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**Bauman, H.L., & Murray, J. (2014). *Deaf Gain: Raising the Stakes for Human Diversity*.  
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In this edited volume of 27 chapters, Bauman and Murray impressively demonstrate the diversity of Deaf Gain, “the unique cognitive, creative, and cultural gains manifested through deaf ways of being in the world” (xv). This compilation covers a wide variety of realizations of Deaf Gain, effectively demonstrating how human diversity is beneficial and necessary to our individual and collective lives. In their introduction, Bauman and Murray promote the use of a bi-cultural diversity framework to replace the hegemonic framework of normalcy that considers deafness a deviation from the norm. In so doing, they hope to reframe the assumption of deviation as deficit to a consideration of the benefits of difference. At the end of the introduction, Bauman and Murray turn hearing loss around to refer to “the loss that hearing people experience by not being open to the benefits, contributions, and advances that arise through deaf ways of being” (xxxviii). The book is divided into six sections that I will discuss in turn, focusing on certain chapters within each section.

#### Part I: Philosophical Gains

Blankmeyer Burke’s opening chapter, “Armchairs and Stares: On the Privation of Deafness,” provides a wonderful introduction to how Deaf Gain may be experienced by signing Deaf people, non-signing deaf people, and those with whom they communicate, raising numerous questions about what may and may not constitute Deaf Gain. Her phenomenological self-narrative of her experiences as a deaf person in both Deaf and Hearing cultures allows for an in-

sightful commentary on the complexities of classifying people as deaf, Deaf, hearing, or Hearing.

The focus of Chapters 2 and 3 is on the United Kingdom's Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (HFEA), in which it is stipulated that donors or embryos with genetic abnormalities cannot be preferred over those deemed healthy, effectively disallowing future parents the choice of a Deaf donor. In "Identifying the 'Able' in a Vari-Able World: Two Lessons," Tabery uses the HFEA as an example of essentialist thinking in which natural states of being are defined based on genotypes. Tabery takes an anti-essentialist stance that goes beyond the Deaf community's efforts to deabnormalize deafness by including all abnormal/normal distinctions in order to resist dominant societal notions of normalcy. In other words, arguments for Deaf Gain would be made stronger by including other groups into advocacy work resisting normalcy. I felt that Tabery did not take his anti-essentialist stance quite far enough as a stronger stance would be to eschew genetic testing overall, rather than focus on determining which genes are decidedly "normal" versus "abnormal." Bryan and Emery, in "The Case for Deaf Legal Theory Through the Lens of Deaf Gain," demonstrate how the passing of the HFEA was significantly influenced by assumptions based on the normalcy of hearing as reported through media accounts, rather than consultations with Deaf people. The authors point out the paradox of affording rights to Deaf people who already live in society while at the same time making judgments to stop Deaf people from coming into being in the first place. They consider the potential of this paradox for challenging normalcy and promoting biodiversity and note that an attitude shift is needed, whereby Deaf is considered a positive state of being rather than a state of harm.

Part II: Language Gains

The chapters in this section demonstrate how the study of sign language has: (1) challenged common assumptions of language (Calton, Chapter 7, “What we Learned from Sign Languages When we Stopped Having to Defend Them”); (2) led to different understandings of the human brain, language acquisition and development (Petitto, Chapter 4, “Three Revolutions: Language Culture and Biology”); (3) led to different understandings of bilingualism and bilingual education (Garcia and Cole, Chapter 6, “Deaf Gains in the Study of Bilingualism and Bilingual Education”); and (4) contributed to theory on the origin of language (Armstrong, Chapter 5, “Deaf Gain in Evolutionary Perspective”). The language gains discussed in this section demonstrate how Deaf Gain can be experienced by the study of human language and culture, and how such knowledge benefits society in general. One notable piece of research that has had significant implications for how we think of language development that is missing from this section is the role of sign language research in demonstrating a critical period of language development (Mayberry & Eichen, 1991; Mayberry 1993, 1994).

Petitto’s work provides a biological level of understanding Deaf Gain and she calls on those who continue to espouse the notion that speech is better than sign to use this new knowledge to the benefit of deaf people. Petitto’s brain-imaging research scientifically demonstrates that signed and spoken languages are biologically equivalent, and that there are advantages to early sign language exposure. While Petitto focuses on biological similarities between signed and spoken languages, Armstrong argues that it is the difference between signed and spoken languages that holds the most potential for Deaf Gain. However, Armstrong’s argument that sign language studies support the hypothesis that language began as gesture before evolving to the spoken modality seems to be a paradoxical Deaf Gain. This evolutionary view

supports the “speech is better” ideology and is one argument used to support teaching deaf children spoken language as opposed to sign language.

### Part III: Language Gains in Action

This section focuses on how Deaf Gain associated with sign language benefits hearing people. In Chapter 8, “Advantages of Learning a Signed Language,” Hauser and Kartheiser introduce “Sign Gain” as a type of Deaf Gain based on cognitive advantages that signing provides to both deaf and hearing people. Snoddon’s Chapter 9, “Baby Sign as Deaf Gain” examines how “baby sign” programs exemplify Deaf Gain; however, much of the research she presents is not specific to baby sign, but rather to hearing children who sign (e.g., hearing children who learn sign language in school or from Deaf parents). She postulates that Deaf Gain would be possible if hearing babies learned correct ASL from qualified native speakers and continued this learning during the school years, but does not address the feasibility of this considering the premise behind baby sign is for hearing parents to communicate with hearing babies before they develop spoken language, rather than as a second language to continue beyond infancy. The irony of the acceptance and popularity of programs to teach hearing babies to sign, while deaf babies are often denied such programs is noted but not expanded upon. The tension and murkiness around the potential for Deaf Gain from baby sign is a realm that could benefit from future research.

In Chapter 10, “Manual Signs and Gestures of the Inuit of Baffin Island: Observations during the Three Voyages Led by Martin Frobisher,” Sherley-Appel and Bonvillian provide an engaging historical examination of the use of manual signs and gestures within native American cultures and how such gestures facilitated communication between Inuit groups and British explorers during expeditions in the 1500s. They make an assumption that the Inuit must have been

familiar with signs because of their comfort using them with the explorers, however, the ease of using gesture when speech was not effective could possibly also demonstrate support for the gesture-origin theory of language development as discussed by Armstrong in Chapter 5. Nelson's Chapter 11, "Bulwer's Speaking Hands: Deafness and Rhetoric," examines the influence of sign language and deaf people to the field of rhetoric as evidenced in the work of rhetorician John Bulwer. Bulwer's theories fit nicely with the descriptions of the gestural interactions between the Inuit and the British in the preceding chapter. On the last page (188) Nelson notes that despite Bulwer's appreciation of gesture and sign language, he still considered them gateways to speech. Up until then Bulwer's work was presented as positive Deaf Gain, but what remains beyond using deaf people and sign language purely to the advantage of hearing people?

#### Part IV: Sensory Gains

In Chapter 12, "Seeing the World Through Deaf Eyes," Dye summarizes evidence indicating that visual processing differences between deaf and hearing people are due to differences with attention to visual stimuli. Rather than neutrally discussing the differences however, Dye situates the evidence within a normalcy paradigm wherein the visual processing of deaf people is compared to the hearing norm, which seemed counterproductive to Bauman and Murray's goal of promoting human diversity and different ways to be "normal." Dye articulates an important point that although enhanced visual processing may be considered a Deaf Gain by Deaf people, it may be taken as further evidence of the need for auditory habilitation by medical professionals, a point addressed by Mauldin (2014).

In Chapter 13, "A Magic Touch: Deaf Gain and the Benefits of Tactile Sensation," Napoli explores the importance of touch with a focus on haptic events, in which there is an exchange

of sensation between people. Most of the chapter is focused on summarizing research espousing the benefits of touch to infant development and cognition and its application to new technological developments. Bahan begins Chapter 14, “Senses and Culture: Exploring Sensory Orientations,” with a powerful example of cultural differences between himself and a deaf man from southern Africa. Throughout most of the chapter, however, cultural differences are limited to be between North American deaf and hearing people as he examines the difference between visual-tactile and audio-vocal modalities for human communication. Bahan continues Napoli’s discussion of the haptic touch (touch as belonging) and discusses how deaf people process sound through the tactile modality, raising an important point for hearing people to consider “how the ideology of hearing sound has undervalued the tactile feeling of sound” (245).

In Zaurov’s Chapter 15, “The Deaf Gain of Wladislav Zeitlin, Jewish Scientist and Inventor,” the philosophical writings and scientific inventions of Zeitlin are discussed as Deaf Gain. Zaurov argues that Zeitlin’s positive Deaf view of himself and the world were apparent in his essay writing and influenced his influential inventions of television technology. In Chapter 16, “The Hidden Gain: A New Lens of Research with d/Deaf Children and Adults,” Sutherland and Rogers suggest that Deaf-centered research conducted by Deaf researchers is necessary to learn more about Deaf Gain. They provide examples of visually reliant tools that could be used in research with Deaf participants and question if the Deaf researcher could be considered a visually reliant tool.

#### Part V: Social Gains

In Chapter 17, “Deaf Gain and Shared Signing Communities,” Kusters presents various communities where deaf and hearing people live together and use a shared signed language to

demonstrate how Deaf Gain can promote acceptance and diversity even while oppressing Deaf people. As marginalizing discourses often exist within them, she cautions us not to idealize such communities: they exemplify how people can adapt and accept human difference through using a shared visual-gestural language, rather than expecting deaf community members to speak, while still conceptualizing deafness as an affliction and relegating deaf members to certain roles.

Kusters therefore suggests that Deaf Gain can be ambiguous, an observation applicable to some of the other chapters in this volume.

In Chapter 18, “Gainful Employment: Historical Examples from Akron, Ohio”, Morton discusses how companies sought to hire deaf employees during and after WWI, evidence of the appreciation of positive qualities of being deaf from an employer standpoint before the term Deaf Gain was even developed. In Chapter 19, “Effective Deaf Action in the Deaf Community in Uruguay” by Lockwood and Chapter 20, “Deaf Gains in Brazil: Linguistic Policies and Network Establishment” by Quadros, Strobel, and Masutti, the authors demonstrate how working together as a Deaf community can lead to Deaf Gain, both for members of Deaf culture and the wider society. In Chapter 21, “Deaf Gain: Beyond Deaf Culture”, Leigh, Morere, and Pezzarossi question what constitutes Deaf Gain and who benefits from it, bringing back questions introduced in Blankmeyer Burke’s opening chapter. The authors reframe Deaf Gain as visual gain and social gain, not necessarily related to sign language or Deaf culture, and consider Deaf Gain as being of benefit to all people, whether deaf, Deaf, or hearing.

## Part VI: Creative Gains

The final section is an eclectic compilation of contributions representative of the vast areas of human creativity. The first two chapters in this section explore how deaf people’s unique



visual-spatial worldview contributes to the design of space. In Chapter 22, “DeafSpace: An Architecture toward a More Livable and Sustainable World,” Bauman introduces us to architectural design through the concept of DeafSpace, and Raike, Pylvanen, and Raino present interactive website designs in Chapter 23, “Co-Design from Divergent Thinking.” In Chapter 24, “The Hearing Line: How Literature Gains from Deaf People,” Krentz proposes a hearing line, inspired by W.E.B. Du Bois’s colour line. Through analyses of classic literary texts, Krentz examines different ways that hearing writers utilize a “deaf presence” (428) in their writing. Krentz juxtaposes these hearing uses of deafness with what deaf writers have taught us about deafness.

In Chapter 25, “Deaf Music: Embodying Language and Rhythm,” Loeffler provides a detailed examination of the tactile and rhythmic sense of music created and experienced through visual language, including ASL songs, percussion signing, and ASL poetry slams. Sutton-Spence considers how signed poetry contributes to a different understanding of language in Chapter 26, “Deaf Gain and Creativity in Signed Literature,” and presents a number of poetry examples supplemented by pictures. The final chapter provides an intimate look at how Deaf artists experience Deaf Gain, as Witteborg presents interviews with 12 Deaf artists (“Deaf Gain and the Creative Arts: Interviews with Deaf Artists”).

## Conclusion

I was impressed with the diversity of topics and opinions, exemplified by the assembly of contributions from varied perspectives, made all the more rich from the editors’ choice to not shy away from contradictions or conflicts between some chapters. I was struck by the few chapters that seemed to focus on Deaf Gains for hearing people that did not include or might even work against Deaf Gain for d/Deaf people. These chapters do still demonstrate how human diversity

benefits our individual and collective lives, but they left me with questions: How is Deaf Gain for hearing people really Deaf Gain if d/Deaf people do not also experience Gain? Is this not an exploitive type of gain that uses what is known of Deaf Gain but at the expense of or disregard for Deaf people? Would Bell's invention of the telephone be considered Deaf Gain even though it was a product of his oralist leanings? As these paradoxical gains were not addressed explicitly within the book, it is left up to the reader to come to terms with these questions.

The collected chapters provide much insight into the benefits of being deaf and how deaf worldviews can enrich the lives of everyone. It is interesting to think of how Deaf Gain could be extrapolated to Disability Gain, a notion that Garland Thomson (2014) has explicitly addressed. We must however be careful not to take advantage of human diversity without regard for those who are "diverse" as there could be a danger in Deaf Gain, or Disability Gain, if the benefit of difference is only used to further the interest of the majority hearing or "able" population.

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