

Critical Insights: Short Fiction of Flannery O'Connor

“Proficient and profound in both novels and short stories, Flannery O’Connor created works that have attracted diverse and abundant analyses. This volume in the *Critical Insights* series **focuses on the young writer’s short stories**, which were mainly gathered into two collections published a decade apart.

Flannery O’Connor came of age during the burgeoning post-World War II era. The opening essay in the brief Career, Life and Influence section of this volume shares an **illuminating look at the influence of the domestic aftermath of the war upon her stories**. This essay is followed by a brief biographical sketch of the writer, who died at the age of 29 due to complications from lupus.

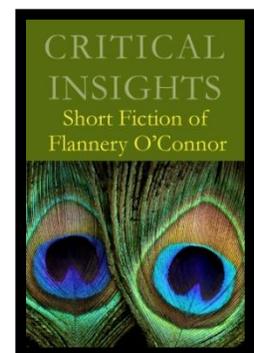
The following four essays, making up the Critical Context section, **work to envelop readers’ understanding of her stories in the social and political climate of the time**, both in regards to her product and the critical response to it. Three of the essays are contributed by this volume’s editor, Robert C. Evans, who writes of O’Connor’s conservative leanings, provides a meticulous survey of the earliest O’Connor criticism, and, analyzes the particular way in which O’Connor presents her stories. The fourth essay in the section offers an interesting comparison between O’Connor’s work and that of African American writer Alice Walker.

The Critical Readings section offers essays which look at O’Connor’s work in a generally chronological way. “Collards and Consumption in a ‘Stroke of Good Fortune’” by David A. Davis relates the placement of food in this early story to broader gender issues of the time. Themes of Christian faith are analyzed through several essays (and through much of O’Connor’s work). And Colleen Warren discusses issues of race and more in her piece “Black Doubling in Flannery O’Connor’s ‘Why Do the Heathen Rage?’”.

A helpful Resources section includes a chronology of the writer’s life, a listing of her published works, and a bibliography. An index rounds out the work.”

-ARBA

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