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"A Silent Exile on This Earth": The Metaphorical Construction of Deafness in the Nineteenth Century

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DEAFNESS IS A CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION AS WELL AS A PHYSICAL phenomenon. The difference between the hearing and the deaf is typically construed as simply a matter of audiology. For most hearing people, this is the common sense of the matter—the difference between the deaf and the hearing is that the deaf cannot hear. The result is that the relationship between the deaf and the hearing appears solely as a natural one. The meanings of "hearing" and "deaf" are not transparent, however. As with gender, age, race, and other such categories, physical difference is involved, but physical differences do not carry inherent meanings. They must be interpreted and cannot be apprehended apart from a culturally created web of meaning. The meaning of deafness is contested, although most hearing and many deaf people are not aware that it is contested, and it changes over time. It has, that is to say, a history.[1]

The meaning of deafness changed during the course of the nineteenth century for educators of the deaf, and the kind of education deaf people received changed along with it. Until the 1860s, deafness was most often described as an affliction that isolated the individual from the Christian community. Its tragedy was that deaf people lived beyond the reach of the gospel. After the 1860s, deafness was redefined as a

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condition that isolated people from the national community. Deaf people were cut off from the English-speaking American culture, and *that* was the tragedy. The remedies proffered for each of these kinds of isolation were dramatically different. During the early and middle decades of the nineteenth century, sign language was a widely used and respected language among educators at schools for the deaf. By the end of the century it was widely condemned and banished from many classrooms. In short, sign language was compatible with the former construction of deafness, but not with the latter.

Schools for deaf people were first established in the United States by Evangelical Protestant reformers during the Second Great Awakening. They learned sign language, much as other missionaries of the time learned Native American or African languages, and organized schools where deaf people could be brought together and given a Christian education. The first school, the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb at Hartford, Connecticut, was founded in 1817 by the Reverend Thomas H. Gallaudet, with a young deaf man from Paris, Laurent Clerc, as his head teacher.

With the creation of this residential school, and the others which soon followed, the deaf in the United States may be said to have become the Deaf; that is, hearing-impaired individuals became a cultural and linguistic community.[2] To be sure, wherever sufficient numbers of deaf people have congregated, a distinctive community has come into existence—we know of one such community in eighteenth-century Paris.[3] These early schools, however, gathered together larger numbers of deaf people than ever before, most of them in adolescence, placed them in a communal living situation, and taught them formally not only about the world but also about themselves. Those from small towns and the countryside—the majority—met other deaf people for the first time and learned, also for the first time, how to communicate beyond the level of pantomime and gesture. They encountered the surprising knowledge that they had a history and an identity shared by many others. Embracing a common language and common experience, they began to create an American deaf community.[4]

Beginning in the 1860s and continuing into the twentieth century, another group of reformers sought to unmake that community and culture. Central to that project was a campaign to eliminate the use of sign language in the classroom (referred to in the nineteenth century as the philosophy of "manualism") and replace it with the *exclusive*

use of lip-reading and speech (known as "oralism"). Residential schools for the deaf had been manualist from their beginnings, conducting their classes in sign language, finger-spelling, and written English. Lessons in speech and lip-reading were added to curriculums in most schools for the deaf by the latter decades of the century, but this was not the crux of the issue for those who called themselves oralists. They were opposed to the use of sign language in any form, for any purpose.[5]

Afraid that deaf people were isolated from the life of the nation, and comparing the deaf community to communities of immigrants, oralists charged that the use of sign language encouraged deaf people to associate principally with each other and to avoid the hard work of learning to communicate with people who were *speaking* English. All deaf people, they thought, should be able to learn to communicate orally. They believed that a purely oral education would lead to greater assimilation, which they believed to be a goal of the highest importance.

The larger goals of the oralist movement were not achieved—the deaf community was not unmade, and sign language continued to be used within it. Most deaf people rejected the oralist philosophy, and maintained an alternative vision of what being deaf meant for them. The deaf community did not, however, control the schools, and the campaign to eliminate sign language from the classroom was largely successful. By the turn of the century, nearly 40 percent of American deaf students were taught without the use of sign language, and over half were so taught in at least some of their classes.[6] The number of children taught entirely without sign language was nearly 80 percent by the end of World War I, and oralism remained orthodox until the 1970s.[7]

Why did educators of the deaf take this road? While this widespread and rapid shift away from the use of sign language has been well documented and described, it has yet to be adequately explained. Oralists at the turn of the century, looking back upon the ascendance of their cause and the demise of manualism, explained it in terms of the march of progress.[8] Improved techniques and knowledge made the use of sign language no longer necessary, they believed. This remained the dominant view in the field until the efficacy of purely oral education began to be questioned in the 1960s and 1970s. Since most recent research and practice supports an eclectic approach that includes the use of sign language—and since, as one recent writer said with only

slight exaggeration, the "Old Orthodoxy of oral-or-nothing paternalism has died a richly deserved death"—the progress model has become rather less tenable.[9]

Most deaf adults and their organizations in the nineteenth century strenuously opposed the elimination of sign language from the classroom.[10] At the Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf in 1890, an angry deaf member pointed out that "Chinese women bind their babies' feet to make them small; the Flathead Indians bind their babies' heads to make them flat." Those who prohibit sign language in the schools, he declared, "are denying the deaf their free mental growth . . . and are in the same class of criminals."[11]

Scholars today in the new and still very small field of deaf history have, in general, agreed with this assessment, and have been uniformly critical of oralism. Oralists, it has been argued, were in many cases woefully ignorant of deafness. Their faith in oralism was based more upon wishful thinking than evidence, and they were often taken in by charlatans and quacks.[12] Others, such as Alexander Graham Bell, were more knowledgable but motivated by eugenicist fears that intermarriage among the deaf, encouraged by separate schools and the use of sign language, would lead to the "formation of a deaf variety of the human race." Bell's prestige, leadership skills, and dedication to the cause gave a tremendous boost to oralism.[13] Opponents of sign language believed that its use discouraged the learning of oral communication skills; hearing parents, eager to believe their deaf children could learn to function like hearing people, supported its proscription. State legislators were persuaded by claims that oral education would be less expensive.[14] Finally, "on the face of it, people are quite afraid of human diversity. . . . [This] fear of diversity leads majorities to oppress minorities"; the suppression of sign language was one more example of the suppression of a minority language by an intolerant majority.[15]

The question of why schools adopted and continued to practice manualism for over half a century has been given less attention. Manualism has seemed less in need of explanation than oralism; since it is closer to current practice, the manualist philosophy of the nineteenth century has simply come to seem more sensible. With oralism now widely rejected, the focus has been upon explaining how and why such a philosophy gained ascendance.[16] Why manualism took root so readily in the first half of the nineteenth century and why attempts to establish oral schools were unsuccessful until the decades after the Civil War

are questions that have not been adequately addressed. Rather than treating manualism as merely sensible and oralism as an unfortunate aberration, seeing both as embedded in historically created constructions of deafness can illuminate them as well as the reform eras of which they were a part.

Manualism and oralism were expressions of two very different reform eras in American history. Manualism was a product of the Evangelical, romantic reform movements of the antebellum years, which emphasized moral regeneration and salvation. Reformers of this period usually traced social evils to the weaknesses of individuals and believed that the reformation of society would come about only through the moral reform of its members. The primary responsibility of the Evangelical reformer, then, was to educate and convert individuals. The Christian nation they sought, and the millennial hopes they nurtured, came with each success one step closer to fruition.

Oralism was the product of a much changed reform atmosphere after the Civil War. While Protestantism continued to be an important ingredient, the emphasis shifted from the reform of the individual to, among other things, the creation of national unity and social order through homogeneity of language and culture. Much reform of the time, oralism included, reflected widespread fears of unchecked immigration and expanding, multiethnic cities. Deaf people in both eras served as convenient, and not always willing, projection screens for the anxieties of their times. The history of deaf education is as much, or more, about concerns over national identity and selfhood as it is about pedagogical technique or theory.

Oralists and manualists have generally been portrayed as standing on opposite sides of an ideological fault line. While in many ways accurate, this formulation obscures fundamental similarities between them. Both created images of deaf people as outsiders. Implicit in these images was the message that deaf people depended upon hearing people to rescue them from their exile. And both based their methods of education upon the images they created. Where they differed was in their definition of the "outsider," and of what constituted "inside" and "outside." For the manualists, the Christian community was the measure, while for the oralists it was an American nation defined in the secular terms of language and culture. Deafness, constructed as a condition that excluded people from the community, was defined and redefined according to what their hearing educators saw as the essential community.

* * *

The manualist image of deafness can be seen in the pages of what was in 1847 a remarkable new journal. Published by the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb and proclaiming itself the first of its kind in the English language, the *American Annals of the Deaf and Dumb* was intended to be not only a journal of education but also a "treasury of information upon all questions and subjects related, either immediately or remotely, to the deaf and dumb." The editors noted that not only did "the deaf and dumb constitute a distinct and, in some respect, strongly marked class of human beings," they also "have a history peculiar to themselves . . . sustaining relations, of more or less interest, to the general history of the human race." The implication of this, and of the editors' suggestion of such topics for investigation as the "social and political condition in ancient times" of the deaf, and "a careful exposition of the philosophy of the language of signs," was that deaf people were not so much handicapped *individuals* as they were a collectivity, a people—albeit, as we shall see, an inferior one, and one in need of missionary guidance.[17]

In "The Natural Language of Signs," Gallaudet wrote that there was "scarcely a more interesting sight than a bright, cheerful deaf-mute, of one or two years of age" in the midst of its hearing family. "The strangeness of his condition, from the first moment of their discovering it, has attracted their curiosity. They wonder at it." Gallaudet and others of his generation also wondered at the deaf. The source of their wonderment, and of the "greatest delight" for the family, was the child's efforts "to convey his thoughts and emotions . . . by those various expressions of countenance, and descriptive signs and gestures, which his own spontaneous feelings lead him to employ." For Gallaudet, "substantial good has come out of apparent evil," for this family would now have the privilege of learning "a novel, highly poetical, and singular descriptive language, adapted as well to spiritual as to material objects."[18]

Gallaudet praised the beauty of sign language, the "picture-like delineation, pantomimic spirit, variety, and grace . . . the transparent beaming forth of the soul . . . that merely oral language does not possess." Not only should the language of signs not be denied to the deaf, but it should also be given as a gift to the hearing as well, in order to "supply the deficiencies of our oral intercourse [and] perfect the communion of one soul with another." Superior to spoken language

in its beauty and emotional expressiveness, sign language brought "kindred souls into a much more close and conscious communion than . . . speech can possibly do."[19]

Such a language was ideal for alleviating what Gallaudet saw as the overriding problem facing deaf people: they lived beyond the reach of the gospel. They knew nothing of God and the promise of salvation, nor had they a firm basis for the development of a moral sense. An essential part of education was learning "the necessity and the mode of controlling, directing, and at times subduing" the passions. Gallaudet emphasized the need to develop the conscience, to explain vice and virtue, to employ both hope and fear and "the sanctions of religion" in order to create a moral human being.[20]

The "moral influence" with which Gallaudet was concerned, however, could not "be brought to bear . . . without language, and a language intelligible to such a mind." Learning to speak and read lips was a "long and laborious process, even in the comparatively few cases of complete success." Communication between student and teacher, furthermore, was not sufficient. A language was needed with which "the deaf-mute can intelligibly conduct his private devotions, and join in social religious exercises with his fellow pupils."[21]

For Gallaudet, then, to educate was to impart moral and religious knowledge. Such teaching was not primarily directed to the mind through abstractions—rather, "the heart is the principle thing which we must aim to reach"; oral language may better communicate abstraction, he believed, but "the heart claims as its peculiar and appropriate language that of the eye and countenance, of the attitudes, movements, and gestures of the body."[22] Gallaudet described the progress of the student with the use of sign language:

> Every day he is improving in this language; and this medium of moral influence is rapidly enlarging. His mind becomes more and more enlightened; his conscience more and more easily addressed; his heart more and more prepared to be accessible to the simple truths and precepts of the Word of God.[23]

The interdependence of the mind, the heart, and the conscience, of both knowledge and morality, run through these teachers' writings. Morality, and the self-discipline it required, depended upon a knowledge of God's existence as well as a heartfelt conviction that the soul was immortal and that the promise of its salvation was real. What was

more, the proper development of the moral nature not only depended upon knowledge but in its turn also stimulated the higher faculties to yet greater learning.[24]

As David Walker Howe has recently pointed out, achieving inner self-discipline was important for Evangelicals not just for the sake of self-control, but for the liberation of the self as well. Liberation and control were seen by antebellum Evangelicals as "two sides of the same redemptive process." Evangelicals, according to Howe, "were typically concerned to redeem people who were not functioning as free moral agents: slaves, criminals, the insane, alcoholics, children."[25] The contributors to the *Annals* in its first year clearly placed deaf people in this same category: outsiders to the Christian community. Teachers at the Asylum at Hartford, "preeminently a Christian institution" dedicated to teaching those "truths which are received in common by all evangelical denominations," bemoaned the fact that "in this Christian land" there were still deaf people living "in utter seclusion from the direct influences of the gospel."[26] These deaf people "might almost as well have been born in benighted Asia, as in this land of light," and were "little short of a community of heathen at our very doors."[27]

Throughout this first year of the journal, images of imprisonment, darkness, blankness, and isolation were repeatedly used to describe the condition of deaf people without education. These metaphors were interconnected, as was made plain by the descriptions of the uninstructed deaf by the Reverend Collins Stone, a teacher at the Hartford school: "scarcely a ray of intellectual or moral light ever dawns upon his solitude"; "his mind is a perfect blank"; if "he dies unblessed by education, he dies in this utter moral darkness"; we must "open the doors of his prison, and let in upon him the light of truth," for the terrible fact is that "even in the midst of Christian society, he must grope his way in darkness and gloom . . . unless some kind hand penetrates his solitude."[28]

The image of the animal appeared frequently as well. Stone wrote that the uneducated deaf were reduced "to the level of mere animal life" because the "great facts and truths relating to God and a future state" are unknown to them. What "makes us differ from the animals and things around us" is the possession of a soul and an understanding of what that possession means. Without that understanding, deaf people were capable of nothing higher than "mere animal enjoyment."[29] With the use of sign language, however as J. A. Ayres believed, "it will

be seen at once that the deaf-mute is restored to his position in the human family, from which his loss had well-nigh excluded him."[30]

Writer after writer used the same or similar metaphors, with the same emphasis upon the knowledge of God and the immortality of the soul as that which distinguishes the human from the nonhuman. The Reverend Luzerne Ray, speculating upon the "Thoughts of the Deaf and Dumb before Instruction," asked the reader to imagine a child born with no senses, to imagine that "the animal life of this infant is preserved, and that he grows up to be, in outward appearance at least, a man." Ray asked, "can we properly say that there would be any mind at all? . . . [C]ould there be any conscious self-existence or self-activity of a soul imprisoned within such a body?" He concluded that to answer in the affirmative would be to succumb to "the lowest form of materialism." While no such person had ever existed, uneducated deaf people living "in a state of isolation the most complete that is ever seen among men" came close.[31] Henry B. Camp, writing on the "Claims of the Deaf and Dumb upon Public Sympathy and Aid," lamented the "darkness and solitude" of the person who lives in a "condition but little superior to that of the brute creation," with "no key to unlock the prison of his own mind."[32]

For the manualists, then, the "real calamity for the deaf-mute" was "not that his ear is closed to the cheerful tones of the human voice"; and it was "not that all the treasures of literature and science, of philosophy and history . . . are to him as though they were not"; the calamity was that "the light of divine truth never shines upon his path."[33] The darkness, the emptiness, the solitude, were all of a particular kind: uneducated deaf people were cut off from the Christian community and its message.

A peculiar duality that runs through their writings illuminates the meaning of deafness for these teachers. Deafness was an affliction, they believed, but they called it a blessing as well. One explained that the only unusual aspect of educating deaf people on moral and religious matters was that they had "a *simplicity* of mental character and an *ignorance* of the world, highly favorable to the entrance and dominion of this highest and best motive of action" (emphasis added). The properly educated deaf person, he believed, will exhibit "a pleasing combination of strength and simplicity." The strength would come from proper education, but the simplicity was inherent in the deafness; it "flows naturally from that comparative isolation of the mind which prevents its being formed too much on the model of others."[34]

Another writer touched on the same duality when explaining the "beautiful compensation" for deafness:

> Deprived of many blessings, he is also shut out from many temptations, and it is rare indeed that the claims of religion and the reasonings of morality fail to secure the ready assent both of his heart and his understanding.[35]

Deaf people were thought to have a great moral advantage in that they have been left relatively unscathed by a corrupt world. They are innocent, rather than living in darkness, and their deafness is an asylum rather than a prison. Deafness, then, confers both the benefit of innocence and the burden of ignorance: two sides of the same coin. It is a positive good if temporary and discovered by the right people but an evil if neglected and left uncultivated. The difference between virginity and barrenness (whether of women or of land) is analogous—the first is a blessed state, the second a calamity. The deaf are blessed if virginal, innocent, and fertile, but would be accursed if left forever in that state. They would then be barren. Innocence holds within it the germ of knowledge and salvation. Ignorance is only darkness.

The dark side was expressed in a poem by a former student at the Hartford school, published in the *Annals:*

> I moved—a silent exile on this earth;
> As in his dreary cell one doomed for life,
> My tongue is mute, and closed ear heedeth not;
>
> Deep silence over all, and all seems lifeless;
> The orators exciting strains the crowd
> Enraptur'd hear, while meteor-like his wit
> Illuminates the dark abyss of mind—
> Alone, left in the dark—*I hear them not.*
>
> The balmy words of God's own messenger
> Excite to love, and troubled spirits sooth—
> Religion's dew-drops bright—*I feel them not.*[36]

But some months later, a poem entitled "The Children of Silence" was published in response "to show that there are times and circumstances," in the editor's words, "when not to be able to hear must be accounted a blessing rather than a misfortune":

> Not for your ears the bitter word
> Escapes the lips once filled with love;
> The serpent speaking through the dove,

Oh Blessed! ye have never heard.
Your minds by mercy here are sealed
From half the sin in man revealed.[37]

The use of "silent" and "silence" in these poems embodies the contradictions in the innocence and ignorance metaphor. It was (and is) a common description of the world of deafness, and at first glance would seem a common sense description as well. Deaf people use it as well as hearing people. In the nineteenth century, for example, journals by and for the deaf had such titles as the *Silent Worker* and *Silent World*. Today there are newspapers such as the *Silent News,* and clubs with such names as the Chicago Silent Dramatic Club.

"Silence" is not a straightforward or unproblematic description of the experience of a deaf person, however. First, few deaf people hear nothing. Most have hearing losses which are not uniform across the entire range of pitch—they will hear low sounds better than high ones, or vice versa. Sounds will often be quite distorted, but heard nevertheless. And second, for those who do not hear, what does the word silence signify? Unless they once heard and *became* deaf, the word is meaningless as a description of their experience. (Even for those who once heard, as the experience of sound recedes further into the past, so too does the significance of silence diminish.) Silence is experienced by the hearing as an absence of sound. For those who have never heard, deafness is not an absence. To be deaf is *not* to not hear for most profoundly deaf people, but a social relation—that is, a relation with other human beings, those called "hearing" and those called "deaf." What the deaf person sees in these other people is not the presence or absence of hearing, not their soundfulness or their silence, but their mode of communication—they sign, or they move their lips. That is why deaf people in the nineteenth century typically referred to themselves not as deaf people but as "mutes." That is why the sign still used today that is translated as "hearing person" is made next to the mouth, not the ear, and literally means "speaking person."

Silence is a metaphor rather than a simple description of the experience of most deaf people.[38] Deafness is a relationship, not a state, and the use of the "silence" metaphor is one indication of how the relationship is dominated by the hearing. Hearing is defined as the universal, and deafness, therefore, as an absence, as an emptiness. Silence can represent innocence and fertility, and silence can represent darkness and barrenness. In both cases it is empty. In both cases it

needs to be filled. Images such as these—images of light and dark, of solitude and society, of animal and human—construct a world in which deaf people lack what hearing people alone can provide.

The absence which defined deaf people was framed as a place in which the deaf lived: a darkness within which they were sightless, a prison from which they could not escape, a blankness and ignorance which denied them humanity. But of course the converse was also true: the problem was not only that the deaf could not see *out* but also that the hearing could not see *in*. The minds of deaf people represented impenetrable dark spaces within Christian society—or better, *without* Christian society—of which the hearing had little knowledge. Sign language was the light that could illuminate the darkness.

* * *

In 1899, the *Association Review* was established as the journal of the American Association to Promote the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf, the first president of which was Alexander Graham Bell. In the introduction to the first issue, the editor Frank Booth was able to state confidently that "the spirit prevalent in our schools is one entirely favorable to speech for the deaf, and to more and better speech teaching so soon as more favorable conditions may warrant and permit."[39] Indeed, with 55 percent of their teachers now speech teachers (as compared with 24 percent in 1886, the first year for which we have figures), the acquisition of speech was rapidly becoming the preeminent aim in the education of the deaf.[40]

The times were not only favorable to speech but quite hostile to sign language. Nearly 40 percent of American deaf students now sat in classrooms from which sign language had been banished. Within twenty years it would be 80 percent.[41] Deaf teachers were rarely hired by the schools anymore and made up less than 20 percent of the teaching corps, down from more than twice that number in the 1850s and 1860s.[42] Those who remained were increasingly confined to teaching industrial education courses, to which students who were "oral failures" were relegated. The new teacher training school established in 1891 at Gallaudet College, a liberal arts college primarily for deaf students, itself refused, as a matter of policy, to train deaf teachers.[43] Booth himself would forbid the use of sign language at the Nebraska school when he became its superintendent in 1911. "That language is not now used

in the school-room," he wrote to Olaf Hanson, president of the National Association of the Deaf, "and I hope to do away with its use outside of the school-room."[44]

Booth was certainly correct that the "spirit now prevalent" was much changed. The *American Annals of the Deaf* at the turn of the century reflected the changed climate as well. Educational philosophy had shifted ground so dramatically that unabashed manualism had nearly disappeared from its pages, with the majority of opinion ranging between oralism and what was called the "combined system." The definition of the latter varied widely. In some cases it meant supplementing speech with fingerspelling but forbidding sign language; in others, speech alone was used in the classroom, with sign language permitted outside; in many cases it meant using speech with all young students and resorting later to sign language only with older "oral failures." To Edward M. Gallaudet, son of Thomas and first president of Gallaudet College, the combined system meant preserving sign language but using it in the classroom "as little as possible." He defended this tiny remnant of his father's world in an article bearing the plaintive title "Must the Sign-Language Go?"[45]

The new aversion to sign language had many causes, but a profound change in the images and meanings of deafness during the second half of the nineteenth century was fundamental. The opening article of the first issue of the *Association Review* is revealing. Reprinted from an address delivered before a meeting of the Association by John M. Tyler (president of Amherst College), "The Teacher and the State" was concerned with what teachers could do about two related national problems: the new immigration and the decline in law and order. There was a "struggle between rival civilizations" within America. "Shall her standards and aims, in one word her civilization, be those of old New England, or shall they be Canadian or Irish, or somewhat better or worse than any of these?" The burden rested upon the teachers, for " 'Waterloo was won at Rugby' [and] it was the German schoolmaster who triumphed at Sedan." Furthermore, teachers could no longer focus on "purely intellectual training," for "[t]he material which we are trying to fashion has changed; the children are no longer of the former blood, stock, and training." Teachers must make up for the new immigrants' deficiencies as parents, he warned: "the emergency remains and we must meet it as best we can." If they do not, the "uncontrolled child grows into the lawless youth and the anarchistic adult."[46]

Tyler's speech was not directly about deaf people, but it must have resonated with his audience of educators of the deaf. Metaphors of deafness by the turn of the century were no longer ones of spiritual darkness but instead conjured images of foreign enclaves within American society. Articles about deaf people in the *Association Review* might just as well have been about immigrant communities, with metaphors of foreignness at work on several levels. First there was the problem of what was now commonly referred to as "the foreign language of signs."[47] Educators worried that if deaf people "are to exercise intelligently the rights of citizenship, then they must be made people of our language."[48] They insisted that "the English language must be made the vernacular of the deaf if they are not to become a class unto themselves—foreigners among their own countrymen."[49] Oralism was about much more than just speech and lip-reading. It was part of a larger argument about language and the maintenance of a national community.

The image of foreignness was not confined to the pages of the *Association Review*. A parent wrote to the superintendent of the Illinois Institution in 1898, requesting information about methods of deaf education. The answer she received was that there were two: "the English language method," and the method in which "the English language is considered a foreign language," taught through "translation from the indefinite and crude sign language."[50]

"Sign language is an evil," avowed a teacher from the Pennsylvania Institution for Deaf-Mutes, one of the first state schools to adopt the oralist philosophy, in an 1892 article in the *Silent Educator*. The mastery of English was not, by itself, the point, he argued. Sign language made deaf people "a kind of foreigners in tongue," and this was so whether or not they also mastered English. Deaf people who signed could not be full members of the English-speaking American community; they were, instead, "a sign making people who have studied English so as to carry on business relations with those who do not understand signs." Using another language was the offense, for "English is a jealous mistress. She brooks no rival. She was born to conquer and to spread all over the world. She has no equal."[51]

This was an extreme example of a usually more subtle nationalism expressed by opponents of sign language. Most oralists did not exhibit overt xenophobia, insist upon Anglo-Saxon superiority, nor advocate one worldwide language. Most emphasized their belief that sign

language isolated deaf people and made the deaf person an outsider who was "not an Englishman, a German, a Frenchman, or a member of any other nationality, but, intellectually, a man without a country."[52] They were convinced and deeply troubled by the conviction that signing deaf people existed apart and isolated from the life of the nation. An earlier generation of educators had believed that sign language liberated deaf people from their confinement, but for oralists it was the instrument of their imprisonment.

Even some hearing educators who had long supported sign language had begun to criticize what they termed the "clannishness" of deaf people. In 1873, Edward M. Gallaudet had condemned the conventions, associations and newspapers of deaf people, as well as their intermarriage, for discouraging the intercourse of the deaf "with their race and the world." It was injurious to the best interests of the deaf when they came to consider themselves "members of society with interests apart from the mass, . . . a 'community,' with its leaders and rulers, its associations and organs, and its channels of communication." Gallaudet's concerns were similar to those of the oralists, except that sign language was, he thought, still necessary—a "necessary evil." It could not be relinquished, he argued, because few people profoundly deaf from an early age could become proficient enough at oral communication for a full education or participation in religious services.[53] Oralists escalated the charge of "clannishness" to "foreignness," however, a term with more ominous connotations.

This was a metaphor of great significance for Americans of the late nineteenth century. References to deaf people as foreigners coincided with the greatest influx of immigrants in U.S. history. The new immigrants were concentrated in urban areas, and no major city was without its quilt pattern of immigrant communities. Many came from eastern and southern Europe, bringing with them cultural beliefs and habits that native-born Americans often regarded as peculiar, inferior, or even dangerous. As Frederick E. Hoxie has noted in his study of the Indian assimilation movement (a movement contemporaneous with and sharing many characteristics with the oralist movement), in the late nineteenth century "growing social diversity and shrinking social space threatened many Americans' sense of national identity."[54] Nativism, never far from the surface of American life, resurged with calls for immigration restriction, limits on the employment of foreigners, and the proscription of languages other than English in the schools.

To say that sign language made deaf people appear foreign was to make a telling point for these educators. That foreignness should be avoided at all costs was generally expressed as a self-evident truth.

"Foreignness" had two related meanings. As with the manualists' metaphor of darkness, this was a metaphor with two centers. Looking from the outside in, the metaphor suggested a space within American society that was mysterious to outsiders, into which hearing Americans could see only obscurely if at all. As such it posed vague threats of deviance from the majority culture. Looking from the inside out—that is, empathizing with what the oralists imagined to be the experience of deaf people—it seemed a place in which deaf people became trapped, from which they could not escape without assistance. "Foreignness" was both a threat and a plight. The deaf community, as one of a host of insular and alien-appearing communities, was seen as harmful to both the well-being of the nation and to its own members.

For many hearing people, what they saw looking in from the outside was troubling. Journals and magazines such as the *Silent World* and the *Deaf-Mute Journal,* written and printed by deaf people for a deaf audience, were thriving in every state. Deaf adults across the country were actively involved in local clubs, school alumnae associations, and state and national organizations. They attended churches together where sign language was used. The great majority found both their friends and their spouses within the deaf community. According to the research of Bell, the rate of intermarriage was at least 80 percent, a fact that caused him great alarm.[55]

The two chief interests of Bell's life, eugenics and deaf education, came together over this issue. In a paper published by the National Academy of Sciences in 1884, Bell warned that a "great calamity" for the nation was imminent due to the high rate of intermarriage among the deaf: the "formation of a deaf variety of the human race." The proliferation of deaf clubs, associations, and periodicals, with their tendency to "foster class-feeling among the deaf," were ominous developments. Already, he warned, "a special language adapted for the use of such a race" was in existence, "a language as different from English as French or German or Russian."[56]

While other oralists would call for legislation to "prevent the marriage of persons who are liable to transmit defects to their offspring," Bell believed such legislation would be difficult to enforce.[57] His solution was this: "*(1) Determine the causes that promote intermarriages*

among the deaf and dumb; and (2) remove them" [emphasis his]. Bell identified two principal causes: "segregation for the purposes of education, and the use, as a means of communication, of a language which is different from that of the people." Indeed, he wrote, "if we desired to create a deaf variety of the race . . . we could not invent more complete or more efficient methods than those."[58]

Bell's fears were unfounded. His findings, published in the year of Gregor Mendel's death and before the latter's research on genetic transmission had become known, were based upon a faulty understanding of genetics. Others soon countered his empirical evidence as well; most deafness was not heritable, and marriages between deaf people produced on average no greater number of deaf offspring than mixed marriages of deaf and hearing partners.[59] But the image of an insular, inbred, and proliferating deaf community, with its own "foreign" language and culture, became a potent weapon for the oralist cause. Bell was to become one of the most prominent and effective crusaders against both residential schools and sign language.[60]

More often, oralists emphasized the empathetic side of their metaphor. They insisted that their intent was to rescue deaf people from their confinement, not to attack them. Deaf adults, however, actively defended the space from which they were urged to escape and from which deaf children were supposed to be rescued. But just as deaf people resisted the oralist conception of their needs, oralists likewise resisted the portrayal of themselves by deaf leaders as "enemies of the true welfare of the deaf."[61] As did the advocates of Indian and immigrant assimilation, they spoke of themselves as the "friends of the deaf." They tried to project themselves into that mysterious space they saw deaf people inhabiting and to empathize with the experience of deafness.

They were especially concerned that "because a child is deaf he is . . . considered peculiar, with all the unpleasant significance attached to the word."[62] The great failure of deaf education was that "in many cases, this opinion is justified by deaf children who are growing up without being helped . . . to acquire any use of language."[63] ("Language" was frequently used as a synonym for "spoken English.") Peculiarity was spoken of as part of the curse of foreignness, and "to go through life as one of a peculiar class . . . is the sum of human misery. No other human misfortune is comparable to this."[64] This peculiarity of deaf people was not unavoidable, but "solely the result

of shutting up deaf children to be educated in sign schools, whence they emerge . . . aliens in their own country!"[65] Cease to educate deaf people with sign language, oralists believed, and they will "cease to be mysterious beings."[66]

Like their contemporaries in other fields of reform, oralists worried that the lives of people were diminished by being a part of such restricted communities as the deaf community; they would not, it was feared, fully share in the life of the nation. The deaf community, like ethnic communities, narrowed the minds and outlooks of its members. "The individual must be one with the race," one wrote in words that could have come from Jane Addams or John Dewey or any number of Progressive reformers, "or he is virtually annihilated"; the chief curse of deafness was "apartness from the life of the world," and it was just this that oralism was designed to remedy.[67] This was the darkness of the manualists redefined for a new world.

Oralists believed sign language was to blame for making deaf people seem foreign, peculiar, and isolated from the nation and claimed it was an inferior language that impoverished the minds of its users. This language of "beauty and grace," in the words of Thomas H. Gallaudet, now was called a "wretched makeshift of a language."[68] It was "immeasurably inferior to English" and any "culture dependent upon it must be proportionately inferior."[69] The implication of foreignness, barbarism, was not left unspoken. As one opponent of sign language stated, "if speech is better for hearing people than barbaric signs, it is better for the deaf."[70] In an age when social scientists ranked cultures and languages on the evolutionary scale from savage to civilized, teachers of the deaf came to depict sign language as "characteristic of tribes low in the scale of development."[71] It was in fact identical to the gestures used by "a people of lowest type" found to exist "in the ends of the earth where no gleam of civilization had penetrated."[72] Like the races supposed to be lowest on the evolution scale, sign language was barely human.

For some it was not human at all. The metaphor of animality reappeared in different guise. Benjamin D. Pettingill, a teacher at the Pennsylvania School for the Deaf, noted as early as 1873 that sign language was being "decried, denounced, and ridiculed . . . as a set of monkey-like grimaces and antics."[73] Sarah Porter, a teacher at the Kendall School, in 1894 wrote that the common charge against the use of sign language—"You look like monkeys when you make signs"—

would be "hardly worth noticing except for its . . . incessant repetition."[74] A teacher from Scotland complained in 1899 in the pages of the *American Annals of the Deaf* that it was wrong to "impress [deaf people] with the thought that it is apish to talk on the fingers."[75]

Lewis Dudley, a trustee of the first oral school in the nation, the Clarke Institution, implied in 1880 that deaf people who used sign language themselves felt less than human. When he visited a school in which sign language was used, the children looked at him

> with a downcast pensive look which seemed to say, "Oh, you have come to see the unfortunate; you have come to see young creatures human in shape, but only half human in attributes; you have come here much as you would go to a menagerie to see something peculiar and strange."[76]

He contrasted the demeanor of these children with that of a young girl he had met who had recently learned to speak: "the radiant face and the beaming eye showed a consciousness of elevation in the scale of being. It was a real elevation."[77] The metaphors of the subhuman and the animal had been used by the manualists to signify ignorance of the soul. To the oralists they came to signify ignorance of spoken language.

Clearly the "real calamity of the deaf-mute" had been redefined. The 1819 annual report of the American Asylum did not ask if most Americans could understand signs, but "does God understand signs?"[78] To this they answered yes and were satisfied. At mid-century the calamity still was "not that his ear is closed to the cheerful tones of the human voice," but that the deaf person might be denied "the light of divine truth."[79] When the manualist generation had spoken of deaf people being "restored to society" and to "human brotherhood," membership in the Christian community was the measure of that restoration.[80] Sign language had made it possible. The isolation of the deaf was a problem that had been solved.

By the turn of the century, however, the problem had returned. Once again educators of the deaf spoke of rescuing the deaf from their "state of almost total isolation from society," "restoring" them to "their proper and rightful place in society,"[81] and once again deaf people lived "outside." They were "outside" because "inside" had been redefined. Whereas manualists had believed that to teach their students "the gospel of Christ, and by it to save their souls, is our great duty," it was now the "grand aim of every teacher of the deaf . . . to put his

pupils in possession of the spoken language of their country."[82] The relevant community was no longer the Christian community, but a national community defined in large part by language.

Both manualists and oralists understood deafness in the context of movements for national unity, and their metaphors came from those movements. Evangelical Protestantism brought together a nation no longer unified by the common experience of the Revolution, unsettled by rapid social and economic change, and worried about the effects of the opening of the West upon both the morality and the unity of the nation. In crafting that unity, by creating a common set of experiences for understanding the world, Evangelicalism emphasized above any other kind of cultural or linguistic homogeneity a common spiritual understanding. When Evangelicals saw dangers in the immigration of the time, it was not foreignness *per se* that principally concerned them, but Catholicism.[83] That definition of unity was not necessarily more tolerant of difference in general, but it did mean that sign language and the deaf community were not seen as inimical to it.

The movement for national unity at the time of the rise of oralism had a different source. This time it was the multiplicity of immigrant communities crowded into burgeoning industrial cities that seemed to threaten the bonds of nationhood. Two streams converged to make sign language repugnant to many hearing Americans: at the same time that deaf people were creating a deaf community, with its own clubs, associations, and periodicals, American ethnic communities were doing the same to an extent alarming to the majority culture. At the same time that deaf children were attending separate schools in which deaf teachers taught them with both English and sign language, immigrant children were attending parochial schools in which immigrant teachers taught them in both English and their native languages.[84] The convergence was merely fortuitous, but it was not difficult to transfer anxieties from one to the other.

If the fragmentation of American society into distinct and unconnected groups was the fear that drove the oralists, the coalescence of a homogeneous society of equal individuals was the vision that drew them together. For the oralists, as for their contemporaries in other fields of reform—the assimilation of the Indian, the uplifting of the working class, the Americanization of the immigrant—equality was synonymous with sameness. The ideal was achieved when one could "walk into . . . our hearing schools and find the deaf boys working

right along with their hearing brothers . . . [where] no difference is felt by the teacher."[85] Just as manualism arose within a larger Evangelical revival, so did oralism partake of the late nineteenth-century quest for national unity through the assimilation of ethnic cultures.[86]

* * *

Humans use metaphor and mental imagery to understand things of which they have no direct experience.[87] For people who are not deaf, then, the use of metaphor to understand deafness is inevitable: they can approach it no other way. The problem is that hearing people are in positions to make, on the basis of their metaphors—usually unaware that they *are* metaphors—decisions with profound and lasting effects upon the lives of deaf people. The most persistent images of deafness among hearing people have been ones of isolation and exclusion, and these are images that are consistently rejected by deaf people who see themselves as part of a deaf community and culture. Feelings of isolation may even be less common for members of this tightly knit community than among the general population.[88] The metaphors of deafness—of isolation and foreignness, of animality, of darkness and silence—are projections reflecting the needs and standards of the dominant culture, not the experiences of most deaf people.

The oralists and the manualists appeared to be opposing forces—"old-fashioned" manualists fought bitterly with "progressive" oralists. The deaf community saw a clear difference, siding with the manualists and resisting with all its resources the changes in educational practice that the oralists sought. One reason was that manual schools employed deaf teachers. Oral schools generally did not—deaf people could not teach speech.[89] Furthermore, oralists simply did not believe that the deaf should exist as a social group; to hire deaf teachers would imply that deaf people had something to teach each other, that there was a significant group experience. Manualists seem to have been more egalitarian for this reason. While deaf people taught in manualist schools, however, they generally found positions of authority closed to them. Few became principals or superintendents, and probably no deaf person ever sat on a school governing board.[90] One result was that when the hearing society refashioned its images of deafness and turned toward oralism, the deaf community had limited means of resistance.

Resist it did through that combination of open and subterranean

means commonly resorted to by beleaguered minorities. From the beginnings of oralism until its demise in the 1970s, deaf people organized to lobby legislatures and school boards in support of sign language in the schools.[91] Deaf parents passed sign language on to their children, and those children who were deaf and attended schools where sign language was banned surreptitously taught others. Those unable to learn sign language as children learned it as adults when they found themselves free to associate with whomever they pleased, however they pleased; over 90 percent continued to marry other deaf people, and deaf clubs and associations continued to thrive.[92] But their means of resistance within the educational establishment were scant, a legacy at least in part of the paternalism of the manualist educators.

Manualists and oralists had paternalism in common, and much else. Both groups saw deafness through their own cultural biases and sought to reshape deaf people in accordance with them. Both used similar clusters of metaphors to forge images of deaf people as fundamentally flawed, incomplete, isolated and dependent. And both used that imagery to justify not only methods of education, but also the inherent authority of the hearing over the deaf. That did not change.

Still, deaf people sided with the manualists. We do not know exactly how deaf people responded to the images created by either manualists or oralists, to what extent they internalized them, rejected them, or used them for their own purposes. The creation of alternative meanings for deafness by the deaf community has a complex history all its own, one that is still largely unwritten.[93] But while the reception of the Evangelical *message* by deaf people during the manualist years is not yet clear, the Evangelical *medium*—sign language within a sign-using community—was clearly welcomed by most. And whether or not deaf adults accepted the oralist depiction of their community as "foreign" or akin to an immigrant community, most of them clearly rejected the oralist understanding of what those images meant.

Whatever metaphors of deafness manual*ists* may have used, manual*ism* allowed the possibility of alternative constructions of deafness by deaf people themselves. So long as deaf people had their own language and community, they possessed a cultural space in which to create alternative meanings for their lives. Within that space they could resist the meanings that hearing people attached to deafness, adopt them and put them to new uses, or create their own. Oralism, whose ideal was the thoroughly assimilated deaf person, would do away with

that alternative. Oralism failed, finally, and sign language survived, because deaf people chose not to relinquish the autonomous cultural space their community gave them.

NOTES

1. For an example of a radically different construction of deafness than has been typical in the United States, see Nora Groce, *Everyone Here Spoke Sign Language: Hereditary Deafness on Martha's Vineyard* (Cambridge, Mass., 1985). From the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, an unusually high rate of inherited deafness on Martha's Vineyard combined with premodern village values to produce communities in which deafness was apparently not considered a significant difference at all. The hearing people in these communities were all bilingual in spoken English and a variety of British Sign Language. There were no apparent differences between the social, economic, or political lives of the hearing and the deaf, according to Groce.

2. Within forty years there would be twenty residential schools in the United States; by the turn of the century, more than fifty. See "Tabular Statement of Schools for the Deaf, 1897–98," *American Annals of the Deaf* 43 (Jan. 1898): 46–47 (hereafter cited as *Annals*).

The use of "deaf" (with a lower case *d*) to refer primarily to an audiological condition of hearing loss, and "Deaf" (with an upper case *D*) to refer to a cultural identity (deaf people, that is, who use American Sign Language, share certain attitudes and beliefs about themselves and their relation to the hearing world, and self-consciously think of themselves as a part of a separate Deaf culture) has become standard in the literature on Deaf culture. The distinction, while useful and important, is often difficult in practice to apply to individuals, especially when dealing with historical figures. I have not tried to make the distinction in this paper. See Carol Padden and Tom Humphries, *Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 2–6.

3. Pierre Desloges, a deaf Parisian, wrote in 1779 that "matters are completely different for the deaf living in society in a great city like Paris. . . . In intercourse with his fellows he promptly acquires the supposedly difficult art of depicting and expressing all his thoughts. . . . No event—in Paris, in France, or in the four corners of the world—lies outside the scope of our discussion. We express ourselves on all subjects with as much order, precision, and rapidity as if we enjoyed the faculty of speech and hearing." Desloges's short book, *Observations d'un sourd et muet sur "Un Cours elementaire d'education des sourds et muets,"* is translated in Harlan Lane, ed., *The Deaf Experience: Classics in Language and Education,* trans. Franklin Philip (Cambridge, 1984), 36.

4. The best account of the contemporary American Deaf community can be found in Padden and Humphries, *Deaf in America.* For anyone wishing to understand the world of deaf people, this small but rich and insightful book is a fine place to start. For a concise history of the formation of the deaf community in nineteenth-century United States, see John Vickrey Van Cleve and Barry Crouch, *A Place of Their Own: Creating the Deaf Community in America* (Washington, D.C., 1989); see also, Jack Gannon, *Deaf Heritage: A Narrative History of Deaf America* (Silver Spring, Md.,

1981), a popular history that was written by a deaf man, published by the National Association of the Deaf, and created primarily for the deaf community.

5. I am using "sign language" here as a generic term referring to any complex means of manual communication. In the nineteenth century, as today, there were (to simplify) two forms of sign language in use: American Sign Language, a natural language that has evolved over the course of American history within the deaf community, having roots in French Sign Language, indigenous sign languages, and a variety of British Sign Language brought to Martha's Vineyard; and signed English (called "methodical signs" in the nineteenth century), of which several varieties exist. These latter are not true languages but manual codes invented for educational use to represent English manually. Manualists in the nineteenth century at different times used both, and oralists opposed both. See Joseph D. Stedt and Donald F. Moores, "Manual Codes on English and American Sign Language: Historical Perspectives and Current Realities," in Harry Borstein, ed., *Manual Communication: Implications for Education* (Washington, D.C., 1990), 1–20; James Woodward, "Historical Bases of American Sign Language," in Patricia Siple, ed., *Understanding Language Through Sign Language Research* (New York, 1978), 333–48.

6. According to Alexander Graham Bell, 23.7 percent "taught wholly by oral methods"; 14.7 percent "taught also by Manual Spelling (no Sign-language)"; 53.1 percent "with whom speech is used [in at least some classes] as a means of instruction." See "Address of the President," *Association Review* 1 (Oct. 1899), 78–79 (in 1910 renamed the *Volta Review*). Bell's figures differ somewhat from those provided by the *American Annals of the Deaf*—see, for example, Edward Allen Fay in "Progress of Speech-Teaching in the United States," *Annals* 60 (Jan. 1915): 115. Bell's method of counting, as he explains in the same issue, is more precise in that he distinguishes between those taught wholly by oral methods and those taught in part orally and in part manually.

7. "Statistics of Speech Teaching in American Schools for the Deaf," *Volta Review* 22 (June 1920): 372.

8. See, for example, J. C. Gordon, "Dr. Gordon's Report," *Association Review* 1 (Dec. 1899): 213; Mary McCowen, "Educational and Social Work for the Deaf and Deafened in the Middle West," *Oralism and Auralism* 6 (Jan. 1927): 67.

9. Henry Kisor, *What's That Pig Outdoors? A Memoir of Deafness* (New York, 1990), 259; Kisor was orally educated, never learned sign language, and has been very successful communicating orally all his life. Nevertheless he condemns "the history of oralism, the unrelenting and largely unsuccessful attempt to teach *all* the deaf to speak and read lips without relying on sign language" (9).

The reintroduction of sign language into the classroom has been even more rapid than its banishment at the turn of the century; it occurred amidst widespread dissatisfaction with oralism—after a series of studies suggested that early use of sign language had no negative effect on speech skills and positive effects on English acquisition as well as social and intellectual development. See Donald F. Moores, *Educating the Deaf: Psychology, Principals and Practices* (Boston, 1987), 10–13; Julia M. Davis and Edward J. Hardick, *Rehabilitative Audiology for Children and Adults* (New York, 1981), 319–25; Mimi WheiPing Lou, "The History of Language Use in the Education of the Deaf in the United States," in Michael Strong, ed., *Language Learning and Deafness* (Cambridge, 1988), 88–94; Leo M. Jacobs, *A Deaf Adult Speaks Out* (Washington, D.C., 1980), 26, 41–50.

10. Van Cleve and Crouch, *A Place of Their Own,* 128–41; Beryl Lieff Benderly, *Dancing Without Music: Deafness in America* (Garden City, N.Y., 1980), 127–29; Harlan Lane, *When the Mind Hears: A History of the Deaf* (New York, 1984),

371–72; Padden and Humphries, *Deaf in America,* 110–12; Oliver Sacks, *Seeing Voices: A Journey into the World of the Deaf* (Berkeley, 1989), 25–28.

11. Quoted in Lane, *When the Mind Hears,* 371.

12. Lane, *When the Mind Hears,* 301–2.

13. Richard Winefield, *Never the Twain Shall Meet: Bell, Gallaudet, and the Communications Debate* (Washington, D.C., 1987), 81–96; Van Cleve and Crouch, *A Place of Their Own,* 114–27; Lane, *When the Mind Hears,* 353–61.

14. Van Cleve and Crouch, *A Place of Their Own,* 106–7, 119, 126.

15. Lane, *When the Mind Hears,* xiii, 283–85.

16. Instruction in oral communication is still given in all educational programs for deaf and hearing-impaired children. "Oralism" as a philosophy of education does not mean simply oral instruction, but is rather a philosophy that maintains that all or most deaf children can be taught this way *exclusively.* The current philosophy, known as "Total Communication," and nineteenth-century manualism have in common the use of sign language. But American Sign Language was commonly used in the nineteenth century, while today some form of signed English delivered simultaneously with speech is most common. The integration of deaf pupils into the public schools, with the use of interpreters, is now the norm. The arguments today are not for the most part between oralists and manualists but between the advocates of signed English and American Sign Language, and between mainstreaming and separate residential schooling. See Moores, *Educating the Deaf,* 1–28.

17. Luzerne Ray, "Introductory," *Annals* 1 (Oct. 1847): 4.

18. Thomas H. Gallaudet, "The Natural Language of Signs," *Annals* 1 (Oct. 1847): 55–56.

19. Ibid., 56.

20. Thomas H. Gallaudet, "The Natural Language of Signs—II" *Annals* 1 (Jan. 1848): 82, 88.

21. Ibid., 82–85.

22. Ibid., 88–89. The emphasis on the heart rather than the intellect was of course a commonplace of Second Great Awakening evangelicalism. Reason and knowledge were not, however, seen as opposed to religion, and were also highly valued; see Jean V. Matthews, *Toward a New Society: American Thought and Culture, 1800–1830* (Boston, 1991) 35.

23. Thomas H. Gallaudet, "The Natural Language of Signs—II," 86.

24. Lucius Woodruff, "The Motives to Intellectual Effort on the part of the Young Deaf-Mute," *Annals* 1 (Apr. 1848): 163–65.

25. David Walker Howe, "The Evangelical Movement and Political Culture in the North during the Second Party System," *Journal of American History* 77 (Mar. 1991): 1220.

26. Collins Stone, "The Religious State and Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb," *Annals* 1 (Apr. 1848): 144.

27. Henry B. Camp, "Claims of the Deaf and Dumb Upon Public Sympathy and Aid," *Annals* 1 (July 1848): 213–14.

28. Stone, "The Religious State," 133–34, 137.

29. Ibid., 134–35, 138.

30. J. A. Ayres, "An Inquiry into the Extent to which the Misfortune of Deafness may be Alleviated," *Annals* 1 (July 1848): 223.

31. Luzerne Ray, "Thoughts of the Deaf and Dumb before Instruction," *Annals* 1 (Apr. 1848): 150–51.

32. Camp, "Claims of the Deaf," 210–15. See also Woodruff, "The Motives to Intellectual Effort," 163–65.

33. Stone, "The Religious State," 136–37.

34. Woodruff, "The Motives to Intellectual Effort," 165–66.

35. Ayres, "An Inquiry," 224.

36. John Carlin, "The Mute's Lament," *Annals* 1 (Oct. 1847): 15. Carlin, a successful artist, was well known for his expressions of what today might be termed "self hatred." He was a contradictory individual. Although he married a deaf woman, used sign language, and was an ardent supporter of the establishment of Gallaudet College, he claimed to prefer the company of hearing people and expressed contempt for deaf people and sign language. While he did not speak or lipread, he became one of the small minority of deaf adults who supported the oralist movement. Carlin derided proposals for a separatist community of deaf people on the grounds that "it is a well known fact that the majority of them [deaf people] show little decision of purpose in any enterprise whatever." *Annals* 10 (Apr. 1858): 89. See also Lane, *When the Mind Hears,* 245–46, 275–76, 325; Van Cleve and Crouch, *A Place of Their Own,* 66, 76–78.

37. Anon., *Annals* 1 (July 1848): 209.

38. Padden and Humphries identify the use of "silence" in reference to deaf people as metaphorical. They explain that sound (to greatly simplify their argument) directly and indirectly plays an important role in the lives of deaf people and has important meanings for them, albeit quite different ones than for the hearing; *Deaf in America,* 91–109.

39. Frank Booth, "The Association Magazine," *Association Review* 1 (Oct. 1899): 4.

40. Alexander Graham Bell, "Address of the President," *Association Review* 1 (Oct. 1899): 74–75, 85.

41. Bell, "Address of the President," 78–79 (see note 6). "Statistics of Speech Teaching in American Schools for the Deaf," 372.

42. Percentages of deaf teachers by year: 1852—38 percent; 1858—41 percent; 1870—41 percent; 1880—29 percent; 1892—24 percent; 1897—18 percent; 1915—15 percent, compiled from periodic reports of schools for the deaf, published in the *American Annals of the Deaf* during the years indicated, under the heading "Tabular Statement of American Schools for the Deaf."

43. Winefield, *Never the Twain Shall Meet,* 48.

44. John Van Cleve, "Nebraska's Oral Law of 1911 and the Deaf Community," *Nebraska History* 65 (Summer 1984): 208.

45. *Annals* 44 (June 1899): 221–29.

46. John M. Tyler, "The Teacher and the State," *Association Review* 1 (Oct. 1899): 9, 12–13.

47. Katherine T. Bingham, "All Along the Line," *Association Review* 2 (Feb. 1900): 27, 29.

48. Edward C. Rider, "The Annual Report of the Northern New York Institution for the Year Ending September 30, 1898," reprinted in the *Association Review* 1 (Dec. 1899): 214–15.

49. S. G. Davidson, "The Relation of Language to Mental Development and of Speech to Language Teaching," *Association Review* 1 (Dec. 1899), 132. See also, Alexander Graham Bell, *Proceedings of the Twelfth Convention of American Instructors of the Deaf* (New York, 1890), 181.

50. Joseph C. Gordon, *The Difference Between the Two Systems of Teaching Deaf-Mute Children the English Language: Extracts from a Letter to a Parent Requesting Information Relative to the Prevailing Methods of Teaching Language to Deaf-Mutes in America* (Washington, D.C., 1898), 1.

51. J. D. Kirkhuff, "The Sign System Arraigned," *Silent Educator* 3 (Jan. 1892): 88a.

52. S. G. Davidson, "The Relation of Language Teaching to Mental Development," *National Educational Association: Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Thirty-Seventh Annual Meeting* (Washington, D.C., 1898), 1044.

53. Edward M. Gallaudet, " 'Deaf-Mute' Conventions, Associations, and Newspapers," *Annals* 18 (July 1873): 200–206.

54. Frederick E. Hoxie, *A Final Promise: The Campaign to Assimilate the Indians, 1880–1920* (Lincoln, Neb., 1984), 12.

55. Alexander Graham Bell, *Memoir Upon the Formation of a Deaf Variety of the Human Race* (Washington, D.C., 1884), 194.

56. Bell, *Memoir,* 194, 217–18, 223.

57. Mary S. Garrett, "The State of the Case," *National Educational Association: Journal of Proceedings and Addresses of the Thirty-Ninth Annual Meeting* (Washington, D.C., 1900), 663; Bell, *Memoir,* 221–22.

58. Bell, *Memoir,* 217, 221–23.

59. Edward Allen Fay, "An Inquiry Concerning the Results of Marriages of the Deaf in America," *Annals* 42 (Feb. 1897): 100–102; see also the discussion of this issue in Van Cleve and Crouch, *A Place of Their Own,* 150–52.

60. On the influence of eugenics upon Bell's work in deaf education, see Winefield, *Never the Twain Shall Meet,* 82–96; Lane, *When the Mind Hears,* 353–61; Van Cleve and Crouch, *A Place of Their Own,* 145–52; for a more sympathetic view of Bell's eugenic concerns about deafness, see Robert V. Bruce, *Bell: Alexander Graham Bell and the Conquest of Solitude* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1973), 409–12.

61. Quoted in Padden and Humphries, *Deaf in America,* 36.

62. Helen Taylor, "The Importance of a Right Beginning," *Association Review* 1 (Dec. 1899): 159.

63. Ibid.

64. Bingham, "All Along the Line," 28–29.

65. Ibid. See also, J. C. Gordon, "Dr. Gordon's Report," *Association Review* 1 (Dec. 1899): 204.

66. Gordon, "Dr. Gordon's Report," 213.

67. Bingham, "All Along the Line," 29; see also Emma Garrett, "A Plea that the Deaf 'Mutes' of America May be Taught to Use Their Voices," *Annals* 28 (Jan. 1883): 18.

68. Thomas H. Gallaudet, "The Natural Language of Signs—II," 89; J. D. Kirkhuff, "The Sign System Arraigned," 88a.

69. Davidson, "The Relation of Language," 132.

70. Emma Garrett, "A Plea," 18.

71. Gordon, "Dr. Gordon's Report," 206.

72. Bingham, "All Along the Line," 22.

73. Benjamin D. Pettingill, "The Sign-Language," *Annals* 18 (Jan. 1873), 4.

74. Sarah Harvey Porter, "The Suppression of Signs by Force," *Annals* 39 (June 1894): 171. Porter repeated this observation in 1913, when she stated that in the "old primitive fighting days the oralists cried to us, derisively: 'Your children, making signs, look like monkeys!' " In the context it is not clear whether she believed those fighting days were over, or whether she was calling for their end; *Annals* 58 (May 1913): 284.

75. R. W. Dodds, "The Practical Benefits of Methods Compared," *Annals* 44 (Feb. 1899): 124.

76. Lewis J. Dudley, "Address of Mr. Dudley in 1880," *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Clarke Institution for Deaf-Mutes* (Northampton, Mass., 1882), 7.

77. Ibid.

78. From extracts reprinted in Alexander Graham Bell, "Historical Notes Concerning the Teaching of Speech to the Deaf," *Association Review* (Apr. 1902): 151.

79. Stone, "On the Religious State," 137.

80. Camp, "Claims of the Deaf," 214.

81. Bingham, "All Along the Line," 28; Taylor, "The Importance of a Right Beginning," 158.

82. J. A. Jacobs, "To Save the Souls of His Pupils, the Great Duty of a Teacher of Deaf-Mutes," *Annals* 8 (July 1856): 211; Susanna E. Hull, "The Psychological Method of Teaching Language," *Annals* 43 (Apr. 1898): 190.

83. Donald G. Matthews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1780–1830; An Hypothesis," *American Quarterly* 21 (Spring 1969): 23–43; Richard Carwardine, "The Know-Nothing Party, the Protestant Evangelical Community and American National Identity," in *Religion and National Identity,* Stuart Mews, ed. (Oxford, 1982), 449–63.

84. Rivka Shpak Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives: Hull House and the New Immigrants, 1890–1919* (Chicago, 1989): 50–55.

85. Taylor, "The Importance of a Right Beginning," 158. The equation of equality with sameness was a staple of Progressive reform thought; see Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives,* 153.

86. Lissak, *Pluralism and Progressives;* Hoxie, *A Final Promise;* Joshua A. Fishman, *Language Loyalty in the United States: The Maintenance and Perpetuation of Non-English Mother Tongues by American Ethnic and Religious Groups* (The Hague, 1966).

87. George Lakoff, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago, 1987), xiv.

88. Leo M. Jacobs, *A Deaf Adult Speaks Out* (Washington, D.C., 1980), 90–100; Jerome D. Schein, *At Home Among Strangers: Exploring the Deaf Community in the United States* (Washington, D.C., 1989), 130; Paul C. Higgins, *Outsiders in a Hearing World: A Sociology of Deafness* (Beverly Hills, 1980), 69–76; James Woodward, "How You Gonna Get to Heaven if You Can't Talk with Jesus: The Educational Establishment vs. the Deaf Community," in *How You Gonna Get to Heaven if You Can't Talk with Jesus: On Depathologizing Deafness* (Silver Spring, Md., 1982), 11.

89. In the first five years of Gallaudet College (1869 to 1874), a liberal arts college exclusively for deaf students, 75 percent of its graduates became teachers at schools for the deaf. From 1894 to 1899, fewer than a third did so. See Edward P. Clarke, "An Analysis of the Schools and Instructors of the Deaf in the United States," *American Annals of the Deaf* 45 (Apr. 1900): 229.

90. Van Cleve and Crouch, *A Place of Their Own,* 128.

91. See W. Earl Hall, "To Speak or Not to Speak: That is the Question Behind the Bitter Deaf-Teaching Battle," *Iowan* 4 (Feb.-Mar. 1956) for a brief description of a battle between the Iowa Association of the Deaf and the Iowa School for the Deaf in the 1950s over this issue. See also Van Cleve, "Nebraska's Oral Law," 195–220; Van Cleve and Crouch, *A Place of Their Own,* 128–41.

92. Padden and Humphries, *Deaf in America,* 5–6; Benderly, *Dancing Without Music,* 218–39; Schein, *At Home Among Strangers,* 72–105, 106, 120.

93. Padden and Humphries, *Deaf in America,* 26–38, 110–21, explore the alternative meanings of deafness created by the deaf community; their focus is on the present, but their brief forays into the historical roots of these meanings are suggestive and insightful.