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978-0-521-82908-3 - Beckett and Aesthetics
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BECKETT AND AESTHETICS

Beckett and Aesthetics examines Samuel Beckett's struggle with the recalcitrance of artistic media, their refusal to yield to his artistic purposes. As a young man Beckett hoped that writing could provide psychic authenticity and true representation of the physical world; instead he found himself immersed in artificialities and self-enclosed word games. Daniel Albright argues that Beckett escaped from this bind through allegories of artistic frustration and through an art of non-representation, estrangement and general failure. He arrived, Albright shows, at some grasp of fact through the most indirect route available. Albright explores Beckett's experimentation with the notion that an artistic medium might itself be made to speak. This powerful and highly original book explores Beckett's own engagement with radio, film, television, prose and drama as part of an attempt to escape the confines of the aesthetic. Albright's Beckett becomes a sophisticated theorist of the very notion of the aesthetic.

DANIEL ALBRIGHT is Professor of English and American Literature at Harvard University. He is the author of many books on music and Modernist literature, including *Quantum Poetics: Yeats, Pound, Eliot, and the Science of Modernism* (Cambridge, 1997), *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and the Visual Arts* (2000) and *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources* (2003).

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René Magritte, *The Song of the Violet* (*Le chant de la violette*), 1951.

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
 Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Cambridge University Press
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521829083

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First published 2003

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication Data

Albright, Daniel, 1945–
 Beckett and aesthetics / by Daniel Albright.
 p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0 521 82908 9

1. Beckett, Samuel, 1906 – Aesthetics. 2. Beckett, Samuel, 1906 – Technique.
 3. Aesthetics, Modern – 20th century. 4. Failure (Psychology) in literature.
 5. Artists in literature. 6. Art and literature. I. Title.
 PR6003.E282Z5424 2003 848'.91409 – dc21 2003051533

ISBN 978-0-521-82908-3 Hardback

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