

Nina van de Voort
6112552
Bachelor Thesis English Language and Literature
Supervisor: J.E.M. Hoorenman
March 9 2020
Word count: 5997

2020

What is a Legacy?

NARRATIVE IN HAMILTON: AN AMERICAN MUSICAL
BACHELOR THESIS BY NINA VAN DE VOORT

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....1

SUMMARY.....2

INTRODUCTION.....2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....6

LEGACY AND CHARACTER.....11

LEGACY AND NARRATIVE.....14

LEGACY AND HIP-HOP.....17

CONCLUSION.....20

WORKS CITED.....20

Summary

This thesis explores the theme of legacy in Lin-Manuel Miranda's award-winning hip-hop musical *Hamilton* (2016) by ways of its relation with use of character, narrative, and hip-hop in the musical, using close reading and Life Writing. The musical is a testimony; its narrative is divided between multiple characters, most notably Eliza Hamilton, Aaron Burr and Alexander Hamilton himself, who all three have their own opinion and perspective of the subject, Alexander Hamilton; this changes his characterization depending on who the narrator is. Furthermore, the use of hip-hop is remarkable as it is a music style with roots as a narrative technique; in the musical is used to further underline the idea that your legacy is formed by both you and those around you, as well as underlining Hamilton's radicalization to try and regain control over his own narrative.

Introduction

In the second half of 2015, a new musical swept the American nations: *Hamilton: An American Musical*, written and produced by Lin-Manuel Miranda (previously known for *In The Heights*), debuted on Broadway at the Richard Rodgers Theatre. The musical tells the story of founding father Alexander Hamilton, his participation in the American Revolution that gained the United States their independence, his rise to the top as the first secretary of treasury of the United States of America, his downfall and his death. The original Broadway cast recording featuring Miranda, Philipa Soo, Daveed Diggs and Leslie Odom Jr. dropped in September 2015, and it revolutionized what audiences expected American musical theatre to be. In order to tell Hamilton's story, Miranda had decided to employ hip-hop in this historical musical. The musical progresses through rapping; in 2015, Daveed Diggs (who played Lafayette and Thomas Jefferson) broke the record of fastest rap on Broadway by

spitting 19 words in a total of three seconds. Apart from being a musical about a revolution, the musical also revolutionized musicals in terms of score with its use of hip-hop.

This thesis examines the musical *Hamilton*'s narrative strategy in telling Alexander Hamilton's life story, as the way it is done in the piece is striking, although it is not an uncommon form of life writing. *Hamilton* employs multiperspectivity; a way of writing that allows for other perspectives into one single story, each giving their own testimony. Though the story focusses on Hamilton, he is rarely his own narrator. My thesis statement is as follows: *Hamilton: An American Musical*, employs a narrative structure that is built around other diegetic narrators telling Hamilton's story to make a case for how narrative and legacy are constructed through using testimony. My research finds its relevance in that the musical not only is about one of America's founding fathers, but an immigrant and a largely forgotten one at that. Because compared to the other founding fathers like Washington and Jefferson, Hamilton is rarely talked about. A story focussing on him, as an immigrant entering the United States, is especially important in today's American society, a divided country in terms of ideology. The musical refocuses the American community and unity by staging a story about the founding of America. Furthermore, it also focusses on the American ideal of freedom, by telling the story of an immigrant who rose to the top in a new country. The musical is written for an American audience, and thus it reminds them of where their roots and beginnings. Therefore, research on a significant musical like this, is relevant to showcase in what way this piece relays American values, and how it breaks down borders between nationalities and ethnicities. What makes it even more relevant is that it is extremely popular among American audiences; Lemonson predicted in 2015 that *Hamilton* would attract audiences that otherwise would never go to a musical (via Mead 2015). However, the general Broadway audiences were still largely white in 2015-2016 season when *Hamilton* premiered – 77% of the audience was white according to the Broadway League (qtd. in Sáez 183).

Although there is no data on the exact make-up of the demographics of the *Hamilton* audience, the *New York Times* posted an article in 2018 attendance of Hispanic people has grown by 61% - making up 8.2% of the overall audience. Reasons for this largely white audience are the steep ticket prices of *Hamilton* and its constantly sold out status make it harder for working class people to see the show (Demby NPR). However, there is still a way that the musical can be interacted with, albeit not in the theatre: *Hamilton* has an enormous online presence. Fans of the show can listen to the cast album online, interact with other fans, and the production even used to post free #Ham4Ham shows; free after show sketches that enabled a large audience to still interact with the show (Hillman-McCord 122-3). This kind of constant social media presence not only allows for a large audience to interact with the show, but also a large non-white demographic, making it a popular show amongst minority groups who see themselves represented in this show. It won eleven Tony Awards in 2016, falling just shy of the record of most won Tony's. Apart from a successful Broadway run which is currently on its fourth year, the musical also has three North American Tours running (notable is the And Peggy Tour (third National Tour), which premiered in Puerto Rico in 2018 and saw the brief come back of Miranda in the title role), a production on the West End (premiered in 2017) and with many more international productions to come. It strikes a chord with the zeitgeist of a broad, modern audience, who are able to see themselves in the characters presented on the stage. Lastly, it is interesting to see how a musical which main musical theme is hip-hop tells a story about immigration; after all, hip-hop is a musical movement largely founded by immigrants.

To answer my research question – which is: what effect do the multiple narrators have on the overall narrative of the story, and how does it play into the theme of legacy? – my research starts by exploring how hip-hop is used as a narrative device, and then moves into researching which of *Hamilton*'s characteristics are highlighted by the different narrators, and

how that supports the idea of legacy within the musical. Lastly, it will focus on the overall idea of legacy and how it is used as a device to tell Hamilton's story, which will then lead into a conclusion. Life Writing, combined with the hip-hop element, will be a useful way to analyse and approach this research.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

The process of producing *Hamilton* was not an easy or quick one. According to Jeremy McCarter, co-author of the book *Hamilton: The Revolution*, a book published on the production and writing history of *Hamilton*, the project had been years in the making, aided by people from all kinds of different backgrounds, running through White House performances and workshops until finally opening Off-Broadway at the Public Theatre. McCarter had previously been interested in the possibilities of rap incorporated in musicals; he found that the lyrical density of rap and the storytelling ingenuity of hip-hop “seemed closer to the verbal energy of the great plays of the past than almost anything [he] saw onstage” (10). Before Lin-Manuel Miranda opened *In The Heights* at the Richard Rodgers Theatre on Broadway. A variety of music genres had already been used in musicals, ranging from pop to rock, jazz, blues, and Motown (Coleman 258; 358; 362). Miranda, however, decided to use hip-hop, and so changed the idea of what a Broadway musical could and should sound like (Coleman 363). But in order to explain why it was innovative to use hip-hop in musicals and what it might do to narrative, we must first look at hip-hop as a music genre on its own before we explore how it works in *Hamilton*.

Narrative and narrative technique is not just about how a story is told, the way we tell a story also reframes the narrative; in the case of *Hamilton*, the narrative is reframed partially from an immigrant’s perspective. Another musical that retold a story from a different perspective is *Wicked* by Stephen Schwartz. The well-known story about Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz is now reframed from the villain’s perspective Elphaba. According to Krus & Prettyman, Elphaba’s narrative opposes the “dichotomised scripts of Glinda and Morrible” (459), by portraying a character that is both an “outsider and resistor” (459).

In *The History of Music Production*, Burgess says that hip-hop started as a music movement in the early 1970s in the South Bronx in New York City (170). Its beginnings can

be attributed to Clive Campbell (Burgess 170). Important aspects of hip-hop are that it is a mix of different musical elements, both conceptual and technical, a mashup of beatboxing, oral, lyrical and melodic components (Burgess 105). There are “four elements” to hip-hop; graffiti, breakdancing, DJ-ing and MC-ing or rapping (Morgan & Bennett 177; Alridge & Stewart 190; Williams 137). Its rap component can be traced further back than the ‘70s, as far back to storytellers and musicians known as “griots” in West Africa, and to the old oral tradition in the African American community (Burgess 105). Nowadays it is still a popular form because it expanded into “a larger multicultural phenomenon”, consisting of graffiti art, breakdancing and fashion (Burgess 105). Hip-hop exists on a cross section; it functions as “an entry point for discussions related to race, class, sexism and black culture” (Morgan and Rose qtd. in Jacobson 832). Therefore, it is able to start discussions about these topics, while also being a versatile way of telling stories about them. Hip-hop transcends any kind of conventional construction such as class, race, and gender (Morgan & Bennett 175). It also defies negative connotations to minority cultures like the African American culture (Alridge & Stewart 193). Furthermore, hip-hop is a comment on contemporary society, employing rhyme to do so, as it helps combine conditions and symbols of contemporary life; it is used to “evoke the era’s distinctive features” (Caplan 7), not to distance itself from it. Hip-Hop is about what is happening in the moment; it uses current products, technologies, and personalities (Caplan 7).

Hamilton: An American Musical made revolutionary history when it opened on Broadway. As mentioned previously, before the musical, hip-hop as a music genre had not been infused in musical before, despite the many possibilities of using it. Miranda used his knowledge of hip-hop style in Alexander’s characterization to make him sound like a “uniquely talented individual” (Kajikawa 473); multisyllabic rhymes were employed to show intelligence, and to intimidate Alexander Hamilton’s oppressors within the musical. Previous

research has been conducted on several things in the musical *Hamilton* that can be seen as revolutionary. For example, Ariel Nereson said that innovation in *Hamilton* does not only lie in its style and content, but also in the fact that a story about a revolution can only be told in a revolutionary way. Another revolutionary aspect of the musical is its use of time; though most of the plot is linear, with a few time jumps here and there, there are also moments where time either completely stops, like in “The World Was Wide Enough” or rewinds, as in “Satisfied”. A final thing in which way *Hamilton* changed theatre way through its casting; the casting call for *Hamilton* encourages actors of colour to join; white actors can only get roles in the ensemble. This technique puts actors of colour on the centre of the stage and gives them their own platform in a predominantly white field. However, the casting has been met with controversy. After the first casting notice was posted, *The Guardian* reported of several institutions such as Actor’s Equity (the union representing actors) criticizing the casting the notice (Smith *Guardian*). Despite the lead roles all needing to be played by actors of colour, the staging and the technique in *Hamilton* “reinforce exclusionary and conservative discourses about American values” and reassures the ideology Americans hold towards their founding fathers (Sáez 182-3). Furthermore, the audience empathizes with the characters and so reinforces exclusionary principles (Sáez 183). An interesting phenomenon is the casting of David Diggs as Jefferson: according to Sáez, Diggs’ blackness “distances his performance of racism from Jefferson’s whiteness, enabling a (largely white) audience to forget the degree to which they are implicated in the violent, anti-black histories of the United States” (McMasters qtd. in Sáez 183). Jefferson’s stance on racism absolves the other characters who originally were racist as well. In fact, the issue of slavery in the founding of America are rarely mentioned in the musical, and only in passing if so. This causes the audience to forget about it happening and again idolize the founding fathers, and the exclusionary ideology on which the United States started. On the other hand, *Hamilton* has also been praised for its

inclusionary casting. McCallister said that “The shared goal of performed whiteness (...) is not to simply get beyond color or build careers, but to create representational and rhetorical room, generate greater potential and more options for actors and audiences of all colors.” (282). *Hamilton* has also been said to argue with history rather than to agree with it as it “reclaims the dismissed and devalued.” (Romano qtd. in McCallister 82). However, there is a bit of pointed racism in the musical as well, aimed at Hamilton: he is despised by Jefferson for being an immigrant.

The writer of the musical Lin-Manuel Miranda was inspired to write this musical after reading Ron Chernow’s biography *Alexander Hamilton* (2004). Like the musical, Chernow describes Hamilton’s life story in his book, though a lot more detailed. It starts with Hamilton being born, how he came to America, discusses his work during the revolution (which even then was finance based) and eventually his political role in founding the United States, and ends with his death after a duel with Burr. Chernow describes Hamilton as an honourable man; even the duels he took part in sometimes were founded in honour. Much of what he did was to keep his honour about him; though this made people often suspicious of him. Chernow does not beat around the bush when discussing Hamilton’s character though; he is “frank and unsparing when it comes to errors in judgment that ultimately frustrated Hamilton's career” (Mead 135), which included misjudgements and “unbalanced conclusions” that “ensured that he would never succeed Washington as president” (Mead 135).

Little research has been conducted on who exactly the narrator is in *Hamilton*. However, the hip-hop element, combined with Life Writing, is a good starting point for this. Biography is not an uncommon musical form. Before, it has been done in many ways. Examples include historical based musicals, such as *1776* (1969), but also jukebox musicals documenting artist’s life such as *Summer: The Donna Summer Musical*, *The Cher Show* and *Beautiful: the Carole King Musical*. Other ways biography has been used in musical are adaptations of

biography, like *Fun Home* (Coleman 372). Even using the historical figure Alexander Hamilton as a focus in a biography in a stage show is also not a new phenomenon. It has been done before in plays such as *Fashions and Follies of Washington Life* by Henry Clay Preuss (1857) and Jon Nicols's *The Essex Junto* in 1802. Playwrights are attracted to Hamilton as a character because of his ““outsider” identity” he acquired during his career (Nathans 272). History is created by both the documents that are left over and what the survivors tell, but also what is told about the historical figures over and over through art and theatre (Nathans 274). This is especially important in *Hamilton*, which presents a narrative on racial representation; something history and older plays falls short on (Nathans 274).

Hip-hop can be used a way to regain agency of one's own (Shipley 29); it offers a way that makes people able to tell their own stories through means that are integrated in their own culture, rather than having to use a way offered by their oppressors. Rhyme can aid in this. The kind of rhyme that hip-hop favours, with elaborate rhymes, offers a form of political “compromise” and “disguise” (Caplan 12). As hip-hop as a lyrical form started out as a discussion between DJs, talking to their audiences, it is also a medium that allows for multiple voices to be heard, which in turn can be used to provide multiple testimonies and therefore connect multiple experiences to form one picture (Haslam and Neale 88).

Chapter 2: Legacy and Character

As narrators, the three central narrating characters Alexander Hamilton himself, Eliza Hamilton and Aaron Burr do not all highlight the same aspect or characteristics of Hamilton; each character focusses on a different side of Hamilton. This makes sense, since Hamilton is a vastly different person to Eliza and Burr, and naturally would give different testimonies of himself than Eliza or Burr would give of him, which in turn helps form a fuller picture of the character by highlighting different aspects. One thing they all tend to agree on, is Hamilton's inability to control and stop himself; he is impulsive, and makes rash decisions. However, they all take it in a different way.

If there is one villain in this musical, it is Burr. Though he starts out as a friend and an ally to Hamilton, he ends up being his worst enemy. Burr credits Hamilton's ambition, and his eventual rise to the top, to Hamilton's determination. He usually mentions the two in combination with each other. In the first song where Hamilton is introduced "Alexander Hamilton" (Miranda and McCarter 16-7), Burr says that for Hamilton, after suffering many losses, "There would have been nothin' left to do for someone less astute ... scammin' for every book he can get his hands on" (Miranda and McCarter 17), in which Burr shows that Hamilton, even from a young age, was willing to do anything to get farther in life. One main motif of the musical is the line "in New York you can be a new man" (Miranda and McCarter 17); New York is seen as a city with endless possibilities where you can remake yourself, which is a chance that Hamilton takes. It first appears in "Alexander Hamilton", right after a part sung and narrated by Burr about how Hamilton was willing to do anything to get out. It is especially a common motif within the first act, where Hamilton is still defining himself, and finding himself, still trying to climb to the top. It is sung during important events in Hamilton's own life, moments where he can redefine himself, such as in "Helpless" (Miranda and McCarter 71-7) when he gets married to Eliza. Marriage is commonly seen as starting a

new life, beginning again; hence why that line is sung at the end of the song, when their lives together begin. From then on, the motif does not come back clearly again; this shows that Hamilton has chosen a life for himself, and he does not intend to start over again. All that is left to do is moving forward.

A striking parallel in the musical is “just you wait” (Miranda and McCarter 17) and “wait for it” (Miranda and McCarter 91-2). In the first song of the musical, Hamilton introduces himself to the stage with the line “there’s a million things I haven’t done, but just you wait” (Miranda and McCarter 16-7). This line is similar to Burr’s main motif “wait for it”. However, the meaning of the two lines to the two men differs. To Hamilton, the waiting is a message to the audience and the people around him. It is his way of telling the world that he is coming, and that he is going to be big, “just you wait” (there is irony in the fact that at the end of the song, while he sings that, the company sings it back to him; though in this case it is a comment on how he should slow down, something they have commented on before with “you never learned to take your time” (Miranda and McCarter 17)). But for Hamilton, he is telling them to wait for him, and see what he becomes. It also is a way of him saying that he will take whatever opportunity comes along to be bigger; something that is shown throughout the musical. A clear example of this is when Washington needs him to form a government in Non-Stop, and Hamilton accepts the offer to become secretary before he knows what the actual position is; it is just a means to grow higher. Burr’s “wait for it” on the other hand, is a comment on his own characterization. Where Hamilton is telling the world to wait for him and that he is doing whatever he can to become known, Burr is saying that he waits for the right opportunity to come along that will elevate him, and get him to the top. Whereas Hamilton is running wild, Burr is much more controlled.

When it comes to Burr relating Hamilton’s incessantness to the audience, it is usually, as said before, paired with Hamilton’s ambition. However, there is also a bit of annoyance to be

found in Burr's words on it, especially near the end of the musical. Right from the beginning, Burr calls Hamilton all names that amount to nothing, insignificant, belittling. The way Burr pictures Hamilton, Hamilton's inability to stop is only a means to end to become more powerful.

On the other side of this scale is Eliza, Hamilton's wife. When she mentions his continuous working, it is usually paired with a comment on his legacy; a recurring theme in the musical and something that Hamilton himself has also mentioned as important to him. She sees his determination as a means for him to be remembered in whatever way possible. In the first act of the musical, Eliza tries to steer him away from that idea that he needs a legacy (Miranda and McCarter 109). Eliza is thus used to help highlight Hamilton's concern with legacy, both by being supportive of it, but also by showing how his determination to control his legacy is affecting his family and how he will stop at nothing; in "Burn" it becomes a point of anger for her: "You and your words obsessed with your legacy/you and your sentences/border on senseless" (Miranda and McCarter 238). Again, the notion of the legacy is paired with Hamilton's incessant ethic regarding to legacy. She has realized that Hamilton will do whatever it takes not for power (like Burr does), but to be remembered. Eliza burns her letters to Hamilton; she actively erases herself from the narrative – something she mentions wanting to be part of earlier in "That Would Be Enough: "Oh, let me be a part of the narrative" (Miranda and McCarter 109) – and in doing so also erases part of Hamilton's narrative. However, she does try to restore this in the end. In "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story" (Miranda and McCarter 279-80), she mentions that she has put herself back into the narrative and tries to gather as many accounts as possible to tell Hamilton's story.

Chapter 3: Legacy and Narrative

An important question in the musical is in fact, the one about narrative: “Who lives, who dies, who tells your story?”. As mentioned, there are different narrators in the story.

However, it is hard to pinpoint if there is a so-called main diegetic narrator; someone who seems to do the most part of narrating, or the most important parts. There is no one “head” narrator in this musical; every narrator plays an important part in telling Hamilton’s story.

The narrators are mostly individual characters. These mainly include Burr, Eliza, Hamilton himself. However, there are parts of the musical where the narration is not as clear-cut. An example of this is “History Has His Eyes On You” (Miranda and McCarter 120), which seems to be sung in the narrated time of the musical, and is just Washington singing to Hamilton. Lastly, the ensemble acts as a narrating chorus in some parts. However, when they do sing on their own (i.e. not supporting any other vocalist), they either set the place and time of the scene (the time indicated by a year) or they help to characterize Hamilton. For example, in the first song “Alexander Hamilton” (Miranda and McCarter 16-7) when they sing how he “never learns to take” his time (Miranda and McCarter 17). Lastly, the ensemble or chorus sets the scene for the entire musical at the end of the first song, by revealing what the plot is going to be about:

“When America sings for you

Will they know what you overcame?

Will they know you rewrote your game?

The world will never be the same, oh” (Miranda and McCarter 17).

They hint at the influence Hamilton has had in the founding of the United States by mentioning that he has been mostly forgotten as most citizens do not know what he overcame or what he has done for the States. At the beginning of the musical, there seems to be an

omniscient narrator/narrators. The first song sets the tone and tells the audience what to expect. However, the omniscient narrator fades away during the musical. In the end, “there is no omniscient narrator, only men, facing one another on stage” according to Joseph Adelman (288). In “The World Was Wide Enough”, Hamilton gives his final soliloquy; his final chance in controlling his narrative in the musical.

“What is a legacy?” is the question Hamilton asks himself in “The World Was Wide Enough” (Miranda and McCarter 273). The idea of a legacy seems to be his passion, his most important drive and the reason why he does things. However, it is clear that he does not care what sort of legacy it will be, it does not matter if it is a necessarily good or bad one. This becomes evident in “Hurricane” (Miranda and McCarter 232-3), where at the end it is said that Hamilton knows what he needs to do to protect his legacy: The Reynolds Pamphlet, which is a pamphlet in which he publishes his affair with Maria Reynolds. In the musical, he does this to protect his own political appearance. In “We Know” (Miranda and McCarter 229-31) Hamilton is approached by Jefferson, Madison and Burr because of some missing money. He tells them about the affair and from then on is afraid Burr will make it publicly known. In “Hurricane” Hamilton thus takes his narrative into his own hands. This is a striking choice here, because at this one point in the musical, he figuratively takes his narrative into his own hands in terms of narrative technique, as he is the one narrating his own story in the song. He also takes control over his own story by deciding what to do next, and publishing the affair himself so he can control what happens. As mentioned, legacy is Hamilton’s main drive. However, a legacy is something you often do not get to see for yourself. Like he says, “it’s planting seeds in a garden you’ll never see” (Miranda and McCarter 273). The whole musical Hamilton fights for his legacy and for him to be remembered in his own words and how he wants to be remembered, to leave something behind. In the end, he fails in controlling his own legacy. For a while this may have been true

historically – as Hamilton is often regarded as a forgotten founding father. However, the musical greatly helps in opposing this idea. Not only is this shown in the final song: “you have no control/who lives/who dies/who tells your story” (Miranda and McCarter 280) but also shown through the multiple narrative. In this sentence, the musical also comments on itself as a form of biography and legacy. Hamilton does not sing or talk in this final song, which highlights the main theme of that song and the musical, which so far has barely allowed Hamilton to be his own narrator: you have no control who tells your story after you die. In the end, other people end up carrying and constructing his legacy and narrative according to their own views; through the multiple diegetic narrators, the same thing happens in the musical.

Chapter 4: Legacy and Hip-hop

Hip-hop has a long tradition of being used as a medium of storytelling; it is a music movement created to give an oppressed group of people a voice. As mentioned in the first chapter, hip-hop is a movement that comments on the contemporary, while also opening up discussion on topics such as race and class. In *Hamilton*, the contemporary can work in two ways, which also plays with the idea that hip-hop exists in a cross section (Morgan and Rose via Jacobson 832). On the one hand, it is interacting with the contemporary within the musical, which is set during the American Revolution and the founding of the United States of America in the late 18th and early 19th century (1776-1804). On the other hand, it also interacts with the current contemporary; it highlights issues that are both important in the age the musical is set, and at the same time provides commentary on today's society. The musical plays on the idea of race, and immigration, and the founding of America as done by immigrants, which is especially significant in present-day America, as it is characterized by political division and extreme policies regarding immigration, especially for Latinx, and Muslim and Middle-Eastern people. According to Joseph M. Adelman, *Hamilton* shows that "historical narratives differ depending on a teller's perspective" that is combined with the uncertainty of never fully knowing the past (Adelman 285). Through the combination of modern music such as hip-hop, a conversation is created between the past of America and its contemporary society. Some of the values that initially shaped America have been forgotten. A story about a forgotten American founding father only highlights that issue, as it might need a forgotten man to bring back forgotten values. In other words, it is the forgotten immigrant who is reshaping contemporary views of American history and American legacy.

One way in which hip-hop plays an important part is in the narration. It is used to underline political ideas. For example, the style is used as a way to show Hamilton's radicalization; one song in which this is apparent is "My Shot" (Gentry, 275). His solo verse

starts out with an introspective glance at himself: “I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory” (Miranda and McCarter 28); this ends up being one of Hamilton’s leading motifs throughout the musical. As he goes on, he realizes that he is part of a larger movement, which causes the music to pick up in tempo and sound, to the point where Hamilton is basically shouting “I’m past patiently waiting” (Miranda and McCarter 29). Kendra James has describes this as “an urgency to force change” (via Gentry, 275). The music and lyrics speed up as Hamilton becomes more urgent about the revolution. Another song in which this type of movement happens is in “Hurricane”; in the final verse, the tempo and volume of the music quickens as Hamilton sings that “this is the eye of the hurricane/this is the only way I can protect my legacy” (Miranda and McCarter 233), again showing him becoming more radical in his actions. After this song, he publishes the *Reynold’s Pamphlet*, and this song is him realizing what he has to do to save his reputation and his legacy. The music and lyrics underlines him becoming more radical in his actions. It can also be an indicator of him not fully thinking through his actions and being more impulsive and in the moment, because of the speed at which it happens and how his actions seem to backfire sometimes (such as with the publishing of the *Reynold’s Pamphlet*). Hamilton has a clear political belief throughout the musical, and the rapid music and lyrics underline his urgency and radical thoughts.

Furthermore, hip-hop in the musical also emphasizes the idea of legacy and storytelling. As said in the first chapter, the musical form derives from old African storytelling techniques, but in its African American context it was used as a way to reclaim agency over one’s own life through re-appropriation (Williams 140); it emerged as a music movement to transcend boundaries (Morgan & Bennett 177) and also became a “music of free speech” (Morgan & Bennett 178). Because hip-hop transcends these boundaries, it becomes a universal “lingua franca” (Morgan & Bennett 178), and in that way can be used to reclaim own agency as it uses a language or style not belonging to any other culture, and allows the individual to

transcend that culture as well and be able to speak in their own words. The notion of legacy is an important theme within the piece, and is Hamilton's main focus in the musical; he mentions it throughout and most of what he does he does with the idea of legacy in his mind. These actions are problematic, for example during "Hurricane" where he sings that publishing *The Reynolds Pamphlet* is the only way he can "protect his legacy" (Miranda and McCarter 233). What Hamilton finds most important of all is not what he does in life, but the story he leaves behind and what people may say of him once he is dead. Using a style such as hip-hop with the connotations it has as a storytelling technique, it emphasizes this focus on legacy and how a person's story is told, and who controls how that story is told. Though Hamilton is not the main narrator of the story, using hip-hop as a device is a way for him to attempt to reclaim and tell his own story. Especially the parts where he takes over the narrative from the others, are the parts where he is most urgent and radical. Hip-hop is a way to express one's self and using it as a tool in the musical, it indicates that Hamilton is still trying to reclaim his own story and be able to tell it himself.

Conclusion

To conclude, the multiple narrative in the musical is used as a testimony and shows how legacy and narrative of a person are constructed by others. It is used to relay that we, as the musical states, are not in charge in telling our own story. Lives and legacies can be formed through others. Especially those who survive others have more of a say in what is known of that other, as they are usually the ones who end up speaking about them. In Hamilton's case, a lot of people did. Jefferson published *Ana*, which mentioned him multiple times, and Eliza Hamilton published his letters to carry out his legacy (a task she did not live to see finished). In the musical, it is mostly kept up seemingly by himself. Aaron Burr, and Eliza. He has no control in how others perceive him after he dies, no matter how badly he tries to form his own narrative and influence his legacy in terms of reputation. Even though he is a largely forgotten founding father, his influences are still visible in terms of what he did in founding the country; he still had a little control in forming his legacy through politics. This is shown in the fact that he is for the most part not his own narrator. Furthermore, hip-hop is used as a tool to further the idea because of its focus in storytelling and narrative device and is used to underline Hamilton's radicalization and him trying to regain control over the narrative even though that is inevitably futile cause a legacy is formed by the people existing around you who end up sharing part of your story.

Works Cited

Adelman, Joseph M. "Who Tells Your Story?: *Hamilton* as a People's History." *Historians on Hamilton : How a Blockbuster Musical Is Restaging America's Past*. Eds. Renee Christine Romano and Claire Bond Potter. Rutgers University Press, 2018. 277-96. *EBSCOhost*. Web. Feb. 20 2020.

- Alridge, Derrick P., and James B. Stewart. "Introduction: Hip Hop in History: Past, Present, and Future." *The Journal of African American History*. 90.3 (2005): 190–95. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Feb. 2020.
- Burgess, Richard James. *The History of Music Production*. Oxford University Press (2014). *EBSCOhost*. Web. 26 Nov. 2019.
- Caplan, David. *Rhyme's Challenge: Hip Hop, Poetry, and Contemporary Rhyming Culture*. Oxford University Press, Incorporated (2014). *ProQuest Ebook Central*. Web. 26 Nov. 2019.
- Chernow, Ron. *Alexander Hamilton*. New York: Penguin Books, 2005. Print.
- Coleman, Bud. "New Horizons: The Musical at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century." *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*. Ed. William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017. 356-80. *EBSCOhost*. Web. 25 Nov. 2019.
- Demby, Gene. "Watching A Brown 'Hamilton' With A White Audience". *NPR*. Web. Jan 15 2020.
- Philip Gentry. "Hamilton's Ghosts." *American Music* 35.2 (2017): 271–80. *JSTOR*. Web. 14 Jan 2020.
- Haslam, Sara, and Derek Neale. *Life Writing*. 1st ed., Routledge (2009). Print.
- Hillman-Mccord, Jessica. "Digital Fandom: Hamilton and the Participatory Spectator". *iBroadway: Musical Theatre in the Digital Age*.
- Jacobson, Ginger. "Racial Formation Theory and Systemic Racism in Hip-Hop Fans' Perceptions." *Sociological Forum*. 30.3 (2015): 832–51. *JSTOR*. Web. 25 Nov. 2019.
- Kajikawa, Loren. "'Young, Scrappy, and Hungry': Hamilton, Hip Hop, and Race." *American Music*. 36.4 (2018): 467–86. *Project MUSE*. Web. 23 Nov. 2019.
- McAllister, Marvin. "Toward a More Perfect *Hamilton*." *Journal of the Early Republic*. 37.2 (2017): 279-88. *Project MUSE*. Web. 5 Feb. 2020.

Mead, Rebecca. "All About the Hamiltons". *The New Yorker*. Feb 9, 2015. *The New Yorker*.

Web. Jan. 18 2020.

Mead, Walter Russell. "First Principals: Alexander Hamilton and the American Founders."

Rev. of *Alexander Hamilton*, by Ron Chernow. *Foreign Affairs*. 83.4 (2004): 133–35.

JSTOR. Web. 8 Mar. 2020.

Miranda, Lin-Manuel and Jeremy McCarter. *Hamilton the Revolution*. Hachette Book Group:

New York (2016).

Morgan, Marcyliena, and Dionne Bennett. "Hip-Hop & the Global Imprint of a Black

Cultural Form." *Daedalus*. 140.2 (2011): 176–96. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 Feb. 2020.

Nathans, Heather S. "Crooked Histories: Re-presenting Race, Slavery, and Alexander

Hamilton Onstage." *Journal of the Early Republic*. 37.2 (2017): 271-78. *Project MUSE*.

Web. 23 Nov. 2019.

Sáez, Elana Machada. "Blackout on Broadway: Affiliation and audience in *In the Heights*

and *Hamilton*". *Studies in Musical Theatre*. 12.2 (2018): 181-97. *EBSCOhost*. Web. Jan.

28 2020

Shipley, Jesse Weaver. "The Birth of Ghanaian Hiplife: Urban Style, Black Thought,

Proverbial Speech." *African Expressive Cultures: Hip Hop Africa: New African Music in*

a Globalizing World. edited by Eric Charry. Indiana University Press (2012). *ProQuest*

Ebook Central. Web. 25 Nov. 2019.

Smith, Nigel M. "Broadway hit *Hamilton* under fire after casting call for 'non-white' actors".

The Guardian. The Guardian US. 31 Mar. 2016. Web. 5 Feb. 2020.

Williams, Justin. "Historicizing the Breakbeat: Hip-Hop's Origins and Authenticity." *Lied*

Und Populäre Kultur / Song and Popular Culture. 56 (2011): 133–67. *JSTOR*. Web. 11

Feb. 2020.