

From Animated Film to Theatrical Spectacle: A Semiotic Analysis of the
Scenography and Re-creation of *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *The
Lion King* (1997).

By
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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own work unless specifically referenced within the text. It is being submitted for the Degree of Master of Arts (Coursework) in the Faculty of Humanities, Development and Social Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban.

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Abstract:

This dissertation aims to analyse the re-creation and transformation of animated films into theatrical spectacles, by examining two Walt Disney animations and productions as case studies: *Beauty and the Beast* (1991 & 1994) and *The Lion King* (1994 & 1997), designed by Stanley Meyer (*Beauty and the Beast* [1994]) and Julie Taymor (*The Lion King* [1997]), respectively. Through a semiotic analysis of the productions viewed in the Monte-Teatro in Johannesburg (*Beauty and the Beast* [2007]) and the Lyceum in London (*The Lion King* [2010]), the scenographic choices of the designers are examined to ascertain the ways in which the re-creation and transformation from animation to theatre occurs. A study of the different styles is conducted, as the case studies were visually different from each other, and from their animated counterparts. Each case study contributes to an understanding of the process whereby an animated film can be transformed and re-created for the theatre. An investigation into The Walt Disney Company, from its inception to its present day theatrical productions, is undertaken to illustrate how The Walt Disney Company has become an influential force in the international performance industry. Responses by reviewers are used to demonstrate how The Walt Disney Company was influenced to alter the conceptual approach for its subsequent theatrical production.

To aid in the analysis of the scenographic designs, the theoretical writings of Martin Esslin (1987) and Keir Elam (1980) are consulted to develop an understanding of how designs are integral to the reception of any production. Developments of scenography are explored from Aristotle who states that theatre does not need any spectacle (design) to portray the poetry of the performance, to Sternfeld's analysis of megamusicals which illustrates the spectacular designs that have become integral to the development of certain productions, and genres. Using Wickstrom's article on *The Lion King* an examination of how the commodities produce meaning from the production is undertaken.

This dissertation provides insight into the development of scenographic designs and the re-creation and transformation of specific elements from animated film to theatrical spectacle through an appropriation of theories about transposing theatre into film (Egil Tornqvist, 2009). This, in conjunction with Guy Debord's theories (1995) on the society of the spectacle, aids in the analysis of the spectacle/scenography.

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Introduction

When I sit alone in a theatre and gaze into the dark space of its empty stage, I'm frequently seized by fear that this time I won't manage to penetrate it, and I always hope that this fear will never desert me. Without an unending search for the key to the secret of creativity, there is no creation. It's necessary always to begin again. And that is beautiful. - Josef Svoboda (Scenography, 2010)

The creativity of theatre designers allows for the empty space of the stage to be filled with objects that draw audiences to watch the productions. The scenography consists not only of the scenic design but also includes the influences that the costume and lighting have on the scenic elements, and the image presented. The scenography connotes the image of the production and ultimately how the production will be received. The importance of scenography has altered throughout theatre history and has become increasingly important in contemporary theatre productions. The use of scenography in musical theatre is one of the aspects that influence how the production is perceived by the audience and actors alike. While not all theatre genres may translate into commercial undertakings, there are some that thrive only when audiences are awed and amazed by the theatricality of the performances, as in the megamusical (Jessica Sternfeld, 2006).

In the megamusical the dark empty space of the stage space is enlightened and transformed into something or somewhere else. It can be an enchanted castle, as in *Beauty and the Beast* (1994)¹, or the African savannah, as in *The Lion King* (1997)². As Svoboda (Scenography, 2010) says, "without an unending search for the key to the secret of creativity, there is no creation". The design for spectacles is constantly changing, developing, searching for something new and different that will appeal to audiences in a local and global context. Through the search for new ways to create productions influenced by cross-cultural developments, theatre designers are inspired to develop their ideas and designs further. For the stage productions of *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *The Lion King* (1997) the scenography had to be innovative to represent the images in a new medium and context, but still be able to be visually recognisable to audiences who know the images from the animated

¹ Unless otherwise stated, this is the date of the original production of *Beauty and the Beast* and the date of the production used for the analysis.

² Unless otherwise stated, this is the date of the original production of *The Lion King* and the date of the production used for the analysis.

films. An exploration of the nature of the designs in the transformation of mediums, and the changing of the designs in the different contexts in theatre productions is undertaken.

This development, or constant searching, is made evident in this following dissertation. Initially the development is related to the improvement of spectacle within theatre; from Aristotle who states that theatre does not need any spectacle (design) to portray the poetry of the performance, to Sternfeld's analysis of megamusicals which illustrates the spectacular designs that have become integral to the development of certain productions, and genres. The development also encompasses the re-creation and transformation of animated films to theatre spectacles. This is explored through the interpretation of two animated films that have been transformed into theatrical productions, namely *Beauty and the Beast* (1991 & 1994) and *The Lion King* (1994 & 1997). Although both productions were produced by the same company, the designs themselves have many differences, illustrating that even though a production may have its origin in a different medium, the outcome of transformation and re-creation will not necessarily be the same. Through an exploration of the development of the productions the creativity within the scenographic designs is analysed to demonstrate the semiotic nature of the transformation for animated film to theatrical spectacle. Through this analysis the images that were re-created from the animation, and the new images and representations, are discussed. Both of the designers, Stanley Meyer and Julie Taymor, are considered specifically to their designs of the productions and how their concepts were created and transformed for the new medium.

These investigations are approached through an understanding of the theories that surround scenographic terminology and theatre practitioners within theatre. Chapter one explores The Walt Disney Company and its entertainment developments from its conception to its present day theatrical productions. It aims to illustrate how The Walt Disney Company has become an influential force in the entertainment industry, as well as on audiences around the globe. Through the appropriation of Egil Tornqvist's theories of theatrical filming, an analysis of the transformation from animated film to theatrical spectacle is conducted. Once this has been established a further study of the re-creation and transformation of a production from one medium to another is undertaken to investigate how it pertains to the case studies.

Beginning with an initial understanding of spectacle as stated by Aristotle, the development from spectacle to the spectacular is analysed in Chapter Two. This is developed and the new

dimension of the spectacular is demonstrated through the use of grand scenic designs and costumes. This is taken further by the commercial use of television and the 'fall' of theatre. The creativity of theatre is further enhanced so that it challenges audiences and entices them back to the theatre. This is done through the scenographic elements that designers used to draw audiences in. An examination of the constructs of the megamusical will be applied to the case studies to illustrate how design is used within productions and also the importance of the design within these specific productions. To further explore the designs of the productions, an investigation of the commodities sold at the theatre venues is undertaken to demonstrate how these sales affect the designs of the production and on how these commodities influence the remembrances of the production by the audience.

Chapter Three analyses the scenography of *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and Chapter Four the scenography of *The Lion King* (1997). Each of these chapters begins by showing how the production's idea arose and how the Walt Disney personnel dealt with the initial idea. The main focus of these two chapters is on the scenographic designs and how these were adapted or changed from the animated films. To help in the analysis of the scenographic designs images are presented and analysed using semiotics and the elements of design. Both *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King* have been performed in South Africa, in 2008 and 2007, respectively. When they were presented in South Africa they entered into a new and specific framework and context. Within South Africa, notions surrounding cross-culturalism and multi-culturalism were evident in the productions. The contexts of the original designs, in particular for *The Lion King*, are analysed to explore the ways in which these notions affect the designs of the productions. Although I will be examining the productions within a South African context, I will also be exploring their global acceptance and the influences from their initial source: the 'Disneyfication' of Broadway.

Through the investigations in the four chapters, an analysis of the productions is undertaken to show how the transformation from animated film to theatrical spectacle can result in two visually different outcomes. These outcomes are analysed through a semiotic approach by applying the theories of Keir Elam and Martin Esslin to the scenography and the composition of the performances.

Chapter 1

The Development of The Walt Disney Company from Animation to Theatre

1.1 The Role of The Walt Disney Company in Transforming Different Entertainment Avenues

On 16th October 1923 Walt Disney and his brother, Roy Disney, created The Walt Disney Company which started with a series of *Alice* comedies. By 1928, The Walt Disney Company developed an all cartoon series with the creation of the character Steamboat Willie, who later became known as Mickey Mouse. *Steamboat Willie* became the first fully orchestrated cartoon.

In 1932 the first colour cartoon, *Flowers and Trees*, won the Academy Award for best cartoon and “for the rest of that decade, a Disney cartoon won an Oscar every year” (Disney, 2009). As the cartoons were gaining in popularity, The Walt Disney Company created a merchandise store that sold products related to the cartoons. In 1937 The Walt Disney Company created its first feature-length film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, which was, “the highest grossing film” (Disney, 2009) for that year. It was through The Walt Disney Company’s rapid production of different lengths and styles of animation that the studio “revolutionized animation forever” (Disney, 2009).

After 1944 The Walt Disney Company began to create live action films, some of which included animated segments. The Company also created the “award winning True-Life Adventure series” (Disney, 2009), which showed a new style of photography in nature that audiences had not seen before. Walt Disney “was always anxious to try something new” (Disney, 2009), and in July 1955 Disneyland, an amusement park, opened in Anaheim, California. Since its inception, Disneyland has served “as the inspiration for every amusement park built” (Disney, 2009). Whilst creating amusement parks, The Walt Disney Company was expanding in film, combining live action, animation and animatronics. Walt Disney died on 15th December 1966 and Roy took over the company. In 1961 Roy Disney created The Walt Disney Company’s first educational films and in 1971 a new amusement park, which is seventy times larger than Disneyland, opened in Orlando, Florida.

In 1983, The Walt Disney Company was working on several projects, the largest of which was the addition of a new foreign amusement park in Tokyo. In 1988 the company’s film-making

“hit new heights [leading] all the Hollywood studios in box office gross” (Disney, 2009), with the profitable success of three consecutive films: *Good Morning, Vietnam*, *Who Framed Rodger Rabbit?* and *Three Men and a Little Lady*, each grossing over a hundred million dollars. The Walt Disney Company was also opening numerous merchandise stores. Although The Walt Disney Company had developed a wide range of film styles, they now “experienced an animation renaissance” (Disney, 2009). In 1991, the animated film, *Beauty and the Beast* became the “only animated film ever to be nominated for the Academy Award for best picture... and in 1994, *The Lion King*, shattered records, grossing three hundred and twelve million dollars in the U.S [United States of America] and seven hundred and eighty three million dollars worldwide” (Disney, 2009).

It was not until 1994 that The Walt Disney Company began to create full-length theatre productions. The Walt Disney Company

ventured onto Broadway with the stage production *Beauty and the Beast*, followed in 1997 by *The Lion King*, which won the Tony award for best musical... . By restoring the historic New Amsterdam Theatre on 42nd street, Disney became the catalyst for a successful makeover of the famous Times Square area (Disney, 2009).

In the twenty-first century The Walt Disney Company has broken further records such as exceeding the three billion dollar gross in global box office takings. The Walt Disney Company claims to continue to be “dedicated to provoking innovative, quality entertainment for all members of the family, across America and around the world” (Disney, 2009).

From the above, one can propose that The Walt Disney Company has had a significant impact on different societies through its engagement with various forms of animation in multiple global situations. Through this form of globalisation The Walt Disney Company has tried to ensure its standing in all of the various forms of entertainment it offers, to reach a wide variety of audiences through a “variety of cross-cultural negotiations” (Sorgenfrei in Zorrilli, 2006:485). These cross-cultural negotiations can be seen in the company’s re-creation of their animated films into theatrical productions on Broadway and in the amusement parks. The Walt Disney Company’s animations, films and theatre productions, have to be able to cater for varying cultures through appropriating representational ideas from different cultural sources and transforming them into images used in the animated films. The inclusion of global appropriations can be seen in films, such as: *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) which uses sources from French culture; representations of ‘Arabia’s’ cultural ideas are evident in *Aladdin*

(1992); *The Lion King* (1994) is situated within 'African' cultural sources, and *Mulan* (1998) uses cultural appropriations associated with the Chinese imperial régime, these are only a few examples. Although the animated films do not represent the source culture in its entirety, they use cultural sources in the representations presented and the animation creates ties to the countries from which the appropriations were initially made. Some of these stories are taken from the folklore or fairytales of a country while others are fictitious stories located in those countries.

Through the appropriation of the folklore of various countries, The Walt Disney Company's use of global representation had been regarded as "cheap because it comes second-hand" (Byrne, 1999:43). The acquisition of the material may seem cheap, but the development of the story and transformation it undergoes, is unique and costly to The Walt Disney Company.

Globally theatre, as an entertainment and didactic form, is "an art deeply woven into the social fabric of [any] given culture and its history" (Worthen, 2004:1341). The Walt Disney Company's appropriation of stories from different cultural sources to create a 'global' appeal has become "in our era a critical convenience for reducing the dynamic variety of contemporary theatre to the fictional boundaries of a single 'national' culture" (Worthen, 2004:1341). It could be argued that appropriating the myths and legends of different cultures forces these cultures to fit into a Disney perspective of how to tell stories and what these stories mean to audiences.

1.1.1 A Study of the Influences of The Walt Disney Company

The Global Disney Audience Project (1997) was a study that aimed to promote an "understand[ing of] transnational media conglomerate from the perspective of those receiving its offerings" (Phillips in Wasko, 2001:31). Due to the global scale that the project intended to encompass a total of "1252 respondents representing fifty-three separate nationalities [were questioned to gain] a greater understanding of how Disney is perceived" (Phillips in Wasko, 2001:31). Although most people did not acknowledge any known effects that The Walt Disney Company had on their lives, there was an obvious connection between the ideals that the interviewees had, in relation to the ideals that The Walt Disney Company represents. The results "indicate a uniformity of exposure and a relative unanimity of attitude[s] and belief[s]" (Phillips in Wasko, 2001:31).

This study shows how widespread the values of The Walt Disney Company are, not only in

entertainment but in the way that people are affected by “Disney products [which are imbedded with the] virtues Disney approve of and which vices the company disapprove of” (Phillips in Wasko, 2001:32). Mark Phillips (in Wasko, 2001:32) states that the universal conformity “speaks of a propaganda machine unparalleled in its concinnity”. Although the conformity may be seen as a form of propaganda, the popularity of The Walt Disney Company explains how the values of the company are consistent with the values of the people who attend forms of Disney entertainment. Once the responses to the study were data based, the results were “daunting... . [Revealing] an oversimplified conclusion: as far as Disney is concerned, it really is a small world after all” (Phillips in Wasko, 2001: 31). The conclusion illustrates that the effect of The Walt Disney Company’s global structure has ensured that their different cultural audiences have an understanding of what the company stands for: their morals and values.

Although the different cultural audiences may have an understanding of Disney’s morals and values, The Walt Disney Company can be said to make different audiences adhere to their image of ‘the world’. This can be seen in the theme parks that The Walt Disney Company has built. There is a part of a theme park where the whole world is represented in a traditional ‘Disneyfied’ fashion. Like the stories of different cultures that have been appropriated for the Disney films, so have the countries been appropriated to fit within the Disney vision. The Walt Disney Company can be seen to have an effect of a “cultural bomb” (Worthen, 2004:1343). This ‘cultural bomb’ is set to

annihilate a people’s belief in their names, in their languages, in their environment, in their heritage of struggle, in their unity, in their capacities and ultimately in themselves. It makes them see their past as one wasteland of nonachievement [sic] and it makes them want to distance themselves from that wasteland. It makes them want to identify with that which is farthest removed from themselves; for instance, with other people’s languages rather than their own. (Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o in Worthen, 2004: 1343)

From the perspective of one of the culturally colonized, the ‘cultural bomb’ that Disney has used does annihilate some of the people’s belief systems. The Walt Disney Company changes the language, the environment, and the heritage of the stories to make them globally ‘acceptable’, while applying their idea of ‘universal’ morals and values. In doing so, The Walt Disney Company can impact the cultures by making them want to identify more with Disney’s representation of their culture than with the real culture itself.

1.1.2 Disney Theatrical Productions and the Renovation of 42nd Street

As The Walt Disney Company was recognised internationally and continued to have an impact on animation, live action films and amusement parks, a new division was created. This venture would see the creation of a subsection of The Walt Disney Company that was to focus solely on theatrical productions. Disney Theatrical Productions, which is a unit of Buena Vista Theatrical Group, was created in 1993 and is now operated by Thomas Schumacher. It is through the company's determination to create award-winning theatre productions that Disney Theatrical Productions has been able to operate for the past fifteen years, transposing their animated films onto the stage and creating individual productions, such as *Aida* (2000). Disney Theatrical Productions "produces and licenses its Broadway musicals around the world reaching a global audience... in over forty countries" (Broadwayworld, 2009). To aid in their expansion into theatre, in 1997 The Walt Disney Company "completed restoration of the historic New Amsterdam theatre on 42nd street, reopening with the world première concert of *King David* [and] later that year *The Lion King*" (van Oerle, 2009).

The renovation of the New Amsterdam Theatre on 42nd street was a turning point for the lifestyle of the area. It has been termed the 'Disneyfication' of Times Square because it is a reinvention, and a promoting of a certain lifestyle, in this case the 'Disney' way of life. The 'Disneyfication' of the area has changed the "cultural and geographical locations of the 'New Times Square' into internationally recognizable [sic] cartoon images" (Wickstrom, 1999:289). The area was originally on "a street with a reputation as perhaps the nation's sleaziest" (Martin, 1994). If The Walt Disney Company had moved into the theatre without renovating, their theatre productions would have been out of place as the area would have influenced the audiences. To ensure that this did not happen, The Walt Disney Company bought the New Amsterdam Theatre, with the hope of reopening it in "September 1996 as a major push to reinvigorate the long-stalled effort to revitalize [sic] 42nd Street" (Martin, 1994). The Walt Disney Company's aim was to re-create the theatre and the street so that it enabled locals and tourists to utilize the various opportunities that the area had to offer. It can be seen here that a different form of 'cultural bomb' has been placed by The Walt Disney Company. By changing the environment in which the theatre was situated, it has implemented its ideas, morals, and values on the community. Disney characters were placed into this new environment, and a new lifestyle was created, the 'Disney' way of life. The culture that had previously existed in the area was transformed to adhere to a lifestyle dictated to them by The Walt Disney Company.

To make 42nd Street more appealing, The Walt Disney Company used the existing architecture of the building in the renovation and through this they were able to keep the history that the street had through the architectural designs. When the New Amsterdam theatre opened in 1903 it was the “crown jewel of the theatres in the city” (Beckelman in Martin, 1994). The New Amsterdam theatre was to become one of the highlights of 42nd Street. The Walt Disney Company’s involvement was seen as a way to draw tourists to the location. Michael Eisner the CEO of The Walt Disney Company (in Martin, 1994) stated, however, that “Disney was moving beyond the concept of people sitting on couches being entertained by increasingly sophisticated electronic systems” to the idea that local people would move out of their individual networks and into the community.

There were those who did not approve of the intended ‘Disneyfication’ of the area. Steve Nelson (in Wickstrom, 1999:288) stated that “Disney’s approach is to exploit theatre as another option on the tourist agenda, expanding on a fact that Broadway producers have known for years – locals don’t go, tourists do”. This idea seems to contradict Eisner’s desire to entice the local people to frequent the theatre performances. The area was, however, transformed and a “New Times Square” (Wickstrom, 1999:285), so called because “it replaces what was seen as a decayed neighborhood, overrun by porn shops and peepshows” (Wickstrom, 1999:286), was created. The development of 42nd street “wraps the images of pleasure, leisure and spectacle that were characteristic of New York in a contemporary commercial package that draws its imagery from a standardized global culture industry” (Wickstrom, 1999:287).

For some, the venture was not unforeseen as Nelson (in Wickstrom, 1999:288) states:

the shift from commercial development to street-level entertainment zone provides the perfect climate for Disney’s version of 42nd street: a formerly indigenous theatrical district transformed into a romantically idealized tourist version of its former self. The enterprise fits perfectly with Disney’s usual practice of taking architecture, costumes, and other trappings of different cultures and melding them into theme park and movie entertainments that are safe and accessible, yet still enticing, to a mass audience.

The expansion of The Walt Disney Company into the New Amsterdam theatre opened other opportunities for the locals of the area. Tourists are drawn to The Walt Disney Company as it engages with global ideas that are associated with the various source cultures. By purchasing a theatre Disney Theatrical Productions could produce theatre productions of their choosing. This ensured that The Walt Disney Company’s investment in the theatre will generate more

profit. By staging theatre productions that are re-creations and transformations of the animated films in the theatre, a global audience would be attracted. This can be attributed to the widespread audience base who wants to see the re-creation and transformation of the animated films into theatre productions. While Nelson's argument, that The Walt Disney Company use of appropriation for commercial gain, is relevant, appropriating different source cultures, whether it is through the architecture or costumes, is part of what audiences have come to expect when attending any form of The Walt Disney Company's entertainment.

By placing recognizable items and structures of The Walt Disney Company onto 42nd Street, the 'Disneyfication' of the area and of the people who frequent the productions was evident. As Worthen states, when commenting on the globalization of America, "this sense of American culture, American values, American money, and American... power have become so pervasive as to threaten the political, and cultural autonomy even of powerful countries" (2004:1344). If one was to replace the word American with The Walt Disney Company, one would be able to apply this statement to the 'Disneyfication' of 42nd Street. The culture was changed to one more appropriate to the values of The Walt Disney Company, while the income generated extended their power over the entertainment industry.

The 'Disneyfication' of 42nd Street, furthermore, ensured that tourists began to frequent the theatre performances and purchase the commodities created for the productions. The quality of The Walt Disney Company's theatre productions influenced the way that audiences perceive other theatre productions that are on Broadway or elsewhere. Broadway has an influence, not only on American productions, but on productions outside America. Allan Swerdlow (Appendix A:112), the director of the Cape Town production of *Beauty and the Beast* (2008), said that, "the production as you see it, is the production you would have seen had you attended it on Broadway". The quality of productions around the world is being compared with the quality of performances seen on Broadway. Broadway productions became a form of elitist theatre and all the theatres in the Broadway area tried to incorporate a sense of what 'Broadway' was, through their productions.

1.2 Animated Films and Theatrical Spectacles

The Walt Disney Company's main influence in the global market is through its animated films. Because certain animated films achieved high standards, these animated films have been re-created and transformed into successful theatre productions. *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) was

nominated for an Academy Award, while *The Lion King* (1994) grossed over three hundred and twelve million dollars. The Walt Disney Company was assured that the popularity of animated films would draw in an audience who would be interested to witness how the animated images were transformed and re-created onto the stage.

Egil Törnqvist (1991:12), an academic literary critic, notes that stage performances differ from other performances in six different ways, based on the fact that the “chief characteristic of stage performance, unlike other modes of representation..., [is that] it is live”. The fact that stage productions are live, influences the stage actors as they “respond to the reactions from the audience. There is, in other words, two way communication” (Törnqvist, 1991:12). This is enhanced by the idea that “a visit to the theatre is a social event: the reactions are those of a mass audience, and in [the] interval(s)... the theatergoers can exchange views on the performance” (Törnqvist, 1991:12). Unlike films, “every single stage performance is unique [and] unrepeatabe” (Törnqvist, 1991:13). The audiences’ reception and the direction of the production are influenced by the space in which it is performed. As Törnqvist (1991:13) says, “a stage performance is, in part, determined by the spatial facilities at the time of staging”. The spatial aspects influencing the production could be a contributing factor as to why The Walt Disney Company renovated the New Amsterdam Theatre. The spatial facilities manipulate the “distance from stage to auditorium [which] necessitates larger-than-life kinesics (mimicry, gestures) and paralinguistics (diction) [as well as]... proxemics (grouping of characters)” (Törnqvist, 1991:13). And finally, “owing to its plurimedial and unrepeatabe nature, it is extremely difficult to notate a stage performance in a satisfactory way” (Törnqvist, 1991:13).

The re-creation and transformation of the animated films into theatre takes into account the way that the audience views the action. In theatre, as Natalie Rewa, a Canadian playwright and professor, explains, the use of theatre space can be analysed in a comparison with images in film. Because the case studies were originally animated films, the analysis of the productions through the use of their animated counterparts reveals how the mediums were altered when adapting the animation for theatre. Rewa (in Oddy, 2006:121) states that

while the visual experience of perspective in the theatre is often linked with the proscenium arch with active framing as in film or painting, and the manipulation of sight lines has been associated with camera angles, such an approach is being augmented by the attention to the way in which specific details can break out of a sense of two-dimensionality.

The case studies' use of representations transformed from animated images break the two-dimensional qualities of the animation. The scenographic elements that are placed on specific sight lines enable audiences to perceive the performances in a certain way, dependent on where objects are placed within the acting space. All the pieces on the stage enhance the overall effect of the representations.

Although the scenography heightens the way in which the production is seen, the differences between animated films and theatrical productions affect the way in which The Walt Disney Company re-created and transformed the animated film on stage. One element that had to be taken into consideration is the limitation that theatre has, as animation can present a wide variety of images to the audience in a few seconds. In a theatre performance, however, the main elements affecting the way the re-creations and transformations occurred, is that a theatre production is a live performance while the animated film is drawn or computer generated. Although theatre cannot represent the versatility of animated films, it can surpass the animation through the creation of the theatre's 'unreal reality'. This implies that the world created for a theatre performance allows the audience to be able to identify with it because it is being recognised as a different form of reality. For the duration of the performance, the reality the performance creates will remain 'real', allowing an unreal reality to be produced for the re-creations and transformations of the animated film when they are transformed into theatre productions.

Both of the mediums are representations of an unreal reality. For animated films the reality remains within the animation and the audiences are less likely to apply the circumstances to themselves, as the world that is created is one that cannot be readily identifiable within the human world. When it is on stage, however, the actors are able to bring a sense of humanness to the characters. The unreal reality that is created in theatre allows the audience to be transported more easily into the action because the human quality that is now associated with the production. Audiences attend these animation-based productions with a prior knowledge of what the story is about and what the characters are supposed to look like. While the creators might try to sever the bond between the animations and theatre productions, the audiences will still have the experience of the animated film and this will influence their experience of the theatrical production.

Other elements that are taken into consideration for theatre performances, such as the visual

and aural elements, allow the audience a certain amount of interaction with what they are watching. The theatre productions' visual and aural components are influenced by live actors and orchestral accompaniment. While animated films have background music and singing, the theatre productions transform these elements into singers who are presented on stage. In re-creating the animated film into a theatrical production these elements have to be taken into account to ensure that the audience is able to follow the story and recognise the representations of the animated films within the production. Although the stories of the animated films are represented in the theatrical productions, the audiences, in part, tend to see how the story has been transformed and told in the new medium.

1.2.1 The Re-creation and Transformation of Animated Films into Theatrical Spectacles

In Törnqvist's study (1991) he "takes a step towards legitimizing scholarly inquiry into the adaptation of stage drama for television" (Lipscomb, 2001: 240). Törnqvist's focus is on how theatre texts can be re-created into live action film. Many of his theories, however, are applicable to the re-creation and transformation of animated films into theatre productions. According to Törnqvist, there are a number of determining factors involved when one transposes from stage to film; however, these can also be applied to transposing from film to stage. There are four elements, the first of which is known as the chosen medium which, for Törnqvist (1991:9) is the transposition from theatre to film. The presentational style of the theatre production is the second element and it deals with how the theatre style is re-created and represented in the film. The third element is the directorial preferences which influence how the creative aspects of the theatrical production will be re-created in the film. The fourth element is the technical possibilities of realisation, which makes use of film's technical advancements to create effects that could not be achieved in a theatre production.

The above factors can be applied to transposing animated film to theatre in the following ways. The chosen medium of re-creating an animated film on stage is more difficult than Törnqvist's mediums. This is because the animations have to be transformed into real objects and living beings. The presentational style of the performance is important, as an animated film is can be transposed in a number of different ways. In the case studies, a difference is evident in the presentational styles of the productions: *Beauty and the Beast*'s (1994) style has more visual links to the animated film, whereas *The Lion King* (1997) breaks many of the visual ties with the film. These presentational styles are controlled by directorial preferences and have to be

maintained throughout the productions. This is affected by the technological possibilities of realisation within the theatre as opposed to those of animated film. The animated films had to be extended in plot, and broken down into the key visual images that could be transposed onto the stage. Although the technical possibilities are limited, the theatre offers other avenues of representing the animated film. The challenges of this realisation are complicated through animated film offering a variety of ways to present the images. This had to be re-created in a different way so that the representation could be linked to the animated version.

In discussing re-creating theatre performances into a film production, Törnqvist highlights the importance of the audience. The re-creation and transformation of animated films into theatre productions includes the consideration of how the audience will be brought from one medium to another, and how the new audience will to be drawn into the theatre. Although animation is not a 'realistic' form of film, the world created is representational as it becomes an idea of the animated reality. While 'talking' animals and objects break the sense of reality the location corresponds to the audiences' ideas of locations in their reality. This has to be transposed to theatre in a specific way so that the 'reality' of the animations is retained.

Törnqvist's study includes the theories of Erika Fischer-Lichte a Professor from the University of Berlin. Fischer-Lichte (in Blesok, 2001) states that "everything that humans produce is 'significant' for themselves and each other, because humans in principle live 'in a significant world', that is, in a world where everything that is perceived is perceived as a signifier which must be judged to have a signified [meaning]". This is evident in the creation of both the animated films and theatre productions. Both worlds are created by humans and encoded with meanings in the images and representations used. These are perceived by the audience as the signifiers and need to be decoded to give meaning to the action which occurs during the production. This can be attributed to the fact that "the generation of meaning can... be regarded as the general function of all cultural systems; it is this function which allows them to be defined as cultural systems" (Fischer-Lichte in Blesok, 2001).

Theatre creates meanings which are generated by the images and representations which "can change if the sign is inserted into a different semiotic context; related to something else; or used by another user" (Fisher-Lichte in Blesok, 2001). The meanings of the images are changed as they are removed from the animated films and re-created as the representations of the theatre productions. The audiences may initially perceive the productions in view of their

own experience of the animated films; their perceptions, however, may change through the different use of the familiar images within the representations. The extensions added to the theatre productions enable the stories to be related to something else which will change the way that the meaning of the production is received. The audience members that attend a performance apply their personal expectations and experiences to the circumstances and situations that the performance presents to them, as a result the meaning generated for the specific individual audience member is different from that of other audience members. The reaction, however, that one audience member has to the performance influences the audience members around that individual member.

Törnqvist states (1991:191) that “the problem is not that plays are transformed but that often they are transformed in a superficial, unimaginative way.... . [P]lays are occasionally transformed with great success”. It has to be noted that it is during the re-creation and transformation that the success of the production can be visualised. The case studies’ productions vary, illustrating the various ways in which animated films from the same company can be performed and designed so differently from each other. Through this new audiences are drawn to the productions, as they are willing to experience the changing nature of the animated films. This can also be attributed to the lengthening of the productions through the addition of sub-plots, songs, dances or introducing a chorus. Re-creating the animated films in this manner allows for all the different elements of the theatre to represent an aesthetically pleasing production.

1.3 Representations and Signs

Representation, according to Stuart Hall, means “using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people” (1997:15). However, Mai Vukceвич, University of Chicago, (2002) states that there are several known definitions of the term representation which itself “embodies a range of meanings and usages dipping into... [varying] ideologies” (2002). The most common of these definitions is the idea that the representation “functions through its ability to resemble something else casting a representation as an object” (Vukceвич, 2002). The case studies’ representations of images enable the audience to engage with the representations as the images are mediums which stand “between ‘the real’ and the spectator” (Vukceвич, 2002). WJT Mitchell, Professor of English and Art History at the University of Chicago, (in Vukceвич, 2002) notes that “instead of just looking to individual mediums, we should be looking to the relationships and processes

through which [representations] are produced, valued and exchanged”.

With the various connotation of representation in mind, the representations of images facilitate an “essential part of the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture. It does involve the use of language, of signs and images, which stand for and represent things” (Hall, 1997:15). This can be applied to theatre through the representations creating meanings which are produced by the actors’ use of the space. The meanings that are exchanged are emphasised through the use of the spoken text and through the signs that are encoded in the scenographic design elements. This relates to the case studies in their use of representations to exchange meaning. Although the animated images have been re-created for the theatre productions, they still have a link to the animated films which the audience will associate with the way that the images are used within the theatre productions.

Representational images are created in theatre, not only through the scenic elements, but are also emphasised by lighting, sound and actors. These various components influence how the images within a production are created and, ultimately, viewed by the audience. In the productions of *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *The Lion King* (1997), where the images have been adapted from the animated film into representational images within the theatre, the audiences have certain ideas of how the production should look and sound in terms of how they recall the animated film. The representational images refer to the film, but also allow the audience to accept the representations within the new medium. The representations become more complex due to the prior use of the images within the animated film. The changes that are made in adapting the animation into a theatre production also have an influence. By changing the images into new representations of the original animated images, audiences can draw on their understanding of the film to help identify certain characters or locate specific situations. The representations of the animated images become important in the two specific case studies through the way that they are used in the productions. Representations are “signs that stand in for and take the place of something else. It is through representation that people know and understand the world and reality through the act of naming it. Signs are manipulated in order to make sense of the world” (Mitchell, 1995). By applying this definition to theatre, the representations in the theatre productions will be adaptations of the original images. These representations are used to create a new world in which audiences can understand the ways that the signs are manipulated.

1.3.1 The Use of Semiotics in Theatre

Semiotics is viewed as the, “study of how meaning occurs in language, pictures, performance and other forms of expression” (Tomaselli, 1996:29). However, semiotics in theatre is viewed “not as a theoretical position, but as a methodology; as a way of working, of appropriating theatre in order to open up new practices and possibilities of ‘seeing” (Aston, 1991:1). Through the methodology that semiotics presents to theatre audiences, the scenography of the theatre productions can be analysed from the way the production is viewed. From this viewing academics and critics interpret the visual representations to develop an understanding of the performance. This is achieved through the use of the two major design components, being the set and costume. While the other elements of theatre do impact upon the semiotics of the performance, these two components reflect the “themes, mood, style, and emotions of a play as well as indicating [the] historical or geographical context of the production” (Llewellyn-Jones, 2001) received by the audience.

According to Elaine Aston, Professor of Contemporary Performance at Lancaster University, (1991:144), “the spectator’s reception of the visual dimension is to be seen as the final stage of a project that involves [different] phases” of decoding and encoding. This is achieved through the various people who influence the creation of the production. In re-creating and transforming animated films for the stage, the original text has already been encoded with various ideas and these are either incorporated or changed when creating the theatre productions. The way in which the scenography is viewed by the audience can be analysed by each individual audience member according to how they interpret the performance and further influences by other audience members. In analysing the various elements in such a manner a deeper understanding of the meaning of the productions can be revealed; the “design is open to another level of reception as it subsequently acts as a communicator to the audience” (Llewellyn-Jones, 2001).

The text is used as a point of reference for the visual aspects of the performance. The director can chose to use the text’s recommended images, adapt the text or change the images completely. If the images are changed completely, audiences could be removed from their idea of how the performance should be visually perceived and they might not accept the re-creation within the new medium. The designs of the scenography, at a basic level, decorate the stage and make it pleasing for the audience to view. The designs, however, serve another

function as they become “integral to the realization [sic] of the text’s counterpointing theme and ideology, image and symbol, in pictorial terms” (Aston, 1991:144).

Pictorial influences on the scenographic design in theatre production are taken from the way in which the stage resembles a picture in a frame. The proscenium arch acts as the frame of the performance and everything that is placed within it is seen as part of the picture. Theatre ‘pictures’ change rapidly and new pictures are re-presented throughout the performance. These ‘pictures’ operate, as Aston (1991: 146) states, on four distinct levels: functionalistic, sociometric, atmospheric and symbolic. Aston explains each of the above by illustrating their use in various theatre productions. This demonstrates how each of the four levels can influence the interpretation of the ‘pictures’. The four distinct levels develop by interacting with each of the other levels, and are, usually, all represented within a production. Functionalistic scenography is primarily a practical element as it is placed in a performance for a functional reason, to re-create the location and period of design. This influences the sociometric level which takes into consideration the class demographics, represented by the scenography, of the characters environment or clothing in the production. The atmospheric level reinforces the mood of the production. This underscores the way certain moments are perceived. Through working with the other levels, a clearer understanding of characters and situations can be revealed. The symbolic nature of the scenography allows for various interpretations to be brought to the production. The symbolic level relies on the other levels to represent the initial structure of the scenography through which the audience can apply their personal experiences and understandings about the meaning of the production.

Audiences’ receptions of the scenography are affected by their “everyday experiences of encoding and decoding analogous social signs” (Aston, 1991:153). The action performed on stage becomes relevant to the audience through their experiences. The actor becomes a product of “one’s social experience and general cultural knowledge” (Aston, 1991:153). It is relevant to say that the representations that the theatre produces can be a “mirror of social interaction” (Aston, 1991:153), allowing the spectators to interpret the action in terms of their social position and experience.

According to Pierre Guiraud, linguist and literary critic, (in Aston, 1991:154) the “social signs are iconic in nature, and are related to aesthetic signs”. The iconicity of the signs fits in the theatrical realm as Esslin claims that, “all dramatic action is basically iconic: every moment of

dramatic action is a direct visual and aural sign of a fictional or otherwise reproduced reality” (1987:43). Through the iconic nature of the signs, as a tool of communication, the message embedded within the production is interpreted by the audience. The iconic nature enables the parallels between the fictional world and the audience’s reality to be identifiable. Esslin (1987:47) explains that the icon “aims at suggesting a complete identity in looks between the ‘signifier’ and the ‘signified’”. The signifiers in the design must be able to work with the signifieds to produce a sign that will help create understanding of the production.

Theatre does not only make use of iconic signs but also takes into consideration indexical and symbolic signs in different areas of performance. The signs “combine, in dramatic performances, in a multitude of different sign systems, or ‘languages’, each with its own ‘grammar’ and ‘syntax’” (Esslin, 1987:48). The sign systems are used in analysing the different elements in a production and so create meaning. These “‘meaning-producing’ elements of a performance can and should signify how they interact and combine” (Esslin, 1987:49). Elam, a theatrical practitioner, (1980:41) explains that:

on stage the physical characteristics of the signs and signals are not only ostended [sic] for their own sake..., together with the formal patterns of the combination, but contribute directly to the production of meaning. Signal-information... becomes, in the theatre, a source of semantic information, owing to the ability of the material qualities of the message to connote a range of meaning in their own right.

In applying this notion to the theatrical productions, the sign systems of the animated film, relate to those in the theatre production giving similar dramatic information. Yet the way in which the theatre production represents the images from the animated film changes the audience’s previous understanding of the way the sign was produced. This in turn will affect the interpretation of the theatre performance by audiences’ expectations.

According to Tadeusz Kowzan, a theatre semiotician (in Esslin, 1987:52) there are five different groups of sign systems that are related to five specific areas of a production: the text, the action, the way the actor looks, the visuals of the stage, and the sound of the production. By grouping the different areas it is easy to identify the different sign systems and thus the areas are more susceptible to be analysed in the productions sign systems. Although they are divided for analytical reasons, the five groups work together to create a fluid flow of performance.

In order for the signs to work within the theatre space they must be identifiable. In theatre this is achieved through “the ‘atmosphere’ of the theatre [as] the absence of these atmospheric factors, plays a vital part in the overall effect and meaning of the dramatic event for the spectator” (Esslin, 1987:53). The type of stage, the proscenium arch, influences how the signs are created and how they are interpreted by the audience. Everything that is placed in the acting area affects the way the sign system is interpreted or read by the audience. The objects within the acting space are “immediately raised to the level of a sign” (Esslin, 1987:53).

When audiences come to watch a theatre production, and this has particular significance to the case studies, they have certain expectations of what the production will look like and what they will receive from the production. This expectation has a “crucial influence on the way the ‘meaning’ of individual signifiers as well as the total meaning of the performance is understood” (Esslin, 1987:54). The audiences’ expectations can be achieved before the production starts through preliminary advertising, whereby representations and signs of the productions are shown to the potential audiences. These aim to “set the initial mood, the level at which all other signs are to be ‘decoded’” (Esslin, 1987:55).

1.3.2 Employing Semiotics to Analyse Theatrical Designs

According to Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, “semiology cannot concentrate on one system of signs... because it needs to identify a body of signs making a Gestalt that signifies a whole” (2001). Due to a “Gestalt” (meaning a structural entity [Simkin, 1975]) being needed, the scenography, as a whole, is used to convey messages about the situation that is taking place. One way that this is achieved is through the scenic designs having an obvious function that,

is an informational, iconic one: it ‘pictures’ the environment against which the action of the drama unfolds, and provides much of the basic expositional information for the spectator’s understanding of it by indicating its place and period, social position of the characters and many other essential aspects of the drama. (Esslin, 1987:73)

By the design indicating the various points mentioned, it enables in the audience an understanding of the characters situations. The actors, therefore, do not need to explain all these things to the audience as these are visually available for interpretation by the audience. The designs, however, cannot transmit meaning beyond the initial understanding if the space that it creates is not used by the performers. It is through the actors’ movement within the space created by the scenic elements that meaning can be interpreted by the audience. Esslin (1987:72) notes that the “dynamics of movements become one of the principal signifying

systems in the performance". This illustrates the importance of the communication between the different elements and their functions within the production.

In its relationship with the different areas of a production, the design can affect the fluid movement of the performance. The scenic design pieces have to be moved in accordance with the movement of the action on stage as the design can "slow down or speed up the action and decisively influence its basic rhythmic structure" (Esslin, 1987:73). If the design affects the rhythm of the production then this will influence the way in which the performance is read by the audience.

It is not only the elaborate designs, such as those used in *Beauty and the Beast* (1994), that are seen as icons. The designs of productions that are semi-abstract, such as the designs in *The Lion King* (1997), "are icons, even though they may merely suggest selected features of the reality for which they stand... for it is of the nature of iconic signs that they do not have to be completely representational. Indeed they can be formalized [sic] abstractions" (Esslin, 1987:74). Because the representation is iconic the link between the theatre production and the source text is heightened, and as a result the sign system that is created by the two different mediums is compared by the audience.

Although the scenography of a production is usually iconic, the different design elements do have a strong symbolic component. According to Esslin (1987:75), "the whole mood and meaning of a dramatic performance can be determined by... a basic colour scheme or the decision to adopt a given artistic style... for both set and costume". Through the symbolic nature of the signs within the scenography, the extent of the sign system that is represented to an audience is vast and can influence the meaning that audiences gain from the production.

Lighting is an integral part of the performance as it enhances the other designs. The lighting can "direct attention to the focal points of the action, almost literally an 'index' finger pointed at the area of maximum interest" (Esslin, 1987:76). It is through the lighting indicating various parts of the stage that the audience's attention is drawn to those specific areas. The importance of lighting is further suggested through Esslin's (1987:77) statement that "the style and detail of the lighting may... determine the whole texture of the performance". Both of the case studies have very different lighting styles and results in the textures of the productions differing from each other. All of the various areas that make up the scenographic elements of a

theatre performance, “the sets, costumes and lighting are all visual sign systems that are the fundamentals of all drama” (Esslin, 1987:77), in conjunction with the way that they are used by the actors and their actions.

1.3.3 Design Elements that Influence the Semiotic Nature of Theatre Productions

In *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *The Lion King* (1997) the presence of certain design elements enhances the quality and interpretive nature of the scenography. The designs make use of shape, colour, texture, space and line (McMurtry, 2007:23). Each of these elements influences the way that the scenic elements are interpreted by the audience. The elements are used in various combinations, with none of them working alone to create an effect.

Line is used to “create shapes, give a sense of movement, create perspective, and evoke emotional responses” (McMurtry, 2007:23). Shape can either be seen as two- or three-dimensional as these “relate to each other through size, colour, outline, positive and negative space, and light” (McMurtry, 2007:23). Colour is influential because it can change “depending on the hue, value and intensity, whether primary, secondary, complementary, according to the lighting, and evoke emotional responses, symbolic associations and visual focus” (McMurtry, 2007:23). The texture of a production’s scenic design is important because it creates contrasts through visual and emotive means. Space is a complex element as there are various spaces present in the theatre. For example, there is the theatre space itself which influences the way in which the production is viewed by an audience. The scenic pieces have to fill the stage space, either “vertically or horizontally and in depth... . The space is occupied by shapes, their relation to each other, and by light and darkness” (McMurtry, 2007:23).

These five elements ensure that the visual aspects of a production will be balanced and in proportion. They can be used to create a distortion within the production which creates contrast between moments of balance and moments of distortion. Depending on the way in which they are used, they can show moments or spaces of importance by placing an emphasis on characters or situations. Their relationships and unity can also affect the rhythm of the performance, which can be affected by the use of patterns and repetitions of those patterns in conjunction with the first five elements.

The design elements mentioned above “need to be read together and incorporated into the bigger picture of theatrical space, audience layout, acting style, music and imagery” (Llewellyn-

Jones, 2001). When all the visual elements are viewed individually, and as a whole, “a sense of design is born and the full impact of the theatre experience can be interpreted... [and the] core meaning of the production” (Llewellyn-Jones, 2001) revealed to the audience. This is evident within the case studies, as each of the design elements is presented to the audience as an individual entity; however, they are also part of a whole image, the “Gestalt”. When the images are seen as a ‘gestalt’ the individual meanings have a greater impact on the core meaning of the production and how the designs aid in creating this message.

1.3.4 Why Semiotics?

Through the above explanations of semiotics and the design elements in theatre, the reason for using semiotics in analyzing the scenography of the case studies becomes apparent. Semiotics is the “study of signs and meanings, semiotics... has been as important as any movement in twentieth-century cultural theory, informing development in perhaps all subsequent areas of theoretical endeavor [sic]” (Fortier, 1997:18). Scenography in theatre is a complex sign system with each area containing a meaning which adds to the understanding of the production. By using semiotics one is able to decode these sign systems to understand how the meanings apply to contemporary cultural theories as well as social experiences.

Jiri Veltrusky (in Fortier, 1997:22) states that “all that is seen on stage is a sign.” By decoding all the signs on stage, the scenography can be more fully understood to “stand for something which is not present” (Fortier, 1997:20), and the performance becomes easier to analyse. For example, the costumes in the case studies are an integral part of the performance as they dictate character, locale and period. Roland Barthes (in Fortier, 1997:24) states that has a relationship with the performance that

must constantly link the work’s meaning to its ‘externality’; as such it must be constructed so as to aid in the reading of its social meaning. In this way theatre involves ‘a politics of the sign’, each theatrical *gestus* should aim for a ‘precise vestimentary code’, and the sensuous qualities of a costume, its grain and texture, are in the service of understanding, not sensuality.

The analysis of the costumes in the case studies is done using semiotics to demonstrate how, as signifiers, they are integral to the understanding of the production and the development of the audiences’ identification with the characters.

Increasingly, the visual aspects of scenography have come to rival the aural aspects of

communication in the theatre. As Jon Whitmore (1994:12) states

visual communication results from the observation of colour, movement, shape, the actor's body and makeup [sic], printed words, costumes, furniture, doors, windows and the like. As spectators view... a performance, they are bombarded with visual stimuli that give meaning to the experience.

The meaning that the audience is able to construct out of the diverse visual signs can be demonstrated through semiotically analyzing the scenography and using these perceptions with the verbal communication to further extend the understanding of the production, the characters and the situations.

The artistic qualities of a production are decided by those people relevant to its creation, yet it is the audience who has to be able to understand or identify with the performance. As Whitmore continues,

the final meanings of a performance are concocted not by the playwright, not by the director or performer, but by each spectator, uniquely. It is the interaction and negotiation that go on between the signifiers produced by the playwright, director, designers, performers, and the spectators, which are ultimately needed by the spectators alone, that constitute the essence of the performance experience. (1994:15)

Chapter 2

From Spectacle to Spectacular

2.1 The Spectacle: Aristotle's Consideration

The term spectacle is taken from Aristotle's *Poetics* (Butcher, 1998), which was rediscovered in the fifteenth century A.D and came to be "considered authoritative on drama" (Brockett, 2004:37). In *Poetics*, Aristotle discusses the essential components of dramatic poetry: plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle and song. While Aristotle (in Butcher, 1998:6) explains the parts in detail, he briefly states that,

the spectacle has, indeed, an emotional attraction of its own, but, of all the parts, it is the least artistic, and connected least with the art of poetry... . Besides, the production of spectacular effects depends more on the art of the stage machinist than on that of the poet.

Aristotle places more importance on the verbal element rather than the "visual spectacle" (Harris, 2007). To Aristotle (in Harris, 2007), spectacle is "brought to bear in the construction of masks and the performance of actors and thus need not be contrived by the poet". Although the Greek texts do not dictate the stage design or location in stage directions, it is incorporated into the dialogue. As Barnard Beckerman (1990:70) states: "neither in Greece nor in Elizabethan Theatre was the locale highly individualized [sic]... the performer continued to maintain his independence of the setting well into the eighteenth century".

Aristotle does mention the use of spectacle in connection with the spectacular effects of the stage machinist which illustrates that "spectacular equipment will be part of the tragedy" (in Butcher, 1998:6). Stage machinery consisted of the *ekkyklema* and the *deus ex machina*. The *ekkyklema* was used on a platform and means "something rolled out [and] was to show what had been going on inside the house by bringing the interior out" (Arnott, 1962:42), while the *deus ex machina*, which means "god from the machine, [was a] large crane which lowered characters from above [from the *skene* on to the stage] to indicate that they came from the heavens" (Arnott, 1962:43). Besides these two machines there were hardly any other noticeable pieces of scenery. Peter Arnott (1962:38) notes that "there is no evidence that any form of painted scenery, apart from a permanent architectural façade, was used in classical times". He (Arnott, 1962:38) further states that most of the tragedies were performed, "before a temple or palace... . Thus the simple architectural façade would provide all the background

that was required". The use of spectacle was considered to add little to the quality of the performance, while the influences it had on western theatre illustrates the development of the spectacle in varying degrees throughout its use in theatre.

2.1.1. Spectacle and Spectacular Uses

Through the changes made to the Greek amphitheatre, various types of stages have emerged throughout history, such as the thrust stage, theatre in the round and the proscenium arch stage. Due to the structural development of the types of stages, the spectacle was enhanced and, in the case of some of the 'new' stages, often became spectacular through the vast quantities of design elements used on stage. By the nineteenth century the spectacular "became increasingly popular" (Gascoigne, 1968:255) and was a prominent element in most theatre productions.

Spectacle is now defined, in accordance with Aristotle's understanding, as the connection of visual elements within a performance. Acting theorist, Robert Cohen (1994:47) expands Aristotle's definition to include all "the visual aspects of production's scenery, costumes, lighting, make-up, properties, and the overall look of the theatre and stage". Some productions, especially during nineteenth century Romanticism, favoured "mammoth stagings featuring processions, crowd scenes, palaces, animals, triumphal arches and lavish costumes" (Cohen, 1994:48). The use of spectacle became spectacular through the use of elaborate scenic designs which were used to represent the performance. The spectacular was used mainly in Opera, but was also used in various other genres of theatre. A definition of spectacular states that it "resembles the spectacle [but is] impressive, grand or dramatic" (Dictionary, 2009). In theatre it is known as a "lavishly produced performance [that is] sensational in appearance and thrilling in effect" (Dictionary, 2009).

As spectacle and spectacular became more prominent in theatre productions, different parts of the theatre production began to incorporate design elements. The development of spectacle into spectacular was followed by the term scenography which incorporates all the design elements of the spectacular to varying degrees. This new term, scenography, "encompasses all the visual elements of the production: the movement and special relations of characters, the lighting, settings, costumes, and properties" (Brockett, 2004:45). The scenographic scope is now much larger than Aristotle's idea of spectacle. As Pamela Howard, a practicing scenographer, (2002:125) states, the "scenographer means more than decorating a

background for actors to perform in front of... . The actors are the scenography and therefore to separate 'sets' from 'costumes' is, in scenographic terms, a contradiction”.

The development of spectacle in scenography can also be attributed to the subconscious need for audiences to be challenged. This challenge is undertaken through the multiple genres of scenographic design that can be used within a single production. This can be heightened by characteristics, emotions and juxtapositions which can sway the audiences' interaction with the action on stage. This is done, not only through abstract representations but also, through the “scenography challeng[ing] the concepts of perspective by [an] engagement with the spectator” (Rewa in Oddey, 2006:121). The effect of representations on stage can be influenced through the way they are presented. According to Rewa (2006), perspective of scenography influences the way audiences view the performance, which implies that the way scenographic elements are placed within the acting space influences the way that audiences perceive a production. Angles impact on the visual aspect of scenography and so the placement of the designs on stage influences how audiences react to the characters in the environment depicted.

It is through the *mise-en-scène*, a French term meaning “put in the scene” (Kolker, 2009), that the composition of the performance is viewed in its totality by audiences. In theatre, *mise-en-scène* means everything, on or in the stage, is taken into consideration during the performance. Rewa (in Oddey, 2006: 121) believes that the

new scenographic experiments effectively drive the *mise-en-scène* [sic] by encouraging in the audience an engagement and analysis of the animation of the stage space as it contributes to a complex and multivalent performance. [This analysis] engages spectators in a strong visual narration and begins to make the links with linear perspective and cinema more tenuous.

The performance as a whole will be viewed and so all the various elements have to work together to create a specific representation for audiences. While scenography is an element in itself, it is viewed by audiences as one composite of a whole, which can be analysed individually and as a whole. The use of the entire *mise-en-scène* enables audiences to engage with the production, through the visual and textural nature of the various designs and therefore, such an engagement aims to expand audiences' perceptions of the theatre.

2.1.2 The Influences of Media Spectacles on Theatre

Because the case studies are theatrical productions adapted from animated films the connection between theatre and media is one of differing influences. Anne Weber (2006:ix) argues that “for the last seventy-five years – since the introduction of the ‘talkies’ in the ‘20s and television in the ‘50s – live theatre has struggled for its place in a culture increasingly dominated by the screen”. Theatre could not compete with television’s ability to present a quick succession of images. Through television and film’s use of rapidly changing images, theatre audiences were becoming more visually literate. This allowed theatre to use media related influences, such as iconic films or advertisements, in designs as audiences can now, subconsciously, receive, decode and analyse a number of images in a short space of time.

Further advances in technology, such as in the improvement of lighting to a digital board, have enabled a development in the design aspects of theatre. Even though theatre cannot generate the same quantity of images as television, audiences are able to appreciate theatrical representation in a new light. Audiences are influenced more by images than by spoken words and written texts and are now accustomed to dealing with a variety of different images; they can, according to Taymor (in Weber, 2006:43), “fill in more blanks because they have seen so much TV and film”. The Walt Disney Company has used television’s ability to transmit images rapidly in their animated films. The creative teams, for the theatre productions under study, used the images from the animated films as representations in the theatre productions. Using the images ensured that audiences would be able to recognise the origins of the representations and be able to transpose the animated images into the new medium. *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *The Lion King* (1997) draw on this notion of audiences ‘filling in the blanks’ by juxtaposing images from the animated films in relation to how the images are represented in the theatre productions. The ability to do this can be attributed to the idea that the mind creates the ‘magic’, “the ability of the human mind being able to imagine” (Weber, 2006:43). Through the ability of the audience to be lead by the ‘magic’ of the performance the audience open themselves to receive the stage event as a ‘real’ event, with the circumstances affecting characters that audiences connect with.

Taymor (in Weber, 2006:44) states that “theatre potentially surpasses film, because it is better equipped to deal in the abstract, in layers of imagery and symbolism”. Through films’ abstraction of images, theatre audiences have become accustomed to linking various representations together. This means that audiences are now able to identify with certain ideas

that the abstractions, through the representations, depict. Theatre designers have the skill to use various images which will illustrate new representations so that audiences will be able to recognise or connect with the changed surroundings within the performance. The different uses of the images create signs through which audiences' opinions of characters and situations are generated or altered through their understanding of the signs.

2.1.3 Engagement with Scenographic Elements

During a performance, a subconscious interpretation occurs to create a more complex understanding of what is being watched. This interpretation creates an understanding of the performance in relation to audiences' personal experiences, which can be motivated by the signs of the representations created by the designs for the production. The interpretation of signs encountered through personal experiences creates a view of "our human reality not as a collection of transparently accessible objects, but as saturated with conventional meanings that give sense to our lives" (Wade, 2009:18). This is applicable to the way signs are generated and interpreted within theatre productions. Meanings are transposed into the representations that allow audiences to use and decode them in relation to their lived experiences or influences, as argued by Jean-Phillipe Wade, Professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, (2009:18) who says, "our experiences of the world are mediated by signs". If we experience the world through a mediation of signs, then the experience of a theatre production is done by similar mediations of the signs that are created by the representations.

The representations, that the scenography creates, allow audiences to relate to the situations presented throughout the performance. By being able to relate to the performance, audiences can apply their personal experiences to the characters' situations. In doing so, audiences subconsciously interprets the signs in the image system and discover meaning within the images represented on stage. This is clarified by the idea that we should

come to think of our social and cultural world as a series of sign systems, comparable with languages. What we live among and relate to are not physical objects and events; they are objects and events with meaning... if we are to understand our social and cultural world, we must think not of independent objects but of symbolic structures, systems of relations which, by enabling objects and events to have meaning, create a human universe. (Culler in Wade 2009:18)

Theatre, like reality, uses representations to emphasise certain ideas. These representational images are made up of symbolic structures and systems of relations that, once interpreted, "create a human universe", or new reality, for the duration of the performance. The audience is

able to associate themselves with the world created on stage as it is a reality that they can identify with or compare to their own.

Representations of the animated images, such as those used for *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *The Lion King* (1997), have predefined “systems of relation” which taken from the animated film version source for each of the theatre productions. Once the predefined animated image system is introduced into the theatre production, it creates a new relation system while still retaining ideas that were generated from the original system. This creates a more complex image system through which audiences will define new meanings of the representations used in the productions. The representations are viewed by audiences in two different ways. The images are of course, seen as individual representations, and are synchronic images. The images are also collaborative and build the design during the course of the performance through the diachronic establishment of the images.

By introducing multiple layered scenographies adapted from the animated films, the spectacle offers audiences the opportunity to escape and be enchanted by the new ‘reality’ presented to them by the performances. For the duration of the performance the created reality is converted into something that is more real than the lived reality of the audiences. They are then able to identify and suspend their disbelief for the performance, after which they return to their reality. This allows audiences to think of the world created on stage as a new reality, which allows them to ‘believe’ the events are ‘real’ for the duration of the performance. For the case studies this is heightened due to the fantastic nature of the stories and also the audiences’ prior knowledge of the story and the happy ending. Audiences have the foreknowledge of what the outcome of the performance will be and so are able to become more willing to accept the new reality.

2.2 Megamusical’s Use of the Spectacular

The term megamusical refers to a “kind of musical theatre that rose to prominence in the 1970s and 1980s and that remains a dominant force on Broadway today” (Sternfeld, 2006:1). Although megamusicals have been performed for almost forty years, productions are still awe-inspiring and “the influence of the megamusical of course continues, in similar as well as opposing forms of shows” (Sternfeld, 2006:352). For a production to be termed a megamusical it has to fulfill a number of criteria. It is not only judged by the budget or the profit, but on other elements that will “make a musical a megamusical” (Sternfeld, 2006:1). These elements are

not only found in a megamusical production but also in the way that it is represented within its theatrical location.

In Jessica Sternfeld's *Megamusical* (2006) she develops a list of similarities existing in several megamusicals such as *Les Misérables* (1985), *Phantom of the Opera* (1986), *Beauty and the Beast* (1994), and *The Lion King* (1997). Through her comparison of these, certain constructs can be identified which are common to the creation of megamusicals. These constructs are evident in all musicals, but a megamusical extends the way in which they are perceived. The elements that the megamusical enhances are plot, music, sets, staging, and advertising. Megamusicals make use of the characteristics which Aristotle considered to be the least important when creating dramatic poetry, that is music (song) and sets (spectacle).

The constructs, as identified by Sternfeld, allow for an understanding of the differences between a megamusical and a musical production. The plot of a megamusical is drawn from epic sweeping tales of various origins, which are "big in scope" (Sternfeld, 2006:2). They grapple with broad, 'universal' issues that make the concepts more prominent than the specific location of the events. The music of the megamusical is a prominent feature. Most megamusicals have little or no spoken text. This, however, is not a prerequisite. For example both *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *The Lion King* (1997) contain music, but the spoken text is important in locating the action. Even though the case studies have a fair amount of spoken text "everything is fluid, underscored, [and] tied together by the music" (Sternfeld, 2006:2). The music is used as a device to link and transform scenes. It also dictates the mood and inner feelings of the characters. While the plot and music are important elements, the sets and staging of productions complete the sense of grandeur. Impressive, complicated, expensive sets have become one of the defining characteristics of the megamusical, which often seems to be more spectacular than mere spectacle. Through the use of the productions' representational images within advertising campaigns, the scenic designs have become the feature attraction of the megamusical. Scenography is evidently an important part of varying genres within theatre, but for the megamusical it is essential that scenography be able to captivate the grandeur and splendour of productions. For megamusicals "publicity hype is created as show logos, gossip and images are seen everywhere and anywhere" (Sternfeld, 2006:3).

More often than not a megamusical is the reworking of a text from the Romantic period.

Romanticism “transformed poetry, the novel, drama, painting, sculpture, all forms of concert music... and ballet” (Romanticism, 2009). The transformation allowed the artistic form to become an echo of the feelings of the working class of the time. The Romantic period “favoured the revival of potentially unlimited number of styles” (Art History, 2009) and these new styles lead to the idea of creating a system that would allow for the styles to be analysed in comparison to and differentiated from the other styles. This influenced how certain styles of art were perceived by audiences. For performances then and now the influence can still be seen today through the “theatre revival programme” (Cohen, 1994:280), which saw productions such as *Les Misérables* and *Phantom of the Opera* being adapted, developed and produced. The Walt Disney version of *Beauty and the Beast* (1991 & 1994), for example, is an adaptation of a story written in 1740.

The theatre of revival programme “has a broad appeal” (Cohen, 1994:281), as it embodies a wide range of capabilities. Theatre of revival can address “in some complexity, the serious and tangible problems facing humanity around the world... . [Yet it is also a] forum for insight, information, ideas, empathy, catharsis, wit, rapture, virtuosity, and laugh-till-you-cry humor [sic]... . It is a vital, vibrant, thriving glory of the current stage” (Cohen, 1994:281). While theatre of revival avoids using “art for art’s sake” (Cohen, 1994:281), the idea of art being created for art’s sake becomes the instrument in connecting the theatre of revival with postmodern ideas of theatre, which can be seen to be not “about something so much as it is about itself. About art” (Cohen, 1994:283). The revival of stories, such as *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King*, and the creation of the theatre productions in such a grandiose manner can be attributed to the collaborative nature of theatre of revival in a postmodern setting. Thus productions are created from a work of a previous era but presented to the audience using post-modern technologies and designs. Productions that were created two to three decades ago are still popular because of the way in which they utilise images and representations.

The revival of megamusicals can be seen to be part of the theatre of revival which “for most audiences...is familiar, entertaining and aesthetically satisfying” (Cohen, 1994:281). Comments, by academics like Oscar Brockett (Brockett, 2004:223), assume that the revival of such genres was generated by

the decision of the Disney corporation [sic] to enter the Broadway market. Stage versions of its animated films *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King* attracted large

audiences, including families who did not originally attend Broadway. *The Lion King* also won high critical praise and numerous awards for its design and directing (by Julie Taymor). Interest in the musical is still strong.

Although The Walt Disney Company created megamusicals that appealed to a wide variety of theatre audiences, The Walt Disney Company were not necessarily the reason for the revival of megamusicals.

2.2.1 The Scenography of Megamusicals

The visual aesthetics of musical productions are used to influence how audiences interpret the visual images. Compared to the reproduction of images that audiences receive through television, scenography of megamusicals is able to extend the number and form of images which can become more abstract because of audiences' ability to analyse and accept various forms of images. Taymor (in Weber, 2006:43) notes that because theatre audiences are able to understand the abstract visuals, "it is a pleasure of the contemporary theatre that you can use a kind of shorthand because the audience is becoming more visually experienced, more visually literate". Visually literate audiences offer scenographers more scope in their creations. Within the genre of megamusical, the type and purpose of the scenographic elements vary between the different productions, for example between *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *The Lion King* (1997).

The design of scenography is done in such a way as to "create settings that are appropriate to the play but also provide spectacle through the settings' visual variety and appeal" (Brockett, 2004:377). A number of designers have commented on their use of the spectacle in their designs. For example, Heidi Landesman (in Brockett, 2004:377), a designer for regional theatres as well as Broadway plays and musicals, states that, "if 'spectacular' means extremely theatrical, then it's all for the good. On the other hand, if it means just a lot of scenery decorated to within an inch of its life, then I don't find 'the spectacle' very appealing". For Landesman the representation of spectacular involves using the theatricality of the theatre to benefit the design of productions. This can be seen in the case studies' use of advanced technological scenic pieces incorporating seemingly minimalistic designs which integrate the idea of theatricality.

Robin Wagner (in Brockett, 2004:377), a theatre and rock concert designer, claims that theatre design

is not about painting or sculpture, it's about life, which is the very essence of theatre... . You have to be extremely careful not to snuff out the life of a script visually, because the design is a very powerful instrument. Vision is the strongest sense that a person has and what is there will either support or drown that which has to live in it.

For Wagner the idea of spectacle is that there has to be a connection between the design and the action of productions with neither of the two taking preference over the other. One can assume that if this balance is correct then the visual aesthetic of the whole performance can complement the audiences' perceptions.

The idea of the acting space and the space of the spectacle is developed by Marjorie Kellogg (in Brockett, 2004:377), a designer for numerous theatre companies, who states: "what we tend to think when we look at the scenery is that the scenery itself is the positive [space], whereas what's really positive [space] is the space contained within the scenery. It's positive because that's what the actors are going to be moving through". Although Kellogg focuses on one specific element of scenography, her statement illustrates that, while the scenery is important in creating the initial understanding, it has to be engaged with through the action for it to continue to present a meaning within the performance.

The above attributes are evident within the megamusical genre. The two case studies are both termed megamusicals, yet their use of spectacle and spectacular varies greatly. The diversity of the scenographic field within a specific genre allows a production leeway to create the scenography that it needs in order to present the production to an audience. The elements, however, still incorporate the attributes that Landesman, Wagner and Kellogg have mentioned. Although the case studies both use theatricality in their designs, it varies for each production.

The diversity of the genres of the two different designs is evident. For example, in *Beauty and the Beast* (1994), the scenography is constructed to employ a sense of grandeur through the scenic design's elaborate embellishments and through the size of the set pieces. This is repeated in all the scenographic elements that the production uses. Through the use of the grand, elaborate scenic designs, the different locations within the production are easily represented. In *The Lion King* (1997), however, the scenic design elements portray a sense of minimalism in comparison with *Beauty and the Beast* (1994). Although the scenography has a minimalistic appeal, the different elements portray an evidently animal based world in a

different way to from *Beauty and the Beast's* enchanted castle.

The idea behind the use of the scenic construction in *The Lion King* (1997) was that the costume design would be the focal point of the scenographic elements. Although the emphasis is on the costumes, this does not mean that the scenic design is less relevant to the visual aspect of the production. The scenic design allows for the specific space to be created on stage so that the focus of the audience is directed to the costumes of the characters. *The Lion King* (1997) uses the *mise-en-scène* to accentuate the designs of the costumes, which then become the focus due to the minimalistic scenic construction. By having a minimal set, the actors are able to create a montage of crowds and individuals making a holistic scenographic representation.

Chapter 3

The Iconic Nature of *Beauty and the Beast* (1994)

3.1 The Beginning of a New Venture

The Walt Disney company “first thought of adapting the tale of *Beauty and the Beast* [into animated film] some forty years before they actually did” (Yurgaitis, 2005). When *Beauty and the Beast* was released in 1991, the film was a commercial and critical success winning an Academy Award for the Best Picture, and two Oscars for Best Musical Score and Best Song.

In the same year, The Walt Disney Company’s chief executive officer, Michael Eisner, read an article in the *New York Times* by Frank Rich (1991) (in Yutgaitis, 2005) in which he complained about the “sad state of musical theater [sic], [and] noting that the animated feature *Beauty and the Beast* had better music than anything he had seen on Broadway that year”. This was one among many reviews that had acclaimed the musical quality of the animated movie *Beauty and the Beast*. Because of these positive film responses, Eisner and his partner, Jeffrey Katzenburg, began discussions on the idea of turning *Beauty and the Beast* into a full musical for Broadway.

Eisner and Katzenburg pulled together a team to discuss the possibility of a stage musical based on *Beauty and the Beast*. At first the reaction was negative as the team was unable to visualise how the piece would work on stage, and no one thought that an audience would be able to watch a stage production, of two and a half hours, based on an animated film. Eisner had asked director Robert Jess Roth to direct the production and Roth “created an elaborate presentation... that was so convincing that any resistance the creators had was quickly dispelled” (Yugaitis, 2005). Even though the idea was accepted, they still felt the need to conduct pre-Broadway trials at Disneyland.

3.1.1 Short theatre productions based on Walt Disney Animated films

The Walt Disney Company used theatrical forms of entertainment in their theme parks to entertain audiences and these began to be used to test their reactions to animated films being re-created for the stage. For example, *Beauty and the Beast*, before being developed as a Broadway production began as a theme-park stage show. The Walt Disney Company knew that, “their strength was in telling stories and that [the story of *Beauty and the Beast*] would fit perfectly with the stage” (Frost, 2005). Mini theatre productions were produced and performed,

one of which was a twenty-five minute production of *Beauty and the Beast* (1991).

The mini productions “turned out to be a big success” (Yurgaitis, 2005) and encouraged the team to stage longer productions in the hope of seeing *Beauty and the Beast* being performed. This mini production of *Beauty and the Beast* was designed in such a way that it resembled the animated version through iconic representations of the characters. Through doing this The Walt Disney Company personnel were able to evaluate the audiences’ acceptance of the animated film as a theatre production. They would also be able to visualise the production in performance.

Eventually, with some questions still to discuss and difficulties to overcome, such as “how to make the Enchanted Objects believable in a live performance, and how [to] retain the magic of the Beast’s transformation” (Frantz, 1995:21)³, Eisner agreed that production of *Beauty and the Beast* could begin. Initially the development of the full-length theatre production involved the addition of new songs that would turn the eighty-five minute animation into a two and a half hour Broadway production.

3.1.2 The Creative Team and Their Initial Ideas

The creative team Roth assembled was diverse, with people from different avenues of theatre design. The scenic designer, Stanley A. Meyer, “was working at Disneyland as an art director designing stage shows, parades and special events when [he] was approached [by Roth] about designing *Beauty and the Beast*” (2009, Appendix C:115). Meyer had known Roth since college and they had “worked on many shows together over the years” (Meyer, 2009: Appendix C:115). The initial designs for the half-hour production of *Beauty and the Beast* which was performed at Disneyland were created by Meyer and later these ideas influenced the Broadway production. Meyer (2009: Appendix C:115) states that “there were a number of other people who thought they were entitled to be the team to create the first musical for The Walt Disney Company but in the end Michael Eisner took a huge chance giving a relatively unknown creative team the opportunity to prove themselves”. The final creative team consisted of Stanley Meyer (scenic designer), Matt West (choreographer), Ann Hould-Ward (costume design), Natasha Katz (lighting designer), as well as Jim Steinmeyer and John Gaughan (illusionists). The creative team worked together and discussed the animated film, scene by

³ Appendix H (page 128) has more information regarding Enchanted Objects

scene, to find places “where new songs could be added” (Roth in Frantz, 1995:22). Alan Menken, one of the original composers for the *Beauty and the Beast* screenplay, was asked to extend the music with the help of lyricist Tim Rice. Rice (in Franz, 1995:23) comments that “when [he] first heard of the project, [he] thought it was impossible, because the movie was so good. But when [he] saw what they had in mind, [he] realized [sic] that this could be a wonderful, traditional but contemporary Broadway show”.

It was not only the creative aspects that made *Beauty and the Beast* a success. According to the producer, Robert McTyre (in Frantz, 1995:28),

We are bringing a new way of thinking to the theatre both creatively and business wise. On the creative end, the show is a very collaborative effort, with many more people involved and contributing than usual. And, on the business side, we bring financial discipline. Most important, we're developing new audiences, stimulating people – children and adults – to fall in love with the theatre.

The team assembled knew the budget that they had to work within to create the theatre production. Each of the different design components worked together to develop a specific design concept that would allow them to financially create the pieces, but still be able to create a production that would stimulate new audiences. The decision by Eisner to produce *Beauty and the Beast* as a theatrical production has “ended up being the most lucrative deal of his career by making over \$2.5 billion for The Walt Disney Company” (2009: Appendix C:115).

3.2 Conceptualisation on the Road to Broadway

Once the animated film had been expanded, the “company moved to Houston in November 1993 and for seven weeks, they refined, polished, and worked out the many kinks in a musical’s try out” (Yurgaitis, 2005). The production opened in December at the Houston Theatre Under the Stars where it became a commercial success. Never-the-less, the creative team made many “changes between its Houston try out and its Broadway premiere” (Yurgaitis, 2005). The newly refined *Beauty and the Beast* production opened on 18th April 1994 in the Palace Theatre on Broadway.

Although the production of *Beauty and the Beast* holds strong visual ties to the animated film, Menken explains that “we were walking a line. We wanted it to feel both familiar and brand new. And we had to be sure something was gained dramatically by bringing it to the stage” (in Frantz, 2002:23). According to Meyer, the creative team developed many different concepts of

the production, one of which consisted of a large rose centre stage. The rose would turn, and the petals would open revealing the scene that was to take place. When the scene was finished the petals would detach from the whole and move offstage. At the end of the performance the audience was “left with the final petal dropping from the giant thorny rose stem as Belle professes her love for the Beast” (2009: Appendix C:115). The style of the performance was dictated by Eisner who “wanted to produce a 1950s style Broadway musical like the kind [he] grew up seeing on Broadway... . The scenic element would have to be very traditional, almost a bit old fashioned... . It was a time honored [sic] tradition of flat scenery painted to look dimensional” (2009: Appendix C:115).

According to David Frantz, an academic, (1995:28), the collaborative nature of the production “underline[d] the success of *Beauty and the Beast*”. All the different creative areas were interdependent which enabled the elements to work together during the performances. As Frantz (1995:28) states, “everything is fully integrated into the whole”, to create the world of *Beauty and the Beast*, through which audiences engaged with the action. Although it was partly due to the collaborative nature of the creative elements, it was also through the development of the characters that the production was given an emotional heart. As Roth (in Frantz, 1995:29) explains, “Although much has been made of the spectacle, the show works because of the emotional heart of the story”.

The expansion of the music - six new musical numbers were added - emphasised the way in which Meyer created the sets. Meyer (in Frantz, 1995:30) states, “the musical evokes a strong emotional response which affects the way I envision the scenery”. Meyer faced the challenge of adapting the visual images of the animated film into the theatrical spectacle. After analysing the animated film, Meyer “accumulate[d] a stack of over fifty different locations” (Frantz, 1995:34). Due to the limitations of the theatre space, these locations could not be presented on stage and so Meyer had to decide which locations to keep and which were not necessary. He (in Frantz, 1995:34) states that The Walt Disney Company, “wanted to do a theatrical production, not a repeat of the movie, and that necessitated some very different choices”. Locations used in theatre productions have to be creative enough to accommodate a number of different scenes. Theatre can “create the illusion of many different scenes from just a few basic sets” (Frantz, 1995:34). This is seen in *Beauty and the Beast*, for example, in the creation of the Beast’s castle. Meyer created a few small scenic pieces such as tables and chairs which were placed on stage along with “bringing in swags or shifting the columns – to

change the space” (Meyer in Frantz, 1995:34). This, in combination with the lighting, enabled the scenic design to change from the bedroom to the hallway, library or dining-room, “wherever [they] needed it to be” (Meyer in Frantz, 1995:34).

As the focus is on the emotional heart of the story, the scenic elements were created in such a way as to allow “the story and emotion to flow rather than having the need to [re-engage with the action] because the audience is sitting in the dark waiting for the next scene to start” (2009: Appendix C:115). The scenic design was created to allow the scenes to change in front of the audience. There is only one blackout which occurs after the Beast imprisons Maurice⁴. This is done to emphasise the dramatic intensity of the Beast’s attitude to people who ‘trespass’ on his land. Meyer (2009: Appendix D: 117) says that it was a goal of the team “not to use blackouts at the end of every scene and to only use them as a way to punctuate a scene emotionally, rather than just end it”.

In creating the world of the production, the most difficult element was to make “the cartoon come to life on stage” (2009: Appendix C:115). Meyer had to make the two dimensional world of the animation a three dimensional world in the theatre. This was mostly achieved through the use of texture in the designs of the scenography. The textual additions allowed the “audience to access the story and emotions of the characters” (2009: Appendix C:115). Through Meyer’s collaboration with Hould-Ward and Katz they “strived to create a world that was not only beautiful but was textual and real. [They] had to create a world where the audience believed the story could actually happen” (2009: Appendix C:115). While designing the scenic space of the production Meyer had to keep envisioning the practical use of the pieces within the scenes. This was achieved through the actors inhabiting the space in which they interact with the scenic pieces. Through the actors presenting the characters in the space created by Meyer, he sometimes “created deliberate juxtapositions between the character and the set” (Frantz, 1995: 34). This is evident in the various places that *Beauty and the Beast* has been performed. For Meyer the scenic design is never complete on its own: it “needs the actors, the music, the lighting, the dancing [and] the staging” (Meyer in Frantz, 1995: 34) to make the set pieces, which create the world on stage, come alive.

Although the production of *Beauty and the Beast* has been performed in various locations for

⁴ Appendix H (page 128) has more information regarding the character Maurice

the past fifteen years, the first visual creation was altered during the initial years. As Meyer (Appendix C:115) states, “After we opened the show on Broadway the first big scenic visual change we made to the show was with the opening town number”. Even though the production had opened and been acclaimed by audiences, there were still some scenic moments that Meyer and the other members of the team felt could be altered to generate a better visual impact. The first of these alterations was the opening number, which many felt could be bolder. This was achieved through changing the colour palette of the scene. Initially the colour palette for the opening number was similar to the one in the animated film. This consisted of the designs being “in a spring pallet [sic], with a lot of green in the foliage of the birch trees making the design feel very cold in temperature” (2009: Appendix C:115). Meyer wanted to change this to an autumnal palette “with strong reds, russets and yellows [so] that the show would have a hotter more bold beginning” (2009: Appendix C:115). He also felt that through this change the contrast between the village and the enchanted world of the castle would be a greater visual contrast, as the castle’s colour palette consists of bright turquoises, blues and purples.

Once this change was completed, the creative team wanted to simplify the scenic element. According to Meyer they “stripped the design of the shown down to four castle columns, two torn swag panels, the west wing unit (because it had to house the levitation device) and a few prop pieces” (2009: Appendix C:115). Through this simplification of the scenic elements, Meyer argues that the scenic design “allowed the audience to use their imagination a bit more in visualising what the castle interior could be” (2009: Appendix C:115). The new design also allowed for a diversity of intimate moments and grand moments that “made the objects in the castle almost seem as if they were in miniature” (2009: Appendix C:115). Although there were many different changes to the production, Meyer states that he “wished the design could have been less literal and ... evoked much more a sense of environment, place and feeling” (2009: Appendix C:115). Yet at the time, Meyer (2009: Appendix C:115) acknowledges, it was “too different an idea from the cartoon”.

3.2.1 Critical Reviews of *Beauty and the Beast* on Broadway

Reviewers commented on the style in which *Beauty and the Beast* was created and many called it a “well done adaptation, [while] others found it a predictable disappointment” (Sternfeld, 2006:320). Either way, *Beauty and the Beast* still managed to draw audiences into the theatre. David Richards, the chief critical reviewer for the *New York Times*, (in Sternfeld, 2006:321) stated that “it is hardly a work of art, [yet] one gaped at the show throughout,

marveling [sic] at effects”.

The comments of the reviewers varied throughout the run of the production on Broadway. It was noted for having “dazzling special effects, awe inspiring costumes and scenery and exquisite music to combine and create an enthralling theatrical experience for the whole family” (MonteCasino, 2008). The MonteCasino website also noted other positive reviews from *The New York Post*, which stated that the performance was “a spectacular stage extravaganza” (2008) and *The New York Times* stated that “the astonishments rarely cease” (2008).

A Broadway reviewer, Michael Murray, wrote an article after *Beauty and the Beast* had been showing for ten years on Broadway. In the article Murray (2004) states that although “there’s a certain freshness missing from the proceedings...much of the show is still enormously effective and enchanting. It’s still possible to get swept away in the carefully developing love story”. Murray (2004) also noted that *Beauty and the Beast* was “never revolutionary theatre, it’s always been solid family entertainment, and it remains so”. Reviewers, like Robert Windeler (1994), said that *Beauty and the Beast* was “flat and lacked fizz”. Linda Winer (in Sternfeld, 2006:321) thought that as a “contender in the real world of Broadway megamusicals, this is pretty tacky stuff”.

As with most megamusicals, the scenography is the key to the representations that are presented through the visual images. In a review by Bryce Ives (Ives, 2007), it was noted that “the most immediate impression of the production is the stunning beauty of the backdrops and sets. The Walt Disney Company believed that ‘pictures still speak the most universally understood language’ and the exaggerated beauty of the visual experience is disarming and effective”. With the understanding that reviews of the production vary, it is interesting to view the different opinions of the various comments by reviewers about the productions of *Beauty and the Beast*. Although there were reviews for and against the production, *Beauty and the Beast* was accepted by audiences, performed on Broadway for thirteen years, and is still touring internationally.

3.3 The Scenographic Designs of the Production

Having witnessed a performance as an audience member during the South African production, one was overwhelmed by the grandeur of the settings and designs that continue to be used within the production. For Meyer to create the scenographic elements for the production he

drew sketches of the designs: the final ones are represented in Figure 1, Figure 2, Figure 3 and Figure 4. In these designs one can see the visual contrast that was initially created for the two various locations: the village and the enchanted castle. Meyer (Programme, 2008) stated that he “makes very specific choices about colour to support and communicate the story and the spirit of the show. We respond to colour subliminally, so without pulling focus from the actors, the music or the story, colour contributes to how we understand and experience the story emotionally”. Although colour is an important element, the other four elements, line, shape, space and texture are also used in the designs of *Beauty and the Beast* to create a specific meaning.

Meyer can be seen to have used analogous colour palettes, which “achieve colour harmony” (McMurtry, 2007:29), as well as elements of complementary colours to create a contrast or a certain effect throughout the designs. In his early sketches the use of colour can be seen to differentiate the various locations as well as to juxtapose and contrast the character types in the scenes. Within these sketches the use of line is important as it creates certain images not only as a whole but also within the individual scenic pieces that are illustrated. There are no vertical or horizontal lines within the design of Figure 1 which makes the design come alive with a sense of movement. The vertical lines of the houses are rounded, not rigid, creating organic movements which suggest that the village is more natural, as well as the idea of the fluid motion of a country-lifestyle.

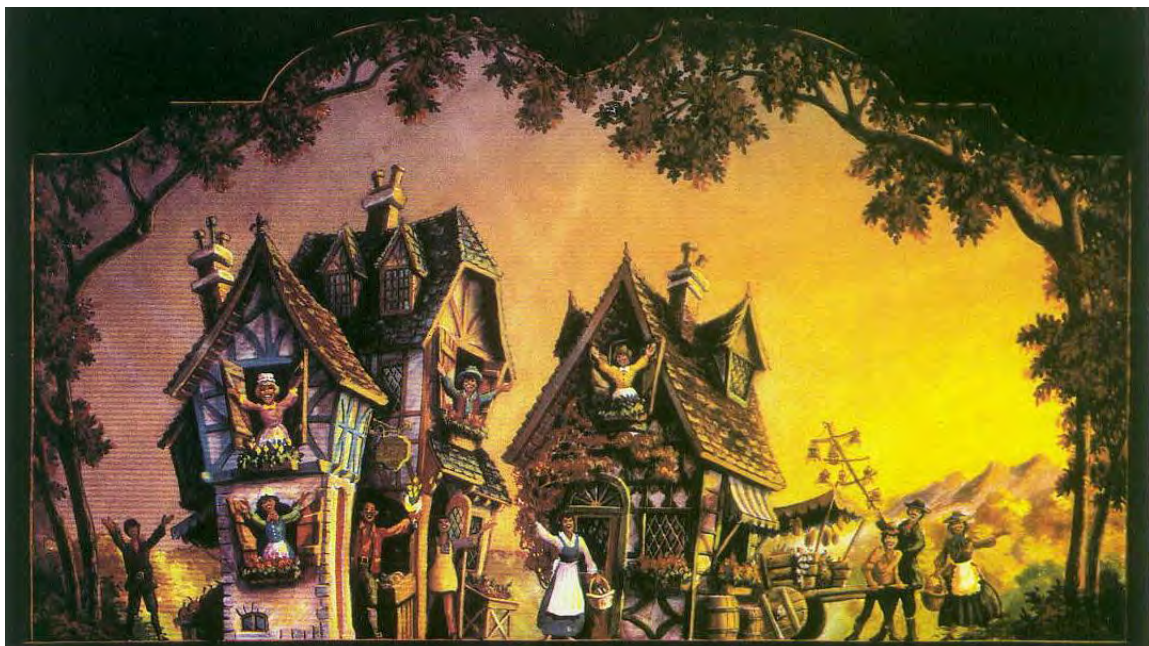


Figure 1

Meyer also used a combination of two-dimensional designs, such as the backdrops, and three-dimensional designs in many of the scenic pieces that were used in the different locations. The designs are very textual, utilising a large range of different textures both in the scenic design and in the costume design. By using a wide range, texture becomes an index which locates audiences within the action, and also identifies where the main action is happening on the stage. Texture can be used to illustrate the importance of an object by differentiating it from textures around it.

Figure 1 and Figure 2 are both images of what the scenic design was trying to capture from the animated film. In these images one can see the similarities created through the colour palette as both use warm, rustic colours creating an atmosphere of an inviting, country village. In keeping with Llewellyn-Jones's earlier contention that costumes and set reflect the "themes, mood, style and emotions of the play as well as indicating [the] historical or geographical context of the production" (2001), Meyer's draft and final sets and costumes incorporate a specific time period in which the events occur.

Through the scenographic signs, the audience is able to identify that the production is located in a French village and the period was "from the mid- to late-1700s" (Frantz in Lassell, 2002:35). The period of the production is carried throughout the designs in all the different locations. In Figure 1 the green birch trees that surround the proscenium arch are evident, as well as the varying colours of the house scenes and village costumes. Figure 2 explores a natural, monochromatic colour palette in the scenic design, with colour being introduced through the costumes. The decorative accessories, in Figure 2, are taken from the song which is sung while in the tavern: for example, the antlers in the designs are taken from Gaston's line "I use antlers in all of my decorating" (Gaston's Tavern lyrics)⁵. While certain areas of the tavern are dark, the warmth of the fireplace seems to expand into the surrounding areas. The wooden style of building allows for a natural, wholesome essence to be given to the action that is represented within the tavern.

⁵ Appendix H (page 128) has more information regarding the character Gaston



Figure 2

Meyer's designs draw on two theatrical styles. Figure 1 can be seen to be expressionistic. This is due to the distortion of the lines to express an "emotional distortion" (Wright, 1972:154). It appeals to the intellect of audiences and it often uses elements of other styles. Figure 2 uses simplified realism in its design. The designs create an illusion of the realistic setting, which meets "more accepted aesthetic standards" (Wright, 1972:153). It is evident through the theatrical styles of the designs that the visual elements portray the iconic nature of the production in relation to the animated film through the use of the colour and structure.

Due to the designs "open[ing] another level of reception" (Llewellyn-Jones, 2001), it becomes evident that elements such as colour can play an important role not only in representing the scenography as a 'gestalt', but also in influencing audiences' reactions during a performance. For example, in Figure 3 and Figure 4, there is a contrast between the two colour palettes that show the difference between the castle when the Beast⁶ is present and how the servants react to their surroundings of the castle. The intensity of the hues chosen for Figure 3 indicates how the song, "Be Our Guest", offers more opportunity for the designer to be creative with the use of colour in the designs. The castle, when the Beast is present, makes use of tones and shades in specific hues with a low intensity that affects the atmosphere of the location as in

⁶ Appendix H (page 128) has more information regarding the character of the Beast

Figure 4.



Figure 3

The hues for Figure 4 create a colour palette of greys and blues, both of which can be attributed to a cool temperature, which has an emotional effect on how the action is perceived. However, during the song "Be Our Guest" the audience is allowed a glimpse into the intensely colourful world that once existed within the castle walls. The intensity of the hues and the use of an analogous colour palette highlight the vibrancy of the location. The explosive nature of the scene is represented by the fireworks shooting out of the champagne bottle to illustrate the wealth and grandeur that the Enchanted Objects possessed when they were human.

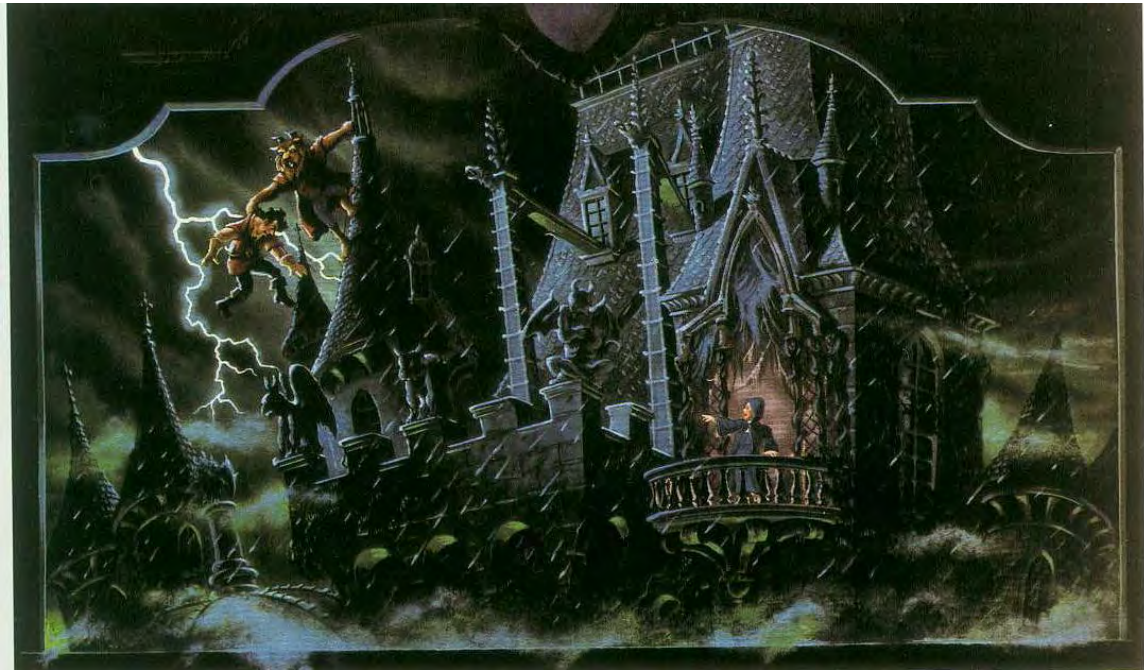


Figure 4

As mentioned, Meyer changed some of the scenic elements through the duration of the production. He altered certain elements to the production as a whole, but he also changed some of the designs for specific audiences. For example, Figure 5 was created for the Los Angeles production for the scene when Belle⁷ dances with the Beast. While Figure 5 still echoes the original garden scene used for the production. It emphasises a more romantic atmosphere through the use of the full moon and cool colours highlighted with the warm pink flowers around the edge. Figure 6 was created for the Toronto production finale. This architectural set piece was painted, by Meyer, “onto a backdrop where the sun is rising”, illustrating the beginning of a new day and a new life for the Enchanted Objects. Then for the finale, shown in Figure 7, “[Meyer] used a colorful [sic] daylight screen which appears behind a hanger with cherubs coming to life and garlands of roses in full bloom” (Frantz in Lassell, 2002:30). This is the finale for the production of *Beauty and the Beast* that was produced at the MonteCasino Teatro, Johannesburg, and the ArtScape Theatre, Cape Town. The South African performance finale is viewed in Figure 8, where the backdrop illustrates the use of the original designs in Figure 7.

⁷ Appendix H (page 128) has more information regarding the character Belle



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

Using Elaine Aston's (1991) theories of the pictorial qualities of theatre productions performed on proscenium arch stages, *Beauty and the Beast* can be analysed using the four levels that she mentions. Through an analysis of the above Figures the four distinct levels: functionalistic, sociometric, atmospheric, and symbolic (Aston, 1991:146) become evident. The sketches demonstrate how the scenic pieces are functionalistic within the action. Scenic pieces that are brought onto the stage serve a purpose in creating a specific design locale but they also aid the actors by placing the action in a specific locale. A sociometric undercurrent is shown in the designs through the contrast between the village and the castle. Through this contrast the audience become aware of the various social positions of the different characters. With the various usage of the colour palette, the tonal qualities of the hues used influence the atmospheric level. Through the different palettes used in each location, the colours become synonymous with that location and how the characters are represented within the space. For example, the rose is a symbolic image as it symbolises the love that the Beast needs to find as well as the emotional heart of the production. It is also demonstrated through the way in which the scenic designs inhabit the space through the shapes that they create and the lines that are generated through the placement of the pieces.

According to Esslin (1987:111) the key signs that are present in a theatrical production are considered to be: "the general colour scheme of a performance; the pictorial style of the set, whether realistic or abstract, flat or three dimensional; the cut and period style of the costumes; the acting style, whether realistic or grotesque, deeply serious or comedic [and] the mood of the background music". It is on these key signifiers that the "concepts of style and genre are based" (Esslin, 1987:111). The style of a performance, according to Esslin (1987:113):

depends on the general level of the 'key' signifiers: a combination of all the decisions about which elements are to be used, and which excluded. Which colours, or general colour tonalities should form the basic mood of the performance, what degree of acting should be adopted, whether realistic props should be employed or objects merely suggested by mimed action, etc., and which elements of all these signifying systems must conversely be rigidly avoided.

In *Beauty and the Beast* the styles of the two locations have been illustrated through certain signifiers. The colours create a certain atmosphere for the location and the actions of the characters either reinforce the mood or work against it. *Beauty and the Beast*, although a fantasy story, uses 'realistic' acting styles as well as properties. The properties are created to resemble their realistic counterparts, even when those objects are the Enchanted Objects.

3.3.1 The Village

The first representations viewed by the audience are those from the village scene. This location is filled with warm earth colours of reds, browns and yellows which are illustrated in all the different elements of the scenography. In viewing a colour palette such as this, audiences experience an inviting atmosphere and have a positive association with the characters. Through the style and colours of the costumes one can identify the setting as a 'country-people' locale. It is through the visual experience that the audience, according to Meyer (in Programme, 2008: Appendix D:117), interpret Belle's difference through the blue dress: "Belle's blue dress against the earthy tones of the village sets her apart before she's sung even one word". Belle's difference is indexically shown through the use of the colours and her placement within the actions, as seen in Figure 9. Blue not only sets her apart from the village, but it can be symbolically related to various ideas, such as coldness and rationality. The idea of placing Belle in a blue dress develops a sense of irony when related to the coldness that the colour supposedly represents, as she is the one who shows the most compassion later in the plot (Beauty and the Beast: Plot, Appendix H: 128). Not only does her dress make her stand out amongst the crowd through the use of complementary hues, but her stance and the fact that she is reading, are all signs that convey that she is not accepted by the villagers. Her individuality is echoed through her interaction with the village hero, Gaston, and the lyrics of the opening song.



Figure 9

In Figure 10 this contrast is developed between Gaston, who is seen as accepted by the village, and Belle through the use of proxemics in the way that the actors and the designs utilise the space of the theatre is known as the proxemics (Elam, 1980 and Törnqvist, 1991) of the performance. Both Elam and Törnqvist use proxemics in discussion with the different kinds of special relationships that occur during the performance. For example; “the performance itself begins with the information-rich registering of stage space and its use in the creation of the opening image” (Elam, 1980:56). From this opening image the use of the space on the stage becomes an important factor in the understanding of the performance and the characters relationships, as proxemics is an important element of “perception and reception” (Elam, 1980:56). The formation of the villagers in Figure 9 leans away from Belle who does not acknowledge their attention to her. Their expressions are one of confusion and their postures are hunched, which enhances the connotations of the villagers’ inability to comprehend Belle. Although Belle does not seem to acknowledge the presence of the crowd, her stance is towards them and she is only slightly closer to the front of the stage. Figure 10 represents a different feeling towards Gaston. The villagers face Gaston and their faces have a more accepting look. Gaston’s pose, while facing away from the crowd is constantly asking for

attention to and approval of his actions. He is placed much further forward than the crowd, highlighting his self importance. Gaston stands alone because he thinks that he is better than the crowd of villagers, more in looks than in intelligence.

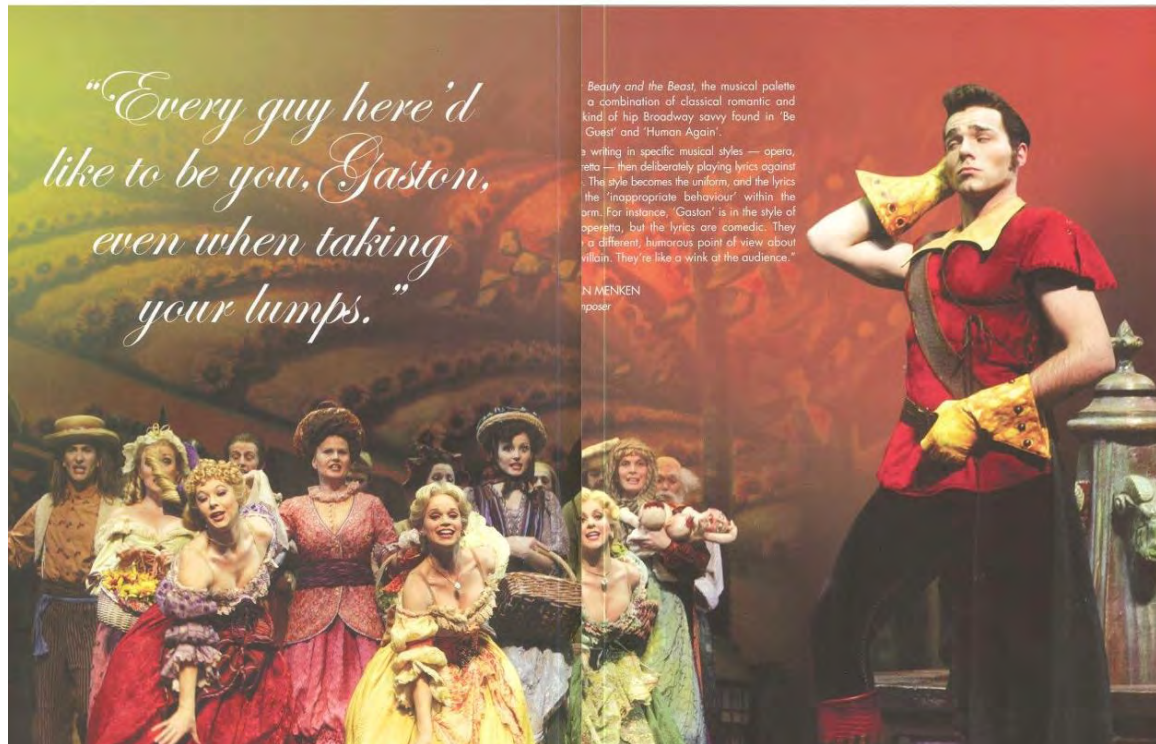


Figure 10

The way in which the actors use the space can be interpreted in specific ways. In productions such as *Beauty and the Beast* there are three different types of proxemic relations that are occurring. The first is the “fixed feature” (Elam, 1980:62) which is the relationship that audiences have with the auditorium and the constructs of the stage itself. Next is the semi-fixed-feature, which concerns the “moveable but non-dynamic objects such as furniture, and... sets” (Elam, 1980:63). The last is informal proxemics, which is the special relationships that the actors have with each other during the performance.

In *Beauty and the Beast* the use of the second two of the proxemic relationships is important, as is evident in Figure 9 and Figure 10. The actors’ special relationships portray meanings such as the acceptance of the character and how that character interacts with the other characters present on stage. *Beauty and the Beast* also analyses the interaction between the scenic designs and the character. This influences how audiences perceive the characters in their locations as well as through their interactions with the other characters. In the castle, the

proxemic relations between the semi-fixed-features is developed through the 'objects' being the characters.

The scenic design that is present in the village scene aims to be a representation of a classic country village where nothing from the outside world impacts upon the villagers. For the village specific lines are used to show that the nature of the inhabitants is gentle and fluid illustrating the nature of village life. There are two backdrops that are representations of the village: the sunflower fields as illustrated in Figure 9 and Figure 10, and a mountain scene as shown in Figure 1, which was used for the first Broadway production. Both of these backdrops show the secluded location of the village and lead to an understanding of the villagers' disapproval of Belle and her need for knowledge. The colour palettes for the backdrop designs both replicate natural influences with a few more green highlights coming out in the sunflower backdrop of Figure 9. The scenic structures themselves place the village in a certain period, mid- to late-1700s, with a rustic French influence in the village architecture, which is enhanced by the costume design,. The use of wooden structures shows the villagers reliance on nature. This is evident in the exterior location of the village and also in Gaston's Tavern; where the interior is decorated with antlers, but more importantly, the extent of the use of wood in the tavern accounts for colour scheme within these two locations.

3.3.2 The Castle

In the castle Esslin's theory (1987) can be applied to the objects within a space and how they are immediately raised to a level of a sign. This is taken one step further by having the objects as the characters. The Enchanted Objects act as symbols and can be associated with certain human qualities. For example; Lumier, Figure 11, is a candlestick which can be associated with romance, which is developed through his French accent, being paired up with a female, Babette, and that the candles are associated with romantic dinners. His characteristics tend to be romanticised and sexually orientated. If one was to analyse the shape of Lumier's outline it can be seen as a phallic symbol, which highlights the sexuality of the character. Mrs. Potts (Figure 11), who has been transformed into a teapot, is associated with the mother-figure of the staff and the Beast. The symbolic sign of the teapot conveys the idea that Mrs. Potts can calm and control the staff and the Beast, but she can also defend herself against danger. Each of the Enchanted Objects can be analysed through their indexical and symbolic signs. They are also associated with their inability to be fully human because they are slowly changing into the objects that they represent. This is highlighted by the scenic design through the analogous

colour palette, disjointed lines and shapes created which suggests an intolerance to trespassers in the castle.



Figure 11

The details of Meyer's scenic design are evident in Figure 12. This is the representation of the bedroom that Belle is permitted to use while she stays in the Beast's castle. The image of the bed is an interesting sign, due to the exaggerations of its majestic nature, as well as the colours used. A bed usually signifies ideas such as warmth, safety, relaxation and has a welcoming feeling associated with it. In Figure 12, however, these associations have been distorted to enhance the symbolic references that the castle represents.

The size of the bed is exaggerated through the extension of the headboard which ends in an elaborate design. Through the distortion of the dynamics of the bed one can see that an expressionistic design style has been used to highlight the use of the bed and to exaggerate the affluence of the designs. Although the bed has been lit in such a way that it has some

pinks on it, the overall appearance of the area is an unpleasant and cold one. Like the castle, in which she is held prisoner, the bed has become a symbol of the unwelcoming atmosphere of her 'prison'. The size of the bed would dwarf Belle, which symbolically relates to the seclusion she feels not only from the villagers, but now also from the residents of the castle.



Figure 12

The surrounding area of the bedroom is predominantly lit in different tonal hues of blue, which influences the atmosphere of the scene and it presents a cooler atmosphere in which the action happens. The size of the bed and the area in which it is located is an index of the grandeur of the castle as it is highlighted by the gold, signifying wealth, which is shown in various places in the design. The gold is affected by the lighting which alters the sign-system of the room when it is lit differently through the castle scenes.

As a signifier, the bedroom represents the 'prison' nature that Belle has to adapt to. When the bedroom is placed within the context of the castle it becomes evident that there is also a theme of grandeur to the decorative pieces of this locale. This is also demonstrated through the costume and lighting design of these scenes. In Figure 13 one can see how the bedroom relates to the signifiers of the castle as a whole, as it illustrates the exterior castle wall with the Beast present in the centre of the piece.

The exterior is elaborate and large in scale. As the Beast is shown against the set piece, he appears small yet still holds a position of power. By placing the Beast in the centre of the set piece he becomes the focal point of the visual image. Although the Beast is wearing similar colours to the exterior, the lighter purple cape draws the eye towards the Beast. The castle itself is decorated in such a way that it has a mysterious and eerie atmosphere about it. This is illustrated through the cold blue accented lighting and the dark shadows that it casts over much of the area. The exterior of the castle being represented in such a way enables the audience to place the sign-systems of this castle within a greater context of what castles usually represent. The gargoyle that can be seen through the trellis and the sharp extended ending of the roof, all connect to show the torment that the beast, and the Enchanted Objects, are living in. The lines of the castle's exterior are symbolic of the torturous nature of the beast. They also a representation of what will meet those who trespass into the Beast's castle. The lines that are used on the exterior of the castle are predominantly staggered diagonals which are sharp and create a staccatoed movement. This represents the sense of a world within the castle as one that is constantly changing as the enchantment progresses.

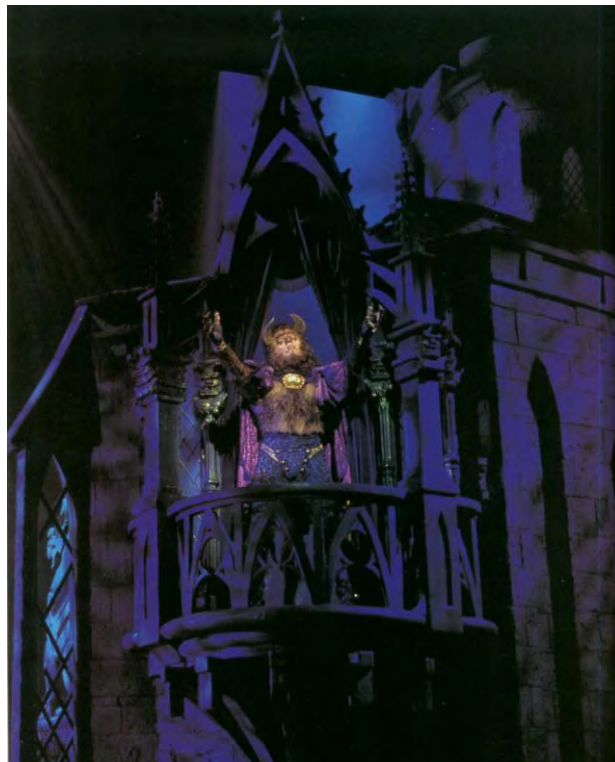


Figure 13

By juxtaposing the exterior of the castle with that of the village, Meyer symbolizes and

stereotypes certain ideas and appearances. The exterior of the castle is made of brick which contrasts with the wooden effect of the village dwellings. The apparent harshness and coldness of the brick, when compared with the warm, wooden structures of the village, seem less cruel when the Enchanted Objects are in the space. The contrast between the castle and Gaston's Tavern ironically demonstrates how incorrect judgments can be assumed; the castle is initially supposed to be the uninviting 'home' of the potential villain, the tavern is supposedly the inviting 'home' of the potential hero, whereas the reverse becomes evident. Meyer's scenography reinforces both the incorrect assumptions and the later reversals.

One of the key symbols that was used in the production design of *Beauty and the Beast* was the image of the rose. This image has been associated with *Beauty and the Beast* since the early eighteenth century. The resident director of the Artscape Theatre in Cape Town, Alan Swerdlow (2008: Appendix A: 112), stated in a press conference that, "the rose is a terribly important symbol because it is enchanted". For most western audiences the rose is a representation of love but in the production the symbol of the rose was changed to generate a new meaning when placed in association with the Beast. The rose became the symbol of the Beast's and the servants' destruction: when the rose perishes so will the Beast unless he finds someone who will love him. Although, in the story, the rose still has a connotation of love, this is not immediately seen. The design team incorporated the symbol of the rose into their designs and roses were used throughout the designs both in the scenic design and in the costume designs. Alan Swerdlow (2008: Appendix A:112) noted that "the symbol of the rose is repeated throughout the entire set. There are roses everywhere. There are roses carved into doorways, there are roses in some of the costumes, there are roses in some of the detailing on various decorations". For example, in Figure 14, the Beast's cape buckle has the image of a rose on it. Figure 14 also allows one to see how the rose can be viewed by the audience.

This image presents the Beast carefully removing the casing of the rose. The care that the actor use when performing with the rose becomes an index of the enchantment that the rose represents and the possible destruction that will come to the Beast. Compared to the other objects that are present on stage, the colour of the rose stands out from the cool colours of the Beast's costume and the colours that are used for the design of the interior of the room. To stress how the rose impacts on the lives of the people within the enchanted castle, the rose is illuminated, giving it a magical presence, which was also highlighted by it being suspended in the air. The rose petals wilt and fall listlessly to the ground, an indexical sign pointing to the

passing of time, and also to the impending fate of the castle if the Beast does not find love.



Figure 14

Throughout the Castle scenes, the colour palette is dominated by cool blues and purples. Meyer felt that this would drain the energy of the cast and wanted to formulate a scene where the castle would transform into a new energetic location. This is seen in the song “Be Our Guest”, Figure 15. During this number the castle transforms from the cool colours to incorporate “hot reds, pinks, and lavenders, with lime and aqua accents [which] pump the energy” (Meyer, 2008: Appendix D: 117). By using these colours the warmth of the Enchanted Objects is illustrated, as is their need to make Belle remain at the castle.

Swedlow (2008: Appendix A: 112) states that, along with the image of the rose, the image of the heart is prevalent: “Because it is such a romantic piece, there is the repetitive image of the hearts” which are found on set pieces and costumes. In Figure 15 the hearts are evident in the circles as well as on the edge of the skirts of the Enchanted Objects represented as napkins. The heart becomes a symbol of the “emotional heart of the story” (Swedlow, 2008: Appendix A:112) as it is a visual aspect in the scenography. Using both the representations of the heart

in conjunction with the rose defines the way in which the audience interprets the scene. For this scene, with the heart images, the atmosphere becomes warmer and the audience is able to see the extent of the curse, of the Enchantress on the castle, as all the objects make their way on stage.



Figure 15

3.4 Animated Influences that were re-created

Beauty and the Beast's transformation from an animated film to a theatrical production was the first of its kind. The initial theatre production that occurred in the Theatre under the Stars was an exact replica of the animated film, as represented in Figures 16, Figure 17 and Figure 18. Figure 16 shows the animated ballroom of the enchanted castle. This colour palette resembles Figure 17 and Figure 18 even though they are representational of a time prior to the ballroom scene in the animated film. The mini production of *Beauty and the Beast* becomes an exaggerated iconic representation of the animated film. This is due to the means by which the design team designed the characters and the setting to represent the images that were present in the animated film.

Through the exaggeration of the iconic representations of the original images, audiences are able to identify the specific characters and situations without explanation because of the familiarity of the designs. One has to keep in mind that this first attempt at re-creating the animated film on stage was only twenty-five minutes long, and because of this limitation the

designers for The Walt Disney Company were unable to develop a thorough reinvention of the film in a theatrical medium. By representing Belle's entrance into the enchanted palace in the way illustrated by Figure 17, the team that was assembled for the theatrical production was able to analyse the reaction to the representation of the animated film as a theatrical production and develop the structure. For the Broadway theatrical production, however, the atmosphere of the animated film was changed. *Beauty and the Beast* was made slightly more sinister through the use of an extended colour palette and through the extension of the plot and development of the characters.

The scenography used in the re-creation and transformation of *Beauty and the Beast* has a strong link to the original images of the animated film. Many critics noted that the theatre production was trying to replicate the animated film on stage with no development in the visual scenography. While there is an obvious sense of replicating the animated film on stage, this was The Walt Disney Company's first attempt at something of this nature. Being unsure of how the audience would respond to an animation influenced theatrical production, The Walt Disney Company originally designed the production as an iconic representation of the animation. Audiences would have been attracted to the production to see how such a story was to be represented on stage.

What is also noticeable in Figures 16, Figure 17 and Figure 18 is the costume design. The initial costume designs created characters that fully resembled the animated characters. For example, in Figure 17 the character 'Chip', a teacup, is represented as an icon of the animated teacup, although he is much larger than in the animated film. In the theatrical production the characters, while still keeping the essence of the animated characters, were changed to suite the style of the performance. So 'Chip' was represented, through the art of illusion, as a teacup the size of a small child's head with the actor's face extended out the side of the cup. This was a more 'realistic' representation of a child who has been turned into a teacup.



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

The visual quality of the re-creation of *Beauty and the Beast* was highly effective for the style of the production. Because of the popularity of the production on Broadway, and subsequently internationally, it was inevitable that The Walt Disney Company would continue to re-create animated films into theatrical spectacles.



Figure 19

3.5 Conclusion

During the re-creation and transformation of the animated film into the theatre production, the different images had to be re-created from one medium into a new medium. For *Beauty and the Beast* the scenography has very strong links to the animated film through the way in which it was re-created. As Meyer noted (Appendix C: 115), to create a theatre production based on an animated film that broke these visual links would not have been accepted at the time. Eisner (Appendix C: 115) also played a vital role in how the designs were made, setting

limitations around how far the scenography could push the visual boundaries.

The re-creation of *Beauty and the Beast* achieved its aims as a theatrical production. It ran for 13 years on Broadway and toured internationally, including performances in Johannesburg, December 2008, and Cape Town, January 2009. The South African performances allowed local audiences to experience the re-creation of the animated film into a theatrical production. These performances used the scenographic designs that were brought out from the United States of America, which presented the audiences with the original designs of the production.

By examining the development of *Beauty and the Beast*, from a mini theatre production to a Broadway production, a complete analysis of it was able to be expressed. The developments in the scenography were shown to illustrate how Meyer created the final scenic elements. This also demonstrates how Meyer re-created and transformed the design elements from the animated film to the theatre production. Although the production was re-created and transformed for the theatre, there were many elements that remained similar to the animated production. The Walt Disney Company, however, stated that this is what they wanted in their first animation to theatre production. As such it became a very successful production, and allowed for The Walt Disney Company to have feedback from reviewers that would influence their creation of subsequent productions.

The designs of the two locations allow for a juxtaposition to be created and audiences are led to believe the village is kinder than the castle through the design elements. This notion, however, is challenged in the production as the ideas associated with the castle are transposed onto the village through the actions that occur throughout the performance. By placing the two locations against each other audiences can note that preconceptions about places and people can be challenged by how the space is used.

The use of certain symbols, such as the rose and hearts, created indexical and symbolic notions that were applied to the characters in the production. The different shapes of the characters, for example Lumier, were also explored to demonstrate how the shapes can affect audiences' opinion, or understanding of the characters and their actions. These symbols were taken from the production and used in the commodities sold at the theatres. This was examined and the iconic nature of the commodities was explained through the limited designs that were incorporated into the commodity designs.

Chapter 4

The Walt Disney Company Creates a Spectacle with *The Lion King* (1997)

4.1 Inspired by the Challenges

After the success of the re-created *Beauty and the Beast* (1994), The Walt Disney Company wanted to transform another popular animated film into a theatrical spectacle. As *The Lion King* (1994) had grossed more than three hundred and twelve million dollars, it became the company's next animated film to transform. The transformation of *The Lion King* (1997), however, would have to be different from that of *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) which "translated pretty literally onto the stage" (Appendix F:120). Although the Walt Disney Company was inspired by the success of *Beauty and the Beast* (1994), they were unwilling to create another theatrical production in the exact way.

For most of the people who had worked on the animated film, the idea of turning *The Lion King* (1997) into a theatrical production was not something they wanted to be a part of as they were unable to envision how it could be placed within the theatrical space (Appendix F: 120). For example Elton John imagined the actors wearing mascot uniforms, while Tim Rice envisioned it to be like *Cats* (1981), "only twenty years too late" (Appendix F: 120). However, Thomas Schumacher, executive vice-president of The Walt Disney Company, (Appendix F: 120) stated that the only way he could "ever imagine it working is to have someone re-envision, reinterpret it for the stage and do something highly theatrical".

In order to achieve this new visual experience of *The Lion King* (1997) Taymor was approached, because of her unconventional design style demonstrated by her previous productions. For Taymor the challenge was in creating a theatre production of *The Lion King* that could incorporate her own unique design style, from a film with "imagery is so identifiable and ingrained in the audience's minds" (Taymor, 2002:61). To break these images by creating artistic representations might potentially be seen as disregarding the audiences' ideas of how the animated film should look as a theatre production. Some iconic images were retained which allowed the audience to accept the changes with more ease. Taymor was drawn in by the large scale of the production and the challenging task of transforming scenes such as the wildebeest stampede.

Taymor's creative ability to transform *The Lion King* (1997), through different styles of design,

puppetry and masks, would, it was hoped, enable The Walt Disney Company to be taken seriously in the theatrical world. Eisner (Handbook, 2007:1) states

this production reaffirms our commitment to legitimate theatre, which began with the record breaking stage production of *Beauty and the Beast* [1994]... . We have assembled a great creative team for *The Lion King* (1997) with backgrounds in theatre, opera, puppetry, and dance to bring a bold new dimension to the source material.

This creative team consisted of Taymor (director, costume design, mask and puppet co-design), Richard Hudson (scenic design), Donald Holder (lighting design), Michael Curry (mask and puppet co-design) and Garth Fagan (choreographer). Through the various areas of expertise within the creative team, the members were able to collaboratively develop the visual experience of the production.

4.1.1 Julie Taymor - a Different Background

Taymor's theatrical based style of directing has been influenced by her international studies and travels. Through training with different teachers such as Herbert Blau and Jacques Lecoq, Taymor learned how to "refine a story into its key elements – turning raw material into a play" (Blumenthal, 1999:12). Techniques such as refining the story were applied to *The Lion King* (1997) to extend the plot and music, as would interpreting the visual images of the animated film and developing new representations for the theatre production. Through the key elements of the animated film, Taymor was able to focus on the story, and how theatrical design is able to tell the story to the audience. Schumacher stated that the initial meetings were based on how the story would be transcribed and, once this was discussed, it was decided that the story would reveal how it could be told (Appendix F: 120).

From Taymor's international studies and travels, specifically in Indonesia she learned how to work with "visually orientated theatre as well as experimental and traditional puppetry" (Blumenthal, 1999:13). She developed the ability to apply different forms of design techniques to a wide variety of production styles. By using experimental forms of visualisation and puppetry that Taymor had learned from various institutions and countries she challenges audiences' imaginations to fill in more and develop the seemingly abstract designs into something that is representative of certain ideas. In so doing the "theatre audience can choose what to look at" (Taymor in Weber, 2006:45). For example, in the opening sequence of *The Lion King* (1997) a variety of animals proceed onto the stage, from various entrances including

processing through the auditorium. As a result the audience has the ability to choose which animals to look at. They may decide to focus on one specific animal the whole time, or move from animal to animal. As one of the designers and the director, Taymor had to take into account the audiences' different viewing choices.

Taymor is noted for her experimentation in various form of theatre, mainly for non-commercial theatre productions. Because of this experimentation, Taymor prefers to be involved in various roles when creating a production, such as directing and designing. For *The Lion King* (1997), Taymor was the director, costume designer, co -puppet and -mask designer with Michael Curry, and worked with Richard Hudson to develop the scenic designs. According to Blumenthal (1999:53), Taymor dispelled

the rampant skepticism [sic] [of] another pairing off with Disney to adapt the animated kiddie movie to live theatre for adult and children alike, she created an all-out smash on Broadway... . *The Lion King* is an artistic triumph as well as a huge commercial success, and its popularity shows no signs of fading.

4.1.2 The Conceptualisation of *The Lion King* (1997)

Although Taymor had been asked to re-create the animated film into a theatre production, The Walt Disney Company executives, such as Eisner, were initially “concerned” (Taymor in Schechner, 1999:44) that her ability to transform this popular animated film into a commercial theatre production might not be successful. Taymor states that the contract with The Walt Disney Company was in three parts, the first of which was conceptualisation. If The Walt Disney Company personnel agreed that the concept was suited to the transformation of the animated film, then Taymor could move on to the second part of the process.

Taymor developed an initial concept to show to The Walt Disney Company personnel that would demonstrate how the production would work within the theatrical setting. In an initial meeting with Schumacher, the producer, he told her to “do it Taymor style” (Appendix F: 120). For the demonstration her design was based on the opening song, “The Circle of Life”, which focused on the concept of the circle and the circular events of the story. Having worked with puppets before, Taymor wanted to extend the boundaries of The Walt Disney Company into a realm where the human could be seen simultaneously with the puppets without a confusion of this anthropomorphic style. The animated film uses anthropomorphic means through the animal characters speaking, singing, dancing, yet the theatre production develops this

anthropomorphic style by having the human body visualised in the designs. Because of Taymor's avant-garde history in theatre, The Walt Disney Company executives were "frightened about it because [with all the puppets on the stage] you don't know where to look" (Taymor in Schechner, 1999:44). In the demonstration Taymor proved that *The Lion King* (1997) could be done with puppets, masks, and effects created with make-up to make an anthropomorphic representation of human and animal. After watching the demonstration Eisner (in Taymor in Schechner, 1999:44) said, "Let's do all the puppet stuff, because it is definitely more risky, but the payoff is bigger".

After this decision was made, The Walt Disney Company allowed Taymor to direct the production as she envisioned it. One of the first changes Taymor made was to the character Rafiki. Taymor felt that there were insufficient principle female characters within the animated film and so transformed Rafiki into a female. She also expanded the role of Nala to heighten the female presence within the plot. This heightened the female aspect of the production and developed a new focus in how the story could be told. The Walt Disney Company consented to Taymor changing Rafiki into a female character, and this aided in the enhancement of the theatricalisation of *The Lion King's* (1994) re-creation.

The production was to now begin with Rafiki, setting a precedent as to how the production was to continue with regards to the female characters within the storyline. Although the character's gender had changed the design of the production character still had a close resemblance to the animated character of Rafiki. The extension of Nala's story develops Nala as a character through her refusal of Scar's proposal and her exile. This identifies her as an important figure within the lioness group as well as in the plot of the production. The design of the lionesses within the production demonstrated the power that the females held within the pride with regards to procreation and their hunting abilities. The other lioness roles were expanded as a pride in the scenes of mourning for Mufasa, the hunting dance and when Nala leaves. Through these scenes the group bond is highlighted. Having the group of females present during these scenes is an indexical signifier of the importance of the lionesses within the production. The iconic representation of Nala's exile is thus heightened due to the other group moments. Nala's exile, however, leads to her interaction with Rafiki, which is an important moment as it demonstrates Nala's growth as an individual and her separation from the pride.

Taymor's theatrical designs aimed to encourage a change from the animated film, as she

“wanted audiences to be released from their memories of the film right from the start, to take a leap of faith and imagination” (in Wickstrom, 1999:291). Once Taymor was able to design how and as she felt it necessary, the concept of the production began to develop. She retained her original idea of the circle, and included the idea of a wheel turning. The wheel was incorporated into the designs of some of the animals, such as the gazelles and the image of Pride Rock rising out of the stage floor. The idea of the circle is displayed through the animated film and the theatre production having a cyclic nature in the plot, as well as in the lyrics and dialogue. The story deals ultimately with the idea of birth, death and rebirth. The theatre production, like the animated film, begins with the birth of Simba⁸, moves through the death of Mufasa and ends with the birth of Simba’s child. Taymor used the cyclic nature of the plot and incorporated the circle into her designs, for example in Mufasa’s mask, the stage floor design and certain scenic elements. The circle show cases a link to nature and the designs that do not have a cyclic element, for example Scar⁹, illustrates his intent to unhinge nature..

In order to re-create *The Lion King* (1994) Taymor used “a breathtaking fusion of puppetry and human performance to re-create the animal characters” (Handbook, 2007: 1). This is evident in the first moments of the performance when the animals enter. The anthropomorphic nature of the designs ensured that the human qualities were illustrated in the way that the performers were costumed, and yet simultaneously the costumes were able to illustrate the animal qualities of the characters. For example the “human qualities of the lions come out in the African-styled beadwork, corsets, armor [sic], and cloth, [yet] the costumes use silk cloth to negate the human shape, breaking the shoulder line, enhancing the powerful joints and thighs” (Handbook, 2007:24). In addition, by fusing the art of puppetry with the human body, the re-creation and transformation of The Walt Disney animated characters was done in such a way as to retain the essence of the characters in the designs, but also re-create new representations of the characters. By doing this, audiences’ expectations are changed: the story remains the same but the way it is told encourages the audience to use their imagination.

Additional to the challenge of creating a fusion of human and puppet was the challenge of creating images of the different landscapes that the animated film presents to audiences. Taymor (2002:106) states that, “the challenge for the creative team was to create a sense of vast panorama, an infinite landscape under a wide open sky. Not an easy task on a

⁸ Appendix I (page 130) has more information regarding the character Simba

⁹ Appendix I (page 130) has more information regarding the character Scar

proscenium arch stage". By envisioning the landscape of Africa, the possibilities for representing the scenic elements of the production could be placed anywhere within the idea of what 'Africa' consists of. Instead, the 'idea' of Africa was represented without locating it within a specific geographical position. The proscenium arch does not offer an escape from this challenge as it presents the designers with sightlines, which hinders their "search for the endless horizon" (Taymor, 2002:106). The idea of creating an African landscape was designed into the stage curtain immediately visible to the audience on arrival in the auditorium and also into the floor design at the Lyceum Theatre in London, this pattern is repeated on the front of the boxes. The drummers are also seen by the audience in the first box on each side of the stage which breaks the notion of hiding the musicians, allowing the audience to see how the music is created.

During the conceptualisation, one of Taymor's ideas was that the mechanical pieces of the stage, masks and scenic designs must be seen. The reason for doing this is that "when the human spirit visibly animates an object, we experience a special, almost life-giving connection. We become engaged by both the method of the storytelling as well as the story itself" (Handbook, 2007:23). By witnessing the mechanics during the performance, the audiences engage more with the piece. Audiences can, for example, be taken in by the different qualities of the scenography. When Pride Rock lifts up out of the stage and the audience is able to visualise how the components work to create the effect, from the rock lifting out of the stage floor and the back half of the stage lifting up, it makes the experience more memorable and exciting. As Blumenthal (1999:211) says,

magic can be generated by blatantly showing how theater [sic] is created rather than hiding it. The spectacle of a stage transforming, of Pride Rock coming into being before our eyes is more compelling, more entertaining than seeing a curtain drawn to reveal the piece of scenery already in place.

Also the ghost of Mufasa was created through a scrim cloth with different shaped pieces coming together to create the shape of the lion Mufasa. This enables a sense of 'magic' in the theatre and allows the audience to be absorbed into the emotional heart of the performance.

With all the mechanics of the production on display audiences have to push their imagination to allow for the mechanics to become part of the presentation. The idea of making audiences take a leap of faith was carried throughout the scenographic designs. Taymor did not want the images from the animations to be re-created exactly on stage, but wanted to use

representations that would lead the audience to abandon their preconceived ideas of what the play should look like from the animated source; she utilised the animation as a starting point and then encouraged them to change their preconceptions.

4.1.3 Cross-culturalism

Taymor was certain that in re-creating *The Lion King* (1994) as a theatre production the various elements that she and the rest of the creative team could bring to the production would enable the designs to be visualised in a cross-cultural setting. A cross-cultural theatre production uses a mixture of numerous cultural sources in a production. For example in *The Lion King* (1997) there are cross-cultural elements in the many types of textures and fabrics used. Among their fabrics are silks, painted in accordance with Balinese art forms to enhance the texture of the material. Other fabrics use beads to emphasise certain sources, as in African 'traditional' clothing. There was also a sense of making the fabrics seem organic. The use of the fabrics can be seen in the costumes, masks and puppets. When the production was performed in South Africa, the designers added local materials to the costumes to give them a more localised textual nature.

Taymor's masks combine the art of traditional African tribal masks with Indonesian masks. The two mask origins work together and present audiences with an interesting and diverse array of mask styles and designs that allow audiences to visualise the ethnicity and nature of the countries through the masks. The diverse forms of puppetry used combine different cultural techniques to illustrate the different characters. By integrating different styles of design in Taymor's concept, the production aims to appeal to differing cultures in a global context.

Cross-culturalism is also evident in the music and in the story itself. The story is a westernised story that has been transposed into an African setting. The music that is used draws on African choruses and rhythms, such as the introduction to *The Circle of Life*, in conjunction with traditional British pop music, such as *Can You Feel the Love Tonight*. These influence the way that audiences perceive the performance. The cross-cultural nature of *The Lion King* (1997) allows it to be adapted for numerous countries; for example, in the South African adaptation local languages (such as isiZulu and Afrikaans) were added to make the production accessible to audiences. Taymor (in Weber, 2006:51) states that she is, "gratified that *The Lion King* [1997] has that wide appeal – that it is not just a display of an American piece of theatre, but it is owned by wherever it is".

Intentionally or not, the varied sources for the designs, plot, music and dialogue resulted in discrepancies as to whether the stage production is cross-cultural or if The Walt Disney Company merely appropriated other cultures for their commercial benefit. Rustom Bharucha (1990:14) says that “borrowing, stealing and exchanging from other cultures is not necessarily an ‘enriching experience’. ... [Cross]-culturalism can be liberating, but it can also be a continuation of colonialism”. Although the production of *The Lion King* does not develop its appropriation of its source cultures to this extent, the commodification of the cultural entities could be seen to be an “exploitation of other cultures” (Bharucha, 1990:14). This exploitation is further explained through Gary Williams (in Zarrilli et al, 2006:491) statement that “intercultural theatre productions...have exploited the languages of theatre – spectacle, music, dance – to be accessible to international audience”. For *The Lion King* to be accessible to an international audience it used a scenography that could be translated internationally, especially because of the productions political stance on race.

Bharucha further states that one

presumes to represent ‘other’ cultures by placing them in one’s own ‘map’ of a post-modern performance. Instead of questioning the validity of this ‘map’ to the individual contexts of other cultures, [one] upholds its universal applicability through links like sociobiology, computer languages and multinational corporations. (1990:28)

In the case studies there seems to be little questioning of the ‘individual context of the cultures’ that are used, even though the productions have been seen by a number of cultures. While Taymor aimed for a ‘universally’ applicable visual context of a representation of ‘Africa’, her links can be seen as using sociobiology and the multinational corporation, namely The Walt Disney Company, to ensure the ‘cultural’ success of *The Lion King*.

The cross-culture nature of the production allows for countries that are affected by racial politics or might have associated themselves with racial injustices, to supposedly be unified through the production which ‘transcends race’ and allows for audiences, “or at least white audiences” (Taymor in Weber, 2006:51), to attend the production without a racial issue arising from which race is acting which parts. However, for non-Caucasians *The Lion King* “is very powerful politically” (Taymor in Weber, 2006:51). This is evident in the placement of a non-Caucasian king on stage during the performance. Taymor (in Weber, 2006:51) states that “*The Lion King* is not about race and, at the same time, it celebrates race”.

Even though *The Lion King* (1997) was noted for Taymor's insistence on casting the actors based on the racial profile, according to Taymor (in Weber, 2006:51) the production itself "transcends race; you don't think about who's black and who's white". This conscious decision does present different political viewpoints to the audience. Taymor stated that one of the reasons for favouring non-Caucasian actors was that, for African-Americans, there had never been a black king represented on the Broadway stage. This was an opportunity to show that representation. Taymor made a decision as to which characters were to be portrayed by "non white people; they could be Japanese, Hawaiian, Brazilian, but they could not be Caucasian. Though you could call it reverse racism, it just feels right" (Taymor in Weber, 2006:51). In some countries, such as South Africa, this decision could be seen as a re-enactment of its past. As one reviewer (Stage Talk, 2008) noted "when the adult Simba comes to reclaim the Pride lands, it is impossible not to be reminded of Nelson Mandela". It was not only in casting a non-Caucasian actor as Mufasa or Simba but also in choosing a Caucasian actor for Scar that highlighted racial stereotyping, whether Taymor intended it or not. The politics surrounding race, especially in South Africa, affects the audiences' interpretation.

It is through the racial fixed casting terms that the designs of the production are viewed. The design styles are appropriated from countries, like South Africa where non-Caucasians have been discriminated against. One has to consider that if the same designs were worn by different races would the impact of them be as great, as audiences applied their lived experiences to the designs and actors that portray a character. While the presence of a non-Caucasian king had an impact on African-American audiences, who do not have a king, the affect for South African's would be different because of their Royal family. The use of the masks, in relation to the race of the actor, display a complete image for the audience who then have to localize, or personalize what the image means for them and for the plot of the production.

Taymor (Wickstrom, 1999:298 & AppendixG:126) states that on completion of the mask designs, "I felt delighted and relieved. I saw Disney, I saw Africa, and I saw my own aesthetic". This statement reinforces the sense of 'universality' that The Walt Disney Company tries to develop through their animated films, and consequently in their theatre productions. Academic critics have a negative view of Taymor's universalising tendencies. To Wickstrom, "the artist, Taymor, no less than her work, *The Lion King*, both become instruments of the out-and-out

commodification of the global crossroads, local space and the experience between” (1999:298).

4.1.4 Critical Response

Before the production had been performed for an audience, Richard Zoglin, a Broadway reviewer, who had watched a rehearsal, stated that, “the question is whether Broadway audiences, who now expect grandiose realistic effects like falling chandeliers, flying helicopters and sinking ocean liners, will be ready to take [Taymor’s] concept just as readily [as the actors]” (Zoglin, 1997). Although his concerns were justified, due to the theatricalised nature of the production as opposed to the spectacular nature of most Broadway productions, *The Lion King* (1997) has become a commercial and critical success. The reviewers who approved of the re-creation stated that it is “a night of constant surprises” (Shand on Disney.com, 2009), and that it is “breathtaking... visually captivating theatre” (Bodey on Disney.com, 2009) style. Others maintained that Taymor had created,

a fantasy world It looks like a children’s picture brought to life... . Taymor’s production – with its vivid set-pieces parades of jungle life, birds on poles and animal silhouettes on backcloth – travels at exuberant pace, pausing for spectacular dramatics... . It lights up the West End with the blaze of Taymor’s fabulous imagination (The Stage, 2006).

There were reviewers who did not find the production any different from the animated film. For example, Wickstrom (1999:292) states that, “the stage production, like the film, avoids emotional complexity in favor [sic] of surface beauty or virtuoso performance”. Wickstrom (1999:291) continues her criticism by illustrating that Taymor’s “claim that the show’s artistry and depth distinguish it from the run-of-the-mill Disney production...becomes a kind of alibi for the commodified Disney context in which the production takes place”.

According to Sternfeld (2006:325): “Taymor did not develop individual characters... - she was all big picture. As a result the show lacked some of the personal ‘suspense of poignancy’ of the film”. This suggests that while reviewers, who enjoyed the production, seem to be focused on the entertainment value of the performances, Sternfeld and Wickstrom’s comments are influenced by the way in which the theatre production was re-created from its animated version. The fact that it is a re-creation of a Walt Disney animated film influenced reviewers who are positive about the production and those that have a negative view of it. Both positive and

negative reviews of the production are influenced by the images and sign systems that The Walt Disney Company portrays. Taymor stated that there is a, “name recognition” (in Schechner, 1999:51) that is involved when audiences decide whether or not to attend a production. *The Lion King* (1994) was one of the most successful animated films produced by The Walt Disney Company, and as such there are certain influences that are drawn from the name recognition. On the other hand, “if *The Lion King* hadn’t been a movie, there would be nothing like this [production]” (Taymor in Schechner, 1999:51).

These reviews demonstrate that the focus of the production was the design component and the way that it was perceived in relation to what audiences had seen in the animated film. Although the design seems to have been a large part of *The Lion King* (1997) the story was developed further to illustrate how the characters reacted to their situations and how the characters influenced the plot of the production. Characters may not have been developed individually (Sternfeld, 2006) but the different groups of characters were extended to show their position within the story and their effect on the lives of the other characters. This was seen through the design of the additional scenes, for example Nala’s exile and Timon and the waterfall.

4.2 The Scenographic Concepts

To understand the complexities of the transformation of *The Lion King* from animated film to theatrical spectacle the production was viewed at the Lyceum Theatre in London. In viewing the production one is able to identify certain elements within the design that were taken from the animation, the iconic images, those that have been changed and those that were created for the theatrical production, which are the indexical and symbolic images. The most evident design aspect is the continuity of the elements which come from Taymor’s vision being such an integral part of how the production was to look and feel, which influenced the final designs and the direction of the actors.

To aid her in her design concept, Richard Hudson was hired as scenic designer. Taymor wanted Hudson to design the scenic elements because he is “a minimalist” (Schechner, 1999:53). The minimal background would allow the rich texture of the puppets to be heightened and a visually rich experience is created for the audience. This was needed as Taymor wanted the puppets and the actor to be, visually, prominent on the stage at all times during the production. As Sternfeld (2006:323) explains: “the visual elements of the show

dominate it entirely... . Taymor's costumes/puppets are fascinating and rarely distracting". The idea of the collaborative nature of the costume, puppet and scenic designs within the production demonstrate the combined ideas of the creative team. For Hudson the idea of designing for *The Lion King* (1997) was a unique experience as "one of the most remarkable things about *The Lion King* (1994) is that it is not set in any specific time... . [He] could not peg [his] designs to a particular date or period as [he] usually does, and that made [him] much freer. The designs were endless, as long as the scenery evoked Africa" (in Taymor, 2002:106).

Hudson's designs have been known to be "reminiscent of the work of those artists who boldly evoke dreams. [His] sense of narrative theatricality leads him to create settings that transform as the performance unfolds" (Davis, 2001:127). Taymor believed that this kind of designer would be able to capture the sense of what *The Lion King* (1994) could be, as a theatrical production. Like Taymor, Hudson "straddles the mainstream and the avant-garde" (Davis, 2001:127), which would hopefully lead to a creative exploration of design ideas for *The Lion King* (1997).

Due to her design concept, Taymor did not agree with all of Hudson's initial designs. For example, Hudson wanted to use a projection for the sunrise, yet Taymor wanted it to be the starting point of what the audience could expect from the production, and so opted for a more representational sunrise, as shown in Figure 20. The sun rising in front of the audience illustrates how it was made as it rises off the stage floor, thus keeping with the idea of the mechanics of the production continually being shown to the audience. As it was the first moment of the performance, Taymor had to develop the relationship with the audience and demonstrate how the performance would proceed. Eventually the sunrise was achieved with flat "pieces of silk, on the floor" (Taymor in Schechner, 1999:53) that were raised, by fly-bars, and held in position by the aluminum bars that the silk was attached to. Figure 21 shows how the representation of the sun was perceived in conjunction with the animal procession onto the stage. The lines of the aluminum bars are evident and create a hazy effect as if the sun is rising.



Figure 20

From this first moment of the production, the image of the rising sun, one can see that Taymor and Hudson's scenic designs are semi-abstract, as "they merely suggest selected features of the reality for which they stand" (Esslin, 1987:74). The abstract reality of the designs for *The Lion King* (1997), form a "tension between what you see, what you imagine, and what you know" (Schechner, 1999:43). Because the mechanics of the special effects were visually clear, Taymor was capable of demonstrating the "distinct theatrical identity through [the] mimetic immediacy" (Wickstrom, 1999: 291). An analysis, using the elements of design can be applied to this opening moment to show the emotional quality that this image evokes. As shown in Figure 20, the colour palette consists of yellows, reds and oranges. This bold palette engages the audiences' senses and is reminiscent of an actual sunrise, yet the horizontal lines visible through the silk, compose the circle image that recurs theatrically not realistically. By using the silk on aluminum bars a smooth texture is created which is juxtaposed with the textures of the animal costumes which are rough and layered, as illustrated in Figure 21. The stage space that the sun uses is minimal, yet it evokes the sense of the African landscapes reminiscent of the opening of the animated film.

To add to the experience of the sun rising, Taymor had some of the animals enter through the auditorium which brought audiences into close proximity with the performers which would

“reveal the [anthropomorphic] duality of the human and the animal” (Taymor, 2002:109). Taymor (in Weber, 2006:44) states that this presents audiences with a “visceral experience”, which is achieved when, for example, one of the performers brushes past an audience member. The feel of the puppet enhances the experience as audiences can associate the textual feel of the puppet with how the puppet moves during the performance. By having the procession of animals walk through the auditorium, the actor/spectator relationship is changed as audiences are now included in the acting space. This boundary is challenged throughout the performance as the puppets engage the audience.

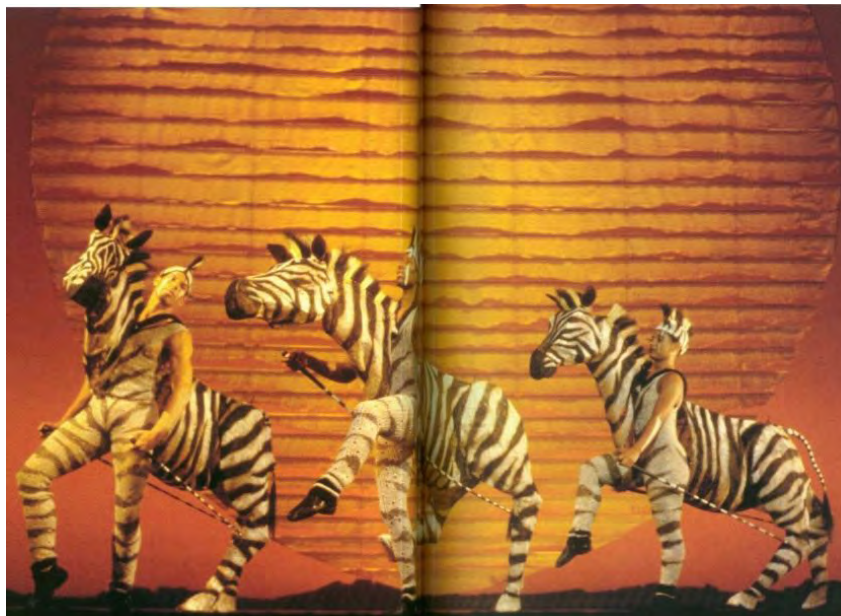


Figure 21

Taymor stated that the most difficult scene to re-create would be the stampede, shown in Figure 22 and 23. As in the animated film the scene is done on a large scale and is critical to the plot. In the theatrical production the effect created by the stampede seems complex and heightens the emotive quality of the audiences' reaction. Sternfeld (2006:324) explains that this “simple, elegant trick was created by mounting different-sized animal masks on revolving cylinders, and engaging them in sequence, closer and closer to the audience. The simplest elements...were often the most theatrical”. The solid vertical lines of the designs reveal the urgency and the dangers that are present for both Simba and Mufasa as the stampede begins to fill the space. These vertical lines are broken by the natural horizontal lines at the top of the structure. The horizontal lines presented by the stage and the designs reinforce the idea of the destruction of Mufasa as he falls. These horizontal lines are juxtaposed against the horizontal

line of the burial slab, which follows the stampede.



Figure 22

The connotations of the earthy red tone used for the stampede heightens the sense of danger through the symbolic quality of the colour red. This is intensified through the repetitive use of the colour within the masks of the wildebeest and in the surrounding scenographic designs. The quality of the red is manipulated by the lighting to show different tones and hues of red throughout the scene, to heighten the emotional impact of the death of Mufasa. The almost bare stage which follows enhances the loss that the pride is going through and the danger which preceded his destruction. The positioning of the lionesses around the body of Mufasa and the crying effect, the actors pulling blue ribbon from the eyes of their masks, foreshadows the events to follow. It is an expression of desolation, not only for the pride and pride lands but also for the developing Simba plot.



Figure 23

Like the re-creation of the stampede, Taymor and Hudson had to re-create Rafiki's tree. Because Rafiki was changed into a female, the tree had to represent her feminine qualities to audiences while signifying the original tree of the animation. The emphasis on the theatrical nature was followed through into the 'painting' of Simba as a cub as this was done through shadow puppets in the central circle of the tree. The tree itself, as shown in Figure 24, is designed to evoke an abstract textual quality through the patterns that are used as representational signs of leaves. The patterns used are symbolic of African patterns, and can be connected to the rock paintings that can be found in various regions of Africa. With these connotations the new leaf designs are intricate and add to the mystical nature of the tree. Having the patterns drawn in this manner emphasizes the feminine mystique of the character Rafiki.

The grasslands that surround the tree are lifted from the floor. This means that audiences first encounter the grasslands as palettes of grass on the floor and only as they continue to rise do audiences notice that the palettes are on the heads of the actors. The tree itself is on a scrim cloth lowered by a fly bar. Rafiki's tree uses a colour palette that signifies ideas such as warmth and has a welcoming nature. It is different from all of the other location designs as it uses the actors as the flora, and a scrim cloth as the set. The difference of this scenographic moment is still linked to the production through the repetition of the patterns used on the floor of the stage which are used in the patterns of the tree.

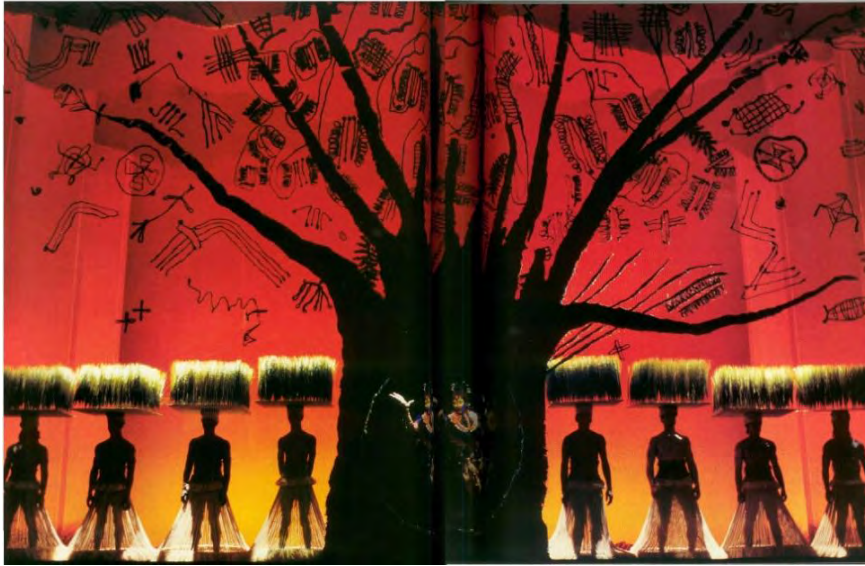


Figure 24

The Lion King (1997) is technologically sophisticated because of its high budget as the London production “cost roughly 6.5 million [pounds] and had taken in advances over 10 million [pounds] by opening night” (Sir Tim Rice, 2010). As Taymor explains, she was interested in exploring the use of advanced technology. She found, however, that what worked best for the production, was not an over-exaggerated use of technology but the “stuff [she’s] done [her] whole life, which didn’t cost anything” (Taymor in Schechner, 1999:45). It is the use of simple acts like the “tears coming out of the eyes. Or the silk going into the water hole. Or the shadow puppets of the fish. Or the little mouse... . They have the power. In fact more power because they are so transparent, so simple” (Taymor in Schechner, 1999:45). These simple acts in conjunction with the technologically advanced mechanics of the production provide an interesting visual aspect.

4.2.1 Pride Rock

The Lion King (1997) had the same challenges as *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) in finding a way to represent all the various locations of the animated film. The production of *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) had two specific locations, the village and the castle, whereas *The Lion King* (1997) had to represent more than two locations. This is achieved through, as Taymor stated, largely minimalistic scenic design which relies on lighting and costume design to make the stage visually appealing. There are three main locations in the production, with the most iconic of the representations being the design of Pride Rock.

Taymor did not want a scenic piece that would protrude onto the stage from the wings. Hudson had to develop a way to portray the essence of what Pride Rock stands for and be able to have it appear on stage. Figures 25 and 26 are rough sketches by Hudson, illustrating the different ideas as to how Pride Rock could be conceived for the theatre production. The initial design, in Figure 25, a “wedding cake appeal [was rejected by Hudson as it was] too symmetrical” (Taymor, 2002: 110). Figure 26 illustrates the beginnings of the spiraling formation.

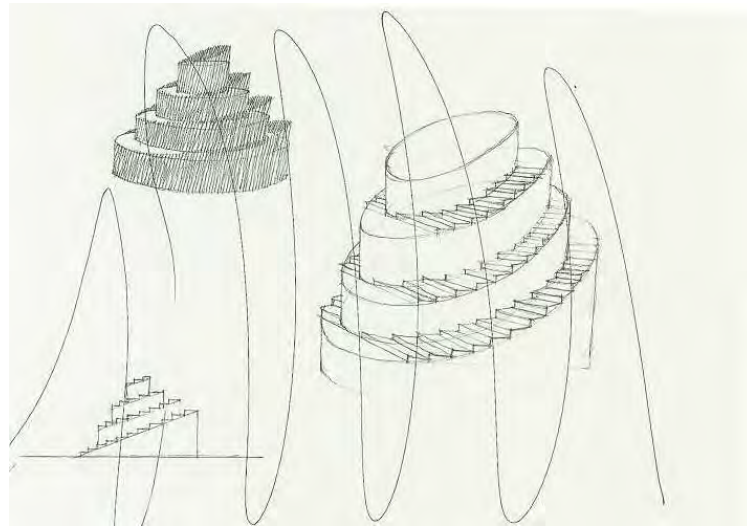


Figure 25

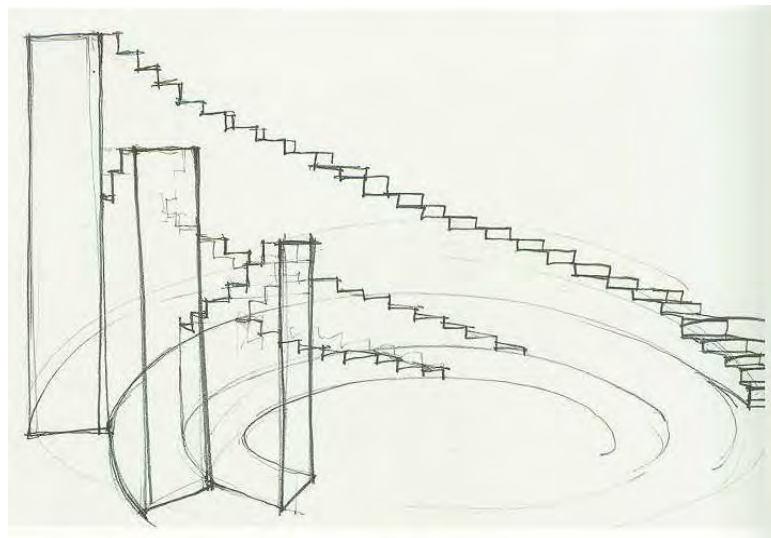


Figure 26

Pride Rock was created so that it would appear from the stage floor. As it rises it turns in a circle, emphasising the circular concept of the production and situating the characters that use the structure within a certain ideal such as one of status and recognition depending on the height and positioning. It was the “mechanics of the Pride Rock design [that] helped drive the overall style of the production” (Taymor, 2002: 68). To ensure that Taymor and Hudson’s idea

would work within the theatre space, Hudson created a scale model for each scene to ensure that the concept they had created would be represented by the designs. The scale models also illustrate how the designs are appropriated from the animated film. This in turn allows for an analysis to be done of the original designs and how these were created on the stage.

A model design of Pride Rock is shown in Figure 27. In this Figure the initial plans for how the rock would emerge, and the lifting of the stage, can be seen. Hudson (in Davis, 2001:128) states that he works with models because they allow for a, “more immediate sense of space... [which] shows the relationship between figure and the set”. During the actual performance, however, these colours were intensified. The colours are from a neutral palette which

primarily consist of a selection greys, beiges, tans, creams and taupe. These colours generally work with most other colours making them excellent choices as background colours for walls and ceilings. In this manner, more vibrant colour choices [stand out when placed with a neutral palette] (artSparx, 2010).

By using the neutral palette, it allows for the emphasis to be on the animal procession and action after the initial awe at the movement of the stage. Pride Rock is seen against the blue of the sky due to the use of earth tones such as brown and subtle reds. For Pride Rock the blue lighting behind the natural colours of the animals illustrates the harmony of nature within the circle represented by the animals. There is no danger represented as the new life is introduced. Pride Rock itself has a textured effect that enables it to stand out from the smooth cyclorama and slightly textured stage floor, allowing Pride Rock to be the focal point. The concept of the circle is repeated within this model through the shape of Pride Rock, the circular effect it creates with the stage floor and the floor in part is tilted and rounded at the edges giving the stage a circular emotive quality.

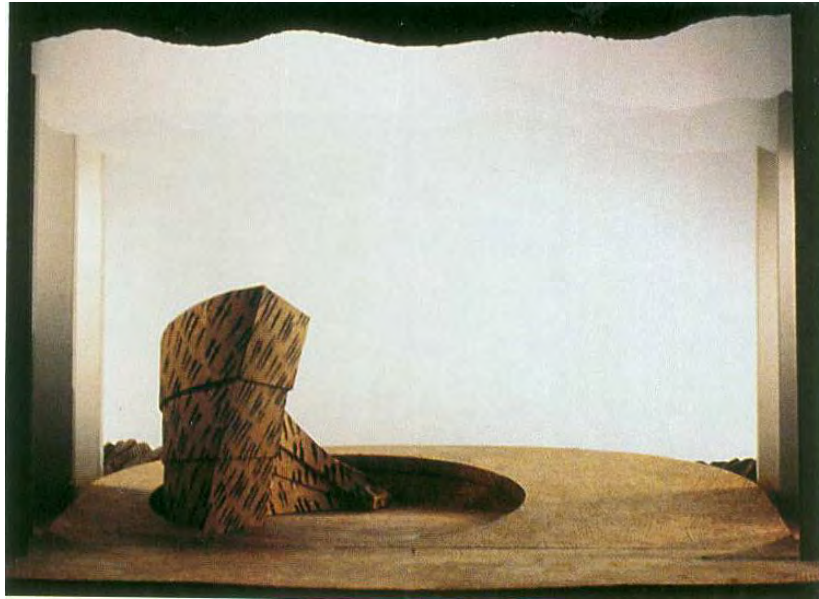


Figure 27

During the performance the audience views a vibrant blue lit cyclorama with a cloud or mountain effect created by hanging material from the fly bars, as represented in Figure 28. The animals on stage become one of the focal points and they direct the audience's eye line to the royal family on the pinnacle of Pride Rock. Simba is noticeable, despite his size, as he is positioned against the blue sky and the complementary yellow hue of his body becomes even more visible due to this positioning.



Figure 28

According to Aston (1991:146) "four distinct levels" can be identified within the design. The functionistic level is evident through the function of Pride Rock, which is to elevate the royal

family while their son is being introduced to the animals of the land. By having the family above the animals a sociometric level is created. The family is of a higher status therefore they are positioned above the herds of other animals. The members of the lion family are also the only animals to have more of the human qualities in their costumes when juxtaposed with the animals beneath them, thus setting them apart. The colours, movements and music create the atmospheric level, which is a jubilant celebration of new life. The symbolic nature evident in the design focuses on Simba who is the future principle character.

4.2.2 The Elephant Graveyard

The Elephant graveyard is a second important location and design as it is juxtaposed with the image of Pride Rock. The visual aspects of Pride Rock are repeated, through a correlation of similar colours, however, these are used to create a distortion of the ideas that Pride Rock expresses. They are connected through the twisting circular nature of their designs “just as Pride Rock is a stylized twisting circular staircase that twists out of the stage..., the Elephant Graveyard is a twisting series of steps made of bones” (Handbook, 2007:27).

The model design for the Elephant Graveyard, Figure 29, illustrates the initial concept of the design. Keeping with the cyclical concept, the structure of the bones is twisted to represent a circular pattern. Like Pride Rock the performers use a staircase to reach the top of the bone structure, from where Scar dictates to his followers. This position enhances the elitist status of the character at the top, with a clear separation, created by the vertical bones, from the animals beneath him.



Figure 29

The design elements used in this structure heighten the juxtaposing of The Elephant Graveyard and Pride Rock. The bones create smooth sleek vertical lines, with texture being introduced only by the joins of the bones. The lines of the bones are not straight, creating a sense of movement or suggesting a desire for change. The design elements distort the emotional quality associated with Pride Rock. The shadows, created by the bones, give the location an atmosphere of suspense and the bones allow many places from which animals can emerge. As a place of death it seems fitting to be the location where the hyenas live, the scavengers of the animal kingdom, and it is the place where the downfall of Mufasa is discussed and agreed upon. The colour palette of The Elephant Graveyard echoes those of Pride Rock through its use of a neutral colour palette. Pride Rock's focal colour, however, was earthy in tone while in The Elephant Graveyard the most prominent colour is the pearly white of the bones, positioned on the brown textured stage floor. Pride Rock is a place of birth and salvation, while The Elephant Graveyard is a place of death and oppression.

During the production the bones can be lit in different ways to create certain effects, as demonstrated by Figures 30 and 31. Figure 30 has the light focusing the attention on Scar, who is at the highest position on the bone structure of the Elephant Graveyard. The remaining section of the bone structure is silhouetted against the cyclorama which is dimly lit to create a feeling of emotional anxiety as well as a sense of uncertainty about what is in the darkness.



Figure 30

Figure 31 shows the elephant skeleton in a new light. Audiences are able to see the joins of the bones and the destruction that the hyenas are capable of through their inhabitation of a

location synonymous with death. The bone structure is covered with hyenas that are all focusing in a specific direction. The hyenas, unlike the bones, are textured. This heightens the distortion of the location. All of the designs within the Elephant Graveyard have a sense of distortion. This is created from the disruption of the circle and cyclic nature. The bones create the space and shadows through which the actors move and as such audiences may only see part of a character as it emerges from or into the shadows.



Figure 31

As Scar is seen as prominent character within this location his design is carried through the design of the hyenas. Their bodies are seemingly out of proportion and their animated facial features indicate their need for simple explanations of complex ideas. They are dressed and designed to create a feeling of military cohesiveness and this conveys their allegiance to Scar. Situating the hyenas on the bones demonstrates their destructive capabilities. The Elephant Graveyard, through the use of dark tints of blues and the stark creamy white bones, demonstrates the threat of the animals that utilise that space.

4.2.3 The Jungle

The Jungle is Timon and Pumbaa's home and Simba grows into a lion under their guidance. The design of the Jungle enhances the differences between itself and the other locations. The Jungle uses more vibrant colours compared to the Elephant Graveyard and creates a sense of the unexpected, for example in Figure 32 the cactus is inflatable and can inflate at a rapid pace

bursting through a trap. Once the cactus is inflated a wilting effect is achieved, by deflating it, when Pumbaa approaches it. By contrasting the two locations of the Elephant Graveyard and the Jungle with each other is demonstrates the different places within Africa, but also shows how the location affects the interpretation of the character. Simba is brought up in a world that is so different to both Pride Rock and the Elephant Graveyard in colour palette as well as values.

For the most part the cyclic designs seem to be used to create vines from the fly bars. The colour palette also changes with the introduction of greens, pinks and purples in the plant costumes and on the insect props. During the Jungle scenes there are no elevated structures on which the animals stand which emphasises that there is no differentiation between them and others. The Jungle appears to be a place of equality.



Figure 32

There is a change in the atmosphere, illustrated by the designs, of the Jungle during the song 'Can you feel the love tonight' as shown in Figure 33. With the entrance of Nala the circles are reintroduced to the design through the plants and shapes that they create, while the circular costumes are highlighted by their complementary colours. In Figure 33 the shapes on the stage become reminiscent of the circles that Pride Rock created by vines hanging from the fly bars and ensemble characters creating different shapes with their bodies. The ensemble creates moments of static when they hold position, for example two characters form the shape of a heart, linking with the music and the emotional quality of the scene. The heart combines

circles and diagonal lines, suggesting a fusion of the past and present for Simba. The conflict is visually present through the use of the circles and the vertical lines that have been used throughout Simba's presence in the Jungle. The echoes his inner conflict of whether or not to return to Pride Rock.



Figure 33

The lines of the Jungle scenes, as represented by Figure 33, present a world where structure and conformity do not seem to exist, this is evident through the vertical lines of the vines which are haphazardly placed. In the Jungle there are various lines, shapes and textures that fill the space. Through the quantity of these elements, the two different worlds, that of the past and the present, are juxtaposed against each other. The new world offers freedom represented through the bright colours of purples and yellows, combined with the natural greens and browns of the earth. The natural element is represented through the plants that are shown, and how the light is used when illuminating them.

4.3 The Puppets and Masks

By incorporating both puppets and masks into the scenography of *The Lion King* (1997), Taymor was able to produce a dual effect. Through the use of various forms of puppetry and the styles of the masks the different effects that were created enhance the designs of the production. The masks, examples of which are represented by Figure 38 and Figure 39, present the audience with a duality of human and animal qualities that is dependent on where the mask is situated, that is, either above the head or in front of the face.

The puppets present a different kind of duality between puppets that are integrated with human qualities, such as Zazu¹⁰, Figure 37, and Timon, Figure 35, which use techniques from Bunraku puppetry. These puppets present audiences with human characteristics and qualities, so much so that they appear as live themselves. The puppeteers are present on stage throughout the performance, manipulating the puppets. Even though the puppeteers are costumed, the puppets' movements and life-like qualities draw the attention of the audience away from the puppeteers. However, audiences are presented with a choice, to either watch the puppeteer or the puppet. There are also puppets that influence the nature of the puppeteer, for example the gazelles shown in Figure 34. These puppets are attached to the puppeteer to enhance their leaping movements. Yet these puppets are unlike their counterparts, such as Timon and Zazu, as they are not built with the ability to portray human emotions.

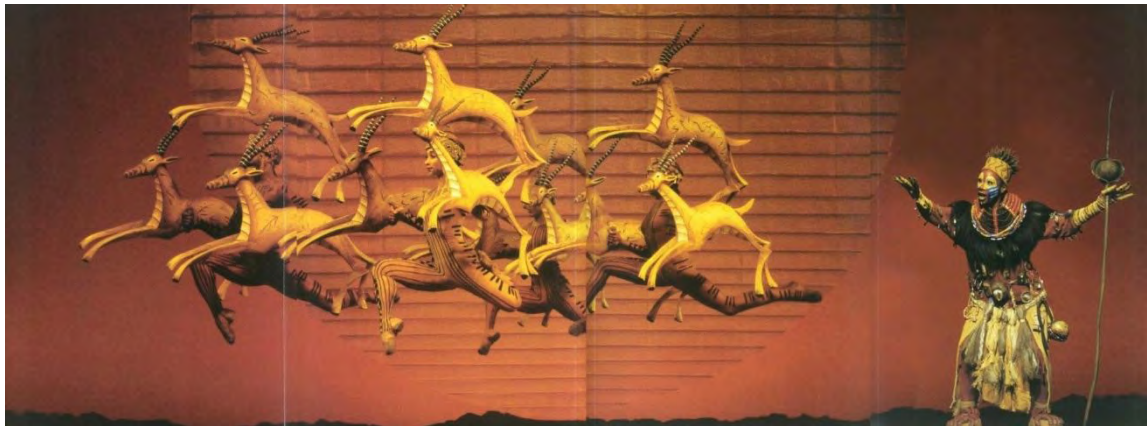


Figure 34

Different styles of puppetry were used such as Japanese Bunraku Puppetry, Rod Puppets and Shadow Puppets. For the Timon puppet, the Bunraku style was used as this best suited the movement desired for the puppet and actor. The shape and size of the puppets were considered in order to develop the best puppet styles for the different characters. The puppets for Timon and Pumbaa, as illustrated in Figure 35 and Figure 36, demonstrate how they were achieved visually with regards to their animated character. Taymor wanted these characters to duplicate their animated characters because they were such important comedic elements within the film. By linking them visually with their animated character the comedic elements of the animated film is transposed to the characters within the production.

It is also through the duality of placing the puppeteers in a visual position that the characters,

¹⁰ Appendix I (page 130) has more information regarding the character Zazu

and puppets, can portray the comedy that the animated characters possessed. Audiences can choose to watch the puppeteer or the puppet. The amount of time that audiences dwell on watching the puppeteer can be attributed to the skill of the puppeteer in manipulating the puppet. The puppeteers' designs were done in such a way that the puppeteers' emotions and actions are attributed to the puppets rather than them being separate entities. This becomes part of the duality that Taymor created.

The puppet Pumbaa, Figure 35, was designed in such a way that the head of the puppet would extend in the front of the puppeteer, essentially with the puppeteer in the middle of puppet. Audiences are able to see into the puppet through the skeletal nature of the side of the puppet. This allows audiences to see the puppet being manipulated by the puppeteer. To link the puppeteer to the character, his make-up and hair design was designed to evoke his warthog qualities.



Figure 35

Timon, Figure 36, was designed to be visually different from Pumbaa. After trying several styles of puppetry, Timon was created using the Bunraku puppetry style. This allowed the puppet to be slightly smaller than Pumbaa, standing at about 1.2 meters in height, and controlled by the puppeteer from behind. Unlike traditional Bunraku puppetry, which uses three puppeteers, Timon had one puppeteer. He was costumed in such a way as to allow the attention to be drawn to the bright brown-orange of Timon, while the puppeteer, who is dressed in green, blends into the jungle background. It was interesting to watch the actors manipulate the puppets and often the facial expression was transposed on to the puppet without the facial structure of the puppet moving. By witnessing the emotion of the actor manipulating the puppet

the audience is able to identify that emotion comes from the puppet rather than the actor.



Figure 36

For both Timon and Pumbaa the use of two heads, the puppets' and the actors' heads, successfully represents the character's look from the animated film, but also the personality of the character needed for the production.

Another type of puppet that was used is the Rod puppet as demonstrated by the character Zazu, in Figure 37. Zazu, like the hyenas, Timon and Pumbaa, is a comedic character, and, through the costuming of the puppeteer, the comic nature of the bird is revealed. The puppet resembles the animated form of the bird, through the puppet design basing the movement colour scheme on the animated character. Taymor (2002:100) states that Zazu is "part British butler, part majordomo" and it is because of this interpretation that she created the costume of the puppeteer as a three piece suit and bowler hat. The make-up of the puppeteer enhances the comedic nature of the puppet as it resembles the traditional make up of a clown in the white make-up around the eyes and mouth.



Figure 37

In the production Rod puppets were created for Simba and Mufasa in the grasslands. Their size was designed to place them in proportion to their surroundings. For example in the scene when Simba convinces Timon to jump over the river leading to Timon hanging over a waterfall the theatrical way in which this was achieved is interesting and creative. A smaller puppet of Timon 'hangs' from a tree over a waterfall which has been scaled down, while Simba stands on the side of the stage talking out to the audience. This scene challenges audiences' perception through the use of the scaled down waterfall in the same space as the original Simba.

In the scenic designs the use of iconic images from the animated films are used in conjunction with symbolic and indexical images. *The Lion King* (1997), in the use of puppetry, has moments when puppets are used to portray what is happening to the actual character. These can be seen as indexical images as they are representing what is happening to the puppet without the actor being present on stage. This is seen through the use of Rod puppets, when Simba and Mufasa are walking through the grasslands and also when Timon falls into the waterfall. Both of these create indexes which point out situations that are occurring to the characters without the actors themselves being on stage. Like the Rod puppets of Simba and Mufasa, there are also Shadow puppets which are used to illustrate the change of location or to overcome a technical difficulty such as the mouse that Scar 'plays' with in the beginning.

Taymor and Curry were uncertain of how to create the designs for the masks for the production, as they “wanted to preserve that flavor [sic] of the characters conceived for the movie, and as written in the script, but [they] wanted to maintain [their] own aesthetic” (Taymor, 2002:75). The masks added a sense of difficulty as, they are unlike a face as the masks can only portray one attitude. Taymor had to develop a look for each of the masks that would embody the ideals of the characters as illustrated in the animated film. The masks of Mufasa, Figure 38, and Scar, Figure 39, will be used as examples to explain how these character masks were developed.

As Taymor (2002:75) explains, the “essence of Mufasa is symmetry... . As part of the symmetrical image, I designed Mufasa’s mane to form a circle around his head”. The circle of Mufasa’s mane links him to the theme of the circle that was present within the production. This would also make him a continual reminder of the circle of life; when he is destroyed so is the cyclic motion of life at Pride Rock.



Figure 38

In Figure 39 Scar is represented and it is evident how he is visually opposite of Mufasa: through the use of elongated hair and a distorted face, Scar’s demonic nature is revealed.

Taymor (2002:76) describes Scar as a, “more active force in the drama... [and] misshapen psychologically... . The Scar mask had a bony, comic yet terrifying feel to it”. By placing these masks above the head they “preserve the vertical lines of the human actors... and provide the horizontal shape of the animal” (Taymor, 2002:87).



Figure 39

Mufasa is visually proportionate, portraying the ideals of balance between nature and the cyclic tendencies it shows. Scar, however, is visually displeasing. His costume is twisted and in complete opposition to that of Mufasa. Through these visual differences the images of the two characters are juxtaposed. The two hierarchies that are set in place are seen to be opposites of each other through the values that each of the rulers have, which is shown semiotically through the designs.

The way in which the masks were designed allows for the dual nature of the personalities to be present to audiences. When the mask is situated above the head it represents the human qualities, while the lion emerges when the character is angry. For Mufasa and Scar the performers lean forward to make the mask drop down over their faces. This allows for audiences to be presented with the lion as opposed to the actor. The lionesses change between lion and human by lifting the masks off their heads and extending them in front of

themselves. A piece of fabric is attached to each mask and around the lionesses' ankles to give an iconic representation of a lioness. To ensure that the weight of the designs did not hinder the actors' performance Taymor and Curry created lightweight masks: Mufasa's weighing 312 grams and Scar's weighing 270 grams.

Through the above discussion of the puppets, masks and some of the costume designs it is evident why Taymor wanted a minimalist designer. All of the scenographic elements work together to create an interesting effect that fills the stage when needed or leave it bare to emphasise a character's situation.

4.4 Animated Influences

The Lion King (1997) was developed differently from *Beauty and the Beast* (1994), yet it still has visual links to the animated version. This is seen in the puppet and scenic designs, as well as in the plot. For the puppets, the comic roles of the characters in the theatre production is enhanced through the visual links that it creates with the animated character: Timon, Pumbaa and Zazu were created as direct representations of the animated counterparts. These characters, in the London production, sounded like their animated counterparts, creating a stronger tie to the animated film and the comedic roles that the animated characters were created to fulfil. While characters like Scar and Mufasa embody the ideas of the animated character, they were created and represented as visually new characters. Other characters, like the hyenas, were designed to show a visual difference between the three main hyenas; Shenzi, Banzai and Ed represented their animated counterparts, while the ensemble had elements of a hyena in their design.



Figure 40

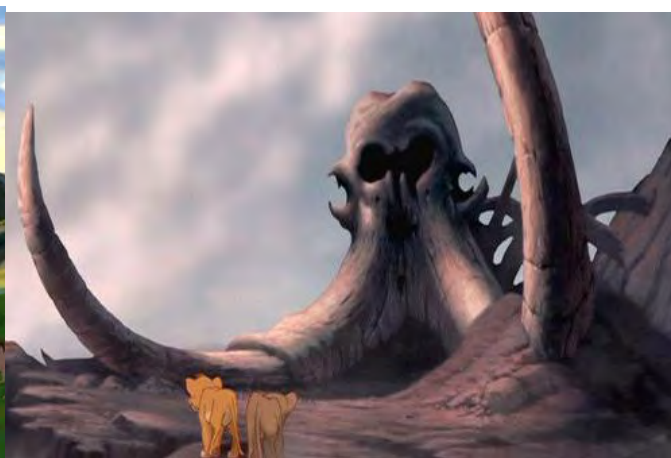


Figure 41

While the scenic locations have the ability to change the visual link to the animation, the link

between the scenic designs and the animation is visually embedded in viewers' ideas. Pride Rock, Figure 40, The Elephant Graveyard, Figure 41, and the Jungle all represent the locales from the animated version, taking ideas from what each of the areas represent and creating signs within the designs that resemble those ideas. However, through the development of the plot, there were new scenic designs added that have little link to the animated film. For example, part of the theatre production demonstrates the drought that occurs in the Pride lands. This is visually achieved through the use of the waterhole in Figure 42. The blue silk cloth is pulled through a small hole in the stage floor to create the illusion of the waterhole drying up. This effect accompanied by the actors' and puppets' reactions and the dialogue, creates a complete series of events that allows the audience to make decisions as to why certain events, such as the drought, have occurred. The drought juxtaposed against the fertile land where Simba is in exile and the waterfall scene which almost ends in disaster.

Figure 42 illustrates the minimalistic scenic design of the silk waterhole which creates a dynamic visual contrast between the intense blue of the waterhole, the dark blue sky and the vibrant colours of the birds and the costumes of the actors on stage. This is part of the theatricality that Taymor was aiming to achieve. By having the birds as material on sticks the idea of theatricality is brought to the forefront. There are no special effects when portraying objects, like the birds, they are simply created and presented as this to audiences. The drought effect could have been done through expensive technological equipment, yet Taymor's theatrical solution allows for the effect to be created by simple means.



Figure 42

4.6 Conclusion

The *Lion King* has been a commercial success: different productions have been performed for thirteen years, and is sold out for all of the performances currently at the Lyceum Theatre in London. The transformation of *The Lion King* had to be creatively done to draw audiences to the theatre. As a result of some of the negative reviews from *Beauty and the Beast*, The Walt Disney Company had the opportunity to approach the subject from a different view point.

The new theatre production of *The Lion King* altered the plot and characters, and placed the action around designs that aided the performers. Taymor's creativity and knowledge of different design styles and experience of other forms of theatre enabled *The Lion King* (1997) to be a commercial success. Because of that success, *The Lion King's* touring production came to South Africa and, as with *Beauty and the Beast*, the main scenographic designs replicated the original. The South African version catered for local through changes in the designs and dialogue, which demonstrated the desire to appeal to the local community by The Walt Disney Company.

An exploration of the designs, as re-created and transformed from the animated film, showed that the re-creations and transformations had to still be recognisable when placed within the new medium. The designs were placed within a specific context and concept, and either adhered or broke this to portray certain ideas about the locations or characters. Through The Walt Disney Company asking Taymor to develop the designs; the production was able to be created in a different way to most commercial theatre productions. Taymor wanted to present the production as a theatricalised re-creation, transformation and representation of the animated film. In order to achieve this she presents audiences with the mechanics of the production. The actor is visible in all of her designs, as is the mechanical aspects of how the scenes changed.

These designs were then explored further in connection with the commodities that are sold at the theatrical events. The designs of these are done to appeal to a wide variety of consumers and therefore must have designs from both the animation and the theatrical production. In having these commodities it can affect the way in which the production is remembered by the audience, as the commodity becomes a sign of the production through audiences' placement of the commodity into the theatre realm.

This dual nature is echoed in the design styles of the puppets and the puppeteers. Their dual nature was explored through their designs and it was found that although audience may choose where to look during the production that it did not hinder the flow or storyline. By having the puppeteer and puppet present at the same time audiences are able to apply what the actor does to the puppet, as with facial movements of gestures that the puppet cannot make.

The Lion King is noted for its success and through an exploration of the creativity of the designs, through the re-creation and transformation, one is able to see why it is a success. The designs in a megamusical are integral to the action of the production and as thus the designs of the scenic elements, although minimal allow the designs of the characters to be placed at the forefront of the visual elements.

Conclusion

Throughout this dissertation *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King* have been analysed in relation to their re-creation and transformation from animated film to theatrical spectacle. As it is clear both creative teams were required “not simply to translate, but to reinvent the animated feature for Broadway” (Frantz in Lassel, 2002:23), the outcome of the analysis was to show how these theatre productions were created in such a way as to ‘reinvent’ the scenography for the audiences. As both productions were classified as megamusicals, (Sternfeld, 2006), elements from this genre of theatre were important in the analysis of the productions. The importance of scenography has altered through theatre history and has become increasingly important in contemporary theatre productions. The use of scenography in megamusicals is one of the aspects that formulate how the production is perceived by the audience and actors alike. The scenography consists not only of the scenic design but also the influences that the costume and lighting have on the scenic elements, and the image it represents as a whole. This was investigated to demonstrate how lighting can change the appearance of the design, both by adding more light and the use of shadows. This is used in both of the case studies to illustrate certain tensions and moods. Through these changes, audiences are able to experience a wider emotive response to the production.

By examining the development of The Walt Disney Company, in Chapter One, it demonstrated the way that the company grew from its inception to creating theatrical productions. The reconstruction of 42nd Street shows that The Walt Disney Company was not only re-creating its animated films but also the specific areas in which their productions were going to be performed. Through this reconstruction the ‘Disnification’ of the area was explored to express what elements were kept, such as the key architectural structures in the New Amsterdam theatre, and what elements were not kept, for example the pornographic stores. This creates an understanding of what The Walt Disney Company promotes through its animated films and theatrical productions, as these actions comment on how the company is perceived by audiences, and these preconceived notions are then applied to the productions that are viewed.

The beginnings of a discussion around the re-creation of the animated films into theatrical spectacles began by introducing certain key terms, which were later used in the analysis of

Beauty and the Beast and *The Lion King*. This chapter sought to develop an understanding of The Walt Disney Company and also create an understanding of how these theories would be applied to their animations and theatre productions by introduction of certain terminology to the examination. As The Walt Disney Company have created theatre productions, the semiotics that are found in theatre interpretation applies to their re-created works and therefore the discussion of these ideas develop the understanding of The Walt Disney Company's further development into theatre productions.

The debate concerning the importance of spectacle/scenography within theatrical productions was examined, in Chapter Two, to demonstrate that, while some theatrical genres may succeed without sophisticated scenography, the megamusical is shown to need elaborate designs to convey the grandeur of the theatrical event. The elaborate nature of the scenography within the megamusical genre was investigated through a theatrical framework which represented how the scenography in the megamusical is influenced by the animated image. As the case studies were transposed from one medium to another, the images from the animated films were fundamental to the immediate recognition of a seemingly new and re-created and transformed image within a new medium. The knowledge of The Walt Disney Company and theatre semiotics is expanded on through an examination of the megamusical in relation to *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King*

The re-creation and transformation of animated films as theatrical spectacles has been proven to succeed commercially as seen in the success of the megamusicals studied. It is because of their success that one is able to note the challenges that the creative teams had to overcome, and how these challenges differed for each of the productions. Although both *Beauty and the Beast* (as examined in Chapter Three) and *The Lion King* (as examined in Chapter Four) have the same medium of origin, and both involved a re-creation from animated film to theatrical spectacle, the two differ greatly in the scenographic elements and style of the final product. This divergence is partly due to the difference in the creative teams and the working styles of Meyer and Taymor. The Walt Disney Company had the reviews of *Beauty and the Beast* to consider when they were planning to produce and decided their second animation to theatre production would not be a visual replica of the animated film. The designers were able to develop a new understanding of what to alter in order to not only once again draw audiences into the theatres for this new re-creation, but also appease critical reviewers.

In studying these different approaches one can determine how the scenography can change to allow for different interpretations to be visualised even though the original source medium is the same. In the electronic interview with Meyer he stated that he wanted to do a less scenographically replicated design for *Beauty and the Beast*, but because of Roth's concept and The Walt Disney Company's influence he had to design in the style that was demanded by the director and producer (Appendix C: 115). Taymor, however, was allowed to experiment more. Although there were negative reviews for *Beauty and the Beast*, the action called for the production to be done as a representation of the animated film. The enchanted nature of the castle had many challenges; so too did the costuming of the characters. *The Lion King*, however, could not be done in the same manner as The Walt Disney Company did not want to repeat the same design approach. The subject matter of the production also enabled it to be more diverse in its design than *Beauty and the Beast*.

The analysis of the productions was conducted to investigate the importance of the scenography within the megamusical genre and also the ways in which these representations were either derived from the original animated images or newly created. In both the case studies it is evident that the scenography is important due to the support that it offers the actors during the performance but also as confirmation of points in the dialogue that emphasise certain moments for the audience. The layering of codes within the images taken from the animations, or those created specifically for the stage version, allowed the production to be a new representation of the animated films, while still recalling the film's images. The differing images and representations allow for the audience to become more involved in the production as it is visually different from the animated film, due to the extension of the plot and the development of characters. As a result of having visual similarities between the animation and the theatre spectacle, audiences can apply a prior knowledge of the plot and be more accepting of the changes and developments that the designers have made within the production. Audiences attending productions such as *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King* do not expect to see the film but rather how it has been reinterpreted for the stage, and to witness how the actors, designers and directors have re-created the piece for the new medium. This re-created version of the animated film is visually appealing. Through the application of a semiotic analysis, the visual elements were decoded to illustrate how the scenography of the productions offers a new understanding of the animated films.

An investigation as to the cross-culturalism of *The Lion King* was undertaken to demonstrate

the differing nature of what was intended compared with how it was interpreted by reviewers. Although Taymor stated that *The Lion King* transcends race, certain reviewers noted that moments within the performance could only be paralleled with certain racial historical events, especially within the South African context. While one might try to transcend race, audiences who have experienced racially directed politics will see racial issues within the theatre production. A continued analysis of The Walt Disney Company's multi-cultural appropriations led to discrepancies and debates. Many of the Walt Disney animations have been appropriated from different cultures. An example of such appropriation was the use of local phrases and materials within *The Lion King* (2007) production in South Africa, and the appropriation and stereotyping of French folklore and hospitality in *Beauty and the Beast*. While *The Lion King* seems to have more cross-cultural appropriations, *Beauty and the Beast's* appropriation focuses on the style of the design reflecting the ideals of French villages and the nature of the servants.

The designs of the productions are also investigated in relation to the commodities on sale at the theatre. Through this investigation, aided by Wickstrom (1999), it is evident that while the commodities may heighten the commercial profit of the production they do not enhance the individual nature of the designs presented in the production. The impact of commodities on the productions has also created a new experience for the audience as; the images used for the commodities enhance the theatricality of productions. As The Walt Disney Company has a global influence within different cultural contexts, its impact on the sale of the commodities from the productions demonstrates the commercial value of Walt Disney productions.

Beauty and the Beast and *The Lion King* received both positive and negative reviews, with minor caveats. These reviews were included in the analysis and proved that even though the reviews of *Beauty and the Beast* were taken into account there were still negative reviews about *The Lion King*.

Through the investigation and analysis one is able to conclude that the scenography of a production within the megamusical genre is highly important. Although both case studies began as animated films, their theatrical counterparts are diverse and allow audiences to embrace the new imaginings and re-creation of the original images. Because of the commercial success of the commodity sales, the commercial value of the productions has ensured that the re-creating of animated films to theatrical spectacles has continued with the

creation of more recent productions by The Walt Disney Company, such as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1999), *Tarzan* (2006) and *The Little Mermaid* (2008).

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APPENDIX A

Media viewing of the Cape Town Performance of *Beauty and the Beast*

2009 Alan Swedlow

Artscape Theatre, Cape Town

Transcribed by: Kirsten Tait

Alan Swedlow: Right, welcome everybody to the special media afternoon with Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, it's a great big spectacular Broadway musical with all the bells on and everything that you expect. Just to put you into the picture as to how the production actually came about – the physical production. Initially a team comes out from different parts of the world, in fact assembled by Disney Theatricals in New York and they come out and teach us the show. It's an entirely South African cast. It's entirely in that sense an entirely South African production produced by Peter Torien and Hazel Feldman, and I want to urge, stress this point that this is probably one of the biggest and spectacular musicals that Cape Town has ever seen and as long as the audience's come that will give the encouragement to do further productions of this nature. It cost a great deal of money. The entire set, costumes, props everything that you see has been shipped out from the United States. The production as you see it is the production you would have seen if you had attended it on Broadway. The international actors who came out and taught the show to us to our technical crew because there's a lot of technicality involved in the show and of course to Gill Simmons, who is the resident choreographer and I take the role resident director. There are 34 people in the cast, there are 60 people working back stage every night just to give you a little indication how big the show is, we are going to present two numbers from the show for you. Just before we go into the actual numbers themselves I would just like to give you a little bit of background. *Beauty and the Beast* the actual story is perhaps one of the newer fairytales. It can be taken back to the late 1800 century. It appears in various forms but is originally French, *Babelle ella Bet* and it has been filmed before. The most famous version ...done immediately after the Second World War.

Disney filmed the animated version and released it in 1991. It was already a musical version with a score by Alan Menken and the lyricist Howard Ashman...It was around that time when the movie was completed when Frank Rich the famous butcher of Broadway said: that the movie was the best musical on Broadway that year and contained the best score. The film is very much shorter than the actual show, because initially it was designed very much for a family audience and has very much fewer songs. Additional songs were added to the Broadway production... The story deals with a spoiled prince bewitched into becoming a beast. Because he spurns the enchantress cruelly he is set the task that he has to find somebody to love him and her can love them in return only then will the spell be reversed and he will be a human being.

In Gaston's tavern people come together for a drink in the evening, but this particular evening that we are going to see, Gaston is in a fowl temper because he has been spurned once again by Belle, she has refused his offer of marriage. He's rather down in the dumps and when he's down in the dumps everyone gathers around to try desperately to cheer him up.

There are quite a few costume changes that you are going to see. There are a great deal of costumes in this

production some 700 costumes came out from New York in different styles, different combinations, uh just about everyone in the production wears between 5-8 different costumes of an evening for different scenes. Obviously there's a time changes and people do change their clothes but there are various outfits that people wear in addition to the outfits in the castle who all have their own specialized costumes. They were all built in – and when I say built the objects costumes were literally built in workshops in New York – the prince's jacket is so heavily encrusted with beading and crystals uh I made a silly joke the first time I saw it I said I suppose a whole bunch of people in Blyh were sewing that, they said not quite but certainly twenty Russian ladies spent their time beading that jacket – that Anton will be wearing for the interviews so you will be able to see the details and workmanship that goes into that, uh silk, velvet no less. It's a kind of show that we- uh you know when we think about the expense to put something like this together is just mind boggling.

Just a word about the actual logo, obviously the Beast looking at the rose, in this particular version of the story and in most versions of the story dating back to the 18th Century the rose is a terribly important symbol in the production because it is an enchanted rose, that the enchantress gives to the beast and as long as that rose remains whole and intact and doesn't die he has a chance of turning back into a prince – if the rose dies before he has found someone to love him and love them in return he will stay the beast forever. So the rose symbol you see him holding, uh, is repeated throughout the entire set there are roses everywhere. It's worth having a little squiz carefully at the set design itself because there are roses carved into doorways, there are roses in some of the costumes the people wear, there are roses in some of the detailing on various decorations. I am still finding new roses everywhere. And, uh, there's also the repetitive, because it is such a romantic piece, there is the repetitive image of the heart and it's also worth looking out for that because the hearts are also everywhere on the set and it quite fun to find, and we still look up and say Oh, I discovered another one, uh, that we overlooked.

Gaston's Tavern, just to remind you, he is very depressed, he's, uh, he's been spurned by Belle for the umpteenth time, and people are trying to cheer him up lead by Lefou. It also contains a great example of the spectacular choreography that is the hallmark of the show.

APPENDIX B

Biography of Stanley Meyer

Programme Notes for *Beauty and the Beast*

Johannesburg, 2008

Scenic designer

Is the recipient of an American Theatre Wing Design Award nomination, New York Outer Critics Circle Award nomination, Los Angeles Ovation Award nomination, multiple Los Angeles Drama Logue Awards, first recipient of The League of American Theatres and Producers National Broadway Theatre Award. His design credits include everything from Soth California's Grove Shakespeare Festival to Conceptual design and development for clients including: The NIKE Corporation; Bounce Event Marketing; SONY; Six flags New Jersey; Sea world Antonio, Sand Diego and Orlando; Busch Gardens Tampa and Williamsburg; Inmotion Entertainment; Lotte World; Thinkwell Design and Production; Universal Studios Orlando; Madame Tussaud's; Clear Channel Family Entertainment's National Tour of *Time for Teletubbies!*; A design segment for IKEA's television show, *Space for Living*; *Happy Harmony Celebration*, Universal Studios Japan's spectacular street show featuring the characters of Peanuts, Sesame Street, Hello Kitty and Shrek; a plethora of industrials, parades and special events for the Walt Disney Company including a rock and roll version of *The Nutcracker*, filmed for the Disney Channel; #1 rated attraction 2 years in a row for Sea World Orlando – *Blue Horizons*, a stadium show featuring a cast pf whales, dolphins, trainers, acrobats, and divers; THEA Award Winner: Best Spectacular – *Peter Pan's Neverland*, A Lagoon Nighttime Spectacular for Universal studios in Japan; *The Nutcracker Ballet* for Lone Star Ballet Texas; Alice Cooper's 2007 and 2008 Tour; Disney Live – *Three Classic Fairytales!*, Feld Entertainment, Inc; 2008 True Colors Tour featuring Cyndi Lauper; Happy Halloween parade for Universal Studios Japan and *BUZZ!!* a Las Vegas Musical Spectacular about the life of Busby Berkly.

APPENDIX C

Electronic Interview with Stanley Meyer

January to October 2009

Transcribed by: Kirsten Tait

I was working at Disneyland, as an art director designing stage shows, parades and special events, when I was approached about designing Beauty [*Beauty and the Beast*]. The director, Robert Jess Roth, and I had met in college and worked on many shows together over the years. Our choreographer, Matt West, came on later to become part of our collaboration. To this day Matt and Rob are some of my dearest friends. We had produced together a number of inventive original stage shows for the Disney Company when the idea off first doing *Beauty and the Beast* as a stage musical came about. Michael Eisner, the CEO of the company, had been working with us closely on these original inventive musicals. There were a number of other people who thought they were entitled to be the team to create the first musical for the Walt Disney Company but in the end Michael Eisner took a huge chance giving a relatively unknown creative team the opportunity to prove themselves. After all, we had come through for him and Jeffery Katzenberg before, so why not this? His decision ended up being the most lucrative business deal of his career by making over 2.5 Billion Dollars for the Walt Disney Company.

We pitched a number of ideas for the concept of the show. One design idea has the show located on an enormous rose in the centre of the stage. The rose would turn and one of the petals from the rose would lower revealing the scene for which the story was to take place. When the scene was finished the rose would detach and float away offstage. When we finally were at the end of the show you were left with the final petal dropping from the giant thorny rose stem as Belle professes her love for the Beast. The rose would then bloom again filling the stage after the transformation. Though an interesting idea, Michael Eisner was very clear that he wanted to produce a 1950s style Broadway Musical, like the kind he grew up seeing on Broadway. He wanted the scenic elements to be very traditional, almost a bit old fashioned. It was wing and border. It was a time honoured tradition of flat scenery painted to look dimensional. *Phantom of the Opera* was the biggest musical to come out before *Beauty*, so Michael Eisner was also clear about the opulence and grandeur that would need to be onstage in order for it to compete with the some market as *Phantom*.

It was my idea to design the scenery in such a way that the scenic elements would move and change a vista, instead of setting the scenery up and “revealing” in a very old fashioned way, where the scenery is set up backstage while the scene is taking place downstage or “in one”. It was also the goal of our team not to use blackouts at the end of every scene and to only use them as a way to punctuate a scene emotionally rather than just end it. If you notice in our staging the first true blackout does not come until the scene where the Beast tells Maurice at the fire place “I’ll give you a place to staaaaaay”. This allows the story and emotion to flow rather than having the need to gear back up because the audience is sitting in the dark waiting for the next scene to start.

Even though Michael Eisner was clear as a producer, all of our specifics and details came from our director Robert Roth. Rob and I sat for many days as we discussed and envisioned what the set could be, specifically the castle scenes. We knew we did not want completely separate sets of scenery for each scene like in the cartoon; also

there was not enough room in the theatre to contain all of that stuff so we created something, which we affectionately called to “all purpose Shakespeare set”. The castle would be a multilevel platform with stairs and balconies that would traverse from upstage to downstage. By simply traversing the actors up and over this unit and rearranging the columns, torn bits of swags ,and lighting the audience would be transported from a dungeon to a bedroom in just seconds. This made the castle less literal and left more up to the imagination of the audience. To this day I wish the design could have been way less literal and had evoked much more a sense of environment, place and feeling. But at the same time it was so too different an idea from the cartoon.

My first big diversion in the design from the cartoon was the garden scene. In the cartoon the scene in the ballroom was all about Belle and the Beast dancing in the ballroom. It was the first animated film to use computer based animation on that level with the animation feeling as if it were the camera swirling around the characters as they danced on a big marble hall. I thought the idea of them falling in love in that space was sterile and not very romantic. I discussed this with the director and we went to our producer. I ended up coming up with an idea that made the producers feel comfortable where the scene took place in a beautiful eighteenth century garden that was overgrown with foliage. The architecture of the garden was evocative of the ballroom from the cartoon ballroom with its many grand arches. I also thought it could be lovely that we returned to the garden in the finale and the audience would watch the overgrown arbor bloom with rose’s right before their eyes.

The hardest job for myself was making the cartoon come to life onstage. I knew we had to make it three dimensional and textural in a way that allowed the audience access to the story and emotions of the characters. From the very beginning Ann Hould-Ward the costume designer, Natasha Kats the lighting designers with myself strived to create a world that was not only beautiful but was textural and real. We had t create a world where the audience believed the story could actually happen.

After we opened the show on Broadway the first big scenic visual change we made to show was with the opening town number. Many of us associated with the show wished the opening number of the show was bolder. The pallet for the town in the original production, like the cartoon, was in a spring pallet with a lot of green in the foliage of the birch trees, making the design feel very cool in temperature. I believed if we made a drastic change in the pallet and changed the colour of the town drop to be autumnal in feel with strong reds, russets and yellows that the show would have a hotter more bold beginning. I also believed it would give a greater difference between the world of the small little town and the enchanted world of the castle which was in bright turquoises, blues and purples.

Later we would come up with a version of the show that stripped the design of the show down to four castle columns, 2 torn swag panels, the west wing unit (because it had to house the levitation device) and a few props pieces. This version of the show is my most to date because it allowed the audience to use their imagination a bit in visualizing what the castle interior could be. The design allowed for intimate moments and also very moments that made the object the castle almost seem as if they were in miniature.

APPENDIX D

<p style="text-align: center;">Programme notes for the Production of <i>Beauty and the Beast</i> Johannesburg, 2008</p>

Alan Menken: For *Beauty and the Beast*, the musical palette was a combination of classical romantic and the kind of hip Broadway savvy found in “Be Our Guest” and “Human Again”. I like writing in specific musical styles – opera, operetta – and then deliberately playing lyrics against style. The style becomes the uniform, and the lyrics are the ‘inappropriate behaviour’ within the uniform. For instance, “Gaston” is in the style of an operetta, but the lyrics are comedic. They give a different, humourous point of view about the villain. They’re like a wink at the audience.

Tim Rice: When I was invited to join forces with Alan Menken to develop *Beauty and the Beast*, I wanted to continue Howard Ashman’s creative vision and to make sure that everything we wrote was true to the spirit of the show. We didn’t need more show stoppers like “Be Our Guest” or “Gaston”. But we did need songs to expand the characters and their relationships. For instance, “If I Can’t Love Her”, deepens the Beast’s character by revealing his human longings.

Stanley A. Meyer: I make very specific choices about the use of colour to support and communicate the story and the spirit of the show. For instance, the red Enchanted Rose glowing against the castle’s cold blues and purples is a constant reminder of the Beast’s story. Hot reds, pinks, and lavenders with lime and aqua accents pump up the energy in “Be Our Guest”. And Belle’s blue dress against the earthy tones of the village sets her apart before she’s sung even one word. We respond to colour subliminally, so without pulling focus from the actors, the music or the story, colour contributes to how we understand and experience the story emotionally.

Matt West: In developing the movement for the Enchanted Objects I wanted to emulate the glamour of the Busby Berkley musicals, but add a touch of humour. I did this by exploring the objects’ human side. Ann Hould-Ward and I spent hours looking through kitchen shops asking ourselves, “how would a body move in this?” The effect I wanted was for an object not just to be a spoon, but a person trapped inside a spoon. The character is sharing a little joke with the audience saying in effect, “yes, I’m a spoon, but there’s also a person in here!”

Ann Hould-West: As we’ve opened new productions around the world, it’s been fascinating to see how different cultures have affected our own visual thought process on the costume design. Artists in every country are affected by where they live and the way they relate to light. The costume colouration in the Mexico production was very different from the Japan, for instance. We’ve also changed costumes to reflect different social norm. For example, in Vienna, there is a very refined definition of appropriate fabrics for the winter ball season, so we adapted those choices for the ballroom scene and finale in recognition of the sensibility.

Robert Jess Roth: Every production is different because the individual artists bring their own unique touches that are surprising and wonderful and touching. Yet, it’s still the same show – a universal story that everyone connects to. For instance, there’s a moment in Act Two, when the Beast lets Belle go. The audience is sitting in the dark,

hoping, waiting to see if he's going to say "I love you". It's a signature moment. You could be in Japan, Johannesburg, or New York and feel the same response. The audience is immersed in the world of their imagination. That's the power of this story, and I've been privileged to have seen audiences all over the world fall in love with it.

APPENDIX E

<p>Biography of Julie Taymor Programme notes for <i>The Lion King</i> London 2009</p>
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Director, Costume designer, Mask and Puppet co-designer and additional Lyrics

In 1998 Julie Taymor won the Tony Award for Best Direction of a Musical and for Best Costumes for *The Lion King*. She also won the Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle and Drama League awards for her direction, and myriad awards for her original costume and puppet designs. Ms. Taymor made her Broadway debut in 1996 with *Juan Darien* (Lincoln Center's Vivian Beaumont Theatre), nominated for five Tony Awards. Other theatre work includes *The Green Bird* (New Victory Theatre, La Jolla Playhouse and The Cort Theatre on Broadway). *Titus Andronicus*, *The Tempest*, and *The Taming of the Shrew* (Theatre For a New Audience); *Juan Darien* (Music-Theatre Group); co-adaptor and director of *The Transposed Heads* (Lincoln Hill Festival); designer and choreographer of *The King Stag* (American Repertory Theatre). Opera Direction: *The Magic Flute* (Maggio Musicale, Florence); *Oedipus Rex* (Saito Kien Festival, Japan); *Salome* (Kirov Opera); *The Flying Dutchman* (Los Angeles Opera). Film Direction: *Frida* (2002) winner of two Academy Awards, starring Salma Hayak, *Titus* (1999), starring Anthony Hopkins and Jessica Lange. *Fools Fire* (for American Playhouse) premiered at Sundance and aired on PBS in 1992. Ms. Taymor's awards include a MacArths Foundation Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, an Emmy for her film of *Oedipus Rex*, Odie Awards for *Visual Magic* and for *Juan Darien*, the Bradeis Creative-Arts Award, the Dorothy Chandler Performing Arts Award, and the International Classical Music Award for Best Opera Production (*Oedipus Rex*). A revised and expanded edition of the book *Julie Taymor: Playing with Fire*, spanning more than 20 years of her work, is published by Abrams. The illustrated screenplays for *Titus* and *Frida* are available through Newmarket Press. *The Lion King: Pride Rock on Broadway*, is published by Hyperion. She directed a new production of *The Magic Flute* for The Metropolitan Opera in 2004 and will premiere and original opera, *Grendel*, at the Los Angeles Opera and Subsequently at the Lincoln Center Festival in 2006.

APPENDIX F

Interviews with various Disney personnel

Disney: The Lion King DVD

Transcribed by: Kirsten Tait

Musical Origins

Thomas Schumacher: *The Lion King* came out in the summer of 1994 and in the spring of 1994 on Broadway appeared our enormously successful stage production of *Beauty and the Beast*. Michael Eisner said to me “You know, we should do *The Lion King* on Broadway.”

Irene Mecci: I think Thomas Schumacher is on the record as saying “you’re crazy, Michael”.

Peter Schneider: Well, it was a good idea; we thought it was a bad idea. We all thought it was a bit nutty at first.

Don Hahn: Everybody said, “Oh my god, you gotta be kidding me. *Lion King*? Is it, what are they going to do wear rubber heads and dance around or something?”

Roger Allers: It just sounded awful and absurd

Tim Rice: I thought, well, it’s going to be like cats, you know, but twenty years to late.

Elton John: I just didn’t know how they could do it except for, you know, for having all those kind of mascots you see at like professional NFL games walking, around doing numbers, hey that’s going to be really great.

Roy Disney: So there was a lot of laughter accompanying the idea.

Michael Eisner: So I simply said, uh, to, uh, to Tom Schumacher and Peter Schneider, “If you don’t figure out what to do, then I’m just going to do it.” Because everybody was skeptical and that created a lot of scurrying around.

Don Hahn: It was Thomas Schumacher, I think, that had just worked with Julie Taymor in a number of Broadway ventures and said the only way I can ever imagine it working is to have someone re-envision, reinterpret it for the stage and do something highly theatrical.

Thomas Schumacher: Julie’s ideas were very different because she said although this is a story told with animals it’s a human tale, it’s a tale of us and so to do that she wanted the human revealed at all times and feel like...Whether you play a principle character, whether you play an ensemble person who is becoming an animal or plant, you always see the person.

Julie Taymor: I had to play with keeping a certain amount of the character of the Disney characters so that they're recognizable, but then I was also very inspired by African masks which were made more abstracts much more stylized much more essential less soft and round, but you will also see my style and I have a definite sculpture style mixed with Africa so it's kind of a three pronged thing. I wanted them not to look so flat, I wanted them to have a kind of depth that wood has, so texture and organic materials, fibers, wood, uh, something that would make it less, uh, cartoon like. This isn't to be a cartoon brought to life; this is an actual theatricalization of *The Lion King* as a script.

Roger Allers: Julie Taymor has a great way of taking a lot of different influences from around the world that you know she studied the Balinese dance, and Balinese, uh, mask making. And she took a lot of uh, rhythms and the shapes of things from that. And the, uh, Bunraku Puppetry from Japan, where the people manipulate the puppets in front of them and they're dressed in black and uh, she took that idea for Timon and for Zazu, and a mixture of all this, the mixture of masks and puppets and people and the abstraction of it, I think really helped make *The Lion King* work.

Thomas Schumacher: It's really hard to single out any one individual and say they were responsible for what happened.

Peter Schneider: I am a very big believer in the collective process of the coming together of an extraordinary bunch of artists to create something extraordinary. Without Julie Taymor, however, *The Lion King* in its present form would never exist.

Screen to stage

Roy Disney: *Beauty and the Beast* succeeded as a stage play because it was such a good play, a good structure to begin with that it translated pretty literally onto the stage, where as *The Lion King* had to literally change costume – they had to transform itself into something that was stagey.

Thomas Schumacher: Ironically people always assume that Julie Taymor came into our first meeting and pitched an idea for the physical world of the piece, and she didn't. She flew to California sat down in my office and we just talked about it. Her ideas were all about music all about storey and I said: "What about how will we ever make this play?" She says that will come later, she says first we figure out how we tell the story, what is the story?

Julie Taymor: The basic story is so, so strong so classical archetypal of the prodigal son, the child who has to leave home and has to go on this journey of self knowledge before he is allowed to come back again and take his proper place with his family and with his land. That's a story for all times, you're starting with something that is very good I also was completely excited by the combination of music it uses in the Elton John songs joined with Lebo south African influence. The chorus seems to be a fantastic combination and very unusual for Broadway score, it's much more innovative much more fresh its new and as I live with a composer I'm very big on the music, it's very important that I love the music and so there is a lot of this that I think is very inspiring.

Thomas Shomacher: And so she began immediately trying to shape the story and expand the role of Simba to try and figure out who he is? who is Nala? Why did Nala leave? Why does she find Simba? and the role of Rafiki. She had big ideas how to adapt Rafiki.

Michael Eisner: She did want to change Rafiki into a woman, which we agreed to but the spirit of the Broadway show was the spirit of the movie.

Don Hahn: Visually Julie threw out the movie and reinvented it but thematically she kept the story emotions and themes of the story.

Irene Mecci: So we finally got far enough on the process- Julie said "You know I'm going to have hire someone to write the book, the script and you seem to know it really well. How about you? So we did it and so that was all and the interesting collaborative process

Roger Allers: It was one of those, what do you call it, harmonic convergence of talent, a great mixture of people in the room that we bounce off each other and write together and create together. It was one of those sort of I can't wait to call it a rare thing; it's just a precious thing. That's the testament to an artist, if they make a strong enough statement then it always feel like well of course it's always been that it creates its own identity and it lives and will feel like it's always been there.

Musical Texture:

Peter Schneider: I think Julie's fundamental contribution was to say that what you saw visually on the screen in the sense of Africa needed to somehow be translated into the stage play and her instinct was that the music would be that translation.

Elton John: She re-emphasized, or made more important, the African element of the film to the um, Lebo M stuff and that worked so brilliantly.

Thomas Schumacher: We approached two teams simultaneously, the same two teams that we had essentially done the movie with. So we went to Elton and Tim and we spotted three different places for them to write songs and they did that. The Morning Report, Chow Down and The Madness of King Scar, which opens up the second act. And we said we need these three story points to be told.

Lebo M: And as additional songs, written by myself, Hans Zimmer and Mark Mancina, from the album Rhythm of the Pridelands, which have been uh rearranged and arranged for the Broadway production.

Roger Allers: There was so much energy, so much positive energy that was still in them from the project that they went on and did that other album, Rhythms of the Pridelands.

Peter Schneider: Rhythms of the Pridelands, became a sort of key in instrumental piece in the stage show.

Roger Allers: The stage show wouldn't exist without them doing that album. It's interesting how one thing just grows out of the other.

Peter Schneider: And Lebo M, Mark Mancina taking the sounds of the album and the weaving it in created the chorus and the Africanization of the Broadway show, which I think is the essence of what people thought was so powerful.

Mark Mancina: But in that case it was very difficult if you look at the range of music in *The Lion King* stage musical we have everything from sort of traditional African, Chinese then we go into British pop songs, goes all over the place and in that situation we have a live band in a pit that has to play all that. You can't have recordings you don't have sequences you have a live band that has to have that range. It was a refreshing problem but it was exciting because of the feel that it's organic and that its all performed and its all played every single night live.

Julie Taymor: And the more live I could make it, the more tactile and uh really feel like, uh, uh, a totally present event, the more exciting it could be as theatre.

Setting the stage

Peter Schneider: What's wonderful about the ability to create illusions and to create magic.

Thomas Schumacher: Everyone said to us how in heavens name are you going to put *The Lion King* on stage, but of course it all comes down to the stage design, and there was a fantastic team headed by Julie. Julie put a team together and really shaped the visions of the show. She of course designed the costumes and along with Michael Curry designed the puppets and the masks which she sculptured herself – all those puppets, all those masks are all original sculptings. She designed the costumes and came up with these ideas, like the cast – the ensemble – could be both flora and fauna that the savannah could rise up out of the floor with grass palates on people's heads and they could sing. The savannah itself singing, they become plant life again in "Can you feel the love tonight?" but they also play the fauna, they play the animals- always revealed the...the big idea was always revealing the human.

Jeff Lee: When you look at it it's really quite simple, it's clean, it uses a lot of you know theatrical, early theatrical tricks and the simplicity of it is what makes it work so seamlessly and smoothly.

Thomas Schumacher: The lighting that Don did, the scene design Richard Hudson did was working with this funny little concept that Julie had – you could be very spare and then very full and then very spare again and that is all set against Don holders beautiful dance lighting his fantastic use of colour and saturation the beautiful make-up and hair and then Julies work with the puppets and costumes- these elements all come together to create an

entirely new look for it

Peter Schneider: All those ideas of sketches of things that create the illusion that you're someplace else.

Leaps of Fantasy

Thomas Schumacher: There's a lot of different elements of movement in the piece. Clearly there is the fantastic choreography of Garth Fagan, who won a Tony award for it and he is a contemporary choreographer – who did some of the big beautiful sequences like the lioness dances, such pure dances. There's a great moment when the lionesses take their masks, these sort of crown like masks, off and extend them out and sort of become like lionesses.

Garth Fagan: The theme is, I am trying to come up with a movement language for Lion King-land where everyone moves in a certain way. And then I have humans playing animals or plants through the use of Julie Taymor's fabulous puppets and costumes. So that makes it a little bit more tricky but much more fun.

Aubrey Lynch: There is not a word to describe what it was like to be given pure Garth Fagan movement, be given pure Julie Taymor avant-garde theatre and pure ancient languages and this beautiful music by Lebo M and putting it all together and saying "okay now you're a gazelle". Everybody was at war between how much of the movement do I do before I disturb the puppet, how much do I move the puppet before I start the movement? How long can I stand like this and sing these notes and be clicking in sounds that are not in the English language. One of the singers said something that was very profound to me one night in one of the dramatic moments backstage she said "You know what, Aubrey? Everyone in *The Lion King* was brought together to learn something about themselves." And I was like "Whoa, you're right, that's exactly what it is. For whatever reason this universe brought us all together, and created this pool of people, not just the dancers and singers but the people who sewed the beads, who painted the silk and did all these things, came together and tried to put together Julie's picture together. Each person involved had to want to make that final picture happen.

Elton John: You see kids' faces, you see adults' faces, when the animals walk through the theatre at the beginning of the show and you're just, you're just blown away. I mean I get goose-bumps thinking about it now.

Roy Disney: It's still fun to turn around and watch the people behind you realize what's happening. It's an amazing moment in theatre.

Thomas Schumacher: The show does not limit itself to one style it explodes with different styles in the same way it explodes in puppets: you see shadow puppets, you see rod puppets, hand puppets, you see mechanized puppets

Don Hahn: And all the seams are visible. You know, you see the cranks and gears and pieces of sets and scenery go by. Our audiences' are willing to take huge leaps of faith and fantasy and it's something we're all born

with, something we all have, hopefully for all our lives. And that kind of leaps of fantasy is something we try to do in our animated films and something that Julie Taymor did on stage.

APPENDIX G

<p>Programme notes from <i>The Lion King</i> Johannesburg, December 2007</p>
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Julie Taymor: The challenge was to take this epic film, to find its essence, and to make it theatre. I wanted audiences to take a leap of faith and imagination right from the start. Stage mechanics would be visible. The audience, given a hint or suggestion of an idea, would be ready to fill in the lines to take it the rest of the way. They'd be participants in the event. As I began to visualize *The Lion King* the dominant theme and image to emerge was the circle. In addition to being a tale about a boy's personal growth the story dramatizes the ritual of birth, death and rebirth. Nature's cycle is evident throughout the work. One of the most powerful elements in the film is the rich humanity of the animal characters. In considering this ironic duality – they're both human and animal – it became critical not to hide to actor behind a whole mask or inside an animal bodysuit. I wanted the human being to be an essential part of the stylization...I felt delighted and relieved after sculpting Mufasa and Scar. I saw Disney, I saw Africa, and I saw my own aesthetic.

Michael Curry: We wanted to create puppets and masks that allowed the energy to come directly from the actor, so when we started to design, we began with the human figure. For an actor's movement to be articulated through a puppet may sound like a simple concept, yet it took a team of hundreds of people over 34000 hours to achieve our goals.

Garth Fagan: Whenever emotion and style meet, a kind of passion is kindled. Julie and I both take our inspiration from many different cultures, and in *The Lion King*, I find particular excitement in that space where modern, Caribbean and African dance, and ballet collide

Elton John: When Tim and I were originally approached to write *The Lion King*, I wanted to create a rock-and-roll or pop music score that could be great fun, current and aimed at a younger audience.

Tim Rice: My first reaction to the idea of adapting *The Lion King* for the stage was that it is impossible, but to my great delight Julie Taymor has done it! Elton and I have added three new songs to our original five and, combined with the African influenced music, the score is now much bigger and more theatrical.

Michael Ward: In designing the make-up for this production, I had to work with the duality between the masks, and the actors' faces. In some instances, the make-up is purely decorative, for instance, Mufasa's make-up is inspired by Masai tribal decoration. In other instances, the make-up help's convey the character's personality, such as Scar's cynicism. In *The Lion King* make-up is a design tool that supports every other design element.

Richard Hudson: My challenge was to evoke the vast African landscape within the limitations of real stage space. The 'eureka' moment came from studying African textiles. Their pure, abstract patterns inspired me to strip away everything non-essential in the staging; to work for the king of 'complex simplicity' that resonates emotionally as well as stylistically.

Roger Allers: When we met with Julie Taymor and started kicking around ideas for expanding the story, Irene and I suddenly found ourselves talking in the characters' voices. Julie said – and I think we realized, too – we still had the characters in our head.

Irene Mecci: Adapting *The Lion King* screenplay into the stage play gave us the rare opportunity to revisit characters that we loved – and find places where we could clarify or heighten moments for the stage.

Lebo M: When I'm writing music, what I hear in my head is different from the set harmonic structure of western music, which is noted on paper. African music isn't always written down that way: it's often passed on vocally, so it is very immediate and physical. In *The Lion King*, both western and African musical approaches have been combined to take the music to another level. Then, when you add in all the elements of theatre, suddenly you realize how high a song can go.

Donald Holder: Lighting for Mufasa's ghost was difficult to conceptualize, yet relatively easy to achieve technically. We eliminated all ambient light onstage, projected overlapping images of crisply focus dots of light, and sculpted the mask with sidelights. The effect we wanted was that of entering into the silence and vastness of the cosmos – or of the internal world of Simba's subconscious.

Mark Mancina: *The Lion King* music represents a huge range of world music – from western scoring techniques to African chorals. At one point, we're even doing the Charleston. The rhythms, the instrumentation, and the instruments come from all over. We used nineteen different types of wood flutes alone. So we had to build an ensemble that could play an exceptionally wide range of styles.

APPENDIX H

Beauty and the Beast: Plot

Adapted from: IMDb: *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0101414/synopsis>

[Accessed on 29/09/10]

An old beggar woman arrives at the castle of a French prince. Repulsed by her appearance, the prince turns her away. The woman throws off her disguise, revealing that she is a beautiful enchantress. The Prince tries to apologize, but she has already seen the lack of kindness in his heart. She conjures a powerful curse, transforming him into a hideous beast, his servants into anthropomorphic household items. The curse can only be broken if the Beast learns to love another and receives the other's love in return before the last petal of the enchantress's rose withers and falls; if not, he will remain a beast forever.

A beautiful young peasant woman, named Belle, lives in a nearby village with her father, Maurice, who is an inventor. Belle is seen as "odd" by the other townsfolk due to her preference for reading books. She is the object of unwanted attention from the local hunter, Gaston, an egomaniac. He and his sidekick, LeFou, openly mock her father's inventions.

Maurice rides off to a fair with his invention, but gets lost and loses his horse. Cold and tired, he stumbles upon a mysterious castle. One by one, the enchanted household items - Lumière the candelabra, Mrs. Potts the teapot, her son Chip the tea cup, and Cogsworth the clock and head of the household - welcome him. The Beast, however, is enraged when he discovers Maurice and locks him in a dungeon in the castle tower.

Gaston arranges a wedding ceremony outside Belle's house and invites the entire town. He invites himself in to propose to her. Belle declines which serves as a hard blow to Gaston's ego.

Belle is worried when the horse returns home without Maurice, and decides to search for him. Belle finds Maurice in the Enchanted Castle's tower dungeon, but the Beast catches her. She offers herself in exchange for her father's life, giving her word to remain in the castle forever.

Back in the village, the citizens attempt to cheer up Gaston in the local tavern by reminding him how in awe they are of him. Maurice bursts in and asks for help to rescue Belle from "a beast", but no one believes him. When one of the villagers calls him crazy, Gaston thinks of a plan to get Belle to marry him.

Belle meets the enchanted objects who cheer her up. Lumiere, along with the other servants, welcomes Belle warmly and entertains her with an elaborate dinner and a show. Belle manages to sneak away from them and enters the forbidden West Wing, where she discovers the enchanted rose. The Beast finds her and frightens her with a terrifying display of temper. Belle flees the castle and is attacked by wolves. The Beast appears and fights off the vicious creatures. Over time, the two start to become friends. The household items are excited and optimistic that Belle may fall in love with the Beast and cause them to become human again. The relationship reaches its climax with an elegant dinner and ballroom dance.

Belle is melancholy and tells the Beast that she wishes to see Maurice. The Beast gives her the magic mirror and, having fallen in love with Belle, releases her to rescue her father and also gives her the mirror so that she may look back and remember him. Belle finds Maurice and takes him back to the village, where a mob gathers to take him to the asylum. Gaston offers to have Maurice spared if Belle agrees to marry him but she still refuses. Belle uses the magic mirror to show the Beast to the villagers, who become frightened at his hideous visage. Belle assures them that the Beast is kind and gentle, and that he is her friend. Out of jealousy and anger, Gaston tells the mob that Belle is as crazy as her father. Belle disagrees and calls him the real beast for wanting to kill him. Insulted, Gaston rallies the villagers to storm the castle. The villagers force open the door, but Lumiere leads the servants in defence of the castle. Gaston deserts the battle to search for the Beast. The servants eventually manage to drive the villagers out of the castle.

Gaston finds the Beast and attacks him. The Beast does not defend himself but as soon as he sees Belle arriving at the castle the Beast gains the will to fight Gaston. The Beast grabs Gaston by the neck and threatens to throw him off the roof. Gaston begs for his life, and the Beast relents, softened by his love for Belle. When the Beast climbs back up to the balcony where Belle is waiting for him, Gaston stabs him in the back.

The Beast tells her that he was happy to see her one last time, and dies succumbing to his injury. Belle, in tears, whispers that she loves him, just before the last petal falls from the rose. The spell is broken. The Beast reverts to his human form as do the enchanted objects.

APPENDIX I

The Lion King: Plot

Adapted from: IMDb: *The Lion King* (1994) <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0110357/synopsis> [Accessed on 29/09/10]

The Lion King takes place in the Pride Lands, where Mufasa rules over the other animals as king. Rafiki anoints Simba, the newborn cub of King Mufasa and Queen Sarabi and presents him to a gathering of animals at Pride Rock.

Mufasa takes Simba around the Pride Lands, teaching him about the "Circle of Life", the delicate balance affecting all living things. Simba's uncle Scar, who desires the throne for himself, tells him about the elephant graveyard, a place where Mufasa has warned Simba not to go. Simba asks his mother if he can go to the water-hole with his best friend, Nala. Their parents agree, but only if Mufasa's majordomo, the hornbill Zazu, goes with them. Simba and Nala elude Zazu's supervision and go to the graveyard instead. There, the cubs are met by Shenzi, Banzai and Ed, spotted hyenas, who try to kill them. Simba and Nala are rescued by Mufasa, who was summoned by Zazu.

Meanwhile, Scar gains the loyalty of the hyenas by claiming that if he becomes king, they will never go hungry again. Scar lures Simba into a gorge while the hyenas create a wildebeest stampede. Alerted by Scar, Mufasa races to rescue Simba from the stampede. He saves his son but is left clinging to the edge of a cliff. Scar flings him into the stampede below and Mufasa is trampled to death by the wildebeest. Simba is convinced by Scar that he himself was responsible for his father's death and goes into exile. Scar once again sends Shenzi, Banzai and Ed to kill Simba, but he escapes. Scar informs the pride that both Mufasa and Simba were killed in the stampede, and that he is assuming the throne as the next in line.

Simba is found unconscious by Timon and Pumbaa, a meerkat-warthog duo who adopt and raise the cub. When Simba has grown into an adult he is discovered by Nala. Simba shows Nala around his home and the two begin to fall in love. Nala then tells him that Scar has turned the Pride Lands into a barren wasteland; she asks Simba to return and take his place as king but Simba refuses. Rafiki arrives and persuades Simba to return to the Pride Lands, aided by Mufasa's presence in the stars.

Once back at Pride Rock, Simba (with Timon, Pumbaa and Nala) is horrified to see the condition of the Pride Lands. After seeing Scar strike his mother, Simba announces his return. In response, Scar tells the pride that Simba was responsible for Mufasa's death and corners Simba at the edge of Pride Rock. As Simba dangles over the edge of Pride Rock, Scar whispers to Simba that he killed Mufasa. Enraged, Simba leaps up and pins Scar to the ground, forcing him to admit the truth to the pride. A raging battle then ensues between the hyenas and the lionesses which results in Simba cornering Scar. Begging for mercy, Scar blames the hyenas for Mufasa's death, but Simba orders Scar to go into exile. Scar pretends to leave but turns to attack Simba, resulting in a final duel. Simba triumphs over his uncle by throwing him over a low cliff. Scar survives the fall but finds himself surrounded

by the now-resentful hyenas, who attack and devour him. Over time the Pride Lands turn green with life again and Rafiki presents Simba and Nala's newborn cub.