

5. *Coequality and Transnational Studies: Understanding Deaf Lives*

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ON THE FIRST MONDAY of July 1889, Deaf American Amos Draper mounted a platform in the chapel of St. Saviour's Church. Facing him was a crowd of more than one hundred largely working-class British Deaf men, all gathered at this Oxford Street meeting room in central London to greet a delegation of some twenty Deaf Americans en route to the first International Congress of the Deaf in Paris, France. Draper surveyed the audience and, quoting Shakespeare, declared, "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin."¹

This "touch of nature," the physical fact of deafness, manifested itself in a number of commonalities in the lives of nineteenth-century Deaf people from different nations. Deafness had long been a nexus around which transnational bodies of professionals incorporated. While a transnational body centered around a professional discourse is perhaps commonplace, a look at the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Western Deaf world shows Deaf people of this time created and maintained consistent contact with one another over national and continental boundaries, despite seemingly few similarities between their lives. After all, what could a Deaf American educated at the state-supported American Asylum for Deaf Mutes in Hartford, Connecticut, and employed as a professor at the National Deaf-Mute College in Washington, D.C., possibly see himself as having in common with a Deaf Briton educated at the privately funded Old Kent Road school in London and working as a draughtsman for the Imperial Admiralty? In other words, what incentive would a person living in one national and occupational context have to spend time and energy on interactions with someone living in a much different context?

Hints of an answer emerge from the St. Saviour's Church meeting. In his address, Draper noted that, despite vast geographical separation,

in all essentials our experiences are probably the same. If you have troubles, we can sympathize with you, for we have the same troubles; or if you have joys, those joys are ours, and we rejoice with you.²

Deaf people, for good or bad, shared a common experience of living as members of a visual community in an auditory world, an experience transcending local contexts and national boundaries. This experience was supported by a shared rejection of larger social misconceptions and professional ideologies that homogenized them as deficient countrymen, ignoring the realities of their lives as members of a cultural community.

Draper's comments point to an area that has thus far lain outside the research frame-

works used by scholars in Deaf Studies and related fields. To date, Deaf Studies has most often explored Deaf lives within the frameworks of single national communities.³ One consequence of this restricted field of study is that Deaf Studies scholars often view Deaf people in a framework of comparison (whether explicit or implied) with other national minorities/oppressed groups. Why do we always reach for analogies with the African American civil rights movement or look to Women's Studies for ideas on how to interpret the experience of Deaf Americans? I do not want to suggest we cannot learn much from such comparisons, nor would I deny research within this framework has had a beneficial impact on the field of Deaf Studies and Deaf people's lives. Yet, is it possible that an adherence to theories and structures designed to explain the place of other minorities in specific nation-states not only unwittingly ties us to nation-specific narratives but also obscures just what it is that is most *Deaf* about being Deaf? Transnational studies of Deaf people may enable us to see beyond the classic nation-state-based "minority struggle for equality" narrative to explore how Draper's "touch of nature" illuminates commonalities in Deaf lives across national boundaries and what these commonalities mean for the world in which we live.

I would like to suggest Draper's sentiments, signed in 1889, are applicable to the current global Deaf community. This does not mean Draper's nineteenth-century Deaf world and our contemporary twenty-first-century Deaf world are alike in all respects, but that constructions of transnational spaces for articulating Deafhood exist/ed both in the nineteenth century and today.⁴ Transnational interaction among Deaf people does not ignore national boundaries or national identities. Rather, I believe Deaf people in different locations share a common discursive field as Deaf people, a field existing alongside identities framed within the boundaries of specific nation-states and the cultures associated with those states. Living in a visual community stretching across national boundaries, while simultaneously participating in their auditory, national communities, Deaf people live uniquely structured lives.

Understanding Deaf Lives

The 1893 World's Congress of the Deaf at the Chicago World's Fair brought together over one thousand Deaf people from the United States and Europe. While the Congress was an event run by Deaf people for Deaf people, it was also part of the Chicago World's Fair's Congresses Auxiliary, an assembly of 225 Congresses on topics ranging from temperance to religion to "women's progress."⁵ Deaf American George T. Dougherty, head of the World's Congress of the Deaf organizing committee, noted with satisfaction that the Congress of the Deaf "got recognition on a basis co-equal with all the great World's Congresses of other kinds."⁶ Dougherty marveled at this fact, as did other Deaf people in attendance, proud of their ability to "meet the hearing world in congresses."⁷ Participants listened to papers from Deaf men on the current state of Deaf lives in different Western countries and passed a resolution affirming their unanimous condemnation of the oral method in Deaf education. The Congress was not all work, however, as participants conversed well into the early morning hours at a lavish banquet in downtown Chicago, one among a number of well-attended social events during the week.⁸

Dougherty's use of the term "on a basis co-equal" points at a way of being Deaf that

has not been fully explored in the field of Deaf Studies to date. When social scientists first began to study Deaf people as a distinct community, they presented an image of a community hindered by failed educational practices and limited vocational opportunities in its struggle for equality with hearing society.⁹ Later work in the field of Deaf Studies has moved away from this focus to emphasize how Deaf people have managed to maintain a unique cultural community despite overwhelming ignorance, and at times outright hostility, to sign language and Deaf Culture.¹⁰ Throughout much of the academic literature, a dichotomy of assimilation and resistance is predominant, with hearing society presented as a hegemonic force provoking resistance among inhabitants of the Deaf world.

The idea of coequality offers something different. Deaf people are not foreigners in their own country or solely oppressed minorities within their nation-states. The experience of being Deaf encompasses an expectation of participation in a society not tailored to Deaf norms as well as the articulation of a separate space of being Deaf, a space that, at times, transcends national boundaries. With coequality, the traditional binaries—of Deaf worlds and hearing worlds, of Deaf lives “segregated from” or “assimilated into” hearing societies—can be seen not in opposition to one another, but as mutually formative. Deaf people live simultaneously in hearing spaces and in Deaf spaces, are part of a Deaf community and active participants in non-Deaf social settings. Coequality presumes a distinct group acculturated to, but not assimilated in, larger society.

Take the exultation Dougherty and his counterparts felt on having their World’s Congress presented alongside other international meetings at the great World’s Fair. Not only was this a triumph in that it presented Deaf people as equal to hearing people (and on a global scale to boot), it was also, according to Dougherty, the culmination of a century’s worth of Deaf people being educated and working together as a distinct community:

Who would have dreamed one hundred years ago that this could ever be possible? Then the deaf were uneducated and widely scattered, unknown to each other; their influence, of course, was *nil*.¹¹

Nineteenth-century Deaf people saw their consolidation into a single community through organizations and conferences as the best means to achieve not just equality, but coequality with larger society. Deaf people willingly sought to participate on an equal basis in the society around them, but refused to be submerged into it. In order to shape their terms of participation in non-Deaf society, it was necessary to have a Deaf world. Otherwise, “unknown to each other, their influence, of course, was *nil*.” Coequality highlights the ability of Deaf people to live successful, productive lives *as Deaf people*, moving within both the Deaf world and non-Deaf society at will.

Deaf American Olof Hanson, traveling in Germany in 1890, found himself sitting opposite a young Deaf German man in a Berlin café where “about a hundred” Deaf Germans were assembled. Hanson found this young man, educated orally and with only a rudimentary knowledge of German Sign Language, was on his first trip from the provinces to this metropolitan gathering of Deaf Germans. He had come for a single reason: “I am here looking for a wife.”¹²

If coequality presumes a distinct community, where can this community be found in geographical space? Hanson's story of the young German man illustrates the fact that sites of cultural production and transmission in the Deaf world have not remained the same over time. Hanson would have pointed to the Berlin café as a site of entrance into the Deaf community. A few decades ago in America it would have been possible to give an equally simple answer: Deaf clubs and Deaf schools. Today, both schools and clubs are on the wane, and increasing numbers of young Deaf people do not participate in either arena of cultural production. It is time for Deaf clubs and residential schools for Deaf people to be historicized, to be understood as products of a specific historical moment and not as universal, singular vehicles of Deaf cultural transmission.

The major features of the new Deaf cultural landscape consist of gatherings at designated public or private spaces situated both in physical, geographical space and at virtual sites that exist only in moments of active creation and consumption. An example of the latter can be found in "Deafzone," a World Wide Web page created by young Deaf Swiss-Germans where Deaf parties in ever-shifting locations are advertised, e-mail and instant messaging addresses are exchanged, and ideas are debated in online discussion forums.¹³ The inherently temporary nature of contemporary gatherings in physical space is illustrated by a Deaf New Year's Eve party in Amsterdam attended by a group of young Deaf people from different European countries, all jetting into a mutually agreed upon location to party with like-minded counterparts for several days. Contemporary sites for the manufacture, expression, and consumption of Deafhood are increasingly fluid, temporary, and situational.

Mobility and continuous community re-creation are emerging as the key characteristics of the twenty-first-century Deaf community, but they are not necessarily unique to this time, nor should we see community mobility and change solely determined by technology. Admittedly, e-mail and the Internet play an important role in current community interconnections that sometimes transcend national boundaries, just as railroads, steamships, and new global postage rates were also factors in transnational interconnections among nineteenth-century Deaf people. Technology may be an enabler, but it is not an originator of transnational contact. For changing social contexts over time also reveal a commonality across time: the desire for Deaf people to be with members of their own community and the continued significance of transnational sites for the articulation of Deafhood.

I had the pleasure of participating in the 1996 Nordic Deaf Youth Camp in Kinsarvik, a community of little over four hundred people located deep in the mountains and fjords of western Norway. During the weeklong camp, we seventy-odd Deaf young adults (ages eighteen to thirty) became a significant percentage of the town's population, transforming it into a Deafcentric space. On the final day of the camp, after the last busload of campers left, I wandered around the campsite, now a depleted shell. The campsite's hearing owners came out of the woodwork and set about tidying up the place for the next set of guests. My three travel companions, one Russian, one Dane, one Norwegian, and myself, an American, drove home with little left to say to one another; all sharing an unarticulated feeling of longing, a sense that something significant had ended and now we were back to the regular pattern of our lives.

This feeling of dislocation and longing after a large-scale Deaf event seems to be a fairly common phenomenon, as is the jarring feeling one experiences upon seeing a formerly Deaf physical space transformed into a hearing space. Sites of today's World's Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), quadrennial meetings attended by several thousand people, are Deafcentric sites for several days, then emptied of their Deaf character immediately afterwards. Unlike diaspora populations, Deaf people do not live their lives in the expectation of some end point where all Deaf people will come together in a homeland.¹⁴ Rather, Deaf people go to preselected geographical locations to establish temporary physical communities of Deaf people. These temporary spaces provide Deaf people an environment where being Deaf becomes a standard way of being.

The centrality of transnational Deaf spaces in maintaining a sense of coequality is important here. These spaces bring fresh insights into specific Deaf localities needing points of comparison for their own lives lacking in the larger society physically around them. Arjun Appadurai's use of the word *locality* seems to fit in with this type of interaction. Appadurai conceives of locality as existing in a form that is "primarily relational and contextual rather than as scalar or spatial . . . constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity, and the relativity of contexts."¹⁵ Within temporary localities constructed at Deaf events, Deaf people find a space to express Deafhood, fully aware that this space exists beside a contact zone containing philosophies with different degrees of understanding—and tolerance—of Deaf people.¹⁶ It might be possible to call Deaf localities *translocal*, functioning as nodes in larger transnational flows of knowledge on Deaf people.¹⁷ Interactions that are intensely localized in time and space exist alongside and are influenced by previously formed Deaf localities, potentially separated by one or both of the twin elements of time and geography. Attendees at the most recent WFD Congress bring together ideas from their home settings, from previous WFD Congresses or other transnational gatherings, and from interactions with one another. All of these settings come together in one space, and interactions within this space bring together multiple viewpoints centered around a common theme: the experience of being Deaf. Transnational Deaf localities are continually changing articulations of coequality derived from a multiplicity of sources within the global Deaf world and from contact zone interactions with non-Deaf societies. Coequality positions Deaf people as being cognizant of (and incorporating ideas from) discourse both from the societies in which they live and from their transnational Deaf counterparts.

Approaching Transnational Studies

So far I've tossed out some terms—coequality, contact zones, and (trans)localities—that I think may prove useful in understanding Deaf lives. While Martha's Vineyard may or may not have once been a sign language mecca, most Deaf people do not live their lives in anticipation of its return.¹⁸ Rather, Deaf people aim for a state of coequality in which they participate in non-Deaf societies while simultaneously creating temporary, situational localities in which to express their Deafhood. These localities, I contend below,

cannot be seen as existing solely in the boundaries of a single nation-state. I offer below three points on Deaf transnationalism, with some questions.

DEAF EVENTS HIGHLIGHT DEAFHOOD

The Nordic Youth Camp and the WFD Congress examples above point to the significance of Deaf-centered events for Deaf lives. It is at these events that Deaf people can highlight the Deaf aspect of their identities. The Deaf community is a largely decentralized community that forms in specific geographical spaces only at prearranged times, most often at events enacted for Deaf people (often by Deaf people themselves). How does the inherently temporary nature of most Deaf events affect Deaf people's constructions of their lives? Are Deaf events a temporary respite from the process of living in a contact zone? Are these events constructed by individuals as the primary events in their lives, with their geographical microlocations (hearing workplace/neighborhoods) and contact zone interactions playing a lesser role in a hierarchy of importance they accord to events in their own lives? What similarities/differences emerge in the articulation of Deafhood/coequality in different localities? How does Deafhood change in explicitly transnational contexts (for example, WFD Congresses) as opposed to local contexts with transnational influences?

COMMON GLOBAL DISCOURSES SPUR TACTICALLY MOBILE RESPONSES

In 1883 Alexander Graham Bell addresses the U.S. National Academy of Sciences on the possibility of the "formation of a deaf-mute variety of the human race." Intense discussion ensued among scientists, educators, and the general public about the best way to prevent this from occurring, with a number of influential thinkers suggesting Deaf-Deaf marriages ought to be discouraged by a variety of means. Deaf Briton R. Armour, in his address to Deaf men from nearly a dozen countries at the 1889 Paris Congress, concluded his summary of British objections to restrictions on Deaf-Deaf marriages with the comment, "It is scarcely necessary for me to enlarge on any of these [objections] since I know that your own sentiments coincide with mine."¹⁹

Armour felt comfortable making such a claim because he and his contemporaries were responding to a single discourse perpetuated by people utilizing the same global grid of scientific knowledge—eugenic science—to advance their aims. The ideas used by Deaf people to respond to this discourse had what Ann Laura Stoler calls *tactical mobility*.²⁰ Tactically mobile ideas are those formed in one setting that are transferable to other settings. While specific national contexts may predicate specific local responses, these responses are then transmitted to other localities, to be adapted to and adopted by Deaf people experiencing similar mechanisms of control elsewhere. Tactical mobility thus highlights not only Deaf transnationalism but also commonalities in the experience of being hearing when faced with a Deaf world.

Of particular interest in this vein is that mechanisms devised by hearing people to control Deaf people's lives slip so easily from their points of origin to other sites. Technologies of hearing improvement are a classic example of a transnational phenomenon impacting Deaf people in different countries: the hearing aid and cochlear implant did not sit quietly within the nations in which they were invented, but quickly

spread to all areas of the world.²¹ With a transnational study of audism, for example, the task would not be limited to looking at the different trajectories audism takes in the United States and Britain, to pick two countries at random, but would explore which aspects of audism operate regardless of national boundaries, while paying attention to the forms audism adapts itself to in response to context-specific circumstances. Exploring the commonalities of Deaf lives across national borders may enable us to uncover previously overlooked transnational instruments of rule and resistance that may be obscured in single national contexts.²²

TRANSNATIONAL CIRCUITS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

*In 1890, Deaf Briton Francis Maginn took a leading role in the "formation of an Association on American lines" that was to become the British Deaf and Dumb Association. His argument for the necessity of the association drew on the accomplishments of the Deaf American delegation to the International Congress in Paris. For their part, American Deaf people found themselves having to "follow instead of leading" when they discovered Maginn's conference was attended by representatives from different Deaf Societies, as opposed to the U.S. National Association of the Deaf conventions that were "heterogeneous gatherings of men and women who represent nothing but their individual opinions."*²³

A British conference, emerging from observations among British Deaf men at the Paris International Congress and following the American example, ended up influencing Americans themselves. Sometimes, ideas did not merely transmit; they ricocheted across transnational circuits into different localities.²⁴ Nineteenth-century Deaf people often wrote on issues of concern to their national communities in a framework that included frequent references to similar problems faced by Deaf people in other nations. Transnational networks produce knowledge on what it means to be Deaf in different translocalities, localities that serve in turn as nodes in which ideas from different sources intermingle, are reshaped, and are sent on (or not). Can we identify the nodes, institutions, and individuals operating on twenty-first-century Deaf circuits of knowledge production? How is coequality articulated in these circuits? Which localities (if any) lie outside these circuits and why? What are the possible consequences of participation in/exclusion from circuits of knowledge production in today's Deaf world?

Transnational work will no doubt uncover previously overlooked commonalities between Deaf communities situated in different national spaces. To give just two examples: Why does nearly every national association of Deaf people place official recognition of their sign language by the government high on its list of political aims? Likewise, why is it that—at least in every Western nation I have had the opportunity to test this out in—the standard Deaf to Deaf individual attention-getting method consists of precisely *two* taps on a shoulder? The task here is not really to explain “who came first” but to ask why these similarities occur. Because of a “touch of nature”? A shared experience of living as visual minorities? If these similarities are the result of cross-national pollination, why do extranational influences find such fertile ground in different Deaf localities? While exploring similarities, we should take care not to do our studies in a teleological model that presumes any one existing national Deaf community as a model to which others will inevitably evolve. Similarities should be studied as manifestations

of specific phenomena that cut across national boundaries, not as inevitable steps in a historical evolution.

Of course, differences do exist. Most Deaf Malawians live lives very different from those of most Deaf Canadians. I emphasize similarities in this essay because it is easy to fall back into simplistic nation-based narratives of development with certain Deaf communities on an apex of successful integration into national societies ("We have the ADA/relay services, etc.") to which other countries need to catch up. Or comparisons that presume Deaf lives depend solely on the societies in which they live ("Scandinavian Deaf people are so lucky. Their socialist societies provide for everything!"). It is easier to find national differences in Deaf people's lives than to understand transnational similarities. Whether these differences are due to national/geographical factors or to some overlooked variations in Deafhood is another question for us to explore. In doing so, scholars should also keep in mind how social, ethnic, and economic hierarchies structure transnational interactions among Deaf people. Where were African American Deaf people at the 1893 World's Congress? Are Malawian Deaf people able to find their way into contemporary Deaf transnational conversations often dominated by developed countries? How do these exclusions hinder, even distort, the efficacy of transnational circuits of knowledge production among Deaf people?

The Future of Coequality: Some Questions Currently without Answers

The exhibit floor at the 2000 U.S. National Association of the Deaf convention presented a visitor with an array of Deaf-owned firms selling Deaf products from FRIENDS earrings to teddy bears signing I.L.V. Next to these expressions of cultural distinctiveness were businesses marketing different forms of assimilation into non-Deaf society: computerized avatar interpreters, cochlear implants, and telecommunications relay services.

Deaf people today still affirm the ability of Deaf people to live Deaf-centered lives while simultaneously exploring different forms of coequality with non-Deaf societies. This overlapping duality of cultural distinctiveness and individual assimilation is a dominant organizing principle of the contemporary Deaf world. Yet, with advances in genetic engineering progressing rapidly, we may face a time when the physical fact of deafness becomes not an accident of nature but the product of a conscious choice. Do individuals whose families made this choice still have a claim to state largesse (in the form of relay services, interpreter services, state-funded schools for Deaf people) largely based on a benevolence model? Are both sides of coequality sustainable?

If citizenship is predicated on participation in larger society, and participation in our contemporary society is now increasingly oriented toward the consumption of goods and services, then what does it mean to be Deaf in a consumerist society? We are seeing increasingly powerful corporate entities (some Deaf-controlled, many with Deaf employees) become major sponsors of events organized by political advocacy organizations for Deaf people. Dougherty claimed Deaf people found power through community organizations. How has commercialization affected Deaf community organizations built on notions of representative democracy? Today, corporations offer a variety of services centered around both conceptualizations of Deaf as a culture and of deaf

as a disability, providing consumers with a menu of services ranging from American Sign Language classes to job-training services. Understandings of Deaf people based on both assimilation and cultural distinction are today being manufactured and sold, often by Deaf people themselves. How does coequality change when it becomes a commodity packaged and sold by businesses oriented toward institutional profit? What happens when ways of being Deaf are commodified and sold? Globalization may foster transnational meetings among Deaf people, but how do the discourses within these meetings change due to consumerism?

Beyond the Nation-State into . . . an Understanding of Deaf Lives?

Nkhata Bay, Malawi, 1998: I sit on a small beach on the shores of Lake Malawi, watching my laundry dry on the sand in front of the thatched hut I've rented for a few days. A thin Malawian approaches me. The dust on his pants indicates he has walked a long distance and the neat, but worn, clothes on his slim frame tell me he is either a farmer or fisherman, earning an income without resorting to the tourist trade. Our eyes meet and he lifts his right hand to his face to ask, "Deaf?"

What role can transnational studies play in understanding the structures of Deaf lives? I would suggest that restricting ourselves to nation-based narratives is not, on its own, sufficient for us to fully understand what it means to be Deaf. Utilizing a transnational field of study enables Deaf Studies to discover just what it is that is most Deaf about being Deaf. More than a mere "touch of nature," being Deaf is the dominant factor in ways of organizing individual and community lives that contain remarkable similarities across national boundaries. An aspect of this similarity no doubt comes about because of similar patterns of domination through global scientific and pedagogical discourses aimed against Deaf people's cultural expression. But there is something more—Deaf people find real value in the lived experiences of their Deaf counterparts in different nations, willingly incorporating extranational productions of Deafhood into their own translocal personas. Transnational studies of Deaf people may end up clarifying similarities in Deaf lives, similarities obscured by nineteenth- and twentieth-century ideologies privileging distinctiveness based on the imagined boundaries of nation-states. What does it mean to be Deaf—to live as a visual minority in an auditory world? Transnational Deaf Studies can guide us to multiple possible answers to this question.

Notes

1. Amos Draper, "Report to the President," in *Annual Report of the Columbia Institution for Deaf Mutes, 1889* (Washington, D.C., 1889), 34.
2. Ibid.
3. There are a growing number of essay collections that bring together essays on a range of national or regional groups under a single cover, but few individual essays in these collections work outside of a national framework. Examples abound in a range of disciplines. See Leila Monaghan, Constanze Schmalting, Karen Nakamura, and Graham Turner, eds., *Many Ways to Be Deaf: International Variation in Deaf Communities* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2003); Renate Fischer and Tomas Vollhaber, eds., *Collage: Works on International Deaf History International*

- Studies on Sign Language and Communication of the Deaf*, vol. 33 (Hamburg: Signum, 1996); Penny Boyes Braem and Rachel Sutton-Spence, eds., *The Hands Are the Head of the Mouth: The Mouth as Articulator in Sign Languages* (Hamburg: Signum, 2001); and selected volumes of essays in the Sociolinguistics in Deaf Communities series from Gallaudet University Press.
4. The term Deafhood was devised by Paddy Ladd to define "the existential state of Deaf 'being-in-the-world.'" I use the term here as a shorthand for naming the cultural experience of being Deaf, finding it a ready counterpart to the idea of coequality. See Paddy Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood* (Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2003), xviii.
 5. David F. Burg, *Chicago's White City* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 235.
 6. *Proceedings of the World Congress of the Deaf and the Report of the Fourth Convention of the National Association of the Deaf* (Chicago, 1893), 10.
 7. *Ibid.*, 20.
 8. "1,000 participants," *ibid.*, 11; "lavish banquet," 109.
 9. Works in this vein would be Paul Higgins, *Outsiders in a Hearing World* (Beverly Hills: Sage Press, 1980); Beryl Lief Benderly, *Dancing Without Music: Deafness in America* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1980); and Jerome Schein, *At Home among Strangers: Exploring the Deaf Community in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1989).
 10. A number of works emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s. For a representative sample, see Harlan Lane, Robert Hoffmeister, and Ben Bahan, *A Journey into the Deaf-World* (San Diego: DawnSign-Press, 1996); MJ Bienvenu and Betty Colonomos, *Introduction to American Deaf Culture*, videotape series (Burtonsville, Md.: Sign Media, 1992-93); Sherman Wilcox, ed., *American Deaf Culture: An Anthology* (Burtonsville, Md.: Linstock Press, 1989); Carol Padden and Tom Humphries, *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988). Works in this vein are still being published today, a recent work of Deaf history being Susan Burch, *Signs of Resistance: American Deaf Cultural History, 1900 to 1942* (New York: New York University Press, 2002).
 11. Emphasis in original. *Proceedings of the World Congress of the Deaf and the Report of the Fourth Convention of the National Association of the Deaf*, 10.
 12. Olof Hanson, "Observations Abroad," *American Annals of the Deaf* 35 (1890): 270.
 13. "Deafzone," <http://www.deafzone.ch/>.
 14. There are scholars who deemphasize the place of a homeland in diasporic communities. James Clifford notes "transnational connections linking Diasporas need not be articulated primarily through a real or symbolic homeland. . . . decentered, lateral connections may be just as important as those formed around teleology of origin/return": *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 249-50.
 15. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 178. For more on localities, see chapter 9.
 16. The term "contact zone" is drawn from Mary Louise Pratt, who describes them as "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination": *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 4.
 17. Appadurai has a bleaker view of this term, using as an example of translocalities tourist sites where "local subjectivity is commodified, and . . . nation-states . . . erase internal, local dynamics through externally imposed modes of regulation, credentialization, and image production": *Modernity at Large*, 192.
 18. For more on Martha's Vineyard, see Nora Ellen Groce, *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985).
 19. "Reminiscences of the Deaf and Dumb Congress in Paris," *Deaf and Dumb Times* (November 1890), 83.
 20. Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies," *Journal of American History* 88, no. 3 (2001): 847.

21. Global distribution does not mean even distribution across the globe; wealth plays a large role in determining which areas of the world will receive the latest technology first, with developing countries getting the latest technology later than their developed counterparts.
22. This is an idea advanced by Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties."
23. "Our Notes," *Deaf and Dumb Times*, April 1890, 122; Francis Maginn, "The Proposed National Association of the Deaf," *Deaf and Dumb Times* (January 1890), 73.
24. The term "circuits of knowledge production" is drawn from Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties," 831.

OPEN YOUR EYES

DEAF STUDIES TALKING

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