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6 The Dilemma of the Hard of Hearing within the U.S. Deaf Community

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Members of the American Deaf culture have long taken what is commonly perceived as a disability to be a "way of life," creating a worldview that maintains a different reality: deafness as the "normal" state of being.[1] To be Deaf has traditionally and primarily been defined as using and valuing American Sign Language (ASL) as well as conforming to a set of culturally defined behavioral and attitudinal norms (Padden and Humphries 1988; Kannapell 1993).

Hard of hearing individuals, being neither fully deaf nor hearing, share characteristics of both yet, at the same time, also share many of the problems and issues faced by Deaf people and have long attempted to tread a fine line between the cultures to which they belong. Despite this effort, hard of hearing individuals frequently report rejections or alienation from both groups, their commonalties notwithstanding. As a result, hard of hearing individuals have often had difficulty developing a secure, complete sense of identity as Deaf, Hearing, or bicultural individuals.

The dilemma of identity has been further compounded for hard of hearing people by a new "Deaf militancy," which asserts that some aspects of being hard of hearing are proof of nonmembership within the Deaf culture. One possible resolution to the hard of hearing person's identity dilemma lies in granting hard of hearing people the means to gain cultural knowledge of, and acceptance by, the minority Deaf culture through education and socialization within enculturating sites such as schools for the deaf, social and recreational activities, and Deaf clubs.

Methodology

Much of the information presented in this chapter comes directly from my doctoral dissertation (Grushkin 1996) in which I conducted participant observation and interviews (Spradley 1980; Hammersley and Atkinson 1983; Emerson, Fretz,

and Shaw 1995) with four hard of hearing high school students at a residential school for the deaf in the United States that used the ASL-English, bilingual-bicultural (bi-bi) philosophy. Students were selected according to criteria for hearing status, length of enrollment within the program, age, and cognitive as well as linguistic ability. Attempts were made to balance selected students for age, gender, and racial composition.

I have a congenital severe-to-profound hearing loss, which with amplification is corrected to a "hard of hearing" level, although I have poor speech discrimination through aural means alone and, therefore, identify myself as Deaf. I was raised orally and in public schools without any contact with other deaf and hard of hearing individuals until I enrolled at the age of 13 at Model Secondary School for the Deaf, a national residential school program for deaf and hard of hearing students connected to Gallaudet University. Since that time, I have been a member of the Deaf community. I attended Gallaudet University and have worked within educational programs for deaf and hard of hearing students for all of my adult life. Some of the information presented in this chapter, including anecdotal commentaries and direct observation, comes from my experience and knowledge as a member of the Deaf community, although the greater portion is, of course, research-based.

BEING HARD OF HEARING: DEFINITIONS

One will quickly learn from reading the literature that determining exactly where the boundaries are that separate being deaf, being hard of hearing, and being hearing is an extremely difficult task. The definitions of these terms vary along audiological, cultural, and ideological lines. In addition, a variety of terms have been developed to describe hearing loss, some of which are considered pejorative or not culturally validating for the Deaf community, for example, *hearing impaired, hearing handicapped, deaf and dumb,* and *deaf-mute* (Levitan 1993).

AUDIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND CATEGORIZATION OF HEARING LOSS

Hearing loss is measured by presenting a series of auditory signals at varying frequencies and degrees of intensity (loudness). The testee's responses (or lack of responses) to these signals are then plotted on a graph called an audiogram. The audiogram's horizontal axis is used to chart the sound frequencies, represented by Hertz (Hz), which refers to the "speed" of the sound waves. Sounds in the lower frequencies (125–250 Hz) are perceived as deeper whereas sounds in the higher frequencies (2,000–4,000 Hz) are higher in pitch. On the vertical axis, the sound intensity, or loudness, (represented by decibel or dB) is graphed. Standard audiological practice is to quote the average of a person's responses (Pure Tone Average or PTA) across several frequencies. People with a greater amount of hearing loss in the higher frequencies are said to have a high frequency loss, and a person with less response to lower frequencies is said to have a low frequency loss.

Rosen (1980) provides a clear, informative explanation of the different degrees of hearing loss and their implications: [250]

- *-10 dB to 25 dB: Normal Range*—Normal breathing is heard at 10 dB; leaves rustle at 25 dB.
- *25 dB to 40 dB: Mild Impairment*—Soft sounds cannot be heard. Repetition may be required to understand what is said. It is hard to understand in noisy places and when more than one person talks. A quiet home at night or whispering occur at around 30 dB.
- *40 dB to 55 dB: Moderate Impairment*—Sounds such as soft speech at 50 dB are not understood without amplification. Normal conversation is barely audible and may sound distorted.
- *55 dB to 75 dB: Moderately Severe Impairment*—Normal conversation level, which is about 60 dB, will be inaudible without amplification, and may sound distorted.
- *75 dB to 95 dB: Severe Impairment*—Only very loud sounds are heard, such as a vacuum cleaner or a shout at a distance of one foot (80 dB). Conversation must be amplified, however, some speech sounds will still be inaudible or distorted.
- *95 dB and up: Profound Impairment*—Even loud noises, such as a power lawn mower (95 dB), a noisy factory (100 dB), music from a rock band (110 dB), or a propeller plane at takeoff (120 dB) may only be sensed as an indistinguishable rumble rather than actually being heard. (2–3)

Difficulty of Using Audiological Definitions

A person might have varying degrees of loss in different frequencies yet maintain an average loss similar to another person with a different frequency range response. Ross (1990) clarifies this point:

> Consider a child with a 40 dB hearing loss at the frequencies of 500, 1,000, and 2,000 Hz. The average hearing loss is 40 dB, and it is this figure that is usually used when describing the degree of the hearing loss. Now consider a child with a zero threshold at 500 Hz, a 40 dB threshold at 1,000 Hz and an 80 dB threshold at 2,000 Hz. The average hearing loss for this child is also 40 dB. The auditory performance and general behavior of these children will, however, differ considerably. The child with a flat hearing loss is consistent in his or her diminished ability to respond to speech and other sounds. The child with the high frequency loss, on the other hand, can respond to low intensity (and low pitched) sounds normally, but because he or she cannot perceive the full spectrum of speech frequencies, the child's responses to meaningful stimuli are inconsistent and inadequate. Furthermore, this child will usually display more severe speech and language problems than the one with a mild-to-moderate flat hearing loss (1990, 8).

Cultural and Attitudinal or Ideological Definitions

Measurable definitions of hearing loss such as those provided above may serve well for bureaucratic purposes, but within the interpersonal realm, they fre-

quently possess little meaning. As an illustration, Witcher (1974) describes her daughter as "hard of hearing," yet she states that her daughter has a severe to moderately severe high frequency loss, which enables her to hear only some sounds such as thunder and car motors. To many observers, this description would be indicative of a deaf, not hard of hearing, person.

Similarly, Ross and Calvert (1967) describe how, by referring to all deaf and hard of hearing children as "deaf," the educational system is creating a self-fulfilling prophecy through which the hard of hearing children indeed become deaf. Although Ross and Calvert's words express some truth, it is clear that both their, as well as Witcher's (1974), comments indicate their desire to avoid placing the stigma (Goffman 1963) of deafness upon the hard of hearing child. That is, both authors appear to imply that being deaf is less desirable than being hard of hearing, just as being hard of hearing is less desirable than being hearing. The avoidance of stigma is what has spurred educators and the general public to use euphemisms such as "hearing impaired," "audiologically handicapped," and so forth to describe hearing loss.[2] In using these labels, the society as a whole is attempting to engage in the process of normalization (Lane 1992) or "hearization" (Nover 1993) of deaf and hard of hearing children and adults. Nover observes:

> [H]earization leads many deaf children into wishing or thinking they will become hearing some day. Others prefer to be called "hearing impaired" or "hard-of-hearing" rather than deaf. Unfortunately, deaf and hard-of-hearing children may learn to view hearing people as superior to those who are deaf. (1993, 16)

Yet, the Deaf community, in a cultural inversion (Levine 1977; Basso 1979; Ogbu 1987) or rejection of Hearing values, has embraced the term *deaf* to apply to themselves. Cultural inversion is common to minorities, especially "involuntary minorities" (Ogbu 1987). Ogbu defines involuntary minorities as those groups who have been placed into a minority status within a nation through means not of their own choosing, for example, the African Americans who were brought to America through slavery or the Mexican Americans living in formerly Mexican portions of this country at the time of American annexation of Mexican territory. Cultural inversion is explained by Ogbu in this manner:

> Cultural inversion is the tendency for members of one population, in this case involuntary minorities, to regard certain forms of behaviors, certain events, symbols and meanings as not appropriate for them because they are characteristic of members of another population (e.g., white Americans); at the same time, the minorities claim other (often the opposite) forms of behaviors, events, symbols and meanings as appropriate for them because these are not characteristic of white Americans. *Thus, what the minorities consider appropriate or even legitimate behaviors or attitudes for themselves are defined in opposition to the practices and preferences of white Americans.* (1987, 323, emphasis added)

Thus, for Deaf people, having a hearing loss is a core aspect of their identity and one to be closely held along with their language and values (Reagan 1985;

Padden and Humphries 1988; Kannapell 1993). This view runs directly counter to the perspective of the Hearing community, which holds hearing loss to be a negative, undesirable phenomenon and one that has the potential to exclude an individual from attaining or retaining a Hearing identity, from participating within Hearing society (which would be unfortunate in the Hearing worldview), or both. In other words, the different "center" (Padden and Humphries 1988) of the Deaf community holds deafness as the normative state of being while the possession of hearing is the marked condition. In the Deaf community, according to Padden and Humphries, a person who possesses a great deal of auditory capacity that enables him or her to function almost as a hearing person might be described as VERY-HARD-OF-HEARING whereas, within the Hearing world, a person who is described as "very hard of hearing" is an individual with a severe degree of hearing loss.

As one can see from this discussion, the very meaning of commonly held terms can differ widely depending on one's psychological and cultural orientation. However, to be Deaf or hard of hearing does not necessitate that one belong to a single political, cultural, or educational entity. One's status as a Deaf or hard of hearing individual is a function of audiological, sociocultural, and personal perceptions. The highly varying definitions of all three perceptions make it difficult to define an individual as belonging to any one of the categories of Hearing, Deaf, or hard of hearing.

Education of the Hard of Hearing in America

Education of deaf people in America began in 1817 when Thomas H. Gallaudet, a Protestant minister, and Laurent Clerc, a deaf man educated in France, established the first permanent school for the deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. Shortly thereafter, residential schools for the deaf quickly appeared in many states across America. At these schools for the deaf, hard of hearing individuals were often educated alongside their more profoundly deaf peers.

Before the early 20th century, hard of hearing individuals (and deaf people who had been born hearing) were referred to as "semi-mutes." Although most of these individuals were taught along with their profoundly deaf peers through sign language and fingerspelling under the "Combined System," which was developed by Edward Miner Gallaudet (Thomas Gallaudet's son), the hard of hearing (and some deaf) students also received additional instruction in speech production. Starting in the 1850s and 1860s, a movement began that pushed for the abolition of sign language and for deaf children to be instructed through speech alone (oralism). For an excellent exploration of the reasons for oralism's popularity and rise in acceptance, the reader is referred to Douglas Baynton's (1996) work.

The oralist movement was spearheaded by notables such as Alexander Graham Bell and Gardiner Greene Hubbard in the United States as well as others abroad such as the famous French physician Prosper Ménière and the Abbé Giulano Tarra from Italy. In the late 1870s, a series of conventions took place at which oralism was actively endorsed, and in 1880, this movement found its culmination at an international convention of educators of the deaf in Milan, Italy. At this convention (which had only one Deaf person in attendance) all of the 164 dele-

gates, except for the five from the United States, voted to endorse oralism as the sole mode of instruction within schools for the deaf. Oralism came into primacy worldwide after the Milan convention, and most deaf and hard of hearing students were instructed through oral and auditory means alone. Although actively resisted in the United States, oralism soon took over also at the American schools for the deaf. Lane (1980) describes the swiftness of oralism's spread:

> There were 26 American institutions for the education of the deaf in 1867 and ASL was the language of instruction in all 26; by 1907, there were 139 schools for the deaf and ASL was allowed in none. (131)

According to anecdotal evidence within the Deaf community, educators of the deaf would often demonstrate the effectiveness of oral education by showcasing semi-mute students (without informing their audience of the background history of these students) as exemplars of what oral instruction could achieve (see Lane 1980, 1984). In addition, semi-mute and hard of hearing students were held up as models of oral communication for more profoundly deaf students to emulate. The comparison of hard of hearing students to deaf students was a naturally unfair one because these semi-mute or hard of hearing students possessed a natural advantage over their profoundly deaf peers in their ability to auditorily perceive some speech sounds or in their memory of how to speak, which they may have retained if they had been born hearing.

With the advent of electronic amplification in the early 20th century, the distinction between deaf and hard of hearing individuals began to emerge. Along with this differentiation and in conjunction with the push toward English-only, oral education (Lane 1980; Nover 1993), educators began placing increasing numbers of hard of hearing (and deaf) students in public school programs, a practice known as "mainstreaming." The impetus for mainstreaming gained extra force with the passage in the mid-1970s of Public Law 94–142, which was superseded in 1998 by P.L. 105–17. Since P.L. 94–142's passage, enrollments at many state schools for the deaf have significantly declined (Holden-Pitt 1997). Further, hard of hearing students are not encouraged to attend schools for the deaf, which is clearly indicated by the increase in enrollments at schools for the deaf of children with corresponding increases in severity of hearing loss (Holden-Pitt 1997).

At public schools, (and at some schools for the deaf) sign language and, especially, ASL is not considered to be a logical mode of communication for hard of hearing students because they are presumed to be capable of academic and social functioning through aural means alone. Consequently, hard of hearing students are frequently not exposed to any sign communication but are encouraged to develop their speech and auditory skills to promote a greater sense of identification and interaction with the Hearing world. Thus, hard of hearing people clearly have been and continue to be psychologically and physically isolated from the Deaf world. Branson and Miller (1993), working in Australia, assert that this psychological and physical isolation from the Deaf world ultimately teaches hard of hearing (and deaf) students to reject it (see also Woodward and Allen 1993).

DIFFICULTIES OF HARD OF HEARING INDIVIDUALS IN MAINSTREAMED SETTINGS

At first glance, one might easily conclude that hard of hearing individuals have more in common with hearing people than with deaf people because they can

acquire speech and auditory skills to a greater degree than is possible for most deaf people. However, a great deal of empirical documentation points to deficiencies in the auditory and articulatory (speech) processes of hard of hearing children and adults that directly or indirectly translate into academic and social difficulties for this population (Davis 1990; Ross 1990) and that parallel the situation of more profoundly deaf children. Indeed, a number of studies have shown that, academically, hard of hearing students tend to lag two to three years behind their hearing peers (Ross, Brackett, and Maxon 1982; Brackett and Maxon 1986). Further, losses as mild as 15 dB to 25 dB (the point at which one can hear leaves rustling) can result in academic lags of more than a year, and the academic delay increases with greater degrees of hearing loss (Quigley and Thomure 1968). Although this academic delay is not as severe as has typically been found for severely and profoundly deaf children, it remains true that hard of hearing students experience academic difficulties in the regular school program as do severely and profoundly deaf children.

In addition, although hard of hearing people may possess the ability to rely on auditory processes alone for speech comprehension, they frequently report comprehension difficulties when they encounter extensive background noise or when the speaker is further away, does not articulate well, or uses a dialect different from that of the hard of hearing listener. The apparent inconsistency of hard of hearing students' responses to auditory stimuli (including speech) has led to a paradoxical social exclusion of these students by their hearing peers, who reported a higher social preference for their more profoundly deaf classmates (Elser 1959; Kennedy and Bruininks 1974; Kennedy et al. 1976; Ross 1990). That is, because hard of hearing students might respond to a hail or other speech event from one of their classmates under one set of auditory circumstances but not under another seemingly similar (to the Hearing student) situation, the Hearing student might perceive the hard of hearing student as being "moody" or as ignoring them, which decreases the desire to socialize with that person.

Despite the observations in the studies above that suggest Hearing students prefer to socialize with more profoundly deaf students than hard of hearing students, a pattern of relatively greater social isolation, not integration, is the reality for both deaf and hard of hearing students in "mainstreamed" (public school) settings. Under the "audist" (Lane 1992) paradigm, which emphasizes speech over sign, hard of hearing individuals and their teachers were discouraged from learning or using signs because this mode of communication was thought to inhibit the use of articulatory and auditory skills. Even now, some educators such as Duffy (1998) express concerns about the potentially detrimental value of signs for hard of hearing (and deaf) students, despite evidence to the contrary (Stuckless and Birch 1966; Israelite, Ewoldt, and Hoffmeister 1992; Daniels 1993; Strong and Prinz 1997) that suggests that exposure to signs, including ASL, does not hinder and may even help speech and English language development. Indeed, when exposed to signs after having relied solely on audition in their lives, many hard of hearing children and adults have expressed an appreciation for the broader opportunities for communication and socialization that signs provide for them (Moschella 1992; Grushkin 1996).

RISE OF THE AMERICAN DEAF COMMUNITY AND MILITANTISM

The idea has been fairly well established within the anthropological and Deaf-related literature that the American Deaf community exhibits characteristics (language, values, behaviors) validating the view of the Deaf as a cultural unit rather than as a subculture of deficient, "handicapped" individuals (Higgins 1980; Padden 1980; Reagan 1985; Padden and Humphries 1988; Kannapell 1993). Within this culture, audiological deafness and use of ASL are held as the primary prerequisites for "membership" within the community (Padden and Humphries 1988; Kannapell 1993).

The development of the American Deaf community can be directly traced to the establishment of schools for the deaf in America, starting with the American School for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. These schools for the deaf provided a centralized location where large numbers of deaf individuals could come together and develop a language and social networks. The centralized aggregation of deaf students in schools is especially important for a "low incidence" condition such as deafness in which approximately one out of every 1,000 people are born deaf (Schein 1989). Without schools for the deaf, deaf individuals would be isolated from one another because most deaf children are born to Hearing parents who have no prior knowledge of deafness, and these families typically do not have any deaf neighbors in their immediate vicinity.

During a period that was fairly concurrent with the pivotal 1880 Milan Convention, members of the Deaf community established the National Association of the Deaf (NAD), which provided a base for advocacy for the educational, social, and financial rights of deaf people in America. NAD, fearing the loss of ASL in America as a result of oralist efforts, attempted to preserve signing through film in the early 20th century (Schuchman 1988; Weinrib 1994). In the 1960s, linguists, beginning with William Stokoe, began to recognize ASL as a full language in its own right rather than as a derivative of English or as a "poor substitute" for oral communication. The establishment of the NAD provided a means through which to empower the Deaf community, and the sense of empowerment rose with the recognition of ASL as a language.

This sense of empowerment reached a previously unknown peak in 1988, when Gallaudet University, the world's only liberal arts program for deaf and hard of hearing students (which had never before had a Deaf president), selected its seventh hearing president over two well-known Deaf candidates for the position. The University's students protested, shutting down the campus for a week until one of the Deaf candidates was appointed, in a movement now known as the "Deaf President Now" (DPN) protest. The following year, Gallaudet University hosted "Deaf Way," an international conference celebrating all things Deaf. These two events energized Deaf communities around the world, especially in America.

In addition, these two events fostered growth within a subset of the Deaf community, the "militant Deaf," who allegedly champion Deaf culture to the exclusion of Hearing people and Hearing culture, including their language, English (Bertling 1994; Caswell 2001). Although the reality may be that these militant Deaf are not as radically anti-Hearing as they are made out to be (especially in the

rejection of English), it is important to understand that many Hearing (and some deaf) people perceive Deaf people as either belonging to or condoning the militant subset.

Some Deaf people's militancy is exacerbated by countertrends to the growth of Deaf culture that serve to isolate and "hearize" (Nover 1993) deaf individuals. As was discussed earlier, oralism and mainstreaming are two of these countertrends. Another countertrend is the attempt to transform ASL into a dialect of English (Lane 1980) through the use of signed English systems. These signed English systems, which use visual mechanisms for representing English morphology and syntax, are widely used in school programs for deaf and hard of hearing students in America despite growing evidence of their ineffectiveness in promoting English skills (Stokes and Menyuk 1975; Supalla 1991).

Another significant countertrend has been the development of assistive listening technology, especially the cochlear implant, which blends medical and amplification techniques to provide even profoundly deaf individuals some sense of hearing. The Deaf community has strongly protested the use of the implant, which is being used on a growing number of children with hearing losses, despite limited and mixed effectiveness. Their argument is that the implant serves only to continue the academic, communicative, and social isolation of deaf children.

The now-defunct television program for deaf and hard of hearing people, *Deaf Mosaic*, once broadcast a protest against the cochlear implant by French Deaf people, including one scene in which a Deaf leader took a sledgehammer to an implantation device. In addition, a student leader of the DPN movement has been quoted as desiring to "stick a pencil in [his] ear," should he ever become hearing, to maintain his identity as a Deaf person. Images and quotations such as these have only served to further the perception of the Deaf community's militancy. Hearing people with no prior understanding of Deaf culture and values are frequently shocked and scared by these images and often take these events on their face value as evidence of blind radicalism and rejection of Hearing people and their society.

Criteria for Membership in the Deaf Community

The primary criteria for Deaf community membership have traditionally been to have a hearing loss and to use ASL (Padden and Humphries 1988; Kannapell 1993). However, the Deaf community is far from homogeneous; within its confines, one can find a wide range of types coming from an equally wide range of backgrounds. Although in most writings, the term *Deaf community* is used to refer to those within the community's "core," the Deaf community can encompass those who are relatively isolated from the core, for example, those deaf and hard of hearing people who refuse to use or have not had the opportunity to learn ASL.

The core members of the Deaf community have long been primarily defined as those who were congenitally deaf or deafened at an early age, attended a residential school for the deaf, and for some, were also born to Deaf parents. The Deaf community is also composed of individuals who were born deaf but were raised orally or attended public schools; hard of hearing people; and even some hearing people such as those who were born to deaf parents or maintain extensive social networks within the community (such as sign language interpreters). Some

of these individuals may enter the Deaf community through alternative enculturating sites such as a college for the deaf like Gallaudet University or through association with Deaf individuals at Deaf clubs or events (captioned movies, festivals, outdoor activities, etc.).

SHIFTING ASSOCIATIONS AND STATUS

The degree of status that a Deaf person is given as a member of the Deaf community (judging from my experience in the Deaf community) appears to be influenced by a number of factors such as hearing status, age at which one learned to sign, the extent to which one uses sign language and the degree of ASL present in the person's signing, the quantity and quality of associations with Deaf people, and the individual's own self-ascriptions or desires to be affiliated with the Deaf community. For example, Padden and Humphries (1988) cite the case of a hard of hearing person well-situated within the Deaf community who was described by others as "deaf, but really hard of hearing" (51). Some individuals have had a long-standing relationship with the Deaf community, yet have chosen to disassociate themselves from the community because of perceived injustices done to them by other members or as a form of protest against the community's values or militancy. These individuals may choose to identify themselves in other ways than being Deaf to reinforce their stance as separate from the Deaf community.

Within the Deaf community, a somewhat pejorative sign is used to refer to an individual who acts like or espouses ideas that are perceived as belonging to Hearing people: THINK-HEARING. This sign, which incorporates a parametrical change from the mouth to the forehead of the sign for HEARING-PERSON, literally means "thinks like a Hearing person" (Padden and Humphries 1988). I have seen Deaf people discount certain individuals as THINK-HEARING because they enjoyed listening to music, referred to themselves as "hearing impaired" rather than as "Deaf," or expressed the sentiment that Signed English is better than ASL for communication or education. The true motives of a person labeled as THINK-HEARING for socializing with the Deaf community subsequently come under some suspicion, and the core members of the community reconsider whether that person should be thought of as a member of the Deaf community. The sign THINK-HEARING is the Deaf equivalent of the labels "Uncle Tom" or "Oreo" found in the Black community. This suspicion of those who do not appear to conform entirely to Deaf norms arises, in part, from historical relationships between Deaf and Hearing people (see Lane 1992; Wrigley 1996) but, mainly, as a means of maintaining in-group cohesion, a means that also occurs in other minority groups such as Native Americans and African Americans (Basso 1979; Higgins 1980; Fordham and Ogbu 1986).

In other words, one's status within the Deaf community is not static; individuals can, over time, shift toward or away from the core, just as is the case for the Lubovitcher Hasidim (Levy 1973) and other ethnic minority groups (see figure 6.1). That is, a person coming from outside or from the fringe areas of the in-group may decide to actively pursue a greater degree of group membership and may accomplish this deeper affiliation through intensive social interaction with the group's core members and through an adoption of the values and behaviors of the in-group. Within the Hasidim, for example, an informal and nonstatic con-

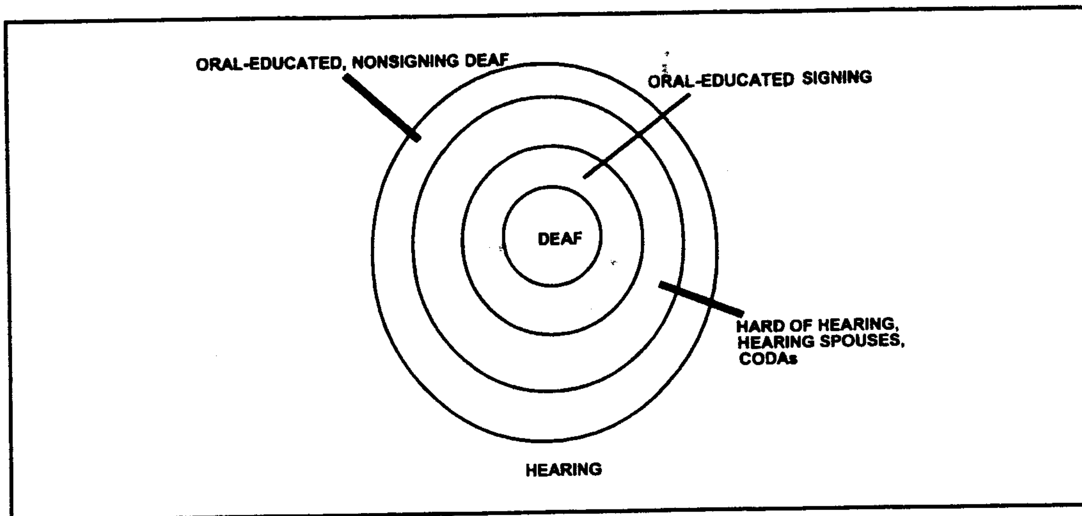

FIGURE 6.1 Schematic of relative relationships within the Deaf community

tinuum of classification appears to range from a core of Hasidim to a peripheral group of observant and nonobservant Jews who may or may not have accepted many of the cultural forms or rituals associated with Orthodox Judaism.

Like the Hasidim, an unspoken continuum exists for being Deaf, which has a core group of deaf people born to Deaf families at the center (Padden 1980; Erting 1982; Johnson and Erting 1989). Just outside of the core group are those who were born to Hearing parents but attended a residential school for the deaf and learned ASL early. Still further out are those deaf people who were educated in the public schools ("mainstreamed") but chose to identify with the Deaf community at some point in their lives, have learned sign language, and participate in the community's events. At the periphery are the orally trained deaf individuals, the hard of hearing people, and late-deafened adults who may identify more closely with Hearing people.

Like nonobservant Jews or non-Jews for the Hasidim, the oral deaf and hard of hearing people as well as Hearing people who wish to become a part of the Deaf community (e.g., through marriage or as an interpreter) may undergo the socialization process and become accepted community members, provided they conform to the values and behaviors of the Deaf community. The sites for enculturation of Deaf individuals have been found primarily within the schools for the deaf (Erting 1982) but also within Deaf clubs; Deaf organizations (NAD and its state affiliates as well as the National Fraternal Association of the Deaf); Deaf sporting groups, both informal and organized (World Recreational Association of the Deaf, U.S. Deaf Skiers Association, U.S. Athletic Association of the Deaf); and regular association with Deaf individuals in more informal settings.

THE HARD OF HEARING WITHIN THE DEAF COMMUNITY

Hard of hearing people have traditionally possessed a fringe status within the Deaf community (see figure 6.1) with the exception of those who have Deaf parents. Hard of hearing people with Deaf parents are usually fully accepted members of the community having grown up with the language and the cultural values and norms. The status of fringe membership emanates from a number of

causes. One cause may be the presentation of hard of hearing individuals as models of oral communication to be emulated by profoundly deaf individuals, despite the inequity of auditory and oral communication skills. This inequity and exhibition of hard of hearing people as oral models may have led to understandable anger and rejection of these "favored individuals" by profoundly deaf people, rejection that came to be established as a cultural norm.

More importantly, hard of hearing people have traditionally been encouraged to and often do identify with Hearing values and culture through oral and mainstreamed education, as Branson and Miller (1993) have suggested. That is, hard of hearing people seem to choose to associate with Hearing people and are said to reject signs in favor of spoken communication, arguing that signed communication is not a necessary mode of communication for them. In addition, hard of hearing people, as a natural result of their auditory and communicative (through speech) capacities, frequently are quite capable of traveling in both worlds and are, therefore, suspect in their loyalties to Deaf culture and individuals (Higgins 1980; Padden and Humphries 1988). As Padden and Humphries (1988) state, "HARD-OF-HEARING people walk a thin line between being Deaf people who can be like hearing people and Deaf people who are too much like hearing people" (50).

This discussion does not mean to say that hard of hearing individuals are unconditionally rejected by Deaf people; on the contrary, hard of hearing individuals are occasionally asked to serve as informal interpreters for deaf people on certain impromptu occasions. At times, hard of hearing people have served as officers of Deaf organizations and clubs. However, as Padden and Humphries (1988) assert,

> [The hard of hearing] can be admired for their ability to seem like others [the Hearing] for specific purposes, but they are viewed with suspicion when they begin to display behaviors of the others [the Hearing] when there is no apparent need to, such as when there are no hearing people present. (50)

The dilemma of how to tread this fine line does not apply solely to hard of hearing people. Deaf people who have developed oral skills also have had to learn the cultural rules pertaining to when they might be "permitted" to use speech. One older Deaf adult informed me that these rules were learned at a young age at her residential school for the deaf when she would speak without signing to hearing adults and would receive minor ostracism, criticism, or insults as a result from her peers. I experienced a similar period of enculturation myself when I entered the Model Secondary School for the Deaf with minimal knowledge of signs. Until I attained a reasonable level of fluency, I experienced teasing and reduced social interaction among a broader set of peers, being labeled as "ORAL" with a classifier sign suggestive of an exaggerated, large set of lips flapping.

However, the two concepts—to be auditorily hard of hearing or to be culturally deaf and communicating through signs and speech—do not appear to be mutually exclusive. For example, Padden and Humphries (1988) make note of individuals, born to Deaf parents yet audiologically hard of hearing, who are well-accepted members of the Deaf community. Further, although their examples

are relatively fewer, some hard of hearing individuals who had not previously been associated with the Deaf community have chosen to embrace a Deaf identity because of social and communicative difficulties in the Hearing world, so consequently, they socialize primarily within Deaf circles. Similarly, the hard of hearing students in my study, like other hard of hearing people elsewhere (Moschella 1992), have found that, instead of signing being a "problem," it is a "resource" (Ruiz 1988) that provides expanded social opportunities and clearer, unfettered communication. Thus, hard of hearing people could benefit from encouragement to associate and identify more closely with both Deaf people and Hearing people. The question that presents itself at this point is how can this sort of bicultural re-identification be promoted?

Being Hard of Hearing: An Ethnic Perspective

When one accepts the perspective that the Deaf are a cultural or ethnic group, no great stretch of the imagination is required to envision hard of hearing individuals as being of "mixed ethnicity." Being, in part, Hearing and, in part, Deaf, they are analogous to those individuals who are born to parents of different races or ethnic backgrounds. That is, just as "mixed-race" children are not solely of one or the other ethnicity but share genetic and cultural aspects of both races, so too, hard of hearing people are neither deaf nor hearing but share characteristics of both.

In America during the era of slavery and segregation, a "one-drop" rule was adopted (however informally) under which an individual who possessed even one ancestor of African origin would be considered "Black," even if his or her physical characteristics revealed no traces of this ancestry (Zack 1993). Traditionally, mixed-race individuals have been pushed to identify solely with one of the races or cultures within their heritage to oblige institutionalized racism and to acquiesce to simplified bureaucratic documentation (such as census forms). However, in recent years, an increasing number of mixed-race individuals have resisted a forced choice, insisting that the various cultures or races in their backgrounds are equally valid and that to make a choice among them is misleading and potentially psychologically harmful for individuals of mixed heritage (Zack 1993; Courtney 1995; Leslie et al. 1995; Morganthau 1995).

Ironically, hard of hearing individuals also labor under a version of the one-drop rule. On one side, "audist" educators insist, as has been described earlier, that, because hard of hearing individuals have a significant amount of auditory capability, they must have more in common with Hearing people. However, on the other side, some Deaf people, experiencing a sense of militancy with respect to all things Deaf, have attempted to broaden the cultural and community base of the Deaf world by including at least some hard of hearing people within the ranks of the Deaf community. As one hard of hearing adult female informed me,

> I'm not really involved in the Deaf community. I just wanted a taste of what it feels like to say I'm Deaf. When I did . . . a lot of Deaf people would say "YES!," and then hard of hearing people would say "You're really hard of hearing!" Then, when I said to Deaf people that I'm hard of hearing, they resented that, saying "You're really Deaf!" That turned

> me off. They did not really accept me as hard of hearing. But they accept me as Deaf, period.

Yet, even as hard of hearing people are encouraged to identify with the Deaf world, they are simultaneously rejected at some level by Deaf people when they engage in practices associated with Hearing people, for example, speaking (especially without signing) or listening to music. Another hard of hearing woman, culturally Deaf from a Deaf family, expresses some ambivalence and difficulty in reconciling her Hearing and Deaf selves:

> I'm Deaf, yes. I sign fluent ASL, yes. But there are things like, I enjoy music, I like to hear, I like Hearing people, sometimes I talk with my voice and I enjoy that. But sometimes I feel that Deaf people . . . don't accept that. I feel, I feel they reject me, so sometimes I emphatically say "Yes I am Deaf, I'm just like you, I'm Deaf, I'm from the Deaf culture, but it just happens that I have those things." . . . Like for example, [I?] would sign music (remember back then that was so popular, signing music), and then Deaf militant people said . . ."Stop! Stop!" I felt, "No, it's not true [that Deaf people do not enjoy music]. I enjoy it, I think it's beautiful."

The first woman quoted above states that, when hard of hearing people engage in activities associated with Hearing people, they are then relegated to the status of THINK-HEARING. However, she expresses a desire to maintain a hard of hearing identity rather than a Deaf or Hearing identity:

> I have [Deaf] coworkers who sometimes say "You hard of hearing people THINK-ORAL, THINK-HEARING." "Yes, I'm, hard of hearing." "[But] You're still Deaf, since you can't hear." "[Hey] Wait a minute. You say I'm THINK-HEARING, which?" So really, I, I can't say I'm Deaf period. I'm really hard of hearing.

Thus, hard of hearing individuals may appear to be condemned to a permanent state of psycho-sociocultural limbo: They are damned if they join the Hearing world and damned if they try to join the Deaf world. Indeed, Harvey (1989) warns of possible psychological harm to a hard of hearing (or deaf) individual who attempts to develop a "pseudo identity" as a Hearing person by attempting to "pass" (Goffman 1963) for Hearing. Harvey's warning has a reverse corollary: Perhaps, hard of hearing individuals cannot or should not attempt to pass for Deaf either. For a hard of hearing person to pass as Deaf would necessitate denying a part of his- or herself, a part that he or she may find pleasurable in some contexts. The dilemma of determining one's affiliations and place in the world has taken its toll on many hard of hearing individuals; Harvey (1989) reports that many hard of hearing patients enter therapy, claiming a sense of alienation and social rejection from others that leaves them socially isolated, withdrawn, and depressed, and that they often have problems with the abuse of drugs and alcohol.

Concepts of Bilingual-Bicultural Programming

Is this psycho-sociocultural limbo an inevitable result of being hard of hearing, a result that can never be changed? Currently, available evidence (Grushkin 1996) would indicate that this possibility is not necessarily so. One means of rectifying this situation lies in bilingual-bicultural (bi-bi) education, an approach that uses the two languages available to deaf and hard of hearing students, ASL and English, and that actively promotes the equality of the Deaf and Hearing cultures and communities. My study (Grushkin 1996) was conducted at the California School for the Deaf at Fremont (CSDF). CSDF uses a bi-bi approach, and the students are all exposed to an age-appropriate, cognitively challenging educational curriculum that is taken directly from the local school district, which is reputed to be one of the best in the area, if not in the state.

The introduction of educational material in sign language, in particular ASL, which is not a native language for most of the case study participants, does not appear to present a significant problem for comprehension. Indeed, for some classes such as physics and biology, the visual nature of signing appeared to further comprehension of complex topics such as the calculation of force and velocity or cellular biology because ASL classifiers and deixis (directionality) provide a visual representation of the concepts that, otherwise, are abstract written or spoken words (Grushkin 1996). The use of ASL is not perceived as a barrier to learning; quite to the contrary, the participants all expressed opinions to the effect that ASL was a more efficient medium for instruction and communication than signed English and even oral speech alone (168). Although some participants indicated a reliance on speechreading the "mouthing" (Davis 1989) of some signers, other signers who mouthed minimally or not at all did not appear to pose a problem in the participants' receptive language comprehension. As two of the participants demonstrated, hard of hearing students were certainly able to attain fairly good grades; indeed, all of the participants received passing grades.

The bi-bi program at CSDF engages the "maintenance model" in which the "native" language is encouraged, even as the second language is also promoted. Within this "additive" environment, the message is continually conveyed to the students that academic skills, including the development of written English, is imperative for their future success. In other words, whereas "transitional" models (in which students are quickly taught only in the majority language) deemphasize academics for language learning, the school's maintenance model does the reverse.

One can correctly reach the conclusion that, for hard of hearing individuals from public school backgrounds, bi-bi programming may be more correctly viewed as an "immersion" type of bilingual programming. Immersion bilingual education refers to the placement of children from majority language backgrounds in school programs where the minority (target) language is spoken a significant percentage of the time. A traditional bilingual immersion program is one that

> employs two languages, one of which is English, for the purposes of instruction and involves students who are native speakers of each of those languages. Both groups of students—limited English proficient (LEP) and

> English proficient (EP)—are expected to become bilingual. They learn curricula through their own language and through the second language, become proficient in the second language, and continue to develop skills and proficiency in their native language. (New York State Education Department 1986, in Campbell and Lindholm 1987, 7)

Although several models have been developed to provide bilingual immersion education, several important aspects commonly contribute to its efficacy. First, the immersion component involves the placement of a percentage of language-majority speakers in an environment where the minority language is the primary language of instruction. Second, the majority language is taught as a curricular component for some portion of the day, usually one or two periods, as a "language arts" course. Third, the two languages are never mixed within an instructional period. This third element may be one that causes the most confusion about bi-bi programming.

One important influence on the efficacy of immersion programming is the issue of socioeconomic status. It is relatively well known that students of middle- and upper-class status tend to achieve academic levels higher than those of their working-class peers. Further, "transitional" bilingual programming is predominantly composed of students from immigrant families, which are usually of working-class status. Placement in these programs is often automatic. In contrast, immersion programming is almost always voluntary; students are usually placed in these programs at the behest of their parents, who want them to acquire fluency in a second (nondominant) language for some purpose. This desire for acquisition of a second language is typical of middle- and upper-class values, and students enrolled in immersion programs are predominantly middle-class and higher. In any case, the primary goal of these immersion programs is for students from both language groups to attain high levels of scholastic achievement in both languages, earlier and more efficient acquisition of English language skills, high self-esteem, and positive attitudes toward both languages and the communities they represent (Campbell and Lindholm 1987). Within these programs,

> [i]t is . . . necessary for the students to develop linguistic and metalinguistic skills in both languages that will enable them to read academic texts, write acceptable essays and test responses, and be able to discuss subject-matter areas—mathematics, science and social studies in both languages. (Campbell and Lindholm 1987, 9)

It is clear from this discussion that for hard of hearing students, placement in bi-bi programs fits the "immersion" model. Students are enrolled at schools for the deaf, in concordance with the Individualized Education Plans, which are determined not only by the school district but by parents and students as well. For hard of hearing students, it would seem that parents who place their child in a signing environment recognize the additive benefit of a visual environment and language for their child. Hard of hearing students, with a fairly good command of English who also learn ASL, are well-situated to attain the linguistic and metalinguistic skills in both languages that Campbell and Lindholm underscore in the quotation above.

Bilingual immersion, or "two-way" bilingual programming, has been put into place in the United States and Canada. In Canada, English speakers are enrolled in French-speaking schools (Genesee 1984) while in the United States, a variety of immersion programs educate English speakers alongside speakers of one other language, including Spanish speakers (Campbell and Lindholm 1987; Lindholm 1988). Studies of these programs indicate that bilingual immersion has a positive effect on both groups of students. More specifically, Lindholm (1988) found that the students attained satisfactory achievement levels, despite being instructed predominantly in the second language (Spanish) for the English speakers and receiving minimal amounts of instruction in the second language (English) for the Spanish speakers. Swain and Lapkin (1991) suggested that, for majority-language children, whose first language is strongly reinforced by their environment and who have achieved a threshold level of performance in their second language, the tendency is for their first language performance to be enhanced. Finally, Genesee (1984) concluded that immersion programming is associated with positive social-psychological outcomes such as not experiencing a loss of ethnic identity with respect to one's home culture while developing a greater sense of similarity to the minority language speakers.

Bi-Bi Programming: Forging a "Mixed" Ethnicity?

The results of my study (Grushkin 1996) did support Genesee's (1984) findings that, for hard of hearing students, education through bi-bi programming does not result in any loss of identification with their Hearing background and enhances their sense of Deaf identification. These students also expressed highly positive attitudes toward ASL, which is also in keeping with Genesee's work. The identity that the students developed arose as an amalgam of their experiences in the Hearing and the Deaf worlds.

For the hard of hearing participants, hearing and speech remain an important part of their lives and their identity, despite being in an environment where the value of these abilities is diminished and even rendered irrelevant for their Deaf peers. Nevertheless, the hearing and speech abilities of these hard of hearing students are occasionally recognized and taken advantage of by students and, at times, faculty. For example, one participant recalled being used as an interpreter between his Deaf coach and an opposing Hearing team's coach at a basketball game. As long as hearing and speaking are not unduly "flaunted" in front of Deaf students, the hard of hearing students appeared to experience no overt stigmatization by their Deaf peers with respect to these audiological capacities. Despite being in an environment where the hard of hearing students might not use their speaking abilities for a large portion of time and receive only one session of speech therapy a week, their speech has been evaluated as very good, and no discernible deterioration in the quality of their speech has been reported.

For the participants, the ability to sign as well as to speak and hear offers hard of hearing students the opportunity to broaden the scope of their interactions with others. That is, whereas knowing spoken English alone would limit these students to developing relationships with only Hearing people, also knowing sign language allows them to form additional associations with Deaf and hard of hearing people. Further, the addition of signs to their linguistic repertoire

extends the range of communicative options available to them when they are faced with situations in which they cannot understand their interlocutors through speech. Signing then, they assert, makes their daily lives easier in the educational and social arenas. Therefore, for these hard of hearing students, knowing ASL is a resource (Ruiz 1988).

In addition, the participants all displayed a well-developed understanding and use of the pragmatic strategies of signing such as attention getting, turn taking, and maintaining the privacy of signed communications. Perhaps the most significant pragmatic strategy developed is that of codeswitching, which occurs in bilinguals. The participants use signs with deaf peers and staff members and use their voices (whether in conjunction with signs or not) among themselves and with Hearing staff members. Rarely is an "inappropriate" mode used with the wrong person, indicating that the participants are well aware of their interactants and the communication modality (or modalities) that they prefer.

More important, some evidence indicates that to speak and sign at the same time serves the same function for hard of hearing individuals that signing ASL does for Deaf people: It serves as a symbol of their identity as hard of hearing people. Observation suggests that, at first, other students are understanding of the hard of hearing participants' signing efforts, even when they occasionally discontinue signing. However, after a period of time when the sense is that new signers have had sufficient exposure to achieve communicative competence, these other students significantly decrease their tolerance of these breaks, especially when the participants choose to use their voices with one another or with Hearing interactants instead of signing.

Regardless of those instances when the participants are chastised for not signing, the hard of hearing students as a group do not seem to be overtly discriminated against, especially when compared to hard of hearing students in the public schools. Rather, they appear to be well accepted by their peers, provided that they maintain the use of their signs, and this perception was confirmed by the participants themselves, who noted that their only difficulties with other students were directly related to signing (or more accurately, not signing). In addition, a number of hard of hearing students (from both Hearing and Deaf families) at the school have become well-liked, popular, and even leaders among their peers.

Being at a school for the deaf that has a bi-bi philosophy has not precluded the participants from forming or maintaining friendships with Hearing children in their home communities. However, because of their present circumstances, most find their friendships to be predominantly with other deaf and hard of hearing children. Some critics of deaf education such as Evans (1975), Evans and Falk (1986), and Bertling (1994) have criticized schools for the deaf, especially residential schools, on the grounds that they unduly shelter their charges, failing to prepare them for independent, productive life outside their grounds. However, at this school for the deaf, though the students do lead a fairly structured life, students' activities are relatively free of restrictions.

Although most of the participants enjoy and even look forward to residential living, only one expressed any feelings of restriction or dissatisfaction engendered by living apart from his family. Indeed, in that one case, the separation from his family, to whom he is extremely close emotionally, is what this student objects to and not the idea of residential living itself. The structure of residential living,

however, is looked on positively by the participants as a sort of preparation for future living such as in a college dormitory or apartment house with several housemates.

Finally, the participants all appeared to be developing some sense of identity and their place in the world, which is developmentally appropriate as adolescents. The identity that they develop arises as an amalgam of their experiences in the Hearing and the Deaf worlds. None of the participants seemed to reject their membership in the Hearing society, but the degree to which they embrace the company of Deaf people varied. Following Holcomb's (1997) framework, the four hard of hearing student participants in my dissertation research each appeared to be developing a sense of identity and biculturalism that lies on a continuum of preferences. For the first student, a Hearing-dominant identity is most likely whereas, for the second, a Deaf-dominant identity is probable. The one female student, although from a Deaf family, espouses a desire for a balanced identity, although she likely will be, like her friend, Deaf-dominant. The fourth student's perception that he will primarily associate with Hearing people in the future because of his career interests is belied by his appreciation of the Deaf environment in which he finds himself. Quite possibly, this student, although potentially working primarily with Hearing people on a daily basis, will come to maintain associations with Deaf people in his personal time, as many in the Deaf community do.

Hard of hearing individuals have long been thought to rightfully belong to the Hearing society because of their predominantly Hearing parentage and their abilities to speak and hear. Indeed, they do differ from Deaf people in the extent to which they value the use of their voices, audition, and contact with Hearing people. However, this study demonstrated that hard of hearing children and adults do experience many of the same difficulties in schooling and life that their profoundly deaf peers encounter. Therefore, to some extent, hard of hearing individuals may also be considered to be rightfully belonging to the Deaf world. In fact, some of the participants mentioned feeling that they belonged to "two worlds." One gave indications that she subscribes to this "dual ethnicity" hypothesis, however unconsciously, when she stated "I have a little bit of both [Hearing and Deaf] in me."

In other words, the hard of hearing students in this study appear to perceive the school for the deaf as their Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Although most, if not all, states around the country have interpreted the LRE to be the public school, the original intent of this clause in Public Law 94–142 was for the child to be placed in the environment in which learning is most readily accomplished (Siegel 1994). Even though the wording of the law does not actually specify the environment, the spirit of the LRE would suggest that this setting is the environment in which the child is able to learn at all levels—academic as well as social and emotional. That is, learning for all children, hearing or deaf, occurs not only within the classroom but also in daily, nonacademic interactions with their peers and teachers in the halls, lunchrooms, and playgrounds. Clearly, these students have access to a quality education. However, in their positive perceptions of their social relationships and ease of communication at this school, they are indicating that this aspect, too, is an important part of their lives, one that would be lacking or, at least, not as readily attained in the public schools, which was confirmed by their recollections.

HARD OF HEARING: A THIRD CULTURE?

The findings of my study are not anomalous: In Sweden and Denmark, where bi-bi education has been in place for at least ten years, similar results have been found. Shawn Mahshie (1995) reported that mainstreaming efforts in these two European countries have resulted in patterns of social, academic, and linguistic frustration for hard of hearing children similar to those that have been reported in the United States and elsewhere. However, the results have not been uniform; different results have been obtained, depending on the method of instruction and placement of the hard of hearing students, according to Mahshie (1995) and Bagga-Gupta and Domfors (this volume). Nevertheless, in these two countries, hard of hearing people have become increasingly politicized, allying their national organization of hard of hearing adults with their National Association of the Deaf and the National Parents Organization in the fight to achieve social and educational policy changes. Young hard of hearing people in Sweden and Denmark are beginning to assert that they have been "denied (through lack of knowledge of sign language and lack of opportunities for interaction) the right to the support and socialization of the Deaf Community" (Mahshie 1995, 152). Further, Mahshie sees hard of hearing people in these countries developing a cultural identity of their own.

In fact, hard of hearing individuals in Sweden apparently are attempting to develop a "third culture," one that is allied with both the Deaf and the Hearing communities. This possibility was raised by MJ Bienvenu, a well-known Deaf activist, albeit while discussing a different group of people within the Deaf community (sign language interpreters):

> Being bi-cultural means knowing how to move comfortably between two distinct cultures. Third culture is special in that it represents the possibility of coming to a halfway point, making contact with members of the other culture, but maintaining all the while one's identity as a member of one's first culture. (Bienvenu 1987, 1)

Whether a "third culture" of hard of hearing people will develop in the United States is open to debate. For political and social reasons, the reactions to this idea vary. The participants of my dissertation study, who represent the future of the hard of hearing segment of the Deaf community, were evenly split on this issue. Two felt that a hard of hearing culture would arise, although they had no conception of what such a culture would look like. In contrast, the other two did not see a need for a hard of hearing culture, but each had different reasons. One, from a Deaf family, denied the possibility on the basis of affiliation with the Deaf community:

> I don't think it is necessary to have a third culture. What for? Hearing people, Deaf people, hard of hearing are "in the middle." But in my opinion, most percentage of hard of hearing people prefer the Deaf world than the Hearing world because the Hearing world tends to reject them while the Deaf don't. Sometimes, some do . . . but all? I doubt it.

In direct contrast, the other, from a Hearing family, based his opinion on the ties that hard of hearing people have with Hearing people:

> I feel hard of hearing people will combine with Hearing people. I feel that because many hard of hearing people go to Hearing schools. True, a few come to Fremont, they join the Deaf [community]. But . . . most of the hard of hearing can join the Hearing.

This split also was seen among hard of hearing adults. Ms. E., a hard of hearing African American woman, thinks there is, or will be, a hard of hearing culture:

> I think they have it, but it's never been noticed. I think hard of hearing people . . . have not really come out the way . . . I see Deaf see them. But I think they've come out the way hard of hearing people see them. Will there be a hard of hearing culture? Yes.

In comparison, Ms. H., a hard of hearing woman from a Deaf family, thinks a hard of hearing culture could arise but fears the consequences:

> I've thought maybe we should have a group, a support group for hard of hearing people who live in the Deaf world. Especially there. Hard of hearing people in the . . . Hearing world . . . hard of hearing have SHHH [Self-Help for Hard of Hearing people], they have ALDA [Association of Late-Deafened Americans] . . . but for some reason SHHH and ALDA is not exactly what we need. . . . But I think "wow," to create another group, to create more divisions, I don't want to see that. I think the way we can help hard of hearing people understand Deaf people, their culture, the Deaf culture [is] to accept that and to educate Deaf people to understand that there are certain things about them that they appreciate, and to leave them alone [about it].

Only time will tell whether hard of hearing people will form a cultural unit in their own right as a "third culture" or will be accepted members of the Deaf community, representing the diversity that is possible. Regardless, it is certain that bi-bi education will (or should) play a key role in the eventual creation of the hard of hearing identity, whatever it may become. This identity will come about, given the increasing numbers of hard of hearing children educated in bi-bi schools and the eventual need of the hard of hearing community (as well as that of the larger society) to decide whether or not the bi-bi environment represents a viable educational setting for them. It is significant that in Sweden, a national organization of hard of hearing adults is lobbying for the rights of hard of hearing people to affiliate with the Deaf community in education and society. However, as Ms. H. indicates, SHHH, that organization's closest counterpart in the United States, is more orally aligned and unlikely to advocate for similar reforms. Nevertheless, just as the National Association of the Deaf was instrumental in the creation and recognition of the Deaf community as a cultural and political unit (Van Cleve and Crouch 1989), so too will hard of hearing people require an equivalent

means of organizing, should they desire to restructure how the educational system and society perceives them.

Conclusions

Can we conclude that bi-bi programming is a viable educational option for hard of hearing children, especially in the area of promoting a stable sense of identity? Certainly, bi-bi programming does not appear to do any harm, and it does provide many benefits that are not (and often cannot) be experienced in the public schools. Further, in the long term, bi-bi programming may even prove to be beneficial for this population. The bi-bi framework does appear capable of encompassing those who are hard of hearing. There is no need to significantly reformulate the bi-bi philosophy to accommodate hard of hearing people; however, bi-bi schools might be wise to specifically incorporate hard of hearing students within their curricula and services.

Today, hard of hearing people appear fated to be "culturally marginal" (Glickman 1986), or without a secure sense of self and identity. Given the potential psychosocial consequences of cultural marginality as described by Goffman (1963) and Harvey (1989), how can a hard of hearing person avoid or be helped to avoid this area of difficulty? Schools and parents can consider the lessons learned by interracial parents and can adopt several strategies. First, attempts should be made to stimulate the children's interest and pride in their nondominant heritage (Benson 1981) or, in this case, in their Deaf identity. Second, the advantage of having exposure to two different cultures and perspectives should be stressed. The values and traditions of both cultures should be communicated to these children (Motoyoshi 1990).

Moreover, an important element of biculturality is the need for positive attitudes and acceptance of both cultures. Within the Deaf community, as stated earlier, the trend has been to militantly reject Hearing values and to insist that one can be Deaf only if one adheres strictly to Deaf behaviors, language usage, and thought patterns. However, as Mottez (1990), Cohen (1994), and Turner (1994) suggest, one can be Deaf in multiple ways, just as one can, in multiple ways, be a member of many cultural and ethnic minorities. For instance, Preston (1994) observes that, although oral (nonsigning) deaf people have not traditionally been viewed as being Deaf, they can be considered to be members of the Deaf community. Further, he makes a case for hearing children of Deaf parents being members of the Deaf community, noting that these individuals frequently think of themselves as Deaf—more so than do oral deaf people.

Montgomery (1994) suggests that membership in the Deaf community be defined by an "LAA," or "Lowest Admissible Admit" (259). This concept, he claims, eliminates the "Deaf/Not Deaf" dichotomy, replacing it with a map of "relative belonging." Montgomery's conception is consonant with that of Levy's (1973) representation of the Lubovitcher Hasidim in the sense that the Lubovitcher group has ties to one another but is not a homogeneous group with identical values and ways of being.

Bagga-Gupta (1999) has suggested the idea (similar to my conception of hard of hearing as a "mixed ethnicity") that hard of hearing people be viewed as possessing a "composite" identity: one that consists of multiple, yet equally shared

identities. She argues that everybody in the world has a set of composite identities that include combinations such as husband and father, daughter and sister, Black and White, Deaf and Hearing, and so forth. Each of these identities overlaps others, and none essentially possesses a status significantly higher than any other. Thus, according to Sangeeta Bagga-Gupta during a conversation in November 1997, the use of the word *composite* places a positive emphasis on the concept of multiple levels of identification in contrast to the term *mixed*, which can have negative connotations. In effect, the frameworks supplied by Bagga-Gupta (1999), Montgomery (1994), and myself (Grushkin 1996) all offer a potentially useful means of visualizing and incorporating hard of hearing people and other subgroups within the Deaf community. However, research along these lines needs to be conducted to develop an understanding, both inside the Deaf community and out, of the multiple ways in which one can be Deaf and hard of hearing. Results of this research may show that we can truly speak of hard of hearing people as having the "best of both worlds" rather than being "lost between two worlds."

Notes

1. The word *deaf* is conventionally capitalized to denote a cultural orientation to deaf people and their community. When uncapitalized, the same word refers to a purely audiological perspective. The word *hearing* is similarly capitalized or uncapitalized in this chapter to refer to a cultural or audiological perspective, although this second treatment is not conventional.
2. The trend is becoming increasingly obvious that groups of disabled people are rejecting the "handicapped" label, stating that societal conditions are what create a handicap. See Shapiro (1993) for an excellent discussion of this issue. It should also be noted that Deaf people have long felt that they are not handicapped because they have always been equally able to perform any job that did not require oral communication (Higgins 1980; Padden and Humphries 1988; Jacobs 1989).

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