distrusted the local authorities in Northern Ireland, which they believed were gerrymandered and influenced by the Orange Order, and eventually sought to construct pragmatic links with the central government at Stormont.

The discussion of the Church of Ireland is helpful but less rich. The author recognizes the asymmetry of the church in which the overwhelming majority of Anglicans lived in Northern Ireland, and recognizes also that the ecclesiastical structures allowed for the disproportionate representation of the southern church. As a consequence, the focus is on the Church of Ireland in the south, which, owing to its size and the social background of many of its members, is described as moderate and accommodating. By comparison, northern Anglicans, it seems, were heavily influenced by the Orange Order and are portrayed as a disruptive force waiting in the sidelines to upset the delicate balance achieved by the church leadership between religious and political loyalty. This hardly does justice to a complex community on both sides of the border that was divided along theological, cultural, political, and social lines. In addition, the attitude of the leadership toward the Northern Ireland state is not adequately described. The bishops may have been successful in terms of asserting a united church at an institutional level, but did this come at the price of silent complicity in the inequalities of the northern state? The question of why the Church of Ireland began to seriously question these is not adequately outlined, and the impression is given that the bishops suddenly discovered there might be a problem in the late 1960s.

These comments should not detract from a welcome addition to the literature on religion in twentieth-century Ireland. This book is a forceful reminder to scholars of the wealth of untapped material that exists and which could be exploited to answer questions about the nature and structures of church-state relations on both sides of the border. It is to the author's credit that he has raised issues of such importance.

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Inside the Church of Flannery O'Connor: Sacrament, Sacramental, and the Sacred in Her Fiction. Edited by **Joanne Halleran McMullen** and **Jon Parrish Peede**. Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2007. ix + 233 pp. $38.00 cloth.

The life and literature of Flannery O'Connor—a Roman Catholic woman living in and writing about a deeply Protestant place—has intrigued and baffled many

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lay readers and professional scholars of Southern literature for over fifty years. In the edited volume *Inside the Church of Flannery O'Connor*, ten experts reexamine the person and the fiction of O'Connor by scrutinizing her supposed "journey to literary sainthood," if not Catholic sainthood (1). Together, their contributions amount to an estimate of the current state of O'Connor studies within the larger field of Southern literature. They also provide great insight into the historical and cultural contexts that informed O'Connor's published works and religious worldview. In the end, the diversity of perspectives contained in the book serves to demystify both "the church of Flannery O'Connor" as constructed by her greatest champions and "the Christ-haunted land" that she spent her private and public life trying to illuminate (13).

Editors Joanne Halleran McMullen and Jon Parrish Peede divide *Inside the Church of Flannery O'Connor* into three parts. In Part 1, "The Church: Sacrament and Sacramental in O'Connor's Fiction," three contributors describe O'Connor's ability to situate her conceptions of Catholic beliefs and practices into her fictional renderings of a Southern religious landscape. W. A. Sessions begins the volume with an essay on O'Connor's interest in revealing the reality of evil to "an audience lost in a secular age" (25). Specifically, he shows how O'Connor was like John Henry Newman in her dialectic understanding of "an interaction of presences" in the world, one "diabolical" and the other "sacred" (30). Helen Andretta examines what she calls "the hylomorphic sacramentalism" of O'Connor's imagery in the short story "Parker's Back," which basically means that O'Connor was interested in the union of body and soul as elaborated by Thomas Aquinas. In his analysis of *The Violent Bear It Away*, John Desmond examines how O'Connor uses "displaced sacraments" to reveal the Incarnation of Christ in seemingly perverse characters and contexts.

In Part 2, "The Congregation: Cultural and Artistic Influences on O'Connor's Fiction," four scholars examine the degree to which O'Connor was a product of the regional culture of the South and religious milieu of Tridentine Catholicism in the twentieth century. Robert Donahoo criticizes hagiographic representations of O'Connor and instead chooses to situate the writer within the literary culture of Catholic womanhood and the feminist movement. Jill Peáez Baumgaertner makes correlations between the imagery of O'Connor's works and cartoon catechisms of the period, emphasizing their tendency to exaggerate visual renderings of moral matters. Stephen Behrendt finds similarities in O'Connor's and William Blake's depictions of sacraments, and in the process provides an interesting discussion of the intentions of authors and the interpretations of readers. Timothy Caron's application of Toni Morrison's notion of "theological whiteness" to O'Connor's handling of race is perhaps the most poignant and critical of all ten essays. He makes an important distinction between "Apostates," or those

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who do not share with O'Connor a common understanding of Christianity as a mysterious battle between good and evil, and "True Believers," or those who cannot help but associate their adherence to Christianity with O'Connor's religious sensibilities. Caron then proceeds to criticize in no uncertain terms the failure of "True Believers" to consider the implications of race and racism in the works of O'Connor.

Part 3, "The Word: Denominational Doctrine in O'Connor's Fiction," includes three essays on O'Connor's deployment of Catholic theology in her fiction. Joanne Halleran McMullen, Ralph Wood, and John May all go to great lengths to disabuse readers of the tendency to read O'Connor with an eye for Catholic orthodoxy. Specifically, McMullen uses the short story "The River" to illustrate "how Catholicism seems to take a back seat to Protestant fundamentalism" (169) because of O'Connor's belief that the scholarly writer ought to separate private religion from public creativity. Ralph Wood makes a similar point in his analysis of Harry Ashfield's "scandalous baptism" and "happy death" in "The River." In the final essay, John May argues that "the question of the Catholic dimension of American fiction" is best understood if scholars avoid biographical readings of the author's intentions and instead favor simple readings of "the fiction itself," or the "ways in which religious faith insinuates itself subtly into story" (205).

Inside the Church of Flannery O'Connor is an excellent introduction to the rich scholarship on the real life and fictional writings of a Catholic woman in a Protestant region. Together, the essays also serve as an accessible medley of revisionist arguments against the simplistic reading of O'Connor as an orthodox Catholic writer and the American South as a uniquely solid Protestant land. Historians interested in the relationship between religion, culture, and literature will find this book to be especially useful, as will those interested in the role of race and gender in the composition of American literature.

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The Church Confronts Modernity: Catholicism since 1950 in the United States, Ireland, & Quebec. Edited by **Leslie Woodcock Tentler**. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007. vii + 302 pp. $29.95 paper.

In her collective volume, *The Church Confronts Modernity*, Professor Leslie Woodcock Tentler has produced an insightful, well-organized, and balanced

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