



Samuel Beckett's Abstract Drama: Works for Stage and Screen. 1962-1985 (Stage and Screen Studies)

Erik Tonning

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Samuel Beckett's *Play*, written 1962-63, was an aesthetic watershed inaugurating his late, 'abstract' dramatic style. This book gets close to Beckett's creative process by examining the possible influence of Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone music and Vassily Kandinsky's abstract painting upon this formal shift; by tracing Beckett's developing attitude to abstraction and its relation to his long-standing preoccupation with the 'breakdown' of the subject-object relation and the ultimate failure of all expression; and by following his formal choices through manuscript drafts. The author goes on to analyse Beckett's attempt to adapt his new methods to the media of film and television, and to demonstrate how Beckett's late works for stage and screen develop alongside one another right up to his 1985 adaptation of the play *What Where* for television. Throughout the book, unpublished manuscript materials such as Beckett's letters, drafts, notes on philosophy, psychology and art, and his 'German diaries' augment a detailed account of the submerged sources that Beckett appropriated to the evolving needs of his abstract dramatic art.



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