

## ONE

### MOURNING THE VOICE

---

---

Deaf and dumb go hand in hand.

—Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*

#### *OS(SIS) MUTUM*

IT'S THE TERRIFYING ASPECT of the mortal Gorgon that Caravaggio captures in his *Medusa's Head*, the image a reminder of just how dangerous it can be to look. In mythology, the mere sight of this snake-tressed monster would turn a man to stone; to see her face is to die. And according to Mieke Bal, Caravaggio's painting portrays Medusa as just this *femme fatale*, "a representative of the killing powers attributed to women by men" in the culture that is "ours, today's" (Bal 1996, 57). The killing powers of women derive from a male fantasy of loss: Freud explains in his 1940 essay on Medusa that when a man looks at the monster's decapitated head, he sees a woman's genitals, and becomes stiff (erect) with the terror of his own castration (Freud [1940] 1953, 273). For Bal, however, this story—which ties loss to vision and which constructs the viewing subject as male—is made for the modern age and for the culture that is "ours, today's" for the reason that, to use her words, "although Medusa allegedly killed by means of looking, she ended up dead by being looked at" (Bal 1996, 9). This is the model of vision on which modern discursivity is supposedly based. What Hal Foster (1988, x) calls "Cartesian perspectivalism" separates the always-male viewing subject from the feared object of his gaze, so that the subject is made transcendental



Perseus cried, “Friends, shield your eyes!” and with Medusa’s face, he changed the king’s face to a bloodless stone.

Ovid, *Metamorphoses*

Figure 1. *The Head of Medusa*, oil on canvas, mounted on a wooden shield, by Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, 1590–1600. Galleria Uffizi, Florence, Italy.

and so that the othered-object—the body, the woman—is reified and left dead.

Critics take the emergence of this model of vision to be determinative of the shift from medieval to modern. Erwin Panofsky explains that to a Renaissance theoretician such as Albrecht Dürer (whose 1527 woodcut *Draughtsman Drawing a Nude I* discuss in chapter 5), perspective in the visual arts was a new way of “seeing through” the

material surface of the picture or painting from the centric point of a so-called visual pyramid. The eye that looked from the apex of this pyramid through the transparent “window” of the canvas was considered to be single, lone, and immobile, set entirely apart from what it perceived to be a linear and mathematical world (Panofsky 1991, 27–36). The lone eye was also considered to be singular, vehicle of the “clear and distinct” knowledge of Cartesian rational philosophy. Descartes’ philosophy disembodied the all-seeing *res cogito*, claiming certainty for the spectator by cutting vision off from all affect.<sup>1</sup> It banished what Martin Jay calls the “moment of erotic projection in vision—what Augustine had anxiously condemned as ‘ocular desire,’” as the bodies of viewing subject and viewed object were “forgotten in the name of an allegedly disincarnated, absolute eye” (Jay 1988, 8). And although the gaze could still fall on an object of desire—as when Dürer’s draughtsman, sitting stiffly erect and a safe distance removed, looks through a screen of perspectival threads and eyes the prostrate female nude—it did so by way of a Medusa-like petrification, “a reifying male look that turned its targets into stone” (8).

In traditional Medusa mythology and iconography, “it is crucial that the killing happen by visual means” (Bal 1996, 57): the monster is slain for her looks and her effect—the Medusa effect—in turn, is to kill men for looking at her. As such a figure of the power of sight, and of the reifying potential of Cartesian vision, Medusa is often drawn into critical analyses of modernity as an ocularcentric regime, the transition to which is claimed to involve displacement of the ear by the perspectival eye. The story of the eye’s hegemony in modernity, “the sovereign nobility of vision, ostensibly redoubled by the Enlightenment,” is one of the dominating narratives of contemporary critical theory, Leigh Eric Schmidt, I think rightly, maintains (Schmidt 2000, 7). The grand narrative is not one I subscribe to in this book. Indeed, in this and subsequent chapters, I take issue with the assumption that modernity is centered solely on (a single model of) vision and that it involves “the eye’s clear eclipse of the ear” (15).<sup>2</sup> At the same time, ocularcentrism is a narrative with which I must consistently contend, and for the reason that it makes modernity the story of a profound *hearing loss*. Such is the fantasy of loss that interests me in this book, where I track the trope—and terror—of the always-gendered deaf ear in the discourse on the university that is inaugurated by Kant’s *The Conflict of the Faculties* and that extends through Hegel and Heidegger to the present. In the readings I undertake in this book, it’s the fantasy

of the lost ear, and by extension the lost tongue, that I foreground and put into question. What draws me to Caravaggio's Medusa, then, is her fully open mouth: terrifying and terrified, at once silent and caught in a death scream, Medusa's mouth, Bal suggests, "fulfills its traditional function as a symbol of the vagina dentata which, as an exteriorized projection of castration anxiety, petrifies the enemy" (Bal 1991, 320–21). I propose that Medusa's mouth petrifies as the sign of a woman struck deaf, and therefore, dumb. In support of the proposition, this book's next three chapters find that, over and over again, in foundational texts on the modern research university, the philosopher-subject recoils in fear from an othered-object (body, woman) he defines as deaf and mute. This withdrawal has the effect—the Medusa effect—of cutting off the philosopher's, and therefore the institution's, own ear and tongue. According to my reading of this Medusa effect, the modern university is petrified. It needs to be shaken—solicited—into movement, a matter I explore in the last two chapters of the book.

What I see in the Caravaggio painting, as prefiguring my task in this book, is not a woman temporarily dumbfounded, but incapable of speech, altogether mute; a woman who, like Philomela, has had her tongue cut off. It's this silent Medusa, this icon of speechlessness, that Lynn Enterline takes from the *Metamorphoses*, the Medusa who, throughout Ovid's poem, utters not a single word. Thanks to Freud's 1940 essay, we think of the Medusa effect "predominantly in terms of a visual trauma," Enterline writes. "But in Ovid's text it is not Medusa's 'head,' or even her gaze, that petrifies. Rather, it is primarily her silenced 'face' or 'mouth' (*os, oris*)" (Enterline 2000, 16). Charles Segal notes that the name Gorgon comes from "the Indo-European root *garj*, denoting a fearful shriek, roar, or shout" (Segal 1994a, 18; qtd. in Enterline 2000, 17). Drawing on a long tradition that associates the Gorgon with disturbing oral fantasies, Ovid singles out Medusa's *os* as, Enterline says, in the first place, a disabled or mute mouth, a "face deprived of the capacity to speak" (Enterline 16). This silent *os* is, in turn, the instrument of petrification. "[B]ecause they confront Medusa's terrifying mouth (*os*), numerous male victims stand forever petrified by the force of this *monstrum*" (28).

According to modern ocularcentrism, the narrative with which I try to reckon in this book, Western culture still holds on to the voice as the very essence of identity, the "vibrant principle" of life itself (Rée 1999, 3),<sup>3</sup> and for this reason, although some distance re-

moved from Ovid, modernity's subject remains haunted by the fear of an *os mutum*, the fantasy of a mouth that cannot speak and of a voice that has been lost. In the theorizing of the medieval-to-modern transition as the passage from orality to a resolutely perspectival regime, the fear of the *os mutum* would seem to be realized.<sup>4</sup> And indeed, while some critics concede that different modes of looking developed in the modern era, few question the dominance of the detached spectatorial model, this model as what enabled a new technological science and an individualist social physics, as what turned vision into modernity's master sense, and as what marked the historic defeat of a vocal and auditory culture, one attuned by its ear to the voice. So contends Jonathan Rée, citing Oswald Spengler:

The "thought of the eye," as Spengler called it, gave birth to a proud, solitary and resolute subjectivity, cynically surveying the abstract light-world that surrounds it. The optical mind was the master of mechanical invention, but too fascinated by "static, optical details" to have any sense of the tragedy and mystery of "life." Vision had cut us off from the ancient wisdom of ordinary pre-theoretical mutuality, annihilating vocality and, with it, the "inward kinship of I and Thou." Now that modern civilization was confronting its ultimate crisis—a crisis of its own making, a crisis of technology—it was stumbling uncomprehendingly towards catastrophe: twentieth-century humanity, Spengler thought, having lost its voice and its sense of hearing, was destined to "go downhill *seeing*". (Rée 1999, 4)

Modernity's promotion of sight as what Descartes (in the *Optics*) called "the noblest and most comprehensive of the senses" (Descartes 1985, 152) is thus claimed to be the beginning of the end of the voice. It is important to note that in this account, loss of the voice is also a loss of hearing, an attenuation of the sense that is said to have surpassed all others in significance in the earlier oral and manuscript culture for which communication of knowledge depended on speech. In an oral culture, Donald Lowe explains, adopting the thesis of Walter Ong, communication is aural and "speech has to be heard proximately and instantly, since there is no telephone, phonograph, radio, or audiotape and disc to relay a spoken message across space or time. Speech is assimilated directly by the ear, without the mediation

of the eye. And we are moved more by sound than by sight, since the former surrounds us, whereas the latter distances" (Lowe 1982, 7). With the transition from medieval oral and chirographic culture to modern typography, visuality overthrows aural immediacy, as Lowe tells the familiar story; communication now takes place by reading, "the silent assimilation of the message by the eye" (8). The philosophers of modernity whom Rée calls "friends of the voice" are, he says, as anxious about this displacement of the auditory as they are about the annihilation of speech. Their anxiety is fed by Heidegger's "doleful ruminations" about the consequences, for Western culture, of its shift to an age where the world becomes "picture" (Rée 1999, 5).

Inasmuch as this ocularcentric narrative of loss concerns both speech and hearing, the figure that it finds most frightening must be not only dumb but also deaf. Certainly, these two, "deaf and dumb," have always been put together in the Western tradition; the deaf ear as counterpart of the mute mouth, the mouth that, as Aristotle explained, is *speechless*, though it can emit animal sounds. In a tradition for which, as Rée suggests, even minor speech impediments such as stammering or lisping constitute "an appalling spiritual [and mental] calamity" (Rée 1999, 89), mutism is deemed equivalent to the death of the mind or *animus*. Even more catastrophic is prelingual deafness for the reason that, as I make the case in this book, it constitutes a more originary lack: in this tradition, one is considered dumb, in every sense of the word, *because* one is deaf—that is, not only lacking speech, but also the sound-concept identity that philosophers of modernity consider essential to self-presence. Deafness confers a primordial nonplenitude; from the start, we might say, it locates one outside of ideal immediacy, in the mundane, mobile register of division and delay that Derrida associates with *différance*. Perhaps this is the reason why the Western literary tradition offers no stories of "noble" deaf mutes. "Literary dumbness, it seems, afflicts victims rather than heroes, others rather than self, females rather than males" (91–92). This is in marked contrast to the rich literature the tradition provides on blindness, for instance the many stories of "great blind men" (MB 5) that Derrida takes up in his *Memoirs of the Blind*—"great, paradigmatic narratives of blindness" that are dominated "by the filiation father/son" (5–6, n1), and that make male blindness a condition of extraordinary insight. We have no deaf and dumb sages to set alongside these blind seers. Given that the voice in this tradition is, as

seventeenth-century thinker Francis Mercury van Helmont contended, “an expression of male sexual strength” (qtd. in Rée 1999, 3), muteness, death of the *animus*, is a castration of the principle of sexual prowess. There can be no father/son filiation where the virile voice has been cut off. Nor can there even be successful femininity where the ear, as deaf, is blocked to reception of the male’s inseminating speech.

The terrifying, disabled, *os* that I see in Caravaggio’s Medusa is a *monstrum* that I want to translate in these dual terms, as evoking both oral and aural trauma, both a mute mouth and, even prior to that, a deaf ear. I argue in this book that the two, mute mouth and deaf ear, belong inseparably—as “other”—to the fantasy that Derrida calls *phonocentric*. To say this is to challenge the conventional reading of phonocentrism as solely about the hierarchy of speech/writing, about the Western prejudice for *speaking*, for the voice, as, in conjunction with light-sight, the *eye*, the essence of the rational-spiritual self. I suggest that, even more than speech, phonocentrism privileges hearing. Notwithstanding the story of the ear’s eclipse, and no doubt supporting this fantasy of loss, phonocentrism builds on an *audiocentric* imaginary, one for which the trauma of speechlessness comes second, as it were, to the fear of loss or lack of hearing.<sup>5</sup> To bypass hearing—as critical analyses of phonocentrism commonly do, with their focus on speech and on the contest between speaking and writing—is to miss the anxiety that deafness provokes in the Western tradition, where, associated with dumbness, darkness, and death, its powers are, to say the least, killing. As I demonstrate in the following pages, audiocentrism does not diminish the importance accorded to light and sight in this tradition: indeed, the coming out of darkness to light is, Derrida says, the founding metaphor of Western philosophy as metaphysics (WD 27). The metaphor is at once spatial and temporal: as in Hegel, it gives the story of beginnings and of the ascending East-to-West journey of spirit through historical time, which is also an account of the sun’s, spirit’s, interiorizing *return-to-itself*. Western metaphysics is so bound up with the narrative of its coming to light out of darkness that the entire history of our philosophy could be considered a “photology,” Derrida suggests, “a history of, or treatise on, light” (27). This photology posits an immediate relationship between the voice and the light-sight (*theoria*, *eidos*, clarity, visibility, revelation, intelligibility, *telos*, etc.) of the mind—and precisely in so doing, as critics have not sufficiently noted, it joins speech and sight

to the ear, all fully interiorized and ideal. Within the mind of the phonocentric imaginary, phonetic sound, a word, is *heard* “first,” and as “heard,” is what enables a metaphysical idea, a concept, to be made present, visible, to the self. “*Phonè*, in effect, is the signifying substance *given to consciousness* as that which is most intimately tied to the thought of the signified concept” (P 22). In metaphysics, Derrida maintains, this “original and essential link to the *phonè* has never been broken” (OG 11).

Since, as Oliver Sacks points out, the prelingually deaf “have no auditory image, no *idea* of what speech actually sounds like, no idea of a sound-meaning correspondence” (Sacks 1989, 26), and thus no phonetic inwardness to start with, they must represent a terrifying otherness for the phonocentric imaginary. The prelingually deaf are lacking the voice that, as in the case of Husserl, brings to light for consciousness the ideal being of an object present before its gaze, the voice that, as Derrida puts it in chapter 6 of *Speech and Phenomena*, “keeps silent” because it is heard *before* it is materialized as speech. Of course, the prelingually deaf are speechless; they have their tongues cut off, and so must resort to what Aristotle considered to be “animal aping” (see MP 237). It is important to note, however, that, within a phonocentric fantasy, the spoken word serves as but a medium of the “interior voice,” with writing, one step further removed, “as mediation of mediation and as fall into the exteriority of meaning” (OG 12–13). What is fascinating and frightening about muteness, then, is the interior lack that it supposedly reveals: the prelingually deaf cannot speak *because they have no inner ear*; they are without access to the interiority through which “I hear myself [*je m’entendre*] *at the same time* that I speak” (SP 77). Derrida refers to this idealized speaking-hearing simultaneity as *hearing-oneself-speak*; the term is one I will resort to several times in this book. On one level, I will use the term *hearing-oneself-speak* to denote phonocentrism’s idealization of the ear: its disengagement of hearing from all exteriority, from “facial expressions, gestures, the whole of the body and the mundane register, in a word, the whole of the visible and the spatial as such” (35). Even the postlingually deaf are outside of the ideal of *hearing-oneself-speak*, for they, too, lack the plenitude of an inner speech that can be “heard” independently of lip reading, writing, hand signing, or some other props or prostheses. As well, they are caught up from the start in the sort of linguistic spacing that phonocentrism attempts to collapse.<sup>6</sup> In



a phonocentric culture, then, they belong on the other side of the us/ them line. This is the second level on which I will use the term *hearing-oneseelf-speak*, as a designator of phonocentrism's inevitable collusion with hierarchical—sexist, racist, and colonialist—political structures.

#### LABYRINTH

That Western culture's fantasy of the lost voice, the fantasy Derrida calls phonocentric, builds on a dual—oral and aural—trauma is, I have suggested, a point that is not often made; typically, accounts of phonocentrism attend only to the mouth and to speech. Lynn Enterline's *The Rhetoric of the Body* is a case in point. In this study, Enterline notes that the Latin noun, *os* (*oris*), which is at the root of the English "oracular," is difficult to render as one word. Ovid's narrator "constantly reminds us of its etymological resonances, tracing a tropological sequence with rich cultural significance for his thinking about poetic voice and for some of our most deeply ingrained ideas about language and persons" (Enterline 2000, 16). Yet, for all the etymological surplus Enterline uncovers in the word—including "the mouth as an organ of speech," "the lips," "the voice," "the mouth of a poet," "the face," "the features," "expression," "gaze," "mood," and "character"—she makes no mention of the ear, and this in a study of the disabled *os* that extends from Ovid to Shakespeare (16).<sup>7</sup> In the following pages, I will be concerned with the *os* (*ossis*) as designating both an organ of speech and an organ of hearing and balance; thus as tied up, inseparably, with a fantasy of both mute mouth and deaf ear. My study of this phonocentric<sup>8</sup> fantasy is confined to modern and so-called postmodern Western philosophy, and to its discourse on the university, which I approach by way of the work of Derrida. My study begins in chapter 2 from a point where the threshold between medieval and modern has finally been crossed. Significantly, it was discovery of the ear *os* by Andreas Vesalius that, as much as the Cartesian eye/I, took Western culture over this threshold. The moment of discovery was not without trauma: Vesalius, while cleaning a skeleton—in preparation, no doubt, for the *Fabrica*, his revolutionary treatise on the human body (*De Humani Corporis Fabrica*), published in 1543, the same year that Copernicus's new cosmology (*De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium*) also introduced the modern world—was startled when an ossicle fell out of its skull. And here too, the trauma leads to a narrative

of loss: in the second skull, the one Vesalius turned next to examine, he could not find the stirrup.<sup>9</sup> Missing an ossicle, that ear must have been deaf; whether it was the ear of a woman is not known.<sup>10</sup> We do know, however, that it was Gabriello Fallopio, the first anatomist to fully open the tympanum and peer into the labyrinth, who discovered and sur-named the female “fallopian tubes.” Not just on the threshold of modernity, but “everywhere and at all times,” Derrida writes in “Tympan,” sexual investments “powerfully constrain the *discourse of the ear*” (MP xiv).

In the text I read in chapter 2, Immanuel Kant stoops and, almost losing his balance, picks up (on) the stirrup. The incident is recorded in a footnote to *The Conflict of the Faculties* (1798) which, with the exception of the *Anthropology*, was Kant’s last book, written in his old age and, as he says in the footnote, at a time when he was experiencing weakening on his left side, blurring in his left eye, and difficulty with his organs of balance. Significantly, the note on the stirrup has to do with the question of how to keep a body balanced, how to secure its footing, left and right, particularly at the moment when it has a wide threshold to cross. In *The Conflict of the Faculties*, Kant develops an architecture for the research university, a design that he says will provide the institution with new and secure footings, and with the leverage it needs to cross the threshold from medieval to modern. Adopted at the turn of the century by the University of Berlin, and then transported to North America, Kant’s design became foundational for the modern research university as we know it. In keeping with the ocularcentric moment in which it was conceived, Kant’s is a design for a panopticon, a vertical institution that puts philosophy at the center and top and that gives it a view of all the academic fields. As I read *The Conflict*, however, Kant is concerned even more with the university’s ear than its eye. My reading is guided by Derrida’s “*Mochlos*” (a word that designates something monstrous, an animal-human hybrid, a being that lacks the *animus*).

In *The Conflict*, it is the fear of losing his voice that, as a kind of Medusa-effect, leaves Kant and the Kantian university with a speechless mouth. For at each stage of his university design—a labyrinth architecture that gives the institution the shape of an inner ear—Kant withdraws himself further into the interior of the place, constructing a hierarchy of the disciplines by way of charting this inward movement. By the time he arrives at the university’s center, which is

also its uppermost site, Kant imagines himself—or at least his essential self, his voice-consciousness, which is also supposed to be the university's essence or *animus*—to be withdrawn from exteriority altogether. At this very centerpoint, the point on which all the weight of the structure rests, and the source from which the life of the body comes, Kant's fully withdrawn voice thus falls silent, and the university, for which he, as rational philosopher, is the sole spokesperson, is, in effect, struck dumb.

"The moment of crisis is always the moment of signs," is the way that Derrida puts it in *Speech and Phenomena* (81). Better still, the moment of crisis is the moment of the signifier, the moment when Kant's voice would be released, embodied in a word or gesture, and let go out into the world. But rather than lose his voice, rather than "risk death [of the *animus*] in the body of a signifier that is given over to the world and the visibility of space" (SP 77–78), Kant collapses the distance between his mind and his speech and so stops any movement of sound through his body. It's as if his tongue had been cut off. Lynn Enterline, in her study of the *Metamorphoses*, notes that Ovid repeatedly evokes the idea of a speechless mouth in order to suggest that the link between mind and voice is at best fragile and easily broken; that voice and lips "are less than, or perhaps more than, mere instruments of the mind" (Enterline 2000, 46). Perhaps it is a sense of this fragility, and a refusal of it, that leads Kant to define himself and the essence of the university over-against an outside Babel of sounds and signs. Or, perhaps Kant's phonocentric fantasy is an instance of what Freud called the "work of mourning," where the subject, out of longing for the lost object, chooses to phantasmically ingest or incorporate it (Freud 1984; see also Abraham and Torok 1987). In this case, mourning would be a work of swallowing the voice and of making it an uncanny presence that haunts the university crypt.

Kant's university is petrified as a result of oral trauma; but the institution's death really comes through the ear. For it is hearing that he first of all disembodies and makes even more ideal than speech, leaving the university deaf even before it becomes mute. In the phonocentric institution, hearing, fully idealized as *hearing-oneself-speak*, has priority: to be a full and free rational subject is "to hear" in advance of speech, writing, or gesture. "*The voice is heard*" by a subject who does not first "have to pass forth beyond himself," as Derrida notes in *Speech and Phenomena* (76). Phonic signs, or "acoustical

images,” as Saussure would later call them, “are heard [*entendus* = ‘heard’ plus ‘understood’] by the subject who proffers them in the absolute proximity of their present” (76). This acoustic proximity is supposed to be what animates Kant’s voice, and the Kantian institution, from within: “My words are ‘alive’ because they seem not to leave me: not to fall outside me, outside my breath, at a visible distance; not to cease to belong to me, to be at my disposition ‘without further props’” (76). And it is this acoustic proximity—and loss of proximity—that determines the placement of the disciplines in Kant’s university hierarchy. Pure rational philosophy, with its claim to hear the voice of reason in a wholly nonexterior way, is granted full supervisory title at the university’s center and top; while the faculties of law, medicine, and theology, rooted as they are in empirical experience, their ears tuned to the outside world, are assigned a lower place; some distance removed from the center, they are university’s necessary supplements or props.

It is important to remember that Kant’s retreat into the proximity of *hearing-oneself-speak* is actually a blueprint for the subordination of space and the movement of spacing, so that the privileged interior, from which speech, writing, and gesture are excluded, is not a space at all, but an absence of space, “a self-proximity that would in fact be the absolute reduction of space” (SP 79). Philosophy’s look-out at the top of the edifice is, then, what Derrida refers to as a “non-place” (LIP 132; see also Wigley 1993, 69), where the subject, and so the institution, is finally and fully estranged from the sound of its own voice and from the spacing movement that this sound is. Since, without movement, no embodied hearing can take place, the university ends up with both its tongue and ear cut off. Kant, who always puts philosophy on the left, leaves us with an institution that is weakened on this side, and that, with its inner ear disabled, suffers from problems of balance. We could even say, given this erosion of the interior, that the modern university is born not only still, *still-born*, but also stooped over. At its inauguration, the institution is already in danger of falling.

Kant’s subordination (incorporation) of space and spacing is, as a Medusa-effect, his defense against loss of an imagined oral-aural proximity: “The proximity is broken when, instead of hearing myself speak, I see myself write or gesture” (SP 80). Out of the same anxiety about lost proximity, he insists on a strict separation of philosophy from the other university faculties, and even on a division within

philosophy itself, a boundary that would separate pure reason from branches of the discipline (historical philosophy, for instance) that clothe reason in empirical knowledge. The same phonocentric fantasy of proximity prompts Kant to establish a rigorous, uncrossable, *us/them* boundary between the university and the outside world. With this boundary, he is determined to exclude from the university a disparate group, some of whom are beholden not so much to reason as to political and utilitarian concerns; some of whom are either too distracted or too incompetent—idiots (*Idioten*), Kant calls them—to listen to the voice of reason. Even more than those who do not listen, however, this inside/outside boundary banishes those who cannot hear. Deafness is a more serious loss than blindness, Kant explains in the *Anthropology*, published in the same year as *The Conflict*. For even if a man loses his hearing later in life, and is able to compensate for the loss by use of his eyes, “whether to observe mimicry or, even more mediately to read a text” (Kant 1974, 38), or by using his sense of sight together with touch—“He can also use his eyes to read our lips, or his sense of touch to feel our lip movements in the dark” (37)—loss of hearing leaves one, from then on, outside of self-presence, dependent on embodied signifiers and empirical prostheses. More drastically still, the man deaf from birth, who has not yet heard the voice of reason speak within him, who has never *heard-himself-speak*, cannot arrive at an idea. There is no place for the so-called deaf and dumb inside the academic institution, for “a man who, because he was deaf from birth, must also remain dumb (without speech) can never achieve more than an *analogue* of reason” (34).

It is not incidental, then, that, as Lennard Davis contends, “Europe became deaf” in the eighteenth century (Davis 1995, 51), at the very moment when the modern research university was born. Despite the received opinion of historians, philosophers, and critics that deafness is an “epiphenomenon,” all but irrelevant to the study of Enlightenment thought and culture, it developed in the eighteenth century into a matter of central interest, Davis points out. Michel Foucault in *Madness and Civilization* shows how, at the close of the Middle Ages, the targeting and confinement of “madness” provided a discourse out of which the new “rationality” could emerge. In much the same way, Davis suggests, during the eighteenth century “deafness” was constituted as a fascinating otherness—an “icon,” as he calls it—against which Enlightenment ideas about “subject, class position, and the

body” could be confirmed (Davis 51). The disabled *os*, the deaf ear, and therefore the mute mouth, is this kind of icon for Kant in *The Conflict*: a figure of loss against which he withdraws, and defines, the rational subject and the institution of reason. What I must add to Davis’s point is this: the icon sets up a Medusa-effect, in that Kant’s withdrawal into a disembodied oral and aural ideal leaves the modern university unable to speak or hear.

#### THE SCHOLARLY SIGNATURE

Despite the argument that vision has sole hegemony in the modern era (Jay 1994, 14), Kant’s *The Conflict of the Faculties* designs the research university as the product of a phonocentric imaginary, thus as much an audiocentric, as an ocularcentric, institution. A generation after Kant, the work of that other great philosopher-architect of modernity, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, also casts doubt on the thesis that, in the shift from medieval to modern, the voice and ear are left behind. With his grand narrative of history as the coming to light out of darkness and the return journey of spirit (*Geist*), rising first in the East, then setting in the intelligible eye of the Westerner, the prominence of light and sight in Hegel cannot be questioned. In Hegel, we have what Derrida calls philosophy-as-photology, “a history of, or treatise on, light” (WD 27). We have, then, the same affiliation between the metaphor of the sun and the metaphors of circle and seed that Derrida says permeates all of Western metaphysics. The eye is generally taken to be at the center of this tropological system: the solar, patriarchal eye/I and its light as what William Spanos calls the “foundational trope” out of which “radiate” the allotropes of the centered circle and the seed (which includes both planting/cultivation and phallic insemination) (Spanos 2000, 14). To this systemic metaphors, however, I would add sound and hearing, not just as additional allotropes of light/sight, but the eye, rather, as allotrope of the ear. For spirit’s determination as light, separated from the empirical world, is too abstract, too “Kantian,” for Hegel; rather than withdrawing the essence of being from the substantial world, Hegel has ideality pass through material bodies—portraying the great story of spirit’s journey of return-to-itself as a story of the idealizing-relief of sound. Spirit is the sound-source: and from the moment that its light (seed) first enters the Eastern darkness and immerses itself in matter,

it is spirit's *oscillation-vibration* that puts history on its course. Granted, the heavy matter of the East barely stirs when entered by spirit, but as its spiral passages take it from East to West, as it returns ever closer to its self, the progress of spirit is charted, by Hegel, as the passage of sound—from silence through noise and voice to “active” (inseminating) speech; speech that, in a final passage, is relieved into *savoir absolu* (this is Derrida's translation in *Glas* of “absolute spirit,” his siglum for which is *Sa*. I must add that *Sa* is, as a Medusa-effect, *silence absolute*).

Hegel's philosophy “demonstrates very clearly the strange privilege of sound in idealization, the production of the concept and the self-presence of the subject,” Derrida writes in *Of Grammatology*, following his remark with a quotation from Hegel's *Aesthetics*: “This ideal motion, in which through the sound what is as it were the simple subjectivity [*Subjektivität*], the soul of the material thing expresses itself, the ear receives also in a theoretical [*theoretisch*] way, just as the eye shape and colour, thus allowing the interiority of the object to become interiority itself [*läßt dadurch das Innere der Gegenstände für das Innere selbst werden*]” (OG 12). Given that sound is this spirit or “soul of the material thing,” hearing, the sense through which the mechanical and material becomes ideal, is more privileged than sight, as Hegel himself states in his *Aesthetics* (II, 890). I think Hegel's privileging of hearing lies behind his morbid fascination with the Egyptian Sphinx, the massive stone animal-human hybrid that, in common with the Medusa, shows us a female face that is stone deaf, and therefore dumb. Although they are turned toward the sun, as if waiting for spirit to give them sound, these colossal stone statues remain “motionless” and “mute” (I, 354), their brute ears too heavy to enable spirit's oscillation to resound as intelligible speech. This speech would be phonetic—not the mysterious sign language of Egyptian hieroglyphics, the language that Hegel finds as enigmatic as the expression the Sphinx wears on her face. Kant, in his *Anthropology*, bars the deaf and dumb from the rational sphere because they lack the “words” in which the voice of reason is first heard and then spoken (Kant 1974, 34). Even more than Kant, Hegel privileges phonetic speech, preeminently his own German tongue, the national work of his own world-historical people, as the mode in which an inmost self first resonates, and then resounds, with spirit's presence. In Egypt, “[a] national work in the department of language is wanting” (Hegel 1991a, 199). While its hieroglyph symbols can be partially phonetic, and so

bring it closer than China to the *us* of the *us/them* boundary that separates Occident from Orient, what is inside from what is outside of world-history, Egypt remains, at best, a transitional phase, a mediating moment. Its hybrid hieroglyphs hint at spirit's struggle to free itself from nature, but in the end, they are as speechless as the silent face of the Sphinx, "mysterious and dumb, mute and motionless, because here spirit itself has not really found its own inner life and cannot speak the clear and distinct language of spirit" (Hegel 1975 I, 354).

The fate of Hegel's woman is given in the Egyptian Sphinx, a matter that concerns me in chapter 3, where, by way of reading Derrida's *Glas*, I approach Hegel's university—approach but do not enter, for as a woman who lacks an active voice-hearing apparatus, I am (doubly) banned from the place. According to Hegel, a woman belongs to the home and the hearth because, like the Sphinx, incapable of vibrating freely with herself, she is impotent: she has a speechless mouth. Also like the Sphinx, which crosses female breasts and face with animal paws and wings, she is a hybrid creature, part above ground, part below: in the family, the woman's transitional role is to facilitate the passage, through her body, of seed (speech) from father to son, in which capacity, she mediates, albeit passively, the idealizing progress of spirit (the passage from voice to *hearing-oneself-speak*); but as the son passes on beyond the family to higher education, the woman (mother, daughter) falls back to the underground, her law being dumb-darkness: she has to take her light from the man. Heavy matter to his free spiritual self, the woman is keeper of the man's tomb, the one who shrouds and buries his corpse, attends to his memorialization, and ends up herself, quite simply, dead. Incapable of passing into universality, the woman, in Hegel's family, is a disappearing middle term.

In chapter 3, I focus on Hegel's family, as Derrida does in *Glas*, in the first instance because, where there is, as Hegel has it, no family in Kant, one cannot get to university in Hegel without a passage through the family—the family as a determinate moment, what in his *Philosophy of Right*, he describes as the first and most "natural" moment of *Sittlichkeit*. We find the university here: education is the family's third and final stage, the stage through which, having produced and passed on its sons, the family-as-moment comes to an end. But even though the family-as-family ceases to be—in the passage to education of sons—the family-as-structure goes on: and this is the main reason why, following Derrida in *Glas*, I focus on the family in chapter 3.



Indeed, even as the son passes beyond the family, so as to accomplish the relief of the father and bring the family circle to a close, the familial structure is immediately repeated in the classroom, where education takes the form of rearing (raising the father's spirit in) the son. "The father [spirit, self, subject] divides, goes out of himself into his son, recognizes himself in the son, and finds himself again, re-counts himself in his revenue" (G 28ai). The family provides the model for Hegel's pedagogy. More than that, the family gets repeated in—is the "copulative" structure of—every *Aufhebung*. "The whole system repeats itself in the family" (G 20a). Spirit's return journey through history, Hegel's overarching narrative of sound, is itself an absolute Christian Holy Family scene: the going-forth-from-himself of the father, coming-back-to-himself in the son, a conception that passes through, even as it incorporates/crosses out, the woman, the material-middle term. Every return-to-self passage of sound-become-speech (spirit, seed) through a signifier is an instance of this familial relief; each time, the embodied middle is consumed.

In approaching Hegel's university through Derrida's reading of this familial structure in *Glas*, my main interest is in the woman, the middle that disappears. Because she is a speechless *os*, because she lacks the "voice of active hearing" (G 250a), Hegel's woman is a Medusa-figure against which he defines male subjectivity and male pedagogy. At the same time, as was the case with Kant, this fantasy of aural/oral lack sets up a Medusa-effect: for in consuming the embodied middle of which woman is the trope, Hegel stops the male subject's outer ear and cuts off his voice. This is what happens in the passage to *Sa*, the Absolute Idea that Hegel's signature is, where all exteriority disappears into silence absolute. As with Kant, so with Hegel, then, where the essence of being is proximity-to-self, where being is "being-(close)-by-itself" (G 23a), hearing is privileged as *hearing-oneself-speak*, with the effect—the Medusa effect—that voice and ear are disembodied.

As will be evident by now, I am interested throughout this book in the "re-embodiment" of hearing, this as inseparable from the task of university re-founding. For although hearing has, of course, never left the body, the idealizing narratives of modernity tell another story, one that structures and supports oppressive academic and political institutions—themselves part of "discourse," always discursively made and sustained. To argue for embodied hearing—whether by oralism or

gesturalism, by lip reading or hand signing—is to situate “being” in relation to an other-outside. Audibility, I will argue, requires exteriority: *no hearing without an outside*. It involves vibrations—their differentiating-spacing movement—that transmit through a medium (despite the contention of Donald Lowe, hearing is never unmediated, not any more so in an “oral-aural” than in an “ocular” culture) and that imprint on a body, a tympanum, or other writing pad: *no hearing without an imprint of some sort*. I will also argue, as does Derrida with his notion of *proto-writing* (“there is no linguistic sign before writing” [OG 14]), that the imprint is there from the start; it does not invade or detract from an original, *hearing-oneself-speak*, interiority; and it does not disappear, at the “end” (as the circle returns to itself) into an idealized voice-consciousness. The imprint *remains*, as does Derrida’s unmistakably graphic, better still, hieroglyphic, countersignature in *Glas*: an imprint that is at once *seen zigzagging* and *heard tolling* back and forth between the book’s left and right columns. This signature’s bastard course is a coming-going movement that thwarts education’s return-to-self father-son familial relief, and that—even as they are being put in place—shakes the university’s foundations.

#### INSTITUTIONS OF THE “YES”

Derrida suggests that all of Heidegger’s work can be read “as a drama of sorting things out with the university” (CM 209). In this book, the drama makes for something of a hinge. For as I discuss in chapter 4, there is, in Heidegger’s work, a gesture of silencing-deletion that drives the modern concept of university to the edge of an abyss and that takes the Medusa-effect I have been tracking in this university discourse to a terrifying extreme. Yet there is also in Heidegger a silence that has to do with writing differentially, “under erasure” or within what Derrida calls “mute signs.” This kind of silencing suggests opening and response-ability to an other-outside; thus, it is a pivot on which the university might turn, as it were, from a phonocentric fantasy of loss to a discourse that re-embodies hearing. In chapter 4, my reading of Derrida’s hearing of Heidegger on the university is situated between these two gestures of silence. Given the argument I am proposing in this book—that there can be no hearing without movement and an imprint of some sort—I think it important to note that each of the two types of silence entails im-

printing, a “typological motif” (OS 34), although only one allows the imprint to space-oscillate.

Chapter 4 locates the first gesture of silencing in Heidegger’s 1933 Rectorate Address, delivered on the occasion of his installation as Rector of the University of Freiburg. While the Rectorate Address “confirms something essential” to the Kantian concept of the university, Derrida suggests, it also represents that concept’s “limit” (CM 209), I would say, end.<sup>11</sup> In a discourse that gathers ideal being close to himself, and to an identifiable “us,” and that sanctions Nazism in the same gesture, Heidegger’s Address exalts spirit (*Geist*)—as what affirms itself through the spiritual world (*geistige Welt*) of the German people, through the will-to essence of the German university, and through the self-affirming speech of its new *spiritus rector* (see OS, chapter V; Heidegger 1985).<sup>12</sup> Just as Hegel praised the national and spiritual institution of the German language, in the Rectorate Address, “[t]he German character of this university is not a secondary or contingent predicate,” Derrida maintains; “it cannot be dissociated from this affirmation of spirit. As the highest agency of the institution thus erected, of this ‘high school’ (*hohe Schule*), directed upwards from the heights, spirit can do nothing other than affirm itself—and this, as we shall hear, in the movement of an authentication or identification which *wish themselves to be properly German*” (OS 33). The identification-authentication is rendered with the all-out force of a “single blow” (31) that withdraws the Rector’s speech (and, therefore, hearing) into a spiritual beyond, and so *deafens* Heidegger, even as—in this limit-case of the Medusa effect—he is *dumbstruck*. Once the blow, the “spiritual imprint” (38), is delivered, once, in a simultaneous celebration of spirit, sanctioning of Nazism, and reestablishing of metaphysics, the limit is met, Heidegger falls forever silent: deaf from then on to the question of his, and the university’s, responsibility vis-à-vis Nazism, mute on the question unto his death.

In the Rectorate Address, the speechless *os* from which Heidegger withdraws, and to which he opposes a spiritualized Nazism and the spiritual essence of the German university, belongs, I argue in chapter 4, not immediately to a woman, but to the benumbed animal with which she has been historically conflated, as in Hegel, for instance. The othering of “the animal” is already underway in Heidegger’s lecture course of 1929–30, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, which, in this respect, is “preparatory” to the Rectorate Address. What

Heidegger wants to talk about in the lecture course—the fundamental way of life, the *life as-such*, of *Dasein*—can be got at, he says, only by way of distinguishing between the world-poor animal and man, between “what constitutes the *essence of the animality* of the animal and the *essence of the humanity* of man” (Heidegger 1995, 179). This (*us/ them*) distinction can be delimited, he says, by philosophy only, not by the other university disciplines, certainly not by the psychological, biological, and physical sciences; what he means by “life,” for instance, “‘life’ as such cannot in principle be grasped from within the perspectives of these disciplines” (188). In broaching the question of the as-such, then, Heidegger immediately, and with one and the same sweeping gesture, reconstitutes the Kantian hierarchy of the university disciplines and reinstates the binary man/animal opposition. The stone, since it has “no being at all” (179), is not really the other pole of Heidegger’s binary opposition; it is the animal, rather, on which his phonocentric fantasy fixes, the animal that, after all, does have life and does relate to the world around it, but—because it does not have speech and hearing, because “benumbedness” (*Benommenheit*), the essence of the animal state, is “deaf and dumb”—in a way that Heidegger wants to distinguish absolutely from the “being-there” of *Dasein*. The gesture of removing the benumbed animal to the absolute outside of the as-such is repeated, emphatically, in 1935, at the opening of *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, where, as Derrida points out in *Of Spirit*, Heidegger declares both that “[t]he world is always a *spiritual* world,” and, in the very next sentence, that “the animal has no world.” It follows, Derrida says, that “the animal has no spirit, since, as we have just read, every world is spiritual. Animality is not of *spirit*” (OS 47). The spirit that the benumbed animal does not have is the spirit that the Rectorate Address celebrates. The celebration “corresponds properly, literally, to an *exaltation* of the spiritual,” Derrida writes. “It is an elevation” (39) of everything Heidegger consecrates as “spiritual” to the highest remove from everything that he associates with “the animal.”

In keeping with the operation of what I have been calling the Medusa effect, Heidegger’s spiritualizing of being in the Rectorate Address, a move that deafens him and leaves him forever silent, is, on its other side, the abjection and reification of a disabled *os*—an *os* that is labeled as “animal,” but that, through the oppositional binary that it inscribes, belongs as much to the woman, perhaps also to the man of science who, like the animal, is lacking “the hand.” By the same