

ABSTRACT

Lafayette in *Hamilton*: History in Art

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Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*, based on historian Ron Chernow's award-winning biography of the nation's first Treasury Secretary, quickly became a cultural phenomenon after opening on Broadway in 2015 and introduced a new generation to the medium and magic of musicals. This thesis discusses how *Hamilton* portrays the Marquis de Lafayette, a Frenchman who fought in the American Revolution. It compares the character presented in *Hamilton* with the historical figure of Lafayette and considers the historical accuracy of the portrayal. The thesis also looks at historical musicals and how they have employed history in their composition. Ultimately, I find that *Hamilton*'s portrayal of Lafayette is effective in engaging a broad audience with history even if it is not completely historically accurate. The balance of accuracy and engagement make it possible for *Hamilton* to reach a broad audience while still offering historical value.

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LAFAYETTE IN *HAMILTON*: HISTORY IN ART

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INTRODUCTION

Composers use history in art and musicals often to make a political message. One of the most effective uses of history in a musical is *Hamilton*, a hip-hop musical created by Lin-Manuel Miranda, which tells the story of Alexander Hamilton and various other Founding Fathers. One of the most interesting characters in *Hamilton* is the marquis de Lafayette, who came over from France to fight for the American cause. Daveed Diggs portrayed him in the original casting of the musical. The character of the marquis de Lafayette is portrayed accurately enough in *Hamilton* to be effective in drawing people to further investigate the history behind the art.

Marie-Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Motier, Marquis de Lafayette became one of the richest people in France at the age of twelve, in 1770. He married Adrienne de Noailles, the daughter of a premier family, gaining more social status in a world where your connections determined your life. His wife's family, the Noailles, had relatives throughout French nobility and a spot reserved for them at the French court. Gilbert and Adrienne quickly became part of the young circle forming around King Louis XVI and his young queen, Marie Antoinette. In 1777, when Gilbert was only nineteen and his wife pregnant with their second child, he decided to cross the Atlantic Ocean and fight on the side of the colonists against the British. What drove him to make this decision when he had wealth, status, and comfort in France?

His reasoning has many different levels; a belief in liberty, a thirst for military glory, a desire for adventure outside of the reach of his in-laws. Although Gilbert's motives may not have been pure, he won over the American public in a way few

foreigners have. He became known to the Americans simply as Lafayette. He served in the American forces without pay and spent much of his own money trying to keep his own soldiers outfitted. His personality attracted people. He was a little too enthusiastic, naïve, and arrogant about his military skill. He would write letters to people he did not know to try to convince them that they could attack the British in the East Indies or in Ireland. His plots at times seem hare-brained and ridiculous but his enthusiasm is magnetic. Always the optimist, even when trekking through South Carolina and getting turned away at Congress, Lafayette focused on the beauty of America and his excitement rather than his hardships.

Lafayette appeals to historians especially in his years in the American Revolution simply because of this enthusiasm. He formed a close bond with Washington when few others could, he loved Hamilton like a brother, and he proved to be an effective military commander, even with no leadership experience. Lafayette earned the praise the American people bestowed to him. He came to America with a desire for military glory but left with military experience, further developed Enlightenment ideals, and many friends who would support him the rest of their lives. George Washington even took in Georges Washington Lafayette when the Marquis and his wife were in prison in Austria during the French Revolution. Lafayette was a true American patriot, but he was also a true Frenchman. His divided loyalties, instead of hurting him, made him the hero of two worlds. While buried in Paris, his grave is sprinkled with soil brought from Bunker Hill.

When *Hamilton* came out in early 2015, it exceeded the expectations of everyone. The idea of a hip-hop musical about Alexander Hamilton seems contradictory and frankly ridiculous, but Lin-Manuel Miranda spent the time and effort to craft a musical that

masterfully incorporates primary documents, the Founders ideology, a love story, and hip-hop references. By using contemporary music references, Miranda can capture the interest of a new generation and bring them into the world of Broadway. He uses the familiar story of the American Founding, that everyone learns about in American History, but brings it to life with Hamilton's story which is surprisingly unknown. Hamilton's life includes many highs and lows, dramatics, rivalries and betrayals. However, Hamilton is not the only character Miranda brings to life. He explores many of the Founders in a more complex way, exploring the men behind the mythology.

In the original cast of *Hamilton*, Daveed Diggs, an Oakland based rapper, plays the roles of the Marquis de Lafayette and Thomas Jefferson, as they appear in different acts of the musical. Having an African American play this role is part of the appeal of *Hamilton* as the diversity of the cast plays characters who were all straight, white, Protestant, mostly rich males. Some owned slaves. Miranda uses the casting as another way to connect this story to the modern-day. A diverse cast looks like the world of today and makes the story seem closer to the present. Miranda also strives to humanize these almost mythical figures by not shying away from their shortcomings. The musical talks about Jefferson's hypocrisy in owning slaves, Hamilton's rampant ambition, Washington's temper. This allows the audience to interact with these characters not as idols but as people.

Diggs' portrayal of Lafayette is fun, fast, and energetic. He raps incredibly quickly in a French accent. However, one of the aspects lost in this casting is the youth of Lafayette in the Revolution, which Diggs tries to capture with energy and enthusiasm. Many of these revolutionaries were incredibly young when they fought for their

countries, espousing ideals of freedom and liberty. However, the portrayal of Lafayette in *Hamilton* seems to capture Lafayette's spirit and enthusiasm, as well as his friendship with Hamilton and Laurens. Miranda paid special attention to the historical accuracy of the musical. It was inspired by Ron Chernow's biography, *Alexander Hamilton*, and Miranda brought in Chernow to act as a historical consultant. In the case of Lafayette, when the musical diverges from history there seems to be a purpose.

Hamilton also fits into a context of other historical musicals with both real and fictional characters. However, because *Hamilton* tells such a well-known story, Miranda had to offer a new take on the Founding. He achieved this by telling the relatively unknown story of Alexander Hamilton while using rap and hip-hop music combined with more traditional ballads. The goal of using a historical narrative in this musical is to interest a broader population in history, but also to represent the American Founding with people who look like America now.

The portrayal of Lafayette in *Hamilton* effectively promotes the goal of appealing to a broad audience. While the character in *Hamilton* is not fully historically accurate, the changes have purpose and simply interesting the public in history can cause them to further investigate these characters. The aspects left out for reasons of time and a concise narrative allow the viewers to better follow the story, therefore contributing to creating a compelling story and interesting people in history.

CHAPTER ONE

Historical Lafayette

Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert du Motier de La Fayette was not a person expected to become a hero of two worlds and fight for freedom both in America and his native France. Born into a noble family he was not expected to do much but have a ceremonial place in the French military. However, his ambitions stretched beyond his position in France. Lafayette was young, idealistic, and ambitious when he chose to join the American Revolution in 1777. His upbringing, marriage, military tact, and relationships with America's founding fathers allowed him to become an almost mythic figure in the American conscience. Lafayette left France to fight in the American Revolution not only because he believed in the values it put forth, but also because he had a thirst for military glory that he felt he could not acquire in France at that time.

Lafayette was born in Auvergne at Chavaniac on September 6, 1757.¹ His development in French society of the day led to his distinct liberal ideology. In French society there were three classes, called the three estates; the first estate was made up of the clergy, the second, the nobility, and the third, everyone else. This social stratification of France was strict and defined how each member of society would live and what they would do. Although he was born to a noble family, Lafayette was part of the provincial nobility, as opposed to robe nobility who lived in cities or court nobility who lived in and around Paris or Versailles. At this time, "Nobles were fragmented by differences of

¹ Clary, 7

wealth, birth, dynastic pretensions, provincial affiliation, profession, religion, court connections, and political outlooks.”² Even though the nobility did not constitute a large percentage of the French population, there were still deep divisions between the different groups within the second estate. Taxes on land was one example of a dividing line in the second estate because they affected provincial nobility far more than robe or court nobles. Perceptions of these different classes on nobles also differed. François Quesnay, a French economist stated, “The nobility is divided into two classes: into courtiers and citizens.”³ In this quote he is discussing the difference between the court nobles, who he sees as base and hungry for power, and the provincial nobility who must take care of their provinces, because in the feudal system this was part of their role. However, in the eighteenth century, ideas about the role of nobility were also shifting due to problems with the perception of the monarchy. At this point, there was a “new tendency among some nobles to set ‘nobility’ in opposition to ‘monarchy,’ that is, to define the aristocracy as the main bulwark against an intimidating despotism, reflected both a growing awareness of the monarchy's pervasive presence and an acceptance of its self-sustaining power.”⁴ Although the nobility possessed privilege in society because of the spread of Enlightenment texts they were beginning to think of monarchy and tyranny in a different way, albeit one that did not affect their own social standing. This new conception of the nobility as a protector of the people in opposition to the monarch leads to a further consideration of Enlightenment values such as freedom, liberty, and equality as well as a

² Smith, *French Nobility*, 44

³ Smith, *French Nobility*, 128

⁴ Smith, *Culture of Merit*, 191

discussion of who should be protecting the people from despotism. This contributed to unrest in France during the eighteenth century.

The instability of the monarchy due to debt and resistance to change caused many younger members of French society to question whether the state was on the right path and consider other theories of government and the state. The nobility was also unstable due to the addition of new nobles, those who had bought their titles. There had been “many new noble families... in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, faithful servants of Louis XIV’s expanding state apparatus or beneficiaries of the monarchy’s financial difficulties and willingness to sell titles.”⁵ This created even further divisions within the Second Estate in which Lafayette grew up. This change in the people who had access to nobility changed nobles’ feelings toward the monarchy. The monarchy was also plagued by being too static when many things were changing. For the monarchy, “tradition, precedent, and stability were its sources of legitimacy.”⁶ However, this meant the monarchy was unable to adapt to changes within French society. Much of Lafayette’s ideology seems to be in opposition to these problems in French society at the time.

The Catholic movement of Jansenism also led the people of France to question the monarchy and consider religion as a more individual practice. The new movement “encouraged a new and more democratic religious sensibility, a reliance on the dictates of individual conscience and on direct communication with God through prayer.”⁷ This idea broke down the hierarchy of the church in France and thus the monarchy because the King was the head of the church in France. This fragmentation of the church within the

⁵ Garrioch, 85

⁶ Garrioch 5

⁷ Garrioch 195

French state allowed for a more individualized society. Because of the “growing emphasis on understanding and individual reflection”⁸ this could lead to people considering their individual positions in society more thoroughly. This individualization is important when examining Lafayette because it allowed more of the Enlightenment thought to gain traction among the nobility. Also, this undermining of the monarchy led the people higher up in French society to think about other systems of government. While Lafayette was not a Jansenist, he at some point joined the Freemasons, who promoted an ideology that was “antithetical to monarchical absolutism, to the hegemony of the universities and their official teachings, and to the old clerical and aristocratic estates with their social and legal privileges.”⁹ It is not clear when Lafayette decided to join the Freemasons but tradition states he became a mason “in France in 1777 just before his departure for America.”¹⁰ Both movements allowed more thought of individuals into France and thus further consideration of Enlightenment ideals such as liberty and freedom. Although these movements affected different people in different ways, the ideology impacted Lafayette immeasurably.

Although Lafayette was a part of the country nobility, he became very rich due to the death of his mother and great-grandfather when he was twelve.¹¹ Lafayette grew up in the countryside, raised by “his *grand-mere paternelle*.”¹² She allowed “the peasants to hunt and garden on her lands and take firewood from her forests. When times were hard, she made sure nobody went hungry.”¹³ This shows from an early age Lafayette

⁸ Garrioch 193

⁹ Jacob, 113

¹⁰ Jordan, 147

¹¹ Clary, 16

¹² Clary, 11

¹³ Clary, 11

understood the peasants were not people to avoid or take advantage of but rather it was his role as a noble to take care of them. This sort of conception of his job as a noble must have shaped his later ideology, especially his adoption of Enlightenment ideas such as liberty and equality. In 1768, when Lafayette was ten, he moved to Paris at the direction of his great-grandfather, the comte de La Rivière.¹⁴ Not long after that, his mother and great-grandfather died, leaving him the La Rivière fortune.¹⁵ Although only twelve, he now owned an incredible amount of wealth. However, other nobles now viewed him as an eligible bachelor, and he was expected to become part of the court nobility.

Lafayette's family also had a long military tradition and so when he was only thirteen, a family member secured him a position as a "lieutenant in the Black Musketeers, an elite corps of which his great-grandfather had been the commander."¹⁶ This appointment was largely ceremonial and did not require much of the young Lafayette. His family and Lafayette himself expected him to have a commission. France, while often at war during the eighteenth century, nevertheless did not engage in a war during the years from the end of the Seven Years War in 1763 to their involvement in the American Revolution in 1778. David A. Clary, quoting Lafayette's later memoirs, explains that Lafayette, from the time he was eight "longed for glory" because of his military heritage.¹⁷ However, France during this time period did not allow the opportunity to achieve glory in battle. His position in this unit and in the French military was based on connections to the monarchy, and his marriage gave him stronger connections to court.

¹⁴ Clary, 14

¹⁵ Clary, 16

¹⁶ Bernier, 11

¹⁷ Clary, 12

Because Lafayette had so much money, he became a sought-after prospect for marriage for many noble families in France. Through family members and attorneys, Lafayette was betrothed to and eventually married Adrienne de Noailles. Both children were still in school at the time of the betrothal and so the marriage took place later, but Lafayette moved into the Noailles palace in Versailles, moving even closer to the center of power.¹⁸ Lafayette was only sixteen when he married Adrienne de Noailles, the fourteen-year-old “daughter of one of France's most august families.”¹⁹ Lafayette’s fortune gave him standing among the provincial nobility and his new connection to the Noailles family provided prestige and connections to power. Both his fortune and connections were hugely important in his later involvement in the American Revolution.

His marriage put him at court in Versailles, in a group of young nobles which formed around the new Queen of France, Marie Antoinette. Lafayette, due to his provincial heritage did not fit in at court. He did not have the social wiles or talents necessary for success in courtly life. He was intelligent but considered “dull and awkward” by the other courtiers. Lafayette was given multiple opportunities to have high positions at court most notably working as a lord-in-waiting to the comte de Provence, the King’s brother. However, Olivier Bernier argues Lafayette knew “the army would be his road to fame, not some silly court job in which he would always be an object of ridicule.”²⁰ The problem was that France was not close to going to war. For a teenager who was convinced his glory would come from serving in the military, Lafayette did not feel he would have the opportunity to do so if he remained in France.

¹⁸ Clary, 17

¹⁹ Chernow, 96

²⁰ Bernier, 14, 16, 18, 21, 22

In 1775, Lafayette reported to his annual training for the Noailles Dragoons at Metz, in Northeast France.²¹ The officer in command at Metz was the duc de Broglie, an ambitious man, who was also looking for the next opportunity to gain military recognition, and saw an opening in America.²² While at this time, Lafayette had dreams of going over and fighting for the American cause, for “liberty,” no solid plans were yet made. One event which encouraged Lafayette to consider this action even further was the dinner hosted by the duc de Broglie for the Duke of Gloucester, King George III’s brother. The Duke spoke of his pro-American position and the failings with the British policy. This must have made an impression. This was the brother of the King of England speaking about how England did not have a good argument against the Americans. Although the American conflict had been discussed in French circles prior to this, the authority of the source must have impacted how those gathered viewed the news. Lafayette listening to this discussion must have seen an opportunity to not only fight the British, but also fight for liberty. While this dinner made Lafayette intrigued, it did not move him to action until a few years later, in April 1777. In 1776, due to military reforms Lafayette was put on the “inactive list.”²³ For a teenager who dreamed of military glory, this lack of opportunity must have been devastating.

Instead of waiting for his chance, Lafayette decided to create an opportunity to fight the English by going and fighting for the Americans in the American Revolution. He convinced Silas Deane, an American recruiting French officers, to give him a commission of Major General but he offered to take the position with no salary paid to

²¹ Clary, 25

²² Clary, 26

²³ Bernier, 25

him.²⁴ Lafayette, while ambitious and enthusiastic, had not thought of all of the implications of him leaving France. Vergennes, the foreign minister of France, claimed Lafayette had committed a “hostile act” which was “an insult to the king.”²⁵ Lafayette’s plans to go to America produced such a strong reaction from the monarchy due to his status in France. Deane recruited other officers but none from as prominent a family as Lafayette. This affected the backlash in France from Lafayette’s departure, as the French were not engaged in the War and they worried because someone as prominent as Lafayette escaped to fight for the Americans. Diplomatically, this was a problem with the British because they felt the French should be able to control their nobility. The French government would not sanction French officers going to America to fight the British.²⁶ Lafayette was also married and had obligations to his wife, as she was pregnant with their second child when Lafayette finally left.²⁷ Her family did not approve of Lafayette’s schemes and so he did not tell her of his plans to leave.²⁸ Ultimately Lafayette determined that military glory and the chance to continue the Lafayette legacy was more important to him than remaining in France to build up connections with the court nobility. Although obstacles precluded his adventures, he found a way around them so he could fulfill his destiny. At only nineteen, he was ambitious and naïve enough to see the American experiment in an idealized and romantic light.

When Lafayette first arrived in Philadelphia, on 27 July 1777, Congress brushed off the young Frenchman with no military experience, but a letter from Benjamin

²⁴ Bernier, 27

²⁵ Clary, 78

²⁶ Clary, 78

²⁷ Bernier, 29

²⁸ Bernier, 29

Franklin gave him the legitimacy and prestige to gain an official command as a Major General.²⁹ Lafayette's wealth carried great value in the colonies because he did not want a salary and could pay for clothing and provisions for his men, unlike the congress who throughout the Revolution lacked funds.³⁰ Franklin also realized the connections of Lafayette's family in France, and that these could be helpful in gaining French aid later in the war.³¹ However, Lafayette did not yet speak fluent English, which meant he was unable to advocate for himself effectively.³² However, Franklin's letters and Lafayette's wealth convinced the congress to accept his commission as a Major General, but did not give him a military command.

Lafayette quickly became part of the trusted group around George Washington, whose army was around Philadelphia, as part of his military staff.³³ This elite group included Alexander Hamilton and John Laurens. While Lafayette did have ambition and enthusiasm, he also remained humble in his level of experience. When Lafayette came to Washington dressed in new uniforms, Washington said "I suppose...we ought to be embarrassed to show ourselves to an officer who has just left the French forces," Lafayette responded, "I have come here to learn, *mon général*, not to teach." Lafayette was a proud French nobleman but his respect for Washington and the American cause allowed him to fit into the circle around Washington with ease. Washington found Lafayette "worthy of 'esteem and attachment.'"³⁴ Stuart Leibiger describes how their "friendship grew very fast, as these men came to admire each other remarkably

²⁹ Chernow, 96

³⁰ Chernow, 96

³¹ Clary, 84-85

³² Clary, 93

³³ Chernow, 96

³⁴ Clary, 96, 98, 99

quickly.”³⁵ Being close to the Commander in Chief of the American forces put Lafayette close to the action, even if he did not command soldiers. Some historians have spoken of their relationship as that of a father and son, most notably David A. Clary in his book *Adopted Son*. This view seems to make sense because Lafayette lost his father when he was only two and Washington had no children. Lafayette also named his first son Georges Washington de Lafayette. However, some argue their relationship began more as a marriage of convenience which developed into a closer relationship like Stuart Leibiger in his essay *George Washington and Lafayette: Father and Son of the Revolution*. Whatever the nature of their relationship at first, they became close friends throughout the Revolution.

Hamilton and Lafayette also established a close friendship. Chernow explains how their relationship developed not only because they both worked with Washington, but also because of Hamilton’s proficiency in French. Hamilton acted as a liaison officer for Lafayette. They had many things in common. Lafayette lost his father at two years of age and his mother when he was thirteen. Hamilton’s father abandoned him when he was around nine or eleven.³⁶ His mother died when he was either ten or twelve.³⁷ Lafayette came from France to fight in the Revolution, Hamilton came from the Caribbean to go to school and experience opportunity available in America. Both came to the American Revolution with a desire for military glory. However, in many ways the two could not be more different. When Hamilton’s mother died, he was left with nothing to his name,

³⁵ Leibiger, 214

³⁶ Chernow, 21, 96

³⁷ These ages depend on whether Hamilton was born in 1755 or 1757. His birth date is still debated by historians.

while Lafayette was left with one of the largest fortunes in France.³⁸ Hamilton had to worry about his legitimacy due to his mother and father not being married.³⁹ While both men had something to prove in the American Revolution, their motives and background were completely different.

Lafayette became successful in the American Revolution not just because of his personality and ability to make friends, but due to his martial skill. Although Lafayette did not have a chance to prove his military prowess in France, and had no experience in warfare, he proved to be an effective and reliable officer.⁴⁰ The American army also provided for more opportunity than the French partly due to a lack of organization but also because Washington recognized the value of multiple opinions. When Washington held war councils with subordinates, he allowed all of them to speak their mind on the issues on the table, because of his experience in the catastrophic Braddock Expedition.^{41,42} Lafayette was not entrusted with a military command at first, while Washington and congress decided if he had value, but once he gained a military command, he felt compassion for his soldiers and trained them to the best of his ability.⁴³ The Battle of Brandywine was where Lafayette saw his first military action, however at this point he did not have a military command. He rode up to the line of soldiers, who had just broken and were trying to flee. Lafayette quickly took hold of the situation, and managed to order the retreat, even after getting shot.⁴⁴ This action proved to Washington

³⁸ Chernow, 24, 25, 40, 94

³⁹ Chernow, 16

⁴⁰ Bernier, 57

⁴¹ Clary, 106

⁴² Washington tried to warn Gage, his commander, that Gage was leading the troops into a bad position, but Gage ignored him, and this led to a catastrophic defeat for the British.

⁴³ Bernier, 57

⁴⁴ Clary, 115

that Lafayette deserved a command of his own in the American forces, and he eventually appealed to the Congress on Lafayette's behalf.⁴⁵ Once Lafayette had his own command, he spent a fortune of his own money trying to keep them well equipped and fed. Congress did not provide the funding, and so Lafayette took it upon himself to make sure at least his own troops were provided for. Lafayette proved to be a successful officer, with a particularly effective retreat at Barren Hill, where his forces nearly got surrounded.⁴⁶

Lafayette returned to France in February 1779 to try to drum up support for the Americans. His return brought about a wave of popular support for the American cause among the French people and tried to help diplomatically. As opposed to Benjamin Franklin, the American tasked with appealing to France, it was easier for Lafayette to reach the ministers and the King because he was French and he had deep connections in the French aristocracy. Ultimately, Lafayette returned to America in April 1780 this time with approval of the King.⁴⁷

Lafayette also took part in the Battle of Yorktown, the final major battle of the war. Lafayette was already down in the South when Cornwallis took up a position at Yorktown and Lafayette blocked him in on the land side while waiting for orders. The French won a naval battle which blocked Cornwallis in from the sea.⁴⁸ Lafayette held the British there while Washington decided to move his force from outside of New York City down to try to take out the British army in the South.⁴⁹ Once Washington's troops arrived, the siege began in earnest and Lafayette directed the attack on two British

⁴⁵ Bernier, 56

⁴⁶ Clary, 133, 182

⁴⁷ Bernier, 81, 82, 90, 92

⁴⁸ Bernier, 125

⁴⁹ Middlekauff, 583

redoubts from the rear, allowing the siege lines to move even closer to Yorktown.⁵⁰ Soon after, realizing his bad position, Cornwallis surrendered. Lafayette having found victory and military glory against the British left America in late 1781.⁵¹

Although Lafayette came to America with ambitions of military glory, he left with a new understanding of Enlightenment ideology and the values of freedom and liberty. The American Revolution helped him to mature. Freedom and liberty came to have a deeper meaning to Lafayette throughout the duration of the war.⁵² Lafayette became a successful American general, gaining his own command and contributing to the war with money, skill, and connections in France. He was transformed throughout the war, becoming a more experienced and developed person. His success in America gave him a good reputation both in the states and France, and his relationships made with American founders endured throughout the rest of his life.

⁵⁰ Bernier, 131

⁵¹ Bernier, 132, 135

⁵² Bernier, 68

CHAPTER TWO

Lafayette in *Hamilton*

Although Lafayette only takes part in half of the musical *Hamilton*, his character adds depth to the show by representing French support for the American cause as well as acting as a foil for Hamilton. He belongs to the young revolutionary group with Alexander Hamilton, John Laurens, and Hercules Mulligan who profess the cutting-edge revolutionary ideas. Although Lafayette does not have as many lines in the show, the values this group espouses seem to reflect the individual thoughts of each member, so when Laurens speaks of abolition in “Yorktown” or Hamilton mentions it in “My Shot” these reflect the wider values of the Revolution and ideas being discussed at the time, not only their personal views. The lines Lafayette does possess in the musical are used to show character progression by demonstrating his improvement in English, his relationship development with various characters, and the development of his values into a more concrete ideology. This chapter addresses each song individually, specifically discussing Lafayette’s parts, then looks at the development of the character throughout the musical.

Miranda introduces the group of Hamilton, Lafayette, Mulligan, and Laurens first in “Aaron Burr, Sir” when Hamilton runs into the other three while talking to Aaron Burr. Lafayette, Mulligan, and Laurens start with raps over a very basic beat but when Hamilton comes in, he changes the pace of speech and feel of the song and his rhymes are more complex. This enmeshing and progression of styles infers that Hamilton brings this group together. In the next song, “My Shot” this group of four becomes further

linked and they begin to discuss revolutionary ideas as opposed to simply their own interests. Throughout the musical, in songs like “The Story of Tonight” and “Yorktown” the group appears together. This group defines Lafayette’s character and allows Lin Manuel Miranda to focus on Mulligan, Lafayette, and Laurens collectively in comparison to Hamilton. By creating this group, Miranda allows the viewer to understand the ideology of each character without having them profess their distinct views, although certain characters like Laurens have more developed ideological stances. Because these characters are nearly always together, it helps the viewer to understand that one speaks for all, like when Laurens professes “But we’ll never be truly free/ Until those in bondage have the same rights as you and me,” he states not only his support of abolition but also infers that the group share this position.¹ Although Lafayette does not state his position on this issue, later in the song Hamilton refers to them as “a bunch of revolutionary manumission abolitionists.”² Lafayette may not have completely agreed with the position but understood the values behind it. By creating this group, Miranda does not need each character to profess their individual views. He does include verses by each man but uses their words to reflect on the whole group. Alexander Hamilton constitutes an exception to this generalization because there are times when he speaks for the group, like in “My Shot” when he states “What are the odds the gods would put us all in one spot/ Poppin’ a squat on conventional wisdom, like it or not/ A bunch of revolutionary manumission abolitionists?/ Give me a position, show me where the ammunition is!”³ However, Hamilton often speaks only for himself and he performs more asides and inner dialogue

¹“My Shot,” *Hamilton*

²“My Shot,” *Hamilton*

³“My Shot,” *Hamilton*

due to his role as the main character. An example of this occurs in “My Shot” where he states “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?”⁴ Miranda does not focus on this sort of inner dialogue with any other character besides Hamilton’s main foil Aaron Burr. Therefore, Hamilton’s lines necessitate evaluation to determine when Hamilton speaks for the group and when he only reflects his own views in order to differentiate Hamilton’s views from the groups’.

In “Aaron Burr, Sir,” the first song where Lafayette is introduced, he is shown to be a Frenchman who does not have much of a purpose to be in the Revolutionary conflict except for the fact that he wants to show up King George and gain military glory. He also seems rather arrogant, claiming he is “The Lancelot of the revolutionary set” inferring that he is not only handsome but also that he has some sort of military prowess, as Lancelot was one of the legendary Knights of the Round Table.⁵ Lafayette seems at least enthusiastic if not arrogant in stating that his goal is to “tell the King ‘Casse toi,’” meaning go away in French.⁶ His portrayal in this song makes him seem egotistical and immature. He does not speak of freedom or revolution, and much like Mulligan and Laurens in this song, he focuses on his own life and goals. It is also important to point out that in this early point of the musical Lafayette is still speaking nearly half of his words in French. He does not seem comfortable with English. This indicates that Lafayette had only recently arrived from France and had not had much experience in the colonies. This makes Lafayette stand out from the group, as Mulligan and Laurens are both from the

⁴ “My Shot,” *Hamilton*

⁵ “Aaron Burr, Sir,” *Hamilton*

⁶ “Aaron Burr, Sir,” *Hamilton*

colonies. Lafayette not speaking much English at this early point also allows Miranda to show how much he has grown in the course of the Revolution in later songs like “Guns and Ships.”

Once Hamilton addresses the group, the song transitions to “My Shot” in which the values of the friends are first avowed. Since the Revolution and its leadership so heavily focused on values, the ideology of each of these individuals represents an important part of their character. In his verse in “My Shot,” Lafayette again professes his military prowess stating, “When I fight, I make the other side panicky.”⁷ By again focusing on Lafayette’s perceived military tact, Miranda contends that this is one of the defining characteristics of Lafayette. It also puts Lafayette in comparison with Hamilton himself because Hamilton is always wishing for a military command like in “Right Hand Man” and “Meet Me Inside.” This line also goes back to Lafayette’s arrogance. So far, he has not been shown to be a successful officer or commander but is boasting to his friends about his ability based on his desire for glory and his inflated ego. Again, in this verse Lafayette is tied back to France and his language issues. He states “The unrest in France will lead to ‘onarchy?/ ‘Onarchy? How you say, how you say, ‘anarchy?’”⁸ While Miranda is making a play on words, but this also ties Lafayette back to his French roots and his issues with English. In this verse Lafayette still seems to have an adversarial ideology. He is not professing any values but putting himself in opposition to things like monarchy and “the other side.” This shows that Lafayette’s ideology is still rather underdeveloped even while his co-conspirators are praising things like abolition and independence.

⁷ “My Shot,” *Hamilton*

⁸ “My Shot,” *Hamilton*

“The Story of Tonight” follows “My Shot” and just further affirms the group’s commitment to freedom and their conviction that they will be instrumental in it. They want to “Raise a glass to freedom/ Something they can never take away.”⁹ This song seems to function mostly as a commitment to revolutionary values by everyone in the group. It also shows their understanding that they will be a major part of bringing revolutionary values to Americans as they say that their children “will tell the story of tonight.”¹⁰ Hamilton, Lafayette, Laurens, and Mulligan all understand that their commitment to work together to implement revolutionary values marks a significant change in the Revolution as a whole. This seems optimistic and self-aggrandizing but also seems to be just a measure of their enthusiasm and commitment to the cause. This song is also more laid back and relaxed as opposed to “My Shot” which preceded it. This use of feeling demonstrates that the group are not only fellow revolutionaries but friends who will kick back and have a drink as well as overthrow British control in the colonies.

Miranda chooses to leave behind politics and the American Revolution as the musical turns to the marriage of Hamilton and Elizabeth Schuyler. Lafayette reappears in a more significant capacity during “Stay Alive” in which Hamilton, Laurens, Lafayette, and Mulligan are talking about what they have done for the cause. Lafayette briefly states, “I ask for French aid, I pray that France has sent a ship.”¹¹ This again refers to the fact that he represents the French and French cooperation in the American Revolution. However, this appeal to the French for aid also shows the value of Lafayette as an asset to the American cause. He has enough power and influence in France to ask for aid. Since

⁹ “The Story of Tonight,” *Hamilton*

¹⁰ “The Story of Tonight,” *Hamilton*

¹¹ “Stay Alive,” *Hamilton*

Lafayette's background is never explicitly discussed, lines like this help show his status in France. At this point it is helpful to realize that France had still not formally joined the Americans in their fight against the British, which gives context to the many American losses. While the musical goes rather quickly through various losses like Washington's loss in New York in "Right Hand Man," it still picks up on some of the major issues facing the American Revolutionaries. In "Right Hand Man" the musical deals with the issue of retreating troops, and it also handles the fact that the Americans understand that they are not winning the war. Therefore, Lafayette and the French become more significant to the American cause, especially in a naval sense. So, when Lafayette is saying he prays that the French get involved in the war, the Americans realize they are in a dire situation and need support from somewhere in order to continue fighting the British. It is also significant that he hopes the French "sent a ship" as this could refer to supplies but also Lafayette realizes the British have naval supremacy and sees the benefit to the French navy becoming fully involved in order to counter the British on the seas.

The next time Miranda includes Lafayette in the musical is in the song that is the epitome of what Daveed Diggs can do and explores Lafayette's character even further; "Guns and Ships." "Guns and Ships" shows the audience many things about Lafayette from his relationship with Washington and Hamilton to how Americans view him to addressing his military and diplomatic tact. This is also the song where America is portrayed as on the verge of victory. In this song Daveed Diggs raps incredibly fast in a slight French accent. By this point Lafayette has been in America long enough that Miranda gives him fast raps in English and although he still has a French accent, this shows how much he has grown and developed since he first appeared in "Aaron Burr,

Sir.” This development in proficiency of language is a distinct and detailed development that is shown throughout the musical, but he does not discuss his ideology in this song, so it is difficult to tell if this developed along with his language.

“Guns and Ships” also displays Lafayette’s relationship with both Washington and Hamilton. This song is a conversation that happens between Lafayette and Washington. Lafayette is sharing military and personal advice with Washington when he says, “We can end this war at Yorktown, cut them off at sea, but/ for this to succeed there is someone else we need-.”¹² Instead of dismissing Lafayette’s opinions like Washington does to Aaron Burr in “Right Hand Man” and Hamilton in “Meet Me Inside,” Washington seems to listen to Lafayette’s advice. This reaction by Washington portrays Lafayette and Washington’s relationship as something different than how Washington relates to Hamilton or Burr. This reaction might be related to Lafayette’s role in the army and his impressive military skill which he just discussed earlier in the song. While this part of “Guns and Ships” shows the audience about the relationship between Washington and Lafayette it also reveals something about the relationship between Lafayette and Hamilton. Lafayette advocates for Hamilton to get a military command to Washington, stating that “he knows what to do in a trench/ Ingenuitive and fluent in French” and “No one has more resilience/ Or matches my practical tactical brilliance.”¹³ Lafayette seems to portray his friend in the most flattering light possible even to Washington, who knows Hamilton very well. This advocacy demonstrates the close relationship between Hamilton and Lafayette. Lafayette realizes how much a military command means to Hamilton and understands that Hamilton could be an asset in the possible final battle of the war at

¹² “Guns and Ships,” *Hamilton*

¹³ “Guns and Ships,” *Hamilton*

Yorktown. He also has some credibility here with Washington not only because of his military skill as mentioned before but also because he came through and helped get the French to join the American side. Hamilton and Lafayette are foils to one another especially because of their mutual desires for a military command. While Lafayette quickly assumed a military command and then earned one, Hamilton only received one right before the final battle of the war. In this way, having Lafayette advocate for Hamilton seems appropriate and even beneficial due to his relationship with Washington.

Another aspect that “Guns and Ships” addresses is Lafayette’s military and diplomatic skill. Lafayette’s tone has not changed from his earlier boasts to the group, however at this point, the narration of Burr recognizes him as a true American hero that is “constantly confusin’, confoundin’ the British henchmen.”¹⁴ In this context, his boastful tone takes on more meaning because it is no longer boasting about things he hopes to do but his past achievements. He says he is “takin this horse by the reins makin’/ Redcoats redder with bloodstains.”¹⁵ He tells the audience that he has taken advantage of his opportunity to lead troops and was effective at taking on the British Redcoats. This hearkens back to his comparison with Hamilton and how Lafayette had the opportunity to lead while Hamilton had not yet had that chance. He then states that he is “never gonna stop until I make ‘em/ Drop and burn ‘em up and scatter their remains”¹⁶ which shows his persistence and desire to finish the fight. Lafayette is always portrayed as ambitious, enthusiastic, and persistent, and this is no different. He wants to destroy the British not just win small victories but win independence for the colonies. He says to “Watch me

¹⁴ “Guns and Ships,” *Hamilton*

¹⁵ “Guns and Ships,” *Hamilton*

¹⁶ “Guns and Ships,” *Hamilton*

engagin' em! Escapin' em!/ Enragin' em!"¹⁷ This line is important because it speaks to his military skill and strategic talent and infers that he was able to get out of a tight situation therefore frustrating the British. He also understands that the battle at Yorktown can be a divisive one in the war. His comprehension of the war helps him realize that the battle of Yorktown can completely wipe out Britain's ability and will to fight. While "Guns and Ships" deals with Lafayette's military ability it also speaks to his diplomatic skill. Lafayette mentions how he returned to France "for more funds" and came back with more "Guns/ And ships/ And so the balance shifts."¹⁸ This verse points to Lafayette's influence in the French court and his diplomatic skill. He acted as a diplomat on behalf of the United States in their fight with the British. He convinced the French to commit even more men and money to the American Revolution. His actions were helpful to the American cause and Lafayette claims it shifted the balance of the war to the Americans. After the many defeats in the earlier stages of the war, this part demonstrated that Lafayette and the French were incredibly important in the war's success.

This song also addresses how the American populace thinks about Lafayette. In the narration at the beginning of the song Aaron Burr states he is "An immigrant you know and love who's unafraid to step in!" and also refers to Lafayette as "America's favorite fighting Frenchman."¹⁹ This is the only place in the musical the audience is told about how Lafayette is viewed in the colonies. From this brief mention, the audience understands the colonists respect Lafayette and appreciate that he joined in the fight with the Americans. These lines show that the Americans like him due to his military success.

¹⁷ "Guns and Ships," *Hamilton*

¹⁸ "Guns and Ships," *Hamilton*

¹⁹ "Guns and Ships," *Hamilton*

This is significant because Lafayette was a Frenchman and yet he became a hero to the Americans due to his devotion to their cause and his ability in battle. While the musical does not explore their feelings to Lafayette further, the mere fact Miranda felt it was necessary to mention it shows the importance and prevalence of these feelings.

The next time the audience sees Lafayette is at the Battle of Yorktown where he meets with Hamilton. Again, this shows the relationship between Lafayette and Hamilton but also emphasizes Lafayette's support for Hamilton to have a military command. Lafayette says Hamilton is "In command where [he] belongs."²⁰ Lafayette inherently understands Hamilton's desire for a military command due to his similar thirst for military glory. Lafayette also discusses how after the American Revolution finishes, he will "go back to France" and "bring freedom to [his] people if [he's] given the chance."²¹ Hamilton also promises American support in that endeavor but backs out of this in the Second Act. This promise also shows a complexity to the relationship between Hamilton and Lafayette. Hamilton, in this moment, promises American support of the cause of French freedom as a sort of abstract idea. When the opportunity to support the French people during the Revolution comes, Hamilton argues against joining the cause in "Cabinet Battle #2." Hamilton and Lafayette are close allies during the American Revolution. Their relationship is based on shared ideals and thirst for military glory. However, once the issue becomes real and is no longer simply abstract, Hamilton takes a more pragmatic stance and keeps the United States out of the war. Lafayette again calls for "freedom for France!"²² near the end of the song, preparing the audience for the

²⁰ "Guns and Ships," *Hamilton*

²¹ "Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)," *Hamilton*

²² "Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)," *Hamilton*

discussion of whether the American should join the French Revolution later in the musical.

Lafayette's development throughout the musical is also a subject of interest because his character changes as the musical progresses. The first aspect to contemplate is the development of his ability to speak English. At the beginning of the musical in "Aaron Burr, Sir" Lafayette speaks with a strong French accent and is still struggling over words like "anarchy." He also says more than half of his lines in his verse in French which is contrasted with Laurens, Mulligan, and Hamilton. Laurens and Mulligan speak in very brash tones and simple rhymes. This contrasts with Lafayette's switches to French and more mocking and gentle tone. Lafayette's accent even sticks out when they say together "to the Revolution!"²³ All their verses are very different than Hamilton's part at the beginning of "My Shot." It shows the stark difference between someone who is barely speaking English and Hamilton who is not just rhyming at the end of lines but using the language in such an effective and intelligent way. Miranda even says "It wasn't enough to rhyme at the end of the line, every line had to have musical theatre references, it had to have other hip-hop references, it had to do what my favorite rappers do, which is packing lyrics with so much density, and so much intricate double entendre, and alliteration, and onomatopoeia, and all the things that I love about language."²⁴ The development of Lafayette's capability in English is a small difference from the beginning of the show, but it is effective at showing how Lafayette grew into the Revolution and embraced not only the ideas and military glory of the Revolution but also the culture of America. By adding this progression, Miranda can tell the audience about Lafayette's

²³ "Aaron Burr, Sir," *Hamilton*

²⁴ Fessler, *A Tweet Lin Manuel-Miranda Wrote*

intentions without having him say that he loves America. Lafayette embeds himself into the fabric of what it means to be an American and this use of language portrays that shift in a more abstracted way.

Lafayette's relationships also progress throughout the musical, especially his relationship with Hamilton. The audience sees where Lafayette and Hamilton meet, in "Aaron Burr, Sir." There is little focus specifically on their relationship throughout the musical but in "Yorktown" they are shown to be much closer. Miranda shows they had become friends throughout the musical, with Lafayette being at Hamilton's wedding and being a part of the group. However, at the beginning of "Yorktown" their relationship is shown more distinctly. Lafayette and Hamilton see each other at the beginning of the song and Lafayette states Hamilton is "in command where [he] belongs."²⁵ Hamilton also comments "we're finally on the field. We've had quite a run."²⁶ Hamilton finally has a military command at Yorktown and is proud to show it off. The two seem very comfortable with each other in this scene, and generally happy for their military success and the victory of the colonies. This song also confirms that Hamilton and Lafayette share an ideology, as when Lafayette discusses bringing freedom to the French people, Hamilton affirms he supports this goal. This ideological tie is important in understanding Lafayette and Hamilton and how their relationship progresses to this scene in "Yorktown." At the beginning Miranda shows Lafayette as a boastful man who is mostly focused on fighting the British and Hamilton supports this because all his group are somewhat brash and outspoken. By the end Miranda bases their relationship on a more considered and practical approach.

²⁵ "Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)," *Hamilton*

²⁶ "Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)," *Hamilton*

Although Lafayette's relationship with Washington only appears once in "Guns and Ships" it deserves further consideration. This scene shows Washington trusted Lafayette. He trusts him with a military command but also to give him military advice. Lafayette in this scene with Washington is not as boastful and outspoken as he was at the beginning of the show, he speaks to Washington in a logical way, fighting for his friend and comrade, Hamilton. Washington's response to Lafayette here seems to point to a close relationship between the two of them. When Lafayette starts arguing Hamilton's case, Washington's first response is "I know."²⁷ Washington does not dismiss Lafayette's advice or his promoting of Hamilton as a military option. Instead Washington acknowledges Lafayette as a reflection of his own thoughts and validates their relationship.

Miranda also wants to show how Lafayette's ideology develops throughout the first act. At first, as discussed, Lafayette seems boastful and self-interested. He wants military glory and to defeat the British. By "Yorktown" Lafayette's stated goals have changed. Since he realizes the American war has been won, his goal now is "freedom for France."²⁸ In "My Shot" when Lafayette is saying what he dreams of it is simply "life without the monarchy."²⁹ This is a negative statement because he does not say what he is for, merely what he is against. He realizes the French unrest will lead to some sort of political change but as far as he is concerned at this early point, the movement is simply against the monarchy, not necessarily espousing changes they want to make. Later, in "Yorktown" Lafayette says he is for freedom for the French people. Although this sort of

²⁷ "Guns and Ships," *Hamilton*

²⁸ "Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)," *Hamilton*

²⁹ "My Shot," *Hamilton*

sentiment had been apparent in songs like “The Story of Tonight,” the freedom discussed there was for Americans. The line in “The Story of Tonight” is “Raise a glass to freedom/ Something they can never take away.”³⁰ Even if Lafayette believes these words in relation to the American people it is not clear he believes them to be universal until his affirmation in “Yorktown.” This shows a development in Lafayette’s ideology in the musical. It is not completely clear, but his idea of moving from one revolution to go fight for the freedom of the French people is a new idea that he brings up in “Yorktown.”

Lafayette’s character in *Hamilton* has limited lines, but through looking at those lines carefully, the audience is able to see the development of his character. He becomes more fluent in English, develops relationships, and conceives of an ideology in which freedom is valued. Although Lafayette in *Hamilton* is limited to group scenes and only has one song that focuses on him, his character adds a depth to the show, not only because of his relationship with Hamilton but also his role as acting as a representative of France and French support in the musical. Lafayette’s character in *Hamilton* also allows the audience to view Hamilton’s thirst for military glory in contrast to Lafayette’s. This helps the audience to better understand both characters.

³⁰ “The Story of Tonight,” *Hamilton*

CHAPTER THREE

Comparison of Historical Lafayette and Lafayette in *Hamilton*

Lin-Manuel Miranda created *Hamilton* to express ““a story about America then, told by America now,”” and ““to eliminate any distance between a contemporary audience and this story.””¹ He accomplishes this goal by casting a diverse group of people and using contemporary music like rap and hip-hop to attract a broader and younger audience to Broadway. Although the musical appeals to many groups of people, does it accurately represent the historical figure of Lafayette? If not, is the representation accomplishing a different goal, such as engaging people in history? Although *Hamilton* only focuses on Lafayette’s involvement in the American Revolution, his character in the musical is accurate and appealing enough to interest people in his story.

Lafayette first appears in *Hamilton* with a group including Hamilton, Laurens, and Mulligan. However, this meeting did not occur, partly because Hercules Mulligan did not belong to Washington’s military family. Mulligan acted as a spy in New York City for Washington, as he says later in the musical, when he identifies himself as a “A tailor spyin’ on the British government!”² A more accurate version of this meeting would include Laurens, Hamilton, and Lafayette and take place in Valley Forge during the winter of 1777-1778.³ These three men met and became good friends, but they met each other at different times. Miranda created this meeting for the purpose of convenience, in

¹ Delman, *How Lin-Manuel Miranda Shapes History*

² “Yorktown,” *Hamilton*

³ Clary, 149

order to introduce the four as a sort of revolutionary group. Instead of introducing Burr, Lafayette, Laurens, and Mulligan individually, Miranda saved time by Hamilton meeting them in a group. While the meeting of them together does not reflect history, their conversations about revolution, liberty, and slavery accurately portray the kinds of conversations Washington's cadre discussed when united.⁴ By putting them in one place during this scene, Miranda can express their revolutionary ideals in the next song, "My Shot." The first meeting of the group lasts from "Aaron Burr, Sir" to "The Story of Tonight."

In "Aaron Burr, Sir," Lafayette speaks mostly in French and explains his purpose in the American Revolution, to fight against the English. Since Lafayette spoke only halting English when he arrived in America, the use of the French language in this phrase makes historical sense.⁵ Miranda cleverly uses Lafayette's first verse in the musical to establish several important facts about Lafayette. Lafayette speaks mostly French and English with an accent, so the audience understands he came from France. The verse also shows his motive, to fight the British, and his brash and arrogant character. All these qualities fit with the historical character of Lafayette. His youth contributes to the egotism and naivety shown in the musical. However, Lafayette also possesses an enthusiasm that does not effectively appear in the musical. For many, this quality made Lafayette enjoyable to be around. Lafayette was only nineteen when he left for America and Miranda portrays this without having to explicitly address Lafayette's age. Miranda also portrays Lafayette's primary reasons for joining the Revolution as a desire for glory gained by fighting the English. While this certainly contributed to Lafayette's motives,

⁴ Clary, 150

⁵ Clary, 93

his reasoning was more complex. He saw himself as a “defender of that liberty which I adore, for myself more than anyone, I bring with me only my frankness and enthusiasm, but no ambition, no selfish interest; as I work to acquire glory, I am also working for their happiness.”⁶ He wrote this on June 7, while on board the *Victoire* in a letter to his wife. This complicates the understanding of Lafayette’s motivations because he has a personal motive of glory, but he differentiates that from ambition and his desire for the happiness of Americans. For Lafayette, glory meant success in battle, even if he did not command all the troops. He had no ambition for higher posts partly due to his wealth and security in his position in French nobility. Figures like Hamilton wanted to use the War to boost their wealth and station afterwards and therefore possessed more ambition. So, while this verse captures a surface view of Lafayette, he is more complex and has many reasons for joining the Revolution.

In “My Shot” Lafayette worries about the unrest in France and brags about his military prowess. Due to his position in the court nobility in Versailles Lafayette did not see the unrest in France as much of a problem or cause for concern. While protests over food prices did occur, and these eventually led to the French Revolution, nobility in France saw this tension as typical peasant unrest as opposed to something new and revolutionary. While Lafayette lived closer to the peasants and had more interactions with them when he was younger and resided at Chavaniac, he moved to Paris when he was only ten.⁷ However, Miranda may have included these lines by Lafayette to foreshadow his future involvement and support of the French Revolution. As for his arrogance about his military skill, Miranda could be addressing how Lafayette portrayed

⁶ Bernier, 36

⁷ Clary, 14

himself to the Americans, and not simply his actual experience or skill. He wanted to gain a military command so that he could fight the British and gain glory, one of his primary goals, so he necessarily portrayed himself to the Americans as an experienced and talented French officer.⁸ However these lines do not reveal anything about Lafayette's ideology or belief in the Revolution, even as many other characters in this song discuss these topics.

"The Story of Tonight" can be seen to have a double meaning for Lafayette. It professes the values of the Revolution, stating "Raise a glass to freedom/ something they can never take away."⁹ Lafayette supported this value for the nation of America, but it could also apply to his own life. Lafayette gained freedom not only from his wife's overbearing family in France but also from the court life at Versailles by fleeing to fight in the Revolution.¹⁰ His escape provided Lafayette control over his own fate and life. He no longer worked to appease others but rather focused only on his own desire for glory. Life in America also lacked the type of luxury and social wiles necessary to be successful at French court. Because Lafayette never possessed these skills, he fit in better with the Americans. While this song applies to the group and their commitment to the Revolution, for Lafayette it reflects his reasoning for leaving France. Lafayette wanted to control his own life, and this connects to a desire for freedom.

Although the musical focuses on Hamilton's personal life for the next few songs, Lafayette reappears in "Stay Alive." Lafayette, in this song, says, "I ask for French aid, I pray that France has sent a ship."¹¹ This plea for aid occurred between the date Lafayette

⁸ Clary, 12

⁹ "The Story of Tonight", *Hamilton*

¹⁰ Clary, 29

¹¹ "Stay Alive," *Hamilton*

arrived in America, June 13, 1777, and the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778, which follows later in this song. Lafayette did appeal for French aid many times during this time period and urged various attacks on the English in different theatres of war.^{12,13} He proposed these plans not only to lower level officials in the French government, but even to Vergennes, the foreign minister of France. This shows Lafayette's reach in French society because he had the connections to appeal seriously to people this high in the French government. The idea of Lafayette "pray[ing] the French have sent a ship" also demonstrates the slow and unreliable quality of communication during the Revolution and the most effective response would be a French fleet appearing off the coast of America. This song then focuses on the Battle of Monmouth, explaining how Lee failed to keep his troops from fleeing in disarray and Lafayette saved the day. Lafayette served under Lee at Monmouth and while Lee was indecisive and lacked knowledge of the terrain, Lafayette followed his orders even when they put him and his troops in a weak position. Washington re-formed Lee's retreating troops and took a stand. He put Lafayette in charge of the second line, and Lafayette repulsed an effort from Clinton to turn the American left.¹⁴ Lafayette is not the hero who came in to save the day at the Battle of Monmouth as portrayed in *Hamilton* but rather an officer following the orders given to him. Then what purpose did Miranda have in portraying it this way? Lafayette is known by the audience of *Hamilton* at this point, and eventually became known for his military skill. Since Miranda already planned to talk about Monmouth, it must have seemed convenient to show Lafayette's skill in this song. It also puts Lafayette and

¹² Clary, 126

¹³ Du Motier, 108-112

¹⁴ Clary, 194-197

Hamilton in contrast because Washington passes over Hamilton for a military command in rather dramatic fashion, saying, “Hamilton!/. . ./Have Lafayette take the lead!”¹⁵ This distinctly shows the audience that Washington does not consider Hamilton as a military leader. This song addresses Lafayette’s appeals to the French and the Battle of Monmouth and while not completely accurate, the changes made advance both the perception of Lafayette’s military skill and Hamilton’s story.

“Guns and Ships” opens with Aaron Burr introducing Lafayette as “America’s favorite fighting Frenchman.”¹⁶ Most Americans possessed “genuine affection” for Lafayette, and he became even more popular after the success at Yorktown.¹⁷ Unlike other French officers who came to fight in the Revolution, Lafayette did not want to be paid, and he quickly became close to Washington. Nearly everyone who met him liked him and enjoyed being around him.¹⁸ Taking a bullet in his first military action at Brandywine just added to his appeal, as he bled for the American cause. Speaking of Lafayette’s popularity in America is important to understand his title as the hero of two worlds.

The song moves on to address Lafayette’s military skill and how he frustrates the British by escaping from them. His words no longer sound arrogant because he has proven himself in various battles. Especially informative is the Battle of Barren Hill, which took place on May 20, 1778. Although a minor battle, it illustrates Lafayette’s military skill. Washington sent Lafayette to determine if the British planned to leave Philadelphia because Washington received intelligence that this would occur soon. He

¹⁵ “Stay Alive,” *Hamilton*

¹⁶ “Guns and Ships,” *Hamilton*

¹⁷ Bernier, 92

¹⁸ Clary, 124

provided Lafayette with a force of 2,200, hoping they could harass the British.

Washington also told Lafayette that his unit was valuable, and it should not be risked unnecessarily. Lafayette went to Barren Hill, between Valley Forge and Philadelphia, which was isolated and not an easy position to escape from if surprised. Howe realized Lafayette's position at Barren Hill and sent three columns of British troops to try to encircle Lafayette's force. Lafayette realized what was happening the morning of May 20, and the main road to the ford was already blocked by the British. However, Lafayette knew the terrain around his position and escaped using a different path, down the river bank. Lafayette and his forces escaped from a difficult position, and the British only detected their failure to encircle Lafayette when they ran into their own forces.¹⁹

Lafayette benefited from his troops having trained under the Baron von Steuben, as they formed into platoon columns which allowed an orderly retreat. While Lafayette failed in taking up a good position and making sure he had scouts far enough out, his skill in extracting his force from a tight spot proved his composure in times of pressure.

Lafayette knew that if his force surrendered to the British it would be a huge blow to the American cause and somehow found a way to escape. While these smaller battles are not included in *Hamilton*, lyrics about Lafayette's military skill refer to instances like Barren Hill.

"Guns and Ships" then discusses Lafayette's return to France and how he brings more guns and ships back to America. Lafayette's actual return to France was more complicated. Since Lafayette left without the approval of the French government, on his return in 1779 he was put under house arrest.²⁰ However, Lafayette was not only popular

¹⁹ Lengel, 287-289

²⁰ Bernier, 81

in America, but his adventures in America grew his popularity in France and his return sparked French popular support of the American cause. Lafayette, once released from house arrest, also had the connections to appeal to the highest levels of the French government for more French aid for the American cause. When Lafayette returned to America, he did bring with him the news the French were sending French soldiers led by Rochambeau to fight with the Americans which aided the American cause and improved morale.²¹ Lafayette did not convince the French to join the war but did contribute to negotiations which led to French troops making the journey across the Atlantic to fight for the Americans.

Lafayette also mentions in “Guns and Ships” that “we can end this war at Yorktown, cut them off at sea.”²² Historically, it makes sense he recommends this to Washington, as Lafayette led a force in the South, sparring with Cornwallis before Cornwallis took a position at Yorktown and then holding him there until Washington made the decision.²³ Miranda used Lafayette to first introduce Yorktown as an ending point for the war because Lafayette was the one who had been fighting in the South with Cornwallis. Lafayette also knew the strength of the French navy and understood if they could defeat the British navy, preventing them from helping Cornwallis, his position was disastrous. Lafayette understood the challenges of Cornwallis’s position and the consequences of the British losing this large of a force.

At the end of the song, Lafayette advocates for Hamilton to gain a military command. Lafayette felt for his friend, as he understood the importance of a military

²¹ Bernier, 92

²² “Guns and Ships,” *Hamilton*

²³ Lengel, 331

command especially after the War for those remaining in America. Lafayette desired military glory, and he saw the same desires reflected in Hamilton. Washington did not grant Hamilton a military command until Yorktown. However, Lafayette had advocated for Hamilton to Washington before, most notably in a letter to Washington in November 1780. Lafayette says that “Hamilton is, I Confess, the officer whom I wold [*sic*] like to See in that Station.”²⁴ He goes on to describe why Hamilton would make a good military officer, including that Hamilton understands Washington’s opinions and “intentions on Military Arrangements.”²⁵ Lafayette also says Hamilton loves discipline and that he would work well with the other armies and commanders. Lafayette’s advocacy for Hamilton reflects their friendship and Lafayette’s loyalty to Hamilton. Lafayette plays on his relationship with Washington to try to acquire a military command for Hamilton and is not successful until Washington finally gives in at Yorktown. By having Lafayette appeal to Washington on Hamilton’s behalf, Miranda shows the closeness of the relationship between Hamilton and Lafayette, and Lafayette and Washington.

In “Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)” Lafayette proposes freedom for France. However, while Lafayette did support ideas such as liberty, his ideas did not yet spread to his home nation and he still supported the monarchy. Lafayette did develop a more complex ideology while fighting in the American Revolution. He “began to understand what liberty really meant, why the people should have rights, why government out never to proceed without the consent of those it rules.”²⁶ Lafayette would not have found it ironic to espouse the ideology of the American Revolution while also

²⁴ Du Motier, 28 November 1780

²⁵ Du Motier, 28 November 1780

²⁶ Bernier, 68

supporting the absolute monarchy in his own country. His ideology still required development, and many viewed the American situation and American people as very different than the French peasants. At this time, Lafayette did not hope for freedom for the peasants of his own country. However, Miranda could have included these lyrics for Lafayette as foreshadowing of his future involvement in the French Revolution.

At the beginning of the song, Lafayette and Hamilton meet at Yorktown. They worked together during the siege of Yorktown to take one of the British redoubts which was necessary in order to advance the line.²⁷ While Miranda creates the content of the conversation, Lafayette and Hamilton would have been near each other during the siege of Yorktown, and Lafayette may have congratulated Hamilton on his newly acquired military command. This shows Lafayette and Hamilton's relationship. Since Lafayette and Hamilton now both had a military command, they could achieve their initial goals in the War. For Hamilton it became possible to use this experience and prestige to rise after the war, and Lafayette gained military glory that produced respect in France.

Because Hamilton is the focus of the musical, Miranda develops his relationship with Lafayette the most. Hamilton and Lafayette became close because they worked closely with Washington, a fact the musical portrays accurately. The group of Hamilton, Laurens, and Lafayette portrayed by Miranda in the musical is also historically accurate as Hamilton and Laurens were aides-de-camp to Washington and Lafayette also stayed near Washington. They also all spent the winter of 1777-1778 at Valley Forge. Lafayette and Hamilton had a very close relationship, as explained by Chernow in his biography of Hamilton. Lafayette wrote to Adrienne, ““Among the general's aides-de-camp is a

²⁷ Du Motier, 270

(young) man whom I love very much and about whom I have occasionally spoken to you That man is Colonel Hamilton.”²⁸ This relationship is the most thoroughly explored of Lafayette in *Hamilton*.

The most glaring absence in terms of the historical Lafayette in *Hamilton* is the lack of exploration of the relationship between Lafayette and Washington. Lafayette and Washington had a very close relationship, with Lafayette even naming his son Georges-Washington Lafayette.²⁹ Washington also relied on Lafayette to command troops and entrusted him with important missions against the British, unlike his relationship with Hamilton or Laurens. Clary argues that Lafayette saw Washington as an adopted father, as his own father died when he was only two.³⁰ Lafayette’s relationship with Washington was one of his closest from the Revolution and impacted the rest of his life. The only focus in *Hamilton* on this relationship is in “Guns and Ships” when Lafayette and Washington are talking about Hamilton, but their relationship ran much deeper than this. Miranda left out further development of this relationship because it did not have direct connections to Hamilton’s story. While it was an important part of the Revolution, it did not impact Hamilton’s trajectory as much.

Lafayette also had good relationships with several of the other Founding Fathers. While still in France and when he returned in 1779, he met and became friends with Benjamin Franklin.³¹ Franklin advocated for Lafayette to Congress before he arrived in America because of Lafayette’s connections and wealth.³² Lafayette’s relationship with

²⁸ Chernow, 96-97

²⁹ Clary, 250

³⁰ Clary, 451

³¹ Clary, 177

³² Clary, 85

Franklin was important both in gaining him credibility with the new American congress but Franklin was also a well-regarded figure in America and his recommendation of Lafayette had an impact on how the American people first viewed Lafayette.

Hamilton is mostly accurate in its depiction of Lafayette. The parts it adds in and takes out have purpose like foreshadowing the French Revolution to show how Lafayette's ideology later impacts his stance in different circumstances. The lack of an established relationship between Washington and Lafayette could be due to a practical interest in the length of the musical, and a focus on Hamilton's character above all else. Therefore, Miranda only used the relationship between Lafayette and Washington to relate back to Hamilton's story. Despite these shortfalls, the portrayal is effective in giving a broad overview of Lafayette and he is an appealing character in *Hamilton*.

CHAPTER FOUR

Historical Musicals

Although *Hamilton* is an especially interesting example of a historical musical, there are others which successfully use either historical characters or a historical setting in different ways in order to accomplish a variety of goals. Because not all historical musicals can be considered, this chapter will consider *West Side Story*, *South Pacific*, and *The Sound of Music*. *West Side Story* and *South Pacific* both use historical settings to frame their stories, but *The Sound of Music* also adds the element of being based on real people. While *Hamilton* fits into the context of historical musicals, it is significantly different in terms of the use of historical figures, the goal of the musical, and the style of music.

Both *South Pacific* and *West Side Story* use historical settings but create fictional characters. *West Side Story* takes place in 1950s New York and the Jets and Sharks take the position of the Capulets and Montagues in *Romeo and Juliet*. Because *West Side Story* “grew out of real-life, snatched-from-the-headlines events, and frightening crime stats” the audience could understand the story of *Romeo and Juliet* in a new light because it became much more accessible.¹ The strain between the gangs is exacerbated by making them different races, White and Puerto Rican, mirroring tensions in the city at the time. However, while the setting appeals to a broad audience, the characters themselves are nevertheless flat due to the literal interpretation of *Romeo and Juliet*. Maria and Tony in

¹ Berson, 6

West Side Story do have certain characteristics which differentiate them from *Romeo and Juliet*, such as Maria's Puerto Rican heritage and culture, but the characters feel too familiar to identify with because the story shares so many similarities with *Romeo and Juliet*. The characters also almost always appear with their gang or with each other and thus are not defined throughout the musical as individuals. Jerome Robbins, director and choreographer, encourages the audience to "imagine Romeo 'in terms of today,' against a backdrop of 'the gangs of New York.'"² Robbins understands the divide created between the present day and the world of Shakespeare when he wrote *Romeo and Juliet*. Robbins understands the themes included in *Romeo and Juliet* still apply to life in New York in the 1950s and thinks a modern take on *Romeo and Juliet* can convey these themes in a more effective way due to many people identifying with the setting of the story. In creating a modern-day *Romeo and Juliet*, *West Side Story* is successful, but the story does not change enough to make it as appealing as it could be. One way to make this musical more effective would be to further develop the characters as individuals instead of within the context of their gangs. The main characters, Maria and Tony, bear the classic naivete of *Romeo and Juliet* but their motivations and backstory is not as developed as it could be.

South Pacific also uses a historical setting, an island in the South Pacific during World War II. Although some of the islands, like Bali Ha'i are fictional, the historical setting informs the conditions faced by the characters in the movie and why they are all there initially. The stories told in this musical are fictional, as are the characters, based on the book *Tales of the South Pacific* by James Michener.³ Michener served in the Navy

² Berson, 21

³ Michener, *Tales of the South Pacific*

during World War II in the South Pacific and took that inspiration to write *Tales of the South Pacific*. He was also a historian and thus concerned with accurate details in his descriptions of the South Pacific. This musical has the benefit of not being based off such a well-known story, but rather off of Michener's own experience. It also includes many different storylines and characters, carefully selected from the book by Oscar Hammerstein II.⁴ The historical setting allows all these different characters to be in the same musical and the mission against the Japanese frames the entire story. While the characters in both these musicals are fictional, the settings provide framing and in *West Side Story*, familiarity. While *South Pacific* takes its setting and story from a book, *West Side Story* places *Romeo and Juliet* in a new setting and context.

The Sound of Music and *Hamilton* fit into a different category of historical musicals because they use historical figures to tell their stories. Although they both use historical characters, the story of the figures in *The Sound of Music* is relatively unknown, especially when compared with the story of the Founding Fathers told in *Hamilton*. Because the story told in *The Sound of Music* is not well known, Hammerstein and Rodgers were able to manipulate the story. Although *The Sound of Music* is based on *The Story of the Trapp Family Singers* by Maria Augusta Trapp, Hammerstein and Rodgers had more leeway to change the story because many people do not know it.⁵ One of the changes they made was to portray Maria as falling in love with Georg, when she stated in her own autobiography that she fell in love with the children and married their father because she loved them. Another especially dramatic change was Georg's personality. The real von Trapp children felt that the portrayal of Georg as cold and detached from his

⁴ Purdum, *South Pacific, the Rodgers and Hammerstein Show*

⁵ Gearin, *Movie vs. Reality*

children in the first half of the musical did not accurately reflect reality. While Hammerstein and Rodgers added this for dramatic impact, casting Maria as the solution for many of the family's problems, the reality did not match this. Because of this leeway, they left out many details and changed the personalities of various characters.⁶ Maria, for instance, was not as perfect a person as portrayed in the musical but could have angry outbursts. The portrayal in the musical of the escape was also fictionalized, as the family instead of escaping over the Alps to freedom simply told people they were going to America to sing, and escaped the Nazis that way, with less dramatics.⁷ There are distinct reasons to change details such as this. Hammerstein and Rodgers wanted to tell a good story and by shifting certain aspects of the reality of the Trapp family, they could make a more dramatic, appealing, and financially successful musical.

Hamilton fits into the same mold as *The Sound of Music* because the characters are historical figures. However, because the Founding Fathers are so well known throughout America, Lin-Manuel Miranda had less leeway to change their stories. Miranda also realized he needed historical consultants because he wanted ““historians to take this seriously.””⁸ Because Miranda wanted the musical to be tied so closely to history, he brought on Ron Chernow as a historical consultant, partly because Chernow's biography *Alexander Hamilton* was the basis for Miranda to begin the writing of *Hamilton*.^{9,10} Miranda knew for a musical about such premier figures in American history, it would not be taken seriously if it did not contain an adequate level of historical

⁶ Gearin, *Movie vs. Reality*

⁷ Gearin, *Movie vs. Reality*

⁸ Evans, *Ron Chernow on Alexander Hamilton*

⁹ Evans, *Ron Chernow on Alexander Hamilton*

¹⁰ Gibbs, Bryer, *Award-winning 'Hamilton' Musical*

accuracy. One of the ways Miranda accomplishes this is through using the writings of the characters throughout the show, like Washington's farewell address in "One Last Time" or Hamilton and Burr's letters in "Your Obedient Servant." By integrating these men's writings with lyrics written by himself, Miranda achieves a level of authenticity to the characters which would not have been possible otherwise. Miranda was able to integrate these writings into the songs without them sounding out of place, due to his ability to take the voice of each character.

The intention of each musical varies partially because of when they were composed. *West Side Story* addressed racism, xenophobia, and delinquency, while presenting a familiar story.¹¹ One of the goals of *West Side Story* was to appeal to youth not just through the setting of the musical but also with the different kind of music and choreography used.¹² This goal influences how the characters from the show are depicted. The creators use younger, more impulsive characters to portray the gangs. Although characters like Bernardo and Riff are the older members of the gangs, they do not seem much older than Tony and Maria, although Bernardo and Anita establish a household. Unlike the traditional *Romeo and Juliet*, their families are not as important as their respective gangs, involving even more young characters. The musical did not just appeal to youth but a broad section of the population due to its use of a modern setting and its inclusion of modern music. Similarly, one of the goals of *South Pacific* is also to address racism, as it deals explicitly with the problem multiple times and "Hammerstein made a particular point of combating prejudice."¹³ He accomplished that by putting characters of

¹¹ Berson, 7

¹² Berson, 7

¹³ Purdum, *South Pacific, the Rodgers and Hammerstein Show*

different races in constant contact. Cable and Liat fall in love and they are a mixed-race couple. Although Nellie has trouble accepting Emile's children from his former marriage, she eventually comes to love them. For the time these musicals were created, 1949 for *South Pacific* and 1957 for *West Side Story*, speaking about race in such a frank way made a distinct political statement in both time periods because it was still before the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. However, *West Side Story* addressed the issue in a time when tensions were increasing. Both musicals humanize people of other races and show how prejudice is not positive, and in both cases leads to conflict and a separation of a couple. In *West Side Story* Maria and Tony are separated because they belong to gangs of different races, and in *South Pacific*, Cable realizes he cannot stay with Liat even though he loves her. Both movies connect prejudice with tragedy in a time when prejudice was commonplace.

In *The Sound of Music* the goal is more difficult to discern. This could be because the musical focuses more on romance with the underlying anti-Nazi narrative. However, the inclusion of the Nazi regime and the Trapp family fleeing from Austria because of the Nazi threat show that there is some goal of the musical, broader than simply telling a good story. Part of the message is loyalty to country, in this instance Austria, and an understanding that people must stand up against tyrannical regimes, the Nazis, even when it may be more convenient to give in. Stagnation in the musical is portrayed as bad, both in the case of remaining in the path of the Nazis but this theme also appears in the relationship between Captain von Trapp and his children. He remains stuck on the death of their mother and unable to move past his loss. However, this musical focuses more on the story than the historical setting and thus the goal of using a historical moment is not

as easily understood as in *West Side Story* and *South Pacific*. The historical setting does underly the entirety of the musical and the darkness balances the happy romance.

The aim of *Hamilton* is to make the story of the American Founding more accessible to a diverse population than it is in the history books. To do this, *Hamilton* must reach a broad audience. This goal, however, also makes a political statement, along the same strain of historical musicals like *West Side Story* or *South Pacific*. Because more people know this story, *Hamilton* can make a bigger impact by casting people of color as Founding Fathers and make it easier for many people to identify with the founders. The inherent nature of Alexander Hamilton's story also appeals to a broad audience because he comes from nothing, and "everyone loves an underdog."

The style of music present in these musicals reflects on their goals. The musical style of *South Pacific* and *The Sound of Music* fit into the fabric of Broadway. Since Rodgers and Hammersmith composed both musicals the similarity of musical style makes sense. Also, while the goal of these musicals was to make a political statement, the composers were not seeking to shake up Broadway or reach a broader audience than those already viewing Broadway productions. Although these musicals became wholly successful, they used typical Broadway music in order to achieve this accomplishment. Their focus on different themes while still fitting into the mold of Broadway allows them to affect change within Broadway and change ideas about acceptable topics for Broadway.

Both *Hamilton* and *West Side Story* use some of typical Broadway style but integrate various contemporary influences to make the music more accessible to the audience. In a musical whose setting means to mimic the world outside, *West Side Story*

integrates “Tin Pan Alley, jazz, Latin grooves, and modernist symphonic effects.”¹⁴ The dance in *West Side Story* also broke the rules of Broadway by including “jagged, athletic, hypercharged dance and gesture in an exhilarating mongrel hybrid of ballet, social dancing, and cutting-edge modern dance.”¹⁵ Both of these aspects help *West Side Story* to stand out on Broadway and connect the musical to the world outside and its moment of creation. Bernstein incorporated more contemporary styles of music in his compositions so they could appeal to a broader audience. Miranda used a similar strategy in the creation of *Hamilton*. He especially used rap and hip-hop references to appeal to younger audiences like the song “Ten Duel Commandments” which uses the same structure as Biggie Small’s “Ten Crack Commandments.”¹⁶ References like these would be lost on traditional Broadway audiences but they could still enjoy the innovation of using rap while these sorts of allusions would appeal to younger, more diverse audiences. The style of music in *Hamilton* helps accomplish its goal of reaching a broader audience and connecting history to the present moment.

Hamilton fits into the context of historical musicals by presenting a political message based on history. *Hamilton* is not unique in its use of contemporary music to appeal to a broader audience as Bernstein used the same tactics in *West Side Story*. However, *Hamilton* uses rap and a diverse cast to appeal to young audiences as well as to make all Americans feel closer to history. For modern audiences, the combination of Hamilton’s story and the inclusion of contemporary music adds a newness to *Hamilton*. Miranda created a musical which covers a story of the Founding told by historians and

¹⁴ Berson, 6

¹⁵ Berson, 6

¹⁶ Wilstein, *Hamilton’s Hip-Hop References*

artists many times over but adds enough new elements that it feels different and this difference made *Hamilton* a cultural phenomenon. The characters portrayed in *Hamilton* feel familiar and the story well-known, but Miranda strives to complicate the romantic view of these historical figures and show that history is not so far removed from modern life.

CONCLUSION

Because Lafayette follows his values and thirst for glory to fight in a Revolution on the other side of the world, he stands out. He had no reason to leave the comfort of France, but his ideology drove him. Lafayette's story is unrealistic, but this makes it interesting. His enthusiasm for the American cause still draws people to him. His portrayal in *Hamilton* allows the audience to engage with a simplified version of his story and encourages more study. With further investigation the audience would find a complex person who had a long and eventful life. This paper simply explores one level of who Lafayette was but he was only twenty-four when he left for France after the end of the American Revolution so many other avenues of exploration exist.

While Lafayette may seem like a figure with no relevance to the present world, his portrayal in *Hamilton* shows the connections between the eighteenth century and modern-day. The accessibility of the characters in *Hamilton* illustrate the ideal outcome of the use of history in art. *Hamilton* reaches the audience in a way the Founding has never been able to by shedding the mythology surrounding the American Revolution and the Founding Fathers and treating them as fallible men. As *Hamilton* proves, history is often closer than we realize. Interesting more people in history has value because understanding history leads to a more informed citizenry who have a deeper understanding of the values the Founding Fathers espoused when they built the country. *Hamilton* achieves incredible success in forming connections to the stories of history, the main purpose of history in art.

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