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WOLFGANG KAYSER AND MIKHAIL BAKHTIN'S TYPOLOGY OF THE GROTESQUE: FLANNERY O'CONNOR'S SELECTED SHORT FICTION

MASTER THESIS

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WOLFGANG KAYSER VE MIKHAIL BAKHTIN'İN GROTESK TİPLEMELERİ: FLANNERY O'CONNOR'IN SEÇİLMİŞ ÖYKÜLERİ

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ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Wolfgang Kayser ve Mikhail Bakhtin'in Grotesk Tiplemeleri: Flannery O'Connor'ın Seçilmiş Öyküleri

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Bu tez, Amerikan Güney gotik edebiyatının gelişimini ve bu edebiyat türünün temel özelliği olarak grotesk karakter sınıflandırmasını Flannery O'Connor'ın seçilmiş kısa öykülerindeki karakterler aracılığıyla Wolfgang Kayser'in sınıflandırması ve Mikhail Bakhtin'in teorisini temel alarak çözümlemeyi hedeflemektedir. Amerikan Güney gotiği 19. yüzyılda İç Savaş (1861-65) sonrasında Amerikan gotiğinin alt türü olarak gelişmiştir ve bu türe gösterilen rağbetin artması O'Connor'ın da eserlerini yayımladığı 20. yüzyıla denk gelmektedir. Amerikan Güney gotik yazarları kölelik damgası, ırk ayrımcılığı ve sınıfsal farklılıklar gibi toplumda var olan sorunlar üzerinde durmaktadırlar. Aynı zamanda Güneyin tarihi ve kültürüne birçok gönderme yapmaktadırlar. O'Connor bu alt türün önde gelen isimlerinden biri olarak kabul edilir. Amerikan Güney gotiğinin en önemli örneklerinden olan eserlerinde toplumun kusurlarını ortaya çıkarmak için grotesk temasını işlemektedir. Kayser'in *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* (1963) adlı kitabındaki sınıflandırma temel alınarak, O'Connor'ın kısa öykülerinde üç çeşit grotesk karakter belirlenmiştir. Bunlar; görünüşü grotesk olan karakterler, dünya anlayışları kusurlu olan entelektüeller ve şiddete meyilli ve iyiliğe inanmayan şeytani karakterlerdir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Amerikan Güney gotiği, grotesk, Flannery O'Connor, Wolfgang Kayser, Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*.

ABSTRACT

MASTER THESIS

Wolfgang Kayser and Mikhail Bakhtin's Typology of the Grotesque: Flannery O'Connor's Selected Short Fiction

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This thesis aims to analyze the development of American Southern gothic literature and the grotesque characterization as its essential feature through the characters in Flannery O'Connor's selected short fiction based on Wolfgang Kayser's classification and Mikhail Bakhtin's theory. American Southern gothic flourished as a subgenre of American gothic following the Civil War (1861-65) in the 19th century, and its increasing popularity coincides with the 20th century when O'Connor published her works. American Southern gothic writers dwell on the inherent problems of the society such as the stigma of slavery, racial discrimination, and class distinctions. They also make a number of references to Southern history and culture. O'Connor is regarded as one of the leading figures of this subgenre. In her fiction, which is the quintessence of American Southern gothic, she deals with the grotesque theme in order to expose the shortcomings of the society. Three categories of grotesque characters have been identified in her short stories on the basis of Wolfgang Kayser's classification in his *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* (1963). These categories are the characters whose appearance is grotesque, the intellectuals with their flawed perception of the world, and the demonic characters with a tendency to violence and cynicism.

Keywords: American Southern gothic, the grotesque, Flannery O'Connor, Wolfgang Kayser, Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Grotesque in Art and Literature.*

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis aims to analyze the grotesque characterization in the Southern gothic fiction of Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964), whose short fiction is a quintessence of that tradition in the 20th century, through the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) and Wolfgang Kayser (1906-1960). Kayser has introduced three different types of grotesque characters in E. T. A. Hoffman's (1776-1822) works. The first type is the characters with grotesque appearance and movements. The second type is the eccentric artists with bizarre appearance, physiognomy, and movements. The third type includes the demonic characters with grotesque demeanour (Kayser, 1963: 105-106). On the basis of Kayser's classification, three categories of grotesque characters are defined in O'Connor's short stories; the characters whose physique are grotesque, the intellectuals with their flawed understanding of the world, and the demonic characters with a tendency to violence and cynicism.

The reason for the importance of the South in American gothic writing depends on the region's painful history and Southerners' specific identity. Their point of view is mostly marked with pessimism, and this is basically related to their defeat in the Civil War (1861-65), which humbled their assumption of superiority, and their desperate attachment to the past in the modern age. Before the Civil War, they appeared to be rich, strong, noble, and confident, yet they lost their confidence as a result of the trauma they had following the war. They developed a negative approach to the North, technology, and modernity. Even after 100 years following the war, they could not get over the scars of the past and withdrew to their shell, making themselves grotesque in the eyes of the North. As a Southerner, O'Connor reflects the weaknesses and defections of the South in her writing through the use of grotesque characterization.

To provide a clear understanding of the grotesque, the theory of Bakhtin and O'Connor's own understanding of the term have been examined in addition to a detailed discussion of Kayser's theory. For Kayser, the most distinctive and recurrent elements of the grotesque are the monsters, animals, plant world, tools, the coalescence of these nonhuman elements with the human elements, madness, and alienation from the self and everything that is familiar formerly, which is a reminder of Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) theory on *the uncanny*. He emphasizes the importance of reception in determining what is grotesque (Kayser, 1963: 181). O'Connor also suggests that the grotesque

process is an outcome of individual perceptions, which is the reason why the fiction of the South is regarded as grotesque by the Northern readers (O'Connor: 1984: 40). While Kayser perceives something negative in the grotesque, Bakthtin points out that it is the inseperable part of the folk culture. He describes the grotesque as "the material bodily principle," and associates it with "fertility" and "abundance" (Bakhtin, 1984: 18-19).

The study includes five parts. The first two parts provide the historical process of gothic fiction in the Unites States and the essential elements in Southern gothic fiction. The remaining parts deal with the three types of grotesque characters in O'Connor's fiction as mentioned above.

In Part I, the origins of the gothic in Europe is studied in addition to some key concepts: the Sublime, *the uncanny*, and the grotesque. The emergence of the genre in New England pioneered by Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810), who has broadened horizons for many following literary figures, is investigated together with the common themes for American writers. Gothic novels and stories are recognized as the first truly American works in the strict sense. The convenience of the United States for the development of this genre is associated with several factors; Puritan outlook on life, the interaction with the frontier, grievous witch hunts and the stigma of slavery.

In Part II, the analysis of the historical background of Southern United States and the development of Southern gothic fiction in this context is provided, and the interconnection of the gothic, grotesque, violence, and race issues in the South is revealed. After the detailed explication of Kayser and Bakhtin's theories on the grotesque, through their works *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* (1963) and *Rabelais and His World* (1965) respectively, O'Connor's place in Southern gothic tradition is clarified, and her understanding of the grotesque is elucidated based on her posthumous collection of articles and essays, *Mystery and Manners* (1969).

In Part III, the target is to disclose the physical grotesque qualities available in O'Connor's characterization throughout her short fiction. Four prominent characters are selected for this purpose; Parker in "Parker's Back" (1965), Lucynell Crater in "The Life You Save May Be Your Own" (1955), the hermaphrodite in "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" (1955), and Ruby in "A Stroke of Good Fortune" (1955). O'Connor's purpose in bringing the physical deformation into the forefront is to expose the class and gender defects, social imperfection, and racism inherent in the Southern society.

In Part IV, the focus is on the intellectuals in O'Connor's stories such as Thomas, in "The Comforts of Home" (1965), Joy/Hulga in "Good Country People" (1955), Asbury "The Enduring Chill" (1965), and Julian in "Everything That Rises Must Converge" (1965). The main reason why they are portrayed as grotesque is that they all have family issues; the absence of father figure and a strong attachment to their mothers, which is responsible for their failure in developing a healthy personality. The intellectuality is only a cover for these dysfunctional family bonds. These intellectuals have a common personality trait which leads to their downfall. The most commonly held flaw in their personality is pride. They adopt a rather supercilious manner towards the others. Furthermore, they are not open to any change and do not feel safe at their houses. However, their conceit is undermined in different ways. While Thomas and Joy head for the catastrophe with the introduction of an evil outsider, Asbury and Julian victimize themselves as consequence of the antagonism they feel towards their mothers.

Part V centres upon O'Connor's demonic characters. There are two subparts in this section. The first subpart is on the wicked and cynical characters. They are characterized as being corrupted and impenitent, and the evil influence of their moral degeneration induces their alienation and exclusion from the society. They resort to violence as atonement for their marginalization, and some of them deny the existence of goodness: Sarah Ham in "The Comforts of Home" (1965), Rufus Johnson in "The Lame Shall Enter First" (1965), Manley Pointer in "Good Country People" (1955), Misfit in "A Goodman is Hard to Find" (1955), three boys in "A Circle in the Fire" (1955), grandfather Fortune in "A View of the Woods" (1957), and Singleton in "The Partridge Festival" (1961). In the second subpart the grotesque belief system of the South and the characters who have internalized it are evaluated. These characters have been divided into two categories. The first category includes characters that follow grotesque religious rituals or whose hypocrisy is exposed, such as Mrs. May and Mrs. Greenleaf in "Greenleaf" (1965), Mrs. Turpin in "Revelation" (1965), and Mrs. Shortley in "The Displaced Person" (1955). The second category includes the ones who have internalized racism in the Southern society, such as Mrs. McIntyre in "The Displaced Person" (1955), Mr. Head in "The Artificial Nigger" (1955), and Tanner in "Judgement Day" (1965).

PART I

1. THE ORIGINS OF GOTHIC FICTION

1.1. What is *Gothic*?

A clear understanding of what *gothic* means underlies the analysis of gothic fiction and discussion of its key features. The original meaning of the term is something that is connected with the Goths, who were the Germanic people of the Middle Ages. As the time progressed, its meaning underwent a semantic extension to define almost all the circumstances and things belonging to the Middle Ages, particularly as a reference for the structures built by the Goths and other people in that period. Gothic design of buildings was principally recognized for its distinguishing characteristics, such as pointed arches, incorporated in the architecture of cathedrals, castles and churches.

Towards the end of the 18th century, the emergence of Romanticism brought about a number of variations in the themes and subjects appealing to the authors and poets of the time. In this unprecedented literary movement, a special emphasis was laid on the feelings, imagination, and the psyche rather than reason and intellect. This movement, however, did not consist of a homogeneous group of literary figures that were all of the same type. A sub-group of writers diverged from the distinguishing features of Romanticism and favoured much darker concerns, mostly related to inner fears of human beings and death, and produced literary works, more specifically poems and novels, which would establish the prevalent composition of the new genre. At the beginning, medieval times and castles comprised the setting of these novels, thus leading all the works belonging to that sub-group of writers to be called as Gothic. Prior knowledge of some concepts closely related to the Gothic will prove proper in the examination of its historical background.

1.2. Some Key Concepts of the Gothic

1.2.1. The *Sublime*

One of the concepts that are closely associated with the Gothic is the Sublime, first mentioned in the treatise called *On The Sublime* by a Greek author, Longinus. (213?-273?) According to Longinus ". . . the Sublime consists in a consummate excellence and distinction of language, and that this alone gave to the greatest poets and

prose writers their pre-eminence and clothed them with immortal fame" (Longinus, 1995: 163). He ascertains five different origins for the Sublime which are "the power of grand conceptions," "the inspiration of vehement emotion," "the proper construction of figures," "figures of thought and figures of speech," and "nobility of language" (Longinus, 1995: 181). He ends his treatise by stating his dissatisfaction with the scarcity of literary works inspiring sublimity in his age, comparing them with previous works.

Diverse definitions of the Sublime have been made over the centuries, but the one having left its mark on the Gothic is Edmund Burke's (1729-97) approach to the term in his work *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). His way of dealing with the Sublime is essentially different from that of Longinus: "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime;* that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" (Burke, 1990: 36). Burke's treatment of the Sublime reverses the grasp of beauty and art. The emotions such as dread and horror, appearing to be negative and distant from the aesthetic, can form paths to the Sublime for him. He defines the foremost effect of the Sublime as "astonishment," which is superior to other effects such as "admiration," "reverence" and "respect" (Burke, 1990: 53). Moreover, he asserts that proportion and perfection are not the sources of beauty, thus asymmetry is not to be regarded as ugly. On the contrary, things that are not perfect or symmetrical can arouse love and affection. Putting forward these ideas, Burke establishes a strong connection between what causes terror and pain and what is the Sublime. In this way, his understanding of this term has a direct bearing on the subject and elements of gothic fiction which arouses the feeling of fear not expressed openly that is suspense; hence it calls forth the Sublime.

1.2.2. Freudian Concept of the *Uncanny*

Another concept that affects the most central and significant aspects of the Gothic is the uncanny. This concept had been discussed by Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and by Ernst Jentsch (1867-1919) before, but its sense in gothic context was propounded by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) in his essay "Das Unheimliche" ("The

Uncanny") in 1919. As Freud suggests, "the 'uncanny' is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" (2014). In other words, something well-known to the person from the past turns into a strange being, which is difficult to explain. He makes a linguistic analysis of the German word *unheimlich*, meaning the uncanny, and its opposite *heimlich*, meaning homely and familiar. He makes an inference that *heimlich* holds a meaning that overlaps with its opposite, so something which is known, familiar and homely can become unknown and uncanny. Freud discusses the elements of the uncanny in a short story "The Sandman" (1816) by E. T. A. Hoffmann (1776-1822). He reveals how castration anxiety as the fear of emasculation experienced by the male child undergoing Oedipal complex, which is once familiar to Nathaniel who is the main character of the story, remains hidden for years and then comes to surface in a different, unfamiliar form which is the fear of going blind (2014).

Such a state of estrangement from something once familiar is the primary motive behind the terror aroused by the Gothic. This concept takes a crucial place in the study of gothic fiction, since many gothic works depict the alienation of the characters from the things that seem very secure to them. The house, for example, is an important element of the Gothic in that as a familiar place where one feels confident and safe, it gets haunted and makes its inhabitants suffer. The residents are thus estranged from their home. In this way, the uncanny is an irrevocable strand of gothic exploration in literary works.

1.2.3. The *Grotesque*

The root of this term is *grotte,* which means 'caves' in Italian. The word *grotteschi* is derived to represent an ornamental technique mostly found in caves. The term is also used in art to define paintings which picture the intermingling of human, animal and vegetable forms. Its usage in literary context is rather dissimilar with its original meaning. *The grotesque*, mostly related to characterization in literary works, refers to unusual, strange, distorted, freakish, inharmonious and unbalanced. Most writers employ grotesque to create satirical effect. Grotesque situations and characters are particularly prevalent in gothic works, but gothic writers create freakish and idiosyncratic characters not to create comic effect but instil fright and disturbance. The monster created out of the dead people by a doctor in *Frankenstein; or, The Modern*

Prometheus (1818) by Mary Shelley (1797-1851) is a good example of the grotesque in that it arouses a feeling of disturbance in the readers which ultimately leads to a sense of horror.

1.3. The Origins of Gothic Fiction in England

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Europe witnessed the flowering of an influential philosophical movement, The Enlightenment, and its taking hold of European thinking and literature. The fundamental doctrine of Enlightenment was precisely based on the prominence of scientific truth and logic rather than religious beliefs and emotions: "The period was characterized by a profound faith in the powers of human reason and a devotion to clarity of thought, to harmony, proportion and balance" (Cuddon, 1998: 262). Most of the thinkers, writers and poets charmed by that philosophy were deeply committed to declaring the power of human logic as opposed to the dogmas and convictions that had been taken for granted for centuries and to the emotions that were not dependable. This era of reason corresponded with the Augustan Age (1689-1745) in Britain. In conjunction with the growth of Neoclassicism, the art and literature of ancient Greeks and Romans were highly appreciated and esteemed. During this period of literature, poets and authors avoided externalizing their personal standpoints in their works. Instead, their primary attempt was to appeal to common interest by utilizing the power of reason, which was a matter of the utmost importance. Poets preferred to write in a didactic style, designing their poems in a way to teach people. Poetic diction was much more ornamental and distant from subjectivity.

On the other hand, most literary figures in England began to question everything having been accepted without argument before: "Perhaps the most widely shared intellectual impulse of the age was a distrust of dogmatism. Nearly everybody blamed it for the civil strife through which the nation had recently passed. Opinions varied widely about which dogmatism was most dangerous. . ." (Greenblatt, 2006: 2061). In the second half of the 18th century, the values and literary standards having been adopted with the Enlightenment and Neoclassicism began to undergo major alterations. Ancient Greek and Roman literatures were not appealing any more. Emotions which had been suppressed by the poets and writers of the previous age rose to the surface. The ornamental language in literary works was no longer deemed pleasurable but artificial. It was a period of transition between the Enlightenment and Romanticism, which was

known as Pre-Romanticism. Pre-Romantic poets wrote despondent and gloomy poems which were mostly meditations on death. As a consequence of the themes they employed and their melancholic style, these poets were called Graveyard poets in England, and they acquired widespread reputation. These poets are considered to be forerunners of both Romantic and gothic writing.

Following the period of transition known as Pre-Romanticism, the glorification of reason and glossing over feelings brought about the birth of a new philosophical and artistic movement, Romanticism, as an answer or more appropriately as a reaction to Enlightenment during the last decades of the 18th century. Romanticism had a great influence on art, music and especially literature of Europe and induced the birth of a fresh literary trend. It dominated European literature for almost a century. Unlike the preceding literary outlook that had accentuated the power of human mind and depreciated feelings, Romanticism regarded emotions as the sole way of comprehending life. Imagination took up a considerable position in this era. The rising value of emotions and imagination eventuated in an upturn for the importance given to the individuals. The uniformity of the previous age gave place to individual differences. The social framework representing a constant circle of rationalism turned into an occasion with much personal diversity and individualism:

> *Romanticism, in contrast, stressed emotion, freedom, and imagination. Romantic artists prized the individual, individuality, and subjective experience; many were personally rebellious and sought out intense experiences. In contrast to Enlightenment thinkers, they considered intuition, emotion, and feelings better guides to truth-and to human happiness-than reason and logic (Coffin and Stacey, 2005: 721).*

Another remarkable qualification of Romantic era was the treatment of nature more seriously than before. Nature was considered as the single way of reaching wisdom. Poets observed nature with a different kind of attitude from the earlier literary movements. It was a source of knowledge to them where they could find the morality and holiness in the wilderness. They also sought inspiration in the woods and took refuge in nature: “For many European Romantic writers, the natural world is more than just a backdrop or setting for human activity. Rather, the representation of nature and

the exploration of the human relationship to nature permeates all aspects of literary art from genre and form to plot and character" (McKusick, 2005: 413). The most vigorous defenders of Romanticism were English Romantic poets such as William Wordsworth (1770-1850), Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), George Gordon Byron (1788-1824), and John Keats (1795-1821), who laid stress on sensibility and described nature with this concern in their minds.

The rise of gothic fiction in the last half of the 18th century coincides with the flourish of Romanticism. The points marking the beginning of both these movements are similar in that they both originated from a certain kind of variation from Enlightenment rationalism. As an outcome of sharing a rather strong involvement in emotions and appearing in the same period with Romanticism, the Gothic is considered as a sub-genre of Romanticism. However, the Gothic may be described better as a deflection of Romantic themes rather than their continuation. In addition, gothic works in general were not generally appreciated as notable works of literature having a striking effect on the literary atmosphere of that era. The main reason for this was the frequent use of supernatural in gothic works which causes a divergence from reality. The fact that early gothic writers employed common stereotypes, such as defenceless female suffering in the hands of a villain and waiting to be rescued by another man, also contributed to depreciation of their works.

1.3.1. Early Gothic Works of English Literature and Their Major Themes

Defining the characteristics of the following ones, the first gothic work, *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole (1717-1797), was published in 1764. This novel is viewed as the initial example of Gothic romance integrating the traditional story of love affairs with the supernatural and horror, and the themes Walpole employed have become the keystone of many subsequent works. To demonstrate the innovative contribution of Walpole, Fred Botting states: "Horace Walpole's novel, the first 'Gothic story', introduces many of the features that came to define a new genre of fiction, like the feudal historical and architectural setting, the deposed noble heir and the ghostly, supernatural machinations" (Botting, 2001: 4). It is a story of a lord living in a gruesome castle and living through some unusual events. The story is based on an old prophecy saying that the lord Manfred will lose his sovereignty over the castle. This prophecy haunts the story from the beginning. After the death of his son, he acts on the

fear of losing his rule and power. At the end of the story, Manfred accidentally kills his daughter, and Theodore, who is the rightful heir of the castle, reclaims what should have belonged to him.

This work serves as blend of the past and the present. The setting is a medieval castle and the main character is the inhabitant in it, but Walpole narrates his story with contemporary concerns such as the seizure of power without having right to do this and the righteousness of authority:

> *Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto negotiates a series of anti-Enlightenment themes in its construction of a debate concerning the relationship between the medieval and the modern. The medieval, associated with castles and malign aristocrats, becomes recast as symbolically representing some highly politicised issues of the 1760s. Anti-Enlightenment ruins and irrationality can ultimately be decoded to reveal some historically specific political, social, and economic anxieties (Smith, 2007: 18).*

With this novel, Walpole established a mysterious atmosphere with supernatural and incomprehensible happenings. He constituted the general framework of Gothic genre and started a tradition that would be followed, developed and modified by other authors in the future: "Whilst the novel illustrates some historically specific concerns relating to the aristocracy, it also introduces some formal elements which later Gothic writers would have to contend with, including images of religion, the family, and the particular representations of gender" (Smith, 2007: 23). It is possible to find the traces of his fiction in many American gothic works in the following years.

The setting for the Gothic continued to be aristocratic castles, feudal structures and strongholds with their hidden passages and obscure history. This type of setting became the juncture of terrifying events. An important work the storyline of which takes place in a medieval castle is *The Mysteries of Udolpho: A Romance* (1794) by Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823). The ill-willed protagonist of the story is Montoni, who strongly wishes to take possession of the inheritance that he is not entitled to. He harms the others out of his greed, and the location of this evil is the castle. Another similar set of surrounding is employed in an epistolary novel written much later than the first

gothic works, *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker (1847-1912). This novel presents the story of Count Dracula who is a vampire, and both master and slave of the night. His home and the places where he kept Jonathan Harker, the captive, is a castle.

Most of the early gothic works incorporate unusual themes such as the evil as the inevitable component of human life, the dangers of science, repressed fears and desires coming up to the surface with horror with a depressing atmosphere. The authors draw on the occurrences that cannot be explained by the laws of science to emphasize these themes. A good example for this kind of writing is *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) by Mary Shelley (1797-1851). It depicts the struggle of an ambitious doctor to create life. By combining the parts he collects, he creates a monster, which, at first, seems to be a success. However, in the course of the story, the monster kills the doctor's friend and family. The doctor also dies while searching for the monster. With the use of such supernatural events, Shelley raises a question directed towards the validity of science and its limits in human life.

Early gothic writers portray existence in a way that prevents people from attaching themselves to their so-called peaceful lives blindly and makes them realize the underlying melancholy and gloom. It produces paranoid responses in the readers. They reveal the obsession with the past and scrutinize the subconscious of society by means of the return of the repressed. Sanders argues that "Gothic fiction was, and is, essentially a reaction against comfort and security, against political stability and commercial progress. Above all, it resists the rule of reason" (Sanders, 1994: 341). The setting and character development of the early gothic works seem to conform to a basic and standard formula that is not complicated; however, the questions raised by them are more complex in that they are politically and socially subversive by casting doubt on all kinds of the established institutions. The uncertainty and suspicion surrounding the protagonist Manfred's right to rule the castle in Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* is actually a process of questioning the institution of aristocracy. Another instance of such a subversion of the institutions can be seen in *The Monk: A Romance* (1796) by Matthew Gregory Lewis (1775-1818). The main character of the novel is Ambrosio who is a devoted monk, but his gradually arising perversion causes him to commit a number of sins including adultery and murder. The plot of this novel turns out to be an implicit questioning of the religion as an institution and a way of subverting religious principles.

When gothic fiction was invented in the 18th century, it served as a tool for the consolidation of new way of thinking. To invigorate the modern, the writers of the period reflected the past with a kind of despondency and created an opposition between present and past. That is why, some early gothic writings include medieval environment as the location of the extraordinary and the evil: " 'Gothic' functions as the mirror of eighteenth century mores and values: a reconstruction of the past as the inverted, mirror image of the present, its darkness allows the reason and virtue of the present a brighter reflection" (Botting, 2001: 5). Some of the early gothic writers preferred to write about medieval castles being represented as the ground for supernatural and inexplicable happenings. In this way, the Gothic proves to be a method of reversing the past and presenting a darker and gloomy antecedent to the modern, which secures the position of new arguments against the outworn ideologies.

Some other gothic works of English Literature, which provided a basis for the upturn of the genre in literary terms, in the 18th and 19th centuries, are *The Old English Baron* (1778) by Clara Reeve (1729-1807), *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne: A Highland Story* (1789) by Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823), *The Fatal Revenge* (1807) and *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) by Charles Robert Maturin (1782-1824), *Vampyre* (1819) by John William Polidori (1795-1821), and *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) by James Hogg (1770-1835).

1.4. The Growth of the Gothic in New England: The Underlying Factors

After the establishment of the first colonies, it took many years for the Americans to form a national identity. They could not get over the influence of European literature for almost two centuries. The birth of early gothic works in the new continent occurred at the same time with the development of American national consciousness in the second half of the 18th century following the Declaration of Independence in 1776. The first-hand consequence of this was the aim to invent a national literature. In this respect, American gothic has a crucial function in the history of American literature. Gothic novels and stories may be recognized as some of the first truly American works in the strict sense; these works assign American gothic writers a more distinctive role as the first bearers of national literary trends, which is different from the role of the gothic in Europe where early gothic works are mostly accepted as inferior works. Allan Lloyd Smith draws an uninterrupted line between gothic tradition

and literature in New England: “American fiction began in the Gothic mode, because the first substantial American efforts in fiction coincided with the great period of British and European gothic” (Smith, 2009: 267).

Even though the birth of the Gothic in Europe preceded its emergence in New England, American gothic cannot be described as a plain follow-up of European gothic literature; they had certain differences. There were several reasons for the difference between the European gothic and the American gothic: aristocracy was an established institution in Europe and this affected the subject and setting of European gothic. However, in America there were no aristocratic families. The noble people living in America considered themselves as aristocrats, but the social structure could not become aristocratic in its fullest sense**.** The anxiety for survival in the strange soils was also a point forming a novel path of development for American gothic. The way of thinking and belief system were affected by survival instincts and philosophical movements of the century such as Romanticism, Transcendentalism and Naturalism, which contributed to gothic awareness. This indicates an obvious distinction in the perception of gothic works for Europe and America, which also shows that America was an appropriate place for the flowering of them.

Early gothic works were mostly produced in the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century. Nevertheless, the arrival of the genre in New England might be traced back to much earlier times. From the discovery of the new continent onwards, most pieces of writing such as sermons by the preachers, descriptions by the early settlers and works of fiction included some elements peculiar to gothic fiction. This situation developed from the fear of not belonging to the new places. For instance, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (1741) is a well-known sermon by Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) which contains dark imagery and horrifying themes in the sense that he depicts the wrath and vengeance of God, and Hell as a place of divine punishment to invoke horror for the people. Even though no work was called gothic in those years, many included themes and subjects of gothic tradition. The presence of such themes and subjects lead many critics to direct their attention towards those years to gain a deeper insight into the prospering gothic fiction of the 19th century. To comprehend the limits and all aspects of Early American gothic and to understand why America was an appropriate place for the flowering of the genre, it is a prerequisite to analyze the early years of American society and the first settlements, their way of life

and thinking and their connection with the new land. The most straightforward way to hold such an enquiry is to dwell upon, first, Puritan outlook on life which forms the foundation of American society and constitutes the basis of American thinking; second, the interrelation with the frontier which draws the line between the real and what is known to be gothic; third, the excruciating social events such as Salem trials and witch hunts which have left a negative mark in the minds of Americans and become a constant and indispensable reference point for a number of writers and critics in the following years; and fourth, the stigma of slavery in the national consciousness as the source of a strong feeling of guilt due to the sins committed by the ancestors.

In the first quarter of the 17th century, a vast number of Europeans migrated from Europe to New England. Among them were Pilgrims and Puritans who were the residents of the early settlements. Pilgrims and Puritans were Protestant Christians who were unhappy with the religious affairs and church rituals in Europe. They assented to the purity of the new land and relocated there. Pilgrims were a more rigid group and were called Separatists in Europe. They thought English Church was beyond reformation. Their migration into America was difficult and full of perils. Many members of their society died on the way before reaching the new continent. The others were not prepared enough to survive; they did not have enough supplies and weapons. The harsh conditions and the native tribes' attacks laid many obstacles on them. On the contrary, with their higher number and supplies Puritans were more prepared to deal with the severe conditions, so they had a bigger influence on the newly forming society than the Pilgrims. They were not happy with the English Church either, but they believed it was improvable. Puritans established a firm community, developing the basis of American society. They prescribed a limited life to people; no laughter, no entertainment, no ornament, only working and praying. So, people's emotional life and emotional freedom were always restricted and suppressed; and this suppression comes to surface in the posterior generations.

As Protestant Christians, the worldview of Puritans was based on the doctrines of Martin Luther (1483-1546) and John Calvin (1509-1564). Luther was a German monk and the father of Protestant Reformation (1517-1648) who criticized Roman Catholic Church and had faith in the Bible as the primary source of religious beliefs, thus removing all the mediators between God and people. Calvin was a follower of Martin's teaching as a French theologian during the Protestant Reformation. He held a

strong belief in sinfulness of human beings stemming from the Original Sin of Adam and Eve. According to him, only the elected few for whom Jesus died would reach salvation, and others would be punished in the Hell. Calvinist theology stressing the human inclination towards sin and evil became the determining factor of attitude towards religion and social life in the new soils.

As followers of Protestant Christianity and Calvin's views, Puritans had a strong belief in the wickedness of human nature caused by the Original Sin. They reckoned the Fall as the bringer of an inevitable sinfulness for the humanity which was impossible to avoid. For them, sinfulness was embedded in the hearts of all men and nothing could they do to change their fate if they were destined to end up in Hell; so the change of destiny was nearly impossible to achieve. This conviction of humans' having a wicked nature and belief in predestination were the early traces of gothic awareness in New England. As it is known, the Gothic involves a certain faith in the existence of evil haunting people's lives and the reversal of the ideas such as salvation and advancement. In this way, Puritan attitude to life brings a religious foundation for gothic position. This connection of gothic and Puritan outlooks indicates the convenience of American society for the flourish of the Gothic.

Not only was American society convenient for the Gothic to prosper, but also the lands in which they formed their civilization were fruitful for that movement. The discovery of the new continent, America, dates back to the 15th century and most of the early settlers arrived in the 16th and 17th centuries. Before that time, continental America had remained completely untouched by the outsiders with a quite undisturbed nature full of many unknown and assorted things such as the Indians, untouched woods and uncultivated nature. The term, frontier, came on the stage when the first settlers built their towns on the coasts of Atlantic Ocean. The frontier was the line between their towns and what is called to be 'the wilderness.' With their residential areas expanding, this line started to move westwards, but there was always a boundary marking their so-called civilized towns and separating it from nature with all the wildlings growing in it and Indians who were perceived as savages.

The frontier was a dividing line indicating the edges of places suitable for living in. It carried a cultural meaning as well. Europeans were newcomers and strangers in the land with their developed and organized social structure and alleged superiority. The

antithesis of their way of life was the unspoiled nature and countryside. Fredrick Jackson Turner explains the importance of the frontier in American history as such:

> *American social development has been continually beginning over again on the frontier. This perennial rebirth, this fluidity of American life, this expansion westward with its new opportunities, its continuous touch with the simplicity of primitive society, furnish the forces dominating American character. The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic Coast, it is the Great West. Even the slavery struggle, which is made so exclusive an object of attention by writers like Professor von Holst, occupies its important place in American history because of its relation to westward expansion (2014).*

The historical significance of the frontier brought about a never-ending interest into the unknown wilderness by the literary figures as well. In their Introduction to *Frontier Gothic: Terror and Wonder at the Frontier in American Literature* (1993), Mogen, Sanders and Karpinski state:

> *In forging a native style, nineteenth century American writers were responding to European literary influences, but many of them also grappled with the most fundamental conflict shaping American experience, the battle between civilization and nature, between the mental landscape of European consciousness and the physical and physical landscape of the New World (Mogen, 1993: 14-15).*

Europeans who have arrived on the new continent started to build an interaction with the frontier. This interaction proved itself effective in changing both their lives and nature: “So he little by little transforms the wilderness, and is himself transformed into a new product, the American” (Rudolph, 1962: 78). As a consequence of the opposition between civilised outsiders and intact nature, the frontier came to a state of shaping the lifestyle, philosophy and literature of the newly forming society in New England.

The foremost effect of the frontier was the terror and horror it bore and it projected onto the society. Wild nature was acknowledged as the home of all kinds of

evil and sins and people grew fright against the woods and all of its components beginning from the establishment of Puritan colonies: "The origin of contemporary American versions of the gothic wilderness is the Puritan's initial reaction to the New World, the mingled apprehension and aspiration which have defined the characteristic tone of the frontier mythology ever since" (Mogen, 1993: 94). In many literary works belonging to the early years of American society, people who established a strong connection with nature were thought to be the servants of evil and morally bad deeds.

The clash against the Native Americans also became an important factor in forming the consolidation of European immigrants. These indigenous people with their unique lifestyle and culture had lived in those lands for many years before the arrival of Europeans, which changed their lives irrecoverably. The war between the natives and newcomers and their "eccentric" way of life launched a process of othering. With this othering process, which included the approach towards the natives as if they were evil and dangerous, Puritan society has justified their attempts to colonize America. The marginalized natives were regarded as an integral part of the frontier, thus engaging the imagination of the new settlers, and turned into a connotation of the horror the woods bore.

The woods and immense nature appealed to many literary figures in New England who sensed gothic atmosphere in the land. Even the first accounts of the Pilgrims and Puritans include a sinister way of dealing with the frontier. William Bradford (1590-1657), one of the early settlers in New England as a member of the Pilgrims, wrote his impressions of the first time when he set foot on the continent. He became aware of the dismay and eerie atmosphere. He reports his views in *Of Plymouth Plantation* (1630-1651): "Besides, what could they see but a hideous and desolate wilderness, full of wild beasts and wild men-and what multitudes there might be of them they knew not" (Bradford, 2003: 78). He sensed something frightening; that unknown territory was likely to be the shelter of many hostile creatures. Such a potential menace results in the migrants to develop a hesitant attitude towards nature: "Neither could they, as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah[1] to view from this wilderness a more goodly country to feed their hopes. . ." (Bradford, 2003: 78). They despaired of

[1] Mountain from which Moses saw the Promised Land (Deuteronomy The Bible 34, 1-4).

finding a completely safe way to inhabit New England. Charles L. Crow interprets the essence of this work and shows its relation with the Gothic:

> *In Of Plymouth Plantation we see an early representation of ideas that are central to American literature and American Gothic. The concept of wilderness is among the most complex in the national culture, and retains, even to the present, traces of the demonology we see in Bradford, though the landscape has been largely conquered and tamed. As a repository of our fears, wilderness is still gothic territory (Crow, 2009: 19).*

Another account on the frontier and the frightening experiences associated with it is *Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (1624) by Captain John Smith (1580-1631). Smith was one of the migrant settlers who travelled to New England. He wrote this book to convey his adventures and observations. In Chapter 2, he tells the story of his captivity by the Indians who were regarded as the children of the devil. The descriptions of the Indians pervading through his narration show his judgement about the unknown atmosphere of the frontier and its residents:

> *Six or seven weeks those barbarians kept him prisoner, many strange triumphs and conjurations they made of him, yet he so demeaned*[2] *himself amongst them, as he not only diverted them from surprising the fort, but procured his own liberty, and got himself and his company such estimation amongst them, that those savages admired him more than their own Quiyoughkasoucks (Smith, 2003: 48).*

This narration in the third person singular is a sign of Smith's and the Europeans' perception of themselves as the center of admiration and of Indians, so-called savages, as the others.

To grasp the development of American gothic fiction, it is also essential to make a reference to the Salem witch trials which took place in 1692-93. These trials include a series of hearings in which many people were charged with involving in witchcraft and

[2] Behaved.

put to death in the end. The trials and the related anxiety about witchcraft planted the seeds of fear, which is the indispensable element of the Gothic, in the newly formed society and inspired many American literary figures to write about Salem. They were engraved in their subconscious and became a part of their works: “Salem witch trials of 1692 have become a prominent feature of the American cultural consciousness” (Ray, 2003: 32). The role of Salem witch trials in American gothic fiction and their status affected the course of American literature by presenting the inner fears of the new residents in New England.

The background of the witch trials is still under discussion and no single reason is enough to explain what happened before those trials: “In recent years, scholars have variously emphasized intra-community group conflict, religious tension, demographic competition, failures of leadership, gender concerns, psychological relationships, and frontier Indian clashes as central to the Salem outbreak” (Latner, 2008: 137). The potential reasons attributed to the sudden start of witch hunts are mostly grounded on the social and economic conditions at that time. Poor living conditions combined with the big number of diseases threatening the newly forming society and the conflict with the wilderness and Native Americans were sources of fear for its members. There was also an ongoing contention among the residents of Salem over the use of its ports, which increased the tension in the society. Furthermore, Puritan mind, which saw women as the temptress of evil deeds and source of wickedness, and the pressure printed by their belief system, which may have led people to wonder about the sin, bodily pleasures and the hidden in general including the interest in occult, incited the violence to come about. However, the discussion to determine the essence of Salem trials and doubt surrounding the presence of the witches in Salem did not come to an end: “This was the most important outbreak of witchcraft in British America, and scholars ever since have been attempting to establish who to blame for it” (Detweiler, 1975: 597). This obscurity and mystery which is difficult to explain has been a source of interest among Americans and many writers have written about their reflections on those days of agony.

Apart from the lingering legacy of witch trials, as an established institution of American society and legal system until the outbreak of the Civil War (1861-1865), slavery has always stayed in the memory of the country, too. It constituted the main reason behind the clash between the North, which abolished slavery, and the South,

whose aristocratic system was based on the employment of slaves. Even its abolition following the Civil War could not end the unrest in the society in that a shocking amount of racism pervaded the post-war period for decades. In this way, slavery and racism became inseparable parts of American gothic fiction, which is nourished by the repressed emotions and subconscious mind. The sense of repressed guilt, fear of slave rebellion and miscegenation, and racial hypocrisy became important in the development of gothic works and also played a fundamental role in the formation of Southern gothic movement.

1.4.1. The Birth of Transcendentalism in New England

The 19th century witnessed the flowering of a new philosophical approach to life in New England. Consciousness of nationality and increasing value of the individual gained more significance. New kinds of thought started to be formed among the thinkers and writers of this period. Romanticism held the strongest influence on their thoughts and views. As a consequence, in the first half of the 19th century, there came a new philosophical movement, which is called Transcendentalism. The importance of Transcendentalism for this context stems from its popularity in the period in which some influential American gothic writers flourished, and its principles which pave the way for gothic awareness by causing a reaction for American gothic writers, because they were in opposition to American gothic fiction.

Transcendentalism was an extension of European Romanticism in New England, but they had certain differences. First, Transcendentalism was an extreme form of Romanticism with regard to its influence. While Romanticism left its mark on both the philosophy and literature of the century, Transcendentalism remained mostly as a philosophical movement. Second, the religious views of Romantic and Transcendentalist thinkers varied to a great extent. The religious judgement of Transcendentalists was affected by mainly three philosophies: The main theology influencing the formation of Transcendentalism was Unitarianism which was the overwhelming religion of the 19th century, stressing the unity and oneness of God and denying the idea of original sin and predestination. Transcendental thinkers were also affected by Pantheism which is the belief that God and universe are the same entity. With the impact of these two theologies, religion came to the forefront for them. They felt certain about the omnipresence of God and began to reject the idea of innate

malignity of human beings. However, for Romantic thinkers religion was an individual issue. Lastly, they were inspired by German idealism which was a philosophical movement prevalent in Germany from 1780s to 1840s, stressing the discrepancy between things and appearances. An important representative of this philosophy, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), asserted that human beings are only capable of comprehending the appearance, not the things themselves, which became the fundamental motivation behind Transcendentalists' exertions of exceeding the physical worlds to understand the essence of the existence.

Until the 19th century, American thinking and literature stayed under the influence of Europe. However, the emergence of national consciousness in that century brought about the will to get over that influence. This was also the desire of Transcendentalist thinkers, who emphasized the significance of developing indigenous thinking and literature.

The prime concern of Transcendentalist thinkers is emotions and feelings. Spiritual side of the people is of capital importance. The primary emphasis of Transcendentalism is stated by Francis Bowen in the article "Emerson's Nature": "In its essential features, it is a revival of the old Platonic school. It rejects the aid of observation, and will not trust to experiment" (Bowen, 1950: 174). Reason is no longer dependable, since it is considerably limited. There is only one way to access knowledge and it passes through feelings, perceptions and intuition. Transcendentalism has an important principle; "matter was the mere external manifestation of spirit" (Levin, 1958: 14). Concrete things and objects are understood as the reflections of inner thoughts and feelings. Transcendentalism includes a powerful celebration of nature. A thinker or writer can find peace in nature and this solitude turns into a way to focus on one's intuition. Therefore, this period becomes the time when many thinkers are involved in an escape to the woods. The woods and the wild nature are the sole places of accessing one's soul and spirit, because there is an interconnection between nature, which is an integrated part of divine entity and soul. Unlike the early gothic writers, Transcendentalists perceived nature friendly and inspiring God's benevolence, which also shows the religious focus of its philosophy when it is compared to European Romanticism.

As the antithesis of gothic trend in the American literature at that time, Transcendentalism was popular among writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-

1882), Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862), Amos Bronson Alcott (1799-1888) and Margaret Fuller (1810-1850). They are the "children of the Puritan past who, having been emancipated by Unitarianism from New England's original Calvinism, found a new religious expression in forms derived from romantic literature and from the philosophical idealism of Germany" (Miller, 1957: ix). Although they were grown up in the Puritan tradition, they were aware of the philosophical and religious schools such as Unitarianism and German idealism. Most of the poets, authors and thinkers of the century were under the influence of this philosophy, either as supporters or opponents of its principles. They distrusted authority, preferred spontaneous forms and most importantly discussed about good, evil and human nature. Unlike Puritans, they believed that human nature is not completely evil or completely good. Emerson was the one to define many elements of transcendental philosophy and thus, he is regarded as the most influential of the transcendentalists. His philosophy contains many principles that are central to Transcendentalism. First, he is a believer of nature's spiritual quality. Second, he disregards the existence of evil in the world and believes that everybody is good in essence. Third, he is a strong supporter of individualism and self-confidence as ways to reach self-fulfilment.

Besides the influence of Emerson's philosophy, Thoreau was a prominent figure who contributed to transcendental philosophy with his essays and books as well. Living in the woods alone, he invigorated the transcendental doctrine of individualism and reflected upon the spiritual quality of nature. He was a rigorous opponent of American social institutions, particularly slavery, and Mexican-American War (1846-1848) conducted by American government. With his essay, "The Resistance to Civil Government (Civil Disobedience)" (1849), he set forward the idea that one should prioritise her/his conscious over the laws and do what is right no matter what the laws necessitate. In addition, his most famous work *Walden* (1854), in which he gives a description of his settlement on Walden Pond, is a strong celebration of individualism and simple way of life.

No matter how much Transcendentalism was promoted in New England, there were also many writers and thinkers opposing its ideals. The criticism and disapproval of Transcendentalism are based on a number of different factors: "transcendental impracticability in worldly matters, a blindness to sin and evil, hostility to the reform of social and political evils, 'a belief in perfectibility in this world,' a worship of self-

reliant spontaneity at the expense of the authority of tradition . . . " (Clark, 1966: 25). The period between 1830s and 1850s were the times in which Emerson and his principles predominated the way of thinking in New England. Those were also the times in which a more sinister movement, called 'Gothic', flourished as a reaction to Transcendentalism. The gothic literature of this era was shaped by a growing opposition to Transcendentalist principles. The prominent figures of gothic movement were all influenced by the forces causing bad things to happen and they felt certain that evil was an inseparable part of people's lives in contrast to the optimism of Transcendentalists. They recognized the wicked and unpleasant occurrences in the universe and the objective of their literature was to demonstrate people the malevolence of human beings and the universe. They undermined Emerson's faith in individualism and discerned the gruesome side of nature and reflected it in their writings.

1.4.2. The First American Gothic Writer: Charles Brockden Brown

The gothic flourished in America in the last half of the 18th century. American gothic was influenced by Romanticism in the larger sense. The first important writer producing works that are truly gothic in New England is Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810). Although the previous works contain the grains of gothic themes, in Brown's works they become the pervading mechanism controlling the function of the story:

> *For better or worse, then, Brown established in the American novel a tradition of dealing with the exaggerated and the grotesque, not as they are verifiable in any external landscape or sociological observation of manners and men, but as they correspond in quality to our deepest fears and guilts as projected in our dreams or lived through in "extreme situations." Realistic milieu and consistent character alike are dissolved in such projective fictions, giving way to the symbolic landscape and the symbolic action, which are the hallmarks of the mythopoeic novel. Simply to acknowledge the existence and importance of such a tradition is embarrassing to some readers; for it means, on the one hand, a questioning of the sufficiency realism, which justifies art by correlating it with science; and on the other, it suggests a disturbing relationship*

> *between our highest art and such lowbrow forms of horror pornography as the detective story, the pulp thriller, and the Superman comic book, all of which are also heirs of the gothic (Fiedler, 1966: 155-56).*

His fiction includes traditional gothic elements such as madness or repressed fright coming to surface and grotesque characters such as Francis Carwin in *Wieland: or, The Transformation: An American Tale* (1798) who can speak without moving his lips and make it look as if his voice belongs to another person.

Wieland is an important work and it is regarded as the first gothic work of American literature. It is the account of two siblings, Clara and Theodore Wieland, whose father has died mysteriously, according to what Clara believes, as a consequence of spontaneous combustion or divine interference. The course of events is shaped by the strange voices heard by the main characters, and murders committed by Theodore Wieland alleging that he has been ordered by God to kill people, even Clara. The voices they hear are understood to be uttered by Francis Carvin who is a ventriloquist. Theodore commits suicide towards the end of the story, because he feels a twinge of guilt. With this story, Brown introduces gothic genre to American Literature, with its grotesque characterization, supernatural hints, the question of distorted truth, ambiguity and terror and suspense, all of which would be adopted by the future gothic writers. Following the publication of his works, subsequent American writers exercised gothic themes and setting.

Some of the early American writers following the tradition are Washington Irving (1783-1859), James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), Herman Melville (1819-1891) and Henry Clay Lewis (1825-1850). With their works, they explore gothic themes such as the impossibility of salvation and progress, inevitability of committing sin, evil nature of humanity and the despair and loneliness of humans. They planted the seeds of the national literature of America. Leslie A. Fiedler reports transformation of the Gothic in its way from Europe to New England:

> *In the American Gothic, that is to say, the heathen, unredeemed wilderness and not the decaying monuments of a dying class, nature and not society becomes the symbol of evil. Similarly not the aristocrat but the Indian, not*

> *the dandified courtier but the savage colored man is postulated as the embodiment of villainy. Our novel of terror, that is to say (even before its founder has consciously shifted his political allegiances), is well on the way to becoming a Calvinist exposé of natural human corruption rather than an enlightened attack on a debased ruling class or entrenched superstition. The European identified blackness with the super-ego and was therefore revolutionary in its implications; the American gothic (at least as it followed the example Brown) identified evil with the id and was therefore conservative at its deepest level of implication, whatever the intent of its authors (Fiedler, 1982: 160-61).*

Such a change becomes the marking point of a completely novel way of treating gothic in America. The perpetual darkness is accompanied by new themes, characters and setting. The role of American gothic is indicated like this: "American Gothic presented a counter-narrative, undercutting the celebration of progress, inquiring about its costs and the omissions from the story. Gothic writers persisted in asking troubling questions about Americans and wilderness, and about Americans' belief in themselves" (Crow, 2009: 17). American gothic is formed to subvert the promises of freedom and independence; instead, it constructed a cynical and doubtful perspective to American life and future.

1.4.3. Prominent Themes and Elements in Early American Gothic Works

The setting for early American gothic writing exhibits a difference from that for European gothic works. As America lacked the aristocratic history haunting Europe, American gothic writers paid their attention to the houses of ordinary people rather than castles. They discerned the terror in haunted houses by scrutinizing the depth of the inhabitants' psychology and its reflection onto those houses. The description of the monstrous house in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) is a good example in terms of its contribution to the evil atmosphere and dark imagery of the story. The house and its residents become inseparable and they both end up with destruction at the end of the story. Apart from the extension of the inhabitants' psychology, the house also harbours their family history. As a prevalent theme in gothic works, the past guilt and crimes committed by their ancestors affect future generations, and their dwelling having

witnessed the family history and secrets becomes a curse for them. Hawthorne's novel *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) is a narration grounded on the unjust property inherited by the Pyncheons and its influence on the future progeny. Pyncheon house hosts many supernatural happenings and deaths which start with Colonel Pyncheon's usurping what does not belong to him.

As mentioned previously, gothic writers criticize and question the legitimacy of the established institutions and one of their method for this purpose is to reveal the hypocrisy of vigorous defenders of those institutions and belief systems. As did their European counterparts for Catholic religion, early American gothic writers criticized the bigotry and hypocrisy of first Puritan settlers in New England. This is a recurrent theme particularly in the works of Hawthorne. In "Young Goodman Brown" (1835), which narrates the story of a simple man who loses his purity and faith soon after he faces the duplicity of everyone he knows, including his wife, he draws attention to the hypocrisy of Puritans in that they seem very religious in their daily lives, but in their secret private lives, they commit sins and cherish the Devil. In another work, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), he gives the account of the Puritan mind and society and early settlements by displaying the alienation of Hester Prynne due to her committing adultery with the Reverend Dimmesdale and sheds light on Dimmesdale's hypocrisy who avoids confessing his sin, though he suffers from deep remorse but makes Hester suffer for it publicly.

Early American gothic writers exhibit a strong awareness of the evil in their works. They deal with themes such as loss of common virtues, human vice, perversion, and inclination to sin. These themes mark their fiction with a remarkable mood of pessimism and a gloomy atmosphere. In almost all of their works, a gothic villain marks the narration with his demonic qualities and immoral deeds. A good example of this is "William Wilson" (1839) by Poe, the main character of which is an antihero with no superior qualities or virtues. He is the personification of the demonic force and causes trouble for others; he gambles and drinks too much. He is a villain who is conscious of the darkness growing inside his heart. This consciousness turns into an unusual way to deal with the Gothic; he is a completely evil person and he does not feel any remorse for his misdeeds. The repressed evil and perversion is predominant in Poe's most other stories as well. The malignity of his characters is accompanied by the confessional tone of the narration. In the stories such as "The Black Cat" (1843), "The Tell-Tale Heart"

(1843) and “The Cask of Amontillado” (1846) the gothic villain is also the narrator who confesses what he has done and attempts to vindicate himself from being mad. However, their paranoia, mental deterioration and incompetence in reasonable judgement undermine their reliability, so they are considered as the mad narrators.

Death is also a recurrent theme that is perceived in many literary works. The writers combine their obsession with death with supernatural elements. It is specifically discernible in Poe’s writing. Many of his short stories and poems are haunted by the death of the beloved. In “The Raven” (1845), for example, the narrator grieves for death of his lost Lenore and his grief is mingled with a supernatural bird repeating the same word again and again. This word, “Nevermore”, haunts all the poem. In another story “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843), He blends the vile deed of the narrator who murders someone for no reason with a common theme of his fiction, the fear of being buried alive. Hearing the sound of the victim’s heart beating after having buried him under the floorboards following the murder is what makes him confess his crime. In “Rip Van Winkle” (1819), in which the protagonist drifts into a death-like sleep and does not wake up for at least twenty years during the period of American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), Irving provides a different perspective into American history by using this gothic device to stir a feeling of suspense and wonder.

Early American gothic writers focus on nature as a prevalent theme in their works which is mostly portrayed as enemy to man. It signifies something considerably different from what it means for Emerson and the other Transcendentalists. They do not view it as heavenly and sacred, but something sinister and dangerous, which is mostly the location of horror. The connotation of the woods for them is sinfulness, malignancy and mischief. People residing in the wild are blamed to be following the will of the Devil and the ones who are not accepted by the society are sent into the forest as a punishment. Indians in the American wilderness are seen as Pagan savages, so they were identified with the wilderness. Melville, for example, exposes the dark, brutal and vicious side of nature in his novel, *Moby-Dick* (1851), which is a story of a sea voyage for whaling that ends up with the death of most of the crew in sea. In “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (1820), Irving treats nature in a much grimmer manner. The hamlet Sleepy Hollow which is the home of many superstitions, haunted houses and ghost stories is surrounded by a dark and mysterious forest portrayed as the center of all kinds of supernatural elements. Even the encounter of Ichabod Crane with the mysterious

Headless Horseman, making him leave the town forever, takes place in the forest. The life in the frontier and Native Americans occupy the mind of many gothic writers. *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) by Cooper is an important novel in this sense. The story takes place in the frontier and while the hero Hawkeye is a "noble savage" showing the virtues such as courage, honesty and wisdom, the antagonist Magua is a typical Gothic villain with his demonic characteristics. Nature finds an important place in Hawthorne's works as well. While the evil gathering takes place in the woods in "Young Goodman Brown" (1835), in *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) Hester Prynne takes sanctuary in the woods, in the house of an outcast, when she is banished from the society.

Desolation which causes suffering for human beings is also an important theme for the writers mentioned above. Individualism which is celebrated by Emerson becomes a matter of misfortune and calamity for them. They unfold the catastrophe resulting from individualism: In "Egotism; or, the Bosom Serpent" (1843), Hawthorne focuses on the distress of desolation with the introduction of the protagonist, Roderick Elliston, who appears to have committed a sin which led to his separation from his wife. In another story "The Minister's Black Veil" (1836), Hawthorne reflects the ineradicable problems of desolation with a veil worn by the protagonist as a token of his sinfulness, which serves not just as a symbol of sin but also becomes a wall between himself and the world. Moreover, the madness and melancholy observed in most of Poe's characters are directly linked with their isolation from the outer world such as the narrator of "The Raven" (1845) who is under the burden of loneliness that evokes some insanity for him.

This chapter has focused on the development of gothic fiction in England and its emergence in America in the last half of the 18th century with the works of Brown. American soil has always become an appropriate setting for the genre with its Puritan past, unknown wilderness, and harsh physical conditions. The most suitable region of the continent that stretches and stirs the imagination of gothic writers has always been, indubitably, the South in terms of its historical facts, since it has harbored a number of social phenomena that leave traces on gothic literature for years; slavery, racism, violence, class and gender distinctions.

PART II

2. SOUTHERN GOTHIC FICTION

2.1. The Historical Background of Southern United States

"The best literature is often deeply rooted in particular regions, and this is true as well of the Gothic" (Crow, 2009:15).

Southern gothic writing reserves a momentous place in American literature. Its importance mostly arises from the vital and engrossing position of the South in the history of the country. With its economy based strictly on the institution of slavery for centuries, the permanent wounds opened up by the Civil War (1861-1865) and with its distinctive regional identity, the South has always nurtured the imagination of many writers. On this account, the uniqueness of Southern gothic is to be searched in the depths of Southern history.

Having been inhabited by the Native American people for centuries, the South was first visited by a European in 1513, Juan Ponce de León (1460-1521) who set foot on Florida with the support of the Spanish realm. Following his arrival, many Spanish settlements were established, with little success of survival. The French made its presence mostly in the North in the early years due to strong Spanish existence in the South. They made expeditions to the South towards the end of the 16th century and named the territory they discovered, Louisiana, after Louis XIV of France. British colonization in America started with the explorations led by Sir Walter Raleigh (1554-1618), and their first colony in the South was in North Carolina, followed by more other settlements. An important figure for the development of Southern identity during this period was William Berkeley (1605-1677) who served as the governor of Virginia for almost 20 years. His 'Second Sons' policy which required the persuasion of younger sons of the European elite to work in Virginia led to the immigration of many aristocrats into Virginia, contributing to the development of aristocracy in the South.

Southern colonies expanded with their economy based on agriculture, as opposed to the North where industry grew. They formed big plantations and exported cotton, tobacco and rice. In the second half of the 17th century, the plantation owners had adopted slavery to provide the labour force they needed on their farms. After the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783), Southern colonies, now being states, had a

powerful voice in the administration of the country; The Declaration of Independence (1776) was written by a Southerner, Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826). These states always prided themselves on being among the 13 original colonies.

The conflict between the North and South had emerged more than a century before the outburst of military action. The economy of the Southern states was based on agriculture and the employment of slaves in the plantations, whereas the North had abolished slavery with its industrially advanced economy, which was the main reason for their contention. However, with the election of Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865) as the president, some of the Southern states declared their secession and formed the Confederate States of America, which led to the outburst of the American Civil War (1860-1865). The fight between Union and Confederacy eventuated in the victory of the North and abolition of slavery in all the states. African Americans were granted citizenship privileges and aristocracy lost most of its power. The festering sores brought with this long-lasting war, such as the loss of many people and economic depression, and the ending of slavery left an ever-lasting mark on Southern identity and consciousness, which became a reference point for many Southern writers, including the gothic ones.

Although slavery was ended following the defeat of the South in the Civil War, the discrimination against African Americans transmuted into a different form with Jim Crow Laws (1876-1965) legalizing the racial segregation. Black society was enforced to make use of separate public services. This systematic discrimination against blacks led to the huge wave of migration from the South to the North, known as Great Migration and also the formation of American Civil Rights Movement (1954-1968). In 1965, all Jim Crow Laws were annulled, which stopped the racial discrimination officially.

The historical context in which Southern identity was built influenced the sentiment and literary understanding of Southern gothic writers. They examined the phenomenon of slavery and scrutinized the racial discrimination towards the black society by revealing the guilty conscience engraved in their psychology.

2.2. Southern Gothic Writing

Southern gothic writing is a sub-genre of the Gothic. It dates back to the 19th century authors Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) and Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864). In the 20th century, the genre included dark romanticism which stresses tendency to sin and

pessimism, southern humour which included black humour and the grotesque, and a sheer naturalism; its increasing popularity coincides with 1920s when William Cuthbert Faulkner (1897-1962) published his works. Other well-known gothic writers in the South are Henry Clay Lewis (1825-1850), Mark Twain (1835-1910), Thomas Clayton Wolfe (1900-1938), Carson McCullers (1917-1967), and Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964).

The genre includes social issues and references to the cultural history of American South. The objective of Southern gothic writers is to reflect the true facts about Southern culture in a disturbing way. They produce stories with strong local colours. The setting is mostly rural towns in the South and plantations where slavery is conducted as labour force. The characters are generally isolated, eccentric and outcast locals who use a distinctive Southern dialect. There are also many allusions to the history of the region. Unlike its parent genre, Southern gothic does not include supernatural elements most of the time. Instead, the weakness of the society is discussed in terms of social classes, poverty, fear of institutions, and destiny.

Southern gothic writers make use of two common themes in their fiction to reflect the shortcomings of the society. First, they uncover the violence inherent in the community with themes such as terror and death. Second, they blend the shortcomings of the society with the tragic history of slavery and racial hypocrisy.

2.2.1. Violence

It is widely assumed that violence is an intrinsic quality of Southern society. Since Southern gothic is a genre that is supposed to expose the problems of social mechanism, Southern gothic writers use violence in their works as a way to point out the objectionable and disturbing sides of the community and culture. The question to ask is why the South is notorious for being violent when it is compared to the North.

Gary M. Ciuba analyzes the reasons behind the confirmed existence of violence in the South through the theory of René Girard (1923-). Girard suggests that violence is a consequence of mimetic desire which means the imitation of someone else's desire. It is an innate quality of human beings that when they encounter someone who wishes to obtain an object, s/he desires the same object. In process of time, mimetic desire undergoes a transformation and the person desires to be her/his imitatee, which is called metaphysical desire. Such a desire is never to be satisfied and it is the ultimate cause of

rivalry and violence. Individual forms of violence may pile up and constitute a tension that threatens the survival of community. To ensure the existence of society, communal violence is projected upon a single individual, which is called scapegoating mechanism. According to Girard, this mechanism is the substructure of cultural life and has a religious overtone, since it brings peace to society.

Ciuba grounds the inevitable existence of violence in the South on this theory. As he suggests, the South forms distinctions in the society, such as racial segregation, class differences and gender segregation, so as to form differences in the community and prevent violence, for sameness is a sure cause of violent behaviour; for instance, people in the same social class may desire the same thing and become rivals (Ciuba, 2007: 16). Ciuba regards highly-valued ideas of 'honor' in the South as mimesis and a path for violence:

> *Honor made self-estimation into nothing but an imitation of how the southerner was esteemed by others. And since the southerners desired such mimetic validation, they copied the desires of the other so that they would regard themselves as especially well-favored in the looking glass of communal approval. The result was that the community of honor was a network in which each member was at once a model for everyone else and a disciple of everyone else (Ciuba, 2007: 21).*

The circulation of violence resulted in the emergence of scapegoating mechanism, in this case African Americans. They were victimized as slaves until the 19th century; afterwards, racial segregation substituted for slavery. Ciuba associates violence and scapegoating in the South with religious background as well: "Southern churches fostered violence the most to the extent that they accepted the institutionalized sacrifice of slavery" (Ciuba, 2007: 39). They justified themselves for this acknowledgment based on the Ten Commandments which, according to them, "did not condemn slavery but even seemed to accept it, and they cited how Paul sent the fugitive slave Onesimus[3] back to his master (Matthews, *Religion* 158)" (Ciuba, 2007: 40).

[3] He was a slave who escaped from his master, Philemon, to avoid being punished for theft. Paul the Apostle sent him back to end the disagreement though he became a Christian.

2.2.2. Racial Bigotry

Racist perspective associated with Southern culture has always occupied the minds of gothic writers. It actually includes the process of depriving Native Americans, African Americans and other minority groups of the privileges that are granted to white Americans. During the ante-bellum years, the institution of slavery functioned as the main symbol of racial bigotry with regards to the fact that slaves were exchanged as commercial commodity and forced to live under subhuman conditions. Southern gothic writers concern themselves with slavery as a social phenomenon, either on conscious or subconscious level. While some concentrate on the ethnic difference between Americans and Native Americans whose so-called idiosyncratic life stirs their imagination, others bring the stigma of slavery into the forefront either to bring her/his repressed fear to surface or to bemoan the exploitation of African Americans. Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826) deals with the possibility of love and friendship involving people of different races and displays the potential risks with the tragic ending of Uncas and Cora's love. "A Struggle for Life" (1850) by Henry Clay Lewis (1825-1850) is another work of fiction focusing on race and slavery. It is the story of a journey into the wilderness by a doctor and a slave-dwarf who loses his temper after drinking too much and attacks the former. Lewis accounts the subconscious fear and hatred of all plantation owners in the South; the figure of a grotesquely-depicted slave unwilling to obey rules and rising against them. The assault of the slave on the white doctor in wilderness after drinking brandy and his death by burning himself as a consequence of hysteria uncover the perspective of Southerners on slavery before the Civil War, unmasking the racist attitude of Lewis himself as well. Another figure in Southern gothic writing, Poe, deals with the same subject in his story "Hop-Frog" (1849) in which the dwarf court jester takes vengeance on his king and the royal court by burning them. As a matter of fact, a number of works by Poe include racial references:

> *To a limited degree, Poe's later poems speak less elliptically to slavery and race. "The Haunted Palace" (1839), especially when placed within "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), potentially invokes dark others to hint at the horrors of a slave revolt, while "The Raven" (1845), particularly if alluding to the color-changed raven of Ovid's*

> *Metamorphoses, can be seen to play on antebellum fears of whites becoming black. (Lee, 2005: 17).*

Pudd'nhead Wilson (1894), a novel by Mark Twain (1835-1910), underlines the social construction of race in the ante-bellum period. It is the story of Roxy, a one-sixteenth black slave, who switches his son Chambers, one thirty-second black, with her master's son, to protect him from being a slave. Nevertheless, his son turns out to be a brutal slave owner and murderer. The master's son is raised as a black slave and even after he learns he is the offspring of a white and rich family, he cannot adjust to his new identity. Twain shows that racial stereotypes are not related to heredity but to the environmental impact and social factors, that is, prejudice lies behind racism.

Racism continued to be an allure for Southern gothic writers in the 20th century. Even though slavery was abolished in the post-bellum years, the unfair treatment of the people belonging to non-white origins remained intact, creating many victims of racism. Literary figures such as O'Connor ruminated over the racial segregation in public facilities and attempted to expose racial hypocrisy pervading the society.

2.3. The Grotesque

There is a close connection between the South and the grotesque, since that region has become the setting for many disturbing social phenomena and has always been marginalized. This is reason why the most distinctive elements of Southern gothic writing are grotesque imagery and characterization. Southern gothic writers concentrate on them to expose the flaws of the characters, the society, and the moral system. There have been many studies on the true nature and origins of the grotesque. Two most frequently referred theories belong to Wolfgang Kayser (1906-1960) and Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975).

2.3.1. Wolfgang Kayser's *The Grotesque in Art and Literature*

A comprehensive enquiry into historical process through which modern perception of the grotesque in literature generated was first carried out by Wolfgang Kayser in his *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* (1963). Kayser traces the layers of the term's meaning in an ancient form of ornamental art, which is called grotesque, in Roman culture. He describes the combination of "human and nonhuman elements" in

the paintings, creating an unfamiliar pattern in the natural order, which is perceived as "not only something playfully gay and carelessly fantastic, but also something ominous and sinister in the face of a world totally different from the familiar one" (Kayser, 1963: 21). He, then, clarifies the evolution of the grotesque as a word in the 17th century, when it denoted "silly, bizarre, extravagant" (1963: 26), and in the 18th century, when it was associated with caricature in terms of the distortion of reality and the term was blended with the comic and satire. While discussing its evolution in the Age of Romanticism, he merges his understanding of the grotesque with Karl Wilhelm Friedrich Schlegel's (1772-1829):

> *To be sure, many of the essential ingredients of the grotesque-the mixture of heterogeneous elements, the confusion, the fantastic quality, and even a kind of alienation of the world-may be found, however vaguely defined, in Schlegel's Gespräch*[4]*. But one aspect is definitely lacking: the absymal quality, the insecurity, the terror inspired by the disintegration of the world (Kayser, 1963: 51-52).*

Grounding his argument on Victor Hugo's (1802-1885) preface to *Cromwell* (1827), he also contrasts the grotesque with the sublime; two are represented as antonyms: "For just as the sublime (in contrast with the beautiful) guides our view toward a loftier, supernatural world, the ridiculously distorted and monstrously horrible ingredients of the grotesque point to an inhuman, nocturnal, and abysmal realm" (Kayser, 1963: 58). Whereas the sublime refers to the quality of excellence in aesthetics, morality, spirituality and language, the grotesque represents a more unpleasant, offensive and bizarre extent of life.

In the 19th century, Hegel (1770-1831) defined the grotesque fusion of human and nonhuman elements in a more critical sense, since his idea of ornamental art was limited to the plants. He also associated the word with an unearthly meaning and "a connection with the supernatural and extrahuman" (Kayser, 1963: 102). Kayser applies his understanding of the grotesque to literary works of E. T. A. Hoffmann. He establishes three types of the grotesque; characters with grotesque outward appearance and behaviour, unusual artists with strange manners, and evil characters with grotesque

[4] A work (1800) by Karl Wilhelm Friedrich (1772-1829). It means 'speech.'

outward appearance and behaviour (Kayser, 1963: 105-106). The meaning of the grotesque expanded to denote humanity as the subject of malevolent forces, the disintegration of the world and alienation. Based on the term's semantic extension in the century, he also makes a distinction between the comic and the grotesque: "In the genuine grotesque the spectator becomes directly involved at some point where a specific meaning is attached to the events. In the humorous context, on the other hand, a certain distance is maintained throughout and, with it, a feeling of security and indifference" (Kayser, 1963: 118).

While examining the gradual development of the term in the 20th century, Kayser mentions both the amalgamation of humour and terror in the works by the authors of tales of terror and Kafka's (1883-1924) cold grotesque, the impression of which was that "we do not know whether we are supposed to smile" (Kayser, 1963: 148). He also analyzes the inherent relation of the grotesque with Surrealism: "It remains to be seen how many of the Surrealistic pictures, in which the technique of alienation was perfected and the attempt made to expand the scope of the grotesque, will prove of sufficient intrinsic merit to deserve a place in the history of the grotesque" (Kayser, 1963: 173).

In the last section of his book, he puts his theory together and identifies the grotesque in "An Attempt to Define the Nature of the Grotesque." Before listing the important elements related to the grotesque such as the monsters, animals, plant world, tools and madness, he points out the reception of the work of art as a significant factor in defining the term; that is, something that may be regarded grotesque from a point of view is not so from another perspective; the process of reception is sufficient for the definition of the term, though: "Nevertheless, it remains true that the grotesque is experienced only in the act of reception. Yet it is entirely possible that things are regarded as grotesque even though structurally there is no reason for calling them so" (Kayser, 1963: 181). Kayser's approach is similar to O'Connor's interpretation of the grotesque as a rather outcome of relative perception in her *Mystery and Manners* (1969): "Of course, I have found that anything comes out of the South is going to be called grotesque by the Northern reader, unless it is grotesque, in which case it is going to be realistic" (O'Connor, 1984: 40).

2.3.2. Mikhail Bakhtin's 'Carnival' and 'Grotesque Realism'

In his well-known work *Rabelais and His World* (1965), Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) provides his comprehensive and far-reaching theory on the true nature of carnival and the grotesque. Prior to his analysis on the grotesque in François Rabelais' (1483-1553) works, he discusses the origins and essence of the term. He divides the folk culture into three; "ritual spectacles," "comic verbal compositions," and "various genres of billingsgate" (Bakhtin, 1984: 5). He, then, emphasizes the significance of carnival as a part of ritual spectacles in the medieval society. He asserts that carnival depends on laughter and it is sanctified as it is "sharply distinct from the serious official, ecclesiastical, feudal, and political cult forms and ceremonials" (Bakhtin, 1984: 5). Laughter is a requisite component of carnival. Its most important function is that it "frees them completely from all religious and ecclesiastic dogmatism, from all mysticism and piety" (Bakhtin, 1984: 7). He explains the most important quality of carnival as follows:

> *Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants (Bakhtin, 1984: 7).*

Accordingly, carnival is not only an event or performance that impresses people. They become an inextricable part of it. The outer world is temporarily put aside; hence it releases them from its limitations. It suspends hierarchy, rules, restrictions, and prerogatives as "the feast of becoming, change, and renewal" (Bakhtin, 1984: 10).

Laughter is an essential part of carnival, and it is not a personal response to something jocular, but it involves all the people in the carnival. It is also true at all times and in all places. Besides, carnival laughter is "ambivalent: it is gay, triumphant, and at the same time mocking, deriding. It asserts and denies, it buries and revives" (Bakhtin, 1984: 11-12).

He dwells on the magnitude of "the material bodily principle" in Rabelais' works and Renaissance literature, which he regards as the "peculiar aesthetic concept which is characteristic of this folk culture and which differs sharply from the aesthetic concept which of the following ages;" he, then, names the material bodily principle, which is basically "food, drink, defecation, and sexual life," as "the concept of grotesque realism" (Bakhtin, 1984: 18). The material bodily principle does not have a negative denotation in grotesque realism, which is different from its sense in the ages that follow Renaissance when it carries a more negative meaning. The reason for this is the fact that the concept of beauty has undergone a change in time and the components of the material bodily principle have been marginalized:

> *In grotesque realism, therefore, the bodily element is deeply positive. It is presented not in a private, egoistic form, severed from the other spheres of life, but as something universal, representing all the people. As such it is opposed to severance from the material and bodily roots of the world; it makes no pretense to renunciation of the earthy, or independence of the earth and the body. We repeat: the body and bodily life have here a cosmic and at the same time an all-people's character; this is not the body and its physiology in the modern sense of these words, because it is not individualized. The material bodily principle is contained not in the biological individual, not in the bourgeois ego, but in the people, a people who are continually growing and renewed. This is why all that is bodily becomes grandiose, exaggerated, immeasurable (Bakhtin, 1984: 19).*

He associates the positive aspects of grotesque realism with being fertile and abundant. He suggests that "degradation" is the main element of grotesque realism, since it is the process of reducing "all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract" (Bakhtin, 1984: 19-20). Reducing something that is incorporeal means lowering it into the earth, which has two ambivalent functions; consuming and reproducing, and being involved with "the lower stratum of the body," thus concerning the "acts of defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy, and birth;" for example, laughter is a form of degradation, as it is related to "the bodily lower stratum" (Bakhtin, 1984: 20-21).

Following his association of grotesque realism with carnival, Bakhtin elucidates the main points of the grotesque. He asserts that the grotesque has connection with time, as it undergoes an unending change. It is also ambivalent including the birth and death at the same time. Some bodily functions take significance for grotesque realism: "The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world" (Bakhtin, 1984: 24, 26). Bakhtin specifies the purport of pregnancy in grotesque realism by drawing attention to the fusion of two bodies in one:

> *One of the fundamental tendencies of the grotesque image of the body is to show two bodies in one: the one giving birth and dying, the other conceived, generated, and born. This is the pregnant and begetting body, or at least a body ready for conception and fertilization, the stress being laid on the phallus or the genital organs. From one body new body always emerges in some form or other (Bakhtin, 1984: 26).*

Moreover, he regards the profane language such as "abuses, oaths, and curses" necessary for the perception of grotesque realism, for the grotesque underlies the profane language which is also a form of debasement. He mentions about the approach of the classic canons towards the grotesque as ugly, unpleasant and without a clear and definite shape or structure (Bakhtin, 1984: 27, 29).

According to Bakhtin, Renaissance literature is the pinnacle of the grotesque. He indicates that the grotesque understanding in Romantic age is somewhat different from the medieval age and the Renaissance. First, Romantic grotesque "became the expression of subjective, individualistic world outlook very different from the carnival folk concept of previous ages, although still containing some carnival elements" (Bakhtin, 1984: 36). However, the grotesque during Renaissance is represented as being universal and belonging to all people. Second, the principle of laughter is incompatible in these two ages. While Renaissance laughter is "a joyful and triumphant hilarity," Romantic laughter becomes "cold humor, irony, and sarcasm" (Bakhtin, 1984: 38). Third, alienation and fright are other distinctive aspects of Romantic grotesque, because

they are not reduced to jocundity unlike the medieval and Renaissance grotesque (Bakhtin, 1984: 38-39).

2.4. Flannery O'Connor: A Prominent Figure in Southern Gothic Fiction

Born in Georgia in 1925, O'Connor commenced her education in Catholic parochial schools. She displayed a particular tendency for fiction when she undertook the editorship of "The Corinthian," a literary magazine of Georgia State College for Women, for which she wrote stories, essays, poems, and also drew cartoons. When she was 15, her father died of a dermatological disease, which would also take her life. In 1945, she got accepted into the master's program in creative writing, mostly known as Iowa writers' workshop where she got acquainted with a few important literary figures; John Crowe Ransom (1888-1974), Austin Warren (1899-1986), Robert Penn Warren (1905-1989) and Andrew Nelson Lytle (1902-1995). Getting accepted into such a society was a striking success for a woman figure coming from the South in the 20th century. Her master thesis was a collection of short stories, among them "The Geranium" (1946) being her first published story, rewritten many times after its initial publication.

O'Connor received the Rinehart-Iowa Fiction Award for a portion of *Wise Blood* (1952) which would become her first published novel. In 1949 she moved into Connecticut to live with two other Roman Catholics, Sally and Robert Fitzgerald, as their boarder for two years. The time she spent with them is assumed to be the keystone of the Catholic vision in her works. In 1950 she was diagnosed with lupus, which impaired her health and made her live in a dairy farm in Milledgeville for the rest of her life. She grew quite fond of birds and fed a number of peacocks, which turns out to be an extensive and chief symbol in her fiction. Stanley Edgar Hyman defines the symbolic connotation of peacock with a religious perspective: "The peacock is a traditional symbol of Christ's divinity and the Resurrection" (Hyman, 1966: 18).

Throughout her life O'Connor published two novels and thirty two short stories. Her novels are *Wise Blood*, an account of a war veteran who has lost his faith and maintains an anti-religious life, and *Violent Bear It Away* (1960), an account of an unwilling prophet. Her first short story collection is *A Goodman is Hard to Find* was published in 1955 and the second collection, *Everything That Rises Must Converge*, was published posthumously in 1965.

O’Connor was a devout member of Roman Catholic Church, although she lived in Bible Belt South where Protestantism was the dominant religion. She describes the position of religion in the South in her *Mystery and Manners* (1969): “But approaching the subject from the standpoint of the writer, I think it is safe to say that while the South is hardly Christ-centered, it is most certainly Christ-haunted” (O’Connor, 1984: 44). This is why her characters experience suffering in their way to reach redemption. She made a vast amount of enquiry about religion and delivered many lectures regarding faith. Her short stories bear the traces of Catholicism; many of the characters in her fiction are Protestant Southerners who are in search of the truth and redemption through pain and violence, and this search is the path towards Catholic salvation. Hyman clarifies the interconnection between the Protestant South and O’Connor as a follower of Catholic set of principles through one of her letters:

> *As a Catholic born and brought up in Georgia, Miss O’Connor always insisted, not only on her right to the imagery of southern Protestantism, but on its peculiar fitness for her as a Catholic. In a letter, she wrote: “Now the South is a good place for a Catholic literature in my sense for a number of reasons. 1) In the South belief can still be made believable and in relation to a large part of the society. We are not the Bible Belt for nothing. 2) The Bible being generally known and revered in the section, gives the novelist that broad mythical base to refer to that he needs to extend his meaning in depth. 3) The South has a sacramental view of life . . . 4) The aspect of Protestantism that is most prominent (at least to the Catholic) in the South is that man dealing with God directly, not through the mediation of the church, and this is great for the Catholic novelist like myself who wants to get close to his character and watch him wrestle with the Lord” (Hyman, 1966: 40-41).*

The works of Flannery O’Connor are generally regarded as belonging to the tradition of Southern gothic tradition. Grotesque themes, racial hypocrisy and uncanny events are distinctive elements in her stories.

2.4.1. Flannery O'Conner's Grotesque Vision

O'Connor's understanding of the grotesque is manifestly revealed in her posthumous collection of articles and essays, *Mystery and Manners* (1969). She castigates the general approach towards Southern writers, since, she suggests, the works of Southern writers are associated with the life and conditions in the South without any exceptions however distinctive they are. For this reason, she argues against the assumption that the characters in her stories are the personifications of typical southerners (O'Connor, 1984: 37-38). She defines the essential quality of the grotesque as follows:

> *In these grotesque works, we find that the writer has made alive some experience which we are not accustomed to observe every day, or which the ordinary man may never experience in his ordinary life. We find that connections which we would expect in the customary kind of realism have been ignored, that there are strange skips and gaps which anyone trying to describe manners and customs would certainly not have left. Yet the characters have an inner coherence, if not always a coherence to their social framework. Their fictional qualities lean away from typical social patterns, toward mystery and the unexpected (O'Connor, 1984: 40).*

It is clear that the events in a grotesque work are unexpected and unusual. The characters are obliged to face these unwonted incidents, although they are intrinsically coherent. The writer of the grotesque unites the image that can be seen with the invisible one; which is related to the ambivalent quality of the grotesque according to Bakhtin. Such ambivalence is the main reason of its involving violence and comedy at the same time (O'Connor, 1984: 42-43). In addition, she points out that "when the grotesque is used in a legitimate way, the intellectual and moral judgments implicit in it will have the ascendancy over feeling" (O'Connor, 1984: 43). The grotesque has the potential to pave the way for intellectuality, morality, and ethics. In her stories, she depicts the Southern social and intellectual defects.

O'Connor states that modern grotesque characters are not principally amusing, but they have a "prophetic vision," and they bear "an invisible burden; their fanaticism is a reproach, not merely an eccentricity" (O'Connor, 1984: 44). She gives a few reasons why the writers in the South write on unusual characters. First, they can identify

grotesque behaviour and appearance: “Whenever I’m asked why Southern writers particularly have a penchant for writing about freaks, I say it is because we are still able to recognize one” (O’Connor, 1984: 44). This distinguishes them from other groups of writers; their vision is untainted: “To be able to recognize a freak, you have to have some conception of the whole man, and in the South the general conception of man is still, in the main, theological” (O’Connor, 1984: 44). Second, there are a number of good writers in the South who concern themselves with the grotesque, and it is challenging for a single writer to shift her/his ground (O’Connor, 1984: 45). Third, the society load the writers with a charge, which is relieving the burdens of the age, and the restrictions of the readers limit their vision, influence the way they write, and arouse some fondness for the grotesque (O’Connor, 1984: 47). She mentions about her precognition on the future of Southern novels: “The great novels we get in the future are not going to be those that the public thinks it wants, or those that critics demand. They are going to be the kind of novels that interest the novelist” (O’Connor, 1984: 49). Thus, she wants the novelists to be rid of the burden of writing depending on the needs of the readers and critics. She also defines the true process of writing on the grotesque for Southern writer:

> *The problem for such a novelist will be to know how far he can distort without destroying, and in order not to destroy, he will have to descend far enough into himself to reach those underground springs that give life to his work. This descent into himself will, at the same time, be a descent into his region. It will be a descent through the darkness of the familiar into a world where, like the blind man cure in the gospels, he sees men as if they were trees, but walking (O’Connor, 1984: 50).*

She suggests that the writer should resolve the limits of their writing and the grotesque with careful introspection and self-analysis; this is the only path for understanding the true nature of her/his writing and the region.

PART III

3. PHYSICALLY GROTESQUE CHARACTERS

In most of her stories, O'Connor degrades the grotesque into physical level which is usually the reverberation of an intangible deficiency or inclination. This kind of grotesque appears in the form of a character's physical deformation, and the objective of O'Connor in debasing her characters physically is either to reveal the feebleness of their spirituality and their vulnerability or to accentuate the other characters' approach to the physical deformity so as to expose their fragile point of view which tends to undergo a transformation. Among these characters are Parker whose body is covered with tattoos from head to foot in "Parker's Back" (1965), Lucynell Crater who is dumb and speech handicapped in "The Life You Save May Be Your Own" (1955), the hermaphrodite in "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" (1955), and Ruby whose pregnancy is grotesquely delineated by the author in "A Stroke of Good Fortune" (1955). With Parker and Ruby, O'Connor draws attention to the erroneous point of view towards the blacks and women in the Southern society respectively, while Lucynell and the hermaphrodite serve as mirrors of social imperfection.

3.1. "Parker's Back"

O'Connor creates one of her obviously grotesque characters in "Parker's Back" (1965). The protagonist of the story is a black man, Parker, who is fond of having tattoos done on his body, which gives him a peculiar/grotesque outward appearance. Anthony Di Renzo (1960-) describes his particular position in the complete works of O'Connor as such: "Psychologically as well as visually, Parker is O'Connor's most arresting grotesque. She carefully delineates his character the way a tattooist creates a design-pinpoint by pinpoint, small detail by small detail" (Di Renzo, 1993: 45). Parker's propensity for tattoos hinges upon the man he saw in a fair in his childhood. Parker has the tattoos of a tiger, a panther, a cobra, hawks, Elizabeth II, Philip and inanimate forms such as rifles and anchors on almost his whole body. The author notifies that Parker "did not care much what the subject was so long as it was colourful" (O'Connor, 1990: 514). The only place without tattoos is his back. Funding his tattoos is even the reason why he works. In this way, Parker is characterized as a man of superficial needs and

desire, not showing serious thoughts about anything: “Parker’s pre-revelation to embellish his back with tattoos is in keeping with his practical nature (this man who buys ‘apples by the bushel and sell[s] them for the same price by the pound’ . . . has no desire to pay for a tattoo he cannot see), but more importantly it underscores his lack of faith” (Petry, 1988: 39). This presumption of shallowness is shattered with his hidden yearning for receiving his wife’s approval and his relentless search for redemption. It seems certain that his grotesque is not only limited to physical level, but there is a spiritual dimension to it as well: “Parker is a creature of contrasts. The laughable garishness of the designs on his body is balanced by the serious hankering for the infinite in his soul” (Di Renzo, 1993: 45).

Parker’s relationship with his wife is an inextricable strand of his pursuit of redemption. His wife, Sarah Ruth Cates, is a fundamentalist Christian. The first time she meets Parker, she does not hesitate to express the disdain she felt for his tattoos: “ ‘All that there,’ the woman said, pointing to his arm, ‘is no better than what a fool Indian would do. It’s a heap of vanity.’ She seemed to have found the word she wanted. ‘Vanity of vanities,’ she said” (O’Connor, 1990: 515). Parker is also aware of their discrepancy; they do not have anything in common to have a conversation about. Despite this, he keeps visiting her. He lives through the first unpleasant experience that makes him anxious when Sarah forces him to disclose what the initials of his name, O. E., stand for. Having learned they are for Obediah Elihue, Sarah consents to say her name (O’Connor, 1990: 515). O’Connor’s choice of name for him is quite engrossing in that it “foretells that he has been claimed by God” (Coulthard, 1983: 67). His first name and surname have some religious connotations, because he searches salvation intrinsically: “Parker's name also foreshadows the particular brand of religion he is destined for. Both Obadiah and Elihu are Old Testament figures. Obadiah, whose name means "the Lord's servant," was a Hebrew prophet, and Elihu, consistent with the story's theme of suffering, appears in the Book of Job” (Coulthard, 1983: 67). His marriage to Sarah Ruth is also a consequence of his pursuit of salvation. No matter how different they are, he marries her, since he considers his marriage with Sarah as a way to compensate for his flaws, subconsciously. It is clear that he is not happy with his wife:

> *Marriage did not change Sarah Ruth a jot and it made Parker gloomier than ever. Every morning he decided he had had enough and*

> *would not return that night; every night he returned. Whenever Parker couldn't stand the way he felt, he would have another tattoo, but the only surface left on him now was his back (O'Connor, 1990: 518).*

Even after they get married, Sarah does not endure to see his tattoos. However, Sarah's position in his life is irreplaceable, since this marriage functions for Parker as the path to redeem himself:

> *Parker forces himself into a psychic transformation through his marriage to Sarah Ruth Cates, whose strict religious standards represent for Parker the ideals he unconsciously desires. Parker establishes contact with religious ideals through his physical attraction for the woman he associates with those ideals, and his constant protests about the marriage allow him to avoid admitting his attraction. The decision is to have a tattoo of the suffering face of Christ put on his back, then, is part of Parker's unconscious strategy for using his devotion to his wife to bring himself to Christ (Gentry, 1986: 79).*

What Parker desires all along is to win Sarah's favour and praise. With this objective in his mind, he intends to resolve the conflict between him and his wife by having a tattoo done on the only part of his body without tattoos, his back, and the figure he chooses is a Byzantine Christ, which will, he assumes, appeal to her. However, his aspiration is blighted by Sarah's blazing words: "Idolatry! Enflaming yourself with idols under every green tree! I can put up with lies and vanity but I don't want no idolator in this house!" (O'Connor, 1990: 529). With her sharp rebuff of his husband, it is ascertained that with his grotesque outward appearance and personality, Parker does not stand a chance against Sarah's contempt. Taking the situation further, Sarah beats him for being idolatrous and leaves him crying, which marginalizes him even more.

Parker's grotesque disposition is also conspicuous in the overwhelming sense of alienation he feels. His aversion to hearing his own name articulated is an indication of such an estrangement. As mentioned above, the meaning of his name is worthy of consideration for a man who keeps off spirituality; it bears a religious overtone:

Obediah means “the servant of the Lord” in Hebrew. When Sarah attempts to utter his name, he responds harshly: “If you call me that aloud, I’ll bust your head open” (O’Connor, 1990: 517). In this way, he feels estranged from his own name and suffers an enigmatic moment. After he has the tattoo of the Byzantine Christ done on his back to gratify Sarah, he lives through another similar experience: “It was as if he were himself but a stranger to himself, driving into a new country though everything he saw was familiar to him, even at night” (O’Connor, 1990: 527). Therefore, Parker becomes foreign to the world he lives in and has a strange and formidable feeling that is difficult to explain:

> *Such a feeling--a feeling that the reader is never sure Asbury achieves or not, hence the relative failure of "An Enduring Chill"--is what Freud calls the "uncanny," "That class of terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar"; "the uncanny," Freud says, "would always be that in which one does not know where one is, as it were."[12] The uncanny is familiar and strange, just as Parker is both familiar and strange to himself with God's constant eyes literally upon him, and he is in a country in which he is both native and alien (Schleifer, 1993: 180).*

He is alienated from his surroundings, his wife and even himself. This experience of estrangement is what leaves him crying like a child in the end, which shows his grotesque nature clearly.

3.2. Lucynell Crater: Mother and Daughter

In “The Life You Save May Be Your Own” (1955), O’Connor touches on the grotesque as a form of physical deformation from a different point of view. The protagonist of this story is Lucynell Crater who is deaf and speech handicapped. What makes her distinctive is her lack of knowledge and experience of the world. She is totally oblivious to the evil and unpleasant things due to her physical anomaly. Unlike Parker who features prominently in his grotesque process intentionally, Lucynell’s role is hardly conducive to such a grotesque mechanism.

What is salient about the Crater family is the absent father figure. Fifteen-year old inoperative car in the yard is the symbol of this absence. Lucynell Crater and her

mother whose name is Lucynell Crater as well live solitarily until Mr. Shiftlet arrives at their plantation, starts to work for them, and fixes the car. Lucynell's innocence is in contrast with her mother's manipulative skills. The author reveals her motivation when she admits Mr. Shiftlet into her house clearly: "She was ravenous for a son-in-law" (O'Connor, 1990: 150). She tries to induce him to marry her daughter by lying about her age. She tries to broaden Shiftlet's viewpoint by turning Lucynell's physical handicap into an advantage while depicting the right woman for him to marry: " 'One that can't talk,' she continued, 'can't sass you back or use foul language. That's the kind for you to have. Right there' " (O'Connor, 1990: 151). She prevails upon him to perform the arranged marriage by offering money. The opposition between the mother and daughter is obvious:

> *Both mother and daughter are named Lucynell Crater, but that is their only resemblance. The mother is a hard-bitten, leathery, and toothless country widow, the daughter a moron who is beautiful in a grotesque way. She has long pink-gold hair and "eyes as blue as a peacock's neck." In contrast to most of O'Connor's daughters, Lucynell Jr. is absolutely docile and sweet, serving as a strange and distorted symbol of spiritual innocence (Westling, 1978: 513).*

The attitude of Lucynell's mother and Mr. Shiftlet towards Lucynell is considerable in realizing her grotesque nature. Her mother recognizes Lucynell's eccentricity when she grotesquely compares her to a baby doll (O'Connor, 1990: 153); and even when Mr. Shiftlet teaches her to say "bird," the first word she wants him to teach Lucynell is "sugarpie" (O'Connor, 1990: 150-53). She assumes the role of an overprotective mother who acts out of expediency when she attempts to talk Mr. Shiftlet into marriage on the sly by telling him that she will not let anybody deprive her of her daughter's company under any circumstances: " '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" (O'Connor, 1990: 151). As regards to Mr. Shiftlet, he trespasses on her innocence by leaving her in the restaurant that they stop by

after they get married. Within this context, the author compares two different insights into her peculiarity. When the boy working in the restaurant says "She looks like an angel of Gawd," Mr. Shiftlet says she is a hitchhiker (O'Connor, 1990: 154-55). Sarah Gordon portrays the role of Lucynell in the story: "Lucynell's role is thus complex. She is both a reflection of the fallenness of the world in her affliction and an emblem of angelic purity. Her value to the "unafflicted" characters in the story, namely, her mother and Tom T. Shiftlet, lies in the way in which each chooses to view her. She is a potentially mediating fleshly presence" (Gordon, 2000: 173). Lucynell is the symbol of innocence indicating the evil side of humanity with her grotesque existence.

3.3. The Fair of 'Freaks'

The fair in O'Connor's "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" (1955) is particularly gripping with regard to its grotesque connotations, including the hermaphrodite, which permeates and preoccupies the mind of the protagonist. In addition to the grotesque evocation of the fair, the child's idiosyncratic stance on it stands out as an important issue. She envisions the fair as a place where monkeys dance, and fat men and midgets are exhibited, an idea which signifies her grotesque vision (O'Connor, 1990: 244). She also imagines the inhabitants of the fair as sick people whose physiques are grotesquely distorted and in need of medical treatment: "She had imagined that what was inside these tents concerned medicine and she had made up her mind to be a doctor when she grew up" (O'Connor, 1990: 243). It seems clear that the child has a grotesque figment of imagination. Trying to trick her cousins into explaining what they have seen at the fair by convincing them she has enough experience and is very mature for her age, she makes up a story in which she sees a rabbit giving birth to six babies by forcing them out of its mouth (O'Connor, 1990: 246). She also envisages the hermaphrodite with two heads. Her grotesque vision is also accompanied with her grotesque personality: "She did not steal or murder but she was a born liar and slothful and she sassed her mother and was deliberately ugly to almost everybody. She was eaten up also with the sin of Pride, the worst one" (O'Connor, 1990: 243). Her spiritual and moral flaws give rise to the formation of a close connection between her and the hermaphrodite in the end. Denise T. Askin expounds the gravity of the hermaphrodite in the child's world as follows:

> *The child lives in a world of freaks: "Cheat," the goofy farmer whose face is the color of the red clay roads he travels; Alonzo the odoriferous and obese taxi driver; the Wilkins boys, who sit "like monkeys" {CW 201) on the porch fence. The child equates them with the dancing monkeys, the fat man, and the midget at the fair. The hermaphrodite is the freak that defies categorization, the one that activates the girl's hungry imagination. The child's eye for the freak, like O'Connor's grotesque art, is disconcerting. But if we consider the medieval folk tradition of the carnival, its licensed travesty of liturgy, its parody of sacred discourse, and its temporary replacement of the bishop by a boy / clown, we can situate O'Connor in a tradition that served, by its very excesses, to balance the church's formality and, as Bakhtin says, to renew its sacred discourse (Askin, 2007: 560).*

In this sense, Askin puts the hermaphrodite in a rather different place than the other freaks in the child's world, as a force that will raise her awareness of her idiosyncrasy and start her grotesque transformation.

The child's protracted focus on the idea of a hermaphrodite culminates in her identification with that person. The moment she gets information from her cousins about the fair, she starts to brood over the hermaphrodite. She wonders the show at the fair and pictures it as if it were a church ritual, the hermaphrodite being a priest:

> *"God made me thisaway and I don't dispute hit," and the people saying, "Amen. Amen." / "God done this to me and I praise Him." / "Amen. Amen." / "He could strike you thisaway." / "Amen. Amen." / "But he has not." / "Amen" / "Raise yourself up. A temple of the Holy Ghost. You! You are God's temple, don't you know? Don't you know? God's spirit has a dwelling in you, don't you know?" / "Amen. Amen." / If anybody desecrates the temple of God, God will bring him to ruin and if you laugh, He may strike you thisaway. A temple of God is a holy thing. Amen. Amen." / "I am a temple of the Holy Ghost." / "Amen." The people began to slap their hands without making a loud noise and with a regular beat*

between the Amens, more and more softly, as if they knew there was a child near, half asleep (O'Connor, 1990: 246).

With her vision, the child sanctifies the fair and its residents that are considered unusual because of the way they look. She pretends to be in the presence of a religious ceremony with a sacred atmosphere. In this manner, she gets closer to the grotesque and feels that she can understand and share the feelings of the hermaphrodite. She experiences her spiritual identification with the hermaphrodite in the church where the hermaphrodite's sentences run through her mind when she prays for herself: "I don't dispute hit. This is the way He wanted me to be" (O'Connor, 1990: 248). This statement resembles to a sermon by a priest and valid for both the hermaphrodite and the child: "Insofar as the reader is to assume that the hermaphrodite's words apply to the child's situation, the message she receives is that what she had considered freakish in herself-her meanness, laughter, ugly talk-is the way God wants her to be. She may be punished for meannness, but the punishment is also a reward" (Gentry, 1986: 68).

For Bakhtin's theory, carnival takes an important place in the life of medieval people; it frees the people from the restrictions of the outer world, and they do not only enjoy it, but become an inseparable part of it (Bakhtin, 1984: 7). He suggests that laughter is the main component of the carnival: "Thus carnival is the people's second life, organized on the basis of laughter. It is a festive life. Festivity is a peculiar quality of all comic rituals and spectacles of the Middle Ages" (Bakhtin, 1984: 8). In a sense, the fair in this story serves a purpose quite similar to Bakhtin's concept of the carnival. As the carnival liberates people from limitations of the outer world and they all become equal no matter how different their status is in real life, the child in the story also experiences such an assimilation; she develops a deep empathy with the hermaphrodite, suspending all their differences and gets closer to the grotesque.

3.4. A Pregnant Woman Grotesquely Depicted

O'Connor's imagery and characterization in "A Stroke of Good Fortune" (1955) become quirky. She tarnishes the truth and distorts the physique of the protagonist via depicting her pregnancy grotesquely. The author introduces Ruby in the stairs of her apartment, where the whole story takes place, when she endeavours to reach her flat. The way in which she is described seems grotesque even in the beginning of the story

where she compares her head to “a big florid vegetable at the top of the sack” (O’Connor, 1990: 95). Before the author ensures that she is pregnant, there is a continuous hint of sickness on behalf of her. Even the palmist she visits makes a reference to her sickness, but also suggests her state of being pregnant in an indirect way: “It will bring you a stroke of good fortune” (O’Connor, 1990: 96). The metaphor of sickness remains intact until her final epiphany of her pregnancy. She ascribes the symptoms such as breathlessness to heart trouble (O’Connor, 1990: 98). Besides, she ignores the swelling on her belly by deceiving herself with the pretence that she has put on weight: “She was big there but she had always had a kind of big stomach. She did not stick out there different from the way she did any place else” (O’Connor, 1990: 105). Thus, with the help of the metaphor of illness and corpulence, O’Connor creates a grotesque imagery by degrading pregnancy into a physical deformity.

Even though Ruby fools herself about her condition, she is aware of her pregnancy implicitly. For this reason, her attention is perpetually centred on maternity and infants, the negative aspects of which she brings to the forefront. First, she denigrates pregnancy by recalling how having children totally wore her mother out. She cannot refrain from scorning her mother for having eight children: “Her mother had got deader with every one of them. And all of for what? Because she hadn’t known any better. Pure ignorance. The purest of downright ignorance” (O’Connor, 1990: 97). For Ruby, becoming a mother is not different from being ignoramus. She gives a thought about her mother’s misfortune for being a mother on another occasion when imagines her brother Rufus “waiting, with plenty of time, out nowhere before he was born, just waiting to make his mother that much deader” (O’Connor, 1990: 103). Her second confrontation with maternity is on the steps on which she finds the toy gun of a child living in the fifth floor, which exasperates her to such an extent that she calls his mother “stupid” (O’Connor, 1990: 98). The author states that the child’s mother calls him “Little Mister Good Fortune,” which is another reference to the title of the story like the prophecy of the palmist (O’Connor, 1990: 98). She renders thanks for her fortune since she is not a mother yet: “She had done all right doctoring herself all these years-no bad sick spells, no teeth out, no children, all that by herself. She would have had five children right now if she hadn’t been careful” (O’Connor, 1990: 98).

Ruby denies any possibility or claim that suggests she is pregnant. When her neighbour implies that she might have a baby, she reprimands her severely and silences

her: “You shut up talking like that!” Ruby shouted. You shut up this minute. I ain’t going to have any baby” (O’Connor, 1990: 105). She adopts an intransigent attitude and abstains from the truth even when she is on her own:

> *“Noooo,” she said and leaned her round red face between the two nearest poles. She looked down into the stairwell and gave a long hollow wail that widened and echoed as it went down. The stair cavern was dark green and mole-colored and the wail sounded at the very bottom like a voice answering her. She gasped and shut her eyes. No. No. It couldn’t be any baby. She was not going to have something waiting in her to make her deader, she was not (O’Connor, 1990: 106).*

No matter how much she refuses to admit this fact, she, eventually, achieves a realization that enlightens what has been disregarded all along. She has her ultimate epiphany at the end of the story when she says “Good Fortune, Baby” and senses a “little roll” in her stomach (O’Connor, 1990: 107). She gains this insight right after she hears her neighbour calls out to her child one more time. The last sentence of the story is also noteworthy: “It was as if it were out nowhere in nothing, out nowhere, resting and waiting, with plenty of time” (O’Connor, 1990: 107). The author’s interpretation of what she feels with this sentence is almost identical to her childhood memory of the time when Rufus was born. This clearly indicates Ruby’s sense of imminent doom as is in her statement that the baby will make her older and “much deader” (O’Connor, 1990: 103).

O’Connor creates a gothic atmosphere in which Ruby’s denial of being pregnant is literalized with metaphors. The narration of her pregnancy merges some unusual details which are deemed grotesque. The bodily changes are perceived and reflected as the consequence of a disease, since her state is reduced to physical deformation. The grotesque description of her condition carries on until she reaches an awareness and feeling of knowledge about her condition in the end:

> *In her later “A Stroke of Good Fortune,” O'Connor evokes in a more Gothic mode a woman's fear of pregnancy. Although Ruby Turpin, the protagonist, refuses to recognize her symptoms, in true O'Connor style,*

> *she is finally brought to a traumatic recognition of her impending maternity in a passage that makes of Ruby herself an obstinate child (Kahane, 2005: 458-59).*

Like typical gothic stories, Ruby is haunted by her fear. All kinds of implications made on her condition cause consternation and fury for her, but she is obliged to come up against her fear after all.

In relation to Bakhtin's theory, the grotesque inheres in pregnancy, for it involves the lower stratum of the body, which is primarily responsible for "defecation and copulation, conception, pregnancy, and birth" (Bakhtin, 1984: 21). In this way, Ruby's pregnancy holds a grotesque tendency, because the bodies of mother and her child are fused into each other, and this suggests an incomplete process by which a new existence is formed: "It is dying and as yet unfinished; the body stands on the threshold of the grave and the crib. No longer is there one body, nor are there as yet two. Two heartbeats are heard; one is the mother's, which is slowed down" (Bakhtin, 1984: 26). Ruby is haunted by the merging of her body with her unborn baby's, and for this reason, she cannot embrace her pregnancy at first, but by the time she ascends the stairs, she comes to terms with her state of being pregnant.

PART IV

4. GROTESQUE INTELLECTUALS

Intellectuals in the stories of O'Connor require substantial attention concerning their grotesque understanding of the world and character traits; most of them are characterized by certain personality flaws. The most commonly held weakness in their characters is pride, which is also one of the fatal sins in Christianity. As typical of Southern identity, they have excessive self reliance in themselves. They feel safe and sound in their homes, and they are not open to any change. However, they head for their fall and a catastrophic end as they have an implacable feeling that they are better or more important than the other people.

The grotesque disposition of O'Connor's intellectuals is strongly connected to the unconscious defect that haunts them to a great extent; the major determiner of their grotesque existence is the family issues. They all share the same traits; the absence of the father figure and strong attachments to the mother. Their intellectuality is only a disguise that hides their true feelings. O'Connor unmasks them by introducing an evil outsider, which one of the features of gothic literature, or debunking their alleged superiority and innocence. She points out that these intellectuals, whose religious believes are weak when compared to their mothers, are in strong need of redemption. She also implies that their pride is a consequence of their lack of faith.

Her grotesque intellectuals are the history writer, Thomas, in "The Comforts of Home" (1965), Joy/Hulga who has a PhD in philosophy in "Good Country People" (1955), Asbury who is an unsuccessful writer in "The Enduring Chill" (1965), and Julian who is an unemployed intellectual in "Everything That Rises Must Converge" (1965).

4.1. Thomas: An Arrogant History Writer

"The Comforts of Home" (1965) is the account of how Thomas's ostensibly insouciant life gives way to a family tragedy. The story line starts when his mother reaches out to a criminal, Sarah Ham, who has no family and calls herself Star Drake, and accommodates her in their house. In an effort to get rid of her, Thomas ends up killing his own mother in the end. However, it looked like an accident. The salient side

of Thomas's personality is apparent in his outlook on life and self-perception. He is one of the quintessential intellectuals of O'Connor's fiction whose conceit is the indication of his grotesquely degraded personality. He is a history writer who is not married and lives with his mother, and he has too much pride in himself and what he does. His behaviour and the way of thinking when he feels that he is more important than the other people is easy to see in his attitude towards Sarah Ham when he meets her for the first time: "Thomas neither moved nor spoke but hung in the door in what seemed a savage perplexity. Finally he said, 'How do you do, Sarah,' in a tone of such loathing that he was shocked at the sound of it. He reddened, feeling it beneath him to show contempt for any creature so pathetic" (O'Connor, 1990: 389). Sarah's peculiar demeanour paves his way for further superciliousness. He feels that Sarah is inferior to him, assuming a divine role against her: "He was looking at the most unendurable form of innocence. Absently he asked himself what the attitude of God was to this, meaning if possible to adopt it" (O'Connor, 1990: 390). His arrogant behaviour remains in the forefront until his final fall when he shoots his mother. O'Connor evaluates the noise of his shot as if it "was like a sound meant to bring an end to evil in the world" (O'Connor, 1990: 403). The final disaster that causes his murdering of his mother is to be construed as the corollary of his arrogant disposition:

> *Thus the story concludes with the ambiguous violence that characterizes many of Ms O'Connor's narratives. In this case, when Thomas insists that only he understands history, both local and cosmical, he demonstrates only his ignorance of human nature. He understands neither his own father nor what Miss O'Connor might call the mysteries of grace and his heavenly father's purposes. Yet the author implies that these purposes may be at work in Thomas' catastrophe; it may be a "fortune fall" that will free him from his smug isolation and provide a chance to make expiation for his pridefulness through suffering (Millichap, 1974: 98-99).*

Thus, the tragedy he faces in the end is to be acknowledged as salvation for him; he accepts punishment for what he has done wrong throughout his life, and the source

of this punishment is none other than himself. He becomes solely responsible for the tragedy in the end.

Thomas's complex relationship with his mother is significant and herein lies the primary reason of the ultimate tragedy. The contempt he feels is not only for Sarah, but for his mother as well. He treats her in disdain for lending a hand to someone who takes advantage of her good will. He considers her mediocrity as the antithesis of his intellectuality, and his understanding of grace is precisely different from hers, which leads to his constant confrontation with his mother. According to him, an excessive amount of goodness, which is typical of her mother, is conducive to the emergence of excessive wickedness: "Had she been in any degree intellectual, he could have proved to her from early Christian history that no excess of virtue is justified, that a moderation of good produces likewise a moderation in evil, that if Antony of Egypt had stayed at home and attended to his sister, no devil would have plagued him" (O'Connor, 1990: 385-86). With his understanding of the evil, he considers her guilty of admitting a criminal into their home. He means to belittle her behaviour incessantly and remonstrates about her naivety: "She proceeded always from the tritest of considerations-it was the *nice thing* to do-into the most fool-hardy engagements with the devil, whom, of course, she never recognized" (O'Connor, 1990: 385).

Thomas's mother lends a helping hand to Sarah Ham, yet the author exposes the hypocrisy of her behaviour and its culmination in Thomas's self-hatred. She pretends to have moral standards, but despises Sarah inwardly. She always makes references to her inferiority and tries to appeal to his son judging from their so-called magnanimity. She thinks wickedness and immorality are the constructions of heredity, that is, no one can transcend what they are born with. What she tells Thomas persistently unravels the way she notices things: " 'Think of all you have,' she began. 'All the comforts of home. And morals, Thomas. No bad inclinations, nothing bad you were born with' " (O'Connor, 1990: 392-93). His mother's constant comparison of him with Sarah begets revulsion in him, causing him to hate himself and to generate a deep rooted anger against his mother.

Thomas's urge to restore the long-lost peace to his life and following tragedy are principally governed by his emotional commitment to his mother. His father is dead and until Sarah Ham appears, he does not have to share his mother's affection with anybody. It comes out that Sarah turns out to be his opponent that competes with him:

> *In this story, part of that complexity derives from the fact that Thomas's possessiveness at some level suggest an Oedipal conflict-an attachment to the parent and an inability to expand the horizons of one's love. Whereas his mother would share her home, Thomas can only declare possessively that it is, as he puts it, "mine" (CS, 394). He conflates "home" and "mother" subconsciously. In other words, when he is "overcome by rage" (CS, 383) at the idea of having to share his mother's love, he sees the girl as a rival he cannot tolerate, rather than as another human being of the opposite sex he might love (Paulson, 1988: 32).*

This makes clear that Thomas's dysfunctional bond with his mother does not allow him to ameliorate the situation in which his relationships within the family and with the outsiders that disturb his peace such as Sarah do not work normally. He figures on killing Sarah, but subconsciously he punishes his mother for letting him down: "Thomas sees the girl as a rival threatening his wish to possess the mother and as a reminder of his own physicality so that he responds with aggressive rationality, repressing not only his own instinctual nature but also his ambivalence toward his mother and his father" (Paulson, 1988: 32). He seems to have been nearly demented with worry about losing his mother.

The absent father figure has a part in Thomas's emotional problems at the same time. O'Connor gives place to the supernatural, which is a typical element of gothic fiction; he starts to hear his dead father's voice when an outsider takes a step on his house. He remembers his father as an imperious figure, based on which the author lays stress on his feeling of incompetence. When he encounters complicated situations which he cannot control, he recalls how his father would "put his foot down" and tackle the issue (O'Connor, 1990: 386). The influence of his father and mother on his emotional issues is plain in how the author identifies him depending on their personality traits: "Thomas had inherited his father's reason without his ruthlessness and his mother's love of good without her tendency to pursue it" (O'Connor, 1990: 387-88). It is obvious that he has inherited the worst aspect of his parents' characteristics. The supernatural makes itself evident whenever he has to face a dilemma. He forms his father's picture in his mind and hears his voice telling him what to do. The cold and domineering manner of his father is explicit in how he insults Thomas and reviles for not having the

competency to come up against predicaments and to teach his mother her place: “Numbskull, the old man said, put your foot down now. Show her who’s boss before she shows you” (O’Connor, 1990: 392). He does what he says without much questioning and paves the way for the final tragedy. Upon hearing his voice, Thomas decides to bring in the sheriff, to place the gun in Sarah’s purse, and even to fire the gun. By this means, he is abetted in the murder by his subconscious, supernaturally.

The quandary that Thomas gets himself into is a striking state of estrangement from something once familiar - the uncanny - in this case his home. The house where he lives in with his mother is of the essence and its desecration by Sarah irritates him: “Thomas kept to his room or the den. His home was to him home, workshop, church, as personal as the shell of a turtle and as necessary. He could not believe that it could be violated in this way. His flushed face had a constant look of stunned outrage” (O’Connor, 1990: 395). In his point of view, his home is damaged and treated without respect, and he gets the uncanny feeling and becomes a stranger in his own world: “Ironically titled, ‘The Comforts of Home’ is a perfect example of the Gothic uncanny the snug refuge revealing itself as a place of crazy horror” (Crow, 2009: 132). His tranquil life is disturbed and he is discomforted as his sanctuary becomes unfamiliar as the scene of matricide. However, his home is not the only place from which he gets estranged. As Thomas associates his mother with his house, he is alienated from her as well: “Although initially Thomas is not as alienated as the other intellectual sons are, being inextricably attached to his electric blanket - - an umbilical symbol of the comforts of his mother's "saner virtues"—the invading Sarah causes his estrangement from his mother” (Morton, 1980: 76). This feeling of not belonging to his home and the state of being estranged from his mother leads to his downfall when Sarah catches him placing the gun in her purse: “At that instant Thomas damned not only the girl but the entire order of the universe that made her possible” (O’Connor, 1990: 403). He magnifies the situation unnecessarily as a typical Southern person. Despite being intellectually an adult, he is still a child in terms of personality.

4.2. Hulga’s Disillusion

It is possible to draw an analogy between the arrogant history writer in “The Comforts of Home” (1965) and Joy/Hulga in “Good Country People” (1955). As is Thomas, Joy/Hulga is also grotesquely degraded with her intellectual arrogance.

Besides, Thomas's pride is undermined by Sarah Ham, which is similar to Joy's situation. Her presumption of intellectual ascendancy is completely shattered by an outsider, Manley Pointer, who acts as if he were a Bible salesman. Having a PhD degree in philosophy, Joy works as a lecturer at the university, and she lives with her mother, Mrs. Hopewell, and their employees, Freemans. She is well educated, and has a different range of interests than the ones she shares her house with. It seems likely that Joy thinks herself superior to the others who do not have suchlike intellectual curiosity. She finds it demeaning to establish a mutual bond with the people intellectually inferior and the way she behaves is utterly ruthless, which leaves Mrs. Hopewell in a situation in which "she felt she had always to overflow with hospitality to make up for Joy's lack of courtesy" (O'Connor, 1990: 280). She, thus, marginalizes and keeps herself at bay, which makes her feel deeply dissatisfied: "All day Joy sat on her neck in a deep chair, reading. Sometimes she went for walks but she didn't like dogs or cats or birds or flowers or nature or nice young men. She looked at young nice men as if she could smell their stupidity" (O'Connor, 1990: 276). Unaware of the fact that Manley will cause her breakdown in the end by vulgarizing her feeling that she is better than the others, she looks down on him as well. Although she imagines forming a close personal relationship with him, she cannot desist from highlighting his meanness: "She had lain in bed imagining dialogues for them that were insane on the surface but that reached below to depths that no Bible salesman would be aware of" (O'Connor, 1990: 283). She disparages his existence and ability to act on his will. She envisages enchanting and manipulating him by adopting a patronizing and manipulative posture:

> *During the night she had imagined that she seduced him. She imagined that the two of them walked on the place until they came to the storage barn beyond the two back fields and there, she imagined, the things came to such a pass that she very easily seduced him and that then, of course, she had to reckon with his remorse. True genius can get an idea across even to an inferior mind. She imagined that she took his remorse in hand and changed it into a deeper understanding of life. She took all his shame away and turned it into something useful (O'Connor, 1990: 284).*

Her treatment of Manley with tenderness and affection shows her arrogance. When he wants her to declare her love, she calls out to him as someone deserving pity: “You poor baby” (O’Connor, 1990: 287). Her patronizing attitude does not change until the end when she feels completely defenceless.

Joy’s intellectualism is grotesquely marginalized in the sight of other characters. Her career and occupation do not get respect, primarily, from her mother. When Mrs. Hopewell glances at her books, she reads a passage which is highlighted by Joy herself. The passage gives a description of science, which appals and horrifies her intensely: “These words had been underlined with a blue pencil and they worked on Mrs. Hopewell like some evil incantation in gibberish” (O’Connor, 1990: 277). She finds Joy’s profession bizarre and imagines her as a “scarecrow” when she teaches at the university (O’Connor, 1990: 276). In addition to this, she adopts an eccentric way of comportment and attitude. Even Joy’s treatment of religion is different from what most people consider to be normal and acceptable; she is an atheist who does not let her mother have a Bible in the house (O’Connor, 1990: 278). Her idiosyncrasy does not escape Mrs. Hopewell’s notice: “It seemed to Mrs. Hopewell that every year she grew less like other people and more like herself-bloated, rude, and, and squint-eyed. And she said such strange things!” (O’Connor, 1990: 276).

Joy’s grotesque qualities are not only limited to her proud posture and intellectual marginalization, but her physical properties include a form of degradation. Above all, the most distinct detail of her physique is the artificial leg which she has got as a consequence of a hunting accident in her childhood. This handicap of hers is the essential component of her existence, in that even her intellectuality may be regarded as a compensation for her deformity, and it determines the way other people behave her. First, her mother adopts an overprotective role towards her. The author gives a broad hint in the beginning: “Mrs. Hopewell thought of her as a child though she was thirty-two years old and highly educated” (O’Connor, 1990: 271). She correlates the negative aspects of her personality with the fact that she has a physical deficiency. For instance, when Joy answers back to her, she is willing to forgive her because of the artificial leg (O’Connor, 1990: 274). Second, Mrs. Freeman has taken a keen interest in her artificial leg and demeans her to the physical level by constantly emphasizing her grotesque essence: “Something about her seemed to fascinate Mrs. Freeman and then one day Hulga realized that it was the artificial leg. Mrs. Freeman had a special fondness for the

details of secret infections, hidden deformities, assaults upon children" (O'Connor, 1990: 275). Third, Manley Pointer pays plenty of heed to her, especially to the artificial leg. Apart from debunking Joy's pretence of superiority in the end, his strong desire to know about her results in a moment of the uncanny for Joy:

> *He was gazing at her with open curiosity, with fascination, like a child watching a new fantastic animal at the zoo, and he was breathing as if he had run a great distance to reach her. His gaze seemed somehow familiar but she could not think where she had been regarded with it before. For almost a minute he didn't say anything. Then on what seemed an insuck of breath, he whispered, "You ever ate a chicken that was two days old?" (O'Connor, 1990: 283).*

Joy's feeling that she recognizes him is blurry in that she cannot pinpoint the precise frame of its context. This is truly an instant of the uncanny for her.

Joy's self-perception contributes to the grotesque understanding of her personality and appearance. She takes an active role in her own marginalization and degradation. A clear indication of this lies in the fact that she purposely changes her name from Joy to Hulga. Her mother is sure that "she had thought and thought until she had hit upon the ugliest name in any language. Then she had gone and had the beautiful name, Joy, changed without telling her mother until after she had done it" (O'Connor, 1990: 274). The fact that she chooses an 'unpleasant' name, the sound of which is unattractive, shows how she desires to degrade herself intentionally. She takes great delight in self-abasement and achieves this by opting for such a name: "Hulga is the ultimate representation of the grotesque in that not only is she missing a limb (her leg was shot off in a hunting accident when she was ten) but she has legally had her name changed from Joy to Hulga because she likes how ugly it sounds and sees it as a reflection of her own deformity" (Hawley, 1996: 123-24). There is one another reason for her choice of that name in addition to its 'unpleasant' sound. Her selection is predicated upon the myth of Vulcan, having a view "of the name working like the ugly sweating Vulcan who stayed in the furnace and to whom, the goddess had to come when called" (O'Connor, 1990: 275). Vulcan is the god of fire in ancient Roman

religion who seizes his wife, Aphrodite, committing adultery with Ares. Gentry relates the name Hulga with her avid inclination to the grotesque:

> *The entire story is relevant to Hulga's choice of her name; the trap that Hulga sets for herself leads to just such an enviable capture. In her relationship with Manley Pointer, Hulga plays two roles: consciously she is Vulcan, and unconsciously she is the captured Aphrodite. Hulga at once the victimier and the willing victim. The value to Hulga in making herself grotesque is that the grotesque process always involves a return to the ideal, in this instance her identity as her mother's good daughter, Joy. The myth on which Hulga bases her choice of her grotesque name is an illustration of this necessary connection between the grotesque and the ideal (Gentry, 1986: 116).*

He associates her willingness to degrade herself with the possibility of reaching the ideal. Her mother does not come to terms with her new name, but Mrs. Freeman has a fervent desire to name her Hulga, as she pays plenty of attention to the grotesque aspects of her existence such as the artificial leg. She calls out to her using the name Hulga. However she is not gratified to hear Mrs. Freeman mishandling her name, since she feels "as if her privacy had been intruded upon. She considered the name her personal affair" (O'Connor, 1990: 275).

Joy is at odds with her mother most of the time, falling into dispute with her about the way she behaves. She pretends to be assertive and self-assured when she bawls at her: "If you want me, here I am-LIKE I AM" (O'Connor, 1990: 274). However, an obvious submissiveness lies behind her seemingly self-confident demeanour. She confesses her academic career to Manley as though she had committed an error: " 'But I must tell you something. There mustn't be anything dishonest between us.' She lifted his head and looked him in the eye. 'I am thirty years old,' she said. 'I have a number of degrees' " (O'Connor, 1990: 288). He makes her grotesque disposition and self-assurance gradually weaker and less effective and downgrades her. He makes his first blunt statement when he wants to see her artificial leg, unravelling her tenuous hold on life and sensitive state of mind: "But she was as sensitive about the artificial leg as a peacock about his tail" (O'Connor, 1990: 288). He goes further and

yearns to see it removed. The moment he removes her artificial leg, he unmasks her compliant and weak nature: “Without the leg she felt entirely dependent on him. Her brain seemed to have stopped thinking altogether and to be about some other function that it was not very good at” (O’Connor, 1990: 289). This indicates that she uses the grotesque aspects of her physique and personality as a way to compensate for her submissiveness. When he leaves her in the end, Joy feels completely abandoned and forlorn: “She is humbled. All of her intellectual superiority and her nihilistic refusal to believe in anything have evaporated in this one act when she falls victim to a conman who is truly able to feel what she can’t – complete apathy and disregard for other human beings” (Hawley, 1996: 125). At this moment, Joy is assimilated into her mother’s beliefs about what is right and important in life, since when she understands Manley’s true colours, she cannot help asking “aren’t you just good country people,” sounding exactly similar to her mother:

> *It is Joy's great tragedy, then, that it is her artificial leg, marking her difference, her dissent, which becomes the focus of her treacherous seduction-or, more properly, rape-by the wonderfully named Manly Pointer, the traveling Bible salesman. It is at this point that Joy reveals her own susceptibility to the sentimental set of values which she so criticized in her mother and Mrs. Freeman, making her complicit in her own betrayal: she asks Mr. Pointer, "aren't you just good country people?" (194) (Gleeson-White, 2003: 53).*

Although she is her mother’s adversary in the beginning, she undergoes a transformation and talks like her mother. Her ingenuous nature comes to surface, since it seems obvious that she is unable to recognize the degraded mediocre people and their attitude towards women.

4.3. Asbury’s ‘Tragedy’

Asbury in “The Enduring Chill” (1965) is haunted by the same flaw that grotesquely degrades Thomas and Joy, and causes their downfall. Although he is well aware of the fact that he is an unavailing writer, he accuses his mother of puncturing his motivation. He is rather boastful and vain, and looks down on his hometown and those

who are around him, including his mother. He has been living in New York, and the reason he returns to his family is that he is seriously ill, and he thinks he is dying. The disdain he shows towards others becomes clear the first moment he sets foot on the town he was born: "He had become entirely accustomed to the thought of death, but he had not become accustomed to the thought of death *here*" (O'Connor, 1990: 358). He overestimates himself and his forthcoming death, which he dramatizes in a poetic way. He is always in search of someone who is capable of appreciating the dolefulness and magnitude of his death; this is how he approaches to the priest he meets in New York: "Perhaps, Asbury thought now, he should have used it for the priest appealed to him as a man of the world, someone who would have understood the unique tragedy of his death, a death whose meaning had been far beyond the twittering group around them" (O'Connor, 1990: 360). He gives heed to the priest, because, in his estimation, he is intellectually his equivalent. With the same concern in his mind, he has a Jesuit priest brought to his house. However, coming into the presence of someone who is intellectually capable of appreciating his tragedy is not the single reason behind his call for that priest. He wants his mother to have a chastening experience; for his mother is a Protestant, and the idea of receiving a Catholic priest in her home as his son's companion is unbearable to her. In this way, Asbury debases the religion grotesquely: "Catholicism becomes a grotesque degradation of his mother's Protestantism, and Asbury is able to confront a spokesman for religion because he tells himself that his motives are antireligious" (Gentry, 1986: 52). With the purpose of debasing her mother's ideals and finding someone who is intellectually his equivalent, he has a conversation with the priest: "Asbury Fox is a pitifully immature literary poseur, fearful of his own disillusionment and eager to find solace from someone whom he considers his equal" (Martin, 1969: 99). He is disappointed though, since the priest is not the intellectual that he has in mind. Their talk does not relieve or satisfy, but disconcerts him.

Asbury is dispirited as his lifelong passion of being a prolific writer is lost, but he desires to come up with some tragedy out of the fact that he is dying. Hankering after a tragic end, he is fascinated with the idea of death; when he arrived in the town where, he thought, he would pass away, he "felt that he was about to witness a majestic transformation, that the flat of roofs might at any moment turn into the mounting turrets of some exotic temple for a god he didn't know" (O'Connor, 1990: 357). His

fascination is also evident in the letter he has written for his mother to be read after he dies, which is described as "such a letter as Kafka had addressed to his father" (O'Connor, 1990: 364). He has written this letter with the assumption that his mother will not comprehend its gravity and contents, another sign of his disparagement of his mother:

> *He knew, of course, that his mother would not understand the letter at once. Her literal mind would require some time to discover the significance of it, but he thought she would be able to see that he forgave her for all she had done to him. For that matter, he supposed that she would realize what she had done to him only through the letter. He didn't think she was conscious of it at all. Her self-satisfaction itself was barely conscious, but because of the letter, she might experience a painful realization and this would be the only thing of value he had to leave her (O'Connor, 1990: 364).*

With this letter, he craves to attribute a poetic quality to his death and to appear more sophisticated than he really is. However, while his aim is personal aggrandizement, he also marginalizes himself in the eyes of the others.

Asbury's relationship to his father and sister is an essential part of understanding his particular way of behaving and his conflicts with the others. The father figure is absent as in "The Comforts of Home" and "Good Country People." His memories about his father disclose his disgruntled feelings: "The old man, he felt sure, had been one of the courthouse gang, a rural worthy with a dirty finger in every pie and he knew he would not have been able to stomach him. He had read some of his correspondence and had been appalled by its stupidity" (O'Connor, 1990: 364). As a writer who is incapable of writing, he seems dissatisfied with his father and ironically despises the letters he sends and receives. His ongoing disagreement with his sister, Mary George, is even more gripping in that she undermines his intellectual posture by constantly making references to his inadequacy. This is the reason why he is unable to establish a close rapport with her: "His sister said he was not an artist and that he had no talent and that was the trouble with him" (O'Connor, 1990: 362-63). She always suggests that he is bereft of mental endowments, and for this reason he is not able to publish anything. She

associates his sickness with his failure in writing, and goes step further by saying "all he's going to be around here for the next fifty years is a decoration" (O'Connor, 1990: 373). The speculation of Mary George turns out to be true to some degree when Asbury learns he is not suffering from a malignant disease just as he has been presuming. It appears that his morbidity is a mere reflection of his psychological weakness: "Asbury Fox's undulant fever in 'The Enduring Chill' and Mrs. McIntyre's nervous disorder in 'The Displaced Person' signify their poor spiritual health" (Martin, 1969: 179).

No matter how opposing their personalities seem due to the head-on clash between two siblings, Asbury and Mary George are quite similar to each other. Although there are few mentions of her except the parts in which her confrontation with her brother is exhibited, Mary George fits to the category of O'Connor's typical intellectuals as well. Just like Thomas, Joy, and Asbury, she lives with her mother, and she shares the same kind of vanity with them. As she criticizes her brother's intellectual capacity sternly, Asbury assumes the same manner towards her: "Asbury said she posed as an intellectual but that her I.Q. couldn't be over seventy-five, that all she was really interested in was getting a man but that no sensible man would finish a first look at her" (O'Connor, 1990: 363). As opposed to their quarrelsome manner towards each other, their mother assumes a more protective role. She dismisses Mary George's implications that Asbury is suffering, since he cannot write and Asbury's hints that Mary George lacks good sense and judgment (O'Connor, 1990: 363, 373).

What distinguishes Asbury from the other intellectuals is that Thomas's downfall is not induced by an evil outsider who violates his home, whereas Thomas and Joy are brought to the brink of ruin with the arrival of some strangers such as Sarah Ham and Manley Pointer, respectively. Asbury seeds the sows of his own destruction by coming back home with the hope of a tragic end. He has moved away from his home to New York, and as things have not worked quite well for him, he returns his home on the pretext of suffering from a terminal illness. By this means, he loses his sense of belonging. He cannot recognize his home anymore, and experiences the uncanny. This is how he makes himself grotesque: "Further examples of how displacement generates grotesqueness appear throughout the stories and novels. Asbury in 'The Enduring Chill' is objectively grotesque and his vision is distorted because neither New York nor Timberboro is his true element" (Martin, 1969: 174). Another peculiarity of Asbury that differentiates him from Thomas and Joy is that he has to confront himself before the

confounding realization that he does not have a serious illness, in the end. The letter he writes to his mother serves an undesigned purpose, which is Asbury's understanding of his failure in life:

> *If reading it would be painful to her, writing it had sometimes been unbearable to him—for in order to face her, he had had to face himself. "I came here to escape the slave's atmosphere of home," he had written, "to find freedom, to liberate my imagination, to take it like a hawk from its cage and set it 'whirling off into the widening gyre' (Yeats) and what did I find? It was incapable of flight. It was some bird you had domesticated, sitting huffy in its pen, refusing to come out!" The next words were underscored twice. "I have no imagination. I have no talent. I can't create. I have nothing but the desire for these things. Why didn't you kill that too? Woman, why did you pinion me?" (O'Connor, 1990: 364).*

By moving into New York, he has hoped to free himself from the restraints of his mother, but he takes cognizance of his incapacity to write, ruefully. He is aware of his inadequacy, fully vindicating his sister's suggestions.

Asbury's relationship with his mother is considerably similar to Thomas's. In "The Comforts of Home," Thomas's mother allows Sarah Ham in their house, much to the chagrin of Thomas; he constantly accuses his mother for letting her trespass on his sanctuary, and subconsciously punishes her for disappointing her. Asbury lives through a similar experience in which he desires to inflict punishment on her mother, but his motive is different from Thomas in that for Asbury's case, there is no evil outsider. He sees his mother responsible for his failure in writing. With this motivation, he always attempts to grotesquely degrade his mother's ideals. The fact that he has a Jesuit priest visit him is the first instance of his debasement of these ideals. Even his return to his hometown shows his propensity for punishing her: "He was pleased that she should see death in his face at once. His mother, at the age of sixty, was going to be introduced to reality and he supposed that if the experience didn't kill her, it would assist her in the process of growing up" (O'Connor, 1990: 357). He hopes to make her mother agonise over his death and undergo a transformation. Another path he chooses to grieve his mother is playing upon her feelings towards the black people working on their farm.

Mrs. Fox strongly holds racist views, and treats these people unfairly. Asbury tries to work up connection with them, not because he is non-racist, but only to torment his mother. He even intended to write a play on them the year before his illness. He spent some time around them for observation, and he tried to tempt them into doing things that his mother did not allow, such as smoking in the milk house and drinking the milk without her permission. He succeeded in making them smoke. However, they refused to drink milk. For Asbury, the best way to encourage them was to drink it himself first, although he detested the taste of it (O'Connor, 1990: 368-70). He aspires to punish his mother at all costs even if he also makes his life miserable. O'Connor employs a heavy irony here; the reason for his current illness, because of which he has returned home, is that glass of milk he drank without pasteurizing. With the same motivation, he demands to see these black workers one more time. He is also in search of "making some last meaningful experience for himself" (O'Connor, 1990: 378). His mother feels obliged to bring them together, scourged by her conscience and pity on her son. The importance that he attaches to his meeting is clear in his feelings: "He waited, preparing himself for the encounter as a religious man might prepare himself for the last sacrament" (O'Connor, 1990: 379). As is apparent, he overestimates the occasion for the same reason that stimulates him to get in touch with the Jesuit priest; he is waiting expectantly for a tragic end. He tries to establish a connection with the black workers with a view to perturbing his mother and having a serious and important experience, yet his plan miscarries. The experience he has turns out to be rather shallow and does not serve the purpose he has in mind:

> *As Dr. Block says appreciatively of the cause of his mysterious fever, "Blood will tell." Part of what it tells is that the source of his disease is his attachment to his mother. Asbury, who is hoping to die so that he will have some effect on her, finds he has become ill from his attempt to rebel against his mother, an attempt in which he, like Julian, tries to ally himself with blacks (Hendin, 1970: 112).*

As Hendin reports, his dysfunctional relationship with his mother bears upon his illness in that he gets undulant fever after he drinks unpasteurized milk to defy her, and his second attempt at making friends with them also ends in defeat and breakdown.

4.4. Julian's Ride

"Everything That Rises Must Converge" (1965) is one of O'Connor's most widely-acclaimed stories, since she reveals the discriminatory practises towards the black community following The American Civil War. Similar to the other stories discussed in this chapter, this story is also about the infighting between a mother who embodies Southern conventions and racial bigotry, and her intellectual child, Julian, who looks down on her and all the values she represents. The story takes place during a bus ride they have where both of them are obliged to question their standards of morality.

Julian is a college graduate and intellectual who feels deeply indebted to his mother, who is the great-grandchild of an old plantation owner who had slaves working for him, since she has subsidized his education, and he has to live with her, because he cannot support himself. For this reason, he reluctantly acquiesces to accompany her in the ride which she is afraid of taking by herself due to the integration of public transportation for the black and white people. However, he feels rage towards his mother for her racist point of view that is hidebound by Southern conventions. As is Thomas, Joy, and Asbury, Julian's conceit is the primary motive behind his code of conduct. For example, he tends to isolate himself from rest of the people from time to time, because they are not as intelligent as he is (O'Connor, 1990: 411). His approach to the black man next to whom he takes a seat on the bus is another sign of his feeling as intellectually superior to the others including his mother: "He would have liked to get in conversation with the Negro and to talk with him about art or politics or any subject that would be above the comprehension of those around them, but the man remained entrenched behind his paper" (O'Connor, 1990: 412). He wishes to start an intellectual discussion with the man in order to flatter himself, but the man refuses to be a part of this conversation, which disappoints him. His unsuccessful interaction with the man is quite similar to Asbury's futile endeavour to establish a connection with the Jesuit priest, whom he supposes to be equal to him intellectually, but gets upset in the end, since what he has hoped turns out to be a false hope.

Julian is scornful of his mother's narrow-mindedness and patronizes her with contempt. Therefore, he is always in a state of conflict with her: "Everything that gave her pleasure was small and depressed him" (O'Connor, 1990: 405). He despises the time he has to spend with her during the bus ride, and seems extremely irate for the fact

that “he would be sacrificed to her pleasure” (O’Connor, 1990: 406). The aspect of her personality that irritates him mostly is her racist prejudice and views. She is a strong supporter of the unfair treatment of the people belonging to the black community; this is why, she is afraid of travelling on a bus into which black passengers are also allowed. He detaches himself from her thoroughly regarding them as being completely different from each other:

> *The further irony of all this was that in spite of her, he had turned out so well. In spite of going to only a third-rate college, he had, on his own initiative, come out with a first-rate education; in spite of growing up dominated by a small mind, he had ended up with a large one; in spite of all her foolish views, he was free of prejudice and unafraid to face facts. Most miraculous of all, instead of being blinded by love for her as she was for him, he had cut himself emotionally free of her and could see her with complete objectivity. He was not dominated by his mother (O’Connor, 1990: 412).*

As is evident, he contrasts himself with her mother in every aspect possible. But his presumption of himself being totally incompatible with her mother is destined to be ruined, since Julian is also a racist himself, and the only reason of his attempted interaction with the black people is to punish his mother. As this impulse governs most of his actions, the assumption of his being independent of her mother is to be proven wrong as well. : “But the luxury of his torment and martyrdom (he has been comically compared, by O’Connor, to Saint Sebastian) and his presumptuous certainty of himself-of knowing ‘who he is’-are suddenly overturned by the sight of his mother” (Orvell, 1991: 9). His illusion is brought to an end, since he is not as different from his mother as he has imagined.

Julian’s obsession with vexing and censuring his mother is what makes him grotesque besides his prideful nature. He gets himself messy by slackening his tie in his mother’s sight for this purpose:

> *Julian makes himself grotesque, but he does so consciously, in order to attack his mother, and the narration correctly analyzes the subtleties of*

> *Julian's mind. Wanting to degrade himself, he takes off his tie at the bus stop, and when his mother tells him, "You look like a-thug," Julian replies, "Then I must be one" (p. 409). Most of Julian's actions to associate himself with blacks are versions of this grotesque, motivated by a desire to seem grotesque to his mother (Gentry, 1986: 97).*

It is clear that he takes pleasure in his mother's disfavour: "There was in him an evil urge to break her spirit" (O'Connor, 1990: 409). All his deeds and decisions are entirely governed by such an impetus. In particular, he interacts with the black members of the society to his mother's disapprobation. For example, whenever he gets on a bus without his mother, he takes a seat next to someone black, which is an act of retribution for his mother's offences. He feels as if he were to compensate for the iniquity of racial prejudice and her misdeeds. He goes further during the bus ride mentioned; when he accompanies her to the reducing class, he sits down next to a black man, antagonizing her deliberately. No matter how intensively he hankers after a conversation with the man with the purpose of giving a lesson to his mother, he cannot succeed. As is clear, the reason for his attention to the black man is not that he is anti-racist, but he only wants his mother to learn her lesson (O'Connor, 1990: 409, 412-413). His interaction with that man brings forth to a grotesque alienation for the mother and the son: "He stared at her, making his eyes the eyes of a stranger" (O'Connor, 1990: 412). He seems to take an avid interest in such alienation, seeking after the moment of uncanny. After the man gets off the bus, he imagines acting as if she did not know her to alienate himself: "He visualized a scene in which, the bus having reached their stop, he would remain in his seat and when she said, 'Aren't you going to get off?' he would look at her as at a stranger who had rashly addressed him" (O'Connor, 1990: 413). To punish her for her racist attitude, he fantasizes about being "friends with some distinguished Negro professor or lawyer," "his being able to secure only a Negro doctor for her" when she is sick, and bringing "a beautiful suspiciously Negroid woman" to home (O'Connor, 1990: 414). All of his imaginary and non-imaginary interactions with the black community demonstrate that he is no different from his mother. His hypocrisy is obvious in his satisfaction to witness unfairness: "It gave him a certain satisfaction to see injustice in daily operation" (O'Connor, 1990: 412). He pretends to have moral standards and an egalitarian perspective:

> *And while a few of O'Connor's stories are told from the point of view of a black man and others are told from the point of view of clear racists, the one that stands out as most disturbing is the story "Everything That Rises Must Converge" about a white man who looks down on racists, particularly his mother, who turns out to be racist himself in his obsession with using black people to aggravate his mother (Hawley, 1996: 74).*

He deceives himself by despising the people who supports discriminatory practices against the black people, but he unfairly treats them by exploiting the downsides of the racist system just for provoking his mother.

Julian's downfall comes along when his mother's racial biases lead to the debacle in the end. She wants to give a penny to a black boy when they get off the bus, yet the boy's mother takes offence and hits her with her purse. Unable to recover from the shock and fright of this unpleasant situation, she dies in front of his son. This incident is significant in shattering Julian's sense of superiority. The moment the black woman and her son get on the bus, he has the uncanny feeling and senses something strangely acquainted in the woman. Afterwards, he finds out that his mother and the woman are wearing identical hats (O'Connor, 1990: 415-416). When the woman's son sits down next to Julian's mother, and the woman has the seat next to Julian's, he feels that "she and the woman had, in a sense, swapped sons" (O'Connor, 1990: 415). This pleases Julian, while, according to him, his mother is quite dissatisfied with such a realization:

> *As I will discuss later in this chapter, Julian sees the significance of the doubling of his mother and the black woman wearing her hat on the bus in "Everything that Rises Must Converge," but he notes it as humorous, while she initially sees it with utter horror and then bemusement at the coincidence, rather than the significance. In fact, it is his hope that she will recognize herself in her double and accept their equality. This is just one of many such moments in O'Connor's stories where doubling is used to expose Southern societal racial fears (Hawley, 1996: 81).*

Thus, Julian's mother who holds racist views is doubled with a black woman with whom she shares the same hat and her son. By this means, O'Connor unravels the unjust discrimination and internalized racism in the Southern society. Her doubling with the woman delights Julian to a great extent, but does not have the same effect on her, and when both mothers and sons get off the bus, she dares to give the little boy a penny. The boy's mother takes umbrage at this impudence: "The huge woman turned and for a moment stood, her shoulders lifted and her face frozen with frustrated rage, and stared at Julian's mother. Then all at once she seemed to explode like a piece of machinery that had been given one ounce of pressure too much" (O'Connor, 1990: 418). The woman is likened to a mechanical device; this is another instant of the uncanny, since human and non-human forms are fused (Hawley, 1996: 94). Following the assault, Julian rebukes his mother for what she has done, but she behaves as if she was facing a stranger, and Julian was not her son. This is what Julian has imagined before, but he is terrified rather than being satisfied:

> *Immediately his mother is struck by a sense of the uncanny as she, like the grandmother in "A Good Man," begins to disassociate herself with her son. As he begins to lecture her on the lesson she should have learned, Julian appears as a stranger to her. "She leaned forward and her eyes raked his face. She seemed trying to determine his identity. Then, as if she found nothing familiar about him, she started off with a headlong movement in the wrong direction" (419). Her experience of the uncanny makes her long to return to the familiar – her home, but her only immediate method of heading there is on foot. She compels herself toward home without pausing to consider her health or her son's presence (Hawley, 1996: 94).*

As Hawley reports, she feels alienated and longs for her home. Even her son is unfamiliar to her, and she does not feel good, but even her body is not familiar, so she is not aware of her broken health. This vulnerable situation does not stop Julian from contending with her. She gives a speech on the moral issue of unfair racial prejudices and her mother's lack of ethics.

> *He saw no reason to let the lesson she had had go without backing it up with an explanation of its meaning. She might as well be made to understand what had happened to her. "Don't think that was just an uppity Negro woman," he said. "That was the whole colored race which will no longer take your condescending pennies. That was your black double. She can wear the same hat as you, and to be sure," he added gratuitously (because he thought it was funny), "it looked better on her than it did on you. What all this means," he said, "is that the old world is gone. The old manners are obsolete and your graciousness is not worth a damn." He thought bitterly of the house that had been lost for him. "You aren't who you think you are," he said (O'Connor, 1990: 419).*

With these sentences, Julian ignores his own hypocrisy and accuses her for the ills of the society. Following the physical attack, she is also exposed to her son's verbal attack, but she cannot recover from the feeling of estrangement. She desperately wants to go home, and it seems as if she did not hear what Julian says. This is the point where his pride and alleged superiority crash. While his mother is dying, he enters "into the world of guilt and sorrow" (O'Connor, 1990: 420). Regardless of his hypocrisy towards the black society and his mother, Julian acts as the mouthpiece of the black society:

> *When the intellectual Julian suffers the real loss of his mother, the real Julian emerges; his self-pitying depression vanishes at once; the faith he had somehow lost "in the midst of his martyrdom" is restored. So complex and so powerful a story cannot be reduced to any single meaning; but it surely O'Connor's intention to show how the egoistic Julian is a spokesman for an entire civilization, and to demonstrate the way by which this civilization will – inevitably, horribly – be jolted out of its complacent, worldly cynicism. By violence. And by no other way, because the Ego cannot be destroyed except violently, it cannot argued out of its egoism by words, by any logical argument, it cannot be instructed in anything except a physical manner (Oates, 1986: 49).*

As is apparent, Oates suggests that what emancipates Julian from his prideful nature and his hypocritical attitude in terms of racial issues is the violent act towards his mother, which bestows upon him the right to speak for the victims of racism and the related discriminatory practices.

With the grotesque intellectuals, O'Connor shows how the Southerners are unaware of the world, fragile, sensitive to outer forces, and unprepared for the evil, since they are introverted and withdrawn from the outer life. They assume they are strong and safe, yet this assumption is undermined by O'Connor, since, in the end, they are wrecked. She also reveals how their family structure is vulnerable and weak with the ongoing clash between the mothers and their children.

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PART V

5. DEMONIC CHARACTERS WITH GROTESQUE DEMEANOUR

Besides the characters with clearly visible physical deformities and the intellectuals haunted by their prideful approach to life and dysfunctional family bonds, O'Connor's grotesque also involves characters with demonic dispositions, which can be classified into two groups. The first group comprises of the wicked characters that are considered to be ill-bred, immoral, and cynical by the society. The second group consists of the characters with flawed world views; the ones that are outwardly devout Christians but hypocrites at heart, and those who have internalized racism no matter how harshly some of them refuse it and deceive themselves.

5.1. Wicked-Cynical Characters and Their Tendency to Violence

Wicked characters in O'Connor's stories are Sarah Ham who has been recently released from prison on parole in "The Comforts of Home" (1965), Rufus Johnson, a juvenile offender, in "The Lame Shall Enter First" (1965), the impostor Manley Pointer who pretends to be a Bible salesman in "Good Country People" (1955), Misfit who has broken away from the prison and murders the entire family in "A Goodman is Hard to Find" (1955), three boys who burn the woods in "A Circle in the Fire" (1955), grandfather Fortune who kills his granddaughter and dies of a heart attack in "A View of the Woods" (1957), and the vicious killer Singleton in "The Partridge Festival" (1961). Some of these characters are portrayed as being corrupted and incorrigible or inclined to violence. They are alienated, marginalized and excluded from the society. The others deny the existence of goodness and thoroughly cynical. They serve a similar function; O'Connor intends to disclose the grotesque, cynicism, and violence inherent in the southern consciousness and to stimulate a startling revelation for themselves and the protagonists through their intervention in most of the stories.

Sarah Ham or as she calls herself, Star Drake of "The Comforts of Home" (1965), is a truly grotesque character; she is a criminal who is ostracized by the society. She has been set free from the prison on parole thanks to the lawyer Thomas's mother hires, yet her eccentricity makes Thomas think that the only place suitable for her is the prison. Her outward appearance suggests a form of degradation: "The girl gave the

immediate impression of being physically crooked. Her hair was cut like a dog's or an elf's and she was dressed in the latest fashion" (O'Connor, 1990: 388-89). The way she looks is grotesquely debased by being compared to an animal or a magical creature. Besides the appearance, her behaviour is grotesque as well. She behaves in an unusual way and adopts a whimsical manner towards Thomas; for instance, she tries to break into his room. Although he is violently annoyed, he fails to persuade his mother into sending Sarah away; her mother is convinced that she is suffering from a psychological abnormality and she cannot help being who she is, since Sarah has told her that she is nymphomaniac. She degrades herself on purpose with this anomaly, yet Thomas can give no credence to her alleged psychological disorder: " 'Nymphomaniac,' he said fiercely. 'She doesn't need to supply you with any fancy names. She's a moral moron. That's all you need to know. Born without the moral faculty-like somebody else would be born without a kidney or a leg" (O'Connor, 1990: 385). By rejecting Sarah's grotesque excuse for her misdeeds and her self-debasement, Thomas does not relieve her from the grotesque distortion of her identity, but debases her in a different way; he thinks she was born with a moral deformity.

Sarah is excluded from each and every segment of the society. Her marginalization is another key factor contributing to her grotesque process and it is the reason why Thomas's mother shows a particular interest in her. She takes part in her self-marginalization by recounting grim events for her past that are made up by her: "The lawyer found that the story of the repeated atrocities was for the most part untrue, but when he explained to her that the girl was a psychopathic personality, not insane enough for the asylum, not criminal enough for the jail, not stable enough for society, Thomas's mother was more deeply affected than ever" (O'Connor, 1990: 388). She is dislocated and otherized; she cannot attach herself to none of the places mentioned above and has no fixed abode. Her deliberate participation in this otherization process is also evident in her acknowledgement of "being a congenital liar" (O'Connor, 1990: 388). She seems to take delight in other people's detestation of her, including Thomas's; the more he shows his loathing of her, the more satisfied she gets (O'Connor, 1990: 395).

Sarah's individual perspective on life and her existence appears to be quite cynical. Even though she seems to enjoy her grotesque presence and others' repulsion of her, she lacks faith in salvation with a mood of noticeable pessimism and bitterness: "

‘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” (O’Connor, 1990: 396). Sarah’s role in the story is more complicated than expected. With her cynicism and grotesque appearance-character, she paves the way for Thomas’s final revelation: “Sarah Ham, then, is a catalyst for Thomas and his mother, enabling them to face the reality of Thomas's selfishness” (Morton, 1980: 81). The quintessence of her existence causes the change in Thomas and her mother’s frame of mind and leads to the tragedy in the end.

O’Connor characterizes Rufus Johnson in “The Lame Shall Enter First” (1965) in a similar manner to Sarah Ham of “The Comforts of Home.” Both are social outcasts with a criminal past. Thomas’s mother and Sheppard invite them into their house out of pity, but they become the evil outsider giving rise to a family tragedy. The home becomes the scene of felony and violence when Thomas kills his mother in “Parker’s Back, and when Rufus manipulates Sheppard’s son, Norton, into hanging himself in order to see his dead mother one more time.

Rufus is a cynical delinquent who spurns Sheppard’s attempts to help him repeatedly. The most conspicuous sides of Rufus’s characterization are his deformed physique and depiction as a social outcast, as is typical in O’Connor’s many grotesque characters. He is club-footed, and he has been at the reformatory for his misdeeds. Therefore, he is to be regarded grotesque both physically and socially. These two aspects are what encourage Sheppard, who thinks Rufus’s “mischief was a compensation for the foot,” to help him by allowing him into his home (O’Connor, 1990: 450).

When Sheppard meets Rufus for the first time, his “monstrous club foot” catches his attention (O’Connor, 1990: 450). However, for Rufus, his club foot is not a form of deformity, but something more divine: “Johnson was a touchy about the foot as if it were a sacred object” (O’Connor, 1990: 459). For this reason, when Sheppard takes him to the brace shop to buy a new shoe for his clubfoot, he is uncomfortable and annoyed, since the clerk “measured the foot with his profane hands” (O’Connor, 1990: 459). He ascribes a vast meaning to the club foot; for example, when the size of the shoe prepared for him turns out to be small for him, he enjoys himself, he falsely believes that “the foot had grown” (O’Connor, 1990: 466). On the contrary, Sheppard has an eye

for the grotesque nature of the clubfoot. He does not sense the same sanctity in it. When he realizes his attempts to help Rufus are in vain, he reduces his exasperation into the clubfoot:

> *The boy's clubfoot was set within the circle of his vision. The pieced-together shoe appeared to grin at him with Johnson's own face. He caught hold of the edge of the sofa cushion and his knuckles turned white. A chill of hatred shook him. He hated the shoe, hated the foot, hated the boy. His face pales. Hatred choked him. He was aghast at himself (O'Connor, 1990: 473).*

His animosity towards Rufus is grotesquely degraded into his club foot; he perceives him as an abomination.

Rufus's psychology is marked with intense cynicism; he believes that he is doomed to be in hell, since he refuses to repent (O'Connor, 1990: 476). He consciously adopts a satanic mood by admitting it many times; he refers to Satan and says "He has me in his power" (O'Connor, 1990: 450). He takes hold of Norton with his jaundiced view of life. He persuades Norton that the only way to see his mother again is to die, and if he wants to avoid ending up in Hell, he should die now: " 'When I'm dead will I go to hell or where she is?' Norton asked. / 'Right now you'd go where she is,' Johnson said, 'but if you live long enough, you'll go to hell' " (O'Connor, 1990: 462). With this cynical standpoint, he destroys all of Sheppard's intentions to help him. He confesses breaking into some houses after he has started living with them. Sheppard's initial affinity with him disappears as the feeling of loathing grows in him: "The boy's eyes were like distorting mirrors in which he saw himself made hideous and grotesque" (O'Connor, 1990: 474). Despite Sheppard's altruistic behaviour, Rufus insults him when the police apprehend him: "He thinks he's God. I'd rather be in the reformatory than in his house, I'd rather be in the pen! The Devil has him in his power. He don't know his left hand from his right, he don't have as much sense as his crazy kid!" (O'Connor, 1990: 480). After Rufus has been taken by the police, Sheppard realizes how he has been negligent of his own son for the sake of an outsider but finds him having hanged himself in the attic as a consequence of Rufus's manipulation.

Manley Pointer in “Good Country People” (1955) is another grotesque character who is deemed to be morally corrupted and has the usual qualities of O’Connor’s typical evil outsiders. Unlike Sarah Ham who appears content with her exclusion from the society and does not follow the moral rules imposed by the community, Manley pretends to have moral standards to infiltrate into Joy’s house. He postures as a devout Bible salesman, and makes many references to his being one of the good country people and a faithful Christian, for example, by saying “for a Chrustian, the word of God ought to be in every room in the house besides in his heart” (O’Connor, 1990: 278). He doubles himself with Joy by implying they both have heart conditions, and they do not have much time to live (O’Connor, 1990: 279). In this way, he develops an intimacy with her, yet their discrepancy is not revealed until the very end.

Manley takes a special interest in Joy’s grotesque qualities in a similar way to Thomas’s mother who is heedful of Sarah Ham’s grotesque behaviour: “He was gazing at her with open curiosity, with fascination, like a child watching a new fantastic animal at the zoo. . .” (O’Connor, 1990: 283). He evinces his unusual interest by asking questions and talking over her wooden leg; he is enthused by her grotesque existence. This unusual interest seems innocent to Joy at first, and she assumes a feeling of superiority towards him, yet her disillusion becomes apparent when he opens one of the Bibles in his small bag; the contents of it horrifies her, since he keeps “a pocket flask of whiskey, a pack of cards, and a small blue box with printing on it” in the Bible (O’Connor, 1990: 289). Her assumed superiority vanishes into thin air, and with the innocence of a child, she asks “aren’t you just good country people?” (O’Connor, 1990: 290). She refuses the idea that she has been deceived and refers to his Christian values, yet he shows his true colours: “ ‘I hope you don’t think,’ he said in a lofty indignant tone, ‘that I believe in that crap! I may sell Bibles but I know which end is up and I wasn’t born yesterday and I know where I’m going!” (O’Connor, 1990: 290). In this manner, the discrepancy between Joy and Manley is exposed:

> *Relations of metonymy in O’Connor present a more complicated world view. In "Good Country People," the basis for a relation between Hulga-Joy and Manley Pointer is a mutual assumption of shared value, and the climax of the story occurs when this assumption is proven wrong. What characterizes their relation is a difference in perspective or world-*

> *view, and the relation becomes then one in which the known and understandable is linked to the ominously incomprehensible. That is, Hulga-Joy's nihilism is a masquerade for her indulgent self-pity in a psychological event we easily understand, but Manley Pointer's country bumpkin guise hides full conscious and malign nihilism that is unaccountable and ominous (Burke, 1988: 103-104).*

As Burke suggests, Joy degrades herself by choosing an ugly name, Hulga, and believing that religious and moral principles have no value, yet this degradation is understandable, since it is clearly related to her feeling of pity for herself. It is obvious that Manley plays a very important role for her by uncovering her true nature: "He exposes the philosophical nihilism of Hulga as a cover for her own private disappointments. . ." (Burke, 1988: 104). However, Manley's malevolence is connected to his demonic nature and unexplainable.

Some of O'Connor's demonic characters resort to violence; a prominent example is The Misfit from "A Goodman is Hard to Find" (1955). He is a criminal who has escaped from prison, and his name is mentioned in the very beginning when the grandmother admonishes her son not to travel in the direction of Florida, after reading about his enormities, in case they would cross paths with him. The violent acts and murders ending the story are foreshadowed by her foreboding, which is actually deceptive since the only reason of her prudence and cautiousness is that she wants to go somewhere else (O'Connor, 1990: 117). Her son does not change their destination against her will. They encounter The Misfit and his friends when they have an accident after they change their road to see an old plantation following the grandmother's demand (O'Connor, 1990: 123-24). The first time she comes across with The Misfit, she gets the uncanny feeling that he is somehow of her acquaintance (Hawley, 1996: 86): "The grandmother had the peculiar feeling that the bespectacled man was someone she knew. His face was as familiar to her as if she had known him all her life but she could not recall who he was" (O'Connor, 1990: 126). This strange familiarization is followed by her desperate attempts to save herself from being killed.

The Misfit is inclined to violence and crime, yet his answer to the grandmother's question about why he was in prison is ambiguous, because he does not remember clearly. His proneness to violence is accountable if his family problems are taken into

account: “It was a head-doctor at the penitentiary said what I had done was kill my daddy but I known that for a lie. My daddy died in nineteen ought nineteen of the epidemic flu and I never had a thing to do with it” (O’Connor, 1990: 130). He understands what the psychiatrist says in the literal sense of the word, and feels as if the authorities were trying to shift the blame of his father’s death onto him unfairly: “Part of what makes redemption difficult for The Misfit is that he has been told that he needs to desecrate the image of his father. A prison psychiatrist told The Misfit that he has an Oedipus complex, but the Misfit has not become fully conscious of using the grotesque, because he has misunderstood the psychiatrist” (Gentry, 1986: 109). The psychiatrist’s implication of the Oedipal situation between him and his father is misconceived.

The Misfit’s understanding of the religion is also grotesque in a certain sense. He draws an analogy between himself and Jesus Christ (Gentry, 1986: 110): “Jesus thrown everything off balance. It was the same case with Him as with me except He hadn’t committed any crime and they could prove I had committed one because they had the papers on me” (O’Connor, 1990: 131). He depicts himself as a degraded reflection of Christ.

The negotiation of the grandmother with The Misfit to save herself ends in failure. His friends take the family member to the woods one by one to shoot them, and she is killed by The Misfit himself the moment she uncannily replaces him with her recently murdered son by treating her with motherly tenderness and affection (Hawley, 1996: 86): “She saw the man’s face twisted close to her own as if he were going to cry and she murmured, ‘Why you’re one of my babies. You’re one of my own children!’ She reached out and touched him on the shoulder. The Misfit sprang back as if a snake had bitten him and shot her three times through the chest” (O’Connor, 1990: 132). He rejects any kind of close personal relationship violently, which is basically related to his fear of intimacy. The relationship of him with the grandmother is noteworthy, since he is introduced as a person that contrasts with her:

> *Miss O’Connor introduces a foil to the Misfit: the grandmother is a good person on the surface-at least the community thinks so-but she is also “mean.” She forces her family to obey her; she sees them as an extension of herself; and she seizes “every chance to change” reality. Because she convinces her son to turn the car toward the house with the “secret*

> *panel," causing the family to meet The Misfit, she seals everyone's death. She tries to adopt The Misfit, giving him well-meaning advice and false love. He responds by shooting her three times (Malin, 1966: 113-14).*

As Malin suggests, the grandmother is a manipulative character; she is solely responsible for the suffering of her family. First, she manipulates them into changing their road to see an old plantation, but she later realizes that she has misdirected them. Second, the accident they have is caused by the cat which should have been left back at home, but was kept in the car secretly by her. In addition, what makes The Misfit decide to murder them is her recognition of him as a fugitive. However, he dismisses her manipulations harshly, and his final judgement after he has shot her is as if he were saving her from the power of the evil: " 'She would of been a good woman,' The Misfit said, 'if it had been somebody there to shoot her every minute of her life' " (O'Connor, 1990: 133).

The proclivity for violence is the predominant quality of the three boys in "A Circle in The Fire" (1955). The son of Mrs. Cope's former worker, Powell, brings his two other friends Garfield Smith and W. T. Harper to her farm. The arrival of the boys seems inauspicious the moment they set foot on the farm with their baleful look:

> *What we actually see of them is ordinary enough, but from their first appearance on there is about them just the right degree of ominousness, of mysterious threat, achieved, for instance, in the eerie appearance of Powell's unmatched eyes-"his gaze," we are told, "seemed to be coming from two directions at once as if it had them surrounded" (Stephens, 1973: 180).*

This premonition proves to be right; these outsiders are regarded by her as unwelcome intruders, for after exchanging the usual pleasantries, they refuse to leave and strike fear into her heart by riding her horses without consent and letting the bulls out. The children she is familiar with are estranged from her at once: "The three of them stared at her as if they had never seen her before, the large boy with a sullen glare, the small one glint-eyed and unsmiling, and Powell with his two-sided glassed gaze hanging vacantly over the crippled destroyer on his shirt" (O'Connor, 1990: 188). Their

response to the question if they rode the horses is “No mam!” at once in loud enthusiastic voices like the Amens are said in country churches” (O’Connor, 1990: 183), and thus O’Connor attributes a grotesque qualification to the boys in terms of religion (Gentry, 1986: 56). Their most violent offence corresponds to the worst fear of Mrs. Fox which is foreshadowed even before the boys come up as a sign of the vicious arson attack in the end: “Mrs. Cope was always worrying about fires in her woods” (O’Connor, 1990: 176). They burn the woods with a grotesquely religious overtone “as if the prophets were dancing in the fiery furnace, in the circle the angel had cleared for them” (O’Connor, 1990: 193). This brutal incendiary attack brings about Mrs. Cope and his daughter Sally Virginia’s eventual alienation from the world to which they do not belong anymore in an uncanny way: “The child came to a stop beside her mother and 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” (O’Connor, 1990: 193). In this way, the evil outsiders cause a considerable amount of change in the protagonist by estranging her from everything she is familiar with.

The violence in O’Connor’s fiction is not only engaged in by evil outsiders; she displays the eruption of domestic violence in “A View of the Woods” (1957), which ends with the murder of Mary Fortune by her grandfather. The contrast between Mr. Fortune and his granddaughter is the allegorical representation of “the struggle between nature and progress” (Magistrale, 1987: 113). Mr. Fortune is determined to sell a portion of his land for a gas station to a man named Tilman in defiance of his family’s opposition, since he is open to progress: “He was not one of these old people who fight improvement, who object to everything new and cringe at every change” (O’Connor, 1990: 337). He overestimates the selling as if he were involved in a heroic deed and thinks “he had acted on principle and that the future was assured” (O’Connor, 1990: 352). The one person he is closely connected with in his family is Mary, and the fact that she also deprecates the sale infuriates him. When she stirs up trouble in Tilman’s place, he decides to discipline her by whipping in the woods. However, she shows no signs of giving in, and pounds on him repeatedly. At this point, she is grotesquely described to “a pack of small demons all with stout brown school shoes and small rocklike fists” (O’Connor, 1990: 354). He is estranged from Mary, and in a moment of exasperation, he beats her head on the rock, killing his own granddaughter; he, then, has

a heart attack (O'Connor, 1990: 355-56). The clash between progress and nature is not resolved, but gives way to unavailing violence.

Another account of violence is found in O'Connor's characterization of Singleton in "The Partridge Festival" (1961), who murdered several people after being arraigned by a mock court, since he did not buy an Azalea Festival Badge, and was sarcastically jailed in an outdoor privy during the last year's Partridge Festival (O'Connor, 1990: 422). Singleton is elevated in the eyes of Calhoun, the great-grandson of the founder of the festival, and Mary Elizabeth; they both regard him as a scapegoat victimized by the community itself and excoriate the festival severely. This is evident in Mary Elizabeth's contempt for the residents of the town: ". . . 'but this whole place is false and rotten to the core.' Her voice came with a hiss of indignation. 'They prostitute azaleas!" (O'Connor, 1990: 434). Calhoun also glorifies Singleton and feels responsible to expose the lack of justice in the society: "The boy felt now in a concrete way the force of his innocence, and he thought that to do justice to all the man had suffered, he would have to write a novel; he would have to show, not say, how primary injustice operated" (O'Connor, 1990: 432). Although Calhoun and Mary Elizabeth extol the innocence of Singleton, they get disappointed when they decide to see him in the prison, since he appears "to be exactly the opposite-crazy and lecherous and pointing toward the demonic" (Hawkes, 1962: 405-406). He acts like a lunatic reversing Calhoun and Mary Elizabeth's initial idealization. His behaviour suggests wickedness, immorality, and insanity:

> *Singleton's association with the Devil is suggested through comically evoked disorder in a scene dominated by unbalance. His eyes are mismatched; he wears a black, movie gunman's hat in contrast to his white hospital gown; he enters the room suspended between two husky attendants, the frenetic activity of his spidery shape emphasized by their contrasting stolidity. His first words are curses and his first gestures lustful advances. He tries to sit next to Elizabeth, declaring "It's not every girl gets a chance at me" (443). He lunges toward her in an attempt to fondle her knee, then breaking loose from the attendants, whirls around the room, leaps on to a table, and in a sexual frenzy, pulls his gown over his head. Within the comic framework, O'Connor draws a picture not of*

the innocent scapegoat but evil displaying itself as madness (Lindroth, 1984: 54).

This final realization leaves them in a state of alienation; when they look at each other, they see Singleton. They get unfamiliar to each other. This experience appears to be disappointing for Calhoun at first, and he seems to be in total contrast with the festival and community. However, he finds the chance of communing with the society. The festive spirit which is "according to Bakhtin an institutionalized use of the grotesque is here idealized and trivialized, or at least it is in the mind of Calhoun," because he desires to be integrated with the community or the festival inwardly, and his ongoing strictures on them and his ostensible empathy with Singleton are only consequences of his wish "to achieve a place in a community" (Gentry, 1986: 70).

5.2. Flawed Belief System in O'Connor's Stories

O'Connor exposes the frailties of the southern society through some characters who reverse religious ideals grotesquely or internalize racist attitude by debunking their inveterate convictions. Religion takes an important place in the works of O'Connor who is known as a devout member of the Roman Catholic Religion. Many characters in the short stories are Protestant southerners whose faith and sincerity are questioned - for they create the spurious impression that they are professed believers - and who are in need of redemption. The characters whose religious hypocrisy or grotesque faith are exposed by O'Connor are Mrs. May and Mrs. Greenleaf in "Greenleaf" (1965), Mrs. Turpin in "Revelation" (1965), and Mrs. Shortley in "The Displaced Person" (1955).

The reproach of slavery and racism is also ingrained in the southern consciousness. That is why Southern writers reflect the deep-rooted racial prejudice, discrimination and violence in their works very often. O'Connor also deals with this subject, exposing how racism is internalized in the society. Some of her characters with racist comportment are Mrs. McIntyre in "The Displaced Person" (1955), Mr. Head in "The Artificial Nigger" (1955), and Tanner in "Judgement Day" (1965).

A salient character with grotesque religious practices is present in O'Connor's "Greenleaf." As the wife of Mr. Greenleaf who works in Mrs. May's farm, Mrs. Greenleaf remains in the background for the most part. However, she antagonizes Mrs. May on a large scale in terms of her grotesquely depicted characterization. Mrs.

Greenleaf was huge and negligent: For example, her garden was like a garbage, and her daughters were dirty most of the time. Even the youngest was filthy. Mrs. Greenleaf is contrarily religious. Her eccentric understanding of religion is considerably gripping; she is into a religious ritual called “prayer healing” (O’Connor, 1990: 315):

> *Every day she cut all the morbid stories out of the newspaper – the accounts of women who had been raped and criminals who had escaped and children who had been burned and of train wrecks and plane crashes and the divorces of movie stars. She took these to the woods and dug a hole and buried them and then she fell on the ground over them and mumbled and groaned for an hour or so moving her huge arms back and forth under her and out again and finally just lying down flat and, Mrs. May suspected, going to sleep in the dirt (O’Connor, 1990: 315-16).*

With this bizarre and peculiar ceremony, Mrs. Greenleaf degrades the religion grotesquely and contrasts sharply with Mrs. May’s secular interpretation: “She thought the word, Jesus, should be kept inside the church building like other words inside the bedroom” (O’Connor, 1990: 316). If their approaches to religion are compared, Mrs. Greenleaf’s faith seems “grotesque but yet natural,” while Mrs. May is just the opposite (Burns, 1967: 161-62).

Whereas Mrs. Greenleaf is distinguishable with her grotesque reversal of devotions, Mrs. Turpin stands out as a hypocrite in terms of religion and racial prejudices (Hawley, 1996: 134). She makes invidious distinctions depending on the class and race of people, but she is too satisfied with herself and does not feel that any change is necessary: “Thank you, Jesus, for making everything the way it is!” (O’Connor, 1990: 499). Her self-righteousness is apparent in her visionary conversation with Jesus:

> *If Jesus had said to her before he made her, "There's only two places available for you. You can either be a nigger or white-trash," what would she have said? "Please, Jesus, please," she would have said, "just let me wait until there's another place available," and he would have said, "No, you have to go right now and I have only those two places so make up your*

> *mind." She would have wiggled and squirmed and begged and pleaded but it would have been no use and finally she would have said, "All right, make me a nigger then—but that don't mean a trashy one" (O'Connor, 1990: 491).*

She judges the people basing them on their class and race. She also categorizes people basing them on their skin colour and property:

> *On the bottom of the heap were most colored people, not the kind she would have been if she had been one, but most of them; then next to them—not above, just away from—were the white-trash; then above them were the home-owners, and above them the home-and- land owners, to which she and Claud belonged. Above she and Claud were people with a lot of money and much bigger houses and much more land (O'Connor, 1990: 491).*

This prejudiced classification governs her approach to the other people. She also acts with such a sanctimonious manner in the doctor's waiting room she goes into with her husband and appraises people by their outlook. However, when Mary Grace, a surly girl in the waiting room, flings a book to her and clasps her throat, she is terrified. The curse she utters by bawling at her, "Go back to hell where you came from, you old wart hog," haunts her for the rest of her life (O'Connor, 1990: 500). Her self-righteousness is shaken, and she casts doubt on her alleged faith. She reprimands God for sending her a message as bitter as it, which exposes her hypocrisy, since her gratitude about what she is and has vanishes the moment she is attacked by Mary Grace. In addition, her prejudices related to the social class and race others belong to are proven wrong when she has a vision that all those who were previously held in contempt by her reach up to Heaven before her and her husband: "The sharp class distinctions she believed existed, even against good evidence to the contrary, are gone. The classes of people, however, are not simply confused, as in her late night dreams; the order is exactly the opposite of what she expects" (Martin, 1994: 53). With this reversal, her pretension to be a devout morally superior Christian is severely debilitated.

Mrs. Shortley from “The Displaced Person” (1955) is socially inferior to Mrs. Turpin in that she is a farm hand in Mrs. McIntyre’s farm. However, she shares the same hypocritical faith with her. When Mrs. McIntyre hires a Polish refugee to work for her, she condemns him for not having “an advanced religion” (O’Connor, 1990: 198). In fact, her own perception of the religion is far from being advanced, since “she is only an Atheist when things are going well” (Hawley, 1996: 125):

> *She had never given much thought to the devil for she felt that religion was essentially for those people who didn't have the brains to avoid evil without it. For people like herself, for people of gumption, it was a social occasion providing the opportunity to sing; but if she had ever given it much thought, she would have considered the devil the head of it and God the hanger-on (O’Connor, 1990: 203-204).*

In her own way, she regards the religion as a remedy for those who are not capable of abstaining from the vice. She distinguishes herself from this kind of people and reverses the religion grotesquely by considering the devil as its head (Gentry, 1986: 29). She is estranged from redemption and solely nonreligious until a specific point: “Mrs. Shortley has her own notions of religion and of how God has to make Himself known to her. She wants to control grace and events, therefore anything so unpredictable as the grace of God revealing itself through people and history is alien to her character” (Mayer, 1976: 12). However, the moment her position in the farm is threatened due to the sedulous work of the Polish worker, Mr. Guizac, she starts to give heed to religion, which makes her hypocrisy evident.

In addition to Mrs. Shortley’s hypocritical and grotesque understanding of religion, Mrs. McIntyre’s fear of miscegenation is another theme governing the course of events in the story. Mrs. McIntyre is the owner of an old plantation who has a few black people working for her. She treats them unfairly and believes they are inferior to her race. For example, she thinks “all Negroes would steal” (O’Connor, 1990: 198). She is also conscious of class distinctions and derogates the socially unprivileged people whom she calls “white trash” (O’Connor, 1990: 203). After she hires Mr. Guizac to work in her farm, he is overjoyed at her assiduity: “That man is my salvation!” (O’Connor, 1990: 203). However, the moment she learns that he is planning to marry

his niece to one of the black workers in the farm, she is terrified, and suddenly her notion of Mr. Guizac changes: “At this point the previously ungrotesque Guizac becomes fully grotesque in her eyes” (Gentry, 1986: 105). He becomes a burden to her, and she thinks of a possible way to fire him:

> *Monster! she said to herself and looked at him as if she were seeing him for the first time. His forehead and skull were white where they had been protected by his cap but the rest of his face was red and bristled with short yellow hairs. His eyes were like two bright nails behind his gold-rimmed spectacles that had been mended over the nose with haywire. His whole face looked as if it might have been patched together out of several others (O’Connor, 1990: 222).*

She reverses all her prior convictions about Mr. Guizac and feels uncanny; it is as if she is totally unfamiliar with him. Her impression is that he is of some nonhuman material. Her attempt to fire him ends with a tragedy in which Mr. Guizac is run over by a tractor. Afterwards, her health deteriorates and she retires as a lonely woman. All these unfortunate events are led by her fear of miscegenation: “Mrs. Mclntyre's horror of inter-racial marriage eventually brings about her downfall when the displaced per son, Mr. Guizac, at first a welcomed intruder, does not seem to respect the race distinctions prevailing in Georgia” (Tedford, 1981: 30).

A similar kind of prejudiced attitude towards the black people makes itself apparent in Mr. Head of “The Artificial Nigger” (1955). He takes his grandson Nelson from the rural town they live in to Atlanta for the first time. He emphasizes Nelson’s innocence with the fact that he “ain’t ever seen a nigger” (O’Connor, 1990: 252). He desires to teach manners to Nelson though the fear of the black people he spreads in his heart: “Racism is the old man's demonic weapon in disciplining Nelson” (Giannone, 1995: 55). He thrives on his goal, for Nelson starts to feel hatred and repugnance towards them. When they get lost in a neighbourhood where black people live, he quails at the fact that they will be harmed (O’Connor, 1990: 261). Their alienation from the city with all the black people living in it takes place when Mr. Head decides to give Nelson a lesson. When the boy is sleeping, he walks away from him, but watches over from a distance. Having noticed he is alone, Nelson looks for his grandfather, but

knocks down an old lady while running. Mr. Head arrives at the spot, and he denies knowing Nelson for fear of getting into trouble. At this moment, Nelson feels estranged from Mr. Head, which is certainly an instant of the uncanny: “His eyes were triumphantly cold. There was no light in them, no feeling, no interest. He was merely there, a small figure, waiting. Home was nothing to him” (O’Connor, 1990: 268). Before leaving the city, they come across a small African-American statue, which Mr Head calls, “An artificial nigger” (O’Connor, 1990: 268):

> *They stood gazing at the artificial Negro as if they were faced with some great mystery, some monument to another's victory that brought them together in their common defeat. They could both feel it dissolving their differences like an action of mercy. Mr. Head had never known before what mercy felt like because he had been too good to deserve any, but he felt he knew now. He looked at Nelson and understood that he must say something to the child to show that he was still wise and in the look the boy returned he saw a hungry need for that assurance. Nelson's eyes seemed to implore him to explain once and for all the mystery of existence (O’Connor, 1990: 269).*

The small statue makes them experience a moment of epiphany, and they empathize with the black race, since both they and the black community have been overcome by the city: “Just as Mr. Head and Nelson have been defeated by each other and by the city, the statue suggests the defeat of blacks by the city and by whites” (Gentry, 1986:84). His final statement suggests that race, itself, is also artificial, a result of social construction: “They ain’t got enough real ones here. They got to have an artificial one” (O’Connor, 1990: 269).

The internalization of racism is also evident in Tanner, who is an old man from the South and has gone to New York City to live with his daughter from “Judgement Day” (1965). His departure from the South is mostly related to his racist views, because the land he lives in is purchased by Doctor Foley who is partially black, and he refuses to work for a black person: “When his racist pride is faced with the challenge of being a “nigger’s nigger,” Tanner leaves, and in doing so he leaves his friend of thirty years behind, offended, shamed, and alone” (Roos, 2005: 191). His prejudice has grotesque

connotations. He yearns for the old times when he had his African-American friend next to himself Coleman, as a way of assuring his authority, and commemorates his encounter with him. His downfall is brought by a black neighbour with whom he tries to establish a friendly relationship by calling him “Preacher” (O’Connor, 1990: 544). Having been offended by his manners, he attacks Tanner and bawls at him in a way he is not used to:

> *"I don't take no crap," he whispered, "off no wool-hat red-neck son-of-a-bitch peckerwood old bastard like you." He caught his breath. And then his voice came out in the sound of an exasperation so profound that it rocked on the verge of a laugh. It was high and piercing and weak, "And I'm not no preacher I I'm not even no Christian. I don't believe that crap. There ain't no Jesus and there ain't no God" (O’Connor, 1990: 545).*

With this horrifying experience, he is estranged from the world he lives in. The old system that he clings to is destroyed, and he is no more a part of the world. In a desperate effort to return to the South and the old world order he is familiar with, he gets out of his daughter’s flat, yet dies on the stairs.

To conclude, with her demonic characters, some of whom are portrayed as wicked, cynical, and violent to draw attention to the weaknesses of the society and the shortcomings of the justice while others emerge with their flawed sense of the self and belief system in terms of religion and race, O’Connor develops her own perspective towards the Southern world view. Since she reveals the destruction brought by these characters and unmasks their fallacy, she offers a moral solution to the burdens facing them.

CONCLUSION

This thesis presents a full-fledged analysis on the flourishing of Southern gothic fiction in the United States by discussing the essential components of the genre in Flannery O'Connor's selected short fiction. Her stories have been classified on the basis of Wolfgang Kayser's theory in his book *The Grotesque in Art and Literature* (1963). eighteen short stories have been selected for these purposes, and the characters are divided into three groups based on their physical deformities, intellectual curiosities, and demonic dispositions.

The use of *gothic* as a term extends over centuries, but its reference to a form of writing in today's context dates back to the 18th century when it flourished as a sub-genre of Romanticism. The first gothic works were published in Europe where they were mostly regarded as inferior works, but their role in America is much more different. Gothic works have a requisite function in the genesis of American literature, since they are acknowledged as the first truly American works. The convenience of American society for the development of the gothic may be associated with several factors. First, the worldview of the Puritans, who were among first settlers in America, based on the wickedness of human nature and their strong belief in the Original Sin became the early indication of gothic awareness. The land these people settled into was also suitable for gothic possibilities, for they were always in interaction with the frontier, which stirred their imagination. Moreover, the social stigmas such as witch hunts and slavery provided necessary themes for early American gothic fiction.

With its historical and social reality, American South has always been convenient for gothic possibilities. Southerners are haunted by the burdens of the past such as slavery and colonization, and the wounds opened up by the Civil War and the following destruction tarnished their sense of identity. They attach themselves to their values and refuse to change, which makes them vulnerable to the evil outsiders. They are withdrawn from the world. With this historical background, violence has become an integral part of the region. Besides, racism and fear of miscegenation which mark the 20th century have been a blemish on the collective consciousness. All these components of the South's social reality marginalize Southerners and make them grotesque when compared to the North. For its specific regional identity, the South has appealed to many writers.

In the 19th century, Southern Gothic writing developed as a sub-genre of American gothic, and the 20th century witnessed its rising recognition with the works of William Faulkner, Carson McCullers, and Flannery O'Connor. The common themes employed by these literary figures are the tragic history of slavery, internalized racism in the society, and violence. Above all, they make use of the grotesque in their works on a large scale in order to expose the flaws of Southern way of life. O'Connor is a prominent writer who perceives the weaknesses of Southern society and criticizes them through her fiction. She reprimands slavery as a guilt of the past and uncovers the violence and racism embedded in the consciousness of Southerners. She exposes how class and gender distinctions are social burdens. To make such criticism, she employs grotesque characterization and imagery. The focus in her fiction is on the physical, intellectual, moral, and ethical defects, and the solution she proposes is coherent with her worldview. As a member of Roman Catholic Church in the South where Protestantism is the dominant belief, she offers redemption as the remedy.

The target of this thesis has been to investigate the development of Southern gothic in the American South through the selected short stories of O'Connor who is a well-known representative of the genre. The focus has been on her characterization on the basis of the grotesque figures that appear recurrently in the stories.

In literary context, the grotesque refers to any quality that is different from what is usual, odd, deformed, discordant, and out of balance. The writers employ the grotesque to instil terror and perturbation. The theories of Flannery O'Connor, Wolfgang Kayser, and Mikhail Bakhtin, on the true nature of the grotesque have been discussed so as to provide a comprehensive understanding of the term. For O'Connor, the grotesque involves unaccustomed events that are out of the ordinary, excluding any possibility of realism. However, she believes that the grotesque perception occurs in process of reception; that is every piece of writing in the South is deemed grotesque by the Northern readers.

For Bakhtin, the grotesque is an inseparable part of the folk culture. He associates grotesque realism with "the material bodily principle, that is, images of the human body with its food, drink, defecation, and sexual life" (Bakhtin, 1984: 18). For him, the negative denotation of the term in today's context is only the consequence of its marginalization in the course of time, but it is profoundly positive, because all the components mentioned above are related to goodness. These positive connotations were

adopted by the medieval society, yet following the Renaissance, it gained a much more negative meaning.

Wolfgang Kayser, on the other hand, gives a detailed history of the grotesque, the meaning of which developed gradually from an old form of ornamental art combining human and nonhuman entities. He, then, clarifies the semantic expansion the term has undergone from its satirical allusion to the denotation of something supernatural. In the 19th century, it started to be used as a reference to malevolence, alienation, and estrangement. He lists the important elements for the grotesque as the monsters, animals, plant world, tools and madness, and stresses the significance of reception in grotesque perception.

The main body of this thesis focuses on three different types of grotesque characters available in the selected short stories of O'Connor; the characters whose appearance is grotesque, the intellectuals with their grotesque approach to life, and the demonic characters who are wicked, cynical, and violent.

The first type of grotesque characterization in O'Connor's short stories is on physical level. She portrays these characters with deformed appearances to draw attention to another defect. They are sometimes the incarnation of a spiritual deficiency as in the case of Parker in "Parker's Back" (1965) and Ruby in "A Stroke of Good Fortune" (1955), both of whose grotesque physiques are the reverberation of another defect. Parker's body is covered with tattoos, and this is the reflection of his desperate need for salvation. Similarly, Ruby is pregnant but O'Connor reflects her body with grotesque details, since she denies the possibility of pregnancy until her final revelation. On the other hand, there are other characters who are victimized in society due to their grotesque existences: Lucynell Crater in "The Life You Save May Be Your Own" (1955) and the hermaphrodite in "A Temple of the Holy Ghost" (1955) reveal the social imperfection. Lucynell Crater is dumb and speech handicapped, and due to her physical condition she is naive and childish in nature and exploited by an evil outsider. As for the hermaphrodite, the physical deformation leads to his marginalization in the eyes of the society and his condition haunts the protagonist until the end of the story.

The second category of O'Connor's grotesque figures consists of the intellectuals with their lofty disdain for the others. They are excessively self-righteous, and they head for their fall because of such arrogance. One common trait of these intellectuals is that they all have family problems; there is no father figure at their

homes and they are in a constant conflict with their mothers. Thomas in “The Comforts of Home” (1965) despises her mother for letting an outsider into their home and end up killing her, while Joy/Hulga in “Good Country People” (1955) consciously degrades herself - for example, she changes her name to Hulga just because it sounds ugly - in defiance of her mother. Thomas and Joy feel safe at their homes, but their peace is disturbed by an evil outsider. Both Asbury who is an unsuccessful writer in “The Enduring Chill” (1965) and Julian who is an unemployed intellectual in “Everything That Rises Must Converge” (1965) try to punish their mothers for their racist prejudices, yet they ignore their own hypocrisy. The reason why they attempt to interact with the black community and to defend them is not that they despise racism, but they only desire to antagonize their mothers.

The last type of grotesque characterization in O’Connor’s fiction is the figures with demonic temperament. This category of characters may be divided into two groups based on their common characteristics. The first group consists of the characters who are deemed wicked in the society. Some of them are considered immoral by the society due to their marginality, so they are alienated from the world they live in. Two prominent examples are Sarah Ham who calls herself a nymphomaniac in “The Comforts of Home” (1965) and the impostor Manley Pointer who pretends to be a Bible salesman, but is corrupted at heart in “Good Country People” (1955). Others exhibit strong proneness to violence, such as Rufus Johnson, a juvenile offender who persuades Norton to commit suicide in order to see his dead mother again in “The Lame Shall Enter First” (1965), Misfit who kills an entire family in “A Goodman is Hard to Find” (1955), three boys who burn the woods satanically in “A Circle in the Fire” (1955), grandfather Fortune who murders his granddaughter in “A View of the Woods” (1957), and the mass murderer Singleton in “The Partridge Festival” (1961). The second group includes the characters with grotesque belief systems, hypocritical faith, and racist attitudes. While Mrs. Greenleaf in “Greenleaf” (1965) debases the religion grotesquely with her eccentric rituals, which she calls “prayer healing,” Mrs. Turpin in “Revelation” (1965) and Mrs. Shortley in “The Displaced Person” (1955) are devout Christians only when they need to. On the other hand, Mrs. McIntyre in “The Displaced Person” (1955), Mr. Head in “The Artificial Nigger” (1955), and Tanner in “Judgement Day” (1965) are impenitent racists. All these characters have a similar function; O’Connor

desires to reveal racism, cynicism, and violence inherent in the southern consciousness and to trigger a stunning revelation.

In conclusion, through these short stories O'Connor draws attention to defects of Southern people. She makes their grotesque condition – their narrow-mindedness, bigotry and ignorance of human nature - distinct. They are naive to destructive outer forces. As a society in vacuum, they are not prepared to the cultural changes in the 20th century America. They become tragicomic that is grotesque.

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