

Rome – a Temporary Deaf City!

Deaflympics 2001

by

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Abstract

The texts in this publication, *Rome – a Temporary Deaf City*, is based on fieldwork done in Rome, the summer of 2001, where the quadrennial Deaf World Games were held (now called Deaflympics). This fieldwork is the first one within the anthropological project «Global Connections in Deaf Worlds». The research team from Stein Rokkan's Centre for Social Science Research in Bergen consists of Jan-Kåre Breivik (hearing anthropologist), Hilde Haualand (deaf anthropologist) and Per Solvang (hearing sociologist). By the time we went to Rome none of us were experienced in doing co-fieldwork during such intensive events. The ethnographic paths were actually made while walking through the streets of Rome. Following a short introduction, the first text, by Breivik, is about some anthropological challenges related to fieldwork in non-conventional settings. The second one, by Haualand, is a description of how Rome gradually changed into a deaf village within two hectic summer weeks – and then, all in a sudden, disappeared. The third text, by Solvang, is a comment upon Haualand's text. He is in particular focusing upon particular episodes, during the Deaflympics, which points towards nuances in deviance discourse (in which deaf life is also a part of). The fourth text, by Breivik, focuses on the close connections between deaf sports and transnational deaf life. It is in particular the team-sports, such as soccer, which are put in front. The final text, by Haualand, is a summary and a kind of location of Rome/Deaflympics within the broader project. Here, we invite our readers to participate in the project. This can be done by commenting upon and posing question towards the project, the researchers and our texts, and by proposing changes or revisions. You are also invited to supplement and broaden our work by providing us with your observations and considerations. This project is strongly user-oriented, and we are therefore inviting deaf persons to participate. We are in particular looking for deaf persons with experiences from the transnational deaf scene, but we are not excluding anyone because of this.

This publication is also available in Norwegian and on the Internet. You can download the texts (in both languages) from the project-website:

www.deaf.linator.com. Here, you will also find more information on the project and different ways to reach members of the research team.

Foreword

This publication exists in two versions, one in English and one in Norwegian. It contains texts in two languages, English and Norwegian. All of them are related to an anthropological team-fieldwork in Rome, the summer of 2001, where the 19th Deaflympics was held. The term Deaflympics is a fresh one and not thoroughly implemented yet. We are therefore also using the old term DWG (Deaf World Games) in addition. The coming games (from the next one in Sweden 2003) will officially be called Deaflympics, with acceptance from IOC.

The uppercase D in Deaf (in contrast to deaf) denotes, in the words of Markowitz & Woodward (1978), individuals who in addition to having a significant inability to hear, identify themselves «by choice» to be members of the Deaf community, subscribing to the cultural values, norms and ways of that group. Today, however, the terms and distinction are not only confusing, as Fjord (1996) states, «but in a constant state of flux within the deaf community» (1996:66). This is the main reason why we're not adhering strictly to the established practice of using this distinction. It should be possible to read from the text and its contexts when we're focusing on the cultural (deaf hood) or the audiological (medical) aspect of deafness.

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The first text, by Breivik, is about some anthropological challenges related to fieldwork in non-conventional settings. If you're not interested in methodology, you should rather skip this one. The second one, by Haualand, is a description of how Rome gradually changed into a deaf village/city within two hectic summer weeks – and then, all in a sudden, disappeared. The third text, by Solvang, is a comment upon Haualand's text. He is in particular focusing upon particular episodes, during the Deaflympics, which points towards nuances in deviance discourse (in which deaf life is also a part of).

The fourth text, by Breivik, focuses on the close connections between deaf sports and transnational deaf life. It is in particular the team-sports which are put in front with soccer as a case.

The final text, by Haualand, is a summary and a kind of location of Rome/Deaflympics within the broader project: Transnational Connections in Deaf Worlds. Here, we invite our readers to participate in the project. This can be done by commenting upon and posing question towards the project, the researchers and our texts, and by proposing changes or revisions. You are also invited to supplement and

broaden our work by providing us with your observations and considerations. This project is strongly user-oriented, and we are therefore inviting deaf persons to participate. We are in particular looking for deaf persons with experiences from the transnational deaf scene, but we are not excluding anyone because of this.

The texts are, partly because of this, published in a somehow unfinished fashion. The texts are furthermore not direct translations between Norwegian and English, or the other way around. They may therefore differ in nuances.

The texts are also published on the Internet, at the homepage of this project. www.deaf.linator.com where the options for direct comments and contributions are plenty. Here, you will find updating, corrections and the running comments to these texts.

Literature

Fjord, Laura Lakshmi (1996) «Images of Difference: Deaf and Hearing in the United States», in *Anthropology and Humanism*, Vol. 21, No. 1.

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Doing Transnational Fieldwork: Methodological Challenges¹

Jan-Kåre Breivik

My thesis, *Deaf Identities in the making*, is not based on traditional ethnography. I have in particular «failed» to do «long-term» fieldwork – the traditional virtue of good anthropology. «Contextual depth» is one of the supposed outcomes of such fieldworks – and one of the main aims of anthropological research of whatever fashion. I fully embrace this aim myself, but I do question «long-term fieldwork in one localised setting» as the most appropriate research strategy in this pursuit. The key challenge in reaching such depth – is not necessarily related to length – but to context and relevance. Finding or constructing the relevant context(s) in which one wants to understand a phenomenon, is all but simple. But it is, nevertheless, highly important. The «local context» which is traditionally facilitated by «being there for a prolonged time» is one such construction, which channels certain observations and certain interpretations – and blocking out others. This is also true when it comes to other ways of contextualisation – as in transnational, multisited studies. The challenge is thus to engage in the construction of appropriate fields (including the virtual spaces) that one can justify as the most relevant to the research phenomenon one is dealing with.

First of all we have to question the constructed normality of people as settled, bounded and strongly patterned in terms of culture, which is also inherent in our preconceptions of «the field». If the people or phenomena we aim at understanding challenge our preconceptions of expected regularities, we should rather renew our methods and engage in innovative approaches suited to the situations at hand. Our inherited mental and physical maps of a geography where different people are clearly located could then be rendered invalid. There is by now a growing recognition of a «changed context of ethnographic work». This is very well demonstrated in Gupta and Ferguson's book *Anthropological Locations* (1997) where they write about «the lack of fit between the problems raised by a mobile, changing, globalizing world, on the one hand, and the resources provided by a method originally developed for studying supposedly small-scale societies, on the other». This misfit is also observed by Olwig and Hastrup (in *Siting Culture* 1997), when they are calling for new methods based on novel insights related to diversity of spatial practices (1997:1).

The relevant field for understanding a particular social phenomenon, lets say a linguistic minority, should hence not be taken for granted. A focus on different «spatial practices» is, on the other hand, allowing us to engage in the «shifting spaces» of relevance to the people one is doing research among. This is particularly important when long-term fieldwork at one place can be misleading. This lecture is thus about fieldwork. It is connected to the work I have done in the deaf field and my recent

¹ This is the written version of my first lecture, which was held the day before I defended my

following-up study – on «translocal and global connections in deaf worlds». As an empirical example I am in particular using experiences from a short-term team-fieldwork in Rome this summer –in order to illustrate some methodological challenges. «Contextual depth» is certainly sought, but how this might be achieved should be discussed. One thing, which is clear, is that the methodological guidelines from traditional ethnography are not very helping. I do also believe that some of these guidelines would lead research astray – and make us lose sight of contexts more relevant to the cultural practice of community- making and identity -formation at hand.

But first I will touch upon the prevailing orthodoxy in anthropology – which is related to a fiction of doing fieldwork the Malinowskian way. This kind of fieldwork has been modified and criticised for years, and as many other contemporary anthropologists working under the «changed context of doing ethnographic work», I work differently. My main aim is therefore to join into the current discussion on the necessary renewal of anthropological methods and ways of approaching social phenomena.

A prevailing orthodoxy?

This lecture is thus also, I should admit, an attempt at putting my research into the centre of anthropology. This is felt as a necessity, because of the way in which my research project has been met within the anthropology department – both explicitly and implicitly. I have been met with much sympathy and backing (especially from my supervisors) and the project has certainly been rendered interesting. But there have been too many «buts». One dimension of the felt marginality has been related to my main choice of method; namely «collaborative work on life stories from deaf subjects» but also to the fact that my research topic was quite inept for classic fieldwork. The fieldworks I, nevertheless, have been engaged in can best be described as ad-hoc, short-term and scattered. My project was thus representing a kind of «thorn in the flesh» of traditional anthropology, in terms of both topic and method. The sense of being committed to a marginal project within anthropology did also occur to me with force when a senior colleague of mine said to me that the Anthropology Department, could allow themselves to have one of my kind, but not more than that. «*In order to remain distinctly anthropological we have to stick to what we are best at.*» By this he clearly meant long-term fieldwork in a localised non-western community.

So despite all sophisticated debates within anthropology (on multisitedness, transnational connections and hybrid identities) there is still a practice of division between those doing anthropology «proper» and those doing interesting things at best, cultural studies» (as the demonic other) at worst (Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Amit 2000). The proper (and idealised) thing is still, by and large, to do long-term fieldwork at faraway places – in small, localised communities – as my colleague indicated. This is

doctoral thesis in social anthropology.

also the central credo in a recent article in the Norwegian Journal of Anthropology from another senior anthropologist from Oslo. The author, Signe Howell, is strongly concerned about the future of anthropology because of a recent and «noticeable shift in both geographical and thematic foci of many young anthropologists in Norway.» (Howell 2001: 146) «From engaging in long-term participant-observation in unfamiliar settings where the task is to seek a holistic understanding (...), many anthropologists (nowadays) become dependent upon sporadic and thematically delimited interaction», she writes. And she asks, worried: «*How far can we divert from the traditional anthropological ideals before we lose the unique ethnographic contribution?*» Not very far she suggests. I would go pretty far, but I must, at the same time, admit that I appreciate a whole lot of Howell's Malinowski-inspired recommendations. Especially the one where she, with reference to Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (1922), stresses that each phenomena must be studied through its broadest possible manifestations in many different contexts, in order to reveal underpinning values and principles (Howell 2001:18).

It is precisely the broadness of manifestations and the plenty contexts of relevance to a phenomenon that is the challenge – which to me implies openness towards transnational connections, narratives and multi-sited fieldwork – all in order to reach contextual depth. Howell does however not engage in a careful discussion on adequate contexts for research. On the other hand, she is more or less resorting to traditional orthodoxy and defends Malinowski's more clear-cut recommendations related to «living with the people one studies», preferably in local households, for a «long time», and to engage in «interaction through the local language». These virtues may be worthy of a defence – but as she elaborates upon it – it becomes obvious that she defends a tradition in which «the exotic» and «different» defined as being «far away» (*fjerne strøk*) is imposed as central to, not to say defining, the discipline. This is a position, which insists on the existence of a world in which relatively isolated cultures/people still exists– quite unaffected by global forces and transnational practices.

The contemporary blur of clear-cut distinctions between the here and there, the native and the foreign and the homely and the strange, should guide us in being cautious in this «new» and maybe global «terrain». «Remote areas» as Ardener (1989) insists, is not a question of geographical distance – but of our imaginative and visual recognition of foreignness and homeliness. So – if the search for difference and exotica is central to the anthropological discipline, and that deep understanding through «cultural chock» is necessary, one does not, as Howell recommends, have to travel far.

The search for «cultural difference» (and otherness) can thus be done anywhere and not only at faraway places. Judith Okely writes in her book «*Own or other culture*» (Okely 1996) about this – and on how «familiar territories» such as Europe (for Europeans – NB) have been established as a non-anthropological region – due to its supposed lack of shocking experiences and radical differences. By reflecting on ethnographic experiences in her own «backyards» Okely strongly questions these

suppositions, and she renders the established common-sense representation of cultural differences in terms of geographical distance as pretty invalid. I would add, in line with the main lead in my thesis, that cultural similarities can and do occur in context of geographical distances. Some people do, thus, by their less settled spatial practices, question taken for granted aspects of our constructed territorialisation and regionalisation of cultures and people. As Okely states: «Gypsies destabilises the theoretically and empirical presumptions of regional territory» (1996:3). This is because of their global presence and translocal spatial practices. The practice of deaf social bonding is in a similar vein pointing in the same direction. And if one adds migrants, refugees, gays and lesbians and other more or less travelling or unsettled people – the destabilising potential is massive.

The deaf case

The practice of deaf social bonding and identity formation, is related to a widely experienced reversal of understanding cultural sameness/difference among deaf subjects – different from what hearing settled people regularly believe and to which orthodox ethnography subscribes. In my thesis I have in particular been concerned with deaf life stories. Within these stories I found interesting aspects of a strong translocal drive where identity conforming aspects were strongly connected to the reported praxis of communication with people that did not (regularly) live in their co-presence.

What counts as culturally close or own can thus not be taken for granted – as ontological dwelling in co-presence. One key feature in my research is thus related to observed weak territorial anchorage points in relation to present residences, neighbourhoods and biological families (and place of birth). The sense of belonging is then very much related to travelling away from this and moving towards temporary arrivals at occasions where communication is less restricted, through the visual sign languages. The visual improvements within the new technologies have, in addition, made it frequently more possible for deaf subjects to stay in continual touch with each other in contexts other than face-to-face co-presence. These changes are thus supporting their already translocal style of life.

This is related to the demographic features of deafness. Most deaf people are born into hearing families. These families represent a world they seldom will experience as their own. Engagement in diverse strategies of passing and pretending has for many deaf subjects been counterproductive – and strengthened their sense of being different (as failures). The sense of liberation and joy when introduced to a signing community and experiencing the «companionship» and «sharing» described by many, is then introducing positive flavour to this difference. The «discovery» of one selves as deaf and positively different is also paralleling the experiences that many gay and lesbian subjects are reporting to have when «coming out». These are important turning points, where deaf subjects come to re-value central aspects of life. And they

are thus, gradually becoming engaged in a differently figured world that somehow supports these newcomers' desire and hunger for social life as «real communication». The communicative basis for community-making is thus put in the foreground and the communication partners are often more likely strangers than known «familiar» faces from the neighbourhood, in which they happen to live from day to day, or in the network of family/kin they have been born into.

Deaf identities and communities are thus quite weakly patterned and circumscribed by dangers and uncertainties. The routes towards a deaf identity are therefore, as I elaborate upon in my thesis, diverse, fragile and uneasy. Common and identifiable stableness and regularities in deaf lives are thus hard to establish. The everyday life in a hard-to-sign (hearing) environment where many deaf subjects are «settled», raised and positioned (most of the time) – do hence not contain the key constituting elements of belonging. Identification and belonging are thus more connected to projecting, longing for, planning and performing deaf communal life beyond this – at temporary occasions. Conscious efforts in making such occasions appear, through active involvement and planning, is thus becoming central. The sense of be-longing is thus connected to the places and occasions where visual communication is practiced. This could be the Deaf Club in town, or other occasions or deaf spaces not too far away.

This is *one* key aspect. But, since the number of deaf Norwegian signers is quite small (4-5000), there is also an aspect of narrowness and restriction comparable to what exist in other small communities. Being different (in terms of sexual orientation, style of being or way of thinking) is thus a problem – «here» as well. The travel away is thus also related to escaping this narrowness by expanding one's social networks: This is done by travelling abroad – to transnational crossroads and by joining the global «community» of signers. This is not a new feature of deaf life, but a tendency that is growing to the extent that it is now fully legitimate to speak about deaf people as part of a transnational movement.

In the new project in which I am engaged, we are more fully devoted to these aspects of deaf life and transnational aspects of communication and community-maintenance. The first fieldwork in the new project can thus serve as an exemplary case for a debate on challenges and opportunities in doing transnational ethnography.

Deaflympics in Rome – a short-time team-fieldwork

We (the research team) started out in the middle of July this summer, doing fieldwork at one of the strongest mobilisers within the transnational deaf world, namely the 19th Deaflympics in Rome, Italy. About 4000 deaf athletes from 80 countries (from all world regions) gathered in the pursuit of doing their best in sports and in order to strengthen their social networks. As one of the deaf boys at the American Soccer Team expressed: *My first goal is to acquire new friends, and secondly – to win the gold medal!* By this he expressed a widely observed and demonstrated concern among the athletes.

These athletes were further joined by a huge group of staff, together with an unknown number of deaf supporters and tourists from all over the world (about 20000?). In addition to those in physical presence at the Games, other parts of the global deaf communities followed the great happening through Deaf Magazines (electronic, video or paper), different deaflympic-websites, and through e-mails and text messages from friends at the spot. The event did thus mobilise a huge proportion of the deaf world – and the social/cultural impact of such a transnational arrangement was very well demonstrated and experienced.

I came to Rome a few days before the opening of the games, waiting for my co-researchers to arrive and engaged in the meantime in some preparatory work, fetching the tickets, getting to know the transportation systems, walking in the city in order to get a sense of the city as a tourist. And all the way I was engaged in deaf-spotting – in order to get a sense of how the city gradually changed into a field where sign languages flourished – into a temporary deaf city. We were three researchers present. It was I, the hearing anthropologist, with some elementary sign language skills and some experiences in the global practice of visual communication. The second one was Hilde Haualand, a deaf anthropologist with massive competencies in different sign languages (among them ASL) and with personal knowledge of the global features of deaf life. And finally, it was Per Solvang, a sociologist with no previous knowledge of signing and with few interactional experiences with deaf people. As a mixed team, we did thus represent some interesting differences, which we chose to exploit methodologically:

- the «naive» and «slightly ignorant» first impression (Solvang)
- the perspective of a half-way insider and half-way outsider (Breivik)
- the gaze of a supposedly «native» anthropologist (Haualand)

In addition to these different perspectives, we focussed also differently in terms of themes. Haualand had a specific attention towards the phenomenon «deaf tourism», Solvang with a comparative outlook on deviance/ difference, and I was concerned with the cultural aspects of Deaf Sports – and followed in particular the American Soccer-team throughout the tournament. With this rough division of research-labour, we started out conducting fieldwork, sometimes all together, but also one by one. We did also use e-mail and sms throughout the fieldwork – in order to co-ordinate the moves of the research team and in order to stay in touch with informants and making new appointments with them.

We did also produce informative handouts on the project, including its rationale and ways to reach us, the research team. These were distributed in the city at central Deaflympic spots. By means of this and by means of continual face-to-face presentations of the project, we got in touch with many different kinds of deaf «transnationalists». This included deaf Romans, the American Soccer Team and other athletes, top leaders of the international deaf sports organisation, deaf volunteers and tourists from all over the world. We were also in frequent touch with deaf Norwegians, whom we knew from «back home» (among them four of the storytellers presented in

my thesis). We have thus, by now, around 60 highly interesting informants, and we are staying in touch with them through e-mail and Internet chat, and many of them will be approached again at other transnational spots throughout the extended research period. By means of this design and the fieldwork in Rome, we did also managed to arrive at some key areas of interest (to us and to our informants). These topics, as they appear in our field-notes, are pointing in many directions and provide surface sketches of the hectic social life in Rome – this particular summer.

With our three mobile bodies and six eyes (and hence from different angles and through different but complementary details) we were able to observe the dramaturgy of the Games and engage in a whole range of activities and encounters during these days in Rome. On a generalised level we observed a gradual move from an international competition agenda towards a kind of transnational brotherhood practice. The «international» feature of the official program and in the Opening Ceremony was prominent. But in the days after the opening ceremony we could clearly witness a gradual withering away of «national» supporter-teams, and the growing feature of one mixed transnational deaf community. This was most visibly demonstrated at the social evening-gatherings which were gradually both more crowded and more lively. The visual aspects of this re-new brotherhood was also demonstrated at the Closing Ceremony where different «nationalities» mingled behind «other nations'» banners in a colourful mix – and as such a clear indication of a breakdown of the international agenda.

We could also observe a huge mismatch between an official and phonocentric spirit (the Pope's paternalistic welcoming speech, and hearing pop-music in the Opening Ceremony) and the practice of a strong deaf culture through the practice of visual communication and transnational orientation. The massive dislike of the Opening ceremony was quite easy to sense and to get comments upon. And by observing and conversing with different deaf persons we feel quite justified in saying that there was a massive strengthening of transnational competencies during the Games among both those accustomed with transnational deaf life and those on their first or second trip. The frequent practising of International Signing and/or American Sign Language and the strong will to break communication barriers, could be observed and experienced during the Games – at different spots; outside of Coliseum, at the piazzas, on the tram or at the different sports arenas in central Rome. As the days passed by and the communicative visual practice flourished, it also became obvious that this event was a key opportunity to acquire girlfriends, boyfriends, lovers, soul mates, friends and/or partners. The hectic exchange of e-mail addresses, chat-identifications and mobile numbers was really noticeable. And the social bonds established, maintained and renewed at this occasion were thus a central feature – which clearly extended into the future.

The establishment of different social bonds at such a hectic deaf space-time is particularly interesting to investigate, and especially related to the opportunities to be able to stay in continual touch through the new technologies. It is also interesting to see

how these different relationships are activated in everyday life at «home» and contributes to an extension of social networks transnationally and a differently experienced every day life «in the hearing world». This is however impossible to get a grip on through a 14 days fieldwork. Such fieldworks must hence be extended to include other research strategies and long-term engagement must be sought by other means.

Now, with this brief sketch in mind, how shall we understand this kind of fieldwork in the face of orthodox or traditional ethnography?

- We stayed there for a short time. But: Could we have stayed longer?
- Any deep sense of place was thus totally unattainable. Which Rome did we really witness?
- We did not live in any local household. Where should that be? But, on the other hand, we lived and socialised as many other did
- And we did not speak the local language – because there was no single or local language to speak. There was a multitude of languages present, signed, spoken and written, and we simply had to cope with our different competencies.
- We could not just wait for things to unfold, – we acted more vigorously in order to hijack informants and to make our research known (in many ways a kind of behaviour similar to our informants – getting the most out of it in short time)
- And we did continually use electronic communication in order to cope (and again, we simply did as our informants did)

So – by this short-time fieldwork, which is differing from expected ethnographic practice, we did in some ways, violate the Malinowskian ideals (presented by Howell earlier in this lecture). The one ideal which we have not violated, however, is maybe the most important one. This is the previously mentioned understanding that each phenomenon must be studied through its broadest possible manifestations in many different contexts, in order to reveal underpinning values and principles. And we would stress that it is precisely this broadness of manifestations and the many different context of relevance to the phenomenon «deaf social bonding» that has brought us into this transnational field with multisites, global forces and cyberspace.

A new framework for ethnographic research?

The experiences we have gained from Rome are then hardly deep, in a traditional ethnographic sense, but they have served as important points of reference to our research and we are drawing heavily upon them in our continual work. Most of all, we are following up the interesting group of informants acquired in Rome – by means of ICT (e-mail, Internet chats) and future face-to-face encounters. We are, furthermore, about to build a project web-site, where our informants (and other deaf subjects) are invited to take more active part in and on the research (as a way of locating of our informants in virtual space?). In the face of all this we do not feel to comfortable with traditional ethnography and the methodological guidelines developed within this

tradition. These are too preoccupied with long-term fieldwork at a particular place, preferably far away and with face-to-face participant-observation. A whole lot of anthropologically interesting research project does not fit into that scheme of thinking – and we are, therefore, in line with Sarah Strauss, who has been involved in another area of transnational practice, looking for «a new framework for ethnographic research» (Strauss 2000).

Her project is of particular interest in this setting, because she originally sat out to do fieldwork in line with the ethnographic traditional. She was about to do research into the practice of Yoga at a chosen spot in India, but the field did not materialize as she expected. Instead she found herself «following threads and trails of people, publications and practices that together told a story». The single site in which she started, Rishikesh in India, as a «strategically selected locale» turned also out in due time to be «insufficient to describe what was going on in that place – especially in terms of yoga» (Strauss 2000: 166). She was thus drawn into the process of «(re) constructing the field» with rather few ethnographic guidelines. And one of the problems she arrived at was that there was a multitude of possible pathways to chose – to do the necessary broadening of her research.

In terms of methodology she writes: «the study of yoga has forced me to examine how we as anthropologists ought to constitute the object and circumscribe the location of our research, that is «how we construct the field». To construct the field is therefore an act of methodological orientation and interpretation at the same time. A single-site approach is therefore just one of many possible field-constructs – and not necessarily the best one.

The construction of the field must thus take into account different types of considerations. First of all, it must be guided by the phenomena one wants to explore – and recognition of the inevitable partialness of any perspective. It must hence also take into account the methodological and epistemological consequences of the global/transnational flows of persons, things and ideas. The decisions about which «leads to follow» are thus hard and sensitive ones – and, certainly – a too fleeting, eclectic and multisited research strategy can result in bad ethnography. In my work there is thus danger of becoming a surfer on the surface of deaf transnational life – and the aim of reaching contextual depth withers away. But, I will stress again that with a long-term single-site approach we could have been even worse off.

Liisa Mallki, one of the contributors to the renewal of ethnographic work, questions the obsession with stableness and durability in anthropological inquiries and she asks, «what do we do with fleeting, transitory phenomena that are not produced by any particular (recognised) grammar?» (Mallki 1997:87) In her answer to this key question, she puts forward phenomena such as the freak occurrences and the impermanent, which are phenomena which are hard to «localize as objects of field research». By choosing to focus on durability, observable patterns in-place and regularities, anthropology thus tends to engage in a subtle normalising practice. Internal variation tends to slip away and the boundedness of groups/places becomes

reinforced, unfamiliar networks tend to be under-analysed or not seen at all and the impact of «foreign» or «strange or freak» occurrences will be of secondary interest if at all. It is as if «the desire to establish clear-cut categories and to create an orderly field of study has led anthropologists to downplay cultural diversity or to brand it as abnormal» (Olwig and Hastrup 1997:2).

In a hearing anthropological gaze, single deaf subjects can thus be rendered mute, dumb or as isolated and cut-off from society, or more precisely as disabled locals. The result of such ignorance can thus be that the ethnographies produced will reinforce internal normalising practices operating within the populated space of research by simply replicating the «local» hierarchical priorities and definitions. This can imply justification of disabling practices and, in the deaf case, contribute to a sedentarist version of phonocentrism. This is thus, also related to a general problem, described by Olwig and Hastrup «that people who are mobile, and therefore not immediately present in the research site while the ethnographer is paying his or her fleeting visit, have often been ignored» (1997:5). If not ignored – such movements and absences are often looked upon as peripheral to social life – and as a special and temporary phenomenon.

In line with these scholars I would insist that this qualify for a request of a renewal of methods in anthropology. I would therefore strongly argue – that contextual depth – must first of all relate to a careful discussion on which contexts that are the most relevant ones – and in the case presented above – this can hardly be Rome as such. The important thing for us was however to be there – because of the occasion – and grapple with the specifics of Rome in terms of transportation, getting tourist-like glimpses of Coliseum, Pantheon etc, – and to follow the different streams of deaf life enfolding within this short time span. With this, we have tried to be temporary immersed in the occasion in similar ways as our informants did. And when they left to their different everyday lives, we left as well. The long-term quality of our ethnography must hence be fashioned differently, by our attempts at staying in continual touch through available means – most noticeable through cyberspace – and probably also face-to-face, at future crossroads.

For me, and my present research team, this have implied a research design where we engage in a series of short term multi-sited fieldwork in team, and an exploration of the use of cyberspace for maintenance of social bonds, and collection of narratives of different kinds in order to enrich and thicken the ethnographic description. Narratives of events (such as the Deaflympics) are in our perspective not seen as opposed to our observations of the same events – but as providing alternative and complementary perspectives upon the same. Such narratives are further looked upon as constitutive in their own right – because of their importance in shaping a «community of memory» (Malkki 1997) that is connecting to a wider translocal field of belonging – in which deaf identification must be understood. In short, we are trying to move towards a relevant kind of holism by taking into account the diversity of contexts, sites and occasions that

shape deaf transnational experiences. These contexts are highly global, translocal and multisited.

This research is thus involved in different «tracking» strategies, as George Marcus (1995:95) describes as ways or modes of materializing multisited ethnography. We are then following the tracks of people, partly by moving physically where they move, and virtually through co-presence in cyberspace. We are also following the plots and metaphors revealed in the (life) narratives of deaf subjects – which in fact moved us into multisited ethnography in the first place (which in fact also tells about what metaphors do – they move and evoke). One of the anxieties, that this kind of move «toward multi-sited», give rise to, writes Marcus (1995: 100), is related to a «concern about attenuating the power of fieldwork». Howell's worried question, which I cited the beginning of this lecture is an example of this.

I would, however, reframe this question – as a kind of open closure to this lecture. *How far can we divert from the traditional anthropological ideals (Malinowskian-inspired orthodoxy) – in order to strengthen and broaden our unique ethnographic contribution?*

Thank you very much for your patient attention!

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The two-week village: A deaf ritual

Hilde Haualand

Viewing the Deaf World Games (DWG) as a ritual, containing both aspects of liminality and symbolic potent symbols, the potential for sacredness as well as myth making connected to the DWG is evident. The powerful symbols included the Olympic inaugural and closing ceremonies, statements from the participants where they announce that being at the DWG is like «being with the family» and the intensified visibility and encounters of sign languages. The actual time span of the Games, which gives the participants a very definite and restricted time to gather new friends, acquaintances and experiences, makes it a very intensive event, somewhat disconnected from the everyday rules for social behaviour that apply at home. This structure, including the liminality and the separation of home/away is considered essential to the tourist experience, because it allows us to translate the attendants or «tourist into a sacred world, where s/he is transformed or renewed and then turns him or her back to normality. (...) The normal rules are in abeyance (if not actually reversed), and replaced by Turner's close and egalitarian 'communitas'» (Brown 1996:35).

In this article, attempts will be made to describe some of the people, processes and transformations that took place during these two weeks. The main focus will be with the deaf tourists – with their plurality in experiences and appearances during the antistructural communitas of the DWG, strongly inspired by Turner's analysis of pilgrimages as social processes (1974:166-230). Also, there will be a discussion of the DWG as a ritual containing *inter-national* as well as *trans-national* aspects, as well as a ritual uniting the presumed distinction between the elitist aspect of the Olympic Ideal (*citius - fortius - altius*) and the broadly acclaimed social aspect of the DWG.

Arriving Rome

As always when arriving at such spaces as the Deaf World Games or other gatherings drawing large numbers of deaf individuals, my mind was immediately set to find other sign language using people. I was instantly searching for quickly moving hands in the crowds of people, a very effective way to catch other deaf persons, due to the visibility of sign languages. But this time, I was bound up holding one child tightly in each hand, to make sure they would not be lost in the swarms of travellers and natives in Rome. I was unable to just spontaneously wave my hands and ask «Deaf?» when I saw people communicating in sign language. Arriving Rome and staying there one night with my family before the games opened, gave me a golden opportunity to just observe all the people I otherwise perhaps would have encountered right away. Except for their signing hands and getting oriented by sharp, trained eyes, they were not much different from other tourists, with their uniform of shorts, solid sneakers, T

shirts, maps and at the central station Termini, also with their big suitcases or backpacks. The first signed conversation I got a glimpse of, was between a guy that seemed to be a local and two women with a little child, with several suitcases and bags at an overloaded baggage trolley. The local explained, with very clear international signs, the location of a place where one, as far as I understood, could get more information about the games. This was the day before the official opening of the games, and the density of signers was still low. Not before reaching the Spanish Steps, I got the glimpse of more deaf persons, consisting of a couple aged fifty-something. They were Americans, as far as I could see from their signs, and I saw her signing to him «Okay, now we have seen the steps, now let's go somewhere else», and they soon disappeared in the dense mass of tourists by and on the Spanish steps. Later the same night I saw a group of deaf athletes at the crowded Piazza Navone, but I was not able to see where they came from. After waving my family good bye the next morning, I was ready to be a part of the society that I witnessed the previous night – and which flourished in Rome the next two weeks. Observing signing people three times in a few hours is not a normal occurrence in the everyday life of most deaf or hearing people. But those three instances were nothing compared to what was to come. Within a few days, signing people could be seen everywhere all the time, and a similar process as one outlined by Breivik (2001) took place. He describes how he on his journey to the Deaf World Congress in Brisbane, in 1999, witnessed the frequency and density of sign language use increased at every stop made on his way to Australia.

Reforming Rome

The signing people gradually became more visible in Rome. As more and more spectators arrived, they also increasingly left their mark on Rome. There were deaf people at the trams, at piazzas, in the streets, in all the different city parts where the sports areas were located and at all the cafés Rome is famous for. The city did not only get a different visible feature, the density of deaf people could soon be noticed in the way the servants and the waiters treated their deaf guests.

The first few days, most waiters just looked somewhat confused and puzzled in their attempts to communicate with their deaf clients or guests. Attempts to ask for the price or the bill with our hands was, albeit understood, not responded to in a way that was comprehensive, as they responded by mere shouting out numbers or questions in Italian or English. But within few days, many servants had improved their visual communicating skills noticeably. Rather than barking out the prices in lire, they now showed the prices in fingers, and a pen and a piece of paper were quickly made available if gestures were not enough. The mayor of Rome, Valter Veltroni, suggested in his greetings to the participators in the official guide of the Silent Games, that the very presence of those «physically disadvantaged» in Rome was an «occasion for all of us to enrichen our moral luggage» (Deaflympics 2001: 13). But one must question whether the acts of excellent service from the numerous waiters in Rome really were

symptoms of their high moral. Since most deaf tourists also paid for the drinks and food, and also gave some tip, it is more reasonable to say that the waiters' raised awareness in how to communicate with deaf people ran out of commercial interests. As deaf people are not very physically disabled when it comes to eating, the deaf guests would not come back if they were experiencing less than good service. They were there as tourists – and by this being the ultimate consumers. Seeking and gathering sensations, Bauman (1998:81-83) points out, is the first goal of a consumer in a freewheeling postmodern world where material resources and things are too tangible to give the thrill that a sensation or a mere desire can do. Experiencing Rome and the countless myths and sagas of the eternal city included visits to the famous piazzas and the cafés, and the waiters were there to serve the visiting consumers, deaf and hearing. Rome was partly and temporarily transformed into a Deaf Village, where deaf people were visible and many enough to gain rights and services they often can't claim or experience at home without being viewed as demanding or «difficult». Events such as the DWG allows the participants, often unconsciously, to participate in a «play world» (Holland et al 1998) of deaf people, where it is possible to pretend that the product is authentic («as if»). This is even if, or maybe just because the agents know that this play or its product is of limited durability. Had the play world of a deaf village that emerges during the Games been of extended durability, or a stable state, the symbolic effect and emotional involvement would have been of a quite different quality².

It is as if the Games is a centre, or goal for a journey, which is «invested with too much potency to survive prolonged familiarity: the contemporary pilgrim ... gathers strength and illumination from the experience, and moves on elsewhere» (Brown 1996:40). But the art of play, Holland et al (1998:238) point out, «has a spectrum of effects: new genres are created and recorded in the durable media, old ones are refigured, and new worlds and new identities are created». Even though being both distant and liminal, an event like the DWG might provide the delegates with fuel for further identity agency and negotiation. The connections and friendship bonds that were both created, revived and strengthened during the games, certainly was a crucial part of the strong sense of transnationality at the DWG. But this was not evident from the start, as the symbolic rhetoric of the opening ceremony shows.

The opening ceremony

If transnationality implies that countries, nations, states, regions or places of origin are given subordinate roles in social interaction, this is not the right concept to describe the opening ceremony. It was given a very Italian flavour because of the conflicting information that was given on the exact time for the ceremony, the delays and all the

² This perspective first of all applies to deaf people who do not live in or near extended deaf communities as i.e. Gallaudet University. The impact of seeing and meeting so many other sign language users as during the Games in Rome, may not be as strong to Deaf people meeting other sign language users on a broad and everyday basis.

technical problems. After waiting for more than five hours for the opening ceremony to start, the spectators could finally witness the athletes starting their file into the huge Stadio Olimpico. Following the Olympic tradition – with a deaf twist – France were first in line because they hosted the first DWG in 1924. Then the other countries followed, one by one in alphabetical order, and the filing terminated with the host nation Italy as the last nation to enter the stadium.

An Italian Barbie-look-a-like television star was hired as a mistress of the ceremony and gave comments as the nations passed by. To much despair and quite a lot of hopelessness on behalf of the local organizing committee, these comments were not made available for the deaf part of the public, nor for the deaf athletes. The international interpreters that were displayed at the large screens on both sides of the stadium were for long periods not able to hear anything of what was going on in the stadium. If they by chance were able to hear something, one could be sure that the screens themselves did not work properly, with large black dots covering crucial parts of face and hands.

Partly because of all the technical difficulties and the problems to get some intelligible information from the formal ceremony, the spectators had a vivid social life at the stand. In stead of being frustrated from trying to pay attention to a programme that seemed to be best suited for hearing Italians, the public started to get to know each other, which for many probably was one of the primary reasons for their trip to Rome this summer. However, most were seated country wise. A row of about 20 young Norwegians sat next to a large Greece contingent with their flags. A very spirited supporter team from Sweden was continuously cheering and waving a few rows down, and the Danes were not far away either, with their characteristic red and white outfit. Several crowds of Americans could also be seen wearing and waving the Stars and Stripes. As the athletes' delegates passed by, different groups among the audience raised and cheered the delegation from their own country. The national groupings among the public also reflected how the athletes entered the stadium, each neatly grouped with their own countrymen and –women, with the national colors very visible. When the official part of the opening ceremony ended, with intense symbols like white doves, balloons in the Olympic colors and a deaf athlete lightening the Olympic fire, the international spirit was vibrant. This was despite the problems to get a grasp of which messages the local organising committee had tried to give. The message was clear, the inaugural rite united the colours of the world for the purpose of peace and unity between the attending countries during the DWG, but also initialised a state of temporary geographical concentration of the otherwise scattered deaf world.

Temporary concentration: opportunities

This concentration gave an occasion to shape, reshape and celebrate cultural aspects within the deaf community. It was an opportunity to articulate imaged cultural differences between deaf and hearing/non-signing people. The games gave a chance

for making the imagined deaf community into a temporary very visible one. This, in turn, provided the members of this community to establish an 'in-between' space between their own imagined community and the people *beyond* this imagined community – in this case – hearing Romans. This 'in-between' space, or meeting place thus became a «terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, and contestation, in the act of defining the idea of society itself.» (Bhabha 1994:1-2).

The members of the deaf community were during the games able to collectively spell out the figured differences between them and non-signing people, since they for a rare occasion were of a number that could not be overseen or erased out by a non-signing majority. The hearing encompassors were physically faced with the numerous «deaf ways» of life and communicating, and a complementary relationship emerged between the athletes and spectators of the games and the non-signing inhabitants or visitors in Rome. The way the servants eventually changed their services to their deaf guests, was just one example of acknowledging in public the distinct communication mode of sign language users. Another effect was how our hearing cohabitants at the research institute where we lent rooms took the presence of all the signers as an occasion to ask about deaf people and sign language in general. They were, like the servants, given a brief and perhaps learning insight into the deaf community and some of its characteristics, of which the transnational aspect is just one of many.

These features, the drastic increase of signers who were there to meet each other and at the same time made their commonality very visible, and the strict temporality of this increase, challenges two profound premises about the anthropological field. The first anthropological «truth» – «that 'home' is a place of cultural sameness» (Gupta and Ferguson 1997:32) is provoked by the presence of all the signers who so overtly states their commonality and joy of meeting other Deaf people, who are far away from their every day homes (Breivik 2001). Being in Rome was like «being with my family», as i.e. gold medallist and swimming star Terrence Parkin from South Africa stated. Going to Rome did in this instance not mean going to see the «other», but to meet those like «us». Being away from home – or being in quest for the «other» is considered a characteristic feature of tourists, but in this case one can question who were the «other» and who were «us». Another «truth» that is being put under trial, is the notion of the *geographical place* as the site of origin for the features that are of anthropological interest during a fieldwork. It is impossible to grasp the underlying social processes during the games by referring to Rome as such, or to the culture or history of Rome and Italy. The field in question here, is not Roma as a place, but the «cluster of *embodied* dispositions and practices» (Clifford 1997:199) that happened to be in Rome just these two weeks in July 2001. The city, the traditions, history and culture of Rome certainly had its impact on the experiences made by the attendants to the DWG, but must still be understood as a backdrop for the presentation and negotiation of the deaf selves that took place during this temporary gathering. The deaf community could be perceived as a global city, which «is not a place, but a process. A process by which centres of production and

consumption (...) are connected in a global network, while simultaneously downplaying the linkages with their hinterlands, on the basis of information flows» (Castells 1996:417). The *centres* of this community move constantly, by the ever-shifting locations of the large transnational events like the biennial DWG and the quadrennial Deaf World Congresses.

The tourists: Getting there

Nevertheless, the DWG was this time located to Rome, and some travelling was necessary in order to get to this temporary deaf space. People had been traveling to Rome in numerous ways, and with a variety of motivations beyond the desire to meet other signers from all parts of the world, and perhaps to get a sight of Rome. Many of the young people we met, made a prolonged stay in Rome during their interrail trip, which was to continue after the games, some were even making a stop in Rome on their once-in-a-lifetime travel around the world. Two buddies from England drove their empty trailer all the way from England via Dover-Calais, through Paris to Milan and finally Rome. Some comrades from Lithuania and Russia had stuffed themselves into a Lada, and some of their mates from East Europe could be observed making earnings to cover expenses in Rome by selling self made paintings and other knick-knack. Hordes of North Americans and Europeans had been coming in with either regular or charter airplanes or buses, on an individual basis or by tours organised by deaf associations, deaf travelling agencies³ or by private persons. People were accommodated in everything from tents at a camping in the outskirts of Rome, five star hotels to a bunk bed in the home of a more or less familiar acquaintance in or nearby Rome. The numerous ways of travelling and accommodation very well reflected the variety in both age, country of origin and socio-economic status of the tourists.

Who were there?

The games did by no means last long enough to get a deeper knowledge of each other, neither for the fieldworking anthropologists nor for most of the participants. However, this does not have fatal consequences for the validity of my observations or arguments. Viewing the games as a liminal stage or a play world for innovative and experimental strategies of selfhood and the society, I will not claim that the roles played by the agents during the DWG should be taken to represent their personality or identity as such. The journey to the games strongly resembles of a ritual of pilgrimage, which «liberates the individual from the obligatory everyday constraints of status and role. (...) He is no longer involved in that combination of historical and social structural time which constitutes the social process in his rural or urban home community»

³ Travel agencies making special advertisements directed towards deaf people or arranging travels/tours exclusively for deaf people exist in several countries, among others in Denmark, Norway, USA, Costa Rica and Germany.

(Turner 1974:207), and the roles performed during the games do not necessarily reflect the roles and statuses possessed at «home». The roles and the types we met are rather perceived as representations and symbols for the variety and diversity among the attendants of the games.

Like Turner, I view the tourists – or pilgrimages – as «symbols of totality» (1974:208). The participants did not only come from different countries from all over the world, they also had a variety of reasons for coming and chose various strategies in their journey through the social space of the DWG. In sum, they are seen as representing the ‘communitas’ that emerged during the Games, in which the social structure is not completely eliminated, just radically simplified (p196).

The two Americans by the Spanish Steps were as mentioned earlier, «collecting» sights in Rome. This could be seen as an extreme outcome of the search of «authenticity» that drives the tourist to continuously seeking for new places, and where «his brochure provides a ceremonial agenda, which he follows more or less ‘religiously’» (Brown 1996:37). Perhaps not being as determined in their quests for sights as the Americans, but still in Rome also for the sake of the city itself, were the groups of friends in their thirties, who rented an apartment in a northern part of Rome. They were anxious to see the Colosseo, Forum Romanum, the Vatican and other famous attractions. In their rented apartment, they were able to try out home made Italian dishes, but living close to the centre of the city, they were also able to enjoy a coffee or a glass of red wine at a piazza if they wanted to. At the same time, they were careful to be spirited supporters for the athletes representing their country, and had brought flags and other outfit in national colours. Their activity shifted from exploring ancient Rome and traditional Italian food to being patriots on behalf of the country they lived in, but also very important, they were frequent and eager visitors to the main area for night time social activity during the games, the Foro close to Stadio Olimpico. Their purposes for going to Rome and the

DWG were clearly multivalent, and this is a feature they indeed shared with most of the participants. However, different weighing was given to the different activities, as seen in the behaviour of other delegates.

The cosmopolitans

Another kind of player at the stage of the DWG in Rome, was a cool Danish dude, who made a very hip impression with his High Street branded sunglasses and well trimmed pointed beard. Even though often surrounded by good-looking girls, he seemed to be very little affected by their presence. He seemed to be living at the edge of the games, by never showing up at any social event until the atmosphere was at the peak. He was only occasionally seen with his country fellows during the competitions, and he was never seen wearing or carrying any colours that could resemble of any national patriotism. He lived by a friend’s place in Trastevere, along with some other equally laid-back people from several countries, in the hottest *riani* (city part) in Rome. These

cosmopolitan friends had in common that they had long experiences in both travelling and living in other countries than where they were born (some had been studying at Gallaudet University), and had learned to know each other as a consequence of this mobility. They all knew several sign languages (all knew ASL), and several were excellent international signers, too.

A couple of American girls even utilised the DWG as part of their world travel. The games were a marketplace for purchasing names and addresses to people they could live at, at the remainder of their tour. This resembles of the network of Esperanto speakers, albeit being less formal. A very superficial conclusion is that to this group of attendants, both Rome and the international competitions were of less interest than the social life, which had its peak at Foro every night. All the people mentioned here were, it seemed, representatives of a global elite, with the resources to travel wherever they want, any time. The CISS and FISS volunteers, who did everything from computer punching results, selling tickets and making video reportages, also seemed to be of this elite, but among these, several did not have the economical, only the communicative resources, to participate actively at the games. As Bauman (1998) points it, those 'high up' are characterized by their high «degree of mobility – their freedom to choose where to be» (1998:86). Their distinctive non-national outfit resembles another cosmopolitan feature, the urge to not be too readily identifiable (i.e. as supporters) within a crowd of participants (Hannerz 1996). Also, cosmopolitanism is a matter of competence and the Trastevere clique, the volunteers and the backpackers possessed the linguistic and cultural knowledge needed to move on with ease within the transnational deaf network, without being locked to a certain nationality or one specific sign language.

The hard-of-signing

This contrasted somewhat to a couple of friends from England, who both were rookies at this arena. None had received education in sign language, their mastering in both English and British Sign Language were poor and their heavy oral luggage made interaction with non-Britons constrained. But their drive to meet and interact with other signers appeared to be strong, and one of them systematically picked up new signs and tried to get in touch with the people they encountered. They eventually seemed to succeed in making new acquaintances, but were at the same time much more restricted or bound to a British oral tradition, in their attempts to meet other people, than the earlier mentioned cosmopolitans. A survey conducted among deaf and hard of hearing young people in Norway in the fall of 2001, also showed a gap in degree of international interaction among those who had received education in sign language and oral languages respectively. Among the sign language educated youths, 2/3 reported that they had been travelling abroad in order to meet other deaf people, while less than 7 % of the orally educated youths reported the same (Grønningsæter and Haualand 2002). Further investigation is needed to find out how national education and welfare policies influence opportunities to participate at the increasingly

important global arenas, as it can seem like deaf (and perhaps also disabled) people are especially vulnerable to education decisions made on their behalf, early in life.

The supporters

The games had its spirited national supporters, too. Some of the countries, with the largest contingents of athletes, also brought official supporter leaders. The size of the supporter teams varied grossly both in numbers and visibility. However, during the competitions, they highlighted the nationalities represented in the competitions and left no doubt about the games being an *inter*-national event. Most of the supporters, like the group of friends in the rented apartment, put away their flags and national colours after the competitions. A few Vikings with horned helmets, Bavarians and high-spirited Yankees could, however, still be seen wearing highly visible national colours and flag cloaks even at the nights at Foro. What several of these had in common was their ability to make fun of themselves, to great joy and amusement for their spectators. As for the cosmopolitans, these explicit supporters were also excellent international signers. Some were supporter leaders at daytime, and seemed to have no time or need to take off their supporter uniforms by night. They were giving the Foro an international flavour by clearly showing which country they lived in, but were at the same time among the most contact seeking and relation builders across both nations and social layers.

In their quest for new experiences, sensations and friends, the DWG attendants were travellers and pilgrims to a site both different from home and of limited durability. The role of Rome during the games gives only one example of the difficulty of defining the role of the destination or goal for travel. In one manner, the eternal town was an accidental backdrop for the temporary village of sign language users, of which many were there only to meet new friends and watch sports, as probably was the case for the most visible supporters who continued to wear their uniforms at night. However, to several of the signing villagers, the mythical eternity of Rome was in itself an important incentive to travel to the DWG this summer, like it was for the friends in the rented apartment and the American couple. Different weightings were given to the various activities and this shows that «tourism is, indeed, a multivalent activity» (Selwyn 1996:6), and cannot easily be analysed in terms of home/away work/leisure and us/the other. Leaving ones' geographical home behind for a while, implied meeting other people like oneself elsewhere, and did not automatically lead to a sense of being «away». Solvang is asking (in this volume) if the DWG can be compared to a national championship in the «Deaf Nation» and that this is aspect should be investigated further.

But what nonetheless was at stake was the authenticity of both own experiences (the senses) and the surroundings (the world that is «as if», or the myth). The traveller, or tourist «is after both authentic social relations and sociability (with would certainly include an authentically 'good time') as well as some sort of knowledge about the

nature and society of the chosen destination⁴» (Selwyn 1996:8). If the Games provide an innovative terrain for elaborating the self and identity as deaf – or represented a liminal stage – the social relations and sociability during the Games will perhaps be of a more experimental kind than at one's geographical home. At the same time, some rules for social behaviour are highlighted or intensified, in order to strengthen and underline the myth of the Deaf community.

The walk over victory of the American Team when it was discovered that one of the Iran players wore a hearing aid could be an incidence of the stricter rules on hearing (aids) that comes into function during such a mythical event. The 55 dB rule (see Solvang for details) might be explained and defended with a fair play perspective, but can also be seen as a definite border against the world that is left behind during the rite of the Games. Wearing hearing aids or hearing better than 55 dB becomes a taboo for the athletes at the games, a rule that cannot be broken without fatal consequences (exclusion from the games and/or deprivation of eventual medals won). Here we see the duality of *play worlds*, «its freedom is as contained as its discipline. Both depends upon the authority and power which establish the possibility that is also the boundary, the space of possibilities, that holds play apart from ordinary life» (Holland et al 1998:239).

The Olympic Ideal and the deaf community

Since most of the athletes were restricted by strict team curfews, they were not able to socialise much with the tourists of the games, certainly not at the beginning when few had finished the competitions. Comments from former athletes indicate that there is an invisible border between the athletes and the tourists at the games. The different groups did not only differ in degree of freedom or scheduling, but also slightly in their goal for going to the Games. Both certainly wanted to meet new friends and socialize with deaf people from all over the world, but they had different arenas and times for these activities. It could thus seem like there were two different worlds at the games, with the athletes and official delegates in one, and the spectators and tourist in the other. The tourists met at the stands, at the caffès and at the nightclub at Foro, while the athletes met at the hotels, before and after the specific competitions at the sport fields. But as more and more athletes had finished their competitions or had been defeated, athletes could also be seen at the prime nighttime meeting place, the Foro. The density of people increased every night, and Foro gradually became the prime meeting place during the DWG both for the tourists and the athletes. The two worlds gradually became one, and South African silver medal winner from the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000, swimmer Terrence Parkin, made a statement, when coming from him, elegantly united the Olympic ideal of *citius – fortius – altius* and the outspoken joy of meeting and making friends with deaf people from all over the world.

⁴ I here primarily view the Games themselves and the social life surrounding these as «the destination», not Rome as such.

Terrence Parkin made a metaphoric relation between the athletic achievements and the sense of being at home among ones' equals that many overtly expressed. Parkin officially announced that he had chosen to attend the Deaf World Games rather than a world cup swimming contest elsewhere, because being in Rome was like *being with his family*. Being a world-class swimmer, he broke several DWG-records during the Rome DWG, and his statement of being with here with his «family» was visibly acclaimed and appreciated. Being both an outstanding athlete and a «true» deaf person (by announcing his membership in the Deaf family in fluent international signs), he personalized not only the vibrant sense of *communitas* (Turner 1974) of the Deaf community that could be sensed through the games. In addition, he also used a symbolic language with parallels to the Olympic Truce, which underlines *the spirit of brotherhood* that shall be prevailing among groups and individuals all over the world during the period of the Olympic games⁵. By using the family metaphor, both Parkin and the IOC make a moral statement. This kind of metaphor (Family of Man (Lakoff and Johnson 1998:317)) provides «the crucial step for moving out of the family to a universal morality [and] entails a moral obligation, binding to all people, to treat each other as we ought to treat our family members» (ibid). Being family, or akin to each other, also implies a sense of sameness or equality. Parkin did thus not only say that he felt like he was a part of the worldwide deaf family, he also stated that he was *like* them. So when he at the same time made outstanding Olympic achievements, the entire deaf world (his *family* or *equals*) was metaphorically lifted to higher levels, too. Some call this empowerment (Fosshaug 2002), but it also has its parallels to newspaper journalists reporting that «We won!» whenever a national star athlete or team gain international sport victories, as if the entire nation were involved in this achievement. The importance of the Olympic games, as well as the Deaf World Games «is the hyperbolic expectation to exceed all limits, break all boundaries and burst all formats, to reconfirm biannually that the human condition is to transcend its own condition» (Berkaak 1999:51). By his very presence and his former achievements, combined with his family statement, Parkin for a short time transcended the entire deaf community.

The closing ceremony

Not alone because of Parkin's statement, but also because of the intensified social interaction with other signers, it was a transcended community who again met at the enormous Stadio Olimpico on August 1st. The 19th DWG terminated with a closing ceremony, which in organisational chaos reminded of the opening ceremony. But the processes and the social mingling that had taken place the previous weeks, certainly had its impact on the life at the stands. Two weeks earlier, a large crowd of young Norwegians had shared the frustrations of not getting the faintest idea of what was going on at the stadium field, but this time, the same people were scattered around at the stand, mingling with people from all over the world. I myself was sharing the

⁵ <http://www.olympic.org/ioc/e/facts/truce/>

sweet melancholy of knowing that this enjoyable liminal state was soon to end with two friends from the USA, which friendship had been revived during the games, a young Slovenian girl, a couple of notoriously flirting Italians and a some other people of which country of origin had no significance. Most used international signs, some were strongly influenced by ASL, and many made sure to exchange all contact information to be sure they would continue staying in touch. As during the opening ceremony, the spectators talked more with each other than they did watch the ceremony.

But only a short glimpse was necessary in order to see that the neat national filing that had characterized the opening ceremony, was replaced by a disorder of nations and delegates that reflected the transnational mix that also had taken over at the stand. The athletes just walked into the field, in one large crowd, and everything was completely out of control. But no one seemed to care, we all were, after all, one big happy family, and all was eagerly waiting for the ceremony to end, so we could go to the Foro for a grand finale of the intense social life we had been involved with the past two weeks. At the last night, Foro was filled up with athletes, tourists, interpreters, professionals, official representatives, the cosmopolitans, the nerds, the supporters and everyone else that had been attending the Games, which now had come to an end. The tense was magic, everyone talked with each other, and all seemed to have a great time. What had opened as an international event, in order to celebrate both outstanding sportsmanship and the *spirit of brotherhood*, had been fused into a transnational family, where other differences were rather insignificant. It was, beyond doubt, a celebration of the beloved deaf community.

Leaving Rome – the vanishing village

As the unfolding of a deaf village could be witnessed the day before the games opened, the journey home gave an equally strong feeling that the same village was vanishing. The last morning, I encountered quite a lot of signers on my last minute souvenir shopping, before I stuffed my clothes back into my suitcase and headed for the train to Fiumicino Airport. Some sign language users sat on the train, and I was happy to see some friends from Norway at the airport. However, they were booked at another flight, so I was to travel home alone. At the gate lounge, a couple of young deaf Britons were also waiting, but I was too tired to make a reasonable conversation, so I did not reveal to them that I was deaf. I slept most of the time at the plane from Rome to Heathrow, and never saw the deaf co-travellers again. At Heathrow, waiting for the plane to Oslo, I was all of a sudden surrounded by hearings only. There were no communicating hands visible, and all were just a crowd of real strangers. I felt dissolved, and it was like the sign language community in Rome just had vanished, just as sudden as it had been unfolding two weeks earlier.

The egalitarian and existential relationships that had been developed and maintained during the games were again replaced with the too well known structure

of every day life. The structure, «which hold people apart, defines their differences, and constrains their action» (Turner 1974:274) was once again dominating, and the 'web' of power of the (mostly unconscious) hearing majority was for a moment unpleasantly clean and crisp. And again, a parallel to Turner's pilgrimage is close. Attending events such as DWG can be viewed as a piece of participation in a kind of «sacred existence, with the aim of achieving a step toward holiness and wholeness in oneself» (1974:208). It is thus conceivable that this «formation» desired by the pilgrims eventually lead to a «more intense realization» (ibid) of deaf culture and its core values. By this, the ritual of the DWG gets consequences for the deaf community, far beyond the actual time span of the games themselves.

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Decibel, deviance and culture

Per Solvang

During the fieldwork in Rome the three of us discussed our experiences daily. Our discussions developed considerably when we after a few days began to make fieldwork notes every morning of what had happened the previous day. Our discussions of these made it very clear to us that especially Hilde and I had an eye for very different issues and phenomena. I was fascinated and curious about things that were a matter of course to Hilde, not in her role as anthropologist, but as a person with a life long involvement in deaf settings. In my presentation and discussion of my experiences I have stressed this different perspective I partly represented. It can be labelled as that of the astonished hearing person, for the first time in social settings dominated by the deaf, and trained in disability studies and sociology of deviance.

Measuring deafness

During the games I became curious about the definition of deafness. Who is able to participate in the World Games? The answer is primarily given in medical terms. To be recognised as deaf the athlete must have more than 55-decibel hearing loss (Stewart 1991). This is measured as an average through the frequency range. This means that a person with no ability to hear sounds in the lower frequency ranges can have an average loss of more than 55 dB, but still be able to understand a spoken conversation. But a person in this situation will hardly have any interest in using sign language and participate in deaf settings, at least because of the person's hearing loss. Despite this possibility, rare as the condition is, the definition of a deaf athlete is primarily a medical measuring of the level of bodily non-function, supplemented by the not obligatory criteria of cultural belonging and sign language competence.

This construction of deafness supports the understanding of the deaf as disabled. A central component in the disability category is the measurement of who is defect enough to gain rights to privileges (Stone 1984). Through the history of the welfare state, medically defined losses of ability have been the means for distributional decisions. This tradition is prolonged by the deaf, despite their critical stance towards understanding deafness as pathology. I was told that the 55 dB question was heavily discussed, but the lack of alternatives is the reason for keeping up with it, according to the informant I talked to. But why are there no accepted alternatives? This question, I believe, is interesting in relation to how the tension between a disability and minority framework is played out among the deaf.

CISS, The International deaf sports organisation, has debated the issue on how to define a deaf athlete. The condition «socially Deaf» has been suggested. In his analysis of this discussion, Stewart (1991) points to the problem that defining a person as socially deaf cannot be «independently verified. Hence, an audio logical criterion that

offered a high degree of objectivity was agreed upon.» (Stewart 1991: 23). This rhetoric is very close to the definition of disabled persons by the welfare state. Measuring of the body by the use of mechanical instruments is preferred in order to grant admission to scarce resources. The problem here is that alongside the medical (and audio logical) definition of difference, one can find an understanding of the body as defect, as an object for treatment. In addition, 55 dB can also be interpreted as a question alongside doping, among both hearing and deaf athletes. This was highlighted in the football match between Iran and USA. In the middle of the second half an Iranian player got hit by the ball on the side of his head. It was then revealed that he carried a hearing aid. The referee stopped the match immediately. USA won on walk over. The players on the USA team meant this reaction was too strong, according to them an expelling of the player with hearing aid would have been sufficient. The mates on his own team gave him a scolding, as far as I could observe.

Stewart (1991) discusses the issue of hearing aids in his book on Deaf sports. A first problem is the damage they can do to the body, i.e. when the ear is hit by a ball. But most important is the symbolic meaning. It represents a symbolic adaptation of a deaf person to the hearing and speaking world. And this is not what deaf sport is about, also because many deaf do not gain any hearing improvement with technical aids. Deaf sport is about deaf athletes competing on equal terms.

I observed another example of the doping question outside Stadio Olimpico. There was a sign saying «hearing tests». I was told that this was a studio where some athletes were taken in for a test. There had been episodes where athletes had brought false audiograms from their home countries. The test equipment at Stadio Olimpico measured mechanical responses in the inner ear. With this it is impossible to give false responses. This brings in medicine and disability again. Medicine became the core field of knowledge just because it was able to measure the body without relying on what the person in question tells (Stone 1984). The deaf have taken great care in distinguishing themselves from disability by not wanting, for instance, to be involved in Paralympics. In Deaflympics (the new name on the World Games) it seems to me as if participants with a certain level of hearing ability, or as users of hearing aids, are targeted as cheaters. But the way they are defined, are as non-disabled. This is also the issue in Paralympics. In the Sydney games in 2000 it was revealed that the Spanish basket team for the intellectually disabled had players with normal IQ levels. This was looked upon as cheating because some players weren't regarded as disabled.

I will conclude the discussion of measuring deafness by asking if the deaf by the «55 dB hearing loss» demand is furthering the perspective on them selves as disabled and bodily defect, a perspective, which in other settings is recognised as oppressive both to deaf people and to disabled people in general (Oliver 1990). The issue about the definition of a deaf athlete exemplifies that discussions on deafness is basically always implying questions about sound. Sound has also other meanings in deaf discourse than medical measuring of hearing abilities.

The absence and presence of sound

One day a rumour was spread through SMS that deaf people were going to meet at the Planet Hollywood restaurant and bar. Hilde snapped this up and in the evening all three of us in the research team were on our way. At Planet Hollywood in Rome there are two bars and one restaurant. After a while we sat down in the large downstairs bar. Hilde and Jan-Kåre got in touch with a lot of people. My communicative skills in signing are poor and I concentrated on observing what was happening around me. People were easily getting in touch with each other. I could see people communicate between different parts of the room, though the music was played rather loud. The music was one of the styles I find most enjoyable, classic basic rock'n'roll by performers such as The Rolling Stones, The Pretenders and The Clash. It was easy to enjoy the music because spoken language was almost absent, as the majority of bar guests were signing only. I reflected upon the fact that a lot of themes in the majority culture give very limited meaning to a person born deaf.

An example that came to my mind was the beloved novel *High Fidelity* by the British author Nick Hornby. An important theme in this book is popular rock music and all its connotations and related social practices, such as behaving in a record store, making compilation cassettes for friends, judging people by their taste in music, etc. These main ingredients in the novel are of very limited relevance to the deaf. Practises related to popular music are of course subjects known to deaf people, but the knowledge lacks the important relation to the sonic meaning and quality of music.

Without music, a party by the deaf is a lot more silent than among hearing people. All three of us in the research team went to a party hosted by the next organisers; Winter Deaflympics 2003 in Sundsvall (Sweden) and Summer Deaflympics 2005 in Melbourne. This was a gathering intended for deaf people only, so background music was irrelevant and the organisers had not set up a disco. Several hundreds of people were gathered outside, partly in large tents. People enjoyed themselves, with signed conversations, eating and drinking. For me as a hearing novice in the deaf world the silence was astonishing, because it was so many lively people in sight. It reminded me about watching a movie with the sound turned off.

Even if I discuss sound in terms of presence and absence, I am trying to focus on the *meaning* of sound. My idea is that sound is relevant to deaf people, because deaf people are a part of the larger society where sound is of prime importance in the construction of numerous social practices. One example is popular music. In this way sound is not absent for deaf people. At the same time sound is also of limited relevance to deaf people, a kind of absence. Many deaf people focus on the visual. They use the visual to communicate and to establish meaning and sense of belonging. This is strongly visible to the novice in settings totally dominated by the deaf, such as the reception party mentioned above. In mixed settings, where a large number of hearing people also were present, deaf people's involvement with sound seemed to me somewhat different. This was the case among the football team supporters.

The football and volleyball matches I attended were not silent. The supporters of the teams made a lot of noise. They were banging with empty plastic bottles. At football matches the German supporters was guided to sing «Deutschland, Deutschland». It was also a lot of screaming and making of sound when one of the teams had a goal, or was close to get one. In an audio logical perspective this can be understood by the fact that a lot of the supporters had various degrees of hearing abilities, ranging from deaf people with an ability to hear some sounds, to hearing people (mostly the team member's relatives). But the sound issue has a wider meaning than making noises or not. I was discussing the questions of sound with Hilde. She referred to an interesting discussion among deaf people concerning body sounds. Some deaf people believe that body sound has no relevance to deaf people. This means avoiding knowledge about norms for body sounds, such as the widespread taboo status of smacking one's lips when eating, and belching, and the possible positive connotations to sounds made when i.e. snapping ones fingers. Other deaf people want to know these norms, and then decide what to do in specific situations.

Sound is also a hot issue in discussions about deaf peoples involved in the performing arts, both as artists and fans. Many deaf people have been brought into sound related activities such as folk dances. Some have pointed at famous pop groups that serve as teen icons, and meant that they should be idols for the deaf too. Others oppose that deaf people will have any outcome of relating to sound based activities and idols. If deaf people shall gain confidence and be proud, one should focus on art forms where the visual abilities are of greater importance, as in pantomime, painting and sculpture (Breivik 2001).

Adjustment to the majority

Deaf people mostly find themselves in a minority situation, and have to adjust to sound based social environments. In gatherings such as the DWG this is different to a certain extent. Many settings are totally dominated by deaf people, and even in the streets of Rome deaf people were easily spotted. This calls for adjustments among the hearing people present, especially for those of us with no competence in signing. Personally, I found that I changed my bodily style when communicating during the fieldwork. I noticed it myself, and it was commented upon. I started using my hands when talking, especially when deaf people were present. I did not rely solely on the others' lip reading of me when talking to deaf folks from Norway.

At several occasions I observed bartenders and servants adjusting to their guests. The bartenders, at Planet Hollywood and at the reception (mentioned before), started to use simple signs and written messages. At the reception, where there was no music, I even noticed a silencing of the bartenders. They stopped using their voices, at least partly. Another incidence happened a night when the research team went to a restaurant with a group of eight deaf people. We sat down outside, in the tourist area of the restaurant (the Italians were inside). Our waiter had no knowledge of sign

language, but started to flirt with some of the girls with great confidence and his willingness to go into communication with deaf people was remarkable. He also made a lot of jokes, took it out on us and fooled around with a coin trick. We were far away from thinking about the people around the table as a group of pitiful handicapped people who were dependent on their helpers and assistants, as addressed by the Pope in the program booklet for the games (Deaflympics 2001).

Abandoned Modernity

I have been to two world congresses of sociology. The first were in Madrid in July 1990, and the second I attended were in Montreal in 1998. One common denominator was the flair of abandoned city I experienced. Montreal was at this time in recession. Therefore, I was told, conference facilities and hotels were cheaper than in comparable cities, and affordable for sociologists from all over the world. In Madrid July is hot, very hot. The university campus, where the congress was held, was deserted, and none of the seminar rooms had air condition. One soon found out why a long summer break was necessary for the Spanish students, especially when coming from the cold north.

This experience of abandoned modernity I also had at the World Games. July in Rome is at least as hot as in Madrid. And it is holiday time. As the Spanish students, the Italian athletes do not use their arenas, at least not the outdoor ones and those indoors without air condition. Just looking at a football match in the sunshine was out of the question for me. Deaf athletes were running as fast as they could in the same sunshine. A parking lot outside one football arena and the adjacent volleyball arena were empty with the exception of some Romani people in campers, another marginal group, but in the summer heat able to use the parking lot as home ground. When it comes to huge international gatherings sociologists and deaf people are to a certain extent comparable. Neither of the two has command over large economical resources. For gathering purposes they have to rely on what I have labelled abandoned modernity. The facilities of the modern society are available to the groups on the margins at certain times of the year, and in certain areas of recession.

Not all the places used by the deaf were deserted on beforehand. At the world games there were examples of more active takeover operations by the deaf. The bar at Planet Hollywood was expecting business as usual the night mentioned, but was crowded by deaf people. My impression was that at least the downstairs bar was abandoned by hearing Romans. I was told that this had happened at comparable large deaf gatherings. Some café or bar soon emerged as *the* meeting place for the deaf, and could stay so for the whole gathering. At the world games, the bar at Foro mentioned by Hilde served as the main meeting place. The takeover of Planet Hollywood was for many only a start before going to the Foro bar. The organisers of the World Games had established the bar at Foro. At other gatherings in the deaf world, when no such meeting place has been made, the takeovers of ordinary bars were much more widespread than in Rome.

The nationality issue

Why are Deaf World Games organised? Many hearing colleagues asked me in what way the deaf was disabled in sports, especially individual sports. The answer I gave was that deaf people do not have any bodily defects limiting them to win medals in sports such as cycling, tennis or swimming. One of the silver medallists in the Sydney 2000 Olympics was deaf, and was attending the World Games in Rome as well. His idea about attending this was, as Hilde points out, to be among his own folk.

We can then take as a starting point that deaf people want to perform sports and meet each other on deaf terms, where signing is normal. But the nationality issue is still there. The Deaf World Games is imitating the Olympic games by the way the competitors represent their home countries. Maybe the World Games can be said to represent a national championship, where local parts of the country to a certain degree compete. The nation of the deaf is made up of deaf from the nationalities they share with hearing people. These analogies are far from perfect, but I find them interesting. They would be worthy of further investigation, in order to shed light upon the relation between deaf identity and national identities. Hilde Haualand's account of the difference between the opening and the closing ceremony is interesting in this respect. After two weeks, national identities were played down and the deaf collective was more in the forefront.

I introduced this text as a report from the hearing person unfamiliar to deaf settings. This is mainly reflected in the perspective I present. Most of the subjects, such as who is deaf, sound, adjustment to the majority and nationality are debated heavily also among deaf people. In this way, I believe the issues I address to be of significance to deaf studies.

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Deaflympics and the social role of Deaf sports

Jan-Kåre Breivik

The drama that was played out in Rome during two hectic summer weeks, described by Haualand above, was mobilising huge portions of the deaf world. That is beyond doubt. One can, however, wonder if anything else than sports would have been equally mobilising. My answer is both yes, and no. On the one hand, it is obviously so that DWG/Deaflympics function as a golden opportunity for mass assembling (as do the World Congresses and national and regional cultural festivals) – and the interest in sports could hence be vicarious. On the other hand, it is no coincidence that sports arrangements have a key position in deaf worlds.

In the following I will present a short sketch of how deaf sports have emerged – particularly in an international and transnational perspective. I will look into the team-sports, in particular soccer, and their historically important role. There will be a focus on the team-sports present and precarious situation in many deaf communities/countries. The absence of Norwegian and English soccer teams in Rome are, in this perspective, interesting cases. This is followed up by observations from the soccer-tournament in Rome, as a side-drama to the Deaflympics as such. This will contain perspectives from players as well as spectators.

Deaf Sports History: The World Games and the growing interest

Deaf World Games (DWG), now Deaflympics, have a long history, starting before the first games in France in 1924.

In the years prior to 1924, international sports were given little importance by young deaf people. Indeed there were very few national federations to provide sporting competitions for the deaf. Mr. Eugène Rubens-Alcais, a deaf Frenchman, worked very hard to encourage six official national federations, then in existence, to accept the idea and to take part in the International Silent Games, a deaf version of the Olympic Games. At the first games, held in Paris between the 10th and the 17th of August 1924, the participating nations were – Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Great Britain, Holland and Poland (Also competitors from Hungary, Italy and Romania, where there were no official national federations took part.) The competitions at the first Games were held in the disciplines of Athletics, Cycling, Football, Shooting, and Swimming. Following the success of the Games, enthusiasm was high for the continuation of the Games to be held every four years.⁶

This became the practice, and every fourth year there have, with few exceptions, been Deaf World Games. In 1926, CISS (the international deaf sports organisation) was formally established and the next DWG was held in Amsterdam. Four years later, in 1931 in Nuremberg, more countries (14) were represented, among them Norway. Later

⁶ Based on extracts from articles by Antonie Dresse, founding CISS Secretary-General, Jerald Jordan, former CISS President, and from CISS Bulletin, and fetched from the CISS web-site.

on, this has escalated. As the table below shows the numbers of nations and athletes have steadily increased from one game to the other, with a kind of breakthrough in 1993, Sofia, with more than 50 nations and approximately 2000 athletes present. This tendency was further strengthened Copenhagen in 1997 and particularly in Rome, 2001, where about 80 nations and approximately 4000 athletes participated. In Rome there were also more representatives from south and east than ever before – but still not to the extent that the proportions were satisfying. Both the games and in particular CISS are still quite Euro-American. There is no good overview on the numbers of supporters and tourists, but it is reasonable to believe that these numbers have increased dramatically as well.⁷

THE SUMMER GAMES 1924 – 2005

Date	Place	Nations	Athletes
10-17 August 1924	Paris, FRA	9	145
18-26 August 1928	Amsterdam, NED	10	210
21-24 August 1931	Nuremberg, GER	14	316
17-24 August 1935	London, GBR	12	283
24-27 August 1939	Stockholm, SWE	13	264
12-16 August 1949	Copenhagen, DEN	14	405
15-19 August 1953	Brussels, BEL	16	524
25-30 August 1957	Milan, ITA	25	625
6-10 August 1961	Helsinki, FIN	24	595
27 June-3 July 1965	Washington DC, USA	27	697
9-16 August 1969	Belgrade, YUG	33	1183
21-28 July 1973	Malmo, SWE	32	1061
17-27 July 1977	Bucharest, ROM	37	1468
23 July-1 August 1981	Cologne, GER	32	1663
10-20 July 1985	Los Angeles, USA	29	1648
7-17 January 1989	Christchurch, NZL	32	1469
24 July-2 August 1993	Sofia, BUL	51	1900
13-26 July 1997	Copenhagen, DEN	57	2078
22-July-1 August 2001	Rome, ITA	Ca. 80	Ca.4000
January 2005	Melbourne, AUS	?	?

- The table has been copied from CISS's webpages.

⁷ The winter games, starting in 1949 is far away in size, both in respect to number of athletes

The DWG history is also closely connected to the history of the transnational deaf movement as such, in more than one way. First, the early dating of the initial games shows the strong presence of organisational mobilisation (organisations of – not for) characteristic of deaf environments, and that they, in comparison with for instance most organisations for/of disabled people, have been particularly early on this arena. This holds for both national settings as well as on the international or transnational scene (see Lane et al 1996).

The fact that such games are organised by the deaf themselves is also indicating the peculiar deaf position outside regular hearing society, in terms of culture, sport and language, but also outside the (hearing) disability field. Deaf persons do hence not participate in Paralympics (which is a more recent construction)⁸ or, in any great degree at ordinary (hearing) sports events, such as the Olympic Games and World Championships. There are exceptions, however, among them the deaf superstar, the swimmer Terence Parkin (see Hualand's article above) who not only were impossible to match (by the other competitors) in Rome, but who could also display his superiority in competitions with hearing swimmers. This was demonstrated by his achievement of the silver medal in ordinary Olympics (200m breaststroke) from Sydney 2000. Parkin's position as a Deaf Hero is interesting in many ways. In this context it is appropriate to put weigh to his own words to the deaf supporters and fans and to the deaf media present in Rome. To them, he stated that it was OK to compete against hearings, but here, during Deaflympics, he felt at home – among his own kin/d.

This kind of indicative referencing (through kinship metaphors) is not rare, and leads us into the grounds and reasons for the existence and meaning of deaf sports. The former CISS president Jerald Jordan describes the peculiarity of deaf sports in this way:

Deaf athletes are neither fish nor fowl. On the one hand, they are medically disabled, which leads to the tendency of the hearing population to classify them with other disabled athletes. On the other hand, as far as sports are concerned, they are able-bodied. No adaptations to the rules of sports need be made. No new sport needs to be conceived to make participation of deaf persons possible. Where competition with able-bodied, hearing athletes provide ample opportunities to hone athletic skills, it often fails to satisfy basic social needs, like communication and getting to know fellow players on intimate terms (Jordan 1991: viii, preface in Stewart 1991).

The present Secretary General of CISS, Donalda Ammons, describes the social aspect with a slightly similar mode:

An important part of all international competition is the opportunity to meet and develop friendships with people from all over the world. Deaf athletes are

and as tourist magnet.

⁸ In a certain period, however, CISS and WGD were forced to accept to be organised under the Paralympic branch, within the Olympic hierarchy with IOC on top (Fosshaug 2002, Atherton et al 2000).

not so much rivals fiercely competing for a prize, as they are friends competing alongside and against one another. There are few words that can describe the sensations that arise from being at a table with twenty athletes and sport directors from many different countries. Our national sign languages are all different, and yet by using an international sign language, we communicate without assistance from translators. We do not avoid one another simply because we may be playing against each other the next day. No matter what sign language we use or what country we are from, the urge to socialize with one another will always be there because we are Deaf first and athletes second (Ammons in Stewart 1991: 191).

This, she confirmed to us, when we by chance got her as dinner partner at a ristorante between two central sports arenas (Stadio Flaminio and Stadio Olimpico) towards the zenith of the games. She expressed also strong interest in our research, and confirmed our proposal that transnational networking was one of the main and most interesting features of the Deaflympics. Several athletes expressed themselves similarly, and it was in many ways quite clear that the sporting interest was of secondary importance, at least as individual achievements, to the social aspect. Put differently; Deaf sports must first and foremost be understood as a social practice – as one of many arenas where signed communication is carried on (Stewart 1991).

Deaflympics and the Olympic Spirit – Who's Spirit?

The transnational feature of the Deaflympics is one of the main traits distinguishing these games from others (ordinary games), where competitiveness and nationalism walk side by side. This is reflected in the general attitudes among the deaf athletes reporting that the core value of participation lies in the social and transnational networking practice (gaining deaf friends from all over the world) and winning something for your own nation becomes of secondary importance. There are, however, conflicting tendencies in this area, that is the touch of nationalism and patriotism to which we shall return below. The main impression is, however, by and large, that the spirit of peaceful coexistence stands strong. The opinion that the Deaflympics are more faithful towards the Olympic spirit (peaceful coexistence etc.) than what can be traced in the regular games is also emphasised by key persons within international Deaf Sports

The competition and spirit surrounding the World Games for the Deaf is far closer to the «Olympic» ideal than that associated with the Olympics as the public knows it. I am continuously reminded of this each time I watch the Olympic struggle, with issues related to professionalism, doping, internal politics, and nationalism. In time, it may well be that the World Games for the Deaf will be one of the last remaining vestige of the true «Olympics». ... CISS shares the same goals as the International Olympic Committee (IOC). We believe that there is a need for athletes to compete with each and other, and a need for a group of people with a commonality, deafness, to come together and share their experiences. International Deaf sport competition actively promotes

the old ideal of the Olympics – the brotherhood of man through sports (Stewart 1991: 6-7).

This fits in many ways in with our own observations and collected statements from informants, but not 100% since patriotism and rowdy sportsmanship were present – however mild this was in comparison with «hearing» sports. The recent Salt Lake City Olympic Games (ordinary winter games 2002) exemplifies this, with its doping scandals and the American exploitation of the games for own propaganda- and marketing purposes (cf. Bush's welcome speech). Deaflympics appear in light of this as something very different, and somehow closer to de Coubertin's (the father of the modern Olympic games) hopes for the games in contributing to reconciliation and peaceful coexistence between the peoples of the world (Tomlinson 1999). The modern Olympic games did never come to that stage, partly because the interest for this kind of competing coincided with «the period of the emergence and consolidation of first-world nation-states» (Tomlinson 1999: 217). By this they became new arenas for show-offs of different nations' peculiarities, relative strength and good health (by exposure of one's repertoire of strong and attractive bodies). Some of the Olympic ideals were hence betrayed from the very start. The most alarming today is maybe how the Olympic games reinforce commonsensical understandings of normalcy connected to body and nation, where concepts such as «winner culture» and «physical perfection» have an unusual strong foothold. It is hence disquieting when the deaf movement adapts towards, and mimics, central elements in the regular Olympic games, especially when the focus rotates towards elite sportsmanship connected to physical perfection, maximum efficiency and the maybe even competitive nationalism/patriotism and demonstration of power through the metaphors of war.

Another and maybe equally alarming trait connected to Deaflympics and its mimicry, is the way the games are staged (particularly related to observations of the Opening Ceremony of Deaflympics 2001). The Opening Ceremony at Stadio Olimpico was not only copying the grandiose elements from other Olympic games, but did also adopt the regular phonocentric repertoire. The hostess of the Opening Ceremony, an Italian hearing TV-celebrity, who did not sign at all, but proceeded in her verbal Italian language, reflected this. The «sign language interpreters» in front, were furthermore invisible to most spectators – and the contents of the messages did not arrive. The huge monitors, that should give a better visual picture of the proceedings, did not help at all, since they were largely defective throughout the ceremony. And when the deaf (and signing) president (for FISS, the Italian Deaf Sports organisation), Mr. Corti, did his welcome speech in verbal Italian, the blunder was about to become complete. Among the artistic passages, the arrangers had in superabundance hired one of the Italian pop superstars, Alexis, singing boring teenager pop music and with no body language whatsoever. The whole event was hence marked by sound to the extent that the visual languages were silenced, that is a totally deaf-unfriendly event. The reactions against this unfriendliness were plenty, and the event was even described as a scandal (in contrast to the report given at the official deaflympics-websites). Among them were

members of CISS, for instance the Secretary General and the President. Fosshaug, Røine and Vik (2001) did sum up the games in a highly recognisable way. «The president of FISS, Renzo Corti, did his speech without sign language, and the Secretary General of CISS, Donalda Ammons, ran away in despair when this deaf person, competent in sign language and International Signs, could perform such a speech.⁹ Many of the spectators and athletes reacted also strongly against this» (Fosshaug et al 2001:23). In addition they write about the negative reactions around when Corti was re-elected to the CISS board, particularly because of this (his non-signing speech) and because of the organisational miseries caused by FISS.

This phonocentrism was in addition «amplified» by the welcome speech from the Pope (in the programme booklet) where a clear Christian-paternalistic point of view was asserted. Here, he particularly expresses the joy of helping «our many less fortunate brothers and sisters». His point, which was clearly handicap oriented and phonocentric, was that «hearing impaired athletes can offer a witness of hope to those who share your condition. By your courageous human and athletic daring, you show that even apparently insurmountable difficulties can be overcome (and) to draw greater attention to the problems of individuals who have difficulty in communication and integration in the broad sense» (Deaflympics 2001).

The disability discourse and phonocentrism (and maybe also the Italian patriotism) was however strongly countered and challenged by key persons in CISS and through the practice of communication and social life. And most of this happened outside of the official picture, among the active ones, the spectators and the tourists. The CISS- President John Lovett's word in the program therefore demonstrated to be both a necessity and an improved representation of what happened during the Deaflympics 2001. «The Deaflympics are the arenas where elite deaf athletes of the world come together to not only display their sporting prowess but also to demonstrate that their deafness are unique culture, language and lifestyle of which they are proud» (Deaflympics 2001). This included the active ones, but perhaps to a greater extent the spectators, the tourists.

Football – a Deaf Team-Game? Today as well?

Since the beginning of deaf sports, team sports have especially been central. Football represents one of the few «branches» that has been represented in the whole Deaflympics history, and in many countries the football has had a special position. This is primarily the case in countries where the football has a strong position generally, and where the deaf schools as instances of recruitment also have a strong position. Additionally, team sports, such as football, has a strong social aspect connected with co-operative playing, and provides a format and a dramaturgy that make the play very attractive for spectators (in contrast to other individual sport «branches»).

⁹ The rumour goes that Ammons pulled the plug out of loudspeaker terminal before she left.

«Deaf United» (Atherton, Russell and Turner 2000) is a very solid introduction to deaf football history in England and Great Britain. This history, which is more than 130 years old, is closely attached to the history of the British deaf community – and to the British history of football generally. England or the UK is in many ways the «birth place» of football, and even though this play has been spread over the whole world, the English football still has a very strong position. The English deaf national team had in many years a strong position internationally since there existed an arsenal of deaf «club team (and an own deaf football-league) to recruit from.

Some also played professionally in hearing clubs. For deaf teams it has been reported that it was of great interest to play against hearing teams. On such occasions it was created an arena for display of cultural differentiation and a possible marking of the comparative strength of sign language (Atherton et al. 2000). Today, the situation is different, and it is many years since the deaf British could manage to raise a competent national team. In common with many other countries, among them Norway, «the British educational system has adopted a policy of integration for deaf pupils into mainstream schools in recent years. As a result of this misguided policy, a majority of deaf schools have been closed, and the deaf child is now denied the opportunity of becoming a member of the school team » (Homes in Atherton et al. 2000:9)

To get a place on a hearing school team in a mainstream school is of course a possibility, and talented deaf football players are also partaking. However, the possibilities for them to develop their skills are strongly impeded because of the social exclusion or the loneliness they experience as the only deaf person (as many of them report). «In this respect, involvement in deaf sport is in essence often more of a cultural than a sporting activity, whilst partaking in competition with hearing sportsmen – as members of a hearing team- is more sporting in focus, often with little social interaction between deaf and hearing members» (Atherton et al. 2000:35). To be integrated in the hearing teams, can, as long as it does not include a support to membership in a deaf football team, imply both «invisibility» and assimilation. The possibility to play in deaf teams is not necessarily lost for players who are integrated, but long travel distances, weakened cultural belonging and massive organisation decreases the chances for things to «function» – and gradually fewer teams can withhold any activity due to a low-level recruitment. In such a downward spiral the one negative trait strengthen the other.

In the book «Deaf United» the decline of British deaf football is considered with a restrained grief, and the future for deaf football are presented in a quite negative light. But it is not pure football nostalgia that is promoted, but that the process seems to fall together with general problems in the deaf world and how especially collective projects have meagre conditions. The need for a conscious focus on new forms of collective mobilising is therefore considered to represent the only possibility.

Norway – England: Remiss!

In common with England, Norway did not manage to have a deaf national team in football to the Deaflympics in Rome, 2001, and it seems to be so that they have been facing similar challenges. It concerns the effects of a long-lasting integration policy that has contributed to weaken the deaf schools, and thereby the establishment of stable deaf teams. Additionally (and perhaps in relation to), as Atherton et al (2000) assume, the plurality of leisure interests among young deaf today also contributes to weaken the recruitment. For Norway, who had a, though weak, deaf national team during the European Deaf Soccer Championship (in Oslo, 1999), there were some supplementary factors of importance. For a long time it was not certain if active deaf Norwegians were allowed to partake in the Deaflympics, at all. The background for this is the dramatic reorganisation of the deaf sport that had been accomplished in Norway the latest years; The Deaf Sport Association was terminated and the activities were administrated by NFI, the Norwegian Disabled People's Sport Association. The control/management over own sport withered gradually away, and NFI and NIF's (The Norwegian Sport Association) interest in keeping the deaf sport teams going was extremely weak. CISS did thus react on this situation, since they demand that those countries who are allowed to participate should document that deaf people have extensive control over their own sport (Johnsen 2000, Fosshaug 2002).

It couldn't thus be taken for granted that the deaf athletes from Norway should be allowed to participate, and during the negotiations it was decided that Norway should get a preliminary acceptance. The football team and other traditionally strong sport teams (as volleyball and handball) were not represented, because they were terminated under the new sport regime. The only team that participated from Norway was a relatively new established bowling team (a new sport in Deaflympics, with increasing popularity, which doesn't exist as a sport branch in ordinarily Olympics).

Decreased control over own sport and weakening of the deaf schools (and the Deaf Clubs) can therefore be seen in relation to one another. But what can explain why some countries still have their teams «intact» and to some extent uphold a high standard of sport? First, it is obvious that the size of a country is of importance, i.e. number of deaf people, and to which degree football is a prestigious activity, generally. Second, it seems that countries/Deaf Sports Associations who have focussed on new ways of running organisational work and recruitment stand stronger (especially because of the deaf schools weakened position, here as a recruitment arena). And there are reasons to believe that the lack of such attempts have contributed to the fact that the British and Norwegian teams were lacking in Rome.

There are great differences between the countries that had football teams in Rome, and not all of the teams were especially well organised in the beginning of the tournament. 16 teams participated in the tournament (Malaysia, Iran, Greece, Croatia, Germany, Turkey, Spain, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Italy, USA, Argentina, Denmark, Ireland, France, and Algeria). I had followed some of these teams during the European Championship in Oslo two years earlier, and I knew that Italy would be one of the

favourite teams (they won the European Champion league). They had good players, and the team was then quite well organised. From the same tournament, I also knew a little about some of the others teams, such as Croatia and Denmark, and I understood that they could manage good football – especially via several elegantly talented football players.

The football tournament and the American team

I came to Rome a few days before the official opening of the games. Because of this, I got chances to attend some preliminary matches, and I decided to see as many of them as I could possibly manage. Friday 20th of July, I went to one of the 4 arenas, where the matches were going to be played, namely at Viale tre Fontane, a few kilometres South West of central Rome, to see Iran against Argentina. During the match I find company with a deaf Canadian and we were both enjoying the glimpses of good football on the ground. Iran plays best, but they are quite disorganised especially related to having the necessary final touches on the ball. There are a whole lot of excellent Iranian players, individually, and we both noticed no. 22 in particular (a player with a quite unexpected role later in the tournament). Argentina is having a cheap goal in the very end of the match, leaving them as winners of the game. It is however a relaxed and friendly atmosphere around, and the players are polite and humble. The number of spectators is pretty small, but there is a good mix of people. There are minor supporter groups for both countries, but many are just present with a lack of preferences for the one against the other team. After the match I am approaching a small gang of German football players, and we discuss the recent match and their expectations for the tournament. I am gradually starting to make a decision on following the Iranian and Argentinean matches, as well as the German and Italian games. The following day I will have the opportunity to see Italy against USA, a game that makes me change my plans.

The match between Italy and USA was extremely exciting and with a surprising result, since the «small boys» (in this context) challenged the great favourite at their own «home ground» by playing really good football. When I arrived right before the kick-off at Stadio Flaminio, I do first say hello to my Canadian fellow from yesterday's match. Then I happen to be standing side-by-side one hearing American, who turns out to be the father of Mike, no. 18 at the American team. His quick and frequent comments to the game make me curious. It is a certain nerve in the play and quite rough behaviour on the ground, especially on behalf of the Italian players (with quite a few exceptionally raw kicks). At the American team there are some very young players, between 17-19, in addition to some veterans, of whom some have been involved in such games 3-4 times before, one as early as in the Bulgarian games in 1993. But they have, as Ed (the mentioned father) tells, had many training gatherings before they left for Rome, also at Gallaudet University, and are well organised.

The result from the match is surprising, but not at all unfair, a 2 – 1 victory for USA. The Italian players, on the other hand, are surprising in the way they tackle, or rather do not tackle, the defeat. They do not express any kind of politeness after the match; they avoid shaking hands with the Americans and display a really bad spirit (also in comparison with regular conduct in hearing games). This leads to a certain degree of frustration among the American players, especially the young ones. This was quite beyond their expectations.

One of the reasons why I find the American team attractive, in addition to the fact that I have established a kind of rapport with them and I believe that they are able to make it very well in this tournament, is the highly interesting mix of players. There are different age groups represented (debutantes and veterans), and they are recruited from many different American States. Many of them do also play at «hearing» University teams, and there is a multitude of backgrounds displayed (i.e. where they seem to «come from»; Africa, Latin America, Europe, Asia, and USA). After the match I am introduced to Mike, no. 18, through his father, and get the opportunity to tell about the research we are conducting in Rome. He is interested in that, and we exchange e-mail addresses and promise to stay in touch throughout the tournament. I am also told where to find them, the hotel in which they live, where a future meeting with him and the whole team may be set up. Before I leave the stadium, Ed tells me more about the team and that some of the players were interviewed before they left the States, by a Deaf Magazine, on which kind of expectations they had from the days in Rome. The answers were quite unison and clear, as was the priority of the answers:

1. «Gain new friends and socialise with all the deaf.»
2. «Win the gold medal.»

I am going to see another match later on this afternoon. In the meantime I intend to do some tourist essentials and today this is to visit the Trevi fountain and St. Peter's Church. Rome is now starting to be more visibly deaf than ever and sign language is seen everywhere. By the Trevi fountain I meet a gang of deaf young adults, mainly from America, dressed in yellow sweaters with the inscription: «Reaching the Deaf for Christ!» Pure missionaries, they are. I start chatting with these polite and happy (for Christ?) people, but mostly about football because that's what's on my mind right now. They become visibly surprised when I tell about the fresh American victory over the «home favourite» Italy. As an experienced «deaf-spotter» I do now spot deaf signers everywhere and I suspect that there is a certain density around the most spectacular sightseeing objects (as it is for tourists in general). And by the St. Peter's Church I run right into another deaf gang. This time I notice some familiar faces, a group of Croatian football players, who are more than happy to get involved in a football chat. We're having a nice exchange of football results, and found out that we were all present at in Oslo, the summer of 1999, at the European Deaf Soccer Championship. And suddenly it is time to say «goodbye» and «see you again».

More matches, and the social life around the arenas

The same afternoon, I go on to watch Spain against Algeria. Both teams play in the same group as Italy and USA, and I sit down by some of the Italian footballers, expressing their sorrows after the USA defeat. One of them tells me that the team has been quite altered since the European Championship in Oslo, where they won the gold medal, and this time he was all but optimistic on the chances to become a finalist and win the gold medal once again.

There are no American footballers watching this game, and I suspect that the American troupe is subjected to stronger restrictions during the tournament. They were not seen at the social evening-events either – before the end of the tournament. The match between Algeria and Spain is quite even in the beginning and at break-time the result is 1-1. There is a whole lot of rough play on the ground and some of the players at both teams are really good, individually. The collective dimension is pretty absent. Spain gets more goals annulled because of offside, a trap they often fall into. The Algerian team is more concerned with the art of acting in order to achieve opportunities, than actually play football the regular way. There is thus a lot of lousy acting going on and too much arguing with the referee. The match results in a 5-2 victory to Spain, and I start to orient myself towards the centre of Rome, again. I round off the evening by finding an Internet Café nearby Pantheon, sending e-mail to Mike with a kind of game-report. USA is about to meet Spain quite soon – and maybe they can make use of my evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses.

From Monday, the 23rd and July, that is right after the already mentioned official opening of the games (grandiose and phonocentric), the number of games increases. There are more social events going on and the deaf features of Rome are getting stronger and stronger. This Monday, our research team is extended with a sociologist, Mr. Solvang, and we (him and I) go together to Viale Tre Fontane in order to watch Iran against Germany. This match turns out to be quite boring, and the German team wins 1-0.

Per, a freshman in such contexts, becomes however quite aware of the difference between a deaf and a hearing match. The referee is for instance making visual signs (waving the white scarf, which he has around his wrist, in companionship with his flute) – and the spectators are performing a mix of deaf applause (hand waving) and clapping.

The following day, Tuesday, I go alone to Viale tre Fontane, watching USA against Spain. I am excited and I expect that USA is going to do well, after the victory over Italy. But already from the very start, this game is different, and USA is defeated thoroughly. I myself have gone totally away from any kind of objective position – and wave my hands for the Americans against the «rough and brutal» Spaniards. I experience this game as a dirty one, where the American gentlemen features have to give way for Spanish physicality and theatre. In addition I halfway agree with those around me, expressing the opinion that this game must have been a fixed one (on beforehand), because the referee is letting most of the worst kicks by the Spaniards go

unnoticed. The disappointment is huge among the American players, and Ed who are standing next to me is quite resigned. Mike, no. 18 on the team, comments upon the game himself, in an e-mail later on: «...the game was a nightmare ...I'm still disappointed about it...I can't believe what happened... 3 goals taken away...I never saw any games like that...it was crazy....» With this loss, USA is definitely out of the medal struggle (it is only number one and two in each of the four groups that go on further to the quarterfinals) and USA (as number three) will be playing for a fair position between the 9th and the 12th best. Italy and Spain go on to the quarterfinals. The American team is jokingly hoping for an Italian victory, because this will put their own results in a better light.

Wednesday the 25th, there is a match between Germany and Argentina, and once more I am joined by Per, whom this time functions as a camera assistant. We arrive at Stadio Flaminio in due time before kick-off time and the general mood among the spectators is good as they move in. The heat is stark, and the players are going to have some tough 90 minutes on the ground. The Roman sun, and the heat, indicates also that Rome is as a kind of sports-wasteland at this time of the year, since no hearing matches are running in this period. Per buys himself a German flag, and strengthens the established practice of becoming biased in sports, as I certainly have been, and we are making some jokes around our objectivity. At the grandstand the German supporters are clearly outnumbering the Argentineans, and they are fairly well organised. They are selling German flags, translated versions of the Deaflympics program and waving/screaming for their team at any occasion. During the game I am communicating with some of the German supporters, and am getting in touch with a German lady, who are really interested in our research project. The obligatory exchange of e-mail addresses and «see you later» occurs. Germany wins the game, and Per has managed to capture the excellent German goal on film. With this victory, Germany has become a quarter-finalist, but together with Argentina who remains the second best in this group.

Friday the 27th, we are on the football-wagon again, this time in order to watch Spain against Germany. Because of an altered schedule, we are going to see Italy playing against Argentina instead. We stay on for a while, but the heat is more than we can bear (imagine then the situation for the players) and we leave the arena for something more comfortable and cooler. Italy wins, we are told, and they are ready for the semi-final. Germany is qualified for semi-final as well, and as it turns out, they are both winning their respective games and meets for the final play at Stadio Olimpico. This game will be held right in front of the Closing Ceremony.

But before this there are more things to happen, and our interest for the American team is still strong. At Saturday the 28th I am getting an e-mail reply from Mike, where he writes that he can manage to collect those on the team that are willing to meet us, by the swimming pool at their hotel. We (Hilde and I) are hence invited to come and ask them about anything that could be of interest to us. We make an

appointment for the coming Monday, and I promise to be present this afternoon as well, when USA plays against the Iranians.

Deaf cheating in sports

Per and I are going, then, to the arena Campi Sportivi to watch this match, and we meet with more deaf persons than ever on our way. There is a pretty «calm» mood in town, probably because of the heat, and we cannot bear to walk, as planned. We are travelling by collective means and run into an intensive short-talk with two deaf boys, who have met once before in Brisbane 1999 (the Deaf World Congress), and are now happily reunited. One of them comes from Sidney in Australia, and his fellow comes from UK. I explain our project, roughly, and they are eager to express their interest. So, again we engage in e-mail address exchange and promises of staying in touch, and then we have to leave at Termini, change our metro rout heading to Flaminio and finally the train to Campi Sportivi. At the train I am again involved in conversations, this time with different football enthusiasts, among them an Algerian football player, who are quite interested when he learns that I know all the Algerian results in football. The trip has been time-consuming, but interesting indeed, and we do arrive a little bit late (ten minutes) for the match. Iran plays very well, and USA is playing okay. We say hello to Ed and we are nodding to all known faces around. In the beginning of the second round there are strange things going on on the ground, and it takes a while before we start to fathom what his is all about. The ball hits the head/ear of the Iranian player no. 22 (the good one, earlier mentioned) and it becomes obvious, by the way he puts his hands to his head, that he has been wearing a hearing aid. This is forbidden and recognised as cheating due to the 55-dB limit. The result is that the referee calls the game off, and disqualifies the Iranian team.

Use of hearing aids represents a clear violation of the rules for participation in Deaflympics, and represents an attempt at overruling of the decibel limit established by CISS. The rationale for this limit is to safeguard that the participants are really deaf. The most interesting feature of this incidence was not, however, that an understanding of «hearing as doping» could occur. The fact is that all players and spectators expressed disappointment over the result: that they could not enjoy further play at the spot. The possible gain the Iranian team should have acquired, by illegitimate means however, one player using a hearing aids was by and large envisaged as pretty minor. The question that caused the most fuss was connected to the choice of punishment, especially since almost everyone (us included) believed that the Iranian team was totally disqualified and forced to leave the game at once. Wouldn't a red card for no. 22 have been a more appropriate means, leaving the game open for regular closure and more playing time? Why this collective punishment? The American players were clearly supporting this opinion, since they believed the case to be unfair – because the Iranian team should not be bereft of their, right before this incident, more than fair chance of winning the match. Mike, among others, was eager to play on and win or

lose the game in a proper way, but had to swallow the judgement made by the referee. The result is that USA gets a walkover to the next game, playing for a 9th or 10th position. The Iranian team, we come to know later on, gets the opportunity to finalise their participation playing for an 11th or 12th position.

The gold hunt – and the problem of patriotism

USA was then having one more match left, against Uzbekistan. Germany and Italy were qualified for semi-finals against Ireland and Greece. Both matches were played at the same arena, Stadio Flaminio, one after the other at Sunday the 29th. Per and I intend to watch both games, but we arrive a bit late because of a wrong choice of bus, but we are there in time to see the German winner goal in the middle of the second round. I am sitting among some Ireland supporters, and start chatting with a black deaf guy from England. He is part of a quite football-interested English gang, waving banners for Ireland or whichever team they happen to be watching. «The rise and fall of British Deaf Football» is a theme that pops up, and we start to compare the English situation with the Norwegian one.

Biz, which is what he calls himself, believes this is a sad story but he really hopes for better days and to see a British team in the next Deaflympics. Most people around us come from England, waiting for the next semi-final, between Greece and Italy. The mood is good and we are not prepared for the emerging situation. The technical staff at the arena start to practice the tradition of emptying the stand after the match and before the new one shall start. This is mainly because they want to ensure that the respective supporters are channelled to their seats at separate departments of the stand (in order to prevent hooligan fights?). The football lovers from England argue against this, and tell the staff that it is meaningless to separate the spectators – because they (as anyone else, they say) can sit together with anyone: «Hey, we are all deaf, aren't we?» They were hence making the following valid argument: We are all football lovers no matter whom wins, and we can (and want to) sit down with anyone of our deaf brothers and sisters. The guards responded mildly at first, more aggressive as the arguing went on and on, but nothing seemed to make them change their (and our) minds. It was in particular a young cool black man that was leading this ad-hoc rebellion. He argues that everyone have valid tickets, and that he and everyone around him can sit at any place, be it among Italians or Greeks: «We are all deaf, and we support all deaf players.» But no, the guards have some work to do, and this is to empty the stands before the next match. We all have to leave our seats and head for the exit door.

On the outside, in front of the entrance gateways, there is by now a mass of people, and both Italy and Greece have attracted huge amounts of spectators, especially the «national home team». We are however approaching many known faces, from Norway as well, who, as the Britons, are not present because of any preferred favourite team. Some just like to see a good match, others are not really interested in

football – but join in because of the sensation of being part of a huge deaf spectacle. We are only approaching one Norwegian fellow with a genuine interest in football, an ex-player at the former Norwegian team. All the others just want to be where the deaf masses assemble and to have fun, and this afternoon – this is the place. I choose to sit at the Italian side, Per follows Greece.

Italy wins this match and the two finalists are ready to compete for the gold medal. But this was not the most interesting feature of this afternoon. After the episode with the Britons that were forced to leave their seats, I am once more sensing a tension between a local/national patriotism (a mimicry of the regular soccer nationalism?) and a transnational brotherhood spirit. The first feature is certainly present, even though in a less prominent fashion than I have witnessed at hearing games, and I can hardly imagine any presence of deaf hooligans (going crazy for their national (or club) teams).

Compared with the experiences from the European Championship in Oslo in 1999, I do see both parallels and differences. Here, at Deaflympics, with more branches of sports to choose between, there is a better chance that the soccer-games attract football lovers (and patriots), while in Oslo this was the sole choice. In order to socialise you simply had to swallow football. The matches, thus, attracted many deaf «spectators» without a dint of football knowledge, and I could easily observe that more than 2/3 of those present, at any particular time, (even during the highlights of the match) were immersed into chatting with old friends and half-known strangers. There was a remarkable ignorance of the game proceedings, maybe with a few exceptions, such as the Greece supporters with their exaggerated nationalism. This occurred in Rome as well, but in-between there were clear dints of patriotism (among both supporters and teams).

Meeting the boys from the States

Monday morning, with our heads full of impressions, we (Hilde and I) drive for Jolly Midas Hotel, one the outskirts of Rome, meeting the American Soccer Team. The sense of being in Rome decreases heavily, since the hotel and surroundings are bereft of any local colouring. We are fooling around for a short while and when we walk inside of the hotel we find a table with a parasol by the swimming pool. We are waiting for Mike & Co. Quite soon some of them appear, and move slowly in our direction. The mood is very much relaxed, and the conversation starts. The exchange is mostly between Hilde and the Americans, since most is conducted through ASL. I am not totally left out; however, because I have communicated with Mike before and I know the games they have been playing quite well. The 8-9 players are interested in sharing their experiences and thoughts with us, and one by one tells about their experiences so far.

It turns out that most of them are quite dissatisfied with the social life so far, partly because of the out-of-the-way location of their hotel and the leaders' insistence on resting between the games. They are also disappointed with relation to the way of

behaviour from some of the other teams, especially from Spain, but also Italy where none were thanking for the game, and Algeria that was more into theatre than football. They are all looking forward to the next match, however, against Uzbekistan – hoping for some good play. They are also looking forward to a closure of their participation in the tournament, because they then can take more part in the social deaf nightlife and maybe also get some glimpses of the Roman tourist attractions. Otherwise, the group consists of quite different types of persons. Some of them are young debutantes, while a few of them are veterans being into this for the second or third time. And there is a strongly visible «joking relationship» the freshmen and the more experienced (and older) ones.

One thing that hit us immediately, and which became evident later on, was the impression that few players were Americans, in terms of having been born in the USA by American parents. Quite a few were Hispanics, two came from Hungary, one adopted from Korea, one had a Danish father, and two-three were white Americans. And in addition to those we communicated with, there were a few black players, among them one from Nigeria (whom we established contact with after the final match), and one from El Salvador/Mexico. They had all been recruited to the national team through a recruitment program, set up by the American Deaf Sports Association. Only a few of them had any experience from playing in a Deaf Club, and most of them were picked out because of good performances at regular University teams.

One of the neophytes stressed that he was particularly happy for this opportunity to travel abroad – and that it was exciting to communicate with signers from other countries, without ASL. Others nodded in agreement to this, and one compared the communication through International Sign as a funny «play of mimicry.» A third player reminded us that he hadn't had the opportunity to meet with so many others, and that this was mainly restricted to the Americans at the hotel. He was overtly disappointed with the hotel life, far away from the deaf life in the city centre where most people gathered. He really doubted that could remember faces from his few encounters and he believed it would be hard to do, as Carlos (one of the experienced ones) frequently does. «He walks around and say 'Hello, how are you doing?' to a lot of persons. I probably can't do that, let's say in Melbourne (the next summer Deaflympics) in four years time.» One of the Hungarians, the most experienced one at the team, is tuning in at this theme, telling that this is his fourth time – even if he is not active this time because of a broken shoulder. He spends most of the time by the pool, and is perhaps better off socially than the others preoccupied with preparing for new games all the time. The games in New Zealand (1989) have definitively been the best for him. Carlos, this time on his third games, believes that Denmark (Copenhagen 97) was the best, while Bulgaria (Sofia 93) and Italy (Rome 2001) have been bad trips in comparison – both socially and otherwise. In Bulgaria the standard was lousy at all levels, both for the tourist and the athletes. And this Rome arrangement is too big, too scattered and too much of the sports events happen too far from central Rome. All this puts hindrances to the quick and frequent encounters. And

the early curfew (23.00) has made it almost impossible to engage in the social evening life in Rome. He did, however, stress that from this evening and onward, there would be no ban on leaving the hotel till late at night, and he really looked forward to take part in the deaf fiestas in town.

We terminated the conversation and wished everyone good luck for the final match this afternoon, and we made sure, as well, that we would be present as spectators. And again we were engaged in exchange of e-mail addresses and promised to stay in touch.

USA-Uzbekistan

USA's last match starts this afternoon at Stadio Flaminio. I locate myself by the small group of Uzbekistani supporters, but with a sense of being a total stranger. I am trying to get an overview of the American team, after our face-to-face gathering earlier this day. It seems to be so that we have been talking to quite a lot of reserves, but also with some of the key players on the team. The game is clearly running in the Uzbekistan way, but they are burning the one golden opportunity after the other, and USA is the first team to get a goal. In the break I move over to the American supporters and am approached by a hearing American, who turns out to be another one of the young player's father. He tells me that his son is attending Gallaudet's College. And then he gives me a mini-lecture on the necessity of an early diagnosis of deafness, telling me that his son got ASL from when he was 5 weeks old. And he admits that they were lucky to attend a health care centre with personnel experienced with both deafness and sign language. The family then moves to Washington DC in order to give their son an optimal start in life, with a strong backing of a sign language community added. He is really satisfied with seeing his own son prosper, and experience gatherings such as Deaflympics. «I can see how he mature here, by meeting strong grown up deafies he can use as role models, from all over the world. It's simply marvellous!» And he proclaims that: «Deafness is not a handicap, not at all!» He also tells about his experiences in counselling of fresh hearing parents having deaf babies, and these have been mixed experiences. He is for instance, quite astonished by the fact that most parents don't want to see the most obvious choice for their children – a sign language environment.

After the break, the match becomes more even. Uzbekistan is still dangerous, but lacking the necessary lucky. USA is burning some good opportunities, and especially no. 4 comes close to a second goal for USA. In the last minute, however, Uzbekistan gets a chance and makes the match even again. This means extra rounds, using the golden goal principle. Uzbekistan becomes the winner, fair enough, and the American displays their good spirit of true sportsmanship. They nod politely for the match and shake hands with everyone at the other team. We, Hilde and I, communicate with some of the players from our position above, and they seem to manage pretty well –

despite this loss. It has been a good match, and for once against polite and fair-playing athletes.

After the match we do as many others, we're just hanging around. Soon the American players join in chatting with supporters, friends and family. Quite a few American from other sports branches are present and we do, as always, make us of the opportunity to acquire more interest to our project.

Finale – the intensive social life takes off, this time in a final flash

Deaflympics 2001 in Rome is about to reach a closure in more than one way. And even if few have actually left, most people have started to prepare for the return trip (to wherever they may have their residences) and farewell sessions. In most of the sports the results are final and ready. It is only a few team tournaments left on the sports program, and it is the final matches. The football final between Germany and Italy is the last one and by many reckoned as the great highlight in deaf sports, which is well reflected in the program – putting this match in as part of the Closing Ceremony at Stadio Olimpico. This is the same arena in which the Opening Ceremony was held and also the main playground for the Italian-hosted regular Olympics some 30 years ago. At this day of closure, the 1st of August, a mass of deaf people slowly assembles in order to watch the final competition and to experience the Closing Ceremony.

The match itself becomes quite exiting and Germany is playing very well throughout the match. The Germans have huge opportunities for getting one goal after the other, and it is hard to believe that they shall not make it. Italy has, on the other hand, just a few good chances, but by taking good care of them and in the end they manage to do as they did in Oslo in 1999 at Ullevål Stadium. They win. Italian supporters are clearly proud and start to get into the party gear. But, it should be admitted, most people attending do, by and large, ignore the whole incident. They are simply more eager to mix and to chat with all the strangers that have turned into friends and to ensure and strengthen the social bonds established. And before the final farewells, many looks forward to the big fiesta this evening/night which is going to be more crowded than ever, including all those athletes now ready for parting.

Summing up

Through these small Deaflympic sports glimpses, I have tried to demonstrate a few things, among them that it is no coincident that deaf sports attract deaf people. Secondly, I have tried to give a portrait of sports – the way it has become for good and for worse (through the sports' focusing on bodily perfection and elite sport as nationalism) – as a double-edged sword. As a symbol for international reconciliation it is no doubt that the deaf Olympics are closer to these original ideals than the regular Olympics, now quite far away from reconciliation and fair play.

Deaflympics demonstrates, thus, in many ways how an international point of departure can be transformed into a transnational community sense and practice – even if it is (as it seems) of a temporal nature. But, it is at the same time so, that Deaflympics in some respects comes dangerously close to the more negative aspects of present sportsmanship, as we have seen, in the hearing world.

Another feature that has emerged is the differences between being an active participant in sports and being a tourist/spectator. In my recent thesis (Breivik 2001) some of my deaf story tellers, tell about this, by highlighting the tourist life as most rewarding when it comes to having a deaf transnational experience and to engage in an extending of own social networks. As we understood from our contact with the American team, it was clearly the social restrictions that made their experiences in Rome poorer than they had hoped for, a feature which was further worsened by a technically speaking bad arrangement. But, on the other hand, the chance to participate as an active participant is also an attractive one. In addition to the aspect of empowerment in getting an opportunity for display of own bodily strength and competitiveness in a sign language environment (Fosshaug 2002), this is also an opportunity for world travelling. And hence, to a moderate degree, to participate in the global deafhood where new friendship bonds are established and one's social network strengthened. In this, there are huge differences among the athletes, since some sport branches includes just one concentrated stunt – and that's it, while in other branches you are involved in tournaments that are extended in time. This leaves you with fewer chances to be thoroughly immersed socially. The economical aspect is also important, because many athletes will have their travel and accommodation costs covered by others. Some of the tourists were in this case expressing a kind of envy, as they were attracted to the economical benefits. This was most strongly expressed by one we met with, who was wondering which sports to chose in order to appear as an athlete in Melbourne 2005. This should preferably be a sports branch where he could get good in a hurry, without the laborious work of massive training.

One last feature, to which I have attempted at shedding some light, is the position and future of the deaf team sports, and in particular football. This position is still strong, but the future is, mildly speaking, unsure. In the USA it seems to be the case that conscious efforts in recruitment work function – but they do struggle, in the States as well, with the decrease in numbers of deaf football clubs. In Norway there have been a though debate going on, especially in the Deaf Magazine, since the recent closing of the National Deaf Sports Association led to a kind of integration into the umbrella, Disabled People's Sports Association. This step has recently been recognised as a disastrous one, an organisational solution that also was about to block Norwegian participation in Deaflympics. In England there have been raised a massive critique against the British Deaf Sports Association, BDSC, for instance at Deaf UK (an e-post forum – and right after the games). BDSC is characterised as «extremely pig-headed» and many push for a necessary change. The progress and outcome of this and similar conflicts is interesting, indicating how different deaf communities will approach the

present challenges – related to the widely acknowledged weakening of collective formations.

One should however not, that the accelerating popularity of Deaflympics is pointing in a different direction, as a clear sign of the strengthened features of transnational social bonding in deaf worlds. But, as the Rome arrangement clearly demonstrated, there are many areas where new tracks have to be crafted and some difficult choices considered.

As Atherton et al (2000) writes, there are for instance good reasons to examine in more details the troublesome connections between deaf sports and the broader field of disability – and that some of the causes for «decay» can be found here.

The deaf community also suffers because of its ambiguous position within disabled sports. In order to have the best chance of obtaining funding from external sources – either directly through sporting bodies or from the National Lottery – deaf sports needs to come under the umbrella of disabled sports. However, deaf sportsmen and women, including footballers, do not see themselves as disabled sports people (ibid.:52).

One of the dilemmas for deaf sports is that without this kind of connections, the finances will become extremely insecure. All this severely weakens their case for independent funding» (Atherton et al 2000:53). This dilemma must find a solution, because this tight connection is connected to and strengthening the already common disability view of deaf individuals and their communities, not only of deaf sports:

In this respect, deaf people face similar problems in their leisure activities to those they face in everyday life, namely campaigning against being regarded as disabled whilst accepting benefits and services intended for disabled people (Atherton et al 2000:53).

Whether deaf sports will survive, as we know the phenomenon today, is uncertain. The one thing we can know, for sure, is that arrangements and events such as Deaflympics are strongly mobilising and attractive within the deaf worlds, and that the need and desire for a transnational network is strong. We do also sense a clear tension or a struggle between a local/national politics of normalisation and integration, and the deaf movement's collective politics of identity. This will be, as far as we can see, a continual field of tension and a long-term challenge for both the deaf sports and the transnational deaf movement.

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Summary – and a call for criticism

Hilde Haualand

In this publication, we have shared a few unfinished texts with you. They will be further elaborated upon and we will analyse several of the phenomena and events we encountered, beyond the suggestions for analysis we have provided here. In other words, this is work in progress. The texts are resulting from our pilot study, which took place prior to the main «Global Connections in Deaf Worlds» project. By the time we went to Rome none of us were experienced in doing co-fieldwork during such intensive events. The ethnographic paths were actually made while walking through the streets of Rome. The lessons learned in Rome, about doing team fieldwork and about the various angles of a transnational deaf event, will be used for further elaboration and refining of fieldwork methods at future events of limited durability that we are going to attend as a part of this project. Thus, you will find us in Washington, D.C., USA at Deaf Way II this summer, in Sundsvall, Sweden at the Winter Deaflympics 2003, and finally in Montreal, Canada at the WFD World Congress the summer of 2003. We will at each event be very eager to meet as many people as possible, and also we would like continuous feedback to the texts, short video cuts and questions raised at our home page www.deaf.linator.com.

The project – proceedings and purposes

The project «Global Connections in Deaf Worlds» is a three folded one. We have here mentioned the two main areas for research, the transnational meeting places and our net site. The third approach is with a group of young deaf people in Norway, which we will follow closely to see how they develop and maintain identities and relationships through the various Internet tools.

The transnational meeting places are important for understanding the worldwide deaf culture. Deaf people have long traditions in travelling for gathering purposes, and the inter/transnational meetings in the deaf community have been there for a long time. So far, little research has been done on the role of these gatherings. Attempts to describe deaf culture and society have often been forced into a frame based on single nationality and territorial anchorage. Breivik showed in his recent PhD dissertation (2001) that these frames for understanding deaf culture are insufficient, and that there is a need to go beyond national and territorial borders to get a grasp of what deaf culture, society and identity is about. The present project is thus a follow up of his dissertation, since the transnational features of deaf identification were only superficially analysed in this work.

However, these transnational meeting places might be under change, partly due to the new technological possibilities. The need to travel to communicate has decreased drastically the past few years. Text telephones have been partly available in many countries for about 20-30 years, but they have had national standards disabling

international calls. Deaf people, who for almost a century have been deprived of the possibility of ordinary telephone calls, now witness and live through an explosion in their communication opportunities. The Internet, which still mainly is a textual medium, is accessible for deaf people, with few or little special adaptations. This contrast somewhat to the documented lack of access to information deaf people have experienced especially since the radio- and TV age started (Sander 1993, Haualand 2000, 2001).

The meaning and importance of new information- and communication technology to deaf people has not yet been investigated, even though it is obvious that deaf people mostly benefit from the recent technical achievements. Web Cams have enabled sign language users to communicate through the Internet over long distances, and does probably also transcend space capabilities in the deaf community (Keating & Mirus 2002). Public telephones have never been accessible to deaf people, and the Short Message System (SMS) has caused a drastic change in the communicative mobility of deaf people. Recent research on deaf people and information has not managed to keep track of the consequences latest technology. This project will actively make use of this new technology to explore how deaf people use and benefit from both the Internet and other mobile communication devices. This is in part also a succession of Haualand's master thesis in social anthropology (2001) about the information discourse in the deaf movement. The site www.deaf.linator.com is a tool to communicate with deaf people worldwide, as well as a site where we continuously will share our research with you.

The third angle of this project will be a close up study of a group of mobile young deaf people, who cross national, territorial and traditional cultural borders in their quest for identity and interaction opportunities. This will unite features of the two first mentioned angles of the project. As mentioned earlier, the need to travel seems to be decreasing – at a time where travelling can be done with much more ease and to a more affordable cost than ever before. So an important question is how these features will influence the transnational deaf community.

This publication – a result of close co-operation

After reading each other's texts, we see that the different perspectives we early agreed upon, very clearly leave their marks in the texts. These perspectives could in a simplified way be said to be that of *sports* (Breivik), *tourism* (Haualand) and *deviance* (Solvang). These choices of perspectives were done based on both personal interest and academic research each of us has done before. These perspectives have definitely influenced the ways we conducted and organised our fieldwork, how we experienced it, and at last – how we have been writing about the DWG of 2001.

All perspectives provide mutually useful background information for all the texts. Breivik's sketch of the history of DWG and discussion of the role of sports in the deaf community is important information about the context of the social ritual of the same games Haualand outlines. Solvang gives further texture to this with his

perspectives as an «outsider», and raises important questions about how the deaf sports' movement both departs from and embraces medical definitions of deafness. Those of you who have read the entire publication have perhaps noticed that we all write about the incidence where one star Iranian football player was caught with a hearing aid on during a match, and its consequences. To Solvang, this was interesting because it revealed a potential conflict between the dissociation of a disability perspective in deaf culture and the inclusion of the same perspective when the rules of participation in the DWG were set up. Breivik highlighted the same occurrence, but discussed it from a fair play and sportsmanship perspective, and showed how the exclusion of the entire Iran team opposed to the Olympic truce of brotherhood and equality.

Haualand also wrote about the Iranian, but with her perspective, this was used as an example of a taboo that comes into play during a specific social ritual. All three perspectives are valid, but give different explanations and descriptions to the same «Iran gate»¹⁰ affair and the texts should therefore be read and understood in the light of the other texts. This multiplicity of ideas, we will argue, is one of the strongest qualities of our research team. The triple description of the same event makes our notes from Rome into a thicker description of the DWG than if anyone of us was to carry out fieldwork alone¹¹. By being three fieldworkers in Rome at the same time, we have been able to cover a broad range of events and happenings. Another event that is described in the texts is the opening ceremony. Breivik, who is hearing, but with a fairly good knowledge of the don'ts and do's in the deaf community was dismayed by the obvious lack of deaf friendly entertainment and information during the ritual, a disgust he shared with most of the spectators. Haualand, however, who herself is deaf, was also somewhat dejected by the audist inaugural ceremony, but her goal for going to the DWG (beyond being a researcher), was to meet other deaf people and tourists. That the inaugural ceremony failed to meet the demands of the deaf spectators was by no means any hindrance for socialising at the stand and the ceremony was for her given a secondary role in the course of the games. This is an example of how our personal experiences also give flavour to the texts and the analysis.

A call for criticism and discussion

By generously sharing our field notes with each other, each of us have been able to draw on three pairs of eyes to write about the events we found of interest. However, our perspectives are not exhaustive, and we would very much like your comments to our work. Your perspectives and comments will add further texture and thickness to the ethnographic description of the DWG, and fuel everybody's understanding of the importance of events like this. The further work very much depends on your criticism

¹⁰ There will be no further comparisons with the initial Iran gate affair in the US a few years ago.

¹¹ Haualand did not even watch the Iran player incident herself, but only heard about it through the grapevine, as well as from her research colleagues.

and comments. Please do not hesitate to share your thoughts with us. You find our contact information at www.deaf.linator.com, or just write an e-mail to anyone of us;

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