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**Annelies Kusters, Maartje De Meulder, and Dai O'Brien, (2017) *Innovations in Deaf Studies: The Role of Deaf Scholars*.
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I am one of a handful of signing deaf tenure-track or tenured professors in Canada. To my knowledge, I am also the only one who teaches a stand-alone university course in Deaf Studies that is not part of a sign language interpreter or teacher of the deaf training program. As such, I was delighted to read *Innovations in Deaf Studies: The Role of Deaf Scholars* edited by Annelies Kusters, Maartje De Meulder, and Dai O' Brien. In this work I find many of my scholarly experiences and concerns reflected on an international scale. The editors, all graduates of the former Centre for Deaf Studies (hereafter called "the Centre") at the University of Bristol, have brought together a range of contributors who focus on deaf people's ontologies, epistemologies, and production of research from within a Deaf Studies perspective. As the editors note, the book is a "deaf space in print" (2) with each chapter written and reviewed by deaf scholars. Although the Centre closed in 2013 as a result of austerity measures, the publication of this book is a testament to the power and productivity brought about by the congregation and participation in collective endeavors by signing deaf people. Indeed, this history of collective social and cultural participation may be one of the most important contributions that deaf scholars and communities can make to the field of disability studies as a whole.

The book is divided into three sections that are preceded by an introduction by the editors. The introduction signposts and critiques current issues in Deaf Studies where hearing scholars continue to dominate, as within separate disciplines of theoretical sign language linguistics and deaf education, and "there is a need for innovations in the conceptual apparatus" (3). The smaller numbers of deaf scholars in Deaf Studies and in academia as a whole is linked to the oppression of signed languages and the concomitant impact on the educational achievement of deaf people. However, the discipline of Deaf Studies, originating with the dawn of sign language linguistics in the 1950s and 1960s, is not monolithic, and the editors critique the concepts of deaf culture, community, and identity. Also critiqued is the big-D versus little-d distinction between Deaf and deaf people traditionally used to demarcate a cultural from a medically imposed identity; "an oversimplification of what is an increasingly complex set of identities and language practices" (14).

The book's first section about developments and directions in Deaf Studies begins with Dai O'Brien's chapter about using Kaupapa Māori principles to guide research in Deaf Studies. This is followed by Joseph J. Murray's chapter about the history of Deaf Studies in the United States, which captures the self-actualization brought about through the valorization of American Sign Language (ASL) in linguistics research and the "new power relations in the deaf community" (84) that ensued, as native signing deaf children of deaf parents gained prominence. Maartje De Meulder's chapter similarly traces the growth of "a deaf academic professional class" in the United Kingdom during the 1970s and 1980s and highlights ruptures and tensions between so-called deaf academics, who often teach mainly hearing students, and grassroots deaf people. Michele Friedner's chapter about doing Deaf Studies in the Global South draws important parallels with disability studies, since in this context a cultural

model of disability and deaf identity can fail to address "that impairment often is caused by structural violence and global inequalities" (133). Rebecca Sanchez' chapter analyzes Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* from a deaf literary studies perspective that casts light on the connections between fascism and "fetishizing and normativizing particular communicative modalities" (165).

The book's second section about deaf ontologies includes a dialogic chapter between Hannah Lewis and Kirk VanGilder about deaf liberation theology from a transnational perspective that offers insights "for exploring how we articulate and justify the uniqueness of our being in light of religious traditions that often have been sources of oppression and exclusion" (188). Rachel Mazique's chapter uses schema criticism to present a literary studies analysis of the short story "*Of Silence and Slow Time*". Mazique brings current issues in bioethics and language rights to the forefront, as the matter of deaf people's right to be born is surveyed from disability and ethnic group rights perspectives. Using an intersectionality framework, Renet Moges' chapter also features literary analysis of one ASL and two English-language works of deaf queer literature. As a deaf queer person of colour, Moges writes, "[w]hen we further marginalize an identity of a group, we miss out on learning opportunities based on these groups' own perspectives, which are shaped by their unique life experiences" (236). However, for me, the standout chapter in this section is Marieke Kusters' study about the sense of intergenerational responsibility shared by deaf teachers of the deaf in Flanders, Belgium. As Kusters writes of her study participants, "[n]one of the teachers received sign bilingual education, nor did they have [Flemish Sign Language] and Deaf Culture as a subject course, nor were they taught by deaf teachers" (251). Yet the teachers in her study were driven

by "the need to teach deaf children 'how to be deaf' in this world, knowledge that is not found in the current curriculum for deaf education" (255).

The book's third section about ethnographic methodologies features several other outstanding chapters, including Dai O'Brien and Annelies Kusters' overview of the visual research methods of photography and filmmaking that have been paradoxically underused in Deaf Studies. Both O'Brien's description of his research with deaf young people using auto-driven photo-elicitation and Kusters' account of a vast and impressive filmmaking project in Mumbai offer exciting directions for further work in Deaf Studies centered around visual research methods that can both more truly represent deaf ontologies and offer "a radical departure from the hegemonic methodology of the academy" (293). Following this, Noel O'Connell's chapter illuminates how autoethnography can be used to represent and analyze an oralist upbringing in a Church-run deaf residential school.

The chapter by Hilde Hauland offers a social anthropologist's perspective on video relay service interpreting in Norway, Sweden, and the United States. This chapter illustrates how the same technologies of communication that are constructed as "assistive" or "special" in a social service context can be seen as generic in another, commercial context¹. Hauland recounts her epistemological split after conducting fieldwork at Gallaudet University in the USA, where "I gradually learned to take access to communication for granted," and returning home to "re-encounter ... an audiocentric world in Oslo, Norway" (327). Combined with the invisible labor of a deaf researcher who must regularly send out hundreds of emails to organize her own sign language interpreters, the construction of inclusion in a social democratic country is paradoxically shown to "reproduce a group of excluded people" (334).

¹ Notably, video relay services have existed for decades in other countries, they were only introduced in Canada on a nationwide basis in 2016.

The final two chapters include Lynn Hou's account of sign language meta-documentation in the village of San Juan Quiahije, Mexico. This chapter is shaped by her positionality as a deaf Asian-American researcher working in collaboration with a hearing research partner. As she writes, far from being able to perform as "a silent observer, hiding behind the camera and videotaping the interactions" (344) between deaf and hearing adults and children, her identity required her to become an active participant in research. Erin Moriarty Harrelson's chapter is a searching account of conducting fieldwork in Cambodia as a Fulbright-National Geographic Digital Storytelling Fellow and becoming a "public anthropologist" who was censured on Facebook by a deaf Cambodian expatriate in the USA. Moriarty Harrelson raises important questions for deaf researchers from the Global North and the "discursive authority" they possess that may overlook situated complexities and perspectives in the Global South. Such oversights may lead to efforts to achieve "fast social justice" and may be less effective than the "situated agentive projects" (380) of local populations.

The book's Afterword, by Paddy Ladd, a former lecturer and coordinator of the M.Sc. program at the Centre for Deaf Studies, is a beautifully written coda. Ladd reminds the current generation of deaf scholars "to develop a better understanding of, and respect for, those who form the majority of our communities, without whom there would not be communities to join" (388). In Canada and elsewhere, "the eugenics movement is in a much stronger position than before," and this leads to the responsibility of deaf scholars "to maintain the existence of the peoples who have so enriched our lives" (392). Kusters, De Meulder, and O'Brien's volume is a seminal contribution to deaf and disability studies from the perspective of deaf scholars and hopefully a harbinger of more to come.