



Samuel Beckett in the Literary Marketplace (Irish Studies)

Stephen Dilks

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Samuel Beckett has long carried the aura of an artist "damned to fame." Known for being a recluse with a profound distaste for publicity, Beckett gained a legendary image, infusing much of the critical attention that his literary work continues to receive. In this highly original and audacious volume, Dilks sharply departs from existing accounts of Beckett's persona by developing a critical analysis of his life as a professional writer. Focusing on the period between 1929 and 1969, and taking into account published and unpublished letters, advertising materials, photographic portraits, royalty statements, and other archival material, *Samuel Beckett in the Literary Marketplace* offers a powerful challenge to the received understanding of Beckett as an author shy of fame, averse to self-promotion, and unconcerned with commercial success.

Showing how Beckett's assumptions about professional life were shaped by his socioeconomic upbringing in South Dublin, Dilks illustrates the author's protracted efforts to develop and sustain a successful career as a professional writer with an enduring legacy. Dilks explores in great detail how Beckett fashioned an authorial persona, shaped public reception of his work, and controlled his business affairs. He shrewdly used agents and professional acquaintances to market himself as an unknown celebrity and to defend and disseminate his public image. Throughout, the book acknowledges Beckett's self-consciousness about his mythic relationship with the literary marketplace.

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