

Notes

I owe a great debt to several colleagues for their roles in making this essay happen. First, and most significantly, Dirksen Bauman not only helped instigate—and inspire—the ideas here when he invited me to be a part of the Summer 2002 Deaf Studies Think Tank, but he gently harassed me into writing an introductory “personal statement” for the Think Tank that became, in essence, the genesis of this essay’s content. Later, as we continued to hold vibrant electronic and face-to-face conversations about my ideas and examples under development, he further influenced not only the content but also the form of this essay. In a sense, I think of this piece as a collaboration with Dirksen. Colleagues Cathy Kudlick (California State–Davis) and Jim Ferris (University of Wisconsin) also came to play a part in the production of this piece as the three of us shared a kind of triologue performance in a session called simply (but profoundly) “Between” at the 2004 Society for Disability Studies meeting in St. Louis. When they helped me further expand the signing and body space to create a six-armed insect, I knew then that after nearly two years of tinkering with this essay I had finally reached the (between) place where I not only felt comfortable but now actually *wanted* to put the ideas in print.

1. Gina Oliva, *Alone in the Mainstream: A Deaf Woman Remembers Public Schools* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2004).
2. James Woodward, *How You Gonna Get to Heaven If You Can't Talk to Jesus: On Deopathologizing Deafness* (Silver Spring, Md.: T.J. Publishers, 1982).
3. Here you can now imagine a Big D if you want, but for now, I'm going to just let one term stand and use “deaf” or “deafness” (little d) to represent both the “deaf” and “Deaf” positions since, as I have been arguing, no one really seems to completely understand the differences and distinctions between the two terms to begin with.
4. Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 149 (brackets mine).
5. George Bernard Shaw, “Maxims for Revolutionists,” in *Man and Superman: A Comedy and Philosophy* (New York: Penguin, 2000), 254.
6. Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, trans. George A. Kennedy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).
7. Hélène Cixous, “From *The Laugh of the Medusa*,” in *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*, ed. Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg (Boston: Bedford, 1990), 1244.
8. John Bulwer, *Chirologia; or, The natural language of the hand . . .* (1652; repr., New York: AMS Press, 1975).
9. Elizabeth B. Welles, “Foreign Language Enrollments in United States Institutions of Higher Education, Fall 2002,” *ADFL Bulletin* 35, nos. 2–3 (2004): 7–26 (<http://www.adfl.org/resources/enrollments.pdf>).
10. These issues over American Sign Language in the academy and its relationship to “foreign language” instruction were the subject of a three-session “Presidential Forum” at the 2004 Modern Language Association Annual Convention in Philadelphia, Penn.
11. Jacques Derrida, “Signature, Event, Context,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 311.
12. For more discussion on the consequences of the lack of contextually and culturally based approaches to scholarship in “deaf language and literacy,” see the introduction to Brenda Jo Brueggemann, ed., *Literacy and Deaf People: Cultural and Contextual Perspectives* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 2004).
13. Margaret Winzer, *The History of Special Education: From Isolation to Integration* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1993), xi.
14. Brenda Brueggemann, “Are You Deaf or Hearing?” in *Lend Me Your Ear: Rhetorical Constructions of Deafness* (Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1999), 237–60.

12. Border Crossings by Hearing Children of Deaf Parents: The Lost History of Codas

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The role of Deaf Studies has great potential in contributing to Border Theory/Studies. We should explore issues of border within the Deaf experience/World. There are tremendous implications for study and finding a “lost history.”

—Brenda Brueggemann, 2002

In this chapter I will discuss the lives of Hearing children of Deaf parents (HC DP) and attempt to relate their lives to the idea of living on the “border.”¹ Border is a concept recently developed by examining the lives of minority groups in the United States and their handling of two cultures.² The concept of borderlands comes to mind when we discuss the Deaf world and many of the issues that are internal and external to it.

The following descriptions of borders are pertinent to the discussion of the Deaf world and how they and their children live. Since this chapter deals with Hearing children of Deaf parents, the border becomes a dissection of both the hearing and the Deaf worlds. I submit that the borderlands consist of the following conditions. We might think of them as contained within a Venn diagram, where they are not exclusive of each other but have overlapping and separate components.³ We will have to deal with the following descriptions and their conceptual constructs.

Physical Borders: Real Borders: continents, oceans, islands, shorelines, rivers. Included in physical borders could be the connotation extended to the body, a physical demarcation, such as “hearing” or “not hearing,” as a border process. This is similar to constructed borders: for a specific purpose, that is, the idea that there is a thing called “amount of hearing” and whether it is a real category.

Political Borders: Legal: nations, states, nation-states, towns, cities, etc. Here we enter divisions of greater societies that include minority groups. Ironically, the Deaf are a minority group in the Hearing society and HC DP is a subgroup of the Deaf world. However is it a subgroup within the Hearing world?

Social Borders: Here the idea of border becomes vague and ill defined. The Hearing society does not really believe that the Deaf constitute a social group. This definition of a social border is only on the Deaf side of the border. The advent of Deaf Studies as an academic endeavor has begun to expand the understanding of Deaf as a cultural concept much like the concepts of black, white, “Hispanic,” Jewish, etc. However, all of these cultural terms have complicated definitions known only to the subgroups within their borders, a process that will directly relate to the discussion of HC DP in this chapter.

Psychological borders: In the understanding of psychological borders, the academy in higher education and medicine become the holders of the concepts. The idea of "normal" vs. "abnormal" and what these terms mean in relation to individuals and groups is the substance of great debate. But this debate appears to only be on the side of the border where the academy resides. In most cases, the academy, because it is also invested in the political and physical borders of the body, is not interested in examining its meanings within the borders of each group that might be delineated by the social borders.⁴

As can be seen above, "The idea of the 'border' or 'borderlands' has also been expanded to include nearly every psychic or geographic space about which one can thematize problems of boundary or limit."⁵ This then provides us the opportunity to look at the borders that the Deaf world is involved within and then examine a single group within those borders.

I will first begin by trying to place the HCDDP inside the border process by trying to explain the extent of their relationship to the Deaf world. Then I will try to expand the border processes and move into particular border ideas such as *home*, *language*, and *family*. Within each of these areas I will try to offer some of my own observations and those of others. Since this area is relatively scant of information, much of what I write is my own and I am fully responsible for its content and how other writers are interpreted.

Who and Where Are the Hearing Children of Deaf Parents?

Hearing children of Deaf parents are typically the succeeding generation in the Deaf world. When Deaf people marry they typically have hearing children. It is almost the reverse of the Hearing parents of Deaf children situation. Ninety percent (or more) of Deaf children are born to Hearing, whereas it is probably true that 90 percent of children born in Deaf families are hearing. The irony extends when we later look at language and find that more than 60 percent of the HCDDPs are exposed to a signed language and may become fluent in that language.⁶ Recently, the HCDDP has become known as a Coda,⁷ a child of Deaf adults. This is the term that is now common among HCDDP and Deaf people in general; hence it will be used from now on in this essay to address HCDDP.

What do we know about Codas? We know very little, so much of this is from my observations and my own life. The data on Codas are abstracted from keynote presentations, autobiographical books, one research-based text, Preston's *Mother Father Deaf*, and information from the Coda conferences, the official CODA publications, and my notes. My life may be a unique experience, but I doubt it.

Where Are the Codas?

Why has it been so difficult to open up and talk about our lives? Deaf people generally feel free to talk about their lives with all the negatives and positives that go along with it. Why is it so difficult for Codas to say what they feel and talk about who they are in Deaf or Hearing groups? As a Coda I can talk to Deaf people freely about their lives and some parts of my life, but there seems to be a real psychological border that I cannot cross to

talk with Hearing people about my life as a Coda. There are a small number of areas that I will not cross into when in discussions with Deaf people, but I don't think there are any areas of reserve among Deaf people and Codas on topics of the Deaf. This is beginning to change.

Codas grow up in a Deaf family; not all Codas grow up in the Deaf world. This is an important distinction. Many Codas do grow up in the Deaf world, exposed to many other Deaf adults, Deaf clubs, Deaf meetings, etc. However, many Codas also grow up separated from this exposure. But all Codas grow up in two worlds, the Deaf world of their families and the Hearing world. Every Coda leads two lives: one as Coda and one as a hearing person. They may chose to only live one life, but all of them have two. The Coda life in most cases is not visible. Hence we share the invisibility of the Deaf in the world.

Outside of the Deaf world, I can talk about the hearing person but not the Coda life. Codas continue to be on the border when they are in contact with the Deaf world. Since we don't know much about Codas, I am not sure they are border people when they escape.

"One Generation Thick"

If there are two million Deaf people⁸ and half are adults, then we could estimate that half of the adult population of the Deaf are married yielding a potential of 250,000 families. If we estimate an average of two children per family we extrapolate that there are about 500,000 Codas in any one generation. One generation is all that there will be since most Codas will have hearing children of their own. This process is typical in bicultural immigrant families.⁹ It typically takes three generations to become fully acculturated. In the Deaf world for many Codas it is completed in one generation. Here the idea of One Generation Thick (OGT) was conceived.¹⁰ The Hearing children of Deaf adults are removed from the Deaf world after one generation because the culture and the language are not passed on from parent to child. I believe that because we are OGT, we are not interesting to look at since we assimilate into the Hearing world so rapidly. A possible reason for this is that it's easier to assimilate into the Hearing culture.

Codas are not easily identifiable and therefore are not visible within either culture. They are clearly not visible to Hearing people, but within the Deaf world they are a known entity because of family ties. What happens to these Codas when they become adults and cross the border into the Hearing world permanently? There are no demographics available on Codas and there are only about five hundred to six hundred Codas that are associated with the CODA organization or on its mailing lists. Where do they go and why do they disappear?

The closer one lives to the border the more aware one is of its consequences and its meanings. If one lives deep in the culture, far away from any "reminders" that there is a border that has been created, the less the border issues appear. Creation of a border is to create demarcations, designations, separations, or examples of differences. Since the border signifies this process, the further one is removed from the border the less one has to deal with border issues.

Take the case of the first, second, and third generations of immigrant children. The first generation must live literally on the border; they must learn to deal with two cultures, two languages, two sets of rules, behaviors, etc. The second generation is distanced from the border but still has maximal contact through the extended family. Most likely the second generation will deal with two cultures but it will be filtered through parents who are the first generation. The second generation will have contact with the two languages but will probably only learn one fluently and might have a passing knowledge of the other. The rules the second generation lives by will be the rules of the dominant culture, and they will only be aware of the nondominant cultural rules. By the third generation, the border issues are far removed and are either only a memory or something one must "learn" about. The third generation consists of acculturated and assimilated descendants.

Typically, the firstborn male Coda will learn the language of the family. Many, for various reasons we will explore later, do not acquire the language well, whereas the firstborn female Codas often will become fluent. The rest of the siblings may learn the language but not always to fluency. Or if there is a large separation in age between siblings then more Codas will acquire greater proficiency. In addition, the background of the Deaf parents and their attitudes toward ASL or a signed language also dictate fluency levels and skill within the culture/family.

First- and secondborn females clearly dominate the group of fluent signers and knowledge holders of the culture within the Coda population. However, in the United States and most countries the issue of gender also becomes a border. The border issues of gender interact with the Deaf border issues to make the process of assimilation into the culture, access to power, and control of one's life more complicated.

An excellent example of this is that the interpreting field is dominated by females. In the United States both cultures appear to view the female as the one in the "server role" in the family. The Coda female may well internalize the larger cultural roles of helplessness, nonaggressive personality, and subservient attitude. All the beneficial values that maintain the borders of each culture will perpetuate the helping idea and become inculcated into interpreting values. The result of females becoming good signers is dealt with in a later section on interpreting.

Internal Borders

Can you have borders within borderlands? Is that the place for Codas? Negotiating borders for Deaf people is complicated because national heritage does not accurately imply their roots. Borders for Deaf people are established based on contact between people who are like them and people who are different from them. We are culturally and physically surrounded by borders since borders can be political, physical, and psychological. As the title of the film *Passport without a Country* suggests, Codas are subject to amorphous borders. This documentary is important in that it clearly places Codas in between cultures. We live on the border or we seek to move as far from the border as possible. There are these burning questions of not only where we belong, but what is our identity. Are Codas Deaf and Hearing; that is, are they bicultural?

The distinction between Deaf and Hearing people appears to be a well-defined process within the Deaf world. However, it is not necessarily so in the Hearing world. The use of the terms Deaf and Hearing implies a clear border. In my growing up there were Deaf and there were Hearing; rarely did the two mix or were they confused as to whom the terms applied. These boundaries are often clear to Codas but remain unclear to others.

In fact for me, since I lived on the campus of a school for the Deaf, it was very clear who the Hearing people were as there was a real border. The street physically bordered our house and the school. When I crossed the street it was clear that I was moving into the Hearing side of the border. Most Codas did not have this clear a physical dividing line, but if one considers the door to your house the border, this clearly holds for all Codas,¹¹ since once you enter the house you are now in a world constructed and controlled by Deaf parents. Once you left the house you knew that you had to "become" Hearing in all ways.

Who Are Codas?

It is possible that the contribution Codas can make is to help clarify the definition of culturally Deaf or the word "deaf." By investigating the question of whether Codas are deaf or hearing we become clearer on what it means to be Deaf. The binary relationship we have established by the terms Deaf and Hearing must be depolarized. Codas present a problem to that binary relationship. If we continue to maintain this binary split, understanding our many borders becomes more difficult. If we are able to remove this idea of a binary relationship between "hearing" and "deaf," we may arrive at some useful discussion as to membership and transmission of the culture. What is important to recognize is that to understand who the Coda is requires a change in definitions in both the Hearing and Deaf cultural demarcations. Essentially, it's not only hearing loss. It consists of many other things. Because of the attitudes, misconceptions, and lack of real knowledge in the Hearing world, Deaf Culture is the only culture in the world where the definitions of who belongs are so confusing. Hence, a Coda would do better to escape all this confusion and move as far from the Deaf/Hearing border as possible.

To begin with, having a hearing loss is one of the significant factors in membership of the Deaf community. This fact creates an interesting dichotomy. Hearing loss is avoided as a major factor because it begs the question as to whether a disability underlies the definition of who is "Deaf." If Codas are not to be viewed as members of the Deaf world the problem is exacerbated. A really interesting question is that if Codas are a subgroup within the Deaf world should we adopt an ethnic model for Codas? This would mean that Codas would be viewed as integral members of the Deaf community and would be seen as one of the carrier groups of the culture across generations.

"To claim that Codas are not part of the DeafWorld is puzzling to me. What could be stronger than the parental bond? How can we not be part of you, Deaf people? We are of you."¹² Davis's questions pose significant issues. There is some reality to the issue of who can claim to use the label "Deaf" in that some Codas are "Deaf" than most Deaf people.

Can Codas Be Considered Deaf?

"If Deaf is characterized by a 'condition,' a 'pathology,' then no. But if it is exclusively a cultural distinction, characterized by experience and language, then surely Codas can be at least partially 'Deaf.'"¹³ Todd Czubek's comments lead us to look at some questions and try to frame some answers that will create further discussion. Who are Codas and where is our center?

It is clear that Codas do not have a hearing loss. Hence, hearing loss by itself may not be the distinguishing characteristic of the Deaf world. Hearing children of parents who have a hearing loss are viewed as "Codas." In this chapter I will refer to these parents as Deaf. However, Deaf must be understood in the cultural terminology on the Deaf side of the border. Deaf is someone who identifies as Deaf. The issue of hearing loss is not an absolute with regard to who is "Deaf." We all know that "Deaf" as a cultural term includes people whose hearing loss can be very slight, what the Hearing might refer to as Hard of Hearing (HoH). Many of these people have decided as an identity process to stop using their voice when interacting with the Hearing. However, we all know that sometimes, a Deaf person who is capable of speaking will use their voice if they feel it is necessary. Hence, "hearing loss" and "voice" are not necessary conditions for someone to be considered Deaf. There are many Codas who do not use their voice on the Deaf side of the border. They will use their voice on the Hearing side of the border. This situation is equivalent to the HoH above.

From Whom Do Codas Learn?

In the case of language acquisition there are simple and complicated processes for Codas. In the case of the parents who use a signed language, the firstborn Coda typically learns this language, especially if they are female. If there is enough time between the second- and firstborn (say four years or more), the secondborn Coda will learn sign language. If the secondborn is a female, they will learn to sign no matter the time distance between first- and secondborn. One of the first paradoxes we will encounter begins here. Many of the Deaf parents of Codas have Hearing parents themselves. As a result, many of these Deaf parents have learned to sign either from other Deaf children when they were young or from adults (hearing or Deaf) who were their teachers and their language models.¹⁴ This issue is not an insignificant one, in that most of these Deaf parents, due to the educational system's lack of cohesion, have learned an inadequate version of American Sign Language (ASL). As a result they graduate from school with an impoverished knowledge of both ASL and English.¹⁵ In terms of language acquisition, we now know that in the case of Deaf children of Deaf parents (DCDP) whose Deaf parents are not fluent ASL users, the DCDP will operate on the signed language input and make it a more fluent language. There is no reason not to believe that the same situation happens with Codas. This suggests that the first generation of Coda signers will be the first generation of fluent ASL users. For the Deaf world, the use of a signed language is one of the criteria for membership in Deaf Culture.

When Do People Become Deaf?

With regard to use of a signed language in the community, another factor is the idea of those Deaf persons who join the Deaf world later in their lives. For the Hearing side of the border the meaning of "to become Deaf" has to do with the date of acquiring a hearing loss. There is a great deal of nomenclature on this issue, as a number of terms and definitions garner a large amount of print to discuss this idea.¹⁶ For the Deaf world, "to become Deaf" does not relate to when hearing loss occurs in a person's life but to when they learned to accept and use a signed language. There are many people who have acquired a hearing loss but are not members of the Deaf world. These people are distinguished from those who have decided to learn a signed language and join the Deaf world. This is a conscious identity issue. However, with respect to Codas, since we are born into the Deaf world, it is not a conscious decision to join the Deaf world but to separate and be excluded from it.

Given the above discussion, as children more Codas are fluent in a signed language than the majority of the Deaf world. Some maintain their fluency throughout adulthood; some lose their fluency as they separate and become more full-time members of the Hearing world and, in effect, remove themselves from the Deaf world.

What distinguishes Codas from their peers in the Deaf world is the exposure and use of spoken English. All Codas (with very few exceptions) become fluent in the spoken language of the Hearing community in which their parents reside (spoken English in my case).

Many Codas initially think they are Deaf. It is not uncommon to hear stories of Codas who did not realize there were Hearing people out there, who did nothing but use their voice. However, by the time a Coda learns to interact with others, the Hearing world is clearly evident. Most Codas are bilingual by the time they are three to five years of age. Given the Hearing world's fear of the effects of hearing loss, there is typically great effort by the Hearing extended family to ensure that the Coda offspring will learn to talk. Codas who are able to use a signed language¹⁷ and who use a spoken language are in fact the true bilinguals of the Deaf world, even in comparison with DCDP who learn English very well. Although the DCDP's English will be excellent, it will not always be fluent. Another irony may be that the Coda who is fluent in ASL and English more resembles the person who has lost their hearing later (after age six) and learns ASL fluently.¹⁸

Acculturation

If a culture is passed down from parents to children then Codas learn Deaf Culture from birth. In addition Codas also learn Hearing culture. Hearing culture is mostly learned from the extended family, or in some cases from older siblings when there are large age differences between children in the family. Aside from the transmission of language, Codas learn many of the beliefs, mores, and values of the Deaf world. It is through this process that Codas also learn about the Hearing world and the conflict that the Hearing world presents to both Deaf and Codas. To the Deaf the Hearing world

is dangerous, one of which to be suspicious and aware. Hearing people exhibit an ignorance of the Deaf way of life and one must be careful when crossing the border and interacting with the Hearing. In addition, the Hearing who are professionals are to be encountered with extreme caution. Those Hearing professionals who "know" about the Deaf are the most dangerous. For it is through them that the Deaf have learned about the Hearing world. Deaf people grow up in schools and learn the values of the Hearing world that are in essence founded on the fact that to be Deaf is negative and therefore the closer you can be to acting Hearing is a positive. This belief is the antithesis of the Deaf world, and Codas learn this at a very young age. In fact, it takes Codas a great deal of time to understand that even though they are "hearing" they are not included in the reference to "Hearing" people by Deaf people. This issue, itself, deserves a great deal of discussion but will not be expanded upon here. However, suffice it to acknowledge that when Deaf people discuss their problems with Hearing people and Codas are present, this can cause a real identity crisis. Codas have been able to solve this crisis on their own, since it is unique to the Deaf/Hearing worlds and is probably the major issue of sitting on the border.¹⁹

An interesting result of growing up in a Deaf family is that for Codas the identity issue is a psychological division having no physical demarcation. So in essence we must borrow our parents' physical condition as part of our own identity process. Then we must go through great effort to understand this issue and separate ourselves from our Deaf sides. It is probably this reason that drives so many Codas into fully participating in the Hearing world and keeping the Deaf world at arm's length (no pun intended).

Who Can Pass as Deaf?

There are two more issues that cause Codas to have an unclear definition as to who they are. In many situations, for those Codas who sign, they are often mistaken for being Deaf. Typically, this is by those Deaf people who have Hearing parents. Some Codas are even able to fool those who are highly fluent users of ASL as in the DCDP. Codas are adept at code switching and adjusting their signing to the requirements of the interaction levels. It is for this reason that many Codas are mistakenly thought of as Deaf.²⁰ This ability to move in the Deaf world, understand how it operates, and function as a Deaf person demonstrates that many Codas are actually more culturally Deaf than many Deaf people.

All of this results in raising the issue of identity formation. How does the Coda become a fully integrated person, capable of functioning in both worlds but understanding what place we inhabit? Clearly, one avenue is to escape totally into the Hearing world and ignore or even reject the Deaf world. This process can clearly instill that the border is truly a border and does not need to be crossed except under very special conditions. To obtain a better picture of Codas and the process of identity in adulthood, the reader is referred to an excellent documentary entitled *A Passport without a Country*.²¹

Hearing versus Deaf

How does the Coda handle the dilemma suggested above? Since there are two lives in the border process, what actually might happen when many Codas cross the border into the Deaf World is that they become Deaf. That is, they begin to sign and many turn off their voice (unless members of their hearing family are present; more about this later in this chapter), ignore any of the noises or talking around them, and enter into conversations with different groups of Deaf people. If there are introductions to be made, these are conducted under Deaf cultural rules. If I meet someone new it is important that they know where I came from, in my case that I grew up in a school for the Deaf, which one, and where my parents grew up, where they currently live, and with what schools they were associated.

However, even after being integrated into the Deaf group, a Coda will still be considered Hearing. When I enter or function within the Hearing world, I must attempt to put aside all of the Deaf behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs in order to participate smoothly. For example, it is not important where you came from or where you lived when you are introduced to someone new. This creates a conflict, in that this shallow introduction suggests that the hearing person is not really interested in you; they are only doing this as a courtesy. For me, it has been hard to function in new Hearing groups because I am not really aware of how to expand the conversation with a new person. If I ask where they are from and about their family, it could be taken as too personal an inquiry.

When I meet hearing people I initially avoid telling them I have Deaf parents. This prevents much confusion and extended explanation. Since the Hearing world has been socialized to view the Deaf as a problem group, the conversation always ends up with preconceived standard questions. How did you learn to talk? Do you use a sign language? Do your parents talk? Etc. It is interesting to note that many Codas have developed this strategy because they are always tired of explaining their parents to the world.²²

Alternatively, when I would meet Deaf people they would see me as a Coda, an automatic ally but not part of the Deaf world. When I meet hearing people who find out I am a Coda they would not label me as a Coda, but they would also see me as an ally of the Deaf world and not a member of the Hearing world. We end up being uncategorized. No other cultural group goes through this process except maybe children of Gays and Lesbians.²³ It doesn't matter which side of the border you are on, you are not "one of them."

As Codas we meet different types of Hearing people who are able to create inner conflict. For most of us, the average Hearing person poses no threat other than asking some questions from ignorance. On the other hand, there is a subgroup of Hearing people who are professionals whether in the field of hearing loss or in fields with which we may come in contact. For example, members of two professional groups cause great disharmony for Codas: medical professionals and educational professionals, two groups whose goals are to "help" people live better in the world. The medical people are typically encountered in two ways. First, for every Coda they are encountered when our parents enter the hospital. It is here that all of us must return to the Deaf side of the world. The ignorance displayed by the medical professionals about Deaf people is

rampant. One of the major themes of stories told by Codas has to do with how to handle the medicine man and the hospital setting. The conflict that ensues is undeniably the greatest for Codas. It is probably here that the attitude about the Hearing world is solidified in the Coda psyche.

As one example, I have been put in the position of interpreting for one of my parents while they were in the emergency room. My father was on a gurney, both hands were tied to the gurney, and compresses were covering his eyes. The doctor was yelling at him to stop fighting, even after my repeated attempts to explain that he was Deaf and couldn't hear. What the doctor mistook for "fighting" the restraints was my father finger-spelling "A-M-I-D-E-A-D" because with the compresses over his eyes, his hands tied, and some drug that was injected to partially paralyze him, he was unable to figure out where he was. After I removed the compresses and was able to converse with him, he quieted down. However, the doctor continued to yell at my father "to stay awake." There was much more to this incident, but this gives you the flavor of the scene. In another example, a Coda arrived at the hospital and the father had been preparing a meal for his sick spouse but was sitting in the waiting area at the request of the nurses. It happened that the spouse had died earlier, and the doctors and nurses felt it best to wait for the Coda to arrive to tell the husband/father. These actions demonstrate that medical personnel treat Deaf people as children with little respect and that they do not believe Deaf people are able to function as competent adults. Many times when Codas return to the border, they are put in the position of interpreting for their parents in times of extreme stress, which serves to drive them even further from the border. Many of these kinds of stories are known within the culture.

Another group consists of Hearing educators who are supposed to be knowledgeable about the Deaf, especially if these educators are in the oral educational field, which is becoming more pertinent given the cochlear implants of today. It is not uncommon for educators to have instilled in many Deaf people that the use of ASL is very negative. And these professionals promote the myth that those people who use ASL are illiterate and unschooled. If you use a signed language you will never be a fully functioning person. Many parents of Codas have internalized these beliefs/myths, even though they may be fluent users of American Sign Language. As a result some Deaf parents may not sign to their Coda children. These Coda children will grow up without a means of really communicating with their own parents, somewhat the reverse of the Deaf child in the Hearing family where the Hearing parents do not learn to sign.²⁴ This inability to sign is a major issue when Codas get together. Those Codas who do not sign may feel that they are not part of either the Deaf world or the Coda world, and don't know how they feel about the Hearing world. It is probably another reason to escape far from the border. The further away the less inner conflict encountered.

Identity and Belief Systems

In his Coda memoir, Lennard Davis writes,

I knew my mother was loving and devoted, working hard at a low paying job to earn the necessities of life. I knew my father was a gifted artist and capable writer. He wrote a column for

the national Deaf magazine and authored plays that he and his friends performed at the Deaf Club. I also knew, when I looked at the pile of old *New York Times* issues in the closet, that headlines were blazoned with my father's name for having been a world-class race-walker, all the while working as a sewing machine operator in a sweatshop.²⁵

I am amazed at the resiliency and strength of identity that Codas achieve given the tension and conflict that enters their life at times when identity formation and individualization occurs. Codas are immersed in the Hearing world view of Deaf people and find conflict in that view when looking at their own parents, as the quote from Davis above attests. As another example, a Coda student arrived at the university as a freshman who could not believe a Deaf person was getting his PhD at a major university. In addition, this Coda could not believe that this same Deaf person was going to be their professor and advisor for four years. Yet this same student came from four generations of Deaf people. The internalization of what Deaf people are developed out of experience. This Coda witnessed his own family as having a great deal of struggle with the Hearing world. It appeared that the solutions to the struggles were always solved by contacting the Hearing member of the family. This is not atypical of young Codas. In growing up, we do not know who is right in their view of Deaf people. Many Codas continue to believe that their parents are less capable than other people and that it is a direct result of their being Deaf. Our knowledge of the world is derived from a very small sample, and as children of Deaf parents, we learn early the false belief that the Hearing know what is best. It is always important to give deference to Hearing people, a belief that Deaf people learned in their educational programs, and consequently this myth has been passed on to us.

Codas as Hearing: Acculturation and Identity

The "cultural" acceptance of one group or another clearly is defined by the acceptance and access allowed by the power/dominant group. It is at "the edge of culture"²⁶ that the problems of Coda and Deaf culture have faced the "border wall." Codas are able to easily move across or between the two populations. This is parallel to those Deaf people who speak well and constitute the "bridge" Deaf members of the community. Many of the Deaf leaders are from this membership group within the Deaf community. Deaf leaders also come under the archetype of the "Gallaudet Deaf," a distinction made by members within the Deaf community. This ability to travel easily across the border engenders suspicion and mistrust because those Deaf who cannot traverse the border easily do not have the same access to the information, purpose, or control of this border-crossing process. Hence, divisions within the Deaf world are created. Codas are viewed within these divisions and are suspect as to their purpose when residing on either side of the border. When the Coda resides in the Hearing sector of the border the issues become, what does the Coda say about the Deaf, about the Deaf community, about their Deaf parents, about their Deaf parents' friends, etc. As a result Codas are looked upon with a wary eye especially if they are in the business of the Deaf (i.e., teacher, social worker, etc.).

How does a child growing up in a Deaf household and living in a Hearing neighborhood come to understand and to resolve the tremendous conflicts about their parents

and themselves to which they are exposed? At very young ages, Codas are exposed to attitudes around language and around their parents as follows:

SIDE OF BORDER BELIEF
 DeafHearing is bad.
 HearingDeaf is bad.
 DeafASL is good.
 HearingASL is bad.
 DeafASL is broken English.
 HearingBroken English is bad.
 DeafEnglish is bad.
 HearingLiteracy is good.
 DeafCan't read or write.
 HearingDeaf are illiterate.
 DeafASL and English are both languages of the Deaf world.
 HearingBilingualism is bad.

The above issues can be referred to as border control issues. These are the issues that inflame the two cultures and that carry misunderstanding, illogical beliefs, pain, and suffering within families and across generations. These border issues create the greatest conflict. As young children Codas learn that English is supreme, to the point that many Deaf parents do not want to sign with their children for fear it will interfere with their English development. There is no research to support this in the history of the Deaf in the world. In fact, in contrast, those Codas who grow up in a signing environment do not lack English skills in comparison to the general population. It is possible the interpreting process may support the learning of both languages to fluency. Since interpreting requires one to move from one language to another, it is critical to know what the meanings are in both languages.

The greatest conflicts in the development of a Coda reside around the issues of language and education, issues clearly controlled by the Hearing side of the border. It is in this process of control over the language issue that the development and feeling of powerlessness occurs in both Codas and their parents. Language is the train that carries the culture across the community and from one family to another. It is also the train wreck that prevents intergenerational interaction when the grandparents are Hearing.

The real irony is that ASL is thought to be bad by the Hearing and yet it is the main process with which many of us communicate with our parents and our parents' friends. For those Codas who do not sign, many feel they have been cheated, cheated by some unknown group called the "Hearing." Many Codas who do not sign may not have had an in-depth conversation with their parents for most of their life.

Finally, how does a youngster listen to the countless stories and statements that imply a "hate the Hearing" attitude by many Deaf people? Codas are subjected to these statements by their parents, sometimes direct, sometimes incidental, and it becomes a confusing mess, when we know that we are "Hearing." As children, we probably don't recognize the conflict immediately, but as we get older, it becomes very clear that "Hear-

ing" people are the enemy. One of the most complicated situations Codas face is understanding that the term Hearing does not apply to us. But we learn very late about this. A real problem is that we listen to our parents and their friends complain about those "Hearing" people, and then we look at ourselves, and we are Hearing. Our parents then turn around and call us Hearing. This is difficult to rectify in our lives. It sometimes drives us away from the community.

How does one rectify these confusing, alienating, and opposing views? What type of personality is developed in which the parent is viewed as the child who is unable to communicate and the child has all the communication tools at their disposal? How is a child to grow into adolescence and eventually adulthood and come to terms with all this conflict?

The young Coda becomes initially stigmatized in the Hearing world and has no way to obtain quick answers or explanations for what is happening. As a result some outcomes are predictable, such as many Codas become shy at first and some stay shy in the Hearing world. Some Codas become peacemakers to reconcile both the internal and external conflicts.²⁷ If you can solve the external conflicts then maybe you can reduce the internal conflict that has built up for so long.

Some Codas solve the internal conflict by "running away," metaphorically speaking. Most remove themselves physically from the Deaf world. And for those who escape, the death of both parents is the final border crossing for most Codas, since most of them are not in the Deaf business. Once our parents die, there is no need to continue the association with Deaf people. Since most Deaf people have hearing children and hearing grandchildren, the connection with the Deaf is truly only "one generation thick."

The border walls become thick at this juncture because of the two views of our parents: Deaf parents are capable versus Deaf parents are not capable. It is here that some of the most complicated identity processes occur. For example, when we are in the midst of a Deaf conversation or interacting with our parents over some event that occurred on the Hearing side of the border, the phrase "it's hearing people's fault" pops up in our presence. We know we can hear but are we part of the "hearing" as referenced in these attacks? In addition, we are subjected to countless interactions where Hearing people make negative references to our parents. The terms "dummy," "dumb," "illiterate," and "stupid" are bandied about over the time of our development. It is no wonder that we rebel in adolescence or become passive as adults and for the most part escape this constant conflict that becomes our cultural heritage. We learn at a young age that Hearing people do not understand our parents, and our parents do not understand them. We learn that the Deaf club is a place where Deaf people are treated as people with all the positives and negatives associated with the treatment of equals. We learn that as we grow we will be expected to "leave" the community. In fact, we are groomed for it. As adults there is no official membership for Codas in any of the Deaf organizations, the cultural events, or the social processes. There is no shaping us to assist in shaping the future for better or worse. There is no process for Codas to learn how to access power in the Deaf world.

This results in feelings of powerlessness to shape our lives.²⁸ In the hearing world, hearing parents are invested in shaping the lives of their children so that they can access,

learn, and participate in the culture as adults. Hearing people learn about the mechanisms through which you can access power. Now clearly all power is not accessible by everyone, but there is the myth that "anyone can be president" in the Hearing world. There is no such myth in the Deaf world for Codas. You can only be what the Deaf world dictates you can be. There is no role for Codas in the Deaf world other than the bordering interpreter.

Access to shaping the consequences of skill acquisition and learning in the Deaf world is in the Hearing world as, for example, in two areas: education and law. In education, the decisions or policies are made by hearing people (even including disabled people but not Deaf people) and these policies eventually influence the Deaf world. What Codas learn from these policies is just how powerless our parents are and by extension how powerless we really are. The myth of democracy says that the majority rules, and if you are a minority, it is extremely hard to get a majority vote. In the case of Deaf people, they are a minority within a minority (the "disabled" population). To the point, mainstreaming as a policy is a Hearing world creation. It heavily impacts on the Deaf world and splits the Deaf adult population into those who use ASL and those who don't. In fact, the identity confusion of our parents is the direct result of the Hearing world's treatment of Deaf children in the education field. As adults, Codas become confronted with an identity crisis. Codas have more access to this policy-making process because they are Hearing. Yet, Codas who do not and are not embraced by the Deaf world as adults see themselves as Hearing people. As adults many Codas bring with them all the inaccurate and unfounded beliefs of the Hearing world since there is no mechanism for them to believe or learn otherwise. As a result Codas have the potential of being in a unique position, but the history of Codas suggests they see themselves as part of the Hearing world not the Deaf world.

As an example when the two worlds collide, when Coda superintendents of schools for the Deaf and Coda program directors and Coda principals in regular school settings have an opportunity to mix at meetings and conferences the border issue becomes pronounced. These professional Codas function in the Hearing world even though they are in schools for the Deaf, which are supposedly viewed as part of the Deaf world (another myth).²⁹ In reality schools for the Deaf are part and parcel of the Hearing world except when the business of education has been completed for the day. It just so happens that the Deaf world is encased as a minority group inside the school for the Deaf. Deaf adults run the school after hours; Hearing adults run the school during the academic time and Hearing adults make policy, raise funds, etc. Hence the Hearing run the school as part of the Hearing world from a hearing perspective. Coda professionals bring all their baggage to the operation of the school. And in most cases, this baggage is full of the internalized Hearing views of their parents and what they have learned along the way. These include the use of ASL is bad, Deaf opinions are one-sided and narrow, there are many options that should be available to parents, to learn to talk is very important, the average Deaf person will never really learn to read, etc. All of these views result in the continuation of our Deaf parents not being able to obtain a good education, not feeling as participants in their lives, growing up without any control over their own destiny, etc. The cycle continues. Yes, there are some superintendents who hire the Deaf, who look

to the Deaf for advice; however, when it comes to academics the Hearing policy reverts to the Hearing world. This Hearing control of attitudes and beliefs is passed on to Codas. So in essence if one wishes to become a leader and participate in the power structure, Codas must adopt the Hearing world views. Becoming Hearing in the cultural and political sense is easier for developing a personality and belief system because it reduces a great number of conflicts.

Border Talk: Language, Communication, and Signing

"I saw the intelligent and lively side of my parents and their friends at the Deaf Club. I knew that my father and mother were capable of subtle communication, and that sign language was as adequate, capacious, and poetic as any language. I could tell my parents almost anything that any other kid in the Bronx could tell his or her parents."³⁰

The Deaf say they are not disabled and do not want the same things that the general disabled population want. However, the Deaf want captions, interpreters, TTY access, relay, etc. Are not these accommodations similar to what the general disabled population wants? For a Coda this paradox is difficult to understand as a person growing up and extremely difficult to explain to others. Hence, many Codas get into a defensive posture defending the Deaf perspective without having a strong supporting rationale behind it.

If we did identify as "Deaf" are we required to experience the same discrimination, trauma, and prejudice as our parents and other Deaf people? In fact, many times we do receive the same treatment as our parents and as our parents' friends. It can best be seen in the interpreting situation.

Many times as children and young adults we are exposed to extremely prejudicial comments about the Deaf. Sometimes the comments are not always obvious but subtle, and since we are not trained to be professional interpreters it is very difficult to know what to do. Many times discriminatory comments arise out of the situations where the interpreter is misconstrued to be part of the Deaf person and is not there on behalf of the Hearing person. There is no place a Coda can go to get advice on how to handle this type of discrimination. As a result I believe that Codas develop either of the following two types of strategies to handle their own inner conflict.

The first strategy is to develop into a peacemaker, which borders on the passive side of the spectrum, while others may develop into what has been called the freedom fighter.³¹ In truth, there is some of each of these components in all Codas. Many Codas in an attempt to avoid conflict keep to themselves any negatives from both sides of the border. Hence, we become repositories of the rampant discrimination and prejudice of both populations with no outlet that would provide some type of resolution to this conflict. Here is where the attempt at therapeutic intervention is thwarted. As cauldrons of information about both groups, yet not belonging to either one, where does one go to relieve the pressure when the cauldron is full? If you go to the Hearing therapist, you must process the information about the Hearing through Hearing minds in that you must see the Coda's information based on the norm of the Hearing. How do you discuss the positive nature of having Deaf parents from the Hearing point of view? No matter

what a therapist may say, there is an underlying foundational belief that to be Deaf is bad or negative. This is a psychological and cultural fact. You can't just dismiss it and say let's talk about you, or whatever therapeutic exchange is made. And vice versa with the Deaf. It is another place one cannot go because there is no rationale on the Hearing side for how we think. Ironically, it is much easier on the Deaf side since there is more awareness and knowledge about the Hearing world and its ways. Hence, it is more comfortable for a Coda to be with Deaf people who unofficially accept Codas as transient members. The Coda is a mirror of both cultures.

Power of Interpreting

Initially, interpreting is translating what Hearing people say to your parents and vice versa. All Codas begin this process at a young age. Some Codas continue to interpret for their whole lives; all Codas interpret for their parents until their parents die. The interpreting process carries with it great power and sometimes great confusion.

At a very young age in the interpreting situations you learn about the power you have. You learn about the attitudes of the Deaf and Hearing toward each other as explained above. Mostly you learn that you are in almost absolute control of the communication process. The interpreter controls:

1. Who speaks when. The initiation, timing, and length of time of the interaction.
2. What language will be used. The language choice is typically decided during the interaction and is determined by the level of the participants. However, the Coda interpreter has free reign as to the language process of the event. The tone of voice, the level of the register, and the emotional level are controlled via the language used.
3. What will actually be "said" between the Deaf and Hearing participants. The Coda interpreter has control over the translation process and content. It is clear that the interpreter can make either party look good, appear knowledgeable, competent, and in control or vice versa.

For example, there is a major border issue as to how one handles the type of interpreting situation below, probably encountered by all Coda interpreters.

If Dad is upset during an interaction and says, "Tell the clerk he is a jerk!" young Coda interpreters are more likely to respond as follows: "My father thinks you are not correct." Or some may go it straight the first time and tell them what their father has said. Typically, this will only happen once. An excellent example of this situation is provided by Bonnie Kraft on the videotape *Tomorrow Dad Will Still Be Deaf*.³² It is during these situations that the young Coda hears the side comments reflecting the attitudes of both sides. It is here that the idea that the Deaf hate the Hearing and that the Hearing think the Deaf are stupid, incompetent, and "dumb" is reinforced. In addition, in many interpreting situations young Codas learn that hearing adults treat you as the adult and your parent as the child. All of these situations must be handled and incorporated into the Coda's psyche. Given this process, it is a tribute that most Codas are able to function well as adults.³³

In addition to the power of the interpreting process, the young Coda has to contend with the fact that the interpreter is really not supposed to be part of the conversation between the Deaf person and the Hearing person. The idea of the interpreter being the nonperson in the interaction has a significant psychological bearing on how to handle each side of the border. It is more through acquired skill than actual training that many Codas have become good interpreters. However, it is also true that Codas who obtain interpreter training will be better interpreters. But those who become interpreters as adults, whom we would call Hearing interpreters, face these issues as adults and not as children. Hence the skills and strategies that one may need to deal with these types of psychological events are much more mature. In addition, the Hearing interpreter does not have the emotional stake in an interpreting event since they never have to interpret for their parents.

A final example of the complexity of interpreting as a Coda, and another paradox that must be understood, is that many Deaf people do not like to have Codas as interpreters. It is possible this has stemmed from the Coda as interpreter who has access to the most private of private things and access to the community, access to what might be called the underbelly of the community, thereby posing a threat to the confidentiality of the situation. There is a double problem with this: the Deaf want Coda interpreters but don't trust them, but they request them because there is a greater distrust of the Hearing interpreters. This creates all kinds of tension between the Deaf, the Coda as interpreter, and the Hearing interpreters. These are only a few examples of the many conflicting processes created when crossing the border. The psychological toll this has on young Codas who do not fully understand how to deal with these types of situations could be the major reason why most Codas are missing from the Deaf side of the border.

Family

There are differences in Coda family makeup just as there are in the world at large. Some Codas have large Deaf contingents, that is, grandparents who are Deaf and aunts, uncles, brothers, and sisters or any combination who may be Deaf. However, the most common situation is that there are no Deaf people in their family other than their parents. This family dynamic mirrors the situation of Deaf people, our parents included, where in the typical Hearing family with a Deaf child, the Deaf child tends to be the only Deaf person in the family. I am able to present only my family. There is not very much research or literature on Deaf families unless they have Deaf children. There are some memoirs beginning to surface that provide some poignant and realistic descriptions of Deaf families with hearing children.³⁴ There are some papers that present a discussion of family.³⁵

My family is not the typical Deaf family. Both of my parents were college-educated Deaf people although my mother never completed her college education. My parents were teachers of Deaf children and were very active in both grassroots functions and the non-grassroots activities. My parents were very active in the national and local athletic associations of the Deaf and the local Deaf clubs, and at the same time they were involved in the International Catholic Deaf Association, National Association of the Deaf,

state government committees, and other leadership areas that wanted to both set policy for Deaf people and manage the community to maintain its future. In essence, they were Deaf leaders.

What does it mean to be part of a family? In the Deaf world the term family has a different meaning depending on which side of the border you are on. The idea of a nuclear family is probably more appropriate in meaning on the Deaf side of the border and the idea of an extended family is more in line with the meaning on the Hearing side of the border. That is, Deaf families tend to be removed from the Hearing extended family. Hearing families tend to have more contact and interaction with extended family members. Clearly, the issues surrounding communication create a border within families.

The Notion of the Extended Family as "Family" on the Hearing Side of the Border

In my extended family my father had thirteen siblings that survived and my mother had four siblings. This is a total of seventeen siblings, all of whom were Hearing, and not one of them could use sign language or in my lifetime has made the effort to learn to sign. Only one sibling on my mom's side learned to fingerspell. Ironically the spouses (one of my uncles) or children (one of my cousins) of my father's family learned to sign and/or fingerspell. If there was to be any meaningful communication the burden fell to my sister and I to interpret within the extended family.

Typically during the interpreting situation my father's and mother's sisters would tell me that it was my job to take care of them. When my extended family members would refer to my parents they would use the phrase "poor Bet and Alfred." This was a favorite reference that was used for as long as I can remember. There was a constant suggestion that I was to take care of my parents and that they were viewed as less than capable adults. This message created a huge psychological border between me and my extended family, a border that I find difficult to cross even into my adult years. The interactions with my extended family allowed me to develop a clearer understanding of what the terms Hearing and Deaf meant depending on what side of the border they were used.

The Idea of the Nuclear Family

In addition to my parents being relatively untypical in the Deaf world, my growing up was also not typical of most Codas. For the majority of my life at home I was raised in a school for the Deaf, which is a different experience than many Codas have. We actually lived on the border of the Deaf and Hearing communities (I do not use Deaf world here as the school for the Deaf was more a part of the Hearing world for me) as we lived in a house that was on a town street but also was within the boundaries of the Deaf school campus.

Life at our home was very Deaf. Deaf people, other than my parents, would often be there at night. There were no lights connected to doorbells, hence the house was never locked. Deaf people would just let themselves in. We had a large kitchen in the house, and many times there would be five to six Deaf people in the kitchen. During these times there would be discussions and many times complaining about the Deaf school, the Hearing people who worked there, etc. Deaf people gathered at my home because

my father was a leader and a teacher at the school. The irony of this is that my extended family did not see my father as a leader.

Both of my parents used ASL, with my mother much more fluent than my father (who lost his hearing at sixteen and became Deaf when he learned to sign at Gallaudet when he was eighteen). As a result both my sister and I learned to sign when we were very young children, much like how the typical hearing child learns the language of their home. In my case, my fluency in ASL is much less than my sister's who took over the interpreting role when I left home.

Many Codas do not learn how to sign very well. Many Deaf parents have grown up in oral programs and learned to sign in the dormitories from other Deaf people, not from the adults in their environment such as the teachers in the schools. In addition, Deaf parents have been told ASL is bad and will hinder the development of English, so they don't sign with their kids. Many Codas may not have the skills to have an in-depth conversation with their parents; this mirrors the Deaf children of Hearing parents who are unable to sign until they meet other Deaf children or enter the Deaf world as adults. As a result some Codas are able to understand their parents but can't understand their parents' friends. Both groups grow up angry and resentful toward their parents. Our Deaf parents become estranged from their Hearing parents and Codas become estranged from their Deaf parents mostly centered around the issue of learning American Sign Language.

Coda identity within the family can be seen from different perspectives. In one instance, the issuing of names can become a border issue. Names are important parts of identity for people. In the family the membership issue of who is Deaf and who is Hearing becomes established by how one is referred to.

The title "Coda" claims ownership to something not acknowledged in the past by our families. The term has only been in existence for about twenty years. It was coined by Millie Brother, the founder of the CODA organization in 1982. As a result Codas have been meeting and many issues are seen as patterns within our families. One pattern is the creation and use of name signs for Hearing children of Deaf parents as a true border issue.

For example, in the Deaf community many of the older Codas began our identities with:

Son of _____ (in my case Hoffy or Betty)

Daughter of _____ (Hoffy or Betty).

There were no name signs for me or my sister. Our names were short enough to be fingerspelled. However, I do not recall any of my parents' friends referring to me as "B-O-B"; it was always Hoffy's son. I did not receive a name sign until I was an adult. My father's name sign was an "h" handshape at the shoulder; I was given the name sign with an "h" handshape in contact with the crook of the arm. When my father died, some of my parents' friends raised my name sign to his location. Later, Marie Philip assigned a name sign to me when I arrived in Boston. This is a "b to h" handshape at the shoulder. It is this name sign that has been used for the past twenty-six years. I didn't even know that my mom had a name sign in the community until I was an adult. The awarding of name

signs to Codas is an unexplored area. I am meeting many Codas whose parents have given them name signs and they have used them their whole lives. This could be a generational issue or an issue of stratification within the Deaf world. That is, could the non-college-educated Deaf parent be more prone to create name signs for their children? This could also be an identity issue within the community. Names could be construed as membership tags and the DeafWorld still has not figured out where Codas reside.

Adult Families: Relationships with Spouses

Mirror of the Deaf world: most Codas marry non-Codas. This is literally the opposite of the Deaf world. It is at this stage in a Coda's life that the borders become very well defined and begin to harden (suggesting that the border will be difficult to traverse easily). The relationship with a spouse may have a range of internal processes, from being accomplished easily to handling the situation with great repression of emotions and affiliation.

Typically spouses of Codas will not have had any contact with Deaf people in their lives. As with all interactions between the borders, the issue of communication process will underlie the relationship. Many spouses will attempt to learn to sign. This has both good and bad implications. In many cases the level of skill will result in parents not really being understood, and the spouse is not really understood by parents. This issue is then dealt with through a politeness process. Each interlocutor knows they are not understood but lets it go. Many times the Coda is responsible for explaining what took place but at another time. Spouses then gain a false sense of accomplishment and become more confident so that when the fall arrives, the harder it will be. It is usually at its critical point when the phrase "I know/understand your parents and your situation" appears. In many ways this is similar to the professional who learns to sign.³⁶ Many professionals who learn to sign because of the acceptance and effort to understand the conversation by Deaf people have an overblown sense of their signing skills.

The case where the spouse doesn't learn to sign can create real problems for Codas. Once again the Coda is forced into an interpreter role explaining both the content of the message, the reason for the interaction, and the cultural meanings behind the messages to both the parents and the spouse.³⁷ Hence, the Coda can be cornered into a defensive role, and all the childhood skills come into play to make sure there is no friction. The stakes are very high, higher than the interactions with Hearing people outside the family, since it's one's marriage and immediate family that are the players not the Hearing outsiders.

A common example encountered by Codas is when Deaf parents sign: "What's wrong with your husband/wife? He/she doesn't like us" or "I don't understand what he/she signed, please explain what they said." The Coda is then in a double bind: if they encourage their spouse to learn to sign problems will occur, and if they don't there are still problems. It's a lose-lose situation. However, most Codas work very hard to solve the issues of communication with their Deaf parents and their spouses.

Another example is the misreading of facial expressions that is very common when the borders are crossed, especially in a marriage situation. Research indicates that Deaf

people are no better at reading Hearing facial expressions than Hearing people.³⁸ In fact, in my experience, the problem in misreading facial expressions is more prone to be on the Hearing side of the border. Hearing people are more prone to misread the Deaf person's facial message. Since facial expression can be emotional and syntactic in the Deaf world but is only emotional in the Hearing world, Deaf people have more experience in reading faces.

A number of defensive strategies are entertained to accommodate the situation. Soon the Coda begins visiting their Deaf parents alone, or frequent visits become a rarity. Many of the strategies we used in growing up will be implemented at this time. It is much easier to be in groups (family) when all the members are Hearing or Deaf. If there is a mix of Deaf and Hearing then the Coda's role and identity within the group becomes a problem. The Coda becomes the "interpreter" in the family, not the son or daughter(-in-law). As a result Codas begin to restrict their contact with Deaf people in general, and then restrict our interactions with our Deaf parents to the relay or the TTY. Prior to the TTY there was just avoidance of contact with our Deaf parents or with Deaf people in general. In my generation, these strategies can be recognized when we find ourselves spending more time with the Hearing grandparents.

An easy and common solution to avoid all this is to move far away from both sets of grandparents. Schedule visits once or twice a year. This can slowly build up conflict within either spouse. Hearing spouses can become resentful because there might be a lessening of contact with their parents. The conflict may be lessened these days by the technological revolution. TTYs, videophones, and relay access are common now, and most Deaf people have or use them. However, many Deaf members of the older generation are not fully comfortable with TTYs, e-mail, or instant messaging. These are the next generation's tools. It is probably subtle at first, as the Coda may or may not recognize that they are unconsciously entering into these types of patterns. But when recognition occurs resentment may begin to build in Codas.

The underlying issue is that a Hearing spouse can never really know and understand. They can sympathize, empathize, and support, but understanding how interactions with their Deaf parents are intended to be resolved may not be possible. This is not to say that relationships between Codas and their spouses are always going to be a problem. Many Codas have developed excellent survival skills that they can then implement to function fully on the Hearing side of the border.

In the case of Hearing grandchildren the border becomes a wall, and the wall is in many cases difficult to climb over. Again that issue with signed language reappears. Most Codas do not teach their children how to sign. Most Coda grandchildren have a superficial or fleeting relationship with their Deaf grandparents. It could be compared to the benevolent Hearing person attempting to interact with the Deaf. The grandchildren are able to interact, but there is no depth to the interaction unless the Coda parent interprets, explains, and leads. It is here that the idea of a one generation thick process is at work. The number of grandchildren who are able to sign well enough to interact at more than a superficial basis is very small. The cycle continues and the fluency at using ASL reduces with each succeeding generation.

As a result of these processes we end up developing "border management" strategies.

This is very much an extension of childhood behaviors. Avoidance of the problems, keeping a lid on feelings, moving away from one's Deaf self, repressing emotions are all strategies Codas implement to maintain relationships with the Hearing and the Deaf worlds.

The CODA Organization

The Coda conference is like "coming home."³⁹ However, it is important to clearly distinguish the difference between "home" and "family." In the Hearing world coming home is coming home to the family in which you grew up and from whom you learned all your values and in which you feel full membership. In the case of Codas, family is where you grew up and learned all your values, but membership issues are clearly faced in this process. Crossing the border to family means visiting the Deaf world, not entering as a member. It is for this reason that I think the CODA organization has become such a strong and respected phenomenon. Although the CODA organization meets annually and only attracts three hundred or so Codas, the impact of the group can be seen in the Deaf world. The term "Coda" is now within the vocabulary of all Deaf people, Codas have established an identity as a group, and Coda has become a symbol for a sub-cultural movement. As a result of the CODA Organization, the leadership in the Deaf world is now discussing where Codas fit, not only nationally but internationally.

Unlike other cultural or subcultural groups, Codas had to claim and stake out the definitional territory of children of Deaf adults and our heritage on our own, where typically cultural identity and heritage is passed on from parent to child. When this identity was claimed and an organization begun, the Deaf initially viewed us with misgivings. When CODA was established as an organization, there was the perception that Codas were dissatisfied with the homes in which they grew up. It is interesting to see how much of a parallel process the Coda annual meeting has with many of the Deaf clubs we all participated in as children. I will address two issues that I think have great import and that represent the Coda crossing the border to the Deaf world. The Coda meeting represents the Deaf world side of the border. As children we were viewed as having a place in the Deaf world; as adults we have been excluded from participation in its internal structures and politics. I will address the issues of closed meetings and the myth of Deaf voice.

Closed Meetings

The annual meeting of the CODA Organization is open only to Codas who are at least eighteen years old. There has been a considerable uproar about this issue by both the Deaf and the Hearing. It seems that Coda-only meetings have engendered suspicion and distrust on both sides of the border. This should not be confusing when you realize that Codas have grown up in the Deaf world, their values are the same, their behaviors are the same, and many of their issues are the same. They have learned these values from their parents. Codas have learned that the Hearing do not understand, and Codas are always explaining themselves to others. Interpreting all the time for the Hearing members

of our families is many times a burden. We are constantly stressed by the knowledge of both cultures (one open, one closed) and this results in the constant weight of responsibility (always on guard defending Deaf people to the Hearing and vice versa).

These are issues germane to Codas and to the Deafworld.⁴⁰ Deaf people have "closed" meetings yet many cannot see the parallel with Coda meetings. One issue could be projection. Since the Deaf have closed meetings and many meetings are to figure out what to do about the Hearing, many Deaf think that the Coda meetings are to complain about the Deaf and, closer to home, to complain about our parents. As in any group, there is always an issue or two to complain about, but this is not the purpose or the portrayal of a Coda conference. Ironically, it is a celebration of our parents, their resiliency, their fortitude in the face of constant persecution, and how these attributes have been handed down to us. The CODA meeting is a celebration of the many skills and talents that all of us seem to hold in a hidden part of our psyches. The meeting presents talents of Codas across a range that continues to astound me. I have seen musical talents equal to many of the professionals in our world to storytellers whose ASL fluency is equal to some of the most respected professionals (some compare to Garrison Keillor) to those who present intellectual workshops on issues germane to our lives and the history of Deaf people, which includes Codas and Deaf Culture.⁴¹ The range of talent, knowledge, and intellect is displayed for the group to see and for the individual to gain the respect they deserve.

The annual CODA meeting functions as the place for a "home." At CODA meetings, the bottom line is that it is safe to say what you feel and that this will be understood without great explanation and creating cultural conflicts.

A Border Myth: Deaf Voice, the Myth of Silence, and the Deaf

The second issue that needs to be addressed is the meaning of Deaf voices and the myth of silence in Deaf families. Re-creating the sound of how your Mom or Dad called you home is one of the most shocking borders to cross upon entering the CODA meetings. Many of us did this in private with siblings⁴² but never in a wider group and rarely as adults.

The Deaf club was a cacaphony of sounds that we encountered as children. These sounds were normal and natural and in some cases lovingly warm. These sounds of home helped put meaning to "place" in Coda lives. The irony is that as a child, I never laughed at the sounds of the Deaf community. But when I crossed the threshold into the Hearing side of the border these sounds became stigmatized, they were viewed as awful, vulgar, horrible. The inability of the Deaf person (our parents) to speak well or even clearly is the central problem of all Deaf people as far as the Hearing world is concerned. These sounds are the sounds of our families.

The most humorous and loving feelings are felt when stories are told that include Deaf voices. Many stories revolve around the attempts to call us home for dinner or whenever our parents needed us. We all knew who was calling (so did all the neighborhood kids), and the joke was to see how fast you could get home to quell the "noise."

For me one of most striking border issues is that of using Deaf voice. It allows me