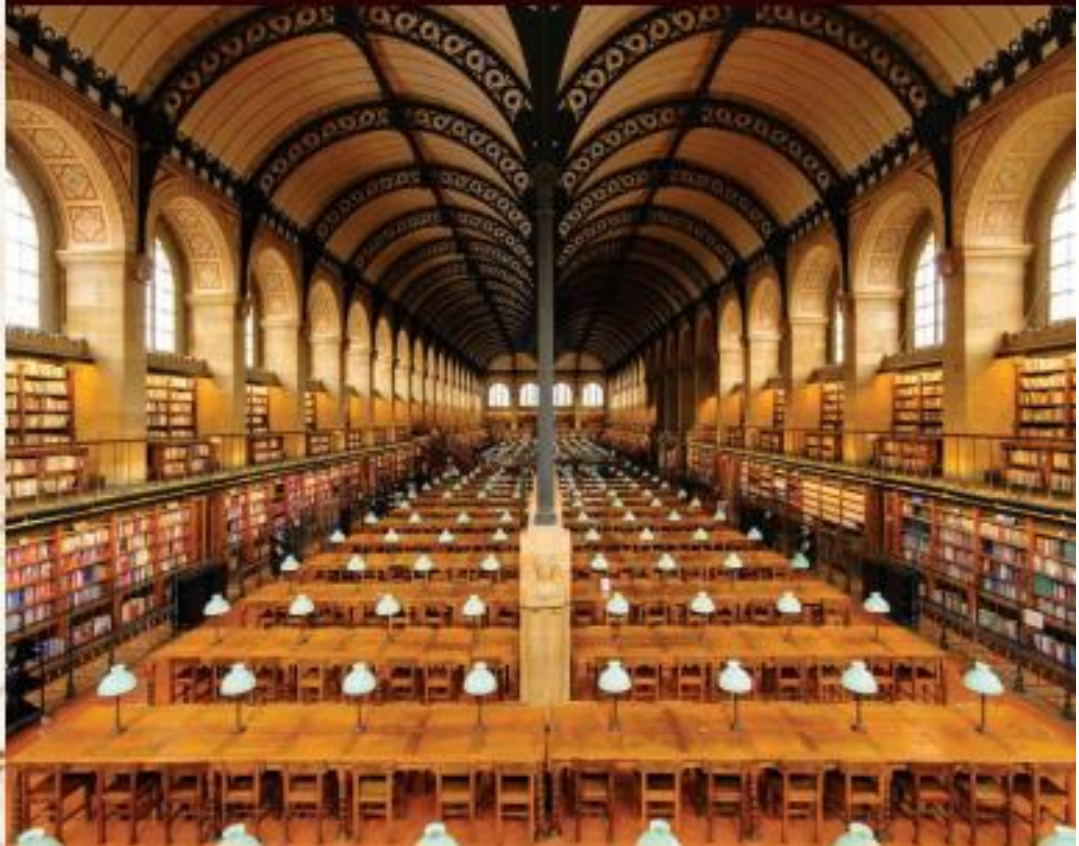


JOYCE,
ARISTOTLE,
AND
AQUINAS

Fran O'Rourke



THE FLORIDA JAMES JOYCE SERIES

Fran O'Rourke, *James Joyce, Aristotle and Aquinas*

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Endorsements

“Aristotle and Aquinas are ubiquitous ghostly presences in Joyce’s work. With meticulous and wide-ranging scholarship, Fran O’Rourke provides readers with a treasure trove of insights into these appearances, touching on issues as diverse as identity, stability through change, the nature of beauty, and love. He makes a powerful case that understanding these references is crucial to understanding Joyce.”

Martha C. Nussbaum, The University of Chicago

“We have long realized the importance to James Joyce of both Aristotle and Aquinas, but O’Rourke elucidates that significance with notable scholarly and critical insight and genuine brilliance. Without turning the artist Joyce into a philosopher, he takes him seriously as a thinker.”—Morris Beja, author of *James Joyce: A Literary Life*

Foreword

Reading Fran O’Rourke’s *James Joyce, Aristotle and Aquinas* is akin to listening to Debussy’s “The Girl with the Flaxen Hair,” a beautifully constructed work, seemingly straightforward while full of complexities that convey the exuberance of the creation with grace and pleasure. Professor O’Rourke has written a marvelous scholarly study that offers, in lucid prose, profound insights into an important portion of the intellectual, imaginative, and creative contexts that inform the writings of James Joyce. O’Rourke disclaims direct interpretive intentions, and instead makes the modest, though in my view quite important, assertion that his work is “concerned exclusively with philosophical themes which are of material significance for Joyce’s writings, or which provide inspiration for their artistic construction; it is not concerned with the literary character or merit of the application in the writings of Joyce” (1). The three hundred and twenty pages that follow do just that, but in the process they provide the intelligent reader with a range of important explanations for the influence on Joyce of

Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. From this, one has the ability to construct one's own interpretation, as we all do anyway, based on philosophical perspectives quite familiar to Joyce but, given contemporary intellectual tastes and current university syllabi, foreign to most modern readers.

It would be easy to sum up this project by saying that it offers useful additional information to supplement current interpretations of Joyce's works. That would be true, but would also run of risk of oversimplifying its impact. O'Rourke's study produces the same effect that Keats describes in "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." The careful explanations of key philosophical positions held by Aristotle and Aquinas and the erudite delineation of how Joyce encountered these views open for readers narrative perspectives and dialogic nuances imbedded in the canon that would otherwise go unnoticed. This is not a polemic study attempting to proselytize a critic's ideology. This is a scholarly work that respects the intelligence of its readers and acknowledges the range of interpretive possibilities that can be supplemented by a greater sense of the elaborate and at times conflicted intellectual context from which Joyce's writing emerged.

Michael Patrick Gillespie

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