Babilónia Número Especial
pp. 139 - 150

The Sight of Silence: The conceptualisation of silence in the visual cultures of sign language communities

Anne C. Uhlig

Abstract:
Deaf people are perceived by hearing people as living in a silent world. Yet, silence cannot exist without sound, so if sound is not heard, can there be silence? From a linguistic point of view silence is the absence of, or intermission in, communication. Silence can be communicative or non-communicative. Thus, silence must exist in sign languages as well. Sign languages are based on visual perception and production through movement and sight. Silence must, therefore, be visually perceptible; and, if there is such a thing as visual silence, how does it look? The paper will analyse the topic of silence from a Deaf perspective. The main aspects to be explored are the perception and evaluation of acoustic noise and silence by Deaf people; the conceptualisation of silence in visual languages, such as sign languages; the qualities of visual silence; the meaning of silence as absence of communication (particularly between hearing and Deaf people); social rules for silence; and silencing strategies.

Keywords: visuality, language, perception, Deaf culture

Résumé:
Les entendants pensent que les sourds vivent dans un monde silencieux. Cependant, le silence ne peut exister qu'en contraste avec le bruit : s'il n'y a pas de bruit, peut-il y avoir silence ? Dans une perspective linguistique, le silence peut être défini comme une absence ou une rupture de la communication: le silence peut avoir une fonction de communication ou de non-communication. Il s'ensuit que le silence doit exister également dans les langues signées. Ces langues sont fondées sur la production et la perception visuelle de mouvements du corps et du regard. Le silence doit donc être perçu par les yeux. S'il existe quelque chose comme une forme de silence dans ces langues, comment cela peut-il se voir ? Prenant en considération le silence au sein d'une langue visuelle, notre contribution analyse la qualité du silence, son importance dans l'absence de communication, en particulier entre sourds et entendants, et finalement les règles sociales et les stratégies auxquelles il est soumis.

Mots-clés: visualité, langue, perception, culture sourde

When talking about Deaf people and deafness, 'silence' is a favourite word for titling books, articles or films in one or another combination. The depiction of the *Silent World*[1] is thus described as *On the Other Side of Silence* or *Silent Love*[2], a *Silent Minority*[3], *Silent Poetry*[4], and so on. Often, the meaning of the word 'hearing' is transferred to the deaf visual perception, as in *I See a Voice*[5], *When the Mind Hears* or *Seeing Voices*.[6] Sometimes the written description of the Deaf perception engages other senses as well, particularly when it comes to the translation of book titles, such as *The Feel of Silence* by Bonnie Poitras Tucker (1995) which became *The Sound of Falling Snow* in German (2001) or the aforementioned *Seeing Voices* by Oliver Sacks (1989) and its translation into German as *Silent Voices* (1990). *Silence is Golden* is the name of a crime novel by Penny Warner in which a Deaf heroine looks for visual clues (2003). This 'golden' shine of silence is intriguing, particularly in its visual form. It is, however, in the hearing ascription meant to describe the absence of sound and, as such, the lack of shine, a deplorable dullness.[7] But the meaning of silence for hearing people implies not only the absence of acoustic input, or the inability to perceive signals aurally. It is also connected to peace, calm, relaxation, quietness or death. "Please give me some peace!" does not mean the entire soundscape has to be switched off, but that loud noise or being spoken to is not welcome at that moment. The treasured silence of a forest is not defined by the total absence of sound, but the non-existence of certain – unpleasant – noises so as to provide space for sounds that would otherwise be unheard. The demands "shh!" or "be quiet!" are meant to arrest speech in order to better apprehend other acoustic signals (such as the weather forecast on the radio, a conversation at a neighbouring table or an undefined noise of movement in the house, or outside). Silence can be uncanny in situations where there should be no silence: it can be embarrassing, as in a sudden halt in conversation, or at the end of one noise before the beginning of others. Silence is thus by no means the total absence of acoustic signals, but is used to describe the hierarchisation and priorisation of sounds. Furthermore, silence is thought of as the opposite of something that can be heard.

In hearing peoples' perception, silence is a complex concept that is closely related to sound and sound management, and finally construed to give meaning in conversational and social interaction, and to describe acoustic perception in that framework. In regard

1 Book title (Maria Wallisfurth 2005).

2 Both are film titles; in the German original: 'Jenseits der Stille' (Caroline Link 1996) and 'Stille Liebe' (Christoph Schaub 2004).

3 Book title (Susan Plann 1997).

4 Book title (Nicholas Mirzoeff 1995).

5 Book title (Jonathan Rée 1999).

6 Book title (Oliver Sacks 1989).

7 Whereas the concept of blindness has traditionally been constructed to allow the value of 'inner sight' and an even enhanced wisdom, silence in connection with deafness was always just a sort of 'nothingness', a lost sense even negatively spreading over to other senses and reducing their function instead of enhancing it.

to deafness the 'sound of silence' is perceived as threatening by hearing people since it seems to deprive a deaf person from a very important source of orientation. But if there is no sound, can there be silence? And if silence as a concept is so inherent in hearing culture – which is after all the culture with which the Deaf[8] communities live in close interaction – is it not somehow taken into consideration by the deaf population?

Before describing how acoustic silence is perceived and managed by deaf people and in the Deaf community, a brief overview of deaf and hearing interaction in daily and historic life will provide the necessary context.

More than 90% of deaf children are born to hearing parents. Upon the birth of a child, a regular screening takes place which will reveal deafness at a very early point in life (if it is not caused by an accident or illness later in life). The deaf child then becomes subject to medical intervention and intensive special schooling with the goal of restoring or instilling a maximum of hearing and speaking ability in order to better 'function' in the hearing world. The hearing idea is not to leave the child 'in silence'. From its earliest years the deaf child is thus confronted with the importance and value of acoustic signals, whether through aural perception or vocal production. It is rarely silent around the deaf child, with a medical and educational corps busy trying to stimulate hearing and speaking via sound. As silence and sound belong together, it is also important to learn to manage silence in all its variety, from total absence of sound to the dampening of sound or the preference for certain sounds. However, the control of noise – be it produced or perceived – is difficult for a deaf child because physically there is no aural measurement possible. Sound and silence have thus to be learned via other sensual channels, mainly those of feeling (vibration) and seeing (movement).

Deaf children are usually enrolled in schools for the Deaf or mainstreamed in regular schools, accompanied by a communication assistant or a sign language interpreter. In schools for the Deaf they quickly learn sign language through communication and interaction with their deaf peers (some of whom will have Deaf parents and thus be able to transmit the language, which is, in their case, the primary language). As sign language became more recognised some schools adopted a bilingual approach and classes began to be held in a bilingual way; that means both in proper sign language, or another form of visually encoded language, and in the spoken and written language of the country.[9] However, in many schools vocal language production remains very important, thus reflecting the high value that is accorded to competence in spoken and written language in hearing

8 Following the widely accepted conventions *Deaf* with a capital *D* refers to the Deaf community as a linguistic and cultural minority, whereas *deaf* with a small *d* priorises the physical aspect of deafness.

9 Visually encoded forms of spoken language usually follow the word order and grammar of the spoken language, whereas sign languages are independent from spoken language and have their own grammar and linguistic features. Visually encoded forms exist in a broad variety, for example 'Signed English' or 'Lautsprachbegleitende Gebärden' in Germany (spoken language accompanied by signs) and are not to be confused with proper languages.

cultures. The struggle for recognition of sign languages and their value remains a central topic throughout the Deaf life of the past and present. Precisely because Deaf people don't want to be silenced, it is important to acknowledge their 'silent language' (another popular but misleading formulation). Deaf people have been dissuaded from using sign language for nearly a century, they have been effectively silenced. Furthermore, powerful attempts have been made to force them out of what has been perceived as their silence and to make them talk. Speech is seen as the most basic requirement to participation in socio-cultural and economic life, and its perceived absence has had heavy repercussions on Deaf communities, also in regard to religion.

Apart from these audist constructions of silence with their social impacts, the question of visual silence has not been pursued so far. Acoustic and visual silence are not completely different concepts, but can only be fully understood if compared. I will first explain how deaf people manage and perceive the acoustic aspects of silence, before proceeding to the conceptualisation of visual silence afterwards.

The meaning and social rules connected to silence are part of each child's social education – an education that is given by the hearing world (parents, extended family, educational establishment, general environment) as well as the Deaf world (parents, if Deaf themselves, Deaf peers at school, friends, sometimes teachers, Deaf organisations and the events and meetings they organise). Silence is talked about, explained and, as a form of knowledge, communicated to Deaf people via those structures. Apart from their own visual view of silence, Deaf people integrate the many meanings of silence in their cultural knowledge and silence becomes part of their general sensual conception.

The hearing concept of silence cannot be transferred to the deaf perception without risk of misunderstanding. If silence is defined in regard to, and as the absence of, acoustic signals then there can be no silence in the Deaf world since this reference point is missing. Here the old philosophical question about the tree falling in a forest with nobody there to hear it fall comes to mind. There is no need (or place here) to seek an answer – as it has been shown that Deaf people are well able to acquire knowledge of silence even though they cannot hear it. The pairing of sound and acoustic silence are present in the Deaf world as everyone who has ever attended a Deaf meeting or party can witness. Conscious sound production takes place not only outside linguistic communication, but also particularly in sign language conversations. The voicing of words, called 'oral units' by Ebbinghaus and Heßmann (400), form part of many signs. Oral units can appear with the use of voice or without it. As 'mouth pictures' they either form the equivalent word in spoken language or represent a semantic unit as 'mouth gestures' or 'mouth mimics'. That these mouth pictures are often accompanied by sound is rarely mentioned in linguistic research. Several informants informed me that they prefer to use their voice and not to remain vocally silent, whether in communication with hearing or with Deaf people. The use of one's own voice through speaking out words is not dependent on the conver-

sation partner's hearing status: it is part of a comfortable language use that includes the production of sound and silence as well.[10] Once a Deaf woman took part in an experiment to sign exclusively to me, and not to use her voice at all. She quickly gave it up with a shudder, explaining that her voice 'is there and wants out': she could not be silent. Another informant said her voice must be used: if not, a physical pressure arises that is both uncomfortable and unmanageable. When a sign language conversation becomes intense, as happens in discussions or quarrels, the vocal intensity increases as well. This increase does not necessarily become obvious due to heightened volume, but also through a visible urgency in mimic, perceivable in the change of the voice and a general reduction of silence as conversational intermissions are reduced and turn-taking become faster.[11] To get the communication partner's attention, the silent waving of hands may be substituted by more urgent slapping of the table surface – in short, the general noise level rises as in any heated spoken language.

In the contact between hearing people and Deaf people and among members of Deaf clubs, the management of the voice is adapted to the various needs and personal styles of expression and communication. The possibilities of sound and silence and their different registers are also used in regard to the advantages or disadvantages they might bring about. The deaf voice, though existent, is sometimes not used in a communication with a hearing partner if the Deaf person estimates that its unusual sound might tend toward a false evaluation of its owner. In hearing cultures voice is an important and more or less unconsciously perceived informant of social and educational status. Thus the voice is quite 'telling' and its usage subject to rhetoric manipulation in a conversation – none of which can apply to the audible voice of deaf people, which is a medium that cannot be controlled in this way, yet is perceived within this socially agreed framework in which voices are perceived and speakers judged.

The old expression 'deaf and dumb' is not only pejorative, but also totally incorrect for two reasons: Deaf people use vocal speech even though sometimes different from the speech of hearing people; and they are not dumb in the sense of 'without language' as sign language is a fully fledged language. In addition to the use of vocal sound in their communication, music also forms a part of Deaf daily life – much to the surprise of hearing people who above all deplore the lack of the ability to hear classical concertos when confronted with deaf life. "I do not live in a world of silence," writes David Wright as he explains how he perceives the sound of music through touch and vibration (151). Here, it becomes apparent that a concept of sound and silence has been gained through interaction with hearing people and their aural perception. What silence and its absence means for hearing people is very well known to Deaf people and forms part of their cul-

10 I have never observed a sign language conversation where there was complete vocal silence.

11 See Padden and Humphries for a description of traditional stories about mismanagement of vocal noise in heated sign language communication (1988).

tural knowledge. What Wright hears when feeling a concerto is not the same as what a hearing listener may perceive, but the importance of music in hearing culture is certainly communicated to Deaf people and as such integrated in their worldview.

Sound causes vibrations, and vibrations are felt, then categorised as sound and described with a vocabulary reserved for acoustic qualities. In communication (with hearing and with Deaf people) this vocabulary is also used. Be it thunder or a loud bang, shouting or the ringing of the phone – the vocabulary used to describe these noises are of clear acoustically motivated origin and not something like 'a strong vibration' or 'a fine vibration'. While the inhabitants of the Arctic have − for southerners − an unfathomable spectrum of words to describe the various qualities of snow, Deaf people do use signs that refer to unheard sounds that are nevertheless part of their perception – because sound does not make itself heard through the ear alone and silence is not only the absence of sound. The knowledge of sound and silence comprises the implication that these are only perceived acoustically by hearing people, and kinetically and visually by the Deaf. The perspective of Deaf people, which is based on difference, meets in a conflictual way the perspective of hearing people, which is based on deficit. Padden and Humphries remark that it might well be possible that the imagination Deaf people have of sound and hearing is not quite correct, but it is certainly no less correct than what hearing people think about how Deaf life is (1988).

The management of noise and acoustic output also contains approaches to produce acoustic silence. The enhanced visual awareness – often displayed by an intensive eye gaze of a Deaf communication partner – serves to notice the moments when acoustic silence is appropriate in a conversation, i.e. when turn taking is managed, on the phone or when third parties are asked to be silent for a moment. Thus, a moment that requires silence makes itself visible in the faces of communication partners and in the discourse flow of a conversation: even acoustic silence has a visual feature. The vocabulary used for silence is, of course, fit to express exactly what kind of silence is meant. As is customary in spoken interaction, to put a finger on one's lips means not to speak or to speak at a lower volume.[12] Other signs demand that people stop moving about because of the noise it makes, to be quiet or to be still. Since noise in Deaf daily life is produced not only by the use of language but also by movement and activities, such as reading the rustling newspaper or (re)placing objects, a mixture of acoustic and visual silence becomes apparent. Movement produces acoustic noise and lack of movement produces quietness, be it as in "running one's mouth" or in general physical movement. The lack of movement also means a standstill, and slow movements might be less noisy than faster movements and less visually distractive.

12 In spoken language the finger on the lips is often accompanied by a hissing sound or an exhaling of breath ("sh") as if the speaker wants to lay a dampening blanket of a low, inoffensive noise over a too loud conversation.

As a conversation between hearing and signing people is often led via a sign language interpreter, the Deaf person furthermore manages silence and noise of, and via, this third person. A very finely tuned interaction takes place when silent sign language becomes interpreted in aurally perceivable spoken language and vice versa.

The translation process between sign language and spoken language not only transfers meaning from one language to another but also changes the modus of expression from acoustic to visual so that the meaning expressed in sign language is still the same as in the spoken language, but now has no acoustic quality any longer. Of course, a visual quality is gained, and for many hearing people it is a fascinating and almost scary process to *see* their words, instead of hearing them, as happens when the translation is made into another spoken language. Even though they are likewise incomprehensible, at least the comfort of the acoustic aspect remains, giving the illusion of some remaining control over what is said. The silence of a message translated into sign language is in this context scaring and perceived as a lack of control.

A multi-layered meaning of silence becomes visible in the poem *On his deafness* by Robert Panara:

> My ears are deaf, and yet I seem to hear
> Sweet nature's music and the songs of man
> For I have learned from Fancy's artisan
> How written words can thrill the inner ear
> Just as they move the heart, and so for me
> They also seem to ring out loud and free.
>
> In silent study I have learned to tell
> Each secret shade of meaning and to hear
> A magic harmony, at once sincere,
> That somehow notes the tinkle of a bell,
> The cooing of a dove, the swish of leaves,
> The rain drop's pitter-patter on the eaves,
> The lover's sigh, the strumming of guitar,
> And, if I choose, the rustle of a star!
>
> (Robert Panara 27)

Having explored the sound of silence as partner and complement of aurally perceivable signals, silence will now be looked at from the Deaf perspective. Not only can silence be felt in the visual culture of sign language users, as in the denial of communication or through vibration, it can also take the form of unmoving pictures and restricted hands. It is the 'sight' of silence that will now be investigated.

As mentioned above, silence can appear as a pause in communication in order to enable the perception of another acoustic source. In the line, "He looked at me in silence for four seconds" from his poem *Maltz* (211), Peter Cook describes the signed communication between two men and how it was stopped. Silence appears when the communication flow of signed language comes to a halt. The wish to 'be left in peace', i.e. not to be spoken to or to be left alone, also implies a halt of something, namely movement, and not only a halt in spoken conversation. In both cases silence is produced through a break in conversation and a reduction of movement and visual input. Thus, when a signer asks another signer to be quiet, wanting him not to sign, he basically asks him not to move (his arms). In this case the movement would have been acoustically silent, but not visually. To ensure visual silence in a conversation, a signer or a person who is attempting to sign is sometimes virtually tuned out, either by looking away from him or raising the flat hand with the palm outward toward him. If two people are intensively engaged in a conversation and a third person approaches them with a question, the rules of visual politeness prescribe the third party to discreetly enter the circle of peripheral view to announce his or her presence. The two interactors will then acknowledge the person by looking at, and including, him or her, and by moving into a triangle; or, if both need to pursue their topic undisturbed, the third person is either silenced by not being acknowledged visually or the mentioned flat hand is raised which means, "a moment please, we will look at you soon". When both are ready for the third party to enter the conversation the hand will be lowered the eye contact broken between the original partners and the third person included in the visual communication circle.

David Wright, quoted above, says "[…] the world in which I live seldom *appears* silent. Let me try to explain what I mean. In my case, silence is not absence of sound but of movement" (153). The absence of movement, the 'standstill', is the Deaf silence. Wright also mentions a singular experience with the human voice when attending a cricket match and the crowd gave out all of a sudden a loud scream as a "queer and spooky experience" (153). This spooky noise that shouldn't have been there since Wright is deaf represents an equivalent to the uncanny experience of silence hearing people have when there is no sound where sound should be. Whereas a short sentence is enough to relay the according sound, this particular experience in the event of the Cricket match evokes a lengthy narrative of visual perception:

> While the bails were still flying, coats, hats, cushions, umbrellas,
> sandwiches, for all I know babies even, were hurled into the
> air by some nine or then thousand West Indians in the free seats
> where I was watching. Up went a simultaneous roar of delight.
> Hearing that sound, for me not very loud but like a croaking bark,
> was a queer and spooky experience.
>
> (David Wright 153)

In a kinetic and visual world of perception, silence is perceived as the absence of movement and as visual monotony. A winter landscape has been described to me by Deaf people as being very silent because nothing moves and the colours are few, mainly nuances of black and white. By contrast, a meeting is perceived as stressful because people are constantly moving; everybody wants to say something; and a permanent visual hubbub assaults the eyes.

Like the raising of voices, the enlargement of the signing space and the production of more extroverted signing movements can be seen as equivalents to a high vocal volume, whereas a small, shy signing is used as the whispering register. A frozen face that does not betray any visual clue as to the opinion of its owner can well be interpreted as being silent and trigger a demand for expression.

Unfortunately, the vocabulary to convey visual nuances of sound and silence in written or spoken language is lacking in variety because "our concepts of language and literature have evolved within a false dualism of speech and writing", as Bauman puts it (315). The visual perception, and its categorisation and description within the domain of sound and silence, is often circumscribed as 'hearing with the eyes', or other formulations mentioned above that quickly lead onto very thin ice when it comes to the adequate representation of these concepts. Silence and the lack of movement are not so far apart. What has a strong visual impact is often accompanied by sound in high volume (for example, parties or soccer matches), and silence can look very calm and quiet. It is important, however, not to confuse visual and acoustic concepts of silence. It is too easy a solution just to look for an equivalent and to pair 'loud' with 'coloured', 'movement' with 'noise', or 'standstill' with 'silence'.

Adjectives such as 'quiet', 'still' and 'calm' are meant to define further a certain acoustic characteristic but can also be used to describe behaviour or communication style. Sign language is represented in written texts either through drawings of signs, photographs or words in capitalised letters. The sign CALM triggers in a hearing reader the information he has stored for this word. CALM is, however, used – as any lexical element – in very specific combinations and expressing nuances that don't come across in this reduced written representation. It has to be emphasized that any written representation is already not only a bilingual but also a bimodal translation, and it is important to keep in mind the original linguistic and cultural context. Thus, to state that visual silence has to do with calmness blurs the information as much as it tries to make it clear.

It is not only movement that defines the 'volume of silence', it is also the availability of information. The statement that it is 'silent around' a person means that no information about this person's current state of life has been communicated. When the Deaf do not acquire information from someone over a longer period, they often describe this person's unknown situation with the sign STILL. Interestingly, this implies that the person has not been seen, has not been moving within the Deaf scene and has not been engaged or active

in the community. If someone is currently not engaged with community purposes because of another occupation (for example outside of it in the hearing world, professionally or otherwise), and this is known because it has been communicated, then there is no silence perceived because a basic information flow has been maintained in spite of this person's absence.

'To silence' someone means to hinder this person, linguistically or otherwise, to share his opinion and knowledge up to the extreme extent of taking this person's life. Most of the information generally available to a hearing society is not accessible to the Deaf. Even though it would be technically possible to communicate much more information than is currently done, i.e. via translation into sign language (video spots in the internet) or information meetings for target groups within the signing community, these options are not used. The hearing society keeps largely silent when it comes to their interaction with Deaf people. Keeping information from the Deaf means hindering their access and making it difficult for them to raise their 'voice'. Signers meet serious barriers when they want to access the hearing majority's broad spectrum of discourses and to participate in their formation by giving the Deaf input. They have to remain silent because their language is not accommodated and the information flow stands still. If information about their life, culture and discourses were to get out – if 'sign' were to get out – the prevailing silence would well be lifted, giving way to the noise of interacting cultures. This form of 'social silence' has a strong visual component insofar as it results in invisibility: the Deaf cannot be seen and perceived in public life (as lawyers, physicians, salespersons, philosophers, teachers, etc.) so long as they are silenced and disabled from equal participation and talked about only in a very narrow and specific context, whereas other areas and aspects of their life suffer from enforced silence.

Seeing silence from the perspective of a visual culture, like that of the Deaf communities, means to engage in a multi-dimensional approach that encompasses knowledge about acoustic silence and visual silence and the ways in which both are managed. It also means to explore the vocabulary used for both and the context in which it is employed. Visual silence and its conceptualisation can be compared with acoustic silence, but should not be seen exclusively in regard to it because the concept of acoustic silence emerged within a totally different sensual perception of the world and within an equally different history of discourse. It is wrong to assume that what Deaf people see is the same as what hearing people see since every image triggers for both a different set of knowledge connected to this image and developed under different historical and cultural conditions. Further study might reveal the impossibility of fathoming visual silence within the currently available vocabulary and perhaps the word 'silence' – even when clarified by the adjective 'visual' – will prove to be insufficient. For the moment, however, it can be safely concluded that 'seeing silence' and 'hearing silence' are two concepts that have arisen in different cultures, but both refer to certain states in verbal communication, information

flow and political discourse when these processes become stagnant. Visual and acoustic silence can be actively managed and enforced, but can also happen passively and be caused by diverted interests. Silence can be the consequence of a rupture in conversational or informational flow, but it can also be a necessary counterpart of verbal and informational output, ensuring a harmonic balance between all and nothing.

As both concepts of silence, the hearing and the Deaf, can be found in the Deaf world view, one is well advised to distinguish between both in spite of their apparent kinship. The sound of silence and the sight of silence are two sides of a fascinating phenomenon that each cascade down into a multitude of meanings.

Works Cited

Bauman, Dirksen-H. "Towards a poetics of vision, space, and the body. Sign language and literary theory." *The Disability Studies Reader*. Ed. Lennard J. Davis. New York and London: Routledge, 1997.

Cook, Peter. Maltz. *No Walls of Stone – An Anthology of Literature by Deaf and Hard of Hearing Writers*. Ed. Jill Jepson. Washington: D.C., Gallaudet University Press, 1992.

Ebbinghaus, Horst und Jens Heßmann. "German words in German Sign Language: Do they tell us something new about sign languages?" *The Deaf Way. Perspectives from the International Conference on Deaf Culture*. Ed. Carol Erting. Washington D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1994.

Mirzoeff, Nicholas. *Silent Poetry. Deafness, Sign and Visual Culture in Modern France*. Princeton (New Jersey): Princeton University Press, 1995.

Padden, Carol, and Tom Humphries. *Deaf in America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988.

Panara, Robert. "On His Deafness". *No Walls of Stone – An Anthology of Literature by Deaf and Hard of Hearing Writers*. Ed. Jill Jepson. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1992 ["On His Deafness" originally appeared in 1972, New York].

Plann, Susan. *A Silent Minority. Deaf Education in Spain, 1550-1835*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.

Poitras Tucker, Bonnie. *Der Klang von fallendem Schnee*. Bergisch Gladbach: Bastei Lübbe, 2001.

---. *The feel of silence.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press 1995.

Rée, Jonathan. *I See a Voice. Language, Deafness & the Senses – a Philosophical History.* London: Flamingo, 1999.

Warner, Penny. *Silence is Golden*. Palo Alto: Perseverance Press, 2003.

Wright, David. "Selections from *Deafness*." *No Walls of Stone – An Anthology of Literature by Deaf and Hard of Hearing Writers*. Ed. Jill Jepson. Washington, D.C.: Gallaudet University Press, 1992. ["Deafness" originally appeared in 1969, New York].

Sacks, Oliver. *Stumme Stimmen. Reise in die Welt der Gehörlosen*. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1990.

---. *Seeing Voices.* Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989.

Wallisfurth, Maria. *Lautlose Welt. Das Leben meiner gehörlosen Eltern*. München: Knaur, 2005.