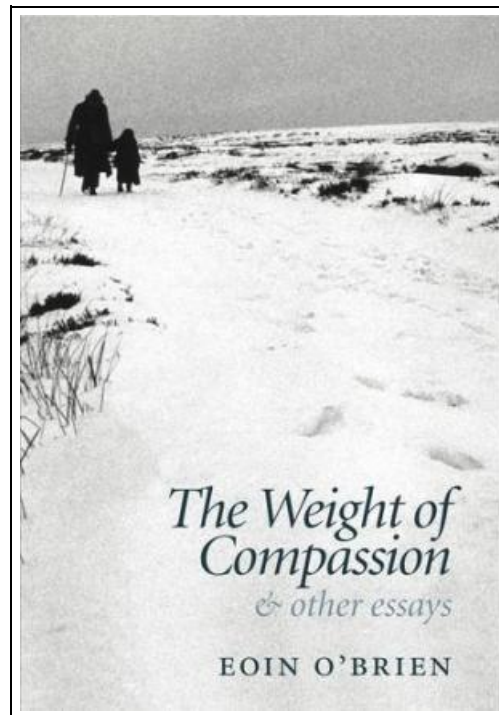


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The Lilliput Press Ltd, Ireland, 2012. Hardback. Condition: New. Language: English . Brand New Book. THERE ARE MANY facets to Samuel Beckett's writing - humour, despair, love, poignancy, suffering - but for me there is one dominant characteristic, compassion, compassion for the human condition of existence. So begins Eoin O'Brien's title essay, an observation that encapsulates the collection as it broadens out into convergent streams of essays on literature and medicine. Part One focuses on the nature of friendship and connectivity, on the role of the good doctor and the individual in society. Intimate portraits of literary Dublin of the twentieth century and earlier, Samuel Beckett, Con Leventhal, Nevill Johnson, Denis Johnston, Micheal MacLiammoir and Petr Skrabanek; Corrigan, Gogarty and Korotkoff, Chekhov and Handel, speak of exemplars past and values present, as the influence of the arts is inscribed on a doctor's life and work. The Beckett essays alone yield remarkable commentary on Ireland's greatest early modernist, and include a little-known account of the Irish Hospital at Saint-Lo in Normandy, where Beckett worked as a storekeeper in a poignant drama of humanity in ruins that informed his subsequent work. The Corruption of Privilege, addressed in Part Two, looks incisively at the practice and history of the author's profession within Ireland and elsewhere, at medical education and the medical establishment; at medical journalism, humanitarian involvement, and at broader issues - landmines in the Third World and the plight of colleagues in Bahrain. Invaluable archival images of Beckett, Con Leventhal, Nevill Johnson and others - some sixty in all - underpin the writings of this chronicler and observer of Ireland's recent past.



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