1982


Abbie Donald Evans
Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY IN A TOTAL INSTITUTION:
AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF A STATE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR THE
DEAF

The Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical Col.  Ph.D.  1982

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THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY
IN A TOTAL INSTITUTION: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF A
STATE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
In partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in
The Department of Sociology

by
Abbie Donald Evans
B.A., Louisiana State University in New Orleans, 1967
M.A., Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, 1971
December, 1982
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to my professors, fellow students, SSD (the State School for the Deaf) and my family members.

Very special recognition is due to Dr. William W. Falk my major professor. He has made both a scholarly and personal contribution to the development of this study. His humanity matches his very bright abilities as a sociologist. His help during this study extended far beyond the usual perfunctory duties offered by many teachers. Forest (Andy) Deseran taught me much about symbolic interactionism, and, like Dr. Falk, provided not only a teacher-student relationship, but also a friend-to-friend relationship. Dr. Perry Howard taught me much Macro sociology and in a personal way influenced my thinking a lot. Dr. Michael Grimes helped me learn methods and gave assistance months after I had left the department. These professors definitely constitute a credit to the department of sociology and to the university at large.

I extend appreciation to George Lord and Mike McGettigan my fellow students, for numerous hours of thinking theory together. In Baton Rouge Robert and Sue Chadbourne gave me a home away from home and I thank them.

At SSD, the superintendent cooperated in every way. One could not ask more of him and my gratitude is great. Also the principal and especially the assistant principal of lower and middle schools cooperated in every way. Appreciation is extended to the teachers,
staff members, students and houseparents who gave interviews, permitted my presence in their work places and otherwise helped me gather information.

I am grateful to Mrs. Mable Edmiston for typing and suggesting ideas for the project. Mrs. Edmiston and Sherry Schieman transcribed numerous tapes and typed, altogether, an astronomical number of pages of work.

Finally, the greatest debt, the greatest sacrifice, and therefore, my greatest gratitude is to Barbara, Jeff and Greg who lived without me for nearly two years. Fragile words fail to convey my feelings of gratitude for their acceptance of the great price we paid.
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ABSTRACT

Above all deafness constitutes a language and communication problem. A child born deaf experiences a form of double deprivation: symbolic deprivation and social interactional deprivation. Both the development of self and the construction of a world (human culture) are impeded by the lack of language.

This first ethnography of a state residential school for the deaf (SSD) follows Glaser and Strauss (1967) by developing a theory from "data" systematically obtained on the field. The formulations of Goffman, Berger and Luckmann, Mead and Bernstein guided this inquiry and provided it a sense of reference.

The central problem investigated in question form is: What are the effects of restricted language and restricted environment on the self and on the world view of deaf children in a residential school?

Information was gathered from August through mid-December, 1981 by means of participant observation, interviews, and secondary sources. A total of twenty-three teachers from every school (lower, middle, high, vocational and special studies) were interviewed. Ninety-eight per cent of all interviews were tape recorded (my voice recorded responses of deaf members) and modal length of interviews
was one-and-one-half hours. I lived in the school infirmary and made daily observations in classrooms (for one week durations). Observations were also made on playgrounds, cafeterías, bus trips, etc.

The findings of this study are subsumed under three headings: language acquisition, total institution, and self. A process of "total enculturation" (instead of "disculturation") is the socialization norm at SSD.

One important finding was that SSD does not give highest priority to English and, not surprisingly, that students acquire a very poor command of English. ASL is viewed as a restricted code of communication which permits a restricted self and world view.

It was found that some students were unable to talk about themselves. Others did so in terms of school oriented activities. And yet egoism was very common at all ages.

A rich underlife was found to exist. Using some ingenious and creative ploys students preserve self even in the face of round-the-clock surveillance.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Since Benjamin Lee Whorf's work (1962) Language, Thought and Reality, much has been written about the role of language in the social construction of reality (see especially Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Linguistic man has been characterized by various writers as the "wise man" (Homo sapien), "tool maker" (Homo fabricans), gregarious or social man (Homo socius), "The order maker" (Homo nomos), and finally as "talking man" (Homo loquens; Hertzler, 1965). Increasingly, anthropologists (White, 1949), ethnomethodologists (Mehan and Wood, 1975) phenomenologists (Berger and Luckmann, 1967) and sociologists in general (Homans, 1978) have placed more and more emphasis on "talking man."

In the field of social psychology George Herbert Mead (1977) has made great claims for the significance of language by arguing, for example, that it is a prerequisite for mind and for self. No language, no mind, no self. Similarly, in his work on the sociology of language Joyce Hertzler (1965) bluntly states that "brains think with words." Again no language, no thought processes. Scott and Lyman (1975), on the other hand, go so far as to suggest that we may approach the Hobbesian question, "How is society possible?", by analyzing what they hold to be the basic ingredient of interpersonal
ritual -- talk. "Talk," they say, "is the fundamental material of human relations" (p. 171). Eitzen (1980) refers to languageless infants as a "horde of savages" who appear on the scene (by birth) every day in America. It is, he says, through social interaction that they are humanized and the vehicle through which socialization occurs is language. Dialectically, we may say that words make "man" and man makes words. Man invents symbols for things that are out there and then treats those symbols as if they are whatever it is they represent (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). Postman and Weingartner (1969) remind us of Korzybski's observation that "whatever we say something is, it is not." They emphasize that meaning is not located in words, meaning is in people.

In recent years sociologists have increasingly given attention to the idea that reality is mediated by language; different views of reality are concretely determined by the different structures of language.¹ This popular notion holds that taxonomies, interpretative schemes, social categories of space, time and causality, behavioral recipes and value hierarchies are filtered by semantic domains and syntactic structures. To be even more specific, all this is mediated through forms of language such as class-based codes and different linguistic repertories (Luckmann, 1975). The basic point here is that different groups use different linguistic codes and these in turn represent to their respective groups differing realities. Alfred Schutz (1973:18) noted the social origin of knowledge, its context-bound character, and its relationship to
language:

Only a very small part of my knowledge of the world originates within my personal experience. The greater part is socially derived . . . I am taught not only how to define the environment . . . but also how typical constructs have to be formed in accordance with the system of relevances accepted from the anonymous unified point of view of the in-group . . . The typifying medium par excellence by which socially derived knowledge is transmitted is the vocabulary and the syntax of everyday language.

Thomas Luckmann (1975) posits a relationship between linguistic styles (or codes of language) and social class. First of all he argues that kinship units are units of the stratification system, and secondly that the family has a monopoly on primary socialization. One important consequence of this monopoly is directly related to the range, content and style of language which is linked to social strata. Furthermore, class codes of language are said to reinforce group solidarity which is analogous in some ways to that of occupational argots. In short, language is the primary vehicle of socialization — especially for initiation into the social world (Berger and Berger, 1979).

To recapitulate: many sociologists and other social scientists treat the use of language as the variable which differentiates humans from all other animals. Therefore, it has been traditional to theorize about the relationship between language and (1) reality, (2) mind, perception, thought, cognition, (3) self and (4) social structure. Given sociologists' sensitivity to the "social", it is rather surprising that they have virtually ignored language as a topic for sociological inquiry. Most often, language
seems to be taken for granted — it is a given. But what happens in the sociological frame of reference when language, as it is assumed to exist, is absent? That is, what happens for the technically languageless individual? How does he or she learn and get socialized into the ways of the world?

When these individuals are children, many of them are unable to be effectively initiated into the social world; they are severely cut off from the socially constructed world of symbols, cut off from that universe which sets man apart from all other primates (Berger and Luckmann's "symbolic universe"). Many deaf children are sent away to residential schools at age three to learn to remedy this, to learn language. For them, the family does not have a monopoly on primary socialization. The family will not transmit its own class codes of language. In fact, the typical family will not even be able to use the child's language (if it is sign language). Instead, the residential school obtains a kind of monopoly over its residents (i.e., deaf children) and almost total power over what they shall become.

In short, the residential school serves as a comprehensive or total institution. Here we have the most obvious form of social determinism: the determination of the situation and the linguistic-act by the social structure (Luckmann, 1975). Unlike Goffman's total institution where mortification of self and disculturation occur, young deaf children without language enter residential schools where total enculturation will transpire. The construction — not
the mortification — of a first self will eventuate. Total encultur-
ation — not disculturation — will be the norm. For these near
languageless children the institution will structure the self, the
mind, the world, and one's place in it. Also, it will provide the
children with a language, an argot unfamiliar and unknown to most
family members and generalized others. Objectified in that unique
visible language is a configuration of meanings -- a culture -- which
defines the world for them. For an extended period of time, very
few people outside the residential school can have linguistic/
symbolic access to them, to their definitions of reality. This means
that school peers and staff members have a near monopoly over defini-
tions of the world. It is this ontological process which is focused
upon in this study.

Statement of the Problem and An
Introduction to Deafness

This study will examine the relationship between language
acquisition and use, formation of self and the role played by an
institutional environment. More specifically, the central problem
to be investigated is given here in question form

What are the effects of restricted language and restricted
environment on the self and on the world view of deaf
children in a residential school?

Following Bernstein (1977), this study will explore how symbolic
systems are both realizations and regulators of the structure of
social relationships. In this case the residential school is the
structure of social relationships within which American Sign
Language (hereafter referred to as ASL), fingerspelling, and written and verbal symbol systems are realized. Unlike children in any other socialization situation, the institution will give most deaf students their first true language—a language of signs, then a language of words. Another important variable is social class—wealthier deaf children generally attend private oral schools or public schools and are more likely to acquire greater English skills than are residential students. Perhaps more than any verbal language, ASL is a regulator of social relationships since it is a "foreign" language to the major society. That is, if one's primary language is ASL, then his social relationships are greatly determined and limited by that language. In this sense it is clear that the terms "community" and "communication" have a common root base. (Of course the same would be true of Chicanos in Chicago whose main language is Spanish— they are bound together by that language.)

It is necessary to make clear at the outset that there is considerable variance among deaf people (i.e., not all deaf people are equally "deaf"). Some are born deaf (prelingual deafness) while others lose hearing later (postlingual deafness). The degree to which an individual is deaf and/or the length of time and age at which deafness occurs is related to a form of stratification among deaf people. This is directly the outgrowth of having never been able to hear, thus having never been able to form a vocabulary and articulate words in conjunction with aural capacities. The simple axiom here is: the longer one has had hearing capacities, ceteris
paribus, the greater the probability that one has a more nearly nor-
mal or normative English vocabulary and use of that language. One's
language disadvantage, then, corresponds to the degree (moderate,
severe or profound) to which one has been or is currently deaf and
to age of onset of deafness.

It is important to take note of this variability among deaf
people because, in this study, the ability to "talk" is given much
emphasis insofar as it is related to the individual's ability to
comprehend the world around him/her. Also, the forms of talk among
deaf people are varied -- i.e., there is not simply aural-oral lan-
guage. Instead, aural-oral language may be supplanted or even re-
placed by sign language, a purely physical language. Fant (1972:iii)
notes that there are several sign languages: In the United States
there is American Indian sign language and two other sign languages
which are used by most deaf Americans -- signed English and ASL
(what Fant calls "Siglish" and "Ameslan"). Fingerspelling alone is
not a language and is not a part of a sign language; that is,
"fingerspelling is nothing more than the presentation of spoken
English in a visual-manual medium . . ." (p. iii).

In this study it is anticipated that the stratification found
among the adult deaf population will be paralleled (in fact, have
its origins) in the residential school setting where many deaf
children get their formal education. In that setting, there should
exist a type of hierarchical arrangement determined by language
ability. Those students who have high verbal skills (English)
constitute the "elite" on campus. These vocal children either have some residual hearing or were postlingually deafened, or both. They can talk and talk is "human." Of lesser prestige are those students with high skill when using American Sign Language (ASL, the most widely used language system among deaf people). This group either learned signs early in life and/or their own parents are deaf. On a third level down the hierarchy are unskilled ASL users who probably entered school late and thus learned (any) language late. On the bottom are the "slow" children who are unskilled in the use of speech and/or manual methods of communication. This group uses many crude, unconventional gestures and may be multi-handicapped.

American Sign Language is the true language of deaf people (Fant, 1972:v; Furth, 1966:15). Furthermore, most deaf people feel that it is the "natural" language for them (Northern and Downs, 1974:253). And today most deaf people in the United States use ASL as their primary language (Schlesinger and Meadow, 1972:31; Jacobs, 1974:34). Given the widespread use and importance of American Sign Language for deaf people, it is important to state here some of the assumptions being made about ASL as it should be found in a residential school. First of all, ASL is a real language with an estimated lexicon of 25,000 signs (estimated by Klima in Moores, 1978:173). Not long ago it was held that ASL was a loose collection of primitive, home-made gestures without any grammar; Klima and Bellugi (1979:30) represent the current position of most linguists today:

Far from being a loose collection of gestures, ASL is a
language with a complex grammar, both at the level of internal structure of the sign and at the level of operations that signs can undergo as they are modulated for special meaning within ASL sentences. None of these operations derive from those of English; the principles on which they are based are directly suited to a visual-manual rather than auditory-vocal language.

ASL, then, is a separate language from all other languages. It is not a dialect of English nor does it derive from English. It is "a complexly structured language with a highly articulated grammar" (p. 4). Therefore, ASL is viewed as a foreign language and most deaf students are considered to be bilingual people (see Vernon and Koh, 1974:38). Deaf children, then, are users of a language foreign to their own family members, neighbors and society at large. On the other hand, English is a foreign language, at best a second language, for the deaf person (Cicourel and Boese, 1972, also assume this position). This is the paradox: on the one hand, linguists and members of the deaf community -- now more sensitive than ever to cultural pluralism -- declare ASL to be an independent and functional language of its own. Thus, any pejorative statements which claim it is inferior are ethnocentric claims. ASL is defended as our "native" language; English is "your" language. On the other hand, deaf people live in an English speaking society where textbooks, newspapers, job application forms and family members utilize English. Even after 200 years of teaching them language skills, the deaf usually do not acquire proficiency in the English language (Moores, 1978:223). For example, a study in 1965 of 93% of all students enrolled in schools in the U.S., ages 16 and older, found 30% were
functionally illiterate; only 5% achieved at 10th grade level or better (see Mindel and Vernon's 1971 review of achievement studies). The average reading level of deaf people in the United States is at the 4th grade level. It is believed by many writers that the problem lies not in sign language, not in lower social class conditions, not in cognitive patterns, but in the imposition of an early linguistically deprived environment (Moores, 1978:170).^5

Another assumption about ASL (and other sign languages) is that it is a unique phenomenon since it is the only non oral-aural language in the world. Furthermore, as a visual-gestural language it differs from some of the commonly accepted universal characteristics posited for language: "that language is based on speech and the vocal apparatus; that linguistic symbols are essentially arbitrary, the form of a symbol bearing no relation to the form of its referent" (Klima and Bellugi, 1979:3). ASL is pervaded at all levels by iconicity (representational, mimetic) and is global in character; that is, it is a concept, not word-based language. As noted earlier, finger-spelling is English represented by configurations (alphabet) of the fingers and is not ASL. To say that the lexical items of ASL tend to be globally iconic means that many symbols are mimetic (pictoral) representations of objects or events (a parallel here may be found in the evolution of human writing in which the first stage was idio­graphic: a circle meant the sun; the second stage of development was iconic: a circle with straight lines going out meant sunshine). In this unique language, pantomime and non-conventional gestures are
often interspersed with the regular signs.

While some writers (see Friedman's comments, 1977) feel that users of ASL are "culturally and cognitively deprived," most current researchers see this as an untenable position with no evidence to support it. For example, Donald Moores (1978) objects to the notion of equating ASL with Basil Bernstein's (1977) restricted code of communication (Bernstein is discussed in detail in a later section, "Language and Social Class"). Since ASL is considered to be a legitimate language, then, it would be expected to manifest both restricted and elaborated codes just as any spoken language would. While some have argued, however, that the iconicity, the mimetic, and the idio­graphic qualities of ASL make it a "restricted" language, it is not a goal of this study to determine whether ASL is restricted or elabor­ated as a code of communication. It is, on the other hand, central to this investigation to discover, if possible, the connection be­tween ASL and perception of reality.

Further, this study will investigate life within a total in­stitution which constitutes a relatively isolated and closed world. Isolation and routinization characterize the institution:

A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life (Goffman, 1961).

Most deaf children housed in state residential schools are from the lower classes. Various social classes differ in their control over the means of mental production (Collins, 1975). From a
structural standpoint the approach in this study will view the school as an "imperatively coordinated association" (Dahrendorf, 1969) and treats the school as a form of social organization in which there is an inherent authority relationship. Authority is a legitimate relation of supra- and sub-ordination and every position in an imperatively co-ordinated group can be recognized as belonging to one who dominates or one who is dominated. To put it another way, "the division into positive and negative dominance roles is a fact of social structure" (p. 219). In the school setting, this basically takes the form of relatively powerful teachers and relatively powerless students.

Inmates or students who live in total institutions occupy subordinate positions and must adapt to official rules and requirements of the organization. One set of adjustments to official rules and requirements which is relevant to the goals of this study is known as the "underlife" of a public institution (Goffman, 1961). These secondary adjustments refer to acts of members who habitually employ unauthorized means or unauthorized ends, or both, in the process of their daily existence in the institution. Those who make a primary adjustment to the organization become programmed, normal "co-operators" (p. 189). On the other hand, those in the underlife get around the organization's assumptions as to what they should do and what they should be. It follows that members with low status in the establishment tend to have less commitment and emotional attachment to it than do higher status members. They are more likely to involve
themselves in the modalities (English, ASL) and their skills will be related to the probability of participation in the underlife at the school. In other words, students with poor language (English, ASL) skills will enjoy less status and prestige on campus and, therefore, will exhibit a greater tendency for inhabiting the underlife. Other relevant variables associated with such behavior may be age, race, and social class. This study will seek to discover the underlife and who its participants are at a residential school for the deaf.

Significance of the Problem

This study is significant in several ways. (1) This will be the first ethnography of a residential school for the deaf. In that sense it will fill a void in the sociological literature on a group of handicapped people virtually ignored by sociological researchers. (2) It may be the first description of "total enculturation" in a total institution. Rather than a restrictive or retarding effect like "disculturation" and "mortification of self," a residential school for deaf children equips its students with language and its own brand of socialization. Observation of this group, then, offers a unique opportunity not to be found in other social settings. (3) This study attempts to develop theoretical statements which are grounded in qualitative, empirical research (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It generates theory as much as it tests existing theory. More details of this approach will be provided in the chapter on methods. (4) In recent years new laws in many states have called for "mainstreaming" deaf children (i.e., including them in the normal classrooms). This study can potentially provide information on
whether or not deaf students in general prefer their linguistic community (subculture) or integration into a system which uses a difficult and foreign language (spoken English). (5) Finally, this study addresses questions about the relationship between language and thought, reality and self. The researcher will be able to observe very young children who have no language and catalog what happens to them in their everyday situations. These observations can provide opportunities for considering socialization by non-linguistic and facial gestures as well as the development of language abilities.

Organization of the Study

This first section has served to introduce the study. The second chapter provides a theoretical outline for the study focusing on language and its relationship to the social construction of reality. It is in this section that the relationship between social class and language are discussed. Chapter Three is a review of relevant empirical literature. This focuses on ethnographies of schools in a general sense, since very little has been done specifically on deaf people. In Chapter Four, the methods and procedures to be used are described. Chapters Five, Six and Seven present the findings of the field work. They focus, in order, on the acquisition of language, life in a total institution and formation of self. Chapter Eight is a statement of the most crucial theoretical propositions derived from the study. The last chapter provides a summary of the study as well as implications drawn from it.
CHAPTER II

LANGUAGE AND MATTERS SOCIAL

"In the Word was the Beginning ... the beginning of Man and of Culture."
... Leslie White

Man the Social Animal

This chapter is a selective presentation of theoretical ideas drawn primarily from the writings of George Herbert Mead, Joyce Hertzler, Peter Berger, Thomas Luckmann and Basil Bernstein. The omission of Erving Goffman is intentional. Because of his importance his work is briefly summarized and liberally drawn upon in the chapter on Total Institutions. In the remainder of the present chapter, all theoretical writings are presented in ways that make lucid the importance of studying deaf people and their language/socialization experience.

First is presented a brief argument for the uniqueness of man who, by means of language, occupies two worlds; then Mead's thoughts on significant and non-significant gestures, language and cognition (contrasted with the ideas of Piaget), and language and self are given. Third is a summary of Joyce Hertzler's work regarding the social functions of language. Fourth, selected ideas from Peter and Brigitte Berger's (1979) works plus Berger and Luckmann's important
phenomenological work on language and The Social Construction of Reality (1967) are included; many ideas from this work are relevant to any study of deaf people who (usually) begin life with profound language problems. The final section of this chapter deals with "language and social class" with emphasis on the controversial work of English sociologist, Basil Bernstein.

Unique Man: The Meaning Maker

The greatest miracle in our world today isn't the bomb, the color T.V., or the supersonic jet. The miracle is a child -- speaking in the language of his culture. How a child can somehow make his eating and breathing systems produce seven to nine sounds per second in words uttered at the rate of 180 per minute, and give them a consistent order and meaning is incomprehensible. -- Dixon, 1971

Charles Darwin once said: "There is no fundamental difference between man and the highest mammals in their mental faculties . . . the mental powers of higher animals do not differ in kind, though greatly in degree from the corresponding powers of man" (White, 1949:23). Two distinguished anthropologists, Ralph Linton and Alexander Goldenweiser, also agree with Darwin that man is no more than a "talented animal," that the mental difference between human beings and all other animals is merely one of degree and not one of kind (p. 23). I disagree.

The position taken in this study is that man actually differs in kind from all other living creatures. Man inhabits a twofold world: obviously he lives in the same physical environment with all other life forms, but simultaneously, and more importantly, he
experiences life in a symbolic man-made universe. In his discussion about the "social world taken for granted," Schutz (Wagner: 1970:79) alludes to the double world of man by noting that man is born into a ready-made world which is at the outset a socio-cultural and not merely a physical world.

The late Leslie White (1949) set forth his thesis that the mind of man and the mind of non-man are fundamentally different. It is a difference of kind and not simply a difference of degree because man uses symbols and no other animal can do that (p. 25). Non-human animals are locked into the physical world and cannot enter into nor participate in the world of symbols in which a human being lives:

It is impossible for a dog, horse, bird, or even an ape, to have any understanding of the meaning of the sign of the cross to a Christian, or of the fact that black (white among the Chinese) is the color of mourning. No chimpanzee or laboratory rat can appreciate the difference between Holy water and distilled water, or grasp the meaning of Tuesday, 3, of sin . . . It is not . . . that the lower animals can do these things but to a lesser degree than ourselves; they cannot perform these acts of appreciation and distinction at all (pp. 23-24).

Even George Homans (1978:134) who places man on the side of nature with other animals argues that human social behavior is complicated by the fact that stimuli for man is largely verbal. He acknowledges that language sets human behavior further apart from that of animals than does anything else. According to Miller (1973:68-69) George Herbert Mead also hypothesizes about the man-language linkage and its meaning. He believes that man is unique and distinct from all other animals because he has language which makes him a rational creature. Man is differentiated from other animals, says Mead, by thinking, i.e., by possessing the ability to analyze the field of
stimulation and to pick one stimulus rather than another (1977:171). In short, the behavior of non-human animals is dictated by environmental stimuli and genetically coded instincts, but the language-using, thinking-man, argues Mead, constructs his own symbolic world, i.e., culture.

At this point it is necessary to define the molar concept "language" as it is used in this study and to distinguish it from the concept of communication, which is not to be used interchangeably. Language is defined as a formal system of verbal and/or gestural (used by deaf people) symbols which have rules of syntax and grammar that specify the order and the manner in which these symbols are to be used. Communication, on the other hand, refers to the process of conveying information. Animals and humans may communicate information with growls, whistles, cries or grunts, groans, gestures, facial expressions and body positions. Humans transmit "messages" (symbolic information) in the form of body symbols or with complex language as defined above. It is necessary to emphasize here that while it is possible for one to communicate ideas with hand gestures, facial expressions, dances, etc., it is important to remember that one can communicate greater quantities of meaning and more sophisticated, precise information (greater quality of meaning) with standard spoken (or ASL) language.

Some deaf people use crude homemade signs while others use complex sign systems to convey meaning. On that crude-complex symbol continuum, the question arises: If a deaf person possesses very few or no significant symbols (i.e., no spoken words), no formal ASL
system how does he differ greatly from chimps or dogs who have no
significant symbols, no language? Of course a man with virtually no
symbol system possesses a capacity for language, but in view of the
many claims that humans differ from infrahumans, where is the human
who has virtually no language system? Would he actually inhabit the
physical world of all other animals but not the symbolic world of
men? Would his physical (animal) world basically be unstructured
and not dissected by categories and typifications?

Cicourel's study of sign language helped him develop a two-
level model of interpretive procedures (in contrast to traditional
ethnomethodologists' one verbal world). One of these operates non-
verbally in ways which enables an individual to perceive what others
are doing and thus to sense a social structure (Collins, 1975:110).

At the other level is verbal language or "surface rules."

Would a languageless person "see" hills and mountains as
animals do -- as continuous terrain unbroken by terminological
divisions? Following Leslie White (1949), the symbol is considered
the "universe of humanity." Without the symbol, an infant and a
deaf person with no language at all are not human for "human be-
behavior is symbolic behavior." But would a languageless deaf person
learn a significant repertoire of human behavior by a lifetime of
social interaction -- even with virtually no language? A further
examination of George Mead's ideas will generate even more questions.

George Mead's Linguistic Man

George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) worked at Harvard with Royce
and James and eventually was converted to pragmatic philosophy by the latter colleague (Coser, 1971). As a student of psychology and philosophy his ideas on gestures, language, and mind or cognition (and the social construction of reality), and the link between language and self have had a major influence on sociology -- especially symbolic interactionism. These major ideas are concisely presented below together with an opposing viewpoint of Piaget and the structuralists.

Mead's explication of significant and non-significant "gestures" fits nicely with the preceding prefatory remarks. A dog fight, for example, is called "a conversation of gestures" which, like the gestures of two human boxers, are not significant gestures (Strauss, 1977:155) and self-consciousness may be absent (p. xxvi). Animals use non-significant (non-symbolic) gestures; human beings use significant gestures (or symbols) and these meanings "take on identical meanings to ourselves and to others . . ." (p. xxvi). The latter are said to be the most effective communication and social adjustment tools (p. 158). This is a point of signal importance since the forthcoming discussion of differential codes of communication indicates that some codes are more effective modes of communication than others, especially in school and classroom situations.

Since significant gestures are conscious and non-significant gestures are unconscious, then meaning is not a factor of consciousness until significant symbols are evolved in the process of human experience (p. 167). Phrased differently, significant symbols are gestures that possess meaning and are more than mere stimuli. The
meanings of symbols are constructed by groups and they represent arbitrary creations of linguistic man.

While Mead is willing to label significant body symbols like facial expressions, actors' body postures on stage, or -- say -- hand gestures like "come here" as language, the definition of language in the present study does not allow these disconnected, relatively unsophisticated idiograms to constitute "language" since no rules of grammar and syntax are involved. Formal, complex language and not body gestures is the superior mode of human communication.

Mead's emphasis on the inner life of the actor as the source of overt behavior led him to theorize about the relationship between language and mind/cognition and reality. Language (significant symbols) is by nature social and is the "vehicle of thought" (Miller, 1973:67). It is a tool for communication with oneself and with others; if one has something in his mind that cannot be communicated to another, then it cannot be communicated to oneself and it has no meaning for him (p. 78). Reflective thinking enables a person to organize and to control his own behavior. What is thinking? It is the process of "pointing out" things to oneself before acting. The essence of thinking is "The internalization . . . of the external conversations of [significant] gestures which we carry on with other individuals in the social process" (Strauss, 1977:159). Since human beings think with symbols, language makes mind possible (p. 195). With significant symbols one is able to consciously select and analyze certain stimuli from the field of stimulation. This selective process is essential to human intelligence and is made possible by
language (p. 174). Moreover, intelligent behavior involves delayed reaction which occurs when one picks out the responses and holds them in the organism (p. 177). This "holding" ability is also based on language. Presumably, this means that languageless humans and animals are impulsive, present-moment oriented. Thus, intelligent behavior includes foresight and choice; these constitute alternatives for man in contrast to lower animals who respond involuntarily to the environment, to stimuli. The thinking man is able to deal with present problems in terms of future consequences by reference to "both the past and the future" (p. 178).

For Mead there is a "world-wide difference" between conditioning white rats on the one hand, and the human process of thinking by means of symbols on the other (p. 183). How is such a level of human experience possible? Two conditions make human thought possible: social interaction and communication by means of language (p. 134). In fact, social interaction is said to be the basis, not only of human thought, but also of language, consciousness, mind and self. Mind (reflective intelligence, purposive behavior) emerged from biosocial behavior. To further develop the argument that mind arises through communication, Mead notes that the mind of Helen Keller was "built" by means of manual (fingerspelling) language. Symbolism implements intelligent behavior; i.e., the "peculiar content" of mind is the meaning of things.

Not all theorists agree with Mead that language is a prerequisite for thinking. In fact some well-known writers insist that non-human animals communicate and think (Furth, 1966:23) and have
language too (Collins, 1975:96; Fleming, 1977). The following discussion of the structuralists presents their position that cognition precedes language and not the other way around as Mead said.

**The Structuralist Position**

The structuralist position held by Piaget treats verbal signs as only one aspect of symbolic functioning. There are various forms of symbolic functioning such as imitation, mental imaging, mimicking, and symbolic play (Anastasiow and Hanes, 1976:21). This viewpoint argues that representational thought is associated with general symbolic functioning and not just with language. Further, the development of representational thought is dependent on the processes of cognitive maturation.

From this perspective, Piaget views cognitive development as a process which proceeds through several invariant stages: sensorimotor, pre-conceptual, intuitive thought, concrete operations and formal operations (Maier, 1969:156): (1) a child's developmental process begins with concrete experiences, when these are mastered development proceeds toward mastery of its corresponding abstraction; (2) personality development proceeds from experiences with three worlds -- the physical to the social to the ideational world; (3) the evolution of cognition moves from doing to consciously doing to conceptualization.

It is recognized that early stages of cognitive development do not involve the logical patterns of organization and structure that are inherent in social symbol systems (Anastasiow et al., 1976:
Conscious thought is based on the acquisition of language; language symbols also facilitate storage and retrieval processes in memory. In short, the basic processes associated with the development of cognitive structures are conceptualization and categorization.

In the preconceptual stage (after motor intelligence), children who acquire language are able to communicate with other people, to think, to represent the external world, the past and the future. At this point, however, they are not yet able to cognitively recognize Mead's generalized other.

During this period — ages two to four — play is the primary tool for adaptation: "The child plays his way through life" (Maier, 1969:118). But it is a combination of both language and play which becomes the vehicle for cognitive development. Increasingly the child accepts speech as a conveyer of meaning and by means of verbal or non-verbal communication a bond is established between thought and word (p. 120). As a result of this nexus there is a negation of the child's autistic world of imagery and ludic play. This suggests that a child with a severe deprivation of language, play, or imitative behavior, would tend to remain in his autistic world, to be less accessible to the impact of his environment. If so, then we can reasonably expect deaf children (or adults) with severe language problems to exhibit autistic, egocentric behavior.

Language, then, frees a child from purely sensorimotor behavior, from a world entirely linked to his own desires of physical satisfaction. With language, "identification" becomes possible: a "good child" obeys parents, a "bad child" disobeys. Parental orders
are taken literally as if words were objects (p. 124).

At the "intuitive thought phase" (age four to seven) a child with normal language development has increasing interest in the social world around him. His repeated symbolic interaction with others reduces egocentricity and increases social participation. Presumably (again), a child deprived of normal language development remains, relatively more within an egocentric world.

It is at this stage of life that a child begins to use words in his thought. Previously he acted out his thoughts by his motor apparatus, but now, by school age, speech is used to express his thinking -- even though his thinking remains essentially egocentric (pp. 125-126). Even at this point, neither valuation, rank, nor relativity (except in terms of opposite absolutes: a "best" and a "worst") are understood.

Language in relation to the intuitive thought phase of development serves three purposes. It is (1) a means to reflect upon and also to project objects into the future, there is self-conversation (thinking aloud); (2) primarily a vehicle of egocentric communication; and (3) a means of apprehending the external world, a way to adapt to it. "Conversation is an extension of thinking aloud, and projects individual thoughts into the social plane and encourages collective expressions" (p. 131).

Between the ages of four and seven, the child develops an extended symbolic imagination during play. At this point he reaches a new level of organizational thinking and begins to take the role of the other, to think in terms of the generalized other and of
collective rules which gradually replace individual ones. It is
cognitively a move from the private (egocentric) to the public
(social) world.

The third level of thought for Piaget is the phase of concrete
operations. At this level, mental capacity can "order and relate
experience within an organized whole." During this phase the
normal child exhibits a characteristic frequently used to describe
deaf children and adults: he is extremely concrete and thinks in
terms of real objects and situations. In his book, Thinking Without
Language, Furth (1966:2) ponders the origin of the "deficiencies"
which cause many deaf people to appear "concrete minded." Then he
suggests that physical objects are easier than abstract ones to add
to a deaf person's vocabulary. And why do deaf people seem rigid,
why do they sometimes fail to reason?

Deaf people behave as they do, not as a direct or necessary
consequence of linguistic deficiency, but as a result of
their social environment (p. 151).

For Furth, the relationship to be investigated should be the
social environment-intelligence one instead of the linguistic
deficiency-intelligence relationship.

Systems of classifications and categories are established
during this time. Since the child is now able to order experiences
and see his relationship to others, a notion of certainty is created
for him. He can explain his own experiences and thoughts (get out-
side himself) and order them as he sees fit. This suggests that a
child who has serious difficulty with language acquisition experi-
ences a nightmare of uncertainty.
Thinking eventually shifts from an inductive to a deductive level. Such a shift is related to learning, to group relationships, and to ideational worlds. Explanations are found which are related to objects and events: "the sun no longer would 'just come out of the clouds'" (Maier, 1978:59). The child's world shifts from one of mythology to a world of science (1969:139).

Linguistic and cognitive development enables the child to interpret his perceptions of his world. Now there are points of reference whereby he may anchor his experience in a rational and communicable system. He has moved toward the social world and away from the center of his own life experiences (the autistic world).

To sum up, some theorists believe that cognition develops in the absence of any language. Lenneberg is said to have concluded that "development of language appears to require a certain minimum state of maturity and specificity of cognition" (Anastasiow and Hanes, 1976:25). Obviously Piaget also believes that cognition precedes language ontogenetically, that language develops out of the maturation of cognitive processes. To further test this, deaf persons provide a natural experimentum crucis, a great potential for elucidating the relationship between language and thinking. A psychologist, Hans Furth, (1966) has already discovered this fertile soil for research and concludes that cognition does precede language. His work is described as

The most convincing evidence concerning the primacy of cognitive development comes from the research on the cognitive development of deaf children. Although deaf children generally acquire a form of symbolic communication much later than normal children, Furth (1964) concluded that the lack of language does not affect
cognitive development in any direct or decisive manner (Anastasiow and Hanes, 1976:26).

His research clearly leads him to theoretically postulate "the non-necessity of language" Furth, 1966:226). Moreover, there are certain effects of linguistic deficiency made salient in the study of the deaf. Often deaf people are "experientially deficient" in the following ways (pp. 226-227).

1) They do not know facts; they lack information.
2) They exhibit a minimal degree of intellectual curiosity.
3) They have less opportunity and training to think.
4) They are insecure, passive, or rigid in unstructured situations.

In spite of these negative effects of linguistic deprivation, the deaf are as intelligent as the hearing. If there are differences between these two groups, Furth says, they "are due to experiential and social factors of home, school and the deaf community" (p. 227). The deaf differ from the hearing primarily in terms of personality variables. As for language usage "practically all" deaf children could learn English well if their parents used (early) signs along with their speech. Formal language learning after age four is really too late to be successful (p. 227).

One final note is worth stating. None of the writers mentioned so far make clear the distinction, if any, between thinking and cognition. Mead, Hertzler, Randall Collins (1975:103,146), Berger and Berger (1979:14), Schatzman and Strauss (1966:442) seem to discuss thinking in terms of words and language, i.e., as internal conversation. The structuralists talk about cognition as if it is an innate developmental process of human intelligence, a process of non-
verbally structuring the environment, of being able to comprehend certain experiments dealing with logical operations where, for example, liquid is poured from one container to another (and remains the same quantity) or balls of clay are squeezed into different shapes (but remain the same quantity of clay; Furth, 1966).

Mead also was aware of the unique creativity of man as a reality builder — that language, as many have said, was the scaffold by which the symbolic world of man was erected.

Symbolization constitutes objects not constituted before, objects which would not exist except for the content of social relations wherein symbolization occurs. Language makes possible the existence or appearance of that situation or object, and it is part of the mechanism whereby that situation or object is created (Strauss, 1956:165).

Thus, social man (Homo Socius) is also talking man (Homo Loquens), whose response to the environment differs qualitatively from that of all other animals. As a member of the animal world he is subject to the forces of gravity and disease. As Homo loquens he responds to nature not automatically nor instinctively, but by constructing his own world of meaning (culture) which then acts back upon his behavior (see Berger and Luckmann, 1967).

Finally, Mead explored the nexus between language and the self. He felt that the human being is unique, not because he has a soul, but because he has a self (1977:201). Like mind, the emergence of self is a consequence of both social interaction and language. Mead's German friend Wundt presupposed that selves were antecedent to the social process (p. 161). Durkheim believed mind made society possible, but Mead insists that the self and mind are to
be accounted for in terms of social interaction and communication. The group is antecedent to mind and self (1977:161).

Social interaction gives rise to significant symbols which enable the individual to take the role of the other. While Piaget, Chomsky and Furth theorize that cognitive development precedes language, Mead argues that the evolution of language emerged within group interaction where initially there was "no mind, no awareness, no consciousness" and no self (Miller, 1973:69).

Language is essential for the biographical development of self which is non-existent at birth. This means that the intelligence of lower animal life does not involve a self. In contrast human beings tend to organize all experience into that of a self, to organize their memories upon "the string of our self" (Mead, 1977: 200). Although the self is reflexive (i.e., it can be an object to itself), it is not the same as the body. Furthermore, if one cannot become an object to himself he cannot act intelligently or rationally. This theory implies that a person with a severe lack of language (infants, retardates, isolates, many deaf children) cannot be an object to himself, can have no self and no mind, and cannot act intelligently. A human being who possesses a complex formal language utilizes a mode of communication which differs radically from the barking of a dog or the clucking of a hen because human linguistic communication is directed not only to others but also to the individual himself (he is an object to himself). Whenever a person communicates to others there is also a conversation of gestures (words or signs) between the individual and himself. But, says Mead (Strauss, 1977), when two dogs
communicate with a conversation of non-significant gestures, neither animal's own communication is directed to himself.

It logically follows that a person with a language problem has a self problem. We can imagine a continuum from "no language-no self" to "full language-full self": "When the individual . . . is unable to talk competently to himself or to communicate readily with others, he is diminished as a self to himself and to his associates" (Hertzler, 1965:402).

Inadequate language facility results in a "truncated personality and an incompletely socialized individual" to the degree that one's social interaction with others is limited. If this interference is severe, the acquisition of culture will be restricted, personality and self development will be impaired or limited. In this context Hertzler (1965:403) views deaf and blind people as socially restricted by their sensory handicaps. Because of their general communication problems (or special forms of communication) they "live in a world apart, a subculture, a community within a community."

Joyce Hertzler: The Social Functions of Language

Randall Collins (1975) believes that phenomenological sociologists exhibit a philosophical bias that overemphasizes man as a thinker rather than as a creature of emotions and activities. He also believes that Cicourel's study of ASL (1972) highlights "the multi-modal nature of perception and cognition." On the other hand, Collins explores "microsociology and stratification" on the thesis
that "if we can explain who will talk to whom and about what, we will have the centerpiece for a grounded theory of stratification and of social structure" (p. 91). The foregoing criticisms of overemphasis on speech will serve as a caution for this section where so very much is claimed for (verbal) language. 11

Language humanizes the primate Homo sapiens. The symbol, says White (1949), is the basic unit of all human behavior and all civilization; all human behavior originates in the use of symbols and a baby is not yet a human being until he begins to symbol (p. 35). Many writers emphasize the "primary function of language" which is to construct and create meanings (realities, worlds, cultures; Miller, 1973:73). It is even posited that the role of language in creative activity may be found in the phenomena of inventions (Hertzler, 1965:47).

Whenever communication exists there is community and language brings man to terms with his world. Words, Hertzler writes, enable one to avoid the feeling of "terrifying isolation in the universe" (This summation derives from pp. 38-56, Hertzler; see Berger, 1967 for precisely the same idea.). Man without language would experience "a big, booming, buzzing confusion" (a phrase attributed to William James by Hertzler, p. 41) and "could not develop even the simplest mental pictures" (p. 42). Human beings use a finite number of words (and signs) to reduce "raw" reality to a system of orders and classes that can be managed. Different types of words (and signs) serve to indicate, to mark out, different aspects of reality (p. 39).

Language also has a naming and identification function. The
reality of this function is well illustrated by Helen Keller (1902) who tells how the mystery of language came to her at the pumphouse, how she first learned that "everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought." With the incredible power of words, typifications, categories and concepts man brings objects into existence; the referents of reality are represented and categorized by them. Both Russian and American psychologists have "shown that children learn more rapidly when they name things or talk about problems as they go along" (Simmons, 1971:444). Language is "an instrument of thought" and not merely a social tool.

Language is a means of perception and determines to a large degree what the speaker "sees" out there (Hertzler, p. 41). It is a cultural instrument, a set of spectacles used to construct and confer reality. With its lexicon, grammar and semantics language becomes the essential tool for conceptualization. "Man operates within an ideational framework" (p. 42); he lives in a world of ideas and language creates and sustains the whole of his mental world. "Brains think with words" (pp. 42-43) (and signs) and "Thinking is never more precise, complex or extensive than the language of the thinker" (p. 43). Man, in short, is trapped by the range, structure, and form of his language -- that "imperfect garment for thought" (p. 44).

Language establishes a community of thought (Hertzler, 1965; Taylor, 1976). With shared meanings (which are human constructs) there is a common reference world whose objects, events, facts and actualities are shared by everyone in the group. This is what makes community. An ideal-typical continuum of no language-no community at
one pole to full language—much community at the other pole is depicted in Figure 1.

With language man has become a word-maker, a tool-maker, a world-maker. With language he is a creator of symbolic universes. In this sense he is a small god who is able to speak things into existence (for example, "I pronounce you husband and wife"). From a vast complex reality he uses language to extract and to establish a body of "facts" (p. 45). A fact is an "artificial representation of reality . . . a portrait of some part of it" (p. 45). The socially constructed corpus of "facts" for each group emerges directly from "the world of words" (p. 45; and signs). Reality, then, is "something intellectual, capable of being apprehended only through symbols" — it is "a language-made affair — which is caught, corralled and encircled by means of words (p. 45; or signs).

Language has enabled man to create and use tools. Some even speculate that one form of early man (Neanderthals) became extinct because "his tool kit shows a conspicuous lack of invention and adaptability" (Solecki, 1979:28). Why? Because that species of man never developed "a fully articulate and precise language" (p. 28).

But first he was a word-maker, a technologist of symbol-making which enabled his thought systems and his tool systems to greatly improve. Beyond that, language is a record, an individual or group memory of accumulated knowledge which prevents it from being lost. Written and oral language enable men to record their wisdom and their abstract thinking such as folklore, cosmology, theology or science.

The poet speaks of "winged words" because language has a
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<th>No Language</th>
<th>Limited Language</th>
<th>Restricted Language</th>
<th>Full Language</th>
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<tr>
<td>.Prelingual Humans and animals (infants, young deaf children, isolates, all non-human animals)</td>
<td>.Deaf children and adults with few words or signs; mental retardates with little language</td>
<td>.Extremely isolated or illiterate groups</td>
<td>.Multilingual and highly educated people</td>
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<td>.Limited degrees of community</td>
<td>.Simple community</td>
<td>.Highly integrated relatively closed community</td>
<td>.Diversified, complex and relatively open community</td>
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<td>.Communication by prelanguage means (calls, gestures); almost totally concrete</td>
<td>.Communication by low level human language (words or signs plus calls, gestures); very concrete</td>
<td>.Relatively integrated codes of communication based on shared, local experiences. More use of physical gestures and context-tied statements than column 4</td>
<td>.Elaborated codes of communication based on pluralistic social experiences. More use of abstract universalistic statements</td>
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<td>.Virtually no human reality; the animal world</td>
<td>.Very elemental forms of human reality; the child's world</td>
<td>.Fairly simple (non-technological) reality; an ethnocentric world</td>
<td>.Complex reality the pluralistic world</td>
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time-bridging function which transmits knowledge (culture) across space and time (p. 54). As a memory agent, language facilitates the transmission of factualized experiences to others across space and time. Thus, for languaging man the past and the future are called into the present by means of language. In contrast other animals are time-bound and live only in the present moment. For animals (and men) without language instinct, some learning and imitation is the range of their limited behavior. But Homo loquens, talking man, is able to live simultaneously in the past, present and the future for space and time are produced in his mind; they are realities socially constructed, marked and bound.

There are some negative and limiting functions of language, too. For example, language may canalize perception and response, it may "act as blinders -- focusing attention only on some aspect of things or events, and not on others" (p. 52). Concepts and expressions of space and time are perceived and interpreted in ways related to one's particular form of language (p. 53). Wittgenstein (1977:201) has graphically stated this same idea: "The world is my world: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of language . . . mean the limits of my world." Similarly, Postman and Weingartner (1969:121) hold that "The more limited the symbol system, in number and kind, the less one is able to 'see.'" And similarly Peter Winch believed that one could not get outside the concepts with which he thinks of the world: "The world is for us what is presented through concepts" (1958:15). While Bertrand Russell (1943:60) said that language made possible
thoughts which could not exist without it, Postman and Weingartner (1969:101) view language as a prison house which "structures what one will see and believe . . ." We take mere snapshots of the wiggles which comprise the universe and these become our reality (p. 99). Language is likened to a map which may (or may not) establish good correspondence to the territory described (Postman and Weingartner, 1969:14; Hertzler, 1965:46).

An examination of Hertzler's position on language and thought shows that he is near Berger (the following subsection) and Mead, but far from Piaget and Furth. Like Berger (and Socrates) he views thinking as a form of internal conversation (p. 43). Without language one's thoughts would be "vague and misty, seen dimly through the depth of feeling and intuition" (p. 43). We should call this cognition. Before they drift away thoughts must be pinned down by the feet of language (p. 43). Often we ask a friend what he said and he replies, "Nothing, I was just talking aloud." In other words, when the mind is thinking, it is talking to itself (with words or signs) (Postman and Weingartner, 1969: Mead in Strauss, 1977; Collins, 1975). Internal conversation with words (or signs) should be called thinking.
Man the Reality Builder

Man invents a language and then finds that both his speaking and his thinking are dominated by its grammar. Man produces values and discovers that he feels guilt when he contravenes them. Man concocts institutions which come to confront him as powerfully controlling and even menacing constellations of the external world.

-- Peter Berger, (1969)

If Copernicus removed man from the center of the universe, then the creativity of man as meaning-maker, as symbol-creator, puts him once again at the center of the universe (Postman and Weingartner, 1969:98). Moreover, the objects and events "out there" are not anything until we make them something and then "it 'is' whatever we make it. Most of our 'making something' activity . . . consists essentially of naming things" (p. 99).

The act of creation is a dialectical process in which society is a human product and man is a societal product. In his book, The Sacred Canopy, Berger (1969) explains three steps in the dialectical process of society-man production: (1) externalization; (2) objectivation and (3) internalization. These processes are defined as follows:

Externalization is the ongoing outpouring of human being into the world, both in the physical and the mental activity of men.
Objectivation is the attainment by the products of this activity . . . of a reality that confronts its original producers as a facticity external to and other than themselves.
Internalization is the reappropriation by men of this same reality, transforming it once again from structures of the objective world into structures of the subjective consciousness. It is through externalization that society is a human product (p. 4).

Lower animals enter the world with drives and instincts and
occupy a world completely determined by these biological factors. This means that the non-human world is closed and is programmed by each animal's own constitution. As Berger argues, at birth there is a dog-world, a mouse-world and a horse-world and all of these are closed. But there is no closed man-world; to the contrary, his world is an open one which must be fashioned by his own activity (p. 5). Man is born unfinished -- his world is not simply given, it is not prefabricated for him. Having no given relationship to the environment his condition is one of instability and he must create a world for himself and he must continuously establish a relationship with it. This world building, this ordering of experience is accomplished by language, by an ongoing conversation between man and his world.

Man produces a world; man produces himself: "more precisely, he produces himself in a world" (p. 6). In other familiar terms, the human world thus produced is culture which provides structures (nomos) for human life that are not given biologically. Man's impositions of order, his world-building activities then produce "knowledge," society, culture, and human nature, and these creations have no existence apart from human beings interacting in groups where language is the foundation of that creative interaction.

Both society and the man-world are man-produced and rooted in the phenomenon of externalization. Man's own products are objectivated and "come to confront him as a facticity outside of himself." The cultural world (like "an assemblage of objects") is collectively
produced and maintains its reality "by virtue of collective recognition" (p. 10). Even though one may dislike the institutions of his own society they will nevertheless be real to him (p. 10). Society, itself a human product, attains the status of objective reality, a coercive facticity experienced as given, as "out there," as an extraneous reality external to one's self. Furthermore, it (man's own creation) has the capacity to impose itself upon reluctant individuals in forms of coercive power and procedures of social control. These man-made creations compel the individual to recognize them as real, not by its "machineries of social control," but in its potency to impose itself as reality (p. 12). Even language, another product of man the meaning-maker, presents itself to the individual as an objective reality. This process of objectifying human activity makes it possible for a person to objectivate a part of himself within his own consciousness. This means that he can confront himself with himself:

... the individual qua real 'self' can carry on an internal conversation with himself qua archbishop. Actually, it is only by means of such internal dialogue with the objectivations of oneself that socialization is possible in the first place (p. 14).

A major and recurring theme in the work of Berger and other phenomenologists has to do with the major role of language in the reality building process of man. Language is held to be the primary vehicle of socialization -- especially for initiation into the social world (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:133; Postman and Weingartner, 1969). Language is the basis and foundation of "a towering edifice of
symbols that permeate every aspect of his (man's) life" (Berger, 1969:6). Language is a bridge from isolation from anomy to the company of my fellows. "Everyday life is, above all, life with and by means of the language I share with my fellowmen" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:37).

In this theory, internalization refers to the process of absorbing into consciousness the objectivated world. Thus, the structures of the externalized world act back upon its creator and determine the structures of consciousness itself (p. 15). Successful socialization then is defined as "a high degree of objective/subjective symmetry" (p. 15). If there is little correspondence between the objective world and one's subjective world (asymmetry) socialization is a failure (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:168). One's identity then is a production of the world, it is "that which he is addressed as by others" (Berger, 1969:16).

Man appropriates the objective world into his own consciousness by talking with others; indeed his identity and the world remain real to him through ongoing conversation over a lifetime and "man comes pretty close to living in a house that language built" (Russell Smith cited in Postman and Weingartner, 1969:123). Through conversation with significant others, the individual gradually builds up the world in his consciousness. The objective world is perpetuated and maintained as subjective reality by continuous conversation (the most important vehicle) with others.

As the individual acts on the world, the world acts back on
him. Thus, the data of the objective world becomes the data of his own consciousness; there is an objective facticity about the external world which penetrates one's subjective world. This process of internalization finds the individual learning the objectivated meanings, a stock of knowledge -- identifying with them and being shaped by them. "They become his meanings and he will possess, represent, and express them."

An individual will also take on roles assigned to him by institutional programs; but more than that, he apprehends his own identity in terms of these very roles. For example, a boy who cannot hear is assigned to a special school and is given a set of roles appropriate for his identity as a "deaf boy." This socially objectivated status, its role and the constructed identity, are apprehended by the boy as external facticity, as real and true (some "deaf boys" can hear and talk well enough to use telephones, but they know they are "deaf").

Society, then, is a world-building enterprise which orders human experience. In Berger's words a nomos is imposed upon the experiences and meanings of individuals (1969:19). Language, too, is viewed as the imposition of order upon experience: "Language nomizes by imposing differentiation and structure upon the ongoing flux of experience" (p. 20). With language one builds up "semantic fields" and "zones of meaning" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:41).

What would happen to an individual if he were cut off from the social world? Suppose he had little or no language as in the case of an isolate, a feral, an infant, a retardate or a deaf child -- would
anomie (no nomos) become a powerful threat to him? Berger says that one's nomos is constructed and sustained in conversation with significant others whose definitions and selections of certain aspects of reality are posited for him (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:131). If that conversation (using words or signs) were radically interrupted, the individual would be plunged into anomy (p. 21). The consequence is separation from society, which amounts to a situation of meaninglessness -- the "nightmare par excellence." The anomic world is one of disorder, senselessness, madness and anomic terror and "all societies are constructions in the face of chaos" (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:103). Presumably, by this theory, those individuals (isolates, ferals, retardates, deaf children) languish in a disordered world filled with terror, unable to carve out an area of meaning in that vast amorphous wasteland.

In contrast to those people with language problems, normal persons easily share everyday life with others. In everyday life they experience others in face-to-face situations which is "the prototypical case" of social interaction (p. 28). In these situations one apprehends the other by means of typificatory schemes. Presumably for Berger, typifications are words (or signs) which would not exist without formal linguistic systems. These typifications enable one to apprehend the other type, fitting into some pre-defined categories (e.g., man, American, etc.). Not only are others apprehended as types, but situations are also typical in everyday life (p. 31).

To summarize this section, it has been shown that language is
a nomos-building process which makes possible the individual's effective participation in a society. Language helps him to learn to convey and to retain socially recognized meanings. Language facilitates the development of abstract thoughts; therefore, his mind is free to move beyond the immediate situation -- he is capable of reflection on the present, past and future.

In this perspective the individual is viewed as an active agent in the socialization process. He is not merely a passive pliable pile of clay unreluctantly molded by an omnipotent social force. Instead, he uses language to act back on his world and its inhabitants. A child literally starts to talk back to the adults; his capacity to act back on them increases in direct relation to his capacity to use language (1979:11).

In the drama of human socialization, the major protagonists are the significant others (p. 13). For the child they are the social world tout court. Their world of subjective meanings, definitions and structures will be conveyed/internalized into the child's own consciousness. The significant others talk and thereby convey all they have, all they know, all they are to the receptive child. A multitude of objects previously experienced as things external to himself now become experienced as something within himself. Through on-going conversation, reflection and the dialectical action of child/world, a symmetry is established between the inner world (subjective reality) and outer world. This explication of internalization is especially interesting in terms of conscience formation in a child. It is
especially important to note here that conscience is a product which derives from talk:

Conscience . . . is essentially the internalization (or, rather, the internalized [presence]) of moral commands and prohibitions that previously came from the outside. It all began when somewhere in the course of socialization a significant other said, 'do this,' or 'don't do that,' . . . Then these statements became silently absorbed into his own mind. The voices have become inner voices. And finally it is the individual's own conscience that is speaking to him (p. 14).

Language and Social Class

Thomas Luckmann (1975), in his book, The Sociology of Language, discusses the relationship between social class, language (semantic domains, linguistic codes, etc.) and perception of reality. Styles (or codes) of language and status repertories are based on a common lifestyle which is determined by the accessibility of goods and services (p. 39). Language is "embedded" in social structure and forms of communication are status-bound (p. 42). For Strodtbeck power through language is the "hidden curriculum" of the middle-class home (in Ornstein, 1978:83-84). Whenever the disadvantaged (or the deaf) fail to attain power through words (or signs), "there is less motivation to use words and verbal reasoning to exercise power." In other words, an important coping strategy for a child at school is a formal language and concept code. Thus, children with language problems (including deaf children) develop strategies that are "physical in nature" and these thwart the use of "problem solving, conceptual strategies in school" (p. 84). Thus, one strong focus of interest in the sociology of language is the degree of correlation between social class and linguistic differentiation (Luckmann, 1975:40).
In recent years, more and more studies have examined the cognitive implications of class-bound linguistic styles. For example, Schatzman and Strauss (discussed at length shortly) examined "the consequences of cognitive styles linked with social class on the perception of social reality and the general orientation in society" (p. 41). Moreover, Luckmann says, the actual everyday use of language ("speech acts"), the choice of a jargon or linguistic style are socially predetermined and stratification-bound. Therefore, one's own particular language filters his social reality; it mediates reality to the individual and becomes a large part of his personal orientation in the world (pp. 42-43). Language also objectifies culture ("a configuration of meanings defining reality").

The big four, language, thought, self and social interaction are closely linked. If the claim is true that a child in a lower class family has fewer opportunities to learn to label and categorize stimuli, to ask questions, receive feedback -- if visual and auditory stimuli as well as parent-child interaction are limited at home (Ornstein, 1978:83), then think how much more limited is concept formation for a young profoundly deaf child whose parents use little or no sign language. His lack of experiences also affects negatively the ability to convert objects and events into abstractions (p. 83). One result of a "disorganized home life" for a child (sometimes) is the inability to understand separateness and difference, and to think of past and future time. He has problems organizing stimuli and thinking "in a logical order."
As early as 1955, Schatzman and Strauss believed there could be important differences in the thought and communication of social classes (p. 442). This position says each social group orders the world's objects and events by its own distinctive grammatical, logical and communicative rules. These authors further believe that social class differences exist by degree of preciseness, elaboration, vocabulary and literary style, that thought is revealed by modes of speaking (p. 442). In their study of ten upper-group and ten lower-group participants who survived a tornado, they found a link between social class, mode of communication and organization of perception and thought. More specifically, the study found a considerable disparity in: (1) the number and kinds of perspectives utilized in communication (p. 443). Every lower-class member described events egocentrically "as seen through his own eyes." Analysis of their narratives showed a narrow perspective with few illustrations, little depth and richness and few qualifications. Some of the "most unintelligible" interviewees used "dream-like images" and assumed the interviewer (in this case, an outsider) automatically understood the context of objects and events being discussed, i.e., their accounts involved few "connective, qualifying, explanatory, or other context-providing devices" (p. 445). In contrast, middle-class members would take the role of others and describe events from several standpoints; they used many linguistic devices to clarify what they meant when they talked. (2) The ability to take the listener's role. It was as if my standpoint is the standpoint tout court. (3) The handling of
classifications. The authors found that lower-class members do not easily think in classes and "cannot talk about categories of people or acts." In other words, they tended to think in particularistic or concrete terms (p. 447). In contradistinction, middle-class speech was well organized, filled with clear illustrations and interlaced with classificatory terms. Also their conceptual terminology overshadowed concrete imagery in their narratives. "We conclude that, in general, the thought and speech of middle-class persons is less concrete than that of the lower-group" (p. 448). (4) The frameworks and stylistic devices. The frames of lower-class members were more frequently segmental or limited (crude temporal connectives, for example) in scope than those used by the middle-class. Their frames were easily changed during a narrative. There was also a lack of "genuine elaboration." Again, middle-class persons readily add to their master frame many subsidiary frames, to use multiple perspectives, elaborated answers and long asides. As they converse their role-taking is active.

Several questions remain: is the language of the lower-class individual inadequate for conveying rich accounts of his experiences and his perceptions? Or did he actually see and experience the tornado that way? Does his language reflect "concrete" modes of thought and perception, or does he "perceive in abstract and classificatory terms, and from multiple perspectives, but is unable to convey his perceptions" (p. 453)?

This rather classic question about concrete (particularistic)
versus abstract (universalistic) modes of language and/or cognition, which is found so often in the literature, is extremely relevant to any study of language and deaf people. For example, Jacobs (1974:63), a deaf writer, mentions the language problems of the deaf adult manifested in his poor reading ability which remains far below his hearing counterpart. "Since his communication has been very limited, his understanding has also been limited to concrete concepts" (emphasis added). Deaf adults are said to be characterized by their poor understanding of "subtleties in language construction, such as idioms, allegories, metaphors, similies, euphemisms, ironies, and other figures of speech" (p. 63). Unable to grasp play on words used in everyday humor, "the average deaf adult is therefore limited to the more earthy and concrete forms of humor" (p. 63). One result of such language problems is "shallow ideas."

The blame for part of this poor performance is placed on deaf people themselves because they are satisfied with "surface pleasures" (sports) and programs which give immediate concrete benefits as opposed to classical literature, arts and crafts, foreign cultures, etc. Furthermore, they miss a lot of information and are unaware of major social changes around them. They are "Two years behind the current trends" (the drug movement for deaf youth was two years behind). Thus, "Culture, as it is commonly conceived, is foreign to the short-changed deaf adult" (p. 64). But there are still others to blame for the inadequate education of deaf adults. It is the "unpleasant experiences with the traditional schooling methods" (p. 64). Other
writers who emphasize "oral habilitation" — i.e., emphasis on use of residual hearing and speech for deaf people — locate this language problem in type of language one uses. It is argued that English is the gateway to Jacob's "culture." Sign language is said to be limited in scope and expressive power . . . bound to the concrete, and limited in expression of abstractions, metaphor, irony, and humor." (Northern and Downs, 1974). ASL is a language with "crude syntax" which is satisfied with the conveyance of the "general concept" and not the "specific intent." It also has difficulty expressing pronouns and "verb tense is indicated by context" (pp. 253-259). This system is not conducive to the development of acceptable English.

One of the most immediate responses to these calls for proper English as the language for deaf (or poor and "deprived") children is to charge the advocates of English of being ethnocentric, prejudiced and biased. In turn, a strong rejoinder to that charge is that every citizen must learn to read, write and use numbers in our society. Navajos, poor black children, and deaf people must be able to function in the dominant society if they hope to rise from poverty: "In every case in the United States where groups have overcome poverty and discrimination, they have developed these abilities through formal education and by working within mainstream institutions" (Ornstein, 1978:86). This is a strong argument and would be difficult to refute.

An English sociologist, Basil Bernstein, has written much about the relationship between symbolic orders and social structure, how the class system acts upon the deep structure of communication, and
how speech codes may be differently focused through family types. His theoretical framework integrates ideas from Durkheim, Cassirer, Sapir, Whorf, Mead and Marx. Of these it is Marx who gives us a key for understanding the institutionalization and change of symbolic orders. The key lies in "the social significance of society's productive system and the power relationships to which the productive system gives rise (1979:475). Not only is economic capital subject to appropriation, manipulation, and exploitation, but so, too, are symbolic systems (cultural capital). Unlike Chomsky Bernstein believes all people do not have equal access to "the creative act which is language" (p. 475). This sociolinguistic thesis examines how symbolic systems (speech, in this case) "are both realizations and regulators of the structure of social relationships" (p. 474).

In his classic work on language, Benjamin Whorf (Carroll, 1956) did not relate styles or codes of speaking to an institutional order, nor did he view them as emerging from the structure of social relations. "On the contrary, they are seen as determiners of social relations through their role in shaping the culture" (Bernstein, 1977). Again, the social structure is not seen as the mediator of language, culture and thought (p. 203).

In contrast to Whorf, Bernstein's sociological thesis, which rests on Vygotsky and Luria, posits that distinct linguistic forms and fashions of speaking will emerge within the larger dominant language and these codes will "induce in their speakers different ways of relating to objects and persons" (p. 204). Bernstein insists
that no language or code is superior to another, yet he expresses
the idea that a particular form of social relation acts selectively
on both what is said and how it is said, i.e., the speech system
(syntactical and lexical options) is both a consequence and a quality
of the social structure (p. 205). For a developing child the social
structure becomes his subjective reality which forms his speech (or
sign language) acts. His particular speech code transforms "the
environs into a matrix of particular meanings" and these become part
of his subjective world (p. 206). Black children, for example,
possess a different language and a different matrix of meanings from
the school. Their code, of course, "has direct application to their
immediate environment" (Ornstein, 1978:82).

Social class has the most formative influence upon the pro-
cedures of socialization. It not only "deeply marks the distribution
of knowledge within society" but also affects the deep structure of
communication itself (Bernstein, 1979:477). In Bernstein's theory
of social class, there are two orders of meaning, universalistic
meanings and particularistic meanings; a child is oriented by the
socialization process toward one of two "codes of communication"
which provide "access to relatively context-tied or [either] relative-
ly context-independent meanings" (p. 477). These are (1) elaborated
codes whose (middle-class) speakers are oriented toward universalistic
meanings and (2) restricted codes whose (working-class) speakers are
oriented toward particularistic meanings. These restricted codes
are "more tied to a local structure" (p. 478). The class system
limits access to elaborated codes (p. 478). In order to further clarify this idea of contextual constraints upon grammatical-lexical choices, some characteristics of the "restricted" speech variant are condensed and presented below:

1. Since a common history exists the intent of the other is taken for granted.
2. With a common background group members need not raise meanings to the level of explicitness (i.e., the elaborated code).
3. A strong metaphoric element is likely to typify the speech forms.
4. The speech form is context-bound. Unless one shares the common history of a relationship one may not be able to understand the speech encounter. Social relations affect meanings, the syntactic and lexical choices (egocentrism is greater).
5. The communication acts utilize condensed symbolic forms.
6. In this group speakers occupy communalised roles. ". . . restricted social relationships based upon communalized roles evoke particularistic, that is, context-tied meanings, realized through a restricted speech variant" (p. 478).

The social context within which this code arises is one where social relations are typically "based upon closely shared identifications, upon an extensive range of shared expectations, upon a range of common assumptions" (Bernstein cited by Gecas, 1979:385). It is a social world which "raises the 'we' above 'I'" and social solidarity exists at the expense of "verbal elaboration of individual experience" (p. 385).

The second code of communication, the "elaborated code," is concerned with logical, temporal, and spatial relationships between objects and ideas. Therefore, it has greater potential for the complex organization and analysis of experience. Restricted
language use is more mundane; it is the language of subjective observation rather than analysis (Kerckhoff, 1972:48).

In this social world individualism is emphasized over communality and 'I' prevails over the 'we'" (Gecas, 1979:385). The characteristics of the restricted code (above) suggest a style of communication more typical of relatively small and closed social groups. "Bernstein suggests that restricted codes emerge from social relations based on mechanical solidarity, whereas elaborated codes emerge from organic solidarity" (p. 385). As noted by Gecas (p. 385) the domain assumption (Gouldner, 1970) of Bernstein -- which may be problematic -- is that "mechanical solidarity is more typical of social relations in the lower classes," that organic solidarity characterizes social relations of middle-class people. The code of the former is stereotyped and limited. It is a language of implicit meaning, easily understood (by insiders) and commonly shared (Hess and Shipman, 1970). "Sapir, Malinowsky, Firth, Vygotsky, Luria have all pointed out . . . that the closer the identification of speakers, the greater the range of shared interests, the more probable that the speech will take a specific form" (Bernstein, 1977:478). For Bernstein the class structure gives rise to different family-role systems and these encourage the two styles of communication:

In middle-class homes, children learn the kind of 'elaborated' linguistic code (one that is based upon abstract general principles that apply to any situation) that is congruent with the conventional classroom situation, while working-class children acquire a more 'restricted' code, which reflects their own limited life situation (Boocock, 1980:44).
Deaf children, generally speaking, do experience a relatively more "limited life situation" than their hearing counterparts. The question, then, becomes: do deaf people who are thrown together into social, cultural and linguistic isolation use a restricted code of communication? Is their style of communication context-bound, less abstract and particularistic in nature? Is the deep structure of the communication a restricted code having its basis in communalized roles? The theory holds that middle-class family roles are "person-oriented" and working-class family roles are "status-oriented." It could be argued very easily that deaf children separated from nearly all family life at school, are dealt with on the basis of their status as "deaf students" by the en loco parentis institution. At any rate, the poor academic performance of many working-class children may result from a confrontation between

(a) The school's universalistic orders of meaning and the social relationships which generate them, and (b) the particularistic orders of meanings and the social relationships which generate them, which the child brings with him to the school" (Bernstein, cited in Boocock, 1980:44).

Several studies have found class differences in the use of language which support Bernstein's theory. In his review of six studies dealing with "communication and linguistic behavior," Gecas (1979) cites empirical findings of parent-child communication as it differs by social class. These empirical studies focus on three different dimensions of communication: (1) the relationship between social class and parental use of commands and imperatives in speaking to the child; (2) the nature or referent for parental
explanations to the child (Bernstein's positional or status appeals versus personal appeals); (3) styles of teaching the child (self-regulating versus didactic learning).

In his review Gecas lists the following empirical generalizations (pp. 376-377).

SES (socioeconomic status) is negatively related to parental use of commands and imperatives.

SES is positively related to the use of personal appeals.

SES is negatively related to use of positional appeals.

SES is positively related to emphasis on self-regulating teaching-learning.

SES is negatively related to emphasis on didactic teaching-learning.

None of the generalizations from the empirical literature are particularly strong relationships (p. 377). It can be said, however, that the findings upon which they are based are generally consistent and this justifies further attempts to explain the relationship between a major [molar] variable (social class) and important dependent variables.

When Bernstein's sociolinguistic theory is evaluated, Gecas concludes that, in general, the evidence does support the relationship between social class and form of language. Lower-class parents are more likely to use a restricted style of language (p. 387). The important question that must be addressed is why such a relationship exists between social class and linguistic styles. Bernstein's answer is that family structure (i.e., social relations - positional
versus personal orientations), encourages the development of linguistic codes. But neither Bernstein nor other sources provide any empirical evidence for this (role-code) relationship. On the other hand, there is some indirect evidence to support Bernstein's proposition that social class is positively related to aspects of the family role system, such as the openness and flexibility of family roles (p. 388). The problem here is that there is no empirical basis for knowing the importance of the family role system as an intervening variable between social class and linguistic codes (p. 388). Gecas' overall conclusion of Bernstein's sociolinguistic theory is that empirical support for the theory is "not very impressive" (p. 388). At the same time, he admits, no verdict can be rendered until more tests are extensively made.

Finally, in the literature there is considerable criticism and rejection of the basic idea that children who live in poverty develop language differently. Anastasiow (1976) argues that lower-class children who speak a different vernacular are normal in intellectual functioning. His thesis is that poor children acquire language in ways similar to advantaged children; they speak a different dialect but not a different content (p. 68). One problem for poor rural children is said to be one of experiential deprivation rather than a language deficiency *per se* (p. 110). This, as we have seen, is the view of Furth (1966) regarding deaf children. These writers wish to reject a linguistic determinism and favor the idea of experiential deficiencies. Like Anastasiow, Harris (1975) rejects
these discussions of language and social class which say that lower-
class dialects are inferior to middle-class ones. Such pejorative
allegations, he alleges, have no basis in linguistic science.  

William Labov (1972a) is another who has vigorously opposed
the idea that lower-class children are reared in a linguistically de­
prived environment. His research on black ghetto children indicates
that they may, in fact, use language expressions which are stigmatized
by educators, researchers and middle-class culture in general, but
these forms of expression do not in any way prevent the expression of
complex thoughts in concise patterns. He challenges the "deficit
theory" of Bereiter and Engleman (1966) and charges that Bernstein's
views are "filtered through a strong bias against all forms of work­
ing-class behavior" (1972b:229). These verbal deprivation theories,
he says, are serious and damaging to poor children. Furthermore,
some theoretical writers are providing teachers a ready-made theoreti­
cal basis for their prejudice towards the lower-class Negro child and
his language. Presumably, if these children learn middle-class lan­
guage they will experience a whole chain of successes. "The essen­
tial fallacy of the verbal deprivation theory lies in tracing the
educational failure of the child to his personal deficiencies"
(pp. 253-254). Ergo, as long as programs like Operation Headstart
try to repair the child, rather than the school, they will fail be­
cause they are based on inverted logic. In short, "There is no
reason to believe that any non-standard vernacular is in itself an
obstacle to learning" (p. 260).
To sum up, several parallels and contrasts between lower-class and deaf children should be emphasized. First of all, much of the literature on deaf people describes them as "concrete minded." Jacobs (1974:63), for example, writes: "Since his [the average deaf adult] communication has been very limited, his understanding has also been limited to concrete concepts."

In this view Cummings and Renshaw (1979:293) make an interesting distinction between abstract and concrete communication. They cite empirical data which show that the language of young children is closely tied to sensory experience (therefore, they use more concrete nouns than adults). Although he believes there is no difference in cognitive structure between the hearing and the deaf, Furth (1966:2) speculates that the deaf appear concrete-minded because they can learn the vocabulary of objects physically observable much easier than the "verbal subtleties" of abstract terms like "democracy" or "purpose." His more central argument is (similar to the conclusion of Anastasiow [1976] above re: poor children), however, that deaf people behave as they do not because of some linguistic deficiency, but as a result of experiential deprivation (p. 151). In other words, it may be that the social environments of home, school and the deaf community do not motivate nor stimulate the inquiring mind toward intellectual activities and, therefore, intellectual retardation may be associated with this environmental handicap. Furth (p. 152) speaks of "an inability to look for reasons," and deficiencies in "discovery" and "initiative" (these may be called "intellectual laziness" or "rigidity"). A related and interesting point should be made here --
whenever a child is able to verbally (or with signs) express his desires, experiences and thoughts adequately, he is freed from the necessity of physically acting out his thoughts by mime or gestural processes. In propositional format, the lower the level of language skills, the greater the use of physical gestures. The competent use of language (signs or verbal), then, negates the autistic-egocentric-concrete-physical gesture-world of a child (see Maier's discussion of Piaget's theory of child development, 1969).

In short, young prelingual children, poor children, deaf children and deaf adults have in common (1) a greater use of physical gestures and (2) concrete mindedness. Why? Because of limited language skills, i.e., underdeveloped or restricted codes of communication. Another point should be repeated: while a hearing child (of all social classes) acquires his code of communication primarily from his family, this is not the case for deaf children. Neither social class nor family will have much direct input into type of linguistic code acquired -- except for the fact that lower-class deaf children are more likely than middle-class children to attend a residential state school. Beyond that, the school itself supplants the family and gives the deaf child its own brand of language, culture and socialization per se. For these children, Berger and Luckmann's (1967) axiom about parents being equal to the world for the young child (inasmuch as the child experiences the world through his/her parents) needs to be rephrased. Instead, it is the school which is the world-builder for many young deaf children.
CHAPTER III
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Prior to this study, no ethnographies had been conducted at any residential school for deaf students. Because there is no literature about residential schools per se, the following review is of ethnographies conducted in other school settings in the United States.

This study accepts the idea that face-to-faceness is the foundation of knowing; face-to-face interaction is "the fullest condition of participating in the mind of another human being" (Lofland, 1971). Philip Jackson (1968) calls for such close participation when he claims that fifty years of sophisticated learning theories have failed to affect the teacher's classroom activities. He suggests that "a new look at teaching" may require us to move "up close" to the phenomena of the teacher's world.

This chapter will review case studies and ethnographies which have been conducted at the primary level of education. The review is discussed under the following major subheadings: (1) "The Minutae of Everyday Life in the Classroom," and (2) "Adaptive Strategies of School."

The chapter is organized under these subheadings for several reasons. First, these topics are common themes found in other empirical studies. Researchers have indicated the importance of the
detailed and trivial aspects of classroom life, which among other things, operate on the individual in a cumulative way over the years of one's educational career. Sociologists in general are interested in the ritualistic patterns of human groups — why they exist, and what the consequences for their members. Erving Goffman's (1961) work on life in a "total institution" (which is defined later in this work) is an example of a significant contribution toward understanding better those human actors who live under regimented life conditions. The state residential school for deaf children is a total institution par excellence. Therefore, it is important to observe the minutae of daily life among these deaf children. It is possible that observations of this social setting could provide some insight as to why the vast majority of prelingual deaf persons "under our present educational system -- do not acquire functional language competence, even after undergoing many years of intensive training" (Furth, 1966:13) [emphasis added].

A second reason for organizing this review of empirical literature as it is lies in the fact that schools are places with unequal distributions of power and authority where students have little of either. It is an organization where attendance is compulsory and boredom is pervasive. More than any other social setting, school is a place where one's behavior and performance are constantly evaluated. Studies need to review the power differential between students and teachers, classroom management (social order and social control), and tracking. Information on these topics is especially
needed with respect to deaf children because the institution possesses near-parental power and control over the child. The school will give him/her language, aspirations, world views, definitions of self, etc. One objective of this study is to learn how teachers, staff, counselors, houseparents, and others exert power over students in terms of "constructing reality," defining situations, including the power to determine one's track (academic, vocational, general).

Finally, the second major subheading reviews how students adopt various adaptive strategies to school life. This subsection takes ideas from Goffman (1961) about how inmates form an "underlife" in a place where a bureaucratic organization handles whole blocks of people and their human needs (p. 6). The organization tells the individual all that he/she may be (p. 180), but some residents devise strategies to circumvent official rules, goals and definitions. The residential school of the present study is a very restrictive social environment. This is primarily because school officials are "parents" and guardians of the students whose families are geographically far away.

The Minutae of Everyday Life in the Classroom

Although several researchers have done field work in the school resulting in ethnographic accounts of in-school differences, no one has provided a better account than the landmark study by Philip Jackson (1968). Jackson did his observation in schools in California. He noted the repetitious, regimented quality of school life, referring
to it as "the daily grind." That striking description refers to the humdrum and trivia, the cyclic and ritualistic quality of events which occur at school. The school is an institution, a bureaucracy, and the essence of a bureaucracy is rules. In school, the major activities of everyday life follow rules day by day, week by week, and year after year. For everyone involved, the daily grind of classroom life is characterized by repetitive, routinized and compulsory experiences. In fact, in a way which is similar to prisons and mental hospitals, life's daily activities are regimented. Math begins and ends with the clock on Tuesdays and Thursdays, spelling and English occur daily at the same hour, and so on. Students eat, work, and play by schedule. Scherer and Slawski's (1979) case study of an urban high school similarly describes the daily regimentation and how students resist it in an effort to reduce "official time" by expanding "student (autonomous) time." As they said of their study site, "there are prescribed times when students may go to their lockers, walk the halls, or stand in the smoking rooms" (p. 136).

Various studies describe the classroom as a "constant" social context and a "stable" physical environment. It is a place of much talk where some teachers average over two hundred interpersonal exchanges every hour of every working day (Jackson, 1968). However, there is much one-way communication and the teacher is the consistent communicator defining and explaining the world.
The Three Facts of Student Life

Daily life at the school is characterized by a "social intimacy unmatched elsewhere in our society." Crowds of students are clustered close together -- thirty or more people literally side by side. As Jackson notes, there are three facts of life every student must learn to cope with: crowds, power, and praise (p. 10). These three facts of life are presented below with "praise" discussed in terms of "constant evaluation."

Crowds

Since daily life is spent with many others it happens that most of the things that are done in school are done in the presence of others. Schooling is above all else a public, not a private, experience. And this point is especially relevant to the present ethnography because sign language of deaf students is a public language and can be observed and understood (i.e., read) across long distances in the classroom. Privacy in a total institution, as noted by Goffman (1961) is problematic. In that crowded world the resident must constantly look over his shoulder to see if criticism or other sanctions are coming (p. 38). Goffman divides the institutional world into three spaces: off-limits space, surveillance space and space ruled by less than usual staff authority (p. 230). Those places (the toilet, the hall, woods, behind buildings, etc.) which provide some time away from the crowd are known as "free places." Sometimes in prisons, inmates request to be locked up in the "hole"
(isolation) in order to escape the crowd and to "cool down" or to reflect upon some concerns of his/her own.\textsuperscript{19}

Jackson's description of the humdrum quality of school life parallels this. He discusses four features related to crowded conditions: delay, denial, interruption and social distraction (p. 17). Under crowded conditions the teacher constantly responds to the classroom management problem by occupying various roles. First of all, she is a "traffic cop" - a governor of who may or may not speak. Next, she controls scarce objects (the rulers, the scissors), she is a "supply sergeant." Thirdly, she gives special privileges to deserving students and she acts as an official timekeeper. Activities are scheduled and "school is a place where things often happen not because students want them to, but because it is time for them to occur" (p. 12). During the day there is much delay and much waiting. Interaction with the teacher is in a fixed order and the student must wait for a turn or "find something to do" until the next activity begins. These delays are cumulative: "Learning how to live in school involves learning how to give up desire as well as how to wait for its fulfillment" (p. 15). In this situation, the greatest virtue is patience. One must learn to suffer in silence, to control but not to abandon his/her impulses. Both teacher and peer pressure force the student to maintain an attitude of patience. Moreover, negative sanctions may be applied if one is pushy (impulsive) or withdraws into daydreams or sleep.

Still another feature that derives from the crowded
conditions of classroom life is interruptions of all kinds. First of all, events begin and end by the clock and inevitably some natural interests are interrupted. Daily activities will follow a schedule whether individual or group interests follow or not. Another feature of crowd life is that, although sitting near many other people, the student must not communicate with them: He/she must learn to be alone in a crowd (p. 16).

Other studies of schooling environments have approached schools as structures of resources, roles, expectations, values, and verbal exchanges. Since Dewey, many sociologists view schools as small communities; Katz, however, sees schools as complex organizations, as specialized structures which serve special functions, and not as self-sufficient communities (Boocock, 1980:128). In their famous study of expectancy effects, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1966) looked at teacher-student activities and outcomes of student performance in terms of teacher expectations of student intellectual growth. They found that students do as well or poorly as teachers expect them to do. In short, a self-fulfilling prophecy occurs. Bossert (1979: ix) has criticized research designs typically used to study schools; he has claimed that they have employed "simplistic, input-output and 'black box' designs." This approach, he argues, fails to relate structural properties of schools and classrooms to what students and teachers actually do. It appears that even though educational processes and schooling environments are complex in nature, some models nevertheless assume that teacher personality or expectations are the
primary determinants of classroom behavior.

Criticism is leveled also at research designs which treat classroom structure as a "system of dyadic exchanges" between teacher and pupils. Bossert's (1979) two longitudinal comparisons of several groups of school children in a northern city provides a glimpse inside the "black box." His research design integrates concepts from small group and industrial work studies. The ethnography itself gets at the nature of the classroom as a group (not sets of dyads, personalities, expectations) and examines the link between learning processes and social relationships. Social organization of the classroom is said to be more significant than individual relationships when it comes to understanding behavior. In other words, recurrent instructional tasks (structure of activities) are the factors which shape both teacher and pupil behavior.

Bossert's methodology is highly pertinent to the present study and merits some discussion. First, he includes a descriptive ethnography of four classrooms studied. Information was collected via several techniques: informal conversations with students, teachers counselors, parents and the principal. Informal interview schedules were utilized with students and teachers. Other observations were made and notes typed for analysis as soon as possible after the encounter. Following Glaser and Strauss (1967), Bossert used the "constant comparative method" which prescribes that analysis occur simultaneously with data gathering. His study reviews a number of other studies which, on the one hand, did not differentiate classroom
structures. Bossert argues that these structures shape differences in interpersonal relations and must be the targets for ethnographic investigation (p. 4). Teacher control (degree of dominance) and the allocation of instructional assistance are considered to be important features of teacher-student relationships (p. 47). Thus, if a teacher uses recitation (structure of activity) as opposed to multi-task activities, then clearly he/she becomes much more control oriented. In short, the structure of instructional activity determines the degree of dominance (i.e., actual control) exercised by a teacher.

Power

Much of the literature depicts the classroom as a despotic social situation with a clear dichotomy of power: teachers have it, students do not. Although authority is on the side of the teacher students are not without resources of their own for coping with the classroom power structure (Waller, 1932). For example, they can mentally (daydream) or physically withdraw (skip classes) or even interrupt classroom activities (questions, disruptive behavior).

Several studies of schools call attention to various structural defects inherent in the teacher-student relationship. One of these lies in the practice of compulsory attendance (Boocock, 1980; Jackson, 1968). Students, like inmates or mental patients in other service institutions, are in attendance whether they like it or not. One study found that one-fourth of all discipline referrals and class closures (for a ninth-grade class) are for truancy (Scherer et al.,
In order to escape coercive and compulsory classroom life, students skip class (because of boredom, defiance, dislike of a teacher or class). Or sometimes they hide in bathrooms, back halls, stairs and parking lots (Scherer et. al., 1979:137). Another "defect" is that teachers have far more power than students and they are able to shape the course of events which will occur. Therefore, school is "a place in which the division between the weak and the powerful is clearly drawn" (Jackson, 1968:10).

Even parents often possess little or no power in terms of school activities. This point is illustrated by Sullivan's study (1979) of an inner city school in New York; it is a school filled with many poor people and immigrants. The study reports that the control of the school is largely isolated from the families of the students it serves (p. 207). One reason for this is that working-class people have difficulties in being able to attend meetings. In a residential school for the deaf, a similar condition may obtain since most parents live quite far from the institution itself.

It has been pointed out that social relationships at home and school are very different for a child. At home life for a child is intimate and personal and parents have authority over the child's life. Upon entering school, however, the child moves from the authority of parents to that of teachers. The child finds him/herself with a stranger who exerts control in a situation where the dominant relationship is relatively impersonal (Jackson, 1968:30). Parental authority at home is mostly restrictive but authority of the teacher
at school is as much prescriptive as it is restrictive. The teacher makes the plan of action and prescribes work for the newcomer. In short, the teacher is the student's first boss and the student is not free to quit working (p. 30).

Now, the question can be asked: How can student involvement be obtained in the classroom? How can his interest, his participation in the learning process be increased? Suppose rules and regulations were de-emphasized, suppose the curriculum was altered to fit the needs interests of students, what if teachers tried to make classroom activities as lively and interesting as possible? Even if all this were done the fact remains that students are in school whether they want to be or not. Jackson concludes that the educational problem of "inattention" is a permanent part of the educational scene, that inattention "may not have its roots only in the lesson per se nor in psychological deficiencies within the student but rather in the nature of the institutional experience called 'going to school'" (p. 111). In their ethnography Scherer and Slawski (1979) observed that many students do not find classrooms, school clubs, athletics, etc., interesting and therefore they do not participate in anything. Avoidance and non-involvement are seen as coping strategies. If these students barely pass and make no trouble they are left alone: the student avoids the school and the school avoids the student.
Praise

Another fact of life at school is "pervasive evaluation." Here one comes to know the pains of failure and pleasures of success. These are experienced at home too, but the school keeps a semi-public record of his/her cumulative progress. In fact, the two enduring topics of special interest to sociologists which have to do with teacher-student interaction are (1) the exchange of expectations among teachers and students and (2) evaluation which "illustrates one more aspect of the asymmetry of the teacher and student roles" (Boocock, 1980:161). Unlike other situations, daily life at school consists of constant evaluation of one's words and deeds. The total person is continually weighed in terms of (1) academic achievement (2) personal qualities and (3) institutional adjustment.

Even though there are several ways to evaluate students, tests are given at school more than any other place. The teacher is the main evaluator even though one's peers participate in the evaluation process too (Jackson, 1968; Bossert, 1979). For example, Bossert tells how a teacher would ask class members to "verify" the answers just given by someone by raising their hands if they agreed with her. Additionally, classmates would evaluate each other's personal qualities - one's reputation or popularity, for example. Thus, students learn how to witness and participate in the evaluation of others in a world where public scrutiny is a way of life. Any given student, then, is caught between two evaluators and must be concerned with two different audiences (teachers and peers) whose tastes and
expectations may not be the same.

Schools are also reward-oriented social systems which emphasize the advantages of success and disadvantages of failure. As a result the student must learn to behave in ways that ensure the chance of reward and praise, and reduce the likelihood of punishment; this is akin to Goffman's (1956) cynical actor who makes a great effort to avoid censure and to win praise. The dramaturgical quality of this is nicely illustrated by Jackson's comment: "Learning how to make it in school involves, in part, learning how to falsify our behavior" (p. 27).

The central problem of schools like other involuntary institutions is maintenance of order and control (Boocock, 1980:128). Most elementary schools are said to share a single goal which is not unlike some total institutions: the prevention of "disturbances" (Jackson, 1968:104). One mechanism for maintaining social order in the classroom is to have a clear authority hierarchy with clearly institutionalized positions of dominance and subordination. Another mechanism for maintaining order is found in the basic structure of "the daily grind" of classroom life. Jackson (1968:104) outlines five major classes or rules of order found in most classrooms:

1. Who may enter and leave the room.
2. How much noise is tolerable.
3. How to preserve privacy in a crowded setting.
4. What to do when work assignments are prematurely finished.
5. How far to go in establishing the classroom equivalent of social etiquette.

While these rules are meant to preserve the peace and order of
the classroom, they also function to ensure that students do not escape their duties. Some rules are designed to prevent students from disturbing one another. For example, the teacher may assign some "busywork" to students who have completed their seat work earlier than others; this way idleness and disruption of group attention is avoided. The rules of etiquette have to do with being polite: raise you hand, refrain from laughing at another's error, stand in line, etc., "it is quite clear that the teacher's success as a teacher depends in no small measure on his ability to deal with these trivial aspects of school" (p. 106). Classroom management then is not merely a problem of the past even if educational critics continue to criticize those teachers who make maintenance of group control their most salient concern. "Efforts to run the school smoothly and to avoid disruption in the routine may have long-lasting educational consequences, not the least of which is teaching students avoidance, conformity, and passive acceptance" (Scherer and Slawski, 1979:148).

School authorities may manipulate time schedules in order to attain control. In this way they can reduce "student time" (the opposite of "official time") by enforcing a rigid time schedule. In order to maintain a "safe" social environment "the school day was shortened by eliminating all times when large numbers of students could congregate in any one space, such as study halls and lunch hours" (Scherer and Slawski, 1979:130). Beginning at 8:00 in the morning the school scheduled virtually all of the students' time. Students respond to such regimentation by seeking some degree of
autonomy over their own lives and they try to break the imposed monotonous routine of daily life. "The desire for autonomy is a powerful one and becomes particularly acute when rewards for conformity are in the long-term and distant future" (p. 134). Some student responses to this coerced regimentation of school life involve strategies for restricting the "official time" in the classroom. Students can accomplish this by talking, opening and closing books, being restless, by ending class early (preparing to leave before the bell sounds) or delaying the actual start of teaching. On the other hand, more subtle ways to resist official time are employed: tune out the teacher, withdraw from classroom activities, come to class without papers, books, and cause disturbances. In short, students are able to "limit the constraints of official time and to accumulate more student time in their day" (pp. 134-135). Even the refusal to do homework can be seen as resistance to infringement on student time.22

The School as a Bureaucracy

Historically, school systems at all levels have grown in size and complexity and have experienced a process of bureaucratization. More specifically this means that they are increasingly characterized by a division of labor, the definition of staff roles as offices (recruitment based on merit and competence), hierarchical ordering of offices, a growing reliance on rules and regulations and emphasis on expertise, universalistic criteria of evaluation, and impersonality (Parelius and Parelius, 1978; Boocock, 1980).
Katz (1971) believes that bureaucracy in education emerged to promote the illusion of social mobility while strictly regulating it. As attested by Sullivan (1979) "Formal rules are the essence of bureaucracy . . . Yet rules can be enforced for some and over-looked for others, thus perpetuating relations of power that exist outside those rules" (p. 235). Katz points out that bureaucracies do not come into being neutrally, but rather they emerge as agencies of social control. In their quest for greater and greater levels of efficiency and productivity, for the maximization of ability, talent and competence schools became bureaucracies. To efficiently differentiate the bureaucracy must identify and develop talent within the school population. Ability tracking is the major way of accomplishing this and it is strongly correlated with student's race and socioeconomic status (Boocock, 1980); a finding supported by Sullivan. Ethnicity is established outside the school and "brought into the building" as the basis for sorting; it is internalized by students even before they enter school. Thus, a self-sorting process operates which is nurtured and supported by the school. In addition, "students use linguistic labels to reinforce the image and to establish social boundaries among students" (p. 237). Not only is sorting based on ethnicity, but rules of the high school are differentially enforced according to ethnicity. For example, whenever potentially violent black students break rules they may be ignored. Or student restrooms (student territory) are relatively free from adult supervision: "these variations in rule enforcement are negotiated on a
day-by-day basis" (p. 239). In short, social organization in a school may (given its situatedness) be based on the demarcation of identity and power.

Boocock (1980) discusses how sociologists have conceptualized schools as institutions, sets of behavior, small communities, and as bureaucracies. As mentioned earlier, schools have been unfavorably compared with other involuntary institutions like prisons, mental hospitals. In those places a small group of employees - some of them professionals - provide service to a large group of "clients."

"Under these conditions where, in many cases, the services were not requested by the clients a central problem of involuntary institutions is maintenance of order and control" (p. 128). But schools and most involuntary institutions differ in an important way: most of the latter are likely to be total institutions where the client's activities occur inside the boundaries of the institution. This is precisely the situation for deaf students at a residential school because they eat, sleep, play and work within the establishment. Typically, in most service institutions one set of people do their work for another set of people whose wishes are generally not considered.

The World View of Teachers

While the school is a bureaucracy guided by its emphasis on rules and formality ethnographic research has found that most teachers prefer an informal, free and casual approach to teaching (Jackson, 1968:126). Actually their practices amount to a "less formal"
rather than "not formal" social arrangement. For example, their desire for informality seems never "sufficiently strong to interfere with institutional definitions of responsibility, authority, and tradition" (p. 129).

A second facet of the world view of teachers is related to their lack of technical vocabulary. In other words, their language reveals a conceptual simplicity which is tied to their world view. It includes: (1) an uncomplicated view of causality, (2) an intuitive (rather than rational) approach to classroom events, (3) an opinionated (rather than an open-minded) stance when confronted with alternative teaching practices, and (4) a narrowness in the working definitions assigned to abstract terms (p. 144).

The assignment of narrow working definitions to common terms which denote global aspects of human behavior (such as motivation, social relations, and intellectual development) stems from the daily experience of the teacher as he/she lives in a "world of sharp existential boundaries" (pp. 146-149); attention is on concrete experience with a particular group of students. That is, the teacher is embedded in the here-and-now. In addition, there is an emotional attachment to the workplace, the classroom, in part the result of engaging in hundreds of verbal interchanges every hour of the working day, at least for elementary teachers (p. 149).

A third facet of the world view of teachers is a "tender-minded" view of the situation. Teachers as a group seem to maintain an idealized view of children, a "quasi-mystical" faith in human
perfectability (p. 150). On the one hand such a view could be attacked as unrealistic or undesirable, but on the other hand it may have a positive function: it may "prompt actions that serve as antidotes to the toxic qualities of institutional life" (p. 152). In other words, the very fact that teachers are not completely rational and methodical may mean that they (1) soften the impact of the impersonal institution and (2) protect students from the anonymity and isolation implicit in institutional living. This is accomplished by coming to know their students, by caring about them and by missing them when they are not there. To sum up, a teacher's world view can protect the student by removing or dulling some of the abrasive aspects of school life. Indeed, this orientation of teachers probably makes impersonal life at school far more tolerable for students.

One other related point should be made — the teacher occupies an ambiguous role because of working for and against the school at the same time. This is a consequence of having an allegiance to preserve both the institution and the student as well. Jackson draws upon the work of Charles Horton Cooley who said institutions were made up of less than whole persons who give to the institution the specialized part of themselves. "A man is no man at all if he is merely a piece of an institution; he must stand also for human nature . . ." (pp. 154-155). Likewise, the teacher stands for ideals beyond those of official bureaucracy. As Jackson observed, many aspects of classroom life seem trivial and they are, but the minutiae of daily life are to be watched and pondered.
Adaptive Strategies to School Life

The Student Subculture and Tracking

More than twenty years ago James Coleman (1961) conducted an ethnography which resulted in his important book The Adolescent Society. He discussed how industrialization developed in America which made it necessary for children to acquire extended years of school training. He later commented that one consequence has been that "industrial society has made of high school a social system of adolescents" (Coleman, 1975:74). Far-reaching economic changes in our society isolated adolescents. They eventually became a subculture, a functional community with "cars, freedom in dating, continual contact with the opposite sex, money, and entertainment like popular music and movies, designed especially for them" (1975:75).

Coleman's early study involved ten high schools in which he analyzed the relation between adolescent value systems and the allocation of rewards and resources among the students in each school. One well known finding in all ten schools was that academic achievement was of less importance than being an athletic star among the boys or being a cheerleader or being goodlooking among the girls (p. 78).

In Sullivan's (1979) study of three high schools, he included a sociolinguistic analysis of ethnic labeling behavior. It was learned that students assigned a set of categorical linguistic terms to one another, which Sullivan called "sorting." Interestingly
those labels varied along the rural/urban continuum. For example, the urban school used labels referring to racial phenotype, language, religion, culture, or place of origin. In contrast, students in a rural school labeled one another in terms of their places of residence (local towns, villages). In a more homogenous setting the suburban school used sorting labels which "did not correspond to any identifiable structural attributes of those so labeled such as class, ethnicity, residence" (p. 224). These labels are seen as a basic social process called "sorting" and refers to the ways high school students in different schools form cliques and personal friendship networks.

In his study on the "hidden curriculum" in a high school, Rosenbaum (1976) reported that the track system influenced IQ scores, friendship choices, student activities, students' evaluations of themselves and others; in short, tracking perpetuates social inequality. By studying a socially (race, class) homogeneous school it was possible to see whether a school track system affects students' attitudes and behaviors in the absence of social class differences. In addition, this approach enabled him to investigate some issues not dealt with by Coleman's Adolescent Society. Coleman, for example, failed to ask whether school factors determine which students participate and lead in various school activities nor did he ask whether school factors influence friendship choices. His work ignored the track structure of the school and its relationship to the structure of adolescent society (a relationship established by Rosenbaum).
Rosenbaum found that students are tracked into separate societies, that "whether or not a student participates in extracurricular activities is highly dependent on what track he is in" (p. 156). For example, students in the college track were members of political clubs, news publications, and were officers of clubs. Clearly students in the college track occupied places of leadership and positions of influence. What the adolescent society forgets is that these "lackluster" (these unadulated non-athletes, non-cheerleaders) students who run student activities and organizations are the ones bound for social mobility. This study of tracking notes that the social functions of a shared adolescent subculture "distracts students' attention from the process of social selection in the school."

Rosenbaum states that:

The adolescent society restricts individuals' access to friend-groups, activities, and leadership positions in a pattern analogous to the social discrimination in adult society. Only the elite are allowed into the best social groups, activities, and leadership positions (p. 171).

Coleman's earlier research emphasized a single set of dominant values in the adolescent society, but Rosenbaum disagrees. School groups are differentiated by track placements. Furthermore, the differentiation within the adolescent society is not in conflict with school and adult society but rather works to "reproduce, support, and perpetuate social inequality in adult society" (p. 172). It was found that 50% of the respondents said a majority of their friends were in their own track, thus "neighborhood friendships dissolve and trackbased friendships supplant them" (p. 160).
In a two-year ethnographic study of a desegregated high school in the South, Noblit (1979:78) observed four networks of students. These four groups are differentiated by class, race, and commitment (school versus street):

Group A: middle and upper-class whites/committed to success in school/members of accelerated classes.

Group B: Blue-collar whites/less committed to success in school, more to the street.

Group C: active blacks/relatively committed to success in school/some in accelerated classes/from working/class homes.

Group D: lower-class blacks/strong commitment to life style of street/they are poor and come from housing projects (p. 78).

In this particular society of adolescents, the distribution of power and influence was unevenly distributed among the four groups with honor students having essential control of student activities and honors. "The honor students were able to maintain support of others by mobilizing the teachers (who 'respected' these students), the blue-collar whites, and the active blacks (who were attempting to gain admission into the honor student network)" (p. 78).

In his ethnography Sullivan (1979) looked at status in the school organization and investigated "how the social networks of the students relate to their statuses in the school organization and ... what processes account for such patterns" (p. 217). Five major interrelated sources of recruitment for the networks were identified: neighborhood, ethnicity, social class, status in the school organization and activities of special interest. Two additional factors
are suggested as major determinants of informal associations in everyday life, the size and complexity of the school and the stratification of its curriculum. For example, the size of the school and its divergent programs fragment whatever associations may be brought from the neighborhood into the school itself. Since class schedules and programs divide best friends this causes a high rate of class-cutting, a practice used by students to be with their friends. On the other hand, the stratified curriculum with its varied programs opposes the process of fragmentation which derives from size and complexity. That is, the divided curriculum works to some degree to lump together some students and to reinforce class and ethnicity. The different ethnic groups tend to be divided along the following ethnic and racial lines:

Recent immigrants are funneled into the ESL (English as a second language) bilingual, and other language classes. White and Chinese students are disproportionately concentrated in college preparatory classes and programs. Black and Hispanic students are disproportionately concentrated in slow-learner and business classes . . . Thus, the curriculum tends to fragment neighborhood ties even though it also reinforces class and ethnic divisions (p. 221).

Finally, a word about tracking and self evaluation. It is taken for granted that track placements are intended to have academic implications, but it is also true that they take on social evaluations as well. In Rosenbaum's study both college and non-college students believe the college tracks offer better education and higher prestige than the noncollege tracks. Those who chose the college track said they choose to remain there because they are able to do the
demanding work required of them. Conversely, nearly all noncollege track students say they choose this track because of "their personal shortcomings, either lack of ability or lack of motivation" (p. 167). These choices provide "neither abstract nor hypothetical" information about self-images but actually reveal the way students evaluate their own school capacities. "A student's choice of a noncollege track becomes an admission to himself and to the school at large that he belongs in a lower status position" (p. 167). Track placement then has a clear impact on lower-track students' self-evaluations.

Others have claimed that students' educational and occupational aspirations are more or less fixed by the time they enter the eighth grade (Jencks et al., 1972). Some research has reported that students in lower track positions receive less respect or deference from both teachers and their peers. For example, more than a third of noncollege track students mention "blatant insults" from teachers and administrators (Rosenbaum, 1976:179). Self-concept, defined as confidence in their own ability to learn, has been found to be a powerful predictor of test scores for whites. For Black children it was not confidence but a "sense of control of the environment" which was related to higher achievement (Boocock, 1980:51).

Not only does track placement effect self-image but students located in lower noncollege tracks experience a more limited range of social identities (p. 182). Whenever they do participate in activities they learn functionary roles and low status positions. Since they do not experience full participation in social activities they
do not learn various social skills and identities. Similarly, Goffman (1961) observed that new inmates at mental institutions suffered mortifying experiences as they were re-socialized to accept a new lower status position. Garfinkle (1972) wrote that all societies have ways for transforming the public identity of its members into something that is considered as lower in the social scheme of social types. He conceptualized such activities as "status degradation ceremonies." For some students ". . . the multitude of insults and deprivations that lower-track students experience is apt to undermine their feelings of competence and self-esteem, discourage their interest and involvement . . ." (Rosenbaum, 1976:182-183).

School Values and Adaptations

School values define what a model student should be. Generally speaking, a student should be obedient, conforming (exhibit "good behavior") patient and docile. Thus, one way students can adapt to the school system is to become "good workers." If they fit the model and really learn to comply with educational authority, they can use these skills in nonschool settings. But obviously some students are not good workers and they may innovate to obtain their rewards. One technique is to develop interpersonal maneuvering, to seek special favor by manipulation or by moving close to the source of power. This technique can include fawning, false compliments or even social dishonesty. Yet another technique is simply to spend a lot of energy staying out of trouble -- the hiding of words and deeds (Jackson,
Ethnographers have stressed the similarity of school values to factory and office values. For example, students must learn obedience and docility in the classroom which prepares them for life in the work world: power is a fact of life to which we must adapt (p. 33). A conforming student can comply with procedural expectations of the institution and become a "model student." It has been suggested that some valedictorians may reach success by the path of conformity as much as by intellectual prowess. As Jackson states "in schools, as in prisons, good behavior pays off" (p. 34; emphasis added). The school-wise student who learns how to avoid pain to acquiesce to the network of school rules actually learns to be passive. Curiosity, "that most fundamental of all scholarly traits," is of little value as the student meets the demands of conformity.

Satisfaction With School

One chief complaint of students who are having problems with school is boredom. Yet a review of several studies concluded that students do pay attention to the lesson most of the time (Jackson, 1968:101). Even as early as 1927 researchers were trying to estimate the degree to which students were involved in or withdrawn from classroom activities while sitting at their desks (p. 85). More recent research along these lines finds some negative themes that predominate whenever students are asked to discuss their feelings about school. One theme has to do with frightening or embarrassing experiences with
cruel or insensitive teachers. The other theme is boredom with meaningless tasks. Furthermore, there is some evidence that it is the institution of the school and not individual teachers which generates discontent among students (p. 49). In contrast to this is the finding that most students say they are satisfied with their school experience. This leads to the question about the relationship between levels of satisfaction with school and academic performance. Logically, it would seem that contented students (with positive attitudes toward school) would be the ones who excel in academic performance. Surprisingly, existing evidence "points to an absence of a direct link between the way students view their school life and their relative mastery of academic objectives" (p. 75).

To end this discussion of the adolescent subculture the following summary statements are offered: (1) Industrialization of our society brought about extended schooling for children which created an "adolescent society." (2) Students label and sort each other out differently in rural, suburban and urban schools. (3) Students' associations and cliques are strongly effected by a school's tracking system which "perpetuates social inequality." (4) Some schools funnel students along various race and class lines.

The Praxis of Damnation

Jackson (1968) portrays the student as one in need of protection from "those qualities of classroom life that threaten his sense of uniqueness and personal worth" (p. 154). A great segment of a
student's life is affected by school and neither family life nor peer group life will substitute for a humane classroom experience. From this viewpoint a peer culture and extra-school activities are defense mechanisms which "operate internally to reduce discomfort, or to strengthen the student's resistance by sharing criticism, subverting regulations, ridiculing authority and in other ways providing defenses against the more unpleasant aspects of institutional living" (p. 154).

A recurring theme found in ethnographical accounts of schools is that factors other than individual capabilities play an important role in the way students are processed through school systems. More than thirty years ago Hollingshead (1949) analyzed the relationship of social class and clique formation at Elmtown. He looked at the impact of cliques upon the treatment and evaluation of students by school authorities. He concluded that the school reinforced the class structure, that a student was judged by teachers and peers on the basis of family background. His analysis focused on middle-class domination of the adolescent social system with the working-class child having almost no opportunity in the school system at Elmtown.

In a more recent study, Cicourel and Kitsuse (1963) investigated how a society develops techniques for selecting and training its members to fill occupational positions. Unlike the common assumption that performance and achievement are mere products of ability and motivation for students with above average talents, Cicourel and Kitsuse give attention to "non-intellective" determinants
of educational and general life aspirations. Attention is directed toward school officials who have power and authority to define situations, life goals (college or no college), and even status positions of students. The subject of inquiry was how "routine decisions of the guidance and counselling personnel within the high school are related to the college/noncollege decisions and, by implication, to the occupational choices made by students" (p. 6).

Like Durkheim the authors concerned themselves with rates of social phenomena, with their patterned variations and how those are tied to the social and cultural organization of the group. The problem researched involved "the processes by which persons come to be defined, classified, and recorded in the categories of the agency's statistics" (p. 9). In other words, the rates are intertwined with organizational activities of the agencies that produced the rates in the first place.

The Cicourel-Kitsuse ethnography theoretically followed Alfred Schutz who stressed the way socially derived knowledge is transmitted by the vocabulary and syntax of everyday language. Thus, attention was given to the clinical language used by school personnel to identify student types. Cicourel and Kitsuse observed school personnel and noted their use of clinical labels as they spotted student "problems" or "difficulties" associated with "lack of motivation," "anxiety," "the emotionally disturbed" or "sibling rivalry." Organizational efforts of this kind which "help" the student may "redefine the initial basis of the student's 'problem'" (p. 18). This occurs when
counselors and other school officials locate the student's "problem" of lower academic or behavior performance within the student's own organism or inside his family situation -- instead of locating the problem in the school system itself.

This orientation of school officials has two primary consequences for the student: (1) it deflects school authorities from examining the organization and methods of the school system and counselors as sources of academic problems; (2) it creates a population of students who are organizationally differentiated as "clinical cases in need of therapeutic treatment." Inquiry was made into criteria used by counselors to define "normal" adjustment as they identified and interpreted problems. This is a significant query because if a school controls students' access to higher educational facilities, it also controls their life chances (p. 16). More specifically, counselors occupy positions of power and authority as a "validating agent for the student's future" (p. 19). It was found that ability and performance were not the only criteria used by school authorities to determine who progresses into the college curriculum. Other criteria used to determine the progression toward college includes interpretations by school personnel of the student's biography, social and personal "adjustment," appearance and demeanor, social class, and "social type" (p. 136). The major concern of the study, however, has to do with the consequences of these classifications and definitions on any given student's career within the high school. The thesis they develop is: social class and organizational
sponsorship (and not mere talent) are critical to the way students are processed through the school system.

The last study presented in this review is one by Willis (1977). Willis conducted a three-year ethnography on the transition from school to work. He included one main case study of twelve non-academic working-class boys (the "Hammertown boys") and five comparative studies of conformist working class boys in a nearby mixed secondary school. In the comparison of these groups the parameters of class, ability, school regime, and orientation of the school were selected for analysis (p. 5). The school consisted of 600 boys many of whom were West Indian and Asian minorities. This particular school was selected "because it was in the heart of . . . an absolutely characteristic working-class . . . council estate . . ." (p. 4) (i.e., a public housing project of small, attached row houses).

Willis begins the book with the statement:

The difficult thing to explain about how middle-class kids get middle-class jobs is why others let them. The difficult thing to explain about how working-class kids got working class jobs is why they let themselves (p. 1).

Willis attempts to capture the class culture of the working-class boys. "Culture" for him is conceived as more than a mental category, more than a set of transferred internal structures. The concept is used to include "experiences, relationships, and ensembles of systematic types of relationships which influence "choices" and "decisions." Culture sets structure and effects how "choices" are made and are defined in the first place. In short, it is in part
"the product of collective human praxis" (p. 4).

The working-class counter-school culture is the locus, the milieu where the nature of manual labor is internalized, where working class themes are mediated to individuals and groups. A culture is generated and maintained in their own praxis which finally directs and prepares some of its members to certain kinds of work (p. 2). The acquisition of subordinate roles and the associated involvement with manual labor contains an element of "self-damnation" (p. 3). In other words, it is a process of self-induction into the labor process. The working class culture is directly linked to regulative state institutions which "have an important function in the overall reproduction of the social totality and especially in relation to reproducing the social conditions for a certain kind of production" (p. 3).

Willis tries to explain why state education continually fails to improve the life chances of the working-class. His interpretative analysis finds that working-class boys hold certain convictions and insights which finally lead them to an objective work situation which seems to be entrapment rather than liberation. How does this happen? A number of caveats are presented: class society exists by means of a "contradictory double-articulation" which means that an unfree condition can be entered freely. That is, there is "a moment in working-class culture when the manual giving of labor power represents both a freedom, election and transcendence, and a precise insertion into a system of exploitation and oppression for working-class
people" (p. 120).

The working class is portrayed in terms of class struggle and oppression: they are the only class not inherently structured from within by the ideology of capitalist organization. This class does not have to believe the dominant ideology nor capitalist legitimations; it does not need the "mask of democracy to cover its face of oppression" (p. 123).

Willis' discussion of language is of interest to our own ethnography. He writes that part of the reaction to the school institution by these working class boys is an antagonism to, a rejection of words, of language as the expression of mental life (p. 124). In some ways for the working class the cultural is in a battle with language. However, this does not mean they have no rich language. They do. It means that language cannot express "those mental insights which are . . . too much for the received language" (p. 125). What is actually described in this book is a dialectical process where working class boys create meanings (say, for example, by changing clothes, habits, styles of behavior, personal appearance) within the informal groups and these meanings turn back onto the group members to shape their stylistic practices and behavior. Such cultural activity not only "expresses" a notion of the world, but acts to "cast into doubt the workings of the larger ideologies, institutions and structural relationships of the whole society."
Studies of the Deaf

Robert Scott (in Higgins, 1980), among others has pointed out that very little sociological information exists on deafness compared to other disabled groups. Moreover, the information which does exist is often speculative, anecdotal and atheoretical. As Scott notes, many seminal insights into stigma have come out of research on the disabled and much has been learned about "the elusive fiber that keeps everyday, common taken-for-granted reality intact through studying the handicapped" (p. 7). Again, deaf people have been largely ignored by sociological theorists who discuss the intriguing nexus between language, thought, perception, and reality. And yet it is commonplace for writers in the fields of social psychology, phenomenology, ethnomethodology and symbolic interactionism to treat "talk" and language as the primary variable whenever they discuss "the social construction of reality." It is surprising, then, that so many have paid so little attention to a group of people who commence life with a profound and fundamental language problem.

In 1968, under the guidance of Aaron Cicourel, Robert Boese wrote a master's thesis called, "Towards an Ethnography of the Deaf." In that work he too observed how communication is significant in the development and maintenance of social life and how it is perhaps the main theme of sociology today (p. 2) and, as pointed out above, that almost nothing is known about people who use non-oral methods of communication. (With few exceptions, sociologists have done little work in that vacuum since 1968). In this section a review is made
of several recent studies of the deaf worlds of children and adults. Some of these bear more directly on the present work than do others and these are reviewed first.

Community in the Deaf World

The deaf world is a gemeinschaft one. It is a face-to-face culture differing in many ways from other communities. Even the criteria for social class used by the outside world has less importance to this community. Here the major determinants of social status derive from race, sex, education and "sophistication" (Benderly, 1980: 235). Because it is such a small and strongly cohesive subculture it is a community of conservative family, moral and sexual relationships. It is a world in which "everywhere outside the deaf club or the houses of community members . . . is foreign territory . . ." (p. 236).

In this society a residential school generally has much more input into the socialization of the deaf child than does his parents. Bound together by their language deaf children grow up in institutions often far away from family, neighbors and hometown. The residential school becomes their world par excellent.

Benderly's (1980) book, Dancing Without Music, tells how it is to grow up deaf and discusses the question, "who are the deaf?" The book begins by describing "two different worlds," the deaf and the hearing. It views the deaf community at Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C. as a "foreign country" (p. 1).
Trained in both cultural anthropology and linguistics, Benderly provides a much needed social and cultural approach to deaf people as a community, a culture, as a people. The author appropriately takes note of two major variables: time of onset of deafness (prelingual or postlingual) and degree of hearing loss (mild, moderate, severe or profound). The probability of having gone to a residential school for the deaf is greater if hearing loss is early and profound. And this makes it more likely that one's childhood and youth were markedly different from that of his hearing counterparts (p. 10). Paradoxically, deaf people who experience the great language and communication problem, who grow up in total institutions away from family life and regular social interaction with diverse other groups are presented in this book as not so different at all. For example, one deaf educator's - Victor Galloway - description of the "typical" white male deaf person is cited as follows. He is:

a stable, productive, relatively well adjusted, and quite provisional member of the lower middle or working class. He supports his deaf wife and hearing children with a steady manual job, often skilled work that requires little communication with co-workers. He owns his own home in an average or slightly better neighborhood. He attended a state residential school and finished with a fifth-grade reading level. As a young man he participated in athletics at his local deaf club, and as he grew older he moved into club leadership. The club, or perhaps a deaf church, is his main social connection (p. 15).

And from the psychological literature "one astonishing fact stands out beyond dispute" these people who passed through such an abnormal and different childhood emerge "stunningly normal adults." It is their sheer normality and ordinary adjustment that amazes (p. 65).
On the other hand, residential schools are described as restrictive environments which produce negative results for its members.

Residential Schools in Transition

Schildroth (1980) reported the enrollment patterns among 62 public residential schools as well as those for the general school population during 1970-1978. It is shown that in recent times the residential setting has come under scrutiny from several different places. Even Public Law 94-142 (the "Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975" calls for "mainstreaming" i.e., putting handicapped children into regular classrooms as much as possible) is seen by many as a threat to the residential schools (p. 80). Some have claimed that a truncated socialization process results: (1) from the experiential deprivation at home where poor communication exists and (2) at the residential school where strict institutional rules prevent the semblance of normal social interactions (Evans, 1975).

Other writers have reviewed the published reports about the consequences of experiential deficiency which derives from communicative inadequacy (Meadow, 1968). For one thing the personality of the deaf person is said to be effected negatively in the following ways: immaturity, egocentricity, distorted perception, lacking empathy, more dependency and deficient in educational and intellectual functioning (pp. 29-30). Meadow's study of deaf children with deaf parents -- found "superior intellectual and social functioning" of these children compared to deaf children with hearing parents (late
communication, and, generally speaking, rejection).

As for the trends of enrollment in residential schools there has been a national decline in the number of white hearing impaired students in the 62 schools. This is said to be partly caused by a faster growing black population, especially in the age group under 14 (Schildroth, 1980:90). Nationally there has been an increase of 3.3% of multi-handicapped children during the years 1970-1977.

Residential schools restrict students' freedom and work against the development of maturity and independence. Since these institutions act *en loco parentis*, they typically impose rules dealing with youthful sexuality in ways "preposterously strict for a convent high school" (Benderly, 1980:61). But the residential school plays a vital role in the caring for deaf children. Since most children of hearing parents cannot grow up to be like their parents, then someone must help them find a satisfying way to be a deaf person and that someone else has traditionally been the state residential school (p. 228). Traditionally these schools have received the hardest cases, children with the greatest loss of hearing. Until recent years, however, it was actually other deaf children at the school who functioned to help an individual (newcomer) find a meaningful way to be a deaf person. That is, it was the children who welcomed the newcomer into that world since (until recently) the adult authorities tried to suppress sign language and encourage speech (p. 228).
Most adults who were deaf as children can describe the same experience — the frustration, anger, and loneliness of home; arrival at school; the sudden dawning of community and relationships. Of all adult cultures in the world, this is one of the very few handed down generation after generation from child to child (p. 228).

Over time the schools gave in to rising demands for the use of signs. But even so it was not until the late 1960's that any school in America actually taught sign language. The school, as Benderly says, finally accepted it as a fait accompli. Even today older deaf people exhibit an anger which permeates the social division of deaf-hearing. Some of them harbor a "bottomless fury" over what was done to them by hearing people who had tried to make deaf children become hearing children.

Today, the residential school is home for many children who quite literally "visit" their hearing parents on holidays and summers. "The school became home because it was where the heart was, and vacations were interruptions to be dreaded, even resisted" (p. 229). Deaf people belong to a language community, a sociological phenomenon unlike any other handicapped group. This is illustrated by the fact that many hard-of-hearing people went to residential schools before hearing-aids were widely available and "there they learned to be deaf" (p. 229). For that group a hearing-aid might increase their hearing but destroy their social world, their active involvement with deaf people and their institutions. According to Benderly, their deafness makes them among the most cohesive of minority groups.

Higgins (1980) has observed that membership in the deaf
community seems to reduce one's desire to improve speech and lip-reading skills. One's commitment to the deaf community inhibits the desire to be like the hearing world and those deaf persons who can speak are thus perceived as less committed to the deaf world (p. 41).

Benderly speaks of the cultural gap between the deaf and the hearing (p. 232). The deaf are seen by some people as immature and old-fashioned, (epitomizing the somewhat dated expression, "square"): as people who are "out of it." This differentness is described as an "unworldliness" and characterizes even educated deaf people. And yet the advent of total communication (TC) on residential campuses has resulted in an increase of trust between the hearing and the deaf. Some bitterness is gone and the future may see more interaction between the two communities (p. 234).

Today there is a new and formidable threat to the state schools. "Large-scale mainstreaming," writes Benderly, "may well be the third great experiment in deaf education" (p. 241). But the fate of children is not all that is at stake. Bureaucracies and budgets now face potentially drastic change. The new law calls for "the least restrictive environment" and touches the idea that separate cannot be equal. The oralist camp hailed the new law (PL 94-142) as a move toward social justice while the manualist camp worried not only about individual children but also about the future of the institutions it had taken so long to build (p. 247). The manualists doubt that local schools will have the expert knowledge and materials needed for deaf children and that they will spend the
necessary funds on so few clients. Secondly, they believe that the public school would be a lonely world for the isolated deaf child and thus not be the "least restrictive environment" at all. They believe the "other" curriculum of friendships, camaraderie, sports and activities is at least as important as school work (p. 252). These critics of mainstreaming say it is true that deaf people must live with the hearing but it is also true that they must live among themselves. Further, they dislike the implication of the new law that the "normal" is preferred; that normal equals success which signifies that the handicapped must mean failure. In short, "the residential schools stand in increased danger of stigma, at the same time that the country believes itself becoming more open to the handicapped" (p. 253).

According to one study (Office of Demographic Studies, 1977) PL 94-142 has caused an increase in enrollment of multiple handicapped for the residential schools and more of the "normal deaf" going to public schools. That is, the residential school now finds itself with increasing numbers of children more difficult to educate and this makes necessary program changes. Today, more than 70% of the mainstreamed children attending regular schools have mild hearing losses whereas over 60% of students attending residential schools had profound losses (and only 1% had mild losses [p. 254]).

Simply put, degree of hearing loss (mild, severe, profound) and time of onset of deafness (prelingual or postlingual) seem to play an important role in placement decisions. On the other hand,
there are two other important factors involved. Older students attended residential schools which, Benderly speculates, may be related to the social needs of adolescents. Next, more poor children are going to residential schools and more children from wealthier families are mainstreamed: "One residential school child in five came from a home earning less than $5,000 in 1977, as opposed to one mainstreamed child in 10" (p. 254). These statistics indicate, among other things, the oral bias of upper-income families (or their desire to keep them close to home since residential schools are often far away).

Finally, one of the axes of life for managers and staff members of residential schools is the uncertain future caused primarily by PL 94-142. It has been called "the road to hell" by prolific writer and editor of the American Annals of the Deaf, McCay Vernon (Gannon, 1981:397). He believed the law was under-funded, that it was naive to assume that mainstreaming is feasible and desirable for the great majority of handicapped children. He also noted that most states require two years of additional training for teachers who teach deaf children. How can a teacher with 25 or 30 hearing and one deaf child provide for the deaf child's mainstreaming, he wonders.

A Sociology of Deafness

Paul Higgins (1980) considers the deaf as "outsiders," a conceptualization which derives from Howard Becker's writings on deviancy theory. In the foreword to Higgins' book, Robert Scott (p. 9)
describes the deaf community as extremely cohesive, divided into strata and cliques along the familiar lines of age, sex, education and ethnicity. And yet there are other lines of division peculiar to the deaf, lines based on preferred modes of communication, like signing, speaking and lip-reading (p. 9). The community gives its members a sense of separateness, of identity, something threatened by mainstreaming. After describing the deaf as outsiders in a hearing world and covering such topics as the deaf community and identity, other chapters deal with deviance stigma. As Scott says, the book is an introduction to the social world of the deaf — a long overdue one at that.

As Higgins described it, the deaf community is partly a response to stigma; the lack of social acceptance in the hearing world is pervasive (p. 140). And for people who are stigmatized, acceptance is a central feature of their lives (Goffman 1963:8-9). Deaf people differ in a unique way from hearing people in that typically their parents are not outsiders (only about 10% of deaf children have deaf parents) which means that most of the time the children have an outsider relationship with their own family members. Additionally, if they marry another deaf (outsider) person the parents may be unhappy about that situation plus the fear of having deaf grandchildren.

As outsiders in this world deaf people are stigmatized, or as Goffman puts it, they are viewed as discredited, tainted or incomplete. They have a failing, a handicap, and they do not measure up to "normal" standards. They are not whole persons. It is their
mode of communication, i.e., signing, which hearing people focus their attention on. That mode of communication makes them stand out as different creatures, as discredited ones. Sometimes their own hearing children are ashamed to sign to them in public and this creates an uncertainty for the parents as to whether or not they are to be ashamed.

Those who create and control the larger social world often treat the 'failing' of outsiders as a master status. The failing is emphasized and individual characteristics are overlooked. Deafness as indicated primarily by signing is the master status for these outsiders (p. 131).

The non-outsiders monopolize reality and define who is and who is not an outsider. For people who cannot hear it is the hearing world which stigmatizes and defines them as tainted. There is polarization and deaf people who can speak verbally often are seen as less committed to the deaf world since they tend to blur the contrasts needed for identity (p. 176). The question is: Who benefits from these socially constructed divisions?

By putting and keeping people in subordinate positions, by making them outsiders, those who monopolize reality assure themselves that, in contrast to outsiders, they are morally superior people. They may also assure themselves of cheap labor, convenient scapegoats and so on. If outsiders did not exist, they would be created (p. 178).

Moreover, the nondisabled put the outsider in an inferior position and then expect him to agree with that definition. The tainted one is supposed to jump for the chance to be rehabilitated i.e., to become like the nondisabled; today mainstreaming is the way to salvation (p. 180). Some deaf and 'wise' hearing people understand how
successful mainstreaming can be a threat to the deaf community and to the identity creation provided by it.

It is conceivable that state schools for the deaf would close down if mainstreaming was totally successful. No more homecoming gatherings and no more children becoming deaf alumni. What would happen to sign language? What would happen to Gallaudet College with no new generations of signers coming along? It would be the death of a culture which is discredited by non-members anyway.

More than 15 years ago another sociologist, Marvin Sussman, (1965) wrote a paper on "Sociological Theory and Deafness: Problems and Prospects." In that work he repeatedly refers to the lack of sociological theory and research in the field of deafness. He briefly sets forth ways that sociological concepts may be applied to studies of deaf people in terms of deviance and stigma; marginality (which is especially useful for viewing hard-of-hearing people); social movements and family concepts. We may not know much about the deaf he writes, because our frame of reference is fitted to those in a hearing world.

We are intent with our preoccupation to do the right thing without seriously attempting to find out what deaf people really want. We do not hesitate to tell them what they should have. The control over the deaf by the nondeaf is so pervasive and those who are 'socialized into it' that they in reality become products of the system even against their own will (p. 47, emphasis added).

Long ago Alexander Graham Bell's (whose mother was deaf) grandfather believed that speech and communication of ideas was the factor which made humans like God (Moores, 1978:60). Bell himself
married a deaf woman but favored the oral philosophy and expressed his own fears of the formation of a "deaf race" in a paper entitled, "Memoir upon the formation of a deaf variety of the human race."

Furthermore, he attacked residential schools because they isolated deaf people from society and also provided a place for them to come together. Thus, he opposed the use of sign language (referred to as 'gesture language') and the intermarriage of deaf men and women. In short, he called for the elimination of the schools, the language, and deaf teachers.

The self and marginality

Human beings develop a self which will not survive unharmed whenever negative criticisms, stigma, and social rejections are unrelenting. And the division of humanity into deaf and hearing camps effects not only formal organizations of the two groups but also touches the most intimate associations. For example, the ongoing conflict between the two modes of communication (actually two philosophies) disrupts family relationships. This is seen by the common observation that deaf children communicate little with their parents and have poor relationships with them when they become adults (Higgins, 1980:66ff).

For deaf people (and those hard-of-hearing) life is a series of constant minor irritations composed of stupid mistakes, dependency on others for routine needs, and a river of small unkindnesses on a daily basis. In response-to those blunders and pains these
subordinate people develop certain interactional tactics to "hold
the powerful at bay" such as shuffling, head-bobbing, forelock-
tugging and grinning (Benderly, 1980:66).

Ethnic identity costs much more for deaf people than for
other groups. They recognize that they belong to a particular group,
that they are in opposition: "to be deaf is to be not hearing; it
is to be one of us and not one of them" (Benderly, p. 229). More
than a decade ago it was observed that some graduates of the Clark
School for the Deaf exhibited an "in-group" tendency since 38% had
only deaf friends. Some of this tight cohesion is seen as something
based more on societal rejection than on choice (Sussman, 1965:48).

As one ages, marriage can further establish one's identity
as a deaf person. That is, the marriage of one deaf person to an­
other often solidifies their identities as deaf adults (Benderly,
1980:61,230). At the macro level, Sussman (1965:45) believes the
NAD (National Association of the Deaf) is an organization that helps
relieve marginality by frankly developing an identity of a person as
deaf. Borrowing Jesse Jackson's phrase, it is to declare: "I am
somebody!"

Sign language as a
link to the world

In their work with deaf people, Aaron Cicourel and Robert
Boese (1972) suggest ways for a deaf child to improve his education;
that he must learn sign language or else he will always be deprived
of "a natural basis for the acquisition of communicative competence in the deaf community and will find himself to be a pathological curiosity in the hearing world" (p. 33). They take the politically controversial position that a deaf child should learn signs before he learns oral methods. If he does not then he will be cut off from the world of the deaf. It is true, they concede, that the deaf person must deal with the hearing world but he will probably never be at home in the hearing world. While it is possible for a hearing person to learn signs well, it is seldom possible for a deaf person to become a skilled ("native") speaker of an oral language. The argument is that speech is never a deaf person's natural language, that it is always a second language (p. 40). Furthermore, oral language can never be learned as a second language by a deaf person in the same way that a hearing person can learn a second oral language.

The ethnographic setting of deaf social interaction is "basically a pictoral or iconic kind of environment" (p. 47). That is, a deaf person uses ideographic symbols and is able to create new signs using gestures of the hands, arms, face or motion of the entire body. The deaf society is viewed as a separate world within the hearing world. Even when traveling they seek out each other. At home they seek other deaf people continuously, primarily because they constitute a language community (p. 48). Trapped by language, they are on the inside looking out.

Cicourel and Boese stress the importance of studying natural sign language. It should be used among the deaf to "generate
intimate social relations" (p. 51). If natural signing is ignored then the deaf are cut off from their "native culture" and "American" (or, for them, second language) sign language. Most of the existing literature plus deaf people themselves consider ASL their "native" sign language and certainly not a "second" language.

Fingerspelling also must be used to communicate abstract ideas which are picked up from the larger society (p. 52). Yet, if sign language is a functional language, why can it not transmit abstract or technical information learned in the larger hearing world? Nash (1976:356) also suggests that sign language is a restricted code of communication:

Sign language, when compared to middle-class oral English, is less concerned with middle-class style and more dependent upon knowing the context to convey meaning. In general, there appears to be less difference between sign language and the version of English found among workers than between sign language and middle-class English.

Since deaf people live in a hearing world, their daily activities are evaluated by hearing rather than by deaf people. The non-deaf society, then, will view oral communication as the only normal mode of communication. But those who knowingly deal with the deaf must be somewhat more tolerant and understanding. For example, teachers of the deaf (orals or manuals) must understand the everyday world of the deaf. Cicourel and Boese believe a teacher must have knowledge of manual modes and "some oral communication ability" in order for the deaf child to adjust satisfactorily. If a deaf person first learns signs then he will always mediate what he is reading
and writing in the oral language through his own sign system (p. 53). This study reported, for example, how a deaf man read a note written in English, rehearsed it to himself, then signed it to his wife.

An interesting hypothesis is that fingerspelling is recognized by a child as an iconic representation which it is derived from and it may be that he actually sees a sequence of letters but collapses them into one sign instead of seeing several different letters (p. 54). Thus, if a deaf child is in a hearing school his teacher must understand that English is a foreign language to him, that sign language is his first language.

The most deficient teaching situation in public schools is the one where only the oral method is used. In short, "the deaf person must be a bilingual if he is to adjust in a hearing world" (p. 59). Hearing people must recognize that he occupies two worlds. Finally, the deaf child is best viewed not as some kind of anomaly or pathology, but as a "remarkable person" who is bilingual. In order for us to understand human communication then native sign language must be understood.

**Theoretical Propositions**

Having concluded both the theoretical and empirical reviews of literature, it is now possible to integrate them and then state the general propositions which guide this inquiry. Throughout the theoretical review, emphasis was given to the role of language as a socially given and as a situated thing of especial importance for
deaf children who unlike hearing children, must be taught language in a formal way.

Is ASL a restricted code of communication? Moores (1978: 167) seems to say no -- ASL, like all other languages, would have both elaborated and restricted codes. On the other hand, he says a "rule of thumb" (on the use of various options of manual communication) is that "the more informal situation, the more signs tend to dominate. As a situation becomes more formal and 'English-like,' there is a tendency to use spelling to a greater extent" (p. 161). McCay Vernon (1974) editor of American Annals of the Deaf, has also written about "the repression" of sign language which resulted in its slow development. "For example," he notes, "the number of signs is not as great as the number of spoken words in any country" (p. 691). Therefore, one must resort to fingerspelling to remedy the sign shortage. In a sense this says that more complex communications require a more specific (spelling) mode of manual language (elaborated). The present study will leave open the possibility that the iconic, ideographic and concept-based ASL may be a restricted form of communication. At the present time, sociologists, anthropologists, and linguists in general are involved in a great debate over the verbal deprivation hypothesis which is now "a crucial issue in our society" (Labov, 1972a:257). Labov, who studied the logic of nonstandard English among Black ghetto kids, refutes several writers who claim the superiority of one language over another. For example, he attacks Basil Bernstein whose views are said to be "filtered
through a strong bias against all forms of working-class behavior, so that middle-class language is seen as superior in every respect—as 'more abstract, and necessarily somewhat more flexible, detailed and subtle'" (p. 229). Anthropologist Marvin Harris (1975:131) likewise believes the demotion of dialects to inferior status is a part of a general process used by ruling groups to maintain their superordinate position. The present study will provide a unique examination of language acquisition, use and competence since children as young as four will be included.

The formulations of Goffman, Berger and Luckmann, and George Mead will guide this study and give it a sense of reference. This ethnography will be able to make a contribution to present knowledge about total institutions, a concept viewed by Goffman as a social hybrid which is part residential community and part formal organization. Goffman's (1961) formulations are somewhat limited, as illustrated below, because they ignore people without language, without roles, culture and with relatively undeveloped selves, i.e., he never considered deaf children who come to an institution with little or no language at all. For example, he says that inmates come to the institution with a "presenting culture" rooted in a "home world" in which his experience confirmed a conception of self. Thus, "we deal with something more restricted than acculturation..." (p. 13). That something is called "disculturation" which means an "untraining" which cripples an inmate's ability (temporarily) to handle parts of the outside world. But these assumptions ignore and
and forget the deaf child who enters the institution with no presenting culture, no language, an undeveloped self and a gross lack of role sets. The young deaf child in fact will not experience dis­culturation but rather "total enculturation." Like most other theoreticians, Goffman forgot that these near tabula rasa people existed and this omission is manifest in his formulations. It is no exaggeration, then, to say that this ethnography will examine an unusual type of total institution and its monopolistic and far reaching socialization-reality-creating powers.

Berger and Luckmann (1967) make great claims for the role of language as it functions in the humanization of an infant. Human beings, they write, must create a world for themselves and this is accomplished by language, by ongoing conversation. What reality have deaf children constructed when language was virtually absent until age 5 or 8 or 10? What is the "reality" for those who never become very competent with any language? If there is really such a connection between language and reality, then deaf people constitute (as mentioned earlier) an experimental group whose methods used to perceive and structure the world with types and typologies need to be researched. This is the raison d'être for the present study.

Berger (1969) claims that socialization can take place only if the individual can talk to himself ("internal dialogue," p. 14). Furthermore, one's identity and his consciousness are established and maintained through ongoing conversation. Again, language imposes order upon "the pantarhei of experience" (p. 20). And if one's
conversation with others were interrupted he/she would be plunged into anomie, into meaninglessness — a state of madness and terror. These statements do not accurately describe deaf children and deaf adults who lack language. Who would argue that they are without a world, without socialization or consciousness? They certainly do not seem to live in anomic disorder — much less some state of terror. These fascinating propositions of Berger and Luckmann seem to overstate the power of language and to underemphasize the human capacity to function, to learn and to nomize — to some degree — their world even though little language is present.

In short, the role of language in socialization, learning, and perceiving may be exaggerated in contemporary sociological theories. White's (1949) statement that deaf people without language are not human is an example. Or Berger's claim that language is a child's initiation into the social world, or the idea that thinking is dominated by one's language.

Finally, George Mead (1977) posits that meaning is not a part of consciousness until symbols are involved. This means a pre-lingual deaf child without words or signs experiences no meaning. Language is the vehicle of thought, he writes, but the great majority of contemporary writers in the field of deafness dismiss as absurd the notion that such a deaf child cannot think (Hans Furth, 1966; Vernon, personal correspondence; see also C. Tomlinson-Keasey and Kelly, 1974). Furthermore, Mead's writings would suggest that the young languageless deaf child cannot think and has no mind (1977:195).
Like Berger and Luckmann (1967), Mead claims too much for language and pays too little attention to the human capacity (intelligence) which works in a limited way to structure reality even without language.

Finally, Coleman's study (1975) of adolescent culture raises questions about the deaf youth subculture. His description of the adolescent society where young people have cars, freedom to date, much contact with the opposite sex, money, and entertainment does not accurately portray deaf youth who reside in state residential schools. That is, their subculture includes few cars, very little freedom in dating, not much money and very little popular music. His well-known finding that academic achievement was not as important as being an athletic star for boys or being a cheerleader among girls (p. 78) may also differ among deaf youth. At any rate, the value system of residential students at the state school for the deaf will be one research target of this ethnography. Who makes up the leading crowd at the residential school? Athletes and cheerleaders? Or skilled communicators? What characteristics of boys and girls are counted as important?

Using Lofland's (1971) technique of observing "meanings" (verbal - and sign - productions of participants) and following Sullivan (1979) whose studies of high schools included some socio-linguistic analysis of student labeling, it will be another point of interest at the residential school to discover the labels and categories used by the racially mixed group of deaf students (labels
other than their major division of the world into "deaf" and "hearing").

Unlike Coleman, Rosenbaum (1976) found no single set of adolescent values. In fact over half of the respondents said most of their friends were in their own track. Track based friendships replace neighborhood friendships, but deaf children in our study will have virtually no neighborhood friendships to dissolve because of the communication barrier which exists. The principle "neighborhood" will be other residents of the institution. Tracking for these students may be strongly related to language skills. That is, students with high language skills (especially English) will tend to achieve higher academic and social goals. Since nearly all these students live in large dormitories the question about friendship choices is: will students in a residential school tend to be friends with fellow dormitory members? Or will they separate along racial or class lines?

Finally, Jackson (1968) says that peer culture and extra-school activities for hearing children are defense mechanisms against unpleasant aspects of institutional demands. In contrast, the deaf student at a residential school eats, sleeps, works and plays at the institution. What mechanisms of defense provide comfort and strength and "escape" for him/her?
CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Justification of an Ethnographical Design

One aspect of modern life is knowing about rather than directly knowing a wide variety of human beings (Lofland, 1971:1). To know about categories of human beings is to obtain information about them from second parties. This second-hand information provides a portrait constructed from a distance and often contains significant oversimplifications, distortions, errors, and omissions (pp. 1-2). Whenever people have relatively little direct knowledge about an object they are more inventive -- as they must be -- in their construction of an image of it. For example, deaf people very often seem "strange" and "foreign" to the larger society; thus, they are often stereotyped and stigmatized. As Lofland states, however, it is not enough to know through stereotype and casual typifications. Thus, one way to know a community of people and its associated dynamic processes of social organization is by means of a case study, an ethnography.

The ethnographic approach can be especially useful in studying schools. Richer (1975) has made a strong case for "grounded theory" in which he argues that there is a lack of isomorphism of
large scale surveys with meaningful dimensions of schooling. A case in point is the input/output model used by Jencks (1972) and Coleman (1966) which focused on such independent variables (input) as (1) teacher characteristics and (2) physical plant variables and their relationship to the dependent variable (output) of cognitive achievement. This approach is described as "abstract empiricism" and constitutes a theoretical vacuum. What we need, states Richer, is more inductive concepts and hypothesis generating techniques as opposed to hypothesis testing techniques (in short, the Glaser and Strauss position). The unit of analysis for several large scale surveys (namely Coleman and Jencks) has been the entire school (its physical plant facilities, its quality of teachers, etc.). But Richer says we need to come closer and look at the dynamic process of teacher-student interaction within a school. In other words, a closer look at the everyday life, its activities and experiences within classrooms is more likely to be a more salient unit than the entire school-unit when it comes to investigating cognitive development (p. 388). This viewpoint is somewhat buttressed by Jackson (1968) who estimates that a child logs 7000 hours in the classroom by the time he reaches junior high school (p. 5) (or for total schooling, 15,000 hours; see Michael Rutter, et al., 1979). Teachers, on the other hand, experience about 1000 interpersonal contacts each working day with their students. "In light of this," Richer says, "to suggest, as some have done, that schools have no effects is ludicrous" (p. 397).
The present study followed Richer and Glaser and Strauss (1967) and attempted to formulate theoretical statements by assessing the life situation of deaf students as they conceived it; it was an effort to "participate in the mind" of individuals by face-to-face interaction. This involved "taking the role of the other" or what Cooley called "sympathetic introspection." This strategy permitted me to gain knowledge and understanding of the world views and the definitions of reality manifested by teachers and students (Richer, p. 390). This goal was accomplished by making observations in the classroom, in the staff room, in the infirmary, in the dining room, in recreation centers (on campus), on bus trips, on the playground and in the dormitories — in short, by entering into the "life world" (or Lebenswelt; Schutz, 1967) of the participants and particularly the students.

The ethnographical research technique approached the social setting with no preconceived hypotheses to test. On the contrary, in order to construct a conceptual system and some operational categories a participant observer goes to teachers and students with as few preconceptions as possible. Phrased differently, actors evolve the script rather than merely playing out a script given to them. It was my task to understand this evolutionary process and, importantly to discover at what points structural components came to exist and to influence actor's behavior.

Furthermore, case studies are valuable in exploratory research (Himelstein, 1980). This is especially true when little research has
been done in a substantive area and when one is planning a long-range commitment to an area of research. Certainly this was the situation at the inception of this study.

In a limited way this ethnography followed Glaser and Strauss (1967) who called for researchers to discover theory from data systematically obtained on the field (p. 2). I sought to formulate theoretical statements which derived directly from observations made at the school. Such formulations are "grounded" in data and are thought to be "more successful" than theories generated by logical deduction from a priori assumptions. These statements, like grounded theory, "fit" the situation being researched, i.e., the categories must not be forced on the data, but are derived from the data under study (p. 3).

This does not mean that my ethnographical research proceeded in isolation from existing theory. My strategy of developing theoretical propositions means that some data collection and data analysis occurred simultaneously and, further, that a general sociological perspective and general problem/subject area guided the initial decisions for collection of data (p. 45). There was, however, no pre-conceived theoretical framework.

This study aimed to refine and develop some of the formulations of Goffman (1962) regarding "total institutions" as well as those of phenomenologists on "the social construction of reality." Since this is the first ethnography of a residential school for the deaf, that is, of a unique language-giving total institution, and
because theory is considered to be a process, an ever-developing entity and not a perfected product (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:32), then Mead and Bernstein's works on language and self were also developed to a point where further studies with greater generalizability may occur. Some attention was also given to power dimensions as these related to definitions of situations. Further, it was believed that future studies could extend this seminal work "because qualitative research is often the most 'adequate' and 'efficient' way to obtain the type of information required . . ." (p. 18). This first ethnography of a residential school for the deaf is needed because it affords an opportunity to apply, for the first time many basic sociological concepts and propositions to an unusual social and linguistic setting. Hopefully, this work will stimulate more research and even provide preliminary data for quantitative type investigations.

**The Study Site**

The site for this study was a large residential school for the deaf located in a Southern state. Geographically, the school is located in a mountain village, Doubletown ("Double" in the sense that a deaf and a hearing community coexist, but remain sharply separated), whose population is around 1,000 people. Mountain City and Springtown are somewhat larger towns located nearby. Two much larger metropolitan cities are about 1½ - 2 hours drive away from SSD (the State School for the Deaf).
The land on which the school sits contains more than 400 acres and is used in such a way that buildings are grouped on two campuses (previously being white and black campuses), with relatively open space in the remaining acres. There is much privacy and seclusion from the outside world (but not from each other as fellow-residents because one is always in an institutional setting).

In 1979 the school had a total student population of just under 450. By 1980 that number had dropped to slightly more than 350. During the study (1981) the figure was still lower than in 1980 and 60 percent of the population was black. According to the superintendent the decline in student enrollment is due to white flight to public and private schools; this loss of students is a consequence of not only avoiding racial desegregation by parents but also the increasing prevalence of mainstreaming. SSD's trend is congruent with Schildroth's (1980) report on 62 U.S. residential schools which indicates an overall increase of 22 percent blacks between 1970-1978 (p. 84); this trend also is indicative of state residential schools housing more and more poor children. In 1979 and 1980 there was a sexual imbalance at SSD with 220 males compared to only 134 females for the latter year. By 1981 there was an equal number of males and females. Just over 50 students lived at home (day students) and there was an increase of 17 multi-handicapped students over 1980. The age range of students reached from 3 to 21. There were 108 members of the educational staff (of these 82 were instructors and the rest were administrators, teachers' aides and
other supportive personnel); the teacher-student ratio in the classroom was 1:4 and 12 of the 108 staff members were deaf persons. The school consists of 8 dormitories employing 66 houseparents (a loss of 19 since 1980). The total estimated per capita cost for 1981-82 was slightly more than $13,000 (American Annals of the Deaf, April, 1982:Vol. 127).

Sources of Data

Both primary and secondary data are used in this study. Primary data were gathered by means of observation and from intensive interviews. Secondary data were collected from various printed documents provided by the school and other official records. I was given access to student records, daily "chronicles" (in which houseparents describe all problems which occur during their work shift), library materials, and at least 20 sets of mimeographed papers -- research and otherwise -- prepared for distribution by the school.

Primary Data

Interviews

This ethnographical inquiry did not use "structured interviews" which usually force one to choose between a fixed set of alternative answers attached to a set of pre-formulated questions (Lofland, 1971:75). Instead, I used a "flexible strategy of discovery," i.e., the unstructured interview whose object is to carry on a guided conversation, to elicit rich, detailed materials, and to find out what
kinds of things are happening in a given social setting (see Lofland, Chapter 4). The aim was to obtain narratives in the interviewee's own terms in a situation where he/she could speak freely. This approach is similar to the one used by Himelstein's (1980) ethnography of a Southern school.

Although flexibility is sought in qualitative interviewing it is still possible to use an interview guide which gives some structure to conversation. A guide of this type is a crystallization of a researcher's "puzzlements" which have been recorded. Furthermore, the guide is sufficiently flexible to allow the interviewee to give individual character and contours to his/her own accounts. This flexible strategy discovered what was problematic to participants in this setting; what is important, stressful or difficult to them. In the words of Strong (1943) I sought to discover the participants' "axes of life," their frames of reference. Our approach believed that participants under study are themselves analytic and that "one must learn their analytic ordering of the world, their categories for rendering explicable and coherent the flux of raw reality" (p. 7).

A general guide to the interviews is presented below. There were some variations in the guides because there were three major groups -- students, teachers (including administrators), and houseparents -- to be interviewed.
1. Introduction and Preliminary Questions

The interviewer introduced himself and explained the general nature of the research. Interviewees were asked if they would permit the conversation to be tape recorded and their anonymity was assured. Although most teachers, administrators and houseparents were hearing people, most students were deaf which necessitated the use of sign language during interviews with the latter group. Therefore, their signed responses were verbalized into a tape recorder (see Higgins, 1980 about special skills and special problems associated with data collection among the deaf). Early in the interview casual talk was used to set the interviewer at ease. This small talk soon led into general background questions of a non-threatening nature.

2. General Background Questions

The interviewee was asked some general demographic questions plus a set of questions about his deafness. Afterwards, emphasis was placed upon obtaining narratives in the interviewee's own terms (Lofland, 1971:81). (a) Sex and race of the interviewee were recorded. How old are you? What is your father's (and mother's) occupation? (b) Are you "deaf?" How old were you when you became deaf? How old were you when you entered this school? Did you attend some other school before coming here? Can you hear and understand a person's voice with a hearing aid? Do your parents use sign language? Are they expert signers?
3. The Current Situation: Life at the Residential School for the Deaf

Interviewees were asked for a general account of daily life at the State School for the Deaf which reflected the salient dimensions of a total institution. Probes included: which dormitory do you reside in? How many people live there? Which is the best dorm on campus? What problems are associated with dorm life? What is your daily schedule beginning with time of awakening to time of retiring (time of meals, nonclassroom activities, kinds of people typically encountered during the course of the day -- dorm mates, classmates, boyfriend/girlfriend)? During the school week how often do you leave campus? Where do you go? With whom? Do you like to go home on weekends? What happens on weekends when you stay here?

4. Associations

Interviewees were asked to discuss their relationships with other students, teachers and houseparents.

a) Student-student relationships: Who are your best friends? Why do you like them? (Sometimes students were asked to write down the names of best friends.) What clubs, organizations do you belong to? Do you have many hearing friends? Do you date them? Why? Who is the most popular student on campus (athlete, cheerleader or bright person)? What problems do you have in the dormitory?

b) Student-teacher relationships: Who is your favorite teacher on campus? Why is he/she so popular? What problems do you have with your teachers? Which teachers do you like best -- the
hearing or the deaf ones? Which school rules do you dislike most? Are your teachers skilled with sign language?

c) Student-houseparent relations (questions for students): Who is your houseparent? Do you like him/her? Why? What problems do you have with houseparents? Who is your favorite houseparent? Why do you like him/her? Do most houseparents use ASL skillfully? What dorm rules do you dislike most?

d) Questions for houseparents: How many students are you responsible for? Where do you live (in Doubletown or some other town)? What "type" of students do you have here? How do students get along with each other? Do you belong to SAD (State Association for the Deaf)? Have things changed over the past five or ten years? If yes, how? What recurring problems do you encounter in the dormitory?

5. Total Institution Questions

a) World views of students. General questions designed to get at the distinctive outlook of deaf students who have had a common experience were posed: Is SSD a good place to live? What do you like most (and least) about SSD? Which is the better language, English or ASL?

1. The Self. Will you marry a deaf or hearing person? Why? When you have children, do you hope they are deaf or hearing people? Do most hearing people like deaf people? Are you deaf, hearing impaired, or hard-of-hearing? If you wrote me a letter,
how would you describe yourself? If you wrote a book about yourself what would you say?24 Tell me five things about yourself. On several occasions teachers asked students this question for me, i.e., if the student seemed to have difficulty answering it, I would see if teachers could have more success with the question.

2. Aspirations. What will you do after you graduate?

b) Underlife. Students were asked to describe how one circumvents certain official rules (sex proscriptions, alcoholic drinks, eating "midnight" snacks, etc.). Teachers and staff members were asked how students achieved "free time" in "free places" away from authority figures.

6. Thanks and Disengagement

Students and teachers were often asked if they would permit a second follow-up interview which could serve to clarify some ambiguous information initially obtained or, perhaps, to add more to some idea which was discussed the first time. Sometimes they were asked to suggest other interviewees who might be either receptive to or of particular interest to the aims of the study.

Notes on Data Collection

Access to interviewees was not problematic and methodological problems were negligible. First, younger students (3 to 14) at SSD are generally receptive to strangers -- especially if they use sign language. High school students differed slightly in that they were
somewhat more distant and "cool" until I had associated with them over a period of time in classrooms, on buses, etc. Generally speaking, deaf people are easy to know especially if one uses their language.

I originally anticipated that 40 to 50 interviews would be made (see Lofland, 1971:91); no rigid quota of interviews was set so that flexibility could be maintained. The broad topic of this inquiry was student life and culture in a total institution and early interviews began with teachers in the lower school where the youngest children are taught. Students from different categories were purposefully selected by age, race, degree of hearing loss and language ability. These groupings could be placed on a language continuum from "low hearing-poor English" to the other pole of "high hearing-good English."

Two other major groups were interviewed: professional staff (teachers and administrators) and houseparents. Professional staff fall primarily into two distinct categories -- deaf and hearing persons (with nearly everyone at SSD in this latter category). Members of both groups were interviewed. Teachers at various grade levels were selected and special attention was given to those few teachers who worked with young deaf children who possessed little or no language. Houseparents were viewed as important people because they spend much time supervising students in the dormitories and, presumably, exert significant influence on the socialization of the children. A final group of respondents was local townspeople. All
categories of respondents are described in Appendix A.

This study, like all ethnographies, makes no pretense of trying to randomly select individuals. Individuals were purposively selected to represent different categories of respondents. Hopefully, this was done in a relatively unbiased way but certainly the principle of randomness was not attempted. The first interviews and classroom observations began, as planned, during the first week of school in August, 1981 and continued until mid-December, 1981. The initial work took place in the lower school with very young children and their teachers. In this way I could observe children without language and monitor their first weeks of exposure to formal sign language. My time at SSD was almost divided equally among lower, middle and high schools for the duration of the study. I returned, however, for a few hours at a time to inquire about the progress of "the babies" who had earlier been without language.

During the second week of researching in the lower school an administrator suggested that all teachers from lower and middle schools might be called to the library where I could explain the nature of my research at SSD. It was "no big deal," he said, but the explanation might be helpful to explain what I was doing "to a group of people who work in a school with declining enrollment." In that meeting I described myself as a hard-of-hearing person who had worked six years as a minister to deaf people in Louisiana and also had eleven additional years of non-religious work with the deaf community. I explained that I would write an ethnography, a description -- a
still photograph — of the school and its student culture. Afterwards, there was a noticeable increase of receptivity in the form of increased friendliness.

Although no real problem was ever encountered it was interesting, if not surprising, to observe how protective — with respect to potential sexual matters — the institution was. For example, the administration provided me an office with two desks, a phone and an electric typewriter. The irony is that I was unable to use that ideal facility to interview female students because, as one staff member put it, gossip among students would be wild.25 Often, then, I interviewed students in a physician's office at the infirmary (behind closed doors but close enough to nurses to discount the possibility of any deviant behavior). Early one evening I asked that a fifteen-year-old cheerleader be sent to the infirmary for an interview (the cheerleader had already agreed to give the interview). A female houseparent escorted the student to the infirmary (an adjacent building) and secretly asked a nurse, "He's not gonna take her to his room, is he?"

Students were cooperative and friendly. Younger students (middle school age) were curious and even affectionate or playful. This openness is a common characteristic of deaf children. They generally seem willing to approach even a stranger in their midst and ask him many questions: "Are you deaf?" "Where do you live?" "What are you doing?" Most teachers anticipated the children's questions and allowed me to explain to each classroom that I was
writing a book about the school (and in high school we added, "in order to get a Ph. d."). Both middle and high school students were often amused by my shorthand notes and I took opportunities to teach them how to write their own names -- or some other word -- in order to encourage a friendly relationship between us.

Teachers were interviewed in their own classrooms during their free hour and/or by appointment after school hours. Also several teachers were interviewed in their own homes at night. Students, on the other hand, were interviewed either in the private physician's office (mentioned earlier) or, in the case of males, in a local restaurant where I had permission to take them for a "treat." There we had interviews and food and drink (in an extra dining room which was empty at night).

High school students, while less playful and somewhat more distant to a new adult, were still receptive and talkative. Only one student (whose mother worked at the school) was evasive and put off a formal interview by saying that he had too much work to do and could not stop for an interview. Even so, I talked with him two or more hours on two or three different occasions during chance meetings. Afterwards, I tape recorded all I could remember of our conversations. Bus trips, one to five hours long, also provided opportunities for informal and unobtrusive interviews as well as the construction of social bonds with students of all ages. I gradually became well known to increasing numbers of students.

The third group, houseparents, were generally receptive and
cooperative although two or three seemed aloof and uninterested in my work. Interviews with houseparents generally took place in the dormitories late at night (until 4 a.m. in one case) when students were asleep. I took one cooperative houseparent to Mountain City for an early evening meal which concluded with an extended interview at his home. He was a key informant whom I interviewed three times.

The modal length of all interviews was one-and-a-half hours. Teachers were interviewed during their free (one) hour and/or during one hour after school. One very positive and effective aspect of interviewing teachers was subsequent interviews in which I was able to pursue points made during the first session. This follow-up work was done in the majority of teacher interviews. Interviews conducted in teacher's homes lasted as long as three hours. These individuals were also followed up for a second session of elaboration and/or clarification.

Student interviews averaged one-and-one-half hours. Several students gave follow-up interviews which allowed me to pursue things said previously. Informal (no note-making, no tape recording) interviews ranged from five minutes to an hour-and-a-half. Late afternoons or nights found me talking with students under a tree, in a restaurant in Doubletown, in the campus recreation room, or even in the gymnasium. All such encounters and conversations were tape recorded within three hours after occurring.

Interviews with houseparents ranged from one to five hours (the five-hour one took place during a trip to and from a restaurant
plus three hours of taping in the interviewee's home). Interviews with houseparents were fewer in number than the other categories (students, teachers), however a sufficient number were conducted that I was confident in my information (i.e., "data"). Much night work was given to typing and studying notes and trying to relax some after observing/interviewing for most of the school day.

This study allowed for the easy and non-disruptive use of a tape recorder. Since deaf students generally cannot talk verbally, I used a small dictaphone (which can fit a shirt pocket) to record my questions and then to record -- with my own voice -- their responses. Further, in order to assure validity of my comprehension of their responses I not only verbalized into the tape recorder their signed responses, but I also signed again what they had just said to me. Often I would clarify some idea before taping it and then the idea was signed and verbalized for the tape recorder. This practice allowed the interviewee to see and to verify that the information was being tape recorded accurately. Frequently, I recorded almost literally what a respondent said in signs. These word-for-sign interpretations appear throughout the analyses and give the reader a sense of what actually took place during the interview. These literal renditions of sign talk will seem choppy and abbreviated to most readers and I have filled in (using the etcetera principle) some compacted messages by using parenthetical clarifications.

Tape recordings were also used to record daily observations, thoughts, and/or impressions. Other times I would converse with a
respondent and make notes in shorthand (a skill which I have used for over 30 years). Shortly afterwards, before the notes and the experiences "cooled," I read the notes into a recorder. A recorder is a useful tool for describing a social setting because it enables one to capture many details as one literally looks at a setting and simultaneously describes it to the recorder.

Factors influencing the interviews

Several factors, other than a non-threatening approach, are related to the high level of cooperation attained at SSD. These factors include my long-term personal relationship with the superintendent, his "lame duck" status, my own hearing loss (my use of hearing aids and sign language) and disenchantment. Just how these promoted cooperation is described below.

The first factor which worked to my advantage was a long-term (ten years) acquaintance with the superintendent (and the principal -- to a lesser degree). I had conducted one other research project under the same superintendent and principal six or seven years prior to this one. Through the years I had also attended a number of conferences (on deafness) where the superintendent and I further developed a friendly and professional relationship. Finally, about five years ago I was commencement speaker at SSD and some teachers and administrators said they remembered me in that role.

Another factor which worked positively in my favor was the "lame duck" status of the superintendent. That is, he began studying
his own doctoral studies just after my research at the school con­cluded. He planned to eventually step down from his post and enter private practice. Thus, in view of our long acquaintance, his own concern for research in this area, and his impending departure, he seemed completely open to any reasonable request for my own autonomy or information. He gave me access to publicly available school records as well as the records (chronicles) of daily/nightly activities (problems) inside dormitories. He denied only one request in which I asked if I could attend a meeting in which personnel from Gallaudet discussed with his staff the future (or lack of) of residential schools. Other school personnel had been turned away from that meeting, he explained, which is why I was turned away. Beyond that, he helped me in every way possible to gain access to information.

Thirdly, my own hearing loss worked to my advantage. My use of two hearing aids and sign language were visible markers of status (I was at least somewhat like a deaf person. For example, some administrators and teachers signed to me as if I were "deaf."). The point is that not only did students and deaf adults tend to view me as "deaflike" but so did hearing personnel. This served as a linkage (a kinship) to the deaf group although that group would generally consider me as one different from themselves (but perhaps more like themselves than fully hearing individuals). The importance of my sign language skills cannot be overemphasized. Without that skill research among deaf populations (where signs are used) would be
extremely difficult.

A fourth factor which promoted cooperation was disenchantment with the school or some aspect of it on the part of certain individuals. Some parents seemed anxious to discuss and to criticize the relatively low level of academic achievement which characterized students, their children included, at SSD. They sought better for their own children and were eager to provide information to a researcher which might someday help some other deaf children. The majority of deaf people interviewed were disenchanted about something. They wanted a different emphasis on sign language (versus English) or a different means of teaching inside the classroom, or more deaf teachers, or more equality and less discrimination (in terms of promotions, salaries, or daily social interaction). Some teachers used the interview as a way to air their complaints. Students, some felt, were learning too little English and consequently, too little of everything else. "We are failing them somewhere," they often stated. They often mentioned dormitory life and criticized it as a situation in which too much time is squandered and too many houseparents work primarily for money (as opposed to the old days when houseparents really loved and cared for students). Beyond these local events overall enrollment at the school was declining and the quality of students was thought to be declining as well -- in part due to increasing numbers of multi-handicapped and poor children. This was something interpreted as contributing to less pleasant working conditions and more behavioral problems.
As expected, a few interviews were relatively unproductive. One deaf day student gave nonsensical answers to questions by saying, "study, practice, learn" to almost any question presented to her.

One teacher cooperated fully during the first interview (I observed one week in his classroom) but later seemed to avoid me (during recess, his free hour) in ways that prevented another interview. In contrast to his friendly, helpful, and enthusiastic mood which characterized the first interview, his behavior was "cool" during subsequent talks and was recorded in my field notes as follows:

I have the impression that he often is not answering truthfully or fully or that he is avoiding giving his true responses or feelings due to some fear. When we had a long discussion about whether or not there is a deaf subculture, he argued that deaf kids are essentially the same as hearing kids . . . he wished to downplay the idea that they might be different (eventually, however, he did say there is a difference between black and white deaf kids . . . that when they have a dance party the black kids will dance much more than the white kids).

One administrator resented my research efforts and attempted to select a sample of interviewees (and classrooms for observations) which he characterized as "the cream of the crop." That biased sample was avoided, however, when (privately) a higher administrator advised me to make my own arrangements with interviewees. I did interview those teachers (the cream of the crop) but I also interviewed other teachers of my own choosing. Prior to this event another administrator had warned me that this might happen. It came up whenever I asked him if he could suggest an interviewee in the high school to which he replied,
No. I couldn't do that. Mr. Pompi (the administrator) will send you to those people he picks out. If you try to do any interviews without his approval and knowledge then he will close it up tight.

At any rate I was able to observe and to interview people in the high school without any further difficulty from Mr. Pompi. We remained friendly towards each other throughout the duration of the project although he constantly reminded me who was boss of "his school" (something I suspected him of conveying to the just mentioned teacher).

There were only two interview rejections and one of them involved a new high school boy who was hard-of-hearing. The boy was unable to either hear well or to use signs well and seemed very shy and withdrawn, even fearful. I had wanted to learn about his first impressions of daily life at SSD since he was a newcomer, but he was very unresponsive so the effort was abandoned. The other rejection came from a female houseparent who said she was too busy for an interview. She seemed afraid of a "formal" interview which might include difficult questions for which she might not know intelligent answers or questions which could get her in trouble. All other administrators, houseparents and teachers whom I approached were very positive and receptive. The extremely high degree of cooperation led me to conclude that the data was excellent for this type of study.

Participant Observation

This intimate research technique has been called a "morally hazardous" method of social research (Lofland, 1971:93). For several
decades now it has given rise to more controversy than any other social scientific method (McCall-Simmons, 1969:1) and yet it continues to be widely used.

Classroom observations were made for one week at a time for the duration of the study (with the exception of one week at the midpoint of the study which was used to review and to study where I had been and where I was going). Additionally, I was able to make observations of classes from behind one-way mirrors throughout lower and middle schools. These unobtrusive observations were tape recorded in detail right on the spot (since my observation posts were always small private rooms) and then all transcriptions were typed weekly. The availability of these notes enabled me to study data as it was collected and to follow up certain leads.

Modal length of classroom observations was three hours per day. Observations in dormitories were made weekly and these were tape recorded immediately after leaving the dormitories. Usually I visited dormitories at night and sometimes on weekends. After several weeks had passed I was able to "hang around" the boys'dorms observing and talking with both students and houseparents. It is safe to say that I eventually became part of the scene in at least one of the dormitories.

Beyond classrooms and dormitories, observations were also made at the following places and times: during recess when children were playing, in the cafeteria during meal times, in corridors during the changing of classes, and in the recreation center (especially on
the main campus) whose hours of operation ran from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. I observed students during five-hour bus trips while going home for weekends as well as other shorter trips. Staff members were observed during two State Association for the Deaf meetings and one parent-teacher meeting. I attended a pep rally in the high school auditorium and made observations at basketball and football games, especially the homecoming celebration which was attended by hundreds of alumni whose presence transformed Doubletown into a "Deaftown" for a weekend. Finally, a few observations were made in one lounge.

Throughout the study I lived in the school's infirmary which was adjacent to two dormitories which housed boys and girls. Many evenings I sat with student-patients and nurses asking them questions relevant to my research objectives. As planned, I assumed the role of "known observer" or, as Gold (1969:35) would have it, "participant-as-observer" which is the role most frequently used in community studies (p. 35). These direct observations helped me to live a similar socialization experience as that of the students and helped check the validity of some interview information obtained.

Secondary Data

The secondary data examined include: school annuals which indicated scholastic awards and other kinds of recognition at each high school grade level (e.g., "best dressed" couple, "wittiest" couple, "most popular" couple, homecoming queen, etc.). A preliminary review of school annuals showed that many students listed
"talking" as a hobby; just what that meant was of interest to this ethnography. Student records containing demographic and audio-metric information was needed. Handbooks for students and houseparents were obtained and studied. The contents of these important documents are found in the chapter on "Total Institutions." Finally, library materials and numerous mimeographed studies and articles were obtained and read. These articles, stacked in a hallway inside the administration building, are so timely and relevant to this study that a few paper titles are provided here:

"Dormitory Personnel - Preparation and Functions"
"Deaf Awareness"
"Sign Language"
"Communication Methods"
"Cognition and Language"
"The Deaf Person and Learning"
"Mainstreaming: Issues and A Model Plan"
"Educational Needs of Black Deaf Children"
"History of the Education of Deaf People"
"Language Growth and Development of the Deaf Child"
"The Handicap of Deafness"
"A Rationale for Total Communication"

There was no newspaper published in Doubletown thus I could not examine that as a source of information about SSD.

**Modes of Analysis**

The information gathered in this study is not amenable to statistical analysis, nor was that the aim. This ethnography aimed at discovery, not verification. The goal of the analysis was to discover and to understand native concepts, typifications, and hypotheses about social life and then to relate these to one another in ways that would facilitate the generation of theoretical propositions.
Interviews were loosely guided which permitted the flexibility needed for discovering the life world of participants who resided at the institution. Some of Lofland's (1971:15) six units (acts, activities, meanings, etc.) were used by the inquiry to help answer the question, "What are the characteristics of a social phenomenon, the forms it assumes, the variations it displays?" (p. 13). The analysis was concerned with understanding everyday activities and adjustments (i.e., the underlife) of the deaf students living on a spatial, linguistic and subcultural "island." Those typifications which actors use spontaneously are a central feature of cognition and represent a selective and persistent attitude of an actor toward his environment (McKinney, 1969:1). These were evaluated by frequency and intensity of occurrence. It was anticipated that some interviewees would know more than others and some would have access to more accurate information than others. These were discovered and relied upon accordingly. Some judgments of validity were based upon the researcher's own perceptions which is probably an inevitable aspect of all sociological research. It was possible to check reliability by comparing accounts of different interviewees. Beyond that, the participant observation itself functioned to check information from interviews. Again, some information provided by interviewees was checked in various documents: school papers, manuals, student files, etc.

The three research strategies -- participant observation, intensive interviews and examination of available documents -- provided
an enormous amount of insightful material for analysis. From this material a description of the dynamics of the social organization of a residential school has emerged, and theoretical formulations have been generated and grounded in and on the ongoing setting at SSD.
Language is a peculiarly human phenomenon. It is essential to any meaningful interaction between individuals. A languageless person lives in a world of relative isolation -- in fact one is hardly "human," at least as that word commonsensically conveys conditions for one's existence, without language. Language frees the human being from the nonsymbolic world of all other animals. It is language, above all else, which enables man to participate in life. It enables one to act upon the world, to think, to learn, to understand -- in short, to make sense of the world as a socially produced and maintained place. Those without language, in contrast, may experience rejection and stigma. Of particular interest here is what happens to deaf children who go through early childhood without any language.

Those Without Language

"Sachmo," a black boy of six or seven years, represents one human being who has occupied a languageless world most of his life. Unable to hear since birth, he could neither send nor receive ideas or words or signs at any level of sophistication. In his own family
unit, he was alone. Neither parents, siblings nor neighbors could reach him since he was unable to meaningfully communicate in any way. His head is battered and massive scar tissues spread across his forehead. Both eyes are nearly sightless and move beneath a heavy blue-grey film. While several teachers suspect he was abused by family members, two top administrators insist that Sachmo (a pseudonym which derives from the boy's constant use of a rag to wipe his ever salivating and toothless mouth) battered his own head to bits and clawed out his own eyes. One person said he had observed the boy actually banging his head against a wall during his first year at the school. "But once we gave him some sign language and some attention and reached him, he became a normal person. In his frustration and desperation Sachmo was crying out, 'Let me out! Let me out!' as he destroyed his head and eyes."

Certainly not all languageless children respond this way but Sachmo's behavior suggests how unfree, how shackled, bound, limited and stymied is an individual without linguistic competence. Sachmo's case of social and linguistic isolation from society fits Berger's (1975:238) claim that "Separation from society . . . inflicts unbearable psychological tensions upon the individual . . ." and constitutes the ultimate danger of meaninglessness, that such anomic terror is "the nightmare par excellence." On the other hand, there seemed to be evidence at SSD which suggests that people born deaf have no knowledge of sound, especially a language of sound (I watched students attempt to whistle but could make no sound). Thus, one deaf woman
told how she didn't know she was deaf when she was a little girl. Deafness often seemed to be taken for granted, a normal condition of life and not at all a traumatic handicap. Could it be that one without language (and according to Berger, without nomos [order]) does not live in anomic terror? That he knows nothing else and is calmly satisfied with the only reality there is (for him)?

At any rate to have language gives one control. With it one can act upon the world and bring about desired changes in his/her environment. Without language one is relatively powerless, as in the case of Kandy, a teenage girl found in an infirmary bed lying in a pool of menstrual blood. Her inability to communicate is itself a lack of power, an inability to reach out and act upon the world, to manipulate one's fellow human beings.

What about young deaf children at home between birth and ages four, five, or six? If their parents cannot use some form of manual communication and the child cannot hear or speak, then what is the "nature" of such a child upon his arrival at SSD? An administrator suggested that these children are virtually tabula rasas, that they enter lower school as "blanks" who do not know they have a name and who cogitate with images not words or formal signs. They seem to have no understanding of what is happening to them when they enter school. One of the SSD teachers, the administrator remembered, tells how his parents took him to a residential school in the Deep South and left him there, unable, of course, to explain to him what was happening. The boy had seen his father exchange watermelons for
dollars and when he saw money change hands between his father and school officials he thought he had been exchanged (sold) to the school. Again, without language this child was isolated and terrorized. Today this "sold" boy is a teacher who continues to experience difficulty with emergencies which occur in a hearing-talking world.

The visual quality of sign language requires a visual closeness and immediacy not necessary for hearing people. One evening in the boys dormitory a thirteen-year-old put a spider in the hair of a boy who was watching television. When told that he had a spider in his hair, he gave a high, shrill scream which effectively captured a hearing houseparent's attention. This illustrates how the human voice has a greater range and is a power more effective than hand flagging (the visual medium) which requires the receiver's line of vision to convey the call for help.

In a social world where most adults (teachers and houseparents) are hearing people, the use of the voice is a form of power even when among hard-of-hearing individuals. For example, in one classroom where most students could verbalize (and these tend to be grouped together because they excel in academic work which is English oriented), a teacher wrote on the blackboard, "Lolita kissed a cow last Monday." After much excitement all students waved their hands vying for the teacher's attention and wanting to be first to tell what tense "kiss" should be. The teacher then wrote another sentence. With her back still toward the students Tama, who is hard-of-hearing and can talk, shouted, "I want to do it! I want to do it!" The
teacher heard her request without looking and then allowed Tama the
rewarding chance to give the correct answer. Tama had won out over
the others; she was less limited than her peers because it was not
necessary to use the teacher's narrow line of vision in offering her
answer.

To further illustrate the imprisonment which results from a
lack of language, an exchange between an administrator and me is
given (note the parallel between what I am told and the play, Johnny
Belinda):

Interviewer: I get the impression that many children here have
been rejected or abused.

Administrator: That's for sure. I guess . . . not just mild
abuse but the real stuff . . . at least one-third, at least
one-third.

Interviewer: Why so many?

Administrator: The usual inclination to reject the handicapped.
Other factors come into play with the deaf that may not be
ture for other handicapped people. The young deaf child will
not have the language to tell someone that something's hap­
pened to him, and he's pretty much defenseless. As you come
into high school a very high percentage of girls have been
molested. Sometimes the child is not even able to tell the
mother when someone outside the family does it. Talk with
some of the high school girls and they will tell some
amazing stories.

Clearly, man acts upon the world more effectively with lan­
guage (either sign or verbal) than without. But can a languageless
person think? How do languageless children make any sense out of
their experience? In the absence of language are events and objects
simply met and acted upon in a stimulus-response manner with little
or no symbolic processes involved? Given what we know about them,
it makes more sense to ask, "To what extent can one think without language and by what means do they think?"

Thinking with pictures

At SSD, hearing and deaf teachers and administrators believe deaf children think with pictures or images. One hearing teacher said she herself lies in bed thinking about decorating her house and mentally pictures the kinds of things she wants to use. But as she notes:

Most of the time I think in words, although I can visually see changes of my home in my mind. Since my deaf students don't have words I imagine they rely on pictures and they probably have very clear images whenever they think without words. But most of my thought processes are in words.

It is difficult to imagine that any degree of sophisticated thinking could actually occur without formal language of some kind. Presumably a "movie" of wholistic images can occur inside the head. However, without refined divisions (categories), interpretations of wholistic reality are very limited. Consider the case of a small child enrolled in a school 100 miles from her mother. In the absence of any language, how can that child think about home? A young teacher surmises that

the child might use mental images like pictures . . . she would bring her mother's image to mind and she would probably relive some experiences with her mother like her mother holding her on her lap. (The child may) reminisce about the things they have done. I think that way myself sometimes. I can think in pictures and . . . maybe I am 'low level' myself [she laughed].

With language -- the elaborated code in particular (Bernstein, 1979) -- we are able to move from wholistic to more precise modes of
cognition. Perhaps it is true that languageless deaf children think with mental pictures or whole images; that thoughts are about chunks of reality undifferentiated by categories and typifications. Some studies indicate that normal hearing children "tend to code pictures pictorially up to the age of five; from then on word-based phonological coding predominates" (Klima and Bellugi, 1979:89,93). With language an object is mentally retained as a symbol not just as a physical image. As Postman and Weingartner (1969) say, "We see through our words."

Thought without specific words is "vague and misty, seen dimly through the depth of 'feeling' and 'intuition'" (Hertzler, 1965:43). In a constantly changing world people use language to abstract certain bits and pieces "out of this maelstrom" and then respond to the names "as if they are the bits we have named" (Postman and Weingartner, 1969:108). But how is it without language? Without bits of named reality? A maelstrom only?

What special characteristics, if any, does a teacher of deaf children need? A middle school teacher wished she could draw pictures which, she believed, would help young deaf children with limited English (and signs) more readily understand certain ideas. The use of wholistic pictures to communicate with deaf children is interesting in view of the fact that Gestalt perception is a right-hemisphere (of the brain) task while normal language acquisition is a left-hemisphere task (Pines, 1981:32). Further, it has been theorized that if language is not acquired during a critical time period (for the
left-hemisphere) "later learning may be limited to the right-hemisphere" (p. 32). Interestingly, and along these lines, researchers have found that deaf children who acquire sign language early in childhood "showed normal left-hemisphere specialization for language ability . . . and their left-hemisphere also appeared to be specialized for picture recognition, an ability that is normally confined to the right-hemisphere" (p. 34). It seems that a visual (sign) language causes (?) other specializations to occur in the language part of the brain.

Without language the initial cognitive process is made difficult for deaf children. As one teacher gasped, "This child has the attention span of a gnat and I think that is an exaggeration."

For one thing these children often seem to have a memory problem (remember, theirs is only a visual memory instead of developing both auditory and visual memories). I observed that teachers of young children frequently used the phrase, "OOhh, you remembered!" Implicit was the notion that the expectation was one of failure not success. Does this mean memory and cognition are more fragmentary or less specific comparatively speaking?

During a memory-language test in one classroom a teacher hid animal figures around the room. One child later found some ("That's right, you remembered") and failed on others. One day at a mountain creek where teachers take young children to feed bread to fish, a teacher told one boy to "Remember Mr. Evans. Try to remember that we saw him today (Friday) so we can write a story about him on Monday."
After repeating the message again I was told that the children would likely write about the trip to feed fish and not remember that Mr. Evans was there. This is, of course, more grist for the idea that these children are presented with a world which is cognitively captured in a fragmentary yet wholistic way. Thus an overall experience is retained (vis., feeding fish) with little retention of details.

Learning discrete English words and learning to read them is very difficult for these children. According to one teacher:

Language, reading, dictation (spelling) all of these come very slowly. You and I have talked about the (repeated) exposure to a word that a deaf child has to have. A hearing child is getting it two ways, hearing and visually. But a deaf child gets it in one way -- visually. So it takes repetition, repetition. It takes so much longer for a deaf child so I start very, very slowly.

Deaf children, she said, learn "by doing it over and over." And when a child finally performs well he is abundantly rewarded, "When they do something right I praise the stew out of them."

The first days of language consist of wholistic symbols in the form of single signs (go, come, sit), acting out ideas (run, jump) and pictures combined with written words. Soon one learns the picture of one's own name. That is, a student learns his/her name, not by looking at a series of letters like T-i-n-a, but by emphasizing a unitary or wholistic picture of one's name, i.e., a gestalt presentation of the name which is printed with green chalk and outlined with red as follows:
At first it is a symbolic world of icons, ideograms, pictures and mime -- wholistic presentations of reality. But wholistic reality (and cognition) must be dismantled, divided and differentiated. One must move cognitively from crude gestures and mime to specific linguistic modalities -- and within these -- from restricted to elaborated codes of communication. In the classroom children must take the entire human body and break it into discrete bits and pieces and name them. This act constitutes a "mental world, a world of ideas and meanings."

The consciousness of deaf children is largely developed by sign language, an iconic and ideographic language. It is not a word-based language (and it is not English). It is a language in which signs are produced at half the rate of spoken words. While some tend to feel sign language is "an abbreviated language" Klima and Bellugi (1979:194) hold that "ASL economizes by doing without the kinds of grammatical morphemes that English uses; ASL has special ways of compacting linguistic information which are very different from those of a spoken language like English." Facial expressions are used for grammatical purposes and this compacts information. I would argue that sign language is on the wholistic (less specific) end of the continuum, that fingerspelling (of words) falls on the particularistic pole. I suggest that a relationship exists between sign language and concrete-mindedness of deaf students (reported by all teachers interviewed!). Also it may be related to the
phenomena of students learning that a Collie is a "dog" but a Chihuahua (and all others) is not — one sign for one object (the "black-and-white" character of deaf consciousness) or the girl who marvelled at my insistence that a car "door" was also called a "door" (just as the "door" we closed in the room).

To illustrate this further, consider the following case of two little girls without language. The words to be learned were written on the blackboard, walk, run and jump. Words are very difficult to learn. First a picture of a child walking is shown to the girls and the word "walk" is written below the walking child. Next, the teacher shows the ideographic sign for walk (the two hands move just as one's two feet move during walk -- one goes up and down again and again). Each little girl then traces each letter of w-a-l-k on the blackboard with a long pointer. Tina begins to fall asleep but the teacher taps her desk aggressively and verbalizes, "Wake up Tina!" Finally, each girl is taken by the hand and they must actually walk with the teacher to and fro across the front of the classroom. After all this work one thinks of the old adage, "One picture is worth a thousand words." By now, however, we feel that one word is worth (derives from) a thousand hours of work.

Language functions to facilitate not only a "picture" but also an understanding of the social world. A preschool deaf child, with no language, is basically unable to understand the world at home, its "rules" and expectations. An administrator of the lower school gave testimony to this when asked what would happen if there was less
supervision over the children at school.

If we did that here we would have students ending up dead. We're talking about students that don't understand the world, that don't understand consequences because of their language. They don't have a real picture of cause and effect. They don't understand the significance of picking up a piece of pipe and hitting someone on the head.

When asked if the children could not learn cause and effect and consequences of this or that action by watching television (a visual medium), he replied:

Is TV, uninterpreted, a good picture? Showing people knocking each other across rooms? Part of our responsibility is to get across to them a good clear understanding of the world. They just don't have it. They don't have the moral background... my opinion is that we find many more amoral deaf, a higher percentage, than normally hearing.

I probed, "Why is that the case?"

The primary reason is lack of home training. The normally hearing youngster learns right, wrong from watching what happens around home, but more importantly he hears it discussed by hearing people who talk about why he should or should not do this... Now the deaf kid can see what's happening where he lives but he can't discuss it, doesn't really understand it. He only sees what is apparent from the outside. He doesn't understand motivations nor why people do what they do, or the punishment they may receive. I believe the primary reason is the lack of language...

The "lack of home training" mentioned above refers to the impossibility of transmitting much of the "script (culture) to the child. It is a language-socialization problem. Without language an individual attempts to manipulate the social environment by means other than formal language (e.g., crying, pouting, pulling, shoving, smiling, nodding, etc.).

Language permits one to understand how the physical world is
socially divided, labeled and objectivated. In a classroom of thirteen and fourteen-year-olds a teacher explained the differences between cities and states by using a large map, 8 by 6 feet in size. She asked, "What city is largest in the United States?" A student answered, "New York." But when the teacher explained that the state of New York also had a city named "New York" (NY, NY), the students' blank stares indicated a lack of understanding. Afterwards the teacher asked, "What is the capital of our state?" No one knew the answer and two teenage students signed, "D.C." "No," the teacher replied, "that's the capital of all the United States." Looking at a large map of the United States students wanted to know if there were other deaf people in other states and were surprised to learn that there were. Somehow, the notion existed that -- for this age group at least -- this school and this state housed all deaf people. It is as if they ethnocentrically viewed their group as the deaf people, similar to other groups who have claimed to be THE PEOPLE. At this point their relationship to a larger world of deaf people mystifies them, indeed for most cannot even be imagined.

In another classroom a teacher taught "the babies," i.e., the preschoolers, that the human face is divided into parts -- "eye," "nose," "eyebrows," "hair." Each child had to attach discrete facial parts (eyes, nose, lips, etc.) onto the outline of a cloth face. A few weeks after observing this, two boys, 13, asked me, "What is the name of this (pointing to eyelash) . . . is it 'eye-hair'?" I told
the boys it was "eyelash." Quickly one guessed (by fingerspelling) that the chin was "e-l-b-o-w." He wanted to know if a spot on his jaw was his "c-h-e-e-k." I instructed him to raise his finger up toward his cheek bone. This illustrates the arbitrary division of "cheek" from other portions of the face: where does the cheek begin and end? It is one more illustration of how a solid, wholistic mass (in this case, a face) is divided into bits and pieces by linguistic means, agreed upon by some group. For young deaf children with little language, such a solid mass can only be roughly divided and understood with didactic pointing gestures. As Cassirer allegedly wrote, "Before the intellectual work of conceiving and understanding of phenomena can set in, the work of naming must have preceded it, and have reached a certain point of elaboration" (cited in Postman and Weingartner, 1969:127). The naming process, so painfully absent for young deaf children, "transforms the world of sense impression, which animals also possess, into a mental world, a world of ideas and meanings" (P. 127). For these children, the whole truly is greater than the sum of its parts!

The normality of language ability is made salient when one observes the isolation and rejection of deaf people who never acquire any language. In this society those who learn little English suffer too. I asked one teacher why so many (87 percent; see Jacobs, 1974: 82) deaf people presently have blue collar jobs, given that many do graduate from high schools and generally score well on nonverbal IQ tests. "It is probably because of the (English) language," she said.
"That surely plays a big part in it." In short, a group of people in this society without normal hearing and without adequate English skills generally are assigned to manual not mental work. The students at SSD are forced to deal with societal stigma, discrimination, and general interaction with others on the basis of their chief ascriptive status (deaf). History suggests that they, too, will not be able to read and write English well enough to locate many jobs other than manual ones. "Unless something drastic is done to change the prevailing educational practices," one deaf author warned, "The employment picture for deaf people will worsen" (Jacobs, 1974:83).

There are reasons to believe that "within ten years unemployment among deaf workers will be about 70 percent" with the remainder of workers occupying "unskilled and menial jobs."

By definition, many will not be "literate" (i.e., able to read and write). Why is it that way? Why do not deaf students learn English -- the language of the dominant society? Why do deaf adults continue to denigrate the use of manual forms of English in schools and continue to insist that TC or ASL be used in classrooms? Will these forms of manual language teach English? Rather than asking "who is to blame?" we ask "What are the major causes?" behind these choices. Bad homes? Lazy students? The educational system? Blame the victim (Ryan, 1971) or blame the agency? Or both? One thing we know, as Benderly (1980:138) stated so well:

The field of deaf education remains one of the great scandals and shames of education; and it is the hearing-handicapped, burdened by prejudice and bad schooling in addition to their disability, who bear the consequences.
Language Acquisition

A young preschool teacher believes that deaf children must obtain language early:

Most children learn (language) between the ages of one-and-a-half and two. We (at SSD) are at a disadvantage. Children come in knowing nothing. Can you imagine? A two-year-old hearing child may have a vocabulary of two hundred and fifty words. Our children come in and do not know they have a label, that they are called by a name, that they are Ronnie or Donny. They don't know that their primary caretaker is called Mama. They just don't know the labels for things. They don't know that the red thing they just ate is an apple. They know that liquid is to drink and food is to eat from past experience but they don't know the names for things like that.

But nearly all of them have learned to cope, albeit in sometimes crude ways. Elementary learning theory suggests that they can copy those around them to aid their existence. Furthermore, a person without language develops nonverbal intelligence -- as in the case of Genie, a modern day isolate found at age 13 -- which suggests at least some "independence of language from certain aspects of cognition" (Pines, 1981:34).

Thus they are able to dress themselves, feed themselves, use a restroom, and so on. How do they communicate such things without use of any language? As one teacher says, "They use a lot of gestures. If they want to tell you something they make up their own signs. If they want to go to the bathroom they will point or grab somebody by the hand, or pull them, or point to themselves (genitals)." This is a significant point. The lower the level of competence of formal language (speech or sign), the greater the utility of (1) physical communication (pulling, pushing, grabbing one's genitals to signify
"restroom," etc.) and (2) local, situated neologisms (more accurately, "neosigns") whose meanings are inherent to the present context. Above all other things we should note that deaf children represent the incredible proclivity of man to communicate with symbols. Even deafness cannot stifle that most human of all characteristics.

The breakthrough

A famous example of associating a thing with the word (or symbol) which represents it is found in Helen Keller's "breakthrough" at the water pump. Anne Sullivan spelled the word "water" into Helen's hand as cool water simultaneously was pumped over it. The breakthrough refers to Helen's first comprehension that the finger configurations (w-a-t-e-r) referred to the cool nameless liquid she felt flowing onto her hand. For the very first time in her life she actually understood that everything had a name. She had previously developed about sixty homemade signs before the waterpump breakthrough (or, as she called it, her "liberation"). She later thought of herself without language as "the little being governed only by animal impulses, and not often those of a docile beast" (Keller, 1902). Before language came, she was to write of her social and symbolic isolation: "There was no sense of natural bonds with humanity" (p. 37). By her own stirring account the waterpump miracle was the time and place where Helen crossed the bridge from nothingness to the shores of comprehension. Her tutor Anne Sullivan wrote: "At the well-house, nothingness vanished, but (she was) not in the
real world yet. She did not reflect or try to describe things to herself . . . she remembered the words and only used them when appropriate" (p. 42). Immediately Helen wanted to know the names of other things. She had moved into the world of symbols and referents, into the universe of mankind. That day at the well-house she "suddenly felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten, a thrill of returning thought . . . the mystery of language was revealed to me . . . everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought" (p. 36). Indeed one wonders about the labeling of objects and events and the "birth of thought" nexus.

Do similar "breakthroughs" occur at SSD? An administrator believes that one particular teacher continues (after more than 25 years) to teach languageless deaf children for the reward of seeing them "suddenly say, 'Ah-h-h-h-h-h' when they first understand, when they transfer images to symbols." That breakthrough, he said, will "make the hair stand up on your neck."

Another preschool teacher described the "awakening" or the "breakthrough" experience this way:

Before the breakthrough, the children imitate what you say or if you talk to them they will shake their head like they understand and they really don't. And you can tell they don't understand by asking them to do something and they stand there motionless or they do something else that you did not ask them to do. They are really happy when they are able to respond correctly.

Usually this is a gradual and not a traumatic experience. In fact, the teacher may not be aware of its occurrence, at least at the moment.
The first time they learn a new color, the first time you show them a color, 'this is red,' and then they tell you everything that is red in the room -- they have grabbed the connection that this sign is associated with a certain color. That is a breakthrough right there!

Although some deaf children enter SSD with no language, similar to but not quite "blank slates," they nevertheless acquire language in much the same way a hearing child does. A child can understand words or phrases (such as "go and get your shoes") before he can repeat them back to an audience. At SSD a deaf child is able to do that by the end of the first year. They will be able to sign something very simple like "Jan fell," or "eat now?" which means "are we going to eat now?"

How does a preschool teacher begin teaching language to a languageless deaf child? One teacher spoke of her techniques for accomplishing communication:

In the beginning of the year I don't use straight English, I use anything at first. I am not that concerned with using straight English at first, but certainly towards the middle of the year or at least at the end of the year I am using straight English all the time. They are understanding it by that time.

Sometimes, if a child does not understand "straight English" she tries "to get the concept across to them any way I can." ASL, it will be remembered, is a concept-based and not a word-based language. In contrast, signed English attempts to use one sign for each equivalent English word. First of all, then, languageless children receive global gestures and not (signed) English: "When they come in as babies, the first few days (I use) gestures. I wouldn't
attempt to say to a child, 'Sit up there in the blue chair.'" Would you say, "Blue chair?" I asked. "Yes, or just 'Sit' and point to the chair or push them down" into the chair. The main point here is that normal hearing children are at the "single-word stage" by the early age of 12 to 15 months. In contrast, these deaf children at ages 4, 5 or even 7 start out in these classrooms at the single-word stage (or less). Obviously the teacher's task is a challenging and difficult one.

One day I watched a preschool teacher show a little girl her newly created name sign (which was not really a standardized sign but merely an initial, "M", on the right cheek -- an arbitrary sign which could just as easily have other meanings assigned to it. It is definitely local and situated). Next, the teacher signed M on the right cheek and said, "raise your right hand when your name is called." At this stage physicality is the norm. So the TA (teacher's aide) literally lifted the child's hand when the teacher made her name sign (M on the right cheek). This little girl does not understand at all that she is the referent of the symbol, M on the cheek, although in time she will lift her hand when she sees that signal. Occasionally, the teacher or the TA actually shaped a child's hand into some sign, or even manipulated her arms when it was time to respond to certain signs.

It is interesting that many of the first signs learned by these language deprived children are negative. In one class, I was rapidly writing down (in shorthand) observations. While writing and
listening I heard both teacher and TA very frequently telling students, "Mistake!" "Is that the way to spell your name? Mistake!"

An eight-year-old boy without language who entered SSD late this year parroted to the teacher, "Mistake" when he dropped a book. The friendly teacher told the researcher: "That is the first sign they learn, mistake. The second sign they learn is bad." The TA, a hearing woman, added, "Mistake was the first sign I learned myself." In another classroom a different teacher threatened a sleepy and inattentive child: "This is where they learn 'no' and 'mistake' and these are some of the first signs they learn." Two nights later a nurse in the infirmary criticized this negative introduction to language: "These kids learn 'no,' or 'wrong,' or 'mistake' before they learn anything else!"

In the preschool classroom some positive signs used during the first days of school included "sit," "good," "same." But "mistake" is a key sign in this first classroom too. One morning in this classroom, when activities seemed calm and relaxed, the teacher explained to me that "play," "restroom" (signed RR) and "eat" are also among the first things they learn. One important observation is that, for these late-comers to the symbolic universe, first signs are often one-sign statements and tend to be dichotomous pairs like "yes-no," "good-bad," "right-mistake." Many teachers used "mistake" very, very frequently (when one plays, talks out of turn or makes an error in a lesson). Thus, the very first language for four or five-year-olds is baby language (or more nearly a binary type of negative
baby language).

Other first signs used with near or full languageless children during the first three or four weeks of school are "open," "yellow," "red" and other colors. On Friday mornings these children are taken to a restaurant in Doubletown to experience off-campus. Once inside, lined up and excited, two little girls in their second week of school (and language) used a single sign to denote whether they wanted "brown" or "white" ice cream. Thus began the long human process of dissecting reality -- in this case dividing the world of ice cream not into flavors, but colors (colors are more concrete than "flavor"). On this happy day of the school week teachers eat sandwiches, potato chips, drink cokes and smoke cigarettes. Nearby four-to-the-booth, excited students lick and slurp "brown" and "white." A little girl rested her "brown" cone on the table. Quickly her teacher signed, "Mistake!" Just outside a large plate glass window flows clear, cold mountain water down a creek whose banks are lined with thick green grass. One little girl giggled and licked her "white." Suddenly she signed "Duck!" (thumb and index-plus-middle finger at lips closing, opening). Soon six or more ducks came into view and Tina's mouth gaped wider and wider "ahhh!" eyes popping while pointing. This was the real world, a learning laboratory where objects and events could be associated with signs in a "natural" (unrehearsed) way.

A high school teacher told of a teaching-learning experience with a class of 8th and 9th graders. In that class she taught the
English word "clinging" by acting out and pantomiming the concept showing, for example, how a child might cling to its mother. Afterwards her students were "amazed" and said over and over, "Oh, that's what you call it." Then they repeatedly spelled with their fingers c-l-i-n-g. Again, the necessity to become very physical and mimetic (to act out, to portray, to dramatize, to picture a concept) is a common mode of symbol development for deaf children. Another technique of teaching language, that of unscrambling words into their correct syntax, often produces great excitement for students causing "their faces to light up."

**Prelanguage activities in the classroom**

Most children do not begin in the preschool because preschoolers are very young children who live at home (day students). In fact SSD does not admit children to the dorms until they are five years old. At the beginning of the 1981-82 school year, the preschool class consisted of only three students, two girls, ages two-and-one-half and three and one-half, and one boy "Solo Boy," age four. I labeled him "Solo Boy" because he spent his first week in the infirmary with a skin disease. He was alone without language, with no understanding of why he resided in that strange place filled with white-coated women. He did not know where his parents were nor why they left him. Not one face was familiar to him at a school and a town which had no names. That is, he had no idea he was in an "infirmary" or at a "school" since he possessed no signs or words for
these places. He was "solo."

In a preschool situation children are not ready for a structured school situation, instead they engage in readiness skills "with emphasis on language." Many of prereading activities consist of learning visual and motor skills. For example, a child is asked to look at a picture and indicate what is missing; there is eye-hand coordination work. Motor skills include learning to run, hop, bounce a ball and to manipulate a pencil. Moreover, classroom activities include mixing shapes and colors in lieu of "always emphasizing language." Yet these very activities provide an opportunity for introducing language since one can talk about colors, objects, and concepts like size: "That's too big" or "too little." Meanwhile, directions are being given and learned. As a teacher told me, "When they get into reading programs they will already have the idea to work left to right." She estimates that by the end of the first year the preschoolers would know "well over one hundred signs and will be able to use short phrases." (Unlike these languageless children it would be much easier, of course, for a person with a "native" language to learn a second language. At SSD, for example, a deaf girl, 16, who had previously attended an oral school was able to learn 200 signs in one day.)

Artificial processes and experiential deprivation

Teachers in the lower and preschools complained that a classroom is an "artificially structured situation." They believe that a
more natural way is needed to teach language to deaf students. This opinion first surfaced when I asked, "What is your most recurring problem as a teacher?" One teacher promptly replied:

Sometimes I get frustrated because I am not able to teach them naturally . . . I have thought if I could just take this child home with me and talk to him all the time. There are so many daily exercises you live through like the feeding and the dressing and going to the store . . . that would provide such a better basis for learning language than it is to be in a classroom eight hours a day and try and create (natural experiences).

When pressed to elucidate the "artificial" character of this late language acquisition situation, it was clear she meant mundane, everyday experiences of home and family life were absent. To put it another way objects at school are named (signed) and labels are taught to children in a non-utilitarian context (this is a . . . and this is a . . . etc.). The classroom was viewed as a place of contrived events and experiences:

Well, I mean you always have to invent activities. You just don't sit down and teach them colors and words. I mean I try to avoid that and it is very hard to sit down and teach them the word apple because you are not giving them a way to use it. It's better if you can teach them in some other way like cutting up an apple and eating an apple.

The best and most natural thing for these students she argued, is "their parents" because they could teach language in natural, everyday interactions. This notion of language acquisition stands in sharp contrast to students learning a long list of opaque words in a sterile classroom which has few uncontrived objects to aid vocabulary acquisition. In short, the already amorphous symbolic world remains difficult for the deaf child to grasp in a classroom. As a
case in point, I observed Solo Boy trying to place a yellow wooden block beside a second one of the same color. When he chose the wrong color, the teacher signed, "Where is a yellow one?" But his attention span was so short that he quickly lost interest in the activity. Here is a boy with no labels for colors and a teacher trying to captivate his mind long enough to convey various color concepts. Obviously, the process is far more difficult for Solo Boy than for a hearing child who had been told long ago about the yellow ball, the yellow canary, the yellow car, etc.

In a classroom of students one year older than preschoolers, the teacher believes that language (signs and English) enables students to put their thoughts into "actuality" or "reality" or as some say "to nail their thoughts down." Although SSD is trying to give its children grammatical tools, "the deaf are sadly lacking in language experience."

"Experience" is a key term which recurs often in discussions. That's why the concept "experiential deprivation" seems useful in this analysis since deaf children are literally deprived of symbolic experiences -- and these are the most significant experiences -- with other human beings. Two kinds of experiential deprivation are mentioned: (1) deprivation of language experience and (2) deprivation of normal interaction with family members, playmates, neighbors, etc. Deprivation of diverse symbolic experiences, such as simply going to a store with a parent and exchanging ideas via symbols, is another problem. These children have physically been to a store with parents but little
was symbolically learned. For example, in numerous trips to a store, they might learn the names of few or no objects because the single most important form of interaction is missing -- symbolic interaction. One parent at SSD was all too aware of this need:

Another way parents can help (a child) a lot (to learn language) is to take the child with them everywhere they can. Expose them to the world! Don't keep them home and isolated . . . be ashamed of them as a lot of people are.

An experienced teacher poignantly told how young deaf children are out of touch with the world of symbols. In that condition she sees how they are deprived of the massive flow of human knowledge which in effect, leaves them outside the substantive world of homo sapiens ("wise man"), the symbol maker and user:

I can't talk to these children like you would the average six-year-old hearing child about the man on the moon when all that happened. These children can't relate to it. You have to start language at a level they can build from. I can't tell them about the astronauts, something about mother and daddy talking about the Libyans and how the Americans shot down an airplane. . . A deaf child has to experience something (emphasis added).

There is so much for a child to learn and language facilitates that humanizing process. With language exposed objects and events are given meaning. Therefore, it is not sufficient for a child to merely "experience something" -- he must experience something symbolically. "Something" must have labels and meaning for the mind to develop fully. An insightful teacher associated language and behavior as problematic for deaf children:

When a hearing person starts to school we have a vocabulary. We learn from other people. And we learn how to be tactful automatically. Nobody teaches us, no one sits down and tells us how to be tactful. We just learn it. The deaf have missed this
experience. No one taught us to be tactful. Not every word was taught to us individually as it is for the deaf (emphasis added).

Normal hearing children begin to acquire language on the first day of life as they hear rhythms and intonations of human voices. In contrast, two girls, five years old at SSD had "almost finished their formative years" without any language at all. They were said to be "culturally deprived." Laments their teacher:

How am I going to breach that gap? It is going to take me weeks just to get by the sense training. I should be starting language and reading but I can't until I get this idea over to them. You don't jump from first grade to third grade in school. You go through a natural process . . . here it is sense training and then into academics.

The much abused concept, "cultural deprivation," seems very appropriate for deaf children deprived of language because language is the principle vehicle upon which culture passes from parent to child, from one generation to another. Certainly, the language problem of the deaf is a culture problem. Without language one's world consists of so many physical objects devoid of meaning. The deaf child is deprived, then, of experiencing pervasive definitions of the world at large which have been created by his group.

In a language-deprived situation, one can expect poor reading ability. Some administrators at SSD were defensive and protective when asked about this. They claim in a relativistic way that deaf students read nearly as well as hearing graduates who also read poorly:
I'm not sure it's (deaf reading skills) that much lower. It is somewhat (lower) but when you think about the language deficit, that their real first grade work is at least two years behind the average hearing youngster, that makes good sense. They're just behind to start out with and the only way to compensate for that is to identify every deaf child when they're age one and give them preschool training. Then so far as I'm concerned they'd learn the same.

What kind of students make it through the system learning English very well? "Those with hearing," was the quick reply of an administrator. Some residual hearing, he believes, is the "primary variable" in learning English. A simple and helpful proposition may be stated in the following way: "The greater one's residual hearing the less one's cultural and symbolic deprivation." Especially is this true at the family level of group life. Of course, we must remember that DD's (deaf children of deaf parents) acquire language early and are not so deprived as DH's (deaf children of hearing parents).

English and Sign Language: Communication of Meaning by Discrete Words Versus Communication of Meaning by Ideograms

This section of the study examines differences between sign language and English, an issue introduced in the previous section. It seems axiomatic that some languages are more limited than others in terms of scope and breadth. For example, some languages of the Far East are not adequate to deal with scientific ideas formulated with a Western world language. Similarly at SSD sign language may work very well in that particular social world, with its parameters.
clearly defined; in Schutz's term, its "life world" is known. But in stepping off the SSD campus into a more urban, technological world (just beyond the limits of the school), the language may no longer work well. Language is a situated phenomenon, hence its sociolinguistic peculiarities. For the deaf, the development of sign language gives credence to the idea that man is, above all, a language creature and that even deafness cannot stifle this most human of all characteristics.

Of course there is also a relationship between thought and language. Here advanced thought is treated as dependent upon language. Different languages, then, give rise to different conceptions of the world. As Kando observes,

Different languages are different ways of categorizing and hence perceiving the world. Aristotelian logic is largely a formalization of Greek grammar, and it is primarily analytical and characterized by the assumption that substance always underlies appearance, thing always precedes activity . . . Quite different is Chinese logic which emphasized the relational significance of phenomena, their mutual implication or inherence (Kando, 1977:146).

If this is strictly interpreted, then, abstraction depends on language. Some languages allow more abstraction than others. Thus the users of different languages have entirely different worlds open to them. And within any given language, the greater the ability to use the language the greater is one's ability to use abstractions.

Sign language is unique because it is a visual-physical language -- it must be seen. It is not English "in the air" i.e., ASL is not merely the transmission of ideas with English in a visual
channel. Although other sign language systems may be based on
English and use English grammar and syntax, ASL is an independent
language of its own. It has its own rules for being understandable.
As one teacher said of SSD students, "They have a language of their
own, a pattern, it seems to me from my observation. I don't know.
I can't describe it . . . their sentence structure is not what you
would call standard English." ASL's conversational quality is only
understandable in the conversational context. It is literally a form
of situated meaning. Unlike words, iconic signs do have a relation­
ship to their referents (signs often resemble referents). Without
a sense of hearing it is often necessary to touch or tap in order to
direct one's attention, to communicate. Again, this illustrates
ASL's physical quality.

In one classroom, a teacher lifts a child's hand to stop his
writing. With her hand she directs the child's attention from his
paper toward the blackboard. The child must gaze at the board then
back at the teacher's hand; he follows her head movements and his
head turns when her head turns (from the paper on the table to the
work on the 'bonus' board). On a three hour bus trip home with a
load of students, I was once again strongly impressed with how signi­
ificant facial expressions are in human communication. One observes
deaf children who pucker, distort, exaggerate, stretch and shake
their faces, heads and bodies; movements of face, eyes, eyebrows,
lips, arms, shoulders, knees give meaning not in words but in ideas.
This necessity of physical dexterity makes ASL a whole style of
communication which is only understandable by being observed.

Visual-Gestural Language: Hand to Eye Talk (a Public Language)

Sight and hearing are the "distance-senses" for human beings. With frontal, overlapping vision man can see half of his frontal surroundings (180 degree peripheral vision). Hearing, however, is 360 degrees; you can hear what you cannot see. Deaf persons do not have this access to the world. At SSD I watched a girl attempt to "call" a boy who sat in front of her by fanning his back with a book. Other vibrations, such as banging on the desk, are also used to "call" another. If one person is "calling" another across the room (waving, banging, etc.), two or three nearby students will pass along the call. Three other people may aid the first hand-flagger. The value of hearing is especially evident when one realizes that the deaf can only "hear" where they can see -- to the front.

Tube-like, visual-gestural communication is restricted in its field of receptive communication. In high school one student showed off his newly acquired driver's license and I observed the difficulty of communication (and learning) as a group of peers gathered around, some of them unable to literally see the discussion. Hearing people, like sponges, soak up much new data by overhearing others (behind them, beside them, over them). Three students were all making signs and attempting to get the attention of the licensee. For hearing people the analogy would have been a shouting match. Another example
of the restricted visual channel of communication was observed on a school bus carrying students home for a weekend. Two young boys, 11 and 12, sat in that crowded vehicle with hands gesturing this way and that. Many of the students necessarily sat backwards in their seats in order to converse with someone behind them. The young boys were small and short in their seats. In order to see (hear) what was going on, in order to participate in the larger community, they sat on their legs in the seat but an ever-present houseparent continuously told them to "sit down." Thus, they were cut off from the flow of social language, just as they are whenever it is dark.

Visual language is limited in several other ways. One deaf teacher told of working in an office with hearing people and how they would talk all day while they worked. At the same time, when she talked to someone by writing on a pad, her supervisor warned her about "wasting time." She felt it was unfair that others could chat all day during work, but that she would be punished for briefly joining their symbolic community via pencil and paper. It is this public quality of sign language that is especially problematic.

On a school bus I saw two girls "whisper" to each other. They did this by fingerspelling at the bottom of each other's sweaters; in that way, only the two of them could easily read the "whispered" message. (After dark this can be done by fingerspelling inside of one another's hands, as deaf husbands and wives do.) In a dorm one night a teenage boy led me away from another boy and with our backs to the other, he pretended to "whisper" some gossip about
him. After the whispering we turned back to the first boy and we
laughed strongly. The whole scenario was a fake whispering to irri-
tate his peer. If one of the boys tried to play a joke back on the
first boy, the first boy would literally take me and force me to
turn my back to the one signing to me; obviously I would be unable
to see the other boy's rebuttal of the joke played on him. Or, one
boy would stand between me and the other one who was trying to tell
me a bad joke on the first one. All this is done in jest but it
illustrates how deaf students "break" communication by blocking the
view of the signers and how they "whisper" with a language which is
very public, given that it can be read at far distances.

In a small group, where the visual-gestural language is very
public, secrets are difficult to keep and the selves and souls of
group members are relatively naked and unprotected. During an inter-
view with a high school girl in a small classroom, her eyes shifted
from mine and then she moved from her chair to seat herself upon a
table in the corner of the room nearby. I caught the cues of her
behavior and looked out the door where one of her best male friends,
sitting with four other boys, had been gazing intently at our inter-
view. She placed a wall between her "nosey" friend who was "eyedrop-
ning" on our private discussion.

The public quality of life at SSD is well comprehended by the
students. This explains why the sign "nosey" is used so often. It
also explains the strong negative reaction of deaf students to those
who speak English verbally without signing at the same time. If a
hard-of-hearing student or a new student from an oral school uses his vocal English, students will sometimes deride them, stigmatize and reject them. Why? Because the talking student is using an esoteric language which leaves out of the symbolic exchange of ideas those students unable to speechread. While all students do need and want some privacy, they are public, or group minded, and resent secret exchanges of information in English. They will only accept a deaf peer speaking English if he/she signs at the same time.

Another limitation (at least a hazard for a less than super-skilled signer) has to do with the use of space when talking. I interviewed one person who described how two men took two women to a restaurant. After he described how the four were seated in the restaurant, I had great difficulty understanding who said what to whom. "He told me . . .," he signed to me. "Wait," I interrupted, "which of the two 'he's' told you?" And so forth. His depiction of the four conversing people, plus his own comments to me at the moment, plus the common usage of pronouns required me to work very hard to understand the story which was told spatially. (Deaf people point to imaginary persons which means "he" or "she" -- instead of signing "he" or "she." )

Finally, sign language is unique in that it is one of the only (if not the only) languages which is peer learned (see Klima and Bellugi, 1979). Moreover, deaf children do not speak the same language as their parents since well over 90 percent of parents do not know sign language. An administrator at SSD suggests that ASL is
taught by children to children not because it is restricted from parents, but because the children are the ones who use ASL; they can teach it in a relatively unsophisticated manner of usage and not formal training. This is a case of the social structure determining the symbolic order. If ASL is generated and perpetuated informally by youth, then the possibility that the language is relatively undeveloped, unelaborated and unsophisticated is quite real (although it clearly can be sophisticated in its own way by creating context-bound neologisms, for example). Others have noted also that parents usually want to teach their children and have them be like them but in this case the two generations are separated by the very glue of relationships -- the critical dynamic of language.

Sign language of the deaf is stigmatized

While it is true that it is popular today for hearing people to learn sign language and that television stars can be seen "doing" a phrase or two in signs, the language remains different and "different" is often stigmatized. Minority groups have long fought and suffered attacks against their native languages because English-speaking schools have attempted to supplant their languages with English. Even at SSD there was a time when children were forced to sit on their hands to enforce verbalization and to stifle signs. Deaf adults have common stories of paper bags being tied over hands, of hands being spanked, etc.

One deaf teacher at SSD told how she and her brother, who
was also deaf, came to SSD at age 13. They had attended public schools before and could speak but did not know ASL when they arrived at SSD. "My parents made me promise not to use ASL, but to continue using my speech. I promised them that I would" (she made the sign of the cross over her heart then raised her right hand as if to take an oath). Her parents valued speech and devalued ASL which, nevertheless, eventually became her master language.

During an interview with one deaf adult who works at the school, I asked, "What is the most important thing in your life right now?" At first, she thought it would have to be "independence," but then she added, "Education. I didn't learn enough language development (before) and I want to continue learning here . . . I mean English language." Both hearing and deaf youth and adults tend to speak of the English language in a generic sense as "language." Constantly I had to ask which language they meant, ASL or English (again illustrating the lack of taken-for-grantedness so common to idiomatic English).

One night in the infirmary where I lived, a 19-year-old senior sat in the lobby in her pajamas watching television and talking with staff members. As I first entered the room she was talking to a deaf maid and, with me looking squarely at both of them, the senior said, "Who is that man? I don't know him." She had seen me sign to others and knew I had read her question but, presumably, it is normative to bluntly ask such questions even in the presence of visitors or strangers. Afterwards I sat and chatted with her and
asked questions. She plans to go to college and wants to study English. "Which is the better language, English or ASL?" "English," she said. "Why?" Her response was not what I expected: "Because they said so at a meeting." For many students and adults alike, sign language is second-class and English is first-class.

I found another example of this "English emphasis" in the lower school when the assistant principal (the only male in lower school) called out two students from their classrooms so that the two of us could ask about their inner selves. I had told the assistant principal that students were unable to handle the question, "Tell me five things about yourself." He sent for his best student, who, incidentally, was postlingually deafened. We three sat behind a large screen for the session (obviously, not an ideal situation for interviewing a student). I asked the boy about himself and he began to list his school experiences: "Number 1, science; Number 2, social studies; Number 3, language . . .:" "What do you mean 'language'?" "Verbs, nouns, period." In a generic sense "language" meant English to him and English -- not ASL -- was given in response to a query about his self.

One can understand the emphasis on English as a necessary language for living in this society, but often the emphasis is perceived as described here -- English is a part of the self. If there is a connection between language and self and if one's language is denigrated then one's self also is debased as tainted and inferior. For example, a colleague once told me that his wife, an elementary
school teacher, would refuse to respond in any way to a black child who used the word "axed" for "asked." The rejection of one's language is generally a rejection of the language user as well. (This is developed in much more detail in Chapter VII, "The Self.")

Cultural imperialism: many sign systems

Not all students or adults say English is the best language. One hard-of-hearing girl, whose speech was sufficiently adequate to tape record, said sign language is better than English (although she is trying to learn more English). "Why?" I asked. "I feel good with myself. I understand with my fingers or signing." She had known signs for four years, had graduated from public high school already and was attempting to learn more English at SSD where sign language is used. Her loss of hearing is severe enough for her to be a marginal person -- neither deaf nor hearing.

Hard-of-hearing students often appear stupid and retarded to the hearing world because they frequently fail to respond appropriately to what was said to them; or they seem unable to handle the simplest questions like, "What time is it?" At SSD several hard-of-hearing marginal persons have "found a home." Indeed, with some speech and some hearing they are usually superior to the truly deaf in reading and writing and enjoy the added advantage of manual language to fill in what their ears miss; they "feel good here." They are relatively more bilingual and bicultural than deaf students. For this hard-of-hearing girl, sign language is "better" because it fills
in the gaps during the transmission of information. Even so, she quit SSD at Thanksgiving and never returned. She told me,
I need to go home and get a job. In other colleges they don't know how to sign, they just talk. They talk real fast and I don't understand . . . I feel weird about school (SSD) and everything because I have graduated and I am back here at school again).

Sign language like other languages is a symbolic order which is influenced by the social structure. In many ways the language is controlled and modified by hearing people. For example, the conventional sign for "coke" (Coca Cola) is to jab the index finger of one hand into the other arm just above the elbow. We usually mnemonically describe that sign as representing "a boost," "a pickup," or "a shot in the arm." (My own father, born in 1901, would use a similar expression by saying "let's stop and get a cold dope [coke].") At SSD, nondeaf people have decided that the sign conveys a bad connotation and they are trying to change it to a new sign which depicts and represents "pop." The old sign, they argue, looks too much like shooting dope in the veins and might cause immorality among deaf youth.

Nondeaf people not only dominate the school, its curriculum (there is only one deaf administrator at SSD whose power is small), the moral value system, but also how the native language of its native speakers (signers) is to be used or changed. They invent new sign systems and modify the existing ASL of the deaf. Many of these efforts are intended to "improve" sign language which usually means to make it more like English on the hands. Consequently many
hearing "experts" now work to improve or develop basic ASL.

Even Alexander Graham Bell, whose mother and wife were deaf, insisted that speech is the way to restore deaf people to society, that the use of both speech and sign language simultaneously (which is essentially what is used at SSD) has the disadvantage of injuring the precision of ideas (Moores 1978:62). Bell is said to have believed that sign language is "ideographic, imprecise, inflexible, and lacking in subtlety and power of abstraction; it is a narrow prison intellectually and socially" (p. 79). The irony is that the language (signing) of otherwise languageless people is not seen as liberating but rather as imprisoning!

One deaf adult at SSD clearly stated a pervasive linguistic problem at this school:

The worst thing in America today is that the deaf children are multilingual because one teacher will use ASL, another teacher will use SEE (Seeing Essential English), another teacher will use PSL (pidgin sign language), and so forth. Therefore, the children go from classroom to classroom and from school to school where they must be multi-language people -- even with manual languages! Compare that to hearing children who hear Russian one hour, German the next, Spanish the next.

Most teachers and houseparents did not appear to be skilled with any sign system, and almost none of them are able to use ASL, the language of the students. At least twenty percent of teachers volunteered, "I am not very good at sign language." There are exceptions, of course, including deaf teachers and deaf houseparents and five percent or less of the hearing people.

A top administrator is one of the skilled ASL users who can
hear. During one of our several twenty to sixty minute interviews in his office, he said that he feels we mistakenly "try to quantify things that are qualitative," which means that it is impossible to compare English to ASL. That, he says, is analogous to comparing oranges to apples. He, too, argues the belief that nondeaf people are trying to change sign language.

Administrator: ASL is an art form and not a science.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Administrator: It is an art in its form and it is individualistic. . . . The attempts that we see going on today . . . trying to make ASL have grammar and syntax . . . we try to make ASL into our own English mold. We try to make ASL a delivery system which will fit into the English mold and I think that is why deaf people holler about ASL. They say the new grammatical and syntactical and initialized forms of sign language like SEE (are) not ASL and they tend to wish that hearing people who are developing ASL would leave it alone.

The real issue is not that deaf people should discard their ASL. The real issue is whether or not they will be bilingual, i.e., have the ability to use English as well as ASL. Yet deaf leaders and deaf teachers at SSD rigidly insist that TC (total communication) be used in academic situations. Again, TC at SSD does not include any speech training worthy of mention; it transmits ideas, not English words and children will not learn English with this system. This is the dilemma: deaf adults prefer TC but it will not effectively teach English.

While the majority of deaf teachers and staff eagerly helped me gain information during the research, one of them suggested that
deaf people keep some things to themselves (i.e., they do not tell hearing people all that they are thinking). Some ideas and practices are theirs in an exclusive way. This may be a reaction to the many hearing people's efforts to "improve" their language. As he told me, "Deaf people keep their secrets. For example, how do you spell moon?" (I spelled it for him on my fingers, m-o-o-n.) "A deaf person spells it 'm-o-n.'" He does not mean that moon is misspelled, but rather, that native signers blur double letters whereas hearing signers (using their second language) are careful to include each of the double letters. Then he showed me how a deaf person would spell the word "walking." As the letters were rapidly changing on the fingers the entire hand was twisting and rolling. In this context, the deaf man said,

We cannot tell black people to follow white English and it is the same for deaf people. We cannot tell deaf people that they must follow white English . . . signed English. In fact, the old deaf people refuse to use the new signs. They continue the freedom to use comfortable language, ASL, and to communicate with ease. What will happen ten years from now with all these new signs and these new sign systems? I predict that ASL will be king.

Some deaf students hate English but simultaneously fear failure and rejection in the hearing world if they do not learn English. I was somewhat surprised when the most popular senior boy, who is perceived by both teachers and students alike as very bright, told me his hatred and fear of that language and its users. Note how his self is threatened:

Interviewer: What bothers you most at SSD?
Student: Well, (he blinked his eyes and pensively looked up) English is hard for me. I try to learn but never did put it down (get it down) and (it) made me bored. I tried, tried, made me angry. Study, study at home. Got me tired, but I have to learn. I must learn for when I finish school and try to talk to the outside people. They don't know what I say.

He knows that the inability to speak is "less human" -- a notion with a long history. Back in the 1600's a Dutch doctor who taught speech to deaf children perceived the nature of speech in a religious sense, believing that humanity lost its 'divine speech,' which enables us to effect all things merely by speaking the word (Moores, 1978: 45).

Even Alexander Graham Bell's grandfather worked with deaf people and is quoted as saying

Perhaps, in no higher respect has man been created in the image of his Maker, than in his adaptation for speech and the communication of his ideas (p. 60).

Quality and styles of manual languages used at SSD

In this section the quality and styles of manual language systems used by teachers, houseparents, and staff are discussed. Manual languages are referred to generically as "sign language" because there are several types or styles of sign language on campus. Officially, all teachers are supposed to use TC but they do not. Most use a system of signs closer to signed English. Those students and adults who were prelingually deafened and/or who are profoundly deaf, and this is the majority, use ASL. In contrast to this, the postlingually deafened individuals are more likely to use something
closer to signed English. As we shall see, this diversity of sign language codes is definitely problematic for the majority of students whose primary means of expression is ASL. Any judgment of "quality" or skill of any given signer in this paper is based on my own evaluation of communicators. On the pages which follow I will state that different individuals' signs are either "good," "fair," or "poor." 30

Most teachers (and houseparents) do not know the language of the students (ASL)

One of the most pronounced findings of this study is that most of the teachers, houseparents, administrators and staff are poor at using ASL (when they can use it at all). Emphasis at SSD is on the communication of ideas by any and all means (i.e., TC); emphasis is not solely on acquisition of English. This combination of using TC and late language acquisition results in the inability of most students to read or to write English with any notable degree of competence. Because of this, they have serious problems wherever precise and sophisticated language is required.

At the same time that the students know little English, some teachers know very little sign language of any kind. One example is found in the vocational school where the formal educational level of teachers is far lower than that of teachers in the academic program. I asked a teacher if he taught his students the names of parts of a common office machine (upon which they were trained). He said,
Some names, but not many. Their (English) language is very weak and that is understandable. (Why is their language so weak?) Well, the houseparents do not know how to teach deaf children. I am not very skilled in ASL myself (emphasis added).

I observed the teacher's sign language skills on two different occasions and they were indeed limited. Once during the interview he shook his head and spoke of the difficulty of ASL, a foreign language to nondeaf people:

Our students use ASL and they leave out lots of information when they talk to each other. It is chopped up, and they reverse words. And their sentence structure is different. Rather than saying 'guess who?' they say 'who, guess?' I have difficulty understanding them when they talk ASL. On the other hand, if you put in every article and every word the kids get confused and don't understand what you're saying (in signed English) (emphasis added).

Although he had more than ten years experience working with deaf people at another social agency, he remarked again, "I am not very skilled in ASL myself."

For one week I observed an experienced high school teacher. Her sign language (which was not ASL, nor was it always TC, but was perhaps closer to a form of corrupted signed English) skills were no more than "fair." Her signs were small (in a spatial "box" and were relatively unexpressive) and moved in brief spurts, haltingly. While students did seem to understand most of her messages, the overall experience was comparable to a North American teacher using rough Spanish to a class of Mexican children. As the students worked in their workbooks, the teacher said, in an apologetic manner, "Students have a sense of humor, especially when a teacher does not sign
well, like me." During the course of the research at least 8 to 10 teachers made such "apologetic" remarks, i.e., disclaimers, about their lack of sign language skills.

During one of our interviews we discussed how deaf and hearing teachers interact very little on the playground or in the teacher's lounge. I asked why the two groups were so segregated. She, too, perceived the language problem between hearing teachers and deaf teachers (who use two different codes):

Well, they're interested in different things. And there's so few of them (deaf teachers). But they can sit down and go into great length . . . you don't have many hearing teachers that can communicate (with sign language) well because we haven't had total communication that long.

The latter statement refers to the days of strict oralism at SSD which ended in 1973. To illustrate the language barrier she explained that if two deaf teachers and one hearing teacher got together "the deaf have to go so slow." The hearing teacher might be able to sign to the deaf teachers, "but when the deaf persons talk (sign) to them, they don't know" (what was said). To put it plainly hearing teachers often have problems with receptive communication.

They don't even know what these kids are saying! . . . And they (deaf adults) won't take the time. Just like the hearing don't want to take the time to explain to them different things. So, rather than waste the time, the hearing go this way and the deaf go this way (left and right gestures which indicated opposite directions). I don't believe one of our deaf teachers has ever been in that lounge!

I wondered if deaf teachers noticed the lower level sign skills of their hearing colleagues? How would they feel about them? I asked one of the six deaf teachers at SSD about this. He said that
recently "the deaf demanded that hearing people use signs when we are in their presence." Secondly, he said, "the deaf demanded that hearing interpreters be very expert, very skilled," signifying that deaf adults at the school were fed up with sloppy interpreting. Another deaf teacher told how deaf-hearing relationships often intersect along communication and language lines. He wished the administration would set up a system whereby teachers would be paid and promoted "on the basis of experience and communication skills . . . But the administration accepts (academic) degrees ahead of communication abilities." And still another deaf teacher said

I tell them, you know one thing only! You don't know enough yet. I emphasize communication here. I emphasize that teachers should communicate on the level of the kids. One thing that bothers hell out of me is that the teachers come in here (SSD) from a hearing school and they cannot sign! (emphasis added).

While the deaf teachers get angry with the hearing teachers, the relationship is reciprocal. In some conversations with hearing teachers they would get red-faced with anger because they "interpret for free" (i.e., they interpret for hospitals, attorneys or others who have a deaf person there but no one who can sign). In general, however, the hearing teachers seemed well aware of their inability to sign well. I asked two hearing teachers, "Do you have any idea what percentage of teachers can use sign language well?" Without delay the first teacher estimated, "about ten percent sign well. But most teachers in lower school can't (sign well). It would be a very high percentage . . . ninety percent (cannot sign well) I would
say." The second teacher made an estimate of the high school situation: "I would say forty or fifty percent sign well, really sign well" (the same figure cited to me by two high school students, independent of each other). The first teacher chimed in "But when it comes to reading signs they don't understand it."

During an interview with two other teachers, a deaf teacher expressed a similar view that many teachers at the school do not sign well:

I think Ameslan (an acronym for American Sign Language) is what we need at SSD. Most teachers, most teachers do not know how to sign. They use SEE, signed English, and the kids sit in their classes and are bored, bored. I think it's OK to use SEE in an English class but ASL should be used in all other classes. They should be given concepts, the children need concepts.

The other teacher commented that "I don't really think it's (English) teachable."

There are, of course, some teachers who sign very well and this was true at all grade levels. Too, some age and grade levels of school require less sophisticated language, as in the lower school where many teachers command sufficient signs and skills to communicate with young, near languageless children. However, even where skills are relatively good, the signs are usually closer to signed English than to ASL. Although certainly not true for all SSD teachers, the comment of one staff member seems poignant: "Some teachers here sign sloppy, sloppy, sloppy."

Part of the reason that many faculty and staff members are weak signers may be that they came to SSD quite by chance. In the
words of one staff member, "I fell into it . . . I got it basically because I live in a nearby town." He said that he knew no signs at that time. In this rural section of the state the school can hardly expect to have access to a large pool of adults trained in special (or deaf) education. Consequently it often draws upon the local populace whether or not they are acquainted with deaf people and deaf language.

SSD does provide some sign language training for its personnel. For example, a video tape recorder and player were placed in the infirmary with tapes which were lessons of basic signs. A nurse and I examined portions of the first two or three tapes which were so elemental as to be useful for someone who has never seen a sign. (There were staff members at the school who actually needed that kind of help.) Other tapes, presumably more advanced in nature, were available yet I saw only one nurse watch a tape during one (and only one) night. Since I inhabited a room near the infirmary, and noticed people viewing the tapes, it is certain that the tapes were used very little.

The following narrative told by a nurse illustrates the general poverty of sign language abilities on campus:

Workers here get eight hours per week of in-service training, of sign language training in the summer. The teacher (of signs to staff members), in this case was a hearing person whose parents were deaf. To the class he signed and mouthed, 'I not have BM today.' No one understood, so he signed 'I not shit (thumb pulled from other clinched fist) today.' Many house-parents did not know what he said!

She definitely believes that considerable numbers of staff members
are unqualified because they do not know the language of deaf people. Moreover,

No one evaluates me to see if I can sign. My supervisor may write something about me (for the record). All of us signed a paper that says we must be fluent in sign language within 12 months, but we know it is not enforced at all.

The signing ability of houseparents and staff members

Of all employees at SSD, houseparents and infirmary personnel had the lowest level of sign skills. Most nurses and their aides use sign language very poorly. They have difficulty with both expressive and receptive aspects of sign language. Out of a total of eight nurses and aides only two nurses could sign "good," two aides were "fair" and all others were very poor.

The following incident illustrates the barriers and language inadequacies involved in the health care region of SSD. Anyone who has ever fallen ill or suffered some accident in a foreign country can understand the type problems faced by sick or injured deaf students whose caretakers (in the infirmary) may not know their language. One evening a teen age boy assaulted a teen age girl. Immediately afterwards I walked into the infirmary where the injured girl had come for treatment. In the meantime, the nurse's aide (no nurse was on duty that night) had fled down a corridor of the adjacent boys' dorm with a silver spoon because the boy (who had beat up the girl) was now having a seizure and was swallowing his own tongue. A second nurse's aide was left behind in the
infirmary but she was unable to effectively sign and communicate to others who were waiting until the urgency was over in the boys' dorm. Using awkward signs and gestures the aide tried to tell the others to sit down, and to wait because a boy was having a seizure. Because the aide was unable to transmit that message in sign language, I had to explain to the bewildered and curious students just what the commotion (and the delay) was all about.

For resident students, houseparents are a very important group. They spend more time with students than any other set of adults on or off campus. Thus, they have much more time to talk and interact with them. Houseparents could be significant others for these youth who are far removed by space and language from their actual family members. This fact has long been recognized by SSD administrators and other similar schools.

In the 19th century residential schools were viewed as custodial places and not as educational ones. Houseparents had little education and thus received very low salaries (N.A., N.P.--from a mimeographed article supplied by SSD).\textsuperscript{31} The superintendent of the Oregon State School for the Deaf is alleged to have worked to "drastically" upgrade the houseparents position because "Counselors (or houseparents) work with the pupils more hours per week than do the teachers" (p. 136, above article). He assailed the 6 to 8 hours per day in which children are "under the care of untrained people who are only babysitters or policemen" (p. 136).
Unfortunately, the greatest waste of human life and potential mental development is located in the boring and useless after-school hours at SSD. Houseparents are primarily policemen and babysitters and, in general, mere custodians of inactive baggage during their working hours. The overwhelming majority of houseparents have low, low sign language skills. During a bus trip home for a weekend, I observed a houseparent who accompanied the bus driver. Along the way he would frequently stand up and angrily shake his index finger and/or shake his head negatively and either spell or fumble with a few rough signs in order to fuss at excited students. After almost 5 years at SSD his skills were minimal.

Several of the deaf houseparents (who are few in number) complained that hearing houseparents do not know sign language. I asked one if hearing houseparents could, in general, sign well. His terse response was, "No. Many of them don't."

Both students and (some) parents were aware of this problem. As one mother said, "Some of the houseparents don't have signs enough to explain things to the kids!" Complaints were common among the students. For example: "Sometimes I help the houseparent understand." (Understand what?) "They are a little weak on signs... Most of them talk." "Weak" is probably too kind a characterization. The damning aspect of this, especially given the good which could be accomplished by caring, competent people, was dramatically stated by another student.
[Houseparents] always sitting talking to another houseparent (who) can hear. They never talk with students . . . They don't learn sign language so it's best (for them) to talk . . . We read their lips . . . It makes me angry inside. My stomach goes around and around (churns). I need houseparents (want them) to learn sign language.

Different strokes for different folks

One administrator had recently visited another school for the deaf where success with learning English is said to be the highest in the country. He wanted to find the key to such success.

There must be consistency of the sign system no matter what system (of signs) it is. If it is ASL or SEE or Manual English or whatever . . . We must lay a base and build on it but we have not yet done this at SSD. ASL can be a base of modifying it to give syntax, etc. and by initializing many signs and modifying and improving the basic ASL.

It is clear to him that SSD uses multiple sign systems, and none of these especially well and ASL is more of a restricted than elaborated code. It can be a "base" but not the whole language.

A deaf (former) teacher (now working at SSD in another capacity) said, "One problem at SSD is that teachers do not know how to sign properly such sentences as, 'My nose is running.' Many teachers, he said, use the wrong sign for "run,"; they might use an ideographic sign which depicts bipedal running instead of using the ideographic sign for "dripping," (four fingers flicking in a downward stroke from the nostril). Again, the point is that coherent, consistent instruction is impossible in the face of multiple sign systems, none of which are executed meaningfully for students and
teachers alike.

I observed one teacher who permitted students to sign, "I spent my vacation in Canada." Students used the sign "spend," which ideographically represents the idea of spending money (the right hand repeatedly removes money from the left hand). Such errors were common among students. I saw one student use the sign for "blind" — two signs in front of the eyes signifying lack of eyesight — to refer to window blinds.

A communications specialist at SSD helps to standardize and, sometimes, initialize (making a gross sign into a more specific — elaborated — sign) signs as well as disseminating information about the never ending creation of new prefixes and suffixes for sign language. He, as much as anyone, is sensitive to the problems with multiple sign systems at SSD.

The students should not be multi-lingual people where both deaf and hearing teachers are using different sign languages to the children, such as SEE-1, SEE-2, ASL, Pigin sign language, and so forth. It makes no sense for a hearing teacher to teach kids French and Spanish at the same time they teach English. Therefore, deaf kids should not be exposed to many sign languages in different classrooms. It is a crime. Many hearing people use signed English because they say ASL is 'bad English.' Who do they satisfy? Themselves! Not deaf people.

This person (and others as well) believes that teachers in classrooms should teach deaf students standard signs, but they do not. And if a child says, "I see five bird," the teacher should tell him "bird" with an "s" (in sign language). As the specialist told me,
"I believe in 25 years ASL and SEE will converge . . . Some books are adding new affixes, but they are not throwing out ASL." Phrased more analytically, ASL is moving from a restricted code toward an elaborated code of communication. It is having its range of abstractions (subtlety, nuance, and so on) expanded.

A real problem at SSD is the lack of speech training, which makes the use of TC especially troublesome. One person said his "dream" was for deaf students to acquire good language although he despaired, somewhat because basic ASL is not now widely used at SSD. Several hearing parents of deaf students also complained about the paucity of speech training at the school. TC, of course, requires — by definition — the use of speech, signs, gestures, writing, mime and so forth. To learn it requires a kind of Gestalt philosophy of language which students must fully comprehend. My own observation is that sign language (defined as near signed English), not ASL (the language of the students) and not TC (the ideological philosophy of the school), is the modus vivandi inside classrooms at SSD.

On one occasion I was talking with three teachers. All agreed that speech (which is, of course, English) is underemphasized today in contrast to a decade ago. As one teacher said:

I don't know that I can explain it but we've had kids come here who had a good bit of hearing and then later on they're acting more and more deaf . . . and it's not just the fact that they stop using their speech, which is a bad thing that does happen, I hate to say . . . (about ten years ago) when we had the teacher training and every teacher was a speech teacher, our kids had pretty good speech, most of them. I don't mean great speech . . .
Another teacher interrupts: They could pronounce the words anyway.

First teacher continues: And now since we don't have that, the kids really don't get speech training.

This supports our contention that (1) TC is not really the principle language system of the school, and (2) English is given lower emphasis than other codes. Who benefits from this approach?

In general, what happens in classrooms at SSD is that ideas are transmitted with condensed, abbreviated and compacted phrases as opposed to elaborated, full, and more explicit phrases or sentences. While ASL is said to be compacted too (see Klima and Bellugi, 1979:87,194) and can give information in single sign units because of its simultaneous organization, nevertheless, there is an important difference when condensed signs are used by competent signers and when used by incompetent, inexpressive signers. Much information (meaning) of ASL is located in the "grammar" of the body - facial and eye movements, intensity of motion, etc. These meanings are absent whenever a hearing person provides compact phrases without using the extra body information. It seems inconceivable that students could spend 16 years with diverse types of sign language and then graduate with any degree of competence with the English language. The quantity of English acquired in the English classrooms is microscopic compared to the ocean of non-English within which students maneuver throughout the years at the school. To argue, as one administrator did, that English is
reinforced in every classroom (teachers correcting students poorly signed English) is a myth. Students are literally environed by multiple manual codes, the least one being signed English (SEE).

Signing difficulties among the students

Interestingly, and in support of one of our major theses, one of the speech patterns associated with lower class language is also found among deaf students. Schatzman and Strauss (1966) found that whenever lower class interviewees told narratives, they seldom qualified their utterances; they took for granted that their own perceptions represented reality and were shared by all who were present (including the outsiders, the researchers). The narratives lacked "depth and richness and contain almost no qualifications and few genuine illustrations" (1966:332). (Of course, more recently this is the same argument found in Bernstein's work on working class children in England. In short, restricted language is the norm.) More interesting, in terms of parallels found at SSD, is the fact that the lower class respondents gave virtually no summary statements, i.e., statements that "signify that speakers are sensitive to the needs of the listeners" (p. 332). They used phrases like, "That's all I know," and "That's the way it was" which indicates that the speakers knowledge is exhausted.

The parallel found at SSD is that deaf students, too, would punctuate the completion of a sentence or an idea with the signs
"finished" (which also means, "completed") and "that's all" (two signs). This pattern of language and thought is seen in the quotations below. These are interesting since they derive from interviews with hard-of-hearing students who signed and verbalized simultaneously. Their speech was not clear enough to tape record although I could, while watching their signs, hear and understand most of their statements. Often their speech was "choppy" and condensed like the ASL they use (Klima and Bellugi, 1979, say ASL is "compact-ed" and "economizes").

I asked one middle school boy, to tell a "story" about the events (schedule) of his life during a typical day at SSD. These excerpts of "deaf language" are not more than 70 or 80 percent of what he literally said since I tended to "interpret" his messages into nearly correct English, but trying to retain a sense of his overall form of expression.

In my class my teacher ask me to go to town and buy some clothes in town. Bought some shoes and toothpaste (I first interpreted his iconic sign to mean brush my teeth) and then we finished and go to the Burger King and eat a big, big sandwich. Eat, eat, eat. Finished.

It is noteworthy and perhaps significant that personal pronouns are often omitted, especially "I." Sometimes a deaf person simply points to an imaginary second (or third, or fourth) person instead of signing or spelling "he" or "she." It is hardly a surprise, then, that a high school teacher said her students often do not know the English pronouns! I asked the boy to tell me what he...
did early each morning:

Houseparent come in little late and we have to get up and take bath, put on our clothes, brush teeth, sit TV, at 7:00 o'clock it's time to go eat . . . all of us. Finished. Talk, talk, talk at the high school. Come back to the dorm about 8:00 o'clock.

In another part of the narrative he said "we go to P.E., play volley ball, finish at 11 o'clock . . . then we go back to class and have math until 12:50 and go eat, finished."

A hard-of-hearing high school boy also punctuates or "summarizes" (or perhaps it is a sign which functions like a period at the end of a sentence or the lowering of the voice at the end of an utterance) his sayings.

Interviewer: What's the most important thing in your life right now . . . today?

Student: Grow up in my life. Become an adult, a man. I can't wait to graduate from high school. I want to go to college to be an actor and then I'll be playing on the TV. Work to be an actor. Finished. But I want to have good food and health in my life. That's all.

Interviewer: What problems do you have at SSD?

Student: Yesterday I had an argument with my friend. Then we got mad with each other again. Then we forget about it and become good friends again. That's all.

I asked him to tell me about events that transpire during the course of any given day of his life.

Sunday morning, same (as other days?). Get ready to go to church at 9:45. At 12:15 come back to the dining room and eat and then go back to the dorm. Finished, I rest . . . Last time (last weekend) boys and girls go home. School close and that's all.
A third and final example of this abbreviated closure to conversations and streams of thought comes from a hard-of-hearing boy from the lower school. I asked what he liked best at SSD? "The best thing I like about the school is reading and I like the teacher, Mrs. Mayday. (I) like the gym, play basketball and track. That's all."

The compact syndrome and the "finished" summary statements are salient in this boy's sign and verbal communications. His responses, using signs and voice, were extremely abbreviated. What do you do when you go home? I asked.

I went home and I met some boys and girls and I said, 'Hi.' Some boys and girls . . . for me . . . happy . . . come here . . . play, play . . . dog run with me . . . walk to fishing . . . many, many fish. Bass, catfish . . . Finished. Go home . . . walk, walk. Eat, eat. Finished. Travel with grandmother. Clothes, shoes, toothbrush and visit grandfather . . . loves me.

It seems fair to say that the students cannot be any better at signing (in whatever form, including signed English) than those around them. The world they experience is a fragmented one in which most of their own "scripts" appear as a particle -- bits and pieces of some larger text. While English is the language of the dominant culture, English is something that SSD students are generally poor at. And this skill deficiency is exacerbated by an instructional staff which -- by its own admission -- is often not on the same (sign) wave length as the students. As one teacher despairingly said: "We don't teach our kids any language patterns. . . Our kids
Sign language is truly unique. It transmits information by concepts and ideas, not by (English) words. For students at SSD, this means symbolically existing in two worlds: one is a world of visual-gestural language where ideas and thoughts are conveyed as holistic concepts and pictures; the other is a world where thoughts and ideas are conveyed by discrete units (English words).

At SSD the world is primarily the concept-world. It is the one in which the students are comfortable; it is the one they generally prefer. But after leaving SSD, their entire lives will be surrounded by the "word-world," for it is in that world they must earn a living and act out their daily lives. Many students (and deaf teachers) seem to have little realization of that reality as they push and fight for ASL or TC as their first language at SSD. They seem unconcerned about the future world where reading and writing (literacy) is needed. Many students said sign language was the "best" language. While the ethnocentric side of this is understandable, a widespread attitude at SSD naively says, "take your stinking English and shove it. I have a language of my own."

The overwhelming majority of students at SSD displayed an incredible poverty of English abilities. For them it was the "other symbolic world," to be ignored whenever possible. A veteran high
school teacher painfully contrasted her present students with an outstanding former student who could recount details of things observed. She is frustrated at the lack of students' observations of written English "markers" out there in the world:

I tried to get the other kids to notice things and come tell me . . . when they're with mom and daddy going to the store to notice signs like, 'so and so river' or 'so and so street' and learn the word river, learn the word street, learn the name of the store. They won't do it. And I'll think, how many rivers have they gone over (and) seen that sign? Why don't they know that that is what a river is? And how many street signs have they seen? Why don't they get that in there?

Whenever she asks students to spell "river" or "street," students reply, "never seen that word before."

Even the brightest students do not know many common English words. The homecoming queen, described by one teacher as the student who best understands English and English idioms, did not know the word "abstractions." Another example is seen in the attempt of a high school teacher to discuss with two students the use of frequent negative signs (terms) on campus. The teacher, competent with ASL, first tried to ask the question in terms of "positive and negative attitudes." Afterwards, he intended to ask specifically about the common usage of many negative signs (stupid, dumb, MR - mentally retarded, NG - no good, etc.). The boys, however, had no understanding of the concept "positive and negative attitudes." One boy said he had never heard of it. Then, as the usual approach is, the teacher embarked upon a long story which illustrated hypothetical
situations involving positive and negative responses in social encounters. The point here is that two normal high school boys had no understanding of "positive and negative attitudes," whether presented by fingerspelling (English on the hands) or in sign language. These examples are neither unusual nor atypical. Whether rivers, streets, abstractions, attitudes, etc., for many SSD students, English is a conceptual wasteland and stories often of some length are required to illustrate meaning at practically any level.

The poverty of word knowledge is accompanied by the general inability to use English syntax. TC and ASL are not English. Mindful of that, one teacher declared, "I can't say to the kids, 'Write a sentence the way you sign it.' They could do that maybe if they had the (English) vocabulary." I suggested that "The sign is an ideogram and if one doesn't know a word for an ideogram, then one doesn't have (English) vocabulary." The teacher agreed, "Right. Like the sign (shaking the right hand, fingers spread). How are you going to write that?"

In ASL there are many signs whose mimetic qualities are situated to a given moment and/or place. Consequently a teacher would have difficulty telling a signer, "Now, write in English what you just signed." The difficulty would involve changing an ideographic message into discrete words (signs represent and resemble referents much more than words do, i.e., signs contain much more iconicity than do words which are purely arbitrary symbols of
objects). It was my observation from classroom to classroom that very few teachers actually train students to write complete English sentences. Most of the time students fill in blank spaces with words or blank spaces for a single letter (e.g., _able = table). This occurred commonly at most grade levels. Can students learn English well when some other language (ASL, TC) system is more often used? Can students learn English syntax and vocabulary by filling in tiny blanks?

It is necessary to emphasize and to illustrate how deaf students at SSD occupy a visual-gestural-iconic-ideological-global-conceptual (non-English) world. The following is a classic example. It is provided by a high school teacher who was told by one of her students that he had found a job.

Teacher: What is the name of the place where you're working?
Student: I don't know.

Teacher: You work there and you don't know the name of it? Tonight when you go to work, you look and see what's the name of it (the store).
Student: I clean up and I fix co-colas.

Teacher: You don't work at the co-cola company. I know that. Where do you work?
Student: I work in the mall.

Teacher: That's fine. What's the name of the place? Tonight you look.

The following day the conversation resumed as follows:

Student: The name's up there (points upward meaning over the
entrance of the store).

Teacher: What?

Student: It's colored orange.

Teacher: What's the name (of the store)?

Student: Orange (teacher: That's all he could remember).

Again he was told to look for the name of the store where he worked. "Well, he came back (the next day) and he had learned, 'The Orange Bowl.' And I said, 'That's the place you work when somebody asks you!'' With a look of incredulity and with head shaking to and fro, she added, "And he was a senior." A second teacher sitting nearby added, "It amazes me that they don't notice things like that. It amazes me."

Another example derives from an interview with a girl who was labeled "slow" by several teachers. "Do you want a car in the future?" I asked. She said, yes, and I asked what kind? "Green car and brown. I forgot the name." Like the male student above she lives in a world of global symbols where objects are often signified by their properties, large/small, pretty/ugly, green/brown, as opposed to English symbols which differentiate objects by names/labels and/or properties. One student said he would "go to college" after he graduates. Which college? I wondered. "I forgot its name," he replied. This was repeated by a girl who told me she wanted to be a nurse. Where would she study? "Forgot name of a college." These examples illustrate a major point: the students
do not know much English. *Ipso facto*, little English gets used in their thought processes.

If one thinks of a place but has neither signs nor words to label the referent then what sense of the place exists for the individual? Is it only a kind of ideographic, mental picture? How sophisticated and complex can thought be under those conditions? In fact, more fundamentally, what is "thought" under those conditions? Is reality holistic, undifferentiated and more blurred than, say, sharply divided regions of the world? We believe the holistic concept-world dominates the word-world at SSD. It is a more simplistic, less abstract view. This notion is supported somewhat by a teacher's comments below. She explained some preferred qualities for anyone who might want to teach deaf children. She calls for even more pictures:

I've always thought that if you were going to teach deaf that first off you ought to be able to draw... There are so many things that you need to explain to deaf children and you start trying to explain it and draw it. I wish so much that I could draw. If you could draw you could show them.

There is empirical evidence that hearing children "code pictures pictorially up to the age of five; from then on word-based phonological coding predominates" (Klima and Bellugi, 1979:89). The teacher above listed other traits a teacher should possess: patience, good working use of TC, some skill with ASL and "it helps a lot if you can pantomime." There was no mention of skills for teaching English words.
The concept-world of deaf students is global, restricted, and often presented in polar types. It lacks fine, precise, pictures/signs/ideograms with which to carve out reality, especially as such realities are experienced in industrialized, urbanized, pluralistic, technological society. In the vocational school at SSD, where one finds much technology, there is a world of objects (tools, machines) which have few or no signs to represent them. In twentieth century advanced industrial society, technological knowledge is a must and the technology which exists grows ever more complex. The inability of deaf students to comprehend even a simpler technology (such as auto mechanics) illustrates the problems they have. As a vocational teacher stated:

Our language has verbs, adverbs and we have to change our (English) language for them. For example, I'll tell them to go measure a micrometer but they don't know what that is. They don't know what a lathe is. And they have trouble putting a new word (labeling) on a machine. For example, they don't say, 'alternator is broke,' they say 'motor broke.' A boy told me last year about his girl friend. He made her sign, but he could not spell her name . . . You are either ugly or pretty. You are bad or good. The hardest thing for me to tell them when they are working on a machine is 'a little bit more' (pressure, or twist). They know just enough to get by.

The Situatedness of Learning
Language at SSD

Social structures and symbolic orders exist in a type of dialectical relationship, each helping to give rise to and maintain the other (see Berger and Luckmann). In this way, language at SSD
evolves; it is largely shaped, nurtured, and maintained by children for children. While such a system may have its own sophistication, the degree of sophistication (no matter how ingeneous is may seem) is not likely to rival languages which are replete with their own "rules of correspondence" (see Rudner, 1966). In this context, it is not likely that children will teach children a language that is terribly abstract, subtle, and so on.

Of course, in small, closed societies (Gemeinschaft) characterized by mechanical solidarity, members may take-for-granted that other members understand the full implications to all symbols utilized. In fact, the language used may be a code of implicit meanings peculiar to and functional for the local group. SSD is such a community. It represents what Shibutani (1978) has conceptualized as a "social world" which is "a culture area, the boundaries of which are set neither by territory nor by formal group membership but by the limits of effective communication" (p. 113). It is a social world of common communication styles and common perspectives. As Shibutani notes, such worlds can develop from segregation. As examples he cites "the academic world, the world of children, the world of fashion;" I would add, the "world of the deaf." Not only does every social world have a communication system but as Shibutani states, there also "develops a special universe of discourse, sometimes an argot. Special meanings and symbols further accentuate differences and increase social distance from outsiders" (p. 113).
During an interview with two teachers, the segregated quality of life at SSD emerged. One teacher suggested that, although students take more trips off campus today than in the past, "our children don't have anything to talk about."

Teacher #1: They have things to talk about but they don't know how to bring it out. Right now they go a lot and they see a lot for sure. They ought to have something to talk about.

Interviewer: Where do they go?

Teacher #2: They go to McDonalds or . . . skating or the movie or somewhere . . . But they have many more experiences than the kids used to have because years ago the kids didn't go anywhere when they were here.

Teacher #1: But they all do it together. Maybe that's the reason. They do it together and everyone knows it (the experience of the trip) so why tell them?

There is, in short, a homogeneousness to those things experienced. But much more importantly, at SSD as in other such institutional settings, there is a homogeneousness to what can be experienced. Marx, in an initial formulation of the sociology of knowledge, noted that what was known (i.e., existing knowledge) was equatable to what could be known. Homogeneous groupings, not unlike the Dark Ages, give rise to limited views of the world and it is the language in conjunction with the prevailing ideology which determines the degree to which this will be found.

The social and linguistic structure of student life at SSD is close-knit. Like Goffman's "inmate," SSD students do things together -- always in groups. Their social world is truly a restricted one. It is a "we group" characterized by a kind of
mechanical solidarity. Whenever they travel to the outside world (e.g., McDonald's), their unique network of communication remains unbroken; they are untouched by the English speakers of that other universe of discourse. They rarely return to campus howling with excitement about what some stranger said to them (in a McDonald's or elsewhere). The two worlds seldom meet and ideas between them are seldom exchanged.
CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS: SSD AS A TOTAL INSTITUTION

Introduction

This section examines everyday life of SSD students who inhabit a total institution. The total institution is conceptualized by Goffman (1962), as "a place of residence and work where large numbers of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life" (p. xiii). Examples of social organizations which fit the definition of a total institution include prisons, mental hospitals, monasteries, concentration camps and homes for the aged. To this list may be added residential schools, including the one at SSD. In such total institutions all activities are controlled by the same authority; everyday life is highly regimented.

The typical normative process in a total institution is one of mortification -- a deadening or denying of what had previously been accepted as "normal" behavior. At SSD, however, we may speak of total enculturation as being the common and typical normative process. We say total enculturation because there is insistence on learning the norms of the society at large. And at SSD, this includes a school policy of students acquiring skill in spoken and
written English. As a total institution, then, SSD transmits not only its values, beliefs and sentiments but also language which will enable the individual to adapt him/herself to the general society.

In this section the official and unofficial cultures of the residential school are examined. This entails a brief analysis of school as published in the Student Handbook — a graphic example of school norms constituting the official culture. Too, in examining the official culture, it is necessary to present world views of administration, teachers and staff. This also allows for discussion of different types of sanctions utilized at SSD. Next, this section presents the student culture including the underlife, student world views (with special mention of sexual beliefs) and the student stratification system. This discussion allows for analysis of the unofficial school culture as acted out by its main participants.

The Official Culture

In its fifteen pages, the Student Handbook provides a succinct statement of the school's official culture. Similar to most school handbooks, the one at SSD begins on a positive note, emphasizing attainment of the "best." Thus, it states on the cover sheet, "Our goal is to help every student to do the best that he or she can . . ." On page one it states, "(Students are expected to behave) in such a way as to make their education the best." Thereafter, there exists a fairly common school practice of providing a
litany of things which "are not permitted." These run the gamut from very serious (e.g., drugs, sex, abuse of staff) to less serious (tardy for class, horseplay on a school bus, etc.). Throughout, the message is the same -- punishment (including corporal) is reserved for those who misbehave. The rule is -- "You goes along and you gets along." In short, in helping every student to do his/her "best," those in control must have a firm grip on running the school. The prevailing axiom is the greater control, the less trouble hence the best education.

Unlike a regular school, however, at SSD most students board; students are technically wards of the state since the school legally serves as en locus parentis. Thus, the tenacles of school control and authority reach further than they otherwise would. As Goffman (1961:6) notes about total institutions more generally, they are bureaucratically organized to handle "blocks of people" with their diverse needs. These needs are met not through individuation but rather, regimentation whereby one must adhere to prescribed norms in nearly every situation. Goffman says of the total institution's residents,

Their whole day is scheduled for them and all their essential needs are planned for. In this segregated world different motives and different attitudes are held toward work . . . Sometimes boredom is a great problem in these places because so little work is required and for adults who are work oriented demoralization may occur (p. 10).

In fact, regimentation and tyrannization are viewed as assaults upon the inmate's status as an actor. In everyday life of civil society,
we are told, one is able to enjoy the freedom of going at his own pace, of making personal choices for action, and scheduling his own events. In contrast, life in a total institution differs in that "minute segments of a person's line of activity may be subjected to regulations and judgments by staff; the inmate's life is penetrated by constant sanctioning interaction from above" (p. 38).

This is well illustrated by passages from a prison newspaper. It describes the way life in prison was organized by an old fashioned dinner bell on a tall pole:

In the humdrum of everyday existence, only one thing stands out -- the ringing of all these damn bells . . . the bells represent the unemotional authority governing a prisoner's life . . .

The bells first ring at 5:30 a.m. every weekday morning. They ring seven days a week, 30 days a month, 12 months a year . . .

The bells tell us to get up, and again in a short period of time, that we have to line up for breakfast. Next these same hellish bells tell us its time to go to work. Towards noon, they ring again so that you may be aware that you are going to be counted and then fed again. Later, they ring again, return to work. At the end of the day they signal that work is over . . . in a short time the bells ring again, you must stand up and be counted. Then you can relax, do what you want . . . the bells have stopped ringing until 5:30 tomorrow morning. Then it will start all over again (Le Premier, 1972:8).

This same kind of daily monotony is found at SSD. There, too, whole blocks of people must be moved from one place to another. To accomplish this daily life is scheduled and regimented. The Handbook's statement about home life policies (p. 10) dictates for
preadolescent students the daily rhythm of life:

Wake-up time Monday through Friday is 6:00 a.m. Leave for dining room at 7:00 a.m.

Return to dorm and perform duties before leaving for school.

Wake-up time Saturday and Sunday is 7:30 a.m.

Breakfast at 8:10 a.m.

The bells of prison are replaced by various omnipresent authority figures. The regimented student does not stop when classes conclude. Instead, students are told by the handbook that they should sign in with their houseparent no later than 3:30 p.m. Study hall is to be conducted for younger students from 3:30 till 4:00 p.m. and then supervised play extends from 4:00 p.m. until 4:45 p.m. Supper time is at 5:00 p.m. and then free time will be given after supper until 7:00 or 7:30 p.m. which is a total of 1 to 1½ hours of free time per day. Lights are out within the dormitory at 9:00 p.m. on Sunday through Thursday. The weekends, however, are considerably freer.

The daily schedule of life for high school students is more flexible, although they, too, have after school schedules. Like their younger counterparts, on school days they must sign in with the houseparent no later than 3:30 p.m. and weekday evenings specify time for study hall. Because older students occupy a campus which is close to Doubletown, they are permitted off-campus privileges by the following schedule:
1. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday for one hour.

2. Saturday and Sunday after 2:00 p.m.

3. Wednesday (a day when town businesses are closed all day) not at all; do not even cross the bridge (between the school and the town).

4. No students will be permitted in town after 6:45 p.m. on town days.

The regimentation of time is but one way of maximizing surveillance (Goffman, 1961:6-7), or direct observation by those in authority. In the total institution there is off-limits space, surveillance space, and space ruled by less than usual staff authority (Goffman, 1961:227-238). These refer to the setting of the institution, regions where the underlife may occur. In off-limits space mere presence is prohibited unless one is accompanied by an official agent. At SSD, dormitories are out of bounds during school hours and one must not leave campus (except during the one-hour allotted time). Too, wooded areas near the school are off-limits.

Surveillance space is "an area a patient needs no special excuse for being in, but where he would be subject to the usual authority and restrictions of the establishment" (p. 228). Finally, spaces ruled by less than usual authority are places where inmates or students use concealment devices to hide activities for their forbidden behaviors. That is, they may devise means of "maneuvering freely within the structure of ward politics" (p. 228-229). For
example, one might openly read a forbidden book after it has been placed into a dust jacket which bears some acceptable book title. In short, members of total institutions find free places, i.e., "License has geography" (p. 230). Restrooms at SSD were used as a cover for smoking. Empty buildings, wooded areas and stairwells were places for sexual encounters. Students and staff may tacitly cooperate in the emergence of these places where surveillance and restrictions are reduced. "Free places are backstage to the usual performance of staff-inmate relationships" (p. 230).

As noted above, SSD students are allowed one hour per day to visit Doubletown. It could be assumed that this is a period and a place where one is outside the surveillance space, relatively free of authority. However, this is not always the case. I frequently observed the director of home life watching students walk the streets of the little village as he sat inside one of the two small restaurants. On one occasion I observed a deaf adult male come in and whisper to the director that there had been a theft at the school; the director then used his two-way radio to have school authorities investigate the story. Thus, even in town school authorities are able to monitor student behavior.

On the campus itself, the rule to be followed is "let your houseparent know where you are at all times." School supervision is meant to include virtually every oncampus act by the individual. Food brought from home on the weekends is to be checked in with the
houseparent. The Handbook directs students to "accept correction at all times from any supervisor or houseparent (do not say, 'you are not my houseparent')." Older students are told how to use dormitory washing machines as well as the school laundry. They must not visit other people on other floors of the dorm. The only transportation to church is on the bus; they must not walk to or from church. Visitors must be cleared through the home life director's office. Visitors are not permitted inside the dormitories but they may enter the recreation center. Finally, to use the telephone or the TTY (teletype communication system) requires the houseparent's approval and "all long distance calls must be made collect and conversations must not be over five minutes in length."

The 1981-82 SSD Handbook for Home Life Department employees indicates the orientation staff members are to take in their work with deaf students. The prevailing adage seems to be, "Trust not thy students." Indeed, the need for a close rein is aptly stated in the following passage: "Wherever your children are, that's where you should be." Surveillance is paramount. One key area to watch is dormitory rooms.

Frequent visits into rooms are vital. Room checks are like taking your dorm's pulse. It gives you indications of your students' conditions. It will not only keep down mischief, but will also help you learn who studies and who does not, who associates with whom, etc. It will allow time to make closer friends with your students. Keeping a close and frequent eye on each room will solve problems before they happen.
Changes in lattitudes, changes in attitudes

The Handbook, of course, is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg. It is an easily obtainable expression of how SSD, like most public schools, is a bureaucratic organization replete with rules upon rules. And rules, in their statement of normative parameters, almost always give emphasis to what the individual cannot do. As Freud would describe it, civilization is attained at a cost -- the chief cost being some loss of individual freedom. Likewise at SSD, and in other total institutions, regimented behavior provides for little "official" expression of individuality.

I spent much time at SSD querying staff members (including administrators) about what, if any, changes had occurred during the past five to ten years in the way children are treated at the school. I did this for two reasons. First, it was clear in many of my interviews that the general orientation at the school altered each time a new superintendent was hired. Second, given the national press for "mainstreaming" and allowing handicapped individuals greater access to the society-at-large (especially through hiring programs and other such reforms), I wondered how school personnel felt about the school in 1981.

Without using any specific historical date as a point of reference, I gained vivid impressions of the "caretakers" view that things are too lax. This offered further support for Goffman's
regimentation thesis. Students and staff exist in a kind of dynamic tension -- each wanting to gain and/or maintain some advantage over the other. For teachers and other staff this most often takes the form of maximizing control and resenting any infringement on existing arrangements which strengthen their position. A frequent expression used by adults to describe the students was "doing your own thing."

Many teachers in the middle and senior high schools felt that SSD was too permissive and offered too much freedom. One teacher cited the widespread student use of vulgar language and the reluctance of teachers to punish its use. As this teacher told me:

I say to them that you're talking ugly and I don't want to see it. But this used to be something that we didn't see because the kids knew that if they did it they'd be punished. The kids used to know that if they had sex, man, they were going to get it! Or, they'd get sent home and never get to come back. Or if they stole anything they'd go to jail. But then it came in with do your own thing and there's no punishment involved.

One wonders what effect actual incarceration had upon students' behavior.

Many teachers believed that the current administration (in place for several years) changed things for the sake of change when it took over. A few also thought the administration was now coming back to some of the older ways, i.e., back to more discipline on campus. In the old days a houseparent would know where the children were but this administration came in and said "don't watch them so close. Let them be free." As another teacher put it
His expression was 'don't eyeball them.' The thing that bothers me is that students may need to have some freedom but it should have been maybe a gradual (thing). I'm not saying I know how it should have been done, but it was almost too much . . . you're free to do your own thing no matter what! Even if it's immoral, if it's illegal, no matter what -- do your own thing. That's alright. And so things went haywire.

In the early 1970's the school was caught up in student unrest with a school strike which resulted in some of the school's best students being expelled. At that time the school would not tolerate any challenges to its authority. Long hair was equated with being rebellious and could result in expulsion. Too, the school was forced to desegregate. One deaf staff member believed that racial integration (and too much freedom) had caused the school to degenerate. In the past SSD was more like a jail but that aspect of it had been improved, he said. But then came racial integration.

Staff member: In the past black and white were separated and then they mixed them up and it got worse. White girls went with black boys and white boys went with black girls. Before that it was limited. They were separated . . . now they're mixed together.

Interviewer: Is that worse?

Staff member: That's worse. Yes.

Interviewer: Why?

Staff member: Sign language is all mixed up, dirty minds, dirty communications. Now they (are) free, independent, sneak around. In the past there were many heroes who played football and pretty girls would go after them. Now it's different. More independent. The kids don't understand right from wrong. They see the hearing people and imitate them. Now they are free to go, to sneak around, and do this and do that and go places. In the past it was more strict. Now they go to town and travel around everywhere. We need to spank them. The older kids, you cannot control them.
What techniques and tactics are used by those with authority at SSD to achieve more social structure and social control? Those with authority can maintain surveillance and use informants as well as search squads which check out dormitories during evening hours. One nurse's aide felt "The kids are under supervision all the time. Whenever they walk to town a houseparent is supposed to . . . Check up on time." Another social control tactic is surprise searches of student dormitory rooms. I talked with a houseparent in a dorm that had just been searched by the director of home life and a security guard. This occurred during the second or third week of the new school year. The houseparent explained to me, "We heard a little something suspicious and we ourselves asked for the search. The director says that it will help the boys to know that we will search the place from time to time." Later I asked some of the teenage boys if they were offended by the surprise search and they said no, they were not offended. One boy remarked that the authorities were just doing their job. Another boy added, "They are doing this to help us."

There is, of course, an informational network among staff members. Teachers learn about students' problems from houseparents and teachers tell houseparents about in-school problems. After the teacher learns from a houseparent that a given student was in trouble the night before then the teacher passes that information to administrators who eventually ask the student himself about the problem. But, as one administrator pointed out, "There are many voices in the
wilderness;" That is, there are many informants. I asked an administrator if he always talked to the students involved in dormitory problems.

Yes. Eventually. But I try to find out indirectly first. I talk with the people in the dorms. Talk to other students. Always some student wants to tell you what is up. I lost my best one last year in high school. There was one young man who would tell you how it was, and what was up, and he understood. He was real helpful.

His answer was revealing in terms of the conspiratorial ambience which can exist in a total institution.

Staff and administration view of students

Officials at SSD infrequently mentioned that many students have poor relationships with their own parents. Many parents, they say, reject, ignore, and abuse deaf children. School officials believe that many parents have "dumped" their unwanted children on the school. There they are received by surrogate (house) parents many, perhaps most, of whom are poor at sign language. Moreover, these houseparents are often transient and temporary people who walk in and out of the daily lives of these somewhat parentless children. Parental neglect at home, then, is not necessarily rectified at the school although, for many, school is a better place than home.

A top administrator estimated that one-third of all students were "abused and molested" children because, without language they are vulnerable and defenseless. He tended to downplay the role of social class in this abusive behavior. Instead he emphasized a deaf
child's vulnerability, his/her lack of language and his/her naivete. He seemed to summarize the situation at SSD by saying, "We have an awful lot of hard-luck stories at this place.

One city official in Doubletown stated, during an informal interview at the popular town restaurant, "What makes me feel bad is that some kids are just dumped at the school by their parents." He explained that his observation derived from his own experience as an employee at the school. The top administrator cited above also provided a specific example of such dumping or rejecting of deaf children:

This little emotionally disturbed boy that I was telling you about . . . his parents have always rejected him. They have lots of money. They brought him up here and then they picked him up from a hospital where they kept him all summer. They brought him up to SSD for registration and dropped him and they were driving a new car. Obviously they have a lot of money and the child has never lived with them. He's been in and out of state hospitals and places all his life.

This little boy, the administrator said, had recently spent one year in special studies (for slow students) but was now attempting to function in regular academic middle school. School personnel described this child as having "A big dose of emotional disturbance because of parental rejection."

Interestingly, one prime reason given for rejection at home is that these students are handicapped. They cannot easily communicate with their parents. As one administrator said: "Some students want to stay here at SSD because their home is a place of isolation, a place without communication." Parents, he said, seek the cause
of their child's deafness, they feel guilty and consequently reject them. Several people volunteered that when students first enroll at SSD they want to go home. But when they get into high school, most of them do not want to go home any more because "they cannot talk to their parents." 32

One secretary, like many of the teachers, felt that too many SSD employees are transitional and they drift in and out of the lives of these deaf children. "They have so many people to relate to. They go to bed with one houseparent and wake up with another one, and then numerous adults engage them all day long. They must deal with various administrators and different security officers throughout their lives here at SSD." Again, the problem of poor skills in sign language crops up. It compounds the problem of the children being adrift in a kind of no man's land.

Some staff members, secretaries, and several teachers expressed the feeling that houseparents no longer had strong commitments and dedication to the work of being a houseparent. As one former staff member remarked, "Sixty percent of the staff is over there to get the paycheck." Teachers and secretaries expressed dismay over the idea that houseparents are merely paid hands now as opposed to strongly devoted, caring and concerned surrogate parents which, they said, was typical of houseparents a few years ago. One former houseparent also indicated that some houseparents abused the students. She explained how two teenage students were found trespassing in a house in Doubletownt and were whipped with a large leather belt by a
In recent years the student body has changed in significant ways. Not only are there more blacks and more poor, but there are more multihandicapped. Thus, among administrators and teachers at SSD it is common to hear conversations about "normal deaf." So many students are multihandicapped or have some mental disability that the phrase 'normal deaf' had evolved to refer to students whose only physical handicap consists of deafness. SSD operates a diagnostic and evaluation center where psychological tests are administered in order to determine which persons are "normal" and which ones have other mental or physical disabilities. Few, however, seem to fit the 'normal' definition. And even for those who do, a paradox seems to exist -- being normal inside the institution does not necessarily equal being normal outside. Thus, those who are "normal deaf" may serve as role models for the other children, something mentioned by staff members. But the isolated quality of the institution still cannot be ignored, even for the normal deaf children.

There was one staff member who emphasized the effects of institutional life upon deaf students rather than the psychological variables involved. I asked that staff member if he had the power to change the school in any way, what would he change? His answer is interesting and echoes some Goffmanian ideas regarding total institutions.
I would have older kids live in cottages and learn survival skills. As long as they live together in a group they'll not learn how to sew on a button or even to cook. Not long ago a teacher asked one group of sixteen and seventeen-year-old boys and girls to sew on a button. They did not know how, and during that experience they probably learned three new words, needle, button, sew. These students are just not exposed.

Staff members consistently criticized the cloistered, restricted, and relatively deprived form of life at the institution. I asked a counselor what the greatest effect of deafness is and he replied that

Isolation is the main effect. Isolation from the hearing world. The hearing world itself does not understand deafness at all. It makes me mad, I wish I could get them to understand. Hearing kids in Mountain City, for example, are scared to death to play football or any other game with these deaf students. They think that if they touch them they will become deaf or something.

Again, normativeness is situated and stigma is literally some observable and reacted to difference. One staff member of the infirmary, whose signs were quite good, believed that the world of deaf children is "like a newspaper. It is a sea of unfamiliar things."

The protective, almost womblike quality of SSD especially manifests itself for high school students. They grow restive and are anxious to have greater involvement in the social world beyond that at SSD. Their preparation for this, however, is not always very good.

One staff member, who has a deaf child at SSD, told me about taking her child to a restaurant where she could observe young boys and girls dating and dining out. The deaf teenage student often
remarked "I wish I could do that." But, her mother explained, "The problem is that there are no boys at SSD with cars and secondly most of the boys don't know how to ask a girl for a date . . . All the kids know is to take a girl to the woods. That's all they know about dating." This is but one more example of their lacking general knowledge about everyday life, thus requiring more than normal supervision.

As we have shown throughout this study, the roots for general, societal ignorance are sown early on for these deaf children. For elementary-age children, the fit between the institutional regimented world and the larger world outside of the institution can be especially problematic. As one administrator said young deaf children "don't understand the world" because of "their (lack of) language."

It is important to note in this person's comments the reference to language. As we have argued throughout, this is the pivotal issue for the deaf. In the most Kantian fashion, reality lies somewhere behind the eyes. As Postman and Weingartner note, we see the world through our words. Of course Postman and Weingartner are assuming the capacity to hear and verbalize. For deaf people, the world is experienced through signs more broadly, words being but one form of experience. In the absence of words (or signs), of course, there is little about the world which can in any way make sense. More sociologically, the symbolic nature of the world is lost on most young deaf children since they have no linguistic,
culturally defined frame of reference. I asked the administrator
why he thought deaf children were "amoral" (at the same time, really
implying immoral as well), a term he had used to describe their be-
havior. He said it was because deaf children are outside conversa-
tions at home, they cannot hear and understand . . . "It is a lack
of language."

This answer further supports the role language plays in
understanding the plight of deaf children. Above all, to be deaf as
a young child is to be isolated. If the child does not have sup-
portive, understanding parents, then the sense of isolation is ampli-
fied. One solution for parents is to place the child in a residential
school such as SSD. Ironically, though, in doing this one form of
isolation is replaced by another. As the mother of a deaf child com-
mented, many normal behaviors are unknown to deaf children. I asked
this same woman about placing her child in an SSD dormitory. Her
answer reflects the conflicting pros and cons to such a move.

Well, the dormitory kids don't have a mother and father here to
tell them right from wrong. They have someone who is paid to
keep them and these people come on by shifts and then they
leave. They don't stay with them. Thus, the kids have many
bosses. There is no way one houseparent can teach 20 kids
right and wrong things. There is no family foundation. SSD
is the only family they have. The majority of these kids are
glad to be back here from home after summer vacation because
they have such loneliness and poor communication at home.

So, while basic principles of the primary family are missing at SSD,
for many children it may be the best alternative available. They
prefer and enjoy SSD life over nuclear family life at home where
they may be largely excluded from things.

**Two Worlds: Languages Apart**

Some administrators, teachers, staff members and townspeople perceive deaf students as occupying an entirely different social world, a subculture, in but not completely of the larger culture.

In a local restaurant I asked a resident of Doubletown what his impressions were of the deaf people at SSD. He stated,

> The kids live in a different world. But I learned one thing! They are not dumb. For deaf students there is no race to them other than deaf and hearing categories. It seems to me like the community of Doubletown is split into two groups, deaf and hearing. And the only way to help that is for hearing people to learn sign language, because the kids cannot learn to hear.

This man is one of the few people who see the deaf-hearing schism as requiring greater reciprocity. At present, the larger culture and its presentation at SSD necessitates that deaf children adapt to the larger culture. The burden is totally on them. Their success is always gauged against the larger culture's norms. At a minimum, it is necessary to understand the world of the deaf as a subculture -- something recognized by this man. But that need not be in a pejorative context. I asked one staff member to describe what new discoveries she had made by working with deaf students at SSD. Her answer could not have been more sociological.

One of the big discoveries was the language limitation. What it does to you not only in terms of being able to process things auditorially but how it can change your entire living structure, your internal living structure and the way that it is a subculture kind of existence. You are isolated and even
though most minority groups are isolated in one way or another, to me this is the one that is most isolated, because without the communication (skills) most people simply cannot communicate with the deaf. That is just a restricted way of living! You tend to seek out those who can communicate with you, those who know what your world is about, and that automatically limits you.

She further described ASL as a "black and white restricted language" and implied that it has a smaller vocabulary bank than other languages.

I think ASL is restricted. The thing we were talking about before, about being able to express those feelings. I can feel a thousand different ways. And there are times that I grope for the words to put what I'm feeling right this minute into the right words. Sometimes words are not adequate but I still know that I have a lot of means of expressing that. And I also know that if I try harder I can hunt around for the right word that will get close to what I'm feeling. I may never hit right on it, but it'll come close. I know that. I know that bank is there within me.

Because students use a "black and white" language they tend to view the world in simplistic black and white divisions. "Some say they are 'good' either because they never have sex or because they make good grades. It's either black or white. There are no shades of gray. It's so clear-cut and dramatic here."

The extent of the communication problem was the discovery for this staff member in her years of work at SSD. Until one is emersed in this 'deaf world,' one can neither understand what the communication gap is like nor the importance of the spoken word. Students know they are isolated, "there's a feeling of that," she said. Especially the blacks, and the "lower average people," who
make remarks like "hearing people are against me," or, "if you were
deaf you would know . . . ."

Deaf students are perceived as different from others because
of structural arrangements at the school such as constant group life
and relative isolation from the larger world. A staff member stated
the problem this way

They don't know what is socially appropriate. All the kinds
of things that you build on by being allowed to group date,
and then to date double, and then to date singly as you get
older -- that process doesn't happen, that developmental
dating.

Thus, students at SSD have few opportunities to learn socially ac­
ceptable dating behavior. Another example of the relationship be­
tween structural arrangements and student behavior was provided by a
top administrator who often spoke of children fighting. I asked why
students were conflictive. Part of the reason, he said, is that
students

Spend a lot of time together in the dorms -- they spend much
more time with nonsiblings in a much closer relationship than
do normally hearing children because of the residential en­
vironment. I think that having to protect yourself and to
assert yourself with other students more than a normal hear­
ing student does -- I think that leads to some shorter fuses
and you have more blowups.

One is reminded here of Zimbardo's (1982) study of a simulated prison.
That sociological experiment concluded that the negative behavior of
guards and prisoners was a direct consequence of structured social
arrangements rather than personality or character traits of the in­
dividuals involved.
At SSD there was a general tendency for officials to explain deviant or undesirable patterns of behavior in terms of individualistic and psychological variables. For most officials the cause of student behavior and misbehavior lies "under the skin" of each individual. The top administrator cited above believed that students fight because, "They lack emotional controls. I don't think they mature as quickly as normally hearing. And I think they stay in that young stage longer." Two veteran teachers agreed that deaf students are immature. Therefore, they criticized the administration's past attempts to run SSD "like a college."

Teacher: And these kids were not ready. They are not as old as college kids and not ready for that responsibility mentally. Physically, maybe, some of them are as old, but mentally and emotionally they are not as mature as hearing college kids and that was the way it was going to be. And we would have an honor dormitory with no houseparents and all that sort of thing. And the kids weren't prepared for that.

Interviewer: When you say they are immature, do you mean high school as well as the young students?

Teacher #1: Physically, they are mature. Mentally they cannot handle it. They can't control their own feelings.

Teacher #2: They don't realize the consequences of some of the things they do.

Interviewer: I want you to define immaturity by giving an example.

Teacher #1: They know they have feelings and I guess it's your abstract (i.e., problems with abstractions). They have this feeling, this desire, everybody has. Deaf people have it. But they don't know how to control it, to react to it, to channel it right.

Here, again, language deficiency is thought to be related to
immaturity, feelings and emotions. But causal variables are many
and complex. Is language the major variable? Or is it institutional
arrangements? Or are the sex and fighting class based? Is this a
case of lower class behavior imported into the school? (see Shover,
1979). Or a combination of these?

The socialization process at SSD is viewed by one staff mem-
ber as truncated because intonation of language is absent. This has
the consequence of creating individuals whose behavior is "blunt."

For example, students typically say to staff members, teachers and
others, "You're fat" or "You're old," or "You're sloppy today."

This abrasive and blunt linguistic assault was explained as follows:

Staff: They do it within the community themselves. They do
that everyday.

Interviewer: You mean it is their norm?

Staff: Yes. Just to be more blunt. Well, they can't pick up
on the social niceties. When I am being sarcastic hearing
people know I am being sarcastic, my facial expression
changes. While deaf people can pick up on facial expressions
they don't get the intonation of the voice, and so what they
get is a direct message, the blunt message. So sarcasm can
be wounding to them sometimes where it is not to other
people. And I think that is basically what they do all the
time. Instead of saying to others 'I think you are gaining
a little bit of weight' what they would say is 'Gain weight.'
They are not going to say, 'You put on a little bit of weight
maybe.' They will just ask, 'Fat? Fat now?'

Students frequently say to her, "You stupid!" whenever she
fails to respond as they expect. During my own observations I saw a
student tell a teacher, "Crazy, you." Another day while crossing
campus a high school boy joined me, sized up the way I was dressed
and signed, "Sloppy, you." (This bluntness, and negative element of the student culture, will be discussed more below.) This staff member thought deaf students in general were direct and blunt because it is simply their way of life. Deaf people are simply more honest than hearing people.

When they are angry, they say they are angry. They don't tone it down and sweeten it down and all those things. They just tell you that it makes them mad. I like that. That is one of the things that I like most about the deaf. Once I got over the fact that they would tell me I was fat or my hair looked ugly or I should wash my hair and all these things -- they would just tell me. Once you get over that I really like their blunt way. I wish a lot of times hearing people had that going for them. I would like to be able to do that more than I can. I enjoy that generally about the deaf, although there are times when it has made me a little upset and frustrated but then I look back and realize that I could be dealing with people who were trying to lay hidden traps instead of dealing with me honestly and I really like the fact that they want to deal with me honestly.

What is called good clean honesty here is described by Goffman (1961) as a failure to support another's act, which is essentially the way interacting people sustain social order (harmony) and/or impression management. Goffman argues, in fact, that we must not speak brutally honest and frank. Instead, we must display a form of politeness, "a veneer of consensus," by supporting each other's act.

Student Culture

For residents of a total institution, the ebb and flow of daily events is largely determined by others. Residents have little say or control in establishing and enforcing rules, the formalized
norms of the institution. In sociological parlance, they must be "other-directed," act as others want them to. As Peter Berger (1969) has eloquently phrased it, these people are saddled with the "yoke of society." But in society at large as well as the total institution, not all life is regimented and acted out in accordance with the official, institutionalized view. Barring behaving as an automaton, all of us innovate to some degree. That is, we may act in predictable, hence normative ways but, importantly, we ad lib in some small way. Phrased differently, in a society of Americans, each individual subscribes to certain societal norms yet each is also a unique, existential person — a self.

According to Goffman, in the total institution with its extreme conditions of regimentation, individuals who are confined develop an "underlife." The underlife is a type of culture within a culture (sociologically, it is a subculture). It, in a collective way (vis., as a cultural aggregate), has its own norms, its own rules. For residents of a total institution, the underlife offers inmates and residents a form of self preserving behavior. It is a way of expressing one's individuality. This may take the form of engaging in insubordinate behavior or other acts which are interpreted as antagonistic toward authority. As Goffman says, the underlife is a way of "reserving something of one's self from the clutch of an institution . . . to express that one is one's own man."

Lacking the willingness to completely identify with the official,
institutional world view, the underlife allows the individual to maintain at least a modicum of attachment to a group and to have his/her self predicated on such attachment. In Goffman's terms the underlife consists of "secondary adjustments."

It was theorized at the outset of this study that an underlife such as Goffman describes would be found at SSD. To the degree that this exists, this study would document ways in which individuals resist the pull of official, institutional life. In the following pages we present ingenious, subtle and sometimes explicit ways in which residents of SSD engage in secondary adjustments. We describe how residential students resist the constant presence of school authorities as represented by teachers, houseparents, administrators and other SSD adults. The underlife at SSD is a place where students can occupy free places and free time away from the rules, regulations and official definitions of the system at large. We will see that students find places in school buildings, dormitories and secret places on the school grounds as well as off-campus sites where they can engage in forbidden sexual behavior. There are niches, crannies, crevices and cracks where individuals escape in order to smoke cigarettes or marijuana, both on campus and off-campus. We will see that free places and free time regions provide escape and possibilities for self-expression.

If freedom is a "primal thrust" as some psychologists argue, then students at SSD and other members of total institutions will
press hard and long against the walls of authority, rules, and coercion. They will find free time, free territory and zones for expression of self. One teacher in the vocational school put it this way. "Our kids at this school have a routine. They are told when to get up, when to go eat, and when to go to school. So, whenever they slip off to secret places they have some little freedom."

During the fifth week of my observations at the school, my field notes recall "these classrooms are places where almost every moment of one's life is under constant supervision and evaluation. One is either right or wrong. Correct or incorrect, good or bad, mistaken or correct, or very good."

I asked one top administrator if he could give some examples of how students circumvent the rules, the authorities at the school. He told many examples and began in this way,

Well, they do it hourly. They lapse into esoteric sign language, you know, I've watched kids sit in classrooms and very rapidly use esoteric sign language with enough basic signs that the teacher will recognize and ask for permission to go next door to have intercourse with their girl friends. The teacher will say, "Yeah." And everybody will just burst out laughing and they can tell the teacher to "go stuff it" or "bullshit" and the teacher never knows it.

One is reminded of how prison inmates are said to use insolence or remarks made under the breath as well as muttering, sneering, and glaring in order to express anger and frustration (Goffman, 1961). Inmates are said to express contempt for authority in numerous ways such as groups of prison inmates marching in a goose-step or seating themselves simultaneously at a dining table or laughing
hilariously at some feeble joke made by an individual who had
authority over them (p. 316). Sometimes, the administrator said,

They'll pretend -- passive aggressive -- and hide behind
deafness. They'll say, 'Don't understand.' They're dumb. And sometimes they'll just flat refuse to look at you.
You know that's the easiest way to frustrate a system.
If the teacher's chewing you out you just close your eyes.
If I close my eyes you'll go away -- to a deaf person that literally happens.

**Free places and free time**

One of the best illustrations of the underlife at SSD is sexual behavior which includes all forms of sex play, not just intercourse. On campus at SSD residents have found some places and some time for sexual behavior which is outside the grasp of school authorities. One staff member, who was himself a former student at this school, told about the secret places of the underlife:

We used to have secret places. Right now they usually do it (have sex) in the school when the teacher is gone talking somewhere. And then they do it in the closet or do it downstairs somewhere or they meet after going from the dining room or somebody going to the dining room they'll stay in a room. You really have to watch out for that kind of thing.

Sometimes, when students are supposed to be cleaning up, he said, they might slip into a closet "just a few seconds and that's it, you know." I asked if the two students made a plan the day before?

**Staff member:** No. Just do it. Just like that. Just meet and do it.

**Interviewer:** You didn't tell the girl yesterday to meet you tomorrow?
Staff member: No. Just do it. (He snapped his fingers) just like that! Just a moment.

Interviewer: You just asked her?

Staff member: No. Just happened to be blank (empty), nobody around or we just knew that was the time you could do it and you did it. Only one time I did plan, but all the other times there was no plan -- it just happens.

One teacher explained how students will have sexual relationships in empty rooms on campus. Students are said to use empty rooms above the superintendent's office as well as secret places inside the gym. One boy told her how he entered the girl's locker room in the gymnasium "and the girls didn't hide. The showed me themselves. I didn't want to see them, I just wanted to see one girl but the one I wanted to see had finished dressing already." This teacher, who was herself a student at SSD, remembers that students used to enter into different rooms and especially the boys' locker room in the gym.

When we had halloween parties couples would be kissing and kissing. There was the fishing pond where students would get behind a curtain and kiss a little bit and we'd watch them and that thrilled us. Sometimes if we had all women teachers we knew they'd never go into the men's restroom, so girls would go to the boy's restroom and kiss the boys in there."

Both middle and high school teachers referred to stairwells and dark rooms in the administration building where students would go for sexual encounters, places also cited by high school students. One middle school student said that students would leave the dining room after eating and run to an empty building and "do it quickly." He reminded me that in the winter time the weather is cold and school
security guards tend not to drive around very much which provides opportune times for such encounters.

A top administrator at SSD agreed that students were indeed "quick to discover holes in cupboards." His account provides insight into human ingenuity regarding the posturing against official authority.

They've discovered that if you really want to get together and neck a little bit or whatever, you arrange with your girlfriend -- and you go to the gym and pretend that you are coming to the snackbar, but instead you cross the yard nonchalantly and go down into the basement of the art room. I'll (a student) come in from the other end and we'll have a good 15 minutes before people even know we're anywhere around.

He noted that students would often get "one of those retarded ones" to act as watchman or guard while the couple is in the basement. Afterwards when the bell rings the couple meanders out, one of them leaving one side of the building while the other emerges from the other side. "We put the mentally retarded ones to watch -- 'you do that or I'll beat you up,' and he believes us so he doesn't say anything." One of the high school students explained how his peers arranged to find free areas and free time:

Most of the houseparents go to the recreation room. Sometimes the boys tell the girls what time, what place, don't let the houseparent see you. Try to fool the houseparent. The boy explains the place where to go. She goes and the boy waits until the girl goes there and then he goes. Most of the time they go to the recreation room and then leave for the next building, to its basement. The girl goes down into the basement and the boy goes up into the dorm and then he goes down inside the dorm, down the stairs to the basement and they have sex and various things.
The houseparent is unable to notice where everybody is, he explained, and adds that a second boy will go to the basement and give his friend a signal that there is no houseparent around, to come on out. Students and teachers also said that dormitory rooms were used for sexual liaisons.

Free places and free time on school grounds

Not only do students discover free places in school buildings and dormitories but they use hiding places on or around the school campus proper. Some of these hiding places have been used for generations and are passed along from one cohort of students to another. One top administrator, for example, told about free places that existed in the Arkansas School for the Deaf. He told me the following story.

They were tearing down an old building and a deaf teacher who had been in that school remembered that there had been a tunnel, an underground maintenance service tunnel between the boys' and girls' dormitories. They used to go down into the tunnel and meet and do whatever came naturally. So they passed it on from one class to another and he (the teacher) had forgotten it. But when they started tearing it down, it reminded him of the tunnel and he went to check it out and sure enough it was still going on. For 75, 50 years maybe the kids had been frustrating the system in that regard.

A staff member, who is also an SSD alumnus said,

There are places like the coal pit. It's cold in the winter time but we still did it there or up in the washateria. (When I was a student) I'd go to wash clothes and somebody would meet me there or in the back of the bus. The girl didn't wear panties, she just sat on top of you while you were riding in the back of the bus.
There is a quaint old barn located on one of the two campuses at SSD. A teacher remembered that a girl in her class last year had gone to the barn with a boy. "The student said, 'We kissed' and she explained everything to me and I said, 'shame on you!' I found out it was a man who worked here and that girl thought that I went to the barn with the same man. She thinks because both of us are deaf we do the same things, that we have these things in common." This illustrates two points: First, deaf students are especially curious about sex. Second, they treat it as a "natural" not "social" drive. Freud, in a very sociological way, discussed how civilization curtails our natural drives. It takes a drive like sex or hunger and directs it in socially prescribed ways to make it normatively acceptable. For many different students, the general norm of sexual behavior being verboten (forbidden) except under certain circumstances is poorly understood. The confusion over this is well illustrated by the teacher's account since the student involved assumed that her behavior was normal, in fact that the teacher would have done the same thing.

A high school teacher explained that boys take advantage of some of the "slow" (intellectually not well developed) girls in the nearby wooded area, the basement, or a boiler room somewhere. He believes that these girls are easily exploitable. "They can't tattle-tale because they do not have enough language to tell someone." Another teacher told how students would out-maneuver and manipulate
the authorities in the following way:

I used to have an art club and the kids would want to join the art club and come down here at night to work. And I would write them passes to come down here, and then for one reason or another they wouldn't show up. They were meeting their boyfriends in the woods someplace. The houseparents thought they were here and I thought they had for some reason decided not to come and then by the time the houseparents and I got straightened out--it may take weeks. And so that's what was going on last night. Some kids were supposed to have met one of the coaches for some tennis practice in the gym and they didn't meet him.

Not only do students use tunnels, coal pits, washaterias, wooded areas, but they have also used the shelter of a bridge which is very near campus. One teacher explained how a couple might be under the bridge with a student-guard sitting on the top of the bridge. The guard's role is to throw rocks into the water if some adult is coming near the bridge. Finally, I was told about a bank of dirt near the gymnasium which is covered with kudzu vine. As this teacher told me, during a basketball game,

One of the security guards came up to me and said, 'Did you see anybody go into that kudzu right then?' I said, 'No,' and he said, 'Well tell me if you do.' I said, 'Oh, why?' He said, 'Oh, they got sheets and blankets and pillows and everything up under that kudzu where they have their parties.'

Free places and free time off-campus

Both teachers and students mentioned that a local city park which adjoins the property of the school is used as a place for sexual intercourse. One girl suggested below how this is arranged,

Some kids have cars and they go down to the park and have intercourse. They hide. They take the car down there. They turn in
a key at the office, but they keep an extra key in the pocket and nobody knows it. So they can sneak out at night -- the girl just fools the houseparent and tells them I'm going to eat and they go over there and have IC (intercourse) in the park where the trees are.

One teacher said that students have been caught in an old Negro church which is located very near campus. "I don't know how many times they used it before they were caught. It has been mentioned already by a houseparent that students have been found using a crowded school bus for sexual activities. A nurse in the infirmary stated that "when you see a bus with students sitting up high in their seats, go check it because they are hiding some couple." Afterwards, I asked the top administrator if students used school buses in that way?

Oh yes. Occasionally we have houseparents who are not quite as sharp as they should be. The kids will get in the back of the bus and some of them will get in the seat in front of them and they get a big bunch gathered around, you know. Shoot the breeze while the two on the backseat are doing what comes naturally.

Students also go to ball games where few of them actually watch the game. For example, at the homecoming football game it seemed that most of the audience were conversing and not paying attention to the game itself. As confirmation for my observation, the following day a teacher asked me if I had noticed how deaf people talked to each other and ignored the ballgame? Another teacher commented, "Hearing kids go to a game because they want to see the game. Of course, they do some other things too but mainly they go to see the game. But our kids don't go to see the game. They go for every
other reason in the world but they don't go to see the game." At a ballgame there are many new faces and many new people to talk with. There is a great deal more freedom as one slips and slides in and out of different groups within the large crowd. In short, there is less close supervision and more freedom.

Since deaf students use a public and physical language which is accessible to many other people even from long distances, they must seek ways of communicating more privately. Of course, one way is by hiding or being in some non-public place. Numerous examples of this have already been presented above (e.g., under a bridge, in the woods, and so on). A more imaginative, ingenious solution to seeking privacy is required for acts technically done in public. On one occasion I saw two girls "whispering." This was done by one girl placing her hands at the bottom of a second girl's sweater. The second girl looked down from the top of the inside of the sweater to read the "talk" of the hands which whispered a message. She then responded in the same way to the other girl and in this way they privately conversed in the presence of other people. Similarly, we noted earlier how students often use signs improperly (upside down) in order to convey a message publicly yet secretly.

Getting free by getting sick

Many of the activities at SSD have a "hidden" purpose to them. It is hidden in that it is not stated but it may, in fact, be
why one group of participants (usually the students) participates at all. In short, these activities offer an outlet for student comradeship free of adult supervision even though adults are usually present. The infirmary at SSD, with its plush sofas and whiteclad nurses and large color TV, was such a place. Two nurses told how three students came to the infirmary for eight consecutive days claiming to have stomach aches, fingernail problems, and headaches. I asked the nurses why the students came to the infirmary and one of them replied, "Just to hang around a new place. They don't talk to us, but to each other." Again, it is a place for private conversation; a place where there seems to be less authority and relatively more freedom; a place which is different from the dormitory and the classroom. In Goffman's terms, this is a way of "working the system."

One nurse in the infirmary told me that students exploit houseparents and teachers by frequently claiming to be sick. As she said, "They can play the medicine game for a long time." I asked why students did this. "Maybe they come here because they are tired of eating, sleeping, studying, and playing with the same people all the time," she said. Again, here we see the explanation suggesting that the activity is a form of escape.

Several nurses complained that students came to the infirmary for almost no reason at all, or least of all for actual medical reasons. Two nurses laughingly told how "it was funny to see two girls
come in all dressed up with flowers in their hair in order to see some boys or just to walk out near the boys' dorm. We told them they seemed to be sick because they came here so often. We told them "you must go to bed until seven o' clock this evening and stay in your pajamas." Both girls started crying and said, "I not sick." Clearly dressing in pajamas and staying in bed until 7 p.m. is an authoritative response to those who too obviously are 'working the system.'

Visits to the school counselor are another form of escape. One staff member put it this way:

Last year one of the children was coming over for counseling sessions. She really had some bad problems and really hated one of the classes she was in, and really came over here a lot during that time. And being an astute observer it took me only a month to figure out what was going on. You have this problem and it just happens to surface every 10 o'clock English class period. It's just that it really gets bad at 10 o'clock every Tuesday morning, it's just one of those things you can hardly handle on Tuesday at 10, so you just have to be here (with a counselor). And so you come to see me and you talk to me for a while, and you talk to me for 30 minutes and 'I'm feeling better now I can handle the rest of the day. Pass me back to class.' Pass them back to class; it sounds easy enough.

The counselor explained how students would also come to see an audiologist maintaining that their hearing aid had broken. Whenever a student arrives in the office of the audiologist, if there are others being tested, students will wait for an entire class period. "This is a good place for messing around," the counselor told me.
Understanding by not understanding

Always in the underlife, students learn how to cope from within the system by "conning" it. While they are "in" the institutional system, they are not necessarily "of" it. The old adage that "rules are made to be broken" is a lesson well learned by many SSD students. Students learn just how rigid the official culture's parameters are. These are learned in an enterprising, ethnomethodological way. In a style which would make Harold Garfinkle proud, they daily engage in ethnomethodological "experiments." That is, they push the norms to their extremes to document for themselves just what they are. As one staff member said, "We have some kids who know just how many times you can break this one rule before they really come down on your head or they'll be restricted to the dorm. 'I can live with that so I'm going to do the following things,' and so on. You do what you want to do and you get restricted and next week you can do it again . . . You can do it again in three weeks and say 'Oh, I forgot!'" Of course they have not forgotten, quite the contrary. They have remembered very well that you can push so far but no further. But you do push to the extreme because the axiom that holds is: The closer I get to the extreme, the more my freedom has been maximized. Even a trivial daily activity like riding the bus offers a chance to test the normative boundaries. As a teacher explained:
They used to be able to make the bus wait on them a few minutes but now the bus will just go on without them. Now you walk, but that is a choice, that is manipulation of the system. 'Miss the bus. Sorry, sorry, pass me to class.' Pass them to class and they have a nice leisurely walk. I have had some of these kids walking through the fields picking flowers, you know. But they learn, they learn to manipulate the system.

Life at SSD is a kind of tug-of-war with the advantage accruing to one side one time and another side another time and the reality of this is not lost on school staff members. They understand that students at SSD (like students elsewhere) will "rebels." And in rebelling they effectively assert their own sense of self and worth. A top administrator describes the struggle between individual selfhood and the social system in the following way:

We have a lot of kids who tell me (by their actions) I'll beat them with my mind. I'll be so stubborn and so passive-aggressive -- that your patience will wear out! And you'll say, 'To hell with it.' and you have kids coming in from P.E. and the teacher's got 8 kids there and ready to teach history. You're late to class and you come wandering in 10 minutes late and where've you been? 'Can't hear you.' 'Why are you late?' 'Lost my shoes. Somebody stole my shoes.' That's a favorite, 'Somebody stole my shoes,' or something.

The administrator understands that this is the student's way of inverting the power relationship between student and teacher. The student has the power to disrupt, and do so in a naive way, as though he/she is unaware of the net effect. As the administrator rhetorically asks, "What can a teacher do?" but proceed with the class lesson. Bright students learn that if they want to they can be manipulative and possess a certain kind of power. As the administrator says of this kind of student,
He can pull his passive/aggressive bit and he knows that nine out of ten times, if he just perseveres, folks are going to give up and not pursue it because he pretends -- 'I don't understand.' Most often, 'I don't remember.'

The World View of Students at SSD

The major social division of the world made by deaf students is deaf and hearing, however, this is not easily accomplished. Students define "deaf" in various ways. For example, some younger and/or slower students will say that one is "a little bit deaf" if one is able to use sign language. They do not understand that one could use sign language and not be deaf. A teacher in the Special Studies Department (for slower students) tells that a student will say, "'My Mom is deaf,' and I will say 'No, she is not.' The student will say, 'Yes, she is a little bit deaf because she can sign a little.'" Other teachers also commented about this confusion among deaf students and being able to tell who is and who is not one of their own.

Deafness is such an important attribute to deaf students that it, alone, transcends the importance of other common determinants of social groupings. One teacher tells that a black boy and a white boy insisted they were cousins because they were from the same hometown. The students could not understand that race might preclude their being cousins. To them, cousins was a bond of geography and deafness with race being given no consideration.

Finally, not only do deaf students at SSD divide the social
world into deaf and hearing people, not only do they identify the use of sign language with the status of "deaf," not only do they sometimes equate kinship with similar locale but they also view certain school symbols as indicative of deaf and hearing. As one middle school teacher put it, "If a coach gives a student a blue penny (a shirt used by basketball players) students will say, 'the blue shirt is "hearing!"' Tan and red for them are 'deaf.' In my classroom they once colored the counties (of a state) in a book tan and red and then said, 'I colored it deaf!'

Newcomers views of life at SSD

As we have shown elsewhere in this report, there is much concern at SSD about schooling students who can exist in the "real world," the world outside of the walls at SSD. As one approach to the students' views on this, it was decided to interview students who were relative newcomers to SSD. It seemed wise to talk with hard-of-hearing students because they had had greater audio participation in the hearing world. In particular they had had experience in hearing schools but they had come to SSD because their experience was not a good one. Thus, they come to SSD as "converts," as marginal people who experienced the radical change of moving from one world to another world. There is evidence that hard-of-hearing students, skilled with English enjoy higher status than others. This was observed by the school's audiologist who said, 'I think
that hard-of-hearing' has a status here because the kids will tell you fast, 'I am not deaf. I am HH' (in signs: hard-of-hearing).

Some of these newcomers have been at SSD as long as five years or as little as two years. Since they had spent much of their life in the hearing world and then joined the deaf world, we assumed that their comparative insights would be useful in discovering significant differences of the two worlds. As we shall see, these students point out ways in which the deaf subculture differs from the hearing world from which they migrated. They will discuss different linguistic expressions and modalities, different interpersonal relationships as well as differential knowledge of the outside world.

Several newcomers said they made good grades at SSD. They claimed that the school was not very hard. I asked one girl how she liked the deaf world. Her picture of deaf students is telling:

It's okay. There are only a few deaf people who can really understand what you say. Like if you try to explain things to them they don't understand it. They ask me to help them with English and I try to explain it -- over and over again! But they don't understand.

Some of these hard-of-hearing students have become true believers, converts who have been integrated into their newfound deaf world to the extent that they now denigrate the hearing world from which they come. For example, one young girl, a cheerleader, said during an interview that she wanted her children to be either deaf or hard-of-hearing: "I want a deaf child because a hearing child is spoiled. My favorite is deaf and hard-of-hearing. I hate talking
people because they are spoiled."

Another newcomer who is hard-of-hearing told how uncomfortable she felt upon first arriving at SSD, having spent nine years in public schools. She dreaded to walk in front of other people because she felt everybody was looking at her. "I had never been around so many deaf people at one time. I was so different. I was nervous and scared at the same time."

One unique linguistic quality of the school is this meaning of certain colloquial phrases. Sometimes these words sound oddly juxtaposed against each other. One newcomer mentioned the difference between the expressions "fired home" and "suspended." "I think 'fired home' means no more coming back. But 'suspension' is one week or two weeks -- something like that. I say something like, 'Jim got fired home.' and they would say no, he got suspended." This expression, "fired home," is interesting in that it is an abbreviated form of saying: "This person was fired and sent home." Of course being "fired" is an American euphemism for being dismissed from one's job (in Britain the expression is "made redundant"). On numerous occasions I heard students remark that someone had been "fired home." Obviously fired home is used to refer to more serious offenses than is the term suspended.

The same newcomer who explained "fired home" also told me how her spoken as well as her sign language had expanded since attending SSD. She gave this example: "They (SSD students) say,
'late touch,' when they mean 'have you ever been there before?' I say it myself like it's a slang word. It's just a habit because I say them and memorize it." It was my own observation that students would not say, "I have never been to that city before." Instead, they would sign "I late touch that city." This is similar to another expression in ASL which is signed, "I think touch you" which means "I will keep you in mind." In each of these expressions the sign "touch" makes an idea more physical or concrete. Touch is the most fundamental means of communication. For the deaf students it takes on special significance since so much of their language is, of necessity, physical. Thus "late touch" conveys an act not yet done while "think touch" becomes the cognitive shorthand for bringing to mind someone not physically present. The physical connotation of touch also has importance for hearing people who wish to "think touch you." For them, however, it gets expressed to a departing friend or loved one when they say "Keep in touch."

Subtle? what's that?

It has been shown throughout this report that a real problem for deaf students is dealing with abstractions. One outcome of this is to be incredibly direct -- blunt to the point of rudeness. Too, despite some ingenuous ways of duping the authorities, students at SSD often tell authorities about the misdeeds of their classmates. For example, one morning in high school a student raised her hand to
inform the teacher that another student had smoked a cigarette last night in the dorm. Such behavior at SSD was common. A houseparent related that one student might tell a police officer who is searching a dormitory room that some marijuana was hidden in the ceiling above by the student's roommate. Two nurses in the infirmary gave this example: "A boy might come in here without a pass and later on five or six students will rush in here to tell us that he did wrong! That he had no pass to come in here!" Each of these incidents suggests that loyalty to one's peers may get subordinated for loyalty/deference to the authorities. It is not, however, that honesty is some well adhered to virtue. Instead, students gauge their behavior to their own situations. In a type of exchange, they engage in certain behaviors (e.g., informing) that may enhance their own situations at least for the moment.

A good example of student bluntness is in considering the informal student dress code and how one's appearance has attributes associated with it. In her desperate attempt to achieve acceptance at the school a new girl decided to dress plainly and without jewelry. I asked her what would happen if she wore a pretty dress to school? "The kids would ask me, 'Why are you wearing a pretty dress? Why did you change? Are you trying to show off?'" Another new girl, Karen, arrived on campus wearing tight blue jeans, make-up and a purse. Students asked, "Are you a whore? Go get them (jeans) off! That's not right. You are not supposed to wear tight jeans." But
the school has no official rule which prohibits the use of jeans. In fact, at public school students did not wear dress pants, "but (you) come here and everyone of them has on dress pants."

At SSD students experience considerable student-based pressure to conform. And subtlety, as noted above with the use of the term "whore" is the exception not the rule. Those who deviate are quick to be pointed out by their peers. The term "show-off" is very much used for this purpose. It is a leveling device by which one is ridiculed for displaying some higher status behavior or appearance. It is used derisively by SSD students when wanting to isolate the deviant (this idea of student stratification will be discussed in more detail shortly.). In the use of all descriptive terms for enforcing conformist norms, subtlety is ignored. I asked Honey, a new high school student, about this. Why are SSD students so severe on each other?

Honey: When I came here I realized that the deaf are very, very different.

Interviewer: How are they different?

Honey: Communication is very different. I try to communicate in the same way as in the hearing world. I am used to the hearing world. I thought it would be the same but the deaf don't like the way I communicate. They make fun of me in front of me (to my face). They think that I am stuck-up and I want them to understand that I live different (from them). I have parents who want to take care of me. The houseparents here care for their children, but I grew up different. They (the students) don't have responsibilities and their personality is mean. I look at their personality and I think, Wow!

Dolly, another hard-of-hearing student also perceives that her
school peers have a problem with manners: "In public schools students go home every day and their mothers and fathers can teach them manners. But here we have to stay in the dormitory and they (the parents) can't (teach their children manners)." Neither teachers nor houseparents can hope to have as much influence on a student's behavior as the student's own parents who would have only a relatively few children to deal with at one time.

Honey arrived at SSD driving a sleek automobile, wearing pretty clothes and jewelry, and using speech and speechreading as her primary means of communication. Having come from a world of expensive private schools and skiing trips in foreign lands this deaf teenager met with some strong opposition at SSD. During the second month of her tenure at SSD she explained, "Hearing people do not hurt other people's feelings. Here they hurt your feelings, they don't care about your feelings." I asked for an example of that behavior. "Many people do not think I should be in school here. Sheena says many, many times to the boys and girls, 'Honey is trying to show off, she thinks she is on top.'" Although she had made considerable progress toward adjusting to her new world, even claiming Sheena as her best friend two months later, Honey repeated her first observation about the bluntness of the deaf student subculture.

I like hearing people. They are always careful what they say to another person, but deaf -- they don't care. They say anything they feel inside. They just gush/pour it out, just say it, and spew it out. But hearing (people) are patient and keep it inside. Maybe one (hearing) person feels sorry for me the way I talk, my voice is funny. But they don't tell me 'Your
voice is funny.' But here, they'll tell you your voice is funny, your actions are funny. They'll say anything, but hearing (people) think about other persons but here they don't care.

Karen, another relative newcomer, offered some similar observations:

Okay, in public school nobody goes up to your face and says 'You are a whore.' They don't do that. Here they do. Well, like in public school you tell a friend something and she keeps it a secret. But here they don't keep secrets. Like I tell one of my friends something and I say keep it a secret, don't tell, and she goes around and she tells somebody and it gets around fast. I noticed that. That was the first thing I noticed. Hearing school you can tell somebody something and they won't say anything. Another thing I noticed was hearing people, they smoke pot at school, and nobody goes and tells on them because they know you would get in trouble if you do. Here, the kids would be smoking or something and the other kid goes and tells on him. That was something I noticed too.

Is this puritan and rigid and conservative behavior due to the rural setting of everyday life? Why are students so painfully blunt and direct to each other? Had they failed by the socialization process to learn subtle manners, respect for others, and diplomatic techniques? Why do they exhibit so little loyalty to one another? Why will students tell the authorities on each other?

It has been alluded to at numerous points in this narrative that no matter how good the school environment, it still may not equal a proper home living situation. Students at SSD live in a constant group situation without personal and individualized parental guidance and teaching. The students at SSD give some credence to the adage "familiarity breeds contempt." One must always be mindful that SSD is its own little world. As in other institutional settings,
a world is created which acts back upon those who created it and in
the process denying them their individuality. Taken to an extreme,
everyone would behave alike. Tact would be unnecessary in the face
of a constant, naked candor with no pretense of civility in any form.
One very articulate and popular young high school teacher, whose
sign language skill is outstanding, talked about the "uninhibited"
and blunt ways of deaf students:

Teacher: Freud would be very happy to come here because this is
a microcosm of what he said. Because the language is blatant.
These people have been together for 14 years day and night.
The subtlety, all the Freudian things that we have been
taught to suppress as members of the hearing middle-class
society, all the thoughts that we are supposed to never
articulate, these kids take as everyday communications.

Interviewer: Blow it out.

Teacher: They just blow it right out. They walk in and they
are liable to say anything. Now there are some staff people
who intimidate them, very few, but the kids are just about
willing to say anything anytime concerning sex. And they
are convinced that sex makes the world go round.

While sex is almost a preoccupation of many SSD students, it
is something about which they are very confused. Wearing make-up
is quickly equated with being a whore. Too much time with individ-
uals of the same sex may lead to being called homosexual. One teacher
told how students would often see a male and female teacher talking
together and would ask them, "Are you sweethearts?" Many students
seem to have no conception of a casual relationship between a male
and a female and therefore they tend to suspect some deeper sexual
involvement between individuals. This same teacher also told that
students may see her talking with another female teacher and they'll say "lesbians." They might see you talking to another man, she said, and call you all homosexuals.

Can you imagine saying something like that to one of your teachers when you were in school? Now we had (someone) who teaches science, a very respected teacher, a good teacher, a very respected person and Mrs. ______ who was principal . . . One day they were standing outside the library talking. One of the girls walked by and said, 'lesbians.' Can you imagine a hearing child saying that to a principal and a teacher?

These quotes well illustrate both sexual confusion and the bluntness with which things are expressed. Too, they show a certain naivete in dealing with authorities which precludes deference as it is usually found among school children and their immediate super­visors.

Deaf children were also seen making fun of handicapped deaf children on campus. Several informants mentioned that such behavior did occur. According to one very bright articulate student, Macer, one student might call another "mentally retarded" (MR) in order to make him mad. As he said,

Sometimes I see the handicapped teased, teased, teased . . . make him feel it cause he can't help it. Sometimes a deaf kid will laugh at somebody in a wheelchair. They say he's crippled, 'You can't run, you can't walk. I beat you. You can't beat me running, you can't run. You're crippled. You can't go fast. I think I can beat you.

Karen, the hard-of-hearing newcomer, had observed a similar pattern of behavior and seemed puzzled by it:

If she is really mentally retarded they will go up and say, 'Gosh! She is handicapped! She is ugly!' It is normal I mean if she was born that way, she can't help it. And that's
what they do and they have a handicap themselves. They are deaf! I don't understand.

This kind of derision illustrates an important sociological point. Much like Gordon Allport found in *The Nature of Prejudice*, nearly everyone seems to have someone that they can feel superior to. With deaf children we find a group of already handicapped individuals who are even further constrained by living almost exclusively among other handicapped children. So what do they do? They find a target for their own hostilities, in this case focusing on those less fortunate than themselves.

I asked a high school teacher, who has worked at SSD for many years, about this blunt, direct, and uninhibited approach to other people. He, too, interpreted this behavioral style as a failure to learn the appropriate reactions to different behaviors. **And, importantly, feeling superior to some other deaf group.**

I've been talking to a lot of the coaches around . . . We have a problem with teammates criticizing teammates. We have problems with a JV (junior varsity) team making fun of a varsity team or vice versa. Girls making fun of the boys . . . This is unheard of in public schools. You would be ostracized in a minute.

It should be very clear by now that SSD is a complex social organization complete with its own stratification system. One dimension of this system is power which lies more with the authorities than the students, although to a certain degree (as we have shown) this is negotiated.
Social Stratification Within
the Student Culture

In this section, we will look at social stratification at SSD in general and solely within the student world. We are interested in the hierarchical arrangements which have been established by the students. These students, like human beings everywhere, have worked out social differences in terms of power and prestige. It is of interest to document what qualities are differentially valued and what categories of people inhabit or occupy the slots of any given hierarchy. First we consider the school vis-a-vis the society at large. Afterwards, we examine stratification within the student world itself.

General Stratification of the School

During the past decade several social changes have altered the character of the student body at SSD as it had historically existed. First, many middle-class deaf students have been mainstreamed into public and private schools. Thus enrollment at SSD has decreased. Another factor contributing to a decrease has been the end of the Rubella epidemic which occurred some years ago in the United States. This has left lower-class, black, and more multi-handicapped deaf students to attend state institutions. I asked one administrator at SSD to describe what kinds of students attend SSD. His reponse acknowledges the changes mentioned above: "All kinds. I think the kind of kids we most usually miss getting in here is
some of your very, very bright deaf. Some from your higher class families because they tend to try the public schools first." A middle school teacher discussed the difference between now and five years ago. "More mentally retarded kids now, more multi-handicapped kids." A high school teacher stated that the language patterns found among students at SSD is related to the fact that most students today are from the lower classes and have more multiple handicaps. "Either you're very bright or you're mentally retarded. The middle ground is not there." SSD, then, is a kind of residual place. It is where many students go for lack of acceptance elsewhere. SSD gets a preponderance of disadvantaged children who bear the scars of emotional and physical detriments besides their deafness.

Stratification among teachers

Deaf and hearing teachers are differently distributed along vertical axes. First of all, deaf teachers (and administrators and staff) are greatly outnumbered by hearing teachers. In high school, for example, there were around twenty teachers, four of whom were deaf (and only one of these is a true, i.e., prelingually-profoundly deaf person). In the middle school of ten teachers only two were deaf (both postlinguals and one deaf aid [prelingual]). The school has successfully filled racial quotas with approximately one-third black teachers in the lower and middle schools, although no black teachers or aides were deaf.
The rural location of SSD ensures that deaf teachers will remain few in numbers and thus small in strength. For most deaf people, an urban setting offers more hope for a community of kindred souls. In contrast, the rural setting of SSD is a kind of deadend. Its location is a vestige of history when asylums for "strange" people were established in out of the way places. As a high school teacher noted, SSD has problems recruiting deaf teachers: "This place is the last resort. No one from a large city will come to this small town because there is nothing to do... No balls to attend, no whiskey to buy. There's nothing to do."

While it was of interest to find out how deaf and non-deaf teachers perceived one another, it was impracticable to very directly inquire about this. In doing field research, it was important that local civility between researcher and respondents be maintained. Consequently, deaf/non-deaf reciprocal views were carefully and usually indirectly approached.

Several administrators indicated that the school looked "very positively" upon the idea of having more deaf teachers at SSD. They could serve as role models for students and they could keep hearing staff members aware of problems of deaf students and deaf staff members. But these are "official" definitions of the situation. Behind the facade, however, in the backstage (to use another Goffman term), one finds conflict between deaf and hearing teachers. In fact, some deaf teachers were viewed as incompetent and had been
removed from the classroom and placed in various staff positions which, some say, were "created" for them.

While some hearing teachers praised and supported deaf teachers, others denigrated them. Several said there should not be more deaf teachers at SSD, "Cause a lot of the time I think the deaf teacher is very limited in his understanding of things that go on and so is the deaf child. I mean if they (students) had all deaf teachers, they'd be limited to whatever that deaf teacher ... however far her education went and what she got." At the risk of overstating the case, it did seem at SSD that deaf and hearing teachers were generally not very satisfied with each other. Deaf teachers felt they were subordinates, second-class people in an institution filled with children of their own kind. They felt controlled from every angle, as if they were high school graduates instead of equally educated peers of hearing teachers. My own impression was that a dilemma did exist -- deaf adults did seem incapable -- in some ways -- of teaching and "doing academics" to the standards and average expectations of their hearing counterparts. As a result, they were not only dominated by the hearing majority but also sorted "down" into lesser positions. The epitome of this "placement" was a Gallaudet graduate who first worked as a counselor in an unsatisfactory way, and who today works as a houseparent.

Most deaf teachers felt powerless. This was angrily (in fact, irately) expressed by one person who was asked if deaf people
had input into the decision-making process at the school. "No! Zero! None! N-o-n-e! Period! P-e-r-i-o-d! Never the deaf get what they want!" Deaf teachers (as well as some hearing administrators) felt that school policies regarding linguistic codes used at SSD were dominated by hearing people. They also complained that too many sign systems were utilized on campus. "Deaf people," said one administrator, "wish that hearing people would leave ASL alone." And a deaf teacher strongly believed that young deaf children just beginning sign language should be exposed to more deaf teachers. "I wish all the teachers in the primary department were deaf -- all of them -- all of them! Deaf teachers could give the children a basic foundation and then hearing teachers could teach them from that point on."

Deaf adults like deaf children are stratified along language lines. Those who can read, write and/or speak English are on top. The sole deaf administrator at SSD is a postlingually deafened person who speaks well enough to be interviewed on television. Of all the deaf teachers at SSD only one is a true (prelingual) deaf person. As Jacobs (1974) noted, there are few prelingual, profoundly deafened individuals to be found in places of authority and places of high status.

Sports heroes and academic non-heroes: immediate and deferred glory

The student subculture at SSD values and extols sports. While
male students are popular because of a combination of factors such as ability to play football or basketball, friendly personality, and academic achievement, the single most important variable of all is whether or not one is engaged in sports. At SSD sports make the man. I asked one teacher to tell me how the high school was stratified, who the big shots on campus are? She immediately answered, "The sports heroes." I mentioned to the teacher that I had been told that quite a high percentage of the football players were "slow students." The teacher replied, "Well, I'd say yes." This observation was affirmed by other teachers who were interviewed. Being intellectually slow does not necessarily interfere with one's ability on the athletic field. Again, it is sports and not brains which are valued by the student culture at SSD.

While sports are the primary source of status, they are not the only one. Generally, athletic success at SSD is restricted to men -- at least status occurring from participation is restricted to them. However, academic success offers a kind of alternative, albeit not as popular, ladder for prestige.

One high school teacher describes two hierarchies at SSD, one of them being "intellectual" and the other being "physical." He describes the physical hierarchy as something of a pecking order in which person A assigns work to person B and B passes it on to C. Down at the bottom of the pecking order, he says, there are students who are ironing clothes for those people above them as well as making
up their beds or cleaning up their rooms. It is, he says, "something houseparents constantly deal with." It was quite apparent that larger and stronger males would compel smaller and weaker boys to do their washing in the dormitory at night. This stratification system of work also occurred in the girls' dormitories according to several interviewees. In either case we see a kind of social Darwinism in which the strong survive and thrive.

The intellectual hierarchy is something which is not heavily emphasized among most of the students. Instead, its prestigefulness is more emphasized by the teachers, something we discuss in more detail shortly.

Social Status and Sex: A Matriarchy

Female students at SSD achieve relatively high status in various ways. One way is to belong to different groups and organizations at the school such as the drama club, the junior National Association of the Deaf, the Explorer Scout troop or the singing signs club. I asked one popular high school girl why school organizations were dominated by females. She said that boys simply do not volunteer for leadership in those programs. Also, she said, the boys tend to think that the girls are smarter and therefore they do not engage in those leadership roles.

The 1981 Yearbook shows that senior class officers were made up of two males and two females. The president of that class was a
very bright student who could lip read well and speak well; she now attends a hearing college. In that same yearbook, junior class officers consisted of three males and one female who is, according to one high school teacher, the power. This girl, Cindy, became the homecoming queen during the course of this research. She is popular and perceives herself as something of a matriarch. According to one teacher, Cindy and the matriarchy work like this:

In the senior class you have the most intelligent boy -- who is just a head and shoulder above any other boy I've ever dealt with. Now Macer is a super athlete and quite intelligent, so he's a natural leader. Ted, although extremely intelligent, is not an athlete and does not have a lot of charisma. So he's not a leader except that he's sort of like an advisor. He comes up with the concepts and he throws them around and then Cindy okays them and then Macer will act on it. It's a very nifty system. Then you got under Macer two black boys and they are your sargeants in this hierarchy. They get it and take it down to the ranks and get it done.

Both black boys, incidentally, have some residual hearing.

As further evidence that a matriarchy exists at SSD the 1981 sophomore officers show four females in those positions. The freshman officers consist of three females and one male. It must be remembered that there are many more males at SSD than females. Thus the number of female officers in these high school classes is disproportionately greater than would be expected by chance. As one high school teacher said about the male officer in the freshman class, "I guarantee you the boy doesn't have much power at all." This same kind of disproportional representation is clear in examining
virtually all SSD coed organizations. The matriarchical character to student life at SSD was explicitly acknowledged by a teacher who said that when a bright, aggressive new girl arrived on campus, "She almost unglued the matriarchy which existed here."

One might assume that cheerleading would be a status producing activity but at SSD that is not necessarily the case. First, cheerleaders are almost exclusively hard-of-hearing and must be able to use their voice. Second, at SSD, at least, this is accepted as more of a role to be carried out than it is an honorific act. That is, at SSD, cheerleading is simply something that occurs in conjunction with athletic events. Despite the fact that cheerleading entitles the individual to more "free time" (discussed earlier) it is not something which other students seem to envy.

Status and English Language Capacities

Another form of stratification at SSD is language, i.e., English. There are several hierarchies within the hearing culture and these are often directly related to English skills. (Especially is this true in England itself.) SSD is surrounded by an English speaking world and it never forgets it. Beyond that world there is yet another world which believes that speech is perhaps the most significant of all human characteristics. This is reflected in the following words, found inscribed in stone at the Speech Department
of Louisiana State University:

GOD THE ALL POWERFUL FATHER OF NATURE AND CREATOR OF THE WORLD, HATH EXALTED MAN ABOVE EVERY OTHER ANIMAL BY NO CHARACTERISTIC SO POTENT AS THE FACULTY OF SPEECH

--Quintilian

We have shown throughout this report that language skills are critical for intellectual and social development at SSD. The better one's skills, the greater his/her success and the easier it is to make it in the hearing world. As Jacobs (1974), a deaf author, has noted:

The better educated deaf adult ... appreciates the value or oral skills more than do the less educated adults. They go into vocations ... where oral skills become highly useful. Therefore, hard-of-hearing or deafened adults who indubitably possess more natural and understandable speech are more likely to be accepted by the hearing community than others.

Hearing is, in the society at large, a taken-for-granted attribute which must be possessed for success. Or, in its absence, and as a minimum substitute, the individual must possess understandable, intelligible speech. Among the deaf community such skills are prized. Thus, as Jacobs says, it is not surprising that "a pecking order according to the usability of their oral skills is frequently perceivable among ... deaf leaders" (p. 68). The normative expectation for deaf people is to become "pale imitations of hearing people" Jacobs, p. 18). Always it is hearing which sets the
normative boundary for judging accomplishment.

The hearing world as a normative frame of reference even includes extracurricular activities. During homecoming week at SSD I attended a program in the auditorium, which included a short drama and some dancing and choreography done to loud music. The following evening I attended the homecoming football game where I observed cheers accompanied by a bass drum. To my surprise a high school band from Mountain City performed during the half-time break for the deaf audience. Clearly, the model in use for SSD football games is that found in the hearing world. How else can one explain cheerleaders and marching bands which urge audience participation among people who cannot hear them? Indeed as noted earlier, audience reaction is often apathy or totally ignoring all activities except conversations with people seated near oneself.

As stated throughout this study there are two kinds of deaf people who are able to speak relatively good English: hard-of-hearing individuals who are not profoundly or severely deafened and the postlingually deafened, i.e., those deafened after English was already acquired. If these students are able to talk, they are generally able to read and write much better than their truly deaf counterparts. Their residual hearing or having been postlingually deafened enhances their academic work. As support of this, at SSD most students who have English skills are clustered in the
highest level grades. One parent who works at SSD said of her child's classroom, 9-1 (the smartest level of 9th graders), "All of the kids in that classroom have some speech." In contrast to that group I sat in a classroom of truly deaf students which was described by the teacher as "very limited with vocabulary."

One deaf teacher recalled her own experience at SSD where she had done her student teaching while in college. The teacher she had worked under had pointed out certain students who "were not smart"; those students worked on puzzles. The teacher informed her that in this way she could work with the smart students on the other side of the room. As this woman told me,

I noticed they were hard-of-hearing and could talk, were smart. The ones who were not smart were on the other side of the room and we ignored them. Give them some work, the slow ones, keep them busy, that's all. And so the teacher and I would work with the hard-of-hearing or the deaf who could talk on the other side of the room and leave the slow ones to work by themselves.

She recalled her own high school days at SSD where children performed in programs in the auditorium. "They always picked those who could talk." Whenever visitors came to the school, she said, they would also choose students who could talk to demonstrate to the visitors how well they were doing. "The teacher never picked the ones that couldn't talk -- never. Always picked the ones that could talk."

The emphasis on language skills and making it a prerequisite for academic success leads to a self-fulfilling prophecy. Ability
to use verbal and written English not only helps to place students in the highest level classroom of each grade level but it also influences -- in fact, nearly perfectly correlates with perceptions of them as leaders and college bound individuals. The high school teacher who had mentioned "two hierarchies at SSD" (one physical, one intellectual) discussed why he and other teachers (although not necessarily the students) saw the supremacy of the intellectual hierarchy. "You've got a group of students who are good at language, they're pretty bright, they've been called on to be leaders from day one. And they are. They're natural born leaders. They make most of the decisions that concern the school." Thus, while he sees some students as "natural born" leaders he notes that they are good at language, a socially acquired skill.

This same theme arose during an interview with a former teacher. I asked her if the smarter students looked down on the vocational program at SSD. She said, "No, I really don't think so. They know they are college bound and they know that they're the class leaders and this kind of thing . . . " Subsequently I asked her what was special about the college bound people; what did they have going for them? She replied, "There are some profoundly, stone deaf, that are college bound. But a lot of them have a lot of hearing and got language in those formative 1, 2, 3 years of age or just have the IQ to go with it."
Finally, I asked a high school teacher if Cindy was the top leader over Sheena, another popular girl on campus. He said, "Oh yes. Sheena is no contest . . . as far as leading, as far as being a leader." I asked what gave Cindy her power and he said, "language," both signs and English. "She probably knows more idiomatic expressions than any other deaf student on campus. And I think this gives her a certain amount of clout."

At SSD it is extremely clear that among the teachers and administrators, language ability is the critical variable in explaining success as measured in the classroom and out of the classroom with the notable exception of athletics. And for truly deaf teachers and students, the path to success is a difficult one since some hearing so highly correlates with developing language skills. Ironically, this advantage even carries over to sign language since it can be more quickly acquired and one's vocabulary expanded if the individual can or has ever been able to hear. That is, hearing, in and of itself, opens the cognitive doors to our minds. In its absence, all knowledge is slow to be acquired.

Sometimes Verbal English is Denigrated

We have seen that language ability is extremely important in the stratification system of the student culture at SSD. There are times and conditions, however, when the use of verbal English is denigrated
by students. When I first arrived at SSD I assumed that oral capa-
city would be directly related to occupation of leadership roles.
A teacher in the lower school disagreed. She told me of two sisters
in the lower school who had "lovely" speech but were not looked up
to because of it. "They don't hear it in the first place . . . You
see, these children are not hearing that child's speech."

Generally, SSD students resented their peers using spoken lan-
guage without simultaneously using sign language. It is not spoken
English that they objected to but the absence of their own language,
i.e., ASL. Thus, students would become angry whenever the verbal
hard-of-hearing or deaf peer would use the voice only in their
presence. They felt left out and would react negatively to such
behavior. I interviewed Cindy, the popular high school girl, about
this.

The deaf complain about those who can talk because in the class-
room the deaf are sitting and the girl who can talk talks to
the teachers and no signing (occurs). One person says, 'What
did you say?' and they say, 'Pay attention.' The deaf get
mad. Sometimes they (the verbal) deaf talk and not use sign
language. Sometimes the deaf think that the teacher is
helping the talking (person) and not (helping) the deaf kids.

Given that non-verbal, truly deaf students are in the majority
at SSD, it is not too surprising that students feel compelled to
almost exclusively rely on signing, at least among themselves. This
can be a bitter lesson for new students who are verbal. One student
described such a person to me.
Well, some people didn't like her because she talked well. In the past in another school, her private school, she had to learn to lipread and got used to it. She moved here and was dumbfounded (at a loss). She not used to here and made her frustrated.

A postlingually deafened friend who was very verbal, described a similar experience when he entered a State School for the Deaf, more than 35 years ago: "Before I learned signs good I would talk a lot (verbally) to hearing teachers, guards, and administrators. The deaf kids began to make fun of me and say, 'Can't you sign?' Within two years I was able to sign good." This derision due to verbal but not non-verbal skills was also mentioned by the mother of a postlingually deafened student. She told how her child was disliked by other deaf children "because she used her voice and speech. They wanted her to sign and they resented her using speech."

Summary

In this chapter we have focused on SSD as a total institution. In particular much care was taken to examine official and unofficial cultures. We have shown that "total enculturation" is a more typical process at SSD instead of disculturation. Students who enter this SSD at a very young age are almost literally cognitive blank slates; they come with little language, little knowledge, little culture, and little sense of self. These are to be provided by the school.

The "official culture" is a set of rules and expectations de-
signed to create and maintain social order. It also aims to guide students between the boundaries of "right" and "wrong" behavior. But against this stands a "student culture." It develops alongside the official culture and establishes its own demands and expectations. In their daily existence residential members find means of self-preservation and self-expression in an underlife. In the underlife are free times and free places where authority and structure may be wholly or partially circumvented. Like other total institutions SSD is a place where students must be accounted for nearly every hour on the hour.

SSD is not only surrogate parent but is above all else a linguistic community for a small group of people. Most resident students had previously lived in families (at home) economically and symbolically impoverished and SSD saved them, at least temporarily, from both types of deprivations. From a student's point of view the trade-off was to lose some individual freedom and home-family life in order to attain community, self and language upon which all else rests. In a word, communication replaces isolation.

Again, in this chapter the role of language is given incredible importance by all actors at SSD. Whether student, teacher, administrator, parent, staff member, possession of language is highly important. Although English is not the major language goal of the school (a fact to be pondered), literacy is valued by almost all
actors at the school.

It has been shown how reading and writing abilities are greatly facilitated by residual hearing, postlingual deafness, and intensive oral training. We have also portrayed two groups at SSD: the monolingual (ASL only) and bilingual (ASL and English) groups. The advantages of bilingualism and literacy (the ability to read and write English) cannot be overemphasized. In fact, at SSD there is much imitation of the English speaking world in the form of cheerleaders, marching bands and other school activities. This is hardly surprising since a monumental, sound-based giant lies at the gate of the school.

The salience of English abilities is evident on every occasion, especially in terms of power and decision-making. Talking people control SSD and its academic programs. Talking people modify deaf people's sign language — and, again, the majority of teachers and leaders at SSD are either hard-of-hearing or postlingually deaf and they can speak English. We have also suggested that several hierarchies exist within the student world (athletes and talkers; day students and cheerleaders may be viewed as cliques). Similar to Coleman's Adolescent Society, we too find a system of stratification among the students.

Finally, when we say that English skills are valued and contribute to social status we do not mean that students do not value
ASL or even their own deafness. They do. What we wish to emphasize is the importance of English/speech as a key to academic success, popularity and status. The bilingual (ASL and English) person has access to two worlds. The need for literacy is obvious. It is a requisite for rising above low levels of income (and poverty). A high school teacher made the following statement:

I'm saying this on a tape recorder, but our deaf people are going to have a terrible time. The ones that graduated 10 years ago are in the lower strata of society by and large. They're mopping hospital floors and working on assembly lines and still reading on a fifth grade level -- very isolated lots of them.
CHAPTER VII

FINDINGS: SELF

Introduction

Thus far the analysis has focused on the objective side of life in a total institution and the world-building processes associated with it, primarily through the acquisition of language. The present chapter deals with the subjective side of life within the total institution. We will discuss the information of self-concepts among SSD students and the role played by such significant individuals (i.e., "significant others" in Harry Stack Sullivan's terms) as teachers, administrators, houseparents, staff, parents and others. After this we will discuss the students' own definitions of self. This will include deaf self-definitions, positive and negative, and then also positive and negative self-definitions by hard-of-hearing students.

Since the theoretical chapter on language and its role in self-formation was quite lengthy, only a few brief comments are needed at this point to restate the general argument set forth in this study. As noted earlier, it is with language that we act upon the world. It is with language that the self of a human being is able to emerge and to develop. What is the self, asks Becker (1975), if not an
identifiable locus of communication? "Personality," he said, "is a locus of word possibilities" (p. 58). There is a connection between one's language capacities and skills and one's self. Becker says that self is in fact our language and that if one would present himself as infallible then one would have "unshakable control over words" (p. 59). Whenever language is skillfully used it is one of the "highest attainments" of human civilization. The use of words or signs is almost a magical power by which one is able to act upon the world, to manipulate others, to attain the wishes and bidding which one may give.

The power of words or signs is incredible in scope. That is why, whenever we find ourselves in a strange culture where a strange language is used, we are somewhat uncomfortable at losing the power derived from a common language. This, of course, constitutes the problem for many deaf and hard-of-hearing people. To paraphrase Becker, they cannot "navigate without fear in a threatening social world" (p. 61). Therefore, deaf people find themselves relatively powerless in acting upon the larger society (including their families) in which they live. Again, Becker conceptualizes the self as a linguistic system and self-identity is tied to the power to use words or signs.

It is fair to say that language as either words or signs, creates us by giving meaning to our acts. And the unique quality to
this for humans is that symbolically the meaning can be detached from the act itself (see Berger and Luckmann, 1967). As Postman and Weingartner (1969) phrase it, we are "meaning makers."

Against a backdrop of a hearing, speaking society, deaf people are at home and comfortable within their own communities -- especially is this true for children in residential schools such as SSD. In that world, students have the power and capacity to present themselves by their language and to create and maintain strong interpersonal ties. But outside in the larger universe of discourse they are limited by their lack of ability to use the English language. The extent to which they are competent in its usage determines the level of power which they will have. Less competency equals less power. Thus, the greater the degree of language problem a deaf student has, the greater will be problems with sense of self.

Kuhn (1960) has shown that as one ages from seven to twenty-five, the number of groups to which one belongs increases in volume, leading one to internalize as part of his/her self-definition a larger volume of these identifying statuses (p. 429). Included in these "identifying statuses" are age and sex, specialized occupation, family groups, association groups, and prestige rankings (p. 434), concepts Kuhn borrowed from Ralph Linton. More contemporary social psychologists prefer similar arguments about self -- it emerges as we frequently and intensively interact with diverse groups, taking on
certain self-definitions according to the situations in which we find ourselves. This is expressed as the social interactionist's postulate that man is an object to himself, a George Herbert Mead position. Mead long ago suggested that one's behavior is "a function of his identity, and further, that his conception of his identity derives from positions he occupies in society" (Kuhn, 1960:434).

In contrast to this heterogeneous "life world" (Schutz, 1970), the life experience for most deaf students at SSD is very homogeneous, lacking exposure to diversity. Furthermore, it is a basic assumption of the present study that some deaf students have differing degrees of linguistic capacities and are, therefore, in varying stages of self-development. That is, those deaf students with language problems also experience self problems. Their life is especially constrained.

In his discussion of self, Kando (1977) wondered what effects the absence of language or restrictions in linguistic proficiency would have. Studies on feral and blind deaf children, and on aphasic, mentally retarded and schizophrenic persons indicate that "the development of a mature, healthy, and competent self requires adequate mastery of the language used by one's significant group. Failure to adequately master a language is a major aspect of inadequate socialization" (p. 147). Kando states that feral and isolate children were not "truly human" because they were unable to communicate symbolically, to take roles and play roles; "they had no selves"
(p. 147). Even Helen Keller is mentioned as one not being socialized, as being (as Keller said in her own words) "a little animal."

Those suffering from aphasia, a situation where speech is impaired or lost, suffer primarily from the inability to think abstractly, there is a regression to a more concrete categorical attitude (Kando, p. 148). They cannot take the role of others or empathize with others. "Their frame of mind, as that of young children, is egocentric" (Kando, p. 148), something also found among lower class people who have recently experienced some great tragedy (see Schatzman and Strauss, 1966). In regard to the inability to empathize, as in the case of the aphasiacs, it has been shown that one consequence of collective child rearing in places like hospitals, orphanages or other institutions is "a serious emotional deprivation for the infant" (Kenkel, 1977:158). We turn now to the students and those around them to see how alike or dissimilar they are compared to those with hearing against whom they are inevitably compared.

**Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Selves**

Students at SSD are stratified within each grade, ranging from level 1 as the smartest to levels 4, 5, or 6 as the slowest. The graduation has consequences for the formation and maintenance of self. Occasionally an individual student will be placed in the wrong strata of the grade level inadvertently enhancing self-worth. As one high school teacher said, "I got a girl in 10-6 who is head and shoulders
language-wise above all the rest of the kids in there." Later, this high school teacher discussed the positive inner feelings of deaf students:

Well they have a self-image and usually its tied up with what they're good at. You know the kids that are good athletes, they strut their stuff and that is their image... The ones who are the brains in this school, like Ted Nostic for instance. He came in the other day and he says, 'Why is it that all the bright students are pot-bellied?'... He said, 'I'm bright and look here I'm soft. Look at you, you're bright and you're soft. Look at these other people, they're bright and they're soft. But now look at the kids out here who are not very bright and they got bodies like a rock.' He asked, 'Why is that?' I said, 'I don't know.' But that's his self-image. He knows he's very bright. He knows he's head and shoulders above everybody else but he knows that physically he is no competition.

This boy (a postlingual) was one of the very few who could so articulately discuss his "self" vis-a-vis comrades. As the teacher said of this boy's comments, "These are the types of self-images which are abundant here at SSD," And students are aware of them. Rare is the person who can safely be described as both bright and athletic.

As we can see, this teacher's hypothesis is that what seems like egocentrism may be an artifact of the language system used at SSD. When you are forced to speak in declarative sentences, there is little room for qualifying statements. Thus you either are one way or another, but the middle ground is simply not available.

At the same time that students may have inflated images of themselves (for which teachers offer partial, tentative explanations), it is also true that many students have doubts about their abilities.
This is particularly true when their frame of reference is normal hearing people in which case hearing often emerges, by their accounting, as superior to deafness. A high school teacher mentioned how the student culture, being relatively closed, provides a very narrow mirror or reflection of what one's self is. In fact, he believes that a lot of deaf students have an inferiority complex.

They don't feel like they're as coherent as hearing people. I often have kids come in here and tell me about their dreams. They dreamed that they can hear. Then they come in and tell me how they pray every night that tomorrow they'll wake up and they will be able to hear. I've had some high school kids come in here and just cry. They'll say things like 'I really wish I could hear, listen to the radio, listen to music, I'd really like to know what it is.' I've had them come in here and say, 'Well, I went out and got stoned last night and I could hear.' They come back and they say, 'Man I went to a concert. I went to a rock concert and I could hear it.' And I would say, 'What does it sound like?' and of course they cannot tell you.

This particular teacher had attempted to get at the self of individual deaf students by asking them whether they planned to marry a deaf or a hearing person. While many deaf students tended to distrust hearing people and most often will say they plan to marry a deaf person "because the hearing person might cheat on me or give me a hard time." This same man claimed that he had observed students saying that "all deaf people are stupid. I want to marry a hearing person because they are smart and they can take care of me and they can do things that I can't do and that's going to be good." And yet the teacher says (from the students' point of view) "one day all deaf people are stupid and the next all hearing people are mean and
vicious." It appears that deaf people, like other minority groups, may denigrate and stigmatize their own kind. If there is an out-group and an in-group, they are clearly out. And in a very real sense they are looking in, watching a drama which they are poorly prepared to understand. The teacher remembers that a year ago one of the smartest students who "had everything going for her" said, "don't worry about me, I'm just a deaf person. I'm not important." The teacher said he was really shocked, "really hit between the eyes" by that negative statement of self.

One deaf teacher at SSD attributed negative self-feelings to the fact that deaf people grow up with hearing role models and not deaf role models.

All they (deaf) grew up looking at (were) hearing teachers. They don't have a model of the deaf teacher. Their (hearing teachers) body language, their expression is lost. They keep their bodies very rigid. Now they (deaf students) grow used to a deaf world, a lot of action, a lot of special education expression and they're (hearing teachers) straight and they (students) are lost. Deaf can't do that smooth movement; all the deaf people are more wild in movement. We are different. Am I doing right to be part of deaf or should I be part of the hearing world? Which one am I? All of us are confused. That's what I think. Many times all of us finally become part of the deaf world. That's fine. But with many struggles, many frustrations. Many deaf people have to struggle and struggle to gradually change and become like the deaf.

The deaf teacher has described her frustrations and confusion as to role models. During her school days the problem was, who she should identify with: the deaf people or the hearing teachers? She says that deaf people differ from hearing people: the behavior of
deaf people is far more exaggerated and animated. She expresses the agony of students during the self-formation process whereby they look up to the superior hearing teachers and yet resent them and wish to identify with their own world of deafness. But as we have already noted, at SSD (like other state schools for the deaf; see the annual report on "Educational Programs and Services for The Deaf in the United States" [April, 1982]). The deaf teachers are few and far between.

During an interview with a deaf staff member, I asked why students at the school were unable to answer the question, "Tell me five things about yourself." He replied that most students distrust hearing people and prevent them from taking advantage of them by denying them this information. In short, deaf students tend to see hearing as superior, deafness as inferior. They are caught between two centrifugal forces, two different role models. On the one hand, there are the prestigious hearing teachers who dominate by sheer numbers and influence and, on the other hand, the deaf peer culture. There is a combination of respect and deference with fear and distrust for the hearing person, and, thus, one "hides one's weaknesses from the superior outsider."

Not only do many students perceive the hearing as better than the deaf group, but teachers and staff members report that many deaf students also have low aspirations for themselves. Several staff members perceive students as having little or no thoughts about the
future. One staff member said:

The kids do not stop and think about the future. They can get SSI (Social Security benefits) and just make it along with some small low blue-collar job. They think that's doing very well as they have seen others before them who have left here just getting along. They accept that.

This staff member believed that most deaf students do not respect authority, and, secondly, that they become involved with drugs and sex before they are ready for it. If this observation is accurate, then the question becomes shall we blame the victim or shall we look to the system which created the victim? A high school teacher also perceives that students do not have long-range goals, that their aspirations are relatively low in nature. Again this negative perception is said to be attributed to the fact that a deaf student is a member of a group which receives free handouts and therefore self-esteem is lowered. As the teacher put it:

They don't have long term goals. I think that's the key to any type of positive thinking. It's the old priority of values. If the only goals you have is to appease your basic instincts, your primary needs, and if you're having trouble doing even that despite government largess, then you are going to have a very negative self-image and you are going to dislike those who are near you, those who are like you. 'My life seems to be a failure.' 'He's deaf and I'm deaf and then I don't like him either.' 'He's stupid and a liar and I'm stupid and a liar.'

A posited relationship between language and (negative) self-concept is offered. The teacher believes that ASL lacks ability to express some ideas except in harsh ways. For example, he explains that in English we have many expletives; we have "shucks" and "shoot"
and "gee whiz," but the deaf have only one sign that covers all of these ideas. A sign depends strictly on body language and facial expression to present the degree of intensity for the expletive, whether "shit," "shoot," or "shucks."

Another high school teacher believes that part of the explanation for low self-esteem is in the way that students are grouped: true deaf are put in with a high percentage of mentally retarded or brain damaged deaf children. The true deaf child then feels tainted by that association because he/she is cast into a social group of which he/she is not really a part; it is confusing.

That hurts his self image in a lot of ways, having a lot of deaf people here who have some type of brain damage. That does in fact hurt most of the other deaf kids' self-image. They feel like: 'Well, if other people see that person and he's mentally retarded and he acts stupid then they're going to act stupid;' and that part of the self-image is definitely ugly.

A few staff members at SSD expressed their own negative feelings about the behavior of the students (Presumably some of these negative feelings are conveyed in subtle ways to the students.). For example, one hard-of-hearing houseparent told about his chaperoning a bus filled with 8th and 9th grade students going on a bus trip. The following day he told me of his observations:

The manners while on the bus was wild boys and girls equally hitting one another (there was) less discussion or talk. More physical language (boy says) I'll fuck her, I finger her. She likes to fuck. (girl) He hit me. (boy says) she hit me. (boy) She said a bad word. The behavior I saw . . . the girls beat on boys and boys accept (that). Then over again (vice versa). Next time doesn't accept it get mad.
With obvious display of disgust the houseparent said, "What a culture we have!" He told how he also observed students lying to each other in order to "get pride." An example of this, he says, is a student saying: "My brother got a big dog," "I drove (a car), out-ran police. I told police off. They left me alone." or "I have lots of money. I will have a job easily. I (will) quit school." Note again the embellishments or sheer falsification here to make oneself appear favorably -- to make an impression.

The observations of the houseparent are congruent with my own observations with reference to the physical interaction of hitting, shoving, pushing, touching, playing. He expressed disgust over such physical behavior and contrasted it to "less discussion or talk." His second source of dismay was the public use of vulgar language by deaf students, something I have also observed on numerous occasions. The final behavior pattern which disturbed the houseparent was the common practice deaf children have of using fantasy and lies to raise their own self-esteem. As Ernest Becker (1975) noted "if we put our self-esteem on the block in society, we also need society to add to that self-esteem. Our identity can only be validated in the social encounter" (p. 65). By referring to Cooley and Mead, Becker states that the eternal question, "Who am I?" can only be answered by the society in which one is anchored. "Every social encounter is a potential life source for self-aggrandizement" (p. 65), something which frequently occurs among SSD students.
If it is true that deaf students at SSD hold beliefs that hearing is superior and the deaf are stupid; if it is true that they are torn between role models having a preponderance of hearing teachers instead of their own deaf teachers; and if it is true that they are cast into the same social situation with many mentally defective deaf peers; then it is somewhat easier to understand their frequent fantasizing, boasting and bragging and their search for social validation of a positive self. As one teacher of the very young children said to me, "Deaf children have no confidence. They want you to say yes or no to every little piece of work they do." What the teacher means is that young deaf children, who are constantly tested and evaluated in a social situation also constantly seek approval from those in charge of them.

The Teacher as a Positive Influence on Self

Previous studies (e.g., see Meadow's review of the literature on self-image and deafness, 1969:431) have indicated that deaf children in residential schools exhibit a surprisingly positive self-image. Some researchers have described that situation as one in which the self-image is unrealistically and overly positive. More than a decade ago, Boyce Williams (1970:36) leveled a criticism at the "lavish praise" that a deaf child frequently receives for classroom work that is actually far below his true abilities. Williams called for more realistic rewards and motivations, for a heightening of the deaf child's capacity for self-evaluation. As a consequence
of exaggerated and overly positive feedback from teachers, researchers have found that students become "very egotistical," something we too have observed elsewhere in this paper.

At SSD I often observed instances of teachers lavishing praise upon students. Generally the praise was given for some relatively minor accomplishment and this, in fact, is a continuing process in the residential school at SSD. I interviewed some new students, hard-of-hearing people who are unable to function in public schools, and asked them how difficult they found the classroom work and homework assignments. Not one of these newcomers described the academic work and the assignments as difficult. Of course, most of them are hard-of-hearing and therefore have a great advantage over the profoundly deaf child. Indeed, it was my own observation that classroom academic activity and homework assignments seemed to require far less than one would expect in a public school.

During the very first interview in the lower school, a teacher said to me, "When these children do something right, I praise the stew out of them." And this was definitely what I observed during the research. But at the same time, primarily in the lower school, I observed teachers who behaviorally presented radically contrasting impressions. On the one hand, one could observe the teacher signing "Very good! Very good!" but one also hears the single (signed) verbalization,"Mistake! Mistake!" Overall, however, it seems to be the positive side which prevails and this may be related
to the egotistical, self-aggrandizing evaluations which students make about themselves.

On the high school campus there is a reading laboratory where the "brightest" students (primarily hard-of-hearing, postlinguals and middle-class students) go to acquire intensive and extra English reading practice. The teacher in the reading laboratory said some "top" students will enter the classroom and tell her they do not need to know the new information on the blackboard. According to the teacher, this might be a lesson that not even the brightest student would know.

They might know some of the information on the blackboard and they would become upset if I have information there that they do not understand. Their own self-image in this case is that they know a great deal and therefore I am attempting to challenge them everyday. I am trying to show them that they do not know a great deal.

The teacher has to make an effort to deflate their self-image and their self-confidence.

Two months earlier I had interviewed a former teacher who had taught at SSD for more than a decade. During that interview she demonstrated how lavish praise and childish baby-talk are used to motivate students and in the process to create inflated selves.

She told of having some difficulty motivating the children to wear their hearing aids. So when one person would reach and start to put on their aid I'd say, 'Great! You remembered your hearing aid. I'm so happy about that. Good girl.' Then I might go on and do something else and then, 'Hey, look, you remembered yours too.' And my peripheral vision would see hearing aids going on all over the
classroom. Then finally if there was just one person without an aid I would have to deviate a little bit and I'd just say, 'I'm so sorry that Tommy forgot his aid. Just so sorry that he can't remember.' Then he'd grab that thing out and he'd hurry and put it on but it made a difference. I think the voice quality and the praise makes a big difference.

This teacher seemed to give and expect in return positive feelings -- a kind of mutually reciprocal arrangement between herself and her students, with at least some divine intervention ("The Lord sent me here to work with these children," she had told me.) She described how she would walk around and praise the children, give them eye contact and make them know she loved them. When she walked past some of them she would put her arms around them or touch them on the shoulder or on the head.

Sometimes I would go by and they'd kiss my arms all the way up. It's amazing they're just so loving. And anytime I felt that I needed to be loved or wanted or appreciated I would get on the school bus and ride to this city or that city or somewhere with them and they'd all fight to see who could sit with me.

Whether this somehow led to inflated egos seems to be of lesser importance in this case than the larger image of a teacher who could provide so much emotional contact for children who might otherwise experience little by way of affection.

In the lower and middle schools, students who would write their names correctly would receive strong reinforcement and praise. If a student fingerspelled or wrote the correct spelling of a word he/she was generally praised very strongly. Thus, the atmosphere is one in which young children struggle and compete for the praise and reward given by the teacher for the smallest accomplishments.
Merely wearing one's hearing aid was occasion for great acclaim.

In the rural, mountainous village where SSD is located several teachers and staff members claim that one must have a special calling, must have special qualifications, to work with deaf children because they are in fact special people. Several staff members and teachers indicated that work with the deaf is something of a calling, that they have been sent by the Lord. It is common to find them exhibiting great empathy for the deaf children to whom they minister. Therefore it is not surprising to learn some teachers treat deaf students as special people. As a teacher in the vocational program said:

I try to teach them but they are all special. I try to get them to like themselves because if one does not like himself then others will not like him. Deaf people feel that they are different, that they don't fit in, and when the deaf socialize they do it with other deaf people.

Some deaf students, then, get special treatment. The "top students" (i.e., students in grades 12-1, 11-1, etc. who are often hard-of-hearing or postlingual or middle-class students) are given favored treatment and they know it. As the reading class teacher said, "I try every day to have something on the blackboard for the smartest kids. Something they do not know. These kids know they are on top!" In a kind of ironical way, it is special treatment for children who actually receive a disproportionate share of positive input about themselves.

Classroom sizes at SSD are very small compared to public
schools. In lower school some classrooms had only three students, though most had more; in the middle school classrooms usually had six to ten students. In these small social situations, characterized by competitive win or lose academic contests, we find students seeking praise and reward from their teachers. One day in a high school classroom I observed three or four students unable to use the English word "occupation" correctly. Two students did not know the word at all. Another person wrote on the blackboard, "Is your father work?" She meant to write, "What is your father's occupation?" At last, the teacher asked one girl if she could write the sentence correctly. When she did, the teacher replied in sign language for all to see, "See how you can count on Sue?"

In the lower school, one classroom of four children contained a little, blonde boy with large dreamy eyes who was one or two years younger than all his peers; therefore, he was given different school work from the others. Understandably, he sometimes became upset when he wanted to participate and engage himself in the same activities with the others. One day while the students were working, the little boy suddenly stood up and signed to the teacher, "Finished, I am strong!" The teacher said to the boy, "I think you deserve a star, go to my desk and get one." In this way the little boy got the praise and recognition he so badly wanted.

Several teachers told me how students in all grades would become quite upset whenever their work, filled with mistakes, was
generously marked red. This, indeed, was my own observation from classroom to classroom. In high school, one teacher told how students "seek pleasure and avoid pain:"

In the past students didn't care about their grades but today some of them will get upset if they make many mistakes. Now I think the individual work which we assign them is good for them. That's the reason few fail. I do not give many "F's".

In one small lower school class, I observed a boy hesitate again and again to write an answer to a math problem; he continually looked toward the teacher hoping for her approval. Eventually the teacher noticed his behavior, shook her head wistfully and remarked to me, "They hate to make a mistake." In that same classroom, on another day, I observed a boy begin to cry and whine because he was unable to spell two or three words in a row after the teacher had called them out. For these young students, the possibility of failure and loss of teacher approval is a most serious matter.

The youngest children arrive at the lower school with little or no language. According to the teacher, once they begin to understand the symbolic system, then "they are able to prove that they understand what you are saying because they can respond to you and they feel good about themselves which makes you feel good about yourself (as a teacher)." So the child begins to have self-feelings as language is attained and as he interacts with those around him/her.

The most stigmatized group on the SSD campus are the slow and the multihandicapped children who are enrolled in a program called Special Studies. I asked one administrator what normal deaf students
in the nearby buildings would say about these Special Studies students. The administrator replied,

'Mentally retarded, you!' which most of these kids that I have now either don't know what that means or, if they do, it doesn't bother them because they don't think it really applies to them. I have one or two kids who can be kind of set off if somebody says that... the approach of the middle school is that if a student has problems you don't really need to be adding to them. The approach down here then to the child is that a self-concept building kind of thing (is at work). You're doing many, many things and some things you are good at and other things maybe you're not good at. That's all right -- the same with everybody.

The Teacher as a Negative Influence on Self

For children living at SSD (and other residential schools for that matter), teachers should be more significant than they would be in regular day schools. Teachers have a disproportionate quantity and quality of influence upon their students -- even more than the parents of those students. At SSD we find some teachers being highly positive but we also find them acting in negative ways. Some teachers tell students they are somehow inferior, that they cannot learn, and that English is too difficult for them. This in no way suggests that all teachers behave this way. As expected, most teachers are caring people engaged in rewarding but difficult work. Even the school system itself stratifies and segregates students from each other by mental, physical and scholastic criteria.

It was not unusual to have teachers tell me, in front of their students, that they are not up to par, that they are inferior, that they are flawed. I was often shocked by the way teachers would make
negative comments about the abilities (or inabilities) of their students -- and make these comments in sign language with students looking on! When I entered a high school classroom and was introduced to the teacher, he was somewhat excited to have an interviewer present and, therefore, was eager to converse. In the interview he signed to me in front of his students, "The deaf cannot learn because they don't have (English) vocabulary. They don't understand that one English word has many meanings." Since I was wearing hearing aids, this teacher continued to sign publicly his opinions about limitations of his (slow) students. "I take them outside to the lake of water and they cannot remember the name of algae in the water. They can say only, 'the green growing.'"

Some teachers feel that the multi-handicapped, the slow, the retarded deaf children cannot learn, consequently these children are stigmatized by both teachers and students. Two teachers in the middle school told me how some teachers stigmatize Special Studies students.

Teacher #1: Some teachers do stigmatize Special Studies students. They say, 'You don't have to teach them. Why try.'

Teacher #2: And even some of the teachers in Special Studies themselves feel that way. "Oh, these kids can't do anything. Why should I spend my time beating my head against the wall?"

But despite these negative comments, both of these teachers indicated that such children might not "hit the top of the world" but that they could learn something.
In the lower school, more frequently than in the high school, I observed how people worked with young children whose attention span was very short. Problem solving tasks had to be changed quite frequently, which means that the younger children are moving from one task to another. Competition for favorable teacher evaluations is continual. In the lower school, teachers seem to speak to their children, whose English or manual linguistic abilities are limited, in short polar opposites "good," "bad," "yes," "no," "mistake," "right." A few of these classrooms resounded with the extremes of praise on the one hand and the negative "no, mistake" on the other hand.

In one classroom I observed the TA (teacher's assistant) trying to help a young boy whose attention span seemed very, very short. The TA would place fingers on a chart while at the same time standing nose-to-nose with the child. Simultaneously as the child made an error, the TA would hold (for several seconds) the sign "mistake" on her chin. Quickly she turned to another boy, "That's not right. Not right. That's a mistake. That's right. Good." And the little boy clapped his hands together. Nearby another little boy played at a table with his arms stretched over his head and the TA looked at him and signed, "Mistake! You made the flag fall down. Place it back again." Five minutes later a little girl wriggling in her chair slipped from it and looked at the teacher who was staring at her. In anticipation the little girl spoke to herself by making
the sign for "mistake" and quickly re-seated herself. The teacher noticed how the boy who had inadvertently toppled the flag was doing nothing. She spoke to him, "This work we're doing is for babies. Are you a baby?" The boy answered "Yes." Teacher: "Do you want a bottle?" Boy: "No." Teacher: "Mistake." Soon the TA observed the restless little girl and commented that she always misses the spelling word "doll," writing instead "ball" everytime. The teacher interjected, "This little girl confuses the "d" and the "b"; also she confuses the "n" and the "u." That shows some kind of brain damage." Quickly the teacher turned to chastise the little girl. "I can get mad with you," said the teacher. The little girl signed, "Mistake."

For hours and hours the elementary classroom is a world of "mistakes" and "good" and "very good" events. Not only is it a world of praise and punishment linguistically, it is also a world in which children judge themselves by the criteria of their teachers. A child makes a noise or slides from the chair and looks toward the teacher making the sign "mistake" before the teacher herself is able to make that sign. A little girl age eight, whose paper had just been corrected with red ink, turned to me and said, "Paper (is) bad." I signed back to her "It's alright." But slumping in her seat she nodded her head and signed, "No, no, no." Taking the role of the teacher, she evaluated and accepted the judgment that her paper was bad.
Students at SSD are linguistically and spatially segregated from the mainstream society to such an extent that they have definitions of themselves and their abilities which seem incongruent and unrealistic to many observers. Consequently, some teachers may make negative comments in an attempt to bring the deaf student closer to what is believed to be reality (his or her actual abilities). As one teacher said about student aspirations for the future: "They are not realistic when they talk about the real world." They may have laudible goals but the means to attain them are a mystery.

Not only do teachers sometimes tell students that they are inferior to others, but they often hold up models from the hearing world as a normative standard. Very often the reference group presented, aspired to and glorified is the hearing world, not the deaf world. It is the hearing person's language which must be mastered. It is the hearing world where one will work. Even one's parents and brothers and sisters are usually hearing people. A former deaf teacher, who had taught teenage students, allowed no chewing gum in his classroom. One must remember that deaf children have to be taught not to smack their lips when they eat or when they chew gum because they are unable to hear it. Also, they are constantly taught not to drag their feet which makes noise. The message is always the same: hearing people must not be offended or intiuded upon by the noises of the deaf.
The Role of Parents

The material on parents is limited at best. Only a few parents were interviewed and most of the impressions were gained from indirect references, especially students talking about their own parents. Even with this limited information, a fairly clear picture of the parents of a deaf child emerges. It is a troublesome picture since these parents are caught in a very difficult bind. On the one hand, if they turn their child over to a residential school, they may be accused of being callous and indifferent. On the other hand, to keep the child may, in effect, deprive him/her of knowing other similar children and importantly, acquiring language. A third choice, to mainstream the child in the local public schools, is also a possibility but it is often predicated on the child having at least partial hearing.

A very unusual situation exists between deaf children and their parents: they do not speak the same language. When a child lives at a residential school, child and parent may come to occupy two different worlds and the bridge between them is not an easy one to cross. It can safely be assumed that most parents wish for their children to be much like themselves (Benderly, 1980). At a minimum they want them to be healthy, including being able to hear. Having a child with a defect of some kind, then, is almost certainly a disappointment the seriousness of which will vary by the seriousness of the defect. It can be especially difficult for the parents of a
deaf child since the defect may not be immediately realized. Too, once it is, the child's language skills have already been retarded. To remedy this, either the child must learn the parent's language or the parent must learn the child's. All evidence indicates that this latter solution rarely occurs at least to any appreciable extent.

In our effort to understand the formation of self process for deaf students, students were asked to explain their own parents' response to learning sign language. One very popular student was clearly bothered by responding to this query. The disappointment in his parents was evidenced by his facial expression and comments:

I tried to teach and my mother and father tried themselves (to learn sign language) but they never did; just a very, very little bit. They improved. Just a little bit, but not much sign language. Since I started to school they encouraged me (to learn) but they never did it. I encouraged them but they never did it. (I) encouraged them . . . I wanted my father to learn sign language but I'm disappointed.

As we have already noted, the deaf child-parent relationship is a potentially stressful one with plenty of room for each to be disappointed in the other. During an interview with a parent who had moved to be near the school, some of the language problem became apparent. This mother described her child's language as somewhat restricted. When asked in what way the deaf child's language was restricted, she replied in terms of his inability to use signed English:
Mother: (He) was trying to tell me in complete English sentences and he knew he couldn't do that so he just said, 'I don't know.'

Interviewer: Does that happen often?

Mother: Well, when I sign to him I try to sign in complete sentences. I put in all of the articles and adjectives and prepositions and everything (note: signed English) and I think that inhibits him sometimes because he thinks that I expect the same from him. But he's got to have it if he's going to learn to write sentences and communicate with people. But he'll tell me something in a phrase sometimes. Okay, if he's got that phrase backwards its not meaning as much to me and I have to sit there and just have to work and work to drag it out of him sometimes. And I'll say to him, 'Tell me again. Explain again. Try another way, tell me another word.' And he'll say, 'I don't know, I don't know.' I said, 'But try to make good sentences and tell me so I can understand.' And he'll keep working and finally he'll get enough across to me that I can understand. But I have to drag it out of him because in the deaf world you don't do that. You just . . . a word here, a phrase there, you know, and that's why they can't make good sentences. They don't ever sign in sentences where you can understand them.

Here we see a highly motivated, well intentioned parent; a parent who is so concerned that a home in another part of the state has been sold so that the family could relocate to stay together when the child began at SSD. The parent realizes that signed English (not just signing) is the critical skill to be acquired. But there is a hidden message to the child in this -- to be fully like me you must be able to talk like me. Your world's language (ASL) must be rejected, and the deaf community who can only sign along with it.

One popular and very influential senior girl was interviewed and asked if her mother and father had tried to learn sign language. Predictably, her response was, "Yes, but they preferred me to talk (rather) than use the sign language." Again, the message is the
same — you adapt to us (and by implication, our hearing world) rather than we will adapt to you (and the deaf world).

My Self, My Friends, My World

The students at SSD offer a classic example of ethnocentrism. For example, in the gymnasium when coaches are giving out different colored sweat shirts to play ball, young students will insist that they be given red and black colored shirts because they say red and black is deaf, and the blue shirts are hearing. After a ball game between SSD and a rival school, students will return to the dormitory shouting, "Deaf won! Deaf won!" The attitude seems to be that deaf people at SSD are "the people" (akin to other groups around the world who see themselves as somehow favored). Young students will color a map red and black and will say 'this map is deaf' meaning that red and black are the school colors and are therefore equated with the social system there. One teacher told of the awe expressed by middle school students who learned that deaf people live in places other than this one.

Deaf students at SSD strongly identify with each other. In their institutional setting the school environment is womb-like and family membership is redefined. Thus some young children will confuse common family terms. Since they live far from family members, their confusion is understandable. A teacher's daughter may be thought of as a sister; sons become brothers; and so on. On one occasion a black boy and a white boy claimed to be cousins but the
teacher insisted that they were not. Their explanation was that they were from the same town, hence must be related. Their shared deafness forges a bond between them offsetting all other differences. The feeling of closeness, intimacy and kinship is epitomized in one of my conversations with a senior boy. I asked him to tell me a story about himself and he described how his parents brought him to the school and how he "looked around and was afraid," not being used to the strange environment. Afterwards he said he began to learn, to grow, to develop. His bond with SSD is especially clear in the following quote:

A short time I will graduate and go out. Can't come to school again. True I like school. That's all. Truly, I hate to leave school because I like staying many years (here) because I like to see my best friends in SSD. More interesting, friends interacting with each other, more fun, pleasure and joy. When I leave school truly very disappointed if go to work, work, work for long time living. My friends (will) be gone out and gone away and dispersed and I can't meet them, my best friends. Maybe my friends will move to another state and I want to meet them so I know where they live. Really I'd like to stay in school. I truly want to stay in school until I die. I wish I could because I like to see my best friends, more fun pleasure and joy. So I want to see my old friends, I wish to see them before they die. I want to remain with friends so that I can see them every (time of) interaction or association with friends. So I can visit and talk and visit . . . more fun, pleasure. I truly don't want them to die and to be absent (drop out) and not be able to talk. I want to be able to see my best friends. I don't want to see them drop out and can't appear again. I wish they would stay and keep living forever.

At age twenty, this boy dreads and fears the departure from his community. This is his world; this is the place where he first acquired language and the ability to establish community by means of communication. This is the world about which he knows most. The
world which awaits him on the outside is a world of strangers; it is another social world characterized by a different and difficult universe of discourse. I asked the boy, "How is the deaf world different from the hearing world?" He attempted to define the deaf world in terms of one of the relatively few social organizations which exist for deaf adults. "(In) the deaf world (one) goes to a deaf club; it's a professional SAD (State Association for the Deaf) club. I think really (it is) very hard to explain, but I don't have any experience in the deaf world (outside the school). I (am) late going to the deaf world." Presumably he had heard about deaf adults attending local SAD chapters in various towns and cities, but beyond that he seemed to have no conceptualization whatsoever of a deaf world in contrast to a hearing world. For him and others, SSD is their world. Although they are keenly aware of the larger hearing society, they seemed to actually know little about the "deaf world" of adults outside who live in pockets of various cities around the country.

Deaf students at SSD are very comfortable with each other and sometimes afraid of social interaction with hearing people. As one deaf teacher said, "I drive one thousand miles in order to be with a group of deaf people." Several older students frequently made the statement that hearing people do not understand the feelings of the deaf. I asked a senior girl about that.

Student: Hearing people may not understand me, and they say, I don't understand that (what you said). I'm afraid.
Talking people should know that deaf (are) hard to understand because they cannot hear. Hearing (people) can't understand the deaf try (efforts).

Interviewer: Do you think deaf people are different from hearing people? Their feelings, their ideas?

Student: I don't know, I don't know.

Interviewer: Have you in the past had a date with a hearing boy?

Student: Never a date. No. A few talking boys asked (me) for a date and I was shy.

Interviewer: You were afraid to date them?

Student: At that time I was afraid that maybe they might not understand the deaf, maybe leave me out, but they (did) not.

Deaf students often feel as if they are on the outside looking in, which helps to explain the very tight cohesion among themselves. I asked this same student if she felt uncomfortable in the presence of hearing people, and she said, "Yes, if I don't know them." I then asked her if she thought that most deaf people like hearing people, and her response was a one handed sign which means "so, so." When I asked why, she said, "The hearing people do not understand us."

Whenever deaf students look out towards the hearing world of English speaking people, they feel shy, apprehensive and fearful. But whenever they turn towards the mirror of deaf peers within the confines of SSD, they feel good, comfortable, and normal.

Although there are indications of a "we" solidarity at SSD similar to that which is found in small pre-modern societies, deaf adolescents nevertheless exhibited some self-awareness apart from the
The irritated teacher said to me, "That is the worst thing they ever put in this room. The first thing they do every morning is to look at themselves." As the girl finished her hair she began to shake and shimmy and dance to the thunderous voice of the teacher who called, "Sit down!" She begrudgingly walked toward her desk looking at the teacher signing one word, "Headache," meaning "You give me a headache." While students were certainly aware of their own presentations of self, there were also many cases where they seemed unable to talk about themselves. This is illustrated below.

During one session with a high school boy I was experiencing great difficulty getting him to tell me five things about himself. I asked a deaf teacher standing nearby to ask the boy to make some statements about himself. The teacher had almost no success, so I interrupted and said, "Do you like to be deaf or do you hate to be deaf?" He promptly replied, "I like deaf," a response given by many students.

To help investigate one's self definition, I often asked students, "Are you deaf or hard-of-hearing?" The true deaf, the prelingual and foundly deafened, would always respond, "I am deaf." On the other hand, those people with some residual hearing emphasized their status as "hard-of-hearing" as opposed to "deaf." (This is
discussed in an earlier section on "Student Stratification Systems."

Another technique used for getting self-definitions or self-feelings was to ask students if SSD needed more deaf teachers. A positive response would indicate a positive identification with a reference group (the deaf); a negative response would suggest negative feelings about deafness, deaf teachers, and thus one's self. As one popular, senior girl said, "The deaf teacher understands; the deaf teacher (is) clearer than a hearing person. The deaf teacher is same as me. The deaf teacher influences (the deaf students) better than a hearing teacher." She preferred deaf teachers because hearing teachers "are not one-hundred percent like us (such as) signing, their behavior-actions, their way of doing things."

While some of the deaf students are positive about themselves, they can be negative about deaf people as a group. For example, one high school senior complained about the limited amount of time students are allowed to spend off campus. She said, "Here we are limited to one hour (in Doubletown) but at home I can go to town for two or three hours." I asked her if she understood why they were limited to only one hour of freedom off campus. She replied, "The average deaf will steal, they want to take anything. (The school is) afraid somebody might hit us with a car, anything like that." For residential students the school is en locus parentis.

I wondered if students at SSD were class conscious, since class is often thought to be related to self concept although Kuhn
(1960:435) found no evidence to support the salience of class attitudes among 1185 respondents. Would they be sensitive to a student whose parents were middle-class or upper-class? A new girl had recently arrived as a day student. Her father was a wealthy lawyer from a nearby town and her clothing and her automobile indicated her comparatively high status. Soon I began to ask students if they knew anyone on campus who was rich, thinking perhaps they might mention the new girl. To my surprise many of them named themselves or their friends as rich. A high school girl said, "My parents buy things for me. They give me a little money. I am rich." I asked her how much money she had. She answered, "Much." "How many dollars have you saved?" I asked. She answered, "Ten dollars."

One day while strolling across campus in late afternoon I encountered two high school boys standing beneath a tree. They were anxious to engage me in conversation and after a short discussion about my rather old and small automobile, one of them said he planned to buy a Cadillac after graduation. I asked if he had money saved for this. His response was, "I am rich." His friend standing nearby, with grave seriousness, agreed, "He is rich." "How much money do you have?" I asked. "In the bank I have one-hundred-sixty-eight dollars." Again, I asked an eighth grade cheerleader if she knew any rich students at SSD. She indicated that her boyfriend was rich. "How much money does your boyfriend have?" I asked. She said, with expressions of awe, "Over one-hundred dollars." These situated definitions of "rich" are interpreted here as reflections of the
relative isolation from the larger economic system of the hearing world. It reflects the restricted definitions of wealth within the realm of people living together at SSD and clearly stands at odds with the larger society.

Some Self-Disclosures and Some Problems

During this research I attempted to get at the selves of deaf students in various ways. I not only used Kuhn's (1978) TST method but also used two other techniques: 1) Tell me a story about yourself. I do not know you very well. I am interested in you; tell me five things about yourself. 2) If you wrote a story about yourself what would you say? Number one above was used at the suggestion of the school's superintendent. In every instance the technique employed was an introspective, projective one. It was very difficult to elicit responses about one's self which made sense. Sometimes a student would stare into space for a long period of time and finally say, "Hard!" Other students would think, remain silent, ponder, and finally say, "I don't know." Some students, on the other hand, would immediately begin to tell about their daily activities such as going to English class, chemistry class or social studies class. Most students seemed stymied, no matter which projective technique was used. I would ask a leading question or make a statement in many, many different ways, elaborate on it, rephrase it, etc., yet students would continue to have extreme difficulty formulating a sensible response. One might think that the first statement would be, "I am
deaf." However, only one or two students ever mentioned their hearing status. Apparently, at least as reflected with these techniques, the hearing status of deaf children is taken-for-granted much as the hearing status of hearing children.

During the process of collecting data by these techniques, I also began to ask teachers, administrators and others why students were unable to respond to queries about self. Several teachers hypothesized that it is a language problem. One high school teacher, for example, explained, "They have communication problems and limitations. They begin language late at age five or six at which time a normal hearing student will have two-thousand words. The deaf child starts school at this age with zero vocabulary and they never catch up with hearing children in terms of language." Even so, I told the teacher that if deaf students utilized ASL, a real language, it would seem that they should be able to respond to questions they understood in that language. In return he suggested that "students learn about tangible things and have problems with abstractions."

In response to the query as to why deaf students had difficulties telling stories about themselves or telling five things about themselves, one administrator in the middle school said, "The word, 'thing,' is too abstract for students to handle . . . it is quite an abstract concept." He too believes the problem for deaf children is a language problem. The administrator further explained that he had recently visited a Southern school for the deaf in which language
is taught by "transformational grammar," a technique derived from Chomsky's work. "Part of the problem," he said, "in most schools of the deaf is that children are asked to use language by using unknowns to deal with other unknowns." Earlier another teacher had mentioned how students almost never use a dictionary because once they arrive at the definition of a particular term they are generally unable to read even more unfamiliar words which compose the definition itself.

A high school teacher agreed, "If you give the question, 'Tell me five things about yourself?' it means nothing to deaf people. The word 'about' means nothing to deaf people." On the same day, SSD's communications specialist expressed precisely the same view: "I think your question is abstract . . . the word 'about' means nothing to deaf kids." A solution was offered by the high school teacher (above) who suggested that a high school teacher, who is deaf, would be able to pantomime or act out the probe about self to deaf students. I wondered why it would be necessary to pantomime or act out a question. That is, why would not skillful use of student's own language, ASL, be sufficient? The teacher, like others, believed the sign 'about' was too abstract. In either case, we again see words (signs) getting equated as "unknowns."

I discussed this problem with another administrator, who has excellent sign language skill. His hypothesis was as follows: Deaf students have never heard such a question (about self). The problem
is one of experiential deprivation, more specifically, one of symbolic deprivation. He argued that asking deaf students at SSD "Who am I?" is equivalent to my asking most people to talk about Einstein's theory of relativity. If they are unfamiliar with it, they too might be nearly speechless while attempting to respond to the question. I countered by stating that that analogy was not a good one. I argued that any one of us, in whatever language we use, in whatever place we are, should know about ourselves. To ask me for information about myself which, presumably, I am acquainted with, is certainly different from asking me about the theory of relativity with which I am not well acquainted. The administrator seemed to perceive the problem as one related to a deprivation of symbolic experiences. He suggested, by his hypothesis, that deaf students inhabit a relatively truncated symbolic universe where they seldom encounter certain questions.

I told the high school teacher (above) about my experience with Sammy, a high school student who was unable to give a single reasonable response. The teacher, who knew Sammy very well, remarked, "What I really don't understand is why a kid like Sammy, basically a bright kid, has never grasped the concept 'about.' Cindy, (a very popular high school girl), may not be that much brighter than he is, but she has the concept 'about' and she has had it for a while." At any rate the teacher said he was convinced Sammy had a concept of self although it "may not be as developed as most hearing people's
concept would be at his age." I asked why Sammy's concept of self might not be as developed as a hearing person's to which he replied, "Well, the lack of experiences . . . lack of reflection . . . self is based on reflection." He clarified the latter notion by pointing out that if one's parents, relatives, or neighbors cannot reflect to you what you are, then your self-image will be very narrow and undeveloped. Again, part of the problem here is perceived by this teacher to be a language problem -- i.e., a problem of abstraction regarding the term "about." But more than that, it is a problem having to do with experiential deprivation which is tied directly to an inability to fully communicate with diverse, significant, and generalized others.

Earlier another high school teacher had discussed the self-disclosure problem with me. She believed "the students can give you back what they have been exposed to. Maybe they never had the opportunity to give a description of themselves. It is a question they have never encountered. The kids should have been asked questions like that down in the lower schools." This view is yet another hypothesis of symbolic and experiential deprivation, which prohibits self-examination and, in a sense, self-consciousness.

A teacher from the lower school who overheard this conversation with the high school teacher, stopped to give her own explanation. She too located the problem not only within the language itself, but within the style of language, and the very socialization
process itself which takes place within that social world. She speculated, "Perhaps the students cannot answer the statement, 'tell me five things about yourself,' because we have brainwashed them and taught them to give one single answer to one single question and your asking them for five things at one time is too much." She suggested that one might ask a student, "What is your name?" then ask another question and yet another question. This lower school teacher's idea about having one answer for one question was echoed by a former teacher who is now a staff member. She said, "I let students see that they can each and individually have a different thought, and that two or three of them can still have a perfectly acceptable answer and not be afraid. That it's not straight down the road, one single answer." These teachers give credence to the seemingly rigid mode of thinking found in deaf individuals (adults as well as students). One question, one solution. Again, the deaf are used to concrete, specific concepts and their applications. Anything abstract is immediately troublesome.

The communications specialist at SSD, a deaf man, also thought that the problem I was facing in these interviews with deaf students had to do with language. First, he said, deaf students attempt to hide their identification because they do not want hearing people or outsiders to know their weaknesses; they do not want outsiders to use the information to their own advantage (a familiar theme: distrust of hearing people). The best approach, he suggested, is to
"warm them up" by saying: What is your name, where do you live, etc.

A staff member suggested that students at SSD use a language of polar concepts (i.e., ASL). This, the staff member believes, is related to the fact that "their choices at the school are limited to either-or-choices. For them, things (concepts) must be tangible." In that context we discussed the peculiar way in which deaf students will sign "I have touched California" meaning "I have visited" or "I have been to California." The staff member referred to a test consisting of twenty pictures given to hearing students who frequently and literally said, "I feel..." i.e., they would self-disclose upon seeing a picture. When this same test of self-disclosure was administered to twenty deaf males there were only three self-disclosures. I asked why deaf students were stymied. He replied that SSD uses ASL, signed English, and other forms of manual language, suggesting that the existence and use of multi-linguistic systems create a language problem of such magnitude as to affect one's ability to express self.

This staff member talked about administering another set of picture tests to get at the "self" of deaf students. Students are shown faces smiling at one end of a continuum while other faces change slowly until it becomes a sad face at the opposite end. There are other pictures similar to the happy-sad ones which deal with strengths and weaknesses while some pictures of faces depict
various degrees of anger, again moving left to right on a continuum.

How did students at SSD react and respond to these tests?

They never use the middle section. They're never in-between, they're either-or . . . out of thirty students we did not get any midliners. They are either happy and they're smart or they're unhappy or they're sad and they're not smart or they're really pretty . . . it's just either-or.

The resulting pattern on these tests is always "an extreme," she said. In general, she concluded, "They're strong or they're weak, they're either ugly or they're pretty," rare is the person making a midline choice.

Two or three teachers related student reticence (when asked about self) to traditional distrust and/or hostility which exists between deaf people and hearing people. For example, a teacher in the middle school told how students would take a trip as a group and afterwards she would ask them to write a short story about their experiences. The teacher graphically described students' negative responses as follows:

Teacher: It's like pulling hen's teeth. They wouldn't tell me much about it. What did you do, what did you ride at the fair, and I'd have to ask what did you eat? I wanted them to tell me all of that without my having to ask them, to pull it out of them.

Interviewer: Why is that?

Teacher: You ask them a question and they'll tell you it's not your business (a second teacher who was present pointed out that this is more true in high school). Just that quick. 'My business. It's not your business.' Secretive, if they do something like going to the state fair at night they keep it a secret from their teachers.

In contrast, a teacher in the middle school explained, younger
students in that school were less secretive. Even so, she explained, the problem is a similar one. "If I do not go with them on a trip then I just might as well give up a lot of times. Because I am not going to get anything (stories, accounts) out of them." To illustrate the point, she told how boys would travel to the next state to play football. When they returned an adult could ask them to tell of their experiences and they might respond "football" and just shrug. I once observed a teacher who invited a football player to tell his class about last weekend's football game in a neighboring state. The boy said, "Dirty old referee. SSD lost. ______(state) is pretty." He thought for a moment more then signed, "Mind empty."

To explain this enigma a high school teacher suggested, "Maybe the students you interviewed were shy because you are a stranger to them. One girl refused to write an autobiography for me. She said I was 'nosey.'" Generally, however, my experience was that students were very open. Problems with self-disclosure seemed more often due to inability than unwillingness to be cooperative.

Deaf students: tell me five things about yourself

An analysis of interviews with deaf students (as opposed to hard-of-hearing students) demonstrates 1) the difficulty of self-disclosure as well as 2) the axes of life for residents at SSD. This section will be followed by a similar analysis of hard-of-hearing students' efforts to make statements about themselves.
An interview with Max, a lower-class boy, 14, (whom teachers described as "from a poor family background") suggests the relevance of the contemporary debate between social institution theorists (or deprivation theorists) who argue that deprivations of prison life give rise to existing forms of social organization and inmate culture and, on the other hand, the importation theorists. The importational model holds that inmate behavior (social organization and culture) is imported from the outside world into the institution (Shover, 1979); that the oppositional behavior of prison inmates, for example, is an extension of a way of life which was maintained (on the outside) before entering prison. The question, then, becomes: to what extent does student behavior at SSD derive from lower- (or other) class background? From the totalness (the deprivations) of the institution? Or from the effects of deafness and language problems? No definitive answer will come from this study but a further discussion of this debate is found in Chapter VIII, "Theoretical Propositions."

Max is something of a fighter in the middle school. I observed him one day as he irritated and bullied another boy in class. Soon, in response to the other boy's anger, Max shoved him and made threatening and hostile gestures. As we see in the following exchange with Max, physical violence seems to be common to home life too.

Interview: Tell me about yourself. I am a little bit ignorant about you. I am interested in you. Tell me five things about you.
Max: 1) I live in Southtown.
2) My cousin has a car painted like the Dukes of Hazard.
   (Max stalled, his eyes rolled with a pensive expression.)

Interviewer: Tell me more about you. Tell me more.

Max: 3) Mother sent me to store nearby and some man stole my
money and mother got mad and then we had a fight.
   She got a switch and whipped me (stalled again).
4) I had a fight with Mrs. Sanders (teacher) because
   she wanted me to write something and I did not want
   to write it.

Max, who was considered by a middle school administrator to be
both bright and somewhat mean, hardly approaches his self as an
object in the four statements above. In fact, he makes no status
identification (age, race, grade level, etc.); not even references
to hearing or student statuses. Moreover, the only associations
mentioned (with mother, teacher) are negative. Furthermore, he made
no self-definitions or self-evaluations in his response.

Other students also exhibited great difficulty with the
request, tell me five things about yourself. Sammy (see p.325), a
handsome boy, 17, from a slow class (10-4) had no knowledge of
English terms relating to certain facial parts (chin, neck, cheek,
eyebrow, and eyelash). I used several approaches in an attempt to
elicit statements about himself. I said, "Tell me about yourself.
Pretend that you write a letter to me and tell me about yourself.
What would you say? Tell me about yourself." There was a long
delay, a long silence during which Sammy stared thoughtfully, eyes
squinting, into space. I tried again, "Just tell me five different
things -- just five things about yourself." Then I began to count
for him, "Okay, first . . ." (Pause for his response). At last he
signed:

1) Yesterday (I) saw (a) basketball (game).
2) Last night, play, play, play.
3) (I) want (to) swim.
4) Last night, (I) watch(ed) TV, HBO.

At this point he stalled so I tried another question which sought to
elicit a more direct statement of self-evaluation or self-definition:
"Tell me about your personality." He replied, (I) fuss with girl-
friend." Why? I probed and he simply pointed to a small scratch on
his nose. By this time I had become accustomed to such extremely
brief responses where one must fill in (Garfinkle's etcetera princi-
ple) much of an actor's intended meaning.

The boy seemed so normal (not retarded, not multi-handicapped,
not poorly dressed, etc.) that I tried one final approach. I called
over a deaf instructor and explained my "self" questions to him while
the boy looked on. I told the instructor to ask, in his own way,
questions which would elicit self-statements. Soon, however, it was
clear that the boy could think of nothing more to say. Thus, the
instructor tried to lead him easily, gradually, one question at a
time:

Teacher: What are your hobbies? Do you like to go camping?

Student: What does that ("camping") mean?

Teacher: (Using much mime and gesture): You go into the woods
and set up camp. You throw out (a) fishing line (and) you
sit back in your chair and you relax, etc.
Finally the deaf teacher shifted his approach and tried to tell Sammy how to explain five things about himself. "What is your name?" "What is your hobby?" (again). He replied, "Swim, like girls, like (to) help people." "How do you help people?" I interjected. "I don't know," he finally answered after a long silence. In short, it appears that the axes of life -- at least in terms of his statements -- are all recreational (sports, television, playing, and girls). This "fun" view of the world was congruent with a strong image I was developing about students in general at SSD. Their world was one in which they engaged constantly in horseplay. One high school boy wrote a short narrative about himself. In the story he told how he initially (as a child) was unhappy at SSD. Later on, however, he wrote, "I told my parent that I want to go back to SSD . . . everything like a big fun." To put it another way, their's was a fun syndrome and academic matters were constantly described by a large number of students as "boring."

A few days later I told an administrator about the difficulties students had exhibited on the self-disclosure attempts. He suggested an experiment. The two of us would talk to (presumably) some of his best students. He wanted to see for himself just what would happen. Thus, we sat down with a 14-year-old postlingually deafened (which means he had a real English advantage over others) boy. After an explanation of my study and some preliminary questions, I said, "You know some people write books about themselves. If you
wrote a book about yourself, what would you say?" His answer came in (again, the familiar and brief) one-sign responses:

1) Science (Okay, number two.)
2) SS (social studies).
3) Language. (What do you mean, "language?")
   Verbs, nouns.

The administrator interrupted and said the boy did not understand the question. It was suggested that I give the student some examples (which amounts to rehearsing him). Thus, I illustrated by making a statement about myself ("I am tall"); the administrator did the same, and then the boy followed: "I am age 14; I love to pet animals; my weight is 85; I will go home Friday, December 18; I like to work math in school" (Each statement of his was made after the administrator and I had made our single statements.).

The question is why do bright students (even this postlingual one) need to be rehearsed or led before they can make statements about themselves? Whenever one repeats a question in sign language—signing it first this way and then another — why are students either puzzled or prone to talk about their daily school activities? Does this suggest that the self is socially anchored and embedded in the school context to the extent that these are the "natural" responses to give? Or it could be argued, perhaps, that the setting of the interview (with the administrator present) was not ideal. My response to that is that the "experimental" boy behaved precisely like other students who were interviewed in more ideal settings. Although Sammy was postlingual and middle-class his initial
responses were no different from his less fortunate peers.

One other example will sufficiently illustrate the problem. I interviewed Nola, an 18-year-old girl from the highest grade level (11-1), who defined herself as "deaf" although she wore one hearing aid. While she knew sign language (3 years at SSD) and had spent eight years in oral schools her knowledge of English was impoverished (like Sammy, above, she did not know English terms for facial parts like chin, cheek, eyebrow and eyelash).

I asked Nola to tell me five things about herself. Her immediate reaction was puzzlement (eyes blinking slowly, pensively) as if I had asked about some mathematical equation. Again and again I rephrased the probe in different ways. Finally she signed, not "Nola," but 'my name.' We considered that as statement number one. Again, she stalled for a long time. I tried leading her (which I wanted to avoid), "Are you 'pretty or ugly'?" One sign, "pretty." Eventually she signed, "(I) like (to) play (games), different." "Like what?" I asked. She spelled "A-t-r-i" which, I concluded, referred to Atari. "(I) like (to) swim." "Fine, fine. Can you tell me one more thing about yourself?" She stalled again and seemed to be searching the sky for just one other response. "Are you smart or dumb?" I led her again (with a familiar black-and-white dichotomous statement). "Smart, me." she echoed.

The experience with Nola (and others) was puzzling, unique, and even somewhat exciting. Here was a middle-class girl (an
assumption based on her attendance of private schools for eight years), a member of the top junior grade level who — after laboriously (with some leading) making three statements about herself — was unable to say another word (sign). Why? The setting of the interview seemed right. We were talking in private, she knew me and had seen me interviewing others, and she seemed relaxed. Does she not know sign language after three years at SSD? Is she slow or retarded? If so, how was she a member of the top junior grade level? Could it be that certain linguistic statements (tell me about yourself), certain inquiries, may be completely absent from one's socialization process, with the result that one is unable to cope effectively with them? Even Macer, bright, ever popular, member of the elite structure, talked about himself strictly in terms of school experiences:

Interviewer: If you wrote a book about yourself, what would you say?

Student: I would write a story what I'm doing. What I'm doing in the morning in the class. What I'm studying and writing. Studying the (English) vocabulary and various things and writing about other classes. Science, laboratory, chemistry and yes, I'm writing about my lab and chemistry and making other notes.

The self seems lodged in the wall of the world, i.e., SSD. Let us now turn for a look at hard-of-hearing students who were similarly asked to talk about themselves.

Hard-of-hearing students: tell me five things about yourself

An analysis of interviews with 15 hard-of-hearing students
reveals some striking contrasts with those of deaf students. These differences may be roughly subsumed under the rubric, "a different consciousness." First, these students, when asked if they were deaf or hard-of-hearing, identified themselves as "hard-of-hearing." Second, their command of English is much better, as a whole, than the deaf group; thus, they were able to tell (or even write) better stories about themselves. Third, as a group they are non-marginal persons. That is, SSD is their school, sign language is ONE of their languages, and the deaf culture and social organization at the school was adopted as their own. One might have suspected that, if there were any marginal people to be found at SSD, it would be the hard-of-hearing who, in most cases, spent some of their school lives in hearing schools. In general, they "love SSD," and feel very positive about themselves and their futures. One newcomer very analytically recognized a difference in world views or consciousness between the hearing world and the school world: "I have a different mind (consciousness) and I understand many things that they don't understand. I accept people in the hearing world. I know they understand the future, but I'm worried about the deaf," whom she described as having little knowledge about the outside world.

The overwhelming majority of hard-of-hearing students interviewed had previously attended regular public schools. In most cases, they described a frustrating experience characterized by inadequate communication due to their hearing loss. They had tried to
participate in the hearing world, failed, and retreated to the deaf world of sign language. At the school they took on new reality and thereby became bilingual and bicultural individuals who possessed a much greater range of symbolic and interactional capabilities. Although they accepted the deaf world and enjoyed a more meaningful existence at the school, they nevertheless held onto another (non-deaf) definition of themselves.

A middle school boy said when his mother was pregnant "She hurt -- something was wrong and then had birth. I was a little bit deaf, a little bit half-and-half, hard-of-hearing (and) talking."

In the outside hearing world the hard-of-hearing status can be a painful and marginal one. At the school, however, "HH" (which is a standard sign for this separate category) can mean "I stand with one foot in the deaf world and one in the hearing world; I am bilingual and bicultural. If I have to, I can flip-flop from one universe of discourse to the other, from one reality to another." Moreover, HH carries more status and prestige at SSD than on the outside. The fact that hard-of-hearing students find comfort and satisfaction by changing social worlds says much about the human need for community and communication. Further, it suggests a different sense of self than would otherwise occur.

One advantage of being hard-of-hearing and of having attended a hearing school is greater English skills. In contrast to deaf students almost all hard-of-hearing students were able to tell
stories about themselves and all of them were able to tell longer, more elaborate stories than deaf students. The following interview will illustrate this superior ability to talk about oneself (Notice also the vivid description of regimented life at SSD.).

Interviewer: If you wrote a book about your life, what would you write?

Student: I don't know. A long time ago when I was a little boy, my mother asked the boss of the school, 'Can my son join the school?' So I went to class and had good friends and talked and sat with them. I sat with a friend side by side and we wrote math and science and different things. And we finished. Then we had recess and we went out and played, played and played.

Time to go eat, then we lined up . . . lined up and we marched like soldiers. We marched to eat . . . we marched . . . and then we sat down in straight lines. Rows and rows of lines, finished. We put up our dishes and we went outside to play, play, play.

The passage above is similar to a deaf respondent's story in that one's self is squarely centered within the context of school life. But this student was also able to discuss home life:

The bus leaves home (from SSD) and we arrive in (the capitol city) and we sit (there) till seven o'clock on the bus. We get a ticket and we arrive home. My mamma gets me up and takes me home and puts me down and I go outside and play with my dog. Then I play and play and my mamma goes out and does things and my father is working on the job. And me and my sister we just go and do different things. We go fishing, shooting the gun and playing. Then we go to sleep — myself alone — I sleep.

The richness and diversity of this boy's experiences told in sign language (and very choppy English) is far superior to the majority of brief stories told by deaf students.
Non-Marginal Life at SSD for Hard-of-Hearing Students

Outside of SSD many of these students were marginal persons, even in their own families as well as in their schools. But once they moved into the deaf world, learned signs and adjusted to a new reality they found new statuses, roles, and happiness. Many hard-of-hearing students seemed to primarily associate with each other. When several of them named their "best friends" there were disproportionately more hard-of-hearing students than would occur by chance. Similarly one day student said all her friends were also day students. At SSD they more often excelled in academics. They were able to fill certain statuses (like cheerleading) where some hearing was required. Several excerpts below indicate how hard-of-hearing students strongly accept and value the deaf world.

Interviewer: If you wrote a book about yourself, what would you say about yourself?

Student: I would say I'm a good worker. I am a brilliant (bright) student. I am the best favorite in the class. I am the best cheerleader. I want to be vice president in my class . . . I want to be a good player on the basketball team. I have many good friends here. I am popular.

A pretty fourteen-year-old girl (also a cheerleader) came to SSD in the seventh grade and worked her way into the highest level of grade 9 (9-1). Clearly, it was the pain of marginality associated with a hearing loss which pushed her toward the deaf world:

In public school I couldn't really understand when the teacher explained . . . it just was really hard for me to understand and to be around with them (hearing students). I was afraid they would get impatient with me because I couldn't hear. My
mother and daddy wanted me to come over here and I joined it (SSD).

When I asked if it hurt when she moved from the talking world to the deaf world, she described herself as "satisfied." The general sense of satisfaction occurred in other interviews as well.

I miss my family very very much but I love SSD and I love all the teachers.

I feel comfortable better here than I did outside. People are friendlier here and I have always dreamed of being a cheerleader.

At first I didn't like school here. One year later I quit school here and joined school at my home, but I never like my new school, too. I told my parent that I want to go back to SSD again, SSD really chance (changed) everything like a big fun . . . I am really going to miss SSD a lot when I leave to college . . . SSD is really a great school for any deaf student.

This last statement illustrates another important sociological fact. SSD really is a "big fun" and "a great school" which provides more freedom and prestige for some students, especially hard-of-hearing ones, than they might enjoy in the outside culture. In particular there is freedom from isolation and communication problems.

We have already mentioned how hard-of-hearing students derive some additional status and prestige and leadership roles because of their English (and verbal) skills. But students also have more freedom for interracial dating, much more than they might know in the small towns and villages where they were born. Interestingly, the dominant pattern is for black males to date white females (I heard of only two cases of white males dating black females). One
wonders what percentage of fully deaf black males date white girls. That is, does hard-of-hearing status raise the black male to a level where he can enter the superordinate world of white females?

Another theme found among discussions of self by hard-of-hearing students is positive self feelings or self aggrandizement. This is briefly treated here since a fuller discussion of "egocentricity" is presented in the next section. A few excerpts from different stories about self are sufficient:

I was sweet when I was growing up, but not bad. I was sweet. My heart is soft and my personality is sweet and quiet all the time . . . I have good behavior (I) show up and (I'm) good to help other students.

I am a Christian like an American person. I am smart.

I am the favorite in my class. I am bright.

Another difference between deaf and hard-of-hearing students' stories about themselves is that the latter more often refer to associations outside the school world, especially the family. In her story about herself one girl explicitly showed her reaction to what had been a loving, caring relationship.

About three years ago my grandmother -- my mother's mother -- she had gotten sick, she died. I loved her to death. She was the best of all. So after she died my grandfather he met this other lady and he got married. They were married three months and he died. And after both of them were dead I felt life isn't worth living. I hated myself.

The reference to non-SSD people in stories about self was found in other accounts as well. A fourteen-year-old boy included friends and family members in his story about himself:
I met some boys and girls and I said, 'Hi.' Some boys and girls waited for me, happy, come here. (We) played and played. (A) dog ran with me. (I) walked to fishing. Many, many fish: bass, catfish, finished. (I) go home (and) walked (and) walked. Home, eat, eat, finished. Traveled with grandmother . . . Then I go home and see a movie on TV at night. Enjoy. Take a bath and go to bed.

Finally, I used Ralph Linton's (see Kuhn, 1960) five general kinds of statuses (which are found in every society) to analyze self-statements made by hard-of-hearing students. These universal statuses are:

1) Age, race, sex
2) Specialized occupation
3) Family groups
4) Association groups
5) Prestige rankings (self-evaluations)

It was anticipated that there would be some reference to hearing status. However, students in this study almost never voluntarily referred to their hearing status (if asked, however, they would differentiate themselves from the hearing). This suggests that being deaf (or hard-of-hearing) in this community is normal, taken-for-granted, and obvious. In this world one does not describe one's self as deaf anymore than one (on the outside) views one's self as "a hearing person." To put it simply, in this social world deaf is normal.

Only one student mentioned age and none mentioned race or sex. All students mentioned their families, while only one referred to his grade level and only two spoke of "sweethearts." One student mentioned her religion (and she had been rehearsed, we learned, by
her mother who worked at SSD and knew of the interviews). Does this mean that age, race, sex and religion are not salient parameters of self-definition, or does it mean that these students simply have never learned to represent themselves in those terms? Apparently, their consciousness of self is not sliced up into neat, commonly found social categories.

All but one of the hard-of-hearing students made favorable statements about themselves (self-evaluations, self-definitions). Conversely, there were no unfavorable statements made about self which means that these students are not "sorry" about their deafness; they seem, at this point, not to view themselves as deficient or tainted in any meaningful way. Quite the contrary -- as many of them recognize, they are special people at SSD.

Inflated Beliefs About Self: Egocentricity

Much of the literature written in the last ten to fifteen years has described deaf adults as being immature and somewhat ego-centric (see Meadow's, 1969, review of the literature). In very recent years, there has been much criticism against the idea. Our research at SSD, as will be seen in the following interviews, clearly supports the older studies -- deaf students do have incredibly inflated egos. They are "super positive" in their feelings toward themselves. One might expect "handicapped" children to be depressed about their shortcomings, to think of themselves somewhat negatively. The older studies, however, found just the opposite -- these children
are very positive. One possible explanation has been that these students are often highly praised throughout the day for very minor accomplishments. This tends to inflate and create self feelings and self-definitions that are extremely positive; that it may be somewhat undeserved, as the world outside residential schools would see it, is not usually considered as a problem.

I would ask students who is the smartest person in your class and frequently individuals would answer, "I am." If I asked who is the most popular person in school, a common response was, "I am the most popular person." One afternoon I asked a nineteen-year-old, "Who is a girl in your class liked by many people -- she is popular, good; many people pay attention to her?" Without blinking an eye she replied, "Me and Louise."

This practice of self-aggrandizing is seen again in the following examples. One evening in the infirmary I found a popular junior girl whom I had not yet interviewed. I soon joined her in the lobby where she was chatting with nurses and passing students; I proceeded to interview her without her awareness of it. When I asked about the popular students on campus, first she named three seniors, two boys and one girl. Then she said, "The juniors include me . . ." She said she did not know who the sophomore popular students were which suggests that each grade level has their own set of popular people and, secondly, that each class has little knowledge of each other's popular students. The homecoming queen's highly
positive self evaluation is reflected in the following quote which was prompted by a question about a popular boy. "He is nice to people, understands people, not in trouble, almost the same as me."

Self-aggrandizing occurs at lower grade levels too. In the middle school I asked a young boy, who is somewhat rough and aggressive, "Who are the most popular students in middle school?" He named two students and then said, "Me."

I asked a high school cheerleader, "Who is the smartest student that you know?" She answered, "Me." "How do you know that you are the smartest one?" I continued. "Because I'm always studying every night and it makes me understand. I make many 100's in class." I said, "So you are the smartest person in the whole school?" And she replied, "I never made an F." She is hard-of-hearing and, like other hard-of-hearing students, she finds a pleasant world at SSD. The hard-of-hearing see themselves as above the truly deaf students: they have some command of English and are able to excel far beyond their deaf peers. This tends to make them feel very positive about their accomplishments and their aptitudes — maybe overly positive since the comparison is relative. This cheerleader has found a home at SSD and is happy in this world where she is a person of status, a person who makes high grades, one far above the others. The following exchange between us illustrates her good feelings about herself.

Interviewer: Do you wish you could hear? Do you prefer to be
hard-of-hearing?

Cheerleader: I prefer hard-of-hearing. I want to talk. I do not have perfect hearing. It bothers me too much.

Interviewer: What will bother you?

Cheerleader: If I would be hearing they would talk to me and be fussing and they would be hearing kids and I hate.

Interviewer: You hate what?

Cheerleader: They just slam the doors and things. Make too many noises (I observed that a favorite pastime of students is to hoot and scream loudly in order to drive those with hearing aids crazy).

Interviewer: You told me you were popular yourself. Can you tell me why people like you?

Cheerleader: I wonder why. I'm the best popular cheerleader. They love me because I use my voice all the time. I holler to win.

It is important to notice that this cheerleader believes she is popular, in part, because she is able to talk. "Talking" gives one a high social ranking at SSD at least among the teachers who are in fact one group which influences the students sense of self; talking without simultaneously signing, however, is stigmatized and rejected by the truly deaf students.

We see that students will quickly tell you "I am popular," "I am smart," and make many other self-aggrandizing statements. One boy told about himself, "I am skilled in basketball and I play with other boys." He continued, "But I am skilled and I am tall." I asked, "Do people like or dislike you?" He replied, "Friends me. Friends good, nice." "Who's nice?" "Me." he replied. Due to their
relative isolation from the world at large, these students at SSD do not realize the possible degree of their limitations. Their spatial and linguistic distances from the everyday dynamics of the outside world results in the formation of a distorted sense of that world. Only sketchy bits and pieces about life in that other world are apprehended from visits home and/or from television. They cannot hear the television and are unable to effectively gain information from family members who usually cannot sign. Thus, fragmented snapshots of the life outside are obtained here and there. Life seems relatively easy at SSD and one's sense (probably erroneous) of things is that, it will be easy after graduation. Good jobs, nice salaries, pretty clothes and automobiles are anticipated. Deaf is okay here and deaf will be okay out there.

Finally, I asked several teachers why deaf students seem so open, so forward, so egocentric. One explained that it is a question of subtleties related to the language system they use. "Ameslan (ASL)," he said, "does not have many conditional words and therefore lacks the capacity to communicate subtleties," terms like 'could,' 'would,' and 'should.' The ASL used by students at SSD generally uses 'must,' 'can' and other strong words. The teacher remarked:

So that's where they get into a lot of trouble. They write me a note and they say 'Carter Pier, meet me at three o'clock. Do this favor for me.' They don't say, 'can you meet me,' 'will you meet me' 'would you meet me,' 'are you able,' 'could you?' These things are not a part of their vocabulary. Ameslan does not use those words. And your high level deaf people do not
use those words, i.e., if they did not become deaf after first hearing. That is one of the subtleties that Ameslan does not have. It deals with these self-images. . . . the middle ground is not there. Either you're bright or you're mentally retarded.

As we can see, this teacher's hypothesis is that what seems like egocentricism may be an artifact of the language system used at SSD. When you are forced to speak in declarative sentences, there is little room for qualifying statements. Thus you either are one way or another, but the middle ground is simply not available.

At the same time that students may have inflated images of themselves (for which teachers offer partial, tentative explanations), it is also true that many students have doubts about their abilities. This is particularly true when their frame of reference is normal hearing people in which case hearing often emerges, by their accounts, as superior to deafness.

Negative Beliefs About Self: The Hard-of-Hearing

Not all hard-of-hearing students are positive about their situations. Some make statements which indicate a sense of marginality -- fitting imperfectly into both hearing and deaf worlds. Unlike the totally deaf students, hard-of-hearing students may hold the value that hearing is better than deafness. Since they are more sensitive to hearing, they may conclude that ASL is inferior, English is superior. They more easily and fully comprehended the possible value that English usage will have for them. In this way, these students seem far likelier to express self-doubt and at least
some reservations about their deafness.

Students also express negative self-feelings and definitions which seem to be a consequence of parental feedback. For example, in passing through the boys' dormitory one Sunday afternoon, I stopped to chat with a seventeen-year-old. When I asked him if he was deaf or hard-of-hearing, he responded, "I am hard-of-hearing. My mother had measles and then had a bad baby." At some point in life deaf students ask a very self-reflective question: Why am I deaf? Some parents explain to children that they are the consequence of sickness, disease and sometimes, as in this case, they are depicted as "bad babies." In this case, "bad" is not meant to be self-denigrating but, rather, is a way of depicting a birth defect which has had, for them, a negative connotation. "Bad" is simply a euphemism for different or abnormal!

The ability to use English again occurs as an important consideration. To not use it is a negative attribute. Conversely, sign language is seen as more difficult and of less benefit. As one student said, "Sign language is mixed up. Hard." This negative characterization of sign language and positive assessment of English was affirmed one morning when I was substituting in the vocational school.

I stood around with four high school males and asked them many questions. One of the boys, Willy, was hard-of-hearing and all the others were deaf. I asked Willy and two deaf classmates which
was the best language, sign language or English? All three boys agreed that English was better. (During most of this conversation, Willy dominated and his peers clearly deferred to him, allowing him to be the spokesman for the group. I noticed that one boy would raise his hand as if he were in a classroom when he wanted to interrupt or say something whenever Willy was conversing. Again, it is his ability to partially hear which helps him get and maintain status.) All the boys said English was a better language "because sign language is so condensed. So brief." Willy's deaf friend, Mark, gave me an example

Yesterday I was in the library. A deaf boy called my attention and said (with fingerspelling) 'mvp' you. Mvp means 'most valuable player.' I asked him most valuable player in what? Football? Basketball? Or baseball or what? The boy's language was too brief, too condensed.

Note here Mark's reference to a "deaf boy," somehow different from himself. Then Willy provided a second simple example of the condensed aspect of sign language. In that language, he explained, one would say, "go town." In English on the other hand, he said, you would say, 'I'm going to town." My field notes, which were tape recorded within two hours after the event, made the following observations:

Willy is a hard-of-hearing boy and it was my impression that he dominated our conversation. Blaker often wanted to speak and would raise his hand to show his desire to speak. Willy, who is among the popular group at school, dominated the unusual social interaction event in the absence of their teacher. The other boys deferred. Two or three other boys stood around and watched our conversation never saying anything. Willy seemed to be playing the role of opinion-maker or, to put it another
way, as a teacher to his full deaf peers. At least two of his deaf friends standing nearby agreed that English language was the better language. Since Willy is hard-of-hearing and therefore is able to read and to write better than most deaf boys, and because he is in the "leading crowd" at school, and because he dates one of the most popular girls on campus and is therefore himself a popular person, then Willy probably knows which is the better language. What is being suggested here is that hard-of-hearing students in schools for the deaf probably have significant degrees of power when it comes to defining the local reality.

To quote again from another page of field notes made immediately after the interaction I recorded the following observations:

In the conversation with these two boys, Willy and Mark, there was definitely a consensus that English was the superior language. Both students said they enjoyed English and wanted to learn more. An important sociological question is, 'What is the significance for students of a belief that their own language is inferior to the language of the major culture?'

One newcomer to SSD, a hard-of-hearing girl, made a negative statement about herself which was directly linked to her English writing skills. When asked how often she wrote letters to her parents and how often she received letters from them the girl said, "Letters, easy words. I can't make sentences very good." (Presumably the sentence means "I write my parents letters and use easy words because I cannot use words very well.") I asked, "Why?" She replied, "I can't think too much. I don't know how to say sentences on paper very much. My family understands me and my writing real fine." That same day I observed this student in class. Her teacher remarked to me that "Nola should not be in this classroom (11-3) because she is not slow, but she did not want to move when we offered it. She said she gets along with this group and did not
want to leave it." I asked her why she did not move up and she replied, "ll-1 is too hard for me." One process operating here is that Nola's self is being constantly and positively reinforced because she is able at this grade level to excel far beyond other students in her classroom. It is worth repeating that negative self feelings are associated with inability to use the English language for some students. The student's marginality may be minimized by heightening the chances for success.

Yourself, Myself, Ourselves

One of the most interesting cases of a student fitting the "marginal person" category is Honey, the day student from an upper middle-class family in a nearby town. After nearly four months at SSD she gave me numerous insights into the student subculture at the school. She was able to do this because she herself had come into the school as an outsider, as a person reared and schooled in the hearing world, and as a person who knew no sign language nor any of the subcultural ways of life prior to attending SSD. During a second interview with her (two months after the first interview) I asked, "What is the deaf world?" She immediately replied that

Honey: Communication is very different. I tried for a long time to understand their communication. I changed a little to try to belong to their group, acting the same as them.

Interviewer: How do they act? How do you mean, 'act like them?'

Honey: They use their hands, they move their body, they move so much! They do silly things in their movements. They show action. They act out a story, show you action. In a
restaurant hearing people don't show their actions much, but the deaf move a lot in a restaurant, inside or outside, doesn't matter. Any place. In Hill City, at a movie -- they move a lot. Sometimes it embarrasses me because I don't want others to know I'm deaf. But I understand their feelings too. I understand I am deaf too and I am changing my actions like them.

Interviewer: Are you imitating them? (Becoming) same as them?

Honey: No, not the same, but move around, talk around in the movies. My boyfriend got a little embarrassed in the car (the boyfriend is a hearing person; another couple, a hearing boy and a deaf girl are with them at the time). And I talked with Judy . . . We were talking in the restaurant and my boyfriend was sitting across the table and Judy's date was on the other side also. Our boyfriends wanted to know if we enjoyed the food and we said, yes, and we just kept moving a lot, very much, good action. Judy's boyfriend was looking. He didn't know what was going on.

It is a common story. A young deaf person reared in private schools, where speech and speech-reading are emphasized, realizes at some later point in life the need for sign language. Eventually the person becomes aware of the numerous difficulties of performing and functioning smoothly in the hearing world. Often, it is a very slow and gradual migration from the world of words to the world of signs, from the world of traumatic communication experiences to the sign-world of community, comfort and identity. Honey offers an excellent example of someone learning to be deaf. From her own account, she is "beginning to act like them." For her, and other comparable newcomers to residential settings (be they schools, prisons, asylums, whatever), the institutional world becomes, in Berger's term, the paramount reality against which all other worlds are judged.
CHAPTER VIII

THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

Introduction

The previous analytical chapters have provided a wealth of detailed information on life at a state school for the deaf. These chapters have focused on language, self and the total institution. Each has drawn upon a somewhat different theoretical orientation -- the first two chapters relying heavily on Mead and, to a lesser degree, Bernstein -- the last chapter relying more heavily upon Goffman. Given the large number of analytical observations made in these chapters, the task of now giving some theoretical coherence to them is overwhelming. Rather than spend very much time (and space) on any one chapter's findings, the present chapter will highlight some of the key findings from the overall study. Following the lead of Himmelstein (1980), a series of hypotheses will be stated in such a way that the empirical findings are restated into a more formalized, theoretical format.

It has been the position throughout this study that SSD (and other similar institutions) offers a vast arena of research possibilities. These institutions house children who arrive with little or no formal language. The researcher is afforded the opportunity of observing children as they acquire language in a step-by-step,
moment-by-moment process. It is impressive drama, an unfolding before one's eyes of humanization. In a larger sense, it is an opportunity to watch the social construction of reality at its origins. Prior to stating any specific theoretical statements, a brief overview of the study's principal questions is given.

Following the conceptual lead of Bernstein (1977), one of the theses of this study has been that American Sign Language (ASL) is a restricted code, since it is relatively undeveloped (Vernon, 1974). Bernstein's distinctions between restricted and elaborated codes of communication (and the social conditions which give rise to such codes) are especially relevant in a study of deaf people with their dependence upon sign language. This allows for empirical testing whether or not ASL is a restricted code. Of course for Bernstein, restricted codes of communication were associated closely with the working class. At issue in the present study has been determining to what degree ASL (a type of restricted code) is dependent upon class factors versus questions about the very nature of the language (its iconicity). An extension of this is to observe deaf persons of different social class origins to see if differing forms of sign language are used by them.

Another interesting problem for social scientists arises. Anthropologists and linguists have dogmatically argued that no language is inferior to any other language. There are no superior languages. Is that true also for codes of communication? If ASL (or
any other code) is a language which has survived and continues to be perpetuated by children from one generation to another can it develop as fully as languages which flow through adult brains? If ASL lacks signs for everyday objects and events, is it equal to other languages? If ASL, an ideographic language, does not teach effectively English, a word language, should it continue to be used in academic situations? What happens to students who graduate from high school unable to read and write English well enough (literacy) to get good jobs in their own English-speaking society? Why do state schools and deaf people continue along this path?

A third area of inquiry (and we are linking and expanding some preceding categories) relates to the triad: language/self/social interaction (usually considered in dyadic pairs). First of all we cannot research the self-social interaction relationship if no language is present. That is, in order to get at self adequately we must be able to use language with our subjects. We must be able to talk to them about themselves, to ask them questions and to convey to them our own intentions, meanings and inquiries. This is not possible if language is absent. Since many levels of language skills exist among deaf children, SSD and other sister schools enable us to see how language and self are related. We can discover whether or not students with restricted and limited language abilities (but not too limited) also have limited selves as Hertzler (1965) suggested. While Mead's (1977) theory argues that language is a prerequisite
to self, that without language one has no self, this is difficult
to imagine or to accept. Do language-impaired deaf children have
no selves or does their language difficulty make it impossible to
express a sense of self?

The self/social interaction nexus has been of great interest
to sociologists for a long time. Goffman, in his classic work on
stigma (1963) analyzes physical disabilities as "tainted." But many
deaf children in residential schools are not viewed as "tainted" nor
do they see themselves that way. Quite the contrary, many of them
hold overly positive views of themselves. Several writers (cited
earlier) relate these egotistical feelings to the fact that lavish
praise is often heaped upon deaf students whenever they accomplish
very minor tasks. At SSD, the significant others of the school con­
stitute a very positive "looking glass" (Cooley, 1964), consequently
we find the opposite of what Goffman (1963) described in Stigma.
For deaf children there is a taken-for-grantedness about deafness.
In a sense it is normal, it is okay (many say it is "better") and not
at all negative. For those born deaf there never was sound nor
speech. How can one miss something one never had?

Finally, there are questions about the institutional side of
life at SSD. For Goffman (1962) the "totalness" of an institution
is indicated by the extent of isolation from outside society. As
we have argued throughout, deaf children are doubly removed from the
outside culture by space and language. Some arrive at the school
with little or no language and eventually acquire a language (ASL) foreign to the natives on the outside. This may result in worlds which are literally languages apart.

Having little or no language deaf children arrive at the school with little culture. Here they grow up under salaried surrogate parents employed by a department of "home life." To avoid confusion, their office doors are labeled "parents." But these "parents" are strange substitutes. Often they are of another race, another social class and, more importantly, may or may not speak the language of "their children." Odd parents, these.

At the institution group life is touted above all else. According to Bernstein (1977) this condition favors the emergence of a restricted code of communication. Part of the rationale for undertaking this study was that much insight into types of relationships and codes of communication could be gained by studying the linguistic communities at SSD -- communities tightly knit together, thoroughly separated from the larger world.

Further, schools for the deaf -- as total institutions -- permit investigations of Goffman's (1962) "underlife," the ways in which individuals attempt to preserve self from the long tenacles of the social order. Do deaf children, under processes of "total enculturation" (which tends to inspire great loyalty), attempt to circumvent the systems of authority and rules to lesser (or, perhaps, greater) degrees than inmates in prison? In a setting where many
teachers and houseparents are not highly skilled with the students' language, will patterns of "secondary adjustments" differ from those found in other institutions?

As an organizational entity, SSD is threatened by policies which could alter its constituency or worse (from an organizational point of view) put it out of business. Mainstreaming, for example, threatens the life and security of the school employees. It changes the face of the student body, taking away middle-class students and retaining (and increasing in number and proportion) lower-class students as well as multiple handicapped people. What happens, then, to self-images of "normal deaf" when grouped with physically handicapped, retarded, blind, etc. deaf peers? Do they get along or do "normal deaf" tend to stigmatize these other people? Too, what happens to those students who are mainstreamed? Administratively, what happens to social relationships in a school where administrators and staff are frightened of losing their jobs? When funds are being cut, enrollment is down and classrooms are over (not under) staffed?

The research findings reported in the analytical chapters of this study suggest numerous theoretical hypotheses. In the following, certain of these are specified. In all cases the statements flow from empirical findings of the study. Additionally, the statements represent a combination of Glaser and Strauss' (1967) "grounded" theory and a more formal theory presented in a bivariate fashion.
Hypotheses About Language and Reality

As Berger and Luckmann (1967) observe, for the child, his parents' world "becomes the world" in a most massive and unchanging way. But this is not necessarily the case for deaf children. Although not stated by them Berger and Luckmann assume a normal, hearing child is the one learning (being socialized into) his parent's culture. For the deaf child, however, it is generally the school and its actors not the family which provides for a sense of "the world." Since most parents of deaf children are poorly skilled -- if at all -- in sign language, the deaf child learns little of symbolic significance from his family. Instead, it is school officials and student peers who both provide and participate in constructing his social world. In this way, the deaf child will become more of a reflection of the school world than his own family's world.

This leads to three related hypotheses:

$H_1$: The more restricted (undeveloped) a child's language system is at home, the more restricted (impoverished) is his knowledge of the world (intersubjectively known signs and symbols).

$H_2$: The more restricted a child's knowledge upon entering a residential school, the greater the degree of "total enculturation" experienced at the school.

$H_3$: The greater the impact of "total enculturation" at the residential school, the greater the discrepancy between the worlds (cultures) of child and parent (and child and society).

$H_1$ posits that for a child born with no hearing, his knowledge of the world is severely truncated from birth until such time as he
has a symboling system with which to "understand" his surroundings. From Mead and Weber, to understand is predicated on shared symbols -- in Weber's term, it is the experience of intersubjectivity whereby two individuals mutually define into existence and agree upon the meaning of some object or event. In the humanizing process, of course, the absence of language precludes any form of understanding as we commonly think of it. Technically, the deaf child is "in" but not "of" his own family. He is more of an appendage than full participant in family life.

H1 in its broadest application builds on the work of Bernstein, for it says nothing about deafness. Instead, it focuses on the degree to which language is experienced in the home. For Bernstein this relationship was largely the result of class background -- the lower the class, the poorer would be one's facility with his language. Thus this would result in one's using fewer words (i.e., having a poorer vocabulary), having poorer syntax, and being likely to speak more often in utterances than complicated sentences which evince some continuity and development to a thought. The magnitude of this problem is amplified drastically when you introduce the element of a child with no hearing. Now one is presented with a situation in which even a poor vocabulary accompanied by poor syntax is made inaccessible.

However, at the same time that most writers (as in previous references to Berger and Luckmann) assume hearing as an attribute
that the individual will possess, in reversing this assumption we
cannot assume that all deaf children will suffer a total hearing
loss. Deaf children, then, may -- and in fact do -- differ in both
degree and kind. Thus hearing loss may range from total to only
partial. In the most axiomatic way and having the greatest inclusive­
ness of any of our theoretical statements is the hypothesis that:

\[ H_4: \] The greater the degree of hearing loss, the
greater are all "social" relationships (c.f.,
acquiring language, family-child interaction,
general "understanding," and so on) made
problematic.

This hypothesis ties in directly to \( H_1-H_3 \). In fact, it in a
certain way subsumes each of its predecessors since it focuses so
specifically on hearing itself as the crucial variable. It posits
that from degree of hearing loss all other things flow. Note, this
is not to say that innate capabilities (e.g., "native" intelligence
defined in terms of ability to learn) disappear or take on less
importance than they otherwise would. It is to say, however, that
all things being equal, the degree to which one's hearing is impaired
may be the key determinant for much else which occurs in one's life.
Thus we return to hypotheses 1-3.

As we already noted about \( H_1 \), for the deaf child, knowledge
of the world is "truncated." The world simply cannot be experienced
in all of its complexity because the individual's sense perception
is diminished. If the child's experiences at home result in a
severely reduced base of knowledge by virtue of the absence of
language, then it follows that the child's acquisition of "culture" must be accomplished in part via other mediums. Thus the less the child brings into the school with him (in the form of language and general knowledge of the culture), the greater will be the impact of the school upon him, something we stated in $H_2$. In George Herbert Mead's terms, the preclusion of language from consciousness can only result in a rather undirected form of activity on the part of the child. For Mead, the normal child moved from the play to the game stage; in this way the child more and more learned to grapple with the world in terms of rules and roles. And in the extension of Mead by Berger and Luckmann, much importance is given to reciprocity as social life is lived out in a kind of ebb and flow (give and get) quality. But how is this possible for the deaf child? It isn't. Deafness necessitates for a young child the ability to encounter one's world as a serious of charades in which, more often than not, he/she is the only player.

Of course the enculturation experience at the residential school is more beneficial than not since it provides the child with a more formalized, structural culture where none or little previously existed. In only the most extreme cases does the child arrive at the residential school a virtually "cultureless" individual. But the school does little by its day-to-day example to build upon what the child had previously known (barring the child having already developed some mastery of language). The world which he now faces
is almost exclusively one of signs, rather than oral expression. It follows that the learned child is placed into an old paradox -- he must, to a certain degree, unlearn what he previously "knew."

Again, reference to Berger and Luckmann is helpful since they refer to knowledge as the certainty that things are real -- that they are what they seem. And one's culture, as acted out by those around him, provides assurance that individual perception and reality are more-or-less isomorphic. As stated in H3, the more the school norms and culture are subscribed to, the greater will be the discrepancy between whatever was learned at home and whatever one comes to see as "normal" at school. The point was repeatedly made throughout the analysis that learning well the culture at the school was not necessarily the same as learning well how to cope in the society and culture-at-large, a point I return to shortly. It was the disjuncture between the two which would create the sense of discrepant or somewhat contradictory world views.

This contradiction for the individual is not without its cost. And, again, this cost can be traced -- in part to the lack of language for whether at home or away, the languageless individual is cast adrift in a kind of sociological "no man's land." As noted above, this, at the same time, can also lead to a type of "marginal man" (Stonequist) status since the individual can conceivably have a foot in two different worlds at the same time. Here, however, our concern is more with the potentially anomic state in which an
individual may find him/herself. If a culture is not clearly understood as the world for the child, it is understandable then why it would present a confusing picture of things to the child. The order which is so easily taken-for-granted by the hearing world is replaced by a possible chaotic terror in the mind of the deaf child. Berger and Luckmann refer to the taken-for-grantedness of everyday life as presenting a "self-evident, massive facticity." Its 'massive' quality means that it "cannot be wished away." Having been in this social factlike world for a long enough period of time, one learns its ways -- one comes to identify as being "in" and "of" his world. But if language is sufficiently impaired at the outset of one's life, it is likely to be difficult to sort out potentially discrepant world views. This leads to the following hypothesis

**H5:** The less formal language one has to thereby help organize his sense of the world, the less any culture will confront him in a coherent, massive way and the more likely he will engage in some form of deviant (anomic) behavior.

This hypothesis also brings to mind the issue of cognition, or thought as it may occur in the mind of the deaf child. The term "charades" was used earlier to refer to the acting out which deaf children must do to make themselves understood. In Median parlance, this means that much of what passes for "language" among deaf children is conveyed by "gestures." These gestures must somehow convey to the observer an intended meaning. This physical side to deaf life was frequently commented upon in the analytical text.
Recall that children were often described as wild and unruly. Thus miming, touching and a generally more tactile form of communication is commonplace. Lacking English terms for things, one must constantly improvise to express him/herself. Too, this often requires that two people share in close temporal proximity some object or event so that the iconic nature of sign language is understandable. For example, I saw a program in which two kangaroos were boxing. Later I noticed two teenage boys discussing the program. Every reference to the kangaroos required that fists be made and held to the chest accompanied by hopping up and down. Clearly, this is an example of sign language's problem with conveying phenomenological "essences" or less abstractly, the "meanings" of things as opposed to the things themselves. This leads to the following hypothesis

H₆: The lower one's level of language development, the more physical is one's communication acts (play, mime, etc.).

This observation for deaf children has a counterpart in the hearing world. Hess and Shipman (1970) found that working class mothers used more nonverbal teaching methods with their children than did middle-class mothers. For the boys in the example above, then, words are simply replaced by gestures, and these are often (as in the case above) context or situationally bound. In that sense, then, the language is a restricted code of communication being highly concrete in its referent. In a similar way, these same kind of traits are cited by Bernstein (1977) in his concept of
"restricted codes."

**Hypotheses About Language and Self**

Following Mead (1977) we assume deaf children are not born with a self; self is not the same thing as one's body. Self emerges and develops within social interaction and the most important aspect of social interaction is talk. Language, says Mead (p. 199) is "essential for the development of the self." Of all the traits, it is man's capacity to become an object to himself which distinguishes him from all other life forms.

For Becker language and self are entangled. Self is "an identifiable locus of communication" and personality is "a locus of word possibilities" (1975:58). Further, if one has "unshakable" control over one's words (or signs) then one can present himself to others as "infallible." In short, language is a form of power and without it one faces a threatening world. As Berger and Luckmann (1967) say repeatedly, interruptions of one's languaging process create a nightmare of "terror," and yet these statements are not supported by our findings. Young deaf children who have never heard any sound at all do not know sound (nor language) exists. Nevertheless, it follows that those with a serious language problem will have a self problem. As Hertzler (1965:402) notes, inadequate language results in a "truncated personality and an incompletely socialized individual . . . he is diminished as a self to himself and to his associates."
One explanation of the difficulty students had telling stories about themselves is directly tied to language. Not only is it possible for a deaf student to be lodged so tightly, as Goffman might say, into the walls of his social world that he cannot extract himself as an individual, but low level language skills may be related to this inability to talk about oneself. In this frame the following hypothesis seems logical:

\[ H_7: \] The lower the level of language development (or acquisition), the more difficult it is to self-disclose.

In \( H_7 \) we see a close relationship between certain concepts of Mead's and those of Bernstein. "Self" by virtually all admissions is a highly abstract concept. Certainly its empirical referent can only be derived by very indirect methods and it is clear in the old debate between the Chicago and Iowa schools of symbolic interaction, that there is disagreement between the practitioners of the sociological school of thought for whom self is a critically important concept. Given its abstractness, then, disclosing and/or discussing of one's self may be difficult even for a very bright, articulate individual. When this is coupled with a fundamental language problem such that the individual is required to more often than not act out to express himself as opposed to communicating in words (as a symbolic alternative to gestures or signs), the plausibility of \( H_7 \) becomes quite clear. Rephrased, we could say that it is axiomatic that individuals who depend upon restricted codes of conduct will
find it most difficult to express all abstractions including notions of "selfness."

We noted in $H_4$ that the greater the degree of one's hearing loss, the more problematic will all aspects of life be. Too, we noted that not all deaf people are equally deaf. Deafness is not a discrete variable providing either/or states of itself. Rather, deafness is a continuous quality running from the extremes of totally deaf to totally hearing. What we did not address earlier was that not all parents of deaf children are hearing individuals themselves; that is, some of them are the offspring of one or both deaf (or hard-of-hearing) parents. Understanding of this point is critically important in terms of both language acquisition and self-disclosure, two things which we have already seen must be understood in relation to one another. This leads to a series of hypotheses (some of which could just as easily be placed in the previous section):

$H_8$: The time at which hearing loss is experienced and the degree of the loss will vary directly with language acquisition. The earlier and greater the loss, the greater will be the difficulty of learning language.

Given that $H_8$ posits that the later and less the loss of hearing will enable individuals to more easily learn language, it follows that:

$H_9$: The later and less the hearing impairment, the more likely will the individual be to self disclose.
Hg and H9 are direct corrolaries of one another. Our argument has been that self disclosure is nigh on to impossible if language acquisition has been severely impaired. The more severe the impairment, the more restricted will one's codes of communication be. But since we know that there is a potential intergenerational component to deafness and language ability, it is also necessary to state two hypotheses for those individuals who have one or both deaf parents.

H10: Deaf children with deaf parents will more quickly learn a useable language than will deaf children with hearing parents (especially where the degree of hearing loss is nearly total).

Given that deaf children with deaf parents will have something of a language advantage, hence acquire it sooner and likely be more skilled in it by virtue of their complete (early) dependency on it, it follows that:

H11: Deaf children with deaf parents will be more able to self-disclose than deaf children with hearing parents.

Hypotheses H7, H9 and H11 require some further comment because to a certain degree they stand in opposition to classical Meadian social psychology. In the analytical text there was cited the case of a teenage boy who simply could not understand queries about his "self." Even when a teacher was called upon to help explain my probes to the boy, the boy's responses remained largely irrelevant to the questions being posed. His case illustrates that for deaf
children, Cooley's "looking glass" reflection may be observed in an opaque mirror. Unable to freely and competently communicate with his "significant others," the near languageless child may apprehend vague, distorted and restricted reflections from others. On the other hand, however, and in opposition to a strict interpretation of Mead's "self" being very dependent upon language, is it plausible to argue that young children with little language have no self? We think not.

On a daily basis, those around the child do have some occasion to recognize him, even if in no more than a perfunctory way. In their recognitions, images are presented to the child by gestures, facial expressions, rewards and punishments, and so on. Given this type of situation, it seems wise to question and modify Mead's position that language must precede self (i.e., no language, no self). Spitzer (1982) has recently challenged the assumption that language is necessary for the development of self-awareness. Similar to us, he argues that self-recognition may occur prior to and independent of language acquisition. Our modification of this is expressed in our "self" hypotheses outlined above. There, we make it clear that rather than taking the role of language as a kind of necessary and sufficient condition for self awareness, we believe (like Spitzer) that individuals will have greater or lesser difficulty with self-disclosure in part dependent upon the timing and severity of their hearing loss. And as we note in H11, it is likely that deaf children
with deaf parents will be able to self-disclose earlier and better than their peers with hearing parents. Thus, language must be conceptualized in a broad sense when it is related to awareness of self. In fact, the very concept of self may be as much a product of a particular socio-historical epoch and culture as it is any language peculiar to those things.

We have made it very clear that restricted codes of communication engender restricted worlds in which individuals live. If the world was conceived of as a pie, the analogy here would be the greater one's language abilities, the greater his share of the pie would be. Conversely, the less the language, the smaller the share. One of the empirical findings was that many deaf children evinced a high degree of egocentrism. While they often had great difficulty in describing their "selves," they were very quick to make comments about their smartness, richness, popularity, and so on.

No empirical finding has presented a greater paradox in this study than this one. Here we have children for whom self-disclosure is difficult. Not only are they language impoverished (in the absence of abstract concepts) but they are often anchored to a group. Thus language and groupness in combination may affect the vague responses to self. At the same time, however, they are incredibly egotistical. Why? Our posited answer is expressed in the following:

\[ H_{12} : \text{The lower one's level of language skills, the more one's behavior is hedonistic and ego-centered.} \]
One must always be mindful when dealing with these deaf children that to a very large degree, theirs is a world of dichotomies -- there is black and white, good and bad, smart and dumb, and so on. Remember our discussion about "Mistake!" Wrong was definitively wrong. In the later years of school, of course, subtlety and differentiation are more easily accomplished. The odd thing remains though -- these children are often prone to see themselves in very aggrandized terms. Even when having relatively little money either on them or in the bank, they are "rich." Likewise when asked about the brightest person in the class, the answer is easy, "me." These inflated expressions of self worth are helped along by teachers who, by their own admission, are quick to praise deaf students for doing even the easiest problems correctly.

One final note on this paradox. By reversing the emphasis and wording of $H^1$, we would be saying that the better one's language skills, the less hedonistic and egotistical his behavior would be. Our reasoning for this is that language ability allows one to more fully understand his circumstances. Thus "others," both significant and generalized, can and do have a more dramatic impact on the individual's sense of things. Intersubjectivity can only be "inter" when two or more individuals are on the same cognitive wave length. If language is sufficiently impaired, then arriving at shared meanings is made difficult if not impossible. Where language is not terribly impaired, however, it seems far more likely to result in a more well-rounded, well-integrated individual who more easily and
fully understands what others' expectations for him are. Thus one's focus may be less on a truncated or fragmented self and more on a self that is understood with both strengths and weaknesses.

**Hypotheses About Total Institutions**

A working hypothesis of this study was that in the total institution setting of SSD, student "underlife" would be a very important phenomenon for investigation. And, indeed, this was found to be the case. As noted in the analysis, the older the children got, the more inventive they got at circumventing the "official culture" of the school. That is, the rules and norms of the school were frequently replaced or altered by the rules and norms of the student culture. The overwhelming side to this is readily understood since as a residential school, many children spend much of their lives within its confines. Too, as Berger and Luckmann say about normal socialization, adults make the rules up and their game is the only one in town. So, too, is this true at SSD. However there, as we have alluded to previously, there may in fact be two games -- one sponsored and organized by adults, the other by the children -- with two conflicting sets of rules.

Above all else, total institutions are characterized by their generation of and dependence on rules. In turn, enforcement of these rules serves to regularly remind one and all that there are supposed to be two groups of people in the institution -- those with power and those without. In short, the controlled and the controllers. As
Weber (1964) showed about bureaucracies generally, and as Goffman and others have shown about total institutions, despite their rule-reliance for their existence, there are always ways for creative individuals and groups to find ways to soften-up the impact of the rules. This leads to

$H_{13}$: The greater the number of rules enforced and the greater the sanctions for violating them, the greater the perceived disparity between residents and staff in the total institution.

$H_{14}$: The greater the perceived disparity between residents and staff, the greater the creativity of those seeking to circumvent the "official" rules of the total institution.

What is recognized in $H_{13}$ and $H_{14}$ is that rules create classes of people based on authority relations (Dahrendorf, 1959). In this way power becomes a zero-sum game -- for some to have it, someone else must be doing without or giving up something. The more strictly this is enforced, the more likely those disaffected are likely to see a gulf between themselves and those in power. And unless those disaffected completely acquiesce, they are likely to seek out ways to make their rule-guided lives as pleasant as possible.

For children in institutional settings (as was empirically shown at SSD), this often takes the form of "conning" the system by following the spirit but not the letter of the law. For example, recall how children would tell a teacher or houseparent that they were going from one place to another (thereby satisfying the institutional
requirement that someone "in charge" know where his "charges" were going to be) then, they would go somewhere else. Or, the girls who went to the dispensary ostensibly for medical attention when in fact they were going there to have some privacy for their own conversation. The most vivid, graphic illustrations of H14 dealt with sexual behavior. Sexual encounters were achieved in the relative privacy of a room, woods or car but also in the bold public of a school bus with children on it — children who knew of a sexual liaison occurring and, in fact, helped to see that those engaged were given the opportunity to do so (a practice also found in prison where homosexual sex is common and must often occur in publically-confined circumstances).

The "totalness" of the total institution does not refer only to the culture which pervades it, but equally important is the totality of the isolation within it. Goffman emphasizes the regimentation of everyday life and its collective character which results in little privacy. The net effect of this for the individual is that Mead's innovative and creative "I" is effectively suppressed. The more massively real total enculturation has been, the more likely individuals are to subscribe to the institution's rules and regulations. Translated into Mead's terms, this suggests that totally enculturated members will make less attempts to express "I" because the social/institutional "me" dominates their conforming behavior. This results in
H₁₅: The greater the degree of "totalness" (as isolation from the outside and pervasiveness of socialization within the institution), the less tolerance there will be for individualism (creative expression, deviance).

H₁₆: The more enculturated the individual, the less the individualistic he is likely to be.

These two hypotheses suggest not only overtones of Meadian social psychology but more structurally they evince a certain lineage to Emile Durkheim's concern for social solidarity. Of course for Durkheim the relationship between the individual and the group was always a dialectic one -- each existed in part because of the other (a point amplified into a book by Berger and Luckmann). In the total institution, normative loyalty was often to the system of authority (despite the daily attempts to circumvent it at many points in the road). Thus students seldom expressed anger when punished for committing some wrong.

For the very young children, the total institution provides a form of total enculturation (see H₂ and H₃), providing a sense of culture where none may have previously existed. On the other hand, older deaf students who come from other schools may experience a process of "disculturation," a term Goffman (1961) uses to refer to cultural disruption. The consequence of this for newcomers is that they must conform and fit into their new surroundings -- and at SSD this is exactly what happens. But not entirely. Consequently, we see two related theoretical statements
$H_{17}$: The younger one is at time of initial residency in the total institution, the greater the impact of the institution will be.

$H_{18}$: The older one is at time of initial residency, the greater is the likelihood of active participation in the institution's underlife.

Those whose entire lives are more-or-less lived out within the institution's walls experience the institution as a relatively homogeneous, consistent life world. This stands in sharp opposition to latecomers who may have much first-hand experience with a broader range and diversity of social groups -- ranging from families, other schools (perhaps including other deaf schools), and so on. It seems very plausible, then, to suggest that older children who first attend the school will have a larger number of experiences to draw upon in evaluating the school (approximating Berger's "cosmopolitan" motif) thus their reactions to it may be of a more varied nature (i.e., in ways unlike those whose whole lives have been spent there and for whom the school is very much in the "natural" order of things).

The total institution's cloistered life style is also likely to produce a particular style of interaction unique to it. As already shown, the very form of sign language often results in improvisation and unique iconic gestures for objects and events for which no word is known. Also reflecting this restricted code of communication is the incredible bluntness with which individuals address each other -- and this includes, as shown in the text, not only relationships among students but also among students and teachers.
In a kind of parody of ghetto life, deaf students often "do the dozens" with each other. They not only one-up each other (as shown in the ego-centered nature of many of their comments) but they deal with one another in an interpersonal style which would be shocking to those in the hearing world. They call each other "stupid," "fat," "ugly," "sloppy," "nitwit," and so on. Lacking the ability to be subtle in their interpersonal dealings (by virtue of signing which is a public act), bluntness is the rule not the exception.

H19: In the total institution where everyday life is of a public/group nature, interpersonal communication will be characterized by a public, open, blunt and (in the norms of the larger, outside culture) tactless style.

Finally, we consider Berger and Luckmann's (1967:163) notions about successful and unsuccessful socialization. For Berger and Luckmann, successful socialization occurs when the objective, structural circumstances and the individual's sense of those circumstances fit closely together -- i.e., when they are more-or-less isomorphic or symmetrical. From Durkheim on, the sociological principle here has been that the simpler the society, the more easily successful the socialization experience is.

One of the avowed purposes of SSD is the socialization of deaf children to live in the larger hearing society, to make them full participants in it. SSD (as with other residential schools for the deaf) does not intend to give its students skills which work only within the deaf community (although preparation for life in that
"home" community is definitely an important goal of the school, and according to both Nash and Higgins this sense of deaf community is critically important for deaf individuals). What has been discovered in this study, however, is that SSD's students are well socialized for the deaf world but poorly socialized for the hearing world. As shown throughout the analysis, many of the students have very distorted views about the "outside" world. Our theme throughout this section on the total institution is that it provides for a cloistered, isolated and overly protective life world. As one teacher stated, "They are not realistic when they talk about the real (hearing) world." Similar comments were made by hard-of-hearing students whose grasp of both hearing and deaf worlds was superior to long time SSD students. As one of the students said, she was "worried about the deaf" because they had little knowledge of the larger world.

School-supported efforts to enable the children to more fully understand the outside world are made difficult by deaf students and deaf adults, for both of these groups demand ASL (or, total communication). Of course if too much emphasis is put on ASL or total communication, skills in English may suffer which is exactly what happens at the school. In turn, a self-fulfilling prophecy is set in motion in which teachers and others often find themselves utilizing sign language because that is the "children's language." This generally isolated, institutionally-unique growing up experience leads to our final two hypotheses
$H_{20}$: The greater the degree of spatial, linguistic and interactional segregation from the society at large, the less successful is the socialization process (in terms of the larger society's norms).

$H_{21}$: The greater the degree of spatial, linguistic and interactional segregation from the society at large, the more successful is the socialization process in producing a subcultural native.

These final hypotheses recognize two important points about spending most of one's formative years in a residential school. And the accuracy of our statements should hold whether the "school" is for deaf children, juvenile delinquents or any other group isolated from society. The first point is that it is difficult to learn to be a member of society if most of your life is spent apart from the society. This is like saying that you can not be "in" it if you are not also "of" it. The second point is that the more the individual is held apart from the society, and finds an institutional culture as more of a substitute than supplement to the larger society's culture, then the greater is the likelihood that the individual will be a "native" of a somewhat unique and -- in the larger society's scheme of things -- peculiar culture.
CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this study we have stated the problem to be investigated, reviewed the theoretical and empirical literature on studies of schools in general and relevant studies of the deaf in particular. My methods as a participant observer have been spelled out clearly, the analysis has been presented in three chapters: findings on language acquisition and various language systems used at SSD, findings on the dynamics of SSD as a total institution with emphasis on the rich underlife found there. Thirdly, findings on self and self-disclosure. We found not only problems of describing one's self but also some egoism. Following the analysis and discussion of the findings we presented (in the previous chapter) more than twenty theoretical statements (hypotheses) which derived from the actual field work itself. The following pages discuss theoretical implications of the findings and present final methodological notes regarding the limitations of the study.

The central problem investigated in this ethnography dealt with the question, "What are the effects of restricted language and restricted environment on the self and on the world view of deaf children in a residential school?" It investigated the process of language acquisition, the effects of language deprivation and the
nature of manual language systems used at the school. We sought to expand knowledge in several areas such as the relationship between language and perception of reality, language and self as well as language and thought. As noted earlier, the uniqueness of manual languages presently used by deaf people came sharply into focus whenever apes were taught sign language. Afterwards it became much more difficult to define language in traditional terms (words, vocal organs, sound, etc.) because sign language is a visual-gestural language and not an aural-verbal one. Unlike spoken languages sign language symbols do have relationships to their referents. To put it another way, sign language -- to a great extent -- is iconic. Many signs resemble some aspect of their referents and, therefore, are more context-tied than spoken words which have no similarity, no relationship at all to their referents. In view of this, sign language was examined as a restricted code of communication. As Nash and Nash point out there are "unmodern ways of life" within modern societies with a range of linguistic styles from vernacular to dialectic to pidgin (1981:38). The users of these forms, he says, "live in unique symbolic spheres." Higgins too pointed out that of all the manual systems ASL is least influenced by English (1980: 61). Deaf people with higher education, he notes, are more likely to fingerspell more often than less educated deaf "because the former are more concerned with making certain distinctions in their conversation that may not be possible to make with sign language"
(p. 62). This agrees with our own findings that fingerspelling is best viewed as a precise and specific (elaborated) means of communicating, that sign language systems are general and global (restricted) codes.

Further, this study found that deaf students, in general, are "concrete minded." That is, they have difficulties with abstractions -- a finding congruent with theoretical claims that language facilitates complex thought processes and frees us from the concrete here-and-now. We also found that students' perceptions of reality were unique and also related to their language capabilities as well as their institutional cloistered life situation. Young boys (ages 10-12) believed the fantasy of television: "John Wayne is dead. I saw him get shot." "Superman is real. I saw him fly!" Living and moving within their own small universe of discourse symbolically and spatially apart from the hearing world (that reality toward which they now move) their perceptions can be best described as naive. Benderly (1980) made a similar observation when he wrote that the deaf community is not unlike old-fashioned people of the past. "Everything is free" is one of their views. "Deaf is better than hearing," some believe. But this viewpoint will eventually meet stigma (on the outside) which holds an opposite view. After graduation, some believe, good jobs, salaries and large cars await them. "I am rich" several students boasted because they had one-hundred dollars saved. At this point in their lives, some students
differ somewhat from the deaf described by Nash and Nash (1981:42) who wrote that "The success motif is weak within deaf consciousness, and attitudes toward it are ambivalent." Many SSD students aspired to attend college, become teachers, police officers, actors and truck drivers. Others had lower goals such as washing dishes in restaurants.

Hertzler (1965), Mead (1977) and many others have written about the language-self nexus. Language facilitates the emergence and development of self. This study found an incredible inability of many high school students (as well as middle school students) to tell about themselves. Most would finally make statements about attending various school classes. Others were completely stymied. And, related to language limitations, some were very egotistic. When asked who is the smartest, prettiest, or most popular person in a certain classroom, students commonly replied, "Me." This is a function, we believe, of the language problem.

Another research target of this study was to discover the dynamics of life in a total institution, especially the underlife. We found a rich and active underlife thriving at SSD. As students live under institutional rules and regulations they, like Goffman's patients in a mental institution, devised ways to escape the grasp of the bureaucracy. Like patients and prisoners in other total institutions, deaf students find ways to preserve self. They find ways to smoke tobacco and marijuana, to drink alcohol and to have
sex with someone -- even if it must be with the same sex. They create ways to have a nice hot meal in the dormitory after hours when no food is legitimately available on campus.

**Theoretical Implications**

This study has explored the life world of a linguistic community of children inside a total institution. This setting is an unusual social situation where children usually acquire language for the first time after enrollment. Too, most of these children use a different language from that of their own parents and family members. As stated so often, the dynamics of everyday life in a bureaucracy at SSD is preponderantly group life. Almost always one lives in the company of others. Real privacy is nearly unknown and the world is compulsively a public world.

One contribution of this study is not only its generation of new questions but its challenge to some classic statements made by several sociologists. Mead for example, has claimed that language is the vehicle for thought (mind); that language is a prerequisite to thought. Language is also necessary for self to develop. We believe these near absolute statements, or assumptions, are overstatements of relationships between these variables. We believe that a deaf child without language does have mental processes. Mead has underestimated the power of the human brain to imitate others, to "mind" even without formal symbols. Again, a deaf child is able to
learn many human ways by observing, by imitating, and he carries on intelligent mental activity.

It would be extremely useful in the social sciences if a clear distinction were made between the concepts thought (or thinking) and cognition. Let "thinking" refer to self (internal) conversation with language (word language or sign language). "Cognition" may be defined as mental activity (reasoning, reflecting, intelligent problem solving, cogitating). These definitions of thinking and cognition, if accepted, could save countless arguments as to whether or not one can think without language. By definition (as stated above) one thinks with language but cogitates with images, nonlinguistic symbols and so forth. All throughout the study, my position has been that sophisticated and complex mental activities of any kind (thinking or cogitation) are not possible without some formal system of language -- but this need not mean merely oral/verbal language because sign language is a manual language not an oral one. Peter and Brigitte Berger (1972:58), for example, make the claim that one without language is unable to talk to himself, has no internal voice, has only "silence within ourselves . . ." Without internal conversation with one's self socialization is not possible (Berger, 1969:14). Furthermore, one is shielded and protected from "terror," from the "onslaught of nightmare," from anomy by the symbolic universe (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:102). In one sense young deaf children at SSD do not exhibit signs of anomy or "terror."
On the other hand, they are "lost." They do not know what's happening to them. They don't know where they are nor why they are now apart from their families.

This study concludes that Mead's requirement that language precede self is overstated. These relationships are too absolute. Young deaf children view themselves in mirrors and know they are objects -- even before acquiring any language (see Spitzer, 1982). If self is defined as ability to take one's being as an object, then the assumption that language is a requisite for development of self seems spurious. A deaf child can be praised, patted, petted, smiled at, etc., (positive communication) or either scowled at, beaten, scolded, etc., (negative feedback) and there is no reason to believe he/she is without evaluative feelings about him/herself. Again, as stated above (about language and thought), the relationship between language and self is relative and not absolute: the more language one receives, the more fully developed one's self and the more able one is to express self. It is simply not plausible to theorize, as Mead did, that without language there is no "mind," no self.

This study has also made a contribution to the phenomenological works of Berger and Luckmann (1967) who, like Mead, make great claims for the role of language in human existence. Language, these authors say, is the means by which human beings nomize the world. The implication here is that without language one inhabits an autistic existence of chaos. While it makes sense to argue that
language (especially the naming of objects in one's surroundings) does enhance one's ability to structure reality and/or his experience, it is also true that young deaf children (prelinguals) are able to structure the world to some extent by observing patterns and frames of those behaving around them. Simply put, they have a modicum of order and structure without a formal symbol system; they are not wallowing in a fury of pandemonium. Moreover, these children are unable to effectively communicate with us and we can never know their reality, their world views. After they attain language, of course, they could recall i.e., reconstruct for us their prelingual experiences. These and other reconstructions, as we know, are suspect because they are ex post facto feelings, thoughts and interpretations of a former life.

I should state that my position on language as a primary factor in the development of minds, selves and realities is not cast aside. It is the strong, near-absolute deterministic claims for language that I am tempering somewhat. Linguistic determinism is no more plausible in the social sciences (as in the case of Whorf) than any other monolithic explanation. Sociologists (especially sociologists of language) must not continue to underemphasize the importance in human development of social interaction, language or no language. Although we have argued that the most important form of human social interaction is talk (with speech or sign language), we have also argued that a child without language has the large human brain which
enables him/her to learn much via social interaction. He/she learns to dress, to eat with utensils, to line up, to play, etc. Certainly, he/she needs formal language in order to rise very far about the immediate world at hand, to construct a complex world. In sum, we believe it is an overstatement to claim that such a child has no world, i.e., no culture. Admittedly, his culture-world is limited and simple, but it is there. Even languageless apes develop proto-culture. A deaf child does not walk about in a vacuum, a blank space. At the very least he/she structures everyday life. He/she experiences repetition, patterns, and rules to follow. In a dormitory a languageless child needs play time, eating time, bath time, punishments and rewards for certain behaviors. He/she knows. He/she understands. Non-human chaos is not the norm.

Another contribution of this study has been to expand the theoretical position of Basil Bernstein, which posits that lower-class people use a restricted code of communication and middle-class people use an elaborated code. Bernstein's theory links symbolic orders to social structures, in particular social class and family roles. This study found that ASL is a symbolic system which precisely fits the definition of restricted code. We observed, for example, the extent to which ASL (as used at SSD) is situated, context-tied. Students would say my favorite teacher is BK. Who is BK I asked. "I forgot his name," says the student. Or "I will get married next year." Who will you marry? I wondered. "SW," the student replied.
"I don't know SW -- spell her name for me." Incredibly, the boy shrugged uncomfortably, "I don't know the spelling (of her name)." Nearby towns are initialized. Where are you from? Student: "M" (the letter M moved from shoulder to shoulder) -- as if everyone in the world knew what town "M" represented. As Schatzman and Strauss (1966) said of their lower class respondents, information was given to the interviewers as if the speaker were a single camera "unreeling the scene to the audience;" middle-class speakers, in contrast, talk like directors of several cameras providing several perspectives (p. 446). In Bernstein's (1979:475) words these people (and our deaf people) are "in the grip of the contextual constraints which determine (one's) speech acts."

In colorful and stylistic narratives this study also indicated how abbreviated and compacted is the language system of ASL. One-word or two-word responses from students were common to the point that I have called it a one-word sentence syndrome. Do you have a girlfriend, I asked a high school boy. "Poor," he signed (a teacher had earlier told me that students said "poor" about things or conditions that were bad). The boy meant there were poor girlfriend choices at SSD. In vocational school, one teacher laughed and marveled at the way the boys would say a truck (or anything old) was "country." "Who is your favorite teacher?" "Mrs. CF." "Why?" Student: "Body." Since I had spent some weeks at SSD (becoming an insider who would understand localized, situated symbols and abbreviations), I knew Mrs. CF taught health which helped me know the boy was
not speaking of a beautiful teacher's body but referred instead to
the fact that she taught about human bodies. Schatzman and Strauss
(1966) reported a similar pattern among lower-class interviewees
whose talk had "dream-like sets of images with few connective, qualifi-
ing, explanation, or other context-providing devices" (p. 445).
Deaf students, like these interviewees (in the Schatzman-Strauss
study) give descriptions "as seen through their own eyes" (p. 443).
There is a lack of role-taking here, and a form of egoism too.

I also found Bernstein's (1977) particularistic order of
meanings (more concrete in nature, more tied to the context) prevail-
ing at SSD. This is similar, of course, to the lower-class speakers
in the Schatzman and Strauss (1966) study who "think mainly in parti-
cularisitic or concrete terms" (p. 447). They concluded that "the
thought and speech of middle-class persons is less concrete than
that of the lower group" (p. 448).

For Bernstein, it is the class system which "limits access to
elaborated codes" (1977:478) but at SSD the use of ASL and its
restricted character may not be tied to social class at all. Actually,
ASL is basically a language maintained and perpetuated by children
from one generation to another. Therefore, it is a very undeveloped
language which requires many facial and body gestures to help convey
global meanings. Simply put, ASL is a perfect example of Bernstein's
restricted code not because of social class but because ASL has been
stigmatized, oppressed and limited in its development. There is an-
other possibility, however. One could argue that more lower-class
deaf use ASL, that more middle (and upper) class deaf tend to use more fingerspelling and speech but less body gestures and less ASL (for other such speculations see both Nash [1981] and Higgins [1980]).

One other important contribution made by this research is in the exploration of the school as a total institution. Goffman's (1961) conceptualization of life in total institutions has been useful in this study although some modifications and elaborations of Goffman's ideas have resulted from our work. I have shown that total enculturation is the normative process at SSD. I viewed young deaf children as near tabula rasae (knowing full well that they are not really blank slates in some absolute sense) who acquire first language at school not at home. Thus, they generally obtain their first explanations and definitions of the world at SSD. Comparatively speaking, the family has much less influence (and input) upon this world construction process and the school has a near monopoly on the social production of reality (socialization). But, as we pointed out, deaf or hard-of-hearing youth who arrive late at SSD after having attended other schools may experience Goffman's disculturation. They must learn to be deaf! To act like a deaf person; to ontologically be deaf.

We say also that many students at SSD had colonized. They accepted the institution as "home" where common language, community and friends were to be found. They tended to cooperate with
institutional authorities, to help them make the system work. One thinks of Macer who said, "I wish I could stay here all my life."

In a sense this colonization is more understandable than a person whose adjustment to prison life is colonization. At SSD a deaf person undoubtedly experiences the greatest degree of community life he may ever find. In this setting there is happiness with hundreds of others who know your language. When awaking at dawn one's roommate greets you with your own language. Breakfast, bus rides, classroom hour, gym hours, etc.; all of these are spent in the company of "like situated people." Acceptance is total; stigma is unknown. There is free food, shelter, medicine, money (from SSI), television, ball games and constant talk. This is the meaning of students (in the school annual) who said "talking" was their hobby. After graduation there is the hearing world and jobs. At that point one must find a niche where once again there will be others who speak "my" language.

As Goffman pointed out, however, there are other members of the institution who are the "bad guys" -- key members of the "unlife." This study definitely illustrates the utility of this notion. A picture has emerged from this study which shows the ingenuity and persistence of human beings as they negotiate with and circumvent -- as much as they can -- the authorities. There has been the emergence of a student culture, a buffer zone between students and institutional staff. This is a commentary which speaks to the dynamic tension
between those with and those without authority.

This study has also described the dynamics of everyday life in a linguistic subculture. SSD is a place of many languages, some are verbal but most are sign languages. Any given student faces, on a day-to-day basis, various codes, styles and types of signs. Teachers, houseparents, staff and administrators use the core language of the student body with varying degrees of skill. In the course of a day, from dormitory to infirmary to classroom to the gym, one meets TC, ASL, signed English, fingerspelling, newly invented signs (in the form of initialized old signs), and pigin sign language. We do not mean that students are lost in a maze of unknown language systems, they are not. But we are saying that the lack of standardization of one language system, and the various flavors or styles or signs add to the problems of clear communications at the school. As we know, communication even with a single standardized language is confusing enough. I found signs in lower school not known by students in high school.

This study also indicates the existence of a hierarchy based on language instead of social class. Scott and Lyman (1975) were very correct when they said that talk is the fundamental stuff of which interaction is made. While it is true that students stigmatize peers who verbalize without simultaneously signing, it is also true that students who can speak English and sign gain prestige and status from teachers, administrators and houseparents as well as from peers. If one knows English, one is more similar to the hearing people who
dominate the institution (as well as the world at large). One also can read and write in ways superior to those who know little English -- and the classroom, the textbooks (and the society outside) revolve around English.

Perhaps one of the most important findings and points of this study is that SSD does not give maximum priority to the teaching and learning of English -- which is the language needed on the outside. English is the language which one must use skillfully in order to rise above poverty and menial work. Literacy is related to life chances. But teachers and administrators say it is most important to communicate ideas -- by any means possible (whether one uses English or mime). The point here is not that children should be forced to verbalize English. Instead, the point is that they must be given every chance to graduate with a command of written English at least. If they could learn to verbalize some English (and many, probably most, cannot) that too would be helpful.

Final Methodological Notes and Limitations of the Study

A few final comments about the methodology and limitations of this study are appropriate. First, I feel that a longer period of time in the field at SSD would have been very profitable. Six months would be better than four months and a complete school year would be ideal for gathering information. At the end of my study I had discovered new informants, new domains (new relationships, new
patterns) important to an ethnography. For example, I needed more
time in vocational and high school classrooms in order to gain a
clearer picture of curriculum tracking. With more time at the school
I would interview more teachers at the high school level. I would
try to have at least some of the interviews at their homes (or else­
where) off campus. The few teachers actually interviewed at their
homes were very open and uninhibited. There are also rumblings of
racial problems here and there among both students and teachers and
this information is needed. One group, the "bad guys," (popular
students who are leaders of rule-breakers, i.e., deviants) were not
interviewed nor closely observed in this study. We need to know
about that clique, their techniques for "beating the system," their
self images and aspirations, etc. More time in the field would have
permitted more observations of various groups, more casual inter­
views. The longer I stayed, the more I was accepted and the more
willing to talk were members of various groups.

More time in the field would enable the videotaping of
students being interviewed or interacting with each other (the school
has sophisticated television capacities). The tapes would permit
analysis of their sign talk, the use of ASL, body and facial gestures
as well as usage of manual English (signs or fingerspelling). An
analysis of the tapes could add to our understanding of the various
codes of communication used by students: one could compare post­lingual and prelingual students' sign talk. In this way one could
repeatedly observe (on tape) postlinguals greater use of an elaborated code (if this were the case -- and we believe it is) and the "true" deaf's (prelinguals) greater use of a restricted code (ASL).

Another fertile domain to be more thoroughly investigated is students' usage of typifications, especially the many negative ones so commonly used (nit wit, stupid, mentally retarded, whore, etc.).

If I had had more time at SSD I would devote considerable time observing young children on playgrounds. One day, for example, I saw a four-year-old hard-of-hearing child showing two others how to play doctor (by lying down, giving imaginary shots in the arm, etc.). Can "true" deaf (prelingual, profound loss of hearing) take roles of others (being a nurse) if language is very limited? These observations would be very relevant to Mead's thoughts about play and role-taking.

Another area of inquiry needed by a study like this one is the reading lab where students volunteer their attendance. Some quantitative data here would be useful. How do these volunteers differ from all others? Are they mostly postlinguals or hard-of-hearing people? What race, class and age categories are represented by this group? Why are they so drawn to English? Higgins (1980:95), for example, cites a study which says "the better deaf people rated their speaking (and lipreading) abilities, the slightly higher was
their self-esteem." In short, Higgins refers to stratification, a pecking order, in the deaf world "which is based on speech ability . . ." (p. 95). Again, our findings at SSD agree with this language-status connection.

Since Doubletown is so small more townspeople need to be interviewed, especially hearing high school students. More time could be spent watching students and their off-campus (town) activities and interaction with outsiders there.

One limitation of the study has to do with ethics. I have tried to provide as much anonymity as possible for the school and its members. Often this has been nearly impossible because content, status position, and/or philosophies (or even attitudes) of interviewees will be recognizable by some members of staff who read this study. With so few deaf teachers, at SSD for example, some of their statements may be easy to identify. This is truly an ethical problem since most deaf teachers and staff were very trusting and open in their giving of information.

Another ethical problem lies in the fact that certain administrators cooperated fully in making this study possible. It is difficult to report negative events or situations which may cause those same administrators to "look bad" in some way. And yet if a sociologist uses the scientific method then he/she is obligated to report what is thought to be the true facts whether they are positive or negative ones.
The information and insights reported in this study will be able to provide firm grounding for theoretical propositions or models. This, and not verification of hypotheses, was the aim of this research. The question of validity is answered, at least in part, by the degree and extent of agreement on the part of various interviewees from nearly every segment of the population. For example, all teachers interviewed said deaf students are concrete minded (i.e., have difficulties with abstractions). While there are other ways of interpreting the social world at SSD, our theoretical frames (Goffman, Berger and Luckmann, Bernstein and Mead) seem to be useful ways to explain and to analyze that world.

It seems clear that qualitative interviewing plus first-hand observations are excellent ways to build theoretical statements. We have accepted Lofland's (1971) position that face-to-face interaction and participation with others is the best way of knowing and understanding them.

Finally, a few words about reliability of the research. One may claim that one's qualitative work has reliability (to some extent) by the degree of agreement of respondents. "These students think everything is free," -- an observation made by sixty to seventy percent of adult interviewees -- is an example of such agreement. As for the researcher's reliability in observing, interviewing and recording information accurately this may never be known since it would be difficult to prove (Himmelstein, 1980). Because theory
building and not verification is a major goal of this study the researcher's reliability as an instrument may not be so important at this point. That is, his insights and their accuracy may be tested later whenever theory is built and verified or tested.
FOOTNOTES

1 There are some current theorists who believe that language does not exert strong effects on thought or perception (see Furth, 1966, 1971; Gibson, 1969 and Lenneberg, 1967).

2 World view is used here to include student culture, its values, beliefs, aspirations, fears, etc.

3 One exception is deaf children of deaf parents who acquire sign language at the normal time for language acquisition. All other children at the residential school are very late getting language.

4 Scholars like Eric Lenneberg, Bellugi and Noam Chomsky support "total communication" as opposed to pure oralism. Total communication consists of oralism, amplification, signs, gestures and written English.

5 This is a persuasive point of view since numerous studies show that deaf children of deaf parents who acquire (sign) language on time are superior in academic performance to children of hearing parents (see a review of six studies in Moores, 1978:176ff).

6 See Ralf Dahrendorf's work entitled, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society (1959) published by Stanford University. See also Jerry Himelstein's dissertation, Chapter two (1980) for a discussion of "imperatively coordinated associations."

7 See also Joyce Hertzler (1965:29) who argues that man is the only creature with symbol-forming power. It is not that man is simply a great tool maker because we know that the great apes also use and even modify tools.

8 Again Hertzler (1965) like White (1949) agrees that Homo loquens are qualitatively different from other animals: Man alone creates, establishes, institutionalizes and uses language. Only man has the tremendous range in the kind and quality of communication across space and time that language makes possible...What is epochal is not Homo fabricans (tool maker) but Homo loquens (speaker or verbalizer) (p. 31).

9 To avoid terminological confusion, I avoid usage of the popular expression, "body language."

10 Hertzler mistakenly thinks that nonverbal signs and signals relate to words, imply words and would, in fact, be meaningless.
without words. But this is not the case at all since a few deaf people cannot read or write English (words). Their language is ASL—which is not English—and includes no words whatsoever.

Notice how Hertzler and others perceive language in terms of speech only—a glottocentric bias. This writer will often write in parentheses the words: "and signs" to remedy the omission of ASL as a language.

Unless otherwise noted, this discussion of "reality" derives from several different works of Peter Berger and his various co-authors. The dates cited will indicate which ideas belong to what articles.

Didactic learning: Parents show the child how a thing works, they focus more on the operations than the principles (Bernstein's 1977 concepts).

See Kerckhoff (1972) who cites about seven different supportive studies. See also Hess and Shipman's (1965) study which concludes: "The picture that is beginning to emerge is that the meaning of deprivation is a deprivation of meaning—a cognitive environment in which behavior is controlled by status rules rather than by attention to the individual characteristics of a specific situation and one in which behavior is not mediated by verbal cues or by teaching that relates events to one another and the present to the future. The environment produces a child who relates to authority rather than to rationale, who, although often compliant, is not reflective in his behavior, and for whom the consequences of an act are largely considered in terms of immediate punishment or reward rather than future effect and long-range goals" (p. 136).

See also Ornstein (1978:82) who mentions four American studies which replicate and support Bernstein's findings.

Bernstein (1973:204) makes no such claim. He explicitly states that there is no reason for believing one language or general code is better than another.

Harris cites Hertzler (1965) and Labov (1972) but noticeably absent is any mention of Bernstein's work.

See Ornstein's (1978:84) discussion of a disadvantaged child's mental style which includes the ideas of Riesman and Ausubel on concrete vocabulary and concrete mindedness.

In some schools teenage couples ask their teachers to let
them converse privately behind a door in order to resolve some urgent love problem.

19 For a good discussion of the private vs. the public spheres of life, see Berger and Kellner (1979). They view the public sphere as "an immensely powerful and alien world, incomprehensible in its inner workings, anonymous in its human character" (p. 311). It is within the private sphere where the individual seeks self-realization, power, intelligibility—a place where he is somebody.

20 One interesting research problem is suggested here: We need to discover how the student's coping with school life carries over into the world in general.

21 Ironically, however, it has been found that teachers do not rely much at all on test information to help them understand how well students have done. They seem to have a general distrust of tests and they tend to believe that performance on achievement test reflects native ability rather than teaching effectiveness (Jackson, 1968:123-125).

22 This use of time and conflict between student and teacher is but one more illustration of Weber's insight into the inner-workings of bureaucracies. In this case with students seeking to undercut the bureaucracy as much as possible so that they exert greater control over their lives.

23 For reasons of anonymity, greater specification cannot be given to either the name or the location of the school.

24 This question was suggested by the Superintendent.

25 Other male staff members at SSD never talk to females in strict privacy, I was told.

26 Becker and Geer (1969:d40), in a rejoinder to Martin Trow, state that participant observation is most suited to "the problem in which one is more interested or understanding some particular group or substantive social problem rather than in testing an hypothesis about the relations between variables derived from a general theory."

27 It is believed that one important finding of this study is the degree to which ASL is context-bound or "socially situated." Perhaps all languages are this way to some degree, but since ASL physically depicts or portrays (draws a picture in the air)
objects or events in a social setting, then such depictions are local creations which would not be understood by an outsider. To put it another way, the temporary sign that I (an outsider) observe being used by two deaf people can be context-bound to that particular environment and not at all standardized. Two "natives" are able to create, on-the-spot, neosigns and localized tags and phrases not known by an outsider who also signs. One former student, for example, said he would soon marry. I asked who he would marry and he made her initials (something known by local deaf people). "Spell her name I said, "because I don't know who S.J. is." He grinned and said he couldn't spell her name. This situatedness is a characteristic of Berstein's (1977) "restricted code of communication."

28 The term "cultural imperialism" is borrowed from Martin Carnoy's 1974 work, *Education as Cultural Imperialism* published by the University of Chicago Press.

29 Once at LSU I was asked by a co-student, "What did the professor say to read?" Being hard-of-hearing, I said, "Huh?"—he immediately turned and asked a second person nearby. A hundred or a thousand experiences a day like that one shred the self of a hard-of-hearing marginal person.

30 It can be anticipated that signers will object to my presumption that I am 'such an expert" as to make assessments of this type. My response to that objection is (1) signers generally are able to quickly rate one another with a few minutes of observing one's use of sign language; i.e., sign skills can be judged and classified; (2) I have signed since 1964 and have taught the language at the university level since 1971. Further, deaf people consistently remark to me that my signs are "good."

Poor signing is defined as signing which is halting, jerky and "rough." It is unclear because of its poor form and slouchy articulation (either in the movement of the sign, the hand configuration or in the place or articulation—these may be corrupted by lazy or mere incorrect presentation of one or more of these parameters). *Fair* signing may be described as smoother but slow and often lacking sign vocabulary which necessitates much fingerspelling (more English, and more ambivalence for the deaf reader of fingerspelling). *Good* signing refers to smooth, fluent and fairly rapid (i.e., not dragging) presentation of messages which have some resemblance to ASL syntactical structure; fingerspelling is easy and not jerky. In short, a poor signer's language might be comparable to an immigrant's heavily accented and choppy use of English.
31 Taken from a mimeograph paper (p. 130) which is available to SSD staff in great stacks. The paper is almost certainly a reproduction of some journal article and its title is "Dormitory Personnel - Preparation and Functions." No author's name nor publisher were given.

32 As an aside, it has been observed in the Israeli Kibbutz that children visit their parents but then they also become happy about returning to the KIBBUTZ, to their group (see Melford Spiro, *Children of the Kibbutz*, 1971). It is as if the children have two families: their actual kin and their Kibbutz "family group." In other words, deaf children may wish to not go home because of their attachment to the surrogate parent (the school dorm) as well as the facility of communication.

33 Some who have researched sign language would disagree. They would argue that signs, too, have "intonation" in the form of posture, intensity of movement, etc.

34 A third possible group exists: those students who spend many years in oral schools learning to talk. Since only a few such students found at SSD, this possible group is not considered in this study.

35 These categories for analysis are taken from Kuhn, 1960.
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APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWEES
INTERVIEWEES

I. Administrators (N=5)

A. The superintendent at SSD was interviewed three different times. His skill with sign language was outstanding.

B. High School. The principal was informally interviewed once. The interview was not productive of useful information, however, since he suggested that we tape record what turned out to be a philosophical discussion of many events unrelated to this study.

C. Lower School. One administrator, the only male adult in this school, allowed one tape recorded interview and two subsequent sessions where shorthand was used.

D. A top administrator in the vocational school was twice interviewed.

E. The top administrator in Special Studies was interviewed once.

II. Teachers (=23)

A. Lower School. Four teachers. These women work with children who enter the school with little or no language. All four of them have many years experience at SSD and one of them is a parent of a deaf child.

B. Middle School. Five teachers. One of these teachers had a deaf child and another one was deaf herself.

C. High School. Six teachers (three males and three females). There were two deaf teachers in this group; one was prelingually deafened and the other was postlingually deafened. Her speech was quite good.

D. Vocational School. Six teachers. There were four males, two females, and two deaf teachers interviewed in this group.

E. Special Studies. Two teachers. One was deaf and the other one had taught many years at SSD.
III. Students (N=32)

A. Lower School. No students were interviewed in this school because of their youth and language limitations.

B. Middle School. Five students; 4 males and one female.

C. High School. 27 students; 13 males and 14 females. This group includes 5 day students, three cheerleaders, the homecoming queen and the most popular boy in high school.

D. Vocational School. Several students were interviewed inside the vocational school, but these have been categorized as "high school" students (above). One day a teacher failed to attend his classroom and I was asked to "babysit" a group of 5 males. I used the hour to interview two of them.

E. Special Studies. No students were interviewed in this school although I asked six to eight different students questions during the classtime or whenever classes changed. Sometimes a teacher would tell me about a student's ideas or behavior and would encourage me to ask the student about it myself.

IV. Houseparents (N=6)

A. Lower School. Most houseparents were interviewed at night time after the students were asleep. Two houseparents (one deaf, one hearing) who kept the young (lower school) children were interviewed.

B. Middle and High School. Four houseparents; one was hard-of-hearing and all others were hearing people.

V. Staff Members (N=11)

A. These nine females and two males consisted of secretaries, former teachers (now working in offices on other programs) and four nurses in the school's infirmary. There was also a psychologist and a communications specialist as well as two parents of deaf students. Five of the eleven were interviewed twice.
III. Students  (N=32)

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B. Middle School. Five students; 4 males and one female.

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VI. Townspeople (N=7)

A. A city official was interviewed for one hour (short-hand notes). Three store clerks were questioned for 15 minutes each as well as one barber and two workers in a local restaurant.
VITA

The author was born in Eastman, Georgia on August 31, 1934. His primary and secondary education was received in the public schools of Dodge County, Georgia. After graduating from Eastman High School, he completed studies in a local business school, worked for three years as a bookkeeper followed by ten years as a barber. In 1956 he married Barbara Ann Davis of Cochran, Georgia and they have two sons, Jeffrey and Gregory. Eleven years after high school he earned an Associate of Arts degree at Middle Georgia College in 1964. He then received a diploma in theology after three years of study in the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (1967). Afterwards, in 1969, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Louisiana State University in New Orleans. Then in 1971 he earned a Master of Arts degree from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. The field work done for the master's degree focused on the socialization of deaf youth in a residential school. During this time period he also served six years as a minister to the deaf and, simultaneously, as a prison chaplain for thirteen months. Presently his work with deaf people spans more than fifteen years. His own moderate loss of hearing requires the usage of two hearing aids.

Since 1971 until the present the author has taught sociology and anthropology at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. During the period 1971-1979 he did field work among Southern Cheyenne Indians of Oklahoma, the Navajos (six months), seven Mexican prisons and
Tzeltal (Mayan) Indians in Chiapas, Mexico. He has published work in the areas of deafness and prisons.

Since 1979 the author has pursued graduate study at Louisiana State University majoring in sociology, specializing in the sociology of education and minoring in deaf education. He is presently a candidate for the terminal degree of doctor of philosophy in sociology.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Abbie Donald Evans

Major Field: Sociology

Title of Thesis: The Social Construction of Reality in a Total Institution: An Ethnography of a State Residential School for the Deaf

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

November 19, 1982