Of Foreign Countries and Archipelagos of Pain: Metaphors of Exile and Emigration in Disability Poetry

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"For you, there was no conscious departure/no hurried packing for exile./You are here, anyway, in your own/minor archipelago of pain," Karen Fiser muses in her autobiographical poem "Across the Border," wrapping illness-induced disability into a seemingly neat metaphor of exilement and entrapment. This notion of disability is congruent with many non-disabled individuals' conception of disabled embodiment (see e.g. Brodwin and Orange 145–173; Brostrand 4–9, Thomson): In literary and societal discourse, to be disabled tends to be equated with being imprisoned in one's body, alienated from it and, most importantly, *burdened* with a body that is less "able" than the norm (in whichever way this norm is thought to be defined[i]). However, the reality of life with a disability is much more varied and less easy to generalize: While there are some disabilities that are accompanied by varying degrees of physical discomfort, many individuals living with disabilities emphasize that they do not "suffer" from their disability and that it is not their different embodiment but society's treatment of this difference that disables them[ii] (see e.g. Davis 3–4; Linton 5–9). The idea that their bodies constitute a prison, that they are exiled in their bodies, in many cases is thus not consistent with the experience of individuals living with disabilities. At the same time, images of emigration and exile are frequently employed in disability poetry[iii] – their connotation, however, is very different from what non-disabled readers might expect.

Disability poetry is heavily centered on embodiment. To Petra Kuppers, both a literary scholar and a practitioner of disability poetry, the genre is "the place where performed language and bodies come together and apart, and where disability culture as a shared experience can challenge itself" (2007b: 90). When Jim Ferris defines disability poetry as "a challenge to stereotypes and an insistence on self-definition; foregrounding of the perspective of people with disabilities; an emphasis on embodiment, especially atypical embodiment; and alternative techniques and poetics" (n.p.), he both highlights a literary distinctiveness of disability poetry[iv] and focuses on the social and political agenda of disability writing. Questions of definition and identity, of agency and self-determination, are central to disability poetry; and the distinctive ways in which embodiment is focused on in much disability poetry has foreshadowed the greater importance placed on questions of corporeality within Disability Studies as a whole. The "third language" which, according to Jennifer Bartlett, is born from

the intersection between disabled people's specific physical challenges and society's treatment of non-normative bodies (see 15) can be traced both in the work of poets with a disability who foreground their disability in their poems (such as Cheryl Marie Wade or Jim Ferris, see Rana 443–451) and in those poets who do not necessarily identify with disability culture (e.g. Jillian Weise, Larry Eigner, or Josephine Miles).

Emigration and exile, though powerful metaphors in poetry on disability and illness, have long been overlooked by literary scholars and researchers of disability literature. Yet the connection between the experiences of emigration, an often painful, forced and frightening transition, of being uprooted, alienated from one's surrounding, resonates quite strongly with the experience of disability, of inhabiting a body that is simultaneously one's home and, in the most extreme, one's prison. At the same time, however, emigration can also be a self-determined, conscious and joyful experience, and this more positive aspect of what we might call self-exilement is reflected in much writing on disability, too: Raymond Luczak's assertion that "[a] deaf man is always a foreign country" (l. 15) is uttered with pride, and the idea of the immigrant uprooted and stranded in a strange land is reserved for the deaf person's hearing counterpart in his poem "Instructions to Hearing Persons Desiring a Deaf Man." The "paradoxical fusion of the two seemingly opposed notions of exile and entrapment" (76) that John Ower proposes in his evaluation of home and exile in Canadian poetry, "a double dislocation of sensibility that in turn produces an intense desire for a home which constitutes at the same time a freely chosen and protective center, and a place of escape from exile" (76), also resonates in some disability poetry's more ambiguous reflections of the body as a simultaneously familiar and alien space, such as when Sheila Black talks about the body she was born in with its "familiar lay of the land, the unkempt trees" (l. 28) as a beloved homeland from which medical treatment has exiled her. The disabled body, it seems, can be imagined as both: haven and prison, exile and home, and it is an ableist assumption that disability automatically equals the denial of access to what Fiser imagines as a land "across the border." The following paper will examine the way in which exile and emigration can be configured and connoted in disability poetry. Discussing two poems about disability—Raymond Luczak's "Instructions to a Hearing Person Desiring a Deaf Man" (2003) and Sheila Black's "What You Mourn" (2007)—it will argue that disability poetry's use of metaphors of exilement can challenge ableist assumptions of the disabled body as prison and of disability as entrapment.

1. The Medicalized Body as Exile: "What You Mourn" by Sheila Black

The year they straightened my legs,
the young doctor said, meaning to be kind,
Now you will walk straight
on your wedding day, but what he could not
imagine is how even on my wedding day
I would arch back and wonder
about that body I had before I was changed,
how I would have nested in it,
made it my home, how I repeated his words
when I wished to stir up my native anger
feel like the exile I believed
I was, imprisoned in a foreign body
like a person imprisoned in a foreign land
forced to speak a strange tongue
heavy in the mouth, a mouth full of stones.

Crippled they called us when I was young
later the word was *disabled* and then *differently abled*,
but those were all names given by outsiders,
none of whom could imagine
that the crooked body they spoke of,
the body, which made walking difficult
and running practically impossible,
except as a kind of dance, a sideways looping
like someone about to fall
headlong down and hug the earth, that body
they tried so hard to fix, straighten was simply mine,
and I loved it as you love your own country,
the familiar lay of the land, the unkempt trees,
the smell of mowed grass, down to the nameless
flowers at your feet—clover, asphodel,
and the blue flies that buzz over them.

Nature as a theme does not feature prominently in most of disability poetry. At the same time, many disabled poets use migrational metaphors that play with natural images to convey a sense of bodily alienation and/or belonging. As Petra Kuppers points out, nature can serve as a powerful metaphor of sitedness, embedment, and transgression since

> the same language of overcoming used traditionally in relation to nature conquests also informs much writing about disability: conquest and vanquishing, lording over or being lorded over, climbing the mountain or perishing on its slopes – these often seem the main positions available to both dichotomized gender and disability readings. (2007a: 22)

In her confessional poem "What You Mourn" (2007), Sheila Black employs a natural metaphorics to juxtapose the body before medical treatment to the medically changed and "perfected" one. The poem's main focus is not on some of the issues most frequently

discussed in this context (such as the medical gaze or the medical model of disability).[v] Instead, rather than recollecting or commenting on the medical procedure itself, the lyrical I reiterates first a doctor's and then her own reaction to the medical process, focusing on her feelings of exilement that leave her "imprisoned in a foreign body/like a person imprisoned in a foreign land" (ll. 12–3).

The enjambed "*Now you will walk straight*/*on your wedding day*" (ll. 2–3) highlights the sexualizing notion that a woman is only of worth if a man is interested in her, since the reason for the medical treatment (or at least the ostensibly soothing reason the lyrical I is given as a child) is not so much that she "walk straight" at all but that she "walk straight/on [her] wedding day". In contrast, the lyrical I's recollection of her actual sentiments on her wedding day explains her feeling of estrangement with her body: On that day, she does not in fact marvel, as the doctor's remark seems to suggest, at how her changed body has helped her find a husband. Rather, she mourns the body—the home—she has lost through the medical staff's intervention.

The interconnection between physique and psyche is made quite clear when the lyrical I distinguishes between "*that body* I had before *I* was changed" (l. 7, added emphasis). Even though this phrasing suggests that body and self are separate, the lyrical I identifies so strongly with her body that she equates *its* change with *her* change. This *not-quite* duplication of the lyricized body is mirrored by the *not-quite* symmetry of the poem: The two stanzas each consist of one sentence and are of nearly equal length (15 lines in the first stanza, 16 in the second). A sense of separation is tangible from the start: The lyrical I is clearly separated from her former body, but the poem is also informed by a strong sense of corporality. She does not, for instance, merely "wonder", but "arch[es] back and wonder[s]" (l. 6) about her unchanged body, thus connecting the cognitive process with a physical action. Even the images with whose help she describes the disassociation from her medically treated body are filled with this sense of physicality, enhancing the notion of a doubling of bodies. Thus, when she describes the imagined feeling of ease in her unchanged body, for instance, her use of the verb "to nest" (l. 8) with its sound approximation and shared etymological root with "to nestle" is so intimately physical as to create the illusion of two corporal entities in close physical contact. Similarly, when the lyrical I uses the familiar metaphor of speaking in a "strange tongue" to describe her feeling of exilement, the imagery is also a decidedly corporal one: The strange tongue is simultaneously "heavy in the mouth" (l. 14) and creates "a mouth full of stones" (l. 15). This mixing of metaphors—the strange tongue on the one hand becoming an integral, if obstructive, part of the body and on the other hand invading the new

body as a foreign matter—reinstates the suggestion of duplicity already apparent in the poem's structure on the page.

The distance between the changed body and the lyrical I's self is evoked through several metaphors concentrating on the idea of exilement and imprisonment, and thus runs counter to stereotypical beliefs about the disabled body as prison. The title of the poem supports this inside/outside divide: What *you*, the non-disabled person, mourn when you consider disability—a loss of independence and mobility maybe, a sense of exilement and entrapment—is not equivalent to what *you* (in its function as an indefinite pronoun) as the disabled person who has been subjected to medical treatment mourn, i.e. the loss of familiarity, of belonging, of a sense of the body as home. The medical professionals trying to cure the body misunderstand the lyrical I's relationship to it, and in that sense the poem ultimately does address the medical model of disability: The lyrical I does not need healing, she needs reconciliation, acceptance, and she needs to be able to make a home, a nest of her body. Altering her body thus does not only mean exiling her from her home; it results in her imprisonment in her new body, in a loss of agency, and of expression.

The clash between inside and outside perspective is made explicit in the second stanza, which starts with the lyrical I remembering the different terms of varying levels of offense assigned to her (and here, she makes the only claim of group identity, juxtaposing "them", the non-disabled, against "us", the disabled): "*Crippled*" (l. 16), "*disabled*" and "*differently abled*" (l. 17). The use of irony in this passage offers a powerful comment on the social construction of disability and seems to add another dimension to the speaker's statement: The level of political correctness (or even the recognition that there is such a thing as political correctness) changes while society's attitude—one of pity and rejection—remains the same. Either way, all of these attributions are judged to be beside the point, and the lyrical I emphasizes that her relationship with her (formerly) untreated body used to be at the same time more complicated and easier than this: the untreated body "was simply mine" (l. 26). In its clarity and simplicity, this statement highlights the ease at which the lyrical I felt in her own body. At the same time, however, the complicated lyrical motion that leads to this proclamation suggests that the route to this recognition may not be that straight forward: The sentence leading up to it runs over eight lines through various evasive subclauses and side-descriptions, repetitions and enjambements, only to, in the end, jumble out the important claim of ownership (note the missing comma after "straighten" in line 26):

> none of whom could imagine
> that the crooked body they spoke of,
> the body, which made walking difficult

and running practically impossible,
except as a kind of dance, a sideways looping
like someone about to fall
headlong down and hug the earth, that body
they tried so hard to fix, straighten was simply mine (ll. 19–26)

While the first stanza ends in the lyrical I's declaration of feeling imprisoned and exiled in her changed body, the second stanza culminates the poem in her recollection of love for her pre-operational body. Like with all true love, she suggests, the depth of feeling lies not in an overlooking of flaws but in loving someone or something despite whichever "crookedness" and imperfections they might encompass:

and I loved it as you love your own country,
the familiar lay of the land, the unkempt trees,
the smell of mowed grass, down to the nameless
flowers at your feet—clover, asphodel,
and the blue flies that buzz over them. (ll. 27–31)

The term "country" can be understood both in its literal sense and as a metaphor for the addressee's own body: love of both may not be perfectly rational and explicable either. The lyrical I evades any evocation of beauty in this re-imagination of her body: the country she is using as a metaphor is not particularly beautiful, nor are the flowers that populate it. The landscape is merely "familiar", the trees even "unkempt"; the appeal of this scene lies not in a suggestion of its beauty but in its familiarity. It is thus reminiscent of the lyrical I's vision of nesting in her unchanged body from the first stanza (l. 8). Though it may be an alien place to others, it is her home, in which she could have found comfort and happiness, and which, despite its roughness, provided familiarity and a sense of belonging. Even the supposedly "nameless flowers" are in fact known to the lyrical I (though not to the addressee of the poem, who is initially ignorant of their names), the clover conjuring up associations with being lucky, living a careless life of ease ("living in clover"), the asphodel drawing on a darker side of existence (as a herb in danger of extinction and with the implied reference to the mythological Meadows of Asphodel). Read without this symbolism, the overall impression is of a wild but beautiful place, dominated by vibrant greens and energetic activity. The association with *the land* as a place of belonging is also drawn up in the description of the lyrical I's running as "a kind of dance, a sideways looping/like someone about to fall/ headlong down and hug the earth" (l. 23–25). Even in the vulnerable state of apparent defeat, the overall implication is an ambivalent one: In falling, the lyrical I reconnects and embraces

her place of origin, her disabled body.

2. Nationhood and Agency: Raymond Luczak's "Instruction to Hearing Persons Desiring a Deaf Man"

His eyebrows cast shadows everywhere.
You are a difficult language to speak.

His long beard is thick with distrust.
You are another curiosity seeker.

His hands are not cheap trinkets.
Entire lives have been wasted on you.

His face is an inscrutable promise.
You are nothing but paper and ink.

His body is more than a secret language.
Tourists are rarely fluent in it.

His eyes will flicker with a bright fire when
you purge your passport of sound.

Let your hands be your new passport, for
he will then stamp it with approval.

A deaf man is always a foreign country.
He remains forever a language to learn.

Deafness is not a disability; rather, Deaf[vi] individuals are members of a cultural and linguistic minority – this credo is integral to the Deaf community's sense of identity (see e.g. Blankmeyer Burke 63–65). Some Deaf theorists and activists even proclaim Deafness as an ethnic identity (see Lane, Pillard, and Hedberg) and it is with this sense of ethnic, quasi-national belonging that Raymond Luczak plays in his "Instructions to Hearing Persons Desiring a Deaf Man" (2003). The poem is concerned with the problems and possibilities of a starting relationship between a deaf and a hearing person, feeding, at the same time, the implication that these problems and possibilities are transferrable to the exchange of Deaf and mainstream society as a whole. The poem starts with a description of the various levels of miscommunication by which exchanges between deaf and hearing can be characterized. Miscommunication can be triggered by psychological barriers—the poem's deaf man is

highly suspicious of the hearing person (e.g. “His eyebrows cast shadows everywhere”, l. 1, “His long beard is thick with distrust”, l. 3)—and by an actual communicational incompatibility (“You are a difficult language to speak”, l. 2). The succession of these levels within the poem (the stanzas’ first lines tend to lean towards the psychological, the second line to the communicational level) indicate that they are closely intertwined: It is never just strictly language issues that stand in the way of successful communication between deaf and hearing; miscommunication is often closely linked with psychological issues. The poem emphasizes the distrust on the deaf person’s side, indicating its rootedness in past experience (“You are *another* curiosity seeker”, l. 4, “Tourists are *rarely* fluent in it.”, l. 10, emphasis added), while the parameter of action lies with the hearing person: It is he or she who will have to overcome the communication problems by meeting the deaf man on his terms, i.e. by learning how to sign (“Let your hands be your new passport”, l. 13).

The poem wavers between distance and approach, and the notion of interpersonal movement/rigidity is mirrored by its structure; its eight stanzas of two lines each are determined by parallelisms. The first to the fifth as well as the last stanza are end-stopped, giving the impression of immovability and rigidity, e.g., “His face is an inscrutable promise./ You are nothing but paper and ink.// His body is more than a secret language./ Tourists are rarely fluent in it.” (ll. 7–10) The poem gains momentum and transgresses this standstill in the sixth and seventh stanza, which are stylistically defined by their enjambments: “His eyes will flicker with a bright fire when/you purge your passport of sound.//Let your hands be your new passport, for/he will then stamp it with approval” (ll.12–15). These enjambments create a sense of movement and progress which mirror the change in the hearing person’s approach to the deaf man: Rather than regarding him as a novelty, the suitor begins to approach the deaf man on the latter’s terms. The enthusiasm exhibited in these two stanzas is brought to a wary stop in the last stanza, however, which culminates the poem in the proclamation of seeming incompatibility: “A deaf man is always a foreign country./He remains forever a language to learn.” (ll.15–16). This seemingly defeatist notion is undercut by the more positive image of the continuing exchange, however: Although deaf and hearing partners may remain alien to each other, the speaker seems confident that the hearing person will continue his or her attempts to “learn” the deaf man, i.e. to get to know him behind the novelty of his deafness. All communications and intercultural problems aside, a continuity, a dynamic moment is implied in the envisaged learning process.

The poem’s title juxtaposes the technical term “instructions” with the sexual “desiring”, indicating the conflict between physical attraction and communicational barriers. As such, it

counterintuitively and somewhat ironically offers a technicalized, standardized solution to an emotional problem. The title's emphasis on desire (rather than, for instance, the more neutral and/or romantic "in love with" or "infatuated with") highlights the sexual notion behind the attraction.[vii] Arguably, sexualized desire is impersonal since it is based more or less exclusively on physical attraction – we do not need to know or understand someone, we do not even have to love or like them in order to desire them. The hearing person in the poem cannot communicate with the deaf man, his or her attraction to him is therefore, to some degree, detached from the deaf individual *in himself*.

In a way, the hearing person's desire can thus be thought of as a colonizing attraction, one that excludes the individual and separates them from their body and emphasizes a sense of hierarchy. Considered in this light, the hearing person's desire represents what Homi Bhabha has characterized as fetishization within colonial discourse. According to Bhabha, colonial discourse activates the simultaneous recognition and disavowal of differences, aiming at defining the colonized as Other while simultaneously fixing it as a knowable stereotype:

> The construction of the colonial other in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse, demands an articulation of forms of difference – racial and sexual. Such an articulation becomes crucial if it is held that the body is always simultaneously inscribed in both the economy of pleasure and desire and the economy of discourse, domination and power. (Bhabha 19)

Bhabha continues by defining the fetish or stereotype as "the scene of a similar fantasy and defense – the desire for an originality which is again threatened by the differences of race, colour and culture" (27). The prevalence of deaf characters in romance literature[viii] (see e.g. Dee, Anderson) supports the notion of deafness as (colonial) fetish, and the sense of "similar fantasy and defense" (ibid.) described by Bhabha is tangible in Luczak's poem, too. The notion of a colonized discourse is also emphasized by the poem's invocation of oriental stereotypes: The deaf man's "long beard thick […] with distrust"[ix] (l. 3), his "eyebrows cast[ing] shadows everywhere" (l. 1), and "eyes flicker[ing] with a bright fire" (l. 11) are tropes of orientalism. The poem's imagery thus plays with oriental clichés, and the link between deafness and nationhood (most evident in the trope of the "passport of sound" as an insigne of the hearing world, and the hands, i.e. the ability to sign, as "new passport" providing access to the Deaf world, ll. 13–14) emphasizes this nationalizing discourse.

Unlike the colonized object, however, the deaf man in Luczak's poem defends his agency. He dictates the rules of communication, of national belonging and acceptance, and it is the hearing person who has to plead for acceptance and entry into the "foreign country" of deafness. Considered from this angle, the "desire" evoked in the poem's title might transcend

the sexual level and indicate a desire to understand and to belong. At the same time, it still holds a threat: The hearing person might desire to exercise power over the deaf man, and it is in the latter's refusal to trust and accommodate the hearing suitor that he defends his agency and (ethnic/national) identity. At the same time, however, while the hearing person is addressed directly ("*You* are a difficult language to speak" [l. 2], added emphasis), the deaf person is not part of the conversation. Even in this defense of Deaf agency and identity, he thus remains the object of inspection and outside interpretation, the speaker serving as an interpreter between the two individuals as well as between the hearing readers and the Deaf world.

"Instructions to Hearing Persons Desiring a Deaf Man" is a highly political and socially critical poem; its concern is with the hearing part of society, and the anger of the poem's focalizer, the deaf man, is directed at what is depicted as a colonializing and fetishizing discourse. In that, the text transcends its materiality and serves as a commentary of deaf/hearing relations—the poem's focalizer is distrustful of his hearing counterpart's attention for a reason. Importantly, however, and in contrast to the self-reflective lyrical I in Sheila Black's "What You Mourn", the deaf man in Luczak's poem does not feel alienated from himself. He is a "foreign country" to the hearing person rather than to himself, and his exilement is chosen rather than forced upon. The communication problems are located less with him than with the hearing person and ultimately, all agency remains with him: He comes from the position of power that allows him to allow or deny access to the "foreign country" that represents both himself and the Deaf community.

3. Conclusion

Exilement and national belonging are common themes in disability poetry. "Who does not long for connection, location, a place? I want foreigners to see how our country lies", Petra Kuppers explains in her endorsement of the disability poetry collection *Beauty Is a Verb* (see Bartlett/Black/Northen). Instead of perpetuating the ableist assumption of the disabled body as prison, these poems question and subvert conceived notions of disability by configuring the disabled body as home, and the medically treated and/or non-disabled body as the foreign, the place of exile, and emotional and intellectual standstill.

There is no one way disability is experienced, and therefore, no one way the disabled body is referenced and described in poetry. As Luczak, Black and other disability poets show, however, disability is not necessarily the disaster that non-disabled persons tend to configure it as: Luczak's and Black's seemingly counterintuitive use of home as a metaphor for the

disabled body and of exile as either a chosen act of embracing the disabled body or an enforced migration into the medicalized, *normalized,* body illustrates the positive embodiment by which disability can be accompanied.

The self-determined nature of Luczak's and Black's work thus demonstrates not only the influence of the disability rights movement on the genre of disability poetry, it also highlights its genre specificity: In its embracing of difference, disability poetry is also exemplary of US poetry's move from the margin to the center of society (see Rana 454). Turning notions of exilement and emigration upside down, the poets succeed in questioning readers' preconceived notions of disability and invite discussions of the disabled body as a site of belonging rather than alienation and estrangement.

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[i] For a detailed discussion of "normalcy", turn to Lennard J. Davis's seminal *Enforcing Normalcy*, in which he discusses the construction of disability and normalcy and the historical roots that have ultimately lead to the discursive configuration of the body along fictions of normalcy.

[ii] The terminology within Disability Studies reflects this discussion, and there is a spirited debate, for instance, over whether to talk and write about "disabled individuals" or "individuals with a disability". The key question in this discussion regards the cause of disability, the prevailing question being: who disables whom?, and whether or not the disability is seen as defining the individual. The British civil rights movement, for instance, rejects the term "people with disabilities" since, when used in that context, the term "disabilities" refers to a person's medical condition and thus confuses disability with impairment. As proponents of the British model argue, there is a strong difference between "impairment" (the physical reality of different embodiment) and "disability", i.e. the degree to which one is disadvantaged because of this impairment. Someone living with a disability is not *disabled* by his or her own body but by society's treatment of their different embodiment. In that sense, society becomes the disabling factor in the equation, and a disabled person is actively "dis-enabled" by his or her social and political environment. In contrast, people-first (or person-first) language as supported by e.g. many members of the American Disability community, emphasizes that disability is foremost a label and that the fact that someone lives with a disability merely constitutes one part of that individual's identity. Proponents of the people-first model of terminology reject the use of terminology such as "disabled person" because it suggests that disability is the defining characteristic of such an individual and excludes that person's other roles and identities from his or her description and configuration.
For a more detailed overview of this complex question, refer to Mackelprang 87–98, or Neher/Sandin 182–195.

[iii] For a concise discussion of the defining markers and characteristics of disability poetry, see Rana 443–456.

[iv] I have questioned the idea of disability poetry's uniqueness in terms of literary style elsewhere (see Rana 444– 447), since I believe that what marks this genre of poetry as different is less a difference in poetics (disability poetry, in my opinion, works along the same lines as other types of poetry) but in social and political outreach, and identity-formation.

[v] The medical gaze describes medical and diagnostical practice which separates the patient's body from his or her psyche. The medical model derived in part from this theorization is "a standard, shorthand term to indicate the depersonalization of the institutionalized medical industry that can result in stripping people of their most intimate internal identity" (Rose 2011: 178)

[vi] Within Deaf Studies, the category "deaf" (with a lower case "d") is used as a generic term for any individual with impaired hearing. In contrast, "Deaf" (with a capital "D") signifies membership to what is considered Deaf culture, i.e. the notion that being deaf does not imply being inferior or lacking in any sense (see e.g. Dolnick 1993, 37–53).

[vii] The peom also neglects to disclose the gender of the "desiring persons" (in contrast to the clearly masculine object of desire). This may be a nod to Luczak's own background as a homosexual deaf male, but it also highlights the individuality of the deaf man: He is the identified focalizer of the poem, it is he who is characterized by the poem, while his counterpart remains unfixed, unknown, and thus, in a sense, unimportant not only in terms of their characterization, but also of their gender.

[viii] Romance plays a particularly important part in young adult fiction about deafness (see e.g. Brown 2008, Lytton 2015,)

[ix] Beards presenting a problem for lip-reading, the deaf man's "long beard […] thick with distrust" (l. 3) can also be read as a metaphor for his unwillingness to assimilate himself into mainstream society.