

**“I can rhyme Anarchy & Panicky if homeboy has a French accent
right?”**

—

Repetition, Rhyming and Social Impact in *Hamilton*

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Amerikkalaisen musikaalin pitkän historian aikana sen käytänteet ovat vuorotellen muodostuneet ja rikkoutuneet. Tämä pro gradu -tutkielma tutkii musikaalia *Hamilton: An American Musical* (2015), joka kertoo USA:n ensimmäisen valtionvarainministerin Alexander Hamiltonin elämästä ja kuolemasta. Tutkielman lähtökohtana on hypoteesi, että *Hamilton* on käytänteitä rikkova musikaali. Tutkimuksen kohteena on se, millä tavoin *Hamilton* käyttää toistoa ja riimejä joko mukautuen tai poiketen vallitsevista käytänteistä sekä se, millä tavoin musikaali itse vaikuttaa ympärillään olevaan yhteiskuntaan ja millä tavoin toiston ja riimien käytöllä edesautetaan tätä vaikutusta.

Hamilton käyttää toistoa hyvin musikaaleille tyypilliseen tapaan korostaakseen muun muassa tiettyjä hetkiä ja niiden eroja suhteessa toisiinsa. Toistoa käytetään myös tiettyjen teemojen korostamiseen sekä itse musikaalin puitteissa että suhteessa musikaalin ulkopuoliseen maailmaan. Näin *Hamilton* yhdistää toiston yhteiskunnalliseen vaikutukseen: toistamalla tiettyjä asioita ne jäävät varmasti yleisön mieleen ja niitä pohditaan myös teatterin ulkopuolella.

Aikaisemmista musikaaleista poiketen *Hamiltonin* pääsääntöisesti käyttämä musiikkityyli on hip hop ja rap. Koska rap on puhemaista laulua, kaikki *Hamiltonin* dialogi on laulettua. Tämä tekee siitä myös muodoltaan erilaisen kuin useimmat musikaalit, joissa laulaminen vuorottelee puhutun dialogin kanssa. Sekä musikaaleissa että räpissä tärkeää ovat nokkelat riimit, mutta musikaaleissa arvostetaan enemmän lyriikoiden sovittamista hahmon luonteeseen eikä niinkään nokkelaa riittelyä vain sen itsensä vuoksi kuten usein räpissä. *Hamilton* yhdistää molemmat käytännöt niin että sen lyriikat soveltuvat sen hahmoille, mutta ne ovat myös erittäin kekseliäitä.

Hamilton rikkoo rajoja myös ulkoisesti: Musikaalin kaikki päänäyttelijät ovat afroamerikkalaisia tai latinoita. Vähemmistöjen nouseminen päärooliin Broadway-musikaaleissa on edelleen harvinaista, ja suoraan heille suunnattuja rooleja on vähän. Kaikki *Hamiltonin* henkilöahmot ovat alunperin valkoihoisia, ja on merkittävää, että heitä esittävät nyt vähemmistöjen edustajat, sillä vähemmistöjen asemaa historiassa on usein vähätelty. *Hamiltonin* roolijako ei ole sattumaa, vaan sen tekijät ovat hyvin tietoisia roolituksen tärkeydestä ja sen aiheuttamasta huomiosta. Lisäksi hip hop tuo lisänsä *Hamiltonin* yhteiskunnalliseen vaikutukseen. Hip hop syntyi ilmaisemaan esittäjilleen tärkeitä yhteiskunnallisia kysymyksiä ja sen ilmaisemat kysymykset ovat edelleen afroamerikkalaisille ja muille vähemmistöille tärkeitä. *Hamilton* yhdistää kaksi hyvin erilaista taidemuotoa: pääsääntöisesti valkoihoisten esittämät musikaalit ja pääsääntöisesti vähemmistöjen esittämän räpin. *Hamilton* kunnioittaa ja hyödyntää molempien taidemuotojen käytänteitä, mutta se myös rikkoo molempien rajoja yhdistämällä ne ja luomalla jotain uutta.

Avainsanat: musikaalit; *Hamilton: An American Musical*; hip hop; yhteiskunnallinen vaikutus; vähemmistöt.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Musical theater in America has a long history. From its origins in operettas and revues to the at present popular integrated musical – a musical which incorporates acted scenes with songs into a cohesive whole (McMillin: 1) – it has changed and evolved through different forms and conventions (see for example Bordman; Block; Jones). Those conventions were often born out of what was popular, rather than through any conscious effort to create them. Throughout the American musical's history, there have also been some seminal musicals, which have instigated change within the genre. Examples of such musicals are *Oklahoma!* (1943) which helped popularize the modern form of the integrated musical and *Hair* (1967) which incorporated rock music into the musical. This thesis will consider *Hamilton: An American Musical* (2015) as one of those musicals capable of instigating change.

Even though the academic study of musicals has been increasing in the past decade or two, most of the studies focus on older musicals, classics or otherwise well-known musicals such as *Oklahoma!* and *A Chorus Line* (1975). Hardly any studies have been carried out on contemporary musicals. Yet it is also important to study newer musicals because they are at the forefront of the genre. New musicals show where the genre is going and how it might be changing in the future. It is of course not possible to know how long the popularity of a contemporary musical will last, but that does not prevent discussion. In today's highly electronic world, it is also possible to track a certain musical's reception and possible impact on viewers and critics from the very beginning.

The musical under examination in this thesis is a popular contemporary musical called *Hamilton: An American Musical*, written by Lin-Manuel Miranda, which premiered on Broadway on August 6, 2015. The musical portrays the life and death of Alexander Hamilton,

the first Treasury Secretary of the United States of America. He had an eventful and productive life starting from his poor childhood in the Caribbean through the Revolutionary War and political pursuits ending famously in a duel in which he was shot to death by the then Vice President Aaron Burr (Chernow: 1, 4–5). *Hamilton* is highly popular with critics and audiences alike, having won numerous Tony awards as well as a Grammy and being sold out on Broadway until the end of the year 2017.¹ *Hamilton* stands out from other musicals because its music is largely in the style of hip hop. In the past, musicals have used a variety of musical styles from pop ballads to jazz and even rock (Taylor: 1). However, while hip hop has been used occasionally, it has not yet gained a steady footing in musicals. Miranda’s previous musical *In The Heights* used “hip-hop to tell a story that had nothing to do with hip-hop” (Miranda & McCarter: 10) and *Hamilton* does the same. Revolutionary era America could not be further away from modern hip hop, yet *Hamilton*’s popularity clearly proves that this combination is not a problem for the audiences. The quote in the title of this thesis is from a tweet² from Lin-Manuel Miranda, which encapsulates some of the innovation that went into the writing of this musical. *Hamilton* is seemingly different from other musicals at its very core and thus provides an interesting subject for study. Instead of studying musicals which are very similar with one another, studying the one musical that is different provides a different point of view on the whole genre.

The basic research question in this thesis is: How does *Hamilton* adhere to or subvert conventions of repetition and rhyming in musicals and how does its treatment of these stylistic matters contribute to its social impact? As stated earlier, over time there seems to have been musicals which both subvert old conventions and form new ones. If the hypothesis here is that *Hamilton* is one of these musicals, we must answer these questions to prove, or

¹ <http://www.hamiltonbroadway.com/#tickets>

² https://twitter.com/lin_manuel/status/346746065086734336

disprove, the hypothesis. Both repetition and rhyming have to do with the form of the musical and are very prevalent in musicals, thus providing ample material for analysis. For the purpose of this thesis, social impact is understood in the sense that a work of art affects the society around it, be it society at large or a smaller society, for example the Broadway community. Social impact is something that is not necessarily always associated with musicals. There is however a precedent for it in musicals and equally importantly in hip hop culture as well, which is an integral part of *Hamilton*. This combination of musicals and hip hop is the primary reason why its social impact is potentially so big. *Hamilton* takes elements from both cultures and combines them in ways which challenge the existing norms and create new conventions both within the musical form and outside it in for example casting.

To find an answer to the research question, this thesis will analyze multiple aspects of *Hamilton*: firstly, its use of repetition in building characters as well as the way it uses repetition to build larger themes within the musical will be analyzed. Secondly, the possible differences in rhyming between different characters and the possible effect those differences have in their characterizations will be analyzed. The possible effect different styles of music have on rhyming will also be analyzed. Thirdly, the show's possible social impact through casting and musical choices as well as other extramusical features like its educational initiative will be discussed.

Besides this introduction and a final chapter with conclusions, this thesis will have four other chapters. The second chapter of this thesis will survey the history of the musical to map its conventions and also detail some modern theories regarding the form of the musical. The chapter will also look at conventions of writing lyrics in both musicals and rap music. These will provide the background framework and context for understanding both the traditional and the innovative features within *Hamilton*. The third chapter will analyze the use

of repetition in *Hamilton*. The first sub-chapter will focus on how the use of repetition affects characterizations. The second sub-chapter will focus on how repetition is used to build themes. The fourth chapter will analyze the rhyming patterns in the musical. The first sub-chapter will focus on how different characters use rhyme and how it affects their characterizations. The second sub-chapter will focus on the possible effect the style of music might have on rhyming. The fifth chapter will focus on *Hamilton*'s possible social impact, looking especially at the effect of its casting choices as well as its educational initiative. As will become evident later, all of these topics and themes are very much interconnected. Especially the social impact aspect is affected by for example the casting choices but also by much deeper aspects in the musical form itself.

2 THEORIES ON MUSICAL AND LYRICAL FORM

This chapter will first briefly discuss theories that are applied to musicals, especially regarding the integrated musical, since it is the most studied form of musical at present. Secondly, this chapter will explore the history of the musical lyrics and their form as well as the form of rap lyrics. These theories and suggestions on form will be briefly compared with *Hamilton*, though this comparison will be more pronounced in the following analysis chapters.

2.1 Musicals

American musicals have a long history. Their development started with revues, which focused on songs succeeding each other rather than any clear plot, and operettas, which in turn focused on an often satiric plot interlaced with songs and popular dances (McMillin: 11). The differentiation between these two forms was already present in the late 1800s and the turn of the century and they had their origins in Britain, and the operetta partly in France and Vienna as well, before they migrated to America (Bordman: 135). Revues and operettas were often satirical and laced with comedy, especially the operetta with its penchant for mistaken identities (McMillin: 11–13). Most early musicals had romance as their main plot and ended in marriage, but this changed in the 1940s and 1950s and since then this has not been the case with most of the more popular and influential musicals (ibid: 180).

Modern musicals come in various different shapes and sizes. At present the most common, as well as most widely known, form of musical is arguably the so-called integrated musical which, as was stated earlier, is a musical where acted scenes and performed songs come together to form a cohesive whole (McMillin: 1), meaning two or more different ways

of expression (i.e. speaking and singing) come together, as opposed to just one way of expression (i.e. singing), as in current sung-through musicals. This difference will be addressed in more detail later. This form of musical was popularized on Broadway by Richard Rogers and Oscar Hammerstein II whose hit musical *Oklahoma!* premiered on Broadway in March 1943 (ibid). At the time the “leading aesthetic theory ... was the new criticism” which leaned heavily on Wagner’s theory of “*gesamtkunstwerk*” (ibid: 3). Both of these theories essentially strive for the same thing: they “sought an organic wholeness in works of art”, meaning that art “should grow like fruit on the vine” and that the artist should disregard elements which did not fit the whole (ibid: 3–4). New criticism would seemingly be a fitting theory to explain the basics of the integrated musical as well, however, the most important works detailing new criticism at the time all excluded musicals as “popular entertainment hardly worth study”, seeing song and dance as unnecessary additions to drama (ibid: 4). Rogers and Hammerstein on the other hand wanted to “elevate the cultural status” of the musical and they did this by applying the ideas of new criticism to musicals, attempting to bring them to the same level as the other, more highly regarded art forms (ibid: 5).

Modern theories on how integrated musicals work and present their material vary from scholar to scholar. The basic definition as seen above is quite simple, but further theories and arguments on how the integrated musical actually works add complexity to the definition and it would seem there is no one answer. While there is some consensus on the very basic definition of the integrated musical there are also differing opinions on the more detailed definitions as well as on whether or not sung-through musicals can also be integrated musicals. Therefore it is not so much pertinent to try to define integrated musical (or sung-through musical for that matter) in a broad sense, but rather focus on the more detailed definitions and theories on how musicals work and present their content. This will provide a

framework against which *Hamilton* can be compared to discern similarities and differences.

Millie Taylor states that while the basic definition of integrated musicals suggests that all the parts of a musical work cohesively together, that might in fact not be the case (55). Taylor theorizes that since the way meaning is signified varies in each medium (music, dance, spoken dialogue), the meaning that these mediums convey may differ, for instance giving different reflection on a character, thus creating disjunction between meanings instead of cohesion. This in turn creates an interpretation of said character that is complex and nuanced. (ibid) Later on Taylor argues “that the through-composed [meaning sung-through] musical is also composed of individually disjunctive elements” (59). The comparison here is to the integrated musical which by virtue of being “integrated” and thus having several different media which signify meaning in different ways, has an “in-built capacity for disjunction and disruption” (Taylor: 63). Scott McMillin echoes Taylor’s theory. He argues that by definition integration involves different things coming together and thus the tension the differences create is far more interesting than those differences being subdued in favor of seamlessness. (McMillin: 2)

However, McMillin (182) further theorizes that if indeed it is the differences between the individual elements of the musical that make it interesting, there must be some resemblance between the elements regardless. McMillin calls this the mirroring effect. He suggests that the presence of a mirroring effect proves that different aspects of the musical must “remain distinct enough to reflect each other” (208). He comes to the conclusion that he prefers the term “coherence” over “integration”. He further explains this distinction by saying that “integration” refers to different aspects melting together while “coherence” refers to different aspects sticking together while still remaining different. (209) This mirroring theory could be seen to facilitate reprises in musicals. Reprises are by definition repetition and this is

what mirroring can be understood to be as well. McMillin's mirroring refers to moments that resemble each other but are different enough to create some level of disjunction, which in turn emphasizes the coherence of the musical. However, there are no explicit studies done on reprises and why musicals use them abundantly.

McMillin puts forth another argument regarding integrated musicals which is that they alternate between "two orders of time" which creates tension and complexity. The first order of time is book time (e.g. the spoken dialogue), which is progressive and moves the plot along. The second order of time is lyric time which is the one present in song and dance. This second time disrupts the book time. (6–7) McMillin further argues that songs and dances do not advance plot, as is suggested by integration theory, but instead they build on the plot set by the book. They use the intrinsic difference between book and song to emphasize and repeat the plot. (7–8) However, Jones expresses a differing opinion. Using *Show Boat* (1927) as an example, he posits that the songs continue the themes set forth by the acted scenes, developing characters further and advancing the plot. (76) Jones further explains this by suggesting that songs (melody and lyrics) have the power to speed through time and compress it to express more in a shorter amount of time compared with spoken dialogue (ibid). Furthermore, Geoffrey Block's definition of integrated musicals, which is that "the songs advance a plot, flow directly from the dialogue, and express the thoughts of the characters who sing them" (394) is also in direct opposition to McMillin. Additionally, sung-through musicals fit this definition as well as integrated ones do. Going by his definition, Block further suggests that a musical being sung-through actually increases "the possibility of integration" (394), instead of weakening it. However, Block also suggests that this "increased integration leads to decreased dramatic meaning" (ibid), meaning that the musical being sung-through runs the risk of repeating its musical themes too much, which dilutes their dramatic

power. These differing opinions suggest that the relation between singing and speaking can be quite flexible and that there is no straight-forward form but that this relation can vary even within one musical.

Specific research on sung-through musicals is very scarce. One of the only ones is Jessica Sternfeld's 2006 publication on what she terms "megamusicals". A megamusical "is usually sung-through and features an epic, historically situated, but timeless plot staged on a fancy set" (Sternfeld: 3). Her examples include *Cats*, *Les Misérables* and *Phantom of the Opera* (ibid: 1). Sternfeld also notes that in addition to these qualities of the show itself, there are often other, "extramusical features" which define the megamusical (3). Especially in the 1980s, megamusicals were marketed with big marketing campaigns. Due, in part, to this type of marketing, megamusicals are often financially successful and they are also internationally widespread. Finally, though megamusicals are popular with the audiences, they are often, for whatever reason, not appreciated by critics. (Sternfeld: 3–4) These types of musicals are also discussed briefly by some other scholars. For example, Jones gives this type of musical very little merit. He prefers the term "technomusical" over megamusical because he wants to draw attention to the fact that these kinds of musicals have very little "real content" and they rely on "spectacle, not substance" to make money. (322) Given that the premise of Jones' book is to study musicals which focus on social issues, his view on megamusicals is somewhat understandable. Bordman describes these types of musicals as "spectacles" and concedes that they often have "textual weaknesses" but use "special effects" to distract from that (722).

While *Hamilton* does seemingly adhere to at least some of those qualities attributed to megamusicals, its historical plot and the fact that it is sung-through being the most obvious ones, at least some of those shared features might be coincidental. Its decade-spanning plot and historical setting is a given due to its subject matter, namely the life of a historical figure.

It is sung-through because it uses hip hop (rap) as its base musical style, and rapping is by definition almost like talking. Rapping is a type of music where the performer “uses spoken or semispoken declamations, usually in rhyming couplets” to perform the song (Ramsey Jr: 165). *Hamilton* is financially successful largely due to good reviews as well as hype from audiences and celebrities. *Hamilton* seems to have some features in common with megamusicals, but it seems to have arrived at these qualities coincidentally through its choices, rather than striving for any similarities. By virtue of being sung-through, *Hamilton* does not fit the basic definition of an integrated musical, but it does not fit the definition of a megamusical either. It seems to fall somewhere between these two opposite ends, having features of both types of musicals.

Hamilton does not have a clear difference between book and song, as it is sung-through and thus does not have a book and the lines between songs and dialogue are blurred by using rap, but it does arguably still adhere to the two orders of time set forth by McMillin. *Hamilton* has dialogue performed by rapping, a kind of recitative speech, which is in real time, while its more “songy” numbers often speed up time in favor of condensing the plot. However, these speeded up numbers do also advance the plot. It also has a few songs that seem to stop narrative time in favor of exploring a feeling or emphasizing a moment more fully. These songs go inside the character’s head and show us what they are thinking. Examples of these kinds of songs are “Wait For It”, “Hurricane” and “Burn”. *Hamilton* seems to show evidence of both McMillin’s theory of the two orders of time as well as Jones’ idea that songs do advance the plot.

As can be seen from this section, musicals and their form can be defined and described in many different ways. Most of the theories presented here fit musicals with both speaking and singing as well as musicals with only singing in them. The conventions of musicals might

have been clearer earlier in the development of the form, but in present day the conventions and definitions seem to vary from person to person. But while there might not be a conventional form for the musical as a whole, at least when it comes to the degree of integration between speaking and singing, some of the smaller portions of musicals do have conventions, as we will see in the following chapters. *Hamilton* is a testament to this difficulty in forming a coherent definition but also to the flexibility of the form. It partly fits the definitions of both integrated musical and megamusical and in other parts it does not fit either definition, rather being something new. Essentially it both draws on some established conventions of the musical form but also challenges others.

2.2 Lyrics

Hamilton is undoubtedly a musical, though as seen in the previous section, a more specific definition is difficult to make. *Hamilton* uses music styles typical to musicals but it also uses rap as its form which is a rather new addition to musicals. There are some conventions for lyrics in musicals, but there are also conventions to the lyrics of rap music, which are partly different from those of musical lyrics. This section will look at the conventions of both musicals and rap to form a base for the further lyrical analysis of *Hamilton*.

A number of influential figures on the world of the musical have advocated for certain standards in the genre, one of these being the use of pure rhymes. The lyricists in the 1920s and 1930s, before the popularization of the modern integrated musical in the 1940s, wrote lyrics of varying complexity, which often had very witty rhymes and other plays with words (Furia: 9). While purity of those rhymes did not seem to be as much of a focus as the wittiness, most of the rhymes still seemed to be pure, for which ever reason, though occasionally some near rhymes did slip in. For example, Lorenz “Larry” Hart (of Rodgers and

Hart) had a penchant for intricate mosaic, internal and even broken rhymes (Furia: 95) which he paired with the talent of making those complex rhymes sound like colloquial speech (Furia: 108), such as in the line “Beans could get no keener re- / ception in a beanery” (from *The Garrick Gaieties* (1925), qtd in Furia: 104). Ira Gershwin on the other hand usually had quite simple rhymes (ibid: 127), but he had a talent for other ways of playing with words, like using an exclamation as a noun: “You made all other boys seem blah; / just you alone filled me with AAH!” (from *Funny Face* (1927), qtd in Furia: 134).

As a contrast with the others, Oscar Hammerstein II (of Rodgers and Hammerstein as well as Kern and Hammerstein) seemingly on purpose decided to write his lyrics to fit the character instead of flaunting his own wit, setting the standard for integrated musical lyrics that hold to this day (Furia: 193). Hammerstein favored simple lyrics and even the absence of rhymes rather than very elaborate ones (ibid: 182). Instead of rhymes, he focused on crafting the vocal and consonant sounds in words so that they would be easy to sing (ibid: 188). Hammerstein stated in an essay in 1949 that rhymes should be limited in their number, so as not to make the audience “rhyme-conscious” and thus have them focus more on what is being said instead of the rhyming itself. He elaborated that if you have the audience wait for the rhyme, they tend to “listen to the meaning of the words” more. (qtd in Block: 339)

This notion from Hammerstein might be the one still prevailing, considering, as stated above, that his and Rodgers’ musical *Oklahoma!* popularized the modern integrated musical. In fact Stephen Sondheim, someone who follows in their footsteps, echoes the notion of fitting the lyrics to the character: he said in an interview with Jim Lehrer on PBS, referring to “I Feel Pretty”, a song of his own from *West Side Story* (1957) where Sondheim feels he gave Maria (the character who performs the song) words too uncharacteristic for her, perhaps because he “wanted to show that [he] could rhyme skillfully” (Sondheim). However, it has to be noted

that the lyricists who valued wittiness over anything might not have disagreed with this: Block refers to the Rodgers and Hart musical *Pal Joey* (1940) and its character Vera, whose “ability to rhyme internally reflects her complexity and sophistication” (107). The older lyricists might simply have had different standards for what constituted realistic expression for their characters. They perhaps trusted in the audience’s ability to suspend disbelief more than modern musicals.

Sondheim preserved the “concept of the integrated musical”, though his work differs from the works of Rodgers and Hammerstein “stylistically and dramaturgically” (Block: 382). Sondheim understood the form of the musical that Rodgers and Hammerstein adhered to, but he reinterpreted it in his own way, wanting to say something new (ibid). This is similar to what Hammerstein and his contemporaries did earlier, taking the prevailing tradition and critical theory and molding it into something of their own. Perhaps *Hamilton*’s inability to directly fit into any of the traditions mentioned above (though it does not entirely miss them) is simply a sign of this kind of shift happening again.

The conventions of rap lyrics are far more clear and well documented (see for example Bradley and DuBois). Rhyming is at the forefront of rap lyrics and rappers make use of both pure and near rhymes, positioning them practically anywhere within the lines. Rappers also use similes and other creative ways of using language. (Bradley and DuBois: xxxi) However, rap also has constraints which guide the form: “The MC not only must craft a coherent poetic narrative or create a compelling persona, but must do so while rhyming with some regularity and without ever losing the beat” (ibid: xxxiii). Successful rap lyrics must be “poetically interesting”, because they do not have the support from music that more melodic songs have (ibid: xxxiv). These constraints lead to rap lyrics being more closely judged than lyrics in other genres of music (ibid: xxxv). However, there are no restrictions to what kind of

language rappers can use. They can use existing slang or make up new slang words and they can be offensive and explicit. (ibid: xxxvii–xxxviii)

Furia notes that lyrics have similar aspects to poetry. They use creative language, such as rhyme and metaphors, and sometimes lyrics can be evaluated in the same way as poetry. (6) Furia was referring to musical lyrics, especially those before the 1940s, but there is no reason this same sentiment could not be attached to rap lyrics as well. In fact, Bradley and DuBois' *Anthology* does exactly that: it assesses rap lyrics as poetry, without their music. It can be argued that what connects modern rappers and the musical lyricists of the 1920s and 1930s is the demand to be creative and witty while adhering to their respective forms. However, modern musical lyrics follow this demand more loosely since it is now common to fit the lyrics to the character and hardly any character is quite as witty as the writer whose job is to come up with clever rhymes.

Hamilton builds on both the traditions of lyrics in musicals and the traditions of rap lyrics and by mashing them together creates something wholly new. Like its many predecessors *Hamilton* listens to the traditions of its form, both musicals and rap, but does not replicate them exactly, instead opting for something new and different. This again is a telling sign that *Hamilton* is not only deliberately different but also aiming for change.

3 REPETITION

Reprises are a constant feature of musicals (Block: 358). A reprise is a piece of melody or a part of a lyric or a song that is repeated later on in the musical for a variety of reasons. Originally it might have simply been a way to make more money by making sure the audience would remember a certain song and buy the recording of said song, but over time it has formed into an artistic device and a way to elicit emotional responses in the audience and to remind them of previous scenes and moments. (Jones: 76–77) Reprises specifically as a stylistic device were used as early as the Kern and Hammerstein musical *Show Boat*, which premiered in 1927 (ibid: 76). This is not surprising, since, as noted before, Hammerstein and his later collaborative partner Rodgers were responsible for what was to become the prototype of the modern integrated musical (ibid). Reprises can be used to remind the audience of what came before but they can also be used to draw attention to the subtle differences between scenes and moments thus creating disjunction (Taylor: 75).

In the sheer number of reprises, *Hamilton* definitely adheres to the convention of musicals. *Hamilton* is full of reprises and it uses them very effectively. It has literal reprises, where even the song title has the word “reprise” in it, for example “The Story of Tonight (reprise)”, but it also has far more subtle reprises that happen in the middle of songs. In the context of this thesis, reprises will be understood to include all forms of lyrical and melodic repetition.

There are several different ways of using reprises. The most obvious one is using clear repetition as a reminder of something that happened before, a type of flashback, such as Hamilton repeating the phrase “I am not throwing away my shot” a number of times throughout the musical. Reprises can also be used to highlight differences between moments,

creating disjunction, for example Hamilton repeating a monologue beginning with the words “I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory” at three very different moments in his life. Reprises can also be used to highlight a character trait, such as when Hamilton repeats other characters’ words for different reasons. *Hamilton* also uses reprises to establish important themes within its narrative. The first sub-chapter 3.1 will look at repetition as a tool to emphasize certain characteristics in the characters of the musical. The second sub-chapter 3.2 will look at repetition as a tool to emphasize larger themes within the musical. Both of these sections will also show that repetition can be utilized to affect the audience and their perception of the story and its themes in specific ways. This links directly to the musical’s social impact: the audience will remember the aspects which are emphasized through repetition much better than aspects which are not and these are the aspects which will effect them later on as well.

3.1 Repetition and characterizations

As stated before, reprises are very important in musicals and this is also true of *Hamilton*. This sub-chapter demonstrates how reprises can and are used to add depth to the portrayals of characters in the musical. All the major characters in *Hamilton* repeat themselves. This is done to establish their individual themes and personalities and possible ambitions. Some of the characters also repeat others for various reasons. Whether they are repeating themselves or other characters depends on what the character is trying to achieve at any given moment and it contributes to their characterization. One of the ways to use repetition to build characters is to use it to remind the audience what the character is like by repeating their established signature phrases throughout the musical. *Hamilton* does this with more than one character, for example Hamilton and his wife Eliza. Both of them repeat their signature phrases at various different

moments throughout the show.

The show's third song is "My Shot" and this is Hamilton's "I want" song. These are the songs in musicals where the protagonist tells the audience what he or she wants and what they are striving for (Miranda and McCarter: 21). The song's core phrase gets repeated several times throughout the rest of the show:

HAMILTON: I am not throwing away my shot!
I am not throwing away my shot!
Hey yo, I'm just like my country,
I'm young, scrappy and hungry,
And I'm not throwing away my shot!
[Miranda & McCarter: 26]

"I am not throwing away my shot" is a concise statement of Hamilton's personality, signaling to the audience that he thrives on ambition and figuratively or literally wants to make every "shot" count. This chorus or parts of it are reprised six times over the course of the show, five times in Act 1 and once more towards the end of Act 2. A few of these moments will be presented as examples below to show how the repetition of this phrase is used to remind us of Hamilton's ambitions at particular moments.

After "My Shot" the next time we hear the phrase is in the song "Right Hand Man" which takes place right at the beginning of the Revolutionary War. Before this Hamilton has not really had the chance to act on his previously stated ambitions but now the opportunity presents itself and we are reminded of his goals. General Washington is introduced for the first time and the war seems quite hopeless from the beginning. Washington is "gonna need a right hand man" (Miranda & McCarter: 60) and Hamilton is just a low-level soldier at this point, but when he gets an offer from Washington to be his aide, the ensemble acts as Hamilton's inner thoughts, and reprises the chorus from "My Shot" and finally Hamilton himself voices the final "I am not throwing away my shot!" (Miranda & McCarter: 64) which acts as Hamilton saying "yes" to Washington's offer. This is the moment in Hamilton's life

and (military) career when he gets the chance to truly prove himself and he takes the figurative “shot” without hesitation. Repetition here is used as a flashback for both Hamilton and the audience. We are reminded of Hamilton’s ambitions and shown that Hamilton himself has not forgotten his previous words and that he is still living by them.

There are two additional moments similar to this one which are related to the war where this phrase gets repeated to signal Hamilton’s ambition. The phrase recurs at the very end of Act 1. The final song, “Non-Stop”, ends with Hamilton repeating the phrase, as if to remind the audience and himself that this is what he is all about and to make sure the audience does not forget this during intermission:

HAMILTON: I am not throwin’ away my
Shot!
I am not throwin’ away my
Shot!
I am
Alexander Hamilton!
I am not throwin’ away
My shot!
[Miranda & McCarter: 145]

What adds depth to this moment is that while Hamilton is saying he won’t throw away his shot, the audience gets to hear the ensemble singing “Just you wait!” (ibid) in the background. This phrase has a double meaning here. Firstly it is a simple flashback to the moment in the very first song of the musical where Hamilton introduces himself with these words:

HAMILTON: - - My name is Alexander Hamilton.
And there’s a million things I haven’t done
But just you wait, just you wait...
[Miranda & McCarter: 16]

However, those words from the ensemble in “Non-Stop” also foreshadow the end of the show (and Hamilton’s life). While Hamilton might not be able to hear the ensemble contradicting him, the audience certainly can and it serves as a reminder to us that Hamilton might have to change or abandon his principles and “throw away his shot” by the time the show is over.

Curiously the “my shot” phrase is repeated in Act 2 only once and even then it is Hamilton in his monologue, right before he gets shot, wondering, “If I throw away my shot, is this how you remember me?” (Miranda & McCarter: 273). Since this is the only time in Act 2 that we hear this phrase even though it is repeated quite often in Act 1 the reminder is rather strong. The audience is suddenly reminded of this phrase that Hamilton used often when he was younger which results in a very emotional reaction. This phrase reminds us of a younger man full of dreams and ambitions but at the same time we realize that now that he has finally understood that sometimes you need to “throw away” the proverbial shot, it is already too late.

Eliza has two important signature phrases in the musical, which are similarly used to remind the audience of her personality and ambitions. Her first phrase is first heard in “The Schuyler Sisters”:

ELIZA: Look around, look around at how
Lucky we are to be alive right now!
[Miranda & McCarter: 44]

The first line of this phrase is actually first sung by her sister Angelica earlier in the same song, with the phrase then ending in “the revolution’s happening in New York” (Miranda & McCarter: 43). Eliza and Angelica are shown to be very close throughout the musical and Eliza adopting an idea that Angelica has first presented and making it her own is a testament to that bond.

After its introduction, Eliza repeats this phrase in “That Would Be Enough”, which also brings in her second important signature phrase. Eliza first uses the whole “look around”-phrase as it were sung the first time to try to convince Hamilton to stay with her instead of going back to the war. She then a few lines later uses the beginning of the phrase as an introduction to the point she is trying to make:

ELIZA: - - Look around, look around...

Look at where you are.
Look at where you started.
The fact that you're alive is a miracle.
Just stay alive, that would be enough.
[Miranda & McCarter: 110]

At the end of this verse she also brings in her second signature phrase, which is “that would be enough”. Towards the end of this song Eliza repeats this same phrase a couple of times to emphasize the meaning behind it:

ELIZA: We don't need a legacy.
We don't need money.
If I could grant you peace of mind
- -
And I could be enough
And we could be enough
That would be enough.
[Miranda & McCarter: 110]

Both of these phrases are repeated again in a reprise of “That Would Be Enough” in the final song of the first act, “Non-Stop”:

ELIZA: Look at where you are.
Look at where you started.
The fact that you're alive is a miracle.
Just stay alive, that would be enough.

And if your wife could share a fraction of your time
If I could grant you piece of mind
Would that be enough?
[Miranda & McCarter: 143]

This is again a moment where Eliza, perhaps more to herself than to Hamilton, is trying to figure out how to convince Hamilton that he might be happy even without all his ambitions fulfilled. She is trying to convey to him that what he already has could, and should, be enough. Later in the same song, Eliza condenses both of these phrases into an actual question directed at Hamilton which he ignores: “Look around, isn't this enough?” (ibid).

Both of these phrases get briefly reprised a couple of more times throughout the show

in very similar situations. Eliza uses these phrases in an attempt to get Hamilton to slow down and consider what he already has instead of constantly aiming for more. Repeated so often throughout the show, these two phrases, “look around at how lucky we are to be alive right now” and “that would be enough”, become the embodiments of Eliza. However, even though she tries to convince Hamilton that they “don’t need a legacy”, she is still shown to worry about their legacy in the final song, where she also reverses the phrase “that would be enough”:

ELIZA: And when my time is up?

Have I done enough?
Will they tell my story?
[Miranda & McCarter: 281]

The repetitions of her signature phrases on one hand emphasize just how little Eliza changes throughout her life, but on the other hand also highlight that one moment at the end of the show when Eliza does worry about her legacy. Many of these examples from both Hamilton and Eliza and how repetition is used in respect to their character are directed more at the audience than the other characters, such as the chorus singing “just you wait” at the end of “Non-Stop” and the final song where Eliza worries about her legacy. By following the emotional cues given by these moments of repetition the audience is led to feel a certain way about these moments and these characters and to read the situations in a particular way, leading to a particular response to the situations. This can be seen as a way to impact the audience in a broad way to see things a certain way.

Another way to use repetition is to use it to highlight differences between different moments. A character repeating something in different moments emphasizes not only the differences between the moments but also differences between the character’s reactions in those moments. For example, there is a passage of monologue which Hamilton starts with the

words “I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory” which is repeated a total of three times throughout the musical. Each of these moments is pivotal in Hamilton’s life: the first time comes at the beginning when he has just arrived on the mainland, the second time is right before the revolutionaries win the war at Yorktown and the third time comes at the end, just before Hamilton dies.

Similarly to the question-reprise earlier, this monologue also has questions at its core:

HAMILTON: I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory
When’s it gonna get me?
In my sleep? Seven feet ahead of me?
If I see it comin’ do I run or do I let it be?
Is it like a beat without a melody?
[Miranda & McCarter: 28]

The first time we hear these particular questions is in “My Shot” when Hamilton is trying to find his place among his new friends when he has just arrived in New York. He is young and uncertain, but at the same time, as mentioned earlier, this song is his “I want” song. These questions are only the beginning of a longer monologue (which later turns into a speech addressed to a crowd rather than the audience) in which Hamilton comes to the self-realization that he wants to take part in this revolution and help the colonies gain their independence. This desire to help form a unified nation is his motivation throughout the musical and thus his life.

The part quoted above is the only part of the monologue that repeats, though not completely intact. The continuation to the monologue is different in each of the three instances. As stated above, the first time we see Hamilton come to a realization of what he wants to do with his life. The second time this monologue appears in “Yorktown” we see him living up to that desire:

HAMILTON: I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory.
This is where it gets me:
On my feet,

The enemy ahead of me.
If this is the end of me, at least I have a friend with me.
Weapon in my hand, a command, and my men with me.
[Miranda & McCarter: 121]

Hamilton is making peace with the fact that he is about to enter battle and that he might die. There are no questions here now, only statements. So far in the story Hamilton has been struggling to rise through the ranks and he is finally where he wants to be, a commander in actual battle. But the next lines of this particular monologue bring him to a different kind of realization about his situation:

HAMILTON: Then I remember my Eliza's expecting me...
Not only that, my Eliza's expecting,
We gotta go, gotta get the job done,
Gotta start a new nation, gotta meet my son!
[Miranda & McCarter: 121]

Hamilton realizes that his job helping the nation is actually not done yet and that it still needs him. Also, more importantly, he realizes that he is not responsible for only himself anymore but that his wife and soon-to-be-born son are very much depended on him surviving and coming home to them after the war.

The third time we hear this monologue, in "The World Was Wide Enough", the questions are back again:

HAMILTON: I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory.
Is this where it gets me, on my feet, several feet ahead of me?
I see it coming, do I run or fire my gun or let it be?
There is no beat, no melody.
[Miranda & McCarter: 273]

During this iteration of the monologue time gets suspended right after Burr fires his gun towards Hamilton. It represents the thoughts running through Hamilton's mind in this moment which he realizes might be his last. The words closely resemble those he used in "My Shot", asking the same questions, but stating that now he knows "there is no beat, no melody". He continues the monologue by reflecting back on his life.

Reprising this monologue in three different moments in Hamilton's life definitely throws each moment into contrast with each other. The first time he "imagines death", Hamilton is at the beginning of his career, young and ambitious. The second time he has finally reached the peak and has achieved all he wanted to, only to realize there is still a long way to go. The third time Hamilton looks back at his life and his legacy, wondering "If I throw away my shot, is this how you remember me? / What if this bullet is my legacy?" (Miranda & McCarter: 273). These moments are pivotal in Hamilton's life but they are also very important considering Hamilton's own responses in these situations. Each of these moments is emotional for him but for different reasons and repeating the words leaves the audience open to focus on how Hamilton is saying these words and what he is feeling, instead of what he is saying.

Characters repeating each other can also be an effective way to use repetition. The purpose of this might be simply to create a comedic effect, such as when Washington repeats Burr's earlier line "talk less" to Hamilton in "One Last Time" in a futile effort to get Hamilton to shut up. In this moment Hamilton is forgetting himself and ignoring what Washington is trying to tell him. Hamilton is literally talking too much and Washington essentially telling him to shut up by using a line the audience relates to Burr is simply funny. Having one character repeat another character's words can also be used to not only tie two moments together in an emotional way but also to show the audience how a certain character relates to other characters.

Hamilton uses someone else's words a few times throughout the show, but a very emotional example of this is in "It's Quiet Uptown". Earlier in the musical, in the song "That Would Be Enough", we see Eliza trying to get Hamilton to settle down. Hamilton has just been fired from Washington's service and he is upset at this setback in his career. Eliza tries to

get him to realize what he has already achieved in his life and be content with that:

ELIZA: Look at where you are.
Look at where you started.
The fact that you're alive is a miracle.
Just stay alive, that would be enough.

And if this child
Shares a fraction of your smile
Or a fragment of your mind, look out, world!
That would be enough.

I don't pretend to know
The challenges you're facing.
The worlds you keep erasing and creating in your mind.

But I'm not afraid.
I know who I married.
So long as you come home at the end of the day
That would be enough.
[Miranda & McCarter: 110]

Eliza is voicing her worry that if Hamilton goes back to the war he might not come back home at all. She is pregnant with their first child and wishes that Hamilton would see the appeal of a more quiet life at home with his wife and their child. Hamilton seems to listen to his wife since the stage directions at the end of this song state: "Hamilton kisses Eliza's hand." (Miranda & McCarter: 110).

This passage of worry and Eliza wishing that simple things were enough for Hamilton is reprised by Hamilton himself in "It's Quiet Uptown". This song is set right after the Hamiltons lose their first-born Philip, the very same child Eliza was pregnant with in "That Would Be Enough". In this second iteration of this moment the melody is the same but slower and some of the words have been changed:

HAMILTON: Look at where you are.
Look at where you started.
I know I don't deserve you, Eliza.
But hear me out. That would be enough.

If I could spare his life

If I could trade his life for mine,
He'd be standing here right now
And you would smile, and that would be enough.
I don't pretend to know
The challenges we're facing.
I know there's no replacing what we've lost and you need time.
But I'm not afraid.
I know who I married.
Just let me stay here by your side,
That would be enough.
[Miranda & McCarter: 253]

Both these moments are about accepting what you have and what you do not have and coming to terms with those facts but also about mending something broken between the couple. When Eliza is saying these things to Hamilton the first time around she is afraid that Hamilton is not including her in his life, pushing her away. She says: "If you could let me inside your heart / Oh, let me be part of the narrative." (Miranda & McCarter: 110). When Hamilton in turn is saying these things to Eliza, he is not only trying to console her about the death of their son, but also begging to be let back into her life. This song comes after Hamilton had an affair and confessed to it publicly. Eliza has turned away from him and has shunned him from her life. Just as Hamilton comes around after listening to Eliza's words before, so is Eliza moved by Hamilton's words and they reunite at the end of the song.

In this instance Hamilton is not using Eliza's own words against her, but instead is using them to show her he was listening and that he cares. This instance is also very effective from the audience's point of view, since both moments relate to Hamilton and Eliza's son's life, though at opposite ends. Choosing to use the same melody and similar words both when Philip has not yet been born and when he is already dead creates a frame for his life and his parents life in relation to him. In that very emotional moment of the Hamiltons trying to come to terms with the loss of a son the audience is reminded of a previous moment when everything was still alright, which makes the moment even more emotional.

Another concise example of different ways of using repetition to build characters comes in “Blow Us All Away”. In this song we meet Philip Hamilton as a young man. He has been on stage before in “Take a Break” as a nine-year old boy singing and rapping with his mother. As a young man, we see him being confident and boastful, eager to make his mark in the world:

PHILIP: Meet the latest graduate of King’s College!
I prob’ly shouldn’t brag, but dag I amaze and astonish.
The scholars say I got the same virtuosity and brains as my pops!
The ladies say my brain’s not where the resemblance stops!
I’m only nineteen but my mind is older,
Gotta be my own my man, like my father but bolder.
I shoulder my legacy with pride,
[Miranda & McCarter: 245]

The first two lines as well as the fifth line are almost direct reprises of his father’s words when he was a young man in “My Shot”:

I’m ’a get a scholarship to King’s College
I prob’ly shouldn’t brag, but dag, I amaze and astonish.
--
Only nineteen but my mind is older.
[Miranda & McCarter: 26]

Repeating these words as an introduction ties Philip to Hamilton’s fate in a very emotional way. Like his father before him, Philip is ambitious and proud, ready to give the world his everything. But unlike his father, Philip does not get the chance to do this, since he is the one to die first in a duel, with his father following a few years later. The song continues with him seeking out George Eacker and challenging him to a duel because Eacker disrespected Hamilton. Philip goes to his father for advice but ends up going through with the duel anyway. Right before the duel we get another reprise from Philip:

PHILIP: My name is Philip
I am a poet
And I’m a little nervous, but I can’t show it.
[Miranda & McCarter: 246]

Here he is reprising his own earlier words in “Take a Break” where he said:

PHILIP - - My name is Philip,
I am a poet.
I wrote this poem just to show it.
[Miranda & McCarter: 169]

Reminding the audience here of what Philip said as a young boy makes the whole affair even more emotional and as Miranda himself notes, “God, it’s effective.” (Miranda & McCarter: 246). Right at the end of “Blow Us All Away” there is a brief reprise of the “Ten Duel Commandments” as a way to link all the duels in the show together and give form to the practice of dueling:

ENSEMBLE: Count to ten!
PHILIP: Look ’im in the eye, aim no higher.
Summon all the courage you require.
Then slowly and clearly aim your gun towards the sky—
MEN: One two three four
ENSEMBLE: Five six seven—
[Miranda & McCarter: 246]

We only see Philip as an adult in this one song (and in the next one, “Stay Alive (reprise)” where he dies) and so there is only a brief time in which to make him familiar to the audience. “Blow Us All Away” is an excellent example of how effective reprises can be in building a character quickly in many different ways. By this time in the show, we already know Hamilton quite well and by having Philip reprise his earlier words, we instantly make a connection between him and his father. Evoking memories of Philip as a child ties us to him emotionally and finally repeating the words and the beat from an earlier duel gives us a hint of what is about to happen a few seconds later (Philip getting shot) and ties his fate with his father’s, which we already know will happen later.

The examples presented in this section show several different ways in which repetition can help the audience build an image of a character. It is also important to note that carefully choosing which parts and phrases to repeat and at which moments has an effect on the way

the audience reads the story. Repetition can thus be used to influence the audience and guide their response, not only in terms of the story but outside of it as well, and can be used to focus the audience's attentions to important themes and ideas presented in the musical and help them make connections to the real world.

3.2 Repetition to establish themes

Repetition can be used to establish themes. One the biggest themes in *Hamilton* is the idea that stories are different depending on who tells them and that you do not get to tell your own story once you are gone. As we will see later on, this is even stated literally several times throughout the show through reprising the phrase “you have no control, who lives, who dies, who tells your story”. Another major theme is the notion that “history has its eyes on you”, that whatever you do now will be judged by others later in the future. A third important theme in *Hamilton* is the idea of leaving behind a legacy.

The musical contains a concrete miniature example of how stories change depending on who is telling them. Both Eliza and her sister Angelica narrate the same story in two consecutive songs, but each uses their own perspective, which makes their respective stories different. The songs are “Helpless” and “Satisfied”, which follow each other approximately at the mid-point of the first act. In “Helpless” Eliza describes how she met Hamilton for the first time, how they fell in love and got married. Following Eliza's account of the events, in “Satisfied” the whole scene of Eliza and Hamilton first meeting gets literally rewound and repeated and Angelica describes the same night from her own point of view.

Eliza starts “Helpless” by telling the audience how that first meeting between her and Hamilton happened:

ELIZA: I have never been the type to try and grab the spotlight.
We were at a revel with some rebels on a hot night,
Laughin' at my sister as she's dazzling the room.

Then you walked in and my heart went “Boom!”
Tryin’ to catch your eye from the side of the ballroom,
Everybody’s dancin’ and the band’s top volume.

--

My sister made her way across the room to you
And I got nervous, thinking “What’s she gonna do?”
She grabbed you by the arm, I’m thinkin’ “I’m through.”
Then you look back at me and suddenly I’m helpless!
[Miranda & McCarter: 71]

We see that Eliza is instantly attracted to Hamilton and from a brief conversation some lines later we get the sense that Hamilton has a similar reaction towards Eliza as well, when he tells her that “If it takes a war for us to meet, it will have been worth it.” (ibid: 72) Eliza continues the song by detailing her and Hamilton’s courtship, after which Hamilton chimes in with a rap-verse in which he declares his love for Eliza and finally they get married. “Helpless” then moves directly onto “Satisfied” which begins with Angelica giving a toast at the wedding before the scene is rewound to the beginning of the party where Eliza and Hamilton first met and Angelica tells the audience her side of the story:

ANGELICA: I remember that night I just might
Regret that night for the rest of my days

I remember those soldier boys
Tripping over themselves to win our praise

I remember that dreamlike candlelight
Like a dream that you can’t quite place

But Alexander, I’ll never forget the first
Time I saw your face
I have never been the same
Intelligent eyes in a hunger-pang frame
And when you said hi I forgot my damn name
Set my heart aflame, ev’ry part aflame,
FULL COMPANY: This is not a game...
[Miranda & McCarter: 80]

Mirroring Eliza, Angelica is also instantly attracted to Hamilton, who we see returning the sentiment in a conversation between him and Angelica where he flirts with her saying things

like, “You strike me as a woman who has never been satisfied.” (ibid: 80) and “You’re like me. I’m never satisfied.” (ibid). However, the audience already knows, having just witnessed it, that Hamilton marries Eliza, not Angelica. So, the rest of “Satisfied” is Angelica telling the audience that while she is in love with Hamilton as well, she will put her sister’s happiness ahead of her own.

These songs detailing the same event from two different points of view tie in with a larger theme present throughout *Hamilton*. We first hear the line “You have no control. / Who lives, who dies, who tells your story.” (Miranda & McCarter: 120) sung by Washington in “History Has Its Eyes On You”, which will be discussed below. This idea of the story being different depending on who tells it is demonstrated on a smaller scale in “Helpless” and “Satisfied”. Eliza’s side of the story is a happy love song, the beginning of a life together. Angelica’s side of the story, on the other hand, is one of heartbreak and putting your own desires aside for the benefit of others.

There are two lines which are originally introduced by Washington, but go on to become emblematic of larger themes in the whole musical. In the song “History Has Its Eyes On You”, Washington tells Hamilton about his early days as a commander where he failed and got his men killed and this failure led him to some important realizations about life:

WASHINGTON: Let me tell you what I wish I’d known
When I was young and dreamed of glory.
You have no control.
WASHINGTON, COMPANY: Who lives, who dies, who tells your story.
WASHINGTON: I know that we can win.
I know that greatness lies in you.
But remember from here on in,
WASHINGTON, MEN: History has its
Eyes on you.
[Miranda & McCarter: 120]

The phrase “history has its eyes on you” is reprised at the end of “Non-Stop”, where everyone is singing their themes simultaneously. The phrase gets emphasized even more than the others

when it is sung first by just Washington simultaneously with the other characters singing their own themes but the song builds and the whole ensemble comes together to sing “history has its eyes on you” right before Hamilton chimes in with “I am not throwing away my shot”, as discussed earlier. This is the so called “ensemble effect” which McMillin details in his book: the whole ensemble comes together in a dramatic moment, often at the end of an act (70). The fact that this happens around the “history has its eyes on you” phrase is significant and establishes the phrase as emblematic of a larger theme. This phrase is also repeated towards the end of the song “Hurricane”. Hamilton is just deciding to publish his affair and Eliza, Angelica, Maria and Washington come together to try and remind him that “History has its eyes on you” (Miranda & McCarter: 233), though Hamilton does not hear them.

In the last song of the show, “Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story?” the notion of other people telling your story after you are gone comes into full light, as is already evident from the title. Washington begins the song by reprising himself word for word:

WASHINGTON: Let me tell you what I wish I'd known
When I was young and dreamed of glory.
You have no control:
WASHINGTON, COMPANY: Who lives,
Who dies,
Who tells your story?
[Miranda & McCarter: 280]

This phrase gets repeated throughout the song. After brief addresses from both Jefferson and Madison, Burr and Angelica with help from the ensemble ask the question “And when you're gone, who remembers your name? / Who keeps your flame? / Who tells your story?” (Miranda & McCarter: 280) after which Eliza enters the stage with the poignant words: “I put myself back in the narrative.” (ibid). In this song, Eliza emerges as the one trying to preserve Hamilton's legacy after he is gone. Earlier in the show, in “That Would Be Enough”, Eliza tells Hamilton that “We don't need a legacy.” (Miranda & McCarter: 110) and hopes that just

being with her and their child would be enough for Hamilton. However, in this last song, Eliza seems desperate to make sure she has done enough to preserve not only Hamilton's legacy but her own as well:

ELIZA: When my time is up, have I done enough?
Will they tell our story?
- -
And when my time is up?
Have I done enough?
Will they tell my story?
[Miranda & McCarter: 281]

As was already discussed in the previous sub-chapter in relation to Eliza's characterization, "that would be enough" is emblematic of Eliza's character but here it is reversed to bring focus to the larger theme of legacy in the show. The notion of legacy is also emphasized by Hamilton himself repeating related ideas twice. The first time is in "Hurricane" just as he decides to publish his affair he says to himself "- - this is the only way I can protect my legacy." (Miranda & McCarter: 233). The second time comes in "The World Was Wide Enough", in his final monologue, as he wonders, "What if this bullet is my legacy? / Legacy. What is a legacy? / It's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see." (ibid: 273).

It could also be argued that since Alexander Hamilton was an actual historical person, this musical about his life ties into his own personal legacy as well. *Hamilton* as a musical not only tries to preserve Hamilton's legacy, but also to incite conversation on who gets to narrate American history, both by making very specific casting choices but also by having an actual question about who tells the story ingrained into the very structure and form of the musical. The musical itself also ties to a much broader sense of legacy in that it is both preserving and reforming the legacies, conventions, of both musicals and rap music by mashing them together.

4 USE OF RHYME

Rhyming, especially in poetry, is a long-established custom, prevalent even today, but perhaps not as long as one might imagine. Classical (e.g. Greek, Latin) poetry does not use rhyme but prefers to structure poems by different means while Anglo-Saxon poetry relied on alliteration. (Lennard) Rhyming in poetry started spreading in Europe from the 11th century onward and has gone through phases of popularity throughout its history where it is now either celebrated or shunned, depending on who you ask. (Lennard)

Using the terms defined in the *New Oxford Rhyming Dictionary* as a base, I will briefly explain the terms and definitions for different rhymes used in the following analysis section. All examples are from *Hamilton*. *Pure rhyme* is understood to mean all rhymes which share all elements following the last stressed syllable, for example “be / me” and “colder / shoulder”. Pure rhymes can also be formed so that one word has more syllables than the other, such as “Lafayette / set”. *Near rhyme* is understood to mean all rhymes which share a stressed vowel sound, but not the following elements, for example “independently / parentheses” and “anarchy / panicky”³. *Mosaic rhyme* is understood to mean rhymes where one or both of the rhyming elements comprise of more than one word, for example “Mulligan / come again” and “honest stand / promised land”. Mosaic rhymes can be both pure and near rhymes. *Broken rhyme* is understood to mean rhymes where one or more of the elements is broken between lines, for example “course/it’s / corsets”. As for the position of the rhymes, an *end rhyme* is where the rhyming elements are at the end of their respective lines. An *internal rhyme* is where one or more of the rhyming elements are not at the end of their line. An *initial rhyme* refers to a rhyme where the rhyming elements are at the beginning of their respective lines. Finally, in the context of this thesis, all rhymes will be judged based on Standard American

³ Depending on the accent, this might also be a pure rhyme.

English pronunciation and the performances on the cast recording will be used for further reference.

In the context of this thesis we must not only look at the general technicality of rhyming itself, but also the conventions of both musicals and hip hop. As already discussed in Chapter 2, traditionally musical theater has valued pure rhymes. The rhymes must be inventive and internal rhyming as well as mosaic rhymes are tolerated and even encouraged, so long as the rhymes are pure. Hip hop on the other hand has the exact opposite conventions. In hip hop the purity of the rhyme does not matter, the only thing that matters is that the rhyme is clever and inventive (and matches the beat of the song). One important part of hip hop culture is also linking the lyrics to important social commentary (Bonnette: 2). So, the use of rhyme in *Hamilton* ties not only to the formal conventions of both musicals and rap music but also to the convention of social impact in rap.

The following sub-chapter 4.1 will focus on how different characters express themselves when it comes to using rhyming. The focus of the analysis will be on how rhyming is used to build characters and what the character's way of using rhyme tells us about the character. Some focus will also be on the social impact that is enacted through the use of rhyme and rap music. Sub-chapter 4.2 will look at the possible effect the style of song has on rhyming. The focus will be on the possible difference between primarily sung songs and primarily rapped songs as well as the rapped and sung dialogue present in the musical. Here too some focus will also be on the social impact enacted by the use of rap music.

4.1 Characterizations

Hamilton uses several different styles of rhyming depending on the character. Some characters have very complex rhymes, meaning they use mosaic rhymes and even broken

rhymes whereas some characters hardly rhyme at all. Some examples of these differences in rhyming will be presented below.

Hamilton has a unique way of rhyming, which is established very early on, in the song “My Shot”, which also acts as his “I want” song as well as the chorus becoming somewhat of an anthem for Hamilton during the first act, as was discussed earlier in Chapter 3. After one repeat of the chorus, Hamilton dives right into telling the others (and the audience) who he is and what he wants:

HAMILTON: I’m ’a get a scholarship to King’s **College**
I prob’ly shouldn’t brag, but dag, I amaze and astonish.
The problem is I got a lot of brains but no polish
I gotta holler just to be *heard*.
With every *word*, I drop **knowledge!**

I’m a diamond in the rough, a shiny piece of **coal**
Tryin’ to reach my **goal**. My power of speech: unimpeachable.
Only nineteen but my mind is older.
These New York City streets get colder, I shoulder
Ev’ry burden, ev’ry *disadvantage*
I have learned to *manage*, I don’t have a gun to *brandish*.
I walk these streets *famished*.
[Miranda & McCarter: 26]⁴

The first five lines have a pattern of ABBA at their core with an added internal rhyme at the end of the fourth line and the middle of the fifth to offset the basic pattern. The rest of the lines do not have a clear pattern but rather the rhymes seem to be clustered together in sets of internal rhymes. The first two clusters of “coal/goal” and “older/colder/shoulder” are pure rhymes, but the third cluster of “disadvantage/manage/brandish/famished” are near rhymes.

In this next portion Hamilton sticks to one rhyme and uses it at the end of every line, sometimes adding it to the beginning of a line as well:

HAMILTON: A **colony** that runs **independently**.
Meanwhile, Britain keeps shittin’ on us **endlessly**.
Essentially, they tax us **relentlessly**,

⁴ The bolding, underlining and italics have been added to the quotes to highlight the rhymes throughout this chapter. They are my additions unless stated otherwise.

Then King George turns around, runs a spending **spree**.
 He ain't ever gonna let his descendants **free**,
 So there will be a revolution in this **century**.
 Enter **me**!
 LAFAYATTE, MULLIGAN, LAURENS:
 (He says in **parentheses**.)
 HAMILTON: Don't be shocked when your hist'ry book mentions **me**.
 I will lay down my life if it sets us **free**.
Eventually, you'll see my **ascendancy**
 [Miranda & McCarter: 26]

Even the others joining in with a joke evoke the same rhyme, though in their case it is a near rhyme. Very early on Hamilton is painted as someone who is eloquent and thinks quickly, clustering his rhymes and shifting his rhyming patterns from verse to verse. This is established by using internal and initial rhymes in a versatile manner.

“My Shot” has one final part from Hamilton towards the end, where we see him share his inner thoughts with the audience as well as realizing that a revolution is not straightforward but that he still wants to be a part of it:

HAMILTON: I imagine death so much it feels more like a **memory**
 When's it gonna get **me**?
 In my sleep? Seven feet ahead of **me**?
 If I see it comin' do I run or do I let it **be**?
 Is it like a beat without a **melody**?
 See I never thought I'd live past twenty
 Where I come from some get half as many.
 Ask anybody why we livin' *fast* and we
Laugh, reach for a *flask*,
 We *have* to make this moment *last*, that's plenty
 [Miranda & McCarter: 28–29]

Hamilton begins this section with five lines with simple pure rhymes, though the similar vowel sounds in “get”, “ahead” and “let” evoke a mosaic rhyme. This is the section that was discussed earlier in Chapter 3 in regards to reprises. He has one more rhyming couplet with “twenty / many”, before moving on to a very different internal rhyming scheme where “fast / last” are a pure rhyme but even “laugh”, “flask” and “have” form near rhymes with the two other words. Finally this section goes back to the “twenty / many” rhyme with an additional

“plenty” in the same scheme. Especially the way these words are emphasized in the recording bring out the similarities in pronunciation.

After the first part, Hamilton uses more complex rhymes and shifts rhyming schemes often:

HAMILTON: Scratch that,
This is not a moment, it's the **movement**
Where all the hungriest brothers with something to **prove went**.
Foes oppose us, we take an *honest stand*,
We roll like Moses, claimin' our *promised land*.
And? If we win our **independence?**
'Zat a guarantee of freedom for our **descendants?**
Or will the blood we shed begin an **endless**
Cycle of **vengeance** and death with no **defendants?**
I know the action in the street is *excitin'*,
But Jesus, between all the *bleedin' 'n fightin'* I've been *readin' 'n writin'*.
We need to handle our financial **situation**.
Are we a nation of states? What's the state of our **nation?**
[Miranda & McCarter: 28–29]

The first two lines have a mosaic near rhyme “movement / prove went”. The next two rhyme both internally as well as at the end, with “oppose us / Moses” and “honest stand / promised land”, both being mosaic rhymes. The beginning of the following line also adds to the rhyme scheme with “and” rhyming with “stand” and “land”. The next five lines have near rhymes of varying degrees with “independence / descendants / endless / vengeance / defendants”. With this rhyming scheme enunciation is especially important and that makes them closer matches. The next two lines have an interesting five syllable rhyme with “bleedin' 'n fightin' / readin' 'n writin'” with an extra “excitin'” before them, perhaps to bring emphasis to the rhyme. The section ends with a simple pure rhyme of “situation / nation”. Compared with the beginning of this verse, Hamilton clearly gets more excited and this can be seen in his use of rhyme. He uses internal rhymes in groups but also rhymes internally and at the end of the same couplet and he uses complex mosaic rhymes. His mind is working fast as he is forming these questions and coming to these conclusions until finally at the end of the verse his excitement

unhinges his lines:

HAMILTON: I'm past patiently waitin'. I'm passionately smashin' every
expectation,
Every action's an act of **creation!**
I'm laughin' in the face of casualties and sorrow,
For the first time, I'm thinkin' past tomorrow.
[Miranda & McCarter: 28–29]

This final section is a little irregular in the sense that the first line has so many more syllables than the second line that even though they have a rhyme at the end, they seem a little unbalanced. However, this can be explained by the feeling of this verse. The music has been building up to this point and at the beginning of this final section the music changes by first dropping out all together during the words “I’m past patiently waiting” and then continues with an emphatic burst of music. This whole verse can be seen as a stream of consciousness -moment for Hamilton, where he simply thinks out loud. The final four lines tell us where he ends up with his thoughts and he is so excited about the decision and his future that even his lines are unbalanced. The section, and the whole verse, ends with a simple pure rhyme of “sorrow / tomorrow”.

Another good example of Hamilton’s personal style comes from “Cabinet Battle #1”.

Hamilton and Jefferson are debating about Hamilton’s plan to unite the colonies’ debts:

HAMILTON: Thomas. That was a real nice **declaration**.
Welcome to the present. We’re running a real **nation**.
Would you like to join us, or stay *mellow*,
Doin’ whatever the hell it is you do in *Monticello*?
If we assume the debts, the Union gets a new line of **credit**, a financial
diuretic.
How do you not **get it**? If we’re aggressive and *competitive*
The Union gets a boost. You’d rather give it a *sedative*?
A civics lesson from a slaver. Hey **neighbor**.
Your debts are paid cuz you don’t pay for **labor**.
“We plant seeds in the South. We create.” Yeah, keep *ranting*.
We know who’s really doing the **planting**.
And another thing, Mr. Age of *Enlightenment*,
Don’t lecture me about the war, you didn’t *fight in it*.
You think I’m frightened of you, man? We almost died in a **trench**

While you were off, getting high with the **French**.
Thomas Jefferson, always hesitant with the President
Reticent– there isn't a plan he doesn't *jettison*.
Madison, you're mad as a *hatter, son*, take your **medicine**.
Damn, you're in worse shape than the national **debt is in**,
Sittin' there useless as two *shits*.
Hey, turn around, bend over, I'll show you where my shoe *fits*.
[Miranda & McCarter: 161–162]

Hamilton starts off fairly simply with two couplets of pure rhymes, “declaration / nation” and “mellow / Monticello”. His next line has two sets of internal rhymes within the line, with “debts / gets” and “credit / diuretic”. The latter pair has a third counterpart on the next line with “get it”. Notably also, especially with the way they are emphasized on the cast recording, the words “assume” and “Union” create a pair with their similar vowel sounds. The next six lines form three couplets with relatively simple rhymes which are pure except for the first set: “competitive / sedative”, “neighbor / labor” and “ranting / planting”. The next four lines form two rhyming couplets first with the mosaic near rhyme “Enlightenment / fight in it” and then with the pure rhyme “trench / French”. The next four lines are very interesting because even though Hamilton is starting to get upset and frustrated and he is firing off insults at Jefferson and Madison, seemingly unable to stop himself, his rhyming is still very complex and characteristic to him. He is able to keep his words as eloquent as ever despite his emotions running high. There are two groups of three with the internal near rhymes “hesitant / President / reticent” and “jettison / Madison / hatter, son” as well as the pure end rhyme “medicine / debt is in”. Hamilton finishes his verse with the pure rhyme “shits / fits”. This verse is very emblematic of Hamilton's style, but it is also important in other ways. Presenting this Cabinet debate in the form of a rap battle is very fitting because while these historical figures are debating important political issues of their time, they are using the language of a very modern culture. This ties to the conventions of rap lyrics. Rap has always valued the use of clever rhymes but it has also always been used to give voice to social issues important to its

performers. Since those performers are more often than not members of minorities, this combination of historical figures and modern music is even more fitting, literally making a place in history where minorities fit right at home.

There is another example of Hamilton getting upset but retaining his characteristic clustering style. In the song “We Know”, Jefferson, Madison and Burr are accusing Hamilton of misusing government funds, but Hamilton refutes the accusations by revealing his affair with Maria Reynolds and giving them proof in the form of receipts:

HAMILTON: As you can see I kept a record of every check in my checkered
history.
Check it again against your *list ’n see consistency*.
I never **spent** a **cent** that wasn’t mine
You **sent** the dogs after my **scent**, that’s fine.
Yes, I have reason for *shame*
But I have not committed treason and sullied my good *name*.
As you can see I have done nothing to provoke legal action.
Are my answers to your satisfaction?
[Miranda & McCarter: 230]

His rhyming here is anything but structured. We see him clustering his rhymes again, but this time he rhymes almost anything he possibly can. There is first the rather complex and unbalanced rhyme of “history / list ’n see / consistency”. There is a “mine / fine” -rhyme at the end of the next two lines, but there is also the internal repetition of the similar sounding words of “spent / cent / sent / scent” where actually the three latter words are homophones. The next two lines have an end rhyme with “shame / name” as well as the internal rhyme of “reason / treason”. Finally, there is the rhyme of “action / satisfaction” at the end of the last two lines. There is also the addition of repeating the word “check” or versions thereof in the first two lines. Hamilton is seen to be upset and emotional in these two instances, but his rhyming style is still exactly the same as when he is calm or excited. The use of rhyme is thus not used to signal different emotions, but rather some other qualities the characters have, eloquence, wittiness and quickness of mind, for example.

Hamilton uses plenty of internal rhyming which makes his rhyming clustered. He also uses mosaic rhymes and mixes pure and near rhymes indiscriminately. He is able to keep his customary rhyming even when he is clearly upset. All of these features combined paint him as quick witted and eloquent and it seems rhyming comes very easily for him. On the other hand, Burr's rhyming is the exact opposite of this, in that Burr rhymes very little throughout the show. This creates a juxtaposition between them which tells us that their personalities are at the opposite end of a spectrum.

One of the most important songs when it comes to understanding Burr's personality is "Wait For It". At the beginning of the show, even when prompted, Burr does not reveal much about his personality or ambitions, preferring to keep to himself. Half way through the first act he finally shows the audience what he is like. As the title suggests, the song talks about Burr's willingness to wait for things in life, instead of diving head first into them, as Hamilton is prone to do. If there is any song where we would see a typical way for Burr to use rhymes, this would be it:

BURR: Theodosia writes me a letter ev'ry **day**.
I'm keeping her bed warm while her husband is **away**.
He's on the British side in Georgia.
He's tryin' to keep the colonies in *line*.
But he can keep all of Georgia.
Theodosia, she's *mine*.

(chorus)

My grandfather was a fire and **brimstone preacher**.
But these⁵ are things that the homilies and **hymns won't teach ya**.
My mother was a genius,
My father commanded *respect*.
When they died they left no instructions.
Just a legacy to *protect*.
[Miranda & McCarter: 91]

⁵ In Miranda's libretto this line is as here, but on the cast recording Leslie Odom Jr (Burr) sings "there". This is probably due to the libretto having changed or the performer simply having made a mistake. Both words fit the context of the song equally well.

The two verses both have six lines and while the first one has simple rhyming schemes with “day / away” and “line / mine” with two Georgias at the end of lines, the rhymes in the second verse seem to deteriorate a bit more. The first two lines of the second verse have quite a complex mosaic rhyme with “brimstone preacher / hymns won’t teach ya”, which is heavily dependent on the pronunciation of the word “ya (you)”. The third line and the fifth line do not rhyme with anything while the fourth line rhymes with the sixth line with “respect / protect”.

The chorus of “Wait For It” has very minimal rhyming:

BURR: Death doesn’t discriminate
Between the sinners and the saints,
It takes, and it takes, and it *takes*
We keep living anyway.
We rise and we fall
And we **break**,
And we **make** our *mistakes*.
And if there’s a reason I’m still alive
When ev’ryone who loves me has died
I’m willing to wait for it.
I’m willing to wait for it.
[Miranda & McCarter: 91]

The chorus actually has three different versions within the song with minimal alterations. The rhymes are the same in each, except the first one, which has an extra rhyme in the two lines preceding the “I’m willing to wait for it” -lines, which goes “And if there’s a reason I’m by her side / When so many have tried”. The rhyming in the chorus is so minimal it seems almost accidental.

“Wait For It” might not have very complex rhyming, but it does have its own kind of a structure. The song’s over-all structure is basic but effective. It has quite a lot of repetition of words for emphasis and the subtle changes in the chorus while keeping most of it intact is very effective in drawing attention to the differences. Burr uses words very differently from Hamilton. Hamilton seems to speak almost without editing, saying whatever comes into his mind in the heat of the moment, but Burr is the opposite. His way of using words is calculated

and deliberate. He says very little, but what he does say, he means. In his way of using words, rhyming is irrelevant, since it does not add to the meaning of the words, it simply plays with them. This way of using rhymes fits the conventions of the musical where the lyrics should fit the character rather than being simply clever. The kind of rhymes and words Burr uses fit him as a character very well, right down to the fact that he would rather sing than rap: rap is the language of the revolution and Burr would rather not take such an obvious stand.

When it comes to comparing the rhyming styles of Burr and Hamilton, their letters from “Your Obedient Servant” serve as good examples:

BURR: Dear Alexander,

I am slow to anger,
But I toe the **line**
As I reckon with the effects
Of your life on **mine**.
I look back on where I’ve failed,
And in every place I *checked*,
The only common thread has been your *disrespect*.
Now you call me “amoral,”
A “dangerous disgrace,”
If you’ve got something to say,
Name a time and place,
Face to face.

I have the honor to be
Your Obedient Servant.
A dot Burr.

HAMILTON: Mr. Vice President,
I am not the reason no one trusts you.
No one knows what you **believe**.
I will not equivocate on my opinion,
I have always worn it on my **sleeve**.
Even if I said what you think I said,
You would have to cite a more specific *grievance*.
Here’s a itemized list of thirty years of *disagreements*.

BURR: Sweet Jesus.

HAMILTON: Hey, I have not been shy
I am just a guy in the public eye
Tryin’ to do my best for our republic.
I don’t wanna **fight**.

But I won't apologize for doing what's *right*.

I have the honor to be Your Obedient Servant,
A dot Ham.

[Miranda & McCarter: 266–267]

What is interesting here is that the rhyming patterns in both of their letters actually follow a similar pattern, though not the scheme. They each have thirteen lines in their letters (excluding the end greeting). After the greeting line, they first have four lines where the first and the third line do not rhyme but the second and the fourth one do. They then have one line which does not have a rhyme followed by a rhyming couplet. This is where it gets slightly different. Burr has a non-rhyming line next, after which his four final lines follow the same rhyming scheme save for the second line, which does not have a rhyme. Hamilton on the other hand has a three-piece internal rhyme in his next two lines with “shy / guy / eye” after which he has one non-rhyming line with the last two lines forming a rhyming couplet. What is also notable is that Hamilton's pace here is considerably faster than Burr's and he gets in about one third more the amount of words than Burr does in the same amount of lines. Hamilton's style is also more rap whereas Burr sings his lines. Both of them are using their preferred method of expression, singing versus rapping, and both are using words in ways characteristic for them: Burr is calculated and deliberate while Hamilton is more stream-of-consciousness. These verses also further show that even though they are both quite upset, their use of rhyme and words remains the same, meaning rhyming is not used to signal emotions. Burr and Hamilton both fit conventions, just different ones. Burr is emblematic of the musical form while Hamilton is emblematic of hip hop culture. However, the fact that their rhyming patterns are rather similar in “You Obedient Servant” proves that these forms are not very rigid and can be made to resemble each other accordingly. This further suggests that combining these two forms opens up both of them to new ways of expression and further

development and refinement.

From the examples in this sub-chapter, we can see that there is in fact not a big difference between characters in the way they use pure and near rhymes, but rather in the complexity of the rhymes. Many of the characters use mosaic rhymes but internal rhyming is where we see a difference. As noted a number of times above, Hamilton for example tends to cluster his rhymes, using different patterns of rhyming simultaneously, mixing internal and end rhymes. When in addition to mixing his patterns he also uses mosaic rhymes, his style ends up very complex. In comparison, Burr's style is far more simple. Burr also uses mosaic rhymes and near rhymes from time to time, but his rhymes are only ever at the end of his lines. He does not use internal rhymes (with one exception in "Wait For It" which can be explained with the rhythm of the song) and he certainly does not mix his patterns.

Hamilton and Burr seem to be at the opposite ends of this rhyming spectrum, as is true of their personalities as well. Hamilton has a lot to say and he says it without much editing. He expresses himself through words as much as through actions. He can often get carried away, especially when he is emotional, excited or angry, as is evident from his clustered rhyming in "My Shot", when he is finally figuring out what he wants from this revolution as well as in "We Know", when he is defending himself against accusations of illegal speculation. Burr, however, is the opposite. His rhyming is always simple and often sporadic, even when he is upset, as can be seen in "Your Obedient Servant". He is clearly losing his temper, but his rhyming stays the same it has always been. Burr measures his words very carefully and never gets carried away, not even when he is emotional.

The lyrics and rhyming in *Hamilton* follow the integrated musical convention of fitting the lyrics to the character. Burr's personality can be seen in how little he uses rhymes and the fact that he does not rap almost at all. Burr's rhyming remains very minimal and simple

throughout the show and it alters very little. When he is the one setting the tone, like in “Wait For It”, he does not rhyme much and if he does, the rhymes are mostly very simple. Hamilton on the other hand has complex rhymes and both raps and sings. However, the lyrics also follow the rap convention of clever rhymes being important, not merely pure ones. Everyone, even Burr, uses near rhymes at least occasionally, most characters use mosaic rhymes and internal rhymes, though some more than others.

4.2 Rhyme and musical style

There are several different styles of music present in *Hamilton*. The predominant style might be hip hop, since most of the dialogue is rapped, but there are other styles present as well. There is the jazzy tone of “What’d I Miss?” and “The Room Where It Happens”, the R’n’B vibes of “Helpless” and the show tune quality of “It’s Quiet Uptown”, just to name a few examples. The focus of this sub-chapter will be on the juxtaposition of sung lyrics and rapped lyrics and analyzing their rhyming patterns to see whether or not this difference affects the rhyming.

As is evident from the analysis in the previous sub-chapter, Hamilton himself is a very competent rapper and he has his own unique style of rhyming. Besides his rapping verses, he does have a couple of songs where he mostly sings and one example of this is “Hurricane”, where he does not rhyme as much as is customary for him. This song suspends time for its duration and lets us inside Hamilton’s head as he makes the decision to publish his affair with Maria Reynolds to discredit rumors about him misusing his government position for personal gain. Hamilton looks back at his life and how he has survived tough moments before:

HAMILTON: In the eye of a hurricane
There is quiet
For just a moment,
A yellow **sky**.

When I was seventeen a hurricane
Destroyed my *town*.
I didn't *drown*.
I couldn't seem to **die**.

I wrote my way out,
Wrote everything down far as I could **see**.
I wrote my way out.
I looked up and the town had its eyes on **me**.
They passed a plate around.
Total strangers
Moved to kindness by my story.
Raised enough for me to book passage on a ship that was New York bound...
[Miranda & McCarter: 232]

In this first part of the song there is some rhyming with pure rhymes at the end of lines with “sky / die”, “town / drown”, “see / me” and “around / bound”. Not every line has a corresponding rhyme and the rhymes that are there are very simple. “Hurricane” has more singing than rapping in it, but it does have one rap-verse as well:

HAMILTON: I wrote my way out of **hell**.
I wrote my way to revolution.
I was louder than the crack in the **bell**.
I wrote Eliza love letters until she **fell**.
I wrote about the Constitution and defended it **well**.
And in the face of ignorance and resistance,
I wrote financial systems into existence.
And when my prayers to God were met with *indifference*,
I picked up a pen, I wrote my own *deliverance*.
[Miranda & McCarter: 232]

There are significantly more rhymes in this verse than the rest of the song. The first five lines have a recurring rhyme of “hell / bell / fell / well” at the end of the lines, with a seemingly extra “revolution” on the second line which does not fit the rhyme-scheme. Looking closer, however, it does form an internal rhyme with “Constitution” on the fifth line, which even starts similarly than the second line. The next two lines have a cluster of rhymes, which is typical for Hamilton. The ends of the lines form a pure rhyme with “resistance / existence” with the addition of a near internal rhyme with “systems”. The last two lines form a near

rhyme with “indifference / deliverance”, again made stronger by the emphatic way they are pronounced when performed. The rest of the song repeats the first part with minimal changes and as little rhyming.

The uncharacteristic (for Hamilton) lack of rhyming in this song as well as the fact that the rap-verse goes back to Hamilton’s customary style seems to suggest that there is indeed a difference between the way rhymes are used between sung songs and rapped songs. There are also the example from “Wait For It” which was analyzed earlier in the previous sub-chapter. “Wait For It” also has very minimal rhyming and the rhymes that are there, are mostly quite simple. The song is melodic and does not have any rap in it.

There are two songs with Eliza at the lead which are both melodic songs with little or no rapping at all. However, one of them has more rhyming than the other. These songs are “Helpless” and “Burn”, respectively. “Helpless” has been talked about before in Chapter 3 in connection to its narrative functions. In summary, it tells the story of how Hamilton and Eliza met and fell in love from Eliza’s perspective:

ELIZA: I have never been the type to try and grab the **spotlight**.
We were at a revel with some rebels on a **hot night**,
Laughin’ at my sister as she’s dazzling the room.
Then you walked in and my heart went “Boom!”
Tryin’ to catch your eye from the side of the *ballroom*,
Everybody’s dancin’ and the band’s top *volume*.

ELIZA, WOMEN: Grind to the rhythm as we wine and dine.

ELIZA: Grab my sister, and whisper, “Yo, this one’s **mine**.”
My sister made her way across the room to you
And I got nervous, thinking “What’s she gonna do?”
She grabbed you by the arm, I’m thinkin’ “I’m through.”
Then you look back at me and suddenly I’m helpless!
[Miranda & McCarter: 71]

Each of the lines has a rhyme at the end, they form mostly couplets with relatively simple and both pure and near rhymes: “spotlight / hot night”, “room / boom”, “ballroom / volume” and

“dine / mine”. The “you / do / through” triplet is accentuated with an “ooohh” from the women ensemble. The last line does not have a rhyme because it ties directly to the chorus. The next bit of Eliza’s narration in this song has a very similar rhyming pattern.

In “Burn”, Eliza has just found out about Hamilton’s affair with Maria Reynolds and she is seen sitting by herself, telling the audience how she feels:

ELIZA: I saved every letter you wrote me.
From the moment I read them
I knew you were mine.
You said you were mine.
I thought you were mine.

Do you know what Angelica said
When we saw your first letter **arrive**?
She said,

“Be careful with this one, love.
He will do what it takes to **survive**.”

You and your words flooded my senses.
Your sentences left me defenseless.
You build me palaces out of paragraphs,
You build cathedrals.
I’m re-reading the letters you wrote me.
I’m searching and scanning for answers
In every line,
For some kind of sign,
And when you were mine
The world seemed to

Burn.
[Miranda & McCarter: 238]

This is the same person singing who we saw rhyme at the end of every line in “Helpless”. Here, she has barely any rhymes and those that are there, are very simple. Similarly to “Wait For It” there is not much rhyming in “Burn” but there is repetition of words and phrases with minimal changes for emphasis, such as the lines ending in “mine” at the beginning of the song. Since both “Helpless” and “Burn” are primarily sung by the same character and they are similar in their style of music, this variety in the amount of rhyming in them seems to suggest

that the amount of rhyming is not as dependent on the style of music as it is on the function of the song in the context of the musical. As can be seen from the lyrics, “Helpless” advances the plot and moves forward in time. “Burn”, however, freezes time for its duration and lets us into Eliza’s head. This is true of “Wait For It” as well: it does not advance the plot but instead suspends time for its duration to let us into the characters’ heads. This theory can also be applied to “Hurricane” since even though a decision is made which affect the plot, the song itself does not advance the plot.

The dialogue in *Hamilton* is primarily presented in rap-form, although some characters still sing their parts, such as Eliza. Next some examples of these rapped conversations will be analyzed. The first example comes from “The Room Where It Happens” which begins with a small conversation between Burr and Hamilton:

BURR: Ah, Mr. Secretary.
HAMILTON: Mr. **Burr, sir.**
BURR: Didja hear the news about good old General **Mercer**?
HAMILTON: No.
BURR: You know Clermont Street?
HAMILTON: Yeah.
BURR: They renamed it after him. The Mercer legacy is **secure.**
HAMILTON: **Sure.**
BURR: And all he had to do was die.
HAMILTON: That’s a lot less work.
BURR: We oughta give it a try.
HAMILTON: Ha.
BURR: Now, how’re you gonna get your debt plan *through*?
HAMILTON: I’m⁶ guess I’m gonna fin’lly have to listen to *you*.
BURR: Really?
HAMILTON: Talk less. Smile **more.**
BURR: Ha-ha.
HAMILTON: Do whatever it takes to get my plan on the Congress **floor.**
BURR: Now, Madison and Jefferson are merciless.
HAMILTON: Well, hate the sin, love the *sinner*.
MADISON: Hamilton!
HAMILTON: I’m sorry Burr, I’ve gotta go.

⁶ The libretto reads “I’m guess” but on the recording Lin-Manuel Miranda (Hamilton) clearly says “I guess”. This is perhaps simply a typing mistake in the libretto.

BURR: But–
HAMILTON: Decisions are happening over *dinner*.
[Miranda & McCarter: 186]

This passage has some minimal and sporadic rhyming, meaning not every line has a rhyme. It begins with some additions to the running Burr-rhyme with “Burr, sir / Mercer / secure/sure”. Burr rhymes the ends of his own lines with “die / try” after which Burr and Hamilton contribute to the same rhyme with “through / you”. Hamilton’s “more / floor” rhyme matches that used by Burr earlier in “Aaron Burr, Sir” when Burr first said these words to Hamilton, which Hamilton is now quoting here. Finally Hamilton has a rhyme “sinner / dinner” before he leaves. In this passage both Hamilton’s and Burr’s rhymes are simple and more there for structure than any deeper meaning.

For an example of a conversation between Burr and someone other than Hamilton, we have his one conversation with Washington in “Right Hand Man”:

BURR: Your Excellency, sir!
WASHINGTON: Who are you?
BURR: Aaron **Burr, sir**?
Permission to state my case?
WASHINGTON: As you **were**.
BURR: **Sir**,
I was a captain under General Montgomery.
Until he caught a bullet in the neck in Quebec, and well, in summary
I think that I could be of some *assistance*.
I admire how you keep firing on the British from *a distance*.
WASHINGTON: Huh.
BURR: I have some questions, a couple of suggestions
On how to fight instead of fleeing west.
WASHINGTON: Yes?
BURR: Well–
[Miranda & McCarter: 62–63]

In this exchange we get another iteration of the Burr-rhyme with “Burr, sir / were, sir”. In Burr’s one longer part, where he starts to introduce himself and state his case to Washington, there are four lines which form two couplets. Both of the couplets have mosaic pure rhymes with “Montgomery / in summary” and “assistance / a distance”. Burr’s final line in this part

might have rhymed with something in his previous line but he gets interrupted by Hamilton before he gets to finish.

Hamilton and Burr have the following exchange in “Schuyler Defeated”:

HAMILTON: Burr!
HAMILTON: Since when are you a Democratic-**Republican**?
BURR: Since being one put me on the **up and up again**.
HAMILTON: No one knows who you are or what you do.
BURR: They don't need to know me. They don't like you.
HAMILTON: Excuse me?
BURR: Oh, Wall Street thinks you're *great*.
You'll always be adored by the things you *create*.
But *upstate*,
HAMILTON: *Wait*.
BURR: People think you're **crooked**!
And Schuyler's seat was up for grabs, so I **took it**.
HAMILTON: I've always considered you a *friend*.
BURR: I don't see why that has to *end*!
HAMILTON: You changed parties to run against my father-in-*law*.
BURR: I changed parties to seize the opportunity I *saw*.
I swear your pride will be the death of us *all*!
Beware it goeth before the *fall*...
[Miranda & McCarter: 191]

Unlike most of their other exchanges, Burr actually speaks more here than Hamilton does. They contribute to the same rhyme-schemes and Burr makes some of his own rhymes when he says more than one lines. All the rhymes in this passage are simple and mostly pure, except for the “Republican / up and up again” which as a mosaic rhyme is slightly more complex.

It would seem that the general conversations the characters have are not very significant when it comes to rhyming. Most of the conversations have very simple rhymes at the end of lines and there is an equal distribution between pure and near rhymes. These are mostly neutral moments for the characters and the rhymes are there more for rhythm and structure than telling us anything about the characters. The conversations may be rapped, but they follow the conventions of musical lyrics rather than rap lyrics: do not be clever for the sake of being clever. The complexity of the rhymes become more important in moments

where the characters bare their hearts and tell us what they actually think about things. It is also clear that the rapping in the conversation and the rapping in personal verses, like for example Hamilton's defense in "We Know" are in comparison vastly different, with the conversations being less emphatic and thus marked with less significant rhymes. The patterns are kept simple and the emphasis is on what is being said instead of how it is said.

What is notable is that both Washington and Angelica are heard singing as well as rapping. They do both equally, and quite remarkably well and this is emphasized throughout the show. In comparison, Hamilton is an excellent rapper but only a mediocre singer, while we hardly see Burr rap but he is a great singer. Washington and Angelica being good at both while not all characters are emphasizes their versatility and intelligence. Also, the fact that Burr raps in conversation but not really otherwise shows that he has a another kind of versatility: he tries to blend into which ever company he is in at any given moment. On the other hand, Eliza never raps, not even in conversation. She always only sings, which shows her wanting to be true to herself no matter what. This in turn suggests that either Burr does not have ideals, or he is willing to mold them according to what gives him the best opportunities in life.

The choice not to have all the characters rap equally much or equally well marks a clear divide between the characters: ones who sing and ones who rap. Of course most of the characters do both (with the notable exception of Eliza, who only ever sings), but most of them also seem to have a preference: for example Hamilton prefers to rap while Burr prefers to sing. There are also characters who do both equally well, such as Washington and Angelica. This clear divide draws attention to the connotations each music style carries with it. Singing is more traditional while rapping is the language of the revolution, both in the story of the musical as well as in real life. When the characters rap, especially the expressive verses, they

become MCs and thus give a voice to social commentary. Choosing to use rap in some very specific situations is also very poignant, since rap has traditionally been used to give voice to social issues. Using rap in the Cabinet debates creates a situation in which historical political matters are discussed with the voice of modern minorities. This choice draws a direct line from the lives of the white founding fathers to the lives of modern people of color.

5 SOCIAL IMPACT

A common stereotype of musicals is that they are simply entertainment with nothing intelligent to say (Hoffman: 3). Musical is seen as insignificant because they are too busy “with entertaining [their] middlebrow masses” to make any points about social issues (ibid: 5). Whether this is because of the musical’s origins in the comical operetta and revues or because it might be hard to fathom that a form of theater where characters seemingly randomly break into song and dance could have any significance is difficult to know. What can be known, though, is that musicals do indeed have something to say and that has always been the case. This fact is very evident in comments made by the cast and producers of *Hamilton* as well: they are very clear about the kind of changes they would like *Hamilton* to facilitate, as will be seen in the discussion below.

John Bush Jones (1) posits that “throughout the twentieth century musicals [have] variously dramatized, mirrored, or challenged our deeply-held cultural attitudes and beliefs”. Jones presents the Gilbert and Sullivan musical (due to its satirical over-tones it could also be called an operetta (McMillin: 11–12)) *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878) as an example of a musical which was both entertaining and featured a social issue of its time (inequality of social classes) (Jones: 9). *Pinafore* is an early example of a musical which commented on the society around it, but musicals have not been devoid of social commentary later on either. Jones writes about “issue-driven musicals” (237), where the “social or political agenda shares center stage with plot and is absolutely inseparable from the story”. These kinds of musicals clearly set out to make a point and their aim is to elicit change. Then there are musicals which are not necessarily “issue-driven” but become so by coincidence. An example of this might be *1776* which premiered on Broadway in 1969. This musical about the signing of the Declaration of

Independence had not been aimed to premier at the height of the anti-establishment protests, but due to re-writes and other scheduling issues, it ended up premiering when it did, and this coincidence possibly aided its success. The people who signed the Declaration were, after all, revolutionaries as well, and perhaps the story thus appealed to people in those troubled times. (Jones: 247–248)

Warren Hoffman also sees musicals as being anything but devoid of social issues. He focuses on the issue of race and the lack of racial diversity on Broadway. White people have always been widely represented in musicals, but minorities much less so (Hoffman: 5). There is some history of African Americans in musical theater, though up until the 1970s, most musicals with African American characters were created by white people and portrayed African Americans as stereotypical (Jones: 69, 217), with some notable exceptions such as *Show Boat* (1927) which had a mixed cast (though created by white people) (ibid: 73). While this history does exist, musicals performed and created by African Americans have always been, and still are, a minority and are mostly viewed by African American audiences (Hoffman: 213). Despite intersecting contributions from African Americans and other minorities in the form of music such as jazz and rock and roll, “the history of the American musical is the history of white identity in the United States” (ibid: 3). Jones echoes this. He mentions that over time the ticket prices for musicals have begun to rise, thus creating an audience that is older and wealthier. This has in turn resulted in the social issues that are being discussed in musicals are mainly those pertaining to the white middle classes. (Jones: 3)

Hamilton in its content might be more coincidentally influential than “issue-driven”. Taking into account just how long Lin-Manuel Miranda took to write the whole musical (roughly seven years (Miranda & McCarter: 21)), it would have been near impossible for him to plan its premiere at a certain time to comment on a specific social issue. Instead, *Hamilton*

tells its story and if there is any commentary on current social or political issues in its content, it is because those issues are common or prevailing. There are issues, particularly political, present in *Hamilton* which puzzle (American) politicians even now; issues such as American presence overseas (“Cabinet Battle #2” takes up this issue by having Jefferson and Hamilton argue over whether the United States should take part in the war between the French and the British). Of course, *Hamilton* has other ways of commenting on social and political issues, not only by its content.

5.1 Immigrant identity

There is one social issue which has quite a notable presence in *Hamilton* and that is immigrant identity. The historical Hamilton was technically an immigrant, having been born and raised in the Caribbean (Chernow: 7) (then under the rule of several countries, depending on the island) before he came to the North American colonies. There are several references to Hamilton being an immigrant in the musical, both as a positive and a negative aspect, the most notable perhaps being the line “Immigrants: we get the job done.” (Miranda & McCarter: 121), shared between Hamilton and Lafayette (who as a Frenchman was also an immigrant) in “Yorktown”. As per Miranda’s note on the same page, “the audience response [to the line] would drown out the next few lines every night.”

The attention Lin-Manuel Miranda pays to the fact that Hamilton was an immigrant perhaps stems from the fact that he himself has a similar background. Both of his parents were born in Puerto Rico and migrated to the USA (Mead) and although Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, they might face some of the same issues than immigrants do, from perhaps not knowing English when they migrate to being a part of a minority (Latin American). Miranda grew up with these issues and they are a part of his identity. He identifies as Latino and said in

an interview with Jeffrey Brown on PBS that writing his previous musical *In The Heights* which tells the story of Latin Americans living in Washington Heights, New York, came from the fact that Miranda wanted a career in musicals but that “there’s only about three great roles for Latino men in musical theater” (Miranda). So, Miranda wanted to create more roles in musicals, not just for himself, but other Latin American actors as well. By doing so, he also challenges the prevailing attitudes towards race and ethnicity and, especially in *Hamilton*, also draws attention to the historical background of those attitudes.

5.2 Casting

Hamilton poses a bit of a problem when trying to categorize it in any way, because while it is written by a Latino person of Puerto Rican origin, *Hamilton* itself does not touch on issues faced by Latin Americans at all, at least in terms of its story. Judging by the casting alone it might be an African American musical or a Latin American musical, but the subject matter is definitely not either. Its only minority representation is in its outward appearance, not its inward presentation. However, this is the whole point of casting *Hamilton* the way it has been cast. Taking the mainstream, white history of America and having minorities, the groups of people who have often been erased from history but who are a major part of the reality of America today, portray it on stage forces the recognition that this is the history of America, and not just white America but *all* America. This history belongs to the minorities as well as the white majority.

So, the issue *Hamilton* is commenting on with its casting is not something inherent in its story, but rather in the presentation of it. When the cast and the creators of *Hamilton* talk about the casting for the show, they often quote the show’s director Tommy Kail who said: “This is a story about America then, told by America now.” (Miranda & McCarter: 33). This

is at the core of the casting. No one is denying that the Founding Fathers, these men who are presented in *Hamilton* were white. They obviously were. But this is where historical accuracy is pushed to the side and other issues come to the forefront. Casting *Hamilton* the way it is, is a way to give opportunities to actors of color on Broadway, as well as showing minorities that the history of America belongs to them as well as the white population.

To the creators of *Hamilton* the casting is a matter of principle. The quote above from Tommy Kail is what they wanted to achieve, they wanted to “eliminate any distance” between the audience and the historical story (Miranda, qtd in Weinert-Kendt). Miranda continues by saying that once *Hamilton* is made available for high school productions, there will be a note about the casting: “If this show ends up looking like the actual founding fathers, you messed up.” (qtd in Weinert-Kendt). Casting the show a certain way is a subtle way of sending a message without it coming out as preaching. Chris Jackson, who plays Washington says: “By having a multicultural cast, it gives us, as actors of color, the chance to provide an additional context just by our presence onstage, filling these characters up.” (qtd in Mead).

Having this piece of mainstream, meaning white, history be portrayed by people of color is very significant from the point of view of ownership. Oskar Eustis, the artistic director of The Public, where *Hamilton* was performed before moving to Broadway, says: “By telling the story of the founding of the country through the eyes of a bastard, immigrant orphan, told entirely by people of color, [Lin-Manuel Miranda] is saying, ‘This is our country. We get to lay claim to it.’” (qtd in Mead). Even the cast sees the shows transformative potential: “Daveed [Diggs] thinks that seeing a black man play Jefferson or Madison or Washington when he was a kid in Oakland might have changed his life.” (Miranda & McCarter: 149).

Daveed Diggs, who plays Lafayette and Jefferson adds to the casting the importance

of a strong presence of hip hop in Hamilton:

It feels important, because it allows us to see ourselves as part of history that we always thought we were excluded from. Rap is the voice of the people of our generation, and of people of color, and just the fact that it exists in this piece, and is not commented upon, gives us a sense of ownership.
(qtd in Mead)

Hip hop culture (and rap within it) was born in the 1970s among the impoverished youth in the Bronx (Bradley and DuBois: xxix). Rap was then and is still used to voice political and social issues important to the people performing it, who especially at the beginning were largely African American (Bonnette: 2). Hip hop and rap have often been viewed negatively by some groups of society, especially the middle classes, white or African American (Pate: xiii) because the focus is more often than not on the offensiveness and profanity present in some rap songs instead of their other merits (ibid: xvii).

So, what *Hamilton* does is take a form of predominantly white culture (musicals) and a form of predominantly African American culture (rap) and mashes them together. The choices for casting come from the rap side of the equation. The choice to use rap in such an extensive way made the natural choice of people to perform that music be African American and Latin American, the people whose culture rap is a big part of. These were simply the people most qualified to perform these songs (Miranda & McCarter: 33). Rap is not just music, it is a part of a bigger culture and cannot be wholly separated from it; *Hamilton* performed by only white people would arguably not have been as successful, if at all, as it is now. *Hamilton* does not just use rap as its form, it pays homage to some of its biggest names. The musical is full of references to the works of people like DMX and Notorious B.I.G. However, to make the mash of these two cultures even more prevalent, *Hamilton* also references numerous other musicals from *South Pacific* (1949) to *The Last Five Years* (2001). (Miranda & McCarter: 94) This mash of cultures is obvious not only in its outward presentation but also in its content.

5.3 EduHam

The Hamilton Education Program, sometimes known as “EduHam” for short, is an educational initiative organized by The Gilder Lehrman Institute in association with The Rockefeller Foundation to enable students from certain high schools to attend a program where they will study Hamilton’s era as well as see the show for themselves for just \$10⁷ each. This program is in action for at least the academic year 2016-2017 in all the cities where *Hamilton* is and will be performed, currently New York, Chicago and San Francisco. In New York alone it will reach 20,000 students. (The Gilder Lehrman Institute website) This program is offered exclusively to Title I public schools, which means schools which have “high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families” (U.S. Department of Education website). In practice this means that “the students tend to be a vivid mix of races, religions, and national origins” (Miranda & McCarter: 156).

EduHam started as just one matinee at the Public facilitated by the theater’s partnership with Theater Development Fund (TDF) (Miranda & McCarter: 156). The whole initiative is about giving students opportunities to see an art form they might not otherwise have the chance to see due to high ticket prices but by specifically having these students see *Hamilton* it is giving them a chance to see themselves represented where they were never represented before, like Ginger Bartkoski Meagher of TDF says: “It’s theater telling [the students] a story about themselves” (qtd in Miranda & McCarter: 157). These students see themselves represented not only on stage but in history as well. This is the idea behind *Hamilton*’s casting working in action. But it is not just the casting that is important, it is the heavily featured rap. As one of the teachers involved at that first matinee, Joe White, says: “The play is in a language [the students] understand” (qtd in Miranda & McCarter: 157). The

⁷ Alexander Hamilton is featured on the \$10 bill, thus the students will only have to pay a “Hamilton” to see the show.

students get the chance to see a culture that is very familiar to them be joined with a culture that is very unfamiliar and form an exciting and cohesive whole. Perhaps *Hamilton* will help these (minority) students, like it helped the adult cast before them, to see themselves as part of a history that has excluded them.

6 CONCLUSION

Hamilton is different from anything that has been seen on Broadway before. It looks different and it sounds different but is it really? Some conventions surrounding musicals are difficult to articulate, since they are more often than not unwritten rules and simply the way things are done. There is not much research done on things that are considered obvious. As seen in Chapter 2, the scholars cannot agree on even a quite simple definition for musicals and their form. Some songs in *Hamilton* do not advance plot and seem to freeze time for their duration while some songs do advance the plot, thus both proving and disproving McMillin's theory on the two orders of time found in musicals. McMillin's and Taylor's theories on disjunction at first seem irrelevant in the context of *Hamilton* but if one widens the view, it could be argued that the fact that *Hamilton* mashes together the culture of musicals and the culture of hip hop fits the theory that disjunction is what creates the integrated musical.

As for the lyrical form, two different sets of conventions must be taken into account. The conventions surrounding the musical lyric seem slightly hazy, since there is the common view that musicals must only use pure rhymes, but this is not actually substantiated by any research, simply personal opinions. On the other hand the conventions surrounding rap music are very well articulated: be creative and interesting while adhering to the beat. The one convention there does seem to be in modern musicals is that the lyrics must fit the character. This *Hamilton* does do in addition to adhering to the rap conventions of complex and interesting rhymes, pure or otherwise.

Both musicals and hip hop also have their conventions of dealing with social issues. Hip hop is very outspoken, making social and political issues often its main point of discussion. Musical on the other hand, while sometimes delving in some social issues, speak

more with inaction than with action. In this too, *Hamilton* adheres to both traditions. It does not say much within its text (with the notable exception of dropping in the word “immigrant” wherever it can) but does make its mark with its actions. The impact its casting is already making (by making people talk about it, both positively and negatively) simply by being so noticeable is pronounced. It is also ushering in a new generation of more historically and socially conscious students who know their place and prospects in society.

So, *Hamilton* seems different but deep down is not very different from the conventions surrounding it. How does it achieve this feeling of difference then? It weaves its way through these two very different cultures (musicals and hip hop) and connects all the best parts of both cultures into one creative whole. This combination is what connects but also subverts both genres, especially musical conventions. *Hamilton* fits some conventions but not others and it does not sit comfortably anywhere. It is something wholly new and unprecedented. It seems coincidental at first, but on closer inspection is definitely not. *Hamilton*'s impact seems to lie in taking old things and traditional ways of doing things and making them sound new and that is where its power for change lies.

It will be very interesting to see if *Hamilton*'s impact is lasting. In ten years, will there be more musicals which mash cultures together as shamelessly as *Hamilton* does? Will the students who are now taking part in EduHam grow up to be performers or politicians, or perhaps both? Will they have their own unique ways of weaving through cultures, because *Hamilton* showed them it is possible?

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