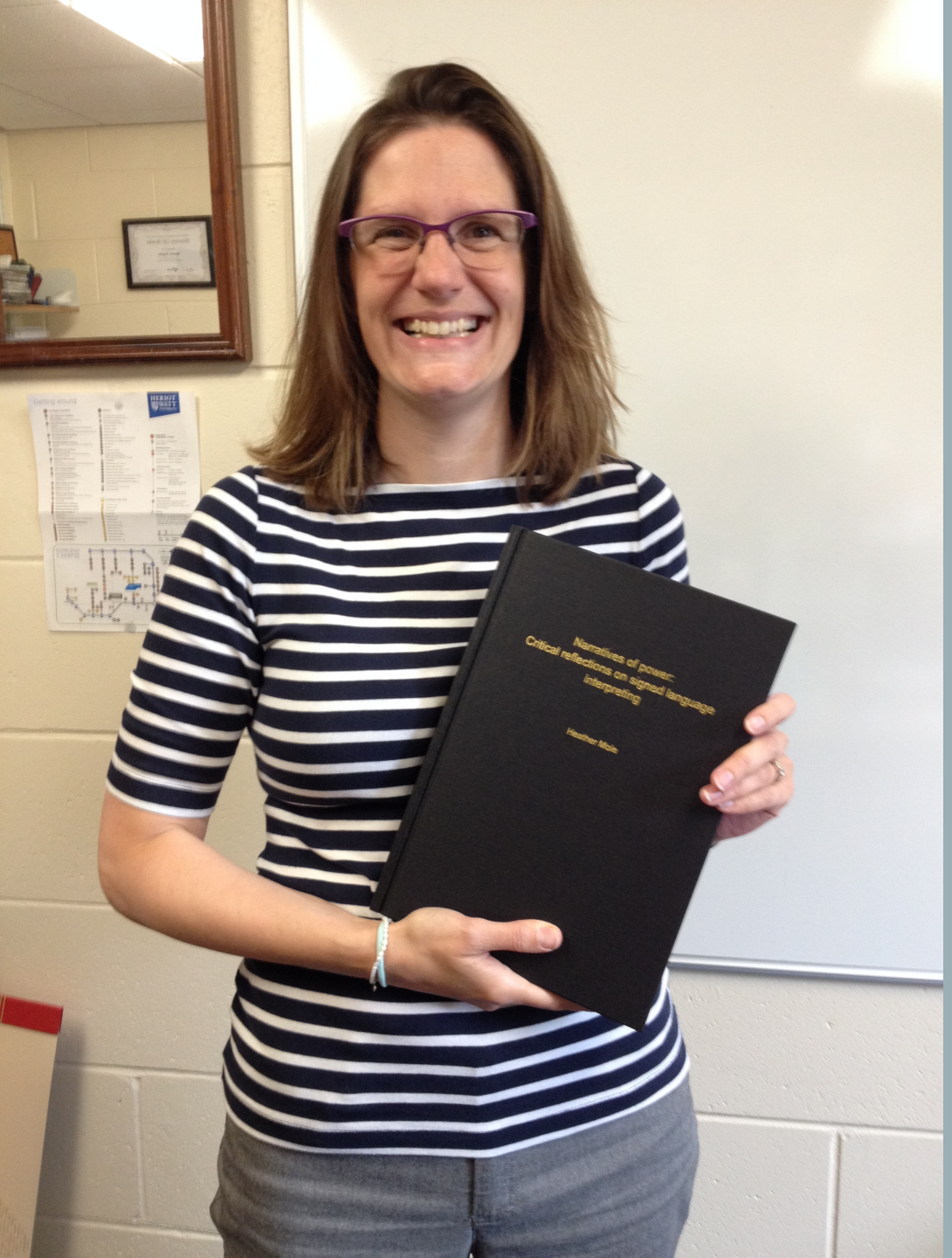


WHAT IS HEARING PRIVILEGE?

Dr Heather Mole


Narratives of power:
Critical reflections on signed language interpreting
Heather Mole

INTRO

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the concept of audism – discrimination against deaf people
- To understand the concept of privilege and to consider what hearing privilege might look like
- To consider ways in which we can examine our own privilege (whether we're hearing or not)



AUDISM

- Like racism this term denotes a type of discrimination against deaf people
- "the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears" (Humphries 1977, p.2)
- "[Audism] appears in many other ways subtly and obviously, directly and indirectly, intentionally and unintentionally, consciously and unconsciously." (ibid, p.13, 14)
- "being hearing or raised as hearing does not automatically make one an audist but given our society and its views on deafness, it is almost a certainty" (ibid, p.12)

AUDISM

Harlan Lane (1999) adapted the term in his book ***The Mask of Benevolence***

"a paternalistic, hearing-centred endeavour that professes to serve deaf people" (p. 43)

PRIVILEGE



WHITE PRIVILEGE

…unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks. (McIntosh 1988, p.97)



WHITE PRIVILEGE

- I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
- I can avoid spending time with people whom I was trained to mistrust and who have learned to mistrust my kind or me.
- If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
- I can be pretty sure that my neighbours in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
- I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
- I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
- I can be pretty sure of having my voice heard in a group in which I am the only member of my race.

TWO TYPES OF PRIVILEGE

Positive Advantages

Negative Advantages

HEARING PRIVILEGE

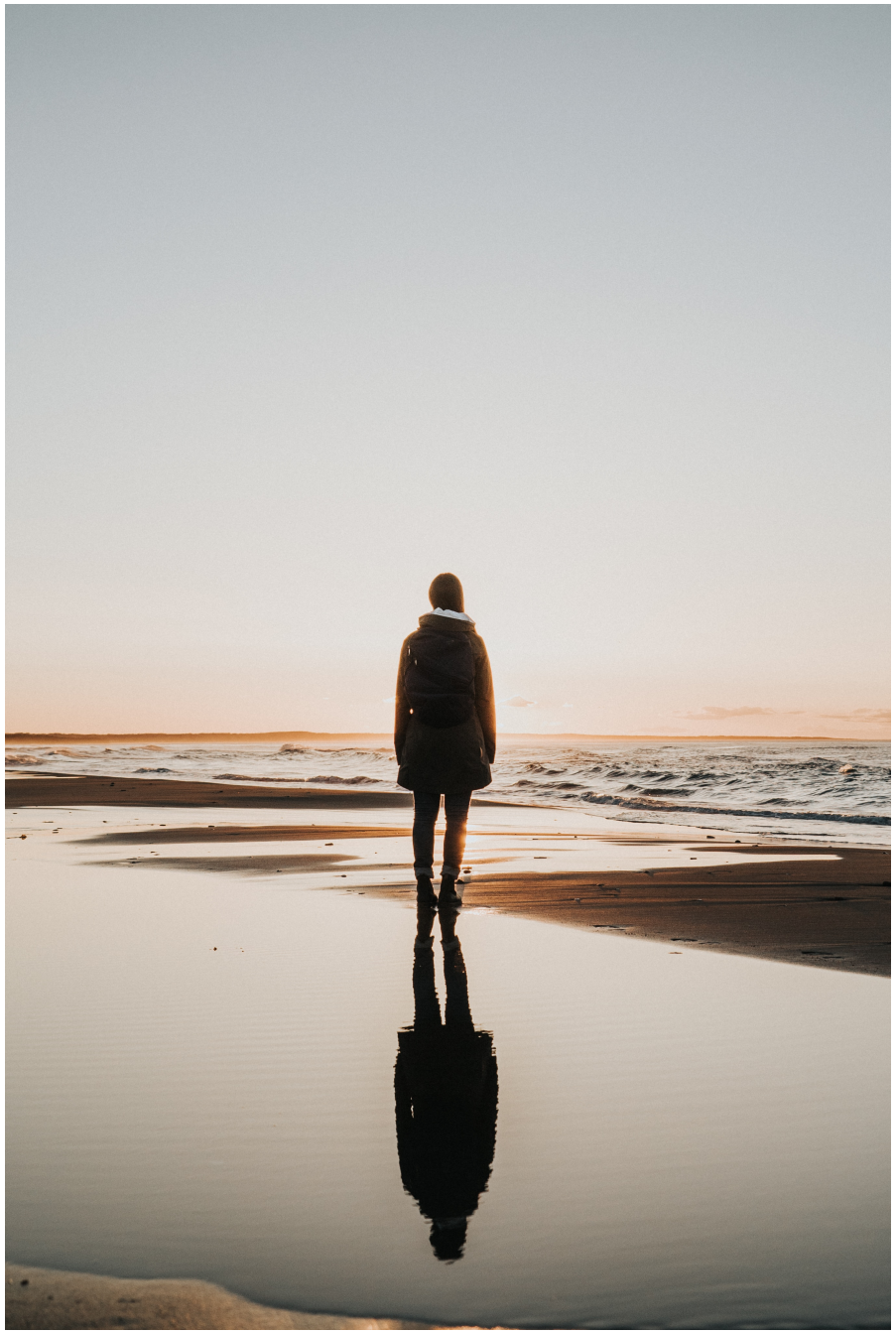
- People do not make assumptions about my intelligence based on my language ability.
- I can go anywhere and assume that I will be able to understand the things around me and communicate with the people around me.
- People do not talk to me like a child or otherwise treat me like a child; they do not speak too loudly and slowly to me.
- I do not have to worry about making people uncomfortable because of my native language or skill level in their native language.
- People will usually be willing to repeat and restate things for me.
- I do not have to worry that I will be chosen last for housing and jobs because of my language use.
- People do not fetishize my language.
- People do not ask to learn bad words in my language or share the few words they do know in my language.
- I can readily find people and media around me that can communicate with me in my native language or dialect.

HEARING PRIVILEGE – WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

HEARING PRIVILEGE CONT'D

- I can be sure that the medical profession does not try to wipe out people like me
- When one person in my group behaves badly in a public space, the rest of my group are not banned from that space
- When I look at the world around me, I see that it has been built for me – communication strategies
- When I am educated I can assume that my teachers expect high standards from me and do not put limits on my capacity to learn
- When I ask for advice from someone they do not assume that I will need another person to guide me through resolving it because I'm incapable
- When I meet new people they don't immediately pity me, or assume that my life must be awful
- I can access incidental information from the discussions being had around me

EXAMINING OUR HEARING PRIVILEGE



RESOURCES

- Robin Di Angelo talking about white privilege
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7mzj0cVL0Q
- Peggy McIntosh's article on White Privilege
- https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mcintosh.pdf
- The National Seed Project
- https://nationalseedproject.org/about-us/white-privilege
- My workshop on Power and Privilege ☺