

Innovations in Deaf Studies: Critically Mapping the Field

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What does it mean to do Deaf Studies and who gets to define the field? What would a truly deaf-led¹ Deaf Studies look like? What are the research practices of deaf scholars in Deaf Studies, and how do they relate to deaf research participants and communities? What innovations do deaf scholars deem necessary in the field of Deaf Studies? A desire to ask, and to attempt to answer, these questions was a prime motivator for us to start editing this volume and writing this introduction. We do not ask these questions just for the sake of asking them: Our common background at the (now defunct) Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS) at the University of Bristol taught us that “doing Deaf Studies” is an inherently political activity, because of the history of both the field and of deaf communities in general. This legacy of the CDS inspired us as we engaged in developing this long overdue volume.

The present volume foregrounds deaf ontologies, defined as “deaf ways of being,” and how the lived experience of being deaf is central not only to the research participants’ ontologies but also to researchers’ ontologies, positionalities, and theoretical framings. The authors of this volume also make a number of suggestions as to how new research, ideas, and methods have the potential to develop Deaf Studies in a way which meets the challenges of the present.

¹ See page 14 for an explanation of d/D use in this introduction.

The imperative for exploring deaf scholars' research practices in Deaf Studies is strengthened by a gradual increase in the number of Deaf Studies scholars who are deaf.² This development is important because the historical and current situation in the academic hierarchies in Deaf Studies and sign language departments is one in which hearing academics outnumber deaf academics (O'Brien & Emery 2014). When reviewing Deaf Studies publications and professorial positions, most publications in high-impact volumes/journals and the majority of the higher (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, and Full Professor) positions in Deaf Studies are held by hearing scholars. This discrepancy has to be situated historically: sign languages have been (and to a certain extent still are) oppressed in educational settings, and spoken languages are not optimally accessible for deaf people (even if advanced hearing technology is used). Language deprivation resulted in generations of deaf people having obtained lower levels of formal education overall in comparison to hearing peers (Conrad 1979, Parasnis 2012, Knoors & Marschark 2014). Due to improvements in educational attainment outcomes (e.g., sign bilingual educational policies in some countries and access to the national curriculum), a growing number of deaf scholars are conducting research in Deaf Studies, and for many of them, this research is informed by their own experience of being deaf.

² In addition, there are increasing numbers of deaf academics in the humanities, social sciences (e.g., Zehnter 2014), and hard sciences whose work does not explicitly engage with deafness: There are thus more spaces opening up for deaf people to be able to research whatever they want—not merely to be experts in matters concerning deaf people, deaf communities, and sign languages.

In the process of developing this book, we produced an academic “deaf space in print,” in which Deaf Studies is discussed: All chapters in this book are written by deaf scholars and each chapter has been reviewed by at least four deaf scholars. Furthermore, the editors discussed this introduction during a three-day think tank; a subsequent draft was circulated to all authors to invite their feedback and suggestions; and we received and incorporated a large amount of productive and critical feedback (although we emphasize that we bear final responsibility for any perspectives shared in this introduction). There is something “deaf” about the process, which goes beyond everyone involved being deaf: Part of thinking about methodology involves (re)examining how we approach academic collaboration or interaction.³ Thus, in the process of creating the book, we employed “deaf capital” (Hauser 2013), that is, we made productive use of a network of deaf peers.

Despite strategically and purposefully focusing on deaf scholars’ work, we do not wish to downplay the importance of hearing scholars’ contributions to the field of Deaf Studies. Our aim is to create a space for contributions from deaf researchers and to see what happens when deaf scholars enter into conversation. Indeed, particular themes and concerns come clearly to the foreground in this book. One of the recurring themes in the book is reflection on the way in which deaf researchers position themselves in their work, which is why our authors make use of concepts such as “positionality,” “intersectionality,” “reflexivity,” and “reflexive meta-documentation” (Moges, Hou, Hauland, O’Brien & Kusters, this volume). Another theme that permeates the various chapters in this book is the investigation of collaborative and power relationships between deaf scholars and deaf research participants, and between deaf scholars

³ Thanks to Rebecca Sanchez for pointing out this connection.

and deaf community members and activists (De Meulder, O'Brien, O'Brien & Kusters, Kusters, Murray, this volume). In short, this book demonstrates that research frameworks and methodologies built around the ontologies of deaf people offer suggestions for new ways forward for the discipline as a whole.

Innovations in Deaf Studies are not only spurred by the growing engagement of deaf scholars with deaf ontologies and with methodological processes, but also by a number of new theoretical trends. Several authors have stated that Deaf Studies is a field that has developed slowly and needs an updated, stronger, and more coherent theoretical foundation (Ladd 2003, Turner 2007, CDS 2008, Marschark & Humphries 2009, Fernandes & Myers 2010, Myers & Fernandes 2010, Friedner, this volume). The conceptual apparatus of Deaf Studies often was not updated (as discussed later) in a way that kept pace with developments in related fields. Furthermore, although Deaf Studies has been inspired by other disciplines such as anthropology, geography, sociology, and political theory, it has not had much interaction with, made contributions to, or offered critiques of those other disciplines. As set out later in this chapter, to innovate the field, we need to interrogate the foundation of Deaf Studies critically (see Friedner, this volume), to work in a more interdisciplinary fashion, and to intervene in other disciplines (see Sanchez, this volume).

Some approaches to Deaf Studies, such as O'Brien's (this volume) and Marschark and Spencer's (2011), have defined the field broadly to include the study of anything linked to deaf people, including research in neuropsychology, theoretical sign linguistics, deaf education, language acquisition, and sign language interpretation. This volume focuses, however, on certain specific strands within the field of Deaf Studies, particularly concentrating in areas around deaf

people's ontologies (deaf ways of being) and epistemologies (deaf ways of knowing), communities, networks, ideologies, literature, histories, religion, language practices, political practices, and aspirations. Our aim is to contribute to the expansion of those areas in the field of Deaf Studies that have been underdeveloped and underfunded, in contrast to, for example, theoretical sign linguistics, which is generally better developed and funded.

Within these underdeveloped areas of study, the founding concepts of Deaf Studies, namely Deaf culture and Deaf community (see Murray, this volume) (and note their capitalization of "Deaf") often are still treated as a monolithic and static theoretical apparatus. There is a need for innovations in the conceptual apparatus of Deaf Studies, not only because the discipline is maturing, but also because deaf worlds have changed considerably since the birth of the discipline in the 1970s. Examples of such changes are the decline of deaf schools, the normalization of cochlear implants, the multiplication of pathways into deaf communities, increased virtual and transnational contact, a diversification of intersectional backgrounds, and a growing number of hearing people who learn and use sign language, to name but a few. To analyze what these processes mean for deaf people, there is a need to look beyond traditional concepts and frameworks and to break new ground.

In this introductory chapter, we first offer an overview of the field of Deaf Studies, and outline a number of theoretical trends. Central in this discussion is an exploration of investigated themes and a critical examination of the theoretical frameworks and concepts that have been used (such as Deaf culture and the d/D distinction). We identify a number of current trends in Deaf Studies, suggesting that they offer innovations to the field. Subsequently, we discuss the role of collaboration, dominance, and hegemony among deaf and hearing scholars, and among

deaf scholars of various educational and national (privileged) backgrounds, and their research participants. Having thus established the theoretical, sociopolitical, and geographical contexts of the current state of the field of Deaf Studies, we then will introduce the main themes of the current volume and explicate the unifying threads that run through the following chapters.

THE INSTITUTIONAL BASIS OF DEAF STUDIES

Deaf Studies, as a multidisciplinary field of study, is conducted by scholars whose job, program, or institution title includes the words “Deaf Studies” *and* those who work in more “mainstream” programs or institutions and approach Deaf Studies not as a separate discipline but as a research focus within their respective disciplines (Fernandes & Myers 2010). Correspondingly, the authors in this book have varied backgrounds: Some of them (including the editors) studied and/or taught Deaf Studies as a separate subject, while others are doing Deaf Studies research while based in non-Deaf Studies institutions and disciplines, such as anthropology, sociology, education, rehabilitation sciences, theology, linguistics, and disability studies. Importantly, Deaf Studies (in the narrower sense outlined in our introductory paragraph) is geospatially predominantly located in the Anglophone west, mostly the United States and United Kingdom, where English is used as the academic lingua franca.

Although a wide range of institutions offer bachelor modules (including in summer schools) or bachelor degrees in Deaf Studies (in the United Kingdom, United States, and beyond), master’s-level degrees in Deaf Studies are much rarer (e.g., Gallaudet University offers such a degree program). We (the editors) have studied Deaf Studies to the master’s level (between 2004 and 2007) in the Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS) at the University of Bristol, and Kusters has a PhD in Deaf Studies from the same center. The CDS was a formerly well-known

cultural and academic landmark but was closed down in 2013 due to funding cuts. Within this program, we were submerged in the field of Deaf Studies in a sign-bilingual environment wherein both deaf and hearing staff (including Paddy Ladd, Jim Kyle, Rachel Sutton-Spence, and other eminent Deaf Studies scholars), used British Sign Language. For us, it was an extremely nurturing place both personally and academically. Indeed, the CDS was the most important place in Europe for nurturing and practicing the development of the underrepresented areas in Deaf Studies mentioned earlier. The fact that the CDS does not exist anymore means that Deaf Studies as a field has lost a very important centralized and internationally recognized place of teaching, research, and exchange.

The MSc degree program in Bristol was (and the BA and MA degree programs in Gallaudet University are) important given that in most other scholarly contexts, Deaf Studies subjects are offered within the context of a (degree) program for sign language interpreters/teachers/researchers, educators, or audiologists (e.g., at HU Berlin, University of Hamburg, Herriot Watt University, Boston University). When looking at these programs' curricula and staffing, it appears that the underdeveloped areas of Deaf Studies mentioned earlier (e.g., the study of deaf people's everyday lives, and their communities) receive only minor attention and often are taught by experts in sign-language teaching or sign linguistics rather than by experts in other fields. Indeed, within the current neoliberal market-driven climate, Deaf Studies in the aforementioned sense is given only very little space, time, and funding to develop.

In addition to these institutes and programs, there are a few Deaf Studies-specific publications, journals, and conferences. Deaf Studies-specific journals include *Sign Language Studies*, *Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education*, and *American Annals of the Deaf*. The

second of these mostly publishes research that falls outside the scope of the field of Deaf Studies as we focus on it in this volume. Deaf Studies conferences are scarce in comparison to international conferences that focus on sign linguistics and deaf education, for example; and are found mostly in the United States rather than on the international level. For example, a series of Deaf Studies conferences were held in the United States in the 1990s, and biennial Deaf Studies Today conferences were organized in Utah between 2004 and 2014.

THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF DEAF STUDIES

Deaf Studies as an academic discipline emerged in the 1970s. The context of its emergence, more elaborately described in Murray (this volume), originates in the birth of sign linguistics as an academic discipline in the 1950s and 1960s (Tervoort 1953, Stokoe 1960, Stokoe et al. 1965). These early sign linguists proved that sign languages were genuine full-fledged languages with complex structures, deserving academic scrutiny. American Sign Language, British Sign Language, and other sign languages (previously just known as “signing,” see Murray, this volume) became named as such and their parameters were explored. Crucial in the spirit of the age were the civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States, in which African Americans and later also Chicanos, people with disabilities, queer people, and women fought for equality (Bauman 2008a, Murray, this volume).

Within this broader academic and societal context, theory building on (and legitimization of the existence of) the American deaf community, and its culture, began (Padden 1980). Woodward (1975) suggested writing Deaf with capital D when referring to sociocultural aspects of deafness, analogous with national/ethnic group identities such as “Italians.” These perspectives challenged the medical-pathological view that deaf/disabled people are “broken”

and should be “cured.” Concepts such as Deaf culture, Deaf pride, and Deaf identity were coined and explored. Padden (1980:92–93) defined Deaf culture as: a “set of learned behaviors of a group of people who have their own language, values, rules for behavior, and tradition, (...) Members of the Deaf culture behave as Deaf people do, use the language of Deaf people, and share the beliefs of Deaf people toward themselves and other people who are not Deaf.” Later on, theory on biculturalism and cultural hybridity emerged, which meant that deaf people were said to be part of both deaf and hearing cultures, of minority and majority cultures (Padden 1998, Ladd 2003).

Important publications written by both deaf and hearing scholars in this period described and explored “the Deaf community,” its history and culture, initially mostly in the United States and the United Kingdom (although a large number of brief accounts from all over the world were included in Erting et al. 1994). Seminal works published between 1980 and 2000 are Higgins (1980), Padden (1980), Baker and Battison (1981), Kannapell (1982), Kyle and Allsop (1982), Lane (1984b), Bienvenu and Columnos (1986, 1989), Van Cleve and Baker-Schenk (1987), Padden and Humphries (1988), Johnson and Erting (1989), Schein (1989), Wilcox (1989), Brien (1991), Carmel and Monaghan (1991), Gregory (1991), Taylor and Bishop (1991), Ladd (1992), Van Cleve and Crouch (1992), Fischer and Lane (1993), Erting et al. (1994), Cohen (1995), Lane, Hoffmeister, and Bahan (1996), Wrigley (1996), and the Deaf Studies Conference Proceedings (Washington DC, College of Continuing Education).

Murray (this volume) maps out how community activists interacting with academics jointly created the discipline of Deaf Studies in the United States, interactions that were particularly important in the work of the Linguistics Research Laboratory in Gallaudet

University in the 1970s (Maher 1996). The Centre for Deaf Studies in Bristol was formally established in 1986 (but Deaf Studies research at the University of Bristol already had started in 1978); and initially also had a strong foundation within the local Bristol deaf community, by organizing certificate courses for the local deaf community and regular research dissemination events. The first decades of Deaf Studies thus featured a strong relationship among deaf communities, deaf people in academia, and hearing people in academia (also see Turner 2007).

Early Deaf Studies thus focused on overturning the dominant medical model in society, the educational system, and academia, including at Gallaudet University, where the medical-pathological perspective on deaf people was dominant (Murray, this volume, Turner 2007). The “culturo-linguistic model,” proposed by Ladd (2003), is the perspective on deaf communities as collectivities, minority language communities with their own cultures. This model challenges the individual medical-pathological model and supplements the “social model” of disability; the latter posits that society disables people, that society has to adapt to accommodate a range of abilities, and that society also is focused on individuals rather than communities or groups (Oliver 1990). The culturo-linguistic model (Ladd 2003) and the related ethnic group-perspective on deaf people (Eckert 2010, Lane 2005, Lane et al. 2011) often are used to distinguish (the study of) deaf people and disabled people.

A focus on addressing oppression was central to the overturning of dominant views in this period. Some authors identified parallels with other oppressed groups such as First Nations and some African peoples (Lane 1992, Ladd 2003). To address hegemonies, power imbalances, and inequalities between passive, dominated, oppressed deaf subjects and hearing colonizers/oppressors (mostly pastors, educators, and administrators), scholars coined or used

concepts such as audism, colonialism, phonocentrism, hegemony, and paternalism (Bauman 2004, Humphries 1975, Lane 1992, Ladd 2003, Wrigley 1996). Closely connected with this identifying and challenging of oppression is the theme of decolonization, liberation, and empowerment (Jankowski 1997, Ladd 2003). Central to many discussions of deaf liberation are the Deaf President Now protest at Gallaudet University in 1988 (Christiansen & Barnartt 1995), Ladd's (2003) discussion of "the Deaf Resurgence" in the United Kingdom, and his Deafhood concept, all of which aimed to challenge and overcome the oppressions experienced by deaf people.

THE CONCEPT OF DEAF CULTURE

The foundational concept of Deaf Studies is thus very much based upon a (monolithic/essentialist) dichotomy between "Deaf world/Deaf culture" and (an often hostile, discriminatory, and inaccessible) "hearing world" (Murray 2007). The article "How is Deaf Culture?" by Turner (1994) and the responses in *Sign Language Studies* (volumes 83–85, 1994), mark the surfacing of discourses that have become increasingly central to Deaf Studies during the past two decades. Turner (1994) criticized the fact that the understanding of "Deaf culture" hitherto had been dominated by Padden's (1980) "static" account of Deaf culture. The latter constituted a checklist with identifiable characteristics and emphasized unity and homogeneity, thus suggesting a unitary (and one-sided) view of "the" American deaf community. Turner argued in favor of an anti-essentialist, fluid, dynamic, and processual view of deaf culture rather than a static one that lists "Deaf features" and describes Deaf communities as having well-defined boundaries (such as comprising only fluently signing white deaf people). He argues for

understanding Deaf culture as a verb (in which dominances are reproduced) rather than consolidating representations of dominant deaf groups.

The set of responses in *Sign Language Studies* displayed a number of perspectives, both in agreement and disagreement with Turner. Ladd (1994, 2003) for example, while on a par with Turner in recognizing hybridity and complexity in deaf cultures and communities, nonetheless defended and consolidated the “Deaf culture” concept (and engaged with its critics in the process of doing so). Ladd (2003) argued the need for *strategic essentialism* after a long period of oralism, stating that deaf communities and researchers should be allowed to use essentialist notions, as a necessary first step in reframing and understanding Deaf communities and cultures after a century of oralism in education (Ladd 2003).

After 2005, the concepts of Deaf culture/community/identity and the d/D distinction were questioned or critically explored by an increased number of Deaf Studies scholars (such as Baynton 2008, Leigh 2009, De Clerck 2010, Kusters & De Meulder 2013, Kusters 2015, Friedner 2015, Sanchez 2015, Friedner, this volume). In response to Turner (1994), Johnston (1994:138) argued that the Deaf culture concept “may already be doing far more work than it was ever intended to do.” Indeed, “Deaf culture” has been used as an umbrella term to include embodied behavior such as waving or causing vibrations, the arts, technology, accessibility issues, and checklists of deaf “values” or “habits.”

Today we see an increasing tendency to use more specific terms for these various elements of “deaf culture,” rather than treating “deaf culture” as an overarching concept, even though there are authors, such as Mindess (2006) and Holcomb (2013), who perpetuate this perspective along with overviews of Deaf cultural traits and rules. Indeed, while Deaf culture

could refer to the arts, other concepts such as deaf ontologies (this volume), deaf epistemologies (Paul & Moores 2012), Deaf Gain (Bauman & Murray 2014), Deafnicity (Eckert 2010), deaf sociality (Friedner 2014, Kusters 2015), and deaf space (Mathews 2007, Gulliver 2009, Bauman 2014, Kusters 2015) are all terms that are used in different contexts to refer to different aspects of deaf experiences and lives. In addition, some scholars suggested that the way forward for Deaf Studies' maturation, was to let go of deaf "identity politics" (Davis 2008), the "Deaf culture" concept (Baynton 2008), and the concepts of phonocentrism and colonialism (Myers & Fernandes 2010).

DEAF ONTOLOGIES AND EPISTEMOLOGIES

A second problem with the foundational terminology in Deaf Studies, such as "Deaf culture," "Deaf community," and "Deaf identity," is that such concepts have become *top-down concepts*, leading to "frozen" ways of thinking and structuring descriptions and analyses of deaf lives (Friedner, this volume). Because the foundation of Deaf Studies has, indeed, been largely "reactive" and driven by a social justice agenda (Turner 2007, De Clerck 2010), Humphries (2008:41) stated that Deaf Studies scholars "need to achieve a balance between the rhetoric of talking culture that too often seeks to 'prove' something and talking culture that is about the circulation and acceleration of culture." Humphries (2008) suggested that the way forward was to focus on deaf ontologies and epistemologies. We interpret this as a focus on "the whole picture"—both oppression/inequalities and positive experiences.

Although an exploration of deaf ontologies also was central to the first decades of Deaf Studies scholarship (Murray, this volume), later scholarship makes the need to create bottom-up accounts of deaf ontologies and epistemologies more explicit, and regards them as *embodied*

ones. Indeed, central in deaf ontologies are corporeality and embodied subjectivity, which means that our bodies influence our experiences and thoughts. We could speak of a sensory turn, by which we mean the renewed focus in deaf epistemologies and ontologies on the role of the visual (Bahan 2008, Baynton 2008, Hauser et al. 2010, O'Brien & Kusters, this volume) and tactile senses (Napoli 2014, Edwards 2015, Friedner & Helmreich 2012) (and also in architecture: see Bauman 2014). Neuropsychological research corroborates this focus on the senses (Capek et al. 2013, Cardin et al. 2013, Emmorey 2002, Sacks 1989). This sensory turn is crucial, because in much of early Deaf Studies scholarship a focus on the (broken) body was associated with the medical perspective and thus was to be avoided. It was exactly this early scholarship, however, (which established the foundations of the field as *not* being about “deafness”) that allowed this return to the body from secure foundations.

An important example of a deaf ontological theory is Ladd's (2003) Deafhood concept, a teleological open-ended essentialist concept centring on visual ontologies, deaf sameness, and liberation. It is essentialist because it states that deaf people are visual beings who should sign; liberating because it makes deaf people aware of, and helps them to cope with, detrimental effects of oppression; teleological because the ultimate aim is to become a signing deaf person who socializes with other deaf people; and open-ended because signing deaf people can develop in multiple ways. The concept resonated with many deaf people around the world, including many outside of academic contexts. It was discussed and explored in local deaf communities and applied in myriad ways (Kusters & De Meulder 2013).

Deaf epistemologies (Ladd 2003, De Clerck 2010, Paul & Moores 2012) are based on deaf ontologies. In response to Turner during the aforementioned debate in *Sign Language*

Studies, Bahan (1994) pointed out that “Deaf culture” is an academic term, contrasting it with the signed concepts DEAF WORLD and DEAF WAY, and argued that it is important to investigate concepts used on the ground (further discussed in Murray, this volume; see Ladd 2003 for a similar argument). Another bottom-up investigation of deaf epistemologies is the exploration of the meaning of the widely used phrase “DEAF-SAME” in a variety of contexts, including international ones (Friedner & Kusters 2015). Friedner (2016) argues that valuing and checking for *understanding* together with other deaf people is a core feature of deaf ontologies and epistemologies. Authors in Bauman and Murray’s (2014) edited volume on Deaf Gain argue that deaf epistemologies contribute to human diversity. Sanchez (2015, this volume) employs what she terms “deaf insight” to interpret mainstream (i.e., non-deaf related) texts such as Charlie Chaplin’s work.

We argue that focusing on deaf epistemologies and ontologies is important because it acknowledges deaf people’s ways of being without “locking” their experiences in top-down, essentializing, imposed concepts and theories. Indeed, such a focus on bottom-up ways of creating knowledge in Deaf Studies can liberate us from constraining academic concepts and theories (see, for example, Lewis 2007), in addition to allowing us to experiment with new concepts such as “deaf sociality,” as mentioned earlier.

DIVERSITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY

Apart from the static theoretical apparatus of Deaf Studies, Deaf Studies scholars also have identified a second problem within the early Deaf Studies canon; although the cornerstones of the discipline have been and still are essential for its maturation, they exclude people, reduce rights, and create marginalized communities through oppressive and rigid definitions of deaf

peoples' relationships with one another and with hearing people. For example, Fernandes and Myers (2010:22) state that Deaf Studies "scholars are engaged in perpetuating a maladaptive myth rather than studying the reality of a complex group," and argue in favor of an "inclusive Deaf Studies" studying a wide variety of deaf people and (sign) language use, including people with different racial, ethnic, and language backgrounds, as well as different preferences with regard to use of amplification and signed/spoken language. The initial (unpublished⁴) resistance against Fernandes and Myers' (2010) piece was perhaps caused by the aforementioned fact that many scholars feel that forms of strategic essentialism (Ladd 2003) and strong promotion of sign language use (Bauman 2008b) are still needed in the young field of Deaf Studies.

In any case, particularly from the 1990s onward, we see an increasing focus on diverse deaf lives in Deaf Studies publications. *Open Your Eyes* (Bauman 2008), which emerged from a Deaf Studies think tank held at Gallaudet University in 2002, amplifies marginalized voices and considers how ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, family, and nationality shape the experience of being deaf. Other works that have addressed diversity within deaf communities are works on deafblind people (Clark 2014, Edwards 2015), deafdisabled people (Ruiz et al. 2015), CODAs (children of deaf adults) (Preston 1994, Bishop & Hicks 2009), deaf women (Brueggemann & Burch 2006, Fries 2013), class (Carmel 1997, Ladd 2003, Padden & Humphries 2005, De Meulder, this volume), deaf queer (Luczak 1993, 2007, Bienvenu 2008, Moges, this volume), deaf black/African Americans as minority (Dunn 1998, 2008, James & Woll 2004, Clark 2010, Stapleton 2014), deaf Latina/Latinos as minority (García-Fernandez

⁴ An important example of deaf discourses not finding their way into print; see further in the chapter.

2014), deaf Asians as minority (Ahmad, Atkin & Jones 2002), deaf First Nations (Paris & Wood 2002), and so on. Such accounts are being increasingly, albeit slowly, incorporated into or discussed in mainstream Deaf Studies. In addition, scholars who are themselves members of such underrepresented groups are bringing their work into the spotlight (see Moges, this volume).

Paralleling this increasing diversity in Deaf Studies accounts, is a broader geographical coverage in edited volumes published after 2000 (although note that Erting et al., based on the *Deaf Way* [1989], was published in 1994), such as in *The Deaf Way II Reader* (Goodstein 2006), *Many Ways to Be Deaf* (Monaghan et al. 2003), *Deaf around the World* (Napoli & Mathur 2011), and Cooper and Rashid's (2015) edited volume on deaf people and signed languages in sub-Saharan Africa. Monographs also have been published, most of them focusing on deaf people in Africa and Asia; for example, China (Callaway 2000), Thailand (Reilly & Reilly 2005), Japan (Nakamura 2006), South Africa (Morgan 2012), Zimbabwe (VanGilder 2012), India (Friedner 2015), Ghana (Kusters 2015), Nepal (Hoffmann-Dilloway 2016), Việt Nam (Cooper in press) and Uganda (Lutalo-Kiingi & De Clerck forthcoming). There has been an increased interest in deaf lives in shared signing communities, too, which are (mostly rural) communities with a high rate of hereditary deafness (Nonaka 2004, 2014, Kisch 2007, 2008, Marsaja 2008, Kusters 2010a, 2015, MacDougall 2012).

Significantly, an increasing number of Deaf Studies contributions are written by scholars, such as anthropologists and international development scholars, doing research *in the global South*, and their works no longer exist in the margin but rather in the center of social and cultural Deaf Studies. (See Friedner, this volume, for a description and analysis of Deaf Studies work

based in the global South.) It is important to mention, though, that almost all these works are written by scholars coming from, or based in, the global North. Moriarty Harrelson (this volume) discusses what this means in terms of ownership, representation, and power.

This emerging body of work in the global South often has combined local fieldwork with a focus on international interactions among deaf people. Other authors have focused explicitly on these interactions. Breivik et al. (2002), Breivik (2005), and Murray (2007) set up the foundations for the study of deaf transnationalism. Their research is based mostly on international conferences and sports events. The edited volume *It's a Small World* (Friedner & Kusters 2015) assembles a number of articles exploring how deaf people meeting each other in a wide variety of international contexts (such as camps, missions, research, and tourism), experience sameness and difference; including a focus on interactions between deaf people from the global North and the global South. This volume is one of the first to explicitly explore intersectionality within deaf worlds.

The theoretical and analytical lens of intersectionality helps us understand the importance and meaning of variables such as nationality, gender, ethnicity, religion, migration status, educational background, disability, and class in deaf–deaf interactions and in deaf signers' everyday interactions with hearing people. Crenshaw (1989) coined the concept of intersectionality in order to draw attention to multiple inequalities experienced by working-class black women in the United States. Intersectionality scholars have focused mostly on a gender–race–class triumvirate, arguing that people are doubly or triply oppressed because of patriarchy, racism, and classism (Crenshaw 2002). More dimensions have been added recently, including sexual orientation, religion, age, and (dis)ability. A number of Deaf Studies scholars have

focused on intersectionality (whether or not they employed the term) including Foster and Kinuthia (2003), Leigh (2009), Friedner and Kusters (2015), Ruiz et al. (2015), and, of course, the authors who worked on the aforementioned intersections (such as deaf and blind or deaf and part of an ethnic minority).

We think that for Deaf Studies, the definition of intersectionality as posited by Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013:795, our emphasis) is helpful: “what makes an analysis intersectional (...) is its adoption of an intersectional way of thinking about the problem of *sameness and difference and its relation to power*. This framing—conceiving of categories not as distinct but as always *permeated* by other categories, *fluid and changing*, always in the process of creating and being created by dynamics of power—emphasizes what intersectionality *does* rather than what intersectionality *is*.” This definition includes *both* the traditional focus on power, privilege, inequality, and oppression and attention to how intersections produce opportunities and/or empowerment.

An intersectional analysis examines how identities change one another’s meaning and impact. For example, deaf and migrant, deaf and blind, or deaf and researcher cannot be seen as additive or mutually constitutive, but rather as *mutually shaped*: Each identity is transformed by engaging with the others (Walby et al. 2012). Identities also can be “subordinate in some times and places and more dominant in others” (Anthias 2012:106–107). Deaf people negotiating multiple intersections might be privileged in some situations and disadvantaged in others. We believe that it is crucial that Deaf Studies scholars pay attention to diversity and intersectionality, not as separate strands of study, but as central to the core of the field, and to its methodology (see discussion later in this chapter). In order to do this, it may be time to move beyond the slippery

language of identity, which as an analytical concept can “mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its sheer ambiguity)” (Brubaker & Cooper 2000:1).

THE d/D DISTINCTION

Related to the recognition of increasing diversity in deaf worlds, a number of researchers are moving away from the practice of using the term “Deaf” for signing deaf people and “deaf” for non-signing deaf people, instead preferring to use only “deaf”. We think that there are multiple problems with the capitalization of “deaf”, because “small d” (deaf) has come to mean “deaf people who do not sign and who affirm medicalized deafness and wear hearing aids” rather than just biologically deaf (as in not being able to hear). The d/Deaf distinction creates or perpetuates a *dichotomy* between deaf and Deaf people (even when trying to be inclusive by writing “d/Deaf”), and it has caused practices and experiences of exclusion. This dichotomy is, in fact, an *oversimplification* of what is an increasingly complex set of identities and language practices, and the multiple positionalities/multimodal language use shown is impossible to represent with a simplified binary.

These problems also are noted by Woodward, who originally used the d/D distinction in 1975 (Woodward 1975) and who points out that many Deaf Studies scholars, including Padden and Humphries in their influential work (1988), have been mis-citing him (Woodward & Horejes 2016). Woodward and Horejes (2016) state that “a rigid taxonomy of deaf/Deaf is dangerous, colonizing, ethnocentric, and reinforces tautological and spiral debates with no positive constructions to the understanding of what it means to be deaf/Deaf. It starts with the misunderstanding of the origins of deaf/Deaf and why this distinction was originally made.”

They point out that the distinction originally was made to emphasize that there is a sociocultural experience of being deaf, and that “deaf” was not meant to be connected to the “medical model” (which was Padden & Humphries’ [1988] interpretation), being “oral,” or as existing in opposition to “Deaf”: Indeed, people could be Deaf and deaf at the same time. Woodward and Horejes (2016) deplore that “The notion of d/D has become an ideological battlefield that further creates rigid and static notions of what being deaf means.”

Furthermore, we feel using “Deaf” is anachronistic when writing about deaf history and ethnocentric when applying it outside the Anglo-Saxon western context. As explained earlier, the use of “Deaf” was initiated in the early years of Deaf Studies, within a certain political and academic landscape that has changed and evolved considerably since then. Capitalizing groups and nationalities (such as “Italian”) is customary in the English language; but the capital “D” makes little sense in many other languages. It is also paternalistic, obscuring, and imposing: the capitalized “Deaf” is often used to describe the self-affirmation and pride of a group. But a deaf person who signs is not necessarily thinking actively about these issues. We think it is potentially problematic for scholars (both deaf and hearing) to “label” deaf people as Deaf, if these deaf people do not label themselves as such.

There have been other suggestions for writing conventions, none of which has really gained ground: *D/deaf* (Eckert 2010), *DeaF* (McIlroy & Storbeck 2010), *DEAF* (Gulliver 2009), and *DDBDDHH* (Ruiz et al. 2015). In a research context, we believe that complex labels are not helpful or transparent and that a single inclusive term might be more beneficial. Senghas (2016) suggests not using terms/capitalizations that need to be seen in print, given that they are hard to use during spoken or signed discussion. Other concepts that have been used are those of Sign

Language Peoples (SLPs) (Ladd, Batterbury & Gulliver 2007) and the Finnish term *viittomakielinen* (sign language person) (Jokinen 2001); but these are political and identity concepts respectively, rather than writing conventions, and there is discussion about whether and how these concepts include hearing people who sign.

If we hold that the d/Deaf dichotomy should cease being used within the community at large and within academic publications, we need to find a more inclusive term with more expansive possibilities. Is the way forward to use “Deaf” for every deaf person, or is it to use “deaf” for everyone (cf. most chapters in this book)? Many authors have used “deaf” for individuals and “Deaf” for sociocultural entities like “Deaf community” and/or established theoretical concepts, such as “Deaf culture” (e.g., Hauland 2012). In this case (which we for the most part have adopted in this introduction), “deaf” does not mean “oral/medical” but rather biologically/corporally deaf. We regard this term as the basis to which several layers can be added, such as “signers” (e.g., “deaf signers”). Note that the term “deaf signers” does not say anything about being able to use spoken language in addition to sign language or about variations in proficiency. Other categories or layers that could be attached to “deaf” are: use of speech, CI (cochlear implant), “Africans,” “people of color” (as in DPOC: deaf people of color), “queer,” “blind” (as in deafblind), “disabled” (as in deafdisabled) and so on. Thus, in this book, we define “deaf” as a term describing all kinds of deaf persons, including those who are hard of hearing. Yet, we want to emphasize that we acknowledge that there are benefits and values connected to capitalizing “Deaf”, and concurrently, several authors in this book have opted for this even after considering the aforementioned arguments (Moges, this volume, Mazique, this volume).

CURRENT THEORETICAL ISSUES AND TRENDS IN DEAF STUDIES

Later in this chapter, we outline a number of current theoretical trends in Deaf Studies. This is a nonexhaustive list: We also note an interest in deaf education (Ladd & Gonçalves 2012, O’Connell & Deegan 2014, Kusters, this volume, O’Connell, this volume, Ladd forthcoming), interest in Deaf and Disability Studies (Friedner, Moges, this volume, Sanchez 2015), and in art (Kochhar-Lindgren 2006, Schétrit 2016), for example. We also see a number of trends running through these different themes: increasing internationalization and attention to intersectionality.

Deaf Spaces and Networks

The study of deaf embodiment, as well as deaf ontologies, epistemologies, and histories is explicitly *spatialized* in the field of Deaf Geographies; that is, increasing attention is given to the spatial forms of social activities, social phenomena, and material things or locations (Gulliver & Kitzel 2016). The concept of “deaf space” emerged in the 2000s, around the time that a spatial turn was initialized in the social sciences in general, and several authors started to use the concept largely independently of one another (Heap 2003, Gulliver 2005, O’Brien 2005, Mathews 2007, Murray 2007, Valentine & Skelton 2008). Closely related to “deaf space” is the concept of “networks” (see, for example, Heap 2003, Kusters 2017). After these initial works, several scholars, mostly with backgrounds in architecture, geography, and anthropology, have picked up on “deaf space” and/or “deaf geographies” and used/expanded them in their theories on historical geographies (Gulliver 2009, Kitzel 2014, Shaw 2015), architecture (Malzkuhn 2007, Sangalang 2012, Bauman 2014, Edwards & Harold 2014), urban and rural geographies

(Kusters 2010b, 2015, 2017), international deaf spaces (Friedner & Kusters 2015), and mobilities (İlkbaşaran 2015, Kusters 2017).

Languaging and Language Ideologies

Current Deaf Studies research marks an increasing focus on everyday language use and language ideologies. Outside Deaf Studies, in the current sociolinguistics of diversity, scholars explore multimodality, multilingualism, and translanguaging (combining features of various languages in order to make oneself understood; see García & Wei 2014) in spoken languages. These scholars explore how visual–kinetic–spatial elements (e.g., gesture) are part of spoken languages.

Similarly, fingerspelling and mouthing are part of most sign languages; and people often rapidly switch between language modalities (signing, writing, speech) when making themselves understood to (deaf or hearing) people who do not share the same first language. Indeed, today there is less need to defend sign languages as *languages*—this is now an established fact in Deaf Studies, although not in all other academic disciplines and not at a policy level.

The establishment of sign languages as languages (at least within Deaf Studies) allows scholars to explore more freely how everyday languaging works. This is not limited to national sign languages, but includes gesture (Kusters forthcoming), International Sign (Napier & Rosenstock 2015), and regional/local sign languages (Nyst 2012). An increasing number of scholars (both sign linguists and Deaf Studies scholars) explore languaging strategies in which various resources are selected and mixed, such as in deaf education (Swanwick 2015), customer interactions (Hoffmann-Dilloway 2016, Kusters forthcoming), villages (Nyst 2012, Green 2014a), within deaf communities (Palfreyman forthcoming), deaf international contacts (Green

2015, Zeshan 2015), and interpreting situations (Haualand et al. 2016, Napier 2016), in both the global North and in the global South.

We also see a growing interest in language ideologies (although the relationships between language ideologies and language practices are under-researched). Recent accounts on language ideologies include Schmaling (2003), Hoffmann-Dilloway (2011), Reagan (2011), Hill (2012), Green (2014a, 2014b), Kusters (2014), Safar (2014), Cooper (2015), Cooper and Nguyễn (2015), İlkbaşaran (2015), Krausneker (2015), Moges (2015a), Van Herreweghe et al. (2015), and Hou (this volume). Many of these works explore language ideologies not just of sign languages versus spoken languages but also of hierarchies of sign languages, again in both the global North and the global South.

Given the current climate of many hearing parents and deaf children being advised against using sign language (Humphries et al. 2012), we strongly believe that a distinction should be made between *studying* language practices and *promoting* them. We believe that although the study can include deaf people's fluid and hybrid language practices as they are, the promotion of language practices needs to focus on multilingualism and sign language rights rather than on the interrelationships among various modalities.

Citizenship and Rights

Increasing attention is being paid to deaf communities' political practices and aspirations. This knowledge and theory building happens in several domains. One is the recognition of sign languages. Previously, attention merely went to the need for this recognition and included overviews of which countries had recognition laws (Krausneker 2000, 2009, Timmermans 2005,

Reagan 2006). Current scholarship marks an increasing number of researchers investigating deaf communities' aspirations for sign language recognition and how the communities work with their governments to achieve these goals, the outcomes and implementation of recognition legislation, and the disparity between deaf communities' expectations and governments' intentions during the drafting of legislation (McKee 2011, Quer 2012, De Meulder 2015, 2016, McKee & Manning 2015, Murray 2015, De Meulder & Murray in press).

Other researchers have investigated sign language policies from an equality perspective or compared (outcomes of) various pieces of sign language legislation (Conama 2010, Reffell & McKee 2009). Another strand of research to receive increasing attention, is that of (differentiated) citizenship and group rights, in which deaf communities seek to accommodate their particular group's needs and practices (Emery 2006, 2009, Cooper & Rashid 2015, De Meulder & Murray in press, Mazique, this volume). Although deaf communities generally do not resist their inclusion in society, they want to decide on the terms and conditions for this inclusion, and achieve it without the loss of their identities. This also has been termed "difference-aware equality," "substantive equality" (Conama 2013) or "co-equality" (Murray 2007). It requires a renegotiation of the social contract for deaf communities, namely, a process of renegotiation in policy arenas in order to reflect adequately deaf peoples' experience as citizens (Emery 2006). The claim for group rights also has been taken up in a more direct academic critique and reflection on policies and legislation, such as the discourse used by the World Federation of the Deaf and by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (De Meulder 2014, Kusters et al. 2015).

Value and Deaf Gain

The common belief that deafness limits a person in many ways is challenged by the perspective that deaf people contribute to wider society and human diversity. These perspectives are consolidated in the concept “Deaf Gain” (Bauman & Murray 2014). Deaf people contribute to human diversity in a myriad of ways: biodiversity (visucentrism), linguistic and cultural diversity (sign languages), design and architecture, and so on. In the same line, Friedner (2013, 2015) contends that in India, deafness actually becomes a source of (ambivalent) value for deaf people as they interact with nongovernmental organizations, with employers in the global information technology sector, and with the state, when these stakeholders embrace deafness as a source of productive labor and a way of making themselves look good to others. Cooper (2015) narrates how tourism agencies catering to the needs of deaf tourists are set up; thus making a profit out of providing signed guides. Such contributions make clear that the Deaf Gain concept is a double-edged sword, and can place deaf people in disadvantaged positions (also see Sanchez, this volume, for a criticism of only focusing on “the positive”). Friedner (2013, 2015), for example, points out that an uncritical focus on Deaf Gain can cover up class issues and the unhappiness and oppression of workers by seeing deaf workers as ideal and idealized diverse neoliberal “workers with disability,” performing “productivity” and “contributing to society” while not making claims or engaging in contentious politics.

Deaf Futures and Sustainable Development

Last but not least, current Deaf Studies research demonstrates a growing concern regarding deaf communities’ future existence, with research on the impact and ethics of genetic evolutions (Blankmeyer Burke 2011, Bryan & Emery 2014, Emery & Ladd forthcoming, Mazique, this volume), the future vitality of sign languages (Bickford et al. 2014, McKee & Vale 2014, De

Meulder 2016, De Meulder & Murray in press), deaf communities' sustainable development (Cooper & Rashid 2015, De Clerck & Paul 2015, Lutalo-Kiingi & De Clerck 2015, VanGilder 2012), and a beginning of attempts to shape Deaf Legal Theory (Bryan & Emery 2014).

It could be argued that these forward-looking research projects are taking advantage of the security offered by previous work in Deaf Studies, which established the viability of sign languages as languages in their own right, and of deaf communities as sociolinguistic groups. In this sense, newer research in Deaf Studies is building on the foundations laid by those who came before.

STRENGTHENING THE DISCIPLINE OF DEAF STUDIES

Although Deaf Studies certainly has been a *multidisciplinary* field, we believe that it has not been *interdisciplinary*. Indeed, Deaf Studies has been inspired by, and has borrowed and built on theories from other fields, but only seldom has made interventions into other fields. Ladd (2003) and Bechter (2008) already emphasized that Deaf Studies research can impact other disciplines, but we believe that only now are we effectively and increasingly making those contributions rather than only talking about them (Sanchez 2015, this volume). One of the obstacles to this has been that Deaf Studies' theoretical apparatus has not been as intensively updated as those of other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Awareness of, and participation in, current theoretical debates in other disciplines is crucial to making interventions in them.

Today, the contributions of scholars doing Deaf Studies are becoming more visible as they increasingly are published in mainstream journals and by mainstream presses. Perhaps this is one of the strengths of having a growing number of people focusing on Deaf Studies while

having had training in other fields. Because publishing in international peer-reviewed journals (in addition to grant writing) is one of the most demanding and competitive academic activities, this is a significant achievement of scholars in the field. “Infiltrating the academy” in this way also means that we are claiming a space of authority as insiders and experts and thus creating conditions for change via research and teaching.⁵

In mainstream fields, for example, all theorizing is deeply grounded in (the assumption of) the use of spoken languages. By engaging with these fields, Deaf Studies not only questions compliance with hegemonic audiocentric and audist structures and authoritative voices but also includes and affirms the embodied “poiesis” (“making”) (Calhoun et al. 2013) of deaf people by studying steadily complexifying communicative events and structures. Deaf Studies also can offer insights into wider research on sociality, social formations, ethics, spatiality, language policy and language planning, politics, and literature (Sanchez, this volume), to name but a few areas of potential contribution. These developments (i.e., engaging with, and contributing to, broader current debates) also mean that getting research funding will become more achievable, particularly in Europe, for example, where research is driven by the need for funding grants to a greater extent than it is in the United States.

Importantly, we believe that making these interventions and building these bridges can only be successful if the discipline has a stronger foundation as a field. Indeed, Deaf Studies does not consist of a unified, coherent, cohesive package (Turner 2007, CDS 2008). Turner (2007:11) states that “a carefully-textured, dovetailing program of scholarship was a luxury the field could

⁵ Thanks to Joseph Murray for this insight.

not afford,” because of external push-and-pull factors, such as availability of funding and certain governmental initiatives. The recent demise of *Deaf Worlds—International Journal of Deaf Studies*, along with the lack of specialized conferences, also has a deleterious effect on the future development and consolidation of the field. The Deaf Studies Today conferences in Utah were American rather than international and have been discontinued, and the International Deaf Academics and Researchers conference series is organized for deaf scholars working in all fields, rather than with a specific focus on Deaf Studies. A regularly scheduled international Deaf Studies conference would enable the field to be consistently deepened, expanded, and innovated.

HEARING HEGEMONY IN DEAF STUDIES

Having established a brief history of the field as well as several new trends, the remainder of this introduction will focus on the position of deaf and hearing scholars in Deaf Studies. In other words, we consider the question: “Who is doing Deaf Studies?” Several ground-breaking works in Deaf Studies were published by deaf scholars: Padden and Humphries’ (1988) and Ladd’s (2003) classics are by far the most cited in Deaf Studies, and many authors in *Open Your Eyes* (Bauman 2008) are deaf, too. They are exceptions, however, because most other authors and editors of Deaf Studies publications are hearing.

A particular traditional pattern in Deaf Studies is that deaf scholars were (and many still are) employed as assistants in the planning and conduct of research: They acted as language models, research assistants, and cultural guides (Baker-Schenk & Kyle 1990) rather than as lead researchers. (See Murray, this volume, however, for an extensive review of the role of deaf scholars in early Deaf Studies in the United States.) These deaf researchers often served as important bridges between deaf communities and hearing researchers who lacked a previous

knowledge of sign language and of deaf cultural behaviors or expectations (Jones & Pullen 1992). Many deaf researchers have felt exploited because they did not receive adequate credit for or ownership of their work (Singleton et al. 2012, 2014). Deaf researchers or research assistants were often the only deaf persons on their research team (though there were exceptions, such as at Gallaudet University; see Murray, this volume), and their input and opinions were thus not monitored by other deaf people (Baker-Schenk & Kyle 1990, Ladd 2002). Therefore, the deaf researcher's "cultural representativeness" was sometimes called into question (Young & Ackerman 2001).

In their position as a bridge, deaf research assistants also had to explain/justify the project to their communities and participants, sometimes without having full knowledge/understanding of its theoretical frame, and they risked being regarded as betraying deaf communities in their association with hearing researchers (Baker-Schenk & Kyle 1990). Indeed, because of negative experiences with hearing professionals in deaf education and in other contexts, hearing researchers often were regarded with suspicion or mistrust, just as some of the deaf people who worked with them were regarded (Ladd 2003; De Meulder, this volume).

It must be acknowledged that hearing researchers have taken different positions. Baker-Schenk and Kyle (1990), both hearing themselves, classified hearing scholars in Deaf Studies, demonstrating their awareness of positionalities of, and differences among, hearing scholars. These included different rates of involvement with deaf researchers and issues in deaf communities, different levels of signing proficiency, different motivations for doing Deaf Studies, different positive and negative experiences in doing research on or with deaf people, differences in involvement in advocacy efforts, and different attitudes toward deaf researchers

and deaf communities. Similarly, and focusing on hearing professionals in general, Hoffmeister and Harvey (1996) identify a number of ways in which these professionals became interested in working with deaf people; such as having deaf parents, having met a deaf person, having become fascinated by sign language, wanting to improve the quality of life of deaf people, and/or being convinced that deaf people need help, guidance, or religious salvation. Hoffmeister and Harvey also identify a number of different relational postures (which can combine, alternate and/or conflict in the same individual); such as being freedom fighters; blaming deaf people for their problems; idealizing deaf people (and feeling betrayed afterward); experiencing deep distress over deaf people's problems; or wanting to immerse themselves totally in deaf communities. They argue that hearing professionals have to work out their reasons for working with deaf people; and that "Deaf and hearing professionals must co-create a mechanism for exercising a shifting balance of power" (94).

Although such classifications and enumerations can be regarded as essentialist, awareness of the existence of these diverse experiences and attitudes helps us to avoid, for example, defining hearing academics in Deaf Studies as a monolithic "oppressor." However, Baker-Schenk and Kyle's and Hoffmeister and Harvey's work are exceptions. As Sutton-Spence and West (2011:422) note, there is "almost no debate about the tricky epistemological and ontological ground navigated by hearing people who work in Deaf Studies." They continue that "[t]he problem of Hearingness remains the elephant in the room" and that "[a] productive, (de)constructive exploration of the place of Hearing people within Deaf Studies has yet to occur" (425). Turner (2007:12) wonders: "have we at all effectively uncovered the power relations and machinations of interest groups at work within our field? Too often, I suspect, the ways in which any one group may take advantage of its social position in relation to another pass without

comment because it is considered politically unacceptable or inexpedient to make an issue of what is known and seen, but can't be admitted.”

For a productive exploration of deaf–hearing relationships in academia, discussion cannot be reduced to a set of methodological, technical issues or attitudes of researchers, but has to be positioned within broader sociocultural patterns and power relations (Jones & Pullen 1992). O'Brien and Emery (2014) point out that this broader sociopolitical context was not discussed in Sutton-Spence and West's article (in contrast to Young & Ackerman's [2001], for example). O'Brien and Emery (2014:29) urge hearing academics within Deaf Studies to look at the big picture and write, “While the numbers of Deaf academics are increasing, their influence, cultural or otherwise, over the fields in which they work remains miniscule.” They continue: “it is vital that hearing academics face up to the context within which Deaf Studies operates; that is, a sociocultural–political society in which d/Deaf people do not enjoy equality” (also see Ladd 2002).

In an attempt to face up to this context, Napier and Leeson (2016) state they want to acknowledge this “elephant in the room” up front at the beginning of their book, discussing several aspects in relation to their position as hearing researchers. They identify themselves “as ‘Deaf (hearing)’; that is, as hearing people we align ourselves with deaf people and their values based on our long involvement in the community, and we bring that subjectivity to our writing” (6). They acknowledge that despite this long involvement and their strong philosophy of collaboration, they are not deaf and are allies of “the deaf community” and guests in it. They recognize the power they have as hearing people in the community and the historical backdrop of hearing researchers dominating the field of Deaf Studies. They acknowledge they have “hearing

privilege,” although they say this does not always entail a negative position, and that this privilege can be accepted and used positively “to broker engagement and educate inside and outside the community” (11).

While acknowledging and discussing their position honestly and openly, Napier and Leeson (2016) also in some way place themselves outside the debate, by stating that “neither of us see ourselves as positioned only in Deaf Studies” (9). They see their work within a broader context of applied linguistics and intercultural communication, “and the languages that we work with happen to include sign languages” (9). This volume demonstrates that virtually no so-called Deaf Studies research is positioned solely in Deaf Studies and that in most cases it increasingly entails interdisciplinary research. Drawing parallels with Black Studies, Napier and Leeson (2016) further state that “the key difference, however, is that white people cannot become black but hearing people can learn to sign. Thus our focus is on *sign language use*, not *deafness*” (9). This comparison with black people does not work because it is comparing apples (skin color) with pears (language use), and the separation of sign language use from deafness does not take the aforementioned “big picture” (of power and hegemony in Deaf Studies and sign language research) (Ladd 2002) into account. The comparison also is reminiscent of Young and Temple’s (2014) pointing at parallels between Deaf people and women/feminism: “There may be people who find it difficult to swallow the idea that two hearing women have written a book about research with d/Deaf people. Is this because we are hearing or women? Or is it both?” (187). They go on to argue that women *also* experience discrimination and oppression in academic structures, an argument that is similarly unhelpful.

In our eyes, the question is not whether particular (fluently signing) hearing researchers *can* or *cannot* do research in Deaf Studies, indeed many hearing researchers have done high quality research within Deaf Studies. We believe that hearing researchers do not need to defend their doing Deaf Studies work per se, but it's vital that they think and write about their positionalities. The above mentioned hearing researchers' discussions of positionality are an important first step. An increasing number of hearing scholars within Deaf Studies (in the broad sense, including sign language research and interpreting research) do work on a par with deaf scholars and contribute towards enhancing deaf scholars' careers, challenging the existing patterns of hearing hegemony.

We believe, though, that increasing numbers of deaf scholars holding PhDs and/or being in positions of lead researcher (rather than assistants or coordinators), and thus having risen in academic hierarchies, already should have contributed to a more extensive extent to redressing the aforementioned sociopolitical/hierarchical imbalances. In the past few years, a trend seems to have developed for high-profile presses to publish *handbooks* and *textbooks* on sign language (and to a lesser extent, Deaf Studies) theory and methodology—again, by hearing authors or editors working without deaf coauthors or coeditors. This is problematic since textbooks and handbooks carry a lot of authority and are often used for teaching and referencing. Examples include Marschark and Spencer (2003, 2011, 2016), Brentari (2010), Pfau, Steinbach, and Woll (2012), Young and Temple (2014), Orfanidou, Woll, and Morgan (2015), Napier and Leeson (2016), Baker, van den Bogaerde, Pfau, and Schermer (2016)—contrasting with Gertz and Boudreault (2016) and Bakken Jepsen, De Clerck, Lutalo-Kiingi, and McGregor (2015) where all or some of the editors are deaf. Redressing the balance will happen only if the number of deaf (co-)editors and (co-)authors of textbooks and handbooks increases. This volume is an important

step in that direction. Another example is that as of 2016, the editorial board of the Gallaudet University Press journal *Sociolinguistics in Deaf Communities* is headed by a deaf scholar (Dr. Jordan Fenlon), and the four new scholars who were subsequently added to the editorial board are all deaf. We also believe that the growing number of deaf scholars will further influence the course that Deaf Studies is taking. For example, we hope that the future will lead to more methodologies designed/adapted for and by deaf people; sustainable relationships with deaf communities; and research themes that are close to deaf people's everyday life experiences and concerns, indeed, to deaf ontologies. Authors in this volume demonstrate several examples, which are summarized here.

DEAF SCHOLARS IN DEAF STUDIES

Deaf Studies scholars who are deaf have increasingly explained and explored the links among ontologies, research practice, and positionality, and between research practice and relationships with deaf communities. Thus the role of deaf scholars is being (re)defined. In such explorations, a number of themes, concerns, and positive and negative observations were consistently present. Before commencing to summarize them here, it is important to recognize that deaf scholars usually have literacy and educational privileges as compared to most other deaf people, and that these are fundamental assets for advancing in academia. It also appears that many deaf scholars have been mainstreamed for all or most of their education (which is the case for almost all the authors of this book). This is unsurprising given that in the United States and Europe, many deaf children have been mainstreamed since the 1970s/1980s.

In addition, we observe that deaf scholars who pursue academic careers often have been privileged according to majority society perspectives, such as having more/better hearing

(without or with technology such as cochlear implants) and/or being able to use/understand spoken language. Some also have had the advantage of being surrounded by deaf/signing family members. With many deaf scholars we observe a strong will to “survive (in) the system.” As such, most deaf scholars of the current generation are not representative of wider deaf communities, do not necessarily identify with the “classic native deaf” model, and generally have very different backgrounds from the first generation of deaf scholars in Deaf Studies, as discussed in Murray’s and De Meulder’s chapters. The effects of (lacking) the aforementioned resources are poorly understood, or are debated and dismissed, as, for example, by Fernandez and Myers (2010). Indeed, this background calls into question what it means to produce deaf ontologies in a way that potentially could expand or rupture the native deaf narratives of the 1980s and 1990s (De Meulder, this volume).⁶

It is thus important to be aware of and transparent about the aforementioned privileges and resources, and it is equally important to be aware of intersectionality not only in research (as discussed earlier) but also in researcher positionality. In this book, for example, there is diversity with regard to authors’ gender and sexual orientation, hearing status (including both deaf and hard-of-hearing people), being deafblind or deafdisabled, use of hearing technology, ethnicity/nationality, and location of research projects. Diverse life experiences and diverse forms of embodiment shape our perspectives, thus having authors of underrepresented backgrounds seemed crucial.

⁶ Thanks to Joseph Murray and Paddy Ladd for pointing this out.

We encountered problems, however, in finding authors from these underrepresented groups. For example, we would have liked to see more diversity with regard to authors' national background or residence, given that all authors included here are based in the global North, more particularly in the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, Belgium, and Norway. Some deaf scholars from the global South study/work in Deaf Studies in the global North but very few conduct research in the global South, and very few pursue an academic career. Although there are a number of deaf scholars originating in the global South who are working as sign linguists, activists/lobbyists, or leading intervention-based work, we looked, in vain, for deaf people in the global South who worked in the underrepresented field of social, cultural, literary, and political Deaf Studies *and* could write for the book, in English. Indeed, there are a number of Deaf Studies scholars in, for example, Brazil, who do work in these areas of Deaf Studies, but who publish in Portuguese. Being unable to offer financial aid for translating their work to English, we could not include their contributions. This is all the more an indication that Deaf Studies, in the sense of the study of deaf ontologies and epistemologies is a very Western and English-dominated discipline (also see Friedner, this volume). We are well aware that deaf scholars in other scholarly traditions will have developed different interests and we do not claim that our accounts necessarily reflect broader perspectives of deaf communities or deaf scholars globally.

Because there is enormous diversity among deaf scholars, we want to emphasize that it is not our purpose to essentialize their experiences in the sections that follow. Some experiences could prove recognizable to hearing scholars in Deaf Studies, too, and some experiences could prove recognizable to some, but not to other deaf scholars. Rather, we aim to pay attention to “the big picture” (Ladd 2002) and to explore which issues deaf scholars encounter. In the first ever methodology textbook in Deaf Studies, Young and Temple (2014) defined methodology as

not just about methods but about position, performance, identity, and associated epistemology; but they did not venture into implications for method or design from a deaf ontological perspective. Both of the authors are hearing, and one has, by her own admission, had little or no contact with deaf communities. There is a wealth of literature in other fields (such as Disability Studies, anthropology and sociology) on positionality, reflexivity, and the position of underrepresented researchers (such as migrants, women, people of color, or people with disabilities), and many of us have been inspired by texts from these fields (see, for example, De Meulder 2007, Hualand, this volume). Although discussing these works is outside of the scope of this chapter, it is important to acknowledge their influence on our work.⁷

Thus, what we want to do in the section that follows, is point out some experiences of deaf scholars in Deaf Studies, their positionality, and their methodologies. Most of these experiences are related to ethnographic research, because ethnography implies personal contact between researchers and research participants, which has caused reflections on positionality.

DEAF SCHOLARS AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Generally, deaf scholars are more likely to get access to deaf ontologies and epistemologies in the communities they investigate compared with hearing scholars: Deaf people often open up more easily to a deaf researcher (Sutherland & Rogers 2014, Moges 2015b). Within international contexts, deaf ethnographers often are invited by deaf research participants to take part in, and

⁷ Thanks to Hilde Hualand for pointing this out.

thus gain insight into, the lives of research participants (Dikyuva et al. 2012, Kusters 2012, Boland et al. 2015, Haualand, this volume, Hou, this volume; and see Moriarty-Harrelson, this volume, for a longer discussion). In this context, deaf researchers also often make use of networks in the global deaf community to connect with research participants in other countries (Boland et al. 2015, Dikyuva et al. 2012). Deaf scholars also have reported that they acquired access to marginalized or underrepresented *hearing* peoples' experiences, such as in Hauschildt's (2010) research on CODAs and Zehnter's (2014) research on homeless people in New York. Similarly, Sanchez (this volume) powerfully demonstrates how what she terms "deaf insight" (insights based on deaf epistemology) brings particular perspectives into literature that are not related to deaf people in the first place.

Connected with the previous point, deaf scholars often have the necessary linguistic capital (O'Brien & Emery 2014) through which to make these connections with other deaf people. They often have or acquire a better understanding/knowledge of national/regional/local sign languages and variants, as well as International Sign, used by research participants. These sign languages/variants might be known or unknown in advance of the research: Indeed, deaf scholars often quickly learn new sign languages or variants (Breivik et al. 2002, Dikyuva et al. 2012), although they also have made use of local interpreters who knew more than one sign language, such as ASL and another national sign language (Wilson & Wyniarczyk 2014). Generally, deaf scholars are better able to suit specific communication needs, to interpret subtle body language (Sutherland & Rogers 2014), and to have insight in the meaning of particular idioms or concepts in sign languages (Young & Ackerman 2001). They also are more likely to have or attain access to discourses in informal deaf gatherings, which is very important because

recording interviews (with or without an interpreter) is a much more formal activity that (ideally) is often complemented with participant observation.

Deaf scholars also are likely to understand certain experiences from the inside out (Sutherland & Rogers 2014) (even when they have enjoyed more privileges in comparison to their research participants), because they have had the same (or similar) experiences as their participants. Examples include being deaf signers, being the only deaf signer in their family, barriers and oppression in public places, lack of communication with family and colleagues, being offered wheelchairs in airports, and being provided menus in Braille. Indeed, Sutton-Spence and West (2011:423) observe that hearing scholars in Deaf Studies “can go up to the fence and look through, but we cannot cross.” This could equally apply, however, to the current generation of often mainstreamed deaf scholars, who may not be able to understand fully or appreciate the ontologies following from a deaf-school background, often the background of people who are considered to be more traditional or core members of deaf communities.

Deaf scholars often experience emotional and personal involvement and personal curiosity in the communities where they do research, even in communities where they had no previous involvement (Dikyuva et al. 2012). Kusters (this volume) explains that she feels responsible for doing research into deaf pedagogies with the ultimate aim of improving conditions in deaf education. This personal involvement and investment is also true for deaf scholars in the humanities: Moges (this volume) expresses frustration at the fact that although there are many deaf queers in academia, the development of Deaf Queer theory is long overdue. This lack led her to undertake an analysis of Deaf Queer literature. Mazique (this volume) powerfully demonstrates how deaf literature analysis can contribute to greater social justice.

Many deaf scholars stated that they felt an urgent need to do something for the communities in which they researched, often in common effort with hearing scholars and professionals. This “something” could either be related or unrelated to the research. Examples include engaging in paid or (often) unpaid work to improve access and services for deaf communities; for example, using their position for advocacy efforts, interpreting on the news, investing time in the organization of activities in the deaf club, initiating or engaging in development projects, assisting in the setting up of a deaf school, strengthening deaf associations, and/or creating a sign language dictionary or DVD (Dikyuva et al. 2012, Boland et al. 2015, De Clerck & Paul 2015, Kusters 2015, De Meulder, this volume, Kusters, this volume). Yet, we observed that others have refrained from such activities following (or trying to prevent) the accusation of being biased, activist researchers.

Sometimes, deaf scholars are the first foreign deaf person and/or the first deaf researcher (or one out of very few) visiting a particular community, which can be surprising, inspiring (Boland et al. 2015, Dikyuva et al. 2012, Kusters 2012, Hou, this volume) or even disconcerting, such as in the case of a deaf researcher who is a person of color (Moges 2015b). Deaf scholars often play an important role in making deaf communities aware that they have their own language (Dikyuva et al. 2012, Murray, this volume), but this is also one of the actual and important achievements of hearing sign linguists.

Deaf scholars have experimented with methodology and writing styles to capture deaf ontologies. Examples include visual methodologies, in particular photography and filmmaking (O’Brien & Kusters, this volume) or “visually reliant tools” such as drawings, photographs, and video diaries (Sutherland & Rogers 2014, Sutherland & Young 2014). Other examples include

tactile methodologies (Barnett 2014); a monolingual approach in a community using a signed language previously unknown to the researcher (immersing oneself in a particular language, not using an intermediary language) (Hou, this volume); and experiments with writing styles such as autoethnography (a method of research that connects the researcher's self with the theme under study using self-reflexive analysis) (O'Connell, this volume, Haualand 2012); and a dialogical style (Lewis & VanGilder, this volume).

There are also a few examples where deaf scholars' deafness and/or privileges can be counterproductive in research. Deaf scholars, especially if carrying out research in their own communities, are sometimes perceived as knowing "too much," so that participants give less in-depth explanations because they expect that deaf scholars "already know" (Conama 2010, Haualand 2001, Sutherland & Rogers 2014, Moges 2015b, Kusters, this volume). Some deaf scholars have reported they had difficulties gaining insight into hearing people's perspectives, especially in foreign countries, even when interpreters are present or even when hearing people know how to sign (see Dikyuva et al. 2012, Kusters 2012, Hou, this volume, Moges 2015b). In contexts of participant observation, deaf scholars are also less likely to be able to observe spontaneous behavior between deaf and hearing people in their research settings, because they are a magnet to deaf research participants who expect them to interact with them (Hou, this volume, Kusters 2012). Deaf ethnographers' interactions with hearing participants are sometimes actively prevented or limited by deaf research participants, who tell them "how to behave" toward hearing people in their research settings (such as ignoring them: Kusters 2012; or not interrupting them: Hou, this volume).

Privileges of the deaf researcher (such as privilege as an academic, privileged access to financial resources) can get in the way of constructive relationships in the field, and also can lead to misunderstandings (De Meulder, this volume, Dikyuva et al. 2012, Hou this volume, Kusters 2012, Moges 2015b, Moriarty Harrelson, this volume). In international contexts, it sometimes happens that deaf scholars unintentionally impose their (Western) deaf perceptions/presumptions on research participants, based on perceptions of deaf sameness. This happens particularly when scholars do not yet have a deep understanding of a different culture in a different country (Boland et al. 2015, VanGilder 2015). Because of the perceived “DEAF-SAME” feeling by informants and the privileged position of deaf scholars (such as in terms of finance, position of power), deaf scholars sometimes encounter high expectations in deaf communities they do research in; for example, informants expecting them to provide information, material or financial resources, or medical advice. Failure to respond to such requests can result in distrust and disappointment (Kusters 2012, Boland et al. 2015, De Meulder, this volume).

A related problem is that of representation: deaf scholars doing Deaf Studies “speak for” deaf communities and yet are part of a privileged elite (Moriarty Harrelson, this volume). Deaf scholars can claim that their work purely represents their own perspective. But still, doing research and disseminating findings (whether through blogs, books, articles, presentations, or vlogs) means that their perspective is powerful, arguably more powerful than the voices of their informants, particularly if the respective community counts few literate deaf people with opportunities or tools at their disposal to react to research that they do not endorse. This discrepancy can lead to resistance against deaf scholars’ position, as Moriarty Harrelson (this volume) has discussed. Important power dimensions need to be addressed, and the question of who or what is an “outsider” needs to be nuanced (Moriarty Harrelson, this volume). This is not

only the case with regard to the global South, as in Moriarty Harrelson's chapter, but also in western countries.

DEAF SCHOLARS IN ACADEMIC SETTINGS

Having discussed deaf scholars' relations with research participants and their personal involvement in the field, we now move on to a discussion of deaf scholars' positions within academic institutions such as universities and research centers, which are hearing-dominant spaces (Stapleton 2015). This section is not specific to Deaf Studies: Many of the experiences listed here are also true for deaf scholars in fields other than Deaf Studies.

To begin with, deaf scholars in academic settings often are pushed into categories such as "disabled," "to be included" (Haualand, this volume), or "to be rehabilitated" (McDermid 2009). They sometimes are perceived or labeled as "too native" (Haualand 2012), "(too) activist," too "radical" (Trowler & Turner 2002), or too impolite and indiscrete (McDermid 2009). Faculty, staff, and students might underestimate deaf scholars' (whether they are students or lecturers) skills, competence, intelligence, or authority (Brueggemann & Modellmog 2002, Blankmeyer Burke & Nicodemus 2013, Stapleton 2014, 2015). Deaf scholars might have different (deaf-centric) values (Trowler & Turner 2002, McDermid 2009) compared with hearing scholars, including visual-tactile orientations.

Deaf scholars in academic settings often lack access to university discourses, such as non-signing colleagues' work (in sharp contrast with their vibrant and often life-changing international deaf academic networks; see, for example, Blankmeyer Burke & Nicodemus 2013), and they often work in isolation from the wider university (such as in other departments, or in

higher levels of hierarchy in the university) (Trowler & Turner 2002, McDermid 2009). They often work in physical isolation from their deaf peers and, as such, lack deaf capital (Hauser 2013, Stapleton 2015). They often recharge their batteries by socializing with deaf peers in their leisure time (Trowler & Turner 2002). Deaf or hard-of-hearing students, faculty, and staff have to “come out,” either to fellow students, colleagues, to lecturers (Blankmeyer Burke & Nicodemus 2013), or to their own students (Brueggemann & Modellmog 2002). They may experience multiple intersections, such as deafness intersecting with gender and ethnicity, which further shape the discrimination and oppression they experience (including aggression and distorted expectations). These intersections, however, also can be sources of cultural capital and peer support (Blankmeyer Burke & Nicodemus 2013, Stapleton 2014, Moges, this volume).

Deaf scholars are less likely to have access to conferences in both Deaf Studies and non-Deaf Studies fields where spoken languages are the main conference languages. Instead, they are dependent on reasonable accommodations for the provision of highly qualified sign language interpreters (who have to be able to work with specialized academic vocabulary) and/or palantypists (see, for example, Hauser, Finch & Hauser 2008, Blankmeyer Burke & Nicodemus 2013). They also have less access to the informal information sharing and networks created and maintained during such events (Woodcock et al. 2007). Lack of access during conferences led to the Amsterdam Manifesto authored by a group of deaf academics after they experienced a lack of access at TISLR (Theoretical Issues in Sign Language Research) in Amsterdam in 2000⁸ and some 15 years later to the Athens Declaration on Access for Deaf Participants at ICED (International Conference on the Education of the Deaf) in 2015. In addition, in their everyday

⁸ http://www.deafacademics.org/conferences/amsterdam_manifesto.pdf

lives, deaf scholars often have to spend a great amount of time organizing access, such as booking interpreters or other language/communication support which eats into their work time (Woodcock et al. 2007, Stapleton 2015, Hualand, this volume).

Deaf scholars also often have additional commitments in the deaf communities outside their academic work and take on diverse (voluntary) roles (for example, in national deaf associations or political activities), which again eats into their time. Sometimes, such responsibilities take so much time from deaf scholars that they pull out of the academy or find it difficult to balance their professional and other commitments (see also De Meulder, this volume). Indeed, deaf professionals are scarce and their efforts are thus in high demand in many different areas. At the same time, Deaf Studies scholars who are deaf are generally more likely than hearing scholars to remain in Deaf Studies for the entire course of their careers, either through choice and commitment and/or because of perceived or actual barriers that prevent them from accessing non-deaf research communities/participants (see Woodcock et al. 2007).

In the academic culture of referring to other people's work, deaf scholars often are faced with very few academic written-language publications by deaf people and with deaf people (Harris et al. 2009), because deaf communities and scholars' discourses (epistemologies) and interests are less likely to find their way into print (Young & Ackerman 2001, Ladd 2002). In this respect, it is important to consider that there are vibrant transnational networks of deaf scholars where International Sign, ASL, and written English are used as lingua franca, and where discourses about methodology, ethics, "giving back" to the communities under study, ownership of data, theory-building, and academic criticism do occur. This happened during a series of international gatherings in Europe and the United States in the 1980s and 1990s; the first of these

was organized in Bristol in 1985. Their main focus was to bring together members of deaf communities involved in education, sign language teaching, and research, a strategy by which they would then spread the new info throughout their communities. These workshops were more egalitarian and more in touch with deaf communities than is their successor, the biennial International Deaf Academics and Researchers conferences that began in Austin in 2002 and were organized in Europe, Brazil and the United States.⁹ These conferences and workshops have been enormously important resources for deaf scholars in order to create and build upon deaf capital (Blankmeyer Burke & Nicodemus 2013, Hauser 2013).

Such conferences often are video-recorded (and the presentations of the 2015 International Deaf Academics and Researchers conference are available online), but presentations and discourses often do not find their way into print, and they are not always accessible for hearing scholars. Also, many deaf scholars cease their research work after receiving their PhD, never publish their PhD dissertation in articles or books, and whether by choice or not, end up teaching sign language and Deaf Studies rather than investing their time into research and publishing. Furthermore, many deaf scholars in Deaf Studies have difficulty finding a forum in mainstream publishing venues, because Deaf Studies themes often are regarded as too specialized.

Another barrier is language: Writing grant applications and publications in written English is a barrier for many deaf scholars, especially for deaf scholars for whom English is a third or fourth language and who publish in French, Portuguese, Chinese, or German, for

⁹ Personal communication, Paddy Ladd (March 2, 2016).

example. Publication in signed languages (such as in the online Deaf Studies Digital Journal or on DVD published by Ishara Press) is not always the solution, because even those deaf scholars who are fluent in sign languages do not always master and often have not been trained in using the appropriate academic register. Furthermore, the academic impact of these appearances is lower than for printed journals, which is a concern for many scholars (especially when applying for grants or tenure). In addition, publishing in English is necessary in order to contribute to other disciplines.

ETHICAL RESEARCH PRACTICE IN DEAF STUDIES

Throughout the discussion of Deaf Studies scholarship in the first half of this introduction, it has become clear that there is a tension between rigorous scholarship and activism, that is, the need for defending and maintaining “Deaf culture” as a concept and as an entity versus theoretical development of the field. We believe that this tension continues to be present, but that current scholarship suggests some new ways forward, and that these are voiced within ethical debates. Singleton et al. (2015) state that although “researchers undertake research primarily for theoretical reasons, [...] when carrying out sign language work in the Deaf community, we should always bear in mind that the social impact of doing so is great” (18). In the search for new ways for deaf and hearing scholars to collaborate on the one hand, and for scholars and communities to collaborate on the other, several scholars have offered critiques of unethical research practice and suggestions for ways to move forward. Most of these critiques were written by deaf scholars, or were coauthored by deaf and hearing scholars (which is a departure from previous Deaf Studies scholarship, where the majority of authors or editors were hearing).

A very important study on ethical conduct in deaf-related research, undertaken by Singleton et al. (2012, 2014) identified myriad ethical problems in studies with deaf research participants, including distrust toward non-signing or not fluently signing researchers. In addition, deaf research participants found that consent forms were not translated; had incorrect ideas about how data would be used; and were concerned about anonymization when they were video-recorded, even when pseudonyms were used. Other researchers have faced similar concerns and have come up with a range of solutions, such as gaining consent in sign languages, gaining consent in groups, and, through constant evaluations, conducting ongoing and repeated conversations about research ethics (Dikyuva et al. 2012, Kusters 2012, McKee, Schlehofer & Thew 2013, Singleton et al. 2012, 2014, Sutherland & Young 2014). They also introduced anonymization of video-recorded data by using a deaf relay interpreter (Fries 2015), and by constituting “composite counternarratives” written like a play, in order to avoid identifying individual participants (not even through pseudonyms) (Stapleton 2014). In auto-ethnography, as well, a number of ethical issues arise when writing about people who can be identified, which are addressed by O’Connell (this volume).

Rather than come up with a checklist of suggestions, some authors have devised new overarching frameworks for ethical research. In this context, Harris, Holmes and Mertens (2009) propose a Sign Language Communities’ Terms of Reference, based on the Indigenous Terms of Reference, which later was applied by Hochgesang (2015) in the Kenyan deaf community. Singleton, Martin, and Morgan (2015) suggest “deaf friendly community-engaged research” (CEnR). Lutalo-Kiingi and De Clerck (2015) promote an interactive model of partnership among nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), academia, governments, and deaf communities. Similarly, Boland et al. (2015) reflect on the relationship between research and sustainable

development. O'Brien (this volume) explores Kaupapa Māori research frameworks for Deaf Studies research. All these authors emphasize that research must be endorsed by deaf/sign language communities before, during, and after the research. Given that a few individual people cannot speak for entire communities, advisory boards consisting of experts and community members could be installed and could function as ethics committees, too. Furthermore, long-term relations with deaf communities are important. Ownership of research findings should be the communities', and data should be published in accessible ways.

Related to publication and dissemination is the question of how to get this information back to deaf communities, and how to deliver it to important stakeholders such as doctors, teachers, and educators. Scholars have experimented with several different methods. One example, already mentioned, is publication in signed languages: Emery (2011) published his book on deaf citizenship together with a full translation in British Sign Language, on DVD. Other venues are *Deaf Studies Digital Journal* and ASLize. Harris (2009) suggests seeking ways to disseminate findings in signed language *before* publishing them in written languages in academic journals, even though there is pressure to publish in written English. Alternative ways of dissemination in sign languages are through documentary film (O'Brien & Kusters, this volume), blogs/vlogs (Moriarty-Harrelson, this volume), or an accessible website (Adam 2015).

A second example is dissemination during events: Adam (2015), for example, narrates the efforts of the Deafness, Cognition and Language Research Centre (University College London) to engage with the deaf public by organizing workshops or Open Days with hands-on interactive sessions, presentations in the national signed language, and a cultural event with performances and short films, along with a roadshow to local deaf clubs in the country. He

concludes that “given the bidirectional process of the public engagement process, the Deaf community will be able to have a greater stake in research, and researchers, Deaf or hearing ones alike, will have a greater awareness of what is high on the agenda for Deaf people, be that a social, cultural, political or linguistic agenda” (50). In a number of universities in the United Kingdom, a new series of events, Bridging the Gap, have been organized during since 2014. These not only aim to disseminate research findings and engage local deaf communities in Deaf Studies research, but also to act as consultation events to discuss these communities’ own priorities and hopes for Deaf Studies research.

Dissemination during events also can be an important means of reaching hearing stakeholders: Cooper and Nguyễn (2015) described and analyzed how they did effective advocacy work in Việt Nam by disseminating research findings to stakeholders such as teachers for the deaf and the media, and how they recognized the role of highly skilled interpreters in this process. Another direct use of academic knowledge is targeted dissemination of research findings in mainstream journals, with the aim of making the public aware of certain practices, such as the lack of linguistic rights for deaf children (Kushalnagar et al. 2010, Humphries et al. 2012, 2013, 2015).

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The chapters in this volume are organized into three sections, each addressing a different element of Deaf Studies. The first, “Developments and Directions in Deaf Studies,” reflects upon the history, current state, and future of the field, including how perspectives gained in Deaf Studies can be used to contribute to and intervene in other academic disciplines and fields. The second section, “Deaf Ontologies,” takes a more in-depth look at how the ontologies of deaf people and

deaf researchers can inform and influence research practice in Deaf Studies. The third and final section, “Ethnographic Methodologies,” explores how deaf ontologies have informed the way in which our contributors conduct their research, whether this be this the choice of method, their positionalities in the field, or how they choose to disseminate their research.

The first section, “Developments and Directions in Deaf Studies,” begins with a chapter written by Dai O’Brien, who offers a potential research framework for Deaf Studies academics. Using this framework, academics can ensure that their research is ethical and that they can connect with deaf communities and deaf individuals through an ontologically informed approach: O’Brien argues that this approach should be rooted in the identities and communities of those involved in the research. Through O’Brien’s engagement with the Māori concept of Kaupapa Māori research, this chapter also suggests ways in which engagement with other fields of study can broaden the horizons of Deaf Studies.

In the next chapter, Murray describes the beginnings of the discipline of Deaf Studies in the United States and the way in which the growth of this field shone a spotlight on the ontologies of the deaf researchers working within it. He also draws out some of the “growing pains” associated with the development of Deaf Studies out of the field of sign linguistics, exploring how the field, through the nature of those who worked in it, and its location within the academy, lent legitimization to deaf community members’ claims for an understanding of deaf people and their lives outside the medical model.

Maartje De Meulder continues the theme begun in Murray’s chapter by shifting focus to the United Kingdom and exploring the emergence of a deaf academic professional class during the “Deaf Resurgence.” She analyzes their positionalities as emerging “professionals” during a

time when most deaf people in the United Kingdom worked in blue collar jobs. She goes on to explore the consequences of this status for their relationships with both the wider academy and the deaf communities of which they are a part. She ends by discussing what all of this means for the current generation of deaf scholars.

Deaf Studies in the global South is the topic of the following chapter, in which Michele Friedner problematizes the discipline of “Deaf Studies” and the construct of the “global South” and explores how both are produced by scholars and activists on the ground and come with their own epistemological underpinnings and orientations. Friedner critically examines some of the foundational concepts of the first wave of Deaf Studies, such as “Deaf culture” and “Deaf identity,” productively utilizing concepts from outside the field of Deaf Studies (such as from Disability Studies) to unpack some of the assumptions bound up in these terms.

The final chapter in this section, written by Rebecca Sanchez, offers a look at the way in which research informed by “deaf insight” can contribute to approaches and analysis in fields other than Deaf Studies. Sanchez’s analysis of Charlie Chaplin’s *The Great Dictator* problematizes what for many is an invisible concept—the fetishization of the voice. By bringing a perspective informed by Deaf Studies to a different field, that of the literary analysis of a text seemingly unrelated to deaf people, Sanchez illustrates how new relevancy and legitimacy can be brought to the field of Deaf Studies in the future.

In the second section, “Deaf Ontologies,” authors experiment with theoretical frameworks that are based on the ontological experiences of being deaf. This section is not meant to present an exhaustive selection, but rather to illustrate and explore what deaf ontologies look like within various theoretical frames and how deaf ontologies inform deaf scholars’ work. In the

first chapter of this section, Hannah Lewis and Kirk VanGilder explore what deaf Christian ontologies look like in the context of worship and theology. To do this, they use a dialogic approach, argued to be more grounded in deaf identities and communities, to explore how their personal experiences as deaf theologians working with deaf congregations has influenced their faith and research practice. Continuing the theme established by Sanchez in the previous section, Lewis and VanGilder argue that perspectives rooted in deaf ontologies can provide innovative interpretations of biblical texts and practices of worship that result in a positive valuation of being deaf that flows from being created as such in the image of God.

Analysis of literature with deaf characters offers the framework for Rachel Mazique's chapter, which explores bioethics, eugenics, and the right to life through schema criticism, a new method of social criticism grounded in cognitive science. Mazique's approach is informed by her ontological position as a deaf researcher, and by the perspective of Sign Language Peoples—leading her to identify both “faulty” cognitive schemas and those conducive to “a Deaf bioethics,” which seeks to reframe bioethical debates that impact Sign Language Peoples. She offers this type of literary analysis as a strategy for promoting social justice—pointing to the aforementioned tension between rigorous scholarship and advocacy.

Rezenet Moges, in the third chapter of this section, discusses the concepts of intersectionality and the queering of the concept of “Deaf identity.” Moges laments the lack of attention paid to LGBTQ sections of deaf communities, offers a critical review of the existing literature in the frame of crip theory, and interviews two queer deaf archivists. Moges also explores how her own identities at the intersection of black, deaf, and lesbian influence her work and life.

The final chapter in this section, by Marieke Kusters, focuses on the intergenerational responsibilities that former and current deaf teachers working in Flemish deaf schools feel toward their deaf pupils. Kusters discusses the ways in which being deaf influences the pedagogical practices of those teachers. The ontological insights gained from their own experiences also motivate the teachers to attempt what Kusters terms “intergenerational correction,” or changing the educational system for the better and to benefit their pupils. Kusters explains that she also feels responsibility to contribute to the improvement of deaf education through research.

The third section of the book, “Ethnographic Methodologies,” describes the methodologies explored by deaf academics doing ethnographic research, as they pursue approaches that best fit with the experiences of deaf people and deaf communities. Again, this is not meant to be exhaustive description, but rather a starting point for reviewing the innovative research methods used by deaf scholars in recent years. We hope that this section will inform and inspire future research in the field.

The first chapter, written by Dai O’Brien and Annelies Kusters, explores the notion of visucentrism, and how this can inform methods of research and dissemination. The authors describe and evaluate their use of photography and video during research projects. While accepting that visucentric research methods are not always appropriate (e.g., for research with deafblind people they might be less useful), they suggest that these approaches tap into the visual ontologies of deaf people, allowing a deeper connection between researcher and participant, as well as a more accurate representation of deaf peoples’ experiences.

Noel O'Connell's chapter is both an exercise in autoethnography, and a presentation of the method as an innovative way of examining the author's own experience as a deaf child in Ireland in the 1970s. He draws on his memories to identify and explore various elements of the deaf experience in this context and suggests that such a research method could be particularly appropriate for deaf people, because it provides a "voice" to deaf academics whose stories traditionally have been silenced by hegemonic narratives attempting to explain away deaf peoples' experiences without regard to their deaf ontologies.

The third chapter in this section, written by Hilde Haualand, discusses how the researchers' own positionality is not only a result of their own experiences and beliefs, but also a result of how they are perceived by others. In her chapter, which outlines Haualand's experiences of conducting research in a multinational context, she explores the implications of "inclusive" practices in research teams and how such practices affected her positionalities during the course of her research project.

The fourth chapter of this section, by Lynn Hou, is based on reflexive metadocumentation as an integral part of ethnographic research of the language and communicative practices of deaf and hearing-signing families in two villages in Mexico. As she produced reflexive metadocumentation of her research progress, she came to terms with how deaf and hearing ontologies shape the interactions among herself, her hearing colleagues, and their research participants, and how these reveal the complexity of their language practices, attitudes, and choices.

The fifth and final chapter in this section is written by Erin Moriarty Harrelson. Moriarty Harrelson discusses how her experience working in Cambodia, in combination with data

collected in the United States and on social media, exposed conflict and struggle over representations of deaf communities in various locations. She outlines how differing claims to knowledge, ownership, and power can be brought to light when assumptions of DEAF-SAME are questioned and other levels of privilege are explored.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This volume explores Deaf Studies as a field that has matured in the sense that it both has a growing body of deaf researchers who make an enormous contribution to scholarship, through employing deaf capital and deaf insight, and a corresponding growth in the breadth of research topics. Given this, the book can suggest ways forward for the field. We hope the present volume will contribute to continuing development and innovation in the field of Deaf Studies, particularly from early-career researchers. In so doing, we are, in fact, engaging in “critical Deaf Studies,” a term analogous with critical Disability Studies (Friedner, this volume): a re-evaluation of explanatory paradigms; new terms of engagement in the struggle for social justice; and exploration of the role of positionality, power, and privilege.

This volume only scratches the surface of the exciting new directions that Deaf Studies can take in the future, with many other areas left unexplored. Examples of unexplored or unpublished areas that ultimately did not make it into this book include methodologies of deafblind researchers doing research with deafblind people and the study of the relationships between deaf political associations and deaf academic scholarship. We hope to see further innovation in research methods and methodology to reflect deaf people’s visual/tactile experiences of the world, and more experimental approaches to research dissemination. We also hope that a greater number of academics from underrepresented groups will come through in the

future and further explore the intersectional identities of deaf people in contemporary society. The future of the field seems bright, with dynamic and exciting research subjects and practices making it into academic discourse.

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