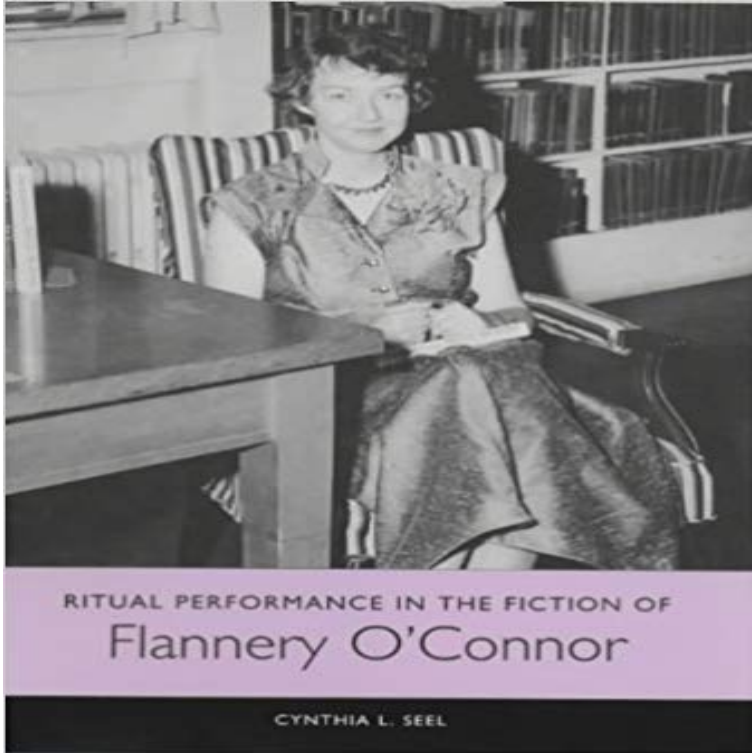


Ritual Performance in the Fiction of Flannery O'Connor (Studies in English and American Literature and Culture)



Flannery O'Connor wrote some thirty short stories and two novellas in her brief but brilliant literary career, including such remarkable works as *Wise Blood* (1952), *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960), and the short story anthology, *A Good Man Is Hard To Find* (1955). While she enjoyed considerable recognition during her lifetime, since her death in 1964 at age 39 her work has garnered even greater acclaim at the national and international levels. The proliferation of O'Connor studies and the increased presence of her works in both the high school and college curriculum clearly support the view that her position as an eminent American writer is secure. Cynthia Seel's study offers a decidedly new way of reading O'Connor. Analyzing six works in detail -- the short stories *Mystery That is Lived*, *A Circle in the Fire*, *The Artificial Nigger*, *The Lame Shall Enter First*, *A Temple of the Holy Ghost*, and *A Stroke of Good Fortune* -- Seel examines O'Connor's primary use of ritual as form (or aesthetic frame) and as transforming action, and thus illuminates the method and impact of O'Connor's works afresh. While O'Connor's affinity for ritual has not gone unnoticed, no one has before assembled and analyzed ritual as it has appeared in a wide range of her fiction, as this book does. It will interest students and teachers of American literature, Southern Studies, feminist theory, and ritual studies. Cynthia L. Seel received her Ph.D. in Performance Studies from Northwestern University.

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