



Party Pieces: Oral Storytelling and Social Performance in Joyce and Beckett (Irish Studies)

Alan Friedman

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"Irishness" has often meant self-dramatization because Ireland is commonly represented, and has historically represented itself, as a nation of storytellers, musicians, and virtuoso performers. Like many of their characters, Joyce and Beckett were superb musicians, creators of performance, and they sought both to evoke and exhaust the resources and rhythms of language and performance. In this groundbreaking work, Alan Warren Friedman explores the rich historical and literary backgrounds of this distinctly Irish phenomenon. He then explains its cultural significance and discusses the major works of both authors, illustrating the diverse ways in which Ireland is enacted. Party Pieces offers a distinct contribution to the critical study of Joyce and Beckett. Unlike other books on the subject of social performance, it places two great modern Irish writers within social and metaphorical conventions that are specifically moored in their Irishness. In so doing the author shows how social performances not only impacted the works of Joyce and Beckett but also were central to their creative processes. Meticulously researched, convincingly argued, and clearly written, Party Pieces is an ideal reference for scholars of Joyce, Beckett, and Irish studies.

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