Abstract:

“Awful Mystery: Flannery O’Connor as Gothic Artist”:

Chad Rohman, Professor and Chair of English

Among the growing array of criticism in O’Connor studies is the study of her Gothic artistry. Despite her use of violence, horrible situations, and awful outcomes, O’Connor’s best stories, written from her orthodox Catholic worldview, posit the possibility of Grace in a postmodern world that denies or diminishes the presence of God and the power of mystery. O’Connor uses Gothic motifs to examine the power of revelation resulting from revulsion—each concept lies in close liminal proximity in her stories forming a binary—awful mystery—that is a key to understanding her works’ purpose and to the Gothic genre in general.