James Joyce and the Act of Reception is the first detailed account of Joyce’s own engagement with the reception of his work. It shows how Joyce’s writing, from the earliest fiction to *Finnegans Wake*, addresses the social conditions of reading (particularly in Ireland). Most notably, it echoes and transforms the responses of some of Joyce’s actual readers, from family and friends to key figures such as Eglinton and Yeats. This study argues that the famous ‘unreadable’ quality of Joyce’s writing is a crucial feature of its historical significance. Not only does Joyce engage with the cultural contexts in which he was read but, by inscribing versions of his own contemporary reception within his writing, he determines that his later readers read through the responses of earlier ones. In its focus on the local and contemporary act of reception, Joyce’s work is seen to challenge critical accounts of both modernism and deconstruction.

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JAMES JOYCE
AND THE ACT OF RECEPTION

Reading, Ireland, Modernism

JOHN NASH
Contents

List of figures vi
Acknowledgements vii
Textual note viii

Introduction: writing reception 1

1 Boredom: reviving an audience in *Dubliners* 28
2 Surveillance: education, confession and the politics of reception 62
3 Exhaustion: *Ulysses*, ‘Work in Progress’ and the ordinary reader 98
4 Hypocrisy: *Finnegans Wake*, *hypocrites lecteurs* and the Treaty 131

Afterword 164
Notes 172
Bibliography 200
Index 214
Figures

1  2d stamp from Free State definitives (6 December 1922) page 154
2  10d Overprint, Rialtas Sealadac na hÉireann 1922 155
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Textual note

The following editions of Joyce’s works have been cited parenthetically in the text:

In addition, the following abbreviation has also been used in the notes: