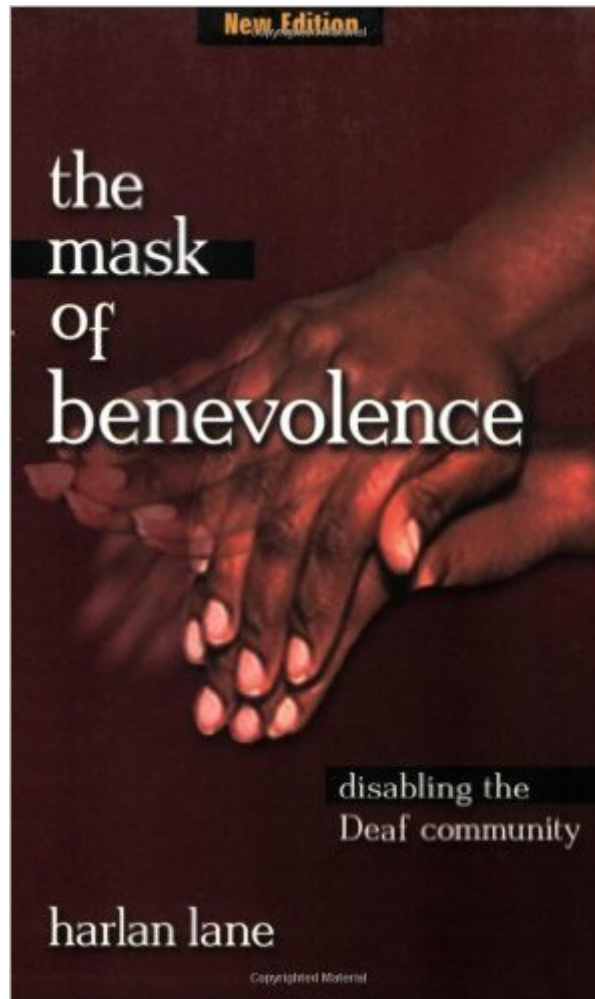


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# The Mask Of Benevolence: Disabling The Deaf Community



## Synopsis

A look at the gulf that separates the deaf minority from the hearing world, this book sheds light on the mistreatment of the deaf community by a hearing establishment that resists understanding and awareness. Critically acclaimed as a breakthrough when it was first published in 1992, this new edition includes information on the science and ethics of childhood cochlear implants. An indictment of the ways in which experts in the scientific, medical, and educational establishment purport to serve the deaf, this book describes how they, in fact, do them great harm.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I found this book to be engaging almost from the beginning; it is meticulously researched, well organized, logical, yet passionate in its defense of an oppressed language minority. One could certainly argue that Mr. Lane short-changes his opponents by not really addressing their arguments on the benefits of mainstreaming Deaf children, but the purpose of this book is not to present both sides of the issues; the purpose is to demonstrate the oppression of the Deaf language and therefore their culture. It provides strong evidence that the Deaf child is a minority, not an invalid, and that the tendency of hearing parents to see mainstreaming as the only option is a dangerous mistake. This is deep reading and scholarly writing, at times to the point of near inaccessibility to a mainstream audience. However, it is convincing and eye-opening if one is willing to put the effort into reading it. Note: the reader from New Jersey seems to have missed the point of this book. By condemning Mr. Lane as refusing to "recognize that different lifestyles are better for different

people," he fails to see that Mr. Lane defends the Deaf as a different lifestyle that deserves to be recognized. This book is not saying that no Deaf (especially late-deafened adults) should try to learn lip-reading or consider cochlear implants. It is simply saying that those Deaf who wish to take part in Deaf culture, who wish to be Deaf, should be given that option as well.

It was a long time ago...perhaps 15 years. My kid had been diagnosed as Deaf or "deaf" by the hearing community with a small "d." In those days, parents (especially a hearing parent like myself) had no options. Technology for "aided" hearing in all forms was the rage. ASL was not allowed even in the "deaf" school he attended. But my son could hear nothing even with powerful hearing aids. So, for me, a NJ criminal appellate attorney (for 20 yrs), I wanted facts-not-fluff. Dr. Lane's book in Hardcover was released in 1992. When I read the review in the NY Times Sunday Book Review section, I could not drive fast enough to get a copy. Holed up for a day, I read it front to back. And then I knew. No. My vocation was not going to be a criminal attorney, I needed to become an advocate or "the law firm" for one - my own kid. And we needed to move out of NJ so good-bye law practice and the money. Had it not been for this book, though, he would not be graduating to attend a great college next year. Please buy this book. Please do not let "them" tell you it is "radical." Go for it. I beg you....

The book was highly readable, yet there were some weaknesses worth noting. While the author made very valid points, I thought the arguments were weakened in some cases by a lack of reliable citations. The only other criticism that I had was that in many cases, the author seemed to imply an intentional effort by hearing people to force deaf people into disability. In many places, the book compared the treatment of deaf people to cases of racism and slavery around the world. While undoubtedly some in the education system do look down on others, I thought that the specific examples shown in the book reflect more on the ignorance of the hearing doctors than an intentional decision to hurt the deaf community. With the exception of these problems, I thought the book was well written and gave an intriguing history of the problems facing people in the deaf community.

I am the hearing parent of a Deaf child and I have very mixed feelings about this book. On the one hand, I find it very informative and it explains Deaf culture and the history of Deaf education very passionately and accurately. On the other hand, the information about cochlear implants and their efficacy is obscenely out dated and one sided. As a parent who has chosen ASL as the primary language of their child AND a cochlear implant, I wish there was a better treatment of the subject.

This book gives you a look at how the educational system stifles the Deaf students and tries to "FIX" them. The Deaf are not broken. They do not need fixing. What they need is compassion and patience and people who are dedicated to facilitating their ways into the mainstream. We allow ESL learners to use their native language, why not allow ASL which happens to be a language as well

Harlan Lane shows how Deafness is a cultural affiliation and only through the hearing world's oppression does it become a disability. Very well-written and researched, Lane digs deep into the Deaf culture and history to bring us this excellent resource. I believe that anyone saying that this work is biased and obsolete holds biased and obsolete viewpoints themselves. Come into this with an open mind, and you will leave a better person. Highly recommended!

This is the kind of book that deserves its own category--it's one of those "life-changing" books, like "The Autobiography of Malcom X." If you read it, your view of the world will change, because you will see things in an entirely different light. You'll see it from the perspective of an oppressed minority, Deaf people. If you're thinking, what--Deaf people are an oppressed minority?--that's because you haven't read this book yet. It is essential that you read this book with an open mind. You will be surprised, astonished, disgusted (by the prejudice and oppression), and ultimately, moved by the tenacity and strength of a culture that survives despite every effort by the majority culture to stamp it out. If you are a hearing person about to enter a profession in which you will be encountering or working with Deaf people, this book is required reading. If you are a Deaf person, this is also required reading. If you have no clue about anything involving Deaf people or their beautiful language and culture, this is also required reading. Why? You need to know how (or if) you are part of the problem. If you educate yourself by reading this book, you can work on having a positive impact instead of a negative one. I can't give it more than 5 stars, but I would if I could. It's that powerful.

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