



# Flannery O'Connor: The Obedient Imagination

By Sarah Gordon



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Disturbing, ironic, haunting, brutal. What inner struggles led Flannery O'Connor to create fiction that elicits such labels? Much of the tension that drives O'Connor's writing, says Sarah Gordon, stems from the natural resistance of her imagination to the obedience expected by her male-centered church, society, and literary background.

*Flannery O'Connor: The Obedient Imagination* shows us a writer whose world was steeped in male presumption regarding women and creativity. The book is filled with fresh perspectives on O'Connor's Catholicism; her upbringing as a dutiful, upper-class southern daughter; her readings of Thurber, Poe, Eliot, and other arguably misogynistic authors; and her schooling in the New Criticism.

As Gordon leads us through a world premised on expectations at odds with O'Connor's strong and original imagination, she ranges across all of O'Connor's fiction and many of her letters and essays. While acknowledging O'Connor's singular situation, Gordon also gleans insights from the lives and works of other southern writers, Eudora Welty, Caroline Gordon, and Margaret Mitchell among them.

*Flannery O'Connor: The Obedient Imagination* draws on Sarah Gordon's thirty years of reading, teaching, and discussing one of our most complex and influential authors. It takes us closer than we have ever been to the creative struggles behind such literary masterpieces as *Wise Blood* and "A Good Man Is Hard to Find."



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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"Sarah Gordon has been steeped in O'Connor criticism for decades, and every serious reader of O'Connor will want to own her insightful book."--Marshall Bruce Gentry, author of "Flannery O'Connor's Religion of the Grotesque"

"This study will be definitive for years to come; it is deeply learned in the life and writings as well as in all aspects of O'Connor scholarship, broad in its sympathy for O'Connor's grounding in Catholic theology, and yet also clear-minded in its insistence on the legitimacy of a range of responses to the fiction. We have needed such a wise, broad-based, and deeply informed evaluation of this important writer for a long time."--Louise Westling, author of "The Green Breast of the New World: Landscape, Gender, and American Fiction"

"First-time readers as well as life-long scholars of Flannery O'Connor's fiction will discover bold and urgent commentary in Gordon's "The Obedient Imagination", and this archival study--this water table of biography and literary criticism--should be a welcome addition both to personal and to university libraries."--"American Literature"

"[P]rovides insightful readings of individual texts and so will play significant roles in the ongoing assessment of O'Connor's work."--Joseph M. Flora, "Southern Literary Journal"

"A terrific book to read. In her engagement with the work of previous critics and interpreters of O'Connor's fiction, Gordon is fair and generous, never dismissive of those with whom she disagrees and respectful of those to whom she owes critical debts. . . . "Flannery O'Connor: The Obedient Imagination" stands as proof of the power of a writer--Flannery O'Connor--and of one reader's career-long encounter with both that writer's works and the critics who have both then and now given shape to them."--"Mississippi Quarterly"

"A superb, important book, a landmark study of this enduring artist. O'Connor, with her usual skepticism, believed that it would take 100 years for her work to be properly understood. Thanks to Sarah Gordon, who began her heroic labors shortly after the novelist's death in 1964, it has taken only thirty-six."--"Atlanta Journal-Constitution"

"A must-read for its undaunted exploration of critical questions most O'Connor scholars evade rather than plumb, including O'Connor's possible racism, quasi-Manichaeism, ambivalent depictions of women, denigration of human relationships, and creative grappling with the expectations of patriarchy."--"Virginia Quarterly Review"

### **From the Inside Flap**

A compendium of tributes to the quintessential Southern gothic storyteller from her peers, champions, and friends

### **About the Author**

Sarah Gordon is a professor emerita of English at Georgia College and State University. She was for many years the chair of her university's internationally renowned symposia on O'Connor. In addition she was the editor of the "Flannery O'Connor Bulletin" and the founding editor of the "Flannery O'Connor Review." Her books include "Flannery O'Connor: The Obedient Imagination" and "Flannery O'Connor: In Celebration of Genius."

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

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Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important action, like looking for your favorite book and reading a publication. Beside you can solve your short lived problem; you can add your knowledge by the guide entitled Flannery O'Connor: The Obedient Imagination. Try to make book Flannery O'Connor: The Obedient Imagination as your friend. It means that it can to be your friend when you really feel alone and beside those of course make you smarter than previously. Yeah, it is very fortunated for yourself. The book makes you more confidence because you can know anything by the book. So , let me make new experience and knowledge with this book.

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