

Good country people



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In " Good Country People" Flannery O'Conner uses symbolism to exploit the characters and their flaws. The various facades the characters create for themselves. Flaws are taken advantage of by society, whether these flaws are physical or ideological. People must be comfortable with every aspect of themselves, because certain people, Manley Pointer, can easily exploit their weaknesses. From the beginning the Bible salesman with an ailing heart uses the svelte and persuasive words to manipulate himself inside when he tells Mrs. Hopewell, " Lady, I've come to speak of serious things. " He continues, using her own thoughts and feelings to manipulate her, telling her, " I know you believe in Christian service" and " People like you don't like to fool with country people like me"(Flannery). He attacks her weakness right at the heart of it. Manley Pointer puts Joy/Hulga into a position where she feels in control. She believes that she is manipulating Manley, but it is he who is doing the manipulating. Before Joy/Hulga even knows it, her glasses are off and Manley has removed her leg. The " eyeglasses" of her philosophical degree cover up Joy-Hulga's poor vision (Oliver). Manley Pointer exploits joy-Hulga's weakness to the fullest extent, because she never sees it coming. Greatest flaws can often be found in those characters with physical impairments (Oliver). Joy/Hulga had grown cynical and cold as she grew up with only one leg and heart ailment. She creates an image that she is smarter and better than the rest of the characters in the story. Her education and self-absorption seemed to instill this attitude. Those who are physically crippled are often emotionally or spiritually crippled(Oliver). We can relate these impairments to Joy's impairments. She emotionally died at age 10 when she lost her leg. Now her weakness is the feeling of power she believed she gained from her studies. She refers to herself as a person who " sees

through nothing" (Flannery). Little does she know that she is stating her greatest weakness by saying this. Ideally good country people are moral, religious and therefore trustworthy. Mrs. Hopewell refers to Manley Pointer as "good country people" and "the salt of the earth" (Flannery). Good Christian people. The title of the story comes from what she likes to call the poorer and less fortunate people that live off the land and work their whole lives just to hang on to some scrap of a life. This is how she views these people. She believes that they are good country people not a bad seed among them, that they are all eager to help out. But Manley Pointer is really a demon, a demon that has come to remind them of their weaknesses. Hulga changes her name from Joy to spite her mother. Joy believes she had picked out the ugliest name she could find. But in all actuality the name true meaning "the holy one" which is ironic as Joy is Atheist. "She is seeking, unconsciously, a moral and spiritual perfection that is holy in nature. That Hulga also likes to see herself in the part of Eve add not only to the irony of her name but her fate in the story" (Holsen). In the short story "Good Country People," Flannery O'Connor utilizes the characters Joy Hopewell and Manley Pointer to expose how believing in nothing makes a person isolated and spiritually empty. Flaws are taken advantage of by society, whether these flaws are physical or ideological. Works Cited Elizabeth Mchahan, Susan X Day, Robert Funk "O'Connor, Flannery. Good Country People." Literature and the Writing Process, Eighth Edition, P169-182. "Oliver, Kate, O'Connor's Good Country People," Explicator, Summer2004, Vol. 62 Issue 4, p233-236, 4p. EBSCO. Web. Sep 27 2012 "Holsen, Ruth M, O'Connor's Good Country People," Explicator, Spring84, Vol. 42 Issue 3, p59, 1/2p. EBSCO. Web. Sep 27 2012