

White superiority in Flannery O'connor's *The Barber* and *The Artificial Nigger**Superioritas kulit putih dalam "The Barber" dan "The Artificial Nigger" karya Flannery O'connor*Muhammad Fawzi Abdullah Aziz¹, Erna Cahyawati^{2,*}, & Hadi Sampurna³^{1,2,3}Universitas Jember

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Abstract

This research analyzes two short stories created by Flannery O'Connor entitled "The Barber" and "The Artificial Nigger" which depict the ideology of white superiority by scrutinizing the context of the stories and discussing the homology between the texts and the contexts. Data were analyzed using qualitative methods, and the theory used was genetic structuralism by Lucien Goldmann. Primary data concerning white superiority were taken from both short stories. Secondary data about socio-cultural and historical facts of white superiority in America in the 1940s -1950s were taken from journal articles and books. The research results show similarities between literary works and socio-historical conditions in the year when the literary works were written. The author's worldview shows that she wants to represent the ideology of white superiority that has oppressed the black race. Through these short stories, the author wants to illustrate how cruel and difficult it is to fight the ideology of white superiority.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini menganalisis dua cerita pendek karya Flannery O'Connor berjudul "The Barber" dan "The Artificial Nigger" yang menggambarkan ideologi superioritas kulit putih dengan mencermati konteks cerita dan membahas homologi antara teks dan konteks. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori Strukturalisme Genetik oleh Lucien Goldmann. Data dianalisis menggunakan metode kualitatif. Data primer tentang superioritas kulit putih diambil dari kedua cerpen, dan data sekunder tentang konteks sosial, budaya dan sejarah superioritas kulit putih di Amerika Serikat tahun 1940an sampai tahun 1950an diambil dari beberapa artikel jurnal dan buku. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya persamaan antara karya sastra dengan kondisi sosial, budaya pada tahun karya sastra itu ditulis. Pandangan dunia penulis menunjukkan bahwa ia ingin merepresentasikan ideologi superioritas kulit putih yang menindas ras kulit hitam. Melalui cerpen-cerpen tersebut, penulis ingin menggambarkan betapa kejam dan sulitnya melawan ideologi superioritas kulit putih.

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A. Introduction

“White superiority” is a racist belief suggesting that white people are naturally superior to other races in terms of intellect, morality, and culture. This idea has been historically used to justify discrimination, violence, and oppression, particularly in countries with a colonial past. The underlying premise is that white should be considered the standard for all humans (DiAngelo, 2018). This belief was spread intentionally by colonial powers to justify the exploitation of indigenous people, however it also developed over time due to the long-standing power imbalance between whites and blacks. As black individuals sought to advance economically, they were often forced to adopt white values and lifestyles, which reinforced the idea of white superiority (Manning, 2004). Applebaum (2008) explains that critical theorists believe white people are to blame for creating racism. They argue that society has socially constructed race, putting one group above the rest, while others are considered “different.” Racism is not just about individual prejudices, but it is also about collective awareness within certain groups. This idea relates to the term ‘whiteness,’ whiteness means how white people and sometimes others adopt their ways to act and think of protecting and promoting the interests of white individuals over non-white individuals (Thomas & Arday, 2021).

Bayor (1988) scrutinizes in the 1940s—1950s in Atlanta, Georgia, white leaders deliberately separated black and white people to maintain white dominance. They created laws and rules that kept black residents in specific neighborhoods and schools and limited them to lower-paying jobs. Transportation projects like highways further divided black and white areas, making the inequalities even more robust. Alexander (2010) explains the racial bias and unfair treatment within the U.S. criminal justice system, replacing the Jim Crow era of the 1940s—1950s. Despite presenting itself as race-neutral, the system disproportionately focuses on and penalizes individuals of color, especially the Black community. In *Equal Justice Initiative* (2017) it is written that in the 1940s and 1950s, lynching was employed to uphold social norms and racial hierarchy in the American South. Numerous African Americans faced lynching for minor offenses, including speaking disrespectfully, using improper titles for white individuals, or insulting a white person despite not being involved in severe crimes.

The issues of white superiority are seen in Flannery O'Connor's literary works “The Barber” and “The Artificial Nigger,” which reflect the socio-historical contexts of 1940s—1950s Southern America, emphasizing the prevailing concept of white superiority. In both stories, there is a clear binary opposition, with white individuals consistently considering themselves superior to black individuals. “The Barber” portrays how white people resist equality with black people, influenced by racial segregation. The narrative revolves around a debate on a gubernatorial election, highlighting differing views on racial equality. Similarly, “The Artificial Nigger” depicts a white character, Mr. Head, harboring racial prejudices and reinforcing the idea of white superiority over black people. Flannery O'Connor's stories are unique because they have interesting characters, strong religious themes, show real Southern life, and are influenced by her own life. All these things come together to make her stories unique and lasting. They explore important ideas about people with cleverness, humor, and understanding.

O'Connor's literary works “The Barber” and “The Artificial Nigger,” mirroring the socio-historical contexts of Southern America, highlight the prevalent belief in white superiority over blacks. These stories provide insight into the societal perspective of that time, reflecting the notion that whites were superior. The research employs Lucien Goldmann's Genetic Structuralism, asserting that literary works reflect the socio-historical context of their creation. This approach is suitable for examining how O'Connor's stories capture the beliefs and atmosphere of white superiority in Southern America in the 1940s—1950s. Goldmann does not view literary works as the product of an individual's effort but rather as manifestations of what he calls ‘trans-individual mental structures’ within a social group. This term denotes the shared values or ideology that the group collectively holds (Eagleton, 2003).

The gap between the present research and the previous ones is its focus on analyzing the issue of white superiority through the point of view of the oppressor, which is the white community. Additionally, other researchers tend to scrutinize white superiority issues through the black's point of view, the oppressed one. For example, Thakholi & Koot (2023) and Aiyetoro (2023) scrutinize in their articles how the black community received discrimination from the white community. Particularly, it shows how black people lose their land and jobs, which benefits the rich white people. It further investigates how the social construct of race affects black individuals and other people of color, delving into the historical and persistent injustices experienced by these communities. Another example is Cahyawati's (2020) article, the study delves into the characteristics of American romantic literature as depicted in *The Narrative Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, by examining the dehumanizing experiences endured by black American slaves and their resilient spirit of resistance against white oppression. The mistreatment endured by enslaved black individuals encompasses the dehumanization of children and women, deprivation of essential necessities,

physical violence, denial of education, exploitation in labor, absence of freedom of expression, and the perception of slaves as mere possessions. These cruel actions inflict feelings of depression and resentment among the enslaved population.

On the contrary, this study intends to explore the issue of white superiority in O'Connor's literary works "The Barber" and "The Artificial Nigger," focusing on their depiction of white superiority in the 1940s—1950s Southern America. The overarching goal is to highlight that literary works, beyond entertainment, convey essential aspects of worldviews and history. The application of genetic structuralism underscores the valuable content within these works, emphasizing the role of literature as a carrier of meaningful cultural and historical insights. The focus and objective of this study is to show the worldview of the Southern U.S. in the 1940s—1950s that is represented in O'Connor's short stories.

B. Method

The research used a qualitative approach to analyze two short stories by O'Connor, "The Barber" and "The Artificial Nigger." It aimed to examine how these stories were connected to the culture of white superiority in the U.S. in the 1940s—1950s. Qualitative research is a research method that focuses on presenting and explaining qualitative data findings descriptively (Darmapriatiwi & Pratiwi, 2024; Meivitasari & Widyatwati, 2023; Wibawani & Rohman, 2023). Furthermore, the theory used in this research was genetic structuralism by Lucien Goldmann (1980) who states that literary texts will always correlate with their socio-historical context. Therefore, the goal of this research was to examine how these stories reflect the structures in society that favored white people during that time. Genetic structuralism is a way of looking at how society and culture work. It says that we can understand why things are the way they are by studying their history and the big patterns behind them. Goldmann thinks that how society is set up and what people think are important in shaping our world (Goldmann, 1980). This method also uses the term "worldview," which describes how an individual or a group expresses their specific perspective or outlook. Worldviews are also associated with social groups that share similar backgrounds and experiences in history. Consequently, these worldviews reflect people's responses that always make sense within their specific circumstances (Bandini & Suprihatin, 2020). The study utilized close reading and analysis of the text to see how the broader cultural influences of the southern United States in the 1940s—1950s shaped O'Connor's stories.

The research used two types of information: primary and secondary data. Primary data were taken directly from O'Connor's stories "The Barber" and "The Artificial Nigger." This involved looking at characters, how they were portrayed, the story's plot, and themes related to white superiority over blacks. The aforementioned information was obtained through close reading of the stories, and the data were collected by quoting relevant parts of the text. Secondary data were gathered from books and journal articles about white superiority in the socio-historical context of 1940s—1950s Southern America.

The research follows these three steps: First, a detailed analysis of narrative elements in "The Barber" and "The Artificial Nigger" was conducted to identify the portrayal of white superiority over blacks in the stories. The second step involved linking this theme of white superiority in the stories to the socio-historical context of the 1940s—1950s Southern U.S., aligning with Goldmann's view on the influence of context on literature. The third step was revealing homology and illustrating how societal beliefs of white superiority in America in the 1940s and 1950s are reflected in literary works.

C. Results and Discussion

1. White Superiority in Flannery O'Connor's "The Barber"

In "The Barber," white superiority is represented through racism, political discrimination, and segregation. The story reflects the 1940s Southern U.S. context, depicting the challenges of racial equality. Racial prejudice, segregation, and political discrimination are portrayed, emphasizing the idea of white superiority. The narrative underscores the ignorance of whites towards racial equality and the resistance to integration.

a. White Superiority in "The Barber" and Its Socio-Historical Context

Goldmann's genetic structuralism underscores the relationship between literary works and their socio-historical context. In the context of this research, discussing the socio-historical conditions of white superiority in 1940s Southern America is vital, as it aligns with Goldmann's theory. According to Goldmann (1980), literary works carry social values from their specific time and place of creation, growing out of social

interactions. Using “The Barber” as an example, written in 1941 and set in Southern America during a local election, the story is assumed to reflect the prevalent racism against black people by white individuals during that time. This demonstrates how the narrative is deeply connected to the social realities of its era. To understand literature, it is crucial to grasp the social process. Literature is shaped by social relations, and the production of literary works is influenced by the prevailing perceptions and ideologies of a particular era. Each era has its unique ideology within social relations, contributing to the formation of a social mentality that, in turn, influences the creation of literary works (Kobis, 2019).

(1) Prejudice

In “The Barber,” the white characters such as the barber and Roy, display racism through prejudice, ignorance, and stereotyping, driven by a sense of superiority in authority, rights, and power over blacks. This leads to arbitrary behavior, with whites willing to undermine those supporting equality with blacks. The story illustrates the quest for absolute power by dominating over blacks, as seen in the white barber’s vilification of Rayber, a fellow white supporting racial equality.

The story starts with a description of a local election. While Rayber, a customer, is getting his hair cut at a barbershop, the barber abruptly and impolitely refers to him using the term “nigger-lover.” This derogatory term is employed to label individuals who support racial equality or black people (O’Connor, 1971b, p. 28).

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After the Democratic White Primary, Rayber changed his barber. Three weeks before it, while he was shaving him, the barber asked, “Who you gonna vote for?”

“Darmon,” Rayber said.

“You a nigger-lover?”

Rayber started in the chair. He had not expected to be approached so brutally (O’Connor, 1971b, p. 28).

The term “nigger” has a distressing history for black people, linked to white individuals. The aforementioned interpretation is supported by Rahman (2012) who explains that the word likely touched English through the words “negro” used by Spanish and Portuguese slave traders in order to refer to Africans’ dark skin. Despite its offensive nature to black people, white individuals use the term arbitrarily, normalized by a historical legacy passed down through generations. While the word is taboo for blacks, it lacks the same taboo status for whites despite its historical connection to slavery and the infringement of black people’s rights. Moreover, Rahman (2012) highlights that slaves adopted the term for self-reference due to its frequent use in their surroundings.

A nigger comes in a white barber shop in Atlanta and says, ‘Gimme a haircut.’ They throw him out, but it just goes to show you. Why listen, three black hyenas over in Mulford last month shot a white man and took half of what was in his house and you know where they are now? Settin’ in their county jail eatin’ like the President of the United States—they might get dirty in the chain gang; or some damn nigger-lover might come by and be heart-broke to see ‘em pickin’ rock (O’Connor, 1971b, p. 28).

Prejudice entails forming judgments about someone based on their group affiliations, involving stereotypes and attitudes even in the absence of personal knowledge. Feelings of discomfort around certain groups are not inherent but result from limited interactions and exposure, often influenced by misinformation (DiAngelo, 2018).

The narrative illustrates the barber’s use of derogatory language, such as likening black people to animals with the term “three black hyenas.” This choice of words represents a normalization of negative language when referring to black individuals, stemming from the perceived superiority of white people in economic, social, and cultural aspects. Despite the absence of concrete evidence supporting their superiority, DiAngelo (2018) explains that white individuals strategically embed racial prejudice into societal structures through their social positions, impacting laws, policies, practices, and norms.

Historical white prejudice towards blacks has roots in economic interests, profiting from slavery, promoting false beliefs to justify oppression, and gaining power and control. These dangerous views have deeply influenced societal behavior and thinking (Alexander, 2010).

(2) Political Discrimination

In “The Barber,” which is centered around a local election, political issues arise, particularly the absence of voting rights for black individuals. The story features George, a black youth at the barbershop, who is

questioned about his candidate preference. Nevertheless, this indicates a historical context where black people might have been denied the right to vote in the local governor election (O'Connor, 1971b, p. 38).

"George," the barber yelled, "you heard that speech?"

"Yessir," George said.

"Who you gonna vote for, George?"

"I'm not trying to...." Rayber yelled.

"I don't know is they gonna let me vote," George said. "Do, I gonna vote for Mr. Hawkson." (O'Connor, 1971b, p. 38).

The text shows that George, a black boy, is doubtful if he will be allowed to vote in the local governor election. Such as when the Jim Crow era was happening, African Americans faced discriminatory measures to prevent them from voting. These included poll taxes, literacy tests, special rules favoring white individuals, and voting restrictions for those with criminal records. Despite violating the Fifteenth Amendment, these methods were successful, as many African Americans lacked the financial means or educational opportunities to meet the requirements. Additionally, white individuals could still vote even if they could not meet the criteria, further disadvantaging African Americans (Alexander, 2010).

In simple terms, the unfair treatment of the black community in politics by the white community has deep historical roots and continues because of existing unfair systems. It is not the fault of every white person, but it is a problem within our society that we need to address. To make things fair, it is essential to recognize the issue of white superiority, talk openly about them, and work together to create a political system where everyone, regardless of race, can participate equally.

(3) Segregation

A narration is stated by the barber who expresses a desire for black people to have their own separate space, away from where he is standing. He believes that the situation would not improve unless black people are placed somewhere different, separated from whites. This perspective is rooted in the barber's sense of superiority over black individuals (O'Connor, 1971b).

Bayor (1988) notes that blacks were allocated less land for residential purposes, and many of their areas were designated as industrial areas. There was a belief that whites and blacks could not coexist in the same neighborhoods. In U.S. cities, including Atlanta, racial segregation is evident, with black and white populations often residing in separate areas. This segregation has deep historical roots influenced by migration patterns and government interventions that restricted the movement of the black population.

The barber's thoughts in "The Barber" are shaped by external factors, particularly the ideology of Hawkson, a gubernatorial candidate who shares the barber's belief in white superiority. Hawkson opposes racial equality, preferring the company of lower-class whites over blacks. This issue reflects the incident when Richard Nixon did the southern strategy. Welfare reform was Nixon's way of offering something different from the big social programs of the Great Society. He did it by focusing on the worries of white people in the North about race. Experts have noticed how Nixon tried to win over white Democrats who did not like Civil Rights laws by using race as a political tool (Spitzer, 2009). The story depicts ongoing segregation between whites and blacks, with Hawkson expressing a preference for blacks to stay within their designated groups. If they do not comply, Hawkson has a specific plan for them (O'Connor, 1971b, p. 30).

"Listen," the barber said, "do you know what Hawk told them people at Tilford?" At Tilford, Hawk had told them that he liked niggers fine in their place, and if they didn't stay in that place, he had a place to put 'em. How about that (O'Connor, 1971b, p. 30).

Indeed, Hawkson indirectly restricts the freedom of black individuals by limiting their territory. Hawkson associates black people with being wild, possibly influenced by a past crime involving them. While this reason does not provide a solid foundation for generalizing the nature of all black people, Hawkson uses it as justification to restrict the movement of black individuals by seizing their territory.

The narrative introduces George, a black boy, into the talk. The barber asks George if he would attend a school with white students in the same class, but George refuses. Even though Rayber, a professor, is willing to teach anyone, regardless of race, George hesitates to be in the same place as white people. This reluctance might stem from George being tired or afraid, anticipating the negative consequences of being in the same place as white people. So, George chooses to stay away from white people, suggesting a concern about his self-worth (O'Connor, 1971b, p. 32). Porter & Washington (1979) emphasize that racial segregation

can negatively impact the self-esteem of black children. In recent literature, only a small number of studies support the idea that black children have low self-esteem or self-concept, particularly since the rise of the black consciousness movement in the 1960s (Davis et al., 1998).

He wondered if George had looked up.

"All right," the barber agreed, "but not mixed up together, huh? How'd you like to go to a white school, George?" he shouted.

"Wouldn't like that," George said. "We need some powders. These here the las' in this box." He dusted them out into the basin (O'Connor, 1971b, p. 32).

(4) The Worldview of "The Barber"

Goldmann's idea suggests that literary works reflect the idea of society when the works were created. In the case of O'Connor, her works, set in 1940s Southern America, were influenced by the prevalent racism of that time, mainly white superiority. This connection is evident in the themes of her works, addressing issues like segregation and voting rights.

In "The Barber," O'Connor portrays the political discrimination in 1940s Southern America, where whites aim to maintain their superior status by suppressing racial equality. The story reflects the socio-historical background of the era, highlighting white superiority through racial prejudice, political discrimination, and segregation between whites and blacks. This mirrors the context of the Southern U.S. in the 1940s, characterized by Jim Crow laws, the denial of voting rights for blacks, and the segregation of black areas into industrial zones.

2. White Superiority in Flannery O'Connor's "The Artificial Nigger"

"The Artificial Nigger" delves into the theme of white superiority, exploring racial issues like prejudice and segregation. Racial slurs are employed, and the main character, Mr. Head, epitomizes white superiority, passing on this ideology to his grandson, Nelson. The story reflects the 1950s Southern U.S. context, highlighting prevailing notions of white superiority, including racial prejudice and segregation. The depicted worldview reinforces the idea of white superiority through these themes.

a. White Superiority in "The Artificial Nigger" and Its Socio-Historical Context

"The Artificial Nigger," written in 1955 and set in Atlanta, Southern America, explores the prevalent racism against black people by whites in the Southern U.S. The story delves into the theme of white superiority, evident in racial slurs and stereotyping. Mr. Head and Nelson exhibit disrespect and dehumanization towards blacks, seeing them as threats and entertainment rather than equals. The narrative also depicts segregation when Mr. Head and Nelson lost their way in a black-populated neighborhood, highlighting Mr. Head's nervousness and retained sense of superiority over blacks due to ingrained racial prejudices in society at that time. O'Connor portrays the verbal argument between Mr. Head and Nelson as a competition in justifying themselves. The depiction of a grandfather who should have more wisdom and a grandson who lacks understanding adds a comic element to the story (Morel, 2005).

(a) Prejudice

In the narrative, Mr. Head casually uses the word "nigger," emphasizing his light-hearted attitude despite the word's dark history. He mentions that Nelson might not like Atlanta because of its black population without offering specific reasons. Mr. Head's perspective reflects prejudice and baseless assumptions about black people, highlighting his perceived superiority. The use of the word "nigger" is historically rooted in the way white people referred to enslaved Black people (O'Connor, 1971a, p. 261).

"You may not like it a bit," Mr. Head continued. "It'll be full of niggers."

The boy made a face as if he could handle a nigger.

"All right," Mr. Head said. "You ain't ever seen a nigger."

"You weren't up very early," Nelson said.

"You ain't ever seen a nigger," Mr. Head repeated. "There hasn't been a nigger in this county since we ran that one out twelve years ago, and that was before you were born." He looked at the boy as if he were daring him to say he had ever seen a Negro (O'Connor, 1971a, p. 261).

Another prejudice case is when Mr. Head and Nelson meet a group of black people on the train, and Mr. Head reacts with a mix of fury and fear due to his belief in white superiority. Nelson, previously unaware of black individuals, learns about them through this encounter. Mr. Head, considering himself more knowledgeable, openly mentions to a fellow passenger that it is Nelson's first time seeing a "nigger." This casual conversation suggests that such attitudes were commonplace in the area and, at the time, reflected the perceived superiority of whites over blacks, possibly viewed as a form of amusement (O'Connor, 1971a, pp. 264–265).

It is also seen that Nelson begins to dislike black people because of his grandfather's beliefs. They see a group of black people on a train, but Nelson gets upset when he cannot see them again. This makes him understand why his grandfather does not like black people (O'Connor, 1971a, p. 265). The story suggests that some white people, like Nelson, might start disliking black people for no good reason.

Nelson turned backward again and looked where the Negro had disappeared. He felt that the Negro had deliberately walked down the aisle in order to make a fool of him, and he hated him with a fierce raw fresh hate; and also, he understood now why his grandfather disliked them (O'Connor, 1971a, p. 265).

Prejudice has various causes rooted in historical factors, such as using slavery for economic gain, justifying the oppression by white individuals, and pursuing wealth and fame. Since these notions are deeply ingrained in society, some still believe and adhere to the behaviors of their great-grandparents.

There is a part of the story where black people are metaphorically compared to animals. When Mr. Head and Nelson mistakenly enter the train kitchen and are asked to leave, instead of apologizing, Mr. Head chooses to depart while demeaning the black employee. He yells, likening the employee to a cockroach disturbing the comfort of passengers. Another passenger finds this amusing, and Nelson feels proud of Mr. Head's actions. This illustrates how white people in the story feel entitled to such behavior, driven by an ideology that sees them as superior to black people, justifying their dominance (O'Connor, 1971a, p. 266).

"Passengers are not allowed in the kitchen!" he said in a haughty voice. "Passengers are NOT allowed in the kitchen!"

Mr. Head stopped where he was and turned. "And there's good reason for that," he shouted into the Negro's chest, "because the cockroaches would run the passengers out!"

All the travelers laughed, and Mr. Head and Nelson walked out, grinning. Mr. Head was known at home for his quick wit, and Nelson felt a sudden keen pride in him (O'Connor, 1971a, p. 266).

Racism is rooted in ideology, representing deeply ingrained beliefs within society. These foundational ideas shape our perspectives from an early age, making it difficult to challenge them. Ideology influences various aspects of society, including education, textbooks, political speeches, movies, advertisements, cultural events, and even the language we use (DiAngelo, 2018).

(b) Segregation

The story "The Artificial Nigger" illustrates segregation through a rundown neighborhood primarily inhabited by black people. As Mr. Head and Nelson walk through the area, they observe dilapidated houses and a narrow road. Nelson's innocent use of the term "niggers" suggests a demographic shift in the neighborhood. This scene highlights the stark division and social dynamics within the community (O'Connor, 1971a, p. 270).

They walked on for some time on streets like this before he remembered to turn again. The houses they were passing now were all unpainted, and the wood in them looked rotten; the street between was narrower. Nelson saw a colored man. Then another. Then another. "Niggers live in these houses," he observed (O'Connor, 1971a, p. 270).

The story illustrates the inequality between white and black communities, emphasizing differences in housing quality. White homes are portrayed as more decent, while black residents live in colorless, weathered wood houses. This mirrors a broader pattern of racial segregation in U.S. cities, including Atlanta. Historical practices like racial zoning, public housing placement, and urban renewal have contributed to this division, restricting the movement of the black population (Bayer, 1988).

The story also depicts Mr. Head and Nelson navigating a predominantly black neighborhood in *The Artificial Nigger*. Mr. Head is uncomfortable and wants to leave, but they keep encountering black residents everywhere. Nelson becomes uneasy, wanting to leave quickly. The narrative vividly portrays the tension and discomfort in a neighborhood where the majority are black. It also highlights segregation, with black children playing in a gutter, possibly lacking access to a proper playground (O'Connor, 1971a, p. 270).

Nelson's skin began to prickle, and they stepped along at a faster pace in order to leave the neighborhood as soon as possible. There were colored men in their undershirts standing in the doors and colored women rocking on the sagging porches. Colored children played in the gutters and stopped what they were doing to look at them (O'Connor, 1971a, p. 270).

In Atlanta, racial zoning was an informal practice that categorized city areas based on race, determining where different racial groups could live or work. While not explicitly following segregation rules, this system influenced land use, building types, and residents. The goal was to control the living spaces of black people, often providing them with less land for homes and labeling their neighborhoods as industrial. Racial zoning aimed to maintain separation between black and white neighborhoods in Atlanta (Bayer, 1998).

(c) The Worldview of "The Artificial Nigger"

The short story "The Artificial Nigger" by O'Connor aims to depict the societal conditions in the 1950s Southern America, specifically in Georgia, Atlanta. The narrative highlights the prevailing discrimination where white people, benefiting more, intentionally mistreat black people based on racial prejudice. The story serves as a portrayal of how white superiority negatively impacts the social life, particularly that of black individuals.

Racial zoning in Atlanta involved designated areas for white and black individuals, spanning residential, commercial, and industrial zones. The guidelines, though at times unclear, resulted in black residents having limited housing space, often in industrial areas. The main objective was to decrease where black people lived and maintain their segregation from white neighborhoods (Bayer, 1988).

The homology between *The Artificial Nigger* and the socio-historical context of 1950s Southern America reveals a connection. The story reflects the prevalent worldview of white superiority, incorporating elements like racial prejudice and segregation. O'Connor purposefully infuses the narrative with the ideology and events of that era, transforming the short story into a valuable piece that not only entertains as fiction but also encapsulates a significant part of history.

D. Conclusion

The researcher employed Goldmann's genetic structuralism theory to analyze Flannery O'Connor's short stories "The Barber" and "The Artificial Nigger." This approach focuses on understanding the worldview within the stories by considering both the text and the socio-historical context of their creation. The goal is to unveil the underlying ideologies of society during the periods when the stories were written, emphasizing the interconnectedness of text and context in shaping literary works. "The Barber," written in 1941, explores racial prejudices within a political context, depicting the challenges of confronting white superiority. The story delves into issues of how the whites think superior, so they practice racial prejudice, segregation, and political discrimination, reflecting the socio-historical events of white superiority in the Southern U.S. in the 1940s. During this period, the white community discriminated against the black community through restrictive laws, including the Jim Crow laws, which limited the voting rights of black individuals. Racial segregation further exacerbated inequalities, resulting in discriminatory land allocation and the categorization of black neighborhoods as poor ghettos.

Next, the story "The Artificial Nigger," written in 1955 Atlanta, delves into the racial prejudices of two white characters, Mr. Head and Nelson. As they navigate the city, the narrative exposes their sense of white superiority over the black community. It vividly contrasts the living conditions of black and white neighborhoods, highlighting the racial segregation prevalent in cities like Atlanta during the 1950s. Through this exploration, the story depicts the profound impact of racial ideologies on individual perspectives and behaviors, reflecting the socio-historical context of that era.

The analysis of "The Barber" and "The Artificial Nigger" involves exploring characters reflecting racist ideologies, depicting prevalent racial prejudices in Southern society. These stories serve as reflections of the socio-historical context, providing insight into the discriminatory behaviors of that era. So, it is proven that literary works such as O'Connor's contain the worldview, knowledge, and history of a certain era. That being

stated, literary work is not merely born to fulfill human entertainment purposes, but it can also be used as a tool to study and broaden our knowledge.

Goldmann's genetic structuralism analysis is employed to reveal the worldview in O'Connor's stories, examining both the text and the social context. In O'Connor's works, white superiority is introduced to provide historical value through the narratives, expressed through the story's atmosphere, situations, and character traits, mirroring the societal views of that time. The narrative of white superiority, as depicted in O'Connor's stories, highlights the harmful impacts of such beliefs. It emphasizes that biological superiority based on race is unfounded and erroneous. All humans are fundamentally the same, and racial systems like segregation and political discrimination are unjust and irrelevant. The idea that one race is superior to another is not only unsupported by evidence but also perpetuates unfair treatment. Rejecting this notion is crucial for building a fair and inclusive society that treats everyone equally, irrespective of their race. Overall, this study is still not perfect. For future researchers, I recommend to do some more close reading and add more references to strengthen this study.

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