattling about so far." As the old lady tries to shed her pretentious behavior to genuinely plead for her life, the narrative reaches the "action of grace" in her soul (111-113). She identifies as a mother and even touches The Misfit, eliciting a violent reaction from him. The murdered grandmother "half sat and half lay in a puddle of blood with her legs crossed under her like a child's and her face smiling up at the cloudless sky" (O'Connor, *CS* 132). The imagery of her as a child at this point can symbolize innocence, supporting O'Connor's idea about the embodiment of grace in the story.

O'Connor also calls our attention to the presence of grace in case of the Misfit as well. The last gesture of the old lady "will grow to be a great crow-filled tree" in his heart and "will be enough of a pain to him there to turn him into the prophet he was meant to become." After murdering the grandmother, he takes off his glasses to clean them. In my interpretation, the conversation with the grandmother and the murders make him cry for

the grandmother or for all the things he has done. Since the two other murderers, Hiram and Bobby Lee, return from the forest at this point the focus shifts from the Misfit to them, so we do not know if he indeed shed tears but it is absolutely possible. Alternatively, however, Stephen Gresham believes that when The Misfit cleans his glasses it is to suggest seeing, both literally and figuratively. In his interpretation, The Misfit wants to understand not only the world surrounding him, but reality as well (19).

If the Misfit himself is indeed crying, however, that means that the moment of grace is not only for the grandmother but for him as well. The grandmother cannot accept the moment of grace as she is dead, but it is possible that The Misfit did not reject it (111-113). Interestingly enough, several critics, including Ted R. Spivey and Louise Y. Gossett, do not take this moment into consideration, presenting The Misfit as a prototype of the unbelieving man with no opportunity for redemption. Many literary critics consider "A Good Man is Hard to Find" to be a masterpiece presenting the power of faith (focusing on the grandmother) or a parable of a man who decided to live without God (The Misfit), but such analyses fall short if they fail to consider the moment of grace for The Misfit.

4.3.2. Interpreting "A Good Man is Hard to Find" through the idea of the lifeworld

"A Good Man Is Hard to Find" displays many of the elements of intersubjectivity, like home, being face to face, and understanding of the other person. The idea of lifeworld can be used in this story to better understand the grandmother and her relationship to Bailey and The Misfit.

To provide a fresh interpretation of the short story, Dan Wood uses Levinas's *Totality and Infinity* for theoretical background. In previous chapters of my dissertation I also turned to Levinas to help identify certain intersubjectivity-related terms. Levinas

believes that through distinguishing the self from the other, the self no longer assumes that it is perceived the same way as the Other is. The separation of the self from the Other derives from the self being itself and no longer the part of the Other. The self, in this way, becomes everything that is not the Other. He argues that the self needs to be separated from the Other so that the self can grasp infinity, which itself is a form of transcendence of the relationships of the self to the Other. He also believes that exteriority can be achieved if the self has an idea of infinity (27-40, 199-205).

The grandmother resembles many other characters of O'Connor who embody aspects of long-gone Southern lifestyles in the 20th century. In Wood's interpretation, the opening line of "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" sets the tone and at the same time sets the stage for "each sentence of the grandmother's juxtaposition and reduction of all otherness to herself." All her conversations with characters are full of references to past utopia. Wood believes that the self's encounter with the Other, in a Levinasian sense, happens after the family's car accident. Once The Misfit and his gang arrives and they are tangibly present in the lifeworld of the grandmother, not only in her mental fears based on newspapers or radio broadcasts, The Misfit, the Other, confronts the grandmother. As Wood notes, "The Misfit's speaking acts as the first challenge to the grandmother's embedded, unreflective, and flawed view; it permits no facile escape or scapegoat" (35-38).

However, the grandmother needs to face a second challenge of her way of being-in-the world, which happens when her conversation with The Misfit turns to theology. After The Misfit reveals that he does not pray, she suggests that he pray eight times. With each interruption, she stifles The Misfit's sharing of his own world and self. The grandmother, try as she might to hold a proper Southern values-based conversation, is unable to control the situation. She is faced with an event that she is not able to contextualize with her

personality or self-assurance -- the murder of her family and now herself -- finally resulting in the complete dissipation of her lifeworld. However, as Wood points out, "it is this very anarchic situation that will function as the condition for the possibility of grace and authenticity—the recognition that 'being proper' does not constitute the most proper way of being" (38).

Turning back directly to Levinas's idea of the Other and the self, Wood also notes that we might interpret the grandmother's responses in the conversation with The Misfit "as the final resignation of their inadequate set of ideologies. While not made via an act of final resignation of her judgement, her encounter with the Other gives rise to a skeptical disruption of the Same's centripetal movements," he argues. Wood finally notes that the grandmother's very first physical movement toward the Other results in three gunshots to her chest, bringing about the ultimate tragedy in the narrative (39-40).

According to the idea of the lifeworld, previously described in both the interpretation of Husserl and Habermas in this dissertation, we can clearly see that the grandmother figure lives in a lifeworld developed in a completely different era than all the other characters' lifeworlds. In Husserl's point of view, the lifeworld is the horizon, the beginning and the end for all kinds of action an individual might perform. The grandmother performs all her actions based on her idea of the lifeworld stuck in an earlier era of Southern history and society. She constantly refers to the past with sweet nostalgia, trying to bring her current family into her lifeworld, but it is too far removed from reality for them to enter. Her lifeworld makes her the misfit in her family and her society. She has no real contact or communication with her daughter-in-law, she hardly ever talks to her son, and although she tries to educate her grandchildren in her values, she is not respected by the family at all. John Wesley and June Star have a conversation early in the story debating the grandmother staying home from the vacation, showing how she is ridiculed.

However hard she tries to gain just a little respect, she never can, and her efforts remain unappreciated.

From the perspective of speech act theory, we can claim that towards the end of the narrative that the grandmother wants to persuade The Misfit to spare her life, even after all her family members are killed. She uses many perlocutionary acts to try to persuade The Misfit to do as she asks him to. The perlocutionary acts not only illustrate her desperate state of mind but also show her personality. In one of her final arguments, she calls herself as a lady, defining who she believes she is. I believe that this is not simply a statement of her self-definition. Elsewhere in narrative she also identifies herself as a "lady," from her dress to her behavior to her ideas. In addition to being outdated, elements of the grandmother's character can be considered flawed. As Rodney Edgecombe points out, the grandmother can be seen as a great example of "all the moral and social deficiencies of the old South" (69). When encountering African-American children on their car journey, she makes racialized remarks suggesting her and her family's superiority.

Ironically, though, The Misfit does, at one point, show some sort of respect to her. He excuses himself for not wearing a proper shirt in front of her. Both of them became misfits, but exhibit very different ways of being incapable of integrating into present-day society. The Misfit identifies with being a misfit -- when confronted, he immediately admits that he is the infamous The Misfit and outside the norms of his society -- while the grandmother does not want to accept that she also is a misfit in her family and society as well. The two most unlikely characters thus share a connection as outsiders.

4.3.3. Unnamed and powerful mothers of "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"

In this section, I wish to point out that in "A Good Man is Hard to Find" the characters do not actually need to use the question "Who are you?" to admit that they cannot fully apprehend another person. As discussed previously in this dissertation, Judith Butler analysis of the question "Who are you?" in her Adorno lectures argues that it is an important element in creating the self, that just by asking the question we immediately recognize that we cannot fully apprehend another person. This question is connected to naming, as names are an element of the self and also are also a part in intersubjective analysis of literary pieces. Like in many other O'Connor stories, the mother figures in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" do not bear names, a significant choice. Later in the story, when we encounter The Misfit, what the grandmother thinks about knowing him turns out to be untrue, because just recognizing a person does not mean knowing them.

The female characters in "A Good Man is Hard to Find" have no names. Bailey's mother is always referred to simply as the grandmother, and her daughter-in-law is always called the children's mother. Bailey's wife does not play an important role in the plot; however, she is a great example of how O'Connor is able to depict personalities by using literary tools. In the beginning of the story the children's mother is described as a person "whose face was as broad and innocent as a cabbage and was tied around with a green head-kerchief that had two points on the top like a rabbit's ears." (O'Connor, *CS* 117). By using the words rabbit and cabbage we immediately get the impression of a not very smart or attractive woman. She is occupied primarily with the baby, exhibiting little thought, action, or personality. She never tries to discipline her two other children, June Star and John Wesley; as it is always the grandmother who makes attempts to educate or correct them. Whenever the children do something wrong, their mother remains neutral.[4] She does

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[4] George Toles remarks that even though the grandmother tries to educated and discipline the children, she is actually never successful. Ultimately, children are only disciplined when they are dragged into the woods for

not take part in communicative situations with the members of the family; she makes no attempts to establish communication with them. If we consider Grice's ideas about the importance of cooperation, we see that Bailey's wife does not contribute to the conversations and there is really no mutuality either; it is, therefore, no surprise that she is unable to reach intersubjectivity with the family members. She probably hears everything that happens around her, but stays silent. Aside from being nameless, Bailey's wife is a curious character with a curious relationship to her husband. She only talks on three occasions in the short story, and only after the arrival of The Misfit. Her lines indicate that she is afraid of the strangers and does not really know how to handle situations like this. After Bailey and John Wesley are taken to the woods by The Misfit's henchmen, she cries out: "Where are you taking him?" (129). It is significant that she does not say "them" only "him." As both who are taken away are males, we cannot say for sure who she is referring to. She might mean Bailey, despite the fact that before this event they had no real contact in the story. When henchman Bobby Lee takes Bailey, he talks to his mother and not his wife, saying "I'll be back in a minute, Mamma, wait on me!" (128). Bailey's wife might cry for her son, John Wesley, which would be understandable as well. A few minutes later after hearing the gunshots, The Misfit politely asks her whether she wants to "join" her husband and her answer is "Yes, thank you" (131). This response is perhaps surprising since she probably knows what is going to happen to her. I think her thanking The Misfit means that she actually prefers to join her husband and her son in death. Maybe she realized that these people killed the male members of her family and that she would have a horrible life without them. When describing her here O'Connor uses the word "helplessly," which seems to be a fitting word for her situation: her life became helpless without Bailey and her son. Unlike the grandmother, she does not try to disagree with the strangers she is

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their murder. In an ironic way, The Misfit and the gang becomes the only authority in their cases, resulting in their complete destruction, he notes (143).

clearly afraid of; she makes no attempts to convince them about their own goodness. Instead she faces her death with decorum, perhaps resignation.

Bailey's wife does not fit into O'Connor's mother-son patterns for several reasons, but her mother-in-law fits the pattern perfectly. Bailey's wife is neither widowed nor divorced, she has more than one child, and her kids are not adults. Bailey's mother, on the other hand, is clearly widowed and has only the adult son Bailey. As Hendin explains, the grandmother is presented as a powerful female person in that she lives with her son's family, an addendum to the nuclear family of 1950s America, but has arguably more influence on her son than his wife. The grandmother and son Bailey do not communicate much -- they have no deep, intersubjective conversations -- yet we get an impressive picture of their relationship. Sometimes the grandmother still thinks of her adult son as a kid: she warns him several times of different things like the speed limit, and she does not really let him get close to his own children. It is the grandmother who leads in dealing with the children, teaching them things about the landscape, the history of the South, and the scenery they are passing, not letting them misbehave while in the car. She is such a powerful member of the family that she takes care of not only her own child but also the children of her son as well, though it is unclear to what degree Bailey and his wife want or oppose this.

One explanation for the grandmother dealing so much with her grandchildren is that she does not find Bailey and his wife fit enough to properly educate them. I assume that she believes that she can do a much better job than her son and daughter-in-law, especially as they do not share her cherished lifeworld. When the grandmother mentions a plantation house with a secret panel, the kids become excited about it; Bailey initially refuses the idea of visiting it, but eventually relents. In this specific situation he gets no respect and shows no power; his mother and the children get what they want.

In many ways, Bailey seems to live up to his mother's estimation of him as an incomplete man. At the time of the accident, Bailey "had on a yellow sport shirt with bright blue parrots," suggesting a tasteless and not especially sophisticated person (125). Parrots are known for their ability to repeating what people tell them, making them seem more intelligent than they are. In "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" Bailey can be seen as a metaphorical parrot: he has no real power as it is his mother who has control of what is happening in the family. When they meet The Misfit after their car wreck Bailey wants to handle the situation, but fails to show real sign of real ability or power; he talks about solving the problem, but is just "squatting in the position of a runner about to sprint forward but he didn't move" (O'Connor, *CS 128*). An obvious sign of fear, his voice cracks while he talks to the strangers. The Misfit does not even seem to notice him; the only person he communicates with is the grandmother.

Ironically, the shirtless Misfit puts on the parrot shirt after Bailey is murdered, setting up Bailey and the Misfit as son figures to the grandmother. She had offered him one of Bailey's other shirts earlier, but he refused. The grandmother realizes that the Misfit's parrot shirt looks familiar, but cannot recall "what the shirt reminded her of," though her son had just been wearing it moments before (130). In taking Bailey's shirt, The Misfit symbolically becomes the son of the old lady. This all happens at as the grandmother calls him one of her own babies and she touches him. The Misfit is touched not only physically but emotionally, but unable to bear physical, mental, and spiritual touching, he becomes furious and kills the grandmother, depriving her of all her powers.

While the grandmother sometimes considers Bailey a deficient son, he does exhibit some more redeeming qualities. Nancy L. Nester analyzes Bailey from the point of view of goodness and states that the title itself refers to him: "The good man was Bailey." According to Nester, Bailey's character is "the good but overlooked man." He tries to be

the head of the family, in spite of his remarkably powerful mother. Bailey makes several attempts to "assert authority" throughout the narrative, but he is always oppressed by his mother. Nester believes the grandmother makes a "visceral connection to what metonymically remains of her son" through the parrot shirt. As The Misfit wears the shirt of her son, the grandmother talks about Bailey's goodness. When she hears two more shoots signing the death of her daughter-in-law and grandchildren, she still cries "Bailey Boy, Bailey Boy," mourning only for the son. As she reaches for the shirt, she "recognizes that goodness is to be found in the quotidian, the commonplace, Nester adds. When she touches The Misfit, and says "You're one of my own Children," she is thinking about touching her own son and realizes that "goodness has been in her midst, within her reach" as "the good man *was* one of her babies, one of her children" (127).

While the exact question of "Who are you?" is not present in the short story, there are moments in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" when the characters admit that they cannot fully comprehend each other. Once the grandmother realizes who The Misfit is, she immediately admits that she can recognize him; she accepts the other subject present before her, as presented in Butler's work. But it soon turns out that while she recognizes him, she does not actually know him. Butler's argument about getting to know the other person becomes valid instantly.

4.3.4. The dysfunctional family lacking real communication

Turning to the issue of communication and intersubjective relations in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," we can see that real and successful communicative situation are hard to find in this particular short story, especially between family members. There are

opportunities, nonetheless, to explore some elements of dysfunctional or only partly successful communication and intersubjectivity.

The grandmother figure tries to connect with the grandkids on several occasions and bring them into her lifeworld; however, although she had a great deal of power over them in the overall family dynamics, in most cases her endeavors to really achieve understanding with John Wesley and June Star are complete failures. An excellent example to illustrate this is the conversation between the grandmother and John Wesley:

> "Let's go through Georgia fast so we won't have to look at it much," John Wesley said.
> "If I were a little boy," said the grandmother, "I wouldn't talk about my native state that way. Tennessee has the mountains and Georgia has the hills."
> "Tennessee is just a hillbilly dumping ground," John Wesley said, "and Georgia is a lousy state too." (119)

The children are not interested in the lifeworld of the grandmother, not sharing at all in her reverence of place. Later, the family passes Stone Mountain, the first significant landmark that they pass on their way to Florida. According to Alex Link, by the time the short story was written, Stone Mountain was "a failed monument of the Confederacy. It was to have been the South's answer to Mount Rushmore, and, given its historical significance as a meeting point for the Ku Klux Klan, was rumored to be the Invisible Empire's secret darling." The mountain symbolized the nostalgia for the Old South and the Lost Cause. Stone Mountain fails to remain an important landmark, just like the family fails to remain a functioning one (127-128); the children show no interest.

This disinterest in Stone Mountain is emblematic of the family dynamic more broadly. The grandmother relies on the past, but her lifeworld is superficial and not shared with others. Mark T. Mitchell believes that the family depicted in "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" shows many pejoratively democratic tendencies, described by Plato. The kids disrespect the elder, the old desperately and pathetically try to please the young, and the most significant male character of the family is particularly powerless. Bailey only reacts to the actions of others; he never initiates anything. "There is no discernible affection between the members of this family, and one gets the impression that they would be happier vacationing separately," Mitchell adds. The communication between members of the family is not intersubjective, as it is often one-sided (211-213).

There are, nonetheless, some communicative situations in the story that are successful. One of the most interesting is the conversation between The Misfit and the grandmother, who seem to be willing to understand each other. As discussed earlier in this dissertation, Donald Davidson believes that in a communicative situation that the interpreter will only be able to understand the utterances of the speaker if he knows that the speaker intends the interpreter to assign some truth conditions to the speaker's utterances; furthermore, if he adds that if communication is successful, there must be such intentions on behalf of the speaker. We can see that The Misfit is willing to engage in conversation with the grandmother and it is the grandmother's best interest to keep up some sort of a dialogue with the man in order to try to survive. They intend to understand each other, even if in some cases the conversation lacks truth conditions. For instance:

"We turned over twice!" said the grandmother.

"Oncet," he corrected. "We seen it happen. Try their car and see will it run, Hiram," he said quickly to the boy with the grey hat. (126)

The grandmother here is caught telling a white lie to The Misfit. However, the exchange continues as they are both still committed to the dialogue. It is greatly significant that O'Connor portrays more effective dialogue between Bailey's mother and The Misfit than between her and her own son.

4.4. Common features of mothers and children

The body of scholarly work on O'Connor emphasizes family dynamics in her stories about mothers and daughters, but her works about single mothers with sons also display patterns worthy of theorization and study. One of the most significant patterns is that these sons are unable to share the lifeworld of their mothers. They all grew up in the New South, leaving behind everything that belonged to the Old South, except for their mothers. The mothers cannot adapt to the social changes that took place after the second world war; their identities are deeply embedded in their Southern past and their notion of Southern family values. The mothers always take such a pride in their heritage that it is one of the most important elements of their embodiment.

One of the sources of conflict between mothers and sons are the lifeworlds they are unable to share with each other. Here I would like to emphasize that it is not the age difference between the characters, but rather their ideas about the world that they live in. It is clear that these mothers and sons think about America and the society that they share in an utterly different way. O'Connor makes pointed juxtapositions in many of the cases. Cultures and cultural communities are constantly changing, but these mothers did not change with the society. The Old South lifeworlds of mothers and New South lifeworlds of their sons make these short stories the most political ones of O'Connor's literary legacy.

These stories prove that the cliché of the importance of family in Southern identity is real. The mothers in these stories actually embody stereotypical elements of southern society in a way that nevertheless make these characters believable and animate, but ultimately contribute to conflict and tragedy.

In their relationships, the sons of these stories always know and feel that their mothers have deep affection towards them, yet, in certain cases the sons find it too much to handle. They go through complex emotional processes regarding their mothers, especially when something is happening to her in the story. This extremely strong tie often brings about conflicts and problems between the characters. Hendin believes that these sons usually become paralyzed by the combination of love and hatred that they feel towards their mothers. Through the stories we can see the sons feeling guilty about the mixed feelings that they have towards their mothers. Even though they try to rebel against their parents, they are afraid of losing the protection of the mother to such an extent that they are not actually strong enough to cut the cord between mother and son (99).

The stories discussed in this chapter contain violence ending in the death of the mother. Unlike in case of the mother-daughter pattern, the child does not become a victim in some way, instead, it is the mother who suffers physical violence and even dies, whether by accident or on purpose. They are sons who need their mothers to help and protect them, but the sons can never help their mother.

5. Single male parent figures and only children

The vast majority of O'Connor's short stories contain characters who come from truncated families. Louise Westling points out in her essay "Flannery O'Connor's Mothers and Daughters" that the repeated depiction of mothers and daughters establishes a dominant pattern in O'Connor's fiction (510). In addition, we have now analyzed a significant proportion of O'Connor's short stories contain truncated families featuring a mother and child. Even beyond these two types, there are stories featuring male parent characters as well. Like some of O'Connor's widow mothers, some of these single male parents have lost their spouse. In most cases these father figures are older than the single mothers in O'Connor's stories, the age when they could easily become or are grandfathers. The stories that I wish to discuss in this chapter are "The Geranium," "Judgement Day," "A Late Encounter with the Enemy," and "The Artificial Nigger," which all feature a single male parent.

No matter the biological sex of the parent, it seems that parent characters in O'Connor's short stories have close relationships but acute conflicts with their children. I believe that the key to understanding these male father figures is to look at their lifeworlds and compare these lifeworlds with their children's. In my the close reading of these stories, I will show how communication between characters goes off track because of the difference in the lifeworlds of the characters. These male parent figures are usually much older than the other characters, being in their 60s or 70s; they were brought up in a completely different environment, resulting in a completely different lifeworld. It is immensely interesting to compare and contrast these male parent figures with the female parent characters from other short stories.

5.1. Fathers and children in "The Geranium" and "Judgement Day"

In O'Connor's stories "The Geranium" and "Judgement Day" we encounter a similar family structure and basic narrative: a father leaves the South to move North to his adult female daughter, who will take care of the parent in his late days. The resemblance is no surprise, as "Judgement Day" is a reworking of "The Geranium." The original story was first published in *Accent* in the summer of 1946, while the latter one was the final story in the posthumous collection titled *Everything That Rises Must Converge* in 1965. (O'Connor, *CS* 551, 555). As both of the stories are always published in *The Complete Stories of Flannery O'Connor*, I believe it is important to analyze both of them in this dissertation. It is my strong belief that we can achieve new interpretations of both stories if we approach them from the point of view of intersubjective theory. I wish to utilize intersubjective theory to gain a deep understanding of the stories as well as the homes represented in them.

In this section of the dissertation I will analyze the idea of an intersubjective home. I argue that the city where the stories take place presents the problem of intersubjective home and the struggle for home in these narratives. Applying Lévinas's idea of the home to O'Connor's stories, I will show that in "The Geranium" and in "Judgement Day," New York is definitively not home for the main characters, despite the presence of family.

In these two stories there are no intersubjectively shared lifeworlds between the Southern characters in the North and others; communication with other characters is completely defective. Successful communicative actions only occur in the stories when Southern characters are presented in the past through flashbacks.

5.1.1. The notion of home in "The Geranium" and "Judgement Day"

Even though most of Flannery O'Connor's fiction is set below the Mason-Dixon
Line, her first and last published stories, "The Geranium" and "Judgement Day," take place
partly in New York City. First, I will examine how New York City is depicted in these
stories. The main Southern characters of the stories, I argue, cannot find home outside the
South and leaving the South has a tremendous effect on their lifeworlds. I also wish to
show how the South is presented in these stories and chart how crossing the boundary
between South and North is experienced by the characters. Intersubjectivity theory helps us
to better trace and analyze these changes. "The Geranium" and "Judgement Day" are
excellent sources for scholars to follow O'Connor's evolution as a writer (Darretta), how
her technique that changed through the years (Orvell), and changes in her depiction of
characters and settings (Sakamoto).

Critics of "Judgement Day" have not dealt enough with two immensely important
aspects of the short story: the cities where the story takes place and the idea of home.
Scholars, especially Ralph C. Wood and Margaret Whitt, put much emphasis on comparing
the main character in "Judgement Day," Tanner, to the Biblical Paul, a well-established
comparison. I would like to add to their analysis a deeper consideration of setting. Tanner
mentions several times that he wants to go home; however, it is never examined what he
refers to as home. We might consider that the expression home for Tanner refers to getting
back to the Lord, not a tangible place on Earth. Flannery O'Connor was a devoted
Christian author, making a viable case for a heavenly consideration of home.

In "The Geranium," we do not know exactly where in the South the pivotal figure,
Old Dudley, is from; the name of his hometown is never mentioned. When his daughter
visits him in his home to ask him to move her New York apartment, Old Dudley takes the

giant leap and moves there. He does it out of pride, as he believes that "big towns were important places;" New York City was an important place "and it had room for him." Had he thought that this move would result in complete confusion of his lifeworld, he might have decided not to make it. As we have discussed, lifeworld in Jürgen Habermas's interpretation refers to shared common understanding. In Habermas's point of view, values form an immensely important part of these shared common understandings; these values develop through face-to-face encounters in various social groups, which can be families or communities more broadly. Lifeworld signals assumptions about the group of people the group that ascribes to that world, like what they believe, what shocks, offends, or inspires them.

Both Old Dudley and Tanner experience geographical displacement and displacement from their lifeworld. David Eggenschwiler believes that in both "The Geranium" and "Judgement Day" the characters are displaced from their communities (152). I agree with Eggenschwiler as it fact that these people are not in the environment where they belonged; however, I would like to point out that the passive sense of displacement suggests that they had nothing to do with changing their place of living. It is critically important to point out that these men decided to leave their homes on their own, meaning that they were not displaced unwillingly by an outside force. Old Dudley could have just stayed in the home for the elderly and Tanner had the option to stay and work at the farm for other people, yet they both *chose* to leave their homes for the North. The result of this voluntary displacement is that Old Dudley and Tanner are clearly unhappy; Tanner even tries to escape the city in order to get back home. Although their sense of loss in their displacement is indeed lamentable, I feel a strong need to clarify that their displacement was not forced.

Old Dudley is lifeworld was shared with the people surrounding him in the South; however, it is not shared up in the North. In the South he had been comfortable with his conditions and had friends and duties. What Old Dudley encounters in New York is not what he expected and not what he was used to in his community. He is constantly overwhelmed by the subways and elevated tracks and the "dog run" apartment buildings. His daughter does not live in her own house, which is a major disappointment for the father. He is alarmed that his daughter lives in an apartment building that has some African-American tenants living in it as well. When he first sees a black person he thinks that it is a servant of someone who live in the building. In the story, the sense of displacement conjured by moving to New York is not ascribed to characteristics of the city itself, but rather on the northern value system and way of life broadly.

In "Judgement Day," we have more precise details about both the hometown and new New York home of the protagonist, Tanner. The short story's first sentence immediately states that he wants to leave New York City: "Tanner was conserving all his strength for the trip home" (O'Connor, *CS* 531). We slowly figure out that Tanner lost his property in the South, so he decided to move up to north to her daughter who had been living there for a while. We see the city through Tanner's eyes; New York City is depicted as a "no-place," a "Wasteland" (531, 550), a Big Apple is rotten to its core. Due to his lifeworld developed in the South, Tanner finds it shocking that in New York City not everyone is a Christian. He meets the neighbor, who denies Christ and says he has no religion. After all the shocks his religion and lifeworld have suffered, Tanner states that the city is inhabited by the damned, who believe that "there ain't no Jesus and there ain't no God" (538). For him, this city is simply sinful.

When comparing "The Geranium" and "Judgement Day," we can see that the expressions O'Connor uses to depict the city through the pivotal figures' eyes became

much more harsh and condemnatory: in "The Geranium" the city is just "dirty" and "dead" (7-9), while in "Judgement Day" it is "no place for sane man," full of "pigeon hutches" (531, 550), the apartments in which people live. O'Connor's presentation of New York significantly worsened over time, drawing a sharper contrast between the old fathers' Southern lifeworlds and their new Northern settings.

5.1.2. Lifeworlds and communication in "The Geranium" and "Judgement Day"

In O'Connor's short stories there are no intersubjectively shared lifeworlds between the Southern characters and other characters in the present. As discussed before, Habermas believed in the power of mutual understanding as a way of communication. He also believed that this particular idea is immensely important when we talk about the lifeworld, and when trying to achieve intersubjectivity. Habermas believed that the intersubjectively shared lifeworld is "bounded by the totality of interpretation presupposed by the members as background knowledge." Successful communicative actions only happen when there are flashbacks in the story, when the two Southern characters are indulging in their memories of the past.

The clearest example in "Judgement Day" is when Tanner remembers meeting Coleman, an African American friend back in Georgia, for the first time.He gave Coleman a pair of wooden spectacles, which Tanner made with his own two hands. In the flashback, Tanner asks Coleman to put the glasses on, and as he does so there is a sublime moment in which the relationship between the two men is firmly established. The spectacles become the symbol of their friendship. The story presents no such moment for Tanner in the North, only despair that he no longer has a home.

As discussed in detail before, home in literature in many cases equals haven and refuge. Home is often depicted as a place or space where people can retreat and relax. This idea of home is founded on several related ideas, most obvious among them, the distinction between public and private. The domain of the home represents a comfortable, secure, and safe space. Home is an intimate space that provides a context for close, caring relationships. Neither Tanner nor Old Dudley experience these connotations of home in New York.

Extending the idea of home to intersubjective theory, Levinas put much emphasis on how the relationship between the world and the I can be conceptualized. He found that identifying oneself as someone who exists in the world at home with oneself is of key importance in this procedure. As for the idea of home, he believed that home is the place where the I can be free. He emphasizes the idea of possessing, as he believes that a person can only be at home with themselves in the world because the world offers the possibility of possession and also the possibility to reject possession.

As we can see, this definition of home often refers to a dichotomy between domestic and public space; however, these ideas can be extended to cover not only the dwelling of a certain person, but also the neighborhood or region that offers some security, comfort, and relationships. Home neighborhood, researchers argue, can serve as an extension of the private realm. For this to happen, it is important that the physical area is not a hostile place for someone; it should rather be a familiar and secure place.

Applying Lévinas' idea of the home to O'Connor's stories, one can conclude that in neither of the cases is New York home for the single fathers, despite being with their daughters. Old Dudley in "The Geranium" simply cannot find his place outside the South, he does not really know how to handle people there; he becomes alienated from other people due to their differences in lifeworlds. The old man is like a potted geranium plant,

rootless in the new environment; the destruction of the geranium on a neighbor's balcony that Dudley spent hours watching in his despair directly represents Dudley's sense of uprootedness and loss. As the story develops, it becomes increasingly evident that Dudley is a shell of his former self. In his memories he is a vibrant and necessary part of a community that he liked to belong to. In New York, he does not own anything, not even the geranium he watches daily, his obsession. New York does not fulfill any of the criteria of home for Old Dudley.

The same applies to Tanner in "Judgement Day"; indeed, he is desperately uneasy there. For him, New York is a dangerous and unfriendly place, including the apartment where they stay. Aside from his daughter, there are no kin relations and intimacy for him there. Furthermore, in New York, the boundary between public and private is blurred by the cramped living quarters, resulting in a completely hostile environment for him.

Of course, it is important to see if the former dwellings of the characters in the South served as real homes for the characters or not. Old Dudley of "The Geranium" definitely felt at home previously in the South, surrounded by community. He was living in a boarding house full of old ladies and "he was the man in the house." He was a needed, necessary part of the community and this is what he misses the most in New York. Based on the description in the story, Old Dudley's former place was indeed a home for him, even if his pridefulness about being invited to New York ruined his situation.

In "Judgement Day," we find that Tanner once felt Corinth to be his home, but because of losing ownership of the property, it lost the sense of safe place and security it had previously provided. If we consider Levinas's definition of home, we can see that he does not have a real home in Corinth anymore. The security that he used to feel is gone and Corinth is not the same as it had been earlier in his entire life. There are obvious parallels between the Georgia town and the Biblical Corinth, which is best depicted in the Bible

through Paul's letters. In the Bible, Corinth was a crossroad city between Sparta and Athens just like the one in Georgia, well known in Biblical times for idolatry, filth, impurity, and debauchery. Tanner's Corinth also became a filthy place for Tanner when he lost his property. According to Tanner's point of view, Corinth is sinful, but he quickly realized that so is New York. His sense of home had been disrupted in Cornith, but he realizes upon arriving in New York that he would feel much more at home back in the South.

There is one more location in the short story: the little community of Tanner and Coleman, his African American friend. After their first encounter, they spend thirty years living together, forming their own community and making up their own city of two people. However racist Tanner may be, he has a real, living relationship with Coleman in a community where the mayor is Tanner himself, sleeping in bed, while Coleman sleeps on the floor like a dog (191). In this paper I will not examine the racial issues in "Judgement Day;" however, I agree with John Roos regarding the significance of this third location as a real home for Tanner.

Tanner's last words before he dies in New York are "I'm on my way home." These words can be seen as a kind of spiritual homecoming for him. After burying the old man in New York, Tanner's daughter decides to dig up the coffin and ship the body to Corinth, where he finally reaches home. The very first word of the short story is "Tanner," while the last one is "returned." Together we get "Tanner . . . returned." We will never be able to find out if O'Connor penned this intentionally, but this phrase frames the short story and suggests an interpretation of homecoming from a religious point of view. Flannery O'Connor was a devout Catholic and she was writing this last short story knowing that she would soon die, suggesting the validity of this interpretation.

It is a literary cliché that community and home in the South have particular importance. Very few O'Connor characters leave the South and when they do they are always presented as dislocated people who cannot fit into the non-Southern environment. Knowing that O'Connor herself also spent the vast majority of her life in the South, one could easily draw a simple parallel between herself and the characters. However, through the critical reading of these stories from the point of view of intersubjective theory, we see that the interpretations can be much more diverse. Tanner was not perfectly at home in Corinth. The presence of family does not create a sense of home for these men. Home, then, is a complex idea with multiple constituent parts, containing elements of location, family, neighborhood, and region.

5.1.3. Violent encounters in "The Geranium" and "Judgement Day"

O'Connor's father-daughter stories, like her other short works, feature violence. As Diane Tolomeo points out, the motif of violence has always been regarded as the most characteristic elements in the fiction of O'Connor. The act of violence usually happens towards the end of the story and in many of the cases is accompanied by the death of one of the main characters. In some cases the characters are not hurt by hard physical violence; verbal abuse can also be seen as a form of violence towards characters. Tolomeo believes that the last three of O'Connor's short stories -- "Revelation," "Parker's Back," and "Judgement Day" -- form a pattern because of the imminent death of the author and O'Connor uses violence as a mean of shocking people in these stories (218-219).

Of these two narratives, the "alpha and omega" of O'Connor's works, only the latter one contains physical violence. The verbal violence is more painful. Tolomeo writes,

A first consideration of this story may seem to contradict that pattern of moving the moment of violence forward so that its results may be effectively worked out, for "Judgement Day" does in fact end with the death of Tanner. But his death is not the most violent event in the story. The worst moment for Tanner must certainly be the confrontation with the young Negro Actor, or "preacher," as Tanner insists on calling him. What the Negro does not understand is that Tanner genuinely desires to befriend him, to make him a substitute for the Negro Coleman, who had both annoyed and befriended Tanner for thirty years .… Thus when Tanner treats his neighbor as if he too were an exile from the South, the Negro responds with vehement anger .… His death is instead connected more explicitly to his insatiable yearning to return "home" to Corinth, Georgia. For it is while Tanner begins his painstakingly slow journey that he suffers his fatal stroke (221-222).

I believe that Tolomeo's arguments about Tanner's returning home coincide with what I stated previously about the story. However, I do not believe that we can separate Tanner's death and the confrontation with the actor because one follows the other; the death succeeds the confrontation with the black man. Although it caused his death, it has paved the path for his homecoming. The black neighbor might even be thanked for what he did to Tanner, because eventually it helped him return to Georgia.

I would like to point out some further important approaches regarding this reading of the story. Firstly, I believe that the moment of violence in "Judgement Day" coincides with the moment of grace. The moment when the fatal act of violence happens and Tanner dies, grace is offered for him in the form of death. We do know that according to O'Connor's Catholic religion, death is the ultimate homecoming. The fact that he was slapped by a person of color, against whom Tanner is prejudiced, suggests that O'Connor

believed in social justice. In his life, Tanner did not practice racial understanding; he was obsessed with his own life and his undisturbed Southern lifeworld. But at his death he must confront the new racial realities of the twentieth century, in which his superiority is defeated.

Secondly, I would like to call the attention to the importance of community in this story. As Tolomeo mentions in her article, Tanner unexpectedly tries to connect with the African American neighbor because he is longing for a real personal relationship with someone, while displaced in New York. The lack of communication and the difference in the lifeworld make it impossible for him to connect with his own daughter and son-in-law, so he desperately tries to work up some sort of a relationship with another person, mistakenly projecting from his old friend Coleman. I would like to call attention again to the importance of the lifeworld because it helps reveal Tanner is not able to get along with anyone. His lack of lack of adaptability and his intolerance, rooted in his old lifeworld, prevent him from learning how to behave and act in the present and in the North. Tanner's moment of grace, like that of many of the mother characters, comes when they confront the difference between their lifeworld and reality in a moment of violence.

Violence and the moment of grace is also present in "The Geranium," even if it is a bit less explicit in this earlier iteration of the story:

> "Where is the geranium?" he called out of his tight throat.
>
> "What you cryin' for?" the man asked, "I ain't never seen a man cry like that."
>
> "Where is the geranium?" Old Dudley quavered. "It ought to be there. Not you."
>
> "This is my window," the man said. "I got a right to set here if I want to."
>
> "Where is it?" Old Dudley shrilled. There was just a little room left in his throat.
>
> "It fell off if it's any of your business," the man said.

Old Dudley got up and peered over the window ledge. Down in the alley, way six floors down, he could see a cracked flower pot scattered over a spray of dirt and something pink sticking out of a green paper bow. It was down six floors. Smashed down six floors. (O'Connor, *CS* 13-14).

This passage of the text is immensely significant for several reasons, most importantly because I believe it is the moment of grace for Old Dudley. Not having many sources of joy in the city, the old man has established a loving relationship with a plant that he sees in a neighbor's windowsill each and every day. As he does not have intersubjective relationships with anyone in the city, he tries to find something he can connect with. But a plant is an imperfect substitute for certain things and can never be anything like a person. When the potted geranium crashes the ground and Old Dudley realizes its absence, he realizes also the importance of real relationships. At this point, I believe Old Dudley experiences an epiphany; he realizes that nothing can substitute for real, intersubjective relationships with other people and that he has none, making him long for his old home even more.

The destruction of the geranium plant can also be interpreted as an act of violence. The author emphasizes that the plant fell six stories, heightening the reader's imagination of the floral destruction that must have followed the fall. As "The Geranium" is one of O'Connor first stories, I believe that she was just starting to experiment with the motif of violence and not yet ready to use violence on human beings. Nevertheless, the passage demonstrates her wonderful talent of depicting moments of grace and vividly illustrating even something so inanimate as the falling of a flowerpot.

This passage also shows the reader the importance of community for a man from the South. The theory of community set up by Romine earlier in this dissertation

establishes boundary, structure, and image as the most important elements of a community. We can see in Old Dudley's example that the people he is surrounded by in New York cannot and do not fulfill for him any of the conditions that Romine mentions. The people in the short story have no boundary, no structure, and no image shared between them. Even Old Dudley's family fails to function as a community, no matter how hard the man tries to believe in it. The strong emotions he feels towards the geranium in the window of the stranger is the result of the lack of intersubjective community in his own life. Furthermore, by pointing out that "This is my window," the neighbor clearly wants to show Old Dudley that New York is not a place like the South. In New York, the close quarters cause the neighbor to cling to the small scrap of privacy he can obtain.

Both "The Geranium" and "Judgement Day" show how the lifeworld of Southerners stay the same even if the characters are located physically elsewhere. These two short stories also illustrate how family members might have different lifeworlds, as we can see with the lack of overlap between the lifeworlds of the Southern fathers and their Northernized daughters.

5.2. Grandfather and grandson in "The Artificial Nigger"

"'The Artificial Nigger' is my favorite and probably the best thing I'll ever write," wrote Flannery O'Connor in one of her letters, published posthumously in *The Habit of Being* (209). This might be one of the reasons why this short story has become significant not only in O'Connor's career but in the American literary canon more broadly. "The Artificial Nigger" touches upon important and at the same time sensitive social issues, beginning with the title of the short story and ending in the statue of a black person that brings about the grandfather figure's moment of grace. As Mary Neff Shaw points out,

"embedded in the bulk of scholarship is the tension between O'Connor's intention to dramatize Mr. Head's redemption through grace and her determination to maintain fidelity to the dramatic unities of character and action" (257).

In this subchapter of my dissertation I wish to move beyond the existing scholarly understanding and approaches to "The Artificial Nigger," focusing instead on identity, embodiment, lifeworld, and (the lack of) community in this truly Southern story. Also, I wish to point out the most important elements of the relationship between grandfather, Mr. Head, and grandson, Nelson, in order to compare and contrast it to other family dynamics in O'Connor's fiction. First, I argue that Nelson's embodiment and identity has much to do with the physical resemblance that he shares with his grandfather. I also wish to point out the importance of intersubjective home in "The Artificial Nigger," which comes into focus when the two characters leave their rural home to visit Atlanta for the day. Nelson's developing identity is central to the story; I argue that the development of his identity and process of embodiment illustrate his coming of age in the story. Finally, the story exhibits how "meeting the other" in the sense described by Merleau-Ponty offers a new approach to examine race in "The Artificial Nigger."

5.2.1. Identity, embodiment, and emotions in "The Artificial Nigger"

In "The Artificial Nigger," we do not have a conventional parent and son; the child character is a grandson as Nelson's parents are already deceased. However, this does not change the fact that Mr. Head treats Nelson as though he was his own son. Jennie J. Joiner points out that

Mr. Head continually tries to subordinate his grandson Nelson into the traditional role of son. But with only Nelson as a dependent, Nelson has to fulfill roles as both son and the racially marker servant. Nelson's subordination is vital to Mr. Head's identity because all culturally distinct binaries on which the traditional households is built have dissolved around him. (38)

While I agree with what Joiner writes here about the subordination of the son, we can look at the issue of identity from two different approaches: the identity of Nelson, and the identity of Mr. Head. This; however, comes hand in hand with the embodiment of the two characters.

As discussed in the theoretical part of my dissertation, the body and its relation to culture are not just an object to study, but can be seen as a subject of culture. This results in embodiment, defined as the notion of understanding that the body itself is something that defines the relationship of the self with the world while being an element of the universe. When the mind recognizes the difference between mind and body, embodiment takes place and the body-mind distinction becomes relevant for the self (Csordas 36-37). Nelson's embodiment and identity has much to do with the physical features he shares with his grandfather.

They were grandfather and grandson but they looked enough alike to be brothers and brothers not too far apart in age, for Mr. Head had a youthful expression by daylight, while the boy's look was ancient, as if he knew everything already and would be pleased to forget it. (O'Connor, *CS* 251)

O'Connor clarifies in the very beginning of the short story that these two people share a strong resemble and parental relationship, despite the generational divide between them. Mr. Nelson treats his grandson as though he was his own child; he is strict to him, he does not try to spoil him. Mr. Head had to take care of Nelson from the time he was one year old, essential the boy's whole life. In the context of the story, the most important factor in Nelson's identity is the fact that he was born in Atlanta, in the city. Mr. Head regrets that he told Nelson where he was actually born; if had he not told him this, the child would lack that part of his identity.

While Mr. Head tries to present himself as a superior to the child and his identity strongly focuses on his traditional role in this two-person family, Nelson does not really seem to identify as a child or as a grandchild. There is only one element of his personality that he wants to display to others: that his birthplace is Atlanta. He keeps telling his grandfather that the trip they are taking to the city is actually his second one because he was born there; however, he omits that he cannot actually remember anything as he was only an infant then. Nelson only wants to accept himself as a person who is from the city, to distinguish himself from the area of the rural South where he lives with his grandfather and to make himself special.

Initially Mr. Head does not want accept Nelson's desire to identify with the city. Whenever Nelson mentions Atlanta, Mr. Head comments that being born somewhere does not mean that the person knows that part of the country. Mr. Head does not seem to remember that he is talking to a child and insists on correcting the child on several occasions. If we turn back to Joiner's interpretation of Nelson in the role of a son, we can see that here Mr. Head does not treat him as a son but as he would handle other adults.

Flannery O'Connor's names for her characters often carry meaning to understand them, and Mr. Head's name suggests his position within the two-person family. He is

actually the head of the family, and desperately wants to act as though it was true. He makes great efforts to emphasize his own importance in the beginning of the story, which make him look a little bit ridiculous. Flannery O'Connor is being ironic when he names the grandfather Mr. Head. I believe that this name helps to undermine his insecure grasp of authority.

Mr. Head's vulnerabilities are revealed when he and Nelson get lost in Atlanta. The grandfather saucily reminds Nelson several times that it was actually Nelson who was born in the city so he should know where to go. In the city Nelson seems to behave much more like and adult and Mr. Head as a child. Eventually it is Nelson who asks a black woman about directions to return downtown. I believe that this is the moment when Mr. Head fails as an adult, grandfather, substitute father, and superior human. To a certain extent he senses this failure because he knows that he is supposed to be the person in charge. He is completely lost in Atlanta, and sometimes also in the relationship with his grandson.

Nelson's view of the city changes multiple times throughout the story, as his day there with Mr. Head unfolds. Still lost after asking for directions from the black woman, Nelson's earlier enthusiasm for the city dissipates and his fears surface.

> "I never said I was nothing but born here," the boy said in a shaky voice. "I never said I would or wouldn't like it. I never said I wanted to come. I only said I was born here and I never had nothing to do with that. I want to go home. I never wanted to come in the first place. It was all your big idea. How you know you ain't following the tracks in the wrong direction?" (263)

There is a remarkable shift in Nelson's identification with the city, denying an association that he had earlier embraced. This is an absolutely normal reaction on his behalf: he is just

a child with no real conception of navigating the city spatially and socially. The only person he ever had a real relationship with is his grandfather, who cruelly abandons him when Nelson gets in a spot of trouble to teach the boy a lesson.

The importance of intersubjective home becomes clear with Nelson's statement, "I want to go home." Levinas believed that identifying oneself as someone who exists in the world at home with himself or herself is of key importance in figuring out the relationship between the self the world. The home is the place where the I can be free. He emphasizes the idea of possessing, as he believes that a person can only be at home with themselves in the world because the world offers the possibility to and to resist possession. The home, to recap, is often associated with security and relies on the binary of public and private.

Based on the definitions and interpretations above, once Mr. Head and Nelson get lost in the city, the importance of home becomes much more crucial to the child than it had been before. This is the point when he actually starts caring about the home, once he has to experience the lack of the home. Nelson realizes not only that he is not safe in this present environment, but also that he has no intimate relationship with the city that he was born in. This crisis in the notion of home results in a crisis of his identity as well. Encountering the embodiment of Atlanta and being disappointed with his experiences there in reality brings about a severe questioning of identity.

Nelson's identity is acutely threatened by one experience in Atlanta in particular: his grandfather denies him in front of strangers. After Nelson falls down accidentally running into a woman, his grandfather declines to protect him and vouch for him.

The women all turned to Mr. Head. The injured one sat up and shouted, "You sir! You'll pay every penny of my doctor's bill that your boy has caused. He's a juve-

nile delinquent! Where is an officer? Somebody take this man's name and

address!"

Mr. Head was trying to detach Nelson's fingers from the flesh in the back of his

legs. The old man's head had lowered itself into his collar like a turtle's; his eyes

were glazed with fear and caution.

"Your boy has broken my ankle!" the old woman shouted. "Police!"

Mr. Head sensed the approach of the policeman from behind. He stared straight

ahead at the women who were massed in their fury like a sloid wall to block his

escape, "This is not my boy," he said. "I never seen him before."

He felt Nelson's fingers fall out of his flesh. (265)

As the grandfather denies the grandson, the child's fingers release their clench on

the leg of the adult. Nelson stands alone, left behind by the only adult and family he ever

knew. His whole embodiment and relationship with the world depended on that one

particular person who now betrayed him. And yet, although Nelson does not quickly

forgive his grandfather, he does not stray far from Mr. Head's vicinity in the hours that

follow. As Paul W. Nisly points out, Nelson wanted to leave, but "he is inexorably drawn

back." In experiencing Atlanta he tries to escape the isolated world of the two men both

literally and metaphorically, but he fails. This is no surprise as he is just a child; however,

the inability to leave will result in later an even more secluded and isolated life of the boy,

Nisly adds (214-216).

The grandfather's denial is important from the point of view of speech act theory as

well. According to Searle and Vanderveken, not all illocutionary acts succeed; they can

very easily fail as well. They believe that in order that an illocutionary act be successful,

the person who utters certain terms needs to have the institutional power to allows that

action to happen. What we see in this case is that Nelson's grandfather, his next of kin, denies him. While a declaration like "This is not my boy" (265) might not have the legal power to dispossess the grandfather from his parenthood, it does have the power to make a child feel like an orphan. I argue that even though the grandfather probably knows that after this incident he will still be Nelson's legal guardian, his words have consequences as the boy will likely become emotionally less attached to him. In my understanding, the developing identity and the process of embodiment that Nelson undergoes in Atlanta can be seen as the first step in his coming of age. Though young, he occupies a more adult world than most children through his grandfather. And even though Mr. Head wanted to be the one to teach Nelson a lesson for his brazen behavior in Atlanta, eventually it is Mr. Head who learns a tough lesson on that day in the city, when he has to grapple with his own shortcomings and the consequences of betraying his grandson.

Finally, I would like to briefly elaborate on the importance of emotions in "The Artificial Nigger." As discussed in the second chapter of my dissertation, Maclaren believes that an emotion is an experience of a tension taking place within our reality, which puts our place in reality into question. Expressions of emotions are actually ways through which we make sense of certain situations. Emotion is not a conscious and internal event, she argues, stating that behavior which is sometimes brought about by escalated emotions should not be explained as irrational, rather, it should be seen in a situation where the person is not able to interpret or make sense of the given situation (26-43).

It is clear in "The Artificial Nigger" that both Mr. Head and Nelson go through an emotionally charged day while they are in Atlanta. The emotions that they encounter -- joy, fear, panic, isolation -- all help them understand their situation and each other's. The way Nelson acknowledges that his grandfather denies him shows that the boy is trying to make real sense of the world and the situation. His grandfather's denial plays an important part in

Nelson's life. He might not realize what is happening to him at the time, but those incidents will play a significant part in the development of his personality.

5.2.2. Lifeworld and communication in "The Artificial Nigger"

Many of O'Connor's short stories deal with the issues of race and social changes of the 1950s and 1960s, and I believe that "The Artificial Nigger" is the short story in which she most eloquently connects race to lifeworld and communication.

In "The Artificial Nigger," there is a clear distinction between the narrator and Mr. Head when addressing African Americans, Julie Armstrong notes. The narrator consistently calls them "Negroes," while Mr. Head refers to them as "Niggers." The narrator's word usage, Armstrong explains, is historically much more appropriate, while Mr. Head's expression is immensely racist. When the story was first published in the *Kenyon Review* in 1955, it generated controversy. The editor of the short story even asked O'Connor to change the title, but the author insisted on sticking to it as she believed that it is not insulting to black people, rather, it is more damaging to the sensibility of white people. Armstrong believes that O'Connor's intention was to reveal white's inclination toward racism (296-298). I believe that had O'Connor changed the title of the story, it might not have become such a significant piece in her oeuvre. While she always manages catchy titles, this one remains as provocative in 2017 as it was in 1955, encouraging constant scholarly critique of the racial issues the story raises.

As in O'Connor's stories about mothers and son, the two pivotal characters, the parent and child characters again have completely different conceptions of blacks:

Mr. Head's grip on Nelson's arm loosened. "What was that?" he asked.

"A man," the boy said and gave him an indignant look as if he were tired of having his intelligence insulted.

"What kind of man?" Mr. Head persisted, his voice expressionless.

"A fat man," Nelson said. He was beginning to feel that he had better be cautious.

"You don't know what kind?" Mr. Head said in a final tone.

"An old man," the boy said and had a sudden foreboding that he was not going to enjoy the day.

"That was a nigger," Mr. Head said and sat back.

Nelson jumped up on the seat and stood looking backward to the end of the car but the Negro had gone.

"I'd thought you'd know a nigger since you seen so many when you was in the city on your first visit," Mr. Head continued. "That's his first nigger," he said to the man across the aisle.

The boy slid down into the seat. "You said they were black," he said in an angry voice. "Your never said they were tan. How do you expect me to know anything when you don't tell me right?" (O'Connor, *CS* 255)

This passage of the story reveals that Nelson has never encountered a black person before, which also suggests that they live in a segregated, isolated community. Even though this kind of physical racial segregation was not impossible in Georgia, it was rare in the middle of the 20th century. Most municipalities were racially mixed, if socially segregated. Mr. Head could have deliberately chosen to live in a purely white area, which suggests a strong racial bias against black people. O'Connor does not give a detailed background of his racial views, but based on the character we meet in the story, this is quite possible.

The exchange between Mr. Head and Nelson about the black man also illustrates how ineffective the communication is between them. According to Donald Davidson, a communicative situation is a triangle: one apex is oneself, the second apex is another creature, and the third one is an object that is located in a space and thus made common. The only way of knowing that the second person, so the second apex of the triangle, is reacting to the same object as oneself is to know that the second person has the same object in mind. The second apex, so the second person, must also be aware that they constitute to the same triangle with the first apex. To find out if they are related or not, that their thoughts are so related, they communicate with each other. It is not necessary that the two of them mean the same thing by using the same expression; however, they must be the interpreters of each other. If we insert Mr. Head and Nelson into Davidson's triangle, we can clearly see that we cannot talk about a successful communicative situation in this case. Mr. Head and Nelson are clearly not interpreters of each other, even though Nelson makes several efforts to explain his view and process the situation. Mr. Head and Nelson did not share the third apex of the triangle and Nelson feels that his grandfather misinformed him about the color of African Americans.

Their racial (mis)understandings also contribute to Mr. Head and Nelson's lifeworlds. Mr. Head holds racial views against blacks, illustrated frequently in the short story. For example, Mr. Head tells Nelson several times, "This is where you were born—right here with all these niggers" (O'Connor, *CS* 260). However, Nelson is not racially biased yet, Black people do not have a specific place in his lifeworld and his opinion of them is quickly developing in his first encounters. What he saw is not what he expected, eliciting shock. I believe that his encounters with black people in Atlanta would have a positive effect on the development of Nelson's views about race, countering how racist his grandfather was.

Tradition is of key importance for Mr. Head, as it was to many of the mothers we encountered in O'Connor's other stories. He appreciates traditions and the way things have always worked. This is probably due to the fact that his lifeworld developed much earlier than the time of the story itself, many decades before the Civil Rights Movement in America. For a man who was born and raised in a segregationist era, the changes of the middle of the 20th century must have felt like a contradiction with tradition. He holds old-fashioned views not only on race, but about himself as well:

> Mr. Head could have said to it that age was a choice blessing and that only with
>
> years does a man enter into that calm understanding of life that makes him a
>
> suitable guide for the young. This, at least, had been his own experience. (249)

This quotation also reveals Mr. Head's usage of clichés, a trait shared with Flannery O'Connor's mother characters. Although less egregious in repeating tired lines, Mr. Head once in a while says or thinks in these ruts. The quotation offers a window into Mr. Head's mind and shows the way he thinks and communicates about himself.

But despite his philosophy of calm mentoring, Mr. Head's communicative strategy is not consistent throughout the story. The man does not really seem to be able to think about the future; his ability to anticipate problems and issues in the future are weak. The reader sees that the old man, responding only to the present situation, contradicts himself. When Nelson is annoying bragging about being born in the city, Mr. Head wants to minimize the importance of this fact; however, when they get lost, Mr. Head immediately changes tune and mocks the Atlanta-born Nelson for not knowing his way around the city of his birth. Furthermore, Mr. Head's mentoring of and communication with Nelson is often more vindictive than instructive. He seeks to humiliate his grandson by drawing

constant parallel between him and the African Americans of the city. The result of this poor communication is that Nelson's trust in his grandfather erodes. It seems to the reader that Nelson is able to outgrow his grandfather once he recognizes the real nature of Mr. Head's communication. The resulting distrustfulness, however, is not necessarily negative in the long run. In order for him to develop a healthy lifeworld where there is an actual place for blacks and modernity, Nelson needs influences other than his grandfather. This is probably one of the biggest challenges he might face in his future.

5.2.3. Meeting the other and reaching grace in "The Artificial Nigger"

As I discussed in earlier parts of my dissertation, getting to know the other is an important idea in intersubjective theory. Merleau-Ponty's ideas echo Husserl's in many ways on this topic. Both theorists believe the other person is an immensely important cultural object. Merleau-Ponty was not that concerned about the idea of the lifeworld -- his focus was more on the issue of embodiment -- but both factors are worthy of consideration in analyzing the characters in "The Artificial Nigger," including their understanding of each other personally and their understanding of racial others.

Lost in Atlanta, the characters encounter several forms of the other. In the city, both Mr. Head and Nelson take stabs at each other's self-righteousness, according to Lorna Wiedmann. The other in this term might mean the other person (Nelson or Mr. Head, respectively); however, it might also refer to the other in an intersubjective sense. Getting to meet the other is of key importance in the process of embodiment, as we could see through earlier examples. However, meeting the other in the context of "The Artificial Nigger" also means meeting the other in the form of African Americans. Meeting the other race is significant because it brings about the moment of grace in the story.

Literary criticism frequently neglects examining the moment of grace in O'Connor's stories, but "The Artificial Nigger" is an exception and we can find several interpretations. Robert Milden believes that many of O'Connor's short stories feature humiliation right before the moment of grace. He believes that this reflects the Protestant value system in the work of the author, as then the sinner is forced to become helpless, reflecting the most puritan ideas of religion.

> But often the moment of humiliation is a prelude to grace itself. In "The Artificial Nigger," to cite one example, Mr. Head's humiliation leads him through contrition and despair to his final regeneration through divine mercy. Having repudiated his grandson Nelson out of fear for his own safety ("This is not my boy. I never seen him before"), Mr. Head realizes for the first time the extent of sinfulness. He tries to annul his act and reunite himself with Nelson by proposing that they drink from a water spigot, a symbolic baptism of his own devising, but the boy will not be tempted into an easy forgiveness. (170)

Milden believes that Mr. Head's moment of grace is directly connected to his repudiation of Nelson. Yet this incident also suggests a moment of grace, or at least a reassessment of worldview, for Nelson also. The little boy not only meets people who are another race than he is for the first time, but he is also denied by his own grandfather. In this moment of grace, he realizes his need for self-reliance in the facing of his grandfather's severe shortcomings.

Wiedmann's interpretation puts the moment of grace at a different scene in the short story. She believes that Nelson's encounter with the second black person prepares the stages for the moment of grace, which actually occurs in the presence of the third black

person, the title character of the short story. She believes that "the artificial nigger" statue that Mr. Head and Nelson come across leaving Atlanta embodies the Bible as a sword, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow and …. discerned of the thought and the intents of the heart." Wiedmann believes that the key to grace in this story is Nelson's innocence and the way she approaches the black woman when he is running lost. "Nelson intuits the terrifying prospect of his imperfection in her mysterious discernment. She knows the way home," she adds (35).

In a third interpretation, Louise Westling points out that here, as in some of O'Connor's other stories, grace is decidedly present. She believes that in "The Artificial Nigger," the moment of grace is unique, because unlike in other short stories, here it is associated with a positive new beginning, not brutal violence.

> The enormous black woman in "The Artificial Nigger" becomes a sort of Beatrice figure of solace for Nelson in his Dantesque journey through the Atlanta slums, and when he and his grandfather return to their pastoral home, they step off the train into a silvery landscape calmed by the moon, which has always been a symbol of femininity and which in Catholicism is associated with the Virgin Mary. (*Sacred Landscapes*, 237-238)

I believe that all the three interpretations of grace are acceptable to interpret "The Artificial Nigger" but that the most interesting approach is presented by Westling. Westling has been a scholar of O'Connor's work for many decades, with fascinating findings explicitly on the issue of grace. Through her critical interpretations, readers can realize that in most cases the moment of grace is not necessarily obvious; readers need their imagination to find meaning for themselves.

This process of discovering grace parallels Mr. Head and Nelson's experiences in Atlanta. They return to their rural home fundamentally changed by the day's events, both alive and more attuned to grace than before.

5.3. Male parent figure and granddaughter in "A Late Encounter with the Enemy"

"A Late Encounter with the Enemy," is a unique piece in O'Connor's collection. Readers meet O'Connor's oldest character: General Sash is a hundred and four years old, used to be an active military personnel, and even though technically he has never been a general, he participated in the Civil War. The uniqueness of this story derives from multiple sources. It is her only story in which a character actually participated in the American Civil War, a critical moment in Southern identity. Furthermore, this is one of few short stories of O'Connor in which the parent characters actually exhibit some sort of sexuality.

General Sash's lifeworld is built completely and entirely on the idea of the Civil War and has no overlap with the lifeworld of his granddaughter, Sally, and the social circumstances they live in. This diversion of lifeworlds is a feature we have seen in other parent-child stories that O'Connor penned. I also claim that the pivotal male figure here is actually embodied as a General rather than as parent figure by his granddaughter. General Sash is important to Sally because of the values he represents, not because of a personal family bond. Sally Poker Sash thus objectifies her grandfather and fails to humanize him in the Butlerian sense. I will support this statement regarding objectification by showing how other interpreters of this same story present the General as a monument, not as an acting subject. We can conclude that the grandfather is not presented as a thinking creature, by Davidson's definition.

5.3.1. Lifeworlds and lies in "A Late Encounter with the Enemy"

General Sash, or to be more precise, George Poker Sash, fought in the American Civil War and it seems to have had a deep effect on his lifeworld. In his flashbacks, General Sash often remembers to the events that he refers to as "the War between the States" (O'Connor, *CS* 135). Like other senior characters in O'Connor's stories, Sash puts much emphasis on the past. This is one of the most important elements of his life, the defining element of his lifeworld. As discussed before in this thesis, Husserl believes that the lifeworld is basically "the world in which we are always already living and which furnishes the ground for all cognitive performance and all scientific determination." In his understanding a lifeworld means several different things for a human being: it means a surrounding where operation is logical for oneself, it is a possible realms of cognitive activity, but it is also "the world of experience in the wholly concrete sense which is commonly tied in with the word 'experience.'" This sense, he believes, is related to a habituality which provides assurance in action and decision for the given person. The whole sensation of the world around the person becomes a commonplace as itself (*Logic* 41, 52).

General Sash defines himself as a General, which is apparently not true but shows us how important the military is for him. The Confederacy for him is not just something that happened in the past; he still lives in the world of the Confederacy and he does not want to accept that the world has completely changed around him. It is also important to mention that General Sash's mind is not clear all the time. We can see on many occasions that he is not able to distinguish between past and present, true or false. He even makes up stories to entertain people or to entertain himself.

"I was in the preemie they had in Atlanta," he would tell visitors sitting on his front

porch. "Surrounded by beautiful guls. It wasn't a thing local about it. It was nothing

local about it. Listen here. It was a nashul event and they had me in it—up onto the

stage. There was no bob-tails at it. Every person at it had paid ten dollars to get in

and had to wear his tuxseeder. I was in this uniform. A beautiful gul presented me

with it that afternoon in a hotel room."

"It was in a suite in the hotel and I was in it too, Papa," Sally Poker would say,

winking at the visitors. "You weren't alone with any young lady in a hotel room."

"Was, I'd a known what to do," the old General would say with a sharp look and

the visitors would scream with laughter. (O'Connor, *CS* 136)

Based on this quotation, it is clear that even though the General's mind might not be

fresh all the time, he is sometimes indeed able to distinguish between truth and lie;

however, he likes tell stories where he is a strong, sort of womanizing man, despite the fact

that her granddaughter, and this way the readers actually know that this is not the truth.

Louise Y. Gossett believes that reality in "A Late Encounter with the Enemy" is

peculiar and unique among O'Connor's oeuvre. She believes that one of the realities of the

Southern past is that sentiment will not save them. The General represents the historical

past in this story; however, she believes that for the General the past is forgotten and the

future is not remembered. She also adds that family loyalty, in this sense, has become mere

deception. "A veneer of pretense covers most human relationships and masks people from

their true selves," she argues (76).

In previous chapters of my dissertation I presented Bollobás's idea about the act of

perfor*mance*, which can fruitfully be applied to General Sash as well. Perfor*mance*, to

recap, refers to a specific mode of performativity which is always represented by the

replaying of norms and rules when creating the subject itself. It is a mode of expressing conventions which produced certain types of identities. The perfor*mance* of identity is anticipated by traditions and sets of norms which helped produce those particular identities. Furthermore, Bollobás explains that perfor*mances* are also excellent ways of expressing the speaker's motives to provide a background for the discourse in a specific convention, or according to a particular tradition (21, 85-86).

In "A Late Encounter with the Enemy," the General consistently tries to live according to the rules of the world as they were during the Civil War. He does not really seem to understand that those days have already passed, the Civil War and the military service is such an important part of his identity that he is not able to get rid of it. His perfor*mance*, which is dictated by the rules of old-fashioned and bygone society and era, focuses on the identity convention of Old South, resulting in a behavior which has absolutely no relevance in the middle of the 20th century. His perfor*mance*, just like his lifeworld, mirrors all the traits of the Old South, whose legacy was present in America even in the decade when Flannery O'Connor was most active.

5.3.2. Isolation and faulty communication in "A Late Encounter with the Enemy"

Ruthann Knechel Johansen argues that in "A Late Encounter with the Enemy," the General lacks any kind of truth condition with the words he is using, resulting in his death. Johansen argues that Sally Poker Sash actually wants her grandfather to be present at the graduation as a General, not as her grandfather.

> O'Connor builds a tomb-like narrative construction with words that bring an old
> conquering hero to his death because they no longer connect him to any reality

besides himself. Sally Poker Sash wants her grandfather, the General, to attend her graduation because he represents to her the tradition of family and place: "Dignity! Honor! Courage!" Through these variations of the cardinal virtues (justice, prudence, fortitude, temperance) and theological ones (faith, hope, and charity), O'Connor constricts her character. This man who embodies the old virtues for Sally, O'Connor describes as "pure game cock" and, later in the story, as a "frail dried spider" (41).

I agree with Johansen's analysis that the man embodies old virtues for Sally Poker Sash and that Sally wants the man to be present more as the General than as her grandfather. This displays their lack of mutual understanding. Sally's embodiment of her grandfather actually fails as she fails to humanize him, in the Csordasian and Butlerian sense.

Johansen believes that the General's words display his virtues, which have no relevance at all in the 20th century. Nevertheless he sticks to these, just as he favored rosy depictions of himself in his storytelling.

The landscape that O'Connor creates in the general's isolated recollection of beautiful girls, ten-dollar gatherings, tuxedos and uniforms, and his desire for national attention is, ironically, a very private, egoistic one in which Sally tries to root her own present life. Processions and parades generally signify passage from one stage to another, or they mark achievement of change. In this environment, however, they permit no such growth; in fact, the sweltering heat at Sally's black graduation procession prohibits even a breeze, thus contributing to the stifling,

constricted atmosphere shaped principally by the arrested ego of the spectacular

Old General. (41)

The General becomes completely isolated from the real world that is surrounded by him, he argues, yet he is not the only one who completely secedes from reality. Sally Poker Sash, Johansen explains, follows his grandfather's example, becoming completely detached from reality towards the end of the narrative. She does not want to realize that the person on stage when she receives her bachelor's diploma is not her grandfather anymore, just his corpse. Like Julian and his mother, both characters in this story occupy somewhat imaginary worlds.

In regard to communication between the two main characters, Johansen believes that Sally Poker Sash also fails at understanding that words without some sort of reality cannot be accepted as truth, as they contain no truth condition. As discussed before in this dissertation, Davidson believes that the interpreter will only be able to understand the utterances of the speaker if he knows that the speaker intends the interpreter to assign some truth conditions to the speaker's utterances; furthermore, if he adds that if communication is successful, there must be such intentions on behalf of the speaker. In this situation, even though Sally knows in most of the cases that General Sash does not tell the truth to her, she declines to confront this. Lacking truth conditions, their communication becomes completely unsuccessful.

We can see examples of defective communications at later points of the short story as well. Consider this scene as Sally and the General prepare for her long-awaited graduation ceremony:

She came in her academic gown to the hotel and dressed the old man in his

uniform. He was as frail as a dried spider. "Aren't you just thrilled, Papa?" she

asked. "I'm just thrilled to death!"

"Put the soward across my lap, dam you," the old man said, "where it'll shine."

She put it there and then stood back looking at him. "You look just grand," she

said.

"God dam it," the old man said in a slow monotonous certain tone as if he were

saying it to the beating of his heart. "God dam every goddam thing to hell."

"Now, now,' she said and left happily to join the procession. (O'Connor, *CS* 140)

Sally does not understand what her grandfather is saying to her; understand him

would require both the ability and the willingness to do so. As mentioned earlier, Davidson

believes that the interpreter needs to intend to understand what the speaker is talking about;

however, in this particular case it seems that the granddaughter does not *want* to pay any

kind of attention the her grandfather. It seems to be fairly obvious that the granddaughter

and grandfather do not have real, relationship with each other. They key to successful

communication is sharing, as I pointed out many times, and it seems that these two people

do not share much in their lifeworlds. While Sally Poker Sash is proud of her grandfather,

she is not proud of him for the reasons the General believes. The woman takes pride

primarily in the status the General and has little desire to know more about the reality of

his life and condition. She cares more about her grandfather sitting on display on the stage

in uniform than she cares about his familially and personally. We know nothing about

Sally's parents and little about what brought the General and Sally together, only that their

family communication is rather ineffective.

5.3.2. General Sash, the monument

Many literary critics highlight the importance of the past in "A Late Encounter with the Enemy," and several focus specifically on the concept of a monument to understand General Sash and his role as more a symbolic historical figure than a flesh-and-blood grandfather.

Gary M. Ciuba believes that General Sash's real history does not live up to the symbolic history of the Confederate war effort he represents. He was once celebrated at the Atlanta premier of a Civil War movie as a war veteran, and now attending his granddaughter's graduation, "he is honored as a Confederate monument." Ciuba believes that the old man is fraudulent, just like the Margaret Mitchell novel and the film *Gone with the Wind.* These symbols of the Lost Cause, he argues, flee history and indulge in cultural memory as a way of narcissism and procession. In his interpretation, General Sash becomes overwhelmed by the past and, through his death, he becomes the embodiment of the South (130).

Robert Donahoo focuses much more on the monument as a metaphor for Sash.

In "A Late Encounter with the Enemy," the monument is pure metaphor—not made of marble or granite but "Tennessee Flintrock"—the name given to George Poker Sash at the movie premiere. As with actual monuments . . . the plans to erect General Sash on a college graduation stage is led by a woman: his granddaughter Sally Poker Sash, who sees him as a symbol of "what she stood for, or, as she said 'what all was behind her,' and was not behind them. This them was not anybody in particular. It was just all the upstarts who had turned the world on its head and unsettled the ways of decent living" … These words establish that, whatever others

may think the old soldier symbolizes—and the snippets of voices heard from the graduation speakers imply that he is seen as a symbol of a history that must not be forgotten—he inevitably symbolized as well the motives and ideas of those who set him up as a monument: here the same sort of phallic pride and white otherness. (11-12)

We can see through these interpretations that the General Sash is revered for his connection to memories of the bygone era of the Civil War, not a living person.

Thus, we can even argue that General Sash does not behave like a thinking creature in the narrative. All he is able to remember are lies, he never actually tells truth. Donald Davidson believes that a creature must be able to express not only one but many thoughts in order to be a thinking creature; and what is more important, the creature must be able to interpret the speech and thoughts of others. He states that without language there probably cannot be much thought. General Sash is indeed not presented as a thinking creature, only as some sort of a monument for the community and for her daughter as well.

The major difference between Sarah Poker Sash and other O'Connor children is that she, while she does not have an effective relationship with her parent figure, does not actually have any sort of conflict with her grandfather. This is mainly because she herself does not think of him as a thinking creature. Sally accepts the fact that the two of them will not be able to communicate with each other and she does not even give try for successful communicative actions; she is satisfied with a monument status for him.

Analyzing the relationship between grandfather and granddaughter, Walter Elder comes to an exciting conclusion: he believes that Sally uses the General as an instrument of revenge against "those who had turned the world on its head and unsettled the ways of decent living" (29). Elder's interpretation coincides with mine: we both believe that the

woman does not really think about his grandfather as a human being, just as a form of moral revenge or an ornament at a graduation ceremony. This dehumanization shows the complete detachment of the two—no surprise she does not even realize that at the end of the narrative the General dies on stage. This supports my argument that the grandfather is more objectified rather than subjectified by Sally, evidencing failed embodiment.

David J. Knauer emphasizes how important it is for Sally that other people recognize the General as her relative. Knauer believes that Sally's efforts to take advantage of her grandfather as a display for her graduation provide the narrative with "its most damaging illustration of history's nonconformity to particular demands." She organizes to have her grandfather on stage at the ceremony to support "her perceived hereditary difference," as she wanted to show what she stood for. Sally reveals what the ceremony and the scene means to her when "Sally appeals to a symbol of the bellum South, her uniformed grandfather, to identify herself with an older, more aristocratic culture, and to distinguish herself from a contemporary culture that she imagines lacks those old traditions." She believes that the General's presence on stage will bring guilt to all the people who brought about change in the society of the antebellum South, Knauer argues.

I believe that his argument is important in a sense that it also shows that Sally Poker Sash does not think about her grandfather as a parent figure, rather just as a tool. Even though they seem to share some parts of their lifeworld, it is superficial and only partially shared, as the General's lifeworld is actually rooted in the past whereas Sally's is devoted to her opposition to the present. For an outsider it might seem that the two of them are close, but a close reading of the text and its criticism reveals the issues and problems in their relationship.

5.3.3. A late encounter with death

"A Late Encounter with the Enemy" bears specific significance, just like many other O'Connor short stories. As Harvey Klevar explains,

> Early in the story O'Connor hints of the significance of George Poker Sash's "late encounter with the enemy." He finds processions "as deadly as the river Styx" and damns them to "hell and back." He has "forgotten history and… [doesn't] intend to remember it again" and mutters "with a certain tone, as if he were saying it to the beating of his heart, 'God damn every God damn thing to hell'." Through these pronouncements and denials he has in fact denied the efficacy of the "enemy" and of history and pronounced his own damnation.
>
> As the old man watches the black procession of graduates immediately before his death, the procession becomes "vaguely familiar and irritating." It gradually becomes a procession demanding a recognition not only of the timeless demand of the past but also the sacred demands of death and eternity which mock his one hundred and four years and consuming interest in "pretty guls." (O'Connor, *CS* 125)

While I agree with Klevar's interpretation about the General's viewpoint in the narrative, I would also like to add two comments to his interpretations.

First, I believe that in "A Late Encounter with the Enemy," we meet one of just a few O'Connor parents who exhibit any sexuality. In most of the cases the parent figures of O'Connor are sexless, in the sense that there are no allusions in the short stories to sexuality or romantic relationships. The hundred and four year old General Sash seems to

have a huge interest in young girls, even if his romantic desires are expressed only in words and not actions. Unlike the granddaughter, O'Connor wants to humanize the General; she wants to show readers that he is not only a monument but a person with personality traits and a desire for affection and connection.

Secondly, Klevar's idea leads us to the moment of grace in the short story. Baking on the hot graduation stage after a minor accident right before the ceremony, the General shifts in and out of consciousness and has an epiphany as he tries to ignore the processing of the graduates. Right before his death on the stage, he is reminded of a nightmarish memory. The students marching to receive their diplomas conjures memories of African American marching in slavery. Here and now he must remember to the fact that he was an active member of the military in the Civil War, fighting against abolition.

> He turned around and began to run as fast as he could but he found himself running toward the words. He was running into a regular volley of them and meeting them with quick curses. As the music swelled toward him, the entire past opened up on him out of nowhere and he felt his body riddled in a hundred places with sharp stabs of pain and he fell down, returning a curse for every hit. He saw his wife's narrow face looking at him critically through her round gold-rimmed glasses; he saw one of his squinting bald-headed sons; and his mother ran toward him with an anxious look; then a succession of places— Chickamauga, Shiloh, Marthasville —rushed at him as if the past were the only future now and he had to endure it. Then suddenly he saw that the black procession was almost on him. He recognized it, for it had been dogging all his days. He made such a desperate effort to see over it and find out what comes after the past that his hand clenched the sword until the blade touched bone. (143)

These all happen immediately before his death, connect his moment of grace with this moment of recognition. The presence of the long-dead wife, mother, and sons just reassures the reader that this is the moment that we were searching for in O'Connor's works. As mentioned before, in many of the stories, the moment of grace coincides with the act of violence; however, in this particular short story it is not true, grace is offered through a completely non-violent way.

Thus we have seen that in all types of truncated Southern families that O'Connor wrote about -- mothers, sons, and grandfathers trying to relate to their children -- problems of communication exist. Intersubjectivity can help us better understand these familial relationships, the cornerstone, at least to many of the characters, of Southern identity and society.

6. Conclusions

Through the close reading of O'Connor's short stories from the point of view of intersubjectivity theory, I can conclude the following.

It is nearly impossible to find family relationships where family members share each other's lifeworlds, by the Husserlian or Habermasian definition of the term. This is an important reason why communicative actions between family members become defective. Intersubjective communicative actions are rare, even non-existent in several texts. Quite often characters scarcely communicate with each other, and obviously this way intersubjectivity cannot be reached. In other cases characters make efforts to communicate, but never reach mutuality.

O'Connor offers generational differences between mother and child as the primary reason for their communicative failure. These generational differences are often presented as the divide between the "Old South" and the "New South," triggering many conflicts between characters. Yet generational difference in itself does not always explain these conflicts. While conflicts between parents and children might be triggered by a generation gap, there is usually an underlying personal aspect to their differences also.

Based on my close reading of the ten short stories, I argue that leaving the South or the home of a given character always results in lifeworld trepidation. The sense of intersubjective home is strongly connected to the Southern environment. At the same time, the Southern characters try to reach intersubjective rapport, especially with people who are also from the South.

Embodiment can be traced in different form, of which renaming oneself appears more often. Renaming is used as the most powerful tool of embodiment in these stories.

Characters often rely on the perlocutionary force of their speech acts in order to persuade other characters into actions that they otherwise might not perform. These speech

acts do not always bring about the intended results. Just like in the case intersubjective communicative situations, speech acts can fail, as we could see through several examples.

While bringing the idea of intersubjectivity theory into focus with regard to O'Connor's fiction, I have tried to demonstrate that even though Flannery O'Connor's works are usually understood as either Southern or Catholic, there are interpretations of her works that put focus on neither of these aspects. I accept and agree that those readings are valid, but I also believe that Flannery O'Connor has a distinct place within the American literary canon based on her presentation of psychological relationships between family members. This dissertation is my effort to present her as an author who is extremely sensitive to complex family problems and dysfunctional family communication.

Through my analysis I examined how interesting and fruitful it is to analyze family relationships based on the gender of the characters, arranging my chapters accordingly. At the same time, I have not devoted much direct academic analysis to gender issues. I believe that a gender analysis of the relationships in O'Connor stories would be highly valuable; however, my focus in this dissertation was on communication and reaching intersubjectivity. A gender study approach to O'Connor's fiction should be a topic of a different work, speaking to a large body of theoretical literature. Further gender analysis would be both relevant and invaluable to deepening our understanding of O'Connor and further research in this area would produce significant insights.

There are several additional directions inquiry can pursue building on my findings. O'Connor scholars are very interested in the parallels between her own life and her characters'; many wonder just how autobiographical O'Connor's works were. Author-character intersubjectivity theories could be fruitfully applied to this question, but such research belongs in a different study, with different research questions and methodological approaches to authorship.

Another direction this dissertation might proceed would be to focus additional attention on O'Connor's Southern background. While I do not deny that her Southern heritage is of key importance and I can agree with interpretations that emphasize Southern gothic elements of her writings, in this work I tried to focus on the more universal aspects of O'Connor's stories. It is undeniable that the narratives included in this work are often considered Southern gothic, but I believe that approaching these stories from that point of view requires a different methodology and research. While much research has already been conducted on this topic, there are still opportunities to extend research in this direction.

The short stories analyzed in this dissertation all contain truncated families; however, I do not discuss all of O'Connor short stories with truncated families. Among the ones omitted here, "The Lame Shall Enter First" and "A View of the Woods" could easily fit the pattern that I presented in my work. I believe, nevertheless, that with the ten narratives examined here I was able to give the different relationship patterns more or less the same emphasis, and some of the selected stories were diverse enough to present different intersubjectivity-related theories in a concise way.

I hope this dissertation serves a useful purpose in pursuing some possible approaches for further study listed above. Intersubjectivity and speech act theory allowed me to approach O'Connor's stories from a point of view that was the most relevant for me. While accepting the significance of other approaches, I firmly believe that in this dissertation I provided new interpretations of the author's narratives and also pointed out interdisciplinary connections between theories. Last but not least, my work presented in this dissertation aimed at revealing some exciting aspects of human nature and relationships that we encounter day by day, with or without knowing their importance or significance.

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