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Audism: A Theory and Practice of Audiocentric Privilege

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Abstract

More than 30 years ago, Tom Humphries coined the term "audism" to describe audiocentric (based on hearing and speaking) assumptions and attitudes of supremacy. Only a handful of scholarly articles mention the concept of audism and not one of those is published outside of Deaf Cultural Studies. In this article, audism is broadly defined in the ideological contexts of individual, institutional, metaphysical, and laissez-faire prejudices. Audism is further explained in the context of overt, covert, and aversive practices of discrimination. Examples of the intersections of the theory and practice of audiocentric privilege are explored. Based on critical observations of audism as a stratifying system of oppression, four recommendations are made: increasing public awareness of Deaf American contributions to society (multiculturalism), infusing Deaf-centric curriculum content in education (equity), advocating intergroup dialogues as a transformative pedagogy that further exposes audism as a social injustice (intercultural responsibility), and promoting community service opportunities (ethical citizenship) for students to do volunteer work in the Deaf American Community.

Keywords

audism, Deaf Culture, discrimination, prejudice, Deaf identities, multicultural curriculum, Deaf ethnicity, laissez-faire racism

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Personal Reflexive Statement

Rejecting the notion that Deaf Americans are disabled by medical circumstance, we note that the practice of audism disables Deaf Americans. We set out writing this article with the goal of making audism more visible to the social sciences. We hope to cast light upon the injustices that Deaf people face and pave the way for a future where those injustices are eliminated. Author Richard Clark Eckert grew up in a family that hearing specialists discouraged from learning to use sign language. As an adult, he learned to be Deaf and today is one of just three Deaf individuals with a doctorate degree in sociology in the United States, two of whom are now retired. Author Amy June Rowley grew up as a child in the midst of a U.S. Supreme Court Case (Board of Education, Hendrick Hudson School District v. Rowley). The Supreme Court should have focused on the more immediate issue about her gaining access to language as a human right protected by the First Amendment of the Constitution (Siegel 2008). Still, Amy June Rowley was denied an interpreter to access communication since the court felt she could access a spoken environment sufficiently to pass with average grades. The 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution grants that every citizen have equal rights and protection. When the court did not reaffirm Amy June Rowley's right to an interpreter, they failed to recognize or value her equal rights to communication. We share the view that denying Deaf children access to sign language is a human rights violation.

A cashier at a local grocery store starts to talk to a customer who is purchasing some food items. The customer is uncertain what the cashier is saying. The cashier ignores the shopper and continues to talk. The Deaf shopper gets the cashier's attention by pointing to his or her ears and then shaking their head in a sideways motion, the shopper forces the cashier to understand.[1] The cashier realizes that the customer is Deaf and stops talking. The shopper gestures as if writing on his or her hand and tries to encourage the cashier to write what was just said. The cashier replies by shaking their head and hands, once again voicing, "No, no that's OK." Who is that omission of information OK for? Why is it OK for the cashier to not have to communicate with the Deaf customer? What makes it OK for the Deaf shopper to not have the same information as other customers?

Examples of police killing Deaf civilians (Cartier 2011; Miller 2011; SeattlePI 2010; White 2000), illegal detainments that included forced use of antipsychotic drugs (Williams 2001), and commitments of Deaf people to asylums for the criminally insane without due process (Rubin 1997) are very much part of the American landscape in postmodern times. However, we begin with the grocery store example because it is so frequent that one can easily identify the diminution of Deaf autonomy as a pernicious norm in American society. Deaf Cultural Studies describe such scenes by using the term *audism* in much the same way that the terms racism or sexism are used.

The primary purpose of this article is to introduce the social sciences, especially sociology, to the theory and the practice of audism. Emphasis is placed on what

audism is and how audism is practiced. Readers will be challenged to cast aside preconceptions, especially pathologic leanings, about what it means to be Deaf in America in the twenty-first century. For the most part, we do not elaborate on when, where, who, and why as that is best left to future studies. We do explore the meaning and the explanatory powers of the concept of audism from the time Tom Humphries (1977) first minted the term up until Eckert (2010) introduced a definition of laissez-faire audism. We retain Humphries' (1977) definition of audism but propose minor revisions to the operational definitions of institutional (Lane [1992] 1999), metaphysical (Bauman 2004, 2008), and laissez-faire (Eckert 2010) audism. As with racism, audism is practiced overtly, covertly, and aversively. Definitions and examples of these practices are provided.

In this article, we also explore the intersections of the theory and practice of audism. This framework is designed to assist social scientists in identifying and comparatively interpreting audism and acts of audism with racism and acts of racism. The examples that we offer emphasize that the signing Deaf American Community has been colonized (Ladd 2003; Lane [1992] 1999, [1984] 1989; Wrigley 1997) as an ethnic community (Dolnick 1993; Eckert 2005, 2010; Erting 1978; Lane, 2005; Lane, Pillard, and Hedberg 2011; Markowicz and Woodward 1978). By Deaf American Community, we mean a community or *polis* of individual Deaf ethnics who prefer to rely and depend upon sign language in their everyday activities.

What can be done to reduce audism in postmodern society? We advocate a four-tiered solution, a public sociology (Burawoy 2005) of audism, which focuses on real utopian (Wright 2010, 2012) themes of multiculturalism, equity, intercultural responsibility, and ethical citizenship. Specifically, we advocate expanding public awareness, making Deaf contributions to American society accessible to the public, exposing the perpetuation of audism as a visible social problem, stressing the importance of both diversity and commonalities through intergroup dialogues, and promoting opportunities for community service work that foster ethical citizenship. The solutions we propose are a synthesis of essential learning outcomes, principles of excellence, and high-impact practices identified by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (n.d.) better known as the AACU and the writings of Banks ([1994] 2008) and Banks et al. (2005).

Background Information

Sociological investigations of the Deaf American Community are rarely published in academic journals outside of Deaf Cultural Studies. The last article to appear in a major peer-reviewed sociology journal was more than 25 years ago (Barnartt and Christiansen 1985). The relative absence of peer-reviewed articles outside of Deaf Cultural Studies that emphasize a sociological view of the Deaf Community is puzzling when one considers that the mother of sociology, Harriet Martineau, was Deaf. Martineau's relationship with the Deaf Community was surely strained by

what some considered highly patronizing views of the Deaf Community (Booth [1877] 2001). Based on Martineau's (1877) autobiography, it is reasonable to conclude that Martineau considered Deaf children's inability to assimilate into an audiocentric civil society as something that could be attributed to familial dysfunctions. From Martineau's view, hearing parents of Deaf children were disabling their children and thereby blocking assimilation and the proper teaching of morals and manners. Although Martineau did distinguish different needs for congenitally Deaf children from adventitious Deaf children (Deegan 2002), her perspective placed attention on Deaf identity primarily in the context of physical attributes of nonhearing, a medical affliction, and something that required cultural-based rehabilitative strategies.

When one considers the writings of Harry Best (1914), who wrote a sociological critique of *The Deaf*, it is surprising that there is an absence of peer-reviewed articles with a sociological examination of any aspect of the Deaf American Community in recent times. Best offered an extraordinarily broad analysis of political–economic interpretations, demographics, epidemiology of deafness, the social organization of the Deaf Community, and competing pedagogies of manualism, which focused on sign language, and oralism, which focused on visible speech and articulation. As explained by Best (1914):

> But it has not always been the policy of the state to allow the deaf the realization that they form in its citizenship and element able to look out for themselves, and demanding little of its special oversight. They have a story full of interest to tell, for the way of the deaf to the attainment of this position has been long and tortuous, being first looked upon as wards and then by slow gradations coming to the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship. (p. xv)

Best viewed Deaf as an afflicted variety of the human race and emphasized prevention, early detection, and early rehabilitation efforts consistent with euthenic principles of his time. Best's work is especially useful for historical comparative examination of the push and pulls between oralism and manualism in the early twentieth century with the push and pulls between the two in the early twenty-first century. Best's work is noteworthy as he did at least make some effort to investigate what today would be considered a Deaf-centric view.

In the twenty-first century, we find Deaf *praxis* organized and defined in the context of Deafhood (Ladd 2003), Deafnicity (Eckert 2005), Deaf ethnicity (Lane 2005; Lane et al. 2011), and Deaf *ethnos* (Eckert 2010). There is a growth of a Deaf-centric epistemology expressed as a counter hegemonic narrative (Ladd 2003; Hauser et al. 2010; Holcomb 2010; Moores and Paul 2010; Paul and Moores 2010; Wang 2010). One characteristic of a Deaf-centric epistemology in the twenty-first century is an increased ability to describe assumptions and attitudes of audiocentricism as privilege exhibited by most of the dominant hearing majority. Yet, we are not aware of the term audism being included in any journal of sociology.

Significance

Within the Deaf American Community, the concept of audism is near taken-for-granted characteristic of the power differential between a dominant hearing majority and the minority community. There is no more need to explain the theoretical constructs of audism to a Deaf American than there is a need to demonstrate the existence of racism to an African American, sexism to a woman, or homophobia to same sex couples. Just as African Americans experience racism, women experience sexism, and gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered (LGBT) experience discrimination, Deaf people are assaulted with audiocentric prejudice and discrimination on a daily basis.

Audism is a theoretical construct, first minted by Humphries (1977), which helps the Deaf Community define their experiences with discrimination. But, why should scholars outside of Deaf Cultural Studies want to investigate Deaf American encounters with prejudice and discrimination? The topic of audism has the potential to act as a bridge between Deaf Studies and the social sciences. The concept of audism, like that of Deaf *ethnos*, may offer promising contributions to the social sciences from which internal colonial models (Blauner 1969), power-differential theories (Lieberson 1970), split labor markets (Bonacich 1972), Noel hypothesis (1968), social distance (Bogardus 1926, 1947; Parillo 2008), spatial mismatches (Wilson 1987), skills mismatches (Wilson 1996, 2009), portfolio of identities (Nagel 1996), situational identities (Gans 1979), ethnic reorganization (Nagel and Snipp 1993), the sexualized boundaries of ethnicity (Nagel 2003), and Deaf real utopias (Wright 2010, 2012) can be further examined. Studying audism potentially expands the validity of a number of existing sociological theories but with less dependence on race, gender, or class.

A Theory of Audism

Searching for ‘‘an English word that is to the Deaf what ‘racism’ is to blacks,’’ Humphries coined the term audism (1977:11). Humphries defined audism as ‘‘The notion that one is superior based on one’s ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears’’ (1977:12). Audism is understood as ‘‘the bias and prejudice of hearing people against deaf people’’ (Humphries 1977:13).

Individual Audism

Bauman argues that Humphries’ concept of audism is ‘‘roughly analogous to individual racism’’ (2004:240). For the most part, this appears to be an accurate interpretation of Humphries’ (1977) writing. Audism is a schema of audiocentric assumptions and attitudes that are used to rationalize differential stratification, supremacy, and hegemonic privilege. Humphries mentions that audism ‘‘appears when deaf and hearing people have no trust in deaf people’s ability to control their own lives and form systems and organizations necessary to take charge of the deaf as

a group to seek social and political change" (1977:13-14). This anticipates institutional audism noted by Lane ([1992] 1999) and dysconscious audism identified by Gertz (2008).

Institutional Audism

Lane ([1992] 1999) extended our understanding of audism by adapting and modifying Wellman's ([1978] 1993) concept of institutional racism. Lane ([1992] 1999) emphasized structural forms of oppression, especially from educational institutions and medical industries. He defined audism as "the corporate institution for dealing with deaf people, dealing with them by making statements about them, authorizing views of them, describing them, teaching about them, governing where they go to school, and in some cases where they live; in short, audism is the hearing way of dominating, restructuring, and exercising authority over the Deaf Community" (p. 43).

Bauman (2004) takes Lane's ([1992] 1999) concept of institutional audism a step further and defines institutional audism as "a system of advantage based on hearing ability" (2004:241). However, the definition of institutional audism needs to reflect recent advancements in the theory of Deaf ethnicity and Deaf *ethnos* (Eckert 2005, 2010; Lane 2005; Lane et al. 2011) and also explain what the system of advantage does to the Deaf Communities. Institutional audism may be defined as *a structural system of exploitative advantage that focuses on and perpetuates the subordination of Deaf Communities of origin, language, and culture*.[2]

Metaphysical Audism

Attempting to answer what drives institutional audism, Bauman (2004, 2008) proposed a schema of metaphysical audism as an extension of what Derrida (1974 as cited in Bauman 2004) called phoncentricism. From Derrida's perspective, it could be the same language of spoken English trumping written English. Bauman's (2004) focus is on the linguicism of spoken language over sign language, which is similar to efforts to make English the official language of the United States where a majority language is stratified above a minority language.

Building upon the efforts of Humphries (1977) and Lane ([1992] 1999), Bauman defined metaphysical audism as "the orientation that links human identity and being with language defined as speech" (2004:242). Many Deaf people have limited ability to use their voice and in previous times were called semi-mute. Those who used their voice had more rights than those who did not speak with their voice (Gallaudet 1864; Gaw 1907; Ladd 2003). The definition of metaphysical audism needs clarification as individuals who become Deaf after having learned to speak also face issues of discrimination. We propose changes to the definition of metaphysical audism that incorporate a broader sociological understanding while clarifying the term speech as used by Bauman (2004:242). Metaphysical audism is *a stratifying schema that promotes differential treatment by linking human identity and autonomous being with*

audiocentric assumptions and attitudes that are used to rationalize the subordination of Deaf Communities of origin, language and culture. This proposed definition facilitates recognition that audism has both structural and schematic underpinnings.

Language, as a defining principle of human identity and autonomy, has stratifying implications that facilitate exclusionary beliefs and acts. Metaphysical audism invokes an attitudinal process of dehumanization. That process facilitates the justification of ''others'' as inferior, subordinate, unworthy, and culturally and morally deficient. The same process is embedded in postmodern institutions, especially education, health care, justice, commerce, labor markets, and the media.

Laissez-Faire Audism

Is it possible for Deaf humanity to be recognized and Deaf Americans also stratified into a subordinate and less than human status? Examining the African American experience reveals that a dual reality of recognition and dismissal is possible. In the 1990s, calls to end affirmative action increased as more and more people subscribed to a ''color-blind society.'' Racism had allegedly ended. This implied that affirmative action policies were no longer needed. Discrimination was allegedly a thing of the past and younger generations supposedly did not have the prejudices of earlier generations. That argument centered on an assertion that African Americans were no longer targets of racism. Bobo, Kluegal, and Smith (1997) use the term laissez-faire racism to describe a postmodern belief system, or racism, which on one hand acknowledges the humanity of African Americans, but on the other hand perpetuates harmful stereotypes.

The acknowledgment of Deaf humanity accompanied by negative stereotypes is similar. Laissez-faire audism is defined by Eckert as ''a postmodern perspective, where the humanity of the Deaf is acknowledged, but autonomy is denied or denigrated'' (2010:329). Laissez-faire audism amounts to a conditional recognition of Deaf humanity based on a postdeaf ''attempt to extricate the dominant hearing majority of guilt'' (Eckert 2010:329). The conditional recognition concerns conformative responses to social controls imposed by what Eberwein (2007) calls the auditory industrial complex (AIC) in which government agencies, medical professionals, and manufacturing corporations aggressively target Deaf children for medical treatment through surgery or amplification. The primary feature of laissez-faire audism is that ''Deaf autonomy is supposedly recognized, but heteronomy continues to be imposed by the dominant hearing majority'' (Eckert 2010:329). Laissez-faire audism, then, *is a postmodern apology which claims recognition of Deaf humanity, but through the denial of Deaf autonomy coupled with a social evolutionary goal to end Deaf-centric structures, schemas, and praxis ends up perpetuating a dehumanization of Deaf American communities.*

The denigration identified by Eckert's (2010) presentation of laissez-faire audism concerns structure, schema, and attempts to nullify *praxis*. However, Eckert's (2010) focus was on defining a theory of Deaf ethnicity encompassing communities of

origin, language, and culture.[3] He did not provide examples of laissez-faire audism or the specifics about acts of laissez-faire audism. Myers and Fernandes (2010) unintentionally provide a noteworthy example of laissez-faire audism when they argue against a strategic emphasis on ethnicity, audism, and colonialism. Myers and Fernandes ask, "What intellectual benefit can be gained by Deaf Studies' continuing to perpetuate the notion that its mission is to counter this almost vanished view of deaf people as sub-human?" (2010:34). By alleging that Deaf people are rarely viewed as sub-human anymore, Myers and Fernandes (2010) fail to grasp the postmodern mechanics of audism. We assert that dehumanization takes place every time Deaf autonomy is diminished. Audism is more than a theory. Audism is also a dehumanizing practice.

The Practice of Audism

The theory of audism concerns interactions between schema and structure that emphasize audiocentric privilege. The practice of audism is expressed in overt, covert, and aversive ways. In this section, we attempt to explore and explain each of those practices.

Overt Audism

Overt audism exists when power differentials between a majority and a minority are so great that majority does not see, care about, or understand the impact of assumptions and attitudes of audiocentric privilege, and is analogous to what is sometimes called dominative racism (Pearson, Dovidio, and Geartner 2009) or overt racism. Superiority is assumed and taken for granted. There is no fear of individuals or institutions imposing sanctions for discriminatory practices. Exclusionary policies and practices of audism that isolate Deaf Americans at school, at work, from medical health care, or due process of law fall under this category. The key feature is that there is no need to disguise dehumanizing assumptions, attitudes, and behaviors.

Covert Audism

A second practice of audism is called covert audism. As the term implies, covert audism is less obvious, hidden, and sometimes disguised. The key difference between overt and covert audism is that covert audism is more difficult to identify. For example, a Deaf person goes to a job interview and discovers that the sign language interpreter the employer was supposed to provide did not show up. The employer may offer to reschedule the interview. However, rescheduling the interview puts the Deaf applicant at a distinct disadvantage in a competitive labor market. It is difficult, if not impossible, for the Deaf applicant to know with certainty whether an interpreter was ever sought out by the employer. Humphries provides a compelling example of covert audism, "We want to hire more deaf people but there just are not any deaf PhD's"

(1977:14). An excuse for not hiring a Deaf person is offered, whereas in the case of overt audism an excuse is neither offered nor expected.

In more recent times, Houston, Lammers, and Svorny (2010) conducted a national survey of vocational rehabilitation counselors to find out whether public policy changes and antidiscrimination laws have led to improved labor market conditions and job tenure and employment conditions of Deaf and hard of hearing job seekers. They concluded, "Neither the ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] nor similar state laws appear to have made it easier for unemployed workers who are deaf and without post-secondary education to find jobs" (Houston, Lammers, and Svorny 2010:20).

Aversive Audism

A third, and less understood practice of audism, is comparable to what is called aversive racism (Pearson et al. 2009). Aversive audism concerns avoidance and denial in a way similar to some of Allport's ([1954] 1979) views on prejudice. Allport defined prejudice on a 5-point scale of antilocution, avoidance, discrimination, physical attack, and extermination ([1954] 1979:14-15). Although antilocution (ethnic jokes) is a form of hate speech, avoidance is a form of social exclusion. Aversive racism is a specific form of avoidance. With the civil rights movement, the public has come to better understand the moral wrong of racism. It can be said that American cultural values of constitutionally based rights of equality underwent transformation during the civil rights movement. The practice of audism shifted as well. Aversive audism concerns a principle of equality accompanied by contradictions and high levels of anxiety when around Deaf people. Egalitarian values compel a person to be open-minded, but contradictions and anxiety levels interfere with their treating Deaf Americans equally. In order to avoid the high levels of anxiety, egalitarian-minded hearing individuals engage in practices of social exclusion that target the Deaf population.

Aversive audists deny the notion of "linguistic discrimination" or what Skutnabb-Kangas ([1985] 1995) calls "linguicism." Aversive audists avoid Deaf people but still attempt to nullify Deaf structure, schema, and *praxis.* They may even appear to xenocentrically romanticize and "admire" Deaf Culture. Aversive audists often assume that Deaf people wish to be assimilated and that assimilation leads to increases in socioeconomic status. Though not labeled as such, Humphries provided an example of aversive audism, "Oh, you have such beautiful speech. What is your hearing loss?" (1977:15). Such comments resemble an idea that people are created equal but some being more equal than others. When hearing people compliment a Deaf person about their using voice, what are they really saying? Why is it necessary to compliment a Deaf person's voice at all?[4]

Overview

In February 2011, ABC's "What Would You Do?" featured an episode in which a manager of a coffee shop pretended to be discriminatory against Deaf job applicants

(Quiñones 2011). The episode informs the public how overt and covert practices of audism can be summed up in terms of attitude. Overt audism is not caring about equality. Covert audism is also about not caring about equality but is accompanied by a pretension of concern for equality. There is some understanding that if overtly expressed, there might be social or legal sanctions imposed against the audist individual or institution. Aversive audism is more complicated and may be better understood in a context of analogous to micro-aggressions directed against Native Americans by defenders who claim that the use of race-based mascots is honorable (Clark et al. 2011).

The ABC episode of "What Would You Do?" exposes overt discriminatory practices against Deaf American applicants when customers tolerate and support what is clearly discrimination from the coffee shop manager. The manager who is an actor openly refuses to accept the applications filled out by Deaf job seekers. The purpose was to see how customers would respond to overt discrimination by the manager. Almost all of the customers did nothing. The show also illuminated covert audism as there was a case in which one customer attempted to privately advise the store manager on how to legally navigate around hiring Deaf applicants. The episode showed aversive audism as some of the customers saw something wrong and did nothing, but later told the Deaf applicants they do not want to work at that coffee shop anyway.

Yet, no matter how much the ABC episode is welcomed for documenting acts and inactions of audism practiced by the coffee shop customers, there are other problems that most hearing people will not recognize. ABC aversively fails to caption the episode or provide a transcript for Deaf viewers of the web site (Quiñones 2011). But, ABC captioned what was signed in ASL for the hearing viewers. To make matters worse, the camera angles used by ABC repeatedly cut out the hands of the signing Deaf applicants. The result was that the web site version of the episode could not be understood by the Deaf viewer.

Intersections of Theory and Practice

In this section, we briefly describe the intersections of the theory and practice of audism. The purpose is to illuminate a variance in audism that ranges from what for some appears seemingly harmless, to more severe levels that are more easily recognized as harmful. In these representations, we strive to bring awareness to all types of audism, no matter how small, to show that any type of audism has repercussions and is an avenue in which the cycle of oppression continues to be perpetuated.

Individual/Overt Audism

At this intersection, audists assert linguistic privilege, openly promote structural inequalities, assume Deaf cultural deficiency, and reject or seek to nullify the Deaf experience (Deafhood). Common examples of this are structural inequalities

rationalized by stereotypic beliefs about inferior Deaf intelligence, demeanor, and sexuality. The assumption that deafness is a hereditary defect led inventor Alexander Graham Bell to argue against Deaf contact with other Deaf ([1883] 1969). This is individual overt audism, though Bell's eugenic philosophy later contributed to institutionalized forms of audism.

Myers and Fernandes (2010) argue that acts of overt audism against Deaf individuals are mostly from the past. We assert that individual overt audism is a cruelty that occurs all too frequently when a Deaf person asks for an interpreter or for something to be repeated (or written down) and the other party responds by saying, "never mind." This is similar to the example of the cashier refusing to write things down for the Deaf customer and making a decision for them that everything was OK (see opening paragraph of this article).

Individual/Covert Audism

When the open practice of audism is not legitimated by law or other negotiated social arrangements, the individual audist is likely to disguise the structural barriers they erect or reinforce, assumptions of cultural deficiency, and act as if they do not reject Deafhood or Deaf ethnicity. A common example of this is the claim that they want to hire more Deaf, but there just are not any who are qualified (Humphries 1977). It is certainly possible there may be a lack of qualified Deaf applicants for jobs that required a specialized skill set. However, such excuses cannot be legitimated for positions that involve unskilled labor or when an employee makes a substantial effort to interfere with decisions made in the recruitment and selection process.

As with individual covert racism, a key feature of individual covert audism is the ease in which the audist can deny and hide the existence of their prejudices or their actions of discrimination. What further distinguishes these examples as audism is when hearing people fail to allow a Deaf person to determine the importance of the matter which is an assumption of privilege and power. When the sole responsibility for decision making is demanded or controlled by hearing people, it is an indicator that the Deaf person's rational thoughts are not trusted by the hearing individuals.

Individual/Aversive Audism

At this intersection of theory and practice, an egalitarian-minded individual claiming that Deaf people should have access to opportunity structures advocates inclusion, denies their prejudices. They usually claim that they have no privilege or seem embarrassed by it. The key feature that makes them audist is their cultural values of equality are contradicted by attempts to nullify Deaf *praxis*. Interpreters that begin to filter out key information, rather than interpret something in its entirety, fit in this category if done without permission of the Deaf client.

Institutional/Overt Audism

This is manifested through an institutional assertion of audiocentric privileges and attitudes. There is an overt advocacy of structural exclusion, schematic isolation, and rejection of Deaf *praxis*. Interpretations of Deaf history using colonial models (Lane [1992] 1999, [1984] 1989; Jankowski 1997) document a paternalistic and exploitative relationship. Two examples of this are the Milan convention of 1880 and college administrators treating English as the first language of Deaf when interpreting standardized testing scores.

The Milan convention institutionalized advocacy to put an end to the teaching or use of sign language in the classroom (Baynton 1996; Denison 1881; Gallaudet 1881; Tarra 1881). The consequences of this policy are analogous to Jim Crow segregation. Effort to suppress the use of sign language is not limited to the past. Although student enrollments in American sign language (ASL) courses are on the rise (Kaya 2010; Lewin 2010), opposition to increased offerings of sign language at universities highlights the postmodern attempts to devalue increased enrollments in sign language classes at colleges and universities (Giordano 2010).

Institutional/Covert Audism

As with individual covert expressions of audism, institutional covert expressions of audism generally are more difficult to support. In many employment situations, Deaf Americans do not have access to interpreters for meetings. Sometimes a manager or a coworker will write notes or try to communicate information to the Deaf employee, often selecting what information the manager or coworker deems to be important. Still, the Deaf employee does not have equal access. This is reflected in an inequitable amount of incidental capital. This is similar to the dinner table syndrome in which incidental capital and knowledge are not transmitted to Deaf children who are left out of conversations (Hauser et al. 2010). The diminished access to incidental capital reduces a Deaf employee's chances of being retained by employer. It also impacts chances of transfer and promotion.

Institutional/Aversive Audism

Departments of vocational rehabilitation service Deaf clients who are unable to obtain gainful employment. Depending on which state the client resides, the programs usually involve some financial assistance for training, books, and personal computers. They also focus on basic training in typing, how to fill out job applications, how to look for a job, and how to improve interview skills. Their primary goal is to provide an individual with the tools necessary to find and maintain gainful employment. Gainful employment is defined by the Social Security Administration as $720 per month or more than 80 hours of self-employment per month (Social Security Administration 2010).

Vocational rehabilitation caseworkers may believe themselves to be egalitarian. In rare instances, the caseworker may be Deaf themselves. Most caseworkers have minimal, if any, sign language skills. However, the same egalitarian-driven vocational rehabilitation counselors (caseworkers) are likely to reject Deaf *praxis* in instances when the goals of Deaf clients differ from the agency goals of rapid placement in the labor market. This is sometimes manifested whenever a caseworker declares that a Deaf person should not seek an advanced graduate degree. It could be that the caseworker sees the goals of a client as unrealistic or lofty, but it could also be that the caseworker is focused on high-impact, low-risk funding. Minimal rehabilitative time as a performance indicator of agency success inhibits educational goals. The higher the educational goals of the client, the longer it takes to implement that plan and the more costly it is for states. Focus on job skills that offer a chance to only minimally exceed administratively defined levels of gainful employment is detrimental to the socioeconomic status of the Deaf Community. When state agencies measure caseworker performance based on average length of time to train and place clients, solutions requiring less education or training are more likely to be pursued by the caseworker.

Metaphysical/Overt Audism

In its most overt form, the denial of human rights or property rights is based on an assumption that a Deaf person is simply not a person. Justinian codes that were discriminatory against Deaf people's rights provide examples of audism rationalized by a view of Deaf not being human (Gallaudet 1864; Gaw 1907). Within that legal framework, Deaf people were not permitted to own or inherit property, were prohibited from marrying, and were prevented from voting.

Although overt dehumanization of Deaf people is no longer a core value in American culture, elements of overt exclusion remain. Stern et al.'s (2002) research of attitudes about genetic testing reveals that hearing people value the life of unborn hearing babies more than the life of unborn Deaf babies. Assumptions that a Deaf person cannot be a dentist, doctor, or lawyer might result in individual or institutional exclusion. The assumption that a physical attribute of hearing is indicative of greater intellect leads to underrepresentation of Deaf students in postsecondary education.

Metaphysical/Covert Audism

In some cases, the assumptions of superiority and the diminution of Deaf rights are not as overt as denying admission of qualified Deaf applicants for employment or admission to graduate school. However, at this intersection the results are similar. Rather than claim animal-like behaviors, the idea of a Deaf person as incapable of managing their own affairs is now applied. The result is audiocentric-based stratification, a denial of Deaf autonomy, and imposition of heteronomy based on

pathological notions of deafness, physical deficiency, cognitive and intellectual deficiency, cultural deficiency, and linguistic privilege.

When Deaf couples are ready to start a family, the idea of euthenic counseling for that couple may seem attractive to much of the public. The idea of genetic counseling being recommended may appear to make sense, but it also resembles metaphysical covert audism. A great deal depends upon whether the person, usually an audiologist, referring the couple for genetic testing is simply insensitive when they make such a recommendation or whether discrimination is deliberate. Additionally, the very notion that a Deaf child is somehow less desirable for a Deaf couple or that the Deaf couple is not equipped to raise a Deaf child is built upon dehumanizing assumptions. If those dehumanizing beliefs are no longer maintained as asserted by hearing people, why are Deaf clients being referred to genetic counselor?

A suggestion of genetic counseling may or may not be an act of audism and, like institutional covert audism, it is very difficult to prove. For example, one hearing couple had a Deaf son. They sought genetic counseling. They found that they were both carriers for Connexin 26 gene, and they would have a high chance of having other Deaf children. Between them and the genetic counselor they agreed that they would use long-term birth control until they could see if their son was able to be raised successfully through cochlear implantation and auditory verbal therapy (AVT). AVT is an intensive type of speech and listening therapy where the Deaf child is not allowed to look at the speaker's face and must rely only on the sounds heard. This kind of therapy aligns methods used on Deaf children during the passage of oralism by proponents, such as Alexander Graham Bell, impacted Deaf education nationally. Many Deaf have been raised orally and never have been fully integrated into a hearing society that fully accepts them. This example is identified as covert because the genetic counselor directs the parents in this case. Directive counseling contradicts standards of nondirective approaches.

Metaphysical/Aversive Audism

Metaphysical aversive audists avoid the issues of inclusion and avoid questions of Deaf humanity but still deny Deaf autonomy and impose heteronomy. They inconsistently claim cultural superiority. Two questions that Deaf people are routinely asked are, "Do you read lips?" and "Were you born Deaf?" These questions involve a hearing person's assessment of a Deaf person's capacity to communicate with the dominant majority on the dominant majority's terms. It is often assumed that Deaf people must move toward an audiocentric center (Balkany, Hodges, and Luntz 1996; Loeb 1993; Sabatello 2005; Tucker 2004), rather than the non-Deaf move toward Deaf-centric communication. Bauman (2008) provides a revealing example of metaphysical aversive audism by noting:

> How does one also explain the common reaction of parents when they learn their baby is deaf: "I will never be able to hear my baby say the words, '*I love you*'"? Indeed, we

> must pause here to consider how normal and how strange this comment is. What is the difference between hearing the words 'I love you', and seeing the signs, "I love you"? Obviously, there must be a profound difference, because this was one of the primary reasons in the testimony of one mother, explaining why she put her six-month old infant under brain surgery to instill an implant in the child's ear to simulate sound. (N.p.)

This is metaphysical aversive because Deaf humanity is denigrated, but rather than label the baby inhuman, sign language is assumed to be inferior. In this example, sign language is not equally recognized as a language for communicating rational thoughts.

Laissez-Faire/Overt Audism

In postmodern times, the humanity of Deaf individuals is not openly denigrated as much as in previous years. Some may perceive the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1975, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 as having transformed the public view of deafness from a negative to a positive. Examples like Heather Whitestone winning the Miss America contest and Marlee Matlin winning an Oscar for her part in the movie *Children of a Lesser God*, as well the inclusion of Deaf themes in shows like Law and Order, ER and Switched at Birth are assumed by some to reflect a society-wide acceptance of Deaf American Culture. Yet, Whitestone supports acoupedic approaches (Life & Health Library 1995), and Matlin has since become a spokesperson for Starkey hearing aids (Robitaille 2011). Neither approach is emphasized by the Deaf Community. Additionally the plot of "Switched at Birth" is premised on pity and even infers that if raised in a different class the medical condition of meningitis that caused deafness would not have been present (ABC Family, n.d.).

Closer examination reveals an illusion of Deaf American autonomy while advocating heteronomy, a denial that audism exists, an assumption of physical and cognitive supremacy, and a denial of access to opportunity structures accompanied by the perpetuation of old stereotypes. Tucker (2004) declares Deaf people as human but also argues that a subhuman status can only be mitigated by rejecting cultural norms and values of the Deaf American Community.

One form of laissez-faire overt audism often occurs when a Deaf American identifies themselves as Deaf and the non-Deaf person they are trying to establish communications with blurts out, "I'm sorry." This statement elevates the speaker and serves as a reminder to the Deaf person that they are in a subordinated role. Another related problem is a hearing person deliberately ignoring a Deaf American. There is no attempt to avoid showing emotions. Ignoring the presence of a Deaf person highlights contempt. This is especially obvious when a hearing person displays their disgust for having to go through an interpreter and talks to the interpreter rather than the

Deaf person. Speaking to the interpreter they say, "Tell him [or her] I said, . . . , ." While some of that may be from a lack of familiarity of how to use an interpreter, and some of it may be from habit even after being told to stop that practice, it is reasonable to suggest that something is triggering a perception of the interpreter being a crutch rather than a facilitator of communications between two parties.

Laissez-Faire/Covert Audism

This intersection is similar to laissez-faire overt audism. It differs in that the acts of audism are more disguised. Laissez-faire overt audists blame Deaf Culture. Laissez-faire covert audists instead blame Deaf leaders for the perceived failure of the Deaf Community to fully access opportunity structures. Myers and Fernandes (2010) argue that Deaf Studies places emphasis on identifying hearing people as an enemy. While it is true the very nature of identity boundaries defines hearing people as "others," this does not mean that the Deaf Community views hearing people as enemies. What the Deaf Community is generally opposed to is any assumption that equality will arise from Deaf people surrendering their own identity and culture. Deaf people generally reject the idea that being treated equally must depend on behaving as if one is hearing.

Similar to the laissez-faire overt audist, the laissez-faire covert audist denies audism exists, claims cognitive, intellectual, and cultural supremacy, and perpetuates old stereotypes. An example of this is when Deaf educators who break through the structural barriers of education find their achievements diminished, invalidated, or ignored. A common example goes something like this, "Well that is nice that sign language works for you, but . . . ," followed by some derogatory comments about Deaf Culture. It is at this point that the laissez-faire covert audist starts advocating oral methods, AVT, cochlear implants, or identifies some anonymous blogger who is a critic of Deaf Culture in a way that presumably elevates the status of the critic. Accomplishments are treated as an anomaly of overcoming a disability rather than role model overcoming audism.

Laissez-Faire/Aversive Audism

As with overt and covert forms of laissez-faire audism, the laissez-faire aversive audists claim to support Deaf autonomy but impose heteronomy. They also deny that audism exists in postmodern times. They avoid the idea that structural inequalities exist and assume that mainstreaming is a success. Mainstreaming offered a promise of integrating Deaf with non-Deaf in the classroom but failed to live up to those expectations. Deaf children were too often placed in special education without adequate accommodations or commitment from the school district. Emphasis was placed on audiological plans and speech therapy rather than intellectual development or improved comprehension of core curricula. This influences an inequitable

access to educational opportunities and thereby exacerbates unemployment problems and contributes to a vicious cycle of prejudice and discrimination.

As with the laissez-faire overt and covert audists, the aversive audist perpetuates old stereotypes and promotes what is sometimes called a postdeaf identity. For example, Davis (2008) writes, that Deaf people might make up a racial group because they have inheritable traits and have history and culture. However, he argues that linguistically the notion of race does not include every Deaf person because many people grew up orally or use a sign other than ASL. It is true that ASL use is not a valid indicator of medical circumstance, nor is medical circumstance a valid predictor or indicator of ASL use (Mitchell and Karchmer 2005; Mitchell et al. 2006).

Davis (2008) also argued that the notion of *ethnos* rejects several people who are part of the Deaf Community, such as hearing children of Deaf adults, and Deaf children born into hearing families. Eckert resolved that issue by defining a community of linguistic interests that included members of the community of culture (2010). Since more than 90 percent of Deaf children having hearing parents, Davis (2008) assumes that focus on biological characteristics provides reason to dismiss the scholarly assertions of Deaf ethnicity. Such a view demonstrates an outdated and outmoded comprehension of the concept of ethnicity (Eckert 2010). Davis (2008) sought to position a blurry postdeaf hypothesis as a bridge between the Deaf Community and the disabled community. Eckert (2010) offers a counterargument based on Nagel's (1996) portfolio of multiple social identities.

Being Deaf American is an ethnic experience, not a disability (Lane 2002, 1995), though some Deaf may have multiple layers of identity and retain a "disability" label. It is understood that some disability activists may be dismayed by a Deaf American Community rejection of a "disabled" identity. We discuss this issue further in the next section by distinguishing audism from ableism.

Critics of Audism

We found two peer-reviewed articles by the same authors that offer criticism of audism. One article includes a general criticism of the concept of audism (Fernandes and Myers (2010) and the other offers specific criticisms of Bauman's (2004) concept of metaphysical audism (Myers and Fernandes 2010). Both articles question the benefits derived from scholars of Deaf Cultural Studies prioritizing audism. In the Fernandes and Myers (2010) article, the coauthors argue that focus on audism serves the maintenance of exclusionary boundaries. While boundary maintenance is a central tenet of any ethnic population, Fernandes and Myers tend to highlight exclusionary decisions made by members of the Deaf Community while generally ignoring micro-aggressions that lead to the exclusions, sometimes expulsion. Fernandes and Myers appear to miss the issue of the boundaries being a negotiated social arrangement. Rather than emphasizing a need for hearing people to question audist prejudices, Fernandes and Myers advocate a questioning of Deaf leadership. We are compelled to ask, where and how exactly are the scholarly articles in Deaf Cultural Studies

emphasizing boundary fortifications created and maintained by Deaf leadership? We find no such articles which suggest that. Markowicz and Woodward (1978) do apply Barth's ([1969] 1998) ideas of identity boundaries. The boundary construction and maintenance described by Barth concerns negotiated cultural constructions. Failure to recognize that identity boundaries are negotiated leads to analytic errors.

In their companion article, Myers and Fernandes (2010) dispute interpretations of Derrida (1974) by Bauman (2004). We are not convinced of scholarly merits of Myers and Fernandes (2010) arguments as they appear to miss the larger point of Bauman that an ideological schema which emphasizes the degradation of Deaf humanity drives a postmodern perpetuation of structural inequalities. In fact, Myers and Fernandes (2010) presume a declining significance of audism and operate with an assumption that colonialism is an outdated metaphor. The continuity of colonization is evidenced by the postmodern exclusion of Deaf Americans from progress toward a cultural democracy. What Myers and Fernandes (2010) appear to overlook is that the pathway to unity that they propose cannot be accomplished in the absence of a cultural democracy. Exclusive focus on pathways to unity leads to further analytic errors. The revised definition of metaphysical audism we provided addresses that need for a broader description of metaphysical audism as a schema and extends the relevance of the dominant hearing majority colonizing structures.

We can also note that Komesaroff and McLean (2006) use a more general term of "ableism" as applied in critical disability theory. Komesaroff and McLean use "ableism" to "describe discriminatory and exclusionary practices that preclude disabled people from opportunities for extensive involvement in social citizenship" (2006:88).[5] We understand that some may wish to conflate and juxtapose the terms and argue that audism is a form of ableism specific to the Deaf Community. While both audism and ableism are discriminatory, we are not yet convinced that the concept of ableism allows for the dual reality of assimilation and pluralism in a context that recognizes the realities of Deaf ethnicity. The focus of ableism appears to be exclusively on assimilation and presumes that assimilation into a mainstream setting will lead to greater upward mobility. The idea that assimilation leads to greater upward social mobility has recently been questioned by Gans (2007).

Audism is a discriminatory ideology that emphasizes coerced, yet unattainable, assimilation and which denies the plurality of a cultural democracy. Ableism on the other hand is by definition a discriminatory ideology that denies the possibility of assimilation. In the context of assimilation, there are areas that the Deaf and the "disAbled" communities share strategic goals as both ableism and audism inhibit self-determination, deny process of civic engagement, discourage intercultural responsibilities, and neglect ethical citizenship. However, the Deaf American Community also seeks and is denied those same ideals in a context of plurality that the concept of ableism does not appear to accommodate. Baynton (2008) notes:

> Deafness is ... very much a cultural construction that changes over time. But it is also a physical reality. The hearing people who have traditionally made the most

> of the decisions concerning the education of deaf children can spend entire careers contented with these constructions of deafness, unconstrained by physical reality, but deaf people cannot. When the cultural climate of the 19th century changed to make sign language objectionable, hearing people could simply say, ''Away with sign language,'' and imagine that this could be accomplished. Deaf people could not, for they are members of a species that by nature seeks optimal communication, and inhabitants of a sensory universe in which that end cannot be achieved by oral means alone. (p. 295)

Lawrence Siegel (2000) explains why Deaf identity should not be constructed either in the medical definition of disability or in reaction to that definition. He notes:

> A deaf or hard of hearing child [person] is, to some degree without hearing. And yet the term ''disabled'' may be a misnomer. That same child is fully capable of developing language—spoken or manual—and become a complete person. A communication difference is not the same as a communication disability. (part IV fn 6)

We can reasonably anticipate two other criticisms. The concept of laissez-faire audism is relatively new. First mention of laissez-faire audism was published by Eckert (2010). Yet, in that work Eckert did little to elaborate on the concept and for the most part asserted that it was analogous to laissez-faire audism as defined by Bobo, Kluegel, and Smith (1997) and Bobo and Smith (1998). We are not aware of any objections to that analogy, though we expect some claiming that Deaf are no longer dehumanized will resist being labeled in context of laissez-faire audism. We also anticipate a future need to provide even greater clarification as aspects of laissez-faire racism are further explored by sociologists.

Building upon the psychological concept of aversive racism (Pearson et al. 2009), we introduced the idea of aversive audism for this article. It is too early to predict criticisms though some objections from occupations dependent on the medicalization of Deaf are likely, especially by those who assume themselves to be aiding or rehabilitating Deaf clients. We can anticipate that some may wish to argue that raising the issue of aversive audism weakens attempts to ally the Deaf Community with the disabled community. We contend that the goal of disability rights activists to shut down institutions and assimilate disabled students is fundamentally incompatible with a plural Deaf agenda to maintain residential schools as Deaf space. The ''disAbled'' community and the Deaf Community do share a number of interests. Those interests and the strategic and adaptive responses to audism and ableism are an important area in which future research needs to be directed. Focus on similarities, without denial of differences, is desirable. Yet, we cannot ignore that ethnic identity has greater salience than physical attributes and is an epistemological assumption that liberates Deaf people from the misnomer of disability.

Limitations

The theory, practice, and intersections of audism described in this article are analytic tools designed to improve social scientific and public understanding of audism as a social problem in postmodern times. We have thus far limited broader discussion of the taken-for-granted audiocentric privileges of the dominant hearing majority. The near total absence of peer-reviewed literature discussing audism in even the most general of terms results in a heavy dependence upon focus on concepts that have emerged from race and ethnic theory that many of those who specialize in Deaf Cultural Studies will be unfamiliar with. Conversely, Deaf Cultural Studies retains terminologies and concepts that most sociologists are probably not familiar with. Although Merton's ([1949] 1968) advice to develop middle range theories is understood, broad generalizations are needed until sociology and Deaf Cultural Studies become more acquainted with one another.

As with racism and sexism, personal experiences of researchers can blur objectivity. We deliberately attempt to offer a Deaf-centric, interpretation of audism in a way that social scientists can understand. We do understand that our Deaf-centric perspective combined with a role of advocacy can cause discomfort to those seeking to shift the direction of Deaf Cultural Studies away from investigating Deaf *ethnos* and Deafhood as counter-hegemonic narratives to audism (Davis 2008; Fernandes and Myers 2010; Myers and Fernandes 2010). The postdeaf pathway leads to a number of analytic deficiencies due to a theoretically incoherent understanding of ethnicity (Eckert 2010) and a faulty assumption that emphasis on ethnic diversity is divisive. Diversity and democracy are not incompatible (Banks et al. 2005). As such, we prefer to offer a framework that opens the door for historical comparative analysis of the signing Deaf American ethnic community with other ethnic populations that experience high levels of prejudice and discrimination. Although some comparisons of racism and audism are included in this article, a more comprehensive historical comparative analysis is needed.

We understand that any historical comparative analysis that questions the dominant paradigms of medical industries is likely to also challenge the comfort levels of those seeking to promote "feel-good" solutions or "miracles" to what is incorrectly viewed as an affliction. We fully expect that those who benefit the most from disabling Deaf children will be defensive and sharply disagree with the framework we lay out in this article. However, we have more than a century of mendacious claims by organizations and professions benefiting from the disabling exploitation of Deaf children. The outcome of following the advice of hearing professionals was and is cataclysmic for Deaf education.

In this article, we attempted to explore and explain the meaning of audism and how it is practiced. This article did not address who is practicing audism, where, or why. Moreover, by focusing on a matrix of what and how, we operate with some fundamental assumptions about Deaf ethnic identity being multilayered and with borderlands and frontiers that are politicized, racialized, nationalized, gendered, and sexualized. Those assumptions need to be examined further especially in the context of Deaf ethnosexuality (Eckert n.d.).

Using the intersections of audism as a basis to critique a speech, film, novel, or play is problematic. For example, the same film may include multiple layers of audism. The 1970's television series the Hulk is an excellent example (Grushkin 2010). It is understood that some may prefer more recent examples. We chose this example because multiple levels of audism can be readily identified. The Deaf actor Lou Ferrigno emerges as a primitive, not quite a human creature that can barely grunt. The lack of spoken language is connected to being less than human. Finding out what people were thinking (or not thinking) and their social location in relationship to the Deaf Community is important when examining audism in the media.

As much as possible, we have attempted to translate the concept of audism into sociological terms. This is not always possible as the terms sometimes conflict with a Deaf-centric perspective. For example, the term institution is used very differently in sociology than in Deaf Cultural Studies where the term is usually limited to residential schools for the Deaf. Keeping in mind an audience that is primarily from the social sciences, we offer further explanations in such cases only if those explanations do not distract from the overall intent of this article. More research is needed.

Community-Based Solutions

If everyone, or nearly everyone, is an audist, what can be done to reduce the social injustices that accompany audism? Efforts to assert Deaf civil rights have focused almost exclusively on the context of disability rights even though being a member of the Deaf American Community is a linguistic construct (Lane 2002, 1995; Ladd 2003). While much of the Disability Rights Movement has "shifted the construct of disability" from the body to socially disabling conditions, the disability construction of deafness "neglects the fact that the DEAF-WORLD has a distinct culture and that deafness is constructed differently in that culture than in national cultures of hearing peoples" (Lane 1995:171). Rather than assert Deaf civil rights in the context of disability rights, a better approach would be to promote Deaf civil rights in the context of Deaf ethnicity, thereby emphasizing linguistic rights.

In order for the Deaf Community to be recognized, progress toward a cultural democracy in America, multiculturalism, equity, intercultural responsibility, and ethical citizenship must be rigorously pursued. Banks' ([1994] 2008) ideas of a multicultural curriculum inform us on how to make such a process successful. Banks ([1994] 2008) applies labels of contributive, additive, transformative, and social action to help the public understand the process toward a cultural democracy. Can those dimensions offer a framework to fight audism in academic settings? We propose these curriculum reforms to be integrated within the mainstream curricula.

Contributive

Students need to be exposed to cultures other than their own. Events that promote multicultural ideas have the potential to provide the public with a positive

experience with "others." When careful planning of such events include the Deaf Community and make Deaf Culture visible to others, then important gains toward including Deaf Americans in a multicultural democracy can occur. However, there are dangerous pitfalls to heritage months, awareness days, public proclamations, and diversity education events. Poorly planned events and impersonal proclamations can create a bureaucratic *illusion of inclusion* that kindles feel-good assumptions for some, but which also creates new tensions rather than the unity and interconnectedness that was originally intended by planners. Contributive events must be aligned with the other three dimensions if there is to be a substantive progress toward a multicultural democracy (See Banks [1994] 2008; Banks et al. 2005). Superficiality and poor planning of events end up being counterproductive by working against essential learning outcomes and principles of inclusive excellence. Such events like Deaf Awareness Week or celebrations of individual Deaf people are examples of a contributive approach. Usually this approach is the first step in curriculum reform, and it should not stop here because doing so will trivialize the Deaf Community and they could be viewed as having "strange and exotic characteristics and reinforces stereotypes and misconceptions" (Banks 2008:141).

Additive

As part of navigating around an *illusion of inclusion* we also advocate a focus on equity that includes an infusion of a Deaf-centric view. It is understood that suggesting the infusion of additive content into existing curriculum is a delicate matter that can push faculty into a defensive mode (Jenks, Lee, and Kanpol 2001). However, meaningful and lasting change cannot occur without some examination of Deaf epistemological and ontological assumptions. The key is introducing some relevance that sets a foundation for the transformative dimension.

In some courses, adding relevant content requires minimal effort. For example, while her relationship with the Deaf Community was admittedly strained, Harriet Martineau, the mother of sociology, was Deaf and can be mentioned in introductory courses and textbooks in sociology. Inclusion of historical content regarding inventor Alexander Graham Bell's eugenics beliefs and how he waged war against the Deaf Community can offer historical examples of extreme levels of audism. Philosophy courses can include mention or discussion of the metaphysics of audism and ethical questions about the AIC. Criminal justice courses can also emphasize ethics, especially in the context of mistreatment of Deaf victims and defendants by the criminal justice system. Psychology courses can include discussion Deaf recognition of microaggressions. Anthropology can increase focus on the preservation of ASL. There are no shortages of constructive additions. However, when adding a book, or unit that includes educating an audiocentric majority about the Deaf Community, there needs to be special attention focused on the addition because it could easily reflect on the Eurocentric view long employed by others. In order to engage in a Deaf-centric perspective, the material chosen should be evaluated for its critical perspective.

Transformative

Teaching intercultural responsibility and encouraging students to critically recognize the social injustice of audism as a human rights violation is an important task that the contributive and additive dimensions usually do not provide. Intercultural responsibility can be emphasized through intergroup dialogues. Intergroup dialogues are "a public process designed to involve individuals and groups in an exploration of societal issues such as politics, racism, religion, and culture that are often flash points for polarization and social conflict" (Dessel, Rogge, and Garlington 2006:304).

Courses in intergroup dialogues are offered at more than a 100 universities. Modeled after the intergroup dialogues at the University of Michigan (Program of Intergroup Relations, n.d.), these dialogues are designed to promote multicultural understanding. The Michigan model occurs in academic settings, but intergroup dialogues can take place in not-for-profit and public settings as well as in academic settings (Dessel, Rogue, and Garlington 2006). Including the polarizing flash points of audism in intergroup dialogues is needed. Discussions about audism can start by including what a Deaf person sees when the clerk refuses to write things down and compare it with what the clerk may see. From those discussions ethical citizenship requires social action.

The transformative approach requires changes to the basic assumptions of the curriculum. It also "enables students to view concepts, issues, themes and problems from several ethnic perspectives and points of view" (Banks 2008:141). In an ideal situation, the material taught would traverse between the Deaf Community as a group of ethnic and linguistic minority along with other minority groups. The understandings and experiences members of those other groups are valuable in helping decode the everyday experiences of Deaf people as well.

Social Action

Unfortunately, audism is something that everyone is capable of. Aligning the contributive, additive, and transformative dimensions with social action is likely to alienate those looking for feel-good solutions to audism. No one escapes the flash points of polarization that intergroup dialogues highlight. Some individuals and professions are more threatened than others, especially those whose depend upon audism for their income. Social actions that promote both diversity and commonalities help build a cultural democracy in which Deaf Americans can more freely participate. In this approach, students are confronted with the essence that these issues are unavoidable and learn how they can be a part of the solution or a part of the larger system that continues to oppress without power and privilege. Traditionally schools have not allowed for students to challenge contemporary ideology that can make social action a complicated effort in the long-term goal of aspiring efforts of reducing audism (Banks [1994] 2008).

Conclusion

After a recent visit to Gallaudet University the former President of the American Sociological Association, Erik Olin Wright, wrote, ''So, here is one way of thinking about the utopian aspiration: the utopian aspiration is for *full participatory inclusion in both the hearing and Deaf worlds without undermining the cultural vitality of the Deaf world*'' (2012:3). Audism is incompatible with a Deaf American real utopia as it undermines the cultural vitality of the Deaf American Community of Culture. Wright (2012), further noted,

> I responded by talking about the utopian aspiration being to create the conditions for individual persons to flourish. The issue is really about the relationship between institutions and individuals more than between groups and individuals. (p. 4)

Wright later asserts, ''We need a spirit in which we experiment and learn from the experiments rather than imagine we can have a blueprint where everything is perfect'' (2012:5). Every act of audism does not fit perfectly in the matrix of audism presented here in the context of what and how. Community-based solutions offer a unique opportunity to learn from what has worked and not worked when others have attempted to transform the relationship between institutions and individuals, especially the relationships between learning institutions and Deaf students, families and Deaf children, health care providers and Deaf patients, the criminal justice system and Deaf individuals, and nearly every institution in American society today. Real utopias require a leadership that emphasizes a social justice framework and equity-minded practitioners.

Perhaps the most troublesome aspect of audism is that even an innocent child signing ''I love you'' can be perceived by some parents as less valuable than a child who uses their voice to express those same words (Bauman 2008). Banks et al. note, ''racism is incompatible with democracy because civic equality is a defining characteristic of a democratic society'' (2005:21). Audism inhibits cultural democracy and without cultural democracy there can be no political democracy. Educators must recognize the audiocentric assumptions and attitudes, the social problem, and the social injustices that the term audism describes. Transformative and civic engagement begins with bridging Deaf Cultural Studies with the social sciences. Meaningful social actions must follow.

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Notes

1. Since the Deaf American Community is an ethnic community (Eckert 2005, 2010; Lane 2005; Lane et al. 2011), we use an uppercase D or Deaf whenever describing Deaf Americans. A lowercase d or Deaf is used when not describing Deaf Americans in an ethnic context.
2. For detailed explanation of the community-based prerequisites of Deaf ethnicity see Eckert (2010:324-327).
3. Eckert (2010) focused on the classical Greek concept of ethnos in defining and its three prerequisites of *Hómaemon* (community of origins), *Homóglosson* (linguistic communities), and *Homóthreskon* (community of culture) when defining Deaf ethnicity.
4. Complementing a Deaf person's speech might be assumed by hearing people as a friendly gesture, but something categorically rejected by Deaf people (Grushkin 2011).
5. This definition is based on Castañeda and Peters (2000).

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