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PROUST, BECKETT, AND NARRATION

This is the first book-length comparison of the narrative techniques of two of the twentieth century's most important writers of prose. Using a combination of theoretical analysis and close readings of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu* and Beckett's trilogy of novels, *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, and *The Unnamable*, James H. Reid compares the two novelists' use of first-person narration in constructing and demystifying fictions of consciousness. Reid focuses on the narrator's searches to represent and erase a voice that speaks the novel; searches, he argues, that structure first-person narration in the works of both novelists. He examines in detail the significant impact of Proust's writing on Beckett's own work as well as Beckett's subtle reworkings of Proust's themes and strategies. This study is an important contribution to critical literature, and offers fresh perspectives on the crucial importance of the *Recherche* and the trilogy in the context of the twentieth-century novel.

JAMES H. REID is Associate Professor of French Literature at Illinois State University. He is the author of *Narration and Description in the French Realist Novel* (Cambridge, 1993) and of numerous articles.

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For Barbara

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Abbreviations

- R* Marcel Proust. *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Bibliothèque de la Pléiade. 3 vols. Paris: Gallimard, 1954.
- TN* Samuel Beckett. *Three Novels by Samuel Beckett: Molloy, Malone Dies, and The Unnamable*. New York: Grove Press, 1958.