

Far calls : on omens, slips, and epiphanies (/review/10.5860/CHOICE.240819)

Heller-Roazen, Daniel. (</search?exactauthor=Heller-Roazen, Daniel>) Princeton, 2025

401p bibl index, 9781945861048 \$37.00, 9781945861208 \$37.00

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Heller-Roazen (Princeton Univ.) examines the phenomenon of overhearing across literary, philosophical, psychoanalytic, and cultural contexts, emphasizing how accidental, fragmentary, or unintended speech can carry meaningful significance. In his analysis, such fragments appear as omens in antiquity, slips in psychoanalytic theory, and moments of revelation in modern literature. Seventeen chapters offer a diverse set of illustrations, ranging from Greek *kledones* and Roman divinatory practices to Augustine's conversion experience, Freudian slips, and the literary experiments of Yeats, Proust, and Joyce. Heller-Roazen argues that the line between intentional utterance and inadvertent expression is fluid, showing how overheard, misheard, or unintended speech can disclose hidden desires and spark insight. Several accounts highlight moments in Augustine's life when chance sounds and unexpected encounters became transformative experiences. *Far Calls* challenges the assumption that only deliberate speech carries meaning, proposing instead that partial or accidental expression can have profound significance. While prior research has addressed overheard words and chance events as sources of insight, Heller-Roazen provides a comprehensive and philosophically informed perspective on the cultural history of overhearing. Recommended for scholars and advanced students in literary theory, psychoanalysis, classics, religious studies, and philosophy of language.

Summing Up: Recommended. Advanced undergraduates through faculty; professionals.

Reviewer: [K. L. Majocha \(/search?reviewer=K. L. Majocha\)](/search?reviewer=K. L. Majocha), Iñisaġvik College

Recommendation: Recommended

Readership Level: Upper-division Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Researchers/Faculty, Professionals/Practitioners

Interdisciplinary Subjects:

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