

John Durham Peters

Harris Hall, Room 108
Monday May 9, 12:00 pm (lunch served)

A Short History of Vowels

The Voice and Its Discontents across Transcription Media

As we approach the jubilee anniversary of Jacques Derrida's *De la Grammatologie* next year, we should consider his claims: voice means presence and that implies post-Platonic metaphysics and the imperial violence of the west. But if we shift our gaze from the voice in general to the vowels in particular, we will be able to see the precise reason for his worries. The history of the voice is the history of vowels. The history of vowels is also the history of efforts to record the voice, and it is a history that raises all kinds of questions about language, what humans are, and the geopolitical divide of east and west.



The Center for Global Culture and Communication is an interdisciplinary initiative of Northwestern University School of Communication



John Peters (University of Iowa) is interested in media and cultural history, communication and social theory, and understanding communication in its broad historical, legal, philosophical, religious, and technological context. He is the author of *Speaking into the Air: A History of the Idea of Communication* (1999), *Courting the Abyss: Free Speech and the Liberal Tradition* (2005) and numerous other articles, books and anthologies. He teaches courses and seminars on critical theory, the history of mass communication theory, media and modernity, pragmatism, the public sphere, and transnational media.

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