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DIPLOMARBEIT / DIPLOMA THESIS

Titel der Diplomarbeit / Title of the Diploma Thesis

“What’s in a (celebrity’s) name: A comparative analysis
of celebrity cultures’ influence on the growing medium of
‘live theatre broadcast’”

verfasst von / submitted by

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angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Magistra der Philosophie (Mag. phil.)

Wien, 2020 / Vienna, 2020

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
Degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet

A 190 344 333

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
Degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Lehramtsstudium UF Englisch UF Deutsch

Betreut von / Supervisor:

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Acknowledgments

First, I would like to thank my mum and my friends for supporting me through the writing process of this thesis. Both for listening to my mad rambles whenever I found something exciting and to my late-night rants when my research seemed to have come to a halt. But mostly for enduring my absent-mindedness towards the end of the writing process.

Secondly, I would also like to express my sincerest gratitude to my supervisor Uni. Prof. Dr. Sarah Heinz, for her help, understanding and infinite pool of knowledge.

My love goes out to SASS (Students Acting Shakespeare Society) and The Six Sentinels for being the best distraction and reason to procrastinate any director could ever wish for. Your support means everything to me.

And lastly, I have to give credit to Max and Nina. For enduring all my mood swings, nudging me on and making sure I did not starve while writing this thesis. I would not be here without the two of you.

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List of abbreviations

LTB	Live Theatre Broadcast
RSC	Royal Shakespeare Company
NTLive	National Theatre Live

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1. Introduction

Sparkling wine and theatre programs – certainly unusual accessories for an evening at the cinema. Unless the program shown is one of the many Live Theatre Broadcasts (LTB) that have started to spread from England to countless cinemas all over the globe. Starting in 2009, the National Theatre in London began live broadcasting selected plays to cinemas, where audiences could watch the plays at the same time as they were performed live on stage from the comfy seats of their local cinema. Since then, other theatre companies have joined the new media-hybrid-wave and established their own brand of live broadcasts, most notably the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC).

The following thesis gives an introduction into this new form of entertainment medium and asks the question where it fits on the continuum between theatre and cinema. Furthermore, it will investigate to what extent the use of celebrity actors and actresses has influenced the growth of Live Theatre Broadcasts so far and how essential they are for their ongoing success. The findings will then be analyzed in three different broadcasts in order to see how the celebrity actors and actresses are utilized in the individual performances and whether or not their appearance influences the performances.

The first chapter will focus on the medium of the Live Theatre Broadcast itself and begin by delving into the history of recorded theatre performances, which form the basis of the current version of the broadcasts. Following this, the chapter will outline the circumstances that lead to the development of the LTBs and how the medium has grown since its start in 2009. In order to understand the medium better, subchapter 2.2 will discuss the different names LTBs had over the years and why this thesis has chosen to call them Live Theatre Broadcasts.

Next, one of the biggest unique selling points of LTBs, namely its Liveness, will be further analyzed by defining what 'being live' means for a piece of art, where the notion of Liveness originates from and most importantly, if LTBs can be considered live or not. This leads over to the next subchapter, which focuses on the main elements that LTBs consist of, such as the introduction of the play via a pre-filmed video, the event-

factor surrounding LTBs and the inclusion of the physically live audience and the physically removed audience in the cinemas.

The second chapter introduces the theoretical concept of Celebrity Culture and asks the question what constitutes a celebrity. A short historic overview based on Leo Braudy (1986) showcases how the idea of a celebrity (actor) developed over time and how it grew into our current image of a 'Star'. After defining what a celebrity is and where they came from, subchapter 3.3 will consider their functions and why celebrity actors and actresses have grown so important to our modern society. The chapter will also explain Grant McCracken's model of meaning transfer, which is usually used to analyze how successful the employment of a specific celebrity is for a brand.

In the main chapter of the thesis, the previously introduced concepts of LTBs and celebrity culture will be combined, in order to compare three different broadcasts, *Coriolanus* (2014), *Hamlet* (2015) and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (2015), in terms of their use of the celebrity actor and their place on the continuum of theatre to cinema. This includes an analysis of changes being made to the original text of the staged plays and the reception of the actors' performances in newspaper reviews. The final chapter will also discuss the different strategies in making LTBs available on DVD or for streaming after their theatre and cinema runs are over, in order to see how the different companies interpret the 'live' element of their broadcasts.

Ultimately, the thesis is interested in whether or not the trend of using a celebrity actor or actress as the headliner for LTBs will continue or if the medium can attract customers without casting a star in the lead role. The thesis also investigates in how far a celebrity's image influences the particular staging and whether or not the associations a celebrity actor carries with them are projected onto their character. And if so, if it is done successfully by adding new layers to the character or if it ultimately hinders the production, because it cannot be seen as a stand-alone piece of art and is instead weighed down by the fame of its main actor.

2. Live Theatre Broadcast

2.1. Origins of the Medium in Filmed Productions

When approaching the relatively new phenomenon of Live Theatre Broadcasts, a closer inspection of its origins can be helpful to understand the core identity of the medium, since the first broadcast from the National Theatre in 2009, *Phedre*, was far from the first time that a theatre production had been recorded. Especially Shakespeare's plays can look back on a long line of adaptations into television programs or feature-length movies which influenced the later development of LTBs. This first subchapter will thus investigate the history of Shakespeare adaptations for the small and big screen, in order to establish the differences between these recordings and the current Live Theatre Broadcasts.

The first time parts of a Shakespeare play were recorded on film dates back to 1899, when four scenes of *King John*, featuring Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree, were shot at Her Majesty's Theatre in London (Welsh 157). Three of the scenes were lost but one of them, the king's death scene, has survived the times and can still be accessed today. The recordings were made for promotional reasons and were shown in variety theatres to promote the running stage production. Though the recording is in black and white and does not feature sound, the surviving scene already shares one of the main characteristics of LTBs, the filming of a (part of the) play on the stage of its original performance. However, Guneratne (36) speculates that the filmed scene was not identical to the stage performance. Instead, he suggests that the scene was most likely altered by moving the actors closer together and moving the background forward in order to fit all performers into the frame and have them in focus. Which means that even from the first filmed recording of a Shakespeare play onwards, the question of adaptation and editing is being raised, as the surviving scene is not an exact replica of the stage performance that the audience at Her Majesty's Theatre in London would have seen, but a hybrid between film and stage, created to fit the needs of the spatially and temporarily removed audience of the film clip.

Following this first recording are a number of skits and sketches based on Shakespeare plays which summarize the plays in a few short scenes. From there on, short films started to be made around 1910, and by 1936, film and theatre makers like

Laurence Olivier shot full productions of the plays (Welsh 158). *As You Like It* (1936) is a prime example of these early black and white films, which were filmed in studios instead of on stages and featured editing, such as close-ups, according to the conventions of film making. The first time a trend of filming on theatre stages was able to establish itself was in the 1960ies, when “live or recorded continuous performance[s] in the studio, and outside broadcast[s] from a theatre” were produced by the BBC (Greenhalgh 22). Greenhalgh specifically mentions the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre as the two main sources of stage productions for these recordings. Performances from both companies as well as from other smaller theatres were adapted and filmed in a studio, outside or in the actual theatre space, in which case the original stage was highlighted “by opening with panning shots of the auditorium and audience, with laughter and applause recorded as effectively as the actor’s dialogue. In other broadcasts the theatre setting is downplayed and only the action on stage is shown, or the theatre serves solely as a replacement studio set” (Greenhalgh 22).

One particular production that should be mentioned at this point is the Royal Shakespeare Company’s history play cycle *The Wars of the Roses*, which was recorded and broadcast from 1964 to 1965 by the BBC (Wyver 23). The cycle included *Henry VI Part I, II and III* as well as *Richard III* and ran on stage in Stratford-upon-Avon and London. Wyver (26) describes in great detail how the RSC stage was altered in order to fit all the recording equipment into the auditorium, by removing seats and adding platforms for the cameras. Most importantly however, the hybridity of theatre and cinema shows itself in that:

[a]lmost all of the main characters speak direct-to-camera for their soliloquies and asides, achieving an intimacy with their confidences which establishes a disarming effect of complicity irrespective of the wickedness that is being laid out. Theatrical address here has been transmuted into the televisual, as the characters employ a mode of speaking that the medium invariably restricts to its own newsreaders and other presenters. At other moments, stage and screen fuse in a performative space that facilitates lengthy speeches to unfold within a single shot that develops by camera movement and reframing but which eschews cuts to alternative angles. (Wyver 30)

This direct address of performer to audience is a well-established practice in the theatre, and by including it in the filmed broadcast, the audience watching experiences this theatre-connotated act in the space of their own home via their television. Creative

decisions like this, alongside the aforementioned editing techniques, help to merge the two creative spheres, theatre and television, into a new hybrid medium that carries both the prestige and direct address of a theatre production, as well as the advanced view and accessibility of television.

According to Greenhalgh (29), shooting Shakespeare plays in actual theatres did not develop into a trend until the early 2000s. Before this, most archived theatre productions were shot in studios with multiple cameras and without a live audience present. In 2006, however, 'Met Live in HD' premiered from the New York Metropolitan Opera, which had previously already transmitted its shows globally via the Toll Brothers–Metropolitan Opera International Radio Network (Met Opera: FAQ). According to the Met's website, the first season consisted of six performances and was transmitted to more than a hundred cinemas worldwide. These broadcasts already showcased most of the LTBs essential elements, such as being shot in front of a live audience in the opera house, broadcasting live to cinemas, including an introduction video for the spatially removed audience and employing filmic editing techniques, such as close-ups or moving shots. The program's success in widening their reach and distributing their program to a much larger audience inspired the National Theatre in London, which launched its own brand of LTBs in 2009 with their first broadcast of *Phédre*.

Since 2009, NTLive has established itself as a highly successful brand, broadcasting plays every two to three months, either from their own Olivier Theatre or cooperating with smaller theatres and airing their productions under the mantle of the NTLive brand. An example for this would be the 2014 version of *Coriolanus*, which was staged and filmed at the Donmar Warehouse but marketed alongside the other NTLive productions. Even though the broadcast productions contain a wide variety of plays, ranging from Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard* to Simon Stephen's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Shakespeare can be identified as the frontrunner in terms of sheer numbers of broadcasts by one playwright. Most seasons of NTLive have contained at least one Shakespeare play, and some of them even featured two or three Shakespeare performances.

The hunger for Shakespeare can not only be seen in the National Theatre's broadcasting list, but also in the fact that both the Globe Theatre in London and the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon have established their own broadcasting brands. Under the leadership of new creative director Gregory Doran, the RSC followed in the National Theatre's footsteps and premiered their first LTB in 2014. Since then, they have broadcast every play from the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and even some select plays from their smaller Swan Theatre to cinemas around the globe. However, in contrast to NTLive, they also make their broadcasts available as a DVD after the initial screening. This enables even more people to see the RSC's productions but could potentially impact the 'event character' of the LTB's screening, which will be discussed later on.

The Globe Theatre should be mentioned at this point as well, especially since they precluded the National Theatre's wave of broadcasts by airing their own live broadcast from the Globe Theatre in 2003. However, the Globe's broadcasts in 2003 and 2004 were not transmitted to the cinema, but instead aired on BBC4, allowing the audience to watch the broadcast from the comfort of their own home. Another Globe performance, *Othello*, was recorded live in 2007 and made available on DVD. Since 2010, the Globe has established multiple ways of watching their performances while not being in the actual theatre. Select performances are broadcast to cinemas and later released as DVDs, with most of these performances also being available as digital downloads via the Globe's website. The Globe's recordings also differ from the NTLive or RSC broadcasts by being filmed over the duration of two performances and later being edited together. This allows the editing team to choose the best shots, instead of having to use the material recorded only during one single performance. However, this also means that the claim of 'liveness' needs to be examined closer when discussing the different meanings and interpretations of the term.

With the National Theatre, Metropolitan Opera, Globe Theatre and RSC paving the way for this new kind of medium, many smaller theatres and companies have also partaken in the new trend. Among the most famous ones are The Festival Theatre Stratford in Ontario, which broadcasts plays to cinemas, television and make them available as a download and DVD. The Kenneth Sokolova and Cinpoes Theatre Company also began broadcasting a select few plays in 2015, including star-studded

performances of *The Winter's Tale* and *Romeo and Juliet*, though they decided not to make their recordings available at any other place than the live broadcast in the cinemas.

Not mentioned in this broad sweep through the history of LTBs have been movies using the original text of plays as the basis of their screenplay, such as *Macbeth* (2015) with Michael Fassbender or *Hamlet* (1990) with Mel Gibson. However, they will become relevant in later chapters, both when discussing 'liveness' and celebrity actors in Shakespeare plays. Also, relevant later on will be hybrid forms of liveness, such as the RSC's *Hamlet* (2010) with David Tennant, which originated as a live theatre production and later transitioned into a studio-based recording, much in the fashion of the 1960ies BBC broadcasts.

From these initial examples, a few differentiating characteristics of LTBs can already be identified, which shall be closer investigated in the following subchapters, such as editing of the filmed material, the liveness of the recording, the form of theatrical release and the repeatability of the screening. These factors should provide a framework for where a specific adaptation falls and thus how it communicates with the audience. However, before investigating these aspects and adaptations individually, the next subchapter will analyze the medium as a whole by investigating the different names Live Theatre Broadcasts have received throughout the years and how each of them focuses on a different aspect of the medium.

2.2. The Problem of Naming the Medium and the Issue of Liveness

Especially in the late 2000s and early 2010s, when LTBs started to gain popularity, many of the newspaper articles and scholarly journals could not agree on a universally used name for the new medium. The following subchapter argues that the lack of an unanimously employed term stems from a fundamental disagreement on what should be the defining feature of the new medium. Thus, I will analyze a few of the used names for Live Theatre Broadcasts and give an explanation for why this thesis has chosen to follow the term 'LTB'.

Generally, LTBs can be considered as part of the growing market of 'event cinema'. According to Wyver (290) this category includes everything broadcast to cinemas that is not a traditional film. Event cinema thus includes broadcasts of operas, theatre, musicals, concerts, sport events or re-screenings of old films for special occasions, such as Halloween, Christmas or anniversaries. While LTBs definitely do belong in this category and live off of its 'eventness', the term is much too broad to clearly define the medium and while many cinemas use the umbrella term on their websites, the unspecificity of 'event cinema' makes it ill-fitting for this thesis.

On the other end of the spectrum are the terms 'NTLive' and 'Live from Stratford-upon-Avon'. Both of these terms are brand names for broadcasts of specific companies, namely the National Theatre in London and the Royal Shakespeare Company, similar to the Metropolitan Opera's 'Met Live in HD' and the Globe Theatre's 'Globe on Demand'. When using brand names, the scholarly articles in question then refer to only broadcasts of one of these companies and not to the medium as a whole. While this thesis does make use of these brand names, they will only be truly relevant when discussing the difference in marketing strategies between the celebrity-filled cast of NTLive productions versus the comparatively lesser known actors and actresses performing at Stratford-upon-Avon.

In his 2017 article on Liveness, Geoffrey Way makes use of the aforementioned brand name NTLive when comparing it to smaller broadcasts. However, other than the brand name, he only addresses broadcasts as 'broadcasts'. Only twice does he add 'live' to the medium's name and its origin in theatre or its place of performance in the cinema is not added. Similarly, Sullivan (2017) talks of "The Rise of the Live Broadcast" in the title of her article, but only mentions 'broadcasts' throughout the text. Aebischer, Greenhalgh and Osborne (2018) on the other hand titled their book "Shakespeare & the 'Live' Theatre Broadcast Experience", which indicates a closer link to the theatre as the place of recording of LTBs than the cinema as its location of being played. 'Cinemacast', on the other hand, was used by Friedman in 2016 when analyzing the broadcast of *Coriolanus* in 2014, linking the broadcast closer to the cinema than to the theatre.

After collecting these examples of different terms, it can be seen that the most common elements in the name of the medium are 'broadcast', 'live' and either 'theatre' or 'cinema'. Since 'theatre broadcast' is overall used more frequently than 'cinema broadcast', the thesis has adopted the former term. However, the most intriguing part of the term 'Live Theatre Broadcast' is the claim of the medium's liveness, which is one of its most important selling points, even though it is heavily debated whether or not the broadcasts actually deserve to claim their production's liveness, considering the heavy editing the raw recordings are subjected to. However, before being able to answer this question, the concept of liveness needs to be investigated closer.

2.2.1. The Concept of 'Liveness'

Liveness may seem like an obvious concept today, but when situated in media history, the idea of liveness as a distinction marker is relatively new, due to the fact that recorded media has been invented rather recently. Before the invention of music recordings, all media was performed live by default, since recording was not an option yet. Only once technology for recordings became available, the concept of liveness began to develop as the counterpart to re-playable forms of media. Auslander (Digital Liveness: 102) mentions that radio was the first medium to blur the lines between the two opposites, due to the commentary being live, but the played music being mostly pre-recorded. In addition, the audience was not able to see the source of the music, meaning that they were not able to clearly distinguish whether the medium was live or not. This was followed by the introduction of television, a medium that initially showed exclusively live broadcasts before adding pre-recorded TV-Shows and films to their program. However, at this point, there are already three kinds of liveness entangled with each other.

The first kind of liveness is what Phelan (146) refers to as "presence". According to her:

Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance. To the degree that performance attempts to enter the economy of reproduction it betrays and lessens the promise of its own ontology.

She continues to explain that even if a performance is repeated, it is not the same performance, but a different one, containing slight alterations which make it unique in comparison to the previous performances of the same staging (148). Seeing as a recorded version of the play, even if it is broadcast as temporarily close to the time of the performance, is still a recorded medium, the only form of theatre that falls under Phelan's definition is a performance where both performers and the audience are in physical close proximity to one another and the audience experiences the presentation without the interference of a technical interface between them. This liveness, which for the sake of distinction of the other types and a lack of an academically agreed upon term will here be called "physical liveness", is also applicable to other forms of entertainment, such as sports events. These also provide an option for physical liveness by watching a sports match or an event where it actually takes place, for example in a stadium, or by watching it 'live' on the TV at home.

The next kind of liveness are events where "performers and audience are temporally co-present, in that the audience witnesses the performance as it happens, but they are not spatially co-present" (Auslander: Digital Liveness 5). Thus, this kind of liveness encompasses sport events broadcast on television and the radio, as well as the Live Theatre Broadcasts, due to them being recorded and broadcast with as little delay as possible to the partaking cinemas. While actors, actresses and audience members are not at the same location, the feeling of watching something that is happening 'right now' is present and makes the audience feel involved, and it creates the illusion of being active partakers in the events. Because of the slight inevitable temporal delays, this kind of liveness can also be called "near-real-time-transmissions".

When comparing physical liveness and live broadcasts, the latter is unable to account for a number of characteristics, such as sensory input that is neither visual nor audible. For example, when watching a theatre performance from one of the first rows, it is not unheard of that performers accidentally spit into the audience when using their stage voice. The simple physical proximity to the actor or actress and the possibility for eye contact creates a deeper connection between the two parties. It showcases that this is a unique event and that the person watching has a physical impact on the performance, simply by sitting in a certain seat. Live broadcasts need to create their social relationships through other means, as van Es (1249) explains:

[W]hat live media share is that they establish that something needs to be attended to now rather than later, because it is important to us as members of society. This is the collective function of live media, and what binds those media together as a group. However, live media can make different selling points explicit by drawing on the particular relation they configure between real time and sociality. With regard to news broadcasts, for example, the live is used to frame the program as *authentic* and *real*. The live broadcasts of sports draw more on the *unpredictability* of the competition – the excitement that comes from the awareness that anything can happen – and on notions of *presence*. In yet other cases, the program might stress *participation*.

The aspect of participation in LTBs is assumed by online communication, which will be discussed later. The need for Live Theatre Broadcasts to be watched at a specific time, on the other hand, is created by only airing them in cinemas once (with the exception of Encore screenings) and thus generating a need for the audience to come together and experience this seemingly unique event together. Its feeling of unpredictability stems from the possibility that something during the broadcast might malfunction, such as performers forgetting their lines or technical errors happening with sound or picture. However, the RSC records their broadcast rehearsal “in the event of any major disruptions on the live night” (Sharrock 97), which means that the sense of unpredictability during the live broadcast is constructed, rather than real. In reality, the unpredictable events are limited to small annoyances like ringing phones or defect microphones, which are not disruptive enough to warrant switching from broadcasting the live performance to showing the earlier recorded performance.

In the case of “recorded live” showings, even such small disruptions can be edited out. The final kind of liveness can be defined as having neither a temporal nor a spatial connection between audience and performers (Auslander: Digital Liveness 5). An example would be the recordings from the Globe Theatre, which are being filmed in front of a live audience but later edited together from two different performances, meaning that the best takes can be chosen and more camera angles can be considered. While these recordings may be able to capture the energy of the live performance, they do not create “a shared (even if individual) experience” (van Es 1247). The aforementioned need to experience something with other people at the same time is lifted and the notion of presence is much less than it would be during a live performance or broadcast.

When now analyzing Live Theatre Broadcasts, a strong focus on the liveness can be seen. The very titles of companies broadcasting theatre usually point to the liveness of their broadcasts, as can be seen in “National Theatre *Live*” or “*Live* from Stratford-upon-Avon” (emphasis added to both titles), which immediately communicates to the audience that whatever is broadcast will be streamed live to them. However, when visiting the homepage of the National Theatre Live, many of the advertised performances are encore screenings. And while some of them can be clearly distinguished by being titled as either “Broadcast live” or “Encores in selected venues”, other productions are merely termed as “International screenings”, without the clear marking of whether or not the screening is live or pre-recorded. Additionally, on the NTL website, the company explains that:

Though each broadcast is filmed in front of a live audience in the theatre, cameras are carefully positioned throughout the auditorium to ensure that cinema audiences get the ‘best seat in the house’ view of each production. Where these cameras are placed is different for each broadcast, to make sure that cinema audiences enjoy the best possible experience every time. Satellites allow the productions to be broadcast live to cinemas throughout the UK, as well as many European venues. Other venues view the broadcasts ‘as live’ according to their time zone, or at a later date.

(<http://ntlive.nationaltheatre.org.uk/about-us> 04.04.2019)

This section of the “About Us” page of the NTL provides an insight into the kind of liveness intended for the broadcasts. Firstly, each broadcast is based on a physical-live event, which is watched by an audience, at the same time as it is recorded for physically removed audiences. The LTB captures images from this live performance and includes shots of the audience throughout the broadcast. For example, at the very beginning of *Coriolanus* (2014), audience members and the inside of the theatre can be seen. This particular production included a short introductory video, sharing the history of the theatre, which included multiple shots of the empty auditorium. This gives the audience watching from a cinema a better understanding of how the performance space looks and what it feels like. In this case, it showcases how small and intimate the performance space is, in comparison to *Hamlet* (2015), which was staged and filmed at the National Theatre, which offers seating to over a thousand people per performance. Overall, it creates a more immersive feeling for the cinema audience by helping them imagine themselves in the actual performance space and takes away from the spatial distance between theatre and cinema. This is further supported by the inclusion of the recorded clapping of the physically live audience, both at intermission

and at the end of the performances. How effective this strategy is can be seen in the clapping of the cinema audiences at the end of the performances. Where usually cinema audiences watching a pre-recorded movie would simply leave the cinema as the credits begin to roll, the audiences at LTBs tend to applaud along with the physically live audience, due to both the conditioning of clapping when seeing a theatre performance, the auditive encouragement of the physically present audience and the feeling of eventness created through the shared experience of watching it with other people in the cinema, which will be discussed later.

To conclude the question of naming the medium, it can already be seen that liveness is an integral part of LTBs' substance and should thus be featured in its name. As for the question what LTBs' particular kind of liveness consists of, the short introduction into the theory of liveness has shown that the concept in this case consists of a variety of aspects, such as the constructed feeling of unpredictability of live events, the missing physical connection between performers and audience and the temporal need to partake in the events at a specific time, which creates a sense of specialness and togetherness between people watching. The following chapter will re-introduce some of these aspects and analyze them from the shifted perspective of placing the medium on the continuum between theatre and cinema in order to re-evaluate the necessity of eventness and the social aspects of liveness in the screening of LTBs.

2.3. Live Theatre Broadcasts on the Continuum of Theatre to Cinema

The hybridity of Live Theatre Broadcast emerges from its origin in both theatre and cinema. On the one hand, it is a filmed theatre performance, featuring shots of the stage and of the live audience. On the other hand, the performance is broadcast to a cinema, where a physically removed audience watches the live edited play on the big screen. Wyver (286) has termed the medium a "hybrid form" of theatre and cinema, while Hitchman (2018) argued for considering LTBs as "a form of technological adaptation", which takes the original theatre production and adapts it into a completely new form of medium, similarly to how a play is changed when it is lifted off the written page and placed on a stage. In either case, the adaptation process involves a few essential elements that differ between watching the performance live in the theatre or watching the live broadcast in the cinema. The most important ones, namely the

addition of supplementary material videos in the cinema, the ability to participate online, the editing of the broadcast material and the event factor of the broadcast will now be discussed in more detail.

2.3.1. The Function of Supplementary Material Videos

When going to the cinema to watch a movie, modern audiences are used to ten to fifteen minutes of commercials before the actual film starts. When watching a Live Theatre Broadcast, those waiting times increase significantly, because not only are audiences shown trailers for the next broadcast events of the National Theatre, the Met or the Royal Shakespeare Company, they also get to experience the supplementary introduction videos. These videos, which are usually about ten to fifteen minutes long, can be utilized in a number of ways.

For example, they can introduce the theatre that the broadcast is being streamed from. Bennet (51) names the 2017 NTLive broadcast of *Twelfth Night* as her prime example for this. According to her, the introduction video gives a backstage tour of the theatre and introduces “the 1,000 people who work there. A common strategy of Event Cinema, the backstage tour not only functions to promote the high production values behind the broadcast about to start, but also underscores the importance of the arts for job creation”. This gives the cinema audience a chance to get a feeling for the performance space that they do not get to visit themselves. Often shots of the theatre’s outside or the foyer are shown to re-create the view that the physically present audience would experience. This immersion into the performance space creates the illusion of being physically present and strengthens the feeling of liveness and of being part of the performance.

The introduction video to *Coriolanus* (2014), on the other hand, focuses on the casting of main actor Tom Hiddleston. It shows images of the rehearsal process, as well as of the actor in his dressing room, getting ready for the show. Interviews with him, director Josie Rourke and other actors and actresses of the cast then continue to explain some of the main motives of the play, such as the focus on the body and the difficulty of political leadership. In his review of the broadcast, Peter Kirwan (276) theorizes that these introductions are included “to ensure interpretation is as homogenous as

possible”, which most videos succeed in. Both NTLive broadcasts of *King Lear* (2014 and 2018) included explanations of main actors Ian McKellen and Simon Russell Beale of how they viewed their characters and what they made of his odd behavior throughout the play. These introductions helped audiences who were unfamiliar with the plays to orientate themselves, while also showing them clips of the play to present what to expect of the production. Through introducing themes and interpretations before the start of the show, audiences could already direct their expectations towards what they were about to see and potentially accept them easier than had they been surprised by them.

In this way, the introduction videos mirror the programs that audiences could buy in the actual theatre. The printed booklets in the theatre serve the same purpose of introducing the audience to themes in the play and providing historical background information. Programs also usually include pictures of the production which can prepare the audience for the staging they are about to see, similarly to the way that the introduction videos prepare the cinema audience.

During the intermission of the play, the presenter of the broadcasts, usually well-known British TV personalities, interview the director of the play and ask questions about the performance (Bennet 51). These can either be pre-selected or taken from social media. And although some of these interviews are conducted in the actual theatre, the physically present audience does not get to experience them. This means that the cinema audience receives an advantage over the theatre audience, especially since the interviews are not posted to Youtube or the broadcaster’s website afterwards, which strengthens the feeling of exclusivity for the physically removed audience.

In a way, these introduction videos mirror the inserts in early silent cinema history, which helped the audience to understand what they were about to see. Titles usually gave brief information about character backgrounds that were too abstract for an actor or actress to portray without additional help, such as a humble upbringing, an evil stepsibling or a certain memory haunting them (Pearson 20). For today’s audience, this help consists mainly of orientating them in the performance space, historical background or staging conventions of plays, as well as the actors’ and actresses’ interpretation of their characters. They help to homogenize the audience’s

expectations of the play and give an additional feeling of exclusivity to the cinema audience, due to the limited number of viewers able to see the behind-the-scenes footage.

2.3.2. Online Participation

In every introduction video before the Live Theatre Broadcast starts, the presenter will invite the cinema audience to use the chosen hashtag when posting about the broadcast on twitter or other forms of social media. While this might not seem too significant, the following subchapter will introduce the different methods of online participation and explain why the sharing of opinions online is in fact an integral part of the medium and what audience members gain from entering the online conversation.

As previously mentioned, every LTB performance has its own hashtag, which is presented in the introduction video and printed on the leaflet that cinema audiences are presented with. For example, the Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company's broadcast of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* used #TheWintersTale, while the 2019 RSC production of *Taming of the Shrew* favored #RSCShrew. These two examples already show a slight difference in marketing strategy, as the RSC includes the company's initials in the hashtag in order to create a closer link to the theatre brand, while the KBTC does not. In recent years, NTLive has taken this strategy one step further by adding emphasis to the hashtag #NTLive and encouraging its use, while the play-specific hashtags, such as #PresentLaughter or #Fleabag seem to be almost secondary. So, while the primary functions of hashtags are to link tweets together and make them searchable for other online participants, they also carry the secondary function of furthering the brand recognition of the different broadcasting theatres.

The main function of the encouragement to participate in the conversation online is, however, to establish "a wider, more collective sense of presence and aliveness" (Sullivan 67). The physically removed audience is able to share their experiences with people from all over the world and even the physically present audience in the theatre to create a sense of community. Within this community, they are able to share and exchange opinions, entering into the event's discourse. Because all watching members of the audience are viewing the same broadcast and are temporally present, the

physical disconnect between audience and performance space begins to matter less, because the sense of community and the shared viewing experience that can be felt in a theatre is substituted or enhanced by the created online community.

Due to the nature and speed of social media, the audience is also reminded of the 'liveness' of the event. Sullivan (68-73) uses the Globe's 2016 production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as an example for this, because the broadcast was not only streamed to cinemas but also made available online immediately. This meant that people were able to stream the broadcast from home, where tweeting during the performance was possible and not considered a social faux pas as using a phone in cinemas or theatres is. However, because people were watching from home, there was a lack of the physical community that is established in the cinema. This could lead to the conclusion that the experience of watching this particular broadcast was a solitary experience, more akin to watching a movie than a theatre performance or a LTB. Sullivan (72) explains that the opposite was the case because "for some, interactivity [online] may be as powerful a factor as physical presence in the creation of aliveness among audiences [is]." This means that the interactivity that can be found in exchanges online are as valuable, fulfilling and successful in creating a community as the physically present cinema audience would be, simply by reading other people's tweets, responding to them or seeing someone re-blog your own comment.

A secondary function that the presenters of the broadcasts mention is the request for feedback through social media. These appeals are usually phrased similarly to "Let us know what you thought of tonight's broadcast on Twitter, by using the hashtag #NTLive." The National Theatre also offered a feedback form on their website after the first few broadcasts where audiences could tell the theatre what they liked or disliked about the screening they watched. This request for feedback gives the audience the feeling of being involved in the process and actually having an impact on the progression of the medium. Kjeldsen (1076) describes it as "the people formerly known as 'the audience' – gain the opportunity to influence events as they take place and thereby help create a simultaneous communal experience and perhaps an experience of a slightly narrower gap between themselves and the decision-makers." This showcases that another strategy to balance the lack of physical proximity to the production is to make the cinema audience feel involved in the process of LTBs as a

whole by giving them a voice online and giving them the impression that their opinions are valued and taken seriously when considering future productions.

In conclusion, online participation via social media is an important core characteristic of LTBs because it helps physically removed audiences feel connected with each other, establish an online community and establish a feeling of liveness. It also allows the audience to share their opinions and enter into a discourse by using the hashtags of either the play or the broadcasting company. Lastly, it gives the audience the impression of being involved in the process of shaping LTBs by allowing them to make suggestions of how to improve broadcasts in the future.

2.3.3. Audience Reaction Filmed

Another strategy that LTBs use to make the cinema audience feel more like theatre goers is to film the physically present audiences in the performance space. Sullivan (634 f.) describes that “[i]n the fifteen minutes or so leading up to the start of the performance, remote audiences are invited to mix visually and sonically with their in-house counterparts, and ideally to merge into one”. In other words, through seeing and hearing the physically present audience, the cinema audience is invited to identify with them and to become one audience, witnessing the same ‘live’ performance.

Broadcasting images of the audiences serves an additional purpose, namely to help the cinema audience situate themselves in the theatre and to imagine themselves in the space. Since members of an LTB will most likely have been to a theatre before, seeing images of the theatre and of the physically present audience can help to also awaken other sensory memories that cannot be transmitted, such as the smell of a theatre or the feeling of sitting on well-used theatre chairs. It also helps to remind audiences of the social etiquette in theatres, which do carry over into the cinema to a certain extent. For example, in my personal experience, fewer people are on their phones during LTBs, and there are hardly any disturbances through phone calls during the performances, which indicates that audiences are more likely to pay attention to putting their phones in silent mode than they would when watching a regular movie at the cinema.

Also, in the same way that social media helps cinema audiences to compare their own reactions of the staging or performance of the actors and actresses, showing the reactions of the theatre audiences helps to evaluate their own opinions. Directors of LTBs can use reaction shots of the audience purposefully, to indicate to the remote audience if something funny or sad happened. This is especially helpful in moments that might not translate well to the cinema screen. By being given the additional information of the intended reaction, the cinema audience might then adjust their own experience of the scene to match the one they have seen on the screen.

However, the theatre audience that can be seen during the broadcast is not a 'natural' theatre audience. They are as much part of the staged performance as the actors on stage are. Julie Raby (103-109) was present in the theatre during the broadcast of several of the Royal Shakespeare Company's broadcasts and describes the experience and differences to a normal theatre performance. For example, she mentions that any seats that may remain free in the first few rows are filled with audience members from the back rows, in order to create the impression that the entire theatre is packed full (105). Furthermore, she describes the instructions given to the theatre audience on how to behave:

Before the broadcast of *Anthony and Cleopatra*, director Iqbal Khan asked the audience to continue to talk while his interview with presenter Suzy Klein was being broadcast to the cinema audience, thus ensuring that they acted out the expected behavior of a theatre audience before a performance starts. (Raby 105)

This indicates that because the broadcasting of the performance is an out-of-the-ordinary experience for the theatre audience too, they rely on instructions in order to keep acting their role as audience in a theatre. They are also required to ignore the cameras moving up and down in front of them and the added filming crew needed to broadcast the performance. The reason for their staged behavior and required ignorance towards anything out of the ordinary is that the broadcasters go to great lengths to pretend that the broadcast is in no way different from any other performance played in the theatre. However, as the next chapter will show, the broadcast that cinema audiences are able to watch has gone through several editing processes before being transmitted all over the world.

2.3.4. Edited Performance

When terming LTBs 'Edited Performances', this refers to two specific aspects, the first one being the changes made to the actual performance on stage, in order to fit the broadcast's requirements, the second aspect being the editing of the visual and audio material from the different cameras and microphones into one optimized, broadcastable video. Both aspects impact the cinema audience's viewing experience, which shall be further explained in this chapter.

Wyver (2015) gives a highly detailed account of the different mechanics happening behind the stage, in order to make the broadcast possible, such as setting up the six cameras throughout the theatre for the RSC's 2014 production of *The Two Gentleman of Verona*:

[F]ive cameras with operators were positioned in the stalls. A sixth attached to the front of the first circle in a central position provided an unvarying wide-shot. Two of the operated cameras were on tracks, which ran on either side of the thrust stage for the downstage half of its length. Three cameras were at the front of the stage, one also on a short track and one on a substantial "crane" with an extendable arm that could take its camera into and over the playing area. (Wyver 293)

The six cameras were positioned to allow for a number of different shots, such as wide shots that would capture the entire stage or close-ups with the crane, able to capture even small detail shots. In order to know which camera to use when, the broadcasting crew attended a matinee performance without any audience members present and decided on the best angles for each moment and the shots they definitely wanted to capture (Wyver 294).

However, once the decisions were made, performers were locked into the performances they had given on the day of the camera rehearsal in order to not block another performer from the camera's view or prolong a scene beyond a certain limit. Actress Natalie Simpson explained that, "you feel the need to stick to the well-rehearsed and less adventurous version of your performance to ensure that you are serving the narrative in the best way possible. I wouldn't feel comfortable trying completely new things for a recorded performance" (Simpson qtd. in Sharrock 96). This indicates that there is no spontaneity in the performers acting on the day of the broadcasts, which can make them seem less authentic or less 'in the moment', because they are not allowed to react freely to their scene partners performances.

The change in performance due to the awareness of the cameras and the removed first rows of seats extends to the actors' voices, facial expressions and body language (Sharrock 97). When acting in a theatre, loud voices and larger gestures are necessary to communicate with the entire theatre, especially the audience members at the very back of the balconies. However, when acting for camera, this kind of acting would look artificial, as the cameras are able to zoom in and capture even minute twitches of the eyes or lips. When performing for the hybrid medium of Live Theatre Broadcasts, performers are forced to decide between leaving their performance unaltered and risk looking like they are overacted for the cinema audiences or adapting their acting in order to fit the camera. In most cases, actors will try to balance the two, which means that the broadcast performance does not mirror the exact performance that a theatre audience would see on a different day.

Both more and less noticeable for the cinema audience is the editing of the raw recorded material. According to Stone (632), "[t]he broadcast filming is not from 'the best seat in the house' but rather exceeds the fixed viewpoint from any one seat, including aerial shots unavailable to the house audience". The wide-angle shots offer shots that show the entire stage and give the physically removed audience a chance to understand the full composition of the set and the placement of the performers on it. Close-ups, on the other hand, allow them to see details that even the theatre audience might miss and engage with the actors and actresses more closely.

When in the theatre, every subject is free to direct their view into whichever direction they please. Some might be interested in a specific performer, others may pay more attention to the details of the stage design. Others might get bored and decide to watch the other people in the audience because they are uninterested in the actions on stage. When watching from the cinema "the subjectivity is determined by the presentation of the content" (Hitchman 182), meaning that the audience is not able to decide what they want to look at – instead, the editors decide for them. Hitchman describes how in the Nation Theatre's broadcast of *As You Like It* (2016), the editing choices went so far as to force the audience's attention onto a specific character:

In the broadcast, the camera gave significant screen-time to Celia, capturing her facial expressions predominantly—and significantly—through reaction shots. These shots prompted laughter in the cinema audience that did not occur in the theatre audience, and this difference was, for the most part, the result of editing: reaction shots relied on

the speed of the cutting. Crucially, there was no moment at which the theatre audience laughed at the same moment of reaction as the cinema audience. (Hitchman 182)

This indicates the power of editing, as it manages to create a completely different focus point for the audience. And while the theatre audience would theoretically be able to focus on Celia too, the editing techniques themselves add to the humoristic effect and change the cinema audience's reading of the character.

Another way in which editing can manipulate the raw filmed material is by adding filters and effects. The Kenneth Branagh Theatre Company's broadcast of *Romeo and Juliet* (2016) was edited to be in black and white, which is a stark contrast to the version that the audience in the theatre saw (Sullivan 67f.). Even though the theatre production featured mainly black, white and gray costumes and sets, the lighting did add colors to the performance and allowed the eyes to find a focus on stage. The addition of a black and white filter forced the connotation to the classic black and white romance movies onto the cinema audiences, where theatre audiences might choose to interpret the lack of color as a nod to a post-apocalyptic dystopia. Examples like this showcase the power of editing in forcing an interpretation onto the cinema audience, where theatre audiences can choose more freely how to view the production in front of them.

In conclusion, while broadcast distributors try to create the illusion of unmediated events, there are differences between the performances that theatre and cinema audiences are able to see. The changes on stage are mainly due to the shifted requirements of the target medium, such as a lack of improvisation and a tendency towards more minimalistic acting. The changes made to the filmed material can range from choosing the most beneficial camera angle to adapting lighting, fixing sound issues or even adding an outside element, like a color filter. Editing of the raw material can also shift the audiences focus, introduce new comedic or tragic elements or highlight themes that the theatre audience might miss.

2.3.5. The Event-Factor of Live Theatre Broadcasts

Much of the marketing for Live Theatre Broadcasts focuses on the event-factor and uniqueness of the medium and each individual screening. When the creative director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Gregory Doran, wrote in a statement "This is no second-hand experience. You do not sit back in the cinema thinking how much better

it would be to be sitting in the theatre, because you feel part of the same live audience” (qtd. in Wyver 298), he touched on the essence of event cinema – being part of a special event and sharing the experience with an audience, made up out of both the theatre and the cinema audience. These events live off of the fact that many of the performances are only broadcast once, on a specific date and time, in selected cinemas, and even Encore screenings are few in-between and carry the connotation of being something special.

According to a study conducted by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts:

eighty-four per cent of NT Live cinema audiences “felt real excitement” because they knew that the performance, they were watching was taking place live that evening. Watching the show with others was also an important factor. Audiences tend to applaud at the end of the screening:
they appear to feel connected to the performance and the South Bank audience.
(NESTA, “Pilot Season” qtd in Stone 637)

This indicates that the most important factors for the event-factor of LTBs are the connection with the other members of the audience, as well as the temporal connection between the live performance and the broadcast.

Willmar Sauter offers another definition of what ‘event’ means in the context of theatre, in that “theatre manifests itself as an event which includes both the presentation of actions and the reactions of the spectators, who are present at the very moment of the creation. Together the actions and reactions constitute the theatrical event” (Sauter 11). However, he adds that “[a] theatrical event is not defined exclusively by the communication relationship between performer and spectator; nor is it sufficiently distinguished from the surrounding contexts, of which the event itself is part” (Sauter 11). From this it can be surmised that the spatial connection between audience and performer is truly secondary when compared to the surrounding social context, which creates a unique, irreproducible event.

In the case of Live Theatre Broadcasts, the event-factor and the atmosphere at the actual screenings are aided by a few outside gimmicks that the cinemas as venues may provide. For example, many theatres offer free printed programs, usually consisting of only one black-and-white page. They provide information on the cast, the

creative team, a brief synopsis and of course the social media outlets of the broadcasting company. While they may not be as visually impressive as the high-quality glossy programs at the actual theatres are, they do represent a medial closeness between theatre and cinema as venues and are an active step towards breaching the social connotations between the two performance spaces.

Similarly, some cinemas provide free refreshments for LTB audiences. For example, the Haydn Cinema in Vienna offers orange juice and sparkling wine, served in Champaign flutes to the guests on their way from box office to the cinema. In comparison to the usual cinema snacks of popcorn and soft drinks, this choice of beverages is more reminiscent of drinks available at a theatre bar. The goal of small additions to the usual cinema visit is the furthering of the event-factor of Live Theatre Broadcasts. Audience members feel special and associate the live broadcasts with actual live visits to the theatre.

When considering the place of LTBs as a hybrid medium between theatre and cinema, the event factor helps to move the cinema visit closer towards theatre on the continuum of the two media forms. Editing, on the other hand, links the broadcasts closer to cinema, as theatre is live, unedited and uninterrupted communication between audience and performer. Similarly, the filming of audience members in the actual theatre is supposed to help create a shared community between physically present and physically absent audiences. Social media also attempts to bridge this gap by allowing all members of the audience to enter into a discourse together and create an atmosphere of liveness. The supplementary material provided exclusively to the cinema audience is supposed to guide the audience expectations of the performance, provide additional information that they might otherwise bypass, as well as add to the exclusivity of being able to watch the live broadcast in the cinema. However, at the center of the medium remains its focus on liveness and the aura of exclusivity that is established among the audience members in theatres and cinemas alike by being led to believe that the performance they are watching is unrepeatable and special. This means that while the medium itself is closer related to a movie, the viewing experience resembles a theatre visit, rather than going to the cinema.

3. Celebrity Culture

Samuel Beckett, Barack Obama, Mahatma Gandhi, David Beckham, PewDiePie und Cara Delevingne. Six people with nothing in common, except for one thing: their celebrity status. The following chapter will give an overview into what 'being a celebrity' entails and how celebrity culture flows into everyday life. It will give an overview into a variety of definitions for the concept of a celebrity and analyze when the current rise of celebrity culture began and how it functions today. The final subchapter will analyze the functions and uses of celebrity actors, in order to develop tools for the later analysis of three different Live Theatre Broadcasts.

3.1. What is a Celebrity?

As with most cultural concepts, there is no one correct answer that would be able to encompass the whole of celebrity culture in one simple term, though many scholars have tried. Nayar's (4) first definition simply states that "a celebrity is an individual or event that the public watches: someone or something that is recognized by a large number of people." This means that, in order for a person to be a celebrity, there needs to be a social consensus of a large group that a person is worthy of their attention. Similarly, Luckhurst and Moody (1) begin their first chapter by stating that "[c]elebrity, the condition of being much talked about, is hardly an invisible phenomenon in the history of British theatre". Leo Braudy widened the field of his 1986 book *The Frenzy of Renown* even more and investigated fame and celebrities throughout history, starting at Alexander the Great, Cicero, Jesus, and after almost 600 pages, reaching modern ages with celebrity politicians and Hollywood stars.

The first chapter is fittingly named "The Urge to Be Unique", and in it, Braudy (6) explains that:

Not everyone can be famous. But much of our daily experience tells us that we should if we possibly can, because it is the best, perhaps the only, way to *be*. [...] In the present, more secular dilemma, a competitive world of job seeking and visible achievement implies that only some will be filled by fame, while the rest must be satisfied with lesser degrees of emptiness. In compensation we have the fame of others – people we might have been if fate or even choice had not deprived us. The great of the past are, of course, already complete: dead as bodies, undying as images. And when death takes the idols of the present away, they too will be translated to the highest realm of fame – forever untouched by the innumerable irritations that plague the fan.

This abstract from the introduction chapter already names many essential markers of celebrities. For example, Braudy mentions the exclusivity of fame. Being famous is something special, a status that not everyone is able to achieve. Also, to the outside, celebrities create the illusion of having risen above the problems of ordinary people, such as job hunting. Most importantly, however, he mentions a lack of emptiness, substituted by a fulfillment found in being a celebrity and the reward of immortality and an unchallengeable positive reputation. For Braudy, fame is a promise of freedom from ordinary problems and anonymity, created by the majority of society for whom fame remains unobtainable.

However, the aforementioned definitions still do not reveal what exactly a celebrity does, in order to warrant their status as a famous person. While instinctual, we may interpret the word as someone with outstanding talents, very few definitions actually mention a necessary talent in any specific sector that might permit someone to call themselves a celebrity. Even the Oxford English Dictionary's (OED: celebrity) first definition only mentions "[a] state or fact of being well known, widely discussed, or publicly esteemed. Later usually: personal fame or renown as manifested in (and determined by) public interest and media attention". Only its second entry mentions any relation to the entertainment industry by defining a celebrity as "[a] well-known or famous person; (now chiefly) *spec.* a person, esp. in entertainment or sport, who attracts interest from the general public and attention from the mass media." This definition, however, still does not include the mention of any outstanding positive qualities, which in turn can be interpreted as giving the same rights to stardom to someone who is well known for being very good or very bad in a certain field. And especially in today's media landscape and growing popularity of internet-celebrities, it can sometimes seem like celebrities do not require any talents at all.

Ever since what Turner (2010) has coined "the demonic turn", ordinary people have been given more opportunities to become celebrities, either through participating in quiz TV shows, talent competitions or more recently by using various forms of social media to make a name for themselves (Giles 60). Today, beauty bloggers, daily vloggers or lets-players can become short-time online celebrities almost overnight by positioning themselves correctly and 'trending' on YouTube or Instagram. Their income can be substantial, depending on their number of viewers or likes and the

consequential income generated through ads running on social media platforms. Where stars and celebrity actors or athletes are being admired for their talents, most online celebrities generate interest by being relatable and showing their audiences where they could be, if they had a video camera and the courage to start filming themselves.

However, all types of celebrities are based on “performance of the self”, as Marshall (39f.) termed it. He describes that:

Celebrities perform in their primary art form – as actors, musicians, singers, athlete – as well as the extra-textual dimensions of interviews, advertisements/commercial endorsements, award nights and premieres. These elements of performance are the professional or producerly elements that are closest to their status as, or at least as conveyors of, cultural commodities.

From this, it can be extrapolated that the celebrity personas audiences are presented with are artificial and as much part of the performance as the music acts or videos might be. Marshall (44f.) goes on to distinguish between the “public self”, which is the official persona presented to the media, and the “public private self”, which celebrities use on social media to share their personal life with their audience. As the term suggests, the public private self is as much staged and artificial as the public self is, in order to present a self-image that suits the celebrity’s needs and strengthens their desired persona. He also adds the “transgressive intimate self”, which is closest to the actual core of the celebrity as a person and can be brought about by emotional triggers, when the person may act or speak without considering their public image first (Marshall 45).

From this initial overview, only a vague sense of what a celebrity is can be gathered. So far, the chapter has established that a celebrity is someone well known and talked about. Secondary sources also indicate that society has come to the agreement that being a celebrity is something that should be desired and that gives the illusion of filling an inner void or longing. It also carries the promise of immortality and the promise of not being forgotten after one’s death. There is also an ongoing shift from classic stardom to the everyday-celebrity, aided through the use of the internet and social media. Lastly, a celebrity has many forms of self that they are able to utilize at different moments, such as the public, public private and transgressive intimate self. However, this initial overview does not create a coherent image of a celebrity yet. Perhaps it is

necessary, in order to come to a working definition of a celebrity, to investigate the history of stardom and celebrities closer.

3.2. Where did Celebrities come from?

Leaning heavily on Leo Braudy's 1986 historical overview of the concept of fame, the following subchapter will closer investigate how the historical personalities known today have transcended history to still be known today. The chapter will also summarize how acquiring fame has changed throughout history and which aspects of celebrity culture can be extracted and explained from this.

Historically, most pharaohs in Egypt or emperors in China focused on separating themselves from the common folk and establishing their presence as divine rulers or even god-kings (Braudy 29). Their intention was to position themselves above their subjects, and their focus was on keeping dynasties and ruling families intact rather than foregrounding their personal achievements. Alexander the Great however, the earliest historical figure investigated by Braudy, prioritized his own fame and used the alleged ties between his family and the great heroes of the Iliad to strengthen his own claim to power and immortality. According to Braudy, Alexander solidified his rise to fame through three different strategies. Firstly, he accomplished extraordinary tasks, worthy of praise and stories. Secondly, Alexander took care to spread the news of his great deeds and record them for later generations (Braudy 43). This step is imperative to generate fame, as any form of celebrity requires a medium to communicate the status of the celebrity and their achievements and names (Braudy 3). Lastly, where other emperors remained aloof, Alexander:

could maintain a closeness to his soldiers and companions – eating, drinking, being wounded – even while he was being worshipped elsewhere as a god or a god-hero. [...] Alexander therefor remains the earliest example of that paradoxical fame in which the spiritual authority of the hero is yet a model of a support of ordinary human nature.” (Braudy 43).

As previously mentioned, this proximity between extraordinary deeds and approachability is another one of the core features of celebrities. They need to be both special in comparison to others and ‘one of the people’ in order to still be relatable. Alexander the Great achieved this dichotomy and managed, through careful proactive shaping of his public image, to become and remain famous.

The use of fame predominantly used in this thesis, namely the celebrity actor or artist in general, began its rise during the 17th century. Between then and Alexander's life time, many changes occurred that altered the concept of fame and its individual components. For example, the mediums of communication changed, enabling both different speeds of communication and new types of celebrities. By the 17th century, the printing press had revolutionized accessibility to written texts and theatre had become a well-established form of entertainment and communication. Over the course of the next century, literature rose to even greater heights and literary and philosophical celebrities such as Rousseau, Franklin and Milton established themselves as household names. Society as a whole experienced dramatic change, moving towards a secular society where social mobility was more feasible than it had been before. The steady decrease of religion as the moral compass of society left behind a vacuum of insecurity, especially when it came to questions regarding the afterlife and the immortal soul. In this time, fame became something worth aspiring towards as it slowly transformed into a substitute for the obscure concept of heaven (Braudy 379). Where heaven was a foreign, unknown realm, fame was a familiar concept and could be attained by perfecting art. Fame promised untouchability and personal freedom, as well as immortality through ability.

Not only the medium and the meaning of fame changed, the audience and bestowals of fame were altered as well. During the middle ages, artists would be sponsored by their patrons, who would allow them to devote their life to their art. Through their affiliation to their lords or sovereigns, artists were able to achieve fame and be financially successful. By the 17th and 18th century, printed texts had become cheap enough to be marketed to a much broader audience, and the wave of new authors shifted the power of deciding which artist should rise to fame to the buying audience (Braudy 351). This in turn links back to the new looser social structures. In this new environment, authors from middle or even lower classes had more opportunities for fame, where they had little to none during the centuries before, where fame was reserved solely for royals, aristocracy, clergy or the military. Braudy (372) describes this change as "what happens when fame ceases to be exclusively associated with any social class or vocation and becomes instead an attribute of the self, a justification of the individual in opposition to traditional standards of identity". With this, Braudy

already hints at another major change in the concept of fame – the stress on the person's identity, rather than exclusively focusing on their achievements.

The example given is once again Rousseau, who found himself adored by fans instead of by colleagues and other intellectuals. Instead of revering him for his philosophical texts, fans began "to turn him into a name, a face, and an aura – an object not of attention but of curiosity" (Braudy 381). Here we can see the earlier mentioned split between the private person and scholar Rousseau and the public celebrity Rousseau, who was famous for both his work and his personality. As part of this dichotomy, celebrities began to shape their public persona to be both unique and yet not unreachable for their audience (Braudy 392).

Through the invention of photographs, the growth of newspapers and the introduction of radio and television, these tendencies were amplified even more. Society developed into mass culture and celebrities gained the further function of becoming a way through which individuals who felt lost and insufficient could understand themselves and others (Braudy 556). As such, celebrities gained spiritual and even political powers by filling the moral void left behind by the secularization of society. Examples for how this power was used are many - Charlie Chaplin, Adolf Hitler and Richard Nixon to name only a few. Hitler used it most prominently by building a cult around the ideals of the NS, promising everyone that if they became more similar to their leader, they could similarly rise through the ranks of society and become more powerful and influential. Nixon, on the other hand, used his fame and charisma, which he gathered throughout his career in film, to further him in his political race for the presidency of the United States.

By the time Hollywood reached its golden era, from 1920 to 1960, performers were more than entertainers. Tabloids and newspapers published their stories and audiences were interested almost more in their personal struggle with fame and a life in the spotlight than they were in their actual performances. The performers' bodies had become sexualized objects, both something to desire and to desire to be like. In an industrialized society which always strived for more efficiency and perfection, celebrity actors marked the zenith of beauty, desirability and talent (Braudy 576). They seemingly had the freedom to live their life as they desired, because they were special, yet ordinary in their struggles with their bodies and their love life. During this time, actors and actresses also became marketable by gaining economic power and started

to use their fame to speak out on behalf of certain brands. Their recognizability and the personality or quality traits attributed to them, then became associated with the product they were marketing as well, helping to sell more products for certain companies.

Today, fame seems more attainable than ever before, due to the wave of reality TV in the early 2000s and the introduction of social media. Participation media, such as quiz shows or talent shows have been popular since the 1950s, but only recently have they begun to create celebrities. Giles (64f.) names *Big Brother* as one of the first examples of a TV show that transformed normal people into celebrities, simply by broadcasting them in more or less everyday situations to a large audience. Their behavior and the heavy editing of the raw material, then decided the audience reactions to their everyday behavior and whether they were known for their positive and negative attributes.

The emergence of social media removed even more restrictions of fame, since now there are no casting directors or producers who can dictate who is allowed to be on TV and who is not. Instead, anyone with an electronic device and an internet connection is able to create an account on a social media platform and attempt to become a celebrity. Especially YouTube and Instagram are platforms which can lead to very quick success but should there not be enough content produced can also lead to a very quick decrease of viewers again.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the means of achieving fame have changed dramatically throughout history, while its essence has remained mostly unchanged. In the beginning, fame was reserved for kings, emperors and heroes, who had the financial means and power to guarantee themselves a place in the history books through their military prowess or the rich graves they left behind. As society transformed, the power shifted towards the audience, who were able to choose whom they wanted to bestow fame upon. However, in turn, they demanded to be included in the shaping of the celebrity image, and the split of private and public persona became more pronounced. Celebrities filled the moral void of the secularized society and gained economic and political power at the cost of struggles with the spotlight and sexualization of their bodies. Today's society has an abundance of celebrities, generated through traditional art forms, reality TV, as well as through short-lived self-made online celebrities on social media platforms.

The essence of fame, however, has not changed. People still want to gain the personal freedom that fame seems to grant celebrities, and the place in history that it promises. The audiences, in turn, look for someone who is both unreachable due to talents or physical attributes, as well as relatable due to their personal struggles in their everyday lives.

3.3. Function of Celebrities and McCracken's Model of Meaning Transfer

While the last two chapters analyzed different definitions of celebrities and their historic developments, the following subchapter's goal is to provide insight into the different functions that celebrities fulfill in today's society. A focus will be put on celebrities' connection to advertisement and celebrities as a commodity and brand in order to, later on, use the theoretical marketing concepts when analyzing the celebrities' influence on specific LTB performances.

The first function of celebrities is a pedagogical one. Marshall (37f.) describes the celebrities' life as a "a very elaborate morality tale that mapped a private world into a public one". Stories of personal struggles are being discussed through gossip and function as behavioral examples of how to act in society. Simultaneously, gossip provided social cues of acceptable and not acceptable behaviors. By opening the discourse about someone else's life, strategies about one's own life can be made in order to avoid making similar mistakes or copy actions of celebrities to attain their beauty or romantic happiness. The necessary information about celebrities can be attained in a number of ways, for example through highly edited autobiographies, in which actors or athletes tell their own stories. On press tours, actors give interviews on TV-shows or to magazines, which are carefully prepared, in order to give the celebrity a chance to give the answer that fits their public persona the best.

In comparison to the aforementioned highly edited examples, social media has offered celebrities the chance to establish a more personal relationship with their audience. Through Twitter or Instagram, actors and actresses can present their public private self, which is their chosen version of their private self that they want audiences to see. The self they pretend to be on social media is never a truly authentic one, but instead is a performance. This performance is "a careful staging to main the self – a composed

and norm-driven construction of character and performance” (Marshall 39). Every persona that is created by a celebrity in this manner carries agency, which is “designed to convey a particular meaning for the individual as they negotiate their passage through the public world and its institution and discourses” (Marshall, Moore and Barbour 290). Celebrities may have a number of reasons for choosing certain strategies of portraying their persona.

For example, actor Ryan Reynolds, best known for his portrayal of Deadpool, posts regularly about his questionable but humorous parenting skills:

Reynolds, Ryan (@VancityReynolds). “On our 6am walk, my daughter asked where the moon goes each morning. I let her know it's in heaven, visiting daddy's freedom.” 16 Oct 2016, 06:54 PM. Tweet.

Tweets like this reinforce the image of a paternal figure with a dark sense of humor, which matches the audience's impression of the character. Similarly, US politician Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is best known for her liberal ideas and posts almost exclusively about issues related to her political agenda:

Ocasio-Cortez, Alexandria (@AOC). “Look out for those in politics who like to label themselves “fiscally responsible,” yet only seem to care about the price of justice - not the cost of oppression. Everything has a price. And an unjust society is far costlier than one that invests in & values all people.” 28 Nov 2019, 1:03 AM. Tweet.

Her ‘brand’ of politician focuses on being outspoken and not holding back her criticism against the established businesses and politicians. Both examples showcase how audiences may extrapolate aspects of the celebrities regarding their personalities or life style from these tweets. Marketing has long since utilized these correlations between celebrities and their audiences’ associations for business purposes. Multiple theories deal with the benefits of employing celebrities to endorse brands and using actors, athletes or writers as commodities.

What most theories agree on is that celebrities in advertisement are used to circumvent anonymity (Fleck, Korchia and Le Roy 652). If a famous celebrity is featured in an advertisement campaign, it will draw more attention due to the recognizability of the performer. More specifically, the match-up hypothesis and meaning transfer model is interested in the overlapping features of brands and celebrities. According to Misra &

Beatty (1960), the match-up hypothesis states that celebrity endorsements are most effective when “highly relevant characteristics of the spokesperson are consistent with highly relevant attribute of the brand”. Should this match-up be successful, the connecting feature is raised in both the advertised brand and the spokesperson, meaning that an athlete might be attributed with a healthier life style, while the brand of vitamins might be perceived as being more effective and healthier through the celebrity endorsement.

McCracken developed the theory in 1989 due to the failings of the two established celebrity marketing theories of the time, namely the models of source credibility and source attractiveness. The theory of source credibility by Hovland and Weiss (1951) explained that the “expertness” and “trustworthiness” of the spokesperson was relevant to the credibility of the advertisement. For example, someone with a doctoral degree or years of experience in the medical field will evoke a stronger believability in term of medical advice on prescription drugs. According to McCracken:

Expertness is defined as the perceived ability of the source to make valid assertions. Trustworthiness is defined as the perceived willingness of the source to make valid assertions. The Holland model holds that sources exhibiting expertness and trustworthiness are credible and, to this extent, persuasive. (311)

The second popular model deals with the attractiveness of the source. This depends particularly on the likability of the spokesperson, which focuses on their physical appearance and their positive behavior. Familiarity due to exposure and similarity to the consumer themselves are also taken into consideration in this model (McGuire 1985).

In comparison, the model of meaning transfer as proposed by McCracken focuses on a performer’s persona and its embedded attributes. He explains that celebrity actors create their own meaning by acting certain parts repeatedly:

Celebrities draw these powerful meanings from the roles they assume in their television, movie, military, athletic, and other careers. Indeed, these careers act very much like large ads, as Stage 1 of the Figure shows. Each new dramatic role brings the celebrity into contact with a range of objects, persons, and contexts. Out of these objects, persons, and contexts are transferred meanings that then reside in the celebrity. When the celebrity brings these meanings into an ad, they are, in a sense, merely passing along meanings with which they have been charged by another meaning transfer process. Or, to put this another way, the meaning that the celebrity

endorsement gives to the product was generated in distant movie performances, political campaigns, or athletic achievements. (McCracken 315)

He further explains that, in order for an ad to be successful, the meaning accumulated by the celebrity should be similar to the intended meaning of the product and demographic of the target audience. For example, if an actress is well known for playing rich, elegant ladies, the associations carried over from the roles would compliment an expensive perfume, promising to grant women a luxurious smell and allure. McCracken (315) summarizes his model in a simple figure (Figure 1), explaining how meaning moves from the celebrity's roles to the consumer:

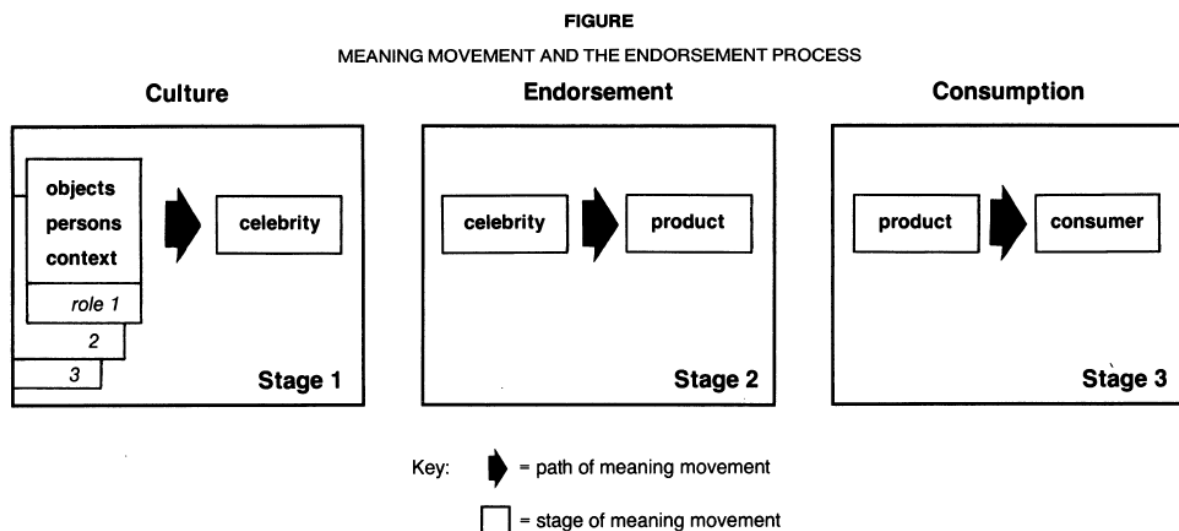


Figure 1: McCracken's model of Meaning Movement

This model can also prove useful to explain casting choices by substituting the product with another role. For example, if an actor is famous for playing very physical and tough roles, then he will carry that meaning over into the next role and add previous associations onto the new part. This may help with faster characterization and a better match-up of expectations and reality for the audience. Alternatively, it may be used for comedic effect. An example would be Dwayne Johnson in the 2017 reboot of *Jumanji*. There, he played the game avatar of a high school gamer, and while he still looked like a powerful adventurer and carried over the meaning from his WWE wrestler career, he acted like a scared teenager. The resulting juxtaposition created the intended comedic affect that made the movie successful, indicating that the producers actively considered the associations the actor carried and how this image would be useful for the film.

In conclusion, celebrities create personas of themselves and spread them in different mediated forms, such as interviews or social media. The created gossip acts as a pedagogical guide for their audiences to discuss norms and societal regulations. Celebrities are also used as spokespeople for brands which consider the accumulation of meaning by the celebrity in order to see which meaning overlaps most with the advertised product. Ads are most successful when the meaning that celebrities acquire through their roles speak to the same demographic as the product is supposed to. In the following chapter, this model will be applied again, specifically to see how performers associated with Hollywood actors and actresses carry over their meaning to benefit the new medium of LTBs.

4. Comparative Analysis of Three LTB Performances

The following chapter focuses on applying the previously introduced concepts to three different LTBs. Firstly, it will give more detailed information on the three performances and why they were chosen, followed by an in-depth comparison of their places on the continuum between theatre and cinema. In this context, the chapter will also analyze the adaptation of the source text in order to see how the text was changed in order to fit the medium and the celebrity actor. After a comparative analysis of the use of the celebrity actors and the reviews' responses to the performances, the chapter will also investigate the social media presences of the broadcasters and the economic factors, influencing the three stagings.

4.1. Introduction to the Productions

In order to help situate the productions, the following chapter will give an overview of the chosen plays, the director and cast of all three productions. Pictures and descriptions of the theatres are added to further understanding of the later descriptions of the broadcasts.

4.1.1. *Coriolanus* from the Donmar Warehouse

Coriolanus is a tragedy written by William Shakespeare. The play tells the story of the Roman general Caius Marcius, who celebrates a great military success against the city

of Corioli and his personal nemesis Tullus Aufidius. When he returns to Rome, he is persuaded to run for consul by his mother Volumnia. At first, his attempt seems successful, but when two of the tribunes, Brutus and Scinius, rally a crowd against him, he rails against the people and their right to vote. For this, he is banished from the city, forcing him to find asylum with Aufidius in Antium. He takes Caius Marcius in and together they rally against Rome. He is set on vengeance against the city that banished him, until his mother, wife and son successfully plead with him. Feeling betrayed, Aufidius and other Volscians kill Caius Marcius.

This staging was directed by Josie Rourke and found a home at the Donmar Warehouse, where it ran from the 6th of December 2013 until the 13th of February 2014. The live broadcast was produced by the National Theatre and filmed on the 30th of January, with varying screening times around the world (Donmar Warehouse: Coriolanus). The role of Caius Marcius/Coriolanus was played by Tom Hiddleston of Loki fame. Mark Gatiss, best known for his portrayal of Mycroft Holmes in the BBC Series *Sherlock*, played Menenius and Deborah Findlay portrayed Volumnia. Actor Peter de Jersey was Cominius and Alfred Enoch, famous for playing Dean Thomas in the *Harry Potter* franchise, played Titus Lartius.

The Donmar Warehouse is a relatively small theatre with only 251 seats (Donmar Warehouse: About Us). The stage is not separated from the seating area and is not elevated, creating an intimate theatre experience due to the physical proximity between performers and audience. In this particular performance, the backwalls of the stage were decorated with red graffiti and a single ladder to the heavens, as shown in Figure 2 and 3 below. Chairs were placed at the back of the stage, allowing the actors to be present the entire time, only stepping into character once they are needed for the scene. The setting was a mix between modern clothing and historical pieces and weapons. For examples, while most of the actors wore jeans and boots, they also had leather breastplates and swords for fight scenes. Together, this created a post-apocalyptic rough look without a specific historic setting as a reference point.



Figure 2: Production Picture of *Coriolanus* at the Donmar Warehouse, showing the graffiti background of the stage and the cast in full costume

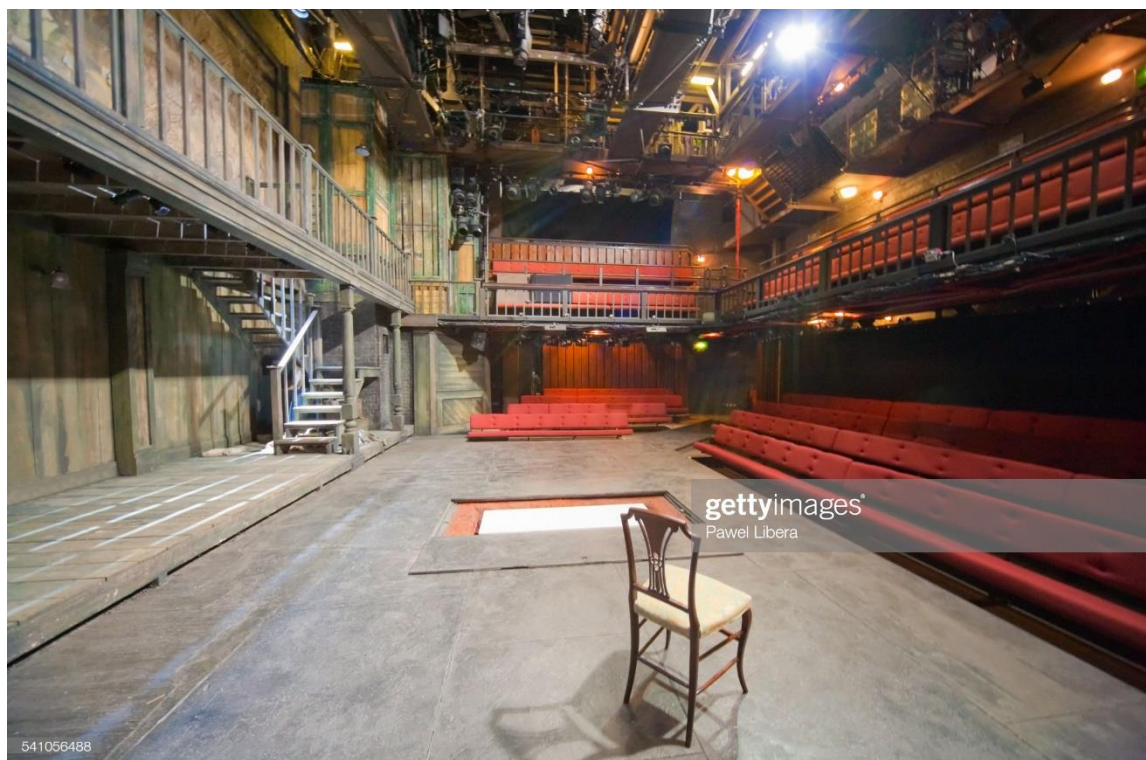


Figure 3: Picture of the Donmar Warehouse Stage and the Auditorium

4.1.2. *Hamlet* from the Barbican Theatre

Hamlet is perhaps Shakespeare's most famous tragedy, focusing on Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark. After his widowed mother Gertrude marries his uncle Claudius, Hamlet is haunted by his father's ghost, who makes Hamlet swear to avenge his murder. After much deliberation, Hamlet tries to use a trick to lure Claudius into revealing that it was him who killed Old Hamlet. But the plan goes awry, and when Hamlet thinks he has killed his uncle, he finds that his actual victim is his girlfriend Ophelia's father Polonius. Hamlet is banned from court and sent to England. On his voyage, he barely escapes a murderous plot from Claudius and after a short while, he returns to Denmark, finding that Ophelia has killed herself. Her brother Laertes challenges Hamlet to a duel, which he accepts. During the duel, both are injured with a poisoned blade and Queen Gertrude drinks from a poisoned cup, intended for her son. Before dying himself, Hamlet forces Claudius to drink from the poisoned cup as well, leaving the Norwegian crown prince Fortinbras to bury the dead and take over the heirless kingdom.

Directed by Lyndsey Turner, the production ran from the 5th of August 2015 to the 31st of October 2015 at the Barbican Theatre (Barbican: *Hamlet*). The broadcast was produced by NTLive and filmed on the 15th of October. The main role of Hamlet was played by internet-favorite Benedict Cumberbatch, who is best known for playing Sherlock in BBC's *Sherlock*. Rounding out the cast are Ciarán Hinds as Claudius and Sian Brooke as Ophelia.

The Barbican is a well-established theatre with space for over a thousand seats on the ground level, upper circle and gallery (Barbican: Barbican Theatre). The Barbican's proscenium stage is very spacious, and the set was designed to look like a hall in a manor or palace, featuring wide doorways and a stair case coming from a balcony, as can be seen in Figure 4 below. The modern costumes were mainly black and white, with a few red and blue pieces acting as color impulses throughout the show (Figure 5). With a running time of almost three hours plus an interval of 20 minutes, the production ran slightly longer than both of the other two productions.



Figure 4: Picture of the Barbican Stage during the rehearsal for the LTB of *Hamlet*



Figure 5: Kobna Holdbrook-Smith as Laertes and Benedict Cumberbatch as Hamlet in full costume

4.1.3. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* from the Royal Shakespeare Theatre

The Two Gentlemen of Verona was one of Shakespeare's first plays and one of his lesser known comedies. The two eponymous gentlemen are the two friends Proteus and Valentine. Proteus is madly in love with Julia, and when he is forced to follow his friend Valentine to Milan, he leaves her with a ring and a promise to be faithful. In Milan, Valentine falls in love with Silvia, who returns his love but is not allowed to show it. When Proteus joins his friend in Milan, all thoughts of Julia are forgotten as he sets his mind to conquering Silvia. Through tricks and lies, he sells out Valentine to Silvia's father, and Valentine is banished from the city. Julia, who followed Proteus dressed as a man, must now witness how he tries to woo the unimpressed Silvia, who soon follows Valentine into banishment. In the woods, Silvia is found by a group of bandits working for Valentine. But before they can take her to him, Proteus frees Silvia from them and tries to rape her. Valentine arrives in time to save her and Julia, who followed Proteus into the woods, reveals her identity. Proteus finally sees that he has wronged his friends and his lover, and a tentative reconciliation begins as the play comes to an end. The play is perhaps best known for including the comical servant Lance and his dog, Crabb.

Simon Godwin's directorial debut at the RSC was performed from the 12th of July until 4th of September 2014 and marked the first time in 45 years that the play was staged by the company (RSC: Simon Godwin 2014). The production was broadcast by RSC Live from Stratford upon Avon on the 3rd of September 2014 to international cinemas. In comparison to the aforementioned productions, the cast of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* does not feature a Hollywood celebrity. Instead, it introduced a number of young actors and actresses who have since established themselves in the British Theatre Scene. These include Michael Marcus as Valentine, Pearl Chanda as Julia, Mark Ardens as Proteus, Sarah MacRae as Silvia and Martin Bassindale as Valentine's servant Speed.

The Royal Shakespeare's iconic thrust stage was only loosely furnished, with the set pieces changing from a plain wall with a balcony, to a metal staircase, leading up to a center stage balcony. The costumes were modern and hinted at the Italian references of the play. As is the case with most RSC plays, there was a live band playing, and

Turio, Silvia's suitor, sang live on stage, which added to the young and dynamic production of the play.



Figure 6: Picture of the cast of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* during a dancing scene in Milan



Figure 7: Picture of the beginning of the play in Verona

4.1.4. Shakespeare's Role in LTBs and Reasoning for Choosing the Analyzed Productions

This thesis decided to analyze three productions based on Shakespeare plays for multiple reasons. For one, because Shakespeare broadcasts make up almost half of all broadcasts to date, using one of them creates a neutral basis for the analysis and ignores outside factors like novelty of the play. For example, a lesser known, more modern play might not have the issue of communicating Shakespearean language to a contemporary audience, but instead would have to work harder at establishing the author's personality to the audience. By choosing three plays from the same author, these factors affect all three plays in the same way.

Also, when NTLive was first funded by the Arts Council England and NESTA, they asked for NTLive to establish a brand based on "The Best of British Theatre" (Bennet 45-6). Because Shakespeare has become synonymous with high-brow theatre and has been established as the quintessential British Writer, performances of Shakespeare performances have become part of the NTLive brand. Whenever a montage of previous LTBs is presented, Shakespeare features prominently and as such has become a cornerstone of what people associate with Live Theatre Broadcasts.

Coriolanus, specifically, has been chosen due to Hiddleston's popularity and the attention that was given to his celebrity persona, both in the staging and the marketing of the play. The play itself is not particularly popular, and yet the performances at the Donmar Warehouse were all sold out. This production offers the opportunity of analyzing how a celebrity's persona drastically re-constructs the role on the page. Also, because the production focuses heavily on Hiddleston's body, it can be utilized as a discussion point for the importance of attractiveness and the celebrity's body as an important tool in LTBs.

Hamlet is interesting for similar reasons. Cumberbatch is a star and when it was announced that he would play Hamlet the tickets sold very quickly. The production's extreme popularity can be seen in the multitude of encore screenings that are broadcast even now, four years after the production closed. What is interesting about this particular production is the media's attention to it during every step of the rehearsal

process and the effect it had on the production. Furthermore, the critiques of the play were mellow, while the popularity and economic success of the production is unquestionable, which begs the question of whether quality is more or less important in LTBs than the fame of the lead actor.

On the other end of the spectrum lies *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The production was broadcast from Stratford-upon-Avon instead of from London and was not broadcast by NTLive but by RSC Live. Also, none of the performers involved in the production has been able to claim Hollywood fame. Instead, the 'celebrity-factor' in this broadcast stems from the author and the location of the broadcast. Because of this, this production offers an interesting counterexample to the other two star-studded performances, in terms of financial success and popularity. Also, this is the only analyzed performance which has been released on DVD, which will be discussed in a later subchapter as part of the companies' approach to liveness.

4.2. Place on the Continuum between Theatre and Cinema

The following chapter will bring together the earlier discussion of the medium of LTBs and the three productions. Though the medium remains the same in all three broadcasts, every production stresses different aspects of the performance and thus shifts its place on the continuum between theatre and cinema slightly.

4.2.1. The Goal of Supplementary Material

The first shift in emphasis can be seen in the supplementary material presented before the broadcast, especially in the comparison between *Coriolanus* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. The later presents a very straightforward synopsis. Because the play is not well known, the introduction video focuses on the four main characters and a rough sketch of the plot. Director Simon Godwin starts off by explaining the starting point of the play and introduces love as its main theme. When the character of Valentine is mentioned, the video cuts to Michael Markus, the actor playing Valentine, who explains his view on the character. This style of narration continues with the actors and actresses of Silvia, Proteus and Julia, with each of them explaining their character once the director's brief synopsis mentions them.

The material shown in between is footage from the dress rehearsal which is explicitly marked as such by writing in the top right corner of the screen. This gives the audience a general idea of what the play is about without giving away the ending. The specific mention of the footage as being from the dress rehearsal indicates to the audience that there was no filmed material to use yet, since the performance they are about to see will be live and as such, there is no material from an actual performance available yet. It stresses the novelty of the broadcast and the fact that the cinema audiences are the first to see this specific broadcast.

The actors are shown in their dressing rooms, where they speak about the characters and the themes of the play, which every actor defines slightly differently, depending on how their character would see it. All of their remarks are very to the point and focus exclusively on the play as a text. Very little is mentioned about the particular staging of the play, aside from the director's final comment on the relatively short performance history of the play. While speaking about this, he also mentions that the play was written by a very young and inexperienced Shakespeare. In total, the video is about eight minutes long and gives a short introduction to the most important plot points.

Coriolanus, on the other hand, focuses its introduction on very different topics. The video is very keen on showing the remote audience around the theatre. This includes historic shots of the old warehouse, the performance space and the dressing rooms. It even shows close up shots of the chains and bricks on stage, as well as the stage lights. The stage is shown from every possible angle, while the director of the playm Josie Rourke, explains how the stage feels and what her intention for the production was. The benefit of introducing the stage in this manner is the created atmosphere for the remote audience. The cinema audience is able to understand the space they are seeing, and they can put themselves into the position of the theatre audience. Especially the descriptions of how the walls feel when touching them and the mention of the smell of the bananas that used to be stored in the warehouse create added sensory input that the cinema audience would usually be deprived of.

Furthermore, the clear focus of the video is on Tom Hiddleston as the main actor. Throughout the video, shots of him preparing for the play are shown. More specifically, the scenes show how he is painted and how his scars and battle wounds are applied

to his naked torso. While these clips are addressed in later parts of the video, where Josie Rourke speaks about *Coriolanus* as being a visceral and very body-oriented play, the half-naked scenes are also shown during unrelated parts of the video. They move the body of the actor, and more importantly Tom Hiddleston's physical fitness and attractiveness, into center stage.

Towards the end of the eight-minute video, Brigitte Hjort Sorensen is interviewed, and she compares her character Virgillia to a character that she played on TV. The video shows a few selected clips from her Danish drama *Borgen*, and Sorensen explains the connection between the two characters. Mark Gatiss, on the other hand, does not mention his character Menenius at all, but instead speaks only about the overarching themes of the play and the political implication that the play tries to communicate. It could be argued that while Sorensen's character transfers positive meaning to Virgillia, the meaning transfer between Gatiss' characters is not desired, and thus Mycroft remains unmentioned.

When comparing the two introductory materials, it can definitely be said that the video for *Coriolanus* is much more concerned with establishing the theatre space as the performance space. The NTLive supplementary material also focuses heavily on Hiddleston's physicality, which overshadows his insightful views into the character. The actual synopsis of the play is hinted at, but without already being familiar with the play, the audience would not be able to understand what the play is about. The RSC material, on the other hand, focuses exclusively on the plot and themes of the play. The actors do get the chance to introduce their own views, but the audience does not gain any insight into the performer's personalities. Instead, the synopsis and Shakespeare as the celebrity writer is put into the spotlight.

I would argue that the reason why *Coriolanus* employs its chosen strategies is because the target audience differs strongly between the two theatre companies. The RSC is well known for being situated in Stratford-upon-Avon and producing performances of plays written by Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Thus, their supplementary material focuses on Shakespeare as a writer and on the plot. *Coriolanus* on the other hand is staged in a relatively small theatre that has not reached popularity yet. The production instead lives off of the actor's name and celebrity status. Because of this,

the actor has to be featured prominently in the video. The exposure of his physical attractiveness is also due to his particular fanbase, which sexualized and idolizes the actor. In conclusion, the videos are targeted at the particular fanbases of actors and theatre companies. The RSC caters towards people who attend the theatre frequently, thus it is not as necessary to introduce them to the theatre space in Stratford, whereas the NTLive broadcast has to introduce a less theatre-affine audience to a performance space. Ultimately, both introduction videos' aim is to help the audience situate themselves in the new hybrid medium. The RSC does so by introducing the audience to the plot and by already showing some clips from the dress rehearsal, while the National Theatre offers the audience an impression of the performance space and a familiar face in the form of Tom Hiddleston.

4.2.2. Audience Reaction Filmed

As previously mentioned, the filming of the audience reactions are an integral part of the LTB experience. When comparing the three plays, two different strategies emerge, which are largely due to the construction of the stages. Both *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Coriolanus* are performed on a thrust stage. This means that, due to the cameras being placed on three different sides, audience members can frequently be spotted in the background. For example, in Figure 8 it can be seen that during a semi-close-up of Hiddleston, audience members behind him are clearly visible on screen,



Figure 8: Hiddleston in *Coriolanus* with audience members visible behind him.

reacting to his performance. Because of the limited space in the small theatre, the audience looks like a wall behind him and is very clearly illuminated by the stage lights.

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the thrust stage is similarly used, but the cameras seem to be placed only on the front side of the stage, with one moving crane camera being used to capture moving shots and close-ups. Because the stage is higher above the audience, the audience's faces aren't as visible during this performance. The only time when the audience can be seen is in scene-establishing shots at the beginning of the play or after scene changes. Figure 9, for example, shows the very first shot of the play, which gives the removed audience the chance to orientate themselves in the theatre space and to get an impression of the theatre audience's size and placement. During later scenes, the audience almost vanishes into the black of the auditorium, and only vague shapes can be recognized as the first two rows.



Figure 9: Opening shot of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* with visible audience

However, instead of seeing the audience, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the audience can clearly be heard. Especially during Julia and Lucetta's first entrance in Act 1, Scene 2 the laughter almost interrupts the scene multiple times and adds to the light-hearted atmosphere of the comedy. While these additional audio stimuli could be seen as disruptive, they can also help the cinema audience to interpret a scene correctly or point them towards a joke or pun that they might have missed. Neither

Hamlet nor *Coriolanus* prompts laughter in the audience, which is mainly due to the difference in genre. In *Hamlet*, slightly awkward laughter can be heard when Cumberbatch appears dressed as a tin soldier, pretending to be mad. Here the cinema audience may be able to extrapolate the tense atmosphere in the theatre and compare them to the tension in the cinema.

The other way in which *Hamlet* differs from the other two performances is the aforementioned differences in stage form. Because the Barbican theatre features a proscenium stage, the only moment when audience members can be seen is at the very beginning of both acts, when the camera shows the audience the full house before focusing on the stage. This means that in comparison to the other two performances, the cinema audience is left mostly to its own devices here, in terms of interpretation of the play and its characters, since there are neither visual nor audio clues. This pushes the performance closer towards cinema on the continuum of theatre to cinema, because it is less engaging for the cinema audience and it resembles a recording of a stage production more than a Live Theatre Broadcast, since one of the key features of LTBs is the presence and liveness of the theatre audience.

4.2.3 The Recurring Event Factor of Encore Screenings

Another theatre-related factor is the eventness of Live Theatre Broadcasts. Returning to Sauter's (11) definition of a theatrical event as being dependent on both the action and reaction between actors, actresses and audience, as well as from the surrounding context, the three performances differ slightly in terms of their event factor, especially when considering their uniqueness. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* had perhaps the least amount of event factor, considering the anticipation around the event and the buzz on social media. When comparing the hashtags used for the three productions, the RSC hashtag is used the least by far, which may be due to two factors. Firstly, the audience of RSC productions is largely interested in either the author, the play or the theatre company itself, but rarely ever in the main actor, since most of the RSC's cast consists of actors bound to the local theatre sphere and are thus not as recognizable for global audiences. In comparison to 'fangirls', these theatre aficionados are then less likely to share their love for the main actor on social media. Secondly, RSC productions are only ever broadcast once, before being released on DVD a few months

later, which means that the hashtags are only used on one occasion. NTLive productions, on the other hand, may be broadcast again as Encore screenings, if there is enough interest. For example, *Hamlet* has been screened at least once a year since 2015 due to popular demand. Just how special these screenings are can be seen at the Haydn cinema in Vienna, which has decided to show *Hamlet* on the evening of the 31st of December. However, these repeated screenings allow for hashtags to gain a secondary function, aside from connecting with other members of the remote audience, namely for advertisement purposes. Through the use of the play-related hashtags, more people may become aware of screenings and look them up online, finding one of the frequent encore screenings of older broadcasts.

And while the liveness and uniqueness of an event is an important factor for the medium, viewers seem to differentiate very little between first time broadcasts and Encore screenings. For example, Céline Stucki posted on Twitter:

Stucki, Céline (@Diesel_Liesel). "Getting my handmaidens to do my hair for attempt 2.0 to see #NTLHamlet Thanks to @ntlive for the encore screening!" 19 Nov 2015, 7:57 PM. Tweet.

This would encourage the understanding that the eventness is not strongly linked to the temporal liveness of the original broadcast but originates from the rareness of the screenings as such and the 'special occasions' that Live Theatre Broadcasts are. And according to the previous tweet, even if a screening is watched multiple times, the excitement remains. According to this, the factor of unpredictability, which van Es quoted as one of the main features of live broadcasts, becomes irrelevant. Instead, the participation in the form of sharing the experience of watching a theatre broadcast in the cinema with friends and other members of the audience becomes more important. It can thus be argued that the event factor remains intact even when watching a broadcast for a second time during an encore screening, because the atmosphere is constructed from the social excitement of a shared experience, resulting from the rarity if not uniqueness of the event.

4.3. Adaptation of the Source Texts and Editing of LTBs

When considering the changes from the theatre performance to a Live Theatre Broadcast, editing has to be counted as one of the most consequential interventions into the viewing experience of the audience. In the theatre, audiences can decide which part of the stage to focus on. They may be interested in a specific actor or be forced to look at a certain stage area because their vision of other parts is obscured. Another option is to admire set pieces, projections or even members of the band or staff around the theatre. LTBs eliminate this freedom of choice, because they only show the audiences one angle at a time. It is up to the director of the broadcast to decide which actor to focus on in what scene, when to use a close-up or show a long shot of the stage.

In a previous chapter, Hitchman's example (182) of Celia in the 2016 NTLive LTB of *As You Like It* was mentioned, where the cinema and theatre audience would laugh at different moments during the show, because the cinema audience was able to see close-ups of Celia's reactions to other characters for humorous effect. While close-ups and forced perspective changes may be used for comedy moments like this or give the cinema audience the chance to see details in the acting performance or set pieces that the theatre audience might miss, the editing can also forcefully shape the audience's opinion of certain characters by (not) showing certain moments or reactions.

In terms of adaptations of the source text, it can be seen that *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* changed the least in terms of cutting lines or re-ordering scenes. The production uses the original text and honors its close connection to Shakespeare by performing the play according to the text. In *Coriolanus*, more lines were cut, usually from smaller roles, such as serving men, Patricians, Titus Lartius or Cominius. Coriolanus' lines stayed mostly intact, with very few exceptions, which leads to an even clearer focus on the main role by upping the percentage of his lines in comparison to the smaller roles.

Out of all three plays, *Hamlet* was forced to cut the most lines due to the length of the original text, which would run about five hours long if left uncut. Elliott analyzes the re-ordering and cutting of scenes in great detail and comes to the conclusion, that substantial changes were made to the text. For example, he mentions that Hamlet

appears on stage much sooner than usual, due to reorganizing lines as well as combining “fragments from five scenes (1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.1 and 3.2)” into the opening scene (Elliott 135). More scenes are cut or moved to a different place throughout Act 2 and 3 in order to accelerate the plot (Elliott 136 ff.). A possible reason for the quickened plot could also be the hope to keep audiences engaged in the story, especially those that might not be used to sitting through three-hour long Shakespeare plays. The biggest change that almost happened to the production was Turner’s plan to move the “to be or not to be” soliloquy to the very beginning of the play. However, due to public outcries after the first previews, the text was re-organized and the play started as it usually does, with the guards on the castle walls. In general, it can be said that Turner’s editing of the script tried to balance out the parts as much as possible, by cutting a substantial amount of Hamlet’s lines while leaving Ophelia’s and Gertrude’s lines mostly untouched (Elliott 140). Furthermore, she removed a large amount of religious references and instead focused on an anti-war message and a warning against the “politics of power” (Sokolova and Cinpoes 129).

The editing of the filmed material, on the other hand, shows more similarity than the editing choices of the written text. Generally, it can be said that the broadcasts for the most part use the well-established filmic conventions of editing. For example, a majority of scenes in films begin with an establishing or long shot in order to show the audience where the action takes place and to set the scene. Similarly, all three Live Theatre Broadcasts begin with an establishing shot of the stage to help the cinema audience orientate themselves in the theatre. The two most used shots throughout the LTBs are wide shots and medium shots. Wide shots are generally used when more characters are on stage, when a scene change happens or when someone new enters the stage. Medium shots, on the other hand, are used when characters have monologues or soliloquies in order to focus on the characters expressions. Close-up shots are rare and are only employed in important emotional scenes or when plot-important details need to be shown.

What is oftentimes missing in LTBs are reaction shots. This type of shot is frequently used in films when characters have longer pieces of dialogue and both characters’ reactions are shown in a sequence. For example, when Ophelia appears in 4.5, the camera focuses almost exclusively on her, showing her in medium shots as she walks

around the stage or in wide shots to indicate her position on stage. While Gertrude is visible in the long shots, the audience hardly ever sees her reactions to Ophelia's words, which are as important for the audience as her actions are. Without the queen's reactions, it is difficult to understand how outworldly Ophelia's behavior is and how much of an emotional impact this has on Gertrude. Similarly, when Laertes comes back, the camera shows him over Ophelia's shoulder in the background, but while his sister is on stage, there are few close-ups of him. The same problem appears in *Coriolanus* in scene 5.3, when Volumnia tries to argue with Martius. When he finally yields to her wishes, we only see a wide to medium shot of both actors and a semi-close-up of Coriolanus, but the audience cannot see the relief or worry on Volumnia's face. Thus, they also cannot estimate if her initial thought is relief, or if she immediately understands that her actions will be the reason for her son's death.

On the other hand, the few close-up shots used are very impactful. This can be seen particularly well in the character of Virgilia in *Coriolanus*. In the text, Martius wife has very few lines, and he rightly calls her "my gracious silence" (*Coriolanus* 2.1.170), due to her limited amount of written reactions to the happenings around her. However, the broadcast focuses on Virgilia on multiple occasions. For example, when she hears that her husband was victorious in the battle, she turns away from both her mother in law and the camera filming the wide shot. Instead, the shot changes to a close-up of the actress whipping away her tears and fixing her make-up, shot by a camera on the side of the stage. This gives the audience a moment alone with the character and shows her emotional reaction, which would usually be lost in the wide shot. Close-ups like these can thus be an indication for the cinema audience as to who the more sympathetic characters in the story are.

LTBs also adopt other cinematic strategies in order to highlight themes, which are important for the intended meaning of the play. *Coriolanus* offers multiple examples of this, especially in relation to Aufidius. When Martius asks for his help at the beginning of the second half, the two characters are very close to each other and due to the close-up of the camera and the almost over-shoulder-shot, images of a kissing scene are evoked, changing the dynamic between the two characters and immediately giving the audience an indication of Aufidius' level of admiration for Martius. On the other hand, during the fight between the two characters at the beginning of the play, the

camera movements shake as they would in a war documentary or if taken with a hand-held camera. The juxtaposition to the usually smooth camera motions adds dynamic to the fight scene and make it feel more like an action movie and less like a theatre play. Effects like this are signs that the broadcasts are truly their own form of medium and not a simple recorded form of the theatre broadcast, since additional meaning is added by the transference of one medium to another.

While it can be seen that the editing influences the viewing experience, it also shapes the way plays are staged. For example, *Hamlet* makes use of filmic techniques such as slow motion in the final fight between Hamlet and Laertes. While it is not unheard of for theatre productions to employ such filmic elements, it should be considered whether the knowledge of the future broadcast influenced the initial staging of the play to bring it closer to the second space of performance in the cinema. Generally, it will be interesting to see whether Live Theatre Broadcasts influence details in the staging as much as they do the choice of play and main actor, and whether or not new trends of stagings will emerge from this hybridization of mediums.

In conclusion, it can be said that while the editing of the video material through different shots such as close-ups and medium shots or through a change in camera movement can enrich the viewing experience and add additional meaning to a story, it can also withhold information about other characters that would be significant for understanding of their motivations and emotions. Especially the lack of reaction shots from characters while they are not speaking “reduces the amount of storytelling that can be achieved by non-verbal means” (Elliott 141). The freedom that audiences have in the theatre to look at whatever character or stage section they choose is removed from them and is substituted with a more fixed interpretation of the play through the employment of editing techniques.

4.4. Use of Celebrity Actors

The following subchapter will investigate three different strategies of meaning transfer in terms of the use of celebrity actor. Firstly, through the juxtaposition of actor and character in Tom Hiddleston, then in the overlapping of actor and character in Benedict

Cumberbatch and finally through the lack of a celebrity in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.

4.4.1. Tom Hiddleston as Martius

When looking at McCracken's model of meaning transfer in actors, it is important to first analyze the different characters an actor is famous for, in order to understand which associations are linked to them. At the time *Coriolanus* was staged and broadcast, Hiddleston was best known for his role as Loki in Marvel's *Thor* movies. However, before he was cast as Loki, he was already an established stage actor, having won the Olivier Award for "Best Newcomer" in 2008 and the Ian Charleson Award for exceptional classical stage performances by actors under 30 in 2006. He had also recorded an audio play of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* for the BBC and acted in numerous classical plays on stage, such as *Othello*, *The Changeling* and *Cymbeline*. However, because these productions did not reach a global audience, Hiddleston's fame remained theatre-sphere bound on a local level. When he was cast as Loki by director Kenneth Branagh, this changed overnight, and he became a celebrity. Especially younger female audiences revered him on online forums like Tumblr. Shortly after the release of *Thor*, Hiddleston was cast as Prince Hal and King Henry V in *The Hollow Crown* Series, consisting of Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1* and *2*, as well as *Henry V*, and thus returned to his Shakespearean roots.

Thus, Hiddleston's image is two-fold. On the one hand, he represents the classic British gentleman, having received his education in Eton College and the University of Cambridge. He is well known for his eloquence and his knowledgeability. The image taken from his experience on stage and his public self presented in interviews can be described as charming, smart and kind-hearted. On the other hand, the character that earned him his fast fame, Loki, is a cunning arrogant villain with questionable morals. The associations carried over from the character can be described as ruthless, deceitful, intelligent and ambitious. Together, the juxtaposing images of a sweet gentleman actor who plays devious characters lead Hiddleston to being cast in the 2014 commercial series by Jaguar, centered on British actors playing villains, which used both sides of his celebrity persona for positive meaning transfer.

When comparing Hiddleston's celebrity persona to the role of Martius, a clear opposition can be seen. In secondary literature, Martius is described as "unharnessed, unregulated, and ungovernable horse that obstinately "will on" in its career" (Hillier 375) or as "being motivated primarily by the love of honor" (Holloway 357). His military prowess helps him achieve fame, but his lack of diplomacy brings about his banishment. Martius is a man of actions more so than of words, and it pains him more to beg for the citizens' voices than to fight in a battle.

When reading Paul Taylor's online review on the Independent website, it can be argued that the meaning transfer between celebrity actor and new role were successful:

A strapping hawk-like figure, Hiddleston exudes the arrogance and dangerous charisma of one of nature's cruel head-prefects. But he also hauntingly hints at the terrible isolation of this hero who has been emotionally stunted and turned into a killing machine by his ambitious domineering mother. This is in no way a sentimentalized portrayal.

Similarly, David Benedict on Variety.com describes the character as "a man who chooses not to listen rather than someone shouting too loud to hear. With his thought process so legible, his arrogance becomes less of a forgone conclusion and, therefore, properly tragic." Both reviews agree on the character's intelligence and his arrogance, which link directly back to the character of Loki. The positive meaning transfer can be seen in both the positive and negative aspects of the character. In Martius' intellect and his empathic reaction towards his mother in the end, the audience can transfer the image of Hiddleston's public self, while Martius' ruthlessness and arrogance can be directly linked to the familiar character of Loki. Martius' physical prowess and the focus on the actor's body, on the other hand, can be seen as a link towards the popular action movie genre where Hiddleston first reached fame. Blackwell (349) explains that Hiddleston's body is viewed favorably because, instead of despite, his wounds and that the production utilizes similar strategies in inviting the audiences to focus their gaze on the actor's action body.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the casting of Hiddleston in the lead role was successful, due to the effective meaning transfer both between the role that made the actor famous and the constructed public celebrity persona. The role of Loki prompted a quicker reading of Martius as an arrogant and ambitious character, while Hiddleston's star persona allowed the audience to feel more sympathy with the character towards

the end of the play. Also, with Hiddleston's fame having originated in the action movie genre, the focus on Martius' physicality and the production's focus on the celebrity's body seemed to occur more naturally.

4.4.2. Benedict Cumberbatch as Hamlet

Similarly to Hiddleston, Cumberbatch began his career on stage, acting in plays such as Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2001) or *Romeo and Juliet* (2002) and Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* (2005). He also played smaller roles in film, being cast in *Atonement* (2007) and *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2008). But his big breakthrough happened when he was cast as Sherlock Holmes in the BBC series *Sherlock* in 2010. The series became an overnight success, and Cumberbatch and his co-actor Martin Freeman became international celebrities. Cumberbatch returned to the show for three more seasons, while also acting in high-profile productions such as *The Hobbit* (2012-2014), *The Hollow Crown: The War of the Roses* (2016) and *Frankenstein* (2011) at the National Theatre, which was also broadcast multiple times to cinemas around the world. Most recently, he was cast as Dr. Stephen Strange in Marvel's *Dr. Strange* (2016) and *Avengers: Endgame* (2019).

Cumberbatch's most famous characters, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Strange, are defined through their intelligence. Especially Holmes shows off his intellectual prowess and genius in every line of the TV show. The character defines himself through his ability to make deductions and connect points that ordinary people would miss through logic. In turn, however, he "lacks the inherent sense of right and wrong that Conan Doyle's Holmes possessed, relying constantly on John to explain the baffling rules of social interaction to him, completely at sea when it comes to the humane and considerate treatment of other people" (Scott-Zechlin 60). Similarly, the dragon Smaug whom Cumberbatch played throughout *The Hobbit* (2012-2014) trilogy and Khan in *Star Trek Into Darkness* (2013) are best known for their cold, calculated intellect. The actor's own public self is more soft-spoken and empathetic than his characters are, though not any less smart. He is also known to keep his private life very private, negating to answer personal questions and deciding to not join any form of social media. This elusiveness does not stop his fans from adoring him online, though the attention seems to be largely on his characters and less on him as a person.

When comparing Cumberbatch's celebrity persona to his performance as Hamlet, certain similarities can be found, especially when reading Susannah Clapp's review in *The Guardian*, titled "Hamlet review - Benedict Cumberbatch is the sanest of Danes":

I don't think I have ever seen a more rational *Hamlet*. When Benedict Cumberbatch tots up his bodkins, whips, fardels and slings in "To be or not to be", he might be enlisting the audience's support in a debate about assisted dying. Each possibility is laid out with complete clarity and assessed. Like a first-rate barrister in training, he nips around his mind to argue against himself.

Paul Taylor from *The Independent* seems to agree with this focus on meaning over emotion as he describes Cumberbatch's Hamlet:

The actor commands the stage with a whirling energy but we rarely feel soul-to-soul with this Hamlet, partly because he's often made to deliver the soliloquies against distracting freeze-framed or slo-mo action, partly because we don't sense that the actor is laying himself bare too as is the case with the greatest exponents of the role such as Mark Rylance and Simon Russell Beale.

Though the reviews differ in reasoning, with some blaming director Lyndsey Turner for an overcrowding of ideas (Billington, Letts) and others berating the star-hype and lack of quality in the supporting actors (Brantley), most reviews agree on Cumberbatch's focus on the words and the witty eloquence of the character, rather than on his emotional impact. This would point towards a successful meaning transfer between characters, copying Sherlock Holmes' intellect and projecting it onto Hamlet. However, for this particular role, the transfer seems to have blocked other readings of the text, focusing the reviewers' and audience's attention on the textual level of Cumberbatch's performance, rather than allowing his empathetic side to shine on stage.

In conclusion, Cumberbatch's Hamlet gains the added connotations from his star persona as a mainly intellectual character, which is detrimental to the character's emotional sides. Furthermore, the hype around the show, which sold out faster than any other show in London's theatre history, may have been also compromised the production's success. Firstly, the media watched the production like a hawk, and when it became known that Turner was planning on opening the show with the 'To be or not to be' monologue, there was a public outcry from newspapers and social media users alike. The controversy finally ended when the monologue was moved back into the third act during the previews. Pressure from being in the public eye may have hurt the

production and compromised Turner's vision for the play. Secondly, the constant onslaught of fans filming in the theatre forced Cumberbatch to address his fans at stage-door, asking them to stop or be thrown out of the theatre. Lastly, the media focus on the production was squarely on Cumberbatch, with few thoughts being wasted on the supporting cast. The outside pressure of giving Cumberbatch the opportunity to shine in the much-anticipated performance may have also taken away time or possibilities for the other performers to deliver their best performance. In comparison to Hiddleston's *Coriolanus*, *Hamlet* seems thus to be an example of not only the positive but also the negative sides of casting a celebrity actor and accepting the inevitable meaning transfers of their previous roles.

4.4.3. The Ensemble in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

Where the previous two subchapters analyzed the two celebrity actors of their respective productions, this chapter focuses on the lack thereof in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Though the RSC has a long-standing history of casting the greatest actors and actresses that British theatre has to offer, Judi Dench, Ian McKellen, David Tennant, Harriet Walter, Oliver Ford Davies, Patrick Stewart and Simon Russell Beale to name but a few, this particular production did not feature any high-profile celebrity actors. Instead, the production was made out of mainly young actors, many of which made their RSC debut during this production. The focus of the play supported by the relatively equal distribution of lines was on the four main performers and a handful of other supporting characters.

This difference of focus can be seen when reading the reviews the play received, for example in Billington's review for *The Guardian*. Here he mentions all four main actors and actresses equally, though his main focus is on the production itself. He takes time to describe the shortcomings of the play and the resulting repercussions for the production, instead of going into detail when describing a specific actor's or actress' performance. Similarly, Spenser's review in *The Telegraph* spends more time on explaining the play and the circumstances in which Shakespeare wrote it than on the actual performance. As in Billington's review, all performers receive roughly the same amount of praise and criticism. Mountford goes even further in her review for the *Evening Standard*, mentioning the theatre company's new policy of playing the entire

Shakespearean repertory once before repeating a play, in favor of spending time with describing the actors' performances in great detail.

In comparison to the other two productions, this strategy of a celebrity-less staging frees the play from any meaning transfer. In this particular case, this is amplified even more due to the relatively unknown play, which means that the director is free of direct comparisons to other productions, as was the case with *Hamlet*. And while this allows the production to interpret the play in whatever way they choose, they also cannot rely on the star power of a celebrity actor to draw in crowds and guarantee the financial success of a production. Instead, the RSC has to trust in the popularity of Shakespeare's birthplace to draw in tourists, as well as the good name of the theatre company and its synonymity with quality Shakespeare productions, to fill the theatre. Furthermore, the performers cannot rely on any of their previous roles to add meaning to their characters, but instead are forced to show the audience all facets of their characters on stage.

4.5. Economic Factors of Production and Post-Production

In order to answer the research question of this thesis, the final factor that should be considered is that of recording and preserving the broadcasts on DVD and the general economic values of LTBs. At the beginning of this thesis, liveness has been determined as one of the key features of LTBs, in so far as the difference between a conventional recording of a play does not constitute the same temporal connection that Live Theatre Broadcasts provide. And when looking at the name of the new medium, it can be seen that the liveness is also "symbolically significant" (Hitchman 175) and thus is a maker of identity for LTBs. However, encore screenings of broadcasts already put this trait into question, since the congruence of time between remote and present audiences is no longer present. And while early encore screenings are scheduled in multiple cinemas at the same time, later encores might only be shown in a single cinema, removing even the correlation and communal watching experience for audiences in different cinemas.

However, it can still be argued that since NTLive productions are not sold on DVD, the screenings are still events linked to a specific time and place, something that cannot

be reproduced whenever the audience wishes. In this context, Auslander (Liveness Performance 58) explains that “ [t]he less an event leaves behind in the way of artifacts and documentation, the more symbolic capital accrues to those who were in attendance”, meaning that the screenings become more precious to audiences because there is nothing to hold on to except for their own memories or pictures of the production. In this way, National Theatre Live broadcasts closely resemble theatre, which does not leave any artifacts behind either, other than programs or occasional audio recordings of speeches from famous stagings. In contrast to theatre, movies are shown in the cinema first, but are ultimately always sold on DVD, meaning that the medium can be viewed whenever necessary.

This begs the question whether or not there is a difference in medium between NTLive broadcasts, which are not recorded beyond the broadcasts, and RSC Live productions, which are released on DVD after a while. The viewing experience per se is not affected by this difference, since the audience still attends the cinema and the broadcast transpires in much the same fashion regardless of the broadcasting company. And while there is no study comparing the level of anticipation between audiences watching broadcasts from different companies, I would argue that the continual success of the RSC Live broadcasts indicates that the excitement and eventness are much the same, regardless of the fact whether a DVD will be made available later or not.

A difference that can be seen, however, is the possibility of encore screenings for the NTLive productions, in comparison to the single broadcast of RSC stagings. Where the RSC seemingly prefers to only broadcast their plays once before releasing them on DVD, the National Theatre offers multiple broadcasts of the same recording in order to give more people the opportunity to see or re-watch their productions. This difference also shows two opposing models of rentability for the broadcasts. In order to earn back the broadcasts initial costs, NTLive screens the productions again, without being confronted with new costs. The RSC, on the other hand, faces the additional costs of producing the DVDs but is able to sell them over a longer period of time and to a broader audience that is not limited by having to appear in a specific time and space.

What should also be taken into consideration when discussing economic value of LTBs is the use of celebrity actors. Aside from providing additional meaning transfer to enrich their roles, celebrities are supported by fans, who are willing to pay to see their favorite actor on stage or screen regardless of the success of the production. Also, the use of a celebrity actor saves a production from being lost in anonymity in the vast amount of theatre productions staged in London and films playing in cinemas (Fleck, Korchia and Le Roy 652). So, while celebrity actors may be more expensive to hire than less popular actors, they also guarantee full houses both in the theatre and cinema, even if their performances end up with questionable reviews.

To conclude the chapter, it is not surprising that theatre companies are interested in expanding their reach and finding new ways to make their productions economically profitable, especially when considering the continuous reduction of government funds for the arts. Both models of either encore screening or DVD selling have proven successful over the last few years and will likely continue to attract audiences to the cinemas. And while the decision to sell DVDs of a broadcast after its release should in theory reduce its liveness and eventness, it does not take away from the enjoyability and the audience's excitement at the screening of RSC Live broadcasts. The communal experience in the cinema is still strong enough to make the viewing experience special and to motivate audiences to go to the cinema. The only repercussion for the broadcasting company is the relinquishing of potential encore screenings in cinemas.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to situate the new medium of Live Theatre Broadcasts in the realm of theatre and cinema, as well as to analyze what effects celebrity actors have on this placement. A historic overview of the medium's origins showed that recordings of theatre productions are nothing new and had been particularly popular in the 1960ies, when performances were first filmed live from the theatre. Here, speeches were frequently delivered towards the camera, imitating television conventions, because most theatre recordings were shown on television rather than in the cinema.

During the early 2000s, the current theatre broadcasting companies established themselves, modeled after the Met Live in HD broadcasts. In comparison to the earlier recordings of theatre productions, the new broadcasts were filmed and transmitted live from the theatre to cinemas around the world, which became the defining feature of the new medium. Even though physical liveness was not achievable through broadcasts, the temporal coalition of the present and removed watching experience, as well as the limited amount of screenings, created the eventness of the broadcasts and brought about excitement through the shared exclusivity of the event.

When placing the medium between theatre and cinema, certain characteristics can be attributed to one or the other parent-medium. For example, the editing of the filmed video material is clearly a cinematic element. It takes away the freedom of directing the gaze wherever the audience wishes and instead dictates a specific view of the play. This in turn alters the viewing experience by focusing on or ignoring certain characters. By showing Virgilia's emotional reactions to Coriolanus' wounds to the audience, the viewers sympathize more with her, while the lack of reaction shots from Volumnia during her son's yielding speech prohibit the building of empathy towards the character, because the audience cannot read her emotions.

The addition of supplementary material attempts to substitute the elements that cinema audiences lack in comparison to theatre audiences. For example, the introduction videos frequently help the audience to orientate themselves in the theatre space by showing the theatre's outside or the stage in detail. Furthermore, the material takes the place of the programs that theatre audiences are able to buy. However, the supplementary videos allow the cinema audience to also see parts of the theatre that are locked from the present audience, like the actors' dressing rooms or rehearsal spaces. The videos add to the eventness and exclusivity of the Live Theatre Broadcasts. However, they also carry agency by forcing a specific view of the play on the audience. This is done by having the performers and directors explain certain themes or character motivations to the audience, which in turn will heavily influence their reading of the play and regulate their expectations. Together with the editing of the video material, it can thus be argued that Live Theatre Broadcasts show a more biased and restricted version of the stage production in comparison to theatre

performances, which leaves the remote audience less space to create their own interpretations of the play.

Online participation is another strategy employed to cope with the shortcomings of the remote broadcasts. Through the encouragement of partaking in the discourse about the play on social media, audiences can enter a large community, express their opinions and regain a sense of shared viewing experiences that might be lessened by viewing the production in cinemas. Furthermore, the online exchange of opinions and criticism can make audiences feel involved in the production and heighten the excitement before or after going to see a Live Theatre Broadcast.

The filming of audience reactions similarly attempts to help balance the physical remoteness of the cinema audience. Through showing the theatre audience, the cinema audience gains a better spatial awareness of the performance space and is reminded of the rule of etiquette in theatres. Watching the theatre audience becomes part of the performance for the remote audience, as the present audience is asked to behave in a certain way, in order to create the most 'natural looking' audience possible. This indicates another deliberate interference into the viewing experience, in order to move the medium more towards a theatre viewing experience than a typical cinema experience.

In order to answer the question of the celebrity actor's purpose in the development of LTBs, the thesis has given a brief historic overview of the evolution of celebrities, starting with Alexander the Great. Through this analysis and the comparison of different definitions of the concept of celebrities, it was established that celebrities need to be known by a large amount of people. Furthermore, they have to simultaneously be extraordinary through a talent or deed, as well as being relatable for their fans. Fame forces attention onto the celebrities' private lives, and their personal struggles turn into morality tales, discussed through gossip and tabloid newspapers. However, the celebrities' true self is never shared with the world. Instead, various personas are created and used in different situations. For example, the public self of a celebrity can be seen when they give interviews, while the public private self is utilized when posting on social media forms. But even the most private self that a celebrity might share with their fans is not their authentic self, but instead a carefully crafted persona that carries

certain values and meanings. These meanings are compressed into the celebrity's persona, which can then be used by brands and theatre companies to decide whether employing a certain actor would result in positive meaning transfer. This can be established when values or characteristics associated with a performer matches the potential brand they are supposed to induce in a commercial or a character they are asked to play on stage.

In terms of the placement of the medium, most NTLive broadcasts utilize celebrity actors to guarantee the rentability of their productions. Though this strategy is neither new nor exclusive to broadcasts, it can be argued that theatre productions with celebrity actors, famous for their roles in Hollywood, are more likely to be chosen for LTBs, because the celebrities add credibility to the productions and draw fans to the cinema. The use of a celebrity actor thus does not influence the media's placement between theatre and cinema, but it does utilize the actors' global fame to lure audiences into the cinema and makes it more likely for cinema audiences to engage with theatre than they would be without the use of a celebrity actor.

However, these celebrity actors do infer meaning from their work in other spheres onto their stage characters. As such, Hiddleston is an example of positive meaning transfer, because his role as Loki and his public persona added value and successful characteristics to his portrayal of Coriolanus. In this case, the arrogance and intelligence from Hiddleston's roles meshed with the soft-heartedness of his public persona and created a multidimensional character that represented both of these sides in a highly-praised performance. Cumberbatch, on the other hand, struggled with the meaning transfer from his role as Sherlock Holmes, as his Hamlet was read as overly intelligent but lacking emotional depth. This production also showed the shadow sides of using a celebrity actor, as the pressure of the media's attention forced changes upon the director's initial vision and left hardly any room in the spotlight for any of the actors linked to the theatre sphere.

In the RSC's broadcast of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, it can be seen that broadcasts are not reliant on celebrity actors. In this case, the famous actors were substituted with more focus on the plot of the play and with attention to the author and performance location. This proves that while LTBs do need a unique selling point to

draw audiences to the cinema, they are not reliant on celebrity actors to broach the rift between theatre performances and cinema. The excitement surrounding the eventness of the screenings is what draws audiences to the cinema, as well as the expanded reach of the productions to remote audiences that would otherwise never be able to attend any of the broadcast performances. The limited number of broadcasts and the lack of recordings of NTLive productions add to the feeling of exclusivity surrounding the broadcasts. While the medium can conclusively be said to be closer related to a movie, in that it focuses the audiences eyes by editing the gaze and its spatial distance, the reception and experience is closer related to watching a theatre production due to the lack of retainable artifacts after the performance.

Thus, ultimately, it really is the novelty of the sparkling wine in the cinema and the excited buzz on social media before a broadcast that guarantee the continual success of the medium. And while celebrity actors help motivate people to buy tickets, the medium is not dependent on them to survive. Instead, it is the constructed liveness, the exclusivity and the communal experience that keep luring people back into the cinema to enjoy an evening of theatre – with sparkling wine in one hand and popcorn in the other.

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Zusammenfassung - Abstract

Das Ziel der vorliegenden Diplomarbeit ist es, das neue Medium der live in Kinos übertragenen Theateraufführungen (Live Theatre Broadcasts) zu analysieren und zu untersuchen, welche Merkmale essenziell für die Identität des Mediums sind. Hierzu zählen die kurzen Einführungsvideos vor den Vorstellungen, die Aufrufe zur aktiven Onlinedebatte via Sozialer Medien, sowie das Filmen des im Theater anwesenden Publikums. Im Vordergrund steht jedoch die Zeitgleichheit der Aufführung und Übertragung, die dem Publikum das Gefühl vermittelt, live im Theater anwesend zu sein. Der größte Unterschied zwischen einem Theater- und Kinobesuch besteht darin, dass das übertragene Videomaterial zusammengeschnitten und editiert ist, was dem Medium eine klarere Interpretation auferlegt, da das Publikum die eigene Blickrichtung nicht bestimmen kann.

Die Diplomarbeit ist auch an der Entwicklung der ‚Celebrities‘ und deren Auswirkung auf die moderne Gesellschaft interessiert. In den jeweiligen Kapiteln werden die Funktionen von Berühmtheiten definiert und McCrakens Modell zur Bedeutungsübertragung erklärt. Dieses wird anschließend verwendet, um zu erklären, inwieweit bekannte Rollen eines Schauspielers sich auf seine späteren Charaktere auswirken können. In diesem Falle werden die Darbietungen von Tom Hiddleston als Coriolanus und Benedict Cumberbatch als Hamlet näher betrachtet. Außerdem wird eine Aufführung von *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (2015) der Royal Shakespeare Company analysiert, welche komplett ohne berühmten Schauspieler auskommt.

Die drei Aufführungen werden anschließend anhand der zuvor etablierten medienspezifischen Merkmale analysiert. Hier kann man klar erkennen, dass das neue Medium näher mit einem Kinofilm verwandt ist, wobei die Rezeptionserfahrung mehr an einen Theaterbesuch erinnert. Außerdem beweist die Royal Shakespeare Company, dass ein Live Theatre Broadcast auch ohne berühmten Schauspieler auskommt, solange das jeweilige Theater selbst oder der Aufführungsort einen ähnlich wichtigen kulturellen Stellenwert wie ein berühmter Schauspieler hat und so das Interesse des Publikums garantieren kann.