



# Deaf Empowerment: Emergence, Struggle, and Rhetoric

*Katherine Jankowski*

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## **Deaf Empowerment: Emergence, Struggle, and Rhetoric** Katherine Jankowski

Employing the methodology successfully used to explore other social movements in America, this study examines the rhetorical foundation that motivated deaf people to work for social change during the past two centuries. The author begins by explaining her use of the term "social movement" in relation to the desire for change among deaf people, and analyzes the rhetoric they used, not limited to spoken language, to galvanize effective action. Central to the book is the struggle between the dominant hearing society and deaf people over the best means of communication, with the educational setting as the constant battleground. It first tracks the history of interaction between these two factions, highlighting the speaking majority's desire to compel deaf people to conform to "the human sciences" conventionality by learning speech. Then, it focuses on the development of the deaf social movement's ideology to seek general recognition of sign language as a valid cultural variation. Also, the influence of social movements of the 1960s and 70s is examined in relation to the changing context and perception of the deaf movement, as well as to its rhetorical refinement.

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