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Flannery O'Connor and Cold War Culture offers a radically new reading of O'Connor, who is known primarily as the creator of "universal" religious dramas. By recovering the historical context in which O'Connor wrote her fiction, Jon Lance Bacon reveals an artist deeply concerned with the issues that engaged other producers of American culture from the 1940s to the 1960s: national identity, political anxiety, and intellectual freedom. Bacon takes an interdisciplinary approach, relating the stories and novels to political texts and sociological studies, as well as films, television programs, paintings, advertisements, editorial cartoons, and comic books. At a time when national paranoia ran high, O'Connor joined in the public discussion regarding a way of life that seemed threatened from outside – the American way of life. The discussion tended toward celebration, but O'Connor raised doubts about the quality of life within the United States. Specifically, she attacked the consumerism that cold warriors cited as evidence of American cultural superiority. The role of dissenter appealed greatly to O'Connor, and her identity as a Southern, Catholic writer – the very identity that has discouraged critics from considering her as an American writer – furnished a position from which to criticize the Cold War consensus.

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Flannery O'Connor and Cold War Culture

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JON LANCE BACON



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Abbreviations

- C** *The Correspondence of Flannery O'Connor and the Brainard Cheneys*, ed. C. Ralph Stephens (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986)
- CS** Flannery O'Connor, *The Complete Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1971)
- CW** Flannery O'Connor, *Collected Works*, ed. Sally Fitzgerald (New York: Library of America, 1988)
- HB** Flannery O'Connor, *The Habit of Being*, ed. Sally Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1979)
- MM** Flannery O'Connor, *Mystery and Manners*, ed. Sally Fitzgerald and Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1969)
- PG** *The Presence of Grace and Other Book Reviews by Flannery O'Connor*, comp. Leo J. Zuber, ed. Carter W. Martin (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1983)
- VBA** Flannery O'Connor, *The Violent Bear It Away* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1960)
- WB** Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood*, 2d ed. (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1962)