



I See a Voice: Deafness, Language and the Senses-- A Philosophical History

Jonathan Rée

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A groundbreaking study of deafness, by a philosopher who combines the scientific erudition of Oliver Sacks with the historical flair of Simon Schama.

There is nothing more personal than the human voice, traditionally considered the expression of the innermost self. But what of those who have no voice of their own and cannot hear the voices of others?

In this tour de force of historical narrative, Jonathan Rée tells the astonishing story of the deaf, from the sixteenth century to the present. Rée explores the great debates about deafness between those who believed the deaf should be made to speak and those who advocated non-oral communication. He traces the botched attempts to make language visible, through such exotic methods as picture writing, manual spellings, and vocal photography. And he charts the tortuous progress and final recognition of sign systems as natural languages in their own right.

I See a Voice escorts us on a vast and eventful intellectual journey, taking in voice machines and musical scales, shorthand and phonetics, Egyptian hieroglyphs, talking parrots, and silent films. A fascinating tale of goodwill subverted by bad science, *I See a Voice* is as learned and informative as it is delightful to read.

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