

‘NOT JUST FOR GAYS ANYMORE’: MEN, MASCULINITIES AND MUSICAL
THEATRE

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores how the changing masculinities of the 21st century have affected how young men connect to musical theatre as a genre that has been stereotypically seen as gay. The investigation is first located in the theoretical framework of masculinities, utilising the concepts of the male sex role, hegemonic masculinities and inclusive masculinity to chart how the performance of the male gender has changed over the past century. The project then adopts an empirical approach to a group of 161 men and 25 women, establishing a methodological framework for correlating sexual orientation with attitudes towards musical theatre. There is a further honing of this methodology through the adoption of Jenifer Toksvig's *The Fairytale Moment* exercise, which identifies how each participant connects to narrative through a core emotional drive. Finally, this data is tested through three case studies of how individual participants connect to *Les Misérables*, *Wicked* and *Soho Cinders*, concluding that the emotional content of musical theatre is now as desirable to straight men as it is to women and gay and bisexual men.

*For my wonderful family: Mum and Dad, Julie and Adam, Tim and Katy,
and my excellent nieces and nephew, Bethany, Isabelle and Leonardo*

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INTRODUCTION: 'NOT JUST FOR GAYS ANYMORE'

If you feel like someone that this world excludes,
It's no longer only for dudes who like dudes.
Attention every breeder, you're invited to the theatre
It's not just for gays anymore!
The glamor of Broadway is beckoning straights,
The people who marry in all fifty states.
We're asking every hetero to get to know us better,
Oh it's not just for gays anymore.

'Broadway: Not Just For Gays Anymore' – Javerbaum and Schlesinger, 2011

The opening number to the 65th Tony Awards in 2011 at the Beacon Theatre presented an affectionate parody of the long-established trope that musical theatre is a homosexual art form. David Javerbaum and Adam Schlesinger's musical number utilised cast members from Tony-nominated musicals to ostensibly bolster the heterosexual credentials of the musical. The music resembled 'The Company Way' from *How To Succeed In Business Without Really Trying* (1961) and the vintage choreography paid homage to Busby Berkeley with its use of box steps, kick lines and canon. The ambiguity of these heterosexual / homosexual overtones was embodied in the host Neil Patrick Harris, a gay actor who most famously appeared as the womanising Barney Stinson in *How I Met Your Mother* (2005-2014). The performance thus simultaneously proclaimed inclusivity for a heterosexual (male) audience whilst continuing to display the level of 'camp' traditionally associated with musical theatre.

The number received largely positive notices from reviewers, with Robert Lloyd in *The Los Angeles Times* lauding the 'throwing down of a sequined gauntlet announced to any viewers troubled by homosexuality that they might be happier on some other channel' (Lloyd, 2011, accessed 10/07/2016). Elizabeth Vicentelli in *The New York Post* praised the production, stating that 'it was great to see Broadway both send off and flaunt its own image as, let's say, not the manliest of entertainment' (Vicentelli, 2011,

accessed 13/09/2016). Yet Vicentelli's suggestion of 'unmanliness' exposes something uncomfortable about the parody and its dated Golden Age style. It is difficult to imagine a similar number being written in the style of Andrew Lloyd Webber, Maury Yeston or Lin-Manuel Miranda, or any other musical theatre composer since Jerry Herman. In short, writers of musicals have spent most of the past forty years trying to rediscover the heteronormative musical theatre of Rodgers and Hammerstein – and yet the trope that musical theatre is for 'the gays' still persists.

'Broadway: Not Just For Gays Anymore' neatly illustrates the central research questions for this project – if Broadway is 'not just for gays anymore' then to what extent does a straight male audience connect to contemporary musical theatre in similar and different ways to a LGBTQ audience? Furthermore, if gay and bisexual men do connect to musical theatre in a unique way, then what is the nature of this connection and how does it link to sexuality? Are there any correlations between the responses of gay and bisexual men to musicals and the responses of women, and how does this confirm or challenge the description above of musical theatre as 'not the manliness of entertainment' (Vicentelli, 2011, accessed 13/09/2016)? This study aims to move beyond the glib conjecture that 'musicals represent an extravagant and excessive frippery and gay people possess some special sensibility that finds an outlet in extravagance, excess, and frippery' (Mast, 1987: 31) in order to explore why men of all sexualities are drawn to musical theatre.

The success of 'Broadway: Not Just For Gays Anymore' relies on the continued currency of the myth about musical theatre and homosexuality amongst its target audience. Grace Barnes describes the number as an 'in-joke' amongst theatre professionals (Barnes, 2015: 109), but the stereotype reaches further into popular

culture than this, as exemplified in a 2003 episode of *The Simpsons* where Grady tells Homer that ‘almost anyone who’s ever written, starred in, or even *seen* a play is gay’ (Kirkland, 2003). As David Halperin writes, ‘a stereotype doesn’t have to be generally valid in order to contain some truth’ (Halperin, 2012: 91), and there is evidence in the work of D. A. Miller (1998) and John Clum (1999) that some gay men in the 1950s and 1960s had a unique relationship with musicals. Yet even the fact that musical theatre has changed since the high camp of shows such as *Funny Girl* (1963) and *Mame* (1966) has done little to dispel the narrative of homosexuality that surrounds the genre.

The current project began three months after the 65th Tony Awards, in September 2011. The study aims to investigate how young men of different sexualities connect to musical theatre in the 21st century in the light of reduced homophobia, enhanced LGBTQ rights and the development of what Eric Anderson terms ‘inclusive masculinity’ (see Anderson, 2009). The online surveys, face-to-face interviews and informal conversations that form an integral part of this thesis suggest that musical theatre as a genre resists the traditional masculine trait of withholding emotion. Furthermore, it is hypothesised that connections made with musical theatre support the development of a more emotionally-active masculinity that benefits men of all sexualities. The majority of academic writing about musical theatre and sexuality has dealt with sexuality in isolation from other aspects of the genre, and this is particularly problematic where sexuality is given a separate chapter within a wider study of musicals as if it exists in isolation from any other factor¹. The present study aims to relocate the relationship between male sexuality and musical theatre within a range of literary,

¹ This is still apparent in recent publications such as *The Oxford Handbook of the American Musical* (Knapp, Morris and Wolf, 2011), which offers only Stacy Wolf’s 16 page chapter on ‘Gender and Sexuality’ amongst its 29 chapters.

musicological, psychoanalytic and sociological frameworks that may be later transferred to other areas of research.

This project is unique in two major aspects. Firstly, whilst audience data has been used in reports such as the Society of London Theatre's annual *Box Office Report*, this is the first academic study to take a systematic approach to gathering empirical data on musical theatre directly from a target demographic. Secondly, the thesis aims to focus on the perspective of young people aged between 18 and 25 in the United Kingdom, a demographic that has rarely been considered in academic studies in musical theatre. The current work therefore aims to utilise a pioneering methodology for musical theatre studies in order to interrogate the long-standing myth that musical theatre is a 'somehow *gay* genre' (Miller, 1998: 16), and to investigate whether there really is such a thing as a 'gay sensibility' (Steyn, 1997: 201) when it comes to younger musical theatre audiences.

'We'd be twice as proud to have you if you go both ways' – key definitions

This introduction has already encountered some linguistic problems in the expression of its central concept. The term 'gay' is sometimes used imprecisely in academic literature to mean 'not straight', and this terminology is problematic in that it excludes a large number of people from the discussion. In 1948, Alfred Kinsey proposed a seven-point spectrum to measure sexual orientation (Kinsey *et. al.*, 1948), and whilst his theory has undergone some modification since then, it seems ludicrous that some musical theatre scholars are still willing to base their arguments around a binary system of sexuality. This project utilises an online survey based on the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid developed from the Kinsey scale (see Appendix A), and therefore the term 'gay' is used to denote a person that identifies as being oriented

towards the same sex. The terms ‘gay only’, ‘gay mostly’, ‘gay more’, ‘bisexual’, ‘straight more’, ‘straight mostly’ and ‘straight only’ are used to refer to specific participants in order to denote different points on the sexuality spectrum, and the term ‘gay and bisexual men’ is used throughout the study to make more general observations about the male participants in the study that identify as ‘gay only’, ‘gay mostly’, ‘gay more’, ‘bisexual’ or ‘straight more’.

‘LGBTQ’ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer) is used as a collective term through this study when making general observations about participants that identify as part of this group (generally those who do not define as ‘straight only’ or ‘straight mostly’, or who do not identify as ‘cisgender’). The term ‘LGBTQ’ is preferred to ‘LGBT’ as this is the terminology used within the university from which participants were recruited for this study. The addition of ‘queer’ to the LGBTQ acronym allows coverage for asexual, pansexual, non-gender binary and other non-heteronormative and cis-normative identities that are not included within LGBT, although the term ‘queer’ in itself remains divisive, since it still carries negative connotations as a pejorative term used against homosexuals in the twentieth century. In this study, the term ‘queer’ is used mainly as a verb that considers how LGBTQ audience members might ‘queer’ a narrative in order to endow it with an alternative, non-heteronormative meaning that is specifically pertinent to LGBTQ people. There are also occasions in which the term ‘queer’ is used as an oppositional adjective to ‘heteronormative’. For example, the concept of the ‘queer-normative space’ introduced in chapter eight suggest that some narratives are able to utilise physical locations in which LGBTQ identification is the norm, such as the gay districts of cities such as London, Birmingham and Manchester, allowing the narrative to break free from

positioning LGBTQ characters against heteronormative society and enabling different aspects of sexuality to be explored by the writers.

The discussion of LGBTQ identities in this thesis relies on a clear distinction between biological sex and gender. A person's biological sex is identified at birth through the anatomical observation of the medical staff present and is traditionally allocated as either 'male' or 'female'. Anne Fausto-Sterling suggests that around 1.728% of live births 'deviate from a Platonic ideal of sexual dimorphism' and may result in genital surgery either at birth or later in life (Fausto-Sterling *et. al*, 2000: 159). Furthermore, since it is now possible for a person to physically embody a different sex to that assigned at birth through medical transition, the stability of the dimorphic biological 'sex' categories is by no means absolute.

Conceptually, this study follows West and Zimmerman (1987) and Butler (1990) in defining gender as 'a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment' (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 126). Raewyn Connell observes that 'sex differences, on almost every psychological trait measured, are either non-existent or fairly small' (Connell, 2005: 21), which leads to the conclusion that the differences ascribed to gender are largely dictated by societal rather than biological factors. The present study subscribes to this social constructionist theory of gender, in which gender exists as a separate entity to birth sex, and that categories of gender are learned, repeated and performed according to how the individual's local culture dictates. Thus it is also entirely possible for an individual to identify as a different gender than the biological sex that they were assigned at birth, since 'gender identity refers to an internal sense of oneself as being male, female, or outside these two categories' (Schuster, Reisner, and Onorato, 2016: 101-102).

Accepting that gender can be outside of the categories of ‘male’ and ‘female’ is an important step both in the validation of transgender identities and in the reconstitution of ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ as gender categories. The rise in prominence of non-binary identities is instrumental in the deconstruction of traditional gender categories as society becomes more aware that there are identities other than ‘male’ and ‘female’. Since the commencement of this study, the high-profile case of the former Olympic decathlete and American TV reality star Caitlyn Jenner has raised awareness of transgender issues in popular culture. This has been coupled with wider protections for transgender people, notably the expansion of Stonewall to include transgender rights as part of their remit (see Gani, 2015, accessed 26/02/2017) and the Obama administration issuing guidelines on the rights of transgender pupils at American schools (see Barrett, 2016, accessed 26/02/2017). Sociologists are becoming more aware of transgender theorists such as Jack/Judith Halberstam (see Halberstam, 2005) and Raewyn Connell (Connell, 2012), although the consideration of transgender people in academic work outside the fields of gender studies and queer theory is somewhat uneven.

During the course of this study it became apparent that the focus on men and masculinity was causing an inadvertent erasure of transgender voices from the project. This is partially due to the utilisation of historical constructs of masculinities such as Robert Brannon’s male sex role (Brannon, 1976), Raewyn Connell’s hegemonic masculinities (Connell, 1995) and Eric Anderson’s inclusive masculinities (Anderson, 2009), which focus largely on cisgender masculinities. Judith Halberstam writes in *Female Masculinities* that ‘masculinity must not and cannot and should not reduce down to the male body and its effects’ (Halberstam, 2005: 1), and it is clear that the

societal constructions of ‘masculinities’ and ‘femininities’ are just as important to transgender people as to cisgender people. Thus whilst the empirical data gathered for the first part of the study is largely from participants that define as cisgender, the second part of the project contains a number of interviews with transgender and non-binary people as part of a discussion of how LGBTQ people connect with musicals. It is hoped that these initial observations might be expanded in future academic studies in which Halberstam’s concept of ‘female masculinity’ might be further explored in relation to musical theatre.

‘So people from red states and people from blue’ – demographics and methodology

The participants in this study are students from the same British redbrick university who were born between 1989 and 1997, and the analysis is therefore focused on participants from the Millennial generation (according to Strauss-Howe generational theory – see Strauss and Howe, 1991) who were working towards an undergraduate or masters degree at the time of their participation in the study. The university requires a minimum of three A-Levels at grades A and B, and a 2010 study for *The Guardian* newspaper suggests that only 23.3% of students at this university are from manual or routine backgrounds according to the occupation of the parent that is most senior in the workforce (Davis, 2010, accessed 23/09/2016). This suggests that the participants are most likely to be from a middle-class background with a high level of educational qualifications.

The main recruitment areas for the study were the LGBTQ association, the student union drama societies, the university music department and other student societies from the student union. A small number of participants fell into more than one category, since there are active members of the LGBTQ association that are also part of

drama societies and/or the music department. The selection bias towards students that identify as LGBTQ and students with a background in music and drama ensured that the central questions of the study could be fully explored. However, it is recognised that the analysis of quantitative data on how many men connect positively to musical theatre is limited by this selection bias, particularly since the ethnic background of the cohort is 90% white British. The small percentage of ethnic minorities in the study reflects the white-dominated recruitment areas of the cohort and whilst it is difficult to draw any conclusions about ethnicity in this thesis, it re-emphasises the need for further research on how musicals reach out beyond the white middle-classes.

It is clear that class, race and ethnicity are all important factors in how a person might respond to musical theatre, and may all have an impact on an individual's relationship with musicals. As Judith Butler notes, the separating of any specific framework of identity from other constitutes of gender, race, ethnicity, class and sexuality 'make the singular notion of identity a misnomer' (Butler 1999: 7), and it is vital that gender and sexuality are not seen in isolation from these other power relations despite the relative homogeneity of race, ethnicity and class within the cohort. The study initially focuses on 161 men and 25 women aged between 18 and 25, with the female cohort providing comparative data to ensure that any observations on men and masculinity are analysed within a wider framework of gender. A further cohort of LGBTQ students took part in online surveys and discussions in the second part of the project in order to ensure the inclusion of non-binary and transgender voices in discussions of gender and sexuality.

The data collection for this study took place between November 2011 and June 2016. Ethical approval for the study was sought and granted by the University Ethics

committee prior to the commencement of the data collection. All participants gave their explicit consent to the use of their data in the project via an online form and were given the option to withdraw from the study at any point before data analysis, resulting in their personal data being permanently deleted from the database. During the study, each participant was given a unique id number for data entry into online surveys in order to maintain their anonymity, and all names used within this thesis are pseudonyms that do not double the real names of participants involved in the study. All electronic data was encrypted and stored securely in line with university guidelines.

Participants were recruited following face-to-face meetings at events run by the LGBTQ association, the music department, the student union drama societies and the student group department of the student union. My own status as a PhD student allowed membership of all four groups, and this helped to enable recruitment for the study as well as establishing a level of trust between the researcher and participants. All participants took part in a face-to-face interview and participated in an online survey about musical theatre (see Appendix B), and male participants completed an additional survey based on the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (see Appendix A).

The face-to-face interview was based on theatre practitioner Jenifer Toksvig's exercise *The Fairytale Moment* (see Appendix C). Toksvig gave a practical demonstration of *The Fairytale Moment* exercise on a writers' course in November 2008, and the exercise was developed for this study in response to the initial research question of how and why individual readers and audience members connect to narratives in different ways. The development of *The Fairytale Moment* exercise for this study has many similarities with the concept of grounded theory as pioneered by Glaser and Strauss in their 1967 study *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Glaser and

Strauss consider ‘how the discovery of theory from data – systematically obtained and analysed in social research – can be furthered’ (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 1), and this ideology underpins both the development of the study and the basic principles of *The Fairytale Moment*.

At the beginning of data collection, the exercise involved participants writing down the basic narrative of a fairytale in four to six bullet points. The interviewer would then ask the participant to choose a favourite moment from their description, using questioning to encourage a free-association around this moment. In the second part of the exercise, the participant described four stories that they particularly connected with, either through retelling the stories or through describing why they particularly liked the stories. After the first batch of interviews, it became clear that certain variables were particularly important in determining how each participant connected to their chosen narratives. This data was then analysed using a variety of methods including linguistic analysis, standpoint theory and a categorisation system based on different literary archetypes. This resulted in portable categories that could be used in conjunction with the data on musical theatre and sexuality based around what Toksvig terms the ‘core emotional drive’ (Toksvig, 2013: 1). This process has clear echoes of grounded theory as described by Glaser and Strauss:

The first requisite property is that the theory must closely *fit* the substantive area in which it will be used. Second, it must be readily *understandable* by laymen concerned with this area. Third, it must be sufficiently *general* to be applicable to a multitude of diverse daily situations within the substantive area, not to just a specific type of situation. Fourth, it must allow the user partial *control* over the structure and process of daily situations as they change through time (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 237).

It would be disingenuous to suggest that this study uses grounded theory in any structured form since the similarities in approach were only noted at the end of the

process. Nevertheless, there are parallels with Kathy Charmaz's constructivist approach to grounded theory, in which data analysis is clearly located within the geographical and social context of the participants:

A constructivist grounded theory can take us deep into the phenomena without isolating it from its social locations. Going deep into the phenomenon allows us to gain intimate knowledge of it and to work inductively from this position (Charmaz, 2009: 146).

The constructivist approach within this study utilised the online survey based on the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid to cross-reference each male participant's self-identification of their sexual orientation with the categorisation of their core emotional drive and other key data gathered from the face-to-face interviews based on Toksvig's *The Fairytale Moment* exercise. This methodological decision reflects Charmaz's statement that 'the logic of grounded theory can reach across substantive areas and into the realm of formal theory, which means generating abstract concepts and specifying relationships between them to understand problems in multiple substantive areas' (Charmaz, 2006: 8). The final part of this study transfers the portable categorisation of core emotional drives from general narratives to the participants' attitudes towards musicals, allowing a further comparison to be made between sexuality and musical theatre. The combination of theories from literature, psychology, musicology, sociology and theatre studies establishes a cross-disciplinary approach to the initial research question of how men of different sexualities connect to musical theatre.

'A big Broadway rainbow is waiting for you' – the representation of LGBTQ characters in musical theatre

It is an intriguing conundrum that, despite musical theatre's reputation as a 'somehow *gay* genre' (Miller, 1998: 16), there has been a dearth of characters that

openly identify as LGBTQ on stage. Indeed, it is often homosexual scholars that are most hostile towards explicit LGBTQ representations in the musical - John Clum suggests that 'the uncloseted gay musical, however earnestly it attempts to recreate gay experience, is not as complex or captivating as earlier closeted musicals... in fact, it often reflects the less attractive elements of contemporary gay culture' (Clum, 1999: 10), and this is echoed in D. A. Miller's conclusion that 'no gay musical is apt to elucidate what makes any musical gay; the featuring of homosexuals on the Broadway stage – even ones amicably drawn to our type – works positively against the recognition of the homosexual desire that diffuses through "other" subjects, objects, relations, all over the form' (Miller, 1998: 132). The reticence of Miller and Clum to accept 'a comforting, stereotypical version of gayness for the bus-and-tunnel crowd' (Clum, 1999: 10) is not unfounded, since the vast majority of LGBTQ characters portrayed in musical theatre are homosexual men, and they largely adhere to three main narrative tropes, labelled here as the 'drag queen', the 'drama queen' and the 'dancing queen'.

Havelock Ellis' 1897 study of 'the world of sexual inverters' (Ellis, 1897: 350) suggested that homosexuality was an inversion of traditional masculine values, as seen in his description of gay 'clubs' in American cities:

The habitués of these places are, generally, inverters of the most pronounced type, i.e., the completely feminine in voice and manners, with the characteristic hip motion in their walk; though I have never seen any approach to feminine dress there, doubtless the desire for it is not wanting and only police regulations relegate it to other occasions and places (Ellis, 1897: 351).

This conflation of homosexuality and femininity forms a central part of the gender theories of Brannon (1976), Connell (1995, 2005) and Anderson (2009) as discussed in chapter one, and it is striking that musical theatre continues to turn to the embodiment of femininity in drag performance in order to explore gay and bisexual male

characters. The Emcee's unexpected appearance in the cabaret girl's kick line in *Cabaret* (1966) and the revelation of Margaret Mead as a man in drag in *Hair* (1967) serve to challenge gender stereotypes without necessarily commenting on sexual orientation, but these brief moments of gender ambiguity pave the way for protagonists such as Frank in *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973), Albin/Zaza in *La Cage Aux Folles* (1983), Tick/Mitzi and Adam/Felicia in *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (2006) and Simon/Lola in *Kinky Boots* (2012).

Frank 'n' Furter's performance as a self-proclaimed 'sweet transvestite' in *The Rocky Horror Show* supports his desire to explore all aspects of gender and sexuality through encouraging Brad and Janet to give themselves over 'to absolute pleasure' (O'Brien, 2013: 82). Frank's gender fluidity allows him to take both the dominant role with Janet and the submissive role with Brad in order to satisfy his desires, and it transpires that Frank has also had sex with Eddie and Columbia as well as creating Rocky for his own sexual gratification. By contrast, Albin's alter-ego Zaza in *La Cage Aux Folles* allows Albin a means to access aspects of his personality that his own persona does not achieve - 'everything's ravishing, sensual, fabulous / when Albin is tucked away and Zaza is here' (Fierstein, 1987: 23). It is Zaza that is able to rebuke Georges and Jean-Michel for their thoughtless dismissal of his 'femininity' in 'I Am What I Am', and it is Albin's drag performance as Jean-Michel's mother Sybil that demonstrates his maternal feelings for Georges' biological son. Thus while Frank uses his drag performance to engage in his omnisexual tendencies, Albin utilises the character of Zaza to perform an emotional range that is denied to him in his male persona.

The positioning of the 'drag queen' across the gender binary does lead to some problematic results in portraying homosexuality in musical theatre. John Clum notes

that the use of drag in *La Cage Aux Folles* allows the audience to identify Albin and Georges as ‘a classic butch-femme couple’ and criticises the ‘conservative’ values of the musical, noting that the love duet ‘Song on the Sand’ could be applicable to any middle-aged couple regardless of gender (Clum, 1999: 14) . The re-gendering of Albin as ‘feminine’ thus partially erases the central homosexual relationship in the show, and this was only mitigated in the 2008 Menier Chocolate Factory production, where Albin appeared as himself in the closing number to share a kiss with Georges.

The link between drag and homosexuality has also caused consternation on two opposing fronts. In *Rent* (1996), *The Producers* (2000) and *Billy Elliot The Musical* (2005), the character’s performance of drag in their private life is not fully explored and seems to be conflated with homosexuality, perhaps betraying the heterosexual standpoint of the writers. Conversely, Harvey Fierstein’s comment that the character of Lola in *Kinky Boots* was written as ‘a heterosexual transvestite’ (Signorile, 2013, accessed 16/04/2017) rests uneasily with Simon’s backstory about his father’s lack of acceptance. Billy Porter, who played Lola on Broadway, openly disagrees with Fierstein’s stance, stating that ‘as an African American gay man who has been out for my entire career, it would be irresponsible for me to show up wearing a dress and then say I’m straight’ (Halterman, 2013, accessed 16/04/2017). Nevertheless, the archetype of the ‘drag queen’ has allowed some valuable explorations into other transgender identities - *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* explores the differences between the gender identities of its three protagonists effectively, in particular through its highlighting of Bernadette as a transgender character rather than a drag queen. The complexity of gender and sexuality is further explored in *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (1998), which Sharon Dean describes as carrying ‘a bisexual aesthetic capable of shifting the

cinematic portrayal of trans experience from the tragic to the transcendent, from a space in-between to a space beyond' (Dean, 2006: 110).

Dean's identification of the 'tragic' cinematic portrayal of LGBTQ characters forms the basis of the 'drama queen' stereotype. Dustin Bradley Goltz notes that, in mainstream films in the 1960s and 1970s, 'a queer future is scripted as looming punishment, an anticipation of violence, as those who stray from heterosexuality are ultimately sacrificed' (Goltz, 2012: 99), and this fate is shared by many gay and bisexual male characters in musical theatre. Early proto-gay characters such as Clifford in *Cabaret* (1966) and Bobby in *Company* (1972) remained largely closeted in the original productions (and in their currently licensed amateur productions), and both remain alone at the end of their narrative². Explicitly gay and bisexual characters in the 1970s fare badly - Frank is vaporised by Riff Raff at the end of *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973) and Paul in *A Chorus Line* (1976) is badly injured during a tap routine and is therefore unable to achieve his dream of being a dancer. It is perhaps unsurprising that AIDS cast its shadow over several musicals in the late 1980s and 1990s, with *Elegies for Angels, Punks and Raging Queens* (1989), *Falsettoland* (1990), *The Boy From Oz* (1998) and *Taboo* (2002) dealing specifically with this subject. These musicals have an authenticity based on their immediacy to the AIDS crisis and there is poignancy in the close relationship between the characters in the musicals and the lived experiences of the gay and bisexual creatives involved in the writing process.

The 'drama queen' stereotype continues throughout the late 1990s into the 21st century in musicals such as *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* (1992), *Rent* (1996), *Bare: A Pop*

² This trend continues with the character of Ryan in Disney's *High School Musical On Tour* (2007), since his sexuality is never explicitly mentioned and he is the only character that is not given a romantic pairing in the finale.

Opera (2000) and *Closer to Heaven* (2001). In both *Kiss of the Spiderwoman* and *Rent*, the gay character is sacrificed for the benefit of the straight protagonist (see chapter one for a further analysis of Angel's death in *Rent*), whilst Jason in *Bare: A Pop Opera* commits suicide after his boyfriend breaks up with him, and Mile End Lee in *Closer To Heaven* dies from a drug overdose. In the latter two cases, the 'drama queen' stereotype falls the wrong side of self-pity due to the failure to develop these characters fully enough to justify their sudden deaths and the subsequent emotional outpourings of their partners.

It is problematic that this outline of the stereotypes of the 'drag queen' and the 'drama queen' has covered nearly every gay and bisexual male protagonist in musical theatre. This is partially because there are relatively few musicals written for these characters, but this also highlights a tendency in musical theatre to fall back on Haverlock Ellis' theory of the 'invert' or on an internalised homophobia that refuses to grant LGBTQ characters a happy ending. Frequently, minor characters are not given an ending at all – Ernst and Hänschen in *Spring Awakening* (2006) are largely forgotten after their initial duet, and the final revelation that Harry in *Mamma Mia* (1999) is in a same-sex relationship seems forced and irrelevant to the narrative as a whole. This leads to the third stereotype of the 'dancing queen', which denies gay characters any discernible narrative impact upon the musical by reducing them to a single musical number.

'Keep It Gay' from *The Producers* (2001), 'His Name is Lancelot' from *Spamalot* (2005) and 'Turn it Off' from *The Book of Mormon* (2011) are all written for minor characters who seemingly have no purpose within the narrative other than to be explicitly 'gay' and stereotypically effeminate, surrounded by an ensemble of dancing

boys in elaborate costumes with brightly coloured lighting. The equating of homosexuality with this type of exaggerated camp is nothing new, but it is pertinent to note that the writers of all three of the songs cited above present themselves as heterosexual, as do David Javerbaum and Adam Schlesinger, who wrote ‘Not Just For Gays Anymore’. It is possible that the straight writers are trying to appeal to a perceived target audience of homosexual men through these numbers, but the overall effect is to homogenise the portrayals of gay men in musicals, thus giving the illusion of LGBTQ representation on Broadway whilst maintaining heterosexual dominance over the genre. This is further demonstrated by the fact that the only three new musicals to open on Broadway between 2001 and 2011 that contained LGBTQ characters written by LGBTQ writers were *Avenue Q*, *The Boy From Oz* and *Taboo*.

This brief analysis tends to support conservative critic Mark Steyn’s opinion that ‘the Broadway musical encompassed everything except the one subject its creators were specially expert in’ (Steyn, 1997: 201), namely the lived experience of gay and bisexual men. The LGBTQ participants in this study are thus unlikely to be responding to explicit representations of LGBTQ characters in musical theatre despite their increased presence in film and television, and this suggests that there may be a different reception process to heterosexual audience members that can identify first hand with the gendered nature of the heterosexual relationships portrayed in the majority of musicals. The focus on sexual orientation in this study is thus located within larger gender structures and hierarchies, utilising a range of frameworks to interrogate masculinities, femininities and gender fluidity.

‘Come in and be inspired...’ – thesis outline

The thesis begins with an overview of how the concept of masculinity has developed in Anglo-American cultures over the past century. Different models of understanding masculinity are analysed through a consideration of three iconic musicals and their male protagonists. The performance of masculinity by *Carousel*'s Billy Bigelow is explored with reference to the archetypes laid out in Robert Brannon's 1976 essay on 'the male sex role', focusing particularly on how the genre of musical theatre inherently subverts this form of masculinity through its emotional release in song. After a brief consideration of the implications of second-wave feminism and LGBTQ rights in the early 1970s, the title character in *The Phantom of the Opera* is investigated through the lens of Raewyn Connell's 'hegemonic masculinity' theory, with a particular emphasis on how the Phantom's power struggle with Raoul dominates the narrative at the expense of Christine as the female protagonist. Finally, Eric Anderson's framework of 'inclusive masculinity' is tested and challenged through the presentation of the male characters in *Rent*.

Chapter two turns its attention to musical theatre academics, concentrating on those studies that concern how male audiences connect to musical theatre. The theories of masculinities explored in the first chapter are applied to seminal texts on homosexuality and musical theatre such as John Clum's *Something For The Boys* (1999) and Stacy Wolf's *A Problem Like Maria* (2002). Ken Plummer's generational standpoint theory (2010) is utilised to consider how academic writers' lived experience of gender and sexuality impacts their own perception of musical theatre. The homogenous background of these scholars as white, middle-aged and middle-class men and women is interrogated, and it is highlighted that the lack of empirical research in

these studies leads to an incomplete understanding of how the musical theatre audience responds to performance.

Chapter three returns to the theory of inclusive masculinities, using Mark McCormack's ethnographic studies in sixth forms (2012) as a basis for exploring the demographic of the students involved in the present study. Through the application of the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid, it is noted that participants in this study share the wider range of emotional behaviours that McCormack describes in relation to the sixth form students, as well as their emphatic rejection of homophobia. However, it is also suggested that McCormack understates the lived experiences of LGBTQ students through his rejection of 'victimisation frameworks', which acts to shield heteronormative behaviour from rigorous examination. The second part of the chapter presents the data from an online survey on attitudes to musical theatre, and concludes that there is little evidence that this cohort considers musical theatre to be 'gay' or 'effeminate'. The data suggests that the majority of male participants involved in musical theatre identify as 'straight only' or 'straight mostly', although it also identifies that female and LGBTQ participants have a higher tendency to connect with female-dominated musicals such as *Wicked*, *Chicago* and *Hairspray*.

Chapter four intensifies the focus on individual audience members by theorising a link between how participants connect to their favourite stories and a key aspect of their emotional psyche, described here as the 'core emotional drive'. This theory draws on the psychoanalytical reader-response theory of Norman Holland and 'The Fairytale Moment', a devising exercise developed by the theatre practitioner Jenifer Toksvig. A methodology is developed based on this exercise, and the second part of the chapter uses two separate case studies to demonstrate how the core emotional drive is identified

Chapter five assimilates participants' core emotional drives through a system of categorisation. It is proposed that the core emotional drive is largely enacted through the relationship between a point-of-view character and their main focus in the story – a second character, a place or locale, or society as a whole. This theory is tested through an analysis of how participants connect with archetypal characters alongside a further investigation of how four of the core emotional drives link to the male sex role proposed by Robert Brannon in chapter one.

The second part of the thesis consists of case studies based around three different musicals. In chapter six, the core emotional drive theory is applied to 22 participants and their connection to *Les Misérables*. Through a series of interviews, it is suggested that sexuality affects the choice of point-of-view character, since many bisexual and gay men identify strongly with Eponine. It is further established that each participant experiences the story in a different way even when they share the same core emotional drive, thus justifying the call for a more nuanced approach to individual audience responses. This chapter utilises a musicological approach to demonstrate how the musical semiotics in *Les Misérables* may establish and support the connection with audience members.

In chapter seven, the focus moves to *Wicked* as a predominantly female-driven narrative. It is noted that straight male participants fail to connect strongly with this musical, but that it is particularly popular with women and gay and bisexual men. The chapter discusses the recalibration of the 'diva' archetype through Elphaba, before using a detailed performance analysis to investigate how the German production of *Wicked* clearly acknowledges the possible same-sex relationship between Elphaba and Glinda. There is also an analysis of Liam's personal account of *Wicked* (see Appendix

E), emphasising how musical theatre can still make an idiosyncratic connection with LGBTQ people through its malleability towards specific LGBTQ lived experiences.

Chapter eight provides an ethnographic account of a concert performance of the gay-themed musical *Soho Cinders* (2012) in February 2014. Through an online survey conducted with the cast, crew and audience members after the performance, it is suggested that there are subtle differences in how straight and LGBTQ audience members responded to the performance. There follows a discussion of how successfully straight audience members are able to ‘queer’ a gay musical in order to identify with the characters in the story. Finally, the study proposes the concept of ‘queer-normative spaces’, where LGBTQ characters are placed in an environment in which their sexuality is normative. Examples of ‘queer-normative spaces’ may include the gay villages within large cities such as London, Birmingham and Manchester, or more localised spaces where LGBTQ people form a majority. There is a brief consideration of the hospital ward in *Falsettos* (1992, revived 2016), the dysfunctional family home in *Fun Home* (2013) and the cosmopolitan New York park in *If/Then* (2014) as a demonstration of this theory. This focus on four recent productions including lesbian, gay and bisexual characters suggests that recent shifts in masculinities have allowed a wider representation of LGBTQ identities that may promote a wider understanding of sexualities across all demographics. As Neil Patrick Harris sings in ‘Not Just For Gays Anymore’:

So people from Red states, and people from Blue,
A big Broadway rainbow is waiting for you!
Come in and be inspired, there’s no sodomy required.
Oh it’s not just for gays, it’s not just for gays,
We’d be twice as proud to have you if you go both ways!
Broadway is not just for gays anymore!

1. 'WHAT THE HELL... WHAT IF HE'S A GIRL?' – MASCULINITIES AND MUSICAL THEATRE IN THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURIES

My boy, Bill! He'll be tall
And as tough as a tree, will Bill!
Like a tree he'll grow,
With his head held high
And his feet planted firm on the ground,
And you won't see nobody dare to try
To boss or toss him around!
No pot-bellied, baggy-eyed bully'll toss him around.

(Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 161-162)

Billy Bigelow's 'Soliloquy' from *Carousel* (1945) demonstrates Rodgers and Hammerstein's representation of a typical working-class man in the 1940s and his attitude towards sex and gender¹. Billy's vision of his yet-to-be-born son Bill as 'tall and tough as a tree' allows him to imagine his offspring as 'the spit an' image of his dad' - a better version of himself, who has 'more common-sense than his puddin' headed father ever had' (Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 159-160). Yet halfway through the song, Billy thinks the unthinkable - 'what the hell... what if he's a girl?' (Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 169). Billy's subsequent description of his daughter as 'pink and white as peaches and cream' and 'a kinda' sweet and petite little tin-type of her mother' (Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 171-172) further establishes Billy's concept of appropriate gender norms for his child.

In Billy's world, 'sex' and 'gender' are inseparable - the biological sex of his offspring pre-determines its gendered behaviour, and affects Billy's own attitude towards his child - 'you can have fun with a son but you gotta be a father to a girl' (Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 171). Billy's gender values may seem outdated to a

¹ As in many Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals, the characters tend to represent the context of the time in which they were writing as much as the setting of the musical, which in this case is the 1870s. This is particularly true of *South Pacific* (1949) and *The King and I* (1951).

modern audience, but it should be remembered that the distinction of sex and gender as separate entities is a relatively recent phenomenon. Thus an understanding of the contemporary definition of these concepts is vital to 1940s musical theatre since, as Stacy Wolf notes, ‘gender is a constitutive element of Broadway musical theatre, fundamental to the architecture of the musical’ (Wolf, 2011: 6).

This opening chapter examines American sociologist Robert Brannon’s 1976 study of the ‘male sex role’ (Brannon, 1976) and the conceptual framework of ‘hegemonic masculinities’ as proposed by the Australian scholar Raewyn Connell (Connell, 2005), using *Carousel* and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) as case studies. It is proposed that definitions of gender are constantly in flux, and the implications of a less rigid approach to gender in the 21st century are discussed using the example of *Rent* (1996) with reference to Eric Anderson’s conceptual framework of ‘inclusive masculinities’ (Anderson, 2009). The chapter concludes by highlighting how, in the case of *Rent*, the performance of inclusive masculinities still allows the male characters to dominate the female and non-binary characters within the narrative.

‘You can have fun with a son, but you’ve got to be a father to a girl’ - the male sex role in Rodgers and Hammerstein

The musicals of Rodgers and Hammerstein in the 1940s and 1950s are reflective of the climate at the end of the Second World War in both the United States and the United Kingdom in their adherence to a dimorphic gender system. The rigidity of gender roles in post-war Britain is reflected in a three-week investigation by Douglas Warth, which was published in the *Sunday Pictorial* (later the *Daily Mirror*) under the headline ‘Evil Men’:

I have watched it growing - as it grew in Germany before the war, producing the horrors of Hitlerite corruption... Most people know that there are such things as 'pansies' - mincing, effeminate young men who call themselves 'queers'. But simple, decent folk regard them as freaks and rarities. They have become, regrettably, a variety hall joke.

There will be no joking about this subject when people realise the true situation.

(Warth, 1952a: 6)

Warth's opinions are somewhat homophobic - in his final column, he suggests that homosexuals 'go about corrupting youth and children' and 'blackmail' their 'victims' who are found 'in responsible positions in the public services' (Warth, 1952c: 12) – but it is particularly striking that his columns emphasise a conflation between homosexuality and gender role transgression. In this climate, it is unsurprising that hyper-masculine characters became more prevalent in film and theatre during the post-war years, and this is reflected in the characterisation of Billy Bigelow in *Carousel*.

Psychologist Robert Brannon produced an influential critique of masculinity in his 1976 study 'The Male Sex Role' in response to the perceived hyper-masculine role models in popular culture (Brannon, 1976: 1-48). Brannon was writing at the height of second-wave feminism, and his description of the male sex role draws on examples from the previous four decades, including John Wayne, Marlon Brando and Humphrey Bogart. Brannon condenses the male sex role into four main archetypes that reflect these performances of masculinity and provide a useful model in analysing Billy Bigelow's 'Soliloquy' from *Carousel* (see figure 1.1).

The Male Sex Role (Brannon, 1976: 12)

1. **No Sissy Stuff:** The stigma of all stereotyped feminine characteristics and qualities, including openness and vulnerability.
2. **The Big Wheel:** Success, status, and the need to be looked up to.
3. **The Sturdy Oak:** A manly air of toughness, confidence, and self-reliance.
4. **Give 'Em Hell!:** The aura of aggression, violence and daring

Figure 1.1 - Lyrical analysis of ‘Soliloquy’ from *Carousel* (bars 1-189) using Brannon’s ‘Male Sex Role’ archetypes

<p><i>I wonder what he'll think of me! I guess he'll call me the "old man!" I guess he'll think I can lick Ev'ry other feller's father; Well, I can! I bet that he'll turn out to be The spit an' image of his Dad But he'll have more common sense Than his puddin-headed father ever had.</i></p> <p><i>I'll teach him to wrassle, And dive through a wave, When we go in the mornin's for our swim His mother can teach him The way to behave But she won't make a sissy out o' him. Not him! Not my boy! Not Bill!</i></p> <p><i>Bill!</i></p> <p><i>My boy, Bill (I will see that he is named after me, I will!) My boy, Bill! He'll be tall And as tough as a tree, will Bill! Like a tree he'll grow, With his head held high And his feet planted firm on the ground, And you won't see nobody dare to try To boss or toss him around! No pot-bellied, baggy-eyed bully'll boss him around.</i></p> <p><i>I don't give a damn what he does, As long as he does what he likes! He can sit on his tail, Or work on a rail With a hammer, a-hammerin' spikes! He can ferry a boat on a river, Or peddle a pack on his back. Or work up and down the streets of a town With a whip and a horse and a hack.</i></p>	<p>Billy sets himself up as The Big Wheel in relation to his son, whilst also invoking the Give ‘Em Hell archetype through his allusion to violence. The idea that Bill will be the ‘spit an’ image’ of Billy is also setting Bill up as The Big Wheel, but the addition of ‘more common sense’ suggests that Billy also wants Bill to aspire towards The Sturdy Oak archetype.</p> <p>The imagery of wrestling and swimming carry the risk of Give ‘Em Hell whilst also carrying the subtext of No Sissy Stuff, which is then referred to explicitly in the final two lines of the verse. This also implies that women are the guardians of appropriate conduct rather than men.</p> <p>Billy is keen to make Bill into his own image of The Big Wheel, whilst also using the metaphor of a tree to invoke The Sturdy Oak, which is alluded to in the line ‘his feet planted firm on the ground’. The Give ‘Em Hell archetype is suggested through Billy’s assertion that Bill will be ‘tough’ enough not to be bullied, which also suggests No Sissy Stuff.</p> <p>Billy’s suggestions of occupations for Bill generally fall into the Give ‘Em Hell archetype - physical labour with an element of risk. There is an avoidance of any suggestions of Sissy Stuff in the list. At the end of the section, Billy again suggests that Bill might follow his own occupation.</p>
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<p><i>He can haul a scow along a canal, Run a cow around a corral, Or maybe bark for a carousel. Of course it takes talent to do that well.</i></p> <p><i>He might be a champ of the heavyweights, Or a feller that sells you glue, Or President of the United States, That'd be alright, too.</i></p> <p><i>(His mother would like that... But he wouldn't be president unless he wanted to be.) Not Bill!</i></p> <p><i>My boy, Bill! He'll be tall And as tough as a tree, will Bill!...</i></p> <p><i>...No fat-bottomed, flabby-faced, Pot-bellied, baggy-eyed bastard Will boss him around.</i></p> <p><i>And I'm damned if he'll marry his boss's daughter, A skinny-lipped virgin with blood like water. Who'll give him a peck, And call it a kiss, And look in his eyes through a lorgnette... Say, why am I takin' on like this? My kid ain't even been born yet!</i></p> <p><i>I can see him when he's seventeen or so, And startin' in to go with a girl! I can give him lots of pointers, very sound, On the way to get 'round any girl</i></p> <p><i>I can tell him - Wait a minute! - Could it be? What the hell! What if he is a girl?</i></p> <p>(Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 158-171)</p>	<p>The final set of suggestions is a mixture of The Big Wheel, The Sturdy Oak and Give 'Em Hell archetypes.</p> <p>Billy distances Bill from his mother once more to ensure No Sissy Stuff.</p> <p>The repetition of the chorus again evokes all four of Brannon's archetypes, before the use of the word 'bastard' further emphasises the Give 'Em Hell archetype.</p> <p>Rather than describe the ideal wife for Bill, Billy focuses on the stereotype of an over-controlling woman, emphasising the No Sissy Stuff archetype.</p> <p>Billy begins to focus on the gender hierarchy between men and women as he imagines Bill and his first girlfriend. His suggestion places himself as The Big Wheel and The Sturdy Oak as he advises Bill how to 'get 'round any girl'.</p>
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It is clear that Billy fully embodies Brannon's male sex role throughout 'Soliloquy', and that he expects his son to follow in his footsteps. Billy is adamant about what his son will and will not be allowed to do, and this points to a sense of anxiety identified by Ruth Hartley, who suggested that 'desired behavior is rarely defined positively as something the child should do, but rather, undesirable behavior is indicated negatively as something he should not do or be - anything, that is, that the parent or other people regard as 'sissy' (Hartley, 1959: 458). Billy's grasp of 'femininity' is much less secure in the second part of his soliloquy. The section largely consists of his own anxieties at fulfilling the male sex role in relation to his daughter (see figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2 - Lyrical analysis of 'Soliloquy' from *Carousel* (bars 190-end) using Brannon's 'Male Sex Role' archetypes

<p><i>(What would I do with her? What could I do for her? A bum with no money!) You can have fun with a son, But you got to be a father to a girl!</i></p> <p><i>She mightn't be so bad as that, A kid with ribbons in her hair! A kinda neat and petite Little tin-type of her mother! What a pair! (I can just hear myself braggin' about her!)</i></p> <p><i>My little girl, Pink and white as peaches and cream is she. My little girl Is half again as bright As girls are meant to be! Dozens of boys pursue her, Many a likely lad Does what he can to woo her From her faithful Dad! She has a few pink and white young fellers of two and three,</i></p>	<p>Billy begins to show some doubt about his ability to provide as The Sturdy Oak for his daughter, also suggesting that his Give 'Em Hell lifestyle may not be appropriate as a father to a daughter.</p> <p>Billy uses a variety of adjectives to describe his daughter, mostly linked to her appearance - 'sweet', 'petite', 'pink and white', 'ribbons in her hair'. The only non-physical attribute mentioned is her intelligence, which contrasts with the physical prowess desired for Bill.</p> <p>Billy casts himself as The Sturdy Oak in relation to his daughter. It is interesting to note that his wish for his daughter's boyfriend seems to match the 'feminine' description of his daughter - 'pink and white young fellers', which emphasises Billy's own dominant masculinity.</p>
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<p><i>But my little girl Gets hungry ev'ry night and she comes home to me!</i></p> <p><i>I got to get ready before she comes! I got to make certain that she Won't be dragged up in slums With a lot of bums like me. She's got to be sheltered And fed and dressed In the best that money can buy! I never knew how to get money, But I'll try, by God, I'll try! I'll go out and make it, or steal it, Or take it or die!</i></p> <p>(Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 171-177)</p>	<p>Billy reverts to his traditional masculine archetypes here. Much of his description centres around him as The Sturdy Oak, but being able to provide 'the best that money can buy' will require him to become A Big Wheel. The last line suggests that he is prepared to Give 'Em Hell in order to achieve his aims. This final section begins to demonstrate Billy's anxiety at living up to the male sex role in relation to his daughter.</p>
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Billy's attitude towards the gender of his unborn child is shown in the contrasting musical settings of the two sections. The 'My boy, Bill' section is accompanied by an allegro march figure, based mainly around the primary and secondary chords of G major. The octave fanfare figure at bar 49 is representative of Billy's desire for his son to be 'The Big Wheel' and 'The Sturdy Oak' (see figure 1.3).

By contrast, the musical accompaniment for the second section of 'Soliloquy' is much broader, based around a more chromatically inflected melody and utilising a distinctive triplet rhythm at the start of each phrase. Harmonically, the music is anchored in F major, but with less reliance on chords I and V than the previous section. This rhythmically languid setting presents a more romantic setting, which may suggest that Billy sees his daughter in terms of his own relationship to women rather than as a person in her own right, and hints at Billy's position as 'The Sturdy Oak' and 'The Big Wheel' of the family (see Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.3 - 'Soliloquy' from *Carousel* (bars 42-49)

42 **Allegro**
+Fl, Bsn

43 44 45

B: My boy, Bill (I will see that he's named af - ter

p r.h. Stgs soli

46 47 48 49

mc. I will)

Tpts, Tbns (muted) Ww, Stgs Tpts soli

sfz *sfz* *f*

(Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 160-161)

Figure 1.4 - 'Soliloquy' from *Carousel* (bars 222-229)

222 **Broader (with warmth)**

223 224

S: My lit - tle girl, Pink and white As peach - es and cream is

Stgs, Cls, Hp 3

pp

225 226 227

she. My lit - tle grl Is half a - gain as bright As

+Ob

Stgs, Cls, Hp

(Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 173)

The tone of this section is reminiscent of Billy's duet with Julie in the first scene of the musical. 'If I Loved You' is a conditional love song in a similar vein to 'People Will Say We're In Love' from *Oklahoma*, and provokes a crisis point for Billy that reflects a general anxiety within the musical theatre genre itself. As 'The Sturdy Oak', Billy needs to remain in control of his emotions in order to avoid any 'Sissy Stuff', but Billy inhabits a musical theatre world in which characters communicate their emotions through singing.

Raymond Knapp has suggested that the musicality of the genre is inherently 'camp', as the music is 'like a set of arched eyebrows serving as quotation marks around whatever is ostensibly being expressed, whether musically or dramatically' (Knapp 2006: 7). Both Julie and Billy try to detach themselves from this emotion by singing melodies that persist in returning to the tonic note against an ostinato in the accompaniment (see Figure 1.5a). This technique is also used in *The King and I* to avoid destabilising the King's masculinity (see Figure 1.5b).

Figure 1.5a - 'If I Loved You' from *Carousel* (bars 214 -217)

The image shows a musical score for the song 'If I Loved You' from the musical *Carousel*. It consists of three staves: a vocal line for the male character and two piano accompaniment staves. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 4/4. The score covers bars 214 to 217. The lyrics are: 'scrawn - y and pale, pick - in' at my food And'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note ostinato in both hands, while the vocal line consists of a simple melody that returns to the tonic note at the end of each phrase.

(Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 66)

Figure 1.5b - 'A Puzzlement' from *The King and I* (bars 5-12)

The image shows a musical score for the song 'A Puzzlement' from the musical *The King and I*. It consists of two systems of music. The first system is marked with a square containing the number '1' and the word 'KING' above the vocal line. The lyrics are: 'When I was a boy, World was bet - ter spot,'. The second system continues the lyrics: 'What was so was so, What was not was not.' The score includes a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef, marked with a dynamic of *mp* (mezzo-piano). The piano part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more complex bass line in the left hand, including some chords and moving lines.

(Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1951: 44)

Billy is unable to maintain this limited range as he follows Julie's expansive melody in the refrain of 'If I Loved You', with the triumphant ascent to a top G masking the emotional detachment of the lyrics (see Figure 1.6). The accompaniment of strings and woodwind are augmented by the lower brass and timpani, which further build the emotional register of the song through their dynamic swelling.

Billy's expansive melodic ascent into the upper baritone register pits him against Jigger's 'alpha male' performance in 'There's Nothing So Bad For A Woman' (see Figure 1.7). Here, Jigger's melody is rhythmically simple and accompanied by block chords (see Figure 1.7), with his vocal range within a minor seventh and pitched in the middle of his tessitura (C2-Bb2). The orchestrations relies heavily on the clarinet and bass clarinet along with the lower string parts to maintain the mid-low register established by the voice, and to avoid the 'feminine' register of the flute and violin.

Figure 1.6 - 'If I Loved You' from *Carousel* (bars 266-273)

Musical score for 'If I Loved You' from *Carousel*, bars 266-273. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics: "Nev - er, nev - er to know..." (bars 266-269) and "How I loved you, If I loved you!" (bars 270-273). The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords. Instrumentation includes +Tbns, Tba, Timp, Sigs, Cls, and Hp, Cls. Bar numbers 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, and 273 are indicated above the vocal staff.

(Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 70)

Figure 1.7 - 'There's Nothing So Bad For A Woman' from *Carousel* (bars 62-69)

Musical score for 'There's Nothing So Bad For A Woman' from *Carousel*, bars 62-69. The score is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The vocal line (top staff) has lyrics: "Moth-er used to say to me, 'When you grow up, my son, I hope you're a bum like your fa - ther was, 'Cause a good man ain't no fun!" (bars 62-69). The piano accompaniment (middle and bottom staves) features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords. Instrumentation includes Ww, Vln 2, Hp, Bs Cl, Vc, and Tutti (no Tpts). Bar numbers 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, and 69 are indicated above the vocal staff.

(Rodgers and Hammerstein, 1945: 215)

Thus in *Carousel*, Billy's masculinity is compromised by the musical theatre convention of breaking into song, and it may be said that Ruth Hartley's theory that 'the outward semblance of non-femininity is achieved at a tremendous cost of anxiety and self-alienation' (Hartley, 1959: 462) is played out on a larger scale within the genre of musical theatre itself. Billy's violent performance of hyper-masculinity thus not only serves to cover his own masculine anxieties, but also seeks to counter-balance the perceived 'non-masculinity' of the musical theatre genre.

'Rose tint my world' – alternative masculinities in the late 1960s and 1970s

The advent of liberation politics in America in the 1960s and early 1970s resulted in a temporary change in the performance of masculinity in Anglo-American culture. In Britain, the hegemonic masculinity of the 1950s 'family man' was challenged in popular culture by a younger generation of men, many of whom championed liberal thinking, experimentation with mind-altering drugs and sexual liberation. Second-wave feminism in the early 1970s brought temporary gains for women, and the musical began to embrace different types of masculinities and femininities in the characters it portrayed.

The fracturing of social identity is paralleled in the emergence of the concept musical in the late 1960s. The concept musical eschewed a linear narrative in favour of a loosely constructed mosaic of interconnected stories based around a central theme or concept. The characters in the concept musical are typically more fluid and less inclined to adhere to the traits of orthodox masculinities, and crucially the power dynamics of gender are frequently subverted.

At first glance, the men in *Hair* (1967) have no desire to aspire to Brannon's 'The Sturdy Oak' or 'The Big Wheel'. Furthermore, Woof asks to share Berger's bed (Rado, Ragni, and McDermott, 1967: 415) and sings a hymn to the beauty of Mick Jagger, stating that 'I'm not a homosexual or anything like that... but I'd go to bed with him... and make great love to you' (Rado, Ragni, and McDermott, 1967: 454).

Elisabeth Wollman notes that 'the connection between Claude and Berger is so central, in fact, that *Hair* can be easily read as a love story between them' (Wollman 2014: 2-3). There is constant 'gender-bending' in the ensemble throughout the play, with authority characters such as Abraham Lincoln and Margaret Mead being played by the opposite gender. Nevertheless, it is clear throughout the musical that the men still hold the balance of power. Shelia may be the activist leader, but it is Berger that possesses the charisma and Claude that carries the fragmented narrative of the hippy being gradually drawn into the Vietnam War draft. Whilst the masculinities portrayed are undoubtedly more liberal in their attitudes towards sex, sexuality and ethnicity, Wollman's concern that the musical reflects 'a sexism that, long prevalent in the dominant culture, existed in the youth culture of the 1960s as well' (Wollman, 2014: 5-6) is clearly sustainable.

The Rocky Horror Show (1973) pushed the boundaries of masculinities in musical theatre still further by introducing Tim Curry as the transvestite Frank N. Furter. The story concerns Brad Majors and his fiancée Janet Weiss, who are portrayed as a wholesome and innocent all-American couple. Their liaison with Frank at his castle opens their eyes to all manner of sexual practices, including both a homosexual encounter between Frank and Brad and a group orgy as part of Frank's 'floor show'. Brad's masculinity is not only undermined by his engagement in sexual

relations with Frank, but by Janet's sexual escapades with both Frank and Rocky. Even Rocky's muscle man masculinity is subverted by his sensitivity, which sees Janet acting as a maternal figure towards him. Finally, Frank is allowed to transcend the gender binary through both his performance of gender and his flexibility in the object choice for his desire.

The ending of the musical is ambiguous – Brad and Janet are returned to their old lives, and the moral indiscretions of Frank are seemingly expunged by the intervention of Riff Raff and Magenta. And yet arguably it is Frank that wins the sympathies of the audience, both through his charisma throughout the show and more explicitly through his eleven clock ballad 'I'm Going Home'. In many ways, the audience is put under the same spell as Brad and Janet, as can be seen by the ritualistic actions employed by the audience at *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* screenings (see Austin, 1981, Kinkade and Katovich, 1992).

The deployment of open endings in this new brand of 1960s and 1970s musicals subverts the right of the audience to obtain a clear ending to the narrative. The original Broadway production of *Hair* ends with the image of Claude laid out alone on a black cloth as the tribe members sing 'Let The Sun Shine In', seemingly unaware of Claude's fate. The audience is invited to choose their own ending by filling in the gaps in the narrative – this is perhaps one of the reasons why these musicals lend themselves so readily to frequent revivals, as the subtle homosexual coding of Golden Age musical theatre is replaced by the invitation to the audience to decode the narrative itself using whatever code they see fit.

This analysis of the temporary change in masculinities in the late 1960s and early 1970s is necessarily brief, but it is important to recognise that there have been

significant challenges to established masculinities prior to the emergence of the ‘new man’ and the ‘new lad’ in the 1990s. The twin backlash against second-wave feminism and gay liberation resulted in the re-assertion of traditional family values by the Reagan and Thatcher governments in the early 1980s, and by the mid-1980s, unconventional gender roles were less readily acceptable. The London production of *La Cage Aux Folles* (1986) flopped as the AIDS crisis took hold (Steyn, 1997: 201), and the *British Social Attitudes Survey* recorded a peak of homo-negativity between 1987 and 1990, where between 70% and 75% of respondents answered that homosexuality was ‘always wrong’ or ‘mostly wrong’ (Park *et al* 2013: 16). Concurrently, sexually liberated musicals such as *Hair* and *La Cage Aux Folles* were replaced by more heteronormative musicals such as *Me and My Girl* (1985), *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) and *Miss Saigon* (1989).

‘Your chains are still mine, you will sing for me’ - hegemonic masculinities in *The Phantom of the Opera*

Andrew Lloyd Webber had already achieved success in collaboration with Tim Rice on three musicals in the 1970s - *Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971), *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* (1973) and *Evita* (1978). These musicals were remarkable for the re-invention of the sung-through musical as rock opera, largely through a combination the aural style of The Who’s *Tommy* with the technologically advanced visual and aural elements of the post-electronic era. By the 1980s, the new genre of the ‘megamusical’ was dominated by Lloyd Webber and Rice (now working separately) and the French writing team of Claude-Michel Schoenberg and Alain Boublil, along with director Trevor Nunn and producer Cameron Mackintosh.

1980s megamusicals tend to focus on a central antagonistic relationship between two men - Valjean and Javert in *Les Misérables* (1985), the Phantom and Raoul in *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) and the American and the Russian in *Chess* (1986). The lead female characters of Fantine, Christine and Florence take a secondary role to the men that are competing over them, and the overall effect is that the male characters overshadow their female counterparts:

In *Les Miz* and *Phantom* —so well known that they're typically referred to in shorthand—old, stereotypical gendered binaries emerge: men are active and women are passive; men function in the world and women are relegated to a domestic space; men are artists and politicians and women are their muses.

(Wolf, 2011: 128-129)

The gendered stereotypes of the megamusical can be usefully analysed in terms of Raewyn Connell's theory of 'hegemonic masculinities'. Connell posits that the gender order is structured around the three key gender relations of power, production and cathexis (Connell, 1987: 169-194; Connell, 2005: 74-75). *Power relations* ensure that the patriarchal system is upheld through the machinations of the government and the media; *production relations* ensure that men continue to monopolise the best-paid and most powerful jobs; *relations of cathexis* ensure the dominance of heteronormative relationships in which the man holds the power as the pinnacle of a reproductive society. Within the gender order, Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as 'the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (Connell, 2005: 77).

Connell's theory assumes that there is a dominant form of masculinity that represents the collective ideal of any given society at any one time. This form of masculinity works to subordinate other masculinities through oppression. Since these

other masculinities are generally defined as ‘non-masculine’ masculinities, there is often ‘a symbolic blurring with femininity’ (Connell, 2005: 79). It is important to note how intersectionality works here – class and race can also intersect with gender and sexuality to determine where a particular form of masculinity is located in the hierarchy, and often those who are disadvantaged by their ethnicity or class may emphasise other elements of the dominant masculinity in order to maintain a higher position than other subordinated groups (Connell, 2005: 80-81).

Connell also suggests that many men adopt a ‘complicit masculinity’ rather than the hegemonic masculinity within a culture. Complicit masculinities operate by maintaining the status quo with gender relations – as Connell puts it, ‘a great many men who draw the patriarchal dividend also respect their wives and mothers, are never violent towards women, do their accustomed share of the housework, bring home the family wage, and can easily convince themselves that feminists must be bra-burning extremists’ (Connell, 2005: 79-80). These men may or may not aspire to the hegemonic masculinity dictated by society, but their performance of masculinity does not challenge the social order of gender.

Many megamusicals carry inherent and systematic gender inequality through their source material. *The Phantom of the Opera* is set in nineteenth-century France and is based on Gaston Leroux’s 1910 novel of the same name. The central power struggle in the musical is between Raoul, who represents the hegemonic power of the current patriarchal system, and the Phantom, who seeks to challenge the established power hierarchy in the Opéra Populaire through his performance of a ‘protest masculinity’, symbolised by his acts of violence. Whilst the power struggle concerns the financial and artistic ownership of the Opéra, the ultimate prize for the victor is Christine Daaé,

Raoul's childhood sweetheart and the Phantom's musical ingénue. Thus the *power relations* between Raoul and The Phantom are as important as their individual relationships with Christine in understanding their performances of masculinities in the musical.

Raoul's power is based mainly on the privileges that he has inherited - as well as being a handsome, young, white, heterosexual man, he has inherited the title of the Vicomte de Chagny and has used his wealth to patronise the Opéra Populaire. Many of the other characters in *Phantom* accuse Raoul of abusing his position in order to enhance Christine's prospects, and he uses his influence as patron in order to visit Christine alone after her opening night triumph in *Hannibal*. Yet Raoul's position of privilege often leads him to take his power for granted. In his first meeting with Christine, Raoul fails to listen to Christine's warnings about the Phantom:

CHRISTINE: Father said, "When I'm in heaven, child, I will send the Angel of Music to you". Well, father is dead, Raoul, and I have been visited by the Angel of Music.

RAOUL: No doubt of it and now we'll go to supper!

CHRISTINE: (*Firmly*) No, Raoul, the Angel of Music is very strict.

RAOUL: I shan't keep you up late!

CHRISTINE: No, Raoul... Things have changed.

RAOUL: YOU must change. I must get my hat. Two minutes... Little Lotte.

CHRISTINE (*calling after him*) Raoul! Things have changed, Raoul.

(Lloyd Webber and Hart, 1986: I/2-9)

Raoul's inability to listen to Christine has tragic consequences when he convinces her to take a part in the Phantom's new opera *Don Juan Triumphant* in order

to capture and kill the Phantom. Raoul is happy to use emotional blackmail to achieve his aim despite Christine's protestation that she is frightened, and the tremolo accompaniment in figure 1.8 is an obvious representation of the danger and excitement of Raoul's proposal.

Figure 1.8 - 'Twisted Every Way' from *The Phantom of the Opera* (bars 17-24)

P RAOUL

Chris - tine, Chris - tine, don't think that I don't care but ev - ery
hope and ev - ery prayer rests on you now.

[CHRISTINE, overcome by her conflicting emotions, turns away and hurries out]

(Lloyd Webber and Hart, 1986: II/2-20)

The Phantom is unable to enjoy the same level of power as Raoul due to his facial disfigurement, as he describes to Christine in Act 2:

Why, you ask, was I bound and chained in this cold and dismal place?
Not for any mortal sin, but the wickedness of my abhorrent face!

(Lloyd Webber and Hart, 1986: II/7-4)

Thus the Phantom has to use his own resources in order to build a viable alternative to the power of hegemonic masculinity. Madame Girya tells Raoul that she had previously seen the Phantom in a circus, where he was 'a prodigy... scholar, architect, musician...

an inventor too' (Lloyd Webber and Hart, 1986: II/1-25), and it is strongly hinted that he uses his architectural and scientific knowledge to wage a campaign of terror on the Opéra. The Phantom's performance of masculinity is based on violence - as Christine states, 'he kills without a thought, he murders all that's good' (Lloyd Webber and Hart, 1986: II/2-19) - yet his initial power over Christine is based on his musical and artistic talent rather than his magic tricks.

In terms of *production relations*, the Phantom is presented as an artist with Christine as his muse, but this dynamic is also apparent in Raoul's role as the Vicomte and opera patron, with Christine as his prima donna. Even the secondary male principals benefit from the gender imbalance within their professions - Monsieur Andre and Monsieur Firmin are managers of the Opéra Populaire, with Ubaldo Piangi as their principal tenor, whilst the female principals (including Christine) are all members of the ballet chorus with Madame Giry as their ballet mistress. The only exception is Carlotta, the prima donna, whose hostility towards the Phantom inevitably leads to her humiliation at his hands.

The Phantom's obsession with Christine is a literal embodiment of *emotional cathexis*, and this is clearly demonstrated in 'The Music of the Night'. The use of language is almost claustrophobic, focusing on the image of darkness - 'unfurls', 'surrounds', 'closing in around you', 'sweet intoxication', 'secretly possess you'. The Phantom explicitly states his desire to control Christine in the recitative preceding the number, stating that he wants Christine 'to serve me, to sing'. Christine is the only meaningful relationship that the Phantom establishes in the musical - his violent antagonism towards other characters is initiated by their prevention of him from

obtaining Christine. Nevertheless, there is one allusion to the Phantom's mother, which suggests a deeper psychological reason for his pursuit of Christine:

This face, which earned a mother's fear and loathing.
A mask, my first unfeeling scrap of clothing.
Pity comes too late - turn around and face your fate:
An eternity of this before your eyes!

(Lloyd Webber and Hart, 1986: II/8-2)

There is clearly an explicitly erotic dimension to the Phantom's pursuit of Christine as he states 'that fate, which condemns me to wallow in blood has also denied me the joys of the flesh' (Lloyd Webber and Hart, 1986: II/8-1), and this prevents any explicitly 'queer' reading of the Phantom's character. The Phantom's impersonation of Christine's father in the graveyard scene also adds an incestuous undertone that adds to the claustrophobic and controlling nature of his obsession. Connell and Pearse note that cathexis may occur in familial and occupational relationships as well as romantic (Connell and Pearse, 2014: 81-82), and thus the persistent invocation of Christine's absent father submerges her further in the patriarchal system, and both the Phantom and Raoul take advantage of this by evoking Christine's memories of her father.

Bobbie Yow suggests that Raoul's character is intended to be 'the heroic, masculine, daylight figure' (Yow, 1991: 115), although ultimately he is also prone to narcissistic tendencies and it is somewhat unsettling to find that Raoul's pursuit of Christine has strong parallels with the Phantom. Raoul's first conversation with Christine is particularly eerie in the way that he uses shared nostalgia to connect with her. This is emphasised by the musical setting of a monotone dream-like chant, which is accompanied by a motif that is later appropriated by the Phantom (see figures 1.9a and 1.9b).

Figure 1.9a - 'Little Lotte' (bars 1-6)

Musical score for 'Little Lotte' (bars 1-6). The score is for RAOUL, featuring a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Lit - tle Lot - te, let her mind wan - der. Lit - tle Lot - te, thought am I fon - der of dolls or of gob - lins of shoes". The piano accompaniment is marked "SUSTAINED" and "p". The score includes a handwritten "Sm" in the piano part.

(Lloyd Webber and Hart, 1986: I/2-7)

Figure 1.9b - 'The Music of the Night' (bars 1-8)

Musical score for 'The Music of the Night' (bars 1-8). The score is for PHANTOM, featuring a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "Ah I have brought you to the seat of sweet mu - sic's throne, to this king - dom where all must pay ho - mage to mu - sic." The piano accompaniment is marked "ORGAN VLAS." and "ORGAN+VCL." with dynamics "mf" and "ff". The score includes a handwritten "dim." in the piano part.

(Lloyd Webber and Hart, 1986: I/3-11)

It is possible to read this borrowing as part of the Phantom's omnipresence - this is not the only time that he twists Raoul's music to emotionally manipulate Christine - but this motivic similarity suggests that there is not as wide a difference between Raoul and the Phantom as might be expected. A lyrical analysis of Raoul's text in 'All I Ask of You' suggests that Raoul is placed as the opposite of the Phantom, with an emphasis on 'daylight', 'light' and 'freedom', but some of his phrases are eerily similar to the Phantom. One might wonder how it is possible for Raoul to be Christine's 'freedom' as he promises 'to guard you and to guide you' (Lloyd Webber and Hart, 1986: I/8-9), and the line 'you're safe, no-one will find you' (Lloyd Webber and Hart, 1986: I/11) is not dissimilar to the Phantom's luring of Christine to his 'strange new world'.

Thus Christine is given a choice between 'darkness' and 'light' - except there is little choice involved as she is first manipulated by the Phantom to sing his 'music of the night' and then by Raoul to ensnare the Phantom:

Christine's struggle becomes, then, not one of career versus love, but of what kind of love she will have: a sexualized, father-inflected, subconscious tug, or a rational, appropriate romance. And in some ways, this too is a false choice, because the other narrative - that of the Phantom's haunting and violent control over the opera house - shows that he is, well, crazy, obsessive, and disfigured, and clearly not an appropriate choice for her. (Wolf, 2011: 153)

It is Christine's acceptance of the Phantom through a kiss that changes the movement of the narrative - the Phantom has already defeated Raoul at this point and seems certain to claim Christine, but the kiss somehow convinces the Phantom to let Christine go. Yet as Grace Barnes notes, 'Christine gives up a promising career as an opera singer to marry the insipid Raoul' (Barnes, 2015: 49) and thus even her agency in accepting the Phantom leads to her subordination to the patriarchal system. Thus Raoul's hegemonic masculinity triumphs over the violence of the Phantom's protest

masculinity, and Christine's femininity is represented as complicit in maintaining the gender order.

'T'd be happy to die for a taste of what Angel had' – 'inclusive masculinities' and male-centric narrative in *Rent*

Oppression positions homosexual masculinities at the bottom of a gender hierarchy among men. Gayness, in patriarchal ideology, is the repository of whatever is symbolically expelled from hegemonic masculinity, the items ranging from fastidious taste in home decoration to receptive anal pleasure. Hence, from the point of view of hegemonic masculinity, gayness is easily assimilated to femininity. (Connell, 2005: 78)

Over the past ten years, Raewyn Connell's description of 'gayness in patriarchal ideology' has been challenged on a number of fronts. In 1995, the year that Connell's text was originally published, 55% of those surveyed for the British Social Attitudes survey thought that same-sex relationships were 'always wrong' or 'mostly wrong', whilst only 22% thought that same-sex relationships were 'not wrong at all'. By 2012, 28% thought that same-sex relationships were 'always wrong' or 'mostly wrong' compared to the 47% that answered 'not wrong at all' (Park *et al* 2013: 16). This data does not necessarily show that 'gayness' has become 'desirable' to heterosexual men or that it is a realistic rival to 'hegemonic masculinity', but it may suggest that 'homosexual masculinities' are no longer positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Eric Anderson's ethnographic studies of sports teams have led him to propose a modification to Connell's theory. Anderson suggests that a decrease in 'homophobia' amongst young men has altered the relationship between straight and gay and bisexual men to such an extent that there is no longer a hegemonic structure of masculinities in place. McCormack and Anderson state that homophobia 'conceptualizes the contexts when homophobia effects (or is used to police) heterosexual men's gendered behaviors'

(McCormack and Anderson, 2014: 153). Anderson's observations on 'diminishing homophobia' and the 'emotional and physically homosocial proximity' of heterosexual men at the turn of the century suggest a significant shift from the dominant masculinity at the time of Connell's conception of hegemonic masculinity theory in 1987. In fact, Connell and Messerschmidt predict this shift in their 2005 revision of hegemonic masculinity theory, suggesting that 'a more humane, less oppressive, means of being a man might become hegemonic, as part of a process leading toward an abolition of gender hierarchies' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005: 833).

Anderson's criteria for a culture of declining homophobia are met in *Rent* (1996), where the principal characters consist of three heterosexual men (Mark, Roger and Benny), a gay man (Collins), a nonbinary person (Angel), a heterosexual woman (Mimi), a bisexual woman (Maureen) and a lesbian woman (Joanne). If Anderson is correct, then the 'inclusive masculinities' enacted by Mark, Roger, Benny, Collins and Angel should be equally esteemed by their society:

In such a setting, the esteemed attributes of men will no longer rely on control and domination, thus intentional homophobic stigmatization will cease... There will be social inclusion of the form of masculinities that were traditionally marginalized by hegemonic masculinity. Accordingly, inclusive masculinity theory maintains that, in such a zeitgeist, multiple masculinities will proliferate with less hierarchy or hegemony. (Anderson, 2009: 9)

As in the megamusicals discussed above, the central relationship in *Rent* is between two men - filmmaker Mark and his housemate, Roger. The major difference is that this relationship is not antagonistic, with each character forming the central point of his own love triangle within the musical. Roger competes with landlord Benny for the affections of Mimi, whilst Mark is embroiled in his ex-girlfriend Maureen's new relationship with Joanne as Maureen still exerts sexual power over him. The other relationship in the musical is between Collins, an ex-housemate of Mark, and his

transgender partner Angel. This relationship is the least volatile in the musical, and is used as a touchstone for the success of the other relationships in the show.

The opening of *Rent* is unconventional. ‘Tune Up’ is a recitative-style number where Mark and Roger’s conversation is accompanied on-stage by Roger tuning his guitar (see Figure 1.10), and thus the intimacy of their platonic relationship is immediately established by maintaining the audience’s visual and aural focus on Mark and Roger in their apartment. Mark reveals personal information about Roger to his camera (and therefore the audience) - ‘he’s just coming back from half a year of withdrawal’ (Larson, 1996: 1), whilst Roger seems to be an unwilling participant in Mark’s film - he is delighted by two interruptions by the answering machine, which prevent him from having to talk about the ‘one great song’ that he is writing.

Figure 1.10 - ‘Tune Up’ from *Rent* (bars 1-8)

Handwritten annotations in the score include a circled '2' above the first measure, 'GTR I ONLY ON STAGE' written across the first two measures, and bar numbers 1 through 6 above the staff.

(Larson, 1996: 1)

The closeness between the two men even manifests itself in their message on the answerphone, where Mark and Roger intone the word ‘speak’ in perfect unison. The opening sequence introduces Mark’s mum, Collins and Benny through various answerphone messages and phone calls, and it is Benny’s request for Mark and Roger to

pay their rent to him that acts as an inciting incident for the opening number and for the musical as a whole.

The opening number, 'Rent', is largely dominated by Mark and Roger, but it also establishes Benny as the antagonist and Collins and Joanne as secondary characters (see Figure 1.11). Mark and Roger are the only characters that sing throughout this number - Benny speaks in his verse and then sings on a repeated G for the contrapuntal section from bars 127-138, whilst Collins sings his first few bars at bar 89 before moving to speech. Joanne is given very limited melodic material and the majority of her entries are spoken, meaning that she is unable to make a significant vocal impact on the number. In fact, 'Rent' establishes a male-dominant slant to the narrative that barely changes throughout the musical.

The title number functions as an 'I want' number for Mark and Roger as the dual protagonists of the musical. Mark's first verse opens with the question, 'how do you document real life when real life's getting more like fiction each day?' whilst Roger begins his verse with his parallel question 'how do you write a song when the chords sound wrong though they once sounded right and rare?' Both Mark and Roger are searching for artistic success in the face of financial hardship, and the similarity in their initial desires in the musical allows them to share the same refrain (see figure 1.12). Their vocal parts function as a canon as well as providing close harmonies, and this solidifies two men's close relationship musically.

Figure 1.11 – Vocal structure of ‘Rent’ from *Rent*

Section	Vocalist
Verse 1 (bars 11-23)	Mark
Verse 2 (bars 24-36)	Roger
Refrain	Mark and Roger in harmony
Verse 3 (bars 51-63)	Mark and Roger (alternate lines)
Refrain (bars 64-72)	Mark and Roger in harmony
Middle Eight (bars 73-88)	Joanne (spoken in rhythm)
Verse 4 (bars 89-101)	Collins
Refrain (bars 102-110)	Mark and Roger in harmony
Instrumental (bars 111-118)	
Verse 5 (bars 119-126)	Benny (spoken in rhythm)
Section	Vocalist
Vocal break (bars 127-138)	Counterpoint between Mark and Roger, Joanne, Collins and Benny
Drum break (bars 139-142)	Mark (spoken)
Verse 6 (bars 143-171)	Mark and ensemble Roger and ensemble All
Refrain (bars 172-179)	All
Coda (bars 180-190)	All (last four bars Mark and Roger in harmony)

Figure 1.12 - Mark and Roger's harmony lines in the chorus of 'Rent' from *Rent* (bars 37-45)

37 CHORUS

38 39

HOW WE GON-NA PAY _____ HOW WE GON-NA

40 41 42

PAY _____ HOW WE GON-NA PAY _____

43 44 45 46

LAST YEAR'S RENT _____ WE LIGHT CANDLES

(Larson, 1996: 10)

The dynamic between Mark and Roger is further established in 'Tune Up (Reprise)', where Mark reminds Roger to 'take your AZT' and promises that 'I'll check up on you later' (Larson, 1996: 30). Roger has not left the house in several months, and Mark appears to take the dominant role in their relationship. This is further established when Roger treats Mark as a confidante after his encounter with Mimi, describing how he was unable to control his temper:

She was more than ok but I pushed her away,
It was bad, I got mad and I had to get her out of my sight.

(Larson, 1996: 158)

The emotional closeness between Mark and Roger ultimately results in an argument in 'Goodbye Love', where Roger reacts angrily to Mark's advice to not leave Mimi. In one of the few harmonically chromatic passages in the score, Roger criticises Mark for being emotionally numb and remaining distant from everyone else by remaining behind his camera (see Figure 1.13). In one of his most un-endearing moments, Mark blames that fact that 'I'm the one of us to survive' for his emotional detachment.

Figure 1.13 - 'Goodbye Love' from *Rent* (bars 134-145)

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 4/4.

- System 1 (Bars 134-137):**
 - Vocal (Mark):** MARK'S IN LOVE WITH HIS WORK MARK HIDES IN HIS WORK FROM WHAT? FROM
 - Piano:** Chords are D \flat 2/F, E \flat /G, and A \flat .
- System 2 (Bars 138-141):**
 - Vocal (Roger):** FAC-ING YOUR FAIL-URE FAC-ING YOUR LONE-LI-NESS,
 - Piano:** Chords are D \flat 2/F, C 2 /E, C \flat 2/E \flat , and B \flat 2/D.
- System 3 (Bars 142-145):**
 - Vocal (Roger):** FAC-ING THE FACT YOU LIVE A LIE
 - Piano:** Chords are A 2 /D \flat , A \flat 2/C, and C 2 .

(Larson, 1996: 158)

Mark and Roger's relationship in the musical demonstrates the 'emotional and physically homosocial proximity' (Anderson, 2009: 8) that forms a central part of Anderson's theory of inclusive masculinity. Furthermore, homophobia is at a low level in Mark and Roger's community, which is reflected in their friendship with gay lecturer Tom Collins and his transgender partner Angel. Collins' friendship with Mark and Roger is established in the introduction to 'Today For You', as the number is introduced by a chromatic scale on the steel drums, before Collins and Mark sing a calypso-style melody in thirds (see Figure 1.14). Collins admonishes Roger for his

unenthusiastic welcome ('Hi? After seven months?'), and he tries to persuade Roger to leave the house, clearly aligning himself with Mark.

Mark and Roger's acceptance of Collins reflects Anderson's 'inclusive masculinity' theory, but it is notable that Collins' musical language is clearly coded as 'masculine' throughout the musical, with Collins often singing in his bass register in a relaxed 6/8 shuffle time ('Santa Fe' and 'I'll Cover You'). This is also true of Benny, who is the closest representative in the musical to the 'orthodox masculinity' proposed by Anderson. Benny generally speaks rhythmically rather than singing, returning to the archetypes of the King and Jigger above as his infrequent melodic material is characterised by repeated notes and arpeggio formulations (see figure 1.15).

Focusing solely on the performances of masculinities in *Rent* misses the more obvious problem of how the male characters relate to the female and nonbinary characters and, on another level, how the female and nonbinary characters are treated by their male author. Both Angel and Mimi are objectified as 'muses' to Mark and Roger, as made explicit in Mark and Roger's duet 'What You Own' (see figure 1.16).

It is the placement of Mimi and Angel within the narrative of *Rent* that highlights Ingrid and Waller's criticism that 'inclusive masculinities' represent 'a successful reconstitution of an entitlement to exert dominance...in a less explicit and less macho way' (Ingram and Waller, 2014: 45). Mark and Roger are accepting of Collins and Angel as a couple, and they sustain a friendship on an emotionally intimate level, but their lives still revolve around their own individual successes. The introduction of Angel as a transgender character who is accepted by the other characters is welcome, but there is a nagging suspicion that Angel functions more as a plot device than a character. Similarly, Mimi's prime purpose in the musical is to redeem Roger

through allowing herself to be rescued by him. The ‘masculinities’ of Mark and Roger thus still preserve domination of women and transgender people by heterosexual men, resulting in Naomi Graber’s charge of the ‘problematic gender politics of *Rent*, in which homosexual and homosocial men protect and support one another, but women, whether lovers or mothers, disrupt their community and cannot form one of their own’ (Graber, 2013: 369).

Figure 1.14 - Collins’ entrance in ‘Today For You’ from *Rent* (bars 1-4)

The musical score for Figure 1.14 consists of two systems of staves. The first system (bars 1-2) features a vocal line starting with a fermata and a note on 'BU-', and a piano accompaniment for 'STEEL DRUMS' with a complex rhythmic pattern. The second system (bars 3-4) shows the vocal line with lyrics: 'STE-LO MARL-BOR-O BA- NA-NA BY THE BUNCH A'. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern. Handwritten annotations include '(1)' above bar 1, '2' above bar 2, and '3' above bar 3. A circled 'Bowe' is written below the piano part at the end of bar 2.

(Larson, 1996: 49)

Figure 1.15 - ‘You’ll See’ from *Rent* (bars 55-60)

The musical score for Figure 1.15 shows two systems of staves. The first system (bars 55-56) features a vocal line with lyrics: 'WHAT WE USED TO DREAM A-BOUT THINK TWICE BE-FORE YOU POOH-POOH IT YOU'LL SEE...'. The piano accompaniment consists of a melodic line with slurs and a bass line. Handwritten annotations include '55' above bar 55, '56' above bar 56, and 'gliss.' written below the piano part in bar 56.

57 CHORUS
 BOYS YOU'LL SEE BOYS YOU'LL SEE
 C² C²/F Am⁷ C²/F
 61 BRIDGE

(Larson, 1996: 65-66)

Figure 1.16 - 'What You Own' from *Rent* (Bars 63-70)

63 VERSE
 FILM MAK-ER CAN-NOT SEE
 AND THE SONG WRIT-ER CAN-NOT HEAR
 PLAY AT #79
 A² A²/G
 66
 YET I SEE MI- MI EV- 'RY WHERE
 AN-GELS
 A²
 69 Roger
 70
 71
 Mark
 VOICE IS IN MY EAR
 A²/G

(Larson, 1996: 324-325)

Conclusion

The development of gender representation in musical theatre reflects the zeitgeist of contemporary understandings of the gender system. Robert Brannon's definition of *The Male Sex Role* (1976) produces an essentialist viewpoint of mid-20th century 'masculinity', but it also reflects the dominant perception of gender within Anglo-American culture at this time. The realisation that different performances of 'masculinity' can achieve the same effect of preserving the dominance of men in the gender order is central to Raewyn Connell's theory in *Masculinities* (1995), and megamusicals such as *The Phantom of the Opera* and *Les Misérables* demonstrate how different hegemonic masculinities result in a male-dominated narrative that subordinates female characters. Eric Anderson's theory of *Inclusive Masculinities* (2009) proposes that different types of masculinities can co-exist within a society due to a reduction in homophobia and in the stigmatisation of 'feminine' coded behaviour, but whilst Anderson's theory is useful in understanding how the performance of acceptable masculinities has broadened in the 21st century, it fails to account for the continued subordination of women and gay and bisexual men by heteronormative structures.

The myriad redefinitions of gender theory and 'masculinities' over the past century have clear consequences for academic scholarship, including musical theatre. John Bush Jones' suggestion that musicals must be seen 'both *in* history and *as* history' (Bush Jones, 2004: 1) is equally true of musical theatre academia, which must be situated within the cultural context that it is produced. The gender system that permeates musical theatre also filters into academic writing, and thus it is important to understand the role of masculinities in shaping the theoretical constructs proposed by scholars as well as inhabiting the musicals that they study.

2. 'WHY NOT TRY TO SEE THINGS FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE?': A REVIEW OF ACADEMIC WORK ON THE MUSICAL THEATRE AUDIENCE

I am what I am
I am my own special creation
So come take a look
Give me the hook or the ovation
It's my world that I want to take a little pride in
My world and it's not a place I have to hide in
Life's not worth a damn
Till you can say, "Hey world, I am what I am"

(Herman, 1983: 131-132)

In the previous chapter, *Carousel* (1945), *The Phantom of the Opera* (1986) and *Rent* (1996) were located within conceptual frameworks of gender and masculinities. It was suggested that hyper-masculinity is performed in periods of high homophobia (as in *Carousel* and *Phantom*), but that more inclusive forms of masculinity are evident as homophobia declines. In this chapter, it is argued that there is a case for locating academic work within a similar framework of gender and homophobia. Ken Plummer describes how 'generational sexualities' can alter the perception of different aspects of sexuality depending on the author's own standpoint:

The idea of generations captures the idea that each generation—born at a specific juncture—confronts the world as it moves through it together in different ways. For the older generations, each moment becomes cumulative—rolling and growing into each other. For a new generation, there is none of this experiential history to start with—this has to be assembled through the current moment. (Plummer, 2010: 175-176)

Plummer's observations are pertinent to the study of academic work that interrogates gender and sexuality, including the relationship between musical theatre and its gendered audience. The concept of the audience as both gendered and sexualised causes immediate friction with the established hierarchy that places critics and academics as a 'learned audience', and it is concerning that academic work in musical theatre continues to rely on the experiences of scholars and critics, who are

largely white, middle-aged, middle-class men. The failure to recognise that different audience demographics may respond to a performance in an entirely different way to those who write about musicals in a professional capacity is a weakness in academic literature, and leads to an impoverished understanding of the different facets of the musical theatre audience.

‘It’s my world that I want to have a little pride in’ - the role of generational standpoint theory in determining musical theatre history

There have been several studies of sexuality and musical theatre over the past two decades. Mark Steyn’s provocative chapter ‘The Fags’ in *Broadway Babies Say Goodnight* (1997) was followed by D. A. Miller’s essay *Place For Us* (1998) and John Clum’s autobiographical *Something For The Boys* (1999). Raymond Knapp’s *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity* (2006) contained a chapter devoted to sexuality in the musical, while Stacy Wolf’s *Changed For Good* (2011) built on her earlier work in *A Problem Like Maria* (2002) in order to provide a lesbian feminist reading of musical theatre. David Halperin’s *How To Be Gay* (2012) draws heavily on Clum and Miller’s earlier work to interrogate the concept of ‘gay femininity’ within various gay subcultures including musical theatre, while Grace Barnes’ recent *Her Turn on Stage* (2015) offers an antagonistic reading of the special relationship between gay men and musical theatre. Figure 2.1 lists these key texts along with brief demographic information about each writer that details their own generational standpoint and (where given) identification of their sexual orientation.

Figure 2.1 - Demographic information about the authors of the key texts on musical theatre and its gendered audience

Work	Author	Year of Birth	Author's perspective
<i>Broadway Babies Say Goodnight</i> (1997)	Mark Steyn	1959	White Canadian heterosexual male
<i>Place For Us</i> (1998)	D. A. Miller	1948	White American homosexual male
<i>Something For The Boys</i> (1999)	John Clum	1941	White American homosexual male
<i>The American musical and the performance of personal identity</i> (2006)	Raymond Knapp	1952	White American male (sexuality not stated)
<i>Changed For Good</i> (2011)	Stacy Wolf	1966	White American lesbian female
<i>How To Be Gay</i> (2012)	David Halperin	1952	White American homosexual male
<i>Her Turn on Stage</i> (2015)	Grace Barnes	1965	White Scottish female (sexuality not stated)

It is immediately apparent that the scholars listed above share a homogenous background in terms of their Anglo-American roots, their ethnicity and their generational standpoint. The five men were born in North America between 1941 and 1959 into the baby-boom generation and, aside from Steyn, would have grown up during a period in which homosexual behaviour was illegal in the United States. Their generational standpoint is likely to be coloured by these experiences but there is little attempt to widen this perspective within the work through empirical data. Grace Barnes and Stacy Wolf were born in the mid-sixties and are therefore part of Generation X (see Strauss and Howe, 1991), and both cite empirical evidence to widen their own perspectives - Wolf through her analysis of internet forum posts by teenage girls about *Wicked* (Wolf, 2011: 219-236) and Barnes through her interviews with female industry

practitioners throughout her text. Nevertheless, the majority of scholarship on musical theatre and sexuality comes from a specific generational standpoint within the white Anglo-American tradition, and this becomes particularly problematic when the work itself does not acknowledge these limitations.

The studies by Mark Steyn (1997), D. A. Miller (1998) and John Clum (1999) were published towards the end of a difficult period for LGBTQ rights in the United States, capped by the enactment of the Defense of Marriage Act by the Clinton administration in 1996. Nylund suggests that the emergence of the ‘new lad’ in the mid-1990s was ‘arguably an attempt to reassert hegemonic masculinity deemed to have been lost by the concessions made to feminism by the “new man”’ (Nylund, 2007: 9), whilst Bethan Benwell notes that men’s magazines such as *Loaded* and *Maxim* in both the United Kingdom and the United States ‘marked a return to traditional masculine values of sexism, exclusive male friendship and homophobia’ (Benwell, 2003: 13). Thus Steyn, Miller and Clum are writing during a period of ‘gender trouble’ where some men were particularly concerned about the gains of the feminist movement - as Judith Butler observes, ‘the fact that heterosexuality is always in the act of elaborating itself is evidence that it is perpetually at risk, that is, that it ‘knows’ its own possibility of becoming undone’ (Butler, 1990: 23).

The tone for Mark Steyn’s *Broadway Babies Say Goodnight* (1997) is set in his introduction, ‘The Fix’, which heavily criticises the Peter Allen flop *Legs Diamond* (1989). Steyn’s description of how Allen ‘wiggles and grinds his way through a performance that makes Liberace look like a paragon of understatement’ (Steyn, 1997: 4) is the first of a series of references that denigrate the camp sensibilities of musical theatre. Steyn professes admiration for many Golden Age musicals, and he lauds the

opening numbers of *The Pajama Game* (1954), *Kiss Me Kate* (1948), *Porgy And Bess* (1935), *Guys and Dolls* (1950), *My Fair Lady* (1956), *West Side Story* (1957), *Gypsy* (1959), *Sweeney Todd* (1979) and *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964) within the first four pages of his first chapter (Steyn, 1997: 13-16). Much of Steyn's book explores his own definition of what makes 'good' musical theatre, but he includes a number of chapters investigating the contributions of various demographics on Broadway, namely 'The Jews' (pp. 75-87), 'The Brits' (pp. 163-177) and 'The Fags' (pp. 196-212).

Steyn's chapter on homosexual men in musical theatre turns the focus from those who create musical theatre to the composition of its audience as Steyn asks the question, 'when did a form mocked as insipid, bland 'family entertainment' come to be associated with homosexuality?' (Steyn, 1997: 198). Steyn suggests that the figure of Judy Garland was central to the 'sly, coded sexuality' of musical theatre that matched the 'sly, coded lives' of gay men (Steyn, 1997: 199):

American homosexuals adopted Garland's suffering as an emblem of their own. But Broadway gave them a full range of supporting players: larger-than-life ladies spilling out tales of love gone wrong. Musicals don't have to be camp, but they exist in a heightened reality - lavishly dressed, lavishly emotional - and that exaggeration seems to appeal to the gay consciousness. (Steyn, 1997: 200)

Steyn is particularly critical about the effect that the association between the musical theatre genre and homosexuality has for its straight audience, complaining that 'hardly any musicals are concerned with conventional heterosexual romance' due to their focus on 'middle-aged and matronly women' (Steyn, 1997: 200) - a bizarre claim bearing in mind that virtually all of the works cited by Steyn in his earlier chapter involve younger women in heterosexual couplings. Conversely, Steyn is scathing about the fact that 'the Broadway musical encompassed everything except the one subject its

creators were specially expert in' (Steyn, 1997: 201), yet displays a negative attitude towards the explicit LGBTQ identities that were 'coming out' in musical theatre:

We are all minorities: Indian hotel clerks, New Hampshire loggers, HIV-positive showtune quoters. A theatre that loses interest in all but a few select minorities is doomed. After the 1994 Tony telecast, Frank Rich suggested in *The New York Times* that henceforth the show should be written and cast by Tony Kushner, George C. Wolfe, Wendy Wasserstein and Stephen Sondheim. He meant this to sound liberating and exciting. Instead, he only emphasized how blinkered and restricted is our view of what theatre is. That's fine for Broadway's approved minorities: gays, blacks, Jewish feminists, and Sondheim fans. What about everyone else? (Steyn, 1997: 211-212)

Steyn displays a heterosexist anxiety about musical theatre being seen as gay, which suggests that Steyn's performance of hegemonic masculinity still reflects Brannon's archetype of 'No Sissy Stuff' even in the late 1990s. As D. A. Miller writes in his 1998 essay *Place For Us*, 'in the admittedly monstrous case that he isn't gay, the aficionado of the Broadway musical must resign himself to be thought so, or work as hard as Frank Rich to establish his improbable but true sexual orientation' (Miller, 1998: 16). Miller's own essay is written from the standpoint of a homosexual man who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s, and his focus is largely on the emotional affects and aesthetics of the musical. Miller notes that gay men eschewed integrated narratives in favour of the 'frankly interruptive mode-shifting' of the musical theatre genre, emphasising the defiant act of breaking into song as a rebuff to heteronormative society:

What he consequently sought in the Broadway musical was the very thing that those who despised it also found there: not the integration of drama and music found on the thematic surface, but a so much deeper formal discontinuity between the two that no makeshift for reconciling them could ever manage to make the transition from one to the other less abrupt, or more plausible. (Miller 1998: 3)

The first section of Miller's essay explores the secret childhood ritual of listening to musical theatre soundtracks whose 'diffuse sentimentality proved to have been rehearsing on its imaginary stage a far more precise, but hardly less embarrassing

sexuality' (Miller, 1998: 14). In his second section, Miller concentrates on the social dimension of the musical theatre piano bar, where 'in the ease and immediacy of gaying up the repertory there isn't spared even the notion of a song that could not release, thus rubbed, a gay genie who had always been lying cramped inside it, but now wafts vaporously, to more or less mischievous effect, over every line' (Miller, 1998: 35). Miller's final section uses the sustained analogy of *Gypsy* to align the homosexual spectator with the female diva, who 'thrills men into wanting to *be* her' (Miller, 1998: 68). This account of gay 'masculinity' describes a movement that exists in opposition to the 'hegemonic masculinity' of the male sex role described by Brannon, and Miller's description of the piano bar is particularly important in identifying the social dynamics of gay 'masculinity' in the 1950s and 1960.

John Clum acknowledges that *Something For The Boys* (1999) is a 'performance' of his own relationship with musical theatre as a self-confessed 'show queen' who sees musicals as 'funhouse mirrors, offering us wonderfully bizarre, exaggerated pictures of our loves, desires and appetites' (Clum 1999: 282). A large portion of the book is focused on how Clum relates to divas such as Judy Garland, Betty Buckley and Ann Miller, noting that these divas 'were central to the experience of urban gay men before gay liberation' (Clum, 1999: 140). Clum's observation that 'it wasn't really sadism to adore Garland for her weakness' (Clum, 1999: 151) suggests that these weaknesses allowed 'identification for gay men at a time when they had nothing but silence or negative comments from any corner of the culture and often had internalized their society's hatred' (Clum, 1999: 151). Clum's lived experience as a gay man in the 1950s has a clear impact on his conclusions about how gay men connect to musicals:

There are three basic ways in which one can generalise about a gay experience" within the shorthand of a musical, which relies to some extent on types and

stereotypes. The first way is to posit a generic or paradigmatic gay experience. There are things most gay men have lived through – for instance, dealing with external and internalized homophobia, coming out to oneself and to one’s family and peer group, and being introduced to institutions within the gay community and elements of current gay styles. There is also gay history with heroes and martyrs, as well as historic turning points, one of which is AIDS. Finally, one can posit to some extent a gay performative style, once called camp but now known as “fabulous”. (Clum, 1999: 246-247)

The concept of a ‘paradigmatic gay experience’ is crucial to an understanding of the connection between gay and bisexual men and musical theatre, since the concepts of ‘coming out’ and the ‘institutions within the gay community’ have no parallels within heterosexual culture. It is unfortunate that Clum often treats ‘gay performative style’ as a natural progression from ‘gay experience’ in his work, as this results in a somewhat inflexible reading of musical theatre that can be alienating even for a gay reader:

After the numerous errors and the missed opportunities, what most annoys me about *Something for the Boys* is Clum’s refusal to remain autobiographical. Throughout, he turns prescriptive, giving us “the” gay reading for these musicals and the people attached to them. And in the end, I – a black, gay man who is younger than Clum – remain unconvinced that Clum’s manner of reading is the final word—or even a compelling one. (Swayne, 2002: 104)

Steve Swayne’s review returns to Helen Freshwater’s concern that academic writers tend to concentrate on their own experiences as audience members rather than engaging with a wider audience. To some extent, this is dictated by Clum’s positioning of his book as a ‘performance’ that is ‘autobiographical, not sociological or anthropological’ (Clum, 1999: 1), but the similarities in the first-hand accounts of Clum and Miller suggest that a unique ‘gay sensibility’ towards musical theatre may have been present in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s. Nevertheless, Swayne’s concerns make it clear that Clum and Miller’s studies form only a partial representation of how gay men connect to musical theatre that is reflective of their own ethnicity and generational standpoint.

Furthermore, it is clear that generational perspective affects Steyn, Miller and Clum's view of the post-Golden Age musical. Steyn concludes that 'musical theatre is in perpetual danger of being marred by normality' (Steyn, 1997: 304), whilst Miller ends his essay in the hope that 'in the rubble of fragments that makes fertile ground for bricolage of all kinds, the scattered corpse of the Broadway musical starts to acquire the property of life which consists in "taking a turn"' (Miller, 1998: 137). Clum's own view that 'for all the current writing on camp, it may be, like show queens and the shows and divas we adore, a thing of the past, a gesture towards gay culture and solidarity when members of that culture felt decidedly out of the mainstream' (Clum, 1999: 8) aligns his work with Ethan Mordden (b. 1949) in *The Happiest Corpse I've Ever Seen* (2004). This suggests a generational standpoint in line with the analysis of Ken Plummer (b. 1946), who notes that in the late 1990s 'I become far removed from this generation, and indeed my life begins to disconnect from most things organized through essentially youthful gay cultures' (Plummer, 2010: 175).

'Some think it's noise, I think it's pretty' - the modern musical in 21st century musical theatre scholarship

By the early 21st century, musical theatre scholars began to recognise the importance of megamusicals to their audiences. Jessica Sternfeld's *The Megamusical* (2006) laments that 'many scholars dismiss, disdain and purposefully ignore the genre' (Sternfeld, 2006: 5), and her study illuminates why this genre became popular in the mid-1980s (see chapter five below for a further discussion of Sternfeld's work in relation to *Les Misérables*). This academic respect for the genre of the megamusical can also be seen in the work of Raymond Knapp, Stacy Wolf and Grace Barnes.

Raymond Knapp's *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity* (2006b) is the second volume of his 'thematic history of the American musical' (Knapp, 2006b: 1). Knapp observes that 'as categories, "national identity" and "personal identity" tend in opposite directions, the former towards a single, relatively stable abstraction, and the latter towards a multiplicity of possibilities expressed and experienced in more concrete terms' (Knapp, 2006b: 1). Knapp notes that 'in musicals, exaggeration is central to how specific attributes of a character or theme are presented, especially regarding gender and sexuality', and this leads to a consideration of how exaggeration may be construed by different constituents in the musical theatre audience, something which is worth quoting at length:

For an audience, exaggeration in performance, especially in terms of gender roles and sexuality, has functioned in at least three ways. For some, it has provided a liberating model, a demonstration of how one might more aggressively control and challenge the boundaries that traditionally circumscribe one's own gendered, sexual self. For others, it has provided a voyeuristic glimpse into alternatives that may be both relished and—precisely because of the element of exaggeration in their presentation—satisfyingly put aside as morally flawed, however intriguing. And, for still others, exaggerations in these dimensions created a special realm in which performance as such was privileged, sliding easily into camp but not necessarily so; this special realm was centrally important for many closeted gay men, especially pre-Stonewall (that is, before 1969), and became a particular locus of gay affiliation thereafter. (Knapp 2006: 206)

Knapp recognises homo-positive, homophobic and homosexual readings of performances, with the homo-positive reading providing a valuable intermediary position for both straight and gay audience members. Knapp also notes the generational dimension to the 'special realm', identifying that this worked in a different way for pre-Stonewall homosexual men (such as Miller and Clum) to gay men that have come out since. Knapp's observation that some audience members 'understand homosexuality as unnatural... although, surely, their numbers are diminishing' (Knapp, 2006b: 264-265)

suggests that homophobia may have decreased in America since the work of Steyn, Clum and Miller. Like these authors, Knapp acknowledges that it is possible to see the heterosexual relationships in musicals 'as standing in for a range of possible relationships, including homosexual ones' (Knapp, 2006b: 265). Knapp's study is more flexible than these works, but he still tends to privilege his own reading in his case studies, which is perhaps unsurprising bearing in mind that Knapp is offering a history of the musical rather than an audience-response survey.

Stacy Wolf's *A Problem Like Maria* (2002) provides a lesbian reading of four Broadway divas - Mary Martin, Ethel Merman, Julie Andrews and Barbra Streisand. This has some similarities with John Clum's approach to the diva musical, but Wolf is careful to suggest that her interpretations are alternative rather than prescriptive:

This book is concerned with interpreting musicals differently: in seeing and hearing in non-conventional ways; in consciously accounting for the importance of spectators' identifications and desires; in not taking for granted heterosexual narratives; in seeing the lesbian in the straight character; in recontextualizing, replacing, re-viewing. (Wolf, 2002: 8)

Whilst Wolf does not deal directly with how gay and bisexual men connect to musical theatre, her methodology in deconstructing the heterosexual narrative in order to provide a 'queer' reading is useful in understanding how musicals are received by individual audience members. Wolf notes that this interpretation is not necessarily uniform amongst spectators:

For musicals, as for any novel, film, musical composition, dance, or performance – any cultural work, that is – meanings emerge through negotiation or a “struggle over meaning” among text, context, and spectator. In other words, when we say that a play *means* something, we have *already* interpreted that play; already considered some aspects of the context and not considered others; already used particular interactive skills, of which we may or may not be conscious, to make meaning. (Wolf, 2002: 4)

Wolf's understanding of the multiple readings of narratives contrasts with many of the other writers cited above, and this forms the basis of Wolf's later study of how young women connect to *Wicked*. In *Changed For Good* (2011), Wolf analyses posts on internet forums and message boards to ascertain how the musical is read in similar and contrasting ways by different spectators within her target group of young women (Wolf, 2011: 219-237), embracing Helen Freshwater's call for including the responses of audience members in the study of theatre (Freshwater, 2009: 3-4) and allowing Wolf to draw clear conclusions about her cohort:

Wicked's girl fans legitimate homosocial attachments, create community, and validate each other's expressions of vulnerability. Girls' active fandom and their insightful use of musical theatre should urge critics, scholars, and fellow spectators to take their tastes seriously and to value that space of girl bonding as a queer social practice, not merely a stage to be gotten through, which only exists to lead up to heteronormative adulthood. (Wolf, 2011: 235)

David Halperin's *How To Be Gay* (2012) is theoretically based around a similar cohort, since it emerged from an undergraduate college course designed to explore how gay men are initiated into 'gay culture' despite being brought up in a heteronormative society:

Genre shapes the sensibilities of young people from their very first encounters with others, from their initial experiences of sociality, and so it forms their subjectivities. Most children grow up in heterosexual environments, where they are introduced to standard genres of discourse, feeling, expression, and behaviour – including the conventions of emotional expression that their parents' spontaneous manifestations of feeling often mirror and reproduce. (Halperin, 2012: 345)

Halperin's observation that 'gay or proto-gay children still grow up, for the most part, in heterosexual families and households' (Halperin, 2012: 119) is important in delineating the differences between straight and LGBTQ experiences of growing up. Yet Halperin's book remains curiously old-fashioned in its definition of gay

culture, with Halperin basing much of his analysis of musical theatre on Miller's earlier work:

The genius of Miller's approach to the Broadway musical is that it enables him to inquire into gay male subjectivity and its constitution, while side-stepping the psychic life of the individual by using a mass-cultural form popular with gay men to document and to recover the distinctive organization of subjectivity produced in gay men as a group by a specific set of historical and cultural conditions. That is an irreducibly *social* approach to the constitution of gay subjectivity. (Halperin, 2012: 102)

Halperin's assumption that Miller is 'side-stepping the psychic life of the individual' is somewhat surprising here, bearing in mind that Miller's work constantly refers to his own individual experience as a gay man in the 1950s and 1960s. This oversight is compounded by Halperin's refusal to acknowledge that young gay men on his undergraduate course might retain any connection to the musical, stating that 'gay men nowadays have a tendency to treat the Broadway musical...with phobic rejection, avoidance, repudiation' (Halperin, 2012: 98). It is unclear whether Halperin is defining 'the Broadway musical' in the narrow terms of American musical theatre written before the 1970s, or whether he is wilfully ignoring the popularity of musicals such as *Les Misérables* and *The Phantom of the Opera* with young people in the twenty-first century. Either way, his attempt to transpose Miller's experiences onto a different generation is uncomfortable, as Philip Hensher notes in his review of *How To Be Gay* for *The Guardian*:

The age of the camp persona, the biting comment, the ironic allusion is not passing, exactly, but it is moving towards a particular section of a particular gay community at a particular point in time. It would be good to know what proportion of gay men identify with that. An interesting book about gay culture would spend time with a range of gay men, of different ages and classes and backgrounds, finding out how their social networks were formed, as well as investigating how they liked to be entertained. (Hensher, 2012)

Halperin's observations appear to be clouded by his own standpoint as a white, middle-class man of the baby-boom generation in a similar manner to both Miller and Clum. This is particularly problematic here as Halperin is ostensibly studying the process of young gay men becoming initiated into 'gay culture', but there is little evidence that he has engaged with the culture of young gay men in any meaningful way. Nevertheless, Halperin does make some interesting arguments about gender and masculinity, particularly with reference to gay culture:

"Femininity" is a means by which gay men can assert a particular, non-standard, anti-social way of being, feeling, and behaving. It represents, more particularly, an ethos at odds with specific forms or manifestations of traditional heterosexual masculinity. As a proxy identity, "femininity" is a clear expression of gay male gender dissidence, a rejection of standard, canonical, established forms of heterosexual masculinity. But that doesn't mean that gay "femininity" necessarily signifies an actual identification with women. (Halperin, 2012: 319)

The term 'gay femininity' is somewhat uncomfortable, and yet the idea that some gay men perform gender as a 'rejection' of heterosexual (or hegemonic) masculinity is persuasive. Yet like Miller and Clum, Halperin underplays the connection between women and musical theatre, thus discounting any investigation into the similarities between how women and gay men connect to musicals:

Though the Broadway musical may be congenial to straight women in ways it is not to straight men, though it may create less gender trouble for its heterosexual female audience than for its heterosexual male audience, there does not seem to be a straight female equivalent to the intensely solitary, wildly ecstatic, excessively sentimental childhood experience of the musical that D. A. Miller describes. (Halperin, 2012: 316-317)

Grace Barnes' recent study *Her Turn On Stage* (2015) aims to redress the balance between male and female perspectives of musical theatre through 'an honest and frank discussion about the gender inequality rife throughout the industry, onstage and off' (Barnes, 2015: 2). Barnes has worked as an associate and resident director on several productions, and her book incorporates interviews with several other female

musical theatre professionals. Barnes makes the important argument that there is a lack of female writers and female creatives in musical theatre, and that this has been exacerbated by the rise of the male-dominated casts of megamusicals in the 1980s, which further reduces female presence in musicals. There is no doubt that this gender inequality is a central problem in musical theatre, but Barnes' assertion that 'a gay sensibility pervades musical theatre and this sensibility does not do any favors for women in the industry' (Barnes, 2015: 120) is more problematic as its thesis is based on a number of misguided assumptions.

Barnes opens her chapter 'Not Just For Gays Anymore' by proclaiming 'that musical theatre is dominated, onstage, backstage, and in the audience, by gay men' (Barnes, 2015: 109). Barnes then moves on to state that 'while women are more likely to be found at *Wicked* and *Mamma Mia!*, gay men will congregate at a sophisticated Sondheim show, *Light in the Piazza*, or any of the diva musicals - *Hello, Dolly!*, *Mame*, *Call Me Madam*' (Barnes, 2015: 110), which seems spurious on both counts. When Barnes suggests that 'it is impossible to pinpoint the reasons why so many gay men are attracted to musical theatre' (Barnes, 2015: 109), one wonders why nobody has thought to simply ask them, and what evidence Barnes is basing her assertions on.

Like Steyn, Clum and Miller, Barnes suggests that creating a 'queer' reading for musical theatre is 'easier to do with a musical than other art forms because the creators of musicals are predominantly gay men' (Barnes, 2015: 110). According to Barnes, gay men originally attended musical theatre as they identified with the gay men in the chorus - 'it is not a myth that the male chorus members in musical theatre are predominantly gay - they are' (Barnes, 2015: 111). Barnes is scathing both of the diva character - 'they are a gay man's version of what a woman is' (Barnes, 2015: 115), and

the convention of drag in musical theatre - ‘do drag queens ever stop to consider how women feel about this disrespectful parody?’ (Barnes, 2015: 117), but fails to consider the historical context of these archetypes:

The gay mindset imposes a certain viewpoint of direction onto the genre - it may even be due to this sensibility that the musical evolved into its own unique art form. But it is a viewpoint in which there is no place for the authentic woman onstage because the gay male creators actively desire the caricature. (Barnes, 2015: 120)

Barnes’ citation of a ‘gay mindset’ demonstrates that the problematic stereotype that all gay men love musical theatre and therefore impose the same viewpoint onto their experience of musicals is still present in academic work. The overall thesis of Barnes’ work is important - musical theatre is a conservative genre and a patriarchal standpoint has been maintained by the continued domination of men in the creative roles. Yet assumptions such as ‘in 2015, homosexual characters in musicals are well and truly out and proud, written and directed by gay men who never saw the inside of the closet’ (Barnes, 2015: 123) are simply erroneous - the stereotypical characters such as Roger Du Bris from *The Producers* (2001), the gay couple in *Legally Blonde* (2007) and Elder McKinley in *The Book of Mormon* (2011) that Barnes cites as evidence were all written by heterosexual men, yet Barnes derides fans of the LGBTQ-written *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* (2006) because ‘they do not question if the image of gay men onstage is a truly respectful one’ (Barnes, 2015: 127). Whilst Barnes (correctly) calls out the use of male privilege in creating musical theatre, she fails to recognise her own use of (presumed) heterosexual privilege when discussing the relationship between sexuality and musical theatre.

‘It’s time to open up your closet’ - towards an empirical methodology for musical theatre

The literature considered above suggests an uneven approach towards audience-response theory in musical theatre. This chapter has argued that the majority of scholars tend to approach their work from an individual standpoint, and this does not allow a nuanced discussion of how different demographics experience musical theatre in different ways. The bias towards the generational perspective of white Anglo-American men born in the 1940s and 1950s has resulted in a persistent narrative that both privileges and stereotypes the relationship between homosexual men and musical theatre, whilst the connection between heterosexual men and musicals has yet to be interrogated, as Steve Swayne observes in his review of Clum and Miller’s work:

Younger gay men have different ways of relating to the musical than does the generation to which Clum and Miller belong. And then there is the great sea of straight men and women who genuinely love the musical, some of whom can queer musicals with the best of them, but who aren’t constrained to read a musical in a particular fashion. (Swayne 2002: 118)

It may be argued that straight men and women are ‘constrained’ in a different way to gay men (and gay women) through their own experiences of a heteronormative society, but it is notable that none of the studies cited above have attempted a comparison between men and women of different sexualities. This study focuses on men who were born between 1989 and 1997 and are therefore part of Generation Y (see Strauss and Howe, 1991), but also includes data gathered from a smaller group of their female contemporaries in order to make some initial comparisons between how gender is performed by Generation Y. It is recognised that this data cannot be fully understood without accepting the gender system as a spectrum rather than a binary configuration, and whilst the present study focuses on 161 participants that identify as ‘male’ and 25

participants that identify as ‘female’, some participants also identify as transgender and/or nonbinary. The transgender and nonbinary movement has become rapidly more visible since this study commenced in 2011, and it is clear that some methodological elements will need to be updated in future studies to reflect this. Nevertheless, it has been ensured that transgender and nonbinary voices are represented in the second part of the project.

The study aims to challenge and explore certain aspects of the literature reviewed above. Firstly, the empirical methodology is a direct response to Helen Freshwater’s call for a more tangible involvement of the audience in academic work on the theatre (see Freshwater, 2009), and this thesis draws from interviews and surveys carried out with 186 participants. The study aims to identify whether the current literature reflects the experiences of young people engaging with musical theatre in the twenty-first century, recognising that Generation Y understands both gender and sexualities in a different way to early generations. Secondly, the binary assumption of gay and straight is rejected in favour of a self-identification model based on the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid (see Kinsey *et. al*, 1948; Klein, Sepekoff and Wolf, 1985 and Lovelock, 2014), which allows a more flexible understanding of the interplay between sexuality and the social construction of masculinities. Finally, the participants in the study are 18-25 year-old British university students. Whilst a comparison of American and British society is beyond the scope of this thesis, it may be instructive to bear the different cultural background in mind when making comparisons to previous studies. The following chapter proposes a methodology that aims to provide an inclusive framework for considering gender, sexuality and musical theatre.

3. 'YOU'RE STILL OUR BROTHERS AND WE WILL FIGHT FOR YOU' – INCLUSIVE MASCULINITIES, SEXUALITY AND MUSICAL THEATRE

Behold the brave battalion that stands side by side
Too few in number and too proud to hide.
Then say to the others who did not follow through:
'You're still our brothers, and we will fight for you.'

'Seize The Day' from *Newsies* (Menken and Feldman, 2011)

D. A. Miller's claim that musical theatre is 'a somehow *gay* genre' (Miller, 1998: 16) reflects a pervasive stereotype that continues to permeate other areas of popular culture. In contemporary television, musical theatre fandom is seen as an integral part of the homosexual characters of Jack in *Will and Grace* (1998-2006), Cameron in *Modern Family* (2009-present) and Kurt in *Glee* (2009-2015). In the 2007 episode 'Work Outing' from the British sitcom *The IT Crowd* (2006-2013), the characters are offered tickets to see the fictional musical *Gay! The Gay Musical*, to which Roy remarks 'Aren't all musicals gay? This must be like the gayest musical ever!' (Carface & Miku, 2011: 0.45). The perceived link between musicals and homosexuality can cause consternation not only for straight men in musical theatre, but also for gay men who dislike musicals. D. A. Miller outlines this objection eruditely in *Place For Us*:

Not all gay men – nor even most – are in love with Broadway, those who aren't are hardly quit of the stereotype that insists they are, which appropriates their musical taste nonetheless by imposing on it the burden of *having to take a position* vis-à-vis the mythos of male homosexuality for which, if only in America, an extreme devotion to the musical theatre is a chief token. (Miller, 1998: 16).

The introduction to this study cited several examples of musical theatre numbers that parody the connection between musical theatre and homosexuality. It is clear that this stereotype continues unabashed in 'A Musical' from the recent Broadway hit *Something Rotten!* (2015), which contains the line 'the chorus boys are kind of gay'

(Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, 2015). It is possible that this stereotyping relates to the generational standpoint of the writers (Wayne and Kasey Kirkpatrick were born in 1961 and 1964 respectively), and that these representations are a remnant of the hegemonic masculinity described by Raewyn Connell:

To many people, homosexuality is a *negation* of masculinity, and homosexual men must be effeminate. Given that assumption, antagonism toward homosexual men may be used to define masculinity. (Connell, 1992: 736)

The rise of musical comedy over the past fifteen years has seen several heterosexual writers make the transition from television comedy to musical theatre, including Eric Idle (*Monty Python's Flying Circus* and *Spamalot*), Trey Parker and Matt Stone (*South Park* and *The Book of Mormon*) and John O'Farrell (*Spitting Image* and *Something Rotten!*). The inclusion of a 'big gay number' has become a standard trope in musical comedies of the 21st century, and one wonders whether poking fun at stereotypical characters such as Herbert and Sir Lancelot, Elder McKinley and Robin is used to accentuate the distance between the heterosexual writer and the perceived homosexuality of musical theatre.

This brief analysis highlights an important caveat for the present study. Despite the focus on a younger generation of audience members and performers, it is white men born before 1970 that have largely written the musicals to which they are responding. The musicals themselves are therefore likely to reflect a different perspective on gender and sexuality than that understood by younger generations. As Ken Plummer notes:

So much writing and research speaking of the contemporary world talks as if we all live simultaneously at the same time in the same reality, but we emphatically do not. Lives that are "just born" organize the contemporary reality of the world very differently from those now in their fourth, fifth, or even sixth generation of life. (Plummer, 2010: 176)

Thus the observations on ‘hegemonic’ and ‘inclusive’ masculinities presented in chapter one must be understood within the context of the lived experience of different generations. Eric Anderson’s conclusion that inclusive masculinities ‘allow heterosexual men to both engage in behaviors and permit them to occupy arenas that were previously associated with homosexuality without threat to their heterosexual masculinity’ (Anderson, 2009: 153) may be applicable to those who grew up in the more liberal culture of the early 21st century, but is less likely to be adopted by generations that grew up in the homohysteria culture described by Raewyn Connell. It is therefore likely that younger men will be more able to embrace inclusive masculinities in their attitude to musical theatre, whilst older generations may act as ‘the carriers of history’ (Plummer, 2010: 169) through maintaining established hegemonic stereotypes.

This chapter uses the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid as an analytical tool to gather data about the attitudes of the participants in this study towards gender and sexuality, as well as enabling them to use the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid as ‘a self-analytical tool that culminates in self-identification’ (Lovelock, 2014: 458). The data from an online survey based on the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid is analysed in conjunction with the findings of Mark McCormack’s ethnographic study *The Declining Significance of Homophobia: How Teenage Boys are Redefining Masculinity and Heterosexuality* (2012b), a sociological study of how young men perform inclusive masculinities in three British sixth-form colleges. McCormack’s work is used as a starting point for exploring the gender structures negotiated by participants in this project during their sixth-form education since they are contemporaries of the young

men involved in McCormack's study, which took place between March 2008 and July 2009 (McCormack, 2012b: 12).

'Answer the call and don't delay' - participant recruitment and demographics

The present study focuses on young men who progressed through the British secondary education system since 2003, the year that Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 was repealed. This gesture was largely symbolic since no prosecution was ever brought under the act, but is recognised as an important benchmark for LGBTQ rights following the equalization of the age of consent in the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000. The British Social Attitudes surveys suggest that there was still a high level of disapproval towards homosexual behaviour in British society at this time - in 2000, 46% of those surveyed thought that sexual relationships between two adults of the same sex was 'always wrong' or 'mostly wrong', dropping to 28% in 2012 (Park *et al*, 2013: 16). Nevertheless, the young people in this study have grown up with increasingly positive legislation around LGBTQ sexualities, with the Civil Partnership Act of 2004 being followed by the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2012.

Participants were recruited for the study through four different groups at a British redbrick university (see Figure 3.1). The involvement of the student LGBTQ association was key to ensuring that a range of sexualities were represented in the final data, whilst the targeting of students involved in the student union drama groups and the university music department increased the likelihood of participants' previous involvement with musical theatre. The final group of participants were recruited through the student groups department at the student union, and represents a control group within the study. In addition to the main cohort, a smaller group of female

participants was recruited to provide comparative data, although it is recognised that the comparatively small size of this sample group may not fully represent the nuances of female connections with musical theatre.

Figure 3.1 - recruitment cohorts for the study (first contact only)

	Drama societies	LGBTQ Association	Music Department	Student Groups	Grand Total
Male	53	48	41	19	161
Female	18	7	0	0	25
Grand Total	73	55	41	19	186

It is important to note the limitations of this recruitment method, and to recognise that the cohort is unlikely to be representative on a national or international level. Around 90% of the sample identified as white British, with the remaining participants identifying as black British, white European or mixed race. The entrance criteria for the university requires three A-levels at the top three grades, meaning that participants are likely to be among the top achieving students in the country. Most importantly, there is an intentional selection bias to ensure that the aims of the study can be met, resulting in a significantly higher representation of LGBTQ students, and a bias towards music and drama undergraduate students. It is suggested that further intersections with gender, race and social class would provide fruitful avenues for future exploration in order to expand on this study, which focuses on the key variance of sexual orientation.

‘Courage is when we face our fear’ - using the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid as a measure of inclusive masculinities

The categorization of sexual orientation in academic studies can frequently lack rigor, with sexual orientation often being either assumed or ascertained through a single question (see Chung & Katayama, 1996). Following Savin-Williams and Vrangalova (2013), it is clear that there is little consensus on how the term ‘sexual orientation’ is defined, particularly in sociological studies, as sexual orientation is often treated reductively and with little reference to the different variables that may contribute to self-identification.

The Klein Sexual Orientation Grid collects data across a range of measures, and thus different measures can be used according to the subject of the study to open further avenues of exploration. The acceptance of sexuality as a spectrum is key to most interpretations of sexual orientation (see Kinsey, Pomeroy, and Martin, 1948), and yet there is little differentiation made between participants that self-identify as ‘straight only’ or ‘straight mostly’ (or between ‘gay only’ or ‘gay mostly’) in the majority of sociological studies (see Vrangalova and Savin Williams, 2012). Furthermore, the distinction between sexual and emotional sexuality still requires further attention (Weinrich *et.al*, 1993), and this area would seem particularly pertinent to the current study.

The major advantage with the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid lies in the ordering of the questionnaire itself. The exploration of sexual, emotional, and social factors often lead the participant to reach the ‘aha!’ reaction of self-identification (Klein, 1993: 9), and it therefore follows that the survey can be used a self-analytical tool that culminates in self-identification rather than a profile of sexuality that is cumbersome to

transfer into a wider sociological study. The participants' present self-identification of sexuality based on the online survey (see Appendix A) is shown in figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 - responses to the statement 'During the past twelve months, I would identify as...' categorised by recruitment cohort (male participants only)

Cohort	Straight only	Straight mostly	Straight more	Bisexual	Gay more	Gay mostly	Gay only	Grand Total
Drama	37	7	0	3	1	4	1	53
LGBTQ	0	0	1	8	2	8	29	48
Music	26	9	1	2	0	1	2	41
Other	15	2	2	0	0	0	0	19
Total	78	18	4	13	3	13	32	161
% of grand total	48.4%	11.2%	2.5%	8.1%	1.9%	8.1%	19.9%	100%

Due to the limited number of 'straight more' and 'gay more' responses from the participants, these categories were merged with the 'bisexual' category for data analysis in this project. However, where individual participants are discussed in relation to specific musicals, their original self-identification is indicated as 'straight more', 'bisexual' or 'gay more'. It is notable that there are a significant number of participants that identify themselves as 'straight mostly' or 'gay mostly' (see Vrangalova and Savin-Williams, 2012; Savin-Williams and Vrangalova, 2013), and this blurring of the boundaries between sexual orientations is consistent with the performance of masculinities identified by Mark McCormack in his 2012 ethnographic study *The*

Declining Significance of Homophobia:

These young men, congregated in the center of the common room, were different from the high school students of my day. They were fashion conscious, wearing tight, low-slung jeans and designer underwear that showed above their belts. Not only did they style their hair, they used moisturizer and

even tanning products. But the difference was not only about looks, they also interacted and spoke differently. These boys hugged each other hello and goodbye, sat on each other's laps, and gave their friends back rubs. (McCormack, 2012b: xxiii)

McCormack's description of the young men that he met as part of his study is reflective of the expanded range of acceptable 'masculine' behaviours available to younger men in today's society. Many of the traits observed by McCormack also apply to the participants in this study, most notably the care in their appearance and the displays of homosocial tactility. McCormack attributes this change to a more liberal approach to LGBTQ issues in Britain, arguing that 'the declining significance of homophobia has meant that young British men do not fear being socially perceived as gay, and this has expanded the range of behaviours that they can enact without social regulation' (McCormack, 2012b: xxiv). These observations are largely reflected in the responses of this cohort to the lifestyle preferences of Klein's grid (see figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 - responses to the statement 'I have socialised with / I would like to socialise with people that are...' (male participants only)

	Straight only	Straight mostly	Straight more	Gay and straight	Gay more	Gay mostly	Gay only	Total
In the past	14 (8.7%)	79 (49.1%)	9 (5.6%)	36 (22.4%)	2 (1.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	161
In the past 12 months	2 (1.2%)	45 (28.0%)	44 (31.2%)	66 (41.0%)	1 (0.6%)	3 (1.9%)	0 (0.0%)	161
In the future	0 (0.0%)	9 (5.6%)	8 (5.0%)	137 (85.1%)	6 (3.7%)	1 (0.6%)	0 (0.0%)	161

For 85.1% of participants, it appears that sexual orientation is not a factor in choosing who to socialise with, but it is notable that 10.6% of participants want to socialise 'more' or 'mostly' with people that identify as straight, whilst 4.3% prefer to

socialise ‘more’ or ‘mostly’ with those that identify as gay. The nine participants that wanted to socialise mostly with straight people all identified as straight only themselves - five were from the drama cohort, three were from the student groups officer group, and one was from the music cohort. This may be indicative of some latent homophobia, since sexual orientation is still playing a part in the choice of these participants’ preferred social group. Nevertheless, it is clear that the majority of participants are comfortable in socialising with both straight and gay people in the future, and that gay people are not stigmatised because of their sexuality. This reduction in homophobia also allows for a wider range of emotional expression for heterosexual men towards their male friends, and Figure 3.4 provides a snapshot of how the participants formed emotional connections with men and women during the past twelve months.

Figure 3.4 - responses to the statement ‘I have made emotional connections with... during the past year’ categorised by sexuality cohort (male participants only)

	Women only	Women mostly	Women more	Men and women	Men more	Men mostly	Men only	Total
Straight only	20	8	13	35	2	0	0	78
Straight mostly	4	0	3	11	0	0	0	18
Bisexual	5	2	1	10	1	0	1	20
Gay mostly	0	1	1	4	1	2	4	13
Gay only	0	1	2	17	1	3	7	32
Grand Total	29 (18.0%)	12 (7.5%)	20 (12.4%)	77 (47.8%)	5 (3.1%)	5 (3.1%)	12 (7.5%)	161

A total of 74.5% of participants reported making emotional connections with both sexes to some degree during the past year. Many participants asked for

clarification about the meaning of ‘emotional connection’ in the online survey, highlighting the ambiguity between the emotional connection in a monogamous relationship and between friends. Participants were asked to define ‘emotional connection’ as they saw fit, and it is recognised that this aspect of the grid may need to be clarified in future surveys. Nevertheless, most participants reported emotional connections to both men and women, and this supports McCormack’s observation that ‘these boys are enjoying the emotional and behavioral intimacy afforded to them in an environment free of explicit homophobia’ (McCormack, 2012b: 81).

The low level of homophobia within the sixth form and university context may also have contributed to the high degree of fluidity in sexual orientation demonstrated in the current study. Figure 3.5 demonstrates that, even across the sexual elements of the grid, there are few participants that identified themselves at the same point of the grid consistently. This suggests that many participants are flexible about how their self-identification reflects their sexual identity.

Figure 3.5 - consistency between sexual attraction, sexual behaviour and sexual fantasy categorised by sexuality cohort (male participants only)

Present self-identification	No. of participants consistent across attraction, behaviour and fantasy	% of participants consistent across attraction, behaviour and fantasy	Total participants
Straight only	54	69.2%	78
Straight mostly	0	0	18
Bisexual	0	0	20
Gay mostly	1	2.1%	13
Gay only	12	32.0%	32

Sexual fluidity is further reflected in the differences between present, past and future self-identification. 39.9% of participants reported a difference between their

present and past self-identifications, whilst 11.8% expected their self-identification to change in the future. The current study relies on the participants' present self-identification of sexual orientation in order to categorise the participants, but there are occasions where a participant's self-identification has altered during the course of the project. This is noted as appropriate in case studies in later chapters, but the data analysis in this chapter is based around the participants' self-identification at the time of their initial story interview.

The degree of fluidity in sexual orientation may be partially explained by the high percentage of same-sex experiences that men of all sexualities have taken part in or would like to take part in. Figure 3.6 shows that 40.4% of participants have either participated in a same-sex experience in the past or would like to in the future, including 16.7% of men that currently identify as 'straight only'. Nevertheless, the small overlap between participants that had same-sex experiences in the past and wanted same-sex experiences in the future suggests that many 'straight only' and 'gay only' men see these experiences as a one-off experiment.

The data gathered from the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid thus far characterises the male participants in this study as embodying complex and often fluid sexual identities that allow for emotional, physical and sometimes sexual intimacy with both men and women. There is little evidence to suggest hostility towards LGBTQ identities, although it is noted that sexual orientation may still play a part in socialisation for a small minority of 'straight only' participants. These findings are largely in line with McCormack's observations, but it is recognised that there are some areas that both McCormack and the data from the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid fail to address.

Figure 3.6 - participants that have had or would like sexual experiences with both men and women categorised by sexuality cohort (male participants only)

	Both men and women (past)	Both men and women (future)	Both men and women (past or future)	Total
Straight only	8 (10.3%)	6 (7.7%)	13 (16.7%)	78
Straight mostly	2 (11.1%)	8 (44.4%)	9 (50%)	18
Bisexual	19 (95.0%)	19 (95.0%)	19 (95.0%)	13
Gay mostly	6 (46.2%)	7 (53.8%)	11 (84.6%)	13
Gay only	12 (37.5%)	2 (6.3%)	13 (40.6%)	32
Grand Total	44 (27.3%)	42 (26.1%)	65 (40.4%)	161

‘Wrongs will be righted if we’re united’ - making inclusive masculinities more inclusive

It is important at this stage to reiterate the limitations within the demographic studied in both McCormack’s work and the current project. McCormack’s description of Standard High, his main ethnographic site, shows several similarities with the present cohort:

Standard High maintains demographic similarity to the population of the United Kingdom - its students reflect the race and class profile of the country as a whole. Students come from working- to upper-middle-class families. Ninety percent of the students are white British, and the remaining ten percent comprise a variety of other racial and ethnic groups. There are approximately 200 students aged 16-18 in the high school, almost all of whom attended Standard School from the age of 11. (McCormack, 2012b: 12)

McCormack’s case that his participants ‘reflect the race and class profile of the country as a whole’ may be statistically accurate, but it is clear that this approach does not allow for certain demographics to be interrogated. McCormack’s figures suggest that there were twenty students from ‘other racial and ethnic groups’ in his study, and it

is unclear how many of these students were male, and how many formed part of McCormack's final observations. Therefore whilst McCormack concludes that 'there is a strong argument that my research documents a changing social zeitgeist' (McCormack, 2012: 139), it is inaccurate to claim that there is clear evidence for this transformation amongst any social group that is not numerically dominated by young white men.

The same limitations apply to the present study, where there are simply not enough black or mixed race students within the cohort to draw any conclusions about race, or sufficient non-British students to draw conclusions on ethnicity. Thus the conclusions made will be applicable to those who primarily experience musical theatre through white-dominant social groupings, and whilst they may be applicable to other demographics, the evidence for any such assumption lies beyond the scope of this study.

A further shortcoming in McCormack's work is that it fails to recognise masculinities within the overall construction of gender. McCormack reports that 'male students did not express misogynistic attitudes, and girls who had had sex were not stigmatised for doing so' (McCormack, 2012b: 92), yet is impossible for a male researcher to draw this conclusion without providing a framework whereby the voices of female students are represented in the study. The marginalisation of women is common in inclusive masculinity literature, and has led Ingram and Waller to claim that inclusive masculinities present 'a successful reconstitution of an entitlement to exert dominance...in a less explicit and less macho way' (Ingram and Waller, 2014: 45). Anderson and McCormack criticise Ingram and Waller for failing to present any examples of bad behaviour from men towards women in their case study (Anderson and

McCormack, 2014: 128), but they fail to acknowledge the publication of *That's What She Said* (2013), an NUS report into lad culture as promoting a misogynist and sexist culture. Phipps and Young identify lad culture as being 'one of many potential forms of masculinity' (Phipps and Young, 2013: 25), and their report details a number of sexist and homophobic incidents perpetrated by male university students.

It is concerning that McCormack explicitly rejects what he terms as a 'victimization framework' in sociological studies (McCormack, 2012b: 131), particularly in view of the fact that his study only includes a limited number of female and LGBTQ students - in fact, 'at Standard High, there is only one openly gay student' and 'there are no openly gay students present at Fallback High' (McCormack, 2012b: 78). At McCormack's other ethnographic site, Religious High, McCormack refers to three gay students, two lesbian students and a transgender student, but it is clear that his study of decreased homophobia is based largely on his interactions with heterosexual men in straight-dominated (and often straight-exclusive) environments. It is thus concerning that McCormack seeks to actively discredit the experiences of gay and bisexual men that have reported homophobic bullying through studies such as Stonewall's *The School Report*, stating that it is based on flawed participant recruitment as 'it is well known that the young people who attend LGB groups, and are known by teachers as LGB in schools, tend to be those who have had bad experiences, oftentimes because of their gender non-conformity' (McCormack, 2012a). Yet this does not excuse McCormack's advocacy of measuring homophobia through the response to homophobia by a heteronormative society:

The media story is that increased numbers of suicides of gay youth are evidence of an epidemic of homophobia. Yet it is questionable whether there actually is an increase in these incidents. It seems highly likely that what is actually occurring is an increase in these incidents... Rather than focus on the (extremely

questionable) increase in suicides, scholars should look at the changing media and political response to these events. This is better evidence of how homophobia is viewed by society. (McCormack 2012b: 131)

As stated above, the fact that young white, heterosexual men from middle-class backgrounds are generally positive towards those with LGBTQ identities is largely borne out in the current thesis. Nevertheless, McCormack fails to acknowledge that LGBTQ students have a different lived experience to the heterosexual students in his study. There is little consideration of how these students negotiated the realisation that their sexual identity was different to their parent(s), or how 'coming out' to families and/or peers at school impacted their psychological well-being. Indeed, there appears to be a wilful diminishing of the homophobic incidents experienced by LGBTQ students prior to their enrolment in the sixth-form:

Craig, a charismatic and sporty student, commented, "I know guys who were homophobic back in school. But you come here, and meet gay guys, and you grow up." (McCormack, 2012b: 73)

First identifying as a lesbian, Ross later told friends that he was going to change his name and start using the male pronoun. He said, "I lost some friends when I said that. They just gradually started seeing me less and less. But I've made new friends, too." (McCormack, 2012b: 77)

Tom said that he does not feel subordinated by his peers, commenting that although he was bullied "a little" with homophobic language in earlier years, this does not happen in the high school. (McCormack, 2012b: 78)

It is problematic that McCormack assumes that these earlier examples of homophobic bullying - whether 'a little' or otherwise - do not have a long-term impact on the students concerned as this subject is not broached in any detail with the limited number of LGBTQ students in McCormack's study. McCormack accuses those who may disagree with his findings as displaying confirmation bias towards a 'victimisation framework', but it seems equally likely that McCormack's handling of his own evidence displays a similar confirmation bias towards his theory that homophobia no

longer exists in school culture. The fact that young heterosexual men exhibit a positive perspective towards LGBTQ sexualities is welcome, but it is still impossible to fully recognise the impact of heteronormative society on young LGBTQ people without including their experiences (whether victimized or not) in the discussion. The present study aims to redress this balance by considering whether the uniquely LGBTQ experiences of growing up counter to heteronormativity, coming out as gay or bisexual, and locating and maintaining LGBTQ relationships within society impacts the type of connection that LGBTQ people make with musical theatre.

‘Now let ‘em hear it loud and clear’ - challenging myths about men and musical theatre

In chapter one, it was suggested that the musical theatre genre challenged Robert Brannon’s conceptual framework of the male sex role through the foregrounding of emotion in its musical numbers. David Halperin suggests that the act of performance itself provides a particular challenge to the perceived masculinity of male performers:

As a rule, any activity that can be construed as “performing” will turn out to be risky business for a man. This is partly because to offer oneself as an object of display in our society is to step into the focus of a putatively male gaze and thereby to take the chance of being feminized. (Halperin, 2012: 243)

Inclusive masculinities literature suggests that the decrease of cultural homophobia ‘frees heterosexual men to act in more feminine ways without threat to their heterosexual identity’ (Anderson, 2013: 33), and it may therefore be expected that the ‘feminized’ and/or ‘queer’ connotations of the musical identified by Halperin are less prohibitive to the involvement of young heterosexual men in musical theatre in the 21st century. Indeed, since it is clear from the data above that young men are comfortable with making multiple emotional connections (see figure 3.4), it is possible

to conclude that Brannon’s archetypes of ‘The Sturdy Oak’ and ‘No Sissy Stuff’ are no longer applicable to young men and their masculinities, and that Halperin’s view that performing is a ‘feminized’ activity is outdated.

The data used in this part of the chapter is taken from a second online survey based on participants’ attitudes towards musical theatre (see Appendix B). It was noted at the beginning of the chapter that both the music and drama cohorts are more likely to have direct experience with musical theatre as an actor or a musician, and this is reflected in figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7 - participant involvement in musical theatre by recruitment cohort

Recruitment cohort	Audience member only	Performer, musician or creative	No involvement	Grand Total
Drama	9 (17.0%)	44 (83.0%)	0 (0.0%)	53
LGBTQ	33 (68.8%)	11 (22.9%)	4 (8.3%)	48
Music	3 (7.3%)	36 (87.8%)	2 (4.9%)	41
Student Groups	12 (63.2%)	2 (10.5%)	5 (26.3%)	19
Total Male	57 (35.4%)	93 (57.8%)	11 (6.8%)	161
Female - drama	4 (22.2%)	14 (77.8%)	0 (0.0%)	18
Female - LGBTQ	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Total	6 (24.0%)	19 (76.0%)	0 (0.0%)	25

Within the overall cohort, 57.8% of male participants had been directly involved in a musical theatre production, with only 6.8% having no involvement with musical theatre in any capacity. The LGBTQ cohort had a high participation rate in musical theatre, which may suggest that there is still an affinity for the genre amongst LGBTQ people. The bias of the recruitment process towards music students and those involved in drama

groups makes it impossible to generalise the figures for this cohort, but it is possible to isolate the data for the 93 male students that have been directly involved in musical theatre productions in order to interrogate the myth that it is mainly gay men that are involved in musical theatre (see figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8 - participants that have been directly involved in musical theatre productions, by sexuality cohort (male participants only)

Sexuality cohort	Performer	Musician	Creative	Total
Straight only	43 (55.1%)	26 (65.0%)	17 (54.8%)	54 (58.1%)
Straight mostly	13 (16.7%)	7 (17.5%)	5 (16.1%)	13 (14.0%)
Bisexual	9 (11.5%)	2 (0.5%)	5 (16.1%)	10 (10.8%)
Gay mostly	7 (9.0%)	1 (0.25%)	3 (9.7%)	7 (7.5%)
Gay only	6 (7.7%)	4 (10.0%)	1 (3.2%)	9 (9.7%)
Total	78	40	31	93

The data above suggests that in this cohort, 72.1% of the male students directly involved in musical theatre identify as either ‘straight only’ and ‘straight mostly’. This figure is particularly pronounced within musicians, but also extends to those involved in productions as directors, musical directors and choreographers. In short, Grace Barnes’ assertion that ‘musical theatre is dominated, onstage, backstage, and in the audience, by gay men’ (Barnes, 2015: 109) is simply not true in this cohort. The positive attitude towards musical theatre within this cohort is confirmed in the answers to the survey question ‘Which of the following best reflects your opinion on musical theatre?’ (see Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9 - responses to the question ‘which of the following best reflects your opinion on musical theatre?’ by sexuality/gender cohort

Sexuality cohort	‘I am a musical theatre fan’	‘I like musical theatre when I see it’	‘I am ambivalent to musical theatre’	‘I dislike musical theatre’	Total
Straight only	26 (33.3%)	36 (46.2%)	11 (14.1%)	5 (6.4%)	78
Straight mostly	7 (38.9%)	8 (44.4%)	1 (5.6%)	2 (11.1%)	18
Bisexual	4 (20.0%)	12 (60.0%)	1 (5.0%)	3 (15.0%)	20
Gay mostly	5 (38.5%)	6 (46.2%)	2 (15.4%)	0 (0.0%)	13
Gay only	9 (28.1%)	16 (50.0%)	4 (12.5%)	3 (9.4%)	32
Total (male)	51 (31.7%)	78 (48.4%)	19 (11.8%)	13 (8.1%)	161
Female (Drama)	14 (77.8%)	4 (22.2%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	18
Female (LGBTQ)	6 (85.7%)	1 (14.3%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7
Total (female)	20 (80.0%)	5 (20.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	25

Figure 3.9 demonstrates that there is little variance in attitudes towards musical theatre between different sexualities, although participants that identified as ‘bisexual’ were slightly less positive than the other sexuality and gender cohorts. This data needs to be considered within the demographic limitations of the study as noted above, but this is the first time that the myth about gay men in musical theatre has been analysed in the light of empirical evidence. It is possible that these figures may not reflect different locales and generational standpoints, but the onus is on other scholars to repudiate these findings with their own empirical data rather than perpetuating the standard myth

through the hearsay narrative that has permeated musical theatre scholarship even during the writing of the current project (see chapter two above for a discussion of David Halperin and Grace Barnes' recent work). Within this cohort, it is clear that there is a wide enough range of demographics to allow further analysis of how men and women of different sexualities connect to musical theatre.

Before interrogating the data further, it is worth briefly considering the reasons that some participants are ambivalent towards or dislike musical theatre. In a later question in the online musical theatre survey, participants were asked to comment on what they most dislike about musicals. Owen states that his dislike for the genre is mainly due to 'the music itself, as the singing draws away from the actual story' (musical theatre survey, 23/12/2014), whilst Alfie complains about the 'jarring way that a lot of musicals go from dialogue to songs' (musical theatre survey, 13/04/2013). The conflict between the story and the songs is mentioned by eight of the thirteen participants that dislike musical theatre, with the other main complaint being 'the prioritising of spectacle over the integrity of the story' (Drew, musical theatre survey, 28/12/2014).

Only two participants that dislike musical theatre referred to the campness of the genre. Drew criticises the 'overly smiley aesthetic, gratuitous key-changes and jazz hands' (musical theatre survey, 28/12/2014), whilst Christian notes that the genre is 'too direct, too glitzy and too flashy' (musical theatre survey, 24/10/2014). However, none of the participants explicitly mention that they find musical theatre too 'gay' or 'feminine', which suggests that these participants' main objection is to the lack of realism in the genre. Nevertheless, it is clear that the link between musical theatre and sexuality is still problematic for some heterosexual musical theatre performers.

‘Like it or not we’re drawing near’ - towards an understanding of why men

(dis)like musical theatre

Musical theatre is something that I as a person am very very (scarily) close to. I’m a straight male, but bizarrely my links to musical theatre and my (kind of obsessive) love of the genre is something that people seem to factor into my sexuality - like because I’m a male and into "showtunes", people assume I’m not necessarily straight or attracted to women - and if I am, then I’m clearly only doing it to "get girls".

Finn (straight only) - musical theatre survey 06/12/2015

The high proportion of ‘straight only’ and ‘straight mostly’ men that state that they enjoy musical theatre in Figure 3.9 confirms that straight men are willing to take part in a genre that is traditionally seen as ‘feminine’ or ‘homosexual’, and only four men explicitly mentioned this stereotype in their answers to the online musical theatre survey. As well as Finn’s description above, Lyndon (straight only) disliked ‘the association that it is gay and to be in or appreciate it you have to be extremely camp’ (23/06/2013), whilst Gordon (straight only) was concerned by ‘the stereotype around it regarding sexuality that puts males off getting involved with it’ (musical theatre survey, 08/03/2016). Finally, Terry (straight mostly) commented that ‘musical theatre is very camp and over the top - I don’t personally mind this but as a straight male, I do not feel that I can be fully open about my appreciation of musicals’ (musical theatre survey, 25/06/2013). All four participants stated that they were musical theatre fans, and all had been directly involved in musical theatre performances. It is likely that these four young men have either encountered resistance from their peers or parents based on the legacy of Robert Brannon’s ‘male sex role’, where musical theatre is still coded as ‘sissy stuff’, or that they have been challenged by a form of hegemonic masculinity that seeks to de-masculinise those who are involved in activities that are seen as being homosexual or effeminate. In either case, these experiences appear to align with Ruth

Hartley's concept of 'heterosexual anxiety' discussed in chapter two, and it is clear that these participants are frustrated by the misidentification of their sexual orientation based on their involvement in musical theatre.

Nevertheless, it is ironic that academic literature has never considered the reverse trend in this situation. In most new social situations outside of the LGBTQ community, LGBTQ people are likely to be assumed as heterosexual by those that they encounter, and one wonders why opposite symptoms of 'homosexual anxiety' or 'bisexual anxiety' are largely unreported in these cases. It is possible that LGBTQ people become acclimatised to being misidentified as heterosexual, or it may be indicative that heterosexuality is still seen as more 'desirable' since it does not mark an individual out as being 'different'. In either case, the perception of men in musical theatre as 'gay' presents an interesting reversal of standard heteronormative society that continues to provoke strong reactions in some straight men.

Apart from the four responses discussed above, there is a notable lack of references to homosexuality and effeminacy in the participants' answers to the musical theatre survey (see figure 3.10). The term 'camp', which is often used as a disparaging term for a perceived gay sensibility, only appears as an attribute that participants enjoy about musical theatre, although it is possible that this term has been replaced by the term 'cheesiness', which is used frequently by participants in the survey. The concept of musical theatre as 'cheesy' is somewhat difficult to define, since participants use it variously in the contexts of the music, the performances and the storylines. It is possible that 'cheesiness' reflects a dislike of the elements of musical theatre that John Clum defines as 'fabulous' (Clum 1999: 247), since it appears to refer to attributes that participants see as stereotypical of the genre itself.

Figure 3.10 - top responses to the question ‘What do you dislike most about musical theatre?’ for participants that are musical theatre fans or enjoy musical theatre

	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	Female drama	Female LGBTQ	Total
Too cheesy	11	4	3	3	3	1	0	25
Poor script / lack of story	6	3	1	2	6	4	3	25
MT industry	8	3	0	2	0	1	1	17
Songs stop the plot	5	3	2	0	0	2	1	15
Repetitive songs	5	3	1	0	2	3	0	14
Overacting	9	2	0	0	1	1	0	13
Genre of songs	7	1	0	3	0	2	0	13

Aside from the nebulous concept of ‘cheesiness’, which seems to irritate participants regardless of their sexuality, it is clear that there are some areas that are particular to specific demographic cohorts. It is largely ‘straight only’ and ‘straight mostly’ participants that commented on the musical theatre industry and, as Robin puts it succinctly, ‘how catty people associated with it can be’ (musical theatre survey, 12/10/2014), and the same cohort dislike the tendency to ‘overact’ in musicals. These responses seemingly correspond with Susan Sontag’s original definition of camp as a ‘love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration’ (Sontag, 1964: 53). Conversely, it is the LGBTQ and female participants that are statistically more likely to complain about poorly structured narratives in musical theatre, suggesting that their focus is more

on the storytelling elements of the production. There appears to be some evidence to support these observations in the choices of favourite musicals by each demographic cohort (see Figures 3.11 and 3.12).

Figure 3.11 - top ten favourite musicals displayed by gender cohorts

Male cohort	Female cohort	All participants
<i>Les Misérables</i>	<i>Wicked</i>	<i>Les Misérables</i>
<i>West Side Story</i>	<i>The Lion King</i>	<i>West Side Story</i>
<i>Wicked</i>	<i>Les Misérables</i>	<i>Wicked</i>
<i>Sweeney Todd</i>	<i>West Side Story</i>	<i>Sweeney Todd</i>
<i>The Lion King</i>	<i>Hairspray</i>	<i>The Lion King</i>
<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	<i>Avenue Q</i>	<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>
<i>Matilda</i>	<i>Chicago</i>	<i>Matilda</i>
<i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>	<i>Billy Elliot</i>	<i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>
<i>Avenue Q</i>	<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	<i>Cabaret</i>
<i>Cabaret</i>	<i>Sweeney Todd</i>	<i>Hairspray</i>

Figure 3.12 - top ten favourite musicals displayed by male sexuality cohorts

Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only
<i>Les Misérables</i>	<i>West Side Story</i>	<i>Les Misérables</i>	<i>Les Misérables</i>	<i>Wicked</i>
<i>West Side Story</i>	<i>Sweeney Todd</i>	<i>Wicked</i>	<i>Wicked</i>	<i>Les Misérables</i>
<i>The Lion King</i>	<i>Les Misérables</i>	<i>Chicago</i>	<i>Spring Awakening</i>	<i>The Lion King</i>
<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	<i>Jersey Boys</i>	<i>Sweeney Todd</i>	<i>We Will Rock You</i>	<i>Matilda</i>
<i>Sweeney Todd</i>	<i>Billy Elliot</i>	<i>West Side Story</i>	<i>The Lion King</i>	<i>Cabaret</i>
<i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>	<i>The Rocky Horror Show</i>	<i>The Lion King</i>	<i>Sweeney Todd</i>	<i>Sweeney Todd</i>
<i>Singin' in the Rain</i>	<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	<i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>	<i>Hairspray</i>	<i>Hairspray</i>
<i>Matilda</i>	<i>The Lion King</i>	<i>Avenue Q</i>	<i>Fiddler on the Roof</i>	<i>Chicago</i>
<i>Grease</i>	<i>Matilda</i>		<i>Chess</i>	<i>Billy Elliot</i>
<i>Avenue Q</i>	<i>Avenue Q</i>		<i>Avenue Q</i>	<i>Rent</i>

There are some interesting idiosyncrasies in each cohort - *The Rocky Horror Show* and *Jersey Boys* are particularly popular amongst 'straight mostly' participants,

whilst the ‘gay mostly’ cohort seems to have a penchant for the rock sounds of *Spring Awakening*, *We Will Rock You* and *Chess* - and these may indicate areas for further study. Yet the most pronounced difference between the cohorts is linked to the gender of the protagonists, since *Wicked*, *Hairspray* and *Chicago* are all more popular with female and LGBTQ participants than with those who identify as ‘straight only’ or ‘straight mostly’. Similarly, *West Side Story* and *The Phantom of the Opera* are more popular with heterosexual participants than with LGBTQ participants.

In chapter one, the theory of power triangles was proposed to make sense of the relationship between the Phantom, Raoul and Christine in *The Phantom of the Opera*. It was suggested that the musical was based around the central power struggle between the Phantom and Raoul, and that Christine was the object of this struggle. Therefore, the narrative can only be actively experienced from the perspective of one of the male characters. Thus a female audience member must either adopt a passive position by identifying with Christine, or they must ‘queer’ their gender perspective in order to identify with the story as the Phantom or Raoul.

Similarly, a gay man must ‘queer’ the narrative in order to find a suitable point of identification. It is possible for him to take the position of Christine and thus to ‘queer’ his gender perspective in order to engage as the passive partner to either the Phantom or Raoul, but this is not the only option. It would also be possible to ‘queer’ Christine’s gender in order to experience a dominant masculine position as either the Phantom or Raoul, or even to ‘queer’ the relationship between the two men as a homoerotic power struggle. The important point here is not *how* gay men and women might choose to ‘queer’ a narrative, but the fact that it is necessary for them to undertake a ‘queering’ process in order to fully immerse themselves in a character. This

reflects Stacy Wolf's observation about how a lesbian spectator might identify with a character in a heteronormative narrative:

Identification, a primary exercise of interpretation and reception, is a multiply inflected spectatorial practice. It can refer to "ego-libido" – seeing oneself as or wanting to be the object ("I like her; therefore I want to be like her") – or to "object-libido" – desiring or wanting to have the object sexually ("I like her; therefore I desire her"). (Wolf 2002: 24)

Figure 3.13 shows that seven of the top ten favourite musicals chosen by this cohort are dominated by active male characters in a power struggle over a passive female character. It should be noted that the 'power' demonstrated in the narrative is not necessarily sexual, and that in some cases, the characters are largely symbolic – for example, Fantine and Cosette symbolise Valjean's duty, and Tony and Bernardo represent the larger battle between the Jets and the Sharks. Yet the lack of active female characters makes it difficult for women to engage with their 'ego-libido', and the lack of homosexual relationships mean that gay and bisexual men and women have to either adopt a different gender for their 'ego-libido' or 'object-libido'. Conversely, straight men are able to directly identify with the protagonist and their 'object-libido' without 'queering' the gender of either character. The dominance of heterosexual male protagonists can be seen in virtually any narrative genre, but its prominence in musicals is surprising given the perception of musical theatre as gay or effeminate.

Figure 3.13 - Analysis of the central power triangles in the overall top ten musicals

Musical	Protagonist	Antagonist	Object
<i>Les Misérables</i>	Valjean	Javert	Fantine/Cosette
<i>West Side Story</i>	Tony	Bernardo	Maria
<i>Wicked</i>	Elphaba	Glinda	Fiyero
<i>Sweeney Todd</i>	Sweeney	Judge Turpin	Joanna
<i>The Lion King</i>	Simba	Scar	Nala
<i>The Phantom of the Opera</i>	The Phantom	Raoul	Christine
<i>Matilda</i>	Matilda	Miss Trunchbull	Miss Honey
<i>Little Shop of Horrors</i>	Seymour	Audrey II	Audrey
<i>Cabaret</i>	Clifford	The Emcee	Sally
<i>Hairspray</i>	Tracy	Amber	Link

There are only three musicals in which female characters play an active role, and even in *Matilda*, it may be argued that Miss Trunchbull is de-gendered through being portrayed by a male actor. Thus it is unsurprising that women and gay and bisexual men are drawn to both *Wicked* and *Hairspray*, since it allows a direct identification through the ego-libido for women and the object-libido for straight women and gay and bisexual men. However, identification is not solely based on sexual desire, and it may be argued that the affinity that women and gay and bisexual men feel for Elphaba, Glinda or Tracy Turnblad is also based on the different power dynamic that is established between a female protagonist and the world that the musical is set in.

‘Proud and defiant, we’ll slay the giant’ – the disenfranchised protagonist in musical theatre

I would love to see more representation in musical theatre as a whole. With a lot of ‘classical’ musical theatre, there isn’t necessarily much representation of race, gender or sexuality. It doesn’t have to be a plot point - in fact, it’s probably better if it’s not - but I would love to see more diversity.

Caitlyn (bisexual) - musical theatre survey 14/10/2015

One of the most striking paradigms in musical theatre is the conflict between the conservative nature of its storylines and its reputation as reflecting a liberal community of actors, creatives and theatregoers. Caitlyn’s observation above is echoed by other female participants in the study – Willow notes that ‘gender roles can sometimes be restrictive and clichéd, with women being secondary to male characters’ (musical theatre survey, 03/11/2014), whilst Claire questions the ‘use of females as a vessel for furthering the male storyline and the mis/under-representation of non-binary characters, bisexual and other queer characters’ (musical theatre survey, 14/10/2015). All three of these participants identify as bisexual women, and it is striking that Caitlyn and Claire’s comments about representation extend beyond their own experiences to incorporate portrayals of non-white and non-binary characters.

David Halperin concludes that gay and bisexual men identify strongly with femininity because ‘despite their male bodies, gay men have the souls, the nature, the tastes, the attitudes, the feelings, the subjectivity of women’ (Halperin 2012: 302), but Caitlyn, Willow and Claire’s observations may suggest the alternative interpretation that the experience of being subordinate to a patriarchal system allows women and LGBTQ people to identify more closely with narratives of others that hold a subordinate position. *Hairspray* is not just about Tracy overcoming Amber and Velma in order to be with Link – in fact, it is not even mainly about this. *Hairspray* shows how Tracy

overcomes the racism and sizeism of Baltimore (represented by Amber and Velma) in order to racially integrate her immediate social group. Similarly, *Wicked* can be read as the story of how a girl overcomes prejudice about her skin-colour in order to unite Ozian society– with the added twist that her self-sacrifice goes unnoticed by the same society. The disenfranchised protagonist is more involved with a higher power struggle with society than with their own personal power struggle with an antagonist character, and it is possible that this is a more important connection for the individual audience member than an identification with gender or sexual orientation.

It is possible for heterosexual male protagonists to be disenfranchised by their circumstances, and this may account for the popularity of *Sweeney Todd* amongst gay and bisexual men and *The Phantom of the Opera* amongst bisexual men. However, both characters draw on a performance of protest masculinity that utilises the values of violence and emotional cathexis that are traditionally associated with the hegemonic masculinities of the 1980s. These characters might be better understood as antiheroes rather than disenfranchised protagonist, in that their narrative is largely propelled by morally ambiguous and self-centred acts rather than a wider social purpose.

This marks an important shift from Gerald Mast's 'special sensibility that finds an outlet in extravagance, excess, and frippery' (Mast, 1987: 37) towards a model that encourages consideration of the role of the narrative in attracting men and women of all sexualities to musical theatre. In order to provide further analysis of idiomatic interpretation, it is necessary to turn to the tools of literary criticism in the following chapters.

4. ‘CAREFUL THE THINGS YOU SAY, CHILDREN WILL LISTEN’ – TOKSVIG’S THE FAIRYTALE MOMENT AND READER-RESPONSE THEORY

Careful the things you say, children will listen.
Careful the things you do, children will see and learn.
Children may not obey, but children will listen.
Children will look to you for which way to turn,
To learn what to be.
Careful before you say, “Listen to me”.
Children will listen.

(Sondheim, 1987: 385)

In *The Seven Basic Plots*, Christopher Booker proposes that ‘structured sequences of imagery are in fact the most natural way we know how to describe almost everything which happens in our lives’ (Booker, 2004: 2). Robert McKee’s recognition of the proliferation of narrative in everyday life underlines how stories remain important to people today:

Imagine, in one global day, the pages of prose turned, plays performed, films screened, the unending stream of television comedy and drama, twenty-four-hour print and broadcast news, bedtime tales told to children, barroom bragging, back-fence Internet gossip, humankind’s insatiable appetite for stories. Story is not only our most prolific art form but rivals all activities - work, play, eating, exercise - for our waking hours. We tell and take in stories as much as we sleep - and even then we dream. (McKee, 1999: 11)

McKee cites the literary critic Kenneth Burke, whose 1973 article ‘Literature as Equipment for Living’ proposed that a novel like *Madame Bovary* ‘singles out a pattern of experience that is sufficiently representative of our social structure, that recurs sufficiently often *mutatis mutandis*, for people to “need a word for it” and to adopt an attitude towards it’ (Burke, 2006: 596). Yet Marvin Carlson notes that theatre scholars have largely ignored the reader-response theories of Hans Robert Jauss (1982), Wolfgang Iser (1978) and Stanley Fish (1981):

This somewhat surprising situation is unfortunate for both theatre study and reception theory, since theatrical performance, as a unique event structure for a circumscribed and often identifiable body of receivers, presents a controlled field of study quite different from the usual literary concerns of reception theory and since this theory may offer to theatre research a different way of considering traditional material, leading to new insights. (Carlson, 1989: 82)

The reticence of theatre scholarship to adopt the methodology of literary criticism is largely due to a perceived gulf between the individual process of reading and the live communal experience of theatre. In her seminal work on *Theatre Audiences*, Susan Bennett confesses that she ‘devotes little space to the particularities of an individual spectator’s response to seeing a play and prefers to concentrate on the cultural conditions that make theatre and an audience member’s experience of it possible’ (Bennett, 1997: 8). Yet there is little evidence to suggest that audience members experience theatre in a profoundly different way to film and television, or even more diverse narrative-based genres such as video gaming and fantasy role-play. Whilst these genres use different modes of production to stimulate different reactions in their audience, they are all engaged in storytelling - a transaction between the author(s) and the individual receiver.

This chapter evaluates the use of literary criticism as a primary tool in analysing how the participants connect with individual works of musical theatre. The opening section considers how the multisensory experience of a musical relates to its communication of story, suggesting that the elements of song, dance and visual effects are engaged in their own narratives within the overall story. The second part of the chapter engages with the work of Norman Holland and Wolfgang Iser in literary criticism, before developing a methodology for understanding how individuals connect to stories based on Jenifer Toksvig’s devised exercise *The Fairytale Moment*. The final section of the chapter examines two case studies based on this exercise, which leads to

some initial conclusions about how Toksvig's theory of a core emotional drive can be utilised in the present study.

'You can't just act, you have to listen' - the relationship between narrative and musical theatre

Millie Taylor has recently criticised 'the canonical acceptance of integration which leads to the focus on story supported by other elements' (Taylor, 2012: 4). Taylor argues that 'an analytical model based on the primacy of story fails to acknowledge the many other functions that music might have, or other analytical approaches that might be used particularly when addressing musicals whose story may not be the main focus of the entertainment' (Taylor, 2012: 5). However, the responses below to the question 'Do you have any further thoughts or opinions on musical theatre?' suggest that participants still consider narrative as central to the success of musical theatre:

Musical theatre is an opportunity to bring out emotions through music that you can't see just from looking at characters/actors. Although breaking into song may not be realistic, I love it when musical theatre remains naturalistic and believable.

(Darren, straight only - musical theatre survey 27/06/2013)

The story has to be strong, and the narrative well-communicated, as well as good music and lyrics. Similarly, music and lyrics must be good, regardless of how well constructed and believable the narrative and characters. Any single weakness can destroy the whole facade.

(Curtis, straight mostly - musical theatre survey 26/03/2013)

I think story is very important in musicals and sometimes it is overshadowed with catchy songs and choreography. Musical are great when they can make an audience feel something or make them talk about an issue.

(Angela, straight mostly - musical theatre survey 19/06/2016)

All three of these participants consider the story as a separate entity to the songs, in line with Scott McMillin's observation that 'when a musical is working well, I feel the crackle of difference, not the smoothness of unity, even when the numbers dovetail with the book' (McMillin, 2006: 2). McMillin's rejection of the 'integrated musical' allows him to theorise a contrast between real-time or 'progressive time' and 'lyric time' (McMillin, 2006: 6-10). McMillin suggests that songs in lyric time 'do not further characterization, they change the mode of characterization'. It may be posited that the songs in musical theatre allow a more reflexive and emotional response from the audience member, bringing to mind Tia DeNora's comment that 'music is conceived within sociology as providing a candidate simulacrum, or contrast structure, against which feeling may be formulated in real time' (DeNora, 2001: 173).

The understanding that the audience experiences the performance of a song in 'real time' despite it occurring in 'lyric time' within the structure of the musical suggests that there are at least two concentric 'narratives' taking place within the transaction. Alongside the stage narrative, each individual audience member constructs their own internal narrative that allows the musical to connect to their own life experiences, as DeNora observes:

This perception is in turn shaped by a range of matters. Among these are previous associations respondents have made between particular musical materials and other things (biographical, situational), their understanding of the emotional implications of conventional musical devices, genres and styles, and their perceived parallels (articulations/homologies) between musical materials/processes and social or physical materials/processes.

(DeNora, 2001: 172)

From De Nora's argument, it may be hypothesised that affective connections to narrative and song are based around an emotional affinity with the story being told. It is

therefore necessary to develop a methodology that interrogates the nature of these connections and their basis in the participant's own life narrative.

'Careful the spell you cast' – towards an individual approach to audience response theory

In his 2008 study *Engaging Audiences*, Bruce McConachie criticises the field of audience response and audience reaction, stating that such terms 'assume that the theatre is primarily a one-way delivery system of messages or fantasies that audiences respond to according to their past conditioning and/or psychic life' (McConachie, 2008:

3). McConachie advocates a more scientific approach to the field, focusing largely on neurology and cognitive theories to build an understanding of how audiences spectate in the theatre:

Theatre and performance scholars will need to move beyond postshow interviews, audience surveys, and similar methods, however, to deploy the tools of experimental linguists and neuroscientists that can clock language recognition in milliseconds and take pictures of the brain thinking' (McConachie. 2008: 16).

McConachie's conclusion that 'social constructions of class, age, gender, and so on, though not unimportant, constrict audience imagination less than we have generally supposed' (McConachie, 2008: 20) is based largely on Melissa Hines' assumption that 'our gender schemas, or stereotypes about sex differences and their causes, have sometimes led us to believe that hormones have behavioral influences where none exist, or, that where they do exist, they are more immutable or limiting than is the case' (Hines, 2005: 228). Yet while Hines appears to be cautioning against the reification of gender schemas rather than denying that these schemas exist, McConachie's approach comes dangerously close to Lauren Berlant's accusation of 'conservative cultural politics, whose aim is to dilute the oppositional discourses of the historically

stereotyped citizens - people of color, women, gays, and lesbians' (Berlant, 1997: 2).

Helen Freshwater cautions against the danger of treating the audience as a homogenous being rather than focusing on its individual constituents:

The common tendency to refer to an audience as 'it' and, by extension to think of this 'it' as a single entity, or a collective, risks obscuring the multiple contingencies of subjective response, context, and environment which condition an individual's interpretation of a particular performance event. (Freshwater, 2009: 5)

Millie Taylor's *Musical Theatre: Realism and Entertainment* (2012) is one of the few studies that directly focus on the relationship between the musical theatre audience, the performance and the text. Taylor aims to 'investigate how pleasure is stimulated in audiences by different parts of the musical theatre text and different sub-genres of musical theatre performance in order to explore the multifarious ways musical theatre functions as entertainment' (Taylor, 2012: 2). Throughout her text, Taylor emphasises the communal aspect of theatregoing over the responses of individual audience members by focusing on the 'experience of co-presence at a unique moment, intimacy, cognitive empathy and emotional contagion' (Taylor, 2012: 131), thus largely avoiding the possibility that intimacy, empathy and emotional catharsis can also be experienced in different ways by individual audience members. Taylor does accept that these individual audience responses may vary, but suggests that this takes place within the communal reading experienced by the audience as a whole:

It may be that individual intellectual responses can be varied, even as emotional responses and communal interpretation is synchronous, and that audiences understand multiple meanings even while they choose to partake of the communal experience and the culturally determined reading. (Taylor, 2012: 93)

Taylor's concept of a singular 'culturally determined reading' is problematic since it assumes that audience members are approaching the event with the same 'horizons of expectation' (see Jauss, 1982) and from the same cultural perspective. It is

difficult to believe that a gay man's response to 'Four Unlikely Lovers' from *Falsettoland* (1990) during the AIDS crisis would engender the same emotional response from a straight, homophobic man (or even a younger gay man in the 2010s), or that a white audience member would fully comprehend the enormity of Lisa B. Thompson's hope that *The Color Purple* and *Shuffle Along* 'will move the next generation of African American theatre artists to share their stories, reinforcing the notion that black art matters' (Thompson, 2016). Accepting a 'culturally determined reading' is likely to negate the experiences of minority groups and dismiss the idiosyncratic emotional responses that are often central to the individual's connection to musical theatre. This reflects Freshwater's concern about the lack of representation of 'ordinary theatre-goers' in academic work:

Why, when there is so much to suggest that the responses of theatre audiences are rarely unified or stable, do theatre scholars seem to be more comfortable making strong assertions about theatre's unique influence and impact upon audiences than gathering and assessing the evidence which might support these claims? Why do they appear to prefer discussing their own responses, or relaying the opinions of reviewers, to asking 'ordinary' theatre-goers - with no professional stake in the theatre - what they make of a performance? (Freshwater, 2009: 3-4)

This focus on the individual response over the communal links back to the psychoanalytical work of Norman Holland in the field of literary criticism in the early 1970s, which forms the basis of the methodology for this study.

'Into the woods, but mind the past' - Norman Holland and *The Nature of Literary Response*

In 1975, Norman Holland published *Five Readers Reading*, a study of how five different readers responded in different ways to a series of short stories (the study was republished in 2011 as *The Nature of Literary Response: Five Readers Reading*). In his

study, Holland used free-form interviews to elicit free association responses from his readers around a selected story. Holland's research was based around the 'identity theme' principle proposed by Heinz Lichtenstein. Lichtenstein first used the phrase 'identity theme' in 1965 as a term to describe the process of 'abstracting an invariant from the multitude of bodily and behavioral transformations during the whole life of the individual' (Lichtenstein, 1965: 119), and Holland developed this concept further in his study:

Interpreting behavior through an "identity theme" explains how we remain the same, yet change. The essence of this view of identity is that we can see one theme or style permeating all aspects of an individual's life... An "identity theme" is determined by past events, yet paradoxically it is the only basis for future growth and, therefore, freedom (Holland, 2011: 61).

Holland comes to the conclusion that the reading process is a transformation of the 'raw material' of the story to create variations on this identity theme. Thus Holland believes that knowledge of a reader's identity theme allows the analyst to 'understand a reader's re-creation not only of a total literary work but of a small fragment' (Holland, 2011: 201). Holland's view of the text as 'a matrix of psychological possibilities for its readers' (Holland, 2011: 12) is persuasive, particularly when considering why the same text is able to elicit such diverse responses in different readers. Holland's thesis that the reader carries equal importance in the reading process as a transaction with the author is central to this study. This is not to negate the work of the author, but to switch the focus from one end of the creative process to the other:

The work begins in the psychological dynamics of its author, and the act of creating it fulfills those processes – for him. The work finds its fulfillment, so to speak, when a reader gives it life by re-creating the work in his own mind.

(Holland, 2011: 13)

Whilst the theoretical framework of Holland's thesis is sound, there are significant problems in his methodology. Essentially, Holland's study approaches the transaction between the reader and the text from the wrong direction. Holland's methodology is based on the supposition that knowledge of an individual's identity theme will provide enlightenment on their understanding of the text, whereas actually the reverse premise is more secure – the way that an individual understands a text will illuminate aspects of their identity theme. In Holland's study, the personality data on the readers is collected and analysed before eliciting responses to the texts, and it can often seem that Holland is imposing his psychoanalysis of the respondents onto their responses to the texts rather than inferring their identity from their responses.

Furthermore, Susan Suleiman notes that Holland 'speaks of his reader's identity themes as if they were objectively verifiable and stable entities rather than interpretive, and therefore necessarily relative, constructs' (Suleiman, 1980: 30). Naturally it is possible to detect patterns in the way that a reader responds to different texts, and to discover certain themes that they will engage with across different stories, but the idea that these themes are an unchanging essence of a reader's identity cannot be proved without a long-range study, and even then the only measure of success is the reader's self-recognition.

Since the present study is examining how young men connect to musical theatre, it is important to define the limitations of an individual approach to reader-response. This study is particularly interested in whether there are specific themes that men of similar sexualities read into stories, as well as whether the themes themselves reflect or subvert the principles of hegemonic and inclusive masculinities outlined in the previous chapters. However, it is recognised that the themes identified in the interviews

conducted may represent a snapshot of an individual's identity, and that conclusions about the longevity of these themes are outside the constraints of the study.

The second problematic area within Holland's work is that the interviewer rather than the participant made the choice of texts discussed. It is entirely possible that some of the five readers would not have chosen to read *A Rose For Emily* at all. Whilst it is still possible that they will interpret the story through the lens of their own story theme, it would seem more logical to allow the participant to choose the stories that they feel that they respond most strongly to. This shifts the focus from the text to the process itself – it may not be possible to compare every participant's response to a certain story (although in this study there are many stories that were chosen by several participants), but the concept of a transaction between the story as an abstract and the reader/audience as an idiosyncratic interpreter remains central.

Wolfgang Iser's phenomenological approach explores the idea that an author can encourage the reader's imagination by leaving 'gaps' in the text for the reader to create their response:

One text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities; as he reads, he will make his own decision as to how the gap is to be filled (Iser, 1978: 280).

Iser's overall argument remains quite conservative, stating that 'we must suspend the ideas and attitudes that shape our own personality before we can experience the unfamiliar world of the literary text' (Iser, 1978: 291). This suggests that Iser believes that the reader-audience must enter the author's world entirely on the author's own terms, which does not explain why an individual reader will often connect to a range of different stories that contain the same core theme. In the words of Susan Suleiman, 'the individual subject it [phenomenological criticism] proposes is often

indistinguishable from an abstract and generalized “reader” (Suleiman, 1980:

26). Nevertheless, Iser does highlight the role of memory as an important element of a reader’s response to story:

Whatever we have read sinks into our memory and is foreshortened. It may later be evoked again and set against a different background with the result that the reader is enabled to develop hitherto unforeseeable connections (Iser, 1978: 278).

Holland’s later work *Literature and the Brain* (2009) discusses the role of memory in creating expectations and interpretations of literature. Following Solms, Turnbull and Sacks (2002), Holland divides memory processes into short-term and long-term, and conscious and unconscious. Whilst the short-term memory processes deal with the conscious practice of reading or watching, the long-term memory processes are integral in determining emotional responses to the stimuli. The ‘semantic memory’ checks and stores the general information provided, whilst the ‘episodic memory’ links the stimuli to conscious or subconscious memories. Episodic memories are encoded by the hippocampus and are tagged with emotional value, thus when new information is linked to an episodic memory, it will affect the current experience of that new information. As Holland notes, ‘old episodic memories color new experiences of literature’ (Holland, 2009: 132). These memories are enhanced by the ventromedial frontal lobes, which provide an unconscious emotional memory system that ‘associates real-world actions with previous pleasant or unpleasant body sensations’ (Holland, 2009: 135) and increase or decrease the activity of excitatory or inhibiting neuromodulators.

Thus memories of previous situations are triggered by the present experience of the text or performance, and combine to provide an individual response. Emotional memories can be learned from society as well as from individual episodic experiences,

which explains why there are often similarities across individual responses based on the generally accepted cultural response to a particular action. The role of an individual's 'memory bank' initiates their individual response to a narrative, as Robert McKee summarises in his screenwriting handbook *Story*:

Our appetite for story is a reflection of the profound human need to grasp the patterns of living, not merely as an intellectual exercise, but within a very personal, emotional experience (McKee, 1997: 12).

McKee suggests that the audience-reader is not only looking for thematic similitude but also a reflection of their own life in the gaps in the story, and this reflects the theoretical frameworks outlined above.

'Sometimes the spell may last past what you can see' - developing Jenifer

Toksvig's *The Fairytale Moment* as a methodology

The previous chapter identified that *Les Misérables* is popular across the full cohort of participants in this study, whilst *Wicked* is more popular with female and LGBTQ participants. The academic literature in chapter two suggested that lived experience results in a different perspective on musical theatre between people of different genders and sexualities (see Clum, 1999; Wolf, 2011; Halperin 2012), resulting in different demographics filling the 'gaps' in the text identified by Wolfgang Iser being filled in different ways. In this chapter, it is posited that Norman Holland's psychoanalytical framework based on the 'identity theme' principle proposed by Heinz Lichtenstein might be adapted to provide a fuller understanding of how musical theatre audiences connect to musicals. The methodology utilised in this study is adapted from *The Fairytale Moment*, an exercise developed by the theatre practitioner Jenifer Toksvig as part of her devising process, which is discussed in a short unpublished article that is reproduced with the author's permission in Appendix C.

Toksvig's exercise begins by asking each respondent to choose a fairytale and to write the story outline in a few bullet points. Next, Toksvig asks the participants to choose their favourite moment from the fairytale, and by a process of questioning and free association identifies 'a foundation of emotional drives to which we can continuously refer back as we explore creative journeys and processes' (Toksvig, 2013: 1). This exercise has clear similarities with Holland's *Five Readers Reading* (1975), but allows the participants to choose their own story and uses the fragmented nature of memory as a technique to highlight the important elements of the story to the individual.

Toksvig notes that it is possible to use any story as a basis for the exercise but that fairytales tend to be most effective as they 'cut everything down to the simplest form, and because almost everyone knows at least the very basics of most popular fairytales' (Toksvig, 2013: 1). As Bettelheim has noted, fairytales are concerned with 'the inner problems of human beings, and of the right solutions to their predicaments in any society' (Bettelheim, 1989: 5), and they continue to impact beyond childhood through a variety of guises in film, television and theatre as 'virtual fairytales' (Zipes, 1997: 1), in which the fairytale 'becomes a broad arena for presenting and representing our wishes and desires' (Zipes, 1997: 9).

Fairytales provide a structural template for the stories that adults read and write, but more importantly in the context of Toksvig's exercise, they emphasise thematic preferences through their use of archetypal characters and delineated contrasts between old and young, good and evil, ugly and beautiful. They also allow for a range of different responses from the reader as there is not always a clear distinction between good and bad – for example, Jack in *Jack and The Beanstalk* steals from the giant to

become rich, and Little Red Riding Hood is partly responsible for her grandmother's death as she naively tells the wolf where to find her house despite her mother's warning. This ambiguity allows the reader to identify more closely with the protagonist as they display a combination of positive and negative characteristics. Here there is an important distinction between fairytale and fable – in the latter, the reader is directed towards a single correct response, whereas the former allows the reader to make their own emotional response (Bettelheim, 1989: 8).

It is this emotional response that allows Toksvig's exercise to highlight the participant's own 'core emotional drive'. Toksvig's definition of this phrase is particularly useful in the context of Holland's work:

It's really not unusual that people will go straight for the fairytale moment which best sums up their core emotional drive, because although we are complex animals, there do tend to be one or two moments in life that have a more profound and lasting effect on us – whether or not we realise that – and pointing at a similar kind of moment in a story is a great way to explore that aspect of ourselves without feeling that it's too personal (Toksvig, 2013: 2).

Toksvig locates the core emotional drive within the confines of a psychodynamic approach, which allows a potential for fluidity that is less prevalent in Holland's model. Toksvig's description also resonates with Peter Brooks' writing on stories:

Our lives are ceaselessly intertwined with narrative, with the stories that we tell and hear told, those we dream or imagine or would like to tell, all of which are reworked in that story of our own lives that we narrate to ourselves in an episodic, sometimes semi-conscious, but virtually uninterrupted monologue (Brooks, 1992: 1).

The key moment selected by the participant is used to elicit a number of themes and concepts through questioning designed to explore different levels of conscious and subconscious responses to the story. One of the key principles of this part of the study is to encourage the participants to be subjective, reflecting Toksvig's insistence that the participant's version of the story is more important than the 'correct' version of the

story (Toksvig, 2013: 2). To this end, many of the questions asked about the key moment were designed to enable the participant to analyse the story subjectively – often they were asked to describe a location, a costume or character’s appearance. Other questions specifically focused on the participants’ attitude towards the characters and the story – sometimes the participant was asked whether they were happy with the ending of the story, or to select the version that they preferred from multiple versions that they remembered. All participants were asked to state the meaning, moral or message of the fairytale, and this often provided the key to their core emotional drive.

The relation between the core emotional drive and the participant’s own psyche is not explored in any depth here as it is outside of the constraints of this study, but it is likely that the participants judge the validity of the exercise against this benchmark. Participants were encouraged to talk about three or four other stories that they connected strongly with, either through narrating the plot or through discussing why they particularly connected to each story in order to measure how the core emotional drive is reflected in participants’ responses to other narratives. This part of the exercise was completed immediately after *The Fairytale Moment* but before the participant was debriefed as to the purpose of the exercise.

The methodology of this study hopes to respond to one of Jonathan Culler’s main criticisms of Holland’s interview process in *Five Readers Reading* – namely that ‘one may even go so far as to seek free association, for the simple reason that it is not very interesting to ask each of one’s readers to recount the plot of a given novel’ (Culler 1980: 54). This study argues that the recounting of a plot from memory is one of the most powerful ways to explore how a reader has engaged with a narrative by using it as a simple tool to establish what the reader has taken from the story, and as importantly,

what they have rejected. The process of noting down the fairytale in bullet points reveals the nature of the connection between the participant and their chosen story, in particular by highlighting the characters and actions that they most identify with.

Toksvig's observation that 'similar emotional themes can be found running in threads that support the fabric of all their creative weaving' (Toksvig, 2013: 2) has similar ramifications for the role of the author in the creative process. This is supported by Vagelis Siropoulos's study 'Andrew Lloyd Webber and the culture of narcissism' (2010), where he suggests that Lloyd Webber tends to explore the themes of narcissism and power in his musicals. The idea of power was central to the analysis of *The Phantom of the Opera* in chapter one, but the archetype of the egomaniac can also be seen in *Evita*, *Aspects of Love*, *Sunset Boulevard*, *Whistle Down the Wind* and *Love Never Dies* - and even in *Starlight Express*, where the story is narrated and manipulated by the voice of an offstage child. Whilst Siropoulos sees Lloyd Webber's work as a 'clever melodramatic manipulation of the anxieties that the postmodern culture of narcissism generates' (Siropoulos, 2010: 285), it is equally possible to suppose that Lloyd Webber is expressing different facets of his own core emotional drive in these narratives, particularly since he maintains extensive creative control over the musicals that he writes.

Nevertheless, it does not follow that individual audience members necessarily connect to the narrative through the same core emotional drive as their writer. Lyndon and Laurie both chose *The Phantom of the Opera* as one of their favourite musicals, but their retelling of the story is subtly different:

The Phantom of the Opera is a spectacle, but it's different to modern music, it's more of a pop opera. The Phantom has a commanding voice - he bellows in an operatic style and absolutely fills the room. The Phantom is the point-of-view character, you feel for him because he can't compete - the central theme

surrounds his ego, and in the end his love doesn't triumph because he runs away from Christine.

(Lyndon, straight only - story interview 27/10/2012)

The Phantom is a character with an air of mystery and a monster of a voice. The story is a fight between Raoul and the Phantom - two men fighting over the same woman. The Phantom's love for Christine is more pure than Raoul's conventional love, but Christine and Raoul end up married and the Phantom is left without. It's mainly a story about injustice.

(Laurie, straight only - story interview 08/12/2014)

Lyndon's narration is broadly in line with the theme of narcissism identified by Siropoulos - the Phantom fails because his love for Christine is not as strong as his own ego. Conversely, Laurie clearly experiences the story from the Phantom's viewpoint and appears to experience catharsis through the 'injustice' at the end of the story. Both participants identify as 'straight only', but understand the narrative in different ways. The purpose of the story interview based on *The Fairytale Moment* is to explore why individual audience members can have unique experiences of the same story based on their core emotional drive. The final part of this chapter offers two case studies to illuminate how the different parts of the exercise allow a deeper understanding of the nature of the connection between stories and the audience-reader.

'Careful the tale you tell, that is the spell' – using *The Fairytale Moment* to understand connections to narrative

The data from *The Fairytale Moment* exercise was gathered from face-to-face interviews with the 161 male participants and 25 female participants that took part in the study. These interviews took place between November 2011 and June 2016, and were combined with the completion of the online surveys on sexuality and musical

theatre analysed in chapter three. Data was noted in shorthand during the interviews and subsequently coded into an Excel spreadsheet for quantitative analysis.

The story interview itself consisted of three parts. The first part is Toksvig's original exercise, where participants were asked to choose a fairytale and write it down in four to six bullet points. Participants were then asked to choose a favourite moment in the fairytale, and to describe what they particularly liked about this point in the story. Where necessary, a series of questions were asked to encourage the participant to elaborate on their answer by engaging with subjective opinions on the location, appearance and perspective of the scene. Finally, the participant was asked to identify the meaning, moral or message of the story in their own words.

The second part of the interview asked participants to choose up to four stories with which they particularly connected. It was clarified that they could choose from films, novels, plays, musicals, computer games, television series or any other narrative genre. For each story, the participant was asked to either retell the story or to elaborate on why they liked it, with prompt questions used as necessary to elicit further responses.

Finally, the participant was debriefed as to the purpose of the exercise. The participant's core emotional drive was identified from the initial fairytale, and then related to the additional stories that were selected. It was possible to identify a core emotional drive in every case, although there were occasions where it did not fit all of the additional stories. Nevertheless, most participants were able to recognise an emotional theme that ran through their retelling of their favourite narratives.

This chapter uses the story interview data of Gary, Tim, Perry and Lydia to illustrate how the *Fairytale Moment* exercise was used to develop an understanding of the participants' core emotional drive. The first section is a detailed analysis of Gary's

story interview, which is transcribed in full in Appendix D. The second section compares how Tim, Perry and Lydia responded in different ways to the same fairytale moment from *Little Red Riding Hood*. The third section proposes a method for categorising core emotional drives based on the participant's point-of-view character and their focal relationship within the fairytale, and the chapter concludes with some initial observations on how the core emotional drives intersect with the data from the online surveys.

Case study 1: Gary

Gary was one of the first participants in the study - he was born in 1991 and was 21 at the time of his story interview. Gary identifies as 'straight only' and classes himself as a musical theatre fan - at the time of the interview, he had performed in both amateur and professional musicals as an actor and a musician. Gary chose *Jack and the Beanstalk* as his fairytale along with *To Kill A Mockingbird* (1960 novel), *All My Sons* (1947 play - 2010 London production starring David Suchet) and *Whistle Down The Wind* (1989 musical - NYMT 2008 production) as his other narratives.

Gary's version of *Jack and the Beanstalk* is based on a picture book that he remembers from childhood and the 1947 Mickey Mouse movie *Mickey and the Beanstalk*. Gary experiences the story from Jack's point of view ('because he's the hero') and focuses on Jack's relationship with the 'whole new world' at the top of the beanstalk, and on the giant as an antagonist. Gary is able to identify with the giant's anger, describing Jack as 'naïve' in thinking that 'he is just able to take things without consequences', and this combination of a naïve protagonist and a flawed but empathetic antagonist is reiterated in all three of Gary's other narratives, which foreground father-child relationships.

Gary tends to see all of his stories from the child-protagonist's perspective - even though his description of *To Kill A Mockingbird* focuses exclusively on Atticus Finch, he seems to view him from a child's perspective:

It's just absolutely packed with... The Atticus Finch character, I think, is completely integral to it... It's how everyone should aspire to be, as a human being. Just his, rules that he lives his life with, I think he's brilliant.

(Gary, straight only - story interview 29/02/2012)

Similarly, Gary is able to identify with Joe Keller in *All My Sons* as personifying 'what a father would do for his son' despite his ambiguous morality - it transpires that Joe knowingly shipped damaged parts for fighter aircrafts in World War II and was thus directly responsible for the deaths of several pilots. In *Whistle Down The Wind*, Gary focuses on the relationship between three children and a mysterious man that they find in their barn - 'the whole question is, was he 'The Man' or was he this Jesus-type character?' Gary's ability to follow Atticus Finch's motto of 'taking someone else's shoes and walking around in them' leads to consequences for all of the child-protagonists, in that they are able to 'escape the boredom of ordinary life' but at the cost of losing their naïve outlook on those around them. In categorising the core emotional drives (see below), Gary's identity theme was summarised as **the loss of innocence**, but Gary's empathy with several different perspectives within the story is also key to his connection with narrative.

Case study 2 – Tim, Perry and Lydia

The exploration of the core emotional drive can be further underlined by comparing the responses of Tim, Perry and Lydia to the story of *Little Red Riding Hood*. Figure 4.1 outlines how the participants described the story of *Little Red Riding*

Hood in their own words. There is a clear contrast in both the writing styles and the content of the three accounts, but all three participants chose the woodcutter saving Little Red Riding Hood as their fairytale moment.

Figure 4.1 - Three parallel accounts of *Little Red Riding Hood*

Tim - straight mostly (Story interview 16/11/2011)	Perry – straight only (Story interview 31/01/2013)	Lydia – straight mostly (Story interview 23/02/2012)
		Once upon a time there was a little girl called Red Riding Hood who lived on the edge of a big forest
	Little red riding hood gets given new coat.	
Girl goes to visit grandmother bearing goodies,...	Goes to take picnic to Granny.	Her grandma, who was sick, lived on the other side and Red Riding Hood decided to go and visit.
... warned not to stray from path.		Before she set off, her mother gave her instructions not to step off the path and not to talk to strangers.
Meets wolf on way, convinced to stray from path.	Wolf watches her and wants to eat her...	However, distracted by the pretty flowers, she wandered off the path and got talking to a mysterious gentleman with very large teeth.
Wolf leaves her and beats her to Grandma's house.	...so runs ahead to Granny's house...	The wolf ran ahead of her to her grandma's house....
The wolf eats grandma...	...eats her...	...and GOBBLED HER UP!!
...and disguises himself as her.	... and dresses in her clothes.	When Red Riding Hood reached the house finally, after getting lost several times, he disguised himself as her grandma.
Little red comes in and the wolf attempts to eat her.	Little red riding hood arrives and eventually works out what's happened.	'Oh Grandma what big eyes/ears/TEETH' ensued.
A woodcutter enters the cottage, kills the wolf and frees Grandma.	Wolf tries to eat her but her dad, a woodcutter, arrives, kills the wolf and cuts Granny out.	Just as the wolf gobbled Red Riding Hood up, a woodcutter heard her screaming and came to the rescue!
	They all live happily ever after (not the wolf).	

Tim's outline is succinct and avoids extraneous details - there is a clear focus on the action at the expense of description. Tim's description of his fairytale moment is just as abrupt - he describes how the woodsman 'bursts in, kicks the door open, cuts the wolf's head off and cuts the wolf's belly' (story interview 16/11/2011). Tim describes the moral of the story as 'dangerous strangers', but it seems to be the violent act of rescue that forms his core emotional drive.

Perry's retelling of the story is much slower paced than Tim's, and this is reflected in his idiomatic use of auxiliary verbs in his description to delay the action - Little Red Riding Hood 'goes to take' the picnic to Granny, and the wolf 'wants to eat' and later 'tries to eat' Little Red Riding Hood. Perry is one of only two participants that establishes the woodcutter as Little Red Riding Hood's father, and this significantly affects his attitude towards the fairytale moment, which he describes as 'Dad comes along and saves Little Red Riding Hood'. Perry describes how Dad 'climbs through the window' into Granny's bedroom to save his daughter, noting that the fact that the woodcutter is Little Red Riding Hood's father is 'more fitting and a nicer sentiment'. Perry states that the moral of the story is that 'your parents are there to look out for you' (story interview 31/01/2013), and this idea of familial protection forms Perry's core emotional drive.

Lydia tells the story in the past tense rather than the present, and she includes significant quotes from the original version of the story that she heard, including 'GOBBLED HER UP!!' and 'what big ears you have'. Lydia uses adjectives liberally, and includes several extraneous details such as Little Red Riding Hood getting lost several times in the woods. Lydia's fairytale moment concerns 'the triumph of rescue', adding that in the version she remembered, the woodcutter marries Little Red Riding

Hood, giving the story a romantic ending between the hero and the heroine (story interview 23/02/2012). Lydia emphasised the importance of the character being ‘a woodcutter not a prince’, and this idea is the basis for Lydia’s core emotional drive.

From this brief analysis, it is clear that Tim, Perry and Lydia responded to the character of the woodcutter in very different ways. For Tim, the woodcutter was a daring rescuer, for Perry, a protective father, and for Lydia, an authentic alternative to the traditional handsome prince. Figure 4.2 demonstrates that the four key aspects in defining the core emotional theme - the point of view character, the focal character, the negative or positive value of their relationship, and the key moment of the story.

Figure 4.2 - Analysis of the moment where the woodcutter saves Little Red Riding Hood

Participant	POV character	Focal character	Value	Story Point
Tim	Minor character (rescuer)	Nemesis	Negative	Pivotal moment
Perry	Father	Protagonist	Positive	Ending
Lydia	Protagonist	Minor character (rescuer)	Positive	Ending

It is clear that Tim perceives the scene from the opposite viewpoint of Perry and Lydia, both of whom identify with Little Red Riding Hood rather than the woodcutter. Tim’s woodcutter deals with the nemesis first (‘kills the wolf’) before rescuing a minor character (‘frees grandma’), but the fate of Little Red Riding Hood is unclear from his account. Perry’s account places the focus on the relationship between father and daughter, and one would assume that the woodcutter’s actions are directly as a result of seeing his child in danger. Finally, Lydia’s woodcutter hears Little Red

Riding Hood screaming and it is thus the protagonist that initiates the moment, with the woodcutter focusing on rescuing the protagonist rather than defeating the nemesis - in Lydia's account, it is not made explicit how the woodcutter deals with the wolf.

Despite the three participants choosing the same fairytale moment, the subtle differences in their storytelling suggest that each participant has a different core emotional drive. Tim's core emotional drive concerns daring rescues, with the phrase 'bursts in' being particularly appropriate to his description of the key moment. Tim's choices of *Lord of the Rings*, *the Iliad*, the history of the American Revolution and the computer game *Bioshock* all contain daring rescues, and are filled with epic battles and sudden narrative changes. Indeed, even Tim's short sentences and succinct narrative style match the violent and definitive act of the woodcutter in *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Perry chose four epic fantasies as his other favourite stories – *Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, *Harry Potter* and the lesser-known *Cherub*. Perry clearly connects with the theme of childhood, as he mentions the younger versions of both Darth Vader in the first three episodes of *Star Wars* and Voldemort in *Harry Potter* as 'almost justifying their actions' in the story. In *Lord of the Rings*, Perry focuses on the relationship between Frodo and Samwise and particularly notes that even when they argue, 'Sam knows Frodo needs him'. Finally, *Cherub* concerns a boarding school where the children work for MI5 – Perry admired the series because 'every single feeling described, you'd felt yourself'. Thus Perry's core emotional drive concerns protection (or the lack of protection) given by friends and family.

Lydia's core emotional drive is epitomised in her observation that Little Red Riding Hood's rescuer is 'a woodcutter not a prince'. This is particularly prevalent in her first chosen story of *Blodeuwedd*, a Welsh folktale where the title character betrays

her military husband by having an affair with a lord. The theme is also prevalent in the film *The Notebook*, where the wealthy protagonist has to choose between a rich young soldier and her true love, a farm labourer. Lydia's other two chosen narratives are *Swallows and Amazons* and *Winnie the Pooh*, both of which represent idyllic versions of childhood with common sense characters. Thus Lydia's core emotional drive concerns the triumph of the ordinary over the privileged.

In a study with a small sample such as *Five Readers Reading*, it would be possible to expand on the role of the core emotional drive as related to other narratives, including the life stories of the participants themselves. This might provoke some interesting discussion in a further study - it is interesting to note that Gary is 'taking someone else's shoes and walking around in them' as a professional actor, Tim is making daring attempts to rescue disaffected inner-city children as a learning mentor and Lydia continues to engage with the 'ordinary' as a professional storyteller and actor. However, since this project is dealing with a large number of participants, it is necessary to develop a system to categorise the core emotional drives in order to make comparisons across different gender and sexuality cohorts. The following chapter provides a model for categorisation that draws on the observations made in Figure 4.2 above in order to provide a more coherent framework for the further analysis of specific musicals in the second part of this study.

5. 'EVERYBODY'S GOT THE RIGHT TO THEIR DREAMS' – THE ROLE OF CORE EMOTIONAL DRIVES IN RETELLING NARRATIVES

Everybody's got the right to some sunshine.
Not the sun but maybe one of its beams.
Rich man, poor man, black or white,
Pick your apple, take a bite.
Everybody just hold tight to your dreams.
Everybody's got the right to their dreams.

(Sondheim, 1990: 20-22)

In the previous chapter, it was suggested that Tim, Perry and Lydia's core emotional drives reflect their choice of point-of-view character, the main focal character in the narrative, the positive or negative value of this focal relationship and the key moment within the story. Figure 5.1 suggests a system of categorisation based on a full analysis of 186 story interviews completed between 2011 and 2016. These categories reflect the power dynamics between the participants' point-of-view character and their main focal relationship in the narratives.

As may be expected, the majority of participants experience their chosen narratives from the point of view of the protagonist. The status of the protagonist in comparison with the other characters in the narrative acts as a point of reflection for the audience-reader depending on their own perceived status in the world, and this can be seen in the four protagonist archetypes performed in these narratives: the hero, the disenfranchised protagonist, the outcast and the anti-hero. A smaller number of participants connected with the archetypes of the nemesis, the sidekick, the rescuer and the deceiver. The first part of this chapter explores these archetypes and what they reveal about the participants' connection to story.

Figure 5.1 - Categorisation of core emotional drives

Category	POV character	Focal relationship	Positive / negative value	Key moment
Planning and Perseverance	Protagonist (hero)	Nemesis	Negative	Overview
Exploring new worlds	Protagonist (hero)	New world	Positive	Beginning
Family	Protagonist (hero)	Family	Positive	Ending
Love	Protagonist (hero)	Love interest	Positive	Ending
Fate and mortality	Protagonist (hero)	Life / death	Positive or negative	Ending
Redemption	Protagonist (outcast)	Society	Negative then positive	Ending
Twisted justice	Protagonist (disenfranchised)	Nemesis	Negative	Ending
Liberation	Protagonist (disenfranchised)	Society	Negative	Ending
Loss of innocence	Protagonist (disenfranchised)	Society	Positive then negative	Pivotal moment
The dark hero	Protagonist (anti-hero)	Self / Society	Ambiguous	Ending
Escape	Protagonist (anti-hero)	Self / Society	Negative	Pivotal moment
Power and corruption	Nemesis	Society	Positive	Ending
Friendship	Sidekick	Protagonist	Positive	Pivotal moment
Rescue	Rescuer	Protagonist	Positive	Pivotal moment
Deception	The Deceiver	Nemesis / Protagonist	Ambivalent	Pivotal moment

‘Free country - means your dreams can come true’ - The hero-protagonist

The archetype of the hero-protagonist was explored by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (1949) and gained popular currency through Christopher Vogler’s famous memo to Disney writers:

The hero is introduced in his ORDINARY WORLD where he receives the CALL TO ADVENTURE. He is RELUCTANT at first to CROSS THE FIRST THRESHOLD where he eventually encounters TESTS, ALLIES and ENEMIES. He reaches the INNERMOST CAVE where he endures the SUPREME ORDEAL. He SEIZES THE SWORD or the treasure and is pursued on the ROAD BACK to his world. He is RESURRECTED and transformed by his experience. He RETURNS to his ordinary world with a treasure, boon, or ELIXIR to benefit his world. (Vogler, 1985)

The five core emotional drive categories for the hero-protagonist fit with specific moments in Vogler’s description above. *Exploring new worlds* represents ‘crossing the first threshold; *planning and perseverance* covers the ‘tests, allies and enemies’; *fate and mortality* is linked to the ‘supreme ordeal’, and both *love* and *family* are representative of the ‘ordinary world’ to which the hero-protagonist has to bring the ‘elixir’. Figure 5.2 shows how different gender and sexuality cohorts connected with these core emotional drives in their story interviews.

Pugh and Wallace have raised significant objections to the work of Campbell and Vogler, arguing that ‘the heroism demanded for the protagonist of these narratives typically depends upon an alpha-male model of masculinity that systematically marginalizes most other characters, especially in relation to gender and sexual orientation difference’ (Pugh and Wallace, 2006: 261). Figure 5.2 suggests that this had a limited impact on the popularity amongst different sexuality cohorts, but it is interesting to note that 68.2% of participants that connected with a hero-protagonist selected exclusively male protagonists in their chosen narratives, compared to 59.1% of

participants overall, suggesting that there is some correlation between the hero-protagonist and masculinity.

Figure 5.2 - Categories of core emotional drives by sexuality cohort - hero-protagonist archetype

	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	Female cohort	Grand Total
Planning and Perseverance	8 (10.3%)	1 (5.6%)	1 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.1%)	4 (16.0%)	15 (8.1%)
Exploring new worlds	5 (6.4%)	1 (5.6%)	1 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (3.8%)
Family	2 (2.6%)	2 (11.1%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.7%)	2 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	7 (3.8%)
Love	2 (2.6%)	1 (5.6%)	1 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.3%)	3 (12.0%)	9 (4.9%)
Fate and mortality	2 (2.6%)	1 (5.6%)	1 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.3%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (3.2%)
Total - hero protagonist	19 (24.5%)	6 (33.3%)	4 (20.0%)	1 (7.7%)	7 (21.9%)	7 (28.0%)	44 (23.7%)

‘Free country - means they listen to you’ - the disenfranchised protagonist

The disenfranchised protagonist begins from an inherently low status position in society due to their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, disability or social class. In the *liberation* category, the disenfranchised protagonist is fighting against societal norms - examples include Elphaba in *Wicked*, Christopher in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* and Darren in *The Saga of Darren Chan*. Where the chosen narratives included hero-protagonists, participants often identified more strongly with other characters - all four of the participants that chose *Harry Potter* selected Hermione Granger as their favourite character.

Figure 5.3 - Categories of core emotional drives by sexuality - disenfranchised-protagonist archetype

	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	Female cohort	Grand Total
Liberation	4 (5.1%)	0 (0.0%)	5 (25.0%)	5 (38.5%)	10 (31.3%)	6 (24.0%)	30 (16.1%)
Loss of innocence	5 (6.4%)	3 (16.7%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (16.0%)	15 (8.1%)
Twisted justice	11 (14.1%)	2 (11.1%)	1 (5.0%)	1 (7.7%)	3 (9.4%)	1 (4.0%)	19 (10.2%)
Total – Disenfranchised-protagonist	20 (25.6%)	5 (27.8%)	6 (30.0%)	9 (69.2%)	13 (40.6%)	11 (44.0%)	64 (34.4%)

Within this category there was a clear schism between those male participants that self-identified as ‘straight only’ or ‘straight mostly’, and those participants that identified as LGBTQ and/or female. In the *liberation* category, 86.7% of the participants identified as LGBTQ, whereas in the *twisted justice* category, 68.4% of the participants identified either as ‘straight only’ or ‘straight mostly’. The major difference is that protagonists in the *twisted justice* category were opposed by a specific nemesis, whereas protagonists in the *liberation* category are fighting against society as a whole. It is likely that the process of ‘coming out’ to family and friends equates to one of Toksvig’s ‘moments in life that have a more profound and lasting effect on us’ (Toksvig 2013: 2), and that this experience is rarely replicated for those who do not identify as LGBTQ. Thus the narrative perspective in the *liberation* category may allow participants to replicate their personal challenge to a heteronormative society through their experience of the story - this will be examined further in chapters 8 and 9.

‘Free country - means you don’t have to sit’ - the outcast

Whilst the hero-protagonist enjoys a positive relationship with society and often acts as the protector of societal values within their narrative, the outcast-protagonist begins their story at odds with their community. Both Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables* and Andy Dufresne in *The Shawshank Redemption* fulfil this archetype - they are rejected by society due to their supposed misdemeanours, but the audience perceives them as hero characters. In these cases, the story is concerned with a redemptive narrative arc whereby the characters atone for their previous misjudgements and are eventually reconciled with society.

Figure 5.4 - Categories of core emotional drives by sexuality - outcast-protagonist archetype

	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	Female cohort	Grand Total
Redemption	5 (6.1%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.4%)	1 (4.0%)	7 (7.5%)

Although outcast-protagonists begin by being ostracised by society, they still retain their most important asset - namely that they are heterosexual men. It is inconceivable that a female version of Jean Valjean would have been able to rise to the position of mayor in a 19th century French town, or that Batwoman would be able to act as a New York vigilante without significant opposition from its residents. Again, this is reflected by the concentration on male protagonists within this category, with only Katniss Everdeen in *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* (2009) and Briony Tallis in *Atonement* (2007) being cited as female outcast protagonists by the seven participants.

‘And put up with the shit’ – the anti-hero and the nemesis

The Dark Triad of personality is composed of narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism. Despite the common belief that these traits are undesirable, the media is awash with characters that embody the Dark Triad. Characters like Gregory House, M.D., Batman (a.k.a. the Dark Knight), and James Bond all embody these traits and are some of the most popular media franchises today. As entertaining as these characters are, they provide us with a window into the dark side of human nature. (Jonason et. al, 2012, 192)

The protagonist in several of the chosen narratives enacts some or all of the characteristics of the ‘Dark Triad’ identified above. In particular, the narcissism of the ‘anti-hero’ often results in the struggle between protagonist and nemesis being internalized within one character, so that the protagonist becomes both the hero and the antagonist of the story. The three categories of core emotional drive largely correlate with the three characteristics of the Dark Triad - the *dark hero* represents narcissism, *escape* represents psychopathy (since it often results in either murder or suicide) and *power and corruption* embodies Machiavellian traits. The anti-hero’s internal struggle causes ripples in society despite the insular nature of the character: the *dark hero* tends to come into conflict with society through their methods of overcoming their internal struggle (Walter White in *Breaking Bad*, Gregory House in *House*), the anti-hero in pursuit of *escape* tends to avoid society as far as possible (Reginald Perrin, Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*), and the more extroverted Machiavellian anti-hero often takes advantage of society for their own ends (Iago in *Othello*, members of the Capitol in *The Hunger Games*).

Jonason states that ‘although women can score high on the Dark Triad traits, they often suffer more serious consequences than men do for pursuing a fast life strategy’ (Jonason et. al 2012: 195), and this is reflected in the small number of female participants that connected with narratives through the anti-hero. It is interesting to note

that nearly half of bisexual male participants experienced their chosen narratives from an anti-hero perspective. Again, there were a high proportion of participants that chose male-only protagonists in their narratives (68.2%).

Figure 5.5 - Categories of core emotional drives by sexuality - anti-hero and nemesis archetypes

	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	Female cohort	Grand Total
The Dark Hero	10 (12.8%)	3 (16.7%)	3 (15.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (9.4%)	0 (0.0%)	19 (10.2%)
Escape	6 (7.7%)	1 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (15.4%)	1 (3.1%)	1 (4.0%)	11 (5.9%)
Power and corruption	3 (3.8%)	1 (5.6%)	6 (30.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (9.4%)	1 (4.0%)	14 (7.5%)
Anti-hero / Nemesis	19 (24.4%)	5 (27.8%)	9 (45.0%)	2 (15.4%)	7 (21.9%)	2 (8.0%)	44 (23.7%)

Participants in the *power and corruption* category tended to forge stronger connections with a nemesis character in their chosen narratives. These characters often function as anti-heroes (Dominick Cobb in *Inception*, the title character in *Hamlet*), but the focus in the narratives tends to be on the gradual corruption of the character. The category of *power and corruption* is of particular interest as it is the only category other than *liberation* to attract a majority of LGBTQ participants - in this case, 71.4% of participants in this category self-identify as LGBTQ, and 42.9% of the participants identify specifically as bisexual.

‘Not the sun but maybe one of its beams’ - the sidekick, the rescuer and the deceiver

There were a small number of participants who consistently connected with narratives through a minor character. Generally these minor characters support the

protagonist either directly through friendship or through rescuing them, or by indirectly thwarting the nemesis. Nevertheless, the archetypes of the sidekick and the rescuer allow participants to connect with a specific aspect of human nature and often result in their own individual story arc. Characters such as Samwise in *Lord of The Rings* and Ron in *Harry Potter* are particularly popular point-of-view characters since they lack some of the introspective nature of Frodo and Harry Potter, and they also allow the expression of a sense of humour. The deceiver is usually looking out for themselves, but this archetype has been made popular by characters such as Varys, Littlefinger and Tyrion Lannister in *Game of Thrones*, who all have an ambiguous morality and a sense of mystique.

Figure 5.6 - Categories of core emotional drives by sexuality - minor character archetypes

	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	Female cohort	Grand Total
Friendship	5 (6.4%)	1 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.1%)	4 (16.0%)	11 (5.9%)
Entrapment and rescue	4 (5.1%)	1 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (7.7%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	6 (3.2%)
Deception	6 (7.7%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	3 (9.4%)	0 (0.0%)	10 (5.4%)
Minor characters	15 (19.2%)	2 (11.1%)	1 (5.0%)	1 (7.7%)	4 (12.5%)	4 (16.0%)	27 (14.5%)

This initial overview returns to the theory proposed at the end of chapter three – that women and LGBTQ people are more likely to connect with a disenfranchised protagonist than straight men. The data in Figure 5.3 is supported by an analysis of the gender of protagonists across the narratives chosen by participants in the second part of the story interview. Figure 5.7 demonstrates that a significantly lower percentage of gay and bisexual men chose only narratives with male protagonists, with over three

quarters of ‘straight only’ and ‘straight mostly’ men choosing all their stories with male protagonists.

Figure 5.7 – analysis of the gender of protagonists in the chosen narratives by sexuality cohort

	Exclusively male	Mostly male	Equal male and female	Female more	Female only	Grand Total
Straight only	65 (83.3%)	9 (11.5%)	3 (3.8%)	1 (1.3%)	0 (0.0%)	78
Straight mostly	14 (77.8%)	2 (11.1%)	1 (5.6%)	1 (5.6%)	0 (0.0%)	18
Bisexual	9 (45.0%)	5 (25.0%)	3 (15.0%)	1 (5.0%)	0 (0.0%)	20
Gay mostly	7 (53.8%)	2 (15.4%)	2 (15.4%)	2 (15.4%)	0 (0.0%)	13
Gay only	10 (31.3%)	16 (50.0%)	2 (6.3%)	3 (9.4%)	1 (3.1%)	32
Female cohort	5 (20.0%)	9 (36.0%)	8 (32.0%)	3 (12.0%)	0 (0.0%)	25
Grand Total	110 (59.1%)	44 (23.7%)	19 (10.2%)	12 (6.5%)	1 (0.5%)	186

The fact that most male participants connect mainly with stories that have male protagonists is unsurprising, but it is notable that every female participant chose at least one narrative with a male protagonist. This may reflect the lack of novels, films and television series with relatable female protagonists, but it does point to a more flexible approach about gender that is shared by many male LGBTQ participants. The second part of this chapter aims to use four core emotional drives as case studies in conjunction with the main components of Robert Brannon’s *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority: The Male Sex Role* (1976) as discussed in chapter two above. An analysis of the dark and often violent endings in the narratives chosen within the *twisted justice* category

examines whether men still adhere to the ‘give ‘em hell’ archetype proposed by Brannon. Secondly, an exploration of the absence of female protagonists in the narratives chosen by those in the category of *planning and perseverance* suggests that these qualities are often still viewed as part of the (masculine) ‘sturdy oak’ archetype. Thirdly, a consideration of the *power and corruption* category leads to a discussion of how bisexual men in the study often retell stories within a dichotomous structure, as well as examining how many stories subvert Brannon’s ‘Big Wheel’ archetype through the corruption of those who obtain power. Finally, an investigation of the *liberation* category suggests an alternative reading to the emasculation of gay and bisexual men that identify with female characters, thus subverting the ‘No Sissy Stuff’ archetype.

‘Yo baby, looking for a thrill?’ – ‘Twisted justice’ and ‘giving ‘em hell’

For some male participants, the focus was clearly on the nemesis’ ending. In these cases, the interviewee largely focused on a satisfactory brand of justice being delivered by the protagonist. The fairytale moments chosen by the participants all reflect this – the witch being pushed into her own oven in *Hansel and Gretel*, the wolf falling down the chimney into the cooking pot in *The Three Little Pigs* and the mother goat replacing her children in the wolf’s stomach with stones in *The Wolf and the Goats*.

Gregory (straight only, story interview 29/10/2013) makes the choices of *Fantastic Mr Fox*, *Matilda*, *Feather Boy* and *Animal Farm*, and this is perhaps the clearest example of the core emotional drive of ‘twisted justice’ in action. The majority of Roald Dahl’s books for children deal with this theme, and Gregory’s description of the moment where Miss Trunchbull forces Bruce Bogtrotter to eat an oversized

chocolate cake for stealing a slice of her cake is a clear example of the punishment fitting the crime. As with many of the participants in this category, Gregory explores the idea of twisted justice in other genres – in this case, he focuses on how the protagonist in *Feather Boy* makes a jumper out of feathers to represent an old lady's son, who jumped out of a window believing he could fly. Gregory also notes the twisted justice served in *Animal Farm* when the hard-working Boxer is eventually sold to the glue factory despite Napoleon's promises, which matches the central slogan of the piece: 'All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others'.

Louis (straight only, story interview 28/03/2014) explores the idea of twisted justice in a different way. His choice of the crocodile swallowing the clock as his favourite moment in *Peter Pan* exemplifies his identification with comic characters in narratives. Louis mentions Tyrion Lannister in *Game of Thrones*, Steve McDonald in *Coronation Street* and Legolas in *Lord of the Rings*, and he sees the sharp and often sarcastic humour of these characters as being central to ensuring that the plot continues to move forward at a good pace. For Louis, the twisted justice works on a smaller scale than Gregory – it is the mechanics of the smaller comic moments within the larger epic structure that interest him.

Barry (gay only, 17/01/2014) chooses *Cabaret*, *Bandits*, *Inglorious Bastards* and *Fifty Shades of Grey*, which reflect a darker side to twisted justice and his own sardonic sense of humour:

Cabaret is a play with gays. There's lots of dancing and singing and I got absorbed. It's about a singer and dancer at the Kit Kat Klub and an English guy. The cabaret club is all happy - it's set in pre-second world war Germany. A Jewish man gets with a German woman, then the second world war happens and it's all ripped apart. The carefree club is infested with Nazi scum. They thought it wouldn't affect it then it did. Bam. (story interview 17/01/2014)

Barry’s alternation of violent imagery (‘ripped apart’, ‘Nazi scum’, ‘Bam’) with more innocent language (‘the cabaret club is all happy’, ‘a Jewish man gets with a German woman’) shows his delight in the juxtaposition between the child-like and the shocking. The retelling of narratives within this category of core emotional drives therefore reflects Brannon’s rule of masculinity ‘Giving ‘Em Hell’, or as Kimmel interprets, ‘masculinity is demonstrated by taking risks, by “going for it”’ (Kimmel 2012: 71).

‘No, baby, this requires skill’ – ‘Planning and perseverance’ and ‘The Sturdy Oak’

In eleven interviews with male participants, a core emotional drive based around ‘planning and perseverance’ was identified. Figure 5.8 shows the fairytale, fairytale moment and specific core emotional drive as articulated by the male participants in this study. The common factors within this group are clear - the core emotional drive revolves around perseverance against complacency, and intelligence against physical strength. Thus the focal relationship is between the protagonist and the nemesis or ‘opposing force’, generally resulting in a positive ending for the protagonist.

Figure 5.8 - Fairytale moments and core emotional drives for male participants with the generic theme of ‘planning and preparation’

Respondent	Sexual Orientation	Fairytale	Fairytale Moment	Core Emotional Drive
Julian (28/06/2013)	Straight only	<i>Jack and the Beanstalk</i>	Boy proves mother wrong	Boy <u>proves himself</u> worthwhile to mother
Marvin (12/01/2015)	Straight only	<i>Cinderella</i>	The Fairy Godmother	Transformation... <u>but with a catch</u>
Brian (10/12/2014)	Straight only	<i>Little Red Riding Hood</i>	The wolf dressed as grandmother	You can be as <u>protective and careful</u> as possible - doesn’t mean you are safe from the wolf

Respondent	Sexual Orientation	Fairytale	Fairytale Moment	Core Emotional Drive
Cole (28/02/2013)	Straight only	<i>Snow White</i>	Snow White meets the dwarves	True inner beauty <u>will always overcome</u> falseness
Neil (20/01/2014)	Straight only	<i>The Hare and The Tortoise</i>	The complacency of the hare	Don't <u>become complacent</u>
Jason	Straight only	<i>Cinderella</i>	The Fairy Godmother	<u>Hard work pays off - perseverance</u>
Lionel (24/02/2014)	Straight only	<i>The Three Little Pigs</i>	The wolf blows down the houses	<u>Clever planning</u>
Corin (24/10/2014)	Straight only	<i>The Golden Apples</i>	Práslea hits the dragon with the arrow	You have to <u>persevere and try more</u>
Ralph (17/08/2014)	Straight mostly	<i>Hansel and Gretel</i>	Following the breadcrumbs	People <u>using their intelligence</u> , laying a trail to get back
Gareth (18/05/2013)	Bisexual	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	The fairies at the christening	Good will triumph over evil <u>but it takes time</u>
Eli (17/01/2014)	Gay only	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	The fairies at the christening	<u>Oversee the whole thing - help damsel in distress</u>

Gareth's observation that 'it takes time' for good to triumph over evil is key here as well - the participants in this category have a particular interest in epic narrative, and Gareth himself chooses *Doctor Who*, *Merlin*, *Game of Thrones* and *Harry Potter* as his four narratives. Similarly, Marvin's theme of 'transformation... but with a catch' focuses on the planning required to overcome the regulations set out by the fairy godmother. In this sense, Marvin's theme is to do with problem solving, which is seen in his identification with Matt Damon's genius janitor in *Good Will Hunting*, the eponymous character in *Sherlock Holmes*, the way that the two characters solve each other's problems with their significant others in *Once* and the overarching epic structure of *Harry Potter*. Across this group, there is a tendency to identify with a low status

protagonist using their intelligence to defeat an opposing force over time, although there are also participants that connected strongly with higher status characters such as Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Who.

A number of differences can be identified between the core emotional drives in this category. Brian's *Little Red Riding Hood* stabs and kills the wolf herself without any help from Granny or the woodcutter (who is absent from Brian's story), and this theme of self-sufficiency is continued in his choice of *Robinson Crusoe*, *The Darling Buds of May*, *Harry Potter* and spy thriller *The Firm*. Contrastingly, Jason's focus on the transformation of the pumpkin into a carriage in *Cinderella* is echoed in the unlikely protagonist in the eponymous *Fantastic Mr Fox*, the orphans in *A Series of Unfortunate Events* and the down-and-out teenage boys who become spies in *Stormbreaker* and *The Recruit*. Lionel's choice of *The Three Little Pigs* fully reflects his interest in building and planning that is at the forefront of his descriptions of the computer game *Halo*, the *Harry Potter* series and the US TV series *Parks and Recreation*, which is about a town planning council. The theme of planning and perseverance runs through all of these narratives, but the focus of the interviewee is different in each case. Nevertheless, the shared combination of a low-status protagonist who works hard to achieve a positive ending over time represents a broad thematic similarity between these participants.

It is remarkable that the only narrative chosen with a female protagonist in this category was *The Book Thief*, which was selected by Cole, and even this story is narrated from a male point-of-view by Death. The protagonists in the narratives chosen in this category tend to conform to Brannon's definition of 'The Sturdy Oak', which Michael Kimmel summarises as being 'confident, secure, reliable, inexpressive and utterly cool, especially during a crisis' (Kimmel, 2012: 71). This can be seen

particularly in the five participants that chose *Harry Potter* as one of their four narratives.

The *Harry Potter* series is not only planned on an epic scale over seven novels, but it also includes several of the archetypes found in Joseph Campbell's *The Hero With A Thousand Faces* (1972). When asked to name their favourite character in the series, only Lionel chose Harry himself, as he remembered being the same age as Harry was when he was reading the books. Eli chose Dumbledore, Brian chose Neville Longbottom and both Marvin and Gareth chose Hermione Granger. The links to core emotional drives are clear - Dumbledore is Eli's 'over-seer', Neville is Brian's 'self-sufficient' character and Hermione fulfils the mentor role of the Fairy Godmother for Gareth and Marvin through her innovative ways of supporting Harry in crisis situations. Hermione and Dumbledore are certainly 'confident, secure, reliable and utterly cool during a crisis', although Dumbledore's failure to be inexpressive is often cited as his weakness by Voldemort. Neville possesses none of these qualities until his coming-of-age in the Battle of Hogwarts at the end of Book 7, when he is able to pull the Gryffindor sword from the sorting hat *à la* King Arthur and decapitate Voldemort's snake, Nagini. It is perhaps Neville that best illustrates the aim of the protagonist's journey in this category - that the protagonist will become the 'Sturdy Oak' character at the conclusion through their perseverance through the narrative.

'Jeez lady, give the guy some room' - 'Power and corruption' and 'The Big Wheel'

Eleven male participants focused on the use and abuse of power by those in authority. The participants tended to concentrate on the power dynamic between the nemesis and the protagonist in their fairytale moment, and this was translated into the

power relationship between societal structures and the protagonist in the chosen narratives. Figure 5.9 summarises this information along with the core emotional drive of the participants. The fascination that participants feel towards the nemesis character is especially notable in this category - indeed, the perceived nemesis is mentioned specifically in seven out of ten of the core emotional drives listed above.

Figure 5.9 - Types of power relationships identified for male participants with the generic theme of ‘power and corruption’

Participant	Sexual Orientation	Fairytale power relationship	Chosen narratives	Type of power in chosen narratives and core emotional drive
Raymond (24/02/2012)	Straight only	Woodcutter and Snow White	<i>Lord of the Flies</i> <i>War of the Worlds</i> <i>Carnage</i> <i>The Shining</i>	Political / Social class ‘Woodcutter saves the girl’
Winston (18/09/2012)	Straight only	Cinderella and the ugly sisters	<i>Nowhere Boy</i> <i>Regeneration</i> <i>Junk</i> <i>2012</i>	Political / Social class ‘Girl doesn’t behave as she’s told but reaps rewards against <u>an outrageous abuse of power</u> ’
Drew (07/01/2015)	Straight mostly	Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf	<i>Spirited Away</i> <i>Laputa: Castle in the Sky</i> <i>Dogville</i>	Political ‘Be careful of <u>strangers</u> ’
Lucas (07/01/2015)	Bisexual	Goldilocks and the three bears	<i>The West Wing</i> <i>Harry Potter</i> <i>Orange is the New Black</i> <i>The Hunger Games</i>	Political ‘You have to try things to find what is right for you’

Participant	Sexual Orientation	Fairytale power relationship	Chosen narratives	Type of power in chosen narratives and core emotional drive
Bradley (16/11/2012)	Bisexual	The evil Queen and Snow White	<i>The Hunger Games</i> <i>Private Peaceful</i> <i>Enron</i> <i>Hamlet</i>	Political / Corporate ' <u>The bitch dies</u> - the oppressive have gone'
Claude (16/01/2015)	Bisexual	Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood	<i>Little Shop of Horrors</i> <i>Chicago</i> <i>Star Wars</i> <i>Lord of the Rings</i>	Political ' <u>The wolf</u> using cunning to corrupt'
Billy (30/10/2012)	Bisexual	The Bears and Goldilocks	<i>Inception</i> <i>Revolutionary World</i> <i>Spring Awakening</i> <i>Changeling</i>	Political / Social class 'Don't take from other people what isn't yours'
Clive (15/01/2014)	Bisexual	The Princess and Rumpelstiltskin	<i>Speaker for the Dead</i> <i>The Hobbit</i> <i>Harry Potter</i> <i>The Blacklist</i>	Religious/mythological 'Don't make clever deals with <u>the devil</u> '
Jude (16/01/2015)	Gay only	The witch and Rapunzel	<i>Hotel New Hampshire</i> <i>Game of Thrones</i> <i>The Avengers</i> <i>Veronica Mars</i>	Sexual 'The <u>glamorous enchantress figure</u> '
Quentin (01/11/2013)	Gay only	The Prince and Cinderella	<i>The Wire</i> <i>Inception</i> <i>Lord of the Rings</i>	Political ' <u>Greedy and arrogant prince</u> - perverse and creepy'
Keegan (08/03/2015)	Gay only	Perseus and Medusa	<i>Mistborn</i> <i>Captain America</i> <i>Percy Jackson</i> <i>Arachne and Athena</i>	Religious/mythological 'Respect the Gods and you will get help'

The attraction towards power is best seen in Jude's interview, where he expresses the appeal of strong and mysterious female characters. Jude comments on the 'red witch' Melisandre and her 'cool, witchy powers' in *Game of Thrones* along with the adult 'sex descriptions' in *The Hotel New Hampshire*, as well as the 'stylish' and 'glamorous' enchantress in his chosen fairytale *Rapunzel*. The obsession with power in the narratives may be political, social, religious or sexual but the allure is clear in the descriptions given by the participants.

The identification with the nemesis character rather than the protagonist requires a 'queering' of the original narrative to allow the audience-reader to experience the story from a different perspective to that intended by the author. Quentin's assertion that the prince in Cinderella is 'perverse and creepy' in the way that he 'stalks' Cinderella by checking the women's feet in the village is offbeat, but can be seen as Quentin attacking the system of male privilege that the Prince exploits. Quentin's three chosen narratives concern homosocial relationships in *The Wire*, *Inception* and *Lord of the Rings*, and Quentin expresses a preference for the complex and philosophical questions faced by the protagonists. In *The Wire*, Quentin focuses on Jimmy McNulty's 'blasé' actions that lead to a struggle between the officers and their superiors, as there is corruption in the police force. In *Inception*, Quentin expresses approval that Dominick Cobb does not wait to find out whether he is in a dream-state or reality at the end of the film. Finally, Quentin criticises the weakness of Frodo in *Lord of The Rings*, noting that Gollum is responsible for the ring falling into the flames and identifying more with Gollum than Frodo. Quentin clearly connects with stories that deal with corruption in society, but he does not experience the stories from the point of view of the

protagonists, which allows him to make his own readings of stories from a different perspective.

Five of the participants in this category identify as bisexual, and one of the most surprising findings of this study is that there is a clear link between participants identifying as bisexual and their connection to dichotomies in the stories that they chose. This is not necessarily an uncommon method for expressing narratives, but only ten of the other 133 participants expressed their core emotional drive in this way. Figure 5.10 shows how the bisexual participants in the cohort expressed the dichotomies in their storytelling of the fairytale moment.

Table 5.10 - Bisexual participants and dichotomies in storytelling

Participant	Story	Core emotional drive	Dichotomy
Jimmy (03/11/2014)	Little Red Riding Hood	Deception	<u>There are dangers even though things are nice</u>
Gareth (18/05/2013)	Cinderella	Planning and perseverance	<u>Good will triumph over evil but it will take time</u>
Christian (24/10/2014)	Hansel and Gretel	The Dark Hero	<u>Gender irrelevant</u> - both have the same wonder and excitement
Francis (16/03/2015)	Hansel and Gretel	Exploring the new world	<u>Don't know who sees the house first</u>
Ken (14/01/2014)	Ramayana	Fate and mortality	Gives birth to <u>two sons</u> in the forest.
Crispin (13/06/2015)	The Lion and the Mouse	Liberation	<u>Large vs small</u>
Travis (14/01/2014)	Cinderella	Liberation	<i>Two ugly sisters. Cinderella lives miserably ever after.</i>
Wayne (15/01/2014)	The Three Little Pigs	Liberation	<u>Two little brothers run to older brother.</u>

Participant	Story	Core emotional drive	Dichotomy
Roger (16/01/2015)	Rumpelstiltskin	Liberation	The importance of <u>family over wealth</u> . <u>Homely and humble</u> .
Lucas (07/01/2015)	Goldilocks and the three bears	Power and corruption	<u>One too hot, one too cold, one just right</u> .
Claude (16/01/2015)	Little Red Riding Hood	Power and corruption	<u>Good vs evil</u>
Bradley (16/11/2012)	Hansel and Gretel	Power and corruption	<u>Physicality vs naturalism</u>
Billy (30/10/2012)	Goldilocks and the three bears	Power and corruption	<u>Animal instinct vs human instinct</u>
Clive (15/01/2014)	Rumpelstiltskin	Power and corruption	Rumpelstiltskin is <u>split in half</u>
Bob (08/11/2013)	The Little Rooster	The Dark Hero	<u>Bright paint against dull feathers</u>
Vivien (24/10/2014)	Frozen	The Dark Hero	Sister <u>love-hate</u> relationship
Lance (10/02/2014)	Goldilocks and the Three Bears	Justice	The porridge is <u>wrong one way and wrong the other way</u> .
Glenn (05/01/2015)	Cinderella	Liberation	<u>It is inside how good you are as a person not how well you dance</u>
Liam (31/10/2012)	Cinderella	Love	<u>A good person in a bad situation</u>

It can be seen that the dichotomy plays an integral part in the readings of several bisexual participants. A detailed discussion of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of the current thesis, but it is instructive to note that participants in this study that self-identified as ‘bisexual’ have a particular interest in the central conflict between two dichotomous values within a narrative. Perhaps the most vivid image of this dichotomy is Clive’s description of Rumpelstiltskin being ‘split in half’. Clive identifies more with

the nemesis in the story, noting that the princess doesn't deserve to 'get out of' her deal with Rumpelstiltskin, and that it is the princess not Rumpelstiltskin that has been dishonourable. Clive also highlights the power of knowledge held by Gandalf in *Lord of the Rings* and is particularly interested in the idea of the wizard prison Azkaban in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. His identification with Red Reddington as 'the Napoleon of Crime' in *The Blacklist* further explores Clive's interest in how characters maintain power in their narratives.

Billy's description of the dichotomy between animal instinct and human instinct is equally vivid - in his re-telling of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, he focuses on the three bears eating Goldilocks as revenge for her stealing from them. Billy's narratives explore the animalistic qualities of human relationships - he notes how Cobb's wife 'takes him down with her' in *Inception*, the effect of children 'deprived of parental love' in *Spring Awakening* and the corruption of the police in retrieving a kidnapped child in *Changeling*. It is notable that Billy focuses on both male and female characters in his narratives, a trait that is shared by Lucas, who approves of the range of male, female, transgender and multicultural characters in *Orange is The New Black*.

Thus far, the narratives mentioned have tended to focus more on the corruption of the system than the acquisition of power. However, Raymond's representation of the inner conflict of the woodcutter in *Snow White and The Seven Dwarves* is the mirror image of the core emotional drive running through his other narratives. Rather than following the theme of 'granting freedom through compassion', Raymond's chosen narratives deal with the consequences of a lack of compassion by those in authority whilst society is in confinement. This theme is seen in Raymond's description of the 'animalistic savages' in *Lord of the Flies*, the lack of responsibility shown by humanity

in *War of the Worlds*, the ‘cabin fever’ in *The Shining* and suburban culture of blame in *Carnage*, where Raymond notes that ‘underneath everyone wants to kill each other’.

Michael Kimmel’s summary of the concept of ‘The Big Wheel’ suggests that ‘we measure masculinity by the “size of our paycheck” or the recognition we receive from others’ (Kimmel 2012: 71), but this view of masculinity is largely absent from the stories chosen both in this category and across the whole study. Whilst the tropes of ‘The Sturdy Oak’ and ‘Giving ‘Em Hell’ are still apparent in many of the stories discussed above, stories about achieving status and recognition are somewhat less important to this cohort.

It is perhaps unsurprising that other participants with core emotional drives surrounding *escape* show a clear affinity with psychological dramas in their chosen narratives. *Birdsong*, *The Seagull*, *American Beauty*, *Memento*, *Donny Darko*, *The Departed*, *The Sea* and *The Good Soldier* all feature in their choices, and every participant in this category chose at least one psychological drama. It is striking that over 60% of the chosen narratives in the *escape* category end with either the protagonist or a loved one dying, with a number of the stories ending in the suicide of the protagonist as their ‘Big Wheel’ status disintegrates around them.

‘Please, lady, don’t forget guns can go boom’ – ‘Liberation’ and ‘No Sissy Stuff’

For some participants, the story of the protagonist comes from their battle against societal norms rather than being a simple good versus evil narrative. The participants assigned to this category identify with their protagonists explicitly because they are female, LGBTQ, disabled or people of colour. As shown in table 5.3 above, only four out of the 30 participants in this category (13.3%) identify as straight only or straight mostly. The category accounts for 30.8% of all the participants that identify as

LGBTQ, which suggests that a closer analysis of the characteristics within this category may give some enlightenment regarding LGBTQ perspectives of narrative.

Four participants chose stories with homosexual protagonists – perhaps unsurprisingly, all of these participants self-identify as ‘gay only’ or ‘gay mostly’ themselves. Of the five stories chosen by participants, three ended with the death of one of the protagonists and none ended with a homosexual relationship still intact. This is reflective of the eight LGBTQ narratives selected across the study, all chosen by gay or bisexual men. This phenomenon is explored further with reference to the musical in chapters 7 and 8, but it is particularly striking as these are amongst the only narratives in this category that end negatively for the protagonist, perhaps pointing to the paucity of literature with homosexual characters and a tendency to punish the LGBTQ character in these narratives.

The other two participants that included stories with negative endings were Roger and Glenn. Roger’s core emotional drive was identifying with the ‘social outcast’ - he describes Rumpelstiltskin as being ‘the strange representation of the desire for wealth and the desire for property’. However, Roger identifies more strongly with Rumpelstiltskin than the royal couple:

It’s a story of arrogance. They believe that they are so much better than Rumpelstiltskin, they believe they can get their child back at that Rumpelstiltskin won’t steal it. They become more humble and accepting... it’s about humility and the importance of family over wealth.

Roger’s identification with the grotesque creature runs through his choice of Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* and the Punchdrunk promenade theatre production of *The Drowned Man*. The theme of family also remains important - in *Metamorphosis*, a young man is transformed into a grotesque, and the family try and disown him as they don’t realise it is their son. Eventually he commits suicide and there is no hope for him

becoming human. *The Drowned Man* is about two parallel stories - one where a husband murders his wife for having an affair, and another where a wife murders her husband for the same reason. Roger describes the story as a 'weird cycle of betrayal and uncertainty' involving 'the lives of the very creepy workers'. Roger's fascination with the grotesque allows him to empathise with both the protagonist and the nemesis in his stories.

Glenn's core emotional drive from the story of *Cinderella* is that 'it is inside how good you are as a person that will show where you go in life as opposed to how well you dance'. The physicality of dance is particularly poignant for Glenn as he connects most strongly with characters suffering from mental health issues. Glenn's choices of *Carrie* and *The Unfortunate Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* enable him to 'see things through their eyes - a different mind'.

The generic theme of liberation in narratives thus allows the reader-audience to identify with disenfranchised characters, but also to empathise with those who fight for other aspects of liberation. Logan, a dancer, connects with the moment where 'Peter Pan is in the air clashing swords with Hook'. Logan's core emotional drive is best expressed through his succinct description of Aladdin as one of his other chosen narratives - 'the urchin becomes a hero'. This is also seen in his choices of *Billy Elliot* and *Saving Private Ryan*. Logan's core emotional drive is particularly difficult to classify in that he does not directly connect with a traditionally disenfranchised group, and yet his identification with 'the urchin' clearly shows an affinity with the underprivileged white male.

Paul's core emotional theme comes from the moment where Belle rebukes Gaston in *Beauty and the Beast* - 'look at character not aesthetics'. Paul is a musical

theatre fan who connects strongly with the victim character in megamusicals - most strikingly, he picks out Eponine in *Les Misérables* ‘watching everything go past - she doesn’t know how important she is’. Paul also highlights the character of Mercedes in *Glee* as portraying the twin characteristics of ‘reservedness and boldness’, and the character of Peter Petrelli in *Heroes* as being ‘empathetic - he takes on problems of other people and is less worried about himself’. Empathy is an integral part of connecting to stories across all participants in this category, and enables an exploration of perspectives that differ from the participants’ own experiences.

‘Everybody hold on tight to your dream’ – masculinities, the core emotional drive and musical theatre

This chapter has suggested that there is some correlation between the sexuality of the male participants and their identification with gendered protagonists in their chosen narratives. It is posited that many LGBTQ people have lived experience of being perceived as ‘different’ in a heteronormative society, and that this provides a point of identification that overrides the gender of their chosen point-of-view character. It is possible that the stereotypical connection between gay and bisexual men and female protagonists in musical theatre is built around a shared experience of being oppressed by society rather than through an identification with the performance of ‘femininity’ *per se*, and this theory provides a new perspective in analysing how men connect to musical theatre.

Furthermore, it is clear that men of all sexualities still connect to elements of Robert Brannon’s ‘male sex role’ archetypes, but that these archetypes are being redefined by the more inclusive masculinities that are being performed. In particular, the ‘No Sissy Stuff’ archetype is continually being challenged, and the data in chapter

three suggests that an emotional connection with musical theatre narratives is now more permissible. Nevertheless, the narratives selected in this chapter and the favourite musicals chosen in chapter three seem to suggest that most men are still more likely to connect to a male protagonist, and that in some cases, these protagonists are performing ‘hegemonic’ rather than ‘inclusive’ masculinity. This raises the question as to whether men that identify as ‘straight only’ or ‘straight mostly’ can be comfortable in connecting with narratives with female or LGBTQ protagonists.

The second section of this project examines how participants of different genders and sexualities connect to three musicals. *Les Misérables* (1985) is a megamusical that relies on the expansive size of its cast, orchestra and production. Most of the main characters are male and largely conform to the ‘Give ‘Em Hell’, ‘The Big Wheel’ and ‘The Sturdy Oak’ archetypes outlined by Robert Brannon. Nevertheless, the emotive quality of the music subverts this model of masculinity, and allows a more emotional connection to be made by its audience members. Chapter six interrogates how this emotional connection works within the context of a largely heteronormative musical that is apparently popular across all genders and sexualities according to the survey undertaken in chapter three.

This analysis is followed by further studies of the 2004 megamusical *Wicked*, and a student production of the 2011 musical comedy *Soho Cinders*. These chapters aim to explore whether the gender and sexuality of the protagonists affect how different audience members are able to connect to a musical theatre narrative, and consider whether ‘inclusive masculinity’ is inclusive enough to allow men of all sexualities to identify with characters of different genders and sexualities.

6. 'EVERY MAN WILL BE A KING' – MASCULINITIES AND THE CORE EMOTIONAL DRIVE IN *LES MISÉRABLES*

One day to a new beginning
Every man will be a king
There's a new world for the winning
Do you hear the people sing?

'One Day More' from *Les Misérables* (Boublil and Schönberg, 1985)

'One Day More', the Act I Finale of *Les Misérables*, draws together its main plots in a contrapuntal tableau that 'vividly details each character's individual emotional circumstance' (Blair, 2016: 62). Each principal character sings directly to the audience, with the musical lines weaving towards a unison phrase on 'tomorrow we'll discover what our God in heaven has in store', and a final rousing harmonic cadence (see figure 6.1). This is an iconic moment within the musical, but also serves to demonstrate one of the unique aspects of *Les Misérables* - it is one of a small number of musicals that is able to sustain the multi-plot structure of its source material.

Many scholars have commented on the 'universal' nature of *Les Misérables*. Sheridan Morley lauds how the musicals 'sets out to redefine the limits of music theatre' through its 'universal themes of social and domestic happiness in terms of individual despair' (Morley, 1987: 205), whilst Edward Behr suggests that 'the universal aspect of *Les Misérables*... has less to do with political upheavals and revolution than with the eternal truths about human nature – and belief in God' (Behr, 1996: 160). More recently, Jessica Sternfeld observes that 'this combination of themes—overcoming social injustice, the call for freedom, the hope of a spiritual reward—is probably the most important factor in the success of *Les Mis*' (Sternfeld, 2006: 224). It is telling that each scholar recognises a different set of 'universal' themes in their analysis, and this indicates an alternative rationale for the success of *Les*

Misérables - that the musical contains a significant number of themes that can be read in different ways according to the core emotional drive of individual audience members.

Figure 6.1 – the ending of ‘One Day More’ (score reduction)

The musical score reduction for the ending of 'One Day More' is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment.

System 1: The vocal line begins with the lyrics "mor - row we'll dis - cov - er what our God in heav - en has in store. One more". The piano accompaniment is marked *rall. molto*. Above the vocal line, guitar chord diagrams are provided for G#dim7, Am, Am/G, and D7/F#.

System 2: The vocal line continues with "dawn. One more day. One day". The piano accompaniment is marked *a tempo (L.H.)* and *rall.*. Above the vocal line, guitar chord diagrams are provided for C/G and G7.

System 3: The vocal line concludes with "more.". The piano accompaniment is marked *a tempo* and *rall.*. Above the vocal line, guitar chord diagrams are provided for C, C/B, Am7, G9, and C.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 2003: 64)

The tableau in ‘One Day More’ represents the crisis point in each of its five major power triangle relationships. Jean Valjean believes that Javert has found his hiding place, putting his protection of Fantine’s daughter Cosette at risk, whilst Eponine is forced to accept that Marius does not return her love for him, and will instead choose Cosette. Meanwhile, Marius makes the choice to join Enjolras and the students at the barricade rather than staying with Cosette, and Javert plans to infiltrate the student revolution, little knowing that the street urchin Gavroche is part of their company and will later expose him as a police inspector. Finally, The Thénadiers have been thwarted in their attempts to burgle Jean Valjean in revenge for him taking Cosette, and turn their attentions to using the revolution for their own gains. The conceptualisation of these relationships as triangulations is essential in understanding how the multi-plot structure of *Les Misérables* allows multiple points of identification for individual audience members and provides each character with a satisfactory and complex scenario.

In this project, *Les Misérables* was the most popular musical with the ‘straight only’, ‘bisexual’ and ‘gay mostly’ cohorts, the second most popular with the ‘gay only’ cohort, and the third most popular amongst the ‘straight mostly’ and female cohort. In addition, it was the only musical that appealed to participants in every category of core emotional drives (see Figure 6.2). This chapter draws on interviews with 22 participants that chose *Les Misérables* as one of their favourite musicals to analyse how individual audience members connect with the main characters as surrogate protagonists in the narrative. This leads to the conclusion that the participants’ gender and sexuality had some impact on their choice of surrogate protagonist in *Les Misérables*, which further enhances the theory that identification can be based on the lived experiences of oppression as well as individual core emotional drives. The commonality between these

female and LGBTQ audience members alongside other disenfranchised groups

underlines Lauren Berlant’s conceptual framework of the ‘intimate public’:

An intimate public operates when a market opens up to a bloc of consumers, claiming to circulate texts and things that express those people’s particular core interests and desires. When this kind of “culture of circulation” takes hold, participants in the intimate public feel as though it expresses what is common among them, a subjective likeness that seems to emanate from their history and their ongoing attachments and actions. Their participation seems to confirm the sense that even before there was a market addressed to them, there existed a world of strangers who would be emotionally literate in each other’s experience of power, intimacy, desire, and discontent, with all that entails.

(Berlant, 2008: 5)

Figure 6.2 - Participants in each core emotional drive category that chose *Les Misérables* as a favourite musical

Core emotional drive	Number of participants	%age of core emotional drive cohort
Deception	2	20.0%
Entrapment and rescue	3	50.0%
Escape	2	20.0%
Exploring the new world	1	14.3%
Family	2	28.6%
Fate and mortality	1	16.7%
Friendship	5	71.4%
Liberation	13	54.2%
Loss of innocence	6	54.5%
Love	4	66.7%
Planning and perseverance	8	72.7%
Power and corruption	6	46.2%
Redemption	3	50.0%
The Dark Hero	7	36.8%
Twisted justice	5	27.8%
Total	68	42.2%

‘When our ranks begin to form’ - points of identification in *Les Misérables*

The interviews on *Les Misérables* used in this chapter were collected during the initial story interview as one of the participant’s chosen narratives, initiated at the end of the story interview or carried out via Facebook as a follow-up interview. The

interviews were based around three questions concerning the participant’s point-of-view character, their favourite song(s) and the reasons that they chose *Les Misérables* as a favourite musical. It is clear that *Les Misérables* evokes a strong emotional connection in individual audience members, and the statistics based on these questions gives an enlightening overview of the material covered in this chapter.

Figure 6.3 shows the point-of-view characters selected by the interviewees, and it is immediately clear that there are certain identifications that correlate with sexuality and gender. Javert, Marius, Enjolras and Valjean are selected mainly by those that identify as ‘straight only’ or ‘straight mostly’, whilst LGBTQ male participants overwhelmingly identify with Eponine. Conversely, the three female participants all chose male characters, which Angela suggests may be because the likes of Cosette and Fantine are too ‘emotionally wet’ (Follow-up interview, 11/07/2016).

Figure 6.3 - Point-of-view characters by sexuality and gender cohorts

	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	Female Drama	Female LGBTQ	Total
Enjolras	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	3
Eponine	1	0	2	0	3	0	0	6
Gavroche	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Javert	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	6
Marius	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Valjean	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	5
Total	9	2	2	3	3	1	2	22

The fact that Cosette, Fantine and Madame Thénadier do not feature here emphasises the fact that the women’s stories are largely subservient to the men in the musical. All of the female characters are segregated from the rest of society - Fantine

through the revelation that she has a bastard daughter, Cosette through Jean Valjean's over-protection, Madame Thénadier through her misdeeds with her husband, and Eponine because of her love for Marius. The women are actively excluded from the major scenes in the prison, in the sewers and on the barricade - as Stacy Wolf notes 'the women only get to be in scenes with *Les Miz*'s big set when they die' (Wolf, 2010: 149). Yet Ethan, the only participant in these interviews that states that he is ambivalent to musical theatre, stated that he particularly liked the fact that *Les Misérables* is a 'story about men' (story interview, 20/11/2012). It is clear that the treatment of female characters is problematic, which is reflected in Denise's comment that Cosette 'slightly angers' her due to her lack of agency (online discussion, 07/07/2016). However, Ethan's connection with *Les Misérables* as opposed to other musicals suggests that he finds a more truthful portrayal of masculinities within the male characters presented.

The original director, Trevor Nunn, conceived *Les Misérables* as an exploration of its three main characters, which he describes in terms of their spiritual relationships with God:

Javert is someone who believes in a vengeful, Old Testament God who will bring down plague and pestilence on all those who disobey the law; Valjean, in the light of his own experience, has come to believe in redemption, and that justice can exist in our world; Thénadier not only believes that God is dead but that he died a long time ago and that we are all fair game for him.

(Behr, 1996: 78)

Thénadier's character is largely treated as a comic aside in the participants' accounts of the story, and it is the characters of Enjolras and the students that resonate more strongly with the participants, perhaps because their ages and world outlook are more relatable. Enjolras' steadfast nature is generally seen as preferable to Marius' indecisiveness, and the fact that *Les Misérables* is not primarily a conventional love

story may partially account for its popularity. Like *Sweeney Todd*, the central plot does not rely on the subsidiary love triangle to engage its audience, and this allows audience members to connect with the narrative in other ways. Figure 6.4 presents the most common reasons that participants gave for their appreciation of *Les Misérables* based on their open responses to this question.

Figure 6.4 - Top answers to the question ‘what do you like about *Les Misérables*?’

	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	Female Drama	Female LGBT Q	Total
The songs and music	8	2	2	2	3	1	2	20
Emotional range	7	1	1	0	2	1	2	14
Political context	4	1	0	0	1	0	2	8
Historical background	4	0	1	1	1	0	0	7
Problems not solved	3	0	0	1	0	1	1	6
Visual production	4	0	0	1	0	1	0	6
Talent of performers	4	0	0	0	2	0	0	6
Total participants	9	2	2	3	3	1	2	22

The data above suggests that the key connections made with the musical are musical and emotional. There is little difference between the sexuality and gender cohorts here, which suggests that the mode of connection with the musical is similar despite the differences in the choice of surrogate protagonist. The historical and political background to the musical was mentioned more often than the visual production and the talent of the actors, but these elements may all be important in

understanding how individual audience members connect with the show. The importance of the songs and music to these participants suggests that musical analysis is the most appropriate tool to use when investigating their connection to *Les Misérables*. Consequently, the observations on how participants connect through different characters according to their core emotional drive is supported by an examination of how the musical elements of the performance support this connection. The next section of the chapter focuses on the adoption of Jean Valjean, Javert, Enjolras and Eponine as surrogate protagonists, and suggests how this affects how individual audience members perceive *Les Misérables*.

‘This never-ending road to Calvary’ – Jean Valjean and the redemption narrative

Angela (straight mostly) and Cole (straight only) both connect to their chosen narratives through core emotional drives based around the themes of planning and perseverance. Both participants choose Jean Valjean as their point-of-view character, and both note the importance of the multi-plot structure in *Les Misérables*. However, they give a different emphasis to their connection with the story – Angela focuses on the overall structure of the musical, whilst Cole highlights the key qualities of ‘overcoming’ and ‘struggle’. This is in line with the specific core emotional drives identified in their original story interviews.

Angela states that she likes *Les Misérables* because ‘it follows multiple characters’ stories throughout one specific period of uncertainty’. She identifies with Jean Valjean because ‘he’s got a clear goal and story arc which I like, and he’s also slightly less emotionally wet compared to other people’ (Follow-up interview, 11/07/2016). Through her chosen narratives, Angela expresses a liking for complex set pieces, citing the conclusion of *The Sting*, the action sequences in the *Indiana Jones*

series and the Tri-Wizard tournament in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* as her favourite moments (story interview, 16/06/2016). In *Les Misérables*, Angela highlights the ‘musically powerful’ ensemble numbers, which suggests that her affinity is not entirely with the hero-protagonist in the narratives that she connects with (she also refers to Harry Potter as ‘a whiny bastard’), but she recognises the importance of the hero as a ‘surrogate protagonist that links the audience with the story’ (story interview, 16/06/2016). The core emotional drive that appears in Angela’s fairytale moment exercise is ‘delayed gratification’, where the wolf allows Little Red Riding Hood to continue walking through the wood in order that he can eat both her and her granny later in the story (story interview, 16/06/2016). Thus it is the epic qualities of *Les Misérables* that appeal to Angela, and these are best represented for her through following Jean Valjean through his epic journey as a surrogate protagonist.

Cole’s core emotional drive comes from his retelling of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, in which he focuses on the moment when Snow White wakes up to see the dwarves. One of the most striking parts of Cole’s interview is his attention to detail when describing the location in which his fairytale moment takes place:

It happens at the dwarves’ home in the deep, dark forest. It’s in the kitchen... like an open-plan kitchen / living area. There’s a large wooden day table, with a few chairs with comfy seats. Snow White is in a see-through glass coffin on the table.

The neatness and sparseness of the dwarves’ home reflects Cole’s direct style in narrating and analysing his favourite stories. Cole articulates the moral of *Snow White* as ‘inner beauty overcoming jealousy and falseness’, and he mentions the act of ‘overcoming’ in all three of his chosen stories (*Lord of the Rings*, *50 First Dates* and *The Book Thief*) as well as his summary of *Les Misérables* below:

It's a story about overcoming things, and about personal development. Jean Valjean encourages us to look at our flaws, move through them and become a better person by standing up for what you believe in.

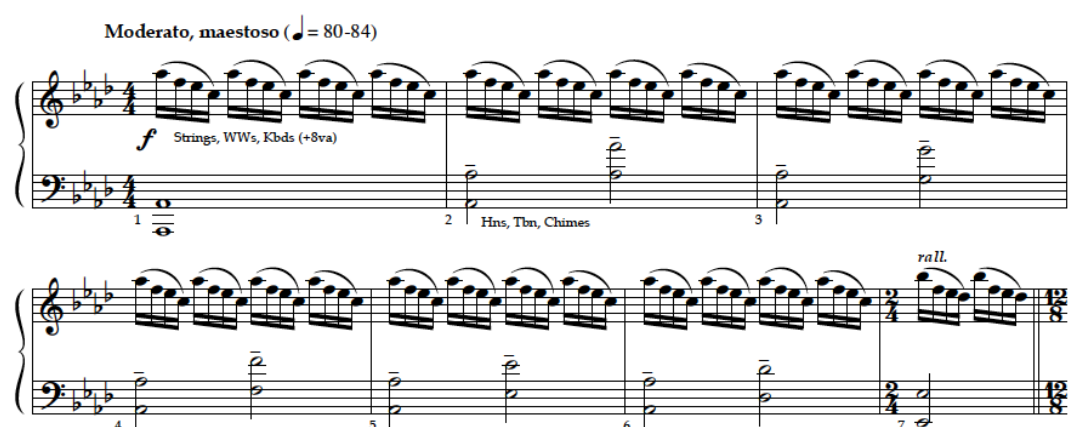
(Story interview, 28/02/2013)

Cole adopts a more personal identification with Jean Valjean in his description of the narrative than Angela. This is evident in how he explains Valjean's story using the first-person plural, thus relating the message both to himself as an individual and to the audience as a whole. Cole's use of language in his more detailed description of *Les Misérables* in his story interview is particularly revealing - he uses the term 'overcomes' four times, and the word 'struggle' twice, as well as the phrase 'emotionally involved' three times. Cole's highlighting of the emotional aspects of *Les Misérables* is vital in understanding his connection to the musical here. Cole echoes Brannon's traditional 'masculine' values in his description of the 'classic strong storyline', and his use of the phrase 'emotional and powerful' emphasises his view of emotion as a strong and positive attribute. Indeed, this reclaiming of emotion as 'masculine' is part of the appeal of *Les Misérables* for men that identify as 'straight only' – both Saul (story interview, 23/10/2012) and Paul (story interview, 05/10/2012) categorise *Les Misérables* as a modern opera because of the emotional content of the music, whilst Martin states that the musical 'makes you cry' (story interview, 10/07/2013).

Cole's choice of 'Who Am I?' as his favourite number from *Les Misérables* explores the contradiction between Valjean's reputation as 'The Big Wheel' and 'The Sturdy Oak' in his role as the town mayor and factory owner and his willingness to show his emotion both in private and in the public setting of the courtroom. The second section of the song is based around the iconic motif that is introduced at the beginning

of Act I (see figure 6.5). This motif is used to mark the major transitions in Valjean’s narrative – his vow to repay the bishop by living a better life, his decision to reveal himself as an escaped convict at the trial of his innocent doppelganger, and at the beginning of ‘One Day More’ where he suspects that Javert has finally caught up with him.

Figure 6.5 – the transition motif from the start of Act I (bars 1-7 of ‘Prologue’)



(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 31)

The power of this motif comes from the horns and trombones on the bass line, where the tonic pedal is interspersed by a descending major scale on the third beat of each bar. The repetition of an ostinato based on the tonic major with an added sixth lends urgency to the music as it moves towards the dominant at bar 7. The clear definition of the brass pattern is symbolic of the conviction and faith that Valjean maintains throughout the show in whatever circumstances he finds himself.

‘Who Am I?’ is representative of Valjean’s resilience and self-reliance as he wrestles with the dilemma of whether to let an innocent man go to jail instead of him. Valjean’s vocal line is based around the same major scale descent as the bass line, with his semi-quaver rhythms matching the strings and woodwind in the accompaniment.

Figure 6.6 – beginning of ‘Who Am I?’ (bars 111-114 of ‘#4 The Cart Crash’)

The musical score for 'Who Am I?' consists of two systems. The first system covers bars 111 and 112. The vocal line begins with a half note rest, followed by 'Who am I?' and 'Can I condemn this man to'. The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and a treble line with eighth-note patterns. The second system covers bars 113 and 114. The vocal line continues with 'slav-er-y. Pre-tend I do not feel his a-gon-y? This'. The piano accompaniment maintains its rhythmic pattern. Performance markings include 'poco ritard', 'N a tempo', 'pp', and 'cresc. poco a poco'. Bar numbers 111, 112, 113, and 114 are indicated at the bottom of the staves.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 101)

The rhythmic security of the bass line gives the sense of strength and conviction in Valjean’s words, and the music stays with the baritone range of B2 to F#3 until the final phrase, in which the vocal line leaps up to a B3 (see figure 6.7a). This register change is used several times during the musical to emphasise Valjean’s decisive moments, notably as he flees from the Bishop’s house with his silver (see figure 6.7b), and when he makes the decision to begin a new life after the Bishop’s forgiveness (see figure 6.7c).

Each of these moments results in a transition in Valjean’s circumstances, marked clearly by the change of tempo. This musical device emphasises Valjean’s function as an active figure and also suggests a risk-taking side to his character that links back to his experience as a convict. However, Valjean’s higher register is also used in his performance of ‘Bring Him Home’ in Act II, which is the song that Johnny (straight only) connects with most strongly.

Figure 6.7a – ending of ‘Who Am I’ (bars 131-135 of ‘#4 The Cart Crash’)

The musical score for the ending of 'Who Am I' (bars 131-135) is presented in two systems. The first system (bars 131-133) is marked *a tempo (non più mosso)*. The vocal line includes the lyrics: "no more guilt than you. Who am I? Two four six o". The piano accompaniment features a dense texture with *ff* dynamics, including a section for *Hns* (Horns) starting in bar 132. The second system (bars 134-135) is marked *Lento (♩ = 72)* and includes the optional spoken line: "Opt. Spoken: 'You will find me at the hospital' one!". The piano accompaniment in this section features a *ff* dynamic that transitions to *mf* by bar 135.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 103)

Figure 6.7b – Valjean’s scream in the Prologue (bars 202-203)

The musical score for Valjean's scream in the Prologue (bars 202-203) is presented in two systems. The first system (bar 202) is marked *a tempo* and *rall.*, with the lyrics: "Took the sil - ver, took my flight!". The second system (bar 203) is marked *Allegro Molto (♩ = 138-144)* and includes the instruction: "Taking the silver cup, he runs off...". The piano accompaniment in bar 203 features a *f* dynamic and includes parts for *Kbd1*, *Kbds, Str*, and *+Vins*.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 19)

Example 6.7c – Valjean’s register change at the end of the Prologue (bars 318-323)

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (bars 318-320) is marked 'molto rall.' and features a vocal line with lyrics: 'world of Jean Val - jean. Jean Val - jean is no - thing now, a - noth - er sto - ry must be -'. The piano accompaniment includes a brass section marked '+Brass' and 'f'. The second system (bars 321-323) is marked 'Più mosso (in tempo)' and 'ff', with 'WWs, Bns' and 'gin.' markings. The score ends with 'Segue'.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 30)

Ian Bradley suggests that *Les Misérables* concerns ‘the power of forgiveness to beget forgiveness and the redemptive quality of sacrificial love’ (Bradley, 2004: 148), and the concept of redemption is central to Johnny’s connection with his other chosen narratives. Johnny selected *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Lord of The Rings* and *The Book Thief* as well as *Les Misérables*, and his core emotional drive of redemption appears to be linked with his experience of Christianity, which he explicitly mentions in his response to *Les Misérables*:

I like the Christian element of the musical. It shows how Valjean makes good out of his own life. ‘Bring Him Home’ shows how much Valjean’s promise to Fantine means to him and how he achieves redemption for Cosette in order to better her life.

Johnny (straight only), story interview 17/11/2012

There are many similarities between Johnny’s connection with *Les Misérables* and the responses given by Cole. Johnny later uses the word ‘struggle’ to describe

Valjean's journey, noting the parallel of the 'struggles' in the narrative with the critical failure of the original London production when it first opened. Johnny's summary of Valjean as 'making good of his own life' reflects Cole's statement that *Les Misérables* encourages people to 'become a better person', but there are two major differences in their descriptions – firstly, Cole's use of the first person plural enables him to take a wider perspective on the story and its social implications than Johnny, and secondly, Johnny's description highlights a different musical side to Valjean than the powerful tone of 'Who Am I?' and 'One Day More'.

'Bring Him Home' is remarkable both within *Les Misérables* and in the baritone musical theatre repertoire as one of the few songs that is specifically written to utilise the falsetto range of the male voice. Whereas Valjean's top register is used for as accentuation in the examples above, 'Bring Him Home' requires the singer to mix the softer quality of the falsetto voice with a controlled use of the full voice (see figure 6.8). It might be argued that 'Bring Him Home' marks the first time that Valjean exerts both emotional and vocal control, and that the manner in which he is able to tame his vocal excesses in the examples above forms part of his redemptive arc.

'Bring Him Home' is unusual in that its musical themes are never used in relation to any of the other characters in *Les Misérables*. The musical accompaniment utilises the quaver motion and the scalic pattern based around the root note that were used in 'Who Am I?', but the effect here is much calmer than Valjean's previous music. 'Bring Him Home' marks the last new material used by Valjean, as the remainder of his music is built around reprises in his final settlements with Javert, Marius, Cosette and Fantine.

Figure 6.8 – the use of baritone falsetto in ‘Bring Him Home’ (bars 59-70 of #21 The Night)

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C).

- System 1 (Bars 59-62):** Marked **Andante, molto rubato** ($\text{♩} = 90$). The vocal line (VALJEAN) begins with a long note on 'God' in bar 62. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note pattern. Orchestration includes Keyboard, Strings, and Woodwinds (Kbd, Str, W/W).
- System 2 (Bars 63-66):** Marked **Molto rubato**. The vocal line (VALJEAN) (falsetto) continues with the lyrics 'high... hear my prayer... In my'. The piano accompaniment continues with the eighth-note pattern. Orchestration includes Keyboard and Violins (Kbd, Vin).
- System 3 (Bars 67-70):** The vocal line (VALJEAN) continues with the lyrics 'need... you have al - ways been there. He is'. The piano accompaniment concludes with a final chord. The dynamic marking **mf (mix)** is present. Orchestration includes Keyboard and Violins (Kbd, Vin).

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 323-324)

Valjean’s confession of his previous crimes to Marius continues this level of control, with Valjean’s previous shriek of ‘24601’ replaced by Marius’ simple answer to the question ‘Who Am I?’ (see figure 6.9).

Figure 6.9 – end of the reprise of ‘Who Am I’ (bars 107-109 of #27 Marius and Cosette)

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is the vocal line for Valjean, with lyrics 'You're Jean Val - jean.' and 'I? Who am I?'. The middle staff is the piano accompaniment for woodwinds (Ww, Brn) and horns (Hrs, Trn). The bottom staff is the piano accompaniment for keyboard and strings (Kbd3, Str). The score includes tempo markings 'a tempo' and 'poco rall.', dynamic markings 'f', 'p', and 'mp', and performance instructions like 'tr' and 'Hrs. Trn'. The bar numbers 107, 108, and 109 are indicated at the bottom of the score.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 389)

Although Angela, Cole and Johnny use Valjean as their point-of-view character in *Les Misérables*, their individual perspectives depend on which of Valjean’s triangular relationships they focus on. Angela states that she is most interested in the power relationship between Jean Valjean and Javert, whilst Johnny is drawn to Valjean’s protection of Cosette as a different side of the same power triangle. Meanwhile, Cole’s view is more holistic as he compares this power triangle with the love triangle between Marius, Cosette and Eponine and the role of the students against Javert and the law at the barricades. Cole concludes that the audience’s ‘emotional involvement’ in the show is based on ‘different people being able to connect to different characters’, which forms the central theme of this chapter. The following section examines how Kevin, Martin, Finn and Tony view Valjean and Javert’s relationship from the perspective of Javert, resulting in a significantly different connection with the musical.

‘We will join these people’s heroes, we will follow where they go’ – different perspectives on the character of Javert

The development of the nemesis as an ambiguous figure in the 1980s megamusical is an important component in maintaining the central power triangle in any show. Characters such as The Phantom in *The Phantom of the Opera* and the American in *Chess* are relatable in ways that Jud Fry in *Oklahoma* and Jigger in *Carousel* are not, and this allows individual audience members to perceive these characters as an anti-hero rather than a nemesis if they choose. As Kevin (straight mostly) explains, ‘Javert isn’t the good one – we don’t see him as it, but Javert actually stands by the rules that he has lived by for all of his life’ (additional interview, 26/10/2013).

Kevin’s chosen narratives are based around the theme of the loss of innocence. His retelling of *Peter Pan* begins with the line ‘Kids don’t want to grow up’ and ends with the line ‘They realise that they have to grow up’, and this summarises his core emotional drive neatly. In Kevin’s description, he argues that it is possible to read Javert’s actions as symptomatic of his upbringing in a prison. Thus Javert sees himself as righteous, and he remains innocent of his flawed perspective until his final scene with Valjean:

Javert can’t believe that Valjean has turned himself around into someone who can love someone and care for people, and this causes conflict between the two men - it has to be Valjean or Javert, and Javert makes the decision. His ending is the main motif from ‘Stars’ - a song about loyalty and the law. It makes me think about how horrible it must have been for Javert.

Kevin (straight mostly), additional interview 26/10/2013

Martin (straight only) shares Kevin’s empathetic response to Javert, stating that the narrative ‘makes you cry from the end of the second act when Javert commits

suicide' (story interview 10/07/2013). Martin's chosen narratives in the story interview are notable as he is the only 'straight only' participant to include more female protagonists than male in his selection. Martin has a particular liking for tragic stories (*Tess of the D'Urbervilles*) and the fantasy genre (*His Dark Materials* and *The Chaos Walking Trilogy*), and this is reflected in his summary of *Les Misérables* as 'multi-layered and not musical clichéd'. The categorisation of Martin's core emotional drive as 'twisted justice' comes from his summary of the moral of *Rumpelstiltskin* as 'always read the terms and conditions', and this is reflected in *Les Misérables* as he focuses on the man who upholds the law throughout the narrative finally breaks the law by killing himself.

Finn states that Javert would be a 'dream role if I ever did professional acting' (story interview, 17/07/2016). His description of Javert's music as 'powerful and baritone-y' matches his core emotional drive of 'power and corruption', and this is also reflected in his analysis of Javert as 'a struggling personality that has a complexity about him that I really like'. Finn also comments that Javert is 'probably the only character that is properly complex in personality and not just in age', aligning Javert with the protagonists in his other narrative choices of *Macbeth*, *Urinetown* and *Game of Thrones*. Javert does not share the corruption of these characters, but it is still possible to read Javert as a 'dark hero' through his narcissistic qualities, which are mocked by Gavroche in Act I:

That inspector thinks he's something
But it's me that runs this town,
And my theatre never closes
And the curtain's never down.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 193)

Kevin, Martin and Finn all focus on the relationship between Javert and Valjean, and this is unsurprising since Javert does not build meaningful connections with any other character. Ironically, the police inspector that is constantly surrounded by people has only one meaningful relationship in the narrative, whilst the fugitive in hiding has strong emotional connections to nearly every other character in the story. Yet the accounts above demonstrate that *Les Misérables* allows individual audience members to empathise with Javert, and Martin's admission that Javert's suicide 'makes him cry' provides more evidence that musical theatre provides emotional catharsis for many male audience members. The understanding of Javert as the anti-hero rather than the nemesis may be supported by a musical comparison of Valjean and Javert's music in their encounters with each other throughout *Les Misérables*.

The first meeting between Javert and Valjean occurs early in the prologue, where Javert presents Valjean with his yellow ticket of parole. The accompaniment is based around the same repeated crotchet chords in F minor that establish the prison setting at the beginning of the number (see Figure 6.10a), and this aligns the tone and style of the music with Javert rather than Valjean. Javert's melody is based around the alternation of the tonic and the dominant notes, with a distinct use of triplet rhythms, while Valjean's melody contains the scalar descending pattern noted above in 'Who Am I?' (see Figure 6.10b). Javert's control in the situation is reflected both by the accompaniment and by his domination of the melody line, in which Valjean can only make occasional interventions.

Figure 6.10a – the prison motif from the Prologue (bars 10-13)

a tempo (♩ = 80-84)

Hrn, Gtr

Kbd1 *mf*

+Bs, Vc, Tbn

10 11 12 13

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 1)

Figure 6.10b – Javert and Valjean's first meeting (bars 52-55 of Prologue)

D

(JAVERT)

Now bring me pri - son - er 2 - 4 - 6 - 0 - 1. Your time is up and your pa - role's be - gun.

Kbd1 *mf*

Kbd 3, Vc

52 53

(VALJEAN)

Yes, it means I'm free.

(JAVERT)

You know what that means? Not

54 55

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 5)

The power dynamics are reversed in their second meeting, where Jean Valjean has established a new life as a factory owner and the mayor of Montreuil-sur-mer. Valjean's melody is now based around an ascending major scalic figure (see figure 6.11), with the semi-quaver accompaniment resembling the transition motif from figure 6.5 above. This time, it is Valjean that dominates the melodic material with Javert interjecting. The music is again in F minor, but moves through Db major and Gb major before settling in A minor for the next scene between Valjean and Fantine.

Figure 6.11 –Javert and Valjean's second meeting (bars 126-130 of #3 The Docks)

The image displays a musical score for three systems. The first system (bars 126-127) features Valjean's vocal line with the lyrics "vert. I do be - lieve this wom - an's tale." and Javert's interjection "But M' - sieur May - or...". The piano accompaniment includes a semi-quaver figure in the right hand and a similar figure in the left hand. The second system (bars 128-130) features Fantine's vocal line with the lyrics "You've done your du - ty, let her be. She needs a doc - tor not a jail. Can this" and Javert's interjection "But M' - sieur May - or...". The piano accompaniment continues with the same semi-quaver figure. The score is in F minor and 3/4 time.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 84)

In the third meeting, Javert becomes suspicious of Valjean and uses a chromatic melody (Figure 6.12a) that was first introduced by the police constables that captured Valjean outside the Bishop's house (Figure 6.12b), and then by Javert himself when he apprehended Fantine (Figure 6.12c). This motif is accompanied by an urgent quaver figure that is similar to the crotchet chords in Figure 6.10a, re-establishing Javert's power over Valjean.

Figure 6.12a – Javert becomes suspicious of Valjean (bars 57-61 of #4 Cart Crash)

Andante (Not too fast)
(JAVERT) G

I have on - ly known one o - ther who can do what you have done. He's a
con - vict from the chain gang, he's been ten years on the run. But he could - n't run for - ev - er, We have

56 57 58 59 60 61

Kbd1
mf
Vc, Bs, Kbd2

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 95)

Figure 6.12b – the police motif (bars 210-212 of Prologue)

(CONSTABLE 1)
Tell his Rev - er - ence your sto - ry. You were

(CONSTABLE 2)
Let us see if he's im - pressed.

210 211 212

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 20)

Figure 6.12c – Javert’s first use of the police motif (bars 95-97 of #3 The Docks)

The image shows a musical score for three parts: voice, piano right hand, and piano left hand. The voice part is in the treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. It contains the lyrics: "Tell me quick - ly, what's the sto - ry. Who saw what, and why, and where? Let him". The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with chords and a left hand with a bass line. Bar numbers 95, 96, and 97 are indicated at the bottom of the piano parts. The label "(JAVERT)" is placed above the first measure of the voice line.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 80)

Javert has fully regained the power in the relationship by his confrontation with Valjean at the hospital, and the music reverts to F minor and the same crotchet chords that marked their first meeting at the prison (see figure 6.10). This time, both men oscillate between the tonic and the dominant notes, with Javert’s bass register cementing his dominance against Valjean’s shrill high baritone (see figure 6.13). Nevertheless, it is Valjean that triumphs as he overpowers Javert and escapes in order to rescue Cosette from the Thénadiers.

The final two meetings between the two men take place around the barricades, where the students have captured Javert. Valjean asks the students to surrender Javert to him as a reward for him saving Enjolras, using a modified version of the motif first heard in ‘Who Am I?’ (see figures 6.14a and 6.14b). It is appropriate that Javert’s retort that ‘the law is inside out, the world is upside down’ is based on Valjean’s motif, marking the first time that he has directly quoted a melody that was originally associated with Valjean.

Figure 6.13 – the confrontation at the hospital (bars 58-63 of #5 Fantine’s Death)

The musical score for Figure 6.13 is set in E-flat major and 3/4 time, marked 'Andante' with a tempo of 80. It features three systems of music. The first system (bars 58-61) includes a vocal line for JAVERT with the lyrics: 'Val - jean, at last, we see each o - ther plain, 'M' - sieur le Mayor, you'll'. Below this is a piano accompaniment with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The second system (bars 62-63) features a vocal line for VALJEAN with the lyrics: 'Be - fore you say an - oth - er word, Ja - vert —' and a vocal line for JAVERT with the lyrics: 'wear a dif - ferent chain.' The piano accompaniment continues with a dynamic marking of *mp* and includes a *sim.* (sostenuto) marking.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 111)

Figure 6.14a – original statement of Valjean’s motif in ‘Who Am I?’ (bars 89-91 in ‘#4 The Cart Crash’)

The musical score for Figure 6.14a is in 3/4 time and marked '(VALJEAN)'. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has the lyrics: 'He thought that man was me — with - out a se - cond glance.' The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic motif of eighth notes in the right hand and a more complex accompaniment in the left hand.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 98)

Figure 6.14b – Valjean bargains for Javert (bars 39-44 of ‘#20 First Attack’)

The image shows a musical score for two characters, Valjean and Javert, from the opera 'Les Misérables'. The score is divided into two systems. The first system, labeled '(VALJEAN)', covers bars 39 to 41. Valjean's vocal line is in the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'Give me the spy — Ja - vert. Let me take care — of him.' The second system, labeled '(JAVERT)', covers bars 42 to 44. Javert's vocal line is in the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are: 'The law is in - side out. The world — is up - side down.' The piano part features a prominent crotchet minor chord oscillation in the right hand, with the left hand providing a steady accompaniment. The score is written in a key signature of one flat (B-flat major/D minor).

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 312)

The final confrontation between Valjean and Javert comes in the sewers, where Valjean is carrying an injured Marius home from the barricade. The meeting begins with Valjean reverting to his tonic/dominant oscillation over the crotchet minor chords that are usually associated with Javert (see Figure 6.15), suggesting that Javert again retains the power in this situation. The breaking point comes with Valjean’s final plea to Javert (see Figure 6.16a) where he invokes the ‘Look Down’ motif used by the poor in the slums of Paris. The use of the motif aligns Valjean with the poor and highlights Javert’s own isolation from society. Javert’s use of the tonic-dominant oscillation that has run through these encounters leads to his final soliloquy before he commits suicide.

Figure 6.15 – the final confrontation (bars 1-2 of ‘#25 Javert’s Suicide’)

Andante (♩=77)
(VALJEAN)

It's you Ja - vert. I knew you would - n't wait too long. The faith - ful ser - vant at his post once more.

mf *mp* *f*

f

1 2

Detailed description: This musical score is for the 'Andante' section (♩=77) of 'Javert's Suicide'. It features a vocal line for Valjean and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with a box labeled 'A' and contains the lyrics: 'It's you Ja - vert. I knew you would - n't wait too long. The faith - ful ser - vant at his post once more.' The piano part includes dynamic markings of *mf*, *mp*, and *f*, and a *f* marking for the keyboard. The score is divided into two measures, numbered 1 and 2.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 352)

Figure 6.16a – ‘Look Down, Javert’ (bars 11-15 of ‘#25 Javert’s Suicide’)

molto rall. (VALJEAN) *a tempo*

Look down, Ja - vert, he's stand - ing in his grave. Give

f

11 12 13

(VALJEAN)

way Ja - vert, there is a life to save.

(JAVEERT)

Take him Val - jean, be - fore I change my mind. I will be

f

f

14 15

Detailed description: This musical score covers bars 11-15 of 'Javert's Suicide'. It features two vocal lines: Valjean and Javert, and a piano accompaniment. The Valjean line starts with a *molto rall.* tempo marking and the lyrics: 'Look down, Ja - vert, he's stand - ing in his grave. Give way Ja - vert, there is a life to save.' The Javert line begins with the lyrics: 'Take him Val - jean, be - fore I change my mind. I will be'. The piano part includes dynamic markings of *f* and *f*. The score is divided into two systems, with the first system covering bars 11-13 and the second system covering bars 14-15.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 354)

Figure 6.16b – original ‘Look Down’ motif (bars 1-3 from ‘#9 The Beggars’)

The image shows a musical score for three parts: voice, piano, and guitar. The tempo is marked 'Andante' with a metronome marking of 80. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is for three bars. The voice part is for a Tenor 1 (Ten 1 Sva) and is marked '(CHORUS - THE BEGGARS) *unis.*'. The lyrics are 'Look down and see the beg - gars at your feet. Look'. The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line in the left hand and chords in the right hand. The guitar part (Gtr) is marked 'ff' and plays a rhythmic pattern. The score includes performance instructions like 'wvs', 'Kbd1', 'sim.', and 'Kbd3, Vc'.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 161)

Javert’s final soliloquy is remarkable in that it is a direct reprise of Jean Valjean’s music after his encounter with the Bishop (see bars 253-end of ‘Prologue’ in Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 23-30). There are some minor rhythmic differences in the melody and a variance in the accompaniment, but the melody itself is clearly Valjean’s. Kevin reads this scene as Javert’s parallel opportunity for redemption, with the tragedy being that he is unable to accept it. Kevin notes that the sequence ends with a reprise of ‘Stars’, representing Javert’s devotion to ‘loyalty and the law’ (additional interview, 26/10/2013). This interpretation re-emphasises the connection between Valjean as hero and Javert as a tragic anti-hero, as Javert breaks his precise and measured musical language and culminates on his final discordant note (see Figure 6.17).

Figure 6.17 – Ending of ‘Javert’s Suicide’ (bars 84-90 of ‘#25 Javert’s Suicide’)

stare in - to the void of a world that can-not hold. I'll es - cape now from that world, from the world of Jean Val-jean. There is no - where I can turn. There is no way to go on!

Gong

p *cresc.*

rall.

(Boublil and Schoenberg, 1985: 360)

Thus far, the analysis has focused on participants that identify as ‘straight only’ or ‘straight mostly’. Tony identifies as ‘gay mostly’ and also connects with the character of Javert through recognising the dual nature of the protagonist/anti-hero relationship with Valjean:

Javert has a firm belief that he is right, and he is just doing his job. He has a massive dilemma when he thinks that Valjean is going to kill him but Valjean lets him live. Javert cannot bear to live his life in the debt of someone that he is chasing so he sticks to what he believes in to ensure that Valjean can't win. Javert is a complex character – he was born in a jail and so he sees the bad side of Valjean. They are like two flip sides of the same story.

(Story interview, 06/12/2012)

Tony's reading of the story is quite similar to Kevin, and his core emotional drive is also based on the central message of *Peter Pan* that ‘you have to grow up’. However, Tony's depiction of Neverland focuses on its many different inhabitants,

including the red Indians, the pirates and the mermaids, giving his outlook a more social setting. Tony also perceives Wendy's realisation that everyone has to grow up as an 'epiphany', suggesting that this is a positive step for her. Tony's selection of *The Hobbit*, *Robin Hood* and *David and Goliath* also focused on the 'epiphany' experienced by its protagonists, who bring about social justice through their actions. Whilst Javert's ignorance of the 'social' aspect of justice can be seen as his downfall, the students in *Les Misérables* rise up against the government on behalf of the disenfranchised poor in society. Tony notes that *Les Misérables* is fundamentally based around the beliefs of General Lamarque who 'looked after the poor and engaged with other people', stating that the moral of the musical is that 'if everyone engaged in understanding others, then there would be no barricade' (story interview, 06/12/2012). The following section offers a brief analysis of how some participants read the narrative of *Les Misérables* from the perspective of the students.

'Raise the flag of freedom high' – the revolution in *Les Misérables*

The music of *Les Misérables* is incredible but I love it so much because of the students. There's so much hope and belief in something better and even though it doesn't get better for them, there's the message at the end of the show that they didn't lose and that there is still something better out there for everyone.

Claire (bisexual), online discussion (07/07/2016)

Tony's observation that *Les Misérables* is 'a great musical for students' is borne out by the number of participants that mentioned the students as part of the reason for their enjoyment of the show. Claire's description above fits in with her core emotional drive from *Peter Pan*, where she identified the moral of the story as 'you can have good things, but you have to keep your eye on your responsibilities'. Like Tony, Claire is

concerned with social justice, and this is demonstrated in her summary of *The Book*

Thief:

It's a story about how an adopted girl in a German family takes in a refugee and hides him from the authorities. The story shows that love is the most important thing you can have, love between friends and family, and you should always remember that whatever happens. (Story interview, 14/10/2015)

Claire's identification of the 'hope and belief' that the students embody is also important to Denise (gay only), whose core emotional drive stems from the moment in *The Ugly Duckling* where Ugly is befriended by 'a new group of swan friends' (story interview, 15/01/2014). Denise states that her favourite song is 'Red and Black', which makes her 'feel like going on an adventure' (online discussion, 07/07/2016), noting that the use of its recurrent theme 'pulls at my heartstrings'. The most prominent reprise of the 'Red and Black' theme is as the stage revolves to reveal the students dead on the barricades (see figure 6.18) and this again provides a moment of emotional catharsis for some audience members.

Figure 6.18 – reprise of 'Red and Black' (bars 51-58 of '#23 Final Battle')



The emphasis that these LGBTQ participants place on the camaraderie and friendship of the students may be linked to the ambiguous relationship between Enjolras

and Grantaire, which was identified by two nonbinary students as a response to a post about *Les Misérables* on the LGBTQ facebook page. Ashley (bisexual) refers to them as an ‘obvious subtext couple’ (follow-up interview, 24/07/2016), whilst Paris suggests that ‘it’s as close to having a gay character as it’s possible to be in the 19th century in the book’, which is reflected in some performances of Enjolras and Grantaire in recent productions.

In Isabel Hapgood’s translation of Victor Hugo’s novel, there is a long passage that suggests an ambiguity about the relationship between Grantaire and Enjolras. Grantaire is described as ‘inordinately homely: the prettiest boot-stitcher of that day... He stared tenderly and fixedly at all women, with the air of saying to them all: “If I only chose!” and of trying to make his comrades believe that he was in general demand’ (Hugo, 1862: 842). Furthermore, Hugo narrates that Grantaire ‘admired, loved and venerated Enjolras’ and that ‘he was the obverse of Enjolras’ (Hugo, 1862: 843-844).

In the musical, this is set up in a short exchange between the two men in the ABC café (see Figure 6.19), where Grantaire appears to mock Enjolras. This is the only time that the characters directly address each other, but some productions add non-verbal cues after Grantaire’s verse in ‘Drink With Me’ that further establish the dynamics of the relationship. These cues have become gradually more overt as the production has evolved in London, as can be seen by a brief analysis of the scene from various casts.

Figure 6.19 – Enjolras and Grantaire’s interaction in ‘Red and Black’ (bars 114-117 of #12 The ABC Café)

In the 10th Anniversary concert production, Anthony Crivello as Grantaire is quite static in ‘Drink With Me’ due to the positioning of the microphone (1:39:45), but Crivello adapts this as part of his characterisation, performing the verse with tension in his upper body and frequent eye closures to communicate his fear. Unlike in most productions, Grantaire does not look at Enjolras at all, and it is Enjolras (Michael Maguire) that approaches Grantaire at the end of his verse, sharing a brief glance before placing his hand on Grantaire’s shoulder (1:40:32-1:40:42). It is Grantaire that looks away first, with Enjolras continuing to look at him for several seconds afterwards.

It is difficult to read too much detail into this performance because of its nature as a concert performance, but any subtext to Enjolras and Grantaire's relationship is fairly subdued here. It is possible to read Grantaire as unwilling to look at Enjolras because it is too painful, and he casts a significant glance towards Enjolras as he finishes singing, which is cut short by a camera angle change on the recording. Nevertheless, Enjolras' actions can easily be read as showing concern rather than affection for his friend.

A Youtube clip from the London production in 1999 demonstrates how the scene can be played quite differently as Enjolras (David Malek) interprets the words of Grantaire (Sam Hiller) as a challenge to his authority and steps in to fight him as he finishes singing (Belliole, 2011: 5:50), only to be held back by Courfeyrac (John Stacey). In this performance, Grantaire and Enjolras barely acknowledge each other and thus the LGBTQ subtext is entirely lost. The 2002 Broadway production (marla9430, 2010: 5:42-8:04) contains a completely different dynamic, as Grantaire (Paul Truckey) directs his verse directly at Enjolras (Christopher Mark Peterson), looking away from him as he sings 'will your death be one more lie?' (6:47). At 7:03, Grantaire reaches out to hold Enjolras' hand, but Enjolras rejects him and walks away, leaving Grantaire crying. This seems to explicitly encourage a reading of Grantaire maintaining an unrequited love for Enjolras, thus restoring the 'queer' subtext to the scene.

By 2008, the London production has altered the dynamic between Enjolras and Grantaire to be more homo-positive. As Grantaire (Keith Anthony Higham) finishes his verse (maria9430, 2009: 7:02), Courfeyrac attempts to offer Enjolras (David Thaxton) some wine, but Enjolras pushes him away and kneels down next to Grantaire (7:09),

whispering an inaudible conversation. At 7:13, Grantaire hugs Enjolras, who puts his hand on the back of head, running it down to his neck. As they part, Grantaire gently adjusts Enjolras' waistcoat (7:22), and the two men touch foreheads as Enjolras walks away. A similar dynamic can be seen in the 2011 cast (*Stars in Your Multitude*, 2013) with Martin Neely as Grantaire and Killian Donnelly as Enjolras, with the only difference being that it is Grantaire that walks away from Enjolras at the end of the sequence (1:33).

This interpretation forms the basis of the 25th Anniversary Concert recording of 'Drink With Me' (Morris, 2010: 1:43:28). Again, the microphone position forces Hadley Fraser as Grantaire to sing out to the audience rather than looking at Enjolras, but Enjolras is positioned next to Grantaire, leaning on his rifle as Grantaire sings (1:44:03). At the end of the verse (1:44:40), Grantaire turns to see Enjolras looking at him, and they exchange a meaningful glance, which is broken by Grantaire. As Grantaire makes to leave, Enjolras grabs his arm (1:44:45), and the two men share an inaudible conversation before Grantaire gently touches Enjolras' face (1:44:53) and the two men exit together (1:44:56).

It is naturally possible to read the interpretations above as portraying a close friendship or brotherhood, but the increasing foregrounding of the Enjolras/Grantaire relationship during these 20-30 seconds of 'Drink With Me' allows individual audience members to read this as a homosexual relationship¹. The closeness of the relationship allows a moment of pathos when Enjolras and Grantaire's bodies are revealed next to each other on the barricade after the students are killed, and this also provides an

¹ It is notable, however, that Grantaire's verse is cut from the 2012 film version (Hooper, 2012), which may emphasise a more conservative culture in film than in theatre.

emotionally cathartic moment. It is interesting to note that this relationship was not mentioned by any of the LGBTQ-identifying men that were interviewed about *Les Misérables*, and that it was female and nonbinary members of the LGBTQ Facebook group that pointed the relationship out. However, there are clear similarities with the character of Eponine and her unrequited love for Marius, which is the focus of the final part of this chapter.

‘What a life I might have led’ – the popularity of Eponine with gay and bisexual men

The love triangle between Marius, Cosette and Eponine is less popular with the participants in this study than the other plots in the musical. Tim (straight mostly) states that he is interested in the ‘revolution not the love songs’ (story interview, 16/11/2011), whilst Ethan criticises the love story as being ‘distracting from the main story of power and emotion’ (story interview, 20/11/2012). Nevertheless, all the participants that identified as ‘bisexual’ or ‘gay only’ connected with Eponine, and five other participants (including all three ‘gay mostly’ participants) also mentioned her in their retelling of *Les Misérables*.

Lyle’s core emotional drive stems from the moral that he identifies in *Little Red Riding Hood* – ‘don’t talk to strangers’. It is ironic that Lyle’s interview also reflected this moral in its guarded nature, as his account of *Little Red Riding Hood* demonstrates:

- Little Red Riding Hood given a red cloak to walk through woods
- Meets a wolf
- Wolf eats grandma
- Wolf tries to eat Red Riding Hood
- Man kills wolf with axe

(Story interview, 25/10/2013)

Lyle (gay only) is most comfortable discussing *Lord of the Rings* as a story set in another world with ‘different species and people’. His favourite character is Gandalf, because he is ‘always there, and he’s been there and done that.’ Yet his other choices of *Love Actually* and *Moulin Rouge* (and in particular, the song ‘Come What May’) suggest that his core emotional drive concerns trust rather than deception, and in particular the concept of ‘trust’ as part of a relationship.

Lyle’s description of *Les Misérables* is also succinct, but he clearly identifies with the cathartic nature of the musical:

For me it’s all about the music, I like the emotional rollercoaster - well it’s more like sad song after sad song! The actual vocal abilities of the people singing is one of the best bits, as there’s no point in a musical if it’s not going to challenge anyone’s ability. My favourite song is probably either ‘On My Own’ or ‘Bring Him Home’, not really sure why...

(Follow-up interview, 22/07/2016)

Lyle’s connection between the ‘vocal abilities’ and Eponine’s song ‘On My Own’ is echoed by Byron (gay only), who states that the song ‘always stays with me, but on both counts the performance is always incredible and I also love the song’ (Follow-up interview, 18/07/2016). This link between the emotional content of the song and the talent of the performer is also seen in both Cole and Johnny’s description of Jean Valjean, although Johnny also states that the music in *Les Misérables* is deceptively simple (story interview, 17/11/2012). The defining vocal moment for Eponine comes in the final phrase of ‘On My Own’ (see figure 6.20a), where she belts and sustains a fermata on a high C. This level of emotional abandonment is also seen in Fantine’s climactic phrase in ‘I Dreamed A Dream’ (see figure 6.20b), and ‘On My Own’ itself is based on a melody previously sung by Fantine during her death scene.

Figure 6.20a – Eponine’s use of belt voice in ‘On My Own’ (bars 139-143 of ‘#18 Building The Barricade’)

The image displays a musical score for the song 'On My Own' by Eponine. It consists of two systems of music. The first system covers bars 139 to 141, and the second system covers bars 142 to 143. Each system includes a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The lyrics are: 'tend - ing, With - out me, his world will go on turn - ing, The world is full of hap - pi - ness that I have nev - er known. I'. Performance markings include '(EPONINE)' above the first vocal line, 'mp' (mezzo-piano) and 'f' (forte) in the piano accompaniment of the first system, and 'rall' (rallentando) above the second vocal line. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand and a simpler bass line in the left hand.

Lyle and Byron’s responses to Eponine recall Miller and Clum’s analysis of the diva archetype in its twin focus on the voice and the suffering female (Miller, 1998: 68; Clum, 1999: 140). Yet Paul’s observation that Eponine ‘doesn’t know how important she is’ (story interview, 05/10/2012) runs contrary to this archetype, as does her position within an ensemble cast – Eponine is simply too small to compete with the likes of Mama Rose. There are clearly parallels in terms of the elision between the character and the actor, but one feels that there is something else to the connection between LGBTQ participants and the character of Eponine.

Figure 6.20b – Fantine’s use of belt voice in ‘I Dreamed A Dream’ (bars 62-65 of #2 I Dreamed A Dream)

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system covers bars 62 and 63. The vocal line begins with a rest in bar 62, followed by the lyrics 'So dif - frent from this hell I'm'. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second system covers bars 64 and 65. The vocal line continues with 'liv - ing. So dif - frent now from what it seemed.' The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings of *mf* and *ff*. A *poco rall* instruction is placed above the vocal line in bar 65. Bar numbers 62, 63, 64, and 65 are printed below the piano staves.

The relationship between Billy (bisexual) and his core emotional drive in *Les Misérables* provides an interesting perspective – Billy focuses on the ‘comical moment of the bears eating a human being’ in *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, resulting in a core emotional drive of ‘don’t take from other people what isn’t yours’ and a subtheme of ‘animal instinct v human instinct’ (story interview, 30/10/2012). Billy explores these themes in terms of the central characters in *Inception*, *Spring Awakening* and *Revolutionary World*, which all interrogate the power dynamics of the central relationship. Billy’s dichotomous description of *Goldilocks* is reflected in his ability to

identify with either or both genders in his chosen narratives, and he mentions this explicitly in his description of Eponine and Marius in *Les Misérables*:

I find Eponine's storyline the most interesting. She is devoted to Marius, but her love is unrequited. I love 'On My Own', when she imagines he is there with him, and 'A Little Fall of Rain', where she risks everything to save him. 'A Heart Full of Love' is the complete opposite of a love song for Eponine – I'd say I identify with both Marius and Eponine in that situation.

(Story interview, 30/10/2012)

The understanding of 'A Heart Full of Love' as the 'opposite of a love song' is especially striking for Eponine. Eponine's appearances in both 'In My Life' and 'A Heart Full of Love' are as the third person in a love duet, and this perspective is particularly apt for any LGBTQ man that has found himself in love with a straight man. Naturally, LGBTQ people do not have the monopoly on unrequited love, but the knowledge that someone cannot return romantic affection because they do not have the right sexual orientation is a more common experience for gay and bisexual men and women.

It is inaccurate to perceive Eponine as a diva character, since she is too peripheral to Valjean and Javert's power triangle with Cosette to take centre-stage in the same way that a diva character might. It is unlikely that a diva would settle for the third part in a love duet, or being the messenger between the central love interests, but there are clear parallels with unique LGBTQ experiences here. Thus Eponine's appeal for LGBTQ participants appears to come from her representation as the outsider in Marius and Cosette's relationship, and ultimately the outsider on the barricades.

‘Tomorrow we’ll discover what our God in heaven has in store’ – accounting for the popularity of *Les Misérables* through audience-response theory

At first glance, the characters in *Les Misérables* appear to perform hegemonic masculinities in a similar way to many other characters from 1980s literature, but the analysis above identifies some significant ‘gaps’ that can appeal to those who wish to ‘queer’ the narrative. The perception of Eponine as a ‘queer’ character is not dissimilar to the relationship between Enjolras and Grantaire that is explored above, and the foregrounding of the brief encounter between the two characters after ‘Drink With Me’ in recent casts of *Les Misérables* is rapidly making a ‘queer’ interpretation of this relationship a standard rather than alternative reading. This chapter has suggested that the musical can be experienced from a number of different standpoints, and in fact many participants connect with more than one point-of-view character in the course of the show.

The above analysis also suggests that part of the popularity of *Les Misérables* with the current cohort and with a wider audience may be due to its multi-plot structure, and there is room for further study of how individual audience members connect to the show. There is clear evidence that many male participants are prepared to identify with a character other than Jean Valjean as the hero-protagonist, but as with many of the chosen narratives in the *Fairytale Moment* exercise, there are few opportunities for participants to connect with female and LGBTQ characters in *Les Misérables*. The musicals in the following two chapters afford this opportunity through the foregrounding of female protagonists in *Wicked* and gay male protagonists in *Soho Cinders*.

7. 'IT'S NOT LYING, IT'S LOOKING AT THINGS ANOTHER WAY' – WICKED AND ITS LGBTQ AUDIENCE

Ev'ry so often we long to steal
To the land of What-Might-Have-Been,
But that doesn't soften the ache we feel
When reality sets back in...

Don't wish, don't start.
Wishing only wounds the heart.
I wasn't born for the rose and pearl,
There's a girl I know, he loves her so,
I'm not that girl.

(Schwartz, 2003: 111-112)

The 2003 Broadway production of *Wicked* and the subsequent 2006 production at the Apollo Victoria in London reinvigorated the relationship between musical theatre and its young female audience. Paul Laird notes that '*Wicked* has proven fabulously popular among young women, roughly between the ages of ten and twenty-five' (Laird, 2011: 40), whilst Stacy Wolf's study of internet fan forums concludes that 'girls and their responses to and uses of *Wicked* offer hope for the energetic continuation of musical theatre in U.S. culture' (Wolf, 2011: 235). The use of dual female protagonists is relatively scarce in musical theatre - within the musicals chosen by participants in the survey, only *Wicked*, *Chicago*, *Mamma Mia* and *Matilda* fulfil this criterion². *Wicked* deals with the relationship between two young women of the same age as it charts the highs and lows of their friendship across the narrative. Bookwriter Winnie Holzman realised the effect of the dual female protagonists on the audiences in the San Francisco previews in 2003:

² Whilst musicals such as *Guys and Dolls* and *Oklahoma* contain two female leads, they are subservient to the male protagonists in these shows.

It didn't occur to me until I had written a few drafts just how few stories there are about women friendships. You have to understand: I didn't sit down and say, "I'm going to write a musical about women friendships." But women were having really strong reactions. Not to discount men who enjoy the piece, but it was almost like women were just starved for stories like these. (Cote, 2005: 71)

According to the data in figure 7.1, the 'men who enjoy the piece' in this cohort mainly identify as LGBTQ, since it is the most frequently chosen favourite musical amongst participants that identify as 'gay only', and the second most popular amongst 'gay mostly' and 'bisexual' participants. Figure 7.1 also demonstrates that the findings of the present study support Laird and Wolf's assertions, with 52% of the female cohort choosing *Wicked* as one of their favourite musicals.

Figure 7.1 - participants that chose *Wicked* as a favourite musical by sexuality and gender cohort

	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	Male cohort	Female cohort
Number of participants	5	2	5	4	13	29	12
% of sexuality cohort	6.4%	11.1%	20.0%	38.5%	40.6%	18.0%	52.0%

This chapter explores how the women and gay and bisexual men represented in the figure above connect with *Wicked* on three levels. Firstly, there is a consideration of David Halperin's theory of 'gay femininity' and his assertion that 'it is through identification with femininity that gay men can manage to recombine the opposed values of beauty and camp that divide gay male culture' (Halperin, 2012: 211). Secondly, the musical suggests an updated definition of the 'diva culture' identified by Clum (1999: 168), Halperin (2012: 211) and Miller (1998: 18) in their studies of

musical theatre. This reinterpretation changes the diva as an archetype, making it is possible for gay and bisexual men to responding on some level to the diva as a symbol.

Finally, there is a critique of Stacy Wolf's 'queer' reading of the Elphaba and Glinda relationship, evaluating how this affects the reception of the musical amongst LGBTQ audience members. This chapter draws extensively on a detailed follow-up interview with Liam (see Appendix E), where he provides a personal account of his connection with *Wicked*, as well as several Youtube clips of productions from the West End, Broadway and Germany that suggest that certain productions of *Wicked* have sought to emphasise a 'queer' relationship in their staging.

'It's all about popular' - performances of femininity in *Wicked*

I have never read the relationship between Elphaba and Glinda as either lesbian or bisexual. I've thought the whole thing is more about the friendship between the two and the understanding that they cannot both succeed together. Equally, I was entirely unaware of any major male following especially a queer male one, as the majority of males I know who have seen the show view it as underwhelming (myself included - I personally believe the entire second act should be cut!)

(Howard, straight only, follow-up interview, 23/07/2016)

One of the curious aspects of *Wicked* is the antipathy that it provokes amongst many straight men that have seen the musical. Johnny (straight only) states that he was 'seriously underwhelmed' by the show and that 'it'll take some serious persuasion (and a very cheap ticket) for me to go again' (online discussion, 19/07/2016). This view is not necessarily confined to those who identify as 'straight only', but the small percentage of 'straight only' men that list *Wicked* as a favourite musical suggests that they do not connect with the show as strongly as women and gay and bisexual men.

The current study has argued that straight men are just as likely to connect to musical theatre as gay and bisexual men, but the polarisation of opinions on *Wicked* seems to support some of the assertions about gay and bisexual men in musical theatre explored in the introduction to this study. In short, the major difference between *Wicked* and *Les Misérables* is that it focuses on female rather than male characters. David Halperin suggests that gay men have a particular connection to ‘femininity’ in popular culture, which may account for the popularity of *Wicked* amongst gay men:

“Femininity” is a means by which gay men can assert a particular, non-standard, anti-social way of being, feeling, and behaving. It represents, more particularly, an ethos at odds with specific forms or manifestations of traditional heterosexual masculinity. As a proxy identity, “femininity” is a clear expression of gay male gender dissidence, a rejection of standard, canonical, established forms of heterosexual masculinity (Halperin, 2012: 318).

The term ‘femininity’ is inherently problematic, and this is partially due to the tendency for many commentators to confuse ‘feminine’ with ‘non-masculine’. Halperin notes that this process leads to ‘a lot of bogus ideas about women and men that we would find utterly implausible if they didn’t happen to agree with the polarized concepts of gender that gender-stereotyping reinforces by representing them as mere common sense’ (Halperin, 2012: 314)³. It is nevertheless possible to identify a number of elements of *Wicked* that are coded as either ‘non-masculine’ or ‘non-feminine’ in order to explore this point further.

Doris Raab notes that ‘where the novel from beginning to end leaves Elphaba’s gender ambiguous at best, the musical succinctly situates Elphaba within traditional gender norms and in dialogue with the overtly and excessively feminine Glinda’ (Raab,

³ It is unfortunate that Halperin seemingly falls into this trap by stating that ‘despite their male bodies, gay men have the souls, the nature, the tastes, the attitudes, the feelings, the subjectivity of women. Period.’ (Halperin, 2012: 302)

2012: 248). Glinda’s femininity is coded as soon as she enters during ‘No-one Mourns The Wicked’ in a mechanised bubble, wearing a sparkling mauve and blue ball-gown, and a tiara in her long blonde curly hair (wakemetheatre, 2014: 2.02). The establishment of Glinda and the absent Elphaba as the centre of the story relies on the evocation of Billie Burke’s entrance as Glinda from the 1939 MGM film, complete with bubble (Fleming, 1939: 20.16). There is even a tongue-in-cheek admission of the perceived smugness of Burke’s character in *Wicked* with Glinda’s line ‘It’s good to see me, isn’t it?’ Glinda’s first vocal entrance is in her soprano range, further emphasising her femininity with the upper string and woodwind tremolo in the accompaniment (see figure 7.2).

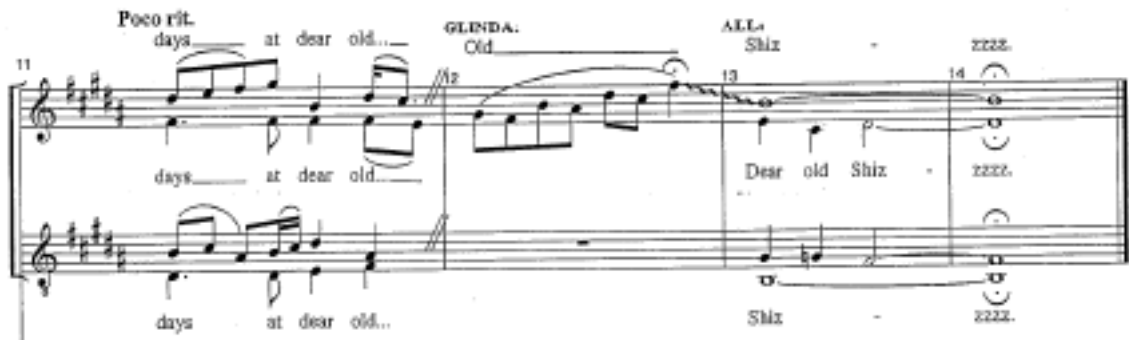
Figure 7.2 – Glinda’s first entrance (‘Opening’ - bars 74-81)

The musical score for Glinda's first entrance consists of three systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is two sharps (D major) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The score begins at bar 74 with the vocal line starting on a whole note 'Let us be glad, Let us be grate-ful, Let us re-'. The piano accompaniment features a tremolo in the upper strings and woodwinds. Bar 75 is marked with a box containing the number 75. The second system covers bars 77-79, with lyrics 'joici-fy that Good-ness could sub-due the wick-ed work-ings of'. The piano accompaniment includes a Bm/E chord in bar 78. The third system covers bars 80-83, with lyrics '"You-know-who!" Is-n't it nice to know'. The piano accompaniment includes Bm⁹/E, E⁷sus, E⁹sus, and C⁷m⁷/E chords.

(Schwartz, 2007: 11)

The musical itself is framed as an extended flashback - both the first and last scenes are set at the moment that Glinda confirms the death of the Wicked Witch of the West to the citizens of Oz. Glinda's position as the 'alpha female' is confirmed at the start of the flashback as she appears with Elphaba and the other students in the song 'Dear Old Shiz' (wakemetheatre, 2014: 9.16). Glinda is first heard embellishing a cadenza on the penultimate note of the school song (Figure 7.3) as she makes her entrance on a luggage cart pushed by an Animal, an underclass race that is later championed by Elphaba. Whilst the rest of the company are wearing the college uniform, Glinda is dressed all in white with a white beret. Glinda's temerity in personalising both the school song and the school uniform is matched by her exalted appearance at a higher visual level than her classmates, momentarily drawing the attention away from Elphaba with her 'fashionably' late arrival.

Figure 7.3 - 'Dear Old Shiz' (bars 11-14)



(Schwartz, 2007: 30)

Elphaba's entrance is much lower-key - she enters with the Shiz students at the beginning of 'Dear Old Shiz', singing the alto line and wearing the navy blue uniform and a plain blue cap covering her plaited hair. The only difference between Elphaba and her fellow students is her skin colour, which causes them to back away from her as

she approaches them. Nevertheless, Elphaba wrenches the attention away from Glinda at the end of the song:

What?! What are you looking at? Oh, do I have something in my teeth? Okay, let's get this over with. No, I'm not seasick, yes, I've always been green, no, I didn't chew grass as a child. (wakemetheatre, 2014: 10:08)

Elphaba's deferential response to an admonishment by her father reveals that she still has some respect for the Oz-ian patriarchal system, which is further explored in her belief in the power of the Wizard in 'The Wizard and I'. Yet the scene has already set up the central power struggle of the musical between Elphaba and Glinda, which continues until the final duet 'For Good'.

Glinda can be read as the 'alpha female' character in the musical, fulfilling Ward, Popson and DiPaulo's definition of 'leaders who believe that they are personally strong and low on introversion' (Ward, Popson, and DiPaulo, 2010: 318). By contrast, Elphaba's character is highly introverted, as demonstrated in her soul-searching in the Act II solo 'No Good Deed'. Glinda also conforms to Hawley, Little and Card's description of the aggressive behaviour of 'alpha females' to 'effectively employ gossip, rumor spreading, interpersonal betrayal, and social exclusion as means to harm the social standing of peers' (Hawley, Little, and Card, 2008: 77). The key sequence in understanding the use and limitations of Glinda's 'alpha female' traits begins with the duet 'What Is This Feeling?' and continues through Glinda's solo 'Popular'.

'What Is This Feeling?' begins with Elphaba and Glinda separately writing letters to their families. Stephen Schwartz recalls that he and Holzman came up with the idea of creating a 'hate-at-first-sight' song that subverted traditional love songs, and this has obvious implications for a 'queer' reading of the show as explored later in the chapter. Schwartz structures the duet in a similar way to 'All For The Best' from

Godspell, where two melodically independent verses are introduced successively and then sung simultaneously. However, whereas Jesus and Judas stick to their own musical material in 'All For The Best', Elphaba and Glinda share both verses before singing the first verse ('What is this feeling so sudden and new...') against the ensemble singing the second verse ('Loathing...'), ironically uniting Elphaba and Glinda through their shared musical material.

Wayne Cilento's musical staging of the number emphasises this clash between the oppositional and the unison (wakemetheatre, 2014: 19.51). After the free-time introduction, the two characters move around the stage without making eye contact with each other (20.35-21.05). There is a clear difference in their movement styles - Elphaba is restricted by the school uniform and barely uses her arms whilst moving, whereas Glinda's open body language is exaggerated by the width of her skirt and the fact that she is carrying a purse on her left arm. On the word 'loathing', the two characters look at each other for the first time with their bodies facing towards each other and in close proximity. This mix of open aggression, stasis and proximity is seldom seen between two male characters in a musical - for example, the 1998 National Theatre production of *Oklahoma!* has Curly and Jud positioned side by side or at a 90 degree angle for the entirety of 'Poor Jud is Dead' to avoid a face-to-face confrontation that would symbolise either physical aggression or overwhelming lust (Sarah Poore, 2012). Yet this configuration of female bodies is appropriate to Elphaba and Glinda's relationship, and re-appears at several key moments in the musical, including the staging of 'For Good' at the end of the musical.

Glinda's 'femininity' is further emphasised by her use of props, including make-up and a hand mirror, which she uses to taunt Elphaba with her own reflection. Some

actors playing Elphaba have mimicked Glinda's hyper-femininity at certain points during the song - this is particularly clear in Willemijn Verkaik's portrayal of Elphaba in the Oberhausen production (dassichnichtlache, 2010: 1.35-1.41), where she imitates Glinda's attention-seeking nature by waving her hand in the air in an exaggerated fashion as if desperate to answer a question. Glinda's status as 'alpha female' is further reinforced by the use of the ensemble in shadowing her movements and emphasising Elphaba's isolation.

It is tempting to polarise Glinda and Elphaba as representing 'feminine' and 'masculine', but this falls into the trap of labelling Elphaba as 'masculine' by virtue of her performing 'not-femininity', as well as ignoring the possibilities of viewing gender as part of a spectrum. Raewyn Connell suggests that there are different types of femininity within a society, and that 'emphasized femininity' is a method of performing the female gender in order to sustain the patriarchal gender order since it is 'oriented to accommodating the interests and desire of men' (Connell, 1987: 296). Glinda's performance of 'emphasized femininity' is initially focused on keeping the Wizard (representing the patriarchy) in power, and Connell notes that 'this kind of femininity is performed, and performed especially to men' (Connell, 1987: 303).

The situation of Glinda and Elphaba as roommates allows a private space for their relationship to develop despite their initial public altercations. Schwartz notes that, once the girls become friends, 'Glinda, because she's a control freak, decides to transform this girl into somebody like her – which is absurd to do to the Wicked Witch of the West' (Cote, 2005: 77). Nevertheless, Elphaba allows Glinda to transform her, and this is the first stage in Elphaba's transition 'from drab, sulky schoolgirl to formidable, sultry sorceress' (Cote, 2005: 121). Schwartz states that he wrote 'Popular'

as a parody of bubble-gum pop - 'it's empty calories. That's who Glinda is at that point' (Cote, 2005: 77).

Glinda's focus on the external underlines the 'lack of introspection' that characterises the 'alpha female' (see Ward, Popson, and DiPaolo, 2010) as well as allowing Glinda to indulge in the ritual of the make-over, which is traditionally coded as 'feminine' behaviour. Glinda's vacuous nature at this stage is seen particularly in her demonstration to Elphaba of 'how you toss your hair' (wakemetheatre, 2014: 49.40). This is the first time that the audience sees Elphaba's hair loose and unplaited, and Glinda's symbolic placement of her pink hair accessory in Elphaba's hair symbolises their complementary 'feminine' natures as 'pink looks good with green'. Yet Elphaba refuses to accept the limitations of Glinda's 'emphasized femininity' and instead seeks to destabilise the political system through performing a new and more powerful 'femininity' that explicitly fights against the limits of the patriarchal political system in Oz.

It is possible to read the characters of Glinda and Elphaba as representing 'the opposed values of beauty and camp' in Halperin's conceptual model of gay male culture (Halperin, 2012: 211). This can be seen in the way that Glinda and Elphaba express their concerns about their roommate to their respective parents, where Glinda's verbosity in her complaint that Elphaba is 'unusually, and exceedingly peculiar, and quite impossible to describe' is immediately countered by Elphaba's monosyllabic and succinct summary of Glinda as 'blonde'. Yet polarising these values as a 'categorical split in traditional gay male culture between beauty and camp, between glamour and humor... which correlate in turn with a basic opposition between masculinity and feminine gender styles' (Halperin, 2012: 204-205) does not allow for the fact that it is

possible to represent both beauty and camp within the same gender performance. Elphaba's beauty may be unconventional, and Glinda's camp humour may be unintentional ('let the little girl go, and that poor little dog... Dodo') but both attributes are integral to both characters.

The concepts of beauty and camp are also problematic in terms of the fact that they deal with the external elements of characterisation - they are about style and aesthetics rather than a character's actions and relationships. The danger with both the traditional concepts of 'masculinity' and 'femininity' and with Halperin's advocacy of 'gay femininity' is that they concern themselves with only with performance rather than with intent. Brendan is the only participant that explicitly discusses performative projection as part of his connection to *Wicked*:

I don't know what it is about the characters but it kind of makes me want to be them. Maybe that's just because I'm gay, I dunno. I like that it doesn't end all perfectly too, that there's progression in both characters.

(Brendan, gay mostly, Follow-up interview 23/07/2016)

Brendan's direct identification with the characters resonates with Stacy Wolf's observation that teenage girls on *Wicked* internet forums 'identify with both Elphaba and Glinda, selecting aspects of two very different characters and two very different actors who play them' (Wolf, 2011: 229). There is a subtle difference here, as Brendan states that he 'wants to be them' rather than that he is 'like' them, acknowledging that he is identifying with characters that he is removed from by his biological sex.

I see myself a bit in both. I think the bit about Elphaba is about being misunderstood and staying strong and standing for what she believes in, and Glinda improves and gets better and more understanding throughout the show. I think that could be why I relate to them - I can draw parallels to being gay.

(Brendan, gay mostly, Follow-up interview 23/07/2016)

Brendan seems to suggest that it is Elphaba and Glinda's personality traits he is identifying with rather than 'femininity' *per se*, and thus it is possible that it is the social position of the characters as subordinate that he is responding to rather than their performative gender. As Brendan states explicitly in his final sentence, it is the 'parallels' to his own identity and experiences that help him to forge a strong connection with *Wicked* - in this case, 'staying strong' forms the bridge between the female and LGBTQ experience rather than the performative act of 'femininity'.

'I'm through accepting limits, 'cos someone says they're so' - the power of the 21st century diva

L. Frank Baum's original novel *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) not only establishes a female protagonist in Dorothy, but also subverts the hegemonic gender system by creating a world in which women frequently act as rulers. Both Baum's wife and mother-in-law were campaigners for women's suffrage, and Baum seems to share these concerns in both his novel writing and his editorials for the South Dakota weekly newspaper *The Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer* (see Koupal, 1989). Whilst Oz is ostensibly governed by the titular Wizard, the power in Oz lies with the four witches that control each quarter of the land, who choose to use their power for good or evil. Indeed, Oz himself is revealed by Dorothy to be 'The Great and Terrible Humbug' (Baum, 1901: 54), and it is Glinda, the Good Witch of the South, that provides Dorothy with the means of returning to Kansas.

Some of Baum's later novels in the series satirise traditional patriarchal gender orders - in *The Marvellous Land of Oz*, the men of Oz respond stereotypically to Jinjur's female army taking over Oz through a coup against the Scarecrow:

"I'm glad you have decided to come back and restore order, for doing housework and minding the children is wearing out the strength of every man in the Emerald City."

"Hm!" said the Scarecrow, thoughtfully. "If it is such hard work as you say, how did the women manage it so easily?"

"I really do not know," replied the man, with a deep sigh. "Perhaps the women are made of cast iron."

(Baum 1904: 82)

Tison Pugh observes that the depictions of women in Oz are 'frequently in tension between protofeminism and traditional sexism yet nonetheless highlight the potential of women to act with strength and determination' (Pugh, 2008: 223), and it is apparent that Schwartz and Holzman's re-imagining of *Wicked* plays on this ambiguity. Madame Morrible and Glinda seem to obtain power in Oz comparatively easily, but the patriarchal system is designed to keep the Wizard and his allies in power. There are also patriarchal overtones in Glinda and Elphaba's relationships with Fiyero and the Wizard, which leads to robust criticism from Grace Barnes:

Can Glinda and Elphaba really lay claim to being empowering role models when they are fulfilling every stereotype—the cute one is good, the ugly one bad—and they spend most of the show fighting for the same boy? What is liberating for the girls watching when the two leading female characters see their futures only in terms of men—either the Wizard or Fiyero? (Barnes, 2015: 75)

Barnes' assertion that 'the cute one is good, the ugly one bad' clearly misunderstands the basic premise of the show, but she is correct to point out that Elphaba's character becomes less focused on liberating Doctor Dillamond and the Animals after she meets

Fiyero. Fiyero's absconding from his engagement to join Elphaba is indirectly responsible for Elphaba's death as it leads a jealous Glinda to suggest that the Wizard uses Elphaba's sister Nessarose to lure her out of hiding. Yet Barnes' suggestion that 'if *Wicked* really is the feminist musical Stacy Wolf claims it is, then surely the two women would go off on their own and find careers' (Barnes, 2015: 75) ignores the fact that this is exactly what they do - Glinda as part of the Wizard's government and Elphaba as a rebel fighter against the regime.

The love triangle between Glinda, Elphaba and Fiyero was created by bookwriter Winnie Holzman (Cote, 2005: 22-23), but it is clear that several participants do not see this as a central part of the musical. Figure 7.4 presents six responses from participants who chose *Wicked* as one of their four favourite stories during their initial interview, and it is illuminating that only Liam mentions Fiyero in his response, perhaps because he tends to gravitate towards 'love' as his core emotional drive.

As in previous chapters, the relationship between each participant's core emotional drive and their connection to the narrative is clear - it is particularly notable here that both Angela and Tania mention the relationship between *Wicked* and *The Wizard of Oz*, reflecting their core emotional drive of 'planning and perseverance' by offering a structural analysis of the narrative. The participants appear to connect to Elphaba on a number of levels - as a 'misunderstood' outsider, as a 'freedom fighter' and as an ambiguously 'evil' character. This aligns Elphaba with John Clum's definition of a diva character:

Whether it's Dorothy being whirled from Kansas to Oz, from black-and-white to color, a metamorphosis symbolized by glittering red shoes, or Rose (*Gypsy*) getting out of a dismal trap in Seattle through show business, or Eva Peron sleeping her way from the hinterlands to the Big Apple, the diva fights for liberation from stasis in a grim, everyday world. To closeted gay men, the diva

heroine was a figure of identification. Where does one find magic if one is different and must try to hide one's difference? (Clum, 1999: 168)

Figure 7.4 - Six responses to the question 'what do you like about *Wicked*?'

Name	Sexuality	Core Emotional Drive	What do you like about <i>Wicked</i> ?
Angela	Straight mostly	Planning and perseverance	I like how it is prequel to something that already exists. Little drops of information make the original more satisfying. And evil characters are far more interesting!
Barney	Gay only	Twisted justice	<i>Wicked</i> distorts figures to look like more than they are. There is a very small distance between a freedom fighter and a terrorist. There's a lot of intrigue in the story - it discourages people from judging a book by its cover and to listen to what people are actually telling you.
Brendan	Gay mostly	Entrapment and rescue	It sees the side of people who are misunderstood, and how hard it is to get out of that cycle. I love how funny Glinda is, and how she has to pretend to be happy about Elphaba.
Claire	Bisexual	Liberation	I first loved it because of the whole 'untold story' idea that Elphie wasn't actually evil and actually people made her into what she became, like the whole 'well they think I am evil so why should I try to change their minds?'. I also love how Glinda genuinely changes during her storyline.
Liam	Bisexual	Love	It's about growing up, and the transformation from good to evil. You can't judge a book by its cover - Elphaba is different and she wants to fit in, but her help backfires so she has to leave. Neither Elphaba nor Fiyero are typically beautiful, but you can find love wherever.
Tania	Straight only	Planning and perseverance	Elphaba is fascinating and easy to relate to. She is un-liked and yet easy for the audience to attach to. I love the link to <i>The Wizard of Oz</i> - it's like a secret where you have to extract the information as you go along.

It can be argued that one of the central tenets of the diva is the ambiguity between their selfless and selfish ambitions. Rose in *Gypsy* is torn between fighting for a better life for her children and achieving success vicariously whilst Eva Peron in *Evita* achieves celebrity as a figurehead for Argentina whilst also giving hope to its citizens. This theme is made explicit in *Wicked* during ‘No Good Deed’, where Elphaba sings ‘one question hurts and haunts too much, too much to mention / Was I really seeking good or just seeking attention?’ This level of self-awareness is uncommon in divas, and *Wicked* challenges Clum’s assertion that the diva ‘must try to hide one’s difference’ since Elphaba’s difference is obvious to her classmates straightaway - her ‘hidden’ talent for sorcery lasts less than five minutes after her entering Shiz University.

Stacy Wolf suggests that *Wicked* ‘reinvents the Broadway diva for the twenty-first century... the show injects a contemporary sensibility that transforms the typical Broadway diva from a larger-than-life force to an everyday girl’ (Wolf, 2011: 224). The strength of *Wicked* lies in its ability to present Elphaba as both universal and different, and this is largely achieved through forcing the audience to read Elphaba’s difference metaphorically. It is extremely unlikely that any member of the audience has literally been bullied for having fluorescent green skin yet representing an impossible difference encourages individual audience members to substitute their own difference in order to relate to the character. As original Elphaba standby Stephanie J. Block notes, ‘Elphaba’s story is one that anyone who has been judged by outward appearances can understand’ (Cote, 2005: 43). It is Elphaba’s story that forms the basis of Liam’s ‘queer’ reading of the musical:

I honestly do see myself in Elphaba. Everything she overcomes and everything she faces is really is similar to what gay men face. I love that she gets her happy ending. Whilst it may not be perfect it is like a whole arch of how gay guys come out. I do love her as a character. It sounds stupid, but she honestly has

been someone I have looked up to. Because she gets through it and does have her own happy ending.

(Liam, gay more, Follow-up interview, 25/07/2016)

There are similarities here with Brendan's projection into the characters of Elphaba and Glinda. Liam relates to Elphaba as a role model - he does not necessarily want to be her, but he experiences the narrative as analogous to his own situation. Again, the idea of Elphaba's strength is mentioned here, and Liam's idea of a 'happy ending' is closely linked to his core emotional drive of 'love' - meaning that Elphaba does end up with Fiyero.

'Everyone deserves the chance to fly' – Liam's 'queer' reading of *Wicked*

Elphaba's first song is an 'I Want' number that establishes her initial quest in the musical - in this case, for her to gain acceptance from the Wizard. This number introduces the style that Michelle Boyd terms 'Broadway pop' (Boyd, 2010: 107), which is generally the style favoured by the younger characters in *Wicked*. Boyd notes that 'Elphaba's *American Idol*-esque singing also distances her from the memory of the original Wicked Witch, instead revealing that she is, like a typical *Idol* contestant, a talented teenager filled with promise and hope' (Boyd, 2010: 108). Boyd's evocation of *American Idol* leads back to Wolf's characterisation of Elphaba as 'an everyday girl', allowing an immediate connection to younger members of the audience. As Paul Laird notes:

"The Wizard and I" reaches out to all young women who believe that their dream and popularity are only around the corner, and it might be magically found if they could sing like that and desire something with such intensity.

(Laird, 2011b: 195)

Laird's evocation of 'young women' may equally apply to gay men, particularly since there is often an inherent feeling of being an outsider. As Liam writes in his analysis (see Appendix E), 'gay guys hope one day that the thing that makes them different - their 'green skin' - will be accepted and not an issue'. Liam makes a metaphorical link between his hometown as Shiz and the Emerald City as Oz, with the Wizard representing 'future friends, future employers and future directors who did not care about me being gay and who recognized my talent' (Follow-up interview, 25/07/2016). Liam's reading of the number is thus in line with both Laird and Boyd's observations, but the point of identification is Elphaba's isolation rather than her 'femininity'.

Whilst 'The Wizard and I' emphasises Elphaba's difference and her initial desire to fit in, 'I'm Not That Girl' focuses on the universal theme of unrequited love. 'I'm Not That Girl' is the only number in *Wicked* that does not require the use of the belt technique, utilising Elphaba's lower vocal range down to E2. As Michelle Boyd notes, the song 'humanizes her and gains audience sympathy by revealing her vulnerability' (Boyd, 2010: 110), but it also reveals the opposing force in Elphaba's self-confidence - if 'The Wizard and I' shows a dream that is tantalisingly close, then 'I'm Not That Girl' suggests that Elphaba's feelings for Fiyero are destined to be unrequited. The song is initiated by a moment of mutual understanding between Fiyero and Elphaba:

Elphaba: You could have just walked away back there.

Fiyero: So?

Elphaba: So, no matter how shallow and self-absorbed you pretend to be...

Fiyero: Excuse me, there's no pretense here. I happen to be genuinely self-absorbed and deeply shallow.

Elphaba: No you're not. Or you wouldn't be so unhappy.

(wakemetheatre 2014: 56:02)

This scene is underscored by a motif that recurs frequently throughout the musical at moments of vulnerability or tenderness (see figure 7.5a). The use of suspensions around the third of the chord creates an unsettled feeling, leading to an unresolved dominant suspension at the end of the phrase. This is matched by the last two bars of the song, which ends on the lowest note of Elphaba's range on the unresolved dominant chord (see figure 7.5b).

Figure 7.5a - The vulnerability motif - 'I'm Not That Girl' (bars 1-4)



(Schwartz, 2007: 107)

Figure 7.5b – the vulnerability motif at the end of 'I'm Not That Girl' (bars 69-72)



(Schwartz, 2007: 112)

Liam suggests that 'everyone can identify with this song, but as a gay guy you will never find love, and you tell yourself you need to stop wanting it so bad because it will never happen' (Follow-up interview, 25/07/2016). Liam also alludes to the higher

likelihood of rejection for gay men, and the link here between gay and bisexual men and women is the relationship between them and their object of desire. The universality of the song is underlined in Glinda's reprise of 'I'm Not That Girl' comes in Act II, after Fiyero has decided to leave her to be with Elphaba. Glinda's music is pitched a minor third higher in C major, but apart from a couple of minor rhythmic variations, the only other difference is that the third line of the stanza is instrumental (presumably because the words 'I wasn't born for the rose and pearl' make little sense for Glinda's character). As noted above in 'What Is This Feeling?', the reprise of 'I'm Not That Girl' underlines the similarities between the two women through giving them the same melodic material. Thus the musical material that Glinda and Elphaba share emphasises the similarities between the characters, whilst their solo material explores their differences. Glinda's solo numbers tend to cement her status as 'alpha female' - a coloratura soprano that is able to cut through ensembles and yet ultimately lacks introspection and substance. Elphaba's solo numbers establish her as a different kind of diva, and gay and bisexual men seem to particularly connect to these performances.

As noted above, the last verse of 'The Wizard and I' suggests the potential of Elphaba as a diva through her powerful use of belt voice. The gradual build in dynamics through the first two-thirds of the song culminate in the final verse, which begins a full major 7th above the first verse in B major before moving back down the octave (see Figure 7.6a). The highest belt note is on the penultimate phrase - a high E that leads to the final held C on 'the wizard and I' (see Figure 7.6b). This is all sung in the chest register, in contrast to Glinda's extensive use of head voice.

Figure 7.6a – the use of belt voice in ‘The Wizard and I’ (bars 133-140)

133 Broadly

stand there with the Wiz - ard, — feel - ing things I've nev - er felt, —

134 135 136

ff B B sus/C# B sus/F# B B sus/C# accel. B sus/F#

137 Faster ♩ = 154

And though I'd nev - er show — it, I'll be so hap - py, I — could melt! And

138 139 140

B B2/A# G#m7 B sus/G# G#m7 G#m7 B/E F#sus F#

(Schwartz, 2007: 45)

‘Defying Gravity’ pushes the vocal limits even further, with a range of almost two octaves (Gb2 to F4). Again, the music builds through each verse and chorus, with the final verse beginning an octave higher than the first verse before moving down the octave in a similar way to ‘The Wizard and I’ (see Figure 7.7a). The final note is a semitone higher than ‘The Wizard and I’, and is approached via a leap of a fifth from Ab3 to Eb4, descending to D4 (see Figure 7.7b).

Figure 7.6b - the climax of 'The Wizard and I' (bars 147-end)

147 see me, they will scream for half of Oz - 's fir' - rite team:—

148

149

150 The Wiz - ard and

151

152 A Tempo

153

154

155

Chords: C, D m7, C/E, F sus, F, C sus/D, C/E, Fm(maj7)Ab, G7sus, C, D m7, G, Am(add9), Am, Fmaj9, D(add#4), B(add b8), G, N.C.

Dynamic: cresc., *f*, *molto rall.*, *ff*, *rall.*

(Schwartz, 2007: 46)

Figure 7.7a – the final verse of 'Defying Gravity' (bars 158-161)

158 ELPHABA:

159 So if you care to find me,

160 (Alt. melody) Look to the west - ern sky—

161

Chords: D b5, G b2, D b5, G b2, A b

Dynamic: *ff*

go through when coming to terms with homosexuality: ‘perhaps being gay took away from the nice person I was trying to be and that being gay made me inherently bad’ (Follow-up interview, 25/07/2016). The persistent identification of ‘No Good Deed’ as a central number suggests that the idea of same-sex relationships still cause some anxiety for young men despite the advances in LGBTQ rights discussed in chapter one.

‘No Good Deed’ has parallels with ‘Rose’s Turn’ in *Gypsy* in that the height of the diva’s emotions impact on the coherence of their musical and lyrical communication. In ‘No Good Deed’, this is seen in the unsettled tonality and time signature, as well as the heightened demands on the voice. This technique might usefully be described as ‘emotional distortion’ (rather than the imprecise terminology of ‘the mad song’), and reflects Michelle Boyd’s description of Elphaba’s ‘unbridled singing’ as ‘almost too powerful; it seems inevitable that at any moment she will be consumed by her magic... and begin her downward spiral into stereotypical witchiness’ (Boyd, 2010: 112). Vocally, ‘No Good Deed’ is more chromatic and scalic than the expansive leaps of ‘Defying Gravity’, and by the end of the number, Elphaba’s vocal line rises in an unstable sequence to the conclusion that her good deeds are worthless - ‘no good deed will I do again’ (see figure 7.8).

Figure 7.8 - the ending of ‘No Good Deed’ (bars 112-118)

The musical score for the ending of 'No Good Deed' (bars 112-118) is presented in a standard format. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Meno Mosso'. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor). The time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: 'Let all Oz be a-greed:— I'm wick-ed through and'. The music is in a key with two flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and shows chromatic movement in the vocal line.

114

115

through, since I can-not suc-ceed, Fi-ye-ro, sav-ing

accel.

A tempo

116

117

118

you, I prom-ise no good deed will I at-tempt to do a-gain, ev-er a-

mf Em

(optional)

(Schwartz, 2007: 238-239)

The tragedy of Elphaba's situation reflects the characteristics of the diva that Richard Dyer highlights in his study of Judy Garland as 'the particular register of intense, authentic feeling... a combination of strength and suffering, and precisely the one in the face of the other' (Dyer, 2003: 145). Elphaba is both grounded in the real world in her passion for both Fiyero and transcendent in her mastery of her magic powers, but she is different from diva characters such as Dorothy and Rose (and diva performers such as Garland) in that her overall mission is social as well as personal. 'No Good Deed' highlights the fact that Elphaba's pursuit of the traditionally 'good' values of social equality and liberation lead to her portrayal as wicked, and ultimately to her downfall.

The above reading concentrates mainly on Elphaba's character development, and both Liam and Barney express reservations about the character of Glinda. Liam sees Glinda as 'the straight popular friend who got everything she wanted' (Follow-up interview, 25/07/2016), whilst Barney describes her as 'rude and arrogant and a bit of a bitch' (story interview, 08/01/2013). Yet most scholars identify Elphaba and Glinda's relationship as central to the narrative, and this serves as a further point of identification for female and LGBTQ male audience members.

'Why Miss Elphaba, look at you - you're beautiful' - a 'queer-feminist' reading of *Wicked*

They rested, like other third-class travelers, in the back rooms above inn kitchens. In a single lumpy bed, they huddled together for warmth and encouragement and, Glinda told herself, protection. The ostlers cooed and shrieked in the stableyard below, the kitchen maids came and went noisily, at odd hours. Glinda would start as if from a frightful dream, and nestle in nearer to Elphaba, who seemed at night never to sleep. (Maguire, 1995: 206)

Stacy Wolf's 'queer' reading of Elphaba and Glinda's relationship in *Wicked* is based on an analysis of the musical conventions of heterosexual relationships in Golden Age musicals. Wolf concludes that 'Elphaba and Glinda are constructed as a queer couple in *Wicked*'s theatrical, musical world' due to the use of vocal and dance duets in the musical. Paul Laird takes issue with some of Wolf's assertions, noting that 'some may disagree with Wolf's classification of Elphaba and Glinda as a "queer couple"' (Laird, 2011b: 296). It is unfortunate that both scholars consider a homoerotic relationship between Elphaba and Glinda as being mutually exclusive with a sexual relationship between Fiyero and Elphaba and/or Glinda, but it is theoretically possible to read *Wicked* as concerning heterosexual, lesbian or bisexual protagonists.

Laird's attempt to correct Wolf's reading of the musical is a little heavy-handed, particularly bearing in mind that Maguire's source material suggests an erotic relationship between Glinda and Elphaba, at least from Glinda's point of view. In a lively online discussion on the university's LGBTQ association Facebook group, Ashley (nonbinary, bisexual) suggests that Glinda can be read as a lesbian character:

Honestly, to me, Glinda definitely seems like a closeted lesbian. Her interactions with male characters just scream to me that she's really only attracted to Elphaba. I think it's a damn shame the musical tried to make her straight, but the subtext still reads very gay to me. (online discussion, 24/07/2016)

Ashley's opinion is challenged by Devon (nonbinary, bisexual), who notes that 'lack of attraction to men does not prove attraction to women, or even indicate it for that matter' (online discussion, 24/07/2016). Several participants in the discussion had read the novel of *Wicked*, and Elphaba's gender was noted as 'canonically intersex' by Devon. This supports Paris Shun-Hsiang Shih's assertion that Elphaba's intersex body is normalised in the musical adaptation, which leads to problematic assumptions about body politics:

The subversive force of the body politics in the novel is appropriated and domesticated in the musical adaptation. This reading also upholds the position that the traumas and pains a queer body needs to endure are already in the past (thus post-body politics), and that we can now celebrate and embrace a 'beautified' queer body without any struggle. The position is dangerous because it leads to the belief that the struggles magically disappear through beautification on stage and thus we no longer need to talk about body politics, while in fact, the struggles still exist and the problems remain unsolved. (Shih, 2013: 152)

The views gathered from members of the LGBTQ association are particularly useful in contextualising Claire's response to *Wicked*. Claire identifies as bisexual and stated in a follow-up interview that she considers herself to be on the asexual spectrum, which affects her reading of the relationship between Elphaba and Glinda:

I read the Elphie/Glinda relationship in *Wicked* as what would probably be described as ‘queer platonic’ - like they weren’t in love with each other but they loved each other fiercely, like properly would do anything for the other. I do know many people read it as a lesbian/bi/wlw relationship though and I wonder if, with *Wicked* specifically, the way the relationship is interpreted depends on the person’s sexuality. I’m definitely on the ace spectrum and my most meaningful relationships are the ones like I mentioned earlier (with the love but not in love) - I have some friends who I would be heartbroken to lose, which is like Elphie/Glinda above and I feel like my sexuality has 100% influenced how I viewed it.

(Claire, bisexual, follow-up interview 24/07/2016)

Claire’s suggestion that gender and sexuality may affect how the narrative is read is echoed by Lindsay (nonbinary, asexual), who sees Elphaba and Glinda as ‘queer platonic partners... although I am looking at it from the perspective of an asexual person so it is probably just me projecting’ (online discussion, 24/07/2016). This does not necessarily follow for every participant - Mel (nonbinary, asexual) responds that ‘I saw them as people who could have had a sexual relationship but that it went the way of friends instead and not a queer-platonic relationship, and I’m someone who is asexual and who has a queer-platonic relationship’ (online discussion, 24/07/2016) - but it is interesting to note that the majority of those in the discussion that read the relationship as erotic self-identify as lesbian or bisexual. Nevertheless, a lesbian or bisexual reading of *Wicked* is clearly feasible, particularly when the musical is read in conjunction with Gregory Maguire’s novel:

Glinda (and, to what I’d argue is a lesser extent, Elphaba too) is far more obviously not-straight in Maguire’s novel, and Maguire also at least partially confirmed that a romantic relationship was supposed to be read/exist between them - it’s forever a source of frustration to me that the musical removed this and forced sweet queer Glinda into a heterosexual love triangle that was just not there in the source material in order to make it palatable for general audiences

(Lisa, gay only, online discussion, 24/07/2016).

There are several moments in the musical that support a ‘queer’ reading, and this is particularly noticeable in the 2007 Stuttgart production. A comparison of Willemijn Verkaik and Lucy Scherer’s performance of ‘Heißgeliebt’ (22below, 2015) with Idina Menzel and Helen Dallimore’s ‘Popular’ from the original London production (wakemetheatre, 2010: 44.30 onwards) demonstrates a different dynamic between Elphaba and Glinda. In the London production, Menzel moves slightly to ensure a distance is maintained between Elphaba and Glinda on the bed as she shares her guilt about causing Nessarose’s disability (45.25). There is a brief touching of hands as Dallimore delivers the line ‘that may be your secret, but it doesn’t make it true’ (46.20). In the German production, Verkaik and Scherer move towards each other as Verkaik begins to share the secret (1.33), with their bodies almost touching. Scherer gently strokes Verkaik’s arm before putting her arm around her shoulder at the end of the dialogue (2.29), and there seems to be more empathy between the two characters - Scherer focuses her gaze on Verkaik throughout the scene, whereas Dallimore largely avoids eye contact by looking past Menzel.

During the musical number, Dallimore largely keeps Menzel at an arm’s length even when making physical contact with her (47.39), thus asserting Glinda’s higher status. The pivotal line ‘Why Miss Elphaba, look at you, you’re beautiful’ is neutralised by Dallimore bending towards a seated Menzel, again emphasising Glinda’s dominance over Elphaba (50.50). In the German production, there are several moments of intimacy between Scherer and Verkaik in the number. Scherer whispers conspiratorially into Verkaik’s ear at the start of the number (3.15), and then moves her face towards Verkaik as if to kiss her before pulling away (4.00). This sexualised teasing continues as Scherer moves her chest towards Verkaik’s chest (4.10), lifts her

skirt up (4.12) and then crosses her arms across Verkaik's chest and strokes her face (4.45). At 5.12, Scherer gradually hitches up her own skirt and then leans into Verkaik's face again (6.02). Yet it is the response to the line 'Elphaba, du bist ja eine Schönheit' ('Elphaba, you're a beauty') that raises the sexual tension. Scherer's delivery is not dissimilar to Dallimore's but Verkaik lingers over her reflection in the handmirror, seemingly pleased at the transformation, before leaving abruptly. This is particularly poignant as the orchestra is introducing the 'vulnerability' motif for the first time (see Figure 7.9). This moment can thus be read as Elphaba's enjoyment of the idea of an eroticised relationship with Glinda being followed by discomfort, and this is supported by Scherer's reaction to Elphaba's departure. Scherer looks disappointed, before delivering a visual gag as she catches sight of her own reflection in her hand mirror. She then looks after Verkaik, clasping the hand mirror to her bosom in a seemingly symbolic gesture of Glinda's feelings towards Elphaba.

Figure 7.9 - the 'vulnerability' motif in 'Popular' - bars 107-110

GALINDA: "And now for the finishing touch."
 (GO)
 "Pink goes good with green."
 (hushed)
 "Why, Miss Elphaba-- look at you. You're beautiful."
 [ELPHABA looks at herself in the mirror, then smiles.
 GO ON]

ELPHABA: "I-- I have to go--"
 ELPHABA rushes off.

GALINDA:
 "You're welcome!"

107 VAMP Moderato 108 109 110 And tho'

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is for the vocal line, starting at bar 107 with the tempo marking 'Moderato'. It includes lyrics for Galinda and Elphaba. The middle staff is for the piano accompaniment, starting with a piano dynamic 'p' and ending with 'poco rit.'. The bottom staff is for the bass line. The score concludes at bar 110 with the lyrics 'And tho''.

(Schwartz, 2007: 102)

The subtext of Elphaba and Glinda's relationship is further established in the Stuttgart production's setting of 'Wie Ich Bin' ('For Good'). The song begins with a reprise of the 'Unlimited' motif, which Elphaba previously sings to Glinda in 'Defying Gravity' at the end of Act I (see figures 7.9a and 7.9b). The motif is now a minor third lower, and is accompanied more sparsely, reflecting Elphaba's transition from the frenzied hope of 'Defying Gravity' to the resigned acceptance of 'For Good'.

As Willemijn Verkaik begins to sing, she fixes her eyes directly on Jana Stelley as Glinda, and takes her hand (Nicole van den Berg, 2012: 0.16) before touching her own chest with her other hand (0.18). Verkaik then holds both of Stelley's hands in hers (0.22), with Stelley leaning away slightly. Verkaik exhales and shrugs her shoulders, nodding to herself as she releases Stelley's hands in order to collect the Grimmerie from Chistery (0.27). This routine is more intimate than the Broadway or London productions, and re-establishes the sexual tension between the two characters. Stelley is a few inches shorter than Verkaik, and this is used effectively as Stelley sings her first verse, looking up into Verkaik's eyes. At 1.42, Stelley places her left hand on Verkaik's right cheek, leaning in slightly as she sings, and stroking her chin. The full verse and chorus are delivered facing Verkaik with only occasional breaks in eye contact. As Verkaik begins to sing, Stelley moves closer to her (2.49) and Verkaik once more takes her hand, first in her right hand and then in both (3.01), before Verkaik bends down slightly to match Stelley's eye level (3.20).

In the middle of the second chorus, Verkaik places Stelley's hand on her chest (3.39) before stroking Stelley's thumb as she moves into the bridge section (3.56). Stelley moves back towards Verkaik and takes her hand again (4.09). The final chorus is delivered with the two actors side-by-side facing out to the audience. At 4.34, Stelley

and Verkaik look at each other as they sing in harmony and then in unison. The final three phrases are delivered into each other eyes, with Verkaik stroking Stelley's face on the second phrase (4.52). The last phrase contains a pause, where eye contact is broken, and the actors finish in an embrace, with Verkaik's arms around Stelley (5.21).

Figure 7.9a – the ‘unlimited’ motif in ‘Defying Gravity’ - bars 100-104

Figure 7.9b - the ‘unlimited’ motif in ‘For Good’ - bars 1-6

(Schwartz, 2007: 249)

This performance does not necessarily need to be read as a love duet, but it is easy to see how it can be interpreted in this way. Stelley and Verkaik's performativity helps to validate a lesbian or bisexual reading of Glinda and Elphaba, and this helps to maintain a possible 'queer' interpretation of both the text and the performance. As Kelly notes, 'the German cast definitely have a more romantically angled interpretation' (follow-up interview, 24/07/2016), and this allows for a 'queer' relationship between Elphaba and Glinda to be read with more conviction.

Conclusion

The idea of the story created a sympathetic resonance in me, and I know that I'm not alone. Anyone who is an artist in our society is going to identify with Elphaba. Anyone who is of an ethnic minority, who is black or Jewish or gay, or a woman feeling she grew up in a man's world, or anyone who grew up feeling a dissonance between who they are inside and the world around them, will identify with Elphaba. Since that's so many of us, I think there will be a lot of people who will.

(Stephen Schwartz, quoted in De Giere, 2008: 275)

One of the reasons that *Wicked* appeals to women and gay and bisexual men is due to the flexibility of its non-hegemonic protagonists. As Schwartz notes, there is a significant identification with Elphaba because she fights against the hegemony of the Ozian society, and is a figure of empowerment for the oppressed. Yet the ending of the story is mixed for both Elphaba and Glinda. Elphaba ends up with Fiyero (albeit in the body of a scarecrow), but is unable to overthrow the patriarchal system. Glinda succeeds in demolishing the hypocrisy of the Wizard and Madame Morrible, but loses both her best friend and her fiancé forever. Therefore, whether the narrative is read as straight or 'queer', there is no complete happy ending for the protagonists.

This chapter identifies a significant correlation between the sexuality of the participants in this study and their connection to *Wicked*. The gay and bisexual men that identify with *Wicked* tend to connect most strongly with Elphaba, either through direct projection or as role model. The relationship between Elphaba and Glinda is less important than Elphaba's relationship with society as a whole. The people that took part in the LGBTQ Facebook group discussion largely focused on the relationship between Elphaba and Glinda, often reading a sexual, romantic or platonic connection based on their own experience. This returns to an observation made in chapter three - that there are relatively few stories that allow women and gay and bisexual men a direct connection with a female or LGBTQ protagonist, and thus women and gay and bisexual men become expert in finding alternate readings. In this case, as Stacy Wolf states, 'one would need to read *Wicked* against the grain to enunciate a straight interpretation' (Wolf, 2011: 202), which perhaps explains why this musical resonates so clearly with the LGBTQ and female communities. This provides further evidence for Lauren Berlant's theory of 'intimate publics':

The structuration of sentimental realism around fantasy practices is not really about the object in itself: it is about mobilizing and publicizing a process of longing for the social as a place where rest and reciprocity can be lived as something other than a ducking under the radar, a compromise, or a retreat. This explains why there is often a fraught transitivity or sense of identification across intimate publics: being constituted by an intense longing for a better good life looks like a likeness across different and often contradictory social positionings. A shared sense of longing as such seems to incite, even invite, belonging. (Berlant, 2008: 270)

The final chapter of this study investigates whether a similar connection can be found between 'intimate publics' in *Soho Cinders*, a musical with an explicitly gay male protagonist.

8. 'WISHING FOR THE NORMAL': 'QUEER-NORMATIVE SPACES' AND 'STRAIGHTING' THE 'QUEER' IN SOHO CINDERS

Wishing for the normal kind of dream,
Nothing too excessive or extreme.
Hoping for the humdrum, is that aiming high?
Others seem to find it tell me why, oh why can't I?

(Stiles, Drewe and Davis, 2013: 9)

The previous chapters have examined how participants of different genders and sexualities connect to *Les Misérables*, which is based on a predominantly heteronormative novel, and *Wicked*, which is adapted from a novel with explicitly 'queer' overtones. Participants that identify as 'straight only' or 'straight mostly' were more likely to connect to *Les Misérables*, whilst LGBTQ participants were able to connect to either narrative. This confirmed the conclusion from Part I of the study that men that identify as 'straight only' or 'straight mostly' are statistically more likely to connect with narratives with male protagonists than women and LGBTQ people.

The following case study is based on a concert performance of *Soho Cinders*, which was produced by the student union's LGBTQ association as part of their history month celebrations in February 2014. *Soho Cinders* is a loose adaptation of the *Cinderella* fairytale, set in 21st century Soho with a gay male Cinderella. The cast and crew of the performance was made up of members of the LGBTQ association, the student union drama groups and the music department, and the performance was attended by several participants in this study. This chapter explores how members of the cast, crew and audience related to *Soho Cinders* as a musical told from a gay male perspective, utilising data from an online survey completed in the week after the production (see figures 8.1a and 8.1b for the demographics of the respondents).

Figure 8.1a – participants in the *Soho Cinders* online survey (cast and crew)

	Asexual	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	No answer	Grand Total
Female	0	6	3	2	1	1	1	14
Male	0	7	1	1	2	6	0	17
Nonbinary	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	0	13	4	4	3	7	1	32

Figure 8.1b – participants in the *Soho Cinders* online survey (audience)

	Asexual	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	No answer	Grand Total
Female	1	2	2	2	0	1	0	8
Male	0	6	5	1	4	3	0	19
Nonbinary	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1	8	7	3	4	4	0	27

The case studies on *Les Misérables* and *Wicked* highlighted how LGBTQ participants were able to ‘queer’ the narrative through focusing on particular moments in the performance, or through adapting the gender or sexuality of their point-of-view character. Contrastingly, this case study will investigate how LGBTQ participants respond to a narrative that is already ‘queer’, and will consider whether straight men and women are able to perform a similar ‘queering’ (‘straightening’?) process on *Soho Cinders*. The case of *Soho Cinders* is particularly interesting since it is in itself a ‘queering’ of a traditionally straight narrative, and this opens the text to a variety of different interpretations.

The chapter begins with a brief introduction to George Stiles and Anthony Drewe, who took part in *The Fairytale Moment* exercise as part of a larger interview about their work (see Appendix F). There is an analysis of how their core emotional drives are represented in *Soho Cinders*, and a consideration of how this might impact the presentation of the narrative for individual audience members. This leads to an analysis of how *Soho Cinders* functions as a ‘queer’ musical, with a particular focus on

a concept of ‘the queer-normative space’. There is then a consideration of the responses to the online survey, comparing how participants of different sexualities and genders connected to the narrative as well as how audience members perceived the representation of LGBTQ characters in the musical. This leads to the conclusion that the foregrounding of specific LGBTQ experiences in the musical allows cast and audience members to engage in a different method of reading the musical to the other case studies.

‘The normal kind of dream’ – the core emotional drive in the writing process

Soho Cinders tells the story of Robbie, a young law student who is working as an escort to fund his degree, and James Prince, a London mayoral candidate who is engaged to Marilyn Platt. Robbie and James have met in an online chat room and have been dating for some time, but the relationship is complicated when the media find out about James’ infidelity with a male escort. Eventually, James is persuaded to start a new life with Robbie by his fiancée Marilyn, and the story ends happily ever after for the two men.

The show is written by George Stiles and Anthony Drewe, whose writing partnership spans over 30 years, with contributions to the book by playwright Eliot Davis. This is the first Stiles and Drewe musical that has a gay protagonist, and George Stiles recalls that the show was rooted in their own experiences:

We decided we wanted to write about us, about living in London, about the difference between growing up gay as we were then at about 40... and what was already a really pronounced difference with the younger generation and the world that they were growing up in that was gay.

(George Stiles, interview, 01/04/2014)

Stiles and Drewe had previously collaborated on shows such as *Honk!*, *Just So*, *Peter Pan* and the stage version of *Mary Poppins*, as well as *Betty Blue Eyes* (an adaptation of *A Private Function*). Thus their work often stems from childhood stories, and this provided an interesting starting point for their completion of *The Fairytale Moment* exercise (see Appendix F).

Anthony Drewe chose the story of *Snow White*, and the moment that the dwarves first meet Snow White ‘and the way that they deal with an impostor having broken in and tidied up their house’ (story interview, 01/04/2014). He states that this part of the story is particularly important because ‘justice was served’ through the ‘rejuvenation of Snow White, because the dwarves are nice to her and she’s suddenly found somewhere she is safe’. George Stiles chose Little Red Riding Hood’s first encounter with the wolf ‘because of Sondheim’ (in *Into The Woods*) because he likes ‘the confused messages of being intrigued by what’s right and what’s exciting, and what she should do... and what she wants to do’ (story interview, 01/04/2014). He suggests that the moral of the fairytale is about ‘having adventures in order to learn’.

There are some ways in which these two core emotional drives work against each other – at one stage, Drewe interrupted Stiles’ story interview to state that *Little Red Riding Hood* was ‘a cautionary tale’, which conflicted with Stiles’ interpretation that the story encourages ‘adventures in order to learn’. Yet it is also possible for the core emotional drives to work in tandem – later in the interview, Drewe recognised the theme of ‘justice being served’ in the characters of the Cat in *Honk!* and the crab in *Just So*, whilst Stiles spoke about the importance of creating a musical world for every story that he works on. In some ways, the inherent narrative focus of justice matches Drewe’s work as a bookwriter and lyricist more closely than the theme of exploration,

which is more suited to Stiles as a composer. The analysis below draws on both of these core emotional drives to make sense of *Soho Cinders* as representative of both Stiles and Drewe's gay lived experience and their ability to create the world of Soho through their music and lyrics.

This study concentrates on a 2014 production of the concert version of *Soho Cinders* by the LGBTQ association at the university at which this research project took place. The nature of a student production immediately nullifies the central theme identified by Stiles as 'the relationships between slightly younger guys and slightly older guys, and what that attraction is', since in this production, the actor that played Robbie was older than the actor that played James Prince. Nevertheless, the production of a musical with a central same-sex storyline allowed data to be collected in order that establishes how different demographics respond to a non-heteronormative love story.

'Feeling like a someone, not a sad also-ran' – the creation of a 'queer-normative space' in *Soho Cinders*

Stiles, Drewe and Davis immediately identify *Soho Cinders* as an LGBTQ musical by using their setting of Soho to create a 'queer-normative' space, where LGBTQ identities are the norm and LGBTQ characters are able to exist without being defined by the difference between their sexuality and the heteronormative environment. It should be noted that this concept of 'queer-normative spaces' is different to Lisa Duggan's theoretical construct of 'homonormativity' as 'a politics that does not contest dominant heteronormative assumptions and institutions, but upholds and sustains them while promising the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture anchored in domesticity and consumption' (Duggan, 2004: 50). Whilst Duggan's 'homonormativity' refers to a political movement that seeks to

‘shrink gay public spheres’ (Duggan, 2004: 51), the ‘queer-normative space’ provides an environment in opposition to ‘heteronormative spaces’. In *Soho Cinders*, the opening number ‘Old Compton Street’ evokes the location that has been labelled as ‘the gayest 100 yards in Britain’ (Binnie, 1995: 194). This reputation provokes a dry comment from the show’s narrator in the opening lines of dialogue:

Old Compton Street, Soho. That promiscuous pot-pourri. That magnificent melting pot. That glittering back passage.

(Stiles, Drewe and Davis, 2012: 1)

The use of alliterative word play and the crude double entendre of ‘glittering back passage’ establishes the camp persona of the narrator, which was supported by the casting of Sandi Toksvig for the 2011 concert version and Stephen Fry for the 2012 Soho Theatre run. That the narrator is coded as ‘queer’ at the outset of the musical helps to establish the ‘queering’ of the space, which is then supported by the vivid depiction of Old Compton Street in the opening number.

The narrator introduces Velcro (a modern take on Buttons from *Cinderella*) as ‘a young single mum’ that works at the fictional launderette ‘Sit and Spin’. The pointed allusion to Velcro’s heterosexuality allows her to function as an audience surrogate, providing a gateway into the ‘queer-normative’ space for audience members that are not versed in the ‘queerness’ of Soho:

Join the party on Old Compton Street
Feel the pavement throb beneath your feet
Take a seat, watch the show.

(Stiles, Drewe and Davis, 2013: 1)

At this point the ensemble enters as the inhabitants of Soho, many in same-sex couples and some in drag, as Velcro explicitly states that the location subverts the normative:

Nothing's normal on Old Compton Street
Dress informal as you jump aboard, step inside
Urges will be satisfied
Here where life is sweet
Old Compton Street.

(Stiles, Drewe and Davis, 2013: 2)

George Stiles states that 'musically, we wanted to be contemporary in a way we hadn't been before' (story interview, 01/04/2014), and this is reflected in the anthemic qualities of 'Old Compton Street'. The pop-rock genre of the number is supported by the band's rhythm section; in particular the accentuated pair of crotchets played by the bass guitar at the start of each four bar phrase against the running quaver power chords in the piano and electric guitar parts from bar 21 (see figure 8.2). These chords also contain a tonic broken pedal point that inflects the number with a sense of urgency and excitement, and a melodic hook for the strings in bar 24 that aligns the musical style with popular genres such as disco.

Stephen Citron proposes that the opening of a musical should determine 'period, tone, character, venue, plot... all must be introduced simultaneously and none of them must be obvious to the audience' (Citron, 1991: 131). 'Old Compton Street' introduces the excitement and bustle of Soho alongside vignettes of the main characters in the story - Robbie, who is being paid as an escort by Lord Bellingham, who is a donor towards James Prince's mayoral campaign, which is being run by William George. Only Robbie sings in the opening number, which further isolates Bellingham, Prince and George as

‘the rich elite’. Robbie and Velcro remain on stage through the number and are thus aligned with the ensemble as the inhabitants of the ‘queer-normative space’, whereas the other characters are seen as temporary visitors.

Figure 8.2 – the rhythmic and melodic hooks in ‘Old Compton Street’ (bars 17-26)

Brightly ♩ = 180

The musical score is divided into three systems, each with a voice line and a piano accompaniment line. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is marked 'Brightly' with a quarter note equal to 180 beats per minute.

- System 1 (Bars 17-20):** The voice part has a whole rest in each bar. The piano part features a rhythmic hook of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line of eighth notes in the left hand. Chords are marked as GOPEN, C/G, GOPEN, and C/G.
- System 2 (Bars 21-23):** The voice part begins with the lyrics 'No - thing's norm - al on Old Comp-ton Street.' The piano accompaniment continues with the rhythmic hook. Chords are marked as G, C, G#m7(b9)5(b9), and GOPEN.
- System 3 (Bars 24-26):** The voice part continues with the lyrics 'Dress in - form - al as you'. The piano accompaniment continues with the rhythmic hook. Chords are marked as C, G#m7(b9)5(b9), GOPEN, C, and G#m7(b9)5(b9).

(Stiles and Drewe, 2014: 2-3)

‘Am I too ambitious?’ – delineating the heteronormative space of politics

The ‘queer-normative space’ of Old Compton Street is directly contrasted with the heteronormative world of party politics in *Soho Cinders*, represented by the nemesis character William George. The musical language of the party headquarters is set up at the beginning of ‘Spin’, where James Prince is holding a press conference about his ‘honest’ politics (see Figure 8.3). There are clear similarities with the pop-rock style of ‘Old Compton Street’ in the use of quaver power chords around a broken pedal point, but use of accents and the flattened seventh in bar 2 gives the music a different flavour.

Figure 8.3 – Opening of ‘Spin’ (bars 1-4)

The musical score for the opening of 'Spin' (bars 1-4) is presented in a two-staff format. The top staff is for the vocal line, labeled 'James', and the bottom staff is for the piano accompaniment, labeled 'Piano'. The music is in 4/4 time, marked 'With Tension' and '♩ = 170'. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The piano part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a broken pedal point in the left hand. The piano part is marked 'mp' and 'f5'.

(Stiles and Drewe, 2014: 42)

The tension and urgency is increased with the appearance of William George, whose deceitful ways threaten to derail James’ campaign. William is frequently accompanied by a broken pedal point in the bass, which provides dissonance with the harmonic progression as in Figure 8.4, where the tonic pedal on Db clashes with the supertonic chord of Eb at bar 147.

William’s devious nature is reflected in the groove that accompanies ‘The Tail That Wags The Dog’ (figure 8.5) after William has managed to depose James as the mayoral candidate and plans to take his place. The rhythmic ‘strut’ emphasises

William’s arrogance and the minor tonality gives the music a more intense feel, contrasting with the brightness of ‘Old Compton Street’.

Figure 8.4 – use of a bass pedal point in ‘Spin’ (bars 145-148)

The image shows a musical score for the song 'Spin' from bars 145 to 148. The score is in a minor key and features a bass pedal point. The lyrics are: "The people at this 'do' could make or break this campaign." The score is divided into three parts: Company (top two staves), Piano (bottom two staves), and a central staff for the bass line. The Company parts are marked *pp* and feature the word "Spin" written above the notes. The Piano part is marked *mp cresc. poco a poco* and features a bass line with a pedal point. The bass line is marked *mp cresc. poco a poco* and features a bass line with a pedal point. The bass line is marked *mp cresc. poco a poco* and features a bass line with a pedal point.

(Stiles and Drewe, 2014: 53)

Figure 8.5 – the groove from ‘The Tail That Wags The Dog’ (bars 1-4)

The image shows a musical score for the song 'The Tail That Wags The Dog' from bars 1 to 4. The score is in a minor key and features a bass pedal point. The lyrics are: "The people at this 'do' could make or break this campaign." The score is divided into three parts: Company (top two staves), Piano (bottom two staves), and a central staff for the bass line. The Company parts are marked *pp* and feature the word "Spin" written above the notes. The Piano part is marked *mp cresc. poco a poco* and features a bass line with a pedal point. The bass line is marked *mp cresc. poco a poco* and features a bass line with a pedal point. The bass line is marked *mp cresc. poco a poco* and features a bass line with a pedal point.

(Stiles and Drewe, 2014: 173)

The establishment of the oppressive heteronormative space of the party headquarters means that James Prince has to find an alternative ‘queer-normative space’ to meet with Robbie. His position as mayoral candidate makes it impossible for him to

become part of Old Compton Street, so instead he utilises a more subtle ‘queer-normative space’ – the Internet. In evoking the spirit of online chat rooms and more recent phone apps such as Grindr, Stiles and Drewe create another ‘queer-normative space’ that has particular resonance for many gay and bisexual men.

‘Am I out of touch?’ – the Internet as a ‘queer-normative space’ in ‘Gypsies of the Ether’

In 1997, James Weinrich suggested that ‘the Internet has functioned as a way for the gay minority to become a majority in a “virtual community” available to anyone, no matter how far away’ (Weinrich, 1997: 58), something which has become even more prevalent since Weinrich’s comments due to the advent of mobile phone apps such as Grindr and Jack’d. In the original score, there are only two songs in 6/8 - the other being ‘They Don’t Make Glass Slippers’, Robbie’s solo song after breaking up with James in the second act⁴. This gives these numbers a more romantic flavour to the rest of the score and also emphasises the moments of private reflection against the more public ensemble numbers.

The ephemeral nature of the virtual space is represented by the right hand of the piano in bars 1-4, which plays a dissonant arpeggio figure over the dominant pedal point in the bass (see figure 8.6). This resolves to the tonic in bar 5, but the harmonic language of the arpeggios remains indistinct due to the sparseness of the chords and the occasional added notes. This higher pitched repetitive pattern is a literal representation of the ethereality of the Internet, which matches the uncertainty in the lyrics.

⁴ In the 2014 score, Marilyn and James’ duet ‘Remember When’ is also in 6/8, perhaps as a reflection of James’ affection for both Marilyn and Robbie.

Figure 8.6 – opening of ‘Gypsies of the Ether’ (bars 1-12)

Ethereal \downarrow = 70
 JAMES V.O.: ...Ah, too many "oks". Just text me. ROBBIE starts to text him back.

James/
Robbie

Piano

5 **ROBBIE**

James/
Robbie

Piano

9

James/
Robbie

Piano

(Stiles and Drewe, 2014: 59)

Stiles and Drewe are tapping into a uniquely ‘queer’ experience that challenge the emotional incapability of the dominant masculinities in the party headquarters (‘bold enough to share my inner thoughts’) whilst also hinting at the inability of the virtual space to fully satisfy desire (‘building up a picture in which no-one can be seen’). The

idea of the virtual ‘queer-normative’ space preceding (and sometimes replacing) the physical meeting is particularly appropriate to the widespread use of location-based apps. The virtual space is safe, but it does not provide the excitement or the satisfaction of the physical meeting, and for James especially, this meeting is fraught with a similar danger to gay and bisexual men cruising prior to the popularity of the Internet.

The accompaniment of the chorus is more stable in its use of block chords, but the harmonic progression remains unexpected. The harmony moves between the tonic of A major and its flattened mediant chord of C major, underscoring the lyrical contradictions of the ‘intimate stranger’ and the ‘faraway friend’. This is even clearer in the final chorus, where Robbie and James sing in harmony, as Stiles uses more stark intervals amongst the traditional thirds (see figure 8.7). The open fourths on the first two notes of ‘intimate stranger’ and the terminal open fifth work along with the open fourth on ‘far’ and the landing on the sixth apart rather than a third on ‘friend’. Alongside the destabilising inclusion of the non-diatonic chord of C major, this creates a sense of distance between James and Robbie as they meet by the lions in Trafalgar Square.

The ending of ‘Gypsies of the Ether’ continues the ethereality of the number by failing to resolve in the last bar as in previous verses (see Figure 8.8, bars 10-11). The statement of the antecedent without resolution gives an ambiguous and incomplete ending to the song that may reflect the precariousness of the ‘neutral’ location of James and Robbie’s meeting compared to the virtual ‘queer-normative’ space. The factors analysed above therefore ensure that ‘Gypsies of the Ether’ is endowed with a sense of specific ‘queerness’ beyond the fact that the song is sung as a love duet between two men.

Figure 8.7 – final chorus of ‘Gypsies of the Ether’ (bars 105-112)

Figure 8.7 shows the final chorus of 'Gypsies of the Ether' (bars 105-112). The score is divided into two systems. The first system (bars 105-108) features a vocal line for James/Robbie (Upper - ROBBIE, Lower - JAMES) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "f You are my in-ti-mate stran-ger". The piano part includes chords A, E/G#, C/G, and G#. The second system (bars 109-112) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "You are my far-a-way friend". The piano part includes chords Dsus2, C/F, and C#.

(Stiles and Drewe, 2014: 67)

Figure 8.8 – unresolved ending of ‘Gypsies of the Ether’ (bars 128-137)

Figure 8.8 shows the unresolved ending of 'Gypsies of the Ether' (bars 128-137). The score is divided into two systems. The first system (bars 128-132) features a vocal line for James/Robbie (BOTH) and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Slower J. = 70". The lyrics are: "p Does't it seem strange meet-ing in this way? Gyp-sies... of the". The piano part includes chords A sus, F#m7, and F#m7. The second system (bars 133-137) continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "eth-er". The tempo is marked "rall.". The piano part includes a "REPEAT AND FADE" instruction. A note above the piano part reads: "JAMES: 'A week without you seems like forever.'"

(Stiles and Drewe, 2014: 69-70)

‘Am I wishing for too much?’ – the disruption of the ‘queer-normative space’ in ‘They Don’t Make Glass Slippers’

‘They Don’t Make Glass Slippers’ is the companion piece to ‘Gypsies of the Ether’ - it takes place in the same location and depicts the breaking down of Robbie and James’ relationship. Again, Stiles and Drewe adopt a uniquely ‘queer’ outlook on the song by focusing on a specific theme - the disruption of James and Robbie’s ‘queer-normative space’ by heteronormative society. Robbie has just been exposed as Lord Bellingham’s escort at a political fundraiser, and James faces political ruin when it transpires that he has been having an affair with a rent boy. Thus Robbie’s first encounter with the heteronormativity of the political party is a disaster, and his fairytale relationship with James is in ruins.

The song begins with a slow vocal refrain before moving into the main accompaniment groove at bar 9 (see figure 8.9). Whilst the number utilises the same 6/8 time signature as ‘Gypsies of the Ether’, there are significant differences in the accompaniment style. Rhythmically, the bass line pounds the strong beats with more improvisatory-style rhythms around the main vocal melody, and the right hand figuration is descending rather than ascending to reflect Robbie’s desperation. The range of the accompaniments are also quite different, with the ethereal high register of ‘Gypsies of the Ether’ being replaced by the use of the low-mid register of the piano in ‘They Don’t Make Glass Slippers’ to emphasise the brutal truth that Robbie has learned.

Lyricaly, the song is based around traditional Cinderella metaphors - ‘glass slippers’, the ‘fairy godmother,’ ‘handsome princes’ and ‘magical kingdoms’ are all referenced in the first verse. The image of the ‘little boy’ links the song inextricably to the ‘queer’ experience - the song makes no sense from the traditional white heterosexual

male position of power and privilege, and it subverts the traditional (and problematic) image of the helpless princess. Stiles' music is marked 'driving forward', with sustained chords across the band supported by the overdrive guitar (see Figure 8.10).

Figure 8.9 – opening of 'They Don't Make Glass Slippers' (bars 9-12)

(Stiles and Drewe, 2014: 158)

Figure 8.10 – 'They Don't Make Glass Slippers' (bars 45-52)

(Stiles and Drewe, 2014: 164)

The three examples given above demonstrate how Stiles, Drewe and Davis present a specifically ‘queer’ story in *Soho Cinders*. In particular, the evocation of specific ‘queer-normative spaces’ allows a more in-depth exploration of different LGBTQ emotions and experiences besides the traditional ‘coming out’ narrative. The second section of this chapter considers how cast, crew and audience members of different genders and sexualities responded to the narrative in the 2015 LGBTQ Association’s production.

‘Nothing too excessive or extreme’ – cast, crew and audience responses to the 2015 LGBTQ Association concert production of *Soho Cinders*

The musical itself is excellent. People came out of the performance saying that *Soho Cinders* had more entertaining and catchy songs than some of the most well known musicals such as *West Side Story* or *The Phantom of the Opera*. The political and social commentary is refreshing and the characters are entirely believable. Overall I would say it was one of the most enjoyable musicals I have ever listened to and performed in.

(Sol, musician, straight mostly – *Soho Cinders* survey, 15/02/2015)

The cast, crew and audience responses to *Soho Cinders* was largely positive, with only two audience members answering the question ‘How much did you enjoy *Soho Cinders* as a musical?’ as less than 50 on a 100 point scale. Many other respondents shared Sol’s enthusiasm for the score, and there was particular enthusiasm for ‘Gypsies of the Ether’ as a favourite number from the musical. Ten of the numbers were chosen as a favourite by at least two participants in the survey as detailed in figure 8.11 below.

Figure 8.11 – Most popular songs in *Soho Cinders*

	Asexual	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	Grand Total
‘Gypsies of the Ether’	0	5	3	1	2	4	15
‘You Shall Go To The Ball’	0	7	2	1	1	1	12
‘It’s Hard To Tell’	0	2	2	2	0	0	6
‘Wishing for the Normal’	0	1	3	0	0	1	5
‘They Don’t Make Glass Slippers’	1	1	0	1	1	0	3
‘The Tail That Wags The Dog’	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
‘Old Compton Street’	0	0	0	0	0	1	3

The popularity of ‘Gypsies of the Ether’ was enhanced in this production by a contemporary dance, which was choreographed with two male dancers representing James and Robbie, and four female dancers representing the heteronormative pressures on their relationship. This provided a visual depiction of James and Robbie’s story in the virtual ‘queer-normative space’ and allowed the dancers to act as a metaphorical flashback through their relationship so far. The choreography was chosen as a favourite moment in seven of the responses to the survey and may partially explain the fact that this number was the most popular amongst participants.

Surprisingly, only three participants chose ‘They Don’t Make Glass Slippers’ as a favourite song, but Tony (gay mostly) was clearly profoundly moved by the number:

It was genuinely beautiful. The frustration, anger, and pain felt during ‘They Don’t Make Glass Slippers’ resonated, and I could identify those feelings from episodes of my life. It’s a realisation that the world is tough, especially for LGBTQ people. It’s a tirade at how brutally unfair life actually is.

(Tony, audience member, gay mostly - *Soho Cinders* survey, 15/02/2015)

Tony's core emotional themes of liberation and justice have already been examined in relation to *Les Miserables* in chapter five, but his connection to a specifically 'queer' story allows him to fully articulate his connection to the story in relation to his own lived experience. Tony also stated that it was 'refreshing' to see a LGBTQ love story at the centre of the musical as 'it highlighted that it's not just me that has faced struggles, and that generally feels good to know'.

Kyle (gay only, audience member) agreed that *Soho Cinders* was 'in many ways a truthful interpretation of the lives of modern LGBTQ individuals... it reflected the real world but had quite a happy ending' (*Soho Cinders* survey, 19/02/2015). Kyle's separation of the 'happy ending' of *Soho Cinders* from the 'real world' does suggest that LGBTQ individuals still face 'struggles' in their lives. Again, Tony articulates this clearly in his analysis of 'Wishing For The Normal':

'Wishing For The Normal' highlights a reality of life for LGBTQ people. We're not 'normal', and we're constantly fighting for that sort of life. Even with people who are accepting, and lovely, will always see you as somehow different.

(*Soho Cinders* survey, 15/02/2015)

Tony's reference to assimilation is not necessarily shared across the LGBTQ community, and some older gay and bisexual men are particularly hostile to this approach. David Halperin recently bemoaned the fact that 'instead of celebrating our distinctive subjectivity, our unique pleasures, and our characteristic culture, we have achieved gay pride at their expense' (Halperin, 2012: 74), and there is a tension between the desire for acceptance by the heterosexual community and the need for the terms of this acceptance to be dictated by LGBTQ people. Nevertheless, *Soho Cinders* produced several positive comments from its 'straight only' and 'straight mostly' cast members,

who enjoyed participating in a musical that foregrounded same-sex relationships. Cast members Mary and Jay's responses reflect a typical liberal stance towards sexuality:

I loved that the fact that for LGBTQ characters in the show the focus wasn't unbearably that they defined themselves that way, it was inclusive, heartwarming and ordinary and that's exactly how I wish it could feel for all genders and sexualities.

Mary, cast member, straight only - *Soho Cinders* survey, 17/02/2015

I thought it was interesting to show how little difference there is between being straight and being gay.

Jay, cast member, straight only - *Soho Cinders* survey, 17/02/2015

Many other respondents focused on how they were able to connect to the story as straight people, with Ethan's response summarising this viewpoint effectively:

I thought that LGBTQ themes were included very tactfully; while there were characters of all kinds of sexualities, it didn't feel forced or shoehorned at all. Any of the relationships in the story could easily have been gender-swapped / sexuality-swapped and it still would have worked.

Ethan, audience member, straight only – *Soho Cinders* survey, 16/02/2015

The idea that the relationships could be 'gender-swapped' or 'sexuality-swapped' suggests that some straight audience members were already involved in a process of 'queering' through adapting the gender of the characters in order to place themselves within the story:

I am not part of LGBTQ but from what I do know about the association I thought the themes were presented in a fun and vibrant way, and the themes were intertwined with a relatable and enjoyable storyline. It meant that the audience could associate themselves with the characters more and care about their outcomes.

Louise, cast member, straight mostly – *Soho Cinders* survey, 15/02/2015

The responses of straight audience members to films and literature focused on LGBTQ characters has received comparatively little attention, and there are clearly some issues with the process of ‘straightening’ a ‘queer’ text. Whilst the process of identification with LGBTQ characters allows straight-identifying people to experience the similarities between straight and LGBTQ people, it is possible that the ‘straightening’ process may work against an engagement with the unique ‘queer’ experiences identified above. As Halperin notes, ‘gay kids continue to grow up in a straight world, straight culture continues to matter deeply to them, and gay male culture still operates through – and indeed thrives on – a metaphorical or figural reading of straight culture: a reappropriation of it that is also a resistance to it.’ (Halperin 2012: 122) However, ‘reappropriation’ of or ‘resistance’ to a ‘queer’ text is somewhat unnecessary in a heteronormative society, and one wonders whether a more reflexive approach to LGBTQ texts might provide a straight reader with a wider understanding of the meanings within them. Laura’s detailed response to *Soho Cinders* shows her awareness of the importance of a ‘queer’ text to the LGBTQ community without her needing to engage in the ‘straightening’ process:

I will probably struggle to articulate this question, and am probably not the best person to decide what the ‘themes’ may be, as I don’t personally identify as LGBTQ. However, the stereotyping and taunting of some of society to the community are embodied by William, who is (rightly) depicted as negative and villainous, largely because of this. I also think it is very clear when there are faults by characters, it is clearly their *character* and not because of their identity, or to do with anything but their own individual mistakes, which is important. I think it is very important that there is a depiction of a LGBTQ couple, who get their happy ending. But not only that, but that the couple is the significant one in the show as if a homosexual couple is depicted at all in a show (onstage or screen), they are usually only a small part of the show.

Laura, cast member, straight mostly – *Soho Cinders* survey, 17/02/2015

Laura’s detailed analysis of the musical recognises her own position outside the community, but also highlights the importance of the LGBTQ couple as ‘the significant one in the show’, thus allowing the inherent ‘queerness’ of the show to take a prominent place, whilst also noting that the LGBTQ characters are still given ‘faults’, thus also touching on the similarities between straight and LGBTQ people identified by other participants.

The data in figure 8.12 suggests that *Soho Cinders* was more popular with female participants than male, and that ‘gay only’ and ‘gay mostly’ men connected with the musical more strongly than ‘straight only’ and ‘straight mostly’ men. Nevertheless, attitudes towards the musical were largely positive within all these cohorts. The musical was least popular amongst bisexual people, and the free text answers in the survey suggest that this is largely due to the representation of bisexuality in the number ‘It’s Hard To Tell’ and the ambiguous way in which James Prince’s sexuality is handled in the show.

Figure 8.12 – popularity rating (out of 100) by gender and sexuality

	Asexual	Straight only	Straight mostly	Bisexual	Gay mostly	Gay only	Grand Total
Female	100.0	89.7	91.6	53.8	92.0	96.0	84.3
Nonbinary				72.0			72.0
Male		80.8	75.3	69.5	87.8	87.2	81.7
Grand Total	100.0	84.1	82.7	60.9	88.6	88.8	82.5

The problem of bisexual erasure is endemic in musical theatre, and it is unsurprising that six of the seven bisexual respondents commented on the bisexual representation in *Soho Cinders*. Grace (audience member, bisexual) complained that the musical was ‘very stereotypical and as a result not fully depicting the community’

(*Soho Cinders* survey, 15/02/2015), whilst Claire (cast member, bisexual) explains that ‘It’s Hard To Tell’ is particularly problematic since it ‘completely eliminates the possibility of bisexuality because you can either be straight or gay’ (survey response 15/02/2015). Roger notes that there are particular difficulties due to the song being sung (at least initially) from a heterosexual perspective:

Like all mainstream LGBTQ+ media, *Soho Cinders* lacks the representation of a broad community. The writing focuses solely on homosexuality and expects the representation of other sexualities and genders to be represented because of it. The song about not knowing people’s sexualities or gender identities was good in theory, but came across as whiny because of the views of the primary heterosexual character.

Roger, audience member, bisexual – *Soho Cinders* survey, 19/02/2015

In *Soho Cinders*, the situation is complicated by the somewhat ambiguous representation of James Prince’s sexuality. James’ relationships with both Marilyn and Robbie suggest that he is bisexual, but he states in a conversation with Robbie that he doesn’t like ‘labels’ (Stiles, Drewe and Davis, 2012: 21). Marilyn tells Velcro that she and James ‘have... had a sex life’ (Stiles, Drewe and Davis, 2012: 71), and James comments that she ‘had the best arse / in your whole class of nerds’ (Stiles and Drewe, 2014: 98), which suggests that their relationship is, or at least has been sexual.

However, Marilyn labels the relationship as ‘mixed-orientation’ and her description of her engagement to James suggests that James is gay rather than bisexual:

It was years later. We were like best friends. He asked me to marry him. I was as surprised as everyone else. By then his swimming career was over and he’d moved back into politics. I thought it was just ‘a convenience’ - a nice cosy package for the voters - so I turned him down.

(Stiles, Drewe and Davis, 2012: 71)

The ambiguous nature of James' sexuality is not problematic *per se*, as Jude (cast member, gay mostly) notes, 'James Prince's sexuality is perhaps the most interesting in terms of his implied bisexuality or sexual fluidity and how those feelings affect his personal life' (*Soho Cinders* survey, 16/02/2015) - as noted in chapter one, the concept of 'sexual fluidity' is popular amongst this cohort of young men. Yet the switching between the labels of 'bisexual' and 'gay' is confusing for the audience, and exacerbates popular myths about bisexuality as being a transitional phase between being straight and being gay, and linking bisexuality with promiscuity. Lucy's bemusement is typical of several responses here:

Is James meant to be bisexual? I thought the point was that he's gay and that's why he can't love Marilyn in that way, but if he is bi then I'd say it's not great representation of bi people.

Lucy, cast member, bisexual – *Soho Cinders* survey, 15/02/2015

However, Nicola draws the opposite conclusion, suggesting that 'bisexuality (and James Prince's in particular) was completely glossed over' (cast member, bisexual, survey response 15/02/2015). This is a difficult issue for the writers of *Soho Cinders*, and the script in its current state seems to support the reading that James is a gay man in a relationship of convenience despite the explicit references to his bisexuality.

Nevertheless, Tony points out that it is difficult to cover all LGBTQ themes in the same piece of work:

As is, possibly, to be expected from two male writers, they've stuck with what's closest to their experience, and there are no lesbian themes, or trans themes. I don't think that's a bad thing, *per se*, it shouldn't be down to one team to bring the plight of the least privileged to the stage.

Tony, audience member, gay mostly - *Soho Cinders* survey, 15/02/2015

‘Just imagine keeping a goldfish...’ – ‘queer normative’ spaces beyond Old Compton Street

The specific connections to the LGBTQ lived experiences in ‘They Don’t Make Glass Slippers’, ‘Gypsies of the Ether’ and ‘Old Compton Street’ link to the creation of ‘queer-normative spaces’, both in Soho itself and in the virtual world of internet chat rooms that Robbie and James initially inhabit. It is clear that many LGBTQ respondents valued the representation of LGBTQ characters since they were able to connect to the unique emotions in these songs without the need for the ‘queering’ process. The fact that George Stiles, Anthony Drewe and Elliot Davis are all gay men allows for an uninhibited and uncoded communication between gay male writers and a gay male audience that is seldom possible even in heteronormative stories written by LGBTQ writers. The ‘queer-normative’ spaces of *Soho Cinders* allow for a very different connection with musical theatre, and recent Broadway productions of musicals with LGB characters such as *If/Then* (2014), *Fun Home* (2015, original production 2013), *The Color Purple* (2015, original production 2005) and *Falsettos* (2016, original production 1992) have continued to explore the LGBTQ lived experience through locating these spaces.

If/Then is set in a cosmopolitan part of New York – the opening sequence is set in Madison Square Gardens, where the bisexual and lesbian characters in *If/Then* are fully integrated into society. Within the narrative, there is no controversy about their sexualities, and their relationships are treated in a similar way to the heterosexual relationships in the story, and thus the setting becomes ‘queer-normative’ – not in terms of the location having a majority of LGBTQ characters, but in the sense that it is just as ‘normal’ for characters to identify as LGBTQ. Yet *If/Then* is able to move beyond

‘queer’ invisibility through creating a unique ‘queer-normative’ space to express a bisexual character’s identity through its clever manipulation of narrative structure. Tackling bisexuality in musical theatre can be problematic as it requires showing a character in two separate or potential relationships during the course of the musical. Whilst the love triangle is a staple for musical theatre, this does make it difficult to portray a bisexual character as faithful and monogamous. The division of *If/Then* into two separate realities based on a choice made by the (heterosexual) protagonist allows the writers to show a bisexual man in a relationship with the female protagonist in one reality, and with a male love-interest in the other.

The narrative structure places Lucas’ duet with Beth after she has aborted their baby in the first reality immediately before his love duet with David in the second, which allows for direct comparisons to be drawn by the audience. ‘Some Other Me’ is very much in Beth’s musical style with irregular time signatures and conversational rhythms leading to a 12/8 power-ballad chorus. Lucas’ verse follows a similar pattern but lyrically, his dreams are far bigger than Beth’s - ‘some other me’s a rock star, some other me’s still cool’. The middle eight sees the two characters alternate lines and briefly sing in harmony, before Beth finishes the song alone.

‘Best Worst Mistake’ is started by David in a 1950s-jazz style. David’s rhythms are also irregular and show dexterity, and again Lucas makes use of David’s structure in the second verse. David is clearly in control of the duet as he interrupts Lucas and sings in counterpoint with his chorus, before taking the lead and tricking Lucas into copying the phrase ‘I love you’. Lucas allows Beth and David to set up both duets, and the dynamic of his character is consistent across both realities. *If/Then* encourages the

audience to normalise LGB sexualities, with the characters of Kate and Anne developing a similar same-sex relationship across both realities.

The experience of ‘coming out’ is one of the unique experiences of identifying as LGBTQ, and is one of the central themes of *Fun Home*, the 2013 musical based on Alison Bechdel’s autobiographical graphic novel. The majority of LGBTQ children grow up with heteronormative parents, consume heteronormative stories and follow a school curriculum that largely avoids any mention of sexuality during the formative years. Despite great advances in LGBTQ rights over the past five decades, it is still assumed that most children are heterosexual until they proclaim otherwise.

One of the problems with representing ‘coming out’ in a narrative is that it is not a singular experience, and is repeated in every new heteronormative environment entered by an LGBTQ person. *Fun Home* embraces this difficulty by structuring the narrative in three timeframes. In the present day, Alison is sorting through her father’s antiques collection, whilst at college, Medium Alison is embarking on her first relationship, and in the childhood home, Small Alison is coming to terms with her sexuality.

The theme of ‘coming out’ is central to ‘Changing My Major To Joan’, which directly follows Medium Alison’s first sexual experience with Joan. Lisa Kron’s lyrics have a stream of consciousness feel, circling around the central images of each song. For example, the chorus of ‘Changing My Major’ begins with the phrase ‘I’m changing my major to Joan’, which is then extended to ‘I’m changing my major to *sex with Joan*’, and finally to ‘I’m changing my major to *sex with Joan, with a minor in kissing Joan*’. This allows Jeanine Tesori to gradually extend the vocal range of the phrase, with the word ‘sex’ at the highest point of the last phrase. The chorus of ‘Ring of Keys’ uses a similar unfolding list, coupled with a number of ellipses in the verses where Small

Alison is unable to articulate her feelings. The use of these lyrical devices allow Kron and Tesori to embed Alison's 'queerness' within her musical personality, and thus the character becomes more rounded than the standard tropes discussed above.

The experience of 'coming out' is one of the unique experiences of identifying as LGBTQ, and it is notable that both 'Ring of Keys' and 'Changing My Major' create a space for Alison to sing about another female character – the invisible delivery girl in 'Ring of Keys' and the sleeping Joan in 'Changing My Major'. The foregrounding of 'coming out' songs create moments in which Alison is able to accept the reality of her sexuality and engage with the public queer-normative space provided by the LGBT society at college and ultimately the private queer-normative space within her relationship with Joan.

It is telling that the queer-normative space of a same-sex relationship still remains one of the less explored avenues of musical theatre, and this is borne out by the paucity of love duets between same-sex couples in musicals. Indeed, the musicals with LGBTQ characters explored in the introduction to this thesis (pages 14-18) contain only eight same-sex love duets: 'Song of the Sand' from *La Cage Aux Folles*, 'I'll Cover You' and 'Take Me Or Leave Me' from *Rent*, 'I Honestly Love You' from *The Boy From Oz*, 'You and I' and 'Best Kept Secret' from *Bare: A Pop Opera*, 'Closer to Heaven' from *Closer To Heaven* and 'The Word of Your Body (reprise)' from *Spring Awakening*. The exception to this trend is William Finn's *Falsettos*, which contains a total of three duets between Marvin and Whizzer ('Thrill of First Love', 'The Chess Game' and 'What Would I Do?') in addition to a duet between Charlotte and Cordelia ('Something Bad Is Happening') and a quartet between both pairs of same-sex lovers ('Four Unlikely Lovers').

The bickering relationship between Marvin and Whizzer results in some unusual lyrical phrases for love duets. The opening exchange from ‘The Thrill of First Love’ establishes these dynamics – ‘Pick up your clothes / Whizzer begs / Whizzer knows / Shave your legs / Make me sick / You’re a prick / God you’re impossible’ (Finn and Lapine, 1995: 23) as the two men conclude that they ‘would kill for that thrill of first love’ (Finn and Lapine, 1995: 28), and ‘Chess Game’ finishes with the phrase ‘this had better come to an end’ (Finn and Lapine, 1995: 75). It is not until Whizzer is admitted to hospital with a mystery illness that the music becomes more lyrical:

Shut your mouth, go to sleep
Time I met a sailor
Are you sleeping yet or...?
What is what? Whizzer, but
I can’t help but feeling I’ve failed
Let’s be scared together
Let’s pretend that nothing is awful
There’s nothing to fear
Just stay right here
I love you

(Finn and Lapine, 1995: 140)

The notion of being ‘scared together’ is further augmented by the addition of Charlotte and Cordelia in the following verse, and amplified by a key change and a final trumpet descant as the hospital ward becomes a queer-normative space in which the characters express a fundamental truth anchored in the lived experience of LGBTQ people during the AIDS crisis. It is these fundamental and unique truths within the LGBTQ experience that tie together the queer-normative spaces with Plummer’s generational theory (see chapter two), Berlant’s concept of intimate publics (see chapter six) and the core emotional drives explored within this study, and it is clear that there is still much to be explored in the representation of LGBTQ characters in musical theatre.

It has been suggested above that straight participants were positive about the LGBTQ elements of the musical, but it is possible that there is sometimes a tendency for straight audience members to try to minimise the differences between straight and LGBTQ narratives. Whilst this reflects the progressive nature of social attitudes towards same-sex relationships, it may also prevent full acknowledgement of the important differences that LGBTQ people face as part of their lived experience. The understanding of these differences must be a starting point for any future work that investigates the connections between masculinity, sexuality and musical theatre. As Richard Dyer notes in 'Entertainment and Utopia':

The fact that professional entertainment has been by and large conservative in this century should not blind us to the implicit struggle within it, and looking beyond class to divisions of sex and race, we should note the important role of structurally subordinate groups in society – women, blacks, gay – in the development and definition of entertainment... Entertainment offers the image of 'something better' to escape into, or something we want deeply that our day-to-day lives don't provide. Alternatives, hopes, wishes – these are the stuff of utopia, the sense that things could be better, that something other than what is can be imagined and maybe realized (Dyer, 2002: 20).

‘LOVE IS LOVE IS LOVE IS LOVE IS LOVE IS LOVE’ – CONCLUSION

My wife's the reason anything gets done.
She nudges me towards promise by degrees.
She is a perfect symphony of one.
Our son is her most beautiful reprise.
We chase the melodies that seem to find us
Until they're finished songs and start to play.
When senseless acts of tragedy remind us
That nothing here is promised, not one day
This show is proof that history remembers.
We live through times when hate and fear seem stronger.
We rise and fall, and light from dying embers
Remembrances that hope and love last longer.
And love is love is love is love is love is love is love;
Cannot be killed or swept aside.
I sing Vanessa's symphony; Eliza tells her story.
Now fill the world with music, love, and pride.

(Lin-Manuel Miranda - Entertainment Tonight, 2016)

Early in the morning of the 70th Tony Awards at the Beacon Theater, a gunman opened fire at the *Pulse* nightclub in Orlando, killing 49 people. *Pulse* is one of the biggest gay clubs in the city, and the attack sent shockwaves through LGBTQ communities across the world. At the Tony Awards that evening, James Corden opened the ceremony with a simple dedication to the LGBTQ community:

All we can say is that you are not on your own right now. Your tragedy is our tragedy. Theater is a place where every race, creed, sexuality and gender is equal, is embraced and is loved. Hate will never win. Together, we have to make sure of that. Tonight's show stands as a symbol and celebration of that principle. (CSBN, 2016)

The events in Florida were mentioned on several occasions during the evening, with Lin-Manuel Miranda's 'Love is love' sonnet offering an emotional response to the 'senseless acts of tragedy' that morning. Writing in *Variety*, Maureen Ryan observed that 'the cathartic nature of the musical numbers and a few of the speeches did the helpful, necessary work of channeling a day of difficult emotions' (Ryan, 2016, accessed 23/09/2016). Both Corden's speech and Miranda's sonnet eschewed any

emotional boundaries of masculinity in order to show support for the LGBTQ community. There were vigils held across the world, and it was touching to receive the following follow-up interview from Gary, the first participant mentioned in this project in chapter four. The message is quoted below with Gary's permission:

We went to the Old Compton Street vigil as a cast and it was quietly beautiful. It very much opened my eyes to the fact that as a straight person working in theatre I take the equality that exists for granted. I'd never really comprehended that many of my friends who are part of the LGBTQ community will have suffered some form of abuse for being who they are or indeed that gay/gay-friendly clubs are a safe environment where they can express themselves without fear of abuse or oppression. Which makes the Orlando atrocity all the more tragic. A truly humbling enlightenment. (personal communication, 14/06/2016)

Dwelling on the Orlando atrocities may seem a mawkish way to begin the conclusion to this thesis, but it is important to maintain perspective on how far LGBTQ rights have travelled even since this project began in 2011. Gary now works as a professional actor in the West End, and his realisation that the lived experience of LGBTQ people differs from his own is reflective of the increased willingness for heterosexual men to expand their understanding of other demographics – or in the words of Gary's core emotional drive, 'taking someone else's shoes and walking around in them' (story interview, 29/02/2012). This final chapter begins by summarising the key original findings from this project, before briefly updating the changing context for this research over the past five years by way of conclusion.

Empirical data collection as a research methodology in the theatre

The key area in which this study hopes to advance musical theatre scholarship is in its use of empirical data collection to redefine the use of audience-response theory to include the study of similarity and difference between the responses of individual audience members. The study first developed a methodology based around online

surveys in order to gather and correlate information about sexual orientation and exposure to musical theatre. This data is presented in chapters 3 and 4 in order to build a profile of how the cohort perceives sexuality and musical theatre.

The information on core emotional drives is particularly unique to this project, and it is recognised that the context of the study only scratches the surface of the data gathered through these interviews. In particular, there appears to be a significant psychological angle that links the core emotional drive to other aspects of the participants' lives, and this is mentioned briefly at the end of the case studies in chapter four in relation to the chosen careers of the participants. It is hoped that this may form a new line of research outside of musical theatre in the field of psychology.

The emphasis on the individual within this project has ramifications for the study of the audience within the field of audience-response. The study is a direct response to Helen Freshwater's call for a more nuanced approach to individual experiences of theatre in her study *Theatre & Audiences* (2009), and it is felt that this approach has been particularly beneficial in the three case studies in the second part of this project. The chapter on *Les Misérables* particularly highlights the advantage of a multi-plot story in engaging a wide range of demographics within the audience.

Reclaiming the gender and sexuality spectrums

One of the major issues with audience-response theory involving sexuality is the tendency of academic scholars to treat sexuality as a binary construct, particularly within the field of musical theatre. The literature review in chapter two revealed that there were few sources that considered the possibility of bisexuality in discussing how sexuality impacts and reflects the study and the enjoyment of musicals. This study is amongst the first to utilise data from the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid as part of a

wider sociological project, and this led to a separate publication regarding the use of this data as a method of categorising sexuality (see Lovelock, 2014).

Within this specific project, the survey based on the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid was mainly used as a self-analytical tool for participants to evaluate their own sexuality, since the only data that has been widely used in the study is the participants' present self-identification. Nevertheless, the statistics on emotional and social connections were utilised in chapter three in order to consider how this cohort of 18-25 year old male university students perform particular aspects of masculinity. The data was also used to explore Eric Anderson's theoretical framework of inclusive masculinity (Anderson, 2009), and in particular to interrogate Mark McCormack's conclusion that sixth-form colleges provide a safe space for LGBTQ students. It was suggested that the overwhelming focus of McCormack's ethnographic study on young straight men failed to fully engage with the framework of inclusive masculinities from the opposite perspective of women and LGBTQ people.

The focus on gender in the latter part of this study is largely due to the growth of a visible transgender and nonbinary presence in the LGBTQ association involved in this study over the past two years. It was recognised that some aspects of the basic methodological framework of the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid specifically and the project in general were flawed due to their adherence to the binary classification of sex and gender. It is hoped that this can be corrected in future projects through a more inclusive use of language that takes transgender and nonbinary identities into account. Nevertheless, the case study on *Wicked* features a brief discussion on how Elphaba's third gender identity in the novel is erased in the musical, and it is recognised that Tison

Pugh (2010), Doris Raab (2012) and Paris-Shun Hsiang Shi (2013) have already produced some pioneering work in this area.

This project has observed some of the key differences in the way that bisexual and gay men approach literature and musical theatre. In chapter five, it was suggested that many bisexual participants retell narratives using dichotomous language, although a detailed study of this is beyond the scope of this project. In addition, it was recognised in chapter eight that many bisexual participants in the cast, crew and audience of *Soho Cinders* were less positive towards the show due to its perceived erasure of James Prince's bisexual identity. The treatment of bisexual people as separate entities to gay and lesbian identities is the first step in redefining the academic study of sexuality within musical theatre.

Redefining the connection between gay and bisexual men and musical theatre

It was recognised at the beginning of this study that the narrative on gay and bisexual men in musical theatre was dominated by the persistent stereotype that equated musical theatre with homosexuality and effeminacy. This project suggests that this narrative continues to be perpetuated in academic work due to the narrow demographic of academic scholars that are active in this area, and the unwillingness to involve significant numbers of gay and bisexual men in the research itself. The first two chapters of this study located both the musical theatre genre and its scholars within three frameworks of masculinities developed through Robert Brannon's male sex role (1976), Raewyn Connell's hegemonic masculinity theory and Eric Anderson's inclusive masculinity theory. It is recognised that the change in masculinity identified by Anderson has the most significant impact on the younger generation, but it is generally the older generation that is involved in writing and writing about musicals.

This area of study is developed through the use of Ken Plummer's generational standpoint theory (2010), which pinpoints the effect that this factor has upon the study of sexuality. Thus the case studies of musicals both in chapter one and in the second part of this study have to consider both the perspective of the writers and the horizon of expectation of the younger participants. It was noted in chapter five that 'straight only' participants still tend to be more comfortable with male protagonists within hegemonic narrative structures, and that this tendency tends to reduce across the sexuality spectrum. This is borne out in the analysis of *Wicked* in chapter seven, which suggests that heterosexual men sometimes find it difficult to adopt different point-of-view perspectives in the same manner that female and LGBTQ audience members do, partially because most narratives do not require them to do so.

Gay and bisexual men and the 'disenfranchised protagonist'

It was suggested in chapter five that many women and gay and bisexual men connect with the archetype of the 'disenfranchised protagonist'. This character may be disenfranchised by their gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class or disability, and will typically face a struggle against societal norms. It is unsurprising that this identification is apparent, since there is a clear parallel within lived experience of oppression, but it remains unfortunate that there are still relatively few female and LGBTQ protagonists in literature and especially in musical theatre.

It is theorised that the identification of gay and bisexual men with female characters (and vice-versa) is therefore concerned with the societal position of the 'oppressed' rather than a specific affinity with perceived 'femininity'. This is seen most clearly in an analysis of Liam's online *Wicked* interview (25/07/2016), in which he details his identification with the character of Elphaba. It is particularly striking that

Liam has been able to utilise his connection with Elphaba to work through issues in his own life, and it is posited that this societal identification is particularly important to gay and bisexual men in their connection to musical theatre.

Final Conclusion

The present study concludes that many young men connect to the emotional content of musical theatre. Within the demographic constraints of this cohort, there is evidence to suggest that the majority of men involved in musical theatre identify as straight, and this is matched by the heteronormative content of many musicals. Nevertheless, the recent surge in LGBTQ musicals on Broadway has begun to encourage a wider range of protagonists for musical theatre audiences to connect with. The focus on individual perspectives within this project suggests that the connections that are made with musical theatre and narrative are often idiosyncratic, and there is much work to be done in establishing how and why these connections are made. The act of 'queering' remains an important tool in empathy, and it is apparent that some straight men are already engaging in a 'queering' process of their own. This can only help not only with the quality of musical theatre writing, but in terms of the development of young men who are able to understand why the continued interrogation of gender structures in society remains a vital process.

Appendix A – Online survey based on the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid

The data collected through this questionnaire may be used for the following research studies:

Men and Musical Theatre - a PhD thesis examining the connection between writers, composers and audience members, in particular looking at how sexuality and masculinity affect the way that men experience musical theatre and story.

Using the Klein Sexual Orientation Grid to Categorise Sexuality in Sociological Studies - an article for the Journal of Bisexuality.

In 'The Bisexual Option' (1993), Fritz Klein argued that sexuality is not only based on sexual behaviour, but also on a range of other variables. This survey is based on the Klein grid and enables a more rounded understanding of sexuality than the Kinsey spectrum.

For more information see:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Klein_Sexual_Orientation_Grid

All answers are confidential, and all responses are stored anonymously with a unique id number that can be used to access your contact information in the event of any questions regarding the survey.

The PhD researcher James Lovelock can be contacted at [REDACTED] in the event of any questions, or you can contact the lead supervisor Paul Rodmell on [REDACTED]

The survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes.

Disclaimer

This information is being collected as part of a PhD research project on men and musical theatre by James Lovelock of the Department of Music in the University of Birmingham. The information which you supply and that which may be collected as part of the research project will be entered into a filing system or database and will only be accessed by authorised personnel involved in the project. The information will be retained by the University of Birmingham and will only be used for the purpose of research, and statistical and audit purposes. By supplying this information you are consenting to the University storing your information for the purposes stated above. The information will be processed by the University of Birmingham in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. No identifiable personal data will be published.

I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information for this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw within four weeks of submitting the survey. If I withdraw my data will be removed from the study and will be destroyed.

I understand that my personal data will be processed for the purposes detailed above, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

I understand that these questions are of a personal/adult nature and include references to sex and sexuality.

I agree to keep this survey confidential in order not to impinge further research.

Based upon the above, I agree to take part in this study. *

I agree with the terms and conditions above by ticking this box

Please enter your unique id number. *

(You will have been sent this with the link for the survey - this will only be used to contact you in the event of there being any missing data or inconsistencies in answers)

Sexual Attraction

I am currently: *

- Single
- Seeing someone
- In a short-term relationship (under 6 months)
- In a medium-term relationship (6 months to a year)
- In a long-term relationship (over a year)

During the past twelve months, I have been in: *

- In a short-term relationship (under 6 months)
- In a medium-term relationship (6 months to a year)
- In a long-term relationship (over a year)
- More than one short-term relationship
- None of the above

During the past twelve months, I have been attracted to: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

In the past, I have been attracted to: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

In the future, I would expect to be attracted to: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

Sexual Behaviour

During the past twelve months, I have had sexual contact (on average): *

(Sexual contact includes mutual masturbation, oral sex or sexual intercourse)

- Every day
- Most days
- Twice a week
- Weekly
- Twice a month
- Monthly
- Occasionally
- Never

During the past twelve months, I have had sexual contact with: *

(Sexual contact includes mutual masturbation, oral sex or sexual intercourse)

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

In the past, I have had sexual contact with: *

(Sexual contact includes mutual masturbation, oral sex or sexual intercourse)

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

In the future, I would like to have sexual contact with: *

(Sexual contact includes mutual masturbation, oral sex or sexual intercourse)

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

Sexual Fantasies

During the past twelve months, I have masturbated (on average): *

- Every day
- Most days
- Twice a week
- Weekly
- Twice a month
- Monthly
- Occasionally
- Never

During the past twelve months, I have fantasised about: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

In the past, I have fantasised about: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

In the future, I would expect to fantasise about: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

During the past twelve months I have watched:

- Straight porn
- Lesbian porn
- Gay porn
- Bisexual (MFF) porn
- Bisexual (MMF) porn
- Group sex
- None

Emotional Connections

During the past twelve months, I have formed emotional connections to: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

In the past, I have formed emotional connections to: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

In the future, I would like to form emotional connections to: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

Social Connections

During the past twelve months, I have socialised with: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

In the past, I have socialised with: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

In the future, I would like to socialise with: *

- Women only
- Women mostly
- Women more
- Both men and women
- Men more
- Men mostly
- Men only
- None of the above

Lifestyle Connections

During the past twelve months, I have socialised with people that are: *

- Straight only
- Straight mostly
- Straight more
- Gay and straight
- Gay more
- Gay mostly
- Gay only

In the past, I have socialised with people that are: *

- Straight only
- Straight mostly
- Straight more
- Gay and straight
- Gay more
- Gay mostly
- Gay only

In the future, I would like to socialise with people that are: *

- Straight only
- Straight mostly
- Straight more
- Gay and straight
- Gay more
- Gay mostly
- Gay only

Self-Identification

During the past twelve months, I would identify as: *

- Straight only
- Straight mostly
- Straight more
- Bisexual
- Gay more
- Gay mostly
- Gay only
- Asexual

In the past, I would have identified as: *

- Straight only
- Straight mostly
- Straight more
- Bisexual
- Gay more
- Gay mostly
- Gay only
- Asexual

In the future, I would expect to identify as: *

- Straight only
- Straight mostly
- Straight more
- Bisexual
- Gay more
- Gay mostly
- Gay only
- Asexual

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Appendix B – Online musical theatre survey

Information

Thank you for agreeing to do a short survey on musical theatre for my PhD.

This is a very short survey, there are only ten questions and they are mostly multiple choice or ranking answers. This is a statistical analysis, so please use correctly spelt short answers without abbreviations if possible.

If you have any questions, please contact James Lovelock on [REDACTED] the lead supervisor for this project is Dr Paul Rodmell, who can be contacted on [REDACTED]

The information that has been provided in verbal interviews and online surveys is being collected as part of a PhD thesis on men, masculinity and musical theatre, by James Lovelock of the Department of Music in the University of Birmingham. The information which you have supplied and that which may be collected as part of the research project will be entered into a filing system or database and will only be accessed by authorised personnel involved in the project. The information will be retained by the University of Birmingham for up to ten years and will only be used for the purpose of research, and statistical and audit purposes. By supplying this information you are consenting to the University storing your information for the purposes stated above. The information will be processed by the University of Birmingham in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. No identifiable personal data will be published.

I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw within four weeks of the interview without giving any reason. If I withdraw my data will be removed from the study and will be destroyed.

I understand that my personal data will be processed for the purposes detailed above, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Please enter your name to confirm that you consent to any data collected from your story interview and online surveys being used in the final thesis. *

Please note that pseudonyms and initials will be used to maintain confidentiality.

Demographics

What gender do you identify as? *

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Genderqueer
- Rather not say
-

What year were you born?

What type of degree did you/do you study at university?

- Drama
- Music
- English
- Modern Languages
- Politics/International Studies
- Humanities
- Sciences
- Engineering
- Medicine or Medical Science
- Computer Science
-

Musical Theatre Experiences

What of the following best reflects your opinion on musical theatre? *

- I am a musical theatre fan
- I enjoy musical theatre when I see it
- I am ambivalent towards musical theatre
- I dislike musical theatre

Please select any of the following that apply to you:

- Audience member
- Amateur musical theatre performer
- Professional musical theatre performer
- Amateur director
- Professional director
- Amateur musical director
- Professional musical director
- Amateur choreographer
- Professional choreographer
- Amateur musical theatre writer
- Professional musical theatre writer
- None of the above

Were you involved in musical theatre productions at school? *

- yes
- no

What are your favourite musicals? *

Is musical theatre all escapism, or can we learn something from watching it? *

Escapism Learn from watching

Further Questions

What do you like most about musical theatre? *

What do you dislike most about musical theatre?

Do you have any other thoughts or opinions on musical theatre that might be useful for this study?

» [Redirection to final page of eSurvey Creator \(change\)](#)

Appendix C – *The Fairytale Moment* by Jenifer Toksvig

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The Fairytale Moment

The exercise came about in my head, really. I wish I could claim some great academic lineage for it, but I just made it up. Let me see if I can put it into words, because it was the combination of a lot of things.

I was doing some devising workshops with acting students. The devising process has its own unique challenges even if you have a lot of time and a small group of people. I had a very short space of time in which to develop stories into short, performable pieces for a large group of people.

It's my preference to cast characters onto actors, rather than vice versa. For a start, it gives me the freedom to work with whomever I want, rather than be limited by some idea of 'perfect casting'. I get to work with friends, in a happy environment, which for me is more important and helpful to a creative process than trying to aiming for a definitive creative outcome and then making the process be all about that one goal. I prefer discovery to planning, and I prefer to make creative journeys with people I like.

So it's really important to me, especially in pure actor-led devising, to encourage the discovery of characters as they naturally emerge from the actor. Plus I was working with drama students, so I wanted to give them some self-awareness: of who they are as creative artists, and of their own personal creative process, and of how a collaborative creative process can work.

Because we had so little time, and I was working with a large cast of performers I'd never met before, I needed a way to get to know something about them fast. Not just any old thing, but something emotionally truthful, so we could get on with the work of developing characters, relationships, journeys, story.

I was a stranger to them, and although there is confidence in numbers, I needed them to have confidence in me very quickly, too.

So I developed this exercise, which allows all of that in the space of about ten minutes per person, if you do it efficiently enough.

Fairytales, in their simplest form, are made of the most basic building blocks of Story. It is possible to do this exercise with any story, actually, but because fairytales and folklore cut everything down to the simplest form, and because almost everyone knows at least the very basics of most popular fairytales, they tend to be the easiest things to use.

Those building blocks are, essentially, characters in challenging situations that stimulate emotions. Since people generally go through life trying to figure out ways to be the character they want to be in the challenging situations they encounter, and all the emotions thereby stimulated.

It's how we cope: by building and building stories in our heads that help us understand and handle life, from moment to moment. It's also how we communicate: telling stories is living, and vice versa.

So it's really not unusual that people will go straight for the fairytale moment which best sums up their core emotional drive, because although we are complex animals, there do tend to be one or two moments in life that have a more profound and lasting effect on us – whether or not we realise that – and pointing at a similar kind of moment in a story is a great way to explore that aspects of ourselves without feeling that it's too personal.

Which is why I start with everyone in the room writing down their choice of fairytale, and choice of moment within it: when you start asking people 'why' (which is the most powerful question in the universe, I think) they start to realise how very personal a conversation you're having.

The skill then is only in keeping it light, being supportive, and occasionally re-focusing on the powerful reason why you're asking these questions. For my devising workshops, I talked about the creative process a lot, and observed the connections between these fairytale moments and other things that the actors felt drawn to.

For performers, it might be shows or characters they've been drawn to playing. For writers, it tends to be their choice of stories to tell. Similar emotional themes can be found running in threads that support the fabric of all their creative weaving.

It's not a trick, but it is a tool. It's not really all that clever, per se, but it is quick and efficient. In fact, I think the biggest skill in doing this is to keep one eye on the process of what you're doing, and why, as you're doing it. Process gives it a purpose other than just getting personal with someone you probably don't really know.

So that's the how and the why of me creating this thing. Using it, I have been able to form a bond between people, and create bonds between characters, very quickly. It has also provided a foundation of emotional drives to which we can continuously refer back as we explore creative journeys and processes.

One key element that I've found incredibly useful is to allow the story to emerge from the person however they want it to emerge, instead of correcting them to some other version you might know. For example, my mother, who is known for her love of providing delicious food for people, said her favourite story was "The Three Bears". Which bit?, I asked. The bit where they all sit down at the table and have a lovely meal, she replied. What about Goldilocks?, I asked. And she said...

... who?

**Appendix D – Transcript of ‘The Fairytale Moment’ interview with Gary
(29/02/2012)**

(JL) What’s your favourite moment in the story?

(Gary) When he gets into the giant’s castle.

Ok. What do you like about that bit?

I don’t know... the whole new world. I just remember the first time I got the story, it was a picture book. There were some cool pictures in there!

What were the pictures?

It was through the beanstalk into the clouds and there was a palace. I say I’m remembering the storybook, I’m also remembering the Mickey Mouse one. You know there was the Mickey Mouse video? I’m remembering that as well. You know, when he was on the jelly and stuff? I don’t know, it’s like the dining hall of the giant.

So if you were going to put one picture with the story, what would it be?

It would be Jack coming down the beanstalk with the giant following him.

Who do you identify with in that?

Jack, ‘cos he’s the hero.

What’s the overwhelming feeling that you associate with Jack? Or feelings?

Wanting to, in a way, escape the boredom of ordinary life, he’s given this chance to explore and that. Yeah, he’s quite naïve.

What is he naïve in, especially?

He’s very naïve in that he’s going into a new world so it must be better, you know, the grass is always greener on the other side. And that he is just able to take things without consequences.

So what do you think the moral of the story is, or the moral of that part of the story?

I suppose the moral of the story is that the grass is not always greener on the other side. Sometimes you should be content with what you’ve got. Don’t take things for granted. And don’t steal from giants!

We’ll come back to those later. Did you have a chance to choose some stories?

I didn’t, no.

OK, you need to think of four stories that you've really connected with, totally unrelated to this. So it could be films, could be novels, could be plays, could be TV series, could be video games – anything which has got a narrative to it, that you really feel a connection to.

I suppose the main one would be *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

What do you like about *To Kill A Mockingbird*?

It's just absolutely packed with... The Atticus Finch character, I think, is completely integral to it... It's how everyone should aspire to be, as a human being. Just his, rules that he lives his life with, I think he's brilliant.

What makes him so different though? It's not just about being good is it?

No, it's about being selfless. People say that there's never really any time that you can actually do a selfless act, you're always being selfish. But I think that with some of the things that he did, it's not – it's the whole point about, not necessarily being good but understanding other people's points of view – taking someone else's shoes and walking around with them. That was something that really connected with me the first time I read it.

I mean, apart from it being absolutely brilliant story as well, that was the kind of the main point that really jumped out at me. I mean, it's a long time that I read the book but I can still remember those sections very vividly.

Any other stories or films or musicals or anything like that?

One's that you particularly felt connected to or had an effect on you?

It's the same thing really.

Really should have thought about this. I'm trying to think of stuff where you walk out and... "wow!". You talk about it for ages. There's definitely one that should spring to mind and I can't remember it!

I mean I recently watched *All My Sons*, the David Suchet one, that was absolutely brilliant, not only because of the acting but the story as well.

You'll have to tell me a bit about that one because I've not seen it.

It's basically about a father, it basically revolves around a dad, who did have two sons who both went to war and only one returned, and they are still unsure of whether the other boy is dead. And it's revolving around one evening where the son who survived, who is back, he basically invites his brother's ex-girlfriend back, as he plans to marry her, and the history of the past gets thrown up in the air. I don't really want to tell you cos it's such... Watch it! It's brilliant. There's basically a few twists at

the end but it's... Basically at the end of it, it's a father-son relationship. And what a father would do for his son and how relationships change due to different circumstances.

That was one when I was literally... I watched it on my friend's laptop. It was one of those where you can buy the play online and watch it? So I didn't get a chance to see it but my parents went and saw it 20 years ago and said it was brilliant. So I really wanted the chance to watch it. Even just on the laptop, I was just like... at the end, I was an absolute wreck. Really good, it made you think and things like that. It throws in the whole mill as well, astrology and things like that as well. By the end of it, it's a load of bollocks, which I find is quite funny.

Erm, another story. Well, my favourite musical is *Whistle down the Wind*, the original version. So it's not very well-known. Do you know it?

I know bits of it. I'm glad you've mentioned that, you're the first person to mention a musical that's actually in the period that I'm going to be studying, which is Lloyd Webber after when he was successful, after Phantom.

Well, this is the original, there was actually an original musical that was written for the National Youth Theatre. Although I do quite like the new musical, yeah, the new musical is...ok. I think it's easy to slate Andrew Lloyd Webber, actually I think it's one of his..., I mean, it didn't run very long but I think it got good reviews – I only went to see it when I was ten. The new one's pretty good, but the old one is fantastic. It is basically set in 1950s Lancashire, and it's still the same – it revolves around three kids and they've lost the mother and they supposedly find Jesus in the barn. Well, the character is called "the Man", and then the whole story basically revolves around this convict on the loose, and, for want of a better word, all hell breaks loose. The parents find out, and the barn at the end burns down but no body is found inside except for a cross, so the whole question is, was he "The Man" or was he this Jesus-type character? The music is really haunting, it's fabulous, it's so good. And, the other good thing is no one has heard of it – yeah, that was first musical I probably did.

It's so good, the story's brilliant. Obviously Lloyd Webber changed it, by setting it in the southern United States. It's still quite good, it's the same story, but I think the music's better... more haunting in the original. I think I'll always have a soft spot in my heart, a really good recollection of that.

Excellent. One more, unless you're really stuck. Or I can do it on three if you like.

Yeah, they are probably three good ones.

The idea of this is... the thing I did with you first is a writer's exercise. Do you write at all?

Not so much any more. Physics doesn't really...

No I understand. The exercise is by Jen Toksvig, who has done a lot with National Youth Music Theatre – she's a bookwriter and a lyricist as well. She reckons that

from the fairy tale you chose, these themes – with you, probably especially the thing about not taking stuff for granted or the grass is always greener – those things, and also the idea of there being consequences, and perhaps this thing about the whole new world. Basically, this thing about going exploring and the world you leave behind – her idea would be that would be the sort of stuff that you would tend to want to write about. Might be true, might not be true, I don't know.

Is that part of your thesis?

That's part of my thesis. When I did it with her, she got it spot on. My idea is that those themes will be the things that you connect with most strongly in plays and novels. But actually, the thing that's coming through with this – and this has happened a couple of times – it's almost like the opposite. You were very focused on talking about the giant in *Jack and the Beanstalk* and this is almost the opposite. Everything you spoken about has had a very important older male character – so there's Atticus Finch, or the father in *All My Sons*, or the figure in the barn in *Whistle Down The Wind*, and I think it's something to do with that. I think that the theme that connects you to it – I mean, there is the thing about consequences as well, it's quite important...

In *All My Sons*, that is definitely true.

But also in *Whistle Down The Wind*, and it's very much open in the ending, but it is the thing about whatever you do has a consequence to it, the fact that he goes along with it. But then the next stage is that if the author has a very clear theme that goes through what he does, is the connection between the author and an audience member because they have the same theme, or is it the text in the middle – can their theme be different? That's what I'm looking at with musicals.

It's quite interesting. It's different as well. It shows that there's a bit more to it than the jazz hands!

Appendix E – Transcript of online interview about *Wicked* with Liam - 25/07/2016

Why do you like *Wicked*?

For me it all started with ‘Defying Gravity’ and the empowerment I felt from it. I first heard ‘Defying Gravity’ when I was just questioning my sexuality and who I really was. Also it came at the time when I was starting to apply to study musical theatre. Along with that came a lot of criticism and doubt that I was good enough from people I considered my friends. The same friends who I was petrified of telling I was gay.

This song gave me the empowerment I needed and also gave me hope when I was feeling down. The lyrics in particular that gave me hope were:

So if you care to find me, look to the western Sky...
Everyone deserves the chance to fly...
To those who grounded me, take a message back from me,
Tell them I’m defying gravity.

I could not wait to leave my small hometown and get to University. *Wicked* gave me that hope. I could see myself in the show and in particular I identified myself with Elphaba.

It seemed like she was saying everything I felt in her songs.

‘The Wizard and I’ – Dreaming of one day being accepted for being gay and finally getting out of the same town I lived in. “The Wizard” being future friends, future employers and future directors who did not care about me being gay and who recognized my talent. I believe that gay guys hope one day that the thing that makes them different - “their green skin” - would be accepted and not an issue. When you get to university it seems to be accepted and I couldn’t wait until that moment.

‘Defying Gravity’ – What I said above. I think this is a power anthem that gay guys can identify with because this song is like a big fuck off and you can do it with or without anyone else and you are proud of being yourself.

‘I’m Not That Girl’ –I believe everyone can identify with this song. But as a gay guy, on numerous occasions over the years I have listened to this song thinking of a straight guy who I really liked. In particular a gay guy who was not out and who I really liked and who liked me but he had a girlfriend and didn’t want to tell anyone about him. Again as a gay guy you can identify with the song because you see people in a relationship and you “are not that girl”. You honestly believe as a gay guy will never find love and that you tell yourself you need to stop wanting it so bad because it will never happen – This can be reflected in the lyrics “Don’t wish, don’t start. Wishing only wounds the heart.”

‘No Good Deed’ –I always strive to be as nice as possible and kind to everyone. But the amount of times it has come to bite me in the bum. Like it would seem at times; the nicer I was the more I’d be bullied or made out to be fake. I could really see myself in Elphaba here. She is at rock bottom, thinking Fiyero has died and that maybe she is wicked after all. A few times I honestly felt that perhaps the reason people were so nasty to me was because perhaps I was not really nice. For that would make sense.

People found it so easy to be horrible to me and against me and who I was. ('Was I really seeking good, or was I just seeking attention, is that all good deeds are when looked at with an ice cold eye') It made me question everything about myself. Sure I thought I was being nice and meant well but perhaps that wasn't the case. Perhaps being gay took away from the nice person I was trying to be and that being gay made me inherently bad. ('Sure I meant well, but look what well meant did'). The amount of times I swore I would no longer be nice because clearly deep down I wasn't. Everyone seemed to see me that way. ('Alright enough, so be it, so be it then. Let all Oz be agreed I'm wicked through and through. I promise no good deed will I attempt to do again. Ever again. No good deed, will I do again').

'As Long As You're Mine' -

Kiss me too fiercely,
Hold me too tight.
I need help believing you're with me tonight,
My wildest dreaming's could not foresee,
With you lying beside you with you wanting me.

When you experience that first same sex relationship. And you cannot believe it is finally happening. This again relates to the belief that you will not find love and that you can't believe this moment is happening and that you think it will be over soon so you will make it last in your head forever - 'If it turns out it's over too fast, I'll make every last moment last'

I love Wicked, honestly. It really does mean everything to me that show.

Which character do you most identify with?

I honestly do see myself in Elphaba. Everything she overcomes and everything she faces is really is similar to what gay men face. I love that she gets her happy ending. Whilst it may not be perfect it is like a whole arch of how gay guys come out. I do love her as a character. It sounds stupid, but she honestly has been someone I have looked up to. Because she gets through it and does have her own happy ending.

For me, Glinda was always the straight popular friend who got everything she wanted. When you are young and gay and you view the world not through rose tinted glasses you really do see yourself as Elphaba. However, it's fitting that by the end of the show that both Elphie and Glinda have learnt from each other. Your sexuality is not an issue and your true friends will be there with you.

Musicals to me always have a deep meaning. I love Wicked so much because I have always been able to find a place in it. No matter what age, I do find I sometimes need to listen to 'Defying Gravity'. Just to make me feel better.

Appendix F – ‘Fairytale Moment’ interviews with George Stiles and Anthony Drewe – 01/04/2014

Anthony Drewe

Snow White and the Seven Dwarves

- Jealous Queen has most beautiful girl in the kingdom taken into the wilderness to be killed
- She meets seven dwarves who take her in
- Meets handsome prince
- Wicked Queen is overthrown
- Snow White becomes the princess

The first meeting between the dwarves and Snow White

Of course I’m thinking Disney at the moment...

I like the characteristics of the dwarves and the way they deal with an impostor having broken in and tidied up their house.

A little bit Goldilocks – whose been sleeping in my bed kind of thing, but seven times over

Do you have a favourite dwarf?

Oh, Dopey. I like Dopey and Doc are my two favourites.

But I think Doc was kind of the brains, they all had such strong attributes, but he was the more sensible one. He was... within the dwarf community he was the father figure. One of them was really grumpy... was he called Grumpy?

Why do you think that part of the story is particularly important?

In a way, it’s a bit like the justice was served. The kindly woodcutter hadn’t killed her and now, rather than being lost on her own in a horrible jungle, you start to see the rejuvenation of Snow White, because the dwarves are nice to her and she’s suddenly found somewhere where she is safe.

George Stiles

Red Riding Hood

- Young girl is charged with going to take goodies to her granny in the world
- She sets out and is waylaid by a wolf but manages to escape and get to her granny's house, where she finds Granny is not Granny at all but the big bad wolf lying in the bed
- And depending on which version you know, she then removes Granny from the wolf's stomach, with or without the aid of somebody else.
- I'm basing this on Sondheim
- I'm remembering that Goldilocks, with the woodcutter, pulls Granny out of the wolf, and they all have a nice lunch with the baked produce that she has provided, with wolf sliders.

What is your favourite moment from that?

Red Riding Hood's first encounter with the wolf – that is, inevitably, because of Sondheim

What do you particularly like about that moment?

I think because of Sondheim I like the... I like the confused messages of being intrigued by what's right and what's exciting, and what she should do, and what her parents have said, and what she wants to do, which is maybe to find out a bit more about the wolf. Whether that's there in the original, I couldn't even tell you.

How do you imagine the wolf?

Looks a bit like Michael Xavier... Definitely urbane and lascivious and predatory... but utterly charming. I love clever villains, I think, they are always the best parts, and when they are a little sophisticated and not obvious they are always the best, like the most recent Bond film.

If you were going to cast yourself in LRRH, what part would you play?

Red Riding Hood – to have the adventure, she comes out on top.

What do you think is the meaning or the message or the moral of the fairytale?

I think like all good fairytales, I think it's quite mixed. I think it's that adventures have to be lived sometimes in order to... of course it's cautionary but it's also about having adventures in order to learn.

Appendix G – Online survey based on *Soho Cinders* concert performance

Demographics and Permissions

Thank you for agreeing to do a short survey about *Soho Cinders* for my PhD. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SURVEY IS ABOUT THE MUSICAL ITSELF RATHER THAN THE PERFORMANCE.

If you have any questions, please contact James Lovelock on [REDACTED]. The lead supervisor for this project is Dr Paul Rodmell, who can be contacted on [REDACTED].

The information that has been provided in verbal interviews and online surveys is being collected as part of a PhD thesis on men, masculinity and musical theatre, by James Lovelock of the Department of Music in the University of Birmingham. The information which you have supplied and that which may be collected as part of the research project will be entered into a filing system or database and will only be accessed by authorised personnel involved in the project. The information will be retained by the University of Birmingham for up to ten years and will only be used for the purpose of research, and statistical and audit purposes. By supplying this information you are consenting to the University storing your information for the purposes stated above. The information will be processed by the University of Birmingham in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998. No identifiable personal data will be published.

I confirm that I have read and understand the participant information sheet for this study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions if necessary and have had these answered satisfactorily. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw within four weeks of the interview without giving any reason. If I withdraw my data will be removed from the study and will be destroyed.

I understand that my personal data will be processed for the purposes detailed above, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Please enter your name to confirm that you consent to any data collected from this survey being used in the final thesis. *

Please note that pseudonyms will be used in the final paper to maintain confidentiality.

Please indicate how you took part in the recent performance of *Soho Cinders*. *

- Audience member
- Cast member
- Musician
- Creative Team

How would you define your gender? *

- Male
- Female
- Genderqueer
- Rather not say
- Other

How would you describe your sexuality? *

This PhD study deals especially with how sexuality impacts the interpretation of story and music, so it would be very helpful if you would be prepared to answer this question. If you feel uncomfortable, then please feel free to answer 'rather not say'. This question is asking you to self-identify as one of the options below based on your own understanding of sexuality, but please see <http://www.youngsouthampton.org/children-and-young-people/advice/relationships/sexuality/klein-sexual-orientation-grid-quiz.aspx> if you would like to explore the concept of sexuality further.

- Straight only
- Straight mostly
- Straight more
- Bisexual
- Gay more
- Gay mostly
- Gay only
- Pansexual
- Asexual
- Rather not say
- Other

Soho Cinders - The Story

Choose three words to describe Soho Cinders. *

First word

Second word

Third word

Please write the story of Soho Cinders as you remember it in 5-6 bullet points.

What was your favourite song from Soho Cinders? *

What was your favourite moment from the musical? *

Who was your favourite character(s) from Soho Cinders? *

- Robbie
- Velcro
- James Prince
- Marilyn Platt
- Clodagh and Dana
- William George
- Lord Bellingham
- Sasha
- Sidesaddle

What do you think is the main theme of Soho Cinders? *

Soho Cinders - Other Information

How much did you enjoy Soho Cinders as a musical? *

This question is about the musical itself rather than the quality of the specific performance that you attended.

Not at all I enjoyed it immensely

Please rank the following elements in order of enjoyment. *

Music

Lyrics

Overall Story

Dialogue

How did you feel about the depiction of LGBTQ themes in the musical?

Do you have any further comments about the musical?

This question is about the musical itself rather than the specific performance that you attended.

» [Redirection to final page of eSurvey Creator \(change\)](#)

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