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Portrayal of Deafness and Deaf Culture in Children's Books and Juvenile Fiction

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Abstract:

Throughout the course of history, numerous perspectives on deafness and Deaf Culture have been accepted by larger society. Deafness can be defined in a two dimensional way: as a physical condition, categorized by a profound hearing loss, and as a cultural construction, categorized by a Deaf identity. (Baynton, 1998, p. 2). Societies' views on deafness and Deaf Culture can be analyzed through literature. Literature reflects the cultural norms and beliefs of a society. Literature can also have the power to influence or shape the views and ideals of a society or culture; this concept is especially true for children books, which instill ideas in children starting at a young age. (Duhan, 2015).

This paper will explore the evidence of historical trends of deafness and Deaf Culture in literature for children, particularly the period of oralism, when deafness was viewed negatively and deaf people were expected to assimilate to hearing culture, and the more recent period of manualism, that embraces the use of sign language and accepts Deaf Culture. Additionally, this paper will use previous accredited research and the analysis of themes of twenty children books to draw conclusions on messages about deafness and Deaf Culture children are receiving from literature today.

Keywords: Communication Disorders, Deaf Studies, Deaf Culture, deafness, children's books, literature, oralism, manualism

Throughout the course of history, numerous perspectives on deafness and Deaf Culture have been accepted by the larger society. Deafness can be defined in a two dimensional way: as a physical condition, categorized by a profound hearing loss, and as a cultural construction, categorized by a Deaf identity. (Baynton, 1998, p. 2). This definition, having both medical and cultural aspects, has created the common conception that the term deaf (lowercase) refers to the physical hearing loss, and the term Deaf (uppercase) refers to a member of Deaf Culture. A person who is Deaf identifies as a member of Deaf Culture, regardless of their level of hearing loss. Deaf people have uniquely invented languages and cultures distinct from the hearing world that surrounds them. Deafness and Deaf Culture have largely been perceived similarly in society depending on historical trends.

The most debated topic in deaf history is the clash between manualism and oralism, two different methods of communication. Manualism supports the idea that American Sign Language is an official language and a valid means of communication. Oralism supports opposite beliefs; the idea that deaf people should learn to talk and lip read. Manualists are typically supporters of Deaf Culture, while oralists believe that deaf people should try to assimilate into hearing culture. Trends of oralism and manualism are present in United States history. In 1817 the first school for the deaf, The American School for the Deaf, was established by Mason Cogswell in Hartford, Connecticut. Cogswell formed a committee, lead by Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet to research the best teaching methods for the deaf (Padden, 2005, p. 16). Gallaudet traveled to Europe where he found an oralist method, which proved unsuccessful when implemented at the American School for the Deaf. Eventually, Gallaudet met Laurent Clerc, a

French teacher of the deaf, who used signs to communicate. Clerc introduced his signing methods at the American School for the Deaf and when they proved to be successful, Clerc traveled all over the rest of New England, prompting the opening of numerous other schools for the deaf (Padden, 2005, p. 17). During this time, the use of signs was embraced by educators and pupils (Baynton, 1998, p. 93). Large numbers of deaf people were gathering and living at schools for the deaf; for many deaf people, this was the first effective communication and common language they had ever experienced. This was the beginning of Deaf Culture and a sense of a Deaf community and identity (Baynton, 1998, p.4).

The acceptance of communication by sign and Deaf Culture always had its skeptics, however, it was generally accepted by society until the 1860s. Scholars call the 1860s a major turning point in deaf history as the trend of manualism quickly changed to favor oralism (Baynton, 1998, p. 4). During this time “a new generation campaigned to replace the use of sign language with the exclusive use of lip reading and speech” (Baynton, 1998, p. 93). Although the majority of Deaf adults and organizations still supported manualism, oralism gained force for a variety of reasons. Many hearing people started to believe that deaf people were evolutionarily less advanced and that signing was an archaic means of communication; ideas that deaf people were not intelligent became accepted (Baynton, 1998, p.5). Oralism continued to rise as hearing people, such as oralist champion Alexander Graham Bell, claimed success with oralist methods (Neisser, 1983, p. 26). By 1920 “80 percent of all schools for the deaf listed the oral method as their primary method of communication” (Padden, 2005, p. 73). These numbers only continued to rise; by the 1950s almost every school for the deaf used the oral method despite low success rates (Neisser, 1983, p. 7). It is projected that less than ten percent of deaf students ever

mastered intelligible speech and approximately four percent of deaf students were able to successfully lip read (Neisser, 1983, p. 8). The oralism method did not foster learning and the average deaf person only had a third-grade reading level (Neisser, 1983, p. 8). In numerous primary source accounts, deaf adults tell stories of being dropped off at oralist residential schools as scared and confused young children who felt isolated; children would learn speech sounds in front of mirrors while wearing headphones and were often reprimanded for using sign (Neisser, 1983).

The second half of the 20th century was a period of struggle for equality for Deaf people and Deaf Culture. At first, change was not noticeable, but by the 1970s Deaf Culture and manualism were gaining momentum (Humphries, 2014, p. 58). Deaf schools and institutions were beginning to revert back to the signing methods that were introduced and proved successful in the 1800s. This was an exciting time for Deaf equality despite remaining oralist stigma and oppression from society. After the establishment of American Sign Language (ASL) as an official language in 1960, the use of sign was growing and its social acceptance was increasing. Momentum continued as spirit and passion grew at the Deaf President Now protest in 1988 at Gallaudet University (Humphries, 2014, p. 58). With the rise of ASL, Deaf Culture was also flourishing; Deaf people were breaking into the middle class and their social lives were improving with the popularity of Deaf clubs (Padden, 2005, p. 78). Additionally, tax-supported collectives, telecommunications, and other social services were becoming accessible to Deaf people for the first time, giving them full access to citizenship (Humphries, 2014, p.59). This rise in ASL and Deaf Culture has only grown since the turn of the century with the advent of new technology and the increasing acceptance of deafness and Deaf Culture.

The acceptance of Deaf Culture has been increasingly popular since the 1980s, ever since the previous oralist trends faded. However, with new innovations and technologies a new controversy has risen between Deaf Culture and the hearing world: the use of cochlear implants and other assistive devices. It is estimated that 3 in every 1,000 children born have a sensorineural hearing loss, that can be ‘repaired’ by a cochlear implant (Samson-Fang, 2000). However, receiving a cochlear implant is an invasive procedure that involves risks and destroys any residual hearing that the ear had. Additionally, the cochlear implant stimulates hearing with electromagnetic impulses, which makes sounds different than when perceived by a true hearing mechanism (Samson-Fang, 2000). Despite these cons, the cochlear implant works well for many deaf or hard of hearing individuals, especially those who are born to hearing parents and have no ties to Deaf Culture. Many Deaf people and supporters of Deaf Culture do not support the use of cochlear implants and other devices because they do not view deafness as something that needs to be fixed (Samson-Fang, 2000).

The trends of oralism and manualism, as well as the oppression and rise of Deaf Culture, are represented in various reflections of culture. One window in which these aspects and trends can be viewed through is literature; it is widely acknowledged that literature reflects society (Duhan, 2015). It is a common conception that “literature reflects predominantly the significant values and norms of a culture” (Albrecht, 1954, p. 426). Although the relationship between literary patterns and the larger culture is complex and not easily understood, “it is assumed that these patterns reflect in significant and characteristic ways the attitudes and shared experiences in society” (Albrecht, 1954, p. 427). This relationship between literature and society can be observed when analyzing literature on deafness and Deaf Culture. Numerous literary works,

many of which are autobiographical, reflect the oppressive views of society on Deaf Culture from the 1860s through the 1970s. *Alandra's Lilacs*, by Tressa Bowers, and *Train Go Sorry*, by Leah Hager Cohen, were both published in the 1990s and tell autobiographical stories of the oppression and struggles they faced growing up deaf in the 1960s. Arden Neisser, the author of *The Other Side of Silence*, traveled the United States collecting primary accounts of experiences deaf adults had while attending oralist schools from the 1940s to the 1970s. *Deaf Like Me*, by Thomas Spradley, narrates the account of Spradley's family raising their deaf daughter, Lynn, in the 1960s. Lynn attended an oralist school where she saw little success, making it nearly impossible for her to communicate. Eventually, the Spradley family can effectively communicate when they learn ASL, a method that they had always been warned against. Works like these reflect the culture and attitudes surrounding deafness at the time period.

Not only can literature be seen as a reflection of a society, but it has also been hypothesized that literature can have the ability to shape culture. Literature "mirrors the ills of the society with a view to make the society realize its mistakes and make amends. It also projects the virtues or good values in the society for people to emulate" (Duhan, 2015). This idea that literature influences or shapes society can be seen in prominent historical examples (Albrecht, 1954, p. 425). *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, written by Harriet Beecher Stowe in 1852, told a story that held an anti-slavery message. The book was able to spread anti-slavery ideals to thousands of people and was a heavy influence of the movement against slavery (Duhan, 2015). Another example of the literature shaping society comes from the novels of Charles Dickens, such as *Great Expectations*. Dickens' novels provided social criticism, had "an indirect influence in creating in society a feeling for regulating and removing social wrongs, calling for necessary

social reforms” (Duhan, 2015). Literature has a role in both reflecting and shaping society; the influence of the writer can impact the quality and nature of these aspects, however for the most part, the writer will represent the “spirit of the times” not their own personal beliefs (Duhan, 2015).

One of the most powerful ways in which literature can reflect and influence society is through children’s books. Children’s books can “serve as means for developing children’s identity and sense of self as well as their understanding of other people and cultures” (Cole and Valentine, 2000). What children grow up reading and looking at in books can be more powerful than is often realized. The content of children’s books, as well as juvenile fiction books, can have both reflective and shaping impacts on society. What children see in the books they read or people read to them, give them ideas about the world, other people, and themselves (Golos, 2012). The content that is published in children's books reflects values and norms of society. The trends relating to Deaf Culture and deafness can be analyzed in children's books as capacities of literature in both reflective and shaping aspects. How deafness is represented in children’s book sends messages that impact deaf and hearing children and reveal society's views on Deaf Culture. How deafness and Deaf Culture are represented in children’s literature reflects the themes and trends of the time period. Children’s literature from the mid to late 1900s incorporates themes of oralism and oppression of deafness while more modern literature incorporates themes of Deaf Culture and embraces the use of sign language.

Children’s books published from the 1800s through the 1960s reflect the attitudes and perspectives on deafness of the time period; this period was when the trend of oralism was very popular. Very few books were published about deafness or Deaf Culture, which demonstrates

how underrepresented deaf people were in literature as well as in society. The children's books that were published during this time period reflect the force of oralism. One of the earliest accounts of deafness in a children book is Christy Mackinnon's *Silent Observer*. Although this book was not published until 1990, it tells Mackinnon's autobiographical story of growing up deaf in the early 1900s in the form of a picture book. Mackinnon expresses how isolated she felt growing up in a small town where her only means of communication were a few homemade signs that she used with her family. When Christy was eleven-years-old she went to a residential school that taught the oral method but also allowed the students to sign outside of class. Christy describes and illustrates her return home for the summer, where everyone gathered around her and expected her to be able to speak; everyone was taken aback by the noise that came out of her mouth. Christy was eager to return back to school, where she could communicate and continue to learn. *Silent Observer* demonstrates how ineffective oralism was at residential schools during this time period. The picture book also shows how hearing people did not understand how difficult it is for a deaf person to learn to lip-read and speak. The oralist school that Mackinnon attended allowed the students to sign outside of class. This was generally frowned upon and punishable at most oralist schools, but hard to eliminate because of how natural it is for deaf people (Neisser, 1983).

Other works that reflect that ideals of the time period are *Lisa and Her Soundless World*, by Edna S. Levine, and *Anna's Silent World*, by Bernard Wolf. Both of these children's books were published in the 1970s. Although attitudes started shifting back to manualism and things were improving for Deaf Culture in the 1960s and 1970s the struggle for acceptance of Deaf Culture is evident in these works. *Anna's Silent World* (image 1), is the perfect example of

oralist trends. Although the work is a picture book, it is a nonfiction work that uses photographs to tell the story of Anna's childhood. Anna is profoundly deaf and she interacts with the world



Anna watches and listens to Miss Webb very carefully. She then repeats what she hears, trying to use the same movements of tongue, mouth, face and body that Miss Webb uses.

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Learning how to talk and to lip-read is the hardest part of Anna's therapy. Even with amplification she can hear only parts of the words spoken to her.

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Image 1 - *Anna's Silent World*, by Bernard Wolf.

Through lip reading, speech, and a hearing aid. Anna goes to a hearing school, has hearing friends, and goes to ballet class. Anna also has annual audiological evaluations and attends speech therapy twice a week. She has trouble communicating in the hearing world, as seen in the book when her friend cannot understand her. The book supports the idea that “the best way to help the deaf is to teach them how to communicate by listening and speaking the way people with normal hearing do” (pg. 20). This book exclusively shows the oral method of communication, which was still a popular view during this time period.

Levine’s children’s book, published in 1974, gives a more progressive view towards manualism and acceptance of Deaf Culture that reflects the change from oralism to manualism in the 1970s. *Lisa and Her Soundless World* provides an interesting perspective that includes using sign language as an aid to communication. Lisa is a young deaf girl and she is viewed as unhappy at the beginning of the book because she cannot hear. Lisa gets a hearing aid and begins to learn how to lip-read and talk. However, Lisa also uses signs to communicate with people when it is too hard to lip read. By the end of the book, Lisa thinks to herself “How happy I am! I can hear with my hearing aid. I can lip-read with my eyes. I can talk with my mouth. I can talk on my hands, I can play with my friends —those who hear and those who do not”. The book alludes to the idea that oralism is preferred, but it is okay to sign to aid communication or learning.

The 1960s and 1970s harbored a struggle for rights and equality for Deaf Culture and by the 1980s the trends in deafness and Deaf Culture had predominantly moved back to the use of American Sign Language and the acceptance of Deaf Culture (Humphries, 2014, p. 58). This is not to say that oppression of Deaf Culture was nonexistent, but it has improved greatly since the

era of oralism decades earlier. This change is evident in the literature that was being published for children. The quality of children's books written about deafness and Deaf Culture increases. Deaf Culture and Deaf people were being written about for children in a quantity that they had not been before. From the 1980s to present day, deafness can be seen in children's books that support manualism. The majority of books published after the start of the manualist era, from the 1980s on, completely reject oralism. In the past two decades "there has been a steady increase in the inclusion of deaf characters in children's literature" (Rana, 2017, p. 70).

Accepting and embracing Deaf Culture can be seen in numerous children's books. One of the most popular children's book that portrays this notion is *Moses Goes to A Concert*, by Isaac Millman, which was published in 1998. This picture book tells the story of a young deaf boy who goes to a concert with his classmates, who are all also deaf. Moses' Teacher brings balloons for each student to hold during the concert to help them feel the vibrations. At the end of the concert, the class meets the drummer who was performing and they find out that she is also deaf; she plays with her shoes off during the concert in order to feel the vibrations of her drum and the other musicians around her. By the end of the book, Moses decides he might want to be a drummer one day too. The book tells children, deaf and hearing alike, that they can do anything that they set their mind to. This uplifting message refuses to let deafness be seen as a disability or let it hold anyone back from achieving their dreams.

Since publishing his first picture book, where Moses goes to a concert, Isaac Millman has written three sequels about Moses: *Moses Goes to School*, *Moses Goes to the Circus*, and *Moses Goes to A Play*. Millman's stories about Moses show readers that deaf kids and deaf people live normal lives and are more alike than different from lives of hearing people. The books send this

positive message to hearing children, who may have previously had no education on deafness. Millman's books would also send positive messages to deaf children; seeing deafness represented in children's literature will help to build a deaf child's self-concept and self-acceptance (Golos, 2012). Additionally, Millman integrated sign language into his books (see image 2). Illustrations demonstrating American Sign Language not only teach deaf children and make the literature more accessible to them, but they also help to educate hearing children on Deaf Culture.

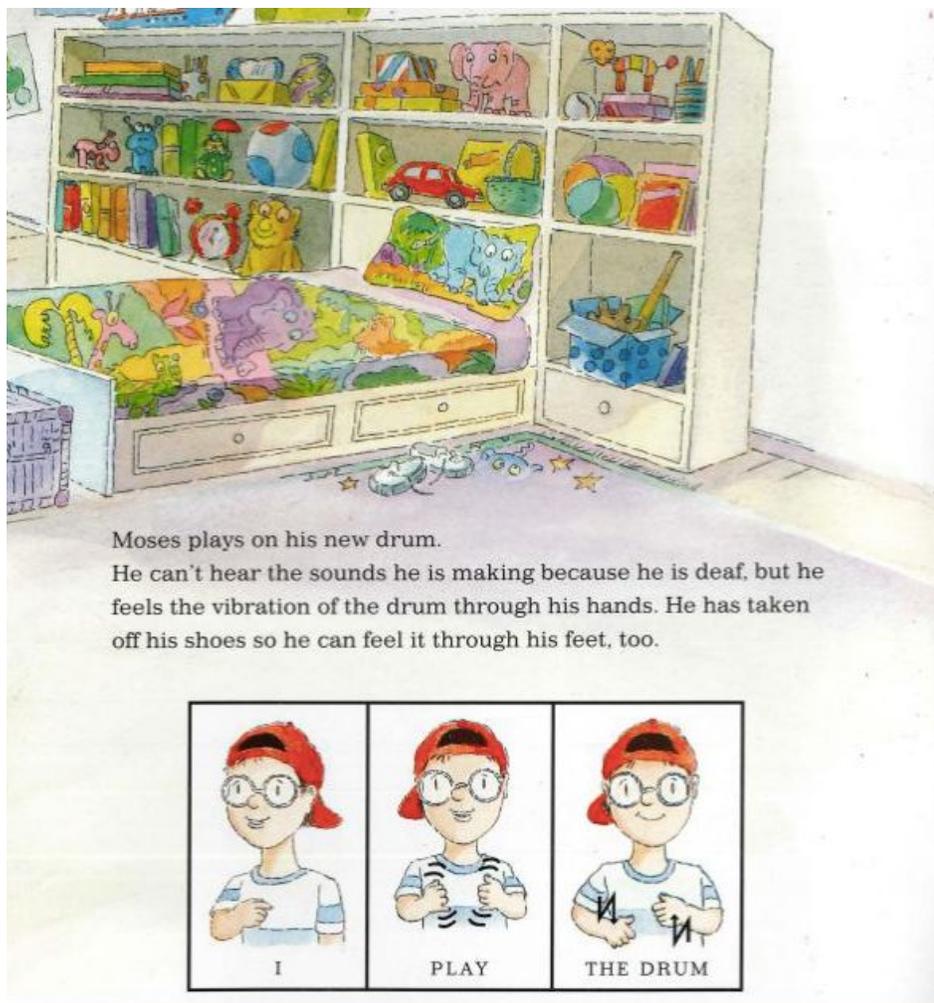


Image 2 - Teaching of ASL from Milmans *Moses Goes to A Concert*

Another children's book that embraces and accepts the use of sign language is *I'm Deaf and It's Okay*, written by Lorraine Aseltine, Evelyn Muller, and Nancy Tait in 1986. The picture book focuses on the emotional impacts and feelings that deaf children often face. The story is about a young boy and his experiences such as thinking kids are laughing at him, getting lost in the grocery store, and fighting with his sister. Each experience comes with certain emotions because the young boy is having experiences unique to a deaf person. The main turmoil that the young boy experiences is the acceptance that he will be deaf for the rest of his life, and that he will be a deaf adult. He finally comes to terms with this when he meets an older deaf mentor. The characters in the book communicate using lip reading and ASL. At the end of the book, a brief lesson on the American Sign Language for each emotion mentioned in the book is included.

Lorraine Aseltine, Evelyn Muller, and Nancy Tait, who all contribute to the book's unique perspective regarding the emotional impact that deafness can have. Both Aseltine and Muller are professionals who work with deaf children and Tait is the mother of deaf children who also works as an assistant in a preschool for the deaf and hard-of-hearing. Their book not only offers an acceptance of deafness and Deaf Culture, but it also validates many of the feelings that a young deaf child could be dealing with. It is important for deaf children to see accurate representations of people like themselves. Additionally, *I'm Deaf and It's Okay* shows hearing children some of the problems that deaf peers could be facing; this encourages sensitivity and increases awareness.

Recently published children's books have used creativity and characters who are animals to convey messages about deafness. *Ranvir Cannot Hear*, written by Genevieve Yusu and illustrated by Shermain Philip, tells the story of an elephant, Ranvir, who is deaf. This 2012

picture book tells the story of Ranvir, as he travels across India trying to find his hearing.

Ranvir meets other animals along the way who help him realize that he is perfect just the way he is and that he should focus on what he can do rather than on what he cannot do. This inclusive and empowering children's book also has American Sign Language and British Sign Language in the back. Amazon and Google Books reviewers alike rave that the story is inspiring and helps open a conversation with kids about acceptance. Numerous other books have been published using animals to convey themes about acceptance and deafness. Carole Addabbo's *Dina the Deaf Dinosaur*, published in 1997, teaches children this moral by telling the story of Dina, who is a deaf dinosaur. Dina runs away from home because her parents will not learn how to sign and they want her to only speak. Dina has another Deaf friend who knows sign language so she learns, but her parents will not learn. Dina meets other animals when she runs away and one of them knows how to sign and the other animals become educated on Deaf Culture. At the end of the story Dina's parents find her and want to learn how to sign. Addabbo's book also includes visuals to teach American Sign Language.

Not all children's books published after the rise of manualism have been so accepting of Deaf Culture and American Sign Language. The use of hearing aids and cochlear implants are evident in literature for children. Many children's books still follow the medical model of deafness, the part of the term's definition that only refers to physical hearing loss, and does not include Deaf Culture (Rana, 2017, p. 70). These books include "references to 'fixing' a character's deafness or an improved quality of his or her life after having received hearing aids and or cochlear implants" (Rana, 2017, p. 70). This view does not coincide with ideals of Deaf Culture that dictate that being deaf is not something that needs fixing. Children and families

today do not always embrace Deaf Culture, they often will raise deaf children in the hearing world which is highly controversial in the Deaf community. Cochlear implants and hearing aid often help children assimilate into hearing culture. Although both technologies are generally viewed negatively by Deaf Culture, many children today use them, so it is important that they are represented in children's literature.

Gracie's Ears, written and illustrated by Debbie Blackington, tells a story based on true events. The book, published in 2011, depicts what it is like to have a hearing loss, how a hearing aid works, and what it is like to wear one. Although the book does not embrace Deaf Culture, it does call for awareness and acceptance of deaf people. Another children's book that teaches readers about hearing aids is Fara Augustover's *Harmony Hears a Hoot*, published in 2014. This work captures the story of an owl, Harmony, who has "listening devices" to help her hear. Harmony is about to start kindergarten and she has good speech and language skills, but she has a hard time with social interactions. *Harmony Hears a Hoot* helps prepare kids, both hearing and deaf, for what they may encounter in school. For deaf children, who are mainstreamed and use a hearing aid, the book helps show kids social interactions they might have and how to best deal with them. The book teaches all children reading the book that they might meet people who are different from them and demonstrates themes of inclusion and acceptance.

A popular book for slightly older children is *El Deafo*, by Cece Bell (image 3). This graphic novel tells the story of a deaf bunny who uses a hearing aid and reflects on many of the experiences that Bell had growing up using a hearing aid. The book touches upon the common problems a deaf child might have, such as communication difficulties, the embarrassment of

hearing aids, and difficulty making friends. Eventually, her hearing aids help the young bunny develop an identity as a superhero. *El Deafo* promotes self-acceptance and inclusion while giving deaf children with hearing aids a character to relate to. Like *El Deafo*, Melanie Patricoff Hardback's 2010 picture book, *Sophie's Tales: Learning to Listen*, gives children with a hearing loss a character to identify with. Sophie, a dog, undergoes the process of getting a cochlear implant. The book gives children someone to relate to as Sophie is diagnosed, meets her audiologist, gets the cochlear implant surgery, and receives auditory training. The book proves to be inspiring and has many acclaimed reviews such as, Gale Rice, Ph.D., Chair



Image 3 - Cece Bell's graphic novel *El Deafo*

of Communication Disorders and Deaf Education at Fontbonne University, who wrote, "I collect children's books which feature characters with disabilities, always hoping to find one in which the character is empowered and defined by more than their disability. These are not easy to find, but Sophie's Tales fits the bill, and I am eager to add this book to my collection" (Sophie's Tales LLC, 2017).

Society's views on deafness and Deaf Culture can also be examined in terms of access to children's literature. Today, books are more accessible than ever for deaf children. Shared reading activities with caregivers are critical for language development in children; this is true for both deaf and hearing children (Berke, 2013). Although deaf children do not usually use speech they still need to develop language and literacy skills, vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, and metalinguistic awareness, which is promoted during shared reading time (Berke). Historically, reading to deaf children has been successful when the parent mediates between the two languages, American Sign Language and English, while reading (Berke, 2013). However, with new education and technologies reading to deaf children has become more accessible. Websites and blogs now have the power to share information, reading tips, and book suggestions for parents who have deaf children. Parents network and share tips such as, "read the same story again and again. This will help your child catch words he may have missed before. Explain the story as needed" (readingrockets). Parents are also advised to try to use simple signs when reading and use stuffed animals to act out a story for a child who is 3-4 years old (readingrockets).

Children's books specifically written for deaf children are accessible for parents. Suggested books to read with deaf infants include *Baby Signs* (image 4), written by Joy Allen in

2008, and *My First Book of Sign*, written by Joan Holub in 2004. These picture books introduce young children to the use of American Sign Language, teach basic signs, and demonstrate American Sign Language fingerspelling hand shapes. Anthony Lewis wrote *My First Animal Signs* (image 5), and other baby sign books. Lewis had also written a series of children's

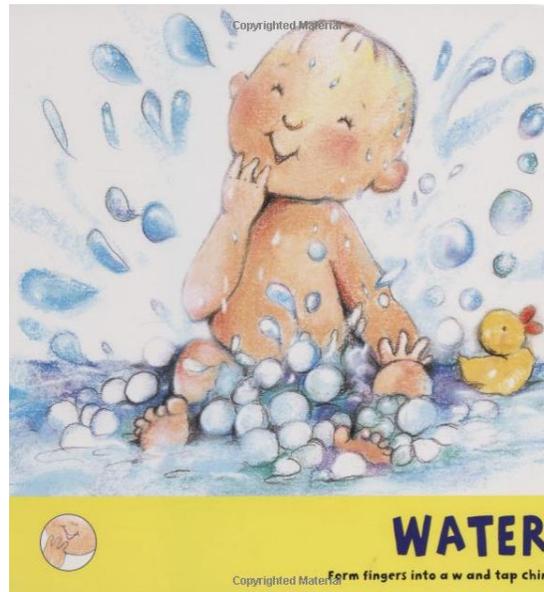


Image 4 - *Baby Sign* by Joy Allen

books effective for preschool age children, including *Sign About Meal Time*, *Sign About Play Time*, and *Sign About Going Out*. These works introduce children to more expansive sign vocabularies that relate to daily life. Annie Kubler has developed a series of books to provide access to language for both deaf and hearing children. Kubler's Sign and Sing Along books demonstrate how to sign popular songs and nursery rhymes like *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star* and *The Itsy Bitsy Spider*.



Image 5 - My First Animal Signs by Anthony Lewis

All of these children's books provide insight into the view of society. The new age books, published after the decline of oralism, reflect more accepting and progressive views on deafness and Deaf Culture. More and more children's books do embrace Deaf Culture and support the idea of communication solely through American Sign Language, while others take the view that technologies, like cochlear implants, can help deaf people assimilate to the hearing world. Although many of these children's books deal with the realistic struggles and social barriers that deaf children face, none of them portray the deaf characters as disabled. Progressive and accepting views can also be seen in juvenile fiction works from recent times allowing these messages to be instilled in children as they get older. Despite the fact that "deaf characters mostly appear in picture books and children's novels rather than in Young Adult (YA) fiction" there are a few juvenile fiction works that tell stories about deafness.

One of the most popular juvenile fiction works that involves deaf characters is *Wonderstruck*, by Brian Selznick. *Wonderstruck* was published in 2011 and became a New York

Times Best Seller. The book is half written and half illustrated; the story of Ben is told through words and the story of Rose is told through illustrations. Brian Selznick, a well-known author from previous publications, is able to incorporate deafness into the eye of the public with this book. *Wonderstruck* has a detailed and well-written plot that is about something larger than Ben and Rose's deafness. Although deafness is part of the plot, *Wonderstruck* does not focus solely on Deaf Culture or even deafness itself; the book is more about two kids on an adventure who happen to be deaf. *Wonderstruck* helps to bring deaf characters in literature into the public eye and provides a representation of deafness in juvenile fiction.

Another recently published juvenile fiction novel is *Five Flavors of Dumb*, written by Anthony John and published in 2010. The book is about a high school senior named Piper, who has been deaf since the age of six. The plot of the book revolves around Piper trying to get a job because her parents used her college fund to pay for a cochlear implant for her baby sister. Piper ends up becoming the manager of the popular high school rock band, called Dumb, despite criticism from many people because she can't hear the music the band plays. The book gives a 'you can do anything or overcome anything message. *Five Flavors of Dumb* also reflects the controversy over cochlear implants; Piper's sister has been implanted and Piper has not. Piper thinks that she gets by fine just the way she is and embraces her deafness, however sometimes Piper does envy her sister's implant. Reviews of *Five Flavors of Dumb* generally say that John's fictional portrayal of Piper's deafness is an accurate representation of a real-life situation.

In conclusion, the trends in deafness and Deaf Culture throughout history are reflected in children's literature. Few children's books relating to deafness were published before the 1980s, which shows how underrepresented deafness was during this time. The children's books that

were published during the period of oralism and decades where Deaf Culture was still becoming less oppressed, society's views on deafness and Deaf Culture were reflected in children's books that supported oralism. The change towards accepting manualism is also reflected in children's literature. Not only was deafness becoming more frequently represented in children's books, but Deaf Culture was gaining support. Books began to embrace and sometimes even teach American Sign Language; they did not represent deafness as a disability or limitation. The controversy about cochlear implants and other assistive devices, which is usually not part of Deaf Culture, is also seen in children's books.

The aspects of Deaf Culture and deafness in children's literature can also be seen as a way that people's beliefs and views are shaped. What children see in the books they read or people read to them give them ideas about the world, other people, and themselves (Golos, 2012). Books published during the oralist trend instilled the ideals of lip reading, speech training, and the assimilation into the hearing world. However, after the 1970s the acceptance of Deaf Culture and American Sign Language was portrayed in children's literature. Books started to teach children sign and acceptance of all people. Books about deafness became accessible to both deaf and hearing children; books showed deaf children that there are other people and kids like them and taught hearing children about deafness. Children's books today represent both deaf children who use American Sign Language and deaf children who use cochlear implants and hearing aids.

As our society continues to move forward, so does the inclusion deaf people and the acceptance of Deaf Culture, as seen in children's literature. This ideal of inclusion is true on a larger scale as acceptance of diversity and people with disabilities has recently been progressing.

The Americans with Disabilities Act, passed in 1990, “mandated an environment essential to acceptance and integration” (Moore, 1998, p. 13). The act helped guarantee equality for deaf people and other people with disabilities. This is evident in the language used when talking about diverse people; terms like “deaf and dumb” or “mentally retarded” were once acceptable norms, however now their degrading use is practically extinct. Social acceptance of diverse people has been growing since the act passed in 1990 and with today’s societal trends of inclusion and acceptance this trend is projected to continue to grow.

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