

JAMES JOYCE AND THE JESUITS

Using James Joyce's religious education and psychoanalytic theories of depression and paranoia, the book opens radical new possibilities for reading Joyce's fiction. In clear and engaging prose, the book takes readers through some of the canon's most well-read texts, including 'The Dead' and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and produces bold, fresh new readings. By placing these readings in light of Jesuit religious practice – in particular, the *Spiritual Exercises* all Jesuit priests and many students follow – the book shows how Joyce's deepest concerns about truth, literature, and love were shaped by these religious practices and texts. Joyce worked out his answers to these questions in his own texts, largely by forcing his readers to encounter, and perhaps answer, those questions themselves. Reading Joyce is a challenge not only in terms of interpretation but also of experience – the confusion, boredom, and even paranoia readers feel when making their way through these texts. Understanding this relation with the Jesuits helps us understand why.

MICHAEL MAYO is a fellow of Worcester College, Oxford. His research focuses on the experience of modernity, using psychoanalytic theory to understand how writers used narrative to negotiate the social crises at the turn of the twentieth century. His publications include work on James Joyce, twentieth-century theology, Arthur Conan Doyle, and the trial of Sacco and Vanzetti.

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What impresses one early in the treatment of this group of unreachable patients is that what looks like a therapeutic alliance turns out to be inimical to a real alliance and that what is termed understanding is actually anti-understanding One finds oneself in a situation that looks exactly like an on-going analysis with understanding, apparent contact, appreciation, and even reported improvement. And yet, one has a feeling of hollowness.

Betty Joseph, 'The Patient Who Is Difficult to Reach' (49)

The glamour of the work alerts you to an onset of beauty, pending the appropriate feeling and an endorsement in thought. But the juxtapositions and the compositional rhythms of the colors, jarring ever so slightly, won't resolve into unity. What's going on? Does the artist aim at order and miss, or does he try, and fail, to destroy it? It's as if you can't quite get started looking, but you can only stop by force of will. The paintings deny you the relief of disappointment. At length, beauty does arrive, though clad in its judicial robes, as truth. Your desire and its frustration, impartially sustained, are ruled the work's subject.

Peter Schjeldahl, 'Shapes and Colors'

Once there was and there was not.

Armenian version of 'Once upon a time'

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Acknowledgements

Kleinian theory tells us that, after endless bouts of paranoia and delusion, we might end up with gratitude. Nothing could be better proof for that claim than this book.

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