

**Judith Sharon**

*Sound and Fury*

**Controversy and Conflict**

**Final paper for the course**

**“What happens in the Black Box?”**

**Submitted to Professor Miriam Shlesinger**

**Bar Ilan University**

**2008**

[Sign Language] is in the hands of its masters, a most beautiful and expressive language, for which, in their intercourse with each other and as a means of easily and quickly reaching the minds of the deaf, neither nature nor art has given them a satisfactory substitute.

It is impossible for those who do not understand it to comprehend its possibilities with the deaf, its powerful influence on the moral and social happiness of those deprived of hearing, its wonderful power of carrying thought to intellects which would otherwise be in perpetual darkness. Nor can they appreciate the hold it has upon the deaf. So long as there are two deaf people upon the face of the earth and they get together, so long will signs be in use.

J. Schuyler Long, Head teacher, Iowa School for the Deaf

*The Sign Language* (1910) quoted by Oliver Sacks at the beginning of his book *Seeing Voices. A Journey into the World of the Deaf*

“The world is changing. You can’t stop the future. You can’t stop progress!”

Heather’s grandmother in the film *Sound and Fury*

## *Sound and Fury*

### **The Cochlear Implant - Controversy and Conflict**

The documentary film “*Sound and Fury*”, produced and directed by Josh Aronson in 2000 and nominated for an Academy Award, opened the world of the deaf to that of the hearing and revealed issues and a reality that were unknown and astonishing to the hearing world. The film reflects the fierce on-going debate between hearing parents of deaf children on the one side and the Deaf community on the other as it exposes the conflicts concerning the cochlear implant in the Artinian family in which some of the members can hear and others are profoundly and proudly deaf. The cochlear implant can bestow a considerable degree of hearing especially to congenitally deaf children and enable them to be full participants in the world of the hearing with far-reaching consequences for their future lives. For the hearing, the possibility of overcoming and correcting a major and what would appear to be a crippling disability is an opportunity to be grasped eagerly, but for deaf parents it is a complex and controversial issue. This paper will attempt to provide some background to the world of the Deaf and their history in order to understand why the cochlear implant is perceived to be such a threat and is causing such a high degree of conflict.

#### **The Film**

The Artinian brothers are the sons of hearing parents. Peter, his wife and all their children are congenitally deaf. Heather, their five-year-old daughter, who is a very bright, aware and sociable child wishes have the cochlear implant so that she can enter the world of hearing children and is able to articulate her reasons for this fluently in sign language. Her father, who has never known any other environment than the world of the deaf, opposes the idea with great agitation. He is the leader of the anti-implant deaf community in Long Island and his world is turned upside down by Heather’s request. He feels that his daughter is rejecting him and his wife. He is afraid that she will reject their language,

American Sign Language, and he is disturbed that she wants to be different, believing that she should be content with what she is. He fears that Heather will not be part of the deaf or the hearing world if she receives the cochlear implant. For him deafness is a natural state of existence and not something that needs to be “fixed”. Sign language is his natural means of communication and is sufficient for him. He says that his life began when he learnt Sign Language and he cherishes the deaf community and deaf culture. In the film he says “If someone gave me a pill that would make me hear...would I take it? No way...I really am happy being deaf. It’s very peaceful.” He functions well in the world and works with computers in a large company in New York, is satisfied and sees himself as being successful even though he admits that he is dependent on interpreters and emails and that he will not be able to rise any higher in the corporate world because of his disability. He reflects the fear in the world of the deaf that cochlear implants will eventually destroy their unique culture and endanger the community and he believes that he will lose his daughter to the hearing world if she has the implant. His wife Nita is at first more sympathetic to her daughter’s request and goes with her, together with her husband, to see how children with the implant function in a regular school. She even toys with idea of having the operation herself, however, when she learns from her audiologist that the benefits for her will not be very great, she decides that neither she nor Heather will have it and succeeds in persuading Heather to give up the idea. She answers her sister-in-law’s arguments concerning the deprivations suffered by the deaf who cannot hear music or the sound of rain falling that she doesn’t need them and her world is full enough without them. She denies that the deaf reach lower levels of literacy than the hearing. Peter’s mother is very close to Heather and invests a lot of energy teaching her to talk and she is very anxious that her granddaughter should undergo the operation. She remembers how difficult it was to raise her son and how isolated, lonely and frustrated he was as a child. Both she and her husband acknowledge that the deaf son and his wife are very good parents but feel that they are being abusive by denying Heather the opportunity to receive the implant. By the end of the film Heather’s parents have decided to move to Maryland where there is a supportive deaf community and a very good deaf school for her to attend.

Christopher, the second brother, and his wife Mari can hear and when one of their twin sons is born deaf it is a catastrophe for them. They are determined that he will receive the cochlear implant as soon as possible. Mari is the daughter of deaf parents and she suffered as a child from living in a deaf family. She and Christopher have to fight their family and members of the deaf community over their decision to give their son the implant. She receives violent and anguished opposition, in particular from her mother who believes that Mari feels superior to her and regards the deaf as being inferior. The argument continues with other members of the Deaf community and Christopher and Mari are strongly attacked for wanting to make such a far-reaching decision concerning their child; a decision that will alienate him from his natural world, the world of the Deaf. Their deaf friends insist that they shouldn't force him to have the implant. This is a decision that should be left to the child to make when he is old enough to do so. However, they know that there is no time to lose because the brain's plasticity lessens with each year and the earlier he has the implant the better the results will be. The film follows them over a period of two years as they fight with family and friends, speak to an audiologist and the surgeon who will perform the operation, and go to observe children in a nursery school who have received the implant.

By the end of the film, the baby, Peter, has had the operation and we see how he reacts to sound for the first time and the joyous reaction of his parents and the audiologist.

### **The Cochlear Implant**

It is clear that the implant is going to have a revolutionary impact on the Deaf Community but what exactly is it and how does it function?

The implant is a small electronic device that provides a sensation of sound to the profoundly deaf or people who are severely hard-of-hearing. Unlike hearing aids which amplify sound, the cochlear implant bypasses the damaged parts of the ear in order to stimulate the auditory nerve directly. It is comprised of five parts, three of which are external and two internal. The external parts include a microphone that picks up sounds from the environment and a speech processor that selects, filters and arranges these sounds and sends them through a thin cable to a transmitter which is a coil held in position by a magnet placed behind the external ear. The person wearing the device can

adjust the sound by means of these external components. The transmitter transmits the processed sound signals to the internal device. This internal device is implanted surgically under the skin behind the ear. It is comprised of a receiver and stimulator that are placed in the bone beneath the skin. These receive signals from the speech processor and convert them into electric impulses sending them through an internal cable to an array of up to 24 electrodes that are wound through the cochlea in the inner ear. The electrodes collect the impulses from the stimulator and send them to the brain through the auditory nerve.

After recovering from the surgery the recipient has to undergo intensive rehabilitative therapy which is critical for the success of the procedure. For people who have lost their hearing after being functional in spoken language, the cochlear device is a great help in restoring their comprehension of speech. The sounds received have been described variously as being normal or as a robotic or electronic form of the human voice. Individuals report they are able to converse without difficulty with other people, in person or on the telephone. They can hear birdsong, a key turning in a lock and even appreciate classical music. However, some adults who have been deaf from birth may find their implants ineffective or irritating and in any case they need intensive therapy in order to make sense of the unfamiliar sounds. On the other hand there have been excellent results with small children. The normal age for children receiving implants is between two and six years old. When the implant is performed at an early age the child is exposed to sound and spoken language during the critical period of language acquisition and can acquire natural speech and hearing skills. In the film we follow both couples as they go to nursery schools and families to meet children who have received the implant. The younger children in the nursery school speak clearly and fluently whereas a girl who seems to have received the implant at a later age still has quite a high degree of difficulty in speaking.

### **Sign Language**

The development of Sign and the establishment of schools for the Deaf in which Sign was the medium of instruction was as revolutionary as the cochlear implant promises to

be. For those who are deaf from birth and who communicate by means of Sign amongst themselves or with the assistance of interpreters when they need to communicate with the hearing world, the cochlear implant holds no appeal and is regarded to be unnecessary except, according to their own admission, in emergency situations. For them Sign is a tool that is sufficient for their needs and even more than that as will be seen below. However, until the establishment of deaf schools for the public, the Deaf were for the most part uneducated and lived in total isolation and loneliness unless they belonged to families that were rich enough to send them to private schools or could employ a teacher who could teach them to lip-read. Others who lived in families or communities in which there were a number of deaf people, could communicate through signs or using an indigenous sign language. They had a language and were not completely cut off from society. For thousands of years, however, the congenitally deaf, who were both deaf and dumb, were considered to be stupid or retarded, and incompetent and were not allowed to inherit property, marry, receive education, engage in challenging work or enjoy fundamental human rights. Oliver Sacks (1989:13-14) vividly describes the situation of the “prelingually deaf” which he says was “a calamity: unable to acquire speech, hence “dumb” or “mute; unable to enjoy free communication with even their parents and families; confined to a few rudimentary signs and gestures; cut off, except in large cities, even from the community of their own kind; deprived of literacy and education, all knowledge of the world; forced to do the most menial work; living alone often close to destitution; treated by the law and society as little better than imbeciles – the lot of the deaf was manifestly dreadful.” Sacks goes on to describe the even more calamitous situation of the deaf suffering from “the destitution inside – the destitution of knowledge and thought that prelingual deafness could bring in the absence of any communication or remedial measures”.(ibid) Abbé Roche Ambroise Sicard (1742 – 1822) was a French abbé and instructor of deaf-mutes. He was educated as a priest and was made principal of a school of deaf-mutes at Bordeaux in 1786. Sicard asked: “Why is the uneducated deaf person isolated in nature and unable to communicate with other men? ...Does his biological constitution differ from ours? Does he not have everything he needs for having sensations, acquiring ideas, and combining them to do everything that we do? ...Why then does the deaf person remain stupid while we become intelligent?” The

answer Sicard gave is that the deaf person “has no symbols for fixing and combining ideas”. (ibid:15) In saying this he anticipated the ideas developed by the Russian developmental psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896 – 1934). The work of Vygotsky illuminated the connection between language and the cognitive development of children and in particular the relationship between language and the development of thought. In his book *Thinking and Speaking*, he maintained that language played a central role in cognitive development and that language skills were “critical for creating meaning and linking new ideas to past experiences and prior knowledge.” Language was the tool that determined the way a child learned how to think because complex concepts were conveyed to him by words. It was not that thinking could not take place without language but rather that it was mediated by it and thus developed to a much higher level of sophistication. According to Vygotsky, the two primary means of learning occurred through social interaction and language, with language greatly enhancing a human being’s ability to interact socially and share his experiences. Social interaction began in infancy when a baby used gestures and sounds as a mean of expression with his mother or other primary carers. It was then that he learned the meaning and significance of signs to express what he wanted. This faculty developed as the child began to use names for people and objects.

Vygotsky’s theories and Sicard’s comprehension of the intellectual poverty from which the deaf suffered are brought to life in Helen Keller’s autobiography where she describes the frustration and isolation of a life in the solitary confinement of those deprived of language, lacking a means of communication and suffering the intellectual limitations of a world without language.

“Meanwhile the desire to express myself grew. The few signs I used became less and less adequate, and my failures to make myself understood were invariably followed by outbursts of passion. I felt as if invisible hands were holding me, and I made frantic efforts to free myself. I struggled – not that struggling helped matters, but the spirit of resistance was strong within me; I generally broke down in tears and physical exhaustion. ...After a while the need of some means of communication became so urgent that these outbursts occurred daily, sometimes hourly. ...



THE most important day I remember in all my life is the one on which my teacher, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, came to me. I am filled with wonder when I consider the immeasurable contrasts between the two lives which it connects. It was the third of March, 1887, three months before I was seven years old.

Helen Keller, who later reached such intellectual heights, became so articulate and a gifted writer did not even know of the existence of words when she was seven years old:

“The morning after my teacher came she led me into her room and gave me a doll.... When I had played with it a little while, Miss Sullivan slowly spelled into my hand the word "d-o-l-l." I was at once interested in this finger play and tried to imitate it. ... I did not know that I was spelling a word or even that words existed; I was simply making my fingers go in monkey-like imitation. ...my teacher had been with me several weeks before I understood that everything has a name.

For Helen Keller a sensation without words could not be called a thought:

“She brought me my hat, and I knew I was going out into the warm sunshine. This thought, if a wordless sensation may be called a thought, made me hop and skip with pleasure.”

She describes how she suddenly reentered the world of humanity when she understood that a sign symbolized an entity or an object and how, with the acquisition of language, thought returned to her and “her soul was awakened and set free:”

“We walked down the path to the well-house... Some one was drawing water and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. As the cool stream gushed over one hand she spelled into the other the word water, first slowly, then rapidly. I stood still, my whole attention fixed upon the motions of her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that "w-a-t-e-r" meant the wonderful cool something that was flowing over my hand. That living word awakened my soul, gave it light, hope, joy, set it free!

I left the well-house eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought.

...I did nothing but explore with my hands and learn the name of every object that I touched; and the more I handled things and learned their names and uses, the more joyous and confident grew my sense of kinship with the rest of the world....

(Helen Keller *The Story of My Life*. Part One, Chapter IV)

(Helen Keller was taught English through finger signing. Being blind as well as deaf she was not a candidate for Sign which is dependent on sight.)

Although there was an enduring misconception that the symbols for communication had to be words, Socrates says (in *Cratylus* by Plato): “If we had neither voice nor tongue and yet wished to manifest things to one another, should we not, like those which are at present mute, endeavour to signify our meaning by the hands, head and other parts of the body? (Sacks:15)

Sign language or a form of sign language developed spontaneously wherever families, groups or communities of deaf people lived together but unless they were privileged they could not receive an education. The first free public school for the deaf was established in the eighteenth century in Paris. The Abbé Charles Michel de l’Epée, born to a wealthy family in Versailles, devoted his time working with the poor of Paris. On a visit to the slums of Paris he encountered two young deaf sisters who were communicating using sign language and decided then to dedicate his life to the education (especially the religious education) and salvation of the souls of the deaf. He learned their language, (this had scarcely ever been done before by the hearing) and developed a system of instructing them based on a combination of the Sign language used by the deaf people in Paris and signed French grammar. De l’Epée taught the Deaf to read by associating signs with pictures and written words and this enabled ordinary deaf pupils to read and write French for the first time. His system became known as “methodical signs”. His method emphasized the use of gestures or hand signs based on the principle that “the education of deaf mutes must teach them through the eye what other people acquire through the ear”. He founded a shelter for the deaf which he ran at his own expense and which later, in the early 1760s, became the world’s first free school for the deaf open to the public. De l’Epée opened his methods and his classrooms to the public and trained many teachers for

the deaf and it was because of this openness and his success that his methods became so influential. He established teacher-training programmes for foreigners to take his methods and establish deaf schools all over the world. One of the deaf pupils of the Paris school, Laurent Clerc was observed teaching in the Institute of Deaf-Mutes in Paris by the Reverend Thomas Gallaudet who was looking for someone to help him establish a school for the deaf in Hartford, Northern America. Clerc went with Gallaudet to America in 1816, teaching him Sign on the journey whilst Gallaudet taught him English. Clerc amalgamated the French sign system with the indigenous sign languages in America to form American Sign Language (ASL) and in 1817 they set up the American Asylum for the Deaf in Hartford, Connecticut. Although the sign language developed by de l'Épée was basically rejected even by his pupils in France he became known as the founding father of deaf education and his teaching methods became so influential that their mark is still apparent in deaf education today.

Pierre Desloges, who wrote *Observations* (1779) the first book to be published by a deaf person, described the excellence of the language as the deaf themselves perceived it. He said: “The (Sign) language we use amongst ourselves, being a faithful image of the object expressed, is singularly appropriate for making our ideas accurate for extending our comprehension ... This language is lively; it portrays sentiment, and develops the imagination. No other language is more appropriate for conveying strong and great emotions.” (Sacks: 19-20)

Sign suffered a setback and was rejected for a century when a majority voted at the International Congress of Educators of the Deaf in Milan in 1880 in favour of the oralist system. The aim of this system was to enable the Deaf to be part of the hearing world by teaching them to lip read and speak and it was considered to be superior to the sign method. The work of de l'Épée had proved that the Deaf were educable but the oralists argued that without speech the Deaf were restricted to interaction with deaf people alone. Lip-reading and speech, on the other hand would permit them to integrate fully with the general population. The result of this was that the education of children worldwide was not conducted in Sign, which had become their primary language, and they received an inferior education. It was eventually discovered that the educational, psychological and

social achievements of children who were early users of sign language were superior to those who were non- or late-users.

Oliver Sacks describes the dilemma implicit in the arguments between those that favoured the oralist method for teaching deaf children and those who favoured Sign. In practice the disagreement exists until this very day. Hearing parents often reject the opportunity to have their deaf children educated in Sign in favour of having them taught to lip-read in order to enable them to function in their own hearing world. Sacks, who is strongly in favour of educating the Deaf using Sign says that the teaching of speech is arduous and demands thousands hours of individual teaching which is given at the expense of general education and the results are a poor imitation of speech and a low level of literacy. Hans Furth, a psychologist argued that the congenitally Deaf who were taught speech suffered from “information deprivation”. because with all the hours spent teaching them speech there was little time left for transmitting information, culture, complex skills or anything else.(Sacks:29) Sacks believes that the Deaf pay an intolerable price for the acquisition of speech. Deaf students who had studied at Hartford were highly literate and educated whereas with the ascendancy of oralism and the suppression of Sign there was a dramatic deterioration in the education and achievements of deaf children and the literacy of the deaf in general.

Until the 1960s, Sign was universally considered to be no more than a sort of pantomime or pictorial language and a poor substitute for speech. This changed with the arrival in the late 1950s of William Stokoe, a linguist and Medievalist, to Gallaudet College in Washington D.C. to teach English. When he saw his deaf students signing he became convinced that he saw in Sign the elements of language. He was certain that signs were not pictures but abstract symbols with complex inner structures. In 1960 he received his first grant from the NSF (National Science Foundation) to study American Sign Language (ASL) in order to determine its structure and form. Stokoe succeeded in proving scientifically that Sign language met all the criteria of linguistics (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and use of language) to be classified as a fully developed language. He showed how each sign was composed of at least three independent parts: location, handshape and movement, and that signs could undergo an immense number of

grammatical modulations. Stokoe described Sign as “language in four dimensions, three of the signer’s body and as well as the dimension of time”. (Sacks: 77-79) Oliver Sacks remarks that the single, most remarkable feature of Sign is the unique, linguistic use of space. The signer produces innumerable intricate patterns which are “nested three-dimensionally in each other” and which the “normal eye” is incapable of distinguishing. He says that Sign is not a picture language but it has “picturing, pictorial power” and that it has a very large vocabulary which is continually proliferating neologisms created “by borrowings from English, mimetic depictions and ad hoc inventions”. (ibid:85-89)

Stokoe’s success led to a complete change in the prevailing attitude to Sign and it became the legitimate method for educating deaf children. By 1980 it was officially recognized in America as a minority language.

There are many common misconceptions concerning the nature of Sign. As seen above it, was not invented artificially but, like spoken language, developed naturally and spontaneously wherever there were groups of deaf people who needed to communicate with each other. Within families a “home Sign” might develop amongst the members of the family even if there is only one deaf member. Sign Language is not pantomime even though a hearing observer may identify a sign that mimics some element of a concept. Far from being a primitive and simplistic language it is rich and sophisticated and can be used to discuss any topic from the most concrete to the most abstract. Signs are largely arbitrary and usually have no visual relationship with their referent just as spoken language is almost entirely non-onomatopoeic. It is commonly and mistakenly assumed that Sign Language is a visual version of oral language; for example that ASL is a visual version of American English. It is, on the contrary, a language in its own right with its own extensive lexicon and its own complex grammar. A standard national Sign Language based on common set of rules for all Deaf people in each country did not develop and there are cultural and linguistic and regional differences among different Deaf communities. However, there are dominant dialects which have or are becoming recognized as the official Sign language of a particular country. An interesting example of a local Sign dialect is to be found in the Negev in Israel where there is a Bedouin tribe called the Al Sayyid tribe in which there are 150 deaf members out of a total of 3500 members of the tribe. The deaf members as well as many hearing ones are signers. The

large number of deaf people are descendants of two of the sons of the founders of the tribe who were bearers of a recessive gene for a certain type of deafness. The Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language (ABSL) has developed an unusual form of syntax and a complex grammar without influence from any other language..

Sign is not an international language since in each country Sign language develops side-by-side with the national spoken language even though there is no relationship between them. A basic difference between spoken language and Sign lies in the fact that spoken language is sequential with one word following another to create a sentence or an idea whereas in sign language a whole scene or idea is created when meanings are carried simultaneously by the hands, face and body posture.

A signer employs more than one modality when “signing”. Both the face and the body have special linguistic functions with specific facial expressions or behaviours. For example a question is indicated by raising the eyebrows. Lacking the intonation or inflexion of the voice the deaf use facial expression and body movement to convey emotion, interest or focus. For the hearing, the marked changes of expression, grimaces conveying agitation, and powerful body movements employed by Signers to express their emotions is especially remarkable. The more intense the emotion the larger the body movements.

Finger spelling is another tool of deaf communication. It is used for proper names or for technical or specialized vocabulary. It is also seen as a bridge to speaking and writing in the national language and the path to literacy and deaf parents begin to finger spell to their children at a very early age.

### **The Deaf Culture and Community**

For the hearing world, deafness is a disability that condemns its victims to a lifetime of difficulty and struggle. For the members of the Deaf Community and bearers of the Deaf culture, deafness is not considered to be a disability but “different way of being”; it is an identity to be proud of. These facts are the source of the tension between the deaf and the hearing members of the extended Artinian family.

Carol Padden is Professor of Communication at the University of California in the department of Communication and an affiliate member of the Center for Research in Language. She is deaf, the daughter of deaf parents and her husband is also deaf. Amongst the subjects of her research are culture and community. She defines culture “as a set of learned behaviours of a group of people who have their own language, values, rules of behaviour and traditions”. She maintains that shared experience, norms of behaviour and survival techniques as well as common interests of a group create a culture. American Sign Language, the natural language of the deaf which only won recognition and legitimacy in the late 1960s, is the essential link to Deaf Culture in the American deaf community who have a strong sense of pride in the culture and language. There is some argument as to whether the Deaf American culture has sufficient criteria to qualify as a full-fledged culture. However, a distinct language, folklore traditions including storytelling, ASL, performing arts and Deaf history, ASL-based social institutions and schools as well as distinct social customs and protocol are all criteria that contribute to the definition of a culture. The rate of intermarriage in the community is very high and there is strong wish to have a deaf child to whom to pass on their heritage, their values and their culture. This explains the joy expressed by Mari’s parents at the birth of a deaf grandchild and their anger towards their daughter who wishes him to grow up in the hearing world. The residential Deaf schools play an important role in the transmission of Deaf Culture and Language.

There is a strong element of exclusivity and elitism amongst some members of the Deaf community who will not acknowledge anyone as a member if they have not had the experience of growing up completely deaf, including being educated at a residential school which plays an important role in the transmission of Deaf Culture and Language. As central as American Sign Language is in the Deaf Culture even if a hearing person is the child of deaf parents and has a native command of the language he/she will not be considered a fully fledged member of the community. Speech and thinking like a hearing person and the exposure to the hearing world disqualify them from belonging to the Deaf Community. A deaf colleague of Sacks became an excellent lip-reader and speaker after twelve years of intensive tuition and was educated in hearing classes in high school and college. She only learned Sign when she was fourteen and it has always been a second

language to her. She feels that she is between two worlds and that she doesn't quite fit into either of them.(Sacks:2) A deaf woman who had undergone the operation reported that she had been rejected by her deaf friends after she received the implant.

### **Conclusion**

The film *Sound and Fury* shows a minority group fighting what appears to be a rearguard action for its survival in the face of the threat presented by technological developments. As Heather's hearing grandmother says: "The world is changing. You can't stop the future. You can't stop progress!" The film shows the very real divide that exists between congenitally deaf parents who want to keep their deaf children in their own deaf world despite the realistic difficulties that they face and their dependency on interpreters when interacting with the hearing world, and hearing parents of deaf children who want their children to be part of their own world. If, prior to the development of the cochlear implant, Sign gave deaf children the best chance to achieve their intellectual potential this will no longer be true. The formalisation and recognition of Sign Language as a minority language opened the way to achievements undreamt of in the history of the Deaf. Sign language lead to the development of a self-contained, vibrant and self-confident community. Deaf culture and the Deaf community have given the Deaf the comfort of a society and the self-esteem it never had. The advent of the cochlear implant, however, is destroying the insularity of the group and opening the way for its children to leave the community altogether. In the coming generations it may lead to the complete disintegration of the Deaf Community.

Six years after *Sound and Fury* was made; a sequel was produced by Josh Aronson called *Sound and Fury: Six Years Later*. Even Peter Artinian, the most outspoken opponent to the implant, had capitulated in the end. The film reveals that not only did Heather get the implant, but so did her mother, her two younger brothers, her deaf aunt and her two deaf cousins. Heather had the implant when she was nine-years-old, which is relatively late, yet her speech is reported to be understandable and in her school, in which she is the only deaf child, she is amongst the top of her class. Peter now says that



“through observation and education he has learned how useful the implant can be for deaf children and how glad he is that his children have it”.

### **Bibliography**

מאיר ע., סנדלר ו. 2004. *שפה במרחב, אשנב לשפת הסימנים הישראלית*. חיפה: הוצאת הספרים של אוניברסיטת חיפה.

Sacks Oliver. 1989. *Seeing Voices A Journey Into the World of the Deaf*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.

### **The Film**