CROSSING SOCIAL BOUNDARIES AND DISPERSING SOCIAL IDENTITY: TRACING DEAF NETWORKS FROM CAPE TOWN

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Abstract

Crossing social boundaries and dispersing social identity:
tracing deaf networks from Cape Town

The conciliatory discourse of the South African Deaf social movement claims a commonality across South Africa's historical divides on the basis of a 'Deaf culture'. This claim in view of South Africa's deeply entrenched 'racial' divisions triggered this study. The study investigates the construction of Deaf identity and emphasizes the crossing of social boundaries in Cape Town, a society with a long history of discriminatory boundaries based on race. The study was carried out among adults who became deaf as children, the group for whom deafness, commonly viewed as both sensory and social deficit, is said to pose considerable linguistic, social and cultural challenges. It focused on strategies that deal with being deaf in a predominantly hearing world. To identify strategies, for this population without a geographical base, the study traced networks of social relationships.

Fieldwork was carried out from September 1995 to December 2001. Between September 1995 and December 1997 research included systematic participant observation and informal interviews. Between January 1998 and December 2001, continuing with participant observation and informal interviews, the study added formal interviews with a sample population of 94 deaf people across Cape Town, collected by the snowball method. The profile of this sample shows a relatively heterogeneous population on the basis of demographic factors and residential area but similarity on the basis of first language, Sign.

The study demonstrates that history imposed boundaries. It categorized the Deaf as different from the hearing and in addition, in South Africa, produced further differentiation on the basis of apartheid category, age, Deaf school attended, method of education and spoken language. In this historical context the study identified a key strategy, 'Signing spaces'. A Signing space, identifiable on the basis of Sign-based communication, is a set of networks that extends from the deaf individual to include deaf and hearing people. On analysis it comprises a Sign-hear and a Sign-deaf space. In Sign-hear networks, hearing people predominate. Relationships are domestic and near neighbourhood. In

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Sign-<u>deaf</u> networks, deaf people predominate. Relationships are sociable and marked by familiarity.

The study found that via the Signing space, the Deaf subvert deafness as deficit to recoup a social identity that is multi-faceted and dispersed across context. Boundaries crossed also vary by context and by networks. Sign-<u>hear</u> networks address the hearing boundary. Limits could be identified in the public arena, when barriers to communication and a poor supply of professional Sign language interpreters again rendered deafness as deficit. The boundaries of the Sign-<u>deaf</u> networks were difficult to determine and suggest the potential, facilitated by Sign language, to transcend South Africa's spoken languages and the related historical divisions. Sign-<u>deaf</u> networks also suggest the additional potential, in sociable contexts, to transcend spoken language, trans-nationally. But mutual intelligibility of Sign language and the familiarity, communality and commonality it offered did not deny an awareness of historical differentiation and discrimination, as a case of leadership succession presented as a 'social drama' shows. However, the process of the 'social drama' also demonstrates that conflict, crises, and a discourse that reflects South Africa's historical divisions need not threaten a broader commonality.

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Opsomming

Die oorsteek van maatskaplike grense en verbreiding van maatskaplike identiteit: die nagaan van netwerke vir Dowes van Kaapstad

Die bemiddelende diskoers van die Suid-Afrikaanse maatskaplike beweging vir Dowes maak op grond van 'n 'Dowe kultuur' aanspraak op 'n algemeenheid wat oor Suid-Afrika se geskiedkundige verdeeldhede heen strek. Hierdie aanspraak het, in die lig van Suid-Afrika se diepgewortelde 'rasseverdelings', tot hierdie navorsing aanleiding gegee. Die navorsing ondersoek die vorming van 'n Dowe identiteit en beklemtoon die oorsteek van maatskaplike grense in Kaapstad, 'n gemeenskap met 'n lang verlede van diskriminerende grense wat op ras gebaseer is. Die navorsing is gedoen onder volwassenes wat as kinders doof geword het. Vir hierdie groep, waar dit gewoonlik as 'n sensoriese en sosiale gebrek beskou word, hou doofheid aansienlike linguistiese, sosiale en kulturele uitdagings in. Die navorsing fokus op strategieë wat te make het met doof wees in 'n oorheersend horende wêreld. Om vir hierdie bevolking sonder 'n geografiese basis strategieë te identifiseer, het die navorsing maatskaplike verhoudingsnetwerke nagegaan.

Veldwerk is tussen September 1995 en Desember 2001 gedoen. Tussen September 1995 en Desember 1997 het die navorsing stelselmatige waarneming van die deelnemers en informele onderhoude met hulle behels. Hierdie waarneming en informele onderhoude is tussen Januarie 1998 en Desember 2001 voortgesit, maar die navorsing het nou ook formele onderhoude met 'n steekproefbevolking van 94 dowe mense van regoor Kaapstad ingesluit. Hiervoor is van die sneeubalmetode gebruik gemaak. Die profiel van hierdie steekproef toon 'n relatief heterogene bevolking op grond van demografiese faktore en woongebied, maar ooreenkoms op grond van eerste taal, naamlik Gebaretaal.

Die navorsing toon aan dat grense deur die geskiedenis opgelê is. Dit het Dowes as verskillend van horendes gekategoriseer, en het daardeur in Suid-Afrika tot verdere differensiasie op grond van die apartheidskategorie, ouderdom, watter doweskool bygewoon is, wyse van onderrig en gesproke taal aanleiding gegee. In hierdie geskiedkundige konteks het die navorsing 'n belangrike strategie, 'Gebare-ruimtes', geïdentifiseer. 'n Gebare-ruimte wat uitgeken kan word op grond van Gebaar-

gebaseerde kommunikasie, is 'n stel netwerke wat van die dowe individu af uitbrei om dowe en horende mense in te sluit. Uit 'n analise blyk dit dat dit 'n Gebaar-horende en Gebaar-dowe ruimte behels. In Gebaar-horende netwerke oorheers horende mense. Verhoudinge word in die huis en met die naaste bure aangegaan. In Gebaar-dowe netwerke oorheers dowe mense. Verhoudings is gesellig van aard en word deur ongedwongenheid gekenmerk.

Die navorsing het bevind dat die Dowe doofheid as gebrek deur middel van die Gebaar-ruimte omkeer om 'n veelvlakkige maatskaplike identiteit wat dwarsoor die konteks versprei is, te behels. Grense wat oorgesteek word, varieer ook in konteks en ten opsigte van netwerke. Gebaar-horende netwerke fokus op die horende grens. Beperkinge kon in die openbare arena geïdentifiseer word in gevalle waar hindernisse ten opsigte van kommunikasie en gebrekkige voorsiening van Gebaretaal-tolke weer doofheid as 'n gebrek voorgestel het. Dit was moeilik om die grense van die Gebaar-dowe netwerke te bepaal en dit suggereer die potensiaal om, gefasiliteer deur Gebaretaal, Suid-Afrikaanse tale en die gepaardgaande geskiedkundige verdelings te transendeer. Gebaar-dowe netwerke suggereer ook die addisionele potensiaal om gesproke taal, in gesellige kontekste trans-nasionaal te transendeer. Maar onderlinge verstaanbaarheid van Gebaretaal en die ongedwongenheid, gemeenskaplikheid en algemeenheid wat dit gebied het, het nie 'n bewustheid van geskiedkundige differensiasie en diskriminasie ontken nie, soos 'n geval van opvolging van leierskap, wat as 'n 'sosiale drama' aangebied is, getoon het. Die proses van die 'sosiale drama' toon ook dat konflik, krisisse en 'n diskoers wat Suid-Afrika se geskiedkundige verdelings weerspieël, nie 'n wyer algemeenheid hoef te bedreig nie.

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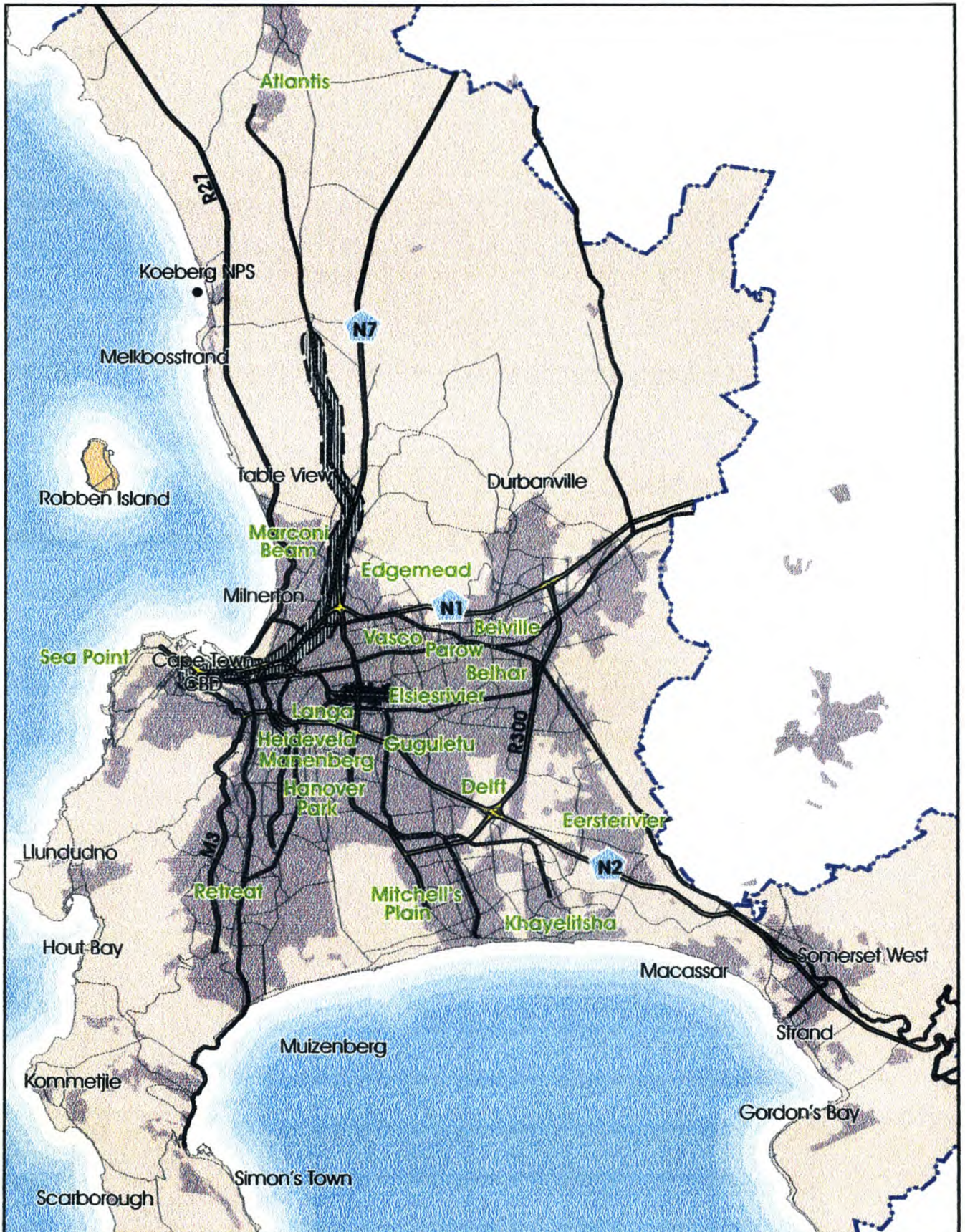
Chapter One: Setting the Scene
Introducing the research interest, the study and sample populations

For the Deaf[1] there is no race, we are bound by our culture
(Nico Beaurain, Sign Hear, later Signature[2], SABC3[3], 30 April 1995)

This study began by chance. In February 1995 I happened upon Oliver Sacks' *Seeing Voices: a journey into the world of the Deaf* ([1989] 1991). Once I started reading the book, I could not put it down. Here were people with what is generally considered a medical condition presenting themselves as a social group with a history and with a language. A focus on the Deaf as an identifiable social group seemed to offer a way to view South African society that was not strictly bound by the old apartheid categories; that moved away from South African anthropology's tendency to focus on African societies (Gordon and Spiegel, 1993: 88; Sharp and Boonzaier, 1995). It was interesting too that if one replaced 'Deaf' with 'African' the same discourse of transformation was echoing on our own campuses, in our society as the students at Gallaudet (the 124 year-old and only university for the Deaf in the world) were articulating (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 127-162). In March 1988 in a widely publicized 'Strike at Gallaudet' (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 162) the students protested the appointment of yet another hearing Vice Chancellor.

As fascinated as I was then, though, a formal study was not my initial intention. Merely as an interest I decided to learn Sign language. It turned out that a Beginners' Class was starting that same evening and that same evening I was attending my first Sign language class. My Sign language teacher, a young woman profoundly deaf from six months of age, although to meet her it would be difficult to know, moved me to wonder, for the second time on a single day.

The next day I was pursuing the literature. I wanted stories by and about deaf people in South Africa. These stories were few and hard to find. But I did find, almost immediately,

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[1] Currently some prefer the convention of upper case when referring to 'the Deaf' as a social group and lower case, deaf, when referring to the audiological condition (see for example, Woodward, 1972; Padden and Humphries, 1988:2). Others may be less particular. To accommodate both views, in the thesis I use upper case when I use the noun, such as the Deaf and lower case when I use deaf as an adjective, such as deaf people.
[2] The final programme of Signature was broadcast on 23 September 2001
[3] South African Broadcasting Corporation Television, Channel 3

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two interesting works, Wright ([1969] 1993) and Lalendle (1975). Then Nico Beaurain's opening address at the 1995 South African Games for the Deaf, his phrase 'For the Deaf there is no race, we are bound by our Culture', seemingly unusual at the time, decided me to convert a growing interest that began by chance into a formal study.

Thus in the same way that I was led to this study, two vignettes, David's Story (Wright, [1969] 1993) and Kransie's story (see Lalendle, 1975: 155-161) as well as Nico Beaurain's phrase (Sign Hear, later Signature, SABC3, 30 April 1995) open this thesis. They introduce the people of the study and the issues it takes up.

David's Story[4]

David Wright was born in Johannesburg in 1920. When he was seven years of age he became totally deaf through scarlet fever. He left South Africa for England in 1934 to attend a school in Northampton. The school offered secondary education for the Deaf, not available in South Africa at the time. At the outbreak of World War Two he matriculated and entered Oriel College, Oxford. In 1942 he took his degree in the Honours School of English Language and Literature. On leaving Oxford he moved to London. In London, he spent five years on the staff of the *Sunday Times*. In 1950 he won the last of the Atlantic Awards in Literature and spent three months in Italy. In 1951 he married Phillipa Reid, a leading lady in mobile Century Theatre. He co-edited the literary magazines *Nimbus and X*, translated *Beowulf*, collaborated with the painter Patrick Swift to write three travel books on Portugal, and published several collections of poems. His poetry won Guinness Poetry Prizes in 1958 and 1960. In 1965 he left London to live near Keswick. The same year he became Gregory Fellow in Poetry at Leeds, and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Literary Society. In 1985 Oxford University Press published his verse translation of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. This was followed by several collections of poetry. The latest, *Poems and Versions*, became the 1992 spring choice of the Poetry Book Society. In 1991 his autobiography *Deafness* was broadcast as *a Bookmark* programme on BBC TV. The same year he was elected Hon. Fellow of Oriel College, and in 1993 the University of Leicester conferred upon him the Hon. D. Lit. (Wright, [1969] 1993).

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[4] David's Story is adapted from the biographical detail that appears as the Front Piece of Wright's autobiography, *Deafness* (1969 - 1993 edition)

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Kransie's Story[5]

Kransie [at the time Lalendle conducted his research during the early 1970s] was a Standard 5 [now Grade 7] pupil of 22 years of age, who was born on a farm near Middleburg, Cape. His mother told him that his auditory impairment commenced when he was 18 months old. His parents took him to several doctors without success. "Uthi umama wazama nalapho, esiwa evuka enyanga ezo ndlebe – wancama – zisandiphethe nanamhlanje" ("My mother says that she tried in every way to have my ears cured – but all was in vain. I still suffer from this impairment"). The two parents and seven children, of whom Kransie was the fourth, comprised the family. The family was sub-economic and lived below the bread line. The father aged 69 years, earned R40 per month. The mother, aged 60 years, was unemployed but received the old age pension of R60 per month. Kransie grew up on the farm near Middleburg, Cape and later settled at Dimbaza. Then he lived in a four-roomed house owned by his elder brother. Kransie's paramount interest was participation in rugby and athletics. In these types of sports he was the star at his school. He had represented his circuit in these games. [But] as a result of his defective hearing he had repeated almost every class except the Sub-standards A and B, and Standard 4. He had lost hope of succeeding at schoolwork because he could not hear well. His own words were "I shall never succeed in education because I do not hear properly what is being taught at school". Teachers complained that he did not write words in full, and his pronunciation was bad. The above problems induced him to sigh that: "Oh, people do not understand that I do not acquire and assimilate school teaching adequately". He confided that what was still keeping him in school are the two Xhosa proverbs, namely: "Umzingisi akanashwa" ("One who perseveres is never unlucky"). "Ekunyamezeleni kukho umvuzo" ("In endurance there is great reward"). He complained that his class teacher was ill-treating, insulting and ridiculing him. She made fun of his poor performance, instead of helping him. His teachers and principal regarded Kransie as dull and ineducable. They looked upon him as a dunce who had to be tolerated, as he was good a sport (Lalendle, 1975: 155-161).

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[5] Kransie's Story is an extract, adapted, from Lalendle's original text (1975: 155-161). I have changed the present tense as used by the author in order to avoid the impression of an ethnographic present. In addition, for ease of reading I have not included the usual convention that indicates those sections of the original text that have been omitted.

Introducing the research interest

David's Story and Kransie's Story suggest that deafness, the audiological condition, knows few if any of the conventional social boundaries of age, gender, geographical location, nation, religion, and in the South African situation, apartheid categories. Deaf people are not, and are unlikely to be, a homogeneous group (see, for example, Padden and Humphries, 1988: 42).

In the discourse of the Deaf social movement, 'Deaf culture' is said to transcend political boundaries (see, for example, Rutherford, 1993: 93-94). In the discourse of the South African Deaf social movement, as Beaurain suggests, Deaf 'culture' is said to transcend 'race' or, as the term has been used in South Africa, the country's historical divides (Sign Hear, later Signature, SABC3, 30 April 1995). Kobus Kellerman reiterated the same sentiments when he was appointed Director of the Deaf Federation of South Africa (Deafsa), the first-ever deaf person to hold the office in the national organization's nearly 70-year history[6] (Sign Hear, SABC3, 3 March 1996).

But given the heterogeneity of the deaf population, does the conciliatory socio-political discourse of the South African Deaf social movement translate to the level of practice in the day-to-day social lives of ordinary deaf people? Can it do so in the South African context where historically 'the political, economic and social status of every individual [was] conditioned, if not determined, by his race. Indeed, the whole pattern of every individual's life – from the cradle to the grave – [was] circumscribed [and legislated] by his race' (Suzman, 1960: 339). If boundaries of all kinds are transcended, in what contexts in the day-to-day social lives of deaf people does this occur and in what contexts does it not occur?

This thesis takes up these questions. It investigates the construction of Deaf identity and the crossing of social boundaries in Cape Town, a society with a long history based on race. The study was carried out among adults who became deaf as children and who

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[6] In 1929 the South African National Council for the Deaf (SANCD) was established (Die SA Nasionale Raad vir Dowes [the South African National Council for the Deaf], *50 Year Jubilee*, *SANCD*, 1979: no page numbers). In 1995, the SANCD, was reconstituted and returned to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) as the Deaf Federation of South Africa or Deafsa (Board Meeting: a warm welcome, *WFD News*, 1998: 10). The WFD was established in 1951 and represents the Deaf worldwide at the United Nations (*WFD Information Brochure*, no date). I return to these organizations later in the thesis.

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would therefore qualify for Deaf education. This is the group for whom deafness is considered to pose considerable linguistic and related to this, social and cultural challenges. In view of these challenges, the study focused on strategies that deal with being deaf in a predominantly hearing world. To identify strategies the study traced networks of social relationships. This chapter introduces the thesis' South African interest, the reasons for the Cape Town location, the study population and the sample population[7'].

The South African interest

When I first heard the unifying, even conciliatory, discourse of the Deaf in April 1995, I was interested because it was unusual at the time: the ethnic mobilization that marked the beginnings of South Africa's transformation from apartheid to democracy, around the time of country's first ever democratic election in 1994, tended to recruit and exclude along the lines of the old apartheid and related categories (see, for example, Comaroff, 1996: 179 on conservative ('white') Afrikaner and Inkatha (Zulu) 'ethnonationalism' prior to the first democratic election of 1994; James, Caliguire, and Cullinan, 1996 on 'coloured' identity; Sharp and Boonzaier, 1994 on 'Nama' identity; Sharp and Douglas, 1996; Douglas, 1997 on 'Bushman' identity). Ethnic mobilization need not in itself be a problem. But in South Africa, by reflecting historical fault lines this ethnic mobilization carried with it the potential to reinforce, rather than overcome, the country's former divisions.

Then 1995 saw South Africans almost to a person pulling together behind the national rugby team. The 'Amabokkebokke', the name given to the national team by the *Sowetan,* a leading daily newspaper in Gauteng with a largely African readership, were on a winning streak[8]. Even those who were not traditionally rugby supporters were touched by the national pride that swept the country, the unprecedented feeling of

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[7] I make a distinction between the sample population, the research population and study population. I discuss this distinction in more detail in Chapter Three. For now, briefly, the 'study population', refers to the wider population of the Deaf , here and elsewhere, past and present. The 'research population' refers to deaf and hearing people of this study met during the course of fieldwork (1995-2001). The 'sample population' refers to the 94 deaf people interviewed by questionnaire. Below, I give my reasons for introducing the sample population early in the thesis

[8] Bafana Bafana (the Guys), the national football team did much the same for South Africans when they won the Africa Cup of Nations, a win that took the country to the 1998 Soccer World Cup.

national unity. Prompted by the then national ambience, John Sharp remarked at a meeting to discuss the feasibility of this study, "perhaps the Deaf are doing long term what rugby is doing short term".

The reality of the legacy of apartheid on the one hand and what South Africa aspires to, on the other, has led to at least two prominent additional discourses. The more political discourse expresses the 'actuality' of the legacy of apartheid. The discourse I term 'moral', though not necessarily un-political, emphasizes additional aspirations.

The 'actuality' political discourse still tends to exclude. By 1998 the discourse was seemingly moving from that of a 'multi-ethnic' South Africa to one of a country of 'two nations'. In his now famous 'two nations' address, Thabo Mbeki, then Deputy President, saw South Africa as still comprising 'a rich white nation and a poor black nation' (Krog, [1998] 1999: 435). Later, in early 1999, when Mbeki led the South African Parliament in a national debate on the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, he gave an equally powerful address but he remained pessimistic: reconciliation during the lifetime of the present generation of South Africans was unlikely. 'The defining parameter in our continuing struggle for national unity and reconciliation is the question of race' (Mbeki, during the second parliamentary debate on reconciliation, cited in Krog, [1998] 1999: 440). Only months before its second democratic election South Africa remained an apartheid society. Since then, almost as if to confirm Mbeki's predictions, reports on 'racists' incidents have continued to appear regularly in the media[9].

The 'moral' political discourse aspires to one nation that recognizes its many cultures. 'Unity in Diversity', written in San language as '!ke e; /xarra //ke' is the motto of the new coat of arms for South Africa, unveiled in Bloemfontein on Freedom Day, 27 April 2000, the sixth anniversary of the first democratic election (*Cape Times*, 28 April 2000: 4). In similar theme, in Cape Town the *Cape Times* newspaper initiated the 'One City Many Cultures' project. The project began, 1 February 1999 (*Cape Argus*, 27 January 1999: 18) continued with regular newspaper articles and ended with a festival (Editorial, *Cape Times*, 20 September, 1999). It aimed for a united city that understands and

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[9] Examples range from the killing of seven 'whites' by a disgruntled soldier at the Tempe military base (Editorial, *Cape Argus*, 21 September 1999) to the use of 'racially offensive language' in a provincial cricket match (Alfred, *Sunday Independent*, 18, April 1999) to a brutal attack on 'black' immigrants by 'white' police officers (*Special Assignment*, SABC3, 7 November 2000).

accommodates its differences. The concern was not so much with difference as such, but rather as difference persisted along South Africa's and Cape Town's historical divides. However, it is not for these reasons that this study is based in Cape Town.

The Cape Town interest

This study is based in Cape Town partly for my own convenience and, importantly, because of the city's significance for deaf people in South Africa. Unusually in the annals of the Deaf (as far as I can ascertain) a young Irish deaf woman, Bridget Lynne is credited with opening the first South African school for the Deaf in Cape Town in 1874 (Boner, 2000: 135-136)[10]. When Lynne opened St Josephs, as the first school was named, she effectively established Deaf education in this country. The start of their systematic education is significant for those with congenital or childhood deafness.

The first ever introduction of the systematic education of those with congenital or childhood deafness in Spain in the 16th century set in motion a process that eventually changed their legal and social status. Mosaic law protected the deaf (see Leviticus, 19:14), unlike ancient Greece and Rome where it was permissible to kill deaf children up to the age of three (Rée, [1999] 2000: 94). However, the Jewish legal tradition did not grant the Deaf the responsibilities or the rights of adults: they were not considered competent to own property, particularly buildings and land (Hodgson, 1953, cited in Rée, [1999] 2000: 95; see also, Wright, [1969] 1993: 165, footnote). Later the Romans drew on the Jewish legal tradition and imposed strict limits to legal capacities, such as the Deaf could not make a will, or marry or seek protection from the law (Rée, [1999] 2000: 95). These laws developed by the Romans found their way into most legal codes based on the Roman legal system. Many of these principles and attitudes were sustained in the Christian church with an added religious dimension. If, as Paul had laid down, 'faith cometh by hearing' (Romans, 10:17) and 'with the mouth confession is made unto salvation' (Romans, 10:10) then it was debatable whether the Deaf could ever be accepted into Christian communion (Rée, [1999] 2000: 95). In general then, prior to the implementation of their systematic education, those people who were deaf from birth

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[10] I am indebted to Sister Margaret Kelly for introducing me to Boner's scholarly history of the Dominican nuns in South Africa - *Dominican Women: A time to speak* (2000) - even before the final publication. I am equally indebted to Boner (2000) for introducing me to Bridget Lynne's significant and hitherto largely hidden role in Deaf education in South Africa.

and/or those who could not speak were almost completely without rights and obligations (Wright, [1969] 1993: 165 footnote). This group introduces the study population.

Introducing the study population

> The problems of deafness are deeper and more complex, if not more important than those of blindness. Deafness is a *much worse misfortune*, for it means the loss of the most vital stimulus - the sound of the voice - that brings language, sets thoughts astir and keeps us in the intellectual company of man (Keller, Helen 1931: 43 – author's emphasis).

This study, by focusing on adult deaf people who became deaf as children, looks to those who, in earlier times, may well have been without rights and obligations because they could not speak. The study does not include those who become deaf later in life as a result of degenerative deafness, or those, who in terms of early Roman Law, would have had rights because they could speak. Consequently, grandparents, even prominent deaf people, such as former President Mandela and Archbishop Tutu, although he is also the Patron of Deafsa, do not qualify for this study. Those younger but beyond school-going age who become deaf as a result of illness or trauma have also been excluded. For instance a young soldier, deafened at age 20 as a result of a bomb blast, and whom my Sign language teacher was instructing to lip-read, is not included in this study. An older woman who became deaf when she was 21 years of age as a result of medication and who was attending Sign language classes at the same time as I was is also not eligible for inclusion.

For those who become deaf early in life, especially those who are born deaf, or who become so prelingually, the audiological condition is said to pose extra-ordinary linguistic (Sacks, [1989] 1991: xi) and therefore related cultural and social challenges (Rée, [1999] 2000: 94). Samuel Johnson has described deafness as 'the most desperate of human calamities' (Wright, [1969] 1993: 5; Sacks, [1989] 1991: 1). Helen Keller, famous for dealing with both congenital blindness and congenital deafness, considered her deafness a much greater disability than her blindness. Without hearing, language acquisition may be at risk. Without language, culture may be at risk. Without culture, our basic humanity may be at risk.

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The effect on ideas, on thinking, on conceptualizing as a consequence of being without language can be serious. Sacks tells the story of a young deaf boy, Joseph ([1989] 1991: 38-39). Joseph's failure to talk at the normal age was first misdiagnosed as 'retardation' and later as 'autism'. Because he was misdiagnosed his schooling was delayed and there was no effort to teach him language. By the time Joseph entered school at age 11, he had 'almost no notion of symbolic communication, of what it was to have a symbolic currency, to exchange meaning' (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 39). He had no notion of even the most basic concepts we take for granted - like the idea of a question. It was not possible to ask Joseph the simple question of how he had spent his weekend. Joseph had a lack of 'historical sense'. He had no notion of 'a day ago as distinct from a year ago' (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 39).

Those who become deaf early in life and are diagnosed in time usually qualify for Deaf schooling. Debates on the education of the Deaf contest the relative merits of two main methods: speech or the oral method and Sign or the manual method. The oral method argues for a focus on teaching deaf people to speak. Oralists usually argue that without speech deaf people cannot engage adequately in a hearing world. The manual method argues for deaf people to be educated in their first language. They argue, among other issues, that the time spent on learning to speak occurs at the expense of academic education and that the end result therefore is a deaf child who neither speaks well nor is adequately educated:

> ... many parents find that their school leaving child still has speech that is in fact totally incomprehensible to the outside world, despite waiting and working for years, always convinced that clear speech is just around the corner. Worse, that by allowing all these hours to be wasted on intensive speech training they have in fact denied their child their rightful education (Kittel, 1991: 59).

> When my mother asks me "Sing Nomalungelo … I do not sing because I can't sing and my mother becomes extremely disappointed because I cannot speak" (Lalendle, 1975: 148)

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Why deaf children were ever taught to speak at the expense of their academic education is a question that may be asked. Interestingly it was seemingly not so much for pedagogical reasons (see Rée, [1999] 2000). The voice, as the 'breath of human life', was considered a mark of civilization and anyone who was incapable of speech was in a state of 'utter spiritual dereliction' (Rée, [1999] 2000: 89-90). It followed that if the 'souls' of the Deaf were to be 'saved' and if they were to be 'civilized' they would have to speak. In addition, in 16th century Spain, when fortunes were being made as a result of early colonial exploitation of the Americas, the deaf children of an increasingly wealthy aristocracy, according to Spanish Roman Law could not inherit unless they could be taught to speak (see Wright [1969] 1993: 165).

Deaf education remained a scientific curiosity and prerogative of the rich until the advent of the Abbe de l'Eppe who towards the middle of the 18th century introduced the manual or Sign method. Many consider the Abbe by far and away the greatest teacher of the Deaf. His method extended Deaf education from the rich to the poor and middle classes, from Europe to America and Ireland and from Ireland eventually to Cape Town (Griffey, 1994: 16 and 34). However, even during the 150 or so years when de l'Eppe's manual method dominated, religious sentiments remained key to Deaf education and related to this policy as it has been directed towards the Deaf (Rée, [1999] 2000: 151).

At the 1880 'International Conference of Teachers of the Deaf' held in Milan, oralism again became orthodoxy and remained so for almost a century until Sign language began to return to the classrooms in the 1970s (Baynton, 1993: 94). Since 1995, in South Africa, Deafsa has been promoting the 'bilingual approach'[11] to Deaf education or Sign plus a written language (Bilingual Education, Deafsa pamphlet, no date) - and interestingly a method not unlike that used by Bridget Lynne (see Chapter Four, for detail on the South African situation as international education and policy was implemented locally).

Thus since the start of Deaf education, dominance has alternated between the oral and Sign or manual methods. Ironically, however, even during those times when oralism was orthodoxy and Sign language was proscribed, pupils learnt Sign at school among

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[11] This bilingual approach complements 'additive bilingualism' or mother tongue education plus English that is currently being advocated for South African schools more widely (see, for example, Heugh, 2000)

themselves (Baynton, 1996). This was seemingly so even for those who like David Wright attended a strictly oral school and who shares the opinions of the oralists. Wright describes the role of Sign among the pupils particularly well:

> Our own sign-argot was of course prohibited, like another habit we had of not using the voice when forming words (it makes for easier lipreading apart from the obvious advantage of cutting the risk of being overheard). But these rules could not be enforced without the presence of the staff. What I have been describing is not how we talked but how we talked among ourselves when no hearing person was present. At such times our behaviour and conversation were quite different. We relaxed inhibitions and wore no masks. But the presence of hearing people constrained our modes of communication. Besides in front of hearing people we would try to appear 'normal' (Wright, [1969] 1993: 60).

Estimates for Signers in South Africa may suggest overall figures for people who became deaf as children and who qualified for Deaf education. Otherwise figures are difficult to come by even in the United States and Canada (see, Padden and Humphries, 1988: 4-5). In South Africa a recent national population census devotes only a single question to disability in general (see, for example, Question 13: Do you [or any member of the household] have a serious sight, hearing, physical or mental disability, Census 1996: 4). The October Household Survey (OHS) is the official means used to assess the extent of disability in South Africa. The OHS investigates disability broadly by the following four categories: (1) visual disability; (2) hearing or speech disability; (3) physical disability; (4) and mental disability (Makhatha and Potgieter, 1998: 45). However, the OHS does not differentiate within the categories, or by age of onset or by degree of hearing loss. A recent study on disability admits to the same limitations:

> … [T]he data do not differentiate within the disability or activity limitation categories. The blind person will be coded as a person with a seeing disability just as someone who is partially sighted. Similarly a Deaf person would have been counted as having a hearing disability as would have been a person with partial hearing (Schneider, et al, 1999: 3)

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Deafsa's figures (1995) for 'prevalence for hearing impairment' and for Signing South Africans (see Table 1.1) are based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) accepted prevalence for hearing loss in a population: 1 percent of a population are estimated to be profoundly deaf, 3 percent to be extremely hard of hearing and 6 percent to be hard of hearing. Of the then total national population of 4 028 464 deaf persons, 402 847 were estimated to be profoundly deaf; 1 208 539 to be extremely hard of hearing; and 2 417 078 to be hard of hearing. Of the national estimated total of 4 028 464 deaf persons, up to 1 609 368 considered Sign their first language (almost the same as the combined total estimate for the profoundly deaf and the extremely hard of hearing). The 1995 national estimate of over 1.5 million Signers suggested that their number is higher than that for speakers of four of the country's eleven official languages, namely Tsonga (1.35 million), Swazi (962 000), Ndebele (799 000) and Venda (763 000) (Deaf in South Africa: facts and figures, *Bua*, 1995: 2).

Table 1.1: Prevalence of hearing impairment in South Africa: Deaf and hard of hearing people in South Africa (Central Statistic Service: 1994 mid-year estimates)

Province	Total population	Profoundly deaf (1%)	Extremely hard of hearing (3%)	Hard of hearing (6%)	Total
Western Cape	3 633 077	36 331	108 992	217 985	363 308
Eastern Cape	6 436 790	64 368	193 104	386 207	643 679
Northern Cape	737 306	7 373	22 119	44 239	73 731
Kwazulu Natal	8 505 338	85 054	255 160	510 320	850 534
Free State	2 726 840	27 268	81 805	163 610	272 683
North West	3 252 991	32 530	97 590	195 179	325 299
Northern Transvaal	5 201 630	52 016	156 049	312 098	520 163
Mpumalanga	2 921 559	29 216	87 647	175 294	292 157
Gauteng	6 869 103	68 691	206 073	412 146	686 910
Total	40 284 634	402 847	1 208 539	2 417 078	4 028 464
Estimated number: Signing as first language	**1 609 386**				

Source: Statistics correlated with prevalence figures researched by the SANCD [South African National Council for the Deaf, now Deafsa] Clinical Service Division
Presented: Workshop on Prevention of Hearing Impairment in Africa: 24-27 October 1995, Nairobi, Kenya.

In the Province of the Western Cape (see Map One, where Cape Town is located, Deafsa's 1995 figures (see Table 1.1) show the total estimated deaf persons to be 363 308. Of these some 145 323 deaf persons (of whom 36 331 are profoundly deaf and 108 992 extremely hard of hearing) probably consider Sign their first language. However, according to a more recent study 'there are about 500 000 users of SASL' (South African Sign Language) (Morgan, 2001: 3). The point is that it is difficult to know the numbers of deaf people as well as Deaf Signers in South Africa and no figures are available for Cape Town.

Socio-economic profiles were also not easy to come by. A national available – but undifferentiated - socio-economic profile suggests that deaf people in South Africa are more materially disadvantaged than their hearing counterparts (Deaf in South Africa: facts and figures, *Bua*, 1995: 2). It has been estimated that at least 70 percent of the Deaf in South Africa are unemployed and maintain subsistence levels of 40 percent lower than that of their hearing counterparts; up to 68 percent live in informal housing settlements (Deaf in South Africa: facts and figures, *Bua*, 1995: 2).

The 'sample population' of this study suggested certain similarities and differences with the study population that I have described thus far. I discuss these similarities and differences below. This discussion notifies the reader early in the thesis of the particularities of the sample population. However, I do not discuss the method of the study in full (see, Chapter Three), except to say that the sample population is based on 94 returns, collected systematically by face-to-face interviews, by question schedule, using the 'snowball' method, a technique that proved most suitable for a population, such as the Deaf that has no geographical base.

Introducing the sample population

The partial profile[12] of the sample population, as I discuss below, reflects something of the heterogeneity of the Deaf by age, by gender, by spoken language and by residence. It also reflects a sameness on the basis of choice of first language viz Sign. But in comparison to Deafsa's 1995 figures, the sample population is not statistically

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[12] A partial profile of the sample population, by Tables 1.1 – 1.10 appears as Appendix One

representative. In addition, in comparison with selected socio-economic indicators for the South African Deaf (given above), the sample population showed certain particularities. As the discussion will suggest, in general, the sample population suggested a more materially advantaged group than the national average.

The ages of the sample population (see Table 1.2) range considerably, from those between 20 and 29 years (6.4 percent) to those 70 plus years (6.4 percent). The proportion of women (Table 1.2) in the sample population is higher than that of men (60.6 percent; females to 39.4 percent males), although men are still relatively well represented. Residential areas ranged fairly widely. The Cape Town residences of the sample population (see Table 1.3) are summarized and collated under 'African' (41.5 percent), 'coloured' (37.2 percent) and 'white' (7.4 percent) as these areas were formerly designated (see Table 1.3a for a breakdown of residential areas surveyed by numbers of returns per area; Map One and Map Two for the geographical distribution of the sample population). It will also be noted that residence extends beyond Cape Town to include the Western Cape Countryside (3.2 percent), other South African cities such as East London (2.1 percent), Port Elizabeth (1.1 percent), Johannesburg (2.1 percent), and Kimberley (1.1 percent). Interviews were conducted primarily in Cape Town, but because this study is interested in crossing boundaries, the sample population was not restricted to residence in Cape Town. Cape Town, for this population without a geographical base, served merely as the location from whence to start the investigation.

All 94 respondents stated Sign to be their first language. Their lip-reading, reading and writing languages varied and reflected the three major spoken languages of Cape Town and the Western Cape, Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa. (Chapter Four, that discusses the collective history of the Deaf in Cape Town, offers reasons for this variation). For 36.2 percent of the sample population, the first lip-reading language choice was Afrikaans, for 41.5 percent it was English and for 21.3 percent, isiXhosa (see Table 1.4). For the 54.3 percent (or 51) who could lip-read two languages, Afrikaans was the second lip-reading choice for 33.3 percent; English for 51 percent, isiXhosa for 11.8 percent and Sesotho for 3.9 percent (and one of the respondents was blind). Since Sign has no written equivalent, the reading and writing languages of the research sample were as follows: 33.0 percent preferred to read and write in Afrikaans; 46.8 percent in English and 18.1 percent in isiXhosa.

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In contrast with the national socio-economic picture of the Deaf given above (Deaf in South Africa: facts and figures, *Bua*, 1995: 2), the sample population overall was not rich but neither were they desperately poor. In terms of employment and housing they were better off than the national picture of the Deaf. Unemployment was considerably lower, almost half the national percentage for the Deaf (36.2 percent – see Table 1.5 in comparison: 70 percent). Those employed (see Table 1.5a for a list of occupations) were engaged in semi-skilled occupations, such as cleaning; a number in skilled occupations, such as shoe repairing; and a number were self-employed.

Only 4.3 percent lived in informal housing settlements in comparison with the national picture of 68 percent (Deaf in South Africa: facts and figures, *Bua*, 1995: 2). The majority lived in council houses or flats and had access to electricity, water, sanitation, postal services and refuse removal. The dwellings were relatively well appointed (see Table 1.6). A considerable majority had refrigerators and electrical stoves. Televisions and video machines were well supplied and there were a number who owned a motor vehicle. Half the sample had telephones in the home but considerably fewer had a 'teldem' (a keyboard telephone)[13].

There are a number of possible reasons why this sample population differs from the national profile of the Deaf. The wider population of Cape Town and the Western Cape generally is considered more advantaged than many other parts of the country in terms of certain indicators (Makhatha and Potgieter, 1998). On the basis of education, for example, the high levels for the Western Cape are 'in sharp contrast to the rest of South Africa, where one in every five (20 percent) African women and one in every seven (14 percent) African males have received no education at all' (Hirschowitz and Orkin, 1996: 12). Unemployment in the urban areas of Western Cape (Makhatha and Potgieter, 1998: 18) is 22 percent, considerably lower than that of provinces, such as Northern Cape (35 percent), Eastern Cape (34 percent), Free State (32 percent) and Mpumalanga (30 percent). However, access to facilities, although better than the rest of the country, remain inadequate, especially for Africans (Makhatha and Potgieter, 1998: 48).

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[13] Although it should be noted that teldems have only been made relatively widely available within the past two years.

The particularities of the group may also be a reflection of the selection by snowball technique as well as the geographical and the time limits I eventually had to place on the sample collection (see Chapter Three). The 'better off' profile may also say something about the sample population as a social group. Their parents and caregivers, often poor, as the personal histories suggest (see Chapter Four) saw to it that their children attended school – even at extra cost to the household. As adults this was an enterprising group of individuals as their occupation profile suggests (see Table 1.5a). It is also a relatively older group of people (the majority are 40 plus years of age – see Table 1.2) that have had the time to establish themselves.

The study as a whole included different degrees of deafness. There are individual differences in addition to the categories of profoundly deaf, extremely hard of hearing or hard of hearing that have been used by Deafsa (1995). The medical specialties, audiology and audiometry, can identify a range of individual hearing differences. Some individual differences can be assisted with hearing aids, including more recent devices such as the cochlear implant (a bionic device for surgical implantation in two year old deaf children aimed at 'curing' deafness). However, few of the older people of this study knew their degree of deafness (or even seemed to care). Few used hearing aids which have improved with time. However, older people may be less likely to use aids than younger deaf people (Kyle and Woll, 1985: 17). Aids are expensive, even the upkeep, such as the batteries. Also, the profoundly deaf cannot usually be assisted with hearing aids. They may even take some pride in their profound degree of deafness.

> Now I must emphasize that I am completely without hearing – a fact, so rum is the operation of human vanity, on which I rather pique myself. (When introducing me to people my mother still says, "He's a little deaf" – a euphemism I find vaguely defamatory) (Wright [1969] 1993: 9)

Rather than degree of deafness, however, it is the age of onset that is said to pose the more serious consequences, with those born deaf or who become deaf prelingually considered the most seriously at risk. Even so, for this study, the only age criterion for onset of deafness was that the individual became deaf young enough to qualify for Deaf education – which all of the sample population did (see Table 1.7). With regard to age of onset of deafness: 18.1 percent were born deaf; nearly half (46.9 percent) became deaf

before their sixth birthday; 28.7 percent after their sixth birthday and 7 percent did not know when they became or were diagnosed deaf (see Table 1.8).

The causes of deafness (see Table 1.9), apart from congenital deafness, included illness (44.7 percent), usually an infectious fever of childhood, and accidents (28.7 percent). However, there was often a delay between age at which diagnosis was made and age of first arrival at school (see Table 1.10). For instance, 65 percent of the sample population (including those born deaf) were diagnosed deaf before their sixth birthday but only 9,6 percent were at school before then, even though it has been oralist educational policy to start Deaf children at school as early as possible.

Despite the audiological and social problems seemingly posed by deafness, including delays in getting to Deaf school, as Joseph's story suggests (see above) it was difficult in many areas of their social lives to identify the participants in this study as 'other' or different from their hearing counterparts, either physically or socially. This study suggests that they are difficult to identify as 'other' because they have developed successful strategies to deal with the challenges of being deaf in a predominantly hearing world. It is these strategies or the 'doing of deafness' that are the focus for the examination of the degree to which social boundaries are or are not transcended. The study is about the doing of deafness by people who, like David Wright, can say the following:

> Deafness had thrown my life out of the usual pattern. Resenting, or trying to ignore, a physical handicap gets one nowhere; the thing is to accept and by accepting dominate, whatever may be the injury. What can one do with a misfortune but turn it if one can, to use? (Wright, [1969] 1993: ix-x).

Thus the social lives of ordinary people who happen to be deaf are the primary interest of this study. Yet the past 15 years has seen deaf activism emerge as a 'conspicuous and contentious player on the American multicultural stage, with "Deaf" (ethnicized) identity being increasingly championed by the mass media' (Bechter, 1999: 1). Less conspicuous, less contentious and not necessarily championed by the mass media, Cape Town and South Africa too have their activists. The South African situation including both the responses by activists and the strategies of ordinary deaf people is

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usefully seen in the context of the wider recent rise of the Deaf social movement. The rise of the Deaf social movement and a 'Deaf ethnicized' (Bechter, 1999: 1) in the United States of America opens the next chapter.

In summary: this opening chapter – *Setting the scene* - has introduced the research interest. It has posed the questions the study seeks to answer and put forward the study's aims. The chapter introduced the Deaf and offered a partial profile of the sample population. This sample population suggests relative heterogeneity on the basis of demographic criteria, such as age and residence, but similarity on the basis of choice of first language, Sign. This early presentation of a profile of the sample population notifies the reader that this population is not statistically representative of the Deaf in Cape Town. It alerts the reader to the fact that the people of this study, on the basis of employment figures and housing, are possibly materially more advantaged than the South African Deaf, nationally. It also acquaints the reader, early on, with the people of the study. The study, as a thesis, takes the following chapter outline.

Chapter Two – *Theoretical considerations* - considers theoretical issues and explores explanations for the social identity of the Deaf of this study. It begins with the rise of Deaf political 'ethnicized' identity (Bechter, 1999:1) in the United States of America, in response to the legitimization of Sign language in the 1960s (see Stokoe, 1960), and in the Post War Two context of multiculturalism and ethnogenesis (Roosens, 1989). Multiculturalism because of its use during apartheid has a problematic history in South Africa. Contemporary South Africa seeks new ways to explain cultural difference and related social identity (Sharp, 1997). This study explores Deaf social identity as simultaneously 'dispersed' across social context (Marcus, 1992: 315). It is social identity that is about the individual as a social actor and also about the collective. As a collective it is internal process or 'community' (Anderson, 1983; Cohen, 1985) as well as responses to 'external process' (Jenkins, 1994). External historical process displaced or marginalized the Deaf socially, in the wider hearing society, on the basis of a sensory deficit. Their marginalized position suggests certain analogies with other 'diasporic forms', especially strategies that respond creatively to 'dwelling-in-displacement' (Clifford, 1994). To explore these creative strategies in situations of displacement, I draw on Marx's (1990) notion of the 'social world', not as a closed system but rather as a set of fluid but discernible integrated networks.

Chapter Three – *Reflections on fieldwork* – discusses the mode of presentation, my relationships with the study population, learning Sign language, and the methods used to collect data. Fieldwork for the study was carried out between September 1995 and December 2001. Between September 1995 and December 1997 research included systematic participation and informal interviews. Between January 1998 and December 2001, continuing with participation and informal interviews, the study added formal interviews with 94 deaf people identified by the snowball method.

Chapter Four – *Historical social context* – explores external processes, international and local to provide the collective and personal historical social context for the people of the study. It explores these processes through the lens of education, often considered the history of the Deaf. It begins in the international situation. It translates the international situation as this changes over time, into the local situation beginning from colonialism when Deaf education began, through institutionalized segregation[14] and apartheid. History demonstrates that by 1994 the Deaf were a population categorized as differentiated from the hearing and differentiated within the category on the basis of age, apartheid category, method of education, school attended and spoken language. Against this historical divisive background I examine adult strategies that deal with being deaf in a hearing world.

Chapter Five – *Introducing Signing spaces* – introduces the key strategy: Signing spaces. A Signing space is a network that extends from the deaf individual to include deaf and hearing people. It is identifiable on the basis of Sign-based communication. For analytical purposes I examine the broader Signing space through Sign-hear and Sign-deaf networks. Sign-hear networks are the topic of Chapter Five. I demonstrate, using Fortes' notion of the Developmental Cycle of the Domestic group (1958), how, over time, deaf people assimilate hearing people into the Signing space via the Sign-hear space by 'teaching' them to Sign. The Sign-hear space addresses the hearing boundary primarily in domestic and near neighbourhood relationships. Among these relationships deafness is not deficit and social identity is dispersed. I demonstrate that it is only beyond the

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[14] 'Segregation' did not become a 'keyword' in the discourse of South African politicians until the twentieth century and one of the first occasions it was used was the opening of the Cape parliament in 1902 (Bickford-Smith, 1995: 7, citing Dubow 1988 20-23). However, policies along these lines have a long history in Cape Town and South Africa.

Sign-hear space, where there are barriers to communication, that deafness again becomes deficit.

Chapter Six – *Signing spaces continued* – focuses on those Sign-deaf networks of the Signing space where deaf people predominate and relationships were broadly sociable (Allan, 1979). I focus on Sign-deaf spaces as community, as ideas and actions from the actors' perspective (Anderson, 1983; Cohen, 1985) through tracing networks. I trace networks from the grassroots deaf social relationships of neighbourhood or residential area and friendship, across the Western Cape region and more widely, trans-nationally. I suggest that boundaries crossed vary by context and by networks. The chapter shows that Sign language facilitates interaction in sociable encounters. It may also be a signifier of 'deaf identity' in certain contexts.

Chapter Seven – *Leadership succession as a 'social drama'* – demonstrates the Deaf dealing with broader social transformation and offers insights from them for wider South Africa. The chapter discusses a case of leadership succession that I witnessed between 1995 and 2000. I present the case as a 'social drama' (Turner, [1957] 1972). I show that change of leadership and competition for positions over this period as well as the discourse used reflected historical processes as these impacted on the Deaf. However, the process of the 'social drama' also demonstrates that conflict, crises, and a discourse that reflects South Africa's historical divisions need not threaten a broader commonality.

In the concluding Chapter Eight – *Conclusions* - the networks of the Signing space are re-integrated. The re-integration suggests the complementarity of the networks. This includes boundaries crossed by networks in terms of those imposed by external historical process. The chapter ends with a discussion of a dispersed social identity (Marcus, 1992: 315). A dispersed identity was difficult to capture. In some contexts participants were not Deaf. In other contexts they were Deaf as 'community' (Anderson, 1983; Cohen, 1985) that was sometimes analogous to 'ethnicity' – or 'ethnicized' (Bechter, 1991:1) - and sometimes analogous to a 'diasporic' form (Clifford, 1994) – or 'diasporized' (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993: 711). But in the Signing spaces, the Deaf were rarely, if ever socially deficit.

Chapter Two: Theoretical considerations
The rise of a 'Deaf Identity' in the United States of America and exploring theoretical explanations for Deaf identity

... arms whirl like windmills in a hurricane ... the emphatic silent vocabulary of the body - look, expression, glance of the eye, hands perform their pantomime ... The seemingly corybandic brandishing of the hands and arms reduces itself to a convention ... It is in fact a kind of a vernacular ... though not a verbal one ... To reproduce their talk by transcribing no more than the words actually used must misrepresent and distort its quality. Its life and subtlety (the observation and humour were often subtle), depended on expressive demeanour, face, and eye, on the mimic gift: the pantomimic gesture subsuming a cartoonist's graphic ability to seize, magnify, and focus some essential point ... Gesture and expression then take over, to elaborate and qualify (Wright, [1969] 1993: 58-59).

The rise of 'Deaf Identity' and Sign language

The legitimization of Sign as a 'real language' by the discipline of academic linguistics has been of paramount importance to the establishment of a Deaf political identity today (Bechter, 1998). When Stokoe published *Sign Language Structure* in 1960, Sign was acknowledged, for the first time ever, to satisfy the linguistic criterion of a genuine language in its lexicon, in its syntax, and in its capacity to generate an infinite number of propositions (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 78 – see also Stokoe, 1960; Stokoe, Casterline and Cronenberg, 1976). However, at first many deaf people were not enthusiastic, but rather, 'indifferent' even 'hostile' (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 145). As Maher (1996) has noted educated deaf people overwhelmingly rejected any suggestion of Sign's linguistic status and maintained that it was not amenable to scientific study and, until the 1960s, for the Deaf in America their language was merely 'the Sign' (Padden and Humphries, 1988: 60-63); as 'the Sign', the language is probably much older.

In 1644, in England, Dr John Bulwer published a monograph on the Sign, *Chirologia: or the Naturall Language of the Hand* (Wright, [1969] 1993: 172). This same Dr Bulwer dedicated his later 1648 publication, *Philocophus: or the Deafe and Dumbe Man's Friend*, although not strictly on Sign language, to Sir Edward Gosticke, a deaf gentleman

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who communicated 'by signs and finger-spelling' (Wright, [1969] 1993: 173 - 174). In 1644 Bulwer described 'one Master Babington of Burntwood in the County of Essex' and his system of communication as follows:

> … 'a deaf man who 'doth notwithstanding feele words and, as if he had an eye in his finger, sees signs in the dark; whose wife discourseth very perfectly with him by a strange way of arthrologie, or alphabet contrived on the joynts of his fingers, who taking him by the hand in the night, can discourse with him very exactly (Wright, [1969] 1993: 172).

Sign is now acknowledged as complex as any language and possibly more so than some. Pinker includes Sign among those languages that he considers make English look like checkers in comparison with chess (1994: 127). As a non-linguist I am not in a position to discuss the complexities of the language. However, for the non-linguists there are some interesting differences from spoken language.

Sign is a visual language. It occurs in space. It has no necessary written equivalent. A Signer must read and write in a spoken language. For instance, a deaf person in the United Kingdom would read and write in English; in China in a particular Chinese dialect; in South Africa in one of the country's eleven official languages. As with any language, children learn Sign easily, although it may be difficult for older persons (see Pinker, 1994: 291 and I discuss my own efforts and limitations later under Method – see Chapter Three). Deaf children of hearing parents often learn it at school, as I have mentioned (see Chapter One). Deaf children and, importantly, also hearing children of deaf Signing parents may learn it in just the same way as any child learns a language (Aarons, 1995). Anything that is expressed in spoken language can be expressed in Sign. 'You can gossip, flirt, joke, discuss calculus and politics, give a linguistic lecture, make poetry, all in Signed language' (Aarons, 1995: 9). Deaf babies 'babble using their hands, just as hearing babies babble using their voices' (Aarons, 1995: 9). It is possible to daydream, talk in ones' sleep and dream in Sign (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 35).

The question has been raised as to whether Sign is mutually intelligible across spoken language barriers (Battison and Jordan, 1976; Kyle and Woll, 1985; 162-172; and in South Africa, Aarons and Reynolds, 1996; Aarons and Akach, 1998; Aarons, 1999).

Early writers claimed that Sign was universally and easily understood. Battison and Jordan cite Long (1918) and Michaels (1923). Kyle and Woll (1985: 162) add Nevins even earlier work (1895).

The return to oralism after the 1880 Milan Conference saw a decline in early Sign language linguistics (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 76). This was until Sign was legitimized in the 1960s by Stokoe's work (see Stokoe, 1960; Stokoe, Casterline and Cronenberg, 1976). But the acknowledgement of Sign as a genuine language also changed the earlier research direction from a search for universality to difference and references to Sign languages as mutually unintelligible became more and more common (see Kyle and Woll, 1985:163).

One response to work suggesting the mutual unintelligibility of Sign has been an attempt by the World Federation of the Deaf to create Gestuno (like Esperanto) for use at International Conferences, although deaf people have found it more difficult to understand than a foreign Sign language (Kyle and Woll, 1985: 162-163). Other work conducted at International Conferences has been interesting. When Signers were asked to use their own language to address a foreign language partner they apparently performed better than would be expected for two unrelated spoken languages (Kyle and Woll, 1985: 164). To explain their seeming ability to transcend spoken language barriers deaf people will say that they 'mime' but since hearing people do not follow this 'sign interlanguage' very well, as they would do if it were simply the performing art, it is more likely that at least some grammatical processes used in visual medium are shared despite differences in vocabulary – and once some basic vocabulary items are negotiated, conversation can flow since people use similar means of putting signs together (Kyle and Woll, 1985: 24-25).

Interest in Sign language both in Africa more widely and in South Africa is more recent than in America and the United Kingdom (see, Serpell and Mbewe, 1990, Schmaling, 1997, for work in Africa; Penn 1993; Morgan, 1995, for South African work). Most recently work in South Africa has also turned to mutual intelligibility across some of the country's eleven official spoken language barriers (see, for example, Aarons and Reynolds, 1996; Aarons and Akach, 1998: Aarons, 1999). Research into Sign language in South Africa (see, for example, Aarons and Morgan, 1998) indicates that linguistically

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there is one SASL [South African Sign Language]. There may be dialectal variation on the vocabulary level as different groups often have different signs but the grammar of the Sign language is the same for all Deaf people 'irrespective of age, ethnicity or geographical region' (Morgan, 2001: 6-7).

The scientific study of Sign by both deaf and hearing researchers, it could be argued, offered the necessary 'distance' (Roosens, 1989: 150) from the language. Roosens referring to 'culture' and ethnogenesis has said that in order to use one's own 'culture' as a right, one must first have gained some distance from that 'culture' (1989: 150). He explains with the example of second generation southern Italians in Belgium:

> The school system in Belgium by forcing young people to speak the local language [Dutch or French] and to attend classes to learn and study in that language seems to be a quite efficient way of creating a perspective on cultural differences ... The home culture becomes an 'object' to the children: they see it at a certain distance, and at the same time realize what is meant by the demand for the preservation of one's own culture and one's ethnic identity (1989: 151)

Roosens goes on to suggest that in the distance lies the 'paradox': 'the ethnic claims and slogans are mainly formulated by people who seem to have markedly moved away from their own culture of origin, which they want to "keep"' (1989: 151). In the same way the distance offered by the scientific study of Sign language allowed it to become a viable 'ethnolinguistic object (i.e., a *linguistic* object)' (Bechter, 1999: 5). As an ethnolinguistic object, Sign became the focus for mobilization around a Deaf Culture for Deaf rights (Bechter, 1999: 5).

'Deaf Identity' in the United States of America

Woodward (1972) made the distinction between deaf, lower case, to refer to the audiolgical condition and Deaf, upper case to refer to a particular group of deaf people who share a language – American Sign Language (ASL) - and a 'culture' (Padden and Humphries, 1988: 2). This distinction has translated into two prominent and contrasting views of deafness, the 'pathological' and the 'socio-cultural', with the socio-cultural view

said to be a response to the pathological attitude or long-time medicalization of deafness (Reagan, 1996: 5).

Lane (1992; 1993) has argued that the pathological view that sees deafness as negative, as 'deficit', is the creation of the 'audist establishment' of special educators, teachers, audiologists, medical doctors and psychologists who have worked together to create a medical model of deafness (Van Cleve, 1993: 272). The medical model 'makes difference into deviance' (Lane, 1993: 279; see, also Goffman, [1963] 1968 on Stigma). Deaf children and adults, by becoming technical objects of psychometric investigation, make the audist establishment possible and its control over the Deaf 'to measure, modify and surgically correct' deafness seem legitimate (Lane, 1993: 279- 280).

The medical model with its language of pathology, it is argued, has encouraged an essentially paternalistic attitude towards the Deaf (see Hahn, 1986: 130). Lane takes the argument further and likens the effects of paternalism on the Deaf to the colonial experience:

> Like the paternalism of the colonizers, hearing paternalism begins with defective perception because it superimposes its image of the familiar world of hearing people on the unfamiliar world of deaf people. Hearing paternalism likewise sees its task as civilizing its charges, restoring deaf people to society. The hearing people who control the affairs of deaf children and adults commonly do not know deaf people and do not want to. Since they cannot see deaf people as they really are, they make up imaginary deaf people of their own in accord with their own experience and needs. Paternalism deals in stereotypes (Lane, 1992: 37).

But Lane puts the suppression of their language Sign at the core of the marginalization of the Deaf: 'the utmost extreme to which tyranny can go when its mailed hand descends upon a conquered people is the proscription of their national language ... What heinous crime have deaf people been guilty of that their language should be proscribed' (Lane, 1986: cited in Wright [1969] 1993: xv).[1]

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[1] Lanes' tendencies to the 'polemic' are not lost on Wright who found it necessary to comment on a 'certain hysteria reminiscent of that found in feminist tracts of homosexual apologetics ([1969] 1993: xv)

Many have argued that proficiency in Sign language, in the USA and Anglophone Canada, has become a powerful marker of 'group solidarity' and probably the single most significant component of 'Deaf cultural identity' (Reagan, 1996: 9; see also Baker and Cokely, 1980; Erting, 1978; Kannapell, 1993; Padden, 1980; Lucas and Valli, 1992; Markowicz and Woodward, 1978). When Sign was legitimized as a language the Deaf could claim a 'culture'. 'Deaf Culture' is said to be 'unique' (Padden and Humphries, 1988: 5). Few people are born deaf to deaf parents. The majority becomes deaf in a hearing household. Consequently the Deaf are considered to learn 'Deaf Culture' later, with Deaf schools rather than the family playing a major role in transmission. Deaf residential schools, for their role in the transmission of 'Deaf Culture', and with no other necessary geographical base, are increasingly being viewed as the 'ancestral homeland' of the Deaf (Bechter, 1999: 1).

The socio-cultural view of deafness that originated in America and that puts forward the view of the Deaf as a minority 'ethnic' group (on the basis of language and a perceived shared culture has since been taken up in Britain and elsewhere (see, for example, Ahlgren and Bergman, 1980; Ladd, 1981; 1988; Lawson, 1981; Deuchar, 1984; Brennan, 1987; Miles, 1988 and Taylor and Bishop, 1991). Africa has apparently been slower. There were only four papers (see Morgan, 1995: 7-8) on 'Deaf Culture' at the international 'Deaf Way' conference held in Washington D.C in 1989 (see Erting et al, 1994). These papers included Simmons (1994) from South Africa; DeVlieger (1994) from Sub-Saharan Africa; Sururu (1994) from Burundi; and Okyere and Addo (1994) Ghana.

The rise of the Deaf social movement that originated in America and its claims for ethnic status needs to be seen against the general social mood of the post World War Two period (Alarcon, 1994), the introduction of the notion of 'multiculturalism' (Turner, 1993; Taylor, [1992] 1994) and the rise of ethnogenesis (Roosens, 1989)

'Deaf identity' in context

The post World War Two period was a time of much reflection and debate as well as major social change. The extreme racist policies of the Nazi regime put race and racism high on the world agenda for reflection and review. The woman's movement gained a new impetus with more women than ever before engaged in wage labour. The colonies

intensified their liberation struggles. By 1947 India had gained her independence. By the 1960s the majority, at least of the British colonies in Africa, were independent. Independence meant new governments. New governments meant dealing with the legacy of colonial rule (see Mamdani, 1996). Some of these changes led to conflict. In response to the conflict, many of the formerly colonized people sought refuge in Britain and Europe, changing its demographic face, probably forever. At the same time demobilized soldiers seeking a new start emigrated from Britain and Europe to Australia, New Zealand Canada and South Africa. Britain, Germany and other European countries began to recruit immigrants to help with the post war re-construction of their countries. Germany relied on Turks. It has been said, at the 50th anniversary of their arrival in the United Kingdom, that Britain's recruitment of 500 Caribbean ex-soldiers in 1948 may well have marked the start of a 'multicultural' Britain (*Pmlive,* Safm[2], 4.00 – 6.00pm, 23 June 1998, Amelia French reporting live from the BBC[3], London).

The term multicultural first made its appearance in New York in 1941 as part of an attack on prejudice (Gordon and Newfield, 1994: 94) and later 'multiculturalism' became a key academic interest area (Turner, 1993). The term is now widely used, albeit with different meanings in different contexts. The American Civil Rights Movement that emerged in the 1960s (influenced as Biko has said by the success of the post World War Two liberation movements in Africa – see 1978: 69) has often been used as a model for the process of multiculturalism and changes in the notion over time. The American Civil Rights movement began in the mood of a liberal multiculturalism or a notion that individuals from diverse race, class and gender groups share a common humanity and, as such, deserve equal rights (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997: 10). Equal rights for African Americans remained the aim but over time the emphasis moved from shared humanity to a focus on difference. Focusing on difference, the Civil Rights Movement began to articulate a 'pluralist multiculturalism' (Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997: 15). However, some in the Movement took the emphasis on difference to an extreme. The extreme 'essentialist multiculturalism' tended to 'exoticize and fetishize' difference (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997:15). Now, as poverty and its effects remain primarily a 'black' issue in

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[2] Safm (104-107 fm) is the Engllish language radio service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC).
[3] British Broadcasting Corporation

the USA, the focus has become a 'critical multiculturalism' that searches for the structural causes of continued inequality (Kincheloe and Steinberg, 1997:23).

The post World War Two mood of civil and then human rights has also influenced the indigenous populations in Canada and New Zealand to challenge the dominance of the white settler populations in those countries (Getty and Lusier, 1988; Scott, 1995; Spoonley, Pearson and MacPherson, 1991). These indigenous movements have been successful to the extent that the liberal democratic governments of Canada, New Zealand and Australia have adopted official policies of multiculturalism. But, as McAllister (1997) has pointed out in his recent analysis of the Australian situation, a policy of multiculturalism can conceal a discourse of difference that supports, manages and may even reinforce unequal power relations

It is through identity politics of the post World War Two period that not only the Deaf but other minorities such as gay/lesbian groups have been mobilized (Stein, 1993; Weston, 1993), often specifically as 'cultural' groups. Similarly civil-rights consciousness has also endorsed the rise of disability rights activism (Scotch, 1989; Shapiro, 1993).

Generally then, the second half of the 20th century has not seen a decrease in the perception of difference as was often projected by earlier researchers of cultural change, nor has it seen the disappearance of ethnic groups, as Marx predicted (Roosens, 1989: 9). This period has also witnessed scholarly concern with difference and theories of ethnicity. By 1968 Derrida was theorizing 'differance' at the French Philosophical Society (Alarcon, 1994: 128). During this period feminist literature has proliferated. Interest in ethnicity was renewed. Roosens (1989: 11-16) credits Barth (1969) with the notion of ethnic group as a social vessel; Glazer and Moynihan (1975; see, also Patterson, 1978) for the relationship between ethnicity and the struggle for material goods and status; Bell (1975) for the discussion about ethnic identification and social identification; and De Vos (1975) and Epstein (1978) are acknowledged for the socio-psychological dimensions of ethnicity. The more recent work of the 1990s has seen a greater concern with unequal power relations. With a focus on unequal power relations attention has turned to new responses by groups that remain powerless, poor and marginalized - as well as exploring why unequal access to power and resources continue (see, for example, Gilroy, 1987; Bhabha, 1994).

'Multiculturalism' in South Africa

> This mechanism of rule – indirect rule – has left a legacy, as Mamdani (1996) has argued eloquently, and we have not yet addressed that legacy adequately. We still need to understand what the precise form of rule by cultural difference was, what it entailed, and how it lives on to complicate the present (Sharp, 1997: 3).

Despite its widespread use in the global context, multiculturalism in South Africa, both as a term and as a notion, has not been without its problems. The architects of apartheid endeavoured, at least partly, to legitimate their policies on the basis of a notion of distinct immutable cultural differences between people (see, for example, Multinational Development in South Africa, 1974; Official Yearbook of South Africa, 1977). Apartheid's divide and rule policy based on distinct cultural differences was not exceptional (Mamdani, 1996). Rather, 'apartheid was the generic form of the colonial state in Africa; the form of rule that Smuts called institutional segregation, the British termed indirect rule and the French association', the 'common state form' that Mamdani refers to as 'decentralized despotism' (1996:8). This form or rule that imposed cultural difference has left a painful legacy. As a result of apartheid, as well as the eras of segregation and colonialism before it, people suffered not only political and economic oppression but also denigration of their 'culture' – 'culture' referring, as Sharp has put it, to 'their dignity as human beings who had their own ways of making sense of the changing world around them' (Sharp, 1997: 3).

The discourse of a 'multicultural South Africa' continues in the post apartheid era. If this unreconstructed view means simply the coexistence of many different cultures, then we are toying, dangerously, with the legacy of rule through cultural difference (Sharp, 1997: 10). If multiculturalism means that a direct association between race and culture persists as maybe implied in the popular notion of South Africa as a 'Rainbow Nation' (see, Alexander, 1996) then this country will never get away from its colour-coded past and the painful legacy it represents.

The Deaf, as a study population, it seemed to me, offered a way out of a strictly colour-coded South Africa. It is possible to imagine a post-apartheid South Africa where groups

based on factors such as religion, language, region, customs - but not on 'race' – will be self defined but also open to larger collective identities (Alexander, 1996: 4). Two recent metaphors point in this direction.

Consider a very large river. It is constituted as the main stream by many different tributaries which never disappear and themselves undergo contour changes in the course of time. It is the flowing together of these contributory sidestreams that brings about the river and which continuously changes the shape and content of the river. I believe that this particular metaphor describes accurately the relation between different "cultures" in many so-called plural or multicultural situations. It certainly throws much light on the evolving situation in South Africa where there is both commonality and difference. Most important, it indicates that it is possible to conceive of a situation where the self defined social groups (tributaries) based on religion language region customs etc., but not on 'race' will continue to coexist and yet be South African as well as open to larger collective identities (Alexander, 1996: 4)

On a similar optimistic, yet not frivolous, note Frankental ends her work on Israelis in Cape Town (1998) with the notion of the 'fruit salad':

A fruit salad by contrast [to the popular metaphors, 'melting-pot', 'mosaic' and 'rainbow'], provides a usually attractive, though untidy and unpredictable, mix of colours, shapes, textures and flavours. Some pieces remain firmer than others but nevertheless contribute flavour; some disintegrate more easily but their flavour too is discernible. Furthermore no fruit is excluded in principle and none is 'hostile' (unassimilable) to any other. And the juices of all combine and are distributed equally throughout. The whole is pleasing, natural, harmonious and wholesome (1998: 228)

The challenge now for transforming contemporary South Africa is to explore a much more fluid, messy, untidy, unpredictable but possibly more interesting, perhaps even more wholesome and harmonious cultural difference. The challenge is to find out how people 'do' being South African and different. It is not difference based on race but it is also difference that cannot deny the historical routes to the present that were based on race. The challenge is to explore cultural difference in the context of the uncertainties of an increasingly globalizing world. It is to explore cultural difference in the related local

context of contemporary post apartheid South Africa where, almost daily, the country's citizens struggle and strive to shape and refigure their newly shared society.

Basically, the challenge for South African anthropology is to explore cultural difference, differently, and in a new context. South African anthropology offers ways to explore cultural difference that builds on the legacy of anthropology in Southern Africa (see, Falk Moore, 1993) including the relatively recent 'exposé' tradition (Gordon and Spiegel, 1993). The exposé tradition deconstructed the imposed cultural differences of apartheid (see, for example, Boonzaier and Sharp, 1988), although it made certain 'mistakes' (Sharp, 1997, 6). It assumed that all cultural difference was invented and imposed from above (Scheper-Hughes, 1995). It failed to note the cultural forms that responded to denigration of indigenous forms – with some notable exceptions from local based scholars (see, for example, Spiegel, 1989), although anthropologists based or trained in the United States have led the way to the recovery of culture (see, for example, Ferguson, 1990; Coplan, 1991; Comaroff and Comaroff, 1992; Peters, 1992). The exposé tradition also failed to note responses to policies of imposed sameness or assimilation, such as those pursued by colonial authorities in Canada and New Zealand (see, for example, Getty and Lussier, 1988; Spoonley, Pearson and MacPherson, 1991).

Despite its 'mistakes' the exposé tradition has always worked from the margins and usually deconstructed apartheid's imposed cultural difference, for good reason. This work regularly demonstrated the functionality of seemingly unusual beliefs and practices, and their very practical role in ensuring the most basic requirement of sheer physical survival (see, Murray, 1981, for just one example among many). A recent work, amongst others I consider that has usefully built on this tradition is that of Malan (1997). She has not focused on physical survival as such. Rather, she has 'exposéd' the 'dispersed' identities (Marcus, 1992: 315) and creative cultural strategies, 'the embedded literacies' of people who have been defined by policy makers as not only technically illiterate but also carrying a related social deficit.

The exposé tradition by deconstructing imposed cultural difference worked well to make the strange familiar. But anthropology is also about making the familiar strange, although the discipline tends to focus on the former rather then the latter. Publication seems to favour the more exotic work. Because of the 'reward structures, criteria of publishibility,

and theoretical premises of our discipline, papers that might show how unexotic and unaligned other peoples' worlds are, never get written' (Keesing, 1989: 459 - 460). However, in the same way that the exposé tradition worked to make the strange familiar it can also do so to make the familiar strange. But the familiar is not easy to access precisely because it is familiar.

> Our own culture is like our own nose. We do not see it because it is in front of our very eyes and we are accustomed to look straight through it to see the world. Indeed if we see it at all, we see it as part of the world. The culture of others, like the noses on their faces, is readily apparent and lends itself to detached and protracted study and comparison (Barley, 1990:3).

The Deaf are familiar and 'other' only because they do not hear. A study of the Deaf compels reflection on the familiar role of hearing in giving meaning to the world. Consider for an instant how much meaning is conveyed in the tone of the voice that suggests mood as well as clues to social class, to old apartheid categories, as well as whether people are local or African from elsewhere, when skin colour makes it difficult to tell. Learning to hear, like learning to see, constitutes a huge learning task, but because it is achieved so smoothly, so unconsciously, by hearing people its enormous complexity is scarcely realized (Sacks, 1995:121). The enormous complexity can only be realized to some degree by looking to those who 'do' meaning via a different route or 'centre' (see Padden and Humphries, 1988: 39-55) that does not include the usual range of sensory resources.

At the same time, because they are both familiar and other, the Deaf offer a useful comparative perspective on South African society. Deaf people, because the audiological condition knows few social boundaries, may be said to 'intersect and overlap across the spheres of class, gender, race, nation, generation and location' (Bhabha, 1994). As such they reflect the full range of a society. Reflecting the range of a society, deaf people may provide a useful comparable group for studying South African society. In South African society at this time of transformation and via the Deaf 'we may [yet] elude the politics of polarity and emerge (by reflection) as the others of ourselves' (Bhabha, 1994: 39). However, it is specifically because the Deaf overlap and are across and 'in between' (Bhabha, 1994: 2) the conventional spheres of class, gender, race,

nation, generation and location, that they pose a challenge for explanations of their identity.

Exploring theoretical explanation for 'Deaf identity'

> The identity of anyone or any group is produced simultaneously in many different locales of activity by many different agents for many different purposes. One's identity where one lives, amongst one's neighbours, friends, relatives, or co-strangers, is only one social context, and perhaps not the most important one in which it is shaped. From a modernist approach to identity in context, it is this process of dispersed identity in many different places of differing character that must be grasped (Marcus, 1992: 315)

Identity is many things, almost too many things and all happening at the same time. Identity is about individuals and collectives. It is what people think. It is what they do. It is about labels or the names people give themselves; give others; and give to groups. It is about boundaries between groups. It is usually all of these simultaneously and it is always relational, always situational; and thus must always be seen in context. The challenge is to capture and try and explain the process of dispersed identity in many different places of differing character (Marcus, 1992: 315). To explore explanations for Deaf identity, in Cape Town, I start with community, a term regularly used to describe the Deaf by themselves and by others (see, for example, Padden and Humphries, 1988; Kyle and Woll, 1985: 5-28).

Community

The term 'community' regularly describes the Deaf as a social group (see, for example, Padden and Humphries, 1988; Kyle and Woll, 1985: 5-28). Community in its popular and academic use has been described as one of the *Key Ideas* of the social sciences (Hamilton, 1985: 8). By the mid 1950s, an American sociologist had identified over 90 discrete definitions of the concept (Hamilton, 1985: 7). But community is not about definitions. It is about meaning for those that use it to describe themselves (Anderson, 1983; Cohen, 1985) and also about how it has been used to describe and even 'categorize' others (Jenkins, 1994). Categorization by others cannot be discounted for its

consequences for construction of social identity (Jenkins, 1994), a point I come to below. This is especially so in the South African context. Apartheid's legislators often used community as a reified and bounded euphemism for race (Thornton and Ramphele, 1988: 29). The discriminatory consequences for people so categorized are well known.

Community as meaning for those who use it to describe themselves is not about the 'falsity/genuineness' of their claims but rather about their 'creation', and the 'style in which they [communities] are imagined' (Anderson, 1983: 15). Communities may be imagined in the sense that members will never know all of their fellows 'yet in their minds they have the image of their communion' (Anderson, 1983: 15). There are also a number of sub-themes where Anderson's work can be usefully applied to the Deaf as they have been described in America. In the same way that the rise of print media contributed to the rise of nationalism (Anderson, 1983: 30), the Deaf in the United States of America have used the media well to promote Deaf identity (Bechter, 1999: 1). Deaf schools have been prominent in promoting notions of Deaf Community, in the same way that the colonial school system contributed to promoting colonial nationalisms (Anderson, 1983: 109). The rise of the Deaf social movement has also produced cultural products, such as poetry, prose, and fiction that define something of the non-pathological character of nationalism (Anderson, 1983: 129). Literary works by deaf people include works on Deaf folklore (see, for example, Rutherford, 1993), Deaf poetry and Deaf drama (see, for example, Miles, 1976; Bahan, 1994; Supalla, 1994) and Deaf history (see, for example, Gannon, 1981; Lane, 1984; Fisher and Lane, 1993). However, explanations of Deaf identity are more than merely listing similarities between Anderson's thesis (1983) and the Deaf in America:

There are many ways to 'imagine community'. In the Last Wave (Anderson, 1983: 105 – 128), the chapter in which Anderson discusses the rise of 'colonial nationalism', a chapter in which he also includes the linguistically diverse Swiss state, (1983: 123-127), he makes the point that 'nations can be imagined without linguistic communality' (1983: 123). Anderson's thesis (1983) is authoritative and has been so influential because he has made it possible to imagine community in many ways. Anderson takes his notion of 'imagined' from Seton-Watson (1977: 5 and see 1983: 15, footnote, 9). 'All that I can find to say is that a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation or behave as if they have formed one' (Seton-

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Watson, 1977:5). Anderson then 'translates' 'consider themselves' as 'imagine themselves' (1983: 15, footnote, 9). To paraphrase, it becomes possible to say that 'a community exists when a significant number of people imagine themselves to form a community or behave as if they have formed one'. Imagined 'community' then, basically, is ideas and actions about the collective from actors' perspective.

Cohen (1985) too is concerned with the construction of community from the actors' perspective. Cohen (1985) highlights the relational, the situational, the inter-activeness, the differences within and the meaning of community from the actors' perspective.

> … the reality of community lies in its members' perception of the vitality of its culture. People construct community symbolically, making it a resource and repository of meaning and a referent of their identity (Cohen, 1985: 118).

From the actors' perspective, by their ideas and action, people construct community symbolically. The boundaries are not the political boundaries of the nation state or even geography, although there may be elements of geographical location. Boundaries are symbolically constructed (Cohen, 1985). Symbolically boundaries are conceptual, about ideas and related actions.

Conceptual boundaries include attaching labels (Frankental, 1998: 89-90). The attaching of a label differentiates self from others irrespective of the criteria or the specific purpose, although a label can also specify the criteria and the purpose. Labeling indicates the labeler's awareness of diversity of 'who is like us and who is not'. It indicates the selection of boundaries and so a conceptual boundary is formed. The selection of criteria for conceptualizing boundaries will depend on the relationship between the actor's objective situation, his/her subjective evaluation of it, and on societal norms. Conceptual boundaries are not fixed. The criteria vary and fluctuate according to social context.

Anthropologists have tended to emphasis the internal processes without sufficient attention to external processes (Jenkins, 1994). Jenkins (1994) stays with the internal processes. However, his theoretical framework that argues for ethnic identity to be understood as an example of social identity in general, adds the dimension of

'categorization' or external processes and the consequences for social identity –
'externally-located processes of social categorization are enormously influential in the
production and reproduction of social identities' (1994: 197).

Social groups define themselves, their nature, and their boundaries but social categories
are identified, defined and delineated by others (Jenkins, 1994: 201). Categorizers often
have the power and authority to 'name' or give an identity. Categorizers may construct
an identity quite divorced from the perspective or experience of those so named or
identified (see, for example, Jenkins, 1994). This externally constructed identity may
even define what it means to bear the name and the experience of it. Categorization is
often the key to 'stigma' (Goffman, [1963] 1968). Categorization by others is an
important consideration for the Deaf and the interactive construction of their identity by
others and by themselves. Social identity as both external processes, including
categorization as well as internal processes needs to be seen in the current context of
the transnational moment. For this aspect, I turn to the notion of diaspora or 'diasporic'
forms (Clifford, 1994)

Diaspora and diasporic

Anderson (1983), it could be said, anticipated 'the transnational moment' (Tololyan,
1991: 4). The 'transnational moment' refers to the late 20th century and its 'new forms of
economic and political interaction, communication and migration [that] combine to erode
the [nation-state's] sharply defined borders (Tololyan, 1991: 5). This political and
economic climate with its dislocated/relocated populations has forced anthropologists to
question their 'implicit mapping of cultures onto places' (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992: 7).
In this political and economic world climate that is characterized by shifting migrating
populations with 'multi-locale attachments' (Clifford, 1994: 306) and where it is no longer
as possible to map cultures on to places (Gupta and Ferguson, 1992: 7), scholars
following Anderson (1983) have re-turned to the notion of 'diaspora'.

Clifford approaches diaspora not from the point of definition but from 'the borders and
what it defines itself against' (1994: 307). The Deaf, it may be said, because they define
themselves, and have been defined by others against the hearing border, are a sensory
diaspora. However, before proceeding, I must point out where Clifford draws the line

with regard to what may be considered even looser 'diasporic' forms (Clifford, 1994: 310). I draw considerably on Clifford (1994) to present my argument and may at times cross the line. Yet overall there were certain compelling similarities between the Deaf and other looser diasporic forms, such as Gilroy (1987) that I found difficult to ignore.

The approach to diaspora, that Clifford takes in 'tandem with Gilroy [1987; 1991; 1993a; 1993b], insists on the routing of diaspora discourses in specific map/histories' (1994: 319). Because the Deaf are not fixed in geographical place, in fact have no geographical base they cannot be 'routed' in specific map/histories. Clifford continues:

> Diasporic subjects are, thus, *distinct* versions of modern, transnational, intercultural experience. Thus historicized, diaspora cannot become a master trope or "figure" for modern, complex, or positional identities, crosscut and displaced by race, sex, gender, class and culture (1994: 319, my emphasis).

I acknowledge that there is a danger of over-extending the uses of the term. However, if the term diaspora - or the looser 'diasporic' - is taken to be a '*signifier*, not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement' (Clifford, 1994: 308 – my emphasis) then it becomes much more possible to argue for the Deaf of this study, in certain situations, to be viewed as a sensory 'diasporic' form (Clifford, 1994: 310).

Sensory diasporic 'dwelling-in-displacement' (Clifford, 1994: 310) is clearly not diaspora in the 'ideal type' of the Jewish diaspora (Safran, 1991: 84). It is not diaspora in the conventional sense as it has been defined (Safran, 1991: 84) and as Clifford has summarized it as follows: 'a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host (bad host?) country, desire for eventual return, ongoing support of the homeland, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship' (1994: 305). In fact it may not be possible to define diaspora sharply (Clifford, 1994: 310). Diaspora is not about people who claim First Nation status or about indigenous people. Their sense of 'rootedness in the land is precisely what diasporic people have lost' (Clifford, 1994: 310). Diasporas are not about immigrants, although there may be overlap (Clifford, 1994: 311). Immigrant populations aim for assimilation. Diaspora is not about exile with its frequently individual focus (Clifford, 1994: 308).

However, given what it is not, it is 'possible to perceive a loosely coherent, adaptive constellation of responses to dwelling-in-displacement' (Clifford, 1994: 310). Sensory diaspora denotes responses to dwelling permanently in the host society, structurally displaced, marginalized, and discriminated against with limitations imposed on assimilation. As Ghosh (1989) has suggested for the South Asian diaspora response, 'it is not so much [about] orientation to roots in a specific place and a desire for return as around an ability to recreate culture in diverse locations' (Clifford, 1994: 306). Being Deaf is not about orientation to roots in a specific place or a desire to return – or a longing to be hearing - but it is about creative responses in diverse locations. Responses are about creating alternative public spheres (Gilroy, 1987) – ' forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identification outside of the national time/space in order to live inside, with difference' (Clifford, 1994: 308). The black diaspora culture in postcolonial Britain is concerned to struggle for different ways to be British <u>and</u> something else complexly related to Africa and the Americas (Clifford, 1994: 308). The Deaf as a sensory diasporic form is about being South African <u>and</u> something else complexly related locally, regionally and even internationally. It is as a 'diasporized identity', or a 'disaggregated' identity, (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993: 721) that makes it possible to be South African and Deaf. It is a connected difference that is about creative co-existence that is sometimes in entangled tension with hearing society and that sometimes is not. Next I turn to the process I intend to use to track the sensory diasporic form (Clifford, 1994: 303).

'Tracking[4]' a sensory diaspora

This thesis 'tracks' (Clifford, 1994: 303) the Deaf as a sensory diasporic form on the basis of Marx' notion of the 'social world' (1990). Marx' notion of the social world (1990) is not about closed systems. His notion offers a conceptual framework for the sociological study of refugees and other migrants. Refugees and migrants are displaced but embedded in a host society or embedded across national borders and also 'dwell-in-displacement'. Marx' notion of the social world 'is the effort we make to work out a coherent account of everything that is relevant … to the understanding of the person or

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[4] Clifford, 1994: 303

social aggregate investigated (Marx, 1980; 1990: 193). This social world can be explored through social networks (Marx, 1990: 189).

Social networks, as a form of analysis was made popular in the 1950s by Barnes' (1954) study of the parishioners of a Norwegian town (see Marx, 1990; Ross, 1995: 33-39 for useful overviews of work using network analyses). This form of analysis was designed to break away from the rigidity of structural-functionalism and to generate explorations into individual social relationships (Ross, 1995: 33). In time, problems with network analyses emerged, particularly with efforts to quantify frequency and density of the social relationships involved in network transactions. Quantification, for comparative purposes meant that all societies had to be 'categorized in standard terms' and this inevitably brought network analyses back once again 'face to face with the aims of structural-functionalist approaches' (Ross, 1995: 35). .

Despite problems, the network approach continues to be used, although with considerably less rigor than urged by earlier scholars, such as Barnes (1954), Boissevain (1974), Boissevain and Mitchell (1973) (see, Ross, 1995: 37). It continues to be a useful approach if the fluidity, complexity and overlap of networks of social relationships are acknowledged. The network approach recognized the 'agency of individuals in generating and manipulating social forms' (Ross, 1995: 35) and it continues to be useful 'for assessing individual motivations and actions' (Ross, 1995: 38). Network analysis has proved useful in the study of fluid social situations (Ross, 1995) and in the study of dislocated populations, such as refugees (Marx, 1990). It is a useful approach for a population, such as the Deaf that does not have a geographical base. However, the approach is not simply piecing together social networks; it also provides the means to gain access to the groups and social organizations in which people participate (Marx, 1990: 195).

In using the network approach to explore the 'social world' (Marx, 1990) of the participants of this study I cannot claim that I will uncover 'everything' that is relevant to the understanding of the Deaf in Cape Town, the social aggregate that this thesis investigates. But exploring their networks is my effort to work out as best I can a coherent account of those aspects of their social lives that are relevant to the participants of the study with regard to the issues this thesis addresses.

In summary: this chapter has explored theoretical explanations for the Deaf against the background of the rise of Deaf political identity in America. It seeks an explanation that addresses a 'dispersed' social identity. A dispersed identity allows for expressions of the individual in his or her social and vocational capacity. It allows for collective expressions that may also vary by context. In some contexts, it may be possible to draw analogies with 'community'. In other contexts it may be possible to draw analogies with ethnic groups and in an increasingly globalizing world it may even be possible to draw analogies with diasporic forms. To investigate strategies that produce a dispersed social identity I draw on Marx' notion of a social world as an open system of networks of social relationships.

The next chapter, Chapter Three, describes the method for the study. I describe the method against the background of certain 'reflections' on the mode of presentation of the thesis, my relationship with the study population and learning Sign language. These reflections I offer for their role in shaping the method as well as for their influence on the findings of this thesis.

Chapter Three: Reflections on fieldwork
Mode of presentation, relationship with the research population and method

In the act of "writing culture" what emerges is always a highly subjective, partial, and fragmentary - but also deeply felt and personal - record of human lives based on eyewitness and testimony (Scheper-Hughes, 1992: xii).

[Ethnography should] ... attempt to provide whatever is necessary for the reader to understand what the described events mean to participants themselves. [It should] do so not in formulations elicited from hypothetical questions to informants but in reports which fully evoke the volatile and evanescent acts of living which human events actually are (Langness and Frank, 1978: 18).

Fieldwork for this study compelled reflection on a number of related issues. The study began at a time of deep reflection in the country as a whole[1]. It was a time of reflection in South African anthropology (see, for example, Gordon and Spiegel, 1993). It was a time of reflection and change in my own career. After a number of years as an anthropologist in multidisciplinary medical research I had decided to return to anthropology and my disciplinary roots. Returning meant changing genres and re-thinking anthropological modes of presentation. No longer a member of a research team, and once again a lone researcher, it meant considering my relationship to the study population for its impact on the research process. In the classic anthropological tradition it meant endeavouring to learn the language and remembering the insights language learning offers into the understanding of a society. Here I tender some of my reflections for their role in shaping the method for the study and inevitably, therefore, for the findings of the study itself.

Mode of presentation of the thesis

This study clearly has its academic aims but actual stories of deaf people in Cape Town are what I would like this thesis to reflect, at least partly. Stories introduced me to the topic (Sacks, [1989] 1991; Wright, [1969] 1993; Lalendle, 1975). Recording the stories of

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[1] Reflection on the testimony at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission would leave few South Africans in doubt about their past. Reflection on the past and reflection on a future that would be different served to guide South Africans to produce one of the most progressive Constitutions in the world.

deaf people was how I explained what I hoped my work would provide when, late in August 1995, I presented a research proposal to the Committee[2] of the Bastion[3] for the Deaf and was granted permission to carry out this study. Recording their story and stories was also how I explained my study to those I worked with during the course of fieldwork (see Appendix Two).

South Africans seem to want their own stories. On World Book Day (23 April 1998) Will Bernard hosted Eddie Daniels on his morning 'phone-in' radio programme *Talk at Will, Safm*, 8.30 – 10.00 am). Eddie Daniels had published his autobiography, '*There and Back*' (1998), almost another '*Long Walk to Freedom*' (Mandela, 1994) and another great South African story. The story moved from Daniel's impoverished beginnings in District Six to his tough life as a trawlerman off the West Coast, to his political activism, to 14 years imprisonment on Robben Island, to a lasting love match across the old 'colour-bar'. During the same programme Xolani telephoned from Umtata in the Eastern Cape, concerned about the 'unsung heroes and heroines' whose stories if not told would be lost forever. Later in the day Jonathan Ball, the publisher, was bullish about the South African publishing industry (*Total Exposure*, Safm, 12.30 - 1.00 pm, 23 April 1998). More South Africans were writing, buying books and reading than ever before. The print run for *Country of My Skull* (Krog ([1998], 1999) was 15 000 – this is in a country where if a book by a South African author sold 3 000 copies it was considered almost a best seller.

On the 22 April 1998 I attended a packed seminar at the University of Cape Town to hear the well known East African academic, Mahmood Mamdani, defend his controversial 'Introduction to Africa Course' (1998) and present it for academic peer review (1998: 6). His passionate – and sometimes biting - address trounced his detractors. The audience loved it. Mamdani stepped down to a standing ovation and enthusiastic shouts of 'Viva'. When questions followed from the floor it seemed that what was at stake was less of a curriculum issue than the novel view of Africa that Mamdani was offering. He was offering African intellectuals, African heroes, African history - an African story of Africa, a story that was not about war, pestilence and poverty. For some

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[2] I was advised to present my proposal to the 'Committee of the Bastion for the Deaf'. This Committee, established to run the Bastion, comprised deaf people from across Cape Town and the Western Cape.
[3] 'The Bastion' is the popular term for the 'Bastion for the Deaf' in Newlands, Cape Town, and I use it in the thesis. The Bastion, formerly a primary school, provides a 'community' centre for the Deaf. It houses the offices of the Non-Government Organization, the Deaf Community of Cape Town (DCCT), the offices of Deafsa Western Cape as well as number of income generating projects. I offer additional detail, below.

of the same reasons Thorold has noted[4] that students were flocking to the anthropology courses at the 'Historically Black Universities' or HBUs as they have sometimes been termed. The attraction was the old structural-functionalist monographs. Although theoretically many decades out of date, they were perceived to offer good African stories – even a heritage.

However, ethnography is always 'partial truths' (Clifford, 1986), though 'deeply felt and personal' (Scheper-Hughes, 1992: xii). Sometimes, it seems flimsy evidence for the making of theory. The making of theory is what anthropology is about, even if the earlier theoretical optimism of grand social theories has given way to a sometimes-pessimistic postmodernism with its at times discordant deconstruction. Theory provides the parameters, the proffered means of explanation for the writing of anthropology's product, ethnography. But theories change. The story remains. The story that remains will always be partial, but however partial, if it can be read in the context of the theories of its time then at the very least it has value as a record.

Recent debates in anthropology discuss the process, the production and the mode of presentation of ethnography (Marcus and Fischer, 1986; Clifford and Marcus, 1986; Hastrup, 1990). The debates respond to Said's *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1978), amongst other works, and his attack on genres of writings developed in the West to represent non-Western societies. In the writing of culture and its interpretation, ethnographers have been criticized for assuming what Crapanzano has termed a 'deistic' authority (1986 and see, Jones, 1993: ix), a higher and more comprehensive epistemological status than their informants. In a move to a more egalitarian ethnography (if you like) scholars have suggested a multivocal approach variously termed 'plurivocality' (Crapanzano, 1985), 'multivocalism' (Handler and Segal, 1984) and 'dispersed authority' (Clifford, 1983). A multivocal approach endeavours to equalize ethnographic authority by distributing it between ethnographer and informant (Jones, 1993: ix). The general idea is that ethnography should interrelate '... diverse viewpoints, thereby presenting not an objective account of the social system, but the meaningful relations of myriad social realities.... [It should be made up of] lively

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[4] Comment at the Annual Conference of the Association of Anthropologists of Southern Africa, University of Stellenbosch, 28-31 January 1998

interaction of many differential viewpoints, no one of which is allowed to obliterate the other (Handler and Segal, 1984: 115).

But such a multivocal aim or 'mission' as Jones has termed it has its pitfalls (1993: ix-x). Precisely because ethnography is subjective, partial and fragmentary yet theoretically orientated the anthropologist must select and in the selection for his or her academic purpose emphasize some voices and mute others.

> In short, authoritative equality - an aberration of extreme cultural relativism - is both analytically barren and intrinsically impossible to achieve, as it is always the ethnographer who has the final word, either overtly, or covertly, in the design of the text itself (Jones, 1993: x).

However as 'a mode of presentation' multivocality has extraordinary potential for 'qualitative illumination' (Jones, 1993: x). Multivocality works as a mode of presentation if an ethnography attempts to provide the reader with what is necessary to understand what 'the described events mean to the participants'; and if it does so 'not in formulations elicited from hypothetical questions to informants but in reports that fully evoke the volatile and evanescent acts of living that human events actually are' (Langness and Frank, 1978: 18). In the writing of this thesis I emphasize as best I can the 'volatile and evanescent acts of living' that I was privileged to record and witness. In this way I hope to make the study appropriate for its academic aims but at the same time accessible to the deaf people who may choose to read the thesis. For both purposes it is necessary to say something about my relationship to the study population.

'Native but stranger[5]' – relationship with the research population

As a born and bred long time resident of Cape Town with some of my settler ancestors buried in the city's cemeteries I am native[6] to the study location. As a native, I know the city and its environs well, both the beautiful and the bleak, and possibly better than many (my work, over the past 10 years and more, has taken me far and wide across Cape

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[5] With acknowledgements to Heilman's 'Jewish Sociologist: Native as stranger' (1980); Ohnuki-Tierney' "'Native' Anthropologists" (1984); and Frankental's 'Stranger-as native-as stranger' (1998: 31-37).
[6] Although it is debatable if and/or when 'a settler becomes a native' (Mamdani, 1998a), I use native here in the derivative sense of natal – i.e. native, as one born in a place.

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Town). But as a hearing person, I am also stranger to the research population. 'Native but stranger' describes my relationship with the study population (Heilman, 1980: Ohniki-Tierney, 1984; Frankental, 1998: 31-37).

When the study location is shared there are many things that need no explanation. There was never a need to explain where I lived and what that said about me. Many people knew both the universities with which I was associated, the University of Cape Town where I worked as a part-time researcher[7] and the University of Stellenbosch where I was registered for this degree. Study participants visited me at home – and not always for research purposes, although when working at home it is sometimes difficult to separate the two. They met my family and my neighbours and came to know them. Some family, like my mother, through my research but on her own terms, became very friendly with and very fond of a number of deaf people (and she does not know a single sign). She has accompanied me regularly to 'Third Sunday'[8] because she enjoys it and, for the same reasons, to Deaf Fund-Raisers. As a Capetonian I know the same shops, the same bureaucracies, the same hospitals and clinics, the same pubs, the same cinemas as well as the beaches, Kirstenbosch, Robben Island, Table Mountain and the Waterfront – as do the participants in this study. I engaged with the Deaf at election times as a citizen, not strictly as an observer. I engaged as a citizen to support my local sports teams. There were many issues and events around which we engaged as citizens and not as researcher and researched.

However, at the same time as I know the city well and now share much with deaf people in Cape Town, as 'white' and hearing it is important to remember that I have been unjustly even 'strangely' privileged. As a strangely privileged native one has to be careful that 'certain subtle peculiarities, which [made] an impression as long as they [were] novel cease to be noticed as soon as they become familiar' (Malinowski, 1961 [1922]: 21). This applies to both changes in Cape Town since 1994 and changes after more than five years of working with deaf people in Cape Town. After a while, the native, for the observation and for the writing, has to remind herself to be stranger.

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[7] Between August 1995 and July 2000 I worked as a part-time researcher in the unrelated (to my thesis) field of Reproductive Health Care. This work I refer to in my thesis as my 'bread and butter' research as it helped me financially during the course of my studies.
[8] Meeting for a Signed Mass on the third Sunday of every month is a long (over 50 year) tradition among the Deaf in Cape Town. I discuss 'Third Sunday' in greater detail in Chapter Six.

The anthropologist was the 'professional stranger' (Agar, 1980) when anthropology was almost always about far off 'other cultures' (Beattie, [1964] 1970), even when the earlier intrepid cultural practitioner only sat in an armchair to rework missionary reports and travelers' tales or was a 'fly on the wall'. Then the perceived 'otherness', the strangeness of the study population was rarely in doubt. It is still not in doubt if anthropology is assumed to be a geographically distant enterprise or if it is still assumed to take its practitioners to alien worlds where difference is, conceptually at least, marked (see, for example, Hastrup, 1990).

Now, though, there is a 'new figure on the scene' (Clifford, 1986: 9), the 'indigenous anthropologist' (Fahim, 1982) or the 'native' anthropologist (Ohnuki-Tierney, 1984). The native anthropologist works 'at home' (Jackson, 1987). Difference or strangeness may not always be that marked. It makes for other challenges too and with these come certain advantages and disadvantages. Heilman (1980) explores the advantages and disadvantages of working in a modern orthodox synagogue of which he was a member. Frankental (1998: 31-37) grapples with the unusual contradictions of her 'self' as researcher in her study in which by all criteria she nearly qualified for inclusion and was regularly perceived by participants in her study to be an 'insider'.

South African anthropologists most often work 'at home' (Thorold, 2001). 'Home' is a very relative concept. If home is as large as the Southern African region then South African anthropologists have been working at home since the very earliest days of the discipline here (see, for example, Hellman, 1935; Hunter, 1936; Krige and Krige, 1943). Even now, as more and more young South Africans move abroad for post-graduate study, it seems to me and interestingly so, that they nevertheless continue to conduct their fieldwork at home. Work in Southern Africa and Africa as a whole has provided rich anthropological pickings (Bates, Mudimbe and O'Barr, 1993; xiv; Falk Moore, 1993). South Africans have even felt the glare of the anthropological gaze as practitioners (Scheper-Hughes, 1995). It does the anthropologist no harm to share the experience with study populations of being 'under' rather than 'on top' of an investigation if it encourages reflection on their role.

During the strictly bounded years of apartheid when otherness was enforced and difference emphasized perhaps South African anthropologists did not examine their native-but-stranger relationship closely enough. I certainly did not when I worked in two impoverished rural villages in Lesotho (Heap, 1989). I expected to feel strange and did, although I was native enough to Southern Africa to have shared certain experiences with the local people that were alien to the European development workers.

However, I did not expect to feel strange at the 'Bastion for the Deaf' in Newlands where I began my fieldwork. Newlands, situated in Cape Town's southern suburbs is the area of the city with which I am most familiar. Yet the feeling of déjà vu with Lesotho was striking. I had the same feeling of finding my way in a new social situation; that tentative 'treading on eggs' sensation; trying to sense what is appropriate and what is not while, at the same time wanting to do the acceptable and be accepted. But I could never tell how I was doing. No one looked up to greet me when I crunched down the gravel path. They did not hear me coming. No one looked up when I entered a room. They did not hear me enter. No one turned around when I called out. They did not hear me. They just walked on. I had to learn to touch strangers for attention. I had to learn the right touch, not too hard and not too soft. I had to learn how not to interrupt a Signed conversation. Signers can converse at some distance, from one side of a room to another, from one end of a long passage to another - unlike hearing people who must shout over distances and then shouting may indicate something else. To avoid interrupting a Signed conversation you need to imagine a line between conversationalists and then duck under this line. Sometimes I thought people looked 'angry'[9] and I wondered what I might have done. Then Debra Aarons[10] explained: 'the grammar [of Sign language] is all in the face; watch the face' [if you want to learn the grammar].

When I look back now I realize that as a hearing person I was not strange for the Deaf. They know the hearing. They have been negotiating their place in a predominantly hearing world since they were children. Although they may have known me as hearing, as an anthropologist, I was an unknown professional quantity. As an anthropologist, unusually among the professionals that engage with the Deaf, I had no useful skills to

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[9] Apparently a question in Sign is expressed with brows pulled together rather than raised as tends to happen with spoken language.
[10] Associate Professor in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Stellenbosch at the time of fieldwork for this study

offer. Other hearing professionals have given and initiated a great deal. Ronel Davids, the social worker at the Bastion when I began my work was one of the few of her profession who became proficient in Sign language. Louise Reynolds, a lecturer at the University of Cape Town, pioneered a 'community' audiology clinic at the Bastion where the Deaf could consult in Sign language. She transferred skills, such as the molding of new and the repair of old hearing aids and in this created an income generating opportunity for the Deaf. She implemented English literacy classes via the medium of Sign language and where the Deaf were teachers. When she emigrated, Merrill Glaser, a lecturer from the same department at the University of Cape Town, took over and the classes have expanded and endured. Glaser in collaboration with Telkom[11] has made Teldems (a keyboard telephone designed for the Deaf) much more widely available, and free for a three-month introductory period. Debra Aarons, of the Department of Linguistics, University of Stellenbosch has raised the profile of Sign language considerably in the Western Cape.

Elsewhere in the world both Deaf and hearing anthropologists have worked with the Deaf. Deaf anthropologists, such as Padden and Humphries who have studied the Deaf (1988) could be considered 'indigenous' (Fahim, 1982). Preston (1994), born hearing of deaf parents and whose study focused on hearing people in the same position, could also be considered 'indigenous'. Higgins (1980) the son of deaf parents who studied the Deaf in general could be considered the 'indigenous anthropologist once removed'. On the other hand Bechter (1998; 1999) is hearing with no obvious connection to the Deaf. Like me he became interested in Sign language and then, as a consequence, deaf people via a representation, in his case the movie 'Children of a Lesser God' (Bechter[12], personal communication by email, 7 May 2001). Yet Bechter is also indigenous in that he is an American anthropologist working in America.

Even when anthropologists purportedly work 'at home', the studies undertaken more often than not reflect social worlds that are not part of their usual milieu. The native-stranger relationship of the anthropologist with the Deaf is therefore probably as relative as this relationship is generally. Added to this is the considerable social variation within the population of the Deaf. Padden and Humphries mention the 'enormous diversity'

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[11] South Africa's until now only parastatal telecommunications service provider
[12] Bechter is a doctoral student in the department of anthropology, University of Chicago (see 1999)

(1988: 4) as well as differences recognized from within, such as the 'professionals', the 'average Deaf person', the 'exceptional' deaf person, the 'poor', the 'peddlers', the 'hard-working honest Deaf person', the 'seamier types', the 'intelligent Deaf (1989: 42). For Preston the study population varied from 'gray-haired grandmothers' to 'ear-ringed punk rockers' and included 'politicians, teachers, bartenders, and doctors'; they were 'married, single, gay and straight'; some were 'model citizens' and some had 'criminal records' (1994: 11). With this variation even the Deaf indigenous anthropologist will be stranger for some and less strange for others.

There is, nevertheless, the implied question about whether a hearing person can ever write about the Deaf experience. The question is raised within the broader debate of whether Western writers can ever represent non-Western societies (Marcus and Fischer, 1986: 1). Generally it is argued that only those who know the society from 'within' can articulate the experience. A hearing anthropologist can never hope to know what it is like to be deaf and may even be likely to offer the more 'idyllic view' (Higgins, 1980: 186). Yet if ethnography is only ever partial truths (Clifford, 1986) there will always be many views of a society. The indigenous anthropologist though, usually has the advantage of knowing the language. I had to learn Sign language.

Below I offer some remarks on my experiences. My experiences of learning Sign language serve two purposes. They share the insights into being deaf that a deaf teacher offered her class and which proved a valuable preparation for my work and for my interactions with deaf people. They also serve as something of a comparative perspective for the hearing people of this study who used Sign language (see especially Chapter Five). Although the relative widespread Signing that I found in Cape Town may imply that learning it was easy, for a number of reasons I found the language difficult to learn.

Learning the language

Learning Sign formally began as a hobby. Lindsay, the teacher was deaf. Lindsay introduced the class to Sign language via the manual alphabet. Even with the alphabet my fingers were slow and stiff. To get them moving, my neighbour's son, who trained as a magician, shared his finger exercises with me. As part of the learning process Lindsay

suggested the class begin to watch the weekly television show for the Deaf (that eventually led me to the issue this thesis addresses – see Chapter One). As the class progressed from the alphabet Lindsay gave us signs[13] and then she asked us to put signs into sentences. Structuring Sign sentences or the grammar remains among some of my many difficulties with the language.

It is difficult for the adult beginner to learn the grammar for a number of reasons. Simple Sign textbooks for beginners are not readily available in South Africa (as far as I can ascertain). Sign has no written equivalent. Consequently, it is rare to find Sign in print and therefore there is no reading material, such as novels, magazines and newspapers that often help in the learning of a new language, its grammar and its vocabulary.

To address some of these vocabulary difficulties Lindsay supplied her class with a 'textbook' she had prepared. In her textbook Lindsay supplied diagrams of signs with an English equivalent. The book worked for me as a type of bi-lingual Sign-English 'phrase book' (much like those travelers take abroad), although strictly, signs do not equal words. There are no 'pocket' Sign language dictionaries. Indeed Sign, for me, gave the notion of a dictionary a new connotation. Accustomed as I am to using a dictionary to find the meaning of a word, it seemed to me that Sign language dictionaries had to address something more. A sign language dictionary (see, for example, Brien, 1992 for the Dictionary of British Sign Language/English) must address, with the addition of diagrams or photographs, among other complexities, cross referencing and the interrelationship between the hand shapes, their position in space, their relationship to the body; and the range of expressions as these too vary to convey different meanings in different contexts, the persons, singular and plurals, the tenses and so forth.

Lindsay's classes were particularly good for the insights she offered into what it may be like to be deaf in certain situations and how to deal with these. She made us role-play, for example, being deaf and explaining oneself to a traffic officer; being deaf and consulting a medical practitioner; or being deaf and consulting the bank manager; or being deaf and relying on a hearing person to make a telephone call. She explained the advantages of mime (and made us practice it), for a hearing person when language

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[13] When I refer to the language, Sign I use upper case. To make a distinction between the language and a single 'sign', I use lower case.

skills are limited and for the Deaf when meeting counterparts from other countries, whose signs may differ. Deaf miming, though, as Kyle and Woll point out is of another linguistic order and beyond that of mime as a performing art (1985: 24-25).

Lindsay stressed what a deaf person wants from an interpreter: simultaneous translation and not a summary. In addition she wanted the appropriate emotion put across. She told us what a deaf person wants from a speaker – to stand facing the deaf person, to keep the light on one's face, never to wear sunglasses, to speak clearly but not exaggerate the words. Wright has suggested that actors are a good example: 'Actors are dead easy for lip readers because elocution is part of their trade' (1993 [1969]: 134). Most difficult for the Deaf to lip read are those who 'grinch language between gritted teeth' (Wright, 1993 [1969]: 135). Always have paper and pencil ready and, as Lindsay and so many have emphasized, use expression. Expression, without signs and even with signs if competence is poor, is the cue to meaning. 'You bastard', the only visual clue to the meaning of this expletive, whether it means 'admiration, gratitude, chagrin, or disgust' is 'the expression in the eyes' (Wright, 1993 [1969]: 137).

Lindsay made the class practice lip-reading. It is tempting to cheat a deaf teacher who will not know if she has given even a whisper of a clue. Sometimes that is all a hearing person needs to get the gist of what is being said. To get the gist I would find myself straining my ears for the whispered clue rather than concentrating my eyes on the lips. Lip-reading is inordinately difficult. Try, for instance, to understand the news on television with the sound switched off or if you need more expression (news presenters rarely use expression) try watching a 'soap', or a drama or even a comedy – not easy, and tiring. Lindsay would say what a relief it was to relax into Sign after a long lip-reading day at work. On the other hand I find the concentration required by Signing hugely tiring. If I lose concentration even for a second I am lost. My language limitations affected some of the methods I used for the fieldwork.

Method of fieldwork

    … in order to do research on this group [deaf people] the researcher needs to have special skills and even then special problems arise (Scott, 1980: 8).

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Fieldwork for this study was carried out from September 1995 to December 2001 and over two phases. The first phase was conducted between September 1995 and December 1997, the second phase between January 1998 and December 2001. Because, research methods varied by these two phases, the discussion below follows this format.

The phases also distinguish between the 'research population' and the 'sample population', a distinction I first referred to in Chapter One, where I introduced a partial profile of the 'sample population'. The sample population forms a subgroup of the larger research population. This subgroup, as I also explain below, comprised the 94 deaf people with whom I conducted formal interviews, guided by a question schedule (see Appendix Two). The larger research sample included this subgroup of deaf people, plus their hearing relatives and friends, as well as deaf and hearing people met in association with my study during September 1995 and December 2001, the full period of my fieldwork. The discussions in the chapters that follow draw on both the research and sample populations.

The two phases posed similar basic research problems. I mention these first before proceeding to the discussions. The problems included some of the following: there is no geographical base for a study of deaf society. This problem of no geographical base is not necessarily particular to a study of the Deaf. However, as I explain, it did pose the problem, initially, of where to begin the study and later how to access the sample population in wider Cape Town. When working with deaf people, recording fieldwork material may be challenging. Tape recordings are not an option with deaf people and it is difficult to Sign and write at the same time. Videos were useful in some instances but inappropriate in others. The Deaf are also said to be wary of hearing people who may be interested in them (Scott, 1980: 8).

Preston has suggested that deaf people are wary of hearing researchers because the 'deficit model' (see Chapter Two) has tended to dominate research on deaf people (see 1994: 21). These reports concerned me at first but overall I did not find deaf people particularly wary of me, or of taking part in the research. Rather, it seemed that deaf people in Cape Town tended to have little experience with research as a whole. It is perhaps not surprising that in my years of research I have not come across or included a

single deaf person in any of the research projects that I have been engaged in. With little research experience the problem was more about explaining issues such as consent and maintaining confidentiality, especially when interviewing deaf people that comprised the sample population. Later in this chapter, I discuss how I obtained consent and endeavoured to ensure confidentiality. I commence the discussion of method, where I began my work, at the 'Bastion for the Deaf'.

Commencing at the 'Bastion for the Deaf'

To access the Deaf, I approached Deafsa. When I approached Deafsa, this government organization and the non-government organization, the Deaf Community of Cape Town (DCCT) [14] had recently moved into the building now known as the 'Bastion for the Deaf'. The building, set in large attractive tree-lined grounds, was initially a Primary School and this school gave 'the Bastion' its name. The building then passed to the former South African National Defense Force (SANDF). When the 'armed struggle' ceased in the early 1990s, the SANDF vacated the premises. The building remained empty and neglected until early 1995. At that time it was granted to Deafsa Western Cape, at a nominal fee, on condition the building was renovated and not sold for profit. By March 1995 Deafsa Western Cape and DCCT had moved in. Deaf volunteers did the initial cleaning. Later a team of deaf workmen renovated the building. A committee of deaf people was established to oversee renovations and the running of the Bastion. It was to this committee, as was recommended to me, that I presented my research proposal for this study.

After permission for the study was granted, in September 1995, I joined the Bastion as a volunteer, working there one day a week. My first task was to answer the phone (a hearing receptionist was yet to be appointed). Soon thereafter I was assigned to assist with the 'Ironing Project'[15], an income-generating venture initiated by Ronel Davids the then social worker. The project was new and my task was to advertise it and keep it going.

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[14] DCCT is a Non-Government Organization that was formed in 1987 to highlight the needs of the African and 'coloured' Deaf. I discuss DCCT in greater detail, particularly in Chapter Six.
[15] People bring their washing to be ironed for a fee by deaf women at the Bastion.

Starting off at the Bastion was useful for a number of reasons. It gave me an opportunity to practice Sign language. It allowed the Deaf that I met at the Bastion to get to know me as well as my research interests. It allowed me to establish 'rapport'. Establishing rapport, despite Marcus' recent critique (1997) remains 'a central requirement, perhaps priority, of successful fieldwork practice' (Frankental, 1998: 33). The Bastion also gave me invitations to Sign Language Workshops, Interpreter Workshops, Leadership Skills Training Workshops, meetings, fund-raisers, numerous formal and informal social occasions and some insight into formal organizational structures for the Deaf.

Fieldwork at the Bastion consisted largely of participant observation. No strictly formal interviews were conducted with individuals at the Bastion, although I kept a regular fieldwork diary. When I took on-the-spot notes I did so only at those occasions, such as meetings, that included hearing people and when an interpreter was available. Otherwise notes were written up afterwards as I found it impossible to try and watch the Signing and write at the same time.

On certain occasions there was no participation - only observation. By invitation, I observed certain Workshops from behind the lens of a video camera[16]. Videoing of these workshops worked for the Deaf in that it provided a record in the same way as a tape recorder would for a similar hearing occasion. The video recordings were edited titled, dated, given subtitles[17] and returned to the Deaf for their records. The recordings obviously provide data but more importantly the experience gave me insight into videoing, its ethics and feasibility as an alternative to a tape recorder for individual interviews. Initially, I had considered videoing interviews with the sample population. However, it has problems. Videoing does not offer confidentiality, unless the face is obscured. But if the face is obscured a central component of Sign language, the grammar that is in the facial expression is lost. Videoing is expensive and intrusive. I needed a tripod because I found it impossible to Sign and hold a camera at the same time. For all these reasons, I used a video camera only when invited to record particular proceedings.

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[16] It was not my filming skills that ensured the invitation but my access to the video camera at the University of Cape Town's Anthropology department.
[17] With the professional assistance of the University of Cape Town's Film and Video Unit

Fieldwork to identify the sample population

Because there is no geographical base for the Deaf it was difficult to know how to access a sample population. I wanted to identify people beyond the activists and those people I had met through my association with the Bastion, beyond deaf people with problems who consulted the social workers. Rather I wanted to draw a sample population from the majority of the adult deaf people who became deaf as children. During the second half of 1997 I tried two options unsuccessfully.

At first I considered the possibility of a list of past pupils from a Deaf school. Consultations that included a prepared proposal with a school suggested this was not a feasible route. At the time I consulted the school the educational system including the 'Special Schools' were in the process of restructuring. My second endeavour considered a 'Population Study'. Again with a prepared proposal I consulted a statistician at the Medical Research Council. A population study seemed possible, although it meant a delay to seek funding (which I was prepared to do). But then I was offered another option via the 'Home Help' income-generating project.

The 'Home Help' project, a sideline to the 'Ironing' income-generating venture at the Bastion, sought to supply deaf domestic workers on a part-time or full-time basis. It did not work for as long or as well as the Ironing Project (tele-communication contact proved a major problem). Eventually, though, the Home Help project gave me an important contact for my research purposes. A member of my family employed Sarah Gushu until she found more regular employment in a factory. Sarah was retrenched when the factory closed down in August 1997, at about the same time as I was looking to ways to move beyond the Bastion.

Sarah's personal qualities and language skills made her the ideal research assistant for my work. She is competent, reliable and tactful. She understood with little explanation the notion of confidentiality. She understood that people would be free to take part or not ('no force' as she put it). Her language skills are considerable. She lip-reads Afrikaans, English, and Xhosa. She reads and writes English and Afrikaans. Importantly she understands 'my Sign', a mix of sign-supported mouthed English. Understanding my Sign, Sarah acted as a 'relay interpreter' (Morgan, 2001: 15). She relayed my Sign to the

deaf person and then, when I had difficulty understanding fast and fluent Sign, she relayed this back to me. A relay interpreter was necessary because, not being fluent in Sign language, I was not in a position to conduct interviews alone. A professional interpreter for my fieldwork was not an option because there are relatively few available, they are in demand and expensive (up to R400 per hour). There was also no guarantee that a hearing interpreter could find deaf people for me. There was also no guarantee that I would identify a sample population with Sarah's help, although she never questioned that it would be possible. With Sarah's assistance the procedure for identifying the sample population was as follows.

(1) Preparation

Before I began to work beyond the Bastion with Sarah I explained the purpose of my work (see Appendix Two for the explanation of the research that I used with Sarah and more widely). I explained that I wanted to meet deaf people, perhaps ask them questions, and outlined the types of questions I considered asking. The questions were piloted with Sarah, her husband and the two women I worked with on the Ironing project for their input, their approval and their appropriateness. The final question schedule appears as Appendix Two. Questions addressed some of the following: demographic detail on the deaf person; including some background on how they became deaf; the school they attended; some background on their parents; their siblings and their children: as well as some detail on the household situation.

(2) Identifying the sample population

Initially criteria that would identify the sample population were not specified, because I was not sure how well the method would work. The first phase to identify the sample population took me to Sarah's immediate friends. Her friends took me to the deaf people in their neighbourhoods. These contacts took me further across neighbourhoods and so it 'snowballed' until I had gathered systematic data by face-to-face interviews, using a question schedule from 94 deaf people (see Appendix Two for the Question schedule used). The snowball method in many ways identified the criteria that I use for the study (that is adults who became deaf as children, young enough to qualify for Deaf education - see Chapter One). It identified the geographical range of the study (Table 1.3a,

Appendix One). However, although it eventually worked well for my research purposes, using the snowball method to identify a sample population contains certain problems. As the partial profile of sample population presented in Chapter One suggests, and as I discuss below, the method did not seem to reach either the extremely poor or the particularly materially advantaged. The findings must thus be understood within these limitations. In addition it was necessary to set geographical and time limits. When I met a woman in Elsies River who asked if I knew one of the Ironing ladies or if I wanted to meet her, being taken back to where I had begun this study seemed an appropriate time to bring this phase of my the fieldwork to an end.

The study includes individuals from Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain but did not probe deeply into these areas. This decision was made on the basis of previous research experience. Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain are both large densely populated areas with populations of a considerable size [18] and would thus have required a great deal of additional time and funding. Although not fully covered here, both areas, either as a single study or as two separate studies, offer interesting opportunities for future research.

This study also included people not resident in Cape Town. Cape Town is the base for this research for reasons outlined earlier (see Chapter One). However, because there is no necessary geographical location for a study of the Deaf, Cape Town is better seen as the starting point or location, for a study interested in networks and crossing of boundaries. With these interests in mind I did not want to place limitations on those Sarah chose to interview when she worked alone (see below). Consequently Sarah also interviewed friends (usually old school friends) who visited when they were here on holiday from up-country.

During the course of identifying the sample population I implemented certain checks on the process. To test whether the method would have worked in the same way in another geographical area I visited Paarl, a rural town that is a convenient day trip from Cape Town. At Paarl the same themes emerged. Sarah's immediate school friends led to other deaf people in the neighbourhood. These deaf people could have led to deaf

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[18] The size of the population of Khayelitsha is 246 566; of Mitchells Plain, 244 080 – figures supplied by Statistics South Africa and based on the 1996 Census.

people in the neighbouring towns, for example Stellenbosch, Wellington and Worcester – these people I met in Paarl led me back to some of the same people that I had met in and around Cape Town. In fact within a day or two, the news of my visit to Paarl was back in Cape Town. I was being asked why I had I not requested help for contacts; why I had taken public transport (which I did on a number of occasions to assess the deaf experience on the train and in a mini-bus taxi); and had not asked for a lift. The deaf people in Paarl also took me back to the De La Bat Community in Belville where I had also visited to test the method. Chance meetings with individual deaf also tended to return me to deaf people I had met at the Bastion or through the course of fieldwork.

(3) The interview procedure

Systematic data, by formal interview, guided by a question schedule were not collected at Paarl or Bellville or at the Bastion. These were recorded through interviews with 94 deaf people in Cape Town, identified through snowballing, usually at the respondent's residential addresses. Before the schedule was administered, the purpose of the research was explained (see Appendix Two). Potential respondents were assured that there was no obligation to take part. If they did participate they were also at liberty to refuse to answer certain questions. 'Verbal' and not written consent was taken and confidentiality was promised (see below 'protecting confidentiality).

Systematic data guided by a question schedule (see Appendix Two) were collected after a number of visits, three on average. The preliminary visits allowed the people to get to know something about me as well as something about the purposes of my work. There were occasions when it was necessary to point out that I was not a social worker or 'from the church' or from the Bastion. In other words I was not visiting in a helping capacity. Giving time also gave those who may have wanted it the opportunity to check up on me and some did. Furthermore, because I was relying on introductions there were often up to four of us arriving at a first visit. These first visits were more sociable and invaluable for qualitative data. Sarah assisted at all of the visits including the formal interview. She also interviewed some respondents alone.

(4) Aids to the interview

The role of photographs during these preliminary meetings must be mentioned. Photographs played more of a role more than I had ever experienced before. It is of course not unusual for people to have photographs of family and friends displayed in the home and they can be important research tools generally. But the extent to which photographs were referred to, the number of albums that were produced, unsolicited, was unusual. Photographs clearly facilitated communication with me. Importantly for me they provided a talking point and a testament to family and certain enduring deaf relationships over time as well as place.

(5) Problems and refusal rate

Overall there were few problems. On three occasions people wanted to know more about the research from me and I obliged. There were no outright refusals. My reception was aided by the method of introductions from friends and neighbours. However, on some occasions it did not seem appropriate to administer a questionnaire. Some of the older deaf people were not ready to be bothered to answer formal questions, although I have included their stories. On other occasions the hearing people in a household seemed suspicious, especially of an animated Sign language conversation that they did not understand. In these cases, without knowing the full background and not wanting to jeopardize a possibly fragile household relationship, it seemed more appropriate to abandon a formal administration of the questionnaire. However, this case material, too is included in the field notes

(6) Protecting confidentiality

To protect confidentiality I have given all of the deaf people, who took part in this study, pseudonyms. However, I have not changed the names of the leadership or the names of well-known deaf people, as these are widely available in the media and therefore to the general public. The pseudonyms used to protect the confidentiality of the informants reflect a 'hearing bias' (see Preston, 1994: 27) in that they are spoken names. Deaf people rarely use given spoken names (such as John or Mary Smith) except in a written context.

The Deaf use 'Sign names' among themselves and for the hearing with whom they associate regularly. I discovered my Sign name almost by chance, when I was being introduced soon after I arrived at the Bastion. As part of learning Sign language hearing learners are also given a Sign name. Sign names, by means of a single or a combined sign, usually, define an individual, uniquely. The names are often very astute in the way they hone in to detail a unique characteristic or feature of an individual. Some even have a history dating back to school days. Sign names rarely have a written equivalent. For instance my name is Signed as follows. The first finger and the thumb are extended from a fist of one hand to make a three quarter circle around the eye followed by the initial M alongside the eye. It is difficult to write but it defines me uniquely as the M who wears round spectacles.

In summary: this chapter has focused on the mode of presentation of the thesis, my relationship with the study population and the method of fieldwork. Fieldwork was carried out between September 1995 and December 2001. This latter period of fieldwork identified the sample population of 94 deaf people. A partial profile of the sample population I discussed in Chapter One (and see Appendix One). The broader research population includes the sample population and all deaf and hearing met, in relation to the study, during the course of fieldwork (September 1995 to December 2001). The findings of this study that I present in the following chapters are based on both the sample and the wider research populations.

The next chapter, Chapter Four, offers a collective and the personal histories of the Deaf of this study. It explores external historical processes, both international and local, and provides the historical social context for the study. The chapter demonstrates that the end result of the historical processes at 1994 were a population categorized as differentiated from the hearing and differentiated within the category on the basis of age, apartheid category, method of education, school attended and spoken language. These externally imposed boundaries serve as a measure for the degree to which the strategies and social identity of the Deaf of this study do, or do not, transcend historical divisions as these pertain to the Deaf. The chapter begins with a vignette, 'Bridget Lynne's personal history' (Boner, 2000: 135 – 138).

Chapter Four: The historical social context
External processes imposing boundaries and constructing the Deaf as different and differentiated

... [T]he personal and collective histories, that is, categorizations and experiences from the past, mediate the understanding and the effects of the present in the present (Frankental, 1998: 91)

Bridget Lynne's personal history[1]

Bridget Lynne, a young deaf woman from Ireland effectively established Deaf education in South Africa when she opened the first school for the Deaf in Cape Town in 1874. Bridget Lynne was born in Ireland in the late 1840s, a decade that saw Ireland ravaged by famine, disease and death and the dispersal of a great mass of the country's people to the United States of America, to Australia, to New Zealand and to South Africa. In 1857, Cahirciveen Union, County Kerry, recommended that Bridget Lynne, an eight-year-old orphan be admitted into the Deaf Institute at Cabra. She spent 16 years at this institution, first as a pupil, later as a pupil teacher and finally as a member of staff. When Lynne was 24 years of age, in 1873, she arrived in Cape Town at the invitation of Dympna Kinsella, an Irish Dominican nun. Kinsella knew Lynn from Cabra, both as a pupil and as a teacher. Kinsella, with a small contingent of six young religious women, had arrived in Cape Town in 1863[2]., at the request of Bishop Grimley to administer to the educational needs of the growing numbers of Irish Catholics in Cape Town. Although an experienced teacher of the Deaf, Kinsella was not able to establish a Deaf school until Lynne's arrival in Cape Town. In March 1874, Lynne opened St Josephs, as the first school was named. Thereafter, she worked at the school, virtually single-handed until her death in Cape Town only 13 years later at the young age of 37.

Bridget Lynne's personal story opens this chapter. When she opened the first school for the Deaf in Cape Town, she established Deaf education in this country. Education is

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[1] This story of Bridget Lynne, first mentioned in Chapter One as the young woman who opened the first school for the Deaf in South Africa in Cape Town, is based on Boner (2000: 31-63; 135-138).
[2] This date, the arrival of the nuns in Cape Town, has sometimes been given to mark the start of Deaf education in this country (see, for example, Griffey, 1994: 33). Certain interested deaf people in Cape Town are also under this impression and so was I until I read Boner (2000).

considered a key to the collective history of the Deaf (Van Cleve and Crouch, 1989; Baynton, 1996; Rée, [1999] 2000). Her experience of childhood deafness probably as a result of a childhood illness associated with poverty, and then a deaf education echoes the childhood personal histories of the Deaf of this study that I present later in this chapter. Her response to the challenge to come to Cape Town to open the first school sets the tone for some of the creative strategies that later chapters discuss in the context of the history offered here.

This chapter, via the education of the Deaf, internationally and locally, explores the collective history and personal histories of the Deaf in Cape Town. It explores the external social processes that constructed the Deaf as different and differentiated. It explores the related boundaries imposed on the Deaf. The chapter thus creates the historical context for the present study, illustrating the point that 'categorizations and experiences from the past mediate the understanding and the effects of the present in the present' (Frankental, 1998: 91).

When Bridget Lynne opened St Joseph's (Boner, 2000: 136 - 138), later termed the Grimley Institute for the Deaf, she established Deaf education in this country for all South Africans. Reports suggest that by the 1920s, African, 'coloured' and 'white' pupils were schooling together at Grimley[3]. In 1921, an interested visitor from London noted that Grimley had 40 pupils and 'at this time was the only [educational] work in the whole of Africa[4] that was being systematically done' for deaf children who were not 'white" (Oxley, 1921: 7).

However, when I began this study in 1995, just over 120 years later, the adult Deaf in Cape Town recognized considerable diversity among themselves. They referred to 'the hearing' as different from 'the Deaf'. They differentiated among the Deaf on the basis of school attended, such as 'the Wittebome Deaf[5]', or 'the Worcester Deaf'. They

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[3] I use the popular term 'Grimley' to refer to the first school, St Josephs that was later named after Bishop Grimley.

[4] It was difficult to ascertain how accurate Oxley was with respect to the 'whole of Africa'.

[5] As mentioned (see Note 2, Table 1.7. Appendix One) when I refer to the major schools in the Western Cape in this thesis I use the local popular abbreviations that are usually as follows: 'Wittebome' for St Dominic's School for the Deaf at Wittebome; 'Worcester' for the De La Bat School for the Deaf at Worcester; 'Nuwe Hoop' for the 'coloured' school at Worcester; 'Hout Bay' for the strictly oral school

differentiated on the basis of spoken language, such as 'the Afrikaans Deaf', 'the Xhosa Deaf'; on the basis of apartheid category, such as 'the coloured Deaf', 'the white Deaf'; on the basis of geography, such as 'the Cape Town Deaf', and on the basis, at times, of age, such as 'the old Deaf' and 'the young Deaf'. Clearly labels vary with context and the purpose of the interaction, and I return to some of these situations later in the thesis. This chapter focuses on the possible historical origins of these labels and the diversity they suggest. The discussion commences with the wider or international situation.

External international processes[6] constructing the Deaf as different from the hearing

People took it for granted that it was impossible for deaf mutes to learn to speak or understand language, or even – in the words of a Commission of Inquiry set up by the French Academy of Sciences in 1749 – 'become capable of reasoning and acting like others' (Wright, [1969] 1993: 157).

The experience of the deaf at the hands of their educators has been like a vast philosophical experiment concerning the relations of voice, language and the senses…By the end of the twentieth century, however - thanks to developments both in linguistics and the social and political organizations of deaf communities – the assumptions that presided over centuries of deaf education had been exposed as fundamentally flawed (Rée, [1999] 2000:9).

When Bridget Lynne opened the first school, the systematic education of the Deaf was already 300 years or so underway. Even 100 years into the systematic education of the Deaf there were still questions as to whether they would 'become capable of reasoning and acting like others' (Wright, [1969] 1993: 157). Prior to the start of their systematic education, from ancient times, the Deaf had been viewed as different from the hearing,

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was a direct offshoot of the original Grimley Institute; 'Noluthando' for the Noluthando School for the Deaf at Khayelitsha.

[6] For this brief overview of the early history of the education of the Deaf I rely on Rée's fine and detailed 'philosophical history' (see [1999] 2000) and Wright (see [1969] 1993:157 –234). Wright in turn relies on six additional works (see footnote [1969] 1993: 157). These include Farrar's (see, for example, 1901) considerable contributions to the Historical Introduction in Arnold (1888 and its many revisions through to 1954. I use these works because certain other available histories (see, for example, Lane, 1984; Van Cleve and Crouch, 1989; Baynton, 1996) tend to focus specifically on the American situation.

'as other' because they could not speak (see, Chapter One). Voice was viewed as the 'breath of human life' and vocal impediments 'a spiritual calamity'; mutism was 'a state of utter spiritual dereliction, the atrophy and death of the soul' (Rée, [1999] 2000:89-90).

The start of their systematic education, although in speech, was significant because it disproved the myth that the Deaf were ineducable. Until the 16th century it was not considered possible to teach the Deaf (see Wright [1969] 1993: 157 - 234). Then Galen's (c AD 130-200) theory of common cerebral origin of speech and hearing predominated. Damage to the one capacity meant damage to the other: if you could not speak you could not learn. Speech, prior to the invention of the printing press, was almost the only means of instruction and education, except for a privileged few for whom books may have been available. Until then, as Farrar[7] has put it, 'the essential artificial nature of speech was not realized, and the possibility of there being other avenues to the mind was either only dimly or not at all perceived' (Wright, [1969] 1993: 160). Then Cardano (born 1501), who had a deaf son, made a revolutionary (for the time) breakthrough. Cardano grasped the following now seemingly elementary proposition that 'writing is associated with speech and speech with thought; but written characters and ideas may be connected without the intervention of sounds' (Wright, [1969] 1993: 164).

When it became known that the Deaf could be taught to speak they became interesting, scientifically, as 'others'. News of the Spanish successes of Ponce de Leon and Bonet who published in 1620 the first ever treatise on Deaf education, spread to Britain where eminent 17th century thinkers, such as Bacon, Newton, Boyle, Hobbes, Locke, Harvey, Wren, and Hooke were taking an increasing interest in the symbolic nature of language (Wright, [1969] 1993: 172). Dr John Wallis, the mathematician and a founder of the Royal Society, and Dr William Holder, also a Fellow of the Royal Society debated in public their teaching experiments, including articulation, with two deaf individuals, Daniel Whalley and Alexander Popham.

The start of Deaf education, coinciding as it did with the rise of colonialism, began at a time of increasing emphasis on difference and otherness. In this context, the Deaf too

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[7] Abraham Farrar was the first deaf person in England to pass a public examination and enter a university (London), and he did so as late as 1881 (see Wright, (1969) 1993: 204), more than 300 years after the start of the education of the Deaf.

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provided a new mission, for civilizing and for assimilation and conversion to Christianity. Ponce de Leon's personal motives for teaching the two Spanish brothers, Francisco and Pedro de Velasco, to speak, were primarily religious, although he also achieved the secular aims of his employers. Even the famous Abbe de l'Eppe learnt Sign language so that he could teach his first two pupils their catechism and allow the Parisian Deaf to confess (Sacks, 1989: 17). Gallaudet's concerns for the souls of the 'heathen deaf' were at the core of his Protestant evangelical interest to establish the first deaf school in the United States of America (Valentine, 1993: 59). Gallaudet saw his vocation amongst the Deaf as missionary work. He considered his calling by Cogswell to start a school similar to that of his fellow seminarians who were leaving America to establish foreign missions in Hawaii, Africa, and Asia (Valentine, 1993: 58-59).

The process of assimilation of 'the other', to make the Deaf more like the hearing, varied but was rarely without some discrimination. The Abbe de l'Eppe, by introducing the manual method or education via the medium of Sign language, did not require the Deaf to learn to speak, but religion was his primary motive (Rée, [1999] 2000: 151). The first years after 1750, under de l'Eppe's tutelage, some have said heralded a 'golden period' of deaf writers, deaf engineers, deaf philosophers, and deaf intellectuals (Sacks, 1989: 21). However, by 1791, at the National Institution for Deaf-Mutes in Paris, vocational training was already being proposed as most suitable for the Deaf. Clerc, who accompanied Gallaudet to America to open the first school there in 1817, and who had studied painting and printing at the National Institution in Paris, wrote extensively about the benefits of vocational training for the Deaf (Leakey, 1993).

Gallaudet, influenced by his theological training, advocated vocational education. For him it meant the Deaf would be "gaining a livelihood by their own personal exertions [and in this way] we would soothe and cheer these lonely, forsaken and hapless beings" (Leakey, 1993: 77). His paternalistic sentiments and his emphasis on the vocational option for the Deaf would be echoed later by other hearing educators, such as Harris Taylor from New York's Lexington Avenue School for the Deaf: "I offer two objectives – ages old, but ever new – proper behaviour and self-support. In other words, our chief aim should be to teach the deaf to behave themselves and make a living" (Leakey, 1993: 77).

At the 1880 International Conference of Teachers of the Deaf convened at Milan, and after nearly 150 years of the manual method, the 'generally conservative oralists' again prevailed (Rée, [1999] 2000: 9). They prevailed in the wider social context that witnessed a conservative Britain under Victoria reaching the zenith of its power and European nationalism on the rise.

The rise of conservatism and of nationalism impacted on the European Deaf (see, for example, Quartararo, 1993 on the situation in France; List; 1993 on the situation in Germany; Radutzky, 1993 on the situation in Italy). Nationalism meant speaking the national language. Speaking the language in France, for instance, became a major symbol for national identity (Quartararo, 1993: 45). For the oralist in France, the return to nationalism was an opportunity to make the Deaf more 'human', to 'civilize' them. Eugene Weber has described what this process meant for the average French peasant, but his description, as Quartararo points out, also applied to the Deaf in France at the end of the 19th century.

> "Teaching the people French was an important facet in 'civilizing' them, into their integration into a superior modern world". … From Brittany to the Pyrenees, from the Vosgos to Corsica, language became the larger symbol for national integration. The republicans were determined to wage war against all competitors (Eugene Weber cited in Quartararo, 1993: 45).

The move to oralism in France was not without a response from the Deaf. When Sicard, the Abbe's successor, died in 1822, the oralists moved to take over the Paris Institute for the Deaf (Mottez, 1993: 31). By the end of the 1830s, the Deaf in Paris led by Jean-Ferdinand Berthier had established the Deaf Mute Committee (Mottez, 1993: 31; Rée, [1999] 2000: 204). The Committee, in addition to holding Banquettes or 'festivals of Sign language' (Mottez, 1993: 35), was also a political forum (Mottez, 1993: 37) that produced French activists on behalf of the Deaf.

Deaf activism, therefore, has a long history. Henri Gaillard (1993) born in 1866 and trained as a printer at the Paris Institute, later became editor-in-chief of the newspaper, *La Gazette des Sourds-Muets*, established by the Deaf (Quartararo, 1993: 46). He wrote extensively on the situation of the Deaf in France, on their poor employment

opportunities, on their poverty, on the limits of their educational opportunities (Quartararo, 1993: 49) and, as is still so often necessary, called for equal rights and duties for the Deaf citizens of France (Quartararo, 1993: 50-51).

Henri Gaillard was among six French Deaf to attend the 1893 Congress in Chicago and lend their support to the Deaf in the United States of America (Quartararo, 1993: 46). It was an important conference. Oralism was on the rise in the United States of America. Between 1817 and the start of deaf education in the United States of America, until the 1860s, nearly all educators considered Sign language indispensable (Baynton, 1993: 93). After the 1860s the campaign for oralism began. Charles Darwin's then new theories of evolution, including its (perhaps more sinister) sub-themes, Social Darwinism, together with eugenics and Linguistic Darwinism were a major influence (Winefield, 1987:82-96; Baynton, 1993).

Alexander Graham Bell, a leading figure in Social Darwinism and eugenics (see, for example, Winefield, 1987; 82; Baynton, 1993: 97; Lane, 1993: 283) was a staunch protagonist of the oral method and an avid campaigner (Winefield, 1987). To promote speech, Bell even went as far as to suggest controls on Deaf intermarriage (see Bell, 1884; Winefield, 1987: 92). Bell's suggestions on intermarriage did not become legislation, as the Deaf in the United States of America feared. However, others among his suggestions were influential. He called for the end of the employment of deaf teachers and a ban on the use of Sign language. In his view, without Sign the Deaf would speak; if they spoke they would be more likely to find hearing partners.

According to 'linguistic Darwinism', inferior languages died out and were replaced by superior spoken languages in the struggle for existence (Baynton, 1993: 99). Increasingly, Sign was seen as one of humankind's original languages: to Sign was 'savage' and to speak was human. Speech distinguished the human from animals (Baynton, 1993: 101). Even facial expression, so essential to the grammar of Sign language, came into question for being animal-like (Baynton, 1993: 106-107).

Eventually oralism in schools prevailed also in the United States of America (see Baynton, 1993). By 1900, 40% of deaf children sat in classrooms from which Sign had been entirely banned (Baynton, 1993: 94). Over half the children were taught orally for at

least part of the day, and by the end of World War 1 nearly 80 % of deaf students were taught entirely without Sign language (Baynton, 1993: 94). Oralism remained orthodoxy until the 1970s, when Sign language began to return to the classrooms (Baynton, 1993: 94).

When Bridget Lynne opened her school in Cape Town the method was manual and the spoken and written language, English (Boner, 2000: 138-139 and see below). In time though, as happened elsewhere in the world, oralism also became orthodoxy. Sign began to return to the classroom only in 1988 when the Noluthando School for the Deaf was established in Khayelitsha (Summary of History, Deafsa Western Cape, no date). The re-institution of a Sign-based education, although the spoken language was Xhosa, brought Deaf education in Cape Town, almost full circle.

External local processes: the beginnings of the differentiation of the Deaf

South Africans began their colonial era with one of the most polyglot populations of the world, a dramatic reunion of all the main branches of humankind … By 1660, all the major language groups of the world, African (Bantu and Khoisan), Indo-European and Malayo-Polynesian were represented in the windswept peninsula near the southernmost tip of Africa (Shell, 1994: xxv).

Moreover many Creole mulatto Cape slaves (slaves born at the Cape, of partial European descent) were indistinguishable in appearance from their owners. European visitors to Cape Town were invariably shocked to see some green- and blue-eyed slaves around the port (Shell, 1994: xxxvi).

Robert Semple … observed in 1803 that 'as yet the people of the Cape are only about to resume a character. They are neither English, nor French nor Dutch. Nor do they form an original class as Africans, but a singular mix of all together which has not yet acquired a conscience, and is therefore almost impossible to be represented. …' (Worden, van Heyningen, Bickford-Smith, 1998: 89)

In 1806, nearly 70 years before Bridget Lynne arrived in Cape Town, when Britain took the Cape from the Dutch for a second time the city was already a divided society. It

comprised 7000 'free' persons that included Dutch, German, other European immigrants; 1400 freed slaves and KhoiKhoi; and 9000 slaves[8] (Bickford-Smith, 1995: 13). When Bridget Lynne arrived in 1873 to open St Joseph's, Cape Town was already a 'singular mix' of widely differing identities that divided the town's population by class, wealth, religion, gender and ethnicity (Worden, et al, 1998: 89).

In this 'singular mix' (Worden, et al, 1998: 89) that was Cape Town from early on, the Deaf were not unknown. The Deaf were officially recognized as a category of the population in the first census in 1865 (CCP 4/11/1). The 1875 census taken a year after Lynne opened St Joseph's, listed 625 returns for the Deaf for the Colony (CCP 4/11/2). Specific figures for Cape Town were not available. Table 4.1 lists the 625 returns for the Deaf of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope per 10 000 of the population and by the population classification in use at the time of the 1875 census.

Table 4.1 Deaf people, by population classification by proportions per 10, 000 of the population for the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope at 1875

Classification	Total	Total infirm	Deaf	Deaf per 10 000
European or White	236 783	937	292	12.33
Malay	10 817	60	23	21.31
Hottentot	98 561	427	101	10.25
Fingo	73 506	275	32	4.35
Kafir [sic] and Betshuana	214 133	553	70	3.27
Mixed and Other	87 184	427	107	12.27
Total Colony	720 984	2 679	625	8.67

Source: Based on Table 1 Infirmities of the People, Census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope taken on the night of Sunday the 7th March, 1875 (CCP, 4/11/2, Part VIII: 161)

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[8] The Cape remained a slave owning society until 1 January 1838 (Shell, 1997: 415). Minte de Stomme (the Mute) who is listed as a lodge slave in 1693 (Shell, 1997:494) was probably deaf. Slaves were often named for their physical shortcomings (Shell, 1997: 231-232). Minte shares her name with El Mudo (the Mute), a famous deaf painter and contemporary of Ponce de Leon (Plann, 1993). She shares her name with 'Dumb Man' who died on Robben Island in 1853 (CCP 1/2/1/3). She shares her name with four factory workers among the research population: "there were four of us who worked there – they called us all 'Dummy". The South African Deaf enter into the written records by their given names, as far as I can ascertain, in 1829 when Frederik Brand, fromTulbach, wrote to the Colonial Office requesting tax relief on behalf of his relatives, Gerrit, Jan Jacobus and Elizabeth Johanna Brand (CO Vol 3941 Ref 130)

Note to Table 4.1: A summary of the definitions of the population classification used in the 1875 census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope (CCP 4/11/2, Part I: 2-3)

The population 'naturally' falls into two classes: the European or White, numbering 236,783 and the Coloured, numbering 484,201.

The European or White class consists of descendants of the Dutch and French settlers, and of immigrants and their offspring chiefly, English and other Teutonic peoples who more lately entered the colony. The number of Dutch and French origins may be estimated at 150,000, nearly the number that professes the Lutheran and Dutch Reformed creeds.

The Coloured are divided into five classes
1 The Malay - originally of Asiatic origin - based on a common and uniform faith - Mohammedanism.
11 The Hottentot - includes all returned as Hottentots, Namaquas, Hill Damaras and Korannas and the scanty remnant of Bushmen still surviving within the colony.
111 The Fingoes form part of the Bantu family, listed separately 'because of their special relations within the colony - involuntary immigrants and their exceptional intelligence and progress in civilisation'.
1V The Kafirs [sic] proper - among whom are representatives of all the tribes South of Delagoa Bay
V The last class includes the great and increasing population which has sprung from the intercourse of the colonists with the indigenous races and which fill the interval between the dominant people and the natives. Among them is an inconsiderable number of foreigners.

When Bridget Lynn opened St Joseph's, the educational method was manual and similar to that at St Mary's, Cabra, Dublin. Cabra drew on the French experience for its method of education, that is, the Sign or manual method as it had been introduced by the Abbe de l'Eppe (Griffey, 1994: 15-16). Cabra used 'signs, natural and methodological dactylology (or the spelling of words by using the manual alphabet), at the same time emphasizing the written word, as the avenue to literature' (see Boner, 2000: 138-139). With this method Bridget Lynn was soon able to demonstrate considerable success with her pupils. The first public examination of her pupils in September 1874 (as was apparently customary in Victorian times) was reported in the local press as follows

> It was with something akin to wonder that we saw children who we were assured 12 months ago were absolutely ignorant of spelling or writing, now exhibiting a considerable amount of skill and proficiency in such elementary subjects as orthography, arithmetic, English grammar, sacred history and writing (*The Standard and Mail,* 22 September 1874, cited in Boner, 2000: 138)

In 1881 when Bridget Lynn was still teaching at St Josephs and a year after the Milan conference in Europe, Dympna Kinsella applied successfully for a government grant (Boner, 2000: 142). In 1882, St Joseph's was listed among 384 'Mission Schools' with a grant of £120 (CCP 4/5/6: 99). Mission schools generally served the 'Black and lower class' hearing children, and learning was limited to reading, writing and scripture (Bickford-Smith, 1995: 25). Mission schools received a grant of £75, although the more expensive non-denominational schools that included subjects such as mathematics and history received grants of up to £200 (Bickford-Smith, 1995: 25).

With a grant of £120 in 1882 (CCP 4/5/6: 99), the Deaf school in Cape Town seemed to be placed somewhere between the mission and the non-denominational schools. Pupils ranged from poor to well-off. For instance, in a letter (26 July 1882) to the authorities thanking them for an increase in the schools grant-in-aid, Dympna Kinsella described Carl the son of German immigrants as 'the most needy', Willie Lee's 'poor parents' could only afford one shilling per month, while Edwin Goodwin's parents paid ten shillings and Miss Hugo, 'the daughter of wealthy parents' always 'paid her own expenses' (SGE 1/65).

In terms of numbers of pupils in 1882 (nine boys and one girl), the grant of £120 may even seem high, although the range of subjects in comparison with Mission schools more generally seemed more varied at the Deaf school (CCP 4/5/6: 99). Subjects included English, writing from copy, arithmetic (with 6 doing the higher grade), geography, history, grammar, composition and sewing. The school also offered evening classes for those in the trades: in 1882, Michael Sturgis, an apprentice harness maker and Charles Sturgis, a compositor at the office of the *Cape Times* newspaper were attending evening classes twice a week (SGE 1/65).

For the first 45 years of the school's existence, the manual method remained the mode of Deaf education at the Grimley Institute (see, for example, Boner, 2000: 149). The move to oralism in the United States and Europe after the Milan Conference of 1880 did not affect the method of education but it put the employment of deaf teachers in Cape Town in jeopardy. By 1902, Annie Marsh, after nearly seven years teaching at the Deaf school in Cape Town and two years as Head Teacher, was facing dismissal (Boner,

2000: 145; SGE 1/317). For a time she seems to have been reconciled with her employers. But by 1904 she was back to signing herself as 'Assistant Teacher' (SGE 1/423) and eventually, apparently, she left to get married.

By 1908, Hannah Farrell, who had been recruited from Ireland in 1906, was also facing dismissal. Hannah Farrell took her problem to the offices of Superintendent General of Education. In an interview (17 January 1908, later handed in as a Report, 23 January 1908), at the offices of the Superintendent General of Education, conducted as a dialogue, in written English, Hannah Farrell gave her side of the story (SGE 1/689). She complained, among other issues, that the new hearing principal 'did not know how to talk in signs', unlike the previous hearing principal with whom Farrell 'got on splendidly'. The previous principal Signed and 'understood the Deaf as if she were one herself'. In the end, despite her efforts, and even with some backing from the Colonial Educational authorities (SGE 1/689[a]) as well as letters of support from parents of pupils (SGE 1/689[b]), Farrell, unlike Annie Marsh was not reconciled with the employers. In the meantime Deaf education was expanding but segregating in the Colony and the educational emphasis was increasingly on the oral method.

Deaf education expanding institutionally but further differentiating the Deaf

By 1904, South Africa counted three schools for the Deaf: Grimley in Cape Town, De La Bat School for the Deaf in Worcester and a small school in the Eastern Cape - but by this time formal segregation of the pupils into 'European' and 'coloured' was established and there was further division by spoken language and by method. (CCP 4/11/5, paragraph 508: clvi). The 1904 census of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope describes these divisions as follows (see, CCP 4/11/5, paragraph 508: clvi). At Grimley the pupils numbered 30 and were listed as '14 European and 16 coloured', the method was Sign and the spoken language English. In the Eastern Cape, a small school established in 1884, catered for five children, two boys and three girls, the method was oral, the spoken language, English and all were classified as 'European deaf'. At the Worcester School, established in 1881, pupils numbered 56 'Europeans' (26 boys and 30 girls)'; the spoken language was Dutch, as I have mentioned above, and the methods both manual and oral. The subjects at the Worcester school included, for the boys, 'carpentry, gardening etc' and for the girls 'dressmaking and domestic work.

The establishment of the Worcester School by the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in 1881 began the division of the Deaf. It separated the children of white Dutch (and later Afrikaans) speaking parents from others and categorized the Deaf by religion, by spoken language, by geography and by method of education. However, its establishment needs to be seen in the context of the Cape of 1881. This was a pre-ecumenical era when Christian denominations were in competition, 'when tolerance in religion was weakness and numerical victory in terms of converts, a sign of God's approval' (Boner, 2000: 28). In this competitive environment, Reverend Rabie of the DRC was concerned (no doubt justly) about Grimley's Catholic influence on the child of a member of his congregation (Boner, 2000: 141).

There was also a perceived need for an additional school. The number of deaf people among the Dutch was reported to be relatively high. In 1877, Barkly, in a letter (dated 12 March) to Lord Carnarvon, remarked that 'contrary to my expectation, I find that deaf-mutism is twice as common here among the population of European descent' and he proceeded to explain the high incidence on the basis of intermarriage among those of Dutch extraction because of their inheritance patterns (GH Vol 23/33 Ref 40).

Importantly, the years after 1870 through to 1882 were a time of increasing emphasis on 'Englishness' - or 'white skins, English tongues and bourgeois values' (Bickford-Smith, 1995: 39). Economic activity prospered at the Cape as a consequence of the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley in 1870 (Bickford-Smith, 1995: 39). The struggle for access to control of resources between the urban English with mercantile or business interests and the rural Dutch with farming interests intensified. The rural Dutch were sidelined and English capitalists were held responsible for contributing to rural Afrikaans poverty (Bickford-Smith, 1995: 40-41).

Together these factors combined to promote the mobilization of Afrikaner identity (Bickford-Smith, 1995: 40-41). In 1875, in Paarl, some of the initial mobilizers of Afrikaner identity established the Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners (Fellowship of True Afrikaners), which stood for 'our language (creolised Dutch or Afrikaans), our nation ('whites' who spoke Afrikaans) and our country' (Bickford-Smith, 1995: 40 - 41). The link between language and nation echoed European nationalism and possibly influenced the

initiation of the oral method at Worcester. In addition Dutch teachers and clergyman were becoming progressively more available, as the Colonial government increasingly withdrew stipends and grants to religious denominations and schools that did not use the English language.

Aggressive British colonial expansion in Southern Africa eventually led to the Anglo Boer Wars at the turn of the century. After the end of the wars, in 1910, the former Boer Republics and the former colonies of Natal and the Cape were united to form the four provinces of the Union of South Africa. At the formation of Union, the 'coloureds' in the Cape retained their franchise (for a time) but Africans were excluded. In response, in 1912, the African National Congress was formed. A year later the 1913 Land Act was proclaimed, the first of two (the second in 1936) major pieces of legislation that reduced the land available to Africans to 13 percent and laid the foundation for apartheid's Bantustan policy. The effect of this legislation was, as Sol Plaatje has put it: 'awaking on Friday morning, June 20, 1913, the South African native found himself, not actually a slave, but a pariah in the land of his birth' ([1916] 1982: 21).

In this post Union context, segregation of the Deaf increased. Grimley was endeavouring to draw level with the Worcester School for the Deaf with regard to method (Boner, 2000: 149). During the 1920s Grimley instituted the oral method with the exception of 'one class of backward children' who continued to be taught in Sign language by a former pupil who had completed her education in England and returned to join the staff of Grimley in 1903 ('Dominican School for the Deaf', *50 Years Jubilee, SANC for the Deaf*, 1979: no page numbers[10]).

While Grimley endeavoured to catch up methodologically, generally, facilities for the 'non-white'[11] Deaf were still considered limited. In 1929 at the founding meeting of the South African National Council for the Deaf, Blaxall made a plea to remedy the situation urgently ('Die S.A. Nasionale Raad vir Dowes' ('the South African Council for the Deaf'), *50 Years Jubilee, SANCD*, 1979). Improving services meant further segregation of the Deaf. Further segregation began in 1933, at Worcester, when the DRC established the

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[9] From here on in this chapter, I refer to this reference as *50 Years Jubilee SANCD*.
[10] This document did not include page numbers only titles to articles.
[11] In the terminology of the time

Nuwe Hoop School in the Western Cape countryside for children who were not classified 'white' (Summary of History, Deafsa Western Cape, no date).

In Cape Town, improving educational services for the Deaf also meant further segregation. When Grimley became a state aided school under the Union Education Department in 1928, state aid made available maintenance and traveling grants for the children and their escorts and the numbers of children at the school increased. By 1933 there were 60 'non-European' deaf at Grimley. In the 'non-European department' of the school, the numbers were increasing even more rapidly than the 'Europeans' and the physical state of the schoolrooms was deteriorating ('Dominican School for the Deaf', *50 Years Jubilee, SANCD,* 1979). A new school was a priority. In 1937, St Dominic's School for the Deaf was officially opened at Wittebome (now a suburb of Cape Town). When Wittebome opened, the 'white' students remained on at Grimley in central Cape Town. Wittebome, like Nuwe Hoop, admitted all pupils not classified 'white'.

By the end of the 1930s, the region that is now the Western Cape had four schools: Grimley and Wittebome in Cape Town, De La Bat and Nuwe Hoop at Worcester. The schools were differentiated by method of Deaf education, and Grimley had by this time also introduced the oral method (Boner, 2000: 149 and see, Table: 4.3, Appendix Three, for a Summary of the local historical process). They were divided by spoken language: English at Grimley and Wittebome and Afrikaans at De La Bat and Nuwe Hoop. The schools were divided by religious ethos; Roman Catholic at the Cape Town schools and DRC at the Worcester schools. In both Cape Town and Worcester the Deaf were segregated. In both Cape Town and Worcester there was a school for 'whites' and a school for those who were not.

The 1930s is the phase when the collective history meets the personal histories of the research population. The older members of the sample population, such as those over 70 years (see Table 1.2), and others of a similar age met through the course of fieldwork were already attending school during the 1930s (see Table 4.2). At this stage in the chapter, I introduce and integrate certain personal histories. These personal histories demonstrate the process of becoming deaf in a society becoming ever more divided and differentiated over time. The personal childhood histories of certain individuals of this

study, as much as the collective history, provide the context for the adult strategies that I discuss in the chapters that follow.

Table 4.2: Profile of the sample population by decade of first attendance at school

Decade		No	%	Schools									
				G/W	W	G	NH	WR	NH/W	EC	HB	NS	DBN
1930	1939	2	2.1	1	1								
1940	1949	15	16.0	0	14	1							
1950	1959	25	26.6	0	12	0	9	2	2				
1960	1969	19	20.2	0	7	0	8	0	0	4			
1970	1979	20	21.3	0	4	0	3	1	0	11			1
1980	1989	3	3.2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	1		
1990	1999	2	2.1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0		
NS		1	1.1										
DK		7	7.4	0	4	0	1	0	1	2	0	1	
		94	100	1	43	1	23	3	3	18	1	1	94

Key to Table 4.2: G/W = Grimley/Wittebome; W = Wittebome; G = Grimley; NH = Nuwe Hoop; WR = Worcester; EC = Eastern Cape; HB = Hout Bay; NS = No School (or ran way – see Table 1.7); DBN = Durban; DK = 'Don't know'

Integrating the personal in the collective: 1930s – 1980s

In the case of a deaf child it is the parents who do the suffering, at least to begin with. Mine found themselves with all sorts of questions to which they had to find answers that might not, for all they knew, exist. How was I to be educated? How far would I be able to lead a 'normal' life? When I grew up would I be capable of ordinary social discourse? How would I earn a living? You can imagine what forebodings weighed on them. They could not know that things might work out better than they feared (Wright, 1993 [1969]: 27)

The personal histories suggest for the most part it was the child's parents or care-givers, who, like David Wright's parents, faced the initial dilemmas when they found out their child was deaf. They had to ensure the best possible future for their deaf child and very often had to make their decisions with little previous experience. All were hearing and deafness in their child was usually their first encounter with the condition. They made decisions as options varied over time as Deaf education continued to expand but became increasingly segregated.

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By the early 1930s, parents had three options for schooling in the Cape. Grimley in Cape Town was still open to all deaf children. Nuwe Hoop in Worcester admitted children who were not classified 'white' and the Worcester school for the Deaf admitted those who were classified 'white'. By the end of the 1930s there were four options. By then Grimley had been segregated and Wittebome had been established. In this context Kas, Basie, and Thelma became deaf and attended Deaf school.

Kas, Basie and Thelma at school by the 1930s

Kas, already at school at Nuwe Hoop in the 1930s must have been one of the first pupils to be admitted there. He was never very forthcoming to me about the circumstances of his becoming deaf and I did not press him. His attitude was a mix of not remembering much about it as well as not really wanting to be bothered at this stage in his life. Those memories were buried beneath a lifetime of sporting interests, working life, courting, marriage, children, making ends meet and now just relaxing in retirement. But his birthplace, the 'Transkei' in the Eastern Cape and his residential address in Guguletu at the time of fieldwork, suggest that Nuwe Hoop did not discriminate among those who were not classified 'white' when the school first opened.

Basie, like Kas was born in the Transkei. At the time of the study he was already a long-time resident of Langa. Basie, for the same reasons as Kas, was not very forthcoming about the circumstances of his becoming deaf and I also did not press him for details. Thelma was at school with Basie and was the most informative about the onset of her deafness.

Thelma was born in 1929 in Mossel Bay into a large family of seven children, two of whom died young. When Thelma was three years of age she became "sick". Afterwards "they" [she did not specify] found out that she was deaf, but how Thelma cannot recall. The next she remembered was leaving home with an escort and traveling to Cape Town by train when she was still "very young". All Thelma recalls of her first journey from Mossel Bay to Cape Town was that she "cried and cried and cried". But the nuns, she said, "consoled her" when she arrived at Grimley. She did not spend many years at Grimley before she and Basie moved to Wittebome when the school opened in 1937.

Within five years of opening, by 1943, there were 150 pupils at Wittebome ('Dominican School for the Deaf', *50 Years Jubilee, SANCD*, 1979). Pupils were still attending from the Eastern Cape. How parents as far away as the Eastern Cape found out about opportunities for the education of their children in the 1930s and 1940s was difficult to determine. Noxolo and Dinah's stories are interesting in this regard.

Noxolo and Dinah at school by the 1940s

Noxolo was born in the Eastern Cape in 1935, one of six children, a boy and five girls. When Noxolo was two years old she became ill and was hospitalized. On her return from hospital she did not answer when her mother called and her family began to suspect that she was deaf. Without any local facilities for deaf children, her parents sent her to the local school with her siblings. They were determined that their children would have an education. According to Noxolo, her parents and her grandparents had been "unlucky" [that is, had little] in their academic education. Noxolo's grandfather farmed in the Eastern Cape and Noxolo's brother still farms the same land (an idyllic setting as the photographs of recent Christmas holidays suggested). Even though the grandfather farmed, he also worked in Johannesburg as a migrant labourer. To travel to Johannesburg in those days, carrying food packed for the journey by her grandmother, her grandfather "walked by day and slept by night". Noxolo's father continued the practice, common for so many, of farming and migrant labour. However, he worked in Cape Town as a groom at the Kenilworth Race Course. As the migrant labour system required (even before strict influx control), her father lived in the males-only hostel for the grooms while working in Cape Town. In Cape Town, a fellow hostel-dweller told him about Wittebome School for the Deaf and he went ahead and made the necessary arrangements with the school. When he returned to Cape Town the next year, after his Christmas holiday at home in the Eastern Cape, Noxolo returned with him. Her father took her to the school and visited her whenever it was possible. School was "O K" (she Signed) but only "one hour of reading and writing – not enough, not enough".

Dinah, the same age group as Noxolo, gives a similar account of how her mother found out about Wittebome. Dinah was born prematurely in Johannesburg, while her mother was visiting family there. However, at the time, the family's permanent home was Crawford in Cape Town. Dinah too became deaf as a result of an infectious childhood

fever. When the parents discovered that Dinah was deaf, they were also concerned about her future until Dinah's mother found out about Wittebome from a friend who had worked there in the school's laundry.

Noxolo and Dinah were already at school when the Nationalist government came to power in 1948. Five years later, in 1953, the Department of Education, Arts and Science recognized Wittebome as a 'School for Coloured Deaf' ('Dominican School for the Deaf, *50 Years Jubilee, SANCD*, 1979). In 1962, two years after the Nationalist government declared the Republic of South Africa, Wittebome came under the control of the Department of Coloured Affairs. Then it became increasingly difficult to obtain permits for both 'Indian'[12] and African children to attend the school.

By this stage in the process of the unfolding of apartheid, 'coloured' parents had the choice of Nuwe Hoop where the spoken language was Afrikaans and the religious ethos Dutch Reformed or Wittebome where the spoken language was English and religious ethos Catholic. But for Flora's mother, choice was not about language or religious ethos. It was, rather, about where it would be most convenient for her to visit her child regularly.

Flora at school by the 1950s

Flora was born in Cape Town in 1954. Rachel, Flora's mother cannot be sure how her daughter became deaf. At the time of Flora's birth, Rachel was working as a live-in domestic and was not able to keep her baby with her. She left the baby with her mother but then her mother was offered a post as a live-in domestic. Times were hard and Granny did not want to lose the chance of an extra income and consequently, Rachel had to leave Flora with "other people" – and she did "not know what could have happened". When Flora was about nine months old the woman who cared for her suspected that she was deaf. According to Rachel, while the child-minder was working in the kitchen she would keep Flora near her "in a box" close by the kitchen window. Flora would sit or sleep or play in the box while the woman did her chores. She saw that Flora "did not notice the birds outside", as her own children had when they too had sat in the

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[12] The parents of Indian children appealed to the Dominican nuns to open a school in Natal but funds were limited. However, Wittebome did agree to train teachers. Teachers trained at Wittebome then went on to open a school in Natal (personal communication, Sister Sally Young, Cape Town)

same box, in the same position in the same kitchen. She mentioned her concern to Rachel and they began to "watch" Flora. Eventually Rachel's mother was sure that she was deaf. She did not answer or respond when called or "fetch Granny's slippers" when asked to do so. The hospital confirmed Granny's diagnosis which resulted in school for Flora when she was still only two years old. Rachel was first offered Nuwe Hoop but she felt it was "too far". She would never be able to see her child. Then she was told that Wittebome would take her child and by the time she was barely three years old, Flora was at boarding school. Rachel was able to see her baby daughter twice a month on her afternoons off.

While Flora was at school, the Nationalist government's grand apartheid, divide and rule, Bantustan policy was taking shape. Grand apartheid, for Africans generally in Cape Town, meant severe influx control. Influx control, by a complex system of Laws (see West, 1988) aimed to keep the cities, like Cape Town, 'white' but at the same time keep a steady supply of cheap labour from the Bantustans. The Transkei and Ciskei, the province of the Eastern Cape since 1994, were the Bantustans that supplied labour to the Western Cape.

The Transkei and Ciskei also became the reservoir for the deaf African children from Cape Town who were being increasingly denied local schooling. By 1979, within five years of the Transkei obtaining its 'Independence', there were two schools for African Deaf in the Eastern Cape, one established in 1946 (the first school in that area established in 1884, see above, apparently moved to Johannesburg) and another later. These two schools for Africans in the Eastern Cape were part of a much larger process that increased the number of schools for the Deaf but further divided the South African Deaf, by spoken language group, in line with apartheid's Bantustan policy.

Grand apartheid and its Bantustan policy, as is well known, proposed and acted upon a notion of an African population that was divided into 'national units on the basis of *language* [my emphasis] and culture...' (preamble to the Promotion of Black Self-Government Act (46 of 1959) (West, 1988: 106). With spoken language a defining factor by 1979, some of the 19 schools for the Deaf included the following: the Kutlwanong School, Rustenburg, for the Tswana and the South and North Sotho; the Dominican school, Hammanskraal, for the Tswana, North Sotho; Vuleka school at Nkandla for the

Zulu; St Thomas, at Stutterheim for the Xhosa; Tshilidzini school at Shayadima for the Venda and Tsonga; Bartimea school at Thaba 'Nchu also for the Tswana and South Sotho; Thiboloha school at Witsieshoek for South Sotho; Efata school in Umtata, for the Xhosa and South Sotho; Eluwa school at Oshakati for 'all the peoples of South West Africa' ('Objects and activities of the SANCD', *50 Years Jubilee, SANCD*, 1979). In this situation the Cape Town based parents of African children who became deaf had little choice but the schools in the Eastern Cape.

Phumzile at school by the 1970s - out of Cape Town to the Eastern Cape

His mother thinks Phumzile was probably born deaf. He was born in 1968 in Retreat, Cape Town, when Africans were still living in the area. As result of Group Areas legislation and the social engineering of the city that followed, Africans were moved out of Retreat to Guguletu and Nyanga. 'Coloureds' were located below the Main Road and 'whites' above it. Almost immediately after Phumzile was born his mother noticed problems. He was never strong and failed to sit or crawl at the expected time. The family would prop him up on cushions in the sitting room so he could see what was going on. They felt in this way they could show him, make him feel what it was like - teach him, if you like, to sit. When "he was still being breast fed" at Groote Schuur hospital, doctors removed a growth from his neck and later another from his cheek. Then his mother began to worry that he might be deaf. She took him to the "hearing clinic" in Salt River. The clinic told her that he was completely deaf in one ear and had little hearing in the other. His mother cannot remember the age at which he went to school but by that time the family had taught him to walk. He stayed at school for only three years and when he came home he had not learnt very much, according to his mother. At home he taught himself to read and write English and Afrikaans. Every day he went to the Petrol Station on the corner, where he bought the newspaper, one day English, one day Afrikaans. Painstakingly he would copy words from the paper then find out their meaning. He continued to enjoy his reading and writing until very recently when his eyesight began to fail.

Once apartheid was deeply entrenched, academic options for deaf pupils varied on the basis of their population classification. African pupils were offered an education as far as Grade Seven. 'Coloured' pupils were allowed to proceed as far as Grade Nine and

'white' students to Grade Twelve. However, even for white Deaf students it took some time for secondary schooling to be introduced. It was only in 1968 nearly 100 years after Worcester was established that the first pupils matriculated ('Skool vir Dowes, Worcester', (School for the Deaf, Worcester) *50 Years Jubilee, SANCD*, 1979). By 1980, Grimley in Hout Bay was offering the choice of an academic or technical matriculation (Boner, 2000: 152).

In 1980, Grimley that had remained 'white' after Wittebome was established and where Bridget Lynn had commenced Deaf education in South Africa, moved to Hout Bay. The Grimley school at Hout Bay was strictly oral and largely for 'whites'. With matriculation available at both Hout Bay and Worcester, the quality of education offered to 'white' deaf children was clearly more advantaged. But 'white' parents too faced some of the same difficulties as, for instance those of Noxolo and Dinah. Parents had to "find their [own] way" as Chris' father, Johnnie, put it.

Chris at school by the 1980s

Chris was born in Durban in 1979. His parents began to suspect he was deaf when he was three months old. An assessment at a Durban hospital confirmed deafness probably as a result of nerve impairment, according to his father. There was no history of deafness in either of Chris's parents' families. They found little help or information available on what to do and what to expect, especially for an infant. A therapist at the hospital suggested they get in touch with a clinic in America and that proved very useful. They signed up at the clinic and began a distance assessment by detailed questionnaire. Over the next two years, at regular intervals, the clinic took them through 12 phases, also by distance questionnaires. The clinic sent regular information on what to expect at various stages. They helped with seemingly trivial but in fact important information, such as getting down to the child's level in order to get the child to learn to lip-read. Chris started boarding school in Durban when he was two and half years old, potty trained but "still in nappies at night". "It was very difficult" [to send a child to boarding school at such as young age] Johnnie remarked shaking his head. Chris was seven years old before his parents found out about the Carel du Toit Centre in Bellville: "The schools hang on to their pupils and they don't tell you about what is happening in other provinces". When they heard about the Carel du Toit Centre, Chris' parents brought him to Cape Town to

have him assessed at the Centre, only to find that according to the Carel du Toit Centre he was "way behind". While in Cape Town for the assessment, the Carel du Toit Centre also told Johnny and his wife about the school for the Deaf at Hout Bay. Within two years, Johnny and his wife had sold up in Durban and moved to Cape Town so that Chris could attend school at Hout Bay.

When Chris was at Hout Bay, by the middle of the 1980s, resistance to apartheid was beginning to show results, despite then President P W Botha's severe repression under a State of Emergency. The Pass Laws were some of the first legislation to be repealed in 1985. With the Pass Laws repealed, additional housing was necessary to accommodate Africans for whom, as part of strict influx control, no land or housing had been made available since the establishment of Guguletu in the 1950s. During the 1980s some of the first houses were built in Khayelitsha. When Khayelitsha was opened for African settlement, the DRC took over a small pre-school that had been run by Shawco[13] and in 1988, established Noluthando. The opening of Noluthando allowed Xolela's mother to send him to a day school in Cape Town.

Xolela at school by the 1980s - back to Cape Town at Noluthando

At the time of this study Xolela was a young man of 18 years of age. He was born in Cape Town, of Cape Town born parents. He has lived in the same house in Guguletu all his life, with his grandmother, his mother, Busisiwe, his siblings and his mother's sister. Xolela became deaf at two years of age. "How could I send him away to school when he was only a baby", Busisiwe, his mother asked. She would not have considered Wittebome, even if it had been offered to her, because it meant boarding school. Fortunately she found out about a day pre-school that Shawco was running for deaf children. This pre-school, as I have said, went on to become Noluthando and Xolela has been attending there ever since.

By the time Xolela was diagnosed deaf, his mother Busisiwe had rights to permanent settlement in Cape Town. There were also those Africans in Cape Town who, in the

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[13] A comprehensive Health and Welfare Service originally initiated and run by students at the University of Cape Town. The student association continues. However, many of the projects initiated by the students took on more permanent professional staff when they became established.

early 1980s, still did not have rights to permanent urban settlement. Apartheid's strict system of influx control granted rights to permanent urban settlement on the basis of a set of selected and complex criteria (see, West, 1988). Contract migrant labourers and their wives and children were particularly severely affected. Until the Pass Laws were repealed in 1985, without a work contract or rights to permanent settlement, an individual was not permitted to remain in Cape Town for longer than 72 hours. As a consequence the migrant's domestic arrangements were particularly complex and fluid over time and place. In this fluid domestic situation a child could be born in Cape Town[14], become ill in another place, have the deafness diagnosed somewhere else. The domestic arrangement also guided decisions regarding the Deaf school the child attended. For these reasons Bongani's personal history is interesting.

Bongani at school by the 1990s and at school in the Free State

Bongani was born in Cape Town, the second youngest of Abigail and Zola 's five children. By the time he was born the Pass Laws had been lifted. However, his parents already had a complex domestic arrangement in place across Cape Town, the Eastern Cape, his father's birthplace and Bloemfontein, his mother's birth place. Zola, Bongani's father, was the caretaker of a block of flats in Rondebosch and had been in the same post for nearly 30 years. Even when influx control was strictly applied, Abigail, Bongani's mother had ensured that most of her children were born in Cape Town. However, the children grew up in the countryside. Bongani became seriously ill in Tsolo, in the Eastern Cape, when he was one year old. There was little the local Eastern Cape Clinic could do for him - desperate, Abigail took him to Bloemfontein, where her parents resided. In Bloemfontein, Bongani was hospitalized and after a long stay at the hospital Bongani's deafness was diagnosed. When he was five years of age, his parents decided to send him to a Deaf school in Bloemfontein. Abigail's parents were permanently settled in Bloemfontein and her hearing children also attended school there.

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[14] Many migrant women, despite restrictions, ensured that their children were born in Cape Town, where health care was considered to be better than in the rural Bantustans (Ramphele, Heap and Trollip, 1991)

Differentiating the Deaf: the situation at 1994

The year before I began this study, in 1994, when South Africans went to the polls to vote in their first-ever democratic election and 120 years after St Josephs had opened, Deaf education in Cape Town had come almost full circle (a summary of the historical process is listed as Table 4.3, see Appendix Three). As I have said Noluthando re-introduced the manual method of education that Bridget Lynne had used, although the spoken language, at Noluthando was Xhosa. The historical process that brought Deaf education full circle increased the number of schools available for the Deaf. By 1994 schools attended by the participants of this study, included five in the Western Cape[15], namely, Hout Bay, Noluthando, Nuwe Hoop, Wittebome, Worcester and two in the Eastern Cape. However, the historical process also differentiated the Deaf, by a range of factors including, age, apartheid classification, school attended, method of education, level of education and spoken language (see Table 4.4, Appendix Three).

The end result of the local historical processes of colonialism, institutionalized segregation and apartheid was therefore not neatly bounded categories based on apartheid classification, alone. Within the broader categorization of the Deaf as different from the hearing – imposed by international external historical processes – there was considerable additional differentiation. Table 4.4 (see Appendix Three) shows that this differentiation varied across and within apartheid classification. The spoken languages of Afrikaans and English differentiated the 'white' Deaf. The younger 'white' Deaf, as apartheid classification and class became increasingly interrelated, had better academic educational opportunities. The 'coloured' Deaf were also differentiated on the basis of the spoken languages of Afrikaans and English. But in comparison with the 'white' Deaf as a whole and the younger 'coloureds', those older who attended Wittebome before it became increasingly segregated, experienced a more integrated education. This integrated school experience they shared with older Africans. In Cape Town, it was only in the late 1960s/1970s that the Africans of this research population began to attend school in the Eastern Cape (see Table 4.2). Until then, in Cape Town, African and 'coloured' pupils were schooling together.

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[15] The only school in the Western Cape not covered by the research population was the Mary Kine, an oral school in Observatory, Cape Town for 'hard of hearing children'.

In general differentiation was greatest for the African Deaf. For those, older than 70, such as Basie and Kas the spoken languages were English (for Basie) and Afrikaans (for Kas). For younger Africans, such as Xolela and Phumzile, the spoken language was Xhosa. For Bongani, at school in Bloemfontein, it was Sesotho. Xolela and Phumzile were also differentiated by method of education and academic opportunity. Xolela, at Noluthando had the chance to proceed to Grade 12. Academic education was limited for Phumzile.

In summary: external historical processes differentiated the Deaf from the hearing and imposed various boundaries, several of which the Deaf recognized. At the start of the chapter I listed certain labels by which the Deaf were differentiating among themselves when I began this study. They distinguished themselves as 'the Deaf' in relation to 'the hearing' and among themselves on the basis of, for instance, apartheid classification, school attended and spoken language. This chapter has endeavoured to explain the local historical processes behind these labels, the diversity they recognize and the boundaries imposed by external historical processes that they represent. The differential impact of external historical processes on the Deaf provides the context for the study and a measure for the degree to which internal processes do or do not transcend social boundaries that were imposed. These imposed boundaries include the deaf-hearing boundary that differentiated from the Deaf from the hearing and those imposed locally as a consequence of the translation of wider processes into the local context.

The next chapters (Five, Six and Seven) emphasize internal social processes. These chapters examine, in the historical context given here, and from the actor and actors' perspective, the strategies that deal with being Deaf in a predominantly hearing world, the crossing of social boundaries and the construction of social identity. In Chapter Five the reader meets the participants of this study as adults. The chapter introduces Signing spaces. A Signing space as a strategy suggests that despite forebodings at the start of deafness both the parent and deaf child 'could not know [then] that things might work out better than they feared' (Wright, 1993 [1969]: 27).

Chapter Five: Introducing Signing spaces
Networks of deaf and hearing people as Sign-<u>hear</u> spaces

'Many people here spoke Sign language'[1]:

Indeed the deaf were scarcely seen as 'deaf' and certainly not seen as being at all handicapped ... The deaf on Martha's Vineyard loved, married, earned their livings, worked, thought, wrote as everyone else did - they were not set apart (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 32-33).

Basie's birthday party: a fieldwork encounter

On February 7, 1998, Basie celebrated his 75th birthday with a party at his home in Langa, Cape Town. For the occasion Basie was well turned-out in a new suit. Because the suit had yet to soften with wear, it sat somewhat awkwardly on Basie's thinner, frailer and older frame. A younger Basie had enjoyed and was much admired for a fine and strapping physique. He was equally widely regarded for his great sense of style – always a "very neat somebody", according to his eldest daughter, Nomsa. Before it was hats. Even now his friends reminisce about a magnificent black felt cowboy hat that Basie sported everywhere in his youth. But for his party Basie wore his regular beanie, its emblem, the skull and cross bones, proudly proclaiming Basie's long time allegiance to the famous Orlando Pirates football club.

When I arrived the door was open and the music on. Outside in the street family, friends and neighbours were milling around greeting the guests. Inside the sitting room was decorated for the occasion. A large 'Happy Birthday Daddy' banner – prepared by Basie's grandchildren – announced the occasion. The furniture was pushed back against the wall and Xoliswa, one of Basie's daughters, was busy decorating the dining room table in the middle of the room. As she decorated, Xoliswa chatted to a friend. "Intle!" [Beautiful!], she enthused fingering the friend's new T-shirt. "Imalini?" [How much?], she asked. "Ne!" she exclaimed, impressed, the price was good. Then she turned to me and introduced the friend as Betty's daughter, Nothemba.

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[1] With acknowledgements to Groce's *Everyone here spoke Sign language: hereditary deafness on Martha's Vineyard* (1985)

While Nothemba and I chatted in English, Xoliswa looked across at Min, one of Basie's deaf friends. Min was deep in a spirited conversation. Her fingers nimble, her hands sure, her face lively, animated as expressions elaborated her hand Signs. Sebenzile and Rachel looked on, focused, attentive. Xoliswa laughed and answered Min. Then she turned to Sebenzile, teasing him. He answered, his Sign leisurely, dry, matching his humour. They all laughed. Laughing too, Xoliswa returned to her table decorations.

"Hy was so onbeskof!" [He – the taxi driver - was so rude!], a guest explained as she flustered through the door, late. Guests continued to arrive, among them Basie's deaf friends, some with their families, from Langa, Guguletu and Khayelitsha, from Retreat, Heideveld and Bonteheuvel[2]. But Basie had yet to choose a tie. Nomsa gave him a choice and he chose a good match. Albert gave him a hand with the tying of the 'Mandela knot' that Basie fancied. As Albert proceeded with his task he continued to regale us in Sign with stories of Basie's younger prowess as sportsman. "Basie soccer good, good" "Boxing yes yes". "At school, skipping skipping; always training, always training".

Then coffee and cake were served. Fingers continued to fly at the same time as Signers took their cups of coffee, chose a piece of cake, spooned in the sugar, sipped the hot coffee and began to enjoy their cake. I, on the other hand, struggled to balance a cup of coffee on my knee, to spoon in the sugar, to eat my cake, to concentrate on the conversation with my eyes in one direction, my ears in another. The seemingly effortless ease with which the rest of the hearing party people moved from one spoken language to another and from one language mode to another was enviable.

While we were enjoying our cake and coffee a young guest arrived and came over to congratulate Basie. Then she turned to me. Smiling, without a moment's hesitation, she greeted me - also in Sign. Nomsa was quick to correct her - "Hayi, uthetha" [No, she speaks]. Laughing she swapped to English. But the point was not lost on Nomsa, on me. Nomsa looked at me questioningly, a half-unsure smile on her face. How would I take

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[2] Langa, Guguletu and Khayelitsha are historically proclaimed African areas. Parts of Retreat (below the railway line), Heideveld and Bonteheuvel are, historically, 'coloured' areas.

the young guest's assumption? I was the only 'white' at the party. I must be deaf. Why else would I come to be celebrating with Basie?

Introducing Signing spaces

At Basie's birthday party it was difficult to know who was deaf and who was hearing. There was nothing physical to identify the Deaf as different, nor was it possible to identify the Deaf on the basis of social capacity. The Deaf at Basie's birthday party loved, married, parented, earned their livings, worked and thought like everyone else. Basie was parent, grandparent, pensioner, widower, and 'a neat somebody' who retained a sense of style and an interest in sport. Albert was affable. Rachel was caring. Min was serious. Katrien was talented. Sebenzile was laid back. Dinah was fun. It was not even possible to identify the deaf people at the party as different on the basis of language. Many people at Basie's birthday party both, deaf and hearing used Sign language.

Fieldwork in Cape Town offered other social occasions like Basie's birthday party, where many people both deaf and hearing spoke Sign language. There were more birthday parties. There were kitchen teas, weddings, first Holy Communions, Confirmations, funerals and 'braais'[3]. When I went out 'beyond the Bastion' (see, Chapter Three) searching for deaf people in wider Cape Town, widespread Signing made it almost impossible to know, at first, who was deaf and who was hearing. During the course of fieldwork, with Sign, it seemed possible, even easy, to cross Cape Town's relatively bounded spoken language landscape, a landscape that reflects more or less the geographical legacy of apartheid's social engineering. IsiXhosa is the primary language in a predominantly African area; Afrikaans in the 'coloured' areas and the predominantly 'white' Northern suburbs; and English in Cape Town's formerly 'white' Southern suburbs.

Fieldwork for my thesis in comparison with my part-time research job[4] offered a striking contrast. My thesis work required only one research assistant with one language skill, Sign. My part-time research work also took me across Cape Town but required a team

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[3] 'Braai', short for 'braaivleis' is the South African equivalent of a barbeque.
[4] As I mentioned in Chapter Three, while I was working on the thesis I was also employed part-time on certain Reproductive Health research projects.

of research assistants to cover Cape Town's three main languages, Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa. On my part-time research working days, language varied with geographical area. On my thesis working days we seemingly 'Signed' across geographical area.

The literature describes instances of widespread Signing by deaf and hearing people. Groce tells the story of the Deaf on Martha's Vineyard (1985) where, for 250 years a substantial proportion of the population suffered from hereditary deafness that began with the arrival of the first settlers in the 1690s. By the mid 19th century, in some areas, up to one in four individuals were deaf and most of the island's inhabitants could Sign. Woodward (1982) and Washabaugh (1986) have described something similar for Providence Island in the Caribbean. The same has been described for certain isolated rural villages of the Yucatan (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 32[5]) and areas around schools for the Deaf in cities such as Rochester in New York and Fremont in California (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 33 footnote 44).

The interesting consequence reported for these areas where there is and has been a high level of Signing among deaf and hearing people, is the very commonplace position of the Deaf in society. They are not 'set apart' (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 33). Specifically they are not set apart on the basis of their deafness. With deafness overcome or 'accepted and dominated' (Wright, [1969] 1993: ix-x) it matters less in the shaping of social relationships or in taking up social and vocational roles.

Deafness matters less in shaping of social relationships when everyone is deaf or when deaf people predominate in a social situation. When deafness no longer counts, or with deafness the common denominator, the usual social factors that shape social actions and social relationship come to the fore. However, some of these same social factors may well work to set deaf people apart in the same way as they may do hearing people. In South Africa, historically, legislation and policy certainly aimed to 'set' the population 'apart'. The 'condition' of being 'set apart' is almost a direct translation of the term, 'apartheid'. Apartheid and segregation, the degree to which these historical processes have affected deaf social relationships and the degree to which these relationships and

[5] In a footnote (43) Sacks ([1989] 1991: 32) refers to the work in the Yucatan of the filmmaker, Hubert Smith and the ongoing study by Robert Johnson and Jane Norman of Gallaudet

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their social action transcend the imposed boundaries of segregation and apartheid (see Chapter Four) is a local interest of this study. Chapter Six focuses on those social situations where deaf people predominate.

Yet there are also those social situations, such as Basie's birthday party, where deafness apparently does not count even though hearing people predominate. Some such social situations are the topic of this chapter. On the basis of these social situations, I argue here that deaf people have crossed, at least partly, the 'deaf-hearing' social boundary which has a long history (see Chapter Four). History set deaf people apart from the hearing with consequences for certain categories of deaf people, initially for their legal status, for their social status and for their education (see Chapters One and Four).

Educational policy, especially during the past 100 years or so when oralism dominated, aimed to assimilate the Deaf into the dominant hearing society by teaching them to speak. Without speech, the thinking went, the Deaf would remain isolated, cut off from the hearing and fail to reach their potential as fully functional members of society.

But the Deaf, it seemed to me, as was evident at Basie's birthday party (see also Groce, 1985; Woodward, 1982; and Washabaugh, 1986) have subverted oralism's assimilation methods, if not its aims. The aim of becoming fully functional members of society has been achieved. However, this functionality has occurred not through speech; rather, in view of the numbers of hearing people apparently using Sign language, the Deaf have assimilated certain hearing people into a 'Deaf space'. This Deaf space I term a 'Signing Space'.

A Signing space worked or functioned as a strategy that allowed deaf people to take up their social and vocational roles. A Signing Space works in Gilroy's (1987) basic sense, as I understand it: marginalized in Britain, certain West Indians take something 'Caribbean', transfer it to another context and thereby, by creating and re-creating culture, make their social life meaningful. The Deaf take something Deaf, their language, transfer it to a hearing environment and thereby make social life meaningful for themselves and those with whom they interact.

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Defining Signing Spaces

A Signing Space, I suggest, is a social network. As a social network (following Frankental, 1998: 165-166) it is a set of social relationships that in time extends from a deaf individual to include deaf and hearing people. Such structures may be loose; participation may or may not be voluntary as the size, the composition and function of networks fluctuate over time. The members, both deaf and hearing, participate in several overlapping networks with the hearing, in particular, also participating in additional verbal communication networks. The bonds formed within any single network may not be exclusive. Despite the fluidity and the flexibility of the boundaries, informants' networks could be identified. A Signing Space as a social network became discernible as a structure when its members interacted and communicated more frequently and more intensely with each other in fluent Sign language, or more broadly, in a 'Sign-based' mode, than they did by other means.

A 'Sign-based' mode of communication that I explain below was more apparent in the networks that I discuss here. This chapter focuses on those networks that included both deaf and hearing people but in which hearing people predominated. For purposes of the analysis of the broader Signing space, I make a distinction between those networks where hearing people predominated – 'Sign-hear' spaces - and those where deaf people predominated – 'Sign-deaf' spaces. As this chapter and the thesis unfold certain additional distinctions emerge, such as the nature of the relationships within the networks and the boundaries crossed. These additional distinctions I return to in Chapter Six. Here I begin the discussion of the Sign-hear space with an explanation of what I mean by Sign-based communication. The broader Sign-based mode was more apparent in the Sign-hear networks.

Sign-based communication

I use the term 'Sign-based' because communication was not always fluent Sign language. Deaf and hearing people both remarked on variation of skill. Remarks on ability included 'my sister, she's better [at Signing] than I am'. Or as a deaf person remarked about her friend's daughter's skills, "Sign very good, very good". Or when I chanced on Dinah Signing to her adolescent grandchild and I asked "Is he good?" She

replied, "No not good, not good [adding, teasing him] he's stupid". But his skill was good enough to appreciate the teasing 'tone' of his Grandmother's Sign.

Modes of communication varied but the elements that comprised the mode displayed a Sign language bias. It will always be difficult to determine everything that goes into the complex process that communication so often is. When Preston tried to develop a 'matrix of communication modes' for his study of the hearing children of deaf adults (and therefore also a deaf-hearing communication situation) he was 'overwhelmed with an endlessly complex and confusing layout' (1994: 127). Participants in this study displayed many of the methods of communication that Preston describes. They included fluent Sign language; lip-reading with and without voice; Sign supported spoken language; finger spelling; expression; 'home' Signs (those that have particular reference to a specific domestic environment, including 'Sign names' – see Chapter Three for Sign names), and mime (in the linguistic and not in the performing arts sense – see, Kyle and Woll, 1985: 24-25, for the difference; and Chapter Two).

Deaf people's apparent keen sense of 'noticing', as Wright has described it ([1969] 1993: 132 - 134) cannot be discounted. Wright has said of his own experience that deafness did not necessarily make him more observant, nor did he notice more (he was no more likely to notice his wife's new hat than many other men); rather he noticed differently ([1969] 1993: 132 - 134). Wright noticed 'acutely' movement where objects were concerned and in the case of humans and animals, stance, expression, walk and gesture because these made up the 'whole data necessary for interpretation and diagnosis of events'. Stance and carriage of the body revealed mood and emotion even when the expression on the face was disguised. And it can happen 'that by the paradox of his disability the deaf person is often in the position of an eavesdropper listening to what he is not intended to hear' (Wright, [1969] 1993: 134). But when the deaf person finds him or herself in the role of eavesdropper, it is a one-way communication.

The Sign-based communication in a Sign-hear space was two-way and marked by its mutual intelligibility to both deaf and hearing people. Being mutually intelligible, it was often a mix of elements that sometimes included, on the part of the hearing user, Signs supported by one or even two of Cape Town's spoken language. For example, William's neighbour explained his absence when we called, as he had asked her to do, in the

following mix. First in Sign supported English: "His brother [Sign] phoned [Sign] this morning [Sign]". Then in sign supported Afrikaans: "Vier [Sign] vrouens [Sign] kom [Sign] vanmore" [four women are coming this morning]. And finally back to Sign supported English: "Wait [Sign], he won't be long". Mixed as this message was, the deaf people accompanying me understood with no difficulty.

In comparison, mere gesture with or without spoken words and despite good intentions did not work. My neighbour, John tried to use gestures to offer his help to Mr Petersen, a deaf man who was painting my house. When John saw Mr Petersen struggling to carry some heavy equipment he gestured from his garden to offer assistance. Afterwards according to accounts given to me by both John and Mr Petersen, Mr Petersen had no idea what John had wanted.

Because Signing skill varied it was difficult to determine numbers of hearing Signers. In addition, hearing Signers generally, even those fluent in the language, rarely acknowledged their skill. When the Deaf Federation of South Africa (Deafsa) called for hearing Signers to come forward to be trained as interpreters, the response was poor and surprisingly so for me in view of the Signing skills I witnessed in the course of fieldwork. Sign was seemingly not regarded as a particular skill. It is a skill that was used 'at home', not 'studied' as a language in the formal sense, in a formal educational institution. There are no examinations, no symbols of Sign language competence; such as there are for spoken language, such as Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa. Not one hearing Signer that I asked had ever considered listing Signing skills on a curriculum vita. The next section of the chapter explores the development of a Sign-hear space as a process over time.

Sign-based communication suggested that the relationships of the Sign-hear spaces or networks were mainly those of the domestic and near neighbourhood as the next sections of the chapter show. In these networks hearing people predominated. The ratio of deaf to hearing siblings was 1:4 (see Table 5.1, Appendix Four). The ratio of deaf to hearing persons in the natal domestic situation was 1:6 (see Table 5.1, Appendix Four) The average household size at the time of the study was six persons (or 5.55) and the ratio of deaf to hearing persons in the household at the time of fieldwork was 1:3 (or 1:2.56, Table 5.2, Appendix Four). Note 1 to Table 5.2 (Appendix Four) explains that the

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household data are based on 52 households (and not 94). For these 52 households accurate data were available. Data were not always clear for the following reasons: the household situation over the period of fieldwork in wider Cape Town proved considerably fluid; in this fluid situation, in some cases there seemed to be confusion between household members and kin. These data were not used.

Sign-<u>hear</u> spaces

I argue that the making and operation of a Sign-<u>hear</u> space is a process. It is an assimilation process over time. It begins in 'hearingness'; the majority of the research population had hearing parents and hearing siblings. Of the parents listed as deaf - one mother and three fathers – it was adult and not childhood deafness (Note 1 to Table 5.1, Appendix Four). Of the total of 389 siblings, there were three cases where there was more than one child who was deaf in the family (Table 5.1).

As a process, I suggest that in time the Sign-<u>hear</u> space expands as the deaf individual assimilates hearing people into a Deaf space by 'teaching' them to Sign. The Sign-<u>hear</u> space expands until it reaches a well-established phase. The Sign-<u>hear</u> space is well established when deafness matters least, when there are sufficient hearing Signers to allow the individual to carry out a fully integrated social life within the domains of, at least, household and nearby neighbourhood. Thereafter the assimilation process proceeds to decline. Inevitably, because a Sign-<u>hear</u> space relies on an individual, it may even 'die out' but it is always shifting.

A Sign-<u>hear</u> space shifts as it expands, reaches a zenith and declines in the context of the fluidity and flux of domestic movement patterns and life events. As a shifting assimilation process with a beginning and a series of phases, including an expansion phase, a well-established phase and a decline, a Sign-<u>hear</u> space resembles the notion of a 'developmental cycle in domestic groups' (Fortes, 1958). The notion of a developmental cycle of a Sign-<u>hear</u> space is used here to frame this shifting assimilation process.

The 'developmental cycle of Sign-<u>hear</u> spaces': framing the process that is a Sign-<u>hear</u> space

> The developmental cycle is a concept whose analytical strength lies in its capacity to reconstruct observations of the complexity and variety of everyday life within a temporal frame (Murray, 1981: 247)

The developmental cycle of Sign-<u>hear</u> spaces that I suggest as a framework for its presenting and discussion leans on Fortes' (1958) notion of the developmental cycle of domestic groups. Fortes' notion (1958) points to the changing size and composition of the domestic group as it passes through various phases from the earlier phase of expansion (when children are being born to a couple), through the zenith (a later stage when children are grown up and on the verge of leaving the natal home to marry and start their own homes), to the decline (when an elderly couple are alone after the children have left the natal home).

Fortes' (1958) notion introduced process and change into the classic studies of kinship and domestic relationships. The notion proved the springboard for many anthropological works that followed, although many of these later works, with an emphasis on fluidity and differentiation, have since taken the notion of the developmental cycle of the domestic group considerably further (see, for example, Murray, 1976; Spiegel, 1979; Spiegel, 1980; Spiegel, 1987). For Fortes, the domestic group was a key unit in society. The domestic group is central to a Sign-<u>hear</u> space. However, the developmental cycle of Sign-<u>hear</u> spaces is not linear or neat. The developmental cycle of a Sign-<u>hear</u> space needs to be seen in the context of the fluidity of the household situation over time and space.

It is now well accepted that the household and its domestic arrangements are fluid - work in Southern Africa having made a valuable contribution to the changing notion of the household. Fortes' (1958) notion of the developmental cycle in domestic groups or households and the changes over time worked for early rurally based migrant labour studies in Southern Africa (see, for example, Murray, 1976; Spiegel, 1979; Murray, 1981). Murray defined the household as 'an aggregate of individuals within which are concentrated the flows of income and expenditure generated by the activities of its

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members (1976; 54). Soon, however, Spiegel was noting ambiguities in Murray's (1976) definition (see, 1979: 50), suggesting that there must be a focus on individuals, their networks and the ways in which they utilize their networks (1980: 8). He notes that 'It is precisely the fluidity of the household structure that must be explored and understood' for its effects on domestic relations, particularly on age and gender (Spiegel, 1987: 127). In taking up Spiegel's challenge subsequent peri-urban based works, such as Jones (1993) and Ross (1995) have taken the analysis to a point that questions the value of the notion of the household as a useful analytical tool (see, also Spiegel, 1982; Murray, 1987 on the developmental cycle).

Yet for certain purposes the notion of the household remains useful (Murray, 1981: 48). I use the term to describe domestic social relationships. Domestic social relationships are not restricted to kin. The social relationships between kin and non-kin that comprise a household are discernible as a structure by a shared sense of reciprocal responsibility for maintenance of the household. Members need not reside together. In fact there may be members responsible for maintenance that are not physically present, as is the case for migrant labourers for most of their working lives. Reciprocal responsibility may be expressed in terms of contributions in cash and in kind.

The household situation for this research population was not only fluid but also often multigenerational. Multigenerational households are not necessarily unusual phenomena. But in Cape Town's primarily African and 'coloured' areas, the impact of apartheid policy cannot be discounted. Apartheid policy in Cape Town affected Africans and 'coloureds' differently in many respects but the result in terms of a limited access to housing was similar. Influx control, that included a policy of no housing being made available in Cape Town between the 1950s and the 1980s, was strictly enforced where Africans were concerned. 'Coloureds' endured the Group Areas legislation. Group Areas meant creating endless 'Coloured' housing estates. But there were never enough houses. Housing and jobs remain some of Cape Town's and the country's most urgent needs.

The discussion thus far has endeavoured to present the issue this chapter discusses. To take the discussion further, three case studies introduce the next section. The case studies demonstrate the developmental cycle of a Sign-hear space through the

expansion phase, the zenith and the decline and present three similar scenarios. The first case demonstrates the process that, over time changes a predominantly hearing space to a Sign-<u>hear</u> space. The second case assumes the process that changes a hearing to a Sign-<u>hear</u> space and demonstrates how a Sign-<u>hear</u> space may eventually spread widely over time and space. The third case demonstrates that at the same time as a Sign-<u>hear</u> space extends over time and place it may also eventually transcend spoken language.

The developmental cycle of Sign-<u>hear</u> spaces: three cases

> It is precisely [in] the fluidity of the household structure that [a Sign-<u>hear</u> space] must be explored and understood … (Spiegel, 1987: 127)

From a hearing to a Sign-<u>hear</u> space

Clarissa, now 65 years of age, became deaf when she was 18 months old as a result of an accident. Her parents were hearing as were her three siblings, a brother and two sisters. When she was five the family moved to her present home in Elsie's River, where she has lived ever since. It is the home where she spent her school holidays when she attended the Wittebome School for the Deaf. It is the home she returned to when she completed her schooling. In time Clarissa married a deaf man, Simon. After they married Simon joined Clarissa in her parents' home in Elsie's River. In time Clarissa's parents died, the hearing siblings married, moved out and established households of their own. Clarissa and Simon had six hearing daughters. All the daughters Signed – and according to their parents, the children "were all very good Signers". The six daughters married, had children of their own and also moved out to establish their own households in other parts of Cape Town – all with the exception of the eldest daughter. She remained next door in a home she and her husband built inter-leading with the parents' home. This inter-leading living arrangement that allows frequent interaction with Simon and Clarissa, has facilitated the Signing skills of their grandchildren and great grandchildren. The younger pre-school toddlers often spent time with Simon and Clarissa and it was interesting to see the beginnings of their Sign language. Simon and Clarissa have set a limit on their Sign-<u>hear</u> space. They have rented two rooms to

lodgers who are not deaf and do not Sign. Assimilation of hearing people into Simon and Clarissa's Sign-<u>hear</u> space has thus stopped.

I begin the discussion of this case from the standpoint of Clarissa. She became deaf and grew up in a predominantly hearing domestic situation. She married a deaf man. Together they expanded the Sign-<u>hear</u> space. By the time all six daughters were Signing and the hearing family had moved on, what began as a hearing space had been converted into a Sign-<u>hear</u> space. At the zenith of the Sign-<u>hear</u> space, deafness did not matter much for Simon and Clarissa. They had carried out their parental duties and responsibilities. They were enjoying their grandchildren. They socialized with their daughters and their families at weekends and this gave them a break from their usual neighbourhood and took them to other parts of Cape Town. Their eldest daughter was available next door to interpret when they needed her. During the week they socialized with other deaf people in their street and in the neighbourhood (and I met them at other houses during the course of fieldwork). Recently they seem to have imposed a limit on the assimilation of hearing people into the Sign-<u>hear</u> space. There has been no effort or desire to assimilate the lodgers into the Sign-<u>hear</u> space. The decline of the Sign-<u>hear</u> space had commenced. The decline seemingly begins after a Sign-<u>hear</u> space reaches a zenith and when the resources in terms of hearing Signers that a Sign-<u>hear</u> space provides, are in place.

A Sign-<u>hear</u> space across the countryside

Katrien was born about 60 years ago in Kimberley in the Northern Cape. She became deaf when she was four years old, the only deaf person in a large hearing family. She attended the Wittebome School for the Deaf in Cape Town. While at school she moved between Cape Town and home for the long holidays. After she left school Katrien found employment in Cape Town as a live-in domestic in a hearing household, a post she held until she retired. At weekends and on her days off, she spent time socializing with deaf friends in Langa, where she met her future husband, Kas. They married when Katrien was 26 years old and they moved to Retreat, where Kas and Katrien boarded with an older deaf married couple and their hearing children. In 1962 the 'GG'[6] (as Katrien

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[6] The 'GG' or 'Government Garage' trucks came to signify, for many Capetonians, removal under Group Areas legislation.

Signed it) took Kas, Katrien and their first child to a council house in Guguletu, where over the next 15 years the couple had five children.

Katrien took some time off from work to have her children and at times she drew on family in the Northern Cape to help care for them. The children moved back and forth between their hearing relatives and their deaf parents from an early age. After 15 years of marriage Kas and Katrien divorced. Kas stayed on in the house in Guguletu and his hearing sister and her family moved in with him. Katrien continued in her live-in post and spent her days off with her deaf friend, Noxolo, and Noxolo's family in Langa. The children went to the Northern Cape to stay more permanently with Katrien's natal family and completed their schooling there, although when possible, they also came to town to stay with their father and their mother. Katrien spent her long holidays in the Northern Cape, something she continued to do. When Kas and Katrien's children completed their schooling some, but not all, returned to Cape Town. A Cape Town based daughter moved between her father in Guguletu and her mother, who eventually after her retirement, settled in Langa, near Noxolo. Although Kas and Katrien became reconciled over time, they continued to live apart as Kas' hearing kin were not prepared to give up the house.

An examination of Katrien's case study reveals that she began the initial phase of her Sign-hear space in a predominantly hearing domestic situation in Kimberley. The context in which she created her Sign-hear space process was more fluid and there were differences from Clarissa. When Katrien and Kas married they lodged with a deaf couple who already had hearing children. They moved into a Sign-hear space already in progress, or in the expanding phase of its developmental cycle. Then Kas and Katrien moved to Guguletu where over the next 15 years they created a Sign-hear space that included their five hearing children. When they divorced, Kas' hearing sister and her family moved into the Guguletu home - but it remained a Sign-hear space. His children continued to visit and, as I discuss below, with a deaf person in an authority position in the household, the assimilation process continues and the household remains 'Sign friendly'. Kas has maintained a certain authority in the Guguletu household. The dwelling has remained in his name and he has always contributed in cash first as a cash wage-earner and later as a pensioner.

After the divorce Katrien continued her live-in domestic work and stayed with a deaf couple on her days off. She spent her free time in Langa at another Sign-<u>hear</u> space in progress. This Langa couple eventually had five sons, all of whom are fluent Signers. After she retired Katrien found lodgings in a hearing household in Langa. Most recently she moved to a 'site and service' development, also in Langa. Presently her Sign-<u>hear</u> space could also be said to have passed its zenith. There is no need for further expansion. She has what she needs. Her Sign-<u>hear</u> space covers her relationships with her natal family and her children in Kimberley, in Guguletu and in Langa. Her friends are deaf and their children Sign.

The decline of a Sign-<u>hear</u> space is most apparent in the case of the first couple that Kas and Katrien stayed with in Retreat when they first married. During the course of fieldwork and after Basie's birthday party that they had attended, the old couple died, first the old man and then the wife. In a sense this particular Sign-<u>hear</u> space in its expanding phase at the time of Kas and Katrien's first year of marriage has completed its cycle. The daughter of the old couple continues her Sign. She is a professional interpreter but it is unlikely that the language will extend to her children. They will speak and the Sign-<u>hear</u> space will be a hearing space.

A Sign-<u>hear</u> space across spoken languages

Edith was born in Laingsburg in the Karoo. At age nine she became deaf as a result of an illness. She is the only deaf person in a large family. When she was 10 she was admitted to the School for the Deaf at Worcester, Nuwe Hoop. Her family were all Afrikaans speaking. Afrikaans was also the spoken and written language of the school she attended. On leaving school at age 17 years, she first worked at home in Laingsburg as a cleaner in the local hotel. Then she left for Cape Town, where she found lodgings in Heideveld with a deaf couple and their hearing children. The hearing children could speak both Afrikaans and English, as well as Sign. The spoken language of the deaf couple was English.

While in Cape Town Edith had two children with a deaf man whom she knew from school but they did not marry. When she returned to work one of the children went to stay with her mother in the Karoo and the other to the father's family in then Orange

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Free State, and both children eventually completed their schooling in Afrikaans in the Karoo. Meanwhile Edith worked in English and Afrikaans speaking environments, sometimes as a cleaner and sometimes as an ironer in a factory. Then she met a deaf man. They did not marry but had a long common-law relationship until he died. They lived together in one of Cape Town's migrant labour hostels, where she was one of four deaf people who resided in adjacent bedholds[7]. In Cape Town's migrant hostels the spoken language is primarily isiXhosa. Some time after Edith's common-law partner died, she met another deaf man, through other deaf people. He had attended school in Cape Town where the spoken language was English. In time they married. After they married they moved to Guguletu, where the spoken language of the household and the neighbourhood is isiXhosa. Along the way Edith has never lost touch with her natal family in the Karoo. She visits her widowed mother three or four times a year. She visits her sisters in the Boland. She has not lost touch with her sons. She regularly visits her married son now living and working in Cape Town. Her unmarried son, since moving to Cape Town, often stays with her and her husband in Guguletu.

An examination of Edith's case study is interesting not for the numbers in her Sign-hear space or for the geographical spread, although this is similar to Katrien, but for the spoken languages her Sign-hear space crosses. Edith's mother tongue was Afrikaans. The spoken language at school was Afrikaans. When she moved to Cape Town, the spoken languages of the Heideveld household was English and Afrikaans. Her working environments in Cape Town were also both English and Afrikaans. But the spoken language of her long common-law relationship with a deaf man was isiXhosa. It is also isiXhosa for the household and neighbourhood context of her current marital situation.

The spoken language barriers proved no problem for Edith. However, by assimilating her children, her daughter-in-law and her grandchildren into her Sign-hear space she has assured her position as well as that of her deaf partners in the children's lives. Her common law partner was not set apart on the basis of his deafness nor was her deaf husband. Sign allowed both men to communicate with Edith's relatives across the

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[7] The bedhold describes the domestic arrangement in the council-built migrant hostels in Cape Town (see Ramphele, 1993: 20-22). In the hostels the 'common denominator of space allocation is a bed' (Ramphele, 1993: 20). Bed occupancy in a council-built migrant hostel in Cape Town is on average 2.8 persons per bed, with a range of 1-10 (Ramphele, 1993: 23) which gives an idea of the over crowding in these living conditions.

spoken language barriers of Afrikaans and isiXhosa. And now her deaf husband is a well-loved 'oupa' [grandfather] to her primarily Afrikaans speaking but Signing grandchildren.

These introductory case studies have described three Sign-<u>hear</u> space scenarios in broad strokes. The next section offers some detail. It covers some of the beginnings of a Sign-<u>hear</u> space in 'hearingness', where the dominant mode is speech. It details some of the factors that influence the assimilation of hearing siblings who were part of the Sign-<u>hear</u> space but not clearly portrayed as such in the case studies. It details the assimilation of hearing children, who, the case studies suggest, were important in each case. The following section also suggests why parents or the parental figure, an important relationship in the life of a child, rarely used Sign language.

In the beginning was the word …

> Everyone knows that it is much more difficult to learn a second language in adulthood than as a first language in childhood. Most adults never master a foreign language, especially the phonology – hence the ubiquitous foreign accent. Their development often fossilizes into permanent error patterns that no teaching or correction can undo … Holding every other factor constant, a key (explanatory) factor stands out: sheer age. (Pinker, 1994: 291)

The onset of deafness for the majority of the Deaf of the research population occurred in predominantly hearing domestic situations. In these predominantly hearing situations, words rather than Signs are the major mode of communication. Consequently deafness will pose communication problems for both the deaf individual as well as the hearing in the domestic situation, especially initially. For the Deaf, language acquisition is considered a serious problem for those who were born deaf or became deaf prelingually (see, Chapter One). If prelingual deafness is taken as those who became deaf at less than two years of age then Clarissa and a considerable percentage of the sample population were at risk with regard to the linguistic and related social and cultural challenges (22.3 percent – see, Table 1.8, Appendix One). For those at risk with regard to language acquisition and the related challenges, less than two years of age is probably a conservative estimate. For children who become deaf after language

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acquisition, say, for instance, between two and five years, such as Katrien and 42.6 percent of the sample population (see, Table 1.8, Appendix One), it can be reasonably assumed that without regular communication the development of further vocabulary will be stunted. With a limited vocabulary it will not be easy for children to express ideas, needs and wants. Children who became deaf after their sixth birthday, like Edith and 28.7 percent of the sample population may have had sufficient vocabulary to use speech to express themselves in the initial stages of their deafness, but this would be largely a one-way communication.

Being deaf in a predominantly hearing domestic situation, when spoken language is still the main means of communication, the child faces the threat of being cut off and isolated from relatives. Deaf people remembered feeling cut off at meal times when they did not know what was being said around the table. They remembered their parents' anger when they did not come when called. This, of course was often a clue to the child's deafness for a parent or caregiver if it had not been picked up earlier as congenital, as prelingual, or as a complication of illness or injury. They remembered their siblings running away from them, teasing them, standing behind them so that they could not see what was being said.

Braam's story, that I happened to witness, illustrates something of what I term a 'linguistic loneliness'. When I visited Paarl (see, Chapter Three) Braam was already at Deaf school and was spending his short school holidays with his older sister. His parents lived in the countryside and because transport was expensive, he only returned home twice a year for the long holiday. When he was with his sister Braam was alone most of the day because she worked. Lonely, he sought out the deaf people in Paarl. But most of those at home during the day were older and did not have much in common with an adolescent. Braam began to roam a bit, seeking out more youthful company, until he was apparently 'attacked' from behind by some local 'youths'. Some of the older deaf people in Paarl became concerned. In an effort to keep Braam occupied during the day one of the old pensioners found him chores to do, cleaning the steps and weeding the garden. Braam complied. But a holiday of chores was not much fun. The forlorn image of a despondent young man sitting at the base of the steps, head still bandaged, taking a break from his chores is one of my most abiding images.

Certain communication without words was possible between the deaf child and hearing parent. It is quite possible to demonstrate love and affection without words. Parents and caregivers 'can tell' much about their children through non-verbal clues. Through a variety of non-verbal clues they can usually tell when things are going well or when things are amiss. Children, both deaf and hearing, soon learn how to interpret the expressions and gestures of their parents, both approval and disapproval. Also, it is possible to see to basic needs such as feeding, washing and so forth without a great deal of language.

However, parents expressed problems in certain particular areas of communication, especially with a growing child. There were concerns for physical safety; it is difficult to check a child over a distance, with their back to you, if they are deaf. There was also concern for their 'moral' safety. Xolela's mother, for example, was concerned about the company her adolescent son was keeping. And even though her son was by this time an efficient lipreader, deaf people can be very adept at not 'seeing' what they do not want to 'hear'. By simply closing the eyes or turning away, the bundle of clues is lost, that same bundle of clues that can make the Deaf good, if inadvertent, eavesdroppers (Wright, [1969] 1993: 134).

Parents found certain explanations difficult. Abigail could not explain to her son, Bongani, who had never known hearing or speech what deafness meant. He wanted to know why his younger sister began to speak or, apparently, to do certain things he could not do even though he was older. Abigail wanted to know what happened at school, especially when he came home with a new scar on his chest. She also wanted her son to know his 'family values' in the same way as she gave these to all her children.

Parents learning Sign language

A number of factors worked against hearing parents learning to Sign. It is generally more difficult to learn a second language in adulthood than a first language in childhood (Pinker, 1994: 291). Hearing adults learning Sign language face the same difficulties, the younger the learner, the greater the fluency (Kyle and Woll, 1985:173 – 194). Even so, as Kyle and Woll suggest, 'motivation to achieve fluency' may override the problems of age for successful second language learning (1985: 193). However, the hearing parents

of deaf children were not 'motivated' to learn Sign when the oral tradition dominated educational policy. In fact they were actively discouraged. Now attitudes towards parents learning Sign language are changing and parents are encouraged to learn. Wittebome School in Cape Town, as well as the local Red Cross War Memorial Hospital for Children, offers classes for parents. Parents are also particularly welcome at Sign language courses offered by committed Deaf teachers.

But sometimes motivation, available classes and even linguistic skill may not be enough. Abigail was motivated, classes were available and she has considerable linguistic skills. Sesotho is her mother tongue. She speaks, reads and writes Afrikaans, which is the predominant spoken language in then (pre-1994) Orange Free State where Abigail grew up and went to school. IsiXhosa is her husband's mother tongue and one of the family's home languages. English is Abigail's working language. Despite her linguistic skills, her motivation and available lessons, a range of social conditions worked against her. I describe Abigail's problems as an example of why parents rarely used Sign language, why they tended to remain towards the social edge of a Sign-hear space despite being motivated, and why deaf children often tended to start their Sign-hear space among their siblings.

Learning Sign language with Abigail

When Abigail discovered that I was learning Sign language she too expressed interest in learning in order to communicate directly with her son, Bongani. She envied the deaf people she had noted Signing on the train and was keen to learn. Motivated, Abigail and I joined a Sign language evening class for beginners. As the classes progressed, it soon became clear that in addition to Abigail's motivation certain extra conditions needed to be in place to enable her to learn Sign.

In the movie 'Mr Holland's Opus', the conditions presented are telling: to learn Sign language Mrs Holland attended a three-month intensive course. As a middle class housewife, she had the time, the money and her own transport. Her deaf son was her only child and linguistically Mrs. Holland was dealing with only two languages, American Sign Language and English. Abigail, on the other hand, was a daily domestic worker. Sign classes in Cape Town at R20 per lesson (R80 to R100 per month) or less may not

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be costly but any extra cost was a drain on Abigail's limited income especially as her deaf child was only one of five children needing parental care and resources. Abigail did not have her own transport and in Cape Town public transport after 7.00 pm was not easily or safely available. Learning through evening classes, for one or two hours a week rather than through an intensive course, was slow. From one week to the next one tended to forget and continuity was lost. It was also difficult to find the energy to go out again after a hard day's work. Cape Town's cold wet winters made going out even less attractive. Bouts of 'flu entered the picture. Classes were missed.

Despite her social disadvantages, Abigail was the most linguistically skilled in the class. During the lessons I used to observe in awe while she manipulated her linguistic repertoire. Quite unaware of her prowess, Abigail demonstrated an extraordinary multi-lingual, multi-modal ingenuity as she switched modes from visual to spoken language and back again across a range of languages. As far as possible the teacher conducted class in Sign. When baffled for clues to the Signs we turned to our classmates for help. Abigail would ask me in English. When I was not much help she would turn to Lungi and ask in isiXhosa. Sometimes when we were completely stumped the teacher would explain on the blackboard in English. Abigail, like all of us, would read the English explanation but I noticed that after visualizing the Sign and/or seeking help in spoken English and isiXhosa, she reverted to her mother tongue, Sesotho, to write up her notes. Learning Sign took its toll on Abigail. She began to wonder why she was tired. She began to feel despondent. Eventually she gave up formal learning, preferring to rely on Bongani's sister. Bongani's sister was beginning to act as the 'home' interpreter for her brother.

Signing children: hearing siblings

'Like any siblings deaf and hearing brothers and sisters fought, played together and learned from each other' (Preston, 1994: 105).

Certainly there were hearing siblings who Signed. Even though I have no exact numbers, and the research population rarely claimed that their siblings Signed, they would often refer to a sibling Signing. Noxolo's (Katrien's friend) sister used Sign. Edith's sister used Sign. May claimed that her younger sister "talked to my mother for me".

During the course of fieldwork I also met and observed many siblings who Signed. Hearing siblings were part of my difficulty in the initial phase of fieldwork 'beyond the Bastion' when I did not know who was deaf and who was hearing.

Thus the only evidence I have for Signing siblings is anecdotal. Even so it is interesting for some of the themes it suggests. Young deaf children learnt Sign language at school. They learnt it informally from other pupils – from others of their same generation and not from the older generation, their teachers. By the time they went home on holiday the young-old language-learning pattern was in place. In line with this pattern they offered Sign language to their same generation, their siblings and not to the older generation, their parents. In comparison with the parents, age worked in favour of the siblings. The time siblings spent together doing the things that they do together also worked in their favour. 'Like any siblings deaf and hearing brothers and sisters fought, played together and learned from each other' (Preston, 1994: 105).

It is difficult on the basis of anecdotal evidence to point to a pattern for Signing siblings on the basis for instance of age, gender, birth order. At times it seemed that more sisters Signed, but there were also brothers. At times it seemed that the siblings who Signed were closest in birth order to the deaf child. When it was a younger sister, it may appear that the older deaf child had a certain authority in the relationship but there were also older siblings who used Sign language. In addition, one cannot discount particular linguistic skill, the personality of the sibling and the emotional bond between certain siblings (Preston, 1994: 98).

Having learnt Sign, a sibling often took on the task of 'interpret[ing] for the deaf sibling' (Preston, 1994: 105). The Signing sibling interpreted within the domestic situation – "my sister talked to my mother for me" and with friends while playing. The interpreting tasks continued into adulthood. During the course of my part-time 'bread and butter' research work (see, Chapter Three) I met deaf women at antenatal and Family Planning clinics accompanied by a relative, frequently a sister, who acted as interpreter.

In Phumzile's case when his eyesight began to fail he had to rely more and more on his sister. His sister had always been the home interpreter. Then she married and moved to her own home, although she was nearby in Guguletu. After his sister left home,

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Phumzile's mother relied on his lip-reading skills and written communications. Then his eyesight began to fail as a consequence of cataracts in both eyes. After a while Phumzile could no longer lip-read his mother. He could no longer read written communications. He could no longer see Sign language. He could communicate efficiently only with his sister and other deaf people. Only deaf Signers and fluent hearing Signers like his sister were seemingly skilled enough to manage a 'deaf-blind' method - a method that involves Signing on the hand and body of the poorly sighted deaf person; and a system at which deaf and fluent hearing Signers are proficient.

Thus, in many cases, by the time the deaf child left school it could be said that deafness was beginning to count less where certain domestic communication was concerned. By the time the deaf school leaver returned home in most cases a sibling was relatively proficient in Sign language, and for other domestic relationships there were levels of communication, such as lip-reading or written communication, as well as some 'home' Signs. At the same time, the deaf child had made 'friends' at school (the sometimes-longstanding friendships among deaf people I discuss in greater detail in Chapter Six).

Friends supplied an important avenue for socializing and deaf people also tended to marry other deaf people. Of those of the sample population who were married (43 or 45.7 percent – see Table 5.3, Appendix Four) 67.4 percent were married to deaf partners. Among the children of the deaf adults of the sample population, only one had a deaf child and all the grandchildren were hearing.

Signing hearing children of deaf adults

The hearing children of Clarissa, Katrien and Edith all were important in their parents' Sign-<u>hear</u> spaces. Here I discuss briefly some of the patterns for Signing among the hearing children of deaf adults. A number of factors influenced their skill, not least of all the fluidity of the household situation.

In his study of hearing children of deaf adults Preston found a range of skills - from those who were fluent Signers to those with no Sign (1994: 95-101). Children had no Sign when they were not exposed to it, when, for instance, parents chose speech above Sign as a means of communication. This occurred in a few cases where the spouse was

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hearing. When a deaf person's 'speech was good' (as the Deaf say) the spouse tended not to learn Sign language and nor did the children. However, in most cases of deaf-hearing marriages the hearing spouse did learn Sign and consequently so did their children.

Children were fluent if they learnt Sign as a mother tongue, early in the same way that children learn spoken language (Aarons, 1995: 9). Some, by learning it as a mother tongue may even become more efficient Signers than their parents, who may have acquired Sign only later in life (Pinker, 1994: 39). Even though the circumstances for mother tongue learning were in place for many of the subjects in Preston's study he also found variation (1994: 95-101). Preston found that birth order was a factor that influenced fluency where there was more than one child (1994: 97). In such a case, the eldest child usually took on the role of 'designated family interpreter' (Preston, 1994: 96). This child, like Clarissa and Simon's eldest daughter, Katrien's daughter and Phumzile's sister, took the major share of responsibility for interpreting for the parent in the home as well as outside of it. In some cases when the eldest child moved out of the home, another child took over the responsibility, but in other cases the same child continued the role of interpreter. Clarissa's daughter continued her role perhaps not so much because she was the eldest but rather because she lived next door to her parents. Preston also found that other factors, such as personality, temperament and linguistic skill overrode birth order (1994: 98).

Overall Preston found gender tended to be important (1994: 100). More girls than boys were fluent Signers. If the eldest child was a boy it was often the eldest girl who became the designated family interpreter. In this study I found that if all siblings were same sex all Signed: Clarissa and Simon had five girls and they all Signed. Noxolo had five boys and they all Signed. Edith had two boys and they both Signed, although the elder was more fluent than the younger son.

Signing skills also varied with the age of the child. Unlike Preston's (1994) subjects, many of the hearing children of the sample and research populations were not yet adults. As with any language, command of Sign varied with the age of the children (the ages of the children for the sample population ranged considerably from < one year to 50 years). With very young children, the Signs were basic and about needs, such as

'hungry' or 'milk' or 'sweetie' or 'biscuit' – and they become very adept at expression. As command improved, children took on tasks for the deaf parent. By six years of age and sometimes even younger, they answered the door for their parents, answered the telephone or made telephone calls and even interpreted. A seven year old interpreted the entire proceedings of a court case for his mother. He was apparently so good the magistrate commended him in front of the entire court at the end of the case. Children could vary the mode of Sign-based communication depending on the context. Another seven-year old used a mix of Sign and spoken language when the company was informal and a mix of deaf and hearing. He used fluent Sign in other more formal or business-like situations, when he interpreted for his parents

In addition to age, fluency varied with the time spent with the deaf parents and thus exposure to the language. Marital status of the parents as well as the fluidity of the domestic situation influenced time spent with the parent. The three cases of the developmental cycle of the Sign-hear space in the context of fluid household situations, presented above, suggested three different scenarios for time spent with deaf parents or parent.

Simon and Clarissa's children grew up in their parent's home. Their exposure to Sign language was continuous and regular and the children were fluent Signers. In Katrien and Kas' case the children spent the first critical years for easy language acquisition with their deaf parents, although thereafter they were dispersed. Katrien and Kas' children also learnt Sign language relatively well. However, their continuing fluency as adults depended on the regularity with which they interacted with their parents. The daughter who lived in Cape Town continued to be most fluent. Even so, the children in Kimberley whose skills in time became 'rusty' with disuse were usually available to communicate with a parent who needed it. In Edith's case, and for other single mothers like her, the children may spend even less, and irregular time, with the deaf parent, perhaps being away from the deaf parent or parents for long periods during the critical language acquisition years. Yet Edith's children also developed a Sign language capacity. As adults, both sons conversed with their mother using Sign-based communication. The younger son used a mix of spoken language and Sign; the older son was the more fluent Signer. The older son was also more skilled with language generally. When he arrived in Cape Town from the countryside in 1997 to seek employment that was better paid than

his work on the farms, he could not speak English. Within a few years he was speaking English well, although he still preferred to write in Afrikaans.

Many factors influenced the beginnings of the Sign-hear space and the assimilation of siblings and children. Household authority can also influence the creation of a Sign-hear space and as it develops through the three phases, household authority varies between hearing and Deaf. The relationships of deaf household and hearing members to the household authority also vary. I examine some of the effects of changing household authority and member relationships to the authority for its impact or not on the creation of a Sign-hear space.

Household authority and Sign-hear spaces

The relationships between men and women, and later among women, provided a crucial starting place for explorations into activities and power relationships within households. Power relationships between men and women, between old and young women, between adults and children and among children, all indicated that households were not bounded nor homogeneous units ... [and] that power relationships intercepted and cross-cut households (Ross, 1995: 29-30).

Authority: the power or right to give orders and make others obey or take specific action (The Oxford Paperback Dictionary)

A dictionary definition has limitations, I acknowledge, but here it suggests what I mean by household authority. Household authority is vested in the individual member or members who have the power or right to give orders and make others obey or take specific action. Household authority is where power lies in domestic relationships. Much valuable work has been conducted in this domestic interest area and I do not intend to review it here (see, Ross, 1995 17 – 33 for an excellent review of work on 'household' and domestic social relationships). Here, I merely point out that the factors that confer power and/or rights in the household situation are complex. They may be a complex mix of age, gender, marital status, employment status and contributions in cash and in kind. Among household members, status in the household can also vary on the basis of a similar range of factors as well as, and importantly, relationship to household authority.

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To these I add the factors of 'hearingness' and deafness for the impact or not on a Sign-hear space.

Household authority varied between the Deaf and the hearing during the phases of the Sign-hear space, excluding the beginnings in childhood. During the expansion phase authority was both Deaf and hearing. When the authority was hearing, the relationship of the deaf person to the authority was a factor that could impede or facilitate the Sign-hear space.

Being closely related to the household authority, such as a child, did seem to facilitate a Sign-hear space. Clarissa, for instance, was the daughter of the hearing household authority. Initially the authority in the household was vested in her parents, particularly her father. The house was in her father's name. He was a key income earner. He made most of the important decisions, such as, when the family moved and to where. After she left school Clarissa did not work but helped at home. When she married, Simon brought in an extra income. As income earner and husband of the daughter of the household authority, his position in the household was secure. There seemed little to impede the creation of their Sign-hear space.

When the relationship was less close, such as a sibling of the household authority, there could be problems, although there was usually an additional factor, such as unemployment. Vi was the sister of the household authority. Vi's married sister was the power in the household, older than Vi and married to the 'owner', the man in whose name the council house was registered. More than this, she was apparently a strong personality, held the purse strings and made most of the household decisions. Vi, single with two children (one still living with her), had lived some time in her sister's household. Her situation became difficult when she was retrenched from her job as a machinist in a factory and had no income to contribute. At the interview with Vi it was possible to feel some of the tension. Vi referred me to her sister to conduct the interview in spoken language rather than with her in Sign and the sister did not give me much time either. I had the feeling – as did Sarah and Dinah who accompanied me (see Chapter Three) - that the Deaf were not welcome. Such a situation would probably not facilitate the development of a Sign-hear space.

But resident siblings' relationships to the household authority varied. Being employed and making contributions to household maintenance facilitated a Sign-friendly domestic situation. Thandeka rented a 'Wendy House[8]' on her brother's property in Guguletu. She was single with one school-going daughter and she was employed. Her hearing brother used Sign language fluently. Also in Guguletu, Sindiswa, also employed, boarded with her hearing sister and her children. The household practiced a Sign-based communication.

But whether the household was Sign-friendly or not depended not only the degree of the relationship or whether the deaf person was employed or unemployed. A Sign-hear space could depend on such factors as marital status, and/or gender and/or the number of children born to the deaf adult. For single deaf women, because single women usually take most of the nurturing responsibilities for a child, the close nurturing relationship could facilitate the child learning Sign. Single deaf men with a child could rarely claim the same closeness that nurturing responsibilities offered, although they may have (or may not have) paid child maintenance. As a result, for single deaf men the Sign-hear space tended to be limited in numbers with consequences for their domestic relationships. However, although certain domestic relationships may have limited Sign language users, the Deaf almost always had good deaf friends to rely on fairly close by in the neighbourhood. For example, a single childless deaf man, Andile was staying with his deceased mother's sister and her two granddaughters. He contributed cash to the household income but complained to Sindiswa and Sarah that he was not getting enough food or hot water – and this was a particularly well-appointed house in Guguletu. His recently diagnosed diabetes may have explained why the food was limited but it did not explain the hot water. There was also very little Sign in this household, which made him lonely at times. But he was not trapped in this loneliness. He was popular among his deaf friends in the neighbourhood and they saw to his needs.

In the decline phase of the Sign-hear space, household authority sometimes passed from the Deaf to the hearing through the purchase of a house. Since 1994 it has become possible for Africans and 'coloureds' to purchase and hold the title deeds of former

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[8] A 'Wendy House' or sometimes referred to by the brand name, 'Zozo', is a temporary or movable wooden structure approximately 2x3 metres (but can be larger) that is often positioned on the property in Cape Town's African and 'coloured' townships to provide extra accommodation for family members or for rent.

council houses. Prior to 1994 it was only ever possible to rent, never to own, such houses. Some old council houses are in desirable locations. Parts of Guguletu, Langa, Retreat and Steenberg are considered very desirable locations relative to some of the new housing estates. The newer areas of Phillipi and Delft, for instance, are far from town making transport expensive. In the desirable locations an old council house has become something of a resource. As such, some pensioned parents sold the house to their offspring. The sale altered the household authority.

Pensioners Jane and Arthur 'sold' their former council house in Steenberg to their daughter and her husband. The daughter and her husband have carried out extensive and attractive renovations, including a second storey (that has given them a mountain view) and a flatlet for the parents. It was a domestic arrangement that worked well. The daughter was available as a Signer and the couple were always home to care for the house and the young grandchild (and for a five-year old aspirant drummer, deaf grandparents were the ideal child minders).

In the same way household authority could also pass from the hearing to Deaf. A young deaf man purchased his hearing mother's council house. The mother stayed on in the house and he, his deaf wife and their three school-going children joined her. The deaf couple also carried out extensive and attractive renovations including a 'separate entrance'[9]. They rented the 'separate entrance' section to a recently married young deaf couple with a two year-old hearing daughter.

Moving in with deaf people with a Sign-hear space in progress seemed to be a common choice. Kas and Katrien moved into a Sign-hear space in progress after they first married. Edith did the same when she first came to Cape Town and stayed in Heideveld to have her first child. After Katrien divorced, she spent her days off with Noxolo, her deaf husband, and their Signing children. Moving into a household, where the authority was Deaf and where Signing was an important means of communication, probably also facilitated the creation and/or extension of a Sign-hear space.

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[9] Accommodation available for renting in Cape Town's African and 'coloured' areas is often referred to and advertised in the newspapers as a 'separate entrance' implying more privacy and independence from the main household than a room inside the homestead.

At the zenith of the Sign-hear space the Deaf also tended to be in authority in the household. A position of authority facilitated the assimilation of new household members into the Sign-hear space. The wife of Noxolo's son, for example, learnt Sign language. Noxolo's authority in the household that led to her daughter-in-law learning Sign was interesting. Her friends consider her 'blessed'. She is not blessed financially. As a widowed pensioner who continued to 'char' twice a week she did not even make major cash contributions to the household. She is not a particularly assertive person, although it must have taken some endeavour and sacrifice, especially after her husband died, to ensure that her five sons matriculated. Some of her sons also went on to tertiary education and all hold good jobs. Noxolo's authority derived from the success of her sons and from her connections. She was well connected in the Eastern Cape, where her migrant labourer grandfather farmed part-time and where her brother continues to farm the same family fields. Noxolo was also a long-time resident of Langa, the oldest existing African township in Cape Town. Established in the 1920s it is home to some of Cape Town's most established – and elite - African families. In Langa one finds beautiful old turn-of-the-century photographs of families solemn faced and elegantly attired in Victorian outfits.

Household authority achieved at the zenith of the Sign-hear space developmental cycle may begin to weaken during the decline. It begins to decline when there are usually sufficient Signers in place to provide this resource when necessary, as Simon and Clarissa's case suggests. A Sign-hear space was also available even when a long-standing household situation split up. When Basie's household split up after his birthday party, with some of his daughters moving to new houses that became available in Phillippi, his grandchildren, also Signers, stayed on. They stayed on to attend school in Langa, and for the working granddaughter, Langa offered more convenient access to town. In staying on they were available to interpret for the grandfather when necessary, mostly beyond the Sign-hear space.

Beyond the domestic Sign-hear space

Beyond the domestic Sign-hear space there were neighbours who used Sign-based communication. Numbers were again difficult to determine. Early fieldwork experience alerted me to Signing neighbours. In the same way that it was difficult to know who was

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deaf and who was hearing in a household situation, it was also difficult to know who was Deaf and who was hearing among certain neighbours. The pattern for neighbourhood Signers, although largely anecdotal, suggested some of the following factors as facilitating the formation and maintenance of a Sign-hear space.

Signing neighbours were found in the dense living conditions of the Cape Flats' townships. Having moved there as a consequence of the Group Areas legislation during the 1950s and 1960s, many were neighbours of long-standing. The reciprocity between neighbours that is often reported for low-income high density residential living more generally, was also apparent.

Frieda and her Signing neighbour, Ivy, whom I mistook for Frieda at the first visit, have lived next door to each other since they were removed to Bishop Lavis by Group Areas legislation more than fifteen years ago. The women and their families live in adjacent flats in one of the numerous soulless blocks that blight Cape Town's 'coloured' townships. Typically, two identical blocks of flats back each other across a largish common concrete courtyard. The common courtyard, its only decoration the end-to-end, crowded but neatly pegged wash lines, is where children play, women meet for gossip, unemployed young men loiter, and, in summer, where the wheelchair bound come out to enjoy the sun. The flats are approached from the courtyard via narrow back stairs that lead up three flights from the ground floor. Each of the three equally restricted landings allows access to two flats with front doors almost side by side. In this situation if the neighbours get on well the two flats become almost one.

Ivy's children used Frieda's flat like their own home. Ivy took phone calls for Frieda – and she was reliable (not everybody who takes a message for a deaf person was reliable, as my own experience taught me). She heard knocks on the door for Frieda. In return, Frieda regularly supplied Ivy with 'good' food. Frieda was an excellent cook and known for it. When folk in the area wanted an especially good meal, they brought Frieda the joint or the fish and all that went with it to make a feast. They shared the meal with Frieda and her family, but according to the agreement, the 'leftovers' were Frieda's. And Frieda always saw to it that Ivy received her share.

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When neighbours needed each other the audiological condition counted less. There was also the obvious element of two people liking each other. If there is sufficient liking, the hearing person in a neighbourhood will make the effort to Sign, at least to communicate. Noxolo and her corner 'fruit and vegetable vendor' Signed. He stopped us to give us a bag of fruit for the journey when Sarah, Noxolo, Katrien and I set out for one of our visits to Khayelitsha. He knew we were going because Noxolo has 'told' him so, although I have never heard Noxolo speak a word. Dinah, from Heideveld also bought from the same vendor because he 'knows' her.

Beyond the domestic and neighbourhood domains there are many situations where language and for the Deaf, Sign was not necessary. This became clear during the course of fieldwork when I shopped with the Deaf (supermarkets where prices are displayed are of course easier than Flea Markets or pavement vendors who may not always display the price), used public transport, took taxis, banked, went to the post office, enjoyed meals in restaurants. Many also manage very adequately in the work place. The proportion in the sample population employed (see Chapter One) suggests that once in employment deaf people hold down their jobs. However, people did report problems finding work and they reported deafness as limiting their opportunities for promotion. One man complained that after all his years as a reliable and skilled (in shoe making and repairs) factory worker he was never once considered for a supervisor's post. On the other hand another man did rise to the position of supervisor but his speech was relatively good.

There were, however, many situations beyond the Sign-hear space where there were problems, where deafness counted. These situations required two-way communication. They included explaining to a traffic officer, learning to drive with a hearing instructor, consulting the banks, negotiating unemployment or maternity benefits (dealing with government bureaucracies generally), dealing with the police and law courts (see also, Morgan, 2001) as well as health care services. To deal with these situations many deaf people relied on the pool of Signers that the Sign-hear space provides. But Signers from the Sign-hear space are not ideal: competence varied; they were not professionals; they were not trained in specialist terminology, such as the Law or health care may require. Because they are not professionals they may not guarantee privacy or confidentiality

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and there were certain dealings where it was inappropriate to include members of Sign-hear space (kin, household and neighbours) in an interview.

When kin, household members or neighbours are not appropriate, social workers from Deafsa or 'development workers' (or para-social workers) from the non-government organization, Deaf Community of Cape Town (DCCT) assisted with bureaucratic matters, such as negotiating pensions and disability grants. But not all deaf people choose to conduct their affairs through the organizations available for the Deaf or through their social workers. Deafsa and DCCT will also arrange for a professional interpreter if asked to do so. Unfortunately professional interpreters are expensive (up to R400 per hour), in short supply and not easy to access. In Cape Town and in South Africa more widely, interpreters - for Sign as well as more generally for the eleven official languages - are not yet part of established and routine practice, except in the legal profession, and even then there are problems (see, Morgan, 2001). Without an interpreter services in health care diagnosis can be delayed and the consequence life threatening.

Makhaya's illness episode

Makhaya's illness episode began with persistent headaches and vomiting. An uncomplaining man, he put up with the symptoms until they began to interfere with his home life, his work and his family. When the family discussed it, his son diagnosed the problem as the 'fruit' that Makhaya enjoyed. His son's wife suggested it was his 'liver'. Makaya's wife, a conscientious woman, altered his diet accordingly. She reduced the fat in his diet, and Makhaya cut down on fruit. But the symptoms persisted. Makhaya consulted a number of health professionals, including four different general practitioners (GPs) as well as the nursing sister at the clinic where he worked. In the consultations with the GPs he relied on his wife whose speech was considered 'fairly good' by all who knew her.

It is important to note that those to whom it was familiar considered her speech 'good'. Sometimes understanding a deaf person's speech requires a practiced ear and this may account for the communication problems regarding Makhaya's symptoms. Despite consulting many practitioners, the treatment was always the same – 'white medicine' (or

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an antacid) and Makhaya's health continued to deteriorate. The repeated prescription of antacids suggests that on the basis of his symptoms, but no history, Makhaya was being diagnosed as having an ulcer. Then Dinah, a friend, recommended her GP, whom she claimed 'understood the Deaf'. When Dinah's daughter telephoned to make the appointment, she explained the symptoms and gave the GP some of Makhaya's history. On the basis of the history Dinah's GP took the investigation further and arranged for x-rays at the academic hospital. The x-ray results ruled out an ulcer. On learning the results, Makhaya and his wife assumed he was 'cured' and they did not return to Dinah's GP for follow-up.

But the symptoms persisted. Eventually, over six months after the symptoms first began, when Makhaya was severely debilitated by the continuous vomiting, when he was slurring his Signs, when his eyesight was deteriorating, when his gait was unsteady, and when he could hardly get out of bed, the family took him to a neighbourhood hospital. The hospital admitted him as an in-patient and carried out further tests. On the basis of the test results Makhaya was eventually referred to the academic hospital where he was seen by neuro-surgeons. On the basis of an x-ray that revealed excessive fluid in the ventricles, neuro-surgeons performed an emergency procedure to relieve intra-cranial pressure. Further x-rays revealed a post occipital brain tumour, the seriousness of the tumour being the region rather than the histology. A fast growing brain tumour in the post-occipital region of the brain can apparently be life threatening. For this reason the neuro-surgeons advised against Makhaya returning home until the surgery to remove the tumour had been performed.

Makhaya's illness episode could be analyzed in many ways. He is not the first or the last person whose symptoms were misdiagnosed and this report does not blame the health care services. The point I am making, though, is that deafness did count during Makhaya's illness episode. Communication and a lack of interpreters was a major problem. Without adequate communication, the primary health professionals, without the full range of diagnostic tools, tended to rely on assumptions and visual cues. Makhaya, a 50-year old African labourer, who did not like to wear his teeth (because they were not comfortable), whose gait was unsteady, who was complaining of vomiting (which the family tended to emphasize and take more seriously than his headache until he reached the academic hospital) and who, it was thought, probably had lifestyle problems

(although he neither smoked cigarettes or drank alcohol) seemed to 'fit' an 'ulcer' diagnosis. Only when Dinah's GP was given a history did he take the case further. However, because Makhaya and his wife assumed he was cured there was no further follow up. Later, when he was admitted to hospital, I accompanied Makaya's wife on a visit. With my limited interpreting skills but some medical knowledge it was possible to provide the medical practitioners with Makhaya's history and his symptoms. The additional symptoms - the headaches, the slurring of his Signs, his unsteady gait – were taken seriously by the neuro-surgeons. The neuro-surgeons also had the advantage of additional diagnostic tools that do not rely solely on spoken communication.

In contrast to Makaya's experience, deafness did not count at Basie's birthday party. It did not count in many hearing contexts. And even during Makhaya's illness it counted more or less depending on the non-verbal tests that were available to the health professionals. The Deaf-hearing boundary shifts. It was also interesting to note how the attitude of the hospital staff changed, from guarded at the start of Makhaya's stay to more open as he began, in his characteristically good-natured way, to assimilate the staff and they too began to learn the odd Sign.

It is in certain contexts in the public domain, as Makhaya's case suggests for health care and Morgan's (2001) work shows for the justice system, that barriers to communication persist. Certain contexts in the public domain often require specialized terminology. Until these communication barriers or boundaries are breached with, for instance, easy, convenient and affordable access to interpreting service, the Deaf will continue to remain marginalized in these important domains of social life.

In summary: by creating Sign-hear spaces, the Deaf have addressed many of their everyday communication needs and problems in the domestic and neighbourhood social relationships. The limits to the Sign-hear space were identified when communication was a problem and deafness again became social deficit but beyond that there was little to distinguish the Deaf as different from the hearing, not even on the basis of language. But there are other social relationships that this chapter on Sign-hear spaces has hinted at. The Deaf tend to marry other deaf people. They relied on friends and associates to find accommodation. For instance when Kas and Katrien were first married they moved in with another deaf couple in Retreat. When Edith moved to Cape Town for the first time

boarded with deaf people. When Zola needed a good meal and hot water he relied on his friends. The Sign-<u>hear</u> spaces suggested many relationships that tended to be primarily with other deaf people. The next chapter examines the networks or the Sign-<u>deaf</u> spaces of these primarily deaf social relationships.

The next chapter, Chapter Six, continues Signing spaces and focuses on Sign-<u>deaf</u> spaces as community (Anderson, 1983; Cohen, 1985). In the Sign-<u>deaf</u> space deaf people predominate and relationships were broadly sociable – ie not domestic and near neighbourhood relationships. The Chapter traces networks from the grassroots deaf social relationships of neighbourhood or residential area and friendship, across the Western Cape region and more widely, trans-nationally. I suggest that boundaries crossed vary by context and by networks but limits were difficult to determine. The chapter shows, with cases, that Sign language facilitates interaction in sociable encounters; facilitates crossing of boundaries; and serves as a signifier of 'deaf identity' in certain contexts.

Chapter Six: Signing Spaces continued
Deaf networks as Sign-deaf spaces as Community

'Everyone here spoke Sign language'[1]

...the Deaf Community is about feeling you belong or identifying with other deaf people (The Deaf Community of Cape Town[2], no author, no date: 2).

Communities do exist but they cannot be assumed (Thornton and Ramphele, 1988: 30).

Communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined (Anderson, 1983: 15).

'Third Sunday': a regular fieldwork encounter

The 'Third Sunday'[3] in July 2000[4] was bitterly cold. I was reluctant to leave the comfort of home for the Bastion[5]. Was it worth going I wondered. Would many people attend? The weather was foul and Father Mark, the regular chaplain for the Deaf, was away. Yet the turnout proved to be as good as usual. In the absence of Father Mark, Jack, a devout man, conducted the service. He was well prepared. The altar table was set with a white cloth and candles. Bookmarks identified the appropriate Scripture readings for the day. The regular readers came forward from the congregation to Sign the Scriptures. Jack Signed the Mass prayers from a small soft covered booklet that he brought with him. Then he gave a short Signed sermon.

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[1] With acknowledgements to Groce (1985) *Everyone here spoke Sign language: hereditary deafness on Martha's Vineyard.*

[2] The Deaf Community of Cape Town (DCCT) is a Non-Government Organization formed in 1987 to highlight the needs of the African and 'coloured' Deaf and I elaborate below.

[3] 'Third Sunday' refers to the over 50 years tradition of holding a Signed Mass for the Deaf on the third Sunday of every month and I elaborate below

[4] I selected Third Sunday July 2000 from the many that I attended for the following reasons: it was bitterly cold but the Deaf still turned out to attend; Jack's sermon pointed to the sociability of the occasion and thereby indirectly introduced the types of deaf networks with which this chapter is concerned.

[5] The former Primary School now known as the Bastion for the Deaf, Newlands provides a 'community' centre for the Deaf. It houses both DCCT and Deafsa as well as a number of income generating projects (see Chapter Three)

Jack's sermon made a plea for greater respect for the religious sentiments of the occasion. "What do you do as you enter [he pointed to the door to the hall of the Bastion] for the Mass?" "No, no you do not come in and greet here, greet there, chat here, chat there", which happened that day as it happened most Third Sundays. Typically, and almost exactly as Jack was describing, people entered the hall, cheerfully, looking around expectantly. Thumbs went up greeting all around. Hands popped up from the congregation to indicate a' booked' seat or point to one that was nearby.

At the end of the service, as was routine, representatives of the Deaf Community of Cape Town or DCCT took to the stage while the July 2000 edition of *Deaf News*, DCCT's Newsletter, was distributed. The DCCT representatives, taking their cues from *Deaf News,* told the congregation that Thomas' son (Sign names[6] only) had passed away. They gave the dates of the death and the funeral, but no additional detail and no one asked. *Deaf News* went on to convey the Women's Group's thanks for support at one of their fundraising functions. The newsletter congratulated Father Mark on his ordination. The representatives drew attention to forthcoming fund raising attractions, such as a dance at the Bastion, '7.00 pm till dawn 6.00 am'. There was some ardent debate about the hours. Some considered this 'too long a night'. Others explained that the hours would allow those who relied on public transport to attend. There was a vote and the hours '7.00 pm to dawn 6.00 am' prevailed by a considerable majority.

Deaf News commiserated with 'all South Africans' who were mourning the loss of the country's bid to hold the Soccer World Cup here in 2006. The many staunch soccer fans in the congregation were passionate in their disappointment. On a more serious note *Deaf News* acknowledged the 13th Annual AIDS conference held in Durban (9 July – 15 July 2000, the week immediately preceding this July Third Sunday) and ended with the warning: 'Remember, beware of AIDS. Use condoms'.

Unusually after this July Third Sunday, because of the weather, the congregation did not disperse to mill about outside, chatting, catching up on friends and their news. The congregation did not thin out into small groups of friends to share a picnic under the

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[6] For 'Sign names', see Chapter Three

trees or enjoy the hamburgers or 'boerewors[7]' rolls that usually were available for sale after a service – a customary companionable ending to a Third Sunday outing.

Introducing a Third Sunday

On the third Sunday of every month for the past fifty years[8] or more deaf people have been coming together in their numbers, even on bitterly cold days such as in July, 2000, to attend a Signed Mass. The venue has changed over the years from, among others, the Wittebome Catholic Church, to St Joseph's Marist Brothers College in Rondebosch, where it was being held when I began attending, in October 1995. The following year it moved to the Bastion, where it has been held since January 1996. The faces have changed over the years, even in the time I have been attending. People have died or moved out of town. Faces have also changed on a month-to-month basis. The regularity with which the majority of individuals attended varied. But the overall numbers, the routine and the ambience remained constant.

Third Sunday was usually a sociable occasion, as Jack pointed out in his Signed sermon, perhaps inadvertently, being more concerned with the apparent lack of religious sentiment at the service. "I go to meet my friends", explained Jane. For Jane, a staunch Baptist on the other Sundays of the month, Third Sunday was not about being Catholic, nor strictly about worship. "It's just like being at a family wedding" was how my mother, who often accompanied me described the ambience. Third Sunday was, it seemed, more about socializing with deaf people. DCCT, too, offered many opportunities for the Deaf to socialize during the year. The annual social calendar began (or ended, if you like) with the highlight of the year, the New Year's Eve Dance. Dances and Discos were very popular and held fairly regularly. DCCT organized Bingo evenings, fetes, weekend outings and the annual Children's Christmas Party – and at this Christmas Party, Father Christmas Signed.

Third Sunday and DCCT social functions, were, as my fieldwork experience led me to realize, one of the more visible manifestations of the networks of social relationships of

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[7] A locally made spicy sausage
[8] It was difficult to determine exactly how and when the Third Sunday tradition began. Anecdotal accounts suggest that it has been going since, at least, before the 1950s.

primarily deaf that I first referred to in Chapter Five and that I termed Sign-<u>deaf</u> spaces. In this chapter I discuss Sign-<u>deaf</u> networks as 'community' for reasons explained below.

Reasons for Sign-<u>deaf</u> spaces as 'community'

The Deaf chose the label 'Deaf Community of Cape Town' when DCCT that emerged out of the Third Sunday tradition, was established in 1987 (Summary of history, Deafsa, no date). The Third Sunday congregation has been termed community by hearing associates. "If you want to meet 'the Deaf Community' you should attend a Third Sunday", I remember being advised when I began discussing my interest in this study. The Deaf elsewhere also use the term to describe themselves (see, for example, Padden, 1980; Schien, 1989).

But 'community' cannot be assumed, especially in South Africa where it has been used as a euphemism for race (Ramphele and Thornton, 1988: 29). 'Communities', the Indian, the 'coloured', the people of Lebowa, for instance, were seen as distinct bounded entities that should develop separately (Ramphele and Thornton, 1988: 30). Even so despite the problems with the use of the term, in South Africa, as a reified bounded notion, Ramphele and Thornton suggest that communities may well exist (1988: 30).

Communities (see Chapter One) are not so much a matter of 'falsity/genuineness' but 'the style in which they are imagined' (Anderson, 1983: 15. Paraphrasing Seton-Watson on the notion of a nation: 'a community exists if a significant number of people consider themselves to form a community, or behave as if they have formed one' (1977: 5 cited in Anderson, 1983: 15, see footnote, 9). Community then is a combination of ideas and actions and it exists from the actors' perspective. In this chapter I explore the notion of community as used by the respondents of this study.

It may be useful to qualify 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) as a 'diasporic form' (Clifford, 1994). Imagined community is almost too generalizable to address the particularities of the situation of the Deaf of this study. The notion of 'diasporic' (Clifford. 1994) form, I suggest may serve as a useful qualifier. The Deaf of this study are both local and transnational. They are transnational in their history, as the history of their education has suggested (see Chapter Four). They are transnational in their

organizational structures. In 1995 the South African National Council for the Deaf (SANCD) returned, as Deafsa, to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) (Board Meeting, *WFD News*, 1998: 10). The WFD, an affiliate of the United Nations was established in 1951 (*WFD Information Brochure*). The South African Deaf returned as members of the Regional Secretariat of Eastern and Southern Africa (RSESA) that was established in 1990 (*Report of the WFD Bureau on WFD activities during the period 1991 – 1995*, 1995: 3). Belonging to WFD and RSESA is not merely nominal. The WFD sets policy for its member countries and I examine some of the local consequences of these policies for leadership in Chapter Seven. Later in this chapter I look to some of the networking between the Deaf here, those on the continent and those inter-continentally.

The Deaf as a diasporic form is not diaspora in the conventional sense of a population having been displaced from a place, sojourners with a longing for home (Safran, 1991: 84). The Deaf are not even 'diasporic', as the notion has been applied up to now (see, for example, Gilroy, 1987; Ghosh, 1989). Up to now 'diasporic' has been applied to populations with transnational connections who dwell permanently but displaced in the host society, structurally marginalized, discriminated against and limited in their assimilation. In response, these populations strategize creatively to be, for instance, British but differently so (see, for example, Gilroy, 1987). The Deaf on the other hand are a sensory diasporic form. They live permanently in the host society but are often displaced, marginalized, discriminated against and limited in their integration on the basis of being deaf in a predominantly hearing society. Even though reasons for displacement may vary, the responses are similar. The Deaf, like others in similar diasporic situations, strategize creatively to deal with their circumstances - in this case, to be South African differently, to be South African and Deaf.

This study explores these strategies using Marx' notion of the 'social world' as social networks (1990). Using Marx' (1990) notion the study has suggested the notion of a Signing space (see Chapter Five). The Signing space identified on the basis of Sign-based communication comprises a set of networks that deaf people generated in response to being displaced in a predominantly hearing society. In doing so the Deaf created a meaningful space where deaf people were not set apart; where they were free to take up their social and vocational roles; where deafness was not a social deficit; where in fact people were not deaf in any socially handicapped sense.

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For analytical purposes I have separated the networks that comprise a Signing space into Sign-hear spaces and Sign-deaf spaces, on the basis of certain qualitative differences. These qualitative differences include the ratio of deaf to hearing people within the network; the types of relationships formed; the frequency of interactions and the nature of the boundaries crossed.

Sign-hear spaces, as demonstrated in Chapter Five, are proactive constructions in response to being deaf in a hearing world. Proactively these networks assimilate hearing people into a Deaf space by teaching them to Sign. As a result, in Sign-hear spaces hearing people are in the majority. These networks deal with the essential, everyday instrumental areas of social life, particularly in the domestic and immediate neighbourhood domains. They push back the hearing boundary. Its limit could be identified in those contexts, where barriers to communication, again rendered deafness as handicap or social deficit. By contrast Sign-deaf spaces were dissimilar in certain ways as I explain below.

Distinguishing Sign-deaf spaces

> The most fundamental element …it seems to me …is familiarity. But not simply the kind of instrumental familiarity … [r]ather a deeper, and more enduring kind of familiarity, if elusive to define; the kind that reflects unconditional belonging and acceptance (Frankental, 1998: 161).

Sign-deaf spaces were about creating spaces of communality and solidarity, spaces as DCCT expressed it, where people 'felt' that they 'belonged' and could 'identify' with 'other deaf people' (DCCT pamphlet, no author, no date: 2). In the Sign-deaf spaces deaf people predominated. Sign was usually the first language and people used it fluently. Networks were similar in nature to those of the Sign-hear space in that they were loose, fluid and flexible as size, composition, participation and function fluctuated over time. However, the quality of the social relationships differed in that, as I have indicated with the opening vignette above, these were broadly 'sociable' (Allan, 1979. 2).

Sociable relationships are difficult, if not impossible to define precisely and instead Allan offers a working definition as follows: sociable relationships are those an individual enters into 'voluntarily and purposefully for non-instrumental reasons' (1979: 2). By making use of Allan's working definition I do not mean to imply that all relationships in a Sign-deaf space were equally friendly and convivial. Sociable includes those relationships that were obviously so as well as those that were not. I also do not mean to imply that elements of instrumentality were absent. In all social relationships there is almost always an element of instrumentality. Allan's use of 'non-instrumental reasons' suggests, broadly, what this bundle of relationships was, in fact, not. They were usually not – or they were other than - the more discernible, more necessary every day instrumental relationships of the domestic and near neighbourhood relationships of the Sign-hear space.

Broadly sociable relationships spanned the spectrum from those that were evidently sociable, such as close friendships, to those that were less so. Even so all relationships demonstrated an element of familiarity. It was an enduring kind of familiarity that may come from knowing people for a long time. The familiarity varied from the unreserved feeling and/ or give and take of unconditional acceptance and belonging – or 'unconditionality' (Frankental, 1998: 161) - of certain close friends to mistrust and reservation. The mistrust and reservation was interesting. It was not mistrust and reservation that comes with unfamiliarity or the unknown. Rather it was based on familiarity and knowing people, sometimes almost too well.

Sign-deaf networks, precisely because they were not the more easily discernible instrumental relationships of the domestic and near neighbourhood domains, were difficult to tease out into a format for discussion. There was an inter-connectedness about the networks of a Sign-deaf space. This interconnectedness gave me my snowball sample. The interconnectedness, it also seemed to me, was basic to the process that distributed news and messages among the Deaf. How quickly news got around among the Deaf, continued to astonish me throughout fieldwork for this study, especially as the majority did not have easy or readily available access to telecommunication. Some have referred to the process that distributed news and messages as the 'Deaf Grapevine'.

Figure 6.1: inviting guests to Basie's Birthday Party

An example of the Deaf Grapevine in operation

LANGA – Hearing kin, deaf friends and neighbours

Nomsa - Basie's daughter

↓→ Betty – Basie's school friend
↓
→ Katrien → Noxolo- Katrien's friend both old friends of Basie
      ↓   ↓
      ↓   ↓
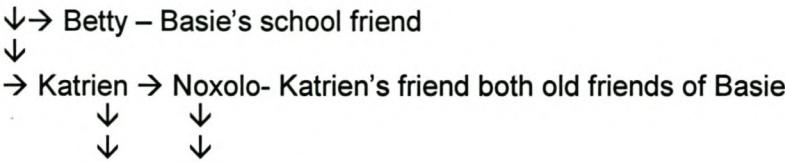
HEIDEVELD – Deaf friends, neighbours and spouses

    Dinah → Portia → Jacobus-Dinah's friend Portia's husband
      ↓
      ↓

GUGULETU – Deaf friends, neighbours, deaf church associates and deaf work mates

    Edith → Petrus Dinah's friend and Dinah's friend husband
    ↓   ↓
    ↓   ↓
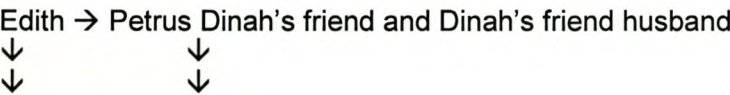
CHURCH   **WORK**
  ↓   ↓   ↓   ↓
Khayelitsha   Tea   Sebenzile   Bastion and DCCT
          ↓   ↓   ↓
          ↓   ↓   ↓
          Neighbours ↓   ↓
                ↓   ↓
          KHAYELITSHA   **RETREAT**

Rachel and Albert – Basie's school friends   Thelma Basie's school friend

The Deaf Grapevine and how it operated was useful for identifying nodes in networks that were otherwise difficult to tease out for analytical purposes. An example of the Grapevine in operation (Fig 6.1) starts the discussion. The nodes identified by the Grapevine, especially neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> networks (which neighbourhood networks I distinguish from those of the Sign-<u>hear</u> space) and friendships are the basis for the discussion of Sign-<u>deaf</u> spaces at the grassroots level. Thereafter the discussion returns to Third Sunday and DCCT. DCCT and its relationship with Third Sunday congregation take the networks further locally, nationally, inter-continentally as well as trans-nationally.

The 'Deaf Grapevine'

Nomsa, Basie's eldest hearing daughter, made use of the 'Deaf grapevine' to invite his deaf friends to his birthday party. Nomsa started the process in Langa (see Fig 6.1 for a flow chart[1]). In Langa, Nomsa, approached Betty, Basie's friend from school, as well as Katrien and Noxolo. Katrien and Noxolo were younger than Basie and got to know him better after they left Wittebome School. Then they regularly joined Basie and other young deaf people who used to get together in Langa at the weekends to socialize and this was how Katrien and Noxolo met their future husbands.

Together Noxolo and Katrien took the invitation to Dinah, their old school friend, in Heideveld, not far from Langa. In Heideveld Dinah took the message to Portia. Portia knew both Basie and Dinah from school. Portia's husband who had attended Nuwe Hoop, they knew less well. But as Portia's husband, Jacobus was welcome to attend Basie's birthday party.

From Heideveld Dinah took the invitation to old friends Edith and Petrus in Guguletu. Edith took the message to church. A number of deaf people attended the same church as Edith did and Nomsa was keen that one of them who had been at school with Basie be invited to his party. Petrus took the message to work. Work gave Petrus a number of

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[1] The flow chart is intended to make this section an easier read. For the same reason I have not scattered the text with thesis references after all the individuals mentioned. Most of the people mentioned attended Basie's birthday party, although they may not have all have been mentioned by name. Some were mentioned by name elsewhere. Thelma, Kas and Noxolo, I introduced in Chapter Four. I used examples of Edith and Katrien's Sign-<u>hear</u> spaces in Chapter Five.

opportunities to spread the message. Most mornings on the way to work Petrus met three or four, sometimes more sometimes less, friends for a cup of tea and chat at Cape Town station. These deaf people took the invitation to their respective neighbourhoods. Petrus worked with Sebenzile at the same large organization but in a different department. Sebenzile had been to school in the Eastern Cape but Petrus knew he lived in Khayelitsha. In Khayelitsha on his way home Sebenzile stopped off at Rachel and Albert's house, which is near the train station, to tell them, old school friends of Basie, about the party. Petrus' third work option was the Bastion. The Bastion is practically next door to the organization where Petrus works. In his lunch hour he went there to ask one of the Deaf at DCCT who lived in Retreat to take the invitation to Basie's old school friends, including Thelma who lived there.

When I trace the process that invited guests to Basie's birthday party it was possible to identify deaf people in a neighbourhood. Deaf people in Langa knew each other. Fieldwork suggested it was the same, for example, in Heideveld, in Retreat and in Khayelitsha. The workings of the Deaf Grapevine also identified friends. Friends varied from close friends such as Noxolo and Katrien to those less close, such as Jacobus. Petrus knew his deaf colleagues in the large organization where he worked. Edith knew the deaf members of her church. On the basis of these networks, especially neighbourhood and friends, I explore Sign-deaf spaces for their composition, their function, the types and frequency of interaction and the boundaries crossed. The discussion commences with neighbourhoods. The neighbourhood Sign-deaf spaces, in the areas where I worked, tended to be some of the larger networks and provide something of a context for the exploration of others.

Neighbourhood Sign-deaf spaces

"Where were you on Saturday?" Gracie reprimanded me for failing to arrive at her home in Elsies River. "We were all here. We bought cool drinks and chips and eats. We waited and waited from 12 o'clock, watching for the car, watching for the car. Then at 3 o'clock [when we knew you were not coming] we just went on with the party". Gracie's reprimand was justified. She was hurt. I had failed to arrive when she had gone to the trouble of inviting a number of the Deaf in Elsies River to meet me. It was a terrible misunderstanding, as a result of my poor Sign language skills and I have tried to make

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up for my discourtesy. However, the point is that Gracie had an extensive neighbourhood network in Elsies River, whom she knew well enough to get together in a short space of time – as well as to ask them to buy and bring refreshments.

Deaf people usually knew who was Deaf in their residential area. Residential area describes more aptly the 'neighbourhood' for these neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> spaces. Although I continue to use the term, a distinction between neighbourhood of the Sign-<u>hear</u> space and that of Sign-<u>deaf</u> space is useful. Near neighbourhood tended to be more characteristic of the Sign-<u>hear</u> space. The proximity of near neighbourhood in the dense living conditions of working class Cape Town contributed considerably to the assimilation of close hearing neighbours into the Sign-<u>hear</u> space (see Chapter Five).

The same dense living conditions also provide the context for the neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> spaces I discuss here. In this context, living close by was sometimes a contributing, but not a necessary factor to the creation and maintenance of a Sign-<u>deaf</u> space. The additional factors that worked to create and sustain a neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> space, I explore on the basis of Dinah and Rosa's network. The example of their network suggests the process whereby a network may begin and how it may alter in composition as people joined, then moved on to link up with networks in other residential areas.

Dinah and Rosa:
starting up and establishing a network

Dinah and Rosa were born in the mid 1930s and grew up in Crawford. They met at Wittebome School. After they left school they married deaf men they knew from school. As young married couples they moved from Crawford to Heideveld, where by the late 1950s, houses had become available as Group Areas legislation began to take effect. Their new homes were in different streets but back-to- back. For easy access to each other and for companionship the two families made an opening in the back fence. Dinah and Rosa and their spouses became known for their hospitality. In time their homes became a sociable place for the Deaf in the neighbourhood to meet, to share news, as well as, sometimes, to provide a home-from-home for new-arrivals in Cape Town. Dinah and Rosa offered both Gracie and Edith a home when they first arrived in Cape Town.

Gracie and Edith:

Joining networks from out of town and moving on

Gracie joined the Heideveld network soon after she arrived in Cape Town in 1963. Born in 1947 in the Transkei, and a past pupil of Nuwe Hoop, she moved to Cape Town to join her father, then a resident at the 'Flats' or the migrant labour hostels in Langa. In Langa Gracie met the Deaf in the area. The Langa Deaf introduced Gracie to Rosa and Dinah. When Rosa offered her accommodation, she left the migrant hostel and moved to Heideveld. While living in Heideveld, Gracie found work and met and married a deaf man from Wittebome. In time Gracie left her first husband. With her two children she moved from Heideveld to Elsies River, where she married a second time, also a Wittebome man. In Elsies River she linked up with the other Deaf in the area and joined her husband's relatively large network. He had grown up in Elsies River and consequently knew many of the deaf people living there.

Gracie and Edith, although the same age and at Nuwe Hoop together, only met again in Cape Town when Edith joined the Heideveld network in the 1970s. When Edith decided to come to Cape Town, her mother insisted she stay with her older hearing brother. Her older brother worked with a number of deaf people and he introduced Edith to them. "It was talk, talk, talk" was how Edith described the meeting. These deaf people, in turn, invited her to join them at Dinah and Rosa's home the following weekend. Soon, Edith also went to board with them in Heideveld. Rosa's husband helped her to find work. While working as a live-in domestic in Mowbray she became pregnant with her first child. Dinah and Rosa cared for her during her pregnancy. When Edith had to return to work soon after the birth, Rosa cared for the baby. In time Edith moved to Guguletu to live with a deaf man in the migrant labour hostels of Guguletu. It was when she was living in the Guguletu hostels that Edith met Thandeka and other Deaf in the area.

Thandeka:

expanding a Cape Town based network across neighbourhoods

Thandeka was born in 1960 in the Transkei, but raised in Guguletu. Her eldest brother took responsibility for her after her parents died. When her deafness was diagnosed she went to school in the Eastern Cape, along with a number of others now resident in

Guguletu. When she left school she continued to live in Guguletu with her hearing family. The associations that she had made at school continued and her network expanded to include deaf people from other schools. She met Edith from Nuwe Hoop, for instance, over an evening meal at the Guguletu hostels. She met the father of her daughter, a Wittebome man. When Thandeka decided to take the opportunity of a new house in a new housing estate in Philippi, she was apparently one of a number of deaf people from Guguletu who did the same. Within a short time after arriving at her new home she was able to stand at her front gate and point to the deaf people in her new neighbourhood.

Characteristics of neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> spaces

An examination of the process that shaped Dinah and Rosa's neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> space shows that it began at Wittebome School. It was nurtured in Crawford facilitated by a shared language. At school Dinah and Rosa learnt Sign. With Sign they could communicate with each other during the school holidays. Thandeka, who attended school with a number of other children from the same area, had similar opportunities growing up in Guguletu. With same-age Signing companions there was none of the 'linguistic loneliness' Braam experienced when he stayed with his sister in Paarl during his school holidays (see Chapter Five). School holidays, when the Sign-<u>hear</u> space was still in the developmental phase could be a linguistically lonely time for deaf children.

When they moved to Heideveld, Dinah and Rosa's 'combined homes' became what I term a 'hub of sociability'. A 'hub of sociability' was a locus in a neighbourhood that reflected some of the ethos and function of the wider neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> space. It was a locus it seemed to me, of familiarity and unconditional belonging and acceptance – or 'unconditionality' (Frankental, 1998: 161). As such it was a place to socialize and relax with fluent Signers away from family and the sometimes more functional Sign-based communication of a Sign-<u>hear</u> space. It was a place to get together and to meet Deaf people from other residential areas, new comers to Cape Town, and those on holiday in Cape Town. It was a place to share a meal, to share a drink, to complain, to share news and information, about, for example, accommodation and work.

A hub of sociability and the wider network as a whole were not fixed. Composition changed over time. Basie and the Langa Deaf and Dinah's home in Heideveld were no

longer hubs of sociability when I did fieldwork. However, Gracie was still active. In some of the larger residential areas, a network could centre on clusters of deaf people who sometimes lived in close proximity. Dinah and Rosa's living arrangements were not the norm but they were also not altogether unusual. Basie and Noxolo established their married homes nearby in the same street in Langa. I found similar situations in Elsies River, in Khayelitsha, in Retreat, in Paarl, in Parow and even in the migrant hostels of Guguletu, as Edith's case suggests. In residential areas, a hub of sociability could also centre on an individual. There are those individuals, most of us know, who have the indefinable mix of personal qualities that make them more attractive to be with than others. The Deaf were no different. Even in smaller residential areas, where there were few deaf people, it was still possible it seemed, to find the hub of sociability. The deaf itinerant road workers, who maintained the national road from Cape Town to Johannesburg, found one of the few, if not the only, deaf woman in Laingsburg when they were stationed nearby to carry out repairs.

The familiarity that seemingly characterized neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> networks did not necessarily mean automatic liking, trust and approval. Even though Thandeka was keen to use the network to find deaf people to share her new home to help her with her repayments, her familiarity with them made her selective. She wanted people she could rely on to pay rent regularly and who would respect her lifestyle as a church-going single mother of an 11-year-old school-going daughter. The Deaf tended to know whom they could trust to keep a confidence. During the course of fieldwork, when I asked if and/or when it would be suitable to administer the questionnaire it became clear that certain individuals were welcome to sit in on an interview but others were not.

The frequency with which individuals interacted with others in a neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> space varied considerably and was difficult to determine. Some deaf people said they rarely, if ever, mixed with other deaf people. Others saw each other frequently. Frequency of interactions seemingly depended on many factors. It depended on age. The older Deaf seemed to be more engaged with children and grandchildren. At this stage the Sign-<u>hear</u> space for many was relatively well established, making the need for a sociable place where people spoke the same language less pressing. Frequency of interaction also depended on time available. Commitments to family and work were sometimes more pressing than socializing with deaf in a neighbourhood. Frequency

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varied with liking. Some deaf people in a neighbourhood were close friends, such as Dinah and Rosa. Others barely spoke to each other. Interactions varied with interests. Some deaf people attended the same church, others discoed together, others shopped together and there were other occasions when they chose to do the same activities with hearing neighbours or kin. The neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> space, like any neighbourhood was only one of many arenas for interaction. Even so as one of many arenas for interaction, the neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> space was a particularly open network in terms of social boundaries.

Neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> spaces and boundaries

The neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> space was not limited by age. Dinah and Rosa were older than Edith and Gracie and Edith was older then Thandeka. The hearing associated with the Deaf also made use of this range in ages. Xolela's hearing mother called on Petrus to have a man-to-man chat with her deaf teenage son. She was concerned about the company Xolela was keeping. His father was dead, her Sign was not good and she found her son was not prepared to 'listen' to her on the subject of the company he was keeping. He just closed his eyes or looked away whenever she tried to broach the subject - but such maneuvres did not work as well with the older Deaf as it did with the older hearing.

Networks included men and women, married and single people, employed and unemployed. Networks in many of the larger residential areas where I worked included people from a range of schools, including Wittebome, Nuwe Hoop, the schools in the Eastern Cape and Noluthando. Consequently many networks crossed the possible boundaries of spoken languages of Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. The networks often included African and 'coloured' deaf people. But the inclusion across apartheid categories depended on context.

Sign-<u>deaf</u> neighbourhood networks were not necessarily particular to African and 'coloured' urban working class residential areas. I did not carry out extensive fieldwork in 'white' areas. However, there were certainly indications of similar networks in 'white' working class Parow. They differed only in that they tended to be limited to 'whites'.

History began the segregation of the 'white' Deaf as early as 1882. But the major factor was the impact of apartheid on residential areas, especially in metropolitan areas.

In contrast to metropolitan Cape Town, in the smaller rural town of Paarl, where the Deaf were not as restricted by geographical distance, there seemed to be fewer barriers to racial segregation. When I visited Paarl I asked how well the 'coloured' Deaf got on with the 'white' and African Deaf in the area. They answered, simply "well" and added, confidently (and without being asked), that it would be no problem to arrange with one of the 'white' Deaf to put me up if I ever wanted to spend the weekend in Paarl. Offering me accommodation on behalf of the 'white' deaf suggested the same familiarity that I had experienced in Cape Town.

The more middle class Deaf, including not only the 'white' Deaf, who had access to private transport and more sophisticated telecommunication, such as teldems, email and increasingly 'SMSs'[2], were not as reliant on the neighbourhood Sign-<u>deaf</u> networks for the companionship and the familiarity that it offered. They were freer in a sense to interact with friends. Private transport and more sophisticated telecommunications transcended the limitations that residential geographical boundaries tended to place on friendship for the majority of the people of this study.

Friendships

When I offered Kitty a lift after a Third Sunday in November 2001, I assumed she was on her way home. But it happened that she was on her way to afternoon tea at Jane and Arthur's place in Retreat. Jane and Arthur were holding an intimate farewell afternoon tea party for Bianca at their home. Bianca was due to return to her home up-country early in the following week after holidaying in Cape Town.

Characteristics of friendships

The only distinguishing characteristic of Jane and Arthur's set of close friends or any of the close friendships that I witnessed was the fact that they happened to have become

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[2] SMS refers to 'Short Message Sentence' that can be typed and delivered via a 'cell phone'. This type of telecommunication is proving popular with deaf people.

deaf as children. Friends often attended the same school and usually conversed in Sign. Otherwise like friends anywhere, they liked each other and enjoyed each other's company. They had much in common and shared the same interests and values. Jane and Arthur's guests, for instance, were of a similar age, all over 60 years. Over time they had all experienced the ups and the downs of long and enduring marriages, although two were widows. They had children and grandchildren. Many of the children had done well – and they were not above a little competitive bragging here and there. The guests were of a similar income bracket. They were pensioners, not rich but neither were they desperately poor. Their homes were attractively appointed and there was always good food on the table. Jane's and Arthur's was one of the homes, where during the course of fieldwork we could always be assured of a good cup of tea – or an icy cold drink in summer.

"We were like family" was how Jane described her loss when one of their close friends died a year or so earlier. Close friendships like all sociable relationships were difficult to define and 'in the end the actor's understanding is paramount' (Allan, 1979: 2). Jane saw close friendship as 'like family' in its ideal type; the myth, if you like, of what we would like to believe family is about, except that it rarely is. Family in its ideal is the idea of home as the people, as Robert Frost suggests (see Frankental, 1998: 161), who will take you in - or you believe will take you in - even when you do not deserve it. 'Unconditionality' or the unconditional feeling of acceptance and belonging (Frankental, 1998: 161), I have suggested, was a mark of Sign-deaf spaces generally but it varied. If unconditionality is viewed as a continuum, then close friendships offered unconditionality in its 'purest' sense.

The give and take of this 'purer' form of unconditionality is probably only possible with a few close friends – as general experience tends to suggest. The Deaf were just as selective. Jane and Arthur invited a few close friends from the Third Sunday congregation. They chose a few close friends from their neighbourhood and from beyond their neighbourhood. The unconditionality of close friendship offered much that was joyful. Photographs in albums, in worn envelopes, in frames, tucked into kitchen dressers and displayed in cabinets suggested many good times over the years.

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However, the unconditionality of close friendships was often more apparent in bad times than good. Close friends were often there in sickness. Ada's close friends cared for her during the last days of her terminal illness. When she could no longer see, when she no longer had the strength to Sign, when she became increasingly difficult to reach, they kept in touch. They used a deaf-blind method for Signing. They held her close. Towards the end they even shared her bed.

Not all friendships were close. Some friendships were difficult to distinguish from kin and neighbourhood relationships. Sisters were friends. Brothers were friends. Mothers and daughters were friends. Dinah and Rosa were close friends and near neighbours. Noxolo and Katrien were friends and near neighbours. Friendships varied. Friendships were made through meetings at church, at discos and dances, especially among the younger Deaf. Friendships were made on the train and at work. At work not all friends were Deaf. Ada's long time hearing friend from work gave one of the eulogies at her funeral. Petrus had hearing commuting friends. He regularly took the same taxi home from work and he came to know the taxi driver and some of the other regular commuters well. Knowing him well they refused (and rightly so) to believe it when a woman (not a regular in the taxi) took a chance and blamed him for stealing her purse.

Men and women could be close friends, like the men and women at Jane and Arthur's tea. But men and women also had same gender friends. Thelma, in fact, had been much closer to Basie's wife who died a few years ago than she was to him. It seemed to me that it was Nomsa, who loved Thelma, as an old friend of her mother, who was more concerned than Basie to get her to the birthday party. Certain interests did happen to divide out along gender lines. Women's interests often centred on their children. As this interest changed over time as the children grew up married had children of their own, it often reinforced and sustained friendship. Swapping news about children and grandchildren came up regularly in conversations between women friends.

Men had shared interests that brought them together. Basie and Kas's shared interest in playing soccer brought them together. There were photographs of youthful Deaf rugby teams. The same team members by the time I met them were more inclined to watch from the comfort of their sofas – or enjoy a game of darts and a beer. Men also called on friends, with skills, such as tilers or panel beaters for 'Do-it Yourself' advice – or to help

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fix an ageing motorcar. To diagnose a car's engine problem when you are deaf demands a particular set of skills.

There were friends that were not close but were invited to celebrate life events, such as baptisms, confirmations, weddings and kitchen teas. However, even at these events close friends could be identified. People chose close friends as godparents. Close friends helped with the preparation, the catering and caring for the guests. Friends were found behind the scenes in the kitchen. They also often seemed close enough to the hostess to assume to hand out 'leftovers' to the other guests to take home.

Like the guests at the farewell tea, close friends were most often of long standing and many friendships started at school. Basie and Thelma were at school together at Grimley and then later at Wittebome. Noxolo and Katrien met at school. Jack (who conducted the Third Sunday service, July, 2002) had a group of close friends from Grimley, who met regularly once a month. Thandeka and her two close friends were at school together in the Eastern Cape. There were close friends, like those of Jane and Arthur who were from Wittebome. Among past pupils from Wittebome, the time when they attended school could influence whether close friendship transcended the boundaries imposed by apartheid categories.

Friendships and boundaries

Apartheid did not impact acutely on the close friendships of those who experienced relatively integrated schooling. Wittebome remained relatively integrated even after the 1930s, when the effects of segregation and later apartheid began to impact on Deaf education in Cape Town (see Chapter Four). In the 1930s Grimley in Cape Town remained 'white' and African and 'coloured' children were sent to Wittebome School. Dinah and Rosa's close friends, by their residential areas at the time of this study, reflected this phase of relative integration at Wittebome. Jack and his close friends on the other hand, who attended Grimley after it was segregated, reflected the segregation of the school. Wittebome remained relatively integrated until the strict influx control of the late 1960s and 1970s when African deaf children were sent to school in the Eastern Cape. Thandeka and her two close friends who all attended school in the Eastern Cape, reflect this later phase.

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Even so networks of friends were not a neat reflection of historical process. Jack and his close friends may have been largely 'white' as a consequence of historical circumstance. However, there were those among his network who had friends who were not 'white' who attended kitchen teas, weddings and life event celebrations. Whether it was only the Deaf who crossed certain apartheid categories in certain contexts was beyond the scope of this study. Mixing across old apartheid categories among the older friends may merely reflect a carry over from 'old Cape Town'. This study was carried out in some of Cape Town's older areas, where, in and around Retreat, for example, which were still relatively integrated until the 1950s (see, for example, Bickford-Smith, et al, 1999:114). It was only then that Group Areas legislation began to take effect. In addition many people who moved in the 1950s to Guguletu did so from District Six, also a longstanding Cape Town residential area with a long history of racially integrated living.

Friendships were similar to neighbourhood Sign-deaf spaces in that they were relatively open to deaf people regardless of apartheid classification. By 'relatively' I mean that apartheid classification was not necessarily a boundary from the actors' perspective. But generally neighbourhood Sign-deaf spaces were more open than those of close friendships. But friendships were not limited to a residential area. Consequently the frequency with which friends kept in touch depended on access to transport and telecommunication. This lack of frequent access was, I am sure, one of the reasons people were keen to take me across neighbourhoods and introduce me to their friends. It gave them an additional opportunity to visit.

Friends also took the opportunity of a Third Sunday to meet. Third Sunday brought together some of the networks of social relationships that I have described thus far. Bringing together some of the networks it served as something of a 'junction'. As a junction or a crossing place of networks coming together, it connected up or crossed certain social boundaries but posed limits for others.

Third Sunday: crossing boundaries and limits

A Third Sunday congregation included people from both Sign-deaf and Sign-hear spaces, although those from Sign-hear spaces tended to be limited to young hearing

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children and grandchildren. In comparison with older hearing children, Third Sunday held many attractions for young hearing children. The number of usually pre-teenage children was almost always sufficient to field team games and the large grounds of the Bastion were perfect. Noise was never a problem. Toddlers roamed freely during the service and adults seemed free to comfort or chide as the case may have been.

However, the majority of the Third Sunday congregation was Deaf. Friends met at Third Sunday. Neighbours often traveled together as it was safer. Thus the occasion brought together deaf adults, young and old past pupils from different deaf schools. Jack who conducted the service on Third Sunday, July 2000 was Grimley educated and he and a core of between five and ten fellow past pupils attended regularly. There were also regular attenders from Nuwe Hoop but the majority of attenders at Third Sunday were from Wittebome School.

The younger school-going Deaf rarely attended Third Sunday. Boarders at Wittebome School usually attended Mass at the local parish church. It was also rare to see past and present pupils from Hout Bay at a Third Sunday. Hout Bay admits pupils from all over the country and South Africa's neighbours, such as Zimbabwe. During the school holidays and as past pupils these children would not be in Cape Town to attend a Third Sunday. Even so, the only Hout Bay past pupils that I have ever seen at a Third Sunday have been the children of Grimley-educated Signing Deaf parents and then only on special occasions when Father Axelrod or Father John, both deaf Catholic priests led the service.

Third Sunday tended to be limited to deaf people of the Christian tradition, although Cyril Axelrod's visits to Cape Town always attracted the crowds, including past pupils from Wittebome, of the Islamic tradition. Apart from its relative openness to particular or different denominations there was actually little that marked a Third Sunday congregation different from other religious congregations. The congregation included young and old, men and women. It bought together Africans, 'coloureds'; and 'whites', which may not be as unusual in South Africa today as it used to be.

However, the ambience was noticeably 'familiar' (Frankental, 1998: 161). At Third Sunday July 2001, as was usually the case, DCCT representatives only ever used Sign

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names. When the DCCT representatives announced Thomas' son's death they gave no details of the funeral. It was assumed that the congregation would know these. It was the same when births, engagements, marriages and birthdays were announced. By extension, in other words, it seemed, that the unconditionality that marked the Sign-<u>deaf</u> grassroots networks, that I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter thus far, also marked Third Sunday.

The Third Sunday congregation reflected certain grassroots Sign-<u>deaf</u> networks. However, the broad 'groupings' that were represented were not unlimited. I have suggested elsewhere (see Chapter Four) that external historical processes differentiated the local deaf population into certain broad groupings – even 'categories', since these divisions were imposed - on the basis of age, geography, school attended, spoken language, method of education and apartheid categories (see Chapter Four, Table: 4.4). I have suggested that these groupings offer something of a measure of the degree to which the Deaf do or do not transcend 'race' as the term has been used to divide the South African population.

Of these historical created groupings the following were usually represented in the general Third Sunday congregation: the African Signing Deaf who attended Grimley and Wittebome and whose spoken language was English; the African Signing Deaf who attended Wittebome before it was segregated and whose spoken language was English; the African Signing Deaf who attended Nuwe Hoop whose spoken language was Afrikaans; the African Signing Deaf who attended schools in the Eastern Cape, after strict influx control was implemented in the Cape and whose spoken language was Xhosa. Third Sunday included the 'coloured Signing Deaf who attended Wittebome, where the spoken language was English and Nuwe Hoop, where the spoken language was Afrikaans. It included the 'white' Signing Deaf who attended Grimley and whose spoken language was English.

The majority who attended Third Sunday were, therefore, African and 'coloured', with the limited, although regular support of the 'white' Grimley Signing Deaf. It did not attract the young school-going Deaf. The attendance from Hout Bay was limited and Third Sunday did not attract the 'white' Deaf from Worcester whose spoken language was Afrikaans. However, the possibility existed for the Third Sunday congregation and the networks it

represented to link up with the Deaf elsewhere at the 'category' level. DCCT as a NGO with a close and regular association with Third Sunday offered this possibility, as something of a crossing place and recent history placed DCCT strategically to assume this role.

Crossing from apartheid to post apartheid South Africa

During the early 1990s, history placed DCCT strategically for the 'crossing' from apartheid to post apartheid. With the demise of formal apartheid that began in the early 1990s, the world began to open up to South Africans. Like many other South Africans, the Deaf took the opportunity to begin the process that would return them to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), which eventually occurred in 1995. Because of apartheid, the South African Deaf, as the South African National Council of the Deaf (SANCD) had been barred from the WFD, an affiliate of the United Nations and the United Nations, as is well known, declared apartheid a crime against humanity.

When negotiations for returning to the WFD began, DCCT was probably one of the few Deaf organizations, if not the only, organization that could offer anti-apartheid credentials. DCCT gained its anti-apartheid credentials on the basis of the constituency it represented, namely, the African and 'coloured' Deaf as well as the timing of its establishment in 1987. The late 1980s was a time of widespread anti-apartheid popular protest on the one hand and severe repression under then President P W Botha's State of Emergency on the other.

At the time of negotiations, DCCT's credentials as an organization with a largely Deaf and elected leadership, established by the Deaf for the Deaf was also useful. WFD's policy requires of its member countries that 60 percent of the leadership must be Deaf. By the early 1990s in South Africa, the leadership of the then government South African National Council for the Deaf (SANCD) and its provincial organizations were largely 'white', hearing, and government appointees. Consequently there were few deaf people with the necessary leadership and administrative experience. DCCT staff, however, with up to ten years leadership and administrative experience in a NGO had important skills to offer. Wilma Newhoudt-Druchen, a co-founder of DCCT became the first Deaf Director of Deafsa Western Cape. When she left this position to become a Member of Parliament

after South Africa's second general election, Stephen Lombard resigned as Director of DCCT to take her place (Chapter Seven looks at leadership succession in more detail).

DCCT took an office at the Bastion when Deafsa Western Cape acquired the building in 1995. This office is the centre of its service provision – such as interpreting and interacting with bureaucracies, as I have mentioned in Chapter Five. Here I look more particularly at DCCT's interactions with the Deaf at the group level.

Crossing boundaries in the Western Cape

> Deaf people in urban areas quickly become multi-dialectal once they have been exposed to other varieties of SASL [South African Sign Language]. They will quickly learn to understand the vocabulary varieties used by other groups (Morgan, 2001: 7)

The past pupils from Hout Bay were not regular attenders at Third Sunday but they were not absent from other Deaf occasions in Cape Town. They attended a 'Deaf March' that Deafsa, with the support of DCCT, arranged in October 1995 (and a second March was held in 1996). In the early 1990s the long time ban on public 'protest' marches was lifted. Probably because they had been denied it for so long, Capetonians took to the streets in their numbers. Public marches became very popular. The Deaf, like their fellow citizens, also took to the streets with posters that proclaimed an identity that was 'Deaf and Proud'; 'Deaf but not stupid', 'Deaf not deaf and dumb'; and that demanded 'Deaf Human Rights Now'.

My Sign language teacher, a past pupil of Hout Bay School took me to the Deaf March in October 1995[3], where she introduced me to fellow past pupils of Hout Bay. While she went off to chat elsewhere, I noticed the Hout Bay past pupils Signing. "You Sign"? I asked a young woman. "Yes", she replied. "I learnt after I left school because all my friends are Deaf". That 'her friends were Deaf' perhaps partly explains why the Hout Bay Deaf did not attend a Third Sunday. As part of the middle class Deaf, with transport and increasingly SMSs they did not need sociable occasions like Third Sunday to bring them together. That her friends were Deaf is also interesting. Although she was educated in

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[3] Two such marches were held during the course of this fieldwork.

the strictly oral method, that aims to fully assimilate the Deaf into the hearing society, she still relied on deaf people for friendship.

DCCT maintained links with the 'white' Worcester Deaf via its association with the De La Bat Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) congregation. The 'white' Worcester Deaf were not regular members of a Third Sunday congregation. Geographical distance between Worcester and Cape Town is one explanation, the Catholic ethos at a Third Sunday another. Historically religion was one of the reasons for the establishment of the Worcester School, in 1882 (see Chapter Four). In addition, since 1978 De La Bat DRC parish in Bellville has offered a regular Signed Sunday service[4]. The parish church, built by a team of deaf builders, was specifically designed structurally and technologically to suit the particular needs of a Deaf congregation.

This DRC De La Bat congregation was also popularly termed a 'community'. In this 'community' the majority were 'white', but the Sunday service and social functions also attracted the Deaf from Paarl as it is a convenient train ride to Bellville. As a 'Deaf community', De La Bat offered its congregation some of the same opportunities of communality and sociability as Third Sunday. It also arranged social events and fundraisers and these were advertised at Third Sunday. Attendance by the Cape Town Deaf at these De La Bat sociable occasions varied. A Saturday morning fete that I attended was not well attended by the Cape Town Deaf, but a Family Sports Day held on a Sunday was more popular. An end of the year luncheon for the elderly from both Cape Town and De La Bat hosted by the Director of DCCT was a success and as a token of their appreciation De La Bat sent an attractive pot plant as a 'thank-you'. In general, though, interaction between De La Bat and DCCT was limited to those who had transport or could afford the costs of transport to Bellville. However, given the opportunity, the potential or the possibility for greater interaction existed, and shared language was key as a Sign-language workshop organized by DCCT suggested.

A Workshop for Deaf teachers of Sign language organized by DCCT for the weekend of 19-20 October 1996 and held at the Bastion drew Deaf from Cape Town and Worcester. Stephen Lombard, from Cape Town and a past pupil of Wittebome and Alison Swanack,

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[4] The chaplain at De La Bat, Dominee Rocco Pierre Hough completed a doctorial thesis on the translation of the Bible for the Deaf – *Beginsels vir 'n Bybelvertaling vir Afrikaanse Dowes* (1998)

living in Cape Town at the time, but formerly of Durban, where she went to school, organized the Workshop. The Workshop, apparently the first ever organized by deaf people for deaf people, brought together up to 50 delegates. The participants varied on the basis of age, class, education, full-time occupation, gender, home address, and religion and they included Africans, 'coloureds' and 'whites' relatively evenly drawn from these former categories.

Almost the entire proceedings at the Workshop were Signed. There were only three hearing people present. Debra Aarons, a Sign linguist from the University of Stellenbosch, Philemon Akach, then Deafsa's National Director for Sign Language Services, and myself (and only to video the proceedings). Only Aarons' opening lecture was interpreted. Otherwise there was no interpreting, although the spoken languages varied across Afrikaans, English and Xhosa. Certainly delegates offered different signs for different things, such as items of clothing or various fruits and vegetables - and Deaf teachers of Sign language were also encouraged to use their 'own' signs. In other words there were and are 'vocabulary varieties' (Morgan, 2001: 7). However, it was interesting that while they identified different signs and varieties of vocabulary, there was seemingly no problem in mutual understanding at the level of discussion. There was also no problem communicating at tea and lunch breaks.

In comparison with the Sign language Workshop, interpreting was a noticeable feature of the meetings of Western Cape Forum for the Deaf (WCFD). WCFD meetings included deaf and hearing people. On the first Tuesday of every third month of the year, the venue alternating between, the Bastion, De La Bat, Khayelitsha and Worcester, deaf and hearing people, involved with the Deaf in the region met for discussion, for debate, for dissemination of information, and for planning to address needs for the Deaf. At a well-attended WCFD meeting there were Afrikaans, English and Xhosa speaking interpreters and if a discussion was lively there was much swapping between spoken languages and Sign and Sign by spoken language. However, after the business was completed and refreshments were served, when the WCFD meeting took on a more sociable ambience, there were no interpreters. Again, - as only the Deaf can - with a cup in one hand, eats in the other, handbags and papers somewhere else, the Deaf greeted, chatted, caught up with the news, across the room, across the region.

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When asked, deaf people in the Western Cape may insist that there are differences between 'Gebaretaal' - or Afrikaans Sign and 'English' Sign and Xhosa Sign. It happened regularly when I was first learning the language. Feeling brave enough I would try out the latest addition to my vocabulary, the sign for 'work', for example. The response was always polite but also puzzled. Then what I was trying to convey would dawn. "Ah work! [but you are using], Afrikaans sign, English like this" and I would get a demonstration. The same scene played out with an English (or Cape Town) Sign or a Xhosa Sign. And so I learnt that there were English or Afrikaans or Xhosa signs for the same object. But at tea the same morning the same demonstrators of different Afrikaans, English and Xhosa signs had no problem carrying out animated Signed conversations with each other.

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During the course of fieldwork the issue of different signs was raised more often on the basis of 'old' and 'new' signs. "I do not understand these 'new' signs" I would hear – then though there would be a demonstration of the new signs and a discussion. Certainly the younger Deaf were concerned to change some of the 'old' signs that they found 'politically incorrect'. Certain old signs that used physical characteristics to identify groups were considered 'racist' and therefore inappropriate. My Sign language teacher did not like the combined sign for women/mother that pointed to the breasts. She taught and used a newer sign. The younger Deaf were also keen to change the combined sign for Deaf that suggested 'deaf and dumb'. They preferred the single sign for Deaf that only involved the index and middle fingers to the ear.

However, different signs did not seem to pose a barrier to communication at either the grassroots level or the group level. For instance, in a large residential area, such as Guguletu, Sign-deaf spaces networked across the spoken languages, by school attended, of Afrikaans (Nuwe Hoop), English (Wittebome) and Xhosa (Eastern Cape). Communication was not a barrier to attendance at the De La Bat fundraisers. The barriers were rather to do with geographical distance, lack of transport and cost. Communication was not even a barrier with the oral Deaf when they joined the Deaf to March in October 1995 and other occasions.

Certain characteristics of Sign language seemed to make grassroots networking and networking across various groupings in the Western Cape a distinct possibility and an

actuality for some. Research into Sign language in South Africa (see, for example, Aarons and Morgan, 1998) indicates that linguistically there is one SASL [South African Sign Language]. There may be dialectal variation on the vocabulary level as different groups often have different signs, as the delegates to the Workshop debated, but the grammar of the Sign language is the same for all Deaf people irrespective of 'age, ethnicity or geographical region' (Morgan, 2001: 6-7). Morgan gives an example: 'there are at least four different signs that are used for mother. However, the same grammatical signals on the face are used across cultural/racial groups (Morgan, 2001: 6-7). It is then the grammar that gives Sign its potential to transcend spoken language barriers and as the same authors note Deaf people 'will quickly learn to understand the vocabulary varieties used by other groups' (Morgan, 2001: 7). The question remains as to whether grammar and/or variation in vocabulary make it possible to network even further afield.

Crossing boundaries further afield

… they were conducting an animated conversation with each other as if they were natives of the same country (Rée, [1999] 2000: 198)

It was at the moment when one hundred and fifty pupils, assembled in the eating room, were all sitting at table. As soon as Clerc beheld the sight, his face became animated; he was as agitated as a traveler of sensibility would be, on meeting all on [sic] a sudden, in distant regions, a colony of his countrymen. … He made signs and they answered him on signs (Extract from a letter from Lafon de Ladebat to Sicard describing Laurent Clerc's visit to the London Asylum during his tour, 1815, to London and cited in Rée, [1999] 2000: 198)

The WFD/ RSESA weeklong meeting held at the Bastion (16-19 September 1997) brought together Deaf delegates from up to ten different African countries, including countries as far afield as Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya. It brought together Deaf delegates from the nine provinces in South Africa as well as WFD executive members from European countries such as Finland, Norway and Sweden.

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Deafsa hosted the meeting. DCCT assisted with the preparation. The DCCT Women's Group organized the catering. DCCT representatives and members of the Third Sunday congregation assisted with the registration of the delegates. Delegates stayed in the nearby hotel, an easy walk to the Bastion and the train station. Abigail, Bongani's mother (see Chapter Five) remarked to me at the time that she knew there must have been "something going on at the Bastion" because she saw people Signing on the train.

Sign was the language of the meeting. I attended only one of the sessions, thus my experience is limited. However, even one session was interesting. It was a full session. African, European and South African delegates were present but there were no interpreters, contrary to what I had expected. I expected as many interpreters as there were countries represented at the meeting, which I understand to be routine at international meetings of the Deaf. I anticipated something along the lines of a WCFD meeting but on a much larger scale. Somewhat perplexed at the lack of interpreters, I asked the South African delegate sitting next to me – "Interpreters?" Puzzled at my question, she replied, "Why - we are all Deaf".

This delegate's assumptions were interesting for the extent of the familiarity she assumed on the basis of language. It was particularly interesting because she was from the Worcester School for the Deaf, a school that historically was the first to segregate the 'whites' from the rest of the Deaf in the region. Yet she saw herself as different only from the hearing. She assumed a sameness that transcended South Africa's historical divisions; that included parts of the continent and included certain Deaf from European countries. She assumed an 'unconditionality' or an acceptance and belonging (Frankental, 1998: 161) with the Deaf that was perhaps rooted in the experience of her local networks and that she did not assume with the hearing who were not part of her domestic and near neighbourhood situations.

DCCT representatives also attended the XIII Congress of the WFD 'Diversity and Unity' held in Brisbane (25 – 31 July, 1999). For most of these delegates it was their first trip abroad. On their return to Cape Town they shared their experiences with the Third Sunday congregation – all proudly sporting conference T-shirts, the women delegates adding a 'tourist' touch with new sarong skirts. Afterwards, I asked one of the delegates about the communication. She shrugged "We had a little problem with the Chinese Deaf,

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at first". Then she added, almost in passing. "At lunch time they put us at different tables with people from other countries [to talk and get to know each other] ". Apparently every day at lunch delegates were encouraged to sit with deaf people from other countries. What this said to me was that someone like Vukile, a DCCT delegate was able to go from Khayelitsha to Brisbane and sit down at the luncheon table with people from other parts of the world and they were all able to chat in their first language.

The question has been raised (see Chapter Two) as to whether Sign is mutually intelligible across spoken language barriers, especially internationally (see, for example, Battison and Jordan, 1976; Kyle and Woll, 1985; 162-172). It is perhaps not so much a matter of whether it is or not but rather of context. In a context, such as an international conference or the local WCFD meeting, where deaf people come together from different spoken language backgrounds and it is important to record the proceedings in the written word, hearing interpreters who are competent in the local regional and international varieties of Sign language are essential. But in other situations context counts.

Context influenced Sign language linguistics. Early writers claimed (as I mentioned in Chapter Two) that Sign was universally and easily understood (see, for example, Long, 1918; Michaels, 1923 and Nevins, 1895). When oralism prevailed again in 1880, interest in Sign linguistics declined (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 76). It resumed again in the 1960s after Sign was legitimized, (see Stokoe, 1960; Stokoe, Casterline and Cronenberg, 1976). Sign language was legitimized into a context of increasing scholarly concern with difference and ethnicity. By 1968 Derrida was already theorizing 'difference' at the French Philosophical Society (Alarcon, 1994: 128). In this context Sign language research focus changed from an earlier concern with universality to difference and references to Sign languages as mutually unintelligible became more and more common (see Kyle and Woll, 1985:163).

Recent South African work has moved again to look to mutual intelligibility or commonalities (see, for example, Aarons and Akach, 1998). The view of different Sign languages paralleling the various spoken languages in this country is perhaps a somewhat artificial distinction. It probably reflects more the historical divisions of the country that also implemented Deaf schooling by spoken language (see Chapter Four).

spoken languages, some have argued that differences between South Africa's eleven official languages are more political than linguistic (Prah, [1995] 2000). Deaf people in urban areas quickly become multi-dialectical once they have been exposed to other varieties of SASL (Morgan, 2001: 7). Similarly in many of South Africa's urban areas speakers of South Africa's local African languages that also share a grammar, also soon become multi-dialectical (Prah, [1995] 2000).

There are many references in the literature to deaf people conversing in Sign across spoken language boundaries. The 19th century Parisian Deaf entertained Deaf guests from Italy, England, Germany, America and Argentina at their 'Banquets' (Mottez, 1993: 32). On a tour to Britain in 1815, Frenchman Laurent Clerc conducted 'an animated conversation' with the pupils of a London school for the Deaf in Sign 'as if they were natives of the same country' (see Rée, [1999] 2000: 198) – and interestingly at the London school Sign was banned and spoken English promoted.

When deaf people get together in more sociable contexts - unlike the formality of a conference, a lecture or a business meeting - 'it is more possible to ask for clarification, indeed much more possible to quickly teach one another certain vocabulary items, which for the deaf can be done in the register of 'classifier' description – i.e. description based on map-like representations, utilizing a repertoire of handshapes signifying distinct sorts of physical objects and physical surfaces' (Bechter[5], personal communication by email 10 February 2002). The question then is what does Sign's apparent mutual intelligibility in sociable context indicate about identity?

Sign and social identity

Sign offers a familiarity, a communality, commonality and – difference. As David Wright has put it

A party of about a dozen people came in and took a table next to mine. Again the sense of familiarity: in a moment or two I guessed they were deaf. ... None of them spoke English, while I had two words of Italian, one was *sordo* and the other *scusa* .

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[5] Bechter is a Doctoral student in the department of anthropology, University of Chicago (see Bechter, 1999).

The party was a deaf-and-dumb club from the Piazza Gesù having its annual dinner. The president was a garage hand from Ostia; the others were tailors, carpenters, seamstresses. All this they told me with a few fluent movements. Our communications by-passed language. On one level I understood what they said better than a hearing Italian could have – and vice versa; we belonged after all to a country bounded by the same silent frontier ([1969] 1993: 135).

Sign was a marker of Deaf identity. When David Wright saw the Italians at the table next to him Signing, it only took him 'a moment or two' to 'guess' that they were Deaf ([1969] 1993: 135). When Sarah and I were having a fieldwork conversation over a cup of tea in a restaurant it did not take long for the deaf couple next to us to 'guess' she was Deaf. It did not take long for a deaf *Big Issue*[6] vendor to 'guess' Sarah was deaf, when he saw her Signing. Sarah 'guessed' correctly that a couple of tourists from United States were deaf when she noticed them Signing at the Golden Acre Shopping Mall in central Cape Town.

Sign suggested a familiarity and communality. David Wright expresses the familiarity as a sense of belonging: 'we belonged after all to a country bounded by the same silent frontier' ([1969] 1993: 135). David Wright felt a familiarity when he saw the Italians Signing and he approached and began to converse. The same happened in Cape Town when Sarah and I were having a cup of tea. It happened with the Big Issue vendor and it happened with the visitors from the United States at the Golden Acre Shopping Mall in central Cape Town. Sign offered Vukile a familiarity at the WFD Congress. It offered the opportunity locally in the Western Cape and in Cape Town in the Sign-deaf spaces of neighbourhood and close friendship.

Sign suggested a commonality: 'citizens' of the same country bounded by the same 'silent frontier'. The 'silent frontier' of the 'country' of the Deaf (Wright, [1969] 1993: 135) was not geographical but sensory. The boundary shifted, in Vukile's case, for instance from the grassroots of Khayelitsha in Cape Town to Brisbane. The boundary was not, however, exclusively Deaf. It included hearing people, as this study has demonstrated. It

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[6] *The Big Issue* is sold by socially excluded people who buy the magazine at for R4.55 and sell it to the public for R8.95. The Big Issue South Africa is a member of the International Network of Street Papers (INSP).

included deaf people trained in the oral tradition, such as David Wright and past pupils of Hout Bay, who, although not frequent attenders at Third Sunday, were not absent from other Deaf occasions, such as the March in October 1995.

In summary: Sign gave commonality and difference. Within the networks and boundaries of the country with the shifting 'silent frontier', the 'citizens' saw themselves as Deaf and others too saw them in this way. But they were also many other things besides and in addition to being deaf. David Wright was a South Africa born, Oxford educated British resident while his supper companions were Italian members of a club as well as being garage mechanics, tailors and seamstresses. Vukile at the WFD conference was Deaf and South African. He was a South African from Khayelitsha who was son, husband, father, member of a household, worker, neighbour and friend. We see then that Sign gives an identity and, at the same time, by creating Sign-<u>deaf</u> spaces deaf people also used the networks to disperse social identity. The paradoxical outcome was that 'in the country with the silent frontier' (Wright, [1969] 1993: 135) - or in the 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) with a 'diasporic' form (Clifford, 1994) – its citizens are not deaf – certainly not in any social deficit sense.

The next chapter, Chapter Seven, demonstrates the Deaf dealing with transformation. The chapter examines the Deaf dealing with transformation via a case of leadership succession that I witnessed between 1995 and 2000. I present the case as a 'social drama' (Turner, [1957] 1972) for reasons I give. I show that change of leadership and competition for these positions over this period reflected the different historical routes of the Deaf. The discourse during the course of the case also reflected historical routes. However, conflict along these historical lines, while seeming divisive, may also suggest an on-going process of change towards a more fluid and inevitably more integrated South African society.

Chapter Seven: Leadership succession as a 'social drama'[1]
Managing transformation and insights from the Deaf

Dog training video: Police brutality racism exposed (Headline, *Cape Times*, 8 November 2000).

"Is jy 'n kaffir? Sê jy is 'n kaffir!" – One of the dog unit officers to an illegal immigrant while he was being bitten by a dog (Verbatim, *Mail and Guardian*, 10-16 November 2000).

Brutal images that tear at the soul of the nation (Oppelt, *Sunday Times*, 12 November 2000).

Good apples give cover to bad apples while the tree rots (Mangcu, *Sunday Independent*, 12 November 2000).

God help us we are a nation in trouble (du Preez, *Cape Argus*, 9 November 2000).

When the news gets a nation talking (Editorial, *Sunday Independent*, 12 November 2000).

Trauma centers get inundated with calls (Geldenhuys, *Cape Times*, 9 November 2000).

Shocked and shamed by police brutality (Jaqui Perkes, Johannesburg; Makgwathane Mothopo, Pretoria; Heather Dailey, Johannesburg; Mandisi Tyumre, Cape Town, James Tindale, Tailwaggers Dog Academy, Benoni, Gauteng; Geoffrey Kennell, Nelspruit, Mpumalanga, Letters to the Editor, *Sunday Times*, 12 November 2000).

In early November 2000, the weekly television programme, *Special Assignment,* screened a video, filmed in 1998, of an apparently racist attack on 'black' immigrants by 'white' police from the North East Dog Unit (see SABC3, 7 November 2000). For once the response by South Africans was seemingly non-racial. There were no 'black' views

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[1] Turner (1957)

or 'white' views. South Africans were equally shocked, outraged and dismayed across the board and almost to a person. Politicians and civic leaders from the African National Congress through to Pieter Mulder of the Freedom Front spoke out (see, for example Quotes of the Week, *Sunday Times*, 12 November 2000; Verbatim; *Mail and Guardian*, 10-16 November 2000). Phylicia Oppelt was distressed (*Sunday Times*, 12 November 2000). Xolela Mangcu was angry (*Sunday Independent*, 12 November 2000). Max du Preez despaired (*Cape Argus,* 9 November 2000). But the nation was talking (Editorial, *Sunday Independent,* 12 November 2000). Phone lines were jammed as radio stations, help lines, Trauma and Counseling Units, and Conflict Resolution centres fielded calls (Geldenhuys, *Cape Times*, 9 November 2000). Letters to the Editors flooded the daily and weekly press (see, for example, Letters to the Editor, *Sunday Times*, 12 November 2000).

Bishop Dandala was equally incensed (see Quotes of the Week, *Sunday Times*, 12 November 2000) but he was also heartened by the widespread shock and dismay, especially by ordinary South Africans (Safm, *1 O'Clock Live*, 8 November 2000). Archbishop Tutu, too, (see *Special Assignment* SABC3, 14 November 2000) chose to focus attention on the responses by ordinary South Africans, wide-ranging but similar in the distress expressed. Tutu saw it as a measure of change and despite the awfulness of the attack he was encouraged: South Africa and South Africans had changed. Transformation, the onerous task that endeavors to take South African society from apartheid to democracy was apparently in process.

Transformation may be in process but it is often difficult to know how it is occurring. It is, for instance, sometimes only evident after the event. It was only after the screening of the video on *Special Assignment* (SABC3, 7 November 2000) that Dandala and Tutu noticed and remarked on the widespread change among South Africans. Transformation is often occurring out of sight hidden in the common place of everyday life. Consequently it is difficult to detect, capture, document and explain.

This study gave me the opportunity to observe transformation in progress. Carried out from 1995 to 2001 the study was conducted in the context of a transforming South Africa. Thus far I have focused on the everyday life of the Deaf and how they strategize to deal with being deaf in a hearing world. This chapter turns to focus on the Deaf

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dealing with transformation. The chapter describes a case of leadership succession that occurred between 1995 and 2000. With the demise of apartheid the South African National Council for the Deaf (SANCD) returned to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) as Deafsa. The WFD's leadership requirement of 60 percent Deaf offered unprecedented leadership opportunities for the Deaf but this was not without competition. However, the manner in which the Deaf resolved the competition and related issues arising around the leadership succession was interesting. To demonstrate some of these interesting insights from the Deaf, this chapter presents the case of leadership succession as a 'social drama' (Turner, [1957] 1972) for some of the following reasons.

Reasons for a 'social drama'

There were similarities between the 'Deaf drama' and Turner's ([1957] 1972) use of the notion of the 'social drama' that I found difficult to ignore. The theme was similar. Turner used the 'social drama' as an extended case (Gluckman, 1940) to examine a 'particular long, drawn-out dispute about succession to headmanship' that involved particular persons at a particular place and at a particular time (Falk Moore, 1993: 17). Similarly this Deaf drama is not about leadership succession in general. Rather it is about particularities - particular individuals at a particular place at a particular time.

The case of leadership succession unfolded like a drama. However, it was not a 'performance' (Sharp and Boonzaier, 1994). Sharp and Boonzaier (1994) have likened a recent emergence of Nama ethnic identity and its staging to celebrate a particular occasion, a legal victory to a land rights claim for a particular audience of invited and interested persons to a performance. The Deaf drama that I observed was not a performance in this sense. It was not a single event deliberately staged to celebrate a particular occasion for a particular invited audience. Instead like a 'social drama' (Turner, [1957] 1972) it was drawn out over a period of five years between 1995 and 2000 and was part of on-going social life.

Because social life is never neat, always cluttered, it is not easy to carve out a small segment for examination, which is where the notion of the 'social drama' (Turner, [1957] 1972: xvii and 91-93) was again useful. The notion of the social drama as Turner ([1957]

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1972) applied it offers a framework or a method to address the difficult task of capturing the process of change in the context of on-going everyday social life. The social drama as a framework divides the process into four phases viz 'breach', through 'crises', through 'redressive action' to a 'resolution' that may be 'reintegration' or 'recognition of schism' (Turner [1957] 1972: 92). Turner also cautions that not every social drama corresponds exactly to the model and under varying circumstances it may not proceed 'smoothly or inevitably from phase to phase ' ([1957] 1972: 92).

'Breach' for the Deaf drama marked the context, the break with the past and the beginning of transformation. In this context, as I hope to demonstrate, a number of smaller events eventually led to a 'crisis'. The crisis demanded 'redressive action'. Their redressive action disclosed the Deaf using their social resources, their available social capital. Using their social capital they reached a series of 'resolutions'. Some involved 'recognition of schism' or breaks with the past. Some were more 're-integrative'. But overall it was possible to observe change in process.

The process of Deaf leadership succession was not without conflict and this was an additional reason for returning to Turner's ([1957] 1972) work. For Turner and his colleagues at the Rhodes- Livingstone and Manchester groups, influenced by Gluckman's deep interest in it (Falk Moore, 1993: 15), conflict was an important element of change. Conflict can be many things, from battles and brawls to mere disagreement. Microsoft Word's thesaurus offers 14 alternatives for conflict[2]. Conflict in its many forms as repeated 'internal inconsistencies' is an on-going process leading to change (Epstein, [1958] 1973: xvii). 'Fresh sources of conflict are continually generated in the development process itself' (Epstein, [1958] 1973: 228). Conflict and its resolution provides part of the momentum to further adjustment and change' (Epstein, [1958] 1973: 228). These political conflicts or 'internal inconsistencies' may be resolved 'through the operation of the principle of situational selection' (Epstein, [1958] 1973: xvii). In other words, as I see it, consciously or not, people make use of their social resources, what they have, or their social capital, to resolve conflict and in the process forge change. The lengthy case follows and thereafter I discuss it in the context of a range of responses by other South Africans to transformation.

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[2] These include disagreement, clash, divergence, difference, argument, variance, quarrel, inconsistency, discord, contradiction, dispute, tension, controversy and fracas – and fracas can be a brawl.

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Into the breach ...

South Africans and the Deaf were well 'into the breach' or the break with apartheid when on the evening of 23 October 1995, Dominic O Majiwa addressed a meeting at the Bastion. Majiwa, a deaf Kenyan, addressed the meeting at the Bastion as Director of Regional Secretariat of Eastern and Southern Africa (RSESA) and a representative of South Africa at the WFD. This, his first visit to Cape Town, was part of a national tour to look at South Africa's services for the Deaf and to attend Deafsa's national conference in Johannesburg, its first as the newly constituted Deafsa.

It is almost impossible to define exactly when the breach or the break with apartheid occurred and the transformation began. All that can really be said is that the process began some time before the election of 1994. For Cape Town, the March for Peace in September 1989 may serve as a useful public, although arbitrary, reference point. Then, in their tens of thousands, Capetonians, in defiance of the nationalist government's longtime ban on marches, thronged their way from St George's Cathedral, down Adderley Street to the Grand Parade, behind Archbishop Tutu and the Mayor, among other concerned business and civic leaders. In February the following year, then President de Klerk unbanned the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Soon afterwards, in February 1990, Nelson Mandela was released from prison. As the negotiations that would lead to the first democratic elections in 1994 proceeded, South Africans at many levels of society, including sport, medical research (where I was employed at the time) and business were soon 'into the breach' taking advantage of a world opening up to them after decades of isolation.

The South African Deaf too, after years of isolation as a result of apartheid, began to negotiate their return to the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). The South African Deaf worked with the WFD and RSESA to ensure their return. The return demanded attention to WFD's leadership requirements.

The leadership requirements of the WFD posed certain challenges for Deafsa. Hearing people had always held the majority of senior positions at the former South African Council for the Deaf (SANCD). Deafsa was faced with changing this almost 100 percent

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hearing profile of the former SANCD leadership to 60 percent Deaf. This was necessary at national level. It was also necessary in the four pre-1994 provinces, the Cape, Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal[3] where organizational structures were already in place. It was also necessary in the five additional post-1994 provinces. In these five additional provinces it was not only necessary to establish leadership and ensure it was 60 percent Deaf but also to set up organizational structures that they would lead.

The leadership demands were high but supply was limited for a number of reasons. The hearing had held the majority of positions, especially the senior posts, at the SANCD for so long that there were relatively few deaf people with the necessary administrative experience to undertake leadership roles. Apartheid had limited the educational achievements of the majority of African and 'coloured' Deaf. In addition organizational work with its administrative and related duties may not appeal to everyone, which limits the pool of available candidates to those who would be interested in this kind of work.

Although supply was generally limited, there was qualified leadership available to replace the hearing at national level. By March 1996, Kobus Kellerman had moved from Cape Town to Johannesburg to take up the post as the first ever deaf National Director of the SANCD/Deafsa. Kellerman, after matriculating from Worcester, attended a hearing university and graduated having had little or no assistance for his deafness, except from friends, and continued to complete a postgraduate degree. At the time of his appointment to Deafsa he was a professional accountant at a Cape Town firm. His academic credentials and activism in the Western Cape had also been acknowledged much more widely than Cape Town and South Africa. He was short-listed for an international post at the WFD about the same time as the then hearing National Director of the SANCD offered to retire. With the national post assured, Kellerman gave up the international opportunity to stay on in South Africa.

The leadership succession in the Western Cape, however, was not so easily resolved. The hearing director of Deafsa Western Cape stayed on. Unlike the national director, he was a younger man. A young man with a young family and mortgages, he was not at an age or in a position to retire. He stayed on even though in the Western Cape, unlike

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[3] Since 1994 the names of these pre-1994 Provinces have changed as follows: the Cape to Western Cape; Natal to KwaZulu Natal; the Orange Free State to the Free State; the Transvaal to Gauteng.

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some of the newer provinces, there was a considerable pool of relatively able and experienced deaf people. In the Western Cape, although hearing people may have held the senior positions in government organizations, deaf people were already in leading positions in the non-government organizations such as the De La Bat congregation and DCCT (see Chapter Six). Education in the Western Cape has a long history. Although the educational achievements of the African and 'coloured' Deaf had been limited, Worcester and Hout Bay had been taking students to matriculation for some time, Worcester, since 1968 (see Chapter Four).

By early 1996 rumblings of discontent regarding the hearing Director of Deafsa Western Cape could already be heard. There were complaints about the Director's management style. He was not a businessman. He was ineffective. He was blamed for the poor organization of the Deaf March in October 1995 in Cape Town's city centre when the Deaf did not have permission from the authorities to march in the street. The March was therefore confined to the pavements where the Deaf were forced to compete with Saturday morning shoppers in a congested city centre. It was chaotic at times, although I enjoyed the experience. I joined a group of fellow marchers and all we did was keep a tall deaf man with a tall banner in our sights. We followed him as he forged a path through the busy pavements filled with sometimes-bemused shoppers.

There were also complaints that the Director did not Sign well. Signing had not been a criterion for the hearing management at the SANCD. For most of the SANCD's 70-year history, oralism had dominated. But increasingly, more progressive hearing professionals who worked with the Deaf were becoming fluent in Sign. Ronel Davids, for example, a social worker on the Deafsa Western Cape staff was sufficiently fluent to interpret in certain situations. Louise Reynolds, an audiologist from the University of Cape Town was also fluent and encouraged her students to learn to Sign. The Deaf began to see it was possible for hearing professionals to Sign.

The Director was certainly helpful to me when I first visited the Bastion, offering statistics and literature. He put me in touch with my Sign language teacher. He took me on as a volunteer and placed me usefully. However, even then I remember him saying to me "the Deaf must tell me what they want". He may have meant well. He claimed he wanted to empower the Deaf, a righteous sentiment that he perhaps saw as the appropriate

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attitude for transformation. But empowerment without direction led to inertia. In waiting to be told what to do or what people wanted, nothing may get done. In the Western Cape the Social Work Programme was delayed. It was a serious delay. Government subsidies rested on the Programme. It was a 'crisis'. The crises called for an Extraordinary Meeting. The Extraordinary Meeting motivated the first phase of redressive action.

A crisis

…have things really changed in the Deaf community? We see a new Deafsa, something we are really grateful for – but have the attitudes of white Deaf people really changed? (Newhoudt [-Druchen], 1996)

In the face of the continuing delay with the Social Work Programmer by the end of 1996, Kobus Kellerman felt compelled to come to the Bastion from Johannesburg to find out for himself what the problems were. By early 1997 when problems were not yet resolved, Kellerman organized an extraordinary meeting of the Western Cape Advisory Committee. The meeting was held at the Bastion on a Saturday (1 March 1997) and was chaired by one of Deafsa's lawyers especially flown from Durban for the occasion. The proceedings were in Sign and interpreted for the hearing participants. Nearly 100 people attended the meeting, including Deaf and hearing Africans, 'coloureds' and 'whites' The Director was asked not to attend and he did not.

The chairman opened the meeting by explaining the reason for holding it. "Why was there no social work programme?" "Why was the Western Cape at a standstill?" In comparison, the chairman claimed, a touch condescendingly, his home province KwaZulu Natal had compiled an exemplary plan. He chided the audience. "Why were workers not going out to areas to find out problems and needs for services?" "Why were the organizations working separately for their own needs?" Why were people resigning from Deafsa Western Cape?" A social worker had apparently tended her resignation because of the problems she was having with the Director. Then by way of setting an agenda for the meeting, the chairman asked the audience to list their grievances.

Listing their grievances took the meeting in another direction, almost as if the audience had not heard the chairman's opening words. The social work programme was not top

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nor anywhere on this list. The first grievance to be listed to the newsprint flip chart was 'race and politics'. The next was the 'Director Western Cape' followed by 'unequal distribution of resources'. The audience then added such problems as 'decisions taken without discussion'; 'poor distribution of information'; 'unhappy relationships between affiliates of Deafsa Western Cape'; 'the role of the Deaf and the respective hearing'; 'Sign language and its differences in the Western Cape' (although, the chairman dismissed this last item as 'not a problem in the Western Cape'). When 'culture' was put forward from the floor as a separate item for discussion the chairman asked "Deaf culture or culture between different communities?" The chairman's question stimulated a debate and eventually it was decided that both were relevant. Thereupon the chairman moved 'culture' to be listed with the first item 'race and politics' and after this the meeting began.

"Let's talk, how is it [race, politics, culture] affecting the Deaf?" He soon felt the need to explain. Race and politics, he explained, was a difficult problem with a long history. "It was okay for people not to invite others to their homes" but for the purposes of the meeting he wanted to know if people were excluded from Sports Clubs or schools "on the basis of colour". He went on "Is there racism at work? Do the 'whites' chase the 'Blacks' away? Do the Muslims get chased away?" This was not, however, how one of the members of the audience saw it. "No, I work with any deaf person", replied a member of the audience, almost surprised that he would be asked to distinguish among the Deaf at work on the basis skin colour and religion.

The disagreements went on to centre on unequal access to resources. First it was access to resources held by the various committees. The Bastion Committee or the Provincial Advisory Committee, which of these the members of the audience wanted to know, had control over resources? Which Committee had the power to distribute resources? Committees tended to be a mix of deaf people from Cape Town and Worcester and included African, 'coloured' and 'white' members. But then the concern turned to unequal distribution to resources among the 'white' Deaf and the African and 'coloureds". "The 'white' Deaf had everything", a member of the audience complained. "They did not help", even with "things like transport". The 'white' Deaf in the audience were hurt. "What must we do?" "Please do not blame all the 'whites'.

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The meeting then returned to the problem of the Director and the same complaints began to be repeated, such as his management style, his ineffectiveness. At this stage the Chairman was getting concerned. The Social Work Programme had still not been discussed. Then it was suggested that one of the solutions to the problems would be a new Director. Almost relieved to be able to get on to the urgent matter of the Programme, the chairman asked for the request to be put in writing since it was not a matter he could deal with at the meeting.

The Social Work Programme was ostensibly the 'crisis' and the initial reason for calling the meeting. But given the opportunity the Deaf commandeered the meeting to air their grievances as they saw them. Many of these grievances reflected and were expressed in a discourse that reflected South Africa's historical divisions and the discriminatory distribution of resources in the past. For instance, as one member of the audience suggested, "the 'white' Deaf had everything". But the discourse was not strictly along these lines. At another level, complaints were general about access to resources by different Committees and membership of committees tended to be more of a mix of Africans 'coloureds' and 'whites'. It was also interesting that one of the Deaf participants found it difficult to understand 'racism' as the lawyer explained it. The Deaf participant was not put off by skin colour and religion. He worked with any deaf person and was surprised that he would be asked to distinguish among the Deaf with whom he worked.

By the end of the meeting it was decided that a new director could possibly be the answer to the problems. The decision to lobby for a new director marked the beginning of redressive action. Symbolically the idea of a new Director offered a fresh start, an opportunity to get rid of the old order and begin creating the new. The Director, as an individual, was unfortunate in that he represented all that was old order in terms of South African sentiments at the time. He was 'white' Afrikaans speaking and male. In terms of Deaf sentiments of the time he was hearing, when leadership positions were opening up for the Deaf for the first time. At the extraordinary meeting the Deaf only expressed a wish for a new Director. They did not specify any criteria, especially whether the new person should be Deaf or hearing. However, at the Leadership Workshop also held at the Bastion a few months later the Deaf were more specific. They specified they wanted a Deaf Director.

'Deaf Director Now': redressive action continues …

The tone, as well as the content, of the [University of Gallaudet] board's announcement caused outrage: it was here the chairman of the board, Jane Bassett Spilman, made her comment that " the deaf are not yet ready to function in a hearing world" (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 128).

Leadership Workshops a collaborative project with Gallaudet were part of Deafsa's initiative to fast track management skills. The plan was that the Deaf from Gallaudet would train the first group. This first group would then advance further training locally. One of the first workshops was held at the Bastion over the weekend of 21-22 June 1997. There were no interpreters. All the participants were Deaf. Lindsay Dunn led the workshop.

Dunn impressed me as a man of quiet but considerable presence. On the first day of the Workshop Dunn looked fashionably 'Washington' in a long overcoat over a dark suit. An elegant fedora protected his clean-shaven head from Cape Town's winter cold and a pair of stylish rimless spectacles completed the image. However, although he may have looked Washington, he was originally from South Africa and a past pupil of Wittebome. The attenders at the Workshop greeted him warmly. They were proud of him. Dunn was a particularly successful student at Wittebome, who left Wittebome to complete his schooling. On completion of his schooling in South Africa, a bursary took him to Gallaudet where he went on to a complete postgraduate degree. At the time of the Workshop he held a position at Gallaudet equivalent to a Deputy Vice Chancellor at a South African university.

At the second session of the first day of the Workshop Dunn screened a video of the 1988 student protest at Gallaudet (see also Sacks, [1989] 1991: 127 – 162). Sacks sums up the reason for this widely publicized protest as follows.

Wednesday morning March 9, 1988: 'Strike at Gallaudet,' 'Deaf Strike for the Deaf,' 'Students Demand a Deaf President' – the media are full of these happenings today; they started three days ago, have been steadily building, and are now on the front page of the *New York Times*. It looks like an amazing story … Gallaudet is the only

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liberal arts college for the Deaf in the world and is, moreover, the core of the deaf community – but in all its 124 year history it has never had a deaf president (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 127)

By 1988, despite its prominence in the life of the American Deaf for 124 years, Gallaudet had not yet had a Deaf President, or Vice Chancellor. When Jerry Lee, a hearing person resigned, the opportunity for a Deaf President of the University presented itself. Immediately after Lee's resignation, the students began their campaign to replace him with a Deaf President. The University Administration failed them. On March 6, 1988 they selected Elizabeth Ann Zinzer, the only hearing person among the three candidates short-listed for the position (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 128),

To explain the selection of Zinzer, Spilman, a spokesperson for the university explained: "the Deaf are not yet ready to function in a hearing world" (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 128). The students erupted. By 8 March 1988, they had closed the university and barricaded the campus. The 'Deaf Prez Now' campaign took on an unprecedented momentum aided by the media whom students kept well informed via their ably orchestrated publicity arrangements (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 133). Eventually both Zinzer and Spilman resigned. By Sunday, 11 March 1988, and after a 9-hour meeting the Board were able to announce that King Jordan, deafened at 21 years of age, would be the next President (Sacks, [1989] 1991: 160).

The video hit a chord with the Workshop attenders at the Bastion in Cape Town. They greeted the Gallaudet video enthusiastically. If the students at Gallaudet could change history, then so could they. The Workshop attenders were soon up off their seats. Clenched fists punched the air. Some of the more athletic and energetic did a toyi toyi[4]. Then a Workshop attender started to chant in Sign, 'Deaf Director Now'. They all took it up. Within minutes everybody was chanting. The idea of a Deaf Director has taken hold publicly. Only some ten odd years after the successful Gallaudet campaign, the Deaf in Cape Town and the Western Cape were not far behind their American counterparts. But it was not a matter of days as it was at Gallaudet before the hearing director resigned.

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[4] The mixed marching-cum-dancing style that marked South Africa's anti-apartheid protests, especially during the 1980s.

At a Western Cape Forum meeting later in the same year the hearing director offered to resign - or perhaps not quite exactly. As was his style, a style that at times had been a bone of contention, the Director suggested he would leave it to the Deaf to decide whether he should resign or not. Some were adamant: he must resign; others disagreed. The Director put them in an awkward position. Understandably they did not want the responsibility for his resignation and for his future. Once again the issue was not resolved.

However, by the end of 1997 the director had resigned. The staff at the Bastion said their farewells at the end-of-working-year 'braai'. His resignation ended 70 years of hearing leadership in the Western Cape. The first phase of the leadership succession was complete. The way was open for the Deaf in the Western Cape to take up available leadership positions.

The director's resignation can be seen as 'recognition of schism' between the old hearing dominated leadership and the new Deaf order. The ushering in of the new Deaf order of leadership included competition, conflict and dispute. The process exposed some of South Africa's historical routes. Some of the discourse of the competition and dispute was couched in terms of old South African apartheid category discourse of race conflated with culture. As the new opportunities for agency and power presented themselves, new voices among the Deaf began to stake their claims.

Deaf Directors: more crises more redressive action and re-integration

We [the Deaf] should be one family yet only whites and coloureds are getting opportunities for upliftment and blacks are being ignored and treated as if stupid (Velemane as reported by Bamford, *Cape Argus*, 21 September 1999)

In March 1998 Wilma Newhoudt-Druchen took over as the Director of Deafsa Western Cape. In contrast to the former incumbent she represented, in many ways, everything that was the 'new' order. She was 'coloured', a woman, Deaf and a social worker with an undergraduate and masters degree from Gallaudet University. Even so she was not to stay Director of Deafsa Western Cape for long.

Newhoudt-Druchen stood for Parliament as an African National Congress (ANC) candidate in South Africa's second general election during 1999. When the ANC won the 1999 election by a large majority, she became a Member of Parliament, the first-ever deaf person to do so in South Africa. Election to Parliament meant that she resigned from her post as Director. Stephen Lombard, then Director at DCCT, took over some of Newhoudt-Druchen's duties at the Bastion. At the same time he, among others, applied for the vacant post as Director of Deafsa Western Cape. As the months went by, despite much conjecture, nobody was sure who the next Director would be.

The new Director was due to be announced by Kobus Kellerman at the meeting of the Western Cape Forum (WCFD), held at the Bastion, 6 November 1999 - unusually on a Saturday to coincide with a 'mini-fete' fund-raiser and to mark the last WCFD meeting for the 20th century. But Kellerman had to inform the meeting that he was unable to make the announcement. There was a problem. Apparently, according to the criteria laid down for the post, the Director required a university degree. Without a university degree, Deafsa would be forced to forfeit the government subsidy for the Director's salary. In light of South Africa's history, this qualification criterion obviously limited African and 'coloured' Deaf candidates unfairly. With these restrictions in mind Deafsa, had been negotiating with the authorities to have the qualification criteria altered. At the time of the meeting, the outcome of these negotiations was not clear. But in time the way was cleared for candidates without university degrees. Stephen Lombard, an able and experienced candidate was appointed to the post and he took up his position early in 2000.

The second phase of the leadership succession that saw Stephen Lombard take up his position, maintained the break with the hearing leadership dominated past that was established during the first phase. Even though hearing candidates with degrees had applied for the Director's post, after Newhoudt-Druchen resigned, it went to a Deaf candidate. Offering the post to a Deaf candidate without a degree made for further change. Higher education and its relationship with social class was no longer a barrier and the way was open for non-degreed African and 'coloured' Deaf.

A few months before Lombard's appointment, Desmond Velemane, expressed his concern for what he saw as a neglect of the needs of the African Deaf. He claimed that

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"only whites and coloureds are getting opportunities for upliftment and blacks are being ignored and treated as if stupid" (Velemane, quoted in Bamford, *Cape Argus*, 21 September 1999). Velemane, claiming to represent 280 deaf people (Bamford, *Cape Argus*, 21 September 1999), was probably expressing the concerns of a particular group of younger African Deaf, those like himself who were born in Cape Town but were forced to attend school in the Eastern Cape, as a result of the impact of influx control on Deaf education (see Chapter Four).

Velemane's concerns exposed the differential impact of apartheid on the Deaf. The particular group of African Deaf that Velemane stood for represented, historically, the third phase of segregation at Grimley. First, when Wittebome School was established, the Africans and 'coloureds' were separated from the 'white' Deaf. Then as apartheid legislation caught up with Deaf education, Wittebome was declared a 'coloured' school. It was closed to Africans and they were sent out of Cape Town to the Eastern Cape.

Velemane took the opportunity of the Western Cape Forum meeting (6 November 1999) with its focus on leadership (among other issues), to challenge Newhoudt-Druchen that she was failing the Deaf in parliament. She was not delivering on the promise of a Deaf member of parliament. At the meeting he again spelt out the needs of his constituency as he had done in a newspaper article earlier.

> "... black deaf people got no feedback about what was happening in Parliament ... Wilma Newhoudt-Druchen, the first deaf MP, had promised to help in the past but now appeared to have forgotten about them ... deaf people unlike those who were physically and mentally disabled were not given grants by the government ... many black deaf people were unemployed and those with jobs were badly paid. Some earn R50 a month as labourers, others do voluntary work and don't even get paid" (see Bamford *Cape Argus*, 21 September 1999).

In the same newspaper article Newhoudt-Druchen denied that she had forgotten the African Deaf: "How could I when I am deaf myself" (see Bamford *Cape Argus*, 21 September 1999). But at the Western Cape Forum Meeting (6 November 2000), she admitted that she was new to Parliament. She still had much to learn. She had little choice about the work that she could do, about the Parliamentary Committee that she

was assigned to. In Parliament as a member of the Communications Committee she was focusing on the following

> "I would rather focus on the needs of the deaf like the need for better education, sign language as the official language and job opportunities. We also need assistive devices to provide us with full access to information since we are going into the global age, subtitles on television and equal access to housing" (see Bamford *Cape Argus*, 21 September 1999)

However, whether Newhoudt-Druchen's focus was satisfactory for Velemane's constituency and their basic needs for income and shelter was questionable. Better Deaf education was not the immediate concern of his constituency. Their children were hearing. Lobbying for Sign as the country's 12th official language was not of immediate concern in domestic, neighbourhood and sociable relationships, given the Signing spaces that I have described. Certainly if lobbying for Sign as the country's 12th official language improved access to affordable interpreter services then it would be helpful. But thus far it is clear to all that official language status for eleven of South Africa's spoken languages has done little for interpreting service more widely. Subtitles for television and assistive devices to provide access to information in the global age are also helpful, but as Velemane must have known in his challenge, they could not replace the need for jobs and housing, issues where Newhoudt-Druchen has little jurisdiction.

At the same Western Cape Forum Meeting (6 November, 1999) Velemane also reiterated his call for an office for the Deaf in Khayelitsha. At first his call was not well received. It was costly to set up an additional office. Yet for reasons of geographical convenience for the Deaf, a satellite office in Khayelitsha made some practical sense and in time it was established. There was a resolution. Velemane was appeased. The younger Eastern Cape educated Deaf, represented by Velemane on this occasion had a foothold in the process that may in time lead to leadership positions. At the same time as the younger Deaf found a foothold in the leadership process, a hearing 'white' male Afrikaans speaking social worker was employed.

Reintegration

A hearing 'white' male Afrikaans speaking social worker replaced the social worker that Newhoudt-Druchen invited to join her in Parliament as interpreter. The profile of the replacement social worker at Deafsa was similar to that of the Director whose staying on began this case. The social worker's employment reintegrated the hearing 'white' Afrikaans speaking male into the organization, however, not as the Director, but as a professional. As a professional social worker and in line with more progressive approaches to Sign language, the new social worker ensured that he was reasonably proficient in the language in a relatively short time. He was well received not only for his Signing skills but also for his competence and personal style.

The reintegration of the white male Afrikaans speaking social worker closes this case and the phase of the leadership succession that occurred during the period of my fieldwork. Looking back from the end of the case to its beginning change was apparent. The former hearing leadership had given way to the Deaf. With the hearing removed divisions emerged among the Deaf. First it was differential access to education. Those without university degrees – the majority of the African and 'coloured' Deaf - were limited in their aspirations. After changes to the qualification criteria for the Directorship were implemented the younger African Deaf most affected by influx control began to make a play for leadership.

Change had occurred and there was also continuity. The composition of the staff of Deafsa Western Cape was similar in terms of old apartheid categories, although the ordering was different. A 'coloured' man held the senior position. The composition was different in terms of Deaf and hearing in senior positions. A deaf man held the senior post. The qualifications for the senior post had changed. Change in Deafsa Western Cape continues. Additional changes have even occurred since the period of my fieldwork ended. Change is an on-going messy process. The changes I have described here and those that continue to occur need to be viewed, like all change, comparatively and in the context and challenges of a transforming South Africa

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Context and challenges of a transforming South Africa

> For better or worse, this society now comprises a single way of life, but one which has many different historical routes leading to it. Some people came to this way of life by the high road vouchsafed to them by the colour of their skin; many others had to make the journey by roads that were far more difficult, dangerous and strewn with obstacles (Sharp, 1997: 10).

Sharp (1997:10) in a few deft strokes has created, succinctly, the context and posed the challenges of transformation[5]. South Africa was, as is well known, a deeply divided country where 'the political, economic and social status of every individual [was] conditioned, if not predetermined by his [sic] race. Indeed the whole pattern of every individual's life – from the cradle to the grave – [was] circumscribed by his race' (Suzman, 1960: 339). South Africa has officially moved from a divided society to a single way of life (Sharp, 1997:10). There is now a single health care system; instead of separate wards patients now lie side by side. There is now a single educational system; pupils sit side by side in the same classrooms. There is now a single legal system and a single prison system. Prisoners are no longer categorized and locked in separate cells according to their skin colour. There are no longer separate entrances to the Post Offices. There are no longer separate carriages on the trains, separate lavatories. The benches in the parks are no longer reserved for 'whites'. The beaches, the mountains, the cinemas, the restaurants, the theatres are open to all.

Although the new structures are officially increasingly in place, the shaping of this single and shared way of life away from South Africa's past is, however, still in progress. The impact of the discrimination of the past is still evident in the considerable material differentiation that continues to exist. Attitudes shaped by the different historical routes continue into the present. Echoes from the different historical routes leading to it continue to resound. When echoes from the past, such as the image of white policemen assaulting black immigrants, reverberate loudly on national television, it seems as if change has not occurred. But even in the dreadfulness of these loudly reverberating

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[5] Sharp's (1997) article is not strictly about transformation. However, in writing on cultural difference and asking for due recognition for the dignity of those who took the hard road as well as putting under scrutiny those who took the high road (1997: 10) he set a research agenda, that to my mind, identifies the context of racial domination on the one hand and the new struggle to overcome it peacefully on the other.

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echoes certain perceptive religious leaders, such as Dandala and Tutu note the more encouraging transformation in attitude: the vast majority of South Africans were shocked and ashamed.

Contemporary South Africa is 'a complex mix of continuity and discontinuity' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999a: 308). It is a time of 'unspeakable uncertainties' (Thornton, 1996: 144-5) for both the locally based researcher and the researched. In this uncertainty, even locally based scholars find it hard to agree as to where South Africa is - whether it is post-modern (Thornton, 1996), or post-colonial (Mamdani,1996) or post-apartheid (see Becker, 2001, for a useful summary of these debates). But these uncertain times are perhaps not so much a reflection of one or the other position. They are, rather, the result of living and working at the point, never stationary, always fluid, of an uncomfortable convergence or confluence of all three – post modern in the global sense; post colonial in the Third World sense and post apartheid in the local sense.

In this uncomfortable confluence, as South Africa's citizens shift and shuffle, contest and negotiate the new single and shared way of life, some local responses in South Africa have been extraordinary. Reports of 'witchcraft and ritual murder, of zombies and Satanism' have 'escalated' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999: 294) to what has sometimes been considered 'epidemic' proportions' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999a: 308). Reflecting on Comaroff and Comaroff (1999), Falk Moore commends them for their 'imaginative sociologies' and 'intellectual audacity' (1999: 304). But she asks whether this extraordinary response was the 'general' South African experience (1999: 305). The Comaroffs in their reply admit that that the conditions described (see 1999) 'do not affect everyone with uniform intensity. We do not assume that the acute doubling of promise and despair was the general experience' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999a: 309). They do not assume that the general experience – as Falk Moore has put it concisely – was the 'roller-coaster sequence' of much higher post apartheid expectations and 'deeper subsequent disappointments' (1999: 305) when hard-earned local freedoms fail to deliver in the face of a capricious and fickle global capitalism.

The general experience and associated responses may not be 'acute' doubling of promise and despair (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999a: 309). However, some day-to-day doubling of promise and despair must be expected in a society undergoing a major

transformation. For most South Africans the future of a single shared way of life holds promise. But, at the same time, people despair at the slow rate of change as the single shared way of life takes shape. The experience of promise and despair in contemporary transforming South Africa, although general, varies. It varies with context across the local landscape and over time. As the experience has varied by context, the responses too have varied from the extraordinary to the mundane or ordinary.

The Deaf dealing with transformation needs to be seen somewhere between reports of 'witchcraft and ritual murder, of zombies and Satanism' (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999: 294) on the one hand and the very commonplace probably more general responses on the other. To highlight some comparative more commonplace responses I consider sport[6]. South Africa is considered a sports loving country. Sport is a general experience widely shared across age, class, gender, and race. As national teams have won or lost over the period of this study there has been some evidence of that 'doubling of promise and despair', although not acute. Even so, and perhaps precisely because it is not acute sport offers a window on the more mundane.

This thesis began with South Africans, almost to a person, cheering the national rugby team, when it won the World Cup in 1995 (see Chapter One). This all white and successful national team was Africanized by the *Sowetan*[7] when the Newspaper nicknamed the team 'Amabokkebokke' [the Springboks]. It was a remarkable gesture of reconciliation on the part of the *Sowetan*. – along the lines of then President Mandela famously donning the 'No 6' Captain's jersey to present the Cup to the winning side. The 'Springbok' as the former national emblem for South Africa's sporting codes carried considerable apartheid baggage. During apartheid sportsmen and women who were not classified 'white' were denied Springbok colours. For this reason most sporting codes have since 1994 changed their symbol with the exception of rugby - and rugby did not retain the Springbok without passionate debate and not necessarily widespread concurrence.

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[6] At my first meeting with John Sharp to discuss the feasibility of this study he compared the Deaf over the long term to the short term unifying effects on the South African population of the 1995 Rugby World Cup. Thereafter I kept up an interest in sport. It gave me something of a comparative but informal measure of transformation. It also gave me a topic of conversation because the Deaf, like the rest of the South African public have a keen interest.
[7] The *Sowetan* is a Johannesburg daily newspaper with a largely African readership.

At the matches leading up to the winning final of Rugby World Cup, the white supporters were noticeably shaky in their rendering of the new national anthem, *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica*. It was not the case, though, when they joined the rousing sing-a-long chorus of '*Shoshaloza*', a migrant labour song that became something of a sporting anthem during the 1995 World Cup campaign. South Africans continued to cheer when the national soccer side, nicknamed 'Bafana Bafana' (the Boys) won the African Cup of Nations and qualified for the 1998 World Cup Finals in France. "Siya eFrance" [we are going to France] was on everybody's lips.

Yet when the national soccer team failed to reach the second round of the 1998 World Cup the conflict or disagreement over the explanation for the poor performance exposed different historical routes: 'White' European coaches did not understand 'African' football was one refrain. But explanations that drew on historical routes did not stop South Africans again standing side by side to vote in their second general election. More recently (2001-2002 season) when the national cricket team crumbled to a series defeat by the Australians, once again historical routes were exposed. 'Transformation' – or the inclusion of a quota of 'players of colour' at the expense of 'merit' (read 'white') – was blamed for the national cricket team's defeat. However, back home, when injuries forced the selection of a young side with an unprecedented four 'players of colour' to take on the seemingly invincible Australians, the team thrilled the country's increasingly despondent sports loving public with their skill, guts and enthusiasm. Makhaya Ntini, the team's fast bowler, was the toast of the North West Province – formerly home to the 'Afrikaans Weerstandbeweging', the infamous right wing movement that at times threatened to derail the pre–1994 negotiations.

But how transformation and change occurs is difficult to know. As I have said it is only visible after the event. It is only then we endeavour to theorize about how and why it occurred. It is not a linear process. It often happens out of sight hidden in the commonplace, in the mundane of everyday life – as sports enthusiasts, for instance, cheer, heckle and coach from the sidelines, on the stands, or in the comfort of the pub, the shebeen or the home. Day-to-day, in many walks of life, South Africans contest, negotiate and endeavour to shape the new shared way of life. Specifically because it is largely hidden in the mundane of everyday life, transformation is difficult to select out and observe. This study gave me the opportunity to observe a relatively hidden

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population dealing with the process of transformation over a period of time and Turner's 'social drama' ([1957] 1972) offered the method to select the case of leadership succession, frame it and examine it. Presented thus, I consider the case of leadership succession may offer certain insights or lessons

Insights emerging

In summarizing, I suggest that this chapter offers certain insights: some for anthropology and some from the Deaf for South Africa more widely. With regard to anthropology, the framework of the social drama (Turner, [1957] 1972) offered a methodological means to the difficult task of capturing the process of change in the context of on-going everyday social life. Contexts of change are challenging for anthropology, methodologically and theoretically (Falk Moore, 1993: 33). Up to now, work in Southern Africa on societies in transition has proved innovative and fruitful for the discipline[8]. Gordon and Spiegel (1993) hope that South Africa's transformation will prove another opportunity for innovation in the discipline. Falk Moore has suggested for the continent more generally that the new Africa – 'the post-Cold War Africa, that is – as always, a mix of the heroic, the tragic and the mundane, presents anthropology with new challenges, applied, practical and theoretical' and anthropology may be poised for yet another phase of theoretical and methodological revision (Falk Moore, 1993: 33). Certainly some new works in the Southern African region, not necessarily from locally based scholars, have pushed anthropology to the cutting edge of new knowledge (see, for example, Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999; Comaroff and Comaroff, 2000). Falk Moore finds these works innovative (see, for example, Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999), for their ability to 'tie translocal processes to local events' (1999: 304). However, she finds it necessary 'to inject a few words of methodological caution' (1999: 304). In other words perhaps methods to deal with change have not kept up with innovation at other levels.

The work of Turner and his colleagues at the Rhodes-Livingston Institute was innovative both theoretically and methodologically. They have left a lasting legacy to draw on. Hunter's pioneering *Reaction to Conquest* (1936) has been singled out as a notable example of a diachronic or historically-dimensioned study at a time when ahistorical and

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[8] The work has been sufficiently prolific for a postgraduate course, the Anthropology of Societies in Transition (Ross, 2002), to be based almost entirely on work from this Southern African region.

static studies are said to have dominated the field' (Brown, 1973: 187 – cited in Falk Moore, 1993: 36). Gluckman's (1940) extended case method pointed anthropology to the interrelationship of the local with the wider contexts. Gluckman's (1940) analysis of the ceremonial opening of the bridge in Zululand was ground breaking in that he pointed to the complex social forces that were at work in this social situation (Marx, 1990: 192). These forces had to be integrated into the analysis and once that was achieved a different conception of the social system would emerge, one that dealt with the impact of the colonial authorities, the white capitalists and the black worker on one another (Marx, 1990: 192). Gluckman did not take the analysis far enough but the 'tribe' as a closed system was no longer the unit of study.

Turner and his colleagues, in pioneering an actor orientated anthropology, went beyond the problematic set by Gluckman (Falk Moore, 1993: 17). Taking Gluckman (see, for example, 1940) further than 'an extended case', Turner applied the notion of the interrelationship of complex social forces to a village ([1957] 1972). Turner did not present the village where he worked as an integrated harmonious whole in the structural-functionalist paradigm dominant at the time but rather as 'an entity thoroughly riddled with conflict' with 'strains built into its very normative core' (Falk Moore, 1993: 17). Even so, in the resolution of conflict, in the resolution of disputes over succession and inheritance and in their management, the process was understood to be 'ultimately group affirming' (Falk Moore, 1993: 17).

The Deaf demonstrate from this case of leadership succession that they have not escaped the effects of South Africa's past any more or less than any other social group. But the case also suggests that it may be possible to deal with the effects. The complaints about past discrimination and the discourse at the Extraordinary Meeting in March 1996 and at the WCFD meeting in November 1999 reflected South Africa's past. The process of the Deaf leadership succession reflected South Africa's history as it pertained to the Deaf. The white hearing leadership gave way to the Deaf. Then it was class as this related to education. Once the educational barriers were lifted, additional divisions were exposed. These divisions exposed the differential effects of apartheid on younger Africans who were denied schooling in Cape Town as a result of strict influx control. However, at the same time as conflict was expressed in terms of the old apartheid discourse and competition for leadership emerged along historical divisions as

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these impacted on the Deaf, there was a degree of commonality. There was commonality on the basis of language and access to organizational structures.

Conflict in its many forms is a continuous ever-occurring part of social life that may be a necessary part of change. The disputes and conflict, especially those that echo the different and divisive historical routes leading to the present that accompanied the case of leadership succession described here need not threaten the new shared way of life. The management of these disputes even if this relies on social capital accumulated in the past, is ultimately group affirming and inevitably the momentum for further change. The next chapter, Chapter Eight, concludes the thesis.

Chapter Eight: Conclusions
In the beginning was the Word … In the ending was the Sign

Here lies one future for anthropology, at least as the discipline looks from the vantage point of the South African postcolony. It is to interrogate the *production* in imaginative and material practice, of those compound political, economic, and cultural forms by means of which human beings *create* community and locality and identity, especially evanescent terrains; by means of which, in the face of material and moral constraint, they *fabricate* social realities and power relations and impose themselves on their lived environments; by means of which space and times are remade, and the boundaries of the local and global are realized (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999: 295 – authors' emphases).

A chance read of 'the word' of Oliver Sacks', *Seeing Voices* ([1989] 1991), in early 1995 stirred my initial interest in the Deaf. My interest took a formal turn when I heard the conciliatory discourse of the South African Deaf, claiming a commonality across South Africa's historical divides, on the basis of a 'Deaf Culture'. This claim, against the background of South Africa's deeply entrenched divides was intriguing. It provided the trigger for this study. The study investigated the crossing of social boundaries of all kinds and the construction of social identity among the Deaf.

The study was based in Cape Town, partly for my own convenience and because Deaf education in South Africa began when Bridget Lynne opened the first school for the Deaf in Cape Town in 1874 (Boner, 2000:138). The study focused on strategies that deal with being deaf in a predominantly hearing world. To detect these strategies the study focused on adults who became deaf as children, the group for whom deafness is said to pose considerable linguistic, social, and cultural challenges. It is the group for whom, historically, deafness as audiological deficit has been considered synonymous with social deficit.

The study found that many people, deaf and hearing spoke Sign language and that in many contexts, the Deaf were not socially deficit. They loved, married, parented, worked, thought, argued, gossiped and socialized just like everyone else. One strategy that allows the Deaf to deal with being deaf in a predominantly hearing world is a Signing

space. A Signing space allows deaf people to take up ordinary social and vocational roles. It transfers a crucial aspect of their deafness – their language – to a hearing environment, thereby making social life meaningful for themselves and those with whom they interact.

A Signing space is a social space, a set of networks that extends from the deaf individual to include deaf and hearing people. Networks, although fluid, flexible and overlapping, were identified on the basis of what I term a Sign-based communication. Sign-based communication varies from fluent Sign (among both deaf and hearing people) to modes such as Sign supported spoken languages and was *not* mere gesture. It was two-way communication readily understood within the Signing space.

The study also found important differences within the Signing space. For purposes of the analysis of the networks, I named the networks where hearing people predominated (numerically), Sign-hear spaces and where deaf people predominated (also numerically), Sign-deaf spaces. The nature of the social relationships of the Sign-hear and Sign-deaf spaces were complementary. The boundaries crossed and social identity varied by networks.

Sign-hear and Sign-deaf as complementary sets of networks

The networks were complementary in the social relationships they addressed. The Sign-hear networks, in the main, addressed the more necessary instrumental everyday relationships of the domestic and near neighbourhood domains. The relationships within the Sign-deaf spaces were more broadly 'sociable' (Allan, 1979. 2) in that they operated beyond the everyday instrumental relationships, in the geographical and social sense of 'beyond', and ranged from obviously sociable, even intimate, to those, less so.

There was a familiarity about both sets of relationships but it was of a different order. The Sign-hear spaces reflected the instrumental 'family-arity' of domestic and neighbourhood relationships. Sign-deaf spaces reflected a kind of familiarity, more elusive to define: the kind that reflects unconditional belonging and acceptance (Frankental, 1998: 161). This familiarity varied from the unreserved feeling and/ or give and take of unconditional acceptance and belonging – or 'unconditionality' (Frankental,

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1998: 161) - of certain close friends to disagreements and conflict, disagreement and conflict not being unusual in these types of relationships.

Sign-hear networks were more discernible, particularly, following Fortes (1958) model of the developmental cycle of a domestic group, as they expanded over time. The Sign-hear space can be considered well established when deafness matters least, when there are sufficient hearing Signers to allow the deaf individual to carry out a fully integrated social life in domestic and near-neighbourhood domains.

The 'sociable' nature of the Sign-deaf spaces, as well as their geographical dispersal made them more difficult to identify and disentangle. Their inter-connectedness supplied the snowball sample for the study; it created and maintains the 'Deaf Grapevine' and ensures ongoing interaction and caring among its members. Often core members are those who schooled together but over time others have been incorporated.

The Sign-hear spaces capture *individual* networks; Sign-deaf networks indicate a *collective*. This, among other issues, influences the varying durability of networks and their continuity over time. Sign-hear spaces are shorter term. They last the life span of the individual. Sign-deaf spaces are more continuous and more durable, over the longer term. Third Sunday is one such formal manifestation of a Sign-deaf space that does not depend on particular individuals and has continued over the considerable time span of more than 50 years.

Crossing of boundaries

Social boundaries are cultural constructions. They may be symbolically constructed by internal process (Cohen, 1985) and/or external process, most often by the interplay of both (Jenkins, 1994). The processes of construction/conceptualization almost always include attaching labels to the constructed/conceptualized sides of the boundary (Frankental, 1998: 89-90). 'Deaf', capitalized to distinguish the 'social' from the audiological condition, 'deaf', lower case (Woodward, 1972), suggests a similar interplay between internal process and external categorization at the group level.

I acknowledge that the interplay of external and internal process is almost impossible to disaggregate. However, the crossing of South Africa's historical divides as these impacted on the Deaf was one set of boundaries that this thesis set out to investigate. History (see Chapter Four) as external process imposed boundaries that were authorized by theories of Deaf education on the one hand and by racist legislation on the other. The end result by 1994 for the Deaf was an 'othered' population designated different from the hearing and differentiated within on the basis of, at least, apartheid classification, method of education, school attended and spoken language. In this historical social context, Sign-hear networks addressed the deaf-hearing boundary and Sign-deaf networks addressed those imposed by a South African history that spanned, colonialism, institutionalized segregation and apartheid.

The data show how the Sign-hear spaces addressed the hearing boundary, in the domestic and near neighborhood domains and that this boundary shifted on the basis of contextual factors. In the domestic situation, networks crossed the boundaries of generation, but did not usually include the older generation and parents were less likely to Sign. Abigail's efforts to learn Sign language (Chapter Five), despite her considerable linguistic skills, identified some of the problems poorer parents faced trying to acquire Sign language. The case material presented also shows how the position of the deaf person in the household can facilitate or impede the Sign-hear space. When the deaf person was in a position of authority and/or contributed to the household maintenance, there were few limits to the Sign-hear space and the deaf person could also determine who to include or exclude. The Sign-hear space, as it proceeded through the three phases in the fluidity and flux of a domestic situation, can also transcend geographical boundaries, as cases demonstrated. A further important finding was that Sign-hear spaces could transcend the spoken language boundaries of Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa and their corresponding social boundaries.

The limit or boundary of the Sign-hear space was identified in those hearing situations in the public domain where communication was indeed a barrier, when deaf people became reliant on others to interpret and when deafness again became deficit and social identity was limited. I gave the example of health care and cited Morgan's work in the legal system (2001). Many of these barriers to communication and the related limits to social identity could be lifted (and the hearing boundary shifted) if the numbers of

professional Sign language interpreters were increased and access to them improved. Class marked by affordability is a crucial factor in this regard.

Sign-deaf networks addressed many of the boundaries imposed by South Africa's divisive history, although this also varied by the nature of the networks and context. The neighbourhood Sign-deaf space was a particularly open network. Networks included men and women, married and single people, employed and unemployed, young and old. Networks in many of the larger residential areas where I worked included people from a range of schools, including Wittebome, Nuwe Hoop, the schools in the Eastern Cape and Noluthando. Consequently Sign-deaf networks crossed the boundaries of the spoken languages of Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa and similar research in other parts of the country could well find similar boundary crossing between 'language communities'.

In the working class areas of metropolitan Cape Town, networks were open to Africans and 'coloureds', clearly crossing apartheid boundaries. In the 'white' working class areas of Cape Town similar networks could be identified, limited only by apartheid geography. However, in the smaller rural town of Paarl where geographically the Deaf were not as restricted, there were few barriers to racial integration.

Friendship networks were similar to neighbourhood Sign-deaf spaces in that from the actors' perspective these were relatively open to deaf people regardless of apartheid classification. Generally, however, neighbourhood Sign-deaf networks were more open than those of close friendships. Close friendships drew people together on the basis of long standing relationships. People were of the same age, the same income, the same school, and therefore often the same spoken language. Unlike neighbourhood Sign-deaf spaces friendships were not limited to a residential area.

Crossing of social boundaries in Cape Town, the Western Cape and in South Africa more widely was facilitated by Sign language, particularly in sociable contexts. This finding confirms recent linguistic research into Sign language (see, for example, Aarons and Morgan, 1998). This research indicates that linguistically there is one SASL [South African Sign Language]. There may be dialectal variation on the vocabulary level as

different groups often have different signs, but the grammar is the same for all Deaf people irrespective of 'age, ethnicity or geographical region' (Morgan, 2001: 6-7).

The study also suggests that Sign language facilitates crossing of spoken language boundaries beyond South Africa. The example of my experience as a participant observer at the WFD/RSESA meeting held in Cape Town in September 1997 demonstrated this (see Chapter Six). The meeting attracted delegates from South Africa and up to ten additional African countries, including some as far afield as Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. A second example was the report back at a Third Sunday by delegates who attended the Congress of the World Federation of the Deaf in Brisbane in 1999. Delegates from different countries were encouraged to have lunch together to get to know each other and they used Sign. Additional anecdotal evidence based on deaf people's experience further confirms this finding.

The suggestion that Sign language may transcend spoken language barriers beyond South Africa is more difficult to substantiate with research from linguistics. I am not a linguist and there is no consensus among linguists, although Kyle and Woll also suggest these possibilities for Sign (1985: 162-172). Perhaps it is because Sign was legitimized in the post World War Two context that emphasized difference (see Chapter Two) that research into Sign language since the 1960s has tended to emphasize difference rather than mutual intelligibility. It should also be noted that research into some of Africa's and South Africa's indigenous spoken languages suggests that differences are more political than linguistic and are more evident in the written (or in the translations) than in the actual practice of the languages (see Prah, [1995] 2000). The issue of Sign language and its role in facilitating crossing or transcendence of boundaries raises the issue of Sign as a marker of Deaf identity.

Dispersing social identity

Many have argued that proficiency in Sign language, in the USA and Anglophone Canada, has become a powerful marker of 'group solidarity' and probably the single most significant component of 'Deaf cultural identity' (Reagan, 1996: 9; see also Baker and Cokely, 1980; Erting, 1978; Kannapell, 1993; Padden, 1980; Lucas and Valli, 1992; Markowicz and Woodward, 1978). However, this study has suggested that Sign was less

a marker of 'Deaf identity' and more a marker of 'dispersed identity' (Marcus, 1992: 315). Identity, whether individual or collective, is almost always relational and situational and it varies by context. I have endeavoured to capture a dispersed identity by contexts, by networks. Even so it was elusive. Yet the study has shown clearly that in the Signing space, deafness was rarely, if ever, a social deficit.

In the Sign-<u>hear</u> space, in relation to a stranger, such as myself, it was not at first possible to know who was deaf and who was hearing. In domestic and neighbourhood relationships that comprised a Sign-<u>hear</u> space, Sign facilitated social capacity. At the same time, though, in these relationships, Sign was a regular marker of *audiological* deafness. In the Sign-<u>hear</u> networks, deaf people as a minority interacted with a majority of hearing people, usually on a day-to-day basis. Every time a hearing Signer swapped from spoken language to Sign to address the deaf person there was an acknowledgement of audiological deafness, even if this was apparently effortless and inadvertent (as interactions at Basie's birthday party suggested – Chapter Five). It is impossible to share the domestic near-neighbourhood situations without knowing that some people in the shared social context happened to be deaf. However, it was precisely, and only, on this 'happened-to-be' basis that Sign was a marker of deafness in the Sign-<u>hear</u> space.

In the Sign-<u>deaf</u> spaces, close friends were not 'consciously' Deaf. There was little that was particularly 'deaf' about these friendships. The same pertained to Third Sunday. At the time of this study, Third Sunday meant different things to different people. For some it was a religious occasion; for others it was sociable – an opportunity to meet and to share news. Via DCCT Third Sunday was a crossing place that extended Deaf networks more widely. However, there was also a familiarity about the Third Sunday occasions, a familiarity that was similar to the 'unconditionality' (Frankental, 1998: 161) of neighbourhood networks and friendships. At Third Sunday there was an assumption that everyone knew each other: participants used only Sign names and needed to give only few details when births, birthdays, forthcoming marriages, and funerals were announced. In this, there was a strong sense of community.

The NGO, DCCT emerged out of the Third Sunday tradition as the 'Deaf Community of Cape Town' and I examined Sign-<u>deaf</u> networks as community (Anderson, 1983; Cohen,

expression of their whole selves' (1985: 107). This study has suggested that the Deaf community expresses only part, a sociable part, of the 'whole selves' (Cohen, 1985: 107).

The ways in which deafness creates 'community' suggests an analogy with ethnicity. Rather than being ethnic, however, it seems that the Deaf can be considered 'ethnicized', to borrow Bechter's term (1999: 1). Ethnicity is a 'flexible' notion with 'many faces' (Roosens, 1989: 17 and 19). It can range from what Gans (1979) has termed 'symbolic ethnicity' to the more sinister ethnocide and ethno-cleansing. The Deaf are clearly not militantly ethnic, or merely symbolically so (Gans, 1979). There can also be no claim to ethnicity on the basis of descent. For the majority their parents before them and their children after them were hearing. Without claims to descent it is not possible to mobilize on the basis of the 'call of blood' and efforts to mobilize as a pressure group for status and material goods (Glazer and Moynihan, 1963: 1975) were sporadic.

As with all ethnic groups, internal differentiation – usually class based and in South Africa exacerbated by past-imposed divides – can create internal conflicts. In this study, such dilemmas were exposed in the process of leadership succession discussed in Chapter Seven. Nevertheless, the possibility of mobilizing around shared concerns, such as equal Human Rights, interpreters, subtitles on television and official language status for Sign language, was demonstrated at the Deaf Protest Marches in 1995 and 1996.

De Vos (1975) and Epstein (1978) draw attention to the non-economic and psychosocial dimensions of ethnic identity (Roosens, 1989:15). The latter, concerned with feelings of belonging, of solidarity, and sociability are the criteria that designate Sign-deaf spaces as 'ethnicized' (Bechter, 1999:1). In addition to these qualities, neighbourhood Sign-deaf networks evoked hallmarks of first generation immigrant ethnic communities (Marx, 1990: 199). 'Hubs of sociability' that could be identified in a residential area, offered an entry point into Cape Town, as demonstrated with, for example, Edith and Gracie's cases (Chapter Six). These hubs of sociability and the wider neighbourhood network were a resource for socializing, sharing news, finding work and accommodation. As a resource, deaf people used them more or less often as needs changed over time. Overall the neighbourhood network was a sociable space that offered a place of familiarity, communality and commonality.

Sign was a signifier of the same familiarity, communality and communality in broader contexts, both where the Deaf predominated and where they did not. At the RSESA/WFD meeting, where the majority of people were Deaf, the South African sitting next to me assumed, on the basis of Sign, that she shared a familiarity, a communality and commonality with her fellow deaf South Africans, with the Deaf from other parts of the continent and with the Deaf from certain European countries (Chapter Six). Whether this assumption proved to be true or not was not the point. It was significant in that it was not something she assumed about hearing people who were not part of her domestic and near neighbourhood situations. In other contexts, where the deaf were in a minority in relation to the hearing, Sign also served as a signifier, analogous to an ethnic marker. When deaf people noticed Sarah Signing in a restaurant, they presumed that she was Deaf, that they would have something in common (Chapter Six). When David Wright noticed the Italian Deaf signing in a restaurant, he presumed that they were Deaf and felt an affinity (Chapter Six). On the basis of Sign, he assumed a familiarity and a commonality – they 'belonged after all to a country bounded by the same silent frontier' ([1969] 1993: 135).

In Chapter Six, I suggested that Sign-deaf spaces formed an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) that took a 'diasporic' form (Clifford, 1994). I suggested this partly on the basis of the extent of the networks of the Sign-deaf spaces as well as Sign's apparent ability to transcend spoken language barriers in sociable contexts. There is, however, considerable overlap between the notions of community, ethnic group and diasporic form. It seems to me that prior to the broad acceptance of Anderson's (1983) notion of the imagined community (and Hobsbawm and Ranger's concept of the 'invention of tradition', see [1983] 1992), debates about ethnic groups and community have tended to be about 'sub-national' but not transnational expressions of identity. Anderson's thesis anticipated the 'transnational moment' (Tololyan, 1991). Scholars working after Anderson in the late 20th/early 21st century context where dislocated/relocated populations are beginning to undermine fixed borders of nation states have re-turned to the old notion of diaspora or a 'diasporic' condition (Clifford, 1994).

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I have argued that the Deaf are not diaspora in the conventional sense of a population having been displaced from a geographical place, sojourners with a longing for home (Safran, 1991: 84) or even diasporic as the notion has been applied up to now (see, for example, Gilroy, 1987; Ghosh 1989). However, there are analogies with these diasporic forms. There was a transnational dimension to Sign language in sociable contexts. The history and organizational structure are transnational, although this need not be particular to the Deaf. However, the position of the Deaf in society is similar to others in diasporic conditions (see, for example, Gilroy, 1987; Ghosh, 1989). The Deaf live permanently in the host society but are often displaced, marginalized, discriminated against and limited in their integration on the basis of being deaf in a predominantly hearing society. They are displaced on the basis of their deafness. Though the reasons for displacement vary the responses are similar. The Deaf, like others in similar diasporic situations, strategize creatively with a Signing space to deal with their circumstances, and in this case, to be South African 'differently' - to be South African and Deaf. As South Africans and Deaf their identity is 'diasporized' (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993: 721). The concept 'diasporized' refers to a 'disaggregated' identity that allows contradictory propositions to hold together (Boyarin and Boyarin, 1993: 721). Such an identity allows for positive expressions of difference despite negative discrimination.

The case of leadership succession (Chapter Seven) suggested that the mutual intelligibility of Sign language in the South African urban context, and the familiarity, communality and commonality it offered, did not deny an awareness of historical difference, differentiation and discrimination. The phases of the leadership succession reflected the historical processes as they had affected the Deaf. When the 'white' hearing Director resigned the historically imposed divisions emerged but by the end of the process, the younger African Deaf, sent away from Cape Town to be educated in the Eastern Cape, were staking their claims to leadership. The discourse at the meetings also confirmed a positive assertion of the possibility of being Deaf and South African. In this case, the Deaf certainly distinguished between 'the Deaf and the hearing' and between the 'African Deaf', the 'coloured Deaf' and the 'white Deaf'. They were fully aware of the past discrimination and differential access to resources that this meant. However, the process of the 'social drama' (Turner, [1957] 1972) also demonstrated that conflict, crises, and a discourse that reflects South Africa's historical divisions need not threaten a broader commonality.

Concluding remarks

From the vantage point of post-colonial, post-apartheid Cape Town (paraphrasing Comaroff and Comaroff, 1999: 295), this thesis has examined how the Deaf, in imaginative and material practice, produce, create and construct community, locality and identity. In the face of moral and material constraint and uneven power relations they impose themselves, via a Signing space, on their lived environments and by means of this strategy, space and times are remade, and the boundaries of the local and global are realized.

In view of the boundaries crossed by the participants of this study and their dispersed social identity, it may be possible to consider a national identity that is not an 'unreconstructed multicultural condition that simply means the coexistence of many different cultures' (Sharp, 1997: 10). Rather, it may be possible to imagine a transforming South Africa where, though an apartheid discourse and historical condition lingers it need not impede ongoing (even if not conflict free) change towards a more 'fluid' (Alexander, 1996: 6) and 'flavoursome' (Frankental, 1998: 228) country, 'where the self defined social groups based on religion, language, region, customs etc., but not on 'race' will continue to coexist, be South African and be open to larger collective identities (Alexander, 1996: 4).

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List of Abbreviations

CA	Cape Archives
CO	Colonial Office
CCP	Cape Colonial Papers
GH	Government House
SGE	Superintendent General of Education

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Appendix One: Partial profile of the sample population

TABLE 1.2 Sample population by age and sex

Age	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
>=70	4	10.8	2	3.5	6	6.4
60-69	5	13.5	8	14.0	13	13.8
50-59	11	29.7	13	22.8	24	25.5
40-49	10	27.0	19	33.3	29	30.9
30-39	4	10.9	12	21.1	16	17.0
20-29	3	8.1	3	5.3	6	6.4
Total	37	100	57	100	94	100
% Total		39.4		60.6		100

TABLE 1.3 Sample population by residential area

Residential area	No	%
African area	39	41.5
'Coloured'	35	37.2
'White' area	7	7.4
Delft	4	4.3
Cape Countryside	3	3.2
East London	2	2.1
Port Elizabeth	1	1.1
Johannesburg	2	2.1
Kimberley	1	1.1
Total	94	100

Table 1.3a Breakdown of the 'African', 'coloured' and 'white' returns by residential area

African		'Coloured'		'White'		Cape Country	
Guguletu	32	Atlantis	1	Sea Point	2	Laingsburg	1
Khayalitsha	2	Belhar	4	Edgemead	1	Ceres	1
Langa	4	Elsie's River	7	Bellville	2	Worcester	1
Marconi	1	Eerste River	2	Parow	2	**Total**	**1**
Total	**39**	Hanover Park	1	**Total**	**7**		
		Heideveld	6				
		Manenberg	1				
		Mitchells Plain	3				
		Retreat	9				
		Vasco	1				
		Total	**35**				

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TABLE 1.4 Sample population by languages

	Sign	%	Languages								
			Spoken/ Lip reading	No	%	Lip reading two	No	%	Reading/ writing	No	%
			Afrikaans	34	36.2	Afrikaans	17	33.3	Afrikaans	31	32.9
			English	39	41.5	English	26	51.0	English	44	46.8
			Xhosa	20	21.2	Sesotho	2	3.9	Xhosa	17	18.1
			Blind	1	1.1	isiXhosa	6	11.8	Blind	1	1.1
					0				Nil	1	1.1
Total	94	100		94	100		51	100		94	100

TABLE 1.5 Sample population by employment

Employment status	No	%
Employed	60	63.8
Unemployed*	34	36.2
Total	94	100

Note to Table 1.5: Unemployed include; Old Age Pensioners X 12; Disability Grants X 3

TABLE 1.5a Sample population by types of employment

Types of employment	No	%	Types of self-employment
Builder	2	03.3	TV Repairs
Cleaner	7	11.7	Shoe Repairs
Domestic	9	15.0	Tailor
Factory	17	28.3	Crochet
Farm worker	1	1.7	Hairdresser
Gardener	1	1.7	Selling biscuits/ sweets
Labourer	3	5.0	Seamstress
Painter	2	3.3	
Restaurant	2	3.3	
Self-employed*	16	26.7	
Total	60	100	

TABLE 1.6 Sample population by types of accommodation, by certain household appointments

Dwellings	No	%	Appointments	No/94	%
Shanty – no electricity	5	5.3	TV	73	77.7
Flats	14	79.8	Video	47	50.0
Houses	75	14.9	Telephone	51	54.2
Total	94	100	Teldem	14	14.9
			Fax	2	2.1
			Email	1	1.1

TABLE 1.7 Sample population by school attended

School	No	%
Wittebome	43	45.7
Nuwe Hoop	23	24.4
Eastern Cape	18	19.1
Worcester	3	3.2
Grimley	1	1.1
Grimley/Wittebome	1	1.1
Hout Bay	1	1.1
Nuwe Hoop/Wittebome	2	2.1
No school	1	1.1
Durban	1	1.1
Total	94	100

<u>Note 1</u> **to Table 1.7:** 'No school' refers to 'ran away' soon after entry. Up to 12.8 percent of the sample population reported running away from school. However, since the focus of the thesis is adults and their strategies, the school experience is not detailed in the thesis.

<u>Note 2</u> **to Table 1.7:** When I refer in the thesis to the **major schools** attended by the sample and research populations I use the **local popular abbreviations** that are usually as follows: **'Grimley'** refers to the first school, St Josephs, that was later named after Bishop Grimley; **'Wittebome'** to St Dominic's School for the Deaf at Wittebome; **'Worcester'** to the De La Bat School for the Deaf at Worcester; **'Nuwe Hoop'** to the 'coloured' school at Worcester; **'Hout Bay'** to the strictly oral school that, like Wittebome, was a direct offshoot of the original Grimley Institute; **'Noluthando'** for the Noluthando School for the Deaf at Khayelitsha. **'Eastern Cape'** refers to the two schools in the Eastern Cape, one in Umtata and one in Kingwilliamstown attended by the research and sample populations. Additional schools, such as **'Durban'** are referred to by their geographical location

TABLE 1.8 Sample population by age of onset of deafness

Age	No	%
Born	17	18.1
<2	4	4.2
2-<4	20	21.3
4-<6	20	21.3
6-<8	11	11.7
8-<10	11	11.7
>=10	5	5.3
Unknown	6	6.4
Total	**94**	**100**

TABLE 1.9 Sample population by cause of deafness

Cause	No	%
Born	17	18.1
Accident	27	28.7
Illness	42	44.7
Unknown	8	8.5
Total	**94**	**100**

TABLE 1.10 Sample population by age of first attendance at school

Age to school	No	%
2-<4	3	3.2
4-<6	6	6.4
6-<8	23	24.5
8-<10	24	24.5
10-<12	18	19.1
>=12	12	13.8
DK	7	7.4
NS	1	1.1
Total	94	100

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Appendix Two: Research Tools

(1) Sample population: explanation of the research given to respondents

(2) Sample population: Personal Question Schedule

(3) Sample population: Household Question Schedule

(1) Sample population: explanation of the research given to respondents

I want to research the story of the Deaf in Cape Town. To do this I need your help. Before you decide whether you would like to help me and take part in the research (and I hope you do), I would like to explain what the work is for and what I need from you.

The work is towards a Doctorate at the University of Stellenbosch, Department of Sociology and Anthropology. I began my work in 1995. In August 1995, the Committee of the Bastion for the Deaf gave me permission to carry out my study. Since then I have been learning Sign language and have been a volunteer at the Bastion - which is how I met Sarah Gushu. Sarah is helping me with my work. I want to interview people at home. Sarah and I would like to interview you and ask you some questions, for example:

(1) Your current living arrangements?
(2) Your family - your parents and your brothers and sisters/
(3) Your children and - if your have grandchildren?
(4) How you became deaf?
(5) Your recent association with deaf and hearing people?

If there are any questions that you do not wish to answer - or do not feel comfortable with, you must feel free to say so. I want you to know that you are doing me a favour. The interview will take about an hour of your time. If you feel that this is too long, we can do half the interview today and half, another time.

I also want you to know that the information is confidential. It will be used in a general sense as part of the story of the Deaf in Cape Town and I will not refer to you by name.

(2) Sample population: Personal Question Schedule

Date.....................................

1 Name?...

2 Address?...

3 When were you born (Date of birth or age)?...

4 Where were you born (the place)?...

5 If not born in Cape Town, when did you arrive here (or how old were you)?.................

6 Why did you come to Cape Town?...

7 How old were you when you became deaf?..

8 What caused the deafness?...

....

....

9 How did you find out you were deaf?...

....

....

10 Did you go to Deaf school?..

11 Where did you go to Deaf school?...

12 How old were you when you first went to Deaf school?..............................

13 Or do you remember the year you went to school?....................................

14 How old were you when you left school?..

15 What standard did you pass?...

16 Are you employed?..

17 What work do you do?..

18 What work have you done since you left school?.......................................

....

....

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19 Has you deafness ever been a problem for you?

(1) Getting a job?..

(2) At work?..

(3) Or with anything else?...

20 Your parents, where were they born?

(1) Mother..

(2) Father...

21 Were your parents deaf?..

22 How many brothers and sister do you have?

(1) Brothers...

(2) Sisters..

23 Are any of your brothers and sisters deaf?...

24 Are you married or do you have a partner?...

25 Your partner's name?...

26 Is your partner deaf?..

27 What school did your partner attend?...

28 How did you meet?...

....

29 How many children do you have?...

(1) Girls..

(2) Boys...

30 The age of your eldest child?..

31 The age of you youngest child...

32 Are any of your children deaf?...

33 Do you have grandchildren?

(1) Boys..

(2) Girls..

34 Are any of you grandchildren deaf?..

35 Do you Sign?...

36 What languages do you lip-read?...

37 What languages do you read and write?...

38 What did you do yesterday?..

....

....

39 What is your religion or which church do you attend ....

40 When was the last time you were with deaf people who are not your family and what did you do together?

....

....

41 When was the last time you went to the Bastion and why? ....

....

Remarks

(3) Sample population: Household Question schedule

Date of interview..

Name of respondent...

Home Address...

Type of dwelling..

Car	Yes ☐	No ☐	If yes, how many...............
Electricity	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Fridge	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Stove	Yes ☐	No ☐	
TV	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Video	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Postal delivery	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Refuse removal	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Phone	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Teldem	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Fax	Yes ☐	No ☐	
Email	Yes ☐	No ☐	

Any other means of communication..

Remarks

Household Questions

Who lives here - and or belongs to this household?

What are their names?

Who is deaf and who is hearing?

What is their gender?

What are the ages or dates of birth?

Where were they born?

What is the highest standard of school obtained - including post school qualifications?

Where did they go to school?

What is their marital status?

What is their relationship to the household head?

Who is employed and what kind of work do they do?

How long have they been in the current employment?

For the adults not working when did they work last?

Who gets income from other sources - Pension   DG   UIF   Other sources?

When did the members of the household arrive in Cape Town?

Where were they living before Cape Town?

Where did they stay when they first came to Cape Town?

Why did they come to Cape Town?

When did they arrive at the current address?

Where did they come from to current address?

What is the religion?

What languages do they speak?

Key to household abbreviations for filling in the Household flow sheets (see below)

HHno - people living at the address, including lodgers

Names

Deaf and hearing

Sex - or gender

DOB – date of birth or age

POB - place of birth for all the people living at the address

Educ – education

Scplace – name and place of the school, especially Deaf school

MS – marital status

RTHH – relationship to the household head

Here I want the relationship to the head of the household

Employ – employment

Type – type of employment

Longemply – length of employment in the present post

Lastemploy - for the adults who were not working, when last employed and the type of work

Otherinc – for the adults who were not working, other sources of income, such as a pension or a grant; or self-employment activities.

Ctarrive - for those living at the address who were not born in Cape Town date of first arrival

BeforeCT - for those living at the address that were not born in Cape Town, place of residence before arrival in Cape Town

StayCT - for those living at the address that were not born in Cape Town, place or residence on first arrival in Cape Town.

Ctwhy - for those living at the address that were not born in Cape Town, reasons for coming to Cape Town.

Arrive HH – date of first arrival at the present address

From to HH – place of residence before arrival at present address

Religion – denomination

Language –choice of first language and all the languages spoken by the people living at this address, including Sign

HHNo	Names	Deaf	Sex	DOB	POB	Educ	ScPlace	MS	RTHH	Employ	Type

People living at the address or 'the household'

HHNo	Names	Deaf	Sex	DOB	POB	Educ	ScPlace	MS	RTHH	Employ	Type

People living at the address or 'the household'

HHNo	Arrive HH	From to HH	Religion	Language

Appendix Three: Tables 4.3 and 4.4

Table 4.3: Summary of local history

Key to Table 4.3

A = African; C = 'coloured'; W = 'white (as for population classification)

Sch = Deaf School

G = Grimely; W = Wittebome; NH = Nuwe Hoop; WR = Worcester; EC = Eastern Cape;

HB = Hout Bay; N = Noluthando

Afrik = Afrikaans; Eng = English; Xho = Xhosa

Sign = Manual method of education; Oral = Oral method of education

Table 4.4: Local differentiation in Cape Town, by 1994, by age, by school, by method, by spoken language by population classification

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TABLE 4.3: Summary of local history

Date	Sch	A Sign Eng	C Sign Eng	W Sign Eng	Sch	W Sign Afrik	W Oral Afrik	Sch	C Oral Afrik	Sch	C Oral Eng	A Oral Eng	Sch	A Oral Xho	Sch	W Oral Eng	Sch	A Sign Xho
1874	G	*	*	*														
1881		*	*	*	WR	*	*											
By 1904 the oral method had been introduced at the Worcester School for the Deaf																		
Sum @ 1910		*	*	*		*	*											
In 1922 Sr Broderick introduced the oral method at Grimley; thus by 1933 it may be assumed that the oral method was gaining dominance																		
1933			*	*		*		NH	*									
1937			*			*			*	W	*	*						
Sum @ 1948			*			*			*		*	*						
Sum @ 1960			*			*			*		*	*						
1965											*	*	EC	*				
1980						*			*		*			*	HB	*		
1988						*			*		*			*		*	N	*
Sum @ 1994						*			*		*			*		*		*

TABLE 4.4: Local differentiation in Cape Town, by 1994, by age, by school, by method, by spoken language by population classification

School		Grimley			Worcester		Wittebome		NH	EC	HB	N
Sign/oral		Sign			Sign	Oral	Sign		Sign	Sign	Oral	Sign
Spoken Lang		English			Afrik	Afrik	Eng		Afrik	Xhosa	English	Xhosa
		Pclass			PClass		PClass		PClass	Pclass	Pclass	PClass
DOB	AGE	A	C	W	W	W	A	C	C	A	W	A
<1920 1929	=>70	*	*	*	*	*						
1930 - 1939	60-69			*	*	*	*	*	*			
1940 1949	50-59			*	*	*	*	*	*			
1950 1959	40-49			*	*	*	*	*	*			
1960 1969	30-39				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
1970 >1979	=<20-29				*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Groups at 1994		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Appendix Four: Deaf to hearing ratios

TABLE 5.1 Sample population by deaf and hearing in the natal domestic situation by ratio of deaf to all hearing, by ratio of deaf to hearing siblings

Relationship	Child Deaf	Hearing	Unknown	Total	Ratio Deaf to hearing
Mother		91	3	94	
Father		91	3	94	
Siblings	3	386	0	389	1:4
Sample	94	0		94	
Total	97	568	6	671	1:6

Note to Table 5.1: Parents adult deafness: Mother X 1; Father X 3
Ratio Deaf to hearing siblings (386/97 = 1:3.9 = 1:4)
Ratio Deaf to hearing domestic situation (568/97 = 1: 5.8 = 1:6)

TABLE: 5.2 Sample household population (n=52) by deaf and hearing, by average household size, by ratio of Deaf to hearing

Household population			Average Household Size	Ratio of Deaf to hearing
Deaf	Hearing	Total		
81	208	289	6	1:3

NOTE 1 to TABLE 5.2: The household data are based **on 52 households** for whom accurate data were available. Data were not always clear for the following reasons
  (1) The household situation over the period of fieldwork in wider Cape Town proved considerably fluid.
  (2) In some cases there seemed to be confusion between household members and kin. This data were not used
  (3) Average household size (289/52 = 1: 5.55 = 6)
  (4) Ratio Deaf to hearing household situation (208/81 = 1:2.56 = 1:3)

TABLE: 5.3 Sample population by marital status

Marital Status	No	%	Both Deaf	%	Deaf/ hearing	%
Married	43	45.7	29	67.4	14	32.6
Single	26	27.7				
Partners	16	17.0				
Divorced	7	7.5				
Widowed	2	2.1				
Total	94	100				