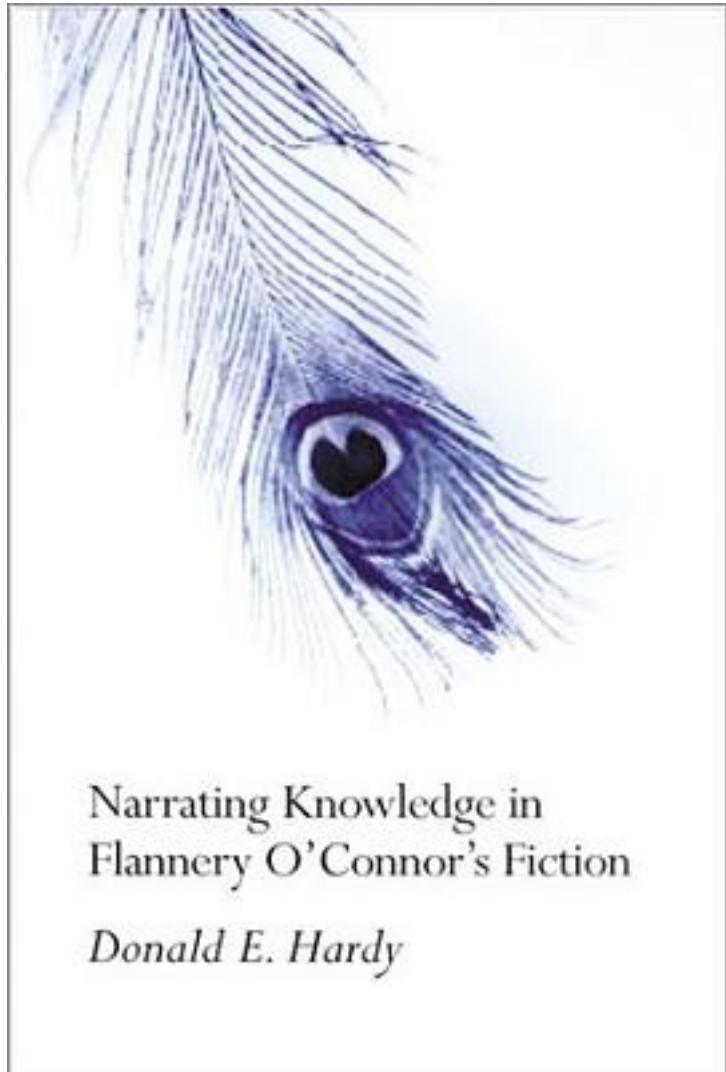


Narrating Knowledge in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction



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A linguistic approach to the novels and short stories of Flannery O'Connor; In *Narrating Knowledge in Flannery O'Connor's Fiction*, Donald E. Hardy examines themes in Flannery O'Connor's fiction concerning the limitations of human knowledge. He argues that attending to O'Connor's stylistic strategies allows the best access to her views about knowledge in all its manifestations - spiritual, rational, and emotional - whether the knowledge is that of the narrator, the narratee, or the characters of her narratives. It also, he maintains, allows readers to appreciate the mysteries she sought to underscore. Surveying O'Connor's fiction, early as well as late, Hardy concludes that the writer's differentiation between grades of knowledge, along with the intimations she offered of what lies behind knowledge - of the ineffable behind the rational - finds only partial expression in the content of her narratives and in her narrative summings-up. For a thorough understanding it is necessary to turn to her employment of certain linguistic devices open to analysis. These include dependent clauses, for rendering presuppositions explicit; negations, for blocking suppositions; and participials describing what is seen, for bringing out implications. In a study completely accessible to readers of O'Connor who possess no background in stylistics, Hardy undertakes analyses that are both qualitative and quantitative, both comparative and statistical. By illuminating convictions of O'Connor's that are latent in but constitutive of her fiction, his exploration enlarges not only her readers' comprehension but their enjoyment as well. It also suggests refinements of linguistic hypotheses with consequences for the revision of interpretive and analytic models applicable to the investigation of a wide range of literature.

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