Flannery O'Connor's Sacramental Art


Mary Flannery O'Connor (March 25, 1925 – August 3, 1964) was an American novelist, short story writer and essayist. She wrote two novels and thirty-two short stories, as well as a number of reviews and commentaries. She was a Southern writer who often wrote in a sardonic Southern Gothic style and relied heavily on regional settings and supposedly grotesque characters, often in violent situations. The unsentimental acceptance or rejection of the limitations or imperfection or difference of these Flannery O'Connor's Sacramental Art is an astute study of its subject. Its author has taken O'Connor seriously, listened attentively to her case against secular presumption, and demonstrated an uncanny capacity for understanding literature in the light of eternity. What recommends her analysis above all else is the critical virtue it shares with George A. Kilcourse's Flannery O'Connor's Religious Imagination (2001) and Ralph C. Wood's Flannery O'Connor and the Christ-Haunted South (2004): a painstaking concentration on what is truly meaningful in O'Connor's symbolism. Flannery: A Life of Flannery O'Connor, by Brad Gooch; Flannery O'Connor and Edward Lewis Wallant: Two of a Kind, by John V. McDermott; The Abbess of Andalusia: Flannery O'Connor's Spiritual Journey, by Lorraine V. Murray.[author unknown] - 2009 - The Chesterton Review 35 (3/4):666-677. Return to Good and Evil: Flannery O'Connor's Response to Nihilism. The Incarnational Art of Flannery O'Connor. Christina Marie Bieber - 1999 - Dissertation, Emory University. On the Critique of Secular Ethics.
Flannery O'Connor believed that only bad religious fiction seeks to display convictions through arranging characters and events into 'satisfying patterns'. She said that more faithfully Christian fiction arises from sacramental theology; the novel, she said, 'must penetrate the natural human world as it is' (Mystery and Manners 163). The jolting and often violent culminations of her stories were penetrations of the world as it is and preparations for receiving grace in the midst of that world (Mystery and Manners 112). Sometimes the moment of grace is refused, sometimes embraced, most often it
The boy was very proud that he had been born in a wreck. He had always felt that it set his existence apart from the ordinary one and he had understood from it that the plans of God for him were special, even though nothing of consequence had happened to him so far." --from "The Violent Bear It Away".