Introduction
DEAF-SAME and Difference
in International Deaf Spaces
and Encounters

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- Deaf people from all over the world attended the Paris World Fair in 1900. There, a French deaf leader remarked that deaf people around the world "know no borders."
- Andrew Foster, an African American deaf pastor and educator, established more than thirty deaf schools in Africa. His methods inspired deaf Nigerians, who applied Foster's strategies in their voluntary work projects with deaf people in Fiji.
- Expatriates and local Cambodians set up deaf tourism agencies in Cambodia. Previously, local deaf people acted as guides for foreign visitors informally and without financial compensation.
- A deaf American lawyer traveled through Chile and founded a nongovernmental organization to support Chilean deaf advocacy efforts by providing legal services and training.
- Deaf youth from all over the world who attended the World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section camp in Durban commented on how the camp provided opportunities for learning, networking, and empowerment.
- A deaf person from Eritrea traveled to Sweden and was shocked to discover how similar her sign language is to Swedish Sign Language.

While the dynamics in each of these encounters between diverse deaf[1] people around the world vary, they all involve deaf people meeting each other in

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[1] We write *deaf* with a lowercase "d" because we see *deaf* as more encompassing, less politicized, and less context-dependent than *Deaf*. As readers will note, the chapter authors have made different choices regarding use of *deaf* and *Deaf*.

international spaces. This book's title, "It's a small world," is a phrase often used in such encounters by deaf people who discover mutual connections, often over and across great geographical distances, and these encounters can be seen as examples of this deaf "small world." Indeed, a shared experience of being deaf, which we call "DEAF-SAME," created the conditions of possibility for these encounters to take place.

The phrase "DEAF-SAME," although not extensively researched, is often assumed to be a widespread (if not universal) phenomenon, and in our personal experience in Ghana, India, USA, and Europe it is typically utilized by deaf people coming from around the world. DEAF-SAME or "I am deaf, you are deaf, and so we are the same" emphasizes at the feeling of *deaf similitude* and is one of the most powerful phrases used in and across deaf worlds. DEAF-SAME is grounded in experiential ways of being in the world as deaf people with (what are assumed) to be shared sensorial, social, and moral experiences: it is both a sentiment and a discourse. Thus, as both a launching point and a unifying framework around which the chapters in this book coalesce, the authors use the concept of DEAF-SAME in both affirmative and critical ways.

DEAF-SAME produces feelings and relationships in individual people and groups as they engage in encounters. Enhancing the idea of DEAF-SAME are deaf peoples' communication practices and the fact that many diverse deaf people can communicate across borders and boundaries by using (mixtures of) national signed languages, gesture, and International Sign. DEAF-SAME can create claims of likeness and affiliation between people with very different cultural, racial, class, religious, economic, and geographic backgrounds, thus transcending geography, culture, and history, among other things. In this act of transcendence, it produces a desired and imagined deaf geography in which differences between deaf people are rendered minimal. This deaf geography in turn produces and engenders the discourse of deaf universalism. By *deaf universalism* we mean a (belief in a) deep connection that is felt between deaf people around the globe, grounded in experiential ways of being in the world as deaf people. To be sure, being in the world as deaf people not only includes the shared experience of being deaf sign language users but also shared experiences of oppression, such as the global impact of the Milan 1880 conference, which resulted in a ban on sign language use in deaf education as well as barriers and discrimination experienced by deaf people in everyday life.

We see DEAF-SAME as an experiential and analytical departure point and not an end point. Why is it not an end point? By analyzing such encounters, we see that despite the shared experience of being deaf, there are also substantial differences between deaf people from different backgrounds. These differences include nationality, ethnicity, class, mobility, educational levels, and of course, language, among other things. People also have different expectations, purposes, or intentions in reaching out to deaf people in other countries, including making new friends, wanting to have an "authentic" tourist experience, learning something new, gaining financial profit, and engaging in research, development, or charitable works, among others. There can also easily be combined and competing motivations.

Exploring similarities and differences between deaf people during their encounters is important to clarify for experiential, practical, and theoretical purposes, for both people engaging in such encounters and for people researching

them. As the chapters in this book demonstrate, these similarities and differences can create complex and contested dynamics between people. Thus, when initiating this edited volume, we wanted to examine how sameness and difference are actively produced, negotiated, and realized by people in specific times and spaces: we were motivated by the sense that feelings of sameness (DEAF-SAME) are often foregrounded in deaf encounters while differences are ignored or discounted.

Studying Deaf Worlds Transnationally and Internationally

This book builds upon previous studies of international deaf gatherings and encounters. Transnationalism, or experiences that transcend national borders, has been a topic of significant interest in deaf studies and other disciplines focused on deaf peoples' experiences. Breivik, Haualand, and Solvang (2002) very productively studied international deaf conferences and sports events (and they discuss some of their findings in their chapter in this book). Using multi-sited ethnography in different transnational spaces, they analyzed deaf peoples' experiences in terms of "routes and not roots" (also see Breivik 2005), exploring the ways that deaf people often see themselves as part of a transnational deaf community before they identify with their national or familial communities (hence people who attended such events say that it is like "being with family").

The term *pilgrimage* has been used to describe deaf people's participation in the "ritual" of the Deaf World Games (aka Deaflympics), where deaf people from around the world come together for a "sacred occasion," in which signed language users temporarily constitute a majority (Haualand 2007). Another ideal deaf place is Gallaudet University in Washington, DC, the only liberal arts university for deaf people in the world, a "deaf Mecca" to where deaf people from around the world make pilgrimages (Lane, Hoffmeister, and Bahan 1996). De Clerck (2007) has written about the effect that visits to Gallaudet University and other deaf "ideal places" had on Flemish deaf leaders, theorizing that these people were "asleep" (in that they were unaware of their language, culture, and rights) and then "woke up" during those visits. For deaf people, this experience of a barrier-free environment fascinated, inspired, and recharged them.

As for historical perspectives on deaf transnationalism, Murray (2007) investigated transnational relationships, events, and conferences in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in his dissertation titled "One Touch of Nature Makes the Whole World Kin." The title is tellingly a quote by Amos Draper, a deaf American quoting Shakespeare, implying that shared deafness leads to feelings of kinship in an international context. Additionally, Ladd's (2006) attention to the internationalist discourses used during the Paris banquets (which are discussed by Gulliver, this volume) has been very inspiring and affirmative for deaf people who continue to use these discourses today.

These studies, which constituted the first wave of research on deaf transnationalism, were important not only in laying the groundwork for future studies but also in creating or greatly contributing to *discourses* of deaf transnationalism in academic and nonacademic contexts alike, where such concepts have been enthusiastically embraced. Murray, Haualand, Ladd, and De Clerck are all deaf and have given multiple presentations on the theme of deaf transnationalism in

signed language to deaf audiences during World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) congresses and Frontrunners courses for example, which have been instrumental in spreading discourses of deaf people as transnational in nature.[2]

These scholars' historical and ethnographic explorations of deaf transnational spaces tended to focus on those spaces experienced by people who come from the global North (countries in Europe, along with Canada, the United States, Australia, and other nations with access to and control of resources) and who visit "ideal" places (such as Gallaudet University) or events (such as international conferences or sports events), mostly in the global North. These are spaces in which elite, mobile, and connected deaf people can circulate.

This first wave of scholarship has addressed but not explicitly focused on themes that are central in this book: power, (im)mobility, the limits of deaf universalism, and the stakes of international experiences for those not from the global North. Furthermore, research subjects in these studies perform "the right way to be deaf," which can be found (or confirmed) in international encounters, such as learning about discourses about deaf identity at Gallaudet University (challenged by Ruiz-Williams et al., this volume) or discourses about recognition of sign languages (see De Meulder, this volume), which are often disconnected from local or national specificities.

To be sure, an increasing number of journal articles, monographs, and edited volumes have paid attention to contemporary deaf lives around the globe, such as *Many Ways to Be Deaf* (2003), *Deaf around the World* (2011), *The Deaf Way* (1994), and *The Deaf Way II Reader* (2006). A specialized volume on deaf lives in Africa (Cooper and Rashid 2015) has been recently published too. A number of monographs have been published or are in the pipeline, such as Nakamura's (2006) ethnography of deaf identity in Japan, Kusters's (2015) ethnography of deaf spaces in a Ghanaian village, Friedner's (2015) ethnography on valuing deaf worlds in urban India, and Cooper's forthcoming book on the state of signed language and cultural belonging in Việt Nam. In these and other works, scholars have been increasingly attentive to the existence of deaf epistemologies that exist elsewhere in the world.

However, although these works shed light on deaf lives in the global South (countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America with access to fewer resources than other countries) and examine deaf peoples' experiences in specific places and times, there is a dearth of work critically engaging with questions about international deaf encounters within the context of globalization. We see this book as bridging this gap: the authors bring together increased attention to differences and specificities in deaf worlds with work on deaf international/transnational encounters in a context of globalization. In addition, we, and many of the authors in this volume, explicitly focus on political economic structures and their roles in deaf lives and the creation of deaf worlds. In this sense, we attend to questions of power and inequality in deaf worlds. We see inequality and (cultural, local, national) difference as two different things: inequality should not be glossed over in the name of difference.

Indeed, one of the decisions that we had to make for the title of this book was whether we would write about "transnational" or "international" deaf

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[2] We thank Hilde Haualand for pointing out how these discourses circulate in nonacademic as well as academic circles.

encounters and spaces. Transnationalism refers to global or cross-border connections that transcend or break down national borders, and recently it has been a widely embraced concept in both activist and academic circles. It is often used in the context of migrants' contacts with people and institutions in their places of origin (Vertovec 2001) but also in the context of feminism (Mohanty 2003), disability politics (Soldatic and Grech 2014), and sexual and queer politics (Povinelli and Chauncey 1999). According to Appadurai (2001), transnational activism can allow for horizontal networking and the ability to leverage cross-border connections to demand changes from international bodies and nation-states. Traditionally, movements have utilized transnational frameworks in strategically essentialized ways to make claims and demand rights (but see Gamson 1995 on the dangers of this).

With the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which has been ratified by many countries, there is a sense that deaf people can go beyond their nation-state to demand rights and entitlements directly from international institutions such as the United Nations. The World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) seems to encourage this by advocating for deaf people around the world to learn about the CRPD and use it as an advocacy tool. However, as Stein stresses in his chapter, it is the nation that actually needs to implement the CRPD by creating national laws. De Meulder shows a similar situation with regard to sweeping definitions of "sign language recognition," which are in tension with differences in national legislation. These and other authors (such as Lockwood, Cooper, and Moges, this volume) argue that there is a danger in focusing solely on what is transnational as such a focus ignores the very real fact that deaf people live in nation-states and that they are members of local, national, religious, ethnic, and race-based deaf and hearing communities, for example. The nation-state is extremely important: it is a guarantor of rights (or not) and it provides a political economic framework. Indeed, deaf people live in specific places and their lives are not only characterized by *routes*: they often have substantial *roots* as well (cf. Breivik 2005).

Thus, as several contributors in our book point out, national borders are often very real, and as such we think that *international* rather than *transnational* is a more suitable framework. Both terms are used throughout the book (depending on the emphasis in particular chapters), but we strategically decided to use the term *international* in the book title to recognize both sameness (using the phrase *it's a small world*) and difference (by using the word *international*). We call on future researchers and scholars to also attend to the stakes of the choices that they might make about whether to refer to transnational or international experiences, encounters, spaces, and relationships.

Globalization, Asymetry, Ambivalence

Deaf international encounters are happening in a context of globalization, which is a fraught, uneven, and ambivalent process. The authors in this book consider questions about how deaf people negotiate DEAF-SAME and deaf difference. They consider differences in mobility, access to social and economic capital, and differences in ideologies, ontologies, and epistemologies, within a globalized context in which deaf international links, interactions, and encounters are both intensified and regularized. Held et al. (1999, 2) define globalization as the "widening,

deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness in all aspects of contemporary social life." Key to globalization is an increase in flows of people, finance, trade, ideas, ideologies, knowledge, and cultural products (Castles and Miller 2010). Globalization is related to political and ideological changes, such as laissez-faire economic politics and removing international barriers for flows of trade, travel, and capital (Czaika and de Haas 2014). Advances in transport and communication technology have occurred: it is cheaper and easier to travel large distances and to connect with each other through technology.

To be sure, the process of globalization is a highly asymetrical one. Czaika and de Haas (2014, 318) write:

> Although it is often argued that processes of technological progress and growing interconnectivity have "flattened" the world (cf. Friedman, 2005) and made global opportunity structures more egalitarian, in reality, contemporary globalization has been a highly asymmetrical process, which has favored particular countries—or rather cities and agglomerations within countries—and social, ethnic, class, and professional groups within them, while simultaneously excluding or disfavoring others.

In this context of heightened connectivity and increased inequalities, we believe that asking questions about what happens when deaf people (and deaf-authored concepts and discourses) travel (or not) is long overdue, as is an investigation of the stakes of deaf international experiences. We follow Appadurai (2001) in calling for attention to *circulation*: it is important to track how people, ideas, languages, projects, and programs circulate.

Deaf people, at least those in the global North, have become increasingly interested in deaf people in other places.[3] Travelling to international deaf events (documented by Breivik, Haualand, and Solvang 2002) is by no means a new phenomenon (as emphasized in Murray 2007 and in the historical essays in part I of this collection), but it seems that there has been increased mobility in deaf worlds and that ways of being mobile have diversified because both institutional and noninstitutional deaf spaces are increasing in number. Institutional spaces include camps, gatherings, festivals, and educational programs while noninstitutional spaces include informal and impromptu networking and socializing. This volume's chapters give rich description to forms of mobility. Deaf people not only gather and connect in the traditional form of conferences (Gulliver, Zaurov, Haualand et al., Green) and sports events (Haualand et al.), but also during international arts events (Schmitt), camps (Merricks), leadership programs (Green, Rashid, Kusters et al.), academic courses (Ruiz-Williams et al.), development or empowerment initiatives (Boland et al., Kusters et al.), nongovernmental organizations (Moriarty Harrelson, Cooper, Stein), tourism (Cooper, Moriarty Harrelson, Green), research (Boland et al.), and religious missions (Aina and VanGilder).

Circulation does not only take place in geographical space but also in cyberspace. Wellman (2001, 248) argues that a dichotomy between cyberspace and

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[3] In contrast, Lee (2012) notes that in Tanzania, there were urban deaf people who were adamantly not interested in meeting foreign deaf people.

physical space is a false one: many ties operate in both spaces and physical space and cyberspace interpenetrate as people actively surf their networks online and offline. The Internet has afforded greater involvement in communities of shared interest, and people who connect online have feelings of belonging, share identities, and obtain information and resources. Through the Internet, deaf people keep in touch with their international friends and maintain their networks (Kurz and Cuculick, Schmitt, İlkbaşaran), learn about nongovernmental organizations and tourist opportunities (Cooper and Moriarty Harrelson), and watch videos created by deaf people from other countries (Ilkbasaran, Kurz and Cuculick).

A major theme among many of these essays is relations between deaf people in the global South and the global North. The global South and global North as concepts exist in relation to each other and in critical development studies scholars have argued that conditions in the global North have created those in the global South and consequently the global South is the target of development and humanitarian work (which may or may not be welcomed or helpful). Similarly, deaf people from the global North involved in development work and interventions aim to improve (assumed or perceived) inequalities in the global South (and improving conditions in "developing countries" is a central mission of the World Federation of the Deafs).[4] However, it is not clear how much on the ground actually changes, or whether the changes are those that people in the global South would want (as Boland et al., Kusters et al., and Moges point out).

Seemingly beneficial "development-oriented" programs and practices such as market reforms and humanitarian interventions might not work to everyone's benefit. For example, Cooper's chapter demonstrates that Việt Nam's attempt to include disabled people by giving tax breaks to businesses that hire them means that hearing entrepreneurs in Việt Nam take advantage of these incentives in order to establish deaf tourism businesses in Việt Nam for deaf tourists from the global North (also see Friedner 2015). Moges's chapter reveals that Finnish development efforts in Eritrea, while perhaps guided by good intentions, led to the colonization of Eritrean Sign Language. VanGilder's chapter discusses the complicated dance that American missionaries must engage in to ensure that local people are involved and invested in mission projects.

As several authors note, DEAF-SAME obscures inequalities, which very often remain and are intensified because of globalization. These include the ability to travel, overall socioeconomic status, and access to deaf-related social and linguistic capital (including having social connections, being able to use and understand the more conventional versions of International Sign, having access to the Internet to learn discourses, and being familiar with Western concepts such as "audism" or "sign language recognition," for example). Most authors in the book struggle with how to attend to both sameness and difference while being mindful of inequalities as well. Moriarty Harrelson, for example, calls for a sense of "SAME-SAME but different" and Moges writes about the pitfalls of "excessive sameness."

It is also important to consider ambivalence and ambiguity in deaf worlds in the context of globalization. The role of ambiguity can perhaps best be highlighted in a discussion of Andrew Foster's work in Africa. On one hand, as Aina's chapter

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[4] See Boland, Kusters, and Friedner (forthcoming) on the history of international development initiatives in deaf communities around the world.

demonstrates, Foster established schools, churches, and educational programs to ameliorate the living and educational conditions of deaf Africans and his work was motivated by a sense of DEAF-SAME; he had a transformative effect on many deaf peoples' lives. On the other hand, many critics of Foster claim that he spread American Sign Language (ASL) and thus engaged in ASL colonialism. However, there are also those who feel deeply grateful to him, and Aina's chapter carves out a space for considering this. In this book we strive to acknowledge these complicated and conflicting feelings and relations. It is clear from the breadth of sites in which international deaf encounters occur that we need a new conceptual vocabulary for describing and analyzing them, as we discuss in the following section.

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS FOR THINKING ABOUT DEAF WORLDS AND INTERNATIONAL DEAF SPACES

Deaf people produce and belong to multiple, distinct, and (sometimes) overlapping worlds, and for this reason we argue for caution with regard to using established deaf studies concepts to describe international deaf encounters. This need for caution emerges from a number of tensions that permeate this book. These tensions exist between certain binaries that appear repeatedly in the different chapters: the binaries between sameness and difference, specificity and generality, local and global, the global North and the global South, developed and un(der)developed, mobility and immobility, roots and routes, and national and international. To be sure, these binaries are extremes, and international deaf encounters are often experienced as a complex interplay of (fluid and constantly shifting) middle points on the continuums created by these different binaries. The goal then is to allow this middle ground to come to the fore and not to become entranced by the binaries. Boellstorff (2005) even pushes anthropologists to examine how the (binary) categories of sameness and difference might no longer be appropriate for understanding increasingly global experiences.

DEAF STUDIES CONCEPTS: A FOCUS ON SAMENESS

The concepts of "Deaf culture" and "Deaf identity" have been extremely productive for deaf studies scholars and lay deaf people. However, these concepts are often uncritically adopted as ideologies rather than as framing concepts, as if there is one way to have a "deaf identity" and as if there is one deaf culture in the world. Indeed, these concepts are often taken for granted and both scholars and lay people often mention "Deaf culture" without qualifying exactly whose Deaf culture or where it exists, assuming that deaf identity or deaf culture is universal (but see Nakamura 2006 on how deaf identity needs to be situated in time and space). Wrigley (1996, 114) notes that "the 'certainty' of 'Deaf culture'—in the singular—hazards a new arrogance: the projection of one certain form of Deaf culture, one experience, and one kind as the model for all." Similarly, Branson and Miller (2002, 244) suggest that the idea of all deaf people having a common, universal, overriding Deaf identity is "a new symbolic violence associated not with the damnation of difference but with the denial of difference," a new but unconscious cultural imperialism not yet recognized as such (Branson and Miller 2002, 243).

Thus, while concepts such as "Deaf identity" or "Deaf culture" have been productive and galvanizing for deaf studies and deaf people, we argue that especially in the context of globalization and increased contact—in person and through social media—between international deaf people, we need to reconsider and qualify what these concepts might obscure in their emphasis on sameness.

In a number of deaf studies concepts, the international dimension of deaf experiences, networks, and signed languages has been explicitly included, although we argue that, similar to the concepts of Deaf culture and Deaf identity, these concepts have focused on how deaf people are similar to each other. Perhaps the most well-known contemporary examples are "Deaf Gain" and "Deafhood" and slightly less well known is "co-equality." Murray (2007) defines co-equality as an understanding of "Deaf lives as being influenced both by Deaf-centered spaces and by larger society," and these deaf-centered spaces are understood as actually or potentially cosmopolitan in nature. Deaf Gain (Bauman and Murray 2014) is a concept that aims to illustrate what deaf people gain from their deafness and how deaf people contribute to society. Being able to connect internationally, through International Sign, is seen as an important example of Deaf Gain.

Similarly, Deafhood theory stresses that deaf people have something in common that goes beyond national or ethnic borders. According to this theory, deaf people share the existential and biological fact of deafness, using signed languages, and experiences of oppression, and they are able to communicate in International Sign across boundaries. In his chapter in this book, Ladd argues that while there is great diversity among deaf people worldwide, they are united in Deafhood, in that they have shared deaf experiences. As such, Ladd seems to privilege sameness over difference. The theory of Deafhood is seemingly essentialist and has a teleological element, implying that deaf people, regardless of where they are, should use signed languages and connect with other deaf people socially (Kusters and De Meulder 2013).

These concepts thus focus on ways that deaf people are the same as each other and they assume that there is one teleological way to be deaf.

DOCUMENTING BOTH SAMENESS AND DIFFERENCE: DEAF WORLDS AND WORLDING

In addition to concepts that focus on and recognize sameness, we argue that we must expand our analytical and conceptual vocabulary to include concepts that represent both sameness and difference. Deaf people in the USA and other places in the global North use the term DEAF-WORLD "to refer to these relationships among themselves, to the social network they have set up, and not to any notion of geographical location" (Lane, Hoffmeister, and Bahan 1996, 5). While the concept of DEAF-WORLD has been productive for deaf people to describe their networks, and for those of us working in deaf studies and at the intersections of Deaf studies and other disciplines, we argue it is important to recognize multiplicity and diversity in deaf worlds, to affirm that there can be more than one deaf world and many ways to be deaf (cf. Monaghan et al. 2003), and to acknowledge that deaf worlds exist in relation to (and often within) other kinds of worlds.

We stress that deaf people *produce* these worlds themselves. In that sense, we find Heidegger's (2008) concept of "worlding" to be especially useful in that it implies agentive action. Through orienting to each other in different kinds of time

and space, deaf people create worlds with each other; they move through time and space toward and away from each other. The concept of worlding allows us to consider how deaf worlds might be created anywhere and at any time and that all deaf people are potentially agents in this process; worlding therefore pushes us beyond the concept of the DEAF-WORLD in that it allows us to analyze how particular worlds are made and unmade.

In documenting deaf people's actual production of worlds we derive inspiration from medical anthropologist Arthur Kleinman's concept of "local moral worlds" in which moral experience is created through "local processes (collective, interpersonal, subjective) that realize (enact) values in ordinary living" (Kleinman 1999, 71–72). According to Kleinman, people enact worlds through interaction and shared experiences and in doing so, they determine what is worthy of value. We argue that scholars, activists, and practitioners must attend to deaf local moral worlds, wherever they are, and that in doing so they must locate what is specific about these worlds.

The concept of local moral worlds allows us to examine how deaf worlds are actually created, enacted, and experienced by people. The concepts of worlding and local moral worlds also allow us to see how these worlds are both made and unmade as well as what is specifically local and global about them, even though it is impossible to disentangle local and global (Massey 1994). This is therefore ultimately a more fluid take on the concept of DEAF-WORLD. The concept of local moral worlds also allows us to attend to what is specific about deaf spaces and to deaf peoples' distinct epistemologies, concepts that we discuss in the following two sections.

SPACES AND NETWORKS

Work in human, social, and cultural geography, including deaf geographies is especially productive for analyzing and exploring (local moral) deaf worlds and international deaf encounters, and this is visible in our use of the term *deaf spaces* in the book title and this introduction. Inspired by the conceptual apparatus of geography, deaf geographies looks at how deaf people produce places and spaces through their unique visual modality of being in the world. As Gulliver and Kitzel (2014) state:

> Deaf Geographies describe how, by the simple expedient of living out their lives from within visual bodies, rather than hearing ones, Deaf people produce Deaf spaces. These Deaf spaces might be small and temporary, like the signing space that exists between some Deaf friends who meet by chance in the street. They might be large but temporary, like a regular Deaf pub gathering. They might be small and more permanent, like the home of a Deaf family. Or as large and as permanent as a Deaf university.

Gulliver (this volume) analyzes how deaf French people, together with international visitors, produced deaf spaces by holding deaf banquets in the nineteenth century. Kusters has demonstrated that deaf space can be temporarily and frequently produced on Indian trains (Kusters 2010) and in a Ghanaian village

(Kusters 2015), while Breivik et al. (2002) analyzed how deaf people produce temporary deaf spaces in international deaf gatherings. Another central concept in contemporary geography is "mobilities," which attends to how people, things, and information move through space and time—a framework that is further explored by İlkbaşaran (this volume).

Another concept that we believe to be useful in the description of international deaf spaces is "networks" (see the chapters by Schmitt, İlkbaşaran, and Lockwood). There is a large literature on social networks in sociology; however, in deaf studies the term *networks* has been underused. Hampton and Wellman (2001) argue that northern societies seem to have shifted from a society based on "little boxes" (strongly overlapping and spatially coherent social groups) to a network society with more dispersed connections where membership overlap is smaller. Axhausen (2002) hypothesizes that people have a larger set of active contacts than in the past and that an increasing amount of time is spent in sustaining far-flung contacts. In this respect, İlkbaşaran (this volume) and Kurz and a Cuculick (this volume) demonstrate how deaf people maintain international deaf networks through social media usage.

We argue that the concept of (deaf) networks offers more potential than the concept of the (deaf) community for the academic study of deaf groups. A community typically connotes a group that is more or less closed and to which people do or do not belong in term of membership; it is often unclear whether mainstreamed deaf people, parents of deaf children, children of deaf adults (CODAs), sign language interpreters, and others belong in this community. In contrast, networks are more process-oriented and fluid. They are organized in clusters, people can be more or less connected in networks, and networks overlap and interconnect with other networks; hence we can see a "small world phenomenon" within networks. Indeed, Watts (1999, 495) writes that "almost every element of the network is somehow 'close' to almost every other element, even those that are perceived as likely to be far away." In this book, Schmitt points out how knots can exist within networks and how such knots are entangled during tangible artistic festivals and gatherings.

LOCAL EPISTEMOLOGIES

As we have seen in our research in India and Ghana, concepts such as Deafhood, audism, and a singular deaf community are often put forth by those visiting from the global North (see Friedner and Kusters 2014), something that is addressed in several chapters of this book (such as Kusters et al.). It is important to stress that these concepts and ideas do different things for different people in different places and that there is also two-way process of learning from people in the global South (for examples, see Kusters et al.). While some deaf people find these (northern) concepts to be empowering, others elsewhere might not understand them or find them useful. It is therefore important to examine what ideas and concepts resonate and work in specific places. For example, Friedner (2015) found that the concept of "deaf development" was important in India, and Green (2014b) writes about deaf Nepalis' conception of DEAF SOCIETY. Similarly, De Clerck (2011, 1431), writing about research with members of the Cameroonian deaf community, states that

"there is a need for reflections on an integrative epistemological framework and on how African (deaf) indigenous knowledge, local spoken and signed languages, and local cultural practices can be incorporated."

In this respect, too, we emphasize again that the concept DEAF-SAME is very important to analyze: it is used in both local and international contexts. For example, see Kusters (2015) for an investigation of the specific meanings that DEAF-SAME has in Adamorobe, a village in Ghana, and West (2010) for a description of the use of the concept by deaf children when they talk about their deaf teachers. It is not a top-down concept authored by deaf studies scholars to understand deaf interactions and relationships, but a bottom-up concept that is used on the ground by deaf people of different backgrounds in a range of contexts. Scholars and practitioners working in different contexts must attend to what is specific in these contexts (and how concepts are used in specific contexts) and not take certain concepts as given.

Attending to deaf peoples' specific epistemologies and locally authored concepts (such as the example of "deaf development" mentioned previously) allows us to move away from broad teleological narratives of what deaf lives or deaf worlds should be like. When looking at international encounters in which multiple axes of difference are at play, it is important to realize that there may not be a universal deaf epistemology.

INTERNATIONAL SIGN AND ATTENDING TO LANGUAGE

International deaf encounters happen through and are mediated by language, and it is thus important to attend to language use, language choice, language attitudes, and language ideologies. Many of this book's chapters examine the role of different signed languages either implicitly or explicitly and several of them also look at International Sign. The term *International Sign* is used to point at the language used by (deaf) people from different (sign) linguistic backgrounds as they try to communicate with each other and it seems to encompass a continuum of more or less conventionalized language. Several authors in this book argue that International Sign as a category flags ideas about what kinds of communication between diverse deaf people are (im)possible (see the chapters by Green, Crasborn and Hiddinga, and İlkbaşaran).

Questions of unique horizons of linguistic commensuration (Green 2014a) and communication across different linguistic and geographic backgrounds are very much at stake in this volume's concern with deaf people's worlds. As the various chapter authors stress, there are no easy answers, and International Sign both offers possibilities and limits, much like the discourse of DEAF-SAME. This is reflected in the different ways that deaf people refer to International Sign: Green writes that International Sign is signed as "WFD"/INTERNATIONAL SIGN in Nepal, İlkbaşaran writes that International Sign is signed as EUROPEAN SIGN in Turkey, and in Adamorobe (Kusters 2015) International Sign is called AMERICAN or ENGLISH.

In general, we call on researchers to attend to questions of language use and language ideologies among those whom they are studying and we also call on lay deaf people and practitioners working internationally to be attentive to the language that they use in their interactions. As Moges foregrounds in her chapter, choice of language use can have harmful effects as certain sign languages can be seen as hierarchical; also see Cooper's chapter. In addition, there has recently been

a proliferation of videos showing deaf people in the global South learning a signed language "for the first time" and there are also accounts, often offered up by development and humanitarian organizations, of deaf people living in the global South who "have no language." Such claims might be political ones, designed to help spur sign language research and the teaching and transmission of national sign languages, but they should not be accepted uncritically (as Moriarty Harrelson points out in her chapter). Such communicable representations of signed languages showcase the need for critical analysis of how signed languages in international encounters (and in international media sources) are represented.

Other Concepts

A number of authors have created or used concepts such as "the deaf global" circuit and "moral geography" to describe and frame the quest for deaf spaces in the global South (Moriarty Harrelson), "signed language sovereignties" (Cooper) to describe the desire for authority over and control of signed languages, "Sign Language Peoples" (De Meulder, Ladd) to describe deaf people as collectivities, "informal interpreting" and "moral orientation" (Green) to describe communicative practices in international deaf interactions, "sign language universalism" (Schmitt) as a concept to describe international spaces in which both deaf and hearing people participate, based on a common use of signed language, "deaf globalism" (Ladd) and "deaf internationalism" (Gulliver) as synonyms for "deaf universalism," "crossover" (Kusters et al.) and "mutuality" (VanGilder) to point at (the need for) reciprocity between different actors in international encounters, and "intersectionality" (Ruiz-Williams et al.) to reveal different aspects of people's identities. These concepts all reflect attempts to work through what is specific about deaf worlds as well as issues that emerge when diverse deaf people encounter each other across differences.

The Authors, the Process, and the Book

The call for papers for this book was circulated via email, deaf academics networks, and Facebook, and we received many more abstracts than expected, which demonstrates that this topic resonates with deaf people and deaf studies scholars. Indeed, it was interesting for us to see how the call circulated and how far it went. Friedner received an email from an American hearing friend with a deaf daughter living in Toulouse, France, saying that she had seen the call on a mailing list for parents. Others told us that they had seen people discuss the book at the Deaflympics in Slovakia. The call circulated through colleagues and extended networks and reinforced our ideas of the many levels of connectedness that exist in deaf worlds.

Both editors and the majority of the authors are deaf. To create a nuanced volume, we have recruited a diverse group of contributors: academics and activists, from the global North and South, from various backgrounds and training in disciplines including deaf studies, history, law, economics, international development, anthropology, cultural studies, interpreting, linguistics, language policy, theology,

disability studies, education, and human geography. The authors live in the USA, Belgium, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Malaysia, Turkey, and Thailand. The research in the chapters are based on events in, or have been collected in, the USA and Canada, Europe (Denmark, Finland, Sweden, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Turkey), Asia (Cambodia, Malaysia, Nepal, Thailand, Việt Nam), the Pacific (Fiji), Africa (Eritrea, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania), and South America (Chile and Uruguay).

Many authors are affirmative of international deaf connections, while others emphasize the challenges and disconnects that exist when deaf people meet each other internationally. Our hope is that through placing these voices in conversation, new understandings will come to the fore of deaf similitude and difference, deaf encounters, deaf interventions, and the role of power differentials in determining which bodies, discourses, and concepts travel. At the same time, we acknowledge that this book is limited as we recruited contributors through networks that could be considered elite and contributors have a certain level of (academic) writing skills. Furthermore, while research has been conducted in diverse geographic locations, most of our authors live in northern locations. We hope that in the future more authors living in and/or originating from the global South will write about deaf spaces and encounters in general and international ones in particular. We note the structural issues that exist in relation to writing in (academic) English and we are aware that writing as a process is often deeply ambivalent for deaf people.

Chapters take the form of traditional academic articles, interviews, and personal narratives. While a number of chapters are entirely or mostly based on historical research and/or literature review (Gulliver, Zaurov, Emery, Crasborn and Hiddinga, Ladd), most of the authors draw on ethnography. To investigate international deaf interactions on the ground, ethnography based on observation, participation, informal conversations, and semistructured or unstructured interviews seems to us to be an ideal method. The authors conducted participant observation in a variety of contexts, including long-term ethnography in their own community or in a foreign country (often the global South) (Cooper, Moriarty Harrelson, Lockwood, Moges, Green, Stein, İlkbaşaran, Boland et al.), multi-sited ethnography (Haualand et al., Schmitt), and short-term (repeated) ethnographic research during events, camps, or mission trips (Green, Haualand et al., Schmitt, VanGilder, Merricks). Other chapters utilize data from interviews and conversations (Aina, Kurz and Cuculick, Kusters et al., De Meulder), online research (De Meulder, Schmitt, İlkbaşaran), and autoethnography (Ruiz-Williams et al.). By including a wide range of ethnographic accounts, we hope to demonstrate the importance of ethnography to the discipline of deaf studies.

We also believe ethnographic research must be situated in the context in which it happens. The authors in this book pay attention to their positionality in the research environment and with regard to their research participants or interlocutors. They reflect on their own background and how it might have shaped the research, particularly hearing status, nationality, ethnicity, and language background. The chapters by Ruiz-Williams et al. and Kusters et al. exhort us all to be mindful and critical of how our own positionalities influence our work and the importance of

attention to questions of privilege and power. Boland et al., Green, and Schmitt productively question the relative influence of being hearing versus being DEAF-SAME in international deaf spaces: they argue that sometimes it is more important to share the use of a signed language than to share hearing status.

BOOK PARTS

While the book is divided into five parts, there is significant overlap in the themes, approaches, and arguments in each. Indeed, this breakdown by part is organizational and strategic on our part; there are quite a few chapters that would be at home in any of the parts.

Part 1, "Gatherings," begins with Gulliver's inquiry into the French deaf community's attempts to create international deaf banquets in order to influence the French state's policies in relation to deaf people and their institutions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Gulliver traces the history of deaf spaces in France to argue for the transformational aspects of deaf spaces, both local and international. This argument is taken up by all of the authors in this section: Schmitt explores contemporary international arts festivals in which signed language is celebrated by deaf and hearing people alike; these festivals function as nodes in international sign language arts networks. Similarly, Merricks analyzes how international deaf youth gatherings are spaces where deaf youth from different countries become transformed in their awareness of what it means to be deaf youth camps provide attendees with opportunities for learning about different deaf experiences around the world and deaf youth also become energized and empowered in their connections to a larger internationalist deaf organization. Providing a more somber note, Zaurov argues for the importance of contemporary separate deaf Jewish spaces as he demonstrates that deaf Jews were excluded from deaf worlds in Eastern Europe before and during the Nazi era, after which they increasingly organized their own international associations and conferences. Haualand et al. end this part with a discussion of their groundbreaking work on large-scale institutional deaf events and how their thinking about these has changed as well as how the fabric of social, political, and recreational international deaf events may be becoming more fragmented and based upon specific interests or skills. As such, this part invites us to consider deaf gatherings as spaces in which sameness and difference are negotiated; different identities, affiliations, and positions are performed; and deaf attendees confront (or ignore) questions of political economic inequality.

The first two chapters of Part 2, "Language," continue from and overlap with "Gatherings," as both consider International Sign. Crasborn and Hiddinga provide an overview of studies on International Sign, its limits and its possibilities, and present us with a hypothesis that deaf people are skilled at communicating across different signed languages because of the tools gained from negotiating communication with hearing people. Green argues that deaf people value direct communication and that, because they are morally oriented toward each other and toward communicating across difference, they ask for and offer translations of what other signers have said. These informal interpreters help ensure that understanding happens while not interfering with deaf peoples' direct communication

with each other. Green's detailed ethnographic examples are taken from a WFD World Congress and a series of workshops and encounters in Nepal.

The other three chapters in "Language" are concerned with language ideologies; more particularly they describe tensions between the use of national/local/indigenous signed languages on the one hand and International Sign or foreign signed languages such as Finnish/Swedish Sign Language and American Sign Language on the other hand. Moges discusses the stakes of cross-cultural and cross-national communication as she explores how deaf Eritrean language planners have "demissionized" Eritrean Sign Language from its Finnish/Swedish influences in order to create and codify an indigenous Eritrean Sign Language. She writes about tourism as eye-opening for deaf people from Eritrea who realized, upon visiting Sweden, that they wanted a signed language that is less similar to a Western signed language.

Cooper's chapter continues with this focus on the role of power in the spread of signed languages. She explores tensions that exist between Vietnamese Signed Languages and American Sign Language with the emergence of a tourism industry targeting international deaf travelers who use American Sign Language. Both Moges and Cooper argue that we must be attentive to "signed language sovereignties" in deaf peoples' everyday lives. İlkbaşaran focuses on Turkish deaf people's use of social media networks. She investigates language ideologies with regard to choices made when using International Sign or Turkish Sign Language in Facebook videos and argues that the choice of International Sign is associated with a range of literacies and (potential) mobility. The authors in this part also analyze tensions between specificity and universalism in deaf worlds, specifically in relation to language, and show how signed languages become a complex terrain upon and in which different interests and agendas are produced and negotiated.

The third part, "Projects," explores the work that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), missionaries, leadership programs, advocates, activists, and technical experts perform. The vagueness of the part title "Projects" is intentional because we are referring to social, moral, economic, religious, and political projects performed by a wide range of stakeholders. Aina begins this part with a discussion of the work of Andrew Foster, an African American minister and teacher who helped to start schools and institutions around Africa. Aina describes how Foster's methods and ideas were also an inspiration for deaf Nigerian missionaries in Fiji, and he demonstrates how both Foster's mission and his results were motivated by feelings of DEAF-SAME. VanGilder follows in the same vein in that he also analyzes faith-based religious volunteerism and mission work by Americans to countries in the global South. However, VanGilder argues that DEAF-SAME is not enough and that project participants must attempt to understand and engage with local cultures, which they can do by establishing mutuality.

Rashid continues by demonstrating how in the fragmented political, economic, religious, and ethnic landscape of Nigeria, establishing a successful international deaf leadership program led by deaf people born in Nigeria but living in the United States and United Kingdom might not be possible, even if the deaf trainers are themselves from the same country and have shared experiences with those who they are training. De Meulder discusses the international deaf agenda for signed language recognition. As she demonstrates, "sign language recognition" means different things in different countries and there are about tensions

between universality and specificity in discourses on signed language recognition: there are seemingly universal aspirations exist but legislation is nation-specific. Stein also discusses this tension between universal aspirations and nation-specific legislation, in this case the implementation of the CRPD in Chile. Stein stresses that for any kind of (technical or legal) project to be successful, deaf people living in the country where it is to be implemented must be invested in it. More than this, Stein demonstrates that beyond abstract and "feel-good" leadership or human rights concepts, often what people on the ground need are technical interventions into a country's legal process. The authors in this section highlight the importance of analyzing projects from multiple angles and recognizing the hard work that people must do to make projects successful as well as the extent they need to be tuned in to local and national cultures and politics. Indeed, it is important to look beyond (good) intentions when considering deaf-focused (or any) projects.

The part "Networks" continues to critically interrogate the role of intentions and also evaluates how places come to exist in relation to each other. Emery's chapter invites us to think of deaf people as a diaspora lacking a geographic homeland. In this framework, deaf people are Sign Language Peoples who have much in common with each other regardless of where they currently live. In contrast, in her ethnographic case study in Cambodia, Moriarty Harrelson argues that there is a deaf global circuit that exists whereby and wherein deaf people from the global North travel to the global South both to have so-called "authentic" tourism experiences and to consume differences. Moriarty Harrelson foregrounds the harmful effects that such tourism can have and sheds light on the absence of a universal moral geography (even if some people presume that it exists). Lockwood's chapter demonstrates how deaf Uruguayans eschewed international connections in favor of establishing strong national connections both within the deaf community and with other allies in Uruguay; as she demonstrates, Uruguay's unique political economy meant that intragroup networks were more important for the deaf community to achieve its political goals. Kurz and Cuculick analyze American deaf peoples' social networking practices and explore the role of digital media in their lives. For their interlocutors, social media has resulted in great ease in communication and connectedness.

In the final part, "Visions," authors consider the practices and processes of *doing* international deaf scholarship and interventions. These chapters reflect on how to do research, how to teach in leadership programs or university courses, and how to engage in international interactions. The part also contains reflective pieces about how to manage—and whether it is possible to manage—tensions between "global Deafhood" or "deaf universalism" and intersectional identities and experiences. Boland et al. share their experiences working internationally as deaf researchers and practitioners in the field of international development; they offer advice as well as some cautions. Their chapter demonstrates how deaf researchers and development practitioners can utilize shared deaf experiences to transform and improve the process of conducting research and interventions. However, they caution that shared deaf experiences can also result in the researcher or practitioner making unwarranted assumptions about what is shared and what is not. Kusters et al. continue in this vein. Their chapter is an interactive collaborative discussion of the evolution of the popular Frontrunners international deaf education program; the conversation focused on the program's interactions

in the global South. The authors, three of whom are current Frontrunners teachers, and one of whom has been a guest teacher reflect on the practice of organizing international deaf youth programs and are critical of the merits of short-term visits and exchange projects in the global South. They stress the importance of "crossover" but conclude that even if the aim of such interactions is exchange rather than empowerment, it is still hard to reach; and they emphasize the importance of openness and honesty in discussing such interactions.

Ruiz-Williams et al. offer a series of autoethnographies as a method of foregrounding the importance of attending to deaf peoples' intersectional experiences. Their method and process of working and reflecting together proved transformative for each of the authors. Together, they argue that deaf universalism ultimately does not work because it tends to ignore and devalue the experiences of deaf people who do not fit into a single-issue identity politics framework. Ladd ends with a discussion of deaf globalism and argues that Deafhood is a helpful analytic for considering how deaf people, who he regards as forming minority cultures, are both the same and different. Ladd's chapter suggests that there can be a shared global deaf experience or a shared global Deafhood.

LIMITS AND POSSIBILITIES OF INTERNATIONAL DEAF SPACES: A CONCLUSION

While this is a large volume, it is not a complete one. We are missing contributions on deaf peoples' immigration practices and their relationships with deaf people in their new countries, children of deaf adults (including adopted children) in international deaf spaces, international romantic relationships, and the roles of gender, race, and sexuality in the creation of more specific international/transnational deaf communities (such as international deaf queer communities for example). Analyzing international deaf worlds through additional axes of difference, especially in the context of global inequalities, is of utmost importance. We look forward to work on these topics in the near future.

In this book, some authors have highlighted the strength of seemingly universal commonalities between deaf people (such as in the chapters by Gulliver, Haualand et al., Merricks, Crasborn and Hiddinga, Stein, Aina, Ladd, and Emery). Some authors focused on how deaf people come together on the base of a double commonality: being deaf and Christian (Aina, VanGilder), being deaf and Jewish (Zaurov), being deaf and an artist or art lover (Schmitt), or being deaf and a youth (Merricks, Ilkbasaran). Some authors emphasize the need for critical perspectives (such as in the chapters by VanGilder, Zaurov, De Meulder, Moges, Rashid, Moriarty Harrelson, Lockwood, Kusters et al., Ruiz-Williams et al.). Most authors, however, recognize both: they are affirmative of the power of DEAF-SAME and at the same time highlight differences and/or inequalities.

In a number of chapters, the writers emphasize the need to consider what it means to ethically or morally cooperate with local deaf people (see Cooper, Boland et al., Kusters et al., VanGilder), especially in light of inequalities. This question of what it means to be *ethical* in such international contexts is an important one. In our understanding of this, we draw again from Kleinman's concept of "local moral worlds" as it is crucial to note that morality varies across time and space and is not universal. We also want to return to Appadurai's (2001) call for an

anthropology of circulation as we see studies of deaf peoples' circulation, studies of circulating discourses, and being a circulating researcher as essential in such fluid contexts.

It is thus important not to look at international deaf experiences through a universalized and decontextualized lens, something that is increasingly difficult with globalization and greater connectivity between certain deaf people. Indeed, globalization creates opportunities not only for making connections (for some people) but also for misunderstanding and misrecognition. We run the risk of obscuring what differentiates deaf experiences around the world. While deaf universalism is an incredibly powerful discourse, it does not mean that a homogenous deaf world exists or should exist. As VanGilder argues in his chapter, "It is possible to overreach across the DEAF-SAME bridge and make our stories everyone else's stories. We run into the 'danger of a single story' as the Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, cautions in her TED talk." Indeed, we think that this book provides a needed intervention into understanding how sameness and difference are powerful yet contested categories in deaf worlds.

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