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Recycled Culture:
The Significance of Intertextuality in
Twenty-First Century Musical Theatre

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RECYCLED CULTURE

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ABSTRACT

The twenty-first century musical is dominated by high-profile adaptations and the recycling of popular texts in a wider trend Graham Allen terms 'cultural regurgitation'. From *Wicked* (2003) and *Billy Elliot the Musical* (2005) to *Jersey Boys* (2005) and *The Book of Mormon* (2011), the commercial musical stage is a prominent site of high-profile intertextuality in that it draws from 'innumerable centres of culture' to fuel an evening's entertainment. Given the proliferation of such intertextuality, however, this trend has received little critical attention beyond the detailing of these musicals as 'safe-bet' entertainments which attract an audience through the recycling of familiar elements.

The primary aim of this thesis is therefore to fill an important gap within existing scholarship by investigating how intertextual references function and operate within contemporary musical theatre. In differentiating the various styles of intertextual reference evidenced within the form, this thesis argues that most twenty-first century musicals either adapt a specific text, capitalise on nostalgia, fashion a bricolage of references or metatheatricalise perceptions of musical theatre as an art form. In doing so, it put forwards the claim that musical theatre invites intertextuality as a diverse layering of textual elements in and of itself. Not only is musical theatre an inherently intertextual form, but it ultimately requires intertextuality to reflect the recycled nature of popular culture more broadly.

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"It's very difficult to keep the line between the past and the present"
Grey Gardens the Musical (2006), book by Doug Wright.

Introduction

It is a common complaint among fans of musical theatre and various scholars that commercial musicals are no longer 'original'.¹ As Ethan Mordden describes in *Anything Goes: The History of the American Musical*, the twenty-first century musical "might be in danger of losing its salient quality. Originality" (2013, 257). Although Mordden writes from a distinctly American perspective, as the alleged birthplace of this art form, such lack of originality can be evidenced across the globe. Of the twenty-one musicals performed in London's West End during October 2015,² for instance, eight were jukebox musicals that recycled past popular music,³ five were based on high-profile films,⁴ four were literary adaptations,⁵ three were revivals of previous productions,⁶ with only *The Book of Mormon* (2011)⁷ featuring a presumably original narrative.⁸ In light of this, musical theatre has become a "cultural recycling center", as journalist Ben Brantley writes, in which popular titles are recycled for audiences who are likely

¹ The term 'musical theatre' will be employed throughout this thesis to refer to commercial productions performed on Broadway (New York) and in the West End (London), rather than the broader traditions identified by the terms 'music' and 'theatre', or related art forms such as opera, vaudeville, burlesque, ballet and cabaret.

² This information was compiled from <http://www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk> [accessed: 20 October 2015].

³ *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (2014), *Close to You: The Burt Bacharach Musical* (2015), *The Commitments* (2013), *Green Day's American Idiot* (2010), *Jersey Boys* (2005), *Mamma Mia!* (1999), *Sunny Afternoon* (2014) and *Thriller Live* (2009).

⁴ *Bend it like Beckham the Musical* (2015), *Billy Eliot the Musical* (2005), *Elf: The Musical* (2010), *Kinky Boots* (2013) and *The Lion King* (1997).

⁵ *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory the Musical* (2013), *Les Misérables* (1985), *Matilda the Musical* (2011) and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986).

⁶ *Cats* (1981), *Gypsy* (1959) and *Miss Saigon* (1989).

⁷ Unless stated otherwise, the year placed in brackets after an example refers to the original London or New York production, which ever came first, rather than any workshop or fringe production.

⁸ Although the musical features no overarching source material beyond its titular referencing of a holy text, it is important not to overstate *The Book of Mormon's* originality, particularly in terms of narrative, given that various popular texts are referenced throughout the show (as will be discussed in Chapter Five).

to already be familiar with the particular high-profile text (2015). As Sheridan Morley highlights, however, the twenty-first century musical is not unique in this way, since British musical theatre has never presented “anything or anyone” that was not already known to the audience as they entered the theatre (1996, 83). Given that this condition dominates both British and American musicals, then, Marvin Carlson proposes that the recycling of known elements is not culture-specific, since the “reuse of already familiar narrative material is a phenomenon seemingly as old as the theatre itself [...] from the enactment of sacred texts to the contemporary Broadway musical” (2001, 44). It is important to recognise, therefore, that musical theatre is an inherently intertextual art form which continually capitalises on an audience’s “pre-sold familiarity” with certain texts (Morley, 1996, 83). Whilst this notion has often been defined as ‘unoriginality’ within scholarship, journalism and fan responses, musical theatre continually recycles other texts and forms in a manner which identifies it as a notably intertextual art form.

Despite scholars including Michael Dunne, Judith Sebesta and Millie Taylor applying the term to various case studies, there remains a lack of research analysing the relationship between musical theatre and intertextuality in any great detail. Such studies do exist, however, in relation to popular culture more broadly, where forms such as film, television and popular music are considered sites of “cultural regurgitation” (Allen, 2010, 204). Although this metaphor has traditionally negative connotations, where past texts are ‘vomited’ into the present, many scholars have constructively analysed the referencing of familiar texts in several films and television programmes, in addition to considering the recent influx of sequels, remakes and reboots of past texts/franchises. Jonathan Gray’s *Watching with The Simpsons* (2006), for

example, scrutinises the intertextual fabric of the popular animated series *The Simpsons* (1989-), whilst David Boyd and R. Barton Palmer analyse the intertextual framing of several Alfred Hitchcock films in their edited collection, *After Hitchcock* (2006). In addition to these book length studies, numerous journal articles have critiqued the intertextual character of various popular texts in an often fruitful and productive manner, including Helle Kannik Haastrup's 'Storytelling Intertextuality: From *Django Unchained* to *The Matrix*' (2014) and Martin Lund's "The Roaring 30s': Style, Intertextuality, Space and History in *Marvel Noir*' (2015). Such critical analysis does not exist in musical theatre scholarship, however, let alone in relation to a specific case study, and hence the form's inherent intertextuality remains an area of critical neglect. This thesis aims to fill that gap.

Why Musical Theatre?

Since *Matilda the Musical* (2011), *Viva Forever!* (2012) and *School of Rock* (2015) continue to identify musical theatre as a highly intertextual art form, to name but a few contemporary examples, it is important to further rationalise the form as an appropriate case study through which to analyse the cultural significance of intertextuality. Starting with Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* in 1607, an opera based in Greek mythology, various forms of music theatre have continually borrowed from literature, film, popular music and classical mythology, whilst also trading on pastiche, satire and cultural references. John Gay's 1728 ballad opera, *The Beggar's Opera*, for instance, drew upon various popular songs from the recent past, much in the same way jukebox musicals like *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (2006) and *Rock of Ages* (2009) do today.

Similarly, numerous high-profile musicals including *Oklahoma!* (1943),⁹ *My Fair Lady* (1956)¹⁰ and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986)¹¹ have been adaptations of literary texts, much like *The Color Purple* (2005)¹² and *Spring Awakening* (2006)¹³ are in the twenty-first century. In these examples alone, then, musical theatre identifies itself as a particularly intertextual form with an established history of appropriating other sources. In addition to this, the combination of song, dance, dialogue and design further identifies musical theatre as an intertextual hybrid of texts, media, genres and forms. Musical theatre is inherently intertextual, in this sense, in that it combines various performance disciplines, each with their own unique history, production process and presumed demographic, to fashion an interdisciplinary art form with its own unique structure. Every new musical is therefore conditioned by an intertextual adherence to, or rejection of, a structural format that has been refined over several decades of performance (and scholarship, by extension). As Lehman Engel states in *Words with Music: Creating the Broadway Musical Libretto*, the structure of a “well-made integrated musical” relies upon several structural expectations that enable the audience to recognise it as ‘a musical’ (2006, 29). Stephen Citron (1991), Scott McMillin (2006) and Julian Woolford (2012) have contested this claim, however, by proposing that such expectations only guide the formation of a production, whether certain song types, design elements or the inclusion of an interval, since there is no prescribed formula to writing a musical (Woolford, 2012, 179). Although the inclusion of music is certainly more important than the presence of an ingénue or comedy double act, musicals are intertextually conditioned by their compliance with a series of broader

⁹ Lynn Riggs’ play, *Green Grow the Lilacs* (1930).

¹⁰ George Bernard Shaw’s play, *Pygmalion* (1913).

¹¹ Gaston Leroux’s novel, *Le Fantôme de l’Opéra* (1910).

¹² Alice Walker’s novel, *The Color Purple* (1982).

¹³ Frank Wedekind’s play, *Spring Awakening* (1906).

expectations that are only further embedded as productions continue to be written in this way. In its very formation, then, musical theatre is a deeply intertextual art form that weaves various performative elements within a narrative framework that is typically formed from existing cultural texts.

In light of the lack of scholarship considering intertextuality in musical theatre, this thesis aims to analyse how an art form which continually recycles existing texts might function and operate in relation to its presentation of intertextual references. Despite millions of fans engaging with the musical through film adaptations, cast recordings and television specials, live musical theatre remains increasingly popular in our ever mediated culture and continues to break box office records each year (Snow, 2015). Given that this increased cultural interest is due, in part, to the recent reinvention of the film musical¹⁴ and the popularity of television shows such as *Glee* (2009-2015), the use of intertextuality within musical theatre continues to diversify audiences by capitalising on previously successful texts to fuel future audiences (Leve, 2016, 266). Although the intertextual nature of film and television musicals is also an area which requires further scholarly investigation, the primary aim of this thesis is to identify how intertextual references function within live musical theatre. Whilst I will acknowledge several musical films throughout this study, including *The Sound of Music* (1965) and *Moulin Rouge!* (2001), this will only be done to formulate a larger point regarding musical theatre and its inherent intertextuality.

¹⁴ Although it is naive to suggest that the Hollywood film musical was entirely 'reinvented' in the early 2000s by films such as *Moulin Rouge!* (2001) and *Chicago* (2002), there are considerably more film musicals being produced today than in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. In 2014 alone, *Annie* (1977), *Into the Woods* (1987) and *The Last Five Years* (2002) each received major film adaptations (a notion which would have been unthinkable in the mid-1990s).

Why the Twenty-First Century?

Despite intertextual references often determining an audience's interpretation of a text, scholars have yet to consider how musical theatre might reflect a wider cultural trend during a time period in which numerous digital and participatory forms have further destabilised any conclusive definition of the term 'text'. Described by George P. Landow as both "inevitably open-ended" and "inevitably incomplete", digital forms such as social media, blogs and YouTube have further identified popular culture as a series of fluid textual encounters which "resist closure" and "never die" given that they can be presented in multiple configurations (2006, 302). Although Landow writes in reference to an online hypertext, or hyperlink between webpages, his argument can be applied more broadly to consider popular culture as a multifaceted web of recycled material that incessantly appropriates the past. The main concern of this thesis is therefore to investigate the function of intertextuality within twenty-first century musical theatre, as a case study through which to analyse the intertextual character of popular culture more widely. In analysing productions which premiered after the millennium, in the most part, this thesis considers the broader cultural implications of intertextuality and the manner in which audiences engage with familiar texts across different media.

In spite of the abundance of contemporary musicals which exploit familiar texts, the start of the twenty-first century is simply an arbitrary point of division that reflects, for the purpose of this thesis, a cultural shift which developed in the early 1990s. As Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* debuted on Broadway in 1994, for instance, musical theatre witnessed a major alteration in that productions were now produced by major corporations, with the franchising model developed by Cameron Mackintosh in the 1980s now being applied to

the adaptation of major films and popular music. As the twentieth century became the twenty-first, productions including *The Lion King* (1997), *Footloose* (1998) and *Mamma Mia!* (1999) had firmly identified musical theatre as a form which recycles popular culture in both extravagant and costly productions that could travel the world. In this sense, the twenty-first century refers to a cultural shift in which source material was predominantly recycled from cultural texts that had been made popular on film, television and in popular music. The twenty-first century musical therefore demonstrates an artistic norm that was established several years before the millennium, yet has grown in dominance and breadth in the two decades following. In analysing several musicals which pre-date the millennium, the remainder of this thesis considers the twenty-first century to begin before the year 2000, since many producer's pre-occupation with familiar and high-profile sources can be recognised in the early 1990s.

In addition to the twenty-first century marking a major turning point in the use of high-profile source material, it also marks a moment in which audiences began engaging with musical theatre through an increasingly diverse series of 'paratexts' that sit outside the live experience (as exemplified by the invention of the Internet). Coined by Gérard Genette to define a literary text's title, introduction, index, and so on, the term 'paratext' refers to a separate text which frames, and often stands in for, the primary text or, in this case, musical. In the twenty-first century, therefore, musical theatre is becoming increasingly popular with audiences who have never attended a live production in London or New York, yet regularly listen to cast recordings, watch video clips on YouTube and engage with specific productions on social media. This thesis, and Chapter Seven in particular, thus analyses the role of intertextuality within a time period in which musical theatre is widely enjoyed by audiences who access the form

through texts that are related to, yet ultimately distanced from, the intended live performance. As an era in which musical theatre is just as regularly engaged with online as within an auditorium, if not more so, the twenty-first century identifies itself as a period in which musical theatre relies upon several established relationships with texts and media that sit outside the auditorium walls (be they the production's source material, cast recording or social media campaign). The twenty-first century musical is thus determined by other media, in relentless adapting and referencing existing texts, whilst also being accessed in other media through paratexts which enhance the global popularity of the art form.

Intertextuality as Recycling, Adaptation and Metatheatre

In order to further pursue this investigation, it is first important to (a) define intertextuality, (b) define intertextuality as a form of recycling, and (c) consider intertextuality in relation to adaptation and metatheatre. Given that these terms are often applied in both studies of musical theatre and intertextuality, they offer a significant foundation upon which to develop this thesis and advance my primary claim that musical theatre invites intertextuality.

Question 1 – What is Intertextuality?

In its broadest sense, the term 'intertextuality' refers to the referencing of a literary, media or social text within another literary, media or social text. Despite being coined by Julia Kristeva to describe the dialogic nature of language in 1966, the term has since been employed within various academic disciplines to define the manner in which meaning is fashioned through and across other texts (Allen, 2010, 1-2). Described by Jonathan Gray as a "system that calls for the viewer to use previously seen texts to make sense of the one

at hand”, intertextuality is a structural and stylistic device that conditions an audience’s interpretation of a text in relation to what has come before (2010, 117). As Graham Allen argues in *Intertextuality* (2000; 2010), reading is a “process of moving between texts” to the extent that meaning “becomes something which exists between a text and all of the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations” (2010, 1). Although it is naïve to suggest that all intertextual references follow a prescribed formula, an opinion that will be developed throughout this thesis, each reference can be differentiated by the audience’s reception of it, particularly their subjective reading, and the intention of its authors. In light of this, terms such as parody, pastiche and adaptation have been employed throughout literary scholarship to distinguish references in relation to their intention and stylistic appropriation of material. The term ‘parody’ is often considered an intertextual figure which mocks or lampoons previous texts, for instance, whilst a ‘pastiche’ is considered a “blank parody” by postmodern scholar Fredric Jameson, particularly as this type of reference does not possess the ironic qualities of parody (1991, 17). With these examples in mind, intertextuality is the referencing of one text within another, in a process that is determined by either the author, the audience, or both, and functions to achieve a specific aim or highlight a particular feature of either text.

Question 2 – Why is Intertextuality a form of Recycling?

As Marvin Carlson proposes in *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (2001), a text I will draw on throughout this thesis, the term ‘recycling’ has been used throughout theatre studies to describe the manner in which the theatregoing experience is always “ghosted by previous experiences

and associations” (2001, 2-4).¹⁵ Whilst this term traditionally refers to the conversion of waste into reusable material, often household goods, this metaphor can be applied to musical theatre in that it recycles past texts in a “conscious and calculated manner” (Carlson, 2001, 14). *The Addams Family: A New Musical* (2010), for instance, recycles Charles Addams’ comic strips and an abundance of related texts, including two high-profile film adaptations, to fashion a self-proclaimed ‘new’ musical. Like many recent examples, *The Addams Family* appropriates past texts to fashion a production that is both new, in that it has never been performed in this configuration before, and recycled from past popular culture. As Samantha MacBride notes in *Recycling Reconsidered*, however, recycling is not simply an indiscriminate process of reusing materials, in the traditional sense, since it involves “separating certain materials for collection and routing them back into beneficial use” (2011, 2). A large proportion of films, popular songs and television programmes are therefore not repurposed decades after they were first produced, since their content is too complex, unfamiliar or expensive to recycle in a financially viable manner. Although many popular works are recycled for reasons beyond financial security, as Linda Hutcheon argues, there remains a large portion of the musical theatre canon which has yet to be revived given that it reflects a specific historical or socio-cultural context (2012, 5). Dominic Symonds describes in his account of Rodgers and Hart, for example, how various early forms of musical theatre were so engrossed by their use of cultural references that they would seem little more than “contemporary, if self-obsessed,

¹⁵ Although it is my intention to use this term in relation to musical theatre, it is important to recognise that the term ‘recycling’ has been used to describe various cultural forms, including film, television, popular music, fashion, fine art and literary fiction. In particular, Vera Dika’s *Recycled Culture in Contemporary Art and Film* (2003), Elizabeth E. Guffey’s *Retro: The Culture of Revival* (2006) and Simon Reynold’s *Retromania: Pop Culture’s Addiction to its Own Past* (2011) each use the term to describe a contemporary cultural obsession with the past.

burlesques” today (2015, 42). Although we might assume these references were familiar to audiences when they were first performed, the inherent topicality of these shows has prevented them from finding a future audience to the extent that they are unrecyclable (as we might expect to read on a recycling container). Grace Barnes considers this notion, in turn, by questioning whether the incessant recycling of popular culture in the twenty-first century is only fashioning a canon of texts that will be “disposable” as time passes (2015, 175). Citing *The Lion King* (1997), *Jersey Boys* (2005) and *Spider-Man: Turn off the Dark* (2011), in particular, she suggests that these shows do not have the “staying power” of their predecessors and will ultimately become “obsolete” once their reference points have faded from living memory (Barnes, 2015, 175). In light of these examples, the term ‘recycling’ can be applied metaphorically to the study of intertextuality, with a particular resonance in relation to musical theatre, for two distinct reasons. Firstly, the recycling of familiar material is an unquestionably intertextual practice, as a central feature of many art forms, whilst, secondly, only familiar and culturally relevant texts can be recycled for a contemporary audience (much in the way that only certain items can be recycled in an environmental context). In the following, then, the term ‘recycling’ will be used to further demonstrate how musical theatre selectively repurposes the past as a conscious form of intertextuality.

Question 3 – What is Intertextuality in relation to Adaptation and Metatheatre?

Although notions of adaptation and metatheatricality will be considered in the third and sixth chapters of this study, it is important to differentiate intertextuality from such terms to provide a basic understanding from which this study will then build. In particular, the process of recycling one text into another, as is a brief definition of both adaptation and intertextuality, is not a singular

process that can be universally applied to both terms. Whilst adaptation is certainly an intertextual technique, not all adaptations engage with their source texts in the same manner. Given that the term adaptation also typically denotes the translation of one text (perhaps a novel) into another text of a different medium (perhaps a feature film), ‘highly intertextual’ productions like *Bare: A Pop Opera* (2004) or *In the Heights* (2008) are considerably more fragmented retellings of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* than the presumably ‘straightforward’ adaptation process of *Romeo and Juliet: The Musical* (2002) or the ‘creative’ development of *West Side Story* (1957).¹⁶ Although it is important not to dismiss direct adaptations of single texts so early in this discussion, particularly as I will return to such issues in Chapter Three, the productions considered throughout this thesis tend to playfully reimagine a series of past texts, whether they are adapting a primary text or not, in a way that might best be considered “repetition with variation” (Hutcheon, 2012, 4). Such texts are therefore not adaptations, in the traditional use of this term, since they draw from numerous texts in an often complex and multifaceted manner.

In terms of metatheatricality and metatheatre, Richard Hornby suggests that the referencing of a world ‘outside’ of the play, particularly when acknowledging the audience or another literary text, is both an intertextual and metatheatrical trope. He writes, the degree of “metadramatic estrangement”, or rather the extent to which an audience is distanced from the action by a reference, is always “proportional to the degree to which the audience recognizes the literary allusion” (Hornby, 1986, 88). Intertextual references disrupt the action, in this sense, by reminding the audience of the work’s

¹⁶ Since *West Side Story* reimagines *Romeo and Juliet* in 1950s New York, Julie Sanders refers to the musical as an ‘appropriation’ of its source material in that it reworks an existing text to fit an entirely new cultural context (2006, 27-28).

constructed nature in their constant recognition of other texts. In turn, a reference must be a direct allusion to a recent and familiar work in order to disrupt the action and recognise a world outside that of the play (Hornby, 1986, 90). Whilst this statement is certainly applicable to many of the references identified throughout this thesis, intertextual references are not metatheatrical or self-reflective simply by referencing other texts. Referencing a specific text does not automatically disrupt the action, for instance, just as an actor acknowledging the audience is not an 'intertextual' reference if they do not acknowledge a specific text or broader cultural idea. Interpreting a production as both "self-contained" and a "product of drama as a whole literary genre" is therefore a significant element of analysing intertextual references, though, as this thesis will demonstrate, not an essential one (Hornby, 1986, 20-21).

Outline of Thesis

With these ideas in mind, the central aim of this thesis is to analyse the inherent dependence on other cultural forms within twenty-first century musical theatre. In order to achieve this, I will categorise the various types of intertextual reference presented within musical theatre, whilst providing a detailed consideration of each in turn. Unlike the often rudimentary usage of this term within existing musical theatre scholarship, this thesis proposes that intertextual references either (a) adapt a specific popular text (or texts), (b) capitalise on an audience's nostalgia for specific texts, (c) fashion a bricolage of various cultural texts, or (d) metatheatricalise perceptions of musical theatre as an art form. Although intertextuality is central to productions that have been vaguely termed 'postmodern' or 'self-reflexive', this thesis expands the parameters of existing scholarship by not only identifying intertextual references, but analysing the way in which they function and operate too. In order to do this, the core of the thesis

consists of four case study chapters which each analyse numerous contemporary productions in relation to one of the types of reference defined above. To provide a wide range of examples, I will refer to various twenty-first century musicals, and their referenced texts, to highlight the diverse intertextual fabric of this art form. In disregarding musicals which premiered prior to the time frame outlined above, this study looks to analyse how contemporary audiences engage with live theatre in an environment saturated by mediatised art forms, the continued recycling of previously successful material and the popularity of numerous musical theatre paratexts (from cast recordings to social media campaigns). In terms of a methodological approach, the term 'intertextuality' will henceforth be applied in an inclusive manner to detail the function of intertextuality within various performative elements of a live production, be they the score, the dialogue or the design, in addition to the experiential 'texts' which frame a production, such as its marketing strategy. This analysis will therefore manifest itself, in the most part, by questioning how a reference might alter an audience's perception of the referenced text and, in turn, their interpretation of the presented narrative, characters and musical style.

In its entirety, then, this thesis proposes that musical theatre invites intertextuality, as a diverse layering of textual elements in and of itself, whilst also requiring intertextuality to perpetuate a wider cultural trend. Given that the liveness of this art form differentiates it from other cultural forms, as one of its most distinguishable features, musical theatre contributes to a "culture of endlessly circulating texts" in which song and dance are vital to the continued fusion of textual elements (Gracyk, 2001, 56). Furthermore, this thesis develops a critical understanding of the rooted connection between intertextuality and musical theatre by identifying several intertextual references and analysing the

way in which they function and operate. Although audiences are certainly able to enjoy performances without analysing the references presented, this thesis investigates the inherent intertextual fabric of musical theatre to then consider the wider implications of this study and the analytical framework presented within it.

To articulate the above discussion, this thesis is structured in three parts. Part One is divided into two chapters which firmly establish the project's theoretical framework and provide a comprehensive literature review of both intertextuality and musical theatre scholarship. In particular, Chapter One traces the development of the term 'intertextuality' through the work of three dominant theorists, Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes and Gérard Genette, to identify the term's usage in relation to specific schools of thought and the shifting consideration of the author/reader's agency and subjectivity. In response to this, Chapter Two rationalises musical theatre as an appropriate art form through which to study intertextuality by investigating the form's continued use of familiar material and innately recycled nature. This chapter concludes by extending the recognised taxonomies of Gérard Genette to fashion a more diverse and inclusive way of analysing intertextual references (which will then be applied throughout the remainder of this thesis).

Part Two consists of four case study chapters each of which interrogates a style of reference identified above in relation to specific live productions. In the first instance, Chapter Three considers the continual, yet multifaceted, use of adaptation within musical theatre to, in turn, examine 'highly intertextual' productions which recycle specific collections of texts and the artistic legacy such materials establish. In focussing on *Wicked* (2003), in the most part, this chapter considers how song heightens and expands a source when presented

as a piece of musical theatre and the manner in which such productions are read intertextually by their audiences. Secondly, Chapter Four provides a detailed analysis of nostalgia in relation to the twenty-first century musical. Through the close reading of several jukebox musicals, including *Mamma Mia!* (1999), *We Will Rock You* (2002) and *Jersey Boys* (2005), this chapter differentiates personal from cultural nostalgia by identifying which elements an audience might respond to, rather than how or why they might react in this way. Chapter Five, in turn, analyses *The Book of Mormon* (2011) as a 'bricolage' of cultural materials and demonstrates how the musical subverts an audience's expectations of certain texts within its often provocative, and notably intertextual, framework. To complete this section, Chapter Six investigates the referencing of 'musical theatre' as a series of flamboyant, and often outdated, tropes that have come to denote musical theatre as a form. Analysing *Urinetown: The Musical* (2001) and *Monty Python's Spamalot* (2005), in particular, this chapter considers productions which metatheatricalise broader perceptions of musical theatre to the extent that they are read in relation to an audience's intertextual knowledge of musical theatre as an art form. In its entirety, then, this central section analyses the function of intertextual references within several popular musicals to demonstrate that audiences must frequently interpret productions in relation to their familiarity with several existing texts.

The final part of this thesis includes a closing chapter and a conclusion. In developing the arguments outlined throughout the previous chapters, Chapter Seven investigates the intertextual fabric of musical theatre beyond the auditorium by considering the recycled nature of numerous 'paratexts' (as a phenomenon which is unique to the twenty-first century). In addition, this

chapter considers the wider cultural implications of this study by proposing that musical theatre is a highly intermedial art form which, as a stylistic reflection of this, references the cultural lexicon in diverse and multifaceted ways. Further critiquing the unqualified absence of originality detailed at the beginning of this chapter, the thesis culminates in arguing that innovation is impossible within any commercial art form, particularly one that is defined by its intertextual reliance on other texts, genres and styles of performance.

In drawing from theatre, performance, cultural and media studies, this thesis aims to rectify a distinct lack of scholarly engagement with the term 'intertextuality' in relation to musical theatre. Although many scholars have used the term to analyse both musical theatre and the twenty-first century musical, in particular, such scholarship tends to identify intertextual references without considering how they might function or the intention behind their placement. In classifying intertextual references in relation to these elements, this thesis expands upon existing scholarship by analysing how a dominant structural and stylistic device operates within a major popular art form. Furthermore, this thesis considers the role of intertextuality within a time frame in which the popularity of the Internet has enabled audiences to access musical theatre through and across multiple texts and media (many of which are far removed from the musical stage). This research project is significant, therefore, in that it provides a detailed foundation for further analysis by investigating a trend that is both dominant and culturally significant, yet insufficiently researched in terms of identifying the function and possible intentions behind the placement of intertextual references.

RECYCLED CULTURE

The Significance of Intertextuality in Twenty-First Century Musical Theatre

Part One

**Theoretical Framework
and Literature Review**

“What you so often read isn’t always so”
Shrek the Musical (2008), lyrics by David Lyndsay-Abaire.

Chapter One: The Art of Intertextuality

Coined by French philosopher Julia Kristeva in 1966, the term ‘intertextuality’ has since taken on a multiplicity of definitions across several academic fields. Often considered a synonym, or perhaps umbrella term, for the literary concepts of influence, allusion, pastiche, parody, adaptation, and so forth, the term is commonly used to denote the formation of one text by way of another, though definitions often vary. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, for instance, defines the term as “the need for one text to be read in the light of its allusions to and differences from the content or structure of other texts” (cited in Hirst, 2004, 17), whilst literary theorist Gérard Genette defines it as the “actual presence of one text within another” (1997a, 2). As Graham Allen notes in his vital study *Intertextuality* (2010), now in its second edition, the considerable usage of this term seems to suggest a defined “set of critical procedures” for interpreting texts, though nothing could be further from the truth (2010, 2). Instead, the term has been used in so many different ways that the generally accepted definition of the term deviates considerably from Kristeva’s original usage. Although many arts and humanities publications discuss intertextuality in some capacity, the disparate usage of this term has signalled a fluidity in its definition, meaning that many scholars have sought to clarify its usefulness within scholarship in the five decades following Kristeva’s coinage of the term in ‘Word, Dialogue, and Novel’ (1966).

This chapter proposes that the term ‘intertextuality’ is vital to the analysis of numerous cultural forms, despite its varied use within contemporary

scholarship. In tracing the development of the term across multiple areas of scholarship, this chapter fashions a working definition of the term that can then be applied to the contemporary musical, and popular culture more broadly, as this thesis develops. Although it is not my intention to detail every theorist who has used the term, this chapter looks to analyse the major critical theories which have shaped the term's usage, whilst also tracing its development in relation to structuralist, post-structuralist and postmodernist thought. Beyond this, however, this chapter will identify the theories which are no longer applicable to contemporary culture, and thus require updating if they are to be applied to the often fragmented and digital forms of popular culture in existence today. Whilst this study is certainly underpinned by several key works, such theories must be appropriated for a twenty-first century context in order to fully consider how the once binary terms of 'author' and 'reader' function within a culture reliant on digital participation and interactivity. It is therefore my intention to firstly critique the problematic nature of theorising intertextuality, whilst also considering why the term's usage has altered so robustly over the past fifty years.

Text and Textuality

Although definitions of intertextuality are often confused and conflated, it is important to recognise that such conflicted use of this term reflects the manner in which the term's central phrase of 'text' has been appropriated in numerous ways. Notably, the term 'text' no longer simply denotes tangible language-oriented objects from which we derive meaning,¹⁷ whether in the form of a book or magazine, and now includes digital music, social media and, of course, digitised novels and newspapers in an ever-growing "convergence

¹⁷ I have been reluctant to use a problematic term like 'audience' or 'reader' here, and instead feel it necessary to use a collective term like 'we' for reasons I will return to later in this chapter.

culture” (a term that has been employed to describe the merging of existing technologies) (Jenkins, 2006a, 2-3).¹⁸ Although printed novels and newspapers remain widely available today, as they were when Kristeva coined this term, critical discussions of ‘intertextuality’ have since diversified in relation to the expansive use of term ‘text’ to recognise the intertextual fabric of various new media forms. Individuals are no longer restricted to which book they have purchased, or which cinema screen they have entered, since popular culture now provides unlimited access to a “multi-dimensional space” of textual relations (as demonstrated by the Internet) (Barthes, 1977, 146). In order to fully utilise the term today, then, intertextuality must be conceived as a fluid concept which relates to the diversity of texts and cultural forms enjoyed by an ever expanding multiplicity of audiences. Scholars must therefore adopt “a new outlook regarding the social and cultural role of art” as the term ‘text’ continues to diversify and the “intertextual nature of all texts is foregrounded” (Allen, 2010, 208).

In his updated chapter ‘Intertextuality Today’ from 2010, a work already outdated by its disregard of several new media technologies, Graham Allen suggests that the initial decade of the twenty-first century saw the proliferation of reality television, a relentless celebrity culture and an influx of high-profile adaptations (2010, 204). It is no longer surprising, for instance, that most films are remakes and sequels, popular music is fuelled by sampling and cover versions, and most fashion choices are recycled articulations of past styles (Allen, 2010, 204). In order to analyse such an inherent sense of recycling, the study of intertextuality must therefore be recognised in relation to the recent

¹⁸ Apple’s iPhone is perhaps the ultimate example of convergence in existence today. Not only does it allow individuals to utilise the technologies of a mobile phone, it also combines, or rather converges, the technologies of a media player, Internet browser, high-definition camera, and so on, to form a unified product with numerous functions (Jenkins, 2006a, 4-5).

expansion of adaptation studies as an academic field. Highlighted by several dedicated journals and the work of Linda Hutcheon, Julie Sanders and Imelda Whelehan, among others, adaptation studies has typically traced the genealogy of one text into another by considering the presumed fidelity between sources. Instead of attempting to detail every intertextual element of a stage production, for instance, scholars have tended to select specific case studies, and thus eradicate any wider textual connections from their analysis. In identifying such restrictive perimeters, often how a novel has been adapted for film, scholars tend to ignore the broader intertextual fabric of a text and the wider cultural implications of this process. Whilst it is understandable that scholars should wish to present clear and accessible analysis, this often comes at the cost of ignoring the multifaceted nature of a text in not recognising the diversity of texts which bear influence on it and enable audiences to determine meaning. In focussing on the relationship between two distinct works, as if within a vacuum, this style of scholarship unhelpfully assumes that such (inter)textual relationships are always the linear transformation of one text into another.

Although the shortcomings of adaptation studies remain problematic, this field has prompted several important discussions regarding the agency of the author/reader in relation to determining intertextual references. As Graham Allen has noted, many theorists tend to distrust the notion that texts contain a specific set of meanings that are determined by the author, no matter how rational this may seem, and instead wish to present a more nuanced approach (2010, 1). Although it is entirely plausible that texts are meant to be read in a certain way, many scholars have considered 'reading' as a subjective act, since what may be recognised as an intertextual reference for one individual, may not be for another (Allen, 2010, 1). If a cinemagoer is particularly invested in the

horror movie genre, for instance, they may interpret a gothic scene as an intertextual reference to another film, whilst an audience member with little knowledge or experience of this genre may not. In turn, audiences form their reading and interpretation of a text through their remembrance of examples from the same medium, genre or artistic style. Meaning is therefore determined subjectively, often far removed from the author's presumed intention, to the extent that audiences draw upon an "unlimited variety of textual references" as they interpret a text (Allen, 2010, 1). In contrast to this, and perhaps more noticeably, references are often consciously placed by the authors of a work, often to mock (as with parody) or replicate (as with pastiche), and thus meaning is determined within such deliberate references through recognition of the intertext. It is important to consider, therefore, that numerous popular texts are overtly intertextual and have such playfulness firmly rooted within their rhetoric. The self-reflexive nature of animated sitcoms like *The Simpsons* (1989-) and *Family Guy* (1999-), for instance, is maintained through a hybrid of intertextual references which mock, entertain and pay homage to popular culture more broadly. As a result, the scholarship detailed within the following differs in its detailing of the reader's agency over the author's as the chapter develops. Intertextual references are thus, in this sense, both a conscious act of the author (which the reader may or may not recognise) and the subjective interpretation of the reader (as determined by their past experiences of 'reading'). In order to use this term more robustly in relation to musical theatre, it is vital to examine how Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes and Gérard Genette, in particular, have shaped the literary study of intertextuality, before considering the late twentieth/early twenty-first century use of this term in relation to multiple forms of popular culture.

Julia Kristeva

Despite Julia Kristeva introducing this term, her definition of intertextuality referred to the dialogic nature of language, rather than the construction of an artistic text in relation to another (as it is generally considered today). As Leon S. Roudiez claimed in his introduction to *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (1980), for instance, Kristeva's definition "has nothing to do with matters of influence by one writer upon another, or with the sources of a literary work; it does, on the other hand, involve the components of a *textual system*" (1980, 15). Kristeva therefore suggested that every sentence we utter is constructed from words we have heard used in similar circumstances, despite seeming original in the mouth of the speaker. We do not create our own language when we speak, of course, since all language remains in 'dialogue' with previous uses, since "to use a word is to use it again" (Schneider, 2014, 7). Texts are "mosaic[s] of quotations", in this respect, since they are formed from the words of previous users (a notion reframed as a 'tissue of signs' by Roland Barthes) and thus remain fragmented (Kristeva, 1980, 66). As demonstrated in her earlier essays 'Word, Dialogue, and Novel' and 'The Bounded Text' (both 1966), every sentence is borrowed from another as a constructed 'intertextuality', a notion unable to be avoided by any speaker who simply uses the language available to them.

It is important to highlight here how these essays not only introduced a central literary term, but also signalled a theoretical shift in Kristeva's work from structuralism to post-structuralism. Despite the undeniable influence of semiotic and linguistic analysis upon her discussion, as I will explore further in the following section, Kristeva sought to reject the structuralist view of language as a stable and defined entity by promoting its fluidity (as various post-structuralist

scholars had before her). To briefly contextualise this shift, structuralism analyses the underlying structures of cultural products, often tracing genealogies and searching for origins, by applying concepts derived from linguistics, anthropology and psychology. Post-structuralism, on the other hand, emphasises the problematic nature of achieving secure knowledge in any capacity, since, as philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche suggested, “[t]here are no facts, only interpretations” (cited in Sontag, 2009, 5). As an area of scholarship influenced by philosophy, post-structuralism questions various assumptions by insisting that reality *is* itself textual, unlike the structuralist depiction of reality as constructed *through* language. In short, structuralism questions the manner in which reality is categorised, in seeking to erode typical modes of perception and categorisation, whilst post-structuralism distrusts the very notion of reason and considers human beings as ‘dissolved’ and ‘constructed’ individuals formed from social and linguistic forces. Although this is simply a brief outline of a major shift in critical thought, Kristeva claimed that the term ‘text’ refers to “all writing and speech – indeed, all signs” which “arise from a single network” (though it is obvious why her theory has been applied more specifically since) (Porter, 1986, 36). Further to this, Kristeva sought to update structuralist theories in the hope of examining language within a broader cultural framework, rather than the restrictive semiotic structure that preceded her writing. In particular, Kristeva sought to critique and reenergise Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of textual dialogism, whilst also extending Ferdinand de Saussure’s theorisation of semiotics, in a manner that continues to influence scholars from multiple disciplines over six decades later.

Semiology and Semiotic Analysis

In order to understand Kristeva's influence in more detail, it is essential to consider the semiotic analysis from which her work stems and the manner in which her work extends, challenges and perpetuates such arguments. As William Irwin and Graham Allen have acknowledged, intertextuality existed in critical thought long before Kristeva coined the term and originates, in some form, in Ferdinand de Saussure's conception of 'the sign', the signifier and the signified. As arguably the most influential linguist of the twentieth century, Saussure demonstrated that we never encounter the real world, only a version mediated through sign systems. As he noted in 'The Linguistic Sign', language is a "system of signs that expresses ideas", whilst also organising and making sense of reality as a "social institution" (Saussure, 1985, 34). Everything we encounter, whether words, odours, acts and images, for example, appears as a sign with no defined meaning, until we, as human beings, project meaning onto it. Accordingly, a sign is formed of two elements: a 'signifier' (the form which the sign takes, i.e. the word 'tree') and the 'signified' (the concept it represents, i.e. a tall plant, formed predominately of wood). Language acts as an organising principle, in this case, by creating recognisable labels for the objects we encounter in the world (I use the term 'object' in the broadest sense here). As Saussure points out, language might be called the "domain of articulations", since, without it, "thought is a vague, uncharted nebula. There are no pre-existing ideas, and nothing is distinct before the appearance of language" (2001, 6). In other words, language enables the human race to distinguish between objects, since meaning is relational and depends upon "processes of combination and association within the differential system of language itself" (Allen, 2010, 10). In this conception, we differentiate the word cat from similar

sounding words (hat, bat, sat), related words (pet, dog, animal) and particular words used to define types of cat (Persian, Siamese, Burmese) to the extent that “in language there are only differences” (Saussure, 2001, 9). Likewise, we distinguish signs in accordance to what they are not, since the colour red is red because it is not blue or green, and hence signs are always socially determined. Saussure therefore suggested that signs are the mechanisms by which meaning is created, with sign systems, in particular, “shaping our perceptions and experiences” of that around us by providing “the structures in which thought occurs” (Counsell and Wolf, 2001, 3).

Although the influence of Saussurean semiology certainly underpins the broad movement of structuralism, and post-structuralism by default, it is Mikhail Bakhtin’s suggestion that all language is dialogic which Kristeva critiques directly.¹⁹ In particular, Bakhtin suggested that we “live in a world of others’ words”, where every phrase is a dialogic unit of meaning formed in relation to others (other people, words and phrases) (1986, 143). Given that every word has a defined history of usage that continues to develop over time, we select a word in relation to our memories of that word in a similar context. Language therefore remains dialogic in that every utterance appears within an ongoing chain of statements, repetitions and quotations, to the extent that an utterance builds upon previous statements and inspires future responses. As he states in his essay, ‘The Problem of Speech Genres’, for instance:

[as] we select words in the process of constructing an utterance, we by no means always take them from the system of language in their neutral, *dictionary* form. We usually take them from *other utterances*, and mainly from utterances that are kindred to ours in genre, that is, in theme, composition, or style (Bakhtin, 1986, 87).

¹⁹ Kristeva went on to critique the role of semiotics even further in her 1968 essay, ‘Semiotics: A Critical Science and/or a Critique of Science’.

In this view, we select words depending upon their usage within a similar context, rather than in accordance with their dictionary definition or widely accepted meaning. Words are thus fluid entities that “belong to nobody” and remain subject to constant reinterpretation through their use within countless dialogic utterances (Bakhtin, 1986, 88).

As demonstrated throughout *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, Kristeva sought to combine Saussure’s semiology with the Bakhtinian notion of dialogism to argue that texts cannot be separated from the social and cultural contexts in which they were created. Like Bakhtin, Kristeva argued that texts must be deciphered in relation to the context of their construction, though she uses considerably more abstract terminology, since a text is always a “permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text” (Kristeva, 1980, 36); all texts are objects of interpretation, none of which are original, that collide and interlock with every new utterance. By employing the fluid term of ‘text’, however, Kristeva questioned the term’s applicability and, in turn, Bakhtin and Saussure’s use of the term in relation to language. Although she does not define her usage in any succinct fashion, Kristeva insists that society and history are texts in and of themselves which can be constructed and interpreted much in the same way as any artistic text. Kristeva’s definition of intertextuality is therefore significantly more complex than an interaction between artistic texts, as we might understand it today, since it refers to all objects of interpretation. Whilst her work is slightly distanced from Saussure’s notion of the signifier/signified, Kristeva simply extended semiology and Bakhtin’s conception of language into culture and society more broadly. As Graham Allen echoes, no physical text can produce meaning without the context of “on-going cultural and social processes” in which it was created

(2010, 37). We cannot utter an original sentence without drawing upon past uses of the words which construct it (though we may not be able to trace their genealogy). Instead of highlighting the nuances of a text's structure in and of itself, Kristeva conceived the term 'intertextuality' to emphasise the manner in which a text's structure is constructed in relation to the numerous texts which have come before it.

Roland Barthes

Despite Kristeva's coinage of this term, the most widely read, and perhaps most articulate, theorist of intertextuality is Roland Barthes. As a French literary theorist whose work spans structuralism and post-structuralism, Barthes sought to destabilise the conventional view that authors establish the meaning of a text, with readers simply 'unlocking' meaning in the course of their reading. As he argued in his highly influential essay, 'The Death of the Author' (1967), for instance, the author should be considered one of many sources of meaning, since readers determine meaning from their own subjective viewpoint. He writes, "[t]o give a text an Author is to impose a limit on that text", which ultimately "close[s] the writing" and restricts individual interpretation (Barthes, 1977, 147). Rather than releasing a "single 'theological' meaning (the message of the Author-God)", meaning is constructed in the process of reading in so far that the "birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (Barthes, 1977, 148). Whilst Barthes is not suggesting that authors should anonymise their work, he argues that meaning is "drawn from many cultures" and is thus constructed in the minds of the reader (no matter how obvious the author's original intentions may seem to be) (1977, 148).

To articulate his argument further, Barthes claimed that all texts can be categorised as either 'readerly' or 'writerly' texts in his 1973 monograph, *The Pleasure of the Text*. In particular, he suggested that a 'readerly' text is permanently guided by the author, with readers looking to the author's intentions to uncover the text's pre-determined meaning. 'Writerly' texts, on the other hand, are complex and multivalent "tissue[s] of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes, 1977, 146). Although a text's title page may suggest clear authorship, authors of writerly texts constantly borrow from pre-existing works, perhaps unconsciously, and so meaning remains fluidly determined by the reader's recognition of past texts. Just as Bakhtin claimed that every utterance is formed from past utterances, Barthes argues that every text is engulfed by a "multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (1977, 146). Although Barthes does not mention intertextuality directly here (he does not use the term at least), there is a clear line of influence from the theories of Kristeva, and those whose work she extended, and Barthes' reconsideration of authorship in relation to literature. The publication of 'The Death of the Author', in this sense, marks the moment in which the study of intertextuality transitioned from linguistics to literature, and, by extension, echoed a shift from structuralist into post-structuralist thought. In destabilising the accepted notion of active authors and passive readers, Barthes promoted the fluidity of meaning in all manner of texts, and thus the term intertextuality has since been used to analyse artistic texts and their multiple influences.

Reader/Response Theory

Although 'The Death of the Author' was certainly a major development in the study of intertextuality, with David Ayers describing it as "canonical,

achieving a level of recognition that few theoretical works of any period have accomplished”, many of Barthes’ core arguments have been further articulated in the concurrent rise of reader/response theory (2008, 128). Often considered an outdated method of analysis that was developed in the 1960s (with little resonance beyond that period), reader/response theory emphasised the role of the reader in determining literary meaning by highlighting how the reader always fashions meaning independently of the text (Barthes, 1977, 146). Wolfgang Iser, for example, argued that meaning is fashioned within the consciousness of the reader at the time of reading (1980, 66), whilst Norman Holland suggested that an individual’s reading of a text can be used to analyse their psychological responses (particularly as reading is an undeniably psychological activity) (1980, 123). In addition to this, literary theorist Stanley Fish coined the phrase ‘affective stylistics’ to suggest a text only becomes a text once it is read. Contrary to the formalist beliefs of the early twentieth century, Fish proposed that a text cannot develop meaning independently of a reader, since the ‘birth’ of a text can only come at the introduction of a reader. In turn, readers construct meaning in relation to other readers within the same ‘interpretative community’ (Fish, 1980, 147-174). As demonstrated in his later monograph, *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretative Communities* (1980), Fish believed that every reader belongs to an interpretative community formed of members of a similar demographic and set of experiences (though these are not distinct and members may not be aware of one another). He writes, interpretative communities “exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way round” (Fish, 1980, 171). In this instance, the reader has agency over the meaning they construe from a text, with other

elements, especially the author's intention, remaining secondary influences which may or may not impact their reading. Much like Barthes, then, Fish rejected the assumption that authors inject predetermined meaning into a text and that their authority is already ingrained within all acts of reading.

Despite his reluctance to detail the political implications of such communities, with Iser rejecting this theory in particular, the work of Stanley Fish remains central to reader/response theory and studies of popular culture. Much like the theorists considered in this chapter so far, Fish recognised the reader as an active participant, capable of individually determining both meaning and intertextual references. That said, whilst reader/response theory is not explicitly concerned with matters of intertextuality, its development throughout twentieth century scholarship certainly parallels the development of intertextuality as a critical term (particularly as each is concerned with notions of interpretation, authorship and interaction between texts). For this reason alone, an understanding of reader/response theory, and, in turn, reception theory (as explored in Chapter Two), is vital to any study of intertextuality, since it has undeniably shaped the various interpretations of participation and agency that are applied to cultural forms today.

Gérard Genette

Having been influenced by both Kristeva and Barthes, French theorist Gérard Genette sought to differentiate intertextuality from other forms of 'textual transcendence' in the 1980s by returning to the term's structuralist origins. As Drew Eisenhauer outlines in his introduction to *Intertextuality in American Drama*, for instance, the term intertextuality had become too vague for Genette, just as it had for Kristeva in her later works, to the extent that the term required

reconfiguring under alternative, and considerably more accessible, headings (2013, 2). In his trilogy of textual transcendence, namely *The Architect: An Introduction* (1972), *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982) and *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (1987), Genette therefore proposed that his term 'transtextuality' included five distinct subtypes that each classified a way in which a text might alter or expand upon the content of another text. In this conception, Genette's first subtype is 'intertextuality', in which a text is quoted or referenced within another (as is now the standard definition of this term). Secondly, 'paratextuality' refers to the texts which surround a text, perhaps the title, subtitle, footnotes, index, and so on, of a printed book. A paratext therefore remains separate from the dominant text, though undeniably frames the way it is read.²⁰ Although the title of a novel does not automatically alter our reading of the text itself, for instance, readers engage with certain familiarities and expectations derived from the title as they read the particular novel (as will be explored in Chapter Seven). Thirdly, Genette defines 'metatextuality' as the critical commentary of a given text, be it a review, commentary or critical analysis. A book review, for example, critiques a given text, and so requires a particular text in order to be written, though it is equally disconnected from the primary text as readers can enjoy a book review without having read the specific book. Fourthly, 'hypertextuality' refers to any relationship uniting one text (the *hypertext*) to an earlier text (the *hypotext*) (Genette, 1997a, 5). Hypertextuality is not the direct adaptation of a hypotext into a hypertext, however, since such texts do not directly reference a former text, simply evoke one. Gaston Leroux's 1910 novel and Andrew Lloyd

²⁰ Although the term 'paratext' is principally associated with Genette and his 1987 publication of *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, numerous media studies scholars have since applied the term to contemporary popular culture, including Jonathan Gray in *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts* (2010).

Webber's 1986 musical adaptation of *The Phantom of the Opera*, for instance, each draw upon the central themes of the classic fairytale, *Beauty and the Beast*, without directly citing it.²¹ Finally, Genette completes his subtypes of transtextuality with 'architextuality', or, rather, the placing of a text within a genre. He writes, "determining the generic status of the text is not the business of the text but that of the reader, or the critic, or the public", since such qualities may "reject the status claimed for the text by the paratext" (Genette, 1997a, 4). If a novel's subtitle were to describe the text as a romantic thriller, for instance, readers have the capacity to ignore such details and align their reading of the text with their knowledge of other genres, be it a romance or spy novel. A reader's ability to recognise a text's generic qualities (archetypes, tropes, style, and so on) thus fabricates a 'silent' relationship between texts, as determined by the reader's experience of similar texts.

Just as Kristeva described all language as dialogic, Genette sought to expand this definition in relation to artistic texts. As he states in *The Architect: An Introduction*:

the text interests me (only) in its *textual transcendence* – namely, everything that brings it into relation (manifest or hidden) with other texts. I call that *transtextuality*, and I include under it *intertextuality* in the strict (and, since Julia Kristeva, the "classical") sense – that is, the literal presence (more or less literal, whether integral or not) of one text within another (Genette, 1992, 81-82).

As this passage highlights, Genette reads Kristeva's definition as a "relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another", as in the "traditional practice of quoting" (Genette, 1997a, 1-2). For this reason alone,

²¹ In her article '*The Beauty and the Beast* Trope in Modern Musical Theatre' (2015), Rebecca Warner problematically demonstrates this trope as an example of adaptation, rather than intertextuality or hypertextuality, by analysing numerous musicals which have 'adapted' the core values of this narrative for the musical stage.

Genette sought to differentiate intertextuality from other types of textual relationship and, in doing so, further classify the diverse textual relationships formed between texts. Although it seems obvious to note that a film's trailer, reviews, script and genre condition an audience's reading of it in numerous ways, Genette suggested that these diverse textual relationships had merely been categorised as intertextual, or simply presumed to function differently, prior to the publication of his trilogy. Scholars had ignored the innate power struggles between texts to the extent that Genette radically emphasised the complex and multifaceted nature of intertextual references by proposing a nuanced interpretative framework. Whilst his subtypes are not "separate and absolute", Genette advanced scholarship by clarifying various complex relationships between texts to further identify the continuous overlap between inherent layers of textuality (1997a, 7).

Authors, Authorship and Intertextuality

Having summarised the literary use of the term intertextuality and the development of reader/response theory, it is vital to acknowledge that few of the theories detailed above have considered the active role an author might play in the selection and inclusion of intertextual references since Barthes first problematised the autonomy of the author in the 1960s. As Jonathan Gray notes, "Bakhtin, Kristeva and Barthes impressively theorized a point of entry to the confusing world of intertextuality, but insufficiently mapped out its landscape" (2006, 36). That said, Harold Bloom's studies of Romantic poetry, *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973) and *A Map of Misreading* (1975), sought to rectify many of the critical gaps that had been created by suggesting that meaning is primarily determined by reader of a text, rather than its author. For instance, he discusses how many Romantic poets, including William

Wordsworth, referenced or alluded to the work of John Milton, as arguably the 'father' or 'precursor' of all Romantic poetry (Bloom, 1973, 32-33). Many 'strong poets', for example, creatively respond to the poets who have come before them, seemingly wrestling with their predecessors, whereas 'weak poets' simply recycle and idealise previously successful ideas (Bloom, 1973, 5). A poet is thus "not so much a man speaking to men as a man rebelling against being spoken to by a dead man (the precursor) outrageously more alive than himself" (Bloom, 1975, 19). Accordingly, Bloom argued that all poets write 'new' poems by misreading and misinterpreting the works which inspired them to become poets. All poets are influenced, in one way or another, by existing poetry, and therefore cannot detach themselves from such work within their own writing practices. In this sense, 'strong' poets transform, redirect and reinterpret existing works to "generate the illusion that their poetry is not influenced by, and not therefore a misreading of, the precursor poem" (Allen, 2010, 132).

Even before Bloom, however, and even over forty years before Barthes, poet T. S. Eliot wrote that "[n]o poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists" (1932, 4). In his 1919 essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', Eliot therefore argued that all authors have an unconscious connection to the significant authors and texts of the past. Furthermore, the term 'tradition' is problematic given that following tradition does not simply mean imitating what has gone before, since "novelty is better than repetition" (Eliot, 1932, 4). Instead, new authors are to thrive by selectively imitating past texts and styles, filtering out what is useful and what is not, to obtain tradition by "great labour" (Eliot, 1932, 4). After all, a poet is not compelled to write "with only his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling

that the whole of the literature of Europe [...] has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense [...] is what makes a writer traditional" (Eliot, 1932, 4). In terms of intertextuality, then, both Eliot and Bloom's arguments can be applied more broadly to suggest that all authors acknowledge, whether consciously or otherwise, the work that has gone before them. Every 'text' exists within a lineage of texts that authors have crafted in relation to the works that either positively inspire them or cause them to separate or distinguish their work stylistically. Texts are therefore always intertextual because the author has included both conscious and unconscious references to existing works and the traditions of writing that has come before them. Although much of the scholarship detailed in this chapter proposes that intertextual references are subjectively determined by the reader, it is vital to acknowledge that they are also often the deliberate act of the author. Whilst intertextual references do require a reader to acknowledge them, hence making a connection between the referenced text and the current text, they are also frequently placed there by the text's creator (as the forthcoming case study chapters will demonstrate).

Intertextuality and Popular Culture

In order to expand this investigation, it is important to recognise that a major theoretical consideration of this term has not published since Genette's *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* in the late 1980s. Instead, the term has been employed throughout popular culture studies to analyse both the conscious referencing of other texts and the subjective interpretation and reading practices of an audience. As Marsha Kinder proposes in *Playing with Power in Movies, Television, and Video Games*, for instance, the consideration of texts in relation to their diverse textual strategies and ideological

assumptions, as if within a “larger cultural discourse”, has refined the term so robustly that intertextuality has become a prominent mode of enquiry within film, television and video game studies (1992, 2). Given the frequent use of this term within popular culture scholarship, the following section surveys the work of several influential scholars to highlight how the term is more readily associated today with the films of Baz Luhrmann, than the dialogic nature of language.

Given the frequent use of the term intertextuality to describe the direct referencing of existing texts, multiple scholars continue to publish intertextual studies of various popular texts and forms (Allen, 2011, 2). Michael Dunne, for instance, analyses the use of intertextual references within numerous cultural texts in his 2001 book, *Intertextual Encounters in American Fiction, Film, and Popular Culture*. From the referencing of existing ‘road movies’ in *Thelma and Louise* (1991) to the recycled nature of various popular love songs, each of Dunne’s chapters highlight the inherent intertextuality of popular culture through the close analysis of several case studies. Jonathan Gray, on the other hand, focusses his 2006 monograph, *Watching with The Simpsons*, on the intertextual study of a single television programme. As one of the few authors dedicated to analysing intertextuality in one franchise, Gray examines multiple sequences in *The Simpsons* (1989-) where audiences require existing knowledge of other genres and texts to “complete the joke” (2006, 2). Similarly, Justin A. Williams details the intertextual nature of ‘sampling’ within hip hop music in relation to issues of ownership and copyright. For instance, he writes that “hip-hop openly celebrates its connections with the past” to the extent that it was “founded on the manipulation of pre-existing material” and regularly creates a “vast intertextual network from myriad elements within and outside of hip-hop culture” (Williams, 2015, 206). Furthermore, I. Q. Hunter analyses the appropriation of

The Lord of the Rings film trilogy within numerous pornographic films in his chapter 'Tolkien Dirty' (2006). As each of these disparate examples demonstrate, then, the study of intertextuality is represented within the twenty-first century by several monographs, edited collections and journal articles which each analyse the conscious referencing of existing texts within another text or franchise. Although the role of intertextuality within musical theatre remains an area of critical neglect, multiple scholars have, and continue to, analyse the placement of direct references within various popular works.

In addition to the recent analysis of deliberate intertextual references, numerous scholars, including John Fiske, have studied more abstract and subjective types of intertextuality since the 1980s. In *Television Culture* (1987), for example, Fiske provides an exhaustive classification of the functions of intertextuality in popular television by differentiating 'vertical' from 'horizontal' intertextuality. In particular, he defines 'vertical intertextuality' as the texts which surround a work, and certainly influence it, without interacting directly. Combining Genette's definitions of paratextuality (the framing texts) and metatextuality (critical commentary), this type of intertextual relationship works to "promote the circulation of selected meanings of the primary text" and is thus bound by a primary text, whether publicity materials, reviews or online conversation, though never actively referenced (Fiske, 2010b, 119). 'Horizontal intertextuality', on the other hand, refers to the text's relationship with certain genre traditions, stock characters and narrative types, rather than direct citations of a particular work. In this instance, horizontal intertextuality occurs "in the space *between* texts", since its effectiveness requires a generalised knowledge of past texts and genres to fully comprehend the text at hand (Fiske, 2010b, 109). As I will examine in Chapter Three, for instance, the musical

Wicked (2003) is as much influenced by cultural depictions of belting divas and the American Dream as it is specific images and phrases from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). In forming a distinction between 'vertical' and 'horizontal' intertextuality, Fiske suggests that intertextual references require the audience to decipher the familiar structures and ideologies which frame their reading of a text, rather than actual past experiences of reading. This opinion is shared by John Frow, who states in his chapter, 'Intertextuality and Ontology', that intertextual references are formed from "cultural and ideological norms; out of the conventions of genre; out of styles and idioms embedded in the language; out of connotations and collocative sets; out of clichés, formulae, or proverbs" (1990, 45). As Fiske and Frow therefore assert, intertextuality is not only concerned with the direct referencing of specific works, since meaning is often shaped from broader tropes and assumptions that have been developed within a diverse network of cultural texts.

In dismissing direct references from his definition of intertextuality altogether, Fiske proposed that texts develop meaning in relation to an audience's assumptions and expectations of a text's broader categorisation, typically their medium or genre. This notion is further highlighted by Tony Bennett and Janet Woollacott in their 1987 work, *Bond and Beyond: The Political Career of a Popular Hero*, in which they claim that popular texts are always read in relation to ever-changing cultural, political and ideological assumptions that have been determined within popular culture. Unlike Kristeva's definition of this term, Bennett and Woollacott use the term intertextuality to survey the social context of numerous references within the James Bond series to highlight the manner in which all texts are read in relation to broader cultural constructs (1987, 44-5). An audience's cultural assumptions

float 'between' texts, in this sense, since texts are "already humming with reading possibilities" the moment we browse a book's cover or purchase our cinema tickets (Bennett and Woollacott, 1987, 91). Fiske, Bennett and Woollacott therefore propose that our predetermined assumptions of a text are fashioned in accordance with the texts which frame it, and thus the characteristics which arise from such texts. Although this is a highly subjective task, audience members often dismiss certain genres if they have not enjoyed the paratexts which represent them.²² Many audiences might dismiss a horror movie, for instance, if the trailer promotes farfetched plotlines, poor acting and, most prominently, frightening content. Such an opinion is therefore formed by the framing of the primary text, rather than the work itself. Audiences consequently determine their potential to enjoy a text from certain cultural assumptions, the texts which surround the primary text, and the "rich and complex" relationships which frame an audience's reading of popular works (Bennett and Woollacott, 1987, 45). The study of intertextuality within popular culture scholarship has thus developed the term beyond the analysis of textual utterances and as a vital element of popular artistic texts, whether featuring direct references or not. It is important to recognise within the following chapters, therefore, the manner in which assumptions of genre, suitability and audience demographic are central to an audience's interpretation of a text and, by extension, the academic study of intertextuality within popular culture.

Although intertextuality continues to be defined using diverse and all-encompassing definitions, many scholars have attempted to clarify its core

²² Although this thesis does not deal with matters of 'taste' or 'cultural capital' in any great detail, Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979) remains a primary sociological analysis of the term 'taste' in relation to cultural hegemony. For Bourdieu, individuals not only possess social and economic 'capital', but a sense of 'cultural capital' determined by the forms or commodities they enjoy and participate in. In this view, the selection of certain cultural texts can often indicate an individual's socio-economic background (Bourdieu, 2010, 59).

meaning, often unsuccessfully, by differentiating the term from similarly used concepts and terms. In their edited collection *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History*, for instance, Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein conclude that:

The study of influence [in particular] tends to center on major authors and canonical works, identifying prior documents as “sources” or “contexts” for a given author. Intertextuality, on the other hand, is a concept unconcerned with authors as individuals; it treats all texts as part of a network of discourse that includes culture, history, and social practices as well as other literary works (1991, blurb).

Although this quotation goes some way to clarify these terms, it also questions whether influence and intertextuality can be studied simultaneously. Can we explore how one text derives from another text (influence), for instance, whilst also acknowledging the complex web of references which engulf it more broadly (intertextuality)? Or, rather, can the conscious, specific referencing of a text be studied in the same manner as the broad, unconscious recycling of cultural tropes and references? In response, Tilottama Rajan suggests that “the idea of intertextuality has increasingly replaced that of influence as a way of describing the status of texts within a tradition” (1991, 61). In this broader view, studies of intertextuality can, and should, acknowledge direct references to specific texts and the appropriation of social, historical and cultural myths or assumptions as equally intertextual. If we acknowledge intertextuality as the creation of one text by way of another, as in its most rudimentary definition, then the above styles of reference are intertextual in that they reference other texts in their formation (one is simply specific, whilst the other is broad). In order to use the term to its full capacity, then, intertextuality should be recognised as the dominant, often self-conscious, referencing of other texts (as it regularly is) *and* the continued perpetuation of cultural myths, ideologies and assumptions. It is undeniable, therefore, that the critical effectiveness of this term has been foregrounded in

recent popular culture scholarship, and so remains a useful, whilst provocative, concept today.

This chapter has highlighted how the term intertextuality has developed since Julia Kristeva first described the permeable “space of a given text” (1980, 36). In addition to this, it has demonstrated how the term might best be employed to deepen our understanding of the relationship between a text, its author and its audience. Although many definitions have been constructed to analyse specific cultural forms in line with a specific context, the term intertextuality will be applied broadly throughout the following chapters to prompt an important analysis of this term in relation to contemporary musical theatre. By applying the term to various case studies, particularly those which have been simply classified as ‘parody’ or ‘pastiche’ within existing scholarship, the main body of this thesis looks to analyse the role of intertextual references within several popular musicals in a manner which emphasises the recycled nature of musical theatre more broadly.

"It's man devouring man, my dear, and who are we to deny it in here?"
Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street (1979), lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

Chapter Two: Theorising the Intertextual Musical

Having recognised the inherent intertextuality of musical theatre at the start of this thesis, this chapter looks to identify musical theatre as a suitable case study through which to analyse the intertextual character of twenty-first century popular culture. Although there are numerous art forms through which this relationship could be studied, notably film and television drama, the self-reflexive, metatheatrical and playful nature of much musical theatre identifies the form as not only appropriate, but a particularly apt case study. In order to apply such a complex term to the musical, then, it is first important to identify the areas of musical theatre scholarship this thesis will build upon to establish where this research might best be located within existing literature. In the second half of this chapter, the discussion then identifies the numerous types of intertextual reference presented within musical theatre to consider how such references might function in relation to the scholarship outlined in the previous chapter. Most importantly, this chapter expands the established taxonomies of Gérard Genette to consider how an intertextual reference might function in terms of its specificity, intention, reception and presentation (as features which are fundamental to musical theatre performance). In light of this, the following chapter is part literature review, part position paper and part methodological statement: all of which identify musical theatre as inherently intertextual.

Literature Review

The unprecedented development of musical theatre scholarship over the past two decades has rendered the field an energetic, vibrant and culturally

significant area of study. That said, scholars including David Savran (2004) and Stacy Wolf (2007a) have continuously deliberated the lack of critical attention musical theatre received prior to the twenty-first century, despite Dominic Symonds and Dan Rebellato suggesting this is something we should no longer lament (2009, 3). David Walsh and Len Platt, for instance, argue that musicals straddle “the high/low cultural divide”, seemingly too “lowbrow” to interest high-art critics and too “conventional” to intrigue cultural critics, to the extent that they have often received a superficial level of analysis within scholarship (2003, 2). Writing during the initial influx of academic interest in the form, Walsh and Platt sought to redeem musical theatre from its marginalised position as ‘only entertainment’, as Richard Dyer had described it in 1992, by considering the broader cultural significance of this art form. Similarly, David Savran looked to destabilise the “long-standing, class-based prejudices about the superiority of art to entertainment” in his article ‘Toward a Historiography of the Popular’ (2004, 211). For Savran, the form’s interdisciplinarity, convoluted genre distinctions, presentation of diverse identities, inherent metatheatricality and devotion to producing pleasure had rendered musical theatre an audience’s “guilty pleasure” and reduced scholarship to coffee-table books and basic historiographies (2004, 216). As Scott Miller also notes in *Strike Up the Band*, the “*silly* and *trivial*” nature of bursting into song and dance has denied musical theatre the comprehensive analysis attributed to other forms of popular culture (2007, 3). Instead of aligning this rejection with the presumed boundaries of high/low art, however, as many other scholars have, Miller notes that singing is simply “the language of musical theatre”, just as “iambic pentameter is the language of Shakespeare” (2007, 3). As many scholars have now recognised, then, musical theatre is as worthy of analysis as film or television, for example,

particularly as the “conventions of musical theatre are no more ridiculous than [in] any other art form” (Miller, 2007, 3).

Despite musical theatre having been considered a ‘fabulous invalid’ for several decades, seeming to balance opera, drama and popular music, the academic study of this form has grown so robustly over the last decade that it is now represented by a dedicated journal,²³ several conference series and working groups,²⁴ numerous edited collections,²⁵ and a multitude of monographs. As of the time of writing, musical theatre scholarship is thriving across the globe, particularly in the UK and the US, and has undeniably been propelled by the renewed public interest in the form throughout the twenty-first century. The increased production of mainstream film musicals (such as *Chicago* (2002) and *Les Misérables* (2012)), musical theatre-based television talent shows (including the BBC’s *Any Dream Will Do* (2007) and *Over the Rainbow* (2010)), and even the recent success of *Hamilton: Original Broadway Cast Recording* (2015) in the US Rap Album charts, have identified musical theatre as a vital element of mainstream popular culture. Such an influx of academic interest has thus been determined within a time period in which musical theatre is culturally important, a connection once lost with the introduction of rock ‘n’ roll in the 1960s, whilst also helped into fruition by the dissemination of musicals on social media, the Internet and twenty-four-hour television. Whilst Savran treats musical theatre as an academic guilty pleasure, having turned to the field late in his established career, the above scholars collectively argue that the ‘snobbish’ rejection of musical theatre is not a

²³ *Studies in Musical Theatre* (2007-) is a primary journal dedicated to developing scholarship within this area of study (as edited by George Burrows and Dominic Symonds).

²⁴ The annual ‘Song, Stage and Screen’ conference, for instance, in addition to the working groups of the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) and Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE).

²⁵ *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical* (2002, 2008), *The Oxford Handbook to the American Musical* (2011) and *Gestures of Music Theatre* (2014).

response to any innate difficulty in analysing these works, since musical theatre can and should be studied.

Although the traditions of musical theatre stem from various past genres and forms, the canon of works generally identified as musicals are typically less than a century old (particularly as very few of the productions performed today predate the twentieth century). Scholars have long deliberated, however, whether *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), *The Black Crook* (1866), *Show Boat* (1927) or *Oklahoma!* (1943) was the first 'musical' and, rather unsurprisingly, there remains no definitive answer. Many scholars have therefore responded to such unclear territory by producing historiographical surveys to help define the complex genealogy of musical theatre. Gerald Bordman's *American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle* (2011), for example, first published in 1984 and now in its fourth edition, is perhaps the most exhaustive detailing of musical theatre history to be published. Separating his thousand-page monograph into certain time frames, Bordman provides a brief, yet thorough, chronology of American musical theatre history as a reference point for scholars, students and theatregoers. Although this format does not allow scholars to provide any detailed analysis of specific productions, many have since followed this format in the publication of John Kenrick's *Musical Theatre: A History* (2008), Larry Stempel's *Showtime: A History of the Broadway Musical Theater* (2010) and Ethan Mordden's *Anything Goes: A History of American Musical Theatre* (2013). As an alternative approach, Mark Steyn's *Broadway Babies Say Goodnight: Musicals Now and Then* (1997) and Mark N. Grant's *The Rise and Fall of the Broadway Musical* (2004) divide the history of musical theatre in relation to broader themes and elements, rather than certain time periods. Steyn, for instance, separates his monograph using terms such as 'show',

'music', 'fags', 'rock' and 'flops', whilst Grant explores major stylistic shifts under the simpler headings of book, lyrics, design, amplification, and so on. Although these monographs often lack critical utility, seemingly little more than a published collection of plot outlines, this style of scholarship remains useful given that it identifies specific trends and often culminates with a valuable discussion of how musical theatre might evolve (or decline). John Kenrick, for instance, suggests that the musical will only "survive and occasionally thrive by adapting to changes in artistic and commercial expectations" (2008, 382), whereas Nathan Hurwitz positively argues that "the future holds infinite possibility for the musical theatre" (2014, 246). In their entirety, then, these historiographical accounts usefully predict the future of musical theatre as a commercial art form. Although the views presented are often highly subjective, particularly as the authors tend to draw attention to the productions they personally admire, this style of scholarship tends to construct a history of musical theatre that is often exhaustive and clear.

Despite such historical studies providing a staple foundation for much musical theatre analysis, the majority of recent scholarship rejects a linear approach by defining a particular methodology or set of case studies. In light of this, the majority of musical theatre scholarship tends to analyse either (a) specific trends in musical form, (b) the representation of national, personal or cultural identities, (c) the commercial framework of musical theatre, or (d) the dramaturgy of the live event (all of which vary in their relevance to this thesis).²⁶ In the first instance, the genealogy of recent musical theatre is generally defined

²⁶ The only notable exemption from this list is the analysis of specific composers, directors, performers and productions. Robert Gordon's edited collection, *The Oxford Handbook of Sondheim Studies*, for instance, in addition to Marc Napolitano's *Oliver!: A Dickensian Musical*, both published in 2014, are difficult texts to apply within this thesis, despite being notable additions to the field.

as a sequence of eras which have responded to, or consciously subverted, the style of 'integrated' or 'book' musical that was first performed in the 1940s and 50s (typically those of Rodgers and Hammerstein).²⁷ Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* (1981) and Stephen Sondheim's *Company* (1970), for instance, are both structured around a central idea, rather than a coherent narrative, and are thus considered 'concept' musicals. Similarly, the megamusicals of the 1980s, be they *Les Misérables* (1985) or *Miss Saigon* (1989), are named so because of their lush scores, reliance on visual spectacle and global appeal. Accordingly, monographs such as Elizabeth L. Wollman's *Hard Times: The Adult Musical in 1970s New York City* (2012) analyse particular stylistic trends, rather than the work of a specific composer or director (though there is often a correlation between the two). Jessica Sternfeld's *The Megamusical* (2006), for example, provides an essential analysis of the megamusical from a musicologist's perspective, whilst identifying the trend's impact on commercial theatremaking in the subsequent decades. In analysing the legacy of musicals like *Chess* (1986) and *Starlight Express* (1984), for instance, Sternfeld argues that many contemporary productions follow the megamusical model, despite being categorised by their use of source material (as with film-to-stage or jukebox musicals) (2006, 352). Although Sternfeld certainly goes some way to classify *The Producers* (2001) and *Wicked* (2003) as recent incarnations of the megamusical, it is her methodology which is of particular use to this thesis. Notably, Sternfeld exhaustively, and often mathematically, analyses the scores

²⁷ With songs growing seamlessly from the dialogue, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!* (1943) is often considered the first 'integrated' musical in that each element of the production works to forward a narrative. Described by Ann Sears as "having the plot, music and lyrics closely knit together to form a cohesive whole", the idea of an integrated musical has since developed beyond the premiere of *Oklahoma!* to become the expected presentational style within musical theatre (2008, 149). Although trends like the 'concept' and 'jukebox' musical challenge this statement at first glance, most works of musical theatre tend to include a series of integrated elements that drive a coherent narrative.

of various productions to identify the recycled nature of such shows. In the appendix, 'List of Recurring Material in *The Phantom of the Opera*', for instance, she details how the score's recurring themes and motifs reappear in either their original form or with new lyrics, orchestration or emotional intention (2006, 381-385). Although this list is specific to one production, and thus limited in its critical utility, this methodology establishes a model for analysing the recycled nature of musical theatre that can be applied more broadly. In meticulously selecting her case studies and extrapolating the features which directly contribute to her argument, Sternfeld fashions a method of analysis that identifies the intertextual framework of a production in terms of its construction, dramaturgy and, more importantly, audience reception. In addition to this example, Wollman's *The Theater Will Rock: A History of the Rock Musical, from Hair to Hedwig* (2006) charts the development of rock musicals, whilst also suggesting that the increased use of amplification and hydraulic scenery, among other elements, has altered many audiences' perception of and engagement with musical theatre. After all, many audience members have grown so accustomed to productions being "fast, loud and funny", as Gussie proclaims in *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981), that they are often perplexed by the unmediated nature of a live play (Sondheim, 1986). Wollman claims, therefore, that rock musicals, and the various aesthetic norms these productions have propagated, have destroyed many of the authentic elements of 'live' performance.²⁸ Musicals are now, problematically for Wollman, "a step closer to the mass media" in their method of production and visual aesthetic, thus often attracting a wider, more diverse, demographic as a result (Wollman, 2006, 123). Although she looks to identify the key characteristics of a specific trend/time

²⁸ The notion of 'liveness' is perhaps best defined by Philip Auslander in *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (1999), as a response to Peggy Phelan's earlier work, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (1993).

period, Wollman identifies the intertextuality of the twenty-first century musical as an extension of the rock and megamusical models of the late twentieth century. Collectively, then, Sternfeld and Wollman provide a theoretical examination of the origins of productions in which familiar idioms are “brushed off, spruced up, and given brand new lives”, eight shows a week (Wollman, 2006, 222).

The second category of musical theatre scholarship that is applicable to this thesis considers the performance of cultural and personal identities on the musical stage. In particular, musicologist Raymond Knapp proposes that musical theatre and film are vital to the cultural formation and acceptance of various social identities in his two-part study, *The American Musical and the Formation of National Identity* (2005) and *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity* (2006). As he argues throughout his works, “the American musical has continued to evolve into the present, both accommodating changes in American culture and society and, in turn, helping to shape their histories in profound ways” (a notion unmatched in numerous other art forms) (Knapp, 2006, 3). Drawing upon numerous case studies, including *The King and I* (1951), *Cabaret* (1966) and *Assassins* (1991), Knapp presents the American musical as a prism through which societies propose, imagine and reinvent their unique visions of existence. Whether in their depictions of race, gender, sexuality or nationalism, musicals continue to provide a platform for the negotiation of various problematic identities, meaning the form remains socially relevant and widely popular. Despite considering twentieth century musicals for the most part, Knapp demonstrates how musical theatre scholarship can sufficiently analyse numerous case studies using a clear and developed methodology (this being, of course, one of the central

reasons his work is widely read and cited today). Given that his case studies span several decades, even centuries, and stem from a variety of cultural contexts, Knapp forms a staple underpinning through which to consider musical theatre as a socially provocative form. John Bush Jones, in turn, provides both a historiographical account of musical theatre and a socially informed reading of American identity in his book, *Our Musicals, Ourselves: A Social History of the American Musical Theatre* (2003). By identifying musicals both “in history and as history”, Bush Jones argues that the American musical continues to “transform, not just report, the tenor of the times” (2003, 1). Like Knapp, he traces the development of this art form from hopeful, often nostalgic visions of America in *Oklahoma!* (1943), for instance, to socially provocative musicals like *Urinetown: The Musical* (2001) in the twenty-first century. In particular, he notes that various twenty-first century musicals are solemn in tone, particularly in comparison with the light-hearted jukebox musicals and film-to-stage adaptations that seem to typify this era, since they continue to tackle social problems and troubling depictions of identity (Bush Jones, 2003, 354). *Urinetown*, for instance, is not only highly intertextual, but built upon the questioning of musical theatre as a social and political force (Bush Jones, 2003, 355-358). The work of Bush Jones and Knapp therefore exemplifies a style of scholarship which provides a detailed socio-cultural analysis of multiple musical theatre works. Although I will only consider representations of identity when appropriate to specific intertextual references, such scholarship demonstrates how musical theatre communicates socially important ideas in a manner that is also familiar, recycled and intertextual.

Beyond the consideration of national identities, numerous scholars have analysed the importance of representing gender and sexuality in musical

theatre. Stacy Wolf, for instance, as a notable figure in this area, argues that “gender inflects and shapes every aspect of the musical” in her book, *Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical* (2011, 6). Building upon her 2002 monograph, *A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical*, Wolf suggests that musicals are ultimately read in relation to an audience’s ideals, assumptions and prejudices regarding gender and sexuality stereotypes. Elaine Aston and Geraldine Harris argue, in turn, that mainstream theatre continually provides a “good-night-out-for-the-girls”, with productions like *Grumpy Old Women Live* (2005) and *Calendar Girls* (2008) attracting largely female audiences (2012, 1). In relation to *Mamma Mia!* (1999), for instance, they consider the feminist implications of musicals designed to provide pleasure by arguing that the musical “traces the postfeminist legacy of women as ‘independent’ homemakers” (Aston and Harris, 2012, 124). Although Aston and Harris are more critical of musical theatre than Wolf, this style of scholarship continues to examine various contemporary case studies in relation to what is presented on stage and the fan cultures/embodied responses found beyond the auditorium. In terms of sexuality, scholars including D. A. Miller and John M. Clum have examined the popular assumption that musical theatre has a secured homosexual fan base. Although Wolf, Aston and Harris would include heterosexual women in this claim, Clum suggests that such identification stems from the form’s rooted presentation of camp aesthetics and diva personas (2001, 133-135). Strong-willed females like Fanny Brice in *Funny Girl* (1964) or Mama Rose in *Gypsy* (1959), for instance, continue to resonate with gay audiences far more profoundly than the homosexual male characters depicted in *La Cage aux Folles* (1983) or *RENT* (1996) (Clum, 2001, 5-6). In light of this, musical theatre resonates with various marginalised groups in a way that is only

achievable through music, flamboyant costumes and self-assured performances. Although this thesis does not intend to classify the intertextual framework of various depictions of identity in any great detail, this style of scholarship demonstrates how musical theatre presents individual people (characters) to a collection of individuals (an audience) for interpretation and, often, personal appropriation.

Looking beyond the auditorium, the third style of scholarship which is applicable to this thesis considers musical theatre as a commercial art form. Scholars including Dan Rebellato, Susan Bennett, Steven Adler and Maurya Wickstrom, for example, have each examined musical theatre as a capitalist event in which investors, multinational corporations and worldwide smash hits are the primary focus. In highlighting one of two dominant narratives, analysis tends to consider either the commercial expansion of London in the 1980s or New York in the 1990s by investigating how musical theatre might reinforce “consumer capitalism” on both sides of the Atlantic (Harvie, 2009, 32). Dan Rebellato’s ‘Playwriting and Globalisation: Towards a Site-Unspecific Theatre’ (2006), for instance, suggests that the British megamusical of the 1980s reflected economic shifts in the UK Thatcherite government to produce the theatrical alternative of a McDonalds hamburger: identical sets, costumes and even facial expressions (an argument later extended in *Theatre & Globalization* (2009)). McTheatre, as Rebellato terms it, shows a “profound disregard, even contempt, for space and particularity” by favouring machine-like productions that are ready to be globally distributed (2006, 103).²⁹ No matter which city *Cats*

²⁹ The ‘robotic repetition’ of much musical theatre performance has been widely analysed in works such as Jonathan Burston’s ‘Theatre Space as Virtual Place: Audio Technology, the Reconfigured Singing Body, and the Megamusical’ (1998), Baz Kershaw’s *The Radical in Performance: From Brecht to Baudrillard* (1999) and Elizabeth L. Wollman’s *The Theater Will Rock: A History of the Rock Musical, from Hair to Hedwig* (2006).

or *Les Misérables* is performed in, the sensation is the same (Rebellato, 2006, 102). In addition to this narrative, there exists a dominant body of literature detailing the Disneyfication of Broadway during the late twentieth century. As Elizabeth L. Wollman describes, the restoration of the New Amsterdam Theater in the mid-1990s, as designed to house Disney's *The Lion King*, signalled the renovation of Times Square to welcome families to Broadway (2002, 446-449).³⁰ Parents were no longer required to usher their children past pornography cinemas to find the relevant theatre, and could, instead, freely explore the tourist trap of bright lights and department stores we recognise as Times Square today.

Although such narratives do little to analyse the intertextual character of musical theatre in any great detail (though Adler's *On Broadway: Art and Commerce on the Great White Way* (2004) certainly discusses the ramifications of high-profile adaptation at certain points), this style of scholarship identifies the dominant financial trends and structures that continue to condition the commercial musical. Just like a theme park, shopping centre or restaurant, musicals now "function and compete on the basis of an experience", whether through elaborate merchandise, premium seats, hen party visits or champagne bars (all of which have become expected elements of the commercial theatergoing experience) (Pine and Gilmore, 1999, 4). Although scholarship like Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore's *The Experience Economy* (1999) may not be instantly applicable to musical theatre, as a major work of cultural theory, their clear depiction of a culture driven by profit, familiarity and synergy certainly

³⁰ Steve Nelson's 'Broadway and the Beast: Disney Comes to Times Square' (1995), Rebecca-Anne Do Rozario's 'Reanimating the Animated: Disney's Theatrical Productions' (2004) and Maurya Wickstrom's *Performing Consumers: Global Capital and Its Theatrical Seductions* (2006) each analyse the relationship between Disney, musical theatre and the framing structures of capitalism, globalization and commercialism.

resonates with many depictions of the commercial musical in the twenty-first century. Such works highlight, then, that various cultural activities have been developed into theatrical 'experiences', meaning that department stores are designed with the same level of detail as any stage production, and that this combination of experience, theatricality and commercialism has since been reinstated (or perhaps recycled) stylistically in musical theatre.

The final area of scholarship worthy of further consideration details the dramaturgical construction of a musical, and is perhaps the most underdeveloped area of literature detailed so far, despite investigating a concept which is fundamental to every musical. Scott McMillin's *The Musical as Drama* (2006), for instance, critiques the 'principles' and 'conventions' of musical theatre, rather than specific trends, contributors or financial structures. Forming his argument around the dramaturgical elements of book, voice, character, ensemble, narration, and so on, McMillin argues that musical theatre is ultimately an un-'integrated' form in that its most exciting features lie in the moments where song, dance and dialogue collide (a view supported by Millie Taylor in *Musical Theatre, Realism and Entertainment* (2012b, 168)). In addition to McMillin's notable work, numerous scholars have detailed the dramaturgical shape and construction of specific case studies in a number of forms. The edited collection *Gestures of Music Theater* (2014), for example, features a somatic reading of *Cats* (Macpherson, 2014) and an analysis of how 'relocating' popular songs within jukebox narratives might alter the musical's dramaturgical function (Rodosthenous, 2014). Although only George Rodosthenous details intertextuality in any detail here, references to other works or tropes are undeniably part of any musical's dramaturgical makeup. This style of scholarship therefore provides fruitful insight into the construction of various

popular works by uncovering many of the intricate features that stem from the collaboration of several authors, genres and forms. In turn, such scholars promote intertextuality as an important framework through which to understand the multifaceted nature of musical theatre.

How Do You Solve a Problem Like Intertextuality?

Having surveyed the literature upon which this thesis builds, the remainder of this chapter identifies intertextuality as an appropriate critical framework through which to study musical theatre and, in turn, identifies ways in which to do so. In the first instance, Jim Lovensheimer notes that the term 'text' is problematic when used in relation to musical theatre (2011, 21). Firstly, most works of popular culture exist as physical objects able to be sold and distributed, like a DVD or printed novel, unlike an ephemeral performance text, which cannot. Secondly, musicals draw from numerous 'texts' and types of text, including an orchestrated score, book, choreography, design, staging and live performances, and so have the potential to form "a new cumulative text" in performance (Lovensheimer, 2011, 20). If so, who is the author (or authors) of that text? Why might a musical be ascribed to a single author when it unites the input of various collaborators in its very formation? Taking the original production of *Into the Woods* (1987), for example, the ownership of that musical is seemingly divided between Stephen Sondheim (the composer and lyricist), James Lapine (the librettist and director), Tony Straiges, Richard Nelson and Ann Hould-Ward (the designers), the original cast (including Bernadette Peters, Chip Zien and Joanna Gleason), the Brothers Grimm (whose fairytales inspired the musical), Bruno Bettelheim (whose book *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976) also influenced the show) and, to some extent, the audiences who have helped re-generate the public appetite for the fairytales which are referenced in the

musical since it was first performed. Although this depicts the creation of commercial musical theatre as oddly democratic, the financial ownership of a musical is often divided between the key authors, as their royalty payments might suggest, with little privilege being given to a particular author or their contributing 'text'. That said, *Into the Woods* is generally considered either a 'Sondheim musical' (since, as Lovensheimer notes, composers tend to dominate perceptions of authorship (2011, 20)), a 'Sondheim/Lapine musical' (for those wishing to differentiate this musical from Sondheim's other works) or, more recently, a 'Disney musical' (since the 2014 film adaptation was produced by The Walt Disney Company). For Lovensheimer, however, such questions are unable to be answered with a clear or universally agreed answer. How can *Into the Woods* be classified a 'Sondheim musical', as it is so regularly cited, if Stephen Sondheim only contributed two elements of many (music and lyrics)? Or, alternatively, how can the producers of a musical, like Disney, influence a production so profoundly that the composer/lyricist is ignored?

Although it is not my intention to provide a definitive answer to such complex questions, terms such as 'text' and 'author' remain problematic when applied to musical theatre, in addition to various other collaborative art forms. It is impossible to argue that one specific author of *Into the Woods* subverts the traditions of Disney Animation, for instance – an odd notion considering the recent live action film adaptation – unless, of course, such subversive elements appear exclusively within the show's score or costumes (though examples of this are rarely so explicit). Instead, the terms 'author' and 'text' should be recognised as impossibly complex, unable to be categorised or defined, in relation to musical theatre. The form's multiplicity therefore stems from its reliance upon numerous authors, media outlets and sociocultural contexts, to

the extent that productions are fluid and incomplete as both written texts and performance texts (as will be explored later in this chapter using the work of Bruce Kirle).

Reception Theory

Although the terms 'author' and 'text' will always be problematic when considered in relation to intertextuality, it is the role of the 'reader' which requires a major reconsideration in relation to musical theatre. As detailed in the previous chapter, numerous theorists have identified readers as active and subjective participants, rather than passive individuals who unlock a "single 'theological' meaning" from a text (Barthes, 1977, 148). As an extension of this simple axiom, the work of Susan Bennett and Ric Knowles formed a vital body of scholarship in the 1990s, that of reception theory, which updated and refashioned the central preoccupations of reader/response theory in relation to theatre audiences. As Marvin Carlson lamented in his 1989 chapter, 'Theatre Audiences and the Reading of Performance', for instance, theatre studies remains unhelpfully focussed on the text as the central source of meaning and has yet to apply the core contentions of reader/response theory to live theatre (1989, 82). First published in 1992 and revised in 1997, Susan Bennett's *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception* seemed to solve the problem Carlson had identified by considering audience members as actively engaged participants. Having since become the undisputed reference point within this area of scholarship, *Theatre Audiences* destabilised the impression of a reader as someone who 'reads' a written text and, as such, undermined any established impression of an audience as a homogenised, unidentified mass (Freshwater, 2009, 12). In particular, Bennett developed the work of Hans Robert Jauss to suggest that performances are conditioned by an audience's

'horizon of expectation', or, specifically, their expectations of a performance's form, style, narrative, and so on (1997, 48). Despite literary history often objectifying these expectations, Bennett challenged the presumption that audiences simply uncover the predetermined meaning deposited by the author in highlighting the subjectivity of the reception process (1997, 48-49). Given that meaning is only ever fashioned in relation to the specific audience member and the context of the performance, the same meaning cannot be determined from *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986), for instance, when viewed as a DVD recording, streamed live to cinemas³¹ or performed live in London, New York, Tokyo or Paris (even the most simplistic of readings will have altered in the thirty years since the production premiered). It should be acknowledged, therefore, that meaning is constructed by the audience in relation to the context in which they 'read', or engage with, a performance.

Whilst the importance and fluidity of a performance's context is widely recognised within scholarship today, such notions were not fully theorised until the 1960s and, even then, were rarely considered beyond the dustcover of a literary text and its author. In light of this, reception theory sought to distinguish between the way in which meaning is determined by a theatre audience and the way in which it is fashioned by a single reader of a literary text (particularly as readers rarely sit among fellow readers witnessing the narrative unfold in real-time, as in the theatre). Bennett therefore emphasised the inadequacies of reader/response theory when applied to the subjectivity of a live theatre audience. Although audiences may 'read' a performance as an interpretative

³¹ As part of the production's twenty-fifth anniversary in London, *The Phantom of the Opera* was performed at the Royal Albert Hall for three performances in October 2011, whilst simultaneously streamed live to cinemas by Fathom Events. This production was then released on Blu-ray, DVD, CD and digital download in November 2011 by Universal Studios, Really Useful Films and Polydor.

act, they are not readers in the way that has been articulated throughout reader/response theory. Instead, audiences 'read' in real-time, sit in a defined seat within a specific location, and thus use their past experiences of theatregoing, as well as their familiarity of texts from other media, to interpret a particular performance. Furthermore, audiences typically watch an entire performance, unlike the television channel-hopping which may occur at home, since theatregoing is ultimately a social event in which individuals commit to the defined trajectory of the performance, both physically and intellectually. The act of theatregoing is considerably more performative than selecting a single book or surveying unlimited television channels, in this respect, and thus remains a pertinent case study for examining texts that are formed through and across other cultural texts. Added to this, the musical theatre canon is dominated by complex and multifaceted works, formed collaboratively by multiple authors, which remain fluid due to their inherent liveness. For this reason alone, Bennett's major contribution to reception theory, and this thesis by extension, was to consider performances "not only against other works, but against the reader's social experience" of theatregoing (1997, 50).

Ghostly Texts and Fluid Performances

Although intertextuality is an inherent facet of musical theatre performance, there remains little scholarship considering this dynamic in any great detail. Nevertheless, Marvin Carlson's *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (2001) remains a central work in analysing the relationship between audience reception, familiarity and cultural recycling on the Western theatrical stage. Whilst Carlson does not consider the term intertextuality at any great length or in relation to musical theatre specifically, his monograph has been widely cited since its publication and provides a vital foundation for this

thesis. Dividing his study into the analysis of the performance text, the actor's body, the production's design and the performance space, Carlson argues that all theatre is haunted by a "ghostly quality", a "sense of something coming back", that establishes a "deep and complex" relationship between theatre and cultural memory (2001, 2). The theatregoing experience is, in Carlson's view, a "repository and living museum of cultural memory" (2001, 165) which is conditioned by the "retelling of stories already told, the reenactment of events already enacted, [and] the re-experience of emotions already experienced" (2001, 3) In particular, actors exist as "living bod[ies] of recycled material", rather than "transparent vehicles" that translate the author's intentions to the audience, since memories of an actor's past roles always permeate their current (Carlson, 2001, 61). As he notes in his chapter 'The Haunted Body', for instance, audiences are often aware of past performers when watching a new interpretation of a role, particularly as certain roles are more haunted than others (whether Mama Rose in *Gypsy* or Elphaba in *Wicked*).³² Despite trying to form a fresh interpretation of the role, actors must always contend with the "cultural ghost of the great originator" to the extent that they rarely fashion a "totally realized embodiment of the remembered interpretation" or entirely fashion their own (Carlson, 2001, 66). Every actor's performance is thus, in turn, an act of "repetition with variation", a phrase Linda Hutcheon has used in relation to adaptation, in which the performer is always haunted by the legacy of past performances, whether their own in the same role, a different role, or that of their predecessors (2006, 8). Ghosting is therefore the recycling of familiar

³² In the dominant fan responses to *Wicked* (2003), the layers of ghosting are often consciously fabricated by audience members who record performances, post them online and critique/compare specific elements. Many fans can detail which actresses perform certain vocal riffs or adopt a particular intonation/vocal quality, for example, and thus use this knowledge to judge future performers. See Stacy Wolf's 'Wicked Divas, Musical Theater, and Internet Fan Girls' (2007b) and *Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical* (2011).

elements in a way that conditions an audience's interpretation of the live performance.

Although he does not claim so specifically within his monograph, Carlson implies that theatre has always been intertextual, whether decades ago or in our contemporary age of "cultural regurgitation", since the various performative elements which construct a performance are always read in relation to an audience's past experiences of theatregoing (Allen, 2010, 204). As a notably recycled art form, the process of 'ghosting' presents theatre audiences with "the identical thing they have encountered before, although now in a somewhat different context", much in the same manner as an intertextual reference (Carlson, 2001, 7). As Carlson demonstrates, theatre is a highly appropriate medium in which to study the functions of intertextuality, particularly as ghosting requires an audience's subjective response to the extent that it cannot be solely determined by the author of the particular text. Only when a prolific actor appears in front of an audience are connections made between their current and past roles, for instance, and the performance becomes haunted as a result. Carlson proposes, therefore, that ghosting "goes far beyond the recycling of references, tropes, even structural elements and patterns that intertextuality considers" and into a more multifaceted framework (Carlson, 2001, 17). Although his use of the term intertextuality is often unclear, Carlson suggests that ghosting concerns the relationship formed between texts that stem from memories of performances, spaces, colours, designs, speech patterns, and a whole host of performative elements. Instead of how one text is consciously referenced within another text, as he perceives intertextuality, ghosting is an embodied phenomenon that underpins every audience's response. As I wish to demonstrate throughout the forthcoming chapters, however, intertextual

references can be identified within every interpretable element of a stage production. From advertising and social media campaigns to fan cultures and merchandise, the intertextual fabric of any production is incredibly multifaceted, seeming to echo the disparate elements from which the stage 'text' is formed, in a manner that fills the gap between performance and reception.³³ Whilst Carlson helpfully extends the "intertextual dynamic" of performance texts by considering multiple theatrical elements, he does so by disregarding intertextuality as a critical term (2001, 17).

Although *The Haunted Stage* is certainly conceptually significant to this study, it is Bruce Kirle's 2005 monograph, *Unfinished Show Business: Musicals as Work-in-Process*, which specifically analyses musicals as 'open' and 'fluid'. Distrusting the "linear, text-based, historiographical" depiction of musical theatre history, Kirle argues that in "overprivileging the text in such a collaborative form, historians tend to ignore what makes musical theatre so vital to American popular culture; its complex relationship to its historical moment of creation and performance" (Kirle, 2005, xxii). In examining the position actors play in the creation of their roles, the impossibility of a fully 'integrated' musical and the depiction of utopian environments in numerous popular productions, Kirle argues that it is "naïve to study the [written] text without paying equal attention to the material conditions in which the text was created, mounted, and received" (2005, 75). Musicals are therefore incomplete as written texts in that they only find a sense of coherence in the moment the performers first sing the songs, speak the dialogue or execute certain stage directions in front of a live audience. Just as Barthes challenged in relation to the written text, Kirle

³³ In *Reading the Material Theatre*, Ric Knowles suggests that the material aspects of the theatregoing experience, whether the marketing campaign or venue choice, are as important to an audience's reception of a piece as any event which occurs on stage (2004, 3).

suggests that the very nature of live theatre undermines any consideration of a musical as a fixed entity with a predefined meaning and context. Given that audiences do not consider the historical context of the original production as they watch a revival, for instance, each musical remains conditioned by the context in which it is being performed. For this reason alone, “how can one subscribe to the idea of a definitive performance, since that very notion is dependent on historical relativism?” (Kirle, 2005, 10). There can be no definitive production of a musical, since each production is determined by the context in which it is performed, meaning that musicals can be socially relevant without being performed in the time frame presented (Kirle, 2005, 12). Musicals like *Oklahoma!* (a nostalgic view of 1900s Americana), *Les Misérables* (mid-1800s Paris) and *Urinetown* (a dystopian future) therefore manage to engage contemporary audiences with their depiction of a transitioning society, despite being set in wildly different locations and contexts. Audiences do not require prior knowledge of the presented time frame, since they will ultimately use their contemporary understanding to interpret a text (and update it accordingly). If a performance features childbirth, for instance, audiences will draw upon their contemporary understanding, or even experience, of childbirth, rather than recalling assumptions made by other cultural depictions of the particular time period (though, of course, they may do both). All theatrical productions resonate, in this sense, in the “gaps and absences caused by performance and reception” to the extent that musicals often “assume lives of their own that can be quite independent from the original intentions of their authors” (Kirle, 2005, 1).

The Intertextual Musical

As a brief survey of the contemporary musical surely highlights, musical theatre is a complex and multifaceted art form that is inherently conditioned by past texts. Among the most popular stage musicals of all time, for instance, whether *Oklahoma!* (1943), *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) or *Billy Elliot the Musical* (2005), each production draws upon a previously successful text to fuel an evening's entertainment. *Oklahoma!*, for example, is an adaptation of Lynn Riggs' play *Green Grow the Lilacs* (1930), whilst *The Phantom of the Opera* is based on Gaston Leroux's 1910 novel, and *Billy Elliot the Musical* is derived from the 2000 film of the same name. In addition to these staple adaptations of literary or filmic texts, musicals continue to be adapted from short stories,³⁴ historical events/biographies,³⁵ television show formats,³⁶ popular music,³⁷ paintings,³⁸ and even political parties.³⁹ As David Savran argues, no other theatrical form, besides musical theatre, "uses as many different media to produce a totality" (2004, 216). Although many productions are straightforward adaptations of singular texts, there are countless examples of musicals which are 'highly' intertextual adaptations of numerous works (termed "multilaminated adaptations" by Hutcheon) (2006, 21). *Into the Woods*, for example, is not the appropriation of one fairytale (as pantomime versions of *Cinderella* or *Aladdin* might be), but a "sophisticated collage" of fairytale narratives threaded through the original narrative of the Baker and his wife (the invention of Sondheim and

³⁴ *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964) and *Cabaret* (1966) both stem from collections of short stories.

³⁵ *Evita* (1978) and *Here Lies Love* (2013) are based upon the lives of political first ladies Eva Peron and Imelda Marcos, respectively.

³⁶ *Jerry Springer: The Opera* (2003) and *I Can't Sing! The X Factor Musical* (2014) are each stage versions of popular reality television shows.

³⁷ *Jersey Boys* (2005), *Rock of Ages* (2006) and *Thriller Live* (2009) are each twenty-first century jukebox musicals.

³⁸ Stephen Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George* (1984) fictionalises the creation of Georges Seurat's iconic painting *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte* (1884).

³⁹ *UKIP! The Musical* was a recent hit at the 2015 Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Lapine) (Sondheim, 2011, 58). As a more recent example, Jeanine Tesori and David Lindsay-Abaire's *Shrek the Musical* (2008), the stage adaptation of the 2001 animated film, presents the original characters of Shrek, Donkey, Princess Fiona and Lord Farquaad alongside many iconic fairytale characters which dominate popular culture. As inhabitants of Far, Far Away (itself an intertextual reference), Shrek and Donkey find themselves within a narrative formed from existing fairytale tropes and structures, just as the Baker and his wife must collect various objects from popular fairytales in *Into the Woods* ("the cow as white as milk / the cape as red as blood", and so on) (Sondheim, 2011, 64). *Shrek the Musical* goes far beyond the perimeters of the fairytale canon, however, given that it playfully references popular music, films, celebrity culture, theme park attractions and even other musicals (as the original film did before it). The intertextual framework of *Shrek the Musical* therefore entertains a far broader demographic than the production's presumed audience of children and their parents. Like many other popular franchises aimed at family audiences, including *The Simpsons* (1989-) and various Disney-Pixar films, *Shrek* references a broad spectrum of cultural materials to provide a familiar experience that remains separate from the often innocent and simplistic main narrative (often in the form of sexualised 'in jokes' for adults).⁴⁰ Although *Into the Woods* also appeals to adults, with Sondheim and Lapine highlighting the broader poignancy of such fairytales, these examples demonstrate, if only briefly, that intertextuality does not function as a fixed and singular method of entertainment. Audiences do not remember a recent blockbuster film in the

⁴⁰ As with many of the jokes in *Shrek the Musical*, Millie Taylor describes how all pantomime performance "treads a fine line" between "double-entendres, topical gags and wordplay for the adults and slapstick, physical comedy, participation and storytelling for the children" (2007, 14). Although it is not my intention to consider pantomime in any great detail here, particularly as Taylor has provided a clear grounding for the intertextual study of this form, many of the following discussions can be applied to pantomime, as an art form which notably capitalises on an audience's familiarity with certain materials.

same manner as they might lovingly evoke an animated film from their childhood, for instance, since our experience of an intertextual reference is conditioned by the memories and nostalgia we have formed of the referenced text. In order to demonstrate the inherent recycling of musical theatre more broadly, then, it seems necessary to consider here how the twenty-first century is particularly prone to the inclusion of intertextual references, as an era in which musical theatre is governed by the use of recognisable sources.

The Twenty-First Century Musical

For many conservative scholars, including Jessica Sternfeld and Ethan Mordden, the 1994 stage debut of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* marked the untimely death of 'original' musical theatre; corporations had invaded a sacred space, tourism had conquered and innovative theatre making was forever compromised. Although musical theatre had always been a commercial art form, the continued exploitation of high-profile material, within a newly corporatized landscape, transformed musical theatre into the "epitome of postmodernism", as Warren Hoffman argues, or, rather, a highly intertextual landscape of recycled material (2014, 171). As many scholars have summarised it, the twenty-first century musical is now a shamelessly 'lifeless', 'pale', 'recycled' and 'repurposed' entity that has found its way back into the "web of popular culture from which the rise of rock had severed it" in the 1950s and 60s (Stempel, 2010, 657). Jessica Sternfeld, for instance, claims that many 'new' musicals are "pale copies of films rather than creative, fresh stage works" (2006, 352), whilst Hoffman argues that contemporary musicals often fetishize the past by recycling familiar works as "new commodities" for a "consumer-driven age" (2014, 171). Although musicals have long been based on familiar films, many contemporary productions are "rigid" and "slavish" adaptations that

identify what Terry Teachout describes as a “commodity musical” (2014, 73). In refusing to highlight their originality with a new title or creative team, as with the adaptation of *The Apartment* (1960) into *Promises, Promises* (1968), the creative teams behind productions like *Young Frankenstein* (2007) and *9 to 5* (2009) have emphasised the contemporary musical as “bland, unchallenging fare” (Teachout, 2014, 74).

It should be recognised, however, that such weak arguments simply recycle claims that were made about musical theatre throughout the early twentieth century. Some contemporary scholars remain blinded by the fact that producers respond to audience demand, whilst being guided by it, to the extent that musical theatre has always been denigrated for its conflicted commercial and artistic formation. It is thus “nonsense to say what a musical should or should not be”, since musical theatre can only ever flow “where the paying public allows” (Kenrick, 2008, 382). In seeming to undermine the trajectory laid out by various scholars and tabloid critics, the premiere of *Beauty and the Beast* simply destroyed the idealised (and widely untrue) impression of musical theatre as separate from popular culture (as an alienated descendent of ‘high’ culture). In this view, the founding of Disney Theatricals only further highlights the influence of broader cultural trends in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Although cast recordings and popular music were once indistinguishable, contemporary critics remain bemused by the fact that the commercial stage hosts the same titles as any cinema, television or computer screen. Such critics overlook the fact that Disney simply combined what could be paused and rewound at home, with the ephemerality of live theatre. Disney did not destroy an elitist art form, one presumed to be separate from popular

culture, but rather fashioned a powerful formula for staging high-profile works on a global scale.⁴¹

It is important to remember here that this trend has received equally little praise from the popular press and the theatregoing community. Whilst many critically acclaimed productions recycle familiar texts, including *Matilda the Musical* (2011) and *Billy Elliot the Musical* (2005), many critics continue to denigrate musical theatre's reliance on other media decades after it became a stylistic norm. Chief theatre critic of *The New York Times*, Ben Brantley, for instance, suggested in 2006 that the contemporary musical had "crossed the border that divides flesh from ectoplasm", selling "nostalgia as the reassurance of brand names" (2006). Although his comment is unhelpfully unquantifiable, Brantley dismisses contemporary musical theatre as an "artificial aide-mémoire, a phenomenon that lets audiences experience the deeply familiar in newly diluted forms", with little room for innovation (2006). In turn, then, his lack of critical interrogation highlights the melodramatic nature of his work and only further stresses his rejection of an inherent connection between musical theatre and popular culture. He seems engrossed by the ideal that musical theatre runs parallel to popular culture, yet never permeates its capitalist walls; a notion that could not be further from the truth. Musical theatre has always recycled trends and narratives from other media, and thus the way Brantley ignores the form's reliance on intertextual references demonstrates his inability to comprehend the form's commercial framework.

⁴¹ To date, the Disney Theatrical Group have adapted six of their animated musicals into major stage productions – *Beauty and the Beast* (1994), *The Lion King* (1997), *Tarzan* (2006), *The Little Mermaid* (2007), *Aladdin* (2014) and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (previously as *Der Glöckner von Notre Dame* in 1999) (2014) – each of which has played to varying success, unlike their universally celebrated animated counterparts. Additionally, the company has adapted a series of other non-animated works for the stage, including *Aida* (2000), *Mary Poppins* (2004), *On the Record* (2004), *Newsies* (2012) and *Freaky Friday* (2016).

In addition to the rejection of these musicals within the mass media, most twenty-first century musicals have received surprisingly little academic attention, despite musical theatre scholarship flourishing during this time period. Beyond a limited number of articles, the twenty-first century musical remains a major area of critical neglect and one which requires further consideration. The 2009 special edition of *Contemporary Theatre Review*, for instance, titled 'The Broadway Musical: New Approaches', focuses on productions which premiered between the 1940s and 1980s, and hence does not consider any case study beyond the 1984 opening of *Sunday in the Park with George*. In providing little consideration of how musical theatre might be 'newly' approached from the 1980s onwards, notions of familiarity, nostalgia and intertextuality tend to be ignored as a result. Although many contemporary productions have been labelled or categorised as intertextual within other examples of scholarship, the critical detailing of the twenty-first century musical is rarely analytical or approving of these shows to the extent that it is critically sparse. Scholars have yet to acknowledge, therefore, that such reliance on familiar sources is an inherent trope of musical theatre and, as a result, a rich area of critical discussion.

One scholar to reject such denigration, however, is Millie Taylor. Sharing Bruce Kirle's belief that the integrated musical is not a standardised model for creating musicals, Taylor argues that the joy of musical theatre performance resides in the sense of juxtaposition, reflexivity, parody, alienation and camp which dominates the art form (2012b, 6). In refusing to provide a linear history of the form, instead focussing on how musical theatre entertains, Taylor's monograph *Musical Theatre, Realism and Entertainment* (2012b) analyses the performative features which continue to "engage and possibly manipulate" an

audience's emotional attachment to the particular performance (2012b, 11-12). It is the inherent pleasure of the theatregoing experience, after all, that has audiences returning to productions like *Mamma Mia!* (1999) and *We Will Rock You* (2002), not how sophisticated the writing or staging might be. Audiences determine meaning, in this sense, in relation to the plot, characters, the performer's identity, and, most importantly, the dissonances of irony, parody and camp (Taylor, 2012b, 168). As she describes throughout her work, musicals exist as multi-layered 'texts', as Kirle has noted, that ultimately engulf the audience in an experience of "associations and sensations" through the "additional signification of song and music" (Taylor, 2012b, 167-168). Considering, in particular, how the multiplicity and juxtaposition of a performance influences the way in which it is read, Taylor identifies musical theatre as a form in which various familiar texts "blend and clash", a phrase Barthes has used before her, to highlight the inherent "disturbances and disruptions" between media (2012b, 187-168).

One trend that Taylor identifies as exclusively intertextual, and worthy of further consideration, is the jukebox musical. In her chapter 'I've Heard that Song Before', for instance, she argues that audiences attend these musicals brimming with expectations of a "wider intertextual field", often the discography of a particular group or artist, and nostalgically evoke their recollections of past popular music in performance (2012b, 149). As the lights go down and the action begins, audiences "combine a different balance of features" to when they interpret integrated musicals, a term Taylor problematises throughout her work, since the iconicity attached to familiar materials often engenders pleasure (2012b, 149). In this sense, the appropriation of familiar texts and nostalgic material invites "intertextual and personal associations in reception", particularly

as audiences respond to a song, sound or image through “affective and emotional alliances” (Taylor, 2012b, 153-154). Given that Taylor laments the clear disregard for jukebox musicals within scholarship, and attempts to fill such a gap, her chapter is significant in that it provides a strong foundation for the intertextual study of various popular musicals and the affective responses they engender. In claiming that audiences interpret a musical through their “memory and experience, past and present in a playful and stimulating exchange”, Taylor recognises that musicals are conditioned by “music, voice, performance, narrative, genres and [other] productions” in a diverse “network of cultural markers” (2012b, 168).

In addition to Taylor’s significant contribution, Judith Sebesta’s 2003 article ‘From Celluloid to Stage: The “Movical,” *The Producers*, and the Postmodern’ argues that the dominance of film-to-stage musicals is a direct result of our “contemporary condition known as postmodernism” (2003, 97). For Sebesta, the twenty-first century musical provides a comforting alternative to film, through “a layer of community” that is unavailable in cinemas, and so relies on “nostalgia, intertextuality, dual coding, and [multiple] layers of meaning” as a result (2003, 101). Given that her article defends the ‘movical’ trend for the most part, Sebesta employs the term ‘intertextuality’ to identify *The Producers* (2001) as a notably postmodern production which is conditioned by an audience’s recollection of the mediated ‘original’ film and its various intertexts. Audiences interpret the piece, in this sense, using an “aesthetic and critical stance shaped by nostalgia, mediatization of culture, suspicion of both the real and grand narratives, intertextuality, pastiche, deferment of meaning, self-reflexivity, dual coding, parody, and fragmentation” (Sebesta, 2003, 99-100). In its very formation, then, *The Producers* provides a live and ‘organic’ iteration of a

popular film, whilst also fashioning a unique interpretation at each performance given the inherent liveness of musical theatre. Audiences expect their favourite scenes to be performed with little deviation from their originating source, as the “not-so-subtle selling point” of these musicals, yet this desired sense of fidelity is often complicated by the very nature of live performance (Sebesta, 2003, 99). In reclaiming such works from their marginalised position within scholarship, however, Sebesta argues that film-to-stage musicals are continually problematised by their mediation, repeatability and unoriginality. Although they are rarely produced to be innovative or ground-breaking, her article stresses that the film-to-stage musical will only continue to be a “permanent fixture” of the musical theatre canon if shows are as brilliant, engaging and as intertextual as *The Producers* (Sebesta, 2003, 108). In identifying the motivations, consequences and predictability of this dominant trend, Sebesta goes some way to critique the twenty-first century musical as an intertextual, and particularly postmodern, form.

Categorising the Intertextual Musical

Having considered the often rudimentary use of the term intertextuality within musical theatre scholarship, particularly in relation to film-to-stage and jukebox musicals, the following section proposes that the recycling of existing material is often more nuanced than currently detailed within scholarship. In light of this, further research and analysis is required to fully comprehend the diverse functions of intertextuality within the contemporary musical theatre canon. In order to do this, it is first important to re-examine Gérard Genette’s established taxonomy and consider how his work might be appropriated or expanded in relation to musical theatre.

As addressed in the previous chapter, Genette opens his monograph *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1997) by defining the term 'transtextuality' in relation to five subtypes (which he then uses to classify the various ways a text might alter or expand another work). In relation to this thesis, however, only three of Genette's five subtypes can be related to the references presented on the musical stage ('intertextuality',⁴² 'hypertextuality'⁴³ and 'architextuality'⁴⁴), and so it is appropriate to exclude 'paratextuality'⁴⁵ and 'metatextuality'⁴⁶ at this point given that these terms relate to texts which remain separate from the primary text (a stage musical, in this case). Although I will provide a detailed analysis of the term paratextuality in the final chapter, the initial intention of this thesis is to analyse the intertextual references presented on stage, before considering the broader intertextual relationships formed by texts like posters, cast recordings and social media campaigns. It is therefore necessary, at this stage, to ignore two of Genette's five subtypes to further consider how intertextuality functions within musical theatre performance. In addition to this, and more importantly, each of the five subtypes outlined are only ever used to distinguish one subtype from another, and thus Genette rarely details how each type of reference functions individually, without defining, for instance, how hypertextuality differs from architextuality. Given that the 'specificity' of a reference, the 'intention' behind its placement, the potential 'reception' of its audience and the way in which it is 'presented' are central

⁴² A "relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as the actual presence of one text within another" (Genette, 1997a, 1-2).

⁴³ Any "relationship uniting a text B (which I will call the *hypertext*) to an earlier text (I will, of course, call it the *hypotext*), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not a commentary" (Genette, 1997a, 5).

⁴⁴ A "relationship that is completely silent, articulated at most only by a paratextual mention, which can be titular [...] or most often subtitled [...], but which remains in any case of a purely taxonomic nature" (Genette, 1997a, 4).

⁴⁵ The "generally less explicit and more distant relationship "in which such texts provide a "(variable) setting" for the interpretation of a work (Genette, 1997a, 3).

⁴⁶ The "relationship most often labelled "commentary." It unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it" (Genette, 1997a, 4).

features of an intertextual reference in musical theatre, it is necessary to look beyond Genette's limited subtypes to fully comprehend the intertextual character of the twenty-first century musical. Although these subtypes are certainly useful as critical terms, the following looks to develop Genette's 'General Chart of Hypertextual Practices', a formula he outlines later in his book, by adding the terms 'specificity', 'intention', 'reception' and 'presentation' to his established, yet limited, method of analysis (1997a, 28).

Designed to identify a correlation between how a reference transforms or imitates a text in line with its playful, satirical or serious nature, Genette's 'General Chart of Hypertextual Practices' aligns the structure of a reference with its presentational style to identify six types of intertextual reference. In particular, he identifies six literary forms (parody, travesty, transposition, pastiche, caricature and forgery), each of which are recognised intertextual figures today, by cross-referencing the manner in which they adapt an existing text (transformation/imitation) with the mood of the particular adaptation (playful/satirical/serious):

<i>mood</i> <i>relation</i>	playful	satirical	serious
transformation	PARODY (<i>Chapelain décoiffé</i>)	TRAVESTY (<i>Virgile travesti</i>)	TRANSPOSITION (<i>Doctor Faustus</i>)
imitation	PASTICHE (<i>"L' Affaire Lemoine"</i>)	CARICATURE (<i>À la manière de ...</i>)	FORGERY (<i>Posthomerica</i>)

(Genette, 1997a, 28).

In recognising a correlation between the adaptation, or 'relation', of a text and its 'mood', the above chart provides a useful starting point when examining the function of intertextual references within numerous cultural forms. Not only does it recognise the fluidity between types of reference and their function, as evidenced by using dotted vertical lines rather than definite boundaries, it also provides several examples of where the mood of a piece is determined by the way its source material is adapted. It is important to recognise, nonetheless, that the chart is limited in its critical utility given that it does not consider the 'specificity', 'reception' or 'presentation' of a reference in any great detail. Although it helpfully suggests that the 'intention' behind a reference is often to transform or imitate a work, it reductively suggests that the intention of a reference automatically determines the mood of the text as playful, satirical or serious. Secondly, it does not consider whether a reference evokes a specific work (say a film) or a broader conceptual idea (say the tropes of the horror movie genre). Whilst Genette does not claim to do so, particularly as the above chart classifies how literary works are referenced without being directly cited, such a consideration is fundamental when analysing the construction of intertextual references more widely. In addition, Genette does not consider the audience's reception of a work by focusing on how the primary author might *use* or adapt the referenced text. In not detailing the subjectivity of an audience's response, he ignores the significant arguments of much reader/response and reception theory to problematically position the interpreters of an intertextual reference as an unidentified mass. Furthermore, Genette limits the self-reflexive nature of a reference by narrowly suggesting that the way in which a reference draws attention to itself is a direct result of the text's overall mood. Although there is often a strong correlation between the metatheatricality of a

performance and the way in which it playfully references other texts, this is not always the case and thus, in ignoring this fact, the chart is limited in its critical usage since it overemphasises the correlation between a work's 'relation' and 'mood'. Finally, Genette uses a range of literary terms to further complicate any clear impression of the term intertextuality or, in his case, hypertextuality. By suggesting that a satirical imitation of a work is automatically a caricature, a term with its own history and context, Genette complicates his own argument by drawing upon terms that have their own intertextual resonances and have been used to describe numerous, often conflicting, types of popular culture. In order to counteract this confusion, and thus present a simpler and more inclusive typography, it is important to expand the above chart to fully identify intertextuality as a multifaceted critical term. Although it is not my intention to dismiss terms such as parody and pastiche altogether, particularly as they have been defined within scholarship in several important ways, these terms have been used by Genette to define rather limited types of intertextual reference. It is necessary, in this case, to expand the remit of Genette's chart to sufficiently analyse intertextual references in terms of how they operate and function in musical theatre.

In order to expand the above chart, it is necessary to acknowledge further nuances in the way texts are transformed in relation to their specificity, intention, reception and presentation, or, as Genette describes, 'mood'. The following chart therefore suggests that intertextual references either (a) adapt a specific popular text (or texts), (b) capitalise on an audience's nostalgia for specific texts, (c) fashion a bricolage of various cultural texts, or (d) metatheatricalise perceptions of musical theatre as an art form (as identified along the y axis). In turn, the function of a reference can be identified (along the

x axis) by considering how it might operate in terms of its specificity, intention, reception and presentation. Instead of suggesting that the adaptation of a specific text automatically defines the author's intention, as Genette does above, the forthcoming chart demonstrates that there is no distinct correlation between *what* a reference adapts and *how* it does so. The following chart is thus an essential element of this thesis in that it provides a fluid, yet stable, foundation for analysing the functions of intertextual references within twenty-first century musical theatre:

TYPE OF REFERENCE	EXAMPLE	DETAILS	SPECIFICITY (specific or broad references)	INTENTION (acknowledge, mock, pastiche)	RECEPTION (predetermined, subjective)	PRESENTATION (metatheatrical or embedded with narrative)
Adaptation (the extended relationship with a specific text, or texts)	<i>Wicked</i> (2003) - Elphaba's 'Unlimited Theme'	Elphaba's musical motif of "Unlimited, my future is unlimited" reflects the opening seven notes of 'Over the Rainbow' from <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> (1939).	Both - A specific reference used to acknowledge a specific song and a broader cultural idea.	To align Elphaba, the heroine of <i>Wicked</i> , with Dorothy, the heroine of <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> , and acknowledge the similarities between Oz and numerous other utopic locations which have been depicted throughout the musical theatre canon.	Since many audiences will attend a performance of <i>Wicked</i> having not seen <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> first, the details of this reference, and the meaning derived from it, rely on an audience's predetermined, and thus subjective, knowledge of the 1939 film. Although it is entirely possible to comprehend <i>Wicked</i> without any prior knowledge, moments like these will only be intertextual when recognised by an audience who are already familiar with the referenced texts.	Embedded - Although <i>Wicked</i> references <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> in a number of overt ways, this musical motif is used as a helpful reminder and loving nod to the 1939 film, rather than a point of disruption or subversion.
Nostalgia (the extended use of several related texts to engender nostalgia)	<i>Mamma Mia!</i> (1999) - 'Dancing Queen'	Donna, Tanya and Rosie perform the popular ABBA song to revisit their youth and early friendship (with some minor lyric changes to suit the new narrative).	Both - A specific song used to encapsulate various presumed cultural memories.	To evoke a nostalgic response to both the music of ABBA and that of being a teenager in the 1970s.	Audiences are likely to recognise this song in a new context in relation to their predetermined familiarity of ABBA's discography, musical style and tone. Alternatively, or in addition, audiences may recognise the cultural image of teenage girls dancing around their bedrooms whilst singing into hairbrushes (as referenced within the song's staging). Although this concept is unlikely to be nostalgic for all audience members, it is an established trope of popular culture that is likely to be widely recognised (even by those with little knowledge of ABBA).	Embedded - This number is designed to stem from the action and forward the narrative, however weakly, and thus any lyric changes and vocal re-gendering goes unnoticed by the characters (given that, in the world of the play, ABBA do not exist).
Bricolage (the brief acknowledgment of various cultural forms and texts)	<i>The Book of Mormon</i> (2011) - 'I Believe'	Using the lyrics "A Warlord who shoots people in the face, what's so scary about that?". Elder Price sings the melody of 'I Have Confidence' from <i>The Sound of Music</i> (1965).	Specific - A direct reference to <i>The Sound of Music</i> .	To acknowledge the sentimentality of <i>The Sound of Music</i> by directly mirroring Elder Price with Maria von Trapp (and the Rodgers and Hammerstein canon more broadly).	Given that typical audiences of <i>The Book of Mormon</i> are unlikely to have a developed knowledge of <i>The Sound of Music</i> , having presumably come to the piece from <i>South Park</i> or <i>Avenue Q</i> , this reference is only likely to be recognised by an esoteric musical theatre 'in crowd'. Beyond this, however, the dialogue is designed to be comical and so will inevitably be read differently by various audience members.	Embedded - Whilst this reference is certainly overt and direct, Price does not acknowledge that he is referencing <i>The Sound of Music</i> , as Elder Cunningham does elsewhere in the musical, and so this number simply highlights that showtunes are embedded within Price's vocabulary.
Cultural Perception (the brief acknowledgment of various cultural perceptions of musical theatre)	<i>Monty Python's Spamalot</i> (2005) - 'You Won't Succeed on Broadway (If You Don't Have Any Jews)'	Sir Robin acknowledges numerous Jewish stereotypes (including Barbra Streisand, <i>Fiddler on the Roof</i> (1964) and skull caps) to encapsulate the presumed dominance of Jewish writers on Broadway.	Both - Several direct references that, in their totality, evoke a broader cultural idea.	To mock several clichés regarding musical theatre as an art form and provoke laughter and/or applause through recognition.	Audiences may recognise references to specific texts, to then, in turn, recognise the broader idea being parodied. It is possible to recognise Barbra Streisand as Jewish, for instance, with little knowledge of musical theatre's Jewish heritage. It is therefore likely that many audiences will recognise the specific references without understanding the broader implications (Although it is unlikely to be the reverse, since such specific references construct the broader referenced idea).	Metatheatrical - This number is conceived to disrupt the action by drawing attention to both the referenced texts and its overt theatricality as a production number.

Although the 'types of reference' defined above are in no way exclusive or exhaustive, the above chart categorises the style of intertextual reference found within the contemporary musical into four major categories. Whilst there are likely to be examples which fall outside these categories, or even into several categories, most major musicals tend to present intertextual references in one of the four 'types of reference' outlined above (as the following chapters will further demonstrate). In addition, the above taxonomy demonstrates that the presentation and reception of an intertextual reference is not predetermined by its specificity or the intention behind its placement, for instance, since references tend to function far more fluidly. In comparing the specificity and presentation of a reference in relation to the author's potential input, in addition to how that reference might then be interpreted, the above chart recognises musical theatre as an inherently intertextual form, yet one which functions in numerous ways. It is thus my intention within the following chapters to provide a detailed analysis of each 'type of reference' using several contemporary case studies. In order to do so, the following will analyse various intertextual references by identifying (a) the specificity of the reference, (b) the intention behind its placement, (c) the reference's reception, and (d) the way in which it is presented. Completing this task across all four case study chapters, the second part of this thesis emphasises the importance of intertextuality as a structural and stylistic device by applying the above taxonomy to numerous examples of twenty-first century musical theatre.

This chapter has identified intertextuality as an inherent aspect of musical theatre performance and one that has yet to be sufficiently considered within scholarship. In wedding text, music, design and various modes of performance, musicals exist as "mosaic[s] of quotations" in which the

contributions of numerous authors frequently subvert, pay homage to, or simply quote, various works of popular culture (Kristeva, 1980, 66). In its self-reflexive and often playful nature, musical theatre appropriates popular culture to entertain, amuse and, more importantly for many theorists, enable audiences to fashion meaning. Audiences are required to draw upon their recollections, assumptions and perceptions of existing texts, or even broad conceptual ideas, throughout the musical theatre canon and, in doing so, identify intertextuality as central to the reception of this art form. Moreover, this chapter has highlighted the lack of rigour in the use of the term 'intertextuality' within musical theatre scholarship, as one of the key problems this thesis intends to resolve. Although intertextuality has not been ignored within scholarship altogether, this term has yet to be considered fully given that this structural and stylistic device dominates popular culture more widely. Finally, and most importantly, this chapter has classified the diversity of intertextual references within the musical theatre canon into four major types of reference (adaptation, nostalgia, bricolage and metatheatrical perceptions). Furthermore, it has highlighted the importance of identifying the specificity, intention, reception and presentation of the particular reference in order to analyse how it functions. As the following chapters aim to emphasise, therefore, the contemporary musical is one in which intertextuality governs in diverse and unpredictable ways. In reflecting various wider cultural trends and texts, musical theatre identifies itself as a site of 'cultural recycling' in which the appropriation of popular culture is now an expected norm.

RECYCLED CULTURE

The Significance of Intertextuality in Twenty-First Century Musical Theatre

Part Two

Case Studies

“Six generations have read this story. This one will sing it”
Tagline to *Little Women the Musical* (2005).

*

“Why Dorothy and Toto went over the rainbow to blow off Auntie Em”
RENT (1996), lyrics by Jonathan Larson.

Chapter Three: Adaptation the Musical⁴⁷

If you were to insert the film titles *Hairspray* (1988), *Legally Blonde* (2001), *Kinky Boots* (2005) or *Made in Dagenham* (2010) into the phrase [Blank] the Musical, you would recognise a dominant trend among commercial musicals of the twenty-first century. Capitalising on past successes with a presumably pre-sold audience, numerous film corporations have fashioned subsidiary stage companies, including DreamWorks, Disney and Warner Bros, to adapt their prolific body of works for a new medium. Although most musicals utilise source material to some extent, the above productions adapt widely recognised non-musical sources, often from globally successful franchises, in a manner that was inconceivable several decades ago. Much like film and television, the twenty-first century musical is a commercial platform in which numerous popular works are “brushed off, spruced up, and given brand new lives” in a new medium (Wollman, 2006, 222). As I will highlight throughout the following chapter, however, adaptations are constantly conditioned by an audience’s expectations and experience of the previous text, in addition to the structural and stylistic differences between media. In this manner, adaptation is a process shaped by an audience’s interpretation of recognisable phrases, images and tropes to the extent that many stage adaptations struggle to find an audience if they notably deviate from their originating source.

⁴⁷ The titles used throughout the following case study chapters are a nod to the frequent placement of ‘the musical’ after the titles of various popular texts, whether *Billy Elliot the Musical* (2005) or *Ghost the Musical* (2011), and the chapter headings of Joseph P. Swain’s *The Broadway Musical: A Critical and Musical Survey* (2002) (which is now in its second edition).

In the first of four case study chapters, the following discussion analyses the intertextual fabric of productions formed from high-profile source material, or perhaps a specific body of works, and the artistic legacy that material establishes. Starting with the presumably ‘straightforward’ adaptation process of *Les Misérables* (1985), before turning to the film-to-stage adaptation of *Billy Elliot the Musical* (2005), this chapter applies the taxonomy outlined in the previous chapter to productions which musicalise individual texts. By examining the role of song, in particular, the forthcoming discussion considers the specificity, intention, reception and presentation of intertextual references within these adaptations to further reject the possibility of a faithful adaptation (as has been regularly problematised within existing scholarship). In the latter part of this chapter, the discussion turns to the musical *Wicked* (2003) as a multi-layered adaptation of an established collection, or ‘world’, of texts. In identifying the lines of influence between the various texts which stem from L. Frank Baum’s novel, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900), this chapter fashions a critical understanding of the “dialectic relationship between source and adaptation” to analyse the process of adaptation as an act of intertextual dialogism, rather than a simple transfer from medium to medium (Krebs, 2014, 590). In doing so, it investigates how audiences draw upon multiple memories and expectations of specific texts as the curtain rises and a familiar title is reimagined on stage. To achieve this aim, however, it is first important to document the rise of adaptation studies in order to establish how the term ‘adaptation’ might be of use to my overarching discussion of ‘intertextuality’ in relation to musical theatre.

Adaptation and the Musical

Whilst definitions often vary, adaptation is generally considered the 'translation', 'conversion' or 'alteration' of one text (perhaps a film) into another text of a different medium (perhaps a stage musical). Although much critical analysis has focussed on how novels are adapted for film, adaptation is a dominant cultural enterprise in which popular texts of all types are recirculated in new media for "sophisticated intertextual readers" (Whelehan, 1999, 17). However, as many scholars have recognised, including Robert Stam, Christa Albrecht-Crane and Dennis Cutchins, the academic study of adaptation is often stalled by an inherent need to examine the 'fidelity' between sources, with much scholarship considering how a film adaptation might reflect its preceding novel. Victor Fleming's film *Gone with the Wind* (1939), for instance, is an adaptation of Margaret Mitchell's 1936 novel of the same name, and thus scholars have tended to approach this text by analysing how a printed novel was 'converted' into a three-hour feature film (Hawkins, 1993). In specifically analysing the process from page to screen, scholars often question (as the film's creators presumably did before them) what material 'works' in a cinematic format? Which characters need to be removed or developed? And, most importantly, what is to be gained, whether artistically or commercially, by adapting this text? Although these questions certainly help to identify the commercial prospects of an adaptation, they have tended to produce reductive scholarship that rarely analyses the wider intertextual relationships between texts, whilst also ignoring more intricate media which might not suit this mode of analysis (be they theatre, theme parks or videogames).

As Simone Murray noted in *The Adaptation Industry*, however, adaptation received unprecedented critical attention in the first five years of the

twenty-first century, notably in the establishment of several dedicated journals, annual conferences and the publication of numerous monographs and edited collections (2012, 2-4). Linda Hutcheon's *A Theory of Adaptation* and Julie Sanders' *Adaptation and Appropriation*, for instance, each expanded the field's remit in 2006 by stepping away from any confined mode of analysis to consider "theme park rides, websites, graphic novels, song covers, operas, musicals, ballets, and radio and stage plays" as important to the study of adaptation as any standardised novel-to-film adaptation (Hutcheon, 2006, xiv). Hutcheon, in particular, suggests that adaptation studies should consider every medium that is circulated in our "postmodern age of cultural recycling", not just those deemed valuable by prominent scholars (2006, 3). Sanders, in addition, proposes that "reading" an adaptation in relation to its originating source is always a "self-serving" "scholarly pursuit", rather than an open consideration of its various "echoes, parallels, and points of comparison" (2006, 1). Since these important developments in the mid-2000s, adaptation studies has grown radically in scale and scope, with the presumed 'fidelity debate' becoming a "point of departure", rather than a methodological norm (Bluestone, 2003, viii). Instead of attempting to identify how a text might extend or subvert its source, an impossible task in and of itself, many scholars now "more carefully and rigorously examine "intertextual" relationships in general" (Albrecht-Crane and Cutchins, 2010, 13). This style of scholarship does not denigrate adaptations which make structural or narrative changes, but rather recognises adaptation as a process that transfigures, translates and transmutes numerous texts into a 'new' work of popular culture (Stam, 2005, 25). In light of this, adaptation studies is no longer a restrictive or one dimensional field, since it enables the analysis of multiple works within a wider intertextual framework.

In order to further contextualise ‘adaptation’ as a form of ‘intertextuality’, rather than a separate critical term, it is important here to survey the major methodological shifts in adaptation studies to determine which modes of analysis might be of use to my forthcoming exploration. In their early edited collection *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text* (1999), for instance, Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan sought to challenge established presumptions that studying adaptation did not require skill or critical rigour (Whelehan, 1999, 3). In particular, Whelehan identified various critical approaches by highlighting the manner in which literary scholars study adaptations as if within a vacuum, privileging the novel over its inferior film adaptation, whilst cultural scholars contemplate the reception and consumption of a work in a much broader fashion. In turn, she concludes that:

[the most] effective textual comparisons across the literature/media divide demand acute skills of close reading and narrative analysis, as well as a good acquaintance with the general debates about the interface between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture. Such a study allows us to acknowledge our actual reading practices in a postmodern cultural context, and inserts the reading of literary texts into the same critical sphere as the consumption of more explicitly commercial products (Whelehan, 1999, 18-19).

As this quotation highlights, the most useful adaptation scholarship coherently examines (a) the dialogic nature of the text itself, (b) the context in which it was produced, and (c) the manner in which audiences engage with it. Given that this description reflects the methodology employed throughout this thesis so far, I wish to develop Whelehan’s observation by suggesting that adaptation studies only developed as a critically useful field once scholars began analysing the complex intertextual relations between multiple texts. As a view supported by Robert Stam in his article, ‘Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation’, studying the textual fluidity of a work ultimately enables scholars to “transcend the aporias of ‘fidelity’” by considering texts as “ongoing whirl[s] of intertextual

reference and transformation” that generate “other texts in an endless process of recycling, transformation, and transmutation with no clear point of origin” (2000, 66). Rather than tracing a clear genealogy from text to text, Stam promotes a form of analysis which operates thematically by investigating how adaptations participate in a “double intertextuality”, given that they are always read in relation to the structure, tropes and conventions of two separate media (2000, 65). As Millie Taylor proposes in her reading of the stage adaptation of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (2006), for instance, considering the “experiential difference between live and mediatised forms” is vital should we wish to understand why audiences attend a live performance of a narrative that is already available on DVD (2012b, 129). Adaptations do not simply remove the stylistic features of one medium by replacing them with those of another, since each medium provides a unique experience that is unable to be replicated beyond the recycling of certain narrative elements, characters, lines of dialogue, and so on. The stage adaptation of *Priscilla*, for example, juxtaposes the live singing voices of three female ‘divas’ with the mimed drag performances of its leading characters. Unlike in the original film where Mitzi, Bernadette and Felicia mime along to recorded pop music, the stage adaptation capitalises on the “distancing effects of vocal disembodiment for its comedy and spectacle” by having its protagonists mime to three onstage ‘divas’ (who are often suspended above the stage in glitzy dresses and elaborate red wigs) (Taylor, 2012b, 145). In this example alone, then, the adaptation of a text from one medium to another, no matter how straightforward the transfer of the narrative, identifies the adapted text as multi-layered, multifaceted and highly intertextual. With this in mind, the critical interpretation of an adaptation should transcend simple comparison by considering the palimpsestic relationship formed between

numerous texts and media (Hutcheon, 2006, 6). It is no longer productive to consider 'texts' as self-contained products within adaptation studies, as Roland Barthes outlined nearly fifty years ago, and thus scholarship should consider how *different* media provide *different* experiences, not inferior alternatives.

"It's the Plot That You Knew": The Straightforward Adaptation

Identified by Robert Gordon and Olaf Jubin as an art form dominated by adaptation, the remainder of this chapter identifies how musical theatre is particularly prone to regenerating texts from other media as a live experience (2015, 3). As a fusion of song, dance, dialogue and visual spectacle, musical theatre continually appropriates and recycles material from other media in a way that is now characteristic of the art form. Scott McMillin, for example, argues that most musicals stem from an adapted source (2006, 160), whilst Millie Taylor observes that such source material is often as diverse as the combination of song, dance, dialogue and design found on stage (2012b, 1). Given the variety of texts and media which have now been adapted for musical theatre, it becomes evident that there is "more than just one way and certainly no single 'correct' approach" to adapting an existing text (Gordon and Jubin, 2015, 5). Much like their source material, stage adaptations are often diverse and multifaceted in their recycling of familiar material, frequently to the extent that they provide useful insight into how a production operates dramaturgically. Victor Hugo's novel *Les Misérables*, for example, is noted by Joseph P. Swain for having never "made the cinematic canon" as a film, despite the release of numerous film and television versions in both French and English, yet has surprisingly become the world's longest running stage musical (2002, 387). It seems important to consider, therefore, as just one example of adaptation within musical theatre, how this text has been appropriated for a live medium

and, more importantly, what has been gained from ‘musicalising’ this text that cannot be gained in any other medium?

Described by Swain as the “epic of epics”, the musical adaptation of Victor Hugo’s 1862 novel *Les Misérables* premiered in London in October 1985, having been developed at the Palais des Sports in Paris in 1980 (2002, 386). Written by Alain Boublil and Claude-Michel Schönberg, with English lyrics by Herbert Kretzmer, *Les Misérables* is performed in over twenty-one different languages and its success as a musical has seemingly trumped, to some extent, the popularity of the original novel (despite it being considered a literary classic today). This has only been heightened, in recent years, by Susan Boyle’s performance of ‘I Dreamed a Dream’ on *Britain’s Got Talent* in 2009, that later went viral on YouTube, in addition to the Oscar-winning film musical adaptation of 2012. The creation of this globally popular musical was not a simple one, however, given that the three-hour stage production, and later film adaptation, stems from a written novel that is over 1000 pages, or 560,000 words, long (Swain, 2002, 368). In adapting such an epic novel for the stage, certain “tradeoffs” had to be made, as Swain describes, that ultimately impacted the presented narrative (2002, 388). The large majority of Hugo’s descriptions of historical context and character background, for instance, plus his essays on religion, slang and politics, were removed in favour of portraying the driving ‘events’ of the novel (Sternfeld, 2006, 178). Although this ultimately meant ignoring large sections of prose, often whole chapters, the “dramatic weight” added by the use of song and music supplemented the level of detail that had to be eradicated when condensing the narrative into a three-hour musical (Swain, 2002, 388). Whilst music “lacks the speed and verbal dexterity of [spoken] language”, or so Ulrich Weisstein argues, it heightens the emotional capacities

of the performer so that what might be an entire chapter in prose ('Chapter III: The Year 1817') can appear as a single song in a musical ('I Dreamed a Dream') (cited in Hutcheon, 2012, 45). Lyrics such as "He filled my days with endless wonder. / He took my childhood in his stride, / but he was gone when autumn came" in 'I Dreamed a Dream', for instance, demonstrate, in only three lines, the emotional strain Fantine is put under when her lover abandons their child (Boublil et al., 1985). Although the context behind this song is not acknowledged in any great detail on stage, the use of song sufficiently establishes the emotional context of Fantine's situation and is heightened by the embodied performance of an actress. Given that the ability to emotionally connect with a performer is unable to be replicated in written prose, the stage adaptation is able to focus on the 'events' of narrative, rather than the 'context' required to drive the novel. On the other hand, there are numerous examples of where the addition of music, notably the use of recurring motifs and identifiable styles, undermines the original narrative. In 'The Waltz of Treachery', for instance, Jean Valjean pries Cosette away from the Thenardiers using the waltz melody established by the Thenardiers to manipulate Valjean into reimbursing them for Cosette's costly childhood. Given that this moment is dramatically "senseless" for Swain, in that Valjean sings a melody designed to manipulate him, the stage adaptation of *Les Misérables* is further complicated by allowing the "interests of musical form [to] win out over fidelity to character and lyric" (2002, 400). In having a range of characters sing the same melodies, often meaning the lyrics contradict the situation in which the particular melody was first introduced, the stage adaptation requires music to function as a "reception shortcut" by guiding the audience from one scene to the next using already established material (Carlson, 2001, 166). In order for an audience to believe

the dramatic arc of the narrative, where Fantine is worth saving and Marius unconditionally loves Cosette, the adaptation of a lengthy novel into a popular stage musical required the emotional input of song and the timesaving devices of music. In order for the characters to be considered “real dramatic agents”, worthy of the audience’s attention, they must communicate through the structural and stylistic devices of musical theatre to, in the most part, *sing* (Swain, 2002, 408).

In order to extend this discussion in relation to the twenty-first century musical, it is necessary to further analyse how song functions in the stage adaptation of a non-literary and non-musical work through the case study of *Billy Elliot the Musical* (2005). Instead of attempting to trace the fidelity between the original text and its stage adaptation, however, as the above has to some degree, the following investigates how song, as a defining feature of musical theatre, operates when adapting a non-sung text into a piece of musical theatre. In considering *Billy Elliot* as a production ‘ghosted’ by the visual and audible features of the original film, the following discussion establishes the critical groundwork for analysing more complex and intertextual productions that apply song to existing sources.

“So Movies Make Good Musicals?”: The Film-to-Stage Adaptation

Despite the price of theatre tickets vastly outweighing the cost of an average cinema trip, stage musicals based on high-profile films continue to be widely produced in the twenty-first century. In 2015 alone, musical adaptations of *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown* (1988), *Bend it like Beckham* (2000), *Elf* (2003) and *Kinky Boots* (2005) opened in London with the hope of attracting fans of each film into the West End. As Millie Taylor questions in

response to *Dirty Dancing: The Classic Story on Stage* (2006), however, why do audiences pay West End prices to attend a live performance of a film that is already well known and readily available on home media (2013, 281)? What is it about the experience of an adaptation that continues to engage audiences and further perpetuate the film-to-stage musical as a mainstay of the musical theatre canon? For Taylor, such answers stem from the ‘experience’ of the adaptation, rather than the adaptation itself; not only are audiences reliving a past experience made popular on film, they are involved in the “danger” of live performance and the “spiralling of energy between audience and performers” (2013, 293). Productions like *Dirty Dancing*, for instance, therefore blend memory and experience in a way that generates layers of intertextual association and nostalgia in their very formation (Taylor, 2013, 285). Although Taylor usefully considers the ‘experience’ of watching a film-to-stage musical, rather than how materials have been transferred between media, I wish to contemplate how the use of song might heighten the emotional content of a text and, in turn, the audience’s engagement with the presented materials. Instead of analysing how a scene might match its film counterpart, the following demonstrates that a spoken scene can be expanded and heightened through music to extract the ‘essence’ of an existing text and recycle it with a new level of emotional intensity. The following discussion therefore identifies song as an intertextual tool through which familiar texts can be expanded, exaggerated and made highly affective.

Opening in London in 2005, *Billy Elliot the Musical* is a direct adaptation of the 2000 British film, *Billy Elliot*, with an original score by Elton John and

book/lyrics by Lee Hall.⁴⁸ Following a young boy's desire to become a ballet dancer despite his working-class upbringing, the musical has been performed in various cities around the world, having played at London's Victoria Palace Theatre for over a decade. Despite its diegetic use of music, however, the film of *Billy Elliot* has also been considered a musical, like *Dirty Dancing* (1987) before it, in light of its dance dominated narrative and use of music as a dramaturgical tool (Feuer, 2010, 59-60). As in films like *Footloose* (1984) and *Flashdance* (1983), *Billy Elliot* features a widely popular soundtrack, constructed of several rock and punk songs, which many audiences sing along to as if attending a live jukebox musical. In this view, *Billy Elliot* is a prime example of what Jane Feuer terms an 'international art musical' in that it celebrates the performativity of popular music and dance, despite its non-singing characters (2010, 55). In adapting the film for the stage, however, George Rodosthenous suggests that the performative framework of musical theatre provides "more opportunity to explore issues of class and conflict through aesthetic imagery, thanks to Peter Darling's choreography and Elton John's music" (2007, 277). The freedom to 'repeat' without 'replication', as terms Linda Hutcheon uses in a much broader sense, therefore enables the composer, in particular, to select whether they will remain faithful to the musical style of the film or fashion a score better suited to the heightened act of singing (2006, 7). In the case of *Footloose: The Musical* (1998), for example, much of the film's diegetic soundtrack was appropriated to be sung by the fictional characters, having appeared on radios, at dances and as underscoring in the original 1984 film. Bonnie Tyler's 'Holding Out for a Hero', for instance, became

⁴⁸ I have attended two performances of *Billy Elliot the Musical* at the Victoria Palace Theatre, London. The first was in August 2007 and the second in September 2008. This production was filmed for home media and cinema live-streaming in November 2014 before closing in March 2016 (Sullivan, 2014).

a feisty quartet for the female protagonist, Ariel, and her friends to emphasise their search for a “street-wise Hercules” (Snow and Pitchford, 1998). In addition to recycling such pre-established material, original songs were crafted by Tom Snow and Dean Pitchford to expand the film’s emotional scenes, fulfil various musical theatre traditions and extend the production’s running time. In its totality, however, the score of *Footloose* is an awkward blend of 1980s pop hits and ‘musical theatre-style’ numbers that do little to forward the action or develop the characters. Although combining existing and original material might seem to eliminate a sense of financial risk, where fans of both the film and musical theatre find something to enjoy, this adaptation is an ineffective attempt to join the familiar with the new given that each set of songs clash stylistically and struggle to form a unified whole.

In *Billy Elliot the Musical*, on the other hand, John and Lee wrote an original score to replace the familiar sound of T-Rex, The Jam and The Clash that had been established in the film. Instead of weaving two musical styles into one score, as in *Footloose*, the musical highlights what Hutcheon describes as “repetition with variation”, in that the film’s narrative has been repeated, yet its familiar soundtrack has been replaced (2006, 4). Although these songs could certainly have been used in the form of a jukebox narrative, as demonstrated in the stage adaptation of *The Bodyguard* (2012),⁴⁹ the authors fashioned an original score which permitted the characters to communicate in a “higher, more expressive realm” than the original soundtrack might allow (Feuer, 1993, 52). Whilst the film version is certainly expressive and driven by music, the stage musical looks to expand the content of the film through the heightening

⁴⁹ Opening in London in 2012, having since toured internationally, *The Bodyguard* is an adaptation of the 1992 film of the same name with the music of Whitney Houston, the film’s original star, as its score.

sensibilities of song. In this case, the original score transports the “character[s] and audience to new transcendent levels” of reception by expanding an existing narrative through song, rather than simply inserting numbers to align with the form’s requirement of song and dance (Hoffman, 2014, 7).

In order to address this final point in more detail, it is interesting to consider the song ‘The Letter’ as an example of where music provides a layer of emotion not available in the dialogue of the film. As Billy presents his dance teacher with a letter from his dead mother, for instance, music enables the pair to communicate in a way they have yet to achieve in dialogue. As Mrs Wilkinson first begins to read the letter written for when Billy turned eighteen, one he has read many times throughout his childhood, the dialogue is identical to that of the film. As she begins to read aloud, however, Billy takes over in song, by singing, “And I will have missed you growing / And I’ll have missed you crying / And I’ll have missed you laugh” (John and Hall, 2005). Whilst the film version is simply underscored by a soft piano accompaniment, the act of singing transcends Mrs. Wilkinson’s spoken communication, thus identifying song as the only sufficient method of conveying this level of emotion. Although it is important to look beyond the fidelity between sources, the musical adaptation of *Billy Elliot* exaggerates the film’s content by allowing the characters to sing and tap into a “deeper kind of reality, one accessible only through music” (Knapp, 2005, 12). In this sense, musical theatre can “reach into the area of subtext and transform the private motivations found there into performability” in a manner that is new at each performance (McMillin, 2006, 76). Song allows Billy to relinquish his shy persona and communicate his emotion directly to Mrs Wilkinson and, by extension, the audience. Just as the lyrics leap off the page in performance, his mother’s letter *joins* Billy and Mrs Wilkinson, a character he has yet to warm to,

in song. The pair therefore sing in close harmony to highlight their shared values of love and parenthood from different generational standpoints. As this occurs, the ghost of Billy's mother enters to join them and addresses Billy directly. Although she is only noticed by Billy, this moment allows the two women who have supported him throughout his life to be united, if only figuratively, in song. By engaging Billy with "both the spirit of his *absent* mother and the guiding *present* Mrs Wilkinson", as Rodosthenous notes, the excessive performativity of musical theatre unites characters who remain isolated from one another in the narrative (2007, 283). In removing the film's soundtrack from this moment, the score functions dramaturgically to highlight a shared sense of empathy in a single melody. In this sense, the characters occupy what Scott McMillin describes as a "shared musical formality" in that the trio are joined by a "formal element that lies beyond them" (McMillin, 2006, 71). Unlike where performers adopt their own rhythms and speech patterns during dialogue, the characters are united here by a predetermined musical interchange, with its own unique structure, that is universally adhered to. Although this identifies the contrived nature of this scene, where three individuals conveniently recognise the same melody, song binds them to produce an emotional unity that is unavailable in dialogue. Whilst the same can also be said for dance in this production, *Billy Elliot the Musical* subverts any predetermined expectations of music to construct a song that is both emotionally heightened and in keeping with the narrative of the source text.

Having addressed how song expands the content of a non-musical source beyond adding numbers, it seems appropriate here to develop this discussion by considering adaptations that do not have such obvious or singular lines of influence. In order to do so, it should be recognised that film-to-stage

adaptations like *Billy Elliot the Musical* notably subvert an audience's expectations of music to fully exploit the unique features of musical theatre. Although dismissing one musical style in favour of another is not a simple procedure for the creative team, it remains a complex process of adjustment for any audience that might be familiar with the original film and its soundtrack. Not only will the audience have to align their memories of the film's actors with those of the stage performers, the newfound performativity provided by musical theatre subverts any previous conception of the narrative in song. This notion is further emphasised, therefore, by productions which draw upon various intertextual fragments from a select body of texts. Given that the recycling of existing material is not a simple process, the remainder of this chapter identifies Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman's *Wicked* (2003) as a highly intertextual adaptation that draws from numerous defined sources. Unlike the multifaceted collections of cultural references that will be analysed in Chapter Five, *Wicked* provides "extended intertextual engagement" with several adaptations as a complex layering of a 'world' of texts (Hutcheon, 2006, 8). Just as Gérard Genette describes Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966), *Wicked* is a "paraleptic continuation" or "transfocalization" of a familiar literary, filmic and dramatic world in which song is used to extend the thematic content of such an intermedial body of existing works (1997a, 292).

"Piece by Piece, Building Up the Image": The Multi-Layered Adaptation

In his opening remarks to 'The Wizard of Oz and the Cultural Imagination', a two-day conference celebrating the 75th anniversary of the 1939 film, Frank Gray proposed that *The Wizard of Oz* is one of popular culture's most generative texts (2014). Demonstrating Linda Hutcheon's claim that "storytelling is always the art of repeating stories", the influence of L. Frank

Baum's novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) can be identified in several film and stage adaptations, spin-offs, sequels and fan texts as an iconic cultural artefact with a timeless appeal (2006, 2). Not only has the proliferation of these adaptations generated a considerable amount of academic attention, *The Wizard of Oz* has permeated popular culture so robustly that it now occupies a "privileged position within [the] American popular consciousness" (Burger, 2010, 123). Given that each adaptation appropriates different elements of Baum's original novel, author Gregory Maguire claims that this body of works has the transcendental power to resonate differently to everyone who encounters it; "Oz is nonsense; Oz is musical; Oz is satire; Oz is fantasy; Oz is brilliant; Oz is vaudeville; Oz is obvious. Oz is secret" (2013, 1). Although these statements identify the playful and often frivolous nature of such texts, whilst providing ammunition for those wishing to denigrate the academic study of popular culture, Maguire implies that the Oz canon is a fluid set of adaptations that continue to engage audiences on a personal level. As a "constantly expanding realm of interlocking, transmedially active, mass-addressed commercial stories", or so Frank Kelleter states, the Oz canon remains a dominant facet of popular culture that transcends barriers of nationality, gender and language through its broadly recognisable themes of home, self-acceptance, friendship and longing (2012, 26). In this sense, the Oz canon is a collection of adaptations which appears in no definitive format, yet constantly critiques the aforementioned themes in a manner which has established its global appeal.

First published in May 1900, L. Frank Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* soon became the "children's story by which America identifies itself" (both as a novel and in its various stage and screen adaptations) (Because of the Wonderful Things It Does, 2005). In 1939, however, the MGM film adaptation,

The Wizard of Oz, firmly cemented the popularity of the novel for a global audience. Although the film removed many of the sequences that appeared in the original novel, its wild popularity demonstrates, as Kate Newell points out, that the variations between adaptations have little impact on the audience reception often attributed to Oz (2010, 81). Whether presented as an animated comedy, like *Tom and Jerry and the Wizard of Oz* (2011), or a Nintendo video game (1993), *The Wizard of Oz* remains a dominant cultural narrative which has been adapted for numerous media for over a century. In the twenty-first century, the most prominent Oz adaptation is undeniably the 2003 stage musical *Wicked*.⁵⁰ Adapted from Gregory Maguire's 1995 novel of the same name, which is, in turn, a revisionist retelling of Baum's original novel, Stephen Schwartz and Winnie Holzman's *Wicked* opened on Broadway in October 2003 to mixed critical reviews and unprecedented audience acclaim. Having since played around the world, celebrating its tenth anniversary in London in 2016, *Wicked* deviates considerably from Maguire's novel to the extent that *The Wizard of Oz*, the classic MGM film, is said to give the musical "life" (Durand, 2010, 22). Vibrating with references to the 1939 film, *Wicked* encourages audiences to look beyond an individual's outward appearance by questioning notions of friendship, tolerance and manipulation in its depiction of two unlikely friends, Elphaba and Glinda. As roles originated by Idina Menzel and Kristin Chenoweth, now musical theatre stalwarts, *Wicked* uncovers the 'untold story' of two young women destined to become the Wicked Witch of the West and the Good Witch of the North from the now iconic narrative (Bunch, 2015, 54). Meeting at Shiz University in their early twenties, G(a)linda, the self-proclaimed 'popular' socialite, is paired with Elphaba, the misunderstood green-skinned

⁵⁰ I have attended two performances of *Wicked* at the Apollo Victoria Theatre, London. The first was in May 2007 and the second in December 2012.

outcast, who is simply enrolled to care for her handicapped sister, Nessarose. Despite their simultaneous intrigue and loathing for one another, the two roommates soon become friends and subsequently fall for the obnoxious Winkie prince, and new student, Fiyero. Unlike the often passive female characters which pervade the musical theatre canon, however, a notion discussed at length by Stacy Wolf, Elphaba longs to be an activist for change, whilst Glinda simply wants to be popular (as she sings in her well-known number of the same name). As the first act develops, the pair travel to the Emerald City to meet the Wizard (just as Dorothy does in *The Wizard of Oz*) and their lives are forever altered. Once the Wizard has been revealed as a fraud, seeming to have little power beyond charisma, he mistakes Elphaba's mysterious powers for witchcraft, leading her to 'defy gravity' in a number which evokes the iconic cloaked figure from the 1939 film. As the second act begins, Elphaba is a fugitive in Oz, whilst Glinda, the now national treasure and fiancé of Fiyero, is manipulated by the Wizard to promote Elphaba's wickedness and conceal his political shortcomings (a situation she is unaware of). As the time frame of *Wicked* collides with that of *The Wizard of Oz*, the now Wicked Witch of the East, Nessarose, is killed by Dorothy's incoming house, meaning Elphaba and Glinda are forced to reunite in Munchkinland. As Dorothy is sent to extinguish the Wicked Witch of the West, Glinda joins Elphaba at Kiamo Ko castle to acknowledge that their relationship has changed them "for the better" and "for good" (Schwartz, 2003). In the final scene, Glinda banishes the Wizard, whilst Fiyero uncovers Elphaba, having faked her own death, and the couple leave Oz determined never to return.

Despite the lack of research into twenty-first century musical theatre, *Wicked* is perhaps the most widely analysed production in recent scholarship.

As demonstrated by numerous articles in *Studies in Musical Theatre*, for instance, musical theatre scholarship has developed concurrently with the original New York and London productions of *Wicked*, both of which are still running at the time of writing, and has thus rendered the production a central case study in such an ever expanding field. In addition to this vital development, the musical has been widely examined in studies of adaptation,⁵¹ economics,⁵² fan culture,⁵³ myth⁵⁴ and gender,⁵⁵ in addition to the abundance of work detailing similar notions in numerous other adaptations of Oz. This is more than a matter of convenient timing, however, since the retelling of this iconic narrative continues to invite diverse interpretations of characters that were first made popular in prose or on film. The performative gestures of Elphaba rising on a hydraulic lift or Glinda tossing her hair towards the audience have thus propelled musical theatre scholarship, and cultural studies more broadly, to further position the Oz canon as a series of texts which continue to resonate widely and are of great cultural significance.

"Under the Surface, Behind the Scenes": Oz as Musical

Before critiquing song as an intertextual tool, it is necessary to identify the numerous adaptations which construct *Wicked* and, more importantly, those which condition an audience's interpretation of it. In this first instance, it remains problematic to define an overarching author or creator of the Oz canon, despite the prominence of Baum's novel (Durand, 2010, 11-13). As Salman Rushdie notes, the fluid and fragmented nature of Oz has ultimately meant that no single writer can be considered the "*auteur*" of *The Wizard of Oz* (1992, 16). Although

⁵¹ See Burger (2010); Newell (2010); Kelleter (2012).

⁵² See Dighe (2002).

⁵³ See Wolf (2007b); MacDonald and Halman (2014).

⁵⁴ See Barlow (2007); Burger (2012).

⁵⁵ See Kruse and Prettyman (2008); Wolf (2008, 2011).

L. Frank Baum fashioned Oz in its original literary form, many of the iconic elements that are now recognised, quoted, and even enacted, throughout popular culture do not stem from his series of fourteen children's books. Instead, Baum's novel has been superseded in popularity by a series of stage and screen adaptations, and thus the Oz canon can be successfully divided into two epochs: pre-1939 and post-1939 (Bunch, 2015, 54). Using MGM's *The Wizard of Oz* to anchor his discussion, Kevin K. Durand argues that the now iconic film has influenced every subsequent depiction of Oz and rendered a normative depiction to be subverted, rather than continued, despite the adaptation ignoring much of Baum's novel (2010, 11).⁵⁶ Through its bright and euphoric energy, *The Wizard of Oz* remains the central text upon which most future interpretations of Oz are determined, particularly as the majority of subsequent adaptations have been musicals. As Ryan Bunch highlights, there remains a special affinity between Oz and musical theatre, since most people's first or primary experience of Oz is often as a musical (2015, 54). Given the difficulty in detaching Baum's work from any joyful memories of Judy Garland, her ruby slippers and a series of singing munchkins, Oz is now a fundamentally 'musical' universe which continues to evoke musical associations from 'Defying Gravity' in *Wicked* to the seven-note riff which signifies the Wicked Witch throughout *The Wizard of Oz*. Musical theatre and film have thus transformed the "already powerful symbolic national mythology" of Oz into a "participatory expression" of hope that continues to inspire audiences to engage both physically and emotionally with these popular materials (Bunch, 2015, 53).⁵⁷

⁵⁶ A rather confusing text to place within the Oz canon is the 1985 live-action Disney film *Return to Oz*. Although the film draws upon many of Baum's books, in being a film, it seems like a sequel without an original; it subverts many of the ingrained images from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and, in turn, sees Dorothy return to an Oz we never saw her visit in the first place.

⁵⁷ As perhaps a more typical 'participatory' expression of Oz, Irregular (Arts)' *Echoes of Oz* project transformed Bradford city centre into a three-day celebration of *The Wizard of Oz*

Although scholars might recognise Oz as evoking numerous associations in the twenty-first century, there remain two significant elements that seemingly dominate all others: music and song.

Although *The Wizard of Oz* and *Wicked* are the most prominent Oz texts in existence today, there have been four major musical adaptations of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* since its initial publication. Firstly, various stage adaptations of *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* were produced between 1900 and 1939, most notably the infamous 1902 ‘musical extravaganza’ which replaced Toto the dog with Imogene the cow. Each of these were varying successes that often presented Oz as a political and economic allegory for America, and thus deepened their source material through a rich portrayal of a fantasy environment which resonated with audiences that were not simply children and their parents. Secondly, the iconic musical film *The Wizard of Oz* was first released in August 1939, with a score by Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg, and has since inspired various stage adaptations, including the 1987 RSC production and Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice’s 2011 ‘revisal’ (as cast on the BBC). Thirdly, William F. Brown and Charlie Smalls’ 1975 stage musical *The Wiz* reimagined the Oz narrative for an African-American audience with an all-black cast (and was later adapted for film in 1978). Finally, *Wicked* reinvented the Oz narrative in 2003 with its feisty female leads, pop/rock score and overt celebration of friendship. As an innovative reimagining of Oz for a new generation, the musical has been performed in five different languages, in over one hundred cities, and continues to play worldwide to sell-out audiences.

through numerous performance events in October 2015. Headed by Jenny Wilson and Shanaz Gulzar, the project celebrated both the city and the film in claiming that “there’s no place like Bradford” (see <http://irregulararts.com/projects/echoesofoz/> [accessed: 25 May 2016]).

In each of these diverse visions of Oz, then, there remains no definitive medium or musical landscape, just a specific selection of source materials.

In light of this, Oz has been evoked in three distinct musical styles: a traditional Hollywood orchestral score (*The Wizard of Oz*), an infusion of soul, gospel and funk (*The Wiz*), and a contemporary pop/rock sound (*Wicked*) (Newell, 2010, 79). Each musical adaptation of Oz is therefore linked by the manner in which it communicates, and thus operates, in song, rather than a particular musical style or sound. The iconic 'Over the Rainbow', for instance, establishes Dorothy as a young woman longing to escape the social ties of Kansas in the opening scenes of *The Wizard of Oz*. Dorothy in *The Wiz*, however, does not sing in Kansas and instead saves her moment of reflection for Munchkinland. In 'Soon as I Get Home', she sings, "Here I am alone, though it feels the same / I don't know where I'm going. / I'm here on my own, and it's not a game / And a strange wind is blowing" (Brown and Smalls, 1975, 21). Although a seemingly innocent alteration from Kansas to Oz, *The Wiz* presents a more sophisticated and mature Dorothy, particularly in comparison to Garland's interpretation, where song empowers her to understand the world's dangers and the importance of finding home (as presumably "influenced by black histories of migration, struggle and faith" for Bunch (2015, 61)). Although *The Wiz* is often considered innocent and charming today, having recently been staged for television in NBC's *The Wiz Live!* (2015), like *Wicked*, it remains a sophisticated depiction of Oz that challenges many of the notions established within the 1939 film. The Oz canon is thus a fluid series of adaptations that tend to inspire reinvention, rather than conformity, through song.

As demonstrated briefly above, the film adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* transformed all literary representations of Oz into an American icon with a

bright, whimsical, and undeniably camp, exterior. It is thus important to consider further the manner in which this timeless film has usurped any literary depiction of Oz through its “fantastic excesses” of colour, costume, song, performativity and celebrity casting” (Creekmur and Doty, 1995, 3). Without doubt, *The Wizard of Oz* has provided an accessible, and wildly elaborate, landscape which transcends the intellectual requirements of reading, and has consequently reached diverse audiences through primetime television showings, home media and the Internet. Despite children continuing to read Baum’s novel, as a globally disseminated book, the communal experience of watching *The Wizard of Oz* at home has secured its canonical primacy and determined its inevitable future success.⁵⁸ With this in mind, *Wicked* was not constructed to remain faithful to Maguire’s novel, as a previously highlighted impossibility, but rather to appropriate its basic premise and characters, before revelling in the iconicity of *The Wizard of Oz*. Despite it retaining many of the vital elements of Maguire’s book, *Wicked* is a sophisticated adaptation of various defined texts in which *The Wizard of Oz* remains the touchstone upon which an audience’s expectations are determined. Although this requires further exploration, it is significant that Elphaba is presented as an intelligent and determined victim of circumstance in *Wicked*, not a horror-movie archetype who torments children with her high-pitched cackle. In extending *The Wizard of Oz* by reinventing the one-dimensional Wicked Witch, as just one example, *Wicked* is a complex adaptation of existing materials that matures the Oz canon through its constant questioning of good and bad, right and wrong. What *Wicked* ultimately achieves as a stage musical is to allow audiences ‘behind the emerald curtain’ into a depiction of Oz that is hinged upon, yet very different from, the 1939 film

⁵⁸ As many scholars and fans have previously cited, the annual showings of *The Wizard of Oz* on US television, from 1959 to 1991, have become a key factor in the film’s canonical dominance and cultural legacy.

adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz*. In allowing audiences to “pay attention to the man behind the curtain”, as Dorothy is requested not to do in *The Wizard of Oz*, *Wicked* further emphasises the inadequacies of studying adaptation through a fidelity model (Fleming, 1939). In destabilising the perfected image of Oz found in several other adaptations, the musical embraces the nuances, and potential meaning, found *between* texts. Whilst *The Wizard of Oz* may determine future interpretations of this narrative for the audience, *Wicked* detangles such complexities and emphasises the adaptation process as one of illumination, not fidelity. As I will consider in the following discussion, then, the Oz canon is a series of highly intertextual works in which song enables iconic material to be repeatedly adapted for future generations.

“And If I’m Flying Solo, At Least I’m Flying Free”: Adapting the Singing Witch

In the first of two discussions regarding song as an intertextual motif, the following considers Oz as a typically “musical world” in which music lends itself to the “heightened nature” of fantasy storytelling (Cote, 2005, 21). In particular, Harold Arlen and Yip Harburg’s score of *The Wizard of Oz* has been so widely appropriated within popular culture that songs such as ‘Over the Rainbow’ continue to be covered and re-performed today (most notably by Eva Cassidy and Israel Kamakawiwo’ole). ‘Ding-Dong! The Witch Is Dead’, for instance, was appropriated to mirror the death of British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in 2013 (an interesting notion considering that Elphaba is conceived as a misunderstood outsider in *Wicked*). In addition, many of the film’s musical numbers are frequently performed at weddings, funerals and school concerts, in advertising and throughout popular culture. In developing the score of *Wicked*, however, Schwartz chose to discard the music, or even musical style, of *The Wizard of Oz* (as demonstrated in relation to *Billy Elliot the Musical* above).

Instead of mirroring the optimism best associated with this body of works, Schwartz fashioned a sophisticated mixture of styles, from orchestral Broadway to “bubblegum pop”, and included recurring motifs to define and emphasise specific characters, their shifting motivations and relationships (Laird, 2011c, 234). In particular, Schwartz repeated various motifs throughout his score with a new tempo and orchestration, or simply in a different key, to reimagine previous moments or further establish certain ideas. The discordant opening of ‘No One Mourns the Wicked’, for instance, establishes Elphaba as a feared outcast, yet this theme is later subverted in ‘As Long As You’re Mine’ to confirm her romantic relationship with Fiyero in a considerably gentler fashion. In this case, the score of *Wicked* resembles that of a film score in that it weaves intricate motifs and repeating patterns to emphasise dramaturgical shifts. It is both thematic and stirring and ultimately enables the emotions of an “ethically responsible, individual girl who becomes a scapegoat” to *sing* (Wolf, 2011, 203). Unlike the sung-through megamusicals of the 1980s, be they *Les Misérables* or *Miss Saigon*, *Wicked* embellishes the political undertones of Holzman’s dialogue in a score that relishes the “formal and phenomenological distinction between the script and the music” (Wolf, 2011, 203).

Perhaps one of the most obvious ways in which *Wicked* subverts the Oz canon is by permitting Elphaba, the Wicked Witch, to sing. Instead of rejecting her as the archetypal villain, song “identifies Elphaba as a protagonist, an empowered girl who overcomes the disadvantages of her green skin” (Boyd, 2010, 99). Unlike the non-singing villains of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *The Sound of Music* (1965), and even *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Elphaba is a vocal ‘powerhouse’ who becomes a three-dimensional, sophisticated, and, ultimately, humanised individual through song (particularly

as she performs on twelve of the original cast recording's nineteen tracks). Elphaba complies with the performative norm of Oz (in both singing and dancing), yet she is ostracised for her physical and political Otherness. Although Eviliene has a solo in *The Wiz*, just as the Wicked Witch does in the 2011 revival of *The Wizard of Oz*, Elphaba is the only witch to be *empowered* through song. As Michelle Boyd argues in relation to the 1939 film, "the Wicked Witch's inability to sing underscores her fundamental opposition to the Oz community and exposes her as the antagonist whose death is necessary for a happy ending to occur" (2010, 106). In having the witch sing in *Wicked*, however, Elphaba dominates the musical's emotional core to the extent that singing "humanizes her and endows her with a voice to rage back against her oppressive world" (Boyd, 2010, 99). Although she assumes the familiar form of a green faced figure with broomstick and hat, thus aligning with the familiar narrative and audience's visual expectations, Elphaba sings as if she is a contestant on *American Idol* (Brantley, 2005b). Schwartz's score, and vocalization of Elphaba in particular, therefore "turns the entire theatre into a temporary community in which the audience can identify with the characters through a shared musical idiom" (as perhaps one of the key reasons the score of *Wicked* is regularly performed out of context and continues to dominate album sales) (Boyd, 2010, 107). In this case, song acts as an intertextual motif in that it subverts many previous musical adaptations of Oz, whilst conforming to the musical theatre canon in enabling the female protagonist to sing.

In her first aspirational number 'The Wizard and I', for example, Elphaba presents herself as an ambitious woman who longs to meet the Wizard of Oz and contribute widely to society. As in all staple 'I Want' songs, Elphaba establishes her desires, the manner in which she can achieve them, and, for the

audience, how the narrative is likely to develop over the following two hours. As a fast and pulsating declaration of her ideals, 'The Wizard and I' intertextually situates Elphaba in relation to the numerous female protagonists who have established their aspirations in such a way throughout the musical theatre canon, be they Tracy Turnblad in *Hairspray* (2002) or Ariel in *The Little Mermaid* (2008). In this instance, Elphaba longs for an individual, rather than a fictionalised location, which will elevate her socially and welcome her into a community in which difference is the norm. As Michele Boyd notes, however, the lyrics "cleverly foreshadow her theatrical death and remind the audience that the wide-eyed girl on stage will soon inherit the fate of the terrifying witch from *The Wizard of Oz*" (2010, 105). In suggesting she will "melt", "die" and crowds will "scream", this number subverts typically negative words as positive attributes, with an ironic nod to what will follow (Schwartz, 2003). Elphaba's fate is predetermined, as the audience might expect, since the song functions as a subtle and cynical subversion of the standardised 'I Want' songs that permeate the musical theatre canon. Just as Carrie sings of "thousands of voices ever repeating" her name in *Carrie: The Musical* (2012), the inclusion of this song type, and its placement within the narrative, articulates a kind of idiomatic intertextuality in which Elphaba subverts any preconceived idea of a singing witch (Gore and Pitchford, 2012).

Throughout the score of *Wicked*, Elphaba transitions from optimistic ('The Wizard and I') to lovesick ('I'm Not That Girl'), defiant ('Defying Gravity') and, eventually, to jaded ('No Good Deed'). In transitioning in this way, Elphaba is humanised through song in transforming her from the nameless archetype presented in *The Wizard of Oz* to a female protagonist worth rooting for. As Boyd further argues, however, Elphaba is "never truly allowed to soar", since

witchcraft, and her green skin, “carries heavy cultural baggage” (2010, 114). “Elphaba cannot fully escape the memory of the Wicked Witch. Whilst she is spared the worst of the witch’s fate, her “happily ever after” is still a compromised one” (Boyd, 2010, 114). Although she acquires a vocal power lacking in all other adaptations, “Elphaba must still die (or at least appear to) in order to restore peace to the community. It is not her silence, but her vocal excess that excludes her” (Bunch, 2015, 65). In bringing her emotions centre stage, then, Elphaba is developed in song, providing an “essential humanity” and “emotional connection to the audience” (Boyd, 2010, 107). The affective nature of music and singing, in particular, transcends the lengthy prose provided by Maguire and encapsulates Elphaba’s emotional journey in seconds. In this case, music reveals subtext and transports the audience to a new emotional plane, whilst also animating an archetype in a manner that is unachievable in another medium. Elphaba does not reveal her ‘Red Shoe Blues’ or hatred for ‘Bad News’, as in the 2011 revival of *The Wizard of Oz* or *The Wiz*, and thus becomes an emblem of difference through song (Wolf, 2011, 204-205). Those expecting a witch who screeches and throws fireballs, just as Margaret Hamilton does in the 1939 film, have their visions reformed through song at every performance of *Wicked*.

“Everyone Deserves the Chance to Fly”: Elphaba’s American Dream

In order to extend the above discussion, I wish to analyse how *Wicked* not only enables the witch to sing, but allows Elphaba to reflect, and certainly pursue, the optimism of *The Wizard of Oz*. To do so, I will first consider how the Wizard, in particular, provides a prism through which Elphaba imagines the American Dream and, in turn, extends any previous interpretation of the Wicked Witch in song. I will then investigate Elphaba’s ‘Unlimited Theme’ as a direct

reference to *The Wizard of Oz* and a continuation of Dorothy's ambitions in a new narrative. It should be acknowledged, therefore, that the Oz canon has repeatedly presented various cultural mythologies in song. From the iconic 'Over the Rainbow' in *The Wizard of Oz* to 'Defying Gravity' in *Wicked*, the scores of these musicals are ingrained with images of upward mobility, transformation, stability, and thus the American Dream (Cote, 2005, 21). In *The Wizard of Oz*, for instance, Dorothy sings of a world where "skies are blue" and "troubles melt like lemon drops" (Fleming, 1939). Mirroring James Truslow Adams' original definition of the American Dream, as outlined in his 1931 book *The Epic America*, Dorothy envisions a life that is "better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement", devoid of social class and upbringing (1931, 214). In their utopic visioning of a location where the "dreams that you dare to dream really do come true" (Fleming, 1939), Arlen and Harburg musicalised Oz as everything that America did not become, yet wished to be (Zipes, 1994, 119). Oz positions America as a nation conditioned by the courage to achieve the impossible or, rather, the ability to *dare to dream*. As a phrase which has been appropriated across popular culture, Dorothy's suggestion is now a recognised emblem of American nationhood and one which continues to be widely referenced as a distinctively American attitude. President Barack Obama, for instance, proposed in his 2011 State of the Union Address that "America has been the story of ordinary people who dare to dream" and of those who wish to fulfil a distinctly American vision of happiness (2011). Although Obama may not have consciously referenced *The Wizard of Oz* when he made this statement, this phrase has entered the cultural lexicon and further identified 'Over the Rainbow' as a number which has resonated with audiences ever since it was first sung by a young child dreaming

of a better childhood. In its overt echoing of the American Dream, this song has enabled the mythmaking qualities of Oz to transcend Dorothy and Toto by reflecting a society that universally longs for a better tomorrow.

Throughout *Wicked*, however, the American Dream is best articulated through Elphaba's longing for self-sufficiency and a need to find 'home'. In 'The Wizard and I', for instance, she asserts herself as an unwavering individual who is determined to become the Wizard's "Magic Grand Vizier" (as Madame Morrible suggests). She sings, "Once I'm with the Wizard / My whole life will change / 'Cuz once you're with the Wizard / No one thinks you're strange" (Schwartz, 2003). Although this song certainly promotes Elphaba's determination and ability to "make good", it also highlights her narrow focus and reliance upon the Wizard (Schwartz, 2003). In naming 'the Wizard' thirteen times during her four-minute number, Elphaba suggests that one must "stand there with the Wizard" and be "half of Oz's fav'rite team" in order to be a national hero, rather than a rejected schoolgirl (Schwartz, 2003). In her constant reliance on an older, male, and notably American, figure, Elphaba's optimism is presented as dependent and individualistic, and thus unable to be achieved without the power of a positive public perception and a supportive community. Unlike Dorothy's vision of a utopic location 'over the rainbow', then, Elphaba's dream is only achievable when provided by a man who has little power beyond his manipulative personality. Although she reflects desires that are now deemed archetypically American, Elphaba needs the Wizard to support her dreams and enable her to "make good" (Schwartz, 2003). Whilst many individuals require other people to help fulfil their aspirations, Elphaba's positivity and longing are only further quashed by the underlying reality that "the wide-eyed girl on stage will one day inherit the fate of the terrifying witch from *The Wizard of Oz*" (Boyd,

2010, 105). In this view, song both encourages and prevents Elphaba from mirroring the entrenched optimism of *The Wizard of Oz*.

Beyond 'The Wizard and I', Elphaba journeys to the Emerald City to meet the Wizard, where he soon, disingenuously of course, promotes Elphaba's social "ascent" (Schwartz, 2003). He sings, "So Elphaba, I'd like to raise you high. / 'Cuz I think ev'ryone deserves the chance to fly / And helping you with your ascent / allows me to feel so parental / For I am a sentimental man" (Schwartz, 2003). In particular, this number reflects America musically by deliberately pastiching vaudeville styles that echo the America from which the Wizard came (a style also used in his number 'Wonderful'). Further to this, and more importantly, the Wizard fashions a metaphorical, and notably all-American, ambition that Elphaba later achieves in taking to the skies having achieved her 'ascent'. In her number 'Defying Gravity', therefore, Elphaba realises that she is "through with playing by the rules of someone else's game" and must reject the Wizard's promise of hope and stability, as notions determined by his American upbringing (Schwartz, 2003). In turn, Elphaba vocally embraces her difference, and thus lack of Americanness, in performing one of the most "powerful songs of authentic self-expression in the musical theatre canon" (Bunch, 2015, 65). As she grabs her broomstick and rises above the stage, her voice "acts as a kind of spell" which enables her to "reveal her inner strength" and emphasise her self-determination and sufficiency (Boyd, 2010, 111). As Ryan Bunch further articulates:

This theatrical gesture both draws the audience into her expression of selfhood and reminds us, through its distancing spectacle, of its performance. The final riff is a wordless vocal display that is pure affect (like Hamilton's cackle), defying and literally exceeding the frame of a narrative intent on trapping her [...] this is a transcendent display of individual, subjective power, deriving its authority from its performed authenticity (2015, 65).

I wish to take this further here by suggesting that Elphaba's physical and vocal excess assists her in exceeding the narrow lifestyle ascribed by her physical difference to pursue several individually determined goals. Whilst her 'dream' has been formulated within Oz, a location intent on restricting her, Elphaba soon realises that her own sense of self is 'limited', as she later sings, and that her dream is conditioned by the Wizard's ability to promote individuality. *Wicked* therefore "invites global audiences to participate in its performance of international Americanism" by providing the Wizard, as the only 'authentic' American within Oz, with the power to both construct and destroy Elphaba's sense of optimism (Bunch, 2015, 66). In screeching that nobody will "bring me down", however, belting a top E_b on the word 'me', Elphaba relinquishes her connection with the Wizard and uses song to sustain her position of self-invention and individualism (Schwartz, 2003). In subverting the operatic canon's continued use of the deteriorated voice to signify evil and madness, song humanises Elphaba beyond what has previously been imagined in literature, musical theatre and on film. Adapting *Wicked* as a musical not only enables Elphaba to sing, but to pursue a level of aspiration only available when communicating through the heightened performativity of song.

Given that the preceding discussions have explored thematic connections between texts in the most part, I want to conclude this section by investigating how Schwartz directly references *The Wizard of Oz*, and musical theatre more broadly, in his depiction of a protagonist who transcends physical difference in song. Although the MGM film is cited throughout the production's dialogue, where the rhythm of "Lions and Tigers and Bears" is replicated as "Apples and Lemons and Pears", for instance, it is within Schwartz's musical motifs where the most fruitful intertextual references can be identified (Holzman

and Schwartz, 2012). As a prime example, the accompanying melody of Elphaba's 'Unlimited Theme' replicates the first seven notes of Arlen's 'Over the Rainbow' with a new rhythmic structure (de Giere, 2008, 304-305). In particular, Elphaba continually asserts that she is "unlimited / my future is unlimited" to confirm her determination and further reflect Dorothy musically (Schwartz, 2003). In developing as a "Dorothy-like heroine", though typically ostracised and rejected within the narrative, this direct appropriation of music demonstrates that Elphaba can never achieve the dream laid out by Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* (Wolf, 2011, 207). Notably, Elphaba subverts her own musical motif in the second act, in singing, "I'm limited / Just look at me – I'm limited", to destabilise Dorothy's optimism and further distance herself from *The Wizard of Oz* (Schwartz, 2003). In this moment, then, the patriotic vision promoted throughout 'Over the Rainbow' is altered and subverted, just as *Wicked* does more broadly, to emphasise what David Walsh and Len Platt describe as "the rotten teeth in the Utopian smile of the American Dream" (2003, 12). Although Walsh and Platt are not describing *Wicked* in particular, they highlight that various musicals present a vision of America that undermines the mythologizing qualities of *Oklahoma!* (1943), *The Music Man* (1957) or, indeed, *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). What *Wicked* achieves, therefore, is to intertextually challenge such optimism by promoting it as both "limited" (in the moment Elphaba decides to leave Oz) and "unlimited" (as shown throughout *The Wizard of Oz*) (Schwartz, 2003). Whilst the placement of this melody is firmly integrated within the score, this direct reference highlights *The Wizard of Oz* as a text which presents a false and unachievable version of the American Dream. In having Elphaba sing this melody in both an ambitious and self-reflective manner, these seven notes subvert their origins and highlight the uncertainty of Elphaba's position within

Oz. Musically, then, *Wicked* evokes the optimism of *The Wizard of Oz*, yet does so by continually reminding Elphaba of her physical and political difference. It seems that Elphaba cannot achieve her American Dream since, unlike Dorothy, she is unable to be manipulated by the Wizard's optimistic visions of nationhood and 'home'.

Although such intertextual recycling certainly develops our understanding of Elphaba in relation to Dorothy and the American Dream, the first three notes of this musical phrase emphasise a level of idealism that has been replicated throughout the musical theatre canon more broadly. In particular, the phrase leaps up the octave between the first and second notes to signal a longing for something more. Similarly, Richard Rodgers uses an octave leap in *South Pacific* (1949) to signify the seductive nature of the mysterious island, 'Bali Ha'i', within the word 'Ba-li'. In addition, Leonard Bernstein echoes this pattern in *West Side Story* (1957), this time in the form of a minor seventh,⁵⁹ to separate the first two words of "there's a place for us" in the song 'Somewhere'. In each of these instances, a leap up the octave is used to represent an individual leaping from their current environment into a world where they can revitalise their own sense of self. Much like Dorothy's depiction of Oz in 'Over the Rainbow', the mysterious Bloody Mary in *South Pacific* continually repeats the phrase "Bali Ha'i" to depict an island where "Your own special hopes, / Your own special dreams, / Bloom" in a mystical location (Hammerstein, 2014, 46). Although Rodgers and Hammerstein are exploiting a stereotyped depiction of the 'South Seas' as exotic and languorous, as Jim Lovensheimer argues, both Bali Ha'i and Oz are depicted as persuasive locations that promote change,

⁵⁹ Geoffrey Block discusses the thematic use of this musical motif at length in his monograph *Enchanted Evenings: The Broadway Musical from "Show Boat" to Sondheim and Lloyd Webber* (2009, 296-306).

discovery and various other principles that are often associated with the American Dream (2010, 152). In *Wicked* and *West Side Story*, on the other hand, such a leap provides Elphaba, Tony and Maria with a sense of perseverance and determination to look beyond their physical difference and find equality (be it through the acceptance of magical powers or an interracial relationship). In further demonstrating this euphoric leaping within his score, Schwartz enters *Wicked* into a broader intertextual dialogue with the musical theatre canon by perpetuating a trope established within productions that are undeniably optimistic, yet problematised by their troubling depictions of race and nationhood. Although *The Wizard of Oz*, *South Pacific*, *West Side Story* and *Wicked* are wildly different in tone and content, they are united by their use of a musical trope which promotes a lifestyle beyond what is culturally prescribed or determined, and so each musicalise the American Dream. Although Elphaba flees her homeland, just as Tony is murdered and Dorothy wakes up from her dream, *Wicked* maintains such optimism to highlight its cultural importance and further demonstrate its limits. Just as Raymond Knapp describes the aforementioned musicals, *Wicked* presents a threatened community which “grows wiser and more secure” in embracing its communal spirit, despite, in this case, doing so by ostracising those who do not conform with a culturally ingrained impression of the All-American citizen (2005, 122). As an intertextual nod to a broader convention of musical theatre, this reference further establishes *Wicked* as a complex and multi-layered adaptation of several familiar texts.

“A Celebration Throughout Oz”: Discovery Fidelity Along the Yellow Brick Road

In the opening pages of *Wicked: The Grimmerie*, the musical’s official companion, David Cote traces the genealogy of the Oz canon from the birth of

L. Frank Baum in 1856 up until the second anniversary of *Wicked* in 2005 (2005, 10-13). Acknowledging the release of Baum's books, the MGM film, Elton John's 'Goodbye Yellow Brick Road', and so on, Cote implies that the Oz canon can be summarised as a linear trajectory from one text to another. As this chapter has demonstrated, however, each adaptation of *The Wizard of Oz* only further demonstrates the fluid and fragmented nature of this body of works. After all, lines such as "I'll get you my pretty!" or "there's no place like home" are iconic lines of dialogue from the 1939 film, rather than fixed and irreplaceable aspects of every Oz text (Fleming, 1939). The Land of Oz is thus an emblematic location in which various lines of influence and textual fragments, "none of them original, blend and clash" (Barthes, 1977, 146). In particular, the stage production of *Wicked* enables audiences to re-envision the popular images and idioms they first encountered on film, or in their reading Baum's or Maguire's books, in a new medium. Although there are several depictions of Oz within the musical theatre canon, the stage adaptation of *Wicked* is perhaps the most intermedial Oz text in that it reaches beyond the work of Baum or Maguire to fashion a semi-original story which encapsulates the legacy of *The Wizard of Oz* as an iconic American film. Audiences seemingly experience the 1939 film in a live format, particularly as Dorothy still melts the Wicked Witch, however, the focus has been shifted to highlight the mysteries and inconsistencies of this narrative and further destabilise the Oz presented in Maguire's novel. As I am sure many audience members will have now experienced, the copy of Maguire's book sold at the merchandise stand bears little resemblance to the production they have just experienced, particularly as the musical only appropriates certain relationships, characters and situations within its narrative (Laird, 2008, 341). Although the creative team has never claimed to provide a

faithful adaptation, the tagline on the musical's poster stating 'based on the novel by Gregory Maguire' seems to suggest otherwise. *Wicked* therefore takes an "activist stance" towards its source novel in entering the work into a "much broader intertextual dialogism" with an existing body of popular texts (Stam, 2000, 64). In this sense, *Wicked* highlights the development of an adaptation as an "ongoing dialogical process", given that Maguire's novel serves as a single line of influence, rather than a mandatory source (Stam, 2000, 64).

This chapter has highlighted the inadequacy of studying adaptation through a fidelity model by considering, for the most part, the role of original song in the stage adaptation of *Wicked*. In focussing on the structural and stylistic differences between media, it has also considered the presumably 'straightforward' adaptation of a literary text, the adaptation of a film which includes familiar music, and, most notably, the complex adaptation of a highly intertextual and intermedial 'world' of texts. Having identified musical theatre as a traditionally adaptive form, in turn, this chapter has argued that song alters and heightens the originating source in a manner that is unable to be achieved in any other medium. In addition to this, it has further demonstrated that audiences always read adaptations in relation to their expectations of the stated source material. *Billy Elliot the Musical* is likely to be scrutinised most intensively by fans of the original film, for example, just as the adaptation of *Wicked* only tends to be critiqued by those who have read the original novel. Although audiences tend to interpret the stage version of *Wicked* in relation to whichever Oz text they are most familiar with, often the 1939 film of *The Wizard of Oz*, Gregory Maguire's novel continues to be recognised as the primary source material of this production, given that it is identified as such within all marketing materials. The desire to identify a single source of influence therefore

remains problematic within the twenty-first century, despite productions such as *Wicked* demonstrating complex and sophisticated routes into highly intermedial bodies of work. Whilst adaptation scholarship has often analysed such texts as if within a vacuum, this chapter has developed beyond this by promoting the idea that audiences read an adaptation in relation to their knowledge and expectations of various cultural texts. It is not simply the familiar title above the theatre's entrance that may be evoked during the performance, and so an audience's interpretation of an adaptation is considerably more nuanced, and also intertextual, when the particular text has been transferred between media. This chapter has therefore identified and analysed a prominent form of intertextual reference in which specific works of popular culture are adapted as mainstream, commercial stage musicals.

*“Well, that’s how I remember it, so that’s how it’ll be”
next to normal (2009), lyrics by Brian Yorkey.*

*

*“I’ve said it before and I’ll say it again: “No more fucking ABBA!””
Priscilla, Queen of the Desert (2006), book by Stephan Elliott and Allan Scott*

Chapter Four: Nostalgia the Musical

During the first act of Catherine Johnson’s *Mamma Mia!* (1999), the protagonist, Sophie Sheridan, greets three of her mother’s past lovers as they arrive on her Greek island to attend her wedding. After some initial confusion as to why Sophie signed the invitations from her mother, Donna, the trio start to reminisce about their past romances by singing the 1977 hit ABBA song ‘Thank You for the Music’. As Sam, Harry and Bill sing lyrics like “without a song or dance what are we?”, Sophie joins her potential fathers in a moment of pure nostalgia (Andersson and Ulvaeus, 1999). Having presumably been taught this song during her childhood, Sophie uses Harry’s guitar to comfort the group with a familiar refrain, one that is also likely to be known by much of the audience. In attempting to “capture their heart” with a familiar “melody”, as the musical itself has often been regarded as doing by scholars, Sophie helps to recall each of the men’s joyous relationships with Donna by saying “thank you for the music” (Andersson and Ulvaeus, 1999). Although she does not know which of these men is her biological father, she uses the “joy” of music to celebrate “the good old days” in the hope that they will stay for her wedding and confirm her parentage (Andersson et al., 2009). Throughout this scene, as in many within the musical, past popular music is used to elicit nostalgia and return both the characters and the audience to fond memories of the past. Later in ‘Our Last Summer’, for instance, Harry remembers “walks along the Seine / laughing in the rain”, whilst Donna recalls Sophie’s schooldays in ‘Slipping Through My

Fingers' (Andersson and Ulvaeus, 1999). Nostalgia, in this sense, is both a dramaturgical device within *Mamma Mia!*, in that the plot centres on remembering and resolving the past, and also a feature of entertainment, in that it uses hit ABBA songs to convey the narrative. In this instance alone, the contemporary musical identifies itself as a form which is particularly prone to fondly remembering the past in a manner that engenders nostalgia.

Having considered the adaptation of specific texts in the previous chapter, this second case study chapter analyses productions which elicit nostalgia for the past by referencing several defined *collections* of texts, typically past popular music. Detailing the specificity, intention, reception and presentation of such references to do so, this chapter identifies numerous jukebox musicals, including *Mamma Mia!* (1999), *Jersey Boys* (2005) and *We Will Rock You* (2002), as productions which engender both personal and cultural nostalgia within their very formation. Although Warren Hoffman, Millie Taylor and Malcolm Womack have each considered how nostalgia is used to entertain within these musicals, this chapter looks to build upon such scholarship by differentiating a personal, subjective relationship with specific texts from a more generalised relationship with certain themes or cultural ideas. In particular, it argues that evoking a collective sense of nostalgia for a specific text is problematic, since nostalgia is always engendered in relation to an individual's experience and understanding of their surrounding culture. Although psychologist Carl Jung has differentiated the personal from the collective unconscious, this distinction is rarely applied within musical theatre scholarship to the extent that audiences are often presumed to collectively return to an imagined, carefree past as the performance begins. Given that this view seems to ignore the salient arguments of much reception theory, this chapter expands

upon existing scholarship by identifying nostalgia as an entirely subjective notion that cannot be universally determined. In recognising that some audiences will have little knowledge of the celebrated artist(s) as they attend a jukebox musical, this chapter suggests that audience members often respond to a complex mixture of memories formed by the thematic content of a text and any culturally familiar depictions of its originating era, performance style and musical genre.

Nostalgia and the Musical

As Raphael Samuel argues in *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, the past continues to be the “plaything of the present” (2012, 429). Highlighted by the recent influx of nostalgic television shows like *Mad Men* (2007-2015) and *Pan Am* (2011-2012), popular culture continues to reflect the past in “broad-brushed contrasts between ‘now’ and ‘then’” to the extent that events are often assigned to the ‘good old days’ where time is measured in generations, rather than decades and centuries (Samuel, 2012, 6). The term ‘nostalgia’ therefore refers to a “culture-wide pull to the past” or, more precisely, the comforting resurrection of mediatized images from a carefree or imagined past (Dika, 2003, 106). As many theorists have summarised it,⁶⁰ nostalgia is the resurrection of faded, and often widely inaccurate, images of the past which are either culturally shared or subjectively determined. Fredric Jameson, for instance, has argued that nostalgia is a negative effect of postmodernism, or, rather, a “cultural condition caused by the rise of

⁶⁰ Although the term ‘nostalgia’ is central to this discussion, the remit of this chapter do not enable me to fully highlight the broad range of scholarship which considers this term in relation to various popular forms. In light of this, it seems appropriate here to identify several notable works that consider nostalgia on the contemporary stage, yet are not detailed within the following. In particular, Susan Bennett’s *Performing Nostalgia: Shifting Shakespeare and the Contemporary Performance* (1995) and Benjamin Poore’s *Heritage, Nostalgia and Modern British Theatre: Staging the Victorians* (2011) each consider the importance of nostalgia within contemporary theatre making and popular culture in general.

multinational capitalism and characterized by the features of pastiche and schizophrenia” (Dika, 2003, 1). In this instance, nostalgia is an *artistic* phenomenon where, rather problematically, mediatized images are accepted as the norm, and thus represent the past for a large percentage of the population (particularly those who did not live in the depicted era). For example, the now commonplace depiction of Americans in the 1950s as freethinking teenagers with greased hair or poodle skirts is the nostalgic fabrication of films like *Grease* (1978), *Back to the Future* (1985) and television sitcom *Happy Days* (1974-84). Far from depicting the Korean War and the launch of Sputnik, such sanitised texts have developed a lovingly remembered depiction of the 1950s which has ultimately been filtered through a cultural lens of desired images (Sperb, 2005, 928). Nostalgia is thus the presentation of the past through its “glossy qualities”, in the manner of “stylistic connotation”, rather than an authentic recollection (Jameson, 1991, 19). In light of this, Jameson depicts a culture obsessed with the “revival of shared cultural markers” that sanitise the past and reduce cultural diversity to mere symbolic representation (Shanani, 2013, 1217).⁶¹ Although those who lived in America during the 1950s may recognise Coca Cola, diners and milkshake bars as authentic realities, these representations are ultimately selective, safe and reductive symbols of a culture still reeling from the Second World War. In this view, nostalgia is the representation of specific ideals and “cultural artefacts”, rather than an ‘authentic’ journey to a bygone era (Dika, 2003, 10).

Despite functioning as a primary presentational mode of much popular culture, the theatrical stage has been widely recognised for “necessarily processing and preserving the past” (Schneider, 2014, 10). Rebecca Ann Rugg

⁶¹ This notion will be considered in more detail in Chapter Five in relation to the various Disneyfied impressions of the world that are referenced within *The Book of Mormon* (2011).

argues, for instance, that nostalgia is a “prime dramaturgical mode of musical theater” to the extent that it conditions the show’s structure, marketing campaign, critical response and, most importantly, the audience’s reception (2002, 45). The “historically simplified” visions of 1950s America presented in *Grease* (1972), *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973) and *Little Shop of Horrors* (1982), for instance, are fundamental examples of how nostalgia is perfectly suited to the often excessive performance style of musical theatre (Rugg, 2002, 45). As argued by Rugg in ‘What It Used to Be: Nostalgia and the State of the Broadway Musical’, nostalgia continues to provide a sense of escapism and a structure through which to rewrite historical truths (2002, 46-47). In particular, musicals such as *Show Boat* (1927) and *Oklahoma!* (1943) have maintained a “kind of cultural nostalgia [that] allows no room for individual difference; rather it encourages the fantasy of similarity” by ignoring the cultural troubles of the depicted time period (Rugg, 2002, 46). By presenting the union of two conflicting communities, as demonstrated by the ‘farmers’ and the ‘cowmen’ in *Oklahoma!*, such musicals enable American audiences to find comfort from nostalgic depictions of their country’s troubled past (Rugg, 2002, 46). As Warren Hoffman notes in his suggestion that “Everything Old is New Again”, as is the title of his monograph’s final chapter, nostalgia was a prime culprit for the whitewashing of America’s troubles throughout much of the twentieth century (2014, 173). In the twenty-first century, however, three stylistic trends have emerged within musical theatre to extend this sense of nostalgia beyond the sanitisation of racial segregation: (1) ‘new’ musicals based on ‘old’ or ‘classic’ stage and screen musicals, (2) revivals or ‘revisals’ of previous musicals that have been repurposed as ‘new’ productions, and (3) jukebox musicals which recycle past popular music as “postmodern pastiche” (Hoffman, 2014, 171). For

both Rugg and Hoffmann, then, nostalgia is fundamental to musical theatre in that it conditions every element of a production through its excessive and exaggerated performativity. Whilst this is certainly true, nostalgia does not function in one way or appear in any singular form within the above examples. The sense of nostalgia which causes audiences to sing along at *We Will Rock You*, for instance, does not evoke nostalgia in the same way as a racially sensitive rewriting of a more traditional musical (as in the 2002 revival of *Flower Drum Song* (1958)). Instead of existing in one form, nostalgia is a multifaceted concept which appears in various guises and tends to be separated, often problematically, into the simple divisions of personal (and subjective) or cultural (and collective) nostalgia. Although separating these terms certainly provides some nuance to this discussion, it is my intention within the following to critique this complex differentiation in relation to the contemporary musical. In particular, I look to highlight how intertextual references evoke different forms or layers of nostalgia, often moving outwards from personal to cultural memories, to the extent that nostalgia is too complex to be summarised using such contrasting categories.

"The Past is Another Land": Personal vs. Cultural Nostalgia

In order to examine how jukebox musicals might operate in terms of nostalgia, it is important to recognise the fragmented nature of all nostalgic responses in relation to a popular audience. As an expansion of Sigmund Freud's notion of the conscious/unconscious mind, a concept still widely cited today, psychologist Carl Jung differentiated the personal from the collective unconscious in his 1959 publication, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. In this influential study, he suggested that the human psyche is divided into three elements: the ego, the personal unconscious and the

collective unconscious. Jung therefore proposed that the personal unconscious is constructed from temporarily forgotten information and repressed memories, whilst the collective unconscious represents a series of essential features that are innate within a particular species (perhaps the fear of pain or death in humans). He suggests that “[t]he form of the world into which [a person] is born is already inborn in him, as a virtual image” and, as such, human beings are instilled with innate characteristics as a result of evolution (Jung, 1953, 188). Although this detailing of the unconscious cannot be applied to theatrical nostalgia in the same way, particularly as our interpretation of the theatrical event is bound by the context of each performance, Jung provides a useful starting point for considering the presumed divide between cultural and personal nostalgia. In particular, he outlines the difference between what is innate, or widely determined, and what might be the subjective response of an individual. He argues that the personal unconscious is exclusively established from memories and past experiences, and can thus, in this case, be applied to the personal recognition of an intertextual reference. Audiences always subjectively determine which elements of a text they recognise, be they images, lines of dialogue or performances, and so such memories are established within an individual’s personal unconscious. In this manner, audiences cannot recall intertextual references within their collective unconscious, since no cultural text is universal enough to be instilled within every human unconscious. Although tropes and narratives certainly resonate across cultures, the subjective nature of recognising intertextual references makes it problematic to define a clear distinction between a cultural and a personal memory in relation to popular culture. In order to continue this discussion, it is therefore crucial to consider the following in more detail: what is collective or cultural nostalgia in relation to a

personally remembered event or text? How can texts engage individuals 'culturally' if they are always read subjectively? And, finally, to what extent can a text include elements which are universally recognised by an entire culture?

In the first instance, I suggest that personal nostalgia is the comforting recollection of materials that have previously been enjoyed by an individual, whilst cultural nostalgia is the sanitised remembering of a past culture. As Rugg argues, personal nostalgia only occurs when an audience member strikes a "personal connection" with the materials presented to form a relationship of "individualism and proximity" (2002, 47). In describing Lynn Ahrens and Stephen Flaherty's musical *Seussical* (2000), for instance, she suggests that audiences may recall childhood memories of fancy dress or bedtime stories when experiencing Dr. Seuss stories outside of "one's own history" on stage (Rugg, 2002, 47). In turn, the "sense of having experienced the story once before, of knowing all the songs already, creates familiarity and a feeling of personal nostalgia" that enables intertextual references to provide comfort (Rugg, 2002, 47). In opposition to this, however, Rugg defines cultural nostalgia as a sympathetic version of a past culture which has since been accepted as a generalised summation of a particular time frame. As in the nostalgic recollection of 1950s America described above, cultural nostalgia presents sameness from a critical distance, often allowing a culture to rewrite its own history in an often affectionate and sanitised manner.

Although such a distinction is certainly useful to this study, it should be recognised that Rugg does not acknowledge the universal qualities of cultural nostalgia or the fact that perceptions are commonly recognised within a certain culture. Beyond this significant oversight, her definition aligns with Elizabeth L.

Wollman's recent assertion that cultural memory is that of a culture remembering itself, and thus cultural memory cannot be equated to history (2012, 8). Akin to Raphael Samuel's broader definition of 'popular memory', Wollman suggests that "a culture collectively and perpetually decides not only how to remember itself – and thus what to preserve, to forget, to canonize, or to render to the junk piles of the past – but also how it wishes to be remembered as history unfolds" (2012, 8). Whilst she is not describing the sanitised recollections that Rugg is concerned with, Wollman suggests that memory can itself be as selective and as sanitising as nostalgia. With this in mind, I employ the term 'cultural nostalgia' to refer to memories that are broad, thematic and presumed to be shared by a general audience. Images of childhood or motherhood, for example, are often nostalgically recalled through personal memories of such instances, and yet there is a larger cultural memory that individuals of all ages, genders and social backgrounds can respond to. In this conception, cultural or collective nostalgia refers to texts which feature universal qualities that can be recognised by any audience member who has given birth, read a bedtime story or nursed a child, for instance, rather than those with a particular interest in a specific text. Cultural nostalgia, as will be explored throughout the following, is therefore the moment when "the distinction between myth and history vanishes" and conceptual ideas are widely recognised by a broad demographic (Assman, 2010, 113). In order to develop this discussion, then, the following applies the above distinction to numerous twenty-first century jukebox musicals in which nostalgia tends to be evoked for past popular music, the absent performer and several broader cultural constructs.

“Rock ‘N’ Roll is Here to Stay”: Jukebox Musicals

As a coin is inserted into a jukebox, the paying customer is invited to select a single song from a varied collection of albums from the past. Given that these materials were selected months, years and even decades earlier, the customer is simply asked to choose from a series of potentially familiar songs within a self-contained system of mediated nostalgia. As a stylistic reflection of the mixture of songs found on a jukebox, scholars including Jessica Sternfeld and Elizabeth L. Wollman have termed productions which capitalise on an audience’s familiarity with past popular music as ‘jukebox musicals’ (2011, 121). *Mamma Mia!* (1999) and *Viva Forever!* (2012), for instance, each interpolate the discography of a popular group around a fictional narrative, whilst shows like *Jersey Boys* (2005) and *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* (2013) use the songs of a particular singer or group to depict their biography. Furthermore, musicals such as *Return to the Forbidden Planet* (1989) and *Rock of Ages* (2009) feature multiple songs from a particular era to musicalise an already familiar text or staple narrative.⁶² Although popular music is used stylistically throughout much of the musical theatre canon, with Joe Deer and Rocco Dal Vera differentiating this type of musical from productions which pastiche certain musical styles, jukebox musicals directly reference past popular music as a ‘compilation’, ‘catalogue’ or ‘revue’ of hit songs (2015, 291).⁶³ As terms which

⁶² *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (2006) and *The Commitments* (2013) are both examples of jukebox musicals which are also adaptations of popular films. The advertising campaigns behind each of these productions differed in their focus, however, with *Priscilla* displaying a bus littered with drag queens, as popularised in the 1994 film, with the poster for *The Commitments* sporting a list of popular soul classics.

⁶³ Inspired by Ben Macpherson’s paper ‘A Sting in the Tale...: When the Star Becomes the Writer Becomes the Star’ at Song, Stage and Screen X, and later developed in a personal discussion, there are two additional types of jukebox musical worth mentioning here: (1) musicals that feature a fictional narrative (or are adaptations) and an original score by a popular artist, such as Sara Bareilles’ score for *Waitress* (2016), and (2) musicals with a biographical narrative and an original score by a popular artist, such as Sting’s *The Last Ship* (2014). Although these examples do not use past popular music specifically, the composers of these

have also been applied to this type of production, it is important here to consider, before continuing, the extent to which this analogy works in terms of how these musicals might stylistically reflect a jukebox.

Despite the often eclectic range of musical styles performed in these shows, all twenty-first century jukebox musicals use past popular music to fuel an evening's entertainment. Whether the music of Queen, Carole King or The Spice Girls, such musicals echo a jukebox stylistically in that they are constructed from a restricted amount of songs that have been selected by a specific creator (be they the manufacturer or the creative team). In turn, both jukeboxes and jukebox musicals allow audiences to revisit past popular music through an archetypically nostalgic form. The relationship between theatre and cultural memory has been recognised as "deep and complex", after all, whilst jukeboxes have long been presented within popular culture as a nostalgic symbol of 1950s America (as in *Grease* and *Happy Days*) (Carlson, 2001, 2). Unlike when using a jukebox, however, the theatre audience is not invited to select which materials they will hear/see at each performance, in what order, and for how long; these choices are always predetermined. In many ways, then, this analogy only suits the contemporary jukebox musical when considering the type of music used in a production, rather than the actual experience of using a jukebox. Songs are rarely added to a production after it opens, for instance, unlike the continual updating of a jukebox, and thus these musicals ride a "surge of collective nostalgia" that rarely changes (Sternfeld and Wollman, 2011, 121). Furthermore, musicals do not have the sustainability of a physical jukebox, given that they require live actors, an orchestra, a specific physical location and considerably larger financial investment. *Mamma Mia!* cannot be

musicals often bring a pop/rock mentality to their scores, often to the extent that they are as driven by popular aesthetics as those which directly cite hit songs.

performed on repeat, after all, unlike the recorded ABBA song from which it takes its name. Although the term 'jukebox musical' has become a ubiquitous phrase within musical theatre scholarship, terms such as 'catalogue musical', 'compilation show' and 'anthology musical' seem more appropriate here (Taylor and Symonds, 2014, 110). Given that these shows perform a series of songs in a predefined order, they do not provide audiences with the customisability of a jukebox. Although both forms engender nostalgia, they do so in ways which make this analogy seem slightly forced and overstated. In the following discussions, then, I will use the term 'compilation musical' to analyse the manner in which these productions use intertextual referencing to fashion a compilation of familiar songs that both entertains and engenders nostalgia.

In favouring entertainment and nostalgia over dramatic plots and developed characters, compilation musicals have often been considered a "guilty pleasure at best and a punchline at worst" within scholarship (Womack, 2009, 202). Although the success of musicals like *Mamma Mia!* has proved that popular songs can "sell a hell of a lot of tickets" (Kenrick, 2008, 372), these shows are often little more than "disguised pop/rock concerts" in terms of dramatic content (Coleman, 2008, 287). Given that they 'sandwich' popular songs into an often "forced" (Hischak, 2011, 26) and "frivolous" narrative (Sternfeld and Wollman, 2011, 121), compilation musicals tend to be denigrated by scholars for their reliance on other cultural forms and lack of integration (particularly as they 'force' both familiar and original elements into one text). That said, there remains an increasing number of academics who have successfully critiqued the compilation musical as an embodied source of entertainment and an engaging instance of nostalgia. Malcolm Womack, for example, argues that *Mamma Mia!* provides a feminist 'revoicing' of the often

“disposable, empty music” of ABBA (2009, 201). In particular, his article ‘Thank You for the Music’ proposes that the female figureheads of Swedish pop group ABBA, Agnetha and Frida, were merely ventriloquist dummies for the patriarchal views expressed in their husband’s lyrics (Womack, 2009, 203). In transforming these songs for *Mamma Mia!*, however, librettist Catherine Johnson often “subverted their original lyrical meanings” by altering the gender of the singer or the situation in which the number was performed (Womack, 2013, 21). Womack’s contribution to this area of study is to thus consider how compilation musicals might be more inventive than they are typically given credit for and, more importantly, how the appropriation of various popular songs destabilises the troubling gender politics of ABBA. Millie Taylor, on the other hand, suggests that compilation musicals require a different type of analysis in comparison to a traditionally ‘integrated’ musical. Instead of analysing the “relatively unimportant story[line]” of such shows, Taylor explores the manner in which compilation musicals entertain audiences and permit “intertextual and personal associations in reception” (2012b, 150-152). In fashioning a participatory community who relive their fantasies and memories through live performance, Taylor suggests that entertainment is the central feature of these shows to the extent that they offer scholars, in turn, a unique perspective on the role of reception, audience involvement and sensation within musical theatre (2012b, 152).

As two key examples of scholars who have critiqued this canon of works, Womack and Taylor occupy notably different perspectives and thus consider vitally different aspects of these productions. Whilst Womack interrogates the gender politics which ‘ghost’ the lyrics of *Mamma Mia!*, Taylor is primarily concerned with how the excessive nature of these shows “allow audiences the

transcendental pleasure of attachment, intelligent interpretation and nostalgic recreation” (2012b, 165). It is my intention within the following, however, to locate a middle ground between these two methodologies, and thus types of scholarship, in relation to nostalgia. Although Taylor is right to acknowledge that critiquing the narrative of these shows is often a reductive task, her analysis tends to ignore the physical embodiment or manifestation of nostalgia on stage by focussing on audience reception for the most part. Despite their work providing a key critical framework for this chapter, Womack and Taylor consider nostalgia as either a type of audience response or an attribute of the onstage action, and thus ignore the layers of recognition which are likely occur between the two. Although audiences certainly respond to the music or performance style of compilation musicals in an embodied fashion, every stage image, line of dialogue or physical gesture has the potential to evoke nostalgia in several ways. It is important within the following, therefore, to further analyse which attributes of a performance audiences are likely to respond to and the potential layers of nostalgia attached.

“I Can Still Recall...”: The Layering of Nostalgia

Often cited as the world’s most successful musical, *Mamma Mia!* premiered in London in April 1999 and has since been performed in twenty languages, in over forty countries, to over sixty million people.⁶⁴ Exploring the confused parentage of Sophie Sheridan and her three potential fathers on a Greek island, the musical weaves the music of legendary pop group ABBA through an original narrative of love, loss and summer romance. Whilst the musical continues to promote the sale of ABBA’s Greatest Hits album, “*Mamma*

⁶⁴ I attended a performance of *Mamma Mia!* at the Prince of Wales Theatre, London, in September 2009.

Mia!'s greatest cultural impact", as Womack suggests, "may be that it has given a new generation a completely different way to listen to the music of ABBA" (2013, 35). Such an achievement, he describes, has successfully distanced some of the world's most popular songs from their originating artists and firmly associated them with Donna and Sophie, the fictional mother and daughter duo who might best be considered the musical's central couple (Womack, 2013, 35). In the following, then, I wish to build upon the taxonomy outlined in Chapter Two to analyse the way in which the song 'Slipping Through My Fingers' (1981) might engender nostalgic responses which fall into one of four categories. Considering how an audience might have either a personal or a collective response to the song and its presented themes, the following discussion instigates a broader analysis of how nostalgia operates within these highly intertextual shows.

Appearing in the 2008 film adaptation with the same intention, the song 'Slipping Through My Fingers' depicts a mother lamenting the speed at which her daughter has grown up and the lack of time they have spent together. As Donna prepares Sophie for her wedding day, she sings the words of ABBA to illustrate her regrets and "the feeling that I'm losing her forever / and without really entering her world" (Andersson and Ulvaeus, 1999). In having Donna style Sophie's hair, paint her nails and help her into her wedding dress, this number is overtly nostalgic in that it features a variety of moments which induce the "feelgood factor" that is so regularly associated with this type of musical (Aston and Harris, 2012, 117). In its depiction of a mother letting go of her child to marriage, 'Slipping Through My Fingers' identifies *Mamma Mia!* as a musical in which the past is represented through popular music, an audience's sentimental longing for a bygone era and an onstage enactment of

remembering. Although such observations can be applied to the musical more widely, I propose that there are four potentially nostalgic responses to this scene: a personal or collective response to the song itself (as a piece of popular culture) and a personal or collective response to the song's themes and content. Whilst many of these responses have been outlined in Kate Egan and Kerstin Leder Mackley's qualitative study of audience reception in *Mamma Mia!* (2013, 130-133), this observation can be applied more broadly to texts which evoke nostalgia and, to some extent, intertextual references in general. In the first instance, audiences are likely to respond to the song itself, or a reference to the song, in either a personal or collective manner (or perhaps both). Firstly, audiences already familiar with 'Slipping Through My Fingers' may offer a moment of *personal* recognition, often through "murmurs of acknowledgment and surprise", when they hear it performed in *Mamma Mia!* (Womack, 2013, 28). Although this is perhaps the simplest type of nostalgic response, and one that is often taken for granted, not every audience member will be familiar with this song as they attend a performance and will not remember, therefore, the moment they first heard it as this scene plays out. Secondly, the number is likely to be *collectively* recognised as either an ABBA song, a pop/rock song, a song with a female singer, or simply a song from the 1980s, when performed in *Mamma Mia!*. Whilst this type of response is typically broad and unspecific, they tend to stem from audiences with broader knowledge of the song's context and history, rather than specific memories of the song itself. Given that specific elements of the song cannot be collectively remembered in this way, the appropriation of this song in a new context offers a larger nostalgic recollection of the culture, musical style and era in which it was first performed. I might recognise this song as maintaining a past musical style, for instance, one

notably different from the music of my childhood, despite being born after the song's initial release. Although I may not be aware of the details of this reference, I am likely to acknowledge this number as the appropriation of a song from a past era in a way that might evoke a broader nostalgic reaction than that of those who first heard it on a jukebox. In this way, audiences may have a *personal* recollection of the song itself, in addition to a *collective* recollection of the song's context, performers and musical genre.

In the second instance, audiences are likely to respond to the larger themes and content of this song. Firstly, audiences with no prior knowledge of the song may respond nostalgically to its presentation of a mother/daughter relationship. In particular, the moment is likely to be recognised by mothers who have adult children, who might identify with Donna's "surge of that well-known sadness", or by daughters who have left their childhood homes to get married or progress into their adult lives (Andersson and Ulvaeus, 1999). As highlighted in the staging of this number, Donna must either sit back and contemplate her relationship with her daughter or, as is the presumed norm for a wedding day, literally 'mother' her by painting her nails and styling her hair. In emulating the trajectory of motherhood in general, this scene displays the transition from a nurturing mother to the moment a child leaves their family home "with an absent minded smile" (Andersson and Ulvaeus, 1999). With this in mind, the number is likely to engender a *personally* nostalgic response from individuals who might identify with the presented situation. Secondly, and perhaps more commonly, the number may provoke a *collective* sense of nostalgia for parental relationships, childhood fantasies and families in general (whether following a nuclear model or, as in this case, a single parent family). Although the exclusive presentation of female characters implies that only women can identify with

these themes, various human characteristics are presented within this song to the extent that such responses are not limited to individuals who mirror Donna and Sophie specifically. In the film adaptation, for instance, the following dialogue is performed between verses (with the sound of Sophie's childhood music box accompanying the pair):

SOPHIE: Do you think I'm letting you down?

DONNA: Why would you even think that?

SOPHIE: Oh, because ... of what you've done. I mean, the Dynamos, raising a kid and running a business, all on your own.

DONNA: Well, honey – I didn't have a choice. I couldn't go home; you know? When I got pregnant, my mother told me not to bother coming back. And I wouldn't have had it any other way. My God, look at what we've had.

SOPHIE: Will you give me away?

[DONNA fights back tears as she nods in recognition]

[singing resumes]

TOGETHER: "Sometimes I wish that I could freeze the picture..."

(Lloyd, 2008).

As the pair are then reunited with the music of ABBA in a final duet section, the honest and familiar conversation detailed above is intertextually bound to a hit song from the 1980s. In this moment, such identifiable dialogue is connected to a popular song in a manner that may condition the way audiences recall this song in the future. Whether hearing the number on a cast recording, radio show or online, audiences are likely to recall, alongside their memory of the song's lyrics or melody, images of parenthood, growing up or getting married, having heard this music appropriated in *Mamma Mia!*. Audiences are therefore likely to respond to either the specific details of this song or the wider cultural ideas invoked by its staging. In evoking a mother and daughter relationship alongside a broader presentation of parenthood, this number engrosses audiences by "taking them back, pulling them in, conjuring up ABBA-infected memories from their past and connecting them through catchy, culturally and personally familiar

songs” (Egan and Leder Mackley, 2013, 133). As I have demonstrated in response, compilation musicals like *Mamma Mia!* engender nostalgia in four distinct ways through their continued recycling of familiar songs. Whether such references evoke the music remembered from an individual’s childhood or songs only discovered the moment the curtain rises, compilation musicals enable nostalgic responses that are either personal or collective memories of the specific ‘text’ or its broader themes.

“You’re Just Too Good to be True”: Appropriating Nostalgia in Bio-Musicals

Having identified how intertextual references evoke several types of nostalgic response, the remainder of this chapter analyses nostalgia in relation to the ‘authentic’ embodiment of iconic performers and the way in which their artistic output is often used to reflect their personal life. To commence this discussion, the following section argues that the mechanisms of musical theatre are active in shaping our perception of the past by evoking nostalgia through a popular depiction in which art is appropriated to imitate life. With particular reference to *Jersey Boys* (2005), the following discussion proposes that our cultural recollection of popular performers is often sculpted by musical theatre, which, in this case, conflates the personal life and artistic output of an individual as one. The inherent liveness of musical theatre therefore enables fluid performances of cultural icons, or perhaps re-performances, which, in turn, evoke nostalgia for a mediated and typically ‘inauthentic’ past.⁶⁵

Popularised by *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* in 1989, there exists a growing collection of compilation musicals which narrate the biography of a

⁶⁵ The majority of this section was first articulated in relation to *Evita* (1978), as a paper entitled ‘So Lauren Bacall Me: Musical Theatre and the Fluidity of Iconicity’, at the Song, Stage and Screen X conference at Regents University, London in June 2015.

popular group/artist through their greatest hits (termed 'bio-musicals' by Taylor (2012b, 152)). With a predetermined narrative to guide the action, the songs of these musicals tend to operate both diegetically and non-diegetically, meaning they are used as both 'authentic' performances, typically in rehearsal or for an acknowledged live audience, and potentially 'inauthentic' expressions of the performer's personal life. As perhaps the most critically acclaimed example of this trend, *Jersey Boys* opened on Broadway in 2005, having since played in over ten major cities, and became the first compilation musical to win the Tony Award for Best Musical in 2006.⁶⁶ With a book by Marshall Brickman and Rick Elice, *Jersey Boys* threads the music of the Four Seasons, later Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, through their "classic American" biography of "rags to riches, and back to rags" (Brickman cited in Rotella, 2005). Noted by Taylor for its "sense of fluidity", the musical is constructed as a series of flashbacks, montages and narrated sequences that enable audiences to simultaneously "relive the songs" and "extend their knowledge of the lives of the celebrities who created them" (2012b, 153). In turn, however, the performance of each figure remains a fluid interpretation that is likely to change at each and every performance. As Frankie Valli is presented each night in *Jersey Boys*, for example, the performer is not only highlighting *their* perception of Valli, a man they are unlikely to have met, but a culturally standardised perception which has been determined by the actors who have previously played the role and creative team who developed it. Similarly, audiences will draw upon their subjective memory and assumptions of such a figure, rather than any factual information, to determine the extent to which they find the production to be 'authentic'. Although Valli, in particular, is still alive today, able to rewrite his own history,

⁶⁶ I have attended two performances of *Jersey Boys* in London. The first was at the Prince Edward Theatre in April 2010 and the second at the Piccadilly Theatre in December 2014.

every actor who performs this role is inevitably haunted by a hegemonic perception of Valli and, in many ways, the “cultural ghost of the great [stage] originator” (Carlson, 2001, 66). As new productions open and fresh actors take up this role, however, the traits which have long defined Valli will continue to change as such mediated representations continue to replace any ‘authentic’ depiction. Musicals like *Jersey Boys* therefore draw upon a culture’s “popular memory” of a particular figure, or rather a nostalgic memory which has been widely accepted, instead of an authentic depiction that is based in historical fact (Samuel, 2012, 6).

Despite its usage within every major analysis of theatre historiography, tribute acts and popular music, the term ‘authenticity’ is continually positioned as an impossible goal which perplexes scholars and, quite often, popular artists. David Pattie stresses in *Rock Music in Performance*, for instance, that rock musicians must always be ‘real’, since “he or she must perform in such a way as to convey and confirm a sense of authentic investment in the music played, or in the worldview that the artist embraces” (2007, vii). Much like the members of a tribute band, then, every actor to portray Valli occupies a “marginal” status to the extent that they will be considered a “second-order functionary” if their performance does not align with the dominant perception of the specific performer (Neil, 2006, 84). Although performing popular songs in the same vein as the original is a central concern of bio-musicals, so too is the need to present a figure which the audience can identify as ‘authentic’ (an individual who can sing, look, talk and gesture like Valli, for example). Whilst this is certainly true, much popular performance is regarded as a “mediation (and perhaps, also, a distortion) of reality” by scholars (Pattie, 2007, vii). Rebecca Schneider notes in *Theatre & History*, for example, that performance “necessarily processes and

preserves the past” to the extent that “there is often a fundamental “replay” aspect to theatre and performance; whether fidelitous or infidelitous to the past, it is often the past that is put into play” (2014, 10). In this case, authenticity remains an unachievable goal within art forms where mediatisation is central to the construction of a performance. The familiar conception of a performer who refuses to ‘sell out’ to commercialism only further highlights the fluidity of recognising an artist’s authenticity, since the “crisis” that makes an artist inauthentic, perhaps the use of auto-tune technologies in a twenty-first century context, is always progressing and evolving (Pattie, 2007, 6). In this view, authenticity is always *ascribed* by the audience or music industry in a specific cultural context, not *inscribed* by the artist’s own sense of self (Pattie, 2007, 10). Authenticity is a process or recognised set of practices which, in relation to compilation musicals, is determined by the audience’s response to certain materials. As Ben Brantley described in his review of *Jersey Boys*, for instance, the musical’s mostly middle-aged fan base “seem to have forgotten what year it is or how old they are or, most important, that John Lloyd Young [the original performer] is not Frankie Valli” (2005a). It is seemingly impossible to fashion an authentic representation of Valli, therefore, without evoking the “invisible but inevitable” presence of past depictions, since the ‘real’ has been lost to the realms of musical theatre (Carlson, 2001, 72).

To develop this point further, I want to consider the way in which the personal life of Valli is often represented through his back catalogue of songs in *Jersey Boys*. In particular, the 1990 hit ‘Fallen Angel’ is sung by Valli as his teenage daughter, Francine, dies from a drug overdose in 1980. Described by Valli as a song of romance and forgiveness, the song is interpreted within the musical as both a moment of loss and a response to the local priest’s insistence

that Valli not blame himself. After considering the instability of any father's protection in a moment of spoken address, Valli sings, "You're home again. / I'm glad you kept the key. / Been waiting here, it seems a million years to me. / But hush now, I know you're all cried out" (Crewe and Gaudio, 2005). As Francine enters in a ghost-like state, wanting to be seen by her father once more, he sings "put shadows way beyond recall, the ghost has almost gone / fallen angel, I'll forgive you anything" (Crewe and Gaudio, 2005). As she exits, Valli concludes in one simple, entirely apt, statement: "I'll be here where you belong" (Crewe and Gaudio, 2005). As a number written by Valli in 1990, a decade after the 'real' Francine's death, Brickman and Elice determine Valli's reaction, not through their own dialogue, but the words and music of Valli himself. Unlike the musicalisation of real-life figures in *Evita* (1978) and *Gypsy* (1959), however, the lyrics of Bob Crewe, the manager and lyricist for the Four Seasons, have been appropriated from Valli's artistic voice as a personal outpouring of grief. Given that Valli never communicated in rhyming couplets or repeated himself to form a chorus, the Frankie Valli of *Jersey Boys* communicates far more poetically in song than in his often aggressive dialogue. In this way, the structure of this type of musical invites the manipulation of history, where the emotions displayed in a popular song are used to represent the individual's personal life. Despite the 'actual' Valli having sung these words, this number remains inauthentic given that such lyrics alter our perception of history with every elaborate word choice and over-thought metaphor. Although we might hope that audiences can separate the artistic from the factual in their response, bio-musicals envisage a nostalgic past that merges the fictional with the real by obscuring any realistic impression of Valli through the re-use of his popular songs.

Although it might seem unnecessary to contemplate whether these musicals authentically represent their source material, particularly as this makes little difference to the audience's enjoyment of such shows, the above demonstrates how compilation musicals evoke nostalgia by applying an individual's artistic output to their personal life. Whilst many audiences will understand that there is a level of appropriation at play here, particularly in non-diegetic moments, it is not the production's dramaturgical development that audiences will research as they leave the theatre. Given that many will search Wikipedia for further information on their way home, many audience members will inevitably align the joyful, and undoubtedly nostalgic, representation they have just encountered with the historical accuracies detailed online. In this way, the "reenactment of the past in the present", as R.G. Collingwood notes, "is the past itself so far as that is knowable to the historian" and, I might add, the performers, librettist, director and choreographer (cited in Schneider, 2014, 37). Since audiences only understand the past through artistic interpretation, nostalgia is evoked, in this case, by an audience that is unaware of the intertextual traces which surround each performance. In reading the name 'Frankie' in their programme, audiences indicatively align what they see on stage with the historical figure that is known to the world as 'Frankie Valli'. Given such a nostalgically underpinned interpretation, where every line of dialogue effortlessly segues into a lyric written for another time, place and situation, this portrayal will only continue to be further embedded until it replaces any authentic depiction that is based in fact. This will only be aided, of course, by the very nature of live performance which facilitates a sense of originality and rejuvenation, meaning that as the time frame presented slips further into the past, new interpretations will remain in the present. In this case,

bio-musicals will always “assume lives of their own that can be quite independent from the intentions of their authors” by appropriating the past in such a manner that art and life are inseparable (Kirle, 2005, 1).

“Who Wants to Live Forever”: Haunted Narratives and Ghosted Singers

In order to expand the above discussion, this final section considers the manner in which presumably original narratives are ‘haunted’ by the embodied presence and legacy of the original singers. Building upon Stacy Wolf’s suggestion that songs performed outside their original context are “always ghosted by the original [singer’s] voice”, this section reads *We Will Rock You* as a production which embodies the original singer (Freddie Mercury, in this case) through its presentation of fictional characters (2002, 42). In analysing the key role of Galileo Figaro, the following section examines the ghosted nature of all compilation musicals, whether those with an original or biographical narrative, to argue that such productions are forever indebted to the presence of the original performers. In this way, such productions evoke nostalgia for the presence of a lost figure, one who can be reborn night after night through the mechanisms of musical theatre.

It has been widely suggested that compilation musicals are always conditioned and received in relation to existing expectations and remembrances of the original singer. For instance, George Rodosthenous claims in his chapter, ‘Relocating the Song: Julie Taymor’s Jukebox Musical, *Across the Universe* (2007)’, that audiences experience the songs in jukebox musicals somewhere “between the presence of the now (watching the current musical) and the absence of something that previously existed” (2014, 42). These responses inevitably contain the ghosts of past incarnations, particularly as the audience

“will not hear and see the new versions with fresh ears and eyes” (Rodosthenous, 2014, 43). Much in the way adaptations are often interpreted in relation to their faithfulness to their source material, audiences determine the success of a compilation musical in relation to how well the songs are re-performed and, in particular, the manner in which the original artists are manifested on stage. Compilation musicals are therefore layered with palimpsestic connotations, ready to be rewritten in the bodies and voices of the new performers, yet never fully rewriting the original. In this sense, audiences construct a “dialogue between one incarnation and the next” in a manner that joins the past and present as a “double-reading” (Rodosthenous, 2014, 43). As I wish to consider within the following, however, no matter how much a compilation musical might fashion an original narrative around the discography of a popular group, the original singer is always embodied in some form, even if they are renamed Donna (as in *Mamma Mia!*), Drew (as in *Rock of Ages*) or, in the case of *We Will Rock You*, Galileo.

Playing in London from May 2002 until 2014, Ben Elton’s *We Will Rock You* fashions a futuristic re-telling of the Arthurian legend around the music of British rock group Queen.⁶⁷ Set in a dystopian future where earth has been renamed ‘iPlanet’, the musical depicts a society of soulless Ga Ga Kids, whose thoughts, choices and music selection have been replaced with the computer-generated uniformity of the Globalsoft Corporation. Much in the way dance is banned in the 1984 film *Footloose*, live rock music is depicted as the undiscovered ‘holy grail’ of Galileo, Scaramouche, and an unruly troupe of bohemians, who find an electric guitar in the remains of Wembley Stadium –

⁶⁷ I have attended three performances of *We Will Rock You*. The first was at the Dominion Theatre, London, in May 2004, the second was the UK touring production at the Southampton Mayflower Theatre in May 2011, and the third was at the Dominion Theatre in December 2013 (only months before its final performance).

“the place of living rock” – as the musical ends and live music is restored (Elton et al., 2013). Despite the bronzed statue which stood outside the Dominion Theatre throughout its twelve-year run, however, Mercury is not a named character within the musical, as Valli is in *Jersey Boys*, and exists only as an absent figure who figuratively ‘haunts’ the production.⁶⁸ In his place, Galileo Figaro, the male protagonist named after a lyric from Queen’s 1975 hit ‘Bohemian Rhapsody’, resembles Mercury throughout the show. In addition to performing the majority of the score, the role attributed to Mercury on each of Queen’s albums, this role has often been played by a slender, dark-haired male in his mid-thirties (much like Mercury himself). Furthermore, Galileo establishes an overt sense of confidence through his performance of rock music, seeing him strut across the stage and take up Mercury’s iconic stance during various moments. Whilst the production might hope to ‘capture the spirit’ of the band’s music, this characterisation and casting choice is undeniably the musical’s most direct reference to Mercury’s performance style and onstage persona. Although audiences are not presented with Mercury in person, particularly as he passed away in the early 1990s, every performer who takes up this role is ultimately viewed as a “living body of recycled material” in the minds of the audience (Carlson, 2001, 61). Simply by singing the material Mercury wrote and originated, each audience member’s recollection of Mercury fashions an unachievable level of authenticity that no actor can successfully fulfil. As Caitlin Moran slated in her original review, “despite a cast of 25 and all the pyrotechnics and lasers you could shake a stick at, it still does not make up for

⁶⁸ It is important to recognise here that terms such as absence, ghosting, spirit, remains and haunting have been used throughout theatre studies scholarship to describe the recycled nature of theatregoing more generally. Although these terms traditionally have morbid or supernatural connotations, they are often used to differentiate the ‘a’-liveness of live theatre from the presumed staleness of mediatized art forms like film and television (see Auslander, 1999; Carlson, 2001).

the absence of one buck-toothed gay man with a handle-bar moustache” (2002). As Brian May discussed in his interview for *Classic Rock*, however, the musical was ultimately a method of “keeping the band in the public eye without having to address the thorny issue of ‘replacing’ Freddie” (cited in *Classic Rock*, 2002). Nevertheless, each of the musical’s scathing reviews indicate that audience members were unable to separate their theatregoing experience from their memories of the past, often to the extent that the ghost of Freddie Mercury has “greater performative visibility” than the body it haunts (Carlson, 2001, 58).

In order to contend with the new audience’s expectations, and to thus avoid any irritation or confusion, *We Will Rock You* features numerous references to deceased artists and, in particular, Freddie Mercury. In the number ‘No-One but You (Only the Good Die Young)’, for instance, the bohemians (all of which are named after twentieth century singers) mourn the deaths of performers who died young. As bohemian Brit (or Britney Spears) steps forward, he claims that “their songs have been lost, but their names live on. We remember the ones that died young: Buddy Holly, Jimi Hendrix, Kurt Cobain, Janis Joplin, Jim Morrison, Bob Marley, [and] John Lennon” (Queen and Elton, 2002). Responding simply with the name “Freddie”, Meat (or Meat Loaf) begins to sing the above song as a tribute to all performers who have died young, yet “life goes on, / without you” (Queen and Elton, 2002). Given that this number was written by May in 1997 to specifically lament Mercury, the song’s presumed universality does not hold up in this moment. For all its intentions to celebrate a host of performers, particularly as their faces are projected across the back wall of the stage, the number culminates as an indiscrete tribute to Freddie Mercury. As the faces of Janis Joplin and Amy Winehouse fade away, Mercury is left on screen as Meat concludes that she is “Crying for nothing /

Crying for no one / No-one but you” (Queen and Elton, 2002). Although he is not named within this song, the selection of the word ‘you’ as the image of Mercury fades from view only further highlights the significance of his legacy to this production. In this case, the number is more than a non-diegetic yearning for a lost era of rock music, since it acts as an overt tribute to the absent singer who adorns the venue, merchandise and marketing campaign of this production. As discussed above in relation to Frankie Valli, *We Will Rock You* is an overt celebration of the “invisible but inevitable” presence of Mercury, and one which undermines its presumably original narrative with every camp pose, flamboyant walk or mimicked intonation (Carlson, 2001, 72). Whilst Mercury may have died a decade before the musical premiered, *We Will Rock You* is considerably more celebratory, and thus nostalgic, than most bio-musicals, in that it only recycles the performativity and artistic output of Mercury. In this instance, audiences are invited to evoke their memories of a flamboyant showman, not the stigma surrounding his death (as would be detailed in a bio-musical like *Sunny Afternoon* (2014)). Mercury is therefore memorialised through the “spell and distance of a glossy mirage”, as Jameson describes nostalgia more broadly, and remembered solely through his music and playful onstage persona (1991, 20).

As a second example of this phenomenon, the second act opens with the number ‘One Vision’ in which the Ga Ga kids perform robotic movements in front of a large bank of screens displaying rotating mannequins, body analysis checks and a pulsating digital clock. As the number develops, however, a gentle poppy field replaces these images as the performers fall from their trance and an original recording of Freddie Mercury echoes throughout the auditorium, replacing the ensemble’s live singing. In this moment, the voice of Mercury

comes forth as an emblem of authenticity; a force able to destabilise their brainwashed minds and re-establish a sense of agency through the presumed power of rock. Added to the London production later in its run, the ghosted nature of Mercury's voice, in this moment, resembles that of a supernatural ghost. Although Mercury is still not embodied by a specific actor, his recognisably mediated voice fills the auditorium and becomes a dominant presence that juxtaposes the musical's prior use of live singers. As the audience take their seats, having presumably discussed the absence of Mercury during the interval, his voice adds to the rock concert aesthetic of the production to remind audience members of why they purchased their tickets. As an estranged tribute act, where songs are either sung live by a 'new' singer or by the 'old' singer without an expected physical presence, *We Will Rock You* "calls on the audience to make connections, to understand references and to participate in a nostalgic evocation of the music of a bygone era" (Taylor, 2012b, 165).

As the above examples demonstrate, such heightened use of intertextuality "leads to a sense of identification and reinforcement" within the audience's enjoyment and reception of this production (Taylor, 2012b, 164-165). By inviting audiences to reflect upon their adoration and subjective memories of Mercury, particularly in the moments described above, the musical is directly haunted by a specific recollection of the original singer. Given that the musical compresses both the past and the future into a single time frame, as Taylor notes, *We Will Rock You* evokes nostalgia for the original singer in ways that may not be explicit to the general viewer (2012b, 164). Those who have little knowledge of Queen are, of course, likely to recognise the depiction of a past aesthetic, however, Mercury is embodied throughout the musical by other

performers, the occasional projected image and, in turn, the large statue which stands outside the theatre's entrance. At no point does a performer step forward and claim to be Mercury, since such intertextual connections, should they exist, are always subjectively fabricated by audiences wishing to enjoy an experience of pure nostalgia. It is the manner in which the production is 'ghosted' by Mercury, in this sense, that "allow[s] audiences the transcendental pleasure of attachment, intelligent interpretation and nostalgic recreation" within *We Will Rock You* (Taylor, 2012b, 165).

"Let the Memory Live Again": The Future of Nostalgia

This chapter has identified a trend within twenty-first century musical theatre in which nostalgia is engendered for a specific series of related texts, particularly the discography of a popular artist or group, and the original performers of such works. In the first instance, it has highlighted the subjectivity of nostalgia as a cultural condition by suggesting that audiences typically form personal or collective responses to the text itself, or personal or collective responses to the text's themes and content. More than this, however, it has demonstrated how compilation musicals fulfil a cultural need to embody the original singers, yet in a manner which conflates fact and fiction, past and present, authenticity and inauthenticity. Compilation musicals therefore fashion an "emotional landscape, a sentimental environment that cherishes past experiences", by enabling audiences to re-experience the past through culturally filtered memories (Padva, 2014, 3). That said, not all compilation musicals have been successful simply because they recycle popular music. For every hit like *Mamma Mia!* and *Jersey Boys*, for instance, there exists a presumed failure like *Viva Forever!* (2012) and *Desperately Seeking Susan*

(2007),⁶⁹ meaning, in turn, that productions need more than recycled music to attract a popular audience. With this in mind, compilation musicals require a sense of nostalgia to find an audience and thrive in a commercial marketplace. After all, nostalgia is shaped by the “affective and emotional alliances” formed between the singer, song and audience member, often to the extent that, as we have seen, the past and present are conflated as one (Taylor, 2012b, 154). Given that compilation musicals perpetuate the entertaining qualities of popular music more broadly, rather than qualities that are exclusive to musical theatre, this chapter has demonstrated that these productions deserve further critical attention in that they recycle popular culture in line with an individual’s nostalgic response to the past.

⁶⁹ Although the phenomenon of shows playing for decades has only existed since the 1980s, the lack of audience enthusiasm and critical support for musicals such as *Viva Forever!* and *Desperately Seeking Susan* has meant that these productions are now considered commercial ‘flops’, having closed within only months of opening in London.

"Bit by bit, putting it together [...] Small amounts, adding up to make a work of art"
Sunday in the Park with George (1984), lyrics by Stephen Sondheim.

*

"The situation is fraught. You've got to be carefully taught"
Hamilton (2015), lyrics by Lin-Manuel Miranda.

Chapter Five: Bricolage the Musical

In a pivotal scene within Baz Luhrmann's *Moulin Rouge!* (2001), Christian and Satine, the film's central couple played by Ewan McGregor and Nicole Kidman, ascend the gigantic stone elephant which dominates the dance hall's gardens to perform the 'Elephant Love Medley'. Once Christian states that "Love is a many splendored thing / Love lifts us up where we belong / All you need is love!", the song develops as a vocal tennis match in which the couple sends back and forth fragments of popular love songs from the latter half of the twentieth century (Luhrmann, 2001). From Dolly Parton's 'I Will Always Love You' to David Bowie's 'Heroes', this sequence joins various popular songs in a "thoroughly and self-consciously intertextual" manner (Larson, 2009, 1040). Situated within an archetypally postmodern film more broadly, this number splices together popular texts and time frames, in having the couple perform songs which have debuted since the 1960s in a setting that evokes the turn of the twentieth century. In its most obvious of applications, then, the 'Elephant Love Medley' is a "tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture", as Roland Barthes describes of all texts, whether such 'centres' be the music of U2, The Beatles or Elton John (1977, 146). More broadly, this song is emblematic of a culture fascinated by the fragmented layering of images, the sampling of various popular texts, and the destabilising of cultural hierarchies (existing in what John Seabrook describes as a 'no-brow' culture (cited in Wolf, 2007a, 52)). As a film which provided the Hollywood musical with a much

needed twenty-first century aesthetic, *Moulin Rouge!* echoes many characteristics of musical theatre as a clear example of the postmodern term 'bricolage'. As in the compilation musicals detailed in the previous chapter, though considerably more multifaceted, the drawing together of numerous texts and references as a source of entertainment can be identified in productions as diverse as *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973), *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (2006) and, more recently, *The Book of Mormon* (2011). Although these musicals are dissimilar in terms of their narrative and musical/choreographic style, they share a postmodern approach to storytelling in that they construct a familiar narrative from an assortment of intertextual references.

Having analysed productions which reference specific texts and specific groups of texts, this third case study chapter investigates how numerous textual fragments are often layered and recoded within a seemingly 'original' musical. In fashioning a bricolage of artistic materials, such productions do not stem from a single source and, instead, draw upon the characters, dialogue and imagery of numerous texts from across a range of media. Unlike *Wicked* (2003) or *Billy Elliot the Musical* (2005), for instance, these productions expand their intertextual perimeters beyond a single body of works in referencing the fluid breadth of popular culture. Investigating *The Book of Mormon* (2011) in particular, this chapter considers how the numerous references presented within the musical subvert the sanitised worldview of their source texts. In drawing from numerous sources, the musical actively challenges the conservative values of many popular texts by presenting a provocative, and often offensive, alternative. In order to demonstrate this argument, it is therefore important to first establish the critical underpinnings of the term 'bricolage' in relation to musical theatre, before examining how *The Book of Mormon* directly

references the work of The Walt Disney Company, the musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein, and presumed 'fan' texts like *Star Wars* (1971) and *Star Trek* (1966-). In the first instance, this chapter analyses the way in which the musical identifies certain nations and cultures through the use of stereotyped signifiers that have been depicted in numerous animated musicals. In the second of three major discussions, this chapter then investigates how *The Book of Mormon* references the musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein by echoing the clash of cultural values that is displayed within many of these texts. To conclude this chapter, the final discussion analyses the manner in which texts such as *The Lord of Rings* (1954) are appropriated to replace, or simply stand in for, the stories provided by organised religion. In placing a reference to *The Sound of Music* (1965) alongside an embodiment of Yoda from *Star Wars*, for instance, the musical constructs, in its totality, a multi-layered bricolage of popular texts which entertains audiences through recognition. Much like the texts referenced throughout the musical, this chapter demonstrates that *The Book of Mormon* entertains across generations and demographics by exploiting various fragments of popular culture within its playfully intertextual framework.

Bricolage and the Musical

As prominent feature of postmodernity, the term 'bricolage' was coined by Claude Lévi-Strauss in 1962 to describe how one text might reinvent fragments of various other texts in a new combination. As outlined in *The Savage Mind*, Lévi-Strauss argues that the 'bricoleur' fashions a work from a "heterogeneous repertoire which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited" (1966, 17). In turn, the bricoleur "has to use this repertoire [...] because it has nothing else at its disposal" (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, 17). Lévi-Strauss therefore conceives bricolage as the fashioning of a work from a diverse, though limited,

selection of materials which are at the individual's disposal. Just as I outlined in relation to recycling earlier in this study, the bricoleur's "universe of instruments" is always limited, or "closed", since "the rules of his game are always to make do with 'whatever is at hand'" (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, 17). In this sense, the bricoleur "'speaks' not only *with* things [...] but also through the medium of things" to the extent that they determine their uniqueness as an artist through their selection (Lévi-Strauss, 1966, 21). A bricolage is thus constructed from recognisable and familiar elements, yet formulated in a way that seems strange and distorted, or simply 'new'. As with the artistic term 'collage', the nature of bricolage is one of 'tinkering' in which various textual fragments are used to form an entirely new entity.

As Christopher Johnson describes in his recent chapter, some fifty years after the term was first coined, the word bricolage has traditionally been used in relation to the arts, fashion, philosophy and business, whilst also, more recently, as a metaphor for the Internet (2012, 355). Most suitably for this study, however, the term has been categorised as an intertextual characteristic of postmodernism. Chris Baldrick notes, for instance, that the very nature of postmodernity favours "self-consciously 'depthless' works of *fabrication, *pastiche, **bricolage*, or *aleatory disconnection" (original emphasis; 2015, 288). A bricolage is therefore a "makeshift handiwork" which transforms "found" materials by incorporating them into a new work (Baldrick, 2015, 46). Given this definition, each postmodern bricolage requires three fundamental elements.⁷⁰ Firstly, a bricolage must feature 'found' materials which are recognisable within

⁷⁰ It is important to recognise here that I am not employing this term in the same manner that Greg Giesekam describes the work of The Wooster Group as a "postmodern collage" (2007, 80-115). Instead, I will use the term to detail the brash layering of popular texts, not the esoteric practices of The Wooster Group, though it is obvious to see how scholars such as David Savran have switched from studying such works to musical theatre later in their careers.

the cultural domain, be they popular songs, fashion styles or snippets of dialogue. Secondly, the 'new' work must be determined by such materials, rather than simply adding broader intertextual references to an established adaptation. For instance, *Moulin Rouge!* is formed entirely from popular romantic texts and archetypes, unlike *Wicked* which references a pre-established collection of highly intertextual works. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, such materials must be *transformed* in their refashioning, moving beyond their original context to develop a new intertextual framework. The embodiment of Marlene Dietrich, Marilyn Monroe and Madonna within Nicole Kidman's performance in *Moulin Rouge!*, for example, is never consciously referenced to the extent that her 'haunted body' exists as a dramaturgical device, not a source of metatheatricity. To qualify as a bricolage, a work must therefore construct its own reality in being entirely fashioned from fragments and traces of other texts; it must adopt a "stylistic code" or, as John Bruns writes, a "postmodern aesthetic [which] mimics the disparate elements of our contemporary landscape" (1998, 95). A bricolage is thus a collection of textual surfaces, or the splicing together of fragments and time frames, which, in many cases, favours style over substance.

Although numerous scholars have defined bricolage as little more than an artistic cobbling of unwanted materials, this notion requires further consideration in relation to musical theatre. Richard O'Brien's 1973 musical *The Rocky Horror Show*, for example, weaves a ghostly tapestry from the kitsch aesthetics of past popular culture. From 1950s science fiction 'B' movies and the Frankenstein legend to Grant Wood's painting 'American Gothic', the musical recycles fragments from numerous popular texts within a seemingly

'original' story.⁷¹ In repurposing materials to suit a character's vocabulary or performance style, however, the formation of a bricolage is considerably more nuanced than the simple drawing together of recognised materials. In particular, the selection process is always conditioned by the audience's interpretation and recognition of the referenced text, rather than simply the texts the author is familiar with or enjoys. Those who interpret Dr Frank-N-Furter in relation to their knowledge or awareness of the actress Marlene Dietrich or filmic representations of Dr Frankenstein, for instance, will instinctively allow these connections to influence their reading of the musical. Although drawing from a broad collection of materials might be perceived as lazy or clichéd within fine art practices, such references need to be carefully selected when applied to a fictional narrative or a set of characters within a musical. In this case, the "strategic intertextual extravagance" of *Moulin Rouge!* is more than pure coincidence, since it invites audiences to embellish their reading across various interpretations and intertexts (Larson, 2009, 1040). Given that they must then fuse such diverse materials into one interpretation, intertextual references require the audience to send their focus beyond the proscenium arch, only to then allow their memories of the referenced materials to condition the way in which they interpret the current stage action. The formation of a bricolage therefore disrupts the presumed integration of musical theatre by encouraging audience members to identify multiple intertextual references within another work.

⁷¹ This discussion has recently been expanded in my chapter: Rush, A. (2016) *It's Just a Jump to the Past!: Subverting Intertextual Otherness in The Rocky Horror Show*. In: L. Campos and F.J. Schopf (eds.) *Music on Stage: Volume II*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 120-135.

The Book of Mormon (2011)

Having established the theoretical foundation of this chapter, the following examines a contemporary example of the term 'bricolage' in relation to how the text might subvert the works it consciously references. Opening on Broadway in March 2011, *The Book of Mormon* received immediate acclaim from both audiences and critics, having since transferred to London, Chicago and Melbourne and embarked on two national tours.⁷² Developed by Trey Parker and Matt Stone, the creators of the animated sitcom *South Park* (1997-), with Robert Lopez, the co-creator of the puppet musical *Avenue Q* (2003), *The Book of Mormon* is not for the faint-hearted or easily offended. Expanding the satirical edge of *South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut* (1999), the animated film musical which parodied the archetypal musical theatre style, *The Book of Mormon* unites the distasteful humour of *South Park* with the playful musical style of *Avenue Q* to "offend, provoke laughter, trigger eye-rolling, satirize conventions and [even] warm hearts" (Kennedy, 2011). Having attracted a younger, and particularly male, audience to live theatre, the musical depicts two Mormon missionaries who are sent on their inaugural mission to Uganda, which, it seems, is nothing like Disney's *The Lion King* (as they had hoped). Instead, the African villagers are plagued by poverty and the crudely named warlord, General Butt-Fucking Naked, to the extent that the pair have little hope of saving the 'natives'. Elder Kevin Price, the successful, driven and, ultimately, selfish missionary, informs Elder Arnold Cunningham, the shy and nerdy sci-fi fanatic, that he will do 'something incredible' on their mission, since Cunningham's role is simply to tag along (Suskin 2012: 110). As they join their district of fellow Elders in Uganda, the pair witness the murder of an innocent

⁷² I have attended two performances of *The Book of Mormon* at the Prince of Wales Theatre, London. The first was in November 2013 and the second in August 2015.

villager, at which Price abandons Cunningham in the hope of transferring his mission location to Orlando. In response, Cunningham decides to 'Man Up' and attempt to convert the villagers himself, despite having never read the holy text. In fashioning his own stories from *Star Wars*, *Star Trek* and *The Lord of the Rings*, Cunningham sways the village to find their own Salt Lake City (or Sal Tlay Ka Siti as Nabulungi, the village leader's daughter, calls it). Price, on the other hand, (after being taunted by the ghosts of Adolf Hitler and Genghis Khan in his 'Spooky Mormon Hell Dream') realizes that he has made a mistake and returns to support Cunningham in baptising the community. As the villagers become "wet with salvation", the Mission President arrives from Utah to reveal that Cunningham's depiction of Mormonism has been formed from popular culture and is thus an offence to the Mormon religion (Suskin 2012: 158). As the district is closed down, the Elders are sent home and the Ugandan mission is deemed a failure. Instead of leaving, however, Price and Cunningham stay in Uganda to find a figurative 'latter day' and celebrate an intertextual story of hope and salvation that has been cobbled together from various popular texts.

Unlike the protests surrounding the 2005 television broadcast of *Jerry Springer: The Opera* (2003),⁷³ *The Book of Mormon* has generally been approved by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, or the LDS church, who have since capitalised on the renewed interest in their religion. Although the production satirises various religious aspects, often caricaturing Mormon missionaries as young men who ring door bells with cheesy grins, the LDS church have unexpectedly supported a musical which lampooned the mythologies and customs of their faith. As J. B. Haws describes in *The Mormon Image in the American Mind*, the musical "placed Mormons in a new and, to

⁷³ See Symonds (2007).

everyone's surprise, paradoxically positive spotlight" (2013, 244). Despite its often offensive language and subject matter, "it was the attention to this play, a play that mercilessly exaggerated every Mormon stereotype, that perhaps gave Mormons themselves an unparalleled opportunity to address those stereotypes" (Haws, 2013, 244). In accordance with the musical's New York debut, and the protests that were presumed to surface, the LDS church issued a single line response: "The production may attempt to entertain audiences for an evening, but the Book of Mormon as a volume of scripture will change people's lives forever by bringing them closer to Christ" (cited in Haws, 2013, 246). Given that religious groups did not protest or lobby the production, the LDS church released its 'I'm A Mormon' campaign (a paraphrased lyric from the musical) in June 2011, only three months after the musical premiered and the same month it won nine Tony Awards. Dominating New York's taxis, subways and billboards, the campaign capitalised on the city's renewed interest in the Mormon religion in the hope of attracting new members. In addition, the LDS church has purchased advertising space in the playbills and programmes of many subsequent productions, with phrases like "the book is always better" and "you've seen the play, now read the book" hoping to extend the musical's celebration of faith and courage (cited in Lee, 2012).

Despite the often irreverent nature of this increasingly popular musical, which still plays to sold-out audiences today, the musical and the religion from which it stems are often indistinguishable within their marketing schemes. As the London production opened in February 2013, for instance, posters for the religion and the award-winning musical appeared concurrently, dominating the London underground as an American import that simultaneously provided 'salvation' and a 'thrilling evening at the theatre'. As a musical full of "theatrical

high jinks, foul language, and reflections on the value of religious belief”, *The Book of Mormon* is widely accepted as an artistic triumph, having recently celebrated its sixth anniversary in New York, and yet, rather surprisingly, one which challenges perceptions of an often mystified religion (Gutjahr, 2012, 193-194). In the following, then, it is my intention to examine how the musical uses intertextual references to construct a piece of commercial entertainment that challenges the norms established within the texts it references. In the first instance, however, it is important to consider how the musical references various cultural signifiers that continue to reduce and sanitise non-Western countries within popular culture, in addition to identifying the critical framework to do so.

“Off to Preach Across Land and Sea”: Negotiating Cultural Signifiers

In the opening sequence of *The Book of Mormon*, a biblical scene depicts Jesus Christ giving the great prophet, Mormon, a collection of inscribed golden plates to be buried in “ancient Upstate New York” (Suskin, 2012, 99). As the scene fades to reveal a contemporary Missionary Training Centre in Utah, a series of young, fresh faced Mormons are roleplaying the door-to-door activities they are destined to complete. As Elder Price steps forward, he mimes the ringing of a doorbell and proclaims, “Hello. / My name is Elder Price. / And I would like to share / with you. / The most amazing book” (Suskin, 2012, 100). As the task ends, each of the Elders is paired and given their mission locations. Elders Young and Grant, for instance, are sent to Norway or, as they proclaim, “the land of gnomes and trolls” (Suskin, 2012, 105). Similarly, Elders White and Smith are sent to “the land of pastries and turtlenecks” in France, whereas Elders Green and Cross depict Japan as the home of soy sauce and Mothra (the radioactive moth from the *Godzilla* franchise) (Suskin, 2012, 106). In light of

such claims, each pair depicts its mission location through simplistic and culturally determined signifiers. Despite having never left Utah in their new roles, they have constructed a distinct vision of the clothing, food and culture which stems from each location. In many ways, then, the Elders' descriptions of their locations align with what Edward Said describes as a dominant set of references and characteristics that have originated in other texts and cultures (1978, 177). Although I will expand upon his notion of 'orientalism' in the next section, Said suggests that we draw upon broadly determined signifiers when describing nations that are different from our own. The United Kingdom, for example, is often reduced to images of the royal family, fish and chips, red phone booths and cups of tea, rather than the multitude of qualities it in fact offers. Just as Fredric Jameson suggests that nostalgic representations draw upon the "glossy qualities" of a past era, such reductive signifiers acknowledge an imagined perception of a particular location which has been constructed across popular culture and fashioned a hegemonic norm (1991, 19).

As an extension of this argument, Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981) is perhaps the most appropriate theoretical source to apply to *The Book of Mormon* in this instance. Detailing the manner in which 'reality' has been replaced by signs and symbols in our now mediatised culture, Baudrillard coins the term 'simulacrum' to describe a copy of an object that no longer has an original, or failed to have one to begin with (1998, 350). The mediatised depiction of pirates wielding swords, wearing eye patches and sporting wooden legs, for instance, has long replaced any historically accurate depiction, and is thus a simulation of reality that fails to ascertain any sense of authenticity. Prominent signifiers have, in this case, conditioned our impression of 'reality' through a mediatised prism of the 'false' by fashioning a series of accepted

norms. Questioning the way media technologies might construct, rather than simply report, facts, Baudrillard goes on to propose that a simulacrum is developed in four distinct stages: (1) the image is a reflection of a basic reality, (2) the image masks a basic reality, (3) the image masks the absence of a basic reality, and (4) the image bears no relation to reality (1998, 353-354). As a prime example of this distinction, Baudrillard argues that California's Disneyland is a "perfect model of the entangled orders of simulation" (1998, 354). As guests enter the park, they encounter, on one hand, a "miniaturised and *religious* revelling in real America, in its delights and drawbacks" (Baudrillard, 1998, 354). On the other, their experience is a "safe, litter-free, traffic-free, [and] immaculately landscaped" envisioning of various satisfied ideals, rather than an actual location (Bryman, 1999, 107). Disneyland is "neither true nor false", in this sense, since it exists only as a "deterrence machine set up in order to rejuvenate in reverse the fiction of the real" (Baudrillard, 1998, 355).

This notion is perhaps best articulated within *The Book of Mormon* in moments which function as performed representations of Disney's EPCOT theme park. Opening in Orlando in 1982, EPCOT's World Showcase allows guests to experience eleven individually themed pavilions around a central lake, each illustrating a specific country or nation. Described as an exploration of the "people, places, and cultures that make our world special", the showcase invites guests to "sample the food, admire the architecture, and learn the legends that make each stop along the way unique. It's this vision of unity that leads us all into our shared future" (The Imagineers, 2010, 74). Although its creators might claim to offer a unique social experience, each pavilion ultimately generalises the nation it represents by compressing an entire country into little over one hundred yards of theme park experience. France, for instance, is reduced to the

enjoyment of wine and the Eiffel Tower, whilst Canada is summarised as waterfalls, trees and totem poles (each ignoring the plentiful customs each nation offers in reality). Just as the Elders presume that they can understand a nation through the simple features which encapsulate it in popular culture, the World Showcase presents a simplified, and notably Americanised, impression of the world which perpetuates a “continual Disneyesque rewriting of history” (Fernandez, 1995, 236). In this sense, the World Showcase is an experiential summation of America’s broader vision of itself, particularly as it presents several diverse nations united by a single body of water. Although this reduction of culture is simply a presentation of a nation’s “minimum negotiable signifiers”, as Michael Sorkin argues, the Elder’s initial impressions seem to substitute a trip to said location, much like a visit to the World Showcase, particularly as the musical never actually depicts each pair visiting their prescribed location (1992, 216). In favouring family-friendly, and notably intertextual, representations, the World Showcase thus promotes world ignorance by obscuring the nuances of various cultures. In turn, *The Book of Mormon* presents a group of teenagers who have unconsciously bought into the imagined unity of the World Showcase, and thus remain ignorant of the ‘real’ world beyond such limited imaginings. It is easy to imagine, after all, Elders Green and Cross presenting bottles of soy sauce to Japanese citizens in the hope of converting them to their beloved religion. Although the Elders still strive to make good, just as the World Showcase fashions a diverse landscape without a Starbucks, the musical recognises that the world is often depicted through simple signifiers, cultural standards and racial stereotypes. It is my intention within the following, therefore, to expand this discussion in relation to several Disney animated

musicals by exploring the manner in which such films have further standardised a simplistic worldview that is referenced throughout *The Book of Mormon*.

“Savages! Barely Even Human”: The Disneyfication of Orientalism

The influence of The Walt Disney Company upon popular culture cannot be underestimated. Since the initial release of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1937, Disney’s fifty-five animated ‘classics’ have redefined the possibilities of animated film and introduced an abundance of characters, images, phrases and often songs into the popular consciousness like no other entertainment corporation.⁷⁴ Years after his death in 1966, the ghost of Walt Disney “still sits on the throne” in dictating how popular works should be appropriated, musicalised and disseminated to a global audience (Zipes, 2011, 17). Through films like *Pinocchio* (1940), *Peter Pan* (1953), *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) and, more recently, *Frozen* (2013), The Walt Disney Company has established various popular ideals which have become the “definitive image” within popular culture (Lester, 2010, 294).⁷⁵ In one instance, Disney’s *Cinderella* (1950) depicts a white, heterosexual woman who is elevated from her position as a downtrodden maid to an affluent princess as a source of self-fulfilment. If you were to ask a young child to describe the fairytale princess Cinderella, it is therefore likely that their description would feature a slender woman with blonde hair, a blue gown, sparkling eyes and some singing mice. Despite the numerous interpretations of Charles Perrault’s classic tale, the 1950 release of *Cinderella* now holds canonical dominance and has contributed to the company’s popularity across

⁷⁴ As of the 2016 release of *Moana*, fifty-five official Disney Animated Classics have been released for home media in the UK.

⁷⁵ From here onwards, the term Disney will be used to refer to the production company in general, whilst Walt Disney will be referred to by his full name.

various media, from film and television to theatre and theme parks, and global ability to excite, mystify and enchant its audiences.

Although their films continue to appeal across generations and cultures, Disney has long privileged patriarchy, beauty, whiteness and heterosexuality in a notably problematic way. Having rendered a formula for domesticating and whitewashing even the most progressive of stories, Disney has continually capitalised on “American innocence and utopianism”, as Jack Zipes describes, in order to “reinforce the social and political status quo” (1995, 21-22). It is significant to recognise, nonetheless, that the early films of Walt Disney merely shifted the oral heritage of storytelling into a fixed corporate image. Given that films are fixed products in and of themselves, rarely re-edited or changed after their initial release, the sanitised nature of many of Disney’s works is a direct result of the advent of commercial cinema, television and the mass media. Instead of a deliberate act by Walt Disney, the dissemination of family entertainment in mediatised formats has permitted the global distribution of problematic representations of both cultural and personal identities. As of the time of writing, Disney representations of various familiar literary characters continue to dominate numerous media, be they Ariel in *The Little Mermaid* or Aurora in *Sleeping Beauty*, simply because technology allows such a thing to occur. It is due to Disney’s use of mediatised technologies, therefore, that several of their films have circulated ‘orientalist’, and even racist, depictions of other cultures that have since been widely accepted as the norm.

Introduced in his 1978 publication of the same name, Edward Said coined the term ‘orientalism’ to refer to the global spread of Western hegemony and its depiction of the ‘East’. Detailing how the ‘West’ perceives the ‘East’ as an alluring and exotic landscape occupied by mysterious strangers, Said

describes orientalism as the conscious positioning of the 'Orient' as 'Other' (a Western construct in and of itself). In positioning the East as guttural, barbaric and immoral, as opposed to the developed and civilised West, Said suggests that such a depiction is one of "power, of domination, [and] of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (2006, 26). To this extent, mainstream popular culture has continually presented the East, rather problematically, as a foreign and strange land that is ultimately unable to reach the civilised heights of the West. Kimiko Akita and Rick Kenney argue in their reading of Disney's *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), for instance, that "Orientalism is a representation of what the West thinks the Orient is" or, rather, a pervasive and unavoidable problem which has widely infiltrated the work of The Walt Disney Company (2012, 51). As demonstrated in films such as *The Jungle Book* (1967), *Aladdin* (1992) and *Mulan* (1998), 'oriental' nations are always depicted as Westernised objectifications, or perhaps Disneyfied impressions, of a "fiction of America, by America, and for America" (Akita and Kenney, 2012, 51). The 1992 release of *Aladdin*, for instance, depicts the fictional city of Agrabah as a vicious land of "unruly exoticism", where greedy thieves, sluttish harem girls and immoral merchants contribute to a chaotic community of unscrupulous individuals (Kraidy, 1998, 46-47). Depicting the citizens of Agrabah as a homogenous group of barbarians, the film portrays everything that is not "male, Western, White, "civilized," and "developed" as 'Other'" (Kraidy, 1998, 47). Further to this, the 1995 Disney film, *Pocahontas*, uses the song 'Savages' to render Native American culture as "like a curse" (Gabriel and Goldberg, 1995). Sung by Governor Ratcliffe, a white, male authority figure who takes pleasure in colonisation, the number concludes that "their skin's a hellish red, / they're only good when dead. / They're vermin, as I said, / and worse. / They're savages!

Savages! / Barely even human” (Gabriel and Goldberg, 1995). Given that this highly stereotyped view of the ‘New World’ had been long recognised as such by the late twentieth century, Disney provided Pocahontas and her community with a sense of agency throughout the rest of the film to contradict any previously negative depictions. For instance, Pocahontas continually questions the legacy of her liberal, though deceased, mother in relation to her stern father and her conflicted position as their daughter. Although the film attempts to rewrite history in this sense, it ultimately relies on the problematic divisions of civilized vs. barbaric to do so. As has been demonstrated by scholars including Jason Sperb and Janet Wasko, therefore, such problematic representations continue to ‘capture’ the public’s imagination, much in the way the Western characters of these films seem to ‘capture’ foreign and unknown lands. As I will now discuss, *The Book of Mormon* makes direct reference to various Disneyfied representations of racial Otherness, often in a way that further highlights the orientalist nature of such films in line with Edward Said’s concept.

“The Sun Rolling High Through the Sapphire Sky”: The Disneyfication of Africa

Despite the continued prevalence of orientalist depictions throughout popular culture, *The Book of Mormon* seems to challenge the often troubling depiction of Africa presented in Disney’s 1994 film, *The Lion King*. In perhaps the musical’s most obvious reference to the animated film, Elder Cunningham responds to his mission location by shouting “Oh BOY - Like *Lion King!*” (Suskin, 2012, 107). As he does so, Cunningham establishes that his impression of the world is entirely determined by popular culture and the texts he has enjoyed since childhood. Although we might presume his actions are driven by a holy text, Cunningham understands the world through the childish, and often sanitised, depictions of Disney. After all, the opening sequence of *The*

Lion King (1994) presents Africa as the sun rising on a lush and expansive plain, where a vast spectrum of healthy animals welcomes the birth of the lion prince, Simba (Allers and Minkoff, 1994). Similarly, Africa is depicted at Disney's Animal Kingdom theme park as a colourful landscape in which lions graze upon artificially warmed rocks and the African population play bongo drums whilst selling exotic food. In this sense, Disney presents Africa as an all-singing, all-dancing utopia in which humans grin and animals sunbathe, a notion Cunningham has seemingly accepted as the truth. Although our cultural knowledge of famine, water appeals and AIDS suggests otherwise, this moment demonstrates that popular texts like *The Lion King* have circulated sanitised impressions of Africa that many individuals, like Cunningham, may have accepted as the norm. Although we might not like to think so, Amy M. Davis argues that we are usually so content to let "Uncle Walt" show us "his" versions of certain stories and cultures that we trust that they have been told "fairly and faithfully" (2006, 19).

In a similar fashion, Elder Price's parents provide a "real LION KING SEND-OFF!" as the two Elders board their flight to Uganda (Suskin, 2012, 108). As the lights dim and the families seem to fade from view, a black female singer enters to "sing like an African", whilst wearing an elaborate costume that resembles those worn by Rafiki in the stage adaptation of *The Lion King* (1997) (Suskin, 2012, 108). As Price and Cunningham are absorbed into a strange parody of 'Circle of Life', the film and stage musical's elaborate opening number, the audience is led to believe that we are now in Africa, which, like the musical so far, is entirely mediated by popular culture. This moment is suddenly broken, however, as Price's parents return to thank 'Mrs Brown' for her 'authentic' performance, to which she responds "Good luck, boys! I've never

been to Africa, but I'm sure it's a hoot!" (Suskin, 2012, 109). In highlighting this impression as an imagined ideal, only fifteen minutes into the production, *The Book of Mormon* identifies the Disney worldview as both false and racist. Just as Ric Knowles describes Peter Brook's appropriation of seemingly authentic material in *The Mahabharata* (1985), *The Lion King* is highlighted here as "non-western material within an orientalist framework of thought and action, which has been specifically designed for an international market" (2010, 24). In this sense, *The Lion King* imposes many of the attributes that have been culturally determined as 'African', including vibrant music and tribal costuming, to establish an undeniably orientalist worldview. In light of such safe, satisfying and overtly sanitised ideals, Disney continues to denote the world in a way that even the most cynical of audience members would like to consider reality. As a prominent symbol of American capitalism, it must be recognised, therefore, that Disney has continually disseminated impressions of the world that many individuals, including the fictional characters of *The Book of Mormon*, have accepted as authentic. In referencing *The Lion King* directly, the musical looks to highlight our cultural reliance upon such sanitised depictions, before offering an alternative.

Despite the cultural significance of these impressions, the lighting soon darkens, the design becomes distressed, and the "music starts to slow down, fall apart ... and finally stop[s]" as the Elders arrive in Uganda (Suskin, 2012, 110). Instead of a location where "we feel safe and completely unthreatened", as Ramona Fernandez describes Disney World, the stage is filled with dilapidated mud huts, dead animals and villagers carrying dirty water; it seems that the Elders have been lured into a false sense of security by visions of Timon, Pumbaa and 'Hakuna Matata' (1995, 236). After having their luggage

stolen by the General's guards, the Elders are soon welcomed into the village through the number 'Hasa Diga Eebowai'. Commencing with the recognisable percussive and multi-tiered polyrhythms of *The Lion King*, the Elders are quickly returned to a familiar depiction of Africa in song (Suskin, 2012, 26). Although they are surrounded by death and disease, the orchestra provides a sense of familiarity which is only further heightened by the villagers performing in the Broadway pizzazz style so regularly associated with productions like *A Chorus Line* (1975) (as will be detailed in the following chapter). As the villagers list their troubles, however, they include the phrase 'Hasa Diga Eebowai!', which translates as 'Fuck you, God!' in English (Suskin, 2012, 112). Initially perplexed by the language barrier, Cunningham asks "does it mean no worries for the rest of our days?", as a direct reference to *The Lion King*, to which Mafala, the village leader, responds "Kind of!" (Suskin, 2012, 112). At this moment, the provocative undertones of this number are made explicit, becoming sexual, violent and extremely un-Disney. As Mafala sings "many young girls here get / circumcised, / the clits get cut right off", he suggests that the villagers must "raise a middle finger to the sky, / and curse his rotten name" (Suskin, 2012, 112-113). Opposing everything that the Elders have ever understood or believed in, the villagers chant "If you don't like what we say / try living here a couple days. / Watch all your friends and / family die. / Hasa Diga Eebowai! Fuck you!" (Suskin, 2012, 116). As the song concludes to "inevitable thunderous applause" (as noted in the published libretto), the Elders are given little time to contemplate such a blasphemous attack as they are swept towards their living quarters; it seems the damage is done and the task of conversion is deemed impossible. In this scene, then, *The Lion King* is used as a reference

point to help subvert the dominance of various popular ideals and present stark alternatives.

Echoing Guy Debord's conception of society being mediated by images (1983, thesis 4), *The Book of Mormon* depicts a Disneyfied representation of Africa, as determined through direct references to *The Lion King*, which is then subverted once the Elders actually arrive in Uganda. In drawing upon stereotypically 'exotic' musical styles, as Raymond Knapp suggests is common within the musical theatre canon, the musical presents a series of individuals who have been persuaded by the ideals of Disney Animation (2005, 250). As Russell Means, a Native American activist, argues in his critique of *Pocahontas*, for example, "millions of children forever are going to see this [and many other racially insensitive Disney films] in their most formative years, and it's going to affect how they see my people and our culture all the way through their lives" (cited in Wasko, 2001, 139). Undeniably, then, The Walt Disney Company is a multinational organisation which has continually fashioned racially inaccurate depictions of the world outside the Western hemisphere. Artists who have never been to Africa, China or South America beyond their coffee table books and computer screens, for instance, are active contributors to the worldview of generation after generation of privileged children. Such children are then, in turn, unaware that these images have been fashioned by typically white, middleclass men in the air-conditioned studios of Hollywood, thousands of miles from the 'real' thing. As a victim of such glamorised images, the subversion described above ultimately leads Elder Price to conclude that "Africa... is NOTHING like *The Lion King* - I think that movie took a LOT of artistic license" (Suskin, 2012, 133). Whilst the film exploits such stereotypes beyond mere 'artistic licence', particularly as the entire continent is represented by only a few

miles of land, the Elders discard their Disneyfied impressions as they mature within the narrative and adopt a more realistic, or at least more nuanced, worldview.

Although *The Book of Mormon* is as much a commercial product as any Disney film, and in many ways a more troubling representation, it is significantly more aggressive and heterogeneous than most previous depictions of Africa within the musical theatre canon.⁷⁶ The 'Africans' of *The Book of Mormon*, for example, are not simply homogenized outsiders, and exist, instead, as friendly individuals who are as sexualised and violent as any white Westerner. This is not to say, however, that the musical presents a realistic depiction of Africa or rejects any mediated representation all together. Instead, the musical aligns with what Steven Mullaney describes as a "rehearsal of cultures" in which "strange cultures" are "performed" in the way we have been culturally disciplined to expect (1995, 69). In this case, *The Book of Mormon* swaps the romanticised ideals of Disney for images which have been disseminated, or 'rehearsed', in popular culture, online or on the news. Whether depictions of AIDS, famine, female circumcision or vicious warlords, any attempt at presenting a realistic depiction of Africa is dodged here for alternative images which are equally as mediated. Just as *The Lion King* was formed from the privileged position of Hollywood, the creative team behind *The Book of Mormon* have fashioned their depiction of Africa in the rehearsal and design studios of New York whilst watching twenty-four-hour news coverage. In replacing laughing hyenas with the 'poverty porn' of Africa, the musical paints a problematic image of a third world country from a privileged position that audiences continue to pay hundreds of dollars to see. Whilst the musical may

⁷⁶ Other noteworthy examples include *Kwamina* (1961), *Sarafina!* (1987) and *Aida* (2000).

seem to undermine Disney, it seemingly presents Africa through the problematic signifiers of a “sunrise on the savanna” or “a monkey with a banana” to the extent that it supports the orientalist divisions of us and them, East and West, civilised and savage (Suskin, 2012, 162). In this sense, *The Book of Mormon* satirises political correctness by referencing *The Lion King* as a way of emphasising our cultural reliance upon such safe representations of other cultures. Although the musical is not progressive in its overall presentation, such intertextual references work to displace the dominance of Disney by providing an alternative, and certainly less glamorised, vision of Africa.

“As Normal as Blueberry Pie”: The Ideological ‘Golden Age’ of Musical Theatre

Having analysed the cultural values of Disney Animation in relation to *The Book of Mormon*, the following section considers how the musical reflects a presumably traditional model of musical theatre, despite its inherent violence and blasphemy. Ushering in the ‘Golden Age’ of the American musical, the original 1943 production of Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein’s *Oklahoma!* demonstrated that song and dance can disseminate the all-American myths of independence, community and hope. As the curtain rises, Aunt Eller is found churning butter, as a young cowboy, brimming with optimism, struts onto the stage and opens his mouth to sing the now immortal refrain: “Oh, what a beautiful mornin’” (Hammerstein, 2010a, 11). He informs the audience that today is a “beautiful day”, full of “wonderful feelin’[s]”, and his life is set to change (Hammerstein, 2010a, 11). The cowboy has yet to be named, but we can be sure that this is the lovesick hero who will drive the narrative to its inevitably romantic conclusion. Although this show remains an important landmark for musical theatre scholars and enthusiasts, the musicals

of Rodgers and Hammerstein also established, and, in many ways, perpetuated, countless escapist ideologies which have grown to characterise musical theatre as an art form. The formula of “boy meets girl, they overcome an obstacle and the wider community are united as a result”, for instance, continues to influence productions decades after such narratives were first dismissed as sentimental within scholarship (Edney, 2007, 942). In many ways, then, Curly’s optimistic stroll signalled the moment in which musical theatre became synonymous with romanticised impressions of love, hope and difference to the extent that the musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein became “mainstream culture for thousands of Americans who’d never been to Broadway” (Wolf, 2011, 31). The unrivalled legacy of *Oklahoma!* (1943), *Carousel* (1945), *South Pacific* (1949), *The King and I* (1951) and *The Sound of Music* (1959), as the duo’s most popular works, has therefore secured musical theatre as an idealised celebration of human existence and associated the names ‘Rodgers’ and ‘Hammerstein’ with a formula for interrogating “the clash of cultural values” (Mast, 1987, 211).

Although the crude language, violence and overt blasphemy of *South Park* seems far removed from the often comforting musicals outlined above, *The Book of Mormon*, rather surprisingly, sustains the traditional model established by such musicals in subversive gift wrap. As Stacy Wolf notes in relation to *Wicked* (2003) and *In the Heights* (2008), for example, the central tenets of a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical continue to typify the integrated musical, establishing a norm to be subverted rather than a tradition to be continued (2011, 202). In particular, many contemporary musicals include a “realist narrative (even in a fantasy locale); an articulate and self-reflexive book; some kind of social commentary; and nondiegetic dance numbers”, in addition

to a leading character “who is both flawed and admirable; a romance whose development forms the spine of the story; and a chorus that embodies the community and its values” (Wolf, 2011, 202). Given that this extensive list of principles characterises much of the musical theatre canon, *The Book of Mormon* identifies itself as a direct continuation of the Rodgers and Hammerstein model, both structurally and in terms of content, despite its often vulgar façade. As John Lahr notes, in particular, *The Book of Mormon* conforms to “the old testament of Broadway circa 1945-1965, A.D., even while fondly spoofing it”, in that it presents flawed, yet likable, protagonists who enter cultures far different from their own, intent on ‘making good’ (2011). Just as Maria von Trapp and Anna Leonowens do in *The Sound of Music* and *The King and I*, Elders Price and Cunningham uncover the commonalities of the human race to unite two opposing communities, devoid of their class, gender, race or belief system. Whilst Maria and the Captain eradicate their conflict through their mutual love of song in *The Sound of Music*, the African villagers are ‘taught’ (as is a buzzword in several Rodgers and Hammerstein shows) that faith can be found within every society, whether poverty stricken or affluent. In turn, the opposing communities are united through sentimental values of love and hope to overcome language barriers and provide a somewhat ‘happy ending’. Although the relationship formed between the villagers and the Elders is not one of romantic love, as with Anna and the King or Maria and the Captain, the communities “grow to love and depend upon each other” by accepting that all stories, whether religious or from popular culture, can be appropriated as personal mantras (Sears, 2008, 159). Whilst *The Book of Mormon* does not culminate in the romantic union of *The Sound of Music*, the Ugandan villagers are inspired to celebrate their devotion to God, whatever that may mean to

them, and, more importantly, to themselves. Just as Maria von Trapp unites the family through song, rather than prayer or bible teachings, religion is used within *The Book of Mormon* as a catalyst for the essential realisation of inner goodness and the power of a loving community. The musical therefore extends an ingrained narrative trope within the musical theatre canon by depicting traditionally white Westerners who affect the outlook of several dark-skinned 'foreigners' with messages of love, hope and community.

"How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?": *The Sound of Music* (1959)

In order to further demonstrate how these classic texts inspire the vulgar language and overt sexuality of this contemporary musical, it is first important to consider how the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein are directly referenced within *The Book of Mormon*. Although the musical ignores any presumed requirement to be 'politically correct', whilst being set decades after the death of either Rodgers or Hammerstein, Elder Price's journey to self-discovery mirrors that of Maria von Trapp in *The Sound of Music*. Although perhaps an unexpected claim, both characters either 'believe' or 'have confidence' in their ability to do 'good' as they enter a chaotic community in the hope of providing 'salvation'. In her number 'I Have Confidence', for instance, as written for the 1965 film adaptation of *The Sound of Music*, Maria approaches the von Trapp mansion full of "doubts and worries" about "a captain with seven children. What's so fearsome about that?" (Wise, 1965). In a similar moment within *The Book of Mormon*, Elder Price sings "A warlord that shoots people in the face / What's so scary about that?" in his number 'I Believe' (Suskin, 2012, 153). In reflecting her lyrics, melody and dramatic situation, Price makes a direct intertextual reference to Maria von Trapp in perhaps the most beloved film musical of all time. Price's situation, however, is considerably more dangerous

than Maria's, since his ability to 'believe' requires God to physically save him, whilst Maria simply requires the 'confidence' found 'within' herself. Although it is not clear whether the Captain will act violently towards Maria as she enters his family home, Price is fully aware that the General carries a gun and will shoot at will. Naively, then, Price believes that faith and perseverance can enable every individual to "follow every rainbow / till you find your dream", as the Mother Abbess proposes in *The Sound of Music*, or, in his case, be influenced by his offer of salvation (Hammerstein, 2010b, 98). Instead of converting the General, however, Price is mocked, attacked and beaten with his holy book. Whilst Maria calmly meets the Captain and his children, Price straddles a hospital bed with the Book of Mormon wedged firmly in his rectum. Although both have overcome their fears as they conclude their respective solos, Price's arrogance, unyielding faith and clear referencing of *The Sound of Music* is not enough to protect him from the 'natives'. He seemingly fails to convert the villagers because of his selfish obsession with Orlando and all too literal application of the holy text. On the other hand, Maria succeeds because she refuses to apply her teachings in any literal fashion and allows the family to reconcile on their own terms. In this view, Maria's mission is more humanitarian than religious, meaning she leaves for the sake of the family, unlike Price who leaves to selfishly visit the Magic Kingdom and the dolphins of SeaWorld. In this instance, Price's intertextual referencing enables him to be read as a strong willed, yet ultimately flawed, individual who reflects a character type that is well established within the musical theatre canon.

Despite the inclusion of this reference implying that Price is a strong-willed, yet ultimately flawed, protagonist, he does not help the villagers accomplish their dreams or serve as a means of survival as the musical

develops. Instead, it is Elder Cunningham who echoes Maria characteristically, given that both characters travel from somewhere they presume to be their comfort zone, though are ostracised at every turn, to a location in which they must fashion a comfort zone for themselves. Like Maria, Cunningham sits outside his religious community in that he is an insecure, loudmouthed stereotype of geekiness (complete with a *Star Wars* rucksack). Nevertheless, he finds a community who can benefit from his quirkiness in Uganda, whilst sparking a romantic relationship with Nabulungi (or Nutella, Nala, Neutrogena and Necrophilia (as just some of things she is awkwardly labelled throughout the show)). Much like Maria, then, Cunningham is a force of good within the village, despite his unconventional approach, and is ultimately the catalyst for change and union. Similarly, “*The Sound of Music’s* ideological work hinges on Maria’s mobility in an American cultural context”, often to the extent that the musical “portrays a white American family reinventing itself through innocence and energy”, with Maria acting as the source of that energy (Wolf, 2002, 223). Despite the musical being set in Austria, just as *The Book of Mormon* is set in Uganda, each musical presents a protagonist who celebrates the mythologies of the American musical given that each character promotes the importance of forming a community within a time of turmoil (be that the vicious reign of an African warlord or the shadow of World War Two). Whilst Cunningham does not have the lyrics of Oscar Hammerstein embedded in his rhetoric, as Price does, he uses his naive charm to fashion a community which embodies the ideologies of musical theatre. Although Maria and the Elders are not similar in age, gender or nationality, the intertextual relationship fashioned between *The Book of Mormon* and such traditional works runs far deeper than the recycling of narrative tropes and similarities in musical style. In this case, *The Sound of*

Music acts as a prism through which to interpret the contrast between Price's attempt to 'believe' and Cunningham's triumphant reinvention of faith within a destitute African village.

"By Your Pupils You'll Be Taught": *The King and I* (1951)

Having analysed the intertextual parallels between the narratives of *The Sound of Music* and *The Book of Mormon*, I wish to extend this discussion by examining how *The Book of Mormon* continually reinvents the sense of orientalism found within *The King and I*. Although the narrative parallels outlined above are certainly intertextual traces worthy of considered analysis, the following section investigates how *The Book of Mormon* follows the structural patterns of a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical at a much deeper level than the simple imitation of content. In particular, *The Book of Mormon* replicates the orientalist nature of such musicals in mirroring their biased worldview. As Raymond Knapp argues, the musical theatre canon features numerous examples of productions which "criticize prejudice on both sides, advocate tolerance, and remain smugly entrenched in the notion that, while "West" is better than "East", it can learn to be better" (2005, 249). Given that musical theatre has long presented troubling depictions of race and nationhood, the above examples demonstrate the colonialist attitudes of much musical theatre, particularly as the musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein tend to present cultures "reaching towards each other across an enormous cultural abyss" (Sears, 2008, 159).

The cultural divide presented in *The King and I*, for example, as perhaps the most obvious example of orientalism in this body of works, is defined, in part, by gender. After all, Anna enters a culture in which being female equates

to little more than slavery and, through her teaching and coercing, manages to alter the King's perception of their cultures (as a direct mirroring of the expansion of women's rights in 1950s America for Knapp (2005, 261)). Unlike the orientalist impression of the West as rational, progressive and masculine, Anna represents the West as a gentle, educated, though strongminded, female (Klein, 2003, 10). That said, *The King and I* has been more regularly depicted, especially by John Bush Jones, Christina Klein and Jim Lovensheimer, as promoting a demeaning view of the 'Orient' from the privileged cultural position of Rodgers and Hammerstein. As Knapp describes, in particular, for all its "good intentions, insights, and blithe indifference to getting things historically right, the show on the whole inevitably patronizes" (2005, 264). As an audience, we are unscrupulously "invited to enjoy our superiority, to contemplate as a curiosity a faraway kingdom of harems, slavery, and barbarity, and even mourn the passing of that culture with the death of its king" (Knapp, 2005, 264). Much like the mediated representations of Africa described above, *The King and I* is an unquestionable example of orientalism as an intertextual "system for citing works and authors" who have previously depicted Asia, the East, and cultures far different from their own, in a similarly narrow-minded fashion (Said, 1978, 23).

Although intertextual traces from *The King and I* within *The Book of Mormon* are considerably subtler than those from *The Sound of Music*, the musical's penultimate scene mirrors the 'Small House of Uncle Thomas' ballet presented in *The King and I*. Once Cunningham has converted the villagers to Mormonism through his tales of Joseph Smith and the magical 'fuck frog', the Mission President arrives from Utah to celebrate the Elder's unrivalled success. To coincide with this important visit, the villagers burst in to present *their* story of

Joseph Smith with handmade costumes, props and scenery that resemble the Mormon pageantry which embellishes the proscenium arch of the entire production. As expected, however, their performance of 'Joseph Smith American Moses' reflects many of Cunningham's alterations in their presentation of raped frogs, dysentery, the 'Great Wizard' Moroni and the Starship Enterprise. As the number quickly escalates from quaint celebration to violent chanting, the Mission President is appalled and deems the Elder's mission unsuccessful. In the same vein, though without expletive language or violent imagery, Tuptim and the wives of the palace perform a narrated Siamese ballet for Ambassador John Hay and Sir Edward Ramsay's visit to the palace in *The King and I*. Adapting Harriet Beecher Stowe's anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) as the 'Small House of Uncle Thomas', the ballet is similarly poorly received for its frank depictions of slavery and gender inequality. In light of this, *The Book of Mormon* and *The King and I* each draw upon several racial stereotypes to "convey the necessities of coming to terms with cultural differences of literally global dimensions" (Bush Jones, 2003, 152). In terms of racial casting, the Asian dancers of *The King and I* portray both white oppressors and black slaves, just as the black villagers of *The Book of Mormon* portray the white founders of Mormonism in a situation where storytelling undermines racial accuracy. In particular, the villager Mutumbo embodies Joseph Smith in white face, a practice Knapp suggests mirrors blackface minstrelsy by favouring "unnuanced stereotyping", and thus subverts the performance form designed to ridicule his race (Knapp, 2005, 264). Mutumbo is not actively racist, however, in never mocking Smith on behalf of his race, yet his actions acknowledge that liberation and equality are traditionally the luxuries of white, Western men (Suskin, 2012, 166). In this case, the performance

enables the villagers to strive beyond their 'lowly' position, whilst highlighting their awareness of such stories as identifiable metaphors. In this case, the performance enables the villagers to strive beyond their 'lowly' position, whilst highlighting their awareness of such stories as identifiable metaphors. 'Joseph Smith American Moses' thus mirrors the 'Small House of Uncle Thomas' in that it functions as a "metatheatrical summation" of the musical's overarching themes of civilisation, freedom and home (McConachie, 2003, 155).

Unlike when Lady Thiang sings 'Western People Funny' in *The King and I*, claiming that "they think they civilise us / whenever they advise us", the villagers of *The Book of Mormon* do not wish to oppose the dominance of the white Americans in any major way (Hammerstein, 2016, 87). Instead, they wish to live like Mormons for their own comfort and survival. Although *The King and I* portrays Eastern communities challenging Western oppression, *The Book of Mormon* depicts a community trying to find its place within an oppressive regime. In maturing the "chopsticks musicals" of Rodgers and Hammerstein, as Ma Sheng-Mei labels them, *The Book of Mormon* depicts a mindful community who are unable to be brainwashed by the dreamlike qualities of Salt Lake City and the promise of a 'latter day' (2003, 17). Although the musical does not give the villagers the agency they deserve, it sophisticates the work of Rodgers and Hammerstein by depicting numbers such as 'Joseph Smith American Moses' as playful celebrations of existence, rather than antagonistic uprisings against the West. In this case, the villagers have been taught to fashion a loving community of their own, not strive to enter or replicate a Western one. Although Nabulungi is certain that she will visit 'Sal Tlay Ka Siti', the adult villagers envisage Utah as an unattainable childhood dream, much like a visit to the fictional lands of Oz or Neverland. In turn, the villagers seek accessible stories of hope and

determination, rather than a physical journey to a Western salvation. In this sense, *The Book of Mormon* matures the orientalist visions of the Rodgers and Hammerstein canon by providing the villagers with agency, freewill and hope. They are not presented as an unruly group who need to be tamed, meaning that, in turn, it is they who teach the Elders about cultural diversity and acceptance (to the extent that they echo Anna's claim that "by your pupils you'll be taught" in *The King and I*) (Hammerstein 2016, 43). In this case, *The Book of Mormon* maintains "the structure and rhythm of a classic musical" by developing the cultural view presented with such texts beyond mere orientalism and promoting contemporary ideals of social and cultural inclusion (Kennedy, 2011). Although *The Book of Mormon* may draw upon the "crude caricatures" that are so regularly associated with the work of Rodgers and Hammerstein, it does so to render them ineffective and offer a contemporary alternative (Knapp, 2005, 249).

"My Stories Are Glistening": Appropriating Fan Cultures in Africa

In the final section of this chapter, I wish to consider the manner in which Elder Cunningham fashions a bricolage of intertextual fragments to entice the villagers through an inauthentic, though wholly accessible, retelling of the Mormon stories. In being fascinated by texts like *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings*, popular culture remains central to Cunningham's rhetoric to the extent that he speaks only in references, comparisons and snippets of dialogue from popular culture. Much like Henry Jenkins' definition of a fan in *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (1992), a now canonical reference point within the field of fandom studies, Cunningham's "excessive and mistaken enthusiasm" for popular culture goes beyond mere enjoyment and into his language, actions and ideals (1992, 12). Although twenty-first century

scholarship depicts fans as active participants, rather than deluded outcasts, “religious and political zealotry, false beliefs, orgiastic excess, possession, and madness” have long been established features of fandom within discourse (Jenkins, 1992, 12). In his more recent publications, however, including *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006a) and *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture* (2006b), Jenkins has defined a fan as someone who is “active, critically engaged and creative” who remains central to the way in which culture operates (2006b, 1). In the fourteen years which divide such seminal publications, and the decade which has occurred since, Jenkins has substantially altered his perception of fandom to coincide with the shifting practices brought about by the Internet and our now global culture. Fans are no longer considered to simply dress up in *Star Trek* costumes or write fan fiction, since they also archive, annotate, appropriate and disseminate their own media content; the twenty-first century fan not only receives information, but creates and circulates it too.

Given that Cunningham has never read the Book of Mormon as he arrives in Uganda, popular culture serves as his religion or, more precisely, a series of texts he has appropriated to form personal mantras. As the Elders are first paired, for instance, Cunningham asks Price one simple, yet fundamental, question: “Are you a *Star Wars* guy or a *Star Trek* guy?! I wanna know EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU. Personally I like *Star Wars* but I’m willing to like *Star Trek* more if YOU think it’s better” (Suskin, 2012, 109). Citing science fiction as the only clear validation of an individual’s personality, where everyone is required to like one or another, this moment suggests that all individuals must conform to a cultural stereotype in some respect. In allowing Price to select which text they will celebrate, and presumably discuss at length, Cunningham

hands his agency, in terms of fandom, over to Price; he would prefer to be socially accepted than favour *Star Wars* over *Star Trek* (or vice versa). Despite his conformity to various stereotypes, Cunningham enables Price to determine his response to popular culture by allowing him to decipher which texts may or may not be 'cool'. In order to have a best friend, one of his early goals, Cunningham must give up his individual preferences so that his companion can, in the words of his father, "help make [him] not so weird" (Suskin, 2012, 108). Although he has preselected the texts Price must choose from, his social inadequacy is further demonstrated, only moments later, in the number 'You and Me (But Mostly Me)'. As this song develops, Price establishes Cunningham's position as a 'follower' by confirming that he will always be second best. He sings, "there's no limit to / what we can do - / me and you. / But mostly meeeeeee!" (Suskin, 2012, 110). As the side dish to his dinner plate, the mate to his captain, and the sidekick to his hero, Cunningham's fascination with popular culture, for Price, renders him a nerdy and socially insignificant individual who is unlikely to triumph. In this case, Cunningham's reliance on popular culture and intertextual references restricts him from succeeding as a traditional Mormon missionary.

In order to extend this final point more broadly, it is important to consider how Cunningham uses intertextual referencing as a force of social change. As John Fiske argues in *Reading the Popular* (1989), for instance, "[if] cultural commodities or texts do not contain resources out of which the people can make their own meanings of their own social relations and identities, they will be rejected and fail in the marketplace. They will not be made popular" (2010a, 2). From this perspective, popular texts must function socially so that audiences can engage with them intellectually by appropriating their hopeful messages.

This notion is best highlighted in the second act number, 'You're Making Things Up Again', in which Cunningham is found teaching the villagers from the Book of Mormon (though both parties are equally confused):

MIDDALA: THREE HOURS we been listening to him talk about STUPID SHIT that happened on the other side of the Earth thousands of years ago! It has nothing to do with US!

SADAKA: That's right! Those "NEPHITES" probably didn't even have AIDS to deal with!

UGANDANS: (*angry, leaving*) Yeah! / That's right! / Shit! / Etc.

ELDER CUNNINGHAM: UH SURE THEY DID! SURE THEY DID!! People back then had even WORSE AIDS!

[...]

And LO! The Lord said unto the Nephites – I know you're really depressed, with all your AIDS and everything... But there is an answer in Christ!

The Ugandans look surprised. They are now paying attention to Cunningham.

NABULUNGI: You see?! This book CAN help us!

(Suskin, 2012, 142).

At this moment, Cunningham turns away from the crowd, initially ashamed, to sing, "I just told a lie. / Wait, no I didn't lie... / I just used my imagination. / And it worked!" (Suskin, 2012, 142). In reinventing the Mormon stories for an audience who are unaware of fantasy and science fiction films, Cunningham is soon joined on stage by ensemble members dressed as Uhura (from *Star Trek*), Darth Vader (from *Star Wars*) and hobbits from *The Lord of the Rings*. By "recklessly warping the words of Jesus", or so the figures state, Cunningham fashions a bricolage of popular references to entice the villagers as if reciting a religious parable (Suskin, 2012, 143). In fashioning a story to suit their needs, rather than one conditioned by intangible metaphors, he appropriates the basic themes of these stories to highlight their universal truths. For example, the idea of Jesus appearing to the Nephites is insignificant to the villagers, yet Boba Fett from *Star Wars* turning men into frogs is entirely applicable, given that they are

unaware that this is an intertextual reference. In this case, popular culture becomes a social tool through which to rewrite culturally specific narratives in the hope of providing salvation for a wider audience. Given that the villagers are unable to appreciate the Mormon stories in their original form, their basic narrative is performed through numerous cultural references to highlight that the broader themes of hope and faith exist within all manner of stories. Although Cunningham's use of popular culture identifies his social ineptitude in the musical's opening scenes, it allows him to demonstrate that faith can develop outside of organised religion as the musical closes. In this sense, the musical both parodies and validates the values of Mormonism through its use of intertextual references.

Despite its clear lampooning of organised religion, *The Book of Mormon* is "a pro-religion musical, or at least a story about the uplifting power of stories" (Kennedy, 2011). Although *The Lord of the Rings* is not a traditionally religious text, it projects the social ideal that subordinate groups (hobbits, in this case) are valuable members of society. In appropriating popular narratives such as this, Cunningham enables a disenfranchised community to find hope through such "glistening" stories (Suskin, 2012, 146). Although the villagers will never visit Salt Lake City, they acknowledge it as a metaphor of hope and comfort through Cunningham's elaborate stories. In light of this, the musical encourages the audience to appreciate whatever creation story they find hopeful and reassuring (Shapiro, 2011). In this sense, *The Book of Mormon* fashions a bricolage of cultural references, often stripped of their original context, to suggest that communal storytelling can form spiritual relationships outside of organised religion. Although *Star Wars* does not have the historical legacy and importance of a holy book, it has formed many individuals' sense of self-worth

and identity for several decades. In this case, the villagers appropriate an interesting, relevant and hopeful story from popular culture, meaning, in turn, that these references destabilise the wide-spread assumption that holy texts are more culturally important than popular culture. Undeniably, then, the musical examines how “cultural transmission, adaptation, and assimilation” can satisfy our “ineradicable hunger for narrative and mystery” to the extent that Yoda from *Star Wars* can replicate Jesus (Cote, 2011). The villagers “make their own meanings of their own social relations and identities” through and across popular culture, as Fiske has argued more broadly, to find salvation (2010a, 2). In turn, they fashion their own belief system by relishing the comforting sensibilities available in all manner of texts. Just as Maria von Trapp suggests that a “song is no song till you sing it”, the texts which are referenced throughout *The Book of Mormon* only develop their religious power once appropriated as such (Hammerstein, 2010b, 131). In this case, Middle Earth and Naboo, as fictional locations referenced by Cunningham, can reflect the “paradise planet” sensibility of many organised religions to provide comfort.

“Tomorrow is a Latter Day”: The Cultural Value of Intertextual Storytelling

Having considered the specificity, intention, reception and presentation of intertextual references within *The Book of Mormon*, this chapter has highlighted how the musical fashions a bricolage of references to reinvent the traditions of popular culture. In referencing various texts with a wink and a nod, the authors consciously acknowledge their diverse influences to subvert the typically sanitised nature of multiple ‘family-friendly’ texts. As the bricoleurs of *The Book of Mormon*, Stone, Parker and Lopez have fashioned a white, heterosexual male’s perception of popular culture and the concepts it has produced and normalised. Although they might seek to destabilise the worldview of Disney

Animation or the musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein, in particular, this chapter has demonstrated how the musical simply replaces one dominant perception with another. Just as John Bush Jones points out that Oscar Hammerstein could not displace his “Eurocentric bias” when writing the lyrics and libretto of *The King and I*, the authors of *The Book of Mormon* were unable to fashion a more realistic impression of Africa, Eastern culture or Mormonism within their writing (2003, 155). Instead, the musical destabilises various popular norms to promote the social use of storytelling within its highly intertextual framework. *The Book of Mormon* is therefore formed from a collection of narratives that each highlight the importance of community, faith and salvation. Although the strife suffered in *The Lion King* is considerably different to that witnessed by Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars*, such stories are amalgamated within the intertextual fabric of this production and celebrated as adaptable images of hope, self-worth and identity. In this case, *The Book of Mormon* further disseminates the prominent visions of hope which permeate popular culture, and, in many respects, organised religion, as an elaborate bricolage of intertextual references.

"It's a world where the dog eats the dog"
Les Misérables (1985), lyrics by Herbert Kretzmer.

*

*"There's a brazier, a picket line, and a barricade. If we had an orchestra,
it could be a bloody musical!"*
Made in Dagenham (2014), book by Richard Bean.

Chapter Six: Meta-Musical the Musical

If you were to ask a member of the public to define their perception of musical theatre, the concepts they are likely to acknowledge would be complex and unimaginably diverse. On one hand, they may recall specific productions or images of *Oklahoma!* (1943), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) or *Wicked* (2003). On the other, they may envisage flared jazz hands, a top hat and cane, someone unexpectedly bursting into song or a joyous wedding; each presumed to be broad, brash and wildly excessive tropes of musical theatre. Although such tropes are certainly clear signifiers of the form, they do not stem from specific musicals or are included in every one; a top hat and cane makes perfect sense in *Top Hat* (1935), for example, though would seem out of place in *West Side Story* (1957). Instead of noteworthy conventions, such signifiers are now popular perceptions of musical theatre as an art form. After all, there remains a widely recognised assumption of what musical theatre is and who it seeks to entertain. Whether stereotyped as a pastime for gay men or middle-aged women, individuals who have never seen *The Sound of Music* (1965), loaded an original cast recording onto their iPod or attended a West End musical are still likely to recognise the form's most flamboyant qualities through their wider dissemination in popular culture. That said, many individuals will not have a specific perception of musical theatre, having never encountered the form in any great detail, and thus a universal

perception cannot be presumed. Images of jazz hands and tap dancing therefore represent a culturally determined perception of musical theatre that stems from various subjective communities, whether experienced theatregoers or fans of *Glee* (2009-2015), and one that has been determined across a range of media. These objects, gestures, narrative conventions, stereotyped audience demographics and modes of communication are thus representative of musical theatre as a semiotic “sign-system” (a term Elaine Aston and George Savona have used to describe theatre semiotics more broadly) (1991, 7). Most audience members do not interpret productions in relation to their placement within musical theatre history, as scholars might, and so musical theatre is often typified as red draped curtains, a series of spotlights and various performers thrusting their hands towards the audience (as highlighted by a simple online image search). It is seemingly possible to signify musical theatre, in this instance, or, rather, a culturally ingrained perception of musical theatre, without ever acknowledging the form’s communicative style of song and dance.

As the final chapter of this section, the following discussion examines the growing trend of referencing, and notably metatheatricalising, various perceptions of musical theatre within the twenty-first century musical. Having expanded the focus of this study from the analysis of specific texts (adaptation) to groups of related texts (nostalgia), through to a bricolage of cultural references, this final case study chapter broadens the remit of this study by analysing productions which reference perceptions of musical theatre as a form of idiomatic intertextuality. Using *Urinetown: The Musical* (2001) and *Monty Python’s Spamalot* (2005) as case studies, this chapter suggests that various productions cite, parody, and thus further disseminate, many of the assumptions made about musical theatre without referencing specific examples.

In drawing upon perceptions with “affection and witty insight”, ‘meta-musicals’ pay homage to the expected traditions of musical theatre, be they the love songs we hear on stage or the gay men who fill the auditorium, by fashioning a piece of entertainment which aligns with such expectations at every turn (Sternfeld and Wollman, 2011, 123). In light of this, the forthcoming discussion argues that the use of intertextual references within the twenty-first century musical is significantly more nuanced than the simple inclusion of direct references to specific texts. By critiquing such assumptions in relation to their potential origins and often problematic use, this chapter argues that numerous ‘meta-musicals’ expand the self-reflexive nature of musical theatre through the nuanced referencing of various popular perceptions. To demonstrate this argument, it is first important to identify several perceptions of musical theatre in line with Hans Robert Jauss’ detailing of an audience’s ‘horizons of expectation’ (1988, 222). Highlighting the iconic use of a top hat and cane as a popular signifier of the form in general, this discussion establishes the critical foundations of the term ‘metatheatre’ and explores the way in which various broader signifiers might be referenced. Beyond this, however, this chapter examines *Urinetown: The Musical* as a production which references a prescribed ‘rulebook’ that all musicals are presumed to adhere to. In presenting characters who manipulate the action in order to maintain their perception of what a ‘musical’ should be, the production is intertextually bound to broader perceptions of musical theatre, rather than specific case studies (despite scholars like Anne Beggs suggesting otherwise). In the final section of this chapter, the discussion focuses on *Monty Python’s Spamalot* as a production which references various familiar clichés regarding the audience demographic of musical theatre, rather than the action presented on stage. In referencing the

Jewish heritage of the form, in addition to its prominent homosexual fan base, this chapter culminates by investigating how *Spamalot* might alienate a core audience demographic through its potentially offensive humour (or even the reverse).

Perceptions of the Musical

In order to demonstrate how specific productions reference wider perceptions of musical theatre, it is essential to return to the reception theory of the mid-twentieth century as a critical foundation. Reviewing the role of the reader in his 1969 essay, 'Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory', Hans Robert Jauss proposed that all texts feature "recognised aesthetic norms" which influence the meaning derived from a text (1988, 222). Later echoed in Marvin Carlson's suggestion that our present experience is "always ghosted by previous experiences and associations" (2001, 2), Jauss claimed that readers always test a work's "aesthetic value in comparison with works already read" (1988, 222). Given that individuals, in turn, read specific codes and conventions within a specific time frame, our expectations are only ever conditioned by the texts we have already engaged with. In relation to this study, an audience member might determine their interpretation of a musical in relation to their past experience and perception of other musicals. They may find themselves unconsciously questioning whether the forthcoming action will include a high-energy tap routine, a counterpoint ensemble number or a devoted heterosexual couple (as many productions have before it). In this sense, an audience's past experience of musical theatre, and their wider perceptions of the form, help to fashion a series of expectations that condition the way in which they interpret a 'new' text. Musicals can therefore only be 'musicals', jazz hands included, if they align with our "pre-understanding of the genre" and the "announcements,

overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics” and “implicit allusions” that have been manifested within similar experiences of musical theatre (Jauss, 1988, 223). The act of interpretation is not an autonomous or singular experience, in this case, since the audience reads the current performance in relation to what has come before.

The flamboyant use of top hats, tap shoes, feather boas and sequins, to name but a few prominent items, has long contributed to a broader perception of musical theatre as an art form. Stemming from vaudeville shows, revues, and other early twentieth century theatrical forms, images of “chorus girls, stunning scenic effects, dashing leading men, solo turns, tap, ballet, orchestra, follow spot, overture to exit music” continue to evoke what Stephen Citron describes as the most “exciting and diverting form of live theatre in the world” (1991, 15). Given that very few productions employ such elaborate signifiers today, however, often favouring the intense dramatic style of *Les Misérables* (1985) or *Miss Saigon* (1989), these tropes are often only used to denote musical theatre in its most dated of forms. Although this seems to exaggerate the dominance of such outdated signifiers, the above images are undoubtedly elements of a rhetoric which, for many, constitute an art form of excess.⁷⁷ From this perspective, musical theatre has formed an ideological ‘bubble’ around itself that is constituted of an excessive performance style, glamorous aesthetic features and several culturally significant mythologies (as Raymond Knapp has argued). As highlighted by the song ‘A Musical’ in *Something Rotten!* (2015), musical theatre continues to be summarised as “bright lights, stage fights, and a

⁷⁷ In her chapter ‘Artifice and Excess in Pantomime Comedy’, as published in *British Pantomime Performance* (2007), and her edited issue of *Studies in Musical Theatre*, ‘If I Sing: Voice and Excess’ (2012a), Millie Taylor identifies music, the performer’s voice and the physicality of the performance as key factors in demonstrating the excessive nature of both pantomime and musical theatre performance.

dazzling chorus”, despite the multitude of aspects it features (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2015). In particular, this number depicts Thomas Nostradamus, a fortune-teller in 1590s England, foreseeing the rise of musical theatre centuries before the 1943 debut of *Oklahoma!*. Seeming to encapsulate the “entire book-musical form in six hilarious minutes”, the number goes on to reference productions including *Annie* (1977), *Evita* (1978) and *RENT* (1996), in addition to a broader perception of musical theatre through witty references and energetic dance routines (Stewart, 2015). As a “mighty fine-y, glitter, glitz, and chorus line-y” art form, such ideological representations of musical theatre seemingly mirror Roland Barthes’ description of detergent foam as expansive, comforting and luxurious (Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2015). Although this seems an odd point of comparison, Barthes argued in his 1957 book, *Mythologies*, that the foam produced by soap powders expands into a bright and airy substance, despite its original form seeming to “lack any usefulness” (2000, 37). In turn, “its abundant, easy, almost infinite proliferation allows one to suppose there is in the substance from which it issues a vigorous germ, a healthy and powerful essence, a great wealth of active elements in a small original volume” (Barthes, 2000, 37). Just as Barthes describes the bubbling qualities of foam, then, musicals are first performed in one location, in one language, and to one audience (“in a small original volume”), before being expanded for future audiences through subsequent performances, productions, cast recordings, film adaptations, and so on. Musical theatre therefore provides a “certain spirituality, inasmuch as the spirit has the reputation of being able to make something out of nothing, a large surface of effects out of a small volume of causes” (Barthes, 2000, 36). If successful, musicals expand into a figurative ‘bubble’ that captures the public’s imagination for decades to come and spreads

to places the authors could never have imagined (or, as a popular detergent advert might describe, “where other detergents can’t”). The assumptions generated by this ‘bubble’ thus endorse the idea that musicals are witty, pretty, and gay (as suggested in Mel Brooks’ *The Producers* (2001)), whilst also dominated by heterosexual weddings, love ballads and a hopeful community. Although this analogy might seem slightly exaggerated, it demonstrates the excessive nature of this art form through various popular signifiers that often hold little currency in the twenty-first century. The term ‘musical theatre’ therefore evokes certain “expectations and rules” from earlier texts and traditions, as Jauss describes of all texts, “which are then varied, corrected, altered, or even just reproduced” in an idiomatic fashion (1988, 223).

“I’m Puttin’ on My Top Hat”: The Iconicity of Fred Astaire

In order to consider the placement of certain signifiers within the twenty-first century meta-musical, it is first important to detail how such perceptions have been popularised, and further perpetuated, within various mass media forms. As Stacy Wolf points out, musicals have continually been “recorded, revised, excerpted, and adapted into other formats” to the extent that the history of musical theatre is also the “history of television and the cast album, of Hollywood film and U.S. tourism, of Disney and YouTube” (2011, 12-13). From this perspective, the presumed boundaries of live and mediatised, ephemeral and recorded, are seemingly blurred when applied to musical theatre and the wider dissemination of live performance. After all, musical theatre music can be heard live in theatres or cabaret settings, printed as sheet music, purchased as a physical cast recording or obtained as a digital download. Such framing devices have therefore enabled musical theatre to become a highly accessible art form, yet one which few audiences experience in its intended live format. In

turn, then, the cultural perception of musical theatre has been formed in relation to the dominant images displayed in various mediated texts, rather than the tropes presented on stage. In this sense, perceptions of musical theatre as a live art form are almost always configured through, or at least influenced by, the impressions distributed in popular culture.

One example of such dominance, and the focus of the following discussion, is the iconic image of a slender man dressed in a top hat, white tie and tails. Established by Fred Astaire in his 1935 film, *Top Hat*, the iconic use of such items has since been cemented as Astaire's trademark style and, as I wish to demonstrate, a broader perception of musical theatre. As Jane Feuer notes in *The Hollywood Musical*, this iconic image stems from the aptly named 'Top Hat, White Tie and Tails' number in which Astaire celebrates the luxury of formalwear, having been invited to a fictional party (1993, 5). As Astaire leads a chorus of aptly dressed men, he sings, "for I'll be there, / puttin' down my top hat, / mussin' up my white tie, / dancin' in my tails", before descending into a frenzied tap routine in which he playfully mimes shooting the men with his cane (Sandrich, 1935). Extending this trademark in *Broadway Melody of 1940* (1940), *Blue Skies* (1946) and *Easter Parade* (1948), such films have rendered the 'Fred Astaire musical' as the inclusion of a particular dance style and prop/costume selection, rather than the simple inclusion of Astaire himself. It is often difficult within twenty-first century popular culture, therefore, to differentiate Astaire's actual persona from the characters he once portrayed, and the stereotypes such films have established. The iconic image of a top hat and cane has thus, in turn, transcended the films of Fred Astaire to become a "universal, and apparently everlasting, exempt from history or geography",

indicator of showmanship, elegance and musical theatre in general (Feuer, 1993, 115).

It should be remembered, however, that such old-fashioned imagery is rarely presented within twenty-first century musicals without an element of nostalgia or parody. If such tropes are presented, it is likely they will appear in either a revival of *42nd Street* (1980) or *Top Hat* (2011) or a highly playful production like *The Book of Mormon* (2011). The cultural status of a top hat and cane has thus been determined, in part, by the various parodies of Astaire's trademark style and the adoption of such objects as flamboyant signifiers of musical theatre. Mel Brooks' 1974 films *Young Frankenstein* and *Blazing Saddles*, for example, embody Astaire as either an inarticulate monster, in the former, or a troupe of effeminate men, in the latter. Rather than celebrating Astaire, and musical theatre by extension, these films display song and dance as elaborate modes of communication, performed by ridiculous individuals, and thus worthy of parody. The well-known number 'Puttin' on the Ritz', for instance, is performed in *Young Frankenstein* by a suitably dressed doctor (referencing Astaire) alongside his mumbling 'monster' sidekick (referencing Ginger Rogers).⁷⁸ Seeming to undermine various perceptions of Astaire's talent and skill, the iconicity attributed to such tropes stems, to some extent, from the parodies presented by Mel Brooks. As Ian Conrich has argued, the genius of Mel Brooks was to challenge genre boundaries by combining the horror film and the musical as presumably distant genres (2006, 125). Given that the audience demographic of *Young Frankenstein* is likely to be different to that of a 1930s monster movie or a Fred Astaire film, particularly due to forty-year gap between

⁷⁸ Although this number was first performed by Harry Richman in the 1930 film of the same name, it was popularised by Astaire in *Blue Skies* (1946) to the extent most previous performances are now ignored within popular culture.

the proliferation of such genres and the release of *Young Frankenstein*, many audiences will have fashioned their perception of musical theatre, or at least the films of Fred Astaire, through the parodies of Mel Brooks. Although this argument cannot be universally applied, the popularity of Brooks' films certainly outweighs the viewership of Astaire's in the twenty-first century.

In addition to these examples, 'Puttin' on the Ritz' has been performed by numerous flamboyant showmen, including Robbie Williams and Neil Diamond, whilst the iconic use of these props and costume has been referenced in many films and television shows (including *Jeeves and Wooster*, *The Morecombe and Wise Show* and *Family Guy*). In Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), for instance, the enchanted candlestick, Lumiere, resembles Fred Astaire with a candlesnuffer and match as his top hat and cane. Exhibiting his "culinary cabaret" in the show-stopping number, 'Be Our Guest', Lumiere leads a lavish dinner for Belle, the film's female protagonist, whilst referencing the razzmatazz of musical theatre that is so regularly associated with these iconic objects (Trousdale and Wise, 1991). Furthermore, Lumiere is voiced by Jerry Orbach, a leading Broadway actor of the 1970s and 80s, to the extent that Lumiere is further 'ghosted', as Carlson might describe, by the showman figures originated by Orbach in *Chicago* (1975) and *42nd Street* (1980) (2001, 53). In turn, then, the continual use of top hat and canes in numbers which reference, parody, or even simply resemble, 'Puttin' on the Ritz', further identifies the work of Fred Astaire as a clear signifier of musical theatre. Although such intertextual layers of association are often broad and symbolic, the signifiers described above continue to be depicted in media far removed from the musical screen or stage.

Along with these popular examples, and more importantly to this discussion, such iconic attributes continue to be referenced within stage

productions as emblematic features of musical theatre. The 1975 musical *A Chorus Line*, for example, depicts the audition process of a 'new' musical, in which the performers wear matching gold suits and glittering top hats. If such a fictional musical had opened on Broadway in 1975, however, these costumes would seem out of place, particularly as the original cast of Kander and Ebb's *Chicago* would have been using vaudeville costumes in an ironic fashion only two blocks away. The realistic use of such outfits was certainly outdated by the 1970s, if they were ever current in the first place, and hence *A Chorus Line* acknowledges a recognisable signifier of musical theatre that is undeniably distanced from the time frame depicted. As a set of mirrors revolves around the dancers in the final number 'One', for instance, the stage is dominated by dancers who represent musical theatre in its most exaggerated form. Although this number does not reference Astaire specifically, the continued use of top hats and glamorous outfits has been so broadly embedded within popular culture that musical theatre can be evoked simply by drawing upon such signifiers. Similarly, the 'Spooky Mormon Hell Dream' number in *The Book of Mormon* culminates with a kick-line of devils and skeletons revealing sequined top hats and using their pitchforks as canes. As the ensemble sidesteps towards the audience, they lift off their hats, shimmy them in the air, and use these iconic objects to remind the audience that they are, in fact, still enjoying a 'musical'. Within each of these examples, then, the audience is not presented an embodied representation of Astaire, though he is likely to dominate their subjective reading, and instead engage with the broad visual cues which have come to represent musical theatre more broadly. Given that Marlene Dietrich appropriated Astaire's iconic style in her cabaret act, just as top hats and canes

are often used within musical sequences in *The Simpsons* (1989-),⁷⁹ these iconic images and costume choices have come to represent musical theatre for many audiences. Although the texts in which such references appear are often diverse, the legacy of Fred Astaire has been maintained through the continual referencing of his trademark style and has thus cultivated something far broader and abstract: a perception of musical theatre as an art form.

“God, I Hope I Get It”: Perceptions as Intertextual Motifs

Before expanding this discussion in relation to several case studies, it is important to highlight the impossibility of detailing a generalised assumption of any art form, particularly one that is problematised by matters of mediation, audience demographic and subjectivity. It is also important to consider, by extension, how the referencing of such perceptions expands the type of intertextuality explored within this thesis so far. In the first instance, musical theatre audiences are diverse in age, gender, educational background and lifestyle, to name but a few demographic features, and will therefore have dissimilar experiences and assumptions of musical theatre. A younger audience may not be aware of Fred Astaire, for instance, yet they may recognise his iconic attire through the intertextual references found in *Glee* or *The Simpsons* (an assumption in and of itself). It cannot be maintained, therefore, that perceptions span generations and cultures, and, for this very reason, are always determined within specific cultural contexts and perpetuated by a particular type of audience (a musical theatre ‘in-crowd’ perhaps). Although the

⁷⁹ Although musical numbers have been performed throughout *The Simpsons*, there are several notable examples which include the use of a top hat and/or cane. In ‘Who Needs the Kwik-E-Mart?’, for instance, from the fifth season episode ‘Homer and Apu’, shopkeeper Apu steals a cane in order to complete his number dismissing his old job. Similarly, the song ‘See My Vest’, from the sixth season episode ‘Two Dozen and One Greyhounds’, finds Mr Burns with a cane and hat performing a parody of ‘Be Our Guest’ from Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast* (which, as noted above, references Astaire in and of itself).

perceptions detailed above may be recognised by a sizable percentage of audiences, many individuals will not have a perception of musical theatre at all and, if they do, it is likely to have been constructed through television and film references or a generalised assumption of New York and Broadway. In this instance, visions of bright lights, the big city and parades of tap-dancing showgirls are as representative of Broadway and the West End, or perhaps even 'show business' more generally, as musical theatre as an art form. The term 'Broadway', for instance, is used concurrently to represent a wide street (literally a broad way), a theatre district in New York and a glamorous form of live performance. The idea of a 'Broadway musical' has therefore transcended any sense of geographical certainty, as David Savran has argued in his recent essay, to reflect a perfected style of performance that features elaborate scenery and a tuned orchestra (2014, 319).

In addition to this broadly recognised perception, the excessive images of jazz hands and a 'tits and teeth' attitude have defined musical theatre for a wide audience demographic and also rejected the form as frivolous entertainment. This is not to say that all non-theatre-going audiences naturally despise the form, seemingly appalled by its excessive nature, yet various perceptions of musical theatre stem from associations made about its audience demographic and fan base. Just as science fiction is often rejected as a fantasy world for geeks, nerds and all forms of social outcast, there remains a rooted presumption that musicals are exclusively for gay men and middle-aged women. Although this is far from the truth, many individuals who fall outside such categories often view musical theatre as a 'guilty pleasure' that is designed for somebody else. The assumptions made about the form's performance style and rooted demographic are therefore often false, or, as is

more often the case, overhyped and exaggerated. Some musicals do include suave showmen and tap-dancing parades of showgirls, as a parody by Mel Brooks would have us believe, yet such perceptions are often exaggerated to identify musical theatre as an entire form, rather than signifiers of certain flamboyant productions. With this in mind, it is impossible to outline a universal perception of musical theatre, since a singular aesthetic and audience demographic cannot be defined. Given that musical theatre *means* something different to every individual who encounters it, whether it be their job, amateur hobby or wife's favourite pastime, the form tends to be characterised by various specific perceptions which are always then read subjectively. Just as audiences will not recognise an intertextual reference without any prior knowledge of the referenced text, such conceptual references require audiences to recognise a specific impression of musical theatre as an art form, rather than as a canon of works.

"This is the Last Line of Our Show": Metatheatre as Intertextuality

In order to examine how conceptual references might function and operate in line with the preceding case study chapters, it should be recognised that various perceptions of musical theatre are referenced in an overtly metatheatrical manner. As argued in his extension of Lionel Abel's *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form* (1963), Richard Hornby claimed that a "playwright is constantly drawing on his knowledge of drama as a whole (and, ultimately, culture as a whole) as his "vocabulary" or his "subject matter." (1986, 31). In turn, the audience always relates what they see or hear to the "play as a whole, and beyond that, to other plays already seen and heard" (Hornby, 1986, 31). Hornby suggests, therefore, that audiences understand 'new' productions in relation to their experience of other productions, no matter

how self-contained such works might seem. Given that “calling attention to the presentational aspects of theatre and its conventions” is simply an exaggerated version of all theatre’s inherent self-reflexivity (Davis and Postlewait, 2003, 15), Hornby proposes that all plays draw attention to themselves in some capacity. All theatrical productions are thus “twice-told”, as Ethan Mordden describes *Ghost the Musical* (2011), in that audiences re-read past texts in the present, depending on their experience or expectations of certain works (2013, 256). More specifically, however, Hornby suggests that metadrama exists in five distinct forms: (1) a play within a play; (2) a ceremony within a play; (3) roleplaying within a role; (4) literary or real-life reference; and (5) self-reference (1986, 32). In relation to this study, the categorisation of a ‘literary or real-life reference’ and a ‘self-reference’ demonstrate that the referencing of a culture outside of the play is, to some extent, metatheatrical. In the first instance, Hornby defines the referencing of one text within another text as metadrama (though it is, of course, also a staple definition of intertextuality). In his opinion, such references have the potential to demonstrate the performance’s artificiality and ‘disrupt’ the action in numerous ways. Although the use of recognisable, real-life objects is standard practice in most theatrical productions (a performer eating a bowl of branded cereal perhaps), the referencing of a literary text or real-life person remains an “odd intrusion” which breaks the carefully established dramatic illusion (or ‘fourth wall’) (Hornby, 1986, 96). As David Beckham is embodied in *Bend it like Beckham the Musical* (2015), for instance, the audience recognises the familiar figure, whilst also having their expectations altered in performance by needing to invest in a different, though perhaps similar looking, performer. In each case, “the metadramatic estrangement generated is proportional to the degree to which the audience recognizes the

literary allusion”, which is naturally dependant on the popularity and timeliness of a particular reference (1986, 88). For example, Hornby suggests that references are often too esoteric to recognise (and thus a game for “scholarly sleuths”) or too exoteric to “damage” the fabric of the play (as with references to Christ, Robin Hood or Cupid) (1986, 89-91). Furthermore, references tend to lose their effect once the referenced work fades into obscurity, often decades after the initial performance (Hornby, 1986, 91). In this case, references can only disrupt the action if they are direct and conscious allusions to recent, popular works that can then be recognised by a large proportion of the audience (Hornby, 1986, 90). This is not to suggest that intertextual references *should* disrupt the action, yet should they be placed there to do so, the reference must be a “moment of special intensity, both hilarious and poignant, as the world of the stage and the world outside it [are] suddenly collided” (Hornby, 1986, 100).

With this discussion in mind, it is important to question whether the referencing of specific perceptions of musical theatre qualify as intertextual motifs, or instances of metatheatricality, given that they require a sense of timeliness and a suitable amount of recognisability. After all, a top hat and cane may be a popular signifier, but is certainly not a recent one. It seems, then, that certain tropes remain ‘popular’ and ‘recent’ by being frequently referenced within subsequent texts, despite such texts often being wildly dissimilar to source of such tropes. After all, *The Book of Mormon*, for instance, is very different tone and content to the films of Fred Astaire. In light of this, the referenced text must be popular enough to be recognised, whilst a past text can only become popular when referenced by more contemporary works. The self-referential nature of all musical theatre is therefore exacerbated by productions which acknowledge popular assumptions of the form, whilst further ingraining

them so that they are made popular enough to be referenced within subsequent productions. As the following looks to highlight, then, meta-musicals expand the widely accepted definition of the term intertextuality from the referencing of specific texts to the self-conscious referencing of various cultural perceptions. In metatheatricalising musical theatre's most recognisable qualities, such productions highlight that if you did not know you were watching a musical, you do now.

"I Don't Wanna Show Off, No More": The Self-Referential 'Meta-Musical'

Having demonstrated the intertextual resonances of metatheatre, the remainder of this chapter analyses productions which typically "wear a sarcastic sneer", whilst simultaneously respecting musical theatre traditions to fashion a cohesive narrative (Barnes, 2015, 25). As Jessica Sternfeld and Elizabeth L. Wollman have noted, the first decade of the twenty-first century saw an influx of ironic, self-reflexive and obnoxiously fun 'meta-musicals' which "look back on their own legacy with affection and witty insight" (2011, 123). *The Producers* (2001), *Bat Boy: The Musical* (2001), *Avenue Q* (2003), [title of show] (2004), *The Musical of Musicals: The Musical!* (2005), *The Drowsy Chaperone* (2006) and *Something Rotten!* (2015), for instance, each acknowledge musical theatre as an excessive art form by consciously parodying other musicals and, more interestingly, the presumed structure and tropes found within such shows. In turning to familiar tropes for content, these productions establish their sense of familiarity by metatheatricalising broader perceptions of musical theatre without adapting a specific source. As of today, however, this style of musical is no longer considered provocative or surprising by scholars, since the mocking of musical theatre traditions is "a long established convention of the American musical" (Garber, 2007, 227). After all, *The Producers* was not the first musical

to feature a character winking at the audience, just as *The Drowsy Chaperone* was not the first to parody other musical comedies, and so the self-mocking, self-praise and self-referentiality of the contemporary musical has been a vital element of musical theatre since its origins.

What is different, or at least requires further consideration, however, is the way such contemporary meta-musicals are postmodern, or, rather, “shaped by nostalgia, [the] mediatization of culture, suspicion of both the real and grand narratives, intertextuality, pastiche, deferment of meaning, self-reflexivity, dual coding, parody and fragmentation” (Sebesta, 2003, 99-100). As Judith Sebesta writes in relation to *The Producers*, “the “truth” of the narrative depicted” tends to be complicated, and often undermined, in musicals which reference highly popular sources (particularly when all audience members are presumed to share a universal knowledge of ‘the movies’) (2003, 100). In drawing upon perceptions fathomed across numerous media, these productions tend to operate in a way that is often crude and subversive, whilst also in line with the offensive and intertextual humour of television shows like *South Park* and *Family Guy*. In challenging various tropes, conventions and metanarratives through intertextual referencing, meta-musicals trade on a certain type of offensive humour that is prevalent throughout popular culture, and one which will only continue to develop in musical theatre in light of the conceptual referencing detailed here. Although Grace Barnes has argued that such shows also highlight an underlying arrogance and childish attitude on behalf of their creators, the following suggests that meta-musicals are notable in that they expand the self-reflective and self-referential nature of all musical theatre by referencing highly intermedial assumptions (2015, 25). In identifying a more expansive style of intertextuality than has been detailed in the previous

chapters, meta-musicals target conceptual assumptions in a significantly more multi-layered fashion than the simple referencing of a popular film or song (and are thus worthy of further consideration).

Urinetown: The Musical (2001)

Greg Kotis and Mark Hollmann's *Urinetown: The Musical* debuted on Broadway in September 2001 to rave reviews, just days after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, and went on to win three Tony Awards. Set in a Gotham-like city, the musical depicts a location in which the declining water supply has caused the government to ban private toilets, meaning money is tight and capitalism governs. Instead of "peeing for free", the UGC (Urine Good Company) regulate the toilet system and capitalise on one of humanity's most basic needs (as headed by the malicious Mister Cladwell) (Kotis and Hollmann, 2014, 16). Among 'the people', however, the young and dashing Bobby Strong seeks to lead the public to toiletry freedom, whilst unconsciously falling for Cladwell's beautiful, and conveniently named, daughter, Hope. As their doomed relationship develops, Hope overthrows her father and leads the people to salvation, where water is for today, not tomorrow. Bobby, on the other hand, is banished to the much feared 'Urinetown', which, it seems, is nothing more than a symbolic disguise for death; Bobby gets thrown off an office block and suddenly he is in 'Urinetown'. As the musical ends, Hope leads the community to find their inner 'river', though this carefree attitude is ultimately unsustainable, as the water dries up and all hope of survival is lost.

Despite the growing popularity of amateur and school productions of *Urinetown*, in addition to a recent London revival, there remains little scholarship examining the musical's use of intertextual references in any great

detail.⁸⁰ The scholarship which does exist, however, tends to survey the musical's political stance and potentially neo-Brechtian form.⁸¹ Anne Beggs, for instance, argues that *Urinetown* adheres to the central tenets of Bertolt Brecht (2010, 43), whilst Kathryn A. Edney suggests that the production questions why “musicals no longer have a political place within modern American society” (if they ever did) (2007, 110). Although Edney certainly agrees that the production perpetuates many Brechtian principles, she also argues that musical theatre is “too ridden with fantasy and too wedded to “boy-meets-girl” idealism to have any potential as an advocate for meaningful social or political change” (2007, 111). In order to subvert such idealism, *Urinetown* must therefore reject the expected traditions of musical theatre. In having the hero die, the ingénue outwitted, and the hopeful community suffering as a result, the musical challenges the idealistic ‘boy meets girl’ narrative by presenting it against a backdrop of rebellion, control and slaughter. Although these moments may seem risky and provocative, the musical ultimately presents a battle between good and evil, rich and poor, freedom and oppression in a manner that continually references a traditional model of musical theatre. In combining political subject matter with an art form of excess, *Urinetown* challenges the intertextual norms of the twenty-first century musical by metatheatricalising both structural and ideological perceptions of musical theatre.

⁸⁰ I attended a performance of *Urinetown: The Musical* at the Apollo Theatre, London, in October 2014. The production marked the musical's European premiere and was a transfer from the St. James Theatre, London, where it had premiered earlier that year.

⁸¹ Although this chapter does not consider alienation in any considerable way, many scholars have recognised that Bertolt Brecht's conception of ‘epic theatre’ continues to influence musical theatre in the twenty-first century (as Kathryn A. Edney and Dominic Symonds each identify in their chapters for *Brecht, Broadway and United States Theater* (2007)).

“Too Much Exposition”: Fantasy Locations and Omniscient Narrators

In the opening moments of *Urinetown*, Officer Lockstock (the musical’s narrator) enters, scans the dishevelled stage and addresses the audience: “Well, hello there. And welcome – to *Urinetown*! (*Pause.*) Not the place, of course. The musical. Urinetown ‘the place’ is ... well, it’s a place you’ll hear people referring to a lot throughout the show” (Kotis and Hollmann, 2014, 9). As he finishes his opening speech, Lockstock has established the self-referential nature of the production and, more importantly, framed the term ‘musical’ as a collection of recognised tropes and perceptions. In flaring his jazz hands and winking to the audience, Lockstock goes on to explain that the musical “takes place in a town like any town ... that you might find in a musical” (Kotis and Hollmann, 2014, 10). In doing so, he suggests that audience members must recall past encounters with musical theatre to sufficiently enjoy *Urinetown*. The audience is not required to envisage the New York of *In the Heights* (2008), the London of *Sweeney Todd* (1979) or the Salzburg of *The Sound of Music* (1959), however, but an image of an ‘every town’: a liminal place which presents a glamorised image of community. Given that Lockstock provides little indication of how this location might manifest itself, the audience is simply asked to imagine a non-descript setting similar to that of ‘Little Old Lady Land’ in *The Producers* (2001) or Audrey’s vision of ‘Somewhere that’s Green’ in *Little Shop of Horrors* (1982); a dreamlike location only attainable in musical theatre. Whilst these examples are certainly symptomatic of the romanticised locations depicted throughout the musical theatre canon, ‘Little Old Lady Land’ is simply a retirement village for New York’s horniest grannies, just as ‘Somewhere that’s Green’ is a nostalgic envisioning of small-town America in the 1950s. Such locations are therefore not as universal as they might seem, given that

Lockstock is referring to a concept which, rather surprisingly, does not exist within many musicals. Instead of presenting a rose-tinted perception of an actual location (as in *Oklahoma!*), or a location which is no longer named so (as in *Miss Saigon*), the musical depicts a location where the inhabitants are so engrossed in the communicative style of musical theatre that their actual location is irrelevant. Just as the Genie describes Agrabah in the recent stage version of Disney's *Aladdin* (2014) as a place where everybody sings or "has a minor in dance", Lockstock implies that *Urinetown* will envisage a town where song and dance are more important than reflecting reality (Ashman et al., 2014). In spoofing the very notion of a musical, a "town like any town" functions here as a framework for reflexivity and an indicator of the diverse musicals which have come before it. *Urinetown* is thus set in an ambiguous location where the characters communicate in a heightened fashion, no matter how dreary the narrative, in order to comply with an established perception of all-singing, all-dancing communities who live in non-descript locations. Although this seems to ignore the specific locations depicted in most musicals, audiences are unable to fully comprehend this moment, or simply the musical's ironic tone, without a clear perception of what a 'town in a musical' might look like. Without such a perception of the musical theatre canon, this moment will be read as an impromptu comment that fails to engage audiences or evoke the traditional model referenced throughout the production. Audiences must therefore draw upon a broader perception of musical theatre to fully understand this reference, one which must be constructed, in turn, by the various perceptions of the form which continue to be circulated in popular culture.

As the above example demonstrates, the intertextual character of *Urinetown* tends to reference assumptions of what musical theatre is or, rather

interestingly, should be. It should be noted, however, that such assumptions are only ever referenced by Lockstock (a policeman) and his accomplice, Little Sally (a street urchin). In throwing “direct and immediate” comments into the face of a “dreaming, imagining audience”, Lockstock and Little Sally actively destroy the presumed ‘fourth wall’ at every opportune moment (Hornby, 1986, 104). Before the audience can identify with Bobby or Hope, Lockstock intervenes and invites the audience to examine the musical as an “artificial construction” (Hornby, 1986, 103). This is only heightened, in turn, by the presentation of Lockstock and Little Sally as both metatheatrical narrators, who collectively guide the action, and fictional characters, who are unlikely to interact given their opposing social positions (would a corrupt policeman really befriend a homeless child?). As a character, Lockstock can do little to save Sally from poverty, and must sustain his authoritative position throughout. In turning to the audience, however, Lockstock and Sally interact to enlarge the world of the play, rather than destroy it, by adopting alternative roles (Hornby, 1986, 104-105). Lockstock and Little Sally therefore enable the ‘internal’ musical to develop (the story of Bobby, Hope and UGC), whilst analysing it in an ‘external’ musical (through their metatheatrical discussions). In the song ‘Too Much Exposition’, for example, Lockstock highlights the importance of not overloading the audience at such an early stage:

LOCKSTOCK: Whoa there, Little Sally. Not all at once. They’ll hear more about the water shortage in the next scene.

LITTLE SALLY: Oh. I guess you don’t want to overload them with too much exposition, huh?

LOCKSTOCK: Everything in its time, Little Sally. You’re too young to understand it now, but nothing can kill a show like too much exposition.

LITTLE SALLY: How about bad subject matter?

LOCKSTOCK: Well –

LITTLE SALLY: Or a bad title, even? That could kill a show pretty good. (Kotis and Hollmann, 2014, 10).

In moments such as these, Little Sally's dual position restricts her from altering the fictional narrative, since she cannot act upon the information she receives as a narrator once she becomes a character. In one scene, Lockstock reveals the true definition of 'Urinetown' to Sally, in stating, "I can't just blurt it out, like 'There is no Urinetown! We just kill people!' Oh no. The information must be oozed out slowly, until it bursts forth in one mighty, cathartic moment! Somewhere in Act Two. With everybody singing, and things like that" (Kotis and Hollmann, 2014, 38-39). As a character, Sally is likely to inform Bobby of her findings and alter the narrative as a result. Nevertheless, she has received this information as a narrator and must therefore support an expected, more 'musical' friendly, convention; that of finding true love. In insisting that Bobby and Hope unite throughout the musical, Sally implies that romantic union will save the central couple, as it has throughout the musical theatre canon (though this is, of course, unsuccessful, given that Bobby is murdered in Act Two). In a final attempt to save the couple, however, Sally sings 'Tell Her I Love Her' to inform Hope that Bobby will "see her in a better place / Where hope is always new" (Kotis and Hollman, 2014, 88). Although Bobby is unlikely to have articulated these lyrics once splattered across the concrete, Sally unites the leading couple in song to emphasise that this musical has, or rather had, a heterosexual couple who were united in the face of adversity. In refusing to allow *Urinetown* to subvert the traditions of musical theatre in any notable way, Sally ensures that the norms established by past musicals are followed stylistically, even if she cannot save the characters in question from being killed.

Although the use of characters who also narrate the story in which they feature is an established trend within the musical theatre canon, Scott McMillin argues that very few of these characters occupy a clear omniscient status (as

we might expect from the narrator of a film or a fairytale) (2006, 152). Whilst Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), the Emcee in *Cabaret* (1966) and Mark in *RENT* (1996), for example, are not usurped by another narrator or killed within their respective musicals, they do not highlight their position as narrators to the audience. Neither Tevye or Mark, for instance, ever inform the audience that the narrative is unfolding from their perspective or that their roles have been written to guide the action. *Urinetown*, on the other hand, challenges this norm by presenting an “authorial voice” which, as Michael Garber suggests in relation to various self-mocking shows, intervenes through self-conscious narration to mediate any communication between the stage and the audience (2007, 239). In this sense, Lockstock and Little Sally play the narrative at its own game to prevent their demise; Sally never ‘pees for free’ or dies of malnutrition, just as Lockstock is never attacked by the uprising. Unlike the punishing of the narrator in *Into the Woods* (1987), Lockstock recognises that his dual position will save him from the fictional action, whilst also enabling him to guide the narrative towards its conclusion. In particular, he states, “I may be a cop, but I’m also the narrator. So no one can touch me, not if they want the show to end” (Kotis and Hollmann, 2014, 98). Given that the audience rely on Lockstock to steer the narrative, his metatheatrical position forces the audience, as Anne Beggs argues, to be “complicit in the death of Bobby Strong” (2010, 48). The musical’s fictional characters are not complicit in the same way as the audience, however, as they remain unaware that Lockstock and Little Sally hold such authoritative positions beyond their policeman and street urchin façades. Bobby does not believe Little Sally to be a threat, for instance, since he is socially superior as the show opens and, more importantly, unaware of Sally’s privileged relationship with Lockstock. Bobby does not overthrow the narrator, in this

sense, because he is unaware that there is one. Lockstock and Little Sally therefore maintain a sense of self-knowingness by, always unsuccessfully, attempting to keep the norms of musical theatre intact. Kotis and Hollmann thus intrude on the action in having their characters acknowledge and discuss which rules or regulations have kept the production in check and, ultimately, a musical.

“What Kind of a Musical Is This?!”: Citing the Musical Theatre Canon

Having started to consider how *Urinetown* references the conceptual presumptions formed by other texts, the following discussion looks to critique the work of several scholars who have described certain moments as direct references to other musicals. Although it is not my intention to reject their readings altogether, it is important to further analyse the specificity and presentation of such references to fully comprehend how they might function. Anne Beggs, for example, describes the score of *Urinetown* as formed from “American musical standards” which are “part of a comprehensive structure” that “constitute the commercial musical repertory in the United States” (2010, 45). The score maintains various “established musical idioms”, in this sense, given that it continually mocks the “rhetoric of the genre” (Beggs, 2010, 45). ‘Follow Your Heart’, for instance, replicates the conditional love song of Rodgers and Hammerstein, as defined by John Lahr (2002, 155), whilst ‘Snuff that Girl’ resembles the energetic gang numbers of *West Side Story* (1957). More specifically, however, Beggs suggests that the second act gospel number, ‘Run, Freedom, Run!’, is a direct intertextual reference to ‘Sit Down You’re Rockin’ the Boat’ from Frank Loesser’s *Guys and Dolls* (1950). Although this song is a prominent example of an eleven-o-clock number that heightens the “energy level and dramatic interest in the second act”, there is no obvious

reference to *Guys and Dolls* in the music, choreography or staging of this number (Laird, 2011b, 34). In particular, Bobby persuades the crowd to hold out for freedom, rather than fighting their current situation directly, in singing, “that freedom sun / Will shine someday. / Till then you better run, / Run-a, run-a, run. / Freedom, run away!” (Kotis and Hollmann, 2014, 71). As the song reaches its climax, with “everybody singing, and things like that”, Bobby transforms the crowd into a beautifully harmonised choir (Kotis and Hollmann, 2014, 39). Having altered their opinion to the extent that he now conducts them, Bobby emphasises his message of hope in a similar vein to that of various past musicals. That said, he does not put on a pinstripe suit, confess his gambling addiction or refer to a higher power beyond freedom (as Nicely-Nicely Johnson does in *Guys and Dolls*). The number is no more ‘Sit Down You’re Rockin’ the Boat’ than ‘I Know Where I’ve Been’ from *Hairspray* (2002), ‘Freak Flag’ from *Shrek the Musical* (2008) or ‘Ain’t it Good’ from *Children of Eden* (1991); there is no obvious correlation between *Urinetown* and *Guys and Dolls* than there is between the various numbers which have been presented in this way throughout the musical theatre canon. Although *Urinetown* may depict “star-crossed lovers caught in moments of social rebellion”, as in *Les Misérables* or *West Side Story*, it does not acknowledge these productions explicitly, but rather pastiches their stylistic conventions (Beggs, 2010, 45). Bobby does not ‘hear the people sing’, or inspire individuals to find ‘a place for us’, and so ‘Run, Freedom, Run!’ simply “demonstrates the credentials of *Urinetown* as a musical”, rather than as a direct reference to *Guys and Dolls* (Edney, 2007, 115).

As highlighted above, many critics have problematically interpreted the referencing of certain conventions as specific intertextual references to other

musicals (often to aid their argument and categorisation of this production as a 'parody'). Such critics therefore employ a simplistic definition of the term intertextuality, one which is entirely centred on references as specific, direct and conscious acts of the creative team. Although I am not suggesting a more nuanced definition is required within scholarship more broadly, Beggs' article exemplifies how many scholars have yet to fully recognise broader stylistic and conceptual similarities between works of musical theatre. Just as 'Defying Gravity' in *Wicked* (2003) does not specifically reference 'One Day More' in *Les Misérables* (1985) or 'A New Argentina' in *Evita* (1978), as a counterpoint ensemble number which closes the first act, *Urinetown* is not always specific in its reference points (particularly as each audience member will have seen different, or even none, of the stated intertexts). As demonstrated throughout this thesis so far, not every audience member will have seen *Guys and Dolls* as they attend a performance of *Urinetown*, and so a general level of familiarity cannot be presumed. Whilst we can presume that most audiences will be familiar with musical theatre as an art form, the style of intertextuality demonstrated within *Urinetown* typically references unwritten guidelines that are not the exclusive aspects of certain musicals. Although Kathryn A. Edney has recognised 'Run, Freedom, Run!' as a "prominent second-act gospel number", rather than a direct reference, the intertextual framework of this musical is far broader than many scholars have previously stated (2007, 115). In this sense, *Urinetown* is not a spoof, or even a satire, of theatrical conventions, but a musical which metatheatricalises perceptions of what musical theatre is, who it seeks to entertain and the manner in which it does so. Whilst musicals such as this tend to include direct references to specific musicals, there is also often a broader, idiomatic referencing at work that requires further consideration.

Monty Python's Spamalot (2005)

In order to expand the above discussion in relation to broader, more abstract, perceptions of musical theatre, the following considers *Monty Python's Spamalot* as a production which references presumed audience demographics. Debuting on Broadway in 2005, Eric Idle and John Du Prez's *Spamalot* is an adaptation of the 1975 film, *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, which 'lovingly rips off' the Arthurian legend and "replaces the mud-and-muck medievalism of the film with the glitter and glam of a Broadway musical" (Finke and Aronstein, 2007, 290).⁸² Having since played around the world, with major productions in the UK and the US, the musical depicts King Arthur and his noble sidekick, Patsy, travelling across medieval England in the hope of enlisting Knights of the Round Table to join him in Camelot. After assembling Sirs Robin, Lancelot, Galahad and Bedevere, the knights are visited by God and instructed to find the illustrious Holy Grail. With the help of the musical's only female character, The Lady of the Lake, the knights are soon sent on a wild adventure, where they are taunted by 'the French', ravished by a killer rabbit and forced to stage a musical by the 'Knights who say Ni'. As the musical culminates, the grail has been located (under an audience member's seat) and a series of weddings ensue to celebrate the 'bright side of life'. As this brief synopsis highlights, *Spamalot* rewrites the film's often slapstick narrative as a linear celebration of various musical theatre conventions (Finke and Aronstein, 2007, 290). Although the film's most popular routines reappear on stage, in addition to 'Always Look on the Bright Side of Life' (a song that was first presented in Monty Python's *Life of Brian* (1979), not *Holy Grail*), *Spamalot* is bound by the presumed traditions of

⁸² I attended the original production of *Spamalot* at the Palace Theatre, London, in June 2008. I later attended a performance of the revised UK tour production at the Playhouse Theatre, London, in February 2013.

musical theatre. Given that the production features a flurry of showgirls, an egotistical diva and several Andrew Lloyd Webber-style love ballads, the musical is less concerned with the mocking of specific musicals, though it certainly does so, and instead references various expectations of musical theatre as an art form. In this case, the political edge of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* is replaced with a “very musical one” that provides a metatheatrical romp through the traditions of musical theatre, whilst broadly following the film’s narrative (Mordden, 2013, 256).

“Papa, Can You Hear Me?”: Yiddish Figures and Camp Personas

Although the following discussion might also be placed in a chapter regarding adaptation, *Spamalot* reimagines the satirical nature of Monty Python as an ode to the glamorous myths of musical theatre (so much so that it will not ‘succeed’ without them). Musical numbers do not continue the action, for instance, as they might in an ‘integrated’ musical, but continually disrupt the narrative with a “sudden reminder of its fictitiousness” (Hornby, 1986, 105). In these moments, the non-dancing characters, typically Arthur, are replaced by glamorously-clad ensemble dancers, only to return once the number has concluded and the dialogue continues. As a result, the interrupting musical sequence tends to be more elaborate than the world of the play might typically suggest; where scantily clad showgirls replace dishevelled knights. A prime example of this is during ‘You Won’t Succeed on Broadway’, which functions as a second act showstopper and a nod to the title of the 1961 musical, *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*. In this scene, Arthur has been summoned by the Knights who say Ni to put on a Broadway-style musical, but not, as they protest, in the style of Andrew Lloyd Webber. As Sir Robin warns, however, the troupe will not succeed on Broadway without any Jews. He sings,

“You may have the finest sets / Fill the stage with Penthouse Pets [...] You may have unleavened bread / But I tell you you are dead / If you don’t have any Jews” (Du Prez and Idle, 2005). In doing so, Robin acknowledges the abundance of Jewish creative teams which have long characterised the American musical and, in turn, denigrates the idea of a British musical (as an ironic nod to the musicals of Andrew Lloyd Webber, Tim Rice and Elton John). As the song develops from a simple instruction to an elaborate production number, Robin references a host of Jewish imagery to confirm his claim that “if it’s not kosher, then no show sir” (Du Prez and Idle, 2005). Initially, he paraphrases various Barbra Streisand songs, including ‘Papa Can You Hear Me?’ from *Yentl* (1983) and ‘People’ from *Funny Girl* (1964). This is soon expanded, however, as a glittering Star of David descends from the fly floor and the cast performs the iconic bottle dance from *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964), though with grails instead (Du Prez and Idle, 2005). As the number culminates, Robin presents himself as a Yiddish version of Fred Astaire, with a traditional skull cap and glittery cane, to combine the traditional symbology of Judaism with that of musical theatre.

Despite the musical’s Anglo-Christian setting, this number pays homage to the phenomenon that, for over half a century, the American musical has been predominantly created by Jewish Americans. Although this number is entirely playful, particularly as Idle and Du Prez conform to the presumably ‘disastrous’ concoction of non-Jewish, or even non-American, composers on Broadway, the song evokes an abstract, yet culturally significant, perception of musical theatre through several specific references. Such references are not solely designed to mock *Fiddler on the Roof* or *Funny Girl*, for instance, but rather use these texts to embody a broader cultural myth. Intertextuality therefore functions, in this

case, as both a conceptual and specific fabrication of the dominant correlation between Jewish culture and musical theatre. From the scores of Irving Berlin and Stephen Sondheim, to the famed performances of Fanny Brice and Al Jolson, this number demonstrates a rooted correlation through several performative references, rather than a verbal acknowledgment or 'in-joke'. 'You Won't Succeed on Broadway' disrupts the action, in this sense, whilst maintaining the assumption that musicals explode simple ideas into elaborate production numbers. In light of this, the number demonstrates a broader type of intertextuality by fashioning a bricolage of references to evoke one of musical theatre's most long-standing perceptions.

As a comparative example, 'His Name is Lancelot' acts as a coming-out number for Sir Lancelot, the most archetypically masculine of the troupe. Echoing the silliness defined in the above example, this song depicts numerous camp personas, flashy costumes and homosexual stereotypes in an extravagant song and dance number. As Prince Herbert reveals Lancelot's sexuality, the moment bursts forward into a song far removed from the homosexual adoration outlined by D. A. Miller in *A Place for Us* (1998). As a disco ball and rainbow cloth are flown in, Lancelot's tabard is stripped away to reveal a "glittering, glimmering, shimmering outrageous body costume, with silver lame tights", as the stage fills with Copacabana-style dancers, laden with maracas and lycra (Du Prez and Idle, 2005). As Lancelot emerges as a "butterfly" who can be found "pumping at the gym" or the "Camelot Y.M.C.A.", this humorous ode to homosexuality develops as if a celebratory disco, not a 'diva-off' between Patti LuPone and Bernadette Peters (as musical theatre fans might expect) (Du Prez and Idle, 2005). As in 'You Won't Succeed on Broadway', this number was consciously written by two heterosexual men who

understood that such depictions were no longer culturally relevant, yet wished only to revel in stereotypes. Given that fruit hats better represent Carmen Miranda than The Village People or the Y.M.C.A, the musical, in turn, refers to a glamorised perception of homosexuality in which individuals ‘blossom’ as they reveal their sexuality. In selecting the “glossy qualities of the image”, this number displays a ‘fabulous’ façade which, rather unsurprisingly, ignores homophobic abuse to promote homosexuality as a joyful facet of musical theatre (Jameson, 1991, 19). In this sense, *Spamalot* draws upon widely recognised images to present a parody in which all “social struggles have been conveniently excised” (Savran, 2003, 96). This is not to suggest that the musical should ever attempt to realistically depict gay culture, particularly as this is a highly subjective task, yet the authors are entirely conscious of their stereotyping in this moment.

It is important to consider, in light of these examples, then, the way in which meta-musicals perform various perceptions of musical theatre in a manner which might risk alienating a core demographic. Having never written for musical theatre before, Idle and Du Prez seemed to anticipate an auditorium full of individuals who would recognise the above clichés as central to a broader perception of musical theatre. The selection of these minority groups is not pure coincidence, of course, as the work of Andrea Most and D. A. Miller highlights, and thus the musical exploits such stereotypes for comic effect to further establish a ‘knowing’ community. As Michael Garber notes, the “intertextual aspects of parody implicate the audience, encouraging them to feel that they are part of a community”, to the extent that they enjoy seeing their identities presented on stage (even if in such a stereotyped manner) (2007, 240). In forming a bond between the audience and the performers, shared jokes

formulate a sense of communion that rejects the level of critical distance, or alienation effect, that has been widely theorised by Bertolt Brecht (Garber, 2007, 240-241). In this instance, audiences are not alienated by such stereotyped representations, but rather enjoy them as a collective who can look past the negative attributes being displayed. Idle and Du Prez therefore imply that *Spamalot* must be Jewish and homosexual in order to qualify as a Broadway musical. Although Lancelot acknowledges that gay marriage will “still be controversial” in a thousand years (Du Prez and Idle, 2005), the musical is inherently bound by certain clichés that reduce the audience and creative teams of musical theatre to their “minimum negotiable signifiers” (Sorkin, 1992, 216). Despite the production having introduced a broad demographic to musical theatre as an adaptation of a cult film, *Spamalot* draws upon several familiar stereotypes to celebrate their fundamental contribution to the evolution of musical theatre within popular culture. It is easy to see how such numbers might be considered offensive, of course, yet the musical metatheatricalises such perceptions to let the audience join in on the joke and further define the sense of community formed between the performers and the audience. In these examples alone, then, the audience is required to interpret the action in relation to clichés regarding those who have funded the production, or those who are sat alongside them, not an assumption of what will be depicted on stage. *Monty Python’s Spamalot* therefore demonstrates an expansive form of intertextuality in which cultural perceptions are metatheatricalised for comic effect.

“And Nothing’s as Amazing as a Musical”: Widening the Intertextual Framework

This chapter has highlighted the manner in which numerous ‘meta-musicals’ reference the presumed conventions of the American musical and metatheatricalise a generalised perception of musical theatre. In celebrating

certain tropes and conventions, rather than specific texts, the intertextual framework of these productions is considerably more complex than the inclusion of 'loving spoofs' or parodies of more traditional works. The characters of *Urinetown*, for instance, continually strive to keep a traditional model intact, always unsuccessfully, in a way that critiques the apparent uselessness of musical theatre as a social force. In having their characters acknowledge which rules and regulations will guide the action, the authors reference numerous perceptions of how a musical should be constructed and the manner in which a musical might function. *Monty Python's Spamalot*, on the other hand, playfully references a set of "expectations, desires, assumptions, and meanings" which have been culturally determined by various stereotypes of audience demographic (Gray, 2006, 26). Although the musical certainly includes direct references to specific texts, it does so to encapsulate broader cultural myths and stereotypes. Despite their often diverse functions and intentions, meta-musicals widen the intertextual framework of the twenty-first century musical by referencing ideas that have been constructed across various texts, genres, media, cultures and generations. Given that the twenty-first century musical continues to be denigrated by the popular press for its ironic, self-reflexive and familiar adaptations of high-profile works, productions like *Urinetown* and *Monty Python's Spamalot* identify a vibrant theatrical culture in which popular culture is continually referenced in broad and conceptual strokes.

RECYCLED CULTURE

The Significance of Intertextuality in Twenty-First Century Musical Theatre

Part Three

**Cultural Implications
and Conclusion**

"Past the point of no return, the final threshold"
The Phantom of the Opera (1986), lyrics by Charles Hart and Richard Stilgoe.

*

"Their chattering and chittering, their nattering and twittering"
Matilda the Musical (2011), lyrics by Tim Minchin.

Chapter Seven: Popular Culture as a Web of Recycling

Having identified four types of intertextual reference, and a framework through which to analyse them, in Chapter Two, the preceding case study chapters have examined the manner in which intertextual references function and operate in contemporary musical theatre. In expanding this study from the analysis of specific texts to groups of texts, through to a bricolage of cultural references, and then broader perceptions of musical theatre, the previous chapters have critiqued the functions of intertextual references *within* various examples of musical theatre performance. Although this has certainly been a beneficial contribution to scholarship, having critiqued the specificity, function, intention and presentation of references within multiple productions, this final chapter extends this analysis by considering the intertextual nature of the experiences which frame the live event *beyond* the auditorium. As identified in the introduction, the twenty-first century can be differentiated from other time periods in that audiences are increasingly engaging with musical theatre through numerous 'paratexts'. The initial aim of this chapter is therefore to investigate how the pricing strategies and social media campaigns behind several notable productions, including *RENT* (1996) and *The Book of Mormon* (2011), further identify the significance of intertextuality within twenty-first century musical theatre. By analysing the intertextual resonances between musical theatre and various framing devices, the first half of this chapter extends Gérard Genette's notion of 'paratextuality' to consider how these

frameworks might parallel the stylistic use of intertextuality exhibited on stage. In demonstrating how audiences actively engage with the texts which frame a musical, the following suggests that these intertextual experiences can expand an audience's engagement and agency by establishing them as active participants. Having further identified musical theatre as a significant intertextual form in the first half of this chapter, the second half then considers why such cultural recycling might occur more broadly by arguing that musical theatre not only invites intertextuality, but requires it to advance as a popular art form. Using the work of Marvin Carlson as a gateway to a broader discussion, this final analysis critiques the economic and cultural necessity of intertextuality to propose that the contemporary musical follows a broader cultural trend in reflecting 'past' works within the 'present'. This final chapter therefore extends the preceding analysis by considering the intertextual nature of musical theatre as a globally commercial form which reflects a cultural need to 'recycle' past popular culture.

Paratextuality and the Musical

As highlighted in Chapter One, Gérard Genette completed his trilogy of textual transcendence in 1987 with the publication of *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (published a decade later in English). As a term introduced by Genette in *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1982), a 'paratext' is a liminal device which mediates the relationship between the reader and the text. Investigating how titles, notes, introductions, epilogues, and so on, might provide a frame through which to interpret a literary text, Genette proposed that paratexts cannot be disentangled from our interpretation of the primary text since they condition the way in which we create meaning (1997a, 3). From this perspective, paratexts provide a "(variable) setting and sometimes a

commentary, official or not, which even the purists amongst readers, those least inclined to external erudition, cannot always disregard as easily as they would like or claim to” (Genette, 1997a, 3). The framing of a text cannot easily be disentangled from the primary text, in this sense, given that paratexts actively reinforce and condition the framework through which a primary text is read and interpreted (1997b, 1). Paratexts enable a “text to become a book”, for instance, since they operate as a “*threshold*” or “*vestibule*” that “offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back [from the text]” (Genette, 1997b, 1-2).

In applying this term to musical theatre, audiences tend to construct their expectations of a production from its poster and ticket design, merchandise, official cast recording, online trailer, press release, social media campaign, and so on, before entering the theatre to enjoy the primary ‘text’. Such framing devices thus function, as Jonathan Gray suggests, as “an airlock to acclimatize us to a certain text” and, in doing so, demonstrate an inclusive use of the term intertextuality (2010, 25). Paratexts are, of course, texts in their own right, able to be enjoyed without the primary text, however they are unlikely to be created without the primary text ever existing. A ticket would not be printed without a correlating performance, after all, just as a cast recording would simply be a concept album without an original cast. In this case, paratexts are simply designed to support and promote the production itself (or disseminate it in a new medium). With these examples in mind, it becomes evident that the manner in which we purchase tickets – who we buy them from, how much they cost and the process of attainment – frames our interpretation of a performance long before we enter the auditorium. Although this seems to exaggerate the influence of these devices, paratexts prepare us for other texts by fashioning a

“zone between text and off-text, a zone not only of transition but also of *transaction*” (Genette, 1997b, 2).

As will be demonstrated throughout the following discussion, paratexts are often as important to analysing how we engage with familiar texts, or the texts we have already constructed expectations of, as any direct reference to *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) or *Star Wars* (1977). Whether in the dissemination of cast albums, bootleg recordings on YouTube or social media campaigns, paratexts frame an audience’s reception of a text to the extent that they are often as attractive to audiences (or more so, in some cases) as the nuances of the live performance. As is evident from fans sleeping outside the theatre, innovative poster designs and continuous celebrity casting, it is often the production’s framework which ensures ticket sales and future audiences, not the material presented on stage (though a strong combination of the two often secures the longevity of most popular shows). Given that these devices are rarely created by the production’s creative team, paratexts are designed to sell tickets and launch the production into the public domain by condensing and adapting the theatrical experience for a different medium. In spite of their obvious importance, however, scholars continue to ignore paratexts when detailing an audience’s engagement with the live event, particularly in relation to intertextuality, despite such texts often driving an audience’s response and desire to purchase tickets. In providing a detailed analysis of these texts in relation to musical theatre, then, the following identifies paratextuality as a capitalist form of intertextuality that mirrors the weaving of textual fragments found on stage. In considering how reduced priced tickets and social media campaigns might inspire an active response, the following demonstrates the

importance of the texts which frame a production beyond the auditorium, the surrounding city and across the world (whether in a physical format or online).

"It's A Rich Man's World": Fan Culture and the 'Reduction' of Broadway

At any given performance of *The Book of Mormon* (2011), numerous avid fans storm the box office desperate to see their name pulled from a spinning tombola, two hours before the curtain is due to rise. As a name is selected and announced to the crowd, the identified individual cheers, as those around them groan, before being led into the box office to collect their 'prize'. Despite the public attention and unwavering popularity this event receives, such prized tickets are not free, nor are they ever likely to be so, since fans are simply invited to *purchase* front row seats for the 'hottest show in town' at the reduced price of £20 in London and \$32 in New York.⁸³ Unlike the official half-price ticket booth (TKTS) or the student/day seat policies that are offered at several commercial theatres, *The Book of Mormon* ticket lottery is a live experience that capitalises on an audience's physical excitement and, more often than not, disappointment. Not only do fans have to *win* the opportunity to *buy* their significantly reduced tickets, they have to push through a crowd of excited fans to purchase their ticket at an allocated time within a predetermined location. The streets surrounding each theatre have therefore become sites of active pursuit, often twice daily, to the extent that this event is now a recognised performance that articulates the intertextual nature of the commercial musical beyond the primary theatrical experience.

⁸³ As a point of comparison, seats in the second row of the stalls currently cost up to £75 at 'peak' performances in London (<http://www.theatremonkey.com/PRINCEOFWALESSstMAP.htm> [accessed: 01 May 2017]).

Despite the above example undermining the “class stratification that has long been materially embedded in theatre buildings”, it is a familiar expectation that those who can afford a higher priced ticket for a production will receive a better view, more leg room and an overall improved experience (Harvie, 2009, 37). Although this has been historically complicated by upper-class patrons purchasing boxes to be ‘seen’ rather than to ‘see’, Jen Harvie notes that theatres have long perpetuated cultural divisions between classes in providing “glamorous entrances for elite, high-paying patrons and dingy stairwells entered off alleyways for servant-class punters with cheap tickets” (2009, 37). Whilst such class distinctions are presumed to be obsolete within the twenty-first century, the tiered, and often flexible, pricing of commercial, big budget musicals continues to separate audiences within theatres, whilst also excluding audiences who cannot afford to pay at all (Harvie, 2009, 38). No matter how popular a production’s source material may be, and thus how wide the production’s presumed demographic, not every member of the public will be able to afford even the cheapest of tickets (let alone the required train fare, accommodation, dinner, and so on). In this sense, audiences are variably enfranchised and disenfranchised according to whether they can afford to attend a mainstream, commercial musical (Harvie, 2009, 38).

As *RENT* (1996) opened on Broadway in the mid-1990s, however, its producers decided to reflect the dawn of a “new beginning for musical theatre”, as John Kenrick argues, in the musical’s pricing structure (2008, 364). Offering front and second row seats at \$20 on a first-come, first-served basis, the ‘rush ticket’ policy (or ‘day seat’ policy in the UK) has since enabled students, tourists and theatre fans to see an unmissable show at a significantly reduced price. Having been embraced by productions across the world, though particularly in

New York, early-risers can purchase tickets as the box office opens, to then enjoy the rest of their day in the comfort of having their evening already planned. At the time of writing, twenty-one of London's West End theatres set aside tickets to be sold at a reduced price or, in other words, thousands of pounds of potential income earmarked for audiences to queue for on the day of performance.⁸⁴ Unlike the sense of luck required to win a ticket lottery, day seats simply require the individual to arrive at the theatre before the box office opens and wait their turn. As producer Jeffrey Seller noted, the initial day seat strategy ensured that "everybody can see *RENT*, no matter what their means, young or old" and stopped commercial theatre from further excluding audiences who might not have the financial means to attend a highly priced musical (The Final Lottery, 2009). Unlike the ingrained financial and class divides that have long excluded potential audiences, day seats are purchased on the day of performance and thus require, instead, an allotted amount of free time, means of travel and a significant amount of perseverance (some individuals may queue for several hours and not receive tickets, after all). In most cases, then, day seats are purchased by younger audiences, often students, who are presumed to walk the city streets, frantic to see the latest hit production. Purchasing day seats has thus become an act of pilgrimage for many theatre fans which, as Michel Poizat notes in relation to a similar strategy at the Paris Opera House, "requires both inspiration and perspiration, savvy as well as [physical] endurance" (1992, 8). In the age of social media, virtual reality games and, in this case, online ticketing websites and apps, day seats require fans to seek out tickets through "actual physical pursuit, occasionally at a run" (Fuchs, 1996, 132). Much like the prescribed performances of the show's actors, theatregoers

⁸⁴ At the time of writing, day seats for West End musicals range from £15 (for *Dreamgirls*) to £29.50 (for *Wicked*) (<http://www.theatremonkey.com/dayseatfinder.htm> [accessed: 01 May 2017]).

must obtain their tickets through an established ritual (come rain, shine or sleeping bag) in an act of “know-how” and physical agency (Poizat, 1992, 9). Unlike film fans sharing their reviews on their mobile phones or computer screens, theatre fans must physically dedicate themselves to a production, surrounded by their peers, in a social act that requires determination and, ultimately, disposable income.

In the twenty-years following the debut of *RENT*, day seats have continued to introduce new audiences to musical theatre, whether tourists looking to fill a few hours or excited fans wanting to expand their ticket stub collection, and further encouraged “an enthusiastic theatre community” (Blank, 2014). Having also enabled fans to become “part of the image-making process”, the fan culture surrounding *RENT* developed the public perception of the show beyond the death of its composer, Jonathan Larson, and framed it as a newsworthy item that showed avid fans sleeping outside the theatre (Replogle-Wong, 2011, 387). Across its twelve-year run on Broadway, individuals could walk past the Nederlander Theater and pay attention to people who were camped out in sleeping bags or shouting, cheering and rushing inside the theatre as the box office opened. Although inviting fans into the warmth of the foyer would certainly have been kinder, fans are asked to embody their fandom as physical advertising campaigns for curious onlookers and future audiences (‘if it’s worth sleeping outside for, it must be good!’). This form of paratextuality therefore both frames and guides the expectations of both ticketholders and potential audiences, whilst also framing the way in which we “consume” the production itself (Gray, 2010, 25). As Maurya Wickstrom argues in relation to the performativity of global brands like Disney and Nike, “in branded spaces [such as a theatre] we must loan the brand’s character the phenomenological

resources of our bodies. We play out its fictions, making them appear in three dimensions, as if they were real” (2006, 2). Both day seats and ticket lotteries, in this sense, elevate a production’s recognisability through physical engagement and the creation of “excitement or prestige, exploration or comfort, risk-taking or assured quality” (Knowles, 2004, 92). Although not every production will sell its day seats the moment the box office opens, the attainment of reduced priced tickets is now a recognised act within the theatre fan ‘community’ that continues to draw attention to the live event, whether in person or when (re)circulated on social media.

Although most theatre tickets are still purchased strategically, often months in advance for a special occasion, day seats have enabled musical theatre to become an instantaneous afternoon treat. Audiences can explore a major city with an afternoon to spare and soon purchase tickets for a recognised piece of entertainment that they were not expecting to attend that morning. In many ways, then, the layout of the specific city determines which theatres sell their tickets the fastest and which are ignored due to their awkward location. If a production is already sold out on arrival, day seats enable fans to simply visit the nearest theatre and obtain tickets for a similarly reduced price there. Although most audiences are not so fickle in their selection of a production, many dedicated fans tend to be as interested in seeing shows with discounted tickets, as they are productions with an famous cast or familiar content. With theatre tickets up to twenty times the price of a standard cinema ticket, however, most audiences do not treat theatre in the same manner as buying a new outfit, book or food item. That said, day seats have enabled theatregoing to become a last-minute treat that is promoted by fans camped outside the theatre or screaming for lottery tickets. An audience’s interest in a

production is therefore heightened, and often determined, in part, by the paratextual relationship formed by the physical attainment of tickets. It is not the box office manager who makes day seats desirable commodities, after all, but the fan culture which emerges from the production's marketing and word-of-mouth to provide an "entrance" that informs us of what to expect (Gray, 2010, 25).

"It Means You Get to Connect": Social Media and the #LoveMormon Campaign

As highlighted above, the attainment of tickets to mainstream commercial musicals developed throughout the 1990s and early 2000s to introduce a series of reduced ticketing strategies that diversified the demographic of such productions. I now wish to expand this observation further by investigating how social media has extended such active participation as a twenty-first century form of paratextuality. In order to commence this investigation, however, it is important to contextualise the major alterations in musical theatre marketing campaigns which have occurred since the 1980s. Highlighted by the introduction of the megamusical, or "through-branded" musical, audiences became "walking advertisements" as they left theatres with a wordless logo printed across various forms of merchandise (Rebellato, 2009, 49). As audiences left the original productions of *Cats* (1981), *Les Misérables* (1985) and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986), for instance, they took with them souvenir brochures, t-shirts and mugs which were emblazoned with distinctive brand identities that forced musical theatre into a global framework. In giving these shows clear and unique brand identities, Cameron Mackintosh enabled his productions to travel the world with indistinguishable production values and marketing campaigns that could transcend language barriers. In forming his productions to be factory copies of the original, these shows established a

sense of quality where, much like a Big Mac from McDonalds, *Cats* would be the same in Shanghai, New York or Berlin (Rebellato, 2009, 41). In the marketing of the original 2011 production of *The Book of Mormon*, however, audiences were seen to 'give something back' to the production, hence becoming, in some sense, marketing assistants themselves. Just as Andrew Lloyd Webber's TV casting of *The Sound of Music*, *Oliver!* and *The Wizard of Oz* enabled audiences to cast productions from their living rooms, the marketing team behind *The Book of Mormon* took a mediatised platform and applied it to live performance. In particular, the musical fashioned the #LoveMormon on Twitter as a collective site where audiences could celebrate the production once they had left the theatre. In turn, the most outrageous and celebratory tweets were selected and plastered on billboards across London and New York's theatre districts to disseminate recommendations from past to future audience members, not producer to consumer.

In the three decades which separate the opening of *Cats* and *The Book of Mormon*, then, the marketing of musical theatre had developed from disseminating globalised brands to individual public opinions (as collated through an open access, user-friendly and, ultimately, global platform). Although a wordless logo was still present in the production's marketing campaigns, it was supplemented by layers of celebratory tweets and comments that raise significant questions regarding public engagement and the ability to promote a production's affective qualities. After all, are we to trust these tweets? Respond to them? Or simply ignore them as a marketing campaign designed to dupe us into parting with our hard-earned cash? It is important to consider, in this instance, whether such paratexts provide a trustworthy voice, expand an audience's agency, and place musical theatre in the cultural mainstream. In

allowing audiences to respond the moment they leave the theatre, the following argues that this campaign fashions a sense of community by expanding the production's intertextual fabric and providing a prism through which we might interpret *The Book of Mormon* as a live experience.

It should be recognised, before continuing, that “everyone who attends a musical, has a response to it, and then shares that response has acted the part of a critic, even if the response was as basic as applause (or lack thereof)” (Dvoskin, 2011, 367). Whilst this has always been the case, the Internet has enabled audiences to leave the theatre and instantly inform their online peer group as to whether they enjoyed or despised a performance. The invention of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, online blogs and email, to name but a few, has inspired an influx in the cultural recognisability of audience-critics, as I will now term them, and questioned the role of professional critics. Audiences are no longer presumed to sit back and discuss their impressions of artistic excellence with their physical peers, but contribute to a market where their money determines a production's longevity. After all, professional critics do not purchase their own tickets and, as time progresses, are becoming “increasingly less representative of the people who are buying the tickets” (Pogrebin, 1998). This shift has therefore undermined professional criticism and, in response, inspired producers to use examples of an audience's actual experience to fuel their marketing campaigns. Instead of critiquing a musical's formation, performance or design, as a professional critic might, audience-critics describe the affective qualities of their experience and how the production has enhanced their livelihood in an upbeat, often humorous manner. Whether detailing how much they nearly wet themselves or their need to instantly rebook, the performance's affective qualities are seemingly undermining its artistic content

in marketing campaigns which are built around *paying* audiences, rather than *paid* critics. Although it is naïve to suggest that audiences only want to be entertained, many individuals will be inspired to purchase tickets if a fellow theatregoer has suggested they do so on a passing tweet. In this case, attendance is not dictated by how many star ratings the production received on opening night, but by theatregoers who simply want to enjoy an evening at the theatre. In seeming to provide diverse theatregoers with a voice, albeit reduced to 140 characters, this marketing campaign reflects the experience of a paying audience, and thus the type of audience professional critics are trying to inform or persuade.

Despite Peggy Phelan's claim that a "performance's only life is in the present", this marketing campaign captures the central tenets of live performance, typically an embodied response, in a digital format (1993, 146). As Nina LeNoir states, "theatre is a relatively unmediated performance form, governed by shared conventions rather than technological interfaces", and is thus unable to be recorded in any 'authentic' format (2003, 115). All digital performance, on the other hand, is "mediated by the hardware and software that allow participants to convene virtually" (LeNoir, 2003, 115-116). In particular, social media platforms are mediated by unknown, intangible and, presumably, inauthentic software, unlike in a theatrical space where every gesture is exposed in full view of an audience. Although theatre is also an art form of illusion, we should question whether these tweets have been altered, produced from fake accounts, or written by a marketing team under false usernames. Whilst we accept there is a selection process in place, can these seemingly 'digital' voices be trusted when purchasing tickets? Although these questions are certainly important, it should be remembered, in the first instance, that

individuals choose to place their comments online; where Twitter becomes a chosen extension of the theatrical event, not a necessity. In turn, then, this campaign exploits, rather than fabricates, the views already made public by past audiences. Fans are not forced to tweet about the production, after all, and so engaging in this way simply helps fabricate a dialogue between fan and text that can be reinstated and reinforced long after their initial tweet. Jill Lubochinski, for instance, spotted her tweet in New York's Pennsylvania Station and tweeted "holy jesus - i just saw my tweet on a poster in penn station! #IBelieve! #LoveMormon", with an attached image (chinski43, 2013). In this instance, the ability to recirculate her fandom months, even years, after her initial statement confirms the authenticity of this campaign and suggests that tweets stem from excited fans, not marketing teams. Unless we are sceptical enough to believe that her entire account is fake, Lubochinski's fandom has been acknowledged in a public location, and is thus endorsed by the production she wishes to celebrate. It is likely she now considers herself to be more than the average fan, whose fandom has yet to be acknowledged, and has become an active participant in sculpting the public perception of *The Book of Mormon* (Lonergan, 2015, 73). In addition, and perhaps most importantly, she reaffirms her excitement and enthusiasm, for a second time, in seeing her tweet printed in a public place. She has found her tweet in a physical location, presumably by accident, and keeps the musical in mind as she celebrates her fandom, once more, on Twitter. Accordingly, this marketing campaign is not a simplistic transfer from audience to Twitter to billboard, but rather a multifaceted dialogue which continually recycles one person's opinion to attract new customers, whilst often also re-engaging the original customer in person and online (we cannot

presume that every selected audience member will then find their printed tweet, of course).

Although having a tweet recognised by a mass brand or global celebrity is likely to be a commonplace experience as social media develops, these marketing campaigns should be considered innovative today given that they provide audiences with a sense of agency, or presumed agency, where their voice is worth publishing. By having their tweets plastered on billboards, social media enables audiences to publically circulate their fandom and, ultimately, promote the continuation of the live event. Given the locality and ephemerality of musical theatre, by extension, it is no longer clear where the performance starts and ends, since social media provides a platform which reflects the live event, whilst always remaining a separate and fluid paratext (Lonergan, 2015, 76). In this case, the use of Twitter, and the Internet more broadly, characterises a series of twenty-first century paratexts which operate in ways that were unimaginable decades earlier. In framing a text quite differently to the way a written introduction might frame a monograph, social media provides interactive responses that enable audiences to contribute to a culture they choose to be a part of. As creative acts that go “beyond the ordinary audience reactions of critical praise or complaint”, or so Patrick Lonergan describes them, such experiences layer the intertextual fabric of the contemporary musical far beyond the auditorium (2015, 76). Although the intertextual layering of sources on stage is important, audiences continue to engage with productions through the participatory events which frame them on city streets and online in cyberspace. In this case, the framing of *The Book of Mormon* extends the musical’s intertextual celebration of storytelling (as analysed in Chapter Five) by

fashioning a global network that is accessible, fluid and designed to promote musical theatre in a twenty-first century context.

“We Can Never Go Back to Before”: Why Ghosting?

Having expanded the remit of this study beyond the analysis of intertextual references on stage, the above discussion has demonstrated that every element of musical theatre, whether in a physical location, in other media or online, is as intertextual as the conscious referencing of other works. I have yet to consider, however, why intertextuality occurs and, more specifically, who benefits from such references? Although many scholars have concluded that intertextuality is a source of financial gain, a discussion I will develop further in the following section, this is not a universal explanation which rationalises the most esoteric of references to relatively unknown texts. In the following, then, it is my intention to question why intertextuality governs musical theatre and how the sense of nostalgia, ghosting and intermediality created in such works is ultimately fashioned to help eliminate several forms of risk. In analysing the four features that Marvin Carlson suggests construct a “ghostly tapestry” to begin this discussion, the remainder of this chapter demonstrates how musical theatre requires intertextuality to help reduce financial risk, attract audiences and reflect the cultural recycling so regularly associated with popular culture more broadly (2001, 165). In identifying financial gain as a narrow explanation for the dominance of intertextuality found within this art form, this chapter concludes that the need for intertextuality is multifaceted in relation to musical theatre, particularly as it remains a dominant structural and stylistic device.

As has been highlighted throughout this thesis, many scholars have denigrated the contemporary musical, given that “the lure of familiarity cannot

be underestimated” within these shows (Wollman, 2006, 145). Musical theatre scholarship, by extension, continues to promote the idea that productions only exploit familiar elements to sell tickets, despite the multiple factors that condition the creation of a commercial musical. Marvin Carlson, on the other hand, proposes that there are four primary reasons for recycling familiar elements in all forms of theatrical experience. Although he does not refer to musical theatre specifically, or even use the term intertextuality, Carlson usefully suggests that familiar elements either (a) save time and exposition, (b) enable the subversion of popular tropes, (c) highlight a performance’s self-reflexivity, or (d) generate economically viable theatre (2001, 166). Although these reasons are not applicable to musical theatre to the same degree, it is important to consider them in relation to the twenty-first century musical in order to conclusively rationalise the use of intertextuality within this popular art form.

(a) Save Time and Exposition

In the first instance, Carlson suggests that familiar plots, characters and situations are recycled to save time and condense material into the allotted time frame of performance (2001, 165-166). Most commercial musicals, for instance, are two and a half hours in length, no matter who the author is, which musical styles are being used or how sophisticated the narrative is. In most cases, then, material is presented in such a way as to ease the audience through a series of recognisable tropes and convey a coherent narrative (as demonstrated throughout the preceding chapter). In particular, musical motifs are often used (or rather reused) throughout the production to remind audiences of earlier events or to quickly establish ideas of setting, character, emotion, and so on. Andrew Lloyd Webber, for instance, is known for repeating musical phrases and styles within his scores to re-establish ideas far quicker than if presented in

dialogue. The score of *Sunset Boulevard* (1993), for example, references the idiom of film music in its lavish musical style and orchestration to denote the production's tone in a usefully straightforward manner. Similarly, and perhaps more obviously, various musicals feature certain character types and circumstances that guide the audience through the narrative without the need of complex explanation or further clarification. It is obvious from the opening scene of *Oklahoma!* (1943), for instance, that the narrative will be driven by Curly pursuing Laurey, rather than Aunt Eller or Jud Fry, given that heteronormative coupling continues to influence most mainstream forms of entertainment. The recycling of elements that audiences already recognise, or simply understand as cultural clichés, therefore provides a type of "reception shortcut" that guides the audience from overture to exit music (shortcuts in and of themselves) (Carlson, 2001, 166). Whilst these examples certainly demonstrate how recognisable features might aid the audience's understanding of a piece, they do not account for the complex intertextual references that have been illustrated throughout this thesis. Although theatre is constrained by its relationship with time, unable to be slowed down, reversed or revisited, intertextual references tend to provide information or evoke a response in a manner that is considerably more nuanced than simply guiding the audience from one scene to the next. In light of this, intertextual references typically fulfil a creative desire to provide an enhanced, or simply different, perspective on the narrative or the referenced text. Although it is important not to dismiss Carlson's justification of this point altogether, particularly as familiar elements guide even the most complex of musicals, genre conventions tend to function far more intricately than simply guiding the audience from one moment to another.

(b) Enable the Subversion of Popular Tropes

Secondly, Carlson notes that familiar elements are often employed for “ironic purposes” to highlight the “incongruity between the apparent situation onstage and what [the audience] know or assume to be the real situation” (2001, 166). Whether to guide the audience or simply entertain them, “recycling can be and has been used with equal success either to reinforce or to undermine the drama being presented” (Carlson, 2001, 166). In this case, intertextual references tend to acknowledge another text, whilst playfully subverting what has come to be recognised as its core values. In *Monty Python’s Spamalot* (2005), for instance, ‘The Song that Goes Like This’ mocks both specific musicals (*The Phantom of the Opera* (1986), for example) and musical theatre in general to undermine the form’s inscribed excess. That said, many intertextual references help develop an audience’s interpretation by recognising a text outside the ‘world of the play’. As detailed in Chapter Five, the referencing of *The Sound of Music* (1965) is as much an opportunity to develop the audience’s interpretation of *The Book of Mormon*, as it is an attempt to mock a classic film musical. The subversive elements of *The Book of Mormon* therefore “undermine” the referenced text to “reinforce” the metaphorical messages portrayed in both musicals (Carlson, 2001, 166). Despite Carlson suggesting that familiar elements can only ever undermine or reinforce the presented action, there are numerous examples within the musical theatre where texts actively achieve both. Intertextual references are not merely designed to achieve one or another, since the cultural recycling evidenced throughout the twenty-first century continues to rehearse and renegotiate the past in multiple ways. Although intertextual references often mock, undermine and subvert past texts, they are not exclusively designed to do so.

(c) Highlight a Performance's Self-Reflexivity

Thirdly, Carlson proposes that the recycling of familiar elements draws attention to the “constructedness of the theatrical performance” in a notably metatheatrical way (2001, 173). As in *Avenue Q* (2004) or *Something Rotten!* (2015), intertextual references repeatedly function as winking nods to popular culture, and thus further highlight each musical as an example of “playful postmodern theatre” that takes “joy in the artifice of art” (Carlson, 2001, 173). In drawing attention to their “status as a product [...] consciously assembled out of preexisting elements”, metatheatrical performances invite audiences to actively participate by involving them in in-jokes and allowing them to further identify with the presented characters (Carlson, 2001, 173). Although each of the case studies analysed in this thesis have been assembled from familiar material, it is important to recognise that many of them have not been metatheatrical, particularly as their characters do not break the fourth wall by directly acknowledging the audience. Whilst Carlson is right to acknowledge that familiar elements remind audiences of works beyond the auditorium walls, such referencing does not automatically disrupt the action by reminding audiences of its fictitiousness (Hornby, 1986, 105). This claim cannot be universally applied, therefore, since the presentation of intertextual references within musical theatre is often multifaceted and nuanced.

(d) Generate Economically Viable Theatre

Despite this final reason being cited throughout musical theatre scholarship, Carlson describes the economic lures of recycling in a single paragraph (thus giving it the same amount of attention as the above reasons). In order to fuel theatre as a dominant “commercial enterprise”, he claims that

creative teams have often recycled familiar elements to “attract an ongoing public”, not simply one audience at one performance (Carlson, 2001, 166). In line with David Savran’s depiction of musical theatre as “always - and unpredictably - overdetermined by economic relations and interests”, all theatre must receive a steady audience to produce a stable turnover and, in turn, sustain its financial outgoings (2004, 213). Although this is a rather obvious observation, and one that is slightly distant from the preceding discussion of intertextuality, the intertextual character of the contemporary musical is often presumed to “cash in” on familiar works through the “extended intertextual engagement” with high-profile texts (Hutcheon, 2006, 8). The third chapter of this thesis, for instance, addressed the manner in which popular works have often had ‘the musical’ added to their titles to regenerate the public interest in a text in a new medium (as with *Legally Blonde the Musical* (2007) and *Shrek the Musical* (2008)). In their titles alone, such works are highly intertextual in that they recycle popular works in their entirety (often to the extent that they are financially successful for doing so). Had *The Lion King* (1997) not been popular as an animated musical in 1994, for instance, it is unlikely the stage production would have been produced and transferred internationally only three years after the film’s release. It is important to note, therefore, that musicals must be adapted from an appropriately popular text, since numerous high-profile stage adaptations have not received the critical or financial success their producers had anticipated. Although shows like *Billy Elliot the Musical* (2005) certainly highlight the benefits of recycling familiar texts, productions like *Gone with the Wind* (2008) and *Made in Dagenham* (2014) demonstrate the unpredictability of this trend, having closed within months of their UK premieres. As in each of these examples, adapting a high-profile source does not automatically

determine a production's longevity, given that audiences seek out the elements they wish to see recycled on stage, not simply those they recognise from a different medium. Just because audiences may recognise *The X Factor* (2004-) as a popular talent show, for instance, does not mean they wish to see it recycled as a live stage musical. No matter how popular *The X Factor* is as a television format, the original London production of *I Can't Sing! The X Factor Musical* (2014) closed only six weeks after opening night due to poor ticket sales. This trend remains prominent, nonetheless, since numerous "safe bets with a ready audience" are successful in providing commercial theatres with a steady audience, and thus income, whilst further establishing musical theatre at the intersections of commercialism, tourism and the mass media (Hutcheon, 2006, 86).

"Money Makes the World Go Round": Capitalist Intertextuality and Risk

Although Carlson's justifications for recycling are certainly useful in rationalising the stylistic use of intertextuality within musical theatre, particularly as they highlight features that are often ignored as intertextual, his final claim cannot be applied to the intricate references which appear within a particular text, only broader adaptations of a whole text. It is obvious that *Ghost the Musical* (2011), for instance, relies on an audience's familiarity with the preceding film from 1990, yet this does not justify or explain the occasional and esoteric references found within *Urinetown: The Musical* (2001) or *The Drowsy Chaperone* (2006). It seems necessary, therefore, to look beyond the recycling of familiar elements as a way of reducing financial risk to consider it as a method of reducing risk more broadly. The remainder of this chapter argues, in turn, that musical theatre not only invites intertextuality, but requires it to remain financially afloat, attract an audience and, perhaps most interestingly, reflect a

wider cultural trend. In order to do so, it is first important to further discuss the manner in which the financial structures of producing musical theatre have aided and perpetuated such a dominant stylistic use of intertextuality.

As noted by scholars including Elizabeth L. Wollman, Jonathan Burston and Steven Adler, the financial structure of musical theatre has developed over the last three decades to the extent that international corporations are regularly capitalising on their previously mediated works in a live art form. As Wollman writes in *The Theater Will Rock*, the live presentation of a familiar text not only extends the popularity of the former text, perhaps an animated film, but also enables the continued exploitation of various related products, be they souvenir dolls, t-shirts or cast recordings (2006, 144-145). Extending Cameron Mackintosh's model of uniformity and commoditisation, the film-to-stage musicals of DreamWorks, Warner Brothers and Disney are, for Wollman, clear examples of the economic factor of 'synergy' in that they form a collection of texts (or franchise) under a single title that, in turn, aids the sale of each associated, yet individual, text (2006, 145). Disney's *The Lion King*, for instance, is not only a widely popular film and stage musical, but a series of recognisable toys, merchandise, theme park attractions and television shows that sell each other based on recognition. In this instance, any 'text' which is labelled under the heading of *The Lion King* can 'become popular' given the existence of its related texts. In forming a brand that can be inscribed on numerous associated products, the act of selling a text through its relationship with other texts is a notably intertextual process. In turn, then, producers require some form of link to an existing text (or texts) to make the live experience financially stable, as perhaps the riskiest element of any synergised franchise.

Looking to Disney's *The Lion King* (1997) to elaborate this point further, it is important to recognise that many individuals will purchase tickets for this musical based on the admiration of past audiences and the fact that billions of theatregoers have seen this production around the world. Although many will be looking to extend their experience of the animated film which preceded it, this assumption cannot be applied to all audience members. It should be considered further, therefore, that many audiences will be persuaded to purchase tickets in line with their expectations of *The Lion King* as a franchise, rather than their actual experience of past texts (though the producers will certainly hope their interest will be extended in due course). As this process occurs in a multitude of configurations, the intertextual associations formed between each component will be exploited for profit to the extent that intertextuality is required to keep these productions running each year (or even decade) at a time. Since this thesis has not dismissed these productions as mere potboilers, a position I in no way wish to retract, intertextuality remains vital in the commercial sector given that theatremaking is not a guaranteed enterprise for any corporation, even those as financially secure as Disney. As Dan Rebellato notes in *Theatre & Globalization*, for instance, the stage production of *The Lion King* may never recoup its initial investment, as its running costs are higher than the average box office income (despite it nearly selling out at every performance). To investigate this further, Rebellato questions "[w]hy would a vast global business like Disney keep such a show going when it's losing money?" (2009, 48). Quite simply, he concludes, "it's not a show; it's an advert" (Rebellato, 2009, 48); the profit created from *The Lion King* as a franchise outgrows the economic failure of its defining element (a stage musical). In September 2014, the production became the highest grossing musical in theatrical history, however, as

Rebellato suggests in his 2009 publication, little of this is converted into net profit, since such financial security can only be harnessed by the sale of its paratexts (Johnson, 2014). If, as Rebellato claims, productions like *The Lion King* are not financially viable in their intended format, then the notion of risk undoubtedly dictates even the most high-profile and seemingly ‘safe-bet’ of adaptations. The recycling of familiar texts therefore occurs in the twenty-first century to keep productions financially viable in a cultural climate where numerous texts and media formats are competing for an audience. Although live theatre has always been perceived to compete with mediatised forms, an argument best outlined by Philip Auslander, the commercial framework established by organisations such as Disney has shaped an environment in which producers tend to exploit several streams of profit, in addition to box office revenue; the risk of ignoring what is familiar and popular is seemingly too financially unstable in a twenty-first century context. Intertextuality is required, in this sense, to comply with the inherent commerciality of musical theatre.

“Those Wonderful People Out There in the Dark”: Risking the Audience

Although the above discussion has addressed the obvious ‘sink or swim’ realities of producing a musical, it is not merely the actions of the producers or financial backers that include an element of risk; it is the audience too. Whilst various contemporary musicals attempt to “lure new patrons into the theatre” by recycling familiar products, purchasing theatre tickets will always be an act of financial risk for audiences, no matter which texts are being adapted or referenced (Barnes, 2015, 10). Audiences must deliberate, in each case, whether the production will match their expectations, seem good value for money or constitute a worthwhile use of their time. With ticket prices rising an average of five percent each year in London alone, audiences must continually

judge the experience they are going to receive, or which experience they choose to receive, in line with several types of risk (Youngs, 2015). Despite the clear financial risk involved, something that only intensifies as ticket prices rise, more audiences are attending productions in London and New York than ever before (with gross sales in London's West End 42% higher in 2014 than in 2008, and 82% higher than in 2004 (Snow, 2015)). With these statistics in mind, it seems rather surprising that as ticket prices rise, more tickets are being purchased. Although we might presume this increased sense of risk might deter audiences, particularly in a decade where the financial market has become progressively unstable and numerous acts of terrorism have affected tourism, audiences continue to visit major cities to enjoy the live experience of musical theatre. As this has occurred, however, the content of such productions has become "disposable", as actress Melanie La Barrie notes in Grace Barnes' *Her Turn on the Stage*, meaning that more tickets are being purchased as a result of presumably safer options (cited in Barnes, 2015, 175). In capitalising on name recognition, producers "keep making all these throwaway shows" as an attempt to eliminate the sense of risk an audience must take when selecting which shows are worth their money and which are not (La Barrie cited in Barnes, 2015, 175). Citing *Shrek the Musical* (2008), *The Addams Family* (2010) and *Ghost the Musical* (2011), in particular, Barnes responds to La Barrie by suggesting that, in several decades time, such shows "will be obsolete because their reference points will have disappeared from living memory" (2015, 175); these musicals are so culturally reliant on their own time period that they are unlikely to be revived in decades to come. Although having a prior interest in a text has become an essential element of contemporary theatregoing, Barnes' comment remains problematic since musical theatre history is dominated by productions

which were successful when they first opened, yet have been lost to obscurity because they are no longer relevant (or their references no longer resonate with a contemporary audience). Even musicals that are successfully revived today seem to suffer, to some extent, given that their cultural references are no longer familiar or historically significant (as in *Guys and Dolls* (1950) and *West Side Story* (1957)). Barnes seems to provide, in this instance, a simplistic view of the musical theatre canon in which shows have never responded to their cultural context or the society in which they were written.

In light of these instances, the presumed disposability of the contemporary musical is not a twenty-first century phenomenon. Musical have continually traded on their recognisability to a contemporary audience for such works to be engaging, relevant and attractive to those with little 'disposable' income. That said, there are several recent musicals that seem to counteract this statement at first glance. *Caroline, or Change* (2004), *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (2005), *next to normal* (2009) and *Fun Home* (2015), to name but a few, have each been critically applauded for their sense of innovation and rejection of the "bland, unchallenging fare" that has been perpetuated by numerous film-to-stage adaptations (Teachout, 2014, 74). Although *Fun Home* is an adaptation of Alison Bechdel's graphic novel, for example, the musical has been recognised by critics as 'original' since it does not "essentialize the familiar" or respond to the "saturation" and "filmic consciousness" of most high-profile musicals (Leve, 2016, 272). It is important to remember, however, that many of these shows, that seemingly challenge the norms of twenty-first century musical theatre, are as intertextual as those which adapt a major film or television programme. Lyrics such as "Oh my god, it's gotten too darn hot, like my man Cole Porter said", from Lin Manuel Miranda's

In the Heights (2008), for instance, demonstrate that even the most inventive of musicals still appropriate familiar idioms and phrases in their very formation (Miranda, 2008). *In the Heights*, more specifically, depicts many of the narrative tropes of *West Side Story* (1957), itself a modernised adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*, through a blend of hip-hop and salsa music set in Washington Heights, New York City. Although a musical like *In the Heights* might seem a risky choice for an audience to invest in, this example demonstrates that even the most inventive of musicals recycle familiar elements, even if very subtly, to the extent that they are highly intertextual as a result. It is seemingly impossible for a work to be 'original', in this sense, since productions are caught between the past and the present, often rearticulating the past through idioms that are likely to attract an audience in the present.

In order to identify this point further, numerous musicals use a twenty-first century aesthetic or rhetoric to re-energise the past (often being considered 'original' as a result). Debuting on Broadway in 2006, Steven Sater and Duncan Sheik's *Spring Awakening* interrupts the narrative of Frank Wedekind's 1891 play with metatheatrical performances of rock music that demonstrate the play's adolescent "mute pain" through a twenty-first century idiom (Sater, 2007, viii). Seeming to ignore the recognised integration of much musical theatre, *Spring Awakening* counteracts the nineteenth century narrative with contemporary sounding songs of pain, denial and admission that are performed with handheld microphones and an onstage band (Sater, 2007, 8). Similarly, though entirely different in tone, David Byrne and Fatboy Slim's *Here Lies Love* (2013) and Lin Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton* (2015) each stage the biography of a political figure, Imelda Marcos (1929-) in the former and Alexander Hamilton (1755-1804) in the latter, through contemporary popular music styles and various intertextual

references. In *Hamilton*, for example, the Founding Fathers of the United States communicate using rap and hip-hop, whilst referencing artists from Jay Z to Rodgers and Hammerstein in a manner that blurs the narrative's eighteenth century time frame with twentieth and twenty-first century popular culture. Although such works do not adapt high-profile texts that might be recognised by a broad audience demographic, musicals like *Hamilton* excite contemporary audiences by presenting the past in an accessible and notably modern style. In each of the above examples, then, it is the form or presentational style that is highly intertextual, and thus familiar, rather than the content or storyline. By staging the narrative within an immersive club environment in *Here Lies Love*, or presenting a cabinet meeting as a rap battle in *Hamilton*, these works are celebrated as new, original and innovative by using twenty-first century aesthetics to draw diverse audiences to an art form that is often considered the conservative pastime of white, middle-class and middle-aged women (as Elaine Aston and Geraldine Harris have explored). Although they might seem a larger financial risk by not appropriating popular source material (the life of a founding father is certainly less familiar than a major Disney film, after all), even the most innovative of contemporary musicals still require intertextuality to entice an audience and function in a commercial framework. In mirroring Raphael Samuel's suggestion that "the past has almost caught up with the present" (2012, 103), musicals like *Hamilton* evoke the past through an intertextual performance of the present to keep musical theatre in the cultural mainstream and make it increasingly popular for audiences who risk their time, money and expectations to attend. Although this is not the sole explanation for such dominant use of intertextuality, the engagement of an audience remains vital in determining what is performed, how it is presented and for whom.

"I'll Help You Be Popular!": Risking Popular Culture

Having demonstrated how the twenty-first century musical requires intertextuality in terms of attracting an audience, this final section argues that musical theatre requires intertextuality to remain popular and reflect popular culture more broadly. Although this thesis has not explored the intertextual nature of forms such as film and television at any length, it is appropriate here to consider how musical theatre might reflect these media stylistically to remain a significant art form in the twenty-first century. It is therefore my intention to argue that the dominance of intertextuality within musical theatre reflects a cultural need to reference, regenerate and recycle existing texts, whilst differentiating itself from such media due to its inherent liveness. In analysing the presentation of musical theatre on television and online, the following section demonstrates that musical theatre emulates the "involved, inescapable intertextuality" of numerous high-profile media in order to remain a popular art form (Gray, 2010, 70).

In the weeks preceding the annual Tony Awards in New York, various television news and chat shows celebrate the nominated musicals with live performances, interviews and short documentaries following specific cast members or one of the television show's presenters making a cameo appearance on stage. From *The Today Show* (1952-), *Good Morning America* (1975-) and *The View* (1997-) to *Late Night with Seth Meyers* (2014-), there remains a tradition of Broadway musicals performing on television for wider dissemination, whether during this time frame or throughout the year, in a way that intertextually repurposes the live event for a broader audience. In turn, websites such as YouTube continue to store these multidisciplinary performances, as a kind of cultural memory bank, for audiences to enjoy long

after each production has closed. Whether posted by the production's marketing team, the specific television show or a viewer who has recorded particular episodes, these performances are available for years after their official release and can be enjoyed in any order, skipped through or watched on mute (unlike the live performance it represents). Furthermore, the Tony Awards broadcast itself can be enjoyed in its entirety, or split into separate performances, as a way of fragmenting the already fragmented representations of these musicals for a wider audience. Television, in this sense, provides a way of viewing musical theatre in a mediatised format, but also as an intertextual extension of the stage. Audiences are invited to preview the live production in a shortened format before risking the purchase of a ticket. YouTube, in turn, allows audiences to re-watch these clips or simply sample a production they were unable to attend in person (as presumably a less modified representation of a production than its online trailer). Such media therefore allow audiences to engage with musical theatre in a way that is unique and participatory. Audiences can choose which clips to watch, when, and for how long, in a manner that forms a bricolage of intertextual references to live productions that they may never see in person. Reflecting Henry Jenkins' suggestion that such media require consumers to "seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content" (2006a, 3), the Internet has enabled television to become a digital extension of the intertextuality found on stage and, more importantly, a way of projecting theatrical content to audiences who have never visited London or New York.

In addition to presenting official cast performances, television often functions as a site of discussion for various musicals, as it does for all sorts of products, without requiring a marketing team to control what is said or shown.

On a recent episode of *The Late, Late Show with James Corden* (2015-), for instance, Corden and actress Rosie O'Donnell discussed their admiration for the musical *Hamilton*, before rapping the show's opening number (The Late Late Show with James Corden, 2016). Although a large percentage of viewers would have enjoyed this moment simply for their impromptu performance, Corden and O'Donnell advertised a Broadway musical in a way that was not generated by the production's marketing team or cast; their performance was designed to celebrate, not advertise. In addition, *The Late, Late Show* also includes the highly intertextual 'Carpool Karaoke' segment in which celebrities sing along to popular songs as Corden drives them around Los Angeles. In an early episode starring actress Jennifer Hudson, the pair visit the Hollywood Walk of Fame and order from a drive-thru restaurant, before singing over Hudson's performance of 'And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going' from the motion picture soundtrack of *Dreamgirls* (2006). As the pair sing out of the window and frantically dance, the sketch attempts to capture a heightened version of an everyday event with two (or more) major celebrities. Having since received over twenty-one million hits on YouTube, this clip has aided the recycling of Hudson's performance in *Dreamgirls* for an audience who may not have seen or even heard of the musical from which it stems. Although the musical is never cited as an intertext, particularly as the sketch was designed to feature over-the-top singing in a "buzzworthy viral video", this clip reaffirms Hudson's performance on mainstream television and online in a way that might influence the purchasing of *Dreamgirls* on DVD or tickets for a future stage production (The Late Late Show with James Corden, 2015). This globally popular YouTube clip is now, whether consciously or otherwise, a paratext that will frame an audience's interpretation of this song, or the musical from which it derives, as

long as it remains familiar. In light of these examples, then, mainstream television and online formats like YouTube function intertextually by enabling various individuals, whether a presenter, guest or audience member, to engage with other media in an interactive format.

From the recent success of live television musicals such as *The Sound of Music Live!* (2013) and *Grease: Live* (2016) to musical episodes of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (2001) and *Scrubs* (2007), television is an intertextual format that continually appropriates material popularised in other media and, as in the above examples, circulates content to an audience that might not have engaged with it in its original form. YouTube, in turn, facilitates the endless recycling of certain texts for any individual with Internet access (a notion complicated further as clips are then disseminated on social media). In order to remain a popular art form, musical theatre must therefore reflect the hybridity and intertextual viewing practices found within other high-profile media. In referencing texts far beyond the remit of musical theatre, whilst also requiring an audience to have prior knowledge of such texts, musical theatre aligns with various popular forms in its inherently intertextual construction. What differentiates musical theatre from these forms, however, is the manner in which stage productions can be updated, re-energised and reinvigorated at each performance. In numerous productions of *Monty Python's Spamalot* (2005), for instance, several songs have been updated to match the shift in context that has occurred since the original production. 'You Won't Succeed on Broadway', for example, was rewritten as the 'Star Song' for the original UK tour, given that the Jewish heritage of musical theatre holds little currency in the UK. Similarly, the actor playing Elder Cunningham in *The Book of Mormon* (2011) tends to add, or substitute, alternative names for Nabulungi in line with what he finds humorous

or what might be topical at a specific performance. Whilst the published script includes him calling her “Jon Bon Jovi” and “Nala” (Suskin, 2012, 114; 172), there are numerous alternatives that have been used in performance, whether Nigel Farage or Nanny McPhee, many of which are then detailed on several fan sites (lifeaskew, 2016). Although intertextual references do not have to be modified to be interpreted in a new light, a notion applicable in all art forms, the liveness of musical theatre enables intertextual references to remain fluid and incomplete, given that their presentation can be altered at each performance (particularly when spoken). Unlike the permanent nature of a film or television episode, unable to be extended or improved without creating an entirely new text, musical theatre facilitates the adding or altering of references in a way that makes each performance unique, yet still identified by a title such as *The Book of Mormon* (rather than *The Book of Mormon: Extended Edition*, as we might find when a film is re-released). Although it is expected that television shows will be extended, shortened or simply re-edited for home media, these versions exist as separate texts, particularly as the original may still be in circulation, unlike an original stage performance which remains ephemeral. Musical theatre should therefore be differentiated from numerous mass media forms for its inherent liveness, yet recognised as replicating these forms by continually trading on intertextuality.

In reflecting popular culture in this way, musical theatre requires intertextuality to be viewed as a popular form and thus attract the commercial audience it requires. Whilst I welcome Linda Hutcheon’s suggestion that economic issues “must be considered in any general theorizing of adaptation” (2006, 30), the Rodgers and Hammerstein estate do not financially benefit from the intertextual references found in *Hamilton*, for instance, and so the reason

behind their placement is arguably more multifaceted. The inherent intertextuality of the twenty-first century musical must therefore be acknowledged as a response to the economic risk of producing a musical, but not, as many scholars have argued before me, conditioned by it. The prevalence of such intertextual referencing is thus an attempt to limit the risk taken by producers and audiences, in addition to the risk encountered by musical theatre as an art form should it deviate from the broader trends of popular culture.

"The Future is a Barren World": Conclusion

Having expanded the remit of this study from the analysis of intertextual references on stage to those found throughout popular culture, this final chapter has argued that intertextuality dominates musical theatre as a way of reducing risk on behalf of a production's producers, audience and broader relationship with popular culture. In particular, it has demonstrated how the twenty-first century musical reflects a wider cultural trend in recycling popular works using a contemporary sensibility and, often, style. Given that Grace Barnes suggests that audiences are driving the use of recycled material as much as producers (2015, 155), these examples identify an era in which, more so now than ever, popular culture is becoming a "multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash" (Barthes, 1977, 146). Just as hip-hop is used throughout *Hamilton* to reformulate a traditional history lesson, whilst references to various contemporary social issues are threaded throughout *Wicked*, popular works are continually reinvented with enough nostalgia to evoke the familiarity of a past text, whilst injecting it with a renewed sense of energy through constant revision. Despite decades of critical neglect, musical theatre has entered a "culture of endlessly circulating texts" with the

same intertextual vigour and intensity that is often described of its mediatised counterparts (Gracyk, 2001, 56). Although I have refrained from denigrating the form for its reliance on existing sources, the twenty-first century musical should be recognised as an extension of popular culture, as a site of cultural recycling, ghosting and nostalgic entertainment, not as a lifeless commodity controlled by commercialism. The established use of adaptation and intertextuality, in this sense, only further demonstrates that most “art is derived from other art”, to the extent that, as Hutcheon details, all popular culture must operate within a contemporary, postmodern framework of “cultural recycling” (2006, 2-3). As highlighted throughout this chapter, and this thesis in general, audiences have never interpreted a text in isolation, devoid of their ‘horizons of expectation’, and so the playful inclusion of intertextual references simply reflects a dominant cultural trend that continues to find a “new intensity and frequency” as time persists (Ott and Walter, 2000, 435). It is important to recognise, therefore, that intertextuality is not solely a structural and stylistic choice that is designed to turn a profit, but a reflection of a cultural need to recycle familiar material and recirculate the past in a new format.

"Yes, the past can hurt. But the way I see it, you can either run from it, or ... learn from it"
The Lion King (1997), book by Roger Allers and Irene Mecchi.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to analyse the function of intertextuality within twenty-first century musical theatre. To achieve this central aim, it has categorised the various styles of intertextual reference which appear within the art form and analysed them in relation to their specificity, intention, reception and presentation. Through four case study chapters, it has demonstrated that references either (a) adapt a specific popular text (or texts), (b) capitalise on an audience's nostalgia for specific texts, (c) fashion a bricolage of various cultural texts, or (d) metatheatricalise perceptions of musical theatre as an art form. To demonstrate these claims, it has analysed numerous references from various twenty-first century musicals to highlight the diverse intertextual fabric of the contemporary musical stage. In particular, I have applied the term 'intertextuality' in an inclusive manner to analyse several performative elements that include specific, broad and thematic references to various familiar works or ideas. Beyond simply identifying such references, however, this thesis has considered the specificity, intention and presentation of references in relation to an audience's reception and interpretation of the narrative, characters and performance style of the specific musical. In addition to this, the preceding chapters have argued that musical theatre is inherently intertextual, as an interdisciplinary weaving of texts and traditions, whilst also exploiting intertextuality to reflect a wider cultural trend. In order to demonstrate this, the penultimate chapter analysed a series of paratextual relationships between certain stage productions and their broader dissemination in other media. In its

entirety, then, this thesis has provided a stable groundwork for analysing the function of intertextual references within the musical theatre canon, whilst also rationalising the increasingly intertextual nature of this art form more broadly.

Given that many twenty-first century musicals have been denigrated by scholars for their lack of 'originality', a term which remains vague and problematic, this thesis has expanded the parameters of existing literature and contributed to musical theatre scholarship in several ways. Firstly, this thesis has provided a detailed understanding of the term intertextuality in relation to musical theatre and its reflection of a wider cultural trend. Although it has not attempted to rationalise the dominance of intertextuality within all popular art forms, a seemingly impossible task for a project of this length, this thesis has identified the manner in which musical theatre reflects other media stylistically to reduce the sense of risk faced by producers, audiences and musical theatre as an art form. This argument has therefore expanded upon existing scholarship by suggesting that musical theatre is as important to the study of intertextuality as any mediated form of popular culture, and should thus be considered further within the often varied usage of this critical term. Secondly, and perhaps most significantly, this thesis has classified and analysed the function of intertextual references within various contemporary musicals. In examining references in relation to their specificity, intention, reception and presentation, this thesis has analysed a wealth of intertextual references, many of which function and operate in different ways, within an inherently intertextual form. Accordingly, this contribution can be condensed into four significant questions which should be applied when analysing the functions of an intertextual reference:

(1) Does the reference evoke a specific text or a broader idea?

(2) Is the reference a conscious act of the author or a connection determined by the audience?

(3) To what extent does the reference develop or alter the audience's interpretation of the musical? And, vice versa, to what extent does the use of this reference alter the audience's interpretation of the specific intertext?

(4) Does the reference disrupt the action, as in metadrama, or remain embedded within the narrative?

In fashioning such questions, and the analysis presented within the preceding chapters, this thesis has provided a prism through which to study the twenty-first century musical as a recycled art form that capitalises on an audience's familiarity with other forms of popular culture. Finally, this thesis has analysed a time period in which a series of both physical and digital paratexts are conditioning the way in which musical theatre is both enjoyed and engaged with by audiences. Not only has it explored the increased use of intertextual references on stage, it has provided a useful starting point for the broader analysis of intertextuality across other genres, forms and media.

Before considering the broader ramifications of this thesis, it is important to identify its limitations and areas of further development. In the first instance, this thesis has only analysed productions which premiered in the last two decades in any detail. This has meant that several highly intertextual musicals, whether *Kiss Me, Kate* (1948) or *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973), have been ignored in favour of fashioning a succinct thesis. Although such productions may seem major omissions from this study, the selection of this time frame has been for three distinct reasons. Firstly, it has provided a workable remit for both

brevity and precision, and thus enabled me to analyse both the most high-profile and esoteric productions that were produced during this time period. Secondly, this remit has enabled me to study contemporary audiences with a sense of accuracy (particularly as this thesis has never intended to provide a historical consideration of theatre audiences). In analysing the intertextual resonances between 'texts' as diverse as *The Book of Mormon* (2011), Twitter and *Hamilton* (2015), this thesis has detailed how audiences engage with musical theatre in an active and participatory fashion (one that is unique to the twenty-first century given the continued engagement with musical theatre through various paratexts). Thirdly, this time frame has enabled me to analyse an era of musical theatre which is often unfairly criticised by scholars, journalists and, to some extent, audiences. Having detached myself from echoing such vague descriptions in my analysis, this time frame has allowed me to consider these musicals in detail and further redeem them from their often denigrated position within scholarship (as scholars including Millie Taylor and Judith Sebesta have before me). Whilst a two-decade exploration of any art form is likely to be condensed and selective, the limitations provided by this time frame have enabled me to constructively undermine the type of negative statements that continue to permeate this area of research.

In addition to limiting this work to a particular time frame, the preceding analysis is simply a starting point when looking to analyse the type of intertextual references presented within musical theatre. Although this study has certainly advanced existing scholarship by analysing a reference's specificity, intention, reception and presentation, this approach has yet to be refined to further identify the nuances of these references. In order to develop this project, particularly beyond the remit of an 80,000-word thesis, this research should be

expanded to consider the intricacies of numerous popular texts and media. Whilst this project has certainly built upon the work of John Fiske and Jonathan Gray, as scholars who have applied the term intertextuality to the study of television, a methodology for analysing intertextual references has yet to be developed in relation to any art form. Although fashioning a methodology would take this project away from musical theatre specifically, it seems necessary to consider the features of other media in order to extend this research beyond its current remit.

Building upon the theoretical underpinnings of Julia Kristeva, Roland Barthes and Gérard Genette, in addition to the numerous scholars who have applied the term to popular culture, this thesis has identified intertextuality as a useful critical term within twenty-first century scholarship. Although it has not challenged or rejected these established frameworks, this thesis has applied the work of such eminent scholars to musical theatre by classifying and analysing the multitude of intertextual references presented on stage. In doing so, it has identified musical theatre as an inherently intertextual form and expanded existing scholarship by analysing intertextuality as a dominant structural and stylistic device. It has highlighted, in turn, that musical theatre is conditioned by its presentation of intertextual references to the extent that numerous musicals recycle popular culture at each and every performance (both onstage and within its broader dissemination). The twenty-first century musical cannot strive for originality, in this sense, because it is produced within a culture that seeks familiarity at all costs. It must therefore remain an attractive site for 'cultural recycling' to further identify itself as an art form which reflects various popular texts and trends.

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RECYCLED CULTURE

The Significance of Intertextuality in Twenty-First Century Musical Theatre

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