

Introduction to the Art of Listening

I. THE PROBLEM

The erosion of public debate is one of the great concerns of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, and “voice” stands in for what has been lost on the order of political subjectivity: Welsh Tories have no voice, conservatives have no voice in the media, the poor have no voice, the people have no voice.¹ Alternatively, in free speech we like to imagine the correspondence between personal voice and the voice of democracy: secure the first and the second should follow. But who is listening? The ear of democracy is an uncanny figure despite the fact that one is impossible without the other. Explain this disfigurement, moreover, and we address some important puzzles of our political age, including the basic vulnerability that lies at the heart of political agency itself. Though we sometimes like to imagine otherwise, political formations, including democratic ones, require passive dispositions such as apathy, ignorance, subjectification, adherence, obedience, suggestibility, accountability, attentiveness, open-mindedness, and sensitivity, as well as the related, middle-voiced experiences of *appearing* apathetic or ignorant, listening, learning, belonging, obeying, changing one’s mind, being subject to this or that, being oriented, being addressed, being held accountable, being responsible, being obliged, being moved.² What

follows will be, in part, a phenomenology of these passive dispositions by way of the rhetorical tradition where the ear of democracy is latent, instead of political philosophy that traditionally proceeds by way of the theoretical eye (θεωρία from θεωρός, “spectator,” literally “one looking at a show”).³

Apart from sound studies, which is relevant, though it frames inquiry differently, what kind of attention has listening received in the humanities and in the interpretive social sciences? Writing at the end of her life, the eminent political theorist Hannah Arendt returned to hearing as she worked against some philosophical distortions in *The Life of the Mind*. Noting how each major category of mental activity draws its metaphor from a different bodily sense, she links formal philosophical thinking to sight, aesthetic judgment to taste, and Jewish faith to hearing, because the Jewish God is heard but not seen.⁴ The Hebrew word *sbema* traditionally translated as “obey” literally means “to hear”: שָׁמַעְתִּי אֶשְׁרָאֵל = Hear, [O] Israel.⁵ “Metaphors drawn from hearing are very rare in the history of philosophy,” Arendt concludes, “the most notable modern exception being the late writings of Heidegger, where the thinking ego ‘hears’ the call of Being.” This parenthetical passage continues with a condensed history that tells of the ear’s demise:

Medieval efforts to reconcile Biblical teaching with Greek philosophy testify to a complete victory of intuition or contemplation over every form of audition, and this victory was, as it were, foreshadowed by the early attempt of Philo of Alexandria to attune his Jewish creed to the Platonizing philosophy. He was still aware of the distinction between a Hebrew truth, which was heard, and the Greek *vision* of the true, and transformed the former into a mere preparation for the latter, to be achieved by divine intervention that had made man’s ears into eyes to permit greater perfection of human cognition.⁶

And though Arendt is in good company as she critiques the theoretical disposition of philosophy, she remains thereby tied to a philosophical orientation that makes Heidegger seem thoroughly anomalous and

forecloses critical paths, like rhetoric, that do not run directly through philosophy. No doubt Arendt's critique of theory allows her to pick up rhetorical phenomena along the way. She notes how Hans Jonas disqualifies hearing as the only possible competitor to sight for preeminence because it "intrudes upon a passive subject" or in her own words because "the percipient is at the mercy of something or somebody else," and she reminds us of the German cluster of words indicating a position of "non-freedom from *hören*, to hear: *gehorchen*, *hörig*, *gehören*, to obey, be in bondage, belong" (112). But these fundamentally political considerations appear only distantly from the philosophical perspective; in fact, rhetoric offers much more detail because it is the traditional domain where subjection is both theorized and practiced. That's one goal of this book. In broad strokes and in some carefully selected detail composing a critical narrative, I rediscover rhetoric at the heart of political and other forms of modern human subjectivity as they appear in the human sciences broadly conceived. As a scholarly project, then, I do talk in terms of disciplines. But as we have learned most notably from Michel Foucault (chapter 2), disciplines are not just a matter of scholarship, as they speak to basic forms of subjectivity and its transformation across a social field. Obedience, for instance, is something I might be called to, which sounds one way coming from Arendt's Jewish God, and another way coming from that cluster of German words that she pointed out in her projects on evil. I take seriously and study disciplinary formation in this book, as disciplines are ways to live.

In fact, following Arendt's close colleague Leo Strauss, political philosophy has recently returned to persuasive rhetoric for assistance, most notably in Bryan Garsten's *Saving Persuasion: A Defense of Rhetoric and Judgment*, where the title of this book indicates how it is more about the active dispositions of judgment than it is about the virtues of passivity. If only rhetoric were not detached from the Ciceronian tradition of practical judgment, Garsten argues, perhaps a more robust republican tradition might have persisted even now, as political reason in the liberal tradition seems exhausted.⁷ Garsten is not alone, moreover,

when it comes to mining rhetoric for a critique of enlightenment philosophy and its limiting rationality. Though inspired by Martin Heidegger, who never left rhetoric behind completely, ear work in Arendt, Jonas, Don Ihde, David Michael Kleinberg-Levin, and Gemma Fiumara reverts, in the end, to the philosophical paradigm and thus loses its grasp on the aural history and phenomenology that runs *directly* through rhetoric.⁸ In contrast, my focus remains on rhetoric throughout this project, while I explain at key instances why it regularly reverts to philosophy, as witnessed, for instance, in Arendt. Chapter 2 explains how the disciplinary structure of the human sciences detaches from its practical origins in rhetoric as the art of moving souls, instead making the sciences primarily the support of state reason. And not surprisingly this historical detachment from rhetoric, designed to shore up a new type of political subjectivity less vulnerable to exogenous persuasion—hence reason over passions of the soul, management over movement, eye over ear and so on—could never succeed in principle, producing instead a whole set of painful approximations legible most readily through the field of psychology and in the related twentieth-century subfield of psychoanalysis (chapter 3).

No doubt in democratic formations we can also make reasonable judgments, express ourselves conscientiously, and act decisively. But these favored activities occupy us less often than we like to think. What's more, we already have relatively sophisticated schemes to describe them because, in part, these activities appear where we would like to imagine ourselves, for reasons I will try to explain in this book. Starting with the philosopher Martin Heidegger—a figure through whom Western democratic traditions were strangely refracted in his Summer Session (SS) 1924 lecture course on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*—I reconsider the history of rhetoric not as the art of speaking, but rather as the art of listening. What is sometimes called the “other side of language” will confirm a basic corollary to the democratic equation: out of the inevitable slippage between speaker and auditor emerges a political imaginary where the subject must be sutured in more or less satisfac-

tory terms (for example the “good man speaking well”) while rhetorical failure takes the form of a phantasm—the classical specter of rhetorical effeminacy, for instance, or the modern specter of the disembodied voice: Gothic rhetoric. At the same time SS 1924 inadvertently helps generate a different genealogy of the human sciences that puts this now familiar critical discourse in new perspective and renders phantasmagoria not so strange after all. Indeed, we’ve been listening quite attentively all along.

How can we begin to understand the renunciation of listening, which seems to have a modern flare? In *The Psychology of Clothes* (1930) it would seem British psychoanalyst J.C. Flügel provides some clues, as he explains “The Great Masculine Renunciation” of another subjectification, namely flamboyant dress, which appears for Flügel under the Ovidian dictum “*Forma viros neglecta decet*—neglect of appearance becomes men.”⁹ “Greater uniformity of costume has really been accompanied by greater sympathy between one individual and another, and between one class and another,” speculates Flügel. “Take any ordinary social function. The men are dressed in a dull uniformity of black and white, ‘the very embodiment of life’s prose,’ as one writer has it. . . . But if there is a lack of romance, there is also absent the envy, jealousy, the petty triumphs, defeats, superiority, and spitefulnesses engendered by the—doubtless more poetical—diversity and gaiety of the women’s costumes” (114).¹⁰ In *The Acoustic Mirror*, Kaja Silverman situates classic Hollywood cinema in this same psychohistorical trajectory, where passive exhibitionism is transformed into active scopophilia (erotic pleasure in the use of vision); more broadly, the desire to be seen is transformed into the desire to see and to know, which includes for Silverman mastery not just of the visible world, but also the audible world via cinema (24–26). When it comes to the art of listening, psychoanalytic theorists like Silverman and Mladen Dolar have useful reminders if we want to examine the apparatus, such as classic cinema, whereby the male voice gains fragile authority over “the voice of the mother” that speaks volumes to masculine vulnerability, as figured in the open ear.

For example, it is no accident that the virtuoso ear in classic cinema such as *Touch of Evil*, or for that matter in the listening technologies of the psychoanalyst or the stethoscope, gain authority by way of a distinction from the female body offering up its truths. Consider respectively Jonathan Sterne's groundbreaking work on what he calls mediate auscultation, or Sigmund Freud's *Dora*, which I will situate in chapter 3.

Likewise, the ideal orator after Cicero insists upon a virility that would mask our dramatic subjection to language, a subjection that threatens to return in the form of logorrhea traditionally known as "mere ornamentation" or its opposite: passive listening imagined as the catatonic condition suffered when one finally stops talking in the plain style. By what mechanisms, then, does our imaginary identification so consistently line up with the agent of an utterance rather than the patient? One goal of this book is to answer this psychoanalytic question by way of a history of the human sciences, which turns out to be essential if we are to understand both how we got here and what we can do about it. To understand, that is, how we have come to a pointed anxiety about maintaining ourselves in the public arena—finding our voice and expressing ourselves reasonably—we need to know a lot more about the disciplinary structures that normalized the rational actor in the middle part of the twentieth century, while all sorts of alternatives consolidated under the countervailing term *irrational*. Indeed, it is time to approach some of the famous pathologies of the middle twentieth century differently—Nazism most prominently—by bringing to bear a longer history of rhetoric as the art of moving souls.

Like Flügel, we can begin symptomatically with the observation that a certain sort of male subject proves his symbolic potency through the repeated demonstration of the symbolic impotence of those subject to speech. In the spirit of Flügel's analysis of visual dissociation, we observe that the male subject dissociates himself from the audible world, attempting thereby to align himself with a symbolic order within which power has become more and more dispersed and nonmaterial. For Flügel, such is life's prose: male subjectivity is better unseen, and I

would add unaddressed. At about the same time, in the 1920s Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer on the Continent, Walter Lippmann, John Dewey, and Herbert A. Wichelns in the United States, are among those concerned with the decline of “face-to-face” communication in mass media: just as the eye is dispersed and dematerialized as a facial feature, so is the ear.

We should not be surprised that the efforts to recuperate visual power analyzed by Flügel and later psychoanalytic theorists is accompanied by similar efforts to recuperate vocal power in the face of mass media. When in 1925 Wichelns famously warns in “The Literary Criticism of Oratory” that propaganda and publicity in the guise of public education threaten the public mind, we witness one such effort at the inception of communication studies as an autonomous discipline. Although we know how to judge timeless literature, we don’t know how to judge oratory because, according to Wichelns, oratory is a vehicle for statecraft and therefore it is bound up with the things of the moment difficult for the critic to reconstruct. “Yet,” urges Wichelns in a striking counterfactual, “the conditions of democracy necessitate both the making of speeches and the study of the art. It is true that other ways of influencing opinion have long been practiced, that oratory is no longer the chief means of communicating ideas to the masses. . . . But, human nature being what it is, there is no likelihood that face to face persuasion will cease to be a principal mode of exerting influence, whether in courts, in senate-houses, or on the platform.”¹¹ Moreover rhetorical criticism according to Wichelns has a recuperative power for the agent of speech earned, characteristically, at the expense of a pliable audience (from the Latin *audire*, to hear): “The scheme of a rhetorical study includes the element of the speaker’s personality as a conditioning factor; it includes also the public character of the man—not what he was, but what he was thought to be. It requires a description of the speaker’s audience, and of the leading ideas with which he plied his hearers” (212). Again, the male subject proves his symbolic potency by demonstrating the symbolic impotence of those subject to speech; whereas the soldier conquers with an art

exogenous to the life affected, the “effective wielder of public discourse” conquers with an art indigenous to the life affected (215). But to Wichelns’s credit, this analogy does not resolve so easily: the speaker’s character and thus the force of his speech relies, ultimately, upon public opinion.¹² Rhetoric as a life science depends upon those lives affected. And how are those lives affected? Rhetoric has to think about this too, though traditionally it has done so in fits and starts, as we will see in an excursus on rhetorical anthropology (chapter 2). Concluding this book, I will take Flügel’s dictum literally, exploring how prose pedagogy also sutures the writing subject around the figure of vocal agency. How do we learn to speak and listen, read and write—how do we learn to communicate—through different regimes of fragmentation? Why do we so animate our rhetorical theories and handbooks?

My use of psychoanalytic theory thus has some affinity with Friedrich A. Kittler, who in *Discourse Networks 1800/1900* analyzes a sensual regime—of the eye, the ear, the hands of children—as it takes shape, for instance, in a particular pedagogy like that of the Bavarian school official Heinrich Stephani, who oralized the alphabet around 1800.¹³ I will track how historically specific formations of psyche depend in part upon “rhetoric” as it is positively manifest in handbooks, pedagogies, and in theories of rhetoric and communication, focusing for example in chapter 4 on the figure of vocal agency in contemporary writing pedagogy. Methodologically like Kittler, my point here is that fantastic forms of subjectivity can be read off of the handbooks and other practical material given to young people and others who are not fully formed, which is to say everyone. The specifically psychoanalytic insight is that such subject formation never produces a seamless transition to subject and then to citizen, relying as it must upon the phantasm of the finishing school and thus ultimately the consummately finished and then polished, whose fragile formation stands still under erasure: the good man speaking well (or not), the best and the brightest (not to mention everyone else)—flickering stars in what Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o famously called the “general bourgeois education system” with its global reach.¹⁴

One type of recuperative project in politics and public culture pays special attention to phantasmagoria, including the forms of failed subjectivity that rail against a political norm just by being bent or broken: voices noticeably strained, or lapsed, or missing, from the models that might show up in handbooks and how-to's.

At about the same time that Heidegger was lecturing on Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Walter Lippmann in the United States published *Phantom Public* (1925) which marks, in the words of one critic, a transition from agora to phantasmagoria. Indeed much can still be gained by measuring the distance between particular ideologies of rhetorical agency and the promising symptoms of their failure in the incomprehensible (Bachmann), the deficient (Lea and Street), the inscrutable (Lee), the inarticulate (Mazzio), the eccentric (Nicholson), the undisciplined or unruly (Alexander, Jarratt, and Welch), the excessive (Al-Kassim), the silenced (Glenn), the unheard (Spivak).¹⁵ But what recourse do we have along with listening more attentively to the previously unheard, for instance:¹⁶ Critical pedagogues on this short list and beyond have a useful set of strategies; in what follows my strategy is distinctly historiographic.

Operative binaries including masculine/feminine, agent/patient, active/passive, and especially in our case eye/ear, only do so much when reversed. Since, for example, reading Silverman and Laura Mulvey the masculine eye dominates important forms of high modernism, one might think we should validate the ear instead. Perhaps an experimental film like Mulvey's *Riddles of the Sphinx* does this by eschewing a conventional voiceover and by disidentifying a woman's voice and a character who appears on screen.¹⁷ But perhaps it is also not accidental that Mulvey is a theorist and historian of film. Without knowing how these related binaries came to bear, and took hold consequentially, the reversals themselves can't do much and might even wind up reinforcing the very structures under scrutiny. Instead, as feminist historiographers have taught us most consequentially—Gerda Lerner on private property and the creation of patriarchy, Evelyn Fox Keller on technology and mother nature, and Susan Jarratt plus many others on the very

idea of rhetoric in the public sphere—it is only when pernicious binaries are denaturalized by way of a detailed history that we learn where exactly the weakest points are in our current system of givens, thereby destabilizing most effectively the system in its extension.¹⁸

Psychoanalysis-as-theory is itself a particular formation with built-in limitations due, in one crucial instance, to its increasingly obscure history as a human science. An important opportunity is lost if we focus on the other side of language while overlooking the disciplinary history that gives way to these very same, overdetermined distinctions between sanctioned speech and its contraries. In fact, when a psychoanalytic framework is ultimately subsumed—contra Foucault—into a broader history of the human sciences where rhetoric as the art of *being moved* takes its proper place, many of these phenomena, including the ear of democracy, do not appear so strange after all.¹⁹

The 1920s provide a turning point in this genealogy of rhetorical citizenship, first because it poses a basic question of our age. Does the Weimar critique of liberalism entail demagoguery as a likely alternative? Important postwar political theorists like Jürgen Habermas suspected as much, and therefore a range of projects were launched that would generate more ideal conditions for public debate without demagoguery or unduly emotional rhetoric. In Kantian terms free speech has always implied a critical ear that might differentiate special interests from principles that could be universal such as human rights. Kant's *Critique of Judgment* formulates the queasiness of liberal democracy: "I must confess that a beautiful poem has always given me pure delight, whereas reading the best speech of a Roman public orator, or of a contemporary parliamentary speaker or preacher, has always been mingled with the disagreeable feeling of disapproval of an insidious art, an art that knows how, in important matters, to move people like machines to a judgment that must lose all its weight with them when they meditate about it calmly."²⁰ Along these Kantian lines sharpened in the 1920s, a persistent question of liberal democracy has become: Which media or modalities, which situations or circumstances, which social disposi-

tions mitigate sophistry? How can the irrational be sidelined systematically? However, at the same time, models of practical reason have come under increasing pressure as interested in their own right and practically unhelpful, as they prove to be, for instance, highly fallible predictors of economic and political behavior.²¹

As recent research has reinserted the rational actor in an emotional scene, Weimar reemerges as a gothic laboratory where human being itself was subject to a range of happy and very unhappy experiments. Is our choice the impossible enlightenment or demagoguery? It turns out that Martin Heidegger and his contemporaries across the political spectrum loosened the hold of this binary when they considered ways of being in the world beyond rationality conceived as a universal standard instead of historically circumscribed, and occasionally useful, sets of procedures. Opposed to Heidegger on the left, for instance, witness an alternative in André Breton's *First Surrealist Manifesto*, also from that auspicious year 1924:

We are still living under the reign of logic, but the logical processes of our time apply only to the solution of problems of secondary interest. The absolute rationalism which remains in fashion allows for the consideration of only those facts narrowly relevant to our experience. Logical conclusions, on the other hand, escape us. Needless to say, boundaries have been assigned even to experience. It revolves in a cage from which release is becoming increasingly difficult. It too depends upon immediate utility and is guarded by common sense. In the guise of civilization, under the pretext of progress, we have succeeded in dismissing from our minds anything that, rightly or wrongly, could be regarded as superstition or myth; and we have proscribed every way of seeking the truth which does not conform to convention. It would appear that it is by sheer chance that an aspect of intellectual life—and by far the most important in my opinion—about which no one was supposed to be concerned any longer has, recently, been brought back to light. Credit for this must go to Freud.²²

Emphasizing sacred rhetoric instead, I hope to demonstrate that Breton's reliance on the Freudian irrational is warranted but insufficient; indeed, our much heralded "re-enchantment of the world" after

Nietzsche and Weber can be misleading, as I will elaborate in chapter 3.²³ Orphaned materials of modernity often turn out to be vital strains of a different genealogy altogether.

Like Walter Benjamin, I do foreground in chapter 3 both failed and extrapersonal communication—including collectivities, machines, institutions, nonhumans, unconscious language, and spiritual entities as well as material objects—to critique our rhetoric of the subject that implies a certain configuration of the sensorium (speech over audition) and then lends itself to a political system I call the voice of democracy. I am interested, like Benjamin, in the concrete historicity of our subject-object regime in its rhetorical dimension, and not just in the positive dimensions of social science. Unlike Benjamin's re-enchantment of the modern world, however, I emphasize sacred rhetoric to enable a more pointed critique of pragmatic phenomena such as the operation of "voice" in the educational and political setting, or Gothic rhetoric understood as that which exceeds the pragmatics of face-to-face communication, of the sort we find foreshadowed in this passage from the pseudo-Ciceronian rhetorical handbook *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, where a speechmaker is advised how to manipulate auditors: "The direct opening should be such that by the straightforward methods I have prescribed we immediately make the hearer well-disposed or attentive or receptive; whereas the subtle approach should be such that we effect all these results covertly, through dissimulation, and so can arrive at the same vantage point in the task of speaking."²⁴ In the context of our contemporary communication sciences "extrapersonal communication" is a rogue category that challenges this fantasy of manipulation by focusing on mysteries subsumed in this passage under the sign of being well disposed (*benivolus*), being attentive (*adventus*), and being receptive or teachable (*docilis*). What is the phenomenology of such familiar advice, after all? Who is the agent and who is the patient when we are told, paradoxically, how to manipulate someone else?

Tracking the modern fate of sacred rhetoric helps us bracket, more importantly, Foucault's history of the human sciences so we better

grasp not just how people are organized but also how they are *moved*: hence emotions in a previous book of mine, and the art of listening in this one. At this point, the core of my argument (chapter 2) is that crucial rhetorical phenomena, most of which can be subsumed under the sign of vocal agency, are misunderstood because we bring to bear an inappropriate framework articulated most clearly by Foucault.

In fact the social sciences have an altogether different genealogy discernible by way of sacred rhetoric, and here once again Martin Heidegger unwittingly provides a clue in his SS 1924 lecture course, which was first scheduled as a course on Augustine before Heidegger changed the topic in the effort to accelerate his planned book on Aristotle (which never appeared but instead morphed into the masterwork *Being and Time*). As Heidegger tries systematically to provide “the [ontological] concepts for things which are usually treated in a nebulous way ... in theology,”²⁵ Augustine provides crucial material for Heidegger’s Aristotle interpretation, which, as we will see, rediscovers *rhetoric as a life science*. Consider, for instance, Augustine in *The City of God*: “By ‘they that hear’ [shall live, comments Augustine on John 5.25] he means those who obey and believe, and who persevere even to the end” (*qui audierint dixit qui oboedierint, qui crediderint et usque in finem perseveraverint*, 20.6). But what Augustine describes is by no means instrumental rhetoric: it would be a mistake to conclude one must simply listen to and obey God, devote oneself to following God’s commandments. His point is that one’s very capacity to hear depends upon how one lives. So with respect to the second resurrection, notes Augustine, “He does not say, as in the first resurrection, ‘and they that hear shall live’ [but rather “when all who are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth”; *quando omnes, qui in monumentis sunt, audient vocem eius et procedent*; John 5.28–29]. For all shall not live.” What this means, Augustine explains, is that “not all will have that life which, because it is a life of blessedness, is the only life worthy to be so called. For, clearly, if they were without any kind of life at all, they would not be able to hear and come forth from the tombs in their rising bodies” (*non enim omnes vivent, ea vita scilicet, quae,*

quoniam beata est, sola vita dicenda est. Nam utique non sine qualicumque vita possent audire et de monumentis resurgente carne procedere). For Augustine, like Aristotle before him and like Heidegger much after him in 1924, rhetoric is not a skill but rather a way of life dependent upon what kind of life one lives, which might be, for instance, blessed or ungodly in religious terms, praise- or blameworthy in ethical terms, friendly or unfriendly in political terms.

In short, the history of the human sciences cannot be understood solely by way of bare-life technologies after Foucault; instead they must be understood by way of the life that can be lived one way or another, which means that persuasive technologies like rhetoric are central even if they are no longer definitive. Rhetoric moves souls. Chapter 2 shows how psychology, politics, and pedagogy are not originally descriptive disciplines à la Foucault in *The Order of Things*; they are the *prescriptive* arts of moving souls both personal and collective, drawing as they do from the first such art, rhetoric. Indeed, that is one important way that disciplines form in the first place—disciplines chase expertise. No doubt the early modern need for institutionalized disciplines of psychology, politics, and pedagogy requires explanation that goes to the heart of state reason. But by definition these new academic formations in sixteenth-century Germany and beyond hadn't yet fully developed their own expertise adequate to meet these new demands. So, like any other academic discipline in its early stages developing first principles, basic assumptions, key terms, research domains, methods of inquiry, habits of mind, and sanctioned authority, these early modern human sciences frequently had to look elsewhere, beyond their initially scant disciplinary resources. In this case, when it came to human science as the art of moving souls, rhetoric was the obvious expert domain tapped at every turn. And now, after this originating episode has been largely forgotten and subsumed into Foucault's biopolitical narrative around the human sciences, it becomes particularly helpful to revisit original disciplinary logics and practices so that their quiet persistence becomes legible once again.

Finally it is worth describing in what way my approach to sense perception—now a rich topic across the disciplines—is phenomenological and not grounded most immediately in the growing field of sound studies.²⁶ Following sound studies, I consider how a sensorium is not necessarily the world of sense data and its organs of reception, while recognizing how this scientific model has certainly dominated earlier periods and to a certain extent our common sense today. And though this scientific model will at times serve as a necessary object of criticism, I will instead foreground a critical ecology of the senses where (sensory) experience is purposive, emerging from a historically situated being-world nexus.²⁷ Thus my approach learns from sound studies where a history of the senses after Marx has been pursued in detail over the last couple of decades, focusing frequently on sound technology as history: see for instance another book by Jonathan Sterne, *MP3: The Meaning of a Format (Sign, Storage, Transmission)*. At the same time, my approach maintains a very different focal point in the ancient discipline of rhetoric because it explains how listening per se has been disciplined, and what this means for the subject of the modern human sciences. Or even more basically in a complementary formula: The object of sound studies is sound, with a paradigm example in “noise”—what it is, and how it appears historically only by way of a scene, for example noise pollution and noise abatement campaigns.²⁸ The art of listening finds its object of study in ontology—being moved and its disciplines—where auditing God is the paradigm example. History of the senses is where the two modes of inquiry meet.

The earliest point in the chronology where I spend significant time (chapter 2) is Melancthon’s sixteenth-century Europe, because that is where we see in detail how the modern human sciences, notably psychology, politics, and pedagogy, drew techniques from rhetoric as the art of moving souls. My historical methodology, however, is more genealogy than chronology. Thus my *narrative* starting point (chapter 1) is in fact Martin Heidegger’s SS 1924 lecture course on Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* because it launched this project when I was a graduate student in rhetoric