Acknowledgments

The central claim of this book is that things are present or absent in context by virtue of the histories of perception that surround them. The text I have presented here is no exception. It is the consequence of many debts accumulated in the course of its own creation, though few of these debts are readily visible here in its most tangible, permanent, and public form. In this section (far too short), I hope to make some of those histories more intelligible.

Throughout my research and writing, I was supported by a number of different programs. These include the Amherst College Donald S. Pitkin Fellowship in Anthropology, the University of Chicago Century Fellowship, two Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) fellowships in Kathmandu, the Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Grant, a grant from the Endangered Language Initiative at the CUNY Graduate Center, and ongoing financial support from the Open Institute for Social Science in Kathmandu. On the other side of fieldwork, I owe a great deal to my editors at Hau for their dedication to this project from its earlier, much rougher forms, and especially to my anonymous readers, whose deep insight and meticulous attention I've done my best to honor.

I have also benefited from a number of unusually generous mentors. Deborah Gewertz was the first to teach me anthropology, and, though her influence precedes this project, it is consequential throughout. Drucilla Ronchen taught me more about fieldwork in deaf communities than I think I'll ever fully realize. The members of my dissertation committee, Juliette Blevins, John Kelly, and

Michael Silverstein, are all deeply present in the pages of this volume. I am grateful for their time, teaching, and support. I am especially grateful to my committee chair, Judith Farquhar, who has been a mentor in the truest and broadest sense of the word. Thank you.

Grad school was better because Abigail Rosenthal was there, too. Her clarity and generosity through countless early drafts propelled this book forward. Gretchen Pfeil has been a wonderful collaborator and a true friend. Amanda Snellinger knows how to get anything done in Kathmandu, and I have learned a lot from her. Sanjib Pokhrel was there from the absolute beginning, and his friendship and teaching provide the foundation to a great deal here. Surendra, Sayuja, Ayushman, and Prastut Shrestha gave me a home and taught me how to be a person in Nepal, and for that I will always be grateful. There are few people in this world with as much insight and resolve as Dhirendra Nalbo, and his patient attention has improved this book in countless ways. Frank Bechter's influence on this work is singular. I have no idea what he must have thought when I sent him that naïve if wildly enthusiastic email all those years ago, but I couldn't have asked for a better friend and mentor. Mara Green is present in perhaps every page of this book, in insights gleaned from the thousand subtle, insightful, impassioned, critical, generous, and often challenging conversations I had with her. As our mutual acquaintances in deaf Nepal are always very happy to remind me, she remains the better signer. I will always be grateful for her friendship.

Above all else, this work has been possible only because a great many deaf people in Kathmandu invited me into their lives. To name just a few, my sincere thanks go to Kiran Acharya, Rashmi Amatya, Bikash Dangol, Nagendra Gurung, Raghav Bir Joshi, Sushil Karmacharya, Sitaram Karnal, Uttam Maharjan, Deepak Shakya, Dipawali Sharma, Rojina Shrestha, Sachin Shrestha, Sanobhai Timilsina, and Satyadevi Wagle. The insight, dedication, kindness, and boundless humor you shared with me were more than I ever deserved. I only hope those things are reflected in these pages.

I am grateful to my family—Theresa Graif, Michael Graif, Benjamin Graif, Joseph Graif, Patricia Martin, Richard Martin, and especially Linda Atwood—for being always ready at hand with their support. Mateo and Soren were wonderful writing companions, and they always gave me a reason to look forward to coming home. Though all flaws of analysis in this book remain my own, any typos that exist might be traced back to the two of them, enthusiastic as they were from an early age to help me write. Most of all, and with all of my love, I am grateful to Sonya. This book is dedicated to her.