

Sign Language Interpreter Space:
a phenomenological case study of interpreted theatre

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative, phenomenological study explores the production of space by sign language interpreters in the theatre, and the influence of multiple interacting spaces on the co-construction of meaning between participants of these interpreted interactions. A sign language interpreted performance (SLIP) of Disney's *The Lion King* serves as a case study of the *placed strategy*, which situates the interpreters on the outer edges of the performance space. Placed interpreting is the dominant SLIP strategy. Applications of Lefebvre's (1991) *spatial trialectics* in deaf spaces and in theatre spaces contribute to the study's conceptual framework for considering interpreted theatre spaces, the *SLIP Spatial Framework*.

Experiences of the SLIP described by deaf audience members, actors, and the interpreting team combine with observation data and secondary references to form a composite narrative re-telling of the experiences of the SLIP from multiple perspectives. Deaf people are shown to produce deaf spaces within the multiple, highly orchestrated incumbent physical and fictional spaces of the theatre. Meaning co-construction occurs between all three groups, not as a process channelled through the interpreters.

The study offers a foundational discussion of *sign language interpreter space* and a tool for researchers and practitioners: the *SLIP Spatial Framework*. Application of Lefebvrian spatial trialectics aligns the study with a growing body of deaf space research, while demonstrating ways in which interpreters blend features of deaf spatial production with those of the situations in which they operate.

DEDICATION

For my husband, James. You are so fine to me.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are so many threads to this fabric—all coming together to form a thing that wasn't there before ... and cannot be here now ... without *these* threads. Just as they were. Are.

Deaf people, interpreters, and actors have shared their personal experiences to bring to life the vivid re-telling of the sign language interpreted performance described in the following pages. Any other mix of people, story, time, or place would have led to a different outcome. I am thankful for the generous contributions of each participant (introduced later, largely by pseudonym)—and to Randy Mayer, company manager of *The Lion King Australia*.

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And to Jim: when I met you, time stood still. And then *life* began. One year later, we were married—well before it was recognized in U.S. law. Twelve years later, we renewed our vows and were legally married when it became possible in Canada. What better way to celebrate our upcoming 30th wedding anniversary than to renew our vows in Scotland? My Love: will you marry me?

[He said yes!]

DECLARATION STATEMENT



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>ABSTRACT</i>	<i>i</i>
<i>DEDICATION</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>DECLARATION STATEMENT</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>LIST OF FIGURES</i>	<i>ix</i>
CHAPTER 1 —INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Statement of the problem	1
1.2 Purpose of the study	7
1.2.1 Study aim and questions	7
1.3 Interpreters and Theatre: putting it together	7
1.3.1 Descriptions of deaf people	7
1.3.2 Descriptions of sign language interpreters	9
1.3.3 Of practice and politics: what (or who) are we doing this for?	11
1.3.4 Three SLIP strategies	14
1.4 The present case: Disney’s <i>The Lion King</i>	25
1.5 Significance of the study	27
1.6 Structure of the thesis	29
CHAPTER 2 —LITERATURE REVIEW	33
2.1 Human geography and space	35
2.1.1 Reality is socially constructed	35
2.1.2 Foucault and the heterotopia	41
2.1.3 Lefebvre and the spatial triad	45
2.1.4 Space, margins, and contact zones	50
2.2 Theatre space	54
2.2.1 Recognizing the places of theatre	54
2.2.2 The oppositional model—performer and spectator	56
2.2.3 Theatre architecture—containing theatre’s worlds	59
2.2.4 Designed spaces—heterotopia by illusion	63
2.2.5 Phenomenology, co-presence, and performance	67
2.2.6 Extended spaces—a framework and taxonomy	79
2.2.7 The SLIP spatial framework	87
2.3 Deaf spaces and deaf geographies	92
2.3.1 The body, being, and knowing	92
2.3.2 The architecture of DeafSpace	95
2.3.3 Theorizing deaf geography	100
2.4 Sign language interpreters and “spaces”	106
2.4.1 Sign language interpreters in the contact zone	106
2.4.2 Describing interpreter spaces	107
2.5 Summary: a conceptual framework for interpreted theatre space	120
CHAPTER 3 —RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	122
3.1 World view and research approach	122
3.2 The researcher	123
3.2.1 Researcher positionality	128
3.3 Qualitative methods in the phenomenological tradition	129

3.4	Research questions	132
3.5	Site selection and study participants	133
3.5.1	Convenience is 10,000 miles from home	133
3.5.2	Identifying participants	137
3.5.3	Becoming known to study participants	142
3.6	Data Collection Procedures	144
3.6.1	One month in Melbourne	144
3.6.2	Interviews	146
3.6.3	Observations.....	151
3.6.4	Desk research	151
3.7	Data analysis	152
3.7.1	CAQDAS software used in the study.....	152
3.7.2	Translation and transcription.....	153
3.7.3	Coding type(s).....	157
3.7.4	Phenomenological description and theme development	160
3.7.5	Writing and translation.....	162
3.7.6	Report of findings	164
3.8	Qualitative validation strategies and study quality.....	165
3.9	Ethical implications.....	167
3.10	Summary of methods	170
 CHAPTER 4 —FINDINGS: EXPERIENCING THE LION KING.....		173
4.1	The social and physical spaces of The Lion King.....	173
4.1.1	Rehearsal spaces.....	173
4.1.2	The social reality	175
4.1.3	The physical / fictional relationship	185
4.1.4	Location and fiction	193
4.1.5	Textual space.....	199
4.1.6	Thematic space.....	202
4.1.7	Summation: the spaces of The Lion King SLIP.....	204
4.2	The Lion King: space as experienced by interpreters, actors, and deaf audience members	205
4.2.1	Entering the spaces.....	206
4.2.2	Preparation spaces.....	208
4.2.3	Thirty minutes until curtain.....	211
4.2.4	Call to places	215
4.2.5	Designated seating for deaf patrons—the ‘deaf section’	219
4.2.6	The intermission	225
4.2.7	Performance mental spaces	228
4.2.8	Interpreter use of space	233
4.2.9	End of show and curtain call.....	242
4.2.10	Epilogue	246
4.3	Summary of findings.....	246
 CHAPTER 5 —DISCUSSION.....		248
5.1	Themes in the data	248
5.1.1	Spaces come together to interact.....	249
5.1.2	Interpreters are part of meaning co-construction	251
5.1.3	Deaf people form a temporary, small-scale deaf space during a SLIP	251
5.1.4	Interpreters use space to influence and facilitate meaning.....	253
5.1.5	Theatre interpreters have ambiguous roles	256
5.1.6	Space and role are related	258
5.1.7	Interpreters experience role strain	260

5.1.8	Interpreter placement leads to competing narratives and split visual attention	263
5.2	The SLIP through a Lefebvrian lens	265
5.2.1	Deaf space and the SLIP	268
5.2.2	Actor space and the SLIP	270
5.2.3	Interpreter space and the SLIP	271
5.2.4	Hybrid strategies of the interpreter performance framework.....	273
5.3	Co-presence and the SLIP	276
5.4	Summary of discussion	280
 CHAPTER 6 —CONCLUSION.....		282
6.1	A return to the study questions.....	283
6.1.1	How are spaces within the SLIP defined and conceived?.....	284
6.1.2	What are the spatial practices and experience of SLIP participants?.....	285
6.1.3	How do the perception and production of space by SLIP participants converge to facilitate meaning?	286
6.2	Study scope and limitations.....	288
6.2.1	Number of participants.....	289
6.2.2	Hearing audience members	289
6.3	Study implications.....	290
6.3.1	Contribution to theory	290
6.3.2	Implications for sign language interpreted performances and elsewhere	292
6.3.3	New research vistas.....	294
6.4	Final thoughts	295
 REFERENCES.....		296
 APPENDIX A—RESEARCH SUMMARY.....		313
 APPENDIX B—INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....		316
 APPENDIX C—INTERVIEW GUIDE.....		318
 APPENDIX D—TRAVEL BLOG POSTS.....		321

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1.	Captions displayed to one side of the stage during a Broadway performance of <i>The Producers</i> . (Photo: Theatre Development Fund.)	3
Figure 1-2.	Avenues to membership in the deaf community (1980).	8
Figure 1-3.	Four motivational models affecting SLIP decision making (McDougall, 2007).....	13
Figure 1-4.	The placed strategy of interpreting during a 2011 Broadway performance of <i>Sister Act</i> ; interpreters located on the auditorium floor. Captions are displayed simultaneously behind the interpreters. (Photo: David Leshay).	15
Figure 1-5.	The placed strategy of interpreting during a 2013 production of <i>A Different Friend?</i> in Brazil; interpreter located on the stage level, outside of the proscenium arch. (Photo: João Miranda / Escola de Gente).	16
Figure 1-6.	The zoned strategy is employed during a performance of <i>A Thousand Cranes</i> by Wild Swan Theater; two interpreters are located on a bench placed behind the main acting space on stage (McDougall, 2007e). (Photo: Wild Swan Theater.)	18
Figure 1-7.	The zoned strategy during a 2018 production of <i>I Was Most Alive With You</i> ; the mirror cast of interpreters is located on a separate level suspended above the actors. (Photo: John Marcus.).....	20
Figure 1-8.	The zoned strategy during a 2012 performance of <i>A Christmas Carol</i> by Wild Swan Theater. During this scene depicting a party hosted by Mr. & Mrs. Fizziwig (centre), one interpreter oversees the dialogue of Mr. Fezziwig and all of the cast members on his side of the stage (interpreter with beard, left side of photo), and the other interpreter oversees the dialogue of Mrs. Fezziwig and her side of the stage (interpreter with hands on heart). (Photo: Lisa Thompson for Wild Swan Theater.).....	21
Figure 1-9.	The shadowed strategy employed during a 1997 production of <i>Rainbow Crow</i> by Wild Swan Theater; the interpreters (skunk, left and reindeer, right) are incorporated into the cast of animal characters, shown here adrift on a chunk of ice. (Photo: Glenn Bering for Wild Swan Theater)	22
Figure 1-10.	A scene from a shadowed 2007 production of <i>Translations</i> at the Hilberry Theatre (McDougall, 2013a). A.) a spontaneous moment in rehearsal between actor (above, left) and interpreter (right) becomes B.) a fixed part of the performance (below). (Photo: Hilberry Theatre, Wayne State University.).....	24
Figure 2-1.	Literature review bedraggled daisy, showing the interaction of review themes and the cross-cutting nature of space & human geography. Gaps in the literature appear as a ● (sign language interpreter space) and a ★ (sign language theatre interpreting space).....	33
Figure 2-2.	Knowledge production during interaction between hearing, deaf, and interpreter sub-universes with interpreter as conduit	38
Figure 2-3.	Knowledge production in multiple sub-universe permutations	39
Figure 2-4.	The Spatial Triad of Henri Lefebvre.	47
Figure 2-5.	The oppositional spatial arrangement of the European theatre tradition, as seen in the Matthews and Herrmann tradition.	57
Figure 2-6.	The interaction between venue, narrative spaces, and design layers, based on Tompkins (2014).	65
Figure 2-7.	Taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre (McAuley, 1999, p. 25).	81
Figure 2-8.	The spatial functions of McAuley's taxonomy in relation to one another (2010, p. 34).	87
Figure 2-9.	The SLIP Spatial Framework.....	90

Figure 2-10. The acquisition of dorsal information by hearing people (left) and deaf people (right). Adapted from Sirvage (2015).	94
Figure 2-11. DeafSpace architectural design summary. Adapted from (H. Bauman, 2014; Kolson Hurley, 2016; Sirvage, 2015).	99
Figure 2-12. Instructional messaging and visual material which are not integrated (left), and which are integrated (right) (Mather & Clark, 2012).	100
Figure 2-13. Permutations of deaf spaces, based on Gulliver & Kitzel (2016).	101
Figure 2-14. Interpreter role-space, charted on three intersecting axes (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014).	111
Figure 2-15. Interpreter/Space Combinations (Scully & Howard, 2009).	112
Figure 2-16. The oppositional interpreter placement, where D=deaf participant; H=Hearing participant; and, I=Interpreter participant.	115
Figure 2-17. The “not ideal” interpreter placement, which establishes a split visual field for the deaf person (De Weerd & Kusters, 2016, p. 18).	116
Figure 2-18. The central fields of vision for participants of an interpreted theatre performance, where D=Deaf participant; H=Hearing participant; and, I=Interpreter participant.	117
Figure 2-19. Summation of space and interpreting concepts discussed in Section 2.4.	119
Figure 3-1. Participant interview inventory	150
Figure 4-1. Location of the Regent Theatre (Heritage Council of Victoria, 1988).	176
Figure 4-2. Front of the Regent Theatre, with advertising for The Lion King (Source: Melbournepoint.com).	177
Figure 4-3. A view of the main lobby of the Regent Theatre, as viewed upon entering. Three wooden doors (right) lead to main floor seating; stairs (left) lead to the balcony level lobbies. (Source: Australian Community Media.)	178
Figure 4-4. Seating Chart, the Regent Theatre, showing “disabled seating” (shaded dark grey) (Regent Theatre, 2015). Dashed line indicates designated seating for deaf patrons. Circle indicates seat of the researcher.	180
Figure 4-5. Seat selection in the Auslan Allocation, showing price differences based on seat location.	181
Figure 4-6. The interior of the Regent Theatre, showing the proscenium and house-left box. (Source: marrinergroup.com.au)	182
Figure 4-7. Percussionist Rolando Morales-Matos, of the Broadway production of The Lion King, costumed and in position prior to performance. (Source: Broadwaymusicians.com)	182
Figure 4-8. The stage door of the Regent Theatre, at 200 Flinders Lane (glass door near the centre of the frame). (Source: Google Maps.)	183
Figure 4-9. Location of the interpreters (I) outside of the stage space, with the percussionists (P) located in the boxes.	187
Figure 4-10. Opening of Act 1. (Photo: John Marcus for Disney.)	188
Figure 4-11. End of Act 2. (Photo: John Marcus for Disney.)	189
Figure 4-12. Josh Quang Tart as Scar (left), his mask thrusting forward as he lunges forward, with Cameron Goodall as Zazu. (Photo: John Marcus for Disney.)	190
Figure 4-13. Mufasa in The Grasslands. (Photo: Disney.)	191
Figure 4-14. Nick Afoa as Simba is alone on stage as he reflects on the memory of his father in Endless Night (Photo: Deen van Meer.)	198

Figure 4-15. The view from behind the last row of seats in the designated seating area for deaf patrons. (Photo: cinematreasures.com)	216
Figure 4-16. Seating diagram of the Regent Theatre, showing the interpreter path from pre-show ‘places’ (the dot) to the performance platform (the rectangle).....	217
Figure 4-17. Degree of split attention as a factor of interpreter placement (Ix), actor location, and a deaf patron’s seat (D). (Angle measurements are not based on actual measurements in the theatre, but on measurements within the diagram, itself.)	222
Figure 4-18. Focus of Zazu character on the puppet (left), and on the puppet and actor together (right). (Photos: left by Deen van Meer; right by Disney.).....	223
Figure 4-19. Upstage/downstage configuration of the interpreters during Endless Night showing Laura (black) and James (grey).	235
Figure 4-20. A: interpreter positions before the counter-cross (left) and B: after the counter-cross (right). Black figure represents Laura; Grey figure represents James.	238
Figure 4-21. Interpreters with eye gaze directed toward each other.	241
Figure 5-1 (also, Figure 4-9). Location of deaf (D) and hearing (H) audience members in the auditorium, actors (A) on stage, interpreters (I) outside of the stage space, and percussionists (P) located in the boxes.....	259
Figure 5-2. SLIP Spatial Framework (reproduced from Figure 2-9 in Section 2.2.6).....	267
Figure 5-3. Actor/Spectator Feedback Loop: the linguistically congruent experience (left) and the interpreted experience (right).	277
Figure 6-1. Literature review bedraggled daisy, showing the contributions of the present study in interaction with existing scholarship.....	295

Chapter 1—Introduction

Nants ingonyama bagithi baba!

[Here comes a lion, Father!]

—Opening Line, Disney’s *The Lion King*

Cast members of Disney’s *The Lion King* stealthily settle into places behind the last row of seats as the lights dim in the audience of the Regent Theatre in Melbourne, Australia. The cast is prepared to jolt the audience members into their on-stage world, by way of a visual and auditory cacophony starting in the back of the audience and streaming toward the stage. As a cast member portraying the role of Rafiki prepares to bellow the show’s iconic first line, the sign language coach who advised the sign language interpreters for the performance considers the 140 deaf people in the audience. She makes a decision:

I was in the front row, across the aisle from the deaf section. I turned to the woman across the aisle, and I signed ‘Hey, look behind you.’ As she did, each row of deaf people behind her turned around, in a domino effect, just in time to see the elephant coming down the aisle. I knew that it was a big moment, and I didn’t think it was fair that deaf audience members would miss it.

The sign language coach has a unique perspective: she is aware of the upcoming details of the performance; she knows how the interpreters have planned for the moment; and she is deaf. She has knowledge and experience of how deaf people experience theatre, and how deaf people use and move within spaces. In the brief moment before the beginning of *The Lion King*, her insights into the deaf experience, the performance, and the interpretation come together to inform her actions—which are designed to make possible a better experience for deaf audience members. This study explores the nexus between this overlap of spaces—theatre, deaf, and interpreter—and the experience of sign language interpreted theatre by performers, deaf audience members, and interpreters.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The specialty of interpreting in the theatre settings has been described as both a tool for accessibility (Kilpatrick & Andrews, 2009) and a new form of art (Gebron, 2000;

Kilpatrick, 2007). It may be both: the practice requires specialised skills involving artistry, and also attempts to address accessibility of theatre by deaf patrons (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 2014, p. 1). Theatre interpreters work in teams that vary in size—often in groups of two or more, but frequently alone—and which may include sign language consultants and other support team members. While the team’s end product is an interpretation performed by interpreters on stage during a performance, numerous decisions impact the final product. The specific professional practices of theatre interpreters vary from interpreter to interpreter, and often from one production to another. Interpreters working in theatre perform multiple functions as translator, interpreter, and quasi-performer of multiple roles (Lenham, 2004; Rocks, 2011; Turner & Pollitt, 2002). The complexity of this arrangement is often under-appreciated, and “the first casualty in this process tends to be any sense of the literary value of the piece” (Turner & Pollitt, 2002, p. 28). Observations from within the deaf and theatre communities suggest that interpreted performances are a different and oftentimes disappointing experience for deaf people than attending theatre produced by deaf people (Bangs, 1994; Cohen, 1989; Kilpatrick, 2007; Richardson, 2017).

There is no one, agreed-upon declaration of what sign language interpreters in theatre do, how they are to conduct their craft, nor their purpose. One view is that the purpose of the interpreters is to *transmit the words* from the script to a deaf audience (Marshall, 2015, para. 3): to be a type of embodied and visual script.

Some theatres now offer deaf patrons a choice: a performance with sign language interpreters, or a performance with captions/sur-titles—a rendition of the dialogue that is digitally displayed or projected in segments on one side of the stage space (see Figure 1-1) or above the stage altogether. A variation is to offer interpreters and captions simultaneously.

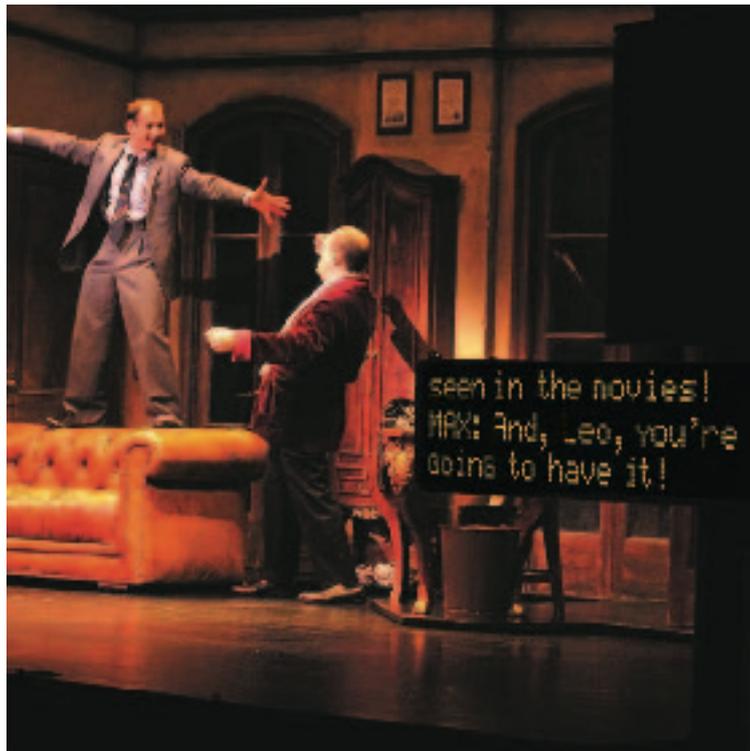


Figure 1-1. Captions displayed to one side of the stage during a Broadway performance of The Producers. (Photo: Theatre Development Fund.)

Deaf writer, arts advocate, and theatre aficionado, Kaitlyn Mielke, contributes her perspective on the utility of interpreters and captions:

What captioning can't provide, the interpreters can. That is, if the interpreters are excellent and know what they're doing. They add the element of theatricality to translating the words and songs and provide the needed emotions and inflections that are absent from a captioning display. They can channel the actors' intentions and broadcast to the Deaf/Hard of Hearing audience in order to make the connection between stage and audience. Also, when one looks away from the stage, they still get the information from the interpreters.

Sarcasm, excitement, terror, fright, love—all those feeling [sic] that bring words to life—the interpreters can convey them. Captions can't. There is the occasional modifier that accompanies a line of dialogue, but they are few in between.

And now musicals—how can captioning show what the music sounds like? All I see on the captioning display are the music notes along with a modifier

(i.e. [upbeat music] or [drum roll] or possibly [crescendo]. For the Deaf person, what does a crescendo sound like? In interpreting for musicals, interpreters deal with multi-layered information—the words themselves, how they are said/sung, and the music style used as well as slight characterization to determine who is talking/singing (Mielke, 2014, paras. 22–26).

Mielke’s perspective suggests that the choice between captions and interpreters is not a choice between two equal approaches with a shared aim. Interpreters visually convey information that captions do not; and, they serve to connect audience members with actors. Thus, the visual—sometimes performative—nature of interpreters is a positive and facilitative characteristic of a nuanced *sign language interpreted performance* (SLIP) experience for Mielke.

In my own practice as a theatre interpreter, the response to theatre interpreters by actors, directors, and others involved in theatre productions has varied widely. Frequently (perhaps inevitably), placement of interpreters in the theatre space during a performance impacts the experience of both the intended audience of deaf patrons and an unintended audience—hearing patrons who can see the interpreters from where they sit (Rocks, 2011). The visual characteristics of the interpreters’ performance that provide Mielke with a nuanced experience of the performance can be viewed by theatre professionals as distractions. They may expect the interpreters to simply convey the text of the script, with an “**obligation** [original emphasis] is to do so as unobtrusively as possible, so as not to draw focus from the performance itself” (Marshall, 2015, para. 3):

Signing a show for deaf audience members is not license to steal focus and take over the evening, and yet that is what a majority of interpreters do, in part because they get praise for it. “Oh,” I hear people say, “you were as much fun to watch as the show!” Well, I’m sorry, but I don’t hire clown acts, magicians and jugglers to go on simultaneously with shows I direct, no matter how entertaining they are by themselves. That style of signing is narcissistic, irresponsible, and disrespectful to every artist from the playwright to the actors and the designers.

I understand that flamboyant, creative signing is more interesting to watch for deaf audience members. However, if that extra enjoyment for two or three or

twenty hearing-impaired patrons is purchased at the cost of a warped performance experience for the rest of the hearing audience and a distortion of the production itself, it cannot be justified (2015, paras. 6–7).

While Marshall expresses the concerns of some theatre artisans that the visibility of interpreters may “interfere with the integrity of the production” (2015, para. 3), some others embrace interpreters as *a part of* the production. Reflecting on decades of performances on stage alongside sign language interpreters of the shadowed style (where interpreters move onstage amongst the cast) in the United States, Wild Swan Theater actor and co-founder Sandy Ryder describes an added value that results from the visual nature of her collaboration with interpreters while acting during SLIPs:

It is incredibly exciting and enriching. For me as an actor, I draw from my interpreter-partner. We make it together. I feel like without them, I am at a disadvantage. With them, I feel like we have so much power to play up a moment—to make something clear. ... I think it helps clarify the moment and what’s really happening—often better than just the words would. The signing conveys it in a way, and makes it in the space, so that the kids can see it and it gives them even more meaning to what the moment’s about. (McDougall [TerpTheatre], 2011, 00:25)

(Shadowing is discussed further in Section 1.3.4.) These are divergent views of SLIP interpreters. The very characteristics valued by Mielke are considered distractions by Marshall. The visual nature of the interpreters is constructive in Mielke’s experience; but Marshall sees this visual nature as a destructive affront to the production. He views the interpreters as something separate from the performance. They are *other*. They should be diminutive.

For those sharing Marshall’s view, placing interpreters to one side of the stage is one way to mitigate what they perceive to be the negative influence of interpreters on the actors and hearing audience members in attendance. In interpreters, Marshall seeks a sterile reporter of text, and nothing more. Ryder stands in stark contrast. She seeks co-creation with sign language interpreters. She values the visual nature of their work, considering

it a vital tool in creating meaning with her audiences. They are not *other*; they are *with her*.

If the visual nature of interpreters is truly destructive to theatre productions when they are placed on a platform outside of the stage space, the shadowed style of interpreting—where interpreters move on stage amongst the cast—ought to be cataclysmic. After thirty years working with interpreters in the shadowed style, however, Ryder’s assessment runs afoul of this assumption. Fellow cast member, Eric Niece, considers how his experience is changed by the placement of the interpreters:

I’ve done a few shows before where I’ve had the signers and what-not, and they’ve been off stage it’s ... with them, it’s almost intrusive and it’s a distraction. But having the interpreters in the cast—in the show—has been such a cool experience. It adds another level to the show. It’s another person to interact with. Even if you’re on stage by yourself doing a monologue, or something like that, there’s still somebody there for you to kind-of play off of and work with (McDougall [TerpTheatre], 2011, 00:50).

The variation of practice techniques among interpreters of *Sign Language Interpreted Performances* (SLIPs) yields variable experiences for deaf audience members (Bangs, 1994; Kilpatrick, 2007). Turner and Pollitt (2002) point to the “integration factor” (p. 27) of the interpreters as the most fundamental of variations among SLIPs. That is, the degree of cohesion created between the interpreters and the performance, a factor of which is the physicality of the interpreters and their placement (Richardson, 2017; Turner & Pollitt, 2002). In my own theatre interpreting practice, a frequent theme in the quest for interpreter/production cohesion has been space and the placement of the interpreters in the physical and fictional worlds on stage. I have been intrigued by the influence of space on my work, and the degree to which decisions about space influence the experience of SLIPs by deaf people, actors, and interpreters.

1.2 Purpose of the study

1.2.1 Study aim and questions

My purpose is to explore the impact of space on the lived experiences of participants of sign language interpreted performances (SLIPs). I rely on interviews with members of three stakeholder groups: *theatre interpreter teams*; *deaf theatre patrons*; and, *actors*, supported by field observations during SLIPs. My dissertation will consider the experiences and co-creation of space within stakeholder groups and across stakeholder groups. My aim is to construct an understanding of how members in each group experience space in the SLIP, and to explore three questions:

- How are the spaces in a SLIP conceived and defined by its participants?
- What are the spatial practices and experiences of SLIP participants?
- How does the perception and production of space by theatre personnel, sign language interpreters, and deaf people converge to facilitate meaning as part of the interpreted theatre event?

Through a phenomenological analysis, this study will describe the lived experiences of participants of an interpreted performance of Disney's *The Lion King*—a performance in the *placed* style (for a discussion of styles, see Section 1.3.4.). These experiences are not offered as exemplars of those of actors, interpreters, and deaf audience members of all SLIPs; rather, they illuminate the described experiences of the specific study participants during one, specific SLIP performance of *The Lion King*. These descriptions lend to an understanding of the *what* and *how* of the SLIP experience.

1.3 Interpreters and Theatre: putting it together

1.3.1 Descriptions of deaf people

An ontology rooted in the embodied experiences of hearing people has dominated the collective, longitudinal defining of *deaf*, contributing to a (pervasive) view of deaf people: a *medical view* (or *the medical model*) (Kusters et al., 2017; Young & Temple,

2014). The attribute of *hearing* has been included amongst a constellation of other human characteristics which have been ascribed the quality of normalcy—centred. People who do not hear are peripheral. Not limited to medical personnel, the *medical model of deafness* prioritizes “normal” hearing in society: people who do not hear (to any degree) are perceived as “broken” and needing to be “fixed” (2014, p. 16). The particular *body* of the hearing person influences their way of being (their ontology) and their way of knowing (their *epistemology*)—which permeates their view of deaf people. Far too often it is hearing people who are in the position to influence research, policy, and the day-to-day lives of deaf people; and, they do so being vacuously uninformed (O’Brien, 2019; Young & Temple, 2014).

A *cultural model* exists in contrast with the medical model—even contesting the medical model. Social, political, and linguistic connections between deaf people contribute to a “different centre”—an orientation to the world that is not grounded in any one attribute. Here, the biophysical attribute of hearing is de-emphasized (Baker-Shenk & Cokely, 1980). Baker-Shenk and Cokely offer an approach to what they describe as “avenues to the deaf community” with an accompanying Venn diagram (see Figure 1-2. Avenues to membership in the deaf community (1980).

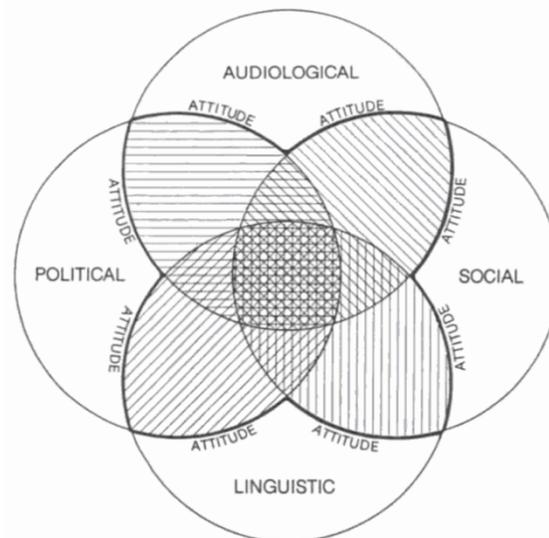


Figure 1-2. Avenues to membership in the deaf community (1980).

The visual depiction of the model highlights a theme within the cultural model—a “core deaf community” where these three types of connections converge with biophysical deafness. The core deaf community is centred in the cultural model, describing some

people as on the periphery. The notion of *the core deaf community* was reinforced by the wide-spread practice of denoting some deaf people as *Deaf* (“capital-D Deaf”) in the literature. Woodward (1975) adopted the convention to draw the distinction between the *population of deaf people generally* (“deaf”) and a *sociocultural framework of being deaf* (“Deaf”) in his own writing. The application of the deaf/Deaf distinction in academic and social conversations expanded over time—often bluntly applied to denote who is in and who is out. Among growing scrutiny of this practice, Woodward returns to the conversation, acknowledging that “a rigid taxonomy of deaf/Deaf is dangerous, colonizing, and ethnocentric” (Woodward & Horejes, 2016, p. 287). Frustrated with the evolution of the use of deaf/Deaf—and also with his connection with the term—he asserts that his original intent was to “recognize formally that deaf people were more than people who do not hear and placing deafness as a fluid identity that is socially constructed” (Woodward & Horejes, 2016, p. 287).

In a *social model of disability*, an impairment is seen as one possible manifestation of a person. The impairment does not disable an individual; structures and behaviours of society are *disabling to* the individual. The impact of the centralization of the normal body in society is recognized (the medical model is recognized), and sociological perspective is added. This conceptualization has successfully undergirded programmes and laws designed to advance deaf peoples’ interests in education, employment, and other parts of broader society. At times, the social model of disability can help articulate the ways in which societal structures impact the lives of culturally deaf people; however deaf people are unique in that there is a parallel development of a cultural model (Young & Temple, 2014). A part of the effort to cast deaf people as cultural-linguistic group has included distancing deaf people from the disability label. An ontological shift in the exploration of deaf lives is discussed in Section 2.3.1.

1.3.2 Descriptions of sign language interpreters

As models of deaf people continue to evolve, so too do descriptions of sign language interpreters. In her discussion about the literary writing of deaf people, Lindgren (2012) explores the contact zones “where deaf and hearing worlds meet” (p. 343). Sign language interpreters are inhabitants of these contact zones, and perform a role purposefully meant to function at a meeting-point between spaces. Early models used to describe sign language interpreting relied heavily on metaphors to discern the interpreting process and

the role interpreters embody (Turner & Merrison, 2016; Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005). Descriptors such as *helper*, *conduit*, and *facilitator* shared the central tenant of the interpreter as a transactional language pipeline between one person and another—all of them were essentially a derivative of the conduit view of interpreting. As the fields of sign language interpreting and related research evolves, so too do the ways in which practitioners, researchers, and governing bodies understand and describe what interpreters do (Turner & Merrison, 2016; Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005). Once encompassed in the broad domain of translation studies, the maturing notion of interpreting studies sought to construct a conceptual framework distinct from (and, yet still related to) translation studies, borrowing and adapting from sociolinguistics, communications, and related domains (Roy, 2000). The *bi-lingual/bi-cultural* model recognized the integral relationship between language and culture in the communicative process, prompting many to adopt a view similar to that of Cokely: “before an individual can interpret between two languages/cultures s/he must be bilingual and bicultural” (1984, p. 140).

In the contact zone, sign language interpreters are residing at the convergence of (at least) two social spaces, and also mediating language and culture between the two spaces. At the practitioner level, the shift away from the machine metaphor lead toward a view of interpreting not as a transaction, but as a process ... an interaction (Roy, 2000; Wadensjö, 1998). Interpreters are now recognized as contributing more than a service to an interaction, but contributing to its *meaning* and to *outcome*.

The interpreter is an active, third participant with potential to influence both the direction and the outcome of the event, and that event itself is intercultural and interpersonal rather than simply mechanical and technical (Roy, 2002).

Far from achieving the cold neutrality of machines, interpreters are active participants who experience the co-construction of meaning and the social-spatial production of space along with the other participants. They have their own, embodied experience of the interaction, and are not neutral participants (Metzger, 1999).

The purposeful move away from the *helper* metaphor was, in part, an attempt to mitigate the undue influence interpreters might have on the lives of deaf people (Turner & Merrison, 2016). While it seems important for interpreters to be aware of and manage

the ways in which their choices can influence a setting, researchers now understand that interpreters *do* influence settings and the co-construction of understanding (Turner & Merrison, 2016). The *machine* metaphor is not reflective of the ways in which interpreters operate in the contact zone between deaf and hearing spaces, and it has been a motivation of successive metaphors to move away from conduit/machine metaphor thinking (Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005). Ways in which researchers have attempted to theorize sign language interpreters at a space of convergence between hearing and deaf people are discussed in Section 2.4.1.

1.3.3 Of practice and politics: what (or who) are we doing this for?

My first exposure to interpreted theatre were late-1980s performances of the National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD), in the United States. Comprised of a mostly deaf cast, NTD performers often included two (or more) hearing actors who provided voice performances (interpretations) of the lines performed by the deaf actors on stage (Peters, 2006). The hearing actors sometimes had other acting and performance responsibilities. Well before NTD, hearing people have been at least occasional participants of deaf performances in theatres and in deaf clubs. During these performances, deaf people have sometimes made adaptations to accommodate hearing audience members. A 1932 performance by the Saturday Night Dramatic Club at Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University) featured an off-stage actor speaking the lines performed in American Sign Language by the on-stage deaf actors (Kilpatrick, 2007). Deaf performers and deaf theatres may have been the pioneers of *theatre interpreting*, and so the question of when theatre interpreting began seems well situated for a conversation about deaf theatre. (See one example in Kilpatrick's (2007) discussion of deaf children's theatre in the United States.) The recent resurgence of blended casts of deaf and hearing actors on Broadway and elsewhere may be a modern continuation of practices from deaf theatres of the past. Richardson (2019) provides a timely investigation into the blending of deaf and hearing theatre aesthetics, and the potential for equality in theatre participation.

Although it is possible to see fragments of theatre interpreting (from sign language into spoken language) in the history of the National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) in the United States, the inclusion of spoken language in deaf theatre has not been universal (Cohen, 1989). Accommodating hearing audience members who do not know sign language is not always a priority of a deaf theatre company. Target audience and "political goals"

are rooted in historic traditions that are influenced by geography, local community perceptions, and even government intervention (Cohen, 1989). While early deaf theatre forms can be traced back to face-to-face folklore traditions in deaf clubs and community groups across the world—where deaf performers developed and practised a visual vocabulary both unique to and suitable for visual language and people of the eye—the NTD was established in 1967 with hearing audiences in mind (Bangs, 1994; Cohen, 1989; Peters, 2006). The talents of deaf people were showcased, but were forced into forms that were familiar and acceptable to hearing people (Peters, 2006). During this time, deaf theatres in other countries remained focused on deaf audiences, and:

... their work embodies a more direct affirmation of the right to communicate in sign language. Some of the groups will not include a spoken text under any circumstances. They feel that if the hearing want to have access, they will have to learn sign language (Cohen, 1989, p. 69).

With this observation, we see that making deaf theatre available to hearing people has considerations that are both practical and political—not unlike the considerations faced when making hearing theatre available to deaf people. In my own practice, I have observed that multiple factors influence decisions related to SLIPs. These include both individual and institutional views of theatre artistry; audience reaction; potential financial benefits and risks; language ideology; the law; positioning of the theatre socially; and, the specific characteristics of each production (not an exhaustive list). Four motivational models typify my experiences, which have described in previous writing as shown in Figure 1-3. To the question, “Why are you considering sign language interpreting for this show?”, I have found the question to be a variation of one of the following:

Access Model	Business Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of <i>accommodations</i> necessary by law • Deaf patron perceived as <i>disabled</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach to deaf <i>community</i> • Emphasis on <i>number</i> of deaf patrons
Artistic Model	Visceral Impact Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign language as an <i>art form</i> • Application of sign language as a <i>visual element</i> in a production may result in <i>reduced readability</i> of the language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign language interpretation <i>blended naturally</i> into production • Deaf patrons <i>experience</i> emotional highs and lows of the artwork <i>simultaneously</i> alongside hearing counterparts

Figure 1-3. Four motivational models affecting SLIP decision making
(McDougall, 2007)

Other writers have made similar observations about the perspectives held by theatre personnel, interpreters, and audience members about what a SLIP is, and should accomplish (Gebron, 2000; Kilpatrick, 2007; Kilpatrick & Andrews, 2009; Rocks, 2011; Turner & Pollitt, 2002). Oftentimes, there is more than one motivation at play. A theatre company may see deaf people as a potential revenue source, while also worrying about the business of disgruntled hearing audience members. They may attempt to use sign language as an artistic tool, but at the risk of losing deaf audience members who perceive the attempt to be cultural appropriation. The decision is complex, and the range of responses can include both: “it’s like ordering toilet paper” (see Section 2.2.7) to “without them, I would be at a disadvantage” (see Section 1.1).

Whether it is a traditionally hearing production being made accessible to deaf people, or a traditionally deaf production being made accessible to hearing people, the motivation of the production company has significant impact on the final product of the SLIP. Once adopted, each model has associated priorities, practices, limits, and possibilities. The features of the SLIP change based on the motivation of the production company: one such feature is space. Often discussed in terms of the *location* where interpreters are placed during a performance, spatial strategies deployed by interpreters encompass more than simply where the interpreters will stand—they influence other features of the performance (e.g., how the interpreters move, are dressed, and interact with others). Three broad categories of SLIP spatial approaches are generally recognized among practitioners: *placed*, *zoned*, and *shadowed*.

1.3.4 *Three SLIP strategies*

The “where” of SLIP interpreters has been referred to alternatively as *approaches* (Turner & Pollitt, 2002), *placements* (Gebron, 2000), *positioning* (Horwitz, 2014), *styles* (Horwitz, 2014; McDougall, 2007b), and *strategies* (McDougall, 2007b). In my own writing, I have treated these terms interchangeably. However; over time, I have found that *placement* is overly narrow: it emphasises the location of the interpreters. *Strategy* and *style* both suggest that there is something more than the location of interpreters at play. Subjectively (to me), *strategy* forefronts the structure and purposeful planning behind the choices made by the interpreters, while *style* forefronts the aesthetics and results of their final product. Gile (2009) makes a distinction between *tactics* (online responses to emerging problems in-the-moment; highly skill dependent) and *strategies* (pre-arranged responses to the demands of the setting, based on agreed-upon insights; influenced by declarative knowledge and rules, with less activation of cognitive skills). Taking Gile’s lead, *strategy* will be my term of choice for the remainder of this dissertation.

While *placed*, *zoned*, and *shadowed* are fairly agreed-upon terms, variations exist in the description of each strategy and the ways in which they are applied from production to production—and from country to country. The following descriptions of each strategy attempt to recognize some of those variations, although even more may exist.

The Placed Strategy: Far and above the most common strategy of SLIP throughout the world, the *placed strategy* is characterized by the location of the interpreters being purposefully outside of the acting space, often to the far left or right of the *proscenium* (the frame that separates the stage of many theatres from the audience). To wit, this strategy has also been referred to as *proscenium interpreting* (Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 2014). When there are two or more interpreters, they are generally placed together as a pair or team on one side of the stage. The placed strategy (sometimes referred to as *platform interpreting*) is oftentimes the assumed strategy of the SLIP (Gebron, 2000; McDougall, 2007c; Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 2014; Richardson, 2017).

The placement of the interpreters is often on the floor of the auditorium, in front of a group of seats reserved for deaf patrons (Gebron, 2000). Due to the location of the

interpreters, the seats allocated for deaf patrons are pre-destined to be on the periphery of the auditorium (a location considered less desirable for viewing the stage, but which is required for viewing the interpreters). Figure 1-4 documents this placement during a Broadway production of *Sister Act*. Some interpreters are provided a small platform, which lifts them off the auditorium floor—but keeps them well below the level of the stage.



Figure 1-4. The placed strategy of interpreting during a 2011 Broadway performance of Sister Act; interpreters located on the auditorium floor. Captions are displayed simultaneously behind the interpreters. (Photo: David Leshay).

When the architecture of the theatre allows, some interpreters are placed on a part of the stage that is outside of the proscenium. This may be a continuation of the stage that leads to an exit, a set of stairs that leads down to the auditorium, or even a small decorative section of stage that is not meant to be occupied during performances (see Figure 1-5).



Figure 1-5. *The placed strategy of interpreting during a 2013 production of A Different Friend? in Brazil; interpreter located on the stage level, outside of the proscenium arch. (Photo: João Miranda / Escola de Gente).*

The arrangement of the interpreters outside of the stage frame leads to a typifying characteristic of the deaf audience member experience of placed SLIPs: a *ping-pong effect*. Throughout the performance, audience members must look back and forth between the stage and the interpreters, leaving them to miss segments of action on stage, and segments of dialogue presented by the interpreters (Gebron, 2000; McDougall, 2013a; Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf, 2014; Richardson, 2017). *Sightline* placement—a variation of the placed strategy—is meant to mitigate the ping-pong effect by locating the interpreter in the line-of-sight between the seats allocated for deaf patrons and the stage (Gebron, 2000). How this is accomplished varies. One option is to place the interpreter in front of the lip of the stage, within the proscenium, but still located in the audience space. As deaf audience members look to the stage, they first see the interpreter and then look ‘over’ the interpreter to see the stage. In my own practice, one theatre company achieved sightline placement by building a platform inside the orchestra pit in front of the stage. Another configuration places the interpreters on the opposite side of the stage from the allocated seating for deaf patrons. As deaf audience members look to the stage, they see the actors and stage action first, and then see the interpreters off in the distance (Gebron, 2000).

In most productions, there are more characters than there are interpreters—and it is commonplace for the interpreters to be outnumbered by actors in scene after scene during a performance (Gebron, 2000). As with much of the details of SLIP interpreting, there is variation in the ways in which interpreters divide the responsibility of sharing multiple characters during a performance. Some approaches are informed by the meaning and discourse patterns within the performance, while other approaches rely on dispassionate criteria. In the former, the interpreters may consider the goals and relationships between characters; the physical similarities between interpreter and actor; and the need for a clarity of discourse throughout the performance. In the latter approaches, the interpreters may base character division on gender (‘you do the men, I’ll do the women’), line number (‘you do the odd numbered lines, I do the even), and adhering to a strict formula—irrespective of discourse clarity. The ways in which interpreters divide characters for the stage are worthy of their own study but are not within the scope of this thesis.

Interpreters in the placed strategy are mostly not costumed, but instead wear plain *street clothing*—the everyday wear of modern society. Black is frequently the presumed clothing colour (Gebron, 2000; McDougall, 2007c; Rocks, 2011). Lighting of the interpreters often consists of one or two lighting elements, unfiltered and colourless. Many production companies aim the lighting narrowly at the interpreters and dim its intensity, in an attempt to reduce spill-over of the light onto the stage space which is highly orchestrated to reflect the fictional space of the production. Interpreters in the placed strategy generally do not consult with the production company on appropriate stage make-up during the performance. The use of make-up on stage varies among interpreters: my own observation has been that many male SLIP interpreters wear no make-up, and make-up worn by female SLIP interpreters is generally of the type and style worn on the streets (rather than employing theatre make-up products and techniques). The placed strategy requires little or no interaction between actors and interpreters of a SLIP, and it is this strategy that employs the least amount of rehearsal and other pre-show interaction between the cast and interpreters (Gebron, 2000; McDougall, 2007c, 2013a; Rocks, 2011).

The Zoned Strategy: Interpreters are sometimes brought onto the stage, where their work operates with a focus on regions within the stage space (Gebron, 2000; Kilpatrick, 2007; Kilpatrick & Andrews, 2009; McDougall, 2007b, 2007e). There are two variations of the *zoned* strategy. In the first, the pair of interpreters is located on a spot of the stage together

that affords deaf audience members a sightline-optimized view of the actors and the interpreters (McDougall, 2007b, 2007e). The interpreters remain in the location. The degree of movement of the interpreters in their location ranges from none-at-all to fully-blocked (planned). The location of the interpreters on the stage space may change from scene to scene, in response to the shifting uses of space throughout the performance. Interpreters and production designers sometimes press into action set pieces, staircases, and furniture to elevate zoned interpreters above the stage floor (see Figure 1-6).



Figure 1-6. The zoned strategy is employed during a performance of A Thousand Cranes by Wild Swan Theater; two interpreters are located on a bench placed behind the main acting space on stage (McDougall, 2007e). (Photo: Wild Swan Theater.)

Deaf audience members can see both interpreters together in this configuration, which clusters the interpreters into one location. The move of the interpreters onto the stage space reduces the amount of distance between the action on stage and the interpreters, thereby reducing the experience of ping-pong effect by deaf audience members. Because

the interpreters stay put on stage as the actors move, some amount of distance between the interpreters and the actors remains, and deaf audience members still face some ping-pong effect as they glance from the (stationary) team of interpreters to the (moving) actors on stage. Interpreters in this variation of the zoned strategy divide characters within the script using the variety of tactics described above for placed interpreters. Because there is usually some distance between the interpreters and the actors, the locations where the interpreters perform must be scrutinised to ensure adequate lighting: lighting designers may not be aware of the planned location of the interpreters during their design process (McDougall, 2007e). As zoned interpreters are located within the narrative space on stage, their attire and use of stage make-up is often also given more scrutiny than that of placed interpreters. They are often provided costumes designed to fit within the fictional world of the production—sometimes with modifications of colour or style that set the interpreters apart from the characters on stage, and to provide a suitable backdrop for sign language (McDougall, 2007e). The interpreters in Figure 1-6 are costumed in the traditional Japanese trousers (hakama) and kimonos worn by nearly all of the characters in the production, but they are the only two people on stage wearing all black.

The placement of zoned interpreters can include upper levels within the set design—either pre-existing or built specifically for the interpreters—so that the interpreters hover over the action on stage, but still remain within the narrative space outlined by the proscenium. A variation of this can include one interpreter per cast member—a mirror cast of interpreters—as was utilized during the 2018 Broadway production of *I Was Most Alive With You* (see Figure 1-7).



Figure 1-7. The zoned strategy during a 2018 production of I Was Most Alive With You; the mirror cast of interpreters is located on a separate level suspended above the actors. (Photo: John Marcus.)

Whereas the first variation of the zoned strategy aims to cluster interpreters together while improving their overall proximity to the focal point of the action on stage, the second variation seeks to place interpreters throughout the stage space so that they each may interpret dialogue within their own geographic region on stage. As described by Gebron (2000), each interpreter is assigned a region of responsibility—a *zone*. The division of characters can be indiscriminatory in this case, as the interpreter who is delivering a character's line may change throughout a scene as the character walks throughout the space. This variation of zoned interpreting creates a distance between the interpreters and also leaves some space between the interpreters and actors within their zones: the ping-pong effect between interpreter and actor is reduced, but still exists. There is an added ping-pong characteristic due the separation of the interpreters.



Figure 1-8. The zoned strategy during a 2012 performance of *A Christmas Carol* by Wild Swan Theater. During this scene depicting a party hosted by Mr. & Mrs. Fezziwig (centre), one interpreter oversees the dialogue of Mr. Fezziwig and all of the cast members on his side of the stage (interpreter with beard, left side of photo), and the other interpreter oversees the dialogue of Mrs. Fezziwig and her side of the stage (interpreter with hands on heart). (Photo: Lisa Thompson for Wild Swan Theater.)

I have not seen a SLIP that utilized this second type of zoned interpreting for the entirety of a performance. Instead, I have seen the approach utilized as a tactic within shadow interpreting (McDougall, 2007d), as shown in Figure 1-8. In what is otherwise a shadowed production of *A Christmas Carol*, the interpreters adopt a zoned tactic for scenes with large groups of characters. Imagining a line separating the left and right sides of the stage, each interpreter is responsible for all of the characters on one side of the line. As the scene fades, the interpreters return to a shadowed strategy. This deployment of zoning as a tactic within shadowing is described by Gebron, but is not labelled as such (2000, p. 25).

The Shadowed Strategy (“Shadowing”): in an attempt to minimize the distance between the actors and interpreters, *shadowing* puts the interpreters in motion throughout the performance (Frishberg, 1986; Gebron, 2000; Kilpatrick, 2007; McDougall, 2013a, 2013b). The interpreters are *blocked* into the performance—a process of determining the moment-by-moment locations and movements of the interpreters and actors on stage. There are frequently two shadow interpreters managing the lines of the entire cast, something they accomplish via a combination of careful character division and precise

blocking. Of the three strategies described here, shadowing requires the most pre-planning, rehearsal, and interaction between interpreters and cast. As recently as 1980, shadow interpreting was considered by some to be experimental, and best suited for “certain types of literary and musical works” (Strangarone & Kirchner, 1980, p. 80). It is the least frequent strategy of SLIP interpreting, but is perceived to provide the most satisfaction—potentially—for all audiences (Gebron, 2000; McDougall, 2013a).

The shadowed strategy of interpreting has comprised approximately 80% of my own SLIP interpreting practice since 1985. The moment captured in Figure 1-9 illustrates the careful integration of the interpreters into the performance, vis-à-vis costuming, blocking, and movement. (I am the reindeer, on the far right of the photo.) In this production where animal characters come to life via face masks, the interpreters are costumed with head pieces and tails. The interpreters are physically a part of the ensemble of characters: suffering their fate alongside them. The interpreters have adopted handshapes and body postures that suggest animal movements (but which do not interfere with overall clarity of their sign language production).



Figure 1-9. The shadowed strategy employed during a 1997 production of Rainbow Crow by Wild Swan Theater; the interpreters (skunk, left and reindeer, right) are incorporated into the cast of animal characters, shown here adrift on a chunk of ice.

(Photo: Glenn Bering for Wild Swan Theater)

The approach to costuming shadow interpreters varies. Some productions choose to dress interpreters in neutral clothes—sometimes street clothing—that is disassociated from the time and context of the production. Their aim may be to make the interpreters seem less present. A more common approach is to costume the interpreters in a manner that suits the era and context of the production. Because the interpreters are often required to quickly shift their work from character to character, their costumes are likewise crafted to afford a bit of neutrality—they are (usually) not aligned with any one specific character (Gebron, 2000; McDougall, 2007d, 2007a, 2013a).¹

Preparation for a shadow interpreted performance often includes multiple rehearsals which include the cast and the interpreters together. Some productions—notably, those which incorporate the interpreters into all performances—call for interpreters in large numbers (or all) rehearsals. It is during these rehearsals where details of interpreter blocking and interpreter/actor interaction can be explored and codified by the director of the production. See Figure 1-10 for an example documenting the transfer from rehearsal to stage of an unplanned interaction between an actor and I in a scene from the play *Translations*.

¹ This is not always the case. In a shadowed production of *The Rocky Horror Show*, I began the performance costumed as the character Brad, and then quickly transformed into a costume replicating that of Dr. Frank N Furter (complete with corset and heels). There was no turning back. The costume dictated that for the remainder of the performance I was to interpret the characters of Dr. Furter and others of his ... ilk.



*Figure 1-10. A scene from a shadowed 2007 production of *Translations* at the Hilberry Theatre (McDougall, 2013a). A.) a spontaneous moment in rehearsal between actor (above, left) and interpreter (right) becomes B.) a fixed part of the performance (below). (Photo: Hilberry Theatre, Wayne State University.)*



The blocking of the actors and interpreters is designed to mitigate the ping-pong effect between the actor and the interpreter. Deaf audience members watch the organic change of focus from location to location on the stage, which is (usually) centred on actors as

they perform. The interpreters are located close enough to the actors to be easily seen in the same field of view, and the requirement for specialized lighting of the interpreters is less likely. Division of characters is strongly influenced by the storyline and physicality of the production, and is viewed through an actor/director lens (McDougall, 2013b). Deaf audience members are encouraged to sit anywhere in the auditorium that is within practical viewing distance for sign language, although the centre section of the main floor is often most desirable.

As noted previously, zoned tactics are at times employed within a shadowed SLIP strategy. Both *shadowing* and *zoned* strategies are more commonly seen in the United States, than in other countries. Local practices and customs are highly influential to the availability and deployment of these interpreting strategies, and the *placed* strategy is the presumed practice in many regions of the world. While these three broad categories of SLIP strategies provide useful foundational concepts, it is helpful to remember that the borders between these categories are not discrete.

1.4 The present case: Disney's *The Lion King*

The present study examines an interpreted performance of Disney's *The Lion King*, interpreted in the *placed* strategy. This staged musical is based on the 1994 Disney animated film of the same name (Fierberg, 2017). *The Lion King* tells the story of *Simba*, a young lion who becomes king of the *Pride Lands* after the untimely demise of his father at the hands of his uncle. Having been convinced by his uncle that he is responsible for his father's death, Simba exiles himself—leaving his uncle to reign as a tyrant. After a period of growth and introspection, Simba returns to reclaim his position as king. While not the inspiration for *The Lion King*, thematic similarities with *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* were recognized by the animated film's creative team early in its development (Blu-ray.com, 2011).

Like the animated film, the staged musical features songs written by Sir Elton John with lyrics by Tim Rice. Conceived for the stage and directed by Julie Taymor, *The Lion King* opened in the US on Broadway in 1997—a production which garnered six Tony Awards (Internet Broadway Database, 2021). The first UK production opened in London's West End in 1999 (Broadwayworld Database, 2021). The first Australian production of *The Lion King* ran from 2003 to 2006; a second ran from 2013 to 2016 (Australian Music

Theatre Database, 2021). The interpreted performance of *The Lion King* which features as the case for the present study took place in June 2015, during the Melbourne portion of the second Australian production.

The home to the Melbourne leg of this tour was the *Regent Theatre* in the city's Central Business District. Originally built for the cinema, it was later re-configured as a stage theatre and gained a central spot in in downtown redevelopment after sparking a decades-long public discourse on heritage preservation. The *Regent Theatre* holds architectural and social significance, being one of the few remaining examples of inter-war cinema theatre architecture remaining in Victoria. It is a visual spectacle. Its design combines highly exaggerated Spanish Gothic and French Renaissance styles—mostly reserved for the public spaces with the building (Lovell Chen, 2018). Spaces for spectators and other members of the public are strictly segregated from those meant for actors and other members of the theatre production companies that perform in the building. As more than 2,100 audience members sit in the auditorium, their eye gaze is directed toward the stage space which is delineated by a frame—the *proscenium*—which marks the separation from the real world and the narrative world(s) of the production.

The SLIP featured in the present study was a Sunday matinee (afternoon) performance. The interpreters were placed on the left side of the proscenium (from the perspective of the audience) and 140 seats were allocated specifically for deaf audience members—occupying an entire section of seats on the left side of the main level of the auditorium. The interpreters were situated on top of a small platform, lifting them slightly off the auditorium floor. An interpreted performance was also offered earlier in the week for school-aged children.

The interpretation of *The Lion King* was overseen by a three-person team from a Melbourne-based company of theatre interpreters. Two interpreters were visible on stage, while a third team member acted as a language and cultural coach. This third team member was present during the interpreted performance. The team interpreted the Australian tour's opening in Sydney prior to the performances in Melbourne. Details of the interpreting team will be outlined in the methods chapter (see Chapter 3). The specific implementation of the placed strategy during the performance will be described in the findings chapter, alongside an exploration of the production and experience of space by the study participants during the performance (see Chapter 4).

1.5 Significance of the study

The availability of theatre created by deaf people with a deaf aesthetic in mind is lamentably sparse. Both in the UK and the US, national deaf theatre companies that once thrived are largely defunct, leaving a small number of local deaf theatre companies to carry on, underfunded and relegated to niche status (Richardson, 2017). Of late, *Deaf West Theatre* in the United States has enjoyed regional success with Los Angeles-based productions featuring blended casts of hearing and deaf actors, including a revival of *Spring Awakening*, which transferred to Broadway in 2016. That cast included deaf and hearing actors. As deaf cast members performed their lines in American Sign Language, hearing cast members served as their voices. Many of these same hearing actors had roles of their own, which they performed by simultaneously speaking and signing in American Sign Language (or singing and signing at the same). Performances crafted with the intent of combining hearing and deaf theatre aesthetics—which I refer to colloquially as *blended* or *mixed* casts—are phenomenon deserving of their own investigation.²

Lacking available and abundant deaf theatre, interpreters have become the presumed way that deaf people connect with *the theatre* (Richardson, 2017). This reflects a broader societal assumption that equates interpreters with deaf inclusion and access (De Meulder & Hualand, 2019). Compounding this is the default use of *placed* interpretation during a SLIP—not as a strategy, but as a technical choice meant to dispatch the interpreters to a location outside of the production. The collection of literature describing SLIP interpreting is small, with a limited number of authors, and is dependent on practice-based traditions. Even with evidence of zoned and shadowed performances stretching back in excess of forty years, *placed* (or *proscenium*) interpreting still dominates the SLIP landscape. “Where shall the interpreters stand?” may be a perfunctory question to some, but it carries meaning—and the diversity of responses can be striking (see Section 1.1).

Prior to beginning my doctoral journey, I had considered writing a non-academic book for theatre interpreters, outlining recommendations for SLIP interpreters based on decades of practice. It was to be an answer book. I had witnessed varying responses to

² See Michael Richardson’s (Richardson, 2019) *Playing Bilingual: Interweaving deaf and hearing cultural practices to achieve equality of participation in theatrical performance processes* for an exploration of the concepts of equality of participation among deaf and hearing actors and audience members.

multiple permutations of SLIP interpreting techniques, not unlike the divergent opinions stated above. Numerous features influence the reported satisfaction of deaf audience members, actors, and interpreters. Translation techniques; script analysis; performance techniques; costumes; spatial production: these are among the multitude of variables that form infinite combinations to influence the experience of the SLIP by its participants. There were more than thirty years of observations, conversations, and experiences swirling together, forming my thoughts about the work of SLIP interpreters—but, the path between those thoughts and what I could say confidently was murky. There has been little formal inquiry into these features of SLIPs. An answer book is hard to write when so many questions have yet to be asked.

Very early in my doctoral studies, the inimitable Cynthia Roy³ turned cold the blood of each of us on the first night of her class, as she *The-Devil-Wears-Prada*'d both a warning and mantra: “I don’t care what you think; I care what you can prove.” Before I can make claims about how to do one thing or the other during a SLIP, it seems important to ask questions about what is actually going on during one.

This study began with a broad intent: to consider the lived experience of SLIP participants in three groups—deaf patrons; the interpreting team; actors—as described by them. There was no initial focus on spatial production during data collection. A first round of data analysis exposed numerous topics related to spatial production, defining the scope of the study presented here. The findings help to address gaps in discussions about SLIPs:

- A description of the phenomenon of space during a SLIP—how space is produced, experienced, and contributes to meaning during the performance; and,
- An instrument for analysing the phenomenon of space during a SLIP

³ *Cynthia Roy, PhD* is a US-based interpreter, researcher, and educator. She is listed as first author of her latest book because “she can beat both [other authors] in arm wrestling” (Roy et al., 2018, p. x).

To this end, the study makes theoretical contributions in the areas of sign language interpreting, interpreting and translating generally, theatre arts, deaf studies, and human geography:

- Highlights the relationship between spatial production and meaning during interpreted interactions;
- Offers a foundational discussion of sign language *interpreter space*, rooted in Lefebvrian traditions of spatial production as applied in deaf studies and theatre topography; and,
- Provides a conceptual framework for the consideration of spatial production during SLIPs.

The following exploration of sign language interpreter space in the Lefebvrian tradition has implications beyond interpreted theatre performances, and the conceptual framework offered here may be a tool for applying a *sign language interpreter space* model to the analysis of other types of interpreted interactions (e.g., trials in courtrooms; births of babies in hospitals; employment interviews in corporate offices).

The study will contribute most directly to theoretical discussions within the disciplines of sign language interpreting studies, deaf studies, and theatre studies. It may also contribute less directly to discussions of human geography and in interpreting and translating studies. The study does not claim to analyse the efficacy of specific interpreting *practices*; however, its findings do illuminate the relationship between choices made during a SLIP and the experiences had by its participants. Practical considerations for SLIP interpreters, theatre production companies, and deaf theatre patrons can be gleaned from these findings.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

After this introduction, I next present a review of the literature pertinent to the study (see Chapter 2). Section 2.1 establishes foundational concepts related to the social construction of knowledge, the production of spaces, and interaction between spaces—

Henri Lefebvre's (1991) spatial triad featuring prominently. The remaining sections of the literature review consider how these concepts have been applied in three domains: *theatre studies*, *deaf studies*, and *sign language interpreting studies*.

Of these disciplines, it is in *theatre studies* where the tradition of applying Lefebvrian thinking to the analysis of spatial production is most evidenced. Section 2.2 introduces the oppositional model of performance and performer/spectator *co-presence*; considers the relationships between architecture, design, and performance; and introduces McAuley's (1999) *taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre*. Section 2.3 offers a discussion of space as it has been recently described within deaf studies, including the architecturally-grounded *DeafSpace*, and also socially-grounded descriptions of *deaf geographies* and *deaf spaces* from a Lefebvrian spatial production tradition. Section 2.4 looks for what "space" is within sign language interpreting studies, finding references to *psychological space*, *mental space*, *role-space*, and others—but no description of *sign language interpreter space* in the Lefebvrian tradition of spatial production. The capstone of the literature review is a proposed conceptual framework for the analysis of the SLIP featured in the study, featured in Section 2.5.

Chapter 3 describes the *research design* and *methods* applied to the present study. I first discuss my *world view* (Section 3.1) and *positioning as a researcher* (Section 3.2), citing their influence on my decision to conduct a *qualitative* study in the *phenomenological* traditions of Max van Manen (Section 3.3). I next describe my use of a small-scale pilot study to *refine research questions* to the focus of the present study, and to explore data handling and analysis procedures (Section 3.4). Implementation of the study is discussed in three sections: *site selection* and *study participants* (Section 3.5); *data collection procedures* (Section 3.6); and *data analysis* and *presentation of findings* (Section 3.7). I end with the intertwining subjects of trust and ethics. I do not assert arrival at a *trustworthiness* destination, but instead describe *validation strategies* that I employ(ed) as a process throughout the life the study (Section 3.8). Judgement of the *quality* of the study is left to others (with guidance from Creswell) and a reflection on the *elephant in the room* (Section 3.9).

Chapter 4 offers a presentation of the findings of the study in two major sections. Section 4.1 establishes the *social and physical spaces* of the SLIP on the day of the performance of *The Lion King* which serves as the focus of the study. The section is meant to provide

the reader with a detailed mental picture of *the Regent Theatre* in Melbourne, Australia, and how its multiple spaces are engaged during the performance. Section 4.2 is a *narrative re-telling of the experience* of the SLIP, as told by the study participants. Rooted in (and heavily quoting) interview data and written in the present tense, this section weaves together the narratives of the study participants in chronological order—starting on the morning of the performance and finishing after that evening’s post-performance celebrations. This existential narrative approach reveals a whole-part relationship within the phenomenon of the SLIP, drawing on participant descriptions associated with lived time, lived space, the lived body, and lived relationships with others (van Manen, 1990). The result emphasizes the co-constructive nature of the theatre experience over time: moments during the performance are frequently described by participants from multiple stakeholder groups within the study (deaf patrons, interpreter team members, and actors).

In Chapter 5, I present an interpretation of the *findings* from Chapter 4 in two sections. I first offer results of a *thematic analysis* of the data, identifying and describing eight major themes (Section 5.1). I then apply the *conceptual framework* proffered in the literature review (Section 5.2), describing the phenomenon of the SLIP in theoretical terms drawn from theatre topography; deaf space; and, interpreting studies. I identify *spatial production strategies* employed by the interpreters and describe the ways in which these strategies influence meaning during the SLIP. Lastly, I discuss *co-presence* between actor, audience member, and interpreter (Section 5.3).

Finally, Chapter 6 considers the *significance* of the study. I begin in Section 6.1 with an attempt to parse the findings of the study among its three *research questions*, while recognizing the scope and *limitations* of its findings (see Section 6.2). I next describe the *theoretical* and *practical implications* of the study. In Section 6.3.1, I discuss the value of adopting *sign language interpreter space* as a Lefebvrian model for exploring spatial production during interpreted interactions, and identify concepts of *interpreter geography* and *interpreter space* revealed in the study. I describe the applicability of the *conceptual framework* employed in the study as a tool in the ongoing exploration of spatial production during SLIPs and elsewhere. I then consider the implications the findings may have on *practice* decisions in interpreted theatre and other interpreting settings (Section 6.3.2). Finally, I contemplate ways in which the theoretical framework born

from this study may be applied to research vistas that lay ahead and may be adapted over time by researchers of varied interests.

Chapter 2—Literature Review

In this chapter, I offer a review of the relevant literature related to the broad notion of space and its relevance to the questions in my study of spatial production by two sign language interpreters in the theatre. How does the production of theatre space influence the location of sign language interpreters in theatre? How does space influence the manner of their work? How do deaf patrons perceive space? How does the perception and production of space by theatre personnel, sign language interpreters, and deaf people converge to extrude meaning as part of the interpreted theatre event?

I shall first discuss foundational concepts of *space* and *human geography* (in Section 2.1), which seek to describe the ways in which humans interact with, create, and construct meaning from places which may be physical, social, or mental in nature. I shall explore how human and social geographers have described the borderlands of these spaces, and the ways in which spaces influence social identity and role enactment. Owing to the cross-cutting nature of space and human geography in my study, these foundational concepts will be related to other disciplines in Section 2.2, Section 2.3, and Section 2.4 of the literature review (see Figure 2-1).

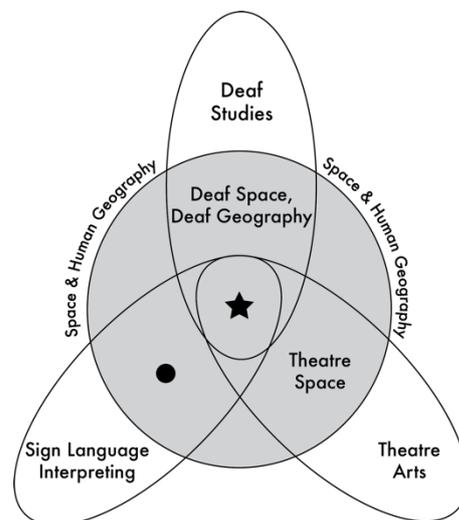


Figure 2-1. Literature review bedraggled daisy, showing the interaction of review themes and the cross-cutting nature of space & human geography. Gaps in the literature appear as a ● (sign language interpreter space) and a ★ (sign language theatre interpreting space).

Section 2.2 will explicate the ways in which theoretical frameworks of space have been applied to the discussion of *theatre spaces* and to the production and experience of theatre events. Particularly, I will explore the ‘oppositional’ arrangement between performers and spectators, and the ways in which real space interacts with fictional space in the theatre. I will seek a reconciliation of previous discussions of theatre space, and a taxonomy for discussing the multiple, connected spaces of the theatre.

Section 2.3 of this review will explore the ways in which space has been described in *deaf studies*, and how the embodied experiences of deaf people help to create meaning from physical and mental spaces. I will explore a growing body of literature which seeks to situate *deaf geographies* and *deaf space* within the broader field of human geography, while also highlighting the unique contributions brought to this field by communities with specific sensory and cultural experiences of space.

Next, I will consider the ways in which space has been conceived by those researching *sign language interpreting*, particularly with respect to human geography, in Section 2.4. Theoretical constructs from *deaf geography* and *deaf space* have just recently been applied to sign language interpreting, although it has long been understood that sign language is a visual/gestural (alternatively, a visual/kinetic) language, and that ‘sign language interpreting’ activates a visual/kinetic mode that influences the process, product, and experience of the interpreted situation (De Weerd & Kusters, 2016; Fekete, 2010, 2017; Humphrey & Alcorn, 2007; Scully & Howard, 2009). I will highlight the nascent nature of the notion of ‘interpreter space’, revealing a gap in research that investigates the ways in which space and human geography influence interpreting in theatre, and in other settings where sign language interpreting occurs. My study will contribute to an understanding of this confluence of situational human geography and sign language interpreting.

The final section of this review—Section 2.5—will proffer a conceptual framework for the study of space in the sign language interpreted theatre event. Borrowing from the frameworks tendered by the theorists in previous sections, and owing to the foundational concepts of space and human geography, this new conceptual framework will seek to reconcile the ways in which social space, fictional space, architectural space, and interpreted space may be conceived and discussed in the remainder of this study.

2.1 Human geography and space

The sociology of knowledge understands human reality as socially constructed reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

2.1.1 *Reality is socially constructed*

Berger and Luckmann (1966) seek to widen the previous discussion of the sociology of knowledge beyond the limits of intellectual history and ideas, and to recognize “everything that passes for knowledge in society” (p. 15). Previous theories on the sociology of knowledge focused, unduly according to Berger and Luckmann, on detached ideas about society that were set apart from the very knowledge of people in society. Just a few in society (as seen by the authors) are concerned with the theoretical underpinnings of “ideas”, but everyone in a society participates in “knowledge”. This knowledge is expressed in a myriad of ways—all of which are considered applicable in Berger and Luckmann’s theory of co-constructed reality.

Owing to their constructivist world view, Berger and Luckmann suggest that there is a *given reality* (biological or physical), and also a *constructed reality* (social or metaphysical). In this way, a river is the given reality, which may yield multiple constructed realities. For some, a river may be a mode of transportation; for others, a border between lands; and, for others, a venue for recreation. Constructed realities are the result of three processes which come into play in the sociology of knowledge: how we *experience* reality; how we *institutionalize* reality; and how we *internalize* reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

The dialectic between the *individual experience* and *social reality* is at work in these three processes. Each individual has their own subjective experience of the river, and yet the co-constructed reality of the river is the result of the social experience. Our individual experience may be solitary (how we each experience reality), but the social experience of reality leads to a “reciprocal typification” of the river, built-up through a shared history of experiences, actions, and actors. This typification is accepted by succeeding generations (or group members) as an objectified reality that is simply “how things are done”—it is *institutionalized*. This next generation *internalizes* the socially constructed

meaning, accepting it as an objective reality. In this way, knowledge is both perceived individually and constructed socially.

Within our social universe there exist sub-universes, which offer the opportunity for *deviation*. Deviants stand in opposition to typical constructions of reality by virtue of their alternate experiences and expressions of the biological or given reality, and illuminate the possibility of alternate interpretations of reality. What was once accepted as objective reality is more malleable than previously thought. These deviations might be the result of conscious decisions to assert difference, but also might be the result of a tension between our own corporeal experience and the collective archive of knowledge growing out of the institutionalization and internalization processes. While their treatise emphasizes the role of this process over time, Berger and Luckmann concede that “the world of everyday life is structured both spatially and temporally” and that space has a social dimension “by virtue of the fact that my manipulatory zone intersects with that of others” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966).

I will return to the concept of intersection of spaces in Section 2.2, Section 2.3, and Section 2.4 of this literature review. For now, consider society in the terms of Berger and Luckmann’s “universe”. They might describe hearing people as living in one sub-universe, and deaf people as living in another sub-universe. The individual experiences of people existing in each sub-universe are informed by the corporeal experiences unique to the group. People who hear have some experiences that differ from people who do not hear, and these subjective experiences are projected into an archived social reality that Berger and Luckmann (1966) would posit is institutionalized by the group over time and accepted as objective reality. Where these sub-universes interact, there exist opportunity for subjective realities to collide, providing mixed forms of objectified realities over time. Through the interaction between hearing and deaf sub-universes, hearing people may institutionalize stereotypes of deaf people based on subjective experiences (e.g., “Deaf people are”); likewise, deaf people may institutionalize assumptions about hearing people based on their own subjective experiences (e.g., “hearing people are ...”). These stereotypes start as individual perspectives based on individual experiences, which become institutionalized within the sub-universe, and then within the broader universe over time. The ways in which the embodied experience influences this process is further discussed in Section 2.3 of this literature review.

While Berger and Luckmann acknowledge the relevance of spatiality and temporality in the social creation of knowledge, they purposefully centre their argument on the latter, deeming “the spatial structure is quite peripheral to our present considerations” (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). They acknowledge that members of sub-universes interact with members of others; but, their description of sub-universes lends to a potential oversimplification of society: separate sub-universes, with inside and outside statuses.

If Berger and Luckmann would place deaf people in one sub-universe and hearing people in another, where do interpreters exist? Some sign language interpreters⁴ are hearing people. Some are deaf people. In either case, the sign language interpreter is part of one sub-universe—and both. They might have formed the basis of their reality in the hearing sub-universe as a child, while also spending significant time in the deaf sub-universe throughout their training, socially, and throughout their professional life. Some sign language interpreters are raised in homes with deaf parents, spending their formative years in both a deaf sub-universe (at home and other deaf environments) and a hearing sub-universe (in other environments). As a result of these experiences, sign language interpreters carry the imprint of both sub-universes; and may also be set apart in their own sub-universe. In the hearing sub-universe, sign language interpreters are socially defined by the subjective experiences of them, which have become institutionalized by hearing people as an objective reality. They may be seen as quirky hand-waving helpers who exist to both help deaf people and to placate legal requirements of accessibility for deaf people. In the deaf sub-universe, interpreters may be seen as a type of necessary evil, who both serve as important access points of communication while also suppressing the liberty of deaf people during problematic conflicts in their roles as interpreters (Dickinson, 2010) (also see Section 1.3.2).

Sign language interpreters might constitute their own sub-universe, informed by—and interacting with—each, other sub-universe. Subjective realities about interpreters are formed by hearing people in their sub-universe, and by deaf people in their sub-universe; and, some of these subjective experiences are institutionalized into a reality that is assumed to be objective. As the interpreting sub-universe overlaps with the others, the

⁴ I use “sign language interpreters” to mean all permutations where interpreters work to or from a signed language (e.g., spoken language to signed language; signed language to signed language, etc.).

subjective experiences of interpreters also inform the institutionalized reality (see Figure 2-2).

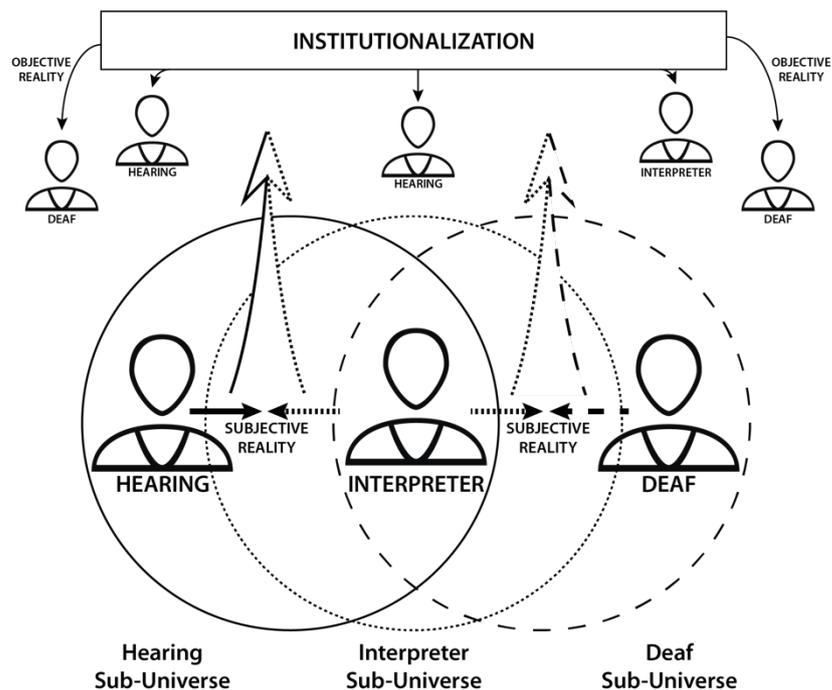


Figure 2-2. Knowledge production during interaction between hearing, deaf, and interpreter sub-universes with interpreter as conduit

A weakness of the representation of interpreting in Figure 2-2, is the representation of the interpreter as a *conduit* between hearing and deaf people—in this case, the sole path through which meaning generation is created. The representation in Figure 2-3 below is (perhaps) more apt: knowledge is generated at the intersection of the triad of deaf sub-universe, hearing sub-universe, and interpreter sub-universe (i.e., the centre section), and is also generated where two sub-universes interact (i.e., hearing and deaf; interpreter and deaf; and interpreter and hearing). Over time, each of these sub-universe interactions contribute to subjective reality, and eventually to objective reality. What it means to experience interpreted interactions will include knowledge generated *with* the interpreter, and also knowledge generated *without* the interpreter.

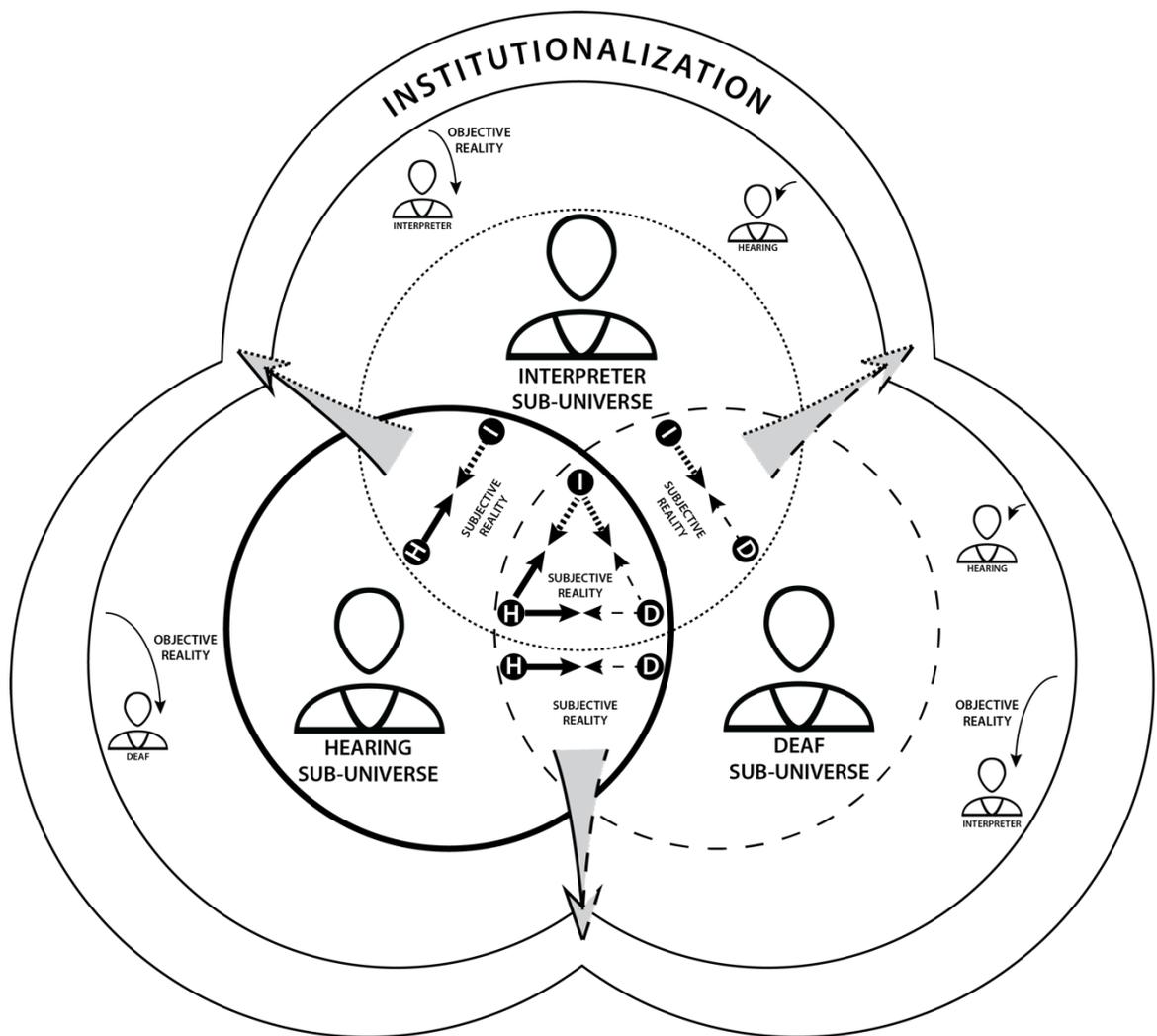


Figure 2-3. Knowledge production in multiple sub-universe permutations

De Meulder and Haualand (2019) explore ways in which centralizing the interpreter in the creation of ‘inclusion’ of deaf people has become the standard in places where sign language interpreting has become largely professionalized and institutionalized. Their observations stem from a review of research in both health care and education, where the default approach to inclusion of deaf people are interpreters, and where problems related to inclusion are typically addressed through the expansion of interpreter numbers, training, and or quality. They note that the emphasis on interpretation contributes to “replacing or concealing the need for language-concordant education and public services” (De Meulder & Haualand, 2019, p. 13). These are education and services provided directly in sign language, rather than through interpretation. They question why interpreter-mediated educational settings should be considered preferential over bi-lingual education of deaf children, where instruction takes places in sign language. The bi-lingual environment provides an educational experience and methodology designed

with deaf learning in mind, combined with a social environment produced by and for deaf children. Contrast this with the experience of a single deaf student with an interpreter in a hearing classroom, where the physical and social environment is optimized for hearing students.

With their analysis, De Meulder and Haualand pull us out of a decades-long rut, where *access* has become synonymous with *interpreting*. They problematize this issue in education and healthcare settings. They coax us out from the place where deaf, hearing, and interpreter worlds overlap (see the centre of Figure 2-3), and urge us to acknowledge inclusion that happens without the involvement of interpreters (see the intersection of hearing and deaf sub-universes of Figure 2-3, labelled “H→←D”). When deaf people are presumed to participate via interpreters, there is a danger of *segregated inclusion* (my term).

Berger and Luckmann (1966) include sub-universes in their discussion of the social creation of knowledge. They admit that their analysis focuses on the temporal aspect of knowledge creation, and how knowledge is socially created over time. Production of space is outside the scope of their analysis. They help to highlight that sub-groups of society contribute meaning to the institutionalization of knowledge from within their groups, and also through interactions among groups.

The creation of meaning during theatrical events is also social in nature (as will be discussed in Section 2.2). Characteristics of spatial production is an added factor in meaning creation in the theatre. Sign language interpreted theatre events typically include multiple sub-groups (e.g., actors, crew members, front lobby personnel, hearing patrons, deaf patrons.). Sign language interpreters are seen as providing ‘access’ to the performance, and are often physically placed outside of the stage space. Deaf patrons are typically encouraged to sit in seating reserved for them. Might this be a form of *segregated inclusion*?

To understand the production of spaces in the theatre, it is worthwhile to consider the theatre, itself, as a space. When we see a performance in the theatre, we are transformed to a space that is not real—and, yet, which is meant to reflect real spaces. The concept, *heterotopia*, has been used to describe theatres and other such *counter-sites* (as will be

further explored in Section 2.1.2). Exploring the heterotopic nature of some interpreting settings may help researchers to distinguish how those settings may produce unique experiences for the users of interpreting services and the interpreters themselves.

2.1.2 Foucault and the heterotopia

Foucault is credited with popularizing the concept of *heterotopia* as a type of spatial relationship based on six principles outlined below in this section. While not part of his formal body of work, a published translation of notes from a 1967 lecture provides a methodology for a *systematic description for reading* of heterotopia, consisting of six principles of heterotopology. In doing so, he sharpens the broader focus on space to two

other spaces, which have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect” (Foucault, 1986, p. 24).

Seeing space as being fundamental to social anxiety, Foucault describes an evolving understanding of space. A thing’s place was once thought to be a static location. As our understanding of the universe grew to include an ever-expanding universe, it also stood to reason that any given place is a location in space that is in constant motion. With a nod to phenomenology, Foucault recognizes that space is heterogeneous. This is an inherently internal view of space. “We do not live in a void.... Instead, we live inside a specific set of relations”, and it is this set of relations which describes a distinct site (1986, p. 23). Foucault’s (1986) interest is an *external* description of space.

Utopias are one kind of *other space*. They represent society in one of two ways: in its perfect form, or completely up-ended, and yet are “fundamentally unreal places” (1986, p. 24). In contrast, *heterotopias*, are real places that are “counter-sites”. They represent all other sites, and yet contest them simultaneously. Heterotopias are unsettling, by nature. Where utopias favour egalitarianism, equality is not a typical feature of heterotopias. They bring together inhabitants that are not socially similar, but instead represent a disparate collection of residents that are marked by other-ness by outsiders (Hetherington, 1997, p. 43). Among examples of heterotopias described by Foucault are brothels; ships; museums; and, theatre. He offers six principles for describing and

“reading” these other spaces (1986, pp. 24–27). A space that is a heterotopia might match one of these principles, or can match multiple principles:

Heterotopias are present in every culture and are classified in two categories: there are varied forms, and no universals.

Heterotopia of Crisis—largely found in primitive societies, these are reserved spaces for people in a crisis state (e.g., the elderly, menstruating women, adolescents, pregnant women, etc.). These are slowly being replaced by ...

Heterotopia of Deviation—a place of people whose behaviour does not comply with wider social norms (e.g., rest homes; psychiatric hospitals; prisons, etc.).

Heterotopias can change to meet the changing needs of a society (e.g., the changing views on death influenced the location of cemeteries from the heart of the city to the suburbs).

Heterotopias can juxtapose incompatible sites in one place (e.g., theatres and cinemas juxtapose different fictional places; gardens juxtapose plants from unrelated regions; zoos juxtapose animals from unrelated regions).

Heterotopias are most often associated with slices of time. They begin the moment a person breaks with traditional time.

Heterotopias that *accumulate time* include museums and libraries.

Heterotopias that are *ephemeral* include festivals and other fleeting spaces.

Heterotopias presuppose a system of opening and closing, and are not publicly accessible. They are both isolated and penetrable, and require permission, compulsion, or a gesture of admission (e.g., prisons, religious purification rituals, required showering before entering spas).

Heterotopias function in relation to all space that remains. They serve one of two contrasting roles:

To create a space of illusion that exposes every real space (e.g., brothels); or

To create an other *real space* that is *as perfect as ours is messy* (e.g., the early American colonies, idealized in opposition to that which the colonists were fleeing).

Foucault suggests that there may be a third site that forms a relationship between the utopia and the counter-site, the heterotopia. In this way, this relationship-site is akin to a *mirror*, a “mixed experience” that is grounded in a physical place (as a mirror exists in a physical place), but which reflects a space in which we are not. Foucault concludes that this mirror is, itself, a form of heterotopia: it occupies an actual site, reflecting all other real sites, but the reflection is fundamentally un-real (1986, p. 24).

These principles reflect Foucault’s broader conversation about *resistance*, *power*, and *knowledge*. Where Berger and Luckmann (1966) establish that knowledge is co-constructed via a process whereby subjective experiences contribute to an institutionalized reality (see Section 2.1.1), authors in deaf studies have described an additional feature of knowledge production in which power intercedes in the process to regulate and prescribe deaf lives—contributing to *audism*. Ladd (2003) describes this systemic control over deaf knowledge and power as having the effects of marginalizing deaf people, and promoting a sense of dependency on service providers (usually hearing people) who have been elevated to positions of power as gatekeepers and other types of interveners. Some deaf studies authors have described these marginalized spaces as spaces of resistance, where there are valid and alternative languages, cultures and knowledges that have roots in the experiences of deaf people (Gulliver, 2009).

Where Foucault’s view of heterotopia eschews a social resemblance or homogeneity among their inhabitants, it fails to fully account for *deaf spaces*, which are often anecdotally identified by their socially unifying features of language, social practices, and identity. (Section 2.3 explores deaf spaces.) Foucault emphasizes the characteristic of *resistance* in heterotopic spaces. This resistance is *diffused* and *decentralized*—a

movement away from an agreed-upon, collective space. Here is where Foucault is at odds with deaf studies, which frequently situates itself as an organized alternative to oralist (or other oppressive) power structures (Gulliver, 2009).

Batterbury, Ladd, and Gulliver (2007) look to discussions of First Nation peoples to help them challenge the established view of deaf people —*sign language peoples* (SLPs)—through a disability lens. Deaf spaces “are not merely the hearing world replicated in sign language, but a separate SLP-authored reality” (Batterbury et al., 2007, p. 2902). This reality is informed by the experiences of sign language peoples from throughout history. The ways in which the diversity of deaf bodies interact with the environment; the influence of modality in language; the representation of deaf experiences in art and culture—these come together in the lives of deaf people in ways not unlike First Nation peoples. A distinction between deaf and First Nation indigenous people is that First Nations people are associated with a physical territory, whereas deaf people are not. Batterbury, et al. (2007) encourage us to see the *collective topography* generated through the language, culture, and history shared by SLPs. They argue that highlighting the parallels between SLPs and First Nation peoples can lead to far reaching implications, including improvement in the self-determination and education of SLPs.

Their call for a shift in view can influence how we research sign language interpreted interactions. When looked at through disability studies, the interpreted theatre performance may be seen as a specialized event where deaf people are *accommodated* by interpreters who provide a service that attempts to give deaf people an experience designed to mirror that of the hearing audience member. When deaf patrons are seen as indigenous peoples, bringing their own culture, language, and history into a space that is already inherently theirs, this may position the interpreters not as an *accommodation* to help deaf people access hearing space; but, they may be seen as embodying *artefacts of sign language peoples experiences*. The interpreters are doing something more than simply reporting the words from a script. But, what is in this ‘more’?

The six principles proffered by Foucault also raise questions about interpreted theatre events. If a theatre space is a heterotopia, does that change with the interpreted theatre event? Is the theatre heterotopia changing to meet a societal need on the night of the interpreted performance (principle two)? Is the interpreted theatre event a unique heterotopia existing in a slice of time (principle five)? Is the theatre one iteration of

heterotopia, with the interpreted performance existing as a juxtaposed and potentially incompatible site?

2.1.3 *Lefebvre and the spatial triad*

Whereas Foucault's (1986) description of heterotopia is skeletal, leaving much interpretation up to others⁵, Lefebvre (1991) offers an opaque, sometimes obtuse, approach to the social creation of space. Lefebvre acknowledges a shift (at the time) away from a traditional view of "space" as being geographical in nature—space as an empty area (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 1). This tradition held to a Cartesian view of space, which offered "an essentially mechanical and mathematical representation of reality" (Merrifield, 1993, p. 518). This representation described space as a dualistic construct, comprised of two, distinct opposites: the *material* (external and objective) *world*, and the subjective world of *human consciousness* (Merrifield, 1993, p. 519).

As there begins a shift from this traditional notion of space as a mathematical concept to the notion of space as a mental construct, Lefebvre criticizes the lack of specificity about the meaning of the *mental space*, which he sees as an overly-generalized term. He finds problematic Foucault's lack of a description about the connection between theoretical space and practical space—"between mental and social, between the space of the philosophers and the space of people who deal with material things" (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 4). He chastens prior theorists for dwelling in the theoretical and ignoring the need for logical links between the mathematical space, mental space, and social space.

Lefebvre seeks a unifying theory, which has the aim "to discover or construct a theoretical unity between *fields* which are apprehended separately" (1991, p. 11): the *physical*, the *mental*, and the *social*. Acknowledging the previous popularity of the notion that space is inherently empty, and then is filled-up with whatever ends up occupying it, Lefebvre understands that the notion of the *production* of space may seem bizarre. Still, he seeks to thoroughly discuss the components of physical, mental, and social space, while also seeking to congeal these theoretical units into a practical process of production. The

⁵ Foucault's *Of Other Spaces* is a *translation* of a brief lecture.

production of space is both a process and an outcome of the process (a product) (Merrifield, 1993, p. 521). “Space is fundamentally bound up with social reality ... [it] does not exist ‘in itself’; it is produced” (Schmid, 2008, p. 28). As both a product and a human process, space is inseparable from ideology, and space is where ideology is physically codified:

What is an ideology without a space to which it refers, a space which it describes, whose vocabulary and links it makes use of, and whose code it embodies? ... More generally speaking, what we call ideology only achieves consistency by intervening in social space and in its production, and by thus taking on body therein. Ideology per se might well be said to consist primarily in a discourse upon social space (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 44).

An important theme of Lefebvre’s work, and that of similar theorists of the time, is that *power* and the *resistance to power* in the form of *transgression*, was encoded in the creation of space (Hetherington, 1997, p. 20). This led to a focus on *marginal spaces* and *spaces of resistance* (Hetherington, 1997, p. 21). Lefebvre’s view of marginalization was informed by his long-standing view of the Marxist interpretation of alienation in a capitalist society. This alienation could only be overcome by reaching *totalité* (“total man”)—a synthesis of physical, economic, and metaphysical characteristics in a form of liberation from a capitalist space that is deliberately produced to be disempowering (Merrifield, 1993, p. 518).

Lefebvre seeks to explain the inter-dependent fields leading to the production of space through his introduction of the *spatial triad*, a relational ontology which borrows from the view of Marx (and others) of *totalité* as a dynamic interrelationship of multiple parts (Merrifield, 1993, p. 518). Previous theories of place borrowed heavily from the Cartesian dialectic of physical space and mental space, each distinct from the other (Merrifield, 1993, p. 523).

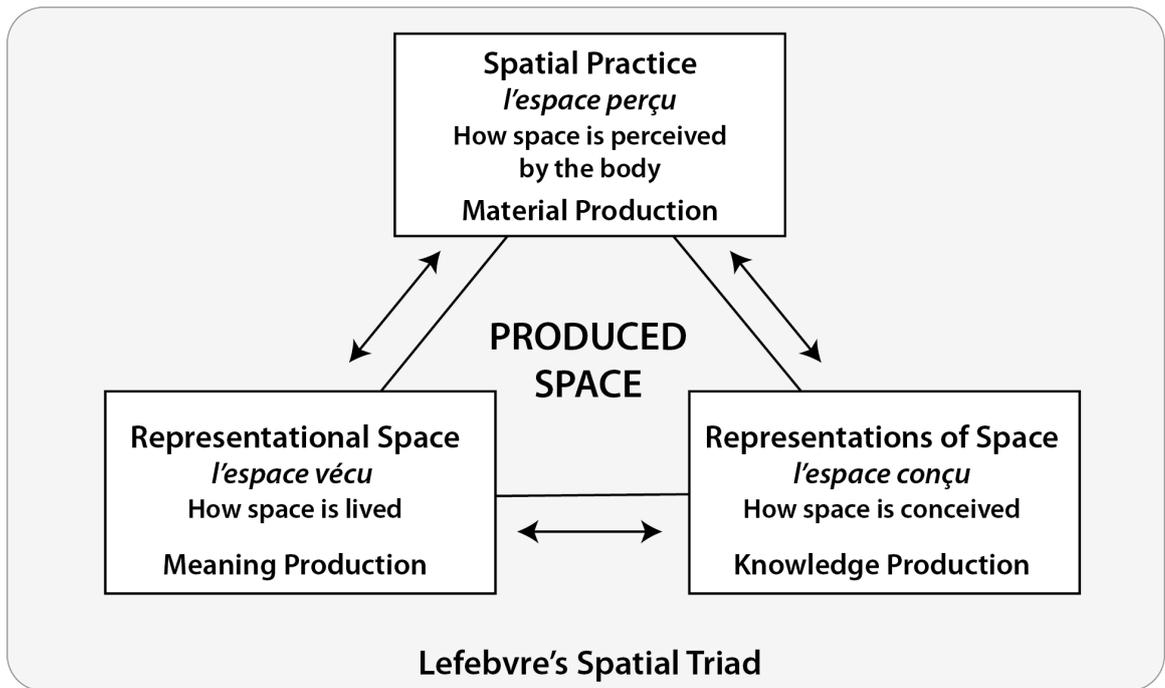


Figure 2-4. The Spatial Triad of Henri Lefebvre.

Here, Lefebvre disturbs the binary, Cartesian framework, in an attempt to unify three types of space (see Figure 2-4):

Spatial Practice: how space is perceived (l'espace perçu). This is physical space as it is experienced by the senses of the human body in its materialistic form. It includes the production and reproduction of space, derived from the specific characteristics of a given space. Successful social practice in a space demonstrates competence, based on “specific levels of performance” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 33). Repeated performances of these competencies help to “ensure continuity and cohesion” of the space (Gulliver, 2017, p. 98). It is the “commonsensical stuff of life lived” (1991, p. 33) as we decipher a space, resulting in spatial practices which “secrete” the society’s space (1991, p. 38). Our perceptions “condition our daily reality with respect to usage of space: for example, their routes, networks, and patterns of interaction that link places set aside for work, play, and leisure” (Merrifield, 1993, p. 524). This is the first of three moments of production of space: material production.

Representations of Space: how space is conceived (l'espace conçu). This includes discourses on space, in the language and ideals of society and those who serve to create and conceptualize space, such as “scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers, and social engineers—even artists of a scientific bent” (1991, pp. 38–39). This

is an “intellectually worked out” space, which is both dominant among the spaces and results in a system of signs (words, etc.) to describe the space. These are the frontal relations of space, signs, codes, jargon, and objectified representations of space. They are the space of capital, and are prone to repressive representations of capitalistic society (Merrifield, 1993, p. 523). After material production (*spatial practice/l’espace perçu*), this is the second moment of production of space: the production of knowledge.

Representational Space: how space is directly lived (l’espace vécu). These are the social discourses of space—a form of residue that is left over from the experiences of the materialized and idealized spaces. The theoretical discourses of spatial practice and representations of space cannot exhaust the practical experience of space: “There always remains a surplus, a remainder ... that can be expressed only through artistic means” (Schmid, 2008, p. 40). This is a passively experienced space “which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. It overlays physical space, making symbolic use of its objects” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39). This is space as it is directly lived by its inhabitants through its associated symbols and images. Finally, this is the last moment in the production of space: the production of meaning.

Gulliver (2017) points to the important role of *l’espace vécu* in providing a “release” or sense of “hope” from the tension that exists between the two other forms of space in Lefebvre’s triad. In *l’espace perçu*, there are a multitude of possibilities, informed by the variation of bodies and ways in which these bodies experience and secrete space. Spaces. This is in interaction with *l’espace conçu*—which seeks to order and codify spaces, entrapping the multiplicity of *perçu* spaces in *conçu* “cages”. In *l’espace vécu* there are moments of liberation from this tension, where spaces can be re-imagined and transformative. The interplay between the three spaces of Lefebvre’s triad is constant and unresolved. They are all necessary in the human quest for *totalité*—a unification of multiple forms of human nature (physical and not) and an escape from alienation. It is within *l’espace vécu* where this quest for *totalité* is possible (Kusters, 2011, p. 69).

Significant factors in Lefebvre’s spatial triad include the primacy of the body; the role of time and history; and, the fetishizing of commodity. Most central of these is the body, for “it is by means of the body that space is perceived, lived—and produced” (Schmid, 2008, p. 41). The body first experiences and produces spatial practices, before they can be conceptualized, and the lived experience of the body “is *strangely different* from when

it is thought of and perceived” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 162). The body’s role is not simply for corporeal sensing through eyes, ears, touch, and more, but through a broader sensing and imagining of the world by individuals in active relationships with others in social practice (Merrifield, 1993, p. 524). The central role of the body in perceiving and producing space has implications when considering the ways in which deaf people experience and create space, something which has been appreciated by researchers of deaf geography and deaf space, and which will be discussed in Section 2.3 of this review.

For Lefebvre, as with Foucault, history is an important tenet in the discussion of space. Our mental representation of space is informed by the politics and social underpinnings that define a space over time—and at specific times in the production of space. What a place means to me today may be something entirely different tomorrow (consider the contrast in meaning of The World Trade Center site on September 10, 2001 and September 11, 2001). Lefebvre sees space and time as conjoined, and both are “fundamentally historical” (Schmid, 2008, p. 29). Think back to Berger and Luckmann’s view of the sociology of knowledge, where meaning is co-constructed by a society through institutionalization. Over time, subsequent generations internalize this societal knowledge. This influence of time and history is replete in the writings concerning space in the era of Lefebvre and Foucault (and after), and is reflected in the application of theoretical discussions about space, which are often applied to specific moments in history.

Space and physical place are influenced by the fetishizing of commodity—a process of tension between produced things, and the social order in which those things are produced. This influences the use and production of space, contributing to a central characteristic of *l’espace vécu*: conflict. “This conflict arises from the inextricable tension between the usage and appropriation of place for social purposes and the domination of place (and space) as a productive and commercial force through private ownership” (Schmid, 2008, p. 29). A theatre is a location for socialization; but, make no mistake, it is an important place for commodity. Transactions occur at many levels, and money is made all along the way. From the vendor selling souvenirs in the lobby, through the actors on stage, and up to the owner of the theatre building itself, money is being made. Any altering of the business process of theatre is seen through the fetishizing of the commodity of theatre, including the provision of sign language interpreters and carving out a space for deaf people in the audience.

2.1.4 *Space, margins, and contact zones*

As socially produced spaces encourage homogeneity, the more one deviates from the norm, the more one may be perceived to “live on the margins”. This is a form of *transgression* or *resistance*, when viewed in the tradition of Foucault and Lefebvre. These are wilful acts of being different, in response to capitalistic or other forms of unbalanced social power. Lefebvre suggests that the margins of society are both at odds with—and are in relation with—the centres of society. There exists a tension between what is different, and the impulse of the society to encourage and maintain sameness. “Sooner or later, however, the existing centre and the forces of homogenization must seek to absorb all such differences” (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 373). If those at the margins persist in defending their difference, the authority of those in the centre to assimilate transgressors will be challenged.

A growing area of study of “others” in society—gay, feminist, disabled studies, and others—have begun to re-interpret this notion that marginal space is a form of resistance or transgression. Hetherington (1997) re-visits multiple definitions of heterotopia, with an eye on marginal spaces. He posits that the previous approach to margins as counter-hegemonic “oversimplifies, through a process of polarization, the issues of marginality, difference, and Otherness” (Hetherington, 1997, p. 7). To wit, a Gay Pride event, which outsiders might view as a heterotopia of *resistance against* the central, “straight” social order, may just as accurately be described as a heterotopic space of collective re-ordering: an affirmative coming-together. Hetherington renounces the notion of marginal spaces as set apart from central spaces, and shifts toward describing marginal spaces as conveying *alternative social orders* (Hetherington, 1997, p. 21). These spaces do not resolve the ongoing tension between resistance and affirmation, but, they provide an opportunity for *l’espace vécu* in the ongoing quest for *totalité*. In this way, the notion of heterotopia allows for spaces where social ordering may be *different*, but not necessarily for the purpose of *transgression* or *resistance*. Are deaf spaces like Gay Pride? Are they spaces of transgression, or are they—in Hetherington’s vernacular—“spaces of alternate social ordering” (Hetherington, 1997, p. 41)? Can they be both? In Lefebvre’s world, the ultimate objective of society is to absorb those on the margins into its centre; but the zenith of absorbing the gay or deaf people who exist on the margins of society would be to re-constitute them as straight or hearing, respectively. This is an unlikely end game for the heterotopias of each of these communities. Section 2.3 will explore the ways in which Lefebvrian concepts of space have been recently applied to research in deaf studies.

Spaces exist in proximity to one another, both physically and metaphysically. The interstitial locations betwixt them constitute *contact zones*, as defined by Mary Louise Pratt:

... social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today (Pratt, 1991, p. 34).

Pratt's (1991) illumination of these converging spaces takes a decidedly linguistic turn, as her revelation about them is couched in her reflection on a 1613 text authored in a blend of three forms: Quechua, "ungrammatical, expressive" Spanish, and line drawings⁶. Totalling 1,200 pages, the manuscript is an artful telling of Inca and pre-Inca history and culture, but which heavily leans on Spanish literary traditions and iconic forms. The result is both record and commentary in a way that was confounding to researchers who were vexed by the juxtaposition of forms and messages. It wasn't until the 1970s when a positivist interpretation of the text gave way to an interpretive view that its author's profound achievement had been fully recognized.

Pratt (1991) extrapolates characteristics of this text as a way to produce a frame for understanding *contact zones*, and the manner of literary forms that are produced therein. The text from 1613 is characterized by Pratt as employing forms that upend the assumption that societies are comprised of distinct language communities with formal, clear borders. She notes that the text is *autoethnographic*, which Pratt uses to mean a form of "text in which people engage with representations others have made of them" (Pratt, 1991, p. 35). These literary forms make use of the languages of both the oppressor and of the oppressed, and serve as a paradoxical representation of the oppressor. As they are presented to both groups, these texts provide the oppressed minority with an avenue into the majority culture, while also serving as a form of critique and resistance of the oppressor. This process of *transculturation* is not limited to written forms, but is also found in other visual forms. In the text from 1613, the author presents four hundred pages

⁶ *The First New Chronicle and Good Government*, by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala

of line drawings which juxtapose Andean cultural values with decidedly European forms. Pratt's framework of literary forms in the contact zone include: autoethnography, transculturation, critique, collaboration, bilingualism, mediation, parody, denunciation, imaginary dialogue, and vernacular expression.

Pratt notes that early analysis of the text was—at best—inconclusive, as it was seen through the lens of homogeneity. If one assumes that language communities are separate and distinct, an interpretation of the author's masterpiece is not possible; it is only when we accept a heterogeneous interpretation that we appreciate the literary forms of the contact zone. Pratt describes the 350-year delay between the publication of the work and a collective ah-ha moment among scholars as “a miracle and a terrible tragedy” (1991, p. 37). She outlines the perils of writing in contact zones: *miscomprehension*, *incomprehension*, *dead letters*, *unread masterpieces*, and absolute *heterogeneity of meaning* (Pratt, 1991, p. 34). Irvine and Gal (2000) note that a push to distinguish one language from another contributes to the erasure of linguistic forms that stray from the defined options. They identify three semiotic processes—*iconization*, *fractal recursivity*, and *erasure*—which lend to the language ideologies that influence how we view and describe language.

Consider this view of literary contact zones, and its application to sign language literature. The poetry of deaf artists such as *Dorothy Miles*, *Clayton Valli*, *Ella Mae Lentz*, and others may not have been on the mind of Pratt, as her focus was on printed texts; however, Pratt alludes to the extension of her discussion to visual symbols created within the contact zone (1991, p. 37). Though signed languages generally lack written forms, readily available video recording technology makes possible a case for viewing sign language literature within Pratt's framework. Analysis of deaf literary traditions draws parallels to other folk traditions, including commentary on the minority experience. Sometimes, this commentary adopts majority culture forms—a representation of the hearing community's language or literary forms—as a means in which to illustrate the oppressive habits of hearing people toward deaf people. Thus, deaf poets are employing *transculturation* in ways which are *autoethnographic*.

My Third Eye, a play produced by the National Theatre of the Deaf (NTD) in the United States, is an illustrative example of utilizing transculturation and autoethnographic techniques to both access the majority culture and comment on it. NTD was funded by

the U.S. federal government with the charge of exposing hearing people to deaf cultures—as opposed to being a source of entertainment for deaf people (Peters, 2006). *My Third Eye* is a collection of vignettes created by NTD and broadcast on national television in 1971. In some ways, the production typified folklore traditions common in deaf theatre; but it also sought to appeal to the broader, hearing audience. Two hearing actors add voice to lines performed in sign language, so that hearing audience members can access the performance. One segment, *Side Show*, provides a subversive commentary on oppression of deaf people by the dominant hearing culture. The segment imagines a world where (nearly) everyone is deaf. The scene is a carnival sideshow, and the carnival “barker” beckons us to attend to the story of a recent discovery: a strange world of hearing people. Two hearing inhabitants of this world are put on display, along with artefacts from their world (including a telephone, a radio, a bell, and other hearing-typical things). The jovial skit pokes fun at this turning of the tables, as the barker points out behaviours that seem strange in a deaf world: the hearing specimens dance every time the radio is turned on; they avoid physical touch; they slavishly “obey” the telephone.

The segment takes a decidedly dark turn as the barker announces that there is evidence of a small number of deaf people in this strange hearing world, where communication happens with the lips and ears, rather than with the hands and eyes. A troupe of actors show a young deaf child being chastened by his hearing mother for using sign language, instead of speech. When he tries to use the sign for “mother”, she slaps his hands. He finally capitulates, forcing out the word “mother” from his lips, as she parades him in front of others for public viewing. She is pleased. In the end, she dominates him, petting him like a dog. The overall effect of the *Side Show* segment is to draw-in hearing people with a familiar troupe (the sideshow), and then to offer a critique of the ways in which hearing people force deaf people to their whim. Here, the National Theatre of the Deaf masters hearing mediums—theatre and television—for a pointed commentary on the oppression they face on a daily basis. This is Pratt’s *contact zone* in action.

When viewed through the framework of the *contact zone*, the National Theatre of the Deaf performance of *My Third Eye*, exists in a space where deaf and hearing *sub-universes* overlap—not unlike the interpreter depicted in Figure 2-2. This view is held aloft by an ethnocentric positioning of hearing people in the centre of society, with deaf people on the margins. Bhabha (1994) seeks to move beyond western post-colonial ethnocentrism, instead suggesting that contemporary culture is both *transnational* and

translational. That is, modern day culture is the result of *multiple cultural inputs* that transform culture through an iterative process. It is the interaction (contact) between differing peoples that makes possible the transformational process, and that interaction is *everywhere*—not simply in prescribed zones of contact. Bhabha upends binary thinking of post-colonialism’s first world and third world thinking. Instead, he posits that there is the “possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 5). A shift away from centrist-peripheral descriptions of deaf lives is discussed in Section 2.3.1, after the following exploration of hybrid features of spatial production during theatre performances.

2.2 Theatre space

It is impossible to consider the drama profitably apart from the theatre in which it is born and in which it reveals itself in its completest perfection (Matthews, 1910, p. 3).

We now turn to the question of space in the theatre. Even the term “theatre” offers a challenge, as the term has the quixotic nature of representing a product, a location, and a process. Actors and artists engage in *making theatre*, and audience members go to *the theatre* to observe *theatre* in action. Furthermore, audience members are not simply observing theatre, but are an essential element of *theatre as a process*. The analysis of space and place in the field of theatre arts has seen an evolution, not unlike the morphing revelations of space in geography and in deaf studies. In this section, I will review the shifting understanding of the topology of theatre spaces. The result will be an unfolding of an ever-complex appreciation of the influence of theatre spaces on the theatre process, revealing physical and metaphysical spaces that must be considered in the analysis of the theatre product. Foucault (1986) and Lefebvre (1991) lend to this discussion, as do more recent authors. I will conclude this section with discussion of a proposed taxonomy for discussing theatre spaces, offered by theatre researcher Gay McAuley (1999).

2.2.1 Recognizing the places of theatre

Theatre studies was originally situated in literary studies, with a focus confined to the text of theatre, or “playtext”. Theatre studies as a discipline was introduced in the beginning of the nineteenth century: a growing recognition of the importance of space in theatre was

central to this movement away from literary studies—“from a linear reading of drama to a three-dimensional staging of it” (Carlson, 2013, p. 18). The focus of theatre historians had been the analysis of theatre text within a literary tradition, limited to the European works in the theatre canon.

The widening of the historians’ lens to include space did not bring with it new works for study. Instead, theatre historians remained focused on the European theatre canon, with an additional focus on the original performance conditions of these venerated works (Carlson, 2013). With time, this expanded focus was applied to other theatre works, as the field of *theatre scholarship* evolved into what we think of it today: “the study of particular theatrical and performative events, or groups of such events, and how they operate within their cultural contexts” (Carlson, 2013, p. 19). This definition allows for the study of a variety of events involving performance (beyond formal theatre settings), and extends the reach of theatre scholarship to include the relationship between theatre and broader society.

What constitutes space and place in theatre studies has also evolved. There has been consideration of the physical structure where theatre occurs, and also recognition of mental spaces conjured during the performance. Researchers also recognize the social element of the theatre performance, which supports several types of spaces related to theatre. Today, it is largely recognized that space has a primary role in theatre (Carlson, 2013; McAuley, 1999; Tompkins, 2014). Early into the transition from the confinement of theatre scholarship under literary traditions, it was recognized that it is impossible to consider drama apart from space. Still, the focus at the time remained in a specific domain: the basic spatial arrangement of the performer in one space and the spectator in another space (Carlson, 1985, p. 19). This *oppositional arrangement* will be discussed in Section 2.2.2.

Theatre depends on both physical and fictional spaces, and shared interaction between performer and spectator; so much so, that the very nature of the theatre event hinges on this interaction (McAuley, 1999). Spaces and *places* are co-constructed and shared between performers and spectators in a manner that is fluid and which “straddles the real and unreal” (Tompkins, 2014, p. 26). The real space of the theatre takes on the fictional space during the theatre performance. This fictional space is ephemeral, and the real space reverts to its previous condition after the performance is over (not unlike the

pavement that reverts back to being a non-deaf space once the deaf people traversing it have left). Theatre events take on different meanings based on the unique characteristics of a specific audience, with specific actors, in a specific place, at a specific time. This live interaction is a central characteristic of the performance, as theatre is a “social event, occurring in the audience as well as on stage, and the primary signifiers are physical and even spatial in nature” (McAuley, 1999, p. 5).

The importance of the shared generation of fictional space demands special attention, as it is the border between performance space and spectator space, and the contact between spaces where performance happens. This is a shared mental space that is more important to the performance than the physical environment itself (Unt, 2002, p. 369). This fact brings into view the importance of the placement of sign language interpreters in both the physical and mental spaces of the interpreted theatre event. Performers and audiences knowingly engage in the co-construction of fictional space during a theatre performance: when the interpreters prepare separately for the performance, and are placed off to one side of the stage, the dynamics of the sharing process is altered. I will return to this point in Section 2.4.2.

2.2.2 The oppositional model—performer and spectator

Theatre scholars in the tradition of Matthews (1910) in the United States and Herrmann (1914) in Germany embraced a specific spatial arrangement (see Figure 2-5):

The confrontation of the actor, occupying his or her own space, with the spectator, also occupying a particular space, and these two connected by a third, encompassing space, the theatre. One of the most fundamental characteristics of theatre is the separation of the real world of the spectator from the mimetic world of the actor (Carlson, 2013, p. 19).

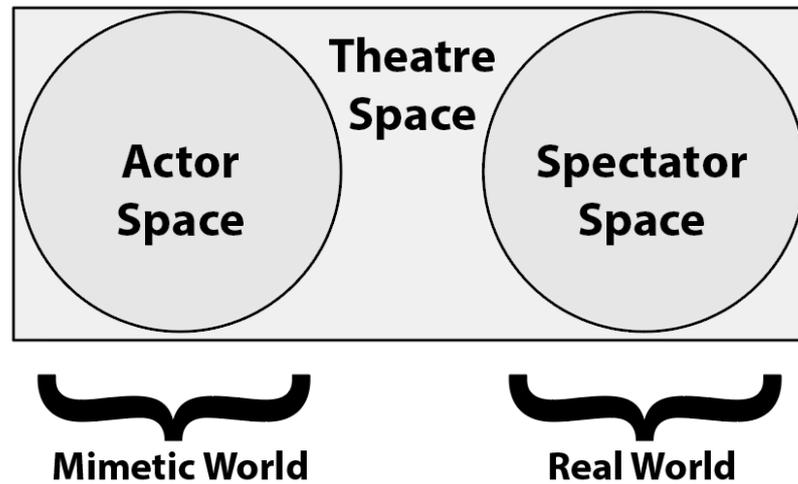


Figure 2-5. *The oppositional spatial arrangement of the European theatre tradition, as seen in the Matthews and Herrmann tradition.*

There may be occasional breaches of this arrangement—when the actor and spectator inhabit the same literal space. Even so, the actor remains in a different psychic space (a space of “the other”) which is a necessary construct of theatre (Stevenson, 1995, p. 5). An effect of the oppositional arrangement is a sense that the spectator is observing live events from an outside perspective. This became even more pronounced during the shift toward realism that occurred in the eighteenth century (Matthews, 1910, p. 139). The stark demarcation between the performer and audience spaces lead to stark psychological and social separations between the two groups, aided by the invisible *fourth wall*:

In a play, all the details of action and of speech must be significant, or else the playgoer is misled and his interest distracted. He wants to see everything that is done; and therefore the fourth wall of every room is removed, so that he can behold what takes place on the stage (Carlson, 2013).

This oppositional view of theatre space is now pervasive, and decidedly ethnocentric of the European theatre tradition, where separation of the audience was the standard—often marked by the *proscenium arch*. This arch is a structural element of the divide between the spectator space and the stage, akin to a picture frame looking from the spectator space into the mimetic world presented on stage. Even though some architectural arrangements in theatres lack this arch, the fundamental conceptual construct remained: the oppositional arrangement of spectator and actor.

It is the space where these two spaces collide where performance happens. It is a *borderland*, or *contact zone*, where the physical worlds of actor and spectator come together—each group enacting their own role, with their own statuses and behaviours, and at a prescribed time—where a fictional world is possible (Unt, 2002, p. 369). Through the co-constructed collaboration between participants from both sides, an evanescent fictional space is conjured; is traversed; and, then is finished. This collision is a necessary and essential part of the performance. These essential collaborative elements are articulated in McAuley’s (1999, p. 7) evaluation of the components of a *theatrical event*, which she defines as:

A dynamic process of communication;

In which the spectators are vitally implicated;

Which forms part of a series of interconnected processes of socially situated signification and communication;

And exists within a culture that it helps to construct; and

Is the product of a specific work process.

A weakness of this oppositional model is that it overlooks performance traditions with more porous boundaries, and which include such physical arrangements as an audience arranged in a circle around the performance. This circular and egalitarian audience arrangement brings to mind Greek coliseum architecture (Schwarte, 2013).

Early investigation into the opposed space model centred on the actor space. Over time, analysis of the spectator space served to illuminate “how the spatial arrangements of this key historical structure expressed and reinforced a whole system of social power relationships” (Carlson, 2013, p. 21). The study of theatre space began to consider non-traditional types of performance spaces, and the ways in which theatre space reflected society (Carlson, 2013).

More recently, researchers also began to consider spaces within the theatre beyond the stage and auditorium, including locations in the back of the house (e.g., backstage, dressing rooms) and in the front of the house (e.g., parlours, lobbies). This led to an appreciation of extra-theatrical spaces, such as consideration for the location of the theatre in the city, and the experiences of the spectators as they travel to and from the venue (Carlson, 2013; McAuley, 1999).

The limitations of viewing theatre spaces strictly within the oppositional arrangement may have necessitated an expanded framework for the analysis of space and place in the theatre; however, the fundamental idea that the interaction between performer and spectator is essential to the theatre remains. The ability of theatre to facilitate fictional spaces co-constructed by artists in one space, and spectators in another space, and yet encapsulated within the space of the theatre, calls for a return to the concept of heterotopia. Foucault recognized the theatre as a form of heterotopia, a space that is an un-real space, but which reflects real spaces. Applying concepts from Foucault and Lefebvre allows for the consideration of the theatre architecture, the location of the theatre, and theatre design in the process of creating meaning.

2.2.3 Theatre architecture—containing theatre’s worlds

Foucault, Goffman, and others looked to the theatre as a source of inspiration and an exemplar of their theories on the social creation of space and the ways in which space relates to politics, status, and role. Theatre scholars have borrowed from writings about heterotopia to help further define the ways in which space influences meaning in the theatre. One fundamental aspect of theatre heterotopias is the very architecture of theatre buildings. This leads to the discussion of how spaces influence theatre performances, and certainly the consideration of the role of space in sign language interpreted performances.

The physical arrangements of theatres have changed over time. Advances in theatre technology and architecture have led to changes in the way social strata are conceived in the theatre space. Space is a primary actor (perhaps not one of blood and bone) in theatre events, and the changing nature of theatre architecture over time has also impacted theatre beyond its mere container. Schwarte (2013) notes three themes in the evolution of theatre spaces: “the search for an egalitarian organization of the auditorium; the refinement of the optical illusion; and, the control of spectator numbers” (p. 137).

Themes of un-even, capitalist societal pressures common to the writings of Foucault and Lefebvre resonate in the changing architectures of theatre spaces from their earliest incarnations to what we think of as “a theatre” today. Social behaviour is the central driver of Foucault’s descriptions of heterotopia; but architecture is an equal partner in creating heterotopic space. Schwarte (2013) elucidates this point with observations of the shifting approaches to theatre architecture in ancient Greece and Rome, and in eighteenth-century France. Early Greek theatre architecture emphasized an equal visual and auditory experience for all spectators, providing citizens with an opportunity to experience “radical equality” (2013, p. 132). Theatres were large, open-air structures that were central to communal, societal life. Their circular design (or nearly circular) evoked a collectivist theatrical process, bringing together spectator and performer.

The Hellenistic period brought a shift in theatre architecture, focused on improving the ability of spectators to see and hear the performance. This necessitated bringing theatre indoors, and led to the development of a series of changes in theatre architecture strategy (Schwarte, 2013, p. 133):

- the size of theatres was reduced;
- confrontational seating arrangements were developed;
- the orchestra was made smaller;
- artistic stage structures up to three floors high were designed;
- boxes (tribunalia) were created for magistrates and other privileged guests or spectators; and
- other dignitaries ... sat on elevated seats of honour (bisellia) in the front rows, separated by a parapet from the semi-circular passageway that lined the first row.

Schwarte (2013, p. 134) notes that the semi-circular design common to the Romans introduced a “hierarchical asymmetry” to the theatre space, separating the events on stage

from those in the auditorium. This asymmetry mirrored the societal asymmetry at the time, when democratic ideals were on the decline. The populist role of large, open-air amphitheatre “entertainment” stood in stark contrast with the elitist “art” of acting found in smaller, indoor spaces. The masses and the elites were “targeted with differing spectator institutions” by their emperors. Over time, the role of the theatre became increasingly marginal, even with respect to its location in the city. Simultaneously, the complexity of the theatre’s front-of-house spaces became more elaborate. With this, they gained import in their role in elite society. Access to these spaces required the status of one whom was socially “in”.

Social strata were reinforced by the complexity of the box arrangements and the very linear nature of the row arrangement in the spectator space. With time, architects made attempts to mitigate this striation, and to re-introduce a sense of an egalitarian physical arrangement. In his criticism of French theatre in the mid-1800’s, Voltaire lamented the loss of interaction between audience members and patrons. He introduced principles designed to mitigate this problem, but these were largely illusionary. His rows were semi-circular in nature, harkening back to open-air, circular arrangements. To create the appearance of an egalitarian arrangement, he introduced painted backdrops on the stage space, which showed visages of spectators looking back toward the actual, live audience. Other architects, such as Blondell and Ledoux made strides toward removing special seating “boxes” for dignitaries, and improving the illusion of the scenic area on stage (Schwarte, 2013).

When we think of the oppositional relationship between performer and spectator, what comes to mind is often a traditional (in today’s terms) theatre space: an audience sitting in rows, looking toward a stage at a group of performers. This arrangement is commonplace, but it is not the only type of place where theatre happens. There are a multitude of other possible performance spaces. Some performances are staged in spaces meant for other purposes. For example, I once attended a ballet that was staged entirely in the stairwell of a Manhattan office building. The dancers started on the top floor and moved down to the bottom floor throughout the duration of the performance. The audience, which was necessarily small, followed the performers down the stairwell, observing from shifting locations on the stairwell. The next day, I attended a performance of *Villa Villa*, by the dance/performance troupe, De La Guarda, which was staged in a reclaimed bank in Manhattan. There were no seats. The audience stood in a large open

space as we watch the dancers perform, suspended from ropes *above our heads*. Still other performances take place in parks, subways, and other found spaces.

Even with attempts to move toward a more egalitarian experience for theatre-goers, theatre houses cannot overcome the hierarchical nature introduced by rows of seating: some people will be closer to the stage than others, and some people will be seated farther away from the centre of the row. The value of seats closer to the stage and toward the centre of rows is reflected in the pricing structure of modern-day theatres. Seats on the first floor of the auditorium are generally more expensive than those on the upper floors, and seats in the centre sections on all floors are more expensive than those on the sides. In many theatres, there still exist “boxes” of a type, which afford premium views and additional privacy. The capitalist approach to tiered seating prices lends to a social stratification in the theatre house: those with more financial means get a better view of the stage.

This introduces an important dynamic into sign language interpreted theatre events. Most interpreted theatre events feature the interpreters off to one side of the stage space, outside of the proscenium arch that contains the performance. Deaf people are generally sat in a specific section of seats, in front of the interpreters. This section is almost always on the far left or right section of the house—less favourable seats for viewing the stage space. Ironically, because of the limited distance for optimal viewing of sign language, “the deaf section” is usually on the first floor of the auditorium—prime seating, with respect to distance. This arrangement can introduce complications for pricing of the seats in the deaf section. Theatre managers expect that seats on the main floor and near the stage will garner a premium price from the patron, but deaf people have no choice but to sit in this section. When interpreters are placed off to one side of the stage, deaf people lack both choice of seating location and choice of price range preference.

Schwartz concludes that theatre spaces are influenced by society and politics, and have the effect of influencing society and politics. Space is more than a framework for theatre—it is a performer. The counterbalancing spatial dynamics of the oppositional arrangement impacts social order in the theatre. While theatre construction have moved toward the egalitarian, it has done so through increased control and manipulation of the *illusion of equality* (2013, p. 139).

2.2.4 *Designed spaces—heterotopia by illusion*

Although Foucault singles out theatre as an example of heterotopia, there has been limited application of heterotopology among theatre scholars. Tompkins (2014) seeks to provide a methodology for applying heterotopology to theatre. The work of Tompkins links Foucault's concepts to more recent studies in human geography, and places it specifically within the theatre space. (For a discussion of Foucault and heterotopia, see Section 2.1.1.) Citing the primacy of space in theatre performance, Tompkins argues that studying theatre's heterotopia can help us describe how spaces are, how spaces might be, and also to explore the socio-political alternatives available to us in the broader world.

Tompkins references Foucault's definition of heterotopia:

... real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society—which are something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented (Foucault, 1986, p. 24).

Tompkins has specific perspectives about what Foucault valued in this definition. The heterotopia presents a “world of its own, related to the actual world, but in some form separated from it” (2014, p. 21) and Foucault emphasized the relevance heterotopic spaces have to places outside of them. Heterotopias either “create a space of illusion designed to expose every real space” or “create a space that is other, another real space, as perfect ... as ours is messy” (1986, p. 27). It is this unsettling nature of heterotopia that renders it key to the theatre, and yet this important function as *sites of resistance* is often overlooked in references to Foucault's heterotopia.

Hetherington (1997) viewed the heterotopia not as a *counter-site*, but as a site that is organized *out-of-order*, allowing the viewer to become aware to alternate ways of being. In this way, Hetherington's heterotopia are not necessarily purposefully resistant to existing sites. Here, heterotopias are read in context between two opposites—a “good space” and “no place”. Tompkins (2014) brings this concept into the world of theatre, rendering the notion of ‘location’ ...

... slightly more fluid since in performance, 'space' straddles the borders of 'real' and 'not real': space in performance is 'real' for the duration of the performance but in its transience, its unreality is limited by the stage set that must be built for the next production to occupy a particular venue... A theatre venue is obviously real even if what is staged within is not. [Set pieces, props, and costumes] are also unreal in that they do not exist beyond their function in a performance and they will be destroyed or repurposed when the production closes (2014, p. 26).

What is happening on a heterotopic real stage space is a world, but it isn't real, although it is meant to evoke an unreal realness. Tompkins links heterotopias in theatre to abstracted space, then to constructed space, and to the actual world. Tompkins seeks to link the concepts of Foucault and Hetherington to the theatre space through a proposed methodology which considers three types of spaces that combine to create heterotopic spaces in theatre (2014, p. 29):

- the theatre venue (conventional or otherwise);
- the narrative space(s)/places(s) that the playwright establishes (generated in the venue, or referred to); and
- the layers of design applied to the first two spaces to accrete or subvert meaning.

With this model, Tompkins recognizes the role of *design* in the function of creating the fictional space that is co-created in the oppositional spaces between the spectator and the audience (see Figure 2-6).

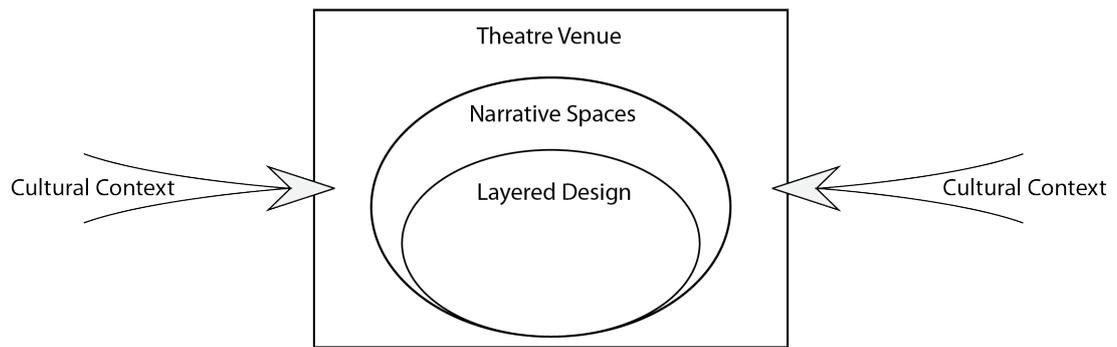


Figure 2-6. *The interaction between venue, narrative spaces, and design layers, based on Tompkins (2014).*

This design layer refers to all creative aesthetics created for a production, such as set pieces, lighting, costumes, make-up, sound, and even smell. The three types of spaces outlined by Tompkins are not all equally represented in each heterotopic theatre space, and heterotopic space may not always be present throughout a production—it may be ephemeral. When Tompkins applies her approach to theatre analysis, she begins with a review of the types of spaces above, allowing for the need to look at the phenomenon “through different prisms” (2014, p. 31). Her aim is to situate the heterotopia between two poles—*constructed space* and *abstracted space* (these are substitutions for Hetherington’s ‘good place’ and ‘no place’).

Finally, Tompkins acknowledges a fourth component in her method: “an account for what this might mean in a cultural context beyond performance” (2014, p. 33). The impact of societal events on the meaning of theatre is recognized by other theorists, including Edelman’s (2012) consideration of the limitations of phenomenology in the study of theatre. Inherent in phenomenology’s usefulness for distilling lived experiences into themes is a potential conflict with the very nature of the theatre event. Theatre is a unique social practice, with the goal of providing the participant with a novel—sometimes elevated—experience (Edelman, 2012). This heightened experience is not limited to the patron, but is also common to the actors and others involved in the production. Each performance is “unique and unrepeatable” (McAuley, 1999, p. 15). There exists a dynamic relationship between actor and spectator, and the reaction of spectators lead to nuanced differences in the co-constructed meaning of the text from performance to performance (McAuley, 1999). Edelman points to the impact that daily events can have on the meaning of individual lines in a play. The meaning of a line may be forever changed, if the societal event is historic, and it may revert to its original meaning as events

in the news change. Edelman posits that phenomenological study in the theatre must include a theatrical analysis of the live theatre event, as a means to document and recognize the context in which participant experiences are formed. McAuley concurs, asserting that theatre results in the production of an event—not an object—and it is essential to study “actual performances and with the work practices of actual theatre practitioners and spectators” (1999, pp. 9–10). Indeed, without evaluation of specific performances, situated in a specific location and time, the researcher is limited to the “virtual performance contained in the playtext” (McAuley, 1999, p. 12).

As an example of the views of both McAuley and Edelman, consider the ways in which some lines in the musical *Hamilton* took on new meaning during a performance attended by newly-elected Vice President Pence, in the United States. The show, *Hamilton*, had been in production for months prior to Donald Trump’s election as President of the United States, in late 2016. Throughout the election campaign, Trump emphasized his stance against illegal immigration in the U.S., which became a popular theme among his political base of supporters. This message drew ire from immigrants, people of colour, and other groups. During the opening weeks of a production of *Hamilton* in Chicago, Illinois, Trump’s running mate—Vice President Elect Mike Pence—attended a performance of the popular musical. Upon arriving in the audience, Pence was greeted by a loud chorus of “boos” (mixed with some applause) from audience members (Mele & Healy, 2016). During a typical performance of *Hamilton*, the line “Immigrants, we get the job done” had come and gone without unique recognition; however, on the night that Pence attended the performance in Chicago, the line drew an exuberant standing ovation from audience members. In another part of the performance, the character of King George sang two lines that also drew a strong reaction: “... when your people say they hate you ...” and “... do you know how hard it is to lead?” Here, the audience reaction was so profound—“they went nuts” according to an audience member—that the actor halted the performance until he could re-group (Mele & Healy, 2016).

The audience was not alone in recognizing the significance of the tumult in American political life, and the added pressure of the presence of Mr. Pence. During the bows at the conclusion of the performance, the actor portraying Aaron Burr gave a heartfelt curtain speech, extolling the importance of equal representation for all of the country’s citizens by its elected officials. The statement was crafted by the creator of *Hamilton*, in partial response to the anguish of the cast members after the election of Trump. Truly,

performers are feeling creatures, and their lived experiences work hand-in-hand with those of audience members to craft the unique meaning of each performance (Mele & Healy, 2016).

The impact of this incident lasted beyond the performance attended by Pence. In the days following the incident, the line “Immigrants, we get the job done” continued to receive heightened responses from audiences; however, at least one performance was interrupted by a dissenting voice. An audience member shouted back at the cast during the performance, including a vehement “We won!” The cast members were shaken by the experience, which was reflected in their demeanour during the bows after the performance (Jones, 2016).

This section adds two components to the simple view of theatre space as the oppositional arrangement between spectator and performer. First, Tompkins adds *creative design* into her model of viewing the heterotopic spaces of the theatre. These layers of design are part of the fictional space of the performance. Second, Tompkins recognizes the impact that *societal context* has on the meaning that is co-constructed between the performers and the audience members.

2.2.5 Phenomenology, co-presence, and performance

The *text* of theatre serves as the main point of investigation of theatre through the lens of *semiotics*, which seeks to describe every aspect of theatre as a coded symbol. These symbols represent the intended ideas, motifs, or concepts of the author or director. In this view, theatre becomes a “passageway for a cargo of meanings” between culture and spectator — all encoded in symbols inherent in the text, design elements, movement, and other aspects of the performance (States, 1985, p. 7). Semiotic analysis of theatre seeks to illustrate a dense and complex structural set of signifiers and gestures that account for meaning-making on stage: an attempt at a scientific, analytical abstraction of theatre.

States criticises semiotics—not for its narrow focus on symbols—but for its:

almost imperialistic confidence in its product: that is, its implicit belief that you have exhausted a thing's interest when you have explained how it works as a sign (1985, p. 7).

With language at the centre of semiotic analysis of theatre, the question of the perception of the spectator—and the spectator's contribution to the meaning of the codes ensconced in a production—were cleaved from the analysis. Carlson (1990) asserts that semiotics inadequately explores the relationships between meaning generation and the audience members, the symbolic meaning of the entire theatre experience, and the relationship between the symbols presented in the theatre and the things they represent in real life.

States (1985, p. 9) considers a purely linguistic view of theatre to be “dangerous” because it treats the language and symbols of the script empirically and overlooks the sensory engagement of the spectator—the moment when text becomes art. *Phenomenology* is concerned with the ways in which we generate meaning through our senses while our bodies are situated in a specific time and space. When applied to theatre performance, it is an attempt to gain access to the coming forth of the *performative moment*: an “utterance or event which does what it says, the collapse of action and meaning” (Grant, 2019, p. 30). Central to this analysis is human embodiment and the experienced perception of a given phenomenon within its environment (Fortier, 2016; Garner, 1994). States (1985, p. 8) posits that semiotics and phenomenology are not mutually exclusive, but are “modes of seeing” that form a type of binocular vision: “one eye examines phenomena through its signifiers, the other through its experiential meaning structures.”

Not unlike the present study, Maxine Sheets-Johnston comes from a discipline steeped in movement and concerns of the body: dance. She trained a phenomenological eye on performance through her early work, *The Phenomenology of Dance* (1966) and then through an extensive research portfolio afterward—drawing out and encouraging exploration of embodiment and kinaesthesia in dance performance. States (1985, p. 14) is an early adopter of phenomenology in the study of acting, situating his approach from the *viewpoint of the actor*—“the instrument on which the text of the play is performed.” He treats the actor as a mediator between the playtext and the audience:

That is, on the textural side, the actor creates the conditions that define the limits of theatre as an art form; on the audience side he makes theatre occur (1985, p. 14).

Audience members see *through* the actor-instrument—also *into* the actor-instrument. Tucked away at the end of *Great Reckonings In Little Rooms: On The Phenomenology Of Theatre*, States (1985, pp. 197–206) explicates this condition in his examination of the *curtain call*, describing its important function, rooted in “the psychology of ending.” It is a *seam* between art and reality where the dual pretence of the performance is self-disclosed:

The play pretends that we don’t exist (the fourth-wall convention) and we pretend that the play does (the willing suspension of dis-belief) (1985, p. 206).

This pretence continues until the initiation of applause, when “the fiction of the play is replaced with the fiction of manners” (States, 1985, p. 203). At this moment there exists an *unstable border* between the fictional reality and physical reality of the stage and theatre building. Like returning to the surface after a deep ocean dive, the curtain call is an in-between point—States conjures an image of a decompression chamber—the actor cushions the audience from a harsh return to the surface. While still in costume on stage, the actor is no longer *in character*—but also not entirely *out of character*. Of all moments during the performance there is none during which the actor is more *ambiguously real*: the actor is a “healthy schizophrenic who is living two lives at the same time” (1985, p. 14).

States suggests that the actors are bowing on behalf of their *character* as much as on behalf of the *actor themselves* (1985, p. 203). They have both *played* the character and are a *vessel* for it, even once the performance is finished. He identifies multiple assumptions underpinning this moment, centred on the actor (1985, pp. 203–205). The actor is expected to be both *congenial* and *humble*, demonstrating good behaviour and a sense of *modesty*. This modesty may, itself, be a fiction—but modesty is prized in the real world. As much as we love to see the effortlessness of genius, we like our geniuses to exhibit at least some minor human weakness. During the curtain call, the actor is *pretending to be himself*, both *seeking our approval* (consenting to receive it, at least)

and *revealing their humanness*. This disclosure shows us that they are *of our world*. The actors may even *applaud the audience* as a message of mutual respect and teamwork: “Your goodness has made it possible for us to be good” (1985, p. 205). Of all moments that comprise the actor/spectator relationship it is the curtain call that States posits is most collaborative. The relationship is recognized and reversed: liberated.

In *The Transformative Power of Performance* Fischer-Lichte (2008) complicates the view of theatre as an object—conceived by actors of material and symbols—which is left to be perceived by audience members. Instead, the performance is a *social event*. It transcends the limits of the materiality of the production and the playtext due to the contributions of the performers and the spectators in the same space: *co-presence*. All participants are afforded the possibility of metamorphosis. Fischer-Lichte posits that the spectator *oscillates* their perception from the material body of the actor to the portrayed body of the character. Meaning is generated through an interaction between the text, the embodied character, and the perception of both of these by the spectator (situated among the group of other spectators and actors) in the moment:

By emphasizing the bodily being-in-the-world of humans, embodiment creates the possibility for the body to function as the object, subject, material, and source of symbolic construction, as well as the product of cultural inscriptions. Theatre and literary studies long overlooked this obvious fact (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 89).

Where States (1985) describes role reversal between actor and spectator as a moment in time at the end of the performance, Fischer-Lichte suggests role reversal is continuous throughout the performance. The actions of the performers on stage are perceived by the spectators, and the actions of the spectators are perceived by the performers. The behaviours and actions of each group contribute to this *autopoietic feedback loop* which “generates the performance itself” (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 50). Like other autopoietic systems, performance events are “simultaneously producers and products, circular systems that survive by self-generation” (Carlson, 2008, p. 7). Sensory perception is crucial to this feedback loop—an actor’s action must be perceived before it generates feedback from a spectator, and the actor must be able to perceive the responses of the spectators (and, potentially, other actors).

Fischer-Lichte describes aspects of the material formation of theatre that artists manipulate, among which include corporeality, spatiality, and *tonality*. The latter described as:

The overall sound quality of a performance consisting of the entirety of audible sounds in the auditorium, such as music, speech, human noises, accidental sounds, and so forth (2008, p. 212).

Fischer-Lichte (2008, pp. 129–130) describes the voice—vocalized intonation, whether uttering words or not—as a *bridge* between actor and spectator. As it is expelled outward from the body of the actor, the voice emphasizes the *corporeality* of the actor. It resonates throughout the performance space “capturing” the *tonality* contained therein and “marking” the *spatiality* of the performance as it lands simultaneously in the ears of both spectator and actor. The voice closes the gap between performer and audience member. It is the unifying element of *tonality*, *corporeality*, and *spatiality*, supplying ongoing fuel to the autopoietic feedback loop.

Garner (1994) similarly centres *speech* at the heart of his discussion of *language as mise-en-scène*, the influences of which are so powerful that it has the potential to overpower the visual materiality of the performance. The spoken word dominates theatre (Garner, 1994, p. 135). The physiology of speech production is manipulated to reinforce the relationships between the spoken utterances on stage and the references they are meant to evoke within the participants of the event. *Corporeality* and *perception* feature prominently in Garner’s framework. “Theatre is a phenomenal space, governed by the body and its spatial concerns” (Garner, 1994, p. 4). The body is the actor’s instrument; the body is also the spectator’s instrument. Co-creation of meaning is reflective of these bodies—and also self-reflective of them.

Discussions in the literature of bodily co-presence and co-creation of meaning between performers and spectators have generally lacked the notion of a deaf spectator or performer. Silence and other treatments of sound/noise are analysed as theatrical features that stand in opposition to normality. The meaning of sounds—or the lack of sound—is interpreted through a phonocentric frame. When the actor, spectator, and researcher are all hearing, the meaning of a period of silence is vignettted; limited to the epistemology

of hearing people, rooted in hearing ontology. The hearing actor may experience silence as isolation and anguish, and this is reflected in the bodily positions and movements of the actor when silence is employed as a theatrical device during the performance. The hearing audience member both observes the actor and reflects back into the autopoietic feedback loop. Rooted in a hearing ontology, the audience member understands and empathizes with the actions of the hearing actor. The researcher observes the original gesture of silence and the audience's response through a hearing ontology. The co-constructed meaning of the performance, and the analysis by the researcher, are rooted in a mutual ontological co-presence.

Bodily co-presence between actor and spectator has been taken for granted as a condition of the co-creation of meaning in an autopoietic feedback loop. This relationship between performer and spectator is un-mediated (although Fischer-Lichte and Garner describe a shifting perspective on this subject as the mediatization of live performances becomes increasingly prevalent). Heretofore, relationships between performers and spectators have been treated as largely binary. Sign language interpreters are an addition to the co-presence model that have not been accounted for in discussions of the audience/spectator relationship.

Within his more recent explorations of corporeality and perception, Garner (2018, 2019, 2020) engages traditions from the cognitive sciences in tandem with phenomenology. Phenomenology works from the inside, moving outward—beginning with the individual experience. Cognitive sciences work from the outside, moving inward—employing experimentation to eliminate the individual experience from the analysis. Garner (2019) suggests that theatre and other forms of spectatorship offer the most fertile setting in which to explore the convergence of phenomenology and cognitive sciences:

When phenomenology and cognitive science engage in dialogue, the study of movement, movement perception and other cognitive actions reaches above and beneath the threshold of consciousness (Garner, 2019, p. 213).

Noting the complex relationship between the movements of the outside world that we observe and our own inner-world experiences, Garner highlights the vicarious neurological responses of audience members to the movements of performers: “we are

cognitively wired for movement responsiveness” (2019, p. 204). These can be measured empirically, corroborating phenomenological descriptions of experiences. In turn, phenomenology offers nuanced insight into the situated and dynamic whole-part relationship of the body in context. When applied in this way to a diversity of bodies and a diversity of contexts, phenomenology *confirms the insights* of experimental investigations, *complicates the models* of cognitive scientists, and *offers directions for future research* (Garner, 2019, p. 213).

In Kinesthetic Spectatorship In The Theatre, an extension of his previous book on performance phenomenology, *Bodied Spaces: Phenomenology and Performance in Contemporary Drama*, Garner (2018) suggests that *sensorimotor resonance* with others is significant to our social lives—including the mechanisms of the theatre (e.g., the *autopoietic feedback loop*). The physical movements and the language created on stage by the performers have an influence on the kinesthetic experiences of the spectator: “Phenomenologically, visual and linguistic action “take place” on stage and in the audience’s virtual engagement” (2018, p. 205). Garner aims to address *diversity* of sensorimotor experiences in his examination of multiple performances featuring disabled performers in “kinetic and kinesthetic-based attempts to navigate the disabled–nondisabled divide” (2018, p. 13)

Garner hopes to disrupt what he sees as a disability binary rooted in the phenomenon of *I can* and the counter-phenomenon of *I cannot*. He seeks to complicate the application of *I cannot*—placing it in a dialectical relationship with *I can*. Throughout our embodied interactions with others of varying sensorimotor and cognitive capacities, we become aware of our *own* capabilities and limitations. Garner (2018, p. 14) asserts that we all share the experience of being “*other* to everyone else in varying degrees” and that this experience of otherness provides us with insight into the disability binary that has been previously unexplored. His is not a study of disability, *per se*, but of the “productive challenge disability presents to traditional models of phenomenal experience, cognition, and aesthetic reception” (2018, p. 14).

Garner questions the validity of the “false dichotomy between ability and inability” (2018, p. 94). Imagining himself watching a dance performance, Garner describes a duality in his sensorimotor resonance: his body vicariously empathizes with the movement of the dancer—it feels liberating to him—and yet, he is also aware that his

own body is incapable of those movements. In this oscillation between *I can* and *I cannot*, Garner reflects on his own *capacity/incapacity*, which he sees as rooted in *experiential variation* between he and the dancer. While he recognizes the limits of his ability to know the experiences of others, Garner asserts that *genuine intersubjectivity* is possible due to the insights from the capacity/incapacity dialectic. He posits that this approach “provides the foundation for including difference within an understanding of sensorimotor resonance” (2018, p. 14).

Describing himself as both *able-bodied-up-to-this-point* and knowing some things about being *small-d disabled*, Garner supplements his descriptions of the performances he explores with written accounts by capital-D Disabled people. Indeed, his descriptions are not a phenomenology of the disabled performer’s experience—but, of Garner’s experience of the performance which included a disabled performer. This is not a criticism of Garner, insomuch as it is to shine a light on the influence of ontology and positioning in his analysis.

A performance of the dance *Divide* described by Garner features four dancers, one of whom—Dwayne Schuenemann—is paralyzed from the waist down. Garner (2018, pp. 95–96) describes the dancers as either *able-bodied* or *wheelchair-bound* and their work together as *physically integrated*. During the first half of the performance, Schuenemann danced in a wheelchair and the choreography (for all on stage) suited this fact. For the second half, Schuenemann danced without the wheelchair, and the choreography for he and the other dancers was suitably conceived. Garner acknowledges being jolted by the experience, which is reflected in his descriptions of the performance. He describes the first half of the performance as a show of agility and effortlessness. There is symmetry and unity. *Integration*. Here, Schuenemann is strong, leveraging his “wheelchair body” creatively, and praised for his ability to adapt himself and the wheelchair toward the physicality of the “able-bodied” dancers—a show of “can-ness”:

But while I never lost sight of Schuenemann’s disability, the seamless integration of body and wheelchair during most of this piece left his motor projects and his body’s ability to execute these projects intact. (P.98).

Garner's description of Schuenemann changes to one of *I cannot* after the dancer jettisons his wheelchair. The choreography of the second half of *Divide* featured movement, positions, and constructions suited to Schuenemann's body as he moved himself along the stage floor. Garner describes these moments in terms starkly different than the first half of the dance. Schuenemann's lower body is *trailing behind* him, *inert*, *dangling*, *unresponsive*, and *less animated than the wheelchair*. *Thing-like*. The other dancers join this choreography, but Garner contrasts their lower bodies (which "maintained a latent animacy") against Schuenemann's (which was "incapable of movement"). Even at this point in the performance—when the choreography is adapted to Schuenemann's body—he is described as being more restricted than the other dancers, for whom this choreography is less naturally suited.

As he reflects on his panicked and terrified response to the second half of *Divide*, Garner concludes that two factors are at play. First is his "encounter with something alien and unexperienced"—"watching someone who could not move his body in the way I could" (2018, p. 99). He adds that his own first-hand experiences help him to resonate with Schuenemann:

I can and *I cannot* can be seen from this perspective as capacities that differentiate my body and body-experience from those of others. As I reflected on my reaction to Schuenemann's performance over the days that followed, however, it became apparent to me that a second factor had been at work. While I do not know what it is like to be paraplegic, I have had temporary experiences that resemble this condition (2018, p. 99).

Garner suggests that his previous experiences of anaesthesia, the effects of ageing, and recurring dreams about paralysis provided him with a "recognition of kinetic possibilities" of paralysis which were referenced during his anxious response to Schuenemann's performance (2018, pp. 99–100). Garner's experiences serve as his reference for Schuenemann's paralysis.

While Garner carefully reminds the reader that he is aware of differences in his and Schuenemann's experiences of paralysis, Garner's descriptions are steeped in his ontology. Lacking is an exploration of the dancers' experiences and perceptions. Would

Schuenemann describe his legs as *inert* during the second half of *Divide*? Is the bridge-building of *Divide* found when Schuenemann uses a wheelchair to adapt to the norms of other dancers, or when the other dancers join him in dancing without the wheelchair? How would a spectator who is paralyzed experience the same performance? Garner's description of Deaf West Theatre's production of *Spring Awakening* is similarly rooted in his external perspective.

While waiting for the curtain to raise on a Broadway performance of the musical *Spring Awakening*—a production which features of mixed cast of deaf and hearing actors—Garner is struck by the kinesthetics of sign language. Sitting in the audience of the theatre, he observes a group of people using (presumably) American Sign Language and contrasts this with the co-speech gestures of an audience member who animatedly moves her hands while speaking. He sees—and seeks—universality in these movements. After seeing the performance, he declares that it apparent that spoken and signed languages share common gestural foundations—here, used as a broad term including both physical gestures and the spoken word (“articulatory gestures”).

The twenty-two member cast of Deaf West Theatre's Broadway production of *Spring Awakening* features eight deaf actors in assigned roles in the production. Six hearing actors are cast as “Voice of ...” (Voice of Wendla, Voice of Moritz, etc.)—performing spoken or sung versions of the lines signed by the deaf actors. Of these six *Voice of* actors, five also play a musical instrument in the on-stage band. The remaining *Voice of* actor does not play an instrument, but performs an additional role in the production. The remainder of hearing cast members portray their own characters while simultaneously reciting their lines in spoken/sung English and American Sign Language.⁷ The result is a production where each line is available in sign language—deaf actors signing as their characters, and hearing actors simultaneously speaking and signing as their characters. Each line is also available in English—hearing actors speak while they sign, and hearing *Voice of* actors speak the lines of deaf actors. While they do double-duty as musicians,

⁷ Sometimes referred to as *simultaneous communication* (or “Sim-Com”), attempts to speak in one language while also signing in another prompts important questions about the limits of this type of multi-modality which fall outside the scope of this study.

the *Voice of* actors weave in and out of the central stage space—oftentimes retreating to its periphery.

Garner describes moments of close physical interaction between deaf actress Sandra Frank (as the character Wendla) and Katie Boeck as (the Voice of Wendla and also playing guitar). They are *collaborative* and *focused*. As deaf actors and their corresponding *Voice of* actors venture farther apart on stage, Garner finds the movement patterns vague—“subjectively decentred”. Aspects of the performance seem to him to be distributed; “nobody owned it at all” (2018, p. 175). This is both *decentring* and *bridging* in Garner’s experience. So much so, that he mistakenly credits the *Voice of* actors as being “double cast” as the characters.

This decentring may be due, in part, to Garner’s dual-channel access to the performance (i.e., auditory and visual). Garner describes scanning the stage visually while also listening as the hearing actors spoke and sang. This dual channel experience allows him to take in each actor individually while always maintaining access to the playtext. The embodied voice of Boeck (Voice of Wendla) has significant access to Garner—it is not only auditory stimuli, it also carries the coded symbols of the script in a language Garner understands. The sign language recited by Sandra Frank (as Wendla) is a visual stimulus that Garner can occasionally process on rudimentary thematic grounds (e.g., up is good)—but the coded symbology of Frank’s utterances are lost to Garner. Attending through the ears and eyes of a hearing person, Garner looks to the stage space designed and inhabited largely by deaf people and he makes sense of it through a hearing ontology. This ontology hooks its anchor to the ship of sound.

While Garner highlights the universals of movement and gesture in sign language and speech, he credits *music* with providing integrating effects behind the movements onstage during *Spring Awakening*:

Music animated their bodies, guiding their movements as if originating within the space around them. From another perspective, the music came from within them, expressing itself throughout their voices, signing gestures, and physical movement through space (2018, p. 172).

Here, sign language is in service to music. This is not a surprising assertion, given that *Spring Awakening* is a musical and Garner lacks the lived experience to parse the language and movements of the production through deaf eyes. Sign language has movement of its own, and does not require music to animate it. Another perspective might be that sign language is bent to the music: limited by it and co-opted through it.

Garner acknowledges limitations in his ability to fully deduce the multi-modal messages of the production and seeks affirmation from a review by deaf writer Rachel Kolb of the performance's successful integration of deaf and hearing actors. In her writing, Kolb (2015) praises the production for providing a more directly personal experience than what is possible through sign language interpreters, while also noting that hearing and deaf people seated side-by-side in the audience would leave *Spring Awakening* having had two different theatre experiences.

Kolb references physical attributes of the production attuned to a deaf aesthetic. She recognizes the learned skill of deaf people “gathering meaning through visual language” and notes ways in which *Spring Awakening* manipulated space to create an *optically rich experience: non-elaborate costumes and sets; bright lighting; bold music; choreography that combined ASL, dance, and gesture; and a set of visual cues and physical behaviours* which supported unified movement. These are reminiscent of deaf space production features observed by Peters (2006, pp. 87–89) in deaf theatre in the United States: close proximity between performer and spectator; small numbers of actor on stage—or a group that is compactly arranged; reduced travel across stage while signing; facing and approaching/interacting with the audience; variable visual stimuli (as expressed through lighting, colour, physicality, etc.).

Where Garner sees music as the unifying force behind the synchronicity of language, choreography, and gesture on stage, it may be that this is owed to the material and social production of deaf space enacted on stage. While hearing audience members may be able to perceive these actions—it is deaf people who are more likely to be able to decode the underlying meaning of this visual architectural language in a way that is less marked than it is for a hearing person. The eye gaze of the deaf spectator may be more purposefully directed than that of their hearing counterpart, due to the deaf person's familiarity with the deaf space production unfolding on stage. Where the physicality of the distance between Wendla and Voice of Wendla may be decentring for Garner, it may be more

unifying for deaf patrons. As Broek steps away from Frank, deaf eyes likely remain on Frank, taking in a unified presentation of Wendla in both body and language. Garner's eyes are not similarly anchored, and go searching for Broek's voice.

Although Garner's analysis of *Spring Awakening* is a phenomenology limited by his experience as a hearing person, his writing (among others) advances the idea of the autopoietic feedback loop to include cognition and sensory responses at the neurological level. Kolb affirms the difference in experiences between hearing and deaf audience members. Importantly, there is consensus that *movement matters*—and that it is essential to meaning-creation in theatre.

Phenomenology continues to evolve as a method for exploration of the theatre experience. This section began with Bert O. States suggesting semiotics and phenomenology might work together as a form of binocular trained on the theatre. Garner now suggests phenomenology and the cognitive sciences are corroborative, providing the opportunity for a tri-focal perspective: semiotics, phenomenology, and cognition. What is left to explore is a more complicated consideration of how deaf audience members experience theatre performances. In the case of SLIPs, the addition of sign language interpreters to the performance allows for investigation of the limits of the binary conceptualization of the autopoietic feedback loop.

2.2.6 *Extended spaces—a framework and taxonomy*

The previous discussions (Sections 2.2.1 through 2.2.4) illuminate the evolving and complex theoretical lens through which theatre topology is viewed. Theatre is much more than the simple container in which theatre happens. The basic oppositional physical relationship between spectator and performer facilitates the co-construction of a fictional space. This fictional space—or “narrative space”—is complex. It originates in the playtext and is represented on stage. Layers of design serve to support the fictionalized space on stage, as well as the fictionalized spaces that exist off stage. These include spaces that are perceived to be directly outside of the stage frame (when the actors move off stage, they are presumed to enter an un-see-able part of the narrative space). Also part of the narrative space are those spaces which are part of the *playtext*, but will never be shown on stage. The socio-political context of the day influences the meaning of space that is co-constructed by the unique collection of performers and spectators present at a

given performance. All of this takes place in a physical space—the theatre—which is laden with its own meaning, by virtue of its architecture and even its location in a town or city. There are many spaces involved in theatre—a knotty issue for theatre scholars which McAuley (1999) set out to resolve in her taxonomy of theatre space.

McAuley (1999) examines the relationship between performer, spectator, and space in theatre, sharpening the focus of previous work in theatre semiotics and phenomenology to the physical and fictional spaces—both present and not—which are central to the theatre experience. Previous discussions of space in the literature was *building-centred*: the building was seen “as an aesthetic object” (1999, p. 9). Here, McAuley (1999) is concerned with the *function of space* within theatre, which exists as a “complex social process” (p. 9). McAuley notes that performance studies is an “emerging discipline” (ibid., p. 17). As such, her study leans on multiple theoretical frameworks, including semiotics (which is “extremely useful in facilitating the careful description of performance”), phenomenology (which is “helpful for providing concepts, vocabulary, and theoretical sanction for intuitively felt reactions” based on the lived experience), ethnography, and sociology (1999, pp. 16–17).

Space is central to the performance experience, yet McAuley (1999) found that critics and practitioners lacked a “precise and widely shared vocabulary” (p. 17) to name and discuss the multiple ways in which space functions in theatre. McAuley reviews several, recent theoretical and critical works in the semiotics of theatre, as a forerunner to her own proposed *taxonomy of the spatial function in the theatre*. In these writings, McAuley finds overlap and agreement, if not consistent terminology. Common to these writers is an emphasis on “the onstage/offstage dialectic and the complex relationship between the physical or material reality and fictional, illusionary world created in and by it” (1999, p. 23). Parsing the writings of others, McAuley (1999) proposes a taxonomy (see Figure 2-7) designed to “define and conceptualize aspects of spatial function in theatre semiotics and to explore how these aspects related to one another” (p. 24).

1. The Social Reality
 - a. Theatre Space
 - i. Audience Space
 - ii. Performance Space
 - iii. Practitioner Space
 - b. Rehearsal Space
2. The Physical / Fictional Relationship
 - a. Stage Space
 - b. Presentational Space
 - c. Fictional Place
3. Location and Fiction
 - a. Onstage Fictional Place
 - b. Offstage Fictional Place
 - i. Unlocalized in relation to Performance Space
 - ii. Localized in relation to Performance Space
 1. Contiguous / Remote Spectrum
 2. Audience Off
4. Textual Space
5. Thematic Space

Figure 2-7. Taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre (McAuley, 1999, p. 25).

McAuley's is the most comprehensive approach to the interwoven connections between social space, the physical/fictional relationship, location and fiction, textual space, and the thematic space of a theatre event. She applies her taxonomy in the real-world analysis of theatre events, recognizing that the degree to which each space asserts itself varies from production to production, and from performance to performance. Her taxonomy offers a well-considered framework for the discussion of theatre events, which may be expanded to consider aspects of deaf space. The following glossary employs some of McAuley's own verbiage in summaries of each term in Figure 2-7.

The first category of the taxonomy is *The Social Reality* of the theatre event, which encompasses the theatre spaces (i.e., the audience space, the performance space, and the practitioner space) as well as rehearsal spaces. As McAuley describes them:

Theatre Space: “The first spatial fact of the theatre event is the theatre building itself.” The theatre building as it exists within the broader landscape; its relationship to other buildings, its history, and the types of activities it facilitates or denies all influence the way the event is experienced and interpreted by performer and spectator. The space is highly segregated and rigidly enforced into “front-of-house” and “backstage” (1999, pp. 24–25).

Audience Space: as a theatre event is a social event for spectators, the front-of-house “facilitates (or denies) types of social interaction.” This includes the point of entry, foyer, stairways, corridors, bars and restaurants, box office, and the auditorium, itself (1999, pp. 25–26). The activities that happen here are very important to the overall experience of the spectators, and “may be the dominant memory retained afterward” (1999, p. 26).

Practitioner Space: theatre workers (except front of house staff, whose designation set them apart spatially from the other practitioners) inhabit a different domain. This includes the stage door access (which is separate from other access points, often on a separate street), the entire backstage area (i.e., dressing rooms, green room,⁸ corridors and stairways), and the stage itself. While largely undocumented and not thoroughly researched, the backstage space provides insights into the experiences the practitioners and the esteem they are (or are not) afforded (1999, p. 26).

Performance Space: the space constituted by the convergence of *audience space* and *practitioner space*, this space both “overrides and subsumes the division of the two previous spaces.” It is *divided* and *unifying*. It is a privileged domain

⁸ A room meant for pre-performance gathering and relaxation by cast members and crew.

where performers and spectators meet to work together to create the performance experience (1999, p. 26).

Rehearsal Space: unseen by the audience, this space has a profound impact on the spatial relations and behaviours seen by the audience. The physicality of this space (no matter how neutral it may seem) influences the decisions made by the practitioners during rehearsal, which eventually have a life in the performance space (1999, p. 27).

The second category of McAuley's taxonomy is also the "second spatial fact of the theatre": the relationship between the "*physical reality/fictional place duality*" (1999, p. 27). As spectators peer onto the stage space (in traditional, modern theatre), there exists a balance in their consciousness of the physical stage itself, in concert with the fictionalized world that has been conjured for the purpose of the performance. McAuley suggests that three terms are necessary to describe this space.

Stage Space: the most basic interpretation of the meaning of "stage space" includes the physical stage, itself, including the spaces comprising the entrances, exits, back wall, and the division between on- and off-stage. This may include spaces in the audience that are temporarily occupied by actors via brief performances in what is typically the spectator space. This space is prescribed by the basic architecture of the building, and provides "the physical grounding for the performance that is a crucial part of its meaning" (1999, p. 29).

Presentational Space: McAuley avoids the terms "designed" and "scenic" space, preferring to indicate a more neutral approach to the way that the fictional space is presented to the audience. This allows for a continuum which includes highly designed sets, props, lighting, etc.—while also accommodating performances on very barren stages, with minimal stylized assistance from design elements. This also includes the ways in which performers occupy the space in order to give it fictional presentation. If an actor mimes the action of opening and closing a door, the space still presents a fictional door to the spectators. While her definition is inclusive of such minimal design approaches, McAuley includes in this category

all manner of design elements (e.g., sets, costumes, lighting, the design of entrances and exits, etc.) (1999, p. 29).

Fictional Place: this space refers to “the place or places presented, represented or evoked onstage and off” (1999, p. 29). This extends far beyond what is strictly presented on stage, and includes several types of space never presented on the stage during a performance. So complex is this notion that *fictional place* is afforded its own category in McAuley’s taxonomy, labelled *Location and Fiction*.

McAuley accounts for the complexity of fictional place in its own category, *Location and Fiction*. The title of the category is meant to emphasize the relationship of the fictional place to the physical presence of the stage. The main sub-categories are *Onstage Fictional Place* and *Offstage Fictional Place*. The latter category includes several types of space, as described below.

Onstage Fictional Place: this is the place that is “physically represented or presented through the actor” (1999, p. 30). In the latter case, the place may not require actual presentation of an object or place, but it is implied through the action of the performer(s). A plain box on stage may take meaning as a throne, when sat on by an actor portraying a king. Several permutations of onstage fictional place are possible. Some productions have a singular onstage fictional place. There may be multiple places, in which case they may be presented simultaneously, successively, or in an alternating fashion. There are numerous possibilities in onstage fictional spaces. The common element to them all is that they are anchored or somehow related to the physical space (1999, p. 30).

Offstage Fictional Place: multiple sub-categories are included in offstage fictional place, as the function of the spaces changes, due to their relationship to the physical space, stage space, or audience space (1999, p. 31). Consider *The Miracle Worker*, which takes place nearly entirely inside the home of Helen Keller’s family, in Tuscumbia, Alabama. The *unlocalized off* places are all of the places that are part of the *dramatic geography* of the story, but which are not in any physical relationship to the stage space. This might be other parts of the town of Tuscumbia or Alabama referenced in the production. Even if Helen’s father

references a next-door neighbour during the performance, there is no reference to the neighbour's home in the production, and so the neighbour's location is considered *unlocalized* and *offstage*.

The *localized off* places are those that can be traversed to or from a space on stage, or from an other performance space (e.g., the audience), often through an exit, or through a door or stairway. They also include spaces that can be seen, at least partially, through a window in the set. There is a spectrum to these places. On one end are those places which can more obviously be perceived (as in the case of doorways leading to the kitchen in the Keller's home in *The Miracle Worker*). On the other end of the spectrum are places that are localized by other means, such as through video projection or the simple act of a look by the actor. In the dramatic scene by the water pump in *The Miracle Worker*, Anne Sullivan has dragged Helen outside to a water pump. A simple glance off stage by Anne can indicate a location elsewhere on the property which will never been seen, but from which Helen's father enters to see Helen finally demonstrate language skills. *Audience off* places are unique instances when an actor on stage references a place that is located somewhere in—or beyond—the space occupied by the audience. In our example of *The Miracle Worker*, Anne Sullivan may be waiting expectantly for Captain Keller (Helen's father) to arrive home from somewhere in the distance. The actor might walk to the edge of the stage, peering out into the audience in anticipation of Captain Keller's arrival. This is a potent theatrical device that is distinct from localized off places (1999, pp. 31–32).

The fourth category of the taxonomy is *Textual Space*. While categorized separately, the text is at work and functional within every other category of space in the taxonomy. Textual space refers both to spatial information contained within the text and to stage directions included in the script. There are a multitude of *textual space* characteristics in the text of the script: geographical information, place names, discussions of movement and direction, and even prepositions. Both the language included in the script and the stage directions therein are manipulated by directors and actors to create and reinforce spatial meaning (1999, p. 32).

The final category, *Thematic Space* is an all-encompassing category that represents the synthesis of how all other spaces are *conceived* and *organized*, and the *feelings* and

meanings that are evoked as a result. It is here where meaning emerges from the structure created by the unique combination of the individual components of the other spaces. Understanding the spatial system that underpins the performance allows us to “unravel the philosophical and ideological content of play and production” (1999, pp. 32–33).

While McAuley painstakingly parses her taxonomy into numerous spatial functions, she cautions against thinking of these functions as separable and distinct. They function in relationship with one-another; and, in the cases of *textual space* and *thematic space*, they are *cross-cutting* and *global* in nature. McAuley notes that there is “inside knowledge” that is developed solely for the purpose of the practitioner and which resides in the practitioner and rehearsal spaces which may never be presented overtly to the spectator, but the practitioner brings this knowledge to the performance. This inside knowledge becomes a component of the meaning co-constructed between the practitioner and the audience member. Moreover, while the text is largely presented in a linear manner, other information is “perceived simultaneously” (1999, p. 35). McAuley presents her taxonomy as a way to identify these functions distinctly, but encourages an analysis which appreciates the simultaneous weaving of these functions in the immediacy of the performance. As such, she offers a visual representation of the interaction of her spatial functions, as shown in Figure 2-8.

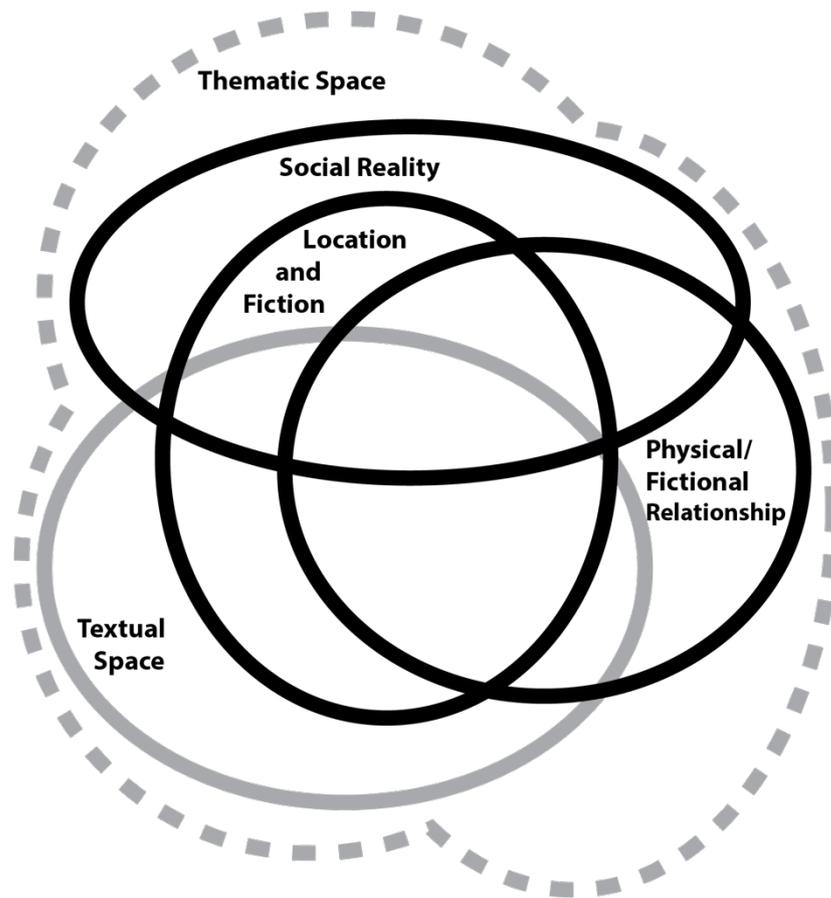


Figure 2-8. *The spatial functions of McAuley's taxonomy in relation to one another (2010, p. 34).*

McAuley's painstaking analysis of the multiple spatial functions in theatre topography provides a meaningful framework for identifying theatre spaces in a more finessed manner than the oppositional model, or by simply referring to "narrative space" without considering the various functions of space in narration. Her assertion that these spatial functions are *interrelated* and *simultaneously relevant* is an important consideration for the analysis of theatre events. It is this taxonomy that will be the source of labels and descriptions of observations in the current study.

2.2.7 *The SLIP spatial framework*

McAuley's taxonomy draws from advancements in discussions related to theatre topography over time—some of which are rooted in Lefebvrian thinking. This influence is not obvious in the taxonomy listed in Figure 2-7, nor in the corresponding figure in Figure 2-8. As Lefebvre's spatial triad is prominent in the discussion of deaf geographies below (Section 2.3), I pause here to make more obvious the connection between the

spaces identified in McAuley's taxonomy and Lefebvrian thinking about the production of space in the theatre. Lefebvre mentions theatre briefly, in a discussion about mirror-type spaces and a 'theory of doubles':

It would have to be extended, for one thing, to take in theatrical space, with its interplay between fictitious and real counterparts and its interaction between gazes and mirages in which actor, audience, 'characters', text, and author all come together but never become one. By means of such theatrical interplay bodies are able to pass from a 'real', immediately experienced space (the pit, the stage) to a perceived space—a third space which is no longer either scenic or public. At once fictitious and real, this third space is classical theatrical space.

To the question of whether such a space is a representation of space or a representational space, the answer must be neither—and both. Theatrical space certainly implies a *representation of space*—scenic space—corresponding to a particular *conception* of space (that of the classical drama, say—or the Elizabethan, or the Italian). The *representational space*, mediated yet directly experienced, which infuses the work and the moment, is established as such through the dramatic action itself (1991, p. 188).

Morash and Richards (2017) argue that Lefebvre's spatial triad helps to problematize the complexity of the theatre—where production of space happens between actor and audience, and over time. In these ways, theatre events are part of a panoply of interacting spaces, radiating outwardly to include the local city centre, the broader community, society, and beyond.

There is at least one major difference between the production of space in the theatre and that which occurs in the wider society: spatial production in the theatre must take place at an accelerated pace, with an intensity and focus that exceeds the rhythms of spatial production in the everyday world. Theatrical events feature highly prescribed spaces that are co-created among actors and spectators, where spatial production must happen rapidly. These *condensational events* include a porous boundary where there exists a “two-way flow” between the fictional world of the performance and the spectator world

of the audience. Intensity is a “defining quality” of these events, serving as the fuel necessary in theatre’s distillation process (Morash & Richards, 2017, p. 8).

Watkins (2005) provides insight into the relationship between representational space (*l’espace vécu*) and the other two spaces. In a theatre event, *l’espace perçu* and *l’espace conçu* form a *performance framework* that is co-constructed during the development and rehearsal process between the practitioners of the production (actors, directors, stage managers, etc.). This performance framework is the *insider knowledge* described by McAuley (see Section 2.2.6), serving to “aid the orientation of the lived experience of the ongoing performance itself, the *l’espace vécu* (spaces of representation)” (Watkins, 2005, p. 212). The way that the theatre’s spaces are conceived and the way that the actors and spectators behave in the spaces come together to guide the participants through the performance. The experience of the performance itself (for actors, audience, and interpreters) is *l’espace vécu* and the performance framework is a reference point for the experience. The two elements of the performance framework are constantly colliding with the *vécu* experience of the production—the framework serves both as an enabling force and an inhibiting force, designed to keep the experience on track for everyone involved.

Like Lefebvre (1991) and Morash & Richards (2017), Watkins (2005) recognizes the importance of time in spatial production in the theatre. One of the spatial practices of theatre practitioners (e.g., actors, directors, crew members) is to work together in a theatre space in order to develop the performance framework over time. Creating the framework is part *of* the framework.

Mapping McAuley’s taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre onto Lefebvre’s spatial triad helps to make more obvious the relationship between the two. Offered here as the *SLIP Spatial Framework*, Figure 2-9 seeks to capture this relationship, borrowing from the discussion in this section.

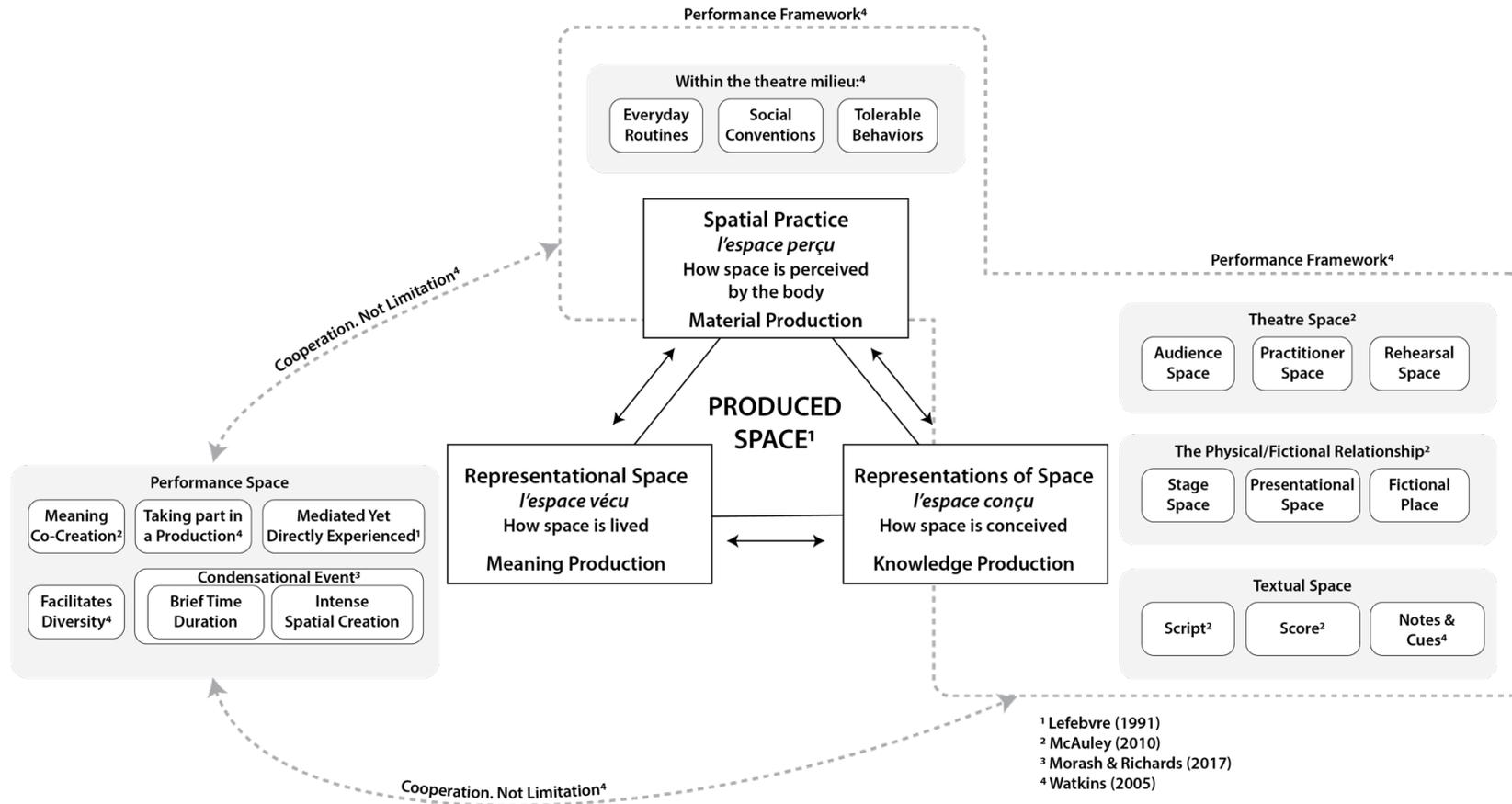


Figure 2-9. The SLIP Spatial Framework.

The descriptions of theatre spaces explored in this section help to illuminate the complexity of the ways in which physical spaces help to support the co-creation of fictional space among theatre performers and spectators. Multiple functions of theatre spaces come together to create meanings that are unique to each individual performance, and which are the by-product of the physical and metaphysical experiences of the specific performers and spectators present at the performance. Theatre producers take great pains to regulate this recipe of theatre spaces for the greatest amount of predictability. The addition of sign language interpreters to a theatre event is (almost always) a fly in this ointment. Often present at just one or two performances of an entire run of a production, the interpreters are an oddity: an often-un-welcomed afterthought. During one conversation in my own theatre interpreting practice, a producer chafed at my elaborate explanation of my process, and the complexity of the work of theatre interpreters. “I don’t care about all of that”, he said. “To me, ordering an interpreter is like ordering toilet paper or filling up the Coke in the vending machines.”

When interpreters are a separate function from the rest of the theatre production—and are physically located outside of the fictional space—it raises questions about the ways in which McAuley’s spatial functions of theatre apply to interpreted theatre events. If actors and spectators work together to form the fictional space, where are the interpreters—and where are the deaf people? If the interpreters do not work in concert with the performers to develop the fictional space, are they apt to facilitate the same fictional space as is crafted for hearing spectators? Is the deaf spectator creating fictional space along with the hearing spectators and the performers? Or, are the deaf spectators creating the fictional space with the interpreters? If the interpreters are located outside the mimic space, and are not part of the designed space, how can they effectively lend to the creation of the fictional space?

In the sections which follow, I will turn to the questions of how concepts of human geography have been applied in deaf studies (Section 2.3), and how concepts from deaf space have been applied to the interpreting process (Section 2.4). Section 2.5 will complete the literature review, with a proposed conceptual framework for the current study, derived from a synthesis of concepts from the previous sections.

2.3 Deaf spaces and deaf geographies

Just ran away. I had to run away.

My parents can hear, but I can't,
and they blame me for that.

I didn't do anything.

I can't speak their language, and they can't speak mine.

I need a place ... to hide ... to feel safe.

Can you help me find a place? Can you? (*Small laugh.*)

Of course you can't.

—Hubbell, *Runaways* (Swados, 1980, p. 11)

Recent exploration of the ways in which places and “space” are experienced and produced by deaf people have resulted in descriptions of *deaf space*, *DeafSpace*, and *deaf geographies*. While the concepts of human geography that had been previously developed through the traditions of Foucault, Lefebvre, and others, have been applied to minority communities and in the area of *disability studies*, none of these adequately address the unique condition and experiences of deaf bodies and deaf people in deaf communities. Residing within the confluence of human geography and deaf studies, the attempts to observe and describe deaf space that will be described herein are informed by the view through two lenses: an architecturally-inspired description articulated by H. Dirksen Bauman (associated with *DeafSpace*), and the Lefebvrian constructs introduced by Michael Gulliver (associated with *deaf geographies* and *DEAF space*). While each lens has its own focus, they each provide important contributions to the current study.

2.3.1 *The body, being, and knowing*

The distinctions between the *medical view*, the *cultural model*, and the *social disability model* notwithstanding (see Section 1.3.1), a feature they share is the centrality of the *body* and its relationship with knowledge and identity (Young & Temple, 2014). Before we give meaning to a space through the social conception of it, there is the experience of the space based on our senses as an individual. There is growing recognition that *individual corporeal differences* demand more consideration of the body in the study of human geography (O'Brien, 2019).

Bahan (2008) centers deaf ontology in a *visual sensory orientation*. The sense of hearing loses its primacy as a quality that defines deaf people as lacking something. Instead, Bahan explores ways in which the visual nature of deaf experiences forms the basis of a *deaf way of being*. Inherent in the experience of not-hearing is the set of accumulated experiences over time of living in a hearing society as a not-hearing person (Young & Temple, 2014). This deaf ontology “pushes the boundaries of ordinary eyes” with effects seen in language, culture, and the arts and literature of deaf peoples (Bahan, 2008, p. 96). While some hearing people may be considered enculturated in the deaf world, the experience of not-hearing is inextricable from a deaf ontology (Young & Temple, 2014).

Borrowing from Vygotskyian traditions, Skyer (2020) argues that deafness is a *biosocial* condition, wherein the inherent biology of a deaf person co-exists with (and depends on) their social experience (the *biosocial proposition*). The territory of deaf cognition is bound to the available sensory landscape (as is that of hearing people), but the condition of the cognitive ground is fertile (the *sensory delimitation-and-consciousness proposition*). Deaf epistemology diverges from nondeaf epistemology precisely because deaf ontology differs from nondeaf ontology.

DeafSpace researcher Robert Sirvage (2015) offers a sliver of insight into the unique ways that he, as a deaf child, experienced space differently than the hearing people in his home. On the farm where he was raised, Sirvage could observe a small lane approaching his house as he watched through a window from the dining room table. There was a grove of trees blocking the approach to the dwelling. A telephone wire hung above the trees, and it was frequented by a flock of birds. Oftentimes, just prior to the arrival of a car at the house, Sirvage’s mother (who was hearing) would announce the upcoming visitor—almost as some sort of psychic prediction. In truth, Sirvage’s mother could hear the car’s approach as it turned onto the gravel stone of the driveway. By the age of seven years, Sirvage also had acquired the ability to “predict” the arrival of visitors. The flock of birds inhabiting the telephone wire in front of the home would fly off the wire as cars approached on the lane, and this became Sirvage’s clue to activity on the approach to the home. This was knowledge that Sirvage had developed innately at a young age, without any overt instruction. One characteristic of the embodied experience of our environment is *dorsality*: the awareness of space and activities behind the body.

Sirvage notes that hearing and deaf people have a roughly 180-degree visual field in which to ascertain knowledge about their environment, and that other senses also help build local epistemology (see Figure 2-10). Hearing people ascertain information from a 360-degree auditory field that is not available to deaf people (generally), and so deaf people adapt other strategies for collecting information about space and place. These strategies may be conscious or unconscious. It is not that deaf people lack knowledge of things outside of their visual frame of reference; rather, they have other means by which to ascertain this knowledge. Sirvage suggests that this oft-neglected discussion of dorsality of deaf people offers an important contribution for considering a *deaf epistemology* (2015).

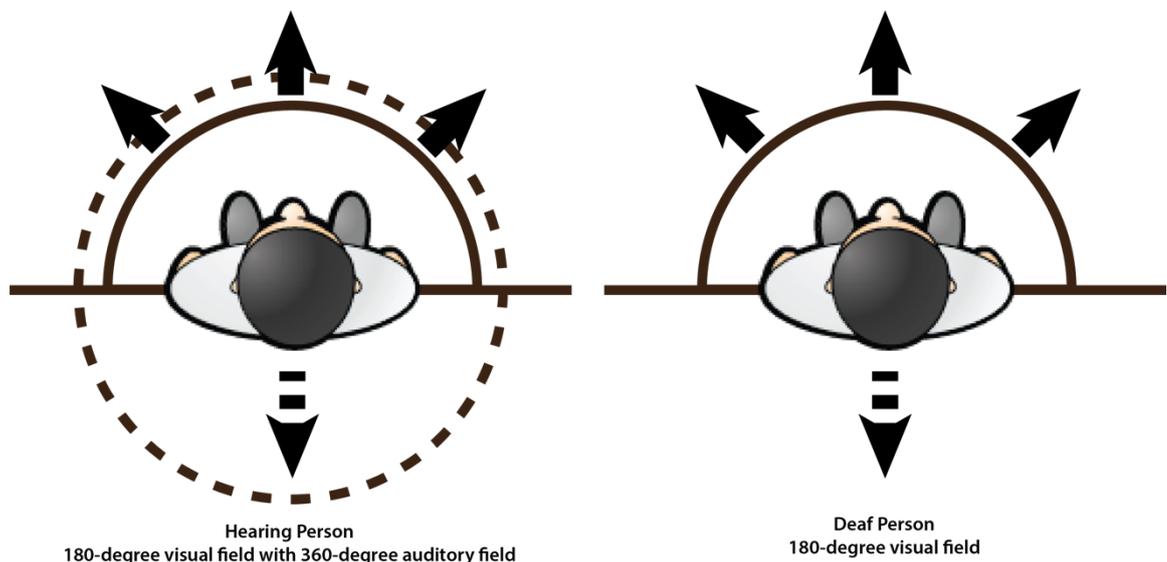


Figure 2-10. The acquisition of dorsal information by hearing people (left) and deaf people (right). Adapted from Sirvage (2015).

In popular parlance, there is a temptation to claim that deaf people “see” better than hearing people (Sirvage, 2015). While this question has not been explored exhaustively, there is some evidence to suggest that the lack of an auditory channel lends to some differences in the ways that deaf people “see”. An important distinction should be made between *seeing* (the manner in which visual information is obtained and transmitted by the organs involved in sight); *perception* (the way in which the brain interprets the input from the visual organs); and, *attention* (the processes through which we choose what visual information on which to focus) (Dye, 2014). Dye (2014) summarizes research of both the visual perception and attention of deaf people. Multiple studies have shown that there are no fundamental differences in the eyes and optic nerves of deaf people, and that

deaf people generally perceive visual stimuli in ways akin to their hearing counterparts. What has been found to differ is the ways in which deaf people attend to the visual field presented to them. Specifically, deaf people demonstrate heightened abilities in peripheral vision and motion processing. These changes are associated with an adaptation by deaf people in areas of the brain associated with an auditory processing of dorsal information in hearing people—the “dorsal visual pathway” which serves to indicate location and motion. Deaf brains are adapting ecologically in response to the sensory orientation of deaf people (Dye, 2014; Stoll & Dye, 2019).

The visual orientation of deaf people is also evident in the nature of sign language, which utilizes physical movement and is perceived by the eyes. While spoken languages employ features of physics (tongues move, creating sound waves which trigger movement of the tympanic membrane in the ear, which transmits to bone, and eventually a neurologic signal), languages which are signed invoke movement and space overtly. Space and movement are essential to the production of signs, and is inclusive in the grammar and meaning of utterances in signed languages. Signed languages are “inherently geographical” (Dye, 2014, p. 206) and the spaces created by people using signed languages “produce different types of spaces” (Fekete, 2017). One construct that is not unique to signed languages, but which signed languages capitalize on, is *constructed action*, wherein the space in front of the signer is utilized to create a fictional space for the purpose of depicting actual events. Similarly, *constructed dialogue* depicts discourse between people not present (or between the signer and a person not present). In these ways, signed languages blend *actual space* with *fictional space* (Fekete, 2017). Blending real and constructed spaces is also a feature of the theatre experience, as discussed in Section 2.2.

2.3.2 The architecture of DeafSpace

Observations from Sirvage (discussed in Section 2.3.1) lend to a socio-architectural discussion of *DeafSpace*, which emphasizes the practical relationship between deaf *embodiment* and *physical place*. In his synthesis of observations from emerging DeafSpace research at Gallaudet University, Hansel Bauman situates DeafSpace in the field of architecture. Manifested as specific seating arrangements in rooms, as centralized and converging gathering spaces, and as wide, unobstructed walkways, these features lend to “architecture as the third person” (Bahan and Bauman, 2006 as referenced in

Bauman, 2014). DeafSpace is described as an *architectural pattern language* comprised of basic *design elements* and a *syntax*, which allows deaf people to co-construct DeafSpaces that reflect deaf sensibilities and identity (M. Gulliver & Kitzel, 2016). DeafSpace is “broadly defined in terms of daily acts of cultural customization focused toward building connection—visual, spatial, social, and symbolic” (Bauman, 2014, p. 377)

Noting that “the desire to take possession of space is deeply embedded in deaf culture” (Bauman, 2014, p. 375), Bauman reminds the reader of the long-held value of places and space in deaf society. Advocating for a return to a study of the primitive relationship between the self, others, and our environment, Bauman begins his argument by noting the adaptive abilities of deaf people when faced with architecture that is functionally undesirable or inhibiting to their linguistic and cultural lives. In doing so, deaf people are creating a form of *vernacular architecture*—a purpose-driven space created by its inhabitants (not professional architects) to reflect the group’s culture and sensibilities (Bauman, 2014, p. 396). This functional relationship between DeafSpace and its inhabitants exemplifies vernacular architecture. Deaf spaces stand out among vernacular architectures for “connecting its prime motivation—deaf sensibilities—to the *people who inhabit all places, not one particular place*” (Bauman, 2014, p. 396).

The adaptive abilities of deaf people for constructing DeafSpace have been collectively honed over time due to a persistent need to adjust their environment to their two primary means of spatial awareness and orientation: *vision* and *touch*. These adaptive acts become interwoven into the deaf experience, and express deaf culture. Rather than contributing to a form of *universal design*, aspects of DeafSpace “seek to create particular sociospatial situations that more sensitively connect individuals to others and to their surroundings in a meaningful way *regardless of where they are*” (Bauman, 2014, p. 379). This is not unlike the socio-spatial situations created by regular deaf pub nights, and “deaf sections” at interpreted theatre events.

Bauman reports on the synthesized findings from multiple environmental-behaviour and architectural-design projects conducted over several years at Gallaudet University. Researchers identified more than 150 deaf-architectural patterns, categorized “according to their distinct relationship between deaf experiences and architecture”. These categories include: *space and proximity*; *sensory reach*; *light and colour*; and *acoustics*.

Crossing-cutting themes found in all categories included: *connection*; *community building*; *visual language*; and, the *promotion of personal safety and well-being* (Bauman, 2014, p. 382).

Pointing to the “formative role space plays in deaf culture and individual experiences” and the “ingrained embodied spatial awareness” of the deaf experience (Bauman, 2014, p. 382), Bauman uses cultural archetypes to describe a deaf-architectural pattern language in terms of its *linguistic*, *cognitive*, and *cultural* sensibilities. Noting that “sign language is a visual, spatial, and kinetic mode of communication that is architectural” (Bauman, 2014, p. 382), Bauman highlights the primacy of proxemics in the linguistic sensibilities of DeafSpace. The *conversation circle* is a common way in which deaf groups re-configure space to allow for sustained and clear eye contact for all involved.

Bauman describes a number of architectural implications for visual language that seem in conflict with typical interpreted theatre performances. The high-contrast approach to dressing and lighting theatre interpreters conflicts with the diffuse, layered lighting that supports sustained viewing of visual language. Multiplying this effect is the significant distance between each deaf audience member and the interpreters, which can lead to “a loss of concentration and even physical exhaustion” (Bauman, 2014, p. 384). Robert Sirvage also illuminates the importance of the *sight line*—the path from viewer, through the person being viewed, and to the background—as an influential factor in the degree of visual acuity of a DeafSpace setting. Using a classroom as an example, Sirvage notes that the colour of paint on the wall behind the instructor requires contrast for optimal fidelity of sign language. Because the angle of sight for the student sitting in the front of the room is more severe than for those sitting at the back of the room, the amount of background which comes into play for the deaf students varies by row (Sirvage, 2015).

The *cognitive sensibilities* of DeafSpace prioritize personal safety and well-being. These are achieved through innovations in way-finding and spatial awareness. Lacking dorsality through auditory means, deaf people employ visual and tactical strategies to provide a multi-sensory approach to a 360-degree sensory field (Sirvage, 2015). Soft intersections, visual cues for way-finding, reflective and translucent surfaces, and external cues to the internal architecture of space all lend to improved “building legibility” (Sirvage, 2015). These concepts are at odds with traditional theatre architecture, which prioritizes division of space; complete visual control; and a controlled

reveal of sub-spaces. (Audience members are held outside until allowed into the lobby, after which they wait to be admitted into the prescribed seating area.)

DeafSpaces reflect deaf “collectivist” *cultural sensibilities*—emphasizing shared information and resources, and distinguishing insiders from outsiders. The fundamentals of the conversation circle—eye-to-eye contact and care for the well-being of others—are reflected throughout DeafSpace. The cultural sensibility for care of the well-being of others is supported by architecture which allows participants to care for their own well-being, and to alert others of potential hazards, such as avoiding collisions with people and objects while engaging in signed conversations and walking (Bauman, 2014, pp. 387–389).

The campus of Gallaudet University, in Washington, D.C., serves as an active laboratory for the DeafSpace project Bauman, Sirvage, and their research teams reference in their research. The *deaf pattern language* they have identified informs multiple *themes* found in the practical application of DeafSpace on the Gallaudet campus. These applications of DeafSpace architecture fall into the four *categories* identified by the team, and summarized in Figure 2-11. The examples shown here are just a handful of the 150 *architectural patterns* identified by Bauman, et al (Bauman, 2014; Kolson Hurley, 2016; Sirvage, 2015).

Deaf Pattern Language Sensibilities			
	Themes	Categories	Implementation Examples
			Colors of suitable contrast
			Uninhibited sight lines
	Connection	Space & Proximity	Wide walk-ways
Linguistic	Community Building	Sensory Reach	Ramps (not stairs)
Cognitive	Visual Language	Light & Color	Transparency/Translucence of inner and outer walls
Cultural	Personal Safety & Well-Being	Acoustics	Contrast-reducing lighting
			The conversation circle

Figure 2-11. DeafSpace architectural design summary. Adapted from (H. Bauman, 2014; Kolson Hurley, 2016; Sirvage, 2015).

While not part of the DeafSpace project, Mather and Clark (2013; 2012) explore the connection between manifestations of space in classrooms and the cognitive effort of deaf students. Instruction in *hearing* classrooms is predicated on *dual input access* provided simultaneously in *two channels*: one visual and one audio. Students look at visual materials (e.g., projected images, white boards, books) at the same time that they listen to auditory information (e.g., teacher lectures; audio recordings; other students). Studies of hearing students demonstrate a negative impact on working memory and learning achievement when the *dual input access* originates from *two visual channels*. Examples include: the student views each visual source separately; and, the students views two visual sources at the same time.⁹ Mather and Clark (2013; 2012) consider the implications of this *split visual attention* on the cognitive load of deaf children, and provide strategies to optimize the placement of instructors, teaching materials, and students within a visual sweet-spot. *Dual-visual access* is achieved when the instructor

⁹ The conditions described here are not unlike conditions that deaf people are expected to endure regularly. The first mimics the experience of looking back and forth between an interpreter and a hearing person; the second mimics the experience of watching captions or subtitles superimposed onto a television or film.

and teaching props are located in the same field of vision, while considering the line-of-sight from each student to the teacher (see Figure 2-12).

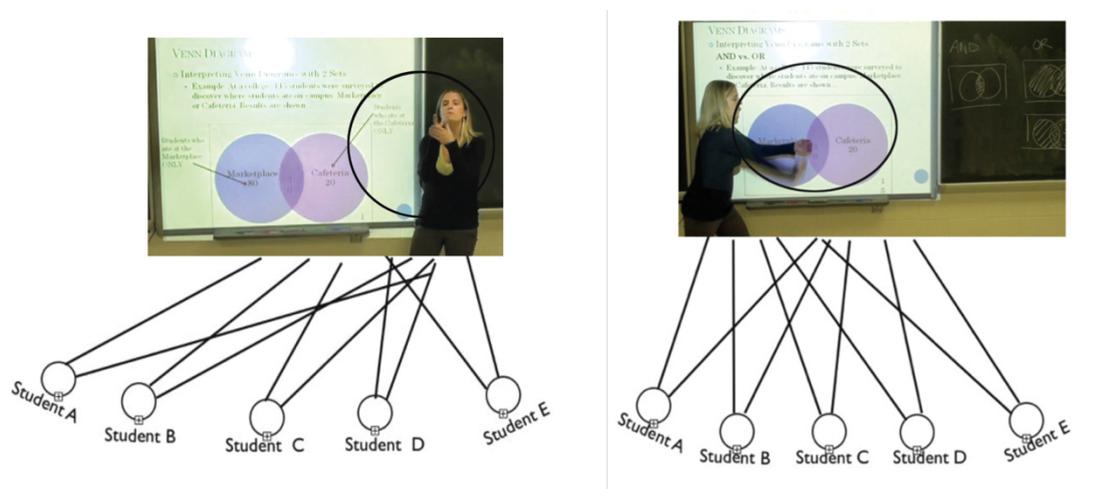


Figure 2-12. Instructional messaging and visual material which are not integrated (left), and which are integrated (right) (Mather & Clark, 2012).

Teachers can integrate sign language with the visual material to further enhance the benefits. While these strategies are applied to teachers who communicate directly with students in sign language, Mather (2013) acknowledges the suitability for scrutiny of the contributions of interpreters to the split attention condition in classrooms with deaf children.

Bauman's findings speak to the ways in which architectural and physical design lend to the creation of material space by deaf people—*DeafSpace*. The collection of categories, themes, and deaf pattern language sensibilities identified within the *DeafSpace* framework (see Figure 2-11) contribute a valuable set of concepts from which to consider the physical design of an interpreted performance. Whether this is helpful as an evaluative tool is not the point of the present study; instead, *DeafSpace* design concepts help to illuminate underlying connections within the physical manifestations of the SLIP spaces described by participants in the study.

2.3.3 Theorizing deaf geography

Separate from the architecturally rooted approach to *DeafSpace*, is a *socially grounded* description of *deaf spaces* and *deaf geographies*. Gulliver (2009) proposed a new model

for considering deaf spaces, by revisiting the interpretation of Lefebvre’s *spaces of resistance* in disability studies and disability geography—which emphasizes a resistance to *marginalization* from a hegemonic center. Incumbent to the resolution to the problem of marginalization is the fading-away of spaces specifically meant *for* deaf people, as they become fully assimilated into society. Gulliver notes that dissolving these deaf-specific spaces would remove deaf people from visually-oriented spaces and “disperse them” among hearing people (2009, p. 42). This result is truly more alienating. Gulliver argues that Lefebvre would say that deaf people are resisting *alienation* and that deaf spaces are a marker of a desire for a coming together: of “us with us” (1997).

The ways in which deaf people perceive and produce spaces are centred in deaf ontologies and a *visual sensory orientation*. The value judgments that are associated with marginal spaces are negated by Gulliver’s argument. Gone is the notion of tension between spaces in the centre of society and those on the margins (where marginal spaces must eventually be subsumed by the dominant space). Instead, Gulliver sees deaf spaces as equally valid to hearing spaces, but simply “built around possibilities as they are experienced within a visually-oriented body” (2006, p. 3). Gulliver and Kitzel (M. Gulliver & Kitzel, 2016) describe four permutations of deaf spaces based on size and temporal duration, summarized in Figure 2-13.

		DURATION	
		Temporary	Permanent
SIZE	Small	Two deaf people signing on a street	A deaf household
	Large	A regularly scheduled deaf night out event at a pub	A deaf university

Figure 2-13. Permutations of deaf spaces, based on Gulliver & Kitzel (2016).

A viable objective of this type of deaf space is to help hearing people recognise realities that they have not yet considered (M. Gulliver, 2006). In their review of international deaf encounters, Kusters and Friedner note the casual observation that “deaf people from around the world know no borders” (2015, p. ix). Deaf space does not seek to achieve survival by contesting hearing space, and yet deaf space *is* contestatory because

...it flips the understanding that the hearing world is all that there is on its head and then demands that the hearing world justify why it has gone to such pains to ignore that possibility for so long (Gulliver, 2006, p. 4).

Gulliver applies the Lefebvrian spatial triad in a *totalité-first* way, centering the quest to become a total person in his exploration of deaf spaces.

First, Gulliver (2009) conducts a history of deaf spaces in 18th and 19th century France, revealing four phases of deaf spaces influenced by the confluence of historic change and the view held by society of the idea of *deaf veçu*. Gulliver illuminates the connections between this changing view of deaf *vécu* and politics, economics, and other societal influences during each point in time. *Emergent* deaf spaces are the “earliest forms of visually authored realities” (2009, p. 90). They are born out of the quest of deaf people for *totalité* (*veçu*)—an attempt to resolve friction between a world crafted for hearing people (*conçu*) and a natural body that is visually-oriented (*perçu*).

Autonomous deaf spaces feature reduced governance from outside—lending to an expansion of deaf-authored constructions of spaces (*conçu*) rooted in a deaf *perçu*. These are emergent spaces “blossoming toward maturity” (Gulliver, 2009, p. ii).

Gulliver complicates the notion of deaf hegemony with his analysis of *located* deaf spaces. Marked by a re-assertion of deaf autonomy, these deaf spaces are located in relationship to the hearing world. But, as there is not one, unifying deaf experience, conceptions of located spaces take more than one form. Gulliver describes located deaf spaces that proposit to *integrate* deaf people into hearing spaces, contrasting them with located deaf spaces meant to *isolate* deaf people from hearing spaces.

Finally, an account of the 1900 Congress of educators of deaf students in France serves as an example of *deaf space disabled*. There, a deaf space—a validating space, co-located with a hearing space—was subverted by hearing people and re-authored as a space of disability. With his discussion of co-located deaf spaces, Gulliver highlights the complex forces influencing deaf spaces from within and without: “deaf space is produced by different DEAF people, in different forms, in different contexts, ‘located’ within a wider world” (2009, p. 198).

As Gulliver constructs his history of deaf space in Paris, he applies a *totalité-centered analysis* based in Lefebvre's *spatial triad*, offering the first formalized model for describing deaf space. He and others have since applied similar analysis in other deaf spaces. Each new application expands our understanding of deaf spaces, while lending to the discussion of deaf space theory and research methods.

Kusters (2011) applies Lefebvre's spatial trialectics to deaf spaces within a concentrated population of deaf people mixed with hearing signers in Adamorobe, Ghana. The study reveals deaf people to be a part of the overall spatial production of the community—integrated through spatial constructions and practices—while also creating deaf spaces differently from hearing people. Differences between deaf spaces and hearing spaces—or within deaf spaces—are acknowledged and not framed as contesting hearing spaces or other types of deaf people. Deaf people “are integrated, and not marginal but liminal, thus normal and abnormal at the same time, with a right to develop (Kusters, 2011, p. 300). This important finding adds nuance to the inclusion-isolation binary.

Kusters (2016, 2017) explores this *right to develop* further with an analysis of deaf space production on transit trains in Mumbai, India. The trains include cars designated for persons with disabilities—HC, or *handicapped compartments*—which have become a staging ground for daily deaf gatherings. Deaf riders attempt to claim territory over space within the cars, resisting official regulations (at times) as they negotiate for access to space among people with other disabilities. This is *autogestion*, a Lefebvrian concept describing “how urban inhabitants claim their ‘right to the city’ by appropriating (partial) control over urban space” (Kusters, 2016, p. 5). It is a highly contentious process among the multiple competing hierarchies in the train cars. Kusters describes *overlapping hierarchies* (when deaf people work in concert with other disabled people) and *competing hierarchies* (when deaf people work to advance the interests of deaf people). The competing hierarchies developed by the disabled riders both resist and add to official regulations. Autogestion wrestles power from established hierarchies within the cars; but, new power struggles emerge within the deaf spaces. This analysis adds to our consideration of multiple interacting spaces (e.g., a seating sections in a theatre), and the ways in which deaf people assert territorial claim among competing hierarchies within a material environment.

In separate studies, O'Brien (2019) and Gulliver (2017) consider deaf spaces in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Employing walking interviews, O'Brien documents ways in which deaf academics navigate the material spaces of the university environment, and their production of deaf spaces within the workplace. Teasing apart the intertwined strands of Lefebvre's spatial trialectic, O'Brien describes the perceived (*perçu*) and conceived (*conçu*) spaces of the university, and the attempts to subvert these powers through deaf spatial production (*veçu*). The deaf academics perceive the institution to be largely inhospitable and unresponsive—part of a “prevailing background of audism” (O'Brien, 2019, p. 10). Teaching and office spaces are not conducive to their work, and concerns raised about safety go unanswered. While there is an expectation of collegiality, the conception of the institution's spaces present barriers to interaction between deaf and hearing colleagues. Deaf academics responded to this collision of their *perçu* with the *conçu* of the institution through small efforts to impose a *deaf conçu* (e.g., office furniture configurations that maximize visual reach; suitable location for recording sign language video documents). The cumulative effect of these small changes is to change the nature of the working environment for the deaf academics to something that is *different* from the nature of the overall environment, if not *contesting* the overall environment:

... each small act of creativity or subversion of the “rules” or customs of the HEI created a little pocket of lived deaf space, some temporary, others more permanent” (O'Brien, 2019, p. 14).

O'Brien notes that some deaf academics also create deaf space by resisting the pressures within HEIs to wear several hats within the institution (e.g., teacher, committee members, event attendee)—instead creating a different hierarchy in which they prioritize activities that advance their students and research participants. Gulliver (2017) also considers the relationship between nested deaf academic spaces and the broader institution, describing an attempt to reach a *vécu* moment in a deaf space classroom setting within the Centre for Deaf Studies (CDS) at the University of Bristol (UoB). The CDS was a long-standing space within the university where the hearing-centred *perçu* of the institution had shifted locally toward a deaf *perçu* and *conçu*: the centre had become a recognized deaf space. There were opportunities for *vécu* moments within the centre, but outside they were fleeting. Over time, *conçu* elements of the university were forced onto the deaf space, imposing restrictions on the members of the deaf academic centre. Gulliver describes a mixed classroom of deaf and hearing students and teachers: one deaf teacher and one

hearing teacher (Gulliver, himself). Interpreters were present during class, due to the varied skill levels of sign language among hearing students, but university regulations dictate that Gulliver must teach in spoken English (instead of joining his deaf colleague in using sign language).

As the hearing and deaf lecturers took turns lecturing in class, they produced different spaces. Gulliver's is produced and structured in a manner consistent with the perceptions of the hearing spaces of the academe; the deaf instructor's space is consistent with deaf ways of learning. Differences in the approaches are more than linguistic, they include views about use of out-of-class time; the tensions between individual and collectivist achievement; and the delivery of course content. The approach intermittently forces hearing institutional norms into the classroom, leading to generalized dissatisfaction among those in the class. After making adjustments to adopt a more *deaf way* of learning, and freeing-up the use of sign language in the room from the restrictions of the outside institution, the course is pulled back on track. Effectively, the class was saved by *dialling-up the deaf space* and resisting the imposed hierarchy.

Gulliver assesses the lifeline of this *vécu* moment. When seen from the view of the people within the class, the change is a bursting-forth from the confines of the imposed *conçu*, re-imagined and re-appropriated with deaf DNA. But at the end of the term, the *vécu* moment of deaf space inside the classroom cannot be stuffed into the normative confines of the institutional marking system. Like a vapour, it's gone. Can it have any impact on deaf lives if the institution is unaware of it? Or, is it one of the many deaf spaces created to endure hearing spaces ... and which benefit hearing spaces ... while going unnoticed by the institution?

With each analysis above, the researchers pick at the fabric of spatial production. As they tug to inspect an individual strand, they find themselves facing a knot. Lefebvre's *perçu*, *conçu*, and *vécu* "interact and compete in a never resolved triadic dialectic" (O'Brien, 2019, p. 17). Researchers applying Bauman's *DeafSpace pattern language* of architectural features in material deaf spaces experience a similar phenomenon: the examination of one feature (e.g., background colour) may reveal a relationship with another (e.g., sight line) (see Section 2.3.2). Resolving this dialectic between Lefebvre's three strands is not the aim: "it is in that constant motion of spatial play that the importance rests" (M. Gulliver, 2017, p. 100).

Within this roiling spatial interplay, deaf space researchers describe phenomena that can inform sign language interpreter research, including the present study: deaf spaces in relationship with outside forces of power; the duration of deaf spaces over time; deaf spaces located within (and disabled by) hearing spaces; ways in which deaf spaces interact, overlap, and compete with hearing spaces (and other deaf spaces); and, the processes by which deaf people claim territory over a space.

2.4 Sign language interpreters and “spaces”

Interpreters’ impact upon the substance and the progression of a conversation is accomplished merely by their presence (Wadensjö, 1998).

The present section turns to the question of sign language interpreters, and the exploration of “space” in their work. Lefebvre’s triad describes space as socially constructed from components of multiple types of space. Deaf geography applies this multiple-space view, informed by the visual sensory orientation of deaf people. Theatre topography borrows from Lefebvre’s spatial triad, describing multiple types of spaces that contribute to the theatre experience. *Interpreter space* does not exist as an evolved theory, but there has been exploration into the “spaces”—physical and otherwise—co-created and co-inhabited by interpreters and others.

2.4.1 *Sign language interpreters in the contact zone*

In their description of deaf geographies, Gulliver and Kitzel (2016) describe *gatekeepers* and *intermediaries*, who reside in the in-between spaces of hearing and deaf spaces. Interpreters may be one such type of intermediary residing in a *contact zone* between deaf space and other spaces. As detailed in Section 2.1.4, Pratt described contact zones as:

... social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power (Pratt, 1991, p. 34).

The bi-cultural competency called for by Cokely (1984) requires sign language interpreters to develop skills creating social spaces in both language communities (English and BSL, for example). The social creation of space requires participants to

adhere to a set of learned behaviours (Lefebvre, 1991). The important link between space and social identity (Mathews, 2006) suggests that interpreters who are bi-culturally competent must be aware of the ways in which both communities reflect their culture through specific practices of spatial production.

When the sign language interpreter is in mid-effort, is she residing in a deaf/hard of hearing community, while also reaching through to the hearing community? Is she residing in the hearing community, but reaching through to the deaf community? Is there a form of alternating status, where the interpreter alternately resides in one space, and yet reaches back to the other?

Perhaps the unique bi-lingual status and role of the interpreter suggests that she resides in a third metaphorical space, comprised of norms, behaviours, and spatial practices from both spaces, but which are calibrated outwardly to the unique nature of the given interpreting setting: a hybrid, described by Bienvenu (1987) as a *third culture*. In Lefebvre's (1991) view of the spatial triad, the sensory body is elemental to the perception and creation of space. Deaf people have a specific perception of space, based on their sensory experience (Gulliver, 2009). Interpreters strive to be knowledgeable and competent in the cultural behaviours of both hearing and deaf people, including the social creation of space in each community. This may be a third, hybrid space—interpreter space.

There is no universal application for the concept of *space* to sign language interpreting, but there have been descriptions of different types of interpreter spaces. These have included cognitive spaces, mental space, physical spaces, psychological spaces, and spaces of role enactment. Section 2.4.2 will discuss the features of these conceptualizations of interpreter “space”.

2.4.2 Describing interpreter spaces

Lacking a body of literature defining *interpreter space* in terms of human geography, this section presents select studies which either suggest there is a type of *interpreter space* or that attempt to apply deaf space concepts to sign language interpreting.

Both Roy (2002) and Wilcox and Shaffer (2005) assert that conduit-type thinking persists as an underground influence in interpreting models, even though researchers outwardly declared a movement away from the conduit model. Wilcox and Shaffer (2005) note that interpreting models often focus on the social and cultural behaviours of interpreters, and have left neglected areas of research related to the cognitive process involved in interpreting, as well as foundational discussions about the meaning of communication. Remaining is a lingering and problematic view of communication as conduit-like—where a message is passed from person to person. Wilcox and Shaffer assert that if our collective understanding of communication is founded in conduit-thinking, our models of interpreting “will remain flawed” (2005, p. 33). They call for a cognitive model of interpreting, reflective of three critical factors:

- the nature of language, especially semantics (the nature of linguistic meaning);
- production (how thoughts and meaning are expressed through linguistic messages); and
- comprehension (the process by which we understand what another person means) (Wilcox & Shaffer, 2005, p. 27).

Studies of cognition and interpreters encompass topics beyond the scope of this paper. A sample include the effects of interpretation “direction” on production (Nicodemus & Emmorey, 2013; Wang & Napier, 2015), and cognitive predictors of interpreter competence and performance (Bontempo et al., 2014; Macnamara & Conway, 2015).

Cognition and Interpreter Space—White (2014) declares *Interpreter Space* a “blended mental space” that is evidenced by specific linguistic traces identified in interpretations. It is already understood that sign language users employ blended spaces as part of a strategy to use space in constructed action (discussed previously in Section 2.3.1). Through constructed dialogue and constructed action, signers blend *real space* with *event space*. Real space is the actual, physical space of the signer, while event space is a temporary, fictionalizing, mental space conceived for the purpose of creating depiction. Event space is accompanied by a specific set of linguistic behaviours (e.g., eye gaze, body orientation, facial behaviour, and actions of the signer). When signers create event space,

they fill it with a temporary depiction of an event or a dialogue. Viewers see the signer in real space, dressed as the person she is and in her present location (for example, sitting in a restaurant). But, as she creates event space and fills it with depiction about her father working in a factory, she now embodies an older man standing at a factory line. We see here two, blended spaces—one real, and the other an event-based fiction. This is not unlike the required elements of the theatre event: the relationship between practitioner and spectator. Together, they convene in a space, to create a space. The co-constructed narrative of the theatre is authored by the creative team and performers, but the space takes on meaning through a social process. In both cases, the viewer sees the interpreter (or actor) as a real entity, but also as character that is super-imposed onto the interpreter/actor. When the interpreter signs “I”, the deaf viewer knows the “I” is truly not the interpreter, but it is the author of the message (White, 2014). Other scholars have noted situational demands that call on interpreters to intentionally use the third person to distance themselves from sensitive content/situations (Major & Napier, 2019; Marks, 2012).

White’s (2014) analysis of linguistic features of interpretations suggests that interpreters employ specific linguistic traits which serve as evidence that interpreters operate in blended mental spaces. All of the participating interpreters utilized depiction, including event space, but two characteristics were noteworthy. First, the interpreters created constructed action or dialogue in spaces where they did not exist in the source texts. Second, when they created constructed action or dialogue, the interpreters broke eye gaze rules for the construction of event spaces. In standard sign language depiction, the signer maintains eye gaze within the location of the event space—in essence, the signer doesn’t “break the fourth wall” of the story within the event space. While interpreting, the participants of White’s study routinely shifted eye gaze to the audience during depiction, violating the rules of eye gaze during standard use of depiction.

White also noted that interpreters pause in locations of the interpretation that are different than pauses in the original delivery. This is often accompanied by a specific physical posture—a hand clasp—which the author suspects helps to signal that the interpreter is still engaged, even if paused. This, along with the added constructed action, demonstrates moments when interpreters skew to their own mental space, asserting their own presence through the interpreters’ choices, and strategies. White suggests that the blended mental space of interpreters is a mix of Narrative space (that of the author of the message) and

Interpreter space (that of the interpreter). In these moments when interpreters insert original material or language strategies, White sees a momentary opportunity for the creation of Interpreter Space. These are moments when the blend of Narrative and Interpreter space seems more heavily influenced by Interpreter space.

During other moments, White notices that interpreters sign in first person pronouns that are suitable for the narrator—the original speaker. While the deaf person sees the interpreter in real space as the interpreter, the interpreter is also signing in first person terms. Still the “deaf people are able to have one mental space for the original narrator of the message, another mental space of the interpreter and blend the two mental spaces together” (White, 2014, p. 151). This suggests that blended space is co-constructed, with the interpreter doing something to create the blended space, and also the deaf viewer discerning this technique and participating in the social creation of the blended mental space.

White’s analysis originally suggests that it is particularly when the evidence of these blended spaces develops (i.e., novel constructions of depiction, shift in depiction eye gaze, interpreter-initiated pauses, and first-person pronouns) that Interpreter Space is created. This would mean that Interpreter Space is ephemeral—it comes and goes only during times of blended space. She eventually clarifies, stating that “Interpreter Space is the mental space that allows for the interpreting process to happen” (White, 2014, p. 153). In this way, Interpreter Space isn’t simply an artefact of the contact zone between deaf and hearing people, but it is an *enabling mental space* that includes multiple linguistic features that support the interpreting process.

Interpreter Role Space—Where White (2014) describes interpreter space as a blended mental space comprised of Narrator and Interpreter spaces, Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2014) describe an interpreter *role-space*. This model combines thinking about role from sociology, psycholinguistics and interpreting research. The authors posit that enactment of role by sign language interpreters is not rules-based, but is the result of the convergence of three factors: participant/conversational alignment; presentation of self; and interaction management. Role-space is visualized by plotting the interpreter’s position on three axes to form a three-dimensional graph, as shown in Figure 2-14.

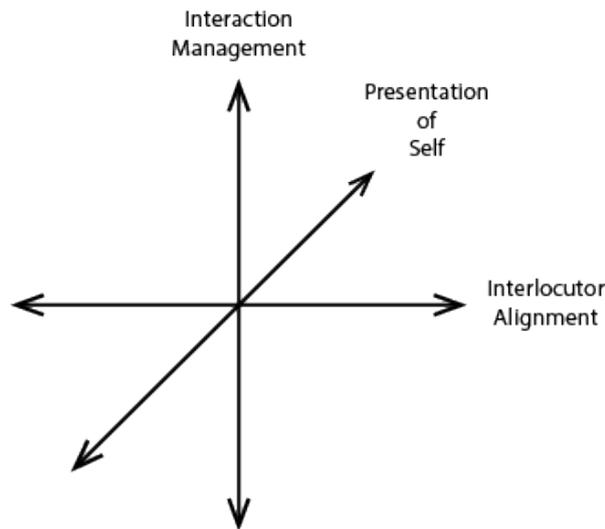


Figure 2-14. Interpreter role-space, charted on three intersecting axes (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014).

Participant/conversational alignment (the x-axis) is an indication of the degree to which the interpreter is *sociolinguistically* and *psycholinguistically* aligned with one interlocutor or the other. Interaction management (the y-axis) plots the degree to which the interpreter overtly regulates the interpreted interaction. Presentation of self (the z-axis) represents the degree to which the interpreter is present and acknowledged as an individual. At any given moment, interpreters exist at a point on all three axes, and the interaction of these points represents the *role-space* occupied by the interpreter. Role-space is described as dynamic and responsive to the fluidity of discourse. Interpreters adjust their location on each axis as needed, dialling it left or right; up or down; and, forward and back (Llewellyn-Jones & Lee, 2014).

The work in role-space by Llewellyn-Jones and Lee is informed by theorists from the field of sociology, particularly Goffman (1959), who suggests that social interaction is symbolic, and that people present themselves to others in a way not unlike actors. Based on an allegory of the theatre, Goffman uses dramaturgical analysis to describe a backstage and front stage. Our interactions with others are performances, where we enact roles crafted to present ourselves in a way that we think best meets the expectations of our audience. Roles are fluid and require maintenance. Roles are not something someone has—they are enacted. Roles are related to status, a position in a society (Goffman, 1959). The influence of an active society on formation of knowledge, meaning, and space extends to the behaviour of groups and individuals. Whether we operate in the centre of

society, on the margins, or in a heterotopia, our behaviour is informed by a mix of statuses and roles.

People enact multiple roles, alternating between and betwixt them, depending on the demands of the given setting and the allotments of their status. Because our role enactment is dependent on social relationships, we are responsive to the multiple views held of us by others. A university professor has relationships with students and a relationship with her college dean: the professor enacts her role in one way for her students, and in another for her colleagues. Merton described this “complement of role-relationships in which persons are involved by virtue of occupying a particular social status” a *role set* (1957, p. 110).

Role strain occurs when a person is unable to meet the demands within a role. People experience role conflict when they are unable to respond to the demands of more than one role, or of multiple roles within a role set. Role conflict is a form of social ambivalence, comprised of “incompatible normative expectations of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours assigned to a status or to set of statuses in a society” (Merton, 1957).

Psychological and Physical Spaces—Scully and Howard (2009) describe ways in which deaf and hearing interpreters have differing perceptions of interpreting that are influenced by the nature of the space in which they work. Applying concepts from Gulliver’s (2006) description of deaf geographies, they theorize the potential of a mental/physical interpreter space. Interpreters—whether they be hearing or deaf—operate in spaces that can be identified as being either hearing spaces or deaf spaces, allowing for four possible permutations of interpreters and spaces (see Figure 2-15, below).

	Deaf Space	Hearing Space
Deaf Interpreter	Deaf Interpreter in Deaf Space	Deaf Interpreter in Hearing Space
Hearing Interpreter	Hearing Interpreter in Deaf Space	Hearing Interpreter in Hearing Space

Figure 2-15. *Interpreter/Space Combinations (Scully & Howard, 2009).*

Using this matrix, Scully and Howard examine interpreters in their own spaces and in the spaces of “others” within seven aspects of interpreting work: *external perception* (How is the interpreter perceived by others?); *home* (Is the interpreter operating in their own environment or that of an other culture?); *power base* (Where is the centre of control in the space where the interpreter is operating?); *message ownership* (To what extent does the interpreter feel ownership of the message?); *efficiency* (How much operational efficiency does the interpreter possess in the space?); *work socialization* (With whom does the interpreter socialize while in the space?); and *expectations* (What are the expectations of the interpreter in the space?).

Each combination of space and interpreter (e.g., Deaf Interpreter in Deaf Space; Deaf Interpreter in Hearing Space) results in its own unique profile of interpreter perception of space. The findings lead the authors to ponder whether interpreter space is both psychological and physical (Scully & Howard, 2009). A thread running throughout the Scully and Howard analysis is the diversity of perspectives on both space and interpreting held by stakeholders in an interpreted interaction. They note that perceptions are not always accurate, in that hearing non-signers often assume that interpreters are hearing. A number of deaf interpreters appear as on-screen interpreters in the UK. Scully and Howard wonder if this suggests that television can also be *deaf space*, or a form of *shared space* that can be occupied by hearing people and deaf people (2009, p. 6).

As detailed by McAuley (1999), theatre spaces are comprised of multiple spaces—both physical and mental. Among these are actor spaces and spectator spaces. In the auditorium of a theatre—the “house”—deaf audience members are often concentrated in a location convenient for watching the interpreters during an interpreted performance. Gulliver and Kitzel (M. Gulliver & Kitzel, 2016) suggest that deaf space is produced any time two deaf people come together and use sign language. Given this, the “deaf section” of a sign language interpreted theatre performance is a type of short-term deaf space, existing both within and besides the larger, hearing theatre space. The stakeholders of the performance (e.g., actors, interpreters, deaf audience members, hearing audience members) each have their own perspective of the space, based on their group membership and the space they are occupying.

Deaf Space and Interpreter Placement— Although Lefebvrian conceptualizations of deaf spaces have not been formally applied to sign language interpreting, the issue of

interpreter *placement* is an inevitable consideration during a SLIP (Gebron, 2000). See the Section 1.3.4 for a discussion of the interpreter placement. De Weerd and Kusters (2016) note the importance of proxemics and kinesics in the work of sign language interpreters.

A focus on interpreter placement became formalized as interpreting models shifted from the *helper* to the *communication facilitator* model. Interpreters began enforcing their vision of optimal physical arrangements—even if it meant encroaching on the norms of the hearing people in the setting (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2007). The awareness of the importance of the physical reality of the interpreted interaction helped to introduce practical standards for the placement of sign language interpreters when working. Here, interpreters became more aware of

... proper physical placement [of the interpreter] within proximity of the speaker so deaf clients could see both the speaker and the interpreter in one visual intake (Humphrey & Alcorn, 2007, p. 176).

By “visual intake” Humphrey and Alcorn are referring to the degree of visual field that a person sees. They describe a still-common arrangement in some interpreted settings, where the interpreter is located in proximity of the hearing participant, so that the deaf person can easily glance between the hearing participant and the interpreter through a simple shift in eye gaze, rather than turning their head to see the interpreter. Figure 2-16 depicts this arrangement.

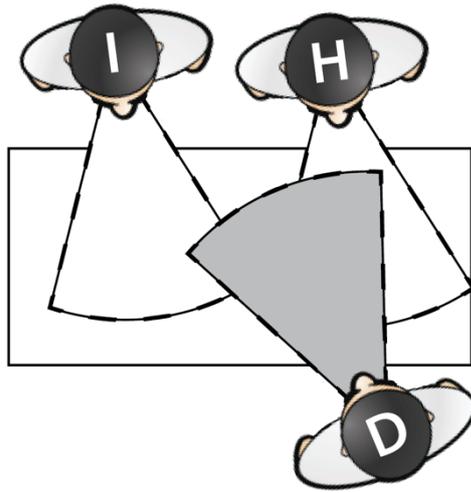


Figure 2-16. The oppositional interpreter placement, where D=deaf participant; H=Hearing participant; and, I=Interpreter participant.

Imagine an arrangement where the hearing person (here, “H”) is conducting an interview of a deaf job applicant (“D”). Figure 2-16 shows the interpreter (“I”) located on the same side of the table as the hearing participant, in order to achieve the “in one visual intake” standard described by Humphrey & Alcorn (2007). While the visual field described by Sirvage (2015) and shown in Figure 2-10 is roughly 180 degrees, Figure 2-16 depicts the *central portion of the visual field*, where there is increased visual acuity. This central portion of the visual field comprises the inner 30 degrees of the field of view (Mather, 2013; Spector, 1990). This arrangement reduces the amount of adjustment the deaf person must make to shift gaze from the hearing participant to the interpreter and back. This shift in gaze may even be possible by simple eye movement, rather than a turn of the head. This arrangement places (H) and (I) in each-others’ periphery. That is, when the deaf person attunes to (I) in her central vision, (H) resides in the near periphery of (D’s) central vision, allowing (D) to remain informed of (H’s) behaviour and other visual cues.

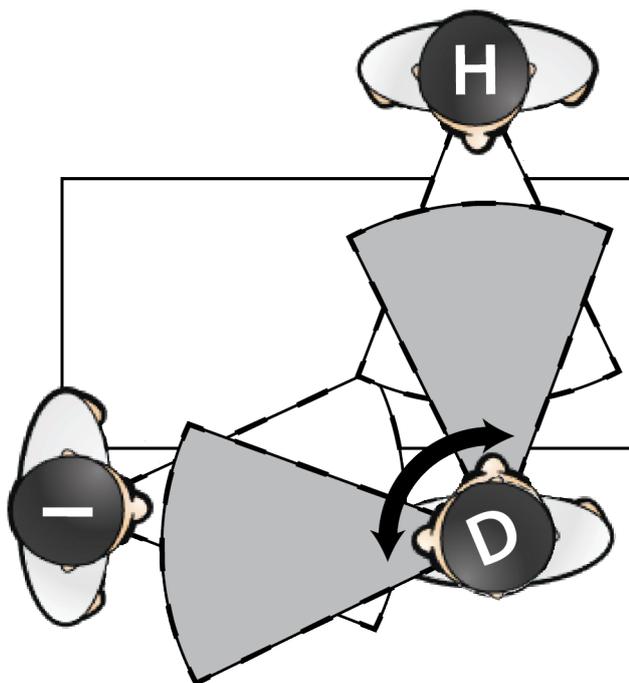


Figure 2-17. The “not ideal” interpreter placement, which establishes a split visual field for the deaf person (De Weerdts & Kusters, 2016, p. 18).

In contrast, De Weerdts and Kusters (2016) describe unfavourable arrangements, wherein the placement of the interpreter forces a deaf participant to attend to a split visual field, as shown above in Figure 2-17. The participant in their study described a solution that would have placed the interpreter next to the hearing person. Effectively, this reconfigures the visual field in order to maximize the amount of information in the visual field, reducing the amount of head movement required by the deaf person in order to attend to both interpreter (I) and hearing person (H). The research participant notes his preference for sitting in front of the hearing person (H) “to ensure the best circumstances for eye contact and fluent communication” (p. 18). This arrangement affirms the *proper physical placement* proffered by Humphrey and Alcorn (2007) and parallels Mather and Clarks’ (2013; 2012) *integration strategies* approach to reducing split visual attention in classrooms with deaf children (see Section 2.3.2 for a discussion of Mather and Clark).

Interpreter Placement and Theatre Interpreting— As described in Section 1.3.4, it is common practice for sign language interpreters in the theatre to stand off to one side of the stage space. This is often described as the *placed* or *platform* position or strategy (Gebron, 2000; McDougall, 2013a).

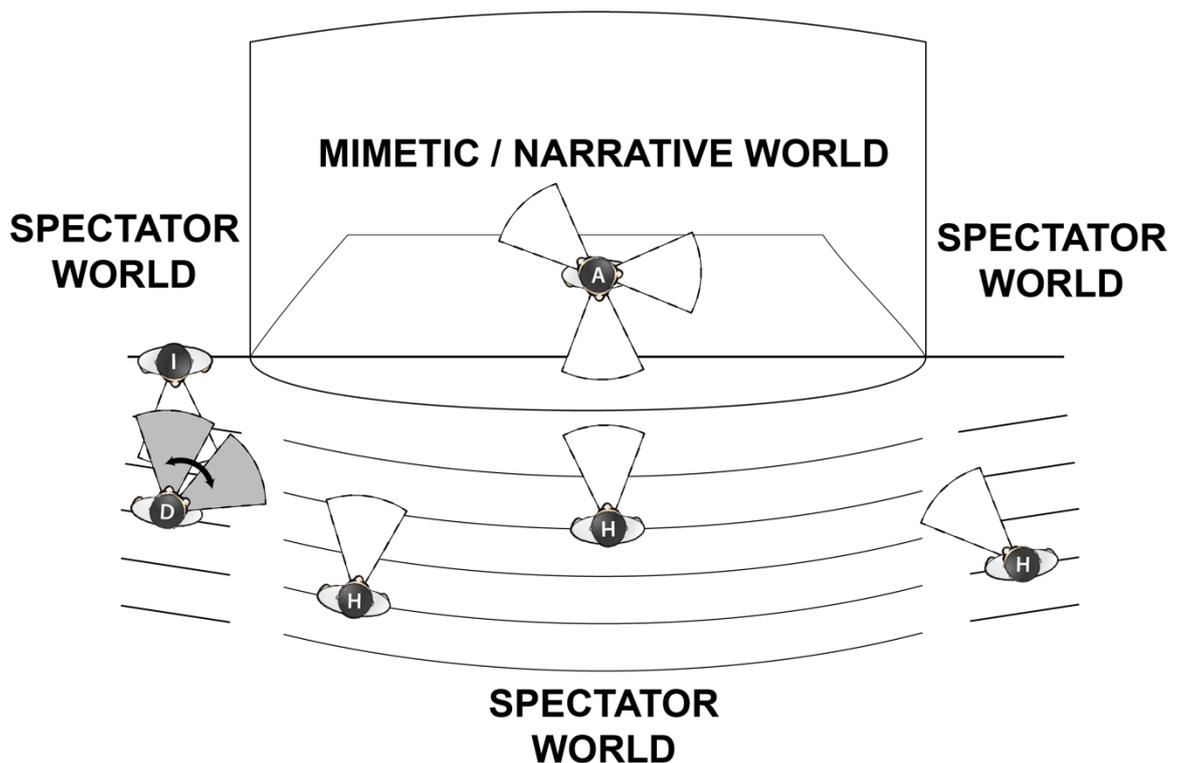


Figure 2-18. The central fields of vision for participants of an interpreted theatre performance, where D=Deaf participant; H=Hearing participant; and, I=Interpreter participant.

Figure 2-18 depicts a theatre space, with a sign language interpreter placed to one side of the stage (“stage right” or “audience left” in this case). Adapting the convention of Figure 2-16 and Figure 2.19, the figure shows the central field of vision for the participants of the event, and the typical directions in which each participant looks during performances. The theatre space is socially constructed, and includes architectural features that impact meaning, demark spaces, and which are associated with specific roles and related role enactment behaviours. Each participant has their own role and status, which influences their prescribed locations and what they see (Section 2.2 provides a detailed discussion of theatre spaces).

Actors (A) are on the stage space, and look in a multitude of directions. Their fictional world (often) exists in all directions around the actor on stage, and extends past the boundaries of the stage—even into the audience. The audience members (H and D) sit in the spectator space. The seats in the spectator space dictate the field-of-view for each spectator. Seats to the extreme left and right provide suitable view, but require the participants to turn their heads toward the stage (this is often assisted by architectural

means, such as a curved row). When the interpreter (I) is placed off to the side of the stage, she faces the audience. The degree to which interpreters look to the stage space will be included in the review of data in this study.

Deaf people (D) are sat in proximity to the interpreter (I). As the interpreter is located to the far side of the auditorium, the section of seats for deaf patrons is, by default, to the extreme side of the row. This seating arrangement forces the deaf person into a split field-of-view, requiring them to spend some time watching the interpreter(s) and other times watching the action on stage. This arrangement mimics De Weerd and Kusters' (2016) *unfavourable interpreter placement*, shown in Figure 2-17.

De Weerd and Kusters (2016) conclude that interpreters must continuously hone their knowledge of deaf communities—including movement and the use of space by deaf people—in addition to their ongoing pursuit of linguistic skills development. Interpreters must learn to optimize use of space in ways which facilitate visibility of the signing space of the interpreter, and of the participants to each-other (when required by the setting). Interpreters learn about the nuances of culturally-specific proxemics and kinesics in deaf communities through “frequent contact with diverse signers” (2016, p. 17) and through check-in moments where deaf people provide cues to interpreters about how to optimize their placement while active in their work.

This section began with an acknowledgement that there is no unified theory of “Interpreter Space”. The term “space” is applied to interpreters (sign language and otherwise) inconsistently in the literature. There are descriptions of linguistic spaces, cultural spaces, mental spaces, physical spaces, and even role-spaces. A theme among the literature is that interpreters operate in a space where two other spaces come together: in a *contact zone*, *hybrid space*, or as part of a *third culture*. Figure 2-19 summarizes findings from the discussion of space and interpreters in this section.

Contact Zone / Hybrid Space / Third Culture	Proxemics & Kinesics	Mental and Psychological Space	Role Enactment
Bi-lingual competency required	Visibility of face, hands, body	Linguistic residue of interpreting	Role-sets and role conflict
Bi-cultural competency required	Location/Placement of interpreter	External perception	Role-space Interaction; Alignment; and Presentation of Self
Interpreter as involved participant	Movements by interpreters	Home	
	Consultation with deaf people	Power base	
		Message ownership	
		Efficiency	
		Work socialization	
Expectations			

Figure 2-19. Summation of space and interpreting concepts discussed in Section 2.4.

Section 2.1.3 described the spatial triad of Lefebvre (1991), which seeks to harmonize three types of space: *spatial practice* (*l'espace perçu*—space as perceived); *representations of space* (*l'espace conçu*—space as conceived); and *representational space* (*l'espace vécu*—space as directly lived). This multi-dimensional understanding of space has been described in theatre studies (see Section 2.2) and in deaf studies (see Section 2.3). In each field of study, space is known to impact identity and role enactment. It is not enough to describe interpreter space as being physical *or* mental—it should be described as physical *and* mental.

White (2014) sees evidence of *mental* interpreting spaces in the linguistic residue of the interpreting process, whereas Scully and Howard (2009) employ a framework to contrast the experiences of specific *psychological* aspects of interpreter spaces by deaf and hearing interpreters. De Weerd and Kusters (2016) highlight *proxemics* and *kinesics* as key

physical ingredients of interpreters' use of space. An important objective is the *optimization of space* for users of sign language, as argued by both De Weerd and Kusters (2016) and Humphries and Alcorn (2007). Llewellyn-Jones and Lee (2014) employ concepts from Goffman (1959) to describe ways in which interpreters responsively calibrate their enactment of role in a metaphorical *role-space*.

For the present study, this discussion begins to provide some framework for considering space as it relates to sign language interpreters. Interpreters exist in a contact zone, where they have a physical presence and cognitive presence. They affect the setting in which they operate, and therefore must be culturally and linguistically adroit. Interpreters adjust their behaviour and role enactment in response to the setting and expectations of its participants. These expectations include a specific approach to use of space.

2.5 Summary: a conceptual framework for interpreted theatre space

In the preceding pages of this chapter I reviewed literature relevant to the present study of spatial production during interpreted theatre performances. I first describe the social construction of reality and spaces, including spaces of resistance, and introduce Lefebvre's triadic model of spatial production (Section 2.1). This model describes spatial production as an ongoing interplay between three spatial moments or strands: *l'espace perçu* (space perceived and secreted by people); *l'espace conçu* (space conceived materially); and *l'espace vécu* (space lived, imagined, given meaning). The three strands of Lefebvre's spatial triad serve as the basis for the three research questions guiding the study (see Section 1.2.1).

I next turned to the analysis of spatial production during *theatre performances* (Section 2.2). I described the nested spaces within the confines of the theatre, and the nested relationship of the theatre in a society. The material features of the space (e.g., architecture; design; performance structures) support the important *oppositional arrangement* between spectator and performer. Multiple *physical* and *fictional spaces* come together during the performance to help audience members and performers escape the reality of the theatre to a world they co-create. McAuley's *taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre* provides a vocabulary for identifying and describing these multiples spaces, and ways in which they interact. I next illuminated the Lefebvrian traditions in theatre topography, centring the co-created escape from reality during the

performance within the *vécu* strand of the spatial triad. I unified these concepts in a proposed framework for considering sign language interpreted (theatre) spaces: the Sign Language Interpreted Performance Spatial Framework, or *SLIP Spatial Framework* (Figure 2-9).

The next section explored the biosocial experience of deaf people, and a growing body of research related to *deaf geography* and *deaf space*. I described a shift away from socio-disability model of deafness, toward descriptions of deaf ontologies rooted in a visual sensory orientation. Bauman (2014) borrows from architecture to consider a deaf architectural pattern language that contributes to the ways in which deaf people manifest material space—*DeafSpace*. I then discussed insights from research exploring deaf spaces through Gulliver’s (2009) *totalité*-first application of Lefebvre’s spatial triad.

The final discussion of this literature review considered interpreter “space” as it appears in the literature. I review previous models meant to describe the process of sign language interpreting, and note a general lack of cohesion around a description of *interpreter space*. I identified studies describing interpreters as having mental spaces, psychological spaces, and role-space. I next turned to descriptions of interpreter placement and location as they work, noting the lack of empirical investigation about spatial production by sign language interpreters. Findings from this literature review were synthesized in a discussion of the typical physical arrangements in a SLIP performance, where interpreters are placed to one side of the stage space.

The SLIP Spatial Framework proposed in this literature review features in the research design and procedures, which are detailed in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3—Research design and methods

In this chapter, I introduce the research design and methods for this qualitative phenomenological study of the experience of space by multiple participants of a SLIP: the team of interpreters; actors performing on stage; and deaf audience members. This study expands our understanding of what it means to experience a SLIP, and how space influences—and is influenced by—the theatre experiences. After a brief review of the research questions, I discuss the choices of research methodology; selection of participants; data collection and analysis procedures; trustworthiness; and ethical considerations.

3.1 World view and research approach

In the introduction to this thesis, I describe my interest in shifting away from *telling others how to do* theatre interpreting, and toward *discovering what is happening* during theatre interpreting. There will be time in the future to test assertions about specific characteristics of SLIP interpreting—a top-down approach; here, I am setting out to ask fundamental questions about the experience.

This is a *qualitative* study employing *phenomenological* research methods informed by a constructivist world view. This world view sees *meaning* as *subjective and co-constructed* by individuals through interaction with others, objects, and things (Creswell, 2014). While *quantitative* studies convert findings (e.g., experiment results, survey responses, concepts) to numbers to answer ‘how many’ and ‘how much’, *qualitative* studies explore the *nature of things* to answer ‘how things are’ (Hale & Napier, 2013).

I chose a qualitative approach because of its suitability for *exploration of social phenomena* between people using an *interpretive framework* that attempts to understand how the world is experienced from the *perspective of the experiencer* (Creswell, 2013). This stands in contrast to a *positivist framework*, which views social phenomena as *facts* that are separate from the subjective experiences of the individual (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Qualitative research brings the researcher into the community, to consider them holistically as they are in their daily lives, both as individuals and as parts of a society (Creswell, 2013; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Given this, qualitative researchers avoid carving out certain perspectives as valid and others as not. Analysis of qualitative data is

often both inductive and deductive and is meant to help establish patterns and themes. Dense and contextualized reporting of study results forefronts the experiences of participants as stated by them, and recognizes the positionality of the researcher, which influences every aspect of the research (Creswell, 2013; Young & Temple, 2014).

Case study research is particularly suited to empirical studies where it is important to understand a contemporary phenomenon *within a real-life context*, often when research questions ask “why” or “how” (Yin, 2009). The present study is a *descriptive* case study: other types of case studies can be *explanatory/causal* or *exploratory*. Because contextualized phenomena present “more variables of interest than data points” case study researchers gather evidence from multiple sources, seeking to draw comprehensive descriptions from where these multiple sources converge (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Case study research is a “linear but iterative process” in which planned research design and procedures are responsive to new discoveries in data collection, analysis, and sharing (Yin, 2009, p. 1).

Hale & Napier (2013) ascribe the strength of *validity* to qualitative studies (and the strength of *reliability* to quantitative studies). *Reliability* indicates the degree to which a study’s results are replicable. *Validity* indicates the degree of meaningfulness of the results, often confirmed through redundant internal findings or external corroboration (Creswell, 2013; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). I will return to the question of scope and trustworthiness of the present study later in this chapter (see Section 3.8) and the final chapter of this thesis (see Section 6.2).

3.2 The researcher

“Full language is unique to and universal in humans, where it is universally transmitted by vocal speech.”

The above quote by Boë, et al. (2019, p. 1) underscores assertions by Young and Temple (2014) that the ontology of the researcher shapes fundamental aspects of the research study. It is in this first line of their report on their research about the evolution of speech in primates where the authors reveal that their work is predicated on an errant assertion that confuses language with language articulatory mode. Which phenomena are

recognized as worthy of inquiry; how a phenomenon might be problematized; which research questions might be asked: all of this and more stem from the knowing and being of the researcher(s) conducting a study. When researchers equate speech and language, they place blinders on themselves and their readers—narrowing the diversity of the world’s languages to those which they are most knowledgeable about, and on which their own scholarly ontology is based. One result is to place limitations on scholarship: researchers who publish results about ‘language’ when they really mean ‘speech’ are trying to solve a Rubik’s Cube by only looking at one side. Their own scholarship is diminished, because they have limited themselves to a subset of reality.

There are also social implications stemming from the errant assertion that speech is the universal articulator of language. The legitimacy of signed languages and deaf cultures has frequently been questioned—even in the face of ever-expanding bodies of research in these areas. This contributes to pervasive linguisticism in research, public policy, and society. No matter how informed or well-intentioned we researchers think we are, we each are the centre of our research endeavour. We cannot help but influence the research process. My aim is to understand my positionality; consider its influence on methodology; factor it into my analysis; and, report these things along with the research findings. In this way, I seek to recognize the existence of my own blinders, and to help both me and the reader to place the present study within a broader context in which the observations herein are one possibility among many.

While the study seeks to explore the phenomenon of the SLIP as experienced by the study participants, the data collected were gathered, organized, analysed, and synthesized through the researcher—me. I was both participant and observer of the SLIP and its surrounding events. Like many researchers of sign language interpreting, I am a long-time practitioner who is curious to dive deeper into the details of the phenomenon I have experienced throughout my practice. Hale & Napier (2013) describe the growing consensus for the importance of the researchers of sign language interpreting to *situate* themselves when reporting findings of their work, and to acknowledge characteristics of their personal, practitioner, and research history that relate to the study.

I was raised in an English-speaking household in the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan, in the United States. There were no sign language users in my family, although I have an aunt (now deceased) who was deaf, and who attended the Detroit Day School for the Deaf—

a school where deaf children from throughout Detroit were educated together. Even so, nobody in our family knew sign language, and so my aunt communicated with everyone via spoken English. Because my aunt did not interact with deaf communities after graduating school, her own sign language skills deteriorated over time.

At age fifteen I was exposed to American Sign Language through a theatre production of *Runaways*, in which there is a deaf character named *Hubbell*. The script called for Hubbell to *sign*, but I mis-read the text and thought the frequent references to Hubbell during the many songs in the musical were directions for him to *sing*. I lobbied enthusiastically to our theatre director to be cast in the role of Hubbell. When I was, I was told to “go learn sign language.” It was 1980, and the only resource was a local library copy of *The Joy of Signing*, by Lottie Riekehof. Using the book, I created a sign-for-word ‘translation’ of each song and my own lines in the production. I have since learned that the director and assistant director never believed that I would be able to accomplish the task, and had pre-planned to drop the character from the production when it proved too difficult. To their surprise, I arrived at the first rehearsal with rough translations of multiple songs, and so the role remained. (They had no knowledge of ASL, and so how they made this determination is beyond my understanding.)

At age seventeen, I began the four-year baccalaureate program in *Sign Language Studies* at Madonna University (then, “Madonna College”). Located less than an hour by car from my home, Madonna’s was one of the first interpreter education programmes established in the United States by a federal grant in 1975. The catholic university’s mission of service to the deaf community is rooted in two activities: providing an accessible and inclusive learning environment for deaf university students; and, educating interpreters and others who will serve the deaf community. At the root of the Sign Language Studies department has always been the principle that *sign language is a human right*. By the time I joined the department as a student 1982, the university’s approach included a robust focus on sign language linguistics coupled with authentic interactions between sign language students (the majority of whom were hearing) and the more than 100 deaf students on campus.

In my third year of studies at Madonna University, I passed the highest level of Michigan’s *Quality Assurance* assessment of sign language interpreters—a QA III. It was 1985. I began some contract interpreting work as I continued my final year of studies.

Shortly after graduating in 1986, I passed a national interpreting exam of the Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf—the *Comprehensive Skills Certificate* (CSC). I have been a working interpreter—often combined with other employment—ever since.

My interpreting practice has included a wide variety of settings and subject areas. Medical and mental health interpreting figured prominently in my early interpreting work, especially in settings involving HIV/AIDS. I have interpreted in a wide range of community and corporate settings. My first interpreted theatre assignment was in 1985, while I was still a student. A shadow-interpreted version of *Alice in Wonderland*, the production by *Wild Swan Theatre* in Ann Arbor, Michigan introduced me to shadow interpreting techniques. The theatre company was, and still is, dedicated to creating theatre performances that are accessible to deaf children, blind children, and other children who are often under-represented in theatre audiences. My work with Wild Swan Theatre was fundamental in the establishment of my philosophy and practice of shadow interpreting on stage. Training I received through Wild Swan Theatre included sessions with actors from the *National Theatre of the Deaf* and other deaf theatre artists.

Early in my interpreting career, I also began work as a caseworker at a local organization serving deaf people, DeafCAN! (Deaf Community Advocacy Network). My work evolved to include both direct service provision and program development. I eventually began working in the broader social services community in Michigan, where my roles have included fundraising, program development, and management of community-business collaborative projects. These projects took me out of the deaf community during my “day job”, but I remained a working interpreter at night—developing a specialization in theatre interpreting.

Since 1985, I have interpreted hundreds of theatre productions in Michigan and the surrounding states, including in Windsor, Canada. I have travelled throughout the United States with a stand-up comedian, interpreting in comedy clubs. My theatre interpreting work has grown to specialize in shadow interpreting, leading to a set of guiding principles and techniques that have developed over time among interpreters working in my company, *TerpTheatre*. I have taught workshops throughout Michigan and the United States about theatre interpreting, including at national and state conferences of the *Registry of Interpreters of the Deaf*.

After completing the undergraduate program in Sign Language Studies at Madonna University, I completed a Master of Arts degree in *linguistics* at *Oakland University* in Rochester, Michigan. There, I divided my time between two interests: *artificial intelligence*, and *sign language*. I was recruited by the department to be involved in a *natural language processing* project funded by the federal government, where I contributed to the project's semantic network, writing in the programming language LISP. I also conducted a socio-linguistic study of the development of new signs in American Sign Language for concepts related to HIV/AIDS, *The Impact of HIV/AIDS on the Lexicon of American Sign Language*. While I was encouraged to pursue a PhD in artificial intelligence at the time, I was determined to study the phenomenon that occupied all of my evening hours—theatre interpreting. Since then, I have considered multiple PhD programs. Theatre departments didn't know what to do with the social science aspects of the study. Linguistics departments didn't know what to do with the theatre component. Instead of adjusting the focus of my interests to meet these programs, I chose to wait for the right fit.

In 2005, I was asked to begin teaching at my alma mater, the *Sign Language Studies* program at Madonna University. Two years later, I became the department chair. I have taught a survey course in sign language studies, interpreting courses, courses in ASL literature and drama, and the department's capstone course. In 2013, I was awarded the *Distinguished Professorship in the Humanities*, an award that provided academic release time and funds to conduct a major project in the humanities. While my initial intention was to produce a guide for interpreters and theatre companies, my interest shifted toward an academic pursuit of questions related to the experience of interpreted theatre (also see Section 1.5). With the blessings of the university, it was during this time that the foundations for the present study were formed.

The availability of online PhD programs changed the academic landscape by this time, and opportunities for academic guidance and structure came in the form of distance learning. I first completed three years of doctoral coursework in the *Department of Interpreting and Translation* at *Gallaudet University* prior to joining the doctoral program at *Heriot-Watt University*.

My “A” language is English, and a “B” language is American Sign Language. In ASL my fluency has been seasoned over 40 years of interaction with deaf people on a personal

and professional level. I can communicate in ASL across a wide range of subject areas and registers. I have some rudimentary skills in Auslan (Australian Sign Language) and BSL (British Sign Language), developed during this research study and during my doctoral studies. I am also comfortable in environments employing translanguaging¹⁰ as a communication strategy between me and users of other signed languages, although—like many others living in the monolith of the United States—my opportunities for employing translanguaging are limited.

Nearly 20 years of my daytime employment have been outside of academia, and so my academic lifetime began formally in 2005. Madonna University’s mission centres around service to others—research is not emphasized. Consequently, my research reputation is limited to local projects and research I have conducted since the beginning of my doctoral studies. Locally, I have a strong influence over theatre interpreting, having educated, trained, or employed most of the theatre interpreters in Michigan.

3.2.1 Researcher positionality

Of the study’s three stakeholder groups, I am most strongly affiliated with the interpreters. I elected to conduct data collection geographically distant from my local community in an attempt to distance myself from my own practice as a theatre interpreter, which has included training other interpreters. In choosing to conduct my study in a location where I was (relatively) unknown, I attempted to minimize the impact that my prior work might have on the participants and myself. Operating in a community that was new to me, and in a sign language that I did not know, also forced me to slow down and to adopt a deliberate, focused approach to communicating with the participants of the study. Even with my prior knowledge of theatre interpreting, this approach put me in the mind of an explorer, going somewhere I had not been and seeing things with a newness that I would have lacked had my research been conducted in my hometown near Detroit, Michigan.

¹⁰ Described by Otheguy, García, and Reid as “the deployment of a speaker’s full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages,” translanguaging may include multiple languages, modalities, and forms (2015, p. 281). During the duration of my doctoral studies, my use of translanguaging has been centred around the goal of mutual understanding between me and other sign language users, and called on features of Auslan, BSL, ASL, and gesture. I avoid the use of speech while translanguaging with other signers. The resulting sensory asymmetry would be an exclusionary practice that “can and often do skewer power relations in mixed settings” of hearing and deaf sign language users (De Meulder et al., 2019, p. 4).

It was a risk. (Site selection, participant recruitment, and data collection procedures are detailed in Section 3.5 and Section 3.6.)

Being far away from where I practise theatre interpreting felt like one way to loosen my perceived affiliation with the interpreters in the study. Yes, I am an interpreter, conducting research about interpreting, and they are also interpreters: there is an existing affiliation that cannot be erased. But, *these* interpreters, I did not know. I had never met them, nor had been in contact with them prior to the study. Similarly, I had never met the deaf participants, nor the actors. That degree of new-ness is rare to me, after practising theatre interpreting for more than three decades. My status as an outsider and a stranger was enhanced by my socio-linguistic differences—it was something to overcome. This outsider status may also have been an asset. The steps I took to strengthen trust between me and the study participants (which I will discuss in Section 3.5.3) were opportunities to demonstrate to participants the sincerity of my approach.

Subjectively, I think it was beneficial. My decades of prior work in interpreted theatre were facilitative in the study: like a log stretched across a stream provides a way across. Working outside of my home territory and language slowed me down. The log became mossy and slippery, and I had to pay more attention along the way.

3.3 Qualitative methods in the phenomenological tradition

In my practice as a theatre interpreter, I have encountered a wide range of perspectives about the SLIP experience (not unlike those described in Chapter 1). Numerous variables contribute to the theatre experience of actors, interpreters, and deaf audience members during a SLIP. It does not surprise me (anymore) when there is a lack of consensus about the nature of the experience—even when these perspectives come from participants of the *same performance*. One permutation: the deaf patrons and interpreters feel a positive connection during the performance, while the actors are distracted by the interpreters the entire time. Furthermore, within each constituent group, there is no templated response. A variation: some actors feel distracted by the interpreters during the performance, while others feel their experience is enhanced. Given this, it would be premature of me to seek a consensus opinion—this is too macro-focused. Problematic, too. Young and Temple point to the “marked heterogeneity” among deaf peoples as one reason for caution when considering the representativeness of study participants, as “from an interpretative and

constructionist epistemological standpoint there is no singular Deaf ontology nor epistemology” (Young & Temple, 2014, p. 89).

My interest is to explore the nature of the SLIP experience at the individual level, and to try to identify common themes across those individual experiences which help to expose what it means to experience a SLIP: Individual experiences exposing the nature of the phenomenon. This is a distinction that lead me to *phenomenology*, which seeks to situate a phenomenon within a broader shared social context (Hale & Napier, 2013). Phenomenological descriptions of *corporeality*, *perception*, and *co-presence* provide insights into theatre as a social event, and the active relationship between actors and audience members. Missing is a textured exploration of deaf people in these roles (see discussion in Section 2.2.5). Having experienced a diversity of reactions to theatre interpreting in my own practice, I sought an approach that would motivate me with an undercurrent of honouring multiple (possibly dissenting) perspectives of the SLIP—a strength of phenomenology—instead of encouraging me to find homogeneity in the shared experiences of the participants.

Many research practices and methods are shared by phenomenology and ethnography. Taylor and Bogdan (1998) situate a *phenomenological perspective* at the heart of all qualitative methodologies; but note (somewhat begrudgingly) that the use of the term *phenomenology* has become narrowed over time as the panoply of theoretical perspectives expands. My decision to conduct a phenomenology had implications for the crafting of my initial research questions; my data collection procedures; my reporting and analysis of findings; and, the impact of the study in a broader research context. I will identify these influences throughout the remainder of this chapter.

This is not to say that I avoided ethnography altogether. Describing the experiences within the Regent Theatre often called upon participants to evoke broader connections with society, culture, and the world outside of *The Lion King*. My attitude was to follow the data where it led me, and so I have honoured descriptions from the study participants that highlight these connections. The data did not stop at the imaginary walls of the SLIP experience. To wit, the resulting analysis may have characteristics of an *ethno-phenomenology* as employed in Creely (2011), to consider both the social factors influencing actors during a performance (the ethno-) and the performance phenomenon itself (the phenomenology).

The relationship between our *experiences* and our *behaviour in professional life* is explored in *phenomenology of practice*, popularized by Max van Manen (2007). Often applied to nursing and teaching, phenomenology of practice

operates in the space of the formative relations between who we are and who we may become, between how we think or feel and how we act. And these formative relations have pedagogical consequence for professional and everyday practical life (van Manen, 2007 p 26).

Actors, directors, interpreters, and theatre personnel bring with them to the SLIP a set of additional norms, standards, and influences resulting from their professional function in the SLIP setting. Phenomenology offers an opportunity to explore how enactment of these roles influences what interpreters and theatre professionals experience and feel about the SLIP, and may lead to improvements in the way we train interpreters to work in the SLIP and elsewhere.

In its broadest sense, a phenomenology of theatre is a “full explication of the *intentional structures* which constitute the theatre phenomena” (Grant, 2019, p. 28). These intentional structures manipulate audiences, presentation, and perception. While there have been many conceptualizations of *phenomenological intentionality* among theorists, Grant (2019, p. 28) identifies three common characteristics:

- they deal with the relationship of humans to their worlds;
- they move towards fundamental explanations; and
- they attempt to reveal taken-for-granted presuppositions.

In practice, theatre phenomenology is less frequently an attempt at the full explication that Grant describes, but often arrives at these three characteristics through a subset of these intentional structures as experienced during specific *performance types*, by specific *groups of people*, or in the *relationship* between the representations on stage and individual audience members (see discussion, Section 2.2.5).

3.4 Research questions

The research questions for the present study were refined over two iterations. The first set of questions served to ground the onset of the study, data collection, and initial analysis. My purpose was to explore the lived experiences of SLIP participants in three stakeholder groups: *theatre interpreter team members*; *deaf theatre patrons*; and, *actors*, guided by three questions:

- What is the experience of participants in each stakeholder group of sign language interpreted performances (SLIPs)?
- What phenomena forge these experiences?
- How do participants in a SLIP describe a successful experience?

The questions were then refined based on observations during early stages of data analysis. Van Manen (1990) suggests that early data analysis rooted in an existential tradition may reveal to the researcher an evolving whole-part relationship in the study. This tradition considers the existentials of temporality (lived time), spatiality (lived space), corporeality (lived body), and sociality (lived relationship to others). The researcher must be responsive to the emerging evidence of the whole-part relationship, making adjustments in the focus and scope of the study throughout the process, so as to guard against a “mindless, slavish, or mechanistic” commitment to a pre-determined procedure (van Manen, 1990, p. 172).

As I began to implement early data analysis procedures (see Section 3.7), a strong whole-part relationship emerged between the individual experiences of *spaces* described by the participants and the broader experience of the SLIP at large. A refined set of research questions resulted from this observation, establishing the scope of the present study and narrowing the theoretical lens to that explored in the literature review in Chapter 2. These refined research questions guided the data analysis, formation of findings, discussion, and final study conclusions for the present thesis:

- How are the spaces in a SLIP conceived and defined by its participants?

- What are the spatial practices and experiences of SLIP participants?
- How does the perception and production of space by theatre personnel, sign language interpreters, and deaf people converge to facilitate meaning as part of the interpreted theatre event?

3.5 Site selection and study participants

A combination of *convenience sampling* and *network sampling*—both forms of *purposive non-probability* sampling—was used to identify the participants of the study. Both sampling approaches seek to identify participants who can help researchers understand the nature of the phenomenon at the centre of the research study, but do not (necessarily) seek to produce a pool of participants that is representative or generalizable of groups or cultures. Site selection was achieved through *convenience sampling* (sometimes described in concert with *opportunistic sampling*), which responds to current conditions with an entrepreneurial spirit to identify sites and participants that are *accessible, timely, and meet the requirements* of the study. Participants within the site were identified through *network sampling*, which promotes the participant opportunity through groups of people with shared characteristics required for the study (Creswell, 2014; Hale & Napier, 2013). *Gatekeepers* served an important dual role in securing the participation of the site and individual participants (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). They first acted as a firewall between me and potential participants, assessing my trustworthiness and the worthiness of my study. They then became a link to local deaf people, actors, and interpreters who would comprise the final pool of participants.

3.5.1 *Convenience is 10,000 miles from home*

At the onset of the study, I began a *site selection process* which attempted to balance the demands and restraints inherent in the *research process* and those of *practicality*. Noting that “the fundamental aim underlying a PhD project is the acquisition of the degree,” Gile (2001) suggests that this balance may tilt toward practical considerations that impact the *feasibility* of the doctoral scholar to achieve that aim (p. 13). He suggests that this is an inherent part of doctoral research, which has priorities that are different than research conducted outside the context of doctoral studies.

Several interconnected criteria influenced my selection of Melbourne, Australia, and a performance of Disney's *The Lion King* for the site for the study. These criteria reflect Gile's balancing act, weighing both research standards and the need to get the job done. I would be collecting data and completing the writing process over a series of years, all while working full-time during the academic year from August through May. Travel during the academic year was not impossible—but, potential conflicts with my academic schedule could reduce the amount of time available for on-site research activities. One source of relief was also a source of pressure. The award I had received from my employer provided release time for work on my project over two years: Collecting data within this two-year period was a strategic necessity and would allow me to balance my research and teaching responsibilities.

A second important consideration was rooted in my research design. The nature of phenomenology is to get at the essence of an experience, as described by those who have had the experience. There is tremendous variety the ways in which SLIPs are planned, executed, and perceived by participant groups (see Chapter 1), and the meaning of each theatre performance co-constructed and shared (see Section 2.2). Inasmuch, included in my research design was the requirement that there be an interpreted performance that was experienced by all of the study participants (actors, interpreting team, and deaf patrons)—and, which I could also attend and observe. Even though my data analysis would centre on the described experiences of the participants, attending and observing the same performance would provide me with an important *experiential frame-of-reference* from which to draw on during data analysis and throughout the process of writing the narrative description offered in Chapter 4.

Site selection never seriously considered my own interpreting community of practice, although this decision was not in judgement of that type of embedded qualitative research. My theatre interpreting practice had dominated the SLIP landscape in my home state of Michigan since the mid-1980s. Over a thirty-year span, my interpreting partners and I trained nearly every Michigan interpreter working on stage, and my company held season-long contracts with multiple theatre companies. As such, I had been not only a theatre interpreter, but also a business owner, an advocate, and an educator (see Section 3.2). This affords me numerous opportunities to leverage these relationships for some types of research—but, in this phenomenology, my objective was to elicit narratives from participants about *their* experiences that *emerged from them* with as little influence from

me as possible. No researcher is neutral; neither are participants. With concerns that selecting participants from within my own, local sphere-of-influence would lead to participants adjusting their narratives to fit what they (think they) knew about my opinions, I excluded Michigan-based interpreters and theatres from site consideration.

Access to participants over the duration of data gathering and analysis was a fourth important consideration in selecting a site for the study. I anticipated a data collection procedure that would include at least two interviews while on site, and a data analysis process that might span the several remaining years of my doctoral studies. My site selection process would include conversations with potential site contacts, to outline my procedures and discuss the likelihood of finding participants with suitable availability.

I originally considered more than one site, in part as a type of redundancy: if plans fell through at one site, another would serve as a back-up. As my focus on phenomenological methods clarified, I determined that multiple sites would introduce locally specific variables that would detract me from my focus on the experience of the individual, and toward other methods, or other aims (e.g., comparison). This is especially relevant in light of the caution from Young and Temple (2014) against seeking homogeneity within studies involving deaf peoples.

With the above considerations in mind, I began to identify the universe of potential research sites, prioritizing my search around SLIPs occurring within the upcoming two years. With the assistance of student interns from my home university (who received stipends or course credit), I culled performance information from online sources worldwide (but mostly English-based sources) in three groups: sign language interpreters; theatre companies; and deaf theatre aficionados. This triangulated approach helped to identify SLIPs that might have otherwise been overlooked during a more single-minded approach. I supplemented online searches with inquiries to other interpreters and deaf people, to suss out sites that might have been missed. All information about upcoming performances was maintained online as a free, centralized public resource for promoting and finding upcoming interpreted performances. Making this information public was one way in which I felt my research efforts could contribute to the broader community. Deaf audience members, theatre interpreters, and theatre companies could all benefit from increased awareness and attendance at SLIPs. Nowhere else did such a centralized repository of interpreted performances exist, and the online performance calendar helped

to distribute information I gathered from a position of privilege as a researcher. The online performance calendar was engineered to allow direct input of performance information from interpreters, theatre companies, and others, and to allow others to publish events directly from a Facebook page.¹¹

A review of the dataset of upcoming interpreted performances served to narrow the scope of candidate sites to those with *confirmed* interpreted performances in the upcoming theatre season (which lasts from fall through spring). It was too late in the current season to select a site and gather data. As arrangements for interpreted performances often occur well after the performance schedule has been announced, many theatre companies had not-yet established dates for the interpreted performances of their productions in the coming season. Two candidate sites emerged, each with upcoming SLIPs confirmed: one in the US, one in Australia.

My first contact with each site was via emails directed to the interpreting team and theatre production companies. In each case, initial replies came from the interpreters, who then provided me with the name of their direct contact within the production company. The interpreter and production company contact individuals served as site *gatekeepers* (Creswell, 2014). I provided the contacts at these two potential sites with an information packet that I would eventually share with all study participants, including a research summary (see Appendix A), my curriculum vitae, the consent form for the study (see Appendix B),¹² and links to my website and previous theatre interpreting work. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) note that this type of background information and research proposal may be helpful to the decision-making process of gatekeepers, while establishing a

¹¹ As online information consumption habits shifted dramatically toward social media (and away from longform websites), the number of visitors to the online performance schedule declined significantly and it was decommissioned after approximately three years.

¹² A consent form in written English was provided to each participant prior to participating in the study. Participants were offered opportunities to discuss the content of the consent form directly with me, and to have the consent form translated/and or explained in Auslan by an English/Auslan interpreter or other intermediary. Included in the consent procedure was the acknowledgement that the participant could withdraw from the study at any time. The study received initial human ethics review approval on 13 April 2015 by the Institutional Review Board of Gallaudet University, which was later accepted by the Heriot-Watt University School of Social Sciences on 9 July 2017.

channel through which the researcher and gatekeepers can negotiate the terms of project participation.

While both sites seemed receptive to my research, the site in the Australia showed more ability to commit specifically to the research plans. The differences between US and Australian theatre seasons may have influenced this factor. My overtures to the sites began in October 2014, with an inquiry about the *next* theatre season. In the US, the next season would begin in the following August or September, and many of the production details for that season were still to be determined—including the dates of interpreted performances and who would be interpreting. In Australia, a performance of *The Lion King* had been scheduled for the following June, with the interpreters identified and 140 seats reserved for deaf patrons. The hemispheric seasonal differences between the US and Australia played to my benefit, as I would be on break from teaching and could focus entirely on a research trip.

After early conversations with my initial contact (as described below) confirmed that the site would meet the conditions described above, I selected Melbourne, Australia as the research location, with a focus on the interpreted performance of *The Lion King* at the *Regent Theatre*.

3.5.2 *Identifying participants*

Having identified the site for the study, I then employed *network sampling* to identify the participants for the study. The owner of *The Company* was my initial contact for the project in Australia, providing connections with local deaf people, interpreters, members of her company, and a production staff member of *The Lion King*. “The Company” is a pseudonym for the business which employs the interpreters for the performance. The owner of the company—Laura—served as a gatekeeper to the site, as did the production staff member.

Phenomenological studies often involve a small number of participants (10 or fewer might be appropriate) (Creswell, 2014; Rudestam & Newton, 2007). Seeking a representative sample of a community or population is not the aim of phenomenology. Instead, the researcher aims to identify participants who have experienced a specific

phenomenon, and to elicit specific information about the experiences of those participants. Young and Temple (2014) caution against claims of representativeness in population samples from within deaf communities, which feature “marked heterogeneity.” More-so, they call on researchers to be explicit about the specific perspectives of the deaf people selected for the study, as such decisions influence whose perspectives within deaf populations are elevated within research literature and are both political and methodological.

Several criteria guided the selection of participants for the study. All study participants had to be participants of the phenomenon in question—the performance of *The Lion King* that would be at heart of the study—whether as an audience member, interpreter, or actor. The participants were required to be available for the study interview protocol (described later in this chapter). Critically, participants needed to be willing and able to share their experiences: Phenomenology is pressured to elicit anecdotes and examples which “point to the thing” that the study attempts to describe (van Manen, 1990, p. 122). Much of the success of the study depends on the skills of the researcher and the openness of the participant. Because phenomenological writing is meant to be but one example of the phenomenon (van Manen, 1990, p. 121), I sought participants who would be open to discussion their own experiences of interpreted theatre—but, more importantly, their experience of *The Lion King* as a SLIP. Generally, my interest was to *avoid* participants for whom this was their *first* SLIP experience, as the phenomenon of the first-time SLIP experience—while interesting in its own right—was not a priority of my study. For each stakeholder group in the study, there were additional considerations:

The Interpreting Team: I would need access to the interpreting team assigned to the performance, including any consultants or other staff directly involved in the SLIP. Ideally, I would have access to all members of the team.

Deaf Audience Members: I was interested in “deaf participants” who attend “interpreted theatre.” While these are broad terms, some assumptions were included in the identification of deaf participants. No attempt was made to constrain the meaning of “deaf” from an audiological perspective; however, it was assumed that the participants would be people who describe themselves as “deaf” (in whatever way that means to them). Use of sign language among deaf participants was also presumed, as the study centres on the phenomenon of interpreted theatre.

Actors: I required access to actors involved in the actual performance(s) of *The Lion King* described in the study. Actors who had been replaced by understudies, or who simply observed the SLIP, would not have had the necessary experiences for a phenomenology focusing on the participant experience. The production had been previously interpreted by the same interpreting team in Sydney, and so it would also be helpful if the actors had been a part of the cast during the Sydney performances. Unlike the other two participant groups, where exposure to interpreted theatre prior to *The Lion King* was assumed, it was possible that the actor-participants might be relative novices. The production company served as the gatekeeper to the actors, and I might not have much say in the participants they selected (or allowed me to access).

Hearing Audience Members: my original research plan allowed for the inclusion of hearing audience members. They would be a part of the global interaction of the performance of *The Lion King*, even if they were not a part of the intended audience of the sign language interpretation. It is an interesting question (to me) to consider the experiences and perspectives of hearing people who are present in the SLIP, but over time I decided to reserve this exploration for the future. As I began to consider the co-creative nature of the performance as an interaction between performer and audience member, I realized an important distinction: the experience of the sign language interpreting part of the SLIP is more direct and influential to the co-creation of meaning between the actors and the deaf people than it is for the creating of meaning between the hearing audience members and the actors. This is not to say that the interpreters do not influence meaning for the hearing people in the audience; but, as the central phenomenon of the study is the SLIP, my priority would be to include participants for whom the sign language interpretation was not incidental to the experience.

My aim was for approximate balance with regard to the number of participants from each of the stakeholder groups in the overall research design. This was not an attempt to assert any probabilistic relevance within the sample. Instead, I was thinking ahead to the report of the findings that I would later write in a narrative form (see Section 4.2), and I wanted the amount of representation across each stakeholder group in the narrative to be relatively balanced. That is, I did not want anecdotes of any one group to overburden the narrative to the point of choking out the anecdotes of the others. The original research design sought two participants from each stakeholder group, based on the modern-day practice of employing two interpreters for a typical SLIP. When I selected the Melbourne

site for my research, I learned that the interpreting team included a language and culture coach, who was also available to participate in the study. This brought the total number of participants to seven: three members of the interpreting team; two deaf audience members; and two actors:

The first interpreter participant—“Laura”, age 46—is the co-founder of *The Company*. She is a native user of Auslan, having grown up in a family with deaf parents and deaf siblings. Laura is one of the most experienced interpreters in Australia, and she is highly regarded by deaf people and interpreters alike. The Company provides interpreting services at theatre events nation-wide.

Like Laura, the second interpreter participant—“James”—is a native user of Auslan, and was raised with two deaf parents. At the age of 28, he was recently accredited (at the time of the study) and completing post-graduate studies in interpreting. He and Laura have interpreted a few shows together over the past two years, and *The Lion King* is their largest project together.

The third member of the interpreting team—“Palma”—is deaf. She was born to a hearing family that did not use Australian Sign Language, which she learned while interacting with other deaf students during primary school. Palma is an experienced actress and theatre director and co-owns *The Company* in partnership with Laura. She serves as a language and cultural consultant to several interpreting teams during each theatre season.

One of two deaf audience members participating in the study—“Adam”—was born in the United States, where he was raised in a deaf family that used American Sign Language. He attended residential schools for deaf children in the United States, followed by post-secondary education—after which he moved to Australia. The sign language of his daily use is now Australia Sign Language (Auslan). Adam has worked as an actor on stage and television; has taught acting and interpreting techniques; has been an interpreter on stage; and has now diversified into other areas of work.

The second deaf audience member participant—“Deb”—was raised in a deaf family in Australia, where Auslan was in wide use. She attended a residential school for deaf children, after which she earned post-secondary degrees and certificates in Auslan,

education, and sociology at Melbourne area institutions. Her work has included acting, translation, teaching (interpreting and Auslan), and programme management at organizations serving deaf people.

The first of two actors participating in the study—Cameron Goodall (“Cameron”)—performs the role of *Zazu* in *The Lion King* (see photo and description in Section 4.1.3), a bird character based on the African red-billed hornbill. Raised in South Australia in a family steeped in music, Cameron performed in bands with his brother and father while young and became involved in theatre in as a teenager. Since studying acting at university, Cameron has worked extensively as an actor and singer on stage, and with credits on film and television. He is 36 years old.

The second actor-participant—Josh Quong Tart (“Josh”)—is featured in the role of *Scar*, a lion character that serves as the chief antagonist of *The Lion King*. Josh was raised in New South Wales in a family where musical ability was the norm. His interest in theatre began at the age of five, and he holds a bachelor’s degree from a prestigious performing arts programme. Now at 39, he has enjoyed success on series television and stage.

I have chosen to identify study participants using *pseudonyms*, except for the two actor-participants. This is a delicate balance. The nature of a phenomenology is to hold up examples of a specific experience, so that we might begin to understand the nature of the phenomenon. It is both specific and general. The deaf and interpreter-participants may be easily recognized by members of those communities, and the actors are well-known for their work in *The Lion King*. The participants acknowledged my plans to use pseudonyms—and also stated that I was permitted to use their real names. I have chosen to use pseudonyms for the interpreting team and deaf participants, because that is what the participants agreed to in writing and the face-to-face consent given to reveal their real names is undocumented. I have retained the real names of the two actor-participants, as their images appear in the findings chapter and the public record of their work in *The Lion King* is so profuse as to make hiding their identities futile. This inevitability was recognized by the actors during their interview, and also in writing by the production company prior to agreeing to allow the actors to participate in the study.

3.5.3 *Becoming known to study participants*

During recruitment and pre-arrival organizing for my research trip to Melbourne I exchanged emails with the gatekeepers at *The Company* and *The Lion King*, providing information about me and my plans for the study. I forwarded written descriptions of the study, a written biography about me, my curriculum vitae, and links to online examples of my theatre interpreting work.

Once the site had been confirmed, I converted some of these email conversations from written text to sign language. It helped to put the language of the discussion onto my body, combining *what* I was saying with *who* I was. I forwarded this information to all of the participants, hearing and deaf. The degree to which the participants were proficient in American Sign Language was unknown to me at the time (English captions were also included), but comprehension of ASL was not the objective. The videos provided participants with insight into me, allowing them to evaluate me on several fronts. They could judge my use of sign language, and their perception of my proficiency as a signer. They could evaluate my research plans, and recommend adjustments. Examples of my sign language use gave deaf participants information to help them consider how they would like to communicate with me during the planned interviews (directly, or using an interpreter). Lastly, the decision to present information in a sign language format was also something that the participants could judge. It was a window into my world view, which the participants could use to determine the degree to which they would participate in the study. Inherent in this was the possibility that the participants might find my use of ASL to be off-putting (e.g.: once seen, they may not have confidence in my signing abilities; they might not know ASL; they may view ASL as a colonizing sign language). This was an acceptable risk, as the ability of the participants to make informed judgements about their participation in the research was a priority. A description of each video follows, accompanied by an interactive quick reference (QR) code (click or scan to view the video):¹³

¹³ QR Code Links:

QR Code 1: <https://youtu.be/HiLKW5fxr8w>

QR Code 2: <https://youtu.be/uwHTpL3UqV8>

QR Code 3: <https://youtu.be/4ozy9ItHjME>

Introduction for Study Participants: posted and distributed to the participants twelve weeks before my arrival in Melbourne, this video segment served as an introduction to the research project—and to me. I described the overall objective of the study; my plans for each of week of the month; and the sequence and timing of the interview protocol. I noted that my plans were adaptable; and requested participant input—including their thoughts about how to communicate during interviews. Even though the interpreting team and deaf participants had agreed to participate in the study, I felt that this video was an essential beginning of the ongoing relationships with the participants (save for the actors, with whom my communication was largely conducted through the production manager of *The Lion King*). 3 minutes, 2 seconds.



QR Code 1.

Research Summary for Participants: as my arrival in Melbourne drew closer, I sent this research summary to the participants of the study. A companion version in written English accompanied the video link (see Appendix A). This video helped to formalize discussions I had been having with Laura and the other participants via email. 6 minutes, 16 seconds.



QR Code 2.

Introduction for Musical Theatre Workshop Participants: as the date of my research trip to Melbourne neared, I was informed that there would be a two-day workshop for theatre interpreters taking place while I was in town. I was invited to appear in a panel discussion during the workshop. Because this workshop attracted participants from throughout Australia, I did not meet most of them until they arrived in Melbourne. I was asked to create an introduction video for those participants, and to include captions. 3 minutes, 31 seconds.



QR Code 3.

With site and participant selection formalized, I offered to present a workshop or seminar to interpreters and/or community members at no cost through *The Company* (in addition to the invited panel discussion described above). This was one way that I could make a

positive contribution to *The Company*, the study participants, and the broader community from which this study would draw inspiration and knowledge. Laura and I agreed on a topic, script analysis approaches for interpreted theatre. The workshop (entitled *Text Analysis for the Theatre*) took place during the third week of my research trip, and was attended by approximately 30 local interpreters and deaf people. While the analysis and publication of the study findings might occur years in the future, my participation in these two educational events was a way for me to return some value to the community during the same trip where the community would be sharing its valuable insights with me (Singleton et al., 2014).

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

In this section, I will describe the data collection procedures undertaken during my one-month visit to Melbourne. While a variety of qualitative data collection methods are employed in phenomenologically-rooted research, interviews feature most prominently (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 1990). Here, they are supplemented by two other common qualitative data collection methods: observation, and document collection.

3.6.1 One month in Melbourne ...

I established a four-week schedule for the on-site data collection efforts involved in the study, consulting with the participants along the way in order to ensure that my schedule suited their needs and preferences, while also achieving my research objectives. The interpreters and deaf participants suggested opportunities to socialize with them and the broader deaf and signing community—and, also recommended visits to local deaf organizations, events, and schools. My home base for the month would be a two-story apartment located north of the Central Business District of Melbourne. From this location, I could access the Regent Theatre and other important Melbourne locations via mass transit. The apartment was spacious, conveniently located, and could also serve as a location for conducting interviews.

The interview protocol (see Section 3.6.2), stipulated two interviews for each participant: preferably, one interview before the SLIP of *The Lion King* and one after. The date of the interpreted performance served as the anchor for the four-week schedule. I situated the performance date at the end of the second week. This allowed time for data collection

both prior to and after the performance, while leaving open the first week for planning and relationship building.

Week 1: during this first week in Melbourne I sought to become acquainted with the study participants on a social level, and to acclimate myself to my surroundings. I was invited to dinner with members of the local deaf and interpreting communities, and also socialized on a more individual or small group basis over coffee, meals, or visits to local community sites, such as a local school programme for deaf children. One of the deaf study participants invited me to an evening event focusing on disability and feminism in the arts, which we attended together. These interactions helped me to begin to adjust to Auslan, and for local community members to assess me. Participants of the study could judge my sign language use; and could make decisions about their preferred communication approach during the upcoming research interviews (see Section 3.6.2). I met with the interpreter who was selected by Palma to interpret during her upcoming interviews, so that I could provide the interpreter with a general overview of the interview protocol. I also communicated (mostly via email) with the production manager of *The Lion King*, and also visited the *Regent Theatre*, so that I could take in the details of the building and see the theatre in its context within the city. During this time, I managed the scheduling for the first round of interviews and finalized plans for a workshop I would be presenting in Week 2.

Week 2: the overarching purpose of the second week of the research trip was to conduct the first round of interviews with the study participants. It was also during this week when I presented the workshop on script analysis for theatre interpreters, which was sponsored by *The Company* and attended by local interpreters and deaf people. Later in the week, I sat on a panel during a two-day workshop on musical theatre interpreting. The interpreted performance of *The Lion King* which is at the heart of this study took place at the very end of this week, with a special school-aged matinee interpreted a few days prior. I attended both performances. During the first, I focused my attention on observations of the public physical spaces within the theatre and the ways in which the production company had appropriated the spaces for *The Lion King*. During the second, my attention was more focused (but not exclusively) on observing the members of the cast, interpreting team, and audience as they experienced the performance together. Invitations to social events continued during this week, and I accepted whenever possible.

Weeks 3 and 4: the second round of participant interviews began in the third week. There were a multitude of housekeeping details to be handled during this week, in order to properly catalogue, duplicate, and secure data gathered in both rounds of interviews. This week also brought additional opportunities to socialize with local community members. Round two of participant interviews continued into the fourth week of the visit, which was also marked by good-byes to the interpreters and deaf participants of the study.

3.6.2 Interviews

Interviews in the tradition of phenomenology serve to gather *narrative material* that helps to explore a phenomenon, and to develop a *conversational rapport* with the participant which facilitates exploration of their experiences (van Manen, 1990, p. 66). The narratives told by the participants need not be precisely factual, as the point is to gather narratives about the subjective experiences as lived by the participant. The conversational nature of phenomenological interviewing is often achieved through a balance of prepared questions and follow-up questions that emerge naturally during the conversation. Questions are utilized as broad tools to encourage participants to reflect on their experiences, and to consider what situations affected those experiences (Moustakas, 1994; Rudestam & Newton, 2007). An overly broad approach may lead researchers and participants away from the central phenomenon of the study; or, may result in an abundance of unwieldy data. Van Manen (1990) recommends asking participants to think about a *specific instance* or event, and to elicit *personal life stories* in the form of anecdotes from the participant—following-up in a conversational manner to help the participant examine the experience in detail.

With these guidelines in mind, I established a protocol comprised of two interviews per participant during my time on site, with the option of a third follow-up interview during data analysis. Three prompts served as the basis for each interview:

- Describe a specific experience of a SLIP.
- Describe what was memorable.
- Describe what made the experience enjoyable.

The interpreted performance of *The Lion King* served as a *specific instance* on which to focus the *second round* of interviews. I considered that the conversational nature of phenomenological interviews would leave open the likelihood that participants would (naturally) drift toward conversations about other SLIP experiences. The first round of interviews provides opportunities to discuss these other SLIP experiences. Separating the interviews established a purposeful focus on the specific experience of *The Lion King* (during the second interview), while also collecting valuable stories from each participant that help to put their experiences into (some) context.

The three prompts above were adapted for each of the two interviews. In the first interview, participants were asked to describe their first exposure to theatre, and then interpreted theatre. They were then asked to describe a memorable SLIP—one which stood out for any reason. Lastly, they were asked to describe an especially enjoyable SLIP experience. The second interviews focused entirely on the interpreted performance of *The Lion King*. Participants were asked to describe their experience, starting before their arrival to the Regent Theatre, and ending with their departure after the performance. They were prompted to consider what was memorable, and also what was especially enjoyable.

I developed an interview guide (see Appendix C), which I reviewed prior to conducting each interview. I did not actively use the guide during interviews. A varied, adaptive approach to interview questions is typical of phenomenology, where the *conversational nature* of the interview is dominated by the narrative as it unfolds from the participant (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher teases out additional detail and guides the participant back to the phenomenon—if necessary—in a way which is natural, and intuitive. Remaining beholden to a pre-scripted set of questions needlessly inserts a structure that influences the manner in which information is revealed.

A question guide, I posit, is one of the moments during research design that Young and Temple (2014) asks us to contemplate. Throughout academe, it is standard for researchers to seek some form of successful ethical review, which must be submitted in written form—generally, written English. This is a type of language policy, forcing researchers to adapt conversations which might ultimately happen in other languages to the dominate language of society. This has cascading effects on the research design and process. If an interview guide is first conceived in/for written English, and then it is

brought to an interview that is conducted in a signed language, a researcher who is committed to the language of the guide will conduct some form of translation of the English question into sign language (planned or otherwise). This shifts the researcher's priority away from the conversational relationship that is required for phenomenological interviews. It prioritizes language that is stuffed away in the recesses of the research proposal over the language of the people in front of the researcher. When the interview happens in sign language, a written interview guide forces the researcher's attention from the participant to the page. This may be a natural part of a bi-modal, bi-lingual experience—but it is not innocuous. For the purposes of the present study, I decided that a written interview guide would impede the conversational nature of the interviews. I anticipated that some interviews would be conducted in some form of Auslan or translanguaging approach; and, I felt that I would also benefit from keeping my own head in whatever language space that would be negotiated by the participant and I during the conversation.

Study participants were given some amount of control over their interview experience, including *scheduling*, *language preference*, and *interview location*. As their participation was paramount, I did my best to adapt my schedule to the availability of the participants. This meant meeting during a wide variety of days and times. While the participants and I did our best to maintain the planned interview schedule—two separate interviews for each participant—I was forced to adapt my protocol to the constraints of the participants in two instances. Scheduling conflicts during the week leading up the performance of *The Lion King* made it impossible to interview interpreter-participant Laura prior to the performance. We agreed to combine the objectives of both interviews into one conversation. I structured the combined interview similarly to the separated interviews, separating the conversations about prior SLIP experiences from those about the performance of *The Lion King*. Laura and I made an effort to maintain this separation, so that the conversational nature of the interview would remain in the headspace of interview one (prior SLIP experiences) or the headspace of interview two (the experience of *The Lion King*). My review of the interview data suggests that Laura and I were fairly successful in our attempt to cover the *subject* areas included in each interview; however, combining the interviews had an obvious impact on the duration of the conversation.

A similar compromise involved the actors. I was permitted access to both actors *together*, *once*, and for *one hour*. This was not entirely surprising to me, as many actors working

at the calibre of Cameron and Josh are scheduled for 8 performances per week. Outside of performances, they are involved in rehearsals, meetings, auditions, and other job-related activities. Accommodating this restriction was a way in which I could demonstrate my willingness to meet the participants in their reality, rather than forcing them to mine. In addition to the challenge of combining the content of two interviews into one, one-hour conversation, the actor interview would require me to balance two participants. The dynamics of this were unideal, as my overall aim was to solicit individual experiences. With two participants, the dynamic could easily lead to a more shared recollection. I was conscious to prompt each actor for their own description of their experiences, rather than falling into the habit of one person speaking on behalf of the other.

Deaf participants were asked to choose which *language(s)* they would prefer to use during the interview, a decision that could wait until after they had interacted with me during the first week of the research visit. Palma (who is deaf and on the interpreting team) chose to use Auslan, with me using spoken English, interpreted by an English/Auslan interpreter. Palma selected the interpreter, who interpreted both interviews and was paid. Choosing the interpreter was not merely a technical task. The chosen interpreter was known to all of the deaf and interpreter-team participants; she had extra linguistic knowledge of the participants and The Company; and, she and I met to discuss the research protocol: She had a dual status as both belonging and not-belonging, and the choice of interpreter was influential to the project (Temple & Edwards, 2002). Interviews with Adam were conducted directly, without an interpreter, in American Sign Language—Adam’s first sign language. Deb chose to communicate with me directly, using a combination of signs from Auslan and ASL which changed throughout the conversation as we negotiated meaning together. Our social interactions prior to the interviews lead Deb and I to believe this strategy would be successful. This was a type of *translanguaging*—although we did not label it as such at the time.

Participants of the study could also negotiate the *location* where interviews would take place, something which was often dictated by convenience to their schedules. My apartment served as the location for the interviews with James and with Palma. Interviews with the other participants occurred in local public spaces of their choosing (a cultural centre; a pub; and, some restaurants). The first interview with Adam was conducted via Zoom, as he lives in another region of Australia.

Documenting the interviews was achieved through a combination of *video* and *audio* recording devices. Interviews conducted in my apartment were filmed using two GoPro cameras—one focused on the participant, and the other on me (and the interpreter, if present). A separate audio track was recorded on a professional digital audio recorder. The separate audio recorder achieved a much higher quality of audio recording than was possible by the default microphones included on the GoPro cameras. Interviews conducted outside of the apartment were filmed with a GoPro camera when the interview was conducted in sign language; however, I opted for using the professional audio recorder for the interviews with Laura and with the actors. These interviews were conducted in spoken English in environments that featured significant background noise, and the technology included in the audio recorder allowed me to filter-out this noise during the review of the data.

Stakeholder Group	Data Item	Duration
Interpreters	James Interview 1	1 hr 39 min
	James Interview 2	1 hr 30 min
	Laura Interview 1	1 hr 34 min
	Laura Interview 2	
	Palma Interview 2	1 hr 12 min
	Palma Interview 1	1 hr 34 min
Deaf Patrons	Adam Interview 1	50 min
	Adam Interview 2	44 min
	Deb Interview 1	50 min
	Deb Interview 2	46 min
Actors	Cameron Goodall Interview 1	56 min
	Cameron Goodall Interview 2	
	Josh Quong Tart Interview 1	
	Josh Quong Tart Interview 2	

Figure 3-1. Participant interview inventory

Figure 3-1 summarizes the inventory of participant interviews, totalling eleven hours and thirty minutes. When prompted to describe their SLIP experiences, interpreter-

participants often included discussions of experiences before and after the performance, accounting for the additional length of their interviews. These descriptions included their morning routine and other activities well in advance of the performance; whereas, the actors and deaf participants described their experience of the SLIP with relationship to their arrival at the theatre. While I did not begin the interview process with pre-conceived expectations about the length of the interviews, I was generally satisfied that I had reached a natural point of completeness with each participant by the end of the interview (given the constraints described above).

With each participant, I left open the potential for a third interview, where I might ask for more discussion about a specific issue or detail that was previously discussed. After conducting the data analysis, I decided against a third interview. I had selected the interpreted performance of *The Lion King* as the central incident on which the participants would reflect. If a third interview were to take place, it would happen after some analysis had been conducted. In the life of a doctoral study, that could be more than a year, and the participants' recollections of their experiences would be shaded by the influence of time. I instead decided to limit my analysis to the data collected on site.

3.6.3 Observations

I collected *field observation data* at the performance of *The Lion King* attended by the interview participants, as well as the SLIP performance for school-aged children earlier in the week. The field observation protocol included my observations about the physical and social features of the SLIP, which I documented by hand in a field journal, and via brief notes spoken into my smart phone (n=17). These are my observations, taken from my participant role as an audience member, meant to work in tandem with the experiences described by the participants from their perspectives. I found the observation data to be useful to the description of the social and physical context of the SLIP that is presented in the findings chapter (see Section 4.1), and for the *corroboration* of statements made by the participants.

3.6.4 Desk research

I conducted ongoing *desk research* as a secondary data collection strategy, designed to supplement my ability to contextualize the descriptions offered by participants during

interviews and my own observations. Prior to and during the research trip, I collected public documents related to the promotion of the SLIP (e.g., social media posts, blogs, the seat purchasing procedure, etc). I also collected information about the Melbourne production of *The Lion King*, which would be helpful in crafting the description of the physical environment that exists within the *Regent Theatre*; identifying the ways in which they are transformed by the crew of *The Lion King* (see Section 4.1); and describing the experiences of the participants in the spaces (see Section 4.2). Examples of ways in which this information supported the writing of the phenomenological narrative (see Section 3.7.4), include: *corroborating* participant descriptions (e.g., the location of the seating section); *bringing additional detail* to observations (e.g., the number of lights focused on the interpreters); and providing the reader with a *visual reference* for a detail mentioned in the narrative (e.g., a photo of the stage door entrance to the theatre).

3.7 Data analysis

In the previous section, I described the data collection procedures for the study, which were conducted during a research trip lasting four weeks. In the following section, I discuss how the data was analysed, beginning with a description of the tools and procedures involved in transcription and coding. I then describe my methods to identify themes in the data, and to construct the phenomenological narrative that will be presented in the findings chapter (see Chapter 4).

3.7.1 CAQDAS software used in the study

Coding tasks were conducted using *HyperResearch*, a version of *Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software* (CAQDAS). Common features of CAQDAS programs include the ability to transcribe multiple data sources and apply codes to transcripts and other research artefacts. Codes can be applied directly to video, audio, images, and transcriptions, and the researcher can view media files and transcripts simultaneously during the analysis process. Codes can be organized into collections, analysed, displayed as code books, and incorporated into theories modelled within the software.

Although the features of *HyperResearch* and similar CAQDAS programs are impressive, is the *researcher* who conducts the qualitative analysis—not the software (Saldana,

2013). Like other choices made by the researcher, the selection and use of CAQDAS software can veneer the study. The features of such software are vast (e.g., data formatting and management, transcription, coding, queries, reports, maps, analysis), and the researcher must choose a subset of features which suit their research design. The researcher may be compelled to utilize features available in the software that aren't suitable to their method.

A type of habitual workflow permeates writing about qualitative data analysis, which prioritizes converting data from interviews, focus groups, and other social and linguistic interactions into a *written format*. Often, this is in the form of typed transcripts. This process may also include translating multiple languages uttered within the data into one, working research language—frequently, English. Often seen as a benign housekeeping chore that happens before true analysis can begin, this conversion of performed linguistic and social data into reported and secondary data has consequences (Temple & Young, 2004; Young & Temple, 2014). When the data includes sign language users, the reduction of filmed interactions to written English constrains what can be represented in the data to what can be written in English. Linguistic features that are possible in visual languages are omitted or transcribed to conform to the limits of written language; and, the biophysical pragmatics of sign language conversations in context are reduced or dismissed. That is a limit inherent in the traditions of an English-centric academe, and in each study in which the researcher makes the choice to adapt their data to this tradition—including this study. This is Young and Temple's guiding thesis, as they warn that adopting an assumed protocol or procedure has the "power to close down some voices and enable others" (2014, p. 1).

3.7.2 Translation and transcription

Perhaps fuelled by our desire to contribute to knowledge in our disciplines, researchers make choices about how to abide the dominating forces of English in academe. Young and Temple encourage critical dialogue about research methodology, and the impact of these choices. In this section, I will describe the ways in which I adapted my analysis protocol to suit the characteristics of each interview, and my approach to translation and transcription of interview data.

My thoughts on this part of the methodology for the study evolved throughout the course of my doctoral studies, as my own knowledge and experience as a researcher deepened. I, too, had assumed that transcription would be an early data management task, converting all interview data into written English. The issue remained fairly abstract (to me) until I began working with data in the pilot study. I had established a flexible approach to data collection, designed to be responsive to the linguistic, social, and technical demands of each interview, but my data analysis procedures were not similarly responsive. I reconsidered my approach to each type of interview, described below in three categories:

Multi-modal Video with English Audio Track: Interviews with James and Palma were conducted in my apartment under well-controlled conditions where I could film with one or more video cameras while also recording a separate audio track on a digital audio recorder. James and I communicated in spoken English. Palma and I communicated using an interpreter: her signing in Auslan, and I speaking in English. Influences from bi-modal communication were evident during these interviews. As James chatted in spoken English, he frequently employed gestures that took advantage of spatial production tactics common to sign language—using his arms, face, and body to depict actions, locations, shapes, and proxemics in a way that was consistent with the real-life event he was describing. This *code blending* is a feature of bilingualism among bilingual/bimodal individuals, notably among *Codas*¹⁴ (Bishop, 2010; Bishop & Hicks, 2005; Young & Temple, 2014, p. 135). I mirrored these behaviours, either to confirm my understanding or seek clarification.

During Palma's interview, the interpreter provided an English rendition of Palma's answers to my questions. My rudimentary Auslan skills were not seriously put to use during the interview; however, my decades of prior sign language experience in American Sign Language was still a present feature in the interview. As Palma responded to my questions, my prior sign language exposure helped me access the ways in which she described spatial relationships in a way that I would likely overlook otherwise. The language used by Palma during the interview remained Auslan; but, my access to it was

¹⁴ Used here, *Coda* refers to a hearing person with one or more deaf parents who was raised within a community of deaf sign language users (colloquially, the deaf community). Deaf people can also be Codas.

both mediated (by the interpreter) and combined (both the English rendition and added spatial information).

In both of these cases, there was an English rendering of record: James, speaking in English; and, the interpretation of Palma's responses as rendered by the interpreter she had chosen. I transcribed these into written English, deciding to represent relevant additional spatial information in square brackets, in-line in the transcript document, as shown in this example from James:

So, if you're imagining like the actual property is my leg here [draws a long rectangle on his thigh], and the stage door is here [indicates the short edge of the rectangle, farthest from his body] and the stage is here [indicates the area closer to him than the imaginary stage door]. And, then all the actors and stuff are up on the different levels [indicating several floors/levels above the stage space].

Time codes embedded in the transcript document helped me to refer back to the source video during coding, analysis, and transcription procedures. The additional spatial information noted in brackets generally serves to provide additional layers of meaning to English renderings of direct quotes from participants, and also to the overall description of the spaces that appear in Chapter 4. Translation of sign language based interview data often has a homogenizing influence. Researchers strive to maintain the 'voice' of study participants, keeping the sign language "visible" throughout the analysis, transcription, and reporting procedures (Stone & West, 2012). This can be aided by blending translated representations from the researcher with (relatively) more direct representations of sign language (e.g., video segments, gloss, annotations). Similarly, documenting visual information embedded in the language practices of the participants within the transcripts of the English-of-record helped to make visible (some of) the language practices of the participants—while retaining the additional information contained therein.

English Audio Track Only: this realization about the value of co-speech gesture in filmed interviews did not surface until the analysis process. During the data collection process, interview locations were largely influenced by participant availability (in which both physical location and daily schedule were considerations). Interviews with Laura and with Josh and Cameron were conducted in spoken English, in public, noisy eating spaces,

packed with people speaking at tables nearby. I elected to record the interview with the digital audio recorder, using a microphone designed to allow the clarity of the audio recording to be adjusted throughout the location spectrum of the recording. After recording the interviews in a noisy location, I was able to use software to digitally “focus” the aim of the microphone on the person speaking at any given time, reducing emphasis of sounds coming from other areas of the room. The GoPro cameras included in my research kit were designed with optics in mind, with threadbare audio features that would provide far less audio fidelity. I set aside the video camera, prioritizing the collection of the audio file. With this I limited the data within these interviews to spoken language, and any co-speech gesture was lost. Like James, Laura is also a Coda and was raised in an Auslan environment. A filmed interview with Laura might also have provided supplemental visual information. This methodological lesson is one that I will carry with me into my future research endeavours.

All interviews transcribed from spoken English (both these and those discussed previously) were transcribed into a word processing document using *shadow dictation* and *speech recognition software*. As I listened through headphones to each interview source file, I dictated each word into a microphone, shadowing the speech present in the recording. Speech recognition software (*Dragon 6*) was used to generate a rough text transcription in English. Multiple factors can influence the effectiveness of automated speech recognition, including the presence of multiple voices, overlapping speech, background noise, and the idiosyncratic language features of individual speakers. Shadow dictation removes these confounding elements by reproducing source speech through one voice, in a controlled environment. I equipped Dragon with a speech profile for my voice and employed shadow dictation as my main method of creating draft transcripts. I then reviewed each transcript alongside the original media, to fix transcription errors and to improve the structure and layout of the document.

Sign Language Video with Incidental Audio: interviews with Adam and Deb took place in signed languages, without interpreters or any use of speech or voice. The first interview with Adam was conducted and filmed via online video chat, as he was outside of Melbourne at the time. His second interview, and both interviews with Deb, were conducted in public gathering spaces (i.e., a community coffee house, and a restaurant). These locations were less crowded than those chosen for the interviews with Laura and with the actors, allowing the participants and I to choose seats that afforded us some

privacy and a suitable physical arrangement for filming. Each interview was filmed using a single GoPro, with composition that included both the participant and me. Audio was recorded via the GoPro, but was not prioritized in data analysis because the interviews included no spoken language.

I did not transcribe these interviews into written English, as spoken English is not represented in the data. Converting sign language data to written English would have been an act of *translation*—something with deeper implications than transcription of a spoken language into its corresponding written code (Temple & Young, 2004; Young & Temple, 2014). My experience transcribing the multi-modal interviews of James and Palma demonstrated to me that transcripts alone were insufficient for my work habit, which involved reviewing interview media directly, even when a transcript was available. Anything else seemed like a separation between me and the interview data—an obsolete and limiting approach, given the ability to directly code multi-media data using CAQDAS software. Section 3.7.6 includes a discussion of my approach to the translation of quotes from these interviews which appear in the findings reported in Chapter 4.

3.7.3 *Coding type(s)*

Applying codes to data—*coding*—is a type of qualitative data method wherein a researcher attaches a label or symbol to a specific data element. How code labels are determined, how much data is coded, and the procedure for applying codes are determined by the research methodology as managed by the researcher. There are multiple approaches to coding, and some qualitative studies employ more than one approach (Saldana, 2013).

Coding is not required in qualitative research. Van Manen (1990, 2007) is among researchers who question the suitability of coding in phenomenological research, and who instead rely on a highly interpretive understanding of themes that emerge from within the research data. Valuable in phenomenological analysis is a process of hermeneutic writing—a reflective method wherein explicative descriptions of the phenomenon are woven together in an “example of examples” (van Manen, 1990, p. 121). I applied three types of coding schemes to the interview data in the present study, to support my writing of the phenomenological narrative presented in the findings chapter (see Chapter 4).

The first coding task—*attribute coding*—was to label research artefacts with standardized information that identified essential elements of each artefact, such as basic descriptive information, context, and data format (Saldana, 2013, p. 70). This served a housekeeping function, and also ensured that meta data about each interview was embedded within the study file. I would later use *HyperResearch* to recall these details for the purpose of writing this thesis.

I next applied *structural coding* to each case (each interview was assigned its own case). This type of coding employs “content-based or conceptual phrases to represent topics of inquiry” (MacQueen et al., 2008 in Saldana, 2013, p. 84). This allows the researcher to identify comparable segments of the data corpus across multiple cases. I applied three types of structural codes, in three separate passes through the data: *interview structure*, *performance chronology details*, and *performance titles*.

The group of *interview structure codes* identified the topic discussed in each segment of the interview, providing an effective way to identify all instances where a specific topic was discussed by one or more study participants (e.g., first SLIP experience; what interpreters wear; seating allocated for deaf patrons). Next, *performance chronology detail codes* were applied to segments that included first-hand accounts of SLIP experiences. Each code in this group identified the moment during a performance experience being described in the interview segment (e.g., arriving at the theatre; the interval/intermission; the song “Circle of Life”). This nomenclature facilitated the development of a shared timeline of the SLIP experience, both at the macro level and moment-by-moment. With this, I could narrow interview data to a single moment in the performance chronology; and then bring together interview segments from multiple participants. My final pass of structural coding identified *performance titles* mentioned in the data. Although the experience of *The Lion King* was the unifying experience for the study, nineteen different productions were mentioned by participants of the study. I applied a *performance title code* to each segment in which a participant described a SLIP experience, labelling the segment with the name of the musical, play, or other theatrical event referenced. This code group allowed me to limit the data to a specific performance, most crucially, the central experience of the study—the interpreted performance of *The Lion King*.

My use of structural coding was functional: it provided an information architecture and meta descriptions I could use as inputs for the sorting, filtering, reviewing, and mapping tools available in HyperResearch. *Structural codes* illuminated *what* topics participants discussed during our conversations; the final round of coding highlighted what participants had to say *about* each topic.

In this final coding approach, I employed *themeing the data*—a term designed to encapsulate a nonspecific approach to identifying essential themes in the data useful in ethnography and phenomenology (Saldana, 2013, p. 175). *Themeing* is a coding *process* which is applied to *specific segments* of interview data. This is distinct from *themes*, which are *outcomes* of qualitative analysis. Using an approach described by van Manen (1990) as “selective” or “highlighting”, I reviewed interview segments, and assigned phrases or statements from within the segment (“in vivo”) that I felt were essential or particularly revealing about the phenomenon (e.g., “good seating is not too close and not too far”; “theatre is a shared experience”; “the first time the actors see the interpreters is on stage”).¹⁵ Themeing, as employed here, is a highly inductive data coding method, suitable to phenomenology (Saldana, 2013).

I applied *themeing the data* procedures to all of the study data—not a subset of the data that I thought might relate to my inquiry related to spatial production. Everything in the phenomenological interview is related to everything else: participants told stories that had parts. These parts contributed to the whole experience. The whole-part relationship is a feature of phenomenological exploration. *Themeing the data* was my chosen methodology for looking at segments of the *individual experience*. *Themes* in phenomenology are designed to get at the *notion of an experience*—but they do not assert analytical value on their own: “They are fasteners, foci, or threads around which the phenomenological description is facilitated” (van Manen, 1990, p. 91).

¹⁵ Here, too, methods and tools do not reflect the pool of possible study data. “In vivo” codes cannot be applied to sign language data without first translating the data.

3.7.4 *Phenomenological description and theme development*

Because there is no prescribed path in phenomenology, some researchers become stuck when beginning the process of writing their interpretation of the meanings found in their data. Phenomenological data analysis is characterized by a search for the *structure of meaning* within an experience, as revealed through *reflexive practices* of the researcher. Two products typify this endeavour: identification of *themes* revealed in the data; and, the ultimate object of the research—a phenomenological text. This text serves to animate the questions asked within the study.

In the style of van Manen, themes are both a starting point and destination. Through analysis, the researcher seeks to recover repeated motifs “embodied and dramatized in the evolving meanings and imagery of the work” (van Manen, 1990, p. 78). Phenomenological themes are *themes of experience*—the experiential structures that make up the total experience. The researcher attempts to give shape to the shapeless notions of the experience. Broad themes identified from early reflections on interview data are revised over time, influenced by the researcher’s ongoing reflection and descriptive writing process. Ultimately, themes are inadequate in representing the phenomenon in toto; instead they serve only to “point at, to allude to, or to hint at, an aspect of the phenomenon” (van Manen, 1990, p. 92). And, so while themes have value—and are a product of the study—their value is referential to the narrative description of the phenomenon.

Van Manen is critical of mechanical, pre-ordained approaches to thematic analysis (1990), but does not rule them out entirely (1984). He advocates a non-prescriptive approach, beginning with descriptions from within the data, and then developing themes through a *reflective process chosen by the researcher* (e.g., additional conversations with participants; review of artworks; collaborative analysis with other researchers). Thematic analysis should be a “process of insightful invention, discovery or disclosure that is not rule-bound but a free act of ‘seeing’ meaning” (van Manen, 1990, p. 88).

For the present study, I adopted a reflection process guided by four *lifeworld existentials* considered within phenomenology to be formative to the human experience—*lived space* (spatiality); *lived body* (corporeality); *lived time* (temporality); and *lived human relation* (relationality or communality). Van Manen notes that each existential may be

“differentiated but not separated” (1990, p. 105). This schema facilitates reflection on each part of the lifeworld existential quadrille for the purposes of thematic discovery and phenomenological writing. Researchers recognize the inseparability of the four existentials, accepting that reflection on one existential will inevitably activate reflection on the others. I employed these lifeworld existentials as reflexive guides during data analysis and during the development of the descriptive narrative. The scope of the four existentials together was expansive enough to allow me to consider all three parts of Lefebvre’s spatial triad, and also recognizes the influence of time (also a consideration of Lefebvrian analysis).

HyperResearch served as a platform and tool set in aid of this reflective process. I reviewed the codes that resulted from the final round of coding, *themeing the data*, identifying all instances in the data where a participant discussed experiences related to space, employing the filtering and sorting tools of the software. This required reflection and interpretation on my part, to include relevant data which did not explicitly mention ‘space’. I next created a *code map*. Starting with a blank canvas, I placed *themeing the data* codes onto the canvas, clustering things together that seemed related. Clusters that were alike were similarly neighbored. Things were related to more than one cluster were situated betwixt.

The visual nature of the code mapping process helped me to temporarily arrest the ephemera of the described moments in the data, and to consider them in concert with nearby ephemera. Clusters became motifs. Each code appeared as text in a square box. I avoided using software tools to draw relationships between individual codes during this early exploration. I used this large map as a macro-level reference point while writing the phenomenological narrative presented in Section 4.2, and throughout the ongoing development of the themes described in Section 5.1. I left the map boundaryless, choosing instead to let the writing process explore the outer limits of each theme-cluster, defined by the descriptions provided by the participants.

I next turned to writing the *phenomenological description* presented in Section 4.2 of the findings chapter—crafting an “example composed of examples” heavily reliant on verbatim quotes and anecdotes from the participants (van Manen, 1990, p. 122). I anchored the description in a *chronology* of the SLIP experience—following the timeline of events as shared by the participants. As I began to write a description of a particular

moment during the SLIP experience, I created a new *micro-level code map* composed only of the relevant codes (often, a cluster of codes). Here, I considered potential relationships between codes, marking them with lines on the map. I treated these maps like digital scratch paper: a place for discovery and reformation.

Embedded in each code on the code map was a hyperlink to the segment of research data referenced by the code. As I crafted the phenomenological narrative description of the SLIP, I travelled through the codes on the *micro-level code map*, clicking on each one to return to the original interview media and review the first-hand account provided by the participants. This additional review of the original participant explanations helped me keep their descriptions at the heart of the phenomenological narrative.

3.7.5 Writing and translation

Throughout the analysis and writing process, I intentionally sought to keep the accounts of the participants in front of me, while also retaining my own memories. Data collection, analysis, and the writing of the phenomenological narrative stretched over several years of my part-time doctoral endeavour. This presented a challenge to the idea of conducting a third round of interviews. Asking participants to reflect on their experience of *The Lion King* years later would introduce a new interpretation of the experience—one viewed from a distance and coloured by new experiences. Instead, I decided to ascribe the scope of the phenomenological narrative to the contemporaneous recollections of the participants collected at the time of my research trip.

The phenomenological description is formed out of an interpretive process in which the researcher is a creative force. I sought ways to help me establish a suitable mindset for writing, activating my own memories of interactions with participants and observations during data collection. This began with the aforementioned review of the source media contributing to each section as I wrote. I looked at digital photos of locations within the theatre, costumes and set pieces from *The Lion King*, and of each participant—leaving them open on a separate monitor as I wrote. I listened to the cast recording of *The Lion King* relentlessly. During each writing session, I watched a video of Laura and James performing their Auslan translation of *Circle of Life*, the song featured at the beginning and ending of *The Lion King*. The song has a summoning purpose, drawing the audience into the story. Seeing it embodied on the interpreters and translated into Auslan

summoned memories of the performance, the study participants, and the purpose of that day's writing.

Direct statements from participants were quoted extensively in the phenomenological narrative. Statements from hearing participants were *transcribed* from spoken English to written English. Statements from James which included co-speech gestures blending Auslan spatial features with spoken English were retained in the phenomenological narrative and described in square brackets. Statements from Palma were transcribed using the English renditions spoken by the interpreter during the interviews. Additional spatial information available in Palma's Auslan statements were carried forward into the phenomenological description as additions to the interpreters' rendering added in square brackets.

Statements from Adam that appear in the narrative were *translated* into written English from ASL. Although now living in Australia, Adam was raised just ten miles from my hometown in Michigan. We have similar ASL regional dialects, and our conversations were easy and familiar. Because Adam and I shared a number of socio-linguistic characteristics, I felt confident in both my understanding of Adam and my ability to calibrate my English renderings effectively to match his original statements.

Statements from Deb that appear as quotes in the narrative were *translated* into English from the *translanguage* of the interview. At every moment in the interview the language in use was a negotiated blend of Auslan, ASL and gesture. This was an active process motivated by clarity. I left each interview with general confidence that we had achieved mutual understanding. As my exposure to British Sign Language (BSL) increased throughout my doctoral studies at Heriot-Watt University, I grew more confident in my understanding of both Deb and Palma.¹⁶ I translated statements made by Deb into written English using my best judgement about word choice, grammatical structures, register, affect, and style. The number of socio-linguistic characteristics shared between Deb and I were fewer than those I shared with Adam. Consequently, these translations began from a more distant place of knowing and may be the most foreignized of all in the study. This

¹⁶ Auslan is part of the same family of languages as BSL (Johnston & Schembri, 2007, p. 55).

is a potential limitation of the study, as misunderstandings by me may have influenced my data analysis and the report of findings. Readers thinking “hmm, that doesn’t seem like something an Aussie would say” are probably correct.

While all quotes appear in English, those originating in English are direct transcriptions that include added linguistic texture from the performed language. Sentences are natural and irregular—reported *as-is*. Their style is varied, as they come from varied sources. Translations of statements from signed languages into English may appear more plain and homogenous, as they are products generated out of context and through one researcher/translator.

3.7.6 Report of findings

I report the findings of my analysis in Chapter 4 as a phenomenology in two parts, distinguishing *what* the participants experienced of the SLIP (Section 4.1) from *how* they experienced it (Section 4.2). Section 4.1 is a preamble to the phenomenological narrative, serving to provide contextual information about the SLIP that is lacking from the participant descriptions, but which is essential to the understanding of the performance *in relationship* with broader society (see discussion in Section 2.2.4). Using McAuley’s (1999) *taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre* as a framework, I describe the physical spaces of *the Regent Theatre*, and the appropriation of those spaces by the production of *The Lion King*. This section is a factual description, rooted in verifiable and referenced sources. Participant data in this section is limited to descriptive details of the spaces described within the McAuley taxonomy. Descriptions of *how* spaces were conceived and experienced by participants is reserved for the phenomenological narrative in Section 4.2.

With this context-setting presentation of the spaces of the SLIP event serving as a backdrop, Section 4.2 invites the reader to fall into the *example composed of examples*—a composite, narrative retelling of the experiences described to me by the participants. I have adopted an anecdotal narrative convention for the phenomenological description designed to evoke images and feelings within the reader. Anecdotal narrative combines the strengths of analytical writing with the literary power of poetic language; it pulls the reader into the narrative pre-reflexively “but then prompts us to reflect” (van Manen, 1990, p. 121).

The phenomenological narrative is a method and a product, designed to bring to life a vivid retelling of the experiences described to me by the participants. It is for the reader to consume and reflect upon, separately from the intrusion of my thematic analysis, which I reserve for the discussion of the findings in Chapter 5.

3.8 Qualitative validation strategies and study quality

Creswell (2013) cautions researchers to be thoughtful in making evaluative claims of *authenticity*, *dependability*, *trustworthiness*, *validity*, and similar descriptors. Researchers may at times frame this conversation as a destination: a seal-of-approval. This implies a type of fixed *verification* of the study method and findings. In his own research practice, Creswell (2013) distinguishes between study *validation* and study *quality*.

Validation is “an attempt to assess the ‘accuracy’ of the findings as best described by the researcher and the participants” (Creswell, 2013, p. 251). It is a *process* undertaken by the researcher, employing one or more *validation strategies* throughout the course of the study and reporting of findings. Several strategies identified by Creswell factored into the present study. The phenomenological narrative provides a *triangulated* description of the SLIP experience, composed of examples from the three stakeholder groups included in the study (i.e., the interpreting team; deaf audience members; and actors). This is a different objective than triangulation *within each group*. Descriptive anecdotes of interpreters, deaf audience members, and actors converge to texturize the narrative description of moments during the SLIP—revealing their multi-dimensional nature. I chose this approach in an attempt to explore the divergence of opinions about SLIPs described in the introduction of this thesis (see Section 1.1).

In the report of findings (Chapter 4), I provide *rich, thick descriptions* of the SLIP, combining multiple participant reflections with abundant detail. (See Section 3.7.4 for a discussion of the development of the phenomenological narrative.). A narrative that is sufficiently plump with (useful) description can be judged by the reader for potential *transferability* (Creswell, 2013, p. 121). *I do not claim transferability*: I have crafted a plump story, so that the reader may decide whether the findings transfer to their own area of study or practice. The thematic analysis is presented separately from the phenomenological narrative, so that the reader can consume the narrative unencumbered.

I have endeavoured to *clarify researcher bias* throughout the research design, implementation, analysis, and reporting. I have elucidated my positionality throughout the study, describing in detail my own theatre interpreting practice, language biography, and personal research agenda. Participants received information describing my positionality and research design prior to data collection in English and in filmed ASL with English captions (see Section 3.5.3). Descriptions in this thesis of the inspirations for the study (Chapter 1) and of my positionality (Section 3.2) form a thick description, allowing the reader to consider the study as a product of a specific researcher with a perspective. I return to the discussion of positionality in the conclusions chapter (see Section 3.2.1).

During my month in Melbourne, my schedule was a mix of *interactive* research activities (e.g., interviews, social interactions, workshops, performance observation) and *isolated* research activities (e.g., desk research, journaling, data management, project management). Interviews comprised 12 ½ hours of the research endeavour. Sustained interactions between researchers and participants improve mutual understanding and reduce distortions in the interpretation of data (Creswell, 2013, pp. 250–251). As the researcher progresses through data collection and analysis, the amount of new discovery falls, and repetition of participant contributions becomes more frequent. As the data becomes more saturated, the value of additional data collection diminishes. Previous to data collection, I considered two perspectives on the scope of a sufficiently-saturated phenomenological narrative of a theatre performance. One standard of saturation might be a complete description of *every moment* of the timeline in the interpreted performance—a scope of data and reporting that far exceeds the ambitions of the present study. I chose instead to seek sufficient descriptions of the *moments chosen by the participants* as they responded to my questions naturally. I made two assumptions. First, that the moments within the performance that were *relevant* to my questions or *vivid* would bubble to the surface during participant interviews, gaining weight in the data by virtue of their relative weight in the experience. I also assumed that some moments would stand out as relevant or vivid *across multiple participants*. Judging the sufficiency of an engagement by the number of hours spent together is futile if the engagement does not yield a sufficiently rich description, lending to the overall quality of the study.

Quality is a broader assessment of multiple aspects of the study both internal and external. Procedural quality and technical merit are considered alongside impact and contribution.

Creswell offers five standards by which he judges the quality of a phenomenology (Creswell, 2013, p. 260):

- demonstrates an understanding of the philosophical tenants of phenomenology;
- explores a clear phenomenon, that is articulated concisely;
- employs phenomenological data analysis procedures;
- conveys the overall essence of the participant experience, including a contextualized description; and
- shows evidence of author reflexivity throughout the study.

Taken together, the validation strategies of the researcher combine with these standards of quality to contribute to the degree of trust that the study earns from participants and interested readers. I return to a discussion of study quality in the final chapter of the thesis (Chapter 6).

3.9 Ethical implications

My *hearingness* is an “elephant in the room”—as I am one of a herd of hearing researchers making its way through deaf studies. Our voices get heard, due in no small part to our privileges. Our (foreign) epistemologies and ontologies have skewed representations of deaf peoples and signed languages, forever impacting the trajectory of research in deaf studies and related disciplines (Kusters et al., 2017; O’Brien & Emery, 2014; Sutton-Spence & West, 2011; Young & Temple, 2014). In the examination of sign language interpreting, researchers commonly operate in hybrid space, borrowing from multiple disciplines, including deaf studies (Kusters et al., 2017; Napier & Leeson, 2016). The present study follows this pattern, adopting perspectives from theatre arts, interpreting studies, and deaf studies. While I have responsibility to all of the participants of the study, the burden resulting from flaws in my study or its reporting is not likely to be equally distributed. Previous sections have described my attempts to consider this

responsibility throughout the entirety of the research *procedure* (Sections 3.1 through 3.8).

The following discussion turns to activities and decisions that relate to my responsibility to deaf people more broadly at three points in life of the study: data collection; analysis; and sharing of findings. While *some deaf people* agreed to participate in the study, these decisions think outwardly to consider other deaf people in Melbourne and the region, deaf people in my own local community (and online sphere), and deaf scholars.

First, I consider the deaf people and interpreters of Melbourne during the time of my research visit. Each participant of the study was offered a gift card in the amount of \$25 (AUD), although not one accepted it. I brought with me a collection of t-shirts in assorted sizes with the word “Detroit” spelled in the fingerspelling alphabet associated with American Sign Language. The t-shirts are sold by an organization serving deaf people in Michigan, DeafCAN! (the Deaf Community Advocacy Network). The t-shirts were universally popular among the participants. I brought enough with me to offer them to other deaf people and interpreters in Melbourne and in Christchurch, New Zealand (where I attended the annual conference of the Sign Language Interpreter Association of New Zealand).

Wanting to contribute something with more immediate benefit to members of the local deaf and interpreting communities, I offered to present a public lecture or workshop at no cost. Laura liaised with local community members to select from a list of topics that I provided. The chosen presentation—*Text Analysis For The Theatre*—described methods used in my own practice to identify macro and micro structures of the script and to make decisions about character assignments, translations, the rehearsal process. The event was community-oriented, not meant strictly for academics or professions of theatre or interpreting. It was social and fun: attended by a mix of approximately 50 people, deaf and hearing.

I agreed to also participate in a panel discussion during a separate, two-day workshop focused on interpreting musical theatre. The workshop took place on the Friday and Saturday just before the Sunday SLIP of *The Lion King*, and was attended by interpreters and consultants from across Australia—including Laura and James. The panel members

described strategies for facing challenges during translation and interpretation of theatre musicals. It was for this workshop that I created the introductory video discussed in Section 3.5.3.

Near the end of my research trip, I attended the annual conference of the *Sign Language Interpreting Association of New Zealand* (SLIANZ) and enjoyed the opportunity to interact with interpreters and deaf people from throughout New Zealand (and also Australia)—including visits to the deaf club in Christchurch. While not directly related to my data collection or analysis, it felt appropriate to continue to seek ways to build relationships and to contribute in a positive way to the conference. It is a SLIANZ tradition to conduct an auction during the annual conference as a fundraiser for the local deaf community. Conference attendees and local businesses contribute items for bid or to be won as raffle prizes. I contributed two “Detroit” t-shirts to the raffle, and also offered a workshop, lecture, or consultation related to theatre interpreting as an auction item. A group of five theatre interpreters from New Zealand pooled together to win the item, providing a handsome donation to the fundraiser. We met several months later via Zoom for a workshop addressing a collection of topics chosen by the group.

To travel to Melbourne and Christchurch within the context of my doctoral studies was a privilege wrapped up in a privilege. The journey did not begin at the airport in Detroit, Michigan—it began in a classroom taught by *Sharon Meldrum*, a deaf instructor; it began in the *Detroit Association of the Deaf* clubhouse on Third Avenue in Detroit; it began in everyday interactions with deaf people at “home.” Thinking about deaf friends and colleagues in Michigan, I created a series of four informal video blogs (“vlogs”) posted on my website, *TerpTheatre* (terptheatre.com). My journey was a privilege that would not have been possible without deaf people, and these travel-style blogs were an attempt to share something *while it was happening* (see descriptions and QR codes in Appendix D).

My decision to write my dissertation at Heriot-Watt University after conducting coursework elsewhere marked a significant change in my research ecosystem. I began my studies in a department with few deaf faculty or students, limiting the influence of deaf perspectives on my research perspective, approach, and habits. The collective ontology and epistemology of the research environment at Heriot-Watt University was vastly different, where multiple deaf scholars featured prominently as scholars and

students. My major review was conducted by a deaf professor who would later become one of my supervisors. Deaf members of the department influenced my theoretical and methodological thinking during interactions both informal and formal—and, it made a difference that the deaf social capital in the department was coupled with authority.

I will seek opportunities to engage in a discussion of the findings with stakeholders of the three broad disciplines represented in the study (i.e., deaf studies, interpreting studies, theatre studies). In academic settings, the study can live out part of its purpose: to contribute to a theoretical discussion of sign language interpreter space (“interpreter space”). In community settings, the study can contribute to a real-life discussion of interpreter space in practice. The theoretical and practical conversations about the research findings, then, should include multiple formats (e.g. academic articles, live presentations, blog and social media posts), with multiple languages and modes (e.g., English (written/spoken), Auslan, BSL, ASL, infographics), and be available to multiple audiences (in all stakeholder groups; paying or not). I will submit findings from the study to online journals and blogs that facilitate this hybrid distribution of content in multiple languages and modes (e.g., Acadeafic; Deaf Studies Digital Journal). Findings published elsewhere will be shared in hybrid blogs that I will host on my website, TerpTheatre.

The *elephant in the room* is not a person, someone who can be washed clean by a list of ‘mea culpas’ in a methods chapter. It is a condition of the past and present clusters of disciplines linked to deaf people. It is a process. It requires a reflexive and purposeful response. Even when hearing researchers attempt to mitigate this issue, no amount of intervention will change the fact that the hearing researcher is sucking up rarefied air in a room that is very small (and nobody remembers inviting them). It is a feature of some phenomenological approaches to avoid an assertion of ethicalness, leaving it to the reader to judge based on detailed descriptions of the researcher’s position and methods. Conversations about the *elephant in the room* inevitably call for reflection: I think the least reflexive thing a hearing researcher can do at this time is to end a section of this nature thinking everything is fine.

3.10 Summary of methods

The present chapter described the *research design* and *methods* applied to the present study. As the geneses of the study and its design are rooted in my personal ontology, I

first discussed my *world view* (Section 3.1) and *positioning as a researcher* (Section 3.2). I next turned to the *qualitative* nature of the study, employing methods in the *phenomenological tradition* (Section 3.3). This tradition seeks to explicate the essence of how a phenomenon is experienced, often resulting in a *textured description* of those experiences in either individual or composite form. An accompanying *thematic analysis* reveals meaning structures in the experience. I then discussed how the research questions were refined to centre on the experiences of *spaces* during the SLIP performance (Section 3.4).

I described the process for implementing the research study in Section 3.5. *Site selection* was determined by features of the research design, convenience, and availability of willing *participants* (Section 3.5.1). *Gatekeepers* and *snowball sampling* helped identify participants from three stakeholder groups: the interpreting team; deaf audience members; and, actors (Section 3.5.2). *Relationship-building* began prior to my arrival in a mix of formats, languages, and modes (Section 3.5.3).

Interviews served as the primary source of *study data*, supplemented by *observations* and *desk research* (Section 3.6). A *conversational phenomenological interview* approach elicited narrative retellings of SLIP experiences from the study participants in two rounds (Section 3.6.2). The first round of interviews centred on SLIP experiences prior to the present study, leaving the second to focus on the interpreted performance of *The Lion King*. Observation data and desk research collected throughout the study provided *detail* and *corroboration* of participant descriptions (Section 3.6.3 and Section 3.6.4).

CAQDAS software (Section 3.7.1) aided in tasks associated with the central products of the phenomenology, the *narrative description* and *thematic analysis* (Section 3.7.4). I described my procedures for *transcription and translation* of study data (Section 3.7.2), applying *codes* to the data (Section 3.7.3), and for the *reporting of findings* (Section 3.7.6). The *phenomenological narrative* performs on two levels: drawing in the reader pre-reflexively, while also causing the reader to reflect. The reader considers the moment-specimen described in this one study, and judges for themselves if it bears sufficient resemblance to other settings to merit the *transfer* of ideas, methods, or the framework presented here (Section 3.8). Likewise, the overall *quality* of the study and the degree to which it garners *trust* is left up to the reader to evaluate based on details shared here about my research *design* and *thought process* (Section 3.8 and Section 3.9).

Chapter 4—Findings: Experiencing The Lion King

In this chapter, I present the findings of the study in three sections. In Section 4.1, McAuley's (1999) *taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre* (discussed in Section 2.2.6 of the literature review) serves as a framework to discuss the *social* and *physical spaces* experienced by the participants of the interpreted performance of *The Lion King* at the Regent Theatre in Melbourne, Australia. In Section 4.2, I present a *narrative account* of the described experiences of the interpreted performances of *The Lion King* by the participants. The narrative weaves together the telling of the experiences by each participant, focusing on the Sunday performance, attended by approximately 140 members of the local deaf communities. An interpreted performance for school children was presented days earlier, which is also referenced in the narrative. Finally, Section 4.3 *synthesizes* the description of the SLIP's social and physical spaces in Section 4.1 with the narrative telling of the lived experiences of the study participants in Section 4.2. A discussion of the writing conventions employed while crafting the following phenomenological description is included in Section 3.7.6.

4.1 The social and physical spaces of The Lion King

The discussion in this first section is structured in the format of McAuley's (1999) *taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre* (see Section 2.2.6) honouring the categories and order of presentation originally presented by the author (see Figure 2-7).

4.1.1 Rehearsal spaces

Well before the meeting of spectator and practitioner can take place in the theatre, the cast and crew must rehearse. So too must the interpreting team. The cast and the interpreting team of *The Lion King* rehearse separately from one-another, and during different periods of time.

The Australian national production of Disney's *The Lion King* originated in Sydney, Australia, where it opened in December 2013. The production moved to South Brisbane in 2014, and then to Melbourne in 2015. The Australian production closed in Perth in 2016.

Rehearsals for the entire tour began in October 2013, in a multi-roomed facility in Sydney. Often working 10-hour days, six days each week, the cast and crew perfected the choreography, puppetry, singing, and costume elements of the production in specialized rooms designed for each purpose. In the *staging room*, these elements were brought together with *blocking* (directed movement on stage) and acting to “put the show on its feet”, as described by Buyi Zama, the actor playing Rafiki (Disney on Broadway, 2013b). Principle actors—those having lead roles—were separated from the ensemble due to customized rehearsal routines best suited for their roles. The cast was reunited later in the six-week rehearsal period, where their work was integrated. The move from the rehearsal compound to the Capital Theatre in Sydney was a noted moment of change in the rehearsal process (Disney on Broadway, 2013b, 2013a).

While the cast’s rehearsal space was a network of specialized rooms designed to facilitate the collaborative preparation of the creative vision of the production by all practitioners (cast, crew, designers, and others), the interpreting team rehearsed in spaces they created for themselves. Prior to the Melbourne SLIP discussed in this study, the interpreters interpreted the Sydney performance of *The Lion King*. Their rehearsals began with a viewing of a performance of the production in Sydney, after the show opened. The interpreters had no access to the rehearsal space during the cast’s preparations. While attending the Sydney performance, the interpreters considered the overall approach to their translation, including how to maximize the visual enjoyment for deaf audience members. Upon returning to Melbourne, the interpreters developed a schedule for their translation and rehearsal processes, beginning with division of characters. The two on-stage interpreters met with their Auslan consultant at their homes (for translation work and interpreting practice) and restaurants (for planning). Each interpreter also worked individually on translations and to develop and rehearse their signed performance of the translation. To aid in their preparations, the interpreters utilized a script and an audio recording of the Sydney cast provided by the production company. The consultant was involved in negotiations with the Capital Theatre in Sydney regarding the placement of interpreters, and also with the rehearsal process of the interpreters. For the Melbourne performances, the consultant was less involved in these pre-performance issues.

In preparation for the SLIP at the Regent Theatre in Melbourne, the interpreter retained much of the translation and performance approach that they employed during the prior performance in Sydney. The interpreters prepared in ad hoc rehearsal spaces in their

homes—with one notable exception. Two days prior to the Sunday SLIP of *The Lion King*, the interpreters participated in a skills development workshop focusing on interpretation of music in theatre. As their project for the workshop, the interpreters chose to refine their translation of the opening song of *The Lion King*, “Circle of Life”. Their work was guided by two interpreter educators with theatre interpreting expertise, and the workshop was conducted in a theatre rehearsal and performance space, the *Malthouse Theatre*. The space of The Malthouse is a proper theatre, meant to facilitate creation by theatre artists—a stark contrast from the makeshift rehearsal spaces the interpreters had fashioned over time for their work.

As the cast and the interpreters arrive at the theatre on the day of the SLIP, they do so having prepared separately—but with the charge of co-creating *The Lion King* together, and with the audience. The physical and fictional spaces waiting within the Regent Theatre work together to encourage this collaboration between audience member and theatre practitioner.

4.1.2 *The social reality*

The first spatial fact of the theatre experience is the theatre building itself, which is made of sub-spaces that affect the social experience of the diversity of participants in a theatre event (McAuley, 1999). The role of each participant acts in concert with the spaces of the theatre: there are spaces carved out for audience members (*audience space*), for practitioners (*practitioner space*), and for the performance (*presentational space*). The location of the theatre, its socio-political history, and the ways in which it is accessed also influence the lived experience of all who enter.

In the case of *The Lion King* in Melbourne, Australia, the theatre building is the *Regent Theatre*, located at 191-197 Collins Street in a prominent part of the city’s Central Business District. Originally opened as a cinema theatre in 1929, the Regent Theatre was celebrated for its grand scale and ornate architecture. A second theatre, in a lower level, was meant as a space for cabaret, but was reappointed as a second cinema when a liquor license was not obtained. The popularity of the Regent Theatre survived a devastating fire in 1945, after which it was painstakingly restored to its original form. Growing operational costs lead to the close of the cinema in 1970. The Regent Theatre remained socially significant—even while shuttered—sparking a twenty-five-year debate over the

future of the building and its relationship to the design of a proposed city square. In 1996, the theatre re-opened, and has operated as a live theatre venue since then. The theatre is listed on The Victorian Heritage Inventory (Lovell Chen, 2018).

The Regent Theatre building is between Collins Street and Flinders Lane (see Figure 4-1). Collins Street is the entrance to the audience space of the theatre, while practitioners gain entry off of Flinders Lane.

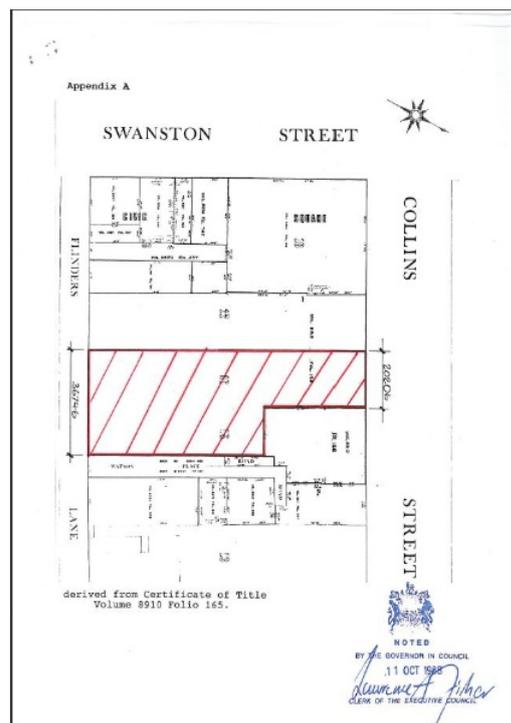


Figure 4-1. Location of the Regent Theatre (Heritage Council of Victoria, 1988).

Audience Space: the *audience space* of the Regent Theatre is accessed via the Collins Street entrance. This is the customer-facing side of the building, consisting of four floors. The exterior of the building is ornate. A cantilevered awning, bespeckled with lights, welcomes patrons over a terrazzo flooring in the *entrance lobby*. The building is festooned by two immense banners hanging from the roof and stretching three floors down the building, their bottom edges resting on the top of the awning. Each banner reveals one main character from *The Lion King*: Simba on the left, and Nala on the right. Two, large billboards showing the show logo flank each side of the awning (see Figure 4-2, below).

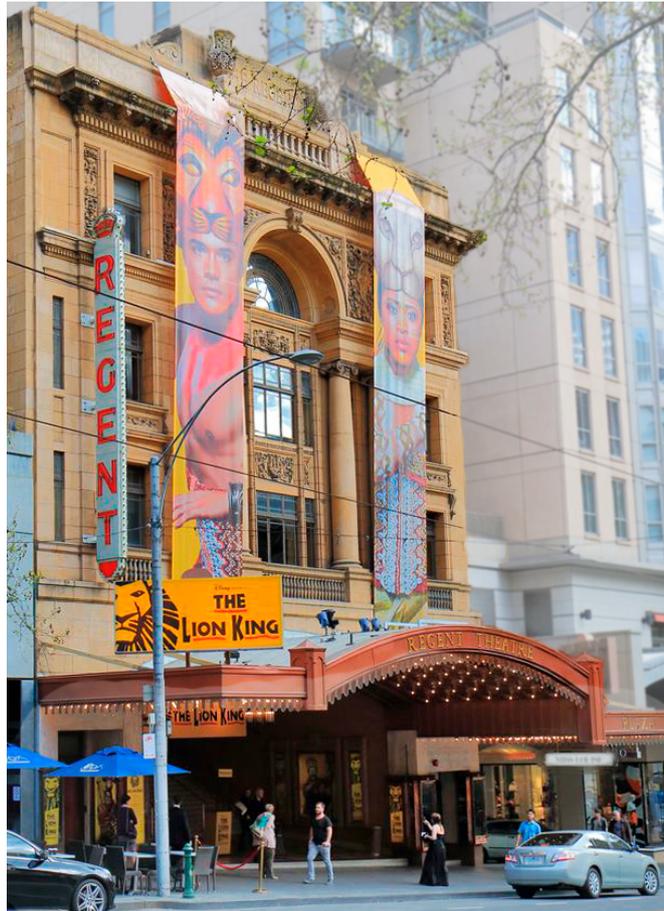


Figure 4-2. Front of the Regent Theatre, with advertising for The Lion King (Source: Melbournepoint.com).

The entirety of the audience space is sumptuous and ornate—just the beginning of a visual festival of Spanish Gothic and French Renaissance architectural styles awaiting patrons inside (Lovell Chen, 2018). A flight of marble stairs leads from the lobby to the *foyer*. The *ticket booth* is at the top of the stairs. As entry into the foyer requires a ticket for the performance, those without tickets must wait for other members of their party under the awning of the *entrance lobby* or pick up tickets at the ticket booth.

People with tickets are considered patrons and are allowed entry into the foyer at a prescribed time prior to the performance (generally one hour before curtain). As patrons pass through the doors into the main floor foyer, they are greeted by a ticket-taker. This is the moment of access to the theatre proper: only those with a ticket may enter.

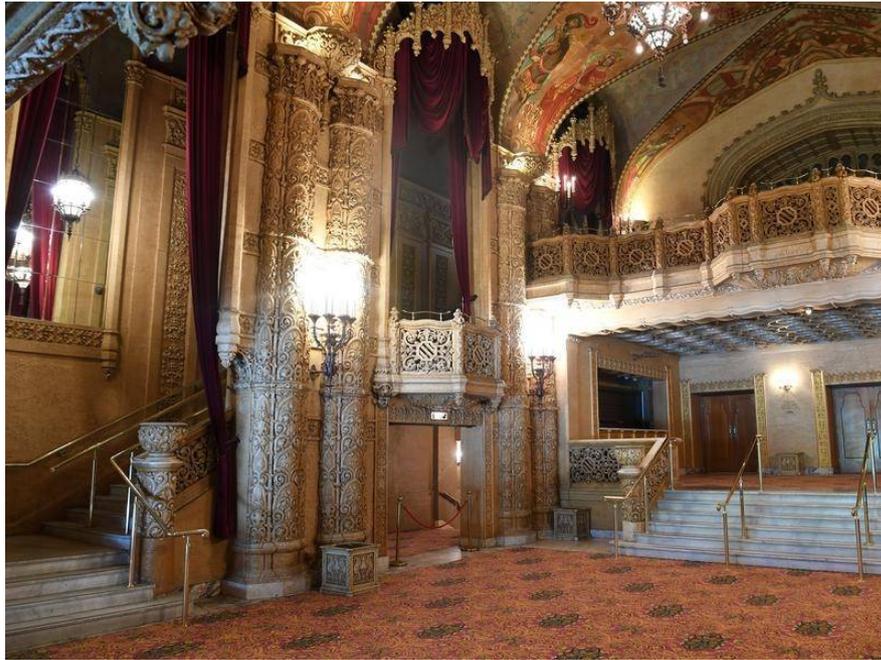


Figure 4-3. A view of the main lobby of the Regent Theatre, as viewed upon entering.

Three wooden doors (right) lead to main floor seating;

stairs (left) lead to the balcony level lobbies.

(Source: Australian Community Media.)

The ticket takers check each patron's ticket, and then direct the patron to the most suitable entrance into the seating space, based on the assigned seat location as shown in Figure 4-3 (e.g., main floor, balcony, left aisle, right aisle). During this time, patrons have access to public spaces, including the foyers on both seating levels, bar areas in both foyers, and the toilets. Two other spaces near the front of the building are reserved for special events and are not opened to general audiences attending *The Lion King*. These are the *Regent Theatre Suites* and the *Royal Promenade*. These rooms are located in the front of the building, on floors above the lobby. Inside the foyers prior to the performance, patrons may purchase show memorabilia (e.g., t-shirts, cast recordings, colour programs), drinks, and snacks.

Wooden doors demark the border between the foyer/lobby areas and the seating area of the auditorium. Patrons are generally not permitted into the auditorium until thirty minutes prior to curtain. Prior to this, actors and other theatre personnel may be finalizing preparations for the upcoming performance. One function of the *ushers* is to guard this separation between the foyer and the auditorium until the appropriate moment; another is to review each patron's ticket and guide them to their assigned seat.

Inside the auditorium, the Regent Theatre seats more than 2,100 audience members on two levels (as shown in Figure 4-4): the main floor (the *stalls*) and balcony (the *dress circle*). Seating in the stalls is on a raked floor—the elevation of the floor rises as it leads away from the stage and toward the back end of the auditorium. The result is that each row of seats is elevated slightly higher than the preceding row. The seats in the stalls are configured into three sections. The centre section, which holds 784 seats, is flanked by two smaller sections to the left (122 seats) and right (137 seats). (“Left” is used here to refer to *house left*—which is left, from the perspective of a person sitting in the audience.) Aisles separate the centre section from the left and right sections. There are also aisles for walking on the left and right perimeters of the auditorium. In front of the first row of the centre section is the orchestra pit, a sunken space spanning the width of the stage. The pit houses (most of) the musicians and the conductor for the duration of the performance. Behind the last row of seats in the stalls is a half-wall behind which is a *crush lobby*—a small space in the back of the lobby that can hold late arrivals or standing-room-only patrons (Lovell Chen, 2018; The Marriner Group, 2015).

The balcony holds 778 seats in two sections—the front and upper sections of the *dress circle*. Like the stalls, balcony seating is raked. There is an aisle separating the front and upper sections, and two aisles dividing the seating in each section (Lovell Chen, 2018; The Marriner Group, 2015).

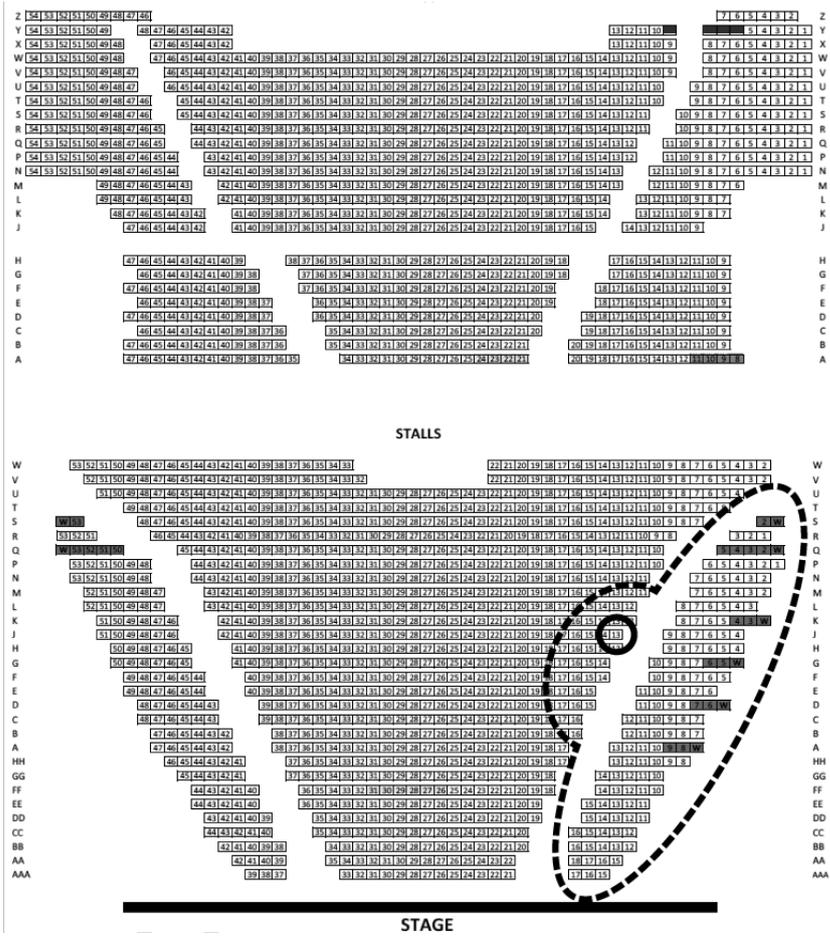


Figure 4-4. Seating Chart, the Regent Theatre, showing “disabled seating” (shaded dark grey) (Regent Theatre, 2015). Dashed line indicates designated seating for deaf patrons. Circle indicates seat of the researcher.

For the interpreted performance of *The Lion King* on Sunday (the focus of this study), the entire house-left section of seating has been reserved for deaf patrons. Hearing people attending with deaf patrons are also seated in this area; although, Laura notes that it is desirable for the seats in *the deaf section* to be occupied by deaf people, with their hearing companions occupying seats on the periphery of the section whenever possible. To accommodate this—and the potential that the 122 seats in the section are not enough to accommodate the number of deaf patrons attending the performance—some seats on the extreme left side of the centre section are also reserved as part of the designated seating for deaf patrons (see Figure 4-4).

Seat selection within the deaf section of seating occurs when patrons purchase tickets to the performance, using a special code on the Ticketmaster website. The code narrows the possible seat selection to the deaf section, identified as the *Auslan Allocation* on the ticket

seller's website. There are two prices for seats reserved for deaf patrons: \$128 and \$150. Seats at the higher price are located along the right aisle of the left section of seating and in the spill-over area located in the centre section (see Figure 4-5). This reflects the premium placed on theatre seats that offer a direct view of the stage, rather than a view at an angle.

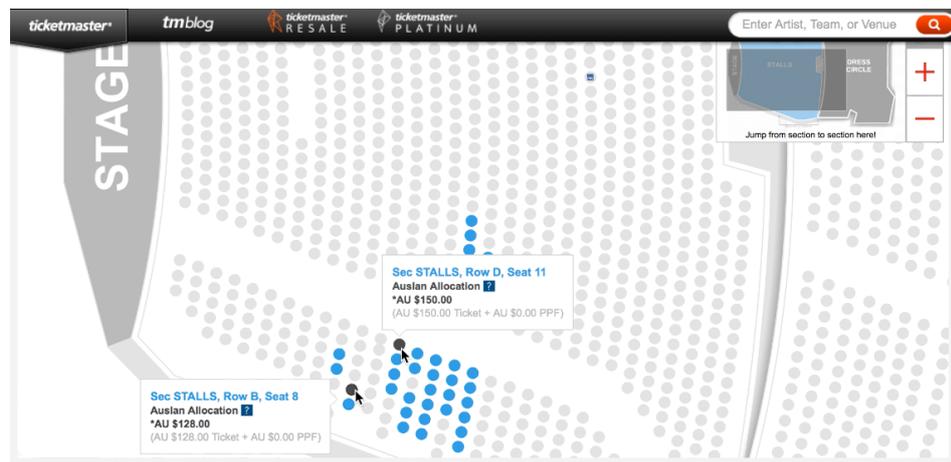


Figure 4-5. Seat selection in the Auslan Allocation, showing price differences based on seat location.

The seats in the Regent Theatre's auditorium direct the visual attention of the audience members to a common focal point—the stage—which is outlined by an ornate *proscenium*—a frame-like border that demarcates the boundary between the spectator space and the presentation space. The left and right edges of the proscenium form Corinthian columns, while the top edge boasts a flourish of gilded medallions and panels that arch toward the ceiling.

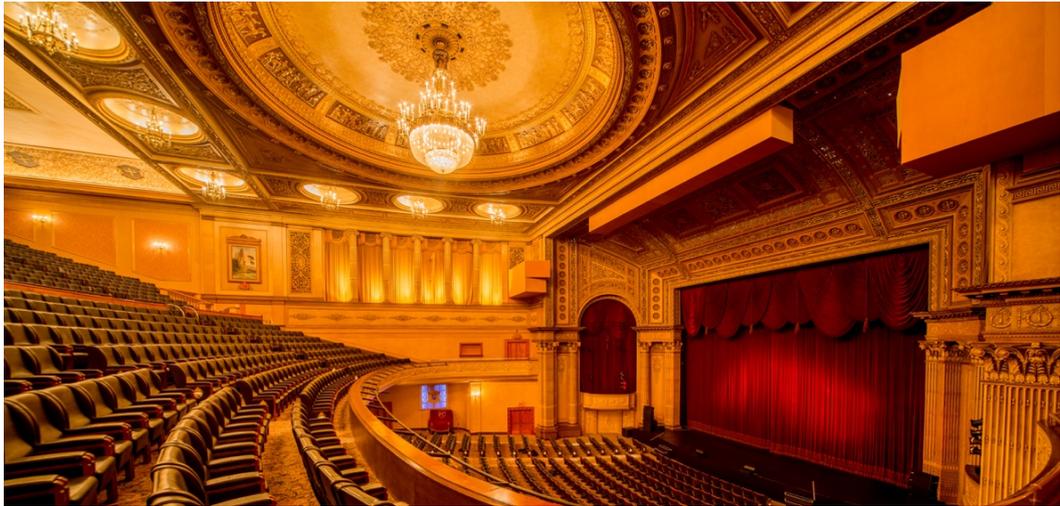


Figure 4-6. The interior of the Regent Theatre, showing the proscenium and house-left box. (Source: marrinergroup.com.au)

On the left and right of the stage frame are decorative *boxes* — elevated spaces bordering the proscenium that are reminiscent of private VIP boxes. The ornate decoration of the proscenium extends to the outside of these boxes, marked by a second group of Corinthian columns (see Figure 4-6, above). During the production of *The Lion King*, the boxes house percussionists from the orchestra. They are costumed by the production, dressed in the colour palette and style of the show—although not as identifiable characters (see Figure 4-7).

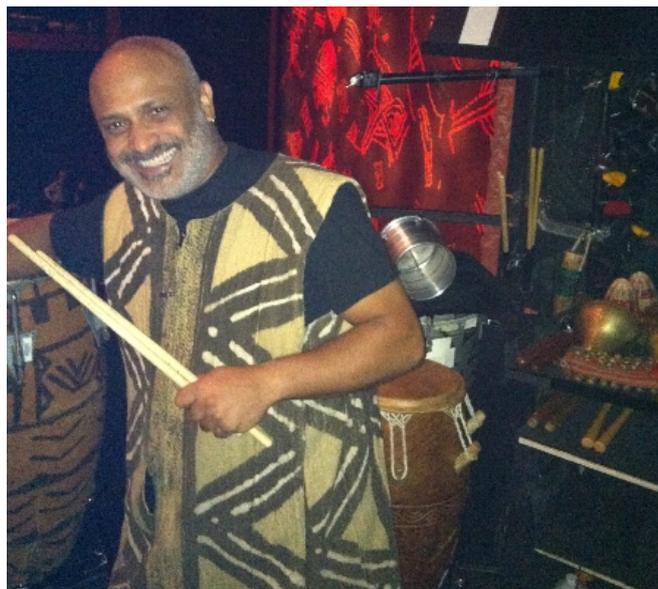


Figure 4-7. Percussionist Rolando Morales-Matos, of the Broadway production of The Lion King, costumed and in position prior to performance. (Source: Broadwaymusicians.com)

As the actors in the production will note later in this chapter, this placement of the musicians on the border between the stage and the audience—dressed in the colour palette of the production—serves to blur the line between the performer space and the audience space, making for a more immersive spectator experience.

Practitioner Space: actors, musicians, and crew members of *The Lion King* enter the Regent Theatre on the opposite end of the building from the ornate entrance enjoyed by audience members, through a non-descript entrance at 200 Flinders Lane, a minor-yet-popular street in Melbourne. There are no signs, large or small, marking the *stage door*. There is no *The Lion King* marketing here (see Figure 4-8). Instead, the humble entrance serves as the boundary between the public and the highly-privileged *practitioner space*.



Figure 4-8. The stage door of the Regent Theatre, at 200 Flinders Lane (glass door near the centre of the frame). (Source: Google Maps.)

Immediately inside the stage door is a window, stationed by a guard. Only members of the company may gain entry through the second door and into the practitioner space. These include actors, musicians, crew members (costumers, make-up artists, lighting crew, etc.), and administrative staff. All others must be accompanied by a member of the company.

Nearly 150 production members may come and go during a day of a typical production of *The Lion King* (Fierberg, 2017), and the technical nature of the show calls for abundant storage and work space backstage. Because of this, every bit of backstage space is put

to use. While the building was originally designed as a cinema, the backstage areas have been divided into spaces that support members of the cast, the crew who run the backstage operations during performances, and craftspeople who maintain the set, costumes and puppetry in the show.

There are more than three hundred puppets in the production, and five hundred costumes, requiring space in the backstage area for their storage, construction, and repair—all supervised by a costume and puppet supervisor (Adrienne Arsht Center, 2012). Costumes and puppets are systematically stored wherever space allows, often on bespoke racks that maximize every use of space. The production company has established both a *puppet room* and a *costume room*, which house staff who conduct daily maintenance on costumes, while also fitting costumes for new cast members (Time Out, 2013).

The fifty-one cast members (Fierberg, 2017) are assigned dressing room space based on relative rank and the availability of backstage space at the Regent Theatre. Dressing rooms are divided among multiple floors in the rear wall of the theatre, above the stage door entrance off of Flinders Lane. Actors in principle roles (e.g., Rafiki, Simba, Nala, Scar, Mufasa, Zazu, Timon, Pumbaa) are in dressing rooms clustered together, sharing rooms in groups of two or three. Members of the chorus share dressing rooms assigned by gender and role (e.g., hyenas, shadowland dancers, etc.) in larger groups of four and more. Many actors personalize their dressing rooms with personal artefacts and other items they feel will help them in their preparation for performances (Broadwaycom, 2015). There is a common makeup room, where cast members requiring ornate character makeup are tended to by three makeup artists and two wig/hairdressers (Fierberg, 2017). There are two orchestra rooms, where the twenty-four members of the orchestra can prepare prior to the performance (Fierberg, 2017). During the performance, most of the orchestra will be in the *orchestra pit*, a sunken area just in front of the stage, between it and the first row of audience members. Some members of the percussion team are placed in boxes in the auditorium (see Figure 4-6 and Figure 4-7, above). There is a *green room*, which serves as a temporary waiting area for actors and crew members before and during the performance. Throughout the backstage space, a system of overhead speakers broadcasts occasional announcements from the stage manager.

Closer to the stage, and still within the *practitioner space*, are members of the backstage crew, who are responsible for overseeing the technical aspects of the show during

performances. Each work in their own designated areas, overseeing lighting, set movement, and the constant flow of costumes, set pieces, and actors on and off stage. Lighting and sound fixtures riddle the backstage spaces—and are also placed throughout the spectator space, in the auditorium. Ultimate control of lighting and sound is managed by crew members from a centralized location just behind the last row of audience members in the auditorium. These crew members are some of the few who are not backstage during the performance. Their view from the auditorium provides them with an important ability to observe the lighting and sound as it is experienced from the view of the audience.

As one draws nearer to the stage space, the practitioner space becomes more controlled and privileged. Persons waiting in the “wings”—the areas immediately to the left and right of the stage—may only be present during times designated to them. That is, there is no loitering backstage. Actors, production staff such as costumers and puppeteers, and crew members remain largely in designated spaces, at designated times throughout the production. Someone has to forge unity out of the chaos of the practitioner space; and, during each performance, that blacksmith is the stage manager. There are a team of five for *The Lion King* (Fierberg, 2017).

Performance Space: the *performance space* is the “privileged domain” where spectator space and practitioner space collide. It is here where audience members and practitioners co-create meaning. The fictional spaces of *The Lion King* and the physical spaces of the Regent Theatre exist in a delicate interplay: the fictional space being held aloft by craftsmanship and the willing (mostly) participation of audience and cast members. *Performance space* is the coming together of two other spaces in the theatre: the *practitioner space* and the *audience space*. The performance space reaches with one arm into the physical realm, while stretching with the other into the fictional.

4.1.3 *The physical / fictional relationship*

The relationship between the physical reality of the theatre building and the fictional spaces generated during the theatre performance can be described using three terms in McAuley’s taxonomy: stage space, presentational space, and fictional place. The *stage space* describes the physical reality of the stage, its dimensions, relationship to the audience space, back wall, and exits and entrances. *Presentational space* describes the

ways in which physical use is made of the stage, which includes both the use of space by the performers and design elements such as set pieces, lighting, and costumes. Lastly, *fictional place* describes the places represented onstage and offstage, via the elements of design, use of space by actors, elements of the text, and through other means.

The *stage space* of the Regent Theatre is presented in a traditional proscenium style, where the stage itself is framed by an arch. The wide, expansive stage was especially suitable to the theatre's original purpose as a cinema house. The proscenium is equally large-scale—an impressive and ornate border between the auditorium and the stage: not unlike the swirling, textured frames accompanying paintings in museums (see Figure 4-6). The *stage space* allows production companies flexibility in the ways in which they manipulate the space with sets, lighting, and other creative elements of the production. Set pieces can be 'flown' upward into the rafters of the ceiling; space to the left and right of the stage accommodate movement of set pieces, costumes, and actors; and producers are free to dig into the stage, creating trap doors, spinning sets pieces, and entire set pieces that rise up from the floor, as does the Pride Rock set of *The Lion King*.

Directly in front of the stage is the *orchestra pit*, a sunken area where (most of) the production's musicians perform throughout each performance. The orchestra is hidden from the audience by a black wall dividing the orchestra from the spectator space. Fine, black netting is draped over the top of the orchestra pit, to protect members of the orchestra from falling objects from the stage. Some members of the orchestra can see the interpreters as they stand on their performance platform, which is located stage-right of the orchestra pit, in the auditorium.

Embedded into the left and right segments of the proscenium arch framing the stage are two boxes. These are decorative areas meant to look like theatre seating boxes, which are often used to house lighting and audio equipment (see Figure 4-6, above). In the case of *The Lion King*, the boxes are occupied by members of the orchestra's percussion section. The percussionists are costumed in African-inspired clothing (see Figure 4-7, above). This purposeful costuming of the visible orchestra members in the design style of the performers on stage signifies an attempt to maintain the reality on stage within the area of the proscenium arch. This has the effect of blurring the otherwise harsh boundary between narrative space on stage and spectator space in the auditorium. This effect is further enhanced by moments during the performance when cast members enter the space

through the audience, rather than from off-stage. The vast majority of the performance of *The Lion King* takes place within the proscenium arch, although the beginning of Act 1 and Act 2 are punctuated by the cast entrance from behind the audience members, and onto the stage via a set of stairs. See Figure 4-9 below for locations of the interpreters and percussionists.

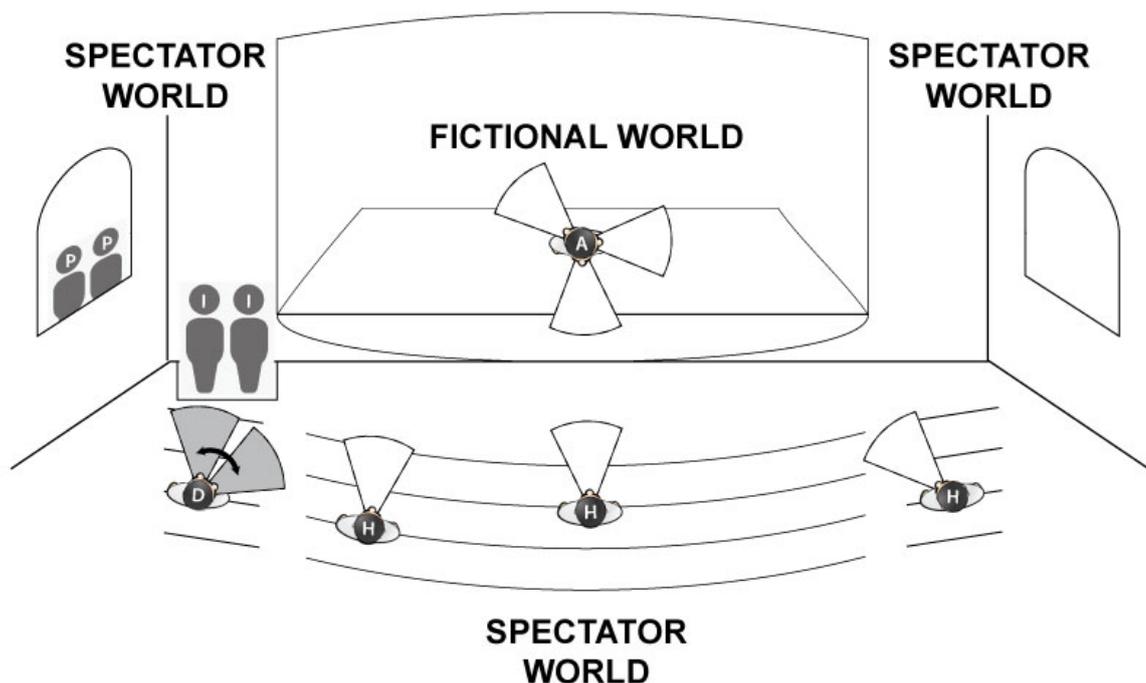


Figure 4-9. Location of the interpreters (I) outside of the stage space, with the percussionists (P) located in the boxes.

The *presentational space*—the sum-total of the use of space during a performance of *The Lion King*—is highly orchestrated. Each set piece has been thoughtfully crafted, and a team of people have considered the colour and characteristics of the lighting of the set in each scene. The costumes are one-of-a-kind creations, meant for specific actors. They blend effortlessly with specialized puppets representing African wildlife. The movement of each actor—whether expressing themselves through dance or in tandem with a puppet—is strategic. These elements have been purposefully combined in order to facilitate the spectator’s release from the physical space, and their draw toward the fictional space.

Drawing the spectator into the fictional space does not require obliterating the physical space. Director, costume, and puppet designer Julie Taymor chose a relatively simple approach to set design, preferring a stylized approach over a literal rendition of locations in Africa. She sums up this decision in a quote from *The Lion King* set designer Richard Hudson ‘The whole point of theatre is for the audience to fill in the blanks. You give them a little bit, and they see more’ (Shephard, 2009). This philosophy is reflected throughout the set design where there is often just one large element on stage, coupled with an expanse of stage space. The show opens and closes with the same song, *Circle of Life*. In the opening version, the stage is empty, with a sun that rises from the stage. Slowly, the stage is inhabited by Rafiki and animals portrayed by actors adorned with costumes and puppetry (see Figure 4-10). At the end of the performance, the animals gather at Pride Rock. The stage is bare, except for a large rock-like structure fashioned with an embedded staircase. The structure twists upward from the stage (see Figure 4-11).



Figure 4-10. Opening of Act 1. (Photo: John Marcus for Disney.)



Figure 4-11. End of Act 2. (Photo: John Marcus for Disney.)

A prominent feature of the set design of *The Lion King* is a plain, wide *cyclorama* at the back wall of the stage. The cyclorama is a slightly curved cloth of a non-descript colour, stretched seamlessly across the back of the stage. The stage floor is *raked*—it rises slowly upward toward the back wall. With appropriate lighting, this combination provides a sense of infinite space. The left and right edges of the stage picture are first marked by the proscenium. Within the stage space, itself, several additional panels help to mark the end of the stage (see Figure 4-11, above). These panels help to hide actors waiting off-stage to make an entrance, and also help to block the audience’s view of the backstage space as much as possible.

There are more than 500 costumes in the show, the majority of which include elements of puppetry that help bring to life the animal-based characters in *The Lion King*. Many costumes are a blend of neutral base costumes that are augmented by highly-technical masks, and mechanical animal body parts. Some of the puppetry movement is aided by hydraulics and motors controlled by the actors, such as the mask for the character of *Scar*, played by Josh Quong Tart in Figure 4-12, below. With the push of a well-hidden button in his palm, Quong Tart can tilt the mask upward, or push the mask forward from his face. This functionality is also a feature of the mask for the character of *Mufasa*, a lion character that is the brother of Scar (Adam Savage’s Tested, 2016).



Figure 4-12. Josh Quang Tart as Scar (left), his mask thrusting forward as he lunges forward, with Cameron Goodall as Zazu. (Photo: John Marcus for Disney.)

The only true hand puppet in *The Lion King* is operated by the actor portraying *Zazu*, a stylized approximation of a Northern Red-billed Hornbill. The actor, Cameron Goodall in the case of the present study, operates the bird's head, eyes, and mouth with one hand, while bringing its wings to life with the other.

Costumes for the cast of *The Lion King* are customized to each actor. Base costumes include leotards, pants and other neutral basic costume components. Leotards and shoes are dyed to match the skin colour of the actors, and are adjusted for seasonal changes in actor skin tones. The colour palette of the production is largely warm-tone, and also highly controlled. There are no sequins, glitter, or shiny objects on stage—a part of the design aesthetic, which is meant to evoke feelings of the dry season of the savannah (Shephard, 2009; Time Out, 2013). At times, the costumes transcend costumes: they are puppetry, and also architectural. To create African grasslands, the stage is nearly bare. It is the costumes worn by the actors that identify the space (see Figure 4-13).



Figure 4-13. Mufasa in The Grasslands. (Photo: Disney.)

The visual spectacle on stage is lit by more than one thousand lighting elements, controlled by multiple light booths. One booth oversees the static lights on stage, and the other manages lights that move. Most lights are programmed into pre-set lighting cues that are triggered by lighting crew members. The intensity, colour, direction, and size of these lighting elements is manipulated to add to the fiction on stage. Their purpose is to influence mood, inform our understanding of the boundaries of spaces, and evoke a sense of the passing time (Shephard, 2009).

Each of these spatial design elements, including the ways in which the actors inhabit the space, lends to our creation of a space designed by the creative team to remind us of Africa—even though it does not represent any specific part of real Africa. The elements are separate, but they come together in a unified way to help audience members suspend their belief, as described by producer Thomas Schumacher:

... when they see people with grass growing out of their head, and say ‘it’s the savannah’; when they see a man with a fantastic mask over his head, and they say ‘oh, he’s a lion’; then the audience is on a journey with the theatre maker. And that’s the best kind of theatre (Shephard, 2009).

While the majority of the performance occurs on the stage proper, some moments in the production include entrances of characters from behind the audience and down the aisles of the spectator space. Each of Act 1 and Act 2 begins with an entrance from the audience. Other action in the performance is largely limited to the space within the proscenium arch.

The *presentational space* of the sign language interpreters for the SLIP is far less orchestrated. The interpreter performance space is a platform created specifically for the interpreted performance of *The Lion King* at the Regent Theatre, in Melbourne. Measuring approximately six feet wide and four feet deep, the platform stands several inches off the floor of the house. The platform is located outside of the frame of the stage created by the proscenium arch, and is positioned in front of the section of seats on the far left of the audience, house left (see Figure 4-9). The platform is dark in colour, as to blend into the dark colour of the floor in the auditorium.

The interpreters do not wear costumes. They are dressed in *street clothes* that they have selected and purchased themselves. These are contemporary garments that they might wear to other interpreting assignments. They are each dressed in all black, with a top and trousers. Both wear their sleeves at a three-quarter length, exposing the forearms. Both wear flat, black shoes. The interpreters have applied their own make-up (basic make-up designed to reduce shine) and managed their own hair. James wears his short hair parted to one side and Laura pulls her hair back into a ponytail. In each case, the interpreters are dressed in ways that they might be for other assignments, and in clothes that they own: the only difference being the additional make-up used for the stage. There is no consultation with the production about the interpreters' clothing, although it has become an assumption among many theatre producers worldwide that interpreters wear black on stage.

There is no special lighting design for the interpreters' stage space. There are two, white lights aimed at the space. The lights have been adjusted to reduce the amount of spill-over from the interpreter platform to the stage, or into the audience. The light is made dimmer than 100% its capacity. While the quality of the lights on the interpreters does not change throughout the performance to mirror that of the stage, lighting technicians turn the lights on and off at the beginning and the ending of each act, and during some important moments when the lights fade to black on stage. This is done manually from

the lighting booth, as there are no computer-programmed cues for the lights illuminating the interpreters.

Although the interpreting team has had no consultation with the production company regarding movement strategies employed by the actors, the interpreters have considered the ways in which their translation and interpreted performance can reflect the movement choices of the actors. The time allotted them to view the actors in character is limited: they have seen one performance prior to their SLIP in Sydney, and have been working from an audio recording of the cast prior to the Melbourne performance. While the use of space for the production of *The Lion King* is highly orchestrated and imbued in all aspects of the production, the interpreters prepare and operate outside the performance parameters of the show.

After the immense investment made in creating a fictional space on stage, the interpreters stand out as un-related (but still related) entities. They are appendages that are set apart, but still responsible for helping meet Julie Taymor’s design objective:

Children and adults alike suspend their disbelief knowing that it is theatre—we’re not really in a savannah; that we’re not really in a jungle. And, they go with you. And their eyes focus, after a while, on just the character (Shephard, 2009).

4.1.4 Location and fiction

The musical *The Lion King* is based on the animated film by the same name. Locations in the film are inspired by a visit by the creative team to Kenya (Finch, 1994). For the musical adaptation, Julie Taymor and her creative team travelled to South Africa to gather inspiration for the design of the staged version of the Disney story. Multiple African languages are represented in the production, and South African musicians and actors are among the cast in every production worldwide. Influences from multiple African countries, filtered through Taymor’s vision, form a fictionalized hybrid *Afric-ish* that represents Africa—but, no specific Africa (Shephard, 2009).

Broadly, the action of *The Lion King* takes place in “the African savannah” (as indicated in the script and in popular discussion about the story). Multiple *onstage fictional spaces*

within the savannah are represented throughout the performance, including (Allers & Mecchi, 1998; Royston, n.d.):

Pride Rock—a large rock jutting from the earth. It is here where significant announcements take place (i.e., the birth of Simba). This is a specific space mentioned by name in the dialogue.

The Pridelands—this is a named space in the dialogue, representing all of the land that is ruled by the character Mufasa (who will hand it down to his son, Simba).

Elephant Graveyard—a depository for the remains of elephants, this graveyard is dangerous and off limits to young members of the pride, such as Simba and his friend Nala.

The Gorge—a mountainous area where Simba is lured by his evil uncle, Scar, to meet his father. A stampede of wildebeests (accomplished on stage by puppets that grow in size and number) kills Simba's father, Mufasa.

The Desert and Jungle—along his journey, Simba travels through unspecified locations with the jungle and desert. The characters and audience members can appreciate the *type* of location (i.e., desert or jungle), but the locations have no specific label or identity.

While *The Lion King* is performed primarily on the stage and within the limits of the proscenium, fictional spaces extend beyond the boundaries of this frame. Offstage spaces also occur within the production, in two forms. *Unlocalized offstage spaces* are those that are part of the fictional world represented on stage, but that are not continuously connected to the spaces on stage, or the audience space. Such offstage spaces in *The Lion King* are limited to references of travel from one specific location in the story (e.g., the Pridelands) to another specific location (e.g., the gorge). There is more emphasis on *localized offstage spaces*. *The Pridelands* are described as a vast area over which Mufasa (and then Simba) rules. Locations within the Pridelands are represented onstage (the Grasslands, Pride Rock, etc.), and some travel sequences appear in the Pridelands. Still, the fictional entirety of the Pridelands is not represented on stage, and the audience is

meant to understand that they extend in all directions and encompass everything else that is shown on stage.

Localized offstage spaces are fictional spaces that can be reached from the stage—either through an exit or some other path. They form a continuous space with the onstage space (McAuley, 1999, p. 31). In *The Lion King*, when *Young Simba* and *Young Nala* travel to the *Elephant Graveyard*, we see them crossing the stage and exiting to the off-stage spaces. When they do, our mind creates a fictional space offstage that is a continuation of the space onstage (i.e., the savannah or the jungle). This is a common phenomenon in theatre. Plays that take place in sets that look like houses often rely on localized offstage spaces to create the illusion of an entire house on stage. Characters may exit through doors into rooms that the audience never sees, and yet the audience creates a form of offstage fictional space. The co-construction of these spaces depends heavily on the design of the onstage space and the movement of the actors. The onstage/offstage boundaries of spaces in *The Lion King* do not rely on doors and walls to identify separate rooms. Instead, the onstage/offstage boundary represents a continuation of spaces found in *The Pridelands*.

Audience off spaces are also employed in the staging of *The Lion King*. These are fictional spaces that encompass the *spectator space*. The opening of Acts 1 and 2, extends the savannah beyond the boundaries of the proscenium, placing the audience in the fictional space (until the song is finished and the cast moves completely on stage). To accomplish this, the cast of animals enters from behind the audience, walking down the aisles of the theatre and onto the stage via two sets of stairs. Onstage, the character *Rafiki* is announcing the birth of *Simba*, beckoning the animals to *Pride Rock*. When she turns outward to the audience toward the animals who are entering down the aisles of the theatre, the use of her body helps to reinforce the notion that the audience space has become a part of the savannah.

In the stampede scene, young *Simba* is being chased by a large confusion of *wildebeests*. The scene is staged with *Simba* running on a treadmill device, facing forward—directly toward the audience. Behind him is a wall of mechanical and costumed *wildebeests*, growing larger and more menacing as the group narrows in on *Simba*. The visual effect is that of a narrow gorge, packed with *wildebeests*, running head-first into the audience. The audience space becomes a fictional offstage space: the pathway in the gorge. Like

the opening of Acts 1 and 2, the movement of the actors works in partnership with staging elements (lighting and set design) to reinforce the existence of the *audience off* space. Both of these spaces recede when the scene or song is finished.

The *onstage presentational space* of the *interpreters* is unlike the other presentational spaces in the theatre, where craftwork has been used to create fictional spaces inspired by South Africa. The interpreters' presentation space is not designed to be a fictional space. There are no costumes, lighting, puppetry, or sets on the interpreter performance platform. Nothing is in place to evoke a fictional space on the performance platform where the interpreters work throughout *The Lion King*. The interpreters have a way of fictionalizing the space on their own, and are employing three spatial devices in the performance described below in Section 4.2: interactive dialogue; counter-cross; forward/backward staging. These three techniques were influenced by a workshop I gave during my research visit. I was asked to present a workshop about ways in which theatre interpreters might analyse a script for the purpose of dividing characters between two interpreters. I brought sample video and photos with me, demonstrating my own work, and that of other interpreters. After viewing these samples, and then working together over several days, the interpreters adjusted some of their interpreting approach in three ways.

First, the interpreters adjusted their physical stance while interpreting dialogue. Previously, each interpreter performed their lines facing directly out to the audience. They did not incorporate the notion of their interacting with one-another. For their new approach, the interpreters delivered their lines using the same approach to the delivery of the actors. If the actors were interacting with one-another, so too did the interpreters. If the actors delivered their lines to the audience (or themselves), so too did the interpreters. This called for the interpreters to turn their bodies toward one-another slightly, simulating the way in which a sign language conversation might take place, and to also incorporate features of sign language discourse (e.g., turning-taking norms, etc.). The interpreters could not truly face each other, as this would cause their signing to be obscured from the view of the audience. Instead, they turned their bodies only slightly toward one-another, often twisting just their upper bodies. This provided the overall effect of the interpreters operating in dialogue with one-another in the ways that actors did on stage.

A second use of space by the interpreters included a *counter-cross* within their performance platform. A counter-cross is a type of movement on stage where two actors move toward and past each-other, as when two actors swap places on stage. For the SLIP of *The Lion King*, the interpreters identified moments on stage where two prominent characters switched places on stage. The interpreters decided to mirror the action on stage, performing a counter-cross on their performance platform. Their objective was to make it easier for audience members to maintain the connection between each interpreter and the actor. As *Scar* and *Nala's* confrontation brews on stage, they exchange places with one-another. As *Scar* moves from stage left to stage right, so does the interpreter. The interpreters hope that this allows the deaf audience members to more easily identify the *Scar interpreter* with the *Scar actor* on stage.

A third use of space by the interpreters attempts to evoke a mood by mirroring the iconic action on stage. In the song *Endless Night*, *Simba* calls out to the spirit his dead father, *Mufasa*:

You promised you'd be there
Whenever I needed you
Whenever I call your name
You're not anywhere

Indeed, *Mufasa* is no-where on the stage, which is bare except for *Simba*. (see Figure 4-14, below).



Figure 4-14. Nick Afoa as Simba is alone on stage as he reflects on the memory of his father in Endless Night. (Photo: Deen van Meer.)

The majority of the song is a solo performed by *Simba* and interpreted by one interpreter. One option is for the second interpreter to stand next to the interpreter performing the song, with no expression or sense of character. Another choice is for the second interpreter to leave the stage space, although this isn't always possible. For this performance of *The Lion King*, the second interpreter took two steps backward, simulating the relationship onstage between Simba and the spirit of *Mufasa*.

Each of these three techniques seeks to facilitate the deaf audience member's adoption of the fictionalized spaces presented in the performance of *The Lion King*. The ways in which the use of space by the interpreters was experienced by the actors, deaf audience members, and interpreters themselves will be described below in Section 4.2.

4.1.5 *Textual space*

Space is indicated in the *text* of *The Lion King* in both the ways it is described within the *stage directions* of the script—the part of the script that describes actions, places, movement and other things on stage that are not included in the dialogue—and also the ways space is described within the *dialogue* of the production. McAuley points out that discussing textual space can be “vexing” (McAuley, 1999, p. 32). Here, I will simplify the discussion by focusing on three features of *The Lion King*’s textual space: the ways in which the text references real spaces; the text’s approach to describing the fictional spaces of the narrative world; and, the ways in which the sense of space is embedded into dialogue.

The script for Disney’s *The Lion King* musical has been largely static; although, adjustments to dialogue and stage directions have been made over time. Moreover, productions may employ a variety of scripts during a single production, each having their own specific utility. Stage managers, for example, may require different types of information than do actors and others who work on the production. Some productions include a *performance script* or *cast script & vocal book*, which includes all dialogue, lyrics, and core stage directions necessary for actors and others involved in the production. Some productions also use a *South African Overview* addendum, which centres on all of the segments of the production that use a South African language (multiple South African languages are utilized in the production). This specialized script includes translations of South African languages into English—a helpful feature for interpreters preparing for SLIPs.¹⁷ Conductors and others working on the production have their own version of scripts and musical scores necessary to keep everyone in unison during each performance.

The interpreters worked from a performance script they received while working previously on *The Lion King* during the Sydney leg of the national tour. During the Wednesday matinee of the Melbourne stop on the tour, the interpreters performed for deaf school children in the audience. It was then that they discovered that there were

¹⁷ The interpreters in the present study have used a translation of the South African lines in the script to develop translations in international sign. In this way, deaf audience members may be privy to information in the script that most hearing audience members cannot access.

changes to a song in the production, so they requested updated script pages from the production company in advance of their general public SLIP for the deaf community on Saturday.

As much as the design of the production is meant to inspire thoughts of locations in southern Africa—through costumes, lighting, sets, puppets, and use of languages from the region—the text of *The Lion King* rarely mentions an actual space in Africa. One script reviewed for this study included the simple note, humbly tucked in the script above the list of characters (Allers & Mecchi, 1998):

THE PLACE

The African Savannah.

There are no references to specific, named African places in any part of the stage directions or dialogue of *The Lion King*. Instead, the production relies on the sum-total of other spaces to facilitate the co-creation of the show’s fictional spaces between the audience and the practitioners.

The fictional spaces of *The Lion King* (described in 4.1.4) are not described in detail in the production notes of the cast script, although Disney does provide descriptions of them in their sanctioned study guide for school-aged children (Royston, n.d.). Within the dialogue of the production, only a few spaces are overtly named by characters. *Pride Rock*, the gathering space of the pride of lions and a strategic vantage point in the *Pride Lands*, is one such space.

The script’s stage directions often describe movement of actors throughout the fictional spaces of the production. There are nearly no references to stage direction, such as “Simba and Nala walk stage left.” This type of reference describes movement in the *actual physical space* of the stage. Instead, the script’s stage directions often describe how the characters move through *fictional spaces* such as “Mufasa and young Simba walk down from Pride Rock.” The phrase “walk down” helps the reader of the script visualize the fictional space, by including directions based on movement in space.

Many of the fictional spaces created for *The Lion King* are shown on stage with simple-yet-effective design details that help the audience members accept what is presented on stage as a reasonable representation of spaces such as *Pride Rock* and the *Elephant Graveyard*. These *fictional onstage* spaces are iconic and receive very little direct description within the dialogue on stage. Some *offstage fictional spaces* are referenced by characters in ways that help audience members fill-in the specificity lacking on stage. the *Pride Lands* are a vast swath of land, too large to represent on stage. Dialogue between *Young Simba* and his father, *Mufasa*—combined with stage direction—helps to conjure-up this image (Allers & Mecchi, 1998, p. 12):

MUFASA

Simba, now that you have grown some, it is important for you to receive some lessons. Everything the light touches is our kingdom.

YOUNG SIMBA

Wow!

MUFASA

A King's time as ruler rises and falls like the sun. One day, Simba, the sun will set on my time here, and will rise with you as the new King.

YOUNG SIMBA

And this will all be mine?

MUFASA

Everything.

YOUNG SIMBA

Everything the light touches?! What about that shadowy place?

MUFASA

That's beyond our borders. You must never go there, Simba.

YOUNG SIMBA

But I thought a King can do whatever he wants.

MUFASA

Oh, there's more to being King than... getting your way all the time.

(Mufasa and Young Simba walk down from Pride Rock.)

During the above segment of the performance, *Mufasa* and *Young Simba* are on top of *Pride Rock*, which is a large set piece on the stage resembling a large rock in the desert. The visual effect on stage implies that from atop *Pride Rock*, one can see across vast distances of the savannah. The body posture of the actors implies they are looking far off into the distance, as Mufasa and Young Simba describe the *Pride Lands*. They are “everything the light touches.” The combination of text, set design, and physicality of the actors helps to support the notion of an immense plot of land. Some fictional spaces within these lands will be visited during the performance (e.g., the *Grasslands*). This segment also introduces other spaces that are not a part of the *Pride Lands*—those that are off limits and “shadowy”. Some of these spaces will also be represented onstage in the performance (e.g., *Scar’s Cave*, the *Elephant Graveyard*).

There is no reference to interpreters in the script’s dialogue, nor in the stage directions included in the script. They are not featured as a part of the fictional spaces of *The Lion King*, nor does the script suggest that they exist in a fictional space as they perform.

4.1.6 Thematic space

All of the other theatrical spaces come together during the performance to create a synthesized meaning—the *thematic space*. Thematic space represents the “philosophical and ideological content” of the production (McAuley, 1999, pp. 32–33). Themes in a production may or may not be overtly stated. In *The Lion King*, the design elements work in concert with the playtext to facilitate multiple themes described by the production’s creative team.

Director and designer of *The Lion King*, Julie Taymor, notes that the themes of the production are present “in every culture, and that every culture understands” (Shephard, 2009, 6:58). It is a classic *prodigal son story*—a young person journeys into the darkness, learns a lesson, and then returns home. Young Simba listens to the wrong people, and bad things happen. He eventually realizes he must make the situation right again, reflecting a second thematic element, *facing one’s responsibilities*. Overcoming obstacles requires that Simba *believe in himself* and *strive to do his best*. Along the way, Simba appreciates a central theme of the show—that *everyone and everything is interconnected and interdependent*. As described by producer Thomas Schumacher,

Not only do you share this experience with an audience in a live theatre setting, but we all share this planet together, and *The Lion King* has a lot to say about that (Shephard, 2009, 7:32).

The theme of interconnectedness is reflected in the design elements of the production: the circular rising sun at the beginning of Act 1; the circular watering hole at the beginning of Act 2; the circular shape of Mufasa’s mask; the movement generated by the gazelle puppetry; and within the lyrics of the production’s iconic song, *Circle of Life* below:

It’s the circle of life
And it moves us all
Through despair and hope
Through faith and love
Till we find our place
On the path unwinding
In the circle
The circle of life

The *thematic space* of *The Lion King* is the synthesis of other spaces, including the design elements of the on-stage fictional space. This synthesis is carefully choreographed to stimulate feelings and meaning associated with the production’s themes. The interpreting team’s relationship with each one of these spaces is important. The interpreters have access to the text, and are located within the social space of the theatre building itself; but, they are not entirely embedded into the designed fictional spaces on stage. Still, they

are responsible stewards of the meaning generated during the performance—a meaning that is the product of careful consideration of all of the other spaces of the theatre.

4.1.7 *Summation: the spaces of The Lion King SLIP*

In this first section of the findings chapter (Section 4.1), I have described the spaces that were involved in the SLIP of *The Lion King*. I will reserve the discussion of how the spaces were experienced by the stakeholders for the second section of this chapter (Section 4.2). I have relied on the McAuley (1999) *taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre* as a framework for identifying multiple spaces at work during the performance. (See Section 2.2.6 in the literature review for a detailed discussion of McAuley’s taxonomy.) Some of these spaces are physical, while others are co-constructed by the performers and spectators. They work in concert with each other to help form and sustain meaning specific to the performance (McAuley, 1999, p. 35).

An attempt at a succinct summary of this application of McAuley’s taxonomy follows. The Regent Theatre is a *theatre space* prominently situated by reputation in Melbourne’s theatre community and by location in the city’s centre. Purchase of a ticket affords spectators access to the ornate *audience space* within the Regent Theatre—an auditorium with two floors of seating, lobby and ticketing areas, and private event rooms. Members of the cast and crew of *The Lion King* gain access through an entrance on the opposite side of the building, through an inauspicious and unmarked entrance to the *practitioner space*. Here, cast and crew inhabit numerous rooms and other spaces designed to facilitate their preparation for the performance, unseen by the spectators. The practitioners (cast and crew) and audience members converge during a performance in the *performance space*, which includes both the physical spaces where the actors perform and the mental spaces created during the performance—the *physical/fictional relationship*. The Regent Theatre has a standard *stage space* with a proscenium arch that demarks the separation from the narrative world of Africa on stage and the real, spectator world of Melbourne in the auditorium. The production of *The Lion King* presents numerous *fictional places* during the performance—based on locations in Africa, but not representing actual places in Africa. To evoke these places, the *presentational space* of the production includes highly orchestrated costumes, puppetry, lighting, set design, audio design, and actor movement. Some places are shown to the audience as *onstage fictional places* (e.g., Pride Rock), while others are suggested to the audience as *offstage*

fictional places (e.g., the expanses of the Pride Lands). The script provides *textural space* in both the stage directions and dialogue of *The Lion King*. All of these spaces interact to form a *thematic space*—an intrinsic meaning—of community and responsibility to others.

During the interpreted performance of *The Lion King*, the interpreters have a *stage space* that is separate from that of the actors—just outside of the boundary of the actors’ stage space. The *presentational space* created for the production is not applied to the area where the interpreters perform. There is no attempt by the production company to elicit *fictional places* within the interpreters’ performance space. The interpreters are responsible to the same thematic elements present in the production, guided by the script, but the lack of a common *rehearsal space* for cast and interpreters means that the interpreters have prepared for the performance unaware of the ways in which the production company intends for the themes to be explored during the performance.

Deaf people sit in a prescribed area of the *audience space*. Throughout the performance, they divide their time between watching the performance on stage, and looking at the interpreters in their separate location. When they look to the stage, they see a fictionalized world supported by the interplay of multiple theatre spaces. When they look to the interpreters, they see the real world, lacking many of the theatre spaces necessary to hold aloft the ‘Africa’ being co-constructed in the Regent Theatre.

With this understanding of the multiple spaces in operation within the SLIP of *The Lion King*, I shall now turn to the lived experience of the participants of the study. Constructed through multiple interviews with cast members, audience members, and the interpreting team for the production, Section 4.2 brings to life the ways in which space was experienced, conceived, and given meaning by the participants of the study.

4.2 The Lion King: space as experienced by interpreters, actors, and deaf audience members

The following section describes the lived experiences of the study participants. The section is purposefully crafted in a narrative form allowing the reader to engage in the narrative without pretext, while also prompting the reader to reflect (see Section 3.7.6).

4.2.1 *Entering the spaces*

The members of the three-person team designated to interpret Disney's *The Lion King* in Melbourne are both honoured and excited to interpret the prominent production. James perceives it to be “the perfect show for deaf people”, in part because of the production's clever mixture of costumes, puppetry, lighting and colour. These elements come together to serve an important purpose in his mind: to provide deaf people with a visual complement to the music that is a nearly ever-present element of the performance. He anticipates that deaf people would love it—“even if the interpreting is shit.”

Upon arriving at the backstage door of the Regent Theatre, Laura and James are denied entry by the security staff. The interpreters have contact with two staff people from the production—the production manager and an assistant—and neither is on site. The security personnel suggest the interpreters wait for the production manager while having a coffee nearby. Desperate to prepare for the performance, they explain that they normally rehearse near the front of the theatre for productions of *The Lion King*. They are directed to the front entrance of the theatre, where they were permitted by the ushers to enter the building. James notes that there is a lack of standardized procedure for interpreter arrival, which is typified by communication problems between interpreters and production companies

Adam notes that entering the theatre gives him a “buzz”. In addition to being one of the one hundred forty deaf audience members attending today's performance, he is also an actor and theatre interpreter himself, and so he feels at home. The atmosphere has a specific, pre-show excitement. The lobby is bustling with adult patrons intermixing with excited children. Vendors sell souvenirs. He is surprised to find that one of the ushers has some basic signing skills. It is a “nice” addition to the atmosphere—something he has not encountered before. Adam has seen both the film and musical versions of *The Lion King* previously, and comes to the event knowing what to expect from the production.

In contrast, Deb (who is also deaf) arrives to the performance with no appreciable prior knowledge of *The Lion King*, save for some exposure to the song *Circle of Life* at the recent workshop for interpreters. She is surprised to see the large number of deaf people in attendance (what will be more than 140)—it is “a big deal”. She asks Adam why the

show is such a large draw for deaf people, and he explains to her that the story has broad popularity, likely because of the Disney film.

Visible in the lobby area where patrons wait to enter the theatre's auditorium is a staff member of *The Company*—the theatre company under which Laura, James, and Palma operate. The staffer is an interpreter, and wears a bright green t-shirt bearing the logo of *The Company*. She notifies each member of the front-of-house staff (e.g., box office; ushers; vendors) of her availability to interpret interactions between them and deaf audience members.

For the actors, Cameron and Josh, it is a typical performance day. They arrive at the theatre through the stage door on Flinders Lane, the non-descript entrance at the opposite side of the building from the public entrance used by the interpreters and the patrons. Inside the stage door, where a list of any adjustments in the cast is posted for actors to see as they arrive, there is no mention of the interpreters. Instead, the actors are alerted to the interpreted performance via email one to two weeks beforehand, much like they would be alerted to a special visitor coming backstage. Josh feels “it doesn't help when it's just an email saying, ‘And by the way, this is for the hearing impaired’.” In contrast with their experiences adapting performances for autistic audience members, where there are multiple preparatory meetings with the actors beforehand, Cameron and Josh feel minimal investment from the production company in the relationship between the interpreters and the actors. On the day of the autism-friendly performance (sometimes called a *relaxed performance*), the entire theatre is reserved for autistic people and their families, providing an important relief from the social pressures that many parents with autistic children feel in public spaces (ATG Tickets, 2016). Cameron can't remember many previous performances that had been interpreted, except for one, that involved rehearsal and preparation between the cast and interpreters. Josh posits that it is that type of interaction that makes interpreted performances memorable for actors:

I think the reason why we don't remember the other ones is because really they've been plunked on the side of the stage.

The actors view *The Lion King* as a show that relies heavily on physicality and using visual elements to guide the experience of the audience member—to Cameron it is a

“visual feast”. Josh notes that other productions rely heavily on text rather than physicality, whereas *The Lion King* “balances every piece of the pie.”

4.2.2 *Preparation spaces*

Because the cast and crew of *The Lion King* is large—the cast alone numbers between 55 and 60—there are no available dressing rooms backstage for the interpreters. Instead, they are led to a room meant for special events at the front of the house, about three levels above the audience. The room is large, with windows overlooking the front entrance to Collins Street in downtown Melbourne. Meant as a space for a formal reception, the room is not currently in use. Although Laura and James have the room to themselves, waitstaff occasionally pass through. This is not a bother to the pair. The room is equipped with a private bathroom. The isolated room provides the pair with a quiet place to rehearse, but at the expense of a relationship with the cast. In some productions, Laura and James are housed in a backstage location, creating opportunities for the interpreters to interact with cast members before the show, during intermission, and after the performance.

Preparing in the event room leaves Laura feeling “a bit disconnected” from the cast. The distance between the event room and the stage will pose a challenge for the interpreters, especially when the lobby is filled with patrons. Their path of egress will require the interpreters to walk down several flights of stairs, through a lobby, and into the house. James notes that each way they will “battle the traffic” to get to their destination without being stopped by well-wishers (deaf audience members, hearing friends, and hearing audience members).

The isolated and ad-hoc dressing location is not an entirely new experience for the interpreters, and is an improvement from their experience interpreting the same production of *The Lion King* in Sydney several months prior. As James remembers:

It was a bit of a nightmare because we didn’t actually have a room. That’s still sort of the battle at the moment. We were imagining that we would have our own quiet space with a toilet and a mirror, but we ended up being put up in someone’s office. It was a dressing room that they converted to an office, so there was

actually someone in there the whole time. It was a really crowded space. We were changing and getting ready in what was a bathroom that had been turned into a storage room. And so, from that perspective it's like, 'You just don't get it.' I mean, it is no fault of their own, because they sometimes just don't have room, but it's like, (imagining a conversation with the production team) 'Come-on guys. We deserve a bit of respect here to have our own room, and for you to at least have thought of that.' Whereas, it's more that when we arrive we have those expectations, and I guess it is sometimes not understood. Even though we try to explain that we need a quiet space—because we need to play our music, and sign, and rehearse—they just don't get it. It's as if we just need to go there, and get changed and jump on stage, (imagining the reaction of the production team to the request for a quiet space) 'What are you talking about?'

In contrast, the Melbourne event room provides Laura and James with the quiet preparation space they lacked in Sydney.

Prior to the interpreted matinee performance of *The Lion King* previously in the week, there was no effort to introduce the interpreters to the cast—which stands in contrast to performances that are modified for autistic audience members. Those are preceded by a meeting between a group representing autistic people and the cast. The actors lament the effect this lack of interaction had on their relationship with the interpreters during that previous performance:

Cameron: I think having some sort of opportunity to meet ...

Josh: Meet them!

Cameron: ... them, the interpreters, would be great. And have even just a very simple idea of what they're doing.

Josh: Yeah. To be introduced. To be introduced to them. I mean people can be brought to the stage for any number of things, and I think that would have been a nice thing to see them eye-to-eye, and to kind-of go 'We're in this together.' Y'know?

In contrast, the interpreters and actors do meet prior to the Saturday interpreted performance. Approximately two hours before curtain, a production assistant escorts the interpreters to the front of the house—the rows of the auditorium nearest the stage. It is common for the interpreters to meet with the production staff to confirm the location of the interpreter’s performance platform, check the lights aimed on the interpreters, and to conduct a sound check for the interpreters. Often, the cast is on stage during these pre-show meetings. On this day, the interpreters wait in seats, practicing translations to songs, and the cast of *The Lion King* streams onto the stage. The stage manager briefly introduces the interpreters to the cast. The exchange is both friendly and awkward, as if the lack of a protocol for such a meeting leaves everyone unsure what to do.

Cast members stand on stage throughout the introduction, looking down on the interpreters standing in the house, approximately ten feet below the level of the stage. James recalls this moment:

So, there was already this weird—not that it was meant to be—but, there was a natural hierarchy there. It was a little bit awkward; like, we were coming in, and they’re the actors, and we’re just interpreters. Whereas, it would have been nicer if we actually came up on stage and shook everybody’s hand.

As the interpreters turn their attention to their meeting with the stage manager, the cast member playing *Simba* approaches them personally with pre-show greetings. This individual exchange feels different to James, “I felt ... equal ... that he wanted to come to us. It had come across like we wanted to come and see them; when, really we were being asked to be there, and they were being asked to be there.” While not purposeful, James perceives there to be a lack of relationship building between casts and interpreters before performances of interpreted theatre events.

The actors have similar feelings. They are interested in meeting the interpreters, as a way to help foster a sense of collaboration. Cameron notes “Anything that’s an extension of what you do as a performer, you have to be interested in.”

The actors feel they are “assuming a relationship” with the interpreters, and wish they could have met them prior to the performance day to facilitate that relationship.

Cameron's experience is that producers "presume that [the interpretation] has nothing to do with me—That I'll just do the show I'm supposed to do, and the interpreter will just be there, and there won't be a relationship." This leaves Cameron on his own to try to understand what it is that the interpreters are doing:

The fact that [the interpreter] was sort-of, attached to my character. That I'm on stage figuring that out for myself at the time. I would have loved to have known that. I would have loved to have been briefed in some way, and just been told.

Josh: I find myself looking [during the performance], going, "How are you communicating what I'm doing on stage?"

They assume the interpreters are professionals who have prepared—but they aren't certain what the preparation has involved. They feel spending some time with the interpreters would help to make the interpreted performance more meaningful for deaf audience members and inclusive of the actors. They have questions about what the interpreters are doing. They perceive the interpreters as working with them, but Josh is unsure if the interpreters need information from the actors, such as choices the actors make about the physicality of their characters:

I immediately would assume that they are completely capable; but, there is something to be said in a production that is so big, and also we take this really seriously—what we do, playing a character, taking a lot of time—and I think just out of respect for both of us, it's a nice thing to do to be able to kind-of go, 'Hi. How are you? Um, at the very least. But, of course, money comes into it, and overtime and stuff like that.

4.2.3 *Thirty minutes until curtain*

Thirty minutes prior to curtain, audience members begin to flow from the lobby into the house in search of their seats, while actors finalize their pre-show routines backstage. The green-clad interpreter from *The Company* who stands sentry in the lobby hasn't yet been pressed into service; but remains to assist, should there be call for interpretation between deaf patrons and hearing staff members prior to the beginning of the performance.

In the backstage area, stage managers announce a *thirty-minute call*—an alert that the start time of the show is thirty minutes away—over the speaker system that permeates the dressing rooms of the actors. In their temporary residence in the event room, the interpreters conduct their own rituals. Like actors, the interpreters have habits and practices that prepare them mentally and physically for a performance. Pre-show nervousness centres on concerns related to individual and group performance. An additional concern is that the theatre personnel will forget to give the interpreters a *call to places*—the pre-show prompt that summons actors and others to their locations where they must be for the start of the performance. The temporary preparation space of the interpreters is not intended for performers, and so there is no connection to the overhead speaker system that prompts performers to the stage. Because interpreted performances are an anomaly, the crew person assigned to cue the interpreters may change from performance to performance. Unlike the actors, the interpreters must be in their performance location prior to the beginning of the performance to interpret the pre-show announcements—the *curtain speech*.

Deb takes in the large knot of Auslan users socializing prior to the performance (and, later during intermission and post-show), “It felt like a deaf club.”¹⁸ She feels that larger numbers of deaf people at a performance leads to an increased social atmosphere, and therefore a more enjoyable experience. Adam is happy to see such a large deaf crowd in attendance, and he spends much of the time prior to the show being social with people in the assigned seating for deaf patrons—‘the deaf section’. Adam has experienced attending a SLIP with a large group of deaf patrons previously, during a memorable performance of *Children of a Lesser God* when he was a young boy. For Adam, the large number of people contributed to a feeling of a deaf atmosphere:

I know there were hearing people there, too. I had hearing aids on, and could hear them talking—it was a mix of hearing and deaf people—but, for me, it was like a big, deaf event.

¹⁸ Melbourne’s deaf club closed some ten years prior.

Deb notices that there are a wide variety of people in the deaf section—representing different ages and parts of the deaf community—and also hearing students of sign language. She sees hearing parents sitting alongside their deaf children; and feels that a positive feature of the deaf section is that families can enjoy the show together. Sitting on the aisle across from the deaf section, consultant Palma watches as the large section of deaf audience members engage in pre-show chatter that looks particularly animated. When she sees someone who is using *spoken language* instead of sign language, the resulting break in the patchwork of moving hands “feels like they’re invading our space,” even though she feels the deaf community has no actual claim to the area:

But it’s not right or wrong. I mean, they’ve booked their tickets where they are sat; but, I’m sure there are some places throughout that deaf-allocated area where there are hearing people. There were hearing people sitting just in front of me to my right—it was right for hearing people to sit there because it was too close to the front for deaf people to sit there.

Deb notes that deaf people are more social with one-another within the deaf seating section of the auditorium than are the hearing audience members who occupy the rest of the seating spaces:

Maybe it’s a new kind of deaf space. Where we once had multiple dedicated deaf spaces throughout the community, now there are none. So, maybe theatre offers a new type of deaf space.

The seating for deaf patrons of *The Lion King* takes up the entire left section of the main floor, a crowd that is impressive to Deb. It is a common experience for her that the section of deaf seating is off to one side of the auditorium. Although the social atmosphere and behaviour of those in the deaf seating section lends an air of deaf space to the auditorium, Deb sees the deaf community’s reign on the space as temporary:

We’re there as visitors. Visitors, yes, but also I felt that I had a right—just like the hearing people—to be in the space and to anticipate watching the performance. I think it was nobody’s space—not theirs, not ours. We were both there visiting, occupying the space for a time, and then leaving.

Deb sees being in a prescribed seating section for deaf patrons as being both positive and negative. Some positive characteristics are that deaf people in the deaf section frequently know other deaf people in the section, and the area is highly social in nature. The social component of the deaf section extends to new or foreign deaf people:

I was once in England and went to see a play. I didn't know anyone there, but once I arrived and sat down, people around me started to say 'hello' and introduce themselves to me. So, it's a good way to meet people. On the other hand, if I wanted to go to the show on a date—and didn't want people greeting us—I would have to sit far away in different parts of the auditorium, you-know? [laughing]

A lack of anonymity is not the only potential issue with designated seating sections. Deb notes that designated seating restricts the freedom of deaf people to choose the seats that they want. Often, these seats are located on the main floor of the auditorium, where seats are more expensive than others. Like Deb, Adam sees both positive and negative aspects of the deaf seating section. He sees theatre as a shared social experience, where he bonds with friends through discussions during intermission and after the performance. Adam wishes there were even more time to socialize with other deaf patrons.

Like Deb, Adam sees the SLIP as a temporary deaf space. The recognition of the interpreters in the pre-show announcement and the curtain call are a way of asserting deafness in an otherwise hearing space, “not in a bad way.”

It's like we set up camp and we say, 'we're here and this is our space.' We always have to. Because the deaf community, now, doesn't have deaf clubs—they've all closed. With so many people coming to today's performance, it became like a hub. A temporary hub. Like a deaf hub from 12:30 to 3:30—but, ironically, it didn't finish then, because it continued afterward, as people headed down to the pub. It went on for a few more hours. So, just a span of time—for about four or five ... maybe six ... hours, it depends on the event—we can feel the impact of this wonderful time. Sometimes, it goes on longer. It becomes a deaf space.

Theatre protocol dictates that performers remain in their pre-show locations (e.g., dressing rooms; the V.I.P. room) until called to places by stage managers (either through

announcements broadcast over speakers in the *backstage spaces* or via direct interaction with the stage manager). In this case, “places” are top-of-show locations for each performer (e.g., a position on stage; the orchestra pit). The interpreters are expected to be located behind the last row of audience members on the left side of the main floor of the house when the cast is called to places. Watching the clock, the interpreters realize that no theatre personnel will be coming to give them their cue to places. For them both, this is a first. Laura thinks, “Oh, my God!” They decide to leave their rehearsal space in the event room facing Collins Street, walking down several flights of stairs into the lobby of the theatre. By this time, the ushers have herded more than 2,100 audience members into their seats. In their seats, the patrons have no idea that a herd of cast members is amassing behind them in the lobby, ready to stream onto the stage. The careful policing of the audience members helps safeguard the beginning of the contrived reality.

4.2.4 *Call to places*

Vigilant about this responsibility, an usher stops the interpreters as they approach a stage manager that they see along their way to be taken to places. The moments just prior to the start of the show are complex, and the stage manager is in charge of the entire endeavour. After reminding the usher that they are the interpreters for the performance, the usher apologizes and allows the interpreters to continue toward the stage manager, who takes them to their designated pre-show places located behind the last row of audience members (see Figure 4-15).

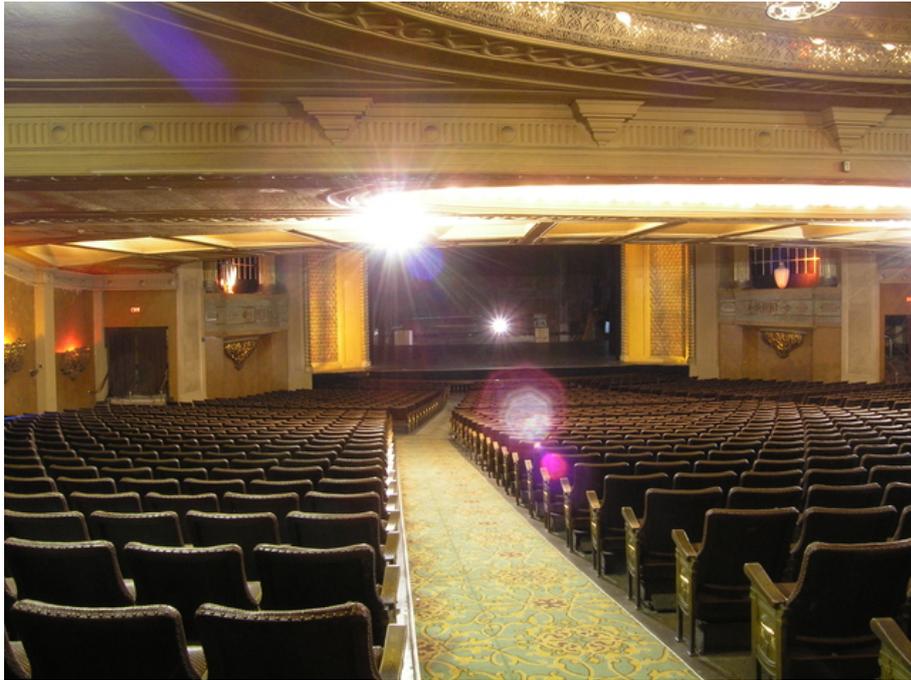


Figure 4-15. The view from behind the last row of seats in the designated seating area for deaf patrons. (Photo: cinematreasures.com)

In the moment, James senses the stress felt by the usher and others:

It was nice to acknowledge that someone else was really stressed. It helped me acknowledge that I'm stressed. Everybody's stressed. It's part of your job when you care.

The stage manager stands with the interpreters behind the last row of audience members, to cue them to travel down the aisle to their performance space. For James, the formality of the stage manager's approach makes him feel more a part of the performance than did the more casual procedure of the previous Wednesday performance of *The Lion King*:

This time around it was much more, (in the voice of the stage manager) 'Okay, we've got one minute.' So, we knew when we went down, that we'd be there for a couple of seconds and then we'd get on. For me, that approach I prefer so much more. You feel more part of it. You're being instructed properly; rather than, you're sort-of this curtain ... You're like an usher, you-know, on the side. And, (portraying the usher-like interpreter) 'I'm just going to get up and do my thing', you-know. So that was nice.

Upon receiving a cue from the stage manager, the interpreters walk down the far-left aisle of the house, toward the platform at the foot of the stage (see Figure 4-16).

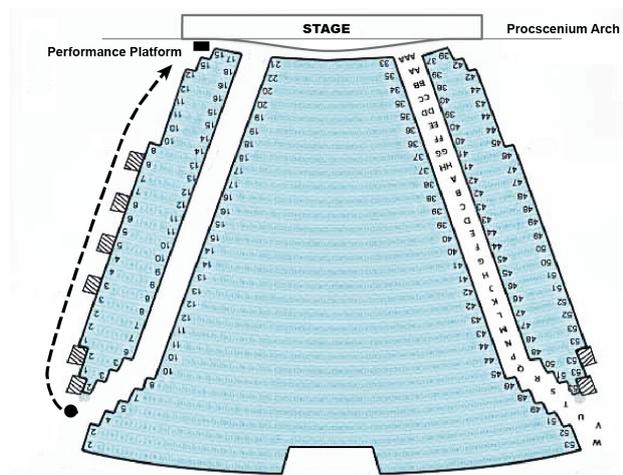


Figure 4-16. Seating diagram of the Regent Theatre, showing the interpreter path from pre-show 'places' (the dot) to the performance platform (the rectangle).

There is no interaction between them, and Laura hopes deaf audience members will not see the interpreters making their entrance. They struggle to avoid eye contact with deaf audience members wishing them well in Auslan. This is especially difficult in the few moments prior to the curtain speech, when the interpreters are standing on the performance platform facing the audience in front of them. The interpreters are conflicted between their desire to maintain the fourth wall and the feeling of responsibility to respond to deaf well-wishers in the audience—especially members of their families. James responds infrequently; with only a slight head-nod or uplifted eyebrow gesture. James comments on the reason for this:

I like to keep that separation. I think it's part of the show for the audience as well, that this is something a little bit different.

This separation is even more complicated for Laura, as the owner of the interpreting company providing services for the performance. She balances her need to focus with a desire to be respectful of audience members. Having been raised in deaf households, both interpreters are naturally drawn to the collectivist pre-show nature of the throng of deaf people laid out in rows ahead of them. When James sees the group of deaf people in the deaf seating section in front of him, he identifies with them:

That area there just felt like ... I felt like that was my community.

As well-meaning as are the deaf audience members offering last-minute wishes of “good luck”, these interactions make the interpreters even more nervous.

The interpreters’ consultant, Palma, watches the interpreters attempt to respond to members of the deaf audience without being noticed by the general audience. The interpreters employ surreptitious nods of the head to acknowledge individual audience members. Palma notes:

Sometimes I wish that in the theatre they could provide interpreters with better access to where they’ve got to stand, rather than having the interpreters walk down the aisle, where deaf people can see them walking and start to say ‘hello’ to them.

The entrance down the aisle is jarring for the interpreters, who will spend the remaining three hours looking at the audience from the stage. To Laura, this style of entrance is:

... disruptive, having to come down, because you see it from the back. This is what the audience is going to see. I prefer to come from the stage. So, you come out; and that’s it, you get straight into it. Whereas, here, it makes you more nervous.

It seems obvious to Deb that interpreters would be nervous during these last pre-performance moments. She feels they are focused on the show as they walk down the aisle and should be left alone to concentrate. Although she feels they shouldn’t be approached before the show and during intermission, she feels it is appropriate to approach them after the show.

When the interpreters walk down the aisle to their places, it has an effect on Adam: “That always makes me feel goose bumps because the show’s about to start.” Just prior to the start of the performance, the interpreters are given a cue by the stage manager to step on the platform in preparation to interpret a pre-show announcement. In addition to a standard announcement about a prohibition on the taking of photos and video during the performance, there is an announcement that the performance will be interpreted. The

interpreters add an announcement (in Auslan only) about the use of International Signing to represent the South African languages spoken in the production. (Because the interpreters have translated South African dialogue into International Sign, deaf audience members will have access to the text of *The Lion King* that most hearing audience members will lack.) Adam likes that there is an announcement about the interpreted performance—something that he feels doesn't normally happen. Deb notices that some people in the deaf seating section may have missed the announcement altogether, as there is no formalized way to get everyone's attention prior to the announcement.

4.2.5 *Designated seating for deaf patrons—the 'deaf section'*

“Nants ingonyama bagithi baba!”

— Opening Line, Disney's *The Lion King*

Cast members of Disney's *The Lion King* stealthily settle into places behind the last row of seats as the lights dim in the audience of the Regent Theatre in Melbourne, Australia. The cast is prepared to jolt the audience members into their on-stage world, by way of a visual and auditory cacophony starting in the back of the audience and streaming toward the stage. As a cast member portraying the role of Rafiki prepares to bellow the show's iconic first line, Palma considers the 140 deaf people in the audience. She makes a decision:

I was in the front row, across the aisle from the deaf section. I turned to the woman across the aisle, and I signed ‘Hey, look behind you. As she did, each row of deaf people behind her turned around, in a domino effect, just in time to see the elephant coming down the aisle. I knew that it was a big moment, and I didn't think it was fair that deaf audience members would miss it.

Cues about where to look and the entrance of characters come to Deb from several sources. As she sees *Rafiki* entering on stage, the interpreter (Laura) begins to interpret—obviously as Rafiki. As the animal characters enter from the auditorium, Laura's interpretation includes a two-handed, alternating beckoning sign, and other signals, indicating that animals are entering from behind the audience members. Deb also feels the vibrations of animals moving down the aisle, as they pound sticks and other props

onto the theatre floor. The domino effect caused by the turning heads of others reaches Deb, too, as she looks around to see the animals entering.

During the performance, Deb splits her attention between the interpreters and the stage. She finds the overall visual picture to be pleasing, and that the interpreters are nicely integrated into the picture. She feels the interpreters are “easy to watch”, which makes it possible to become engrossed in the story while watching them.

Deb notes that interpreters can help facilitate moments when deaf audience members can look back and forth between the interpreters and the stage:

I think interpreters can give us time to look back and forth. Rather than putting out a non-stop stream of signing that we have to constantly attend to, they can give us time to look around. I think it’s best when we can look around, rather than focusing only on the interpreters. We didn’t pay to watch the interpreters; we paid to watch the whole production.

Adam recalls an early interpreted theatre performance of *Children of a Lesser God*—one of his first interpreted theatre experiences—where he first experienced the process of “searching for information” on stage. He likens this to the daily experience deaf people have of searching for information in their environment. It is a type of “yo-yo” experience. He remembers the process of tracking the information on stage as being complicated—not necessarily frustrating, but active. It was a learned behaviour, and he was learning as he was going.

The interpreters at this performance of *The Lion King* have a pleasant visual approach that Adam finds easy to visually digest. The interpreters’ performance includes a natural ebb and flow of emotions, and Adam enjoys taking in the alternating visual images conjured by the interpreters as they trade off between characters on stage. Adam normally splits his time evenly between the action on stage and the interpreters; but, for this performance he spends a bit more time on the interpreters. This is because he had recently worked with the interpreters at a workshop he taught, and so he had the chance to watch the evolution of their work.

Adam notes that the placement of designated seating near the interpreters “is not always the best”:

I call it a lottery, really. Where you sit can sometimes be very fortunate, and sometimes very bad. It can be too close, which means I’m sitting with my neck straining to look upward and all I can see are the interpreters’ faces and hands—I can see very little of the stage. My experiences have been wide-ranging. You never know. Sometimes the front-of-house doesn’t communicate with the people selling the tickets and so you end up with a lousy arrangement that is too close and far off to one side. It leaves me looking back and forth—either left-to-right, or right-to left. Really, you just never know. It’s one of the biggest challenges we always have.

Adam notes that multiple physical factors influence the suitability of designated seating for deaf patrons, including the position of the interpreter, the location of the stage, and the sightline of the deaf patron’s view from their seat to the interpreter and then the stage. Because of his experience as an actor, theatre interpreter, and frequent theatre audience member, Adam makes informed choices when choosing seats at SLIPS:

So, when I reserve a seat, I look for where I feel I know it’s possible the interpreters will stand. And then I grab a seat. Usually, I’m pretty good—because of my knowledge. Some other deaf people don’t have this, and they might think ‘ah, that seat is too far away’ ... or ‘it’s too close’.

When describing ideal seats, Adam factors into the equation the distance from the interpreter; the degree to which the seat is centred with the interpreter or off to one side; and the altitude of the seat when looking at the interpreter (see Figure 4-17).

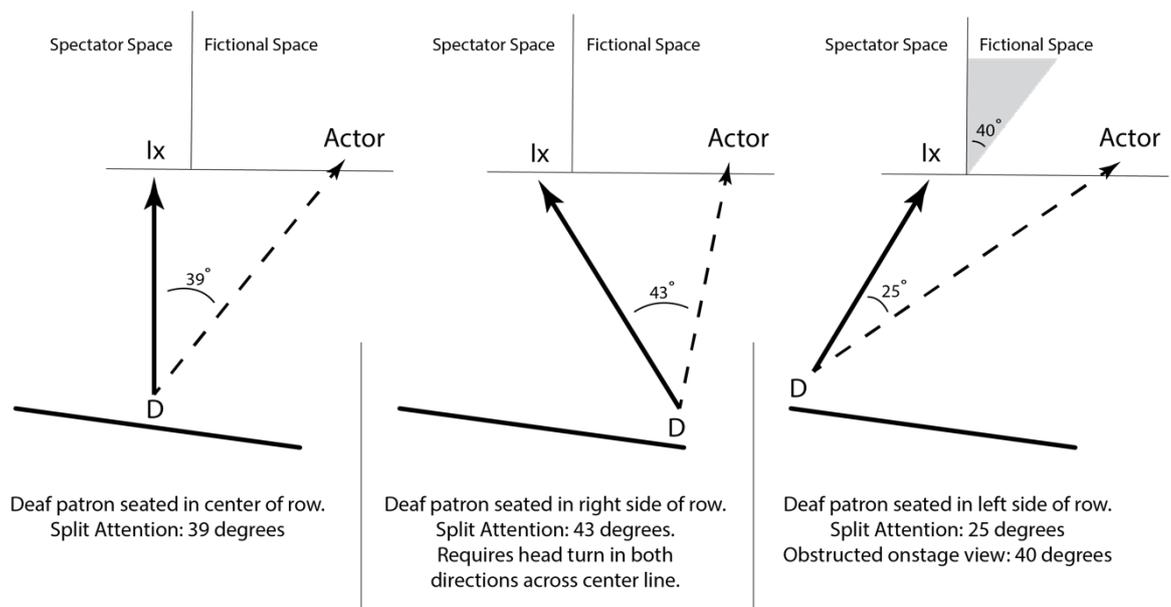


Figure 4-17. Degree of split attention as a factor of interpreter placement (Ix), actor location, and a deaf patron's seat (D). (Angle measurements are not based on actual measurements in the theatre, but on measurements within the diagram, itself.)

It is ideal to minimize the amount that his attention is split between the stage and the interpreter. An ideal arrangement allows him to look at the interpreters and stage in the same field of view. He sees picking seats to optimize one's sightline from seat to interpreter to stage as a learned skill. This is the third interpreted performance of *The Lion King* he has attended—each with other interpreters, and in other locations. Even though the story remains the same, the physical arrangement impacts his experience:

Every time I've seen *The Lion King*, I haven't sat in the same seat. It's a new experience; a new place; a new journey.

Adam notes that he is "adaptable" to seats that aren't ideal. He makes physical adjustments, when he can, to improve his ability to see the interpreters and the stage.

Deb agrees that the sightline from her to the interpreter to the stage is a factor of enjoyment. Positive experiences have included times when the split-attention distance (the ping-pong effect) was short—that is, that the amount of distance (and therefore head-turning) from the interpreter to the stage and back was minimized. She noted that seats too close to the interpreter can be uncomfortable on the neck, and that she prefers to be between 5 and 10 rows away.

Deb notes a difference between attending interpreted performances and her experiences as a younger person attending children’s theatre with her grandmother, who was hearing. There were no interpreters, but the productions were highly visual. They often had simple dialogue, and used movement and visual information to tell the story. Deb could follow along. She went to these with her hearing grandmother, and felt like the visual nature of the productions allowed her to enjoy the productions with a sense of parity—because they both had the same visual focus. The interpreted productions were more dialogue-dependent, and the focus on the interpreters reduced Deb’s focus on the overall production.

Deb notes that she can’t recall whether some shows were interpreted or subtitled, and posits that this might be a good sign ... that the accommodation could be forget-able:

A type of invisibility, maybe. Maybe the two of them should be included in the stage picture, where we’re looking.

In this way she seemed to imply that the interpreters would become less remarkable, not invisible.

The actors feel that there is a connection between physicality and psychology. They describe the visual experience of *The Lion King* as having been highly orchestrated. Included in this is the attention given to puppetry, and the drawing the eye of the audience to the puppet (or between the puppet and the actor, in some cases). (See Figure 4-18, below.)



Figure 4-18. Focus of Zazu character on the puppet (left), and on the puppet and actor together (right). (Photos: left by Deen van Meer; right by Disney.)

They describe the puppetry as both enabling and limiting. Josh sees the puppets as layered on top of them as actors ...

It's just like [deaf people] would be in the show, you're looking from the show to the interpreter—you're doing that with the puppet and the actor as well. You're flashing from one to the other. You're being led ... you're staying on one more than the other, depending ... some people might find themselves looking at the puppeteer more than they do the puppet. Probably wouldn't be ... not what you prefer.

Cameron: I sometimes feel like I'm shadowing the bird ... often. And, I think it's deliberately constructed that way in the production. There are times when the focus is very clearly this [indicating the puppet] ... and very clearly this [indicating himself as the actor] ... and also the picture that we make together.

The split-attention experience that hearing audience members have of looking at both the actor and the puppet is different than that of deaf audience members who look from the stage to the interpreters and then back to the stage in at least two aspects: audience members remain in the fictional space of *The Lion King* when they look from actor to puppet; and, the distance between the actor and puppet is far smaller than the distance between the actor and the interpreters. Many of Deb's friends don't go to theatre, and at least one tells her that the location of the interpreters is an important factor:

I have one friend who wants shadowed interpreters on stage. He won't go to a performance if the interpreters are placed off to the side, but he's willing to pay for a performance that is shadowed.

Adam and Deb are seated next to one-another. They occasionally check-in with each other throughout the performance, chatting briefly. Adam notices that they have a shared emotional experience throughout the performance, and that they sometimes react by giving each other meaningful looks.

It was like we were each having an experience at the same time of the ups and downs of the story. We had that opportunity, and it was nice.

Their reactions are to everything in front of them, according to Adam:

It was both [the production and the interpretation]. Sometimes we would see a wonderful translation, and a wonderful presentation of it coming from the interpreters. We'd look at each other and comment, 'This is just awesome.' It's nice. It's nice to see. Other times, we'd both look up to the stage, in awe, and we'd say, 'that's awesome'. For example, the puppets. When the elephant came in, we were just looking at it in awe. It was cool. So, it's both.

Adam considers whether this might be an advantage that deaf people have over hearing audience members—they can chat in sign language without competing with the sounds from the performance. He says he is not sure exactly what hearing people are doing, but surmises that they would bother others if they talked during the performance:

Hearing people can't talk. They have to be quiet. Deaf people can sign their comments. It's more okay to have some discussion because there's no noise—there's no sound.

This type of checking-in was similar to the ways in which some deaf people might hold brief side-bar conversations during interpreted public events—"but less so" in Deb's estimation.

4.2.6 *The intermission*

As Act 1 of *The Lion King* comes to a close, the actors portraying *Young Simba*, *Pumbaa*, and *Timon* saunter off stage singing and dancing to the show's musical mantra, *Hakuna Matata*. It has been seventy-five minutes since the beginning of the performance. The interpreters wait for the light aimed on their platform to dim, which serves as their cue to dash up the house-left aisle toward the lobby. Audience members are already on their feet. The interpreters struggle against a stream of patrons seeking souvenirs and the facilities. Deaf and hearing audience members stop the interpreters on their way to the event room, at the front of the theatre. Palma sees this as a source of conflict for the interpreters: positive feedback might uplift the interpreters, but negative comments might

deflate their confidence. Ultimately, Palma recognises that interpreters have more immediate needs:

It's important for interpreters to go off quickly, because they need that breathing space. They might need water. They might need to shake it off and rest. They've been expending energy, standing there for a very long time while interpreting.

During the four "hikes" between the event room and the stage, the interpreters struggle to maintain a balance between competing responsibilities: the fourth wall, their own needs, and the expectations of audience members who attempt to engage them. James, who views the interpreters as an extension of the deaf community, considers the dynamics of their pre-show warm-up space and path to the stage:

It's frustrating. It's one part where I feel disrespected by the producers—that they bring us through the audience. We should come from the stage, so that there's that separation, which I think is important.

There are just fifteen minutes to the intermission. At the end of Act 1, the interpreters immediately step off their platform and walk swiftly up the outside aisle of the theatre. Deb feels some deaf people expect to be able to interact with the interpreters during these times, but she feels it is reasonable for them to expect to be left alone. She assumes they are fully engaged in the work they have to do—and are a bit nervous. As the interpreters walk up the aisle past rows of deaf audience members, they try to maintain the separation described by James. Laura sees her mother in the audience, who signs in Auslan to her:

She went, 'Ah, beautiful! You-two should get married.' and 'You're not even saying hello.' and I'm all, 'I'm working.'—She doesn't understand the process.

During the interval, forty to fifty percent of the seats in the section are empty. Many of their previous occupants now fill the aisles on either side of the section. Hearing audience members, by-and-large remain seated in their assigned seats, standing in place to stretch, or exiting up the aisle (presumably toward the lobby). Deaf audience members from different parts of the deaf seating area seek each other out, meeting in the aisles to discuss the first half of the performance.

Chat among deaf people in the deaf seating area is constant during intermission, and continues until the moment that Act 2 begins. Deb is in mid-conversation with someone next to her when lights began flashing and there is a general sense that Act 2 will start. They keep talking, as do other deaf people around them, until the moment that the second act truly comes to life. This was in contrast with hearing people, who “settled down” when it is clear that Act 2 is nigh.

Adam notes that intermission is a time for deaf people to catch up with one another. He describes a pattern in the conversation: first, deaf people will “check in with each other” about their reaction to the show ... “What do you think?” and “That was amazing!”, etc. After that, the topics shift to other things, “but always the first thing is *What did you think?*” He notes (facetiously) that deaf people “never go to the toilet.” He describes some deaf patrons prioritizing socializing in place over leaving the deaf section—even though they had intended to visit the facilities. Instead, they stand in the deaf section and chat—until finally it is too late for them to manage the trip before the performance resumes. Those deaf people who do go to the lobby to use the toilet or buy a drink frequently stay in the lobby to socialize with other deaf people they know and encounter there (as was the case during this performance). When the time comes for the beginning of the second act, it is delayed slightly as ushers attempt to corral deaf audience members into their seats. Adam watches:

The lights were flashing, and the ushers kept saying ‘please take your seats’. Then I realized that hearing people had gone directly to their seats, where they obediently sat. Not deaf people. Deaf people kept chatting with one-another. Even those who were out in the lobby areas—who knew that the flashing lights meant it was time to return to their seats—they stayed standing where they were and kept chatting. It wasn’t until one of the ushers physically went to them and asked them to return to their seats that they did.

Just one usher at the theatre knows Auslan, and so Adam sees the other ushers—all who are hearing non-signers—trying to manage deaf audience members through exaggerated gestures and wildly exaggerated mouthing of the words “PLEAEESE SIT DOWWWN” and “PLEEASSEE TAAAKE YOURRR SEATSSS”. Adam likens this experience to his own experience as an interpreter of two performances of *Strictly Ballroom*, when each second act was delayed as deaf audience members were returning to their seats:

We would get the two-minute call to places for the second act, and then we'd all get into places. Then we'd get a message, 'We're ready to go, but we're waiting on the deaf people.' [laughing] Both times! Even as an interpreter, I had to laugh. I had to laugh. That really is the deaf way, always. For me I think that it's an important part of a good experience for deaf people. They need it. The culture is different.

4.2.7 *Performance mental spaces*

Back stage, the work of the interpreters does not go unrecognized by members of the cast, as noted by Cameron:

I think they're very interesting figures to us, as performers, because they're ... well ... they're interpreting what we're doing, so we need to be interested in who they are and how they're doing it. But, they're also charismatic, and they're performers in their own right, and they command attention. They're not just a conduit of what we're doing, they're kind-of ... they exist in their right ... and they're in the spotlight!

The actors, who have performed nearly 600 performances of *The Lion King*, welcome something different to think about during the show—something that makes the performance unique. The separate lighting for the interpreter stage is obvious to the actors. To Cameron, it is something different from the norm, but which also adds something to the performance:

If you can actually see, sometimes you see, that roughness around the edges—it changes the way you view something. And it isn't so polished. And that can have a really interesting positive effect. Like, if the audience are looking at the show—imagining this from my experience today—they're looking at the show, they have an awareness that something else is going on for somebody else. That doesn't necessarily blur their experience in a bad way; I think it can be really positive. And, that was certainly the spirit which we go into it with—knowing, yep, this is going to be a special show for everyone.

Cameron, who plays the character *Zazu*, is aware of the interpreters from his first moments in the performance. He is one of the actors who enters the auditorium from behind the audience. He is carrying a long pole, on the end of which is a long piece of string attached to a kite in the form of a blue bird. As Cameron circles the puppet above his head, he walks down the aisle and sees the interpreters, standing on their performance platform nearby the stairs leading up to the stage:

Today, my awareness of the interpreters was very palpable, because I'm swinging a kite attached to a pole, running through the audience, and concerned immediately that I might actually hit them. So, I kind-of adapted what I was doing physically to just make sure I didn't do that.

Performing as the character *Scar*, Josh does not enter the stage from behind the audience at the beginning of the show. Instead, he begins the performance off stage. He enters the stage space during Scene Two, which takes places in Scar's Cave. While some actors can watch the interpreters from offstage locations on the opposite side of the stage, Josh has to wait until he is on stage:

There's no opportunity for me to see them do their thing—just because of sightlines. There's no way that I can actually see them unless I'm on stage. And there are really only a couple of moments where I'm not speaking—when the hyenas are doing their thing — when I can actually in my peripheral, watch them. Which is actually, it's a good view—even in my peripheral.

The actors see the interpreters as part of them—an extension of them. Performers. As they see interpreters doing their work in their periphery, they wonder what it is the interpreters are doing to tell the story:

Cameron: Anything that's an extension of what you do as a performer, you have to be interested in.

Josh: Right.

In the audience, Adam is responding to the interpreters and the performance together. “It’s both. I love when an interpreter guides me on a journey through the performance.” He describes enjoying that the interpreters and the production were working in concert. The experience is multi-sensory—visual, language, sound, vibrations. Deb agrees: “The whole thing came together perfectly.”

The translations and performed interpretations by the interpreters are an ever-present part of the experience for Adam and Deb as they watch the performance of *The Lion King*. For Adam, there are “multiple layers to the experience:”

Enjoying the show is the top layer. Beneath that is another layer, understanding their translations. And, under that is awareness of what they are doing in their translations.

These layers work together in concert with any other analysis Adam is doing at the time to form his enjoyment of the show. Adam enjoys this extra layer of involvement in his experience—it allows him to appreciate the efforts of the interpreters to bring forth the story. He realizes that the additional layer of analysis might be idiosyncratic to him, as he is an interpreter himself. Adam also thinks that he was analysing the work of the interpreters more than usual, because he had just completed teaching a workshop that included musical theatre interpreting. The interpreters had worked on the song *Circle of Life* during the workshop, and he felt this made him more analytical of their work.

For Adam and Deb, part of the enjoyment of the performance of *The Lion King* included the opportunities to take in both the interpreters and the action on stage. Adam notes that it is sometimes better for interpreters to “prune” their translations to focus on the content and the flow of the storytelling. He notes that this can mean omitting un-necessary lines judiciously. This helps to decrease frustration caused by the cognitive effort required to parse unnecessary details in the translation. One of these frustrations can be identifying which characters the interpreters are representing at any given time:

With just two interpreters and so many characters, there is a lot to figure out. That mental effort can make it a frustrating experience.

Deb feels that the extra cognitive effort that deaf people experience doesn't have to be considered a *fait accompli*, noting that the quality of the interpreters and overall production can contribute to a more positive experience:

I have had it happen before when I have watched some impressive performances that seemed to require no cognitive effort. But the interpreters were good—and it was a good overall production, too.

To Deb a good theatre experience can mean forgetting about interpreters altogether:

I think one of the best productions I've seen was a German production produced here in Australia. It was called *Soft*. The actors were people with Downs Syndrome. I can't remember if it was interpreted or if it was captioned. I was utterly engrossed in the performance, itself; but, I can't remember who interpreted it ... or if it was captioned, instead. My focus was entirely on the stage. We were sitting up in the audience, and looking downward. But I can't remember ... Maybe that's a good thing.

Deb describes theatre interpreting as a “good platform” for interpreters to reflect on and analyse their work. She feels it gives them an opportunity to consider the relationship between translation and interpretation—something that isn't possible while community interpreting. There, the product and process are ephemeral. Not just a different type of interpreting, theatre interpreting is both translation and interpretation, and it affords interpreters a unique chance to consider their process and product:

But I feel that very few interpreters hit the mark. The rest are awkward. There are one, two, maybe three who are on the same wavelength but the rest still haven't got it. They haven't had that moment of realization. I think it's like the light in their heads haven't gone on yet. They have approached a certain level, but the light just hasn't gone on yet.

Adam also notes that many interpreters translate into a form of sign language that makes apparent the structure and form of the original English text, rather than a conceptually and culturally equivalent rendering in Auslan. That is: their translations are pulled toward

the source language, rather than the target language. Adam finds tonight's translation of *The Lion King* to be set apart from other translations. He finds it "more clear, more clean. It had a message behind it." Adam notes that the approach varies among interpreters, but he feels that when the translation skews toward English, the interpreters:

... forget about the message and underlying meanings ... and why a song might be in the show. When you follow English the meaning is lost. And it's just alright. But tonight was different.

Deb is also aware of this struggle of interpreters to choose where to aim their translations. The preferences of deaf people vary, and are often influenced by levels of bilingualism residual hearing, and class:

It's the same as the hearing people who go to the theatre. Maybe they are middle-class. They have money. They have good jobs, perhaps. Maybe they are well educated. Well, it's the same with the deaf community who can afford to go to the theatre. They might be avid readers. They may love watching movies, or listening to music. They are eager to see the word-for-word rendering from the interpreters. They can enjoy it and feel a connection with it.

But, there are other deaf people who are like, 'Un-uh [shaking head, 'no']. Come-on, we want to see natural Auslan signing'—so they can understand the meaning. So, these are in conflict, and I think some interpreters feel like they are stuck in the middle. I think they consider who might be in the audience, and then adjust their translations one way or the other.

While Adam is a frequent patron of musical theatre, Deb's preference is for dialogue-based plays (often referred to as 'straight plays' in theatre vernacular)—often in smaller, local theatres. She wonders if interpreting musical theatre is a specific type of genre:

I could see in the flowing movements of their signing a different pace that is typical of music. I enjoyed watching it—it's a different style of signing. Although it's enjoyable, two hours might be too much—watching the same style over and

over again can be repetitive. But I think those people who grew up watching the film, wearing hearing aids, and listening to the music enjoyed that more.

Both Laura and James are cognizant of the differences between the pacing of natural Auslan sign production and that of music when it is sung. When performing translations of songs into Auslan, each is sensitive to the “natural rhythms” of Auslan, and try to maintain those rhythms when possible in their performance.

Like Adam, Deb is impressed with the interpreters, and how they work in concert with the production. She knows that it did not come simply, noting that the interpreters have honed their translation over time during performances in Sydney and in the children’s matinee in Melbourne earlier in the week. One moment in the translation does stand out to Deb: a translation Easter-egg inserted by one of the interpreters into parts of the interpreted performance. Knowing the interpreter for nearly 30 years, Deb is aware of private, *pet* signs for friends in the deaf and interpreting communities. Deb notices that the interpreter has worked these signs into the translation as a form of playful, private message to friends in the audience (my term, a *translation Easter-egg*),¹⁹ which brings knowing giggles from those audience members. Deb questions the appropriateness of this. She feels like it brings an un-necessary “innuendo under the surface that isn’t a part of *The Lion King*.”

4.2.8 *Interpreter use of space*

While acting on stage, the actors are aware of the physicality interpreters employ to distinguish characters; cross and counter-cross blocking of interpreters; and moments when the interpreters are throwing focus to the stage. Josh comments about the moments onstage when he can see the interpreters working on their platform:

When you get a sense of the animation levels that they're kind-of committing to; the swap-swappies that go on; and, when they're watching the show, too. I mean

¹⁹ In some contexts *Easter Egg* refers to a purposefully hidden message, joke, or feature that is engineered into software, websites, and video games.

when the hyenas doing their gay dance club scene, I could see them having an opportunity to watch the show.²⁰

Indeed, the interpreters have included several moments of *blocking* on stage during their performance (this is the term for pre-planned stage movements by actors). They have made concerted efforts to increase interaction between each other; have established an upstage/downstage configuration during some moments of the performance; and, have planned to swap positions during other moments (a *counter-cross* in theatre parlance). Deb believes that it is the first time such blocking has been used by interpreters locally, and she feels the addition of it to the performance was possibly influenced by my workshop. She enjoys the adjustments and feels they add a layer of information to the interpretation.

One such adjustment is in Act 2, during the song *Endless Night*. The song is largely a solo musical number, sung by Simba. Believing ... hoping ... that his father is somewhere up in the stars watching down on him, Simba sings up to the sky, and the presence of his father's spirit (represented here by Laura standing in the back) seems palpable. The song is interpreted by James as a solo, with Laura joining at the very end to interpret the lines of *Rafiki*. The interpreters configure themselves in an *upstage/downstage* configuration: as James interprets the character of *Simba*, he stands forward on the platform, near to the audience (the *downstage* position).

²⁰ A dance break during the song *Be Prepared* features pulsating music as the cast of hyena characters dance in a manner that is stereotypical of gay male strippers.

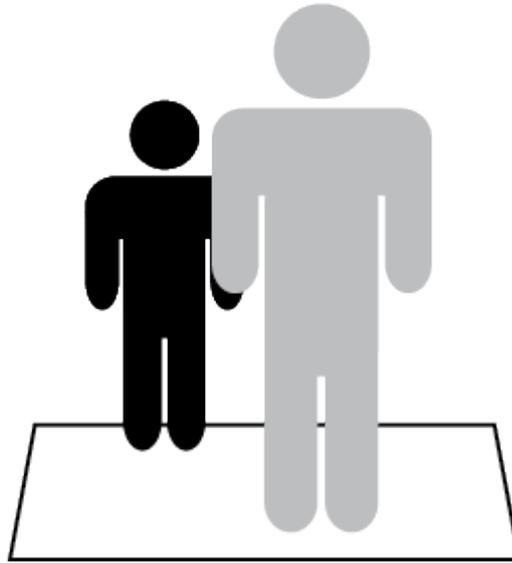


Figure 4-19. Upstage/downstage configuration of the interpreters during Endless Night showing Laura (black) and James (grey).

Laura, who has no lines during the song, positions herself *upstage*, slightly behind James (see Figure 4-19). He explains:

We had done this new thing we had started doing where Laura sort-of stood behind me during that song, and she joins in the song toward the end.

So, it was just a nice song, and I was really conscious the whole time of really trying to get that emotion across. It just ... I knew that it was more complete. That it was a song—it wasn't just a translation, or a delivery of signs, there was an artistic ... there was an art to it. And it's nice when you can implement that into interpreting. And you know that it's a little bit different: it isn't normally done, but it's unique to the show. And, it gives the deaf patrons a feeling of ... You-know because as hearing people, when we go to shows, we are awe-struck by things we see that are so different. You know how a stage might move [up and down], or how they bring props on, or particular things like that. And, for deaf people, they're looking at two interpreters that may be the same all the time [standing stationary off to one side]. Maybe what they're signing is beautiful, but it's fairly standard. Like, a song can be beautiful, but when the set changes, that's

an extra element [on stage]. So, for us to be able to play around with that whole idea is nice.

For both interpreters, it is one of the highlights of the show. Because it is a new technique, it has potential risk. Still, Laura enjoys the moment: “I got lots of goose bumps from that one.”

Even though he normally finds the second act of shows to be less emotionally inspiring than the first act of shows, Adam agrees that *Endless Night* is a highlight of the performance. The craftsmanship of the interpreters during this section impacts both he and Deb as audience members:

I’ve seen the show several times, and that was a moment when Deb and I looked at each other and just said “Wow, that’s amazing”. Not only because of the interpreters, but because of what was happening on stage, too. Because I could see that the interpreters had really worked to express what was happening in the music on stage. It was nice to see. It was poetic. They used sign language with subtlety. It was literal, and their prosody was smooth. Wow. It was nice. It really had an impact on me.

For Deb, this moment is a highlight of the performance that she will remember:

The positioning of the interpreters—wow, it was so nice. It’s the entire thing: you can’t separate the interpreters from the production. But, it was really cool. I nudged Adam next to me and said, ‘I like this. Wow.’

Perhaps inspired by this configuration for *Endless Night*, Laura finds that she also incorporates a move toward downstage during another portion of the show:

Then that one when it was *Rafiki*—somewhere, I don’t know why, but—we had the platform, and I just took a step forward on my own. Never rehearsed it; nothing. I just did it, and it felt right.

This step forward has a similar impact: it sets Laura apart on the interpreting platform in the same way that *Rafiki* is set apart on the stage.

Another new technique employed by the interpreters for this performance is a *counter-cross* movement. While interpreters often stay in one location throughout the entire performance, James and Laura have identified moments when they feel it is worthwhile to swap sides. One example is prior to the song *Shadowland* in Act 2.

James is taller than Laura, and so he feels that he should normally be positioned to the right of Laura, on the *stage-right* side of the platform. His location for *The Lion King* purposefully violates this logic:

If you were to make just a decision, you would say Laura should be close to the stage and I should be on the other side so I'm not blocking so much of the view. But, because it's *The Lion King*, and it's about Simba, predominantly, and Mufasa, and Scar, it made more sense for me to be closer to the stage.

Because James interprets most of the lines for the characters of Simba, Mufasa, and Scar, the interpreting team has chosen to position him closer to the stage, on the *stage-left* side of the interpreting platform (see Figure 4-20A, below).

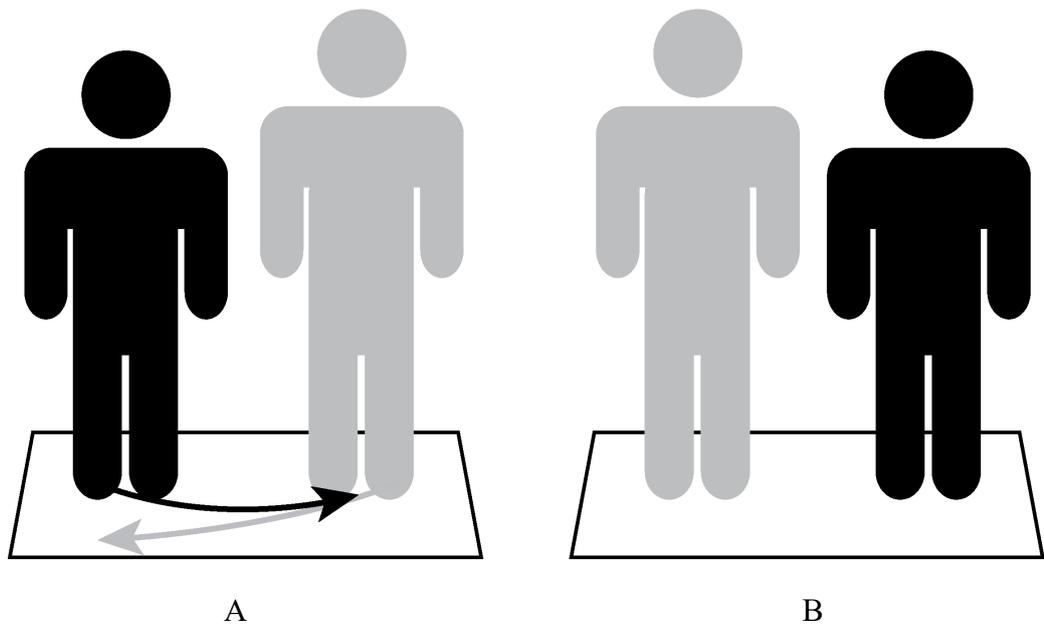


Figure 4-20. A: interpreter positions before the counter-cross (left) and B: after the counter-cross (right). Black figure represents Laura; Grey figure represents James.

Prior to the song *Shadowland*, James is positioned on the stage-left side of the platform, nearer to the stage than Laura (“A” in Figure 4-20). She is interpreting for the character of *Nala*, while James interprets the character Scar. Scar is threatening *Nala*. With Scar’s last line—“You all belong to meeeee”—James uses the sweeping movement from his Auslan translation of the line to serve as his impulse to switch places with Laura. His movement is synchronized with Scar’s bellow. As James signs, he begins to walk to his right, on a diagonal in front of Laura. As he does, Laura takes a step or two to her left. By the time this counter-cross is finished, they each occupy the space once held by the other. Laura is now the interpreter who is closer to the stage (“B” in Figure 4-20). On stage, the actress playing *Nala* runs out of Scar’s cave. The set pieces for the fictional onstage space, *Scar’s Cave*, fade off into the background, and disappear off stage. The actress playing *Nala* takes the focus centre stage and says farewell to the other lionesses with the song, *Shadowland*. Laura’s movement in the counter-cross mirrors *Nala*’s move to prominence on stage.

James and Laura have an established protocol for the counter-crosses they have planned in *The Lion King*. Counter-crosses can be awkward if both actors/interpreters try to be the person who crosses in the front (or the back). The actors risk colliding, as they attempt to take the same path to their new locations. James and Laura have agreed that the

interpreter who will be “taking over” in the next scene will cross in the front, and the other interpreter will cross in the back. The counter-cross they included in Act 1 followed this protocol. Now, in Act 2, James’s movement in front of Laura during the counter-cross before *Shadowland* violates the interpreters’ plans. James realizes this error in the moment, but he and Laura continue with aplomb. There are no collisions.

This type of on-stage blocking is new to the interpreters. From her seat in the audience, Deb thinks it is the first time a counter-cross has been done in this type of interpreted performance in Melbourne. James wonders if some audience members will be annoyed by the move:

I was conscious that perhaps as... I know as an audience member myself, I hate when all of a sudden the person in front of you moves, and I was really excited because I knew I had great sightlines. Then all of a sudden this person in front of me decides to sit up a bit higher, and I'm like "Are you kidding me? Now I can't see. I was so excited, that I knew I had a great seat." So, I was conscious that there may have been some false expectations from an audience member's perspective about what they're expecting for the rest of the show. Then all of a sudden, it's different—the interpreters swap positions. And that can work both ways: it can be perceived positively or negatively.

During the performance of the song *Shadowland*, Laura and James perform some lines in unison—they sign the same thing at the same time. They have considered how signing together creates opportunities for symmetry, and so they have planned for some signs to be produced by one interpreter with their right hand performing the dominant motion, while the other interpreter produces the dominant motion with their left hand. Doing so creates symmetrical patterns of signs moving inward and outward. Their plans are complicated, however, by the counter-cross. As the interpreters begin to perform *Shadowland*, they arrive at the moment of unison signing. They look to one-another as if to read each other’s mind: adding the counter-cross means that they now need to sign the unison portions of the song with the opposite hands than they had rehearsed. The interpreters overcome their moment of panic and make the adjustment mid-performance.

While Deb and Adam find the counter-cross and downstage/upstage configurations effective, these choices are not without their risks. One deaf patron complains to Deb during the intermission about the height difference between the two interpreters (James is taller than Laura), the effects of which he feels is exacerbated by the counter-cross. Deb considers the question of matched interpreter heights:

I don't know if having two interpreters of different heights is a problem for a production like *The Lion King*. I think that there could be some shows where having interpreters of two different heights could be problematic, but I don't think it matters for *The Lion King*.

Palma, the Auslan consultant to the interpreters, observes the comment made about the counter-cross during intermission. Noting that it is the only complaint among a sea of deaf people with positive comments, she decides not to engage the patron with the concern, "And after a while everything seemed to be okay, so I just left it." One patron approaches Palma with emphatic enthusiasm for the on-stage movement of the interpreters, and the ways in which it helps to facilitate understanding the performance during the song *Endless Night*:

One person said wow, they loved how the interpreters moved just a fraction behind—one from the other—and signed from behind. Like Laura was behind James at one stage and people were amazed. And they said that was doable. That was possible, and it looked really good. So, that was a perfect thing to do. Swapping places was not as simple, but it was an experiment for them to do, and luckily they were confident enough ... they had done the show before, twice, and so they could play a little bit with the third performance, and I think it was worthwhile. People said that they liked it. It made sense, they could relate to what was going on on-stage, by changing positions, and it was better. [indicating via signs and depiction that when the actors on stage changed positions, the interpreters also changed positions]. So that was good feedback from everyone.

As the song, *Shadowland* comes to an end, the lights on stage dim to a blackout and the scene changes to the jungle. In the dark, Laura and James return to their original positions—this time following their counter-cross protocol. James enjoys the moment:

It's energizing. Yeah, I feel like it's a moment for us to re-group, and we talk, if we need to. It's sort-of like 'off' [indicates hands closing, as in all lights going out] and then I know there's like a shock factor, and when it comes on, we're there. You know, we're 'on'. I really enjoy those moments.

Another physical adjustment made by the interpreters for the performance is a focus on portraying dialogue as a pair, with active eye gaze directed toward each other during the performance (see Figure 4-21). For Deb it is a welcomed adjustment:

I think historically interpreters here have always directed their lines outward, toward the audience. They haven't shown interactive dialogue between two people—they are separated. But, I think that it is important that the interaction of the interpreters follows what is on stage—that they show the same back-and-forth in the dialogue. I think it depends on the type of show, whether it is dialogue-heavy or visual.

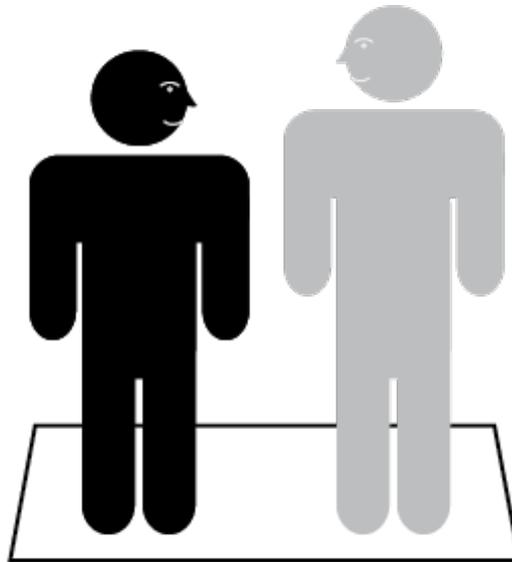


Figure 4-21. Interpreters with eye gaze directed toward each other.

Prior to the performance, Laura reminds James of their plan to increase the amount of interaction between them: “You gotta look at me. You gotta look at me more.” She believes that the technique has a positive impact on the performance, and James concurs:

Laura and I really wanted to focus on our relationship together, and looking at each-other more, and interacting with each-other more. And, we were doing heaps of that, and it felt really good, and we were feeding off each-other's energies.

Some moments during the performance have no dialogue. During these moments, the interpreters *throw focus* to the stage space. Instead of looking at one-another or outward toward the audience, both interpreters turn toward the stage and direct their gaze to the action on stage. Throwing focus is a technique in the arsenal of actors, designed to guide the visual attention of audience members. An actor can throw focus toward another actor or toward a location on stage; and, an actor can *pull focus* by drawing attention away from somewhere else (and toward themselves).

This is what Josh observes during the wild dance break during the song *Be Prepared* in Act 2: as there are no lyrics during the minute-long spectacle, the interpreters *throw focus* to the stage. On stage, Josh is portraying *Scar*. He sees the interpreters turn to face him and assumes that they are doing so out of curiosity about the dance number: “Why wouldn’t they?”

In the audience, Adam appreciates the choices that the interpreters make to take him on the journey throughout the performance—including when they throw focus:

Sometimes both of them would quickly look to the stage, letting me know there was something really important there for me to watch. That was cool for me.

4.2.9 *End of show and curtain call*

Throughout the performance, the interpreters each portray multiple characters. As the interpreters take on each character, the translations of the lines from the script are embodied with the choices made by the actors on stage. As they channel the actors, the interpreters feel they are more of a character, and less of themselves. This is sustained through to the final moment of the performance, when the curtain comes down on the iconic image of an adult *Simba* and *Nala* atop *Pride Rock* with the next generation of lions in the *Circle of Life*.

Almost immediately, the orchestra begins playing the music to accompany bows (the curtain call) and the curtain raises to reveal the entire cast on stage waving their hands in the traditional form of applause in the deaf community. Both interpreters feel a moment of transition from their experiences as characters, to themselves as individuals:

James: I think I switched off at that moment.

Laura: I went back to my little, shy self; inward, reserved.

Members of the cast are singled out individually or in groups for bows, according to a curtain call protocol. At the prescribed moment to recognize Laura and James, the cast members on stage each point their outstretched arm toward the interpreters. Having not discussed their plans for this moment, each interpreter acts on instinct. They do not bow. James feels their response is fitting:

We just sort-of thanked them [signing ‘thank you’ toward the stage] and gave a wave to the deaf community [in the audience]. It was an applause for us; but, my perception is that it was more of an applause for the deaf community. They acknowledged the deaf community was here, and the interpreters were here. I feel uncomfortable bowing. That's when I feel exposed. ‘This is me now, and I'm a bit nervous now.’ Which is maybe why I keep my focus on the cast; because I want it to be about that, more than about me, the interpreter. It would feel slightly weird [to bow], because it's not something that I would normally do, or that I believe is in some ways culturally appropriate in the deaf community. It's more of a hearing thing. You know this [showing visual clapping] is our clap and applause and bow—for me, anyway. I would feel strange bowing, yeah, in front of such a huge audience!

To Deb, the issue of curtain calls, bows, and applause for interpreters is “complicated and involves boundaries.” She sees applause for the interpreter as an appropriate recognition of the efforts of the interpreters, and yet she opines that interpreters wouldn't be on stage if it weren't for deaf people in the audience. (There would be no reason for the interpreters to be there, if deaf people didn't attend.) Adam describes a *dual privilege* at the moment when interpreters are recognized with applause during the curtain call.

They have their privilege because of us. And, we have privilege because we have the opportunity to see something that we would not have the chance to see every day. We also have privilege. The hearing interpreters have their [makes air quotes] ‘hearing privilege’—but not in a bad way. We both have our privilege.

Deb is not certain that there is a ‘right’ protocol for interpreter bows and applause. At *The Lion King*, she employs a combination of visual applause (which involves raising both hands in a “5” handshape, and slightly twisting each hand while holding them aloft) and the auditory clapping utilized by hearing people. She employs the following sequence: When the cast members first come on stage to take their bows, Deb uses auditory clapping. As the cast members point their out-stretched right arms toward the interpreters, Deb switches to visual applause: “to let them know the applause was for them.” Deb watches as the interpreters nod slightly, and they then return the visual applause back to the deaf audience members seated in front of them. When the full cast and interpreters take a final bow, Deb uses visual applause. “I think they’re from two different cultures. Actors take bows, but the interpreters just sort-of nod.” Using visual applause for the actors at the end of the curtain call is a way of representing deaf people—“letting them know that we are here.” To Adam it seems as though the cast almost wants to return visual applause to the interpreters from their places on stage for the curtain call. They do not, but he wonders if that has something to do with the blocking and other instructions they have been given for the curtain call moment of the show.

The interpreters are the last people recognized in the curtain call. Adam thinks this is suitable: “They’ve done a lot of work.” Deb notices that over time, deaf audience members have shifted from praising the *interpreters* of a production, to praising the *overall production* experience in its totality.

Finishing their three-hour performance with a wave of acknowledgement to the cast, and then to the deaf audience, the interpreters turn to exit up the aisle. The response from the audience in front of them is unprecedented to Laura:

People just got up, and they were cheering. Like, they, ‘Aww, you made me cry. I cried four or five times.’ I saw them sign, ‘skin up’ [indicating goose bumps described in sign language]. And, it’s just never been like that before, never. Like,

we've always had 'well done' at the end. But, this—there was something magical when we walked up. We looked at each-other and it was a bit emotional. Yeah, like the hands went up [referring to visual clapping] to almost the back. I was like, 'Wow, they really enjoyed it.' And, for me that was the most important thing—that they enjoyed it—yeah.

James experiences the moment similarly:

It was beautiful—really, really beautiful. As we walked up, everyone progressively started standing up. I thought, 'Oh my God, this is really amazing. This is weird.' It was so surreal. And, then Laura said, 'That has never happened to me in my whole career.' That put into perspective how special that moment was; and, that means more to me than a cue from the cast and bowing in front of [indicates the audience].

Deb feels it is best for audience members to leave interpreters alone as they enter and exit down the aisle to and from their performance space. One exception is at this moment at the end of the performance: here, she feels it is acceptable to approach the interpreters to congratulate them. Adam prefers to leave the interpreters to fully exit, so that they can return to the backstage area (instead of the alternative, walking into the deaf audience and socializing with them). He feels that heading off to the backstage area helps the interpreters maintain a connection with the performers ... otherwise, that is lost.

As Laura and James hurry through the lobby toward the stairs leading to the event room at the front of the building, they find it already riddled with hearing audience members who began their egress during the curtain call. There are no deaf audience members in the lobby, as they have all remained standing near their seats to applaud throughout the duration of the interpreters' exit. Inside the auditorium, *Deb* and *Adam* are with other members of the deaf audience, who are moving as a crowd while greeting one-another and catching-up. Some deaf audience members discuss post-show plans. All the while, ushers encourage the deaf patrons to exit quickly. Deb remembers it taking between thirty-five and forty-five minutes for the deaf patrons to exit the building.

4.2.10 Epilogue

Ecstatic from the positive initial response of the deaf audience, the interpreters rush to the event room to briefly celebrate and to change out of their on-stage clothes. They are excited for more input from family, friends, and interpreters who are en route to a nearby pub. In the moment, James feels the effects of their isolated, temporary “backstage” space:

In reflection, it did feel strange, leaving out the front door. We got our stuff, and went out the front door [onto Collins Street]. I mean, we didn’t even say goodbye to anybody, which didn’t sit right with me. We had more of a relationship with the production crew than we did the cast, so it felt strange not saying ‘bye to the stage manager—‘See you in Perth. Thanks for everything!’ There was nothing. I take Laura’s lead in situations like that, because she’s more experienced than I am, so I assume that’s just how it is. But it didn’t feel right.

4.3 Summary of findings

In this findings chapter, I have sought to bring to life the lived experiences of the study participants of the interpreted performance of *The Lion King*, aided by my own observations of the event.

In Section 4.1, I have explicated the numerous spaces of the Regent Theatre and *The Lion King*. Like an *exploded view drawing*—a type of schematic image that shows relationships between parts of a physical entity—McAuley’s taxonomy of spatial terms in theatre serves to untangle the multiple theatre spaces that normally work together in an integrated fashion throughout the theatre experience. The spaces are identifiable, they have boundaries, they have associated with them membership criteria and roles, and they connect fictional spaces to real spaces both within the theatre and in Africa. The fictional spaces of *The Lion King* are brought to life within the walls of the Regent Theatre through a purposeful and highly-orchestrated creative process. The fictional world of the performance is largely confined to the stage space, and a proscenium arch marks the boundary between the fictional world on stage and the spectator world off stage. The interpreters are located in the spectator space, but located on the boundary between the fictional and spectator spaces. They are not included in the fictional design of *The Lion*

King. Deaf people are seated in a designated area in the main floor of the auditorium, in front of the interpreters.

In Section 4.2, I have employed a narrative approach to telling the story of the study participants, as described by them in interviews. The descriptions included in the section are derived from interview material, which has been woven together to create a detailed account of the moments described by the participants. Actors and interpreters describe having *separate* preparation spaces and processes, including pre-show locations backstage during the day of the performance. The actors lament the *lack of relationship* between them and the interpreters—something echoed by the interpreters. The deaf audience seating area resonates as a *temporary deaf space*. The actors and interpreters feel they are in a form of *co-creation partnership*. In the audience, deaf patrons reinforce this notion, as they watch both the *interpreters and performance together*. Doing so requires them to manage *split visual attention*, as they will spend part of their time watching the interpreters and part of their time watching the action on stage. The interpreters employ several *techniques* to manipulate their use of space so that deaf people can more easily follow along with the performance. *Choices* related to space have an *influence on the experience* of deaf patrons. This can include confusion and conflict about the *role* of the sign language interpreters.

In *Chapter 5—Discussion*, I return to the theoretical framework from the literature review in Chapter 2 to relate the framework to the findings described above. Returning to the bedraggled daisy, I explore how concepts of human geography in the theatre, deaf studies, and interpreting come together in the interpreted theatre event.

Chapter 5—Discussion

This phenomenological study sets out to explore the lived experience of space by participants of a sign language interpreted performance (SLIP) of Disney's *The Lion King*, in Melbourne, Australia. Participants of the study include the sign language interpreting team (two interpreters and their sign language consultant), two cast members, and two deaf audience members present during the interpreted performance.

In Chapter 2, I propose a theoretical framework comprised of existing concepts at the intersection between *human geography* and three other areas of inquiry: *deaf studies*, *theatre studies*, and *interpreting studies*. While researchers in deaf studies and theatre studies have adopted concepts of human geography in their work, those in the area of sign language interpreting studies have not yet generated robust conversations in this area. The theoretical framework proposed herein calls on deaf studies for its sociological and architectural treatments of deaf geography and deaf space; on theatre studies for a taxonomy of multiple physical and fictional spaces of the theatre; and on interpreting studies—which lacks a corresponding description of *interpreter space*—for perspectives on proxemics, mental spaces, and interpreter role.

The findings presented in Chapter 4 include a description of the multiple physical and fictional spaces of *The Lion King* (Section 4.1) and the ways in which these spaces were experienced by the interpreters, actors, and deaf audience members who participated in the study (Section 4.2). In this chapter, I identify eight themes found in the data and return to the theoretical concepts introduced in the literature review (Chapter 2).

5.1 Themes in the data

The data in the preceding phenomenological narrative serve as evidence of the lived experiences of the research participants during a specific interpreted theatre event, *The Lion King* (Smith, n.d.). The following analysis of the findings seeks to explicate universal meaning from the specific experiences of the study participants. There are eight themes explored below.

5.1.1 *Spaces come together to interact*

Each interpreted theatre event brings together multiple types of spaces for a specific duration of time. Although the SLIP is unlike other performances of the same production, they begin with the same foundation. There is first the reality of the theatre building itself, with the incumbent sub-spaces—*spectator space*, *practitioner space*, *performance space*, and *stage space*. It is a real space with a function of facilitating fictional spaces.

Viewed outside of the context of a performance, the individual design elements of *The Lion King* are not any type of Africa—not even the parts of Africa referenced in the script. It is when spectators come to the theatre to participate in the performance, and actors (and others) arrive to do the performance, that Africa happens. At least, Disney’s version of Africa. The savannah, Pride Rock, Scar’s Cave, and the other spaces come alive in the minds of the audience members and spectators alike because of the combination of the other spaces. What the audience objectively knows to be plywood, cloth, and puppetry becomes terrain, skyline, and creature in this—the *performance space*—which exists in the brief duration of the performance.

It is both deaf and hearing. Prior to January 2015, the Regent Theatre was also not *The Lion King* space—it was *Grease space*, as the production preceding *The Lion King* was the musical *Grease*. After the tour of *The Lion King* left Melbourne in 2016, the Regent Theatre took on *Cats space*. On its own, it is a space that is both facilitative for theatre and also inherently nonaligned with any one fictional space. It is alive with possibility. The theatre’s physical spaces have borders (e.g. the stage door on Flinders Lane; the lobby entrance on Collins Street; the transition from the lobby to the auditorium; the proscenium arch); and one is granted access by way of one’s role in the event (e.g., performer, spectator, interpreter). There are gatekeepers and intermediaries of these spaces (e.g., ushers, stage door guards, stage manager). Some are meant to safeguard the illusion of the fictional spaces, often securing the borders of the theatre’s spaces. The Regent Theatre is a traditional theatre space with physical separation of performer space and spectator space, and a prescribed boundary—the proscenium arch.

While the Regent Theatre comes pre-loaded with *theatre space*, *spectator space*, and *performer space* (including the physical stage), the *presentational space*, *textural space*, and *thematic space* are activated by the production team and cast of *The Lion King*. This

is accomplished through the design elements of the production (e.g., set pieces, costumes, lighting), movements of the actors on stage, and through discussion of spaces in the script and dialogue.

These are the interconnected and interacting spaces during performances of *The Lion King's* run at the Regent Theatre. During the interpreted theatre event, only a portion of the auditorium is apportioned specifically for deaf patrons. Deaf people bring features of deaf space to the theatre (which will be discussed more below). Deaf space co-exists with hearing spaces and the physical and fictional spaces of *The Lion King*. The location of the deaf seating section is determined by the location of the interpreters, and the choice that deaf patrons have over their seat is determined by the location of this seating section (if they wish to avail themselves of the interpreters). The location where the interpreters will stand for a performance is determined largely by the production company, and interpreters can sometimes negotiate improvements in location. Deaf patrons lack governmentality over many parts of the physical arrangement of a SLIP, and interpreters become a form of proxy. Many interpreters see themselves as an intermediary during these negotiations and attempt to improve the sightlines for deaf patrons. In the case of this SLIP of *The Lion King*, the interpreting team includes a deaf Auslan consultant who is also a member of the local deaf community. The consultant helped establish the interpreter placement for the interpreted performance in Sydney (Section 4.1.1). This helps to shift some of the governmentality of the physical arrangement toward the deaf community, but the deaf consultant feels a great deal of pressure as a representative of her community (Section 4.2.5). In the deaf seating section, the deaf consultant is at *home* within her community, and she has feelings of increased responsibility to her community as a result.

The interpreters are located on the physical boundary between the fictional spaces on stage, and the spectator space of the auditorium (Section 4.1.2 and Section 4.1.3). They lack the *presentational space* attributes that exist on-stage. On their performance platform, there are no set pieces, no puppets, no costumes, and no scenic lighting. Yet, they share a unique privilege that only the actors enjoy: during the performance, they face the audience.

5.1.2 *Interpreters are part of meaning co-construction*

The traditional model describing development of meaning during theatre performance as being generated through a collaboration between performer and spectator is expanded during the SLIP to include the three-person interpreting team. The actors of *The Lion King* report that they feel they are co-constructing the story with the interpreters—that they are “in it together.” Deaf patrons experience the performance not just through the interpreters, nor just through the performance on stage, but as a combination of both the on-stage elements and the interpreters (Section 4.2.5 and Section 4.2.7). The interpreters adopt characters that are informed by the action on stage (Section 4.2.8), and experience going into and out of character in tandem with the performers on stage (Section 4.2.9).

What is typically conceived as a direct relationship between the actor and spectator now includes the interpreters (at least for deaf audience members). The performance does not *pass through* the interpreters—rather the interpreters are *a part of* this specific performance. For hearing audience members who do not use sign language, the interpreters are still a significant visual presence (they are visible from nearly every seat). Even though there may not be an overt nourishment of the relationship between the performance on stage and the performance of the interpreters, the relationship does exist. The actors posit that hearing patrons are also aware of the interpreters as being a part of the production “going on for somebody else” (Section 4.2.7). By all participant accounts, the interpreters are unaffiliated co-conspirators in delivering the performance: separated from the fictional reality on stage, but also responsible to keep it aloft from the side-lines.

5.1.3 *Deaf people form a temporary, small-scale deaf space during a SLIP*

While the architecture of the Regent Theatre may have been designed to prioritise auditory input, deaf audience members feel that they have a right to the space on the day of the interpreted performance of *The Lion King*, and that they have a shared purpose with hearing audience members. The deaf seating section serves as a small-scale, temporary deaf space. Prescribing the boundaries of the deaf seating section is left to the production company and the interpreting team; and is negotiated far in advance of the interpreted performance. The location of the seating section is dictated by the placement of the interpreters. The arrangement of the seats is permanent. Deaf patrons have little governance over the physical arrangements of the deaf section, but the fact that a prescribed space for deaf patrons exists helps deaf patrons feel they have a right to hold

the space. More than simply being tolerated as individuals because of having each purchased a ticket, they are visible as a group that has occupancy of a designated space. While the theatre company may have determined the physical border of the deaf section, it is deaf people who prescribe its social border. Sign language becomes the default method of communication within the deaf seating section, and non-signers are viewed as outsiders (Section 4.2.3).

Social behaviours reinforce a sense of deaf space within the deaf seating section. The atmosphere in the deaf section includes social interactions that seem more prolonged and varied than those among the broader, hearing audience. Use of the space includes sustained social opportunities during the intermission and after the performance. During these times, deaf patrons adapt to the material environment of the deaf seating section—rows of seats facing in one direction—by standing and forming conversation circles within the rows, and in the adjoining aisles (Section 4.2.1, Section 4.2.3, and Section 4.2.6). There is a welcoming atmosphere to newcomers and deaf people outside of the local community.

During the performance, there is a sense of shared experience among deaf audience members (Section 4.2.5). Deaf patrons check in with one-another during the performance to comment about what they see on stage—something that they posit is a benefit they have that hearing audience members do not, by virtue of the visual nature of signed languages. They do not speculate on whether this behaviour is acceptable to others sitting nearby, but it was noted that checking-in behaviours were somewhat reduced in the theatre, as opposed to other interpreted settings. This sense of shared experience extends to the deaf member of the interpreting team, who feels compelled to alert deaf audience members to visual elements during the opening of the performance that they might have otherwise missed (Section 4.2.5).

Deaf patrons note that visual aspects of sign language help to mark the space as temporarily deaf. While the visibility of the interpreters to nearly everyone in the spectator space during the performance is a constant reminder that deaf people are (likely) in the audience, two moments help to stress this fact. The pre-show announcement that the performance will be interpreted is the first formal acknowledgement that the performance has been specially designated for sign language interpretation. Bookending this moment is the ovation for the actors and interpreters at the end of the performance.

Applauding visually—or a combination of visual and auditory applause—also helps to mark the space as deaf. The visual applause follows a deaf social practice, and signals praise to the interpreters from deaf audience members. The visual applause also distinguishes the deaf seating section from the hearing audience members, further asserting a deaf takeover of a portion of the auditorium. Some deaf audience members combine visual and auditory applause—directing visual applause to the interpreters (reflecting deaf social practices) mixed with auditory applause directed to the hearing actors onstage (adapting to hearing social practices). Still other deaf people aim visual applause toward both the interpreters and hearing actors. Some actors return visual applause to the interpreters and to the deaf seating section.

Nestled within the broader theatre space, the physical parameters of the deaf seating section have been determined largely by hearing members of the production team—with some input from the interpreting team. As much as these arrangements are designed to segregate the interpreters from the onstage space, and—by extension—the deaf patrons from the hearing patrons, the visibility of sign language and deaf social practices in the auditorium allows the deaf space to permeate the boundaries of the physical space carved out for the deaf community. Deaf patrons and the interpreters bring their own spatial and social practices to the space, asserting governance and territoriality that interacts with (and sometimes subsumes) that which has been officially sanctioned.

The sense of deaf space associated with the SLIP is both temporally elongated and physically mobile. What starts in the theatre as a temporary deaf space extends beyond the time frame of the performance, continuing afterward during celebrations with friends and family at a nearby pub (Section 4.2.3). There, the pub becomes a temporary deaf space. The proximity of the club to the theatre allows deaf members of the audience to walk as a group from one location to the other—extending the duration and location of the deaf space.

5.1.4 *Interpreters use space to influence and facilitate meaning*

As the interpreters stand on the platform designed for their performance, they are located on a physical boundary between the fictional space on stage and the real world in the auditorium. They have a fair amount of knowledge about how *The Lion King* will employ set pieces, actor movement, text, and design elements to evoke representations of fictional

spaces. Looking out at the rows of deaf people in front of them, the interpreters are also aware of the spatial practices that deaf audience members have brought to the Regent Theatre, and of the visual-spatial nature of Auslan that they share with their primary audience. During any other performance of *The Lion King*, meaning is co-constructed between performers and audience members. The production is engineered around the presumption of a *sound-oriented language experience* layered on top of a *shared visual focus* on the fictional world on the stage. Deaf people in the audience of an interpreted performance of *The Lion King* have a visually-oriented *language experience in one location* (the interpreter platform), and then a visually-oriented *fictional experience in another location* (on stage). This alters the potential for co-construction of meaning between the performers on stage and the members of the audience who are deaf.

The interpreters are aware of this problem, and they develop mitigating strategies aimed at easing the connection between deaf audience members and the performance. The strategies described in Section 4.2.8, reveal that the interpreters employ a *mix* of spatial practices borrowed from the actors on stage and from deaf people and signed languages. These strategies are recognized by deaf audience members and the actors on stage as being purposeful and important in meaning creation.

Prior to this performance of *The Lion King*, the practice among the interpreters in this study was to stand on the interpreting platform side-by-side, facing outward as they interpreted the performance. It was not their practice to interact while interpreting dialogue, nor to change positions (or move much in general) throughout the duration of the performance. This approach lends to a dis-association between the spatial arrangement of actors/characters on stage and the arrangement of the interpreters on their platform. The actors move throughout the stage space, changing locations and body positions, while (generally) directing dialogue while facing toward one-another. When interpreters remain stock-still, deaf audience members are given an extra burden to determine which characters are being interpreted by each interpreter, even as the position of the actors on stage continuously changes. This leaves deaf audience members sometimes searching for information, as described by one of the deaf participants of the study.

During *The Lion King*, the interpreters have therefore made adaptations that reflect norms of both the actors and deaf audience members. The simple choice of the interpreters to

portray their interpretation as a dialogue between characters was noted as significant by a deaf participant—a breakaway from the previous practice that is important and welcomed. It mimics the natural style of interaction between characters on stage, while also portraying a typical approach to conversations in sign language—which most frequently involve at least two people looking at one-another.

By employing *counter-crosses* and *mirroring of on-stage character placement* (Section 4.2.8), the interpreters attempt to marry the spatial arrangements onstage with the visual experience of deaf audience members. They devise techniques that borrow from both worlds. When the interpreters choose to move on their performance platform, it is an actor-like behaviour. It is a deaf-like behaviour to depict physical arrangements accurately and with meaning. Counter-crosses are used by the interpreters to reduce the workload of deaf audience members by more accurately reflecting the location of characters on stage. The upstage/downstage configuration used during the song *Endless Night* served to create meaning through a physical arrangement of interpreters that reflected the symbolic arrangement of Simba (on stage) and his father (present in spirit). In each case, the technique pulls portions of the spatial arrangement onstage over to the performance platform of the interpreters.

The interpreters use other techniques to direct attention away from them and toward the performance: *throwing focus* (Section 4.2.8); *audience prompting* (Section 4.2.5); and *adequately pruned translations* (Section 4.2.7). The decision of the interpreter consultant to alert deaf audience members of the elephant entering from behind the audience at the beginning of the performance reflects the consultant's sense of shared responsibility of dorsal information in deaf spaces. The interpreters also reflect this sense of shared responsibility as they turn their attention toward the stage during the dance break in the song *Be Prepared*. Here, they are purposefully directing the gaze of deaf audience members to the action on stage—*throwing focus*. There is no dialogue or sung lyrics during this moment, and this technique signals to deaf audience members that their visual attention is better spent focused on the performance onstage, rather than on the interpreters.

The interpreters manipulate one other space-related feature of their work: time. Broadly, economy in translation helps reduce the cognitive effort of deaf audience members. Contributing to this effort is the requirement that deaf audience members look back and

forth between the interpreters and the stage. This ping-pong effect results in lost information. Looking at the performance for too long results in a loss of dialogue, while watching the interpreters for too long can lead to a loss of performance information. Knowing this, the interpreters can *prune* their translations and insert *strategic pauses* designed to provide deaf patrons with more time to change their gaze from stage to interpreters and back.

Interpreters are employing their knowledge and experiences of deaf spatial practices to help optimize the experience of the performance for deaf audience members. Their choices are also influenced by the ways that space is constructed on stage. The interpreters have developed the strategy on their own, separate-yet-informed by the strategy of the actors on stage. The actors and deaf audience members recognize that the interpreters are using the space strategically, although the actors misread throwing focus for the interpreters simply enjoying the show. Deaf audience members accept the techniques as meaningful, helpful, and an important improvement over the previous approach.

5.1.5 Theatre interpreters have ambiguous roles

Throughout their relationship with *The Lion King*, the interpreters adopt behaviours related to three distinct roles: *on-stage person*; *member of the sign language community*; and their role as *self*. These behaviours reflect the diversity of statuses ascribed to the interpreters, and also the ways in which interpreters behave to reflect these statuses. In their *on-stage status*, interpreters seek to join the cast members in presenting the story. Their interpretation visually embodies carefully-crafted script translations. The interpreters are also responsible to imbue their interpretation with the affect of the actors on stage. This *stewardship of meaning*—the responsibility to the creative lineage of the script—forces the performance of the translation into a heightened form of artifice. The interpreters *take on characters* that are influenced by the moment-to-moment decisions of the actors. The interpreters behave in many ways that are similar to actors: they rehearse for an extended period of time; they memorize the script; they study the context of the script; they make decisions designed to evoke emotion on stage; and they have pre-show rituals and procedures designed to help them transition from their life outside of theatre to the constructed world on stage. In their on-stage role, interpreters understand and respect *the fourth wall*, valuing it as an essential part of their work. The actors

perceive the interpreters as being in partnership with the actors to form meaning. Likewise, the performance experience for deaf audience members is inclusive of both the actors and the interpreters.

The interpreters may not be actors, but everyone in the study perceives them as performers who are active in the co-construction of meaning. Belying the antiquated trope that sign language interpreters are *for the deaf*, comments from the actors reveal that the actors count themselves among the stakeholders in the interpreters' work. What sets apart the relationship between the actor and the interpreters is the understanding that each are working *together* to convey a character. The actors in *The Lion King* have had a shared relationship with the puppetry they employ to help portray the characters of *Scar* and *Zazu*. The puppets are *non-human* representations of animal bodies, controlled by the actors. The interpreters are *human* extensions of the actors—a physical embodiment of dialogue. Beyond mere dialogue, the interpreters also embody the character choices inherent in the sound of the actor's voices; the meaning inherent in the orchestration of each song; the pacing and tempo of onstage dialogue. All of this is language, and it is also performance. In their roles as *on-stage person*, interpreters employ actor-like behaviours to help keep the performance aloft.

In their roles as *members of the sign language community*, the interpreters seek to respect what they perceive as deaf social norms. They feel an allegiance to deaf audience members and view the enjoyment of deaf audience members as their primary purpose. They are dressed in black *street clothes* that are not part of their everyday attire, but which they own. This reflects a nearly de facto *uniform* of sign language interpreters. There is no connection between what the interpreters are wearing and the highly-crafted design aesthetics of *The Lion King*. Some of the behaviours and experiences of the interpreters reflect norms of deaf people and interpreters: they deflect direct praise and eschew direct engagement by the hearing interlocutors (during bows); they align themselves socially with deaf people; they wear clothes that are visually and metaphorically plain; they negotiate arrangements for the interaction on behalf of the deaf interlocutors; and, they feel a responsibility to provide deaf people with an experience that is both positive and equivalent to that of hearing people.

In their roles as *self*, the interpreters monitor and attend to their individual needs throughout the experience (both on and off stage). The translation and performance

demands inherent in performing multiple characters require each interpreter to balance moments *being in character* with overt, macro-level considerations related to translation, character division, and partner performance. The interpreters are aware of moments when they *become themselves*: they consider the personal needs of their interpreting partners; they think about the impact of their behaviour on their business and reputation; and they consciously manage their embodiment of characters.

5.1.6 *Space and role are related*

Space is implicated in the experiences of the interpreters, and how the interpreters are perceived by others. Space interacts with the statuses occupied by the interpreters and the roles they enact. The visual and embodied nature of sign language is a characteristic of how space informs the work of the interpreters. If they were producing a live rendition of a French translation of the script, the interpreters could do so via spoken word, delivered to the audience via headphones; there would be no visual embodiment of the translation. By their very nature, sign languages are visual-spatial languages. As described by the participating interpreters, there exists a *competing visual narrative* during the performance: deaf people look to the stage for the visual part of the story, and they look to the interpreters for the dialogue. What is a layered and seamless experience for hearing audience members—a 360-degree auditory experience layered onto a 180-degree visual experience—is bifurcated and taxing for deaf audience members, who are forced to split their attention between the dialogue and the story unfolding on stage.

When deaf audience members look to the stage, they see the carefully crafted visual elements of the contrived world. Every person on stage conforms to the contrived reality. Every visual element is designed to sustain this reality—costumes, set pieces, wigs, make-up, props, gestures, movement patterns, lighting, lighting cues scene transitions. Part of the magic of the reality is that audience members have no idea how much effort goes into making it look effortless.

When deaf audience members look to the interpreters, they see two people in street clothes. There are no wigs. The lighting is white and constant, not coloured and transitional. The interpreters are located on a platform, not a stage. The platform is outside of the stage picture; outside of the proscenium arch; and on a lower level. The interpreters are on the audience side of *the fourth wall*. They are “out”. The visual and

spatial elements of the interpreters indicate that they belong in the front-of-house and are something separate from the cast.

The visual experience of hearing people is prioritized in the theatre. The decision to place the interpreters outside of the stage picture is an accommodation designed to provide deaf people with access to the *script*—not necessarily the *script* and the *performance* at the same time. The outsider location of the interpreter performance platform is on the fringes of the stage picture (see Figure 5-1), forcing the deaf audience members into a prescribed location on the fringes of the house, separated from hearing audience members by an aisle.

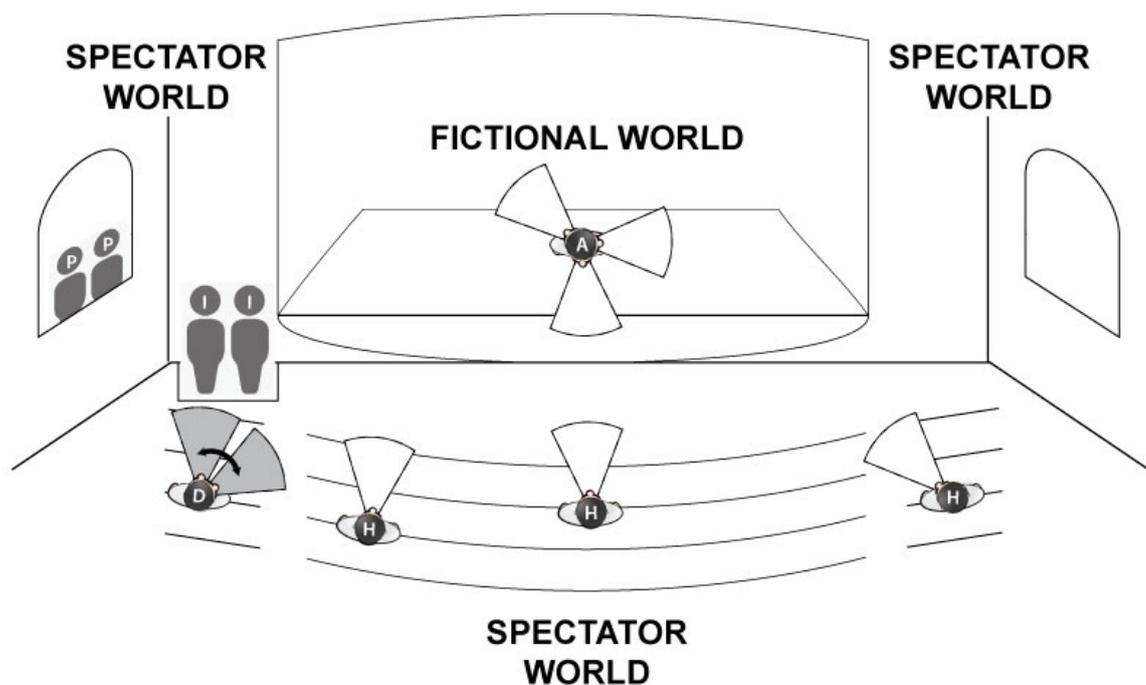


Figure 5-1 (also, Figure 4-9). Location of deaf (*D*) and hearing (*H*) audience members in the auditorium, actors (*A*) on stage, interpreters (*I*) outside of the stage space, and percussionists (*P*) located in the boxes.

The separate status of the interpreters is reinforced by their denied access to parts of the theatre building designated for members of the cast. They enter, exit, and rehearse in the front of the building, rather than backstage with the other actors/ performers. Their path to their performance platform is from the audience, not the backstage. Combined, these uses of space suggest that the interpreter is enacting a role that is limited to the front-of-house.

In nearly every visual way, the interpreters are meant to belong on the *audience* side of the proscenium: their clothes are unlike the actors; their location is outside of the stage picture; they are just ten inches off the floor of the house. In two important ways, the interpreters *operate* in ways that confuse this arrangement of space: they are actively telling the story in a visual way and they are facing the audience. Everyone else on the audience side of the proscenium is sedentary and facing the stage. The interpreters have a unique status that allows them to join the cast in turning to the audience and telling the story.

5.1.7 *Interpreters experience role strain*

Two moments described in the study illustrate ambiguity about interpreter role in the SLIP. These data raise questions about whether the interpreters are experiencing *role conflict* (tension between the demands of two separate roles) or *role strain* (tension due to the demands within one role). The interpreters arrive to the theatre having prepared a translation—the work of an interpreter. They have memorized the translation and set it to music in a way that is lyrical and designed to evoke emotion. They have considered the portrayal of the characters on stage. This is the work of actors. They prepare emotionally and cognitively to both interpret and entertain—a combination of interpreting and acting.

Audience Interaction: while aspects of their clothing, pre-show location, entrance, and performance location place the interpreters on the civilian side of the theatrical dividing line, the interpreters adopt the behavioural norms of actors—including respect for *the fourth wall*. By attempting to distance themselves from the audience in the moments prior to the performance, the interpreters are conflicted between the enactment of their *on-stage role* and the enactment of their *sign language community role*. Dressed as themselves and present in the audience side of the physical space, the interpreters seem available for social interaction—something that is expected of them by members of the audience, both hearing and deaf. Their attempts to remain in their *on-stage role* causes them internal conflict and is noted by their deaf consultant and members of the deaf community. Even while complimenting her daughter's work on stage, one interpreter's parent wondered why she couldn't acknowledge her parent from the stage.

Acknowledgement and Bows: the interpreters attempt to align with the actors vis-à-vis their work and their respect for *the fourth wall*. Their position facing the audience reinforces the *on-stage status* of the interpreters. Over three hours, the interpreters embody a characterized translation of the script that is generally accepted to include elements of performance. In these ways, the interpreters take on behaviours consistent with their *on-stage role*, even as the physical arrangement casts them as outsiders to the narrative world on stage. At the one moment when the interpreters are formally acknowledged in their *on-stage role*, the interpreters are conflicted. As the curtain rises for the curtain call, the interpreters are conscious of a transition from their *on-stage role* to their *self role*: feeling smaller and shy. They then rebuff acknowledgement from the cast, instead slipping into their *sign language community member role*. The interpreters acknowledge both interlocutors in the interaction: they wave to the deaf audience, and they clap for the cast—a behaviour typical of an audience member. This decision is informed by the cultural norms of the deaf community, which overpower the expectation that they bow as part of their *on-stage role*: they see individual acknowledgement for their work as a value that is typical of hearing people, not deaf people. The interpreters are not wrong in their assessment, as both deaf participants echo the sentiment that the issue of interpreter acknowledgement is *complicated* and *involves boundaries*.

The *role conflict* (Goffman, 1959) experienced by the interpreters is influenced by the ways in which space has been arranged within the theatre during the performance, and also the ways in which people use and behave in the spaces. The interpreters are perceived as being in alignment with both the actors and the deaf audience members present. They are also somewhat distant from the actors and deaf audience members—both socially and physically.

The application of Goffman's principles in Llewellyn-Jones and Lee's (2014) role-space model of interpreting is detailed in Section 2.4.2 of the literature review. The role-space model plots the interpreter onto a specific location on each of three axes: *interlocutor alignment*; *interaction management*; and, *presentation of self*. When an interpreter exists in *one location* on an axis, she is enacting the behaviours associated with that *one* plot-point. A change in behaviours results in a change in location on an axis. In effect, being in one location negates behaviours available in other locations. Within a single interaction, the interpreter is likely to occupy multiple role-spaces; but she does so *one role-space at a time*.

An interpreted theatre event is a fabricated, momentary event that is made even more unreal by the addition of sign language interpreters. The interpreters are in *sociolinguistic alignment* with members of the deaf community, evidenced by their location outside of the stage picture; their style of dress; their deflection of praise; and their urge to interact with deaf audience members. The interpreters are in *psycholinguistic alignment* with the cast by virtue of their translation of the script—imbued with the characterizations and affect of the actors on stage—and their commitment to *the fourth wall*. Rather than adapting to this strain by adjusting their alignment between deaf people and actors, the interpreters employ alignment strategies from *both* groups. Deaf-like conceptualizations of space are combined with actor-like conventions simultaneously. Instead of being *this-then-that* (deaf-aligned, then actor-aligned), the interpreters are *this-and-that* (deaf and actor aligned).

The decisions made by the interpreters are meant to help lift them off the axis between the deaf audience members and the actors: *thoughtful translations* that are representative of Auslan; dialogue-like *interpreter interaction*; representation of actor characterizations and movement in *interpreter blocking*; a reverence for the *story*; a commitment to the *fourth wall*; and, thoughtful *preparation*. These choices help to grease the skids as everyone involved in the performance glides toward a fictional world of *The Lion King* that is not possible when isolated on the page or within an individual.

Other decisions push the interpreters back down onto the line between deaf audience members and the actors, plotting them more vividly onto one point of the axis between the two groups. Separate performance, rehearsal, and pre-show locations for the actors and the interpreters; the location of the interpreters outside the fictional space; the lack of presentational space in the interpreter performance location (e.g., costumes, lighting, directed movement, etc.); entrance and exit paths made through the audience—these choices serve to mark the interpreters as outside of the narrative world on stage, and impede a fluid co-construction of the fictional spaces of *The Lion King*.

As the interpreters employ linguistic and spatial practices from both groups to help hold aloft the co-created performance spaces of *The Lion King*, their work is confounded by the physical arrangement between actor, interpreter, and deaf audience member.

5.1.8 Interpreter placement leads to competing narratives and split visual attention

Located on a platform off to one side of the stage, the interpreters offer one visual narrative. They are located in the *spectator space*, dressed in clothing from the real world that dominates the auditorium, and their entrance to their performance space is from within the spectator space. The interpreters operate within the *textual spaces* and *thematic spaces* of the performance, devoid of the design elements of the fictional spaces from *The Lion King*. They do so employing behaviours that are both actor-like and deaf/sign language-like. This is one visual narrative seen by deaf audience members during the performance: modern-day interpreters located in the audience of the Regent Theatre on a Saturday, performing their translation of the script of *The Lion King*.

As the deaf audience members look to the stage, they see a different visual narrative. The proscenium arch serves as the border between the spectator space and the *fictional spaces* presented there. Vast amounts of design and planning have contributed to the construction of this onstage visual spectacle, which must carry actors and audience members alike beyond the physicality of plywood, beads, and puppets—and to *Pride Rock*, *Scar's Cave*, and the other fictional spaces in *The Lion King*.

These are *competing visual narratives*, which deaf audience members alternate between throughout the performance. While the performance has been crafted with the assumption that the entire audience will have a shared visual alignment that is centred on the space within the proscenium arch, deaf audience members manage a *split visual attention* (Section 4.2.5). Every seat within the deaf seating section requires a deaf patron to look back and forth between the interpreters and the stage. For some patrons, eye movement (or use of peripheral vision) may be sufficient to cover the distance, while others may have to turn their heads. Multiple variables influence the degree of split visual attention experienced by an audience member in each seat, as described in the participant narrative (Section 4.2.5).

Each seat in the deaf seating section has its own unique characteristics, and deaf patrons make small adjustments within their own assigned seats to optimize their view of the stage. Choosing seats in the sections involves a mental calculus that considers distance from the interpreter; the degree of split visual attention; and, the amount of stage space visible from the seat. More than just a visual experience, the performance involves

vibrations (from amplified music and sound effects) and sometimes sound. Each deaf person's experience of sound in daily life varies, and the nature of this experience may be influenced by numerous, interconnecting factors (e.g., amplification, direction of sound, the physical environment, use of hearing aids) (Section 4.2.7). Comments from the deaf participants of this study centre (largely) around the visual part of their experience, which included looking to the interpreters for the dialogue of the production. This is not meant to negate the potential of a combined auditory/visual experience, which may be useful in future studies.

The increased cognitive effort associated with the placement of interpreters off to the side of the stage leads some deaf people to reject the placed style of interpreting in favour of the shadowed style (Section 4.2.5). What is a layered, simultaneous *visual-plus-auditory* experience for hearing people is a separated and asynchronous *visual-then-visual* experience for deaf people. By separating the story (the contrived onstage reality) from its dialogue (the embodied translation of the interpreters), the placed arrangement demands that theatre interpreters operate in *two alignments simultaneously*.

Within this competing visual narrative, interpreters are enacting *dual alignments* that are part of a *theatre interpreter role-set*. This condition is fostered by the unique influence of space on the work of sign language interpreters in a theatre environment. Instead of operating in two roles which are in conflict, the theatre interpreters have one role-set. During moments when they are unable to balance the demands placed on them by more than one role relationship within the role-set, the interpreters experience *role strain*, a condition of *sociological ambivalence* about their status (Merton, 1957, 1976).

The themes explored above in Section 5.1 help to elucidate the interconnecting relationships between space, role, and experience of the SLIP by deaf patrons, the interpreters, and actors in the production of *The Lion King*. They reveal the interpreted theatre performance to entail multiple, interacting spaces designed to mediate the shared creation of the narrative and fictional spaces of *The Lion King* (Section 5.1.1). Within the SLIP, space and role are highly regulated (Section 5.1.6). Deaf audience members produce a temporary deaf space in the auditorium (Section 5.1.3). The interpreters contribute to meaning generation in the experience of the deaf audience members and the actors (Section 5.1.2). The role of the interpreter is sometimes ambiguous: physical, functional, and social separation of the interpreters and actors are contributing factors

(Section 5.1.6). The interpreters experience *role strain* as a result (Section 5.1.7). The physical separation of the interpreters' performance space and the actors on stage forces deaf audience members into a condition of split visual attention (Section 5.1.8). The interpreters develop spatial strategies to overcome the competing visual narratives brought on by this split visual attention and the lack of production design applied to the interpreters (Section 5.1.4). The interpreters and actors perceive themselves as working together during the performance to portray their characters, and deaf audience members describe the performance as being the combined efforts of the actors and interpreters (Section 5.1.2). The purpose of the SLIP is for everyone involved to travel from the velvet, plywood, and puppets on Collins Street in Melbourne to the sand, rock, and animal herds of places in Africa. That is only possible through the combined efforts of audience, actors, and (for this performance) interpreters. These themes reflect this interdependent relationship. The space is socially produced—not only *within* each stakeholder group, but *between* stakeholder groups. The *meaning* of spaces within the performance is in interaction with the *way that spaces are defined*, and the ways in which people *do people-like things* in/with the spaces.

5.2 The SLIP through a Lefebvrian lens

Theorists applying Lefebvrian concepts to the theatre describe the lived experience—*vécu*—of a theatre performance as being a co-creation of meaning between spectator and performer, in what McAuley (1999) labels *performance space*—taking part in a production. The *performance framework* (Watkins, 2005) is comprised of the *conceptions of space* (detailed in the *conçu* node of Figure 5-2, using McAuley's taxonomy), working in tandem with the *spatial practices* of the inhabitants of the spaces (the *perçu* node). When actors and spectators enact appropriate spatial practices—actors do acting according to acceptable norms, and spectators do spectating according to acceptable norms—their *l'espace perçu* lends cohesion to the spaces of the *conçu*. That is: When actors act like actors and spectators act like spectators, the performance is held aloft. It is here where meaning is co-created.

In her discussion of deaf geographies, Kusters (2011) describes *vécu* as being dominated by *perçu* and *conçu* spaces and that *vécu* seeks to overcome hierarchy created by the two other spaces. This is echoed in Watkins (2005), who describes *vécu* in response to the two other spaces, joined as a *performance framework*. For the audience member and the

actor, the *vécu moments* are both enabled by and hindered by the *perçu/conçu* combination. This combination is both facilitative and destructive. A characteristic of *vécu* space is that it informs and facilitates deviation, which may be an expression of yearning of the participants to overcome the limitations of the present space production. A positive *vécu* moment for a theatre participant is a frictionless acceptance of the fictional places presented within physical spaces during the performance (see McAuley's reference to the *physical/fictional relationship* in Section 2.2.6)

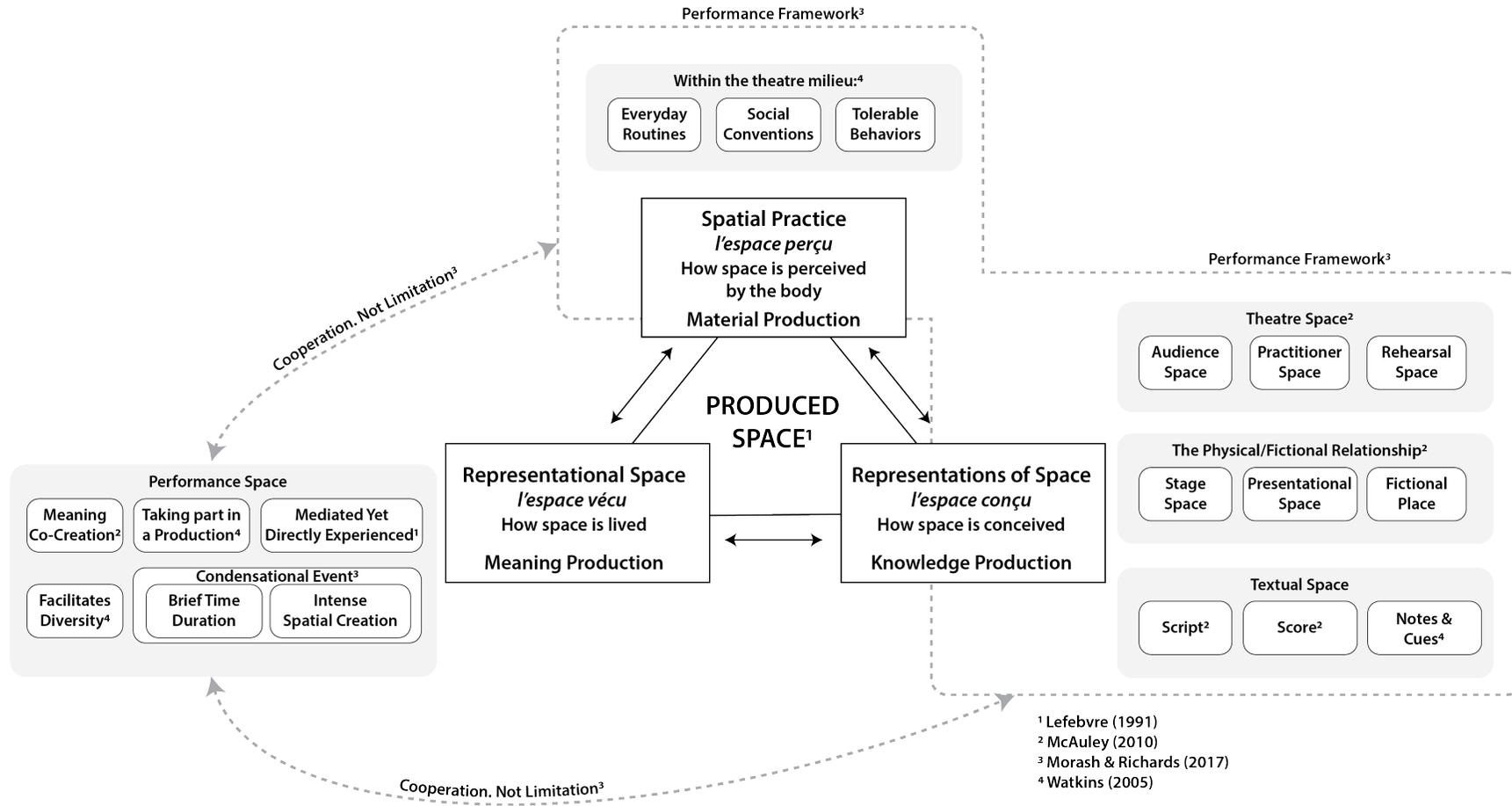


Figure 5-2. SLIP Spatial Framework (reproduced from Figure 2-9 in Section 2.2.7)

5.2.1 *Deaf space and the SLIP*

The Regent Theatre (like the preponderance of theatre spaces) has a pre-cast *conçu* based on the presumption that its inhabitants will be hearing people, with the associated *perçu* of hearing audience members and performers. That is, the performance framework is engineered for *hearing people* to arrive at the *vécu* moment of the *performance space* (the fictionalized mental space that is the performance). Architectural elements reinforce this arrangement: row after row of seats leaves most of the audience members too far away from the stage to perceive detailed visual information on stage. Instead, amplification of the actors' voices projects the dialogue and sung music throughout the auditorium. One might argue that many hearing audience members sit so far away from the stage, that it is the auditory features of the performance on which they rely (since they are too far away to truly discern the action on stage). The stage is outlined by a *proscenium*, focusing the attention of the audience within its frame and where the visual presentation of the *performance framework* is carefully crafted. Their attention remains on this one focal point throughout the performance.

Not unlike deaf inhabitants of commuter trains in Mumbai reported by Kusters (2016, 2017), deaf people attending the SLIP adapt to the physical surroundings to form a temporary deaf space. The space is neither inherently hearing or inherently deaf—even with the existence of *conçu* elements typical of hearing people (e.g., permanent seating in rows or groups that hinder sustained face-to-face interaction). Deaf audience members enact spatial practices that reinforce a feeling of a temporary deaf space, co-existing with—and yet set apart from—hearing audience members. They make adjustments to their seating position to optimize their visual experience; they use sign language; they impose small conversation circles in and around the rowed seating (during performance breaks); they maintain responsibility for the dorsal information of others; they prioritize social opportunities; they check-in with one another to confirm their mutual experience of the performance; and, they include visual applause in their ovation at the end of Act 2 (see Section 4.2). Within this temporary deaf space, these spatial practices are expected—and deviating from them is a marked behaviour. A reflection of Kusters (2017), the deaf seating section is a type of *room without walls*—with borders marked by the aisles to the left and the right of the section, the crush lobby behind the last row of the section, and the space in front of the first row of the section. The interpreters perform on the physical boundary that marks the end of the deaf seating section and the spot where the spectator

space and practitioner space meet. This boundary is not opaque: It is porous. Deaf audience members reference space outside of the deaf seating section when they refer to the stage space. The interpreters walk a tightrope on this porous boundary throughout the performance. Deaf people expect the interpreters to exhibit spatial practices of deaf space (e.g., interaction while walking to and from the stage), and also of performer space (e.g., maintaining the fourth wall).

Members of the deaf audience have little control over the macro-level *conçu* elements of the deaf space. Most decisions about the conception of space within the SLIP have been made without their input. The entire performance framework of *The Lion King* was predetermined prior to the establishment of the SLIP performances. The location of the interpreter *stage space* was determined by multiple factors: the decision that the interpreters would be placed to one side of the stage (rather than zoned or shadowing); the architecture of the Regent Theatre; and, negotiations between the interpreting team and the production company of *The Lion King*. Deaf audience members have no influence on the location or size of the deaf seating section. These decisions are instrumental in the creation of the *split visual attention* experience for deaf audience members, leading to increased effort on the part of deaf audience members as they try to process information from the interpreters in one location and the actors in another. This echoes findings of increased cognitive effort among deaf students experiencing split visual attention in educational settings (Mather, 2013; Mather & Clark, 2012) as discussed in Section 2.3.2. There, the split visual attention condition is a product of the distance between visual instructional materials projected onto a screen and the teacher providing the instruction. Even with this separation, both the instructional material and the instructor are part of one, coordinated narrative—that of the lesson. The SLIP differs. As the deaf audience members look back and forth between stage and interpreters, they see two treatments of the same narrative. “Split attention” is too simple—*split performance framework* is more apt. The deaf audience members want to reach the *vécu moment* that is possible during the SLIP; but, instead of being guided there by a unified, focused performance framework (*conçu plus perçu* combined), they must process dual performance frameworks ... or, perhaps, one performance framework (the Disney-sanctioned one on stage) with a sidecar (that of the interpreters).

5.2.2 *Actor space and the SLIP*

The actors yearn to get to the *vécu moment* of the performance space too. Together with the members of the audience, and facilitated by the performance framework, the actors expect to arrive at the *performance space* of *The Lion King*—where they co-construct the unique meaning of this one, specific performance. The actors are largely unaware of the deaf community during the performance. Instead, they are aware of the interpreters. They see the interpreters as a part of the performance; and, also as something separate. The actors express a desire for a connection with both groups throughout the performance—the deaf audience members and the interpreters—as this connection is essential for creating meaning in the short duration of the performance.

The performance framework is designed to support consistency, even within the day-to-day variations of actors and audience members. The interpreters are not a part of the performance framework that is known to the actors—and yet, the actors presume that they are working in partnership with the interpreters to create meaning throughout the performance (Section 4.2.7). They are excited about the addition of the interpreters, and also frustrated by the lack of both physical and metaphysical connection with them. If separating the interpreters from the actors is meant to avoid distracting the actors, doing so may produce the opposite effect.

Apart from being instructed to acknowledge the interpreters during the curtain call at the end of Act 2, the *performance framework* for the actors is unchanged. Everything about the stage space remains the same (its *conçu*), as does the actors' planned behaviours onstage (their *perçu*). What has changed is their metaphysical journey to the *performance space* of *The Lion King*—the *vécu moment* within the performance. Purposeful planning, design, and rehearsal come together through repeated performances to refine and smoothen this journey. The predictability of the *performance framework* lends to the ability of the actors to manage changes within the performance framework (e.g., performances by understudies; variations in line delivery; malfunctioning set-pieces and puppets). The interpreters fall outside of the planned performance framework. It may seem to the production company that arranging the interpreters outside of the presentation space (the crafted fiction on stage) will mitigate the impact of the interpreters on the performance. As such, there is no consideration for the actors' needs during the SLIP. The actors see the interpreters as something separate from them, and also something with

which they are collaborating (Section 4.2.7). This marks the performance as different than other performances.

Part of the experience of the actors is doing acting-like things (*perçu*) in interactions with other actors and puppets in a planned way (*conçu*) in order to co-create meaning (*vécu*) within the multiple spaces of *The Lion King*. The actors urge for the same type of interaction with the interpreters (Section 4.2.7). They understand the ways in which co-creation between puppet and actor happens in *The Lion King*, and they expect that they should be doing the same with the interpreters. If they aren't allowed to do so, it makes them aware that the struggle to co-create with deaf audience members is made more difficult.

The actors and interpreters share some components of the performance framework: the *textual* space and (sometimes) *thematic* space. These are just part of the ways in which the spaces of *The Lion King* have been conceived (*l'espace conçu*): beyond these, the actors and interpreters have been segregated. This makes impossible the essential interaction between performers that takes place in rehearsals and on stage (*l'espace perçu*). The performance framework is no longer unified—there is now a *split condition* for the actors, that they perceive throughout the performance. They believe themselves to be working with the interpreters to generate characters and broader meaning throughout the performance; but they also experience the interpreters as distant from them physically and metaphysically.

The actors want to reach the *vécu moment* that is possible during the SLIP. They are accustomed to relying on their unified performance framework (*conçu* plus *perçu* combined): instead, they find themselves jostled within their own performance framework by an outlier (the interpreters). They are vaguely aware that the interpreters are using space strategically during the performance. Lacking a connection with the interpreters, the actors default to their prescribed performance framework.

5.2.3 Interpreter space and the SLIP

The interpreters are “split” from the actors in both the *conçu* and *perçu* elements of the triad. As they stand off to the side of the stage, they share some of the *conçu* elements in

common with the actors (i.e., *textual space*, including the script and the score; and the *theatre space* in the broadest sense), but the other *conçu* elements are not shared by the actors and interpreters. The interpreters have a *stage space*—it is located in the *audience space*, instead of in the *practitioner space* with the actors. The actors have *presentational space* (costumes, sets, thematic lighting)—the interpreters do not. The actors enact their spatial practices on the *stage space* located in *practitioner space*, where there is a purposeful relationship between the *physical spaces* on stage and the *fictional places* of *The Lion King*; there is no such physical/fictional relationship between the interpreters and the same fictional places represented in *The Lion King*, as they enact their spatial practices located in *audience space*. In essence, the interpreters have been stripped of the entire *conçu* portion of the performance framework—except for the textual space—and have been separated from the practitioner space. Everything possible has been done to reduce their presence to that of a sign language subtitle. Text without context.

The study participants, however, see the interpreters as much more. The performance as experienced by deaf audience members includes a blend of the efforts of the actors and of the interpreters. The actors, too, assume they are in partnership with the interpreters—a blended effort for this one performance. The interpreters share this view, and feel a responsibility to both the actors and the deaf audience members. On their platform, the interpreters adapt their barren performance space by blending conceptions of space (*conçu*) and spatial practices (*perçu*) from both the actors and from the deaf community.

The interpreters perform some *spatial practices* (*perçu*) that are aligned with those of performers, but they also exhibit *spatial practices* aligned with deaf audience members. The interpreters make decisions about their use of space that are informed by their understanding of the spatial practices of each group. Some of these strategies serve to pull elements from the *presentational space* that exists on stage (actor locations and actor-type movement) into the interpreter's performance space, while others are meant to push the deaf audience members' gaze away from the interpreter performance space and toward the stage. These hybrid *conçu/perçu* approaches attempt to overcome the *split performance framework*, which is exacerbated by the in-ideal location of the interpreters.

5.2.4 *Hybrid strategies of the interpreter performance framework*

The interpreters deploy space production strategies that are borrowed from the actors on stage and also from the deaf community, as reported in Section 4.2 and integrated into the themes described above in Section 5.1. These approaches become a part of the *interpreters' performance framework*:

Maintenance of Blended Mental Space: The interpreters employ spatial practices (*perçu*) and construction of spaces (*conçu*) borrowed from the actors and stage space (Section 4.2.8). Taking in the performance by deaf patrons involves blending the performances of the actors and interpreters (Section 4.2.7). The effectiveness of the translation factors into the mental effort of deaf audience members (Section 4.2.7). When the blended mental spaces are maintained, the interpreters become less marked—even forgotten (the ultimate SLIP *vécu* moment) (Section 4.2.7).

Dorsality and Gaze Directing (“Throwing Focus”): The interpreters enact a *shared sensory reach* and *responsibility to share sensory information* expected among visually-oriented deaf people. Including dorsal information in their translations and gaze directing reduces the amount of information-seeking necessary by deaf audience members. (Section 4.2.8)

Translation Density: The interpreters *prune* their translations to reduce excessive detail and provide time for deaf patrons to direct their eye gaze back and forth between the stage and the interpreters (Section 4.2.7). This is both a construct of space (the textual space of the translation) and a spatial practice (the performance of the translation as an interpretation), meant to overcome the *split visual attention* condition experienced by deaf audience members.

Fourth Walling: The interpreters extend the fourth wall beyond its normal limits within the presentational space on stage—it now protrudes into the spectator space, including the interpreter performance platform, and wherever the interpreters travel during the time of the performance. They maintain alignment with the actors *and* the deaf audience members: they enact multiple alignments (Sections 4.2.4, 4.2.6, and 4.2.9).

These hybrid spatial practices and conceptions of space contribute to the interpreters' *performance framework*. It is a framework which was created separately from that of the sanctioned Disney performance framework for *The Lion King* in rehearsal spaces (*conçu*) separate from the actors and in ways (*perçu*) different than them. Because the interpreters are not an integrated part of the performance framework (and they have developed their own framework), the frictionless arrival at a *vécu moment* is challenged. The actors, interpreters, and deaf people all want to get there together, and the study points to some of the ways that members of each group adapt to this un-mediated change in the performance framework.

McAuley's *taxonomy of spatial function in the theatre* sought to synthesize previous attempts to describe theatre topography—many of which were influenced by Lefebvre's spatial triad (see Section 2.2.6). Through this taxonomy, we have an elegant solution for identifying and describing the spaces outlined by McAuley. It has helped to distinguish the multiple physical and fictional spaces at play during the SLIP; but, the influence of Lefebvre has been blurred into the background.

Deaf geographies theorists have foregrounded Lefebvrian thinking, observing the interconnected nature of the three aspects of the spatial triad (see Section 2.3). This lens helps to highlight the ways in which deaf audience members experience, interact with, and produce spaces during the SLIP. The actors, audience members, and (now) interpreters aim to co-construct the spaces of *The Lion King*—and the spatial triad alone lacks the framework necessary to parse the divisions of physical and fictional spaces which contribute to the performance.

Watkins provides a bridge between Lefebvre and McAuley with the *performance framework* concept (see Section 2.3). Actors, directors, and other members of the production team come together to form this framework, which is comprised of the conceptions of space (*conçu*) and spatial practices (*perçu*) necessary for the production. The performance framework facilitates, but does not force, the co-construction of meaning between the audience and the performers—the *vécu moment* that is the performance experience. When overlaid with McAuley in Figure 5-2, the performance framework brings into relief the relationship between the spaces described in the taxonomy of theatre spaces, and the ways in which the SLIP is different than other performances of *The Lion King*.

The data reveals a *split* in the performance framework of the SLIP. The interpreters operate in near isolation from the actors and production team; and are removed from much of the *conçu* elements of the *performance space*. The (rather) rigid border between *presentational space* and *spectator space* helps to highlight this separation. Exacerbating issues include the degree of *split visual attention* experienced by deaf patrons, and also the degree to which the interpreters do or do not employ *mitigating strategies*. Looking at the data through the multi-layered view of Figure 5-2 helps to distinguish the components of the performance framework that are shared between the actors and interpreters (e.g., text space, thematic space) and those which are not (e.g., presentational space, etc.).

By their nature, theatre events are blends of interacting spaces—as McAuley demonstrates (see Section 2.2.6). Fictional spaces, physical spaces, performance spaces, spectator spaces, thematic spaces, textual spaces: these are a tempest, and the theatre building is the teapot. Adding to this storm is a new teapot—a teapot without walls: the deaf seating section. Here, deaf space production thrives. Simultaneously adaptive and assertive, deaf spatial practices and constructions of space within the theatre lend to a seeking of collective and individual well-being (*vécu* moments within the smaller teapot—the one without walls). This is not *l'espace vécu* in the tradition of 'spaces of resistance' but it a *vécu* of collective well-being, co-existing as an ingredient in the teapot *with* walls—the theatre performance that is inclusive of the performers, hearing and deaf audience members, and now the interpreters.

Standing on a physical boundary between the fictional and spectator spaces of the theatre, the interpreters contribute to the co-construction of meaning during the SLIP. They are in service to the SLIP in a way that is aligned with the performers on stage, and yet they are socio-linguistically aligned with the deaf space production happening in the audience directly in front of them. They are aware of the split visual attention experience of deaf audience members and they employ mitigating methods. More than a distance of metres, the interpreters are separated from the performance metaphysically: With the exception of the text, they are uninvolved in the sanctioned performance framework. They instead create their own performance framework, informed by what they know of the space production practices of the production and of deaf people. The data reveals the interpreters to be enacting spatial practices (*perçu*) and constructions (*conçu*) of both the actors and deaf community—a blend of spaces. *Interpreter space*. They pull some

elements of the stage picture onto their platform, and they help push deaf eyes toward the stage to see important visual information. Each technique is designed to shorten the cognitive distance between them and the stage, allowing deaf audience members to mentally blend the two simultaneous performances into one. *Interpreter geographies*. Forgetting about the interpreter would be the ultimate *vécu* moment of the SLIP—not to resist them, but for them to be subsumed into the *vécu* moment that unifies audience member and performer. *Totalité*.

5.3 Co-presence and the SLIP

The addition of the interpreter into the performance event complicates the notion of performer/spectator *co-presence*, which presumes mutual and reciprocal sensory perception to sustain a feedback loop throughout the performance that is autopoietic. The feedback loop is self-creating and self-sustaining for the duration of the performance, and is at the heart of co-constructed meaning—it “generates the performance itself” (Fischer-Lichte, 2008, p. 50).

During a typical performance of *The Lion King*, this feedback loop achieves autopoiesis within the assumed performance framework of the production: a *dual channel* experience that synthesizes *auditory* information and *visual* information (*Dual Channel: Auditory+Visual*). The auditory channel serves the *playtext* and the *manner* in which written dialogue/lyrics are articulated by performers. The visual channel supplies movement, design, proximity, co-speech gesture and other aspects of the performance *that are seen*. These channels are accessed simultaneously as the hearing/sighted audience member perceives the actions of the actor. In turn, the actions of the audience are perceived by the actor via this *Dual Channel: Auditory+Visual* feedback loop (see Figure 5-3, left).

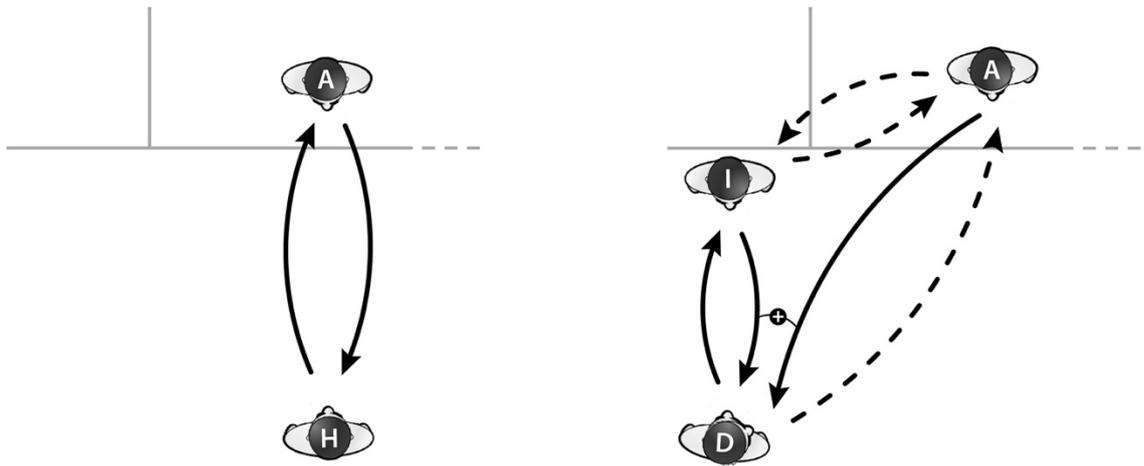


Figure 5-3. Actor/Spectator Feedback Loop: the linguistically congruent experience (left) and the interpreted experience (right).

What deaf audience members in the present study describe is a *Dual Channel: Visual+Visual* experience (see Figure 5-3, right). One visual channel supplies the *material production* of the performance that is visible (e.g., movement, design, proximity, co-speech gesture). Deaf audience members access this channel when they turn to look at the stage space. The other visual channel serves the *playtext*. It is accessed when deaf people turn to look at the interpreters. The deaf audience members describe their resulting performance as a blend of both channels—each distinct and separate, and yet necessary to formation of meaning during *The Lion King*. The separation of these channels cleaves language from the rest of the performance, demanding increased effort on the part of deaf audience members (see Section 2.3.2 for a discussion of *split visual attention*). As deaf audience members respond to the performance, they contribute into this *feedback loop triumvirate*, where they are perceived differently by the actors and the interpreters.

The actors report no perceivable reactions from deaf audience members during their experience of the SLIP (that they recognize)—until the moment of the *curtain call*, when the actors use visual applause outwardly to the audience area and deaf audience members respond. Generally, the reciprocity of the feedback loop between actor and deaf audience member during the performance is lacking. The actors are aware of and lament this condition. Their perception of the interpreters is also distressing, but for a different reason. As they watch the interpreters perched on the borderlands between the stage and the audience, the actors are unable to fully understand the purpose of the interpreters’

efforts—their movements, actions, and language. The lack of coordination between the two groups marks the performance, and the actors are left to manage this disconnect on stage as the performance unfurls.

From their performance location, the interpreters perceive and react to the responses of deaf audience members nearby. The interpreters can see their conversations in Auslan as they comment about the performance, their facial expressions in reaction to what they see on stage or when they watch the interpreters, and the movements made by deaf people as they adjust to improve their view of the performance. The interpreters not only see these responses as movements—they also are able to decode their linguistic and cultural significance. Their awareness of the split visual condition experienced by deaf audience members prompts them to employ mitigating strategies.

In this triumvirate relationship, the performance does not pass *through* the interpreter from actor to deaf audience member—instead, each of these three participants has a relationship with each of the others. The interpreter is *of* the performance and it is within this *triumvirate feedback loop* where the performance is created (to paraphrase Fischer-Lichte). The findings of the present study describe an active feedback exchange between the interpreters and deaf audience members—however, the interpreter is only a *part* of the performance. The other part comes from the deaf audience members' perception of a *portion* of the actors' actions on stage. The remaining relationships within the triad suffer from lacking or under-developed feedback mechanisms (Figure 5-3, right).

Ripples in the feedback loops between deaf spectator, interpreter, and actor help to illustrate the tolerances of the three inter-dependent relationships. While watching the interpreters, deaf audience members see them as people—and they also see the characters from *The Lion King*. This reflects Fischer-Lichte's description of the *perceptual oscillation* that occurs as an audience member observes an actor on stage (see Section 2.2.5). Even with the ambiguity present about the specific boundaries of the interpreters' role, actions by the interpreters can be seen as a violation of their status as *performers*. This is evident in the *Easter-egg translation* employed by one of the interpreters in this study, which stands out to a deaf audience member as a violation (see Section 4.2.7).

Garner (2019) notes that phenomenology complicates models of motor cognition that are devised through experimentation. In turn, the SLIP complicates phenomenological descriptions of performer-spectator relationships, which hinge on ontological similarity and are rooted in a centre-periphery interpretation of ontological diversity. Through this lens, the theatre is still an able-bodied space, which is visited by someone who is disabled. The movements of the dancer sans wheelchair, or the deaf actors in performance, are natural to the performers—but are described by Garner as novel when seen through a centre-periphery spatial framework. The co-existence of spatial practices demonstrated in the SLIP suggests a blend instead of a binary. The attributes of sign language in performance are not in opposition to speech: they are a part of the performance palette that has always existed, but has been unseen, unrecognized, or considered to be something less-than-normal. The *Dual Channel: Visual+Visual* condition of the SLIP highlights the presumed dominance of speech in both the practise and study of the performer-spectator relationship. It also prompts questions about the conceptualization of interpreted theatre performances. What do we think we are achieving? Is a self-generated and sustained feedback loop possible when the performance employs the *placed strategy* (see Section 1.3.4 for a discussion of strategies)? What can we do to improve the audience-performer-interpreter relationships?

It is during the curtain call when the relationship between performer and spectator is recognized ... reversed (States, 1985, p. 198). The performer “lives two lives at the same time” (States, 1985, p. 14). They are bowing for themselves and for the character they portray—seeking approval, but also demonstrating humility. During this moment of decompression, they pretend to be themselves while still not-yet fully out of character. (See Section 2.2.5 for a discussion of States and the curtain call.) This unstable border is no less ambiguous during the SLIP, where both actor and interpreter alike rise from the depths of the performance in full view of—and in accordance with—the responses of audience members.

The curtain call (described in Section 4.2.9) begins with the entire cast of *The Lion King* on stage with hands held upward, gently waving in the visual applause common among deaf people and looking outward toward the deaf seating section. It is the first acknowledgement of the deaf audience by the cast on stage: “Your goodness has made it possible for us to be good” (States, 1985, p. 205).

After acknowledging the orchestra with an outstretched arm, the cast similarly indicates the interpreters as the last recipients of applause during the curtain call. They appear to want to acknowledge the interpreters with visual applause (as a performer might acknowledge a fellow cast member), but they seem unsure and the impulse is stifled. The interpreters deflect praise, instead acknowledging the actors and deaf audience members in attendance: “Your goodness has made it possible for us to be good.”

From the audience, deaf people respond with a mix of visual and auditory applause—a *Dual Channel: Auditory+Visual* response that they know aligns with the sensorimotor experience of the hearing cast members and interpreters: “You *both* were good.” It is at this moment—one of the last when the actors, deaf audience members, and interpreters are together—when the winds of the triumvirate feedback loop blow the most freely.

In this ceremonial seam between fictional and real worlds, the actors finish their decompression privately, leaving the theatre out a *fourth wall exit* (my term) at the back of the theatre building. Pouring out onto Flinders Lane, the actors Josh Quong Tart and Cameron Goodall are also vessels for latent forms of *Scar* and *Zazu*. As the stage lights dim and the imagined savannah becomes the stage of the Regent Theatre, the interpreters continue their decompression in full view of audience members. Laura and James struggle for a *fourth-wall exit* while heading up the aisle and into the lobby of the theatre to the continued applause of deaf audience members. The psychology of the ritual of ending is different for the interpreters than it is for the actors. They exit the theatre building out of a *spectator* portal—a lobby entrance meant for audience members—but, as they step onto Collins Street, they too are vessels into which *Scar* and *Zazu* (and the others) have been poured.

5.4 Summary of discussion

In this chapter, I identified themes from within the experiences described in Chapter 4 (Findings) that may be considered more universally across other SLIPs and interpreted interactions. I applied Lefebvrian thinking in the traditions of multiple theorists, using a synthesized approach illustrated in Figure 5-2. I considered co-presence of the actors, deaf audience members, and interpreters during the SLIP, revealing a triumvirate feedback loop in which meaning is generated. A split performance framework became apparent, and a blended *interpreter space* was revealed.

In the final chapter of this report, I return to the study questions and consider the ways in which the results reported here contribute to interpreting theory and practice.

Chapter 6—Conclusion

This thesis employs phenomenological analysis to explicate universal meaning from the specific, lived experiences of the study participants (van Manen, 1990). Their descriptions and in vivo quotes serve as botanized accounts of their experience of spatial production and role enactment.

The genesis of this study has been my own collective experiences and observations as a theatre interpreter. For more than three decades, I have adjusted my own use of space as a SLIP interpreter in response to input from audience members and actors (see Section 3.2 for a discussion of my positionality as a researcher). This study explores the simple question: what does space have to do with it?

It turns out, it's not that simple. What does *space* have to do with *it*? What does *it* have to do with *space*?

“Where shall we put the interpreters?”

“Off stage right, on a platform in the audience.”

This is not a real quote from my data—but a metaphorical die from which is cast conversation after conversation in theatres throughout the world. You might as well ask “Where shall we place the vending machine?”

I have learnt that space is complicated. There are space-s. They overlap, and blend. There are multiple interacting spaces in production during a theatre performance, a process in which deaf community members and the interpreters contribute.

The placement of the interpreters off to the side of the performance space is not a neutral thing. It influences the experience of the performance by the deaf audience members, interpreters, and actors. This study is a type of story—one case study, designed to illuminate how the particular recipe of space construction and practices during *this SLIP* of *The Lion King* was experienced by participants *on that day*. The *SLIP Spatial Framework* is one of two broad contributions of the study: it may be applied to other

performances, and in other interpreting environments. A second contribution is the recognition of *interpreter geography* and a foundational discussion of *interpreter space*, rooted in the Lefebvrian vocabulary that is also being explored in deaf spaces.

In this chapter, I return to the study questions, and consider the contributions of the study to interpreting theory and practice, and also to theoretical discussions of human geography more broadly. I acknowledge the limitations of the study, and suggest further research of both practice and experimental varieties.

6.1 A return to the study questions

The questions underpinning this study were formulated with a nod to Lefebvre's spatial triad, a unifying theory of produced space resulting from the interplay between spatial representations of space (*l'espace conçu*), practices (*l'espace perçu*), and representational space (*l'espace vécu*). (See Chapter 3 for a discussion of the research design and question formation.) In the section, I explore how findings from the study address the research questions:

- How are the spaces in a SLIP conceived and defined by its participants?
- What are the spatial practices and experiences of SLIP participants?
- How does the perception and production of space by theatre personnel, sign language interpreters, and deaf people converge to facilitate meaning as part of the interpreted theatre event?

In the way that the three aspects of Lefebvre's spatial triad interact to produce space, so too do the findings related to these three research questions. Answering one question conjures up observations about the other two. While the *SLIP Spatial Framework* proposed in Section 2.2.7 is a useful tool for considering spatial production during the interpreted performance, its graphic depiction—with boxes and labels bordered by other shapes and labels (Figure 2-9)—belies the interdependent relationships between its individual components. The borders between the research questions are as amorphous as

the borders between *perçu*, *conçu*, and *vécu*, and the answers below are similarly interdependent.

6.1.1 How are spaces within the SLIP defined and conceived?

The data presented in Chapter 4 reveals that the *placed strategy* employed during the SLIP separates the interpreters from the fictional spaces that are carefully crafted as part of the performance framework. Save for the text, no purposeful application of the production's consideration of space exists on the interpreters' performance platform. This preserves the performance framework for the actors, keeping the interpreters from intruding on the highly-crafted conceptions of space during *The Lion King*. The location of the interpreter is in the *audience space*, not the *practitioner's space* (the stage, backstage, etc.).

Deaf people produce a temporary deaf space within the audience space of the theatre. Within this *room without walls*, deaf types of conceptions of space are combined with spatial practices—creating a type of cohesion. When interpreters or others act outside of expected norms, their behaviour is marked. A component of the deaf SLIP experience is a *split visual attention*, brought on by the separation of the interpreters from the stage space. Deaf audience members layer the two visual narratives as part of their experience of the performance. They employ *strategies* to mitigate the influence of split visual attention on their experience (e.g., seat selection, adjustments within seats).

The interpreters call on their awareness of space conception by the actors on stage and within the deaf community to create a *blended performance framework*. They develop *strategies* to pull spatial arrangements from the stage onto their own performance platform, while also pushing the focus of deaf audience members stage-ward at critical moments in the performance.

As they create this blended space, the interpreters are physically located in the *audience space* and within the temporary deaf space of the deaf seating section. Their location has meaning, as does their pre-performance space, and their egress to and from their performance platform through the deaf space. Their presence in the deaf section, dressed in current-day street clothing that they might wear to other interpreting assignments, and

devoid of the on-stage accoutrement of fiction, all places the interpreters “out” of the fictional world, and “in” the real world of the deaf seating section in front of them.

6.1.2 What are the spatial practices and experience of SLIP participants?

The planned experience of the SLIP for the actors is largely unchanged in comparison with other performances. Except for a brief greeting with the interpreters prior to the performance, their performance framework remains the same: the placement of the interpreter is designed to allow the actors to perform as if the interpreters are not present. Instead, the actors *are* aware of the interpreters. They see the interpreters as co-conspirators, working with the actors to generate the performance of each character. The actors lament the lack interaction with the interpreters to discuss this creation process. The performance becomes marked—some of the cognitive effort of the actors during the performance is spent thinking about this lack of connection with the interpreters, rather than *having* a connection with the interpreters in the actor-like way that actors do.

Deaf participants describe the area where the deaf audience was seated as a deaf space—a hub—citing ways in which its inhabitants gathered within the space and made adjustments to improve their experience during the performance. This *audience without walls* existed within the audience *with walls*—in harmony. Within the fuzzy boundaries of the deaf seating section, norms of language use and spatial production serve to encourage the well-being of deaf audience members. One of the spatial practices that deaf audience members bring to the performance involves making adjustments to unideal interpreting locations, and also the mental blending of interpreter performance and actor performance. In each interpreted interaction, they juggle the location of the interpreter and the location of the spoken language participant in the interaction. This practice is brought into the theatre, as the deaf audience members look back and forth between the stage and the interpreters. In some other settings, they (and the interpreters) have the authority to make adjustments to the interpreter location—here, they do not. Instead, they adjust their seat choices, and make micro-adjustments in their seats during the performance (small changes in body positioning). Deaf people have spatial practices designed to optimize their view of the interpreters—these aren’t the sole domain of interpreters.

The interpreters are not actors, nor are they deaf. The location and other presentational elements (the *conçu*) of the interpreters strip them of any dramatic characteristics, and emphasize only their linguistic function. While they may be outsiders of the performance space, the interpreters are insiders in the temporary deaf space produced in the deaf seating section—both physically and socio-linguistically. They act in ways that suggest that they are insiders of the performance framework—they are part of a chosen few who are allowed to face the audience and who are responsible for telling the story. There is a large palette (or pool, or collection) of spatial practices available: the actors are practising some and the deaf people are practising some. The interpreters are aware of spatial practices employed by each group, and they select practices from each group to incorporate into their own, blended set of spatial practices.

Their prior knowledge and experience in interpreted settings—and within the broader sign language using community—affords the interpreters an understanding of the challenges brought on by the split visual attention experience of deaf audience members. This is a *conçu* problem—but the interpreters have limited control over their location. Within the confines of the space they *do* hold domain over, the interpreters combine spatial practices and constructs designed to mitigate the cognitive load caused by split visual attention, lightening the weight of their impact on the deaf audience member's opportunity to leave the earthly spaces in the theatre, to join the actors in the fictional places of *The Lion King*.

6.1.3 How do the perception and production of space by SLIP participants converge to facilitate meaning?

As one participant of the study notes, some deaf people avoid interpreted theatre, due to unsatisfactory experiences related to the location of the interpreters.²¹ Is it enough that interpreters are provided, and other deaf people are there? Or is something else required to draw deaf audience members? *Going to the theatre* is a social experience. The *experience of the performance* is a *vécu* moment which transcends the earthly bounds of the physical spaces of the theatre and makes active the fictional spaces of the story. The

²¹ For a related discussion, consider Richardson (2017), and a follow-up exploration of co-created theatre featuring deaf and hearing actors in Richardson (2019).

conceptions of space and spatial practices within the theatre form a performance framework designed to enable the arrival at this *vécu* experience.

The actors are insiders of this performance framework, which they experience again and again during performances—in iterations both slightly different and blurringly similar. The framework is specific, yet weightless. For the actors, the SLIP performance perforates the expected sameness of the framework. They feel the interpreters are working with them on character production, but in a separated performance framework. This is noticed by the actors. It occupies some of their time during the performance, and marks it as different. This is an intrusion on the normal facilitative flow of the performance framework.

Arrival at the performance spaces of *The Lion King* is a co-constructed effort between audience members and performers. Deaf audience members during the SLIP unify the performances on stage with those on of the interpreters on their working platform. A confounding variable includes the degree of split visual attention experienced by deaf audience members—the impact of which may be reduced by strategies employed by the interpreters. What it means for a deaf audience member to attend an interpreted performance involves the drag that features of the performance can have on the flight toward the *vécu* moments available in the fictional worlds of the theatre. There is cognitive effort involved in the practice of looking back and forth between interpreter and actor, and then piecing together two performances. This split visual condition is one such drag. Translations can create another type of drag: clumsy or unnatural target forms may set the deaf viewer's mind into a process of decoding the translation's meaning. While the Disney performance framework is constructed to reduce barriers to *vécu* moments by hearing audience members and actors, it does not consider the effort of deaf audience members to blend two related-but-separate performance frameworks.

If one of the objectives of translation is to produce a similar response as the original (Nida & Taber, 1969), the SLIP performance of *The Lion King* achieved at least some *vécu* moments, where deaf audience members reported feeling connected with the fictional worlds in the story. Here, they moved in tandem with the emotional tides of the performance at large. The challenges of a split performance framework notwithstanding, there were times during the performance when they were transported to *Pride Rock* and were moved by *Simba's* vision of his father. During the apogee of *vécu* moments, the

interpreters fade away to become an ingredient in the performance soup. This is not a guaranteed outcome of a SLIP, leading some deaf people to consider the interpreter strategy (placed, zoned, or shadowed) when deciding to attend a SLIP.

The interpreters experience the spaces within the SLIP as a cross between a performance and a typical interpreting assignment for which they are booked. The actors arrive at the space with a performance framework that is well-hewn through repetition, its bumpy parts made smooth through the friction of experience. The interpreters arrive having developed their own performance framework—one that they have developed alone and together—and they have had limited opportunities to experience it in action. The only time they have put their performance framework to the test with the actors present has been during a live performance. With their own plan, and in their own clothing, the interpreters arrive at a space of their own through doors on the opposite side of the building from where the actors enter. Their path to their performance platform, and the platform itself, are separate from the performance world. In spite of all of the attempts to separate them *from* the performance, they are responsible *to* the performance. Like the actors, they experience a release from the physical reality (and their own self) and *become* characters from *The Lion King*, doing things in fictional spaces within the story. The blend of spatial practices and conceptions that the interpreters employ helps to encourage the interpreters' *vécu* experiences of the performance. Their responsibility to the story—and the preservation of *the fourth wall*—imbues their psychological experience with feelings of putting-on and taking-off characters. Like the actors, they feel they are working in tandem with the actors to present the characters of *The Lion King*. They feel they are part of a performance framework—even if not *the* performance framework.

Outside of the performance period, the interpreters are disenfranchised co-conspirators of the performance. The production company is unaware of the interpreters' preparation of their performance framework—or that they have a performance framework at all. This is also a part of the interpreter SLIP experience.

6.2 Study scope and limitations

This phenomenology is a *case study*—it is not an attempt to represent an entire industry, community of practice, or interpreting setting. Instead, the experiences of *these* participants, richly described, are meant to be specific instances that help reveal details

of their experience of one, specific, interpreted performance of *The Lion King*. Chapter 3—*Research Design and Methods* details the scope and limitations of the methodology of the study, including case study methodology (Section 3.3). A summative return to this topic is warranted in this final chapter.

6.2.1 Number of participants

A participant group of ten or fewer is not atypical of phenomenological studies. The present study investigates the phenomenon through the experiences of seven participants of the event, but from the perspectives of three (or more) roles: it includes two audience members, three interpreting team members, and two actors. The effect is to reduce the quantity of available overlapping, thick descriptions of the phenomenon within each group. This study, then, is not a phenomenology of being a theatre interpreter; nor of being a deaf audience member; nor of acting in a SLIP. It is a phenomenology of the SLIP from the perspective of seven participants. This may be one of the strengths of the multi-stakeholder research model: if interpreters are not conduits (see Section 2.4.2)—if they contribute to the meaning of an interaction—then should we not study interpreted interactions as a whole, and not just one participant or the other? If yes, studies like the one reported here must include enough participants from *each* stakeholder group to guard against monolithic representations of the groups (i.e., deaf participants; interpreters; and hearing participants).

6.2.2 Hearing audience members

If the assertion above that a phenomenology of the interaction as a whole is advised (or even possible), the lack of hearing audience members as participants in the present study stands out in violation. Indeed, the study does not claim to represent the experiences of hearing audience members. My central focus was on the people most directly involved in creating meaning in partnership with the interpreters: the actors and the deaf audience members. It may be argued that the hearing audience members are not participants in the interpreted interaction. This might be defensible were not the interpreters so visible to audience members outside of the deaf seating section. Interpreter visibility of this manner factors into the concerns of some theatre professionals that interpreters will detract from the experience of hearing audience members (see Section 1.1). Hearing people include

interpreters in their experience of interpreted interactions—even when they are not a direct interlocutor.

6.3 Study implications

6.3.1 Contribution to theory

The term *space* had taken on multiple meanings in sign language interpreting studies. It was sometimes described as mental, sometimes psychological, sometimes a factor of role. There had been no active application of theory from human geography or deaf geographies to the work of sign language interpreters. De Weerdts and Kusters (2016) are prescient when they suggest that interpreters adopt the proxemics and kinesics of deaf spaces. In the arena of practice, interpreters discuss *where* to stand or sit, and sometimes *when* to move. Theoretically, we have not explored *why* to stand *where*, *how* to move, and *what* do these decisions contribute to meaning. This study contributes foundational concepts for considering *sign language interpreter geography* and *sign language interpreter space* (colloquially ‘interpreter geography’ and ‘interpreter space’ when used in context):

The SLIP Spatial Framework: the study provides a useful framework for the consideration of other SLIPs. This unification of Lefebvre, McAuley, Morash & Richards, and Watkins (Figure 2-9) highlights the potential for a *split performance framework*, and the *mitigation strategies* of SLIP participants. Including performers, audience members, and interpreters in the study demonstrates an interaction-centric analysis to meaning co-creation.

Space Contributes to Meaning Generation: How space is conceived and interacted with has implications for meaning during the SLIP. The *location* and *presentation* of the interpreters influences the view of their role, and the way they contribute to meaning co-creation. A feature of location in a SLIP is *split visual attention*. Far from being neutral, the location of sign language interpreters leads to corresponding adjustments in their own production of space, and in the production of space of deaf people.

Co-presence and The SLIP: The SLIP complicates assumptions made in phenomenological descriptions of *co-presence* which centre the *Dual Channel: Auditory-*

Visual experience and relegate other ontological experiences to the periphery. The influence of interpreters on meaning during the theatre event has implications for the formation of reciprocal empathetic responses inherent in the *co-presence* of performer and audience member. The description of a *triumvirate feedback loop* suggest an ontologically-driven phenomenology of performance experience may lead to an expansion of our understanding of direct, mediated, and blended theatre interactions.

The Spatial Framework and Sign Language Interpreting Generally: If all the world's a stage, why can't the spatial framework proposed here have life outside of the SLIP? Goffmanesque thinking suggests that role enactment is a feature of every interaction. In a court room, there also is a performance framework. There are prescribed places, with associated roles. There are lines and blocking of movement. There is a type of script that only some people perform. The placement of a sign language interpreter in a court has multiple implications for the many stakeholders in attendance. Space conception and spatial practices combine and influence the lived experience. McAuley's (1999) taxonomy can be applied to non-theatre settings: costumes become judge robes; the proscenium becomes the separation between court and spectator seating; and, the court clerk becomes the narrator (or and possibly *stage manager*). The degree to which interpreters are involved in the creation and maintenance of the court's *performance framework* may have implications for spatial production and meaning during the court proceedings. If all the world's a stage, is every interaction a story? Is every interpretation a SLIP?

Interpreter Space is Blended: The study reveals the interpreters to be blending spatial production characteristics of both theatre space and deaf space. This is different than imagining the interpreters being in one space and serving as a gatekeeper into another space, or of the interpreters choosing to be closer to one group or the other. Instead, the interpreters are shown to operate in a blended space that incorporates spatial practices and constructions of two groups. This is the opposite of a space of resistance: It is a space of unification.

Corporeal Translations and Interpretations in Spoken Languages: The study points to spatial production as a contributor to meaning generation during the sign language interpreted performance of *The Lion King*. The Auslan translation of the script is corporeal by nature—sign language is of the body. A translation of the script from

English to Japanese might be assumed to be non-corporeal on paper, gaining its body only when it comes to life through flesh and bone of the actors. Is this true? The person (or persons) translating the script comes from a spatial production tradition of their own. That tradition may veneer concept development, word selection, sentence structure, and other features of the translation process. The study may provide a way to consider spatial production as a feature of translator *visibility* (Venuti, 1995), and issues of *domestication* and *foreignization* in translation of traditionally spoken/written languages.

6.3.2 Implications for sign language interpreted performances and elsewhere

While the analysis in Section 5.2.4 includes observations of techniques employed by the interpreters during the performance of *The Lion King*, it is not the aim of this study to provide generalizable practice recommendations for interpreters. Instead, the study highlights the co-constructed nature of the performance experience—and the blended spaces of the theatre, production, actors, deaf audience members, and interpreters. With this in mind, I will refrain from offering specific recommendations for interpreters, but will instead focus on the SLIP experience and my recommendations for theatre professionals, interpreters, and deaf theatre goers.

Define the goal and be up front about it: The study reveals that the split performance framework influences meaning for deaf audience members, interpreters, and actors. Choices made about the overall interpreting strategy for the production (i.e., placed, zoned, shadowed) have the potential to *inhibit cohesion* between the actors and the audience members—ultimately leading to the failure of the chief aim of the performance. I suggest that we continue to ask what we are trying to accomplish with a SLIP, revisiting the question of the motivation behind each interpreted performance (see discussion in Section 0). This should be a multi-stakeholder discussion, where it is clear how decisions made about the SLIP will impact the experiences for all involved. There are multiple overlapping and competing hierarchies during a SLIP—but one, official hierarchy. As a located space, the SLIP is constrained by the perceptions and physical limitations imposed on it by the official space. There are times when those constraints are *disabling*, making the experience negative for all involved. There is both tension and cooperation between the SLIP and the grander hierarchy; this is normal. But, when the constraints become so unbearable as to make the SLIP pointless, resources should be placed elsewhere—perhaps in a deaf theatre production.

Centre the SLIP on the vécu moment for everyone; adjust the performance framework accordingly: the overriding objective of the SLIP is the *vécu* moment of co-creation between audience member and actor—and, now, interpreter. Failure to achieve this moment impacts the experiences of everyone. With the *vécu* moment centred as the objective of the SLIP, we can purposefully manipulate the *conçu* and *perçu* elements of the *performance framework* based on the demands of the specific production. This works best when the interpreters have a relationship with the production company and can learn about the performance framework of the overall production first-hand. In my own practice, we have participated in production meetings, script readings, and rehearsals to help gain this insight. Such interactions help the cast and the interpreters observe the ways in which the other group interacts with the physical and fictional spaces of the production. With this shared knowledge, cast and crew members can participate in the attempt to create the blended SLIP space. This can lead to improvements in the physical arrangements during the performance; a more unified and collective head-space between the cast and interpreters; an improved representation of deaf *conçu* elements in the public spaces of the theatre; and, a more effective application of strategies designed to mitigate the impact of *split visual attention* on deaf audience members and actors.

When interpreting elsewhere: The findings from this study support a return to the advice of De Weerd and Kusters (2016) that sign language interpreting students should learn more than just sign language, but should have both objective knowledge of deaf spaces and deaf geography and experiences being with deaf people in deaf spaces. As we blend spaces during our interpreting practice, we call on spatial repertoires and constructions from one vast pool—but which are associated with groups of people, social environments, speech acts, languages, and language modes. Interpreters can consider the *performance framework* inherent in any interpreting situation (not just theatre performances), and then manipulate a blend of appropriate spatial production traditions, borrowing from the vast pool and enacting a mix that will lend to the co-creation of meaning. To help with this, we should learn about the physical spaces of the environments in which we work (e.g., hospitals, schools), and experience these spaces as manifested by deaf people and by hearing people. When possible, we should engage the superseding power structure in our efforts to adjust *perçu* and *conçu* elements of our work; however, we should remain aware that the nature of blended spaces includes the duality of *cooperating* and *resisting*.

6.3.3 *New research vistas*

The insights drawn from this study are both a point of arrival, and a point of departure. The SLIP Spatial Framework elucidates spatial production phenomenon for the one performance described herein. With this framework for considering interpreter geography and interpreter space, new questions emerge within me—setting the stage for future investigation in three areas, described below. Other researchers may find ways to apply the findings outlined here to these areas—or in areas of their own design.

Apply the SLIP Spatial Framework To Other Interpreted Performances: results from this study about the relationship between spatial production and meaning during a SLIP can be applied to other performances in an attempt to deepen and diversify explanations of this phenomenon. Practice recommendations for theatre interpreters would be a foreseeable by-product of such exploration.

Apply the Spatial Framework Elsewhere: the spatial framework model may have merit when applied to interpreting settings other than the theatre. The model helps make complicated the question of interpreter placement. Location is only one part of interpreter constructions of space, which show evidence of characteristics blended from more than one spatial production tradition. Further research will deepen our understanding of this burgeoning idea of *interpreter space*, and the impact that split visual attention has on meaning during interpreted interactions where a signed language is one of the languages at play. When applied to non-theatre settings, the SLIP Spatial Framework becomes the *SLI Spatial Framework—the Sign Language Interpreting Spatial Framework*.

Study Interpreter Space Using Diverse and Multiple Research Designs: exploration to further identify, characterize, and quantify interpreter spatial production should be conducted through diverse research traditions. Multiple researchers, exploring interpreting through multiple stakeholder perspectives, using multiple methodologies, can shed light on the nuances of the social production of space during interpreted interactions, and how this process contributes to meaning generation. How do changes in interpreter spatial production impact the participants? How do we measure that?

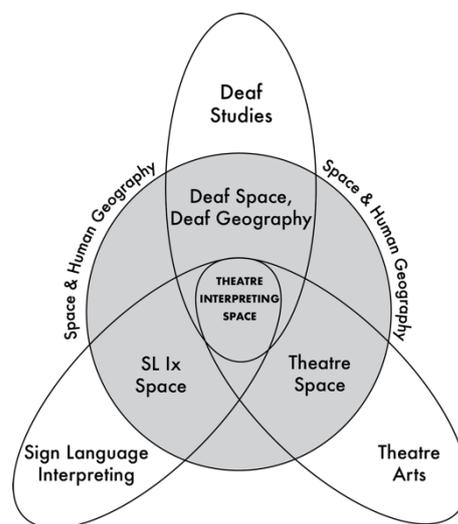


Figure 6-1. Literature review bedraggled daisy, showing the contributions of the present study in interaction with existing scholarship.

The answers will not be found in one petal of the bedraggled daisy (Figure 6-1). It's where multiple petals—multiple research disciplines—come together that we are likely to develop a nuanced understanding of this phenomenon. As we learn more, new petals may be added to the daisy.

6.4 Final thoughts

This final chapter has been a return to the beginning of this thesis. I have considered how the study addresses the three questions introduced in Chapter 1; the contributions the study makes to the theoretical considerations of spatial production during interpreted events; my own plans to apply the research in my interpreting practice, and the ways in which the phenomenon of interpreter space might be explored in the future. My hope is that this exploration of interpreter space will lend to the theoretical discussion of interpreted interactions; and that it will be considered, teased-apart, and improved-upon—to ultimately be subsumed into the research firmament, in *The Circle of Life*.

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Appendix A—Research Summary

Danny McDougall, Primary Researcher

May 2015

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Experiencing Interpreted Theatre



By their nature, theatre events are collective activities – if you are in the room, you are a part of a larger group experience. When sign language interpreters are included in a performance of a play, musical, or other theatre event, they are often viewed as “helpful accommodations” for deaf audience members. Describing interpreters as being *for the deaf* paints a picture of the interpreter and deaf person existing in a bubble. This is far from the case during interpreted theatre, where the interpreters are typically a visible part of the experience for hearing people in the audience, back stage, and elsewhere in the theatre.

Above: Interpreters in a production of *Spring Awakening* at Oakland University. Photo: Rick Smith Photography

The technical aspects of interpreted theatre provide rich opportunities for

research (e.g., translation, script analysis, linguistic analysis) that I will explore elsewhere. Instead of emphasizing the technical details of what theatre interpreters *do*, this study will explore *how interpreted theatre is experienced* by four stakeholder groups:

- Deaf patrons
- Hearing patrons
- Theatre interpreters
- Theatre personnel

My aim is to add to the limited collective knowledge available about interpreted theatre, which members of all stakeholder groups can apply to future interpreted theatre events.

The Research Process

I will visit several "sites" during my doctoral research, where I will attend interpreted theatre performances and conduct interviews. I will take "field notes" (my observations) during the event, and may also film some samples of the interpreters' work (with permission, of course).



Above: Interpreters in action during a performance of *Cinderella* for the Theatre Development Fund. Photo: The Theatre Development Fund.



This research project has been approved by the Gallaudet Institutional Review Board.

At each site, I will identify a minimum of two participants from each stakeholder group, for a total of eight participants. I will interview each participant three times. The first two interviews will be conducted while I am on site - the third interview will (likely) be conducted online, via video chat. All interviews will be recorded, but no identifying information will be

included in the final analysis and report. Participants will be able to withdraw from the research at any time. It is important to me that my analysis accurately reflects the experiences of the research participants, so I will consult them throughout the research process.

About The Researcher



This research is the culmination of my twenty-nine year career as a theatre interpreter. My first exposure to sign language was through theatre at the age of fifteen: I played a deaf character, Hubbell, in Elizabeth Swados' musical, *Runaways*. This led me to pursue a BA in Sign Language Studies. In 1986, I graduated from Madonna University, became nationally certified (CSC), and interpreted my first professional theatre production. The production was shadow interpreted, which has been my specialty since. Throughout my career, I have surveyed audience members about their reaction to our performances – deaf and hearing people – and, I have always hoped for the chance to conduct formal research into interpreted theatre.

I now have a MA in Linguistics and am a PhD student at the Department of Interpretation at Gallaudet University. I am the chair of the Sign Language Studies program at Madonna University (my alma mater), where I have been awarded the

recipient of *The Distinguished Teaching Professorship in the Humanities*. This award sponsors my research in interpreted theatre, allowing me to finally delve into research questions I have had in my head since the 1980's. The results of the research will be included in my PhD dissertation and other published works.

Participation and Questions

I am very grateful for the contributions of each participant of this study, and welcome your questions or comments.

Danny McDougall, M.A., C.S.C

Doctoral Student, Gallaudet University

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Appendix B—Informed Consent Form

Project Title: Experiencing Interpreted Theatre

Principal Investigator:

Danny McDougall, M.A., C.S.C.

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Faculty Advisor:

Jeremy Brunson, PhD

Department of Interpretation

Gallaudet University

I am a PhD student at Gallaudet University. I am conducting research on interpreted theatre. I would like you to consider participating in this study. It is hoped that this study can be used to improve our understanding of sign language interpreting.

This Study:

1. You will be asked to participate in three private interviews.
2. It is anticipated that your participation will take approximately one hour for each interview.
3. You will receive a gift valued at approximately \$25/hour for your participation.

Language:

I will accommodate your preference for language and communication style. Please let me know about any particular communication requirements that you require.

Risks:

There are limited risks to individuals who participate in this research study. Risks are typical of those associated with sharing your thoughts, experiences, and opinions with others.

Benefits:

Your participation in this study will create a valuable contribution to the literature by extending the work of previous researchers of interpretation, translation, and theatre.

Confidentiality:

Interview Data:

Interview data will be kept completely confidential, that is, no one will know anything about your name or any other identifying information as a result of your participation. Published analysis will include pseudonyms. You will be given the opportunity to select your own pseudonym.

Filmed Demonstrations and Commentary:

Filmed demonstrations of interpreted theatre techniques may be used in presentations about the research, and confidentiality is not offered for these filmed segments.

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be offered a *Video Release Form*, which further defines how the video may be utilized.

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in the study, your relationship with Gallaudet University will not change in any way. You may withdraw from the study at any time before or during data collection, for any reason and without penalty.

Results:

You will be consulted about the results of the research during analysis of the research data and after analysis is completed.

Contacting the Researcher or the IRB:

Contact the researcher, Danny McDougall, if you have questions about any risk to you because of participation in this study. Use the phone number or e-mail account at the top of this consent form. You may also contact the Chairperson of the Gallaudet University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) at irb@gallaudet.edu.

Intent to Participate:

If you agree to participate after reading this far, then read the following, print and sign your name below, and enter the date.

I have read the Informed Consent Form and agree to participate in the study conducted by Danny McDougall I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty or prejudice. I understand that I will receive payment or reimbursement for my participation.

Your Name _____

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix C—Interview Guide

Interview 1:

Deaf Patrons	Hearing Patrons ²²	Interpreters	Theatre Professional
Describe your first experience at a SLIP, from how you learned about the event through to the end of the event.	Describe the first time you experienced a SLIP.	Describe the first time you experienced a SLIP.	Describe the first time you experienced a SLIP.
Describe your favourite SLIP.	Describe your favourite SLIP.	Describe your favourite SLIP (that you did not interpret).	Describe your favourite SLIP
Describe your experience at theatre events that are not interpreted.	Describe other encounters you have had with interpreters.	Describe the first time you interpreted a SLIP. Describe your favourite SLIP interpreting experience.	Describe other encounters you have had with interpreters.
<p>Biographical Questions:</p> <p>Age of onset of Deafness, educational setting, age of exposure to sign language, frequency of theatre attendance.</p>	<p>Biographical Questions:</p> <p>Past exposure to people who are Deaf, frequency of theatre attendance.</p>	<p>Biographical Questions:</p> <p>Path to learning sign language/interpreting, familial connection to the Deaf community, training and degrees, certification, years interpreting, interpreting specialties, amount of interpreted theatre experience.</p>	<p>Biographical Questions:</p> <p>Path to becoming a theatre artist or staff person, training and degrees, other roles held in theatre, current connection to interpreted theatre (e.g., directing productions that are interpreted, serving as the access coordinator for the theatre).</p>

²² The interview guide allowed for the possibility that hearing audience members might be included in the study; although, they were not.

Interview 2: After an Interpreted Theatre Event

Deaf Patrons	Hearing Patrons	Interpreters	Theatre Professional
Describe your experience at the interpreted event, X.	Describe your experience at the interpreted event, X.	Describe your experience at the interpreted event, X.	Describe your experience at the interpreted event, X.
What about the SLIP was particularly memorable?			
What about the experience did you particularly enjoy?	What about the experience did you particularly enjoy?	What about the experience did you particularly enjoy?	What about the experience did you particularly enjoy?
*X = a specific event attended by all participants.			

Interview Three: Conducted After Initial Analysis of Previous Interviews²³

Deaf Patrons	Hearing Patrons	Interpreters	Theatre Professional
In previous interviews, you mentioned experiencing Y during interpreted theatre events. Can you elaborate on this experience?	In previous interviews, you mentioned experiencing Y during interpreted theatre events. Can you elaborate on this experience?	In previous interviews, you mentioned experiencing Y during interpreted theatre events. Can you elaborate on this experience?	In previous interviews, you mentioned experiencing Y during interpreted theatre events. Can you elaborate on this experience?

²³ The interview guide allowed for the possibility of a third round of interviews; although, a third round was not conducted.

Appendix D—Travel Blog Posts

See Section 3.9 for a discussion of the blog posts listed here in the context of my research methods.

Travelling Day—Aussy/NZ Research Trip Begins: This blog post introduces the purpose of my research trip to Melbourne. I describe my background and interest in theatre interpreting (a brief positionality statement), my status as a PhD student, and the plans for my research trip. I conclude with some acknowledgements of people and institutions for their support. Posted as a blog in written English and ASL video summary with English captions. 1 minute, 30 seconds.

<http://www.terptheatre.com/aussy-nz-research-trip-begins/>



QR Code 4.

First Day in Melbourne: An American, Unplugged: In this first post from Melbourne, I describe my experience of the lengthy travel procedure from Detroit. I provide a brief tour of the apartment that would serve as my base of operations, describing the local community. I note that my first task is to locate electrical wall plug adapters, as those I had purchased were meant for the United Kingdom, not Australia. Posted as a video in ASL (and English captions), with a brief English summary. 3 minutes, 30 seconds.

<http://www.terptheatre.com/an-american-un-plugged/>



QR Code 5.

Topical Discussion of Australian Currency—These Dollars Make Cents: In this brief video post accompanied by photos and a small amount of written text in English, I describe differences between currency in Australia and in the United States. I discuss colour, size, and security characteristics of Australia money—which are far more varied than found in the US. 1 minutes, thirty seconds.

<http://www.terptheatre.com/these-dollars-make-cents/>



QR Code 6.

A Tour of My Daily Sights—Melbourne by Day and Night: This post features a video compilation of sites from throughout Melbourne, with narration by me in ASL with English captions. I begin the video outside of my apartment in the Fitzroy North neighbourhood, winding through several public spaces (and public transport) before ending in the festive night-time atmosphere on the riverfront of the Yarra River. 13 minutes, 6 seconds.

<http://www.terptheatre.com/melbourne-by-day-and-night/>



QR Code 7.

New Zealand Visit—The Christchurch Cathedral and Quake Damage: My final post was from Christchurch, New Zealand, the site of the conference of the Sign Language Interpreting Association of New Zealand, formatted as a video blog in ASL (captioned in English), with an accompanying post in written English. The video shares sites from downtown Christchurch, describing efforts within the city to recover from damage caused by a series of earthquakes. 4 minutes, 22 seconds.

<http://www.terptheatre.com/the-christchurch-cathedral-and-quake-damage/>



QR Code 8.