DEAF space, a history: The production of DEAF spaces Emergent, Autonomous, Located and Disabled in 18th and 19th century France

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Abstract

DEAF people do not describe themselves as those 'disabled' by an inability to access hearing spaces. Rather, they celebrate an alternative, DEAF space that is produced as contexts such as urban centres, long-term DEAF families, and schools for deaf children allow them extended opportunities to come together, author DEAF languages and cultures, and transmit them from one generation to the next.

This thesis employs Lefebvre's *Production of Space* to describe examples of this DEAF space revealed in France in the 18th and 19th centuries. It does so in four stages. The first begins by locating three DEAF space emergents that span the period of the Enlightenment. The second moves to 1760 to identify a further DEAF space emergent and describes the way in which the administrative neglect that followed the French Revolution afforded it the autonomy it required to blossom towards maturity. The third follows the same DEAF space through the 1830s to examine the way in which the corrective philanthropy of early anthropologists caused DEAF people to begin to locate their production of DEAF space in relation to spaces of the hearing world. The fourth identifies a later example of that DEAF space located and demonstrates how it was manipulated by DEAF and hearing groups within the 1900 Universal Exhibition in Paris, ultimately resulting in the disabling and disempowering of the DEAF community.

The research demonstrates that these DEAF spaces, although contextually minoritarian, were as valid as the realities of the surrounding hearing-authored world. It, therefore, offers a unique lens through which to examine DEAF people on their own terms and a way to move current theoretical representations of DEAF people's reality away from notions framed by compensatory or contestatory 'geographies of dis-ability' towards 'geographies of ability' that validate DEAF space alongside other human pursuits of a Lefebvrian *Totalité*.

Dedications

To Jo… for promises broken, and one finally kept…

And to the DEAF community without whom there would be no DEAF space to describe.

Acknowledgements

There are many people without whose assistance, support and encouragement this PhD would have been quite different, or would simply never have been.

Firstly, because this thesis was the first to be officially established between Geography and Deaf Studies I need to acknowledge the efforts of two quite different supervisory teams. So, thank you to my geographical advisory team who took me on as an inexperienced and 'butterfly minded' activist somewhat lost in geography, and moulded me into something a little more focused. To Simon Naylor who began the process back in 2003 by supervising my Masters dissertation and then continued to the PhD. To Robert Mayhew who has been a great source of ideas and encouragement in the midst of the writing up. And to Yvonne Whelan, who has painstakingly questioned and corrected my maverick writing style. Thank you also to my Deaf Studies advisory 'team', Paddy Ladd, without whose encouragement, insight and belief I would never have got as far as I have.

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Author's Declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: .... DATE:........................

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Sometimes, in sign language (as in spoken language) discourse, it is useful to deal with more than one concept simultaneously. If this happens, the signer will often describe each one in turn, painting them within a central signing space and then 'suspend' them – as they are completed – by hanging them on a signed 'hook' to one side or the other. Then, as each is required, it can simply be unhooked, referred to, and then replaced. To mirror the process of this PhD's emergence, it is necessary to introduce both its author and focus together in a way that demonstrates the confluence of the two. This introduction is shaped to do this by offering two accounts. The first is a brief introduction to DEAF space itself. [1] The second is my own path to the PhD and takes the form of a number of encounters. Each is told between periods of 'suspension' so that as they are described in turn, they can be interlaced into one single account.

1.1   Introducing DEAF space

Begin 'DEAF space' in central signing space…

It was the morning of Thursday September 9th 1880 and the delegates attending the 'International Congress for the Improvement of the Conditions of *Sourds-Muets*' in Milan (Congress 1880) were preparing for the meeting's key vote. [2] For the 164 voting delegates representing a wide variety of European, North and South American schools for deaf children, religious and charity organisations and national governments, this was the moment that had most captured their imagination. Following years of correspondence, observation and debate, and four days of intense

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[1] See the end of this chapter for a working definition of 'DEAF' and other forms 'deaf' and 'Deaf'.
[2] 'Sourds-muets' here is a parallel for 'DEAF'. See section 2.3 for the format of translated terminology used in this thesis.

alliance building and politicking, this was the vote that would justify their attendance, the climax of the congress, and the decision that would shape not only the reports that they would take home, but would establish a standard international approach to the education of deaf children.

It was nearing lunchtime and the delegates were edgy. A series of last minute proposals and counter-proposals between French and Italian delegates had threatened to throw the gathering into chaos and the President was keen to call the assembly to order before hunger postponed the decision yet further. The motion was read out and a secret ballot taken. In the end, there was no doubt that all the blustering had been little more than the efforts of personal and national egos to inscribe themselves as the authors of what was, ultimately, a foregone conclusion. By 160 votes to 4, sign language was officially removed from the education of deaf children and a strict 'Oral Method' was adopted in its stead.

… Suspend 'DEAF space' to left of signing space.

Begin 'Encounters' in central signing space…

For anyone learning a language, there are a number of clear challenges to overcome. However, for those seeking to become truly fluent, there is one key moment of shift. It is, in the words of an interpreter friend:

> … the moment when you stop trusting in the structures of your own language, and begin to trust that the language that you are learning can do the same job… when you can stop worrying about how to say what you want to say and start to worry about how to say what you mean. (Personal communication, May 2006)

In my experience, the most difficult step in achieving this shift is not learning what the new language requires you to add. Rather, the difficulty is learning to cope without what you think is missing. For an English speaker, it is one thing to learn to account for and use, such as German noun genders, permanent and non-permanent Spanish 'being' verbs, complex Russian case inflections and French verb tenses

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marked by previously indistinguishable minimal sound-pairs. It is, however, quite another to accept that by missing out apparently indispensible information - the present tense of the verb 'to be' in Russian, continuous aspect in French, any information about the subject of the verb in Mandarin, the message somehow still remains complete.

For hearing learners of one of the set of natural, visual, sign languages originating within the DEAF community, these problems are the same. However, in trusting sign language to effectively communicate meaning there is another, potentially more difficult challenge. In addition to simply mastering additional language elements - vocabulary that is crafted from the shape, orientation and movement of hands, head, face, limbs and body, for example, or those that are missing - explicit negation words, verbs of being, explicit tense markers, the biggest challenge appears to be accepting that all of this can be done, and done fully, without recourse to sound.

                                  … Suspend 'Encounters' to right of signing space

Unhook 'DEAF space'…

As misguided as the decision to remove sign language from deaf education may seem from the present, it was the perhaps inevitable conclusion to over a century of educational provision to deaf children that had, since the 1830s, become increasingly varied and complex. Heralded as one of the great discoveries of the late 18th century and promoted as a singularly important philanthropic, scientific, medical, educational and philosophical focus of the early 19th, the ability to not only educate deaf children, but through their education to restore them to equality with hearing humanity, had – through the 19th century – become an increasingly fiercely fought-over marker of national and political significance. A confusion of methods, each innovated from a different source, patronised by a different government or religious organisation, championing a different philosophy, and lauded by a different authority, had led to

the creation of hundreds of schools and networks of schools for deaf children across Europe, the Middle East and America.

However, in the midst of this variety and encouraged perhaps by the need to locate clarity within methodological confusion, a gradual evolution had occurred. Based on a complex combination of public perception, the rise of medical scientism and the evolution of institutional discourses that gradually authored the DEAF community as subjects in need of care, the aim of educating deaf children had progressively shifted away from its original emphasis on instruction, to systematic attempts to reconcile deaf children to the hearing world and to the opportunities it offered, a reconciliation that would be signalled by success in teaching them to speak.

It was this to which the representative delegate for the Italian host government referred as, two days after the crucial vote, on the final afternoon of the Congress, he gave the closing address. Speaking to the delegates, the parents and directly to the deaf children whose education they had been discussing, his interpretation of their position and the Congress' successful solution to it is clear:

> Fathers and mothers of those *sourds et muets*, be consoled, for your children… have been truly redeemed to you, and to society…
>
> … And to you also, previously disinherited class, rise up in hope… For even now, there,
>
> > "where it ripens in the silence,
> > where we weep with you in your suffering,
> > where every heart beats for you."
>
> There… the speech, that gives life and thought has begun to bud.
>
> (Zucchi in Congress 1880: 200)

… Suspend 'DEAF space'

Unhook 'Encounters'…

My interest in sign languages stems from a far deeper fascination with almost anything to do with language and its mobilisation beyond simple communication. However, from a background in spoken languages, it was the question of deaf

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people's entirely 'missing' sense that most troubled me as I began to learn British Sign Language in 2000. Or, perhaps less the lack of the sense itself than what its absence implied. Even after only a few weeks of lessons I remember practising sign language introductions at home; "NAME ME m.i.k.e. NAME YOU WHAT?" when it suddenly occurred to me to wonder what someone whose primary medium of communication was visual understood by a hearing-world tradition that applied a sound to identify people. [3] What did the sign 'NAME' really mean to someone who had quite possibly never 'heard' their name in the way that I had? What did any concept mean, for that matter, for those who could not necessarily reference it to the same sound-world meaning that I could? The feeling reminded me of an moment that occurred when I was a teenager on an exchange trip to France, sitting at the bottom of the stairs in my exchange partner's house, listening to the family speaking French and wondering how they ever made sense of anything if they didn't know what it meant in English.

These questions and my struggle with them clearly speak of the strength of my own taken-for-granteds. However, my discomfort was enough to prompt me to begin to ask more, and to look for answers; a process that I found increasingly frustrating as I found that obtaining the information I wanted quickly led me out of the easily obtainable, and into the academic domain. By 2002, I had reached a point where I either had to give up asking questions, or give up employment and ask them full-time.

… Suspend 'Encounters'.

Unhook 'DEAF space'…

As the Milan delegates had hoped, their ratification of the Oral method and pronouncement of the 'abolition of deafness' had a profound effect upon the lives of

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[3] Capitals here denote signs from sign language transcribed into English.

those who used sign language as their primary means of communication. Following the congress, official support from Europe's governments gradually lent weight to a growing transformation of the education of deaf children that included across-the-board provision of speech training, the dismissal or reassignment of teachers unable to teach through speech and a linguistic surveillance of deaf children that extended from the spaces of their dormitories at night to the physical binding, beating or shaming of sign language 'offenders'.

However, most DEAF people – particularly those who had been deaf from birth and so who had no experience of speech (Chambellan, Congress 1889: 28) – were strongly critical of the new approach. Concerned less by the expectation that they should learn to speak, than by the Oralist declaration that the only effective way to encourage speech in recalcitrant pupils was not only to teach speech, but to impose it by forcibly *excluding* "sign language, which is the weed that envelops the good grain of speech and drains it of its sap until it dies" (Fornari, Congress 1800: 116), they pointed out the contradictions of a system that was designed to achieve the restoration of deaf children to society but that actually achieved the opposite.

> Speech is the best language for hearing people, signs are the best for the [mute]… Mankind is born for society… by banning sign language, the *sourd-muet* is excluded even from the society of his peers, he is even more isolated. (Fox, Congress 1889: 26)

… Suspend 'DEAF Space'.

Unhook 'Encounters'…

The origins of Deaf Studies lie, primarily, in opposition that emerged in the 1970s to the legacy left by the Milan Congress and the 'Oralist' movement that it birthed, a legacy that over the first half of the 20th century most significantly evolved authorings of deaf people from those defined by their audiologically-caused lack of speech, to those defined by their inability to speak in terms of deeper-rooted deficiencies in intellectual, cognitive, behavioural, and pedagogical development (Myklebust 1960). It was perhaps most recognisably triggered by the work of

William Stokoe, a structural linguist whose publication into mainstream, hearing academia of a proof that American Sign Language was a fully valid, natural language (Stokoe 1960) provided the spark for other Oralist assumptions to be challenged and led to a raft of linguistic, psychological, anthropological, political, educational and philosophical works that explored how DEAF people, their community and the language and culture that they shared (Ladd 1998) had been at best significantly misunderstood, and at worst explicitly misrepresented by the hearing world (Lane 1999).

As this research began to gather steam, it triggered what Ladd has described a 'Deaf resurgence', a movement akin to the Civil Rights and Feminist movements; a "tremendous improvement in Deaf self-image and self-confidence… particularly noticeable among [sign language] users" (Ladd 2003: 183) for whom the central issue was the immediate and urgent recognition of their language. To achieve this, particularly in the face of long-term discursive habits that had conflated them into a wider group of those diagnosed as 'deaf' by their audiological deviance from a hearing-norm (Kelly 2003), they coined the capitalised term 'Deaf' (Woodward 1972).

At the time I entered Deaf Studies in 2002, it was dominated by debates around each aspect that distinguished those who were 'Deaf' from those who were 'deaf'; with audiological deafness in common, was it more their social membership of a Deaf community, their linguistic preference for sign language or their espousal of a politically Deaf position that set them apart? (Baker & Cokely 1980), and by a fierce condemnation of Deaf people's oppression not only by Oralists but subsequently by the disability movement (see this thesis, Chapter 2). Realising the difficulty of asking questions about how 'Deaf' people constituted meaning without hearing when the entire foundation of Deaf studies largely dictated the need to define Deaf people away from questions of disability (Katz 1999), I followed other areas of interest, in particular, the distinct parallels between the situation of the 'Deaf' community and other minorities defining themselves by linguistic or nationalist criteria. It was in the light of these parallels that I secured funding to bridge between Deaf Studies and Bristol's School of Geographical Sciences and begin this PhD.

… Suspend 'Encounters'.

Unhook 'DEAF space'…

Objections to Oralism were mirrored by the countless communities of signing DEAF people who had either formed as groups of ex-pupils choosing to remain living around their schools, or who identified themselves as belonging to families demonstrating long-term inherited deafness or spontaneous rural and urban DEAF communities forming wherever deaf people found themselves together in significant numbers. While the Oralist delegates at the Milan congress acted through the conviction that their banishment of sign language wrestled deaf people out of spaces of silent isolation and restored them to interactive wholeness within the hearing world, by the early 20th century DEAF people were clear that what they were proposing actually achieved the opposite for those whose home was most naturally the community of those who signed.

> Enemies of the language, they are enemies of the true welfare of the DEAF... the DEAF are… first, last, and all the time the *people of the eye*. (Veditz 1910: no page. Use of 'DEAF' to translate sign language and Italics mine)

However, these profoundly ontological objections of Veditz and the assertion by him, and those like him, of the existence of spaces of sign language interaction and their fundamental role in the life of the DEAF community, had little impact upon an Oralist 'machine' that not only authored the primary objective of deaf education as teaching speech, but also began to author DEAF people unwilling or unable to voluntarily abandon DEAF space for the hearing world as those best served by the same welfare provision offered to other 'disabled' people.

Consequently, as some DEAF people learned to straddle DEAF and hearing spaces, maximising their audiological or linguistic ability to comply with the expectations of hearing teachers and navigate within the hearing world, those less able to 'pass' found their space constituted as a virtual ghetto (Ladd 1979). Preserved most often in the ongoing interactions of long-term DEAF families who could continue to sign at home with impunity, and drawing other deaf people into a knowledge of sign language and DEAF culture through elicit behind-closed-door communication in deaf-school dormitories or the welfare-controlled contexts of the local deaf-club,

presided over by a hearing missioner, DEAF space became the de facto reality of a DEAF community whose inhabitancy of it was inescapable, but whose attitude towards it – at least until the Deaf resurgence – tended to be either one of regret and shame (Denmark 2000) or proud defiance (Ladd 2003).

… Suspend 'DEAF space'

Unhook 'Encounters'…

In 2005, sensitised by contact with geographical theory, three events caused me to revisit my original interest in deaf people's visual reality, but from a different point of view. The first occurred some time in the Autumn of 2005 as my knowledge of sign language improved to the point that I could use it to take advantage of the opportunity to teach. However, as I did this, working alongside DEAF lecturers doing the same, I was puzzled to find that whilst my use of sign language should have, in theory, allowed me the same ability to transmit information as it did them, it did not. Instead there was a tangible difference – almost like flicking a switch – in the receptivity and response that I and they elicited, particularly from DEAF students. Clearly, there was more to creating a context for DEAF learning than simply knowing how to use the language.

After puzzling over this for a number of weeks, I finally asked my DEAF co-lecturer for advice. Over coffee she explained that whilst what I was teaching was clear, I was using sign language to teach in a 'HEARING WAY'; as if I was simply speaking 'but in sign'. This was fine, she said, but it didn't help DEAF students to learn. She, on the other hand, taught the 'DEAF WAY'; painting notions into images, combining them into a picture or a series of pictures, allowing the students to play with elements, focusing in on one area and then highlighting and exploring another, repainting the whole piece by piece, viewing it from different angles, and revising it with no clear beginning or end. Neither was better than the other, she said, hers was

just the way that those who had 'learned to learn' from other DEAF people… visually… learned.

Still chewing over this thought, I left the UK to carry out the preliminary archival work for this thesis in France; a thesis that – at the time – concentrated on "investigating the nature of the [historical] Deaf nation and its defining features" (Gulliver 2005). There, I discovered that while I could talk over my findings with local hearing researchers, my lack of knowledge of French Sign Language vocabulary required any discussion with the local DEAF community to be done by describing pictures of situations often lacking explicit beginnings or endings but rather consisting simply of snapshots that would be questioned, explained, discussed, adjusted, repainted, remembered, celebrated, contested. As I spent time doing this I realised that quite consistently, as I would paint a picture and ask them what they thought, the DEAF person with whom I was speaking would begin their exploration of it by 'climbing inside it'. All the historical accounts that I read described their history as something that was marginal to the events of the hearing world. French DEAF people on the other hand, described it as if it was all that was going on, and as if it was going on around them.

The third event was extremely simple but was, in fact, the final trigger. Returning from France for a short visit to the UK, I met a DEAF colleague who showed me 'in case I was interested', a map on which European, Asian and North American schools for "deaf and blind children and their teachers… in 1837" were marked, connected as a network detailed with travelling times. Having recently discovered that local loyalties in the French DEAF community were described less by local hearing-world origins than by dialects of sign language that located the DEAF person in terms of their school experience, an understanding began to dawn.

Whilst much of the academic work that I had read described the Deaf community and its history in terms of the difference between "deaf" and "Deaf" (Delaporte 2002), what DEAF people themselves were telling me was something quite different. Their reality was not a word, but a *space*, and their history was not the history of a word, but of a space; their space… DEAF space.

Refer to suspended 'DEAF space' location…

Unhook 'DEAF space'…

Bring both concepts together in central space and sign 'LINK'

1.2   Identifying the aims of the thesis

Uncovering DEAF people's spatial narrative it struck me that I might have finally found an explanation to my original question of how to begin to understand sign language without a hearing world reference. Clearly, if it were true that DEAF people's reality was one entirely, or at least primarily authored within the visual then it followed that the concepts that DEAF people mobilised in sign language were not authored in a hearing-world reality, but had been authored in their own sign language-mediated space. Sign language was not simply a language, but was also the means by which its own visually-authored referential system had been authored. To learn how to sign, I had to learn to sign the DEAF WAY. I had to positively reject the idea of engaging with DEAF people from my own space, and – instead – find a way to step inside the same DEAF space that had been defended by Fox and Veditz, ghettoised by Oralism, whose knowledges had been revalidated by Deaf Studies and that continued to be produced for teaching by DEAF students and colleagues.

And yet, if DEAF space solved one problem, it soon presented me with another. Having become aware of it, its challenge to my PhD also became impossible to ignore. As I continued to interrogate the archive, I found less and less evidence of how DEAF people had meant a Deaf Nation to represent a nation at all, and more and more evidence that suggested that rather than trying to pin the DEAF community down to forms borrowed from the hearing world, I could only sufficiently explain what I found by reference to DEAF space itself. By the time I returned home from France, with far more evidence than I ultimately needed, and a somewhat disoriented feeling that came from having seen my original research aim dissolve before my eyes

and a new, but as yet only partly-formed one take its place, I had the firm conviction that rather than describing a history of the Deaf nation, what I needed to write instead was a history – if that were possible – of DEAF space.

This became the principle aim of the thesis. However, to accomplish it, there were two other, clear obstacles that I needed to overcome. These were both conceptual and methodological, and theoretical. Whilst the Deaf resurgence had produced a plentiful source of historical material that focused on the DEAF community, nearly all of it had been written through a lens that either sought to contest the way in which the DEAF community had been authored by others, or that sought to explain DEAF people's reality based on their resistance to those authorings. Although I tried to work with these accounts, I found myself constantly engaged in a battle to 'pull away' from writing a history of space produced *for* DEAF people, or a history of space mobilised by DEAF people *against* their disabling. I realised that if I were to write a history of DEAF space itself, I would first have to work out how to isolate it, and describe it on its own terms. Having done that, I could then explain why what I had done had not been possible before, and what making DEAF space visible did to those prevalent theoretical frameworks.

Two and a half years further on, this thesis is the product of that conviction and the realisation of that conceptual and methodological project. It is, to my knowledge, the first history of DEAF space, one redefined again and again down to its present form as my engagement with the evidence that I brought back from France has allowed me to focus on four specific features of the history of DEAF space, each of which is represented by a substantive chapter. Far from conclusive, it is a first step that has significance to fields that extend far beyond Deaf Studies, or geography.

1.3   Mapping the thesis

Although I address both aims throughout, overcoming the more conceptual and theoretical challenges of DEAF space primarily form the focus for the next chapter (Chapter 2) which is written in three parts. In the first, I locate the reader in the familiar surroundings of a framework that understands DEAF people to be disabled, before quickly demonstrating how the political expediency of the social model of disability, its need to preclude considerations of embodied physical difference and

the consequent conflation of those who are DEAF into the greater group of those who are deaf has effectively rendered DEAF space invisible. I then identify two attempts to make DEAF space visible from within Deaf Studies itself and explore why it is that their explicit contestation of their disabling has rendered them only partly effective. Moving on, I suggest that it is only a framework that can explain DEAF people's spatial difference by reference to their experience of embodied visuality that offers a solution. Beginning by identifying the geographical sub-field of 'geographies of disability' as one that allows this understanding, and further refining it by reference to the work of Henri Lefebvre, I demonstrate that Lefebvre's concept of space as produced not only allows DEAF space to emerge on its own terms, but also allows it to be folded back to challenge its rendering-as-invisible by other approaches. Having identified Lefebvre's work as the framework that I adopt for the remainder of the thesis, I then move on to examine a number of more practical considerations that were key to successfully completing the thesis.

Demonstrating these theoretical issues are four substantive chapters, each of which identifies an aspect of DEAF space as it is evidenced by discrete historical examples. The first explores 'DEAF space emergent'; its production by the collocation of those who are oriented, by their visuality to produce a space of visual communication. Examining three case-studies, it describes the emergence of a DEAF space in both artificially-created and more spontaneously occurring situations where those who require a visual means of communication find themselves living in close proximity, and describes the difficulty of defining a space as 'DEAF' from its origins as a simple space of visual communication.

The second and third substantive chapters form two halves of a whole by identifying and following another DEAF space from its emergence in the 1770s, to identifying the way in which it evolved as it was ongoingly produced by DEAF people against a series of different contextual backgrounds of space produced *for* DEAF people. The first of the two, Chapter four, focuses on a period of administrative abandon birthed by the events of the French Revolution and describes the way in which this provided a context in which the production of DEAF space was allowed to expand without any significant external constraint. The second, Chapter five, then describes what happened when that same DEAF space was squeezed by a loss of autonomy, and the actions of its inhabitants as they were obliged, for the first time, to consider its

location in contact with the hearing world. Both of these chapters describe the relationship between DEAF space and the surrounding hearing world, and examine internal and external factors that shape DEAF space and its independence from, or interaction with (particularly visually mediated) circulations of hearing-authored knowledge.

Each of these first three substantive chapters is supplemented by a Lefebvrian analysis that explores features of the DEAF space that it demonstrates. As such, each links into the next to provide a theoretical backbone to the history of DEAF space that they offer. The final substantive chapter, Chapter six, differs in that it provides a discrete example in the history of DEAF space. It moves on some half a century to examine a situation that arose, post-Milan, with the proposal by the DEAF community to produce a DEAF space that would challenge the Milan congress from within the pavilions of the 1900 Universal Exhibition in Paris. Exploring the events that denied the DEAF community that opportunity, the chapter describes the 'disabling' of DEAF people, and their authoring into a space of disability. Linking this, briefly, to the present day situation described above, this chapter brings the thesis full-circle.

Finally, a brief conclusions and ongoing implications chapter provides a review of the thesis, and suggests ways in which its successful demonstration of a history of DEAF space has implications, particularly for geographies of disability, and for Deaf Studies.

1.4 A note on terminology

Having introduced the terms 'deaf', 'Deaf' and 'DEAF' to some contextualised extent within the introduction, it is important to now provide them with more formal definitions before going on to use them through the remainder of the thesis. As explained in the introduction, when I began working on this thesis, I only employed two terms; 'deaf' – used to describe someone who is "wholly, or partly without hearing", and 'Deaf' - referring to those who consider their situation less one described by an audiological condition, and more by their membership of a linguistic and cultural 'Deaf' community. However, as my research progressed, and particularly as I encountered DEAF space, while I was initially able to stretch the

boundaries of each to a certain extent, I found it increasingly difficult to capture the nuances of what I was calling a 'Deaf' space without adding additional terms. Particularly difficult was distinguishing between the 'Deaf' spaces proposed by Deaf Studies as explicit sites of resistance to the authoring of 'Deaf' people as disabled, and those produced with no apparent contestatory motive simply as the reality of the Deaf community. Far from finding a solution in English, it appeared that the only way to proceed was to borrow directly from sign language itself; from terms like 'DEAF WAY' and from definitions mobilised by DEAF people themselves, like those offered by Carol Padden and Tom Humphries:

> The child uses DEAF to mean 'us', but he meets others for whom 'deaf' means 'them, not like us'. He thinks DEAF means 'friends who behave as expected,' but to others it means 'a remarkable condition'. (Padden & Humphries 1988: 17)

Clearly, if 'DEAF', or perhaps rather more clumsily "the English gloss, used to represent the meaning of the concept signed:

 or as the combination   "
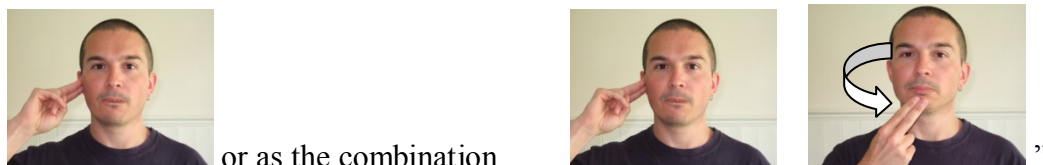
is the way that DEAF people have authored to refer to themselves and to each other, then it was my responsibility to use it out of preference.

Ultimately, this gave me three separate terms,

- deaf – Defined by an audiologically defined deafness.
- Deaf – A term that has been adopted as a counter-representation to 'deaf' and that represents DEAF as it has tended to be defined by the more or less explicitly contestatory period of the Deaf resurgence.
- DEAF – Defined by what DEAF people refer to when they identify something as "expected" or "like me".

Streamlining the use of these throughout the thesis has been a challenge, particularly where terms have been used by others and where each term needed to be mapped on a French equivalent (see section 2.3 below).

For those used to current Deaf Studies terminology, dividing two terms into three might appear confusing. However, the key is to recognise that it is my aim to preserve the flexibility of the terms themselves as they are defined by their users. Firstly, therefore, they are defined by reference to movable constructs such as 'expected' or 'like me' that are allowed to shift over time as they are authored. Secondly, they should be understood as representing the spaces in which they are authored. Thus, whilst 'deaf' is clearly a hearing-authored term, the term 'DEAF' should always been seen as authored from within DEAF space itself, and its use representing a small bubble of DEAF space on the page.

1.5 Abbreviations used in references

Abbreviations commonly used in references are as follows:

ACER – *Arrêt du Conseil d'Etat du Roi*. Reference to original given within the text.

ACPR – *Actes de la Commune de Paris Pendant La Revolution*. References given from original within the text.

BSM – *Banquet des Sourds-Muets*. References by year and by page to annual accounts published in Société Centrale (1842) and Société Centrale (1864).

BHR – *Banquets des Sourds-Muets handwritten ledger*. Preserved in the Archives of the INJS and used with permission from the *Association Amicale*. References by year.

CHS – Truffault, B (ed.) (1989 – 1991) *Cahier de l'Histoire des Sourds*. Historical reader published by the Association Etienne de Fay, 46ter, Rue Ste-Catherine, 45000 Orléans. Page references where applicable given as edition and subsection (eg. 5.2).

CDP – *Conférences Des Professeurs*. References where applicable are given by date of entry.

GSM – *La Gazette des Sourds Muets*. Published from October 1890 to March 1895.

JSM – *Le Journal des Sourds-Muets*. Published from December 1894 to July 1806.

CHAPTER 2 - THEORETICAL APPROACHES

Given the task of writing a history of DEAF space, in this chapter I address the need to identify an appropriate theoretical approach. This I do by first addressing previous descriptions of DEAF space that have either failed to capture its reality, or have described it to a different end and explain why their approaches make them problematic. Having set aside previous approaches, I then identify the features that a more successful framework needs to demonstrate, and suggest that an ideal framework for this thesis is one based in geography – more specifically in the geographical sub-field of geographies of disability – but only as it is informed by Henri Lefebvre's work on a Marxist '*totalité*' and by his 'Production of Space'. This I confirm by a detailed breakdown of Lefebvre's work based in current Deaf Studies research. Finally, describing the process of writing as an engagement with DEAF space itself, I address the historiographical location of this thesis within the aforementioned literatures, its authoring as an academic project engaged with DEAF space, and details of practical strategies evolved throughout its research and write-up.

2.1   Theorising d/Deaf/DEAF spaces

Initially then, I consider previous presentations of DEAF space, and explore why each is inadequate for the task that I have set myself, to describe a history of DEAF space. Having spent much of the introduction describing DEAF people's resistance to Oralism, it may appear strange for me to begin my theoretical exploration within Disability Studies. However, it is key that I do so for two reasons. Firstly, whilst it is my concern to problematise the assumption that DEAF people are disabled and, indeed, the nature of disability itself, I recognise that it is still largely considered 'common sense' (Lane 1999) to locate DEAF people within a larger category of those who are either physically, or sensorially disabled in some way. It is important, therefore, to start here even if only to locate the reader within more familiar territory. Secondly, as I have suggested in the introduction, if it was an early form of medically-modelled disability, in the form of Oralism, that originally stigmatised

DEAF space, this is a situation that has only grown more problematic as it has been overlaid by more recent, disability theory. Since it is my concern in this chapter to locate a theoretical framework through which to describe a history of DEAF space, it is important that I begin here, if only to explore why current models of disability are unsuitable for this task.

2.1.1 DEAF space as a space of disability

The last 20 years have seen a radical transformation in the way that academia has theorised disabilities and disablement, and society's response to them. Characterised until the 1970s by a 'medical model' that drew its strength from a binary comparison between an 'impaired' and 'normal' body (Zola 1972), disability theory began to be substantially re-written in the 1970s as a movement involving those it had previously described began to demand the right to represent their own reality (UPIAS 1976). Their rejection of disability as located in a biological 'impairment' led to the replacement of the 'medical model' of disability in the late 1980s with a 'social model' (Oliver 1990, Morris 1991, Davis 1995) in which the roots of disability are removed from the disabled person's physical body to become a consequence of society's (Abberley 1987, Oliver 1996) failure to accommodate physical difference.

This shift allowed those previously burdened by responsibility for their own disabling to locate it, instead, as the responsibility of "first and foremost... the environmental and social barriers which exclude people with perceived impairments from mainstream society." (Barnes 1998: 78) However, even as the social model of disability has been universally celebrated by disabled people (Kelly 2003), Deaf people have challenged it. Not for its basic premise. Indeed, a number of works from Deaf Studies have seized upon its differentiation between 'impairment' and 'disabling' (Kyle & Woll 1985, Lane 1993) to demonstrate a clear difference between the situation of DEAF people as they move between visually- or sound-mediated DEAF- and hearing-worlds (See Padden & Humphries 1988; Lane, Hoffmeister & Bahan 1996). Rather, Deaf people object to the social model on more fundamental grounds.

Most visibly, their objection arises from a consequence of the social model's success. Fearing that inclusion of the body would weaken the core strength of the model by

allowing it to slide back into corporeally located oppression (Oliver 1990), it became a key strategy of those most staunchly supporting it to refuse to entertain notions of embodiment (Barnes 2000) for fear that it might 'dilute' its effectiveness (Finkelstein 2001). For DEAF people, whose situation is defined less by deafness itself (Batterbury, Ladd & Gulliver 2007) and more by the outcome of *when and how* that deafness orients them towards different communicative media, their entire experience is, at its most fundamental level, a question of embodied experience. Thus, if the social model sources its radicalism from a stark binary described between disabling and impairment and between the body and cultural approaches to the body (Hughes & Patterson 1997), DEAF people assert the need for that 'cultural' approach to also take into consideration the embodied source of their own sign language (Ladd 2003).

For the Disability movement, however, discounting DEAF people's experience leads to an entirely different conclusion. Unable to consider their being DEAF as anything more than a consequence of society's failure to accommodate their physical deafness, they have been conflated within disability theory alongside those who are similarly deaf, but who:

> … see themselves primarily as deafened or hard of hearing… Because these are the people with which the disability movement comes into contact, it is easy for them to mistake the reality of Deaf communities… (Ladd 2003: 168 - 169)

These 'deaf' spokespeople recognise the difference between themselves and those who are DEAF. However, within a model of disability as socially located, there is no room for the difference. Mairian Corker, a deaf writer on disability is clear here.

> 'deaf'... [is] all people for whom being deaf is an important and sometimes dominant characteristic. It may include those Deaf people who are members of the Deaf community, those who are not, and those deaf people whose relationships with both Deaf and hearing communities are not clear. (Corker 1998: 7)

For her, therefore, the pressing issue is less to address DEAF people's assertion of their difference from those who are 'deaf', something that she refers to as a 'threat' to the unity of the disability movement, and more to challenge the "linguistic, psychological, social, architectural, economic and political discrimination" (Corker 1998: 47) that deaf people experience, by pursuing a resolution of what Ladd has called "access issues" (Ladd 2003: 166).

The consequences of this for the DEAF community have been to place them in a situation akin to that of Luce Irigary (1984) who, faced with the need to communicate her reality as a women to a society largely convinced by already established knowledge found:

> … that the vastness and familiarity of the representation we seek to challenge may be so large as to render our truth apparently ridiculous before it is even fully enunciated. (Batterbury et al. 2007: 2901)

As society, informed by the social model, and encouraged by the response that it saw from other disabled people, began to address what it understood to be the systematic oppression (Abberley 1987, Morris 1992, Stuart 1992) of all those constructed as audiologically 'sub-normal' (Davis 2005) by policies to encourage integration by, for example the individualised mainstreaming of deaf children in hearing schools, and the provision of interpreter-services through legislation aimed at lessening discrimination towards those who are disabled, the result has been to author DEAF people into spaces that are only valid as they invalidate DEAF space itself.

The anti-embodiment stance is one that Disability theorists are gradually beginning to acknowledge as something of a theoretical cul-de-sac, particularly in the area of illness (Shakespeare 2006). However, for the moment, there has been little widespread acknowledgement of the kind of change needed to accommodate the situation of DEAF people. Indeed, as DEAF people have resisted their stranding in spaces of further disabling by forms of resistance that I now go on to describe, their actions have been called outdated and short sighted by those who consider that their best hope is to join with 'other disabled' people and embrace a 'postdeafness' (Davis 2008) mitigated by inclusion and interpreters. It is this that makes Disability theory unsuitable as a framework through which to describe and write a history of DEAF space.

The DEAF writer, Frank Bechter, describes a story told by DEAF people that describes their situation of DEAF people trapped first by Oralism into a framework of disability, and then by disability theory itself into disabling spaces as akin to that of a pinball in a pinball machine.

> The story's protagonist has feelings, nonetheless [under Oralism] *it has not been given hands* – and hence *cannot sign*, [under disability] cannot speak for itself or protest its plight… Cannot control its destiny in any way… it is a locus of systematic abuse… Indeed, the pinball does not even realise that it is a pinball – that the forces impacting it

are, in fact, part of a coherent, purposeful system in which it plays the most unlucky role. (Bechter 2008: 62. Emphasis in original)

How is this pinball to liberate itself? "The answer, of course, is that it must grow arms and legs, wrench its way out of the machine… and then speak and be heard." (Bechter 2008: 64). This, DEAF people have attempted to do by proposing two spaces of resistance. The first, by reference to the work of Michel Foucault, the second by reference to post-colonial theories of developmental Nationhood. It is to exploring each of these, and assessing their suitability as frameworks for this thesis that I now turn.

2.1.2   DEAF space as a Deaf space of Foucauldian resistance

Michel Foucault offers a theoretical approach that it is important to consider for this thesis, if only for the quite natural assumption that his work concentrates on problematising the categorical authoring and spatial control of subjects that are, in some ways, analogous to that of the DEAF community. Thus, if disability theory has authored DEAF people into spaces of disabling, then his descriptions of the emergence of the categorically 'mad' (Foucault 1979), of the birth of the clinic and its gaze (Foucault 2003), his approach to problematising the taken-for-granted nature of 'truth' and his demonstration that knowledge is a product of circulating power/knowledge that is inscribed upon malleable bodies (Jones & Porter 1998) authoring them into spaces of control, would appear to be singularly appropriate to decorticating the way in which DEAF people have been consigned to disabling spaces by a discursive, Oralist, 'machine' that has simply continued to produce their subjectivity, although now in the form of Disability theory.

This is a conclusion that has not failed to escape Deaf Studies academics who have drawn upon Foucault's analytical framework with exactly that aim. In his 1993 *Mask of Benevolence*, Harlan Lane, for example, employs a predominantly archaeological approach to deconstructing the concept of 'deaf' itself, demonstrating that far from the common-sensical 'truth' that it is assumed to be, it is simply a foundationless and habitual re-iteration (Foucault 1972, Lane 1999: 87) of statements, or 'traits attributed to deaf people' (Lane 1999: 36) that are bound up together into a discourse of 'deaf'. This discourse, he then demonstrates, is affirmed as truth according to rules that designate it as "the [only] acceptable one" (Lane 1999: 43) because of its

authoring and preservation by 'institutions of power' (Foucault 1982: 212) who produce a 'power/knowledge' (Gordon 1980, Lane 1999: 69) that both authors the deaf subject (Foucault 1972), and regulates the deaf body (Lane 1999: 215) through a regulatory discourse that he calls 'Audism' (Lane 1999: 43):

> … [a] corporate institution for dealing with deaf[4] people, dealing with them by making statements about them, authorising views of them, describing them, teaching about them, governing where they go to school and, in some cases, where they live; in short audism is the hearing way of dominating, restructuring, and exercising authority over the deaf community. It includes such professional people as administrators of schools for deaf children and of training programs for deaf adults, experts in counselling the deaf and in deafness rehabilitation, teachers of deaf children and adults, interpreters, and some audiologists, speech therapists, otologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, librarians, researchers, social works, and hearing aid specialists (Lane 1999: 43)

The DEAF academic Paddy Ladd takes this further by engaging in a more genealogical approach in which he examines the ways in which the 'local discursivities' (Foucault 1980a) that Lane begins to identify have been "released [and]… brought into play" (Foucault 1980a: 85) in the form of wider structures of panoptic control. In his (2003) *Understanding Deaf Culture* he charts the way in which the scientific, Oral method adopted at the 1880 Milan congress, mutated through the 20th century birthed a discursive structure "that we might call a *social-control* (or *social welfare*) model" (Ladd 2003: 139) that established the DEAF community as those inhabiting a form of heterotopic space on the margin of the hearing world, whose contact with the mainstream was mediated by 'missioners' who provided:

> services for assistance with doctors, hospitals, mental institutions, police and courts… funerals, marriages, births, wills, social security and other legal arrangement and form filling… finding employment… any resentment… was tempered both by Deaf helplessness in the face of their power and by gratitude that somebody was willing to devote time to intervening between them and the supposedly hostile world (Ladd 2003: 139)

Deaf Studies academics have, therefore, used Foucault's theoretical battery to effectively deconstruct both Oralist and Disability constructions of 'deaf'. However, they have also seized on Foucault's assertion that "discourse can be … a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault 1978: 100) by

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[4] Here 'deaf' is understood to represent the more traditional 'Deaf' form.

actively pursuing a Foucauldian strategy of 'resistance'; the introduction and circulation of an alternative power/knowledge and the encouragement of the disruption that is produced by the encounter between the two (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982: 147). In part, this has been pursued by traditional academic means by providing additional proof to further bolster the validity of sign language (Sutton-Spence & Woll 1999) and to provide evidence of sign language poetry (Sutton-Spence 2005) and folklore (Rutherford 1993) that has been collected and analysed for its symbolism and decorticated for its linguistics (Kaneko 2008).

However, this proposal of alternate power/knowledge has also been backed up by an explicitly spatial proposal that far from simply offering resistance as a set of valid counter-knowledges, has authored both its own spaces, and those of the DEAF community – the source for the knowledges that it mediates into an academic sphere – as Deaf spaces of resistance. It has done this both through communication policies that deliberately sidestep the question of DEAF 'access' to create small bubbles of (now validated) sign-language communication within institutions of predominantly hearing-world knowledge and by promoting research aims that explicitly 'channel' the academic validity given to Deaf-authored knowledges back to their point of emergence from within the Deaf community itself, the location of the authoring of a valid 'Deaf culture' (Ladd 1998).

Deaf Studies strategy has been effective to a limited extent. Certainly, fields such as mainstream linguistics have accepted the invalidity of their previous descriptions of sign language and moved to accommodate them within those considered natural languages rather than artificial communication systems (Fromkin & Rodman 1988). However, despite its apparent fitting for the kind of critical, disruptive task use to which Deaf academics have put Foucault's theoretical approach, as Deaf Studies academics have attempted to mobilise it to propose their own spaces and the space of the DEAF community as spaces of resistance, Foucault's theoretical work has not had the effect that Deaf Studies would have liked. As Ladd argues; "with the exception of linguistics [other research] has at present had only minimal impact on the disciplines in which [it] operate[s]" (Ladd 2003: 150). Edward Said notes a similar problem in using Foucault in his own work. It is useful, he says, for exposing the internal inconsistencies of "Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient… despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a 'real' Orient" (Said 1995: 89).

However, having done so, it is comparatively powerless to then describe the "cultures and nations whose location is in the East, and their lives, histories, and customs [that] have a brute reality…" (Said 1995:89, see also Young, R. 1990).

The reason for this problem appears to arise from a fundamental challenge of attempting to mobilise Foucault's work, particularly his concept of resistance, in anything other than the way that he originally intended. For Foucault, Ladd and Said's objections are to misunderstand the concept of resistance itself. What they are aiming for, Foucault explains, is resistance understood as "A *total* description [that] draws all phenomena around a single centre – a principle, a meaning, a spirit, a world-view, and overall shape" (Foucault 1972: 10). Rather, what Foucault says resistance really represents is a more *general* description that "on the contrary, would deploy the space of a dispersion" (Foucault op cit). What interests him is not arriving at proving a single, unquestionable truth; rather, it is the pursuit of a relentlessly non-interpretative and non evaluative approach (Mills 2003) that promotes "a politics which defines, within a practice, possibilities for transformation and the place of dependencies between those transformations" (Foucault, cited in Macey 1994: 195). As Chris Philo has described it, this is Foucault's geography, "a form of spatial ontology which proceeds by imagining a hypothetical space or plane across which all of the events and phenomena relevant to a substantive study are dispersed" (Philo 2003: 218).

However, it is exactly here, within Foucault's geography of dispersal, that Deaf studies attempts to locate itself as an explicitly 'ordered' space of resistance, a space that mediates the power/knowledge resistance of the DEAF community through an academically validated 'regime of truth' (Foucault 1981) to problematise the way that an Oralist power/knowledge has authored 'truth' and to propose an alternative power/knowledge in its place. For Foucault, however, this approach is anathema to resistance as he sees it. As Deaf Studies proposes itself as a resistive 'order of things' (Foucault 2002), Foucault denies the possibility of any such ordering, unless the ordering itself is also something to be contested, resisted, and dispersed upon a "surface account[s], where the things of the world – phenomena, events, people, ideas , and institutions – are all imagined to lie on the same level" (Philo 2003: 231).

It is for this reason that, whilst Foucault's work has provided Deaf Studies with a tool to combat specific discourses, positioned according to "local, changing rules" (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982: 55) it offers no framework through which DEAF space, or even DEAF space mediated as validated knowledge through an academic régime of truth, can be validated. The outcome is not DEAF space as this thesis seeks to describe it, as a valid space in its own right, but rather one as Ó Tuathail might phrase it, the location of a struggle between competing authorities to conclusively define what 'Deaf' means, but whose only point of agreement is their refusal to recognise the invalidity of their arguments (Ó Tuathail 1996). A heterotopic (Foucault 1986) construction that only has a temporary validity, and only then in terms of what it says about the truths that allow it to hold together.

2.1.3 DEAF space as a Deaf space of National resistance

I will return to address an additional problem with Foucault's theoretical proposals in a moment. However, before doing so I now turn to consider whether a second Deaf space of resistance, mobilised by Deaf people to wrench themselves out of Bechter's pinball of Oralist and Disabling spaces offers any more hope. This is a space that emerged from Deaf people's perception that if Foucault's theory offered them a way to establish their resistance in what Marcus Power (2003) describes as a locally embedded form; a struggle that is "grounded in particular places and in interpretations of those places and their relations with others areas" (Power 2003: 196), then what they needed to do was to locate a theoretical approach that would allow them to explicitly challenge the boundaries of that 'place-specific identity' (Flint 2002). The result was to shape their resistance in a form that has been referred to as "one of the strongest foci for resistance to imperial control in colonial societies…" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin 1995: 151) and propose that a second space of resistance be crafted around a number of ideas related to the concept of a 'Deaf Nation'.

It may appear to be an extraordinary leap from a space of resistance constructed as a community of culture, represented by a Deaf Studies space and validated by academic proofs to a concept that mobilises the notion of a Deaf nation. However, there are at least two good reasons why it was, in fact, only a small step in a natural progression. The first is a clear immersion of prominent Deaf Studies academics in

the literature of post-colonialism, a literature in which national forms from nation-states, to proto-nations (May 2001), First-Nations (Eriksen 1993, Batterbury et al 2007), Nations of interest such as the 'Nation of Islam' (Alker 2002: 79) and a variety of other "crystallization of… units, suitable for the conditions now prevailing… using as their raw material the cultural, historical and other inheritances from the pre-nationalist world" (Gellner 1983: 49) are proposed, theorised, and mobilised as the site of struggle for the rediscovery and rejuvenation of an oppressed people (Fanon 2001). As Paddy Ladd stated in 1997 at a symposium organised to explicitly discuss the "Informing, Inspiring, Projecting, Representing, Sustaining, Portraying, Developing, Recognising, and Celebrating" (UCLAN 1997) of the Deaf Nation,

> … we already have … community. What is missing is the ability to realise, to 'imagine', its true scope, size and ability. That is where the power of naming is crucial, where being able to conceive of a name/concept that reflects that true dimension… Our cultural renaissance has taught us that, yes, we are a Nation, spiritually at least. (Ladd 2002: 89)

The second, however, is more clearly marked by a key date, 1993, and the publication of Renate Fischer and Harlan Lane's first historical compilation "looking back" (Fischer & Lane 1993) in which evidence appeared for the first time in English that not only had DEAF people in 19th century France previously explicitly used the idea of a 'nation' of DEAF people as a framing concept for their own DEAF 'community of culture' but that they had done so in a way that triggered the emergence of what Bernard Mottez terms the first real "Deaf movement" (Mottez 1993); a movement that was rapidly identified as a 19th century parallel to the Deaf resurgence (see this thesis, Chapter 5).

Clearly, however, if the concept of a Deaf Nation offered both a vehicle for empowerment and a past rationale for activism, it was equally clear that the form that it should take was not straightforward. At the same Deaf Nation symposium in 1997, Doug Alker argued, for example, that far from seeking the formal structures of a "geo-political nation" (Alker 2002: 80) what most Deaf people really wanted was simply "good education, equal opportunities in employment and community involvement…" (Alker 2002: 81) within the hearing nation in which they live. Lilian Lawson affirmed this by suggesting that rather than forming the same 'imagined community' that Anderson (1983) holds the nation to be, DEAF people's belonging

is expressed by a commitment of people often known to each other, who have been to the same schools and who use the same form of sign language. Each group, she argues, has its own sense of belonging. She asks "Do we want one, or multiple Deaf Nations?" (Lawson 2002: 96).

Ladd, however, challenges this literalist assumption. Ultimately, he asserts, whether or not DEAF people ultimately *form* a nation is less important than what can be achieved by asserting the *potential* of DEAF people to form a nation. The *reality* of a Deaf nation - what it might look like, how it might be constituted, who might be a citizen - is less important than mobilising its space as the explicitly strategic (Spivak 1990) adoption of a powerfully representative trope of resistance that provides a way for DEAF people to step away from exactly the kind of 'ambivalent' authoritative disavowal of external validity (Bhabha 1995) that undermined the validity of a Foucauldian space of resistance. It is against this constant need for DEAF people to defend themselves that a Deaf nation is proposed; a space of:

> Peacetime… from that will come the greater visions which form the essence of any nation struggling for the independence to become most fully itself… A Deaf Nation *is*… An imagined community, as Anderson would have it. The importance of the concept of Deaf Nation is that it encourages and facilitates the spread of what is in essence a mental and spiritual exercise, a visioning… (Ladd 2002: 89, emphasis mine)

What Deaf Nation represents, therefore, is less a nation per se, and more the assertion of a potential continuum of spatial positionings that allow DEAF people to pursue their becoming 'more fully themselves'. This is a pursuit that Paddy Ladd has called 'Deafhood' (1998, 2003) a concept that is distinctly informed by post-colonial theorisations of nationhood as 'developmental' (Power 2003) and parallel literatures from Native American (Duran & Duran 1995), Aboriginal (Mudrooroo 1995) and Black Nation activists (Karenga 1993). It is a concept that Ladd defines as:

> the existential state of Deaf 'being-in-the-world'…. Deafhood is not seen as a finite state but as a process by which Deaf individuals come to actualise their Deaf identity. (Ladd 2003: xviii)

Central to Deafhood is the understanding that the core usefulness of a Deaf Nation space is to allow DEAF people to engage firstly with themselves, and with each other as a community of culture, and then with the hearing world but on DEAF terms. Consequently, even as a space of Deaf Nation is envisaged, its nature is largely determined by the extent to which it allows DEAF people to reach for their

Deafhood. At one end of a continuum, in situations where DEAF people have interpreted the failure of the hearing world to validate their reality as a situation of irredeemable intransigence, Deafhood emerges as requiring what we might term a Deaf 'isolationist' space (Rée 2005). Understood through Conversi's (1997) argument that the more fragile or threatened the identity and cultural integrity of a nation, the more assertive it finds it needs to be to maintain itself, in the Deaf case it has largely arisen from the assertion that the only way for Deaf people to resist oppression and locate themselves without reference to a hearing-world is by creating a situation in which they can construct themselves as a numerical or structured majority. In at least two cases, this has given rise to calls to 'withdraw' from the hearing world entirely and establish Deaf-governed territories or town (Davey 2005)

However, at the other end of the continuum, particularly in situations where DEAF people find themselves free from the pressure to defend themselves, for example within the DEAF community itself or within Deaf Studies departments, Deafhood blossoms away from an assertion of survival to follow a burgeoning literature from Aboriginal and Indigenous writers - who have begun to shun assumed dichotomies between those who are Maori *or* Pakeha (Goodrich & Sampson 2008) in New Zealand, or Aboriginal *or* White (Trigger 2008) in Australia - by beginning to explicitly discuss its potential contribution to the hearing world. As the former have begun to explore how Maori or Aboriginal spaces, preserved as such and encountered in their integrity allow non-indigenous people to locate and explore their 'Indigenous selves' (Mulcock 2002), Deaf academics have too begun to propose that Deafhood offers a way for those inhabiting a sound-mediated world to also encounter their 'visual selves' and reconcile their hearing-world authored bodies to the reality of a humanity that is fully expressed in both sound and vision.

There are few DEAF people who maintain a permanently isolationist position. Similarly, there are only limited opportunities for DEAF people to enjoy the peace-time that allows them to propose the more ontological Deafhood approach to their place in the world. Rather, for the vast majority of the time, DEAF people's lives are lived in a state of oscillation between these two extremes. Asserting, on the one hand, their need for the 'order of things' that forms their DEAF being-in-the-world, but also recognising that they are part of wider, predominantly hearing-authored communities and nations they find themselves, sometimes at one end of the Deaf

nation continuum, sometimes at the other, sometimes appearing to be at both ends at the same time. This is a positional dance that Steve Emery has recently described in his PhD as one of seeking a validating 'Deaf citizenship' that allows DEAF people to find their DEAF being-in-the-world, but also hold it in tension with their place within the hearing world (Emery 2006).

However, it is here that a tension emerges. For whilst both Ladd and Emery's work represents ways in which aspects of a Nation discourse can be used to describe the reality of the DEAF community, they also note the way that 'Nation' is limited. Not only because of criticisms of the Nation construct itself and its application to the DEAF community as, for example, a group problematically defined by a physical feature that Lennard Davis refers to as problematically 'racial' (Davis 2008) or those without a territorial homeland (Kelly 2004). But because, seen from a Foucaultian perspective, the core defining features of their Nationhood - a distinct language, culture and community - are also inevitably constructed. As Ladd explains:

> I am aware of the ironic timing of post-modernism – that is, at the very moment when the discourse of oppressed groups at least becomes visible… that their discourses risk being dismissed along with the Grand Narratives themselves! (Ladd 2003: 80)

In the face of this, the only way to maintain the Deaf Nation as a space of resistance is by acknowledging Deafhood as explicitly contestatory. As Ladd continues:

> in the liberation struggles of some groups, a strong case can be made for… a countervailing social, cultural and intellectual force which can then create new spaces for more sophisticated liberatory discourses to flourish… This I have designated as *Deafhood.* (Ladd 2003: 80-81)

However, it is Ladd's assertion that Deaf Nation, in order to be valid, must structure itself as a counter-narrative that ultimately makes it unsuitable as a framework for this thesis. For if the aim of this thesis is to describe a history of DEAF space, and to do so in a way that describes it as a space in its own right, then it cannot adopt a theoretical framework that constructs it as a 'counter-narrative'. Note that this does not mean that concepts of Deafhood and citizenship proposed by Ladd and Emery are also precluded. Indeed, it is a significant finding of this thesis that by removing them from the contestatory Deaf Nation framework and relocating them within a framework of non-contestatory DEAF space, both gain new aspects of relevance that will provide exciting avenues for research into the future. However, it is to say that

Deaf Nation, particularly as it is proposed as representing a space of resistance, must be set aside.

2.2   Theorising DEAF space

Having assessed the failure of both Foucault's work, and post-colonial nationhood to provide an appropriate framework for a history of DEAF space, I now move to identify a more appropriate framework. However, before I do, I would like to briefly return to both Foucault's geography of dispersal, and the proposal of a Deaf Nation to identify a more deep-seated issue that I have so far failed to make explicit. Certainly, the above rationales for discounting both of these theoretical frameworks are valid. However, neither are they the most obvious failing of either. This needs to be addressed now so as to provide a way into considerations of a more appropriate framework.

To do this, I need to first briefly return to Veditz' assertion, cited in the introduction, that DEAF people are 'people of the eye', and to its significance in suggesting that far from being those whose being-in-the-world is simply a being in the hearing world in a visual medium, they are those whose being is in a visual world. With reference to Chris Philo's description of Foucault's geography, they are those who do not inhabit a hearing-authored world "hypothetical space or plane" (Philo 2003: 218) but rather one that is authored by the circulation of power/knowledge in a visual-medium. The significance of this is fundamental:

> Although deaf people share the same physical spaces as the hearing world… they are excluded from many of the interactions that define… the hearing world. Instead [DEAF space]… is created by sharing and interaction lived out in the visually interactive world of sign language… the knowledges that produce them (and the knowledges that are produced within them) have developed over time in ways that make them profoundly different… from those of hearing people. (Gulliver 2008: 91)

Thus, while a Deaf Space of Foucauldian resistance is problematic for the way in which it relies on a concept of resistance that is anathema to Foucault's own, and a Deaf space of National resistance is problematic for its adoption of a constructed counter-narrative, what is potentially even more difficult is that their 'resistance' arises less from DEAF space itself, than it does from the way in which the process of *translating* it inter-space, and *positioning* it as valid upon a hearing-authored plane

necessarily requires it to be justified by reference to the knowledges of that hearing-authored plane. See figure 1 below.

Figure 1.
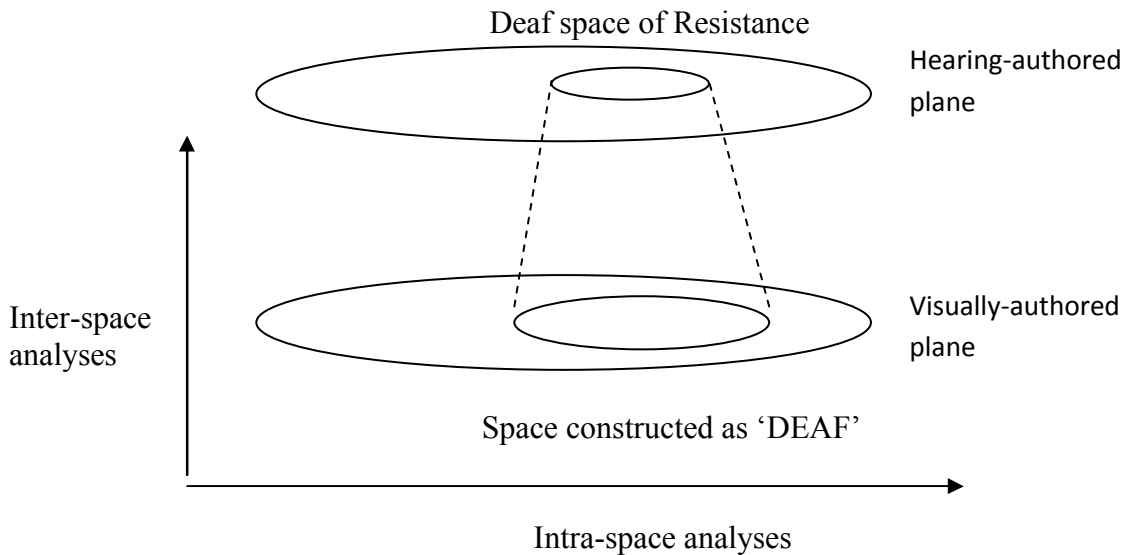
Understanding this, and beginning to unpack the messiness of this 'translation' process, it is relatively easy to see additional reasons why neither of the above spaces of resistance provides an appropriate framework for this thesis. Foucault's notion of resistance is fundamentally effective as it opposes alternate power/knowledges upon the same plane. However, addressing the question of whether Foucault's theoretical approach can extricate DEAF space from the discourses that author it as a space of disabling is impossible when the space that is actually being discussed is less DEAF space itself, than its necessarily resistive form 'in translation', located on the hearing-authored plane. This translation process, and the way that it appears to 'bond' elements authored in a visually-authored plane to elements *of* that visually-authored plane in a way that cannot be simply 'resisted', is something that is fundamentally beyond a Foucauldian analysis that presumes the ability to 'resist' ordering across a single, hypothetical plane of dispersal.

Similarly, translated onto a hearing-authored plan, the very existence of a DEAF community may appear in the form of a Deaf Nation that has to be resistive to preserve its integrity. However, a space of Deaf Nation that asserts the importance of its counter-narrative on a hearing-authored plane fails to take account of issues such

as the authoring of those who are 'deaf' away from those who are 'DEAF' when both rely upon visually mediated communication, the purposeful intra-space and inter-space navigations of those who are DEAF but also citizens of the hearing world, and the possibility of a Deafhood that is not resistive at all, but rather authored simply as a 'being in a visual world' and that only mobilises a resistive element as the ability to freely perform that being is threatened.

Clearly, there is far more to investigate here than I can begin to do with this thesis. However, what this brief outline demonstrates is that this thesis needs a theoretical framework that is potentially able to accomplish both its more immediate aims of describing DEAF space, and allowing me to write a history of it. But that might also be extended in the future to begin to investigate some of these areas of complexity.

I now move on to describe this framework. However, I do this initially with some hesitation for whilst ultimately, as I will demonstrate, it provides a theoretical approach that can later be 'looped back' to demonstrate its benignity, I find it somewhat uncomfortable to suggest that the best hope for identifying DEAF space emerges from within a field that is closely associated with Disability, and that takes the form of 'disability geographies' (Gleeson 1999).

2.2.1   DEAF space and 'dis-ability' geographies

Disability geography is still a relatively new field that only really emerged in its present form in the 1990s as those working within geography to describe disabled people's mobility within different environments (Dear 1978; Dear, Taylor & Hall1980) harnessed Disability's social model to begin to describe the way in which interactions with 'landscapes of power' (Sibley 1995) dis-able those who are physically 'other' (Valentine and Skelton, 2003) by creating physical (Golledge 1991, 1993), legislative (Sibley 1995, Laws 1994), attitudinal (Park & Radford 1997, Parr 1997), political (Imrie and Hall 2001, Siebers 2003) or specifically social (Young, I. 1990) boundaries.

Since its beginnings, many of the debates within it have concentrated on increasing the visibility of disabled people within geography. Hastings and Thomas recent (2006) research considering the construction of the nation as a community by default 'imagined' (Anderson 1983) as able-bodied questions the extent to which geography

demonstrates a tacit ableism (Chouinard 1997) that has traditionally excluded considerations of the disabled body (Davis 1995). Others have contested the relatively safe focus of geographers on questions of mobility against the more challenging areas of mental health and/or learning difficulties (see Wolch & Philo 2000, Hall 2004), or sensory differences (Paterson 2008). Some are concerned by how to reconcile particular research methods, for example the use of questionnaires (Kitchin 2000) with the need to "represent the geographical lives of intellectually disabled people" (Hall and Kearns 2001: 243). Still others, sensitised by questions of development, have questioned how a field such as geography, with a tradition of intervening to shape the environment might also be sensitised to the need to balance the politics of commissioned studies of disability, especially when the findings go against the expectations of the sponsor (Pain 2006: 251).

However, where disability geographies are particularly useful to this thesis is not as they have drawn upon disability to broaden reflexive awareness in geography, but where geographers have begun to take their own understandings back into considerations of disability and disabling. Here, theorisations of the 'body as space' and 'space from the body' (see Nast & Pile 1998, Butler & Parr 1999, Teather 1999, Longhurst 2001, Kelly 2003) have begun to not only allow geographers to counter the notion, prevalent in Disability studies that space is little more than a "container category, or as something that is the backdrop to social action and process" (Imrie & Edwards 2007: 636) but to also to combine "the social model with considerations of impairment" (Kelly 2003: 21) to address the question of embodied disability that has so troubled Disability Studies. The only two examples that disability geography provides of investigations of the DEAF community both provide evidence of this, and acknowledge, albeit in a very tentative form, the idea that there might be a DEAF space apart from a hearing-world referential reality.

The first of these is a body of theory authored principally by Tracey Skelton and Gill Valentine, whose relevant work concentrates on the way in which, particularly young, d/Deaf [sic] people "[experience] social exclusion and inclusion through processes of marginalisation and resistance within a range of socio-spatial institutions..." (Skelton & Valentine 2003: 452) and how each space's expectations and norms either empower or disempower individual performances of identity and belonging. As they say:

> In different spaces people may be ascribed an identity as Deaf or as deaf. Someone might perceive themselves as Deaf and at their local Deaf club where they feel part of Deaf culture and use BSL, their first language, they are likely to be recognised as this. However, whilst they might self-identify as Deaf, for the same person in their place of work, they have to use oral styles of communication within a hearing context, then their work colleagues might ascribe them a deaf identity. (Skelton & Valentine 2003: 456)

Valentine and Skelton's work must be understood within the objective that they set for themselves which is not to describe DEAF space, but rather to recognise the way in which the different spaces through which the d/Deaf person passes impact upon their individual freedom. Consequently, they do not specifically address the question of whether DEAF people have their own spaces – although they do refer explicitly to a 'Deaf space' without definition, understood as produced by the DEAF community as one of the 'socio-spatial institutions...' (Valentine & Skelton 2003) that they study. Nor do they investigate the nature of those spaces or the knowledges that are authored within them – although, again, they are keen to demonstrate that they are both constructed by the ongoing discursive habits of those who produce them, and that they author the individual entering them accordingly. Rather, their primary concern is to examine the extent to which this authoring is either accepted or resisted by the d/DEAF individual, free to perform their own identity, and the way that this impacts on the positioning of the individual as they are found 'on the edge' of either (Valentine & Skelton 2003).

However, even by allowing this final 'either', they demonstrate the perceptive advantage of a lens that recognises 'spaces from the body'. For what Valentine and Skelton's work demonstrates is that far from precluding discussion of the embodied experience of deafness, they accept not only that it has an effect, but that it has a significance in orienting the d/Deaf individual to the space in which they can best develop. This is most evident in their *It feels like being Deaf is normal* (Skelton & Valentine 2003), in which the experiences of a number of young d/Deaf people are described as they grow up, and the extent to which their physical deafness and the differing communicative media and expectations of the DEAF and hearing spaces between which they navigate either squash or liberate their ability to actualise personal freedom of development. The architects of each space, they argue, have a responsibility to structure the individualisation (Roberts 1997: 59, cited in Valentine & Skelton 2003: 318) or the d/Deaf individual; to nurture them to maturity, and to prepare them for leaving that space and encountering themselves in other spaces.

It is unfortunate for this thesis that beyond these select papers and a follow up project that deviated from their original approach (see Valentine & Skelton 2008, 2009), Skelton and Valentine's research into DEAF space appears to have ended, leaving us with little more than a tantalising glimpse of its potential. However, this makes room for a second, geographical approach to Deaf people. It comes in the form of a PhD, completed by Ember Kelly at Bristol University in 2003 (Kelly 2003). Again, Kelly's interest is not DEAF space, but – motivated by her own situation - d/DEAF people's experience of technology and how their deaf body, cyborged (Harraway 1991) by hearing-aids and other assistive technologies challenges the notion of a single disabled/able-bodied dichotomy.

However, working from a geography that acknowledges the 'body as space', it is, again, not long before Kelly's focus provides another potential glimpse of DEAF space. Asserting that what distinguishes someone who is 'DEAF' from someone who is 'deaf' is their experience of embodied deafness, she questions what might happen as the "corporeal boundaries" (Kelly 2003: 10) of deafness are gradually moved by cyborging. What might happen, she asks, if a person born profoundly deaf is given a hearing aid that allows them to interact more freely within the hearing world? Is the impact the same as the fitting of a hearing aid for someone who has only lost their hearing in adulthood? Distinguishing physical abilities from the embodied experiences of them, and the situated consequences of them she asks how those already perceiving themselves as unproblematically located in either DEAF or hearing worlds interpret the fuzziness available to the individual as the technological hybridisation of the deaf body increases:

> If space, especially corporeal space, can be seen as fluid then the distinction of abnormality can be broken down and explored as temporal and contingent upon context… a person overflows her surroundings, and she does so in ways that are quite unpredictable. (Kelly 2003: 29-30)

Frustratingly, however, having defined the embodied experience of deafness as the key feature that distinguishes between deaf and DEAF people, and located variously hybridised corporeal boundaries as a way to investigate their orientation towards different spaces, Kelly's thesis moves away to concentrate on the attitudes of deaf people and the DEAF community towards technological hybridisation, and the burgeoning subject of d/DEAF people and their use of cyberspace.

It is significant that where both Valentine & Skelton's, and Kelly's work offer an opportunity to modify or attenuate the apparent intransigence of the social model of disability is in recognising either the existence or DEAF space, or at least, the potential for a DEAF space to exist. It is also significant that, whilst neither explicitly discusses the nature of that DEAF space, in both Valentine and Skelton's proposal that it plays a crucial role in allowing the d/DEAF individual to develop and mature in the midst of a variety of different spaces, and in Kelly's acknowledgment that it exists even as it is produced by the 'corporeal boundary' that is constantly being problematised by hybridisation and by its relationship with the environment, both assert that the individual's relationship with the spaces through which they navigate is linked to the extent that they allow them, from within a physical body differently enabled by its experience of embodying its place within the environment, to perform their identity as they conceive of it.

It is here, with the notion of DEAF space as produced as those who are themselves deaf, live out their temporally, socially, environmentally located embodiment of the experience of deafness, that it is possible to effect the looping back that I suggested at the beginning of this section. For whilst Valentine & Skelton's, and Kelly's work suggests that DEAF space needs to be understood through a 'geography of disability', their reference to 'disability' is less one that mobilises ideas of 'dis-abling' than one that might be better termed a '~~dis~~-ability geography', a geography of situated, embodied, enabling that they have applied to the situation of DEAF people, but that could quite happily also be used to describe the situated production of space from within any physical body.

If this is indeed the case, then what this thesis can achieve, by identifying and describing a history of DEAF space, is to problematise not only the assertion that DEAF people are those who are disabled, or that they necessarily inhabit spaces that must be constructed as counter-narratives to their disabling, but – by establishing DEAF space as a space that is produced by those who inhabit more or less visually oriented bodies as they are free to do so in order to pursue their self-actualisation as human beings – it also suggests a way for geography to explode the notion of disability itself. Certainly, DEAF people are those who are deaf. However, within a DEAF space, the notion of deafness is not so much resisted as immaterial as it is circumnavigated by the processes of that space's production.

As Rob Imrie & Claire Edwards, in a recent review paper have argued:

> The challenge for geography (and geographers) is, we would argue, to extend and develop the theoretical insights of a Lefebvrian-inspired understanding of the production of space, and continue to combine it with the commitment to dialogical social inquiry. Such an inquiry… is one which ought to be intimately connected to space and place, that is, to the specific values and contexts of conduct, the diversity of lived encounters, and embodied experiences, of disability, and the temporal/spatial fluidity of (disabled people's) identities. (Imrie & Edwards 2007: 634-635)

2.2.2 The production of DEAF space

For Rob Imrie & Claire Edwards, as it is for me, the key to examining DEAF space in its own right, and thereby also allowing a re-configuring disability studies, is the work of Henri Lefebvre. However, before considering why Lefebvre's work, and particularly his notion of space as produced (Lefebvre 1991), succeeds where Foucauldian and Nationalist spaces of resistance fail, it is necessary to first acknowledge a particularly insidious challenge. For, not only has Lefebvre's work already been influentially employed by disability geographers, for example to defetishise spaces of disability (Gleeson 1998, Butler and Bowlby 1997, Imrie 2006), and to expose the way in which dis-abling environments are not fixed, but are produced by social, economic, and political Geographies of Exclusion (Sibley 1995), as Kevin Hetherington states in his *Badlands of Modernity* (1997), they have done so in terms of "the opportunities provided by places of resistance or places on the margin… [subjectivities] that are marginalised in space" (Hetherington 1997: 21). to 'speak back' to the centre.

The nature of this work is clearly problematic for not only does it represent a distinctly 'Foucauldian' challenge to the fixity of the environments that disable and to the construction of those who find themselves marginalised, it does so in a way that is distinctly representative of an 'imagined' solidarity, ordered despite itself, and speaking from an established marginal space. Both of these forms of resistance, by assertions of dispersal and by assertions of the right to speak from an ordered space, are approaches that I have rejected with regards to truly establishing the nature of DEAF space. Clearly, there is more to understanding Lefebvre's potential contribution to this thesis than simply adopting paths that have been previously trodden by others.

These approaches do not represent an insurmountable challenge. Rather, they are indicative of the assumption that I previously described; that there is only one valid plane of reality. However, to explain this, I first need to establish a wider context for Lefebvre's work than is commonly done by those who have used it in disability geography. This I will do by reference to a long standing preoccupation that appears in his writing as early as the 1930s.

Before his *Production of Space* (Lefebvre 1991), Lefebvre must be considered for his Marxism, and in particular as a proponent of a particularly humanistic Marxism whose key principle was drawn from Marx' discussion of what he called 'Total man' (see Marx 1975), a concept that was more than simply economic, and more than simply spiritual. In Lefebvre's own words:

> What is the total man? Not physical, physiological, psychological, historical, economic or social exclusively or unilaterally; it is all of these and more, especially the sum of these elements of aspects; it is their unity, their [*totalité*]… (1968: 157, cited in Shields 1998: 49, emphasis and use of French mine)[5]

The absence of *totalité* was, in Lefebvre's eyes, "alienation in its most pernicious form…" (Shields 1998: 49). Attaining it was, he asserted, the objective towards which Marx worked. "Marxism is a practical philosophy of freedom" (Lefebvre & Guterman 1934: 12, in Poster 1975: 57), he argued as early as 1934, its aim is "the humanization of society and nature… the humanization of man: the conscious, human control of society and nature accompanied… the coming into consciousness of human potentials" (Poster 1975: 57).

It is this deep-seated commitment to challenging alienation and, thereby, undoing the "mystification of consciousness" (Lefebvre & Guterman 1936a) as he saw it, that Lefebvre brings to his later work. However, by the time he wrote his *Production Of Space* (Lefebvre 1991 – henceforth POS), Lefebvre's own experience had demonstrated to him that any attempt to address human alienation directly became tangled up in what he described as "… a systematization that must be 'closed' to be complete" (POS: 11). This 'system' – fetishised beyond analysis by those whose vested interests lie in it appearing to have a self-evident cohesiveness that, far from

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[5] Totalité has been preserved in French to represent Lefebvre's use of it. A use that differs, according to Jay (1988) somewhat from the more economically pursued 'Totality' as it was ultimately understood by Marx himself.

representing reality, simply obfuscates it beyond perception – is what Lefebvre describes as a "capitalist space" (POS: 11); a space 'produced' to be deliberately disempowering.

"Not so many years ago" he says, " 'space' had a strictly geometrical meaning; the idea it evoked was simply that of an empty area" (POS: 1). "Transcendental and ungraspable" (POS: 2), space simply contained, framed, backgrounded what happened inside it. It was understood as forming an *a priori* realm of consciousness, an understanding that alienated the human subject from its reality. But, to understand space in this way is wrong. It is not separate from the subject, he argues, it is known and represented by them in a series of understandings and knowings that he calls a *mental space* (POS: 3), but it is also known and represented by society; used and structured and understood as a *social* space (POS: 11).

The fact that these other spaces are not visible is not because they are not there. Certainly, they are present. However, the problem is how to access them, and by accessing them defetishise space, and by defetishising it, achieve a "rapprochement between physical space… mental space… and social space…" (Merrifield 2000: 171) in such a way that a pursuit of *totalité* becomes, again, a possibility.

Lefebvre's answer is to mobilise, once again, the original Marxist terminology of production:

> The concepts of *production* and of the *act of producing* do have a certain abstract universality… By retrieving something of the broad sense that they had in certain of Marx's writings… it will be easy to recover those concepts and put them back to work. To speak of 'producing space' sounds bizarre, so great is the sway still held by the idea that empty space is prior to whatever ends up filling it… What is called for, therefore, is a thoroughgoing exposition of these concepts… (POS: 15)

What emerges from this 'thoroughgoing exposition' is the *Production of Space*; a project that Lefebvre calls *spatiology*. Its aim is to defetishise humanity's alienation from *totalité* by reconciling the physical, mental and social spaces that have been dislocated in 'present space'. It is difficult, Lefebvre said, "to get back from the object [the present space] to the activity that produced and/or created it… once the construction is completed, the scaffolding is taken down… the fate of an author's rough draft is to be torn up and tossed away." (POS: 113). What is needed, therefore, is a process by which the 'production', in all its Marxist sense, can be exploded.

Lefebvre's proposal of exactly how to do this is somewhat woolly. Ed Soja refers to it as 'bewildering' (Soja 1996: 8) and Andy Merrifield as 'messily blurred' (Merrifield 2000: 173). However, central to Lefebvre's work are three 'moments' (Merrifield 2000), or 'aspects' (Shields 1998) that author the basic brute topography of the world with meaning, "a network or sequence of links" (POS: 403) in which each part is interrelated with the others, altogether making up 'space'.

1. The first is 'spatial practice', or in French '*Espace Perçu*' [perceived/apprehended space] where *Perçu* refers less to a question of 'perception' by sense and more to the apprehension of a space that is "ignored one minute and over-fetishised the next" (Shields 1999: 160). A commonsensical space of life, it is the place of work and the routes that lead to and from it, the physical or social body in its interactive co-crafting of the environment in a relationship of 'doing'. A space that the individual or society, through its everyday 'competence' (POS: 33) "Secretes... propounds and presupposes... produces slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it" (POS: 38).

2. The second is what Lefebvre describes as 'representations of space' or '*Espace Conçu*' [space conceived of, or comprehended]. It is space planned, described and understood, constructed and 'ordered' (POS: 33); "the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers" (POS: 38). It is a space that identifies space *Perçu*, describes it, knows it and discourses on it (Shields 1998: 161). It is a space that is symbolised, known, codified, and objectified (Merrifield 2000: 174) finding its "objective expression" (POS: 49) in structures that are both concrete: buildings, roads, schools and in "bureaucratic and political authoritarianism immanent to a repressive space" (POS: 49).

3. The third aspect of space produced is 'spaces of representation' or '*Espace Vécu*' where, again, *Vécu* refers less to 'la vie' [life], and more to the ultimate freedom of utopian, or revelatory "moments of presence... that shock one into a new conception of the spatialisation of social life." (Shields 1998: 161). Described by Lefebvre as "space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate" (POS: 39) it is a symbolic space, space *as* a

discourse (Shields 1991: 161), that is constantly under attack from attempts by space *Conçu* to quantify, "rationalise, and ultimately usurp" (Merrifield 2000: 174). It is the space of glimpsed possibilities that represent attained-*totalité;* the bursting-forth of a "dis-alienated moment of the embodied 'total person' at one with their context… localised 'reappropriations' of space that may furnish examples… by which certain sites are removed or severed from [a] governing spatialisation…" (Shields 1998: 161, 165).

Having understood Lefebvre's wider theoretical approach, it is now possible to return to the question of previous uses of his work by disability geographers and identify that it is principally this third aspect of space *Vécu* that disability geographers have seized upon for their work. Adopting Lefebvre's theoretical framework to highlight the 'resistance' of their marginalisation by positioning the margins as "counter-hegemonic spaces" (Hetherington 1997: 21) from which they can "… make space as a whole visible, and in so doing reveal the social relations of power that operate within society" (Hetherington 1997: 23), they describe the disabling of those who are physically other in terms of the squeezing of their space by a closed capitalist system busy producing its own secreted *Perçu*, planned *Conçu*, and able-bodied *Vécu*. Their assertions of the validity of disabled people's *Vécu*, described as glimpses of a potential 'dis-alenated' moment in which the entire capitalist production of space *for them* is broken open, provides them with "the site of possible emergent spatial revolutions" (Shields 1998: 165) in which their alienation is resolved.

However, what they have failed to highlight is that rather than pursuing 'resistance' itself, Lefebvre's production of space is effective for them by allowing resistance, but only because the very alienation that they resist and desire to resolve by the dissolution of the "biological-social dialectic" (Batterbury et al 2007: 2902) that society has constructed to marginalise them, is a core element of Lefebvre's more fundamental quest for *totalité*. Thus, whilst their first call upon Lefebvre's work is as a way to resist marginalisation in itself, what Lefebvre would suggest is that actually, what they are resisting is alienation itself, manifested as marginalisation.

The difference is subtle. However, it is of extraordinary significance for DEAF people. For while disability theorists have used Lefebvre to argue that their focus is

to mitigate their marginalisation (and thereby also address their underlying alienation) by means of a resistive *Vécu* that glimpses their full integration within mainstream society, DEAF people would argue that such a *Vécu* is only valid if it acknowledges that those whose space it produces locate themselves by reference to the interactive hearing-world plane that I described above. However, to see it as relevant for them, they assert, would be even more alienating, for what it implies is that their *totalité* could be reached by displacing them from their visually-mediated space and relocating them not only within the hearing world, but dispersing them there amongst those who are hearing.

Rather, what they argue is that it is only by understanding Lefebvre as first addressing alienation, that their own *Vécu* can be understood; a glimpse of a space produced not by reference to the hearing world, but in their own visually-mediated reality, with its own internal coherence; its own "intersections, each with its assigned location" (POS: 33) that is not a resistance to marginalisation, but a "terrain of struggle on the way to realising ourselves as 'total persons' (Shields 2000: 164). It is only having done this, that the relationship of DEAF space to the hearing world, and their relationship to others whom the hearing world judges physically other can be investigated.

Applying Lefebvre's framework in a *totalité*-first way is, therefore, radically different from its disability geography 'resistance first' mobilisation and it is this that demonstrates its appropriacy for this thesis. However, before ending my presentation of Lefevbre's framework, I need to first suggest how each of his aspects of spatial production might inform the writing of a history of DEAF space. To do this, it is worth taking Lefebvre's own advice that abstract theory serves little purpose, and anchor his three aspects of space, and their working together to produce a DEAF space in concrete examples. This I have done by interrogating the literature of Deaf Studies with two aims.

The first is simply to affirm the usefulness of Lefebvre's theoretical framework by demonstrating how aspects of the production of space might appear as they are produced by DEAF people themselves. The second is to begin to allow the reader to climb inside DEAF space so that they can more readily begin to recognise it as it emerges through the following chapters. This has the advantage of allowing the

narrative of each substantive chapter to proceed without being broken by theoretical pauses. Rather, by ongoing reference to space as it is 'produced', aspects of Lefebvre's theoretical framework can be highlighted as they appear and then discussed at the end of each chapter in short discussion sections.

DEAF space *Perçu*

The first is DEAF space *Perçu*; a space shaped by the deaf "body – not bodies in general, nor corporeality, but a specific body" (POS: 170). Here, Veditz' assertion that DEAF people are a 'people of the eye' is clearly relevant. However, so too are more recent proposals by members of the DEAF community that an important feature of DEAF people's life is what Kelly (2003) has called their 'corporeal boundary'; how well they can see and hear, and how they produce space by seeing and hearing. This has been remarked upon both in terms of the parameters of their physical sight; PhD work currently being conduced in Sheffield by Charlotte Westerman is confirming a long-standing anecdotal belief that DEAF people's peripheral vision produces an interactive space that is wider than that of hearing people (Westerman, personal communication, April 2008). Others have noted the way in which DEAF people's space is produced more easily where there is light; Ben Bahan recounts a joke that likens DEAF people to moths for their gravitation towards streetlights (Bahan 2008). Still others have noted the way in which a visually produced reality also leads DEAF people to interpret knowledges from a vision-first point of view; Padden & Humphries (1988), for example, explain how DEAF people's use of comparisons such as 'more or less hard of hearing' orient them the opposite way from those of hearing people because of their starting point in a visually-produced space.

If DEAF people's visuality is important, equally important is the nature of DEAF people's 'secretion' of space, particularly in light of DEAF people's unique position as, in majority, those who are born into hearing families and find their way to DEAF space. Here, Brievik (2005) identifies that it is perhaps less the case of seeing the DEAF community as producing a DEAF space, than actually *being* the embodied location of DEAF space itself. This is something that Batterbury et al (2007) begin to examine as they describe the way in which long-term DEAF families have served as both a DEAF homeland, and a DEAF bloodline, drawing in isolated deaf people, and

allow them to 'become DEAF' as they immerse themselves in community knowledge and transmission. Dai O'Brien and Annelies Kusters have both highlighted the way in which Deaf people, unknown to each other, seek out the opportunity to produce Deaf spaces in pubs (O'Brien 2006) and on railway platforms (Kusters 2007) to which other Deaf people are drawn. And Caroline Nabarro is only one of many to highlight the importance to DEAF people of regular national and international meetings of the 'DEAF world' (Nabarro 2003)

However, DEAF people also point to the production and reproduction of concrete spaces and spatial 'ensembles' (Shields 1998: 162) that demonstrate the production of DEAF space *Perçu* in the material world. The establishment of DEAF clubs is a long-standing tradition (Ladd 2003), as is DEAF people's adaptation of physical environments over which they have control. Ben Bahan (2008) for example, explores the construction of the built environment with regards to DEAF people's rejection of (opaque) doors and embracing of (transparent) windows. This is a pattern that is also reproduced on a larger scale by DEAF architects (Hanson, cited in Bahan 2008) and by environments adapted by DEAF people in which walls and panelling are replaced by glass, furniture is re-oriented, doors are left open (with privacy guaranteed by the discretion of 'not looking') and mirrors are installed where line of sight cannot be guaranteed.

DEAF space *Conçu*

The second of Lefebvre's aspects of the production of space requires identifying DEAF people's space as it is *Conçu*; structured both conceptually in terms of the way DEAF people understand their space, and as they cement those understandings in its production. Interestingly, as this draws upon the way that DEAF people themselves describe their space, it also moves the referential terms away from English and towards sign language. The sign "DEAF" is already familiar, for example. However, in combination with others, it is used to refer to concepts such as "DEAF WAY" [Doing something in a way that explicitly adopts DEAF space norms], "DEAF WORLD" [all those who inhabit DEAF space, or are associated with it], and "DEAF CULTURE" [Following rules that are authored and learned within DEAF space]. Other combinations are potentially even more revealing, in particular the sign "DEAF THEIRS", used less to designate possession, and more to

demonstrate embodiment; a centre-oriented view of DEAF space that hinges on identifying those who are most clearly its inhabitants.

This concept of possession as embodiment is extended by a further sign, described by Clark Denmark (2003) and Doug Alker (2003) and signed 'OWNERSHIP'. Again, not a reference to 'belonging', unless it is a question of DEAF people being 'owned' by DEAF space, were it finds distinct similarities with a number of Aboriginal and First Nation beliefs (see Amery 2000) that locate the individual in a relationship where they belong to the land, or to their language. It describes the relationship that a DEAF person has with DEAF space; a "delicate metalinguistic ecosystem… which ensures the well-being of the [DEAF] individual and thus the quality of life of [DEAF] communities" (Batterbury et al. 2007: 2903).

Finally, if 'DEAF THEIRS' and 'OWNERSHIP' are both terms used to define the core of DEAF space, DEAF people also produce their DEAF space *Conçu* as one with boundaries. 'DEAF PASSPORT' is a sign used to designate permission for trusted hearing or deaf people to enter DEAF space. 'DEAF WAGE', its conceptual opposite; describing those who enter DEAF space only for their own benefit. DEAF club 'DEAF ONLY' evenings are a politically charged ways of providing DEAF people the opportunity to be amongst themselves without hearing involvement.

DEAF space *Vécu*

The third of Lefebvre's aspects of the production of space is DEAF space *Vécu,* a space that is strongly suggested by Deaf Nation and by its continuum of spatial envisioning that represents DEAF people's ability to develop and pursue their *totalité*, perhaps now in the shape of a non-contestatory Deafhood. However, evidence suggests that DEAF people also envisage a series of possible other 'moments of presence' that suggest quite different understandings of a DEAF space and its place in the ensemble of the human world.

The first is one that pursues *totalité*, not apart from the norms of a speech-centred, hearing world, but by the gradual dissolution of them. In current research, Annelies Kusters is building on work by others, particularly Nora Groce (1985), who have identified a number of situations in which high ratios of deafness have led to hearing people also learning sign language. Kusters is investigating these 'Deaf utopias'

(Kusters 2009) particularly with regards to the way in which they are constructed as examples of *totalité*, and examining the way in which they compare to other proposals of DEAF space as those that are constructed by DEAF people alone.

This is not the only evidence of a more inclusional DEAF space *Vécu*. Conversations with proponents of the stronger, more ontological form of Deafhood reveal that whilst all see 'deaf' people as quite different from those who are DEAF, some within the DEAF community assert that attempts to mitigate deaf people's separation from the hearing world are only justified by invalidations of a visual 'being in the world' itself. 'deaf' people, they claim, would be better served as 'total' people not by attempting to rectify their audiological loss, but by affirming the reality of DEAF space, and encouraging them into it as those who are 'becoming visual' (Ladd 2008).

Furthermore, while DEAF people's *Vécu* suggests the value of DEAF space for those who are 'deaf', it does the same for hearing humanity. Here, particularly, DEAF people challenge the *Conçu* of language planners (Eichmann 2008), even those from within Deaf Studies, who attempt to circumscribe sign language into 'dialects' mapped to hearing-world boundaries. Instead, they draw upon the way in which DEAF people, producing a space mediated through sign language are able to communicate beyond their own national limits. This *Vécu*, they suggest, is not one in which humanity is divided into discrete linguistic units, unable to communicate with each other, but rather a pan-global linguistic community, pursuing its *totalité* by reference to DEAF space itself.

2.3   Methodological issues

Having identified Lefebvre's Production of Space as the most appropriate theoretical framework through which to pursue a history of DEAF space, my final consideration in this chapter is to explore three areas that became particularly key to my writing of this history. Since these were areas that became particularly pertinent following the interruption of my initial investigation by DEAF space and by its insistent self-centring as the focus of the PhD, I have largely concentrated on how they impacted the PhD project post-DEAF space intervention, and through the process of writing-up.

2.3.1 DEAF space and historiography

The first is a global concern of the PhD as one that is historical in focus, and concerns its relationship with two other histories that focus, at least in part, on DEAF people. The first a 'history of deafness', one constructed largely in terms of efforts to 'liberate' (Bauvineau 2000) d/DEAF people from their deafness. A history that, according to Paddy Ladd:

> contains two related strands. One focuses on the medical perceptions and treatment of deafness down the ages, with a focus on the organs of hearing and speech… The other consists of a 'Grand Narrative', where Deaf communities are constructed solely as the individual end product of a lineage of distinguished hearing educators. (Ladd 2003: 88)

It is notable that, with the possible exception of Aicardi's very recent sensationist history of deaf education (Aicardi 2009) and local accounts of organisations established to mitigate deaf people's isolation and 'liberate' them from their deafness (Bauvineau 2000), neither of these strands has been significantly challenged in academic historical studies. Rather, they have more often been assumed in histories of medicine, science, or education.

Writing a history of DEAF space as produced, however, allows me to begin to examine the history of deafness in rather a revealing way by highlighting and exploding the audiological essential that undergirds it. Thus, while deaf, and DEAF people might produce quite similar *Perçus* because of their production of space from a predominantly visually oriented body, there is a radical difference between a 'deafness' *Conçu* that locates deaf people as part of the hearing world, and its momentarily glimpsed *Vécu* that envisages a *totalité* born out of restoration of physical hearing or the provision of perfect access, and a 'DEAF' *Conçu* that plans space by DEAF space boundaries and by centred questions of OWNERSHIP, and a *Vécu* of a fully DEAF space in which those who are inherently visual are free to pursue their *totalité*.

However, distinguishing between a history of DEAF space and a history of deafness also raises interesting questions for it reveals that while DEAF space is not produced as a space of deafness, it is nevertheless shaped by it by the way in which DEAF people's own space has often been produced within the spaces conceived for them by others; for example in schools for deaf children or clubs for d/DEAF adults. While

the history of DEAF space that I describe clearly shows DEAF people apart from those who are deaf in that it refuses to centre itself by reference to a hearing-authored medical, scientific, or educational history, it necessarily required me to also consider the history of deafness in as much as it impacted on the former.

This rapprochement of the two, however, brings my research into tension with what I might call a 'Deaf' history, an explicitly emancipatory history of the DEAF community and of its oppression by Oralism that has emerged over the last thirty years from initial studies by Jack Ganon (1981) and Harlan Lane (1984, 1993) and that has been added to by a number of substantive works (Groce 1985, Mirzoeff 1995, Ladd 1998, Miles 2000, Quartataro 2008) and by interpretative writing that has brought the substantive evidence into play in the form of political (Wrigley 1996), philosophical (Rée 1999), and activist texts (Branson & Miller 2002, Ladd 2003). For the DEAF community, this Deaf history is not merely the discovery of the past. In a parallel with what Albert Memmi has referred to as a series of colonising negations DEAF people's rediscovery of their history serves the purpose of turning the tide on their authoring as those who were not human, not civilised, not literate, had no language, no independent mode of thought and, indeed, no history (Memmi 1991). To discover that not only were there DEAF communities in the past, but that they represent a form of DEAF ancestry by their use of traceably similar sign languages (Groce 1985), wrestled with similar pressures (Veditz 1913), and responded with a similarly concerted resurgence and by drawing on their own historical traditions (Mottez 1993) has been an intrinsic part of the 'development' of Deaf political consciousness.

I had already encountered a tension with Deaf history in 2004 as part of my own Masters degree (Gulliver 2004) where I noted that the relative paucity of historians in Deaf Studies and their reliance upon select translations of records into English led to an unbalanced skewing of Deaf history towards particular sources of evidence. The discomfort of that tension is something that I described at the time for the way that challenging the reliability of a 'Deaf historical canon' was not simply a matter of setting the record straight, but had the knock-on effect of destabilising the entire foundation of Deaf resistance.

> Crucially, the impact of this was… [to] somehow betray the Deaf community through undermining understandings of iconic elements… and, thus, endanger community

feeling, identity and political campaigning that are rooted in these ideas. (Gulliver 2004: 74)

Describing a history of DEAF space I found myself in a similar situation. Or one that is potentially worse for its greater importance. As I began to chart, particularly the way in which newly emergent DEAF spaces evolved within the spaces produced for deaf people, it became clear that whilst I identified elements of intent in both, more often, the relationship between the two was one of two balloons, simply expanding within the same space until they could expand no further, and then stopping. Without something occurring to force DEAF space to undergo a shift towards resistance; for example the repealing of a *Perçu* already enjoyed, it was more likely to simply accept and fill the limits of the space provided. Similarly, spaces produced for DEAF people were more likely to simply ignore DEAF space as non-existent unless the potential suggested by its *Vécu* shifted by a discursive re-authoring of its *Conçu* to explicitly preclude what it saw DEAF people doing within it.

Not only is the history of DEAF space that I have written, therefore, one in which the production of space is ambivalent, at least to begun with, it is one that by demonstrating the conditions that lead to contestation, highlights the very non-essentialist nature of resistance that forms the centre of a Deaf historical counter-narrative. I make no apologies for this. However, in my defence, neither have I written it to demonstrate what Chakrabarty (1995) has referred to as the 'artifice of history', a deliberate writing-in of historical interpretation that is aimed at serving a justificatory purpose (Lowenthal 1995, 1998; Samuel 1994).

Rather, if I have a political aim in writing, it is to demonstrate that far from destroying either one or the other, by moving a history of deafness away from a focus on audiology to the space that (initially) DEAF, but also potentially deaf people produce from their embodied experience of deafness, and by moving Deaf history away from a focus on the oppression of the DEAF community of culture to the space in which they author their DEAF reality, what a history of DEAF space allows me to do is to potentially reconcile for the first time within a single analytical framework, the 'history of deafness' that is largely promulgated by disability studies and so strongly resisted by Deaf Studies, and the Deaf historical narrative of oppression that, standing alone from a Foucauldian or strategically essentialist point of view struggles to maintain itself.

2.3.2 DEAF space and the PhD Project

The second area to consider, particularly in the light of the Introduction, and its exploration of how this thesis' ultimate adopted aim - to begin to identify and explore a history of DEAF space - broke into and disrupted an ongoing PhD, is the relationship between DEAF space and the PhD itself. A relationship that is rather less one that is described between 'DEAF space' on the one hand and the 'PhD' on the other, than between what we might describe as the 'DEAF space project' on the one hand and the 'PhD project' itself on the other where 'project' draws upon Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2003) assertion that establishing an indigenous telling is very much a key part of a 'project of survival'. 'Project' in this sense, therefore, becomes a wider – sometime unwittingly adopted – framework within which other actions are located (see Tuhiwai-Smith 2003: 107).

Projects – Timing, scope and purpose

The tensions inherent in the PhD project; an academic process circumscribed by a largely fixed duration, with an appropriately restricted focus, and the aim of ultimately furnishing the candidate with an academic qualification are readily acknowledged by many commentators. Jamie Lorimer's (2005) PhD even takes it as a research focus, describing how it can be less an explicit need for research that directs the choice of PhD subject and more the requirement for the researcher to complete a project from inception to write-up and submission within the time period available. Ian Cook's (1998) PhD, submitted with hand-written annotations and responses added even to the final printed version identifies similar constraints regarding the extent to which the research project itself seeks to burst out of the limits that are established by a formal PhD structure.

Both of these tensions are reflected in my own PhD experience. Timing was clearly a challenge; having begun the PhD in 2004 I find myself still writing-up in the summer of 2009, and the challenge of attempting to both explore, and contain a blossoming exploration of DEAF space within a PhD that was already into its second year was a constant preoccupation. However, what caused the greatest challenge was the tension between the purpose of the 'PhD project' and the purpose that the 'DEAF space project' appeared to indicate. For whilst the requirements of the 'PhD project' were

relatively easily defined, no such limitations applied to the project as it arose from DEAF space. Unheeding of time- and word-limits, responsibility to funding-bodies, personal research skills, disciplinary boundaries, traditional writing processes, criteria of 'completion' or any other restrictions authored by the 'PhD project', having found a way into the open, DEAF space seemed insistent that it had its own project agenda.

Therefore, whilst this PhD has been about writing a history of DEAF space, it has also been about wrestling with the implications of attempting to bring the purposes of a 'DEAF space project' into line with those of a 'PhD project'. This has required two necessary, but also unsatisfactory accommodations.

Projects – form and function

The first accommodation was between what the PhD project and DEAF space projects appeared to want to do and how they wanted to do it. This arose first as I began to decide the 'form' that the PhD should take, and found myself torn by Pihama's (1994) assertion that it is not only the historical account itself but the nature of its telling that also 'reflects reality'. One choice was to adopt a 'safe' format; discrete chapters bookended by theoretical explorations combined into a whole in which evidence and analysis are discussed in a relatively straightforward manner. Another was to prefer a DEAF space telling that takes the form of a journey through a series of constantly re-told pictures and situated experiences that can appear un-begun, un-finished, without purpose and un-structured to a Western sense of narrative (Chakrabarty 1995, Tuhiwai Smith 2003, West 2009).

To dissolve this tension, I considered a number of different approaches. Initially, Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini (2007) and, particularly, Ruth Levitas' (2007) proposal of a 'utopian', fictional, approach was appealing for the way that it suggested that I might situate the reader in DEAF space unwittingly, and then only reveal where they had been in hindsight. However, in-depth discussion with Levitas herself revealed that within the context of a PhD, this was a somewhat risky strategy, best left to a less structured project. I ultimately elected to adopt a compromise approach drawn from the field of Indigenous Studies where similar tensions of attempting to narrate embedded, circular accounts into a Western academic context,

have been identified (Tuhiwai Smith 2003). Four particular narrative approaches were selected: Personal Testimonies (Menchu 1984), Culturally specific Story Telling (Bishop 1996), Envisioning of potential futures, and Reframing of taken-for-granteds (Tuhiwai Smith 2003). These have been inserted where possible, both within chapters, and preceding and introducing them, to provide snapshots of DEAF space, unadjusted by the strictures of a linear narrative.

This accommodation also came to light as the DEAF space project began to challenge the 'function' of the PhD project and draw my attention to the need to apply findings from what was initially a purely substantive exploration. As findings were triangulated with the French DEAF community and with Deaf Studies academics both in France and the UK it was strongly tempting to begin to sacrifice space previously allocated to substantive evidence and to adopt a more new-historicist approach to address the theoretical implications of DEAF space. The need to resolve this tension was one that I resisted for a long time. However, ultimately, in early 2008, time and word limits meant that I had no choice but to begin a process of tranching between substantive evidence and historical application that has been ongoing until the present time.

Somewhat uncomfortable, the approach I have adopted has been to persist with the project of writing a history of DEAF space, but to include theoretical considerations as they are relevant to that project. Consequently, whilst this present chapter, and the final brief 'ongoing implications' chapter are predominantly theoretical in their approach, the four substantive chapters (3 to 6) are largely free from applied theory. In some ways, attempting to include both has been to retreat before the implications of entirely excluding either one or the other and I will be interested to see, post-PhD, whether there is any significant change in this tension, or whether it is a feature of bringing DEAF space into contact with "generative rules and conflicts of a given [academic] culture" (Greenblatt 2001: 308 – in Mills 2003) that might later need to be identified and addressed separately.

Projects – community and research 'application'

The second accommodation between the 'DEAF space project' on the one hand and the 'PhD project' itself on the other surfaced as I pondered my responsibility before

its audience communities. Initially, I was motivated to share my findings with DEAF people and with other academics as quickly as possible. However, whilst it was clear from a number of conferences and from publication that hearing academics were fascinated by my research, discussions with DEAF academics suggested that an over-quick, or irresponsible presentation of their space as one that I was presenting through an elision with a 'disability geography' to a DEAF community predominantly informed by a Deaf historical narrative might, ultimately, turn out to be damaging.

The decision was therefore made to engage with the DEAF community through controlled conference presentations of the PhD project, and in discussions within Deaf Studies, but to postpone a more open-ended engagement between the DEAF community and DEAF space itself until it could be done with the help of a panel of DEAF academics more experienced in navigating the same academic-community disjuncture. Interestingly, because of academic structures that prescribe the objectivity of examiners this engagement has had to be postponed until after the viva because it is likely that one of those key DEAF academics will be involved.

However, despite having avoided explicit engagement between DEAF space and the DEAF community for the reasons stated above, interactions between DEAF space and DEAF academics (Paddy Ladd and Annelies Kusters in particular) have led to them beginning to draw on the Lefebvrian framework through which it has been described. It has been fascinating to watch this happen, particularly over the last two years, since this is perhaps key to the way in which a knowledge of DEAF space might be mindfully filtered back to the DEAF community itself. However, for the PhD project, this has brought its own tension; how to best represent what is essentially the glimpses of a 'spatial turn' within Deaf Studies, brought about in no small part by my own work, before that work itself is realistically made available for consultation. For the sake of pausing events sufficiently to write them, I have had to exclude these discussions from the thesis and simply acknowledge that they are ongoing.

2.3.3   DEAF space and the Record

The final consideration is the way in which DEAF space's break-in upon ongoing archival work impacted the way in which historical evidence was identified and approached, accessed and collected, interpreted and represented within this thesis. Again, I have concentrated on the period following my recognition of DEAF space in which there are three particular areas of concern. To be able to discuss these, however, I need to first establish three different types of archive.

The first are official knowledge repositories such as the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris and local municipal and departmental archives. Indispensible, particularly for the access that they guarantee to background information concerning official policy that shaped the contexts in which DEAF space was produced, their relationship with the knowledge that they contain, with those seeking to access that knowledge and the nature of that access process itself, is largely disinterested, formulaic and has little flexibility.

The second group of archives are held by those who have represented the local face of officialdom towards the DEAF community. Designated as belonging to particular institutions; "Les Archives de l'Institution Nationale des Jeunes Sourds de Paris (INJS)" for example or the "Les Archives des Frères de St Gabriel", their governmental recognition requires them to provide official access to any who formally request it. However, their interpretation of what that means within their own institutional structures, through their own individual narratives of contact with the DEAF community and in the light of what they perceive to be the aim of a researcher working alongside them on an extended basis offers considerable flexibility around this 'official' designation.

The final archives are those owned by individuals or by more grassroots organisations or represented by those individuals or organisations themselves. Often elusive, access is guaranteed only through the establishment of trust. Once trust has been gained, however, further access – and links to other corresponding archives – is often only a question of passing a request through a recognised community; as the owner of one told me when I used the formal 'vous' with them, "in the world of DEAF… we are all *tu.*" Often extremely useful for the way in which they allow the researcher to engage with material that is commonly unavailable elsewhere, sometimes even from *within* a DEAF space, they are nevertheless problematic for the

way in which accessing them is less a case of targeted retrieval, and more often one of trawling for information.

Although the archival work for this project involved engagements with information held in all three groupings of archive, it was primarily conducted at the level of the second, often enlightened by, and triangulated by evidence from the third. Consequently, as will be described below, it is at these levels that the majority of engagements between DEAF space, the researcher and the archive occurred.

DEAF space and archival intimacy

The first area of concern is the extent to which the archive in question was able to firstly, make DEAF space visible at all and secondly, make it visible in a way that was relatively un-exigent on the limitations of the 'PhD project'. Since my work in the archives, particularly after being interrupted by DEAF space, became less a gathering operation, and more an exchange, this was an area that I found informed by a framework drawn from sociolinguistics and from Martin Joo's widely recognised classification of conversational 'register' as distributed along a continuum that reaches from Frozen to Intimate. See figure 2.

Figure 2. From Joos (1967)

| Frozen | Formal | Consultative | Casual | Intimate |
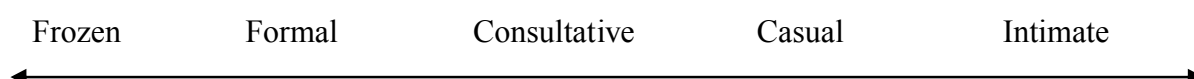
For Joo's, register in human exchanges is largely defined by how much you need to say, to say what you mean in an appropriate manner. At the Frozen end of the scale, much is often said to communicate little, whereas at the Intimate end of the scale, little is often said to communicate much.

I discovered that a similar pattern existed with regards to archives. Exchanges (if they can be described as such) with official archives often took the form of Frozen or Formal requests. Largely ambivalent – beyond care of the archived material itself – towards the PhD project or DEAF space, these required the least of me as a researcher. However, they also revealed the least ready evidence of DEAF space. My relationship with them was largely instrumental and supplementary.

Exchanges with more institutional archives were quite different. Located at the Consultative or Casual register, they were a far more immediately useful source of evidence of DEAF space. However, because of their involvement in the very history that I was seeking to describe and their perception of my part in contributing to that exchange, they could be far more difficult to use. In part, this arose from the approaches of different archivists present in the same archive who were more or less supportive of my research and of its conclusions and who, therefore, stretched official guidelines in different ways to allow me more or less easy access to material. However, in the main, it took the form of a growing realisation that whilst these archives made DEAF space visible, their preparedness to do so was only as durable as the policies that required them to do so. They were the (sometimes) all-too-interested hands administering an all-too-disinterested government policy, one that perpetuated their roles as traditional gatekeepers of DEAF community knowledge.

Consulting with local DEAF communities, I recognised that what I was experiencing often told me as much about the construction of the archive as the records themselves (Lorimer & Spedding 2002). The fact that they "share[d] my frustration with those who control[led] evidence that the DEAF community considers belong to them" (Research Journal July 2006) helped me to manage my own. Identifying the principle problem as a lack of consistent access that would allow me to gather evidence selectively, I developed a strategy that would allow me to overcome this, to serve the DEAF community's need and to also gain the goodwill of the archivists. Acquiring a digital camera, I used moments of greater entente to offer to contribute to ongoing digitisation projects. By doing this I was able to gather a phenomenal amount of evidence which, in hindsight, clearly cost me time in cataloguing and analysis. However, it also allowed me to gather data that I have since found vital to the thesis, and had the added benefit of allowing me to make sometimes difficult-to-access material available to the DEAF community themselves and to leave the archives having made them a gift of selected material carefully digitised and burned onto CD.

No such 'pillaging' was necessary of the third, and far more intimate, group of archives. However, here, it became quickly clear that another strategy was necessary. Despite their preparedness to share DEAF space with me, it soon became apparent that the intimacy of our exchange led them to assume that as a figure to be trusted, I could be relied upon to shoulder their own particular campaigns. On a number of

occasions, I remember being told "This will help you with your paper on __ ", where the blank was filled by a subject that they themselves had suggested.

This was clearly a worry, for it meant that so as not to disappoint them, and potentially betray trust that might be ultimately damaging in the future, I had no choice but to try and pull away from appearing to take from them. However, at the same time, this level of archive was the most key to maintaining my awareness of DEAF space itself. This is a balance that took practice and that I only achieved towards the end of my time in France by adopting a purposefully 'backward in coming forward' approach. Unfortunately, for those I met early on, the pattern of my relationship with them was already set. Notes that I took following my return to the UK read:

> … I think I left it too late to make it clear that I couldn't help [name]… [their] mails suggest that they feel let down by my having come home. I've written to explain but [they've] not replied… I suppose I won't know what damage has ultimately been caused to that relationship until I can actually demonstrate that I wasn't stringing them along… unfortunately I don't know how long that will be… (Research Journal, January 2007)

DEAF space and voice

The second area of concern was how best to locate DEAF people's voice within the more formal archives, particularly when it was not immediately evident. This is a challenge that I had already faced in previous research, and that I had overcome by employing Collingwood's (2005) reference to an 'idealist' history that allowed me to work from a steeped-in knowledge of the subject to begin to extrapolate from situations where there is little or no direct evidence available, and Sewells' assertion that "although we obviously cannot hope to experience what… [historical subjects]… experienced… we can, with a little ingenuity, search out in the surviving records the symbolic forms through which they experienced their world" (Sewell 1980:105).

However, whereas previous research had involved no DEAF space, and only one archive, I found that as I began to engage in an exchange between DEAF space and different archives, previously 'horizontal' research now had to also expand to incorporate imaginings and searchings-out both at, and across different levels of intimacy. Missing evidence could not, therefore, simply be snared by hunting

between the lines of relatively flat relations of cause and effect, rather it had to be enticed out within the context of specific engagements. Work within the archive could not, therefore, always be conducted in a linear, fact finding manner, nor did it always have a defined start or end point. Rather, it looped around, demanding a constant re-engagement with similar or even the same material from a number of different points of view.

Over time, this 'enticing' crystallised into an approach with at least four distinct phases. These are best understood as demonstrated in action (see a detailed example in Chapter 4). However, they can be set out in short here. Firstly, the evidence available was simply re-read through a lens that expected to find evidence of DEAF space as it was produced by the DEAF community. Questions such as "What did DEAF space look like at this point?" and "What were DEAF people doing here?" identified gaps in the record to which more attention could be paid. Secondly, where immediate solutions to those gaps were not available, imagining "How could DEAF people have responded from a visual reality?" often led to intriguing possibilities that could then be verified, or challenged by further reading. Having located gaps in the record and imagined what might have been, the third step was to re-read existing conclusions. Here, questions of "Does this make sense from within DEAF space?" and "Is this consistent with how I understand DEAF space?" revealed sometimes striking disparities between the conclusions of those who have used the same archives without an explicit awareness of DEAF space and my own. Finally then, these disparities and other potential conclusions were explored by seeking out new evidence. Here, questions of "Who else might talk about these events?", or "What was the outcome of…?" helped to locate new, revealing possibilities that triggered other potential lines of enquiry and enfolded the process back in upon itself by revealing other gaps that should have been filled by DEAF space.

DEAF space and representation

The final consideration with regards to the exchange between DEAF space, the record and the research project was how best to interpret the evidence that the archive revealed and how best to represent this within the project itself. Here, my central concern was to resolve an issue that I had, again, identified in my (2004) Masters dissertation, where I demonstrated how easy it was for interpretations of

DEAF community history to vary depending on the selection of corroborating evidence. In that case, I was able to show how late 19th century accounts (position 'a') of a series of Banquets constructed from memory and written at a time when the Banquet's central figures were largely out of favour, differed substantially from late 20th century accounts (position 'b') written from the Société Centrale's own records and as part of the Deaf resurgence (see figure 3).

Figure 3

Decline of Société Centrale des Sourds-Muets (1840 to 1880) and gradual shift away from DEAF idealism towards DEAF pragmatism

Deaf resurgence, (1980) and promotion of Société Centrale as example of idealist Deaf resistance

Publication (1848) of Banquets by Société Centrale

Banquets (from 1834)

DEAF Press (1884 to 1900) (position a)

Deaf history (1990 onwards) (position b)

With regards to this thesis, I was very aware of potentially falling into the same trap, particularly since my most immediate source for DEAF space was the most intimate archive, the modern-day French DEAF community itself. Therefore, while I found more recent historical investigations indispensible in directing me to evidence that I might investigate, interpretations were constructed by reference to the most contemporary evidence wherever possible. Revealingly, this led to a number of occasions where my conclusions of what happened and why differed significantly from those of more modern-day analysts (particularly with regards to the role of religious congregations in the education of deaf children). However, I felt it was more important to locate my triangulation of events as closely as possible to the events themselves so as to avoid writing-in history from more modern-day expectations.

This decision also impacted the representational forms that I adopted particularly since I had also chosen to avoid potential writing-in by translating all original material from French myself and had elected as part of that strategy, to leave referential names in French. This was a particularly difficult choice with regards to

terms such as 'sourd' and 'sourd-muet': firstly, because rendering them into their literal respective translations of 'deaf' and 'deaf-mute', or the more modern term 'Deaf' are all loaded with stigma or additional meaning. However, I also appeared over fastidious and messy to use 'sourd-muet' when discussing events in English.

Therefore, by reference to definitions provided by contemporary writers who not only explore them in terms of audiology, but who define them also as self-ascribed identities (see, Berthier 1873: 200 for example), and a close observation of the way in which their use evolved, particularly through the 19th century, allowed me to directly map them to the forms that I have already established as 'deaf' and 'DEAF'.

Consequently, I made the decision to leave the forms in their original French in translation, and adopt the following English parallels for discussion around them:

- 'sourd' [deaf] – used of someone who is unable to hear to a greater or lesser extent. Sometimes appears combined with 'muet' [mute] in 'sourd et muet', designating someone who is both deaf and unable to speak, but without the community membership significance of *sourd-muet*.
- 'sourd-muet' [DEAF] – someone who is without speech because they are without hearing and who identifies with others who are the same. In the late 19th century this sometimes appears as synonymous with 'silencieux' [silent], ie: "La France Silencieuse" [the portion of DEAF people who live in France].
- 'sourd-parlant' [speaking-DEAF] – someone who is 'sourd-muet', but who has either retained a childhood ability to speak, or learned to speak through oral education.

Aberrant uses of these terms or evolutions of them are marked as such within the chapters that follow.

CHAPTER 3 - DEAF SPACE EMERGENT

3.0   Introduction

Arriving at Essex University in 1990 to pursue a degree in Modern Languages and Linguistics, I was intrigued to see, included on the list of core modules for all students in the humanities and social sciences, a course entitled "The Enlightenment". Following a secondary education that had left me almost completely without knowledge of either history or philosophy, I had no idea what the term meant. Unfortunately, its title was largely oxymoronic. As the lecturer described a period extending from the publication of Descartes' *Discourse on Method* in 1637 to the French Revolution in 1789 during which lives were lifted from an existence that was nasty, brutish and short (Hobbes 1975) into a bubble of reason, science, exploration, and self-discovery before being sent tumbling back into the chaos of Revolutions political and Industrial, I struggled to see how to relate it to a degree that recognised little of relevance prior to a Chomskian linguistics of the 1960s and 70s (Chomsky 1965). Turgot might have framed it as the seeds of "great perfection" (Turgot, quoted by Heffernan 1999: 125). It seemed to me then to have been a 'great irrelevance'.

That I have since revised my opinion is, in no small measure, because of my engagement with this chapter and the timing of that engagement. Presented chronologically here as the first of the four substantive chapters it was, in reality, the last to emerge from the archive, born out of curiosity as I followed suggestions from the more intimate archives detailed above that there was a DEAF space "before that, and then before that… and even further before that." Consequently, rather than evolving as a story without a clearly defined outcome, it was immediately clear how the period in question (approx 1670 to 1779) not only preceded the following three chapters, but also prefigured "… the development of European Societies… include[ing] social transformation, types of political institutions, forms of knowledge, projects of rationalisation of knowledge and practices, technological mutations…" (Foucault 1986b: 43) that had become familiar from the later chapters.

As I explored the evidence for this chapter, therefore, I found myself encountering a considerable number of firsts that I recognised from what they would later produce. Structures for the establishment of a body of experts knowledgeable about deaf people and the submission of their knowledge to the approbation of hearing-world academic societies were established in this period (Roche 1978, McClellan 2003) as was the tradition of affirming that knowledge as fact by dissemination to a popular audience by public demonstration (Hetherington 1997, Ellis 2004). Similarly, the 'exoticisation' of sign language as it evidenced DEAF people's more primitive 'otherness' (Eco 1995), the public fascination for demonstrations of the ability of the aforementioned experts to overcome the 'exotic' and 'erotic' physical difficulties of deaf education (Outram 1995) and the reification of a 'truth' (Shapin 1994) of DEAF people's evolution from a sensationist tabula-rasa; without knowledge or access to knowledge, to valid contributing members of society (see Aicardi 2009) through education all find their roots here.

My reading also suggested that many of the concerns of the Enlightenment mirrored those I had identified for this thesis. More than any period before or since, it was a time in which observations of DEAF people and of their language played a key role in philosophical and scientific enquiry. Diderot, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Sade and Montaigne – the latter reckoned by Ladd (2003) to be the best representative of accurate enlightenment knowledge concerning DEAF people – all describe DEAF people using sign language in the pursuit of mundane communication; to "dispute, argue, and tell stories by signs" (Montaigne, no page reference, cited by Mirzoeff 1995: 16). So too, it was a period in which the expansion of geographical knowledge and its ordering according to concepts of progress (Withers 2007) was prevalent. The discovery and taming of "fresh terrain" (Hulme & Jordanova 1990: 5), understanding and defining the loyalties and boundaries of national (Withers 2007: 42) and para-national linguistic communities (Mayhew 2005), charting and employing different spaces of knowledge and ways of knowing (Ophir & Shapin 1991), imagining spaces of new hope (Vereker 1967), establishing the relationship between a geographically distant 'them' and an Orientally reflexive 'us' (Said 1978). All were concerns that chimed with my own investigation into DEAF space.

And yet, as I began to explore how pre-Revolutionary thinkers had engaged with DEAF space and how later commentators had observed that engagement, the spectre of irrelevancy again, began to haunt me. For, despite the relevancy of the period in shaping the way that society would later describe DEAF people and their spaces, neither this 'history of deafness', nor the predominantly 'Deaf history' that has been written to chart and contest it, has ever really engaged in any detail with the question of DEAF space at all. I realised that if I were to begin describing a history of DEAF space, I would have to set aside more familiar accounts and, instead, locate evidence that would allow me to establish my own.

Much of this evidence was readily available, although since little of it has been translated into English and has, therefore, not formed part of any significant previous historical analysis, it had to be located from scratch. Even then, it only appeared relevant as I gradually developed the ability to look at it, guided by more intimate archival awareness, from within DEAF space itself. What I describe in this chapter, therefore, appears to draw upon many of the iconic currents and figures of both histories of deafness and Deaf histories, but positions them in a way that is disturbingly unfamiliar; from a point of view – as it were – 'behind the scenes' that reveal them as scenery, flatly painted on boards. The education of deaf children is described, but its *prima facie* importance is no longer instruction but here becomes a context that allows DEAF people to produce their own space. The celebrated educators of deaf children, Jacob Rodriguez Pereire and the Abbé Charles Michel de l'Epée are present too, but again only fleetingly and as those unwittingly confirming the fundamental importance of DEAF space. Well known sources of contemporary DEAF knowledge; Saboureux de Fontenay and Pierre Desloges are also present, but presented here in their own complex DEAF spaces rather than as unproblematic champions of this or that educator or educational method. In addition, new heroes appear: Etienne de Fay, the '(Wise) Old Deaf man of Amiens' (André 1766), the first recorded DEAF teacher of DEAF children in France and the producer of the first recorded example of DEAF space in France. His pupil Azy d'Etavigny and his persistent inhabitancy of DEAF space even as he successfully demonstrated Pereire's oral method before Louis XV, the DEAF man Pierre Desloges and the members of an almost invisible, two-hundred strong Parisian DEAF community whose origins appear to date from well before the Enlightenment itself.

My concern in this chapter is not, therefore, to present an investigation of DEAF space as it was understood by the Enlightenment. Nor is it to examine the way in which DEAF space challenges Enlightenment representations of d/DEAF people. Neither of these challenges can be undertaken until the nature of DEAF space is fully understood. Rather it is to begin to write a history of DEAF space itself by not only describing the first evidence of DEAF space that I was able to identify from the records available to me, but that also describes it as DEAF space 'emergents'; shoots of the earliest forms of visually-authored realities poking out from the forest floor of humanity, with the potential to grow into more mature DEAF spaces given the opportunity.

The chapter is structured in three sections each of which presents a different historical case study centred on the three 'new heroes' presented above: Etienne de Fay, Azy d'Etavigny and Pierre Desloges. Given the initial unfamiliarity of DEAF space, and the variability with which it appears within this chapter, I invite the reader to simply immerse themselves in the case-studies which proceed from one to the next without interruption. A final discussion section presents my own more structured thinking regarding the evidence presented and introduces the next two chapters.

3.0.1 Notes on sources

As mentioned above, whilst chronologically it is a beginning, in terms of the limits of the evidence available to me chapter three is very much an end to the available record. Little evidence from formal archives was used at all except to confirm Pereire's presentations before the various *Académies* and before Louis XV. To an extent, seeing past the total lack of formal recognition given to these emergent DEAF spaces represented one of the greatest challenges of this chapter. I relied on fragmented stories, often without preceding or following contexts, sometimes first-hand but more often second or third hand, and accounts needing to be fleshed out by peripheral knowledge and by the reiterative, immersive, engagement with DEAF space in the archives that I described in section 2.3.

This is reflected in the choice of sources consulted in the writing of this chapter; choices which are largely distinguished as, firstly; those providing evidence *about* Etienne de Fay and Azy d'Etavigny, and those written *by* Pierre Desloges. Whilst the

former include written works by de Fay himself, the majority of information has had to be drawn from either works by those who knew de Fay and d'Etavigny, or by later 19th and 20th century commentators. In the case of Pierre Desloges, however, I have been able to draw principally on his own work (Desloges 1779), and on other first-hand sources from the same period with some further information on the wider historical context drawn from other 19th and 20th century commentators. In both cases, mindful of the traditional longevity of the intimate archive of DEAF cultural memory, I have also carefully drawn on historical material from the *Cahiers de l'Histoire des Sourds* (CHS) and from a collection written for the bicentennial of the Revolution entitled *Le pouvoir des signes – sourds et citoyens* (Couturier & Karacostas 1990), both written for consumption by a less academic mixed DEAF and hearing audience.

In all cases, where secondary sources have been consulted, I have taken care to avoid the writing-in of history and of modern-day interpretation where possible. Consequently, whilst I have drawn on English written-language sources, particularly Lane (1984), I have only done so in as far as he provided leads to evidence that I could confirm for myself, or where interpretations could be permitted some flexibility. In all cases I have preferred source material from those who are French themselves, particularly those who are DEAF or who are known to have direct personal knowledge of the French DEAF community. For wider, contextual information, I have drawn on a variety of other, triangulated sources. Given the breadth of the period covered, I have detailed individual sources used at the beginning of each section. Footnotes have been avoided wherever possible, and only used to support assertions where there is insufficient room within the main body of the text.

3.1   The communicative space of Etienne de Fay

My presentation begins with the DEAF man Etienne de Fay and with the space of visual communication that he produced within the closed environment of the Abbey in which he lived and worked. Initially introducing de Fay himself, I describe the conditions of his early residency within the Abbey before moving on to examine evidence of the space that he produced and its impact upon those around him.

Describing the expansion of that space through the establishment, within the Abbey, of a school for deaf children in which teaching was conducted by de Fay through sign language, I go on to question the extent to which this space, produced by de Fay's apparently from nothing and – within one generation – already acknowledged as having its own 'expected' form, might already be considered a DEAF space.

Sources for this section are drawn particularly from accounts of de Fay's life presented by Bernard Truffaut from original documentation reproduced in the Cahier de l'Histoire des Sourds (CHS). These are either given their original references where these are provided by Truffaut, referenced as belonging to Truffaut where it is clearly his opinion, or referenced as taken from the CHS where facts are presented without a source. All have been confirmed where possible by reference to some of the earliest texts to identify de Fay (De Gérando 1827, Séguin 1847) as a founder of the education of deaf children. Background information on monastic traditions has been supported by reference to Susan Plann's (1997) study of the education of deaf children in 16th – 19th century Spain.

3.1.1   Introducing Etienne de Fay

Etienne de Fay, or by his own hand 'Defaye' (Seguin 1847), was born deaf in 1669 (de Fay, cited without source in CHS 1.2, footnote 1).[1] However, for reasons of his relative obscurity, he remained largely un-noticed by the record until DEAF writers of the DEAF press (see Chapter 6) or those involved in the education of deaf children began to sink the roots of their community, or of their vocation into deeper historical soil (André 1766, De Gérando, 1827). By the time this occurred, in the late 18th or early 19th century, no documentary evidence of his place of his birth or of his family's social standing remained. However, those who either knew him or who have described him from a position of closer historical proximity suggest that he was born into a family of some prestige (CHS: 1.2), who would have found his deafness extremely problematic.

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[1] The more modern form of 'de Fay' has emerged as standard and is adopted here (see De Gérando 1827).

This was not for reasons of stigma. Both inherited and accidental deafness were more common and less marked in Europe in the 17th century than in, for example, the 19th and 20th centuries (Groce 1985, Plann 1997). Rather, it was because of the Roman "Si enim vox articulata eis natura concessa est", absorbed from Catholic tradition into French law, that decreed that the only legally admissible assertion of deaf people's right to succeed was verbal; one that proved that their deafness had not arisen from internal deficiency, but been imposed upon them "ex accidente" (Plann 1997: 18). Etienne's early deafness would have hindered his learning to pronounce his own name which, in turn, would have impeded his path to legal adulthood and to taking over the administration of both his own affairs and those of his family.

Etienne's parents were, therefore, presented with a difficult choice. They could probably have afforded to employ a private speech tutor –an expensive undertaking at a time when those studied in the art were considered to be inheritors of a quasi-mystical tradition, traceable to the Venerable Bede's description of the Bishop John of Hugalstat's healing of a mute in 685 and able by their skills to bring about the miraculous reversal of a divinely ordained condition (see Lane 1984: 68 – 69, see also Bébian 1819, Berthier 1840). However, the lack of evidence of any search suggests that either the cost of securing such a tutor outweighed the eventual gain, or that the arrival of a second son rendered the need moot. Instead, they elected to follow a second, also relatively well-established path and seek a place for Etienne in a local monastery (Plann 1997: 13-35) where his material needs would at least be met, and where he would engage in whatever learning or work they found him to do.

3.1.2 De Fay at the *Abbaye St-Jean*

Etienne arrived at the *Abbaye St-Jean* in Amiens at the age of five (CHS 1.2) and settled in to a life about which, other than recording the payment of his board and lodging, there is little information. However, later events suggest that while Etienne's early years in the *Abbaye* might have appeared relatively uneventful to both his parents and to those within the *Abbaye* community, for him they represented an enormous change. Two factors possibly contribute to this.

The first can only be surmised from later evidence and from the contemplative traditions of the *Abbaye's* Norbertine monks who were less concerned by communication with the outside world than they were by pursuing the satisfaction of the spiritual and relational needs of their own congregation. Even though he was only a paying boarder and had not chosen to be there, it appears that the benevolence of the *Abbaye* community also extended to Etienne. By taking up a place within it, he found himself in a community less concerned by how to communicate, than by the simple *need* to communicate.

Secondly, whilst there is no explicit evidence that the Norbertines espoused 'Indica Monasterialia' (Monastic surrogate sign systems) to the same formal extent as did other religious communities (Umiker-Seboek & Seboek 1987), familiarity with other religious orders where its use was so prevalent that 'guardian angels' were assigned to teach it to newcomers so that they could join in common prayers (Plann 1997: 21-22) and the common practice of the voluntary silence (Lane 1984) meant that some around the young de Fay may have either known the Indica, or at the very least been open to its use as an alternate foundation for communication.

Thus, although there is no explicit information on how it occurred, by the time Etienne was twenty years of age, his residency within the *Abbaye* and his interaction with others there had transformed him from an alingual deaf children into a learnèd deaf man, fluent in some form of sign language and in written French, able not only to read and write but also mastering the finer points of mathematics, religious and non-religious history, mechanics, drawing and architecture (André 1766: Tome III, p 339).

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that when, in 1689, de Fay was presented with the opportunity to return to a family whom he now barely knew and where he would legally have to accept the position of a minor under the law, or to remain within the *Abbaye* where he would be offered employment (See discussion in CHS 2.2, 3.2, 4.2) he chose the latter.

3.1.3 The Communicative Space of Etienne de Fay

In 1868 at the age of twenty, Etienne de Fay became the secular architect and procurer for the *Abbaye*, a post he retained for some twenty five years (CHS: 4.2).

However, although his role within the *Abbaye* itself changed little during that time, the longevity of his presence there and the evolutions that this permitted in his relationship with others living in the *Abbaye* led to a distinct evolution in the way that he preferred to communicate.

Initially signing with those who could understand him and adopting written French for everyone else, he gradually came to find written communication cumbersome for everyday conversation. Indeed, it was even highly impractical in some situations, particularly with local traders who struggled to read and write, or were completely illiterate (CHS 4.2). Therefore, both inside the *Abbaye* community, and increasingly outside, he gradually abandoned written French as a language for conversation and adopted the habit of attaching to himself a member of the *Abbaye* community who would act as his interpreter (CHS 4.2).

What this strategy produced was a clear shift in de Fay's interactive spaces. Previously, he had been a deaf individual living in a sound-mediated world, dependent for communication upon the unreliable ability of his interlocutor to read and write. Now, instead, he produced a space in which his visual communication was the default and then invited someone to join him there who he knew could straddle both sound- and visually-mediated spaces as required to mediate between the two. This 'space of visual communication' was clearly sensorily and linguistically distinct from the hearing spaces around it, but because it rested on the proven skill of a third-party, had the effect of both freeing-up of communication and levelling prestige between de Fay and those he spoke to by allowing communication through each one's natural language rather than through the academically dependent skill of writing.

De Fay's visually mediated communication space also had the advantage that as the number of those around him who could sign grew, so the space in which he was free to interact with others also grew. As time went on and he was made responsible for the *Abbaye*'s library – a collection that he was justifiably proud of "expanding by the addition of several thousand volumes" (de Fay quoted by Séguin 1847: 244-247) – the space produced by him in which communication was visual became synonymous with the library's physical boundaries and the habit of its production as a default space of visual communication established itself throughout the *Abbaye*. Whereas

before, de Fay had moved with an interpreter through the *Abbaye*'s default sound-produced spaces, from the early 1820s visiting academics began to equip themselves with a signing member of the *Abbaye* in order to use the library and enquire of de Fay (André 1766).

3.1.4   De Fay's school

While de Fay was working in the library, in approximately 1718, a new under-prior arrived at the *Abbaye* by the name of Father Postel. Although he appears to have had no previous experience of deaf people, Postel was entirely unsurprised to find that the *Abbaye*'s procurer, architect and librarian was deaf. Indeed, he appears to have considered it something of an opportunity. Responding positively to requests from parents like those of de Fay who wished their deaf children to be boarded within the *Abbaye*, Postel went one step further and some time in the late 1720s (Postel 1733), invited de Fay to leave the library and begin a new project. Nominally referred to as a school with 'pupils' (Postel 1733), the fact that two of de Fay's pupils were in their thirties in the 1740s (Bézagu-Deluy, no date) suggest that it would be more accurate to describe it as an educational asylum for deaf children and young adults (CHS 4.2).

De Fay's school differed from the educational provision that he himself had received in two main ways. Firstly, it was formally established as a space that was independent from the *Abbaye* with its own allocation of premises for eating, sleeping and working within which the children were permitted to keep their external status, dress and behaviour, although within appropriate limits (Letter from M. Meusnier to Postel, 29th Nov 1733). Secondly, by placing de Fay over it as appointed teacher, it was produced from its very inception as an extension of de Fay's own personal visually communicative space.

Taught in sign language, a skill in which de Fay was now "extremely able" (Cazeaux 1746, no page), de Fay's school contained a rotating population of between three and six students (Postel 1733) aged between five and thirty-five years old (Bézagu-Deluy, undated) and continued until his death approximately 20 years later. Treated as a peripheral, but well-known sub-community within the *Abbaye* and referred to as "our *Sourd-Muet* boarders" (Postel 1733, entry for January 1728) de Fay's pupils enjoyed the independence of an autonomous existence, in which their visual

communication strategies were unchallenged, whilst also often being invited as guests into the more hearing spaces of the *Abbaye* to share meals with the rest of the community or to participate in events of the religious calendar (Postel 1733).

3.2 The visual space of Azy d'Etavigny

De Fay finally died in approximately 1743 at the age of seventy-four and although it is intriguing to consider what might have been had one of his pupils had the ability to continue his school, this appears not to have been the case. With his death, it was not long before it was closed by Postel and the four remaining pupils were recuperated by their families. With no deaf people present in the *Abbaye*, there was no need for those present and able to sign to continue doing so. The *Abbaye* community simply appears to have reoccupied the premises given over to de Fay and, over time, reverted to its previous communicative habits.

However, whilst Postel's actions suggest that, for the *Abbaye*, de Fay's space of visual communication was simply left behind, at last one of his pupils emerged from his time within it having absorbed its norms as those he 'expected'. This pupil was Azy d'Etavigny. In this second section I initially identify d'Etavigny's early arrival into de Fay's DEAF space, and describe his ongoing production of it even as he was taken away from the *Abbaye St Jean* upon de Fay's death. Identifying him as one of the first pupils of Jacob Rodriguez Pereire, I problematise Pereire's 'oral' teaching method as one that was, in fact, based in an exploitation of Azy's visual *Perçu*. Following Azy as he moved to Paris to act as an exemplar for the success of Pereire's method I demonstrate how, far from being evidence of the 'restoration' of a deaf person to the hearing world, Azy's life shows an obdurate refusal to abandon the DEAF space in which he had grown up.

Sources for this section are largely drawn from those who taught Azy, in particular Father Cazeaux of the Abbey to which he was moved upon de Fay's death, and from La Rochelle's (1882), Séguin's (1847) and Hément's (1875) biographies of Jacob-Rodriguez Pereire and of his pupils, and from Pereire's own writing (Pereire 1747, 1749). These are supplemented by reference to data collected by Jean-René Presneau (1990) in his unique, but all too brief discussion of Azy's education.

3.2.1　　　　　Introducing Azy d'Etavigny

Azy d'Etavigy was born deaf (La Rochelle 1882: 23, Hément 1875: 16, Séguin 1847) in 1730 in the town of La Rochelle on the French west coast. His deafness presented the same challenges and choices to his wealthy family (Lane 1984: 74) as had de Fay's to his own some sixty years earlier. However, either no sibling appeared to release the d'Etavignys from their search for a solution or Azy's father, motivated by what appears to be the belligerence that made him a business success, refused to accept that his son's deafness was incurable. Employing doctors and surgeons from all over Europe, the infant Azy was subjected to countless costly but apparently futile medical interventions. When Azy turned five, there was no change in his inability to hear and so, despairing of finding any better solution, his father followed up a rumour that there was a 'deaf mathematician' living in the *Abbaye St Jean* in Amiens (reported in the Journal de Verdun, June 1740). In 1735, at the age of five, Azy became a pupil of Etienne de Fay.

Nothing is recorded about how Azy perceived his time in Amiens. However, he remained there for eight years, living as a part of de Fay's small signing community and being taught by him. Unmentioned by Postel, Azy was overshadowed by the older pupils. Nevertheless, he appears to have acquitted himself to the satisfaction of his father who appears to have been a type to raise objections had he felt he was wasting his money.

When de Fay died, Azy did not suffer the return to his family that his peers did. Instead, he was immediately moved from the *Abbaye* in Amiens to another in Beaumont-en-Auge where his father knew the Prior, a Father Cazeaux, to be a member of the *Académie Royale des Lettres* in Caen (Pereire 1747: 335, Séguin 1847: 38). Had the community in Beaumont been similarly disposed to that at Amiens, it is possible that Azy might have been able to produce his own DEAF space exactly as de Fay had some seventy years earlier. However, it appears that a combination of their less reflective Benedictine orientation and other unknown factors was enough to prevent any there from establishing any meaningful contact with him. His daily interaction with those around him was limited, by their inability to sign, to only the most basic and concrete of requests (Cazeaux 1747).

3.2.2   Hearing expectations, hearing strategies

From 1743 to 1745 Azy was virtually abandoned, teaching himself through reading. However, in 1745, he quite suddenly became again the focus of his father's attention. Attending a public demonstration at the local Jesuit college in La Rochelle, Monsieur d'Etavigny had been astounded to hear a boy by the name of Aaron Beaumarin, who had – like Azy – been born deaf (La Rochelle 1882: 2), pronounce all the basic sounds of French and a few short words and phrases. D'Etavigny realised that the solution to his problem lay perhaps in a different direction than the one he had pursued thus far. If, instead of curing his son's deafness, he could teach him to speak, Azy would become eligible to claim his inheritance.

Beaumarin's tutor was a young Spanish Jew by the name of Jacob Rodriguez Pereire. D'Etavigny was not prepared to pay the inflated prices that Pereire was asking (see below), nor was he able to persuade him to part with his method for a lesser amount. However, neither was he happy to continue paying Cazeaux to continue housing his son now that he knew that there was the possibility of his learning to speak. He, therefore, came up with a plan. Locating a copy of a fifty year old philosophical work to which Pereire had made reference by the Dutch speech tutor Johan Conrad Amman (Amman 1692), he tempted Cazeaux to put the method into practise by suggesting the prestige that success might give him before the Caen *Académie*.

What followed was a year of tragic comedy. In stark contract to the ease with which de Fay had employed sign language to teach visually, the Prior and an assistant began to attempt to tutor Azy. Perhaps no more clear illustration of the failure of the Enlightenment period's failure to understand DEAF space or approach it on its own terms is needed then the sight, described by Presneau (1990) – based on Cazeaux's own account – of the DEAF boy, sat in bemused silence as his two teachers, both members of the local intellectual élite and driven by the bullying of Azy's increasingly frustrated father, spent long and fruitless hours attempting to unravel Amman's manual and its complex interweaving of the physical and philosophical sources of speech, and its evidencing of the nature of man "... each one reading it out and commenting on [it], then gesticulating and vociferating with the young Azy" (Presneau 1990:29).

3.2.3 Hearing expectations, visual strategies

In 1746, after almost a year of trying, Cazeaux finally gave up trying to teach Azy to speak. Monsieur d'Etavigny was obliged to face the fact that he would have to seek out Pereire directly. Having agreed a contract with d'Etavigny worth three-thousand *livres* "to teach his son, deaf from birth to read and pronounce French" (Contract between d'Etavigny and Pereire, June 14th 1746, cited in Presneau 1990: 29). He arrived in Beaumont to being work. His success was immediate; Within eight days, Azy was able to pronounce 'papa' and 'maman' (Presneau 1990: 29), within a month this had grown to fifty words. After a year of frustration for the Beaumont prior, the results were astonishing, something that would not have escaped the prior since within four months, by November 22nd 1746, Azy had mastered enough French to be presented by Pereire to the local *Académie des Belles Lettres* in Caen where the prior himself must have watched in furious envy (Pereire 1747: 335).

Pereire's method was clearly effective. However, for those associating the ability to produce the sounds of speech with the belief that what they were seeing was evidence that Pereire had somehow effected the propulsion of a 'muet de convention' (Diderot 1751) from a 'state of nature' (Hobbes 1975) to fully progressive humanity, it was also misleading. A closer examination, possible because of the 19th century absorption of his 'demutisation' (Pereire 1749) into a more mainstream curriculum reveals that his methods were less based on teaching Azy "the words of a language" as he would claim (Pereire, November 22nd 1746, no page), than on successfully training him to produce verbal responses to visual and tactile cues.

Initially teaching him how to sense his own production of sound by touching his own throat, Pereire then taught him responses to some eighty 'sound-spelling' (de Fontenay 1779) handshapes which could be combined into diphthong- and syllable-sign combinations. Finally, these were combined into increasingly complex phrases to which Pereire added meaning-carrying signs. By combining the cues, he gradually built up Azy's ability to produce strings of sounds which could be appropriately triggered in response to these visual prompts, or in prepared responses to written French.

For Azy, the method must have been relatively straightforward; each voicing being trained to readiness by touch and each articulation by Amman's procedure of direct manipulation of his mouth shape, teeth and tongue (Amman 1692) and then allied to the appropriate handshape sign to be drilled in combination with others. However, far from being evidence that he had learned to speak, it was simply proof that Pereire's method successfully exploited Azy's proven reliance upon visual communication.

This did not matter, however, for Azy's father. In April 1747, observing that his son could produce the speech that he had so desired, he provided Pereire with a certificate of success, signed by Bailleul, another member of Caen's *Académie des Belles Lettres*, and withdrew Azy from Pereire's tutelage to continue his education at home. However, away from constant practice and without the visual prompts provided by Pereire, Azy swiftly lost whatever speech he had learned producing only "gutteral and hardly intelligible sounds" (Presneau 1990: 30).

3.2.3   Blurring sensory strategies

In the meantime, Pereire had moved to Paris where, on the back of Bailleul's certificate, he began the preliminary contacts necessary to demonstrate his success before the *Académie Royale des Sciences*. Therefore, when, in early 1747, Azy's father made contact with him again, he was only too willing to accept a new engagement with Azy. Back in the hands of his teacher, Azy's performance improved immediately and on June 11th 1749 (Pereire 1749) he accompanied Pereire to a meeting of the *Académie Royale des Sciences* (Coste d'Arnobat 1803) where he demonstrated what he had learned. The members of the *Académie* were gracious reporting that "It is the first time that we have seen confirmed by experience the possibility of such a curious and useful art" (Mercure de France, August 1749, no page). Finally, having worked his way from the rural La Rochelle, through the local *Académie* in Caen, to receive the approbation of France's principle institution of scientific knowledge (Ophir & Shapin 1991), the only remaining step was to demonstrate before the King himself. On January 7th 1750, after a further intensive six months of training, Azy found himself in the castle of Choisy-sur-Seine, standing before Louis XV.

The King was "full of admiration" (La Rochelle 1882: 64) at what Pereire had achieved and awarded him a one-off prize of 800 *livres*. However, his greatest boon was not the King's gift, but the reputation that flowed from his patronage. Courted first by a string of potential clients who flocked to secure his services he found that with the luxury of choice, he was able to adapt his method further. Now rejecting children who were so profoundly deaf as to fail to respond to any auditory stimulus, he selected only those whose unaided hearing was poor enough to have initially prevented the natural acquisition of speech in the home, but who - with careful training in both visual cues and the supplementary use of an ear-trumpet to differentiate between particularly obscure sounds - were able to gain almost perfect pronunciation (Séguin 1847). This blurring of sensory strategies saw remarkable success particularly for those of his pupils whose deafness was so slight as to only place normal speech just out of reach.

Affirmed by the process of his scientific demonstration, by the gathered approbation of those like George Buffon whose *Histoire Naturelle de l'Homme* (Buffon 1749) contains references to Pereire's work (pages 350, 182 in 1818 edition) and by recognition from the King himself, Pereire was also sought-out by the thinkers of the day.[2] However, it was not DEAF people inhabiting DEAF space that these writers encountered but rather Pereire's successfully 'demutised' deaf pupils now brought so effectively into the hearing world. Indeed, this was a knowledge to which Pereire's own pupils contributed; in particular, the pupil that had replaced Azy in his attentions; Saboureux de Fontenay, who was so captivated by the task of learning to speak French, and so dazzled by the society to whom Pereire introduced him that he claims to have "scarcely remember[ed] being a deaf-mute" (Saboureux de Fontenay 1779, quoted in Lane 1984:82 without page reference).

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[2] Jean Autin; whose later biography of Pereire's descendents' (Autin 1984) industrial and economic success reports that Bougainville, Diderot and d'Alembert were friends and that Jean-Jacques Rousseau was a neighbour. He also cites a poem written about Pereire by La Condamine (Autin 1984: 17)

"Pereire, ton génie et tes heureux secours	[Pereire, your genius and your happy aid
Ont rendu la parole à des muet nés sourds!	Restore speech to mutes, born deaf!
Des muets ont parlé! Que ne puis-je prétendre	Mutes speak! Do I not then, like them
A te devoir comme eux la faculté d'entendre."	Owe you my understanding]

3.2.4 Oral performance versus DEAF space

On January 27th 1751, Pereire's work with de Fontenay achieved him definitive success. Appearing before the same commission of the *Académie Royale* that had assessed d'Etavigny's performance, they recommended to the King that he award Pereire an annual stipend of eight-hundred *livres*. Pereire's future was secured. Continuing to work with de Fontenay for a further five years and taking on other pupils from provincial nobility; Marie Marois and Marie Lerat, and the children of the business bourgeoisie and of civil servants (Presneau 1990: 32) he also extended his work into other areas (see Autin 1984) that, in 1759, saw him also recognised by the Royal Society.

However, as each step led him to greater recognition, Pereire largely forgot those whose shoulders he had used to climb so high. In particular his deaf pupils who, having been conjured from silence into speech by the 'Mutismicien', from the French terms 'démutiser' [to restore speech] and 'magician' (Séguin 1847), were largely left to fend for themselves.

Consequently, Azy, finding himself from 1750 practically abandoned to his own devices and with no formal requirement to practice his visually-cued speech, abandoned attempts to speak entirely and took advantage of Pereire's encouragement to his pupils to advertise his expertise by frequenting the coffee houses of the capital (de Fontenay 1779), began to seek out other deaf people within the city. When Pereire eventually became aware of what was happening, he was acutely embarrassed and demonised his previously star pupil for his 'failure' to persevere with speech. Saboureux de Fontenay reacted to the stimga of this by declaring himself at "war on the habit of conversing by the means of gestures" (de Fontenay 1779: 35).

However, Azy was not the only one of his pupils to turn their back on speech once their tutelage was over. Despite their trained speech and their ability to interact with others in the careful one-to-one situations afforded them by public fascination, when liberated to interact in unstructured social contact, all apparently found that effective two-way conversation could only occur in a visual medium. Gradually, every one of

Pereire's pupils for whom later biographical information is available, abandoned speech for sign language once they were free to do so.

Indeed, a linguist who met Saboureux de Fontenay at the age of thirty reported that by that point "not a trace was found of his speech lessons" (Lane 1984: 84). Later analysis of his language by a teacher at the Paris *Institution* classed him as a case-study in the fondness of DEAF people for their own native language. Despite his own reported profiting from speech (de Fontenay 1779) Saboureux's own attempts to teach deaf children were, apparently, all conducted in sign language (Vaïsse, in Congress 1878: 478 - 479). Even Marie-Marois, perhaps the most acoustically gifted of Pereire's pupils and so able to hear with the aid of an ear-trumpet that she acquired Pereire's Spanish accent (Marois, cited in Presneau 1990: 32) eventually retreated from hearing society and lived until she was over eighty in a house where she was able to converse in sign with the other residents (La Rochelle 1882: 492).

3.3 The DEAF space of Pierre Desloges

One man who witnessed the speech of Pereire's pupils and who described it, despite its intelligibility, as "forced, slow, broken and painful to hear, for you sensed how painful it was to execute" (Lane 1984: 84) was the Abbé Copineau, canon of the Church of Saint-Louis-du-Louvre (La Rochelle 1882). Copineau is almost invisible in the historical record. However, his impact upon it is enormous since it was he who acted as the anonymous editor of the first work substantially authored by a DEAF man – Pierre Desloges – and the most complete and inspirational description of DEAF space in the 18th century; the "Observations of a *Sourd-Muet*" (Desloges 1779).

In this final section, I identify and examine the DEAF space produced by a spontaneously emergent DEAF community in Paris and the way that it was encountered, and explored by Pierre Desloges. I begin by examining Desloges' own background and his arrival in Paris just as a public fascination for 'all things deaf' reached its peak through the unique interpretation of DEAF space given by the public demonstrations of the Abbé Charles Michel de l'Epée of the abilities of the deaf pupils that he taught. I then go on to describe Desloges' encounter with the wider Parisian DEAF community and with the space that they produced, and explore the

nature of that space; the first to be unproblematically 'DEAF' for its authoring of a complex tradition of linguistic, cultural and metaphysical expectations. The majority of this chapter is drawn from Desloges' own writing, consulted in the original. References have been maintained in the text out of respect for the significance of his account. Other key works, particularly those by de l'Epée, are referenced within the text.

3.3.1 Introducing Pierre Desloges

Desloges' own account describes how he was born hearing in 1747 in Tours and became deaf only at the age of seven through a prolonged bout of smallpox, which lasted two years. The illness rendered him unable to hear and also affected his ability to fully close his mouth and so deprived him of easy spoken communication (Desloges 1779: Préf 6-7) except with the few people who knew him well. Profoundly deaf and unable to produce comprehensible speech, he found himself cut off from those living in a sound-mediated reality around him in a way that was similar (but opposite in direction) to that of Azy d'Etavigny upon the death of Etienne de Fay and his removal from the *Abbaye St-Jean* in Amiens.

From the age of nine, Desloges lived at home and was provided for by his parents with whom his only reliable means of communication was writing and a few disconnected gestures of his own creation (Desloges 1779: Préf 12). However, at the age of twenty-one and faced with a choice of either accepting the status-quo for the foreseeable future or disobey his parents and strike out on his own, he decided to move to Paris and try to secure employment. In 1768, he arrived in Paris where he found apprenticeship as a book-binder and paper-hanger (Desloges 1779: Préf 1, footnote 1).

3.3.2 DEAF space interpreted

As a deaf man, Desloges could not have arrived in Paris at a more engaging time for the city was bubbling with fascination for deaf people and sign language. The focus of this fascination was no longer Pereire, who had supplemented his speech tutoring with other work and moved on to areas that both he and others considered more practically useful to the country, and so more financially profitable (Hément 1875,

La Rochelle 1882). Instead, what had captured the public imagination was the work of a young priest by the name of Charles Michel de l'Epée.

De l'Epée's career and success are well documented by both those interested in his role in deaf education and by others more fascinated by his contribution to the period's pursuit of a sign-based Universal language (see Eco 1995: 173, Aicardi 2009). Made famous within his immediate environs by a reputation gained from the mid-1760s for a series of private demonstrations to "Princes of the realm, dukes and other lords of the court, ambassadors from foreign courts, magistrates, ecclesiastics…" (de l'Epée 1772: 10-11) that caused such as stir that Joseph Watson, in his (1809) *Instruction of the deaf and dumb* reports "it has been the fashion for many years past, for every traveller who has visited Paris, and, favoured the world with an account of that city, to say something in this subject" (Watson 1809: 84), from 1771 he made the exhibitions public. These were so well attended that from 1772 an intermission had to be introduced between the two-hour performances and publicity pamphlets included a polite request that "those who honour us with their presence remain no longer than two hours" (de l'Epée 1772, frontispiece).

What those attending came to see was something extraordinary. For what de l'Epée had succeeded in doing was something that had never been done before. Far from demonstrating that he, like Pereire, could also lift deaf children from a state of naturalness to the status of developed, progressive humanity by giving them speech, what de l'Epée claimed to have done was harness deaf people's proximity to the original state of mankind, and to its communicative origins in visual language (Bulwer 1644, Dalgarno 1680, Diderot 1751) by meeting them where they were through their own gestural system of signs and then teaching them to bridge the gap to spoken languages through an adapted signing system he called 'methodical signs' (de l'Epée 1776).

This sign system was based on his deaf pupils' own spontaneous gestures; gestures which they authored (see the introduction to chapter 4) as a part of producing their own emergent DEAF space. However, far from being represented as such to the audience, in de l'Epée's hands these signs were raw evidence of a community held back by their failure to progress in tune with the rest of the world. Their sign language is, he wrote, "… more expressive than any other, because it is natural, and

others are not" (de l'Epée 1772: 19). However, it would only become useful if polished up to the same grammatical complexity as hearing languages. "Reduced to a methodical art" writes de l'Epée, "it would be possible to turn this sign language into a Universal Language for all mankind" (de l'Epée 1772: 19). Therefore, while those attending de l'Epée's demonstration were captivated by the exotic sight of messages and questions suggested by de l'Epée and then by members of the audience translated into methodical signs and then translated back again into either French or another written language (de l'Epée 1772, 1773, 1774), what they understood themselves to be watching was evidence that it was possible to 'peel away' the artifice of developed human knowledge; evidence that with the right guidance, humanity could right the mistakes of Babel and by reversion to a more natural ideographical language (de l'Epée 1774: 22-23), be restored to an altogether more utopian condition (Eco 1995: 173).

This was the Paris into which Desloges had arrived and in which he worked. However, as an isolated deaf individual needing to work long hours and, because of his deafness, largely oblivious to the spoken-language discussion of those around him unless he paid specific attention, he knew little of the growing fascination of Paris with deaf people. However, as public fascination for what went on within that hidden, silent world of de l'Epée's pupils grew, Desloges found himself badgered, wherever he went, by " questions about the *Sourds-Muets…* " (Desloges 1779: Préf 2). However, knowing nothing of their "... language of signs" using himself only "odd gestures, isolated and without continuity or connection" (Desloges 1779: Préf 13) we can only imagine his mounting frustration as he visited home after home to be asked the same questions and his growing curiosity at what he learned.

3.3.3   Encountering DEAF space

De l'Epée's interest in the education of deaf children was not only because of its potential role in developing a Universal Language. He was also concerned by the fate of the deaf children's souls, hitherto unreached by hearing priests, and by their material care. Therefore, in 1774, when he was invited to present his work at a royal *concours* (de l'Epée 1774: v) which, if successful would guarantee him the royal patronage that would resolve his long-standing questions of who would teach his pupils after his death (de l'Epée, 1774: vii) de l'Epée announced that that year's

demonstration would be his last on that scale (de l'Epée 1774: v-vi). The response from an avidly interested public was predictably overwhelming. The four hours of the display, performed on a late August afternoon and interrupted by an intermission "... only long enough to permit those present to leave and be replaced by others" (de l'Epée 1774: iv) saw over eight hundred people try to cram their way into a room that only allowed standing room for three quarters that number.

That year, however, it appears that the audience was not only made up of curious hearing people. Although there is no direct reference to their having been present, circumstantial evidence from later that same year suggests that somewhere in the throng of those braving the heat and the press of the throng were two additional parties. The first were members of a local community of some two hundred DEAF people that already existed in Paris when de l'Epée began his work but about which he only gradually became aware over time (de l'Epée 1772: 11).[3] They had no involvement in his teaching but had simply come to see what de l'Epée's reputation was all about. Producing their own spaces for visual communication in the midst of the hearing audience they would have been clearly visible and, probably, something of an additional focus for public attention.

Alongside them, unknown to them and invisible in the crush, was Pierre Desloges, finally driven to satisfy his own curiosity about the *'sourds-muets'*. There is no indication of how he must have felt as he not only followed de l'Epée's pupils written and signed translations of French, Latin, Spanish, Italian and English (de l'Epée 1774: iii-iv), into and out of methodical signs, but also had his first encounter with a more freely signed space of visual communication that was produced by others who were DEAF just 'like him' (Desloges 1779: 12). However, despite the fact that he may have understood nothing of their signing, or that of de l'Epée's pupils, he was clearly excited enough by what he saw to make contact with one of the DEAF men.

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[3] In fact, the number may have well been considerably higher since accepted modern day statistics suggest that a city the size of Paris at the time (500,000 to 700,000 depending on sources) could be expected to have a signing deaf population of at least one in one thousand.

3.3.4   Entering DEAF space

The DEAF man whom Desloges met was Italian; a servant to one of the actors in the *Comédie Italienne* (Desloges 1779: 13). For six weeks that followed their initial meeting, Desloges and he met regularly, the latter teaching him to combine signs to "create different pictures that could be used to represent different ideas, transmitting them to others *like us* and thereby conversing with them in a consistent and ordered way" (Desloges 1779: 12. Italics mine). Through this relationship he grew in his knowledge of those he describes as 'others like us'.

What he discovered astonished him; a local community numbering well over 200 in Paris alone (de l'Epée 1772: 11) and with links, through those like his Italian friend, to other communities of different sizes all over Europe, constituted by those who had either been born deaf or who, like Desloges himself, had experienced some later form of hearing loss (Desloges 1779: Préf 11) and who only found their need for human interaction fully satisfied through visual communication in the language of 'natural' signs (Desloges 1779: 14).

Desloges' learning of this language of signs (Desloges 1779: 14) was rapid and, although he was only too aware that others who were more fluent employed signs that were so complete and complex that "it would require several pages of description to capture the nuances of just one..." (Desloges 1179: Préf 4-5), it was only a matter of weeks before he had mastered the rudiments sufficiently well to begin to communicate with them. However, it was as this allowed him to spend more time within the community that he gradually became aware that it was one thing to learn enough sign language to begin to be able to communicate. It was quite another entirely to truly know how to fulfil the 'expectations' that the DEAF community appeared to take for granted.

The question was not so much one of politeness or of manners. Certainly, there were clearly defined protocols in the language; traditions of referring to different members of the community by their identity, employment, and residential location (Desloges

1779: 46) but these were no less quickly learned than names in the hearing world.[4] Rather, the issue was that whilst Desloges could understand what other members of the community *said*, he still did not fully understand what they *meant*. It was like being a "man, transplanted all of a sudden into the middle of a foreign nation" (Desloges 1779: 7), perhaps able to understand the language, but constantly surprised by their native culture.

What Desloges came to realise, as he grew to understand the language more, was that his having learned to understand exchanges in sign language was only just touching the surface of what this 'foreign nation' was all about. Distinguishing themselves from those who were similarly deaf, but who lived "deprived of the society of others *sourds et muets*, who are abandoned in hospitals, or isolated in a far flung corner of the provinces" (Desloges 1779: 13) by the way in which their collocation allowed them to author, transmit and draw on a long heritage of knowledge authored and passed on "not from those who hear and who speak" (Desloges 1779: 13) but rather by DEAF people themselves, by "*sourds et muets*, who live in society together in a great town like Paris…" (Desloges 1779: 13), the Parisian DEAF community was not simply a group of deaf people producing ad-hoc spaces of visual communication. Rather, each time they met, the space that they produced was one that was ongoing; a DEAF space.

3.3.5   Inhabiting DEAF space

It is this DEAF space that Desloges gradually came to inhabit and explore. A space produced within the same physical world as those spaces produced by hearing society but allowing 'DEAF' people to perform their 'being in the world' in what I have referred to above as a different sensory 'plane'. Referred to by Desloges as "the society of other *sourds et muets*" (Desloges 1779: 19), or "the intercourse of his comrades" (Desloges 1779: 14) rather than a 'DEAF space' per se, what he describes

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[4] Desloges here compares the idea of simply translating "l'Enfant Rivière" into two signs "CHILD", "RIVER" with DEAF people's own naming traditions. "I would not be understood by my friends" he writes" who could see no link between a person and a river… they would simply laugh. But knowing that our language paints the ideas of something and never only arbitrary names… I would designate these people by their own qualities." (Desloges 1779: 46-47)

is clearly a reality authored through sign language and produced by the ongoing interactions of a DEAF community in a way that is distinctly DEAF-centred.

Thus, whilst Desloges' DEAF space differs from that of Etienne de Fay by being produced in the midst of the hearing world and by DEAF people who are in daily contact with it, it is – nevertheless – produced entirely visually in a language which is, in DEAF space, no longer a primitive key to a 'methodical sign' system aimed at rolling-back the artifice of hearing language but, rather, a fully developed, linguistic system that already consists of:

> verbs, nouns, pronouns, articles, genders, cases, tenses, modes, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections, &c, There is, in fact, nothing in any part of speech that cannot be expressed by the language of signs. (Desloges 1779: 19)

It is the completeness of this sign language - a completeness that, Desloges suggests, gives it a communicative adequacy that outstrips that of hearing languages (Desloges 1779: 15-16, footnote 5) - and its employment of a medium that uniquely satisfies DEAF people's need for visual interaction that testifies to it having been authored by DEAF people themselves as tailored to their own communication (Desloges 1779: 7). And it is this DEAF authorship that locates it as the centre of DEAF people's engagement with the world; an engagement that is very real, but that starts within DEAF space and reaches out from there:

> There are those *sourds et muets* from birth… who, by the sole means of signs, have been judged worthy of being admitted to the sacraments of the Church, even to that of holy communion and marriage. There is no event in Paris, in France, or in the world that is not discussed by us. We express ourselves on all subjects with as much order, precision and knowledge as if we enjoyed the faculty of speech and of hearing. (Desloges 1779: 14-15, Italics mine)

However, Desloges is also keen to demonstrate that DEAF space is not only a home produced by those who rely on it for their inability to integrate within the hearing world. If DEAF space is a reality produced by communication in natural visual language and shaped to the needs of those who are visual, then those judged its highest authorities are not those like Desloges himself who have been raised in the hearing world and who continue to hold to contact with it. Rather they are those like Desloges' own tutor, those who can "neither read or write, nor have they been to the lessons of M. l'Abbé de l'Epée… " (Desloges 1779: 14) and yet are more educated in sign language and in the knowledges of DEAF space itself than Desloges could ever have hoped to be.

These are, in some ways, the 'native' inhabitants of DEAF space. Not, insists Desloges, simply because they are the most deaf. "Some hear far better than I do" (Desloges 1779: Préf 11) he asserts. Rather, they are natives of DEAF space because the experience of their deafness has caused them to have "no instruction other than that of good sense and intercourse with those like them." (Desloges 1779: Préf 3). For Desloges, these are the guardians of DEAF space knowledges (Desloges 1779: 14), experts in the "art of painting and expressing their thoughts by the means of natural signs…" (Desloges 1779: 14) and passing them on to subsequent generations in the same way that the knowledges were passed on to them.

However, if these DEAF natives form the core of the DEAF community, Desloges is also only too aware that the DEAF space that he describes himself inhabiting is necessarily one that is hedged around by the hearing world. Indeed, even as he gets to know it better, he discovers that whilst those at its core produce it in a relatively independent coexistence with the hearing world, the growing public knowledge of the nature of DEAF people and about their language that initially sparked his own interest in discovering more, impacts upon the freedom of those within DEAF space to produce it without prejudice:

> I find myself… " he says, "trying to give an idea that is more correct than that which is commonly held about the language of my companions who have been sourds et muets from birth and who know neither how to read, nor write, and who have received no more instruction than that of good sense and the intercourse with their peers. (Desloges 1779: Préf 3-4)

3.3.6   Contesting Desloges' DEAF space

The greatest evidence of the collocation of Desloges' DEAF space alongside one produced as the hearing world is not provided by Desloges himself, but by his ostensibly anonymous author, Copineau who, in presenting Desloges' work to a hearing audience, is clearly keenly aware of his audience, and the way that they will receive it. Thus, even as Desloges describes a DEAF-authored, visually mediated reality produced by the long-term interactions between DEAF people in their own natural sign language and details aspects of it, Copineau is already undermining the validity of Desloges' writing by his need to assert the truth of its author's deafness, and by reference to the extraordinary nature of the work:

> This small work, that we are presenting to the public… has really been written by a young *sourd & muet* whose acquaintance I made at the house of M. l'Abbé de l'Epée and with

whom I am friends…. These are his thoughts, his style and his reasonings. I feel that the principle interest of this Work comes from its Author himself; since it is the first time that a *sourd & muet* has meritted the honour of being published. (Copineau, in Desloges 1779: Avertissement 3-5)

Then, in a string of caveats that belie his determination that "such a phenomenon should, as far as it is possible, be presented to the public in its integrity… and I have, therefore, taken the liberty only of adding to the text a number of notes in areas that I felt best served by this" (Copineau, in Desloges 1779: Avertissement 5-6), he footnotes the main text with "… information that the Author himself cannot know because he is deaf… " (Copineau, in Desloges 1779: Préf 7: footnote 2) and that undermines the reliability of what Desloges' asserts by explicitly stating that "this is the way that the author himself, and those who have the misfortune to resemble him clearly understand…" (Copineau in Desloges 1779: Préf 9: footnote 3).

For Copineau then, Desloges' work must be taken seriously, but not on Desloges' terms. His writing, Copineau claims is of great interest to a "philosophically minded reader" (Desloges 1779: footnote 3, Préf: page 10), to those like de l'Epée, for example, who are fascinated by the potential of sign language to become "a universal language… a tool of communication for all men… a supplement to all other languages… a lens through which truth might be glimpsed" (Copineau, footnote 9, 10 in Desloges 1779: 57, 59). Or to those like de l'Epée's contemporary, the Abbé Deschamps, who contested de l'Epée's idea that sign language could be used to reach deaf people by means of visual language and, instead, saw his mission to deaf people as rescuing them:

> … from the state of ignorance in which they are entombed, to enlighten their spirits, to teach them who they are, to teach them their obligations and the end that they should wish for, the aims they should set themselves, the behaviour they should adopt... (Deschamps 1779: xxxvi)

Thus, even as Desloges' *Observations* provide the first DEAF-authored evidence of a DEAF space, it is couched within a framework that granted it little less importance than that of a philosophical curiosity. Far from achieving Desloges' stated aim of trying to correct public perception, the mechanism of its publication and its reception actually appears to have achieved the opposite. His work was certainly never mentioned by de l'Epée and was only referred to by Deschamps in short-lived critical exchange in which Desloges only published two additional notes, one in 1780, and

one in 1783. Following these, the confirmed record reveals nothing more of Desloges himself.

3.4 Discussion

Desloges may have disappeared from the record in the early 1780s. However, the Parisian DEAF community to which he belonged continued to thrive. De l'Epée's school also continued. Both of these reappear in fascinating detail later in this thesis as the small DEAF community birthed through de l'Epée's school, begins to produce their own delimited DEAF space and as that space flows beyond the boundaries of the school itself to become entangled with the ongoing production of a DEAF space by the Parisian DEAF community. Indeed, it is this entangling, and its roots in the separately observed DEAF space described by Desloges, and produced by de l'Epée's pupils – see the introduction to chapter four – that motivated the 'looking back' from which this present chapter emerged.

Before moving on to this, however, I need to return to address the evidence that I have presented in this chapter, with regards to the way it forms an overview of DEAF space emergent, and the place of that DEAF space emergent within a history of DEAF space as it described through a Lefebvrian framework. Here, I battle with the temptation to attempt to begin to extrapolate the evidence of this chapter into a more theoretical presentation of DEAF space itself. It is better, however, to allow the evidence to speak for itself and to simply draw out a number of areas of particular interest.

The first is to address a significant challenge of the evidence that I have presented here, particularly of Etienne de Fay's spaces of visual communication, and Azy d'Etavigny's visual space and consider whether they were simply that, or whether they already represent a 'DEAF' space of some form. Certainly, given the definition offered above of DEAF as 'like others who are DEAF', de Fay's example does not initially fit. Not only was he a lone deaf man whose spaces of visual communication appear to have emerged more from the practical need to communicate than based on any form of DEAF common identity or community belonging or 'behaving as expected', there is also the clear challenge that if it was his visual orientation that caused him to begin to produce his communicative space, those with whom he

produced it – at least initially – were hearing. Furthermore, the potential presence of those within the *Abbaye* who knew the indica even questions whether the sign language that he ultimately adopted may not have originated with him, but been taught to him by those around him. Having adopted visual communication strategies from his time within de Fay's school, Azy's case is more familiarly 'DEAF'. However, again, his case is certainly not that of Desloges, who I have described wrestling with the implication of the 'expected'.

And yet, at the same time, it is difficult to escape the feeling that to exclude de Fay's or d'Etavigny's space as one that was DEAF - albeit in its very first evolutionary stages – might be to fall back upon a 'Deaf' history; one in which the nature of 'Deaf' is prescribed by reference to a resistive archetype rather than described as it emerges. Certainly, De Fay's communicative space might initially appear to have been the product of little more than circumstance. However, elements of his space demonstrate that it was, indeed, produced to allow him to pursue a Lefebrian '*totalité*': his intellectual blossoming in a context that permitted visual communication and the significance of this in his decision to remain at the *Abbaye*, his preference for full communicative freedom over the learned skill of written French, the way that his communicative strategies 'secreted' a valid *Perçu* of visual 'being-in-the-world' that concretely re-authored his working environment as one in which sign language was considered the default language to adopt.

Thus, whilst Etienne de Fay's communicative space is exactly that; a communicative space with little evidence of an expected 'DEAF', it also appears to suggest a DEAF space *in potentia* at least in enough ways to make it extremely problematic not to describe it as such. Azy's production of visual space, and even potentially Desloges' production of a visual being-in-the-world prior to his encounter with the space of the Parisian DEAF community could be described in the same way. Indeed, what these spaces suggest is that rather than attempt to decorticate between those spaces that are simply 'visual' and those that are 'DEAF', it is better to consider the spaces produced by Etienne de Fay, Azy d'Etavigny, Saboureux de Fontenay, Marie Marois, Pierre Desloges, as all DEAF; albeit in different stages of emergence.

Perhaps what this means is that writing a history of a space as 'DEAF' is rather too easy to do. Certainly, it suggests that DEAF can be defined quite differently at

different times as those producing it agree upon what is expected. However, this is, in itself not a bad thing if what it allows a history of 'DEAF' space to do is not only capture what is essential; its production by those whose being-in-the-world is necessarily visual as a way to allow them to reach for their own *totalité*. But also then permit an exploration of how, within that visual space, additional elements are progressively authored into it, ultimately producing it as a space with features that – over time – become expected.

This ongoing authoring of the expected 'DEAF' elements, the pressure that they put on those who produce DEAF space to adhere to an expected norm, and the possibility that Lefebvre's Production of Space provides to unpack them back to the core features of DEAF people's visual being-in-the-world are further explored through the next two chapters. However, before going on to these, it is worth now outlining what evidence we have of the different aspects of Lefebvre's spatial production within this chapter.

Here, what emerges is a *Perçu* that is shaped by a 'deaf' body. Or, perhaps, less by a 'deaf' body, than by the way in which the embodied experience of that body orients it towards secreting and shaping a commonsensically visual apprehension of reality. Etienne de Fay's *Perçu* within the *Abbaye St Jean* not only secreted spaces that became by default visually-mediated but appear to have had a clear impact upon those also produced by hearing people around him. Azy's clearly visual production of his space is marked by the distinction that he makes between the visually mediated teaching of Pereire and the sound-based failure of the Abbé Caseaux. Desloges' DEAF *Perçu* is evident in the way that he failed to absorb the sound-mediated buzz about de l'Epée that surrounded him until it was specifically brought to his attention, but quickly acquires the ability to communicate within the interactive spaces of the wider Parisian DEAF community. All of these are examples of a visual *Perçu* that secretes space, capturing it, apprehending it and producing it as DEAF.

A DEAF *Conçu* also emerges as space is conceived of, discoursed upon, planned and represented by DEAF people. De Fay's adoption of an interpreter as a way of circumventing the need to surrender his spatial boundaries is an example of this, as is Desloges' assertion that those at the core of the Parisian DEAF community were those who had had the least contact with the hearing world. The DEAF space *Conçu*

produced by Saboureux de Fontenay is perhaps the most surprising; initially representing DEAF space as something to be shunned, it appears that as he embarked on his own path of *totalité*, his *Conçu* gradually shifted until he began to produce DEAF space with his own pupils.

Finally, there are glimpses of a DEAF *Vécu.* These appear particularly in Desloges' discussion of the difference between isolated deaf people and the wellbeing that comes from inhabiting DEAF society. However, we also find them most fundamentally in each of the case-studies in the evidence of DEAF space itself. Clearly, within the range of potential opportunities open to each to reach for a personal *totalité*, there is something common to all that has led to them all doing so by producing DEAF space with other deaf people.

And it is here, with this assertion that DEAF space itself represents something of a *Vécu* for those who are visual, but who live in a predominantly hearing world, that I can introduce the focus of the next two chapters. For, while I have made it clear that I consider the different examples here as those that suggest DEAF space in different stages of development, all of them – even that of Desloges – have been described as 'emergent' for the simple reason that they have all been overshadowed to a greater or lesser extent, by a canopy of constraints. In Etienne de Fay's case, this was the life-span of de Fay himself. In Azy's case, and those of Pereire's other deaf pupils, it was their teacher's expectations and their numerical minority in a predominantly hearing Paris. In the final case, that of Desloges' Parisian DEAF community, as demonstrated by Copineau's editorial of Desloges' work, their space was constantly constrained by being produced in the midst of an increasingly interested hearing society.

However, even as they have all been constrained, it is a feature of their production of DEAF space as a *Vécu* that reaches towards *totalité* that each appears to be poised in a constant state of potential, ready to author that space more richly as it is given increased freedom to do so. The DEAF spaces proposed in this chapter may be only 'emergents'. However, like their forestry equivalents, they clearly emerge with the potential to reach maturity. In addition, as is demonstrated by Azy's production of a forbidden DEAF space *Perçu* to mitigate his isolation within Pereire's home, and Desloges' writing a *Conçu* defence of his DEAF space, those producing each DEAF

space also appear poised to reach for it, or defend it if the *totalité* that they have enjoyed through it, is somehow threatened. Again, the DEAF spaces described here may only be first or second generation spaces. However, what they clearly represent for those producing them is not a temporary substitute for their inability to reach their *totalité* within the hearing world, but the first step on a path to a far more strongly established visual being-in-the-world.

This begs a number of questions. What might happen if the constraints baulking the ongoing development of DEAF space emergent were removed? What might occur internally or externally to allow this to happen? What form might it ultimately take? How might those producing it evolve with it? What form of DEAF might they ultimately author into it? And how far can it grow towards a suggested maturity before it encounters resistance from other spaces? It is to examine these questions, by reference to a single case-study that extends over the next two chapters, that I now turn.

CHAPTER 4 - DEAF SPACE AUTONOMOUS

Even before the success of his work had gained him the recognition of the King, transformed his public demonstrations into one of Paris' most eagerly visited tourist attractions and provided him with a ready body of disciples from all over France and the other capitals of Europe (Alard 1881: 52 and footnote), the Abbé de l'Epée was struggling with a curious problem.

Having drawn some fifty to sixty (Esquiros 1847: 401) pupils together into a single school with the aim of more closely observing their gestures and so being better able to develop his own methodical signs (de l'Epée 1776), it was not long before de l'Epée found himself heading off a minor linguistic rebellion. Apparently sparked into life by a combination of his encouraging them to produce signs of their own invention and by the way that the use of a visual language fulfilled their need for communication, de l'Epée's pupils had begun to develop their own, nascent, natural sign language that they understood between them, but that de l'Epée did not.

Initially, of course, this was what de l'Epée had wanted. Capturing any signs they produced, he transformed them into signed ideographs (Eco 1995: 173) which were taught back to them along with the written language equivalent (or, for those required to demonstrate translation between different written languages, equivalents). However, by 1772, de l'Epée found that his pupils were showing a stubborn preference for their own "equivocal" sign language:

> one or two words pronounced more or less distinctly and accompanied by utterly equivocal signs that appear to be whole sentences to them and that we are supposed to understand. If we do not understand the intention of this language, that has no rules or order, then they grow angry. Our expression, by voice, or by writing makes them impatient. Something that they do not hesitate to show. (de l'Epée 1772: 8)

De l'Epée could not understand them and so, to be sure of their having learned his signs sufficiently well, he "… dissuade[d] them from this arbitrary language" (de l'Epée 1772: 8) in the classroom. However, outside of it, the pupils were free to use any language they wished. Gradually, from 1772, they separated their interactions, producing their own interactive spaces, authored

through their own natural sign language between themselves whilst using methodical signs with de l'Epée and learning as best they could within the classroom the visually-mediated knowledges of the hearing world.

4.0   Introduction

Having explored, in Chapter 3, three different examples of DEAF space emergent, I now move on to a more in-depth, two chapter-long examination of a single DEAF space introduced briefly in the snapshot presented above. It is a DEAF space that is immediately recognisable as similar in form to those addressed in the previous chapter. However, where those emergents of DEAF space were constrained; in de Fay's case by his death, in Azy d'Etavigny's by the paucity of his DEAF community contact, and by the collocation of Desloges' Parisian Community with hearing Paris, the space presented above and upon which I focus in the next two chapters encountered no such obvious obstacles. It offers, therefore, the opportunity to begin to respond to the questions that I proposed at the end of Chapter 3. In particular, with regards to how emergents of DEAF space, and the 'DEAF' of those inhabiting them might evolve if free to reach towards an unconstrained 'maturity'.

However, before engaging with these questions, I must address a more immediate challenge. For, while I go on in this chapter to describe what happened as the DEAF space described above evolved towards maturity, and in the following chapter to describe what happened when that more mature DEAF space was again constrained, what I must first do is establish the context that first allowed it to evolve, and then acted to constrain it. To do this, as I suggested in section 2.3, I must engage with the 'history of deafness' that created the context in which the space was produced. This necessarily requires a brief excursion into the hearing-world events of the time to chart the historical accident of de l'Epée's death coincidentally with the French Revolution, and the subsequent adoption by the Revolutionary *Patrie* of his school. It then requires a more in-depth examination of the way in which the school and its pupils were progressively relegated from the centre to the periphery of the state's attention, and the impact that this had on their production of their own space. Examining this 'history of deafness' and the evolution of this government policy from the period of the Revolution to approximately 1800, is the focus of section 4.1.

Having established the context within which de l'Epée's pupils continued to produce their DEAF space, section 4.2 then begins to describe that DEAF space itself. This is conducted in two stages. The first explores how I approached the task of looking behind a record that largely represents the school as stagnating for lack of direction to discover evidence of the DEAF space being produced within it. Outlining the four reiterated steps that I proposed in section 2.3, I demonstrate how they can be used in practice to build a picture of a rich, behind closed door, DEAF-authored reality that thrived on the 'autonomy' that its freedom from state intervention provided. Having identified that DEAF space and its relationship with autonomy, I then go on to identify how it evolved towards maturity. I do this by identifying two individuals who were key witnesses to its evolution; Laurent Clerc, and Roch Amboise Bébian, and by outlining the way in which their experiences of DEAF space over a period from approximately 1797 to 1820 illustrate its evolution.

The final section of the chapter (section 4.3) presents a brief discussion of two particular features of DEAF space autonomous. Here, I extend my Lefebvrian analysis of DEAF space begun in Chapter 3, to describe how autonomy impacted upon DEAF people's production of their space within the *Institution*, Here too, I identify a further feature of DEAF space that only becomes visible as it is allowed to evolve autonomously to begin to draw upon its own, internally authored knowledges, and link this into my own ongoing examination of DEAF space that I then continue in chapter 5.

4.0.1 Notes on sources

In writing this chapter, I was able to draw on all three levels of archive: The consultative or casual archives of the *Institution Nationale des Jeunes Sourds* (INJS) in Paris provided most of the material: de l'Epée's own teaching manuals, published accounts of demonstrations and correspondence, published and unpublished reports by and about the *Institution*, records of legislation, correspondence and minutes of meetings, proposals and correspondence by Sicard and, in the latter half of the chapter, the published and unpublished writings of those contemporary to events: Sicard, Massieu, Clerc, Paulmier, Bébian and Berthier. Gaps were filled by reference to the more formal archives of the

Bibliotèque Nationale. Points of entry into DEAF space were suggested by the more intimate archives of DEAF community memory.

In addition, where analysis had previously been carried out by academics from both English and French written-language communities, it appeared foolish to needlessly reconstitute it. Available work was, therefore, used to provide a foundational understanding upon which the examination of DEAF space could proceed and to provide original, cited material from sources which were unavailable within the time constraints of the project. Of particular use were Karacostas' (1981) and Buton's (1999) PhD theses on the intersection between the French state and the physically deaf body and Bernard's (1999) extensive account of the history of linguistic policy within the Paris *Institution*. As in Chapter 3, original historical material reproduced within the CHS was also used where referencing allowed its source to be traced.

As this wealth of available material suggests, I found that rather than have to work as I had in Chapter 3, to construct a narrative from what evidence I could find, here the primary challenge of this chapter was to locate DEAF space between the closely-written lines of the vast body of official evidence and related interpretation. This was done by the reiterative approach that I suggested in Chapter 2, and that I demonstrate most clearly in section 4.2. Again, I tried to rely only on interpretation from those closest to the French DEAF community, and to triangulate evidence against records as close to the events as possible.

However, this more closely fought approach to individual records, and individual parts of records meant that whereas, in Chapter 3, my construction of the narrative from a more global reading of evidence suggested that I could simply outline the more general sources used at the beginning of sections, and then draw upon them as necessary, in this chapter I have had to be far more selective. To allow the reader to follow my trail, therefore, particularly where I have used sources in a way that challenge the more traditional English-language Deaf historical canon, I have followed a more direct system of referencing sources within the text. Again, footnotes, have been avoided wherever possible, and only used where I considered it necessary to clarify a point of interpretation that there was not more space to fully explore within the main text.

4.1   A context for DEAF space autonomous

This first section provides a brief overview of the events that lead from the death of de l'Epée in December 1789 and the adoption of his pupils by the French government into a school authored as a National *Institution* in early 1790, to the virtual abandon of those same pupils to their own devices some four years later in 1794. This period has already formed the focus of others' work, in particular with regards to the way in which the creation and legislation of the *Institution Nationale* informs our understanding of the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary state's construction of itself (see in particular Karacostas 1981). It is not my aim here to simply reproduce this work. Rather, it is to examine the way in which the events and legislation of the period created the context in which de l'Epée's pupils ultimately produced their DEAF space. To better achieve this, it is important to situate this section by reference to three facets of an administrative revolution (Aston 2004) that led to DEAF space within the *Institution* becoming increasingly autonomous. They are briefly outlined here and will be highlighted as we examine the period in more detail.

The first of these is a well established tension between the Revolution's declaration of human rights as those that appear – to modern-day eyes at least – to be 'universal' (Hufton 1992) and the reality of the delivery of those rights to citizens based on complex continua of citizenship and participation that ranged from 'passive' to 'active' (DiCaprio 2007), and from 'private' to 'public' according to the potential of the individual or organisation to contribute to the nation. Thus whilst 'droits passifs' [passive rights] were granted to all; women (DiCaprio 2007), the poor (Hufton 1992), clergy (McManners 1969), the nobility (Higonnet 1981) and those in the penal system (Foucault 1997) by dint of their having been born human, it was only those adjudged to have the greatest potential– to "contribut[e] to the public establishment..." (Sieyès, in Zapperi 1985: 75, 143-4) and to have the establishment publically acknowledge them – who were recognised as 'active' citizens', entitled to 'droits actifs' [active rights] and the promise of a two-way relationship of investment and accountability with the state.

The second facet of the Revolution's administrative revolution is the way in which these continua of 'active' and 'passive', 'public' and 'private' came to be signified spatially and visually. As Rapport says, "The *Patrie* was not just one's native land, but *a place* where the new, egalitarian order would flourish, where the people enjoyed civil equality and liberty" (Rapport 2000: 3. Italics mine). To contribute to the nation, therefore, one had to first *be in* it, and then be *seen* to be in it. This worked both ways. Opportunities to participate in the nation, even for those only attributed passive rights, were provided; Sewell (1988), for example reports how women were encouraged to participate in rallies, and in their own revolutionary societies. However, the opposite was also true; self-exclusion from the *Nation* by emigration was not only punishable as a crime in its own right but was seen as a performative abdication of citizenship (Hufton 1992). For those censured by the state but unwilling to abandon it completely, there was even a half-way house; many nobles who accepted the stripping of their nobility were required to move to specific districts like Villejuif in Paris where their behaviour and interactions could be monitored to ensure their adherence to the law (Higonnet 1981).

Thirdly, this administrative revolution saw these criteria of 'active' and 'passive', 'public' and 'private', 'located' and 'visual' gradually combined into a "general, continuous submission to supervision through new forms of political power…" (Foucault 1973: 7) that Foucault calls 'panopticism' after Jeremy Bentham's 1791 *Panopticon*. Described by James Miller as "new and more discreet approaches to burning the rules of society into the soul…" (Miller 1993: 219), it was a relationship that was not merely carceral but was far more 'insidious'; "a technology… exercised over individuals in order to tame them, shape them, and guide their conduct" (Foucault 1978b: 18) that produced 'docile bodies' (Foucault 1997) in which control was exercised by means of "a system of surveillance… a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by internalising to the point that he is his own supervisor" (Foucault 1977: 155).

It is these three facets of the administrative revolution that provide the background against which the production of de l'Epée's pupil's DEAF space proceeded. It is the events of his school's adoption, co-option and re-authoring by the state through this administrative revolution that I now move on to examine.

4.1.1   Adopting and co-opting de l'Epée's school

For all de l'Epée's public demonstrations, his desire for recognition appears to have had little do with personal fame and far more to do with securing the ongoing care of his pupils (Bébian 1819: 37-48). In this he was well satisfied; not only did the king award him a sizeable yearly wage (ACER, March 25th 1785: page 4, article III) of 3400 *livres* from 1785, but a royal commission approved both the creation, with public funds "… in the city of Paris, an establishment for the upbringing and education of those *sourd et muet* from birth of both sexes." (ACER, September 21st 1778, page 3 lines 4-8) upon the event of his death and laid the foundations for a continuation of his vision by affirming his choice of successor – the abbé Masse (ACER, March 20th 1784).

Therefore, in 1789–as de l'Epée lay dying–he must have been somewhat reassured that his work was in good hands. However, less than a week after his death it became clear that the newly Revolutionary *Patrie* regarded the school's status as a privately owned institution rather a waste.[1] Desiring to capitalise not only on the potential of de l'Epée's work to exemplify the Revolutionary ideal of 'regeneration' (Furet & Ozouf 1992) but also keen to re-author it as reflective of the inventive genius of France herself by demonstrating de l'Epée's method as able to "restor[e] as useful to society these unfortunate individuals whom nature seemed to have isolated" (ACPR, 1st series, Tome III. p 500), the Paris Commune requested that the Assemblée Nationale "… render national an establishment whose usefulness is so universally recognised" (ACPR, 1st series, Tome III. p 364) and give it a status redolent of its potential for 'active' contribution to the Nation.

With this, the DEAF children in de l'Epée's care were transformed from those 'adopted' by the *Patrie*, to those 'co-opted' to exemplify the ideal of the Revolution and contribute to its glory. To provide them with the opportunity to do this, teaching – which had ceased with de l'Epée's decline in health – was

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[1] The French term '*Patrie*' is taken from the caption of a painting by 19th century DEAF painter Frédéric Peyson of the *Last moments of the Abbé de l'Epée* which reads "Die in peace, the *Patrie* [fatherland] will adopt your children".

restarted (Brousse Desfaucherets and Champion de Villeneuve to Champion de Cicé, February 27th 1790) and the pupils, who had languished in boredom "… dispersed across several boarding houses" (ACPR, 1st Series, Tome IV: 23 and 36-37) once again took up the rhythm of thrice weekly lessons. However, the destination of their walk was no longer de l'Epée's home on the Rue des Moulins, but the newly nationalised Céléstins. Even this displacement became unnecessary from April of 1790 as the government removed any final semblance of private ownership from the school by withdrawing the pupils from their boarding houses and lodging them within an unoccupied section of the Céléstins itself (Karacostas 1981: 48).

Behind the scenes, the nationalisation of the school had also shed doubt on the identity of its future director. Despite the King having recognised Masse's claim to de l'Epée's succession, it was more appropriate for a school reflective of France's Revolutionary glory to be awarded to the best candidate, or at least to one best able to administer the government's wish that its pupils "recover their faculties, and with them the use of their rights, and to become men, and citizens" (Prieur de la Marne, reported by Esquiros 1841: 404). The advantages of the post were particularly coveted by a young and ambitious Abbé by the name of Roch Ambroise Sicard who had, until that moment, been running a church-sponsored school for deaf children in Bordeaux (Sicard 1789: Frontispiece). When Sicard contested Masse's candidature as provisional (Sicard 1790: iv) and proposed a public competition to establish "the superiority of the knowledge and the talents of he who will have the honour of being definitively named" (Sicard 1790: op cit), Masse simply withdrew from the contest.

4.1.2 From panoptical promise to administrative distance

For the government, appointing Sicard to the directorship of the school signified more than simply finding a replacement for de l'Epée. Sicard did not merely propose to follow in de l'Epée's footsteps by simply looking after the pupils but rather promised to produce the Revolution's desired outcome by administering the school in tune with Revolutionary and panoptic tenants so strongly in vogue. He proposed that:

> The school must be, at the same time, a hospice, a training centre and a school, it must be situated in a vast estate where, without travel or distance, both sexes may be placed together… A small, autonomous society, where the child will find at hand all that is necessary for their upbringing as an honest citizen: school, boarding house, infirmary, and church and workshops for the acquisition of a trade. (Plan Général d'une Ecole de Sourds-Muets, presented to the charity commission, October 8th 1790: no page in original)[2]

> the pupils must not be let out of sight for a single moment and the whole day must become an exercise… their relaxation, their studies, their walks and their work must all be subjects of instruction. (Sicard 1790: 24-25)

By writing in a language that the government immediately understood and painting such a perfect picture of what the school could become, Sicard captured the imagination of the most staunchly Revolutionary elements of the government. He also carried a trump card; a young deaf man by the name of Jean Massieu[3] who had been taught in his school in Bordeaux (although by Sicard's deputy Saint-Sernin and not by Sicard himself) and who was brought to Paris in support of Sicard's candidacy. Massieu's demonstration of his ability to write French supported Sicard's claim that he could make the school and its pupils 'useful citizens' (see Aicardi 2009):

> Sourds-Muets in Bordeaux write what they see done, respond to questions posed concerning both known and unknown objects, teach themselves from books… for they know not only the words of the language, but also the rules of its construction. (Sicard 1790: 22)

Sicard's promise, however, was fragile. Although there is no explicit evidence that he was deliberately misleading in his writing, it is fair to say that some of his proposals owed more to an extraordinary self-belief that led him to "place his light *upon* a bushel" (Esquiros 1847: 405 emphasis mine) than they did to conviction or experience. Thus, when he was required to deliver on his proposals, his enthusiasm for both the vocational sacrifice that his project required and for his previously trumpeted Revolutionary politics evaporated as quickly as they had appeared. In the autumn of 1791, just as the government committed national funding to create the *Institution Nationale des Sourds-Muets de Paris* based on a virtually unchanged version of Sicard's proposals, rumours started to circulate that Sicard was "an enemy

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[2] The author of the *Plan Général* (1790) is unknown. However, portions of it are taken verbatim from Sicard (1790). Karacostas (1981) suggests that it was either penned by Sicard together with Prieur de la Marne, or that de la Marne wrote it with Sicard's 1790 proposals to hand.

[3] Not to be confused with the hearing Jean B. Massieu, a member of the Convention Nationale at the same period.

of the Revolution" (Thibaudeau tome I: 78, cited in Karacostas 1981: 94 with original source of Guillaume undated: 528) and evidence was presented that he had been seen associating with anti-revolutionaries and refractory priests.

Sicard's duplicity left the government extremely embarrassed. Having publically backed him as the catalyst who would apply de l'Epée's method to the profit of the *Patrie*, it could not now easily disown him without appearing foolish. However, neither did it wish to lose the potential contribution that Sicard's expertise represented (Buton 1999), nor could it risk undesirable elements gaining influence within what was now a national figurehead establishment. Convinced by those investigating the allegations that Sicard was more politically 'inept' than explicitly dangerous (Thibaudeau, ibid), they crafted a solution that allowed them to harness his work whilst mitigating his more maverick behaviour.

Their solution, however, necessitated creating a distance between themselves and Sicard that would remove them from personal accountability for his actions. Apparently out of the blue, in February of 1792, Sicard was delivered a set of regulations (Reglements 1792) that he himself had drafted. Reading them, however, he discovered that not only had they been modified from the original, but they had been formally adopted for the school by the "Administrators of the Directoire, for the department of Paris, this February 16th 1792, year 4 of our freedom" (Reglemens 1792: 16) without his knowledge. Removed as a head of the semi-seigniorial 'vast estate' (op cit) that he had imagined the Céléstins might become, he discovered that he had become a simple pedagogical supervisor saddled with accountability to an over-arching administration who would now be responsible for all aspects of wider policy, premises, resources and staffing (Reglemens 1792).

Sicard was bitterly disappointed and in a series of hand-written annotations to his own personal copy of the Regulations rails against the imposition of this unforeseen 'administration' (Sicard 1792). Worse, in an apparent fit of pique, Sicard immediately turned on the government again. On August 26th 1792, he was arrested for sheltering refractory priests and imprisoned. Freed shortly after, following an appeal by Massieu on behalf of the pupils of the *Institution* (Archives Parlementaires, August 31st 1792: 150), it was only a matter of time before his actions brought him more trouble, this

time for publishing defences of refractory priests under the inadequate disguise of his pseudonym "Dracis" (Berthier 1873).

4.1.3 From centre to periphery

The government's distancing of Sicard preserved them from embarrassment (and quite possibly the school, from closure). Between 1793 and 1800, Sicard spent much of his time away from the *Institution* either in prison (1793), lecturing in the teachers' preparatory school in Paris (1795) or hiding to avoid a formal sentence of deportation (September 5th 1798). The only contact that he had with the *Institution* during that time was through his devoted pupil Massieu, who felt it was his responsibility to look after him. "My father has nothing…" he is given to say by a contemporary playwright, "... it is my responsibility to feed him, to clothe him, and to save him from the cruel fate that pursues him." (in Bouilly An VIII: 8). Busy with other commitments, during the periods that he was free and able to take up the reigns of the *Institution*, Sicard found himself so overwhelmingly swamped by administration and by other commitments, fostered whilst in hiding, that he was unable to devote any time to the public demonstrations he so enjoyed, let alone teaching.

Sicard's failure to deliver useful results, however, forced the government to reconsider the place of the *Institution* even further. In the face of war and soaring inflation, commitments to other – more fruitful – plans of the Revolutionary 'imaginary' meant that investment in the now-directionless *Institution* came to a shuddering halt. Batted back and forth between the Ministry for Public Instruction and the Ministry for Public Alms, neither of whom wanted it as a burden upon their coffers (Archives Parlementaires, Tome 49: 549 referenced in Buton 1999 : 369) it finally found a home in 1793 in a provisional catch-all category of 'hospices' (Maignet 1793) that also included the Paris school for Blind Children, the Quinze-Vingt, and the Bicêtre Asylum; institutions whose aims were a similarly confused mixture of education, charity and medical care. However, this change in their categorisation was not merely administrative for, by it, de l'Epée's pupils underwent a significant distancing from the *Patrie.* Now no longer useful citizens, they found themselves re-authored as 'passive' citizens, whose responsibility was now not to contribute to the state but to receive from it "all that is necessary for their moral and physical upbringing" (Maignet 1793: 30: Article XLI).

Thereafter, the constructive 'abandon' of de l'Epée's pupils continued apace. First, the government confirmed their 'passification' of the school by abandoning their commitment to its methodological promise and installing a stand-in director by the name of Alhoy whose task it was to simply consolidate its financial self-sufficiency (Lane 1984: 419). Then, in a measure significant for the way in which it dissolved the government's commitment to panoptic surveillance, they promoted Sicard's pupil Massieu and Roussel, another deaf student, to full teacher status (Jouenne 1794, articles VIII, IX) giving them control of the curriculum (Jouenne 1794, article X). Finally, signifying their removal of the school from the centre of the Revolutionary project and to give more space in the Céléstins to the collocated school for blind children and its celebrated and outspokenly pro-Revolutionary director Haüy, the decision was taken to move the *Institution* out of the centre of the city and into "premises, previously occupied by the St Magloire Seminary, in the *Faubourg St Jacques*" (Jouenne 1794: Article XIII), a location half a mile south of the Seine, where the Santiago de Campostela pilgrim route, the Rue St Jacques, crested a hill before leaving Paris.

4.1.4   One man's abandonment…

By 1794, the *Institution's* removal from centre to periphery was more or less complete. However, it is as the government left the school uninhabitable and dirty, the pupils unclothed and hungry and the teachers under-resourced (Karacostas 1981:109) and moved on to other, more pressing concerns (Esquiros 1847: 410) that the story of DEAF space autonomous really begins. While a 'history of deafness' describes the story of de l'Epée's pupils abandonment by the state, transformation from 'active' to 'passive', geographical distancing from the centre of Paris, explicit turning-away of the state from direct accountability and relegation to a policy of containment rather than disciplinary-panopticism, it ignores the fact that what the government's actions – triggered by both their own Revolutionary politics and by Sicard's flight –achieved was, in fact, little less than the creation of an incubator for DEAF space.

In fact, it is a strange irony that what the abandonment of the *Institution* produced was, in fact, the same 'autonomous society' that Sicard himself had proposed in 1790. However, instead of one that had himself at its head, it was one that was 'disciplined'

by DEAF people themselves. What emerged then was not the vast panoptical estate; a heterotopic space away from the world through which they would conquer their "isolation from the world of men" (Sicard 1789: 36) and be drawn "from this narrow realm [of physical need] and lead into that greater realm of metaphysics and general ideas" (Sicard 1789: 19-20) that Sicard originally imagined, but a strong DEAF space, internally authored, produced within the boundaries of the Institution's new physical limits, protected from hearing interference by the walls and gates of the ex-convent and by the exquisite abandonment of the government of the school into the hands of a largely disinterested administration, and authored by DEAF people largely left to their own devices.

4.2 DEAF space autonomous

In the previous section, I examined the way in which the autonomy given to the *Institution* created a context within which DEAF space could thrive. In this section, therefore, I now turn to examine what that DEAF space looked like. Here, however, I am immediately faced with a significant challenge for, whilst the evidence I present above suggests that everything was in place to allow a burgeoning production of DEAF space, most commentators of this period conclude that from 1792, and even more particularly from April 1st 1794 (Anon 1896: 18) when it was moved into its new premises, the school slumbered into a developmental hiatus that extended until 1800 and was only broken upon Sicard's return. Bouilly, a popular playwright whose description of the Abbé de l'Epée's work on behalf of the poor was sufficient to protect Sicard by inference from the worst actions of the Terror, published a novella entitled "The Return of the Abbé Sicard" shortly after Sicard's return (Bouilly An VIII). In it, he describes the pupils during Sicard's absence as:

> a numerous flock deprived of their pastor, wandering in the desert, a family exposed to the dangers of youth and inexperience trembling before the loss of their father. (Bouilly, AN VIII: 7)

Modern commentators, too, particularly those equating the vibrancy of the school with its satisfaction of the public demand for demonstrations and comparing the welcome that it extended to public figures before and after (but not during) Sicard's absence (Lane 1984, Buton 1999, Bernard 1999) concur. Even Karacostas (1981) whose study of the period 1790 to 1800 covers it in great detail is forced to conclude that whilst change occurred at a government level, little was actually implemented

within the school itself and that "it was only upon the return of Sicard that… any rapid transformation of the *Institution's* staffing or administration occurred" (Karacostas 1981: 142-143).

This, however, cannot be the full story. Indeed, we only need to look to Sicard's own account of what he discovered upon returning from his absence to discover that the pupils that he observed before his departure to be disinherited and quasi-animalistic; 'deprived' and 'isolated' (Actes de la Commune, 1st series, Tome III), 'miserable' and 'idle' (Plan 1790), 'savage' (Sicard 1789) and 'stupid' (Sicard 1790) in their ignorance, communicating only in 'disconnected gestures' and unable to either hold on to learning or fend for themselves in the world (Sicard 1790); now prompt a surprised question:

> Could there not be, in some corner of the world, a whole people of Sourds-Muets? Oh my! Should we think that they would be backward; devoid of intelligence or communication? They would have, no doubt, a sign language that is perhaps richer than our own languages... might they not then be civilised? Might they not have laws, a government, a police? (Sicard 1803: xxiv – xxv)

Clearly, during the period of his absence something had sparked a change within the population of the *Institution*; a change that continued to be visible even after his return.

Before examining this 'DEAF space autonomous', therefore, my first task is to circumvent its apparent writing-out by the authors of the record. This is made easier by adopting the four strategies that I described in section 2.3. Firstly, by re-reading the record through a lens that expected to find evidence of the DEAF space that I 'know' should be there. Secondly, by re-imagining the events that the existing record describes from a DEAF space point of view. Thirdly, by re-assessing the conclusions of those who have written the existing record in the new light of the expected presence of DEAF space. Finally, by seeking out new evidence and reincorporating it into the whole.

In the following example, I apply these four stages to discover the nature of DEAF space as it was produced within the *Institution* as it evolved through the Revolution, and to outline who produced it and what it might have looked like. I have adopted the somewhat artificial approach of separating out each of these discoveries to illustrate

the need to re-write the record to recognise DEAF space, rather than submerge the methodological challenges within a more smoothly written, more flowing account.

4.2.1 Re-reading and imagining the *Institution*'s DEAF space

My first example focuses on the traditional record where we are simply told that following the death of de l'Epée the pupils were "dispersed across several boarding houses, growing bored of their inactivity and demanded a teacher" (Actes de la Commune de Paris pendant la Révolution. 1st Series, Tome IV: 23, 36-37). It assures us that their dispersal was solved by their removal to the Céléstins, their inactivity was addressed by the recommencement of lessons, and their lack of a teacher was resolved by the appointment of Sicard. It then goes on to describe how, in Sicard's absence, the entire school was placed in the guardianship hands of Alhoy, Massieu and Roussel, and relocated to the Rue St Jacques where it slumbered, awaiting Sicard's return.

Re-reading this record through a DEAF-space informed lens, however, suggests something quite different. I have already described how de l'Epée's pupils were already authoring their own natural sign language as early as 1772. Rather than simply being bored for lack of a teacher, therefore, it is much more likely that what was perceived as the desire to be back in lessons was, in reality, a thinly veiled objection to the way that their 'dispersal' prevented them from spending time together so that they could sign. Certainly, there is likely to have been more celebration at their collocation within the Céléstins than at the recommencement of lessons themselves.

Furthermore, critically re-imagining what might have happened as they were not only brought back into classrooms, but relocated within the Céléstins, allows me to suggest that whilst the Revolutionary Government and Sicard thought they were authoring what Christine Aicardi has called a sensationist "useful citizens pilot factory" (2009: 194) the pupils of the *Institution* were more likely revelling in their new-found freedom to communicate. Extrapolating this to 1794 and the Sicard-less move to the Rue St Jacques where they were given unconditional freedom as long as they remained within the boundaries of the premises given them (Reglemens 1792), it is not hard to imagine how their freedom to communicate combined with their

freedom from interference. Rather than simply stagnating, as it must have appeared from the outside, within the *Institution* itself, the reality is much more likely to have been a bubbling community of DEAF pupils and teachers with few constraints on their production of a DEAF space.

Although it is impossible to be entirely sure of this interpretation, peripheral accounts such as that offered by Paulmier (1820), Clerc (1818) and Bébian (1839) – all described in more detail below – certainly support it. Far from 'trembling at the loss of their father' (Bouilly op cit) it appears that Sicard's absence and subsequent actions by the government allowed the DEAF community within the *Institution* to become busy architects of their own 'autonomous society'. Indeed, this chimes with what I have already presented of DEAF space in Chapter 3 and is consistent with what DEAF people in France suggested to me when I asked what their responses might be had they been in this very situation.

4.2.2 Re-assessing the authors of the *Institution*'s DEAF space

Taking DEAF space into account, while the above example appears more believable than the version presented by the official record, it still appears at odds with one piece of evidence. As other DEAF people in the *Institution* at the time celebrated their autonomy, Sicard's DEAF pupil Massieu appears, rather, to have grieved over his teacher's absence. This is an important discrepancy to consider, particularly since many who have described this period, and ultimately the emergence from it of a Deaf voice within the *Institution* have interpreted Massieu's presence within the school as the key locus around which its DEAF community rallied. Harlan Lane, for example, in his 1984 narrative of this period praises Massieu for being a "fluent signer with animated expression and great vivacity" (Lane 1984: 23) and attributes the transformation of Sicard's attitude towards signing deaf people that I observed as indicative of the evolution of DEAF space in the period 1794 to 1800 to his contact with Massieu himself (op cit).

It is easy to see why Massieu might be seen in this light. Not only was he a natural spokesman for the Institution's other pupils (see above), his central role in public demonstrations (de Ladébat 1815), and his work in interpreting for illiterate deaf people in the Parisian Courts (Jouenne 1794) made him something of a Parisian

celebrity. He also had a childhood that rooted him deeply in DEAF space. Born deaf in 1772 in the rural Gironde, the fifth of six deaf children (Bouilly, an VIII), he tells us himself that he communicated with his brothers and sisters, his hearing father, his mother and his neighbours through sign language (Massieu in Sicard 1808: 636). Unable to read or write into his teens, he was so at home in the DEAF space of his childhood that his discovery that he could not attend the local school because he could not hear is perhaps the first example that we have in the historical record of someone sharing Padden & Humphries discovery of the difference between 'DEAF' and 'deaf' (Padden and Humphries 1988: 15).

However, far from it being his inhabitancy of DEAF space that established his 'normal' (as we have seen that it did to some extent for Azy d'Etavigny, above), it was the discovery that he was different that set the tone for the remainder of Massieu's life. Rather than ascribing to the validity of his DEAF space, Massieu's encounter with the notion that he was 'deaf', and that 'deaf' was different, sent him into a catastrophe of alienation in which his attempts to appear like a hearing person became a constant striving to gain the acceptance of 'hearing-speaking' (Massieu in Sicard 1808: 637-638) society:

> I took up books, but I new neither letters, nor words, nor phrases… full of shame I put my fingers in my ears and asked my father to heal them… could not read them… I tried, all alone, to form the shapes of writing with a pen... I knelt, put my hands together and moved my lips trying to imitate those who speak when they pray to God. (Massieu in Sicard 1808: 635)

Consequently, far from being a stalwart promoter of DEAF space, evidence from Massieu himself, and from those who knew him best (see Berthier 1873) suggest that he lived in an uncomfortable tension between his inevitable visuality and his alienation from the hearing world. Able only to communicate visually, outside of the classroom he was apparently happy to use natural DEAF-authored 'equivocal' sign language, discussing everything with the other DEAF people at the *Institution*; from literary interests to the fashions of the time (Berthier 1873: 158, 161). However, in the classroom, his preference was to use the more prestigious methodical signing, developed by de l'Epée and taught to him by Sicard. Happy to propose himself as an example of Sicard's success in rescuing deaf people, he preferred to imitate hearing ways and believed that it was becoming for the other deaf pupils in the school to want to do the same.

Re-assessing evidence that is already available, therefore, suggests that whilst Massieu unquestionably produced a DEAF space to allow himself to 'be-visual-in-the-world', he was far from the principle producer of DEAF space within the *Institution*. Indeed, whilst he was clearly considered DEAF by the others there, Massieu appears to have largely lived on the periphery of its more vibrant DEAF population and rather than embracing the autonomy that Sicard's absence brought as they did, he appears to have feared it. Ultimately, it was not he, but the pupils of the *Institution* producing it almost *despite* him, rather than because of him, who were the true source of the evolution of DEAF space.

4.2.3 Discovering new evidence of the *Institution*'s DEAF space

Clearly, the question that arises from my analysis above is if it was the pupils of the *Institution* who produced DEAF space, then what did it look like? To answer this, I present new evidence, in this case from Louis Paulmier, a hearing teacher who was employed at the *Institution* from 1804, and who wrote a series of books that have not yet found their way into the more readily acknowledged record. Paulmier himself is a fascinating character who would be deserving of more detailed attention. However, here, I am only interested in the account that he makes of an unofficial practice, authored by the pupils themselves, that he observed shortly after arriving at the *Institution* in 1804:

> The circumstances of the entrance of a *sourd-muet* to the *institution* are interesting enough that we should make them known. It is a sort of coming into the world.
>
> The traveller arrives, guided by a relative. Immediately, the other *sourd-muets* recognising the child as a compatriot, gather around him, examine him attentively and, all of a sudden, remarking something exceptional in his person, or his face, or in his stance, or even in his clothing, they show it by a sign. From that moment on, that sign becomes his name, and it is used by them all…
>
> Once the relation has gone… the *sourds-muets* gradually intervene and show their new comrade that he now is attached to them… the child gradually adopts the [signing] habits of his comrades, gradually his face takes on expression, and after about a month he is so changed that his mother would not even recognise him. (Paulmier 1820: 43, 45. Italics mine)

Examining Paulmier's account is extremely satisfying. Not only does it confirm my earlier assertion that the DEAF space produced by the *Institution's* pupils had begun to flow out and fill more public areas of the school grounds, but it also suggests that rather than simply being a space of visual communication, by the time of the events

that he describes, it had begun to be authored with a more complex 'culture' that included name signs, traditions and the recognition of other DEAF people as 'compatriots'. It is almost certainly this kind of organised behaviour that prompted Sicard's observation of the way in which inhabitancy of the *Institution's* DEAF space had transformed the pupils themselves.

However, Paulmier's account also suggests evidence that is perhaps not immediately obvious. Paulmier arrived at the *Institution* in 1804, and wrote the above account in 1820. Clearly, then, what he describes did not simply occur whilst Sicard was absent, but continued even following his return. This is significant, because it suggests – particularly in combination with the other evidence that I have presented – that whilst my investigation to find the DEAF space of the *Institution* during the Revolutionary period has been fruitful, it has also raised more questions. In particular, whether far from being limited to the period of the Revolution, the DEAF space described by Paulmier in 1820 is, in fact, the very same DEAF space that I illustrated at the beginning of this chapter, produced as a DEAF space emergent by de l'Epée's pupils in 1772.

What this suggests is that whilst I have so far suggested that it was the physical and administrative separation of the *Institution* from the heart of the nation provided by Sicard's absence and by the government's subsequent actions, that allowed its DEAF space to thrive, now it appears that the reality is perhaps more complicated. Certainly, this physical and administrative distance created the conditions to allow the DEAF space of the *Institution* to evolve towards maturity. However, it was not distance itself that represented autonomy, but rather the way that distance *created* autonomy that allowed the *Institution's* DEAF population the freedom to produce their reality on a visual plane.

Seen this way, the concept of autonomy, as I have used it, is reconfigured. DEAF space autonomous is not just DEAF space produced at a physical distance from the hearing world but DEAF space produced with freedom on a visual plane. Certainly, this could be as DEAF people are physically distanced from the hearing world; as in the case of the *Institution*'s move to the closed environment of the St Magloire convent on the Rue St Jacques, but it could also be as they are in close physical

contact with the hearing world, separated and entirely free in their own interactive, visual medium.

This is why Sicard's return to the *Institution* had little impact upon its DEAF space. His publications and activities immediately prior to, and following his return suggest that while he was certainly busy, the restriction by the government of his freedom to shape the *Institution* itself had led him to pursue interests that were less focused on deaf education itself, and more on its application to wider theoretical studies of linguistics and philosophy. The record may show that Sicard returned as the *Institution's* director after 1800, and suggest that this caused the school to move from a period of stagnation to a period of change. However, these changes appear to have occurred on a hearing-authored plane, and had little impact upon the space being produced by its DEAF population.

It is here, with this recalibration of what constitutes DEAF space autonomous that I find myself closing this section by necessarily returning to the reiterative nature of employing the four strategies that I propose in section 2.3. For what this discovery of new DEAF space evidence now suggests is that my enquiry into DEAF space autonomous is not over simply at the point that Sicard returned to the *Institution*. Rather, it needs to continue to describe what happened within the DEAF space produced within the *Institution* as it continued to mature. To do this, I now present two case-studies. The first is a DEAF man who arrived at the school before and during this period and so who experienced his 'coming into the world' (Paulmier 1820: 43) through the autonomously produced DEAF space that I have described. Aged eleven, he was brought through the gates of the school by his uncle (Clerc 1852: cited in CHS 6:12). Gathering around him, the other pupils noted a violent burn scar on his right cheek. The designation of this scar, shown by sliding the index and middle fingers of the right hand down the right cheek, became the boy's sign name. He is known to the historical record by his hearing-given name; Louis-Laurent-Marie Clerc.

4.2.4   Case study one – Inhabiting DEAF space autonomous

Laurent Clerc was born in 1786. Audiologically deaf from before the age of one by the same accident that gave him his sign name, Clerc's early years were spent playing with local children and looking after his family's livestock. At home, his deafness

and his family's inability to sign precluded any significant communication. Indeed, if a later description by him of the un-socialised deaf child's experience are anything to go by, his early life was one of isolation and suspicion:

> that of the most unformed of men, attributing all the good that he sees others do to their own self-interest… inclined towards suspicion, often exaggerating the bad that he sees and always fearing to be the victim of those who are stronger than himself. (Clerc 1818: 31)

Indeed, his parents appear to have been among those 'stronger than him':

> At the age of seven, my mother heard that there was a doctor in Lyon who could heal deafness and she took me to him…. We went regularly, each day, and the doctor injected all kinds of things into my ears but I really gained nothing from these sessions. After two weeks I returned home with my mother just as deaf as before. (Clerc 1852: no page)

This pressure to conform to a hearing model did not go away even after he arrived at the *Institution* in 1797 when Sicard was still in hiding. Initially identified as extremely bright, he was chosen to take part in early experimentation with speech teaching:

> Outside of class time… one of the teachers taught me to speak along with a few other pupils… [he] made me repeat words again and again and I still couldn't do it any better. One day, losing patience with me, he struck me so hard that I bit my tongue. I felt so aggrieved that I never tried to speak again. (Clerc 1852b: no page)

This last event appears to have marked a point in Clerc's life at which he determined that attempting to satisfy the expectations of the hearing world was not only beyond his reach, it was uncomfortable and apparently fruitless. Instead, he made his home in the DEAF space of the school where he found that far from imitating Massieu's self-deprecation, the pupils were now authoring themselves and their visual inevitability with distinctly ontological overtones:

> Why are we *Sourds-Muets*? I don't know, in the same way that you don't know… why there are amongst men those who are white, black, red, and yellow… I think that our deafness is the act of providence; by that I mean it is by the will of God. (Clerc 1818: 27)

As Clerc grew up within this DEAF space, he gradually came to adopt its 'expected' behaviours. One example of this dates from around 1805 when he was still a pupil in Massieu's class. Sought out, one day, by a young Hungarian DEAF man who had attended the Vienna school for the deaf and who had travelled to Paris to find work, he was asked for help. The Hungarian needed to organise a meeting with the Austrian

ambassador in Paris. However, he could neither read nor write, nor could he speak. Berthier, a reliable first-hand witness, takes up the account:

> [Clerc] came to find Sicard… 'But', objected the director looking surprised, 'my dear student, how will you communicate?'… 'all I have to do' replied Clerc, 'is to write down in French for the ambassador what his countryman tells me in signs, surely an envoy to the French court with know the French language (Berthier 1873: 186)

For Sicard, the question was clearly about how Clerc would communicate with the Hungarian. However, for Clerc, this is assumed to be quite straightforward (as is, fascinatingly, his recognition that even if otherwise his education appears to have been a complete failure, the Hungarian has shared a similar experience of a DEAF space that had equipped him with DEAF-authored knowledges that led him to recognise Clerc as one 'like him' even in a foreign country): "We are both DEAF" he appears to suggest, "we are both visual, we both use natural sign language. Certainly, we are from different places in your hearing world, but DEAF space is home to both of us and we understand its rules".

If this first event occurred drew on a strong DEAF space knowledge in 1805, some five years after Sicard's return, a further example extends this by another ten years and demonstrates the way in which Clerc, secure in himself and affable towards others had – in, Berthier's words – "left Massieu far behind him" (Berthier 1873: 182). In 1815, Clerc accompanied Massieu and Sicard to England. Upon the occasion of a visit to a school for deaf children in London, the narrator recounts the following events:

> We shall never forget the day, when we went with Clerc, your pupil, to see the Asylum directed by Dr. Watson. It was at the moment when one-hundred and fifty pupils, were sat down to eat in the dining room. As soon as Clerc beheld them, his face lit up; he was as agitated as a traveller would be who, in regions far from home, suddenly chanced upon a colony of his own countrymen.
>
> For their part, the hundred and fifty [English] *sourds-muets* immediately recognised Clerc as one of their own… Clerc approached them, he made some signs, and they responded with other signs. This unexpected communication was a cause for wondrous celebration for them. (de Ladébat 1815: 170, 172)

Again, there is the same recognition of those who are DEAF as 'like him'. Again, the easy communication in sign language. Again, de Ladébat's surprisingly perceptive explanation that Clerc, with the English DEAF children appeared to be amongst his own 'countrymen'.

However, it was in 1818, after moving to the United States to take up a position in a new American school for deaf children opened by Edward Gallaudet that Clerc gave formal voice to knowledge that was intimately tied in to the autonomy of the DEAF space within the *Institution* and that appears to chime with the experiences of the *Institution's* pupils through the period in question. The relevant sections are reproduced in full:

> Nothing can replace [for Sourds-Muets] their natural language (that is of signs) of which all spoken and written languages are but translations… this language, as simple as nature and which is capable of extending itself to describe all of nature has no boundaries other than that in the minds of men. It is universal; and *sourds-muets* from whatever country they come understand each other as well as you [hearing] understand each other. But, they cannot understand you. This is why we teach them, so that they may discourse with you using writing as you might use speech… (Clerc 1818: 15)

> You understand that the language of a particular people can never be the mother-language of the *sourds-muets* born in its midst. All spoken language is necessarily a learnèd language for them and must be taught to them like Greek and Latin are taught in colleges to young Americans… they have no other natural language than gestures. (ibid: 22-23)

> There are *sourds-muets* in Asia, in Africa and in Europe as there are in America. They existed there before you spoke of them and before you discovered them (ibid: 27)

From this information and from evidence of his own actions, whilst it appears that Clerc knows himself how to interact with the hearing world and is clearly involved in teaching others how to do the same, he believes his naturally ordained place to be *outside* of its daily interactions. Clearly, this separation can be bridged to some extent by learning the written form of hearing languages (and elsewhere he also includes the artifice of spoken language). However, this is an arduous task for deaf people that can only be achieved through long years of hard study.

However, whilst Clerc believes that nature has placed him *outside* the sound-mediated hearing world, it has not done so to alienate him *from* humanity but to draw him *into* a visually-mediated world inhabited by others who are similarly visual. Authored through their natural 'mother-language' of gestures, a language that is somehow rooted in the universality of this visual existence and so is comprehensible to other, visually inevitable people the world over, this reality is not second-best to that of the hearing world but is equally rooted in the 'minds of men', having no limits but that of its inhabitants' imagination.

Finally, Clerc gives a clear indication that whilst this visually-mediated world is given to DEAF people by providence, it has not been done so arbitrarily, but by a curious form of election. In fact, the DEAF people that he describes somehow never really belong within the hearing world at all. Rather, born into hearing nations but never destined to be a part of them, he represents them almost as an indigenous Diaspora; born 'in the midst' of the hearing world but belonging more to each other than to the hearing world itself.

Laurent Clerc's writings and actions are fascinating and clearly demonstrate the extent to which the DEAF space produced within the *Institution* had evolved it from its origins as a simple space of visual communication, produced by de l'Epée's pupils as the DEAF space emergent I describe above, into a much more richly authored space that not only produced DEAF people's visual reality, but had also begun to produce DEAF people within it as subjects of its own, with distinctly ontological tones. However, for all of this, it is interesting to note that whilst Clerc asserted that "Nothing can replace [for Sourds-Muets] their natural language (that is of signs) of which all spoken and written languages are but translations…" (op cit), his contemporaries tell us that in 1815, Clerc somewhat insincerely appeared to contradict himself by actively promoting the use of de l'Epée's methodical signs in teaching (Berthier 1839).

At first this seems inconsistent. However, I would suggest that it appears less so when we remember that 'autonomy' as I have explored it above does not necessarily designate the *Institution* as a whole as a DEAF space, but rather areas within it that permitted DEAF people freedom to produce their space as DEAF. Revealingly, Clerc's support for methodical signs, and the evidence that I have already presented of Massieu's resistance to a fully autonomous DEAF space, and his insistence on the superiority of hearing-world language suggest that whilst certain areas of the *Institution* offered DEAF people great autonomy to produce their DEAF space; everyday spaces of the dormitories for example, others – in particular the classrooms – did not.[4] Thus, whilst Clerc knew that natural sign language was far more effective

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[4] I initially attempted to 'map' these spaces onto a plan of the school as they emerged through this period. However, I was unable to for lack of sufficient evidence, and because it soon became apparent that I could not simply map a 'dormitory', for example, as DEAF. Rather, I would have had to map a

in encouraging understanding, he also knew that in spaces that were produced by reference to hearing-world knowledges:

> by raising an innocent hand against the arch-holy… tradition of methodical signs of the Abbés de l'Epée and Sicard he would… be accused of heresy, of sacrilege even. (Berthier 1839: 7)

That he continued to live out this tension between the artifice of a largely methodically-signed, hearing-authored classroom and the DEAF space autonomous of the school is possibly what gave his (1818) representations of the DEAF reality such power.

However, whilst Clerc was unable to step out from behind a façade of obedience to the traditional method, the man who replaced him as tutor was not so trapped, for two reasons. Firstly, he was hearing and so was immune from the requirement to prove his ability to master hearing-world knowledges. Secondly, he was Sicard's godson and was, therefore, all but invulnerable to political attack (Bernard 1999). His promotion to the post of tutor within the *Institution*, and his subsequent actions in "*raising up one altar against another…*" (Bébian, quoted in Berthier 1839: 10-11, emphasis in original) in favour of DEAF space is a unique event in the history of 19th century deaf education and led to perhaps the most vigorous expansion of DEAF space in the record. It is to his case study that I now turn.

4.2.5   Case study two – Liberating DEAF space autonomous

Roch-Amboise Augustin Bébian was born in Guadeloupe to wealthy, French parents in 1789. He arrived to complete his education in Paris in 1802 at the age of thirteen, not long after Sicard returned from his exile to the *Institution*. Somewhat dismissively, Sicard lodged him alongside some of the male deaf pupils in one of the school's boarding houses where Paulmier tells us that the young Bébian quite naturally spent most of his leisure time "in the midst" (Paulmier 1820: viii) of the school's DEAF community. By the age of seventeen, those DEAF people who knew him reported that he knew sign language quite as well as they did (Berthier 1839: 7).

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dormitory space produced by its DEAF residents as DEAF, but the same dormitory produced by a hearing teacher (Paulmier, for example) as non-DEAF. It soon became clear that it would be more valuable to leave a project like this to a later date, and to attempt it, perhaps as part of a more detailed ethnographic study.

Bébian's early residency within DEAF space never led him to propose himself as in any way representative of the DEAF community. However, the result of his time within it and of his friendship with people like Laurent Clerc (Berthier 1839) was formative. Quite uninformed by the traditional everyday/classroom distinction that marked Clerc's experience, the only knowledge that Bébian had of the *Institution's* DEAF community was what he observed and enjoyed of their own autonomous everyday DEAF space.

Therefore, when he eventually decided on a career within deaf education and was allowed to attend and observe his DEAF friends lessons, he was utterly dumfounded. Equipped with personal knowledge of the pupils in their own DEAF space and their own native sign language, he was flummoxed by the imposition in the classroom of teaching in methodical signs:

> a nonsense, pompously clothed in ambitious forms… no better understood by the pupil signing them than by the pupil writing them down. (Bébian cited in Berthier 1839: 8, 10)

Bébian was so distressed by the situation that Berthier tells us that he pleaded with Laurent Clerc to change his teaching method "The aim of education must not simply be to learn words" he later wrote, "but, rather, to attain to correct ideas. Not simply to exercise… the single faculty of memory, but to develop thinking… " (Bébian 1817: 16). However, as we have seen, out of fear for the repercussions of a perceived lack of respect, Clerc refused. So, when Clerc left Paris for the United States in 1816, Bébian approached his godfather and requested that he be named Clerc's successor.

At the time, it was an unconventional move to allow a hearing person to become a teacher without serving some form of apprenticeship and it was likely that it was only his personal access to Sicard that made it possible. However, it is probable that even Sicard would not have granted him the position had he known what Bébian was planning. Immediately upon taking control of his class, Bébian abandoned methodical signs completely and encouraged his pupils to use only natural sign language. "Strip yourselves… of the old man. That is of speaking man" (Berthier, 1839: 9) he told his pupils, "… only reach inside to feel language or discover it in the movement of nature." (ibid).

Bébian's actions appear to have provoked a delicious response from his DEAF pupils. Used to the difficulties of understanding lessons delivered in methodical signs

or written French, they had never before been in a situation where they were encouraged not only to learn through sign language, but to explore the limits of their signing. Reacting to Bébian's boisterous enjoyment of natural sign language like those who were not only being allowed to 'eat sweets before dinner', but were overjoyed to hear that dinner had been swept-away and replaced with a sugary smorgasbord, they wondered in awe as Bébian "… unveiled all the riches, the flexibility, all the energy that the language of *sourds-muets* possesses" (Berthier 1839: 9).

Able to guide their thoughts through his knowledge of natural sign language and encouraging them to explore the signs that bubbled up with them, he would often explain that "Signs do not name things, they paint them" (Berthier 1839: 12) and he would encourage his pupils to explore their understanding by getting them to describe the same objects or events again and again, applauding the variation that each introduced (Bébian 1826) and then, only when he had observed that they could express themselves clearly would he adventure into teaching them French, using their clarity of expression in natural sign as a mirror to verify their understanding of a written text.

Berthier, a pupil of Bébian's reported the impact of this change:

> Before Bébian, our feeble imagination panicked at the least difficulty… we wrote without understanding what we were saying… our memory was peppered with phrases taken from here and from there, we composed sentences by the hundred; all of them garbled. We were like parrots, perched on a window sill, who repeat the words of passers-by without understanding… Bébian was our master. (Berthier 1839: 11, 12)

However, if teaching the pupils to shun the interface of methodical signs, and to engage directly with information through their own language had an impact upon the effectiveness of their learning it also appeared to trigger a further thirst for autonomy that Bébian could not satisfy. To begin with, the problem was very practical. Bébian noted in 1817 that his pupils were "devoured with the desire to learn" (Bébian 1817: 41). He complained, however, the only material available for their use was written in French, which was only of use to them if they had a teacher present to explain the words. Placing too heavy an emphasis on the early need for French would lead only to the present situation in which "they spend their recreation time sat in a corner of the playground or on a window sill copying out words without rhyme or reason, often

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wrongly spelled and making no sense" (ibid: 42). However accompanying them at all times to ensure that they learned the written language was merely another route to dependency upon their teacher (ibid: 39-40).

Arguing that the key to learning for DEAF children was not a better system through which to master written French but, instead, the wholesale replacement of French as their first language of contact with learning, he began to develop a *Mimographie*; a project for "fixing of their signs upon paper in the same way that we do for speech" (Bébian 1817: introductory letter, no page.). This, he argued would not only allow for the creation of teaching material so that DEAF children could quench their thirst for learning without needing to mediate knowledge through French, but would also allow DEAF people's own "…ideas to cease to be fugitive and form a solid and durable foundation" (Bébian 1817: 40) that could be formalised and handed down to subsequent generations.

However, in order to proceed with this, another problem had to be overcome for, Bébian argued, the only people who truly know sign language are the DEAF pupils themselves. Certainly, he affirms, de l'Epée had some success with his methodical signs (op cit: 24). However, for sign language to be used as a full language of learning it needs to be fixed, and it:

> cannot not be fixed… whilst it is delivered to the ignorance of each teacher… far from perfecting it, all that happens is that it becomes more corrupted by the addition of forms and vices from our [spoken] languages and loses its inappreciable advantage of immediately transmitting thought. (Bébian 1817: 27).

The key to the education of DEAF children, Bébian argues, is found only as

> [DEAF people] meet with their peers and exchange knowledges with them, then their intelligence develops rapidly, and the need to communicate develops signs for ideas just as quickly. (ibid: 35)

Whether his pupils understood the political import of what Bébian was suggesting is unlikely. However, this DEAF-centred revolution was one that they were already beginning to foment. Apparently triggered by nothing more than the liberation of their experimentation within DEAF space, it was not long before some of the pupils of the school "children of ten or twelve years old, without any instruction, had enough accuracy to remark upon the inexactitude of some of the signs that are used in the house" (Bébian 1817: vi). Initially, those they corrected were other pupils.

However, this only caused a domino effect. Supported by Bébian and his claim that the school should "be there only to serve the children" (Bernard 1999: 427) it was not long before the entire pupil body began to challenge – to a mixed reception – the presumption of teachers who persisted in using methodical signs.

4.4   Discussion

By the end of his 1817 *Essai*, Bébian appears less a teacher and more a hearing ambassador for DEAF space. His proposals that studies be conducted to describe regional and school-created sign language dialects (Bébian 1817: 52), DEAF people's ability to shift their signing towards more iconic forms for use in international communication (page 52), and his suggestion that taken-for-granted knowledges of the hearing world could be judged by reference to DEAF space-authored knowledges (page 65) reveal the extent to which he considered DEAF space equal in validity to the space of the hearing world. However, as his proposals became more DEAF-centred and more affirming of the reality that he had observed within the *Institution* and in the lives of DEAF people he faced a significant challenge. For, it appeared that having expanded to produce almost the entire extent of its autonomy, what DEAF space had reached was a form of 'tipping point' where it could no longer be produced simply as the space of those consigned to a 'hospice', but now began to seek to expand further by seeking some form of recognition in the eyes of the hearing world.

In the next Chapter, I go on to examine what happened as Bébian – and then as he failed, his pupils - attempted to achieve this recognition by explicitly challenging the French government's authoring of them as those in need of an *Institution* of care. Examining the way in which – far from recognising the validity of DEAF space – the government's response in attempting to 'correct their misbehaviour' led to the repealing of the autonomy that had allowed DEAF space to evolve, I describe how the *Institution's* DEAF community began to take its production of DEAF space outside of the *Institution* and into contact with the wider Parisian DEAF community, and how this led to it beginning to attempt to define a location for DEAF space alongside the hearing world. However, before going on to do this, I want to briefly address the evidence that I have presented in this chapter.

This I do again, by firstly highlighting the way in which it confirms many of the Lefebvrian aspects of DEAF space emergents that I previously identified, albeit in somewhat different forms. Chapter 3, for example, provided evidence that it was DEAF people's embodied experience of visual being-in-the-world that led to their producing a *Perçu* that apprehends and secretes a visually-authored space. Here, I can affirm the same. However, whereas previously, their *Perçu* was expressed in terms of space produced in the midst of a predominantly hearing world, in the case of DEAF space autonomous it appears as a response of those who are visual to their expanding freedom on a visual plane. Clearly, if a DEAF space *Perçu* is the commonsensical apprehension and secretion of space in the visual medium, then the rapid evolution of DEAF space within contexts of autonomy that this chapter describes is, quite literally, evidence of DEAF people's comparative ease of producing their visual being-in-the-world within it.

In Chapter 3, I also explored how DEAF space *Conçu* was the gradual discoursing that DEAF people applied to their own DEAF space emergents. Again, in this chapter, DEAF space *Conçu* is also present. However, whereas in the former the spaces presented were individual (as in the case of de Fay), or described by individuals (as in Desloges' case) and so provide a single snapshot of DEAF space, here, as the same DEAF space is produced with increasing autonomy, its *Conçu* can be seen to shift. There is a considerable difference, for example, between Massieu's *Conçu* of DEAF space as one that largely represents it by reference to hearing-world knowledge and so produces it as less valid than hearing space, and Clerc's *Conçu* of the same space as equally valid. There is still more difference between Clerc's *Conçu* of DEAF space as constrained by the accidental authority of the hearing world, and the DEAF space *Conçu* produced by of Bébian's pupils who not only assert DEAF space's equal validity but insist that within the *Institution*, an establishment created specifically for them, they should be able to dictate appropriate 'expected' behaviour according to DEAF-authored knowledges.

Interestingly, however, this chapter offers few glimpses of DEAF space *Vécu*. What DEAF space autonomous appears to permit by distancing the DEAF community from external influence is a context in which there is little need to produce *Vécu* 'moments of presence' for the simple reason that whilst DEAF space is allowed to expand and mature, its expansion represents a *Vécu* in itself. What examples it does offer,

therefore, are at the beginning and the end. De l'Epée's pupils' celebration at being reunited in the Céléstins following his death would appear to be a DEAF space *Vécu*; a glimpse of a dis-alienated moment in which the production of a DEAF space allowed them freedom to communicate. However, at this point, the *Vécu* in question is produced very much from the point of view of a DEAF space emergent. In fact, the only real evidence that DEAF space autonomous provides of a *Vécu* is the way in which Bébian's pupils appear to offer a challenge to the physical and administrative limitations of the *Institution* and imagine a possible reality in which their DEAF space is recognised by the wider hearing world.

Secondly, however, I want to suggest that whilst each of DEAF space *Perçu*, *Conçu* and *Vécu* − described above − allow me to identify features of DEAF space autonomous as it differs from DEAF space emergent, approaching them with an explicit view to their role in allowing DEAF people within the *Institution* to reach for *totalité* reveals a second feature that I want to briefly outline here and which then leads into the second of these two related chapters. This is a gradual move away from aspects of *Perçu, Conçu* and *Vécu* that emerge from an embodied experience of deafness that is primarily authored by reference to being a visual person in a predominantly hearing world, to become one that is simply an experience of being. It is here, perhaps, that the question of dis-ability begins to disappear and the question of simply 'being in a different reality' begins.

Thus whilst the evidence of DEAF space emergent was that DEAF people, Etienne de Fay for example, produced their *Perçu* to simply establish a visual apprehension of the world, now as DEAF space autonomous allows DEAF people to author and draw upon their own knowledges, they begin to concern themselves less with simply being visual and more with the quality of that experience. A particularly good example of this is the way in which Bébian's pupils explicitly demand control not only over the medium of the language used with them, but over its 'correctness'. Clearly, it is no longer enough to simply 'secrete' their reality on a visual plane. Now, allowed to 'take for granted' the visual medium in which their space is produced, they become more concerned to fine-tune it by reference to knowledges authored within it.

Similarly, in DEAF space emergent, DEAF space *Conçu* represented the 'boundaries' of DEAF space within a default hearing world. Now, however, as DEAF space

autonomous distances those boundaries by making the presence of the hearing world less immediate, DEAF people begin to concern themselves more with a *Conçu* that is authored from within. Here, it also becomes possible to suggest that the term 'DEAF' that I problematise above (section 3.4) might, in fact, be a form of DEAF space *Conçu*. Certainly there is a case for arguing that if 'DEAF' is defined as 'like us' or 'expected' by those who are, themselves, DEAF then its authoring will evolve as DEAF space itself is given the autonomy to evolve more freely and as those who inhabit it absorb its knowledges and learn to perform themselves within it. The difference between Jean Massieu's *Conçu* of 'DEAF' as those reluctantly excluded from the hearing world, and Laurent Clerc's exuberantly celebratory *Conçu* of 'DEAF' as those ontologically predestined to a visual reality supports this assertion.

Finally, where I demonstrated that in DEAF space emergent, DEAF space *Vécu* was largely glimpses of an individual *totalité* made possible by DEAF space itself, in DEAF space autonomous, where it is less a question of producing a visual reality and more one of how that visual reality will play out in allowing its DEAF inhabitants to reach for their *totalité*, it appears that DEAF space *Vécu* takes on a distinctly more imaginative and utopian colour. That there is little evidence of this here is something that I have already explored above. However, it is something that reappears significantly in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 - DEAF SPACE LOCATED

Louis Paulmier took up his position as an apprentice teacher at the *Institution* in 1804 (RDP) whilst Bébian was still a child living amongst the DEAF pupils. Devoted to Sicard, he prided himself on the hard work that it took to master Sicard's method (Berthier 1839). Consequently, it was with barely concealed bitterness that he witnessed Bébian employed without apprenticeship and his immediate success. This was only made worse as Bébian's pupils, liberated in their production of DEAF space began to pick on Paulmier for his inability to use natural sign language (see Paulmier 1820: 22-23). Therefore when, in 1819, Bébian pursued his plan to extend the autonomy of the *Institution's* DEAF space beyond his own classroom by persuading Sicard to write to the school's *Administration* asking that a post of Teaching Director be created, and that he himself be named to it (Sicard to de Gérando 31st March 1819), Paulmier was furious.

For Bébian, the transition to management was not easy. In a school run by his own godfather, Bébian had been a big fish a small pond; never having to explain himself to anyone. Now, his situation was quite the reverse; the realisation of his project depended entirely on the goodwill of the school's *Administration*, a body of somewhat self-important philanthropists who did not take kindly to Bébian – a simple teacher, and one from the colonies at that – telling them how to manage the school (Bernard 1999: 426). However, what really frightened the members of the administration was his insistence in explaining that what he was aiming for was the development of a written form of natural sign language; 'Mimographie' (Bébian 1825) that would allow his DEAF pupils to produce the *Institution* as a place of DEAF learning, quite independent from the intervention of the hearing world (see previous chapter, and below).

As early attempts to persuade them failed, Bébian took matters into his own hands. However, circumventing budgetary limits by spending his own wages on resources and arriving uninvited at administrative meetings to press his case did not work either. Therefore, appointing two of his best pupils; Berthier

and Lenoir, as tutors in his stead, he devoted himself full-time to persuading the *Administration* of his cause, all fruitlessly. Concluding that what he could not achieve by pressure, he would achieve by deception, he forged letters of protestation from Sicard at the poor treatment of his godson (Sicard to the administration 20th Oct 1820, and undated), threatened to resign (Sicard to Baron Keppler January 5th 1821) and, finally, went out of his way to embarrass them by returning to parade the pupils in rags and tatters before visiting dignitaries when he was supposed to be away on holiday (Berthier 1839).

By late 1820, the danger that Bébian's proposals represented, and his attacks on the *Administration's* integrity, demanded a response. However, with Sicard in control, they could not dismiss him without justification. The need to catch him in some form of indiscretion became increasingly urgent. So, when, in January 1821, in an argument over pupil allocations before Sicard himself, Bébian responded to what appears to be the latest in a long string of goads from Paulmier by "seizing him by the throat with his left hand and, with the right, beating him around the head… so as to cause him to bleed." (Paulmier 1821: no page) the *Administration* seized upon the opportunity. On January 8th 1821 they wrote:

> Penetrated by the desire to maintain order and the subordination of the pupils in our care and under our instruction... We decree that Mr Bébian will, henceforth, cease all function in the school and all communication with the pupils. (Sicard to Bébian, January 8th 1821)

With this, Bébian was formally banished from the *Institution*, and from its DEAF space.

5.0   Introduction

With this snapshot, I now move on to the second of my two-chapter treatment of the DEAF space that I initially began in Chapter 4. There, I identified its appearance in the record as a DEAF space emergent produced by de l'Epée's pupils in 1772 and followed it, from the adoption of de l'Epée's school as an *Institution Nationale* upon his death in 1789, to just prior to Bébian's promotion in 1819. Describing the context in which it evolved as one characterised by an accidental autonomy that allowed the

Institution's DEAF population to produce their reality on a visual plane, I identified the *Institution's* DEAF space immediately prior to the events I describe above as having reached a 'tipping point' beyond which its increasing maturity could no longer be reconciled with its nature as a 'hospice'.

It is from the departure point of this background, and the events that surrounded Bébian's dismissal that I begin this chapter; events that represent both a continuation of the previous chapter and a new evolution in the DEAF space that it describes. For here, with Bébian's attempt to validate the knowledges authored within the *Institution's* DEAF space beyond the boundaries of the *Institution* itself, I mark the point at which the previously unconstrained maturing of the DEAF space produced by the *Institution's* DEAF population comes into direct contact with its contextual horizons and the limits of its autonomy are drawn into sharp focus.

The outcomes of this contact, I argue, were twofold. The first, provoked by the incommensurability of the DEAF space proposals suggested by Bébian and the *Institution's* authoring as a heterotopic space of restoration and correction, was to awaken a response from those who were ultimately responsible for establishing and maintaining it. Coming some thirty years after its shaping by the Revolutionary government that I described in the previous chapter, their response was no longer one of disinterested administrative neglect. Rather, it was one shaped by a strongly utilitarian philanthropy that demanded both the right to intervene in the lives of its DEAF inhabitants and the right to expect gratitude from them in the shape of obedience.

The second outcome was to open a new chapter in the production of DEAF space itself. Where previously it had been produced within the autonomous context of the *Institution*, now members of the *Institution's* DEAF community began to search for a way to actively continue to preserve the autonomy of their DEAF space in the face of philanthropic intervention. Initially, their response was to try to resist the re-authoring of the *Institution* by revolting against its architects. However, as this became more difficult, their only possible course of action was to progressively pursue a strategy that they had illicitly adopted since Bébian's departure and relocate their primary DEAF space outside of the *Institution* itself.

Although both of these outcomes interest me in this chapter, it is what follows from them that is my primary interest. For, far from simply translating the production of the *Institution's* delimited and autonomous DEAF space to 'somewhere else', what the 're-location' of this DEAF space brought about was not only a flowing together of its production with the DEAF space already being produced by the wider Deslogian Parisian DEAF community, but also with visually mediated knowledges from the hearing French nation. Consequently, far from simply giving an account of DEAF space autonomous 'relocated', what this chapter describes is the beginning of an extraordinarily complex and intensely emotive balancing act that required the DEAF community to begin to 'locate' themselves and their DEAF space within a wider world. It is within this context that the most clearly defined form of this DEAF space 'located' occurred, a form that DEAF people referred to as the 'DEAF Nation'.

This chapter is written in three sections that largely follow the foci of the three paragraphs above followed by a brief discussion section. Given the complexity and riches of this step in the evolution of DEAF space, this chapter is far from comprehensive. However, as I explain below, this lack of conclusiveness is apparently inherent in a situation that, far from drawing DEAF space towards an internally authored unity as it did in the case of DEAF space autonomous, now exposes the frayed edges of a DEAF space, produced by individual DEAF people with individual experiences and expectations with increasing variety.

Of all the chapters in this thesis, this has been by far the most difficult to write. As I suggested above (Chapters 1) it was a focus on DEAF Nation that originally brought me to the archive. It is a feature of my archival research for this chapter, therefore, that rather than focus on DEAF Nation as only one of the many ways in which DEAF space was located, it was dominated by a tendency to focus on DEAF Nation itself. My struggle to withstand this in writing the chapter is reflected in its title; originally 'DEAF Nation', now 'DEAF space located', its length, and in my ongoing insistence upon the need to look away from DEAF Nation itself to consider it as only one form of DEAF space located.

5.0.1 Notes on sources

Because of their concentration on the administrative authoring of the *Institution* in the years following Bébian's dismissal, the first and section sections draw predominantly on documents found in the *Institution's* own archives. These largely formed three bodies of evidence. The first consists of published material, particularly that authored by de Gérando either under his own name (de Gérando 1800, 1802, 1820, 1827) or as the published newsletters of the *Institution* itself (Circulaires 1827, 1829, 1832), and material published by Bébian and Berthier. The second consists of a collection of correspondence, hand-written minutes of meetings (CDP 1826 – 1831), the historical staff ledger (RDP), regulations (Reglements 1827) and more or less official notifications from the *Institution* to parents (Borel 1827a, 1827b). Both bodies of evidence were easily located within the archives of the Paris INJS.

The third body of evidence used in the first and second sections came in the form of discrete collections, or 'dossiers' of evidence. These were not always so readily available. A number were used. Bébian, Berthier, and Massieu's staff profiles and the records of their disciplinary procedures I was able to consult and photograph. One collection upon which I had hoped to draw; the 'Affaire de l'Insurrection' [concerning the revolt] which specifically describes the events of the pupil revolt in 1830, was irretrievably missing from the archive. I have, therefore, been obliged to rely on selected material from it, reproduced by Bernard (1999; intra 531, 532) in the form of photocopies.

The final section draws predominantly on accounts of the *Banquets des Sourds-Muets*. Again, three sources existed for these. The first are official Banquet accounts (BSM) published by the Banquet organisers themselves, the *Société Centrale* and published in two tomes in (Société Centrale 1842, 1864). These were triangulated against accounts of the Banquets published in late 19th century DEAF-authored newspapers, particularly in the *Journal des Sourds-Muets* (JSM). Both of these sources were readily available as published works. I am also grateful to the members of the *Association Amicale* (direct associational descendent of the *Société Centrale*) for allowing me sight of the original hand-written Banquet attendance ledger and reports (BHR) kept by them in their private archive.

In addition, a number of other sources were used. Information on Eugène de Monglave was largely located within the *Bibliothèque Nationale*. As with previous chapters, I also benefitted from being able to consult modern day analyses conducted by Bernard (1999) and Buton (1999) and, to a lesser extent, Lane (1984), and from previous work carried out by myself on the historical authoring of the Banquets and their place in a canon of Deaf history (Gulliver 2004).

5.1   Replacing autonomy with philanthropy

In this first section, I establish a backdrop against which the remainder of this chapter is written by describing the way in which Bébian's actions, and the response to them by the government were understood through a philanthropic lens that took the right of the state to intervene in the *Institution*, and the appropriately grateful response of the *Institution's* DEAF inhabitants, for granted. Demonstrating the way in which the imposition of a new administration from 1821 had little impact upon the *Institution's* DEAF space, I explore the subsequent establishment of a more fiercely interventionist and philanthropically utilitarian administration from 1826 under the authority of Baron Jean-Marie-Gustave de Gérando. Describing how, despite his initial failure to recognise DEAF space within the *Institution*, his interventionism led to the school being produced as two unequally weighted spaces, I suggest that the late 1820s were characterised by a distinctly uncomfortable tension, particularly for the DEAF staff and pupils as their DEAF space autonomy was progressively rescinded.

Identifying and presenting a situation of ongoing contact between Bébian and his pupils, I demonstrate that – far from simply continuing to produce the same DEAF space in the same vein – Bébian's dismissal and the response of the *Institution's* DEAF staff to it, marked two significant changes. Firstly, I suggest that it marks the point at which the Institution's community became aware that their space was 'located' with other spaces. Secondly, that it also signals the beginning of greater visually-mediated porosity between the DEAF space produced within the *Institution* and those produced outside. Describing how both of these evolutions led initially to a spatial revolt that de Gérando was able to quash, I then explain how the DEAF staff of the *Institution*; Berthier and Lenoir in particular, began to draw upon their

knowledge of a DEAF space outside of the *Institution* to re-locate their primary production of DEAF space outside of the *Institution* itself.

5.1.1   The birth of a philanthropic administration

Bébian's dismissal in 1821 left the DEAF community of the Paris *Institution* in a somewhat precarious position. Clearly, his departure had not caused its DEAF space to collapse. He was, after all, only an ambassador of it to the hearing world and his installation of Berthier and Lenoir as tutors in his stead still held. However, it was unclear how long this situation would continue as, early that same year, the government signalled the end of its policy of virtual abandonment of the *Institution* and its increasing preparedness to intervene. It did this by adding four highly-placed government officials to the Administrative Council: Count Alexis de Nouailles; Minister of state and Member of Parliament, Dr Guéneau de Mussy; Director of the national teacher training system, M. De Colonia; State's Council, and Count Jaubert; Bankruptcy court counsellor. And then, only a year later, by adding two more: Baron Rendu; Procurer general of the accountancy court, and Abbé Burnier-Fontanelle; Elder of the Faculty of Theology (Anon 1896: 68 – 71). These men represented a potential threat to DEAF space. Not by intention. They appear to have had no perception of the possibility of a DEAF space (see below). But because, as a body representative of the government's philanthropic provision to the *Institution*'s inhabitants as those resident in a 'hospice' (see above), they represented an authority who had the power to transform the context of autonomy that had allowed the *Institution's* DEAF space to thrive.

Far removed from modern-day charitable or post-colonial concerns of the appropriacy of need and form of intervention (Power 2003, Land 2005), philanthropic involvement in early 19th century France was a right, born out of traditional charitable provision to those marginalised for no fault of their own from society (Geremek 1987) and transformed by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic era (Woolf 1991, Doyle 1992) into a proving ground demonstrating personal and religious commitment. It was a way for the rich to "make life for those with a marginal standard of living more humane…" (Dekker 1998: 131) but through

which they could also contribute to a wider politics and to the improvement of the state (Owen 1965) by targeting "… children in particular… by elevating them from marginality and fragility into persons, capable of living independently and of having, permanently, a normal standard of living." (Dekker: ibid)

Where this philanthropy was most dangerous to the DEAF space of the *Institution*, was not in a dependency created by charitable provision. After all, since 1793, the school had been reliant upon public funds. Rather, it was in the expectation that those who were recipients of this improving philanthropy should respond appropriately. This was an obligation that dated from before the Revolution, an exchange of intervention and gratitude in which the giver and receiver had clearly defined roles. As Foucault explains: "If he refused to offer himself as a subject for instruction, the patient would be guilty of ingratitude because 'he would have enjoyed the advantages resulting from sociability, without paying the tribute of gratitude'" (Foucault 1989: 102).

It was not only the members of the *Administration's* right to philanthropically intervene in the lives of the *Institution's* pupils that Bébian had challenged, his resistance to their authority on behalf of the DEAF pupils clearly suggested that those served by the *Institution* had consummately failed to understand their role vis-à-vis the state by suggesting that they were not grateful. From 1821, therefore, the massing of the *Administration* suggested that intervention was imminent. However, before any action could be taken, a chain of events occurred that utterly derailed the newly empowered *Administration*'s remit to bring change. First, in 1822, Sicard died. Then, in his grief, Massieu was caught in a compromising situation in the Bois de Boulogne with two underage girls (Massieu file in INJS archives) and was given no option but to resign by the *Administration* who now fulfilled their desire "… to distance our *sourds-muets* far from the influence of Massieu, an influence that I have always adjudged so dangerous for them" (de Gérando to Keppler, April 29th 1823).

However, the *Administration* had apparently acted out of offence rather than judgement. Having already dismissed Bébian, they suddenly found themselves directly responsible for producing results from a school that had no administrative director, no teaching director, no curriculum, and with only one remaining teacher;

Paulmier (RDP), who could not use natural sign. The result was, perhaps predictably, comic. One writer reports that:

> During [those years] the Paris *Institution* lived under the government of an administrative council composed of men who were honourable, but strangers to the teaching of sourds-muets and who, in their ignorance, had the unhappy pretension of innovating. (Esquiros 1847: 445)

These 'innovators' embarked on a slap-stick campaign muddied by communication breakdown and characterised by attempted quick-fixes that always appeared to backfire and leave them with even more to do. In the eighteen months that followed, they not only drove away all three of Sicard's most qualified successors by offering all of them the job at the same time (Pissin-Sicard to Administrative Council, May 14th 1822), they also hired two hearing teacher-apprentices, Messieurs Rivière and Ducros, for whom there was no training syllabus (RDP), and brought themselves into direct conflict with the government itself by proposing that Bébian himself be independently employed to write a teaching manual (Ministry of the Interior to Administrative Council, July 2nd 1823).

Only one group was left to profit from the chaos. Early in 1824, the *Administration* abandoned attempts to formalise teaching into a single curriculum and on January 22nd (RDP, recorded February 6th 1824), made the staggering decision to solve the crisis of qualified teachers by appointing Bébian's DEAF pupil stand-ins: Berthier and Lenoir, to full teacher status. Thus, as the administrators looked to their own challenges, it appears that the school was still predominantly produced as a DEAF space, at least by its DEAF community – albeit with a limit to their autonomy looming into view.

5.1.2   A space of utilitarian correction

Esquiros (1847) suggests that the *Administration's* concern was less the effective transformation of the school and more the satisfaction of their own personal pride. With Bébian out of the way and some form of stability established in the *Institution*, they then did little more. However, their liberal approach did not last. In 1826, the government, who clearly expected more than a simple maintenance of the status-quo, moved again. Raising the original *Administration* to the status of a *Commission Consultative* [Guiding Council] ostensibly to honour them but, in fact, according to a

government official quoted in Esquiros (1847: 446) to 'negate' their influence and get them out of the way, only one of its original members was preserved with any power. Appointed as president of the new *Conseil d'Administration* [administrative council] was the celebrated philanthropist and anthropologist Baron Joseph-Marie-Gustave de Gérando who, in addition to wider works on the history of philosophy (de Gérando 1802) and on the principles of philanthropy (de Gérando 1820) had, in 1800, demonstrated his interest in the interface between language and the human condition in an essay entitled "The influence of signs on the formation of ideas" (De Gérando 1800).

De Gérando had been a member of the original *Administration* since 1814. However, he had been unique in not sharing in its prevarication. The author of Massieu's expulsion from the school (see above) and also implemented in Bébian's dismissal, his approach to the ongoing situation at the *Institution* was unequivocally 'utilitarian' (Dekker 1998). In a 1300 page thesis on "The upbringing and training of those *sourd-muet* from birth" (de Gérando 1827), a letter by yet another new director, Borel, to parents of new pupils (Borel 1827a) and the first in a series of Internationally distributed *Circulaires* [Newsletters] (Circulaire 1827), he set out his understanding of the *Institution*'s past and his plan for the future.

The challenge, as he saw it, was to correct the "life of moral feebleness" (de Gérando 1827: Tome I: 149) that had resulted from the failure of previous *Administration* to intervene in the situation of the deaf child:

> The unfortunate has not only been deprived of positive learning, he has also lacked the necessary help to form his character and understanding. His life is one of moral feebleness and his soul which invokes and expects favourable intervention. (de Gérando, op cit)

The source of this intervention would be society:

> It is in the breast of society that man learns to know the affections and the complete extent of his obligations. It is there that he enters into and participates in the communal experience of its traditions, that he finds prompts and examples. (De Gérando 1827 Tome 1, Page 153)

However, achieving this would take:

> … culturing of the moral faculty, and the culturing of intellectual faculties. These two orders of culture are tightly bound to each other. Instruction is upbringing and benefits from improvements in the character and development of the spirit. This is the point of view that we must adopt in setting ourselves the aim of what should direct our wishes,

our efforts, our thoughts in the care that the sourd-muet expects of us. (de Gérando, 1827: Tome I: 149-150)

The role of the *Institution* was, therefore, not to provide the experience of DEAF becoming that Paulmier had described as 'coming into the world', nor to celebrate the DEAF space that Bébian had so keenly supported. It was not even to perpetuate the safe spaces of containment that the French Revolution had provided. Rather, the role of the *Institution* was to be a space in which utilitarian philanthropy could shatter the auditory and linguistic shell surrounding deaf children and require them to regain their rightful place within hearing society.

From 1826, his once swamped voice within the *Administration* now established in its own right, it was this space of philanthropic correction that de Gérando set about producing within the *Institution*. However, far from the tabula rasa which he apparently expected - canvases blank from a lack of 'positive learning' and 'invoking and expecting favourable intervention' - the reality of the *Institution* was that it was already being produced as a DEAF space.

From de Gérando's point of view, the existence of such a DEAF space was, quite simply, nonsense. Therefore, he completely failed to perceive it as such. Believing that the pupils' continued desire to associate with each other was simply a symptom of their having not yet learned to trust society in which they were made to feel outsiders (Borel 1827a: 4) he set about developing his vision for the *Institution* as a space of reform, developing and writing it into a set of "Administrative Regulations confirmed by his Excellence the Minister for State in the department of the Interior" (Reglemens 1827) that structured expectations of both staff and pupil's behaviour and learning in the strictest of correctional terms:

> Never putting off a punishment, never suffering to permit quarrels or threats between the pupils, never suffering dishonesty, or sloth, or exchanges, or trades, or smuggling, and permitting no play other than that authorised by the head of the establishment. (Reglemens 1827: Art V p 2)

All de Gérando succeeded in doing, however, was to overlay his, and the government's production of the *Institution* over the space already produced there by its DEAF inhabitants. As he, Borel the director, Baron Keppler the school administrator, Paulmier, Rivière and Ducros attempted to enforce these rules, the DEAF pupils along with Berthier, Lenoir and two other DEAF members of staff,

Gazan and Wiederkehr, continued to produce the same DEAF-authored space that they always had. The outcome of this, over time, was quite devastating for the previously autonomous production of DEAF space within the *Institution*. Described by a contemporary who visited the school as "… a house divided against itself…" (Esquiros 1847: 447-448) in an educational sense, "[with] as many methods as there were teachers... " (ibid). It was also a house divided into contested spaces, each one produced on a different sensory plane, drawing on a different legacy of knowledge, aiming to produce different and contested *Institutions*.

5.1.3 Informing DEAF space

Before moving on to the impact of de Gérando's actions, I want to pause for a moment to consider the nature of the space that was being produced by the *Institution's* DEAF community. This is because, as I have shown in previous chapters where readings of the record with little acknowledgement of DEAF space have led to an interpretation of stagnation (see chapter 4), a similar situation arose in this case.

Ostensibly, Bébian's departure from the *Institution* in 1821 signalled the end of his contact with his DEAF pupils. This is certainly the content of Sicard and the administrations decree (see above). However, there are a number of key indications that despite this edict of non-contact, throughout the 1820s, not only did Bébian's pupils continue to leave the school to meet him, but that their discussions often centred on the school itself and their position within it. In the mid 1820s, for example, Baron Kepplier, the *Agent General* [Chief Administrative Coordinator] of the School, wrote to the Institution's DEAF staff:

> The Administration, having declared all contact of the teachers and the pupils of the [*Institution*] with M. Bébian (illegible) being forbidden both inside and outside of (illegible)… reminds Messieurs Berthier, Lenoir, Gazan and Wiederkehr of this prohibition. (Keppler to the staff of the *Institution*, mid 1820s)

In 1826, this was repeated in a reminder to Bébian himself:

> … the teachers and the pupils of this school should have no contact with you… we would prefer… if you would exercise the same restraint by abstaining from contact with our establishment. (Keppler to Bébian, December 26th 1826).

However, it was not only contact with Bébian that Berthier and Lenoir were likely to have found beyond the walls of the *Institution* but, through Bébian, also members of

the same spontaneous DEAF community that Desloges describes in his 1779 *Observations*. Indeed, in 1826, in a strikingly similar passage to one that we have already noted by Desloges himself, Bébian wrote:

> I have met sourds-muets with intelligence that were not educated, and could not write. To what to they owe this? Only to the exercise of their minds through the daily communication that they have with other sourds-muets or with hearing people who, with the habit of living with them, have grown familiar with their language. (Bébian, 1826: 13-14)

There is no explicit evidence of the frequency or nature of this contact. It is, therefore, impossible to say with any certainty that time spent with Bébian did, in fact, lead to his pupils encountering other DEAF people. However, it is almost inconceivable that a situation of contact that persisted from Bébian's dismissal did not lead to some of the knowledges authored within the wider Parisian DEAF community's DEAF space and the wider French nation filtering back into the DEAF space as it was produced within the *Institution*. Certainly the events that followed suggest that the parallels between the situation of the DEAF community within the school in post-Bébianesque frustration with de Gérando, and those of a "new, idealistic generation" (Pilbeam 1995: 130) of French people, growing to maturity in the post Napoleonic years of the 1820s, held back by the ultra-conservativism of the Restoration monarchy (see also Jenkins 1990) did not escape Bébian's pupils. The parallels between wider French disappointment at the Restoration's failure to promote the liberal and Republican movements (Alexander 2003) and their own glipmses of DEAF space autonomous gradually circumscribed by de Gérando's *administration* must have had some kind of impact upon the way in which key DEAF figures at the *Institution* began to understand the way that their own DEAF space was located within the *Institution* more generally.

Within this 'two space' *Institution*, however, it was clear which space carried more weight. In 1827, Borel initiated a series of *Conférences des Professeurs* [teachers meetings] "to establish order and harmony between all parties involved in the teaching" (CDP 22nd Oct 1827) and to develop a single "method appropriate to developing intelligence and to train the hearts of these unfortunates that nature has deprived of hearing and speech" (op cit). Initially both DEAF and hearing teachers attended. However, since neither Borel, nor any of the hearing teachers could sign, and Berthier and Lenoir could not hear, neither group could talk to the other. After sitting through two meetings in which they were asked to 'catch up' by reading the

official minutes (CDP October 22nd and 29th 1827), the latter complained that they had too much to do with teaching to be wasting their time if they were not to be included in the discussion and voluntarily withdrew to continue teaching their pupils. This is a situation that existed and continued to evolve until 1830, by which time its imbalance – in the eyes of the DEAF staff and pupils of the school – had become intolerable.

5.1.4 The glorious (DEAF space) Revolution of (late) 1830

It may not be possible to conclusively prove significant borrowing from hearing France into the DEAF space of the *Institution* at this point. However, it is certainly possible to point to evidence that many members of the *Institution's* DEAF community saw, in the July Revolution of 1830, the opportunity for their own Glorious Revolution. As Charles X was forced to abdicate to be replaced by Louis-Philippe who, as the son of 'Philippe Egalité' had, in his childhood, been a regular attendee at the Abbés de l'Epée and Sicard's public demonstrations in the gardens of the *Palais Royal*, circumstances spurred Berthier and Lenoir to action. A deputation, arriving before the king on November 1st, made known their petition - the reinstatement of their own 'Citizen King', Bébian, to the *Institution*.

In circumlocutory fashion, Berthier and Lenoir's appeal to the King does not mention Bébian's reinstatement in so many words. However, the tone of it is clear:

> There is one [disciple of de l'Epée], the most distinguished of all who has pushed back
> the limits of this art, in which he has no equal, his works have become classic and serve
> as guides in France as they do abroad. We dare, sire, to call him to your attention. Your
> goodness excites our trust and our gratitude makes it an obligation for us. It is through
> his lessons that we have the ability to express to your majesty what we feel. M. Bébian
> directed the studies of our *Institution* for several years under the abbé Sicard as Director
> of Studies. It is his method that we follow in teaching our brothers in misfortune. He has,
> for fifteen years, devoted himself, his talents and his small personal fortune to this
> difficult task… (Berthier 1830: 3)

The King's readiness to receive Berthier and Lenoir and his voluntary remembrance of Sicard and de l'Epée's demonstrations gave them hope. However, his response, transcribed by the Duc d'Orléans and sent to them, was less than they hoped for. Professing only "joy that they [*sourds-muets*] are now given back to society"

(Berthier 1830: 4), Louis-Philippe promised to multiply support for deaf education but no more.

The inordinate nature of the *Institution's* DEAF community's response to Louis-Philippe's refusal to intervene on their behalf suggests that there was more pent up frustration at their increasing lack of freedom than we might have so far observed. Immediately following the King's response, a mutiny broke out amongst the pupils of the school (Affair de l'Insubordination in Bernard 1999: 512-520) who began overtly mimicking their hearing teachers' over-exaggerated gestures and speech and sending them anonymous post containing mocking caricatures.

Then, on December 14th, insolence escalated into action beyond the limits of the *Institution* itself. Borel was ashamed to learn second-hand that due to his failure to quash the revolt, the king had received a petition written by the pupils of the school detailing "opinions relative to the internal organisation of the royal institution" (Bernard 1999: 512); a petition that called for the immediate reinstatement of Bébian and his promotion to the directorship of the school.

> Long Live Bébian. We want Bébian as the director of the Paris Royal Institute of Sourds-Muets. We love him very much. (cited by Bernard 1999: 513)

On the face of it, the rationale for the revolt was simple. However, it would be a mistake to simply see calls for Bébian's reinstatement and promotion to director as support for a person whom the DEAF community held in high regard. Instead, by invoking Bébian, what the DEAF pupils and staff were doing was invoking recognition for the DEAF space that they had enjoyed within Bébian's classroom. Yves Bernard arrives at the same conclusion:

> ... Bébian who, far more than representing deaf people as silent humanity... far beyond the methodical translations of Paulmier who pleaded deaf moral ignorance in court to secure their absolution... Bébian gave a language to the children of the *Institution...* It is the return of Bébian that deaf pupils and teachers called for with every fibre of their being. (Bernard 1999: 513).

This is the unprecedented uprising of a DEAF community who have tasted the freedom of a DEAF space Autonomous and then, through its subsequent loss, have become aware of its importance and of the intrinsic relationship between their 'being in the world' and the nature of the space produced to make it possible. Reacting to the opposition of a body of uncomprehending hearing staff and of their increasing

production of the *Institution* as a hearing space Berthier's response to an uncomprehending Borel, in particular, shows stark evidence of unresolved conflict:

> Reiterate to [the hearing teachers] your exhortations to peace, to order, to perfect understanding... they will never understand them. (Account of Berthier's responses to questioning concerning his involvement in the insubordination of December 14th 1830. Document cited by Bernard 1999: 514)

5.1.5 DEAF space targeted

It may appear that reading the 1830 revolt as a call by DEAF pupils and staff to recognise their DEAF space is an inappropriate reading-in of my focus on DEAF space into the evidence. However, the nature of de Gérando's response to it demonstrates that, whether he would have expressed it in these terms, this is how he saw it too. Not only was his retaliation predictably severe; expelling a number of the student signatories of the letter to the king and sacking Borel for incompetence, his replacement of Borel with a secular director, Désiré Ordinaire - thereby signifying a move away from the accommodation of Christian philanthropy to the more interventionist approach of secular philanthropy (Dekker 1998) - was coupled with the adoption of a policy that explicitly began to target and fragment the *Institution's* DEAF community's opportunities to author and communicate their language and culture; i.e. DEAF space.

He did this first by chastising those whom he considered the ringleaders of the revolt; the DEAF teachers. On March 2nd 1831, de Gérando announced that, henceforth, not only would the default language of all official *Institution* business (CDP March 2nd 1831), including the *Conférences* (CDP, March 9th 1831), become spoken French but the teaching of spoken French would be its ultimate aim:

> The arts of speech and lip-reading will be taught to the pupils by their respective teachers... this teaching will be given from their arrival... and will continue with great application until they are in a position to use both of these means of communication. (Circulaire 1832: articles 8-9)

For their inability to achieve this, Berthier and Lenoir found themselves stranded outside of the formal teaching *Rotation* [timetable]. However, so did all those pupils who were either so profoundly deaf that they could not learn to speak, or who were unwilling to do so. Placing all of these intransigent producers of DEAF space in the same classroom, de Gérando created a virtual DEAF ghetto within the school. The

remainder of the pupils quickly learned that the focus of their time in the classroom was no longer their education to learning, but the mastery – as far as it was possible for them – of the French language.

However, de Gérando's next move showed that it was not merely preventing the influence of the DEAF teachers that interested him. Rather, it was his aim to 'divide and conquer' the DEAF community of the school along audiological, linguistic and attitudinal fault lines. Enforcing the timetable to ensure that contact between teachers and their pupils was kept to a minimum, he "Distributed [pupils] into companies and ranks, having at their head a corporal and a sergeant, proudly wearing on their left sleeve chevrons of yellow wool and marching to the sound of a drum" (Bébian 1834: 26, quoting from the *Circulaire* 1832) whisked them away immediately classes were finished. Then, in a belt-and-braces confirmation of the illegitimacy of sign language communication between pupils he decreed that:

> In all communication between pupils and with others either in class, or during recreation, or during walks or meals, or in the workshops, they will communicate solely with the aid of chalk boards, or through speech, or through fingerspelled French and these will be the only ways of communication between them. (Circulaire 1832: article 13)

Finally, by requiring all new pupils to present a questionnaire (Circulaire 1832: 129) at their arrival in which details of their family's audiological background, the conditions surrounding the onset of their deafness and their previous contact with other deaf people were detailed, he established a filter that allowed him to not only identify those who were most like to succeed in the visually oral classrooms of the school, but also those whose background suggested any previous inhabitancy of DEAF space.[1] These, he either excluded from the school entirely, or segregated directly with the rest of Berthier and Lenoir's DEAF 'failures'.

5.1.6   DEAF space re-located

There is little evidence to suggest exactly how successful de Gérando's reforms

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[1] The statistics reveal a potential 'back story' to the institution's DEAF space. Of 102 *sourds-muets* in the school, 21 are reported to come from families where there are other deaf children. Many of these also have close relatives, or in some cases several generations of close relatives, who are deaf. Further analysis of this will only be possible when the INJS complete their ongoing cataloguing of historical pupils' records.

actually were within the *Institution*. Certainly, accounts of later 19th century linguistic oppression (see *La Défense des Sourds-Muets* in 1885) suggest that his separation and surveillance of pupils would not have entirely eradicated the ongoing production of DEAF space. However, If the disappearance of DEAF voices from the *Institution's* record is anything to do by, de Gérando's actions, now applied with all the commitment of Désiré Ordinaire, were at least moderately successful. Following the 1830 revolt, the voices of the pupils fall silent; the pupils themselves are only visible through the careful authoring of de Gérando himself presented in official literature.

The reactions of the DEAF teachers and tutors appear to support this conclusion. Other than the brief opportunities presented within their own classrooms, they found themselves not only excluded from a DEAF space that they had produced and enjoyed, in some cases, for over twenty years but were forced to watch as it was fragmented and surveilled out of existence. However, as I have already suggested, the *Institution* was no longer the only location that its DEAF staff now produced a DEAF space. Consequently, as circumstances in the *Institution* became increasingly difficult, their primary location for the production of DEAF space shifted outside the walls of the *Institution*, where they continued to meet each other, and to begin to meet more regularly with members of the local Parisian DEAF community.[2]

Whilst it is almost certain that meetings like this had been ongoing since Bébian's dismissal from the school, it appears that the increased pressure of the situation in the *Institution* now lent a particular urgency to this alternative production of DEAF space. Therefore, it was no surprise that, on the evening of November 25th 1832 (JSM, Nov 25th 1895), as Forestier, a tutor in the institution and Gide, a member of the local DEAF community, were found eating together they suddenly realised that the date of their meal coincided with the 120th anniversary of the birthday of the Abbé de l'Epée; the founder of the *Institution*, and the man whose bringing together

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[2] There is some confusion over where the DEAF staff at the Institution lived at this point. Maignet (1793) and Prieur de la Marne (1794) suggest that both monitors and teachers were allowed to reside within the *Institution* although the latter's board was not provided. However, references to 'Berthier's home' in the JSM (Nov 25th 1895) and the BSM (1834) suggest that Berthier and Lenoir might have been living outside of the *Institution*. If this is the case, then more prolonged contact with the wider Parisian DEAF community and with the hearing world is only made more likely.

of deaf children had unwittingly given birth to the DEAF space that De Gérando and Désiré Ordinaire now appeared determined to destroy. Raising a glass to him, they committed to remember the date the following year with a formal, memorial dinner.

This first memorial meal, held in November 1833 (Société d'Appui Fraternel 1913:3-4) was a low-key affair. Little is known about its preparation and it appears to have simply been a private gathering in the home of either Forestier, Gide, Boclet or Berthier; the four DEAF participants. However, what is reported is that during the meal, the four decided to adopt a suggestion by Forestier and form a committee; the *Comité des Sourds-Muets,* whose responsibility it would be to organise an annual banquet on a Sunday evening on or around the same date each year (JSM ,Nov 25th 1895). It was not until the middle of the following November that this committee, which by this time consisted of eleven members met in the home of Ferdinand Berthier (who would become its president) and laid the foundation for the first official banquet which was held on November 30th 1834 at the restaurant "la veau qui tête" in the Place du Châtelet (BSM 1834). It was attended by 51 (or 52 according to the BSM 1834) deaf and 2 hearing people (BHR 1834).

The form of this DEAF Banquet space remained almost unchanged from 1834; taking place on a Sunday evening on or close to November 24th in a restaurant selected for its food, or whose owners were known by the organisers to be friendly to DEAF people, it was little more than a sumptuous meal followed by a tradition of speeches (see the Banquet accounts, JSM November 1895, Gulliver 2004). However, the banquets that followed it quickly emerged as something far more significant than a temporary collocation of DEAF people. By 1836 the number attending had risen to sixty, by 1845 it was eight-five and by the mid 1850s, it had reached nearly one hundred (BHR 1835, 1836, 1845, 1855). Not only that but, through the production of a richly authored DEAF space that drew together the DEAF space of the wider Parisian DEAF community and the relocated DEAF space of the *Institution* and its re-authoring of them into something that it referred to as 'DEAF Nation', the DEAF Banquets provide us with the first explicit attempts by the DEAF community to describe their place, and that of DEAF people, within the wider world. It is to the production of the DEAF banquet space, and through it the concept of DEAF Nation that I now turn.

5.2   DEAF Nation

With this third section, I now arrive at a more in-depth examination of the emergence and nature of DEAF space as it was produced outside of the *Institution*. However, before proceeding to this, I find myself addressing the significant challenge of both the expectations inherent within the 'nation' trope itself, and of interpretations that have been made of DEAF Nation in the form of the 'Deaf nation' by more modern-day commentators. In part, this is perhaps a reminder to myself not to get sidetracked by attempting to unpack the question of the 'nation' any more than the history of DEAF space requires. However, it is also an acknowledgement of the significance that this subject has had in recent years to the modern-day DEAF community and an awareness that to attempt to decorticate this within a single introductory subsection, when the subject of the DEAF nation could easily fill a thesis in its own right, would seem reductionist and somewhat flippant.

My response to these challenges is to remind myself that this thesis is about writing a history of DEAF space, and not a history of DEAF Nation. I would, therefore, request that the reader acknowledge their potential expectations regarding the DEAF Nation and set them aside. Then, reading through the evidence presented below, cling to my previous assertions that what I am describing is the original space of the *Institution's* DEAF community, now relocated beyond the *Institution*, and their ongoing interaction with the spaces and knowledges of both the wider Parisian DEAF community and the hearing world mediated both through that community (see Desloges 1779) and hearing people also able to sign (see Bébian 1826: 13-14, cited above).

What this reveals is that, far from representing a 'nation' per se, DEAF Nation emerges as the most clearly defined (and yet complex, problematic, and unfinished) attempt by the *Institution's* DEAF staff to put a name to the fundamental tension that they experienced as they relocated their principle production of DEAF space away from the closed and perimetered context of the *Institution* and attempted to define their position with regards to a wider DEAF community, and the hearing world. Representative of the balance that they necessarily had to establish, perhaps for the first time, between their visual being-in-the-world on the one hand (with all that entailed in terms of their production of a space that would permit them to reach for

totalité on a visual plane), and their belonging to other communities, imagined and known, each of which had its own spaces and knowledges; DEAF Nation and its emotive reception is a snapshot crystallisation of a particular instance of this balance, produced by individuals from within particular bodies and with different experiential backgrounds and understandings of *totalité,* to be understood by others, both DEAF and hearing from within their own bodies, experiences and expectations.

This final section, reflects this potential for enormous complexity and the specificity of the outworking of this balance in the form of DEAF Nation by approaching evidence of DEAF Nation space from three discrete angles. It begins by examining the way in which the *Institution's* DEAF space was produced as it was relocated outside of the *Institution*, identifying the particular ingredients that led to it being produced as a series of Banquets with their own specific space. Secondly it examines the record for the origins of the 'nation' trope, identifying it as a hearing-world concept drawn into the Banquet space through contact between specific individuals. Finally, it examines the formulation and outworking of the DEAF Nation, and the impact of it as it was received by others both DEAF and hearing.

5.2.1   Producing DEAF space at the *Banquets des Sourds-Muets*

The spark that led to the production of the Banquet space lies, as I have shown, in the 1832 meal shared by Forestier and Gide. However, beyond the choice of the banquet form itself, which may have suggested something of a resistance movement (see Mirzoeff 1995, Gulliver 2004) what really set the Banquet space apart was less its form and more its evolution as a space in which a combination of at least four foundational knowledges authored within different DEAF spaces and crystalised to urgency by immediate local circumstance were performed. The first of these is a tradition which appears within the Paris *Institution*, prior even to Bébian's departure in 1822, and that had begun to author the school's DEAF community into a narrative that was rich with significance. Originally captured by Bébian in his 1819 "Eulogy to Charles-Michel de l'Epée" (Bébian 1819) but likely reaching back beyond that to internally performed folklore of the pupil community, it is a story that tells of de l'Epée – himself marginalised by mainstream wisdom – and of his epiphanic calling to reach out to deaf people, alienated and scattered amongst the hearing (Bébian 1819: 2).

In Bébian's hands, it is an enthusiastic defence of the use of sign language over speech in teaching. However, in the hands of his pupils, in particular Berthier (see Berthier 1836) the tradition appears to have turned from the obvious need for sign language to concentrate on what the lineage of de l'Epée's intervention meant for DEAF people. It expanded to capture Bébian himself; a teacher in the pedagogical image of de l'Epée (Berthier 1830), authoring him into a metanarrative that describes the path taken by the DEAF community from scattered isolation in the hearing world to relational and intellectual wholeness as an embattled exchange between forces for their destruction; Sicard & Paulmier (Berthier 1836: 15) and for their salvation; de l'Epée & Bébian (Berthier 1836: 7, 13).

By the time this tradition had been brought from the *Institution*, through the crucible of de Gérando's philanthropic intervention, into the space of the wider Parisian DEAF community, it had gained a harder edge:

> A meeting to celebrate, as a family, the memory of the Messiah of this people too long fallen… cast out as pariahs from selfish civilisation… The first idea of this Banquet came from the *comité des sourds-muets*, suggested by the need – made more pressing by grave circumstance – to enlighten one another, to support each other as the children of one father, to close ranks and to defend the rights so painfully and valuably won against the evil and ignorance that seeks to steal them back. (BSM 1835: 20)

No longer simply the story of how their being-together-in-the-world came about, it was a story told in contrast to their recent treatment. The Banquets were not merely a celebration, but had also become a communion of shared experience and a call to arms.

A second significant knowledge that authored the DEAF Banquet space combines knowledge both from within the *Institution* and from the wider DEAF community. In the same way that Clerc is described as responding with joy in his ability to communicate with the English DEAF children in the previous chapter, we now find both the DEAF staff of the *Institution* and other, previously unknown DEAF people responding to the discovery of their unity by language into a people who are historically and globally one:

> In [de l'Epée's] happy wisdom he seized upon the language that is given to all intelligent beings, without exception, the language that our ancestors used, that our descendents will use. A language understood both by the desert dweller and by the town dweller. The language, at last, of gestures. (BSM 1834:14)

> Present were *sourds-muets* from all countries; for it is a real advantage… to only have one language to learn, that is *mimique*, a language that has no words and who, painting only true ideas, is necessarily the same across the whole surface of the globe. (BSM 1835: 19)

A third aspect of the DEAF Banquet space is perhaps less well defined but is just as clear. Uniting the participants is the common understanding that whatever their prior experience of DEAF space might have been, what the Banquets offered them was a glimpse of a temporary production of DEAF space autonomous, and the suggestion of what a permanent establishment of that autonomy might be like. For the majority, surrounded in normal life by hearing people, and even for those employed within schools for deaf children or DEAF businesses faced with being accountable to a wider hearing-authored world, this was an experience that triggered nostalgia for their own school days. It was also a situation in which they revelled. Appearing from the outside to be a situation of "reversed roles" (Maurice, in *Le Temps*, December 2nd 1834) it was, in fact, not a carnivalesque performance of reversal, performed with the mindful acknowledgement of the need to return to hearing-world norms. Rather it was simply an alternatively authored reality that redrew the lines of 'expected behaviour' from a DEAF centre:

> Two *speaking people* alone were given the rare privilege of participating… one M. Eugène de Monglave… friend of the *Sourds-Muets*… And M. B. Maurice, then editor of the newspaper *Le Temps*, *an incomplete man… unhappy* and deprived of natural sign language, *paria* of that society and obliged to have recourse to a pencil to conduct a conversation with the heroes of the celebration. An expression of pity could be read in the faces of all those whom he approached. *"What an unhappy man"* they said, *"He can't make himself understood"*. (BSM 1834: 11-12. Emphasis in original)

Finally, as these other knowledges are performed, a fourth emerges, almost as if the DEAF space produced at the Banquets becomes something more than the sum of its parts. Established in common origins with a common vision, united by their tie to the same uniquely visual language, experiencing in the Banquet space the sufficiency promised by other experiences of DEAF space, the reality produced by the DEAF Banqueters can no longer be one that is invalidated by the realities of the hearing world and suddenly becomes one that demands a response of equal recognition from it.

This is demonstrated by a wonderfully imagined cameo reported to have occurred at the end of the first Banquet as the DEAF Banquet space was recognised and respected by even the most illuminated gatherings of the hearing-produced world:

> The *Société Libre des Beaux Arts*, who were in a neighbouring room celebrating M. Daguerre… who would later discover the immortal secret of fixing images with a camera obscura, asked to be allowed to come into the meeting of the *Sourds-Muets*. This proposal was accepted with enthusiasm and the two families soon became but one. The infirmity of the one group disappeared before the consideration of the other. Then, there was nothing more than one single gathering… using pen, or brush, or fingers, or speech. (BSM 1834: 17)

5.2.2   Approaching a space of DEAF Nation

From 1834, the *Banquet des Sourds-Muets* became a regular annual event, its location and form evolving from year to year, settling into an expected format and becoming established as a regular landmark of the DEAF calendar. Its evolution was not only superficial, however. Behind its public display, the *Comité* and those most closely associated with it also began to see the Banquet DEAF space as a way of somehow pursuing the potential establishment of DEAF space autonomous even outside of the *Institution*. Forming a more or less acknowledged intelligentsia; a "chamber of representatives… " for the DEAF community, "… their state council" (BSM 1836: 32), a small group consisting of Berthier, Lenoir, Allibert and Forestier took it upon themselves to embody the core of that space, and to address the challenge of how they might effectively translate it to the hearing world in a way that would capture and communicate its full significance.

The key was clearly to use the Banquets themselves. However, they appear to have proceeded initially with little idea of exactly how to achieve what they wanted. In the earliest years, 1834 and 1835, the approach they take is distinctly religious: the banquets are described as "holy institution" (BSM 1834: 22), a "holy alliance" (BSM 1834: 16) to remember and pay homage to de l'Epée, the "redeemer" (BSM 1835: 19) of the DEAF community, whose representative-as-president, Berthier, now stands at their head as a quasi-prophetic or sacrificial figure:

> I understand, furthermore, all that the unanimous support of my brethren imposes upon me in terms of devotion and perseverance in the accomplishment of these new obligations that I undertake on your behalf, before heaven and before man. My whole life belongs to you: only you have the right to dispose of it as you see fit. (BSM 1834: 13)

Furthermore, having seen success in 1834 when some eleven newspapers : Le Courrier Français, Le National, Le Journal des Débats, Le Quotidien, La Gazette de France, La tribune, Le moniteur, Le Corsair, Le cabinet du lectuer, Le Journal de

Paris and l'Impartial (BHR 1834) dedicated print-space to the Banquet, they attempted to make the 1835 Banquet one that was specifically a space of outreach, demonstrating the potential reality of the DEAF community. However, despite providing a spoken-French translation of everything that happened, and toasting the press directly (BSM 1835: 29), what was translated to print often fell far short of true representation. With enough hearing journalists present that they didn't need to engage with the DEAF guests at all and, instead, simply reported what they understood at first glance. One paper took over three months to publish an account (le Moniteur March 17th 1836) and when it did, based it on a single toast made towards the end of the Banquet by a M. Gouin (BSM 1835: 26) reporting it as a party to "Wish Adieu to M. Clerc".

Abandoning the press, the *Comité* then began to approach members of the local and national government and other well-known figures with the same aim but, again, with little success. The Minister for Public Instruction consistently sent his apologies (BSM 1836) and in 1837 M. Laurent de Jussieu, Secretary General of the Seine *Préfécture* and elected MP for Paris attended, but only to replace the writer Alphonse de Lamartine who excused himself at the last minute. Béranger the poet turned down the invitation in 1836, as did Ferdinand-Thomas the architect and the sculptor. Of those invited, only the playwright Bouilly was a regular guest. However, by this time he was an old man and unable to see beyond the official celebration of de l'Epée's birth to grasp the Banquets' deeper significance (see Bouilly's response to a toast in 1836, BSM 1836: 42-43).

By 1837, it was clear that their actions were having little impact. Consequently, just before that year's Banquet, Berthier submitted a project to the Minister of the Interior proposing that the *Comité* be formally constituted and officially recognised as a "*Société Centrale des Sourds-Muets*" [Central Society of Sourds-Muets] whose:

> … principle aim is to deliberate upon the interests of *Sourds-Muets* in general, to gather into a commonly united accord *sourd-muet* luminaries scattered across the surface of the earth and other learnèd men who have made a deep study of this speciality, to strengthen the ties that unite this great family, to offer to each of its members a rallying point, a place for reciprocal communication and the resources to make themselves known in the world. (Société Centrale 1838)

This body, embodying the potential for DEAF space autonomous, was formally recognised on May 27th 1838. Its founders did not have to wait long to be vindicated. The Banquet 1838 accounts tells the story.

> M. Désiré Ordinaire, for reasons of frequent tribulations that he had to suffer from the Administrative Council, sent in his resignation… M. de Lanneau [major of the 12th arrodissement] was asked to succeed him and was placed in position without informing the council… who refused to attend his inauguration.
>
> Some time after, upon his return to the *Institution*, the council – their pride injured and their rights infringed - were most energetic in their protestations. They went as far as to bar the doors of the archives and of the office in which de Lanneau had installed himself as director in the name of the Ministry… This lasted for six weeks…
>
> In the meantime, the *sourd-muets* could not lose the (perhaps selfish) opportunity afforded to them to guarantee the future of their brothers and that of the *Institution Royale…* They immediately dispatched three; M. Ferdinand Berthier, Lenoir and Allibert to invite him to the Banquet of the Abbé de l'Epée. (BSM 1838: 59-60)

De Lanneau, ignorant of the issues surrounding the *Institution* and its DEAF space and still working through his alienation from the premises themselves, perceived this approach as nothing more than support offered by three representatives of his teaching staff and accepted the invitation. For the new *Société Centrale*, however, de Lanneau's acceptance was not merely the actions of a grateful director. It was a signal that the validity of their DEAF reality, produced in the Banquet space had finally been recognised. This assumption was further justified when, at the Banquet on November 25th, the Banquet guests saw Berthier arriving accompanied not only by de Lanneau, but also by M. Dupin – the president of the chamber of elected deputies, and in an unexpected twist, John O'Connell – the son of Daniel O'Connell, "the Liberator" of Ireland.

All three visitors appear somewhat bemused at the exuberance with which their presence was celebrated. However, for the *Société Centrale,* the significance of their attendance is apparently quite transparent. Finally convinced of the need to recognise the DEAF community on their own terms, it appears to them that the French (and by extension also, Irish) governments have not only signalled this by the "measure of interest that [they] have taken in the *Institution Royale*" (BSM 1838: 62) but have further demonstrated their intent to deal with DEAF people as equals by sending ambassadors to visit them in their Banquet space.

Perhaps because of this apparent recognition of the validity of the DEAF Banquet spaces, the 1838 Banquet also signifies another 'first'. Peeping out from behind the speeches, and the actions of those present is the first clear enunciation of 'DEAF Nation' and of its role in the further emancipation of DEAF people's being-in-the-world. At first it is made by allusion:

> [We lived] a kind of exile in the midst of society, like an anticipation of death!... Now we have united out minds, our efforts, our knowledge; today we form together, a body in whose well-being we all share, active and devoted. Today *we who were not, now we are!...* The seed has been sown, and from it will grow the shoots of out full regeneration and of a great future… To Berthier! To our O'Connell! (BSM 1838: 65. Emphasis in original)

But by 1839, it is made explicit:

> Brothers! … a toast from the exceptional nation of *sourds-muets*: to Berthier, our Napoléon! (BSM 1839: 83).

In many ways, this evolution to Nationhood was one that was simply waiting to happen and, although again, we must guard against reading later authoring back into the accounts of the Banquets (see Gulliver 2004 and below), previous references by Lenoir to a DEAF 'brotherhood', 'union' and 'holy alliance' in 1834 (BSM 1834: 16), by Berthier to de l'Epée as the "flag of our association" in 1835 (BSM 1835: 24) and by Forestier to a "people of *muets*" in 1837 (BSM 1837: 53) indicate that the tenets of a 'nation-type' belonging and politics were present and performed within the Banquet space even as early as 1834. However, the selection of 'Nation' itself by the *Société Centrale* is something of a conundrum. This is firstly because it appears not to have come from within the DEAF community itself. There is no sign in French Sign Language for 'nation', nor has there ever been one in French DEAF community memory. Rather, it appears to have been introduced as a trope by a hearing man by the name of Eugène Garay de Monglave.

De Monglave is a somewhat elusive figure about whom little is truly known. Publically acknowledged as a writer, historian, translator and academic (Vapereau 1869), we also know that he was a staunchly republican opponent of the Restauration (Vapereau 1869), deeply fascinated by Romantic forms of nationhood; opposing the Orléanist Monarchy's attempts to banalise historical accounts to their creation of a French nation-state (Salgado Guimarães 2006) and revelling, instead, in the authoring of poetry that explored the origins and languages of the Basque nation

(Cervantes 1883) which he published under the auspices of an historical society, the *Institut Historique*, that he founded himself in 1833 (Institut Historique 1834). He was also considered fluent in sign language by DEAF people themselves (Ami des Sourds-muets August 1839) and, although we are not sure of the exact timings, we know that he was a close friend of Berthier's, having met him some time after his and Lenoir's removal from the *Rotation* in 1831, and inviting him to join the *Institut* and participate in its research – which Berthier did, acknowledging de Monglave's friendship and encouragement in the introduction to his largely eulogised presentation of DEAF people's history, written in 1836 as the *Histoire et Statistique de l'Education des Sourds-Muets* (Berthier 1836).

Although we have no concrete evidence that it was de Monglave that influenced the adoption of the Nation trope, there are plenty of indicators. We know that he was closely involved in the DEAF Banquets, attending every year, and particularly close to Berthier himself. It was de Monglave who accompanied John O'Connell to the 1838 banquet (BSM 1838). Perhaps most crucially, it was he who was responsible from 1834, for writing several of the press articles that originally figure in the handwritten Banquet accounts and were later used to construct the published BSM record and in which we first find reference to DEAF people as a 'nation':

> At five o'clock, nearly 60 members of this *nation* apart met in the halls of the restaurant in the Place du Châtelet. (de Monglave, BHR 1834; no page).

If it is true that the *Société Centrale* adopted the concept of a DEAF nation from de Monglave without wrestling with the implications of its translation from hearing-authored space, this may also explain the second part of the DEAF Nation conundrum, which is that the *Société Centrale's* use of 'nation' appears not to have meant 'nation' at all. At least not in all aspects of the term. Certainly, it drew on elements of nationhood prevalent in France at the time, particularly as it represented the rise of a disempowered and disappointed populace against an unheeding authority (Jenkins 1990). However, at least at the beginning, it was less political and more explicitly spatial and processural; a description of what they felt they had already achieved in the DEAF Banquet space, and in its embodiment in the *Société Centrale* itself, and of its mobilisation in an attempt to define a place for DEAF people and DEAF space autonomous in an ongoing, evolving relationship with the hearing world.

The consequences of this confusion were perhaps more serious than might be immediately apparent. Use of the term by the *Société Centrale* after 1838-9 incited a response from those outside of it. However, as de Gérando's criticism in a deaf-education centred journal in 1840 indicates, objections were not directed at the DEAF Nation as it was understood by the *Société Centrale*, but rather at the more generally 'assumed' implication of what a 'nation' of DEAF people might represent if the concept were understood more traditionally:

> Nothing would be more harmful to the sourd-muet than to allow them to associate only with other *sourd-muets*. To make *sourds-muets* a separate nation… would not be a privilege for them but a condemnation. It is within the society of those who speak that that they must live and breathe and into that society that they must integrate more and more. (de Gérando In Ami des Sourds-Muets November 1840: 11)

Even though this objection comes from de Gérando, it still demands an answer from Berthier whose response confuses the issue that the same time as it reveals something of the heart of DEAF Nation:

> It has been said that nothing would be worse for *sourds-muets* than to only frequent other *sourds-muets*. To form *sourds-muets* into a **separate nation**… would be to condemn them to a terrible exclusion… Never did such a narrow, selfish idea, take root in our hearts. Voluntarily cut ourselves off indeed!... They wanted to stop the ***sourd-muet*** **nation** using our own language… [Rather], come into our midst, join us in our work, in our play; come and learn our language as we have learned yours. (BSM 1840: 96. Emphasis mine)

5.2.3 Variations of DEAF space location

In hindsight, it is easy to see how those enthused by a situation can appear to be carried away by what they perceive to be happening. The apparent validation of DEAF Nation by the government is a case in point. The implications of the 1838 Banquet were felt throughout the Paris DEAF community. From 1839 same year, The *Société Centrale* began to argue that for those DEAF people lacking contact with others, the spaces of its regular monthly meetings, and those of the Banquets were a "promised land, into which you [*sourds-muets* present] have entered with cries of triumph" (BSM 1839: 79) and a space from which to demonstrate that the hearing world's assumption that DEAF people were inferior was mistaken (Ami des Sourds-Muets, January 1840).

This assertion was incarnated by in the actions of one of its members; Pélissier, who – facing a court case, rejected a traditional plea of moral idiocy commonly adopted by DEAF people before the law – refused the services of an interpreter and prepared to defend himself in writing (Pélissier case in the Ami des Sourds-Muets, April 1840). An increasingly formalised body of shared DEAF heritage was written by Berthier (Berthier 1840) and became a best-seller amongst those able to read it. Everywhere, it seemed that the DEAF community was bursting with confidence based on the belief that the government had recognised the validity of DEAF space.

Then, in 1841, the climax of their hopes was realised. De Gérando's *Administration* was dissolved by the government (Bernard 1999: 661) and in its place was created a consultative commission consisting of (amongst others) Eugène de Monglave, and de Lanneau himself. The joy of the *Société Centrale* is clear at that year's banquet

> "eyes that sparkled in the most complete joy… the assembled guests were celebrating their most outstanding triumph, the return to traditions too-long-distained, the most decisive victory of tolerance over a system that was narrow, petty and exclusive. The victory of true philanthropy over a nepotism that simply paraded as such" (BSM 1841: 116).

Even de Lanneau's speech that year appeared to confirm their belief. His quote, taken directly from Bébian's original proposal of the liberation of the *Institution's* DEAF space: "the *Institution des Sourds-Muets* was *founded for the Sourds-Muets*, and that everything there *must be for the benefit of the Sourds-Muets*" (BSM 1841: 123. Italics in original) appeared to signal the victory of DEAF Nation and the imminent return of the *Institution* to a Bébianesque space, one that was, now, recognised by the state.

Despite this apparent recognition, however, the truth of the matter was that the government had not, nor did it ever, recognise the validity of the DEAF Banquet space, let alone the idea of crystallising it into DEAF Nation. De Lanneau's words may have echoed those of Bébian. However, his meaning was quite different. As part of the dissolution of de Gérando's *Administration*, an ordinance from the King had fundamentally altered the structure of the *Institution*, incorporating it into a body of "Goodwill establishments" run by the Ministry of the Interior "for the public good" (Ordonnance du Roi 9227, 21st Feb 1841) and that would contain, alongside the Paris and Bordeaux Royal Institutions for *Sourds-Muets*, those previously designated as

'hospices'; the Royal Institution for the Blind, The medical Hospice des Quinze-Vingts, and the insane asylum at Chareton.

It was the bitterest of ironies. Just as the Parisian DEAF community were glimpsing a way to establish the validity of their own reality in the eyes of the hearing world, the government brought the entire artifice tumbling down. More painful still is the apparent failure of the *Société Centrale* to acknowledge their change in status. Their celebration of the government's 'goodwill', "… which is yet another proof of the solicitude of the government towards Sourds-Muets" (Berthier in BSM 1841: 118), is a sickening indication that they continued to believe that they dealing with a government and a consultative commission that recognised them. Far from recognising the DEAF Nation, however, all that the government's actions in 1841 represented was to continue the philanthropic circumscription of DEAF space begun by de Gérando.

Those further away from the heart of the *Société Centrale*, however, were perhaps more perceptive of the way in which the government's words did not immediately match their actions. Barely a year later, the journal *l'Ami des Sourds-Muets* received a letter from a DEAF man by the name of Austère Gazan. Gazan was the deaf son of an army general who had attended the *Institution* along with Berthier and had thrived in its DEAF space (Paulmier 1844:1-4) but who, since leaving the *Institution*, had found himself stigmatised for his deafness. In 1843, Gazan's patience finally failed; and in a startling diatribe against the hearing state's refusal to take DEAF people seriously for no reason other than their numerical minority – a situation that, within DEAF space, was of course reversed – produced a description of what is tantamount to DEAF separatism:

> What cannot be the object of any doubt is that, if there existed a people made up of mutes, entirely separated from speaking society… there, would stand the prosecution of laws instituted by universal suffrage… there, the vain rights of birth would be trampled underfoot… there, we would see art and craft, science and the fine arts encouraged and rewarded… there, would be independence in education…. There… there… there… (Gazan, September [sic] 8th 1842, in Ami des Sourds-Muets, July-August 1843)

However, if – for Gazan – DEAF people could never be entirely free within a hearing nation, for others, the implication of separatism was exactly the problem that they had with the DEAF Nation. Jules Imbert – a DEAF bank clerk (BSM 1842: 130) who had been educated at the *Institution* just after Gazan – found the idea of needing

to produce a DEAF space apart from the hearing world distinctly impractical. Having retained some ability to speak, and in daily employ within the hearing world, he enjoyed the DEAF Banquets and appears to have spent most of his time within DEAF space itself. However, he saw no need to shun the hearing world as Gazan suggested. Nor did he understand why his emancipation as a DEAF person should require him to remain within the DEAF Nation space of the *Société Centrale* and wait until they mediated emancipation for DEAF people on his behalf. Rather, he preferred to roll up his sleeves and engage with the French state directly, asserting his own individual validity within it as a citizen, and calling on practical support to help him.

Rejecting the DEAF Nation on the one hand for its unnecessary and impractical separatism and, on the other, for its 'control over the lives of adult Sourds-Muets' (Coup d'Oeil entry for 1844; no page number) Imbert and a group of DEAF friends rejected the *Société Centrale* entirely (JSM November 25th 1895) and went their own way. From 1843, they adopted the practice of annual "July Banquets" which were like the de l'Epée banquets in all ways except that they were held to celebrate the decrees of July 21st and 29th 1791 which had seen the original adoption of de l'Epée's DEAF pupils *into* the nation. Then, in the mid 1840s, they proposed a more integrated place for DEAF people within hearing society by encouraging patronage from the hearing world for those in need in the form of a *Société Générale d'Education, de Patronage, d'Assistance en Faveur des Sourds-Muets et Jeunes Aveugles* [General society for the education, patronage and assistance of Sourds-Muets and blind youth] (JSM, Nov 25th 1895).

The response of the *Société Centrale* to this was entirely disproportionate. On the one hand it failed to appreciate the extent to which Imbert's frustrations were shared by a significant proportion of the DEAF community. However, at the same time, it panicked at the danger that Imbert's actions represented for the gradual erosion of DEAF space validity by frittering away areas of the autonomy of DEAF space through piecemeal reliance upon the hearing world. Frustrated by de Lanneau's apparent lack of urgency and under pressure to achieve results before their DEAF Nation became little more than a request for alms, the *Société Centrale* tried to guarantee their support by mirroring Imbert's proposals by also offering material

support, but in the form of an independently DEAF-funded mutual (Société Centrale 1849).

However, in 1848, external events once again intervened in the most spectacular way. With the fall of the Monarchy and the declaration of universal suffrage, Berthier and the *Société Centrale*'s leadership saw an opportunity to take the DEAF Nation further, this time by legal means. Meeting with the provisional government on March 7th 1848, Berthier poured scorn on de Lanneau's management of the school and requested his removal. Then, following the declaration of a general election by universal suffrage, he proposed himself as a candidate for election to the *Assemblée Nationale* on behalf of France's DEAF population.

> Why should the doors of the new French *Assemblée* be closed to a *Sourd-Muet* who is known throughout the world as a support, an advocate, a counsellor, the father to those like him and who– as you know –often brought the demands of the *Sourds-Muets* of France to the old government…. Having contributed, in my own small way, in obtaining… the full and entire enjoyment of their political and civil rights as equals of the speaking, I have gained the right to intervene in the affairs of the country both as a citizen of the republic, and as an organ of the twenty-two thousand French *Sourds-Muets*. (Berthier 1848: no page)

Berthier's candidature was the final confusing straw that broke the back of DEAF Nation. Not only was it an abject failure, he emerged from the episode having alienated de Lanneau, endangered the credibility of the *Société Centrale*, and confirmed the view of many DEAF people who shared Imbert and his friends' fears that all the DEAF Nation was about was exclusive control of the DEAF community. With no unified Banquet space in which to regroup, the unity of the DEAF community shattered, and the concept of DEAF Nation irrevocably confused, the Parisian DEAF community entered the 1850s producing their DEAF space located in a wide range of different and conflicting ways.

5.4   Discussion

It is clear, from later evidence, that whilst the credibility of DEAF Nation was lost following the 1848 election, the concept itself did not disappear. In a speech, made at the Institution's Annual Prize-giving in 1856, the hearing teacher Valade-Rémi is keen to dismiss the validity of what was still, clearly, a popular trope for the reality of the DEAF Community, at least within the *Institution*.

> If deafness; the constant and almost exclusive cause of mutism, is anything other than an infirmity; it, instead of a sorrowful exception it constituted a character transmitted from father to son, determinant of a race; if (in a word) the *sourds-muets* were, as they like to say, a *nation*, then we would see… deaf children learning the language [of signs] on their mothers' knees…. But almost all are born to hearing mothers who have no knowledge of the language of signs… Do not call yourselves a *nation* and distance yourselves from your hearing brethren. Rather, draw ever closer to them… (Valade-Rémi, in Palmarès 1855-1856: page 9, 19)

This tension between 'distancing' and 'drawing ever closer' to the hearing world was not only encountered within the *Institution*. Although not explicitly presented in 'national' terms, the tension between the idea that DEAF people were best served by establishing their space as an 'always autonomous' from which to engage with the hearing world, and the counter-proposal that DEAF people could somehow integrate into a hearing world that recognised their physical difference crystallised into a schism that continued to characterise the public face of the Parisian DEAF community until approximately 1890.

However, what the final section of this chapter demonstrates is that while the terminology of 'DEAF Nation' was extremely problematic, its adoption as such was somewhat accidental. Certainly, Berthier, Lenoir and the other members of the *Société Centrale* came to understand their experience under de Gérando's philanthropic intervention as somehow paralleling what they understood 'nation' to represent; the loss of romantic dreams of the Napoléonic 'nation organisée' and the gradual readoption of 'nationhood' as an imagined entity to represent the unity of a disempowered populace against the hegemony of disinterested authorities (Jenkins 1990). However, had it not been for the influence of Eugène de Monglave, DEAF Nation would quite likely have taken on a different name (or perhaps no name at all) and the story of the mid 19th century Parisian DEAF community might have been quite different.

In effect, then, what DEAF Nation represents is simply one form to emerge from the relocation of the *Institution's* DEAF space. However, it was not the only one. While Berthier and other members of the Société Centrale's leadership asserted that their best interests were served by producing a DEAF space that maintained its autonomy as far as was possible alongside the hearing world, asserting its validity as a space that DEAF people should not be asked to leave, but that should simply be recognised as their valid home, others clearly disagreed. Gazan's assertion of the need for a

more isolationist DEAF space speaks of his belief that the very maintenance of the autonomy upon which DEAF nation was founded was impossible unless DEAF space was removed from contact with the hearing world. Imbert's assertion of the need for patronage suggests that for he, at least, could entertain the idea of leaving DEAF space and its production as a space to allow communicative freedom with more comfort.

Clearly, all three of these men were DEAF. All three had inhabited the DEAF space of the *Institution* and all produced their space as part of a wider DEAF space. However, just as clearly, the relocation of their space from the DEAF space autonomous of the *Institution* and into a situation where its production could be complicated by their own embodied physicality and their own experiences produced quite different spaces, even as all three strove to reach *totalité* as it appeared to them.

This can be seen in action, again by reference to Lefebvre's three aspects of spatial production. Firstly, by reference to Lefebvre's notion of space as *Perçu*. It is at this level of space *Perçu* that Gérando's philanthropic intervention progressively targetted the DEAF staff's production of space within the *Institution*. It is also through a *Perçu* of space produced with Bébian and with the wider DEAF community that they relocated their production of DEAF space. Ultimately, it is in seeking to re-establish as autonomous a DEAF *Perçu* as possible that the Banquet space emerged. It was also the extension of a visually secreted *Perçu* in contact with spaces through which the knowledges of the hearing world circulated that rendered DEAF space 'porous' to absorbing the concept of 'nation'. It was also perhaps the difference between Berthier's entirely visual *Perçu,* and Imbert's speech-hybridised *Perçu* that ultimately led to their production of differently 'located' DEAF spaces.

However, if the story of this chapter is one of complicating DEAF space *Perçu*, it is also one of a significant shift in DEAF space *Conçu*. Whereas in the previous chapter I asserted that DEAF space autonomous permitted a re-orientation of *Conçu* away from the boundary notions of DEAF space emergent to focus instead on elements authored within DEAF space, here – with the rescinding of autonomy – it clearly adds an additional ingredient. No longer is *Conçu* a discourse that simply defines itself by reference to knowledges authored within DEAF space, now it begins to describe that validity by reference to its reception by the hearing world. The *Conçu*

that Bébians' pupils mobilised to assert DEAF space's validity is still present. However, it is no longer a *Conçu* that freely authors DEAF space validity as unchallenged, but one that specifically authors it as a space that is contested. No longer is it just the natural space of those predestined to a visual reality (see above, chapter 4), now it is also a "right so painfully and valuably won against the evil and ignorance that seeks to steal [it] back" (op cit).

However, here again, a *Conçu* based on the perception that the validity of DEAF space needs to be defended appears to be contingent upon the extent to which that validity is necessary to the individual concerned. For Berthier, asserting the validity of DEAF space is key if he is to be allowed equality with hearing people as he continues to inhabit it. His *Conçu*, therefore, must include a recognition of the contestation of DEAF space by the hearing world and a resistance of it. For Imbert, on the other hand, the situation is quite different. Certainly, he does not shun DEAF space. However, it appears that his own personal DEAF space is not one that has been contested. His *Conçu* is less one that represents DEAF space as necessarily defending itself against the hearing world and that situates it rather as a space that is produced by DEAF people as they are unable to integrate within the hearing world.

Consequently, here, differences also appear in terms of *Vécu*. In the previous chapter, I asserted that DEAF space autonomous virtually precluded the production of a *Vécu*. In this chapter, however, momentary glimpses of a space of dis-alienated *Vécu* appear to multiply as that autonomy decreases. For Berthier, *Vécu* appears to be DEAF Nation; essentially a glimpse of a DEAF space produced and recognised as autonomous even as it is located in contact with the wider world. For Imbert, on the other hand, *Vécu* cannot be DEAF Nation. Rather, while he still produces a DEAF space, his patronage-based *Vécu* appears to reach for a dis-alienated moment that envisages the possible dissolution of the difference between DEAF and hearing spaces, and the full integration of the DEAF minority into the hearing majority.

For both Berthier and Imbert, the differences in the production of their DEAF space are illustrated by differences in *Perçu*, *Conçu* and *Veçu* and the way that they combine as each one reaches for their own *totalité*. However, it is here that I want to return to the question of DEAF Nation, and to assert, what is for me, the key point of this chapter. For what it shows is that – in effect – each of these aspects of spatial

production is, apparently, quite ambivalent concerning the form that DEAF space ultimately takes. Thus, a DEAF Nation space is no 'better' than a DEAF space that foresees the possibility of integration, or a DEAF separatist space. Each is simply a space produced by DEAF people as they live out their embodied reality.

I will return to this in more detail in the final chapter. However, before that, I move away from a micro-history of DEAF space itself, to present an example of a moment in a history of a specific DEAF space that was produced by the same Parisian DEAF community some fifty years after the events that I have just described. I present it as an example of DEAF space in action. But also of an example of the enormous complexities of producing and asserting a DEAF space when not only is the form of that DEAF space complicated by individual embodied experience, but the space itself is perceived in different ways by the hearing world.

CHAPTER 6 - DEAF SPACE DISABLED

On the evening of July 18th 1889, Lemardelay's in the Rue de Richelieu played host to the last meeting of the "1889 International Congress of *Sourds-muets*" (Congress 1889). It was a most bittersweet occasion. as each of the French and foreign DEAF visitors arrived to share in a final celebration before wishing 'Adieu' to recently made friends and beginning the (sometimes long) journey home, there was a distinct 'end of summer camp' feeling in the air. The sweetness of the recent congress and their regret at parting were especially heightened by the joy of having participated in producing a DEAF space so close-knit and unique, so united, so complete and so… easy… compared to the difficulties and challenges of their everyday experience.

For over sixty years, and even more particularly since the Oralist congress of Milan in 1880, the French DEAF community had been obliged to sit and watch as the DEAF space that they had previously produced in their schools were gradually squeezed out by spaces designed to be introductory annexes to the hearing world. As the spread of this Oralism became more and more banal, the previously strong DEAF space foundation that had prepared DEAF children to produce their own visual reality as they left school was eroded. Equality with the hearing world increasingly became the preserve of those few 'speaking-DEAF' able to cultivate speech, the 'silent-DEAF' who had previously formed the core of a visual being-in-the-world found themselves progressively obliged to take on the role of the petitioning "previously disinherited class… [living] in silence" (Zucchi, in Congress 1880: 200) of Zucchi's earlier misapprehension (see above, chapter 1).

And yet, if the 1889 Congress had shown the DEAF delegates who attended it anything, it was that this 'Oral' reality was true only in the eyes of the 'Oralists' themselves. Far from 'places of silence' that they imagined the DEAF community inhabited, the potential of DEAF people to produce their own valid reality was unchanged from the time of Desloges, Clerc, and Bébian's pupil Berthier.

As the American Brill had put it the previous evening at the Congress Banquet:

> We *Sourds-muets* are but one family... I find myself in a foreign country, surrounded by foreigners, and yet I find myself surrounded by friends and acquaintances whom I imagine to have known for years and breathe the air of my homeland. To what can I attribute this? It is the unique virtue of sign language that transforms a foreign country into a homeland. (Brill, in Congress 1889: 86)

No-one appears to have been more struck by the congress DEAF space than the president of the Congress himself; Ernest Dusuzeau. For he, and his colleagues who had organised the Congress shared a guilty secret; the initial reason for the Congress had not been a celebration of DEAF space at all. In fact it had been a carefully planned attempt to deal a definitive blow in a now fifty year-old Parisian battle fought out between their *Association Amicale* (previously the *Société Centrale*), and its embittered rival the *Société d'Appui Fraternel* (having developed as a patronage society from Imbert's DEAF integrationalist movement) over representative control of DEAF people's place within the hearing world. This was a battle that the more conservative *Association* had been losing, until one of their members suggested using their traditions as a strength. Were they not the originators of the de l'Epée banquets? Was the centenary of his death not a perfect time to draw on this heritage? The 1889 Congress had not, therefore, been aimed at producing DEAF unity, or a single DEAF space. Rather its aim had been to cold-bloodedly manipulate the heritage of the *Association* and their reputation as the founders of the *Banquet des Sourds-muets*, in a last-ditch attempt to gain the upper hand over the *Appui,* and reassert themselves as Paris' most important DEAF society.

What they had proposed, therefore, in their invitation to "*Sourds-muets* in all parts of the world... from the *Association Amicale* des *Sourds-muets*, previously the *Société [Centrale]* founded in 1838... ," (letter of 1st Feb 1889, in Congress 1889: 5) was nothing less than a DEAF space 'theme-park'. A programme carefully designed to draw upon the iconicity of the Banquets at every opportunity; from a welcome in the mayoral offices of the VI Arrondissement that mimicked the Banquet's decorative norms to a visit to the memorial site of de l'Epée's remains, to eight days of debate and

discussion that were carefully limited to avoid all troublesome and divisive topics, to a final sumptuous "International Banquet of *Sourds-muets*" (Programme, in Congress 1889: 7). The aim was to offer delegates every opportunity to literally gorge themselves on the mythology of de l'Epée and his achievements, and to leave with the supremacy of the *Association* and its representative supremacy firmly entrenched in their minds.

However, somewhere in the first twenty-four hours of the congress, things had started to unravel as – for first time in approximately half a century – a large gathering of DEAF people explicitly set aside local politics and simply produced a DEAF space. Of course, initially, the *Association* had tried to keep a grip on things (Dubois, in Congress 1889: 33-34). However, as the congress continued, first one (Forestier, in Congress 1889: 29) and then other (Chambellan, Congress 1889: 59) members of the *Association* gradually abandoned their original plan and became caught up in the dance. By the last evening, even Duzuseau had given in. Although in its official form the Banquet confirmed to expectations, it was no longer produced as a space to celebrate the *Association*, but had taken on a life of its own becoming little less than a spectral reincarnation of the original *Banquets des Sourds-muets*. Even the knowledges were the same; DEAF people's emergence from isolation into full humanity through their joining together (Congress 1889: 82), the universality of sign language and its production of a DEAF brotherhood (Congress 1889: 83), even the news that de l'Epée's work had been recognised by the state by the fixing of a plaque to the site where his home had stood on the Rue des Moulins, (Congress 1889: 84) appeared to suggest that the DEAF community, fruit of his *Institution*, would also soon be recognised.

Now, despite the fact that the congress was over, the space that it had produced would not let the *Association* lie. Far from allowing itself to simply be used as leverage in a battle over the right to represent a community tarnished by over fifty years of internecine strife, the full implications of the DEAF 'being-in-the-world' that the congress delegates had glimpsed demanded to be taken seriously. Given the situation of the DEAF community, this pursuit would involve two significant challenges.

The first was defined in an article published in 'le temps', ten days after the congress had ended:

> It is understandable that teachers who make sourds-muets speak see themselves as triumphing over an enormous obstacle… However, we ask that they bear in mind the conditions within which this objective is pursued and its ultimate aim… All the members of the congress, with a few exceptions, recognised that the method of teaching speech offers immense advantages (if, it must be added, it is practicable)… But the common opinion was that the language of signs was also indispensible. (le temps July 28th July 1889)

However, in the face of increasingly strong control of the representation of the nature and needs of DEAF people by those who controlled their education, this challenge dictated another. It was not simply a matter of contesting Oralist arguments, this had already been tried, and had been shown to fail. Rather, it was a matter of more fundamentally persuading those who they needed to listen that their arguments were worth hearing.

6.0   Introduction

In previous introductions I have charted the order in which this thesis' substantive chapters were written and explored the particular challenges that they presented. In Chapter five, the first to be written, I described the difficulty of wrestling with an initial focus on the history of (the) DEAF Nation to objectively consider the DEAF Nation movement as only one manifestation of a much more subtle history of DEAF space as it was located. In Chapter four, the next to be written, I described the challenges of situating that history of DEAF space within a 'history of deafness' and examined the process of sifting readily available evidence to locate an autonomous DEAF space between officially-written lines. In the introduction to Chapter three, the last to be written, I described the curiosity that led me to look for signs of DEAF space emergents, reaching further and further back until there was no more evidence to examine. In writing all three chapters, I took care to link them, where possible, to each other; causally – by tying characters and spaces together, and theoretically – describing the progressive production of DEAF space through Lefebvre's theoretical framework. Presented together, they form a body of more or less continuous narrative and analysis.

As I suggested in the introduction, this chapter differs from those that precede it. Not only does it stand apart for reasons that I will explain in a moment, it is distinctive in

that rather than me go looking for it, it came looking for me. It happened as I was investigating the context of late 19th century representations of the *Banquets des Sourds-muets* published in a body of late 19th century work that has become known as the *Presse Silencieuse* [DEAF press] (see below). Given my previous reading of Deaf history, and what I knew of the gradual ghettoisation of DEAF space post-Milan (see Chapter 1), I expected to find evidence largely in the form of memories of halcyon DEAF space past, tinged with nostalgia and regret. At best, I expected comparisons between the decay of European DEAF space and the relative safety of the American DEAF community whose education system suggested some kind of ongoing legacy of DEAF space autonomy thanks to the involvement of Laurent Clerc (see Veditz 1910, Lane 1984, Quartararo 2008). What I did not expect to find was a maelstrom of personalities, rivalries, societies, alliances, federations, publications, projects and ideals that, far from suggesting decay, indicated an unprecedented assertion of DEAF space that had apparently never been formally described.

Faced with an entirely new field of enquiry, I put other investigations on hold and began to untangle evidence that appeared utterly unfamiliar. Apparently some time in the 1880s, not only had all the previous historical characters that I had grown to know so well died, but the societies that they created had all changed their names and reoriented themselves in strange and unfamiliar ways. Gradually, however, things began to make sense. What I had discovered was almost a 'pocket' in time. While the big picture of DEAF space as I have so far described it is largely correct, in the last ten years of the 19th century, the Parisian DEAF community drew itself together to attempt to produce one final, brilliant, incandescent, demonstration that – far from exemplifying decay – demanded that it be taken seriously. That they did this spatially and in the most prominent way possible, by attempting to organise a representative DEAF space in the form of an "International Congress of *Sourds-muets*" situated within the official pavilions of the 1900 Universal Exhibition in Paris, makes it significant for this thesis. That they ultimately failed because of others' misunderstanding and fear of the space that they proposed, makes it even more so. That the outcome of the failed attempt, even more than Milan, marks the point at which the DEAF space that I described emerging in chapter three was definitively

denied validity and authored as a space that created DEAF people's disabling, made it impossible to exclude it from the thesis.

This is the account that I describe in this chapter; clearly a key point in the history of DEAF space. However, equally clearly, one that differs from the chapters that come before it in two clear ways. The first is its distance from those that precede it. Written virtually in isolation, it describes events that occurred some half a century after those I have described in Chapter five and that occurred against a background that was quite different both in terms of the wider French national situation and the impact that situation had produced within DEAF space itself. Understanding this context more generally, wrestling with what was of central importance and resisting the temptation to gorge myself on new and exciting material and remain focused on the narrative in question formed a considerable part of the challenge of writing this chapter. The first section of the chapter, therefore, presents key elements of this background against which the main account of the Congress itself is then written.

Secondly, in writing up this chapter, it became evident early on that rather than being a more micro-scale investigation into the history of the production of DEAF space and of its internal evolution as I have presented in chapters three to five, what this chapter presented was more of a snapshot that not only exemplified the complexity of DEAF space as I have previously analysed it, but that bridged between previous examples and the more current situation that I described in Chapter 1. What I have done, therefore, is simply to narrate it as an example of the wealth of historical material that remains to be investigated. Following the more microscopic focus of the previous chapters, this final substantive chapter should be seen as a chance to incorporate an understanding of DEAF space, into a situation that represents the urgency and rawness of DEAF people's lives.

6.0.1 Note on sources

As I have already described, the initial archival work that culminated in me writing of this chapter was made with no expectation of finding specific evidence. This quickly turned into surprise at the wealth of information available, and then into something akin to panic at the dawning realisation of the impossibility of either collecting, collating or digesting more than a portion of it in the time available and of

the amount of material that I would *not* be able to include. Over time, I found two bodies of written evidence particularly useful to give my reading shape. Neither have figured, to my knowledge, in any previous English-language historical analysis. Both of these have been extensively used in this chapter.

The first is the DEAF press, a body of DEAF-authored work first described by Bernard Truffault in the CHS and located both in the archives of the INJS, and in the Bibliotèque Nationale. Emerging in 1884, explicitly in response to the Milan Congress and its Oralist aftermath, over the period that I studied for this chapter, it contains eight different DEAF newspaper titles: *La défense des Sourds-muets* (1884 – 1886), *Le courier français des Sourds-muets* (1887-1888), *L'abbé de l'Epée* (1888 – 1889), *L'Echo de la Société d'Appui Fraternelle* (1889 – 1890), *La gazette des Sourds-muets* (1890 – 1895), *Le journal des Sourds-muets* (1894 – 1906), *L'avenir des Sourds-muets* (1894 – 1895), *Le Sourd-Muet illustré* (1897 – 1899). With at least one published by every rival association at some point, and by individuals outside of those associations, the DEAF press gives an extraordinarily valuable insight into at least the more acknowledged complexities of DEAF everyday life. Although all of these papers informed my understanding of the events I describe below, some were more particularly useful. These have been marked by citations in the text. Abbreviations have been used for ease of reading for the Gazette (GSM) and the Journal (JSM).

The second is a collection of the official accounts of national and international congresses organised by both hearing educators of deaf children (Congress 1878, 1880, 1881, 1883, 1884, 1885, 1905) and by DEAF people themselves (Congress 1889, 1893, 1905b). Particularly central to this chapter was the official account of the Congress of 1900 and the records of its preparatory meetings and correspondence, published in two tomes; one for each of the 'sections': *la section des sourds-muets* [the DEAF section] (Congress 1900), and *la section des entendants* [the hearing section] (Congress 1900b). These documents were used for more general reading, and for very specific analysis. References to the Congress events have been referenced as 'Congress… page'. Particular uses of documents contained within have been marked as such. Since these documents figure within a bound volume, I have considered them part of the Congress report itself. Therefore, they have not been detailed separately in the bibliography.

In addition to these two bodies of evidence, I also drew on a wide range of other first and second hand sources and interpretations, particularly to situate the DEAF space that this chapter describes within what was for me, as a member of the British education system, a substantially foreign context heavily shaped by the secularisation of the III Republic. Herein, the more intimate DEAF archives of the DEAF community's own knowledge of their spaces pre- and post-1900 played a key role, particularly those of Michel Lamothe and the association *Deux Langues pour Une Education* - although not without their own dangers of exigency upon the PhD project (see chapter 2). Acknowledging the rawness and conflict that still surrounds memories of the events that I describe below is important. However, I have been mindful to try and keep my account as balanced as possible. To do this, I also spent considerable time investigating its contents from the 'opposite' point of view with members of the principle religious congregation involved – the Brothers of St Gabriel.

6.1   Background

In this first section, I provide a background to the events that I describe below. At first glace the need for this may not immediately appear obvious. The snapshot provided at the start suggests, for example, that there is enough evidence remaining of the DEAF Community's situation post DEAF Nation to assume a continuity from the mid 19th century. This is an assumption that is somewhat supported by evidence. The longevity of Berthier (b.1803 – d. 1886) and the relative youth of Imbert (b. 1815 – d. 1885) meant that both were still alive well into the 1880s. Their ongoing personal acrimony towards each other and the respect with which they and their views were supported by their respective societies, all suggest that whilst the world *around* the DEAF community might have changed through the latter half of the 19th century, the community itself changed little.

However, as I demonstrated in Chapter 5, while the evolution of a DEAF community apart from the hearing world might have been possible within a closed environment, the contact established by DEAF people with the hearing world, particularly from the early 1820s, meant that far from evolving separately, events and currents of the hearing world also impacted upon DEAF space. Not so much upon its fundamental form; there was no change in DEAF people's production of a space that allowed

them a visual being-in-the-world. Rather, the difference played itself out in the way that DEAF people individually and communally performed the tension of locating the place of that DEAF space as it was produced in contact with a predominantly hearing world.

By the mid 1880s, this tension no longer distinguished between visions of DEAF space as a space of DEAF nation 'outside but alongside' the hearing French nation, or as a more porous and individual space that entertained integration within the hearing world. It had been complicated by two other factors. The first arose through the mid 19th century and emerged as a tension between the contextual assumptions of those providing deaf education either as a system of cloistered care, or as a means to include deaf children into the nation. The second arose from within the DEAF community itself as it responded to the increasingly oral content of deaf education to produce a leadership cadre of speaking-DEAF. It is to describing these in more detail that I now turn.

6.1.1 Congregational versus Republican spaces for DEAF people

The first ties into a key concern for France in the 19th century; a process that Mona Ozouf has described as "making something united and indivisible from things multiple and disparate" (Ozouf 1984: cover). This is a process that many commentators have identified as being achieved through its education system (Vasconcellos 2004, Merle 2002); one that not only imposed linguistic homogeneity (May 2001) but that also transformed citizenship from a private matter to one that was publically authored and performed by gradually wrestling control of the individual away from the church and placing it in the hands of the secular state (Ozouf 1984). Indeed, the story of French education and its passage to obligation and laisicisation that culminated in the Ferry Laws is perhaps one of the most acknowledged exemplars of the French national project in the 19th century (May 2001, Bauvineau 2000)

However, as hearing French children saw their increasing provision of education gradually laicised, the education of deaf children went the other way. As local efforts to provide schooling for their own deaf children faltered for lack of finance and commitment, many local schools were handed over to religious congregations. From

just one congregationally-run school in 1829 (Circulaire 1829: 80), the number rose gradually to five in 1836 (Circulaire 1836: 306) and then exploded as requests to the Ministry of the Interior for state-aid for struggling independent schools were redirected to existing congregational monopolies (FSG archives, Nantes; Beauvineau 2000). Thus, as under the second Republic, Carnot's wish was for a school system that would be "free, obligatory and secular" under the Ministry for Public Instruction (Vasconcellos 2004: 9), deaf education was dominated by congregational provision under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior's and its strongly Catholic Inspector for Goodwill Establishments, Oscar Claveau.

By the late 1860s, religious congregations ran fifty-eight of the eighty schools for deaf children in France (Lamothe 2001). Not only that, the size of their staff, their permanence in the field and the cross-pollination brought about by staff movement between schools meant that, far more than the independent secular schools, the congregational schools had begun to hold internal national congresses (Loudun 1854) to establish and promote greater consistency in the best methods to use and had also begun to mediate governmental provision to adult deaf people. However, this was a situation that was fraught with difficulty as the proclamation of the III republic, and the recasting of the education system that it permitted allowed Jules Ferry to pass his eponymous 1881 and 1882 laws that not only made education free, obligatory and secular but that made it so for all French children; "open to all, identical, without differentiation" (Merle 2002: 21), a declaration that include deaf children.

For the Republicans, the solution to congregational control of deaf education was ostensibly simple. All that was needed was a *Transfer* of deaf education from the Ministry of the Interior to the Ministry of Public Instruction. [1] However, for Claveau and the congregations, the *Transfer* not only threatened their participation in what had become an identified work of the church, but offended their sense of pastoral protection. Typified by a desire to provide a safe environment; "consoling and helping these poor children, and thereby softening the bitterness of their miserable lives… leading them into a knowledge of religion" (Deshayes, cited by Beauvineau

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[1] *Transfer* is italicised here to distinguish it as a specific policy pursued here, and later in the chapter.

2000: 21) rather than by the need to instruct, and angered by the dangers of delivering deaf children into the hands of a secular state, the Ministry of the Interior assured all those who would listen that far from equal, deaf children could only be competently cared for in the asylums and hospices that it administered. They succeeded in stalling the *Transfer* for just long enough to see a law passed on March 28th 1882, that created a distinct category of those requiring 'Specialised Educational provision'; "abnormal children, *sourds-muets*, the blind, the backward and the unstable" (Lamothe 2001; no page).

Those involved in secular deaf education were furious. Not only because the congregations had succeeded in resisting their removal from influence, but because having secured control of deaf education within schools over which the congregation maintained complete control, they then became less concerned by the absolute need for maintaining an oral environment outside of the classroom. Both the 1883 "International Congress for the Improvement of the lives of *Sourds-muets*" (Congress 1883) in Brussels and the French national congress the following year (Congress 1884) were troubled by tension and in August 1885, the national Congress in Paris disintegrated into shouting matches as the congregations and Claveau were battered by accusations of collusion (*La Défense* Sept 1885: 65). Attempts by the Ministry for Public Instruction to re-open the debate (see Lamothe 2001) were resisted by Claveau and the Ministry of the Interior who refused to budge.

However, for DEAF people, the division between congregations and Republicans was not so clear cut. Whilst many were angered by Claveau and his deliberate dis-abling of deaf children "… to maintain the involvement of congregational teaching staff in the education of *sourds-muets*" (Buton 1999: 715), some had grown up deeply committed to the church and used to the more autonomous DEAF space environment that the congregational schools tended to permit (Limosin, in GSM, May 1891). By the mid 1880s, in addition to the question of how best to position DEAF space with regards to the hearing nation, many DEAF people were also debating a second question. Did they feel safer in the hands of the church; who would allow them more DEAF space autonomy, but only within a context that represented them as requiring care? Or, in the hands of the secular state; who would recognise them as equals, but enforce their oral integration into the hearing nation?

6.1.2 The rise of the speaking-DEAF

The second complicating factor was the rise of speaking-DEAF people, the origins of which were already in place by the period that we examined in the previous chapter. In 1837, Jean Marie Gaspard Itard – doctor attached to the *Institution* from 1801 – died leaving:

> … eight thousand Francs in perpetual rent… for the creation in said *Institution* of a new class of complementary education to last three years… for six *Sourds-muets* a year elected by competition from amongst their peers and who have finished the normal period of their schooling… The aim of this class will be to instruct them to a level whereby they might read without fatigue all the important written works of our language and for this aim to be reached there is one rigorous condition that shall be applied; *that the use of sign language will be excluded and that the pupils and the teacher shall only communicate to each other by the use of French, either spoken or written.* (Itard 1837, no page, italics mine)

Although it ostensibly made provision for written French, the reality of a class taught initially by de Gérando's hearing nephew (Palmarès 1843 and ongoing) Edouard Morel and then, from 1851 by the overtly pro-speech Léon Vaisse (see Palmarès 1847: 11) meant that those selected for participation gradually became those who were most likely to thrive in a context mediated by spoken French.

Within the *Institution's* DEAF space, those pupils who attended the *Cours Itard* were considered no less 'DEAF' than their silent predecessors. They were, after all, simply those who were now encouraged to cultivate (or continue practising) their oral skills in a way that had been previously unimportant in the visual-only DEAF space of the school. Consequently they were thoroughly at home within its DEAF space and the comparative ease of communication with other DEAF people meant that those who remained in Paris following their graduation most often continued to frequent the DEAF spaces of the adult DEAF community. [2]

However, as progressive changes in 1857 (see Palmarès 1857: 50) divided the *Institution's* pupil body into those who were more or less able to receive 'intellectual teaching' through spoken French and 1860 (Palmarès 1860: 24) saw the silent-DEAF siphoned off into vocation-weighted workshop training, two impacts gradually

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[2] To give an indication of the number of DEAF people arriving in the Capital, the *Association Amicale* reported in 1889 that out of a DEAF population in Paris of 1500, only 10% had actually been born in the city. The remaining 1,350 had arrived either seeking employment (like Pierre Desloges) or through staying on after their education (l'Abbé de l'Epée, Nov 1889: 173).

emerged. The first was that as the *Institution's* teaching methods gradually incorporated more and more oral elements and those who were taught there included not only those who were silent-DEAF, but those who were able to speak, the diversity of those considered 'DEAF' diversified. Whilst DEAF people at the time of Massieu and Laurent Clerc appear to have been almost exclusively 'silent', and those able to speak in Berthier's experience were exceptional enough to be marked as different from their peers (Pélissier in Ami des S.M. Jan 1839: 42) by the 1870s, the number of '*Sourds-Parlants*' [speaking DEAF] appears far greater.

However, it was not only their linguistic ability that differed. With an increased ability to speak, came better education, with better education a greater potential for leadership within the DEAF community and a greater chance for employment in the hearing world, and with this, not withstanding their ongoing identification as 'DEAF' (Gaillard in GSM, 15th Sept 1892: front), a greater ability to become involved in the affairs of the hearing world. Thus, whilst in DEAF space all interactions between DEAF people, silent- or speaking- and between DEAF and hearing people continued to be produced in sign language, the task of representing that DEAF space to the hearing world was gradually passed to those who had been better taught to write by dint of their speech, or who could simply communicate with hearing people through speech itself.

The consequences of this were unforeseen, but fundamental. A leadership cadre predominantly consisting of silent-DEAF was gradually replaced by a significant number of who could speak. However, whereas the former had been taught through sign language, and produced DEAF space as the *only* space in which they could fully be-in-the-world, the latter had been taught through spoken language and producing DEAF space as *one of* the spaces in which they found a home. The former were concerned primarily with achieving recognition for their DEAF space as the only space that permitted their valid being-in-the-world. This clearly concerned the latter too, after all, they were still DEAF. However, for them, asserting the validity of DEAF space was only one of their concerns. They were also concerned by the need to be recognised as fully valid, equal members of the hearing nation.

6.1.3   An example of the new order – Henri Gaillard

In the late 1880s, these underlying tensions between pro- and anti- congregational, and silent- and speaking-DEAF appear to have been relatively unimportant to the majority of the Parisian DEAF community. However, in December of 1884, Joseph Turcan, an unknown DEAF man had published the first edition of his evangelistically entitled newspaper; *La Défense des Sourds-muets*. From humble beginnings, Turcan's publication of articles with titles like "*Sourd-Muet* Children Forced to Taste the Halitosis of the Knights of Speech" (La Défense*, September 1886: 90), provoked outrage as DEAF people spread all over France realised that their situation was not an isolated one, and joined together to make their own voices heard. Unfortunately, each voice required a different paper and it was not long before first one significant society, and then another, began to publish a newspaper.

Within a few years, not only the did Berthier's *Association*, Imbert's *Appui*, and even those espousing a 'none of the above' approach, all began to air their differences but, as they did so, the different internal divisions also rose to the surface. Between 1884 and 1894, some nine different DEAF-authored papers emerged, ran their course, and then either splintered into new titles with new editorial teams and slightly different allegiances or simply disintegrated. It was in this atmosphere of bitter rivalry that the *Association* organised and delivered its 1889 Congress and back into this same atmosphere that those who had attended the 1889 Congress puzzled over what to do. The space that they had experienced there and that had remained with them was in stark contrast to what they found outside. One man who was particularly deeply affected, was Henri Gaillard.

That Gaillard should ultimately come to represent the new order in the DEAF community is in itself an indication of how much circumstances had changed since the mid 19th century. Born hearing on August 26th 1866, he became deaf at the age of eight years old following an ear infection (Siecle Typographique Nov 1894: 2). Initially able to still perceive speech close-up, the attempts of a number of specialists - employed by Gaillard's father - to cure his deafness succeeded only in rendering him completely deaf. Unable to attend hearing school, Gaillard arrived at the *Institution* towards the end of the 1870s where he turned his knowledge of French to good advantage. Elected to the *Cours Itard*, he graduated from it with the top prize in

1883 (Palmarès 1883). Returning to re-train following a brief period of work, he spent over six years there, emerging as a typical example of the 'Speaking-DEAF' (Revue Internationale de l'enseignement October 1888). Identifying himself primarily as a member of the DEAF community (GSM, 15th Sept 1892: Front) he was fluent in both spoken and written French and natural sign language and saw value in both sign language-based teaching and in the teaching of speech.

However, where Gaillard was not so liberal was in his commitment to DEAF unity. Having enjoyed the diversity of 'DEAF' within the *Institution*, he was shocked when, following the example of many of his graduating peers he associated himself with the *Association Amicale*, he found himself located on one side of the ongoing battle over the representation of the DEAF community. In 1888, he dared to directly criticise Chambellan – Berthier's successor as president of the *Association* – for the manner in which he appeared to be deliberately "preventing the unity of *sourds-muets* under a single banner" (Gaillard to Chambellan, April 23rd 1891 in GSM, June 1891: 119) and then walked out on the *Amicale* to join the ranks of its bitterest opposition; the *Société d'Appui*.

By his own admission, Gaillard's actions in 1888 were hot-headed. However, for someone rebelling against the Association for the sake of the unity of the DEAF community, they were also ill-timed. The only member of the *Société d'Appui* to request and gain admission to the 1889 congress, he found himself very much on the 'wrong side of the fence' as the *Association* now became the principle society calling for unity. After having spent most of 1890 attempting to persuade the *Appui* towards a more conciliatory route to no avail, early 1891 found him writing to Chambellan and asking for re-admission to the *Association*. Once back inside, Gaillard joined the editorial team of the *Gazette des Sourds-muets*, a decision that had far reaching ramifications for the DEAF community.

The first was personal and political. Initially neutral, Gaillard professed himself neither pro-congregational (GSM, March 15th 1893) or pro-republican (GSM, August 25th 1892). However, in May 1891, his work required him to begin to present a digest of governmental news as it applied to the DEAF community. Gradually, becoming aware of the differing approaches of those promoting the *Transfer* of deaf education to the Ministry for Public Instruction and those countering it for reasons

that he could only explain as "wanting to create deaf education as an ante-chamber for the church…" (GSM, March 15th 1893) he became a clear pro-republican.

The second was highly public. Sickened by the partisanship of the DEAF Press, and its role in perpetuating the division in the Paris DEAF community, Gaillard was obstinate in his insistence that any newspaper in which he worked should only publish a representative spread of news. Leaving the *Gazette* in 1894, he established himself as the editor in chief of the *Journal des Sourds-muets* – the first DEAF paper to be funded entirely by its own readership and produced by a DEAF workforce on a DEAF-owned press – and in which he promised:

> we will permit our contributors no outrage of expression, no violence of language, no personal attack. We will not enter into the views of dissident *Sourds-muets…* and unleash a fratricidal war…. [we will] be the organ of all Sourds-muets in France, of all of their ideas and all of their desires in as much as they are expressed with talent and courtesy, without violence or brutality. It will be impartial and eclectic and will avoid anything that makes it appear hostile to this or that category of Sourds-muets, or this or that method. (JSM, December 20th 1894, 5-6)

The *Journal's* explicit commitment to non-partisanship made it the single representative voice for the Parisian DEAF community. From 1895, it was the largely pro-Republican speaking-DEAF man Gaillard, and his largely speaking-DEAF editorial team who found themselves in control of speaking for, and speaking to the DEAF community.

6.2   Preparing the Congress of 1900

As I have suggested, from 1895, Gaillard's *Journal des Sourds-muets* was the primary voice calling for unity within the DEAF community. Which also meant that as the community responded to initiatives aimed at promoting unity, Gaillard found himself taking up something of a coordinating role. When his suggestion, made in 1895, that the proposed location of a summer fête be altered to allow wider participation turned out to be successful, his opinion was sought, the following year about who to invite as a speaker. Gaillard's response was clear. He proposed the Republican Paul Deschanel, Vice-President of the elected Chamber of Deputés, the only member of parliament who had:

> … abstained from studies written about *sourds-muets*, and not given us banal words of goodwill… [he is] the only one who has proven to *sourds-muets*, and when I say *sourds-muets* I do not simply mean *Sourd-Muet* children in school… but adult *sourds-muets…* that we are not to be ignored. (JSM, August 12th 1896: 243)

In a curious echo of de Lanneau and Dupin's attendance at the 1838 Banquet, as Deschanel stood to speak with Cochefer, president of the *Société d'Appui* on his right, Genis, president of the *Association* on his left and a row of journalists from the hearing journals of *La Paix*, *le Petit Journal*, and the *Petit Parisien* and Gaillard from the *Journal des Sourds Muets* facing him and, behind them, the attending masses of the DEAF community (see JSM, August 12th 1896), it must have appeared to the gathered DEAF throng that Deschanel's attendance was a mark of their recognition by the state, and this was an impression only strengthened as he spoke:

> You complain that you are not consulted; that not enough notice is taken of your opinion… However, it seems to me that the day when your great family, this family of 35,000 members concentrates and converges all its efforts, all its designs, all of its wills upon a single point. That day, your strength will be increased one hundredfold, and no-one will be able to act for you without your agreement… do you not think that the day upon which your great family… has a representation that brings together sourds-muets from all parts of the country, all trades, all professions, and all social classes… do you not think that that day, you will be listened to? … if you succeed in forging groups that, from one end of France to the other, hold together, you're your voices will be heard and you will not only be those protected by the state, but those who collaborate with it. (Deschanel, quoted in JSM August 12th 1896: 247, 248)

Reported in August of that year (JSM, August 12th 1896), Deschanel's speech was – according to Gaillard – "a shove that would embed ideas of… the regeneration of the *sourds-muets*, of peace and solidarity between us… into the mass of French DEAF people and shake its inertia…" (JSM, August 12th 1896: 247). "You will see" he wrote, "… something is rising up. Something will happen…".

For a community whose oldest members had grown up in a context marked by Banquets and by the *Société Centrale*'s DEAF Nation space, whose move towards unity had been born in the DEAF space of the 1889 congress and whose most recent spatial manifestation of unity had brought them Deschanel himself, it was inevitable where that 'shove' would take them. Deschanel's proposal that they 'concentrate and converge all their efforts upon a single point' could only be spatial. This was a conclusion shared by fourteen representative members of the wider DEAF community who gathered not long after the fête to discuss what to do to make Deschanel's recommendation a reality. Their decision was to form a *Fédération des sociétés françaises des Sourds-Muets* [Federation of French Societies of Sourds-Muets] (JSM, 15th Jan: 1898) that drew its president and vice-president from the *Appui* and the *Association* and contained twelve other members either partisan to one or the other of these two main societies or attending in their own right as

independents. Amongst its aims, thrashed out in the first meeting on the 27th September 1896, was to "Prepare the International Congress of *Sourds-muets* to be held in Paris in 1900…" (Article VIII - JSM October 15th 1896: 313).

6.2.1 Envisaging the 1900 congress

Private affairs and a lack of immediacy meant that it took some time for the *Fédération* to form a committee to oversee the preparations for the 1900 congress. Once it was formed, however, it set to work in earnest (Meeting of 26th Nov 1898, in Congress 1900: 276). In their meetings, reported in the official congress report, and from correspondence between Gaillard and the organising committee for the Universal exhibition itself, a vision of the congress began to crystallise. Externally, it was to be modelled on the 1889 Congress (Gaillard to Gariel, May 10th 1899, Congress 1900: 297) and consist, therefore, of a reception, a series of plenary meetings interspersed with excursions to Paris' principal sites of DEAF interest, organised performances, cycle races and rounded off with a sumptuous banquet (Gaillard to Gariel, May 10th 1899, Congress 1900: 278).

However, the congress was not only aimed at satisfying the desires of visiting members of the international DEAF community; it had a far more significant aim. Prepared for the first time not by one society against another, but by all those represented by the *Fédération* (Mercier, Congress 1900: 279) and, thereby ticking all the boxes described by Deschanel as prerequisites to the DEAF community achieving the respect of the hearing world, it would produced with the explicit aim of providing an open-door glimpse into DEAF space. An entirely DEAF-authored space (Gaillard to Genis, May 21st 1899: Congress, 1900: 301) competently, professionally and purposefully produced in the public gaze at the very heart of the Exhibition (Minutes of May 28th 1899: Congress 1900: 280) it would provide a forum for DEAF people to "debate together matters of their interest…" (Minutes of May 28th 1899: Congress 1900: 280) to their own satisfaction. However, rather than achieving a sea-change by persuasion, it would be DEAF space itself that would do the work. As the president of the *Association* suggested, entry should be cheap so as to encourage as many as possible to attend so that:

> Those strangers who come *chez nous* [into our space] will take away an enduring
> memory of their time in our midst and will return [home] to occupy themselves in

remedying all that is left lacking in the situation of *sourds-muets*" (Jeanvoine, in Congress 1900: 278).

6.2.2 DEAF space denied

It is with this in mind that, following that first meeting of the *Fédération's* appointed Congress organisational committee on May 1st 1899, Gaillard wrote to M. Delaunay-Belleville, representative of the Ministry of Commerce and director general of the Exploitation of the Universal Exhibition (Congress 1900: 297) outlining the DEAF community's request. Delaunay-Belleville, seeing that the letter was from the DEAF community, passed the request on to the Exhibitions official point of contact for congresses concerned with Charity and Welfare, a man by the name of Gariel. On the 8th May, Gariel replied to Gaillard giving him an assurance that the proposal would be taken seriously and requesting that names of an organising committee be forwarded (Gariel, May 8th 1899: Congress 1900: 297). Gaillard eagerly replied on May 10th providing Gariel with a list of some thirty-two names of French and foreign DEAF members of the principle organising committee and five sub-committees detailed to organise different aspects of the programme: "… proof that the organisational committee is already functioning and that we only wait now for the recognition of the Exhibition itself" (Gaillard, May 10th 1899, Congress 1900: 297).

However, when Gariel's response to this flood of preparations was received on the 16th May, it was far from what Gaillard had expected. "It is regrettable" he wrote:

> that you have gone so far with the organisation of your Congress… for I don't see how what you have decided can be realised. You have already named [your officers] whereas, in reality, the organisational commission will only exist when it has been named by the general commissary of the Exhibition. This commission will no doubt contain some of the names that you have proposed. However, it will certainly add others. Besides, there is no guarantee that the commission (when it has been formed) will accept the proposals that you have made. (Gariel to Gaillard, May 16th 1899. Congress 1900: 300)

However, worse was to come:

> Both yourselves, and those involved with the education and patronage of the deaf community have, in fact, proposed a congress at the same time, and from both sides… [we have], therefore decided to propose to the [Exhibition's] Commission that an International Congress for the study of questions regarding the Education and Assistance of *Sourds-muets* should be held… we will certainly add hearing-speaking people to the organisational commission, and there is no question that the issues discussed will only be decided upon by *sourds-muets*. Questions of education and assistance require solution that all involve hearing-speaking people, and from now these will be involved in the preparatory work. (Gariel to Gaillard, May 16th 1899, Congress 1900: 300)

At the moment he received Gariel's letter, Gaillard was in Germany and so was not able to confer with other members of the *Fédération*'s congress committee. His response, however, demonstrates his ongoing assumption that the proposal of a DEAF congress is still being taken seriously:

> I foresee great practical and physical difficulties in attempting to have just one congress in which sourds-muets and hearing are mixed… The *sourds-muets* will still want to have their own congress… it is simply a question, therefore, of finding a way to allow the *sourds-muets* to debate amongst themselves the issues that are of concern to them, and then to facilitate the transmission and the defence of their demands to the International Congress for the Education and Assistance of *Sourds-Muets*… the solution is to have two separate congresses… which will end together so that any decisions are taken by *sourds-muets*, by their teachers and by their hearing friends together. (Gaillard to Gariel, May 21st 1899: Congress 1900: 301)

Gariel's quick answer, returned even before Gaillard has had time to return to France and convene a meeting with the rest of the organisational committee is categorical:

> The Exhibition's commission has already made its decision: There will be one congress... and it will not change it by allowing two congresses as you seem to believe... if the *sourds-muets* maintain their idea of separation then the Exhibition council will not support them and will go ahead and constitute the organisational commission without reference to them. (Gariel to Gaillard May 24th 1899: Congress 1900: 302)

It is easy to see the denial of the DEAF community's original Congress proposal as Gariel's own handiwork. However, despite his position as a teacher in Paris' faculty of Medicine, his membership of the *Académie de Médecine* (detailed in Congress 1900b: 5) and his designation as official delegate of the Exhibition in the group dedicated to the 'Assistance Publique' there is little evidence that he was deliberately obstructive. It is true that his later correspondence with Gaillard takes on an increasingly irritated tone (see below) as further difficulties over the congress arise. However, there is no reason to see this as anything other than administrative frustration and while the tone of his opening speech at the Congress itself suggests that he drew a distinction between "… you, the philanthropic educators of the *sourds-muets* and you, the *sourds-muets* who are the object of [philanthropic education]… " (see Congress 1900b: 19) this is no reason to suspect a deliberate attempt to stall the Congress.

However, as I have demonstrated above, the same cannot be said for others involved either with the education of deaf children or with a stake in the wider politics surrounding it. What may well have caused Gariel's assurances to Gaillard on May 8th to become more guarded is the distinct possibility that in the intervening week, he

communicated the DEAF community's proposal to a mixed group of those involved in deaf education and asked their advice. Those he spoke to appear to have reacted in quite different ways. For the Ministry of the Interior, convinced of DEAF people's need for care, the idea of a DEAF-organised Congress was quite simply anathema. However, not only had Gaillard's proposal come through the proper channels and so appeared before Delaunay-Belleville and Gariel in perfectly formed written French, but having heard about it, those in the Republican camp saw the opportunity presented by the Congress as another opportunity to effect the *Transfer* as one they would not be denied.

However, even for the Republicans who, in principle, accepted DEAF people's intellectual parity, there appears to have been a general horror at the idea that the DEAF community would be allowed to organise their own Congress. Acknowledging DEAF people's ability to integrate within the spaces of the nation was one thing, but no forum should be allowed them if they simply wanted to "attempt to bring back sign language." (Minutes, July 3rd 1899: Congress 1900b: 301). Permitting them the opportunity to produce a space that would be officially sanctioned, and – therefore – as equally valid as that of the Milan Congress, could only lead to a stand-off between irreconcilable declarations. Therefore, apparently assuming that Gariel's notification of DEAF intent meant that they had "received from the Commissioner of the Exhibition of 1900 the mandate of organising an International Congress to study the Education and the Assistance of *sourds-muets*" (Circulaire, July 1899: Congress 1900b: 304), they proposed to Gariel, the creation of an explicitly polemical "International Congress for the study of questions regarding the Education and Assistance of *Sourds-muets*" (Congress 1900b: title). It was this republican authored "Education and Assistance" Congress, complicated by its underlying foundation of clerical and anti-clerical politics that Gariel took back to the DEAF community on the 24th May.

Thus, on the 28th May, as the members of the DEAF organisational committee arrived for their second official meeting, it was to discover that the DEAF space that they had envisaged had been denied. Their responses were understandably mixed; some grieved to see "our original desire, placed before the appropriate authorities, declared null and void" (Congress 1900: 281). However, most are more pragmatic. Would it not be both counterproductive and over-expensive to try and organise their

own independent congress, and find rooms for all the DEAF visitors at a time when Paris would be flooded with tourists (Congress 1900: 281).

Besides which, although it meant the loss of an exclusively DEAF congress, and the marginalisation of the congress' DEAF space within the whole, Gariel had offered a possible solution:

> …there is one solution… to create a commission composed of hearing-speaking and of *sourds-muets* which will divide to allow you to discuss the questions that you wish to discuss. The congress, then, when it convenes will divide into two and the *sourds-muets* and the hearing sections will meet at the same time, but in different rooms. There will only be two joint sessions, one at the beginning and one at the end…. (Gariel to Gaillard May 24th 1899: Congress 1900: 302)

The DEAF Congress committee, therefore, agreed to accept Gariel's proposals and to attend the meeting of a joint DEAF-hearing organisational committee on July 3rd 1899 (Congress 1900b: 301). However, even as this meeting was being planned, the Ministry of the Interior was already putting into action a plan to deny both the DEAF community and the Pro-*Transfer* Republicans the opportunity to even meet. Issuing a private directive to all the schools under its control, it informed them that the aim of key republicans' re-examination of deaf education was, in fact a call to return control of deaf education to DEAF people themselves. It was, they said, not only an un-holy plot by the Ministry of Public instruction, but a plan to allow DEAF people to nestle behind the secular state, in their isolationist space:

> Furthermore, we know that the allies… [of] M. Ladrut [sic] de la Charrière, ex-minister for education of the *sourds-muets*… are the adult *sourds-muets* of Paris, educated through sign language who… frightened that one day this new Method will leave them with no-one to talk to… talk about establishing a state within a state, something that they call the Silent world. (Médéric 1903: page 4)

Therefore, as invitations were issued for a first meeting of the joint DEAF-hearing Commission to prepare the Congress, first the staff of the Paris *Institution* withdrew (Congress 1900b: 300), quickly followed by the congregations who stated "if we chose to attend [the Exhibition] and display our work, we refuse to participate in the Congress… in submission to the desire of the Ministry of the Interior" (Médéric 1903: 3). Consequently, as the DEAF and hearing delegates arrived on July 3rd, they found themselves almost without representation from the majority stakeholders in deaf education. Far from being dismayed, they appear thrilled. Simply noting that they regretted the withdrawal of the *Interieur*-controlled schools (Congress 1900b: 300) they continued with their primary task; the drafting of a provisional programme.

However, in their enthusiasm, and perhaps because of the way in which Gariel's adoption of the republican title pre-empted his clarification that "the congress... will be divided into two *sections*, but will nominally only be one congress" (Congress 1900 (hearing): 300. Italics mine), while the DEAF half of the joint committee continued under the assumption that it was working towards the organisation of a single shared congress that would simply facilitate discussion by separating DEAF and hearing people into two groups, those in the hearing half proposed a third structure altogether that did not match either the DEAF community's original vision of a DEAF space, or even Gariel's proposal of a joint DEAF-hearing space, but was instead imagined as a space produced by hearing people on behalf of the DEAF community:

> Those who concern themselves with the defence of the interest of the sourds-muets and who aspire to give them the legitimate rank that belongs to them in modern society. (circulaire d'invitation, July 1899: Congress 1900: 304)

Instead of a single space, produced to facilitate discussion and decision. What they proposed were two independent spaces with their own agendas:

> Each... deliberating independently, each having responsibility for the votes that it takes... [and] each section with the responsibility of researching those questions that are of greatest importance and of greatest relevancy. (circulaire d'invitation, July 1899: Congress 1900: 304)

These decisions were submitted to Gariel by the hearing half of the organisational committee in late July 1899 on behalf of the entire congress. Their letter includes the questions that they proposed to debate in the hearing section, including:

> Describing the progress that has been made [by the oral] method... [examining] the liberal law of public instruction that imposes the obligation of free primary instruction... [examining] questions of assistance. (Congress 1900: 305-6)

However, at approximately the same time, Gaillard also sent a first draft of a DEAF-authored *circulaire* to the Exhibition delegate in which it is clear that both he and the DEAF community are still working under the assumption that their joint-authorship of the Congress space is intact. Gariel's response, however, reveals that he saw in the DEAF proposal a failure to respect the rulings of the (assumed) joint committee:

> If we admitted two sections for discussion, there is only one Congress... and one organisational commission... I repeat, one Congress, one commission; it is they who take all the decisions relative to the congress. (Gariel to Gaillard August 7th 1899: Congress 1900b: 306)

In confusion, therefore, Gaillard wrote to the president of the hearing half of the joint committee, Ladreit de Lacharrière who was clearly surprised by the news but appeared, ultimately unflustered. It was early days, after all, and there was plenty of time to re-design the congress before it was made official. Responding to Gaillard on August 10th he says:

> I sent M. Gariel the circulaire that I showed you the day before yesterday…. Having taken out all mention of the hearing section. In this form it seems to me that it could be accepted as a first general circulaire. (Ladreit de Lacharrière August 10th 1899: Congress 1900b: 307)

And then, in a move which would eventually prove disastrous, he continues:

> Authorised by the approval that you gave me… I have asked that the circulaire be signed with the names of the [DEAF and hearing] officers… if there is error… we will correct it in the proofs, which I have not yet seen… If you want to assure yourself of this, you can go to M. Gariel directly… the copies have not yet been sent to the Imprimerie Nationale. (Ladreit de Lacharrière August 10th 1899: Congress 1900 b: 307)

Ladreit de Lacharrière was wrong. Having assumed that it was already the agreement of the joint-committee, Gariel had sent the original to the printers. When, after trying twice in August (on the 10th, and the 27th) to persuade Gariel to give him sight of the 'proposed joint' programme (Gaillard to Lacharrière, in Congress 1900: 308-309), Gaillard finally set eyes on it in early September, he discovered that not only had the DEAF community lost their original DEAF Congress, but that even the opportunity to participate jointly in a combined congress and its decision-making had also been denied. He wrote in protest to Gariel on September 4th:

> … we followed your advice, and were happy to accept your decision of a single congress that would place us on the same footing as the hearing… that there would be one organisational commission with one President and one secretary. The sections, for the ease of debate, would deliberate apart but would be all part of the same organisation… and would take part in one common vote. Now… we find that the votes will be separate as well as the discussions. So the two sections have become two distinct congresses. (Gaillard to Gariel, 4th Sept 1899: Congress 1900: 309-310)

6.2.5   DEAF and Republican plans

With the official distribution of the notification *circulaire*, the format of the Congress was fixed. However, the form that it had taken placed the aspirations of both halves of the Congress organisation committee in danger. For the Republicans, the problem was political. Having celebrated the Ministry of the Interior's withdrawal in July, it seemed that they had unwittingly opened the door to their return. Having separated their *section* from the DEAF *section*, and made each one responsible for its own

votes, all that it required was for the Ministry of the Interior to reverse its proscription and mobilise its sizeable majority holding over deaf education and the hearing section would be swamped by Congregationalists again.

The DEAF section, on the other hand, had a more fundamental problem. Having seen their original DEAF congress denied for fear that they would use its authorisation by the *Exposition Universelle* to challenge the declarations of previous Oral congresses from a stance of equal weight, and now finding their opportunity to enjoy equal participation within a joint congress denied, their challenge was to rescue anything at all from the debacle. Therefore, although there is no direct substantiation of the date and evidence of what was discussed can only be surmised from its after-effects, it appears that early September 1899 saw the joint-committee met again, this time with both DEAF and hearing members present, and this time off-the-record. The aim of the meeting was to hold a frank discussion about how they had previously envisaged the congress, what they wanted from it, how they were going to achieve it and, perhaps most importantly, how they were going to guarantee that they achieved it despite opposition from the Ministry of the Interior and the congregations.

Here, however, there would have been a clear problem for neither group entirely shared the others' principle aims. The Republicans rejected the involvement of the Ministry of the Interior and the Congregations. However, they also rejected DEAF calls for the reinstatement of sign language. The DEAF committee, on the other hand, all rejected the pure oral approach to education. However, they were more mixed with regards to their views on the question of ministerial control. Ultimately, it appears to have been Gaillard who guided the decision. All of the Republicans supported the *Transfer* for the way that it ensured that DEAF people would have access to the rights of national citizenship and all of the DEAF committee recognised that whether they supported the Republican's oral approach or not, at least they recognised DEAF people's validity and would be more open than the Ministry of the Interior to engaging with DEAF people as equals in the future. For lack of any other common ground, the *Transfer* became the common focus.

However, for the DEAF and hearing halves of the joint-committee to come to an agreement over this one target meant that both would have to place their own community support on a knife edge. For the Republicans, the key task was how to

calm fears that recognising DEAF equality was simply a route to the reinstatement of sign language and encourage as many pro-*Transfer* oralists to attend. For the DEAF section, attendance was not a problem. However, they had their own challenge in keeping the DEAF community calm about the loss of the original congress. Then there was the delicate issue of why the DEAF committee appeared to have allied itself with a group of dedicated oralists. For both, there was a question of how to steer both *sections* to a vote on the *Transfer*. If either group failed, the Ministry of the Interior would keep control of DEAF education and the status quo would prevail. However, if they succeeded, not only would the *Transfer* be overwhelmingly approved by both *sections* of the congress, but the Ministry of the Interior and the Oralist congregations would be silenced in the face of a united DEAF-hearing alliance that could then, in time, work out more thorny issues of language.

The plan was elaborate and the discussion cannot have been easy. However, it appears that it was fruitful. In a departure from their previous staunch positions, first Ladreit de Lacharrière agreed to demonstrate his goodwill in an article addressed to the DEAF community:

> The oral method is the Holy Grail against which no attack can be made… However, I recognise that in their own meetings, sign language is the one that [sourds-muets] prefer. I admit also… that it would be useful, although not necessary, to learn this language in school since it will develop through the milieu in which the child finds themselves. (JSM 15th Sept 1899: 308)

Then the DEAF members of the committee stepped in, communicating the loss of the DEAF congress but encouraging the DEAF community that their own *section* would be just like the DEAF space of previous congresses of 1889 and 1893 and DEAF unity meetings (see JSM, October 1889: 391-394) except that now it would be officially recognised so that as each *section* voted they would be given equal weighting. "There will, then, be two votes, two propositions…" they asserted in the Journal des Sourds-Muets in December 1899 (p 447), the greater the number of DEAF people there, the greater the chance that the government would accept their proposition over that of the hearing *section*.

Then, in the spring of 1900, after holding off as long as they could, the two halves of the committee made their most risky move. Agreed between them in a joint meeting in December 1899, but distributed in their own time first to the hearing *section* in January 1900 (Congress 1900b: 310) and then to the DEAF *section* at the last minute

in May 1900 (JSM May 1900: 54 – 57), the three primary questions to be considered at the congress were announced and submissions invited:

> First question: The organisation of teaching of sourds-muets in different countries…
> Second question: Results obtained by the oral method…
> Third question: Assistance of sourds-muets…

<div align="right">(January 1st 1900: Congress 1900b: 310).</div>

The question of the oral method had been relegated to second place, and it was within the subtitle for the first, "Should establishments for the education of *sourds-muets* be considered those of goodwill, or those of instruction?" (January 1st 1900: Congress 1900b: 310) that the trigger of the *Transfer* lay.

6.2.6   Last-minute preparations

Whilst all of this had been going on, the Ministry of the Interior had, apparently, been watching quietly. Indeed, it did not need to do anything; its original suggestion that the Congress was a DEAF conspiracy to reinstate sign language had been so successful that it had snowballed into a fully blown journalistic boycott of the Congress by some of Europe's most outspoken proponents of the pure-oral method. Articles with titles like "Why I am not going to Paris" were widely read and believed (Martha to Gaillard, November 21st 1899: Congress 1900: 311).

However, as the Congress continued to gather pace and the publication of the Congress questions confirmed their fears that an opportunity was being engineered to force through the *Transfer*, they found themselves facing the challenge that the joint-committee had foreseen. Their dissuasion of attendance had been so effective that by the early summer of 1900 only eighty delegates had registered, almost all of whom were republicans or foreigners (minutes of May 14th 1900: Congress 1900b: 314).

Consequently, from May, the Ministry of the Interior not only repealed its prohibition on attendance, it actively sought the participation of as many of its allies as possible. In an extraordinary about-face, fifty-two congregational and religious delegates' names suddenly appeared on the roll (see Congress 1900b: 210 – 221), including those who had previously vowed that they would not attend.

However, even with these additional delegates, the Ministry of the Interior still felt that it was under-represented compared to the Ministry of Public Instruction.

Consequently, they invited one more key figure to attend; someone who was not only experienced in maintaining a strictly Oral line in exactly the type of situation that they were facing and who had shown unswerving support for the ongoing management of deaf education by the congregational schools, but upon whom they could rely to be the lynchpin in a last-ditch scheme to disarm both the DEAF section and the DEAF/republican alliance should it become necessary. That person was Claveau (see above). His involvement in the Congress would turn out to be pivotal in engineering the final denial of DEAF space.

6.3   The Congress of 1900

Considering the background information that I have presented, it is impossible not to be struck by something of the sense of anticipation that the congress organisers and delegates felt as its date approached. Not only had attempts by both *sections* to ensure the greatest possible attendance made it the biggest congress ever held, it was also to be the most far-reaching and representative. Over four hundred DEAF and hearing delegates, one hundred and eighty-four to the hearing section and two hundred and thirty to the DEAF section, from countries as afar afield as Japan, Eduador, the United States, Russia and Mexico had promised to attend. Events were closely watched by both the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Public Instruction and virtually every sector of the French DEAF community, and every major organisation working in the field of deaf education and/or deaf patronage had sent a delegate.

Consequently, as those who felt they had the most to gain or lose prepared, the pressure must have been intense. Despite official congress business only being timetabled to begin on the morning of August 6th, both *sections* had chosen to meet the night before to welcome their delegates. A speech, delivered by Joseph Cochefer, the president of the *Appui*, and of the *Fédération* to the DEAF section, on the other hand, not only an indication of the import of the congress itself:

> Tomorrow, August 6th... will be for us almost a question of life or of death... the battle will be heated but we are, I think, sufficiently prepared... we target only one aim: *the completion of our social emancipation.* (Cochefer in Congress 1900: 258, italics in original)

It also revealed something of his nervousness at the fragility of the hidden plan of which he was a key author. Without being able to reveal that plan, he pleaded with those present not to upset it:

> Without a doubt, the question of teaching methods will be brought up; but it would wise to leave the discussion of this to those who are competent, that is, to the educators. In my opinion the general assembly should refrain from such discussions since if we take decisions that are ill considered, we may live to regret the damage that we might do to our younger brethren. (Cochefer in Congress 1900: 258)

However, it also demonstrated the extent to which both the DEAF and hearing halves of the joint-organisational committee more generally perceived that even if the congress was split into separate *sections*, the presence of a recognised DEAF space alongside the hearing *section* was a subject for celebration. After all, was it not true that, for the first time ever, despite the loss of their DEAF congress, formal recognition from the government had set the scene for a confrontation between DEAF and Oralists on equal terms?:

> A happy revolution has occurred in the high spheres of government with regards to the Silent world… the official recognition of our congress… provides abundant proof of the extent to which the views of *sourds-muets* are, today, also considered… (Cochefer in Congress 1900: 258)

For Ladreit de Lacharrière and Claveau, in their own way, it was this recognition of the Congress' DEAF space that placed them under pressure. For the former, it was a question of honouring the recognition and successfully vindicating the trust that the DEAF community had placed in him for the ultimate success of the congress. For the latter, on the other hand, the (he would have believed mistaken) recognition of DEAF space validity was something to be overturned for DEAF people's own spiritual good, and the greater good of France.

6.3.1 August 6th 1900

On the morning of August 6th, as the delegates gathered at the *Palais des Congrès* of the Universal Exhibition, it is easy to imagine how many preoccupied faces there must have been in the unplanned pre-congress throng. As signed and spoken conversation produced pockets of DEAF and hearing space that blossomed and separated, ebbing and flowing into, across and around each other, we can also see the exchange of meaningful glances and nods of commitment between key parties. And as the delegates made their way into the hall following instructions to sit so that they

could either hear, or see the opening speeches, we can almost taste the crackle of anticipation in the air.

Therefore, as Ladreit de Lacharrière and Dusuzeau stood to welcome the delegates on behalf of their *sections* accompanied by interpreters they produced, for the first time, an officially recognised space that was neither DEAF-accessible-to-hearing, or hearing-accessible-to-DEAF but somehow simultaneously both at the same time, separate in sensory production, but collocated and carrying one common meaning that all present could understand. And what a meaning. As first, Ladreit de Lacharrière criticised the derailing of the oral method by those who had created establishments that encouraged DEAF people into intellectual mendacity for their own selfish gains, citing the need for the *Transfer* by name. Then Dusuzeau responded, demanding for DEAF people "the equality of *sourds-muets* as citizens alongside the hearing-speaking" (Congress 1900: 18), those present are in no doubt as to the ultimate aim of both *sections*.

Perhaps it was simply too much too soon. For, as Gariel stood to announce the congress open, and to invite those present to separate for their own discussions, things began to unravel. Firstly, the DEAF *section* was horrified to find that whilst the hearing *section* was provided with all the trappings of official recognition, for some reason, Gariel had simply furnished them with an empty room. "Is this the way that a congress is run?" Cochefer demanded to know:

> …despite our [section] apparently having been placed under the auspices of the Ministry for Commerce and Industry, there is no ministerial delegate present to either assist us, or monitor our work. In fact, there is no official representative at all!!. It makes me wonder if the invitation to *sourds-muets* to participate was really necessary, or whether it was simply for the sake of appearances. (Congress 1900: 228)

Meanwhile, as the penny dropped in the DEAF *section* that even Gariel's promise of equal representation had turned out to be an illusion, in the hearing *section* Claveau used his seniority to request the right to speak on two points of order. Apparently aware that without recourse to official recognition, the DEAF *section* might simply abandon their own room, equip themselves with interpreters and overwhelm the hearing assembly, Claveau recommended that the hearing *section*:

> … make explicit the rules concerning voting… it is not admissible to recognise the right of those to vote who are blatantly unable to follow the discussions for themselves. (Congress 1900 b: 35)

This was so self-evident as to be passed without objection. Claveau, then moved on to his second point of order:

> I am aware that the delegates have only had since yesterday to look over the printed analyses and reports in response to the questions that are presented in the programme… [and aware] that Question 1 of the programme 'Organisation of deaf education in different countries – should establishments for the education of *sourds-muets* be considered those of goodwill, or those of instruction?'… necessarily involves discussion of matters of administration that are internal to specific countries and that are absolutely inadmissible in the context of an International Congress… I would request that this question be removed from the agenda. (Congress 1900b: 36-38)

As Claveau sat down, the room erupted. On the one hand, those from the Congregations rose up in support of the proposal like drowning men suddenly finding solid rock beneath their feet. On the other, the Republicans were suddenly faced with the impending loss of everything that they had been working towards. In the middle, those with no knowledge of what had prompted such an outburst of emotion either sat quietly, or tried to impose some kind of rational discussion.

However, it was here that Claveau truly came into his own for, as both sides thrashed at each other in political desperation, he re-entered the fray as a calm voice of procedural wisdom. Producing a performance of consummate political skill that not only embarrassed those angered by the proposal into silence, but employed the anger itself to demonstrate the potential for danger that he had first suggested, he tied the Republicans up in procedural knots that only a secret ballot on the proposal would unravel. When the votes from the predominantly Congregational and peace-seeking foreign attendance were counted, Claveau's proposal had been passed. Within hours of the Congress beginning, all discussion of the *Transfer* was officially silenced.

6.4   Epilogue – DEAF space Disabled

With some two years of planning from DEAF, hearing republican and Oralist groups suffering such a decisive defeat in its first twelve hours, it is unsurprising that the remainder of the 1900 congress now became little more than a footnote. The following morning, Ladreit de Lacharrière levelled a formal accusation of subterfuge at Claveau, arguing that that:

> the representatives of the religious congregations, acting on the intiative of Claveau – their spokesperson – did reject discussion of the first question… a question that was aimed at lifting the *sourds-muets* from charity and giving them the rights of all citizens" (Congress 1900b: 72)

However, those present found no grounds for complaint in what had been a watertight procedural 'stitch-up', and even Lacharrière's allies begged him to give up on the grounds of embarrassment.

The DEAF *section*, too, appealed against the failure of the Exhibition's commission to grant them the promised recognition of their DEAF space and requested that the hearing section overturn the previously established separation of the *sections* to allow the whole Congress to vote together at the end. The hearing section, unsurprisingly, refused. Then, when Gaillard attempted to hold the *section* together by suggesting that the best policy was to continue presenting a united front in the *section*-specific votes, a number of more reactionary DEAF members, including Cochefer, simply stormed off.

Gaillard and Ladreit de Lacharrière attempted to maintain a brave face until the end of the congress sitting together at the head table at the closing banquet on Thursday, August 9th. However, it was clear to all those there that they were essentially allies in defeat. Of the one hundred and sixteen delegates who attended the banquet, not one came from the Congregations or from the Ministry of the Interior. As the DEAF guests filed past Ladreit de Lacharrière, each one chiming glasses with him and toasting him for "the great service that he had rendered to the *sourds-muets* by cooperating with them in what they tried to achieve" (Congress 1900: 264), the disappointment was sadly evident. Cochefer was conspicuous by his absence. He also missed the organised excursions on Friday and Saturday to the Abbé de l'Epée memorial in Versaille, to the Eglise St-Roch where de l'Epée's mortal remains were interred and to the site on the Rue Thérèse where de l'Epée's home on the Rue des Moulins had seen the first gathering of DEAF pupils. He only reappeared on Sunday 12th, in a meeting of the *Société d'Appui* where he witnessed Gaillard being awarded a silver medal for his work in organising the congress.

Far more than Milan, the 1900 Congress appears to have signalled a point of decision concerning the way that the French government understood DEAF people's space. Even when, five years later at an Independent International Congress of *Sourds-muets* that preceded the Universal Exhibition in Liège, Belgium, one of the founding fathers of the Oralist movement and architect of the Milan congress, Jules Ferreri, declared himself to have spent enough time in their midst to assert that:

> I was wrong! … When I had the opportunity to study sourds-muets better… I was persuaded, not only of the mediocrity of the results obtained at school despite our best efforts, but also of our lack of justice with regards to the culture and the intellect of sourds-muets… that a life of community gives them in cities and in industrial areas. (Ferreri, in Congress 1905: Préface)

He was ignored by the French government who, instead, continued to listen to their own delegate, M. Dubranle, from the Ministry of the Interior run school for deaf children in Chambéry who in the official congress only a week later stated:

> The Sourd-Muet; weak, and by nature of his infirmity unprepared for the struggles of life, needs assistance for the whole of his existence. (Dubranle, in Congress 1905b: 238)

From 1900, then, it was Dubranle's opinion, re-producing the effect of Claveau's intervention at the 1900 Congress that largely shaped official policy. The only way for the DEAF community to produce DEAF space with any autonomy was to withdraw further and further from state intervention. Far from establishing their DEAF space as the valid equal of hearing space, what the denial of their space through the 1900 Congress had produced was the official disabling of DEAF space.

CHAPTER 7 - CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

In the spring of 2006, I arrived at the front gates of the previously Congregationally-owned *La Persagotière* school in Nantes. Two months previously I had been turned away from the equivalent school in Toulouse because of the perception by the school's director that my research was necessarily biased towards the local DEAF community. Apparently at that time, a decision by the school to sell land that the DEAF community had long claimed, had put the two at loggerheads. Before arriving in Nantes, therefore, I had made sure to write and explain who I was and what I was doing. My overly-officious letter on headed University of Bristol notepaper seemed to have done the trick. Their response to my request for access to their archives was guarded, but at least it was not 'no'. I was invited for interview to assess my neutrality.

Waiting at the front gate were the director of *La Persagotière* and her secretary. We shook hands. I then followed both of them down the long drive to the school's front door. As we walked through the entrance hall, and up the stairs to the directors office, I saw no children. I politely asked whether they were not in school? The director stopped dead and turned to me. "This is not a school" She said. "This is a residential centre for those with special educational needs."

Later that afternoon, I described what had happened in Toulouse. "It's similar here" said the director, "*La Persagotière* belongs to the government. But the DEAF community act as if it belongs to them. So, every time the government does something that they don't like, they object. Here, the previous director let them have a hut by the front gate for their *Maison des sourds* [DEAF club]… big mistake, now they're here all the time… they organise reunions… we find them wandering through the dormitories telling stories about when they lived here… it's not theirs… It's the same in Toulouse… they think they can have a say in what happens to the school. So, you turned up talking about DEAF space… it's hardly surprising they turned you away."

A year later, I was back. I had been invited to share what I had found in their archives at their 150th anniversary. My presentation was structured around a number of 'everyday tales', told from the point of view of the DEAF pupils in the 1860s and 1870s. Afterwards I asked the director what the future held. The news was not good. "We're facing financial difficulties…" she admitted. "The government are talking about getting rid of the DEAF children completely and using the buildings for something else, after all, they go to normal schools now. But the adult DEAF community aren't happy."

The intervening year had also allowed me to develop contact with the local DEAF community. In particular with a man I'll name Marcel. His view was quite different:

"What can we do?" he asked me. "What you said about the history of the school… that's the first time I've ever heard that… it made me think. I was five when I arrived here… I learned to sign here… I grew up here… I didn't leave until I was nineteen. It was my home for fourteen years. Now, the DEAF children live here… they're the same… they even use the same [local school] signs that we do… and that goes back one hundred and fifty years… but I'm only allowed back inside when I'm teaching sign language to the staff… the buildings, yes, they maybe belong to the government… but surely *La Persagotière* belongs to DEAF people?"

The director's response was telling as she gave me the key to the archive one last time.

"Whatever you do, don't let Marcel know you have this. DEAF people are saying that they should have the archives… They say it's their history… "

7.1   Reviewing the Thesis

Perhaps it is a symptom of the final throes of the DEAF space/PhD project battle that I described in Chapter 2 but as I have drawn closer and closer to the end of this

thesis, I have grown increasingly aware of the tension of concluding when there is still so much more I could write. To counter this, I have had to increasingly remind myself of what I have already achieved. By identifying, exploring, presenting and describing examples of DEAF space from Etienne de Fay's DEAF space emergent to the DEAF space denied of the 1900 Congress, I have written a history of DEAF space. Or, perhaps, rather, I have written a *first* history of DEAF space; one that will be added-to and quite possible re-written by further research, but a point of departure nonetheless.

Furthermore, through writing a history of DEAF space, I have begun a more formal description of DEAF space itself. This I did this in three stages. The first, I based upon evidence drawn from the examples of Etienne de Fay, Azy d'Etavigny and Pierre Desloges' Parisian DEAF community. Describing these as DEAF space emergents for the way in which they appear as shoots of DEAF space emerging in the midst of a predominantly hearing reality, I described them as characterised by a *Perçu* - a space secreted by those who inhabit bodies that predispose them towards a visual being-in-the-world, by a *Conçu* that describes them by reference to what sets them apart from the surrounding hearing space, and a *Vécu* that envisages the potential for each of them to evolve to greater maturity.

In the second stage, I drew on evidence from the DEAF space that was produced by the DEAF pupils and staff of the *Institution Nationale des Sourds-Muets* in Paris. I identified the way in which a context created by the French Revolution and its administrative aftermath led to a situation in which DEAF space could be produced with increasing freedom. This I called DEAF space autonomous. Here, I noted the way in which the DEAF pupils' freedom to expand their *Perçu* led to them authoring a *Conçu* that was less authored by the limits of DEAF space and more by 'native' features from within DEAF space itself. I also noted the way in which their DEAF space *Vécu* appeared to be subsumed by their growing freedom.

These were evolutions that I then problematised as evidence arose of the rescinding of the autonomy of DEAF space. Here, I followed the way in which restrictions arising from philanthropic intervention squeezed DEAF people's *Perçu* until they reacted by relocating it to a different context, also authoring their *Conçu* in terms of their experience of contestation and their *Vécu* in terms of the need to reach for

autonomy once again. Here, I also demonstrated the way in which the location of DEAF individuals and of their production of space became key to its becoming far more complex. I argued that far from being a homogenous DEAF space as it had appeared to be in a delimited context of autonomy, DEAF space located brought to light the way in which objective and subjective differences of physically secreted *Perçus,* and experientially authored *Conçus* suggested different ways to balance DEAF space with regards to other collocated spaces. Here, I pointed particularly to the differences between DEAF space produced with *Vécus* of DEAF Nation, integration or isolation.

Finally, I provided an example that anchored DEAF space located in a more applied context, demonstrating how its 'location' is not decided only by DEAF people in the face of ambivalence, but necessarily requires DEAF space to be mobilised as it is collocated with other spaces. The example, drawn from the 1900 Congress in which the DEAF community mobilised a specific DEAF space through which they hoped to assert their validity, demonstrated how that space was denied and ultimately authored as a space of disability. This space, in combination with the example of *La Persagotière* in Nantes above, suggests that - whilst the DEAF space produced, for example, within the Paris *Institution* or, in the case of *La Persagotière,* is treasured by DEAF people for the way that it represents a situation of great autonomy, the more normal reality of DEAF space is that it is produced by different DEAF people, in different forms, in different contexts, 'located' within a wider world.

I have, therefore, satisfied both primary aims of the thesis as I set them out in the introduction. Clearly, there have been challenges along the way, some of which I have successfully addressed. Perceiving DEAF space within a record predominantly written by those who ignored its existence is a particularly important challenge that necessitated the development of a specific methodological approach, one that I detailed in section 2.3 and demonstrated with regards to DEAF space during the Revolution in Chapter 4. Similarly, maintaining the history that I have written as one that focuses on DEAF space itself, rather than spaces produced for the DEAF community or space produced to contest them by the DEAF community, is a balance that I have successfully achieved even as I have explored aspects of each.

Similarly, there have been challenges that I addressed less convincingly. Although I established a balance between the need to produce substantive evidence of DEAF space and conduct a theoretical exploration of it, I only did so by backing away from the challenge and separating the two. A similar backing-off strategy led to me photographically 'pillaging' the archives rather than address the complexities of their gatekeeper individuals and institutions. Both of these strategies have produced their own problems. Perhaps, as Lorimer (2005) suggests, these are limitations of the PhD project itself; ones that I will find resolve themselves as I am able to address specific points to specific audiences as I go on to publish material that I have included within the PhD and additional material that awaits the light of day.

7.2   Implications of the Thesis

However, even as I consider that process of dissemination, I find myself considering the challenges that lay ahead. Certainly it would be possible to simply 'roll out' the findings of my research without any regard for what impact they might have. However, I cannot help but acknowledge that rather than simply inform existing representations of DEAF people's space, what my work does is cut across those already in circulation in different, unsettling and challenging ways.

This is perhaps most immediately obvious in terms of the way that DEAF people's space has been authored by disability theory. As I argue above, this has either taken the form of a space of exclusion from the mainstream that disability theorists have attempted to dissolve (Batterbury et al 2007), or as a space into which DEAF people retreat out of fearful reaction to the potential of a 'postdeaf' possibility (Davis 2008). My work contests few of these points directly. Its focus on historical evidence means that if it addresses any of them it does obliquely, for example, in Berthier's response to de Gérando's condemnation of the exclusionism of DEAF Nation. What my work does do, however, is to suggest that to see DEAF space this way is to glimpse only a tiny part of what it ultimately means. Certainly, my work suggests that DEAF space is produced by those who are unable to easily communicate with hearing people. However, their production of a visual *Perçu* is not the product of that inability, but rather a simple outflowing of their ability to communicate, successfully achieved in a visual medium. Similarly, DEAF space may be authored with a *Conçu* that recognises 'DEAF' apart from the hearing world. However, my research

demonstrates that this is not as a marker of 'us against them', but more a marker of 'us with us'. Again, DEAF space *Vécu* might envisage the need for a Gazanesque separatism. However, this is not due to fear of 'postdeafness', but simply part of an ongoing attempt to maintain as much autonomy as possible for the sake of a DEAF *totalité*.

In fact, what my works suggests is that, far from being something born out of 'dis-ability' or as a space that disables DEAF people, there is nothing inherent within DEAF space that would attribute it any less communicative sufficiency, any less promise of maturity, any less overall validity than the hearing-produced space of the hearing world. It is only as it finds its autonomy restricted, its existence contested or its freedom to allow DEAF people to reach *totalité* on their terms threatened, that it begins to author its *Perçu, Conçu* and *Vécu* in a contestatory way. In an example from my evidence, DEAF space is, in potentia, everything that a Sicardian 'DEAF corner of the world' might represent. If it authors itself as contestatory, it is only in the face of an orientalising disability paradigm that will not allow it validity in its own right.

Clearly, this does not mean that there is not a place for dis-ability studies. I have demonstrated, particularly in the case of DEAF space autonomous, that context plays a very real role in constraining or releasing DEAF space to maturity and it is clear that the majority of DEAF people live in daily collocation with what Lane would call an 'audist' world; one in which it is assumed that hearing is 'normal', and that anything else is not (Lane 1999). However, what it does mean is that disability studies can no longer examine DEAF space through frameworks that deny its ultimate validity. Rather it must acknowledge its responsibility to reflexive self-interrogation as a part of the 'dis-abling' machine.

This clearly puts rather a different spin on disability approaches to DEAF people. In a voyage that parallels Geography's engagement with its own role in colonialism (Power 2003), disability studies approaches to DEAF people may only be valid as they identify the way that they have authored DEAF people, and thereby prevented them from producing, inhabiting, and maturing a DEAF space in pursuit of their own, visually-mediated *totalité*. 'Histories of deafness', for example, are certainly valid, but only if alongside describing attempts to engineer deaf/DEAF people's

route back to hearingness, they also recognise the difference between the two by reference to the spaces that each produces, and reflexively engage with the complexities of why it is that one has been invalidated in favour of the other.

However, my history of DEAF space does not only address disability theory. It also addresses Deaf Studies by challenging key areas of Deaf theory and Deaf history which seek to define DEAF space in uncomplicated terms of a DEAF archetype. Here, I am particularly referring to the way in which, for example, more or less porous DEAF space *Perçus* demonstrated in DEAF space located impact upon the DEAF centredness and homogeneity of DEAF space. Or the way in which the *Conçu* of DEAF itself is problematised both in terms of the moment it becomes 'DEAF' and the extent to which DEAF is an undefined, internally authored 'expected' that may or may not adopt an element of contestation. Or, again, the way in which a variety of DEAF space located *Vécus* suggests that there is no one way to reach for a DEAF totalité even from within DEAF space itself.

Clearly too, there are considerable challenges to DEAF space as Deaf Studies has attempted to validate it upon a hearing-authored plane, either as a Deaf 'order of things' originating within a DEAF community of culture or a counter-narrative of Deaf nation. Certainly, the DEAF Banquets and DEAF Nation provide evidence that DEAF space was produced with an explicitly contestatory *Conçu*. However, as my presentation of them demonstrates, the contestation of DEAF Nation was less an attempt to position DEAF people as a 'nation' on hearing terms, and more a question of asserting the need to produce DEAF space autonomous in balanced location or collocated with the hearing-authored world. DEAF space produced as DEAF Nation might have appeared to propose a space, separated intra-space from hearing society on a hearing-authored plane; de Gérando's contestation of it demonstrates as much. However, far from confirming this, Berthier's response is proposed inter-space, as an invitation for hearing people to visit DEAF space and to engage with DEAF reality.

Perhaps it is here, as I suggested in Chapter 2, that the awkward addition of a counter-narrative ingredient to Ladd's Deafhood (Ladd 2003) might be addressed. Proposed as I have suggested through Deaf Nationhood, Deafhood; "the existential state of Deaf 'being-in-the-world' … a process by which Deaf individuals come to actualise their Deaf identity" (op cit) can only be entertained through an artificial

'ring-fencing' of that process of Deaf self-actualisation. The need for a counter-narrative is inevitable. Consequently, as I explained there, the ultimate limits to which Deafhood can reach are constrained.

Seen in terms of DEAF space, however, Deafhood is free to entertain the differences of more or less porous *Perçus,* authoring a more or less heterogenous DEAF *Conçu*, seeing in the relationship between DEAF space and hearing space glimpses of a fully dis-alienated *Vécu*. Unfettered by the need for a defensive counter-narrative by its removal *from* the plane that required it, it has no need to justify its 'difference' in terms of counter- anything. Able perhaps even to address the need for that counter-narrative as a symptom of the internalisation of audism itself, and of its writing-in to an internally authored *Conçu*. Allowed ultimately, to pursue a DEAF actualisation, or 'being in the world' in any shape that DEAF people might find to do so, Deafhood might perhaps be nothing less than a DEAF Lefebvrian *totalité*.

7.3 Identifying a point of re-entry

Working out the implications of my work to both Disability theory and Deaf Studies will clearly take time. It is all very well to ask the DEAF community, for example, to pause and consider the history that I have written, and its implications. However, asking them to do so while they wrestle with the reality of their present disabling is tantamount to asking a salmon to take a break mid-swim so as to be stronger for the morrow. The field against which I write will not stop moving for the sake of theoretical recalibration. Similarly problematic is the challenge of how to introduce evidence of DEAF space and of its history alongside other academic understandings of the DEAF community without the evidence that I have present being simply swallowed up in ongoing theory. It is hard to see how the porosity of DEAF space located might be explored without disability theorists identifying it as evidence of DEAF people's corporeal hybridisation (Kelly 2003) and further evidence of the inevitability of 'postdeafness' (Davis 2008). Similarly, there appears to be little immediate scope to bring the evidence that I have described to bear on wider areas of theoretical knowledge; theories of nationhood for example, or questions of citizenship, or wider historical investigations into secularisation in France, or French educational linguistic policy, if DEAF people are simply assumed to be those who are disabled.

What I need, therefore, is to identify a point of entry that allows me to not only present the evidence that I have described above, but that also allows me to do so in a way that engages with the assumptions of both Disability Theory and Deaf Studies and that gently problematises them. One perhaps is my concentration on historical events rather than the present. Although not adopted to purposefully engineer dispassion, the fact that there is a temporal distance between the evidence that I suggest and the real-life urgency of its application nevertheless offers some critical distance. Of course, that may also be a disadvantage of a primarily historical study. If it happened 'back then', how is it relevant now?

No. What I want to suggest is that the key to finding a point of entry is not simply to shy away from confrontation until those to whom I address myself are more comfortable. Rather, that if it is Lefebvre's production of space that has revealed DEAF space for what it was in this thesis then perhaps the next step is also one that needs to be based in Lefebvre's work; as it is formulated through the geography of 'dis-ability' (henceforth simply a 'geography of ability') that I proposed in Chapter 2.

Not only does a Lefebvrian geography of ability suggest a way to combine the power of disability theory to challenge contextual disabling with the acknowledgement of embodied experience that it lacks. But is also suggests a way for Deaf Studies to side-step a 'strategic' essentialism based in constructed resistance and, instead, refer to DEAF people's reality as simply, 'spatially', elsewhere.   Furthermore, by validating different spaces as they are produced, a Lefebvrian geography of ability offers DEAF space a way to begin to engage with itself and others in a new way; informing, challenging, supplementing, refining, enhancing them and suggesting new areas of enquiry. Not only are there more historical questions to be asked: What does Laurent Clerc's evidence of a 'Republic of Gestures' say to current research on the 'Republic of Letters'?[1] How did Laurent Clerc's American DEAF spaces differ from those that he left behind in France? What contexts did DEAF people use to protect the autonomy of their DEAF space post-1900? How far were DEAF people involved in non-DEAF space historical events? What DEAF space differences arose from

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[1] My thanks to Robert Mayhew for these comparative terms.

nationally and congregationally administered school contexts? All of these are indicated as potential research fields from evidence that has remained peripheral to this thesis. But, there are also areas of immediate and intriguing contemporary application. How do DEAF people produce an international DEAF space despite a variety of sign languages? What might it mean for DEAF space if more hearing people knew sign language? What impact might DEAF space have for hearing world assumptions of technological communication spaces, print-space traditions, or notions of heredity and race? How might hearing-world space be reshaped by spaces for DEAF learning, or DEAF citizenship, or DEAF belonging? How can DEAF academics engage from within their own space with the thought spaces of the hearing world and vice-versa? What might be the implications of the juxtaposition of a valid DEAF space with medically defined notions of well-being? Again, all of these are current questions that sit on the fringes of Deaf Studies and to which geography might valuably apply itself.

My thesis does not answer these questions. It did not aim to. However, by providing a history of DEAF space, and by describing DEAF space through that history it has demonstrated the value of a Lefebvrian framework that provides an entry point from which to begin to address them. The challenge now is to have the courage to engage with them and with the DEAF spaces that they make visible.

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