***“I wanna be in the room where it happens.”***

***Fandom and Celebrity in popular contemporary theatre productions* Hamilton: An American Musical *and* Harry Potter and the Cursed Child.**

With thriving internet fandom, media texts live many lives beyond their initial release as books, films, tv shows, comics, etc. Access to these texts is usually fairly universal, especially with the ease of downloading content legally/illegally online. Theatre however poses a more difficult question of access. To be “in the room where it happened” and see the immensely popular Lin-Manuel Miranda musical *Hamilton* required proximity to New York City’s Broadway, the funds for a ticket and some serious patience in the year-long waiting list. Potterheads keen to see *The Cursed Child* had to be able to get to London’s West End, if they had managed to get an expensive ticket in the extremely long online queue. Complications in access to a text bring about issues of class, but also give fans a wider opportunity for interpretation when the access they do have is to a companion text like an original cast soundtrack or a bound edition of the script.

Theatre is an ephemeral experience. A performance can be argued to be a reproduction of an original text, but in the fandom of theatre texts like *Hamilton* and *The Cursed Child* a great amount of value is placed on ‘the original.’ Celebrity and fandom intersect here as original Broadway or West End casts are seen as not just the original but the *best.* Theatre is a visual experience: we talk about going to ‘see’ a play. However much of a fan’s access to popular theatre texts will be through a companion text. When taking out the visual and being left with the aural or written form, fans fill in the gaps with their creativity. The opportunity to be “in the room” becomes a kind of fan pilgrimage. This excitement is made all the more electric if the fan gets to experience the performance by the original and ‘best’ cast. I will examine the complexities of theatre fandom looking at access to texts, the celebrity of original casts, and fan pilgrimages.

***Keywords:***

*Celebrity*

*Access*

*Pilgrimage*

***Bio:***

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