

Llewellyn Brown

Beckett, Lacan and the Voice

Foreword by Jean-Michel Rabaté

SAMUEL BECKETT
IN COMPANY, vol. 1

ibidem

The *voice* traverses Beckett's work in its entirety, defining its space and its structure. Emanating from an indeterminate source situated outside the narrators and characters, while permeating the very words they utter, it proves to be incessant. It can alternatively be violently intrusive, or embody a calming presence. Literary creation will be charged with transforming the mortification it inflicts into a vivifying relationship to language.

In the exploration undertaken here, Lacanian psychoanalysis offers the means to approach the voice's multiple and fundamentally paradoxical facets with regards to language that founds the subject's vital relation to existence. Far from seeking to impose a rigid and purely abstract framework, this study aims to highlight the singularity and complexity of Beckett's work, and to outline a potentially vast field of investigation

Brown shows expertly how Beckett states once for all a fundamental irrationality that will be the foundation for his entire oeuvre [...].

[...] as the remarkable book by Llewellyn Brown amply shows. His effort at reading Beckett via Lacan leads him to highlight the theme of the voice, which proves to be most productive.

It may matter here that it should be Llewellyn Brown who articulates his *pas de deux* between Lacan and Beckett, and who manages to blend their voices, but never innocently, never naively [...].

Jean-Michel Rabaté,
University of Pennsylvania

Llewellyn Brown's study Beckett, Lacan and the Voice, unlike many ventures that throw out the baby the better to scrutinise the post-Modernist bathwater, recognises the centrality of the voice in Beckett's creation ('I hear, therefore I am'); but, equally, the way that the voice involves a *jouissance* that borders on the real. Given that the self is as 'unreal' as the universe to which it responds, Brown's delineation of how the creative mind and voice play out the drama of their existence in relation to the materiality of words might seem paradoxical, but that very paradox puts into perspective the subjective construction that founds and structures its world by what it hears, then says.

Chris Ackerley,
University of Otago

In this enthralling book, Llewellyn Brown achieves the formidable task of opening up a genuine conversation between Beckettian and Lacanian voices. Brown's great strength is to see psychoanalysis not as a finished body of knowledge waiting to be applied to a docile text, but as a practice of listening and interpreting that is always alive to the strangeness, the untranslatability, of the human voices heard in life and in Beckett. The result is not so much a Lacanian Beckett as a Beckettian Lacan: a vital meshing of two of the most powerful voices, and most effective listeners, of the modern era.

Luke Thurston,
Aberystwyth University