THE SEMIOTICS OF CELEBRITY AT THE INTERSECTION OF HOLLYWOOD AND
BROADWAY

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ABSTRACT

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In 1990, Michael L. Quinn, in his essay, “Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting,” considered celebrity phenomenon—and its growth in the latter part of the 20th century—and the affect it had on media, society, and the role and performance of the actor. Throughout the first fifteen years of the 21st century, there has been a multitude of film and television stars headlining in Broadway and Off-Broadway shows. Despite this phenomena, there is currently an absence of scholarship investigating how the casting of Hollywood stars in stage productions affects those individuals in the theatre audience. In this dissertation, I identify, using a variety of semiotic theories, ways in which celebrity is signified by exploring 21st century Broadway and Off-Broadway productions with Hollywood film and television star casting.

Hollywood is an industry that thrives on perpetuating celebrity. Film and television stars are products that need to cultivate a consumer base. Every star in Hollywood has specific attributes that are deemed valuable; these values are then marketed and sold to the public, creating a connection between the star and certain values. A film or television star is an established actor who has received fame and acclaim for a least one role that was critically lauded, or their past roles become a part of their value and product. Throughout the first three chapters of this dissertation, I explore the types of signification that can stem from product, value, and past roles using a variety of productions as case studies: Equus, Orphans, Sister Act: The Musical, Asuncion, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, Fences, Godspell, How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying, and The Best Man. The first half of each chapter addresses how significations of product, value, and past roles are established, while the second
half of each chapter uses the case studies to demonstrate how these significations made prior to
the performance and during the performance can affect the perception and reception of an
audience member. In my final chapter, I take into consideration how theatrical frames can affect
the signification process, and how product, value, and past roles are recalled and signified during
the star’s performance using Picnic, Death of a Salesman, and No Man’s Land/Waiting for
Godot as case studies. My research found that: The star as a sign is complex and the
significations a reader can call to mind are numerous. Preconceived notions and memories affect
the audience as a star’s product, value and associations, and past roles become signified thus
shaping the perception and reception of both the star and the production.
Dedicated to Jane and Charles Hadley
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INTRODUCTION

The celebrity figure is an alternative reference, competing with and structuring the role of the stage figure as it promotes its own illusion.

Michael L. Quinn

“Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting”

Arguably, in the second decade of the 21st century, stars have more exposure than at any time before in history. This is due in part to the interlocking force of the continued ascendancy of the World Wide Web, the advent of social media, and the proliferation of celebrity entertainment media. Social media, for instance, now provides fans with a detached yet also direct (or perceived as direct) form of contact to stars, changing the dynamic of celebrity and the need for the star to engage personally with the public. Likewise, information about one’s favorite celebrity is almost immediately available, just a Google search away. And, the now ubiquitous 24-hour news cycle requires a constant source of news, including celebrity news, to ensure its very survival. It is because of the prevalence of celebrity in our culture that I am interested in the effects it has on the audience and its perception and reception of theatre, specifically commercial theatre in New York City. The increasing numbers of film and televisions stars who choose—or are advised to choose—to take a turn on the New York commercial stage indicates that this trend is only growing in popularity. To be sure, the 2014-2015 Broadway season saw the opening of 37 new shows, and 21 (or 56.75%) of those had a film or television star cast in a major role. This has greatly increased from the 2000-2001 season, which saw 10 of 28 (35.71%) new shows opening with film or television star casting. This increase is notable; moreover, as more and
more film and television stars are cast in Broadway and Off-Broadway productions, I question how individuals perceive these stars, before, during, and after the performance.

Before his premature death in 1994, theatre and performance semiotician Michael L. Quinn wrote his essay, “Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting,” which stands as an early study into the function of celebrity in contemporary culture and its effects on performance. In it he writes, “The system of celebrity production and reception provides an important supplement to performance study that is frequently dismissed by serious contemporary criticism, despite the apparent growth of celebrity phenomena as reflected in new venues like entertainment news, sneak previews, and an endless assortment of similar apparati” (“Celebrity” 154). I regard Quinn’s remarks as something of a call to action. More specifically, its premise undergirds my investigation of how celebrity, especially from the Hollywood film and television industries, has intersected with New York City commercial theatre (specifically Broadway and Off-Broadway) in the 21st century.¹

In discussing the image of the celebrity, Quinn addresses issues with the celebrity-audience relationship via film. He writes, “There is no live celebrity present on the screen; the image is clearly a filmic figure, a projection arranged for aesthetic perception” (“Celebrity” 155). Quinn suggests that seeing a star perform on film might have different semiotic associations

¹ In the 21st century, Broadway has become a billion-dollar industry with tourists coming from across the globe to see the spectacle, ingenuity, and craft of American commercial theatre. Film production companies such as Columbia, Touchstone, Sony, and Fox Searchlight have become frequent Broadway producers, lending finances, franchises, and stars to the Broadway and Off-Broadway stage.
because film is a projected image. This idea guides my research as I parse through how the film/television star’s body is read on (and in association with) a theatrical stage. Quinn also proposes that there exists an intertextuality when the celebrity takes on a particular role; I believe this makes semiotics a particularly apropos mode of analysis, which identifies ways that the film and television star may be read on stage in an age where the amount of knowledge about stars’ private and public lives is extremely high. While Quinn’s essay interrogates celebrity and acting writ large, he illuminates the problematic situation of a star’s celebrity and its effect on stage productions and the audience. Quinn is speaking broadly about a contemporary concept of celebrity and stardom. Since my focus is on the contemporary commercial theatre in New York City, I believe a brief exploration of stardom in American theatre will help to contextualize the content and structure of my project. Following this historical overview, I will lay out my key research question, describe the methodology and method, indicate my limitations, define consequential terminology, review the theoretical lenses and literature that informs my thinking, and conclude with a chapter breakdown. As I chronicle the history of stars in American theatre, I rely on the histories of the phenomenon compiled by Barry King, Nigel Cliff, Timothy R. White, and Jack Poggi.

Stardom in theatre is a concept that predates American theatre. King, in his book, Taking Fame to Market: On the Pre-History and Post-History of Hollywood Stardom, uses David Garrick—a popular actor in 18th century England—as a model example of early stardom; however, he argues that the modern concept of stardom blossomed with the rise of the cinema. King contends that the rise of the star in the time of Garrick aggrandized the role of the actor, which previously carried little respect or place within society. By prominently casting a theatrical star in a play, theatre suddenly had the potential to increase its signification amidst the populace.
Casting a star in a play made (and still makes) for a distinct and rare opportunity to see a celebrated (or at least famous) actor perform to a small and select group of people. Stars brought crowds and money to the theatre, so it became in the theatre’s best interest to establish and develop gifted actors into stars. If Garrick was indeed the first theatrical star, as King argues, then he paved the way for a host of other actors who soon followed in his wake, including William Charles Macready, Edwin Forrest, and Edwin Booth. The 1849 riot at Astor Place in New York City is a perspicuous case of how these 19th century stars gathered a following of audience members and fans and were capable of inciting them to action. I cite this particular infamous moment in history because it shows the power stars hold over the public to take action as well as just how strongly certain individuals regard and defend their favorite stars. The Astor Place riot was bred of a rivalry between the American born actor and star, Forrest, and British actor and star Macready, who both performed Shakespeare’s roles with great adoration from their publics.

Nigel Cliff writes in *Shakespeare Riots: Revenge Drama and Death in Nineteenth-Century America* that Forrest “became the first homegrown American star” (28). In a way, Forrest signified America and patriotism. Stardom seemed a natural fit to Forrest; he embraced renown and often let this inflate his sense of self. His popularity within the American popular culture of the early to mid-19th century was widespread. Cliff reports, “Racehorses, fire engines, locomotives, and ships had been named for him. Men modeled their beards, haircuts, and mannerisms after his. Public banquets were thrown and gold medals struck in his honor” (87). Likewise, Macready also managed his role as a star and the renown that came along with it. Despite being British, Macready had a strong following in America. Cliff reports, “Admirers begged him for locks of his hair, perfumed flowers turned up on his doorstep and billets-doux
fluttered into his scented dressing room” (75). Cliff’s example of the adoration fans felt for both Forrest and Macready illustrates that even before the rise of technology, stars had a great influence over American theatregoers. Both men were distinct stars, known and remembered for playing particular Shakespearian roles—in fact, Forrest, Macready, and many other stars at the time were synonymous with their most successful past roles—and in a sense became commodities that theatre producers and the stars themselves could count on. Forrest and Macready provide just one example of how the star system in early American theatre influenced audiences. Timothy R. White and Jack Poggi provide a more detailed picture of how other stars following them were situated in American theatre and how they had an effect on audiences.

In Blue Collar Broadway: The Craft and Industry of American Theatre, White argues that the star system was integral to the American theatre scene in the mid-19th century. He writes, “From the 1850’s to the 1870’s, stock theatres existed in just about every major city in America and also in more than a few Podunk towns. At the peak of their influence, they probably totaled approximately five hundred in number from sea to shining sea” (26). Throughout the 19th century, stock companies and combination companies both performed popular plays—many from Shakespeare’s repertoire—and drew impressive crowds. White continues, “Regular stock theatre sustained local ‘stars’ in cities such as Buffalo, New York, or Winston-Salem, North Carolina, but no one on the scale of [Edmund] Kean or successors such as Charles Macready or Henry Irving” (27). Local stars had the ability to bring in audiences and surely had their own significations on the stage. As more and more famous stars began to tour through American theatres, local stardom faded away to national stardom. Only those actors who could captivate the attention of the nation would find their way into profitable touring companies.
White argues as well that stars saw benefits to touring that they could not receive by performing solely in New York City and London. The commercial American theatre was a national enterprise and stars could gain national attention in touring a successful production. “Whether one paid to see Augustin Daly’s stock company as it toured in Denver or Laura Keene in stock in San Francisco, the shows available were quite similar” (White 13). The factor that differed between companies was the stars headlining each troupe. Audiences longed for star performers. I conjecture that the familiarity of the star and having the opportunity to enjoy their talents repeatedly held large appeal with audiences. It could also be seen as a privilege to have a somewhat famous actor come to one’s local theatre to perform. Regarding this, White reports, “[I]t would appear that many theatregoers in distant corners of the United States were beside themselves that a star had come from London or New York to visit their humble hometowns. It was the hangover of becoming drunk with excitement over a visiting star” (27). Famous actors (stars) were elevated in value. They provided an experience that could not be repeated by the local actors. As tours with stars became more and more frequent, “actors who had been playing in town for years suddenly paled in comparison to the memory of the recently departed luminary” (White 27). Stars were in demand as the value placed in them by the public rose and theatrical managers knew that to have a successful theatre meant booking shows with big name stars. As the Theatrical Syndicate and the Shubert brothers began to monopolize theatres in New York City and throughout America, beginning at the end of the 19th century, and continuing through the first three decades of the 20th, stars were caught up in their battle for control.

In Theater in America: The Impact of Economic Forces, 1870 – 1967, Poggi writes that “around 1870 the American theater began to undergo an economic revolution. Hundreds of independent stock companies disappeared and were replaced by a few producing units in New
York City that sent their wares to syndicated theatres throughout the country” (xv). To address this vacancy in the market, in 1896, A. L. Erlanger, Marc Klaw, Al Haymen, Charles Frohman, S. F. Nixon, and J. F. Zimmerman began the formation of the Theatrical Syndicate. Each man was either a theatrical manager or booking agent who believed the state of the American theatre was in disorder and saw an opportunity for profit. The Theatre Syndicate thrived on monopolizing star actors to ensure greater attendance for their productions. Forcing stars to remain exclusive with Syndicate theatres placed strain on other theatre companies, and forced them to change their dynamic. The Syndicate used stars’ commodity, value, and past roles as a financial coup. Their monopolization of theatres and stars went mostly unchallenged until the Shubert brothers began to amass theatres in New York City and other major metropolises.

Lee, Samuel, and Jacob Shubert challenged the Syndicate’s monopoly and eventually replaced it with their own. In 1906, the Shuberts controlled over fifty theatres nationally, six of which were in New York City; by 1910 they controlled seventy theatres, thirteen of which were in the City (Poggi 17-9). The Shuberts continued to build and acquire theatres throughout the next decade. “By October, 1925, they controlled a chain of ninety-two first-class theaters, including thirty-two in New York, ten in Chicago, six in Philadelphia, five in Boston, four in Detroit, twenty-nine in three other large cities, and six in small towns” (Poggi 17-20). As the Broadway theatre industry, under the guidance of the Shuberts, grew, the quality of productions also grew. The fight for control of the American theatre was not only a fight for territory, buildings, and real estate, but also a fight for the leading actors of their time, the stars. However, it was not necessarily the stars that the Syndicate and the Shuberts fought for, but for what the stars signified. Through this brief historical review, three elements of celebrity are brought to
light: how stars were conceived of as products, how they had value, and how they were associated with past roles.

Reflecting on these three elements of celebrity, my primary research question becomes clear. Considering the signification of the star via product, value and associations, and past roles, how does an individual signify Hollywood film or television star when he or she appears in a Broadway or Off-Broadway show and what affect does product, value, and past roles have on their perception and reception of the star and the production? In Chapter I, I specifically look at how stars are used as products, and the affect that the marketing of the star as product has on the perception and expectations of the audience. In Chapter II, I explore ways in which stars are assessed and valued and how this value affects the possible significations of the star. In Chapter III, I consider how memories of the star and their past performances affect the signification process. Finally, in Chapter IV, I examine how the previous significations of the star come to bear on the signification of the star during performance in a variety of theatrical frames. In sum, it is my intention with this study to provide a range of responses that an individual audience member might experience when a star is cast in a production.

To complete my research, I developed a methodology, principally using semiotic theory, and incorporated two methods: case study and qualitative inquiry. My study primarily focuses on a semiotic analysis of the tripartite juxtaposition of Hollywood film and television stars, the public (audiences), and Broadway and Off-Broadway theatre. In my research, I first look to recent Broadway and Off-Broadway productions with prominent star casting. Using these recent productions as case studies, I analyze ways in which the star can be read and how this reading might affect an individual’s decision to purchase tickets, assess value, form expectations, and receive the performance. The first three chapters focus predominantly on the preproduction stage
of development and the individual’s assessment of marketing, value, and image. The final chapter focuses on production and how kinesics, the reading of the star’s body on stage during performance, affects the signification of the star within a range of theatrical frames.

In determining what stars and productions on which to focus, I reviewed Broadway productions from the 2000-2001 season through the 2014-2015 season. I compiled a list of Hollywood film and television stars and the Broadway and Off-Broadway productions in which they were cast. I narrowed down my list of productions to those shows that would serve as suitable case studies for each chapter. After compiling a list of possible productions to include in this study, I contacted the stars, playwrights, producers, and other industry professionals involved, asking them to complete the questionnaire or agree to an interview about their New York City theatre experience. Unfortunately, due to their busy schedules, I only received one

2 In the questionnaire/interview for film and television stars (approved, as were all questionnaire, interview, and survey questions by the Bowling Green State University, Human Subject Review Board), I asked the individuals to respond to a variety of questions about their experience performing on the New York City stage. To gather the prospective of producers and other industry professionals involved in bringing film and television stars to Broadway, I asked a variety of questions to gather perspectives and experiences about film and television stars performing in New York. In selecting playwrights for the interview/questionnaire, I chose authors of new works. While I selected playwrights from my list of possible productions for this study, I was not beholden to it. In this area, I choose to expand my range in seeking the responses of playwrights because film and television stars often perform in revivals of known works and the pool for playwrights of new works on Broadway/Off-Broadway with film and television star casting is quite small. In the interview/questionnaire for playwrights, I asked questions regarding
reply: from film star Jesse Eisenberg. To gather audience responses, I created an online questionnaire using SurveyMonkey for audience members to provide feedback in regards to their experience attending a play or musical with star casting. I used social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit) and e-mail to recruit participants. Although I did not amass sufficient data from actors, producers, and playwrights, I did gather useful data from audience members, which appears throughout the study, and underscores some of my claims and assertions.

In terms of my limitations, I have focused the scope of my research to investigate only film and television stars, to focus solely on Broadway and Off-Broadway stage productions in New York City, and to narrow my focus to contemporary productions within the last fifteen years. While I understand that film and television stars are not the only people with celebrity to perform on Broadway—musicians, reality stars, entertainment personalities, and athletes have also performed—I chose to focus on their performances because they seem to be the most frequent. In choosing to investigate only film and television stars, I have excluded those who are identified primarily as Broadway stars. Therefore, stars that became famous for their work on Broadway or began their careers as a Broadway or Off-Broadway actor, such as Audra McDonald, Benjamin Walker, Christian Borle, Jonathan Groff, Kristin Chenoweth, and Idina Menzel, are not included in this study. Additionally, although I recognize that film and television stars perform in Los Angeles, Chicago, and in other venues throughout the country, I have chosen to focus on Broadway and Off-Broadway productions because of the pervasiveness of reoccurring Hollywood casting.

how they believed the casting of star affected the play and their careers. All HSRB materials can be found in Appendix B. Interview questions and survey questions can be found in Appendix C and the data collected from the audience survey can be found in Tables.
While I primarily define specialized terminology as it is introduced within the chapters, I feel it is important to address here the concepts of celebrity and stardom, and how I reference these terms forthwith. To parse these often-conflated terms, I start by simply citing the *Oxford English Dictionary*. There, the word “star” is defined as “a person of brilliant reputation or talents” and “celebrity” is defined as “the condition of being much extoled or talked about; famousness, notoriety.” Following these definitions, I use the term star when indicating a person and celebrity when discussing the condition of renown. Many scholars have analyzed the system of celebrity, proliferated by Hollywood, also referred to as the “star system.” From this body of literature, I explore the works of Daniel J. Boorstin, Richard deCordova, Christine Geraghty, and Barry King. I cite these particular scholars because their writings have helped to shape my understanding of celebrity and stardom and how I distinguish these terms.

A foundational work in the field of celebrity and star studies is Daniel J. Boorstin’s *The Image: A Guide to the Pseudo-Events in America* (1962). Boorstin argues that stars are “celebrities of the entertainment world” who are “distinguished by their well-knownness more than by any other quality” (154). Boorstin considers stars a species of the genus celebrity. For him, celebrity is an umbrella term that incorporates actors, politicians, athletes, singers, etc. The term star specifically addresses a celebrity in the entertainment industry. He admits, “Of course the star had first appeared as an actor – a person skilled at playing assigned roles. Originally it was the play that gave form to the product. But when the system became established, the relation between the play and the player was reversed” (158). Boorstin discusses an important evolution here that supports my overall argument. Actors who gain fame and notoriety—the foundations of celebrity—become stars, and with their fame, they overshadow the play. To further clarify, Boorstin is stating that celebrity is a state of renown and actors possessing this state are stars.
Thus, “the sign of a true star was in fact that whatever he appeared in was only a “vehicle.” The actor himself was no longer tested by his ability to interpret the play. Instead, the play was tested by its ability to display the actor” (158). Boorstin provides a clear description of celebrity and stardom that is not overly complicated or laden with further markers, indicators, or criteria. I concur with his distinctions where celebrity acts as a baldachin under which stars reside. As other scholars wrote on the subject of stardom and celebrity, the complexity of the phenomenon increased.

Expanding on Boorstin’s ideas, deCordova’s 1990 essay “The Emergence of the Star System in America,” illustrates three forms (the actor, the picture personality, and the star) and how different types of codified knowledge aid in perpetuating the form. deCordova establishes criteria for stardom and introduces a continuum of celebrity. It is important to note that not every star has the same level of stardom. The perception of the star is left up to the individual who must calculate the actor’s worth (fame) for him or herself. The actor is the genesis of these three forms; it is the unknown physical body on stage that is representing a character. It is the embodiment of talent, techniques, and opportunity. Once an actor has become recognizable by name, they achieve the next form, the picture personality. The picture personality, deCordova suggests, differs from the star via three distinct forms of knowledge. “The first pertained to the circulation of the name,” the second was intertextuality, which “emerged as a measure of the increasing regularity and regulation of the cinematic institution” both in terms of product and audience, the third “pertained to the professional experience of the actor” (deCordova 137). In short, “knowledge about the picture personality was restricted to the player’s professional existence – either to his /her representation in films or to his /her previous work in film and theater” (deCordova 138). Finally, the star includes a “paradigm” of “professional life/private”
life (deCordova 138). Therefore, deCordova delineates that the “private and professional become two autonomous spheres that can be articulated in paradigm” (138). In the 21st century, the private life of the star seems to shrink in the wake of cameras in every phone and the ease with which the Internet transmits information. According to deCordova’s model, as fame and renown increase so does an actor’s position within the industry from unknown actor, to picture personality, to star. I agree with deCordova’s notion that stardom is hierarchical. Not every film actor is a movie star; however, the criteria in making this distinction are still vague and somewhat personalized. This allows for some flexibility in determining stardom that I adopt within my arguments.

Following deCordova, in 2000, Geraghty further compounds the definitions of celebrity and stardom by unpacking the typical model of stardom and categorizing the celebrity, the professional, and the performer. Geraghty situates the celebrity as “someone whose fame rests overwhelmingly on what happens outside the sphere of their work and who is famous for having a lifestyle. The celebrity is thus constructed through gossip, press, and television reports, magazine articles, and public relations” (99). She contrasts celebrities to professionals “whose fame rests on their work in such a way that there is very little sense of a private life and the emphasis is on the seamlessness of the public persona”—and to performers—“who are associated with work and the public element of the star duality rather than the private life of the celebrity” (99). Therefore, the “star as celebrity” focuses on an intertextual knowledge of the individual gathered from a host of entertainment sources; the “star as professional” relies on knowledge derived from the context of the star’s work (identification with a role or with a particular genre); and the “star as performer”—acting as a “reversal to the celebrity category”—emphasizes the performance and the work of the star not the leisure and the private sphere”
Geraghty posits new indicator/markers of what constitutes celebrity and star. Like deCordova, her categorization—of the star as celebrity, star as professional, and star as performer—broadens the definition of the star while making distinctions between levels of stardom. This complicates matters if one is to be fixated on terms. While the degree of celebrity is dependent on the star, it is also dependent on an individual’s perception. Thus, I determine that the celebrity (star power) of the star is mutable and relative.

King—in 2015—distinguishes the star slightly differently from Geraghty, unfurling the concept into smaller component parts. He indicates, “the foci of meaning are personage, person, character, and persona” (Taking Fame 9). King refers to a personage as a performer who is famous “for the role s/he holds in a particular social setting exclusive or antecedent to any role” and cites Sir Kenneth Branagh as example; personage signifies, in the case of Branagh, the becoming of an “institutional symbol rather than just a star” (Taking Fame 9). The character is representative of “a performer who may be renowned for his or her performance of a single character or a type of character, effectively playing cameos or avatars of the same character throughout his or her professional life” (Taking Fame 9). The persona illustrates a performer who has constructed a professional identity, “a durable image that draws upon the selection of personal qualities that exemplifies a type” (Taking Fame 9). The person denotes a performer who presents “a likeable image of him/herself which answers to the fact of being on a show but is not adjusted to the demands of fitting the self to a fictional character,” such as reality stars and talk show hosts (Taking Fame 9). King’s articulation of his typography of stars demonstrates the extent that star studies has developed since Boorstin. I make use of the concepts of personage, person, character, and persona, as defined by King, and use this breakdown of stardom to analyze particular motivations for inclusion, as well as, to particulate the connection between
actors and their audiences and fans. Throughout each scholar’s writing much remains the same in terms of the larger context of celebrity and stardom; however, the progression of mediation through the last fifty years has condensed and further complicated the ideas of the celebrity and star.

Throughout this study, I marry the concepts of celebrity and stardom with semiotics. While there have been many notable scholars who have written on semiotics—and theatre semiotics specifically—I rely on the writing of Roland Barthes, Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Peirce, and Michael L. Quinn. Each scholar provides a different view of semiotics that directly applies to the analyses I conduct in each chapter. Because I review each scholar’s ideas on semiotics in detail within the chapters, I will only provide a snapshot of each semiotician presently.

Barthes found the use of semiotics helpful in his analyses of culture and value. His focus of study revolved around the image, particularly the photograph. Believing that a photograph could be read and interpreted differently by different individuals in different groups, Barthes studied both the denotation, the very thing the image is indicating, and the connotation, an implication or identification the image seems to be signifying. Barthes believed that images could be manipulated to send messages that could be used for communication. I use Barthes mode of semiotic analysis to study the advertising and marketing of the star’s image and how it creates significations for the star prior to performance.

Before Barthes, Saussure helped to lay the foundation for semiotics. His writings on semiology used the forms of sign/signifier/signified to explain how written language is expressed and understood by individuals. He believed that patterns and functions of language related to signs and that words and phrases could constitute sign functions. The sign is completed when,
for example, the letters “t-r-e-e” act as the signifier and the image of a tree is signified as a response. Though his approach was largely focused on linguistics, Saussure terminology—sign/signified/signifier—has been adopted or appropriated by semioticians who came after. Saussure emphasized that value existed within the semiotic chain. I bring to bear this idea into the semiotic reading of the star’s sign as I explore ways in which the star has a specific value.

Peirce, another founder of semiotic theory, expands on Saussure’s writing and discusses semiotics outside of the confines of language. He defined three categories for signs: the icon, the index, and the symbol and established and introduced the sign/object/interpretant as the three basic semiotic elements. Peirce’s expanded view of semiotics allows for the making of meaning and allows for a variety of interpretants. When the star represents the object element of the sign function, the interpretant is dependent on interpretation. Calling upon Peirce’s theories on semiotics, I review how the star can have multiple significations and exist as multiple signs simultaneously. I use Peirce’s theories on semiotics in tandem with Marvin Carlson’s “ghosting” to show how memory affects how various signified responses emerge from significant recollections.

Quinn’s writing on semiotics features an explication of the Prague School and their views on structuralism and semiotics. The Prague School used the artifact/mental object/referent as their basic semiotic elements and focused on the how structure and memory affected semiotic analysis in the theatre. This group of scholars gave special attention to the semiotics of acting, and how structures, norms, and cultural perceptions affect the reading of the sign (namely the actor). Incorporating Quinn’s writing on semiotics with Erving Goffman’s description of the theatrical frame and Erika Fischer-Lichte’s explication of kinesics, I determine how
significations during performance, and previous significations made and recalled, affect individual audience members.

As I lay out a map of the following chapters, I wish to reiterate that the structure of this dissertation builds predominantly from the preproduction stage of development to the production. In Chapter I, “Product and Marketing,” I describe how the star is marketed and read as a “Broadway product.” I begin the chapter highlighting Hamish Pringle’s research into celebrities in advertising by discussing how the role of the Hollywood film and television star is an established product and discuss how star casting represents a type of celebrity endorsement. This creates a need for producers to cast the right star in the role. Using Barrie Gunter’s writing on celebrity capital, I parse through ways in which the star is beneficial to the marketing process. Finally, using Barthes’ ideas on semiotics, I will explore how celebrity product was sold through three case studies: Equus (2008), Orphans (2013), and Sister Act: The Musical (2011).

In Chapter II, “Value and Assessment,” I determine ways in which stars are assessed and given value. As I lay out in Chapter I, each star is a particular product. How that product is marketed and interpreted affects the star’s value. In this chapter, I begin with an in-depth explication of value and assessment using Barbara Herrnstein Smith and Deshun Li. After exploring the ways in which value is assessed, I introduce possible criteria that might prove relevant in the assessment of stars: Joseph Roach’s concept of It, box office success, star power, actor training, elasticity, and awards. Using Saussurean semiotics (with an emphasis on value), I explore how value might be read in casting and representation through three case studies: Asuncion (2011), Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike (2013), and Fences (2010).

I seek to explore how audiences decode the image of the star in Chapter III, “Memory and Fandom.” Using Marvin Carlson and Roach’s writings on memory and theatre—
predominantly using Carlson’s concept of ghosting in my analyses—I explore ways in which audiences make semiotic connections with actor’s bodies on the stage. Product and value have an effect on a star’s ghosts. The previous established memories of the star come to bear on the perception of the star in the present. In this chapter, I determine how previous roles and an actor’s private/personal life affect an individual’s readings of the star’s body and discuss how knowledge from past memories might be triggered during a performance. Using Henry Jenkins, Mark Duffet, Carl Sandvoss, and Eric Fiske, I explore the concept of fandom and how the additional knowledge possessed by a fan complicates the signification process of the individual. Using Peirce’s theory of semiotics, I posit possible semiotic interpretations of ghosts through three case studies: Godspell (2012), How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying (2011), and The Best Man (2012).

In Chapter IV, “Frame and Performance,” I begin with an explication of Goffman’s frame analysis and discuss how determining the theatrical frame affects the decoding of an individual’s semiotic analysis. This chapter brings product, value, and image all into play as I assess how the performance of the star is signified within theatrical frames. Using Quinn’s illustration of the Prague School’s semiotics and Erika Fischer-Lichte’s notions on kinesics, I examine ways in which signification might affect the perception and reception of the actor through three case studies: Picnic (2013), Death of a Salesman (2012), and No Man’s Land/Waiting for Godot (2013).

As noted earlier, the semiotics of celebrity is an under-researched topic. Because contemporary commercial theatre frequently relies heavily on stars in its production, the implications of casting stars in plays and musical needs to be determined. In the study that follows, I use semiotic theory to provide likely responses that an individual in the early 21st
century might have when celebrity is interjected into performance. This project also helps to chronicle some of the influential Broadway performances of the 21st century and how the star casting in these productions has helped to shape commercial American theatre on Broadway and Off-Broadway. It is not my intention to approve or condemn the process of star casting or using celebrity to sell tickets. My intention is to provoke thought on how casting stars from film and television in commercial Broadway productions affects the way individuals make meaning and perceive theatre.
CHAPTER I. PRODUCT AND MARKETING

The public’s fascination with famous people will continue unabated because of its role in society as entertainment and R&D. Thus there will be an increased use of celebrities in advertising.

Hamish Pringle

Celebrity Sells

Celebrities have been found to have value as commodity endorsers. Marketers recruit celebrities onto advertising campaigns in the hope that any positive sentiments consumers hold about a celebrity will transfer across to advertised brands.

Barrie Gunter

Celebrity Capital

As the twentieth century faded into the twenty-first, and the Internet became more accessible and gave rise to social media, accessibility between stars and the public was streamlined. By way of numerous websites and apps, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat, this accessibility enhanced the scope of celebrity and altered the relationship many have, or believe they have, with stars. I accredit the increased celebrity of Hollywood actors in the new millennium as role models, objects of desire, and spokespeople with the growing online presence of the star; frequent posts on social media and the ease of searchability via powerful internet search engines such as Google have given the public access to the star not heretofore
seen or experienced.\(^3\) Having online access to moments of the star’s public and private life furthers the conception that an individual fan and the star have a close relationship. This pseudo relationship, which some people believe they have with stars, can form a sense of trust and loyalty, disillusioned as it may be; this relationship also makes stars excellent promoters for products and services.

My focus in this chapter is on how stars are used as brands or products to be effective marketing tools for Broadway shows. In the audience survey I conducted, I asked my participants what primarily prompted them to purchase tickets for seeing a Broadway or Off-Broadway production. Of the 73 participants who answered, 32.9%, or nearly one third, stated that seeing the film or television star perform was their primary reason for purchasing a ticket to a play or musical in New York City.\(^4\) Based on this data, it is clear that the survey respondents are interested in the star as a product or brand. Successfully promoting the star often requires marketing departments in New York to work with producers and actors to efficaciously sell their image. Building off of this evidence, I argue that the Hollywood film or television star is a signifier with a variety of signified responses and that the signification of this marketing affects individual expectations and the decision to purchase tickets. Using Barrie Gunter’s concept of celebrity capital alongside Hamish Pringle’s notions on celebrity endorsement, I parse through ways that a star’s image or name is used in marketing. Following this, I discuss the concepts of


\(^4\) See Table 13.
character and persona that Gunter explicates and how these ideas are used and reflected in commercial advertisements. Continuing to use Pringle and Gunter’s writings on celebrity and marketing, I then explore how stars can be effective endorsers and how marketers use celebrity, fan desire, and exclusivity to sell their products. I carry this idea forward by then discussing the how the star fits within the Broadway schemata. Before finishing the chapter with three separate case studies—Broadway productions of Equus, Orphans, and Sister Act: The Musical—I review Roland Barthes’s writings on photography in Image, Music, Text. Then, using promotional images and show posters in each case study, I analyze the ways in which the star’s image is represented and, drawing on Barthes’s writings on semiotics, address how these promotional images might affect the star’s brand and the ways in which the public might read and be affected by these images.

The Making of a Celebrity Product

In his book Celebrity Capital, Barrie Gunter, identifies and explores five different types of celebrity capital: psychological capital, consumer capital, corporate capital, political capital, and health capital. I focus chiefly on psychological capital, consumer capital, and corporate capital as these types relate most directly to this study.\(^5\) Psychological capital—the star’s ability to motivate, inspire, and make changes in the lives of the public—is concerned with the social relationship between stars and the public, and how these relationships are manifest within an individual and groups. A star’s psychological capital may have a great effect on how they

\(^5\) Political capital involves the star’s ability to use their influence to draw attention to political issues. Health capital concerns the star’s ability to draw attention to health-related activism.
connect with potential Broadway audiences. Both consumer capital—the star’s ability to appeal to consumers—and corporate capital—the star’s ability to earn money for their sponsors—concerns stars as products and endorsers, and their ability to promote other products in the marketplace. Consumer capital and corporate capital come together in powerful ways when Broadway producers use the celebrity of the star to help promote both the production and the larger enterprise of Broadway theatre.

But what specific forces are at play in this process? Gunter devises six celebrity endorser attributes that he synthesizes from Alan R. Miciak and William L. Shanklin’s article “Choosing Celebrity Endorsers,” which analyzed responses provided by 43 executives in advertising agencies and their client companies. These attributes are likeability, attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness, performance, and negative behavior. Of these six attributes, all but negative behavior can be used emphatically in the marketing process to capitalize on the strongest link between the star and the public. I will briefly explicate each.

For Gunter, likeability is a key attribute for any star. The more likeable a star is, the more followers and fans are affected when they are involved in advertising campaigns. He writes, “Celebrities attain their status by gaining social capital among the public who place value on them…. If celebrities have interesting characters, the public may warm to them and grow to like them. The likeability factor can be sufficient in its own right to enable celebrities to add value to brands with which they are associated” (72). Actors like Jennifer Lawrence, Tom Hiddleston, Tom Hanks, and Patrick Stewart appear to have a very high likability, which makes them good

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choices for brand association. Casting a likeable star in a Broadway or Off-Broadway show is advantageous to ticket sales and, hopefully, good reviews.

In terms of attractiveness, the second of the key attributes, beauty and sex appeal are an important factor in determining the celebrity capital of the star. Hamish Pringle, former general director of the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising and author of *Celebrity Sells* contends, “One of the most powerful drivers of human behaviour is the desire to reproduce and to reproduce ‘successfully’. In pursuing this end, I believe that, whether consciously or not, men and women seek to mate with the most successful, desirable or powerful person they can within their peer group and ideally beyond it” (xxii). Putting aside Pringle’s heteronormative assumptions, his idea nonetheless supports Gunter’s inclusion of attractiveness as an attribute of celebrity capital. Since the product being consumed is the star’s body (along with their talents and skills), their physical appearance, as a desirable object for men and women, is a part of their consumer capital. Many Hollywood stars are deemed physically desirable by both sexes, allowing for the visual consumption of their bodies to fulfill sexual desires. A “celebrity’s attractiveness can play an important part in determining how popular they are among members of the public” (Gunter 75). Casting a star that is widely considered desirable might help to increase ticket sales, as those who find the star physically attractive might desire to see the star perform.

The third attribute, expertise, is often sought after when hiring someone. Success (financial or critical) in previous roles in film and television can place the star on the short list for a Broadway or Off-Broadway play or musical. Producers might seek out a star individually or

they might send out the call to agents who will pass the opportunity on to their clients. If the star has successful experience performing a specific type of role or experience appealing to a certain demographic, then he or she might be considered as a viable option. Gunter claims that, “when celebrities are hired to present arguments in favour of using a brand, their impact can depend upon whether consumers regard them as qualified to make these arguments” (72). In the case of advertising to audiences, marketers use the star’s expertise as a selling point. If marketers presume expertise to be a strong selling point for a particular star they might list some of their related accolades or popular film and/or television roles to remind audiences of the star’s legitimacy.

Trust, the fourth component of celebrity capital, is built upon the foundation of a relationship between the star and the consumer. There must be a level of trust between the public and the star for the star to be considered as an endorser. In order for trust to be established, certain criteria, including reliability, dependability, consistency, and honesty must be earned. Gunter notes, “Ultimately, consumers must be able to trust the endorser of a brand. Celebrities can command trust, even when they may not be experts in relation to the product or service being promoted, because of their reputations in their professional and personal lives” (72). A good reputation is paramount in advertising. Broadway has established itself as a trustworthy brand, consistently providing high-caliber theatre performances to audiences who come to New York City from across the globe. While trustworthiness might not be overtly marketed (as it should be an implicit quality), this attribute is crucial for any type of product mingling and marketing.

Performance, the last of Gunter’s attributes that pertain to marketing, is an attribute of celebrity capital that calls upon the unique qualities within a star. There are two primary questions marketers might ask when determining how to capitalize on a star’s performance: “Are
they celebrities because of special talents they possess? Have they demonstrated sustained high-level performance or been one hit wonders?” (Gunter 72). Performance can be difficult to market in a photograph or other image, and often is marketed through commercials and special appearances. For example, when stars are cast in Broadway and Off-Broadway musicals, they usually appear on daytime and late-night talk shows to perform a musical number from the show. This often highlights their performance and helps to generate interest in the production. Non-musical plays typically wait for the reviewers to critique the actor’s performance and, if the review is positive, marketers highlight portions of the review in their marketing materials. Of course, a successful performance by a star in a film or on television does not guarantee a successful performance on stage. While some consumers may be assured of a star’s ability to perform well on stage based on their screen performances, others will need more assurance. The task of the marketers is to ensure that any qualms regarding performance will be addressed and proven moot.

In addition to using these five attributes of celebrity capital, marketers bank on the past roles and the persona of the star. Recalling King, stars can be categorized into personage, person, character, and persona. Of these four, persona and character are the most marketable for the film or television star that appears on the New York City stage. The first of these, persona, may be defined as the perceived personality of the star that is shown to the public. A star’s persona is developed through attitude and characteristics that are established through both public life and the types of characters portrayed on screen. Other actors might be known and cherished for a particular character they have played in the past. I focus only on the categories of persona and character in this study as they directly relate to marketing. To further explore these two concepts, I provide two examples from contemporary media.
In 2013, action film star Samuel L. Jackson began to be featured on commercials for the Capital One Quicksilver credit card. Those consumers familiar with Jackson might associate his no-nonsense authoritative tough guy persona with the credit card, a product that promises 1.5% cash back on every purchase you make without any hassle or annual fee. Jackson’s tough guy persona began by an association with the film roles he has performed throughout his career—Stacks Edwards (*Goodfellas*), Jules Winnfield (*Pulp Fiction*) Mace Windu (*Star Wars Saga*), John Shaft (*Shaft*), Neville Flynn (*Snakes on a Plane*), and Nick Fury (*Avengers*)—and is extended through the performance of his public life. This culmination of roles combined with the personality Jackson exudes has created the persona at the heart of his brand. King defines the persona as “a durable image that draws upon the selection of personal qualities that exemplifies a type” (*Taking Fame* 9). Jackson’s type is the tough guy. The well-known individual, to create a rapport between themselves as a public figure and the public whom they serve, performs, in essence, a character, or a stylized version of themselves that coincides with public and cultural expectations; this act brings distinction to this well-known individual and allows them to shape the way they are viewed by the public. To a certain degree, they filter out certain aspects of their lives (family, hobbies, interests, and even sexual orientation) allowing for the potential existence of a “private life.” Using imagery that supports a star’s persona creates expectations for the potential audience, which might help them decide whether or not to see the show.

As with persona, I examine the use of character through an example of television commercial advertising. Marketing a product in tandem with a popular character not only draws upon the familiarity with that character, but also makes them effective marketing tools. As Gunter notes, “If a celebrity is perceived by consumers to have a background or character that makes them relevant to a particular product or service, this will enhance their effectiveness” (89).
Film star Laurence Fishburne has acted in many award-winning movies including *Mystic River*, *The Color Purple*, and *Apocalypse Now*, but he is perhaps best known for his role as Morpheus in the *Matrix* trilogy. In 2014, Fishburne, as Morpheus, was featured in a Super Bowl advertisement for the Kia K900, a new model for Kia who was intent on entering the luxury sedan market. In the *Matrix* films, Morpheus was an influential person, a great leader, and a teacher; he was responsible for exposing Neo, the chosen one, to the truth. It seems, then, that Kia hoped to use the character of Morpheus to influence potential car buyers and expose them to the truth about the luxuriousness of their new model of car. The commercial relies on the associations and characteristics associated with the character (leadership, influence, truth) in much the same way Capital One relies on the tough guy persona of Samuel L. Jackson. The major difference is that Capital One uses the constructed identity of a real person, Jackson, whereas Kia uses the constructed identity of a fictional person, Morpheus, as portrayed by Fishburne. As I will demonstrate in the case study portion of this chapter, using actors with established characters and personas on Broadway can accomplish the same end. While using advertising that might point to a star’s persona or to a popular character may not guarantee financial success, it should arouse interest and connect American theatre to popular culture via celebrity and fandom.

Gunter and Pringle further the conversation on the star’s ability to enamor audiences by demonstrating how the star can be used as an endorser. The practice of having stars market and endorse another product is successful if the product is somehow related to the star’s brand, if the star continues to be successful, and as long as the public is still fascinated by the notoriety and celebrity of the famous and glamorous. Stars are recognizable and known amongst a large percentage of the population; those stars that are household names clearly make the best
endorsers. As such, advertisers often seek to create signification between something familiar—the star—and their product in hopes that people will purchase the product based on an established association or endorsement.

Regarding the latter, when film and television stars perform on Broadway, it can be seen as a celebrity endorsement. Celebrity endorsements continue to be frequently used in advertising as stars positively recommend their favorite products to consumers. Whether it is Oprah’s favorite things, an advertisement for yogurt, shampoo, or life insurance, or a photograph of a star on Instagram with a product s/he has purchased, it seems impossible to go through a single day without seeing an advertisement featuring a film or television star. Pringle analyzes the phenomena of celebrity in contemporary advertising. He argues that, “there is a heightened degree of effectiveness when a celebrity is incorporated into the advertising and marketing communication” (99). Much of this effectiveness derives from public support for a particular star. If a person uses the same product as a film or television star then this commonality might lead them to believe that their lifestyle is closer to the lifestyle of the star. When a potential audience member sees that a star is performing in a particular show, it may serve as an endorsement from that celebrity and this in turn might encourage that individual to attend.

As long as the star is attributed celebrity by the public and press, they can be considered a viable endorser. Because of its pervasiveness in society, celebrity has broad appeal among the general population. The film industry uses the star’s celebrity—which is typically already established through their past work—in an attempt to maximize a film’s profits. As Pringle asserts, “Because of the risks involved in making movies, where the statistics show that the tiny

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portion of the feature films made which are successes subsidise the vast majority that are not; it’s not surprising that marketers and the agencies involved tend to gravitate to the key protagonists who have the best track records” (120). In choosing an established star, Broadway/Off-Broadway producers of the production are providing their marketers with a bankable image. While there is benefit to the juxtaposition of the star’s image with that of the production, the level of involvement between the two images is crucial. It is not enough for there to be a poster of the show with the star, but the star must assist in promoting the show through other modes of advertisement. TV appearances, commercials, and media interviews strengthen the link between the star and the production and further develop the connection. As Pringle argues, “All the research suggests that the more intimate the relationship between the brand and the celebrity chosen to be its partner in commercial communications, the more likely it is to be effective in the marketplace” (108). The extension of marketing into various and multiple mediums allows not only for a deeper connection between brands but helps to expand the reach of the marketing.

Since marketing involving celebrity endorsements tends to generate hype and appeal for many individuals who are entertained and intrigued by stars, it is not surprising that Broadway uses stars to attract audiences. Because these stars perform in the productions, they provide something more than just an endorsement; they provide an opportunity for consumers to purchase a once-in-a-lifetime experience. As such, one distinct advantage of casting a Hollywood star in a production is exclusivity. If a star is cast in a show, the name of the star is almost always used in the show’s marketing and promotion. This idea is echoed by Pringle who argues that “in using products which have a celebrity association, consumers get a little bit extra in terms of imagery, aspiration and entertainment and this is often enough to tip the balance in
favour of one brand instead of its competitors” (xxii). The ostensible value of exclusivity in contemporary American culture often equates what is exclusive with what is superior.

This marketing of exclusion is essential since Broadway and Off-Broadway, as leading arenas for commercial theatre, depend on a global audience. Gunter contends that, “the need to ensure that global campaigns can work equally effectively in markets with different cultural values applies also to the choice of celebrity endorser” (97). Tourists flock to New York City each year to attend what many consider the pinnacle of American theatre; stars that lack global audiences and fans may see performing on Broadway or Off-Broadway as a way to broaden their consumer/fan base. The star must be certain that performing on Broadway or Off-Broadway for global audiences is in their best interest. There are most certainly some film and television stars who only see themselves as a distinct product for film or television.

Regardless of a star’s brand and their level of fame, when film and television stars appear on Broadway, it can be difficult to determine which product is being sold. At first glance it simply appears that the star has been cast to generate buzz and help sell tickets for the Broadway show. However, closer observation reveals that three products are inextricably linked together through a single event: the show being produced, the star actor, and the larger enterprise of Broadway theatre. Each product is supported by the others and success for one product means success for all three. The effect is systematic and can be expressed in two ways. One, if the show is successful, both the star and Broadway can reap the benefits from that success. Two, if the star is successful, both the show and Broadway can reap the benefits from that success. This simplifies the risks, to an extent, for star casting on Broadway and Off-Broadway; nevertheless, great care must be taken to ensure the right star is paired with the right show. Pringle states, “The choice of a celebrity identified as being best for it is one of the most important decisions that will
ever be taken for the brand” (77). While both Broadway and the individual production may be considered brands in their own respects, it is ultimately the production that must ensure a successful union with a star. The marriage of the star and the production begins with the production team and is almost immediately transferred to the marketing team.

The primary goal of marketing is to promote a product to the public and ensure that people are enticed to buy that product, thus becoming customers. The star is a brand with specific qualities and values and therefore must be matched with another product that will service both brands positively. As Gunter argues, “To assess whether a celebrity makes a good fit for a corporate brand, marketers need to know whether the celebrity they are targeting represents values they would wish to associate with their brands” (19). (There are different ways to assess the value of the star and his/her brand of which advertisers must be aware and I will discuss this in detail in Chapter II.) Gunter suggests, “Celebrity value can be calculated by the nature of the celebrity’s talent, the prevalence of their popularity and also by their simple visibility in the public domain” (106). The marketing of a production on Broadway and Off-Broadway with a star cast in a leading role must consider that the star is already an established brand, with pre-existing values, assets, and liabilities that can be either marketed in a way to capitalize on the star’s brand or in opposition to it. The duality of this marketing allows the production to showcase the star and allows the star to be showcased. Either way, the marketing must represent a complimentary image for both star and production.

The star is not just lending his or her talent and throwing support behind the production in which he/she is cast but also onto the Broadway brand. If the star is involved in controversy or has a negative image it could greatly affect the show and the Broadway name. For example, in 1989, Pepsi released a commercial featuring Madonna concurrent with the music video to her
new song “Like a Prayer.” In the video, Madonna witnesses a rape and burns a cross. This angered bishops of the Catholic Church who called for a boycott on Pepsi Co. and all of its holdings. The boycott worked and Pepsi discontinued the advertisement and dropped their sponsorship with Madonna’s upcoming tour. In this case, the corporate brand was ultimately hurt by its affiliation with Madonna; although, one could argue that this helped Madonna’s celebrity brand as an iconoclast artist, untouched by the rules of convention. The reverse could also happen and association with a corporate brand could hurt a star’s image. When two products are entwined, the public can convolute the relationship between the products, indistinguishing between separate entities, and something negative or offensive can adversely affect both products. The benefits that a star lends the production and to the Broadway brand seem to far outweigh the negative.

Another benefit of star casting is the assured attendance of other film and television stars who attend the production to watch and support one of their compatriots. For example, when Daniel Radcliffe starred on Broadway in *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* in 2011, many of his Harry Potter cast mates (including Tom Felton, Matthew Lewis, and Rupert Grint) came to see his performance. Occurrences such as this can be viewed as a publicity godsend for the marketing department that takes and shares pictures of the stars backstage. These photos are often accompanied with a small article and appear on *Playbill Online*, *Broadway World*, or other celebrity websites. Images also dominate in current advertising practice, which leads me to regard them as texts worthy of critical analysis. To that end, in the second half of this
chapter, I focus my analysis on a close reading of publicity and marketing images created for recent commercial theatre productions in New York City.⁹

As I mentioned in the Introduction, Barthes’ writing on semiotics and the image in *Image, Music, Text* is a powerful tool for analyzing the reading of marketing material. Barthes’ semiotic focus on the photograph allows me to read the promotional images and posters for three Broadway shows. For Barthes, a photograph is a message; he writes, “Considered overall this message is formed by a source of emission, a channel of transmission and a point of a reception” (15). In the case studies that follow, I argue that in the case of New York City commercial theatre, the source of the emission is the marketers for the production, the point of reception is the public who reads the images, and the channel of transmission is the poster image itself. Within the photographic image, the qualities that make a star an effective endorser (their brand, their persona and past characters) and their capital are available to be read by the viewer. In reading these images I determine in what ways the star is being marketed in agreement with their brand or against it. Before I discuss the photographic images of the stars in terms of the marketing for Broadway plays and musicals, and how those images may be read by potential audience members, I will provide a quick summation of Barthes’s writing on semiotics and the image.

The photograph is perhaps the most direct way to link the image of the star with the production. The photograph of the star is an image of the star copied to film and developed on

paper. Barthes contends that the image of the star in the photograph is a denotation; it directly resembles the person whose image was photographed. The denoted image can elicit signs and “since every sign supposes a code, it is this code (of connotation) that one should try to establish” (Barthes and Heath 19). The connotation is an additional or secondary meaning that derives from the image within the photograph. An image of Alec Baldwin in wizard’s robes is still a denotation of Alec Baldwin; however, the connotation of the image is that somehow Alec Baldwin is magical. The photograph transmits “the scene itself, the literal reality. From the object to its image there is of course a reduction—in proportion, perspective, colour—but at no time is this reduction a *transformation* (in the mathematical sense of the term)” (Barthes and Heath 17). As such, the actual photographed image of the star is the mirror image of the star at the time when the photograph was taken. Today, software like Photoshop can enhance or distort an image, but I argue that minor changes to the star’s appearance like airbrushing and other enhancements do little to prevent denotation. The goal of the marketing team is not to make the star look unrecognizable or to alter the image so potential audience members will not be able to quickly identify the actor; if Photoshop is used, it is more likely that airbrushing and complimentary filters will be added. To capture an image on film is to record it within a specific time, in specific place, within a specific frame. Exploring the images of Broadway posters with film and television star casting provides an opportunity to gain an understanding of how advertisers use denotations and connotations to convey specific messages to audiences and hope to create marketing that will appeal to audience members who find favor with the particular star. The posters provide a semiotic field where specific codes are established and may be analyzed and read for their signification. Throughout my analyses of the production images and posters for
the productions of *Equus*, *Orphans*, and *Sister Act: The Musical*, I explore possible connotations that the marketers are trying to assert.

The reading of any photography relies on a particular historical and cultural understanding. Barthes conjectures, “Thanks to its code of connotation the reading of the photograph is thus always historical; it depends on the reader’s knowledge just as though it were a matter of real language [langue], intelligible only if one has learned of the signs” (28). The juxtaposition of the image next to another (person or object), the position of the body, and the gesture and expression of the form can signify one thing to particular culture and something else to another. Barthes writes, “The emission and the reception of the message both lie within the field sociology: it is a matter of studying human groups, of defining motives and attitudes, and of trying to link the behaviour of these groups to the social tonality of which they are a part” (15).

The following case studies illustrate the ways in which the image of the star in marketing materials can be denoted and connotated by the viewer. In *Equus*, I begin with an analysis focused on one famous star who is performing a role unlike any he has ever performed. Building on *Equus*, my analysis of *Orphans* examines the marketing of a multi-star cast and how persona and character can act as denotation and connotation. Finally, in *Sister Act: The Musical*, I analyze denotations and connotations present within marketing when a star replaces a little-known cast member.

*Equus* (2008)

The decision to remount Peter Shaffer’s modern classic *Equus* in London’s West End resulted from conversations between producer David Pugh and stars Daniel Radcliffe, who
played Alan Strang, and Richard Griffiths, who played Martin Dysart. Due to its critical and financial success in the West End, producers decided to transfer the show to Broadway. The play opened stateside on September 25, 2008 at the Broadhurst Theatre and ran for 156 performances.

The casting of the duo, famous worldwide for their characters in the Harry Potter films, ensured the revival much press coverage and robust advanced ticket sales. There was, however, another distinguishing factor that bolstered sales: the chance to see Daniel Radcliffe’s/ Harry Potter’s penis. Audience members, both young and old, who read the books and watched the films, had observed Harry’s transition (as embodied by Radcliffe) from the young “boy who lived,” into an attractive man who was an object of desire for many fans. As Radcliffe was the physical embodiment of the character, it follows that for many people seeing the actor nude equated to seeing Harry Potter nude. In the course of this case study, I argue that the producers of Equus strategically marketed Radcliffe’s attractiveness to key into the desire of his fans, using in particular the opportunity to see a star in the nude to motivate tickets sales.

Of course, the success of Equus on Broadway was in part bolstered by the critical success of the production on the West End. Charles Spencer, theatre reviewer for The Telegraph wrote, “Daniel Radcliffe brilliantly succeeds in throwing off the mantle of Harry Potter, announcing himself as a thrilling stage actor of unexpected range and depth.” He continued to praise Radcliffe writing that, “It helps of course that at 17, Radcliffe is exactly the same age as the

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10 In Equus, Dysart, a psychiatrist, attempts to help Strang, a seventeen-year-old boy who blinded six horses in the stable where he worked. As Dysart begins to unravel the events that led to Strang’s brutal act, his own unhappiness with life rises to the surface. At the end of the play, Dysart begins to question the tenets of psychiatric practice and whether or not what he does can truly help Strang.
character he is playing, and he superbly lays bare the sheer rawness of youth, the sudden mood swings of adolescence, and that intense unforgettable feeling that you are in a hostile world all on your own,” and later quipped that “this play is going to attract a very large audience of devoted teenage girls” (Spencer). Spencer not only praised Radcliffe for his performance, but also Griffiths, and proclaimed the play as a “huge hit” (Spencer). In like manner, The Guardian’s Michael Billington, although somewhat critical of Shaffer’s play, concurred that Radcliffe and Griffiths are captivating and, at times, moving. He refers to director Thea Sharrock’s production as both “well realized” and “vivid” (Billington). The largely favorable reviews and successful box office revenue from the West End ensured the production a home in a Shubert theatre on Broadway the next year. As is typical, when the production transitioned to Broadway, there were a few changes. Most significantly, while Griffiths and Radcliffe continued to portray Dysart and Strang, the rest of the cast was replaced. Equally significant, however, was that much of the advertising and marketing materials used on Broadway, including marketing and publicity images, was borrowed from the West End production. A close reading of the posters and marketing photographs used to advertise Radcliffe in Equus reveals much about the strategy on the part of the producers to capitalize on the actor’s enormous fame and the promise that the production would reveal a part of him not heretofore seen by audiences.

Take, for example, the show poster (Fig. 1) for both the West End and Broadway productions, which display Radcliffe’s upper body, his head thrust back, and his arms outstretched. In this image, the lower half of Radcliffe’s/Strang’s body is manipulated, as the head of a horse emanates from his torso; his nipples become the horse’s eyes and his abdominals become the horse’s nose and muzzle. The image is stark; Radcliffe’s white muscular form
contrasts with the black background. The image is an evocative and somewhat erotic uniting of a 17 year-old nude, male body and the face of a horse.

In examining the image closely by way of Barthes, it becomes clear that there are multiple connotations at play. As Barthes argues, all connotations are cultural. In light of this, the image of horse, acting as a symbol, as an accepted inducer of association, communicates within our contemporary cultural context specific ideas, including motivation, sexual energy, masculinity, and passionate desires. Along these same lines, in that the image is framed by a black background that serves to highlight the semi-transformed body of Radcliffe, it could be argued that the dualism of black and white within the image represents the opposition between good and evil, a key theme explored in the play. In short, then, the image not only draws on symbolic themes at work in Shaffer’s text, but also promotes a strong selling point for the production: the showcasing of Radcliffe’s sexualized body.

While the poster might have been the most publicized image for the show, other photographs of Radcliffe (usually accompanying a horse) also advertised the production. The promotional photos were posted to entertainment websites and were quickly disseminated by way of the World Wide Web. Several of the images include Radcliffe shirtless, with the strong implication that he is nude below the waist, posing with a white horse. In these images, the horse is not only an animal, but is perceived as an object with particular significance. It warrants noting that in Western Culture a white horse frequently is used to represent nobility/chivalry, purity, and/or fertility. They are rare animals, often reserved for heroes, warriors, and noblemen. Given this widely accepted connation, the appearance of a white horse in the advertisements is significant. Barthes addresses the vital importance of such symbolically loaded objects when he argues, “Special importance must be accorded to what could be called the posting of objects,
where the meaning comes from the object’s photograph (either because these objects have, if the photographer at the time, been artificially arranged in front of the camera or because the person responsible for the lay-out chooses a photograph of this or that object)” (22). The juxtaposition of two objects—in this case a nude Radcliffe and the horse—provides connotative meaning that can have a powerful effect upon a viewer.

One of these publicity images (Fig. 2) shows Radcliffe’s nude body, from the pelvis up (again implying that he is also nude from the waist down), standing in front of the horse, one arm reaching towards the horse’s back, the other towards the horse’s chin groove. In this image, Radcliffe’s head is turned looking at the horse’s head; his body and the horse are highlighted against the black background where light fog rises. The use of lighting in this image calls attention to the concept of photogenia and its influence on the reading of a photograph. The stage lighting is used to highlight Radcliffe and the white horse against the black background, and serves to enhance the physical image/features of both. The lighting especially serves to emphasize Radcliffe’s nude body (both that which is seen, as well as that which is not) and his body placement alongside the horse. Radcliffe’s gestures and his positioning (especially in relation to the horse) convey a sensual, even erotic relationship with the horse. Since this relationship is present in Shaffer’s text, the image conveys a key aspect of the production. And yet, I argue it also could be viewed as an attempt on the part of the producers to tantalize readers with an image of the young star, drawing specific attention to his sexual attributes. Though his penis is not shown in these photographs, they nonetheless imply that (a) he has one, and (b)

11 Barthes’ explicates this idea, in *Image, Music, Text* when he writes: “In photogenia the connoted message is the image itself, ‘embellished’ (which is to say in general sublimated) by techniques of lighting, exposure and printing” (23).
audience members might well have a chance to see it. Indeed, it is not hard to imagine how this image might be deployed by a marketing team to draw in audience members by putting on display Radcliffe’s attractive, sexualized physique.

In other portraits in the series, Radcliffe’s nude body is posed in further intimate positions with the horse. In one image (Fig. 3), he is foregrounded in front of the horse, his body pressed against the horse’s neck, shoulder, and upper arm, and his hand reaching out to caress the horse’s chin. Another (Fig. 4) shows Radcliffe embracing the horse, one hand on the horse’s back and the other on the horse’s neck, head resting on the horse’s shoulder. As in the other photographs in this series, the sexual connotations between Radcliffe and the horse further amplify the already sexualized image of Radcliffe’s nude body, providing potential audience members with signified responses of desire.

In another publicity image sans horse (Fig. 5), Radcliffe is pictured in denim jeans and a black belt. His chest is bare and in his hands he holds a saddle and a horse’s bridle. As in the other pictures, his white body is highlighted by the black background with a fog rising. He looks to the left with an inexpressive face. The staging of Radcliffe in this image and the choice of the objects in his hands are significant. The saddle and bridle are relevant to the production, but can connote a deeper significance as well. The saddle and bridle are tools that the rider uses to communicate with a horse, to gain trust, and physically connect the human with horse. Another connotation could signify the saddle and bridle as elements of enslavement where the rider masters the horse. Barthes remarks on this sort of complex, double signification when he writes, “Objects constitute excellent elements of signification: on the one hand they are discontinuous and complete in themselves, a physical qualification for a sign, while on the other they refer to clear, familiar signifieds” (23). Whether the decision to include an object in a photograph is
premeditated or is ignored, the objects provide codes to be signified by the reader. These images seem to fetishize the sexuality between Radcliffe and the horse, drawing in perhaps a different group of individuals who find submission or dominance desirable.

A final series of publicity photographs show Radcliffe with his co-star Joanna Christie (from the West-End production). In one photograph (Fig. 6), Christie’s backside is foregrounded in the right of the picture wearing only a pair of black panties. Radcliffe, wearing only jeans and the black belt, sits on a pile of hay in the left background. It raises the question: Have they just had a “roll in the hay”? Another image from the series (Fig. 7) depicts the two positioned in front of a large pile of hay. In this image, Christie stands behind Radcliffe, embracing him. Her head rests upon the back of his neck, one hand placed on his left shoulder the other positioned on his waist. Her face is relaxed and her eyes closed as she presses her nude body against his. Radcliffe stands stolid, as his face, looking downward, is cast in shadow. Some might argue that the sexual representation of Christie’s body being presented before Radcliffe, who is sitting amongst the hay, speaks to a patriarchal society that emphasizes the seduction of men by women. Others might contend that the stoic nature of Radcliffe in the second image connotes the difficulty or disinterest that some men have with intimacy outside the act of sex. Regardless of how one chooses to read the photographs in a particular sense, each image no doubt contains connotations of masculinity and sexuality. Since these connotations are associated with the denotation of Radcliffe’s image, the connection between the two becomes conjoined. The denoted image of Radcliffe and the connotations of sex, physical maturity, and masculinity through the representation within the photograph are linked. These images link Radcliffe’s body with the body of a woman. The woman could serve as a stand in for the audience member who fantasizes about a sexual relationship with Radcliffe.
The representation of Radcliffe’s sexual maturity as seen in the publicity images for *Equus* did not appeal to everyone. To be sure, the mere idea of seventeen-year-old Radcliffe performing naked on stage was too explicit for some audience members. Ramin Setoodeh, in an article for *Newsweek* wrote, “You’d expect a lot of parents to get on their high horse about Daniel Radcliffe’s role in the Broadway revival of “Equus,” which opens this week. How could the actor who plays Harry Potter—hero to millions of young, impressionable children—get naked onstage, and in such a fiercely disturbing vehicle?” Nevertheless, Setoodeh describes the uproar over Radcliffe’s nude performance to be infinitesimal. Some individuals were upset by Radcliffe’s choice to take on the role of Strang and took to blogs and Harry Potter fan sites to unburden their disdain. Sarah Lyall of the *New York Times* prints one audience member’s response: “‘We’re all kind of freaked out about seeing his — well, him naked,’ Ms. Tobin, 20, said after a recent performance. ‘I still think of him as an 11-year-old boy.’” As this evidence suggests, the naked form of Radcliffe did not appeal to everyone; and yet, for the most part, the exclusive opportunity to see the star naked was a key part of marketing and selling the show.

For his part, Radcliffe performed enthusiasm when accepting the role. In an interview done prior to opening on the West End he confirmed, “The play was shown to me, and I wanted to do it. It wasn’t so much that I had the ambition to do theatre. I wanted to do *Equus*, and the medium for *Equus* was theatre” (Rothstein). Admittedly, Radcliffe believed that accepting the role would help him grow as an actor and demonstrate his versatility to the public. He remarked, “If I’d gone off and done another fantasy film, people would have said, ‘Oh, he’s not stretching himself.’ But then if I’d gone and played a terrorist, they would have said, ‘Oh, it smacks of his desperation to be seen as something else.’ So you have to find that middle ground’. And ‘a play like *Equus*,’ he says, ‘comes with a certain literary clout’” (Rothstein). Radcliffe’s agents and
managers attempted to convey a similar message. “Daniel does not want to step away from Harry Potter,’ the actor’s spokesperson Vanessa Davies said in a model utterance of contractual diplomacy, ‘but he does want to show that he is a rounded actor capable of very different roles’” (Winn). Although Radcliffe’s agent denied his taking the role to further himself from his cinematic portrayal (the character) of Harry Potter, the outcome of his performance did just that. How could it not?

Using attractiveness and sexual appeal when marketing a Broadway show is sure to indicate the mature nature of the performance, but it is also a way to entice audience members into seeing the show. Seeing a star nude on stage is also an exclusive event that only certain individuals would be privileged to see. In the case of Equus, in addition to selling Radcliffe as a sexual object, producers were also selling an exclusive chance to see this famous actor naked. Because of the nature of the play, this marketing was arguably appropriate and at the end of the run, producers earned a profit, Radcliffe achieved a sense of versatility, and Broadway closed another critically and financially successful show. While this case study explores some ways in which the image can denote and connote the star, thus creating signified responses, there are other types of marketing images that can yield different responses. The semiotic analysis of the image is further complicated when there are multiple stars in production, as I will discuss in my analysis of Orphans.
Orphans (2013)

Lyle Kessler’s Orphans debuted at the Matrix Theatre in Los Angeles in 1983 and was later produced at Chicago’s Steppenwolf Theatre in 1985. The Steppenwolf production transferred to Off-Broadway’s Westside Theatre and then to London’s West End at the Apollo Theatre in 1986. Despite its success in regional theatres and abroad, Orphans Broadway debut did not occur until April 7, 2013. This Broadway cast was built around Alec Baldwin, who played Harold, but included other Hollywood stars as well: originally Shia LaBeouf and then Ben Foster in the role of Treat, and Tom Sturridge in the role of Phillip.

It was Baldwin who shopped Orphans to Broadway producers, seeking the role of Harold as his next career move at a time when 30 Rock, the popular TV series in which he starred, was coming to an end. With one star in place, the producers soon announced that Shia LaBeouf (Disturbia, Transformers, and Indiana Jones and the Crystal Skull) would play the role of Treat, and Tom Sturridge, a British stage and screen actor (Being Julia, Vanity Fair, and On the Road), would play Philip. It was widely publicized that Orphans would be the Broadway debut for both LaBeouf and Sturridge. As the following analysis will make clear, Orphans as a multi-star vehicle provides a different product of analysis than does Equus, which placed Radcliffe at the

12 In Orphans, two adult brothers live in a run-down house in Philadelphia. The boys’ father had abandoned the family and the mother had died. The older of the brothers, Treat, provides for the younger Phillip by being a thief and petty criminal, and does all he can to shelter him from the outside world. However, when Treat kidnaps Harold, a Chicago gangster, he begins to lose control over his brother. While in captivity, Harold becomes a teacher and father figure to Phillip. The climax of the play is a power struggle between Treat and Harold, which results in the Harold’s death.
center of all marketing. The multi-star cast brings various products together, hopefully widening the appeal. With *Orphans*, while Baldwin may have been the driving force behind this production, he had to share the publicity with LaBeouf, Sturridge, and later Foster.

Alec Baldwin’s career in film and television has earned him numerous accolades: an Academy Award, an Emmy, a Screen Actor’s Guild Award, a Golden Globe, and a Tony Award. The aforementioned hit television show, *30 Rock*, in which Baldwin played Jack Donaghy, concluded with its seventh season in January 2013, just months before the opening of *Orphans*. In a self-authored article in *New York Magazine*, Baldwin spoke of his departure from *30 Rock* and his expectations for *Orphans*: “Last year began with making plans to do a play called *Orphans*, on Broadway. I was filled with hope. I had spent six and a half years on a television sitcom. I won every award you could win in television. I got paid well. And people loved *30 Rock*. And I loved *30 Rock.*” Despite his many successes in television, Baldwin was enthusiastic about returning to the stage. He “loved Lyle Kessler’s play and was anxious to work with director Dan Sullivan” (Baldwin). While it is true that Baldwin wanted to use his role in this play as a springboard to start anew after playing the same character on television for seven seasons, it seems reasonable to suggest that the popularity of his Jack Donaghy character was one of the initial reasons individuals chose to purchase tickets to the show. To be sure, not only was Jack Donaghy a well-liked character, he was well known.  

Producers could use images of Baldwin that would remind individuals of Donaghy; in turn, Baldwin had the opportunity to change perceptions about his person when they came to see him as Harold in *Orphans*.

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13 Baldwin did a series of Donaghy-like characters during the *30 Rock* show run; commercials, programming and other appearances affirmed the popularity of his character.
As I will discuss in greater depth in subsequent chapters, when a star is known for portraying a particular character, it might be hard for audiences to distinguish the fiction from that of the person. For the time being, suffice to say, many might know the name of a popular character but not of the star, depending of course on the prevalence of the film or television show or the actor. It is difficult to say with certainty whether Baldwin is better known for his character on 30 Rock, Jack Donaghy, or for his public persona, which can be characterized as aggressive and short-tempered. Confusion can occur when the star and the character share certain characteristics. There are, for example, many similarities between Baldwin and his character Donaghy. Both signify strength, affluence, superiority, excess, and derision; however, Baldwin’s persona may be perceived as cruder and as more controversial than the proverbially light-hearted Donaghy. More specifically, Baldwin’s life in the public eye has been ridiculed for a multitude of scandals that have primarily involved his contemptuous, haughty speech and quick temper. Vulgar verbal attacks on his children and family, co-stars, reporters and the media represent a large component of what constitutes Baldwin’s persona. In many respects, then, Baldwin’s persona makes him an ideal star to portray a Chicago gangster who shares similar features. That is, the brutal and violent nature that exists in his persona can be used as a selling point if it corresponds with a character he has been cast to play. Whether or not an individual ticket buyer associates the image of Baldwin with Donaghy or his persona (or perhaps something else altogether) is, of course, variable. As I examine the Broadway poster for Orphans, I see overlaid on the physical appearance of Alec Baldwin the iconic character of Jack Donaghy and his infamous persona.

For the official Broadway poster for Orphans (Fig. 8), each of the three main stars appears aligned in sequence: Baldwin appears first on the left, LaBeouf in the center, and
Sturridge on the right. Baldwin’s appearance is not strikingly changed from that of his character Jack Donaghy; he is outfitted in what appears to be a grey suit jacket and a black dress shirt. His top button is left undone and he is not wearing a tie, which is an article of clothing Jack Donaghy rarely went without. His hair is combed back similar to Donaghy’s and his expression is solemn. While the image of Baldwin might conjure thoughts of Donaghy, there are elements within the poster that refute connections to Donaghy and 30 Rock.

Position, color, and contrast play an important role in the interpretation of the poster. The image of the three stars on the poster is monochromatic; they are foregrounded against a bright red textured backdrop with silver-white lettering denoting their names, the title, the author and the director. The strong color of red against the monochrome of the image and lettering does seem to belie an association with 30 Rock and with comedy, the genre in which Baldwin frequently works, and instead, perhaps, evokes a sense of Baldwin’s fiery and angry persona. The decentralization of Baldwin on the poster can also indicate a departure from 30 Rock where Baldwin starred alongside Tina Fey. Indeed, by placing Baldwin next to the images of LaBeouf and Sturridge, individuals not affiliated with 30 Rock, would disassociate Baldwin from Donaghy.

In providing an image of Baldwin that conjures both his character and his persona, the advertisement allows the public’s reading to determine their decision to buy tickets. Those fans of 30 Rock may see the image that recalls Jack Donaghy and associate the character with the play Orphans. Others may only be reminded of Alec Baldwin the movie star and the public persona he projects. In this regard, it should be noted that Baldwin’s persona is off-putting to some potential audience members; as such, there is a danger that there will be some individuals who will not support a play with Baldwin in the cast. Additionally, those persons who have negative
feelings about *30 Rock* and/or the character of Jack Donaghy may be disinclined to see or financially support a project with which he is associated. This danger always exists with stars, of course, but some stars tend to draw more controversy and have higher unaffordability than others. I argue, however, that the producers of *Orphans* seemed to believe that there was some advantage to using Baldwin’s image in the advertisement for the production, instead of using another image that might convey theme or simply just his name, and that the image they chose drew from both his star persona and the popular character he had recently played on *30 Rock*.

The same complex process of signification occurs with the promotional image of Shia LaBeouf. LaBeouf shares many of the same egotistical and uncontrollable qualities in his persona as Baldwin does. On the one hand, his career in Hollywood has displayed great versatility for the actor. One of LaBeouf’s earliest roles was that of Louis Stevens in the Disney Channel comedy series *Even Stevens*. While LaBeouf might have once been solely recognized for this lovable character, his film career and his public life have minimized any current positive associations that audiences might still have with LaBeouf as Louis Stevens. In casting LaBeouf in a Broadway production, the producers and marketers must have been cognizant of his public persona and how best to represent him as a cast member in the play.

LaBeouf’s public persona ultimately is connected to a series of crude, violent, and felonious events dating back to 2005 when he was involved in a brawl with a neighbor. In that event, LaBeouf threatened his neighbor with a knife after the latter had made insulting comments about LaBeouf’s mother. Further public indiscretions include being arrested in 2007 for trespass when refusing to leave a Chicago pharmacy, being arrested in 2008 for driving while intoxicated, and being arrested in 2011 for fighting in a Los Angeles bar. In addition to his arrests, LaBeouf consistently insults and derides other Hollywood figures. In 2010, he offended Stephen Spielberg
with negative comments in regards to *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*, and admitted to having sex with Megan Fox during the production of *Transformers* when Fox was engaged to Brian Austin Green (Gell). His performances in public life have created an antagonistic, extreme, and neurotic persona. These attributes associated with LaBeouf’s persona can be compared to those of the character of Treat in *Orphans*, who can be described as vicious and ruthless. Since LaBeouf’s own persona somewhat resembles that of Treat, audiences may make positive connections between LaBeouf and the role that he was cast to play.

The Broadway poster for *Orphans* places LaBeouf in the center, foregrounded by Baldwin and Sturridge. Unlike the image of Alec Baldwin, this photograph of LaBeouf seemingly gives more opportunity for interpretation from the viewer. He is dressed in a white dress shirt, a dark vest and a dark striped tie. His hair is neatly cut and styled and his facial hair is short and well groomed. The image of LaBeouf does not appear to reference any particular character from his past roles, nor does it signify any particular attribute of LaBeouf’s persona. Even the expression on LaBeouf’s face is ambiguous, although there is something in its framing and composition that recalls a mugshot. This does not indicate that an individual will not make a connection between LaBeouf’s image and a past character. Rather, it allows for the individual’s strongest semiotic connection with the image of LaBeouf to dominate their thinking. Remembering that the photograph is a denotated form of the individual, it is not unfair to say that the persona LaBeouf has created can be seen reflected in the image. Juxtaposed to Baldwin and Sturridge, LaBeouf remains the center focus of the poster drawing significance of not only the character of Treat as one of the play’s main characters but for LaBeouf as a significant and controversial film star.
While LaBeouf and Baldwin have well developed personas and are widely known for popular roles in film and television, Tom Sturridge was (and still is) developing himself as a film star (at least in the United States). He began to acquire some notoriety stateside in 2004 in the film *Vanity Fair*. His subsequent roles in *Pirate Radio*, *Waiting for Forever*, and *On the Road* both furthered his career and helped establish his fan base. His relationship with, and later marriage to and divorce from actor Sienna Miller, propelled Sturridge into further fame. As the last member of the ensemble cast, Sturridge, who has had a vibrant theatre career in the United Kingdom, completes the multi-star casting for Kessler’s revival. With no iconic film roles to distinguish him and without a discernable persona, Tom Sturridge does not have the celebrity of Baldwin and LaBeouf, which might account for his image being last in the sequence. This does not denigrate Sturridge or his reputation among those who have seen his work. As a burgeoning film star in his twenties, Sturridge still brings his celebrity and star power to the production. Since Sturridge is a lesser-known star, his image will resonate with fewer potential audience members. He is still developing his brand and this makes him a less than favorable choice as an endorser. Baldwin and LaBeouf appear to be the real star attractions and endorsers for the project.

The photographic image of Sturridge, as it appears on the Broadway poster, is foregrounded on the right. He is dressed differently from this other two actors; he appears in a black t-shirt, a gold chain around his neck. His hair is covered by a grey beanie. His facial hair is fuller than LaBeouf’s but is trimmed as neatly. As with the other two men, his expression is flat. The representation of Sturridge in the photograph uses stereotypes to distinguish him from the other characters. His clothing signifies that his social status is somewhat lesser than that of his co-stars. This representation is built on a stereotype coded in a cultural understanding of clothing.
and fashion. It draws upon Sturridge’s persona as he is known for being a hipster—an individual known for rejecting the mainstream and taking part in the counter-culture—and for being rebellious. The choice to depict Sturridge as such on the poster seems to have less to do with his character and more about acting as a denotation of the star.

Unfortunately for the producers of Orphans, the ideal casting they had worked so hard to create was undone due to a clash between Baldwin and LaBeouf. Baldwin’s narrative of events discloses that LaBeouf, who was informed he should learn his lines in advance of rehearsal for a play, became confrontational with Baldwin during rehearsal when the older actor did not know his. Baldwin commented about this experience with LaBeouf in the New York Magazine article he authored: “I, however, do not learn my lines in advance. So [LaBeouf] began to sulk because he felt we were slowing him down. You could tell right away he loves to argue. And one day he attacked me in front of everyone. He said, ‘You’re slowing me down, and you don’t know your lines. And if you don’t say your lines, I’m just going to keep saying my lines.’” Baldwin, flabbergasted by his remarks confronted LaBeouf. “I snorted a bit, and, turning to him in front of the whole cast, I asked, ‘If I don’t say my words fast enough, you’re going to just say your next line?’ I said. ‘You realize the lines are written in a certain order?’ He just glared at me” (Baldwin). The friction between Baldwin and LaBeouf was that of two men with similarly volatile personas. Baldwin knew that either he or LaBeouf had to leave the production and he reports that he volunteered to be the one to go. “I said, ‘I’ll tell you what, I’ll go.’ I said don’t fire the kid, I’ll quit. They said no, no, no, no, and they fired him. And I think he was shocked. He had that card, that card you get when you make films that make a lot of money that gives you a certain kind of entitlement. I think he was surprised that it didn’t work in the theater” (Baldwin). The act of firing and replacing a film star in a theatrical Broadway production that
had already begun to bank on that actor’s success and reputation would be an ordeal for *Orphans* producers and marketers.

After it was announced that LaBeouf was fired from *Orphans*, the producers of the production quickly announced that film star Ben Foster would be stepping into the role of Treat. Foster began his career in television in the short-lived television series *Flash Forward*. He continued acting in film and television and was cast in his breakout role as Russell Corwin in HBO’s *Six Feet Under*. Foster then began to primarily focus on his film career with roles in *X-Men: The Last Stand*, *3:10 to Yuma*, *Pandorum*, *The Lone Survivor*, and *Kill Your Darlings*. His roles frequently involve intense, frantic, and troubled characters, which correspond well with the character Treat. While he certainly does not have the same star power as LaBeouf, nor does he have as established a persona, his success with playing crazed and violent characters to some critical acclaim must certainly have been viewed as a positive by the producers. To be sure, though none of the characters he has played could be thought of as iconic, they have helped to shape Foster’s persona as a masculine rogue. His public life mostly revolved around his relationship with actress Robin Wright, who is fourteen years older than Foster.¹⁴ Not unlike Sturridge, Foster’s relationship with a famous actor helped to boost his own celebrity and his representation in the media.

¹⁴ Foster began his relationship with Wright in 2012 and the couple became engaged in 2014. They broke off their engagement twice throughout the course of their relationship. Wright’s celebrity coincided with her marriage to actor Sean Penn and their troubled divorce. She has had quite a successful film career starring in *The Princess Bride*, *Forest Gump*, *Nine Lives*, and *Moneyball*. In 2013, she gained acclaim for her role as Claire Underwood in the Netflix Original Series *House of Cards*. 
With Foster stepping into the role once held by LaBeouf, the advertisement for the production changed as well. On the new show poster (Fig. 9), the image of LaBeouf is removed and the image of Foster is added. Foster appears center on the new poster for the show, in the same place where LaBeouf’s image was before. Foster, who is six years older than LaBeouf, appears in a white dress shirt, unbuttoned at the collar, and a dark suit jacket. His hair is combed back, similar to Baldwin’s, and his facial hair is no more than stubble. The image of Foster is distinctively different from LaBeouf. Whereas LaBeouf was dressed formally in a tie and vest, Foster’s image implies more informality. LaBeouf stood in the background framed by Baldwin and Sturridge, whereas Foster appears staggered between Baldwin in the foreground and Sturridge in the background. These changes in image are subtle, but have significance, when recalling Barthes’ remarks regarding connotation: “Connotation is not necessarily immediately graspable at the level of the message itself (it is, one could say, at once invisible and active, clear and implicit) but it can already be inferred from certain phenomenon which occur at the levels of the production and reception of the message” (19). As a connotation is an implication or an undertone, its affect on how the image is read as a whole is tangible. Color, font, and perspective can all be connotative, affecting the reader’s perception. In aligning the stars, as marketers have done for this poster, producers seemingly sought to denote star power.

After 27 previews and 37 performances, producers announced that Orphans would close early. The Broadway League reports that the production began its first week of previews with 94.13% occupancy, but fell to 69.56% occupancy two weeks after opening. During its short run, the production grossed $4,056,117 with the average ticket at $71.98 (The Broadway League, “Orphans”). While fans of Baldwin, Foster, and Sturridge who were in New York City may have had the opportunity to see the show, the three film stars did not garner enough ticket sales to
continue the production for six more weeks. Despite the show’s early closing, Sturridge and the revival were both nominated for the Tony Award. Gunter argues that “one reason for multiple celebrity campaigns can be a presumption that specific celebrities will vary in their appeal to different consumer sub-groups within the overall target market” (81). This is certainly true for Orphans, whose star casting appeals to three distinctive fan bases. “Another presumption is that multiple well-known celebrities will make the campaign more memorable” (Gunter 81). In terms of my study, this production is significant because of the ways that the marketing created for it trafficked in the star power of four actors; however, the LaBeouf controversy is far more interesting and will most likely be why this particular production will be remembered.

The reviews for the production were mixed. Writing for Variety, Marilyn Stasio points to the previous roles of the actors and to their personas. She calls the performances of all three actors “emotionally nuanced.” (Stasio). Ben Brantley’s review for The New York Times was not as kind. He refers to the production as a “limp revival” and a “dispiritingly pallid show” (“A Hostage Who”). He also suggests that a play with these three men should have raised “the ferocity quotient” and seems disappointed that they did not. Building on this, Brantley notes that he was hoping for some semblance of the star’s personas in the performance, and was disappointed when these personas were not reflected in performance. In his critique, he points to persona: “Mr. Baldwin, as any reader of tabloids knows, is widely perceived as a highly combustible being. As for the others, well, Mr. Foster was pretty scary as the sadistic outlaw in the remake of ‘3:10 to Yuma,’ and Mr. Sturridge made his name as a London stage actor playing a homicidal high school student in Simon Stephens’s ‘Punk Rock.’” (Brantley, A Hostage Who”). Both reviews make clear that persona and past characters have a strong hold on our reading of the star’s image and the expectations that arise from those readings.
Although the play was not a financial or critical success, the three stars that opened the show had an opportunity to affect the way the public viewed them. I do not believe that Baldwin or Foster received any changes to their celebrity capital by working on *Orphans*; however, Sturridge’s performance gained him critical success and experience. Whereas Baldwin’s persona was untouched—or perhaps further fortified—and Foster performed a role in his wheelhouse that served to strengthen the association with his established persona, Sturridge performed a new role that would propel him forward in his own career. In addition, it could be argued that his image juxtaposed to Baldwin’s and Foster’s imparted to Sturridge a new sense of legitimacy. Performing in a play on Broadway with two well-known and accomplished actors only strengthened his brand.

Each star was given the opportunity to promote their brand in the poster for *Orphans*, for their brands (whether it was one of character or persona) seemed to support the characters they were portraying in the play. The result of their images in sequence does denote a hierarchy in the level of celebrity, but this could be beneficial for Sturridge and Foster whose image may now be associated with Baldwin, whose performances in films and on television has made him a household name. The public was offered a new perspective on these stars as they take in the poster. New associations were made and connotations were formed by the poster’s structure, and through the representation of each star’s image. This case study serves to illustrate how the connotation of the image in Broadway show posters is complicated by the addition of multiple stars. The juxtaposition of Baldwin’s image, next to LaBeouf’s/Foster’s, next to Sturridge’s, affects how the individual perceives the star’s product and can serve to redefine the product for the individual. In this chapter’s final case study, *Sister Act: The Musical*, I explore the marketing
materials for a Broadway show that replaces its lead with a star and how the denotations and connotations depicted in these images distinctly associate the star with production.

_Sister Act: The Musical_ (2011)

When _Sister Act: The Musical_ premiered at the Broadway Theatre, it did so without a star; in essence, the popularity of the film was the primary selling point for the show. The beloved film starring Whoopi Goldberg was the sixth highest grossing film in the United States in 1992 (Box Office Mojo, “1992”). Much of the film’s success derived from Goldberg’s performance; thus, her absence in the musical was potentially detrimental. David Rooney writes, “This enjoyable family-friendly musical adaptation’s biggest draw is the brand [Whoopi Goldberg] was instrumental in forging in the 1992 Touchstone movie and its sequel. But paradoxically, Goldberg is also a handicap here, demonstrating that hers are tough shoes to fill in a comedy” (‘Sister Act’). Actress Patina Miller stepped into those shoes playing the lead role, Deloris Van Cartier. Rooney comments “That’s not to say Patina Miller doesn’t deliver in the role of Deloris Van Cartier, the ghetto-fabulous nightclub singer who witnesses a murder and goes into hiding in a convent. She has a winning presence, but her comic chops are not quite

15 _Sister Act: The Musical_ follows the story of Deloris Van Cartier, a performer who witnesses her gangster boyfriend and his goons murder an informant in his ranks. Deloris runs to a police station and a detective named Eddie puts her into witness protection in a convent. Forced to live like a nun, Deloris struggles to cope when she finds herself taking over charge of the choir. The choir, under Deloris’ leadership, brings money to the church and attention from the press. When Jackson and his men find Deloris, the convent intervenes until Eddie can stop the men for good.
equal to her powerhouse vocals or knockout looks” (‘Sister Act’). I am left asking: Who could be successful compared to Whoopi Goldberg? It is perhaps unfair for Miller to make the comparison; yet, because of Goldberg’s strong connection to the character, it is difficult not to do so.

The new actress in Van Cartier’s shoes was not the only change the Broadway musical made. As Rooney reports, “The creative team has bumped the story back in time, shifting the action from present-day Reno/San Francisco to 1970s Philadelphia. And while Goldberg’s Deloris favored Motown, Miller’s is all about that sweet Philly soul sound, with a dose of disco” (‘Sister Act’). This departure from the film altered the narrative and changed the familiarity that many audience members would be expecting. One change Rooney laments is the loss of a real connection between Van Cartier as Sister Mary Clarence and her unlikely friends, Sister Mary Robert, Sister Mary Patrick, and Sister Mary Lazarus. “While it’s admirable that the writers didn’t want to carbon-copy the movie, they shortchange the show on heart” (Rooney, ‘Sister Act’). With the drastic changes made from the film to the stage, the idea of banking on the audience’s love of the film may have been a bit naïve.

Sister Act: The Musical drew in crowds, but perhaps not the size of crowds the producers desired. When the musical opened on Broadway in April 2011, it sold only 57.90% of its seats and the average ticket cost was $71.12 (The Broadway League, “Sister Act: The Musical”). While The Broadway League reports that the musical did increase its ticket sales over the following weeks, selling 70%-80% of its seats, December through January saw a steady decline, again selling about 50% occupancy. After the holidays, Rumors began circulating through the media that Raven-Symoné would be joining the cast of Sister Act: The Musical, but it was not officially confirmed until March 7, 2012. Raven-Symoné would replace Miller, who had been
with the show since it began workshops in 2006 and was nominated for a Tony Award for her performance. Replacing Miller with a television star like Raven-Symoné generated buzz for the musical and rekindled interest from the media.

David Rooney went back to his keyboard after it was announced that Raven-Symoné was donning the habit. He opined, “Producers clearly are hoping Symoné’s TV fans will provide a fresh boost to reinvigorate box office, which has lost some steam since the holidays” (Rooney, ‘That’s So Broadway’). The producers held out hope that Raven-Symoné’s performance would bring more media attention to the show, and that her presence would lead her fans to purchase tickets. It is quite possible, money aside, that Raven-Symoné was simply the right actor for the role. Rooney quoted Whoopi Goldberg, who threw her full support behind Raven-Symoné: “Finding an actress who can play Deloris in Sister Act is no easy feat… She’s got to sing like an angel, dance her heart out, and land some really big laughs – and, trust me, doing it all in a habit is not easy! Luckily for us, Raven is more than up to the challenge and I think audiences are going to be wowed by her performance” (“That’s So Broadway’). With Raven-Symoné’s first appearance on Broadway since her childhood, audiences surely wanted to see for themselves if the star was up to the challenge. It is with this in mind, I argue that the advertising for Sister Act: The Musical, with Raven-Symoné as the star, used the actress’s celebrity, likeability, and expertise in an attempt to ensure box-office sales.

With a television star in their arsenal, marketing made changes to the promotions and posters to highlight the musical’s new lead. One of the original posters for the West End and Broadway productions was a highly stylized, illustration (Fig. 10). The divine Deloris Van Cartier appeared center with a bedazzled habit and microphone and her red stilettos. Singing nuns and one apparent thug surround her, and the words “Sister Act: A Divine Musical Comedy”
appeared above the ensemble. Another poster (Fig. 11) shows Miller, who is foregrounded and center, amongst a row of singing nuns. The images of these characters are dwarfed by the title, which takes up nearly 75% of the poster. Miller’s name is strikingly absent from both posters. I note the posters before the addition of Raven-Symoné as a source of comparison. It is clear in the marketing for the production with Miller that the name of the show was the dominant selling factor. Miller, who did not have a brand quality sufficient to carry a show, could not serve as celebrity endorser. This changed drastically when Raven-Symoné replaced Miller.

In one poster used when Raven-Symoné joined the cast (Fig. 12), the celebrity actor is seen standing in habit as Sister Mary Clarence in the foreground on the left, while behind her, nuns in bright shining silver habits dance amidst towering stained glass windows. Raven-Symoné’s image is significantly larger than the other nuns, and, although she is not centered, she dominates the poster. The title has also been changed to read “Sister Act: The Musical” and above the title the words “That’s So Righteous” appears. This added text is clearly referencing Raven-Symoné’s wildly popular Disney Channel show That’s So Raven. The presence of this text manipulates the reading of the image. As Barthes argues, “Naturally, even from the perspective of a purely immanent analysis, the structure of the photograph is not an isolated structure; it is in communication with at least one other structure, namely the text—title, caption or article—accompanying every press photograph” (16). Because the text is included as part of the image as a whole (the poster), it reads as a code and influences the reader’s interpretation of the image. Again, Barthes notes, “The text directs the reader through the signifieds of the image, causing him to avoid some and receive others; by means of an often subtle dispatching, it remote-controls him towards a meeting chosen in advance’ (40). Including “That’s So Righteous” on the poster guides the reader to recall (hopefully positive) associations with the
television show *That’s So Raven* and the expertise and likeability of the star. Individuals can only make this connection if they are familiar with the television program. By banking on an association with a children’s television show in the early 2000’s, the marketers sought to appeal to a specific demographic: the parents and children who watched the show. The text, in association with the image of Raven-Symoné, loads the image, asking its reader to recall their knowledge of *That’s So Raven* and associate it with *Sister Act: The Musical*.

At the bottom of the poster in large red letters appears Raven-Symoné’s name, with the preface “now starring.” The updated marketing clearly reflects the addition of a star to the cast and demonstrates the importance of the star’s image and her name in advertising/promotion of the production. Barthes helps illuminate this strategy when he states that “the closer of the text to the image, the less it seems to connote it; caught as it were in the iconographic message, the verbal message seems to share in its objectivity, the connotation of language is ‘innocented’ through the photograph’s denotation” (26). Thus, the name Raven-Symoné, appearing in close proximity to the image, does not connote the image as much as it denotes or describes the image. The bright red lettering, bold font, and close approximation to the image of Raven-Symoné, reminds potential audiences that this image is not simply of a woman in a nun’s costume, but a famous television star. The use of text in the poster helps to remind the reader of Raven-Symoné’s past performance (namely her character in *That’s So Raven*) and her gravitas as a star. The marketers of the musical are hoping to bank on Raven-Symoné’s celebrity. They are clearly highlighting her fame and hoping that in doing so they can sell more tickets. In addition, the casting of a new star breathes new life into a production. The changes in the poster also serve to highlight that this is a slightly different production as a new cast member changes the dynamic of the show.
The image of Raven-Symoné is more than just celebrity; it is also a signification of her attractiveness, her past characters, and her persona. Before she was cast in *Sister Act: The Musical*, Raven-Symoné had starred in *The Cosby Show*, *Hangin’ with Mr. Cooper*, and the aforementioned *That’s So Raven*. She had developed a sense of expertise, which was signified within her image and her name. Her characters showed range and good comedic skill. Overall her characters and her off-screen persona were very likeable. For all intents and purposes, she would make a great fit for the role of Deloris Van Cartier and for the musical as a whole. In marketing the image of Raven-Symoné, producers and marketers seek to remind potential audience members of her likeability and expertise and they hope that the image of the star and references to the past roles that made her so well liked will be enough to give ticket sales a boost.

The departure of Miller and the arrival of Raven-Symoné did have a short-lived, positive impact on the box-office. Before Raven-Symoné’s debut, the show was only selling between 40%-65% of its seats; with her on stage, the show’s ticket sales boosted to 70%-80%, with an occasional dip back in the 60% range (The Broadway League, “*Sister Act: The Musical*”). Despite casting Raven-Symoné in the production, however, the musical was unable to recoup its investments. Announcing its closure, Patrick Healy reported: “The $10 million show, which has had uneven ticket sales since January, will close without recouping its full capitalization. But the producers hope to eventually turn a profit on the show from its North American tour that begins in Toronto on Oct. 2” (“*Sister Act’ Set to Close*”). Alas, even with Raven-Symoné’s boost in ticket sales, the show could not continue its run on Broadway. Although Raven-Symoné has a degree of celebrity, it was perhaps not sufficient to attract a large enough audience. A star with more celebrity might have been able to sell more tickets, but perhaps not.
While it may be easy to blame the star for not bringing in the crowds or generating enough interest, other factors are often at play. In the case of Sister Act: The Musical, Healy reported, “The closing notice comes a week after another Broadway musical featuring religious themes, the revival of “Godspell,” announced it would close this Sunday. The producers of the Broadway revival of “Jesus Christ Superstar,” meanwhile, said on Tuesday that it would close on July 1 unless box office business improved” (Healy, “‘Sister Act’ Set to Close”). The idea that theme, script, and/or music might be a factor in the production’s success is often overlooked when a star is cast in a leading role. This type of myopic analysis may put undue pressure on the star and might have a small effect on their opportunities to be offered other projects.

*Sister Act: The Musical* was an original musical, not a revival, so it did not have the benefit of previous productions, nor did it have a cultivated theatre audience who might have wanted to see the show again. The image of the star, when it is used for a new play or musical, may be too heavily relied upon as a means to sell tickets. The signification of the star’s image does not change because the play or musical is new; however, their image juxtaposed to another, unfamiliar image, may have less effectiveness. I do not believe this is the case with *Sister Act: The Musical* because the story is just as well known if not better known than Raven-Symoné. Her image was juxtaposed to a familiar narrative. She has the attractiveness, exclusivity, and likability that stems from her persona and past characters, and the expertise and celebrity needed to draw in audience members. The musical’s downfall may lie in its divergence from the original film’s narrative. If this is indeed the case, then image of the star, no matter the signification, cannot strongly affect the ticket sales. By incorporating Raven-Symoné’s body onto the promotional images, advertisers could draw on her celebrity image and the multitude of signification that might be present in it. In this case, that seems to have not been enough.
Conclusion

According to Pringle, “all the evidence suggests that campaigns featuring celebrities are no more likely that those featuring any other sort of creative idea to be successful – simply putting a famous person on the screen or in a magazine juxtaposed with the corporate, product or service brand is simply not enough” (95). While I do believe this to be true, there are effects unique to marketing the star and his or her image for Broadway. The star (as an image, as a product, as a persona) becomes associated with the Broadway theatre product. The public can read this merger positively or negatively. While some may associate Broadway with high-quality theatre, others might relate it with commercialism, capitalism, and greed—just another moneymaking opportunity for someone already famous and wealthy. The star is also linked to the production and to the character they are portraying. If it is similar to past roles, the images used for production might reinforce strong connotations that already exist in the star’s image. Moreover, those stars that choose to perform a character in opposition to those performed in the past may disrupt previous connotations and allow for new codes and connotations to be established. This could be said in the case of Daniel Radcliffe who managed to enter into adulthood by redefining himself and the connotations associated with his image. While he still went on to perform Harry Potter in two more films following his stint in Equus, his reliance on that character to sell tickets and draw in audiences was gone.

Stars might also increase their celebrity through Broadway promotional images. The sequence of the Orphans poster juxtaposes Alec Baldwin, Ben Foster, and Tom Sturridge. Those unfamiliar with Foster or Sturridge might recall their associations with Baldwin from the poster and form related connotations. Since the cast was three men, giving each proportional space on the poster unites them giving them separate but equal power. Similarly, Raven-Symoné becomes
associated with the *Sister Act* brand. While she brought her own level of celebrity to the role, those unfamiliar with her before her portrayal of Deloris Van Cartier might now recognize the television star in a larger context. Advertising a star’s image can greatly affect the star depending on the public’s reading of the image: “If the image contains signs, we can be sure that in advertising the signs are full, formed with a view to the optimum reading: the advertising image is *frank*, or at least emphatic” (Barthes and Heath 33). There are few drawbacks to stars from the marketing of a Broadway show. The public who reads the images are the most affected by the star’s representation. It can reinforce or distance a star from past characters, it can associate them with other stars of greater celebrity, it can associate stars with beloved shows or franchises, and it can sell tickets to Broadway shows. The denotation and connotation of the star’s image creates intrigue and helps to convince audiences to purchase tickets; however, how the individual assesses the star, their value (qualities associated with the star), their past roles, and their multitudinous associations and qualities has an equal or perhaps greater effect on whether or not the individual will purchase tickets to the show, on how they create expectations and preconceptions, and how they make their evaluation of the production. As I will make clear in Chapter II, product and value are associative; what the individual values has a strong effect on how audiences perceive and signify the star.
CHAPTER II. VALUE AND ASSESSMENT

Any evaluation, then, no matter what its manifest syntactic form, ostensible “validity claim,” and punitive propositional status, may have social value in the sense of being appropriable by other people. The actual value of a particular evaluation, however, will itself be highly contingent, depending on such variables as the specific social and institutional context in which it is produced, this specific social and institutional relation between the speaker and his listener(s), the specific structure of interest that motivates and constrains the entire social/verbal transaction in which the evaluation figures, a vast and not ultimately numerable or listable set of variables relating to, among other things, the social, cultural, and verbal histories of those involved, and of course the particular perspective from which that value is being figured.

Barbara Herrnstein Smith

Contingencies of Value

After Hollywood stars are cast and marketed in Broadway and Off-Broadway shows, people must decide whether or not to see the show. Between the time when they are first made aware of a show’s existence, usually through advertising, and ultimately deciding whether or not to attend, individuals are asked to assess value and determine whether or not seeing a Broadway or Off-Broadway play or musical is worth the cost of a ticket and their time. Using famous actors in their productions, producers exploit the same bankable star power that Hollywood studios do
to ensure box office returns on their products. The film and television actor has the benefit of having their performances widely distributed and because of this they have a certain kind of household name quality. Star casting in theatre can likewise use the power of a known actor—their celebrity capital—to elevate the value of the show if the star is well liked by the ticket buyers. When film and television stars arrive on Broadway, they typically already have established values based on those specific attributes. When they leave Broadway, their values may increase or suffer depreciation; therefore, the signification of their sign may change depending on their performance and the reviews of critics and audiences. An actor’s success or failure may depend on an assessment of the semiotic connection of value.

In this chapter, I investigate how significations of value are assessed from the star’s image, and determine how a star, as a signifier, contributes to the production. I argue that the reading of a star’s value affects not only the public’s decision to purchase a ticket, but also how audience member’s evaluation of the production. A star’s value may be gauged in a variety of ways. I begin with an exploration of value and assessment through the writings of Deshun Li and Barbara Herrnstein Smith. After explicating the process of assessment and evaluation, I delve into specific characteristics and attributes of stars that calculate into the assessment of their value: talent, It, beauty, fashion, box-office, star power, actor training, elasticity, and awards. Using Saussurian semiology, I then discuss how the individual determines value. Finally, using the New York commercial productions of *Asuncion*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, and

\[\text{\textsuperscript{16}}\text{ Star power references the popularity of the star within society and what draw they receive from audiences. Star power might be difficult to assess, but it is most evident, in terms of data, within ranking scales with use a range of criteria to assess this value.} \]
Fences, I specifically study how an assessment of value for the star affects Broadway and Off-Broadway theatre.

The Complexities of Value and Stardom

Value is a part of our everyday human behavior. People assess and affix value to all manner of things that intersect with their lives. Moreover, the manner in which value is ascribed is open to debate. In her study on the variable nature of value, Barbara Herrnstein Smith distinctly states that “value is impure; evaluation is contingent” (3). Evaluation is an axiological process that is derived from tastes, aesthetics, and morals/ethics. Worth is derived and judgments are formed as something appeals (or not) to an individual. Tastes, needs, and desires change and in this way the value of something or someone is not static. To this end, Smith argues, “Evaluation is always compromised because value is always in motion: a never-fixed mark, whose worth’s unknown although his height be taken: ‘unknown’ not because, like true love, it is beyond mortal cognition, but because it is constantly variable and eternally indeterminate” (9).

Due to its instability, value fluctuates and relies upon the determination of the evaluator. Despite this variability, evaluation is also systematic. Smith addresses this systematic process in her study, focusing on interpretation and experience. An interpretation of an object’s value is dependent of the experience of its value. She writes, “Each depends upon what might be called the psychological “set” of our encounter with it: not the “setting” of the work or, in the narrow sense, its context, but rather the nature and potency of our own assumptions, expectations, capacities, and interests with respect to it—our ‘prejudices’ if you like” (10). This kind of psychological evaluation happens when people watch a performance—be it on the silver screen,
the small screen, or on stage; if the performance does not align with an audiences’ interests or sensibilities or meet its assumptions or expectations, it is given a lower value.

In line with Smith’s logic, Deshun Li describes “evaluation on a psychological level,” which occurs unconsciously. He writes, “A certain value relation and its consequences help the subjects to have their desires, wishes, motivations, interests, emotions and will, without careful considerations, which all belong to evaluation” (139). Thus, for Li, some evaluations are made without deliberate thought. This mode of evaluation might be best represented in the individual who values a particular actor but is not sure why or what it is specifically they like about them.\(^{17}\)

These valuations can be made in incredibly small increments of time as our brain quickly processes sensory information. Within the realm of conscious assessment, on the other hand, which Li describes as an “evaluation on a theoretical and conceptual level,” an individual makes “conscious considerations, in which the perceptions, knowledge, beliefs, faiths and ideals of the subjects play a very important role (132). The perceptions and knowledge about objects and their functions help the subjects to have a better understanding of the effect of the subjects on value relations and to make judgments and decisions according to their beliefs, faiths, and ideals. This evaluation is all encompassing and requires engagement with reason and logic. Individuals might, for example, find it logical to highly value a star that has won awards for acting.

Whether or not a value judgment is made consciously or subconsciously, desire is one of the strongest motivators of assessment. Li states, “Desire is the first form which people ‘want’ when people’s needs are changed into people’s subjective consciousness. So, desire is the initial

\(^{17}\) It is important to note that evaluation is not the same as perception. Whereas perception involves simple awareness, typically through the senses, evaluation involves a conscious or subconscious assessment or judgment.
form of value consciousness” (111). Desire resolves around need; we affix value to those things that satisfy that need. For example, as a person’s hunger increases, so does the value they affix on food. Li is careful to distinguish desire from wishing. He writes, “In wishes, desires have much clearer and more definite aims and the consciousness of purpose; motivation is the result of desire which is extended to people’s area of behaviors and which is connected with actions. So desire and wish are the intermediate links when motivation is produced from needs” (112).

Therefore, desire drives our wishes, our wanting, by providing a need that requires fulfillment. A person who desires food may wish for/want a pizza to satisfy their hunger.

Desire is a strong motivator of evaluation, but conviction based on ideology might be just as strong. Individuals are often guided by their beliefs—an acceptance that something is true. Li writes, “The function of belief lies in that it helps people build efficient principles and goals in thoughts and action” (122). An individual’s beliefs on gun control, climate change, or family values, for instance, greatly affect the terms of their evaluation. Faith, which stems from belief, is also an important concept in determining value. Li writes, “Faith is one of the intrinsic conditions of human culture and civilization. In human spiritual life, there can’t be no faith. A person without faith is like a body without a soul. In human spiritual life, faith is the directing system, orienting system and guiding system of the whole pursuit of value” (125). An individual’s faith may revolve around religious principles or an innate spirituality stemming from an individual’s core beliefs. Li argues, “ideals come from faith, but are different from faith. The elements of reason contained in faith such as knowledge, experience, logic, or rather the knowledge about the objective world which is believed and mastered by subjects, is the basis and premise for the forming and building of an ideal” (126). In the evaluation processes, some individuals might be led by desire, and others by beliefs. This is not a dichotomy, but rather an
exemplar of two of the strongest motivators of evaluation. The way that objects are read as signs by individuals will usually stem from their desire or their beliefs.

Value is also not singularly individual; so while individuals ascribe value to the objects they encounter, their evaluations also brings in social and cultural valuations that have been already established. Society, as a collective, imparts value as well. The Declaration of Independence (as an object) holds significant value to Americans and those who study and value American history; however, other social and cultural communities may not grant the document the same significance. While certain objects maintain a specific social/cultural value, not every individual has the same level of assessment. To extend my example from above, not all Americans, even those who agree the Declaration of Independence is significant, value it in exactly the same way. Regarding this, Smith argues, “it is doubtless the case that communal life requires shared goals or norms—or at least more or less congruous inclinations among the members of the community—and routines of action, reaction, and interaction that are, at least in the long run, mutually and generally beneficial (the two, of course, are not the same)” (93). Thus, while an object might have social/communal value, it might not hold any personal value for some individuals within the community. Communal values may be geographical, political, or occupational; these values might also be cultural, steeped in beliefs, religious affiliation, and customs. For instance, one of the core principles of Islam is daily prayer. Muslims perform five formal prayers a day: one in the morning, one in the early afternoon, one in the late afternoon, one at sunset, and one in the early night. Those who practice this faith place value in prayer because it nurtures spiritual strength and peace of mind. People calculate something’s value by assessing its importance to themselves (the individual) and others (the communal). How they
calculate this value is a little more systematic. According to Li, there are five explanations in the process of evaluation: idea, substance, attribute, relation, and practice theory.

Regarding idea, Li writes that “value is the ‘meaning’ of an object for a subject” and that “the nature of ‘meaning’ has evoked different responses from different philosophical schools” (25). This idea not only complicates the process of how meaning is made but it alludes to different ways of thinking that affect evaluation. Different philosophical mindsets lead to different priorities and predilections within specific groups. Li writes, “‘meaning’ or value is essentially a kind of spiritual phenomenon and points to human interests, emotions, intentions, attitudes and cognitions” (25). This conception of value suggests that individuals derive worth from intellectual and emotional responses that the object in question elicits from them. Thus, the cliché pocket watch handed down from father to son that no longer works holds a specific emotional value for the son, as it provides him a connection with his ancestry.

Li troubles this purely emotional rendering of assessment, however, when he states, “another explanation [of evaluation] is ‘substance,’ suggesting that value is an independent substance or system of phenomena, so that people could finally come upon its absolute being somewhere or in some state” (26). This philosophy assigns a fixed value to objects that relates to that object’s existence. Perfume is the substance of fragrance and thus it has value in its ability to make people smell nice; but perfume could also be linked to emotion, linking it to the first explanation. Given this, there might be a duality in choosing a fragrance. An individual might choose a fragrance worn by a significant other (father, mother, sibling, etc.) because they have an emotional attachment to the smell as well as in the fragrance’s ability to make them appealing in an olfactory sense. The substance of an object and its abilities give it value to some and not others.
To further complicate the evaluation process, Li writes: “The third explanation [in the assessment of value] is “attribute.” According to it, value, not a distinct substance though, is a particular attribute intrinsic to a substance or a situation” (26). Cold is an attribute of ice and its value may be contingent on this attribute. The attribute can be derived from the subject or the object; therefore, the subject can attribute coldness to the object, ice, or coldness is an attribute of the object, ice. Either way the characteristic is inherent to the object. Reflexibility is an attribute of a mirror. Individuals use mirrors to see what they look like, thus a mirror with a clear reflection is essential. Without the attribute of reflexivity, a mirror is not valuable.

Li continues, offering yet another possibility: “Another different view is that of ‘relation,’ holding that ‘meaning’ is a relational category, pointing to the consequence and influence of interaction between subject and object” (26). The value in this circumstance is based on the individual’s relationship with the object, so response value is derivative of particular relationships. Christianity holds more value to Christians than it does to Buddhists. A “rescue can” is valuable to lifeguards because it assists them in the course of the job, but it holds no value for a dentist (unless that dentist is drowning). It is dependent of subject-object relation.

In addition to these four explanations to the nature of value, Li offers a fifth possibility: practice theory. Regarding this he writes, “Practice theory acknowledges that value is a kind of relational phenomenon and points out that value forms and exists as a special ‘relational state’ or ‘relational quality’. It suggests further that the objective foundation of value lies in the subject-object relation, a relation characteristic of human activities, i.e., social practice” (27). Li’s practice theory is situated in historical and cultural customs, which includes popular culture. Since it is rooted in history and culture, value derived from practice theory is changeable. In analyzing value as it pertains to Hollywood film and television stars, practice theory may be the
best philosophy for interpretation. In this way, practice theory allows for the star, as signifier, to be assessed by way of different values (levels of signification) based on the reader’s criteria of what attribute is most significant in the star’s image. While practice theory may be the best philosophy of study in conjunction with semiology, the other responses Li describes cannot be ignored.

Practice theory and its effect on the assessment of performance is considerable. When assessing the value of an actor, an individual is likely to reference that ineffable quality known as talent. The estimation of an actor’s talent is built upon a criterion that relies on subject-object relation. When asked to assess the talent of the film and television stars on Broadway and Off-Broadway, participants in the survey I conducted rated approximately 83% of the stars as possessing above-average talent.¹⁸ The word “talent” was not defined for the participants so as not to lead or manipulate the term. I take this data as an indication that there is a strong connection between stardom and talent within the mind of the audience member. As many stars become famous for their skills and abilities at a particular craft, this is not unexpected; however, as stardom is constructed, it does not necessarily mean that a film or television star will have what can be considered talent. Approximately 14% of stars evaluated were considered to be of average talent, and approximately 2% of the stars were considered to be below average. Since not all of the stars seen on Broadway or Off-Broadway were accredited with above average talent, it is also clear that individuals have a personal mode of assessment or criteria with which they award talent.

The word talent is nebulous. It is often discussed in regards to actors and performance. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the first entry for the word talent is “an ancient weight, a money

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¹⁸ See Table 11.
of account (Latin *talentum*)” (talent, n.). There is no coincidence that in the discussion of value
the origin of the word talent involves economics. The word’s origination in Latin corresponding
to an amount of money is an example of linguistic semiology. The word “talent” (signifier)
denotes money/worth/value (signified). Talent also signified weight, another quantitative
attribute that measures substance. Talent, in regards to propensity or ability appears in the third
section of the definition: “mental endowment; natural ability.” The fifth entry states: “Power or
ability of mind or body viewed as something divinely entrusted to a person for use and
improvement: considered either as one organic whole or as consisting of a number of distinct
faculties; (with pl.) any one of such faculties” (“talent, n.”). It is with the sixth definition of
talent, where at last the word is referenced in terms of an actor’s performance: “A special natural
ability or aptitude, usually for something expressed or implied; a natural capacity for success in
some department of mental or physical activity; an accomplishment (obs.)” (“talent, n.”). It is
this definition of talent that I adopt for use in this study.

Every job requires certain skills, which allow one to complete the tasks essential to the
job with accuracy and certainty. Talent is often classified in relation to someone’s propensity to
perform specific tasks well; it is a combination of practical knowledge and ability. In *Advice for
Actors: What Skills Does an Actor Need?*, Mark Westbrook, studio director at Acting Coach
Scotland, lists the five major abilities an actor needs: “the ability to transform/translate
words/ideas into action”; “the ability to notice and acknowledge psychological change
(registered through behavior) so that it can be worked off on a moment to moment basis”; “the
ability to embody the Mindset of the Task [what needs to be achieved]”; “[t]he ability to
acknowledge the psychological change through the Mindset of the Task”; and “the ability to
acknowledge psychological/behavioural change, while embodying the Mindset of the Task,
working through someone else’s words” (Westbrook). I argue that those actors (stars) who are able to perform these kinds of skill sets proficiently are often considered talented. The talent that a star is believed to hold affects the perception, and thus reception, of the public. If the star is individually or socially lauded as talented, then this attribute could be a strong motivator in ticket sales. Also, those believed to be possessors of talent might be evaluated differently from those who have not been labeled with the value of talent.

Akin to talent is the ability to attract others, captivate them and make them interested in the facets of one’s day-to-day life. British novelist and scriptwriter Elinor Glyn was one of the first to write about this phenomenon, simply calling it “It.” Those with It appear to have certain qualities that signify sex or beauty. Beauty can be defined by cultural or social standards, but ultimately is evaluated through personal preference. Glyn believed that It was the combination of beauty, sex appeal, charisma, and confidence. “To have ‘It,’ the fortunate possessor must have that strange magnetism which attracts both sexes. He or she must be entirely unselfconscious and full of self-confidence, indifferent to the effect he or she is producing, and uninfluenced by others. There must be physical attraction, but beauty is unnecessary” (Glyn 5-6). This magnetism that Glyn conveyed creates intrigue, on a general and sexual level, and can be spellbinding to the public. It exists in few people, but the stars in Hollywood seem to have this quality perhaps more than other actors.

Joseph Roach elaborates on Glyn’s concept of It and how it might be constructed. In the introduction of his book, It, Roach discloses what he believes is one of the foundational concepts.

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of It: “Most of us immediately assume that It has to do with sex, and we’re right, but mainly because everything has to do with sex” (1). Roach’s thought aligns with Li when he conjectures that humans have a strong impulse to satisfy our desire. Roach believes that It can be constructed and that there are dimensions of a person that can suggest It such as accessories, clothes, hair, skin, flesh, and bone. He references accessories as decorations or ornaments, where the less useful the accessory, the more it is significant. “A tie—that refunctioned atavism of the nobleman’s sword—is required of gentleman because it has nothing useful to do, and no suit, however chic, is proof against a bad one; similarly, the bag lady is known by her bag, not because it contains so many of the things she really needs but so few (Roach, It 52). An accessory can signify something as a whole; so a man who wears a ring on his left hand ring finger is signified as a married man. Roach opines, “Accessories make meanings under the ever-useful troupe of synecdoche—the part stands in for the whole, the species for the genus, the one for the many” (It 53). In this way accessories may be used to suggest certain perceptions about an individual. This is also the case with clothing/fashion, which I discuss in more detail in the following pages. Roach writes, “Hair can exert a magical power even greater than that of accessories and clothes, in part because it functions as both” (It 117). Hair often indicates social status and entitlement and subordination: “Social hair is performance, with all its magic and its risks” (Roach, It 127). The performativity of hair may greatly affect the signification of a person. Skin is yet another signifier of social importance. The color of one’s skin, and more importantly, the quality of one’s complexion—which is a sign of good genetics and/or high status—also affects signification. In referencing flesh and bone, Roach describes the physical form as a whole and the distinct need to replicate and recreate it. His references focus on the creation of wax
figures and pygmalionism. It is the overall quality of form that contributes to the ability to house and emit It.

Roach explains that It is expressed not only through an emission of strong qualities, but also through an ability to represent a qualitative binary simultaneously. Regarding this point he writes, “’It’ is the power of apparently effortless embodiment of contradictory qualities simultaneously: strength and vulnerability, innocence and experience, and singularity and typicality among them” (It 8). It is an assortment of the best male and female qualities. Thus, whether It is innate or constructed, it is a particular value that affects how the star is assessed. Those with It are able seduce the public and reflect the qualities they most find desirable. Because of this ability, I theorize that the qualities exhibited by someone with It is variable, for it is perhaps not the qualities innate with the person, but the signification of desirable traits as signified by the reader. While what constitutes It is ultimately in the purview of the reader, magnetism, sex appeal, charisma, ability, etc. seem to play a part in the description of It, the degree to which these characteristics are manifest is interpretable. Those with It are often successful, but it is primarily box office success, actor training/skill, and awards that are the greatest indicator of star worth in Hollywood.20

20 An actor’s success in Hollywood has long been dependent on his or her ability to draw paying customers to cinemas. In the 1930’s and 1940s, the studio system in Hollywood contracted top stars such as Bing Crosby to ensure their pictures would garner audiences. For example, when Mae West signed an exclusive contract with Paramount Pictures in the 1930s, the studio could bank on her sexy persona to sell tickets while at the same time ensuring West a steady career. After the Paramount Case in 1934 changed the way the film industry produced and
According to Box Office Mojo (as of 13 Dec 2015), Samuel L. Jackson has the highest total combined film gross of any actor in Hollywood; his films have a total gross of $4,592,109,461 (“People Index”). Tom Hanks ranks second with $4,333,680,443 and Morgan Freeman ranks third with $4,316,226,479. The highest-ranking female on the list is Cameron Diaz; she is ranked number 15 with $3,031,691,124 (Box Office Mojo, “People Index”). These box office returns seem to indicate that these actors have reliable audiences. Their personas and previous characters have established a following, and that following brings with it financial returns. It must be noted that there is a correlation between these stars and the types of films (genres) in which they appear.

Each of the top twenty highest combined film grossing stars have appeared in popular blockbuster films/franchises—expensive, financially successful films with large production budgets and special effects. Because of the nature of the blockbuster, it is evident why these actors are on this list. The financial success may not be dependent on built-in audiences, but on the popularity of the film as a visual display of effects, designs, and epic stories. Regardless, there exists a correlation between the popularity of the actor and the blockbuster. The relationship is symbiotic: a great actor could bring success to a blockbuster film or a great blockbuster film could bring success to an actor. The bankability that some stars have generated from the blockbuster performances will hopefully transfer when the star is cast on Broadway or Off-Broadway. Because of their roles in blockbuster films, stars like Scarlett Johansson, Daniel Radcliffe, and Ian McKellen have an association with spectacular and elaborate productions; an distributed its films, stars became indispensable and the need for them to sign exclusive contracts abated.
association the producers may hope audiences will associate with their stage production. Even if the star does not lend these associated attributes to the production, they still lend their name, which in and of itself holds a certain amount of value. While financial gain is of the upmost importance in Hollywood filmmaking, there are other indicators that can be calculated to determine a star’s bankability. There are countless ranking systems and lists online and in print that seek to use a variety of algorithms to determine which stars bring about the best box-office returns.

Though box office power is a key factor in determining value, it is not the only factor at play when determining an individual’s star power. To be sure, there are other factors at play that contribute to the ability a star has to gain interest from the public. James Ulmer, Hollywood business mogul, devised a system to value stars in the 1980’s that scored actors on an A through D rating system. The “hot list” or Ulmer scale has been used for decades to determine the bankability of a star. A-list stars are the most sought after in Hollywood. In determining a star’s bankability, the Ulmer scale examines a star’s willingness to travel and promote, professionalism, career management, and talent. Graders of the Ulmer scale use a formulaic approach to the grading that is not known to outsiders. By ascribing the stars with monikers like A-lister, the graders of the Ulmer scale are assessing the value of the star specifically for other industry professionals; however, the prevalence of the scale and its use has made these assessments known to the general public. Because Brad Pitt is an A-list star, the public is led to believe that he has more value than Jon Hamm, who might be B-list. If individuals accept the value ascribed by others, then their reliance on social and cultural assessment guides their perception. These individuals will go and see Daniel Craig and Hugh Jackman in *A Steady Rain* because both men are A-list stars.
In addition to the Ulmer scale, there are dozens of websites and publications that rank stars on a variety of factors. *Forbes* magazine ranks the world’s highest paid celebrities each year. The highest-ranking actor (amidst a range of other types of celebrities) on the 2015 list was Robert Downey Jr. who came in eighth overall by earning $80 million dollars (Greenburg). Ranker lists the most powerful celebrities on social media, CelRank has its lists of the most popular celebrities, and Vulture, its lists of the most valuable stars.\(^2\) Websites like IMDb track the number of times a star’s page has been visited and calculates the star power for each person in its database. Q scores are another type of ranking where stars are measured for their familiarity and appeal. The Q score, designed in 1960’s by Jack Landis, was devised to help determine likeability and fan base so that stars (and other characters, personalities, and brands) could be used in consumer relations and sales. “The value of Q Scores lies in the understanding of how these consumers are impacted, and suggests the most appropriate choices for personalities, characters, licensed properties, programs and brands to achieve desired results” (Marketing Evaluations, Inc.). The frequency and multitude of ranking systems for stars indicates the popularity of attributing a star’s value. This process assists not only those who cast stars and promote stars’ images, but it also provides an established evaluation (assessment of stars’ value) that can be appropriated by the public. If the public is told that Samuel L. Jackson is one the top stars in Hollywood by some force in the entertainment industry, then they are predisposed to this specific assessment of his value. Bankability and ranking are fundamental factors in a person’s own assessment of a star’s value. Although I do not value Jonah Hill with

\(^2\) CelRank uses a specific algorithm to find mentions of star’s names in search engines, articles, databases, blogs, etc. to determine the prevalence of the star’s online presence. Vulture uses domestic and international box office data as well as critic scores in its ranking.
beauty, talent, or charisma, I acknowledge that he holds a particular monetary value and that the projects he is involved with have a certain degree of clout.

Another indicator of clout is fashion. The first entry of fashion in the *Oxford English Dictionary* states that fashion is “the action or process of making” (fashion, n.). It is interesting to think of clothing fashion in these terms; in getting dressed, one is essentially making (building or shaping) their outer appearance. The connection between fashion and the star are representations of the rich, the famous, and the privileged. As Pamela Gibson writes, “some cinematic celebrities can currently generate intense media interest and function as fashion icons quite independently of their on-screen roles, whereas traditionally their fans would go the cinema to watch their films” (53). The value associated with fashion may come from its ability to indicate social status. The way a person is dressed can allude to their worth. Fashion can also be valued for the artistic aesthetic that accompanies it. Many stars become models and icons for specific fashion lines. Fashion requires an understanding of aesthetics, color, and shape; it may, in fact, be considered a talent. Whether the star has their own line of clothes, whether they decide what to wear or have it chosen for them, or whether they are associated with a designer label, the star’s fashion is yet another component that increases (or in some situations deceases) the value they represent.

Perhaps lesser known—but no less important—to an audience than fashion or box office success is an actor’s training and process. There are acting schools all over the country that provide actor training. The most prestigious of these schools carry a certain gravitas that help an actor network and attract attention. Tim Appelo, writer for *The Hollywood Reporter*, published a ranking of the top 25 drama schools in the world. Topping the list was The Julliard School, followed by Yale School of Drama, Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, and
Carnegie Mellon University, Northwestern University, The Actors Studio at Pace University, Florida State University, and USC School of Dramatic Arts were also included in this ranking. The entry into a top tier theatre program like Yale, Julliard, or NYU may signify that the actor is of a high caliber and therefore must be a highly skilled actor. Knowing where the star trained can certainly have an effect on how the star is valued.

In addition to matriculation of the star, the style of acting the star studied may be of consequence. There are different acting approaches, most derived from the techniques of Constantin Stanislavski. While the individuals who have an understanding and a position on the types of acting techniques might be infinitesimal, I introduce the particular evaluation as I feel it falls within a spectrum of criteria used to assess stars as actors. Each school eagerly touts the success of its graduates—encouraging new acting students who wish to find success to apply to their program—making the star’s association with a particular technique known to those who come in contact with the school and/or their marketing. The Actor’s Studio, The Stella Adler School, and The Sanford Meisner Center may each have distinguish characteristics that become synonymous with their acting students. When these students become stars, the characteristics may be factored into the assessment of the star’s value.

During the actor’s training, one of the goals of the actor is to learn to portray their character distinctly. This requires a certain amount of elasticity in the actor. Meryl Streep is known for a certain distinction within her characters; she develops diverse and unique characteristics for each role she performs. This is a credit to her skill as an actor because no matter what role an actor performs, the actor’s body does not change. There are attributes like voice and form that can be altered by speech and make-up, but underneath it all is the actor’s bare form. Thus, no matter what character she is playing, it is Streep’s body under the make-up
and costume. The elasticity of actor being able to perform a wide range of roles is another factor individuals may consider in the evaluation of the star. Some stars, like Jennifer Aniston, are sometimes criticized for not having greater range in their acting, while others, such as Streep, are lauded for their elasticity. The elasticity of the actor, in terms of showing range within a role, is explored in what Barry King refers to as the “elastic self.” Each star must stretch the perception of themselves and afford themselves the ability to expand the type of roles they are offered (King, *Embodying an Elastic Self* 45-6). It can be argued that Aniston might have expanded her elastic self when she took on the role of Dr. Julia Harris in the film *Horrible Bosses*. Her portrayal of a sex-crazed dentist did much to expand the type of roles that audience believed she could perform. Neil Patrick Harris went through the same kind of expansion after he was cast as Barney in *How I Met Your Mother*; his performance in that role allegedly landed him roles in *Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle* and *Dr. Horrible’s Sing-Along Blog*. Although, there are many stars that have used rigidity (played the stereotype, character, or persona) to their benefit (e.g., Harvey Keitel as the tough determined guy, Maggie Smith as the upstanding lady, Christopher Lloyd as the eccentric), more often than not the star’s ability to play a range of characters or to play a type of character may affect their overall evaluation by the public.

One final factor in the evaluation of stars has to do with the accolades, mainly awards, that they receive. The Oscar, the Golden Globe, and the Emmy (primarily Primetime) are

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22 The Academy Awards or Oscars handed out by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences holds the most value in Hollywood. Each year the Oscars are broadcast to over 200 countries, making the event global. The Golden Globes, which are awarded to film and television, are awarded each year before the Oscars and many winners go on to be awarded the Academy Award. The Hollywood Foreign Press Association bestows the awards each year and
lauded as the three most prominent awards in Hollywood. In terms of their influence, Tim Walker reports, “Oscar’s cultural supremacy is no longer so assured. At the Golden Globes, which celebrates both television and film, the traditional hierarchy has broken down as the names featured in the separate categories gradually become interchangeable. At [the 2015] Emmys, the nominees include an unprecedented number of former Oscar-winners” (Walker). Although this hierarchy seems to be diminishing, there is still some bearing on the importance of the award. Not unlike celebrity rankings, awards provide a pre-determined value for stars. This value is associated with the award. While each award show is highly politicized and does not guarantee any indication of value, it is a perception of value that is being sold to the public. This, in turn, becomes associated with the image of star and becomes one of the levels of signification for the sign. The value of the star is contingent on the subject-object relationship that Li discusses in tandem with the axiology of value that Smith describes. The values associated with the star, whether box office success, training/skill, or awards, is semiotic. The star stands as a signifier and the value as a signified response. Before exploring ways in which associated values of the star might be read by the audience (and potential audience), I must briefly explicate Saussure’s writings on semiotics and value, which are crucial to my case study analyses of Asuncion, Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, and Fences.

In the study of semiotics, Ferdinand De Saussure was one of the first to study value as it relates to language. In his study, Course in General Linguistics, he states “without the help of signs we would be unable to make a clear-cut consistent distinction between two ideas” (111).
Saussure recognizes the importance language plays in the sign system and in the process of evaluation. While a rose by any other name might smell as sweet, the combination of letters in the particular order that spell out the word “rose” distinguish the flower from others, and through the signification process, recall information about the object and its connection with the reader. Regarding this process, Saussure argues, “The characteristic role of language with respect to thought is not to create a material phonic means for expressing ideas but to serve as a link between thought and sound, under conditions that of necessity bring about the reciprocal delimitations of units” (112). In this way, language is a signifier; when a person hears the word “rose,” they recognize the phonemes and process a signified response. Thus, an individual might see the word “Oscar” and think of the golden statuette; the same individual might see the phrase “Oscar winner” and think of a particular star. The image is associated with the linguistic descriptor, which is why Saussure’s semiology is crucial to the study of value. The sign is created through a linguistic realization and an associated image. Words like talent, It, star, financial success, etc. might all be signifiers for the star’s image, thus complete the sign.

Saussure makes a clear distinction between signification and value; the two are not interchangeable. “From a conceptual viewpoint, value is doubtless one element in signification, and it is difficult to see how signification can be dependent upon value and still be distinct from it” (Saussure, Bally, and Sechehaye 114). While keeping in mind that Saussure is a linguist, his delineations of value, as it pertains to phonetics and language, may be also used to further the discussion of value assessment in a larger context. Ergo, in the same way value can affect the signification of language, so too can it affect the signification of another sign (such as a person or an object). Alluding to this connection Saussure provides this example: “To determine what a five-franc piece is worth one must therefore know: (1) that it can be exchange for a fixed
quantity of a different thing, e.g. bread; and (2) that is can be compared with a similar value of
the same system, e.g. a one-franc piece, or with coins of another system (a dollar, etc.)” (115).
This example illustrates that objects cannot only have a fixed value, but that this value must
relate to a larger system. In terms of stardom this can be equated to the value of a star and its
correlated value in regards to the Hollywood star system. Brad Pitt holds intrinsic value as a star,
but he also maintains an extrinsic value as one star within a much larger star system. Value and
assessment is an attempt to associate worth. There are many ways to determine worth depending
on the system wherein the thing being evaluated belongs. I argue that in the Hollywood star
system worth is primarily determined through box office appeal, training/skill, and awards.

The following case studies illustrate the ways in which the image of the star might be
associated with a particular value by the reader. In Asuncion, I begin with an analysis that
focuses on box office success and star power. Of these three case studies, the first provides the
clearest connection between value and image because it specifically deals with quantitative data.
My analysis of Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike goes beyond quantitative (box office and
star ranking) data to examine how a hypothetical audience member, who possesses the
knowledge of a star’s training and associates this training with value, might affect his or her
expectations. Finally, in the case of Fences, I analyze the value of awards and how associating
stars with awards might skew the perspective of that person. Taken together, these three case
studies demonstrate three distinct types of values associated with actors and how knowledge of
these values might affect the signification process.
Asuncion (2011)

Asuncion opened at the Cherry Lane Theatre on October 27, 2011. The intimate theatre, nestled in Greenwich Village that seats less than 200 people, is the oldest continuously running Off-Broadway house in New York. The piece performed that evening was written by film star Jesse Eisenberg and produced by Rattlestick Playwright’s Theater, a company whose mission “is to provide a positive, nurturing experience for emerging playwrights, to present diverse and challenging plays that otherwise might not be produced and to foster the future voices of American theater” (Rattlestick Playwrights Theater). Eisenberg, who in addition to serving as playwright also played the role of Edgar, enlisted the help of his film and television star friend, Justin Bartha, who agreed to play Vinny. Joining them in the cast was Remy Auberjonois (who played Stuart) and Camille Mana (who played the titular Asuncion).  

The character of Edgar fits well with Eisenberg’s persona and the characters he has played, including those in a number of financially profitable films. In his review of the play, David Rooney notes, “As a screen actor, Eisenberg has specialized in characters whose restless

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23 In Asuncion, Edgar, a neurotic former journalist who has taken to blogging and living with his former teaching assistant Vinny. Vinny, a graduate student in Black Studies, trudges though life teaching and maintaining his hipster vibe, all while under the influence of marijuana. He tolerates Edgar, supposedly letting him stay rent-free. One day, Edgar’s brother, Stuart, a Wall Street trader, shows up, announces his marriage, and insists that his new wife, Asuncion, stays with Vinny and Edgar for a few days. Vinny jumps at the opportunity and agrees to let Asuncion stay, much to Edgar’s chagrin. Over the course of several days both Edgar and Vinny interact with Asuncion, exploring their open-mindedness (or lack thereof).
intelligence plays against their social awkwardness in films like *Roger Dodger, The Squid and the Whale* and, most notably, *The Social Network*” (“Asuncion: Theater Review”). The character of Edgar is complex; while his neurotic tendencies tend to dominate, it is his profound insecurity and need for reassurance that drives the action. Rooney observed, “Eisenberg appears to have written himself a vulnerable dweeb—all hyper-verbal nervous energy and amusing eagerness to please. But far less tender currents of masochism, insecurity and ignorance inform this neurotic character” (“Asuncion: Theater Review”). In sum, Eisenberg has proven himself successful in this type of role, and he has proven that he can earn money for production companies when he performs them. Though there are a variety of ways to analyze the values at play in this particular linking of star actors to theatre production, I argue that audience members who see value in box office appeal and star power might be more likely to see Eisenberg and Bartha in an Off-Broadway play and that the value signified in the stars can be transferred onto the production.

Eisenberg, an Academy Award and Golden Globe nominee, has demonstrated that he has strong box-office appeal. Many of his films (around 30%) have banked hundreds of millions of dollars: *Rio 2* earned $500,101,972; *Rio* earned $484,635,760; *Now You See Me* earned $351,723,989; *The Village* earned $256,697,520; *The Social Network* earned $224,900,000; and *Zombieland* earned $102,391,540 (Box Office Mojo, “People Index”). Many of these films can be considered blockbusters and Eisenberg’s involvement in them has provided him with a certain box office signification. If Eisenberg is a sign of financial success, then his involvement in a play Off-Broadway is sure to capitalize from this association.

*Asuncion* was the first play of Eisenberg’s to be produced; this was also his first performance Off-Broadway. As noted above, co-starring with Eisenberg was Bartha, who, like Eisenberg has a strong box-office draw. *The Hangover Part II* earned $586,764,305; *The
Hangover earned $467,483,912; National Treasure: Book of Secrets earned $457,364,600; The Hangover Part III earned $362,000,072; National Treasure earned $347,512,318; and Failure to Launch earned $128,406,887 (Box Office Mojo, “People Index”). This was Bartha’s second Off-Broadway production, both of which occurred in 2011; he also starred in Second Stage Theatre’s production of All New People. With Eisenberg and Bartha starring in the production, Asuncion became a multi-star Off-Broadway production. The combination of the two stars only served to add to the value of the production. Moreover, if Eisenberg and Bartha—who have a certain Hollywood value—are performing in this play, then it can be inferred that the play also has value. This argument hinges on the logic of material implication and is dependent on the reader associating the actors as signs with the production. This association of value can also extend to the Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre that is intrinsically connected to the stars and their value.

Concentrating on the financial worth of the two stars, there is a distinct monetary value associated with them. Recalling Saussure’s reference to the 5-franc piece, the object in question has a particular exchange rate and a fixed quality within a particular monetary system. If we replace with 5-franc piece with Eisenberg, then his monetary worth can be understood. Box Office Mojo reports that the mean box office earning from a film starring Eisenberg is $35,436,627. In exchange for that approximately $35 million dollars, one could buy roughly 14 million loaves of bread or the Petra Diamond, which at 507 carats is the world’s 9th largest diamond. If Eisenberg is the signifier and $35,436,627 average box office earning is the signified, then the signification of the value of Eisenberg is equal to the sum. Bartha can be analyzed in the same way. His average box office earning is $103,072,986 (Box Office Mojo,

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24 While materialistic implication is perhaps not the strongest argument, I use this type of logic as an intermediary to connect the transitive properties of value within semiotic analysis.
“People Index”). Since this sum is greater than that of Eisenberg, using the aforementioned signifying chain, it would be determined that Bartha holds more value than Eisenberg in his potential for box office earnings. For Broadway and Off-Broadway producers, the value of these sums is great, as a popular Broadway show can roughly earn around a million dollars and an Off-Broadway show can earn over fifty thousand in one week. It would take a popular Broadway show around 35 weeks to accrue the earnings that Eisenberg averages at the box office and nearly two years of earnings to meet Bartha’s average. Another monetary semiotic connection may be made between the stars and their estimated net worth. According to the website Celebrity Net Worth, Eisenberg has a net worth of 10 million dollars and Bartha has a net worth of 18 million dollars. While the star is more than monetary value, the connection between the star and financial success is strong.

Even if the average box office earning or celebrity net worth is unknown to a potential audience member, they can still attribute an estimated monetary value to the star. The monetary value of a star can be generalized based on box office success without knowing the exact amount earned. Eisenberg’s financially successful films were also those that were highly publicized and advertised; they were discussed among members of the public. Factoring in the number of financially successful blockbuster films in which Eisenberg starred, it can be easily determined that he is an actor whose films garner financial success. Likewise, Bartha has starred in two highly successful film franchises that earned hundreds of thousands of dollars. The success of these films (and their financial earnings) may be equated, in part, to the talent and appearance of Bartha. An audience who signifies a particularly high monetary value with a particular actor may expect to see an actor perform an equivalent performance to this sum. If they are paid such grand sums for their work, and if they achieve high box office returns for their performance, then the
value of their performance should be equal to their monetary value; however, this is not always the case. The challenges of acting on stage are different than acting in front of camera. The camera records the best performance of the actor, which may take several takes to achieve. Because an actor is good at acting in front of a camera does not necessarily mean that they will be equally gifted at performing in front of a live audience.

In addition to box office value there is the value of star power. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are many sources and websites that rank celebrities. The Ulmer scale, which is one of the most-known scales for celebrity ranking, has spent the past several years in transition from a published list to an online list. As the website has still not been launched as of the date of my writing, I am unable to include Eisenberg or Bartha’s current ranking. According to the CelRank scores, as of April 6, 2016, Eisenberg is ranked 404th and Bartha is ranked 1,175th in popularity as actors. Although these scores might not seem impressive at first, it should be understood that ranking includes 2,249 actors and actresses worldwide. If the stars were to be compared only to other male actors, then Eisenberg is ranked 145th and Bartha is ranked 364th out of 492 male stars in the United States. This list indicates that Eisenberg has more star power than Bartha. These actors do not have an overall high ranking. Stardom, and star power, exists in a spectrum and despite this less than favorable rating, these stars still have fans and other individuals who like their work.

Q Scores are another system of valuation in terms of the star and neither Eisenberg nor Bartha have a very high score.25 Eisenberg has an 18% familiarity score and Bartha has an 8% familiarity score.

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25 To tabulate the Q score, respondents are asked to rank stars using the following matrix: one of my favorites, very good, good, fair or poor, and never seen or heard before.
familiarity score; the average for actors is 48%.\textsuperscript{26} This indicates that from the data they collected that neither Eisenberg nor Bartha are incredibly well known by name. Likewise each actor had a slightly low Positive Q Score; Eisenberg scored a 7% and Bartha scored 15%. The average Positive Q score is 21%. This score is not unexpected since both actors had lower familiarity scores. The Negative Q scores for the stars were also slightly high. The average score is 14% and Eisenberg scored a 25% and Bartha scored a 24%. The negative Q score indicates that there is some kind of polarizing factor surrounding the star. I include this data to show both Eisenberg and Bartha are stars, but that they are not the most well-known and/or well-liked stars in Hollywood.

Ranker.com is another popular website that ranks stars in a variety of different lists. Eisenberg is ranked 1,382 on a list of best actors of all time, 128 on a list of best actors working today, 164 on a list of the greatest actors who have never won an Oscar (for acting), 35 on a list of celebrities whose lives you want, and 46 on a list of the best short actors. Bartha’s presence on ranker.com is almost non-existent as he appears only as 102 on the list of best short actors. Whether or not someone agrees with a ranking or list is unimportant (at least insofar as they relate to my argument). What is important is that this list has been made and distributed by someone else; thus, individuals and groups who disseminate information about celebrity and stars decide the value of an actor’s star power. These lists are often not presented as opinions but as an actuality. Therefore, when Eisenberg and Bartha appear in an Off-Broadway play, some

\textsuperscript{26} Performer Q studies are conducted twice a year with respondents six years of age and up with a total of 1,800 respondents. The score for Eisenberg was taken from Winter 2011 and the score for Bartha was taken from Summer 2012 (this was the closest score to the performance dates for \textit{Asuncion}).
individuals are sure to remember the value that others have ascribed to them, which may affect their decision to purchase a ticket as well as how they read and review the play.

Star power holds value for these actors because it is a representation of their fame and how their celebrity compares to other stars. Although Eisenberg and Bartha are not as big a draw as say Brad Pitt and George Clooney, they still have an average or above average star power associated with their names. This star power can be associated with the production, much in the same way as box office worth. The value of the star can be reflected in the Broadway or Off-Broadway production, attracting audience members that might not have seen the show without the recognition of the star. Individuals are pummelled with information, rankings, and photos of stars through celebrity entertainment media, which is a multiple billion-dollar business; and all of this imagery and data affects the evaluation process of each person. Broadway and Off-Broadway can take advantage of the star’s rankings, financial draw, and fame by casting and promoting the stars in New York City theatre.

Although I contacted many stars for a response to how they feel their presence on Broadway and Off-Broadway affects themselves and their audiences, only one star responded: Eisenberg. In his response to my questionnaire, Eisenberg writes: “I am almost exclusively interested in presenting these stories, not necessarily acting in the plays. I get nervous performing on stage so I have signed on to act in them almost reluctantly.” He goes on to acknowledge the success of his film career and its effect on his ability to promote his work and the theatres with which he works. He writes, “I am aware that my movie career is very helpful in initially selling tickets to the plays and I am certainly interested in promoting the plays on television/radio because it allows the theater companies (that have invested in me) to flourish.” Eisenberg acknowledges his box office success and his star power as a way for his play Off-Broadway to
flourish. He recognizes that audiences can see him as a sign for success and that this valuation can be used to entice others to buy tickets and hopefully give the star a favorable review.

Eisenberg writes that he has never considered the personal or professional impact of his stage performances. He opines, “the movie industry is not so interested in the theatre industry. I do the plays because I am interested in presenting them to an audience and my participation as an actor is helpful in getting them produced.” The economic value of an actor is one of many different values, each of which collide with each other during the process of signification. Many of the qualities that lead to box office success like actor training, awards, and talent are wrapped up within this idea of financial viability. Star power can also be built on these qualities but is perhaps more dependent on the current media presence of the star. It is one thing to be involved in popular films, but it is another to frequently be reported on in celebrity news. Box office success and star power are only two parts of a much larger composition of a star’s value.

In this analysis of Asuncion, I have sought to illustrate how box office revenue and star power are signified with the image of the star. This is perhaps one of the strongest significations of value an individual can have with the star. The data are made readily available to the public and the stars are promoted for their financial and social worth. In addition to the quantitative value that comes from box office and star power, there are qualitative values that can also comprise a sign. Qualitative values, like actor training, depend on different systems for the establishment of their worth. Whereas box office depends on the financial system—which is easy to quantify—qualitative values will more than likely be assessed depending on social and cultural systems. Individuals might believe that there is additional value for a star with a particular training, because they have been led to believe that this is true by social understanding of education. In my analysis of Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike that follows, I explore
how a qualitative value (actor training and perceived skill) is perpetuated in society and how this knowledge can affect the expectations and reception of an individual.

*Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (2013)

Christopher Durang’s Tony Award winning play, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, premiered at the John Golden Theatre on March 14, 2013. The cast included Sigourney Weaver (Masha) and David Hyde Pierce (Vanya) along with Kristine Neilson (Sonia), Billy Magnussen (Spike), Shalita Grant (Cassandra), and Genevieve Angelson (Nina). In this section, I focus on Weaver and Pierce, who both have split their professional lives between the stage and film or television. Though both have long and distinguished stage careers, Weaver is perhaps most famous for her cinematic role as Ripley in the 1979 *Alien* film franchise and Pierce for his acclaimed television performance as Dr. Niles Crane on the show *Frasier*. In *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, Weaver and Pierce use their comic timing, wit, and sagacity to heighten the comedy within the play’s action. I argue that both Weaver and Pierce possess specific skills attuned to the craft of acting. The assessment of the quality of their skills is largely left up to

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27 Vanya and Sonia are unemployed siblings—Sonia is adopted—who live a quiet life in a farmhouse in Bucks County, Pennsylvania after the death of their parents. They have been supported by their sister Masha, a movie star late in her career, and her “boy toy” Spike. Conflict is incited when Masha decides that she is selling the house out from under Vanya and Sonia. With the help of their fortunetelling housekeeper Cassandra, Vanya and Sonia attempt to change Masha’s mind. Through the course of the play, almost all the characters find better versions of themselves as they grapple with their family drama and confront their fears.
cultural standards and individual reception. The training and perceived skill of the star is marked in a variety of ways (playbills, reviews, etc.). Moreover, as I will argue, most individuals have an idea of what constitutes a quality performance and are able to describe how they came to this evaluation. Those persons who can identify specific skills or traits deemed culturally valuable for a performer and can further associate those traits with a particular school or practice of acting will signify the star’s performance accordingly because they have such knowledge.

Weaver and Pierce both attended the Yale School of Drama. As I noted in the introduction to this chapter, Yale is frequently included in lists of the top drama schools in the world. Education is often seen as a value and school rankings serve as a key to inform individuals how much value should be placed on a particular school. Yale is an Ivy League school and its theatre program earns its high ranking through its prestigious and professionally active faculty and its critically acclaimed productions (both those produced by the Yale School of Drama and those produced by the allied Yale Repertory Theatre). While the perception is that Yale provides excellent training and opportunities for its students (a perception I do not dispute), it also grants them invaluable networking opportunities. To be sure, to attend Yale is to become connected to and a part of a powerful and well-connected group of alumni. Angela Bassett, Patricia Clarkson, Frances McDormand, Liev Schreiber, Tony Shalhoub, and Meryl Streep are a few of the school’s notable alumni. Whether or not it is training, talent, or networking, these individuals among many others have found their way into successful careers in the entertainment industry.

Yale openly markets its successful alumni alongside the high quality training it offers in an effort to increase its value, attract the best students to apply (and reject most of them to be exclusive — another benefit that increases value), and bring financial and/or critical success to the
next generation of accomplished actors. The public writ large has been told by Yale, its graduates, and ranking publications that it has a superior program, and because it is superior, it holds value. Though it could be argued that the training one receives at Yale is not fundamentally better or different than what is offered at institutions with less name recognition, it seems clear that Yale has become a sign of success and that its School of Drama signifies excellence. I contend that those audience members with the knowledge of the star’s training and those who value specific skills and abilities in actors, such as elasticity, will more than likely attribute higher value to those stars, and by extension, to the productions with which they are involved.

An actor’s training is not only publicized by the schools they attended but are commonplace within the media. In an interview with Weaver published in *The Independent*, James Rampton questioned the star about her time at Yale. Weaver remarked that she felt somewhat stymied while training there; and yet, she has, by her own admission, benefitted from the cache the training has afforded her. Weaver attended Yale alongside Meryl Streep. According to Weaver, Streep received the glamorous leading roles in Yale productions, while she was left to perform (in her mind) less desirable characters, including old women and prostitutes (Rampton). I contend that when information such as this is published and circulated, audiences create a connection between Weaver and Yale and make assumptions (largely positive) about her abilities. To be sure, for many Weaver stands as a signifier for Yale, and Yale signifies value.

The perceived value of the actor’s skill and range is perhaps most powerfully communicated through a critic’s review. Critics usually gage the performance of the actor, and while their review is not always kind, it usually points to certain skills the actor exhibits. In his *New York Times* review of *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* produced at Lincoln Center
(its home prior to moving to Broadway), Ben Brantley writes positively of “Mr. Hyde Pierce’s skillfully low-key comic discomfort” and “Ms. Weaver’s game sendup of every self-loving, self-doubting movie queen there ever was” (“Insecure Namesakes). Upon its move to Broadway, Christopher Isherwood gave the production its second New York Times review. Isherwood applauds Pierce, writing, “Mr. Pierce delivers Vanya’s enraged rant about the debased nature of contemporary culture with sputtering, funny zest.” Isherwood is less kind to Weaver when he writes, “I wish I could say that Ms. Weaver holds her own amid this skilled comic company, and in a sense she does. The audience laps up her character’s absurd narcissism, delighting in the way Masha sprinkles Splenda over every patronizing swipe at her beloved brother and sister.” Even when criticizing Weaver, Isherwood still compliments her. He continues, “But while Ms. Nielsen and Mr. Pierce can do big, broad acting and somehow give it the texture of finely spun glass, it comes across less felicitously in Ms. Weaver’s hands. (This surprised me, given her history with Mr. Durang dating back to their days at the Yale School of Drama)” (Isherwood). I do not think it is coincidence that Isherwood criticizes Weaver’s elasticity and then states that he expected more from a graduate of Yale who had nonetheless worked with these artists in the past. Not only does Isherwood make this connection between Weaver, her range and skill, and Yale, but he also makes this connection for his readers who must now question the signification between Weaver and Yale and the value of her abilities.

In addition to the review, the playbill is also a communicative source for actor training, skill, and past roles. Reviewing the playbill for Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, I observed that each member of the ensemble listed their acting credentials, including education, except for Weaver and Pierce. Both stars list their most popular television and film credits and their most prestigious awards, but make no mention of the fact that they attended Yale. This is
not surprising, for Hollywood stars, their popular and acclaimed roles have more weight among the public than their education. That does not mean that their education and training do not have value and do not affect the perception and reception of certain individuals. The stars’ education is usually a quick Google search away from any curious person and it is also heavily publicized by the school and by the media. By not including their education/training in the playbill, Weaver and Pierce are not actively reminding audiences of this aspect of their life. That does not mean that an individual’s existing knowledge of the star’s training and skill will not affect their signification of the star. This value can even be a motivating factor in the purchasing of a ticket.

Before the show opened, Weaver and Pierce’s names were attached to the production; those who value their training and skill would likely purchase a ticket in advance to see the duo perform. Their agreeing to act in the ensemble brings name recognition to the show, but it also brings additional merit to the show. As each individual person will assess value in a different way, some might see Weaver or Pierce for their star power and their financial success; however, there are others who might see their talent/skills and their training as value. In fact, some might conflate talent with training. As such, whereas one person might purchase a ticket because they value Weaver and/or Pierce for their star power, another person might choose to purchase a ticket because of the skills inherent in the actor or because of the institution where these skills were fostered.

Even if an individual did not prioritize acting training and skill as a signified value of the star before the production, there are moments within the production that might remind or reinforce this value for the audience member. Throughout the production of *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, Weaver performs an aging actress (much like herself) who frequently speaks about her life as an actress. Her character is coaching Spike, a young stud/want to be
actor, who is clearly dating Masha for prestige and connections. The actions of her character, as a coach and mentor to Spike may act as a trigger, reminding the audience that Weaver, herself, was coached and mentored at Yale. The triggering of this association reminds the individual that Weaver attended Yale and that she was the subject of a quality education in the performing arts. This might color the reception of Weaver’s performance, making audience members view her performance positively, based on this association alone, and without further examination of her performance and the merits of her acting skill.

In addition to this plot point, the memory of Weaver’s training at Yale, and the prestige of the university and their drama school might also be prompted through the dialogue. Upon Masha’s arrival to the farmhouse, she laments that her film, *Sexy Killer*, took her from being a “respected actress” to a “global celebrity” (Durang 26). Masha discusses her longing to play her Chekhovian namesake and laments that her famous acting teacher had wanted to cast her in the role (Durang 25). As she continues her descant on acting, she references both Stanislavski and Meisner techniques, choosing to act one out for her siblings (Durang 27). The sheer nature of the play thrusts acting and acting training into the foreground of the action.

Although both Pierce and Weaver attended Yale and can draw from the value associated with university, the experience and training Pierce received at Yale differs greatly from that of Weaver. Pierce “went to Yale intending to be a music major but by the end of his first year he felt he did not have the talent or drive to make it in the profession and started exploring his love of theater. (He performed in his freshman year in the Gilbert & Sullivan Society’s production of “H.M.S. Pinafore” and he later directed “Princess Ida.”)" (Rizzo). After leaving his music studies behind, Pierce studied English and Theatre Studies, and worked with the Williams Theatre Festival in Connecticut. When he left Yale, Pierce pursued an acting career in New York City;
his first role was in Beyond Therapy, written by fellow Yale alum and author of Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike, Christopher Durang.

In addition to his associations with the Yale School of Drama, Pierce is also well known for his personal/professional relationship with Uta Hagen, one of the great acting coaches of the 20th century. Thus, in addition to being a signifier for Yale, Pierce can also be regarded as a signifier for Hagen and her technique. Indeed, an association such as this could very well increase Pierce’s value as an actor, particularly for those who respect and admire Hagen, her work, and her technique. As such, Pierce’s association with Hagen provides yet another possible signification that can attribute value for his work and for the productions with which he is associated.

As with Weaver, these significations of value can be read from Pierce’s image, but can also be brought to mind throughout the skill displayed in performance. Pierce demonstrates a mastery of character when his sisters, both of whom have very different personalities, confront him. With Sonia, Pierce performs a calm and sanguine response that demonstrates an empathic connection with his adopted sister. When addressing Masha, Pierce depicts a man unfamiliar and unattached, but not unaffectionate. In this role, Pierce shows range and his penchant for comic timing. He puts on display his elastic self, which can be both mesmerizing and detracting as one is mentally pulled out of the action to celebrate the star’s performance. After Vanya performs his reinterpretations of Constantin’s play from The Seagull, he launches into a tirade on technology, modernity, and the loss of respect within society. Pierce’s performance is powerful and engaging, which could very well leave the audience applauding his skill and training by the end of the monologue. This type of recognition of talent and training is most frequently seen at the end of musical numbers. While audience members are hopefully immersed in the action of the
play throughout most the show, there are always moments of reflection and alienation where audiences are reminded that they are watching a play. It is in these moments that significations of value can be conscious and values like box office, training/skill, and talent can be recognized as significations associated with the star.

When sitting in an audience, most individuals hold some understanding about what qualifies as good acting and what does not. Actors should be able to perform a range of characters, should be captivating and truthful, should have great focus and concentration, and should be able to react to the other performers around them. Individuals may not care about the acting school the star attended or what method of acting they practice, but ideas associating certain schools and certain acting methods with value can color the value of the acting—sometimes giving the star more value than they deserve and sometimes less. Certain people feel the need to like a particular star because they have a certain kind of association or background. This cultural value can affect the way the star is valued and the expectations that come along with that value. Thus, when an actor such as Sigourney Weaver or David Hyde Pierce is cast in a Broadway or Off-Broadway show, the value assessment of the actor’s training and skill have an effect on whether or not an individual will want to purchase tickets and how they will judge the show. The training and perceived skill of the star does not necessarily have to be marketed by the show because the information already exists within the media in print and online. The expectation for the production is raised when the value of the star is high. Failure to meet these expectations can result in poor reviews. There is a tenuous relationship between the star and the show and the significiation of success (value) of the star will meld with the value of the show. Weaver and Pierce have the box office, star power, talent/training, and skills that affect the value of their brands and an individual’s assessment of them.
It’s important to note that a star’s training and skill can garner them an award nomination. As I conclude this chapter with my analysis of *Fences*, I provide insight into the signification of awards and how these awards might hold value and affect the perception and reception of individuals. Awards tend to be indicative of proficient skill. As actors win prestigious awards like the Oscar, the Golden Globe, and the Emmy, these actors become signifiers for the award. Culturally, there are values placed on these awards. Actors who win an Academy Award have more scripts sent to them and usually have a range of film projects from which to choose. Winning an award associates the star with a certain amount of gravitas. This notion that an award-winning star might have more value than a star who has not won any awards has an effect on how the star (and the other actors on stage) is signified. In my examination of *Fences*, I explore how winning awards changes the perception of the star and how this change in perception affects possible signified responses.

*Fences* (2010)

When the Broadway revival of August Wilson’s *Fences* opened on 26 April, 2010 starring Denzel Washington and Viola Davis, it was no surprise that it did so to full houses.\(^\text{28}\)

\(^{28}\) *Fences* tells the story of Troy (played by Washington), a former baseball player in the Negro League who is now a 53-year-old garbage collector. He struggles to provide for his wife, Rose (played by Davis) and his sons: Cory and Gabriel. Troy has had a complicated life; he spent time in prison for an accidental murder he committed during a robbery. He failed to make a career as a baseball player because of racial discrimination within Major League Baseball. Due to the racial discrimination he experienced in his past, Troy will not allow his son, Cory, to accept a scholarship to play college football. After an argument on this topic ensues, Troy throws
Throughout its thirteen week, limited run, the audience capacity was never less than 100%. The enormous success of the revival production of *Fences* was of little surprise. To be sure, the original production, which opened in 1988, achieved great success on Broadway winning the Pulitzer Prize in Drama, and Tony Awards for Best Actor in a Play (James Earl Jones), Best Direction of a Play (Lloyd Richards), Best Featured Actress in a Play (Mary Alice), and Best Play. It ran for 525 performances. Thus, with many accolades and its notable playwright, the prospect of selling tickets to a Broadway revival of *Fences* was high, even without a star. Nonetheless, collaboration between Washington and Scott Rudin, a well-regarded Broadway and film producer backing the production, ensured a financially successful reboot production.

Rudin’s role, though less public than Washington’s, is significant and telling. He, along with Harvey Weinstein, is one of the most successful producers on Broadway. Moreover, as is Weinstein, Rudin is primarily a film producer, who consciously and continuously casts notable award winning film and television stars in the New York City stage productions with which he is affiliated.

Washington has achieved great acclaim as an actor, not only for his box office revenue and his skill as a performer, but for the awards he has won for acting. Rudin banks on award

Cory out of his house. The family’s situation is further complicated when Troy finds out a woman named Alberta that he was having an affair with has died during childbirth and his infant daughter is in need of a home. Rose agrees to adopt the child and bring her into the family. Seven years pass, and the family reunites for Troy’s funeral. Raynell, the child Troy had with Alberta is now seven and Cory returns home from the military. At first, Cory refuses to attend the funeral; after prompting from his mother, he relents.
winning actors because they have established a reputation in the field of acting and have influence amongst the public. As I discuss the value of awards and how they affect the signification of star, I must admit that the issue of how awards affect value is one of the most difficult to measure. It is important to note that because of the slippery nature of this kind of work, my analysis here is somewhat shorter than those sections that come before. Additionally, it requires me to adopt a tone of conjecture. Nonetheless, I feel it is important to discuss the issue of awards, and to address how they correspond with the other issues I have discussed in this chapter that are at play in value.

Washington and Davis both graduated from quality acting schools and have demonstrated their skills through their various stage and film productions. Washington, a graduate from the American Conservatory Theatre, has been a well known and well-regarded actor since his critically acclaimed performance and award winning performance in *Glory* in 1989. Davis, who studied at Julliard, has not had star status for nearly as long; however, her career gained nationwide public attention when she performed in the film version of *Doubt* in 2008, for which she received her first Academy Award nomination, alongside Meryl Streep. While both actors have graduated from top acting schools and have clearly demonstrated their skills as actors, Washington has box office revenues and awards that Davis does not.

The fact that Washington has an Academy Award and Davis does not is paramount, especially when the affixation of the awards is included in marketing and press releases. In an article on *Playbill’s* website, Andrew Gans and Kenneth Jones, announced the opening of *Fences* and described in detail the actors’ awards and nominations. Regarding Washington, they wrote, “He is a two-time Academy Award winner for his performances in ‘Training Day’ and ‘Glory’ and received Oscar nominations for his performances in ‘The Hurricane,’ ‘Malcolm X’ and ‘Cry
Freedom’” (Gans and Jones). Davis was listed second with the following description: “Davis won Tony, Drama Desk and Outer Critics Circle Awards for her performance in August Wilson’s King Hedley II. She was nominated for an Academy Award, Golden Globe, SAG and Critics Choice Awards and won the National Board of Review Award for Best Breakthrough Performance for ‘Doubt’” (Gans and Jones). It is not my intention to claim that Davis is lesser than Washington since she has not won any prestigious film awards (she has since won an Emmy Award) or that her awards are not prestigious and lack significance. I do, however, wish to illustrate that according to the hierarchical rank of awards—mentioned earlier in the chapter—Davis does not have the same clout as Washington. 29

Another example of prioritizing Washington in the production can be seen in the production poster. While the poster for the production does not mention either star’s awards or nominations, their names are clearly emphasized. “Denzel” appears in the same size font as the title of the play and “Washington,” while smaller, appears in the same font size as the playwright’s name. Davis’ name appears in a slightly larger font than the playwright’s. It could be argued that Washington was predetermined by producers to have more value than Davis amongst the public, which in turn affected the way Fences was marketed and sold. Being nominated for the Oscar, as Davis was, has certain significance; however, winning the award, like Washington has, clearly holds more significance.

29 I would like to further note that each award is perceived differently by the public; the industry propagates the idea that the winner of the award for best actor is received by the actor who gave the best performance, but this is a falsehood. These awards are political and are often voted on by a body of white, heterosexual men. As such, those responsible for handing out these awards have a distinct homogenous taste in what is considered excellence in film and television.
Washington possesses a great deal of celebrity and his winning the Academy Award and the Golden Globe has only served to solidify his reputation as a talented actor. In addition to his awards for acting, Washington is a good example of an amalgamation of the different factors I have discussed in assessing the value of a movie star in the course of this chapter. Throughout his career he has had huge box office success; his lifetime box office gross is $2,236,830,853 (Box Office Mojo, “People Index”). In addition to his talent, he has been extolled for his looks. In 1996, “Washington became the first African American named People’s Sexiest Man Alive”; “in 2000, People, Ebony, and Essence included him in their lists of most beautiful people and sexiest black men”; and “in 2005, Essence featured Washington in its article on the ten sexiest black men on the planet” (Baron 16). There is value placed on the receipt of these qualities and the audience is reminded of this in articles, in the playbill, and during the production.

When an individual puts stock into awards and places additional value on a star because they have won an award, it changes how the star is signified. As I have mentioned, this is an excellent tool for marketing since the appeal of seeing an award-winning actor is alluring. If the receipt of the award is strongly associated with the star for the individual, then the signification of the star with the award is certain to happen at some moment (or moments during the performance). The star is signified by the award and the audience is reminded that they are seeing Academy Award winner Denzel Washington performing in Fences. This can also affect how other stars or actors onstage might be signified. Because Davis did not have a notable film award amongst her accolades, she might not have been signified with the same value as Washington, even though her performance was remarkable.
Conclusion

As seen throughout these case studies in this chapter, how a star is valued can determine what significations are likely when the star is referenced or seen. The value of the star, in a sense, stems from the star’s product. Those special characteristics that make the star desirable are often what is sold as their product. For many stars, they are an amalgamation of the values mentioned in this chapter; they have strong box office draw, talent/skill, awards, etc. The coalition of all of these values gives a star a higher total value than other stars who might be lacking in a particular area. As I mentioned with celebrity ranking, it is quite common to quantify a star’s value to determine which stars should receive higher pay and get top choice for roles.

The way a star is valued will certainly be imprinted on their image. The first thing recalled from memory when an individual sees the image of the star is a good indicator of the dominate value that individual places on the star. In the next chapter, I focus on memory and fandom as I explore how recollections of previous significations and past roles can affect perceptions and receptions of stars and the shows in which they are cast. Because the star is well known and is often familiar to great host of people, they conjure past memories of their work (past roles), personal life, and cultural presence as ghosts. In conjunction with product and value, the memories of the star present another type of signification for the star that the individual acquires before seeing the star in performance. Those memories and associations that hold value with the individual are the most likely to yield significations (ghosts) during the performance.
CHAPTER III. MEMORY AND FANDOM

The process of using the memory of previous encounters to understand and interpret encounters with new and somewhat different but apparently similar phenomena is fundamental to human cognition in general, and it plays a major role in the theatre, as it does in all the arts.

Marvin Carlson

_The Haunted Stage_

Perhaps the primary pleasure that unites fans with performances is simply enjoyment through engagement. The enjoyment is more than a passive process of consumption or reception. It involves the fan being active in suspending disbelief, making meaning and participating.

Mark Duffett

_Understanding Fandom_

Whether in daily life or in the context of a theatrical event, the making of meaning and the assessment of value involves memory. Because stars are exhaustively (if not obsessively) mediated in American culture, many individuals will have some memory of a well-known actor’s past roles as well as their public and private lives. Many will also have a sense of the star as a product. In the first two chapters, I focused on the effect Hollywood film and television stars have on potential audience members in the pre-production stage of development. There I argued that any star’s product and value has the potential to affect ticket sales and shape an audience
member’s expectations. I will build on product and value in these last two chapters, which will focus on the production stage of development. In this chapter, in particular, I entwine memory and fandom studies into my analysis.

Since fans are enthusiastic admirers/followers of stars, who often seek out information about the object of their fandom, they acquire extensive knowledge—which later becomes memories—in reference to the stars they favor, thus having more memories than the average person who might be aware of the star’s work. A fan might know a star’s age, height, and sexual preference, or their favorite book, movie, or food. Of course one fan might have more knowledge and memories of a particular star than another fan. Moreover, it is important to note that there are varying degrees to fandom; it can run the gamut from general interest to obsession. Regarding this spread of interest, in his study of the phenomena of the fan, Mark Duffett tries to dispel fan stereotypes by illustrating that not all fans are obsessed, groupies; he writes, there is “a continuum that stretches between the least committed fans and the most dedicated ones” (44). Each fan retains an individual knowledge base that is built out of the aspects about the star that they value most or with which they find a personal connection. Even though each fan has a different commitment to the pursuit of their fandom, and specific knowledge tailored to their interest in a star, they are still more informed than the general public or audience. To this end, Duffett reminds, “There are qualitative differences of approach and experience separating fans from other audience members. Devotees build knowledge from a different starting point” (43). As knowledge is gained, it is attributed value and given importance; those who consider themselves fans of a particular star will assign more significance to information about the star than someone who is not a fan. I expand on this idea further throughout this chapter in tandem with the concept of ghosting and semiotics.
In the audience survey I conducted, 72.9% of those who responded considered themselves fans of specific Hollywood stars before seeing them perform on Broadway; after seeing the play or musical, 76.92% of those who responded considered themselves fans.\(^{30}\) According to these results, the majority of those individuals who attend Broadway and Off-Broadway shows with prominent star casting were already fans of the star. The 4.02% increase indicates a small amount of individuals who were not fans prior to seeing the star perform on Broadway but who became fans as a result of the performance. There is also a small chance that a star might lose fans as a result of their performance. Daniel Radcliffe, Christina Applegate, Darren Criss, Emma Stone, and Nick Jonas were among the 6% of stars who lost fans according to the survey results.

Individuals do not have to be fans for memory to have an effect on how they perceive stars on the Broadway or Off-Broadway stage. Indeed, as I will argue in this chapter, since the star is a recycled body used over and over again in a variety of performances, there are many individuals, who may not identify as fans that will still have memories of the star. Given this, in this chapter, I draw primarily on Marvin Carlson’s theory of ghosting to explore the affect that memory has on the reading of the star’s body on stage and the ways in which this signification can affect the individual’s (fan or otherwise) perception and their reception of the star and the production. In sum, then, I use Carlson’s ideas, with some useful side-glances to the work of Joseph Roach on the connection of celebrity to memory, to determine how past roles, memories of the star’s public and private life, and celebrity can affect the individual’s reading of the star’s body in marketing and on the stage. Building on this, I then discuss the issue of fandom using the writings of Mark Duffett and Cheryl Harris, John Fiske, Carl Sandvoss, and Henry Jenkins and

\(^{30}\) See Table 7.
explicate how the fan most likely has more memories of a particular star and how this complicates ghosting on the Broadway/Off-Broadway stage. I then move on to explore how ghosting is inexorably linked with semiotics—using the semiotic theories of Charles Sanders Peirce, Erika Fischer-Lichte, and Marcel Danesi—and how negative and positive association with a star via memory (established signified responses) can affect the reception of each person. Finally, in the second half of the chapter, I apply the tripartite mode of analysis—memory, fandom, and semiotics—to New York productions of *Godspell* (2012), *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* (2011), and *The Best Man* (2012). Significantly, all three productions used Hollywood film and television stars from popular film and television series that have strong fan bases (*Weeds, Harry Potter, Glee, Will and Grace*, etc.). Here, I argue that the actors from these series are not only haunted by the memory of their past roles but also by their actions, missteps, and associations in real life, and that the memories that an individual (particularly a fan) has of a star provides a familiarity that will draw them to the production and provide expectations and pre-established interpretants based on these memories.

**Ghosting, Fandom, and Semiotics**

The concept of ghosting, which relies on an individual’s memory, is not specific to theatre; even so, theatre serves a prime site of occurrence. Carlson references Henrik Ibsen’s play *Ghosts* and its connection to the definition of ghosting: “The images of the dead continuing to work their power on the living, of the past reappearing unexpectedly and uncannily in the midst of the present, are concerns that clearly struck deeply into the poetic imagination of the most influential dramatist of the modern European theatre” (*The Haunted Stage* 1). Thus, the memories of what has been seen, experienced, and learned before can shape the reception of an
individual in the present. For example, seeing a red ball on stage might recall childhood memories of games of dodge ball or four square. It is this triggering of memory that is the fundamental tenant within the concept of ghosting. Regarding this phenomena, Carlson writes, “Ghosting presents the identical thing they have encountered before, although now in a somewhat different context” (*The Haunted Stage* 7). The haunting aspect of ghosting allows an event, person, or object to reappear, through an individual’s memory, in the present. Ghosting does not pertain only to the physical; concepts, ideas, and theories can also haunt the present. For example, the concept of a western genre may haunt a film being watched in the present. The conventions of the genre are embedded within an individual’s memory and can reappear with a similar context. Though the idea of ghosting is a phenomenon with broad application, in this study it primarily deals with the physical body of the star as a site of memory.

Within the theatrical context of performance, an actor’s past roles are often subject to ghosting. An actor who is not well known will not have his or her past roles ghosted like the star that is well known for performing particular characters. A star’s past roles can haunt the star’s physical body. As Carlson contends, “The recycled body of an actor, already a complex bearer of semiotic messages, will almost always inevitably in a new role evoke the ghost or ghosts of previous roles if they have made any impression whatever on the audience, a phenomenon that often colors and indeed may dominate the reception process” (*The Haunted Stage* 8). Past roles can ignite a sense of nostalgia in someone who previously enjoyed an actor’s work playing another character. For example, the ghosting of a beloved character like Legolas from *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* films in an entirely different performance context can be warmly welcome by individuals in the audience who loved watching Orlando Bloom in that role. Attributes associated with the character might also be connected with the star, whether or not
they possess these qualities. The characteristics of youth, strength, faithfulness, agility, and lightheartedness that are inherent in the character of Legolas might also ghost Bloom’s form.

Perhaps it is because of these attributes that Bloom was cast as Romeo in the 2013 Broadway revival of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Richard Rodgers Theatre. The then 36-year old actor played the role of a character in his late teens or early twenties. Ben Brantley, in his *New York Times* review of the play applauded the actor’s performance and commended his qualities: “Mr. Bloom, famous for being handsomely heroic in the ‘Lord of the Rings’ and ‘Pirates of the Caribbean’ franchises, keeps surprising. For once, we have a Romeo who evolves substantively, from a posturing youth in love with love to a man who discovers the startling revelation of real love, with a last-act descent into bilious, bitter anger that verges on madness” (“Such Sweet Sorrow”). Brantley ghosts previous characters Bloom has played onto his rendering of Romeo. He also attributes Bloom with characteristics (handsome and heroic) associated with his character of Legolas. It is important to note that Brantley is surprised by the depth with which Bloom performs the character of Romeo, implying that he did not expect such a performance from the actor. As Brantley’s review makes clear, the memories that an individual has can create expectations for the star that will either be affirmed or negated by their performance. The performance of Bloom as Romeo requires Brantley to renegotiate the idea of Bloom formed by the performances of his previous roles. For Brantley, the success and value he attributes to Bloom for his role in *Romeo and Juliet* will remain affixed in his memory along with his memories of Bloom as Legolas and Will Turner (*Pirates of the Caribbean*). These memories will ghost onto the next role that Bloom performs that Brantley observes, and Brantley will again have to renegotiate his signification of Bloom.
The success that Brantley bestows on Bloom further complicates the actor’s body as a site for signification. Brantley sees Bloom’s body and is reminded of past roles and associations. Roach—echoing Carlson—in his book *Cities of the Dead*—contends that the actor’s body is a site of signification that is read by the audience member; recognizing any actor from a past performance can cause the past role to haunt the present role, even if the actor is not famous. He writes, “What remains physically present to spectators in the theater is the natural body of the performer with its *memento mori* of pockmarks, strained lungs, and fat. This dichotomy provokes a constant alternation of attention from actor to role, from vulnerable body to enduring memory, in which at any moment one or the other ought to be forgotten but cannot be” (*Cities of the Dead* 82). There are recognizable characteristics about each individual’s body. In the case of the actor, there is little that they can do to alter their physical form. Producers and marketers spend a great deal of time and money investing and promoting a star in a role and, because of this investment, want the star to be highlighted and recognizable during the performance. Still, there are many star actors who seek to transform their bodies for each role, so that they appear different, perhaps unknown or unfamiliar to audiences. Wigs, makeup, extreme weight loss or weight gain, and even computer-generated imagery can drastically change the appearance of an actor’s body. Bloom did not make any attempt to alter his physical form in an attempt to prevent ghosting. It is doubtless that if he had made alterations to his physical form, that this would have prevented audience members, especially fans, from recognizing the star. I argue that because of the star’s celebrity, they are much more recognizable in performance than an ordinary actor, and thus, following Roach’s argument, much harder to forget. Changing the star’s appearance in service to a character might possibly disguise the star from recognition, but since most productions
publicize the star, the star is known to be performing the role and this recognition alone can lead to ghosting.

I addressed the issue of ghosting in the audience survey I conducted to determine its prevalence during performance. Upon being asked “Did any of the film/television stars’ past roles come to mind while watching the play/musical,” while (50.78%) replied “yes,” almost half (49.22%) of those who responded replied “no”. As I have mentioned throughout this study, the star is a known entity and as such, the occurrence of ghosting is not unexpected. The response from audience members who did not experience ghosting might demonstrate that if ghosting did occur that is was subconscious or fleeting. It might also indicate that audience members might be so immersed in the performance/story that memories from the star’s past are not recalled. Some survey responses seem indicative of this possibility. One respondent replied: “The role was so transformative.” I take this response to mean that the star performed the role in such a way that the audience member forgot that the star was performing the role. Likewise, another respondent stated that “they did such an incredible job that I didn’t even recognize them as actors in other films.” Other respondents mentioned that they forgot about the stars’ past roles as the show progressed. For example, one respondent wrote, “During Daniel Radcliffe’s performance in ‘How to Succeed,’ I thought of Harry Potter. This really only occurred during his opening number; I forgot about it as the show went on.” Another specified that “Orlando Bloom plays Romeo in Romeo and Juliet and it’s a different character with different personality than the roles he played before. He commanded the role and I didn’t see Orlando—I saw Romeo.” These audience responses suggest that ghosting might be less likely in productions where the performance or story captivates or enthralls audiences. To be sure, the respondents frequently

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[31] See Table 6.
describe the lack of their memories of the stars’ past roles and their acquiescence to the immediacy of the moment and the new fiction being presented.

Past roles are not the only ghosts that can haunt a star on stage. There are many elements within theatre—other than the actor’s body—that can be subjected to ghosting: plot, character, theme, design, etc. Moreover, ghosting in theatre does not have to pertain to the haunting of one theatre production or another; books, songs, and other cultural mediums can ghost onto a production of a play or musical. To be sure, as Carlson reminds, “The relationships between theatre and cultural memory are deep and complex” (The Haunted Stage 2). This remark implies that theatre is a component of art and culture and, as such, draws upon the other elements of art and culture within an individual’s cultural memory. It also implies that memory is the core of ghosting and of reception. How an individual perceives something depends on his or her past experiences and past knowledge: “All reception is deeply involved with memory, because it is memory that supplies the codes and strategies that shape reception, and, as cultural and social memories change, so do the parameters within which reception operates” (Carlson, The Haunted Stage 5). Given this, memories of things that have happened in the star’s public or private life—such as the 2007 recording of Alec Baldwin denigrating his daughter—may also be ghosted. In fact, any memory that an individual associates with a star may be recalled during a performance, thus producing a specific ghost that can haunt the star.

Even the memory of the star’s celebrity can haunt their performance. In their study Theatre As Sign-System: A Semiotics of Text and Performance, Elaine Aston and George Savona argue, “A performer who has achieved fame and public recognition necessarily brings the sign of celebrity into play” (102). Remembering that a particular actor is a film or television star and has a certain degree of celebrity can affect the way an individual reads the star’s body, can determine
the expectations of an individual, and can shape the evaluation of the star’s performance. Regarding this phenomenon, Carlson writes, “Even new audiences, for whom a performance cannot possibly be ghosted by fond personal memories of previous high achievement, may be affected by the operations of celebrity itself to view and experience a famous actor through an aura of expectations that masks failings that would be troubling in someone less celebrated” (*The Haunted Stage* 59). The ghost of celebrity can be just as affective in regards to the individual’s reading of the star as any past role or other memory.

As the foregoing explication of ghosting indicates, it is a semiotic process. An audience member sees the image of the star (signifier or object) and recalls an associated memory (signified or interpretant). As noted in the Introduction, semiology/semiotics rely upon an individual’s memories to construct a signifying chain. For example, an individual must access his or her memories of a stop sign when they see it and recall that the signified response to the sign is to cease their movement. In the same way, the ghost of Legolas that haunts Orlando Bloom is a signified response to Bloom whose body acts as a signifier. His body could also act as a signifier for Miranda Kerr (his ex-wife), for masculinity, for Britain, or any multitude of memories that are associated with the actor.

These associations that extend from memory/signified responses can be positive or negative. Remembering that Bloom is associated with *Pirates of the Caribbean* might be a positive association—one that might encourage an individual to buy tickets and influence their reception of another show. On the other hand, remembering that Baldwin is aggressive and verbally abusive to his daughter might carry negative associations, which could discourage ticket sales or positive reviews. The memories developed through knowledge and experience of a particular actor can affect the evaluative process; they can also lead individuals to form
expectations about a particular star (the type of characters they perform and the genre and style of the work in which they perform). As Carlson argues, “A memory of the physical characteristics and acting style of particular actors playing the same type in play after play reinforced the anticipation of how that type would be experienced in each new production” (*The Haunted Stage* 54). Since stars are established brands, it is not surprising that audiences would expect a certain consistency in the roles and types of projects they undertake.

Producers might choose to take advantage of positive associations in selecting and marketing stars for their productions. Regarding this practice, Carlson writes, “This ghosting is actively encouraged by the production’s publicity program, hoping to draw the theatre audience members who have enjoyed the work of a particular actor on television or in films” (*The Haunted Stage* 70). This echoes the processes I described in Chapter I. Advertisers use the knowledge of previous work to entice an audience, drawing upon the semiotic connections they have with a particular star. This marketing method succeeds only when audiences have a fondness or desire for the actor in question. Roach believes that the association between a star performer and his or her characters, “even in death… tend to stay with them. They gather in the memory of audiences, like ghosts, as each new interpretation of a role sustains or upsets expectations derived from the previous ones” (*Cities of the Dead* 78). Memories, especially of those of a performer in a role, become imprinted on the body, not unlike tattoos. Although these memories do not appear on actor’s bodies in ink, they are established marks fixed to the actor’s body. Each memory adds another mark, slightly altering the overall image. As the image is changed, the renegotiation process commences. One particular mark can change the entire perception of the image overall. For example, I once had a positive view of film star Christian Bale; I enjoyed his performances in *American Psycho* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. In
2009, when it was reported with verifiable evidence that Bale aggressively and viciously verbally assaulted the lighting engineer while on the set for the film *Terminator Salvation*, I lost respect for the actor and my evaluation of him changed immediately. Bale’s rant was recorded and made public for the entire world to hear. This memory marked the actor in such a way that the other marks I had imprinted on his body, created through my viewing of his previous roles, became ugly.

While it seems Broadway has caught on and is using the concept of ghosting to sell tickets, the question remains as to whether or not ghosting affects the reception of the audience during performance. Carlson argues in the affirmative that the recollection of previous roles affects audience reception: “Almost any theatregoer can doubtless recall situations when the memory of an actor seen in a previous role or roles remained in the mind to haunt the subsequent performance” (Carlson, *The Haunted Stage* 10). Whether or not these memories are fleeting or distracting depends on several factors. I believe—based on the responses from the survey that I conducted—that whether or not an individual experiences ghosting is primarily contingent on the individual’s engagement with the performance—how immersed in the performance they are—and how strongly associated their memories are with the star. There are many ghosts that can haunt the star because they are well known, and ghosting, if it occurs on a conscious level, may affect the perception and reception of the show. Memories can create expectations and those most familiar with the stars are their fans, which allows for more memories, associations, and semiotic connections from an individual moderately to extremely invested in the success of a star.

The interest generated in particular elements of popular culture culminates in the emergence of the fan. A fan of a particular film or television star through their knowledge and
pseudo relationship with the star will have more signified responses to a star (ghosts) than a non-fan because they have more memories associated with the star. As Cheryl Harris argues, “To be ‘a fan’ is an accepted colloquialism in our culture—one can be a fan of a restaurant chef, a television star, a political candidate, or even a good sunset” (3). But what is a fan? The word fan is nebulous. It is derivative of the word “fanatic” and implies a certainty intensity or fervor. The second entry for “fan” in the Oxford English Dictionary defines it as a “keen and regular spectator of a (professional) sport, orig. of baseball; a regular supporter of a (professional) sports team; hence, a keen follower of a specified hobby or amusement, and gen. an enthusiast for a particular person or thing.” However, recalling Duffet’s claim that fandom can exist on a continuum, this definition seems too rigid. Identification is at the root of fandom. When an individual feels a strong connection to someone or something, they seek to make that object a reoccurring part of their lives; they seek to strengthen that connection and make it personal. In Understanding Fandom: An Introduction to the Study of Media Fan Culture, Duffett describes the fan as “a person with a relatively deep, positive emotional conviction about someone or something famous, usually expressed through a recognition of style or creativity. He or she is also a person driven to explore and participate in fannish practices. Fans find their identities wrapped up with the pleasures connected to popular culture” (18). For my purposes, I denote the fan as an individual with a particular interest, fondness, or attraction to a particular person, object, or thing.

Fans have a variety of ways in which they can access information about stars. With the rise of the Internet, fans can now get celebrity news and gossip pushed straight to their smart phones. There are websites including Just Jared, Hollywood Life, and Pop Sugar; news programs like TMZ and Entertainment Tonight; and magazines such as People and US Weekly
that provide fans with a near constant stream of information. In addition to biographies and autobiographies, websites including Google, Wikipedia, and IMDb allow individuals to make quick searches and research film and television credits, trivia, and biographical information. Carl Sandvoss in his article, “The Death of the Reader: Literary Theory and the Study of Texts in Popular Culture,” writes “The home-based and mobile media through which most fan texts are consumed—television, radio, magazines, walkmen and iPods, the Internet—are firmly entrenched in the structure of everyday life” (23). Thus, not only is this information easily available, but it is also readily consumed within one’s daily routine.

Fans have easy online access to celebrity gossip, entertainment news, and Facebook and Twitter accounts, but they also have access to fan written or created materials (like fan art) that can also shape their perceptions of a star and their past characters. Fan writings are typically written by fans for other fans and they serve to strengthen the connection between the star and fan. Harris states, “Fan writings seem to be central to the practice of fandom: newsletters, fanzines, ‘slash’ fiction, and songs are some of the communications produced” (6). Fan magazines, alongside celebrity magazines, find subscriptions with those who seek to remain connected to the object of their fandom. John Fiske, in “The Cultural Economy of Fandom,” conjectures that “fan magazines often play up to and encourage this sense of possession, the idea that stars are constructed by their fans and owe their stardom entirely to them” (40). This connection/possession affects the way the star’s body is read by the fan. The imagined personal relationship, fostered by these fan-initiated publications, can alter the way the star is valued and their significance as a performer.

Fan fiction, a particular type of fan writing, which situates stars and their characters in fabricated narratives allows fans to express their wishes and desires through a creative outlet.
The practice of writing, reading, and viewing fictive materials about the object of one’s fandom can create distinct—and fanciful—associations and memories that can lead to exclusive signified responses. In writing fan fiction, fans can fulfill their desires by creating situations and relationships that might not exist within the source material. Bloggers represent another example of fan labor. In his book, *Fans, Bloggers, and Gamers: Exploring Participatory Culture*, Henry Jenkins writes, “Bloggers take knowledge in their own hands, enabling successful navigation within and between these emerging knowledge cultures” (151). The knowledge compiled and distributed through blogs adds fictive narratives and editorialized viewpoints to the previous established knowledge of a fan and can shape their understanding and reception of the object of their fandom.

As has fan writing, fan art has become a common fan labor as the Internet has provided easy access for fans to showcase their art. Jenkins writes, “Digital technologies have also enabled new forms of fan cultural production. Photoshop collage has become popular as a means of illustrating fan faction, and now digital art may go to auction at cons” (143). Fans can create a deeper connection to their fandom through creative means that seek to serve the fandom. For example, a large sect of the Harry Potter fandom queers the character in fiction and art. Thus, if a fan reads Harry Potter fan fiction where Harry Potter is in a same-sex relationship with Draco Malfoy, sees a homoerotic fan-created artwork of Radcliffe or Potter, or reads a blog where the blogger insists that Daniel Radcliffe is secretly gay, the fan can be affected and how they read the body on stage may be subject to these memories. This deep level of connection that this type of fan feels for the star can certainly increase the chance for ghosting, and thus, the reception of the star and the production.
The phenomenon of fan writing/art illuminates another factor: while fandom can be an individual pursuit, it can also be communal. It might be more apt to say that fandom is an individualized experience that resides within a larger sociocultural context. Even so, while fandom arises out of a personal connection to an object, practice, or person, when fans of the same object, practice, or person enjoin, then fandom becomes communal. Fandoms can “involve different experiences, concern different practices and mean different things in various contexts. Even if we share identity as fans of the same media object, my fandom may be experienced as something very different from yours” (Duffett 19). Everyone who considers him or herself a fan of something has a distinct connection to that thing and places a higher level of value on it. All fandoms begin with a connection or association with someone or something. As Duffett explains, “At some initial point the fan has to deeply connect with, and love—or at least be fascinated by—the object of their interest” (25). As fans seek a deeper connection to the object of their fandom, they interact with others who share their love/fascination. Communities are enhanced when those who share this emotional connection come together. A fan community’s presence at a Broadway or Off-Broadway show can potentially increase the possibility of ghosting during the production. As fans have the opportunity to discuss the show and the fandom before the show and during intermission and as fans might wear merchandise from their fandom, the idea and memories the individual has about the star and/or film or television franchise can be foregrounded in the individual’s mind, thus increasing the chance for ghosting.

Since fans are apt to actively seek out knowledge about the object of their fandom. They have access to fan writings and art that can shape their understanding and connection to a star, character, or franchise, which in turn shapes their semiotic analysis. Sandvoss states that “whether a given fan object is found in a novel, a television program, or a popular icon, fan
objects are read as texts on the level of the fan/reader. They all constitute a set of signs and symbols that fans encounter in their frames of representation and mediation, and from which they create meaning in the process of reading” (22). When a star moves from film and television to the stage, the significations that fan has already established with the star come into play.

“Individual texts at the point of production are part of a wider web of textual occurrences and the meanings derived from them. These textual elements are read in the context of other texts” (Sandvoss 23). Therefore, ghosting from one text, whether it be film, television, fan fiction, fan art, or other type of fan labor, can be more intense for the fan than the general audience.

As I have noted throughout this chapter, ghosting is a semiotic process. In the case studies that make up the second half of this chapter, I draw on Charles Sanders Peirce’s writing on signs (semiotics) because of his focus on meaning making and the sign process in regards to objects and sign relation. In his writings on semiotics, Peirce argues that a sign is an icon, an index, or a symbol. “An icon is a sign which would possess the character which renders it significant, even though its object had no existence; such as a lead-pencil streak representing a geometrical line” (Peirce and Hoopes 239). An icon physically appears like what it represents. The no smoking sign, which manifests as a smoking cigarette with a diagonal bar through it is a prime example; the sign clearly and figuratively demonstrates “do not smoke.” “An index is a sign which would, at once, lose the character which makes it a sign if its objects were removed, but would not lose that character if there were no interpretant” (Peirce and Hoopes 239). Indices are sensory and rely on a correlation between a sign and its objects; for example, dark clouds signify rain because of their shade. If the object (shade) was removed the clouds would no longer signify impending rain. The third type of sign is a symbol, which “is a sign which would lose the character which renders it a sign if there were not an interpretant. Such is any utterance of speech
which signifies what it does only by virtue of tis being understood to have the signification” (Peirce and Hoopes 240). Linguistically, symbols are created through word-to-word relationships, for every word has established relationships with other words. Cold, ice, and snow can relate to the word winter. One does not have to see (use the senses) to relate cold, ice, and snow to the word winter because these are associated words. Non-word symbols lack phonetic form but follow the same principle. For example, the cross remains a dominant symbol of the Christian faith; the symbol provides associations with the faith and the values and beliefs the faith was founded on: sin, sacrifice, and resurrection. In sum, then, icons are signs that have a physical resemblance to the sign itself; indices are signs that rely on sensory objects within a specific time and place; and symbols are signs that have mental associations with other symbols. Peirce defines the sign as “anything which determines something else (its interpretant) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its object) in the same way, the interpretant becoming in turn a sign, and so on ad infinitum” (239). This is similar to the signifying chain (sign, signified, and signifier) that Saussure developed in his theory, which remains a core concept in the field of semiotics. Peirce’s signifying chain is an attempt to reach beyond the linguistic, which is largely the focus of Saussure’s semiology, and allow for a broader interpretation in the sign-system. Using Peirce’s semiotic theory in addition to Saussure’s theories on semiology, the star’s physical representation, the body, and its ghosts may be analyzed as a site of signification for the theatre audience.

Using Peirce’s theory of semiotics, the actor is the physical embodiment of the character. They are the two individual entities that become one. As Aston and Savona make clear, “The project of differentiation between the ‘character’ (i.e., the constructed psychology) and the functions (structural, ideological, theatrical and so on) of character in drama must ultimately take
account of the actor. Within the theatrical context, the actor serves as the agent whereby character is mediated to the spectator” (46). Since the actor is performing a character, the source of the actor’s body is complex. If the character is well known, such as Trigorin in Chekhov’s The Seagull, the audience might have a preconceived notion of the physical form that the character should have. Whether or not the actor who is performing the character fits this preconceived notion will have an effect on the signification of the actor’s body. In the audience member’s mind the actor might be too fat, thin, muscular, dainty, etc. to stand in for this character. Taking a slightly different view of this process, the actor, being an icon of him or herself and his or her former roles, might meet the current character he or she is playing with disharmony. In any case, as Erika Fischer-Lichte argues, “The moment an actor appears on stage on the stage, the audience has already received information which allows it to identify the character being portrayed as a specific character” (64). Even if an audience comes in with no previous knowledge of the actor, the image on the playbill and the actor biographies inside the playbill provide the audience with specific body positions and facial expressions as well as the actors’ past/important roles. This chapter specifically addresses the body as a site of signification (vis-à-vis ghosting) and does not focus on the body in motion, the kinesics of the performance; I will address that aspect in Chapter IV. As such, I will not discuss how the actor’s performance ghosts in this chapter, but rather focus on the presence of the actor’s body on stage (as a sign) and how it is interpreted (ghosted) using Peirce’s theory of semiotics.

Using the body as a locus of meaning is commonplace in the study of semiotics. In Marcel Danesi’s fundamental book, Messages, Signs, and Meanings: A Basic Textbook in Semiotics and Communication, he highlights the body’s role in the study of semiotics. Danesi argues, “The body is, in a phrase, a primary source of signification. Studying the signs that are
produced with, through, or on the body is a central objective of semiotics” (45). The practice of reading people’s expressions and body language is essential to everyday communication:

“Across cultures, the body signs and the codes that regulate nonverbal behaviors are the result of a perception of the body as something more than physical substance. Winks, hand gestures, facial expressions, postures, and other bodily actions all communicate something culturally relevant in particular social situations” (Danesi 46). The position of the body can convey specific demeanors and elicit certain assumptions. A confident person exhibits good posture, makes eye contact, and displays a happy demeanor and facial expression.

In addition to body language, body image, proportion, and composition also convey specific meaning. Beauty, symmetry, and proportion are important factors (attributes) that one uses instinctively to determine sexual attraction. Danesi opines, “Humans, like other animals, sense and respond instinctively to the sex (male or female) of another human being” (47). Using a well-known star provides a previously signified sexual body known to a large group of individuals. Stars are frequently objects of desire; keeping in mind that physical attractiveness is one of the key components of “It” as discussed in Chapter II, a considerable amount of stars are deemed physically desirable due to the ways that they satisfy conventional standards of beauty. Evaluation relies heavily on the concept of desire and the sexualization of the star fulfills an innate desire within many individuals. As Danesi suggests, this process is primarily mental. “We normally experience desire through the mind first. This then produces changes in the body. Thus, sex is literally in the mind of the beholder” (Danesi 47). Stars’ bodies are frequently signified as a source of sexual desire and are admired as an ideal of male or female sexuality. Because of Hollywood’s consistent exhibition of beauty and sexuality, I conjecture that sexual desire is one of the dominant significations read from the star’s body.
The body can be read and understood through a culturally acquired knowledge of body signals. The body, whether in motion or still, is a primary source of communication. Danesi argues, “Body signals are of two types—witting (emitted on purpose) or unwitting (emitted instinctively by the body)” (47). Posture, body proximity and the space our bodies take up, as well as, certain facial expressions and gestures can all be unwitting. “Nodding, winking, glancing, looking, nudging, kicking, head tilting” are all examples of witting signals that have a range of intentional purposes (Danesi 49). The image of the star, whether mental or physical (in print, media, or person), can be haunted by previous iterations of the star that the individual recalls. This recall will tend to favor certain desires or values the individual prioritizes. “Because of their social value, the types of messages made with nonverbal signs invariably involve connotation, that is, they are rarely interpreted as being purely physical signals” (Danesi 47). The way the image makes us feel about ourselves, about the star, or about something else entirely has a great effect on the prioritization of the image of the star’s body and the specific associations that are signified. As Aston and Savona remind, “We can address the complexity of the actor as a sign by separating out some of the key ways in which the sign of performer is constituted, by examining the actor as a public person, as the conveyor of text, and as a site of interconnecting sign-systems” (102). The analyses in this chapter primarily focus on the actor as icon, but can also be read as the actor as symbol.

The face represents the prime area of the body that suggests the icon. The face is malleable; it is expressive and changes according to a person’s thoughts. From the face, an individual can perceive and make judgments about the person’s qualities (honesty, confidence, etc.). “This perception underlies the practice of portraiture. A portrait is a visual representation of a subject whose facial appearance, as depicted by the artist, is typically interpreted by viewers as
a signifier of the Self—a sign that we interpret as betraying the subject’s character, social position, profession, etc. A portrait is a probe of human character” (Danesi 51). The distinctness of the face, which includes laugh lines, frown lines, and crow’s feet, becomes the physical manifestation of the self (the icon). “The face is perceived the world over as a sign of Selfhood. This is why we tend to evaluate a stranger’s personality on the basis of his or her facial appearance. And, of course, we judge the ‘beauty,’ or lack thereof, of a person on the basis of how that person ‘looks’” (Danesi 50). Danesi likens this idea of Selfhood to persona: “The perception of the face as a purveyor of Selfhood or persona, as it is sometimes called, permeates the semiosphere across the planet” (51). Specific expressions are universal; smiling, frowning, laughing, crying extend beyond language barriers. It is perhaps because of this reason that the image is so often used as a powerful means of conveyance.

The actor’s face can often be manipulated. In film, airbrushing, computer animation, and other digital technologies can alter the way the actor’s face appears to the audience. The mask of the character overlays the actor’s face and becomes either an index or a symbol; it is not the unaltered face of the actor, but something new. Fischer-Lichte illuminates this process when she writes, “We understand the actor’s mask to mean that set of signs which denotes the character’s face and figure” (68). Make-up used in both theatre and film provides an example of the index. Scars, tattoos, or general make-up applications like foundation, lipstick, and rouge change the appearance of the face and how it can be expressed. The addition of make-up adds a sensual attribution on to the face that allows the sign to become an index. Red lips have a different interpretant than purple lips or lips uncolored with make-up. The purpose of these alterations can disguise the actor and/or sexualize them. Danesi addresses this when he writes, “This is why facial decorations and alterations constitute critical Self-representational props and activities that
reach back into the origins of culture. The cosmetic make-up that we use today has a long and unbroken connection to ancient courtship practices. The alterations made to the face and the props used to embellish it during courtship are all latent sexual signifiers” (50). This disrupts the previous cataloged memory of the face and the Selfhood or persona that emanates from it. In a way the change make-up provides is foundational. It changes the icon and allows it to be interpreted in a different way, as an index for the character it represents.

Hairstyle is another indexical change that can alter the perception of the actor’s body as a sign. David Beckham is often cited for his many different hairstyles throughout the years. This particular fashion, like make-up can disguise or sexualize the star. The way hair is cut and styled becomes part of the whole in terms of the actor’s identity. Fischer-Lichte identifies “‘hairstyle’ as the second system of specific signs to be interpreted in relation to the character’s identity. ‘Hairstyle’ is understood to be the special arrangement of the hair on the head as well as facial hair, i.e., beards” (77). Hair color, cut, and style can change the actor’s appearance in a way that depicts a certain period of time, culture, or life-style. When this does not sync with the standard appearance remembered by the individual, it can change the interpretant of the sign. Wigs are often used to make an actor look older or younger or give them a particular attribute they do not already possess. Beards, as well, can change the perception and interpretation of the star, especially if they do not typically have facial hair.

In addition to make-up and hairstyle, the actor’s costume can change the image of the star from an icon to an index referencing the character. The costumes worn reveal or conceal the actor’s body. Fischer-Lichte addresses the centrality of the costume in the signifying process when she writes, “Of all the elements which constitute the actor’s external appearance, the costume is without doubt the most important component. For even through masks and wigs can
be changed as easily and quickly as costumes, the costume is predominant if only because it is easier to perceive in purely qualitative terms than makeup or hairdo” (Fischer-Lichte 84). Seeing a star in a particular costume that does not reflect the pictorial memory already established by the haunted memories of the actor’s appearances in the media or past roles can alter the sign from actor as icon to actor as index.

Finally, the actor’s body on stage can be read as a symbol. Orlando Bloom might be read as a symbol of masculinity, Daniel Radcliffe might symbolize youth, and Sally Field might symbolize maternity. It is common practice to cast leading men with actors who symbolize conventional notions of masculinity and leading women with actors who symbolize conventional notions of femininity. These attributes are open to interpretation but can be physically represented. Masculine men might be typically seen as tall and muscular and feminine women might be typically seen as dainty, curvy, and voluptuous. Other attributes such as intelligent, kind, daring, etc. can be interpretant for the actor’s body because of a past role. Actors can often be typecast because audiences read them in a particular way. Michael Cera is almost always cast as an awkward teenager; Helena Bonham Carter is commonly cast as a crazed, eccentric woman; and Morgan Freeman is frequently cast as the wise old man. These attributes tend to become associated with the star’s image and often difficult to dispel.

In sum, it is clear that memory plays an important role in perceptions, associations, and assessments of stars. Both individuals and those who identify as fans can easily recall those memories that are prioritized and valued through some special connection. Because fans tend to have more knowledge about the star (the object of their fandom) they will most likely have more memories of the star to draw upon during a performance, thus more likely conjuring ghosts. It is because stars are heavily signified objects that it can have many interpretants—and therefore
many ghosts haunting their bodies—that semiotics can be used to research how this phenomenon functions on the Broadway and Off-Broadway stages. The star can be an icon, an index, or a symbol and can be ghosted by respective memories that double as signified interpretants. The following case studies illustrate the ways in which the star, through signification, can be ghosted by individuals and fans and the affect this process has on reader and star. In Godspell, I begin with a basic review of the ways in which a star can be ghosted. I further this analysis in How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying as I determine the effects of ghosting when complicated by replacement casting. Finally, in The Best Man, I explore the intricacies of ghosting within a multi-star cast that is sure to include audience members from many different fandoms.

Godspell (2011)

The 2011 revival of Stephen Schwartz’s Godspell opened on Broadway November 7th at the Circle in the Square Theatre.32 Daniel Goldstein directed the production starring Hunter Parrish. Producers announced Parrish’s leading role as Jesus in August, just three months before the re-imagined revival was scheduled to open. While Parrish is known for his performances in a number of films including Freedom Writers, 17 Again, and It’s Complicated (alongside Meryl Streep and Alec Baldwin), his turn as Silas Botwin in the hit Showtime television series Weeds continues to be his most recognizable role. In Weeds, which ran for eight seasons from 2005 to 2012, the character of Silas finds his passion in growing and selling his own strain of marijuana,

32 Godspell is a musical that centers on the parables of Christ. Jesus gathers followers and teaches them a variety of lessons through song and dance. One follower, Judas, eventually betrays Jesus, which leads to a depiction of the crucifixion.
while frequently indulging in sex, drugs, and alcohol. In addition to Parrish, lesser-known stars Telly Leung from *Glee* and Anna Maria Perez de Tagle from Disney Channel’s *Camp Rock* and *Hannah Montana* joined the cast.

While Perez de Tagle and Leung could be considered stars and certainly are television personalities, it was the image and celebrity of Parrish on which the show was marketed. The image of Parrish stood alone on the Broadway poster and the playbill. The producers’ choice to focus attention on Parrish made sense when considering his affiliation with *Weeds*. The show had over three million viewers and, because of its popularity and provocative storylines, its cast was recognizable by many people. An analysis of the marketing using Parrish, and to some extent Leung and Perez de Tagle, provides useful insight into how the star’s body can serve as a site of signification that relies on an individual audience member’s cognition and memory of external text and historic figures, previously played characters, and knowledge of the star’s public and private life. Each star can have significations and associations that can be expressed as icons, indices, and symbols.

*Godspell* draws upon parables recounted in the New Testament of the Bible. As Parrish portrays Jesus, there are certain to be associations and disassociations between the figure depicted within the Christian faith and the star performing him on the stage. Jesus is one figure who can serve as an icon (of himself), an index (of the Christian faith), and as a symbol (of purity, love, redemption, and forgiveness). The conceptual image of Jesus for most Westerners is shaped by certain religious depictions in Western culture. His image varies within the Christian faith but he is frequently seen as a tall man with flowing brown hair, a robust, full beard, and dark eyes. In an interview with Parrish for Broadway World, Joseph Panarello remarked that Parrish did not match up with the common preconceived conception of the Christ figure. He
writes: “Parrish, who appears in the Showtime series WEEDS, doesn’t exactly fit The Common [sic] concept of what Jesus looked like. He doesn’t have long hair, a beard or scars on his hands and feet. Rather, the actor has stylishly feathered blond hair, azure blue eyes and a complexion so clear that it’s ready for any close-up that a Hollywood director might request” (Panarello). In sum, as this reviewer made clear, Parish was neither an icon or index of Jesus since he was not costumed to look like the images of Christ that are so prevalent in Western culture.

Of course, the physical differences between Parrish’s body and the body that is known or recognized as Jesus will be read and assessed by each audience member somewhat differently. Moreover, those who are familiar with the history of the musical will know that Schwartz’s depiction of Jesus in Godspell is not meant to be taken as a cookie-cutter representation. Nor is it meant to stand as an emblematic, somewhat historical representation that is frequently ascribed to the representation forwarded in Jesus Christ Superstar. In Godspell, the representation of Christ is more philosophical as it depicts Christ as a teacher and leader of men. Parrish does not have established associations as a teacher or leader in his film roles or in his private or public life. As such, the idea that the star would be symbolized in such a way does not seem likely. In casting Parrish as Jesus, the level of disassociation between the star and the religious figure seems to be high. Yet because he is playing the role of Jesus, the memories each individual has about the Christian figurehead is certain to ghost the performances. The dissonance between Parrish and Jesus might allow for alienation from some audience members who might frequently be reminded that the star differs greatly from the man he is portraying.

In addition to the physical and symbolic dissimilarity between Parrish and Jesus, there is also a sharp contrast between the characters of Silas and Jesus. Because he is so closely associated with his Weeds character, the ghost of Silas is certain to haunt Parrish’s performance.
In the television series, Silas appears to lack any modicum of self-control as he obediently serves his mother’s interest in selling and growing marijuana. As already noted, he indulges in vices of indiscriminate sex, excessive materialism, and drug use. That said, although Silas is no Christ figure, he does have redeeming qualities. He is fiercely loyal to his family, he has a firm understanding of what is morally right (although not always living up to those morals himself), and he sacrifices himself and his happiness for the greater good of others. While some individuals might attribute these qualities to Silas (the character), others are justified in ascribing them to Parrish (the actor). Parrish is an icon for Silas (and vice versa). For many fans of the show, they might see the physical form portraying Jesus, not that of Hunter Parrish but of Silas. This highlights a key point in my argument: there may be icon as star—where the star resembles him or herself—and icon as character—where the star resembles his or her character. In the complexity that is fandom, where one person might be a fan of the actor playing a specific character, another person might specifically be a fan of the character, caring nothing for the actor portraying the role. There have been many iconic characters in fandom that seem to supersede the actors performing the role: Buffy the Vampire Slayer, James Bond, Sherlock Holmes, etc. I do not mean to suggest that there are not die-hard fans who prefer a particular actor’s portrayal of a specific character—I, for example, believe that Adam West was the best version of Batman—but that some fans only care about the character and recognize the actor, not for who they are, but for who they have pretended to be.

While Parrish can be interpreted as an icon for himself and for Silas, he also serves as an object with symbolic interpretants. Those who recognize Parrish as himself may see the star as both an icon and as a symbol for celebrity, masculinity, and/or beauty or sex. Those who recognize Parrish as an icon for Silas might also interpret his form (as Silas) as a symbol of
drugs/illegal behavior, vice, and deceit. Since they are fans of the character, these individuals may not see these as negative attributes. I believe that fans of the character will typically have strong positive associations with the character because of their personal connection with the star, character, or franchise. The personal connection that a fan believes he or she has with a star can affect their perception of the star and this can affect the way the star’s body is read on stage and how the star is received. I presume that a fan will typically be less critical of a star who is the object of their fandom because there is an already established value placed on the star. The fan may react negatively to a star’s involvement with a Broadway or Off-Broadway show if the show attempts to subvert the product for which the star is known or if the expectations of the fan are somehow deprived.

Because Godspell is so well known and has been ranked as one of the most performed high school musicals, there is also a strong likelihood that a previous actor or performance can haunt the star. Because of its prevalence in educational and community theatre, it seems likely that many people who witnessed Parrish portray Jesus probably may have seen another actor perform the role, including Victor Garber who originated the role and starred in the 1973 film adaptation. Thus, the ghosting of the past performance could very well haunt the reception of Parrish’s performance. However, I argue that it may be possible for one ghost to become dominant and dispel other ghosts. Due to the positive associations signified with his physical form, Parrish’s fans may allow the significations they have already formed from his prior roles, his public life, and his social media presence (the memories that they associate with the star) to displace the ghosts of past actors who they may have seen perform the role. For example, if

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desire or celebrity are strong associations for a fan and haunt Parrish on the stage, then other ghosts like that of a previous actor in the role may not appear. This is all to say, that Parrish’s stardom, in my opinion, has the ability to outshine previous memories and allow the interpretant of the actor’s body to be foregrounded in the fan’s thought because the fan places such high value on the star and his or her image. A ghost needs to recognized and identified for the audience member to be haunted by it. If there is no trigger to a past memory, then there is no conscious effect on an individual’s semiotic evaluation. As such, one person might be haunted by another actor they have seen portray Jesus but another might not as other memories are prioritized. Parrish might remind some audience members of other actors they have seen perform the role, other representational images of Christ in other performances, or other roles that he himself has performed in the past, but he might not. The likelihood is that he would have stronger semiotic connections for fans who have an established this aforementioned pseudo-relationship with the star.

Because Hollywood stars are usually advertised as icons within the marketing for a Broadway or Off-Broadway play or musical, the audience members may be attending because of the familiarity they have with the star. I do not believe it is uncommon for human beings to enjoy those things they have experienced before. Repetition has its pleasures. Many individuals enjoy re-watching movies, re-reading books, reminiscing about things done in the past. It is our memories of evaluation and preference that guide our decision making process. Casting Parrish is appealing to a particular group of audience members who have positive memories and associations with the star. In buying a ticket to see Godspell, they are indulging in the familiarity they have with the star. When asked if his stoner fans from Weeds would enjoy the show, Parish replied: “Absolutely. The mindset that’s sort of synonymous with pot smokers is, ‘Relax, man. 
Enjoy life, spread love, and be cool.’ Though we’ve made a departure from the flowery Godspell of the ‘70s, that way of thinking is still greatly weaved into the story. You can’t walk away from the show and not feel happy, energized, and ready to take on the world with a new perspective” (Voss). Parrish seems to reassure readers that despite the obvious differences between *Weeds* and *Godspell*, *Weeds* fans will not walk away disappointed with his involvement in this production.

In the same interview, Parrish ties connections with his own faith and how his personal life influences him in the role. He states: I was born and raised a Christian, but it wasn’t until I was 16 that I understood what that meant…. For me, spirituality is really about a relationship, a friendship, with Jesus. It’s all about prayer. The same way I would text my mom or a buddy, I pray to Jesus” (Voss). Printing this information for the public to read creates a connection between Parrish’s private life and his role as Jesus. The memory of this interview might manifest as a ghost for Parrish, as he makes the knowledge of his spirituality known. For fans, knowing this information about Parrish might change their perception of him in the role of Jesus (or his role on *Weeds*) and give them new association with which to create a semiotic interpretant. Part of the job of the actor is doing press for his or her project and it is not unusual for the actor to make connections with their personal life. Once this information is stored into long-term memory, it can later manifest as a ghost. This is one of the downsides of celebrity; since so much information is available to the public about the star, the likelihood of ghosts is substantially increased.

Lesser-known stars like Leung and Perez de Tagle may also be haunted by past memories; but, there is most likely less memories for individuals and fans from which to draw. Leung portrayed a popular character on the television show, *Glee*, but there are much fewer interviews with him than Parrish. In regards to his spirituality and its connection to *Godspell*, he
states: “GODSPELL is about how we can all come together—as human beings, of any religious affiliation—and form a community. What I LOVE about GODSPELL is that it’s actually NOT a religious show at all. Yes—we are using the Bible as our source for text, but as a non-Christian, the show speaks to me” (Rothenberg). Fans of Leung may not know much about his private life as he is only beginning to rise as a star, so this information about his religious beliefs is certain to affect associations that readers have of Leung. While it is far more likely that fans of Glee will see the physical form of Leung as an icon for his character Wes, doing interviews and creating a public persona—sharing information with his fans—help to develop Leung as an icon of himself. Until he achieves more notoriety and publicity, Leung is most likely identified as being his character Wes on Glee.

Leung was not the only rising star in the Godspell cast. Anna Maria Perez de Tagle was also seeking to develop herself as a star. Appearing on Hannah Montana and co-starring in the Camp Rock films provided Perez de Tagle a modicum of fame. Although she portrayed Ashley Dewitt on Hannah Montana and Ella Pador in Camp Rock, she may not be primarily known for her characters but from her association with these Disney Channel franchises. Since she is so closely associated with these franchises and their fandoms, there is a strong possibility for the ghost of these franchises (Hannah Montana and Camp Rock) to haunt her body on stage. As noted previously, fandoms are often built upon franchises and actors can achieve fame and acclaim for simply being associated with the overall product, especially if they are in a supporting role. In this way Perez de Tagle is an object signifying of the fandom; she is an index. When individuals or fans see her body on stage it can correlate, point to, these two Disney franchises. Perez de Tagle’s face is embedded within the success of those franchises and she has yet to break away as an object. Because of her associations with two distinct fandoms, there are
multiple interpretants of her body as an object for those who are fans of both franchises. Also, since both franchises are products of Disney, Perez de Tagle becomes a symbol of the Disney Corporation.

*Godspell* provides a deeper look into ways in which memory (ghosts) can haunt the star on stage and affect the reading of the star. The star can be seen as an icon of the actor and of the character, as an index of a much larger fandom, or as a symbol. The body is a complex site of signification and the interpretant of the body as an object relies on the memories of the individual audience member. Those memories that are stronger or more recent in all likelihood will serve as ghosts to the actor’s physical form. As the play or musical unfolds, the cognitive process changes and audience members may begin to find they have forgotten about the actor’s past roles and their connection to a previous fandom. This is dependent on the level of fandom, for the most die-hard and dedicated fans may not be able to see the star as anything more than their most valued representation of the actor, that of their fandom. While this case study explores some ways in which ghosting can affect the film or television star on the Broadway/Off-Broadway stage, there are other factors that can affect ghosting and stardom. The concept of ghosting becomes further complicated when stars are replaced by other stars, as I will discuss in my analysis of *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*.

*How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* (2011)

In April 2010, Playbill announced that Daniel Radcliffe would return to Broadway to star in his musical debut in *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*.\(^3^4\) Radcliffe was joined

\(^{34}\) In *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*, J. Pierpont Finch, a window cleaner, attempts to make it big in business after finding a book that shares the musical’s title. At
on stage by veteran television star John Larroquette who is well known from his appearances in *Night Court, The John Larroquette Show, The 10th Kingdom, The Practice, and Boston Legal.* The production opened in the Al Hirschfeld Theatre on the 27th of March 2011. The duo of Radcliffe and Larroquette drew upon two separate and distinct fandoms: primarily *Harry Potter* and *Night Court.* Additionally, *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* is a frequently produced musical and, as such, has its own fandom.

It warrants mentioning that throughout the years, many actors have played the main character in *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying,* one J. Pierrepont Finch. Most notable, perhaps, are Robert Morse—who created the character in the original Broadway production of the show in the early 1960s, and also appeared in the 1967 film version—and MATTHEW Broderick – who played the character in the wildly successful revival in the mid-1990s. Morse, who won a Tony Award for his performance in the show, used the production to springboard into a very successful career that involved numerous film, television, and stage appearances; he was extremely popular with those who identify as Baby Boomers. Broderick, who was famous for his work in film and on stage before taking on the role of Finch, is an actor who resonates strongly with Generation X. In like manner, Radcliffe, who is equally if not more famous than either Morse or Broderick, resonates strongly with Millennials. It seems then, that each generation has a production of *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* that it might consider iconic, embedded into the culture of the era. My concern in this chapter is less the

the World Wide Wicket Company, Finch climbs the corporate ladder quickly by charming J.B. Biggley, the president of the company. As his keeps his aims on success, Finch takes interest in Rosemary Pilkington, a secretary at the company. When Finch’s big scheme to get ahead in the company backfires, he uses his ingenuity and charm to save his and the other executives' jobs.
variations from production to production (although that factor does emerge in my analysis), and more on what happens when multiple stars, through replacement casting, are cast in the same role in one production. To that end, using the 2011 revival production of *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*, I review the process of replacement casting—exclusively the role of Finch—and what effects memory and ghosting might have played in reception.

To begin, it can be argued that Finch appeals to the “twentysomethings” of each generation because his struggle to begin a successful career and rise the corporate ladder is a challenge similar to what many people in their twenties face. The initial casting of Daniel Radcliffe, and later replacement casting of first Darren Criss (famous for his role in the television show *Glee*) and then Nick Jonas (famous for his pop music career as a member of the Jonas Brothers, and as an actor in the Disney Channel *Camp Rock* franchise), could be seen as an attempt on the part of the backers to appeal to Millennials as well as draw in fans of the various works with which the actors were affiliated. As I noted in Chapter I, many audience members feel that they have grown-up with Radcliffe. Likewise, Jonas captivated audiences and fans from an early age, maturing into adulthood in the public eye. Perhaps a true “It-guy,” Criss developed a large fan base both for playing Blaine on the wildly popular television show *Glee*, and for his involvement with Team StarKid, a Chicago based theatre company that Criss founded at the University of Michigan in 2009. Radcliffe, Criss, and Jonas are three separate and distinct products with three separate and distinct fandoms. Each star has a different celebrity ranking. As one star replaces the next, the ghosting of one actor’s performance onto the next seems certain.

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35 StarKid Productions records (usually live) theatrical productions and rebroadcasts them via the Internet.
While many film/television star cast shows are run for a limited engagement—accommodating the star’s schedule—others, like *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* attempt to continue the run for as long as possible by recasting stars. In doing so, investors are able to increase their profits. As noted above, the first star to play Finch in the 2011 revival was Radcliffe. His performance was met with mixed reviews, but nonetheless drew massive crowds; the house was nearly filled every night for the first fourteen weeks of the show. My personal experience as someone who saw Radcliffe in this production is perhaps useful here: I knew nothing about the musical, but when I heard that Radcliffe was going to perform, I promptly bought my ticket to see him on stage. I saw the production while it was still in previews and the energy from the audience before the curtain rose was electrifying; everyone in the theatre seemed to be there to see Radcliffe. As with almost all stars, the audience erupted when Radcliffe walked onto the stage. The energy maintained throughout the show, and I wondered if people were cheering for Potter or Radcliffe or both. The Harry Potter fandom itself haunted Radcliffe on stage as scores of fans cheered, screamed, and applauded. I felt much like the majority of my survey respondents who also saw the production. There were a few moments when I was taken out of the action of the play, remembering that I was seeing Radcliffe perform in person, before my very eyes; but, for the most part, I was immersed in the story. Recognizing that a star can be an interpretant for the fandom itself, recasting the star is like recasting the ghosts that haunt the production. While some ghosts from the previous star might haunt the

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36 By his own admission, Radcliffe agreed to tackle the role in this revival as a way to challenge himself. He was not trained in song and dance and spent countless hours honing his skills.
current star in the role, new ghosts suddenly appear in the production that, other than in casting, has not changed.

As are most stars of his stature, Radcliffe can be an icon, index, or symbol. Radcliffe’s physical form is complex site of signification. Even without the addition of the glasses and the scar, he remains an icon of Harry Potter. Radcliffe is also haunted by himself—or perhaps I should say his past selves. During the run of the musical, Radcliffe revealed his issues with alcohol and admitted to being drunk during the filming of some of the Harry Potter films. He also revealed in 2008 that when he was 16 that he lost his virginity to a much older woman. This information about his past can create different versions of himself (Radcliffe, the alcoholic and Radcliffe the toy boy) that can haunt his performances. The memory of these past selves can be triggered onstage. Finch’s interactions with the characters Hedy La Rue and Miss Jones or his consumption of alcohol on stage could trigger these memories and ghosts of Radcliffe’s past. In addition to his past selves, Radcliffe can also represent different symbols like bravery, youth, sexuality, masculinity, and magic. For those audience members who had never seen the musical produced before—myself included—Daniel Radcliffe became the primum representation of the character. Therefore, any other star who would take on the role of Finch in that production would most likely draw on the ghost Radcliffe.

In addition to the iconic, indexical, and symbolic interpretant to his past roles and public and private life, Radcliffe’s physical form can affect the reading of the character. Choosing not to costume Radcliffe in a similar fashion to Harry Potter, there is a chance fans/audiences might

37 I reference past selves here, not as an indicator of past roles, but as commentary on previous versions of the self that others might recall.

38 A toy boy is slang for a male lover who is much younger than his partner.
experience the ghost of Harry Potter less. Regardless of the costuming, the star’s body is still likely to ghost its interpretants. Radcliffe is often sexualized by men and women alike, especially after pictures of his penis became widely distributed on the Internet following his performance in *Equus*. Radcliffe is conventionally good looking: his body is physically fit, he has clear skin, appealing facial features, and blue eyes. Although he is physically fit, his body is slender, his skin is incredibly pale, and he is quite short—5 foot 5 inches. Though beauty is in the eye of the beholder, Radcliffe does not have the tall, muscular body that is often associated with the leading male. While I do not believe this affects his role as Finch, it certainly shapes the way the role might be read by audience members. Finch is cunning, a little bit devious, and quick. With Radcliffe in the role these attributes are physicalized; he literally becomes the “little guy” taking on the giants of industry. His physical presence does not seem to dominate or intimidate the other characters. While his form can be interpreted as masculine, he is unlikely to be considered hyper-masculine. If Radcliffe becomes the primum representation of Finch within someone’s mind—whether they have seen the show or simply followed the press—then his physical form and qualities (interpretants associated with his likeness) are certain to become synonymous with the character. This could be problematic for stars that take on the role after Radcliffe’s departure.

The representation of his physical form is further complicated when you consider the link between fan fiction and the object that is Radcliffe’s body. On FanFiction.net alone there are over 566,000 stories of Harry Potter Fan Fiction; since Daniel Radcliffe is the face of Harry Potter, these stories are frequently associated with his physical form.\(^{39}\) The stories on FanFiction.net and other various sites run the gamut between Harry and Hermione’s marriage,
Harry’s time in school, and the events that precede the Battle of Hogwarts.\textsuperscript{40} Many of the fan fiction stories about Harry Potter are sexual in nature; Harry is sexually partnered with Ron, Hermione, Ginny, and Draco (among others). Radcliffe has just over 40 stories written about himself on FanFiction.net; these include poems, love stories, and a blending between reality and the world of Harry Potter. While fan fiction is niche and is only participated in and read by a group of select people, the effect that the imagined stories can have on the interpretation of an object are no different than an article in the \textit{New York Times} or \textit{People} magazine. The information stored in one’s memory can be recalled and can be ghosted on the star’s physical form. Thus, not only is Radcliffe ghosted by his past roles, his public and private life, and associations formed from physical form, but he can also be ghosted by fictive stories that fans create to satisfy an unfulfilled desire within their fandom. All of the information stored within memory will not only have an effect on how Radcliffe is read on stage in the role of Finch, but also on how those who come after him are read and received.

After Radcliffe left the show in January 2012, Criss replaced him. As noted earlier, replacement casting allowed the production to extend a run and increase the investor’s return, but also tap into different fandoms: \textit{Glee} and Team Starkid. The first week of Criss’ three-week stretch was the highest grossing week of the show’s run; the show earned $1,910,224, a significant rise from the highest gross ($1,271,961) during Radcliffe’s tenure (The Broadway League, “How to Succeed…”). Criss’ performance was marketed as exclusive and for those who

\textsuperscript{40} The Battle of Hogwarts took place in \textit{Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows}. It was the final battle between Harry Potter and Lord Voldemort and ends the Second Wizarding War. Harry kills Voldemort in the epic conclusion of the battle, which takes place near the end of the book.
wanted to see the actor perform the role of Finch, time and space was limited. As critic Adam Hetrick noted, “Criss proved to be a major box-office draw for the production, which sold-out several performances throughout his three-week engagement. Throngs of fans also mobbed the stage door to catch a glimpse of the ‘Glee’ star” (“Darren Criss Exits”). Criss will, of course, bring his own ghosts to the production as individuals and fans read the star as an icon, an index, and a symbol, but the star he is replacing, Radcliffe, will also haunt him.

While Criss and Radcliffe look nothing alike and are not similar in terms of their celebrity brand, they do have some associations in common. Criss performed the role of Harry Potter for Team StarKid in A Very Potter Musical, a popular musical parody based on several of the Harry Potter books. Thus, albeit in different ways, both Criss and Radcliffe can be haunted by the ghost of Harry Potter. That said, it seems more likely that Criss would be ghosted by Glee and his character Blaine, who is the romantic love interest of Kurt Hummel (played by Chris Colfer). In addition to being potentially haunted by his past roles, Criss could also be haunted by symbols formed from his past roles and his personal and private life. Although Criss identifies as straight, his role as Blaine has made him a role model for the LGBTQ community. Fans may see Criss as an icon of himself or of his character Blaine, but they might also see him as a symbol for gay rights. The costume he wore on stage as Finch is somewhat similar to the costume he wears as Blaine; the “bow-tie and suit” look, although not uncommon, could be considered indexical. It is clear that Criss brings his own ghosts to his performance of Finch, but it must also be recognized that Radcliffe’s involvement in the show will have an effect on the perception and reception of Criss.

Radcliffe’s performance was so publicized—videos were posted online, musical numbers were performed on talk shows, and newspapers and magazines wrote numerous articles about the
musical and its star—that even people who did not see the star perform in the theatre could view his representation of Finch in some fashion. As no two performances of a character are exactly alike, those who built their understanding of the character of Finch on associations with Radcliffe were forced to renegotiate their understanding of the character for Criss’s representation. While Radcliffe performed innocence, slyness, and spontaneity, Criss performed Finch with confidence, composure, and calculation. This is evident in how each actor interacts with the characters Biggley, Miss Jones, Hedy La Rue, and Rosemary. Radcliffe’s slightly more frenetic performance contrasted with Criss’ planate representation. In terms of vocal quality, Criss has a deeper more resonant voice than Radcliffe which can signal greater control, strength, and masculinity. Physically, Criss is taller than Radcliffe (5 foot 8 inches), and his body is broader and more muscular. Criss’ physical form can be read symbolically as more masculine than Radcliffe’s. Because Radcliffe performed the role of Finch immediately before Criss, his performance and physical representation will mostly likely haunt Criss on stage. This is evident in a review in *Entertainment Weekly*, written by Aubry D’Arminio: “Slipping into Pierrepont’s purple bow tie seemed a stretch for Criss, who admittedly only had two weeks to rehearse. He twisted his tongue on several lines. He couldn’t land a joke. He danced less challenging choreography than his predecessor, Daniel Radcliffe, had” (“On the Scene”). While most articles on Criss’ performance avoid contrasting the star with Radcliffe, D’Arminio demonstrates just how the ghosting of a previous role can affect reception. Luckily for Criss, he did not have to suffer the ghost of two previous stars as Jonas did when he took the role from Criss at the end of January 2012.

Immediately after Criss’ short run as Finch, Jonas, whose popularity as a pop singer in The Jonas Brothers band propelled him into the spotlight, took up the role. Jonas, who is 5 foot 7
inches with dark hair and a muscular build, is physically similar to Darren Criss. The two stars, however, do not have the same fan base, and it is possibly for this reason that *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying* closed under Jonas’ tenure. After Criss’s departure, the weekly gross of the show began to decline (The Broadway League, “How to Succeed…”). The show dipped to around 50% occupancy before it closed early on May 20, 2012. Jonas had the difficult task of being the third star to reprise the role of Finch in the span of less than a year; the previous incarnations of the character as performed by Radcliffe and Criss seemed to create expectations that Jonas did not meet. In an article for *Entertainment Weekly*, Thomas Geier wrote, “Because the Jonas Brothers are on hiatus as a pop act and fans of teen pop can be a rather fickle bunch, Nick may be less of a lure for young fans in the way Radcliffe and Criss turned out to be” (Geier). Radcliffe and Criss had a strong fan bases that recognized them as actors, whereas, Jonas is primarily known first as a musician and second as an actor. Jonas’ devoted fans, who had time, money, and access, most certainly purchased tickets to see him perform on stage, but he did not have the appeal that Radcliffe or Criss brought the show.

Jonas may have suffered the haunting of both Radcliffe and Criss, but perhaps the novelty of seeing a different star take up the role of Finch had also diminished. Although he had a similar physical build to Criss, his body is a different object that will have a different interpretant. If the ghosts of Radcliffe and Criss are present, Jonas will suffer comparisons with and contrasts to both stars. At nineteen, Jonas does seem to perform a youthfulness that audiences may not have associated with the character of Finch, especially since Radcliffe and Criss were 23 and 25, respectively. Perhaps it was not the way his physical form was interpreted in the role, but Jonas’s performance as Finch that failed to draw in crowds. Nevertheless, being the third star to reprise a role in the short span of a year is somewhat diminishing as the ghosts of
the previous two haunt the current star. The ghosting would only multiply if more replacements had been cast. In this case, ghosting, although it may not affect the audience in the moment of the performance, could be detrimental to the show. Instead of invigorating a new fan base to attend the performance, casting star after star could disenchant or disconcert a potential audience.

There can be benefits to replacement casting. It allows for diversity in the role and can breathe new life into a show. However, it also allows for the presence of more ghosts to haunt the star and the production. This is exacerbated when the replacement actor is a Hollywood film or television star because they are familiar objects with established interpretants. Their celebrity complicates the ghosting because as stars, they might be perceived as comparable in a way that non-famous stars might not be; it is easier to compare a star to another star than it is to compare a star with a non-star. Fans have a distinct knowledge of the stars they follow and this increases the likelihood that one or more of these ghosts may appear to haunt the star. This case study serves to illustrate how memory and ghosting is complicated in Broadway shows that recast stars throughout the course of the show’s run. In this chapter’s final case study, The Best Man, I explore one final matter that complicates celebrity and ghosting on the Broadway stage: the multi-star cast.

The Best Man (2012)

The second revival of Gore Vidal’s The Best Man opened on Broadway on April 1st, 2012 at the Gerald Schoenfeld Theatre.\footnote{The Best Man takes place at the 1960 Presidential primaries in Philadelphia. A respectable, ethical candidate, William Russell, is trying to win his party’s nomination from Joseph Cantwell, an unscrupulous man who will sink to any level to win. During the convention} The multi-star cast included James Earl Jones, John

Larroquette, Candice Bergen, Eric McCormack, and Angela Lansbury. Each actor came from a well-known television series or movie—*Star Wars*, *Night Court*, *Murphy Brown*, *Will & Grace* and *Murder, She Wrote*, respectively—and brought with them fans from those endeavors. Stars like Jones and Lansbury could also be considered Broadway stars, but because they are involved in specific fandoms with distinct characters, I include them in my analysis. This production marked the second revival of *The Best Man*, which debuted in 1960 and was revived in 2000—both election years. The first revival was a star-studded event that included performances by Charles Durning, Spalding Gray, Chris Noth, Elizabeth Ashley, and Christine Ebersole. These famous stars acting alongside each other on the stage allow for complex and various interpretations and for the presences of multiple ghosts.

As I have already pointed out, the stars cast in the 2012 revival of *The Best Man* each had strong associations with a popular film or television franchise that was certain to attract audience members and fans. The interaction between a multitude of popular actors and popular characters of different fandoms could create a semiotic field where the juxtapositions of icons, index, and symbols would appear. The intermingling of no less than four stars in a single play or musical can create a haunted site where ghosts of the past are lying in wait. Not only is there an abundance of ghosts haunting the object that is the star’s body, but also these ghosts have the opportunity to interact as they are juxtaposed. Using this production of *The Best Man*, I argue that multi-star casts, which bring multiple fandoms into the audience, flood the stage with ghosts and create a situation where ghosts from multiple fandoms coexist and collide.

(and the course of the play), both men try to get the endorsement of the outgoing president. As time runs out for both candidates, drastic measures must be taken to preserve the dignity of the party and the country.
The chance that an audience member would be a fan of more than one of these franchises is probable. Thus, when Mrs. Sue-Ellen Gamadge (Lansbury) meets Mrs. Alice Russell (Bergen) fans of *Murphy Brown* and *Murder, She Wrote* could interpret the moment as Murphy Brown meets Jessica Fletcher. Because both Jessica Fletcher and Murphy Brown are perhaps the best-known characters performed by these two woman, the chance of these characters ghosting the bodies of the two stars is to be expected. If the memories of these characters are forefront in the reader’s mind, at the moment that both actresses converge onstage, it can create a unique situation where Murphy Brown and Jessica Fletcher have an interaction outside of their own specific fandom. As memories of these character’s qualities (what they symbolize) haunts the stage, it could affect the way the scene is interpreted. Fletcher’s acute perception, competency, and warmth might be interpreted as superior (or inferior depending on value) to Brown’s wry wit, sarcastic nature, and haughtiness.

In addition to the ghosting of character and signified symbols from the physical form, vocal intonation and quality can be indexical of character or person. Multiple actors on stage bring multiple and familiar voices with them. James Earl Jones, John Larroquette, Candice Bergen, Eric McCormack, and Angela Lansbury each have easily recognizable voices and patterns of speech that are indexical. When former President Arthur Hockstader (Jones) confronts Secretary William Russell (Larroquette) and Senator Jospeh Cantwell (McCormick) his deep, booming voice might trigger the ghosts of Darth Vader from *Star Wars* or Mufasa from *The Lion King*. These characters haunt Jones voice because his distinctive voice was one of the most notable/memorable qualities about these characters. To be sure, even an animated, non-human, character can ghost a star through the actor’s voice. While there is not a physical connection between Jones and the animated character, the star’s voice can serve as an index of
that character which can have symbolic interpretants like royalty, power, and strength for Mufasa and terror, villain, and oppressor for Darth Vader. If Jones’ voice triggers these ghosts within the scene, the power that he wields over the two men could be amplified.

Bergen is known for playing feminist roles in *Murphy Brown, Family Guy, Sex in the City, Sweet Home Alabama, and Boston Legal*. Her voice could be symbolic of power, femininity, and strength. The voice can be symbolic in much the same way the body can be symbolic. It is associated with a particular object that corresponds to a particular sign. Different memories might be triggered by different senses. Touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound can all be used in the retrieval of long-term memory. The physical form of the body can conjure certain ghosts and the voice, an extension of the physical form, might conjure other ghosts or reinforce the ghosts that were conjured by the body. The audience relies on the senses of sight and sound and through these two senses ghosting is likely to be experienced. Even if a voice is not recognized and ghosting does not occur, the voice could still act as a symbol based on qualities like tenor, cadence, or tone. Symbols can also be read in the physical form when no ghosts are present. Musculature, shape, size, and proportion can be interpreted as symbols.

Vocal ghosting and ghosting that comes from the physical form can work in tandem. This combination can reinforce a particular ghost at a particular moment. John Larroquette has been known for playing somewhat bumbling sitcom characters, like Dan Fielding in *Night Court* and John Hemingway in *The John Larroquette Show*. At 6 foot 4 ½ inches tall, one would be hard-pressed to associate Larroquette with gracefulness. As is Larroquette, Eric McCormack is known for his work on TV sitcoms. His portrayal of Will Truman on the popular sitcom *Will and Grace* propelled McCormack and the character to great fame. McCormack identifies as straight and has been married since 1997, but fans of the show might still associate McCormack’s body with the
queerness of his character Will. Although Will was not an overly-flamboyant gay character like his friend Jack, he portrayed certain gay stereotypes. As Russell and Cantwell fight for their chance to be the nominee for their party, fans of the show may be so overwhelmed by the ghosts of the actor’s bodies and voices that they are unable to separate the actor from their iconic characters. If this is the case, then this battle between Russell and Cantwell might be confounded as a battle between Fielding and Truman. This is an extreme example, but it illustrates the extent that ghosting can have on the perception of the fans and their reception of the stars.

The symbols that are interpreted by both the voice and the physical form of each actor’s body can also have an effect on the reception of the show if and when actors who interpret or ghost popular fandoms (characters and their symbols) are juxtaposed. The juxtaposition of the ghosts of past characters from popular fandoms can overshadow the stars and their performance. If the reader allows their focus to be drawn to these ghosts then their ability to become immersed within the story will be altered. Ghosting disallows the star to be a blank slate. Each star’s body is loaded with signification and is a talisman where past characters and memories are bound. For fans, the star can act as a totem, serving as an emblem of their fandom. For these reasons alone, outside of performance, the actor’s body complicates the reception of the audience and shapes their understanding and interpretation of the play or musical. There is special consideration on the part of producers and directors to find the best “fit” for the role and each must consider if the star will best serve the piece. It is unlikely that producers and directors put as much thought into all of the interpretations that can be read semiotically from the actor’s form, nor should they. It would be impossible to identify all of the ways in which an audience might read the star as an icon, and index, or a symbol. In casting stars, they provide the audience with something desirable
and familiar. They have the option to emphasize the interpretants and ghosts of the star or to try to divert them.

Conclusion

Ghosting depends on stored information that is memory. Memory can be complex and it is difficult to say what visual cue or action will trigger a specific memory. That is also why it is so difficult to determine what might be ghosted and when during a performance. Memory recall exists on a personal level. Recalling the data from my survey, just over 50% of audience members indicated that that they experienced ghosting and a majority of that ghosting was the haunting of past roles. For others, ghosting might not happen at all as some memories might be forgotten, not strongly associated, or simply not triggered. We can lose our memories through decay—when we do not rehearse or contemplate information it fades over time—through displacement—when new information replaces old information—and through interference—when new information distorts old memories. Because of the nature of celebrity, our knowledge of stars and facts and trivia associated with them and their past characters affects our perception of them. This is exponentially greater for the fan who has a deeper personal connection with the star.

The “actor is always to some extent limited by the appearance and capabilities of his or her own body… there is always a strong tendency pressing actor or actress toward certain roles for which they seem especially suited physically or emotionally” (Carlson, Theatre Semiotics 17). Typecasting is a practice in Hollywood and on the stage. Actors are placed in roles that are

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deemed suitable to them by producers and directors. The range of the actor can depend on the actor’s skill set. Some actors like Frances McDormand have a wide range and can play many different types of characters—perhaps without summoning any ghosts from her pasts. Other actors like Melissa McCarthy can play dramatic roles but are famously known and remembered for their comedic ones. One might argue that to play a character honestly, without excessive characterization and posturing, that the actor does not need to attempt to become someone else but simply act and react as if the imagined situation happening on stage were real.

Casting stars is casting ghosts. Hunter Parrish, Daniel Radcliffe, and Angela Lansbury are easily recognizable and because their images are shared with those of their past characters, these characters are extremely likely to ghost their performance. The more stars cast, the more ghosts likely to be present. Replacing a star with another star will also curse the replacement actor with the ghost of his or her predecessor. The memories that ghost the performance can alienate the audience by pulling them out of action. Audiences may remember that they are watching the star perform, may remember past characters the star has performed, may remember events from the star’s public or personal life, or may be reminded of a symbol that the star represents. The star also brings with them a sense of nostalgia, of something familiar. Repetition has its pleasures and the recycling of the star’s body in role after role can give the audience a sense of expectation. They know the thing that they are going to see and experience.

This sense of expectation is extremely important for fans that seek out information and have built a special pseudo relationship with a star or one of their characters. However, if the identification that a fan has with the star or character is strong, it will almost certainly alter their experience of the play or musical as a whole. Performing on stage in front of a large audience takes a much different skill set that the actor who performs and is recorded by a camera. Those
fans expectations that are not met by the representation of their favorite actor or character could result in a schism between the individual and the source of their fandom. I believe that after years of seeing actor’s bodies recycled on the screen that audiences have become practiced at ignoring the ghosts associated with the actor and seek captivation by the performance. Ghosting and fandom are a large part of contemporary culture in the first two decades of the 21st century and the likelihood of forgoing the known, desired, and familiar attributes of the star for an actor who is unknown and whose body is a less complicated site of signification seems doubtful.

The star’s product and how they are valued play an integral role into what ghosts might haunt their performance. As I progress into the next and final chapter, I will further complicate the semiotic process of performance, taking into consideration kinesics and the theatrical frame. The recognition of the star’s product, their value, and the ghosts that haunt them will further be explored under these conditions. As I explore the performance of the production, I complete my analysis of the film and television star’s effect on the reader from pre-production to production.
CHAPTER IV. FRAME AND PERFORMANCE

It might be said, then, that a stage production was some sort of voluntarily supported benign fabrication, for the audience treats disclosure somewhat as they would that which terminates a leg-pull executed in good taste and all in fun. But leg-pulls involve the faking of real activity, whereas the stage uses materials that are frankly keyings—open mock-ups of dramatic human actions—and at no time is the audience convinced that real life is going on up there.

Erving Goffman

Frame Analysis

The concepts of stage figure and stage action relate to traditional concepts of character and plot in such a way that a more comprehensive analysis of stage representation is possible. Moreover, this semiotics of acting also accounts for the way actors and audiences build up images of one another in performance—images that greatly enrich the aesthetic function of performance signs.

Michael Quinn

The Semiotic Stage

Casting a star in a Broadway or Off-Broadway production complicates how an individual sees, processes, and receives a production from marketing through to post-production. As I argued throughout the last three chapters, the star is a product and is a sign for certain values (e.g. celebrity capital). Also, the star is a signifier for his or her past roles and other associations with their image that exist in one’s memory. This chapter brings all the previous significations of
the star made before the show begins into the performance (the theatrical frame if you will).

Within the performance proper, the star is a site of intertextuality placed within an intertextual art form. This creates a compacted complexity of signs all residing within a theatrical frame. All of the previous significations made by the individual before seeing the production affect how the individual evaluates the star’s performance. In the survey I conducted, the response to the stars’ performances was overwhelmingly positive. Of those who responded, 47.78% thought the star’s performance was greater than that of the other actors on the stage and 44.24% thought the star’s performance was equal to the other performers on stage. I conjecture that the significations of the star made prior to the performance directly affect the audience’s reception. For example, the way Daniel Radcliffe’s body is signified from the marketing images and posters affects how the individual will signify the star during performance. In this case, marketers have given individuals attending the show sensory images that provide a range of possible signified responses that they will associate with the star in the context of the production (frame).

In Chapter III, I focused specifically on the star’s body (the image) and how the star’s image can be signified. In this chapter, I explore ways in which the star’s body is signified during performance on the stage drawing on previous signified responses and signified responses the audience member will make watching the star perform on stage within a variety of frames. To complete this analysis, I draw upon three theories. I begin with a review of Erving Goffman and frame analysis to contextualize different types of frames and how these frames affect

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43 The theatrical frame is much like the cinematic frame in that they are both frameworks for performance. Although there may be differences between the theatrical and cinematic frames, I will not be addressing those differences.

44 See Table 12.
analysis. In addition to Goffman, by way of the writings of Michael Quinn, I also parse through the Prague School structuralists and a number of allied semiotic theories on performance. The Prague School provides a slightly different perspective on the frame and tailors their semiotic analysis to performance. In conjunction with the semiotics of performance laid out by the Prague School, I incorporate Erika Fischer-Lichte’s writings on kinesics, the study of body movement and gesture as a form of non-verbal communication, to demonstrate how specific movements and gestures can indicate (and sometimes accentuate) the reading of the star as a signifier. Using these ideas to guide my analysis of the productions of *Picnic*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *No Man’s Land/Waiting for Godot*, I identify ways in which semiotic analysis of a star performer within a certain frame of analysis affects an individual’s perception (and reception) of the star, the play or musical, and the production writ large.

Theatrical Frames and The Semiotics of Performance

The use of frames as an analytical device was the primary purpose of Erving Goffman. In his book, *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*, Goffman states that there are a variety of primary frameworks established through societal practice: “When the individual in our Western society recognizes a particular event, he tends, whatever else he does, to imply in his response (and in effect employ) one or more frameworks or schemata of interpretation of a kind that can be called primary” (21). These primary frameworks tend to act as maps where specific things become established within a particular context (“keys”). He continues, “Primary frameworks vary in degree of organization. Some are neatly presentable as a system of entities, postulates, and rules; others—indeed, most others—appear to have no apparent articulated shape, providing only a lore of understanding, an approach, a perspective
These primary frameworks are often coded through cultural interaction. Compartment trays, buffet stations, silverware, and multiple tables and chairs exist within the cultural construct of a cafeteria. Commas, parenthesis, colons, and conjunctions exist within the construct of English grammar. I find Goffman’s writings on the frame crucial to the analysis of performance that I will undertake in this chapter. It must be taken into consideration that the semiotic chains made during performance by audience members happen within one or more theatrical frames.

The theatrical frame, as with all frames laid out by Goffman, must have a “key”—a system that allows the reader to know how to interpret what is being presented to them—much like the legend of a map. According to Goffman, individuals use these keys to identify types of frameworks and comprehend the type of performance within the frame. Keys are interactions or utterances (or contexts) that specify the meaning of interaction allowing the reader to comprehend the interplay between individuals (Goffman 43-6). Keying is the action made by someone who is in the process of making meaning. Goffman explores five basic keys employed in our society: make-believe, contests, ceremonials, technical redoings, and regroundings. Make-believe references activities that are treated as “avowed, ostensible imitation” for the purposes of entertainment and participation in fantasy (Goffman 48). I aver that make-believe is the prime key for the theatre as audiences are keenly aware that the thing they are seeing is dramatic illusion. Because the star is engaged in an act of make-believe, the way in which the individual signifies the star will be affected. Other keys can be employed during the course of a play when different events such as weddings, rehearsals, and competitions are situated within the narrative. These frameworks correspond to another key, so their analysis can become compounded as the individual uses two keys simultaneously within their interpretation. Contests involve events like “boxing, horse racing, jousting, fox hunting, and the like. The literal model seems to be fighting
(or hunting or fleeing from) of some kind, and the rules of the sport supply restrictions of degree
and mode of aggression” (Goffman 56). Contests—such as sporting events—often have a winner
and the engagement between individuals is subject to the guidelines (rules) that have been
socially established for the event. Ceremonials include rituals “such as marriage ceremonies,
funerals, and investitures” (Goffman 58). These formal, religious, societal, and sacred activities
are typically unlike ordinary activities, which is why they require a separate key. Technical
redoings involve ordinary activities “performed outside of their usual context” (Goffman 59).
These can include run-throughs, rehearsals, simulations, and trainings. Regroundings are
“troublesome” and complex; “what is involved is the performance of an activity more or less
openly for reasons or motives felt to be radically different from those that govern ordinary
actors” (Goffman 74). Thus, the perception of something being performed is seen as divergent
from the expected—typical—performance.

In addition to these five basic keys, Goffman describes a key that can be used to read a
performance within a theatrical frame.45 He states: “the central understanding is that the audience

45 Goffman explores the theatrical frame via keying through eight different conventions
that mark the difference between interpersonal interaction and staged interaction: 1. “The spatial
boundaries of the stage sharply and arbitrarily cut off the depicted world from what lies beyond
the stage line”; 2. “As a means of injecting the audience into the staged activity we employ the
convention of opening up rooms so that they have no ceiling and one wall missing”; 3. “Spoken
interaction is opened up ecologically; the participants do no face each other directly… but rather
stand at an open angle to the front to that the audience can literally see into the encounter”; 4.
“One person at a time tends to be given the focus of the stage, front and center”; 5. Turns at
talking tend to be respected to the end, and audience response is awaited before a replying turn is
has neither the right nor the obligation to participate directly in the dramatic action occurring on
the stage, although it may express appreciation throughout in a manner that can be treated as not
occurring by the beings which the stage performers present onstage” (Goffman 125). Also there
is an understanding that it is “only fellow performers who respond to each other in this direct
way as inhabitants of the same realm; the audience responds indirectly, glancingly, following
alongside, as it were, cheering on but not interrupting” (Goffman 127). Although there are
theatrical events that encourage audience participation, the audience is usually informed of this
in advance—which allows them to acknowledge the different theatrical frame and key. In
addition to the actor/audience relationship, there are other standard constructions that are affixed
to the traditional theatrical frame, including the separation of actor from character. “The theatre
seems to provide—at least for Western society—an ideal version of a basic conceptual
distinction, that between a performer or individual actor who appears on stage and the part or
character he assumes whilst employed thereon” (Goffman 128). The role of the audience
member within the theatrical frame is also clearly defined by Western society. “Each person who
is a theatregoer is something else, too. He collaborates in the unreality onstage. He
sympathetically and vicariously participates in the unreal world generated by the dramatic
interplay of the scripted characters. He gives himself over” (Goffman 130). The three case
studies I analyze in this chapter follow the typical Western conception of the theatrical frame that

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6. “A fundamental transcription practice of ‘disclosive compensation’ is sustained
throughout the interaction”; 7. “Utterances tend to be much longer and more grandiloquent than
in ordinary conversation”; 8. “In actual face-to-face talk between persons who have a settled
relation to each other, there will often be occasions when the relationship is not in jeopardy and
little new information bearing on the relationship is being conveyed” (Goffman 139-43).
Goffman addresses. Through the use of the theatrical frame, the audience’s mind allows its members to surrender to the make-believe happening before their eyes, thus becoming part of the process. In determining ways in which the audience can signify the star during performance, I use Goffman’s writing to emphasize that the frame and key used by an audience member during the performance affects their response/signification.

In addition to Goffman’s ideas on frames, Michael L. Quinn also discusses the idea through the work of the Prague structuralists—a group of literary scholars who used linguistics, structuralism, and semiotics as their primary modes of analysis. The groundwork for the Prague School is structure and it serves, like Goffman’s frame, as a schema for examination. Goffman seems to emphasize frames that encase specific types of performance/behavior that can be understood within a specific context; therefore, using keys can give an individual important information about the performance they are witnessing. The Prague School explored structure in

46 The theatrical frame is a socially constructed frame, and while I simplify its constraints using Goffman’s ideas, I must admit that there are multiple theatrical frames that change as the rules of participation between the actor and the audience change; different seating arrangements and non-fixed stages, interactive theatre events, and rules governing theatre etiquette can all require audience members to create multiple and varying theatrical frames. Nevertheless, the so-called rules of theatre that Goffman cites have become so accustomed and practiced in American theatre that it has become, I would argue, the dominate theatrical frame that is expected when one attends the theatre. When the cast and production team wish to operate outside of the standard theatrical framework as defined by Goffman, the audience must be notified so that their roles and expectations can be situated to a different framework.
a more corporeal sense; they would analyze performance in segments, placing imaginary brackets—thus creating a frame—around the thing they wished to study. There is an infinite number of structures in the “Prague School conception, because the nature of the structure depends entirely upon the factors that are bracketed as components of perception” (Quinn, The Semiotic Stage 18-9). The structure (frame) is dependent on where the brackets are placed.

It is imperative to note that there can be frames within frames and the size and scope of the frame varies. The human body can act as a frame so that portions of the body, say the hands, whether in motion or static, can be analyzed and assessed in relation to the rest of the body. The body is also found within a multitude of other frames. It exists within a location, within a town, within a state or province, within a country, etc. Each sub-frame, depending on whether or not it is being used for analysis can affect how the individual reads the body. Thus the way the body communicates and is read is dependent upon the framework in which it is housed. This idea is consequential in terms of the film/television star on Broadway. First, the star is bracketed on the stage instead of on the screen, the structure in which they are typically seen. Second, the star is bracketed on Broadway, which has its own implications. Finally, it individualizes where the frame is situated. Each factor affects how significations are read and how perceptions are formed. As I analyze the three productions in this chapter, I acknowledge Goffman’s conception of the theatrical frame and its affect on interpretation and analysis and I use the concept of “brackets” to indicate exactly what is being analyzed in each particular case.

Quinn also explicated the semiotics of performance, as outlined by the Prague School, which happens within the frame. In line with their ideology on structure, they developed a semiotic theory specific to stage performance. I use the Prague School’s semiotics of the stage because it is comprehensive and still remains a foundational theory in theatre semiotics. “The
sign is divided into three factors: the artifact (signifier or *signans*), the mental object (signified or *signatum*), and the referent (a class or *designatum*, rather than a necessarily specific object or *denotatum*)” (Quinn, *The Semiotic Stage* 24). These mark distinct differences between the sign in the Prague School and in Saussure, Barthes, or Pierce. “Between *signans* and *signatum* comes consideration of perception, whether the sign be aural, visual, tactile, or some combination of sensory channels. And between *signatum* and *designatum* come considerations of active connection or sign type, the dress of similarity or difference between a model or original” (Quinn, *The Semiotic Stage* 24). This type of sign structure allows for the practical functions, symbolic functions, theoretical functions, and aesthetic functions. Because of the Prague School’s focus on and “aesthetic” object, it acknowledges individual taste and hinges upon the sensory perceptibility of the individual. This makes this particular vein of semiotic theory pertinent to my analyses in this chapter.

In their description of the sign, every work of art has 1. “an artifact” (signifier); 2. “an ‘aesthetic object’ which is registered in the collective consciousness and which functions as ‘signification’”; and 3. “a relationship to the thing signified” (Quinn, *The Semiotic Stage* 19). The fundamentals of the sign as defined by the Prague School are not unlike Saussure. The sign is perceived through a sensory channel (aural, visual, tactile, etc.) and, the process of signification is often subconscious and instantaneous. There is a signifying chain that, like other signifying chains, relies on memory and association from an individual. “The Prague School writers placed special emphasis on the idea that the material make-up of the sign often has significant properties of its own, in addition to any explicitly coded significance” (Quinn, *The Semiotic Stage* 20). The coded significance stems from the star’s past roles, their image, and how they are marketed as a vehicle for the production. The established signs I have discussed
throughout the last three chapters do affect the way the star is read; this is because the star is coded in a particular way.

The Prague School also acknowledges and considers the fundamental idea of norms—standard systems or patterns (expectations) usually derived from culture and social behavior. “Norms are merely guidelines made, like all communicative procedures and rules, to generate meaning when either fulfilled or violated” (Quinn, *The Semiotic Stage* 29). There are certain expectations (or norms) associated with particular stars. There are also norms that are anticipated with a frame. When someone walks into Sardis Restaurant in New York City, they expect the décor to feature caricatures of stars from Broadway and Hollywood and the food to be high quality as has been the norm for the restaurant for the last ninety years. Within American culture, there are certain norms that the public has established with theatre (especially with Broadway and Off-Broadway). The high quality of the performance, the lights, sets and costumes; the look and feel of the theatre house and stage; and the concept of the director stem from a presupposed social agreement. Norms extend from society and what is deemed customary within a particular culture; however, norms do change over time. “Because collective opinions change through time, norms are not fixed rules, unities of the type advocated by neo-Aristotelian theorists of drama, but are rather expression of a kind of social agreement as to what constitutes the current standard of judgment” (Quinn, *The Semiotic Stage* 29). Since norms affect how theatre and performance is judged, adhering to the norms or challenging them can ultimately affect how the star is signified and received on the stage.

Quinn explores three kinds of norms in Prague School structuralism that are identified in the theatrical schema: legal, linguistic, and aesthetic. “Legal norms exist as part of a very rigid, singular structure of rules”; linguistic norms are “usually based on the institution of an official
grammar” (*The Semiotic Stage* 29). Aesthetic norms are much more complex and can be broken down into groups. The thematic and sociological underpinning of art constitute the first group; the second group is technical “pertaining to the quality of the sign material as an object”; the third group involves standards of form and genre; the fourth group includes the general aesthetics of beauty, grace, and pleasure; the fifth group involves “the construction and perception of the art work” by the individual (Quinn, *The Semiotic Stage* 29-31). Norms will fall into one of these three categories (legal, linguistic, aesthetic) and because they are so engrained within culture, they have a strong effect on an individual’s analytical process. It is important to remember that “the hierarchy of theatrical components, indeed the very presence of components, changes from work to work, and as normal procedures and audience expectations change through history” (Quinn, *The Semiotic Stage* 52). Broadway (and to some extent Off-Broadway) produces high-caliber commercial theatre; there is a certain polish and certain expectation that has arisen throughout time about the type and quality of theatre that is produced on Broadway and Off-Broadway. Thus, the norms guiding audiences’ expectations were solidified. There are of course deviations to these norms (even if they might be subtle) within certain productions. *Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson, Once,* and *Avenue Q* broke with certain conventions (form, style, sound, etc.) and, in doing so, did not adhere to the norms associated with Broadway. Breaking with conventions and refusing to adhere to norms does not mean that a production will be unsuccessful, only that it affects an audience’s expectations and how they will read or interpret the performance (especially, the body of the actor).

Casting stars on Broadway appears to have become a norm in the 21st century as a large number of shows produced on Broadway have a Hollywood film or television star in a leading role. In terms of the semiotics of performance, stars only seem to complicate the dynamic
between actor and character. Quinn discusses the convoluted notion that the actor’s body becomes the character’s body during performance. He insists, “the character exists not as the actor’s body, but as a dynamic image in the minds of the perceiving spectators. The material signs of the actor are only the objects through which the concept of dramatic character is communicated to the audience” (Quinn, The Semiotic Stage 72). Thus, the character is a conception created in the mind of the individual through the transmission of performance. When a star is performing, however, I opine that the transmission of character to the individual can be disrupted when certain significations (like persona, ghosts, etc.) are signified during a moment of performance.

The actor’s body becomes a living sign when it is considered and read during performance. The body in motion changes the reading. This is where kinesics is brought into play. There are specific components of acting such as vocal delivery, eye-movements, facial expression, head movements, gestures, postures, and body positions, which are variable (Quinn, The Semiotic Stage 77). The way actors move, their facial expressions, their intonations, and their gestures can conjure past roles or elicit a particular signified response from the audience. The way the body moves, is positioned, or expressed can induce certain signifieds such as masculinity, femininity, grace, awkwardness, etc. In Quinn’s recounting of the Prague School’s method, he explores the actor (stage figure) in motion. “The visual aspect of the stage figure was subdivided into two groups: 1. Expressive gestures, poses and facial expressions; and 2. Movements that change the figure’s relationship to scenic space” (Quinn, The Semiotic Stage 73). The frame that the body moves within also shapes the performance, and thus, the reading of the individual. “Elements of acting practice like voice level and gestural size are often conditioned by the theatre building itself” (Quinn, The Semiotic Stage 84). Actors perform
slightly different in a larger theatre than in a smaller one; the actor’s gestures must be larger and their voice louder. The type of stage can also affect the actor’s performance. The demands of a thrust stage or an arena stage force the actor to adapt to the theatre’s structure.

The actor is typically not alone on the stage during a performance but is acting in tandem with other actors and inanimate objects (sets and props). I discussed how the juxtaposition of two or more actors could conjure ghosts and affect the reading of the audience in Chapter III, but there are other ways that the interaction between the star and other actors on stage can affect the reading. As Quinn notes, “The conceptualization of the stage figure creates a technical level of signs not only in the case of the individual actor, but in the case of the whole ensemble of players” (The Semiotic Stage 79). The physical form of actors who are not as well-known as the star will still have signified responses from their physical form and from the scripted character they are performing. The intersection of performances—and the way their bodies interact—by two or more characters can elicit signified responses like romance, friendship, loathing, etc. The actor in performance relies on an interconnectedness between at least two or more objects and the audience’s individual reading of the actors as signs. As I will later illustrate, if the frame (bracket) includes multiple stars, then the performances, associations and attributes, and ghosts of one star within the frame can affect the other stars.

In addition to the actor/actor relation, there are actor/object relationships. The actor can interact with both set and props conveying certain messages and thus changing themselves as a sign. The actor holding a sword has a different significiation than the same actor holding a feather duster. The objects themselves have significiation and when they are added to the stage-figure, the sign is changed. As Quinn notes, “The display of key props like daggers and crowns in the absence of actors can lead to their personification, to the attribution of dramatic character to an
object through a kind of metonymic association that operates in the absence of the character’s acting figure” (The Semiotic Stage 81). Certain props or costume pieces—such as Mary Poppins’ umbrella and bag and Danny Zuko’s leather jacket—are essential to specific characters and help to solidify the performance of the role. Costume, make-up, and other properties in the frame with the star affect the audience’s reading of the star and affect the semiotic chain of analysis.

Quinn contends, “The number of signs created in a whole performance is virtually infinite, and defies any comprehensive qualification” (Quinn, The Semiotic Stage 83). Thus, the idea that anyone can categorically state that the star symbolizes this or signifies that is impossible. There are a variety of (perhaps infinite) readings that can happen from moment to moment; some of them conscious and some of them subconscious. Even if an audience member were to report about their experience with ghosting or recall the star’s effect on their reading of the play—as I have asked audience members to do in my survey—only those things ghosted/experienced stored in the individual’s long-term memory will surface. As Quinn reminds us, “The structure of the actor’s signs has a kind of hierarchical arrangement, so that the most important components can be ‘foregrounded’ while others are almost ignored” (The Semiotic Stage 83). Therefore, the complexity of the sign and the interconnectedness between actor/actor/object is only compounded when the well-known film and television star is cast and the element of celebrity is invoked into the performance.

Performance and analysis would be incomplete without an understanding of kinesics. Movements, which include gestures, facial expressions, and bearing, provide non-verbal semiotic codes. Gestures are movements that are often coded within a sociocultural context. Gestures especially can have different meaning depending on the geographical location and the context in which they are given. Connecting the thumb and the index finger with the other fingers straight
up in the air (the A-OK sign) in American is a gesture for usually signifies all is well, but in Germany the sign is known to depict a certain bodily orifice. The analysis of kinesics relies on the frame in which the movement takes place. Fischer-Lichte, in *The Semiotics of Theatre*, describes three subdivisions of kinesic signs: mimic, gestural, and proxemics. “All facial movements which serve to express primary affects will be considered to be mimic signs; all other facial movements as well as movements of the body that can be effected without changing location will be classified as gestural signs; and body movements which involve a change of place will be treated as proxemics signs” (Fischer-Lichte 30). Through these categories, the star in performance can be individually read within the theatrical frame.

Mimetic signs, as Fischer-Lichte is concerned, derive from facial expressions. As with almost all other signs I have discussed, mimetic signs are social and are governed by cultural rules. Fischer-Lichte lists four types of rules that correspond with mimic signs: “(1) of exaggeration, (2) of understatement, (3) of neutralization, and (4) which mask an emotion via a facial expression that denotes another emotion” (34). These four types allow for high (exaggeration), medium (neutralization), and low (understatement) levels of assessment and for a variable that the expression being performed is not denotative of the emotions being felt. In addition to these rules, there are a series of techniques to determine “who can use which rule under which circumstances” and how to temper emotional or expressive behavior; these techniques of control depend on a) “a person’s static features (e.g., age, sex, height)”; b) “the static features of environment (e.g., ecological factors and specific social situation, such as funeral, marriage, job interview, waiting for a bus)”; c) “temporary personal characteristics (e.g., social role, job acceptance”; and d) “temporary, regular occurrences during social interaction (e.g. “entry,” “exit,” transitional phases, periods of conversation, listening, etc.)” (Fischer-Lichte
The face is perhaps the most expressive part of the body. In terms of theatre semiotics, the face and the voice are the primary indicators of emotion.

The face is only one part of the body that is expressive. The use of hands, legs, feet, arms, fingers, and body position can convey expression as well. The body as a sign can signal emotion that may not be expressed verbally on facially. There are “two specific characteristics of gestural signs [that] are always stressed: their special ability to create expression and the readily noticed ease and seeming directness with which they can be understood” (Fischer-Lichte 40). Expression and body language are so engrained in our subconscious that reading expressions can be second nature. When an individual is familiar with someone, the way they might be with a star, they might be more attuned to their specific facial expressions and gestures. Gesture signs are often used for communication but they might also be used “to fulfill an intention” (Fischer-Lichte 43). Gesture and language are often entwined; many people move their hands in gesture while talking. The tone and quality of voice can also match the gesture, giving it meaning. Waving someone to come toward will have one meaning when the words “come here” are angrily projected, and it will have another meaning when the words “come here” are spoken softly and seductively.

Proxemic signs are not necessarily as easy to identify as mimic and gestural. The use of space and the way the body moves through it is communicative, but perhaps not as distinctive for the reader. “Proxemic signs can be divided into two groups: (1) Signs that take the shape of the distance between parties to interaction, i.e., as empty space, and as the change in distance; and (2) Signs that take the shape of movement, i.e., movement through space” (Fischer-Lichte 58). Distance on stage is subject to perspective and the audience member who sits closer to the stage will have a different perspective than those who are far away. Additionally, those who sit in the
mezzanine or balcony will be higher than those seated in the orchestra and they will have a
different perspective of the space as well. In terms of the star in performance, those who sit
closer will not only be able to read the proximity of the star in relation to the set and the other
actors and objects more proportionally, but the proximity between the star and the audience may
increase the chance that the audience member will have a stronger connection with the star and
their performance within the frame, allowing the audience member to correctly read mimic,
gesture, and proxemic signs with more deft and clarity. The actor in performance is a living,
moving sign within a series of theatrical frames. The ability to read and decode these signs is in
the hands of each individual audience member. Even through the collective audience response,
the identification and signification of the signs within the theatrical frame depends on the
individual’s experience. Since the star is such a well-known figure, the opportunities to make
significations are undoubtedly greater.

In the following case studies, I illustrate how the theatrical frame and the performance of
the stars within the frame affect the semiotic reading of the audience. In Picnic, I explore the
actor’s body as the frame and discuss how the kinesic signs in the star’s performance signify to
the audience. Death of a Salesman follows this, where I consider how the proscenium and the
theatre space/architecture serve as a frame and how this affects the signification of the stars’
performance. In this section, I also discuss how proximity and other types of keys can be used
within this theatrical frame. Finally, in No Man’s Land/Waiting for Godot, I explore the frame of
Broadway and the aesthetic norms associated with commercial theatre and how they affect the
signification of the star’s performance on the Great White Way. I have seen each of the
following productions live on Broadway or I have seen archived footage of the productions and
have taken extensive notes. In each case study, I focus solely on the performance of the actor as
it was seen and experienced by the audience member. I acknowledge that the director and designers have an effect on how the actor can move and perform on stage; however, since the audience will make their semiotic reading of the performance based on seeing and analyzing the movement and action of the stars onstage, I do not delve into how the directors or designers helped to shape the actor’s performance. I focus instead on how the audience reads – or in these cases, how I have read – the actor’s body in performance.

*Picnic* (2013)

The revival of William Inge’s *Picnic*, produced by the Roundabout Theatre Company, opened in the American Airlines Theatre on January 13, 2013. The star-studded cast included up-and-coming stars Ben Rappaport, Madeleine Martin, Maggie Grace, and Sebastian Stan, and long-time film and television stars Mare Winningham and Ellen Burstyn. *Picnic* was the Broadway debut for Winningham, who had starred in the film *Georgia*, for which she was

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*Picnic* is set in a small town in Kansas on Labor Day. Everyone is preparing for a town picnic when Hal Carter, a drifter, arrives looking for his friend Alan, whom he met in college. Helen Potts hires Hal to do odd jobs, which makes her neighbor Flo Owens uncomfortable as she is wary of the stranger. Flo has two daughters, Madge and Millie, and is very protective of her family. An attraction forms between Madge, who is dating Alan, and Hal. Mrs. Potts invites Hal to the picnic and the attraction between Hal and Madge builds as the two dance passionately and go off to spend the night together. Alan is aware of Hal and Madge’s attraction and reports to the police that Hal stole his car in an attempt to force him to leave town. This only serves to end the relationship between Madge and Alan, as Hal indeed skips town. Madge decides to follow after Hal as the play concludes with Flo watching her daughter set out on her own.
nominated for the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress, as well as in *St. Elmo’s Fire*, and *Turner and Hooch*. Some of her noted television credits include two Emmy winning productions, *George Wallace* and *Amber Waves*, as well as well-received appearances in *Mildred Pierce*, *E.R.*, *Grey’s Anatomy*, and *Hatfield’s and McCoy’s*. Like Winningham, Burstyn’s has starred in many films, including *Alice Doesn’t Live Here Anymore*, for which she won the Academy Award for Best Actress, *The Exorcist*, *Requiem for a Dream*, and *Interstellar*. Her numerous television credits include *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* and *Political Animals*, winning Emmys for both, as well as, *The Ellen Burstyn Show*, *That’s Life*, and *Big Love*. While both Grace and Stan have yet to reach the acclaim and awards of Winningham and Burstyn, they have certainly garnered success in their careers. Grace, who was also making her Broadway debut with *Picnic*, appeared on the television shows *Lost*, *Californication*, and *Susanna*, and in film in the *Twilight* franchise and the *Taken* franchise. Stan’s career has grown significantly in the last decade. In film, he starred in the fantasy-action film *The Covenant*, and in the critically lauded *Black Swan*. More recently, he has joined the Marvel Cinematic Universe as Bucky Barnes/Winter Soldier. His television credits include *Kings*, *Gossip Girl*, and a *Once Upon a Time*, where he became a fan favorite for portraying the role of the Mad Hatter (Jefferson).

While there are several stars cast in this production, I focus my analysis primarily on Stan and Grace, as they arguably portray the two main characters in the play.

While there are many frames within a stage production, I use *Picnic* to study one of the smallest frames—that of the body in performance—and how the star’s performance affects their signification. By bracketing the body as the smallest frame on the stage, the star’s performance can be studied myopically and the connection between the star and the character can become apparent. *Picnic* consists of several archetypal characters including Hal (Stan), the athletic,
muscular specimen of the male anatomy who uses his brute strength and sexuality to succeed in life, and Madge (played by Grace), the stunning beauty who seeks to marry well and relies on her femininity to assuage others. These two characters stand in opposition to Madge’s boyfriend, Alan (Rappaport)—who relies on his money, family connection, and education to succeed in life—and Madge’s sister Millie (Martin)—the quintessential tomboy who seeks to live a life independent from others. Other archetypes include Flo (Winningham), the overprotective mother who seeks to marry off her daughters, Helen (Burstyn), the matronly, unmarried, next-door neighbor, and Rosemary (Elizabeth Marvel), the spinster schoolteacher. While I consider each of these characters to be archetypes (based on their representations and descriptions within the text), they are also more complex than the clichés they represent.

*Picnic* provides a great example of marrying stars, whose celebrity capital relies on performing certain types of roles, with corresponding characters. Winningham, for example, has been cast as the dowdy wife and mother in numerous productions including *George Wallace, Everything That Rises, Georgia,* and *Little Girl Fly Away.* As such, casting her to play Flo Owens seems like “the right fit.” Winningham’s success at portraying these types of roles is not that she herself is frumpy, ordinary, or austere, but because she can perform the qualities of these types of characters well. As Winningham sits on the porch chair, as Flo, she bobs her head up and down, hunches her body forward, and uses a stark and stern vocal intonation as she chides her daughter on the need to marry early while she is still pretty. Her ability to perform a reproachful mother is deft and through the frame of her bodily and vocal choices, the audience comes to understand her character’s relationship with her daughter, the life she might have had to endure, and the objectives she seeks to obtain. Winningham, in her performance of Flo, hardly ever smiles, her facial expressions are solemn. When she meets the young Hal Carter, who is
working for Flo’s next-door neighbor Helen, she takes an instant dislike to the man. Winningham conveys her insecurity, her disdain, and her modesty by remaining seated and not looking him in the eye as she shakes his hand. As Flo, Winningham almost constantly performs household tasks like sewing, making alterations, and preparing food. These gestural signs are signified by the individual (and in the case of Winningham reinforced by her past roles); her performance transmits to the audience a reticent and conservative character. Her outbursts of emotion are reserved for the end of the play when Madge decides to give up on her relationship with Alan and chase Hal to Tulsa. Winningham’s tearful performance signifies emotion that the individual has not yet seen in Winningham’s portrayal of the reserved Flo. While Winningham signifies the archetype of the mother figure, she also provides enough nuance in her performance (seen through mimic, gestural, and proxemic signs) to demonstrate her talent and value as a performer.

Two other frequent and archetypal roles cast in a production are that of the leading man and the ingénue. Inge’s play has both in Hal and Madge. The leading man is often the protagonist or love interest to the leading actress; he is often a masculinized character who is physically attractive and possesses desirable qualities. Likewise, the ingénue is the leading female role that depicts femininity and innocence; she is beautiful but virginal, naive, and lacking independence. When casting the actor who must embody these characters, producers and directors frequently seek to cast stars whose product, values, and past roles mirror the attributes of the character. Not only are the stars signs that signify or interpret masculinity and femininity, but their performances are, in Quinn’s terms, referents, where the actors in performance are artifacts and they convey a mental object.

Stan and Grace, as well as their characters Hal and Madge, are symbols representing masculinity and femininity respectively. These qualities are culturally ascribed to their physiques
but are further conveyed through action and interaction. Inge’s detailed stage directions and the actions he writes into the scripts cannot help but to provide the actors with actions to perform on stage as the characters. As it is written into the script, Helen asks Hal to remove his shirt so that it can be washed; the shirt is filthy with sweat and dirt. Hal continues to work throughout Act 1, shirtless and sweaty. The image alone is significant; it depicts a certain ruggedness that is often found appealing in men, but the way the women on stage with him are scripted to react to sight of Hal evokes a sense of lust. Even so, much of the actor’s movements and reactions are crafted by the actor.

In terms of mimic kinesics, facial expressions used by both Stan and Grace support the stereotypical masculine and feminine characteristics of the leading man and ingénue. Stan’s smirks, smiles, and winks are responses to the attention paid to him by the actresses performing interest on stage. When Stan speaks to Grace, she reacts to his charm with her own sweet, innocent, and sometimes bashful smile and fleeting glimpses. These kind of flirtatious facial responses are indicative of typical romantic responses between the leading man and the ingénue. Other mimic kinesics can reinforce the character traits and help to convey their attitudes and beliefs. Hal’s attitude toward rules and laws becomes clear though Stan’s facial expressions during a scene in Act II where Howard (played by Reed Birney) is trying to convince Rosemary to loosen up and have a drink. Hal has a bottle of whiskey and decides to share it with Howard. Stan gives the bottle to Birney freely, but Marvel snatches it away as Rosemary thinks it is indecorous to be drinking when it is against the law. Birney hands the whiskey to Martin and it is quickly snatched back by Stan who goes to take a drink but is quickly accosted by Marvel. Stan plays deadpan when his character agrees with Rosemary that people should abide by the law. Once Marvel turns back to address Birney, Stan scoffs and performs a look of incredulity. Stan’s
face, as well as his body, conveys irritation as Marvel continues her rebukes. When Rosemary gives in and Marvel finally takes a drink, Stan scrunches his face and tries to stifle a laugh. This example clearly indicates that mimic kinesics can be important referents during a performance and can convey messages and support other signs conveyed by the body. Facial signs, however, are stronger when they are read in tandem with the gestural and proxemic modes of kinesics.

Gestural kinesics are bountiful within the theatrical frame of the stage. Many of these gestural signs are used to reinforce the stereotypes of the characters. Stan’s gestures only seem to highlight the masculinity of his character. He often leans against the set posing seductively in a variety of ways. At the beginning of the play, Stan is conveniently shirtless—because Helen is washing his shirt—and sweaty, he leans against a porch beam, hips forward, chest out, smiling and laughing. In one scene, Stan, fully clothed, leans against the shed with one hand on his hip, his fingers pointing toward his crotch while he smiles seductively at Grace, a piece of hay between his lips. This performance seems to jump from the pages of a Harlequin romance novel as the rugged drifter makes small talk with the pretty local girl. The gestures that Stan uses to convey his character’s physical power and masculinity are heavy handed throughout the play. He carries heavy bundles, muscles bulging in front of the ladies as they sit on the porch each pretending to be busy with some activity. After he has taken a shower and dressed for the picnic, Stan sits splayed on the porch swing with one arm outstretched waiting for the ladies. In another scene, Stan leans against the porch, one hand by his back pocket and his hips thrust forward. Grace is standing in front of him timidly on one foot, her arms behind her back, with her head turned down and a bashful smile on her face. This scene seems to physicalize the stereotypes of the leading man and the ingénue that both Stan and Grace are performing. Grace preforms
femininity throughout the play as she rubs and brushes her legs with her hands, prims her hair, and preens.

Gestural kinesics between characters can be equally as telling as characters physically interact with each other’s bodies. Stan proves his masculinity in Act 3 when he becomes forceful with Rappaport; he throws the actor to the ground and pins his arms. Stan’s rough and violent gestures perpetuate brutishness. But the character of Hal is not brutish, he is passionate and he is charismatic. Stan charmingly dances like a fool with Martin, but when he begins to dance with Grace the interaction between the two becomes much more intimate indicating the attraction between Hal and Madge. Some of this has to do with proxemics, but it is also largely gestural: the brush of a cheek, the gaze between each other’s eyes, and the tenderness of the touch. Their relationship becomes more ardent as each other give into their desires. Stan and Grace roll around on the ground in a frenzy of passion, Grace pinning Stan to the ground as she kisses him. This gesture is bold and shows the level of attraction Madge has for Hal; the passion between them is not one sided. Pinning Stan on the ground and kissing him seems uncharacteristic for the ingénue, but as noted above, Inge’s play is more complex than the simple representation of the stereotype. To be sure, each character subverts and deviates from their stereotype by the end of the play. Another example of this subversion through gesture is when Hal begins to feel unworthy of Madge’s love. Stan, as Hal, sulks, turning away from Grace, leaning up against the porch beam, and crossing his arms across his chest. The physical closing off of his body and the performance of vulnerability is not customary of the leading man, but adds dimension to the character. The actions correspond with the words spoken by Stan for the character and there is agreement between what is being performed and what is being said. Casting a star allows for this same type of harmony between the actor and the character. It is like matching two similar things
to become a pair. When an unrecognized actor is cast in a role, there can be no agreement between actor and character because the actor is unknown to the audience. When this occurs, the audience cannot make a connection between the unknown actor and the character; they can only see how the character is being performed.

Proxemic kinesics, like mimic and gestural, can help to match the product/persona of the star with the character he or she is playing. Grace and Stan begin their relationship from afar. Grace sees Stan while he is working for Helen and when he introduces himself, there is distance between them. As time passes, the two gradually come closer in proximity. Then as they begin to feel vulnerable after spending the night in the car together, the two increase the physical space between them. While proximity can help to define the relationship between characters, it can also reaffirm stereotypes or ideas. When Alan meets Hal after he comes to town, the two embrace. Stan is taller, broader, and more muscular than Rappaport. Stan—who again is shirtless in this scene—has one hand on Rappaport’s shoulder and one of Rappaport’s hands is on Stan’s shoulder. The proximity between the two actors showcases the differences in the two men’s physiques and emphasizes their stereotypes—Stan is portraying the ex-football player and rugged outdoorsman while Rappaport is portraying an upper-class businessman. As the two men stand and talk, their bodies distinctly reveal two different types of men. Stan is erect with his hands on his hips and his feet are planted far apart. He is taking up much more space than Rappaport who is slouching with his hands in his pockets or at his side. Stan looks out and makes strong eye contact with Rappaport, whereas Rappaport frequently looks down at the ground, avoiding eye contact, kicking the ground. Stan’s movements and gestures are large, specific, and forceful whereas Rappaports are far subtler. Through proxemic kinesics, Stan’s brand is affirmed. He clearly represents the alpha male, the hero, the leading man that has been
established through his other roles. His expression of idea through proxemic kinesics is nearly as important as the establishment of relationships.

Defining relationships becomes important in multiple star productions where the audience may have familiarity with one or more of the actors but the relationship between the actors is most likely unknown. As Stan and Grace have never worked together before, they are not collectively known. As there is no pre-existing relationship, the audience will try to find the connection between the two famous actors as they appear on stage and attempt to determine their character’s relationship. Thus, to analyze the performance within the frame of the stage, the relationship between the two would be guided by body language (the mimic, gestural and proxemic kinesics) performed by the stars. The response would most likely be different if the actors had knowingly worked together in the past. Returning to the 2008 production of *Equus* as an example, Daniel Radcliffe and Richard Griffiths had worked together on the Harry Potter films. Their relationship was tenuous, but it was established. Seeing the two stars perform together on stage, there is already a familiarity between the two stars that was quickly affirmed or challenged. The relationship between Dysart and Strang is unlike the relationship between Uncle Vernon and Harry; regardless, the previous knowledge of the stars’ work together sets up an expectation and the audience will analyze the physical movements/gestures of the stars to see if the previously held relationship still holds.

A number of Goffman’s frames can come into play as the audience watches the performance of *Picnic*. They know through make-believe that Stan, Grace, Winningham, and Burstyn are actors performing characters on stage; they know that the violence portrayed on stage is not real; they know that there might be jumps in time, things happening off-stage, and characters that they will never meet. For some, a rekeying of the frame can happen since stars
from Hollywood are featured in a Broadway or Off-Broadway production, thus regrounding can be used by the audience to reanalyze the frame. When an individual is focused on the performance of the star and has bracketed (framed) their analysis to the star’s performance through mimetic, gestural, and proxemic signs, they will decode and signify the star according to their performance. Specific movement and gestures will undoubtedly evoke ghosts, and past significations that come from the star’s persona, how they are valued by the individual, and how the marketing team advertises their role in the production through posters, images, and other press releases. As I expand my bracket to include the theatrical architecture and space in my forthcoming analysis of *Death of a Salesman*, the signification process is further complicated.

The star performance is affected by the space in which they perform when the bracket is opened and the theatre, stage, and set; how the action of the play is performed in the space; and the proximity with the audience all come to bear on the signification process.

*Death of a Salesman* (2012)

It was March 15, 2012 when *Death of Salesman*, starring Phillip Seymour Hoffman and Andrew Garfield, opened on Broadway. The play would run at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre for

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48 Willy Loman is traveling salesman who is struggling in business and life in *Death of a Salesman*. His wife, Linda, and his two sons, Biff and Happy, are concerned for Willy’s state of mind. Willy is concerned that his son Biff, home from working out West, will not make something of his life. Biff assures his father he has a plan for his life. Willy, due to his mental failings and inability to travel, is fired from his company. Biff’s business plans fall through and he tries to convince his father that he is not meant for greatness. Believing that his two sons can
a limited, sixteen-week engagement. This would be the fifth Broadway revival of the play since its debut in 1949. Famed director Mike Nichols rounded out his first-rate cast with Linda Emond, Finn Wittrock, and John Glover. Hoffman could be—and was—criticized by some as the wrong type of actor to play the role of Willy Loman. As one critic noted, “With his Baby Huey physique, boyish features, and aura of sadness, Hoffman doesn’t fit the raging-giant-brought-low mold cast by Lee J. Cobb, the first Willy Loman, in 1949 (and expanded on by Brian Dennehy in the 1999 Broadway revival of Salesman)” (Green). Hoffman’s Hollywood career included many character roles in film (Twister, Boogie Nights, Patch Adams, Red Dragon, Doubt, and Capote); he won the Oscar for Capote in 2006. Andrew Garfield, being much younger than Hoffman, does not yet have the same versatile resume, but he received a Golden Globe nomination for his role in The Social Network and landed the role of Peter Parker/Spiderman in the movie franchise reboot. Though Linda Emond appeared on The Good Wife, Law & Order: Special Victims Unit, and in the film Julie/Julia and Finn Wittrock appeared on E.R., All My Children, and Harry’s Law, these two actors had not yet achieved a widespread recognizable status that could have been considered stardom. Nevertheless, Emond’s name took second position on the poster (right after Hoffman). Her successful stage career, which includes Tony nominations and Drama Desk awards is most likely the reasoning for the placement of her name above the younger stars. The combination of stars (including that of Nichols) exists within the theatrical frame of the play and is both influenced by and have influence on the space. As I discuss Death of a Salesman, I will focus on three points: the frame of the theatrical space, the proximity of the audience to the star, and keying within the action of the play.

have a better life if they only had the means, Willy takes his car for a drive and crashes, leaving the insurance money to his family.
The theatrical frame, when opened up beyond the stage to include the house and the structure of the space, allows for additional significations as actors are analyzed within a specific space, and affects the way the audience may read the star in performance. Broadway houses are distinguished as theatrical spaces within the Theatre District and Lincoln Center that can seat 500 or more audience members. Off-Broadway theatres are professional theatres in New York City that can seat from 100 up to 499 audience members. Many of the Broadway theatres were constructed in the early part of the 20th century and have ornate detail that include inspirations from the classical Greek and Roman eras. The very structure of the theatre building can affect one’s process of signification. A theatre building whether designed in modern or postmodern fashion or in neoclassical design can consciously or subconsciously affect the mindset of an individual. Specifically, the Ethel Barrymore Theatre, which can seat over 1000 audience members, was designed in 1928 by Herbert J. Krapp, a prominent architect in New York City. The outside of the theatre was designed to look like the public baths of Rome while the interior infuses Elizabethan, Mediterranean, and Adamsesque styles. The name “Barrymore” appears etched into the theatre and while the name may not mean much to contemporary audiences who do not know that Ethel Barrymore was the “It” girl of her day or that her family has been prominent actors in English and American theatre for generations, the building emulates the refinement of stardom that Barrymore represented and still serves as a symbol of the beau monde. For some, the building might feel apropos for a revival of an American classic like Death of a Salesman. Entering the theatre may evoke certain emotions, preconceptions, and memories.

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49 For more information, including images of the theatre, please see “The Barrymore Theatre,” The Shubert Organization. 2015. Web.
that can later affect the signification of Hoffman and Garfield. The interior of the theatre can have a similar affect.

The interior of the Ethel Barrymore theatre is lavish. Fine drapery, red fabric theatre seats, elaborate chandeliers and lighting fixtures with ornate escutcheons and ceiling medallions, and boxes with columned porticos fill the space. Sitting within the theatre, the audience member is sure to feel patrician surrounded by such opulent decor. This kind of extravagant décor is not present in most modern cinemas and creates the opportunity for a special experience for the audience; it helps to build anticipation and expectation as the audience waits for the lights to dim and the star walk across the stage. The design of the theatre’s interior may have a stronger effect on the signification process than the exterior since the audience is seated within the theatre. The décor of the theatre is ever-present during the production and always within the glance of the audience. Some designers, like Donyale Werle (*Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson*), extend their design far into the house, knowing that they are creating and establishing atmosphere.

Environment does have an impact on an individual’s senses and how they might respond to things in that environment.

Along this vein, I argue that the size of the theatre has a greater effect on the reception of the star’s performance than the design of the space. The larger the frame, the more dwarfed the objects inside are in comparison. Larger theatre spaces affect both the actor and the audience. Actor’s performing in a larger space will typically have to perform bigger actions and speak louder to be seen and heard by everyone in the theatre. A smaller theatre does not require the actor to make such grand gestures since the audience is much closer to the stage. When Hoffman (Willy) and Garfield (Biff) throw around the football in the backyard, they make large, distinct passes so that the action can be read by those audience members in the last row of the
mezzanine. This particular scene helps to communicate to the audience the loving but complicated relationship that Biff has with his father. The embraces, the hustle, the expressions that actors share as the characters are all integral to the understanding of what is happening in this moment. Garfield and Hoffman, being highly skilled actors, do a masterful job conveying the characters they represent through kinesics; but no matter how skilled the stars are at their craft some movements will simply not read as well in the back of a large theatre like the Ethel Barrymore. There is a moment at the opening of the play where Hoffman enters and slowly walks up to the kitchen door. On his seemingly long path from stage right to the kitchen door, which is located stage left, Hoffman slogs along almost nervously moving his downstage hand in a frenetic, seemingly subconscious, manner. It is clear to the audience members in close proximity of the stage that this nervous energy emulating from Hoffman’s hand speaks of his affect, his mood, and that something quite troubling must be on his mind. For those sitting further away in the mezzanine, it is uncertain if this action—which would have certainly been caught in an extreme close-up in a filmed version of the play—would be read. Proximity influences how much of the action (especially small detail) can be seen and how much of the theatre’s house is in the audience’s eye line. Both can have an effect on how the individual signifies the performance. A great football pass from close-up might look terrible from far away. Likewise, a long staggered walk can appear captivating from the orchestra, but seem lifeless from the balcony. The space/proximity to the theatrical frame created by the proscenium affects what is seen and how it is signified. To elucidate this point further, I draw from my own experience as an audience member.

I sat in the second row of the Ethel Barrymore theatre in 2012 when I watched Hoffman enter from the stage right wings. The nuance of his acting will forever be logged in my memory.
I sat just ten feet away from the star and watched as his pale rough hands vibrated with kinetic energy that seemed to be trapped inside seeking escape. His path to the kitchen door was not direct, he seemed exhausted and disoriented. His face seemed botchy and worn and his expression was vacant. I was sitting just outside of the proscenium that served as the frame for this stage production and I could watch every small movement the actors made with distinction. Later in the play, when Biff confronts Willy about sexual escapades with a woman who is not his wife, Garfield and Hoffman give one of the most powerful, honest performances I have seen on stage. Garfield’s reaction to discovering the affair results in a total breakdown; his hands tremble, his expression turns from surprise to disgust to anger. The veins in his neck protrude and I can actually see them pulse with his heartbeat. Spittle flies from his mouth as he speaks and tears well up in his eyes. His eyes are open wide and fixed on Hoffman who seems to convey betrayal, immodesty, and guilt with his face, body, and local tonality. He attempts to deny what is happening, but he cannot help but be drawn in to a desire to comfort his devastated son. During this performance, I noticed tears streaming down my face, but I do not remember when I started crying; the acting was that captivating.

The performance was palpable and while I am sure the audience who sat a great distance from the stage had no problem reading the moment, seeing and signifying most of the movement of the actors as they acted and reacted to each other, I am also sure that the nuances of the performance in that moment were lost due the distance between themselves and the stars. Proximity affords definition; the audience can have a clear reading of the picture, of the movements being made within the frame. When talented and skilled stars like Hoffman and Garfield perform with such detail, the performance is almost memorizing. For me, the play began and ended in what felt like the blink of an eye, not in the three-hour span of time that had
actually elapsed. This experience does not rely on the star, but can happen with any skilled actor; however, the value placed on the star sets certain expectations upon the audience and in those moments when the expectations, which are usually already high, are exceeded, the audience may feel that they have witnessed something great, something transcendent. The casting of the star signals that this show will be something special; someone who has achieved world-renown success for his or her acting abilities will be performing in person, on the stage. The value placed on the star, who does not typically perform in front of a live audience, is high and the fact that their performance, which is unmediated, is unrepeatable, makes the opportunity to watch them act from ten feet away even more rare and special.

Although the audience is keying the frame as make-believe, there is a certain dedication or simulation of the truth that is required. Make-believe insists upon an illusion of reality. This is not an easy task for the actor, but it is made easier when the audience is willing to suspend their disbelief and acknowledge that they will believe what is happening on the stage, even though they ultimately know that what is happening is fictive. This bears importance because of the events that unfold on the stage, within the frame of make-believe, can then be analyzed with other keys.

Contests and ceremonials and reworkings can be used for analysis while the master key of make-believe is already being used. While the master key, if you will, (make-believe) is being used for the theatrical frame of the stage, what I am referring to as sub-keys (contests, ceremonials, reworkings) can used for certain performances within the stage frame. As such, there is a frame within a frame.

In *Death of a Salesman*, contests and ceremonials are two keys that can be used by audiences within the performance. Although these events (tossing the football and the funeral)
are scripted, they still signal to the audience to recall specific keys. This can ultimately have an effect on how the audience makes semiotic connections. Biff was a high school football star and in one of the play’s flashbacks Willy and Biff toss around a football. The football is a signifier that signifies the game, and the action of passing a football triggers the audience to use the contest key to understand what is happening within the action. Biff and Willy are not playing an actual football game in the play, but the audience can still use the contest key and the rules and regulations within the key to understand the actions happening in that performance on the stage. Using the contest key also places a certain signification on Biff. Being coded as a member of a sports team within the frame of a contest (even if it is between father and son) adds another dimension to the performed relationship between Hoffman and Garfield (because it’s between father and son). Likewise, the ceremonial key can be used at the end of the play when Linda, Biff, and Happy attend Willy’s funeral. Linda brings flowers to the grave; the boys dressed in their suits stand respectfully in the background. The frame of the funeral inside of the theatrical frame of the stage requires two keys. First, make-believe because the funeral is not real, and ceremonial because the funeral has a cultural and sociological function that requires its own understanding.

The use of sub-keys in a theatrical production can affect the way the audience reads the kinesics of the star and will ultimately affect their assessment of the star’s performance and range. If Garfield could not throw a football successfully or convincingly or if Emond, Garfield, and Wittrock had not performed the expectations that meet the symbols within the ceremonial key for a funeral, then the audience may not have found their portrayals to be truthful representations and they might have viewed the performances negatively. Keys provide individuals with the symbols that need to understand the behavior and action that is taking place.
within a particular frame. The star, like any actor, is expected to provide the appropriate
significations that correspond with each key, but the star is held to a higher standard than an
unknown actor because the expectations of seeing a star, lauded for their abilities, are higher. It
begins with the opulence of the Broadway theatre space.

When the frame of semiotic analysis is opened to include the structure of the theatre, the
way the star is signified is changed. This allows for each individual audience member to
experience something different based on where they are sitting in the audience and how much of
the house and stage they can see during the performance. In my analysis of *No Man’s
Land/Waiting for Godot*, I open the brackets once more to include the frame of Broadway as a
large-scale enterprise. A Broadway play or musical has its own significations (investment, talent,
spectacle, commercialism) that generate the norm for a Broadway production. Seeing a star act
within the frame (and subsequently within all the other frames within the larger Broadway
frame) brings to an end, the examination of this study.

*No Man’s Land/Waiting for Godot (2013)*

_No Man’s Land_ was performed in repertoire with _Waiting for Godot_ at the Cort Theatre.⁵⁰

These two plays—the first by Harold Pinter, and the second by Samuel Beckett—opened on

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⁵⁰ In *No Man’s Land*, Spooner, a self-proclaimed poet, is invited to the home of Hirst, a
litterateur who lives with his artistic assistant and his manservant. The two men taunt each other
through the night as they become increasingly inebriated. Spooner becomes a guest for the night
and when the next morning comes, Hirst re-appears pretending (or forgetting) that he had not
seen his friend in years. The two discuss the past, present, and future as no man’s land lingers in
November 24, 2013 and closed after 77 performances on March 30, 2014, and starred world-renowned actors Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen. Stewart and McKellen have performed together in the *X-Men* franchise and are very good friends in real life. Both men have a strong presence on social media and use it as a tool to reach out to fans and to promote their current and upcoming projects. Stewart is also well known for his role as Captain Jean-Luc Picard in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and for numerous voice-over roles. McKellen is perhaps best known for his role as the wizard Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit* films. He was nominated for two Oscars, one for his role as Gandalf and the other for his role as James Whale in *Gods and Monsters*. Other films of note include *The Da Vinci Code* and *The Golden Compass* and *Stardust*, for which he performed voice-overs. Billy Crudup joined Stewart and McKellen in the production of these two plays. Though very well regarded, and considered by many as an actor’s actor, Crudup does not have the renown of the other two stars. His film work includes *Almost Famous*, *Big Fish*, and *Watchman*. The trio brought to the stage the same potential for ghosting that appears in other multi-star productions, but the stars’ presence within the theatrical frame demonstrates the intersections between the frames of Hollywood and Broadway as well as the distinctions between actor and character. Before delving into the performances of McKellen and Stewart and how the aesthetic norms of Broadway seek to accentuate their performances, I turn first to an analysis of the aforementioned frames of Hollywood and Broadway.

While the theatre building and the stage represent visual theatrical frames, Broadway and Off-Broadway represent cognitive theatrical frames. Though these frames are not material, they nonetheless have a powerful effect on the way the audience reads and receives a performance. The distance of their conversation. In *Waiting for Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon wait endlessly for someone named Godot who never appears.
For example, a great majority of shows on Broadway are musicals and there exists a certain association for spectacle, commercialism, and wide appeal. Off-Broadway theatre seems to have a penchant for shows that might be slightly less commercial as there are more shows being work-shopped and slightly more experimental, less conventional scripts are being mounted; although, I think it can be argued that in many respects Off-Broadway has become more commercial in the last few decades. Like ceremonies and contests, Broadway and Off-Broadway theatre are specific frames that require specific keys for analysis. The bracket that frames Broadway theatre is a frame that encompasses the forty Broadway houses and the shows being performed in these houses eight times a week. Thus, when watching McKellen and Stewart perform in the Cort Theatre there is a multiplicity of frames. They appear in New York City (frame 1), on Broadway (frame 2), at the Cort Theatre (frame 3), on the stage of the Cort Theatre (frame 4), and within the confines of their own bodies (frame 5). Depending on the mind of the audience member at any time during the performance, the recognition and/or acknowledgement of one of these frames can affect how the audience signifies the star. The signification of the performance of the star is not only affected by the precepts of celebrity capital, their value, and their image, but by the aesthetic norms of Broadway and the star’s place in the Broadway schema.

There are many similarities between the frames of Hollywood and Broadway. Both the Hollywood frame and the Broadway frame involve high levels of commercialism as producers in both areas seek to make large profits. There is an existing duality since the goal of the production is not only to make art, but also to make art that caters to a large population of people that will buy tickets and boost profits. Broadway shows usually cost between 15 and 20 million dollars to produce and very few of these shows make substantial profits. Hollywood does a much better job of securing profits for its films because it is able to mass distribute its production to thousands of
multiplexes around the globe. Commercialism brings with it the elements of technology, spectacle, celebrity, and entertainment value that caters to large groups. These elements have come together to establish aesthetic norms for those productions appearing within the frame of Broadway. Shows that transition from Off-Broadway to Broadway typically get an updated technical overhaul, allowing for all the lights, special effects, and elaborate sets that audiences expect. For Broadway, the main population they seek to appeal and attract tourists. Of course many New Yorkers attend Broadway and Off-Broadway shows, but over 56.5 million tourists visit New York City each year, making this the target group of potential audience members.51

Again, going to see a Broadway show is complicated by the expectation that it is a Broadway show. Likewise, Stewart and McKellen are subject to expectations as they also have guidelines of performance that constitute as norms. There are certain roles that each star has performed and performed well.

There is an added complexity to the assessment of performance within the theatrical frames when a star performs in multiple shows simultaneously. As I parse through the performances of Stewart and McKellen in No Man’s Land and Waiting for Godot, I will look specifically at the contrasts and similarities of two specific theatrical frames embedded within the larger, overall frame of Broadway. The norms of the Broadway stage involving theme, form, and genre are quite elastic. This is part of the diversity that makes Broadway appealing to investors and artists. Absurdist plays, such as those written by Pinter and Beckett, would be a tough sell to producers; however, I am sure that casting McKellen and Stewart in the production alleviated many of the fears about the theme, form, and genre of the plays. Still, the elements

involving technical/qualitative and beauty/grace/pleasure must meet the aesthetic norms of Broadway and No Man’s Land and Waiting for Godot are no exceptions to this rule. These plays could be performed on very simple sets without much need for special effects or complicated lighting or costume; however, this does not reflect the product of Broadway, and so even something that can be simple is made more complex and more sophisticated for the Broadway audiences. This is advantageous for the Hollywood film and television star because it allows them to perform within a frame where the aesthetic values of theatre are comparable to the aesthetic values in film. I expect that the high aesthetic value of Broadway shows is a clear indicator of why more stars perform on Broadway than Off-Broadway. It is beneficial for the star’s image to be associated with what is typically considered to be the highest quality. While the idea that Broadway can hold more value than Off-Broadway is not a value that I hold, it is a belief held by many individuals within society. The belief is what is important, not the truth. As I explore the performances of Stewart and McKellen I will examine how the aesthetics norms (the set designs and costume designs) of Broadway accentuate the reading of the star within the frame.

The beautiful set and costume designs for No Man’s Land and Waiting for Godot were devised by Stephen Brimson Lewis. The set for No Man’s Land, which is a circular room in the house of the affluent Hirst (Stewart), is lavish with beautiful wood walls, and high windows curtained with gold drapes. The furniture appears wood-carved and includes a sideboard and a single leather armchair next to a side table. The floor is painted blue with a baroque fern-like pattern surround by a track of hard wood flooring. This extravagant and beautiful set is certainly worthy of a Broadway performance and worthy of two knighted British stars. While there is no need for such an opulent set, it does not detract from the story, but rather serves the story. The set
is a vessel for Stewart who stakes a claim in the ownership of the house and all the things within it. He, and only he may sit in the armchair, while McKellen must sit on a wooden chair, if he is allowed to sit at all. The set, which serves as a sub-frame within the larger frame of Broadway, serves the actors and gives them a defined space to perform, serves the play by defining the space and setting the mood, and, perhaps most importantly signifies to the audience the quality of performance they should expect. The aesthetic beauty of the set works in tandem with the other elements of theatre to create an overall experience. When the set is beautifully decorated, detailed, and designed, it possibly serves to add to the overall impression of the actors. This is also true of stars. The casting of stars also adds to the overall impression of the production. It is all about creating an experience for the audience that is unlike any other. A beautiful set cannot make bad actors good, but fantastic actors can make a dull, sparse set come alive. The beautiful set with fantastic actors provides balance between these two elements and it only serves to strengthen the semiotic playing field.

The set for *Waiting for Godot*, I believe, clearly supports this claim. As specified in the script, the set requires nothing more than a tree. The minimalist stage could be used so to provide a performance-driven play that would (because of the lack of set) place emphasis on the skills of the stars. Lewis devised a more complex set that would not only allow the stars’ performances to shine, but to enhance them by defining space and providing them with distinct places on the stage to perform certain actions. The proscenium of the stage was framed with an archway below two theatrical boxes. This allowed for entrances and exits on to the stage; the partially raked floor was comprised of wooden planks with large holes that actors could also use for entrances and exits. Near the back wall of the set, which was a giant grey brick wall, was a small stone wall that the stars could, and did, use to hide and act behind. The definition of space that Lewis
created for the stars to perform in gave them more opportunity as performers to interact with their surrounding and provided more levels of signification for the audience.

While sets provide spaces for action to take place and can provide location, costumes can provide the star with a physical representation of their character through fashion. The costumes, as well as the hair and make-up design of Tom Watson, helped to transform Stewart and McKellen into their characters Hirst and Spooner. In the first act of the play Stewart wore a dark brown jacket, a gold tie, and tan slacks. The famous bald actor also wore a blonde wig. Stewart’s costume appears tailored in contrast to McKellen’s. His vertical striped suit, which he wears in both acts is a bit large and as such has more flow when McKellen fluidly buzzes around the set filling his and Stewart’s tumblers with scotch. It should be noted that McKellen’s shoes lack a hard sole and a heel, which allows him to move quickly and quietly across the stage. McKellen’s tie is a bright blue and his pocket square is white. Although the costume helps to reference his impoverish state, it indicates that he is not destitute. Costuming plays a huge role in signification and it assists the audience member in reading the actor’s body in performance. The costumed actor’s body serves as an artifact that will conjure a particular mental object in the mind of the reader. The body in costume in motion adds another layer of signification for the already symbolically overladen star. If the audience member were able to see both productions of *No Man’s Land* and *Waiting for Godot*, then they were likely to see a sharp contrast in the costumed bodies of the two characters.

It is not often that a Hollywood star will appear in two Broadway or Off-Broadway productions at the same time. It is almost certain that seeing the actor perform in one will influence the semiotic reading of the star in the other. Both productions take place within the Broadway frame and within the frame of the Cort Theatre. The sets are radically different which
can help to reset the audience to a different on-stage frame. The costumes are also distinctly different, which can help the audience find distinction between the stars’ bodies in one production, and their bodies the other production. Stewart and McKellen were suitably dressed in the production of *No Man’s Land* to aid the audience in the signification of their character’s status and relationships. This also occurs in *Waiting for Godot*. Both McKellen and Stewart wear horribly distressed clothing full of holes and soiled with dirt. Even their knickers are filthy. There are no ties and sometimes no shoes; Estragon has terrible pain in his feet, which are a filthy as the rest of him. Both men wear bowler hats, which double as props for the stars several times throughout the production. Both men lack color in their costumes; shades of black, grey, white and brown fill out the shape of each man’s body. As both men move about the stage, they are distinctly different from the representations of the characters in *No Man’s Land*. The costume serves as an extension of the star’s body and can serve to partially cover the celebrity so engrained on the star’s iconic form. The caliber of the costuming on Broadway is immense. With large budgets and multitudinous resources, the high aesthetic norms associated with Broadway costumes can again serve to highlight the star under the costume or attempt to mask the star as icon and all of the mental objects, interpretant, and signifieds that extend from the sign that is the star. The expectation of the performance of the star on Broadway is already high because the norms associated with Broadway theatre are high. Having a minimalist design for sets and costumes is not the norm on Broadway, but that does not mean that it cannot be done. Norms are often subverted, but in doing so, one risks the uncertain response from an audience who is expecting the norm to be represented.

McKellen and Stewart have countless significations. Bringing them into the Broadway frame and casting them in revivals of Pinter and Beckett brings their past significations to the
stage, which affects the individual’s reading of the plays. It might also bring new light and appeal to these absurdist shows that do not typically have commercial allure. Using stars on stage affects the reading of the show in a way that casting non-famous actors would not. Casting stars affects the transmission of character from actor to audience, as character is not the only thing a star is transmitting. The practice of casting Hollywood stars in Broadway and sometimes in Off-Broadway shows has been increasing of the past fifteen years and this has created a new norm for Broadway theatre. Now audiences not only expect high quality sets, lights, costumes, and special effects, but highly-skilled Hollywood stars who can deliver a performance at the same quality placed on the other things situated within the Broadway frame.

Conclusion

When each of these case studies is explored within a different frame, the likelihood of certain significations is increased. The frame of analysis is dependent on the focus of the audience member and is determined by the mindset they have when they enter the theatre. Several factors can affect which frame the audience member might choose, consciously or subconsciously, as they sit and watch the performance: location of the theatre, type of stars, aesthetics of the set. A fan that is hyper-focused on a star like Stan might predominantly focus of the frame of the actor’s body in performance. Those individuals who find themselves immersed in the actions of the play (like I was when watching Death of a Salesman) might zero in on the action within the frame of the stage. The frame an individual uses when watching the performance is not static and can change throughout production as they continuously analyze and decode the action on stage. Entering the theatre, an individual might be focused on the larger
frame of Broadway, but during the performance of stars like McKellen and Stewart, the individual might zoom in to use the proscenium or the star’s body as the theatrical frame.

Depending on how the star is signified, whether it be product, value, association, past role, etc. certain signs can be highlighted or underscored. If McKellen’s box office value is forefront in an individual’s mind, then they might be more inclined to view the performance through the larger Broadway frame (and vice versa). If McKellen is valued for his skill as performer or one of his past roles, then the individual might reflexively choose a smaller frame with which to view the performance. There are many situational interconnecting components that affect the signification process, especially during performance. The type of frame can affect the type of significations made and certain signification can affect they type of frame used. Regardless when analyzing performance, the star must be considered within some type of theatrical framework.
CONCLUSION

While some individuals find themselves immersed in the production and make less significations during the performance, others may be so star-struck during the performance that they cannot fully comprehend the meaning in the art or enjoy the entertainment of the performance. Stars, as complex signifiers, have a range of signified responses that stem from their product, values, and past roles. Every star becomes known for something, whether it is beauty, fashion, talent, controversy, personality, or some other defining feature or aspect. It is often what the star is famous for that remains in the forefront of people’s minds. In asking how does an individual signify the Hollywood film or television star when he or she appears in a Broadway or Off-Broadway show and what affect does this have on audiences’ perception and reception of the star and the production, I came up with a complex and somewhat theoretical answer. Relying on three key elements that appear integral to stardom (product, value and associations, and past roles), I surmise that the star is a commercial product used to promote commercial theatre. But I also hold that it is more complicated than that. Many of these stars are accomplished performers and bringing them to Broadway and Off-Broadway provides audiences with a chance to see a skilled actor perform. Regardless of commercial appeal and opportunity, the casting of the Hollywood film or television star has a larger effect on the perception and reception of the audiences.

As I outlined in Chapter I, each star represents a product and has certain celebrity capital. The product is what Broadway producers are buying when they decided to cast a Hollywood star in their show. The product is one of the first significations that an individual will have associated with the star. By casting a star with an identifiable product, producers can influence that way that audience members will interpret the character (and possibly the production writ large). The way
a star is marketed for a Broadway show can also shape how the star is to be perceived (emphasizing certain significations) thus creating expectations for their character. The casting of the star banks upon the previously established significations that the actor has already formed in the mind of the public. The value an individual places on these signified responses can directly affect the possibility that these significations will come back to haunt the star during the performance.

In Chapter II, I argued that there are a host of factors that affect how we perceive and make judgments. How something is defined; how it is marketed; how it is sold as a commodity (a product) are all questions of identification (especially for the star). When stars are revealed as cultural products, their brand is situated within the entertainment industry. This industry is the context in which they are first signified. As I have noted throughout this study, the star is most typically signified through a combination of their celebrity capital, their product, persona, their image/beauty, their box office revenue, skill, awards, and their past roles. Factors such as age, gender identification, sexual orientation, religion, and a host of other associations can influence how an individual signifies that star. After identification comes evaluation. In our contemporary culture, there is already a high valuation of stars for no other reasons than their fame. For many individuals, fame has great value. Other values that are prioritized in contemporary cultures, like beauty, sex appeal, wealth, etc. also seem to accompany most (if not all) Hollywood stars. Audiences value the star should receive and this value judgment is reserved in their mental databank. How a star is valued (in a communal sense) can bring value to the show as many audience members will equate the value they associate with the star also with the production. Additionally, if the star is valued as a performer, then it is likely that the performance they will
give will be worthwhile, thus investing the production with value. Stars regarded with higher value will tend to have a stronger hold in one’s memory and increasing the opportunity for recall.

When an individual makes a personal connection with a star, he or she typically increases their estimation of that star’s value. In Chapter III, I discussed how the personal connection between the individual and the star does not require acquaintance with the star in a corporeal sense. Rather, the star communicates indirectly with audiences through their films, interviews, and social media. The connections developed between a thing and other things in our memories allows for ghosting to take place. Since the fan takes an avid interest in the star, they possess greater knowledge about the star than the average individual. Casting stars with large fan bases, those who have appeared in blockbuster and franchise films, speaks to a larger demographic of devoted followers whose connection with the star is not only strong but personal. The fan will have numerous significations for the star (most of the positive). Casting a beloved star, with popular and adored past roles is advantageous for the production as it increases the likelihood that individuals will have a positive reception of the production. Because the knowledge of a star’s past roles (which are integrated as part of the star’s product) is so common, these significations between the actor and the role, regardless of the value placed on the role, tend to frequently haunt the performance of the star. As the memories, associations, and connections with the star increases, the affixation of icons, indices, and symbols develop, allowing for a multitude of signifieds that can be read based on the individual’s personal cognitive process.

The semiotics of celebrity is complex because the star, the possessor of celebrity, is representative of so many things. Some objects, like a rose, can be signified in a variety of ways. The rose can signify itself, it can signify passion, or it can also signify death. The star, however, has numerous significations that come from each individual’s personal knowledge and memory.
Yet, like the rose, the way the star is signified can be indicated by the context surrounding it. As I overviewed in Chapter IV, a frame helps to establish its purpose/affect/interaction at a specific moment in time in a specific context. The significations made from the star’s performance are dependent on kinesics (the mimetic, gestural, and proxemic) movements of the star within the one or more of the theatrical frames. This is the crux of this study. The frame provides individuals with the criteria for evaluation, so the star is subject to the analysis of the individual in the moment of their performance. The star’s body on the stage draws upon a great many memories and associations (significations) that can affect an individual’s perception and reception of the theatrical event. Seeing a Hollywood film or television star perform, whether it is on stage or screen, affects how the audience perceives and receives the work. Since the star is involved in the signifying chain for so many different signs, an individual will unquestionably recall specific significations at some point during the performance. When a star from Hollywood is placed with the Broadway frame, there are different expectations for the star and for the show.

The practice of casting Hollywood stars on Broadway does not seem to be diminishing. As I have illustrated throughout this study, the prevalence of stars within American commercial theatre (New York City) is at an all-time high. Theatre historians and scholars should consider how seeing the star affects their perception and reception of both the star and show and the impact this practice has on the creation and reception of theatre in 21st century America. For this practice to be truly understood within current cultural context, it seems prudent for a continued interrogation into the effect of seeing a Hollywood star perform (within theatrical frames). The effect of celebrity, ghosting, and expectation that comes from star casting needs to be further investigated.
In short, an unknown actor or a somewhat known Broadway star, does not bring to the stage the expectations that the celebrity-laden Hollywood star does. The star brings with them already established significations that can affect how the performance is read and reviewed. This is further complicated by the fact that individuals signify the same star differently, allowing for many interpretations that can affect their perception and reception of the play or musical—perhaps diminishing the message that is the heart and soul of the piece. Casting a star provides the audience with familiarity and to some extent disallows the individual to watch and interpret a performance free from presupposition and presumption. Casting a star informs the audience how they should watch and interpret the performance. It is reliant of type casting and preconceived ideas and appears to cater to a 21st century audience who is more concerned with celebrity than content. It is doubtless that the semiotics of celebrity and its effect on Broadway and Off-Broadway theatre goes much further than my study can explicate. My study serves to follow the call of Michael L. Quinn and encourage further study into the semiotics of celebrity and how this processes affects the way in which theatre productions cast with stars affects the way in which we watch, receive, and understand contemporary theatre.


Eisenberg, Jesse. Personal Interview. 10 Nov 2015.


Geraghty, Christine. “Re-examining Stardom: Questions of Text, Bodies and Performance”.


APPENDIX A. CONCIEVED PROJECT

When I began this project back in 2014, my intent was to gather data from stars, producers, playwrights, and audiences to determine what affects celebrity casting had on the stars’ careers and the audiences’ perception and reception. As noted in my introduction, Jesse Eisenberg was the only industry insider to respond to my survey. Since I was unable to gather data from other stars, producers, and playwrights, I decided to adapt the project and, using semiotics, explore ways in which the star might be read the audience and how this in turn might affect the star in terms of product, value, etc.
APPENDIX B. HSRB

DATE: October 22, 2015
TO: Kevin Calcamp
FROM: Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board
SUBMISSION TYPE: Continuing Review/Progress Report
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: November 12, 2015
EXPIRATION DATE: November 11, 2016
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review
REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 7

Thank you for your submission of Continuing Review/Progress Report materials for this project. The Bowling Green State University Human Subjects Review Board has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is available as a published Board Document in the Review Details page. You must use the approved version of the consent document when obtaining consent from participants. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that you are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures, those modifications must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the modification request form for this procedure.

You have been approved to enroll 1,100 participants. If you wish to enroll additional participants you must seek approval from the HSRB.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must also be reported promptly to this office.

This approval expires on November 11, 2016. You will receive a continuing review notice before your project expires. If you wish to continue your work after the expiration date, your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date.

Good luck with your work. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Research Compliance at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bgsu.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence regarding this project.
Hollywood and Broadway: The Intersection of Celebrity, Fandom, and Theatre
Informed Consent Form for Celebrity Actors

Introduction
I am Kevin Calcamp, a doctoral student in the Department of Theatre and Film at Bowling Green State University. I am currently doing research on how celebrities cast in Broadway and Off-Broadway plays affect both actors and audiences of New York City theatre. Because of your involvement in the New York City theatre, I am hoping you will be a part of this research.

Purpose
I seek to understand how a celebrity's performing on Broadway affects the actor, the audience, and his or her fans. This research seeks to gain information on how the star performer affects the relationship between the actor and the audience and how professional theatre is created in New York City. I believe that you can help my research by sharing your experience on the New York City stage. I want to learn about the casting process and your decision to perform on Broadway. I want to learn the different ways that you feel your career might have been affected by performing live on stage. I also want to know more about what you experienced during your run on Broadway and how you felt the experience changed your career and what effect you think it might have had on audiences and fans. While there is no direct benefit to you as a participant, I believe your participation will provide significant understanding of how an actor's renown has had an impression on the art of theatre and its reception to the public; this research will not only greatly benefit how we understand celebrity performances on the Broadway/Off-Broadway stage but also benefit the field and discipline of theatre.

Procedure
This research will involve your participation in answering a few questions about your New York City theatre experiences in either a brief 10-minute interview or through a written questionnaire that can be sent to you via E-Mail. Interviews can be conducted via telephone or through an online service such as FaceTime or Skype and will be audio recorded for the sole purpose of this research. Questionnaires will be E-mailed to the participant and should be returned via E-Mail. You are being invited to take part in this research because of your status and because of your performance in a Broadway or Off-Broadway theatre production.

Voluntary Nature
Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are also free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University.
Confidentiality Protection

Due to your position as a public figure, there is no confidentiality or anonymity. By agreeing to participate in the interview or questionnaire, you agree to have your name used in any publications or presentations. All information collected from the interviews/questionnaires will be stored on a password-protected computer. All audiotapes and transcripts will be destroyed no later than five years after the research is published. You will be provided with a copy of the document before publication for your approval.

Risks

The risks involved in participating in this research are no more than what you experience in daily life. There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview/questionnaire if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable. You do not have to provide any reason for not responding to any question, or for refusing to take part in the interview or questionnaire.

Contact Information

Any questions about this research or your participation in this research can be directed to Kevin Calcamp at 917-319-9599 or ekevin@bg.edu or my advisor on the project, Jonathan Chambers, Ph.D. at 419-372-9618 or jonathc@bg.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 or hsrb@bg.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research. Thank you for your time.

By answering the questions via interview or questionnaire, you are indicating your consent to participate. You agree that you are over the age of 18 and you have been informed of the purposes, procedures, risks, and benefits of this study. You have had the opportunity to have all of your questions answered and have been informed that your participation is completely voluntary and that you may withdraw at any time.
Participant's Name

Please initial next to your choice.

_____ I consent to an audiotaped interview.

_____ I consent to a written questionnaire.
Hollywood and Broadway: The Intersection of Celebrity, Fandom, and Theatre Informed Consent Form for Playwrights

Introduction
I am Kevin Calcamp, a doctoral student in the Department of Theatre and Film at Bowling Green State University. I am currently doing research on how celebrities cast in Broadway and Off-Broadway plays affect both actors and audiences of New York City theatre. Because of your involvement in the New York City theatre, I am hoping you will be a part of this research.

Purpose
I seek to understand how a celebrity's performing on Broadway affects the actor, the audience, and his or her fans. This research seeks to gain information on how the star performer affects the relationship between the actor and the audience and how professional theatre is created in New York City. I believe that you can help my research by sharing your experience on the New York City stage. I want to learn about the casting process and your involvement in seeking out and casting a celebrity actor. I want to learn how you feel the play or musical might have been affected through the involvement of a celebrity actor. While there is no direct benefit to you as a participant, I believe your participation will provide significant understanding of how an actor's renown has an impression on the art of theatre and its reception to the public; this research will not only greatly benefit how we understand celebrity performances on the Broadway/Off-Broadway stage but also benefit the field and discipline of theatre.

Procedure
This research will involve your participation in answering a few questions about your New York City theatre experiences in either a brief 10-minute interview or through a written questionnaire that can be sent to you via E-Mail. Interviews can be conducted via telephone or through an online service such as FaceTime or Skype and will be audio recorded for the sole purpose of this research. Questionnaires will be E-mailed to the participant and should be returned via E-Mail. You are being invited to take part in this research because of your work as a playwright who has had their work produced on Broadway/Off-Broadway with a celebrity actor.

Voluntary Nature
Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are also free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University.
Confidentiality Protection

The information you provide in the interview or questionnaire will be confidential and a pseudonym will be used for all publications and presentations. You have the option to waive your confidentiality by indicating your choice at the end of this document. By waiving your confidentiality, you agree to have your name used in any publications or presentations. All information collected from the interviews/questionnaires will be stored on a password-protected computer. All audiotapes and transcripts will be destroyed no later than five years after the research is published. You will be provided with a copy of the document before publication for your approval.

Risks

The risks involved in participating in this research are no more than what you experience in daily life. There is a risk that you may share some personal or confidential information by chance, or that you may feel uncomfortable talking about some of the topics. You do not have to answer any question or take part in the interview/questionnaire if you feel the question(s) are too personal or if talking about them makes you uncomfortable. You do not have to provide any reason for not responding to any question, or for refusing to take part in the interview or questionnaire.

Contact Information

Any questions about this research or your participation in this research can be directed to Kevin Calcamp at 917-319-9509 or kevin@bgsu.edu or my advisor on the project, Jonathan Chambers, Ph.D. at 419-372-9618 or jonathc@bgsu.edu. You may also contact the Chair, Human Subjects Review Board at 419-372-7716 or hsrp@bgsu.edu, if you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research. Thank you for your time.

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Hollywood and Broadway: The Intersection of Celebrity, Fandom, and Theatre
Informed Consent Form for Producers and Industry Professionals

Introduction
I am Kevin Calcamp, a doctoral student in the Department of Theatre and Film at Bowling Green State University. I am currently doing research on how celebrities cast in Broadway and Off-Broadway plays affect both actors and audiences of New York City theatre. Because of your involvement in the New York City theatre, I am hoping you will be a part of this research.

Purpose
I seek to understand how a celebrity's performing on Broadway affects the actor, the audience, and his or her fans. This research seeks to gain information on how the star performer affects the relationship between the actor and the audience and how professional theatre is created in New York City. I believe that you can help my research by sharing your experience on the New York City stage. I want to learn about the celebrity casting process and your viewpoints on how celebrities affect the way Broadway/Off-Broadway theatre is created and received. I want to learn about the factors that pinpoint a need for a celebrity vehicle and how the search for a star begins. I also want to know what considerations for hiring are based on a star’s value (actor-training, awards, etc.) and the size and appeal of their fan base. While there is no direct benefit to you as a participant, I believe your participation will provide significant understanding of how an actor’s renown has an influence on the art of theatre and its reception to the public; this research will not only greatly benefit how we understand celebrity performances on the Broadway/Off-Broadway stage but also benefit the field and discipline of theatre.

Procedure
This research will involve your participation in answering a few questions about your New York City theatre experiences in either a brief 10-minute interview or through a written questionnaire that can be sent to you via E-Mail. Interviews can be conducted via telephone or through an online service such as FaceTime or Skype and will be audio recorded for the sole purpose of this research. Questionnaires will be E-mailed to the participant and should be returned via E-Mail. You are being invited to take part in this research because of your work as a producer/industry professional who has worked with a celebrity actor on Broadway/Off-Broadway.
Voluntary Nature

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are also free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University.

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Risks

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Hollywood and Broadway: The Intersection of Celebrity, Fandom, and Theatre
Informed Consent Form for Audience Members

Introduction
I am Kevin Calcamp, a doctoral student in the Department of Theatre and Film at Bowling Green State University. I am currently doing research on how celebrities cast in Broadway and Off-Broadway plays affect both actors and audiences. Because of your involvement as an audience member who has seen film/television stars perform in the New York City theatre, I am hoping you will be a part of this research.

Purpose
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Procedure
This research will involve your participation in answering questions about seeing a film/television star perform live in a Broadway/Off-Broadway play or musical in a brief 10-minute survey. You are being invited to take part in this research because of your involvement as an audience member who has seen a film/television star perform live in a Broadway or Off-Broadway theatre production.

Voluntary Nature
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Confidentiality Protection

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Hollywood and Broadway: The Intersection of Celebrity, Fandom, and Theatre
Informed Consent Form for Celebrity Actors

Introduction
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Purpose
I seek to understand how a celebrity's performing on Broadway affects the actor, the audience, and his or her fans. This research seeks to gain information on how the star performer affects the relationship between the actor and the audience and how professional theatre is created in New York City. I believe that you can help my research by sharing your experience on the New York City stage. I want to learn about the casting process and your decision to perform on Broadway. I want to learn the different ways that you feel your career might have been affected by performing live on stage. I also want to know more about what you experienced during your run on Broadway and how you felt the experience changed your career and what effect you think it might have had on audiences and fans. While there is no direct benefit to you as a participant, I believe your participation will provide significant understanding of how an actor's renown has had an impression on the art of theatre and its reception to the public; this research will not only greatly benefit how we understand celebrity performances on the Broadway/Off-Broadway stage but also benefit the field and discipline of theatre.

Procedure
This research will involve your participation in answering a few questions about your New York City theatre experiences in either a brief 10-minute interview or through a written questionnaire that can be sent to you via E-Mail. Interviews can be conducted via telephone or through an online service such as FaceTime or Skype and will be audio recorded for the sole purpose of this research. Questionnaires will be E-mailed to the participant and should be returned via E-Mail. You are being invited to take part in this research because of your status and because of your performance in a Broadway or Off-Broadway theatre production.

Voluntary Nature
Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. You are also free to withdraw at any time. You may decide to skip questions or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. Deciding to participate or not will not affect your relationship with Bowling Green State University.
Confidentiality Protection
Due to your position as a public figure, there is no confidentiality or anonymity. By agreeing to participate in the interview or questionnaire, you agree to have your name used in any publications or presentations. All information collected from the interviews/questionnaires will be stored on a password-protected computer. All audiotapes and transcripts will be destroyed no later than five years after the research is published. You will be provided with a copy of the document before publication for your approval.

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Hollywood and Broadway: The Intersection of Celebrity, Fandom, and Theatre
Informed Consent Form for Playwrights

Introduction
I am Kevin Catcamp, a doctoral student in the Department of Theatre and Film at Bowling Green State University. I am currently doing research on how celebrities cast in Broadway and Off-Broadway plays affect both actors and audiences of New York City theatre. Because of your involvement in the New York City theatre, I am hoping you will be a part of this research.

Purpose
I seek to understand how a celebrity's performing on Broadway affects the actor, the audience, and his or her fans. This research seeks to gain information on how the star performer affects the relationship between the actor and the audience and how professional theatre is created in New York City. I believe that you can help my research by sharing your experience on the New York City stage. I want to learn about the casting process and your involvement in seeking out and casting a celebrity actor. I want to learn how you feel the play or musical might have been affected through the involvement of a celebrity actor. While there is no direct benefit to you as a participant, I believe your participation will provide significant understanding of how an actor's renown has an impression on the art of theatre and its reception to the public; this research will not only greatly benefit how we understand celebrity performances on the Broadway/Off-Broadway stage but also benefit the field and discipline of theatre.

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APPENDIX C. QUESTIONNAIRES/SURVEY QUESTIONS

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STARS

1. What led you to decide to take on a role in a Broadway or Off-Broadway production? Where were you in your career?

2. How do you feel about how producers use your celebrity/image to appeal to audiences that will ultimately buy tickets to the show? How was your image used? How did you feel about it?

3. How do you believe your value (your acting-training, awards, Hollywood standing) affects the audience’s reception of your character and of the play or musical? Do they see the character, your previous characters, or you as a celebrity figure? In what ways is the show affected by their expectations?

4. How does your public life and past characters affect the role you’ve taken on Broadway/Off-Broadway? In what ways do you think the audience can see past your former characters and personal life?

5. What affects your decision to take on a role on Broadway or Off-Broadway?

6. How is your performance on Broadway beneficial to your career and your craft as an actor?

7. Do you consider your fans when you decided to make the jump to Broadway or Off-Broadway theatre? In what ways do you consider fan reception in choosing projects or other career choices, if at all?
8. If at all, how do you think performing on Broadway/Off-Broadway changes how your audiences/fans perceive you as a performer? Of course, the success of the role/play affects that, but I’m asking if post-performance hour marked a changed in how your reputation was with fans and if so, what that was?

9. How has performing on Broadway/Off-Broadway affected your fanbase? Do you feel you have gained more fans by performing in a Broadway or Off-Broadway play or musical?

10. Having performed on Broadway or Off-Broadway, are there any reasons why you would not perform on a New York City stage again if asked? If so, what are they?
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PLAYWRIGHTS

1. How did the need for a celebrity actor arise when mounting your play or musical on Broadway?

2. How do you feel about celebrity/image being used to appeal to audiences and to ultimately sell tickets to the show?

3. How do you believe the celebrity actor’s value (their acting-training, awards, Hollywood standing) affects the audience’s reception of the character and that of your play or musical? Give me an example of a good and bad effect?

4. How do celebrity actors’ previous characters and personal lives interfere with the play or musical you have written, if at all? What obstacles, if any, do you think audiences confront in understanding your play when it is embodied by a celebrity actor?

5. How does the casting process involve you? What preferences do you have for/against celebrity casting?

6. What has your experience working with celebrity actors on Broadway revealed to you about the practice of employing celebrity actors in leading roles on Broadway and Off-Broadway? Give me an example of what transpired?

7. Why do you think we need celebrity actors on Broadway at present?
QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRODUCERS/INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS

1. Other than for monetary gain, why hire a celebrity actor from film and television in a Broadway/Off-Broadway play or musical?

2. What factors (value, actor-training, etc.) are considered in hiring a celebrity actor for a specific role?

3. What factors do you believe lead celebrity actors to take on a role in a Broadway or Off-Broadway production?

4. How do you feel celebrity/image is used to appeal to audiences and to ultimately sell tickets to the show?

5. How do you believe the celebrity actor’s value (their acting-training, awards, Hollywood standing) affects the audience’s reception of the character and of the play or musical?

6. Why do you think we need celebrity actors on Broadway at present?

7. In your opinion, how do you see a celebrity actor’s performance on Broadway as being beneficial to either their overall career or to their craft as an actor?
SURVEY QUESTIONS FOR AUDIENCE MEMBERS

1. Age
   18 - 25
   25 - 35
   35 - 50
   50 - 75
   75 +

2. Gender

3. How often do you attend the theatre per year?

4. How often do you attend the cinema per year?

5. Select which film/television stars you have seen perform on Broadway or Off-Broadway?
   (select all that apply)
   Alec Baldwin
   Alan Rickman
   Andrew Garfield
   Angela Lansbury
   Ben Foster
   Billy Crudup
   Candace Bergen
   Daniel Radcliffe
   Darren Criss
   David Hyde Pierce
   Denzel Washington
Ellen Burstyn
Hunter Parrish
Ian McKellan
James Earl Jones
Jessie Eisenberg
John Larroquette
Justin Bartha
Kathleen Turner
Liev Schreiber
Meryl Streep
Neil Patrick Harris
Orlando Bloom
Patrick Stewart
Phillip Seymour Hoffman
 Scarlett Johansson
Sebastian Stan
Sigourney Weaver
Raven-Symoné
Robin Williams
Tom Sturridge
Viola Davis
Zachary Quinto
Other: ___________________________
6. Did any of the film/television stars’ past roles come to mind while watching the play/musical? Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s) and describe what came to mind.
   
   Yes
   
   No

7. Did you consider yourself a fan of the film/television actor(s) before seeing the play(s)/musical(s)?
   
   Yes
   
   No

8. After seeing the play(s)/musical(s) do you consider yourself a fan of the film/television actor? If yes, how so?
   
   Yes
   
   No

9. Did your opinion of the film/television actor(s) change as a result of their performance on Broadway/Off-Broadway? If yes, how so?
   
   Yes
   
   No

10. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is unattractive and 5 is extremely attractive, how would you rate the physical attractiveness of the film/television star(s) you have seen on Broadway/Off-Broadway? What about the actor makes you rate him/her this way? Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s).
11. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is untalented and 5 is extremely talented, how would you rate the talent of the film/television star(s) you have seen on Broadway/Off-Broadway? What about the actor makes you rate him/her this way? Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s).

12. On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is less than, 3 is equal to, and 5 greater than, how would rate the acting ability of the film/television star(s) you have seen on Broadway/Off-Broadway compared to the other actors in the play/musical? Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s).

13. What primarily prompted you to purchase tickets for the production(s)?
   
   Familiarity with the play/musical
   
   Interest in the story/plot of the play/musical?
   
   Interest in seeing the film/television actor perform
   
   Other: __________________________

14. Describe your experience of seeing the film/television stars you mentioned in a Broadway/Off-Broadway production. Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s).

15. Describe the film/television star’s performance. Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s).

16. How was your experience of the play/musical enhanced or diminished by the presence of the film/television star in the cast? Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s).
Figure 1: Poster from *Equus* (Towle).
Figure 2: Promotional Image from *Equus* (Just Jared).
Figure 3: Promotional Image from *Equus* (Just Jared).
Figure 4: Promotional Image from *Equus* (Just Jared).
Figure 5: Promotional Image from *Equus* (Just Jared).
Figure 6: Promotional Image from Equus (Just Jared).
Figure 7: Promotional Image from Equus (Just Jared).
Figure 8: Original Broadway Poster from *Orphans* (Daily Mail Reporter).
Figure 9: Revised Broadway Poster from *Orphans* (Salawi).
Figure 10: Poster from *Sister Act: The Musical* (AllMusic).
Figure 11: Poster from *Sister Act: The Musical* (Charitybuzz).
Figure 12: Poster from *Sister Act: The Musical* featuring Raven-Symoné (Movie Poster Shop).
### Table 1: Audience Survey Responses from Question 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
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<th>25-35</th>
<th>35-50</th>
<th>50-75</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>61</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>39.20%</td>
<td>34.66%</td>
<td>14.20%</td>
<td>11.93%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Table 2: Audience Survey Responses from Question 2

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<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
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<td>1.72%</td>
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</table>

### Table 3: Audience Survey Responses from Question 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you attend the theatre per year?</th>
<th>Under 5</th>
<th>Under 10</th>
<th>Under 15</th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>Under 30</th>
<th>Under 50</th>
<th>50 +</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>49.44%</td>
<td>16.66%</td>
<td>14.36%</td>
<td>4.02%</td>
<td>6.32%</td>
<td>2.87%</td>
<td>6.32%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

### Table 4: Audience Survey Responses from Question 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How often do you attend the cinema per year?</th>
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<th>Under 10</th>
<th>Under 15</th>
<th>Under 20</th>
<th>Under 30</th>
<th>Under 50</th>
<th>50 +</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>32.18%</td>
<td>31.60%</td>
<td>14.36%</td>
<td>11.49%</td>
<td>6.32%</td>
<td>1.14%</td>
<td>2.87%</td>
</tr>
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Table 5: Audience Survey Responses from Question 5

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<th>Answer Options</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
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<td>Alec Baldwin</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alan Rickman</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Garfield</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Lansbury</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Foster</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billy Crudup</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candace Bergen</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Radcliffe</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Criss</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Hyde Pierce</td>
<td>19.6%</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denzel Washington</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Burstyn</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Parrish</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ian McKellan</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Earl Jones</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessie Eisenberg</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Larroquette</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin Bartha</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathleen Turner</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liev Schreiber</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meryl Streep</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Patrick Harris</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orlando Bloom</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrick Stewart</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philip Seymour Hoffman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scarlett Johansson</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastian Stan</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sigourney Weaver</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raven-Symonè</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Williams</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Sturridge</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Quinto</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>95</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

answered question 138
skipped question 39
Table 6: Audience Survey Responses from Question 6

Did any of the film/television stars’ past roles come to mind while watching the play/musical? Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s) and describe what came to mind.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants:</th>
<th>128</th>
<th>(Some responses did not include specific examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Star:</th>
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<th>No</th>
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<td>Alan Rickman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alec Baldwin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Lansbury</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beau Bridges</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Foster</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billy Crudup</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Candace Bergen</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Radcliffe</td>
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<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Criss</td>
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<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hyde Pierce</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denzel Washington</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Hugh Jackman</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Hunter Parrish</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jane Lynch</td>
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<td>Jessie Eisenberg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim Parsons</td>
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<td>John Larroquette</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Stamos</td>
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<tr>
<td>Justin Bartha</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kathleen Turner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary-Louise Parker</td>
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<td>Matthew Broderick</td>
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<td>Count</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
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<td>Michael Cera</td>
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<td>Morgan Freeman</td>
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<td>Neil Patrick Harris</td>
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<td>Nick Jonas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orlando Bloom</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Stewart</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patti LuPone</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Seymour Hoffman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raven-Symonè</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin Williams</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rupert Grint</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel L. Jackson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sebastian Stan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taye Diggs</td>
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<td>Tom Sturridge</td>
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<td>Zach Braff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zach Levi</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zachary Quinto</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

I never watched Reba in anything before seeing her in Annie Get Your Gun.

Bernadette Peters, Rodgers and Hammerstein’s Cinderella
Darren Criss, A Very Potter Musical and sequels, Glee
Hunter Parrish, Weeds/Spring Awakening

I saw her in Once Upon a Mattress. I don’t remember if this was before or after Sex and the City, but I knew her from Girls Just Want to Have Fun and didn’t really see any resemblance in this role.

Adrian Zmed was in Blood Brothers. He was on a TV show with William Shatner in the 80s (TJ Hooker I think). He did a great job in the show.

Daniel Radcliffe in The Cripple of Inishmaan. Simply seeing him on stage I kept thinking of Harry Potter. It was hard to disassociate him from his role as Harry Potter.

When I saw Hank Azeria in “Spamalot” on Broadway I kept thinking how different it was from his work on “The Simpsons.”

I could not see Dan Radcliffe in H2$ as anyone but Harry Potter.

Nathan Lane - Birdcage
Dylan Baker – Spider-man 2 & 3
John Turturro – Big Lebowski (Don’t mess with the Jesus)
Richard Griffiths –Harry Potter
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Celebrity</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Piven</td>
<td>PCU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elisabeth Moss</td>
<td>West Wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Langella</td>
<td>Dracula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Murray Abraham</td>
<td>Amadeus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Broderick</td>
<td>Ferris Bueller’s Day Off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockard Channing</td>
<td>West Wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rupert Grint</td>
<td>Harry Potter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Megan Mullally</td>
<td>Parks and Rec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Ferrell</td>
<td>Being Will Ferrell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Rubens</td>
<td>Pee We</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phil LaMarr</td>
<td>Green Lantern (and pretty much every other DCAU voice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary-Louise Parker</td>
<td>West Wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Stormare</td>
<td>Big Lebowski (we cut off your Johnson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cynthia Nixon</td>
<td>Sex and City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Irwin</td>
<td>Popeye (yeah, I remember, even if he wishes he couldn’t)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Goodman</td>
<td>Big Lebowski</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Glover</td>
<td>Gremlins 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey Rush</td>
<td>Quills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Sarandon</td>
<td>Susan Sarandon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Allen Greer</td>
<td>In Living Color</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen Fry</td>
<td>QI</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sting</td>
<td>Sting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff Daniels</td>
<td>Dumb and Dumber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Gandolfini</td>
<td>The Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Spader</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billy Joe Armstrong</td>
<td>Green Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristin Milioti</td>
<td>30 Rock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Lithgow</td>
<td>Harry and the Hendersons</td>
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<tr>
<td>Al Pacino</td>
<td>Devil’s Advocate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Schiff</td>
<td>West Wing</td>
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<tr>
<td>John C McGinley</td>
<td>Scrubs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryan Cranston</td>
<td>Malcom in the Middle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Cumming</td>
<td>X-men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen Mirren</td>
<td>The Queen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roger Rees</td>
<td>West Wing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Radcliffe</td>
<td>December Boys….What do you think? Harry Potter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Parrish</td>
<td>Weeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Larroquette</td>
<td>Night Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Stewart</td>
<td>Patrick Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philip Seymour Hoffman</td>
<td>Charlie Wilson’s War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annie Potts, Dixie Carter, Delta Burke</td>
<td>Designing Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raven Symoné</td>
<td>The Cosby Show</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Stamos</td>
<td>Full House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molly Ringwald</td>
<td>16 Candles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Patrick Harris</td>
<td>How I Met Your Mother / Doogie Howser, MD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Hyde-Pierce</td>
<td>Frasier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Cumming - The Good Wife</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bebe Neuwirth - Cheers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cherry Jones – 24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patrick Stewart - Star Trek</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Radcliffe - Harry Potter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neil Patrick Harris - Gone Girl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Well mostly just the Smash characters. It didn’t help that I saw the Bombshell concert so they were still in those characters! For the most part I get sucked into the Broadway show and it doesn’t make me think of previous things they were in.

Even though I was watching Daniel Radcliffe dancing around an office, all I could picture was Harry Potter.

This is Our Youth...his role was very different than a role I’ve seen him play in films.

While watching Emma Stone in Cabaret, I couldn’t help but think of her in Easy A. While watching Megan Mullally in Young Frankenstein, I couldn’t help but think of her in Will & Grace. While watching Daniel Radcliffe in How to Succeed..., I obviously thought of his work as Harry Potter. While seeing Zach Braff in Bullets Over Broadway, I thought of his work in Scrubs. When seeing Fantasia Barrino in After Midnight, I thought back to her time on American Idol.

David Hyde Pierce in Drowsy Chaperone
Mario Lopez in chorus Line? Or 42nd Street?

The role was so transformative.

Angela Lansbury -- Murder, She Wrote
Catherine Zeta-Jones -- Chicago
David Hyde-Pierce -- Frasier
John Larroquette -- Night Court

My sole reason for going to see Orlando Bloom on stage (In celebration, London) was because I was already a fan of him in other things, particularly Lord of the Rings.

I saw “Beautiful,” the musical about Carole King, on Broadway in June, 2014. Jake Epstein played a major character on DeGrassi when my younger sister and I were watching a lot of DeGrassi. When he first took the stage I definitely remembered him from the show. I also remembered that his character was in a band on the show. He sang beautifully in the stage production and I remember thinking they should have had him sing more on the TV show.

They did such an incredible job that I didn’t even recognize them as actors in other films.

Idina Menzel - Saw her in If/Then - Amazing performance in RENT as a lesbian (TV)
NPH - Saw him in Hedwig - loved seeing him more in his element, seemed more comfortable with that character than Barney on HIMYM
Darren Criss - Saw him in Hedwig - different role for him to play, weird seeing an innocent glee boy and harry potter (very potter musical that went viral online) play the role of Hedwig. hard to switch mindsets.

Blaine in Glee came to mind when watching Darren.

Jenna Leigh Green (Wicked) - As she played Nessarose, I couldn’t help but think of when she played Libby Chessler on Sabrina the Teenage Witch. The characters were pretty different in
nature, but I could definitely see similarities between the two
Rue McLanahan (Wicked) - When I saw her play Madame Morrible, I was shocked because she had played Blanche Devareaux on The Golden Girls and these two characters were so completely different from one another. I was very impressed with the variety of roles that she was able to play

In a production of “Anything Goes” on Broadway I found Jessica Walter and Joel Grey familiar, but couldn’t place them immediately. Eventually it clicked and I found myself thinking about “ Arrested Development” and “Alias” during the show.

Each role seemed very unique.
For Lily Rabe, I had only seen her in American Horror Story previously, and I saw her in Much Ado About Nothing. It was interesting seeing her in a lighthearted comedy role when previously I’d seen her in drama/horror, but I can’t say that this performance made me think of any other performance.

Pedro Pascal, who I’d previously only seen on Game of Thrones, was also in Much Ado About nothing. As the roles weren’t similar at all, I didn’t think much about his role as Oberyn Martell, except to note that it was interesting to hear him without the Dornish accent.
I saw Zachary Quinto in The Glass Menagerie. I wasn’t expecting to be able to liken it to anything I’d seen him in before (Heroes, 24, Margin Call, Star Trek, American Horror Story), and I didn’t. At first, hearing him speak with a southern accent was a bit jarring (which isn’t to say it was a bad accent, I just had never heard him use one before), but I adjusted after the first few lines and thoroughly enjoyed the play.

Alan Rickman’s voice made me think of Snape. And with Michael C. Hall in Hedwig and the Angry Inch, there is a line in a song about blood on a blade, which made me think of Dexter.

I saw Patti LuPone in the 2005 Broadway revival of Sweeney Todd. I had two major references for her at the time. My first introduction to her was as a child or preteen when the television show Life Goes On was running. It was only later in my twenties that I understood her as a Broadway actor and gay icon and diva. But both of these aspects of LuPone’s public persona were part of my experience. It’s not so much that I was thinking of her as the mom on Life Goes On as that I understood I was seeing someone famous (beyond theater circles) playing Mrs. Lovett.
I hadn’t been familiar with Michael Cerveris (in the same show) before seeing this show, but now I think of this show when I see him on television.

I saw Bernadette Peters in the 2003 Broadway revival of Gypsy. I was definitely aware of her as a big star, but I wasn’t thinking of any particular role. Rather, I think for me Bernadette Peters transcends any one role. So not only was she completely brilliant in the role of Mama Rose, but she was also **Bernadette Peters** performing live.
I also saw Sandra Oh play the role of Nina in Diana Son’s play Satellites in 2006. This was at The Public. In this case, her star persona had a couple different levels for me. First, she had already been on Grey’s Anatomy for a couple years and had starred in Sideways. By that time, I knew she was an actor with incredible emotional depth who was only going to become more famous. I was also aware that she’d originated the role of Callie in Diana Son’s Stop Kiss, which I’d had the opportunity to work on briefly as an intern for a Playwright’s Festival in Minneapolis some years before. I did not ever meet Oh at that time, but had been following her career and was excited to see her in another Diana Son show. After Satellites, because I’d known Diana Son a little, my girlfriend and I got to meet Sandra Oh, which was especially cool for my (then) girlfriend because she too is Korean American and a theater person. In fact,
riding the subway together that weekend in New York, I’d witnessed my girlfriend being mistaken for Sandra. So, to be honest, I don’t remember much about Oh’s role in Satellites. It was not as amazing a play as Stop Kiss was, and the experience of the show was overshadowed, at least as I remember it now, by the extra-theatrical aspects of the night.

During Daniel Radcliffe’s performance in “How to Succeed,” I thought of Harry Potter. This really only occurred during his opening number; I forgot about it as the show went on.

Nathan Lane in The Addam’s Family Musical. I was reminded of Timon in the Lion King and his character in Mouse Hunt.

Of course Daniel Radcliffe is going to be thought of as Harry Potter. I myself haven’t even seen any of the Harry Potter movies, but that was the first thought in my mind – “LOOK HARRY POTTER’S ON BROADWAY!”

Now I think because of this, it was actually easier for me to separate the two, because I hadn’t seen him actually in the role, so when he was performing in How To Succeed in Business without Really Trying, it was easy for me to see him as his character.

Rent the movie

Taye Diggs in “Hedwig.” His role in “How Stella Got Her Groove Back”, his television work, his role in “RENT” both the original Broadway cast and movie.

Ferris Bueller’s Day Off

Melanie Brown (Rent) - scary spice
John Lithgow (Dirty Rotten Scoundrels) - 3rd rock from the sun

Alan Rickman’s character “Leonard” reminded me a bit of Snape, if he was more upbeat, more sarcastic, and had a sense of humor. Overall, it wasn’t too much of a resemblance.

Daniel Radcliffe, and Darren Criss, in H2$, as they both played Harry potter in one element or another, and Darren again in Hedwig, hard to disassociate from his Glee persona.

I was pretty young (6th grade?), and spent the majority of my first real theatre experience (seeing Showboat) trying to figure out why I recognized one of the actors. My dad explained that he was a character on Happy Days, which was why I recognized him. I hadn’t seen much Happy Days, so I couldn’t relate him to a character I knew.

Matthew Morrison in Glee
Darren Criss in Glee
David Hyde Pierce in Frasier

Just more his persona.


Delta Burke - Suzanne Sugarbaker (from "Designing Women")

While watching the show, not particularly. Before and after there tends to be speculation about how they will do in a role (esp. since I mostly see musicals) and then if they lived up to expectations - which inevitably brings up the roles they are “famous” for, especially if that role is very different from the one they are playing on the stage.

Orlando Bloom plays Romeo in “Romeo and Juliet” and it’s a different character with different personality than the roles he played before. He commanded the role and I didn’t see Orlando - I saw Romeo.

John Stamos in Bye Bye Birdie. Thought of Uncle Jesse from Full House.

Sorry, I’m not sure I understand this question.

Do you mean “when I read the name on the previous list did I think of other stage roles I had seen that actor in”??
If so, yes. I was thinking of one or more of stage roles for every actor listed, too many to list.

Alec Baldwin in Streetcar. He is always an arrogant ass and it was true on stage as well.

David Hyde Pierce in Spamalot. There were interesting moments where his role on Frasier kept flashing for me.

The parts played on Broadway were very different to the TV roles.

Hawke: Reality Bites, Hamlet
Klein: A fish Called Wanda, I Love You to Death

Gary Beach in Spamalot, his performance of Roger DeBris in The Producers came to mind often.

The parts played on Broadway were very different to the TV roles.

Hawke: Reality Bites, Hamlet
Klein: A fish Called Wanda, I Love You to Death

Gary Beach in Spamalot, his performance of Roger DeBris in The Producers came to mind often.

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The parts played on Broadway were very different to the TV roles.

Hawke: Reality Bites, Hamlet
Klein: A fish Called Wanda, I Love You to Death

Gary Beach in Spamalot, his performance of Roger DeBris in The Producers came to mind often.
Jonathan Groff - his character from Looking

Raven in Sister Act, that’s so raven
Daniel R in How to Succeed . . .
Harry Potter

Kelsey and David in Frasier the tv show. Finding Neverland actually pulled in a “Cheers” quote, probably just to get it over with. It was quite well done and the audience appreciated it. During Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike I kept looking for Niles, but Vanya was nothing like Miles and David is a marvelous actor who never pandered to the audience.

Darren Criss so completely became the character of Hedwig that I didn’t see his character Blaine from Glee or see much of Darren. Which made it ultimately a better experience. Same goes for Daniel Radcliffe when I saw him in The Cripple of Inishmaan, I didn’t see Harry Potter.

I associated both Michael C Hall and Neil Patrick Harris very strongly with their most recent TV characters, but all of that was forgotten almost immediately in Hedwig and the Angry Inch. Helen Mirren in The Audience, of course, reminded me of her performance in The Queen.

It really does not matter to me. I am just going because I enjoy and want to see excellent talent.

Jane Lynch, Annie. Couldn’t help but think of her performance and compare it to her performance/character on Glee. I had expected she would be a good Miss. Hannibal because her Glee character was so mean and was disappointed in her acting choices in Annie. Didn’t feel that she lived up to the hype in the media.

Vaguely. But this happens to me when watching movies as well. When I watch a production, either on film or stage, I care more about the characters and less about the actors. I will typically recognize the face and voice of the actor but be in able to put a name or filmography with it. But after a few seconds I cease to care and go right back to enjoying the show. The only exception for me is Hugh Jackman. When I watched a video recording of him in “Oklahoma” I was instantly chuckling at the juxtaposition of his singing and dancing role over him a Wolverine in all the X-Men movies. But again that was a quick and passing moment of mirth.

Only in the sense that Darren Criss really embodied Hedwig so, for a moment, there was a fleeting thought of “wow this is so unlike Darren, so unlike Blaine.”

Hugh Jackman’s performance was kept and subtle, not reminding me of anything with which I identify with the film star’s past roles.

Driving Miss Daisy
Will and Grace

Stewart - Captain Picard and Dr. X
McKellan - Gandalf and Magneto

Harry Potter

Sasha Allen -- tvs the voice /pippin
John Rubinstein--pippin original role/pippin

How to Succeed with Dan Radcliffe. Thought of Harry Potter.

Saw NPH in Hedwig. I love him as Barney Stinson in HIMYM. Because he is so unique, his voice, his appearance, I couldn’t help but think of Barney, too. But didn’t think of Doogie b/c he was such a teen in that show, and I spent a lot more time watching HIMYM than Doogie.

Re: other celebrities I mentioned, few had careers before the show, except I did remember seeing Steven Spinella in an episode of Grey’s Anatomy -- I recalled he was this tortured novelist who ate his book and ended up in the hospital. It was quite a memorable episode.
There are several other shows I have seen, and the playbill always tells you what tvs and movies they did, but they were less recognizable or well known, so their performances didn’t conjure anything.

Upon seeing Michael Cera, it was immediately clear that every role he has ever played seeped into his current role onstage. In the performance of This Is Our Youth, it was as though I was watching any of his films, which he already always played the same role in anyway. But nonetheless, it was a terrible choice.

David Hyde Pierce- Niles from Frasier

Table 7: Audience Survey Responses from Question 7

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Star:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Meryl Streep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael C Hall</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Cera</td>
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<td>Patti LuPone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samuel L. Jackson</td>
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<td>Scarlett Johansson</td>
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<td>Sebastian Stan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sigourney Weaver</td>
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<td>Taye Diggs</td>
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<td>Tom Sturridge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zach Levi</td>
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<td>Zachary Quinto</td>
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**Summary Total**

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Table 8: Audience Survey Responses from Question 8

<table>
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<tr>
<th>After seeing the play(s)/musical(s) do you consider yourself a fan of the film/television actor?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>76.92%</td>
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</table>

Table 9: Audience Survey Responses from Question 9

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Did your opinion of the film/television actor(s) change as a result of their performance on Broadway/Off-Broadway?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants: 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| No Change | 50 |
| Positive Change | 59 | 0.855% |
| Negative Change | 10 | 0.145% |

**Positive and Negative Changes** (Individual Responses)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alan Rickman (Positive)</th>
<th>I realized that he was far more energetic and confident on stage than on screen.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alec Baldwin, Alan Rickman, Darren Criss, Ian McKellen, Meryl Streep, Neil Patrick Harris, Patrick Stewart, Hugh Jackman (Positive)</td>
<td>If anything I like knowing how good of an actor they really are. I’m not saying that film and TV actors aren’t good, they are often phenomenal, but the stage allows for more freedom as well as more room for errors. Doing anything live ups the ante and expectations and I enjoy experiencing the quick thinking needed to recover from either actor or technical errors. In film and TV that just gets edited right out by plugging in a different take.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alec Baldwin, Ian McKellen, James Earl Jones, Kathleen Turner, Live Schreiber, Phillip Seymour Hoffman (Positive)</td>
<td>I’m still a fan - he didn’t bomb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela Lansbury (Positive)</td>
<td>The show would probably not be happening if not for Angela Lansbury’s name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carly Rae Jepsen (Positive)</td>
<td>I found out Carley could really sing and she did have Broadway experience which made me respect her more than just a one hit wonder artist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay Aiken (Positive)</td>
<td>More respect for him as a performer. Was willing to take an artistic/professional risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corbin Bleu (Positive)</td>
<td>I had previously only viewed the actor as a doctored up Disney Channel Star. However, after the Broadway production I saw that he did have actual talent for singing and performance; and while I do not consider myself a fan I no longer criticize those who do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Radcliffe (Positive)</td>
<td>Plus the fact that a movie star kept up with and shined alongside of seasoned Broadway performers, it was very impressive!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Radcliffe (Positive)</td>
<td>I was so impressed by his singing acting and dancing abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Radcliffe (Positive)</td>
<td>I always feel that the actor gains more respect from me if he is able to withstand the pressure and has the talent to perform on Broadway and off Broadway show.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Radcliffe (Positive)</td>
<td>I think Daniel Radcliffe is a lot more versatile than I thought before seeing the show.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Radcliffe (Positive)</td>
<td>Daniel Radcliffe can dance! I thought his performance was amazing and just enjoyed him more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Radcliffe, David Hyde Pierce (Positive)</td>
<td>Most of the time, their performance elevated my opinion of them and their talent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Radcliffe, Darren Criss, David Hyde Pierce, Neil Patrick Harris, Orlando Bloom, Raven Symone (Positive)</td>
<td>Again, versatility, makes them more relatable because they aren’t on TV, rather right in front of you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Radcliffe, Darren Criss (Positive)</td>
<td>I just loved seeing the actors in different roles and I appreciated their skill and versatility so much more. (24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Radcliffe (Positive)</td>
<td>I admire his acting talent and diversity of roles post- Harry Potter. I gained increased respect for his talent by seeing him perform in a different way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Radcliffe, John Larroquette (Positive)</td>
<td>Seeing Radcliffe in a drastically different role from Harry Potter made me a bigger fan of his because I was impressed by his range of talent. I also had fond memories of John Larroquette’s TV role in “Night Court” but seeing him in this comedic duo renewed my appreciation of him as a seasoned actor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan Radcliffe, John Larroquette (Positive)</td>
<td>I think it makes them a better Actor. They get the feel of a live audience. They also don’t have the chance to take a bunch of takes it must be right every time and I feel like that makes them better actors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Criss (Positive)</td>
<td>Only in a good way! He was capable of way more than I ever even thought. And definitely is most at home on a stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Criss (Positive)</td>
<td>In particular Darren Criss, I respected him much more as an actor and artist.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Criss, Matthew Morrison (Positive)</td>
<td>I am proud of them as they have proven to me they are very talented - triple threats.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Criss, Hunter Parrish (Positive)</td>
<td>Often seeing the actor live made me appreciate them more.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Darren Criss (Positive) My respect and interest in Darren has increased since seeing his portrayal of Hedwig. He really showed that he is a multifaceted actor who can excel at theatre. Only in the sense that I feel Darren is far more talented than I had originally thought. Hedwig is a farther stretch than Blaine, so it was great to see him do such a great job at such a difficult role. Only in the sense that I feel Darren is far more talented than I had originally thought. Hedwig is a farther stretch than Blaine, so it was great to see him do such a great job at such a difficult role.

Darren Criss, David Hyde Pierce, Hunter Parrish (Positive) It made me like them more.

Darren Criss (Positive) It was my first time seeing him live, so it made me realize how incredible he is in person. Plus I met him afterward and we talked about how we’re gonna work together some day.

Darren Criss, Kelsey Grammar (Positive) I saw them as much more talented and versatile

Darren Criss (Positive) It made me respect their talents and abilities a lot more.

Darren Criss, Jim Parsons (Positive) Yes because I went to said show for the actor. There are shows I want to see cause of the hype but like Jim Parsons I went to see An Act of God to see him. I was already a fan and just loved him more so after. And you can see how versatile some are. Like Jim did Big Bang theory and blew us away in The Normal Heart and was outstanding in Act of God. Darren Criss threw everyone for a loop dressing up in heels and make up and killing it on stage. I love to go as often as I can and if someone I am particularly fond of puts out a film or has a show on Broadway or off Broadway I try my hardest to go. If I like someone or am a fan I will show my support by going to show/film.

David Hyde Pierce (Positive) My respect grew for David Hyde Pierce! He’s a much more versatile actor than Frasier led me to believe. :) 

David Hyde Pierce (Positive) I had a much more complete appreciation for DHP and his talents.

David Hyde Pierce, Kelsey Grammar (Positive) David Hyde Pierce is a marvelous actor. Actually, I saw Kelsey in Macbeth years ago, he, too, is a wonderful actor, with a stage career interrupted as it were, by television. His character in “Finding Neverland” was very good, it’s a lovely show.

David Hyde Pierce (Positive) It made me realize just how talented these performers were, moving beyond the films and television show. I had no idea that either of them could sing.

Gary Beach (Positive) Gary did an amazing job in adapting to the different roles, and I think that he is a strong actor because of it. Even though his performance in Producers came to mind, he still changed up his approach to King Arthur, and it showed. At first, I enjoyed his performance in Producers. In Spamalot, he showed how flexible he was as an actor and how he could be known for more than just his role as Roger DeBris.

Hugh Jackman (Positive) The play took place in a very intimate venue and done in thrust. The dialogue, if I had to describe it, was high energy but we’ll reserved. It gave me even more reverence for what I thought Hugh Jackman was capable of as a Film/Theatre actor.

Hunter Parrish, NPH, Zachary Levi (Positive) sure, I respect them more

Ian McKellen Patrick Stewart (Positive) They seem a little less magical (13)

Ian McKellen, Patrick Stewart (Positive) More respect.

Ian McKellen, Patrick Stewart (Positive) I never especially cared about Ian McKellan & Patrick Stewart, but they are GREAT in the show and it made me like them more.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Jake Gyllenhaal (Positive)</strong></th>
<th>I found out he can sing and do stage comedy.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jim Parsons (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>As I stated before, I was already a fan and his talent was stable enough to allow me to enjoy the show for the entertainment it was, much as I do with his television program.</td>
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<td><strong>John Larroquette (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>I liked John Larroquette more after seeing him on stage -- his character was more serious and more appealing.</td>
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<td><strong>Kelsey Grammar, Matthew Morrison (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>Reinforced my enjoyment of their acting. Held more respect after Broadway for Morrison than before I saw him there.</td>
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<td><strong>Kiera Knightly (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>I was able to respect their work overall more than I had before. Again, live theatre only gets “one take” Actors can get left in the dust and it was nice seeing those stars hold their own.</td>
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<td><strong>Michael Cera (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>I find him much more versatile than before. He impressed me. Everyone says he always plays himself but his character in this play was unlike all characters in film he has played.</td>
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<td><strong>Michael C Hall</strong></td>
<td>They showed how versatile they are as performers.</td>
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<td><strong>Michael C Hall (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>I’m still thinking about how impressed I was with Michael C Hall in Hedwig and I saw it MONTHS ago. The change in opinion is generally a higher level of respect.</td>
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<td><strong>Morgan Freeman (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>I saw Morgan Freeman in “The Country Wife” and since, when I see a television show or film that he is in, I am always reminded if when I saw him on Broadway.</td>
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<td><strong>NPH (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>Seeing NPH in Hedwig just raised my respect for him as an actor and as a person. The physicality of the role of Hedwig was amazing! I admired his strength and agility, 8 shows a week is a lot for such a physical role. That man can wear heels better than I can! I definitely became a big fan of the Spring Awakening kids as a result of that show. Glee was such a great follow-up ... to see so many together.</td>
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<td><strong>NPH, Darren Criss (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>After I saw NPH in Hedwig, I became more of a fan of his. He was more than just Barney from How I met your mother. Not sure it’s possible for me to be more in love with Darren Criss, but I was after I saw how amazing he did in Hedwig.</td>
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<td><strong>Orlando Bloom (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>Improved greatly, from “good” to “excellent”</td>
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<td><strong>Orlando Bloom (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>I became Orlando Bloom’s fan because of his acting. He has tremendous talent and great acting skills. He is also a very interesting person. As a fan I’m watching all of his work and supporting it any way I can. (from Q8)</td>
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<td><strong>Raven Symone (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>After seeing Raven Symone I loved her performance but thought she seemed young for the role in Sister Act. (Negative) I was also very disappointed in how she was very stand-offish with her fans outside the stage door. She seemed to want almost nothing to do with them and was a bit rude.</td>
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<td><strong>Samuel L Jackson (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>It made me realize how much he “sells out” for minor roles since he has a lot of talent.</td>
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<td><strong>Taye Diggs (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>I like him even more than before.</td>
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<td><strong>Tom Bosley (Positive)</strong></td>
<td>I felt more warmly towards him, and more “connected” to him as a performer. At the time, again, I was quite young, I didn’t really understand theater, but now I have much more respect for him as a performer for being able to do a live musical!</td>
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</table>
Vanessa Hudgens (Positive)  Vanessa Hudgens was surprisingly really great, wasn’t reminded of Gabriela as I thought I would be. Vanessa Hudgens, I had more respect for her.  

Zachary Quinto, Lily Rabe (Positive)  It certainly made me appreciate them in a bigger way. Film/television acting is much different than stage acting, and it’s great to see that they have the skill to do both.  

Zachary Quinto, Edie Falco (Positive)  In the case of some of the actors that are less-experienced stage actors such as Zachary Quinto, Edie Falco I was favorably surprised & impressed by their excellent work onstage.  

~General (Positive)  Most of the celebrities I’ve seen on stage, I liked prior to seeing the show. So, what really changed is my respect for them to complete a rather grueling schedule on stage.  

~General (Positive)  Performing live in front of an audience also gives the actors gives them a certain amount of credibility.  

~General (Positive)  To me they’re more human  

Alan Rickman (Negative)  Mugging to the audience, holding for entry applause  

Delta Burke (Negative)  - yes - she broke the 4th wall on her first entrance acknowledging audience applause SIMPLY for her presence … this really bothered me because it read very egotistical to me None of the others though  

Kevin Klein (Negative)  Klein’s performance made me feel like he’s arrogant and full of himself.  

Michael Cera (Negative)  Upon seeing Michael Cera, it was immediately clear that every role he has ever played seeped into his current role onstage. In the performance of This Is Our Youth, it was as though I was watching any of his films, which he already always played the same role in anyway. But nonetheless, it was a terrible choice.  

Sigourney Weaver (Negative)  The only actor I was not overly impressed with was Sigourney Weaver in Sonia, Vanya, Masha and Spike, but that could have been because I didn’t enjoy her character at all.  

~General (Negative)  I said no because not everyone has a great night performing live, we all have days where things are better than others.  

~General (Negative)  Due to the family nature of Broadway, if they are (excuse the language) a dick to their cast mates, it makes me want to boycott them in other venues.  

~General (Negative)  if an actor is clearly a stretch for the part, I get extremely disappointed in the show’s producers and casting directors.
Table 10: Audience Survey Responses from Question 10

On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is unattractive and 5 is extremely attractive, how would you rate the physical attractiveness of the film/television star(s) you have seen on Broadway/Off-Broadway? What about the actor makes you rate him/her this way? Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s).

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Table 12: Audience Survey Responses from Question 12

On a scale of 1 - 5, where 1 is less than, 3 is equal to, and 5 greater than, how would you rate the acting ability of the film/television star(s) you have seen on Broadway/Off-Broadway compared to the other actors in the play/musical? Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s).

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Table 13: Audience Survey Responses from Question 13

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<td>Interest in seeing the film/television actor perform</td>
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<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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Table 14: Audience Survey Responses from Question 14

Describe your experience of seeing the film/television star(s) you mentioned in a Broadway/Off-Broadway production. Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s).

| Participants: | 56 |

Sarah Jessica Parker in Once Upon a Mattress. I like fairy tales and this was fun. Her being in it sold me, but it was that these were cheap day-of tickets that first attracted me to the show.

Adrian Zmed was in Blood Brothers. He was good. It was a long time ago.

Daniel Radcliffe “The Cripple of Inishmaan” I liked the fact that I was able to tell my friends I saw Daniel Radcliffe in person.

It was my first time seeing a Broadway show and it seemed everything a Broadway Production should be. I did not know much about Christy Brinkley ahead of time, but if it were not blatantly stated on signs around the theatre, I wouldn’t have known the show had any “stunt casting” if you will.

Too many to say. I see a lot of theatre and a famous person has never been a draw.

Great! I don’t know what else to say. I expected brilliant acting, and to see a familiar, beloved face up close. This happened.

Tim Curry in Spamalot
David Hyde Pierce in Spamalot
David Hyde Pierce in Curtains
Patrick Stewart in Waiting for Godot
Ian McKellen in Waiting for Godot
Arthur Darvill in Once

Angela Lansbury was in a tour of Blythe spirit and it was exactly what I dreamed it would be.

We sat in the front row so some moments were missed due to proximity but the overall performance was fantastic. The men in the show were great. Michael Cera had a great performance.

Emma Stone far exceeded my expectations of her in Cabaret. Catherine Zeta-Jones did not live
up to my expectations of her in A Little Night Music. Daniel Radcliffe really surprised me in How to Succeed....

Amazing!  NPH in Hedwig

Catherine Zeta-Jones:  she was fine, not bad, but I wasn’t moved by her performance.
Angela Lansbury (in Blithe Spirit):  was completely transformed, LOVED her performance, was actually surprised at how good she was.
John Laroquette -- he was good, but as part of an ensemble cast, so his performance didn’t move me a lot one way or the other.
David Hyde-Pierce -- really enjoyed his performance (in Curtains).  Left the theatre feeling very happy.

The play itself, I found rather boring and tedious, and far too long.  (Orlando Bloom, In Celebration)

It was intimate and great to see a play that is written by a woman being supported by him.

It was incredible. I was already familiar with Hedwig, but seeing the live performance was an amazing experience.

I was super excited when I found out that Jenna Leigh Green and Rue McLanahan were in Wicked

Seeing “How to Succeed” was a very exciting experience.  I was thrilled to see Daniel Radcliffe so close and in such a funny, energizing, and light-hearted role.  The chemistry between him and Laroquette was impressive and I have never seen a show where the audience laughed so much and was so excited to be there.  It was truly an amazing night that I shared with my mom.

“Anything Goes,” in comparison, was not as exciting, but I still appreciated seeing the classic show as I had played piano in a high school pit production and it was a very fun score.

I loved seeing LuPone and Cerveris in Sweeney Todd. This was the production in which all the main characters also play instruments, so it was not only the stars’ presence but also the unusual staging that made the experience so memorable.

With Gypsy, I really loved both Peters and the actor who played Rose. But unlike the above-mentioned 2005 Sweeney Todd which was very ensemble-driven in its staging, Gypsy really lends itself to letting these two divas shine. And they did.

Seeing Dan and John in “How to Succeed” was a really fun experience. I hadn’t seen either onstage before, and it was my first experience with seeing a celebrity headliner. My only complaint is that the opening song got a little lost in shrieking fans as Dan entered. Other than that and name recognition though, I don’t think them being celebrities altered my experience.

Nathan Lane: Addam’s Family Musical; I thought it was neat to see him in real life performing because I really like the movies The Lion King and Mouse Hunt.

Daniel Radcliffe - How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying

It was phenomenal! I had already known about the show and was excited to see his trying something new! I thought he did the role justice.

Same as seeing any other show but with a lot more teenage girls. When seeing Darren

Matthew Broderick, nice work if you can get it. It was really entertaining

Oh boy...I was fifteen when I saw him on Broadway. At Stage Door, where he’s signing everyone’s playbill after the show and stuff, I called him ‘my idol’ right to his face. He looked so bewildered, but also pretty amused by it. He probably thought I smoked a couple bowls or something.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I loved knowing I was in the same room as one of my favorite actors and seeing him perform live was amazing.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeing Daniel Radcliffe in How to Succeed in Business without Really trying was very enjoyable.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loved watching Jeff Goldblum &amp; Billy Crudup - they were amazing; the women were not impressive - I felt they let the storyline do the acting &amp; they just walked it with no emotion</td>
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<td>On the stage, there isn’t a whole lot of difference. In many cases, I’m more excited to see the Broadway stars than the celebrities. Neil Patrick Harris was exciting to see, but as he had the starring role in an incredibly small cast, that makes sense. The only real difference is when you stage door after the show. It gets a bit crazier with celebrities involved and it is exciting to get photos with them, as people back home will know who they are and be excited as well.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orlando Bloom as Romeo in “Romeo and Juliet”. Beautiful experience. I bought the DVD to re-watch his performance. His Romeo is exactly how I see this personage. Very passionate and strong.</td>
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<td>Darren Criss in Hedwig</td>
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<td>Rickman-Private Lives, Seminar</td>
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<td>Plummer-Macbeth, Barrymore</td>
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<td>Judi Dench-Amy’s View, Into the Woods</td>
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<td>Too many, sorry!</td>
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<td>Watching Darren in Hedwig was very emotional. The story line of the play is intense and the music is from my youth. I have fallen in love with the character and music now. So through my obsession with Darren I have been introduced to a difference type of musical theatre. One which had been off-Broadway and not main stream, something I was not aware of at the time of its conception even though I was a theatre goer then too.</td>
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<tr>
<td>With Matt, I fell in love with the Finding Neverland musical. A story that I can relate to the central character. In that he finds his inner child again. Something that I am doing as we very speak. I also feel an affinity to the finding never land show as I know Gary Barlow wrote the score or part of it and he is British and I am a Take That fan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>With Hedwig I am now a fan of Steven Trask who wrote the music for that musical. so through these two guys from Glee I have a spiraling connection to other things and people. I think that this is greatly increased through the access to information via Twitter, the Internet and FB.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I’m not just seeing Darren and Matt in the theatre I meeting up with likeminded people. I’m having an adventure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Through Twitter I have had direct contact with Steve Trask. Which increases my emotional connection to the musical.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I squirmed at Hawke’s limited bag of tricks. I squirmed at Klein’s Falstaff monologue, which he delivered beneath two adoring follow spots as if gold were pouring out of his mouth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vanessa was great and so sweet at the stage door</td>
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<td>Wopat was kind of boring in the main stage show but fun in the after show which was a cabaret, he was kinda really pushing the souvenirs on us though</td>
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<td>The Bullets guy was slightly annoying bc he seemed to think he was better than everyone else in that show and I don’t feel that he was</td>
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It was nice
The musical The Addams Family was just a fun evening for us. I would say that seeing Brook Shields was just an added bonus.

Breakfast at Tiffany’s with Emile Clark was a mixed experience. I love the actress but disliked the production overall. It wasn’t an exciting story for me

I am a big fan of Hedwig. To see the author bring it to life was an incredible experience. John Cameron Mitchel was worth it all. Darren Criss was just as amazing. I loved going to see Jim Parsons in Act of God as well as Kelsey Grammar in Finding Never Land.

I was blown away every time I saw Hedwig (a total of four times.) I saw it when Darren opened, once midrun, and the last two shows. His growth in the characters was beyond moving. He knew how to handle the audience and stage. I saw Darren's second performance as Finch in H2$, and he was so good.

Darren Criss in Hedwig and it was a great experience. Ended up loving the story of the show and I gained many friends and had many wondering experiences seeing the show multiple times.

I saw Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick in The Odd Couple, which was hilarious and my first straight play on Broadway. It was a show we saw by getting lottery tickets day-of. NPH in Hedwig was a show I ordered tickets for as soon as it was announced, as I love Hedwig and my fiancée is a huge NPH fan.

Darren Criss- Hedwig- I am a huge fan of his work and I have loved most everything he does (not a fan of Starkid or A Very Potter Musical) So when he announced he would be the next Hedwig, I needed to go. I was completely blown away by being in front of him, watching him live and seeing how he interacts with the audience and builds off of the feedback he gets from doing a live performance. I saw several of his shows and the audience enthusiasm was different at each. Plus, hearing him sing live and watching the physical portrayal and emotion of Hedwig’s journey was like getting punched in the gut. I think that would not be conveyed as much through a screen.

Neil Patrick Harris- Hedwig- I was pleasantly surprised to see he was playing Hedwig. I spent most of the play picturing him as Barney.

Jonathan Groff- A New Brain- I loved Jonathan in Glee and in Looking and was anxious to see him sing live. I wasn’t disappointed. He has an amazing voice. I was really far up in the balcony, so I didn’t have the same sort of emotional experience as with Darren’s Hedwig though.

Finding Neverland was my birthday present this year and we saw Kelsey Grammar and Michael Morrison. It was a beautiful story, well directed, well acted, beautifully designed, written and produced.

It was an incredible, amazing, and a once in a life time opportunity.

Hugh Jackman, The River.
Hugh Jackman was sort of a household name with me growing up. Getting a chance to see him in the theatre was both a learning experience, and one of personal joy I couldn’t simply pass up.

It was such an amazing thing getting to see the physicality and nuances chosen for the characters in the show. I couldn’t have been happier being anywhere else at that moment in time.

Meh, I often don’t care who’s cast. I care about the performance. If they’re true to the role and the production I like them, if not I get irritated. This is one of those moment when NPH comes
to mind. He’s such a big star on stage and on film that it’s hard for him to put himself aside to just play a character. I don’t know if that’s just how he’s cast and how the directors want him to portray a role, or if he really can’t separate himself. But you always know it’s NPH playing a character instead of a character who happens to be played by NPH.

I thought Daniel Radcliffe was phenomenal in How to Succeed. Far outweighed my expectations. Saw him again in Cripple of Inishmaan and loved him even more.

Little Shop of Horrors
Darren Criss, Hedwig. It was a really magical experience because the show is incredible and I think Darren managed to convey the story and character as well as the catharsis of the end. It’s the end of the show that really makes it, for me.

Corbin Bleu — In The Heights. Initially, I was not at all excited to see this actor perform. I felt he would ruin a production I had been eagerly looking forward to. However, after the show began I saw he did possess actual talent both vocally as well as with the complex dance numbers of the show and it gave me a new respect for him as a performer.

Newsies pippin Beauty and the beast les mis: enjoyed them all except when you are annoyed by the audience than the inability to see the performance

I was delighted the entire time watching NPH in Hedwig. I was just so impressed with his abilities, and I had amazing seats.

Spring Awakening — Enthralled by the storyline and music.

Michael Cera used a lot of acting moments that he had previously used in films, so I felt like I was watching an old bag of tricks... that didn’t even make sense for the character he was playing.

Seeing David Hyde Pierce was very exciting. I’ve always been a huge fan of Frasier!

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**Table 15: Audience Survey Responses from Question 15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Describe the film/television star’s (stars’) performance. Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s).</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong> 50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sarah Jessica Parker in Once Upon a Mattress. She was playful and engaging, even from the great distance of the cheap seats on Broadway. Her voice is powerful and I love dancing, so this was fun to watch.

I was pleasantly surprised.

Daniel Radcliffe “The Cripple of Inishmaan” He did a good job, but I really wasn’t a fan of the play itself and found it kind of boring. I think he did well with what he was given.

As said previously I thought Christy Brinkley was well suited for the role. It seemed well within her abilities.

This is a poorly worded question given the size of this box.

Great! I don’t know what else to say. I expected brilliant acting, and to see a familiar, beloved face up close. This happened.

Tim Curry in Spamalot
David Hyde Pierce in Spamalot
David Hyde Pierce in Curtains
Patrick Stewart in Waiting for Godot
Ian McKellen in Waiting for Godot
Arthur Darvill in Once

She played the old woman psychic and it was obvious why she won a tiny for the part.

He was funny, but also endearing. He played the character as if he had attention deficit issues before Adderall was invented. Classic.

In all of the celebrities I’ve seen onstage, the acting has never been an issue. I mean, that’s what they do in their normal lives/careers, so we should that be any different for a live theatrical situation. It’s usually the singing or dancing that is a bit off. For example, Radcliffe’s singing voice was fine, while his dancing was decent but clearly untrained. Megan Mullally had a surprisingly trained and wonderful singing voice that fit perfectly with her character. Fantasia had a great voice, as always, but her stage presence was awful; she looked annoyed to be on that stage at times.

The performance was quite good, but he was sort of overshadowed by Lena Hall, who stole the show. NPH in Hedwig

Catherine Zeta-Jones -- it seemed underplayed, maybe not as emotion as I would have liked. Hard to like her character, even though she was supposed to be likable.

Angela Lansbury -- in Blithe Spirit she was funny, silly, believable, agile, and kept your attention the whole time. And she was onstage for most of the show.

John Larroquette -- he was the protagonist, playing a good guy surrounded by bad characters, so you rooted for him. He was believable and sympathetic.

David Hyde-Pierce: his enthusiasm in the role was infectious. It’s a very fast-paced play, and relies on his performance to keep it moving, which it did. He was likable and fun.

Very emotional - the character was in a lot of mental distress and Orlando portrayed it excellently.

It was good. I’m not sure how to describe a performance beyond feel-good emotions.

He was perfect.

Both Jenna Leigh Green and Rue McLanahan had powerful performances during their time in Wicked

The most memorable part of the Radcliffe/Larroquette performance in “How to Succeed” was their duetting. Their height difference made their interactions fabulously campy and fun and they looked like they were having the time of their life on stage.

With Sandra Oh in Satellites, I remember thinking she was brilliant, but for the life of me I cannot remember much about the play other than the general outline of the plot.

Again, How to Succeed. Dan really understood who Finch was, and I thought played the charm and the wit of the character wonderfully. His singing voice is nice, but lacked the polish of the other performers, which made it stand out a bit. He’s also a decent dancer, but at times I felt like I could feel him counting. In many ways it was like watching a younger performer, who hasn’t honed those skills yet. Which is probably the case for Dan.

John Larroquette was really well cast. He did a great job of keeping J.B. on balance between his gruff and sensitive sides. He doesn’t have a mind-blowing singing voice, but that’s appropriate for the character.

Nathan Lane: Addam’s Family Musical; He was expressive and funny.
Daniel Radcliffe - *How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying*
As stated earlier, he did a great job of doing “musically” styled acting. His stamina was great in keeping up with the other performers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Didn’t I already do this?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Broderick, nice work if you can get it. He did a very good job</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan played Leonard, the really sarcastic, unforgiving and strict teacher in the play <em>Seminar</em>. He’s rude, he’s crude, he bangs the freshmen, all that good stuff. However, during the progression of the play, you realize he’s kind of like this due to insecurities and self-doubt, and feeling like a total failure. He was funny, yet heartbreaking.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The performance was perfect.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NPH = utterly amazing; inhabited the role like a second skin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Williams = tentative, but successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zach Braff, Zach Levi = pretty on par for what I’ve seen them do on the screen (funny/charming/etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toni Braxton = a bit stiff, acting-wise but voice was gorgeous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billie Joe Armstrong = acting, not that great; intensity was off the charts, though</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orlando Bloom as Romeo in “Romeo and Juliet”. Very convincing performance, perfect diction, perfect control over body language, the complete control over the character and the audience. A lot of feelings, passion. Amazing way to deliver subtlety when it’s needed. Loved it.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All wonderful!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too many, sorry!</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I’m going to compare them.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matts performance was great, accomplished. Like most musical theatre stars. The musical was a more mainstream show.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren’s performance was breathtaking. But that might be affected by the actual show itself. The character is feisty and in your face. But actually I think I was blown away by the transformation of this chap, who I’ve met in real life, and has a small stature but on stage he seemed to be six foot tall. Following watching the show I was even more sure of Darren's talent as an artist. I had been a bit worried that he may not be successful. He proved his worth!</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hawke--Hotspur-- young, angsty, cliché Hawke-Ian curled lip sneer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Klein, Falstaff, broad, attention seeking, milking</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vanessa Hudgens was great, it was a great role for her</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brooke Shields in Addams Fam was great that role was made for her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullets Guy was not very good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brook Shields did a nice job with the part of Morticia in The Addams Family. We were well entertained. It was a fun evening for us.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emile Clark played a lovely Holly in Breakfast at Tiffany's. her version of “Moon River” was beautiful. It took me off guard by how well she captivated the audience with that one song.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Darren Criss was Incredible he was one of the Hedwig performers that has the Rock and Roll going for him and just added to Hedwig experience. Michael C. Hall made me eat my words because I didn’t think he could pull it off but he certainly proved me wrong.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very moving. He definitely made me cry multiple times throughout the show. (as Hedwig)</td>
</tr>
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</table>

| Darren Criss was amazing. I forgot he was Darren for the show. He was completely in that character and his vocals were made for those rock songs. Carley in Cinderella surprised me. |
She’s a gifted singer even though she doesn’t have much vibrato her sweet small voice as perfect for the role of Cinderella. I expected Fran to be hilarious but she was actually mediocre. The step sisters were waaaaaaay funnier.

NPH was outstanding as the first Hedwig on Broadway, his interaction with the audience was great and his performance never wavered.

In many instances he simply walked through the lines on his way to the shows close the following night. In a few He was hilariously on point and in others he was on par and in sync with his fellow actors.

Darren Criss - Hedwig- From the moment he comes on stage, he drew me into the world of Hedwig. Not only was his character Blaine from Glee not present but Darren himself had completely transformed all his speaking and mannerisms to that of Hedwig. No traces of Darren were to be seen. He was completely committed to being Hedwig. Even when he rips the wig off at the end and strips down to transform into Tommy Gnosis, and he looks more like Darren, it was clear that he was Tommy, not Darren and not Hedwig.

Neil Patrick Harris- Hedwig- Even though I kept picturing him as Barney, he was also not Barney, he was Hedwig. I had no idea what the show was about before going to see it and I was a fan of Hedwig after seeing him perform. He was not as convincing with his transition to Tommy Gnosis as Darren was, in fact, it wasn’t until I saw Darren perform that I got he was actually Tommy at one point in the show.

Jonathan Groff- A New Brain- It’s a musical about a guy with brain tumors, and yet I laughed and enjoyed it. Jonathan was engaging and drew me right into his world.

Kelsey Grammar played a supporting role, yet was a ‘draw’ for the commercial audience. He was used well as the producer, impresario for Matthew Morrison’s character, JM Barrie. Mr. Grammar can sing and dance, but acts much better and did that more.

He was amazing. You could not even tell who he was while he was in character.

Hugh Jackman, The River.

It was fluid and honest, almost tragically so. There would be small parts where organism, that was his performance felt mechanical (This was a character trait, not what I’m judging the actor’s performance by).

Mechanical because we later find that Hugh Jackman’s character routinely brings women to this cabin and tries to imitate a love long lost to the years. Which feels autonomous and gives an uneasy feeling to see the lengths he goes to try and set up his first genuine encounter with love. To the point where he brings up old conversations verbatim, cooking the same dinner, and even having women put on the same red dress as his long lost love once wore.

It gave me, as an audience member, and uneasy feeling when witnessing this unfold in front of me; but also a sense of tragedy and pity for Hugh Jackman’s Character. I felt as though I were in the room watching these events unfold and realized that this is how theatre is supposed to feel.

Going back to Hugh Jackman in Oklahoma (is one was at a London theatre, don’t remember exactly which performance it was. My grandma had a copy on vhs from like a decade or more ago). He was good. The accent was a little weird, but so was everyone’s. It was a bunch of Brits playing Midwestern Americans. To be honest I was paying closer attention to the technical work most of the time.

I believe I spoke to all of this for reasons I found negative and liked the remaining the same.

Darren Criss, Hedwig. It was a great experience because Darren really disappeared into the role. Everything about him changed: physicality, vocal quality, expression, etc. He also altered
his voice and movement for the other characters he voices throughout the show. It was a transformative role.

Corbin Bleu - In The Heights. I felt that an excellent production was put on, and while Corbin Bleu was no Broadway vet, he held his own with a talented cast, and I would not have suspected he came from Disney Channel.

Sasha Allen was good as leading player in pippin. She could sing act and dance. Triple threat.

I am skipping this item because I feel like I have already described their performances.

Bland, flat, undramatic, and disconnected from his scene partners.

David Hyde Pierce played Sir Robin the Brave. He had very similar characteristics to Niles from Frasier.

Table 16: Audience Survey Responses from Question 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How was your experience of the play/musical enhanced or diminished by the presence of the film/television star(s) in the cast? Please identify the actor(s) and the play(s) or musical(s).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participants:</strong> 53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sarah Jessica Parker in Once Upon a Mattress. I think I enjoyed the show more because I like her and was interested in her acting/performance at least as much as I was in the show. It adds another dimension to the viewing experience.

No, Adrian Zmed was a good actor.

Daniel Radcliffe “The Cripple of Inishmaan” It didn’t diminish. He held his own in the play and I think was better than a few of the other actors.

It really didn’t seem to stick out to me.

I hate when the audience applauds for an actor walking on the stage before they’ve even said a line. This is worse for famous TV/Film people.

The only time where I think the celebrities made a HUGE difference was in Spamalot. Although it did rather feel that Tim Curry was wasted as Arthur, David Hyde Pierce plays a mean Eric Idle (with all the bit parts that implies)! I’m sure an unfamiliar actor could have also done a great job, but it somehow seemed appropriate to that show’s opening to have celebs.

not at all

It didn’t effect it. It would’ve been just as good if it were a no name.

The experience is always enhanced simply in that the audience is full of people waiting to see what the celebrity will be like onstage. Whether it’s typical theatergoers who are hoping to be surprised or hoping the celebrity doesn’t ruin the show, or whether it’s nontraditional theatergoers who are there just to see the celebrity live in person. Either way, there is a heightened energy in the audience.

NPH was not as good as when I saw it later with JCM.

In A Little Night Music I was expecting a more moving/exciting performance from Catherine Zeta-Jones, who went on to win the Tony for her performance.
I would probably have paid more attention to the actual story if he wasn’t in it.

No, I think the play would have been great played by anyone but I’m not sure if it would have garnered as much attention without Samuel L Jackson playing (The Mountaintop)

It made it a million times better.

It wasn’t

I don’t think either “How to Succeed” or “Anything Goes” was enhanced because of celebrity presence. I have seen many musicals where non-famous actors were dazzling. I suspect both of these performances would have been excellent regardless of who got top billing.

None of my experiences were diminished.

Beyond some occasional shrieking fans that distracted me, I don’t think my experience was really altered. I might have been more forgiving for any faults in Dan’s performance because he’s known for film work. I think maybe at times I made an excuse or two, thinking “Oh, well that’s okay because he hasn’t trained as much.”

Nathan Lane: Addam’s Family Musical; My experience was enhanced. Without him in the musical I think I would not have enjoyed it much at all.

It wasn’t either, I was simply impressed with how well he did!

Daniel Radcliffe - How to Succeed in Business without Really Trying

It was enhanced by loving Taye Digg’s work in RENT, and being excited to actually see him perform in person (for an awesome $49 price point too).

Matthew Broderick, nice work if you can get it. I don’t think it changed the experience but it made it more exciting to tell other people about since they were familiar with him (and not familiar with the musical). As an aside, next time you make a survey make it so you don’t have to keep entering the actor and play! Its tedious.

For almost all, they held their own and were genuinely talented. Several of them were solidly musical theater people in addition to being in film/TV so it wasn’t stunt casting. Scary Spice was terrible & her voice cracked the whole time and they had to transpose songs down for her because she didn’t have the range and it was a total crapshoot on whether she could hit notes and she spoke with a thick British accent when her character was supposed to be a Latina from NYC. That’s pretty bad in my book. Film/TV people are just fine as long as they are genuinely talented - the peripherals outside of their talent level/skill don’t change the experience for me.

I honestly went to see the performance because of Alan Rickman and Alan Rickman only, to be honest. I wouldn’t have even heard of the play if I didn’t learn he was in it.

Added element of anticipation and excitement to the experience

I feel that Michael C. Hall added a lot to the Character of Hedwig. His voice was not perfect and I feel that it portrayed the character in a more broken manner

The cast of “Steel Magnolias” consistently broke the 4th wall which was very disturbing and diminished their playing abilities for me

The stage door experience was the only thing that really changed. For me, the Broadway stars tend to be the real draw, and if there happens to be a celebrity in the show then I just worry about quality. But, on the whole, aside from a being a bit stiff or tentative, the celebrities tend to get the job done.

Orlando Bloom as Romeo in “Romeo and Juliet”. Enhanced. A lot.

I was excited as a fan but came out with a new respect for Darren as a performer

the main 3 I’ve mentioned certainly made the play a greater experience. I have seen a couple well-known Hollywood types try theatre and fail dismally.
increased immensely in both cases.

Got a kick out of seeing them.

Diminished because of the lack of vocal and dance talent
Enhanced bc they were energetic and performing to full houses bc their names were selling the show

Not applicable to my experience.

I think her performance was not hindered by her celebrity status in particular. It was just a weak production

Michael C. Hall was shocking he was amazing and I didn’t think he could pull off a musical but he did. I was so used to seeing him in Drama or thrillers that this was great.

It was definitely enhanced because Darren’s my favorite actor, in both H2S and Hedwig.

It was enhanced greatly with Darren cause it was a man I respected and idolized and love. It made all the performances that much more special

was not ultimately effected as the star blended in with the cast and the show perfectly.

Neil Patrick Harris- Hedwig- I was excited to see that he was playing Hedwig, so my experience was enhanced.
Darren Criss- Hedwig- Definitely enhanced.
Jonathan Groff- A New Brain- Enhanced.

Both Mr. Grammar and Mr. Morrison were perfectly cast for these roles. Their talents enhanced the roles, no square pegs forced into round holes for the sake of publicity. This was a pleasant, enhancing experience; none of that “oh my goodness, how embarrassing for him” thing that can happen when a ‘star’ tries to go from tv to stage. This worked for both.

It made it better in my opinion.

Enhanced before knowing I was going to see idol of mine. During the production it felt neutral. I’d almost forgotten I was watching Hugh Jackman on stage which was refreshing, immersive, and new. Loved it.

No he fit in with the ensemble pretty well. This must have been an older production so Jackman was probably in his early 30s(?). And he’s well suited for the stage and knows how to be part of the ensemble. The role is bigger than him.

spoke to specific incidents already.

Darren Criss, Hedwig. I’m a fan of the show already and have seen the previous Hedwigs before (video), but it was great seeing Darren in the role because he really nailed it. And as a fan of his for a long time, it was wonderful to see him do so well.

Corbin Bleu-In The Heights. I felt that the audience contained a younger (perhaps more teenage crowd) then I was expecting, possibly due to the stars presence; however viewing of the musical was not disrupted. This was not really evident until outside at the stagedoor.

Didn’t care

NPH - enhanced!

Spring awakening - they weren’t stars yet when I saw it....it helped launch them to stardom

It was neither enhanced nor diminished, the actor just wasn’t that good.

It was greatly enhanced.