

But When You're Gone, Who Remembers Your Name?

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Commented [MOU1]: This title is adapted from the song "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story" from *Hamilton*, the musical. Throughout this paper, I explore the modern-day performers' intersectional identities while grappling with the way that historical voices of people of color are left out. This title ties the lack of real historical people's stories to the catchy songs of the modern musical adaptation.

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On March 1st, 2018, I hopped in my car as soon as I got done with my class at 3:50pm and joined a string of cars in the accumulating city traffic. After almost an hour of impatiently waiting, I met my parents and my grandma for dinner in downtown Denver before getting our tickets scanned at the crowded Buell theater. In a few short minutes, we would have the opportunity to see the 7:00pm touring performance of *Hamilton: An American Musical*. Originally written, arranged by, and starring Lin Manuel Miranda in the Broadway cast, *Hamilton: An American Musical* tells the story of Alexander Hamilton, the now-infamous Founding Father who rises from his status as an orphan immigrant, born in the Caribbean, to become the United States of America's first Secretary of the Treasury. Kasinitz (2016) explains, "Miranda, a New York born Puerto Rican, has laid claim to the most profoundly American of stories—the founding of the Republic" (p. 70). The release of *Hamilton* sparked a massive cultural explosion in the United States and led to praise by both scholars and the public. Samuelson (2016) describes *Hamilton*'s popularity, "Lin-Manuel Miranda's Musical, *Hamilton*, is a phenomenon. A smash hit on Broadway. A critical success. Winner of many, many accolades, including 11 Tony Awards, a Grammy, and a Pulitzer" (p. 64). Unlike most people who got swept into the pop culture phenomenon years prior, I had only started listening to *Hamilton* about three weeks before seeing the show. Since then, I have listened to the cast recorded album so many times that the music runs in my mind almost constantly. Through this paper, I will explore *Hamilton* through the lens of representation, performance, and intersectionality to understand the complex relationship that results from adapting a modern musical to fit a Revolutionary-period narrative.

Commented [MOU2]: My professor encouraged me to include my own voice and narration in small fragments throughout this paper. These moments allow me to put my personal experiences in conversation with scholarly texts. In addition, because I use performance as a theoretical framework, I thought it was important to include my first-hand experience as a performance spectator and not just a listener of the *Hamilton* soundtrack.

Commented [MOU3]: This section is meant to provide some background information about both the creator of the Musical, Lin Manuel Miranda, and the historical figure, Alexander Hamilton. I refer to both figures throughout the paper, so I thought it was necessary to clarify their connection to the topic.

Commented [MOU4]: I included this quote to explain the pervasiveness and popularity of *Hamilton* in American culture. I wanted to emphasize this point because the class is focused on Popular Culture. In addition, I wanted my paper to question and challenge *Hamilton*'s popular & critical acclaim.

Commented [MOU5]: I chose to be direct when stating my thesis to ensure clarity while outlining the theoretical frameworks (or lenses) of interpretation. The final line, "adapting a modern musical to fit a Revolutionary-period narrative" makes the connection between past and present (and between theoretical and popular sources) apparent, which is explored in greater depth throughout the paper.

Hamilton subverts casting expectations by allowing and encouraging multiracial and multiethnic performers to reclaim the roles of America's white elite and perform them through their own identities. Kasinitz (2016) describes how "The diverse ensemble includes Latinos, African Americans, Afro-Caribbeans, and Asian Americans. That is, 'Hamilton's' America looks like today's – and certainly tomorrow's – young, urban America" (p. 70). Traditionally, the roles of powerful lawmakers, war generals, and top executives are reserved for the white performers who resemble their historical counterparts. However, Perez, Ross, and Koroma (2015) describe how in the original Broadway cast, "There's an African-American Vice President Aaron Burr, a biracial George Washington, and a Chinese-American Mrs. Alexander Hamilton" (p. 1). The inclusion of voices and bodies that are traditionally left out of mainstream media makes *Hamilton* unique. While some white audiences may be taken aback by the choice to largely exclude white Americans from a story that was lived by white Americans, seeing a diverse cast appear onstage in the opening performance was an unexpected yet pleasant surprise. Before attending the performance, I had only engaged with *Hamilton* through audio recordings, and seeing the performers first-hand made for an experience that was both captivating and refreshing. Shocket (2017) says that "despite its conventional story, it allows for people of color to see themselves as belonging to the founding and vice versa" (p. 269). Walsh (2016) reaffirms this belief when she says that *Hamilton* gives voice and "fully realized life to artists of color that have been historically excluded from, and representationally ridiculed on, American stages" (p. 457). The inclusion of a predominately multiracial and multiethnic cast allows performers to identify with a narrative in which they have been historically marginalized. However, in encouraging multiracial and multiethnic performers to seize positions of power, like the role of First U.S. President or Secretary of State, it inadvertently excludes the voices of historically non-

Commented [MOU6]: At the start of each paragraph, I also chose a direct, clearly stated approach. Because this paper is fairly long and includes multiple theoretical frameworks, I think the cues at the beginning of each paragraph play an important role in introducing the topic of discussion to the audience and indicating the frame of reference.

Commented [MOU7]: This paper was written for a Communication Studies class, so the citations follow APA format - the date is listed directly after the author's name.

Commented [MOU8]: I wanted to provide an example of how the musical *Hamilton* can be consumed on different platforms. Because my paper focuses a lot on the visual embodiment of performance, this points out how these intricacies could be missed if an audience is not viewing the performance live. In addition, this provides a continuation of my personal narrative and the experiences and/or reactions that I had while watching *Hamilton* live.

Commented [MOU9]: This comment is meant to synthesize the scholarly sources and put their critical analysis into my own words. It also helps to emphasize the uniqueness of *Hamilton* in comparison to many other musicals or shows.

white figures that played an integral role in the formation of America. Most notably, African American slaves are mentioned only briefly in song lyrics and Native Americans are ignored completely. In re-envisioning the American hierarchy, current minority figures become elevated through performance but groups that have been habitually oppressed are eliminated from the historical narrative.

In reframing the life of Alexander Hamilton's life story to appeal to a broad swath of the population, Lin Manuel Miranda portrays Hamilton as a fervent abolitionist. In the song *My Shot*, Hamilton refers to him and his friends as "A bunch of revolutionary manumission abolitionists" (Miranda, 2015, track 3) and the final song *Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story*, Hamilton's wife, Eliza, says after her husband's death, "I speak out against slavery./You could have done so much more if you only had—" and the whole company joins in to say, "Time" (Miranda, 2015, track 23, disc 2). Each of these instances portray Alexander Hamilton as an anti-slavery champion for the people. However, in *World Wide Enough: Historiography, Imagination, and Stagecraft*, Carp (2017) says that Rob Chernow's book, *Alexander Hamilton*, used heavily for source material for the play, "exaggerated Alexander Hamilton's antislavery credentials and his sympathy with debtors" (p. 289). Similarly, Isenberg (2017) describes how it is clear that real-world Alexander Hamilton "purchased slaves, and his father-in-law, Phillip Schuyler, owned as many as twenty-seven slaves, his northernness, his Caribbeaness, is somehow conflated with abolitionism" (p. 298). And although the musical flippantly references slavery in the south, it is almost always described in economic, and not humanistic terms. For example, in the song *Cabinet Battle #1*, Alexander Hamilton says "A civics lesson from a slaver. Hey neighbor./Your debts are paid cuz you don't pay for labor" (Miranda, 2015, track 2, disc 2). Carp (2017) criticizes that "Miranda told a story that focused on elite characters, missing

Commented [MOU10]: In this instance, I wanted to exemplify the exclusion of historical African American and Native American people even though the modern cast is diverse. This explores a critical angle, which diverges from the aforementioned praise of inclusive representation by scholars. I wanted to complicate the ways that different races and ethnicities are represented in *Hamilton*, and tie back to my comparison between past and present. I cite some examples of the "song lyrics" in the next paragraph, but if I were to revise this piece, I would include an example here too.

Commented [MOU11]: Here, I chose to cite specific examples of song lyrics from the musical. These popular lyrical examples indicate the way that Hamilton's position as a "fervent abolitionist" is constructed in the musical. I used these examples to contrast the statements and opinions of academic sources which are mentioned later in this paragraph. Re-reading this section, I would choose to break these examples into two separate sentences and would more clearly differentiate the song titles from text by using quotation marks or italics.

Commented [MOU12]: This scholarly example demonstrates how the source material used for Hamilton was inaccurate. These instances show contrast between the historical information about Alexander Hamilton's real life and the way his character is constructed in the musical, *Hamilton*. This allows me to illustrate disconnect between representation in the past and present.

Commented [MOU13]: I included this quote specifically because it references "abolitionism," which matches the lyrics from the aforementioned song where Hamilton's character says that he and his friends are "manumission abolitionists." This reinforces the discrepancy between the way Hamilton is portrayed as an abolitionist in the play but not in historical sources.

opportunities to show how the Revolution and its conflicts affected—and were affected by—a broader swath of the population” (p. 290). Similarly, Monteiro (2016) laments that *Hamilton* is “yet another rendition of the ‘exclusive past,’ with its focus on the deeds of ‘great white men’ and its silencing of the presence and contributions of people of color in the Revolutionary era” (p. 90). In addition to its silencing of historically marginalized voices, *Hamilton* also elevates the real Alexander Hamilton as a figure who fought to abolish slavery. This portrayal is historically inaccurate, but makes him seem more appealing to a modern audience. While *Hamilton* can be celebrated for its non-discriminatory casting, it could refrain from sensationalizing historical characters who did not make anti-slavery a priority during their lifetime and could do more to honor non-white Revolutionary heroes.

Despite its shortcomings, through the performance and inclusion of historically marginalized voices and bodies, *Hamilton* has the ability to provoke meaningful conversation. In “Performing as a Moral Act: Ethical Dimensions of the Ethnography of Performance,” Dwight Conquergood (1985) explores the factors that influence culturally-sensitive performance and says, “Moral and ethical questions get stirred to the surface because ethnographers of performance explode the notion of aesthetic distance” (p. 2). When Daveed Diggs, a man of African American and Jewish descent, emerges in the second Act as Thomas Jefferson in the same room as the audience, it undoubtedly alters the audiences’ conception of who the historical figure is and was. Isenberg (2017) argues that “Dancing and singing invites the audience to reclaim the naïve wonder of a child. As the harsh reality of the early republic is thus hidden, it is recast as a fairytale world” (p. 299). However, Isenberg’s perspective oversimplifies the power of performance and downplays its ability to engage audiences in historical material. And while a theater is certainly a unique venue to tell a story about American history, it is unreasonable to

Commented [MOU14]: This scholarly source specifically discusses representation of people of color in the Revolutionary period, which ties to the essay’s theoretical framework of representation. This argument, contrasted with the lyrical examples, allows for Hamilton’s modern representation to be critiqued.

Commented [MOU15]: This sentence calls back to the introduction, which discusses *Hamilton*’s critical and popular success. It also provides a possible motive for Lin Manuel Miranda to romanticize Alexander Hamilton’s representation as a historical figure.

Commented [MOU16]: The conclusion sentence synthesizes the information presented in the previous two paragraphs. It emphasizes the ways in which modern representation of diverse cast members contrasts with the misrepresentation (or lack of representation) of historical figures.

Commented [MOU17]: Dwight Conquergood is a scholar who specifically focuses on performance studies. My professor suggested that I research his work and cite him in my paper to support the performance studies theoretical framework.

assume that it cannot also be a forum for meaningful conversation. To exemplify how physical enactment of character can be influential to audience perception, Walsh (2016) describes the different embodiments of performance between King George, portrayed by white actor Jonathan Groff, and the other characters. She says, "In contrast to the expansive and powerfully dynamic choreography involving the other characters, George is restricted to the space of a spotlight and left alone on stage for most of the time" (Walsh, 2016, p. 458). Coupled with his elaborate eighteenth-century costume, "These elements distance him both musically and physically from the world the rest of the characters inhabit" (Walsh, 2016, p. 458). Furthermore, Walsh (2016) explains how performance can destabilize notions of power and historical tradition. Using Christopher Jackson, the Broadway performer of George Washington, as an example, "Jackson's young, handsome, and bald black head rather than Washington's wigged white one challenges the audience's familiarity with this costume and its famous wearer" (p. 457). However, not everyone is welcoming or even tolerant of non-white bodies portraying America's Founding Fathers. On the night of the Denver Hamilton performance, a black man portrayed George Washington. When George Washington stepped onto the stage and belted out "Right Hand Man," my grandma asked me, "Who's That?" When I told her it was George Washington, she politely informed me "George Washington isn't black!" Later in the performance, my grandma was confused that Angelica, Peggy, and Eliza Schuyler were sisters, and commented "they don't look like sisters" because each role was portrayed by a performer with a different ethnic origin. These comments exemplify my grandma's confusion and perhaps discomfort with being asked to reimagine our nation's first president and other characters as people with non-white identities. However, this comment opened up an opportunity for us to have a genuine and meaningful conversation about what it means to be American. In portraying the characters of Alexander

Commented [MOU18]: Here, I provide an example of how my personal opinion diverges from this example of scholarship. While my paper is critical of *Hamilton's* shortcomings, I also wanted to demonstrate its ability to engage audiences in productive conversations.

Commented [MOU19]: I do not explain the different "companies" (i.e. the original Broadway cast vs. the touring cast that visited Denver) or the variation in actors that perform *Hamilton* in different cities in detail. Most of the scholarship I found analyzed the original Broadway cast. I thought it was important to keep the descriptions about characters consistent, so I also used descriptions of the original Broadway cast in my paper.

Commented [MOU20]: The focus on embodied movement, costume, and stage location indicates how this paragraph has shifted from a lens of representation to a lens of performance studies, a different theoretical framework.

Commented [MOU21]: In this instance, I connect again to my personal narrative while viewing the performance of *Hamilton* in Denver.

Commented [MOU22]: The aforementioned personal examples contextualize the scholarship mentioned above with my own lived experience. If I were to revise this piece, this conversation with my grandma could be an opportunity to expand on the way *Hamilton* may be interpreted differently by audiences depending on their age, race, or other identities.

Commented [MOU23]: I added this sentence to exemplify how my personal experience demonstrates the ways in which *Hamilton* can provoke meaningful conversations. This supports the claim I made in the topic sentence of this paragraph.

Hamilton, Aaron Burr, Angelica Schuyler, and the rest of the cast, the performers' personal, embodied identities become superimposed onto their historical figures' identity in unique ways. Conquergood (1985) asserts that "One path to genuine understanding of others, and out of this moral morass and ethical minefield of performative plunder, superficial silliness, curiosity-seeking, and nihilism, is dialogical performance" (p. 9). This suggests the ability for performance to spark not only dialogue, but also sincere identification and consideration of those who are traditionally removed from both history and the musical theater stage.

Even though Hamilton breaks free from the expectation that white Founding Fathers should be played exclusively by white actors and actresses, its characters are far less progressive in its portrayal of gender roles. In *Hamilton*, men are venerated war heroes and policy makers and women are wives and mothers. The women-centered story is related by Angelica, Eliza, and Peggy Schuyler, sisters whose lives are intertwined with Hamilton's through marriage and desire. In the song A Winter's Ball, the men, admiring the Schuyler sisters from across the room, simultaneously repeat "Ladies!" (Miranda, 2015, track 9) while Burr describes how "There are so many to deflower" and makes a joke about Hamilton and how women "delighted and distracted him./Martha Washington named her feral tomcat after him!" (Miranda, 2015, track 9). In these lines, women, from the perspective of the male gaze, are valued for little more than their beauty, while men are described as playfully promiscuous. In contrast to Hamilton, who is depicted as ambitious and lustful, Eliza plays the role of doting wife, frequently repeating how she is "Helpless" (Miranda, 2015, track 10). In addition, in That Would Be Enough, Eliza tells Alexander, "I relish being your wife" (Miranda, 2015, track 17). Rob Chernow wrote *Alexander Hamilton*, which is used heavily as source material for the musical, and served as the historical consultant for *Hamilton*. In *Hamilton: The revolution*, Chernow says about Eliza Hamilton, "It's

Commented [MOU24]: This comment connects again to the framework of performance studies and the way that some identities, like race, are constructed visually on the body.

Commented [MOU25]: If revised, this could be an opportunity to connect to cultural discussions about representation in other arenas, like cinema, and the hashtag #OscarsSoWhite.

Commented [MOU26]: I included this example to complicate the way representation operates in the past and in the present in *Hamilton*. However, this paragraph shifts from the frameworks of race/ethnic representation or performance studies and into gender representation. Later in my essay, this also allows me to explore the intersection between race and gender identities.

Commented [MOU27]: This section provides lyrical examples from the musical, which allows me to include popular sources. Like I mentioned in the second paragraph, I think these examples could be improved if they were separated into two sentences or if the song titles were more clearly delineated to make the ideas easier to read and understand.

Commented [MOU28]: This sentence synthesizes the song lyrics and boils them down to a main idea. I included this to create a clear connection between the popular and scholarly sources.

Commented [MOU29]: I included this explanation for clarity because the subsequent quote doesn't make sense if the audience doesn't know Chernow's connection to the source material or the musical.

difficult to make pure goodness compelling” and describes how his wife said “‘Eliza is like me: She’s good, she’s true, she’s loyal, she’s not ambitious’” (Miranda & McCarter, 2016, p. 107, 108). Carp (2017) complains that “Miranda told a story with some very female characters, who generally don’t display much historical agency and seem mostly to respond to what the male characters are doing” (p. 290). Similarly, Isenberg (2017) laments that she is “deeply troubled by the faux-feminism of the Schuyler sisters” and states “Broadway’s *Hamilton* is not an embrace of women’s history” (p. 299). This point exemplifies the tension between *Hamilton*’s simultaneous representation of past and present. Silva and Inayatulla (2017) believe that “Hamilton is less a glance back at a historical figure and more a future projection of an immigrant ‘messiah’ of sorts, a person of Othered origins who (re)defines US nationhood in significant ways” (p. 191). But, if *Hamilton* can transgress boundaries in terms of race, ethnicity, and origin, why must it stay contained within the patriarchal domination of 18th-century America?

Through most of the musical, all women, regardless of race, are confined within the oppressive male-privileged Revolutionary American society. However, in one song, The Schuyler Sisters, Angelica, Eliza, and Peggy say “‘We hold these truths to be self-evident/That all men are created equal’” and Angelica, portrayed by Renée Elise Goldsberry, a multiethnic woman, says, “‘And when I meet Thomas Jefferson/I’m ‘a compel him to include/women in the sequel’” (Miranda, 2015, track 5). Isenberg (2017) says that at times, *Hamilton* “makes feminism look easy” because “It ignores the tremendous resistance in this era when it came to treating women as intellectual equals, and it sanitizes the retrogressive thinking of most of the founders” (p. 299-300). In addition, the performance of *Hamilton* includes a simultaneous engagement and denial with intersectionality. In “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics,”

Commented [MOU30]: I used this example because it critiques *Hamilton*’s traditional gender roles. In addition, it provides a connection between the past (women’s history) with the present (Broadway’s *Hamilton*). This example also clearly ties back to the theoretical framework of gender representation.

Commented [MOU31]: This sentence calls back to the thesis when I introduce the complex relationship between past and present representation.

Commented [MOU32]: I added this to connect back to the discussion of race in previous paragraphs. *Hamilton* defies history in some ways (by including a modern cast of people who have various racial and ethnic identities). However, its historical elements prevent it from being progressive in all ways. This question also asks to the audience to consider the ways in which adaptations have the ability to change or stay stuck inside historical or cultural narratives.

Commented [MOU33]: Though I am critical of the way gender is represented in *Hamilton* in the previous paragraph, I included these lyrical examples to give insight into the ways that some aspects of the musical engage in more modern representations of gender.

Commented [MOU34]: This scholarly opinion ties back to the previous paragraph and criticizes the way that *Hamilton*’s women are represented. I liked this quote specifically because it draws another connection between representation in past and present and criticizes the way that *Hamilton* reframes historical figures in a modern context.

Kimberleé Crenshaw (1989) explains how “Black women are sometimes excluded from feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse because both are predicated on a discrete set of experiences that often does not accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender” (p. 140). Performers, like the Broadway Schuyler Sisters, Phillipa Soo, Renée Elise Goldsberry, and Jasmine Cephas Jones, visually display intersectional identities through their physical portrayal of multiracial and multiethnic women. However, the narratives that they share are those of historically white women. Does *Hamilton* have the capacity to engage with intersectional identities when presenting the voice of a white woman through the body of a multiracial woman? Furthermore, in relating the stories of Angelica, Eliza, and Peggy Schuyler, who were all white historical figures, how can Black Feminism, Latina Feminism, Asian Feminism, etc. be engaged with seriously? Because the performers that portray these characters have various ethnic identities that differ between companies and performances, it becomes impossible for the performer’s personal identity to become incorporated into the narrative. As a result, the broad, overarching term “women” gets inserted as a substitute for individualized struggles and therefore, silences the narratives and the histories of performers with intersectional identities. This has the unfortunate consequence of excluding voices of non-white females, whose intersectional identities relegate them to an invisible status. Crenshaw (1989) explains how feminist theory evolves from a white racial context and asserts that because of this, “Not only are women of color in fact overlooked, but their exclusion is reinforced when *white* women speak for and as *women*” (p. 154). Despite the inclusion of diverse cast members, the “re-envisioned” Revolutionary-period American landscape does not stray far from the oppressive, patriarchal-dominated society that persists from early America to today and glosses over the complex, intersectional identities of each unique performer.

Commented [MOU35]: My professor also recommended for me to include Kimberleé Crenshaw's pioneering publication about intersectionality. This shifts the theoretical framework from gender representation to intersectionality (which engages in the multilayered representation of both gender and race/ethnicity).

Commented [MOU36]: In this instance, I connect back to paragraph 4 when I introduce performance studies as a theoretical framework. Because all of these frameworks are interwoven, I wanted to call attention to the embodied, performed aspects of intersectional identity.

Commented [MOU37]: I couldn't find any scholarship about intersectionality specifically related to *Hamilton*, so I provided these questions to interrogate the way intersectionality operates in conjunction with *Hamilton*'s cast of multiracial and multiethnic women. Because these claims are not specifically supported by scholarship, I formatted these as open-ended questions, which ask the audience to form their own opinions.

Commented [MOU38]: Although I use the Broadway cast as a frame of reference for most of the essay, this example explores the various identities represented in different companies and performances to demonstrate that the cast does not stay constant.

Commented [MOU39]: I insert my own voice and opinions to synthesize the information in this paragraph and to demonstrate how intersectional identities are eliminated from *Hamilton*.

Commented [MOU40]: Again, this conclusion sentence reinforces the connection that *Hamilton* has between past and present. By readapting historical events for a modern audience, I wanted to emphasize the ways that sexism and sex-based discrimination operate both in historical and modern contexts.

Considering the interconnected representation of race and gender, critics both applaud and condemn Lin Manuel Miranda for his choices in casting new faces and adapting historical material. Isenberg (2017) criticizes the play's lack of historical accuracy and accuses Miranda of "erasing all power dynamics: race, gender, and class" while asserting "Hamilton was no abolitionist. He had no desire to challenge the existing social hierarchy" (p. 300). Although *Hamilton* is not perfect, I argue that it successfully reconstructs past narratives, once told by only a handful of people, and communicates them in a way that is both inclusive and captivating. Conquergood (1985) describes how performance "struggles to bring together different voices, world views, value systems, and beliefs so that they can have a conversation with one another" (p. 9). Despite the tension that underlies *Hamilton*'s engagement with modern issues in a Revolutionary America setting, the musical has the ability to contort a classic tale that Americans are comfortable with and change it to be something that more people can lay claim to. In an article from *TIME* magazine, Perez, Ross, and Koroma (2015) cite a quote from Renee Elise Goldsberry, a multiethnic performer who portrayed Angelica Schuyler on Broadway. Goldsberry says:

"Hamilton is a story about America, and the most beautiful thing about it is...it's told by such a diverse cast with such diverse styles of music" and asserts "We have the opportunity to reclaim a history that some of us don't necessarily think is our own" (Perez, Ross, & Koroma, 2015, p. 1).

In describing the reclamation of history, Carp (2017) describes the use of "prophetic memory" in *Hamilton* in order to construct an "innovative retelling of the American story to imagine a more racially egalitarian future" (292). By bridging the gap between 18th-century America and the modern day, Lin Manuel Miranda provides a forum for conversation and an incentive to

Commented [MOU41]: This instance briefly steps outside of the critical, theoretical lenses to commend the positive aspects of *Hamilton*. This ties back to the introduction when I explain how the musical is celebrated by critics and the public at large.

Commented [MOU42]: I understand that my position to analyze *Hamilton* is limited by my identity as a white woman, so I included this example to showcase the intersectional perspectives of *Hamilton* performers. Although my paper provides a critical analysis of *Hamilton*, I thought it was important to include some perspectives from performers and non-white voices. I formatted this as a block quote because it takes up several lines of text. The indentation provides clarity for the audience to know where the quote begins and ends.

discuss how structurally-defined systems, like racism and sexism, continue to influence the fabric of 21st-century society. Conquergood (1985) describes how “The aim of dialogical performance is to bring the self and other together so that they can question, debate, and challenge another” and claims “It is a kind of performance that resists conclusions, it is intensely committed to keeping the dialogue between the performer and text open and ongoing” (p. 9). Despite its flaws, *Hamilton* successfully provides a forum to engage with past and present issues of structural inequality.

The award-winning musical, *Hamilton*, engages with issues of race and gender while adapting the historical rise and fall of Founding Father Alexander Hamilton to fit a modern narrative and appeal to a contemporary audience. Often, the characters’ performances successfully integrate past and present in ways that provoke genuine dialogue and understanding. At other times, the disregard for the weighted histories of racialized and gendered bodies in America results in an oversimplification of complex identities. Through my personal experience watching and listening to the performance of *Hamilton*, I left the theater awestruck. As a white female, I identified with the struggles of the structurally-limited Schuyler sisters in a male-dominated society. As an American, I felt a simultaneous sensation of pride and unease in being forced to acknowledge the juxtaposition between the *Hamilton*, whom I know as the white man on my ten-dollar bill, and the *Hamilton* that presents multiracial and multiethnic bodies that have been historically excluded from positions of power in this country on a stage in front of me. As a human being, I felt intricately connected to the multifarious emotions yet profoundly human struggles of each character. Through the intentional utilization of a multiracial and multiethnic cast to portray the Founding Fathers and the beginning years of American independence, the historical narrative becomes destabilized. Looking up at the face of George Washington,

Commented [MOU43]: This point ties back to discussions in previous paragraphs about *Hamilton* as a site for conversation, *Hamilton* as a bridge between past and present (and future), and *Hamilton* in relation to structural systems of power. As I begin to wrap up my paper, I start to put all of the theoretical frameworks in conversation with one another to explore their interconnectedness.

Commented [MOU44]: In this conclusion, I reiterate the main ideas of the paper while highlighting the positive and negative aspects of *Hamilton*. I also return to my personal narrative while explaining the way that I reacted after watching the performance. This allows me to connect back to my own positionally as a white woman, which informs my perspective while viewing the show & writing this paper.

Commented [MOU45]: This ties back to the penultimate paragraph when I discuss *Hamilton* in a positive light and describe the possibilities that it opens.

simultaneously the nation's first president and a black man on stage, forces audience members to grapple with the fact that multiracial and multiethnic voices are not typically included in the traditional historical narrative because of the history of violence, oppression, slavery, and subjugation of racialized bodies in the United States. To idolize our white Founding Fathers without questioning and challenging the mythical superiority of the White Man is to deny the integral role that female and multiracial bodies have had in creating and constructing modern America.

Commented [MOU46]: I end this paper with a broader critique of society that stems from my discussion about *Hamilton*. I thought it would contextualize my argument in a larger cultural discussion and provide an opportunity for audience reflection beyond just the musical.

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