

# Listening to speech has remarkable effects on a baby's brain

June 27, 2016

*aeon*:

Imagine how an infant, looking out from her crib or her father's arms, might see the world. Does she experience a kaleidoscope of shadowy figures looming in and out of focus, and a melange of sounds wafting in and out of hearing?

In his *Principles of Psychology* (1890), William James imagined the infant's world as 'one great blooming, buzzing confusion'. But today, we know that even very young infants have already begun to make sense of their world. They integrate sights and sounds, recognise the people who care for them, and even expect that people and other animate objects – but not inert objects – can move on their own.

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