

**“The World Turned Upside-Down”?: Understanding
Hamilton and Public Performances of the Past on the
Digital Stage**

Esther Wilson

PhD

University of York
Department of History

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ABSTRACT

This study uses *Hamilton: An American Musical* as a case study for public history analysis. It sees the cultural, political, and technological conditions surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic as crucial turning points for re-evaluating *Hamilton*'s position as a cultural product of the Obama era. *Hamilton* is considered holistically. Key source materials include the *Hamilton* show, the Disney+ film and documentaries, the 'Hamilton Education Program' and the 'Ham4Progress' initiative. The thesis also considers *Hamilton*'s place in the digital sphere more broadly, as made manifest through the social media platforms of Twitter and Instagram along with popular news and other web pages. The different 'stage-spaces' occupied by *Hamilton* are approached with the conceptual frameworks of performativity and transmediality, bolstered by quantitative analysis of almost one million Tweets. Making visible the continued tensions in and around *Hamilton* as a cultural product, what emerges is an enterprise with a mythos built upon a distinct self-historicising urge – a product not only deep in conversation with its surrounding contexts, but which is part of those circumstances. In so doing, the thesis offers a methodological intervention in how to undertake public history practice in periods of ostensibly rapid technological, political, and cultural change.

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references.

WORD COUNT

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Inclusive of text, discursive footnotes, and appendices

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Introduction

Introducing *Hamilton*

“The world turned upside-down” is a line that reaches back to seventeenth-century England. Originating within a broadside ballad protesting parliamentary policy, it became the hallmark of Hill’s seminal re-telling of the English Revolution as having come not ‘from above’, but ‘from below’.¹ As the English Revolution slipped away, popular legend has it that the song resurfaced not as an underdog political rally, but as the plaintive tune of bewildered British troops following their loss at the American Revolutionary Battle of Yorktown. At least, this is the version reinforced by *Hamilton*’s revisionist take on America’s founding.

Opening almost four hundred years after “the world turned upside-down” was first sung, the show uses rap and hip-hop to tell a rags-to-riches tale of Alexander Hamilton’s progress from Caribbean to Congress. In a country still so transfixed with its founding story, Hamilton is depicted as a complex national hero whose agency and influence have hitherto been egregiously overlooked. The main plot takes audiences through the earliest decades of the American nation from the point of Hamilton’s 1772 immigrant arrival, passing through the American War of Independence, the forging of the U.S. Constitution, the resignation of George Washington, and the political ongoings that ensued until the infamous Burr-Hamilton duel of 1804. Hamilton is presented as not only a Founder, but a husband, father, and friend. In doing so, the play uses a colour-conscious cast to bring to new life both historical persons of typical notoriety - George Washington, Aaron Burr, Thomas Jefferson, King George III - and others ostensibly marginalised within wider cultural representations – Eliza Schuyler-Hamilton, Angelica Schuyler-Church, Maria Reynolds, John Laurens. All such figures from the Founding era (aside from George III), are typically portrayed by global majority performers.

“The world turned upside-down” would end up not only speaking towards *Hamilton*’s subject matter, but the show’s very own mythos of cultural and historical exceptionalism in transforming perceptions of the past and how this history might be performed across stage and screen. After its opening at 46th Street’s Richard Rodgers theatre on 6th August 2015, “critics and fans rushed to proclaim it a revolution on Broadway.”² Coming straight from a sold-out off-Broadway run at

¹ See Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (London: Maurice Temple Smith Ltd, 1972).

² Elissa Habert, “Hamilton and History Musicals,” *American Music* 36, no. 4 *Hamilton* (2018): 412

The Public Theatre, Lin-Manuel Miranda's telling of the "forgotten" Founding Father's journey from orphaned immigrant to famed politician and duellist was "showered with recognition," labelled "a powerful cultural phenomenon" and a "touchstone of contemporary culture."³ Over the next few years, *Hamilton* would receive "an unprecedented" sixteen Tony nominations (winning eleven, including 'best musical'), a Grammy, a Pulitzer, and eight Drama Desk Awards.⁴

Having been effectively "forc[ed] out of the musical theatre bubble and into mainstream culture," *Hamilton*'s presence has far-surpassed Broadway and morphed into a sort of 'Hamilmania'.⁵ The show's original cast album was the first musical to reach #1 on *Billboard*'s rap chart – it even debuted there.⁶ Though Broadway of the earlier twenty-first century has been intimately connected to the popular music charts, *Hamilton*'s level of success was unheard of, as if a successful hip-hop show was not already a novelty in itself. Following the original cast recording the show released a mixtape (a series of re-mixed songs featuring mainstream celebrity music artists), an instrumental version, and sing-along programs ('Hamiltunes'), all available on either streaming platforms or (originally) CD. Fan communities blossomed. Having hosted Miranda's first performance of what came to be *Hamilton* at the start of his first presidency, one of Barack Obama's final White House events included inviting the cast to perform together – not as newcomers or Broadway-specific celebrities, but as cultural reformers.

Hamilton sought to not only turn popular understandings of the American Revolution "upside-down." Rather, adapting to the wider cultural, technological, and political circumstances of its moment, the show came to actively mobilise the mythical lament to perpetuate the image of its own cultural revolution. As discussed later in this introduction, Broadway's ability to disrupt social norms was not new to 2015, yet *Hamilton* was perceived to be, or do, something different. The show was widely seen as a transformative moment with the power to change the ways in which publics related to their American past and present, with a sense of agency beyond the sum of its origins and parts. Redefining the means and meaning of spectatorship and participation beyond "live tickets," the show developed its own digitally native 'Hamil-fam' as an online "viral

³ Habert, "Hamilton and History Musicals," 412.

⁴ Renee C. Romano and Claire Bond Potter, "Introduction: History is Happening in Manhattan," in *Historians on Hamilton* ed. Renee C. Romano and Claire Bond Potter, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 1.

⁵ Jessica Hillman-McCord, "Digital Fandom: Hamilton and the Participatory Spectator," in *iBroadway: Musical Theatre in the Digital Age* ed. Jessica Hillman-McCord (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 120.

⁶ Romano and Potter, *Historians on Hamilton*, 1-14; The album also went triple platinum after three years.

sensation” across social media platforms such as Twitter.⁷ This ‘*Hamil*-sphere’ of diverse *Hamilton*-related media wasn’t just about getting around the “inaccessibility” of a sold-out, sky-high-priced show. It took what Silva and Innatullya regard as a staged disruption of “immigrant narratives” across space, medium, and purpose as well as across time, fundamentally linking the Broadway auditorium within the rhythms of daily life.⁸ Another popularised lyric from the show, “I want to be/I’ve got to be in the room where it happens” sung by antagonist-narrator Aaron Burr, proved to be not just a marketing slogan but a watchword for what was happening to the show and its depiction of history. Any space could seemingly be “the room” where “it” – *Hamilton*, its values, attributes, depictions, or educational work – “happen[ed]” in some form. This was a show with inspirational purpose that seemed to be received across even the most rigid of political boundaries: Mike Pence, Trump’s right-hand man who was booed by some ticketholders and called out by the cast in 2015, nonetheless labelled *Hamilton* a “great show” that others should “go to see,” even when his boss took to Twitter to criticise it.⁹ *Hamilton*’s impact, therefore, hasn’t merely been about commercial novelty in aesthetically or experientially “shifting” the Broadway genre, but the ways in which the show has developed its own mythos across different types of media in partnership with diverse publics.¹⁰

The show’s immediate perceived impact is reflected in the scholarship, as researchers quickly sought explanation for the show’s “revolutionary” reputation both within and beyond its hip-hop shake-up of the “Founding Father genre.”¹¹ A flurry of journal articles appeared over the late 2010’s and a dedicated edited collection, *Historians on Hamilton*, hit the academic shelves in 2018. This pace and focus is unusual for a single theatrical product. It reflects not only recent academic interest in popular culture and public history, but also the perceived exceptionalism with which *Hamilton* hit the streets even for those who had spent decades researching other manifestations of American historical, performative, and political cultures. Turning to *Hamilton*’s

⁷ Hillman-McCord, “Digital Fandom,” 123.

⁸ Andie Silva and Shereen Inayatulla, “Who tells *our* story: Intersectional Temporalities in *Hamilton: An American Musical*,” *Changing English* 24, no.2 (2017): 190-201.

⁹ Andres Kudaki, “Pence on Hamilton Boos: ‘What Freedom Sounds Like’”, *NBC*, November 20, 2016, accessed April 3, 2026, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/pence-hamilton-boos-what-freedom-sounds-n686501>.

¹⁰ Katherine S. Madison, ““Who lives, who dies, who tells your story”: The use and representation of records in *Hamilton: An American Musical*,” *The American Archivist* 80, no.1 (2017): 53-81.

¹¹ Joanne B. Freeman, “Will the Real Alexander Hamilton Please Stand Up?,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 37, no.2 (2017): 255-262; William Hogeland, “From Ron Chernow’s *Alexander Hamilton* to *Hamilton: An American Musical*,” in *Historians on Hamilton*, ed. Renee C. Romano and Claire Bond Potter, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 17.

historical intervention, academics were particularly taken by some of the ways in which audiences were probed by the show to “think like historians” and take “the room where it happens” to each site of everyday life.¹² This was partially attributed to how the show engaged existing understandings of American history: In *Hamilton*, Miranda took a White-dominated, elite discourse and re-embodied it within an energised, colour-conscious cultural melting pot of contemporary America. It was, in almost every sense, the musical for the moment.

A crucial omission from scholarship on *Hamilton*, though, is an attempt to understand the operation of this cultural phenomenon more holistically: how each seemingly disparate element came to bear upon another and connect in the minds of contemporary publics. The significance of this oversight can be seen in the early 2020’s, with it a new set of contexts which have come to re-frame the show’s earlier popularity and the scholarship that addressed it. Perhaps the most significant event was the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, as lockdown conditions pushed the release of the filmed version of *Hamilton* towards the Disney+ streaming platform. After years of sold-out, highly prized ticketing, this decision finally admitted fans into the auditorium space in the most democratic manner yet. It became a multimedia event which begged for fresh exploration of how the show ‘performs’ past and present both on-stage and on-screen. Experiencing *Hamilton* was no longer merely waiting in ticket lotteries, scrolling social media #Ham4Ham content, or singing along to the cast recording, but witnessing the ‘phenomenon’ itself unfold from home. It was an opportunity for a resurgence in *Hamilton*’s sense of active, historical work – if previous digital engagement had seemed to make any room “the room where it happens”, the Disney+ film took access and public participation to new levels, taking the site of revolution more experientially from the Theatre stage to the Home sphere. The release was an undeniable hit, resulting in what this thesis terms ‘Hamilmania 2.0’, with new rounds of social and news media virality. The show’s educational program, created with the Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History, also proved popular beyond the classroom, finding fresh online platforms as Covid-19 closures locked-down theatre buildings and schools alike. Yet, the show’s renewed “digital presence” – that which had previously been its “most revolutionary element” according to Jessica Hillman-McCord – also risked being just as much its downfall.¹³ As much as positive reception surged, dissenting voices emerged as #BlackLivesMatter gained renewed traction and previously limited criticism of the show’s “founding chic” found new voices. *Hamilton*’s mythos seemed to publicly crack as celebration of the show was tainted with calls to #CancelHamilton.

¹² Habert, “Hamilton and History Musicals,” 417.

¹³ Hillman-McCord, “Digital Fandom,” 120.

Miranda's work might have "bridge[d] communities" or asked audiences to reflect carefully on "who tells [their] story", but in its newfound Disneyfied image, was *Hamilton* revealed as the ultimate example of corporate-sponsored performance activism? By misappropriating the hip-hop culture of still-marginalised communities, did this colour-consciously casted "people's history" both bodily and culturally erase the very people it claimed to centre?¹⁴ The *Hamilton* team and their proud Disney partners seemed to view themselves on the back foot, defending their efforts across social media and in a new documentary on the Disney+ platform. In so doing, 2020 brought a sense of conscious self-criticism to the show's mythos, while at the same time claiming that there had always been 'more' to this "new American civic myth" than had been grasped by most consumers.¹⁵ If the post-pandemic period had not already been complicated enough for *Hamilton*, two years later Twitter (the social media giant that had staged much of *Hamilton*'s popular presence) fell to cancel culture for many aligned with the political left after its acquisition by Elon Musk, the tech magnate closely linked to the Trump administration.¹⁶ This fundamentally shifted the space in which the show could henceforth perform in digital discourse. The Hamilmania moments of 2015 and 2020 seemed long gone.

Yet as of 2025, by all accounts *Hamilton* seemed to have commercially and popularly 'recovered' from its potential crisis, with several simultaneous tours operating across the world at any one time and a transient peak in public attention amidst the show's ten-year anniversary. It's been back on TV screens, in comedy skits, featured in major U.S award events, gone viral on social media platforms, and is ostensibly still commercially successful. *Hamilton*'s mythos of beyond-Broadway relevance and exceptionalism has prevailed - but how, and why? Tracing *Hamilton*'s post-Covid journey from celebration, to crisis, to continuation, poses a challenge to better understand the ways in which cultural historical products such as *Hamilton* respond to changing circumstances. Looking across the *Hamil*-sphere of film, education, protest, and fan engagement both before and after 2020, this thesis asks what we might learn about not only the uses of history in contemporary formations of narrative and identity, but the roles of

¹⁴ See: Patricia Herera, "Reckoning with America's Racial Past, Present, and Future in *Hamilton*," in *Historians on Hamilton*, ed. Renee C. Romano and Claire Bond Potter (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 260-276; Joseph M. Adelman, "Who tells your story? *Hamilton* as a People's History" in *Historians on Hamilton*, ed. Renee C. Romano and Claire Bond Potter ((New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 277-296.

¹⁵ Renee C. Romano, "*Hamilton*: A New American Civic Myth," in *Historians on Hamilton* ed. Renee C. Romano and Claire Bond Potter, (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 297-323.

¹⁶ See Claire Bond Potter, "Safe in the Nation we've made: *Staging Hamilton on Social Media*," in *Historians on Hamilton*, ed. Renee C. Romano and Claire Bond Potter (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 324-350.

technological and theatrical contexts amidst ever-evolving cultural moments. How has *Hamilton* turned its world “upside-down”?

In summary, the study speaks to two overarching lines of enquiry.

- A) How is our understanding of *Hamilton*’s impact on public understandings of the past shaped by unfolding technological and cultural change?
- B) In exploring *Hamilton* and its diverse manifestations between 2008 and 2025, what do we learn about public understandings of the American past in the contemporary Anglophone world?

In doing so, the thesis offers a third question:

- C) How might interdisciplinary frameworks such as ‘performativity’ and ‘transmediality’ help to interrogate public understandings of the past?

Understanding *Hamilton: An American Musical* as a cultural product of the Obama era, this study argues that the show’s revolutionary reputation lies less upon its on-stage depiction of the Founding Fathers, and more in the continuation of its complex mythos. *Hamilton* is examined holistically, drawing across the *Hamil*-sphere and the show’s diverse manifestations that constitute it and largely as seen from the early 2020’s. Conceptually, the study understands ‘performance’ as both *embodied* – rooted within physical lived experience and performance practice - and *transmedial* – working simultaneously across different types of media. Considering each mode and medium in the *Hamil*-sphere as a stage-space, it posits performativity and transmediality as ways to explore the show’s mythos across different parts of its cultural work and credit these manifestations as part of wider cycles of public understandings of past, present, and future. This approach to *Hamilton* re-frames Hillman-McCord’s previous attribution of the digital to the show’s success, placing what came to be only *Hamilmania* 1.0 amidst wider contexts of technological, political, and cultural change. From the spotlight to the AMOLED screen, the performative emerges as uniquely placed to represent, explore, and challenge historical contentions across such a complex cultural product. Underpinning the utility of understanding our contemporary culture as both performative and transmedial, the work reinforces the value of interdisciplinary approaches to the contexts within which ‘history’ is now ‘played’ out. In so doing, it contributes to conversations about what it means to ‘co-produce’ ideas about history in today’s ever performing and rapidly evolving digitised world.

The show will often be referred to as a ‘cultural product’. In doing so, the thesis takes inspiration from Lyra D. Monteiro’s *National Council on Public History* blog about *Hamilton* from 2016,

where the term is used to emphasise *Hamilton* as an “artistic” output, as opposed to treating the show merely as an in/accurate “historical text.”¹⁷ However, this specific deployment offers greater consideration for the show’s wider contexts and circles of public reception. While ‘cultural’ includes reference to the assumed ‘historical’ and ‘political’ contexts inherent to a ‘culture,’ it can be considered its own distinct category as a manifestation of the collective we deem ‘society’. Likewise, a ‘product’ might be deemed to come from professional creatives, but as this thesis shows, what constitutes ‘*Hamilton*’ has been co-created by an indeterminably broad, international public beyond the original Broadway space.

This is reflected in the various terms used to describe the ‘public’ throughout the thesis: ‘Audience’, ‘stakeholder’, ‘fan’, or ‘witness’ each speak to range of agencies that have influenced what *Hamilton* has become.¹⁸ The study thus also engages expansively with ‘public history’ as a term, with particular appreciation for the systemic ‘tree of knowledge’ process proposed by Thomas Cauvin. ‘Public history’ typically describes work which centres and elevates non-academic perspectives on the production and distribution of historical ideas and narratives, but as recognised by Cauvin, the diversity of what this might constitute poses challenges for the creation and deployment of a singular definition. Cauvin’s model recognises the “many... interconnected stages” and “collaboration between [] different actors.” In using performativity and transmediality to explore *Hamilton*’s multifaceted nature, recognise the complex historical work that can be articulated through performance and digital technologies, and elevate the roles of diverse non-academic actors, the thesis responds to the call for the “future of international public history” to “balance[] practice-based approaches with more theoretical discussions.”¹⁹

The rest of the introductory chapter lays out the thesis’ methodology, surveying the source materials, key terms, relevant background literatures, and the thesis’ conceptual framework. After surveying the broad array of *Hamil*-sphere materials to be qualitatively analysed, ‘HamilTweet’ closes the main methodology section. Pulling on a bank of almost one million tweets about the show, this is the term given to the quantitative strand of the thesis which further reinforces the show’s transmedial operation. The chapter then offers brief analysis of ‘Non-Stop’ to demonstrate the study’s approach to *Hamilton* as source material and the methods that will

¹⁷ See Lyra D. Monteiro, “It’s not “just a musical”,” *NCPH: History @ Work*, June 10, 2016, accessed August 13, 2026, <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/its-not-just-a-musical/>.

¹⁸ See ‘A Diverse Sample’ on page 11.

¹⁹ Thomas Cauvin, “New Field, Old Practices: Promises and Challenges of Public History,” *magazén* 2, no.1 (2021): 13-44.

be applied to interrogating it. This is the 6:25 minute close to *Hamilton*'s first act which sets out Alexander Hamilton's political ascent after the world was "turned upside-down" in 1781. Before delving into the *Hamil*-sphere beyond the libretto in upcoming chapters, this textual source analysis of musical theatre highlights the types of temporal and historical entanglements that will prove central to understanding the show's mythos and wider work. In preparation, the reader is introduced to the Broadway industry and the digital public sphere from the perspective of academic literature. Surveys of each site point not only to the ubiquity of the performative and the digital, but towards the need for more sophisticated and interdisciplinary approaches to better highlight and understand how contemporary cultural products function across different texts and contexts. To this end, the chapter will provide some introduction to the two lenses that constitute the study's core conceptual framework – performativity and transmediality – and through which the study will interrogate *Hamilton*'s mythos. A chapter-by-chapter outline closes the introduction, signposting the study's overall argumentative structure before journeying into *Hamilton*'s – and America's – unfolding past, present, and future.

A Diverse Sample

In demonstrating the transmediality of *Hamilton*'s cultural presence, the study draws across a wide range of primary source materials in a mixed-methods approach which combines both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

The show itself is analysed largely as it was performed in 2016 via the Disney+ platform and from watching the London company live in 2022. *Hamilton* documentaries on the Disney+ platform are seen as providing key insights to the show's wider work and ambition (see, in particular, Chapter Four). The show's audio-only work, such as the official cast recording, receives some limited attention from a largely performative perspective, though consideration of the show's libretto – sung text – alone provides an analytical anchor later in this chapter and is often cited throughout the thesis' discussion. 'Official' web pages and websites belonging to the *Hamilton* enterprise – such as EduHam, and Ham4Progress – are assessed, with generally textual and visual emphases. The HamApp – the show's specific mobile application – was deemed beyond the practical scope of the thesis but could prove a good opportunity for future research. 'Enterprise' will be used throughout the thesis to refer to the varied materials 'belonging' to *Hamilton*. In part, the term recognises also that *Hamilton* functions as a multi-faceted commercial product, a facet made all the more evident by Disney's involvement in the 2020 film.

Social media platforms such as Twitter/X and Instagram are viewed as being as central to mapping *Hamilton*'s broader existence as analysis of the show itself. Sources here have taken a variety of forms appropriate to the platform, largely in the form of Tweets, Reels, and Posts, as well as GIFs which are integrable across different digital platforms. These platforms will receive their own, more detailed, introductions elsewhere in the thesis, as will the ways in which they are approached and analysed. Closely interrelated are the wider channels of digital discourse about *Hamilton*, largely drawn upon in the form of news and critical websites. *Hamilton*'s educational program receives dedicated attention in Chapter Three, and its written curriculum is subject to textual analysis which leaves space for the theatrical pedagogy underpinning it. Though the latter two source bases might in themselves be subject to largely textual analysis, they must be seen as inseparable from their alternative manifestations in the digital sphere. As well as a written curriculum, EduHam material also takes the forms of web pages and Twitter-distributed performance videos. Elsewhere, news and critical websites are often integrated within one another and are (as effectively explored by Chapter Four) increasingly seen as overlapping in terms of public function and engagement. Such conversation between different types of sources will reinforce *Hamilton* as operating transmedially.

HamilTweet

Also crucial to this transmedial emphasis is HamilTweet. Making an appearance in each chapter of the dissertation, HamilTweet is a re-working of the thesis' original computational approach to understanding how *Hamilton* gave history stage-presence across the digital sphere using the Twitter platform. It was envisaged as the main focus of a thesis based heavily in data-driven discourse and network analysis. As a microblogging site, Twitter provided snapshots of the broader digital conversations and trends of which the snapshots themselves are constituents. As well as hosting *Hamilton*'s 'trending' virality on several occasions, the Twitter platform provided a consistent site of both 'official' and 'fan' engagement with the show. This popularity made Twitter a strong contender for evaluating changes in *Hamilton*'s public performance over time, even when this became more of a thread in a qualitative exploration.

Twitter's first form in 2000 – "Stat.us" – had been seen as an approximate equivalent to text messaging, a legacy which lived on in the 140-character Tweet length. In 2006, the platform was renamed "Twitter," meaning "a short burst of inconsequential information." This was "exactly what the product was" – a space to share nonchalantly in the digital void. By 2009, the connective capacity of the public platform brought it to more closely resemble an "information network." Co-founder Jack Demsey claimed that the "web provide[d] a very easy way to immediately grasp

what's going on," arguing that "it really offer[ed] the transparency."²⁰ In the spirit of the millennial age, Twitter was supposedly "something new" which "[did] a very good job of exposing what [was] happening in the world."²¹ By the time Miranda was working on *Hamilton* in 2010, the platform was hosting 50 million tweets per day, reaching over half a billion tweets per day from a supposed 218 million users by 2013.²²

Twitter's architecture recognised the platform's role in public discourse. Those conducting academic research were granted free, unlimited access to the Twitter archive via the Twitter API through approved use of a developer account and the submission of research project details. This free access made one of the world's biggest social media platforms a highly useful tool for researchers looking to explore the role of digital media in daily life. When new bands of costly Twitter access were brought into place following Musk's 2022 acquisition of the platform, academic projects within approved developer accounts were placed within only the 'free' basic band. This did not grant the required amount of Twitter data access required for higher education research, and the fuller access fee was beyond the budget of this doctoral thesis. Some data could still be scoped as the changes were gradual, but the original ambitions of the project could no longer be met. HamilTweet therefore represents a distinctive window into the digital sphere until 2023, enabling the historicization of Twitter as a platform through a globally unique dataset. With 2020 identified as a turning point for *Hamilton*, the timing of Musk's acquisition and the resultant impact upon both researcher access and public perception of the platform (see Chapter Five) reinforce the position of the research amidst turbulent political, social, and economic contexts. This is relatively unique for a study of such contemporary history practice and should encourage conversations about how we prepare ourselves and our field for potentially rapid techno-social shifts.

²⁰ David Sarno, "Twitter creator Jack Dorsey illuminates the site's founding document. Part I," *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 2009, accessed March 2025, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/blogs/technology-blog/story/2009-02-18/twitter-creator-jack-dorsey-illuminates-the-sites-founding-document-part-i>.

²¹ Issue Lapowsky, Ev Williams on Twitter's Early Years, *INC.com*, October 4, 2013, accessed March 15, 2025, <https://www.inc.com/issie-lapowsky/ev-williams-twitter-early-years.html?cid=em01011week40day04b>; David Sarno, "Twitter creator Jack Dorsey illuminates the site's founding document. Part II" *Los Angeles Times*, February 19, 2009, accessed March 2025, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/blogs/technology-blog/story/2009-02-19/jack-dorsey-on-the-twitter-ecosystem-journalism-and-how-to-reduce-reply-spam-part-ii>.

²² Claudine Beaumont, "Twitter users send 50 million tweets per day," *The Telegraph*, February 23, 2010, accessed March 15, 2025, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/twitter/7297541/Twitter-users-send-50-million-tweets-per-day.html>.

What remains are the datasets of ten *Hamilton*-related hashtags and how they were used on Twitter between 2015 and 2023. This data been re-deployed as a thread running throughout the thesis chapters to quantitatively ground the conceptual tools of performativity and transmediality. By analysing and charting the data of almost 1 million Tweets through sentiment analysis, HamilTweet visualises some of the ways in which *Hamilton* as a cultural product rode the waves of the public sphere, quantifying the relationship between *Hamilton*'s performance and its audience across type, site, and context. This allows the study to make some useful, quantitative sense of the show's wider transmedial presence. Fuller details of the HamilTweet method can be found in Appendix One, though given the hashtag's potential discursive significance, brief reflections upon their utility and deployment are provided below.

Hashtags are a tool used by social media users to connect their content to broader trends or themes and thereby associate with others interested in similar ideas. Originating on Twitter in 2007 before eventually being adopted by other digital platforms (see Chapter Five on Instagram), hashtags have been highly influential channels for connecting to globally-trending ideas and themes in public discourse. On Twitter, hashtags algorithmically deemed as prominent were labelled as 'trending' and pushed by the platform team to promote further public engagement. Though trending hashtags could be very short-lived, the heavy public adoption of Twitter could imbue these 'trends' with significance both within and beyond the platform itself, as will later be seen (see, in particular, Chapter Four). Each of the hashtags within 'HamilTweet' represent different parts of *Hamilton*'s story and thus often relate to different chapters of the thesis. Details of the chosen hashtags, and the scoping underpinning their selection, can be found throughout the thesis and in Appendix One.

Analytical methods such as word frequency and sentiment analysis (see Appendix One) enable the identification of trends from what could otherwise seem to be digital ephemera. This helps to put the data (and therefore *Hamilton* and its history) more meaningfully within its wider contexts and, seen in tandem with qualitative source analysis, reinforces the transmediality of *Hamilton*'s cultural presence.

Hamilton: Beyond 'Non-Stop'²³

²³ All libretto references throughout the thesis can be found in Jeremy McCarter and Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton: The Revolution* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2016).

Before moving into the chapters there is an opportune moment to use traditional, textual analysis to reinforce *Hamilton*'s potential as a case study for public history enquiry. Having followed the "bastard, orphan, son of a whore"'s journey through the American Revolutionary War to fatherhood and the trusted side of George Washington himself throughout Act 1, 'Non-Stop' is narrated largely by antagonist Aaron Burr. Before the curtain comes down, the song sets out what 'comes next' for Alexander Hamilton and key characters surrounding him during the early years of the new nation.

Analysis of 'Non-Stop' as libretto provides two key facets in setting up exploration of *Hamilton*'s mythos. Firstly, by moving from the eighteenth-century domestic sphere, to the newly-appointed New York law courts, to the ocean towards English soil, the blending of perspectives within the single song evokes an array of imagined 'stage spaces' across the temporalities and geographies of the 'play-world' and the 'real-world'. These foreshadow the 'stage-spaces' as utilised elsewhere by the thesis. The term speaks towards the different ways within which *Hamilton* and its historical work are re-articulated across different types of media across the *Hamil*-sphere, reinforcing theatrical conceptions of the 'stage' as superseding the physical performance 'space' behind the curtains.²⁴ In so doing, analysis of the song secondly demonstrates how *Hamilton* forces audience engagement with past and present, demonstrating the interplay between the 'true' historical timeline of the 'real' world, and that which is presented by the 'play world' of the *Hamilton* narrative. Historical process emerges as compressed: while occurrences and intersections ostensibly happen in close succession and almost 'at once' to the audience in an almost live-unfolding, this comes at the expense of collapsing the complexities experienced by both real historical actants and their representational characters within the play-world. This engagement of previous public understandings of the past with their on-stage retelling begins to challenge individual understandings of the collective history so foundational to contemporary American identity. Finally, in 'Non-Stop' we glimpse *Hamilton*'s larger perspectives on historical

²⁴ My use of the term 'stage space' pulls on Pearson & Shanks' conception of "found spaces" for site specific theatre. This speaks to the ways in which theatrical performance is "conceived for, mounted within and conditioned by the particulars of found spaces". This thesis will not go into the particulars of the space/site/place debate specific to theatre studies. However, I would argue that although the Richard Rodgers is a traditional, physical stage-space, *Hamilton* has come to find itself performed across a range of "found spaces" beyond this – whether the streets of New York, or the screens of Instagram. Acknowledging Smith's acknowledgement of 'space' – whether digital or physical – as being "never empty" and "always" having a "history," Kaye's idea of "slippage" "over the borders and limits of [theatrical] work and site [of performance]" would be a useful extension of the concept beyond this remit of this thesis for considering the different agents at work in *Hamilton*'s transmedial performances and re-performances of history. See: Pearson and Shanks, *Theatre/Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 2001); Phil Smith, *Making Site-Specific Theatre and Performance: A Handbook* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018); Nick Kaye, *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (London: Routledge, 2000).

determinism, a central tension of the play which the rest of the thesis will draw out through consideration of its wider work and mythos: On the one hand, we can all be empowered to make our own stories by a play which, at times, borders on hagiography; on the other, such agency is beyond us, and our legacies must be seen as part of a wider collective both within and without our own lifetimes. Yet, the thesis will reveal that *Hamilton* manages to speak towards both – seemingly ever-relevant despite its partisan values and potential crisis post-2020. *Hamilton*’s ability achieve this – to assume a sense of agency of its own as part of wider cultural operations – began with its very first form: the libretto.

The number opens with a perspective of hindsight. “I finished up my studies and I practiced law” is a line sung by both Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr. This, it seems, is short-term within the play-world, as each character begins their professional careers in the aftermath of the revolutionary war. Nonetheless, this intersects with the long-term temporal realm of the real-world from which the consumer is experiencing the show. Not only are two known rivals seemingly in conversation with one another, but it is as if Alexander himself is speaking from the grave in a verbal re-animation of his actual political career.

Most of *Hamilton* may be recounted according to the live time of the play-world, but because of Burr’s narrator role at the very top of the show, it’s not initially clear quite with what sort of hindsight *Non-Stop* begins. We soon have confirmation that it is very short-term, as Burr’s “even though we started at the very same time” is overtaken by an unfolding courtroom scene that begins to answer “How to account for his rise to the top? Man, the man is non-stop.”

Playing with perspective and clarity of communication, it is initially unclear whether the question of ‘how to account’ is either to the play-world public or the real-world consumer. The line blurs the lines of distinction and complicates the play as a learning experience. Blurring the play-world and real-world publics, the line gives the listener just enough time to begin to activate their historical understanding of the Founding era before showing it to be only rhetorical. This is not necessarily about what was learned at school, but the [hi]story unfolding in real-time in the performance space and how it builds upon previous understandings.

Just as Alexander seems to be on his journey to greatness, he is also shown to be neither a stranger to making mistakes nor free of criticism – Burr corrects his legal work (“that’s all you had to say”) and the play-world public join the critique with “why do you assume...?” This is a present, unfolding site which situates lyrics such as “soon that attitude may be your doom” or “like you’re running out of time” not within the wider historical timeline known to the real-world, but within the professional career of Alexander Hamilton within the play-world. Almost reflexively,

consumers are made to engage their own understanding and question their idea of foreknowledge. The way in which the characters ‘pop out’ of the unfolding play-world journey by breaking the fourth wall (“I was chosen for the constitutional convention!”) give the number an additional flavour of imagined re-enactment even within the play-world, as well as to the ears of listeners: on how many levels is this apparent ‘experience’ ‘live’?

The sense of ‘liveness’ continues to be complicated as the song continues. Situating the audience as a fly on Burr’s doorstep as Hamilton asks for his assistance on the constitution forces the “middle of the night” domestic space to be inseparable from the “constitution[al]” public one. As the conversation gets more heated and we finally hear Alexander stand up to Burr’s criticism (“then defend it! We fought and we killed, for once in your life...”), the listener is subconsciously made to reflect: are we listening to the play-worlds live unfolding, or is this a re-enactment from the perspective of hindsight – and if so, from whose? As we hear Burr “taking [his] time, watching the afterbirth of a nation, watching the tension grow,” the listener is not only forced to engage with their awareness of the historical record, but actively challenged in their real-world lives against compartmentalising values and actions across expected times and spaces.

We’re also asked to reckon with the realm of historical possibility – not only within what we know happened, but with what we do *not* know. For example, we do not have evidence for the sort of love triangle that *Hamilton* depicts between Alexander, Eliza, and Angelica, as referenced in ‘Non-stop’. Nonetheless, with Angelica’s ‘live’ “I’m sailing off to London,” the characters’ relationship (or, rather, the lack thereof) unfolds before the consumer. This happens within the libretto as a fixed and central element to the *Hamilton* show, regardless of how it intersects with the historical record or the nuances of embodied theatrical performance. Whether this specific element amounts to Saidiya Hartman’s ‘critical fabulation’ or merely commercial sensationalism, the audience is once again made to do something new: reckon with this extra-historical component and decide what to ‘do’ with the gaps in the record of what we ‘know’ happened.²⁵

Burr’s first words in *Non-Stop* may come to be part of only short-term hindsight within the play-world, but his role as the show’s *apparent* main narrator from an extra-temporal perspective continues to plague the track as it continues. Three-quarters of the way through the number, he gives a speech about Alexander’s work on the Federalist papers, a seminal work in the founding of the United States. It comes as if from the history books – “the plan was to write a total of 25

²⁵ See Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts,” *Small Axe* 26 no.12 (2008): 1-14.

essays...John J got sick after writing 5, James Madison wrote 29, Hamilton wrote the other 51” - all aside from the use of “joins” in the first line. The consumer might be situated within the timeline and fictional past-space of the play-world and might hear facts being given as if from a school classroom, but this is in the present tense. Before jumping back into the play-world to address Alexander directly (“how do you write...?”), the line truly blurs time and perspective: is Burr in the time of the play-world or the real-world? Which site is he part of – is he one of ‘us’ down the headphone wire or reading the libretto, is he speaking from our past through the dimension of time, or is he part of the play being consumed? Burr seems to be both inside and outside of each temporal situation: if it wasn’t already clear, *Hamilton* seems to be ‘happening’ across different spaces “at the very same time.”

The listener might hear Alexander being offered his role in the treasury by George Washington, but they know that he will – or, would – go against his seeming determination and “throw away [his] shot.” Engaging with *Non-Stop* with no staging, costumes or choreography, we still begin to palpably ‘see’ the way in which the play as a whole mobilises audience perspective and their experience of the theatrical and historical narrative. As the words pull between different time-spaces, the consumer is made to play each of the parts: as much as we are consumers of entertainment and potential Brechtian students of *Hamilton*’s value-loaded work (see later chapters), we are confidantes, flies on the wall, and all-knowing representatives of the historical record. The show’s performative power is not just in the way that each part comes together on a stage, but how it does so across times and spaces, and almost all at once. *Hamilton* has a performative potential worth the public historian’s attention which is only reinforced by its broader cultural presence beyond the music.

Welcome to Broadway

Theatre as a whole has been described as “a neglected site of public history.”²⁶ David Dean, who made the claim, remains one of the only self-proclaimed Public Historians producing work in the area, having edited the interdisciplinary *History, Memory, Performance* in 2015 and more recently published *Performing Public History* over the course of this research.²⁷ If theatre as a whole has

²⁶ David Dean, “Theatre: A Neglected Site of Public History,” *The Public Historian* 34, no.3 (2012): 21-39.

²⁷ See David Dean, Yana Meerzon and Kathryn Prince ed., *History, Memory, Performance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); David Dean, *Performing Public History: Case Studies in Historical Storytelling* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2025).

been largely overlooked, the musical genre to which *Hamilton* belongs has been similarly missed by those writing explicitly from a public history perspective, aside from where pertinent to a particular product such as *Hamilton*. Two blog posts by Adina Langer for the *National Council on Public History* in 2016 explored the role of emotion in public history on Broadway and brought it usefully in conversation with approaches elsewhere in the field, but few major publications have come to populate the shelves.²⁸ The relationship between musical theatre and the histories it so often draws upon have instead largely been documented by scholars of theatre, performance, or music. This is in spite of both theatre and history, as contended by performance scholar Rebecca Schneider in *Theatre & History*, being “art[s] of time.”²⁹ While this perhaps demonstrates the interdisciplinary potential of the cultural form, it also reinforces both the potential of this study to contribute to a bigger area of literature, underpins the value of its own interdisciplinarity, and poses a challenge to the way in which the field is defined.

Back in the 1980’s, Raphael Samuel himself made the case for appreciating the performative when he contended that “Theatre” is “second cousin to politics.”³⁰ From Ancient Greece to Broadway, Shakespeare to Sondheim, the theatre is a space which has been understood as a site of potential affect - whether in support of the status quo or in seeking to undermine the norm. Theatre is liminal – a site ‘between’ the spaces, the real and the not – and this imbues it with vast potential for meaning-making.³¹ On the one hand, everyone involved in either creating or witnessing a piece of theatre agrees that it is in some senses a form of ‘fiction’, divorced from the realities around it. It is this quality which has, over millennia, allowed artists to push norms and question orthodoxies: the drag pantomime dame in a gender normative society, or the jester’s daring scald to the reigning monarch. On the other hand, the enacted setting of the on-stage action produces genuine affect in those consuming the product: the spectator recognises the apparent emotions of those on-stage, connects with them, reflects upon them. These emotions are themselves rooted in the ‘real’, as dramaturgical techniques like Meisner make use of the off-

²⁸ Adina Langer, “Public history on Broadway (Part 1), *National Council for Public History: History @ Work*, February 22, 2016, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/public-history-on-broadway-part-1/>; Adina Langer, “Public history on Broadway (Part 2), *National Council for Public History: History @ Work*, February 29, 2021, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://ncph.org/history-at-work/public-history-on-broadway-part-2/>.

²⁹ Rebecca Schneider, *Theatre & History* (London: Red Globe Press, 2014), 7.

³⁰ Raphael Samuel, Ewan MacColl and Stuart Cosgrove, *Theatres of the Left 1880-1935: Workers’ Theatre Movements in Britain and America* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985), xiii.

³¹ See Sue-Ellen Case and Janelle Reinelt ed., *The Performance of Power: Theatrical Discourse and Politics* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1991).

stage authentic (the actor's own personal experiences) to legitimise the on-stage fictive (those of the character being portrayed). Play texts (scripts) are also malleable subject to context and dramaturgical decisions: *Macbeth's* glorification of James I was as clear to Stuart England as much as The Public Theatre's 2017 production of *Julius Caesar* was interpreted as a criticism of the Trump administration.³² Building upon the analysis of 'Non-Stop' and embracing the dialogue between play text, performance, and spectator, the theatre's potential for affect makes it a powerful site for ideas about history.

Musical theatre is typically understood as a uniquely American invention, as inextricable from the 'Broadway' area of New York City as the genre is from American identity itself.³³ So called for its unusual width, what became 'Broadway Street' under British Rule in the eighteenth century had once been a trail for the Mannahatta-based Wickquasgeck tribe and then a 'Gentleman's Way' for Dutch settlers. By the late nineteenth century, the entertainment-oriented blocks between 42nd and 53rd Street were among the first to receive electric lighting, earning it the nickname the 'Great White Way' - aptly illuminating not only America's technological advancements but the still-pertinent racial politics of popular culture.³⁴ Though the Great Depression brought considerable hardship for New York's actors, producers, and investors, the era also saw the rise of some of the most successful, old-time Broadway shows: *Show Boat* (1927), *Oklahoma* (1931), and *Anything Goes* (1934). Such shows continued Broadway's already emerging reputation for disrupting cultural norms. *Show Boat*, for example, was not the first Broadway production with a multi-racial cast and, though its representations of race remain deeply problematic to the twenty-first century mind, the show's popularity "brought these sensitive issues to the forefront of public attention" in a new way for early twentieth-century audiences.³⁵ Rodgers and Hammerstein's creative reign over Broadway during the 1940s and 1950s saw a new era of musical theatre: all narrative components (i.e. play, drama, song, dance) were 'fully integrated' as part of the story and a 'formula' came to predicate casting and narrative choices. Moving away from their earlier escapist work such as *Oklahoma* amidst the halcyon era

³² See James Shapiro, *Shakespeare in a Divided America* (London: Faber and Faber, 2020).

³³ See Raymond Knapp, *The American Musical and the Performance of Personal Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

³⁴ See Steven Adler, *On Broadway: Art and Commerce on the Great White Way* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 2004).

³⁵ John Graziano, "Images of African Americans: African American Musical Theatre, *Show Boat* and *Porgy and Bess*," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical* ed. William A. Everett and Paul R. Laird (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 128.

of post-Second World War, U.S. political dominance, Tony-winning shows such as *South Pacific* (1949) and *The King and I* (1951) candidly explored contemporary social issues. Promoting interracial relationships and interrogating America's institutional racism, *South Pacific* was seen as highly controversial upon its debut and became a cultural icon for the 1960's Civil Rights movement. Though *The King and I*'s stereotypical depiction of Thai culture and use of yellowface may no longer stand up to scrutiny, it originally sought to comment on colonialism.³⁶ In spite of historic or contemporary criticism, both examples remain highly successful productions worldwide as popular cornerstones of the genre – across the pond in the UK, *The King and I* was recently revived on the West End (2024) and *South Pacific* toured nationally in 2022.

Rodgers and Hammerstein also heavily influenced Stephen Sondheim, the next 'big name on Broadway' whose works spanned *West Side Story* (1957) to *Road Show* (2008). Famously proclaiming to never "do anything twice," Sondheim's work broke the rules of his forebears. His works were typified by nuanced character-driven narratives, musical complexity and intellectual demands upon the audience, but still ever in-keeping with the evolving liberal cultural politics of the day. Sondheim's half-century career on Broadway reflected the changing American landscape, dealing with newly-trending questions such as immigration (*West Side Story*, 1957), marriage (*Company*, 1970), and the American dream (*Assassins*, 1990). As a "critical darling" with a "finite fandom," Sondheim became an opposite to newcomer Andrew Lloyd Webber, creator of shows such as *Cats* (1982) and *Phantom of the Opera* (1986).³⁷ Webber's imported 'mega-musicals' from the UK (characterized by spectacle, drama, and accessibility, to the critics typical disdain but popular acclaim) can be seen as part of the 'commercialisation' of Broadway that began in the 1970s and 1980s and came to full fruition amidst the "culture wars" of the 1990s.³⁸

Musical theatre may have always "acted as a mirror to society," but financial incentives are an equally important part of their cultural status.³⁹ Broadway's agenda has always been a

³⁶ Neil Smith, "The King and I: timeless classic or dated relic?," *BBC*, July 4, 2018, accessed March 16, 2026, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts44709484#:~:text=For%20many%2C%20The%20King%20and,musical%20felt%20%22very%20contemporary%22>.

³⁷ Michael Paulson "Sondheim was a Critical Darling, Since His Death He's a Hit-maker, Too," *New York Times* December 26, 2023, accessed March 16, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/26/theater/stephen-sondheim-broadway-box-office.html>.

³⁸ See Andrew Hartman, *A War For the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2017); James Shapiro, *The Playbook* (Faber and Faber, London, 2024): xix.

³⁹ Jessica Hillman-McCord, "Musical Theatre in the Digital Age," in *iBroadway: Musical Theatre in the Digital Age* ed. Jessica Hillman-McCord (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 2.

commercial one: a fact which only serves to highlight the necessity of examining the site and its productions from a holistic perspective.⁴⁰ One of the first on-Broadway shows to successfully combine song and dance within a unified narrative, *The Black Crook* (named after a character, and not as a racial stereotype) was greatly “condemned” by the *New York Herald* for its ‘indecent’ costuming and dancing, but this only came to provide effective promotion and reinforced an industry precedent for ‘no marketing is bad marketing’.⁴¹ As the ‘Golden Age’ of Rodgers and Hammerstein’s musical-making partnership got underway, the biggest hits were also taken into that other stereotypically American entertainment style – Hollywood. *Show Boat*, *Oklahoma*, and *Anything Goes* each hit the silver screen in 1951, 1955, and 1956 respectively. After Broadway began to lose mainstream momentum in the 1970s and 1980s, the “most disreputable street in New York City” underwent “radical renovation” as the Webber megamusical, and then Disney, moved in.⁴² With hits such as *Beauty and the Beast* (1994) and *Lion King* (1997), the “Disneyfication” of the Broadway musical cemented it as the perfect commercial venture, with sky-high ticket prices, audience familiarity, and a boom in U.S. tourism. Broadway had a long history of engaging with ‘current’ societal issues with great financial success, yet Sondheim’s shows commercially paled by comparison to these corporate newcomers. By the 1990s and 2000s, Broadway was theatre for the entertainment-eager tourist, not the average American citizen. Disney’s role in transforming musical theatre, usually under the capacity of the Disney Studios division, has been acknowledged in a range of recent literature.⁴³ Disney’s nebulous presence as a cultural force will frequently be brought into this thesis’ conversation of *Hamilton*.

In Broadway’s defence, the period had not only been one of economic and artistic challenge, but spiritual and political: not just a capitalist takeover of the critical arts, but, as phrased by Patrich Buchanan in campaigning against Bill Clinton, a “war for the soul of America.” Played out in the public sphere, the “culture wars” divided the nation politically, morally, and socially for over a

⁴⁰ An attitude which, according to Geoffrey Block and Steve Adler, had rarely been acknowledged in scholarship until relatively recently. See: Geoffrey Block, *Enchanted Evenings: The Broadway Musical from Show Boat to Sondheim and Lloyd Webber* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Steven Adler, *On Broadway*.

⁴¹ Douglas Reside, “Musical of the Month: The Black Crook,” *New York Public Library: Blog*, June 2, 2011, accessed April 3, 2026, <https://www.nypl.org/blog/2011/06/02/musical-month-black-crook>.

⁴² Steven Adler, *On Broadway*, 200-5.

⁴³ See Dominic Broomfield-McHugh and Colleen Montgomery ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Disney Musical* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2025); Amy Osatinski, *Disney Theatrical Productions: Producing Broadway Musicals the Disney Way* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2019); George Rodosthenous, *The Disney Musical on Stage and Screen* (London: Bloomsbury/Methuen Drama, 2017).

decade.⁴⁴ As much as Broadway had also come to be an essential part of the national cultural scene, pulling on a great affective power to challenge norms in an art form that thrives on controversy, it arguably wasn't in a position to be able to answer the deep questions that were being posed about identity, belonging, and morality. Mainstream, family-friendly shows like Disney were a surer investment decision.

By the time Miranda began work on *In The Heights* in the early noughties, such debates were still underway, with an emerging emphasis upon identity politics making fitting context for this second-generation immigrant's new work on immigrant identity. This context would prove crucial to *Hamilton*'s own production (see Chapter One). As the twenty-first century got underway, Broadway had to contend with another ever-changing factor: the technological. The industry may have a long history of film adaptations, cast recordings, and press reviews, but this 'new' digital revolution "fundamentally altered" how theatre happens. In a highly commercialised space, popular access to social media platforms began to radically impact how shows were "marketed...researched... taught...cast," "admired, reviewed."⁴⁵ To 'perform' on Broadway means not only to engage audiences within the current moment, nor to 'perform' at the box office: they must 'perform' online. And in a variety of ways, *Hamilton* would come to do so.

Performing Online: The Digital Sphere

As Chapters One and Two will acknowledge, few fans have been able to consume the show as expected of the original format. And yet, *Hamilton*'s reach beyond the stage has been arguably one of the most extensive in Broadway history, whether in partial representations of the onstage action such as the soundtrack or Disney+ film, or in terms of associated educational materials or social media-powered protest.

The 'public sphere' (to utilise Habermas) in which *Hamilton* exists is digital.⁴⁶ Hillman-McCord's list at the end of the previous section highlights the way in which Broadway shows are currently co-created by the audience: what a show holistically is, does, and how it fits within the cultural moment lies not solely in the on-stage action, but in its broader performance through those who consume, distribute, and discuss it presence more widely. Statistically, approximately 94.2% of

⁴⁴ See Hartman, *A War For the Soul of America*; Shapiro, *The Playbook*.

⁴⁵ Hillman-McCord, *iBroadway*, 2.

⁴⁶ See Jürgen Habermas, Sara Lennox and Frank Lennox, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964), *New German Critique* no.3 (Autumn 1974): 49-55.

all internet users today have a social media account – almost 65% of the global population. This is growing by 7.6 users per second.⁴⁷ Though I would challenge the ‘passive’ nature of anything that elicits a response from its audience as they help to form the meaning and significance of that being consumed, these platforms are not of the kind of ‘passive’ engagement attributed to twentieth-century television, nor early forms of Web 1.0 technologies in the 1990s or 2000s.⁴⁸ Social media spaces are intertwined with the day-to-day experience: the newspaper headlines produced by the printing press have been replaced by the pixelated posts of TikTok; the television schedule has become an almost endless repertoire of on-demand entertainment; electrical black-outs have become weapons of war. The idea of ‘digital stage(s)’ – part of the subtitle for this section - points not only to the theatrical stage as being ‘digitised’ through wider technological developments towards a ‘digital sphere.’ Rather, it speaks also to the way in which the fragmented manifestations of digital technologies themselves become the sorts of ‘stage-spaces’ alluded to in ‘Non-Stop’ in which ideas of the past are presented and played out. These could be anything from a Tweet or Instagram comment section to a news story or press review – seemingly disparate yet connected as part of what *Hamilton* has come to constitute. Each of these digital spaces comes with its own ever-changing terms, conditions, and politics which might abstract or complicate wider ideas of theatrical performance or historical presence.

It’s not only the average user or *Hamil*-fan with whom these *Hamilton* apparitions interact. As coined by Jenna Burrell and Marion Fourcade, our current moment is one of a “ubiquitous” “society of algorithms,” where digital processes and datasets are infused into every major social institution even where the implications of doing so are at odds with other societal values.⁴⁹ The “coding elite” who rule the digital domain trace their lineage to the heart of post-Cold War capitalism, where the “concepts of performance and cybernetic feedback” were “patch[ed] together” for the first time.⁵⁰ Those whose algorithms came to underpin Wall Street in 1970s and

⁴⁷ Datareportal, “Global Social Media Statistics,” October 2025, accessed March 16, 2026, <https://datareportal.com/social-media-users#:~:text=Detailed%20analysis%20by%20the%20team,our%20Global%20Digital%20Overview%20page>.

⁴⁸ Note: I would contest that these forms did have unique performative qualities of their own which shouldn’t be dismissed merely because they are understood to have been ‘succeeded’. This is a potential future avenue for media archaeologists.

⁴⁹ Jenna Burrell and Marion Fourcade, “The Society of Algorithms,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 47, no.1 (2021): 213-237; See also Martina Leeker, Imanuel Schipper and Timon Beyes, “Performativity, performance studies and digital cultures” in *Performing the Digital*, eds. Martina Leeker, Imanuel Schipper and Timon Beyes, 9-20 (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2016); Wendy Chun, *Updating to Remain the Same: Habitual New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016).

⁵⁰ Jon McKenzie, “Performance and Democratizing digitality: StudioLab as critical design pedagogy,” in *Performing the Digital* ed. Leeker et al (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2016), 280.

all of its associated international scandals now have digital technologies and platforms integrated more deeply within human communication than ever before: we have become daily dependent upon them.⁵¹ Alice Marwick’s effective unmasking of the myths of meritocracy, openness, and entrepreneurialism are “crucial to understanding the discursive underpinnings of [these] social media technologies” as we now utilise and understand them.⁵² Ian Bogost’s categorisation of the pixelated vision as theocratical may feel overstated, but the pervasiveness of algorithmic utility, social media technologies, and their transformational impact upon human society does give the claim some credence.⁵³

Scholars across the spectrum have explored frameworks to understand the new types of ‘presence’ brought by intersections with such digital technology - what the pixellated glow might light up in the analogue spaces through which it runs. Adam Crymble and Jason Steinhauer have (amongst others) provided effective volumes on the utility of technology for historians. However, in so doing, their endeavours almost take on a translatory or diplomatic role towards an imagined audience of the unconverted, rather than providing frameworks which can be directly applied to public history practice.⁵⁴

Perhaps the closest theoretical alignment between history and emerging digital media is to be found in Media Archaeology. This area provides a helpful first step towards identifying this thesis’ twin lenses of performativity and transmediality. Emerging in response to the dizzying rate of digital innovation in the 2010’s, this “diverse range of critical, iconoclastic, and non-linear approaches to researching the historical development of media technologies and the history of ideas about them,” sought not to constitute a field in itself but interrogate the significance of ‘new media’ through examination of technological history across scholarly genres.⁵⁵ As Erkki Huhtamo

⁵¹ For a concise explanation, see landmark series *All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace*, aired 2011, on BBC.

⁵² Marwick, A, “Silicon Valley and the Social Media Industry,” in *The Sage Handbook of Social Media*, ed. Burgess, J., Marwick, A. and Poell, T, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2018), 315.

⁵³ Ian Bogost, “The Cathedral of Computation,” *The Atlantic*, January 15, 2015, accessed August 13, 2026, <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/01/the-cathedral-of-computation/384300/>.

⁵⁴ See Jason Steinhauer, *History, Disrupted* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022); Adam Crymble, *Technology and the Historian: Transformations in the Digital Age* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2021).

⁵⁵ Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), accessed April 8, 2025, <https://www-oxfordreferencecom.libproxy.york.ac.uk/display/10.1093/acref/9780198841838.001.0001/acref-9780198841838-e-3729?rskey=Ac0zoJ&result=1>.

and Jussi Parikka set out, media archaeology “rummages textual, visual and auditory archives as well as collections of artefacts, emphasising both the discursive and the material manifestations of culture”, “nomadic[ally]” moving through disciplines.⁵⁶

Conversations in Media Archaeology are thus actively interdisciplinary and, aptly for this thesis, frequently blend potentially distinct fields such as history, performance studies, theatre, and digital media.⁵⁷ Early work around the intersections of performance and digital technology included Steve Dixon’s *History of New Media* within the creative industries and Matthew Causey’s titular case for considering digital media as ‘*Embedded[]*’ within performance practices.⁵⁸ Both have general relevance for *Hamilton*, but in response to the evolving nature of technological integration, Nele Wynants has since built more helpfully upon it. Emphasising a historical embracing of “new” media as part of its cultural work, Wynant’s vision for the relationship between the theatrical and the digital goes beyond the “intertextual” (bringing different ‘text spaces’ into conversation with one another) or “multimodal” (playing across different modes of engagement). Rather, Wynants contends for theatre as an intrinsically ‘intermedial’ (the interplay of different types of media, leading to a space “between realities”) space which has always been the result of diverse media convergence, paving the way for such conceptions beyond the auditorium through further digital technologies. Looking back to the analysis of ‘Non-Stop,’ this thesis sees *Hamilton* as not only fulfilling Wyant’s conception of ‘intermedial’ in terms of the fractioning of historical and theatrical presence built into the experience of the show but, when placed in the context of the broader *Hamil*-sphere, as challenging whether the ‘intermedial’ is ‘enough’. To facilitate its examination of *Hamilton*’s cultural mythos, the thesis will instead propose a transmedial framework. In so doing, it will contend that that the mythos not only bridges gaps “between realities” (the ‘stage-/digital-spaces’ that constitute *Hamilton*’s mythos) but also constitutes and thereby surpasses these fractional manifestations as part of a bigger whole that goes beyond *Hamilton* itself.

⁵⁶ Erkki Huhtamo and Jussi Parikka ed., *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 2-3.

⁵⁷ Nele Wynants, “Media-Archaeological Approaches to Theatre and Performance: An Introduction” in *Media Archaeology and Intermedial Performance: Deep Time of the Theatre* ed. Nele Wynants (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 2.

⁵⁸ See Matthew Causey, *Theatre and Performance in Digital Culture: From Simulation to Embeddedness* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006); Steve Dixon, *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theatre, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2007).

Performativity and Transmediality

Working in the field of memory studies, Reading made use of ‘transmedial’ in 2011 to allude to the workings of contemporary, digitized memory as “an assemblage of discursive formations and material practices not limited or bounded by one medium.” My own use of the term differs in the precise nature of the ‘trans’ suffix: Reading’s incorporation of instantaneity, simultaneity, and globalisation are useful and relevant, but they don’t fully emphasise the role of the human being at the convergence of *Hamilton*’s different ‘stage-spaces’, nor the every-day performativity inherent in each intersecting thing.⁵⁹ Given the ways in which *Hamilton* draws upon the individual’s perceptions of past and present (see ‘Non-Stop’), ‘transmedial’ has thus been chosen to better account for the human sites of consumption, production and re-production, rather than simply intermedial – the ‘between different media’. Though Jean-Marc Larrue and Marcello Vitali-Rosati, (building on James Loxley’s 2007 overview of Performative theory by combining it with the concept of mediation) might contest that “distinction” between the “primary world and the mediatized world” is made “superfluous” by such a term as ‘transmediality’, this thesis does not go so far into theories of convergence as to proclaim that “the end of the traditional conception of a medium.” Rather, it seeks a way to put these ideas to use and dig into what each puzzle piece of the *Hamil*-sphere does with the past in a way which prioritises the concept of medium, while still acknowledging the “convergence” that *Hamilton* constitutes in the mind of the consumer in constituting the show’s overall mythos.⁶⁰

Back in Media Archaeology, Martina Leeker et al’s exploration of the digital itself as being ‘performed’ also helps to understand how the pieces of the *Hamil*-sphere might operate, giving meaning to both the original theatrical product and the wider manifestations related to it.⁶¹ Outside of this thesis, labelling something as a ‘performance’ in 2025 might as well mean calling it an ‘act’ – a pretence, fictional, false. In an age of being one’s ‘authentic self’, ‘performance’ has become a by-word for ‘inauthentic’ (see Chapter Four). But to think of the past as ‘performed’ or ‘performative’ is not necessarily an invalidation. Rather, it is to be able to navigate the ‘entanglements’ of digitality and theatricality – the gone and the unfolding, the physical and the

⁵⁹ Anna Reading, “Memory and Digital Media: Six Dynamics of the Globital Memory Field,” in *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age* ed. M. Neiger, O. Meyers and E. Zandberg (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 248.

⁶⁰ Jean-Marc Larrue and Marcello Vitali-Rosati, *Media Do Not Exist: Performativity and Mediating Conjectures*, (Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2019), 26-27.

⁶¹ See footnote 50.

digital, as alluded to by analysis of ‘Non-Stop’ - through the idea of ‘affect’: that which is produced by the encounter. Academically originating in J.L. Austin’s attempt to understand how words do what they do, ‘performativity’ began with describing the conditions by which certain sounds or figures are ascribed to have meaning or produce ‘affect’ within a so-called ‘speech act’. Later filtered through John Searle’s conditions and illocutory intentions, Jacques Derrida’s deconstructionism and Judith Butler’s queer theory, performativity was aptly adopted by those of more sociological and anthropological schools (e.g. Victor Turner, 1988) and eventually came to the door of Richard Schechner, the theatre scholar who pioneered Performance Studies as its own field in the 2000s.⁶² For Schechner and later colleague Rebecca Schneider, Performance Studies came to hold a more embodied philosophical approach to cultural practice, seeing performativity as a crucial part of human meaning-making beyond the theatre and across daily life.⁶³ Schneider has since written extensively on the significance of bodily gestures as an embedded communicative vehicle and the resultant capacity for performance to highlight continuities in times of historical change.⁶⁴ Anthropologically adjacent, it is this sense of performativity upon which I wish to pull rather than that of Butler, which focuses on language. Rather than emphasising every action or signifier as an entirely creative or constitutive one, Schechner and Schneider’s understandings of performance rely upon every culture having its own evolving code of conduct within which we must each perform (utilise or adopt) certain signifiers. These allow us to be communicable to both ourselves and to others, always alert to our own active sense of presence, as well as to that which has gone before. This then allows one to focus on cognitive effect and connection through the multi-sensory experience through which ideas are being communicated - whether in embodied communication like music, movement, and song as in engaging with *Hamilton* directly, or in their virtual versions or remediations (transformation from one medium to another) more widely, as developed by Leeker et al. Contending that “digital cultures are performative cultures” by the ways in which their “agential forces” (that is, their ability to have affect) are “entangle[d] with human bodies,” Leeker et al’s

⁶² For a concise summary, see James Loxley, *Performativity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007). For more on the works of J.L. Austin, Searle, Derrida, Butler, and Turner, see the publications included in the bibliography. Schechner and Schneider are shortly mentioned but can also be consulted further through bibliographic references.

⁶³ See Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca and Alice Lagaay ed., *The Routledge Companion to Performance Philosophy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020); Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 4th edition (New York: Routledge, 2020); Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁶⁴ See Rebecca Schneider, “That the Past May Yet Have Another Future: Gesture in the Times of Hands Up,” *Theatre Journal* 70, no.3 (2018): 285-306; Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

“performativity” emerges as “a powerful concept to explore and reimagine digital cultures” like *Hamilton* and its mythos.⁶⁵

In drawing out the parallels between auditoriums of stalls and those of screens, Lyndsay and Ariel Gratch more recently offered an observation which adds to this thesis’ work across the intersection of physical and virtual: that the very existence of the ‘virtual’ implies “an identity that is both present and absent...in the in-between space” and “the social construction of reality through...a type of performance and or space that is artificially constructed/practiced, yet nevertheless holds real life everyday consequences.” *Hamilton* and its mythos, therefore, must be “both present and absent” – “artificially constructed/practiced” as a piece of theatre, yet with “real life everyday consequences” for the public’s uses, abuses, and understandings of the past. It must be beyond the binary of online and offline.⁶⁶

The ‘performative’ and the ‘transmedial’ thus emerge as twin lenses which reflexively support one another. The ‘transmedial’ gives structure to the *Hamil*-sphere and its mythos, allowing one to analyse its wider significance and the ways in which the past is mobilised within it. The ‘performative’, meanwhile, helps to understand how *Hamilton*’s theatrical work and mythos practically function, and reinforces the significance of the show’s cultural position as beyond a binary of online and offline. Developing the two lenses on these bases, the thesis will gradually make two key contentions. Firstly, that performativity is a valuable tool for historical and contemporary cultural analysis, allowing one to identify, understand, and contextualise the presence of the past *Hamilton* as both originally performed and as made manifest across the virtual. Secondly, that in understanding how ‘performance’ is made manifest throughout the *Hamil*-sphere, we are led to think towards the ‘transmedial’.

Thesis Outline

Building on existing *Hamilton* scholarship in attempt to find the roots of the show’s wider mythos, Chapter One traces anew *Hamilton*’s journey from page to stage, locating in its contexts of creation what the show set out to ‘do’ and ‘be’ as a piece of Broadway musical theatre. The chapter considers Miranda’s own journey alongside that of the Obama presidencies. It briefly surveys Alexander Hamilton’s historical presence within the American mind via Ron Chernow’s biography and begins to identify the ideologies and influences that came to shape the show’s

⁶⁵ Martina Leeker et al., *Performing the Digital*, 9.

⁶⁶ Lyndsay Michalik Gratch and Ariel Gratch, *Digital Performance in Everyday Life* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), 5.

‘performance’. Here, performative frameworks help to conceptualise the different stage-spaces, actors, and audiences at play prior to the show’s later transmedial fruition. *Hamilton* is shown as best viewed and understood through the eyes of US-centred politics, both contemporary and historical. Mobilised within Obama’s political campaign and traceable throughout *Hamilton*’s origin story, performativity is one of the attributes that made politics so well-suited to social media and other digital platforms, at the very moment that these new technologies began to ‘take off’ from Silicon Valley – and Miranda also had his finger on the pulse. Drawing out some of the different ‘stage spaces’ at work, the chapter visualises the budding *Hamil*-sphere as the enterprise began to form in the minds of different publics. In doing so, it starts to show the need for lenses such as transmediality that can conceptualise the period of technical and political change and help to explore what was happening in the ‘inbetweens’ of this formative era for both Obama and Miranda’s ‘Hamilton’ project.

Deep-diving into the on-stage storytelling and the performative heart of its mythos, Chapter Two considers how *Hamilton* functions as a piece of public history in its embodied musical theatre form: how it constructs and gives presence to the founding era in its crucial message that ‘anyone’ should be able to ‘do’ and ‘make’ history. This is seen not only through close analysis of the theatrical product, but by framing the Disney+ film release amidst Covid-19 lockdowns as a turning point through which to explore the role of the digital in transforming the circulation of ideas about the past. Analysing the choreographic and costume choices seen on-stage/screen, Chapter Two uses the lens of performativity in a more traditionally theatrical sense to excavate the show’s key contention: that ‘history’ is to be made, archived, and written by the unexpected. While this serves to buttress the value of performance-based approaches to the past in response to de Matos and Dean, it also complements the transmediality that can be seen within *Hamilton* at this stage. Thinking about the performative, storytelling power of choreography and costuming segues towards the different types of narrative mediation happening within the production – one which is at once physical yet digital, and fixed yet ephemeral. The ways in which the costume and choreography communicate ideas about the past and the process of ‘making’ history are put into conversation with how the production is remediated virtually, where fibres become pixels and the deeply embodied nature of this theatrical communication is taken into the ether to be streamed within the Disney+ show and scattered within the social media GIF. In this sense, Chapter Two provides a crucial methodological bridge in the thesis’ conception of transmediality - before later chapters consider *Hamilton*’s wider mythos throughout EduHam, Black Lives Matter protests, and fan communities, Chapter Two shows the *Hamilton* production as transmedial in and of itself.

Thinking more practically about the show's beyond-Broadway ambitions, Chapter Three analyses the Hamilton Education Program (HEP) to consider what sort of historical 'work' the show aimed to accomplish beyond its high-profile theatrical presence. The HEP was produced in collaboration with the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History and the Rockefeller Foundation. Through examination and problematisation of the curriculum and select outputs from the summer of 2020, the chapter reinforces *Hamilton* as a show with a wider, value-loaded mission. While the HEP upholds elements of the mythos attributed to the show, it also challenges it: the show's 'unprecedented' digital presence is nuanced by technological conservatism, and its quasi-Brechtian attitude fails to meet the traditional expectations of historical education. Yet, testament to the extent to which *Hamilton* is a product of its cultural, political, and technological time, what also arises is a sense in which performative approaches to exploring and sharing the past facilitate different sorts of historical learning and authenticity. In so doing, the chapter contributes fruitfully towards the various tensions depicted as inherent to *Hamilton* over the course of the study, and the analysis to get there builds methodologically upon the lenses of transmediality and performativity. Performativity is seen as embedded within a pedagogical program centred around learning and response across both online and offline sites. Situating discussion within the context of broader technological development, the chapter speaks more incisively towards the different types of digital stage-space occupied by *Hamilton* and the HEP. Locating the sense of public educational mission within a formalised space which is at once digital and analogue, the chapter thus visualises another layer of *Hamilton*'s transmedial operation, made possible by performativity. This usefully prepares the conceptual ground for Chapter Four, where the public performance in response to difficult pasts and presents is interrogated within the context of volatile online and offline protest.

Chapter Four hinges on the call to #CancelHamilton amidst 2020's BLM movement, based on perceptions of the show as an insincere performance of allyship to racial issues and social justice work in the post-Obama period. In exposing some of the ways in which both *Hamilton* and diverse publics responded to the show's re-contextualisation, Chapter Four further problematises the show's mythos. With 2020 effectively providing a crisis point for its legitimacy, the chapter traces the performance of protest from the Abolitionist movement to BLM, before assessing *Hamilton*-ian responses to both BLM and the calls to its cancellation in the short, medium, and long terms. In discussing a range of sources from Twitter to Instagram and ABC television to Disney+, the chapter comes to see the lenses of performativity and transmediality as wholly intertwined, traceable throughout both *Hamilton* and BLM as interrogative tools into public uses and responses to past and present. These are nonetheless nuanced, both facilitating

and evidencing complex public relationships to historical and contemporary time, action, and effect.

Looking back on *Hamilton* from the perspective of the mid-2020s, the final chapter explores *Hamilton*'s continued digital presence to consider how the show performed after riding the wave of 2020 'cancel culture'. Though the heights of digital attention given to *Hamilton* seemed to wane after 2020, the political, technological, and historical circumstances crucial to the show's reception continued to evolve, resulting in new forms of digital performativity and transmediality. As *Hamilton* settled into new roles of online mnemonic, cultural status symbol, and community connector ever-further from the Obaman contexts of its creation, the chapter sees its performativity come to enable a new and nuanced sort of politicality to that established by previous chapters. Made visible by broader reflection upon its Twitter presence and more recent application on Instagram through the work of *Hamilton* actor John Deveraux, *Hamilton*'s mythos does not undertake 'work' simply by virtue of its cultural presence, nor solely thanks to its educational or social justice endeavours, but because of its unavoidable conversation with contemporary culture and wider conceptions of past, present, and future. Understanding these conversations and values as potentially – but not entirely – reinforcing one another in a variety of complex ways, this altered temporal perspective enables reflection on performativity and transmediality as interrogative lenses. As discussion hints at the political, technological, and cultural reverberations of the Obama era, the lenses illuminate new public understandings of the past amidst unfolding futures and fresh political stages.

Chapter One

'The Story of Tonight' – *Hamilton*'s Journey to Stage and Screen

Introduction

"Now, the truth is...they do owe me...Not to take undue credit or anything, but this is definitely "the room *where it happened*," right here. This is it right here, on *this stage* (emphasis mine)." So

remarked Barack Obama at the close of his presidency, introducing the second *Hamilton* performance at the White House during his tenure.⁶⁷ Unlike the “very premature” ‘Hamilton Mixtape’ that had appeared at the Poetry Jam seven years earlier, the show was now “a phenomenon, a smash hit. It[d] taken Broadway by storm, captivating the entire country, winning tons of awards, turned musical haters into diehard fans.”⁶⁸ Citing its “fierce, youthful energy” and “a cast as diverse as America,” Obama alluded to the extent to which *Hamilton* had grown with his presidencies into a decidedly political force to be reckoned with.⁶⁹ This was no longer a 1-track comedy for campaign sponsors, but an excerpt from an international show with a burgeoning fanbase and an emerging education program.

“The bold, familiar outlines of the presidential narrative...have long been popular among dramatists and audiences.”⁷⁰ *Hamilton* was *not* the first musical about early American political figureheads, given 1969’s patriotic musical *1776*, or 2006’s satirical rock musical *Bloody, Bloody Andrew Jackson*.⁷¹ Yet “presidential musicals have only rarely shaped presidential policies” and as Brian Herrera contended in *Historians on Hamilton*, supposedly “no presidential musical...has maintained as ongoing an intimacy with the actual American presidency” as *Hamilton*. When the show launched in 2015, the scale of public reception and Hamilmania was regarded as “unprecedented,” even though the combination of Miranda, American political history, and hip-hop had been seen as unexpected by many early commentators.⁷² This is again in spite of the fact that recent years had seen a relative mainstreaming of the musical genre, whilst other potential unique points from the show such as colour-conscious casting and

⁶⁷ “Remarks by the President at ‘Hamilton at the White House’,” *The White House: President Barack Obama*, March 14, 2016, accessed March 16, 2026, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/03/14/remarks-president-hamilton-white-house>.

⁶⁸ James Herbert, “‘In The Heights’: Hitting the high notes,” *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, July 21, 2010, accessed March 16, 2026, <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-hitting-the-high-notes-2010jul21-htmlstory.html>.

⁶⁹ “Remarks by the President.”

⁷⁰ Brian Eugenio Herrera, “Inside the Broadway Bubble,” in *Historians on Hamilton* ed. Renee C. Romano and Claire Bond Potter (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 2018), 226-7.

⁷¹ Erik Piepenburg, “He’s Taking the ‘Hood to the 1700’s,” *New York Times*, Jan 6, 2012, accessed March 16, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/08/theater/lin-manuel-miranda-is-rapping-on-alexander-hamilton.html>; Stephen Holden, “Putting the Hip-Hop in History as Founding Fathers Rap,” *New York Times*, January 12, 2012, accessed March 29, 2024 <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/13/arts/music/hamilton-mixtape-by-lin-manuel-miranda-at-allen-room.html>; Philip Boroff, “Hip-Hop Hero Alexander Hamilton, Supertutors Eye Broadway,” *Bloomberg*, August 2, 2013, accessed March 29, 2024, <https://web.archive.org/web/20160925055855/http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-08-02/hip-hop-hero-alexander-hamilton-supertutors-eye-broadway>.

⁷² Herrera, “Inside the Broadway Bubble,” 227.

purposeful anachronism within the historical fiction genre have continued to become commonplace in both the performing arts and across film and television – practices which were never new to the theatre world in general.⁷³ With emphasis upon the evolving digital dimension, the power of human performativity, and seeking to nuance the significance of the show's political affiliations, the chapter traces some of the mechanisms that brought *Hamilton* to public attention.

Ultimately, the chapter is driven by two key questions: In what ways was *Hamilton* connected to the Obama era, and how did people know about the show? That *Hamilton*'s founding story is book-ended by Obama's time as president will emerge as no coincidence, but rather, as fundamental to understanding its mythos. Placing key moments within the wider political and technological timeline, the chapter traces the evolution of Miranda's vision and values for the show and emphasises the extent to which *Hamilton* depended upon specific political and technological circumstances to become "a story of the U.S presidency's earliest days as one retold for the contemporary Obama era."⁷⁴ The chapter will suggest that - at least in its early years - the mythos attributed to the show was only partially true. Rather than innate historical or theatrical exceptionalism, the show's initial success is easily attributable to a confluence of perfect conditions between political, digital, and Broadway stages. In this, the chapter begins to elucidate both the roots of *Hamilton*'s later transmedial enterprise and the performativity that made it possible. Over the course of the two terms, both the Obama administration and *Hamilton* project matured and developed concurrently along parallel visions for interpreting "America then" and establishing "America now."⁷⁵ The chapter presents these two political stages – the White House and the *Hamilton* show - as inexorably connected. With *Hamilton* as the defining cultural artifact of the era, both Barack and Lin-Manuel could even be understood as model stories for American identity in this period of Democratic-dominated, identity politics: where "a young man who...fell in love with a Kansas girl, and fathered a son who grew up to fulfil the American promise that any kid...can be president" finds a second "young man who

⁷³ See: Stephanie Russo, "'You are, like, so woke': Dickinson and the anachronistic turn in historical drama," *Rethinking History* 25, no.4 (2021): 534-554; Stephanie Russo, "Divorced, Beheaded, Live in Concert: Race-ing Henry VIII's Queens In Six," *S&F Online* 18, no.1 (2022), accessed April 15, 2026, <https://sfonline.barnard.edu/divorced-beheaded-live-in-concert-race-ing-henrys-viiiis-queens-in-six/>; Joyce Green MacDonald, *Shakespearean Adaptation, Race and Memory in the New World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020). See also 'Introduction' chapter to this thesis.

⁷⁴ Herrera, "Inside the Broadway Bubble," 229.

⁷⁵ The catchphrase coined by Miranda to describe *Hamilton*, see "Hamilton creator: It's a 'story of America then told by America now'," *BBC*, December 23, 2017, accessed April 18, 2026, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/entertainment-arts-42464676>.

came...learned English, started a family, and...watched his son receive a standing ovation from the president”.⁷⁶

The chapter firstly considers the period of Chernow’s biography through to the 2009 White House performance. Largely drawing from *Historians on Hamilton*, it begins to paint a picture of historical presence given to Alexander Hamilton and his legacy in the two hundred years between his death in 1804 and Chernow’s popular tome. It brings up-to-date the US political context in which Miranda accessed and read the biography amidst the first Obama campaign, and suggests how this hope for a “renew[ed]...democratic imagination” around a performed political inclusivity and budding digital sphere might have provided a nurturing environment for Miranda’s vision of the ‘Hamilton Mixtape’.⁷⁷ After *Hamilton* reached the White House and Miranda performed his “premature” track, the chapter turns towards public receptions of the performance and how these, along with wider societal trends, potentially informed *Hamilton*’s future development. Building upon Potter’s existing emphasis around the centrality of Miranda as a popular celebrity in the early years of social media, the chapter begins consideration of his figure, reputation, and influence with a nod to the growing digital sphere.⁷⁸ Although Miranda was a relative ‘unknown’ outside of Broadway fandoms for much of the chapter’s timeline, it’s worth thinking about who this musical-maker was and how his own performance practices preceded the *Hamil-sphere* to come.

The chapter will then track *Hamilton* through its workshopping era of 2009-2015 as the two Obama administrations powered on. Tracing how the show grew from imaginary album to a ‘mythos’-worthy two-act musical, this section is framed around key stages in *Hamilton*’s development: Miranda’s 2012 Lincoln Centre American Songbook performance, the 2013 Vassar College workshops, the 2014 52nd Street workshops, and finally the show’s 2015 off-Broadway launch at The Public Theatre. At the same time, discussion raises some of the wider influences that the show’s team may have been responding to as the dreams of a “postracial” America led by the first Black President began to slip and the digital sphere became ever more significant.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ McCarter and Miranda, *Hamilton: The Revolution*, 15.

⁷⁷ Henrik P. Bang, “‘Yes we can’: Identity politics and project politics for a late-modern world,” *Urban Research & Practice* 2, no.2 (2009): 135.

⁷⁸ See footnote 16.

⁷⁹ See Christopher Sebastian Parker, “Race and Politics in the Age of Obama,” *The Annual Review of Sociology* 42 (2016): 217-30.

By the end of the chapter, the stage is set for Alexander Hamilton's renewed cultural presence as discussion turns to consider early public reception of the on-Broadway launch of 2015. Looking back on the show's six-year production journey, it surveys what was being said at this time, where, and by whom. As a partial departure from public 'buzz' centred around critical or theatrically privileged circles dominant in earlier sections, discussion here includes HamilTweet exploration of the #Ham4Ham hashtag. In this, the chapter uses the wider digital sphere to expand the 'public' in discussion as *Hamilton* began to bring the Richard Rodgers' stage to the sidewalks of street and social media. In this emerging plurality of 'stage-spaces', the end of the chapter reinforces *Hamilton* as having begun to take the 'transmedial' shape assumed by later chapters. The chapter closes by reinforcing the close relationship between the *Hamilton* product and the Obama years as the cast performed at the White House 'one last time' and seemed to take up the torch of a lost political vision.

As with the rest of the chapters in the thesis, Chapter One considers a range of audiences and stakeholders informing, influencing and responding to *Hamilton* as it developed: the presumed audiences of critical reviews, political audiences of the Obama Administration's public presence, members of Miranda's personal fandom, eager beavers crowding the Broadway sidewalk, and innumerable, nameless Tweepers engaging with a hashtag by the mid-2010s. There is a distinction to be made around the use of the term 'public' regarding the show's early years. Throughout the thesis, 'public' is a term generally used in the fullest and most open sense, in conversation with the notion of a 'digital public sphere' facilitated by various digital technologies. Yet, as a work-in-progress, much of *Hamilton*'s development was a space only accessed by particularly privileged, skilled, or interested people. This means that though the chapter seeks to represent the broadest possible 'public' perspectives, at times the attempt to trace what occurred in the 'rooms where *Hamilton* happened' has inevitably been mediated through a critical lens focussed on a relatively small, specialist audience and all-too-often unavoidably filtered by the good old paywall.

It's also worth noting some of the challenges in accessing and tracing such sources. The volume of content on the World Wide Web of 2021-26 makes comprehensive surveyance of 2009-2015 popular news articles difficult, even where date filters have been used. This is made more challenging by the indeterminable processes of selection and curation to which surviving entries have likely been subject, potentially leading to further challenges of representation in not knowing what might be 'missing' from Web's digital archive. Additionally, where notes come from the show's official 'behind-the-scenes' tome *Hamilton: The Revolution*, it is worth recalling that

this information has been provided for a particular type of theatrical fan audience and released amidst the Hamilmania-fuelled context of April 2016.

Part 1: The Noughties – from Sand to Song

The First Obama Campaign

The significance of nominating the first Black President cannot be understated. Hopes of a “post-racial” society were tangible around the 2008 election.⁸⁰ Obama seemed “a reminder of what is possible” for those who “had been systematically stripped of any hopes that they would witness racial equality in their lifetime.”⁸¹ Following his win, some like Hermene Hartman went so far as to claim that the “civil rights generation ha[d] seen their world come full circle”: that “Young white America [had] entered a new era” and “perhaps ended America’s racism” altogether. This “new era” might not only be “the best America has ever seen,” but in so being, represented a return to the “real America” – “once again, the land of the free, and the home of the brave!”⁸² With a new record of black voting turnout at 67% (up from 59% in 1964 amidst the Civil Rights movement), Donald Kinder and Allison Dale-Riddle calculate that [Obama’s] race “gained him 2% among blacks” – but came at the “cost” of “10% among whites.”⁸³ When “American identities...are deeply embedded and remain heavily imbued with racial, religious and imperial features,” others saw Obama as “the ultimate ‘outsider’ and ‘un-American’.” Despite having a popular political presence since the 1990s (Obama’s biography, *Dreams From My Father* was first published in 1995, shortly before he became a member of the Illinois senate in 1997), Obama’s victory made him one whose “whose loyalties were suspect” as an “immigrant,” Islamic-rooted, non-white man who could have been born in Kenya.⁸⁴ Further mobilised by the mass media considered by

⁸⁰ Seth K. Goldman and Diana C. Mutz, *The Obama Effect: How the 2008 Campaign Changed White Racial Attitudes* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2014), 2.

⁸¹ Hermene D. Hartman, “Afterword: The American Transformation,” in *Black Enough, White Enough: The Obama Dilemma* by Ricky Hendon (Chicago: Third World Press), 194; Parker, “Race and Politics in the Age of Obama,” 219.

⁸² Hartman, “Afterword: The American Transformation,” 196-7.

⁸³ Donald R. Kinder and Allison Dale-Riddle, *The End of Race?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012) cited in Parker, “Race and Politics in the Age of Obama,” 221.

⁸⁴ Inderjeet Parmar, “American Power and identities in the age of Obama,” *International Politics* 48, no. 2-3 (2011): 153-161.

Seth Goldman and Diana Mutz, his political victory was a challenge to the face of a white, conservative America and its comprehensive history of racial power.⁸⁵

How had Obama won? Amidst a context of global “anti-American” sentiment following the conflict-dominated Republican presidency of George W Bush, the aftershock of the 1990’s ‘culture wars,’ and ostensibly entrenched “race-based domination” within the American psyche, Obama’s campaign presented an opportunity to re-define American identity in a country where the “President is America Personified.”⁸⁶ By the noughties the American political climate had come to increasingly rely upon personalised politics, “channelled through...dense social networks” through “the pervasive use of social technology.” Political participation was perceived as no longer revolving around “formal group identities” (e.g. party, church, class) but, being “immersed in consumer culture,” fragmented by post-industrial politics of identity and virtually re-connected by different digital media. That is to say, the infantile digital sphere of television, mass media, and the internet had begun to exacerbate the already diffractive nature of American politics, which was now increasingly understood in terms of individualised causes with some degree of individual autonomy and agency across remote collectives.⁸⁷ Against such a backdrop, Obama’s team relied upon “bridging rhetoric” which “combined goals, tactics and ethos to get people with different (and sometimes even incompatible) identities and projects to freely accept that cooperation across all conventional boundaries may be the only way to resolve the common challenges.” Obama effectively performed as a uniter. Whether “vacuous” (as critiqued by Tariq Ali) or legitimately representative of a new America on the horizon, emphatic slogans such as “yes we can” re-engaged public understandings of what constituted the American “we” - converging the American collective at the centre of the political stage in the body of a Black American.⁸⁸ Against “long-term structural factors” in a “divided society,” Obama’s incorporation of “identity and project politics into ‘big’ politics” centred around an “immediate and concrete

⁸⁵ See Goldman and Mutz, *The Obama Effect*, 59-96

⁸⁶ Parmar, “American Power and identities in the age of Obama,” 153; Parker, “Race and Politics,” 225. For an introduction to the ‘Culture Wars’ of the 1990s, see Andrew Hartman, *War For the Soul of America: A History of the Culture Wars* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

⁸⁷ W. Lance Bennett, “The personalisation of Politics: Political Identity, Social Media, and Changing Patterns of Participation,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 664, no.1 (2012), accessed February 15, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0002716212451428>.

⁸⁸ Tariq Ali, *The Obama Syndrome* (London: Verso, 2010), 8. See also: Jim Mann, *The Obamians: the struggle inside the White House to redefine American power* (New York: Penguin Books, 2012); Justin S. Vaughn and Jennifer R. Mercieca ed., *The Rhetoric of Heroic Expectations: Establishing the Obama Presidency* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014).

political community action” and was described by *The Economist* as “one of the most remarkable acts of rebranding in the history of that remarkable nation.”⁸⁹

Obama’s Kansas appearance, in which he painted his vision of the American dream and identity, well-exemplifies the approach. “We’re greater together than we are on our own,” Obama claimed. “I believe that this country succeeds when everyone gets a fair shot, when everyone does their fair share, when everyone plays by the same rules. These aren’t Democratic values or Republican values...They’re American values. And we have to reclaim them.”⁹⁰ By stating the supposed need to “reclaim” such ideas as non-sectarian “American values,” Obama drew on a cross-party appeal of Americana and, through this scripted address, attempted to perform the ‘democratic’ identity as one belonging intrinsically to all in America. This wasn’t about politics of difference based on identity, but politics of inclusion based on identity. This was not to be a nation of ‘democrats’ versus ‘republicans’ but Americans of all creeds and backgrounds - all of whom he supposedly represented and served in that moment. By depicting an all-American identity within the iconic role of ‘President’ Obama sought to unite the potentially disparate and disenfranchised, inviting them to likewise join in this performance of American identity and enact it through the political act of voting. Political agency was re-branded as something worth being embraced and embodied. In this, Obama thus relied on engaging an enacted “performativity” of those who may have previously self-excluded from participation in ‘big’ politics.⁹¹ This enabled a sense of value-driven, action-taking that “empower[ed] people” to “develop their own identities” as reflected through the public action of political participation.⁹² Though inevitably part of the veneer of political campaigning and its potential pretence, this remained the suggestion of ‘performance’ as something genuine – as practical action validating both individual and common values. As argued by Donatella Galella, such ‘nationalist neoliberal multicultural

⁸⁹ Parmar, “American Power and identities in the age of Obama,” 154; Bang, ““Yes we can,”” 4; “Mr develop their own identities <https://www.economist.com/news/2009/11/13/mr-obamas-unpromising-year>.”

⁹⁰ John Cassidy, “Invoking Teddy Roosevelt, Obama Finds His Voice,” *The New Yorker*, December 6, 2011, accessed March 17, 2026, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/john-cassidy/invoking-teddy-roosevelt-obama-finds-his-voice>; also reported by the Washington Post (2011) as cited in Bennet, “The Personalisation of Politics,” 32.

⁹¹ D. Marsh, T. O’Toole, and S. Jones, *Young People and Politics in the UK* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 2007), 29; also cited in Bang, ““Yes we can,”” 129; See also Jeffrey C. Alexander, *The Performance of Politics: Obama’s Victory and the Democratic Struggle for Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

⁹² Henrik P. Bang, ““Yes we can,”” 119.

inclusion' was to prove the perfect opportunity for *Hamilton* as a show that would (at least initially) become known for bringing political diversity together (see later in chapter).⁹³

Crucially, Obama's attempt to make this 'political performance' feel 'real' also went beyond big physical stages. The campaign coincided with the first 'boom' in social media technologies and having been overlooked within many "mainstream participatory models" at the time, the Obama team invested heavily in these new political stage-spaces.⁹⁴ Research by Pew suggests that 75% of "internet users went online during the 2008 election to take part in, or get news and information about the 2008 campaign."⁹⁵ Connecting with an estimated 10 million voters, Obama's efforts to virtually communicate, fundraise, and mobilise supporters "transforme[d] political communication" as we now know it.⁹⁶ The use of "grassroots funding, social media expertise and viral sensibilities" recognisably "pull[ed] the rug from underneath the political establishment."⁹⁷ Efforts not only helped to create a public 'buzz' for "change," but enhanced Obama's sense of relatable charisma in a way which made the 'local' feel part of the bigger movement, actively enabling everyday people to be part of the political event.⁹⁸ One White House release at the end of his presidential journey would even hail Obama as "the first 'social media president'."⁹⁹ Obama's political performance and the way in which it had curated the political performance of his supporters, had brought online and offline stage spaces together.

⁹³ Donatella Galella, "Being in 'The Room Where it Happens': Hamilton, Obama and Nationalist Neoliberal Multicultural Inclusion," *Theatre Survey* 59, no.3 (2018), accessed February 26, 2024, DOI 10.1017/s0040557418000303; Renee C. Romano, "Hamilton: A New American Civic Myth," *Historians on Hamilton*, 298.

⁹⁴ Edwina Luck, Jaclyn Beaton & Jennifer Moffat, "The social media (r)evolution: Obama's political campaign," *Proceedings of the 2010 Global Marketing Conference* (2010), accessed February 27, 2024, <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/40840/>.

⁹⁵ Aaron Smith, "The Internet's Role in Campaign 2008," *Pew Research Center*, April 15, 2009, accessed April 20, 2026, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2009/04/15/the-internets-role-in-campaign-2008/>.

⁹⁶ Pere-Oriol Costa, "Barack Obama's use of the Internet is transforming political communication," *Quaderns Del Cac* 33 (2009): 35-6.

⁹⁷ "2008: Barack Obama embraces the power of social media in election," *The Drum*, March 31, 2016, accessed April 20, 2026, <https://www.thedrum.com/news/marketing-moment-84-barack-obama-embraces-power-social-media-2008election#:~:text=The%20entire%20landscape%20of%20political,to%20purchase%20the%20exclusive%20book.>

⁹⁸ Costa, "Barack Obama's use of the Internet," 35-6.

⁹⁹ Kori Schulman, "The Digital Transition: How the Presidential Transition Works in the Social Media Age," *The White House: President Barack Obama*, October 31, 2016, accessed April 20, 2026, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2016/10/31/digital-transition-how-presidential-transition-works-social-media-age>.

Meeting Miranda

At the same time, Lin-Manuel Miranda was rising “out of nowhere” to the top of the theatrical scene.¹⁰⁰ Miranda had begun to write plays during high school before starting work on his first big hit, *In The Heights*, during college at Wesleyan. Just two years after graduation in 2002, *Heights* was Broadway-bound. It hit New York in March 2008, just 6 months before Obama’s first presidential win. By common standards of success, the show was a smash. Critically lauded as “the first hip hop musical on Broadway,” it won 4 of 13 Tony Award nominations including Best Musical and later received 3 Oliviers.¹⁰¹ Commercially, a cast recording for *In The Heights* was released 3 months after hitting Broadway, the show has had a number of international tours, and since been adapted for the screen in a 2021 Disney-backed film. *Heights* would be Miranda’s first stepping stone to what would become a diverse portfolio of high-profile work as a supposed “Latin activist”.¹⁰² Though Herrera has suggested that Miranda’s transition from a “show about young, contemporary black and Latinx characters” to “eighteenth-century presidential politics” seemed unexpected, in many ways *Heights* became a clear working model for *Hamilton*, establishing his reputation for particular musical styles, critical success, and multi-media musical work.¹⁰³

Certainly, *Heights* drew strongly on Miranda’s Latinx identity and family heritage, navigating a series of fictional narratives in an immigrant neighbourhood in Washington Heights – supposedly, much like that of Miranda’s own childhood. But this association is also complexly bound with privilege and access to those dominating both political and cultural discourses at the highest levels - something worth bearing in mind when considering *Hamilton*’s mythos as a piece of truly revolutionary theatre. While a second-generation Latinx immigrant, Lin-Manuel is also the son of Democratic political consultant Luis Miranda Jr and therefore no stranger to the idea of having to perform a political identity - whether on the stage of daily experience, on Broadway, or in the winding corridors of Politics with a capital P. Likely as a result of these family connections, *Heights* was also an early indicator of Miranda’s existing industry connections who would stick with him into *Hamilton*. Major Broadway influencers and future *Hamilton* producers Jill Furman

¹⁰⁰ Erik Piepenburg, “He’s Taking the ‘Hood to the 1700’s.”

¹⁰¹ Herrera, “Inside the Broadway Bubble,” 235.

¹⁰² Joël Eduard Nicholas Grassère, “Lin-Manuel Miranda: Broadway Playwright or Latin activist,” *Diggit Magazine*, October 26, 2022, accessed March 30, 2024, <https://www.diggitmagazine.com/articles/lin-manuel-miranda-broadway-playwright-or-latin-activist>.

¹⁰³ Herrera, “Inside the Broadway Bubble,” 226.

and Jeffrey Seller were part of the *Heights* team, with heaps of seasoned Broadway experience on genre-defining twentieth century shows like *Rent* and *West Side Story*. Future *Hamilton* director Thomas Kail was part of *Heights* from 2002, and both Alex Lacamoire (*Hamilton* musical director) and Andy Blankenbuehler (*Hamilton* choreographer) were part of *Heights*' trial runs in Connecticut and off-Broadway between 2005 and 2007. Paul Tazewell (*Hamilton* costumier) and Howell Binkley (*Hamilton* lighting designer) were also heavily involved in *Heights* in their respective capacities. Every part of the production's story was not only the result of co-productive endeavours alongside Miranda but created by those with access to talent and influence: not the sort of access or investment held by the average emerging playwright.

That said, Miranda was still new to Broadway and it was off the back of *Heights*' first Broadway run that he came upon Chernow's biography of Alexander Hamilton.¹⁰⁴ *The Revolution* depicts Miranda as nonchalantly picking up the tome as entertainment for a well-earned beach break, just as beginning to read as Obama prepared to win his first presidential election. Such was the book's supposed impact that before he'd even got on the plane, just a few pages had given Miranda the concept and title for his next project: *The Hamilton Mixtape*.¹⁰⁵ Written with the hindsight of 2016, the recounting has a quasi-prophetic quality which seems inseparable from the show's later mythos.

Miranda later took the idea to critical friend, Jeremy McCarter. McCarter was a member of artistic staff at The Public Theatre that would later host *Hamilton*, and the very friend who would later be co-writing *The Revolution* and *In The Heights*'s equivalent, *Finding Home*. McCarter is also known for his own non-fiction release *Young Radicals: In The War for American Ideals*, which shares stories of political influencers "fighting for their ideals" amidst World War One.¹⁰⁶ It is not this study's intention to declare this version of *Hamilton*'s genesis disingenuous, but rather, point to the ways in which the mythos of *Hamilton* might have come to emerge both in its pre-production years and been subsequently re-curated after the show's initial success. A potential mythos around Lin-Manuel Miranda himself can also be seen and is worth bearing in mind for Chapters Three and Four.

Chernow's Biography and the Historical Presence of Alexander Hamilton

¹⁰⁴ McCarter and Miranda, *Hamilton: The Revolution*, 21.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 11

¹⁰⁶ See Jeremy McCarter, *Young Radicals: In the War for American Ideals* (New York: Random House, 2017)

It is commonly understood that Miranda's show led to Alexander Hamilton's "rehabilitation" within American memory after the nation "forgot him," but this doesn't tell the full story.¹⁰⁷ Popular memory surrounding Alexander Hamilton sits at a series of complex intersections around American Revolutionary history and the perceived centrality of these "civic myths" for a diverse, modern nation.¹⁰⁸ The Revolutionary setting is a "familiar, publicly available set of narratives"; "[they - America] already know the outlines...or at least think [they] do" as Philip Styrer notes.¹⁰⁹ Describing the popular appetite for early American political histories within the United States and the celebration of "American heritage," the revolutionary period is one about which people can "never know enough."¹¹⁰ Its centrality to contemporary navigations of American identity is an a priori position. It's no surprise then that while Chernow may frame Hamilton as "a heroic but forgotten founder who deserve[d] recognition," he wasn't entirely unknown.¹¹¹ The bigger challenge for Hamilton's historical legacy is perhaps thus: "Critics agree that *The Federalist* (Hamilton's most famous work) is a great work of political thought, but they do not agree on what it says. It is venerated as a guide to the mysteries of American government and as a fount of political wisdom in general, but the content of that wisdom is a subject of considerable debate."¹¹² One might argue that it is precisely Alexander Hamilton's nebulous position in both American historiography and public imagination – a known name but lacking a common depth of understanding – that made him so apt for Miranda's historical, political re-brand.¹¹³

Although Hogeland admits oversight of Hamilton in contrast to other founding figures, he also highlights that Chernow's 2004 biography was part of an ongoing cultural conversation about

¹⁰⁷ Phillip W. Magness, "Hamilton as Immigrant: Musical Mythology Meets Federalist Reality," *The Independent Review* 21, no.4 (2017): 497.

¹⁰⁸ Romano, "A New American Civil Myth," *Historians on Hamilton*, 299-300.

¹⁰⁹ Shocket cited by R.B. Bernstein et al., "History and Hamilton the Musical," *C-SPAN*, July 22, 2016, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?412622-2/history-hamilton-musical>, cited by Philip Goldfarb Styrer, "Towards a Historicism of Setting: *Hamilton* and American History," *Modern Drama* 61, no.1 (2018): 4.

¹¹⁰ David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), dust jacket, cited in Hogeland, "From Ron Chernow's Alexander Hamilton to *Hamilton*," 18.

¹¹¹ Freeman, "Will the Real Alexander Hamilton Please Stand up?," 255.

¹¹² Edward Millican, *One United People: The Federalist Papers and the National Idea* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1990), 1.

¹¹³ Note that the thesis will use 'historiography' / 'historiographical' in two key senses: firstly, in reference to the historical work of scholars and the historical craft involved in doing so; secondly, in reference to how *Hamilton* a) represents a 'writing' of history through performance practice, and b) the ways in which this is entangled with the show's transmediality and wider cultural presence. The intended meaning within each deployment should be clear to the reader.

Alexander which can be traced back to the 1997 *Wall Street Journal* article by Brooks and Kristol, published under Clinton's democratic presidency. Hogeland points also to the Gilder Lehrmann sponsorship of a previous conservative biography of Alexander Hamilton by Richard Brookhiser in 1999.¹¹⁴ The figure of Hamilton came to be part of contemporary discourse across both Republican and liberal spheres amidst the turn of the millennium as Clinton gave way to Bush. Despite differences in approach, Brooks (of the 1997 article) gave a sympathetic review of Chernow's interpretation for *The New York Times*.¹¹⁵ Speaking of the 'figure' of Alexander Hamilton, Hogeland saw a progression of the "American immigration fantasy" that "Brooks...emphasized politically, Chernow developed narratively" and Miranda later "dramatize[d] theatrically." Rather than an "elitist" whose vast swathes of dry financial records failed to excite historians, for Miranda, this involved a "fictional Hamilton" who best fits a "staunch abolition[ist]" and "penniless" figure who rose with "dogged efforts." Hamilton may have been ceded "to popular biographers who write within a publishing world where celebrating American's heritage and history sells," but such public circumstances allude to ubiquitous cultural tastes for such histories.¹¹⁶ The convergence between a decade of renewed interest in Hamilton and the 'new' Obaman America where "everyone gets a fair shot" provided not only the context for Miranda's creative genius, but a perfect public palate to receive it.¹¹⁷

2009: The White House Poetry Jam

Miranda's first performance of *Hamilton* at the White House's Poetry Jam on 12th May 2009 has a couple of different origin stories. At the time, Miranda been headlining in *Heights*. In *Hamilton: The Revolution*, McArthur and Miranda narrate the White House invitation as having been specific to *Heights*, which "reflected themes that the new administration wanted to celebrate: family, the importance of home, the vibrancy of the Latino community."¹¹⁸ Some news outlets simply stated

¹¹⁴ Also note that the Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History is the group responsible for the Hamilton Education Program, as discussed later in the thesis.

¹¹⁵ David Brooks, "Creating Capitalism: Alexander Hamilton by Ron Chernow," *The New York Times*, April 25, 2004, accessed March 17, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/04/25/books/creating-capitalism.html>.

¹¹⁶ Hogeland, "From Ron Chernow's Alexander Hamilton to *Hamilton*," 25-37.

¹¹⁷ The White House, "Remarks by the President on the Economy at Osawatimie, Kansas," *Obama White House*, December 6, 2011, accessed March 17, 2026, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/12/06/remarks-president-economy-osawatimie-kansas>.

¹¹⁸ McArthur and Miranda, *Hamilton: The Revolution*, 14.

a request for something “about America.”¹¹⁹ Regardless, the rising Broadway star opted not to perform one of the several Tony-winning songs he had been performing 8 shows per week, but a song that he acknowledged “had never performed in public, and hardly ever in private.”¹²⁰ The recorded event remains available on The Obama White House YouTube channel. With a jumpy energy despite his Broadway credentials, Miranda announces that he was invited to the White House because he was “working on a hip-hop album - a concept album – about the life of someone who embodies hip-hop”, introduced Miranda – “Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton.” Taking a pause to allow the audience and the Obamas to respond with audible laughter, Miranda knows he’s engaging in playful revisionism. He responds “You laugh! But it’s true!” before giving a brief outline of the “penniless orphan” who “caught beef with every other Founding Father” and succeeded solely “on the strength of his writing.” “I think he embodies the word’s ability to make a difference,” claimed Miranda, as if re-phrasing some of Obama’s own campaign language from the year before. Though only 45 minutes long, the event was a showcase for the cultural outlook of the new administration and, as reported by *The New York Times*, “established some precedents.”¹²¹

“All of the performers were either of colour or married to Michael Chabon or Michael Chabon himself,” with other acts consisting of sung jazz, James Earl Jones with Othello, or spoken word poetry.¹²² ‘Alexander Hamilton’ was a very different choice. Accompanied by a visibly enthusiastic Alex Lacamoire on piano, Miranda began his set by inviting the audience to “snap along if you like.” Watching the YouTube clip, the expletive opening words “how does a bastard, orphan, son of a whore and a Scotsman, dropped in the middle of a forgotten spot in the Caribbean” prickles against what one might expect from ‘The White House Evening of Poetry, Music and the Spoken Word’ (elsewhere labelled, ‘The White House Poetry Jam’). The audience nod and snap along, seemingly finding light-hearted (or perhaps, surprising) entertainment in the performance. In contrast to the inspirational and dramatic resonance of the lyrics and how they will be subsequently understood as part of the *Hamilton* franchise, smiles and laughs emanate

¹¹⁹ Simone Keelah Brathwaite, “What Lin-Manuel Miranda, Solange Knowles and Elon Musk Have in Common,” *Medium*, February 1, 2022, accessed March 17, 2026, <https://simonekeelah.medium.com/what-lin-manuel-miranda-solange-knowles-and-elon-musk-have-in-common-4c33fd6fb5d3>.

¹²⁰ McArthur and Miranda, *Hamilton: The Revolution*, 15.

¹²¹ Mike Hale, “Review: White House Poetry Jam,” *The New York Times*, May 13, 2009, accessed January 26, 2024, <https://archive.nytimes.com/artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/05/13/review-white-house-poetry-jam/>.

¹²² *Ibid.*

from the crowd, particularly in response to “the damn fool who shot him.” The performance almost lands as comedy and it’s difficult to watch the piece without the retrospect of the final *Hamilton* product, with the costumes, cast, set, narratives, lyrics, storyline all still to come over the next six years. Barack Obama leads the standing ovation, shown through a camera lens as a sea of smiling, applauding, and laughing faces represent the diversity of America and suggest the hopes of what might be to come – this was a political performance from both the stage and the stalls.

Though we may see great political significance in this particular theatrical performance, there was no guarantee at such an early stage that *Hamilton* would become such a sensation – only potential indicators which are best revealed by hindsight. The speed of digital content turnover poses challenges in terms of accessing online sources with which to gauge immediate public and critical responses to the performance. Though Obama had “promised on the campaign trail that if he was elected, he would throw the White House open to as wide a range of people as possible,” the event was poorly digitised at the time by current standards, with a single live broadcast followed by a note that a “full quality” recording “would be up in a day or two.”¹²³ The footage had enjoyed almost 10 million views on YouTube as of 2024, but around 90% of these were racked up since the publication of *Hamilton: The Revolution* in 2016, emphasising the significance of *Hamilton*’s later digital success after the Broadway launch rather than circa 2009.¹²⁴ Though such figures may seem to pale in comparison to the sorts of viewing figures enjoyed by contemporary viral trends in the 2020’s, it is not an inconsequential number. Critically, Obama’s efforts to support cultural representation of a “more plural America” were widely accepted, though not all deemed Miranda’s contribution worthy of notice.¹²⁵ While Nick Baumann for *Mother Jones* spoke almost entirely of the “pretty clear” “highlight” that had been Lin-Manuel Miranda several months later, others failed to list Miranda entirely, such as John Lundberg for *The Huffington Post*.¹²⁶

¹²³ Ewen MacAskill, “Obama to host poetry party at White House,” *The Guardian*, May 12, 2009, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/may/12/obama-poetry-jam-white-house>; Hale, “Review”.

¹²⁴ “Lin-Manuel Miranda Performs at the White House Poetry Jam: (8 of 8),” *The Obama White House*, YouTube, January 15, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNff7nMIGnE>; McCarthur and Miranda, *Hamilton: The Revolution*, 15.

¹²⁵ Syreeta McFadden, “*Hamilton* at the White House: why this moment means so much,” *The Guardian*, March 15, 2016, accessed March 17, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/mar/15/hamilton-at-the-white-house-obamas-art-theater>.

¹²⁶ Nick Baumann, “White House Poetry Jam Awesomeness,” *Mother Jones*, November 3, 2009, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2009/11/white-house-poetry-jam->

In one interview with the *San Diego Union-Tribune* around 18 months after the performance, Miranda described the evening as a “very premature birth” for what had been a mere “work-in-progress.” He admitted to having been only two-songs into the ‘mixtape’ and rather than focussing on the Hamilton project, much of the discussion emphasised Miranda’s thoughts more generally on the place of musicals within the national cultural conversation. Surprisingly given the depth of his later work with *Hamilton*, Miranda claimed that although his job was to “write ‘em,” it was “other people’s jobs to place them in that kind of historical context”.¹²⁷ This is not what one would expect from someone whose work has been significantly connected to political and cultural stages, and who would later be used as a case study for historical methodologies in the EduHam program (see Chapter Three). A later 2012 interview with cornerstone Broadway publication *Playbill* showed some evolution in Miranda’s thinking as he looked back from the vantage point of preparing for *Hamilton*’s performance within that year’s prestigious *Lincoln Centre’s American Songbook*. Citing the virality of the White House event in its time, Miranda noted that the performance “took on a life of its own when that video went online. It’s used in classrooms, I hear, all the time. Obama stood up at the end of the song, which is the greatest thing that’s ever happened in my life.”¹²⁸ It’s unclear to which Miranda attributes the greater success – educational engagement with his developing project or Obama’s personal involvement with it. Regardless, this earliest period in *Hamilton*’s history set the stage for later developments entwined with the presidency and a particular democratic performativity.

Part 2: 2009-2015 - The Workshop Era

Throughout the ‘workshop era,’ the White House Poetry Jam remained a touchstone for critics writing about Miranda’s unfolding work. In 2012, one Associated Press interview emphasised Miranda’s accelerating career trajectory, noting “You name it, the Tony Award-winning composer-lyricist of Broadway’s “In The Heights” is probably doing it. A rap album about Alexander Hamilton? Ok....”. Listing several other Broadway, comedy and television projects and accolades, the article grounded Miranda within his reputation for premiering the “Hamilton

awesomesauce/; John Lundberg, “Poetry Jam at The White House,” *The Huffington Post*, June 17, 2009, accessed February 26, 2024, https://www.huffpost.com/entry/poetry-jam-at-the-white-h_b_204012.

¹²⁷ Herbert, “In The Heights....”

¹²⁸ Robert Simonson, “Revisit Lin-Manuel Miranda’s Interview About Performing *The Hamilton Mixtape*,” *Playbill*, July 2, 2020, accessed February 25 2024, <https://playbill.com/article/playbill-brief-encounter-with-in-the-heights-and-hamilton-mixtape-songwriter-lin-manuel-miranda-com-186236>.

Mixtape...in front of the first family at the White House in 2009.” Yet, this touchstone was but a stage in a remarkable portfolio marked by support from the epitome of American theatrical elites – Stephen Sondheim. Miranda might have come across as a firecracker prepared to work on the unexpected, but he was also intimately linked with “the legend himself.” With such associations, it’s perhaps not surprising that there was a potential rumour of re-direction for the mix-tape project, with questions around “a future theatrical life” and the “challenge” of making an endlessly relevant hip-hop album in an artistic mode with a problematically short life span.¹²⁹ Somewhere between fact and rumour, *Hamilton* began to take more ‘serious’ shape – no longer just a quirky performance for a president, but a project which was seen to have greater potential for those in the know. This sense of critical support continued throughout the ‘workshop’ years, as the Hamilton project ticked over and Miranda starred in *In the Heights* and freestyle hip-hop group *Freestyle Love Supreme* (again supported by Kail).

2012: Lincoln Centre American Songbook Series

Self-described as “the world’s leading performing arts center,” the Lincoln Centre’s annual ‘American Songbook’ series was a vital opportunity for Miranda’s developing Hamilton Project.¹³⁰ Though the term ‘Great American Songbook’ had meant “one very specific thing: the Broadway-centric spectrum of music written primarily for shows and movies from the 1920’s to the 1960’s” as told by *Playbill*, “in the 21st Century, the term means many different things to many different people”.¹³¹ As “a celebration of a shared musical inheritance by some of the most fearless and exciting storytellers in song today,” the series has run annually since 1997 as a showcase for up-and-coming works and artistic projects.¹³² Described as a “lyric-driven” series, the event now embraces a wide range of performance and musical styles, reflecting the “diversity” that American storytelling is seen to include and “trying to connect the dots between all those genres” in a “uniquely American thread.” At least, that’s what was noted by the Center’s Director of Contemporary Programming ahead of the 2012 showcase. Highlighting the liberal artistic sentiment underpinning the series, Cermele contended that “American popular music has

¹²⁹ Associated Press, “Lin-Manuel Miranda pauses for a little Sondheim,” *Deseret News*, February 6, 2012, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://www.deseret.com/2012/2/6/20249901/lin-manuel-miranda-pauses-for-a-little-sondheim>.

¹³⁰ “Visit,” *Lincoln Center*, 2024, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://www.lincolncenter.org/series/visit>.

¹³¹ Will Friedwald, “Lincoln Center American Songbook 2012,” *Playbill*, December 15, 2011, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://playbill.com/article/lincoln-center-american-songbook-2012>.

¹³² “Lincoln Center Presents American Songbook,” *Lincoln Center*, 2024, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://www.lincolncenter.org/series/american-songbook>.

become a porous idea...people talk about world music: don't forget: America is part of the world too." Performers at a typical American Songbook performance include both "rising talent" and "current stars" in the artistic and theatrical worlds, though usually only few would be widely known across global pop culture.¹³³ Amidst the melting pot, it was announced in December 2011 that "week one...[would] start off with a relatively new composer on the scene, multiple Tony-winning Lin-Manuel Miranda... bringing his new rap composition about American historical figure Alexander Hamilton called *The Hamilton Mixtape*."¹³⁴ Although the event encourages "one-off's," it was Miranda's "work in progress" that won the most excitement from Cermele. Logging the topic of "Founding Father Alexander Hamilton," the *Playbill* journalist noted the project's suitability for the series – "you can't get much more American than that."¹³⁵

An official snippet of Miranda's now 12-song performance has garnered a surprisingly small viewership of only 39,000 views, having not been revived by later fan communities like the White House recording. The 2-minute video is a far cry from a full performance but still represents a vast difference within just two years, with iconic number 'My Shot' getting its first place in the public footlights with a full band and backup singers.¹³⁶ The comparison perhaps reinforces the popular association between *Hamilton* and the Obama administration and hints at the cultural niche occupied by the Songbook Series. Although the Series portrays itself as a diverse, embracing and accessible event for all of America, it's a reminder of the exclusive industry access that helped to eventually bring *Hamilton*'s peoples-history to the public stage.

In an interview with *The New York Times* ahead of the event, Miranda was asked the relatively bold question of "why Hamilton, why now?" In response, Miranda relayed his immigrant narrative of Alexander Hamilton's early years and the centrality of the written word throughout his career, "not only started the two-party system but sort of led to his undoing. He was brilliant and self-destructive and always had to have the last word. That's what hip-hop....is...the culture that's

¹³³ Friedwald, "Lincon Center American Songbook 2012."

¹³⁴ Nocole Rosky, "Lin Manuel Miranda, William Finn, et al. Set for 2012 AMERICAN SONGBOOK Series," *Broadway World*, December 5, 2011, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://www.broadwayworld.com/article/Lin-Manuel-Miranda-William-Finn-et-al-Set-for-2012-AMERICAN-SONGBOOK-Series-20111205>.

¹³⁵ Friedwalk, "Lincoln Center American Songbook 2012."

¹³⁶ Lincoln Center, "Lin-Manuel Miranda at Lincoln Center's American Songbook in 2012," *YouTube*, January 11, 2011, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OByswSEL-RA>.

built out of people pulling themselves out of their circumstances.”¹³⁷ Here, Miranda suggested several strands of thought. There’s a general historical relevance of Hamilton as an influential historical individual, but perhaps more importantly, a view of hip-hop as a perfect medium to convey what he saw in Hamilton’s story. For Miranda, this figure’s tale was a sort of prelude to the principles that remained core to both American and democratic political ideals – ideals with which Miranda appeared to strongly resonate given his family history and personal connection with the hip-hop genre. For Miranda, the modes and markers (e.g. ‘hip-hop’) with which we portray ourselves and ‘perform’ our identities such as through music provided vehicles through which to represent, navigate, and mobilise those identities as part of wider cultural and political conversations.

With the buzz of the upcoming performance and the developments since the White House Poetry Jam, Miranda began to hint at a potential future trajectory for the mixtape, citing the ways in which *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Evita* were both “concept album[s] before they were adapted into musicals.” *Playbill* noted the project as something worth following for readers falling into the “hybrid musical fans/American history buffs” camp, and “who ha[d] been suffering from withdrawal ever since *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson* closed.”¹³⁸ The *New York Times* likewise drew upon *Hamilton*’s unexpected Songbook combination, describing it as “a hip-hop story. It’s Tupac,” something which only “a cultural omnivore like Mr Miranda” could “bring...together,” citing Miranda’s “most successful merging of Broadway and rap to date” with *In The Heights* as evidence.¹³⁹ It is interesting that Miranda’s public identity as a “cultural omnivore” is seen as the key to pulling together these different contexts within performance. Without citing his own background or immigrant identity, what is suggested is Miranda’s particular ability to culturally ‘perform’ and create ‘performance’ across cultural and political intersections.¹⁴⁰

Precisely what *Hamilton*’s future was to hold became the focus of another *New York Times* critic. Describing the piece as “sensational” and Miranda as having “outdone himself,” Holden questioned “who would have thought of comparing America’s Founding Fathers to contemporary

¹³⁷ Stephen Holden, “Putting the Hip-Hop in History as Founding Fathers Rap,” *New York Times*, January 12, 2012, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/13/arts/music/hamilton-mixtape-by-lin-manuel-miranda-at-allen-room.html>.

¹³⁸ Simonson, “Revisit Lin-Manuel Miranda’s Interview....”

¹³⁹ Piepenburg, “He’s Taking the ‘Hood to the 1700’s.”

¹⁴⁰ Jane Levere, “Lin-Manuel Miranda Mixes Alexander Hamilton and Hip-Hop at American Songbook Series,” *Forbes*, January 10, 2012, accessed February 26, 2024, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janelevere/2012/01/10/lin-manuel-miranda-mixes-alexander-hamilton-and-hip-hop-at-american-songbook-series/?sh=33037220dbed>.

rappers...furiously quarrelling.” Asking whether the 12 songs performed would become “a future Broadway musical? A concept album? A multimedia extravaganza in search of a platform?,” the critic settled on being satisfied that “what it is, is hot.” What is unsatisfying from a critical perspective is precisely what qualified Miranda’s performance as having “outdone himself” – the combination of hip-hop and conservative white history was certainly unusual, but there’s an elephant in the room of this contemporary moment about precisely how to qualify the statement. What’s more, as if foreseeing the “musical theatre movement” that *Hamilton* was to become, the review was an extraordinarily enthusiastic advertisement for a project which remained very much behind lock-and-key as far as the general public was concerned.¹⁴¹ And, although Miranda here hesitated to project Hamilton’s next decade following the Songbook - citing his connection “to the idealism of the show” in comparison to being “jaded and bitter and sad” in “10 years” - *Hamilton* was set to grow.¹⁴²

“Can we get back to politics?”: Obama Underway

Songbook aside, what soon became most valuable about the White House event was not public visibility or interest in the project, but the political and theatrical networking opportunities with which the growing *Hamilton* project was now destined to be associated. Shortly after Miranda’s Songbook performance, Obama wrapped up his first term in office and managed to secure a second.

Having received a “super-charged turnout from independents, younger voters and Latinos that had worked in his favour” in 2008 as a “hopeful uniter,” the forecast was grey against new Republican candidate Mitt Romney – even if the Republican party had “become obsessed with its conservative base” and received “alienation among moderates and less ideologically inclined independents.” Romney himself had not helped this image. In contrast to Obama’s rhetoric of inclusivity and individual agency, a video of Romney circulated in which he dismissed a supposed “lazy, dependent” “47 per cent” who were, as paraphrased by Joseph Vogel, “the phantoms who ‘had haunted rich white men for decades’”.¹⁴³ On the Democratic side, the “new spirit in the country” of “Obamania” had cooled as the qualities of his 2008 campaign performances - “the

¹⁴¹ Stephen Holden, “Putting the Hip-Hop in History.”

¹⁴² Piepenburg, “He’s Taking the ‘Hood to the 1700’s....”

¹⁴³ David Jackson, “How Obama won re-election,” *USA Today*, 2014, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2012/11/07/turnout-and-organization-were-key-to-obama-victory/1688537/>; Joseph Vogel, “‘Civilisation’s going to pieces’: The Great Gatsby, Identity, and Race, from the Jazz age to the Obama Era,” *The F. Scott Fitzgerald Review* 13 (2015): 38-9.

manner of his speaking, the colour of his skin and the constant invocation of the word ‘change’” – seemed to have delivered more Shakespeare than shake-up:¹⁴⁴ economic indicators were reasonably weak, opinion poll approval rates hovered around the 40s, and as reported by *The Washington Quarterly*, a “whopping 75% said the country was on the wrong track.”¹⁴⁵

In comparison to the naïve hopes of 2008, the context of 2012 was aptly evidenced (perhaps surprisingly) by another in-progress, politically conscious piece of culture: Baz Luhrmann’s *The Great Gatsby*. Premiering as Obama settled into his second-term, Luhrmann’s film drew similar parallels between politics past and present in view of the American dream, providing insight into the fading of the so-called “Obama Effect.” As noted by Vogel, the film “function[ed] as a multi-media text in the Obama era...speak[ing] in strikingly familiar terms to the issues of [the] time,” such as race, immigration, and socio-economic power. Like Miranda’s take on the Founding Fathers, Luhrman was “less interested in historical reverence” to the past depicted in the 1925 text as “he was in ‘making it new’.” Obama was now established as a political character and as a “cipher” on the political stage, he had to stand “for [all of] America’s greatest hopes, fears and prejudices.” Like all good characters, his role and its meaning were complex. As much as he represented an ‘American dream’, Republican-dominated concern also saw (as with *Gatsby*) Obama’s “[un]acceptable past,” leading to continued “public obsession” with his “true identity.” “Conservative panic” about “illegal aliens,” “racially coded individualist rhetoric about the ‘makers’ and the ‘takers’,” and for some, concerns about the “traditional America,” pervaded American political discourse in the very manner of Fitzgerald’s elite Tom Buchanan.¹⁴⁶ Though Obama clung onto the role, the optimism of the “Obama effect” – of representation, inclusion and empowered performance - had already begun to wane. A supposedly “reactionary” right was starting to prepare for the next election – one which would be won by controversial conservative Donald Trump and coincide roughly with *Hamilton*’s Broadway debut.¹⁴⁷

If the reality of Obama’s aspirational significance as a Black American had begun to wane, how then had he managed to secure another term? When election time came, Obama became the

¹⁴⁴ Ali, *The Obama Syndrome*, 8.

¹⁴⁵ Charles E. Cook Jr., “Have President Obama’s Re-Election Prospects Brightened?,” *The Washington Quarterly* 35, no.2 (2012): 193-198; David A. Fahrenthold, “Obama re-elected as president,” *The Washington Post*, November 7, 2012, accessed February 27, 2024, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/decision2012/after-grueling-campaign-polls-open-for-election-day-2012/2012/11/06/d1c24c98-2802-11e2-b4e0-346287b7e56c_story.html.

¹⁴⁶ Vogel, “‘Civilisation’s going to pieces’,” 38.

¹⁴⁷ Parker, “Race and Politics,” 227.

first president to win a smaller popular vote for a second term. Though perhaps magnifying the extent of dissatisfaction with the presidency, Obama's senior advisor David Plouffe attributed the marginal victory to even greater campaign organisation. Building upon the organisational success of the first term's "get-out-and-vote" campaign, the second was "three years in the making." Plouffe particularly emphasised a renewed use of the digital which developed further the mobilised political performance of 2008.¹⁴⁸ To ensure 'offline' political support in the form of votes, the Obama team performed across several digital stage-spaces. The majority of the \$690 million in campaign funding came through fundraising emails – individual connections to would-be supporters – and while the campaign's official Facebook presence used the platform "as a tool of top-down promotion, focussing on Obama's personality" there was more social media work going on behind the scenes.¹⁴⁹ At the core of the 2012 campaign was "a unified computer database that gathers and refines information on millions of potential voters" based upon Facebook data. Taking full advantage of the boom in public accounts, the database allowed those at any level of the campaign to learn about their target demographics and more individually tailor messaging to would-be voters.¹⁵⁰ Almost in a reverse of the political fractioning feared in the noughties, thanks to the evolving digital sphere political participation was no longer optional and could be discretely targeted according to individuals' social media presence. Before going on-stage to accept his nomination, Obama took to Twitter and his team sent individual emails thanking each supporter who had taken "ownership" and "made this happen."¹⁵¹ In a continuation of his 2008 rhetoric, Obama's victory was portrayed as belonging to the nation, but it had only been made possible by the digital endeavours that had revised what 'ownership' or 'making it happen' meant.

2013: Vassar College Powerhouse Theatre Festival

¹⁴⁸ David Jackson, "How Obama won re-election."

¹⁴⁹ Alexis C. Madrigal, "Hey I need to talk to you about this brilliant Obama email scheme," *The Atlantic*, November 29, 2012, accessed April 20, 2026, <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2012/11/hey-i-need-to-talk-to-you-about-this-brilliant-obama-email-scheme/265725/>; Roman Gerodimos and Jákup Justinussen, "Obama's 2012 Facebook Campaign: Political Communication in the Age of the Like Button," *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 12 no.2 (2015): 113.

¹⁵⁰ Ed Pilkington and Amanda Michel, "Obama, Facebook and the power of friendship: the 2012 data election," *The Guardian*, Feb 17, 2012, accessed April 20, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/17/obama-digital-data-machine-facebook-election>.

¹⁵¹ John Constine, "Obama Declares Election Victory via Email and Tweet Before Speech," *TechCrunch*, November 6, 2012, accessed April 20, 2026, <https://techcrunch.com/2012/11/06/obama-wins-email/>.

Shortly after Obama's second electoral win, Miranda's *Hamilton* project moved into its next phase of development at the Vassar College Powerhouse Theatre Festival. Although it remained a 'mix-tape' in name, in nature *Hamilton* the musical theatre show had been conceived. The Powerhouse program had been run at Vassar College for almost 40 years as an "incubator for Broadway-bound plays and musicals." Now on the "cusp of mainstream stardom," Miranda joined an array of seasoned actors, playwrights, and producers with a staged version of around two thirds of the eventual *Hamilton* show - an entire first act and snippets of the second.¹⁵² Though the piece had firmly moved towards the theatrical, the showcase at this stage remained a presentation without costume or staging. One YouTube account, "HamiltonOldSchool," uploaded a 1hr30 audio recording of the presentation amidst the Hamilmania and 'Cancel Hamilton' debacle of summer 2020 (see Chapter Four). It had received a mere 15,000 views as of 2024. This might suggest a limited general public or fandom interest in the show's history and development in more recent years (see Chapter Five) but nonetheless gives some insight into the exclusive Vassar stage usually barred from the general public. The performance is musically pared back and the lyrics remain unfinalized, but it is a clear development from the Songbook performance with marked characterisation and theatrical intent.¹⁵³ Several future *Hamilton* cast members such as Daveed Diggs and Christopher Jackson were already in-place and future Aaron Burr, Leslie Odom Jr., chanced to look on from the audience. Oskar Eustis, chief of *Hamilton*'s future off-Broadway run at The Public Theatre, was also in attendance.¹⁵⁴

The then recently formed 'Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society' (AHA) also happened to be in town that week. A symptom of the contemporary resurgence in historical interest in Alexander Hamilton, it was "created informally around a "common interest in learning about Hamilton and in encouraging others to learn about him." Now the official partner of the 'Hamilton Grange' National Memorial, "the only...nonprofit organization dedicated to educating about Alexander Hamilton's life and legacy" claims non-political affiliation and has a leadership dominated by

¹⁵² Philip Boroff, "Hip-Hop Hero."

¹⁵³ Hamilton OldSchool, "The Hamilton Mixtape – Vassar College – July 27, 2013 Act 1 and Highlights of Act 2," *YouTube*, August 3, 2020, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3FlnOJbvUk&list=PLDQCFpW7TDv5C9rH3JHI2ccIMl4tcdtP7&index=23>.

¹⁵⁴ A cast list of the Vassar performance can be found on the following link. It is testament to the cultural space occupied by the digital sphere that this document was uncovered not in a traditional archive, on such a digital platform as Reddit. This is a social media-blog website, with a moderated, 30-000-weekly visitor strong 'Hamilton musical' thread as of March 2026. It's difficult to fully verify the source, but is popularly held to be true, e.g. on the *Hamilton* wikipedia page. aotburr, "The original cast for *Hamilton* from its first public reading at Vassar College (Act I only)," *Reddit*, 2016, accessed March 25, 2026, "https://www.reddit.com/r/hamiltonmusical/comments/3ykp0j/the_original_cast_for_hamilton_from_its_first/."

academics and retired financiers. AHA president Nicole Sholet was invited to get involved with the cast following the Vassar performance.¹⁵⁵

The show's potential for a mainstream Broadway audience shone through. Sholet remarked that though "everyone was in plain street clothes," "it was so powerful in this format with just the songs" radiating "unparalleled energy." Miranda supposedly received a standing ovation just for setting on-stage. This could have been strongly attributed to the growing celebrity of his person, but Sholet instead emphasised the historical value of the upcoming work – that "by making the founders so relatable and understandable," "Lin gave power to those who felt disenfranchised." Sholet further remarked that the performance made her realise "how powerful theatre can be."¹⁵⁶ The project could perhaps have been a wonderful new "educational tool...to inspire interest in learning about Hamilton and the Founding era and...apply the knowledge of the past in building [the] future."¹⁵⁷ Given the show's later success and educational investment (see Chapter Three), it is interesting that the show has not remained a formal friend of the AHA according to the list provided on the website. It is a mark, perhaps, that something in the show's later mythos or historical work at some point exempted it from official association, even though one would assume *Hamilton's* interest in the historical figure would align well with the organisation's goals.¹⁵⁸ Sholet has however contributed to an "Unofficial Hamilton" publication which explores "how locations from Hamilton's life are connected to...the musical" and has separately given the show enthusiastic praise. Though apparently aimed at fans and citing a variety of positive reviews on its blurb (including from Alexander's 5th great-grandson who cites the "wonderful ties" between "the musical... and the man"), it is unclear whether the book is intended to be in support of, neutral towards, or to develop more critical perspectives upon the eventual Broadway hit.¹⁵⁹ As before, Miranda was unwilling to "talk about what may happen in the future" to the press after Vassar. With the majority of *Hamilton* material coming from critics or, on rare occasions, the

¹⁵⁵ "Welcome to the AHA Society," *The Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society*, 2026, accessed March 25, 2026, <https://theahasociety.org/>.

¹⁵⁶ As reported by Sasha Tuddenham, "The Start of the Hamilton Mixtape, Right Here in Poughkeepsie," *Marist Circle*, April 24, 2021, accessed April 15, 2026, <https://www.maristcircle.com/features/2021/4/24/-start-hamilton-mixtape-in-poughkeepsie>.

¹⁵⁷ "Who we are," *The Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society*, 2024, accessed March 30, 2024, <https://theahasociety.org/about/>.

¹⁵⁸ See for example: "Welcome", "Who we are", "Collaborators and Friends", "Welcome to the AHA Society," *The Alexander Hamilton Awareness Society*, 2024, accessed March 30, 2024, <https://theahasociety.org/>.

¹⁵⁹ Bryan Barreras and Nicole Sholet ed., *Where was the Room Where it Happened?: The Unofficial Hamilton – An American Musical Location Guide* (Unknown: Bryan Barreras, 2020).

press at this point, it's hard at this point to understand whether this was a sign of uncertainty, artistic protection, or industry gatekeeping.¹⁶⁰ *Hamilton* would power on regardless.

2014: 52nd Street

One year before Trump announced his presidential campaign, *Hamilton* moved into its final workshop phase at New York's 52nd Street Project. Populated by Broadway's brightest, this was an opportunity to put the show on its feet in greater detail and update select critical friends, financiers, and family. The project was firmly backed by Jeffrey Seller, Roy Furman, and Sander Jacobs, some of whom had (as previously noted) been with Miranda since *In The Heights* and followed the *Hamilton* project throughout its journey. The work received continued support from Lacamoire, Kail, and Blankenbuehler, and a greater proportion of the future Broadway cast were now involved, with Odom Jr., Renée Elise Goldsberry, Phillipa Soo, Anthony Ramos, and Okieriete Onaodowan in situ. This was also the first time a full orchestra was present. Though several numbers were to change dramatically over the next two years ('No John Trumbull' and 'Ten Things, One Thing' being obvious changes to the libretto), the final *Hamilton* product was well underway. And it was a good job – its off-Broadway launch at The Public Theatre had already been announced two months earlier.¹⁶¹ From the minimal public press presence that can be accessed today, the 52nd Street presentation appeared to receive overwhelmingly positive critical responses: "The best workshop of any musical I've ever attended," remarked one anonymous producer, "I'm not even sure why they need the off-Broadway tryout," referencing the show's upcoming debut at The Public Theatre.¹⁶² This was a project that continued to exceed expectations.

A recording of the 52nd Street production is once again available on YouTube, uploaded by 'Broadway Archives' in November 2020. Like the Vassar clip in being uploaded long after the original performance, this upload was perhaps due to the attention afforded the show across the Covid-19 pandemic. Although the recording is but a soundboard audio file, the 2hr30 video had attracted over 110,000 views by 2024. It's possible that access to the Disney+ film some months before had piqued interest in the show's first proper staging and previous libretto, even though

¹⁶⁰ Boroff, "Hip-Hop Hero."

¹⁶¹ Adam Hetrick, "Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton* to Be Staged at the Public Theatre," *Playbill*, March 6, 2014, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://playbill.com/article/lin-manuel-mirandas-hamilton-to-be-staged-at-the-public-theater-com-215713>.

¹⁶² Jeremy Gerard, "Tony 2015 Kicks off as Broadway Shows Love for 'Hamilton,'" *Deadline*, May 12, 2014, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://deadline.com/2014/05/tony-2015-kicks-off-as-broadway-shows-love-for-hamilton-728680/>.

the latter is provided more than the former. With hindsight, it reinforces the continued importance of appreciating *Hamilton* as a musical piece to be engaged with audibly, even when the ‘final’ and ‘full-bodied’ product had been made available elsewhere.

2015: Off-Broadway at The Public Theatre

More than ready for an official debut, *Hamilton* hit The Public Theatre as part of its 2014-15 season for a limited run between 20th January and February 22nd. The Public is well-regarded as a non-profit theatre and fostering home for up-and-coming works involving “some of the most important ideas and social issues of today.” Many such projects have gone on to great success, though *Hamilton* remains one of only two previously-hosted shows to be specified in their welcome statement.¹⁶³ The Public billed *Hamilton* as a “wildly inventive new show about the life, death and rhymes of a scrappy young immigrant who forever changed America” – the use of ‘rhymes’ conflating the show’s musical role and the historical politician, while also making possible the re-branding and reclaiming of the privileged Hamilton as a ‘scrappy young immigrant’. Miranda’s Tony and now Grammy-winning status from *Heights* was emphasised, as was the show’s “astonishing musical exploration of a political mastermind who was both a sinner and a saint” through a “breathtaking array of music.” *Hamilton* invited audience members to “tak[e] your shot, spea[k] your mind and tur[n] the world upside down”: in other words, have an individual voice and agency and embrace one’s personal identity and power to make a difference. Without one word claiming a clear political identity or party alignment, the demand brought theatrical performance together with the performance of identity politics and echoed as if one of Obama’s campaign slogans from 2008.¹⁶⁴

Hamilton was now firmly within the public sight, rather than behind the doors of exclusive Broadway circles. Even so (and foreshadowing the Broadway launch later that year), actual theatrical accessibility was limited by a sell-out run despite two later extensions that gave the production team more space to perfect and refine the performance. Press reviews responded to the premiere with ecstatic enthusiasm. *Playbill* even provided a list of 22 critical pieces, though

¹⁶³ “Welcome,” *The Public Theatre*, 2024, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://publictheater.org/about/About-The-Public/>.

¹⁶⁴ Public Theatre, 2014, original page unavailable, quoted by Itshamilttime, “Buzz building for Miranda’s “Hamilton!”, *Itshamilttime*, May 24, 2014, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://itshamilttime.com/2014/05/>.

not all remain digitally accessible.¹⁶⁵ “Word having been “spreading, circulating, building to a fever pitch since May, 2009,” one critic commented that they “[couldn’t] think of another show since *Les Miserables* ...that’d generated so much pre-opening excitement,” nor “another show since *Rent*, at which [they] felt the thrill not only of a promise being fulfilled but of history being made.”¹⁶⁶ This was not just a show “destined for a Broadway transfer” (as predicted during the 52nd Street phase) but “the future of Broadway,” “groundbreaking,” and “fiercely dynamic,” with songs that created “new genres of their own.”¹⁶⁷ “The music is exhilarating” noted *Variety*, “the musical idiom...astonishingly fluid,” and an “impassioned narrative of one man’s story” is understood as “the collective narrative of a nation, a nation built by immigrants who occasionally need to be reminded where they came from.”¹⁶⁸ Not only was the show depicted as technically impressive, but ideologically persuasive. Here, Broadway was reinforced as an innately political performance space, even without a single political identity or allegiance being overtly claimed by those making such declarations. As *Hamilton* moved towards the Great White Way, Trump began his Republican campaign, and the Obama presidency began to slip away, it almost seemed that *Hamilton* was beginning to serve as a reminder of the specific American dreamscape into which it was born – a surviving relic of noughties, democratic optimism in the face of political mobilisation and change.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Playbill Staff, “The Verdict: Read reviews of Lin-Manuel Miranda’s New Musical *Hamilton* at the Public,” *Playbill*, February 17, 2015, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://playbill.com/article/the-verdict-read-reviews-of-lin-manuel-mirandas-new-musical-hamilton-at-the-public-com-342027>.

¹⁶⁶ Jeremy Gerard, “Revolutionary ‘Hamilton’ Raps up American History with ‘Les Miz’ Fervor: Review,” *Deadline*, February 17, 2015, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://deadline.com/2015/02/musical-hamilton-opens-public-theater-1201375233/>.

¹⁶⁷ THR Staff, “Hamilton: Theatre Review,” *The Hollywood Reporter*, February 17, 2015, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/general-news/lin-manuel-mirandas-hamilton-theater-2-774361/>; Gerard, “Revolutionary Hamilton,”; Jason Clark, “‘Hamilton’: EW stage review,” *Entertainment*, February 16, 2015, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://ew.com/article/2015/02/16/hamilton-ew-review/>; Jesse Green, “Theatre Review: Is *Hamilton* Even Better than it was?,” *Vulture*, August 6, 2015, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://www.vulture.com/2015/08/theater-review-hamilton.html>; Alexis Soloski, “*Hamilton* review – Founding Father gets a hip-hop makeover,” *The Guardian*, February 18, 2015, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/feb/18/hamilton-review-founding-father-gets-a-hip-hop-makeover>.

¹⁶⁸ Marilyn Stasio, “Off Broadway Review: ‘Hamilton’ by Lin-Manuel Miranda,” *Variety*, February 17, 2015, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://variety.com/2015/legit/reviews/review-hamilton-public-theater-lin-manuel-miranda-1201435257/>.

¹⁶⁹ As also suggested by Jordan Pontelandolfo, “The impact of social media marketing on the Broadway Industry: A study of *Hamilton: An American Musical* (Unpublished thesis, University of South Carolina, 2022), accessed April 15, 2026, https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1509&context=senior_theses.

Part 3: Curtain-up on Broadway

Finally on Broadway, *Hamilton* had its second premiere at the Richard Rodgers Theatre on 6th August 2015. Critical reviews in the popular press remained highly applauding. Articles cited the extent to which the show was “as revolutionary as ever,” and lived up to the preceding “worshipful press” with an inspirational ability to “make[] [you] feel the unstoppable, urgent rhythm of a nation being born.”¹⁷⁰ What made *Hamilton* so significant at this point, though, was not so much the responses of media critics or Broadway experts, but the engagement of the American (and global) publics. After years of drip-fed information and teases of the show in select outlets, the public had spent over \$27 million in pre-opening ticket sales. When seats opened up for the next 11 months in November 2015, the \$57 million in advanced sales set a new Broadway record – though no doubt supported by some eyewatering official pricing of \$139-\$549 per seat.

¹⁷¹ The extent of the show’s commercial success was virtually unprecedented. As of 2024, *Hamilton* ranked only behind *The Lion King*, *Les Miserables*, and *Phantom of the Opera* in terms of gross revenue for Broadway-only income and had long been part of the \$1 billion club when factoring in other parts of the enterprise (e.g. Disney+ rights, tours, merchandise sales).¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Terry Teachout, “‘Hamilton’ Review: The Revolution moves Uptown,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 6, 2015, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/hamilton-review-the-revolution-moves-uptown-1438907400>; Ben Brantley, “Review: ‘Hamilton,’ Young Rebels, Changing History and Theater,” *The New York Times*, August 6, 2015, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/07/theater/review-hamilton-young-rebels-changing-history-and-theater.html>. For a compilation of Broadway reviews see: Playbill Staff, “Read Critics’ Original Reviews for *Hamilton* on Broadway,” *Playbill*, July 2, 2020, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://playbill.com/article/the-verdict-read-critics-reviews-for-hamilton-on-broadway-com-356498>.

¹⁷¹ Ash Jurberg, “Why ‘Hamilton’ Became a Success,” *Better Marketing*, July 6, 2020, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://bettermarketing.pub/why-hamilton-became-a-success-5cb0214f213c>; Nicole Rosky, “HAMILTON Racks Up Record-Breaking \$57M in Advance Sales,” *Broadway World*, November 9, 2015, accessed February 27, 2024, <https://www.broadwayworld.com/article/HAMILTON-Racks-Up-Record-Breaking-57M-in-Advance-Sales-20151109>.

¹⁷² For data, see: “THE LION KING Broadway Grosses,” *Broadway World*, 2024, accessed March 30, 2024, <https://www.broadwayworld.com/grosses/THE-LION-KING>; “WICKED Broadway Grosses,” *Broadway World*, 2024, accessed March 30, 2024, <https://www.broadwayworld.com/grosses/WICKED>; “PHANTOM OF THE OPERA Broadway Grosses,” *Broadway World*, 2024, accessed March 30, 2024, <https://www.broadwayworld.com/grosses/THE-PHANTOM-OF-THE-OPERA>; “HAMILTON Broadway Grosses,” *Broadway World*, 2024, accessed March 30, 2024, <https://www.broadwayworld.com/grosses/THE-PHANTOM-OF-THE-OPERA>; Ann Schmidt, “‘Hamilton’ What to know about the musical streaming on Disney+,” *Fox Business*, July 3, 2020, accessed March 30, 2024, <https://www.foxbusiness.com/media/hamilton-what-to-know-disney>; Dawn Chmielewski, “Lin-Manuel Miranda’s ‘Hamilton’ Crashes Broadway’s Billion-Dollar Club,” *Forbes*, June 8, 2020, accessed March 30, 2024, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dawnchmielewski/2020/06/08/lin-manuel-mirandas-hamilton-crashes-broadways-billion-dollar-club/>.

Billboards and transportation advertisements aside, marketing in a formal sense is not something that has consistently befitted the *Hamilton* brand. Even though many of the ‘insights’ into *Hamilton*’s development years discussed above represented privileged access to non-public theatrical development, the show had already developed a digital public buzz that simply exploded as the physical doors opened. Public expectation and excitement about a new piece of theatre imbued with a sense of significance isn’t new in itself – as alluded to by Gerard, other milestone musicals such as *Les Miserables* and *RENT* enjoyed some potentially comparable public buzz. ‘Potentially’ is the key word here, however. Back in the 1960s and 1990s, the lack of a true digital ‘public sphere’ – since facilitated by social media - made for incomparable accessibility and conversation. Neither had any other Broadway musical theatre received sponsorship from the highest level of political leadership in such a way that *Hamilton* had from the Obamas.

The ‘Hamilfam’ – the nickname given to the *Hamilton* fan community – had arguably been slowly nurtured amongst the critically *Hamilton*-curious since 2009 and promulgated through what Potter has termed the “Digital Backstage” of Miranda’s Twitter account.¹⁷³ As I have previously argued elsewhere, effective audience engagement with popular culture can rely significantly upon affect.¹⁷⁴ Miranda had been assiduously growing his own personal fanbase on Twitter since the early days of the platform. With almost 1 million followers by 2016, Potter has highlighted the way in which this functioned as “a robust and free publicity network” in exchange for “backstage access.” Surpassing distanced critical news outlets and articles, content here was understood as “spontaneous” and part of a fluid online identity, readily balancing nonchalant daily activities and personal creative updates alongside personal support for liberal political causes.¹⁷⁵ It amounted to a background marketing context for *Hamilton* as a show, built around Miranda as a personal and industry celebrity figure worthy of a virtual audience and community. As much as fans engaged across what has since become X, using ‘hashtags’ such as #Hamilfam to signify (or, perform) their own identities as fans of the show, they also spread their own content throughout the vast, virtual networks of the World Wide Web – Facebook, Reddit, Tumblr and Instagram to name but a few. As seen throughout this thesis, as self-conscious cocreators of the *Hamilton* phenomenon it is the ‘Hamilfam’ who have truly helped to set the show apart. *Hamilton*

¹⁷³ Potter, “Safe In the Nation We’ve Made,” 326.

¹⁷⁴ Esther Wilson, “Empathising with The People’s Princess: Diana and Public Engagement with *The Crown* and its Past,” in *Television and Empathy* ed. Michael Samuel and Theresa Trimmel, 53-70 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2026).

¹⁷⁵ Potter, “Safe in the Nation We’ve Made,” 327, 339.

was not only echoing sentiments of the Obaman era but drew upon a similar set of digital engagement techniques which were, by this point, common across social media.

This thesis terms the 2015-16 period of popular *Hamilton* enthusiasm and engagement ‘Hamilmania 1.0’. It’s important to see this as a multifaceted curation of public buzz, in which *Hamilton* itself (that is, the ‘brand’ and key individuals involved such as Miranda) was an active participant and reciprocator. To segue into the first HamilTweet example of the thesis, one example initiative was the Ham4Ham ticket lottery with its associated hashtag and streetside performances.

HamilTweet: #Ham4Ham

‘Ham4Ham’ originated as shorthand for the ticket lottery which attempted to bring some accessibility to the illustrious Richard Rodgers stage. Ticket lotteries or last-minute ticket releases are fairly common practice for in-demand theatrical performances, though somewhat unusually, a ticket lottery had even been used by The Public Theatre during *Hamilton*’s twice-extended pre-Broadway run. What arguably now set Ham4Ham apart, though, was its branding and delivery amidst an unprecedented scale of demand. With *Hamilton* as the face on the \$10 bill, the libretto’s “ten dollar Founding Father” represented the hopes of many would-be theatre goers: a seat in “the room where it happens” for as little as 1.8% of the value of other spots in the audience. Being at most 7.2% of the cheapest ordinary seat in the house, this represented a vast difference in terms of financial accessibility. For those eagerly queueing outside of the theatre awaiting their fate, *Hamilton* began the practice of miniature street performances. Just as Obama had attempted to engage the hearts and minds of ordinary individuals on campaign, each potential *Hamilton* audience member had something of the show brought to them on the tarmac, empowering them to feel valued as part of the *Hamilton* success story, and, thereby, that of America. Furthermore, Ham4Ham participation was not limited the streets of New York. Being apt for conversion into a digital hashtag, #Ham4Ham was taken online. *Hamilton*’s growing digital presence has been lauded as “its most revolutionary element,” fully buying into the burgeoning world of the fandom’s “participatory culture” and turning consumers into contributors.¹⁷⁶ As noted by Jurberg, the creation of a hashtag “turned what could be a negative experience (missing out on a ticket) into some positive PR and media” as part of a co-created

¹⁷⁶ Jessica Hillman-McCord, “Digital Fandom: *Hamilton* and the Participatory Spectator,” 120-1. See also Clinton D Lanier, Jr., and Aubrey R. Fowler III, “Digital Fandom: Mediation, remediation and de-mediation of fan practices,” in *The Routledge Companion to Digital Consumption* ed. Russell W. Belk and Rosa Llamas (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013): 284-295.

staging of *Hamilton* and its performance of American politics beyond the Richard Rodgers.¹⁷⁷ Looking at #Ham4Ham helps to visualise how these performances not only staged identity as American, but what it meant to perform or encounter a *Hamilton*-ian identity in the show's earliest years.

The #Ham4Ham dataset stands at 175,910 tweets, meaning that the hashtag had been employed 175,910 times at the time of scoping. Figure 1 shows the frequency of fairly neutral terms associated with the #Ham4Ham hashtag, pointing perhaps to commonly shared phraseology amongst fans and the re-sharing of particular public posts containing these specific phrases. Disregarding inclusions such as “https” and “amp”, the data suggests positive public engagement with the hashtag, with the predominance of “win,” “love,” and “live.”

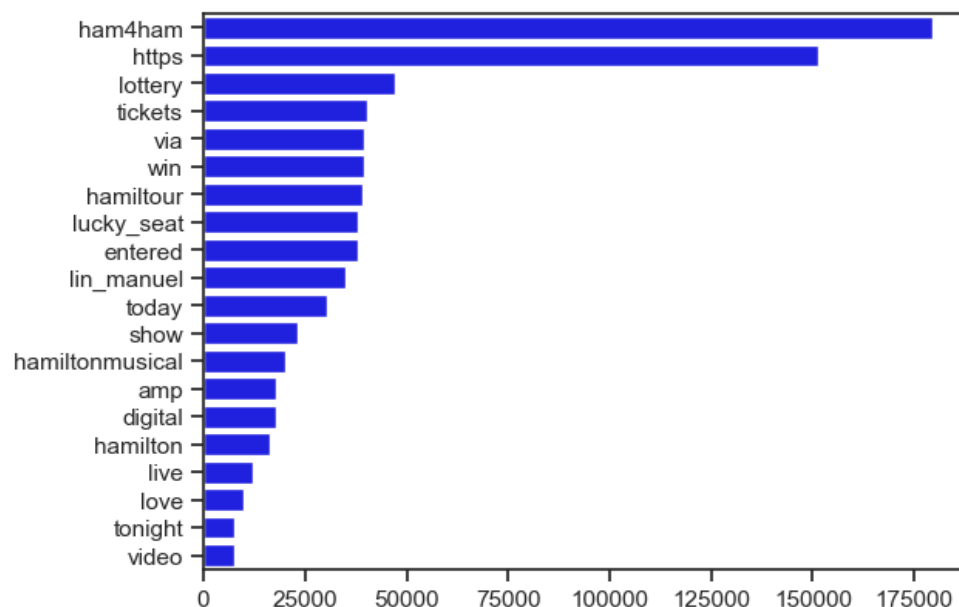


Figure 1: #Ham4Ham - word frequency

Sentiment analysis of the dataset confirms a predominance of a positive utilisation of the hashtag. As outlined elsewhere, this is the process by which Tweets were assigned an average sentiment by the VADER tool based on the language used (see ‘Introduction’ and ‘Appendix One’). This also supports Jurberg’s previous suggestion that cultivation of the hashtag by official *Hamilton* accounts was able to turn a potentially negative experience into a more positive one.

¹⁷⁷ Jurberg, “Why ‘Hamilton’ Became a Success”.

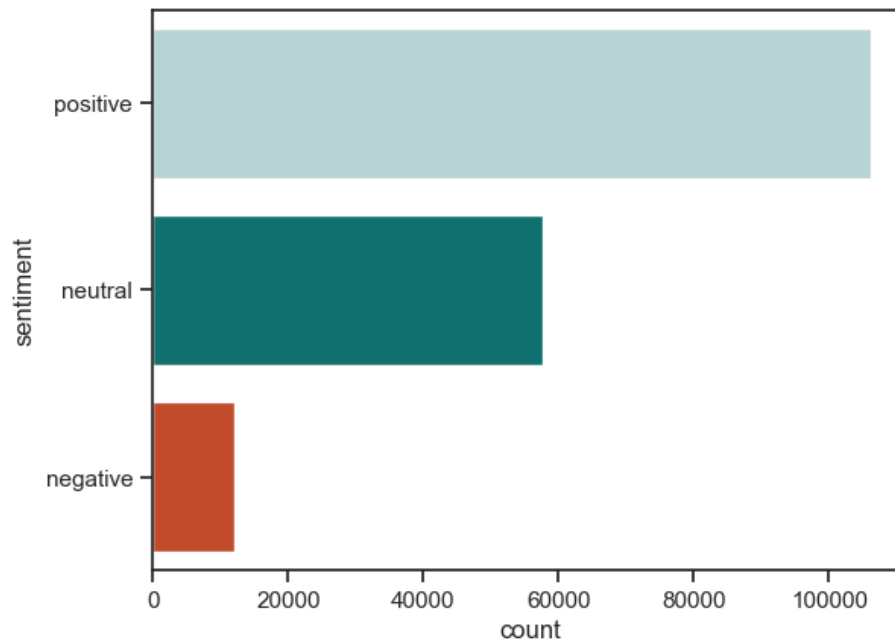


Figure 2: #Ham4Ham - sentiment analysis

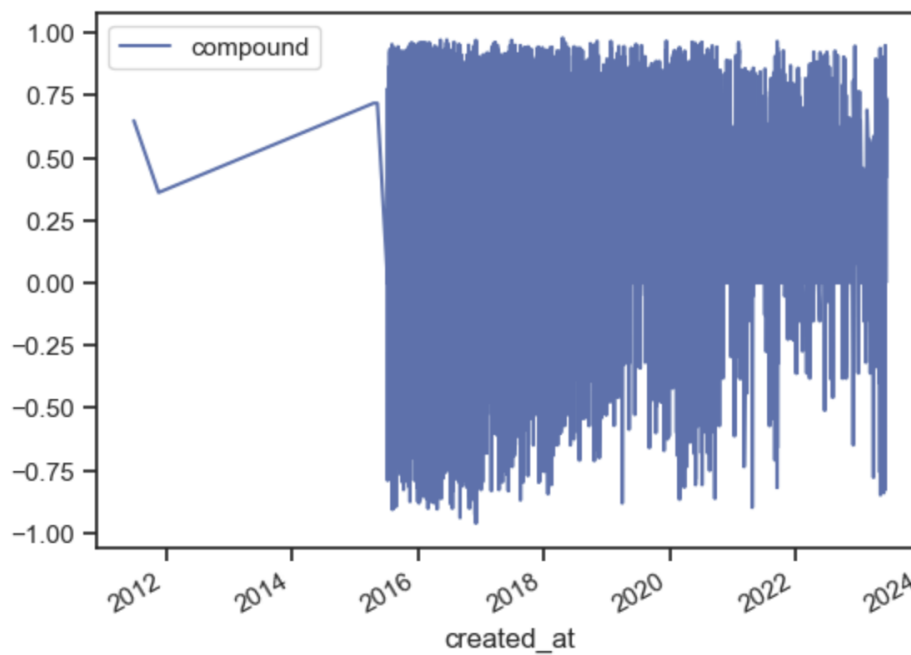


Figure 3: #Ham4Ham - average sentiment score over time

Looking at Figure 3, one can clearly see the moment that #Ham4Ham took off: part-way through 2015, just when the show opened at the Richard Rogers. Though initially receiving equal amounts of positively and negatively-charged sentiment, the hashtag enjoyed remarkably consistent positive attention until 2023 – an interesting aspect to reflect back on later in the thesis after tracing the production’s highs and lows (a small negative ‘blip’ can be seen around 2020 – see Chapter Four). Overall, the sentiment split would correlate with consistent positive fan engagement, with declining negative sentiment as the show became more accessible in later

years (see later chapters). Identifying oneself with *Hamilton* and as a member of its community not just street-side but screen-side was something to be prized. Though the quantity of posts may have declined by 2023 (see Chapter Five), a glance at X in 2023 revealed a number of ‘top’ posts relating to a series of *Sweeny Todd* or *Camelot* and *Hamilton* crossovers that summer, as well as continued ‘official’ public *Hamilton* performances across a similar time period (including one for Star Wars day, featuring Miranda himself).¹⁷⁸ Admittedly, it’s unclear how the X algorithm identified these microblogs as ‘top’. But what’s clear from just the top few is that the Ham4Ham initiative became far more than simply a \$10 bill for a performance about the old guy on the front, confined to an initial access initiative in 2015. Rather, Ham4Ham became part of something bigger, passing into contemporary popular Broadway culture both on and off-the formal theatre stage. *Hamilton* not only affected public engagement with the American past but continued to shape the ways in which its work pervades popular theatrical cultures across street, stage, and screen. This assumed ‘mythos’ of the production over time is the reason for this thesis.

A ‘transmedial’ phenomenon

As interesting as the example is, *Hamilton*’s off-stage work wasn’t limited to Ham4Ham. The filming was completed for the Disney+ film (see Chapter Two) within the first couple of months at the Richard Rodgers; the official cast recording was released in September 2015; the *Hamilton Mixtape* dropped in December 2015; monthly *HamilDrops* podcasts (featuring the now ex-President Obama himself) pooled over a 12-month period between December 2017 and December 2018. The original cast recording was the highest-charting cast album since 1963, the first cast album to ever peak at the top of the Rap Albums chart and, at the time of writing, the top-selling cast album of all time.¹⁷⁹ The *Hamilton Mixtape* proved a popular mash-up between contemporary music artists and the *Hamilton* libretto, while *HamilDrops* followed the multimedia approach with an increasingly politicised agenda, associating the on-stage narrative with those on the world stage. Although the *Mixtape* did not reach the record-breaking, multi-

¹⁷⁸ Depending on the search function of X over time, tweets on the *Twitter* platform accessed on February 28, 2023 included: @joshgroban, May 12, 2023; @stefhiddles, May 26, 2023; @SweeneyToddBway, May 19, 2023; @HamiltonMusical, Aug 31, 2023; @HamiltonMusical May 4, 2023; @Theatrely, May 19, 2023.

¹⁷⁹ Marjua Estevez, “‘Hamilton’ Broadway Album Tops Billboard Rap Chart,” *Vibe*, November 18, 2015, accessed February 28, 2024; <https://www.vibe.com/features/viva/lin-manuel-hamilton-broadway-album-no-1-billboard-rap-chart-387593/>; Keith Caulfield, “‘Hamilton’s’ Historic Chart Debut: By Numbers,” *Billboard*, October 7, 2015, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://www.billboard.com/pro/hamilton-cast-album-billboard-200/>; The album also reached #2 again in 2020 after the release of the Disney+ film, see Keith Caulfield, “‘Hamilton’ Hits No. 2 on Billboard 200, Is Highest-Charting Cast Album Since 1969,” *Billboard*, July 12, 2020, accessed March 25, 2026, <https://www.billboard.com/pro/hamilton-number-2-billboard-200/#:~:text=2%20on%20Billboard%20200%2C%20Is,the%20Billboard%20200%20albums%20chart.>

platinum heights of the original cast recording, it still debuted at the top of the Billboard 2000, receiving a Metacritic score of 77/100.¹⁸⁰ By the time the Disney+ film was released in 2020 amidst the unfolding Covid-19 pandemic, *Hamilton* had enjoyed three American tours (2017, 2018, 2019), a Chicago residency (2016), and a West End launch (2017). All the while, the *Hamilton Education Program*, in partnership with the Gilder Lehrman Institute, began to take form (see Chapter Three). *Hamilton* seemed to be everywhere.

Together, the show's popular presence came to constitute an all-encompassing *Hamil*-sphere which fostered the emerging Hamilmania not just within the Richard Rodgers, but on the streets outside of it and on the screens depicting those Ham4Ham streetside-performances: not just in the ears of listeners in the cast recording, but entrenched in their understanding of the wider cultural moment in *HamilDrops*, or bopping along to the *Mixtape*. *Hamilton* was happening across physical and digital stages both in America and globally. And in this engagement, we can see the public taking their own ownership and agency over *Hamilton* and its history with deeply personal investment in the show. What *Hamilton* meant to the average fan was not simply in-person or virtual, but across both: the buzz of the physical theatre experience fuelled by digital virality online, what happened on the theatre stage as inseparable from those of the polling station. As fans began to reckon with this new cultural blockbuster *Hamilton*, could be understood as not just an inter-medial phenomenon (that is, 'happening' across different mediums) but as emergingly trans-medial (that is, between and across different mediums).

A Change of President and A Change of Scene(ry)

For a play so entwined with the dominant political narrative of America, the change in political background around 2016 was significant. Even more famous for his use of Twitter than Miranda, Donald Trump was elected amidst the "rise" of the post-Obaman "reactionary right" as Parker had predicted.¹⁸¹ Well in advance of the 2020 #BLM movement and the associated #CancelHamilton trend (see Chapter Four), some began to point out the potential for the "representation of minorities in art" to "develop a façade of overcoming racial barriers": just as the Obama presidency, in bringing a black man to be the face of America, had arguably led to the decline of policies addressing social justice or racial inequality, and perhaps even further

¹⁸⁰ Keith Caulfield, "'The Hamilton Mixtape' Debuts at NO.1 on the Billboard 200 Albums Chart," *Billboard*, December 11, 2016, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://www.billboard.com/pro/the-hamilton-mixtape-debuts-at-no-1-on-billboard-200-albums-chart/>; Metacritic, "The Hamilton Mixtape," *Metacritic*, 2024, <https://www.metacritic.com/music/the-hamilton-mixtape/various-artists>, accessed February 28, 2024.

¹⁸¹ Parker, "Race and Politics in the Age of Obama," 227.

problematised racial experiences for global majority Americans in certain conservative circles.¹⁸² The mythos of a democratic imagination under Obama had not truly been renewed by his revising of identity politics – instead, century-old political tidal trends had been followed. The election was a contextual turning point for the show in which Obama had found “a story like his own.”¹⁸³

Whether in the 2009 Poetry Jam or on the campaign trail, the Obama administration had at least presented a form of American identity centred around inclusion and based upon individual initiative and investment in political change. For his critics, the end of the presidency perhaps reinforced the extent to which it had all been a marketing campaign for his own access to power – not about genuine representation and participation and change-making at all, but perhaps only skin-deep. A signified, political act in the performative sense, as well as the practical. Yet, as lamented by commentator McFadden in looking back at the 2009 White House Poetry Jam, “The Obamas ha[d] taken art from the edges and placed it front and centre. Their legacy – now at risk – [was] to make all Americans feel visible” – a feat achieved no less by sponsorship of the “race-bending, genre-flipping, true American story in musical form” that *Hamilton* had become known as.¹⁸⁴ Reinforcing the power of performance rather than diminishing it, *Hamilton* was almost seen as the new bearer of responsibility for those dismayed at Trump’s win. It is fitting, then, that Obama invited the *Hamilton* cast to perform at The White House “One Last Time” before leaving office. This time, the performance read not as an aspirational vision of a presidency to come, but a bittersweet reflection upon the Democratic vision that had failed to fully materialise just as *Hamilton* was coming into its own. Footage of the “workshop and Q&A session” uploaded to YouTube by news channel CBS shortly afterwards has collected almost 20 million views – far more than the clips discussed earlier in this chapter. With footage of a sung performance, the clip also features an introduction given by Obama himself, with “remarks on the history behind ‘*Hamilton*’” before the whole cast sing as a collective the opening number and once again introduce the character of Alexander to the audience.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Kylie Umehira, “All Hammed Up: How *Hamilton: An American Musical* Addresses Post-Racial Beliefs,” *Deerfield: Journal of the CAS Writing Program* 9 (2016-2017), accessed April 27, 2026, <https://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/files/2017/08/Umehira-Issue-9.pdf>, 3

¹⁸³ Kevin Liptak, “At hot-ticket ‘Hamilton,’ Obama finds a story like his own,” *CNN*, July 18, 2015, accessed April 18, 2026, <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/07/17/politics/obama-hamilton-broadway>.

¹⁸⁴ McFadden, “Hamilton at the White House.”

¹⁸⁵ CBS News, “Hamilton cast performs ‘Alexander Hamilton’ at White House,” *YouTube*, March 14, 2016, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPrAKuOBWzw>.

As if reciprocal to Obama's own endorsement of the show, the official *Hamilton* media described the 2016 event as a space to "celebrate the profound legacy" Obama left behind. The video posted by *Hamilton*'s own YouTube account was uploaded amidst the preparation for Obamas "final days in office" and amassed over 12 million views. In such a vein, the video is forthright in its support of the outgoing administration.¹⁸⁶ *Hamilton* was not only popularly seen as an important part of the Obama's legacy but actively acknowledged this itself, complexly fusing an emergent mythos with this political connection. *Hamilton* might have aimed to "Teach 'em how to say goodbye," but the rest of the thesis will explore how the show would appear to continue the political legacy through its ongoing educational work and sociopolitical activism, even with its new (and hardly apolitical) commercial partnership with media giant, Disney.

Concluding thoughts

Less than two weeks after Trump won his presidential election, incoming Vice-President Mike Pence found himself in the privileged possession of *Hamilton* tickets just three months into its Broadway ride. That the family trip was reportedly very much "enjoyed" might suggest that *Hamilton* retained a remarkable sense of cross-party appeal for a show so strongly associated with the Obama administration.¹⁸⁷ It proved more complex. As *Vox* reported of the event, Pence was not "just any theatregoer" and *Hamilton* not "just any Broadway musical." In backlash against the recently won "anti-immigrant" campaign, Pence was greeted with a mixture of boos and cheers from the audience.¹⁸⁸ Some message from the stage was to be expected owing to the evening being a fundraising date, but Pence also received a more personalised address. Dixon, who was playing Burr that evening, thanked Pence for attending and said that the cast "hope[d] that [he] would hear [them] out." Dixon's message emphasised "the diverse America" who were "alarmed and anxious that [Pence's] new administration [would] not protect [them], our planet, our children, our parents, or defend [them] and uphold [their] inalienable rights." The short lecture, spoken as Pence left the auditorium, closed with a "hope that this show ha[d] inspired

¹⁸⁶ *Hamilton*, "'One Last Time' – Hamilton at the White House #ObamaLegacy," *YouTube*, January 10, 2017, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uV4UpCq2azs>.

¹⁸⁷ Michael Gioia, "Mike Pence Enjoyed Hamilton; Was Not Offended by The Cast," *Playbill*, November 20, 2016, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://playbill.com/article/mike-pence-enjoyed-hamilton-was-not-offended-by-the-cast>.

¹⁸⁸ Caroline Framke, "Mike Pence went to see Hamilton. The audience booed – but the cast delivered a personal plea," *Vox*, November 19, 2016, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://www.vox.com/culture/2016/11/19/13683864/mike-pence-hamilton-booed-clip>.

[Pence] to uphold our American values and to work on behalf of all of [them].” It read like an outgoing plea from Obama’s Democratic party. Pence responded somewhat graciously to what had become the elephant in the Broadway room, citing that he “had heard” the message and reassured the public that Trump was “preparing to be the president of all the people of the United States” and “brin[g] together people of diverse views...every day.”¹⁸⁹ *Hamilton* did not just set itself up as a show that would undertake political work through its theatrical art, educational, or, later on, its social justice work, but as a bold speaker directly to the political powers on behalf of those deemed unseen or maligned by them. It was an ironic re-work of Trump’s claim to stand for ordinary Americans whose voices and interests were excluded by the liberal establishment.

The “rare appeal” for a Broadway show was shared on the official *Hamilton* Twitter account to the tune of over 10,000 replies and over 200,000 supportive ‘likes’.¹⁹⁰ Trump offered a less ‘political’ response in the tactical, communicative sense of the word. He took to Twitter to demand that the cast apologise for the “harass[ing]” of Pence, lauding that “The Theater must always be a safe and special place.”¹⁹¹ *Hamilton* issued no apology. With a protagonist who is constantly “writing like [he’s] running out of time” *Hamilton* reinforced its latest political performance through silence. This Alexander Hamilton’s 2 hours and 45 minutes of stage presence had disrupted two-centuries of historical conversation, and the eighteenth-century conservative could no longer have anything to do with the political ‘right’ to which, historically speaking, he belonged.

This chapter began with positing the centrality of the Obama administration for the development of the *Hamilton* musical and its longer-term mythos. Exploring the show’s journey from Chernow’s page to Broadway stage and the beginning of the show’s digital presence, it asked in what ways *Hamilton* was connected to the Obama era, and how people knew about the show. Considering the period 2009-2015, what emerges is *Hamilton* as being birthed by a creative with his own sense of exceptionalism in response to a specific set of political, technological, and

¹⁸⁹ Eric Bradner, “Pence: ‘I wasn’t offended’ by message of ‘Hamilton’ cast,” *CNN*, November 20, 2016, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://edition.cnn.com/2016/11/20/politics/mike-pence-hamilton-message-trump/index.html>.

¹⁹⁰ Christopher Mele and Patrick Healy, “‘Hamilton’ had some unscripted lines for Pence. Trump wasn’t happy,” *The New York Times*, November 19, 2016, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/19/us/mike-pence-hamilton.html>; @HamiltonMusical, *Twitter*, November 19, 2016, accessed February 28, 2024.

¹⁹¹ Joanna Walters, “Trump demands apology from Hamilton cast after Mike Pence booed,” *The Guardian*, November 19, 2016, accessed February 28, 2024, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/19/mike-pence-booed-at-hamilton-performance-then-hears-diversity-plea>; @realDonaldTrump, *Twitter*, November 19, 2016, accessed February 28, 2024.

cultural contexts. The confluence of circumstances not only helps us to understand and contextualise *Hamilton*'s mythos and thereby lay the ground for future chapters, but to conceptualise *Hamilton* as a transmedial product where the consumer or 'public' is central to the formation of the product 'whole' across multifaceted spaces and representations. Though the show can certainly be seen as an effective cultural product of the Obama era, what also begins to emerge through deploying discussions of 'performance' are the parallels between different stage-spaces: the performativity of politics and political engagement, and the politicalities of theatrical performance. What this chapter has not yet delved into is the precise machinations of *Hamilton* as a performed product: what is it about the *Hamilton* show as a piece of Broadway performance that makes it so apt for political, historical and cultural analysis? Continuing to delve into the 'mythos' of the show and the affect of stage presence, this is what the following chapter will start to interrogate.

Chapter Two

Dancing and “Dressing Like the Pits of Fashion”: *Hamilton*’s Storytelling

Introduction

With some irony given the title of Samuel’s seminal *Theatres of Memory*, comparatively little ‘stage presence’ has been given to the past as performed from the historian’s perspective. A recent exception would be Dean’s *Performing Public History Case Studies in Historical Storytelling* (2025), but even this was in response to his own two-decade call for dedicated scholarly attention to public history in performance. In spite of the apparent stage fright there remains as de Matos has penned “much potential to engage with dance in terms of how it interprets the past, how it communicates these interpretations to an audience, and how an audience receives that knowledge and experience.”¹⁹² As a singing and dancing Broadway show, *Hamilton* offers an opportunity for the historian to get into costume and step into the limelight as the tale unfolds. As much as the show has become a multi-media phenomenon, the practical foundation of its cultural mythos is its nature as high-budget musical theatre experience. If we are to consider the significance of *Hamilton* as a cultural product, we need some working understanding of how it exists as a piece of Broadway entertainment. Through the vehicles of costume and choreography this is what Chapter Two seeks to establish: How *Hamilton* gives history theatrical presence and how the Disney+ film and the GIF might shape this work as the theatre’s lighting rig is turned to AMOLED.

Chapter One began to illuminate some parallels between political and theatrical performance, starting to promote the utility of a performative lens across different types of stages. By delving deeply into the on-stage choices made by the *Hamilton* production team, Chapter Two develops the lens of performativity in a more traditionally theatrical sense. The show’s costuming and choreographic choices are revealed as intricately woven to construct complex engagement with the historical archive, making tangible and embodied the intangible process of writing history’s stories.

As hinted at through the Introduction’s analysis of ‘Non-Stop’, theatrical and historical presence are more closely related than might have been assumed. What emerges throughout the chapter is Greg Denning’s contention that all historians might be themselves “performers,” toeing the

¹⁹² Christine de Matos, “Dance as performative public history?: A journey through *Spartacus*,” *Circa: The Journal of Professional Historians* 7 (2020): 27.

line between fact and fiction to compose and present a particular narrative.¹⁹³ In this sense, the performative is not something to be feared but embraced. Through costuming and choreography, one can see how visual, material, and embodied storytelling devices are used to establish the relationship between Miranda's creative output and the intricacies of historical events, surviving archival materials, and the varied public understandings that are both challenged and constructed. What the chapter also speaks towards, then, is the diverse narrative mediation happening both within the original production and across the transmedial enterprise that *Hamilton* has come to constitute.

The chapter first considers the 'on-stage' performance through the ensemble (the collective of background artists who populate the stage and take up minor roles to support the featured characters). Examination reveals them as an intricately organised 'human set' which uses movement and mask to traverse temporalities in embodying both the fictional contemporary, and contemporary theatrical audiences. Ultimately, their role is understood as framing the entire show as an enacted archive that is both alive and dead – one which, in spite of being fixed, resists stability and remains open to re-interpretation and re-formation. The chapter then pushes the emerging theme of historical narrativity and authority further through the presence of two key characters: self-proclaimed history-maker and protagonist Alexander Hamilton, and ultimate archivist and storyteller Eliza Schuyler-Hamilton. Unpicking the characters' apparent historical agency and action as delivered through costume and its embodied animation, the chapter demonstrates potential for performance to challenge the ways in which the 'archive' can – or cannot – be marshalled within the process of 'making' history. What emerges is the contention that, when taking a broader temporal perspective, those seemingly in control of unfolding narratives are not the ones to whom ultimate authority necessarily belongs – an important idea to take through to the thesis' later chapters on *Hamilton*'s wider work beyond the auditorium.

It should be highlighted that though the author has seen the live show, it is examination of the Disney+ film which largely facilitates these discussions. This is a multi-camera recording of one particular performance with the original Broadway cast in Summer 2015, in which the audience's experience of the narrative is shaped by the mediation of the camera and its production team. By focusing the framing for the digital consumer, this mediation reconfigures the live audience's ordinary to navigate the unfolding, 2-hour story in their own way. The screened nature of this

¹⁹³ Greg Denning, "Performing on the Beaches of the Mind: An Essay," *History and Theory* 41, no.1 (2002): 1; David Dean, Yana Meerzon and Kathryn Prince, "Introduction," in *History, Memory and Performance* ed. David Dean, Yana Meerzon and Kathryn Prince (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1.

stage experience also brings into focus the temporal tensions intrinsic to *Hamilton* as the chapter moves towards examination of *Hamilton*'s performance in GIF-form: 'live' yet isolated moments of the Disney+ film produced for integration across the digital plane. The film itself is an archival entry of one *Hamilton* performance left open to endless virtual viewing, where the fixed nature of the footage contrasts the ephemeral nature of embodied choreographic and costume decisions within the unfolding moment of the physical theatre. And yet, *Hamilton* was always intended for the big-screen as well as the big-stage, with design decisions being made by Tazewell with both formats in mind.¹⁹⁴ As a piece in the longer story of America's past, present, and future the film remains "vital participant in the current [unfolding] moment" beyond the curtain.¹⁹⁵ The film thus almost emerges as analogy for *Hamilton*'s wider work: at once seeking to install itself permanently as a closely managed, history-making entertainment product, yet promoting the continued re-performance of its narratives and ideas beyond the point of original control. This, as the thesis will go on to explore, will closely mimic *Hamilton*'s own interest in historical work.

Turning to the film-based *Hamilton* GIPHY library of 2022 through the same performative vehicles of costume and choreography, the chapter finally considers how *Hamilton*'s storytelling facets have been reverberated digitally even further-removed from 42nd Street. In preparation for Chapters Three to Five, discussion begins to question what this could mean for the show's history-making mission beyond the physical stage-space. Scattering the already mediated embodied storytelling across the digital universe, the GIF comes to reinforce *Hamilton*'s ability to not only disrupt historical temporality and history-making on-stage but have affect across the physical and virtual planes that have become so crucial to the enterprise's wider cultural and historical presence. In this way, the 'performative' becomes a means through which *Hamilton*'s transmediality can be visualised and navigated.

Two key theories informing the chapter's consideration of costume are Mark Wigley's conception of 'masking,' and Walter Benjamin's description of clothing as a "Tigersprung" vector.¹⁹⁶ Though

¹⁹⁴ Elizabeth Joy "How an Eighteenth Century Silhouette Tells a Story," *The Art of Costume*, 2022, accessed December 5, 2022, <https://theartofcostume.com/2020/11/25/the-costumes-of-hamilton-how-an-eighteenth-century-silhouette-tells-a-story/>.

¹⁹⁵ Rosemary Candelario, "Choreographing American Dance Archives: Artist-Driven Archival Projects by Eiko & Koma, Bebe Miller Company, and Jennifer Monson," *Dance Research Journal* 50, no. 1 (2018): 81. See also Brandon Shaw, "Effacing Rebellion and Righting the Slanted: Declassifying the Archive of MacMillan's (1965) and Shakespeare's (1597) *Romeo and Juliet*," *Dance Research Journal* 49, no.2 (2017): 62-78.

¹⁹⁶ See Mark Wigley, "Untitled: The Housing of Gender," in *Sexuality & Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina and Jennifer Bloomer (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1992), 383-4; Ulrich Lehrmann, "Tigersprung:

ordinarily applied to everyday sartorial studies, Wigley's 'masking' speaks usefully of clothing's ability to hold the juxtaposition of identity; that which is 'real' (i.e. the performer) and that which is 'invented' (i.e. the theatrical character). For *Hamilton*, this is furthered by layers of prior public understandings of the past and their historical – instead of fictional – counterparts. Clothing reminds consumers of their historical expectations of the founding era, raising the tensions of representation and narrativity in terms of characterisation and between the historical record and this staged record-ing. Benjamin's conception of clothing as a 'Tigersprung' vector also speaks to this, describing fashion's ability to evoke disparate temporalities through visual and material representation: in other words, how costume forces the consumer to navigate the temporal dissonance of *Hamilton*'s setting, which will be seen as both historical and contemporary. The influence of Ella Hawkins' more specific examination of "iconic" costume to "[d]efine the relationship between performance and historicization" should also be noted.¹⁹⁷

Bringing these costumes 'to life' in embodied action, a couple of choreographic concepts are worth foregrounding. Movement has the power to disrupt senses of temporality and contemporaneity: being at once fixed (planned and rehearsed) and yet ephemeral (in-motion, as a process with a defined start and end), choreography can be understood as existing between both the 'historical' and 'contemporary'. This is a constant process of unfolding negotiation which, as this chapter goes on, might to be said as parallel to the struggle for historical narrativity.¹⁹⁸ This "diffractive" potential of dance will be seen as characteristic of what imbues theatrical movement with an apt sense of politicality.¹⁹⁹ Performance scholar Ana Vujanovic has proposed 'politicality' as the way in which art "acts and intervenes in the public sphere".²⁰⁰ This means that movement – whether choreographed or improvised – also has the potential to become political – or politicised – beyond their creators' intentions by the ways in which it is re-

Fashioning History," in *Fashion: Critical and Primary Sources - The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Peter McNeil (Oxford: Berg, 2009), 132-154.

¹⁹⁷ Ella Hawkins, "The 'Shakespearean' Ruff," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 39 no.2 (Summer 2021): 192.

¹⁹⁸ See Christina Thurner, "How to Re-View Things with Words? Dance Criticism as Translation – Pina Bausch," *Dance Research Journal* 50, no.2 (2018): 4-14.

¹⁹⁹ See Daniela Perazzo Domm, "Im/possible Choreographies: Diffractive Processes and Ethical Entanglements in Current British Dance Practices," *Dance Research Journal* 51, no.3 (2019): 66-83

²⁰⁰ Ana Vujanović, "Notes on the Politicality of Contemporary Dance," *Dance, Politics & Co-Immunity* ed. Gerald Siegmund and Stefan Hölscher (Zurich and Berlin: Diaphanes): 181.

mediated and re-contextualised more broadly.²⁰¹ Juan Vallejos then extends the idea of dance as a method of political articulation based on the choices of the performers or choreographer within the artistic product.²⁰² Dance's politicality can thus be said to go beyond the immediate performance and into its wider remediations. Such frameworks should be remembered not only regarding *Hamilton's* performance across stage, screen and GIF, but particularly born in conversation with the show's themes around representation, identity, inclusion, and power - all further cemented in the popular emphasis upon *Hamilton's* colour-conscious casting (see Chapter Four).

On-Stage

Parchment people – history's corp(u)s d' ensemble



*Figure 4: Still from Hamilton Disney+ film showing the ensemble*²⁰³

²⁰¹ Juan Ignacio Vallejos, "Dance, Sexuality, and Utopian Subversion Under the Argentine Dictatorship of the 1960s: The Case of Oscar Araiz's *The Rite of Spring* and Ana Itelman's *Phaedra*," *Dance Research Journal* 48, no.2 (2016): 61-79.

²⁰² For more on this idea elsewhere, see Ana Isabel Keilson, "The Embodied Conservatism of Rudolf Laban, 1919-1926," *Dance Research Journal* 51, no.2 (2019): 18-34.

²⁰³ Image taken from: Chris Lindahl, "'Hamilton' Is the Surest Way for Disney+ to Challenge Netflix at the Event-Streaming Game," *Indie Wire*, May 12, 2020, accessed April 18, 2026, <https://www.indiewire.com/features/general/hamilton-disney-plus-release-means-huge-subscriber-gains-1202230837/>.



Figure 5: *The Hamilton Broadway company*²⁰⁴

Though largely anonymous and rarely represented to any significant extent outside of the on-stage action, *Hamilton*'s ensemble plays a crucial storytelling role through their aesthetic and movement as they move between vocal chorus, corps dancers, and 'on-stage public' throughout the show. Their presence provides in-play contextual narration from start to finish, but they are almost always attired only in the beige-tones seen in the above pictures. This is unlike the colour palettes and distinguishing developments given to featured cast members, as will shortly be discussed with reference to Alexander and Eliza. Tazewell has noted that the use of a "neutral palette" throughout the opening number was chosen to evoke the connection between Hamilton and the parchment upon which he wrote and supposedly formed his legacy.²⁰⁵ Though the use of the word 'parchment' is itself interesting (Hamilton would have written on paper, so why might he be imagined as using an ancient and medieval communication technology instead?), Tazewell's vision signposts us towards something more about the relationship between the material and the embodied. Enrobed in their material representation, the ensemble becomes an enlivened physical archive of original documents and persons. They make visible, albeit at times in abstract, the otherwise intangible historical influences, voices, and documents underpinning the show and the audience's experience of it. As much as *Hamilton* seems to uncover, explore

²⁰⁴ Image taken from: Logan Culwell-Block, "At a Recent Hamilton Performance, Two Actors Changed Leading Roles Mid-Show," *Playbill*, December 21, 2023, accessed April 15, 2026, <https://playbill.com/article/at-a-recent-hamilton-performance-two-actors-changed-leading-roles-mid-performance>.

²⁰⁵ Caroline Tell, "Hamilton's Costume Designer Talks About Modernizing 18-thC Style," *Observer*, August 6, 2016, accessed December 5, 2022, <https://observer.com/2016/06/hamiltons-costume-designer-talks-about-modernizing-eighteenth-Century-style/>.

and utilise Alexander Hamilton's legacy, this is a presence designed to blend-in on-stage, while at the same time being imbued with a storytelling power that claims credence across time. The ensemble represents the pinnacle of Tazewell's 'disappearing' costuming, becoming seamlessly part of, rather than distracting from, the unfolding narrative - both intrinsic and invisible to the development of the on-stage story.

There is also a practical advantage to the ensemble's neutral tones as they swirl their way through the two-act show's three decades of 'history'. Their physical storytelling sees them take on an array of sometimes anonymous characterisations and, as if infinitely malleable to the authorial purpose, a female cast member "can put on a uniform coat and be a man or add a skirt and be at a ball."²⁰⁶ There is a gender-neutrality blended into the sexualised designs of modern leggings and corsetry as the core costume allows for practical role-changing on stage, while still contributing a contemporary edge to the production design and tone.²⁰⁷ The corsetry is retained throughout the show as the base layer, whether left visible (as in 'Alexander Hamilton' or 'The Room Where It Happens') or covered by a military jacket or waistcoat (as in 'Non-Stop' or 'Cabinet Battle #2') – whatever piece of fabric is required to adequately set the scene of a musical number from the perspective of the audience.

This fluidity extends into the temporal. The corset tops worn by female performers appear to represent a stylised blend of real period corsetry which is sufficiently malleable - to an untrained eye – to blend across the 1776-1804 setting. Some of the detailing is suggestive of the channelled, conical silhouettes which typified the mid to late eighteenth-century stay, with accessorising bows and ribbons to match. However, the lack of tabs in place of fuller hip gores and a slightly straighter, curved shape in lieu of the conical is suggestive of more nineteenth-century styling, beyond the show's period setting. Given the skill of professional costumers, this aesthetic decision should not be seen as an inability to make a costume which is both 'accurate' and 'practical', but as a specific design for a costume which should be understood as broadly historical, but not fixedly so. Regardless of how the main cast member costumes change or what layers ensemble members might put on over the top, the ensemble's base-layer corsetry remains the same and, rather than sporting period hair and makeup, all the cast retain "modern

²⁰⁶ Tell, "Hamilton's Costume Designer."

²⁰⁷ Paul Tazewell and Mark Leydorf, "Hamilton's Costumier Turned The Cast Inside Out," *Bloomberg*, April 7, 2016, accessed December 5, 2022, <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2016-design/a/paul-tazewell/>.

styling” from the shoulders up.²⁰⁸ Supposedly to enhance the show’s contemporary feel according to Tazewell, the decision also cements this living archive as superseding temporal restriction.

The ensemble’s first appearance in the opening ‘Alexander Hamilton’ number illustrates the efficacy of their performance in narrating and nuancing the show’s historical navigations from the very start. This song seeks to introduce Hamilton as both a factual and fictional character, meeting expected audience understandings of the historical person and transporting them into the on-stage fictionalisation. The corps emerge from the shadows as Burr finishes the first round of introductory narrations, immediately before the titular character enters from the periphery. A sea of beige, the ensemble at this point includes those who will later be revealed as specific characters, situating for now even known names and historical actants as part of the overall historical archive. Though each member ‘performs’ separately they come together in the mind of the consumer to form a complex ‘whole’, as if the archive itself is framing and legitimising the story being shared. This body of bodies seems to move centre-stage with Burr’s words “the word got around.” They suggest a sort of inscribed repository of ‘evidence’ of who Alexander Hamilton supposedly was, leaking from the past upon which *Hamilton* will shed further light. The movements are strong, synchronised and angular, crossing the path of Alexander Hamilton as he walks forward and looks out to the audience, declaring his name and imploring “just you wait.” The ‘real man’ thus emerges determinatively from and amongst this representation of his own surviving letters and documents. The costume as symbolic of parchment might simply seem emblematic of anonymity, historical unfamiliarity, or the vague ‘past’ as a collection of objects, but the apparent characterisation given to it through choreography holds strength, permanence, and an ongoing ‘unfolding’ of this historic story.

The choreographed movement of this ‘human set’ proves crucial to depicting changes of time or setting within the on-stage story. We see this slightly further into ‘Alexander Hamilton’. As upcoming featured characters emerge and add their ‘personal’ lyrical voices to the chorus of Alexander’s journey to New York City, the ensemble become a physical embodiment of the lyrical journey. As various dancers move around in the background, two anonymous members move towards the front of the stage to become Hamilton’s “split” parents, as narrated by wife-to-be Eliza Schuyler. The same female ensemble member then continues to play his mother, picked up and spun in a rigor-mortis position, going from “bed-ridden” to “went quick.” This physical refrain will later be repeated in Alexander’s own retelling in Act 2’s ‘Hurricane’, which uses the

²⁰⁸ Tazewell and Leydorf, “Hamilton’s Costumier Turned The Cast Inside Out.”

ensemble to physically represent Hamilton's memory of the fateful storm and explain his publication of 'The Reynolds Pamphlet'. In this sort of analysis, then, we begin to see a core tenet of the ensemble's role as mitigators of historical agency. It seems that Alexander understands himself as being historically aware of his life and memory, leaning into the musical theatricality of the *Hamilton* product to surpass real-life capacities and embellish his sense of determinism in spite of circumstance. But Alexander, it turns out, is not the ultimate writer of his own story – and this embodied archive is only part of it.

"The pits of fashion": Alexander Hamilton

Though Alexander Hamilton is presented as the show's central protagonist, examination of his character's relationship to costume and choreography do not reveal him to be truly in control. Although verbally he appears to operate with a strong sense of individual agency throughout, ultimately the show is framed in a way which has already sealed his fate in light of the 'real' Hamilton's historical legacy. As intrinsic as Hamilton's costume designs are to the show's presentation of his character, it is the changing of these costumes and the command wielded over the ensemble which draw into focus *Hamilton's* grappling with historical narrativity.



Figure 6: Still from the *Hamilton* Disney+ film showing Alexander Hamilton's costume in 'My Shot'²⁰⁹

As the show's apparent pacesetter, Hamilton's journey is 'revealed' to him in the same way as it is to the audience and while other cast members change off-stage, the majority of Alexander's

²⁰⁹ Image taken from: "My Shot," *Fandom: Hamilton Musical*, 2026, accessed April 15, 2026, https://hamiltonmusical.fandom.com/wiki/My_Shot?file=103Lunges.jpg.

costume changes appear in front of the audience. Alexander first appears almost inseparable from the bustling ensemble 'harbour workers' as he steps off the 'boat', only identified when an unknown cast-member hands him a brown velvet coat. The material echoes both Hamilton's supposedly humble beginnings and the richness of the upward trajectory the character seems determined to achieve. Two songs later, the 'I want' number 'My Shot' sees even the ensemble being literally moved by his apparent fortitude, seemingly giving some credit to his efforts. But the eagle-eyed might clock that before Alexander had been identified by this coat from the archival crowd around him, an ensemble member had taken a book from his hands. Though unbeknownst to a *Hamilton* newbie, avid *Hamil*-fans would recognise this character as the 'bullet' – the ensemble member who haunts Alexander's character throughout the show. His fate – death by duel – had already been secured before this famously verbose founder could utter a single word.

Hamilton receives his next outfit – a military jacket – a couple of numbers later, shortly after the 'bullet' appears to be brutally murdered after receiving a prop letter. Having entered the start of 'Right Hand Man' back in beige, the 'uniform' is put on him a few bars into the song by Aaron Burr. The outfit takes Hamilton through his early rise to prominence. It is worn with the physical nervousness as he enters Washington's office for the first time and Burr, in his pride, is pushed aside. It is animated in Hamilton's lively brilliance as an unwilling secretary. It swirls around ballrooms and a wedding ceremony as the penniless and apparently powerless soldier marries into the Schuyler household. It is opposed with Burr in the first '10 Duel Commandments' in which the two men act as respective seconds and the ensemble themselves become the physical embodiment of the lyrical countdown, caught between the two supposed story-makers in a foreshadowing of the duel to come. The coat robes Alexander as he is sent home on suspension and he is re-clothed in it by Eliza as she permits him to return to action and take up his promotion. Though not immediately obvious to the average viewer, Burr's clothing of Alexander may have led to his disgrace, but Eliza's will lead to his ultimate upward political trajectory.

The on-stage choreography surrounding the moment Alexander returns to action is fascinating. Sitting at his desk as it rotates around the circular stage inset, Washington narrates the letter out loud while the ensemble and cast members line the second floor of the set and pass the physical prop letter in an overly dramatized fashion. It moves from the left of the stage towards Alexander, as Eliza stands holding the coat in the shadows. As the letter moves and Washington is turned by the stage, signifying perhaps the changing of time, circumstance, and the embodiment of some sort of archival postal system, Eliza walks towards Alexander as if her actions are animated by

the inevitability of the written and spoken word. As she dresses him and they embrace, the second floor is in shadow, with only the couple and Washington lit by stage lighting. Immediately thereafter, Alexander enters Washington's office with a less trepidatory respectfulness, as he is warned that "history has its eyes on [him]." Only Hamilton and Washington are seen centre-stage in this career-defining, story-changing moment; the ensemble chorus who echo Washington's words are seen only partly in the stage's shadowy periphery, until they emerge at the very end ready for the choreographed battle of 'Yorktown'. The voice of the archive – of our understandings of the past - seems ever-ready to emerge in support of its evidential and storytelling mission. Having given him his new coat, Eliza puts Hamilton on the new path which will see him as a key military figure in the successful revolutionary war – and the archive seems to know. In this decisive scene, Alexander is frequently centre stage as the exploding ensemble seem to move to his words. He finishes the number at the front, standing on a block which resembles the one he first tried to take from Seabury as an irritatingly outspoken political wannabe back in 'Farmer Refuted'.

Following the war, Hamilton appears opposite Burr in 'Dear Theodosia' in a new suit (waistcoat and coat) which is green as "the colour of money."²¹⁰ This was specifically requested by Miranda for the role and is made of a particularly delicate silk that requires frequent mending by the show's costume team.²¹¹ It glimmers under the stage lights, emphasising the effect of the brilliance of the colour and opulence of the cut. Leaning into his presence on the US \$10 bill, enrobing himself in money is seen as part of Hamilton's identity both within and without the play. Given the attention that the suit grabs and Tazewell's intention that costume should not distract, we as the audience are believed to expect Alexander Hamilton to want to dress and present himself this way after securing his first official role in the new nation. Much like Hawkins' examination of how the 'Shakespearean ruff' is deployed on-stage not for period accuracy but to meet audience expectations of the period, this is a costume choice in keeping with public understandings of Alexander Hamilton as the impenetrable financier Founding Father.²¹² It is suggestive of an accuracy in ideological representation, if not to the material past.

²¹⁰ See Stephi Wild, "Photos: Costumes from HAMILTON, WICKED, FROZEN, and More Are on Display Now as Part of the SHOWSTOPPERS! Exhibition," *Broadway World*, August 5, 2021, accessed December 5, 2022, <https://www.broadwayworld.com/article/Photos-Costumes-From-HAMILTON-WICKED-FROZEN-and-More-Are-on-Display-Now-as-Part-of-the-SHOWSTOPPERS-Exhibition-20210805>.

²¹¹ Glass, "The Costumes of Hamilton".

²¹² Hawkins, "The 'Shakespearean' Ruff," 191-213.



Figure 7: Image from the SHOWSTOPPERS! exhibition showing Alexander Hamilton's "green as money" costume

The first time the new colour is seen, though, contrasts with this perceived reputation. Alexander and Burr are alone on the stage but for each other and a chair each, dressed informally in their waistcoats only as they lovingly speak to their disembodied newborn children out in the audience. In 'Dear Theodosia,' the two men relay their hopes for the new nation and their collective ("we'll") roles in making this American vision possible. The number is soft, determined, and dream-like, and nuances the renowned animosity between the nemeses: no ensemble archive is present to 'record' such tenderness for posterity on behalf of either man. As the show rolls on after the report of Laurens' death, it seems that this song also functions to prepare the audience for 'Non-Stop,' the number which closes Act 1 and which was subject to textual analysis in this thesis' Introduction. As Alexander buries himself in the "much work" to be done, Burr begins the song's narration, sweeping back in from the stage-left shadows with the green coat in-hand. We only see the coat as Burr emerges from the shadow, the green glinting in the stage light as it's quickly handed to Alexander, who hurriedly puts it on himself. 'Non-stop' is a dynamic number, narrating and enacting how the aspirations of 'Dear Theodosia' came to be physically carried out. It begins with Alexander's petulant, child-like behaviour as a young lawyer. While Burr's dark garment blends into the lighting, Hamilton's green shines out as the ensemble form the physical court scene around him, swirling around the rotating stage. In spite of the narration from Burr, Hamilton seems to think himself in command of the changing scenes, at one point standing on a spotlighted table centre-stage as the ensemble pull out an audience of chairs

facing him, a crowd of open arms seemingly receiving his political preaching. While Burr becomes increasingly irritated with Hamilton's behaviour throughout the song's account of events, the coat continues to clothe his rise to power and the loss of Angelica, his abandonment of Eliza, and his ever-obsessive essay-writing with a quill given to him by none other than the 'bullet'. The ensemble, seemingly undeterred, race around the stage, pacing Hamilton's apparent achievement and advancement. By the end of the number, Hamilton's historicity as an official Founding Father seems secure as he is asked to be the treasurer his clothing evokes. His arms crossed, Hamilton asks out to the Richard Rodgers' or Disney+ audience "treasury or state?" and becomes angry at Washington's suggestion of the potential cost. He puts on a physical display of childish excitement at the thought of heading the US treasury and shows cowardice in shouting to Eliza behind him that he "[has] to leave." As the women decry his lack of satisfaction, the ensemble move in from the back, whisking Hamilton back into a sea of beige bodies and separating him from both women as he looks around. By the end of the number, Hamilton has taken Washington's mark at the top of the stairs, his green coat shining in the spotlight compared to the rest of the stage. The coat continues to see Alexander through some of the highs his political career in Act 2: rap battles opposite the elaborately dressed political opponent Jefferson who brands him the "pits of fashion," his secretive affair with Maria Reynolds, and the fabled "room where it happens." Putting on his own coat at the top of the number seems to have brought Alexander to the point of being seen as a successor to the legendary Founding Father, but he won't prove the successful author of this story.

We first see the outfit morph into Hamilton's final black number with Washington's resignation in 'One Last Time.' In one of his only off-stage costume changes, Alexander's shining green seems to have dulled into a dark green velvet, with a stiffer appearance and high collar. In the stage shadows, it appears as black as Washington's own actually-black suit. Alexander is seen again as a sort of successor to the famous American figurehead but perhaps tainted by his financial desires and newly-created notoriety. The last we see of this green number is in 'Hurricane' as he attempts to use the power of his pen to escape political ruin. Alone in the centre of the stage, the ensemble again embodies the narrative he sings. They echo choreography from elsewhere in the story, listen to his political words, plant financial systems, or form the 'freeze-frame' chaos of a literal and metaphorical hurricane as time stands ironically 'quiet'. The pen for this damning archival entry is given to him by none other than his mistress, who appears in a bold, temptress-like red. The Reynolds Pamphlet attempt of course fails, and the cast respond enthusiastically while the ensemble parades prop paper around the stage, looking at it every which way. Alexander tries to retain authority stood on a box centre-stage, but winds up facing

Washington's gross disappointment as his political opponents party and the ensemble twirl to his unravelling career, undone by the words he left. In the doldrums of influence from this point through the loss of his reputation and his son, it is unclear whether his costume actually changes to black, or whether it is only the stage lighting which makes it appear so. Even during his moment back in the political spotlight and voicing his supposedly decisive opinion in the 'Election of 1800', Alexander appears to be in black until his inevitable death at the very end.

If Alexander's own efforts led to such a disastrous end, how does *Hamilton* see itself as intervening with the historical record and re-evaluating his legacy? Though Burr as narrator has his final "villain[ous]" word after Alexander's death, what follows in the final number 'Who Tells Your Story' is a type of choral, archival review sung by the whole of the ensemble, operating anachronistically in the 'real world' and seemingly outside of the story told on-stage. The number positions Eliza as master archivist and historical narrator: *Hamilton*, at its heart, is revealed as a continuation of Eliza's story.

"Helpless": Eliza Schuyler-Hamilton

Eliza's early characterisation presented someone with limited agency, particularly in comparison to her astute and outgoing older sister. Eliza's first appearance in 'The Schuyler Sisters,' for example, showed her as looking up to Angelica – the older sibling who commands the sisterly troop and their ensemble of back-up dancers in a bold burnt-orange gown in contrast to Eliza's soft blue look. The number contains their (now iconic) anachronistic assertion of female rights within the very founding documents of the United States; Angelica's line "and when I meet Thomas Jefferson, I'm a compel him to put women in the sequel – Work!" being delivered with demanding physical presence, sass, and dynamism which grate against Burr's irritating flirtations. Yet as the show continues, each of the Schuyler Sisters' identities seem to revolve instead around Alexander. Younger sibling Peggy has a dual role of 'confiding' in Alexander as a young girl and playing his mistress Maria Reynolds. Eliza seems 'Helpless' both to fall for him and to secure her place by him, as 'Satisfied' explains Angelica's vital (and historically unsubstantiated) role in arranging the match despite her own feelings. Until her turning point in 'Burn,' Eliza appears a naïve young woman, in love with the idea of Alexander but at the mercy of everyone else's alternative priorities.



Figure 8: Still from *Hamilton* Disney+ film showing Eliza Hamilton in 'Burn'²¹³

Immediately following 'The Reynolds Pamphlet,' 'Burn' is the first clear indication that there might be more to Eliza's role. On the one hand, the song shows a heartbroken woman ridding herself of personal memories from a doomed relationship as she realises her gullibility. This is a trope familiar to any romance plot and her singular presence on the dark stage could fittingly be deemed as isolationist vulnerability. Yet, this personal, solitary voice is powerfully subverted. It's notable that there is no crowd of archival ensemble as witness. Rather than being worn down by the flood of paper that has just overwhelmed her husband in the previous number 'The Reynolds Pamphlet', Eliza glides in gently, as if with numb confidence. She walks around the bench, taking ownership of the space before taking a seat. As the vocal emotion rises, one by one Eliza elevates the burning letters to the audience, transforming herself from a physically and emotionally defeated wife to a strong and powerful authorial force. Her dress compliments both facets – the graceful, draped fabric with its motif blue ribbon and the solidity of a simple, columnar style.²¹⁴ One begins to realise that Eliza needs no ensemble around her on the stage to reify the words and emotions, because she's burning this 'archive' of Alexander with her own hands.

²¹³ Image taken from: Zara Woodcock, "Hamilton's Philippa Soo reveals story behind famous gasp at end of show," *Metro*, July 30, 2020, accessed April 15, 2026. <https://metro.co.uk/2020/07/30/hamiltons-phillipa-soo-13057515/>.

²¹⁴ See Esther Wilson, "A Marriage of Contradictions: The Sartorial Designs of a Regency Yorkshire Wedding Dress," *The Journal of Dress History* 7, no.1 (2023): 46-56.

Eliza's ever having been truly 'helpless' to control the unfolding narrative emerges as somewhat unexpected when thinking holistically about her costume design. While both Alexander's character and costume feel confined to the play's specific, unfolding moment, Eliza's wardrobe has arguably positioned her as a stronger indicator of the story's overall temporal framing for longer than the audience might realise.

This is perhaps most noticeable in the changes of silhouette, all of which occur off-stage. The first key look is 'The Schuyler Sisters' gown. Although it negates a modesty kerchief and many layers of petticoats to meet the practicalities of stage performance, the wide neckline, stiffened bodice, sleeve length, and skirt shape fit well with what one might expect for a 1770's woman of means. The detailing is unusual with an apparent left-side closure on the bodice, the frilled edging hinting at a limited sense of pre-revolution European-influenced opulence. By the time she meets Alexander amidst the revolutionary war, the dress has morphed subtly: although the silhouette remains largely the same, it loses the frilled sleeves in lieu of full-length fitted ones, with bodice detailing that closely resembles the design worn by Angelica as she tells her side of the romance in 'Satisfied'.

As Alexander is sent home part-way through the war and Eliza reveals her pregnancy, her gown has changed yet again. She appears more mature, almost matronly, in a dress which has lost the volume of the previous two in line with the 1780's fashion trend and economic military pressures. It is also now accompanied by a kerchief and adopts a more homely gingham print with ribbon detailing that functions to close the gown over what would have been a stomacher. In real use, this would also have allowed for expansion with her 'pregnancy,' emphasised by Philippa Soo as she rests her hand on her stomach in whizzing off-stage and handing Alexander his military coat in 'Right-Hand Man'.

Eliza's wardrobe once again sets the pace for Act 2. Although the changes in Alexander's silhouette are minimal, Eliza's makes the time jump around 'Schuyler Defeated' rather obvious by donning the 'Burn' dress: a regency-style gown which broadly fits well with the contemporary fashions of the 1797 'Reynolds Pamphlet', if a little too 1800-1810s. Though likely unnoticeable to many audience members up in the gods of the theatre, the Disney+ camera shows the garment as a pale blue ensemble of light cotton with a geometric square texture and blue underbust ribbon. It often appears as white under the stage lights. Though briefly covered by a black overcoat when mourning the loss of her son, this remains the dress in which Eliza is cemented as the show's archivist and legacy writer in the final, fourth wall-breaking number, 'Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story?'. Here Eliza's white gown stands out against the beige tones re-

donned by others in the cast as she reviews her lifetime spent trying to curate a legacy for Alexander, who is the only cast member arrayed in a comparably dubious black. Retaining the ethereality of her regency mode beyond the clear bounds of the play-world, Eliza is preserved in her new-found identity as archiver. Clothing has not just acted as Benjamin's Tigersprung vector in moving the observer from one time period to another, but moved the scene to a nebulous space without specific historical time, even as it is clearly rooted within indications of it. As if trapped in a historical timeline over which Eliza alone presides, the whole cast call her by name. They stand still and silent as she enters and takes command of the physical space. Not just the ensemble but the featured company also move to her words: Laurens, Mulligan and Lafayette come forward and echo an affirming, appreciative response to her work with 'every soldier'. Almost as soon as Washington acknowledges with pride that "she tells [his] story," her account of "[speaking] out against slavery" physically shames the American legend out of the limelight. Even as Eliza's words come to centre on Alexander, she remains the one stood at the front while he falls silently behind. Though Eliza takes his hand as he weeps, she breaks free and takes her place centre-stage, the whole cast echoing refrains such as "time" and "who tells your story" in framing her contribution to the nation's history. The biggest *Hamil*-fan might recall, at such a moment, the identity of the then-unnamed cast member who first clothed Alexander at the top of the show: Eliza.

It is thus only when stepping outside of the fictional historical moment and reflecting upon *Hamilton*'s performance more holistically that one realises the ways in which Eliza has perhaps been a truer focus as the ultimate force behind the entire show's narrative – not Burr the antagonistic narrator, nor Hamilton as the titular character. If such is the case, what story has *Hamilton* tried to highlight as the de-facto cultural product of Obama's time in office? *Hamilton* ostensibly sells a story of and by the 'Forgotten Founding Father' and his murderer, in which Alexander is framed as an 'orphan' and 'immigrant' whose legacy was maligned until finally being given justice by Miranda. But this story is presented as belonging to a woman – one not only in charge of her own trajectory, but the inheritance of her country's founding tale. This takes *Hamilton* beyond mere colour-conscious casting and the use of non-white actors for historically white and privileged roles simply because the presiding political leader was himself a non-white man subject to conspiracy theories about his citizenship. To *Hamilton*, history is ultimately for the writing by the true underdogs, marginalised, and easily overlooked – not just those who, as Alexander ostensibly did, push themselves into the limelight more obviously. We see something of a Brechtian mission – that is, drawing on the legacy of Brecht's 'epic theater' through which

the audience was meant to read theatre as political and learn something (see Chapter Three).²¹⁵ As will be reinforced in the coming chapters regarding the EduHam program or the show's response to #BLM, this egalitarian historical effort is in lieu of the 'big names' or historiographies that publics might think they know. The thrust of the show as still being about a 'forgotten Founding Father' is important, suggesting that regardless of the 'control' individuals may ultimately have over how 'history' plays out, it's important that they recognise their ability to make a difference. This emphasis comes despite fact that its Miranda's blockbuster show that has had the privilege of being the one to re-stage Eliza's voice and thereby clothe it, embody it, and animate it.

By surveying the narrative roles of *Hamilton*'s ensemble and apparently leading roles, the chapter has so far reinforced the value of costume and choreography as performance-based vehicles for undertaking effective historical work. It is the visual and physical 'presence' of each which, I would argue, make them so highly prized for historical work: able to accomplish both obvious and subtle storytelling, queuing notions of authorship, temporality, and historical revisionism in the mind of the audience member whether in the stalls or through the Disney+ screen. In so doing, these performative facets have given *Hamilton* a unique sense of historical presence which supersedes the merely indicative and moves towards the 'active'. Costume functions not only as an indicator of period but is effectively itself 'performed' by virtue of its embodiment and choreographic animation; movement brings not only material embodiment, but a sense of force and unfolding. In this way, the two devices have not only contributed to *Hamilton*'s 'stage presence', but brought to it notions of an active, historical process that is ever-unfolding within the performance, complicating ideas of past, present, and future. Though interesting in itself, this work is further complicated by the show's wider GIF dissemination.

'On-Screen'

So far, the chapter has focussed upon costume and choreography as vehicles through which *Hamilton* makes possible its underdog history parable. Having thought about *Hamilton*'s on-stage/Disney+ performativity and narrativity, consideration for how the show has been further remediated in the GIF offers the opportunity to dig into how this performance and its meaning

²¹⁵ See for example: Ribut Basuki, "Brecht's Epic Theatre as a Modern Avant-Garde and Its Influence on Postmodern Theatre/Drama," *Kata* 4, no.2 (2002): 135-47; Bertolt Brecht, *Brecht on Theatre* ed., Mac Silberman, Steve Giles, and Tom Khun (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).

have moved transmedially, outside of the Disney+ paywall and across other digital dimensions within the *Hamil*-sphere.

GIFs (Graphic Interchangeable Frames) are short, seconds-long visual sequences which can be inserted into any digital context, such as messenger applications, webpages or social media content such as Tweets. GIF libraries form a sort of archive of the public's own storytelling devices when discussing the show across a range of digital contexts. Dating to the late 1990s, GIFs became a staple in the "digital cultural landscape" with a developed "participatory culture" and rich potential for communicating nuanced meaning, though they were rarely used en-masse until greater software integration in the 2010s.²¹⁶ Given how central visual and animated qualities are to the GIF and how usefully these overlap with the material and embodied themes central to Chapter Two's main analysis, Chapter Two examines the GIF in lieu of *Hamil*Tweet.

To explore how the public might have re-deployed the Disney+ recording, this study turned to the 'GIPHY' platform. 'GIPHY' operates as one of the most popular global GIF libraries worldwide and is commonly integrated into modern smartphone software and social media apps. GIPHY can thus be accessed from any digital device and its GIFs are insertable across a variety of digital contexts, from webpages to Twitter or Facebook. With its own *Hamilton: An American Musical* GIPHY channel having over 430 million GIF views at the time of research, GIPHY is one of the key avenues through which *Hamilton* has come to occupy broader digital territories.²¹⁷

Bearing in mind the previous analysis, the chapter considers four GIF sample sets as they stood in 2023: search results for 'Hamilton', 'Alexander Hamilton,' and 'Eliza' on the GIPHY platform itself, and the the initial material on the landing page for *Hamilton*'s official GIF channel. Each set was presumably ordered by the GIPHY website's algorithm, prioritising content deemed most likely to be adopted by the public. GIFs rely first upon visual cues, and the analysis follows this logic by first examining the material cues that are visually represented within these results. As users would then secondly experience the choreographic animation of these costumes as these unfold, analysis moves toward this next. This work does come with caveats: it is impossible to gauge either change over time or precisely how users may have deployed the GIFs throughout the digital sphere, and GIFs with Disney+ film footage have likely been produced by *Hamilton* or

²¹⁶ Ate M. Miltner and Tim Highfield, "Never Gonna GIF You Up: Analyzing the Cultural Significance of the Animated GIF," *Social Media + Society* 3 no.3 (2017): 9. See also Albin Wagener, "The Postdigital Emergence of memes and GIFs: Meaning, Discourse and Hypernarrative Creativity," *Postdigital Science and Education* 3 (2021): 831-850.

²¹⁷ "*Hamilton*," GIPHY, January 11, 2023, accessed January 11, 2023, <https://giphy.com/hamiltonmusical>.

Disney themselves. Yet, there remains utility in highlighting particular trends that allow the researcher to at least hypothesise the sorts of performance and narrative elements seen as particularly ‘applicable’ to daily life. Doing so also adds to the layers of meaning already given to material and embodied dimensions of the show’s on-stage performance. When *Hamilton* is chopped up, re-packaged, and removed further from its original provenance, the GIFs suggest the fractioning of the show’s bigger history-making mission.

It’s worth noting that, for all their importance in how *Hamilton* gives history stage presence, the ensemble has very little presence outside of the stage-show itself, including within the GIFs. Just as *Hamilton* begins to create its own digital content web and thereby expand its own archive of media, this embodiment of historical perspective is largely absent from the popular *Hamilton* imagination in lieu of main character energies or generic marketing animations.

Hamilton

The resulting GIF selections from search terms ‘Hamilton’ and ‘Alexander Hamilton’ show a diversity of moments relating to Alexander Hamilton. The focus remains on Alexander as the main character - this, perhaps, remains the public expectation for a show named after him and ‘about’ him, regardless of the more nuanced historical storytelling depicted by careful costume and choreographic choices. Six times Hamilton is seen in his starting beige, nine in brown, three in military and five in green. These perhaps indicate the moments and characterisations of Hamilton presumed to resonate most strongly with the public, and a developing political upstart before anything else. It’s unclear whether these selections are due to the layers of ‘masking’ imbued by the costume onto the actor and Hamilton’s in-show or real-world characteristics (i.e. visual indicators of personality, whether presumed of the play-world or historical), or their relationship to the show’s engaging plot or popular cast recording.

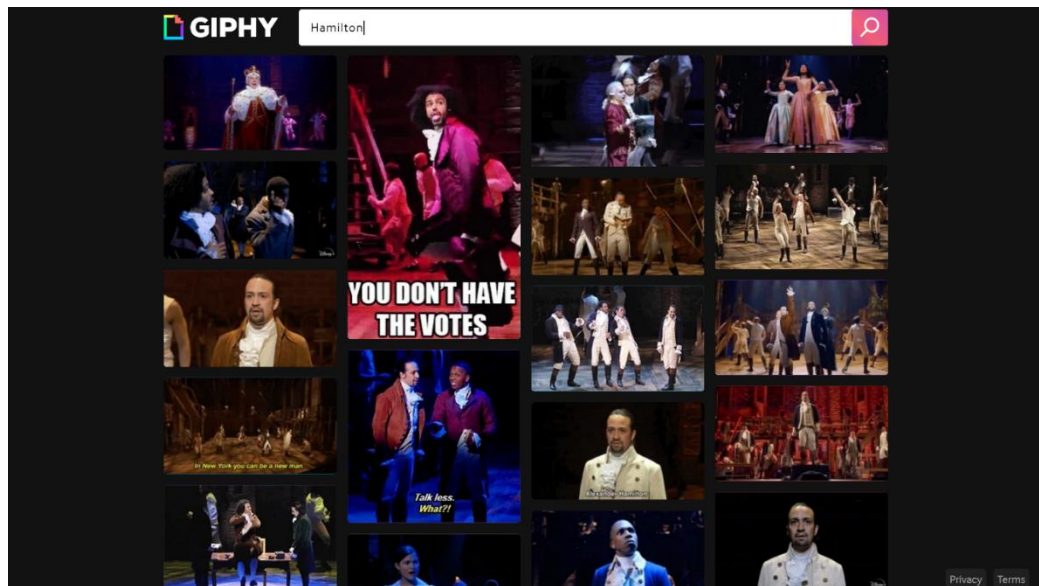


Figure 9: Screenshot of search for 'Hamilton' on GIPHY²¹⁸



Figure 10: Screenshot of search for 'Alexander Hamilton' on GIPHY²¹⁹

The majority of the GIFs come from Act 1, when Alexander's ambitious trajectory is perhaps more clearly foregrounded, rather than Act 2 which more clearly presents his downfall. In this case the GIFs might suggest that *Hamil*-fans are more willing to engage with that level of the show's narrative, positing the centrality of Alexander Hamilton as a mythos-worthy character rather than

²¹⁸ "Search: 'Hamilton'," *GIPHY*, Jan 11, 2023, accessed Jan 11, 2023, <https://giphy.com/search/Hamilton>.

²¹⁹ "Search: Alexander Hamilton," *GIPHY*, Jan 11, 2023, accessed Jan 11, 2023, <https://giphy.com/search/Alexander-Hamilton>.

the deeper layers of historical thinking brought by Eliza's more nuanced authorship and sense of agency.

The GIFs clip a range of movement moments - both dynamic such as bounding into 'My Shot', or Alexander standing almost entirely still in 'Alexander Hamilton.' It is unfortunate that the diverse movement depicted cannot be accurately represented within a screenshot for this thesis. The GIF of Alexander on the table in his green coat, for example, is a highly comical moment from 'Non-Stop' in which he declares himself to have "practically perfected" the law, floating his glowing green coat out behind him as part of the puffed-up pride he had generated. It's an obvious choice for the amused GIF-user wanting to demonstrate their membership of the *Hamil*-fam but also makes comic sense when completely removed from the context of the show. Many of the other moments - a man standing still on a stage in some sort of period dress, or a crowd of performers bounding in similar garb - perhaps do not make full sense unless one is conversant with the show.

A question therefore emerges of how familiar one has to be with the show in order to appropriately deploy the GIFs and what they represent. Arguably, it could be that part of *Hamilton*'s performative power relies so sufficiently upon the mobilisation of common tropes and emotions that these GIFs can be inserted into conversations completely removed from their intended theatrical context and still make sufficient sense. The potential impact of this upon the history being mobilised is complex. In the vein of the GIF, the intricate choreographic work incorporated within the show has a thousand potential re-interpretations, which may not be relevant to the historiographical work for which it was originally intended when removed from its original provenance. One should not forget the general predominance of Revolutionary histories and iconographies within the American mindset, and how these might impact the *Hamilton* snippets. Afterall, the single man standing alone is not an anonymous figure but clearly titled by the caption as 'ALEXANDER HAMILTON' - that money-minded, murdered white man whose face on the \$10 bill has been transformed into that of a Hispanic. Similarly, the period figures bounding across the stage depict brotherhood and conviviality between those of different ethnicities as themes which surpass time and still-continuing histories of engrained racism. Deploying or encountering the GIF without understanding the show might limit the extent to which the show's history-making mission is engaged with, but it doesn't mean that the way in which this story is told has no place within the unfolding cultural moment, nor that it does not, in some way, result in a significance which speaks towards it. Rather than denigrate the show's use of stage performance as a way to 'do' history, such a point would reinforce the significance of it as part of wider societal codes of communication and emphasise *Hamilton*'s ubiquity as a

cultural product within contemporary digital cultures – a theme which will return towards the end of the thesis.

Eliza

Searching for ‘Eliza Hamilton’ brings up an interesting array of results with a number of surprising repeats. The majority of the GIFs do relate specifically to *Hamilton*’s Eliza Hamilton, though one instead links to Hulu character Eliza Dooley and another identifies Eliza as part of a portrait depicting several Founding Father wives. Eliza’s role as archivist, identified earlier in this chapter, is represented in the GIFs, with powerful moments from ‘Burn’ and ‘Who Lives Who Dies Who Tells Your Story’ featured. However, their significance within *Hamilton* itself would be impossible to learn without prior knowledge and understanding, and would likely not be easily integrable into wider digital cultures without this knowledge. Rather than her own legacy and work, Eliza’s relationship to others is perhaps better represented: as a supporting Schuyler sister in ‘Work!’; as wife to Alexander in marriage and as he rises through the financial ranks; as a visually absent sexual object in the provocative dancing of ‘The Story of Tonight – Reprise’; as a woman reaching out to her husband across time and the afterlife. In addition to such disabling connotations, many Eliza-centric GIF are repeated and several ‘relevant’ results instead show *Hamilton* footage in which Eliza doesn’t appear to be visually present – only Alexander, King George III, Burr, or other male cast members.

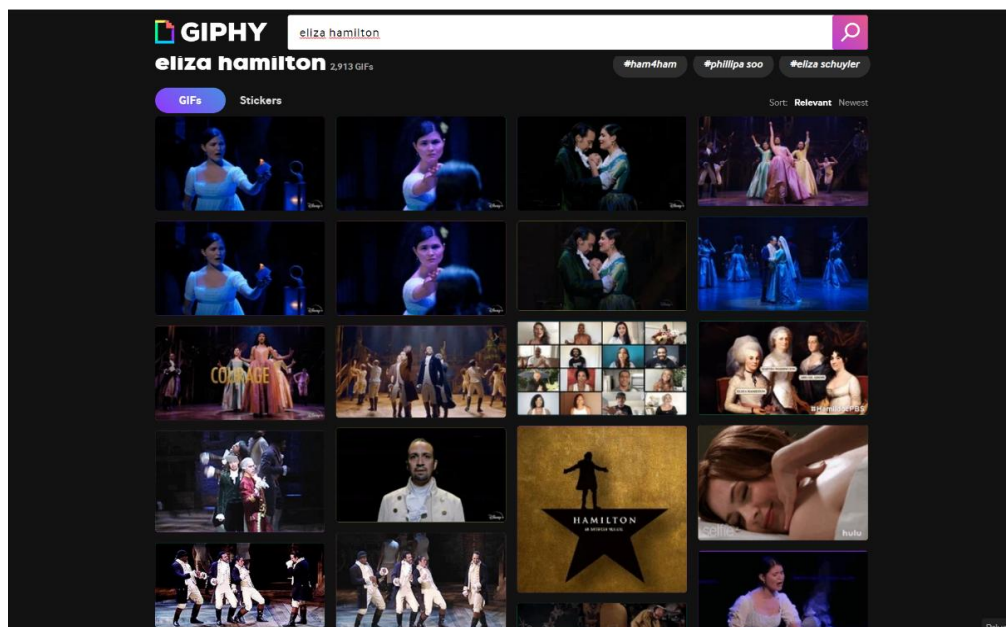


Figure 11: Screenshot of search for 'Eliza Hamilton' on GIPHY²²⁰

²²⁰ “Search: Eliza Hamilton,” GIPHY, March 20, 2023, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://giphy.com/search/eliza-hamilton>.

Even the ‘official’ *Hamilton* GIF which reads “COURAGE” over the famous power-claiming moment from ‘Work!’ blends Eliza’s identity as a woman alongside that of her sisters, though the label is perhaps best applied to her own individual characterisation throughout and beyond her difficult marriage to Alexander. *Hamilton* might be a continuation of Eliza’s story and her role as central archivist well-established within this chapter, but many of the most ‘relevant’ moments from the show have little to do with her or this role. If Eliza’s wider presence does not quite match up to her fundamental storytelling role, it begs the question of what elements the public have gleaned from the show and the extent to which the show’s continued wider mythos might miss her vital contribution.

The ‘Official’ GIF Library

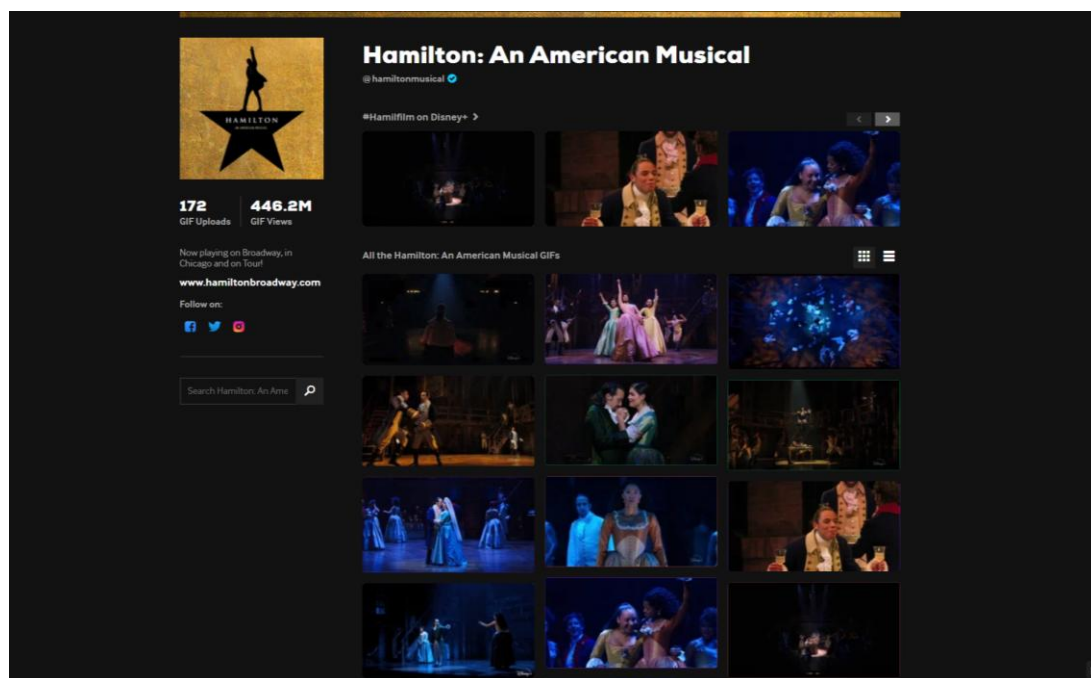


Figure 12: Screenshot of official 'Hamilton: An American Musical' account page on GIPHY²²¹

Intriguingly, the headline GIFs on the official *Hamilton* GIF library do not match the observations resulting from specific search terms. Granted, this displays only 15 of 172 results, but as with the previous ‘results’ pages for *Hamilton* and *Eliza*, the presumed order of relevance reflects algorithmic preference and prediction. Almost all constitute scenes from the Disney+ footage. The modal group centres on the Schuyler sisters with emphasis upon Angelica but the overall range is huge, from Laurens’ toast at the wedding and the wedding ceremony itself, to Burr’s desk leap, King George III’s entrance from the back of the stage, and the paper-storm of the ‘Reynolds

²²¹“Hamilton: An American Musical,” GIPHY, March 20, 2023, accessed March 20, 2023, <https://giphy.com/hamiltonmusical>.

Pamphlet’ where the archival prop-paper evidence against Alexander floods the stage in career-crushing chaos.

These snippets all contain clear visual imagery (whether of a person such as a king, or an action such as a marriage), with obvious movement bringing these elements to life. Alexander’s relationships with others – whether wife, mistress, or friends - are perhaps determined as the most suitable for digital deployment by their dominance at the top of the page, revealing either popular usage at the time or the bias of the *Hamilton* team in assuming the significance of this element of the show’s narrative. This is interesting given the repeated emphasis that *Hamilton* has placed upon historical work and future-making, and the attribution of these values more strongly to Eliza than her husband.

The GIFs begin to suggest just how many different intersections the show’s platforming of the past might sit at. To this researcher, looking at the GIF’s remediation of *Hamilton* helps to reinforce the show’s simultaneous operation across different types of media, representing the layers of transmission from the history books to the Richard Rodgers, to the Disney+ film and thence to social media platforms. *Hamilton*’s presence – it’s sense of liveness, of its ongoing historical intervention – is reinforced as not just about how different storytelling vehicles come together on-stage or the Disney+ screen, but their splintering within transmedial representations and re-incarnations more broadly – endless micro-performances which nevertheless constitute the archival ‘whole’ of what *Hamilton* did, does, and has continued to perpetuate through its wider mythos. But to others, some of those GIFs might just be ye olde George III or George Washington’s friends messing about. Regardless of how any of these samples have been put together, what this cursory GIF glance speaks towards is the variety of values that can be gleaned from one performed, historical product. Though Eliza’s role in *Hamilton* might offer the foundations to inspire a nuanced and enabling historical process beyond the show itself, it must also hold the weight of being a commercial product in a digitised consumer culture. The past, as ever, is up for diverse interpretation and application.

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter centred upon costuming and choreography as storytelling devices with which to examine the theatrical work underscoring *Hamilton*’s mythos. Digging into these vehicles revealed complex layers of historical narrativity which challenged the assumption of Alexander Hamilton’s primacy and reinforced a more intricate agenda about who, and how, history gets to

be made. In doing so, the chapter demonstrated not only their narrative power on a physical stage but started to suggest how their efforts might reverberate throughout the digital sphere, and therefore, the transmedial nature of the show's historical components. This transmedial perspective is the basis upon which the remaining chapters will build.

The significance of the Disney+ film cannot be overstated. The camera angles and audience perspectives that influence how the narrative is experienced are skewed by the demands of creative videography, and there are almost always moments and movements which are not visible in the same way as they may be to a theatregoer depending on where they are sat in the auditorium – and visa versa. Engaging with *Hamilton* digitally, one is intrinsically *not* in the “room where it happened,” no matter how much the show's marketing team might have deployed the phrase in an attempt to lend historical curiosity and time-travel to the event of watching theatre on-demand from home. The scenes being acted out and the authority that these retellings carry with their implied physical presence – the material world coming to life, the power of the archival ensemble, combined with the impact of live performance within a shared physical building – simply cannot be equally replicated through a virtual lens, even if the lens is able to translate something of their effectiveness into pixelated form.

In doing this work, the stage show uses costumed and embodied movement to metaphorically bring to life the intangibility of the ‘archive’ and its key historical figures and events. By physically enacting the different parts and processes of what it means to ‘make’ history – from the ‘original’ events and persons, to the ways in which these come to be evidenced or understood – public engagement with *Hamilton*'s history is brought into what might traditionally be deemed the privilege of the ‘Ivory Tower’. Costumes are not just masks for character qualities or intentions, nor mere ‘Tigersprung’ indicators of timeline, but vital ways through which historical thinking can be activated and enlivened. Movement is not just about providing entertainment or a historical fantasy, but twisting and turning and moving to the rhythm of the work still being done, about bringing powerful, dynamic authenticity of enacting to words or visuals, and about working with historical and artistic material to produce complex contentions. This physical work is a counterpart to the countless interpretations of, engagements with, and uses of, *Hamilton* and its past which now populate the digital world, from marketing materials to social media – a space which could, in terms of GIFs, feel contradictorily surface-level. Yet even here, embodied and costumed movement moments bring together the ‘room where it happened’ and those in which it is still happening, in the daily conversations and ramblings we might normally constitute as mere ‘ephemera’. Without the rustle of fabrics or the small movement moments that make audience members ‘real’ witnesses of the *Hamilton* story, the quality of *Hamilton*'s tangible

storytelling remains sufficient to diffuse with some utility through to the digital, even if it is impossible to fully grasp the weight of the show's historical work through them. The absence of such facets would also undermine the detail with which they construct the show's ultimate case: that history is itself ready to be re-made by the unexpected towards a shared new future. And however helpful or detrimental to the challenge, it is a future that will be shaped by the digital.

Chapter Three

“Get your education”: The #EduHam Program and *Hamilton* as Educator

Introducing EduHam

“The partnership between HAMILTON and The Rockefeller Foundation is a game changer for 20,000 New York City public school[] students. Today, the first 1,300 experienced something truly inspirational—the story of America’s Founding Fathers as told by actors and actresses who look just like them, through a transcendent Broadway musical created by a student of the New York public school system —just like them. We couldn’t throw away our shot at bringing *Hamilton* to the audience it could affect most, who otherwise might not have had the opportunity. *Hamilton* has the ability to reshape history, redefine racial and gender roles, and above all else, inspire – and that is what we hope happens for students here today. I’ve had this date in my calendar since we announced this partnership last fall – now that the day is finally here, I’m as excited as a tourist who won the *Hamilton* ticket lottery.” ²²²

Buying well into the ‘mythos’ of *Hamilton* as exceptional, these words were spoken by Rockefeller Foundation president Judith Rodin at the launch of the Hamilton Education Program (HEP, or ‘EduHam’) in 2016. Introducing the HEP to the world, Rodin made some considerable claims about *Hamilton*’s singing and dancing rendition of America’s supposed origins and who it was supposed to be for: the New York public school students “just like” Miranda who might be “affect[ed] most” by the shows “ability to reshape history,” as much as it might also “inspire” the fortunate “tourist.” Launched at the height of *Hamilton*’s first Hamilmania “the goal of the Hamilton Education [was] to help students see the relevance of the Founding Era by using primary sources to create a performance piece...following the model used by Lin-Manuel Miranda to create the *Hamilton* musical.” As an “in-class curriculum” accessed online via the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History (GLI) and supported by links to pre-prepared digitised primary and secondary resources, the HEP was initially designed to support schools-based history teaching as well as provide access to live performances. Following Lin-Manuel Miranda’s example, young learners are encouraged to delve into primary materials and create

²²² As shared by David Roberts and Joseph Verlezza, “Broadway News: “Hamilton” and the Rockefeller Foundation Welcome 1,300 Students to an Exclusive Student Matinee of “Hamilton” on Wednesday March 15, 2017,” *Theatre Reviews*, March 16, 2017, accessed April 18, 2026, <https://www.theatreviews.com/broadway-news-hamilton-and-the-rockefeller-foundation-welcome-1300-students-to-an-exclusive-student-matinee-of-hamilton-on-wednesday-march-15-2017/>.

their own performance pieces based on histories and issues that are important to them – it’s *Hamilton* as pedagogy both on-stage, and off.

The Program was created in partnership with the GLI and funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Amidst the chaos of sold-out shows, Rockefeller subsidised already-reduced ticket prices by 85%. This allowed young people from underprivileged backgrounds to not only witness the action but take their own HEP-based creations to the Richard Rogers stage, with videos of students’ work being submitted to the company ahead of the visit.²²³ The resources were eventually made available across the US thanks to further Rockefeller finance and as *Hamilton* began to tour, so school children nationwide were supported to see their nearest performance.²²⁴ After branding itself as the ‘EduHamOnline’ and being promoted internationally shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic, the Program found itself digitally braced for the locked-down conditions of 2020-2022. The Program continues to have a presence across *Hamilton*, heritage, and public education circles. In 2024, the Program was largely re-branded once again as part of the GLI’s 30th anniversary, with both “In-Person EduHam (NYC)” and “EduHam Online” routes being offered distinctly (alongside “Hamilton Cast Read Alongs”) within its own section of the GLI’s “Programs” tab.²²⁵ When the GLI and *Hamilton* teams jointly announced the winners of the 2025 EduHam Online competition, they noted a 50% increase in uptake in comparison to previous years.²²⁶ In this annual competition, the Institute’s relationship with the *Hamilton* show is annually re-platformed alongside its wider work in professional teacher development, annual galas, and book prizes. What is it that makes the Program – and the Institute’s relationship with Broadway – so ‘worthy’ of this type of platform?

Chapter Two’s depiction of *Hamilton*’s on-stage work has already labelled it quasi-Brechtian in ambition: Though *Hamilton*’s navigation of personal and national identity negates Brecht’s preference for emotional distancing, the show remains “a critical production” designed for

²²³ Playbill, “Low-Income Students Will Only Pay \$10 – One “Hamilton” – to See *Hamilton*,” *Playbill*, October 27, 2015, accessed March 28, 2026, <https://playbill.com/article/low-income-students-will-only-pay-10-one-hamilton-to-see-hamilton-com-368996>.

²²⁴ Deniz Çam, “Rockefeller Foundation-Funded ‘Hamilton’ Program Puts Students On The Stage,” *Forbes*, April 4, 2019, accessed March 28, 2026, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/denizcam/2019/04/04/rockefeller-foundation-funded-hamilton-program-puts-students-on-the-stage/>.

²²⁵ Homepage, *Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, 2026, accessed April 23, 2026, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/>.

²²⁶ Gilder Lehrman, “Gilder Lehrman Institute and HAMILTON Announce 2025 EduHam Online Winners, Marking 50 Percent Submission Increase,” *The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, March 19, 2025, accessed March 28, 2026, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/about/gilder-lehrman-institute-and-hamilton-announce-2025-eduham-online-winners-marking-50-percent>.

“critical audiences.”²²⁷ As affirmed elsewhere by Huddleston, *Hamilton* has an “intrinsic pedagogical premise” and the HEP offers the opportunity to see this play out in a more structured, measurable way.²²⁸ This is also fitting given a range of scholarly campaigns to ‘prove’ the art form’s applicability to other classroom-based learning - as “innovative” for its ability to forge connections, or even “transformative” for “holistic education.”²²⁹

For this thesis, the HEP offers two main lines of exploration. Firstly, though *Hamilton*’s ‘revolutionary’ historical work acts as a blueprint, the creative content of the HEP student output is left largely unprescribed, aside from that it follows Miranda’s supposed method of creating *Hamilton* and thus results in mini-*Hamilton* performances. It is this performance-based practice which becomes the key educational tool for teaching children how to ‘do’ history and navigate their own identities through past, present and future. In this sense, the Program offers an opportune moment to home-in on the value that performativity might offer as a pedagogical historical framework across the *Hamil*-sphere. Despite tensions in its delivery, the chapter will reveal *Hamilton*’s pedagogical message as an extension of Eliza’s on-stage character - to continue her on-stage role and take control of the historical work to be done beyond it. In addition to the show’s commercial and political facets, in this *Hamilton* is reinforced as having value-loaded intentions beyond the stage and beyond financial success. In a harking back to the political enterprise noted in Chapter One, *Hamilton* seems to be about encouraging the wider public to feel a sense of ownership over the history that is to come – a mission which would in turn contribute to the 2020 ‘crisis’ explored by Chapter Four.

Building on this is, secondly, the way in which the HEP demonstrates *Hamilton* as a complicated transmedial enterprise. Initially, the Program was a relatively analogue operation: at a time when *Hamilton*’s Broadway tickets were nigh inaccessible even for the wealthy, the Program gave Broadway access to the socio-economically underprivileged. Attending a theatre in-person has continued to be part of the HEP even after the release of the Disney+ film, suggesting the

²²⁷ Anton Franks and Ken Jones, “Lessons from Brecht: a Brechtian approach to drama, texts and education,” *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 4, no.2 (1999): 181-200.

²²⁸ Gabriel S. Huddleston, “The Curriculum of the Jester: An Examination of *Hamilton: An American Musical*,” *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing* 37, no. 1 (2022): 2.

²²⁹ P. Kipriaons-Kyprianos, “Theatre in education as an innovative pedagogical tool,” *Edukasiana Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan* 4, no.2 (2025):203-210; Pallabi Bhuyan, “The Stage as a Classroom: Exploring Theatre as a Pedagogical Tool for Transformative Learning,” *International Journal of Contemporary Research in Multidisciplinary* 4, no. 4 (2025): 528-532. For earlier work see for example, Victoria Rue, “Bodied Knowledge: Theatre as a Pedagogical Tool,” *ARTS: The Arts in Religious and Theological Studies* (2003): 29-33.

perceived importance of experiencing *Hamilton* as a live and embodied performance. And yet, underpinned by the show's performative engagement with the past, the chapter raises the HEP as a supposedly digital movement within the show's wider cultural presence. The HEP's 'Online' tracks have helped to facilitate and celebrate educational work through increased digital engagement across both webpage-based (Web 1.0-2.0) and social media (Web 3.0+) technologies. The Spring-Summer of 2020 offers an interesting window to explore some of these works, where #EduHam content coincided with Covid-19 lockdowns before either the Disney+ film launched or #BLM led to calls to #CancelHamilton. In-classroom learning was no longer bound by walls of school or Broadway buildings, but broadcast across the digital sphere, taking the front-of-classroom or locked-down stage spaces to the social media feed, it's mythos there enhanced. *Hamilton*'s theatrical performance, as analysed in the previous chapter, emerges as designed not only to entertain, but to provoke education and self-led learning everywhere: and through EduHam, it could do so with official educational and philanthropic sanctioning.

By drawing on the HEP, a key purpose of this chapter is to highlight more of the various tensions at the heart of *the Hamilton* enterprise. It emerges as once formal and systematised (a school curriculum; a stage show, working within particular codes of Broadway performance), and sponsored by high-level organisations and connections (the Gilder-Lehrman Institution; the Rockefeller Foundation; the Obama administration; Miranda's privileged intersectionality; Disney). On the other, in its digital presence the HEP is depicted as grassroots and down-to-earth (#EduHam; Ham4Ham), trying to break the norms within which it was created, disseminated, and ultimately succeeded (educational systems; revisionist history-telling; what a Broadway performance should look or sound like). As a digitally-accessible resource with social media success, it is the show's digital presence which underpins much of this 'democratising' work, which is nonetheless rooted in a physical performance beyond the wallets of most Americans. Furthermore, EduHam has not only emphasised the Broadway musical *Hamilton* as a worthwhile educational source with the support of a surrounding curriculum, but has fore-fronted Miranda, a musical theatre practitioner, as a legitimate historical educator both in terms of subject matter and historical methodology. With a prestigious backbone of organisations such as The Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History matched by the overt political tones of the show itself, the Program begs questions around historical authenticity and narrativity in a digital age where anyone can "get [their] education" online. Even within a classroom context, no more does history education have to be a textbook-oriented practice – but about telling students to "use your

American voice to tell your American story through your eyes.”²³⁰ This remark by Miranda in the HEP’s ‘Introduction’ video goes so far as to suggest that history education – and the primary sources underpinning it – can be actively and legitimately understood and unpicked by any student from their own perspectives, without the need for academic historians and years of training. There is also then the suggestion that these ideas can make legitimate contributions to shared understandings about past and present, thanks to social media posts of students’ embodied performances where they take on the roles of both educator and actor, able to engage with complex narratives.

With so many potentially interesting issues in play, the chapter centres tensions around two key questions: Precisely what does the EduHam Program reveal of *Hamilton*’s ‘work’ beyond the show, and how does it fit into the ‘mythos’ of *Hamilton*’s engagement with public understandings of the American past? After briefly setting out the creation of the HEP, the chapter will turn to closely examine the Program’s content. This comes in the form of Staff and Student Guidebooks as well as various webpages, but all confined to Web 1.0-2.0 technologies and sometimes referenced hereafter as ‘curriculum’ or ‘syllabus’. Once the curriculum content has been explored, the chapter will turn towards assessment of the Program’s social media presence with a focus on 2020. Here, close analysis of select performance works produced by students of the HEP is followed by HamilTweet analysis of the #EduHam and #EduHamOnline hashtags, both facilitating some public-oriented assessment of the HEP and *Hamilton*’s wider educational presence. Having been promoted online during the periods of Covid-19 lockdowns, this section brings the pedagogical conversation more in line with Web 3.0 technologies, while still rooting discussion in the performative practices that have made *Hamilton*, *Hamilton*. Furthering the attempt to understand the show as a cultural product, this three-fold selection of source materials and analytical approaches ultimately provides different pieces to the transmedial puzzle that *Hamilton* has come to be.

Creating a *Hamilton* Curriculum

The HEP was a result of collaborative efforts between Lin-Manuel Miranda, the GLI, and the Rockefeller Foundation. While Miranda became the case study for students to emulate, much of the material was produced by the GLI and supported financially by the Rockefeller Foundation.

²³⁰ “Introduction,” *Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, 2024, accessed April 23, 2026, <https://hamilton.gilderlehrman.org/create-collaborate?f%5B0%5D=category%3A29>.

At the same time as the production was producing a filmed version for Disney, *Hamilton*'s widespread acclaim (Chapter One) and on-stage storytelling (Chapter Two) were legitimised by its links to well-respected educational and philanthropic names and formalised under a firmly educational umbrella.

In some ways, the GLI made an almost perfect host organisation. Self-describing upon its 30th anniversary rebrand as “the leading nonprofit and nonpartisan organization dedicated to K-12 history education while also serving the general public,” it was founded in 1994 to “promote the knowledge and understanding of American history through educational programs and resources.”²³¹ At the heart of this outreach is seen to be the provision of public access to primary materials and academic scholarship. With an 87,000-piece archive of American history and an “extensive network of eminent historians” at its command, history – done carefully, critically, and thoughtfully – is something for ‘everyone’. Though founders Lehrman and Gilder are known to have had Republican affiliations, their “willingness to segregate politics from historical philanthropy” has been noted amidst debates on their previous work on Alexander Hamilton – namely, the 2004 ‘Alexander Hamilton: The Man Who Made Modern America’ exhibition mentioned in Chapter One. It followed Chernow’s biography and was criticised by others for bordering on hagiography.²³²

Regardless, with such resources at its disposal the GLI’s outputs are typically extensive and often rely on a combination of in-person and digital learning, making a strong context for what the HEP has come to comprise. Over 70 self-paced courses for the general public cover everything from ‘The Age of Jefferson’ or ‘American Immigration History: 1820 to the Present,’ to ‘American Environmental History’ or ‘The History of American Protest’. The Institute also offers a range of more formal learning, with the “Programs” section of its website listing Affiliate Schools, a Masters Degree in American History, and the Hamilton Education Program alongside a range of “special initiative” Programs focusing on select themes – the ‘Veterans Legacy Program,’ ‘The Declaration at 250,’ or ‘Black Lives in the Founding Era’. Though seemingly elevated to its own category on the website, the “acclaimed Hamilton Education Program” is but one of countless school-oriented teaching packs offered by the GLI working across a supposed 14 million

²³¹ About,” *The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, 2026, accessed March 28, 2026, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/about/>.

²³² David Brion Davis and Louise Mirrer, “‘That Hamilton Man: An Exchange’,” *The New York Review*, May 26 2005, accessed February 16, 2026, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2005/05/26/that-hamilton-man-an-exchange/>; Mike Wallace, “That Hamilton Man,” *The New York Review*, February 10, 2005, accessed February 16, 2026, <https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2005/02/10/that-hamilton-man/>.

students, 97,000 teachers, and over 36,000 schools worldwide. At the time of writing, the “lesson plan” tab for teachers gave a 270-strong list of resources with 65 options under “classroom curriculum” – and this is without specifically following links to an “elementary curriculum,” “spotlights on primary sources,” or two separate “professional development” routes for teaching staff.²³³ Emphasising both the public and professional facets of its history work, the Institute even has its own journal, *History Now*.

Behind its apparent ambition, GLI has charitable status and operates only through donations or grant funding. These can be considerable, such as the \$1.8 million given by the US Department of Education in 2017 to expand a three-year professional development program for teachers and centred around knowledge of American history, government, and geography.²³⁴ The GLI also received a \$400,000 grant from the National Endowment for Humanities for the ‘Revisiting the Founding Era’ project in 2018, a three-year library-based program to “create engaging community conversations around the Founding Era ideas and that influence our lives today.”²³⁵ Though one might wonder what prompted two major Founding Father projects so early in Trump’s presidency, the Institute has received a range of high-profile endorsements across the political spectrum over the years. In 2005 the GLI received an Organisation of American Historians’ ‘Friend of History’ award and National Humanities Medal from George W. Bush, a medal was awarded by Michelle Obama in 2011, and the President General Medallion was given by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 2021.²³⁶ *Hamilton*’s partisan origins seem an interesting fit against such endorsement.

Rockefeller funding lent *Hamilton* and its EduHam work another type of credence. Second only to the Carnegie Corporation, the Rockefeller Foundation is one of the oldest philanthropic organisations in the United States. A century since its founding by oil magnate J.D. Rockefeller, the Foundation remains on the global stage as the 30th-largest philanthropic fund, holding over \$6 billion in assets as of 2022 and having distributed more than \$22 billion to international

²³³ “Site Search,” *The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, 2026, accessed March 28, 2026, https://www.gilderlehrman.org/sitesearch?f%5B0%5D=content_type_or_other%3AHistory%20Resources&f%5B1%5D=resource_type%3A47301.

²³⁴ “Awards, Honors, and Key Initiatives,” *The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, 2026, accessed August 14, 2026, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/about/awards-honors-and-key-initiatives>.

²³⁵ “Revisiting the Founding Era,” *The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History*, 2026, accessed March 28, 2026, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/programs-and-events/revisiting-founding-era>.

²³⁶ “Awards, Honors, and Key Initiatives,” *Gilder Lehrman*.

initiatives around health, education, and economic opportunity.²³⁷ Over the course of the 20th Century, the Foundation proved a model for bodies such as the World Health Organization, the U.S National Science Foundation, and the US National Institute of Health. It even significantly influenced the structure of the United Nations, though its mechanisms and significance in bringing America onto the global geopolitical stage have at times been subject to scrutiny.²³⁸ Amidst such prestigious connections, it's interesting to think that *Hamilton*, a 'mere' Broadway show, was deemed worthy of attention – perhaps the Hamilmania marketing machine, so reflected in Rodin's words at the start of the chapter, was legitimate and *Hamilton* was genuinely a 'transcendent' enterprise with affective potential of the highest order.

Though proclaiming to be apolitical, Rockefeller has long been associated with Democratically-aligned values and groups, echoing some of *Hamilton*'s own alignment. Judith Rodin (President 2014-2017) reportedly sought a position on Obama's Global Development Council - just as Hillary Clinton sat as Secretary of State after a significant donation to the Clinton Foundation, and with whom Judith had "close [personal] ties."²³⁹ In an age of Republican-dominated scepticism around global warming, the Foundation have proved strong supporters of environmental and social justice initiatives in spite of their own fossil fuel roots, with a \$1 billion fund to catalyse a 'Green Recovery' from the pandemic in 2020 and \$1 billion more since then to advance climate solutions. Their influence also extends towards social justice and cultural endeavours. Rodin's enthusiastic announcement of the Hamilton Education Program was accompanied by highlighting the Foundation's "long history of supporting the arts and

²³⁷ Grant Thompson and The Rockefeller Foundation, "Consolidated Financial Statements and Report of Independent Certified Public Accountants," *The Rockefeller Foundation*, July 5, 2023, accessed March 28, 2026, <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/2022-The-Rockefeller-Foundation-Financial-Statements.pdf>; "Our History," *The Rockefeller Foundation*, 2026, accessed March 28, 2026, <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/about-us/our-history/>.

²³⁸ Alasdair Roberts, "Remonstrating Neutrality: The Rockefeller Philanthropies and the Evolution of Public Administration, 1927-1936," *Public Administration Review* 54, no. 3 (1994): 221-228; Jaume Sastre-Juan, "Philanthropy, Mass Media, and Cultural Hegemony: The Rockefeller Foundation and the Politics of Science Popularisation in the 1930's" in *Cultural Hegemony in a Scientific World: Gramscian Concepts for the History of Science*, ed. Massimiliano Badino and Pietro Daniel Omode, (Leiden: BRILL, 2020), 297-318; Inderjeet Parmar, *Foundations of the American Century: The Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller Foundations in the Rise of American Power* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2021).

²³⁹ Martin Morse Wooster, "The Rockefeller Foundation's Strong Tie to the Clintons," *Capital Research Center*, April 25, 2016, accessed March 28, 2026, <https://capitalresearch.org/article/the-rockefeller-foundations-strong-ties-to-the-clintons/>. See also: "Rockefeller Foundation," *Influence Watch*, 2025, accessed March 28, 2026, <https://www.influencewatch.org/non-profit/rockefeller-foundation/>; Rick Cohen, "The Unusual Story of Rockefeller's Judy Rodin and Doug Band of Teneo," *Nonprofit Quarterly*, September 24, 2015, accessed March 28, 2026, <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/the-unusual-story-of-rockefellers-judy-rodin-and-doug-band-of-teneo/>.

humanities, fuelled by a belief that the cultivation of aesthetic sensibilities through literature, music, and other fine arts is essential to the well-being of humanity” and noting that “Today’s program [only] underscored the Foundation’s commitment to nurturing the vitality of New York City’s cultural institutions and the role of the arts as a catalyst for social change.”²⁴⁰ Most recently to Rodin’s speech, Rockefeller had funded the pilot ‘Cultural Innovation Fund’ between 2007-2013. This was a project overseen by the Lincoln Centre, at the same time as *Hamilton* was performed at their prestigious American Songbook Series. This was a project geared towards supporting cultural opportunities in the underserved Brooklyn and South Bronx areas of New York – a locale very similar to the first beneficiaries of the Hamilton Education Program some three years later.²⁴¹ With such a powerhouse of support, *Hamilton*’s educational impact beyond the formal stage seemed secure.

The Hamilton Education Program: Curricula and Content

Different syllabi are offered depending on the age of the students. Given the space and focus of this study it has opted to just focus on the standard pack for grades 9-12, rather than the ‘intermediate’ option which is aimed at younger pupils in grades 6-8. Discussion draws upon both the *Teacher Guide* and the *Student Performance & Study Guide*.²⁴²

Before opening either guide, one feature on each front cover stands out: #EDUHAMONLINE. Even though one does not see the hashtag taking off online until at least 2019 (see later in this chapter) it is nonetheless featured upfront under 2016 copyright. The reason for this is unclear. One could see the seeds of some future digital work being planted - an echo of the way in which the original Broadway run was destined for the silver screen with filming in the show’s first summer.

²⁴⁰ In a now-deleted Rockefeller news story. Also quoted in Broadway News: “Hamilton” and the Rockefeller Foundation Welcome 1,300 Students to an Exclusive Student Matinee of “Hamilton” on Wednesday March 15, 2017,” *Theatre Reviews Limited*, March 16, 2017, accessed March 28, 2026, <https://www.theatreviews.com/broadway-news-hamilton-and-the-rockefeller-foundation-welcome-1300-students-to-an-exclusive-student-matinee-of-hamilton-on-wednesday-march-15-2017/#:~:text=%E2%80%9CThis%20project%20is%20transformative.,a%20catalyst%20for%20social%20change.>

²⁴¹ Helicon, “Rockefeller Foundation Cultural Innovation Fund,” *Helicon*, accessed March 28, 2026, https://heliconcollab.net/our_work/rockefeller-cultural-innovation-fund/#:~:text=Project%20Summary,few%20of%20the%20CIF%20grantees.

²⁴² The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, The Rockefeller Foundation, and *Hamilton*, *Hamilton Education Program: Student Performance & Study Guide* (2016); The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, The Rockefeller Foundation, and *Hamilton*, *Hamilton Education Program: Teacher Guide* (2016).

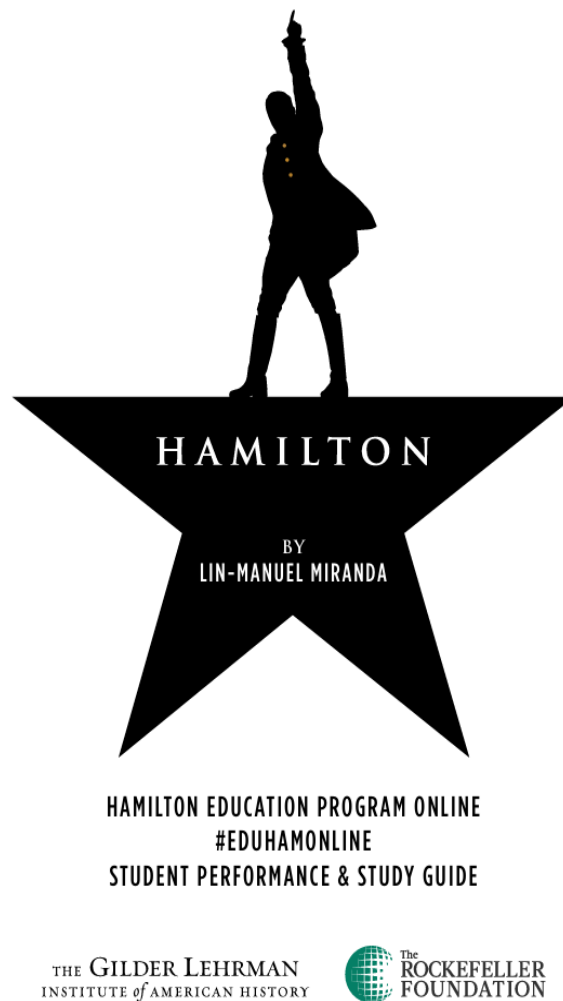


Figure 13: Cover of the Hamilton Education Program: Student Performance & Study Guide

Hashtag aside, the very title of the program – the ‘Hamilton Education Program Online’ – poses its own set of challenges when looking at the digital resources. A picture of the ‘original’ homepage, prior to the 2024 update, can be seen on the next page.



Figure 14 : The Hamilton Education Program ‘Historical Research’ webpage (2023) ²⁴³

On the one hand it is suggested that the website is all-sufficient to complete the Program: all the advice that could be required, the primary sources, the historical context, has been carefully curated by the GLI to enable students to complete the HEP to a high standard. Beyond what is indicated in the 2016 syllabus, the 2024 version of the webpage contains reams of additional video-based guidance from *Hamilton* actors and creatives. On the other hand, this ‘all-sufficient’ website frequently links out towards other avenues. Schools on the ‘in-person’ program not only have the option to visit a live *Hamilton* performance, but those on the updated ‘online’ version can submit student work to win tickets. External websites such as Genius (a lyric analysis community) are also linked and the show has shared student work online on social media. EduHam seems to be not only self-sufficient, but actively part of broader cultural networks relevant to historical work and understanding. It’s not just inward-facing for what young people are doing in American classrooms through the Program, but how this work and its message can be exported both nationally and internationally through the digital sphere as part of the overall *Hamilton* brand.

²⁴³ Image taken from: “Historical Research.” Hamilton Education Program. 2023. Accessed April 12, 2023. <https://hamilton.gilderlehrman.org/research>.

What makes this more complicated is that despite the emphasis upon the ‘online’ and the various resources provided on the Program home page, the HEP ultimately operates in a very ‘grey’ digital space. Even after the 2024 web update, the curriculum’s core materials retain the same 2016 format: paper-based guides that happen to be hosted on a webpage with various interactive links. Rather than an interactive website or immediate push towards social media, the learning structure takes the form of a PDF booklet. Before Lesson 5, classroom activities are based on primary sources largely printed within the pages, with printed paper space to structure the desired student participation and responses. The core ‘online’ component within the Program seems to come only in the form of digital accessibility to wider learning materials and weblinks. Even the final performance component seems to include no actual requirement to digitally record or share the work, apart from to enter the ticket competition. In an age of Web 3.0, this is very Web 1.0 for an ‘online’ program of learning – it is basic tech and far from pedagogically innovative, a quality that arguably comes out more from the curriculum’s emphasis upon creative response. It raises yet another tension between *Hamilton*’s presentation and its meaning, in an already rather taut enterprise just three chapters into the thesis. Rather than denoting a particularly virtuous upgrade in mode or form, the entitled term ‘online’ seems to operate like a flashy, aspirational label. Instead of reflecting a particular historical methodology or approach which is dominated by the virtual, it just denotes ‘access’ to almost analogue resources and learning practices. This traditionality contradicts the Program’s supposed pedagogical push away from textbooks and towards student-centred, empowering practice, as will shortly be discussed in more detail. This flags again some of the contradictions around *Hamilton*’s bigger mythos: does it meet Rodin’s criteria of ‘transcendent’ in surpassing expectations, or in its ability to make such claims without providing the material to truly make a difference to historical understanding?

Designed to comfortably fit within the confines of both ordinary classroom practice and national education policies, what follows is a focus upon digging into historical materials, supposedly making sense of them from a historical standpoint, and then responding artistically to this historical work by navigating these sources through a contemporary educational lens (see Figures 15 and 16 on the next page). As much as the HEP is based on the work of a theatrical practitioner and makes claims to be a digital package, it very much retains the flavour of a traditional history curriculum, with emphases upon “documents,” “text,” and “primary source materials” - and it’s not always clear which is part of the agenda at the forefront. This impression is reinforced by each of the five, pre-planned lessons. With barely a mention of an ‘online’ component apart from the website, the curriculum instead seems to bring the historical and the

theatrical into contention. Apart from where otherwise specified as coming from the student guide, the following discussion draws on materials taken from the Teacher guide.

OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- ★ Discuss important people, events, and key documents from the Founding Era
- ★ Closely read informational texts in order to perform critical analysis of the content
- ★ Accurately summarize primary source materials using text-based evidence
- ★ Compare and contrast original primary source materials with contemporary interpretations of that material
- ★ Write and perform an artistic piece based on primary source materials

Figure 15: Excerpt from the Hamilton Education Program Teacher Guide, showing learning objectives ²⁴⁴

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2: Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Figure 16: Excerpt from the Hamilton Education Program Teacher Guide showing the 'Common Core State Standards' supported ²⁴⁵

²⁴⁴ Teacher Guide, 6.

²⁴⁵ Teacher Guide, 6.

LESSON 1

THE BACKGROUND OF THE MUSICAL *HAMILTON*

This lesson will introduce students to the musical *Hamilton*; Lin-Manuel Miranda, the creator of the show; Ron Chernow, the author of *Alexander Hamilton*, the book that inspired Miranda; and the project that the students will be doing to replicate the way Miranda used primary sources as the foundation for the songs in the musical. Based on the time you have available, you may assign readings and videos for homework.

Figure 17: Excerpt from the *Hamilton Education Program Teacher Guide* showing the introduction to Lesson 1²⁴⁶

Lesson 1 aims to orient learners around the key source materials behind the HEP. Yet, these are not just historical documents, but a collection of *Hamilton* contexts. The presence of two ‘authors’ – playwright Lin-Manuel Miranda and popular writer Ron Chernow – is notable. Suggested materials include: a “Brief biography of Lin-Manuel Miranda” in the teacher guide; “a message from Lin-Manuel Miranda” in the student guide; “an introductory message from Lin-Manuel Miranda” in video-form on the HEP website; “*Hamilton*: From Book to Broadway” within the student guide, “Interviews with Lin-Manuel Miranda and Ron Chernow” in the student guide; two further videos labelled “Lin-Manuel Miranda: How the Teller Determines the Story” and “Ron Chernow: Artistic License in Non-Fiction” again linked to the webpage “hamilton.gilderlehrman.org/create-collaborate.” The lesson’s foci include discussing a “Message from Lin-Manuel Miranda” and the “development of the musical *Hamilton*,” being able to compare and contrast the topics addressed in the interviews, and familiarising oneself with the HEP website, hamilton.gilderlehrman.org.²⁴⁷ The pack thus begins with the perspective of a Theatre practitioner, not a Historian (nor a would-be Eliza).

The “Message from Lin-Manuel Miranda” in the student guide tells pupils that they are both “about to dive into Alexander Hamilton’s world” and that they are to “find the drama” in the “story” they’re “*still living out*” (emphasis mine).²⁴⁸ A number of interesting points could be drawn out here: is ‘find[ing] the drama’ understood as a goal or an assumed outcome of ‘div[ing]’ into the past? If this is a ‘story’ that’s still being ‘liv[ed] out’, how might this effect an attempt to find truth or the ability to construct historical judgement? Is this *the* ‘story’ of Alexander Hamilton, or *the stories* being written by those still living as his inheritors? Is this ‘drama’ contemporary to the

²⁴⁶ *Teacher Guide*, 7.

²⁴⁷ *Teacher Guide*, 8.

²⁴⁸ *Student Guide*, 4.

eighteenth century or the twenty-first, belonging to the explorer or the explored? It is an introduction reminiscent of where the show leaves off: its demand to answer ‘Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Tells Your Story?’ and the suggestion of Eliza as surrogate for the audience member in quite literally taking a ‘stand’ in the supposed archival gap. Yet, such questions are not answered by the HEP: only furthered. “That the person telling the story shapes the story” is one reasonable historiographical point raised. Admitting his own bias in this, Miranda tells students to “Figure out what that person’s story is and what your own point of view is and then write your own story.” Yet, the two seem antithetical: as much as students are to centralise primary materials as part of the course, the method draws almost entirely on *Hamilton* as a Broadway show and Miranda’s journey to making it. In a blurring of what constitutes historical source materials, the show in fact becomes itself a primary source on how to handle the history of “Alexander Hamilton’s world,” even though this isn’t fully explained.²⁴⁹ Against what might be deemed typical of historical training, Miranda’s personal point of view as playwright is evident and endorsed. As much as future weeks encourage students to dig into primary materials, this isn’t to be wholly with a typical historical lens. The issue of bias in ‘reading’ and ‘writing’ history is re-packaged as an affective and self-led journey which is appropriate for sharing and performing to others. While it possibly suggests a reframing of historical interpretation in the language of young Gen Z, it also relates to another emerging point of *Hamilton*-ian tension which will continue over the course of this chapter: If *Hamilton* desires to empower consumers to author their own narratives, what ultimate narrative would the show have in-mind? A pluralistic vision of the future in which any truth becomes ‘the truth’ surely undoes the sense of history-making altogether. This is a problem for a show so heavily deployed within, and associated with, big Democratic politics: What historical or social justice work did organisations such as the GLI or Rockefeller deem themselves as supporting?

The following excerpts from the teacher’s guide give an idea of how each class develops towards the overall goal of “create[ing] [their] own performance piece based on [] research on a historical person, event, or document from the Founding Era.”²⁵⁰ No commentary is given as to how these ‘documents’ have been selected, though another GLI Schools Program with pre-curated primary source selections had attracted criticism for “direct[ing] students to reach predetermined

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

conclusions” without “adequate background” or “alternative viewpoints that would support real analysis.”²⁵¹

LESSON 2

SETTING THE STAGE: ALEXANDER HAMILTON AND HIS ERA

This lesson provides timelines integrating major Founding Era events with events in Alexander Hamilton’s life. Integrating these events will help students understand the context of the readings in the next lesson as well as the context of the musical.

Figure 18: Excerpt from the Hamilton Education Program Teacher Guide showing the introduction to Lesson 2 ²⁵²

LESSON 3

LOOKING AT DOCUMENTS: A CLOSE READING OF PRIMARY SOURCES

This lesson will introduce students to two primary source documents that Lin-Manuel Miranda used to write the song “Farmer Refuted.” Understanding the meaning of primary sources is critical to the success of students’ performance pieces, and 18th-century language can be difficult to understand, so a very careful reading of the primary source documents is critical. The students will read the documents, choose key words, and use those words to summarize the text and then restate the text in their own words. You may choose to use the Differentiated Instructional Activities provided in this Teacher Guide.

Figure 19: Excerpt from the Hamilton Education Program Teacher Guide showing the introduction to Lesson 3 ²⁵³

LESSON 4

HISTORY THROUGH ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

In this lesson, students will compare the original primary sources by Seabury and Hamilton with the lyrics Lin-Manuel Miranda wrote for “Farmer Refuted.” They will consider how to establish historical integrity in a creative piece through a combination of historical accuracy and artistic license.

Figure 20: Excerpt from the Hamilton Education Program Teacher Guide showing the introduction to Lesson 4 ²⁵⁴

²⁵¹ Alan Singer, “Gilder Lehrman’s Flawed History of Emancipation,” *History News Network*, April 7, 2013, accessed April 16, 2025, <https://www.hnn.us/article/gilder-lehrmans-flawed-history-of-emancipation>.

²⁵² *Teacher Guide*, 10.

²⁵³ *Teacher Guide*, 11.

²⁵⁴ *Teacher Guide*, 13.

In the above lesson summaries, one sees more of the archival and historical content at play: a timeline orientation, two documents that supposedly informed Miranda's songwriting, and, by Lesson 4, the comparison of those sources with Miranda's lyrics. The use of "key words" to orient understanding in Lesson 3 is interesting, though the depth of understanding is negligible: The teacher's guide suggests that these should be words that the students "know" using "context, a dictionary, or the provided glossary," but little encouragement is given to students understanding key words within their own historical or historiographical contexts.²⁵⁵ Perhaps to expect more would be beyond a high school syllabus, but it nonetheless once again centralises the emotive engagement of the student, rather than the actual historical site. This is furthered by the need for students to "restate[] the summary in their own words." Though understood as a "negotiation process" with the potential for "different points of view," it sidesteps some of the historical thinking that might be expected. In so doing, one could cautiously contend that the Program gives insights into how the *Hamilton* show itself might have been written, even though this would seem to contend with its history-oriented mission. It is perhaps fortunate that lesson 4 picks up on issues of "historical integrity" "through a combination of historical accuracy and artistic license," though no line is ever clearly drawn. Historical accuracy is prescribed as being "factually correct," "in contrast" to historical integrity "in which, although the presentation of a person, event, or document may not be precisely factual, the spirit of that aspect of history is maintained". It continues that "Lin-Manuel Miranda used artistic license to alter the facts while maintaining historical integrity."²⁵⁶

It's not the purpose of this thesis to specifically assess *Hamilton*'s historical accuracy, integrity, or any other commonly-used terms like 'authenticity' – others have already spoken towards this.²⁵⁷ This passage does have something to say about how *Hamilton* operates pedagogically both on- and off-stage, though. The above quotation seems to be how Miranda understands America's history as being made applicable to the present. By locating in primary sources the "drama" for his "creative piece," as a dramaturge he blurs the line between "the spirit of...history" as experienced, as later understood, and then as performed. To hark back to Chapter One, following the HEP's own approach Miranda seems to have genuinely seen in the historical person of Alexander Hamilton his own experiences of the Obama and pre-Obama periods. Given the show's cultural status and effective White House sponsorship, this also reinforces an

²⁵⁵ *Teacher Guide*, 12.

²⁵⁶ *Teacher Guide*, 13.

²⁵⁷ See *Historians on Hamilton* and other *Hamilton* literature cited in the bibliography for such discussion.

implicated claim on behalf of the show to historical precedence regarding the ideas and values of the Obama era, and those with which that society was originally forged – claims which speak inevitably towards its mythos. In elucidating a specific point of view that Miranda wished to make through the show, this conception almost legitimises Obama’s specific politics within the wider mythos of America’s founding. If not strictly history, what it *does* amount to is a textbook dramaturgical process: responding to the present by pulling on notions of the past, and imbuing *Hamilton*’s theatrical and cultural legitimacy by a re-imagining of the past upon which it’s been built. Every playwright from Aeschylus to Shakespeare has done similarly in the pursuit of political or aesthetic impact, but unlike that of Miranda, their work has almost always retained the veneer of applied fiction. If *Hamilton* has, however, become itself historical pedagogy, we are presented with a challenge in how we understand it as part of contemporary America before we’ve even got to look at what it produced. On the one hand is a show seemingly deeply committed to challenging problematic historical narratives around race and representation; on the other is a potentially uncritical take on what re-framing the past, present, and future might actually require in practice. Meanwhile, Miranda’s words echo theatricality’s capacity for emotive connection so praised by classroom scholars in recent years, buttressing the applicability of performance to enable connection between students and reinforce the fundamentality of emotion and embodiment to *Hamilton*’s pedagogic logic.²⁵⁸

Nevertheless, by Lesson 5 students are deemed ready to start building their own mini-*Hamilton*. In doing so, lesson objectives are to “accurately quote and cite evidence from primary- and secondary-source texts,” “determine importance by summarizing primary source documents,” and “synthesize related information to develop a central theme.”²⁵⁹ Students are to “research and develop their performance pieces around a Person, Event, or Key Document from the Founding Era” and are reminded “that all of their research can be done through the website.”²⁶⁰ As well as a list of people (or characters – the distinction isn’t entirely clear), events, and

²⁵⁸ See P. Kipriaons-Kyprianos, “Theatre in education as an innovative pedagogical tool,” *Edukasiana Jurnal Inovasi Pendidikan* 4, no.2 (2025):203-210; Pallabi Bhuyan, “The Stage as a Classroom: Exploring Theatre as a Pedagogical Tool for Transformative Learning,” *International Journal of Contemporary Research in Multidisciplinary* 4, no. 4 (2025): 528-532.

²⁵⁹ *Teacher Guide*, 14.

²⁶⁰ *Teacher Guide*, 15.

documents, students are also to watch a video of Lin-Manuel Miranda’s “Research Advice,” accessed again via the HEP website.²⁶¹

LESSON 5

CREATING YOUR PERFORMANCE

A. WHAT STORY DO YOU WANT TO TELL?

In this lesson, students will research People, Events, or Key Documents to identify the subject they want to use for their own creative performance piece based on primary sources.

B. WRITE YOUR PERFORMANCE PIECE

C. REHEARSE AND REVISE

D. PERFORM FOR YOUR CLASS

The individual students or student groups will use their ability to read and understand primary sources, their own interests in Founding Era history, and their creativity to write and perform a song, rap, poem, monologue, or scene. They should maintain historical integrity and use direct quotations from primary sources in their creative pieces.

*Figure 21: Excerpt from the Hamilton Education Program Teacher Guide showing the introduction to Lesson 5*²⁶²

The video raises four key points to students: look widely and expect the unexpected; remember that these sources were ‘producing history’ as they went; the show’s emphasis upon legacy and the personal challenge this raises to each audience member; and the “connection” between American history “and the world we live in.” Research had shown Miranda that “almost everything [he] live[d] has to do with the world that they [the Founding Fathers] created” and regardless of the values assigned to these legacies, students are to “create [America] in [their] own images” as they “grow up.” This brings further confusion around historical and pedagogical authority. While students are to centralise themselves, Miranda retains status as an expert practitioner, and all parties must also interact with the antecedent Founding Fathers and the ways in which their legacies have been created and circulated. A stalwart component of American ideology and education remains in the privileging of Revolutionary narratives and figures. Students are to challenge these histories and sources from their own perspectives (however limited or expansive they may be), but they are still to use them as the foundation for

²⁶¹ “Research Advice” under “Interviews with the Creators,” *Hamilton Education Program*, 2024, accessed April 28, 2026, <https://hamilton.gilderlehrman.org/create-collaborate?f%5B0%5D=category%3A85>.

²⁶² *Teacher Guide*, 14, 20.

their own world-building – whether for a 2-minute EduHam project, or out in the ‘real’ “world that we live in.” And they should do it with the HEP’s notion of “historical integrity.”

Before students’ work is potentially shared with the production team and entered into the ticket-prized competition, it is to be graded by teaching staff on the rubric provided in the figure on the next page. Presumably modelled on a scale of 0 – *Hamilton*, one sees a real blend of theatrical and historical thinking in terms of measuring what a ‘successful’ HEP output is. Though four facets are identified, only three are assessed: Research, Historical Integrity, and Artistic Expression, with ‘Originality’ being made part of the latter (though the meaning of the term remains unsubstantiated). The reliance upon primary source interpretation as grading criteria is confusing given the journey students have been taken on. A successful project is not necessarily about a breadth or depth of research, but “clear evidence” of primary sources already provided – of engaging with mysteriously pre-ordained materials or *Hamilton* itself as a primary source, rather than working like a historian and seeking to discover new or diverse materials. Historical integrity, it turns out, is measured on a scale of capturing “the meaning and message” of those primary sources, regardless of “artistic license.”

If the lens of the students’ own experience has been so centralised, how precisely are they to be critically and historically engaging with these largely pre-selected primary materials? Though some historical consideration is at least implicit in the first two of three, it’s unclear what constitutes “highly creative” or “well performed.” Are these outputs to be measured from a historical perspective, or a theatrical? If theatrical, are the other two not also to be likewise scored under a theatrical – rather than historical – umbrella? Perhaps little more could be expected of pre-college students than evidencing basic consideration for primary sources, a care for their context, and a sense of creativity, but nonetheless we see the ‘pull’ of each discipline. What this analysis of the EduHam curriculum reminds us of is the tension within *Hamilton* as a cultural product: it lays claim to powerful historicity, but via almost entirely artistic, commercial, and political contexts. In asking consumers – of the show, the soundtrack, or any other part of the *Hamil*-sphere including the EduHam Program - to be part of its implicated historical mission, *Hamilton* might mobilise existing understandings of the past rather than radically overhauling them. While the character of Eliza gives a role model to the sort of historical work it deems worthwhile, it seems a shame that even EduHam does not necessarily provide the rest of the toolkit to achieve it – unless, underscoring the power of theatrical performance, such is supposedly the work.

PROJECT RUBRIC (15 Points)

Your performance piece will be evaluated based on your research and the historical integrity, originality, and artistic expression in your work.

	Research	Historical Integrity	Artistic Expression
1	Inadequate research shown	Lacks historical integrity	Little or no creative effort or originality
2	Needs more evidence of research	Very inconsistent in historical integrity	Some creative effort and originality
3	Good examples of historical research in primary sources	Historical integrity is generally maintained	The piece shows originality and artistic merit
4	Above-average quality of insightful research in primary sources	Above-average historical integrity	The piece is original, creative, and performance-ready
5	Clear evidence of exemplary research in primary sources	Clear evidence of exemplary historical integrity	Production is highly creative and original, well written, and well performed

What is meant by Research?

Use primary sources from the Hamilton Education Program Online website or independent research to understand your person, event, or document. You may need to use information you learned in class or from reading reputable sources.

What is meant by Historical Integrity?

Your performance piece captures the meaning and message of the primary sources, although artistic license may have been used to change specific facts.

What is meant by Artistic Expression?

Your performance piece provides an original interpretation of your topic through song, rhyme, or prose that conveys to the audience a clear, engaging message.

What is meant by Originality?

The performance piece does not copy another piece of work; the originality comes from choice of character, inventiveness of lyrics and music, and unique expression of ideas and story.

Figure 22: Excerpt from the Hamilton Education Program: Student Performance & Study Guide showing assessment rubric ²⁶³

EduHam Famous: Case Study Creations

As 2020 lockdown protocols gave rise to #HamAtHome, young people were encouraged to share their performative creations online. Some of these were then distributed to global audiences by official *Hamilton* accounts. At this point, one can finally see the ‘Online’ actually seem to come through to the HEP’s outworking. Though an incredibly disruptive and difficult period, the emphasis upon sharing work online has enabled the study to explore what sort of outcomes the HEP actually produced – or, at least, the ones most celebrated or deemed most successful by the *Hamilton* comms team. With an authoritative ‘blue-tick’ on the account, these outputs almost emerge as ‘winners’ of an unstated EduHam competition: not only legitimised by

²⁶³ Teacher Guide, 21.

Hamilton's brand identity, but themselves legitimising the cultural 'worthiness' and 'relevance' of the show's original historical messaging.

This part of the chapter examines the top three student performance videos as shared by the official *Hamilton* Twitter account. All were shared in Spring-Summer 2020 - within only months of the Program's renewed online focus due to the spread of Covid-19, but prior to the release of the Disney+ film. This is important. Although it is possible that exposure to marketing materials may have impacted students' interpretative and performative choices, analysis will nonetheless suggest that the students with the most 'successful' re-makings of their past, based on the HEP and *Hamilton* models, did so with exposure to the in-person performance. Inasmuch as such caveats might undermine the apparent value of the case studies, it also embellishes them. In a time of societal and political upheaval and renewed digital significance, this is what the official account chose to share – the performative, embodied approaches to the past worthy of becoming part of *Hamiltons* ongoing cultural presence (and marketing).

'Remember the Women'

The most popular student performance shared was entitled 'Remember the Women' and shared on 30th March 2020.²⁶⁴ The assumption given by the official Twitter caption is that the piece was made spontaneously at home and as a specific response to lockdown measures preventing the students' access to a Program-sponsored visit to see *Hamilton* live on tour.

²⁶⁴ @HamiltonMusical, *Twitter*, March 30, 2020, accessed April 17, 2023.



Figure 23: Screenshot of 'Remember the Women' as shared on Twitter by the @HamiltonMusical ²⁶⁵

As of 17th April 2023, the video had enjoyed more than 28,000 views, 146 re-tweets, 11 quotes, and 1431 likes. The post also coincided with #WomensHistoryMonth, although the extent to which this hashtag contributed to additional public views or 'relevance' in the search result placement is impossible to ascertain. In terms of its musical structure and style, physical performance, and overall tone, the piece is clearly inspired closely by the Schuyler sisters' song from Act 1. As briefly mentioned in Chapter Two, 'The Schuyler Sisters' presents the girls as atypically active and engaged in the politics and philosophies of pre-Revolutionary America, with a 'Declaration' of their own and an ability to musically bury Burr's flirtatious and discriminatory introduction of them. The number has an iconic choreography that reinforces name-dropping lyrics, such as Angelica's boasting that "when [she] meets Thomas Jefferson, [she's] gonna compel him to include women in the sequel – Work!" Borrowing from these original performative lexicons, "Remember the Women" makes similar use of the introduction of individual characters, vocal harmonisation, and choreography, with the switching of places, triangular formation, and hand movements closely resembling those of Miranda's show.

In some ways the video suggests a capacity for careful understanding and representation of historical thinking, though – like with *Hamilton* itself - it's not entirely clear which parts of the video have come from the girls' "div[ing] into "Alexander Hamilton's world," and which have come from the twenty-first century "story [they're] still living" in. While Miranda's sisters introduce themselves to the audience on a first-name basis, each of the "Simmons sisters"

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

introduce themselves as the wives' of their respective famous husbands. Yet, the song overall emphasises their identities as not simple "wives" but women with their own historical agendas and agencies, as if building upon Eliza's role. The piece has a distinctly ahistorical feel which matches the ahistorical decisions taken by the *Hamilton* team, such as the use of rap or the very idea of women influencing formative philosophical publications like Jefferson's *The Rights of Man*. The Simmons capture the Schuylers' spunky attitude, telling their virtual audience to "Shut up, stop talking, it's our turn now" with an acapella style that mimics one of Eliza's moments elsewhere within the *Hamilton* show. Modern colloquialisms are similarly integrated within the representations of historical interpretation and agency, such as "I'm not just his wife, I'm living my best life." At one point, one of the girls claims that her character "Reminded [her] husband to remember the *ladies*," followed by each of the girls echoing the Schuylers' iconic choreography - right hands in the air with a finger-click. A little bit Beyonce, a little bit Blankenbuehler, it's an obvious mimic of Angelica Schuyler's line to Thomas Jefferson to "include women in the sequel." It's later followed by assertions to their own virtual audience that "Education is important, equal rights too, us women have a voice you agree don't you?," which comes after the declaration that "men get weaker, women only get smarter, fighting for our rights so we have to work harder."

Although the rhyme again echoes Miranda's poetic structure, this is a line with much that could be unpacked. It is perhaps telling of some of the issues of putting young people in the sole driving seat of writing their own history; in suggesting that 'men get weaker' and 'women only get smarter,' the claim somewhat diminishes the assertion of female rights. Crucially, this is not to diminish the collective achievement of the schoolgirls, but to problematise *Hamilton*'s endorsement of a component that has come naturally as a result of completing the HEP. With a somewhat aggressive and discriminatory undertone, it suggests a particular historical moment of re-addressing of an imbalance of gendered power and authority, contrary to scholarship which has often instead sought to emphasise and highlight the continued significance of female voices rather than disparagingly suggesting that this is a new phenomenon. It lacks both nuance and strong foundations in the historical source material supposedly so intrinsic to the EduHam program. If we were to 'grade' the output in comparison to traditional historical education such as the essay, the video feels limited in its ability to truly engage with the depths of historiography and historical understandings that might be expected, but evidently meets well the HEP's own criteria for 'Historical Integrity' by the very blurring of past and present. Apparently defining success so closely on the basis of Miranda's modelling, a 'successful' learning output seems to be one that borders on mimicry as opposed to independent creative thinking. Is the HEP creating

individual historical thinkers who can productively challenge their past and change their future as Rodin suggested, or is it creating mini-Mirandas and the perpetuation of a *Hamilton* brand? What is *Hamilton* celebrating by sharing the performance globally: a smoothly executed performance by school children, or a prototype for the sort of ‘work’ that *Hamilton* aspires to do as a show? Rather than projecting societal progress as the work that Eliza’s character ostensibly inspires, so far *Hamilton* and its HEP seem to simply value the reproduction of a particular cultural product.

‘Fix It’

The second most-popular video shared by the official *Hamilton* account was ‘Fix It,’ on 26th April 2020.²⁶⁶ Similarly to ‘Remember the Women,’ the context for the upload seemed to be the impact of Covid-19 measures upon the Program’s in-person access to *Hamilton* performances. This video seems to have been made within a school, although it still bears the #HamAtHome hashtag, perhaps suggesting the mode of access as opposed to production given national variance in lockdown measures. As of 17th April 2023, ‘Fix It’ had been viewed almost 14,000 times with 40 retweets, 12 quotes and 463 likes – considerably less than the first.



Figure 24: Screenshot of 'Fix It' as shared on Twitter by the @HamiltonMusical²⁶⁷

Each of the three performing students embodies an element surrounding the first constitution and its context; ‘the people,’ ‘the constitution’ and ‘Alexander Hamilton’. Although an official title

²⁶⁶ @HamiltonMusical, *Twitter*, April 29, 2020, accessed April 17, 2023.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

is not given, the central choral line seems to resolve around the contested need to “fix it [the constitution].” The piece does adopt *Hamilton*’s hip-hop rap style and is somewhat reminiscent of Miranda’s ‘Cabinet Battle’ numbers with accenting “ay ay ay” interruptive moments matching the show’s characterisation of Hamilton, but without any choreography mimicking the on-stage action. This could suggest that although the students had been able to listen to the show’s cast recording, they had not accessed a performance of the show. This is unlike the creators of “Remember the Women” who were evidently able to capture something of the show’s iconic choreography in spite of supposedly having their privileged, EduHam-sponsored access denied due to pandemic conditions. The lack of choreography adds a different visual and embodied dynamic to ‘Fix It’ – musically we hear something of Miranda’s style, but it is not matched in aesthetic. It’s possible that this correlates with the video’s reduced popularity.

Lyrically, ‘Fix It’ also appears more abstract in its *Hamilton* inspiration, unlike the concept of ‘Remember the Women’ which very closely followed ‘The Schuyler Sisters’ in tone, approach, and performance. Although the constitution forms a central part of *Hamilton*’s plot, it is never personified or given reception outside of the political elite. What these students arguably do more closely than the Simmons sisters is democratise understandings of the constitution within its historical context, while still providing Alexander’s character as a reference point for those who have seen the *Hamilton* show. The constitution is “perfect, us united is the aim”; the people have “no guidance...no future”; Alexander interrupts that it is “a cute first try.” In this way, the output suggests an understanding of the show and the revolutionary period in a different way to ‘Remember the Women’: Where ‘Remember the Women’ added select historical details within a similar (albeit less nuanced) agenda to that of the *Hamilton* show, ‘Fix It’ goes beyond what is given within the show in order to suggest a bigger historical picture. It portrays a greater sense of historical political agency within Revolutionary America outside of “the room where it happened.” In some ways, this feels reassuring to our understanding of the HEP as a piece of historical education, reinforcing the potential for performative vehicles to foster and transfer thoughtful historiographical work that borders less obviously on mimicry.

The piece does, however, later revert to a *Hamilton*-centric approach when Alexander’s character is given a summarising and particularly dynamic role in resolving the constitutional issue. As the beat kicks in, the character cries “make the voices of the people sound louder, one man can’t have all that ability,” before going on to detail the economic and governmental change needed. In this, “Fix It” echoes some of the criticisms voiced by the characters of Aaron Burr, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison in the show as Hamilton brings in “nothing less than

government control.”²⁶⁸ This could feel like a well-deserved piece of historical revisionism around the reclaiming of the historical Alexander Hamilton within popular memory, but after *Hamilton*, it feels more like a reliance upon the tropes of the Broadway show. Although the students seem to have some capacity to creatively share their interpretations of the past using the Program’s model, seeing work on the period through the lens of the HEP brands it impossible to distinguish clearly between Broadway brand and historical thinking.

What’s your name, man? ²⁶⁹

The third most popular HEP output was shared by the *Hamilton* account on 27th May 2020 as the “week’s #EduHam at Home highlight.” As of 17th April 2023, the video had attracted 17,800 views. The child, James, appears younger than the target audience for the main HEP syllabus and sings alone instead of with classmates, pointing towards the HEP perhaps being used more widely under Covid-19 lockdown conditions. The 1:43 minute clip shows James as Alexander Hamilton, rapping his own life story in response to off-camera interview questions.

²⁶⁸ “What’d I Miss?,” *Hamilton*; *Hamilton* Libretto in *Hamilton: The Revolution*, 153.

²⁶⁹ @HamiltonMusical, *Twitter*, May 27, 2020, accessed April 17, 2023.



Hamilton ✓
@HamiltonMusical

Follow



What's your name, man? James from Pennsylvania is this week's [#EduHam](#) at Home highlight! Take a look! [#HamAtHome](#) (👤: [@Gilder_Lehrman](#))



11:07 PM · May 27, 2020

Figure 25: Screenshot of 'What's your name, man' as shared on Twitter by the @HamiltonMusical²⁷⁰

The piece is heavily modelled on *Hamilton* as a show and provides a sort of back-story from Hamilton's point of view after being shot by Burr. Visually, James is dressed and wigged in quasi-historical clothing: even where the cravat might be a repurposed tablecloth and the jacket a Paddington-style coat, we immediately recognise the Tigersprung attempt at a regency style. Musically, the creation borrows the famed "AL-EX-AN-D-ER" lyric to introduce himself after a snippet of the melodic phrase that opens the show's "Alexander Hamilton" track. The childlike rapping covers the entirety of Hamilton's life until 1804, as depicted by the musical. Some of this, such as Hamilton's early years in the Caribbean, mirrors the Broadway backstory, while other sections such as the "war revolutionary" or "Founding Father" roles are also given in hindsight rather than being enacted. The *Hamilton* show seems to be the main and sole source - at no point are wider historical references consciously cited. Yet, what's so interesting about the piece is the very end of the 'interview'. After being thanked by the host behind the camera, 'Alexander' re-contextualises the duel - the temporal frame which haunts the whole of the *Hamilton* show - and after a brief melodic interlude from "The Ten Duel Commandments," admits that he 'Will throw away [his] shot!' accompanied by the iconic pose from the *Hamilton* logo. Though he's young, in

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

playing with the notion of hindsight, James has clearly considered the role of perspective in both historical and on-stage storytelling, as emphasised by *Hamilton* and Miranda's guidance in the HEP.

Though the video doesn't quite reach the telling of an entirely new and personal story following Miranda's methodology, the piece does reinforce several facets found throughout this chapter. On the one hand, we have the extent to which the show has influenced understandings of the Founding Father era for young people, providing not just a model for making their 'own' history, but re-creating and reverberating that which has already been made by Miranda. On the other, we also see the significance of HEP as bringing together different facets of the *Hamilton* phenomenon. To make the most sense of James' creation and those by the other young people, we have to understand *Hamilton* as a Broadway show both in and of itself, and more widely. Within the framework of an "@Gilder_Lehrman" creation, we see the show's choreography, music and costuming coming together to form a cohesive narrative. Ending with the pose of the *Hamilton* logo (see also Chapter Four) reinforces the 'My Shot' freeze-frame not only to *Hamilton* as a piece of theatre, but to a message beyond the stage: individual determination for a supposedly collective vision, despite all odds. The Twitter and HEP contexts add to this: on Twitter James' video, like the other two, became part of *Hamilton*'s wider marketing machine and social media presence, with the #HamAtHome context reinforcing the show's broader value for those of all ages in a time of crisis. To understand the *Hamilton* phenomenon demands thinking across each of these facets and arenas. *Hamilton*'s presentation of the past, and the presence of the past within *Hamilton*, require not only temporal conceptions but transmedial. One cannot fully understand or appreciate each part of the *Hamilton*'s multi-faceted cultural presence without being familiar with other parts of the whole of it.

HamilTweet

HamilTweet helps to visualise some of the contexts and connections that might have enabled this transmedial educational work and further probe the tensions around this ostensibly 'digital' work.

Since 2016, #EduHam was the main hashtag assigned to the HEP. What's interesting in the below word frequency chart is that the use of the hashtag doesn't show any clear correlations to ideas beyond itself. Terms such as 'students', the *Hamilton* show, Miranda, the GLI, and 'history' all represent aspects intrinsic to the Program and few were deployed heavily. This could suggest

that the HEP was seen as being ‘online’ in a relatively isolated manner – relevant to the *Hamilton* show, GLI or school activities, but not to be discussed outside of this context.

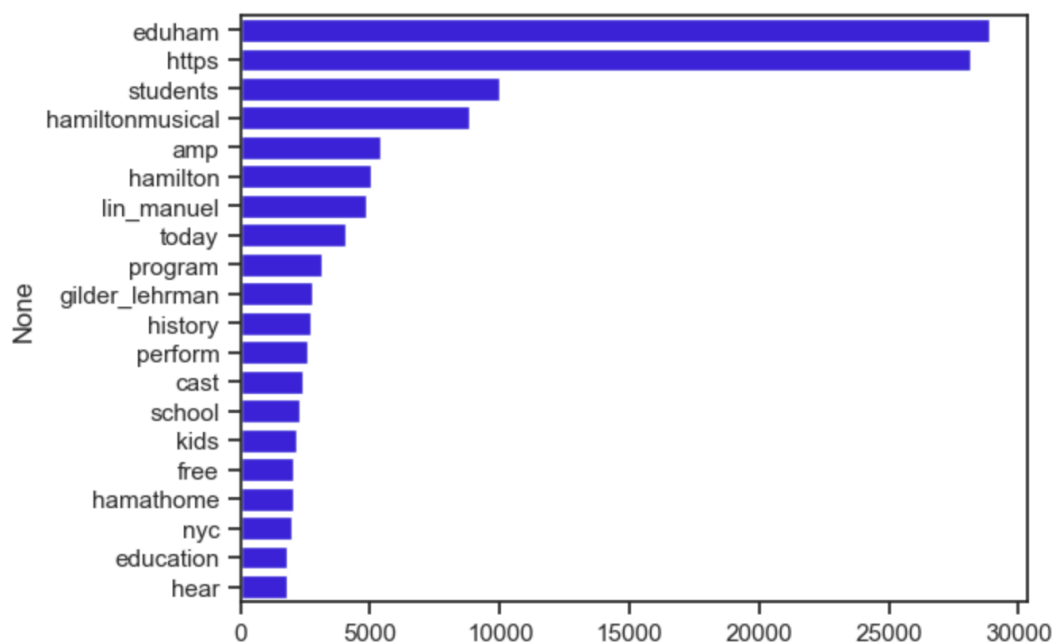


Figure 26: #EduHam - word frequency

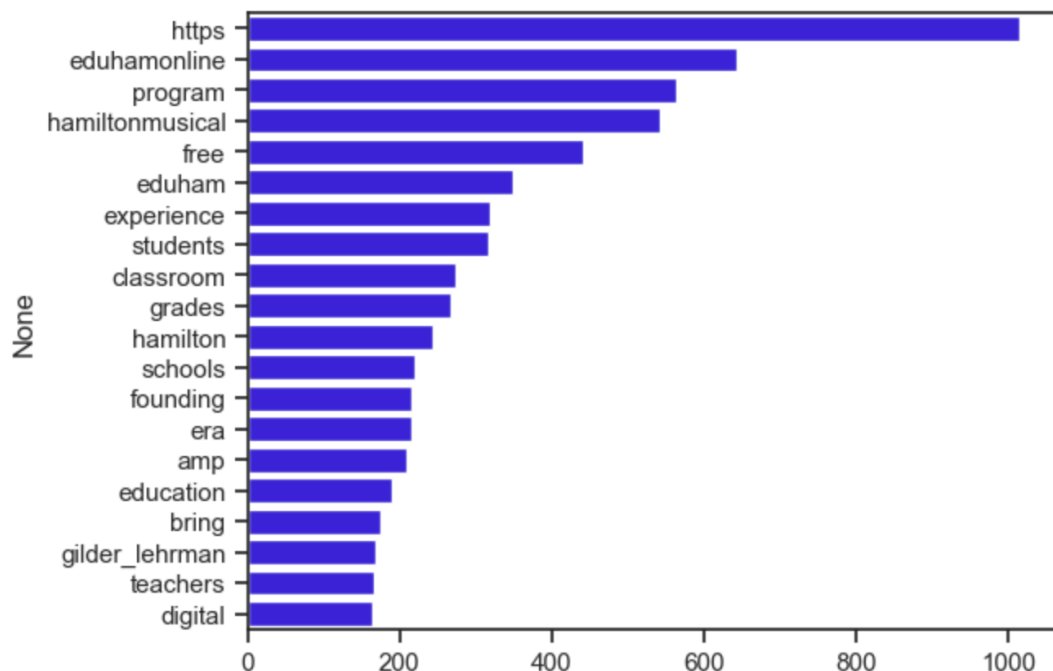


Figure 27: #EduHamOnline - word frequency

This is a little surprising given that the Program asks young people to make sense of their own history and stories, which requires diverse engagement with wider culture. It suggests the significance of the Program’s connection with the broader *Hamilton* brand rather than towards achieving genuine interventions in public education, unless it’s simply the case that Tweets doing

this sort of work failed to go ‘viral’ and achieve the re-tweets required to show as statistically significant.

As shown by Figure 27, the same pattern was largely followed by #EduHamOnline, which received far less usage. Indeed, #EduHam was used in conjunction with the phrase ‘HamAtHome’ (itself a good way down Figure 26 and a key phrase used to connect *Hamilton*’s online presence to the locked-down contexts of 2020) more than #EduHamOnline was deployed on its own by almost five times. This latter term not only reinforces the show’s attempts to use the HEP to engage with publics amidst lockdowns but reinforces the limited public deployment of the ‘Online’ label given to the HEP. It could indicate mere inconsistencies in the marketing department, but it also speaks towards the questioning earlier in the chapter about the use of ‘Online’ at all with regards to the HEP. Perhaps *Hamilton* and its education program were already deemed as ‘online’ in such a way that it did not need special, digital designation, even if someone elsewhere had added the phrase.

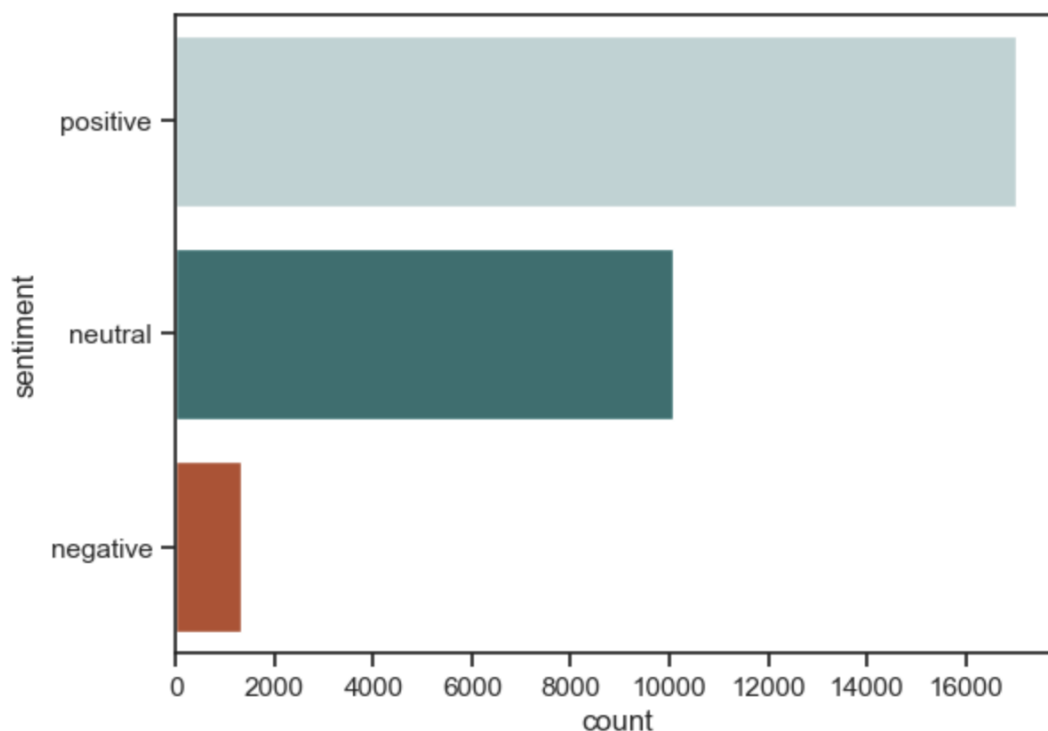


Figure 28: #EduHam - sentiment analysis

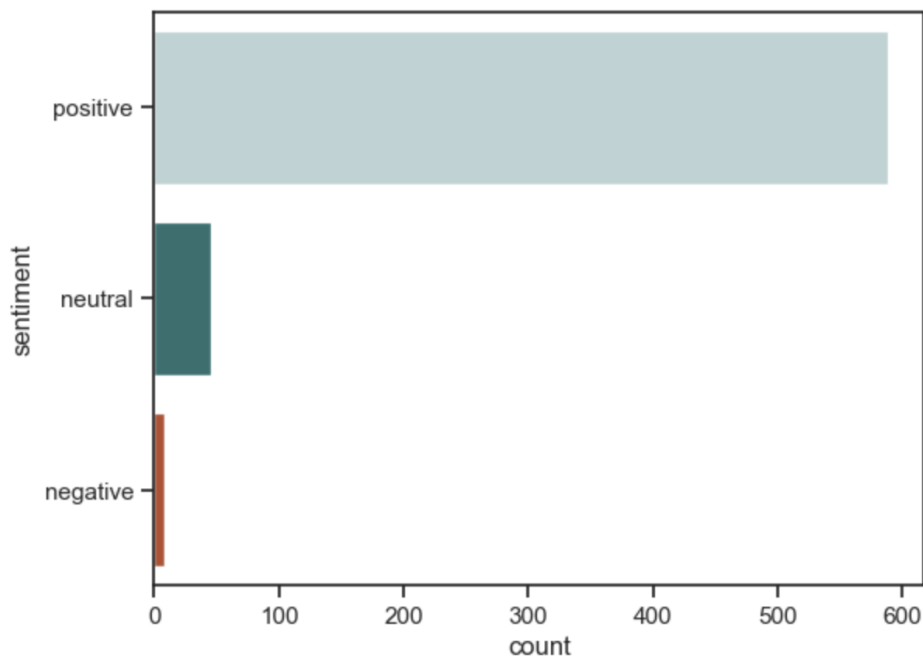


Figure 29: #EduHamOnline - sentiment analysis

This debate is furthered by the sentiment scoring shown in Figures 28 and 29. Despite the discrepancy between the two hashtags in terms of uptake, where the HamilTweet function was able to assign sentiment scores, both show strongly positive associations. It is possible that *Hamilton*'s HEP goes just far enough in the vein of historical education to merit general praise and underpin the impact that the Rodin seemed to think the Program would have. Had Twitter and its API still been available, it would have been interesting have done deeper investigations to glean an understanding of the negatively-skewed Tweets – whether problematising the HEP (and indeed *Hamilton*'s) educational agenda or simply bemoaning the loss of ticket competitions. However, one should note the almost 100% positive association given to #EduHamOnline, in comparison to an approximately 60% of #EduHam uses – it is unclear whether this is due to co-present terms within the Tweets themselves, the function's assumption that 'online' equals positive, or representative of the two hashtags being used differently – one by the public and one by official *Hamilton* media.

Continuing in this vein, arguably the most interesting HamilTweet results for the HEP are that of sentiment over time, shown in Figures 30 and 31. #EduHamOnline clearly shows the hashtag being used in 2019 around the Program's re-brand, but usage did not increase as lockdowns came into effect, with #EduHam retaining predominance. Usage is inconsistent over the 2019-2023 period. Perhaps the re-brand didn't work – or indeed, perhaps the public saw the HEP as an online activity automatically. Whether or not participants were cognizant of the fact, simply by deciding to Tweet about the HEP using #EduHam made it a more digitally engaged project than it

had been. This wasn't just a curriculum for the classroom, but something worth exporting to other potential learners across the world wide web. #EduHam, meanwhile, received broadly consistent positive use from its 2016 inception until 2021, when engagement with the hashtag began to peter out in general. As Chapter Four will shortly detail, *Hamilton* came under fire temporarily in 2020 as part of #BlackLivesMatter, but no increase in negative sentiment supports this as an explanation for the change around the HEP. It's possible that teachers exhausted the novelty of the Program, or perhaps Musk's takeover of the platform reduced the incentive to participate in this specific #EduHam community (see Chapter Five). Had Twitter continued into 2025, it would have been interesting to see whether that year's 50% increase in HEP competition entries translated in any way to the Twittersphere.

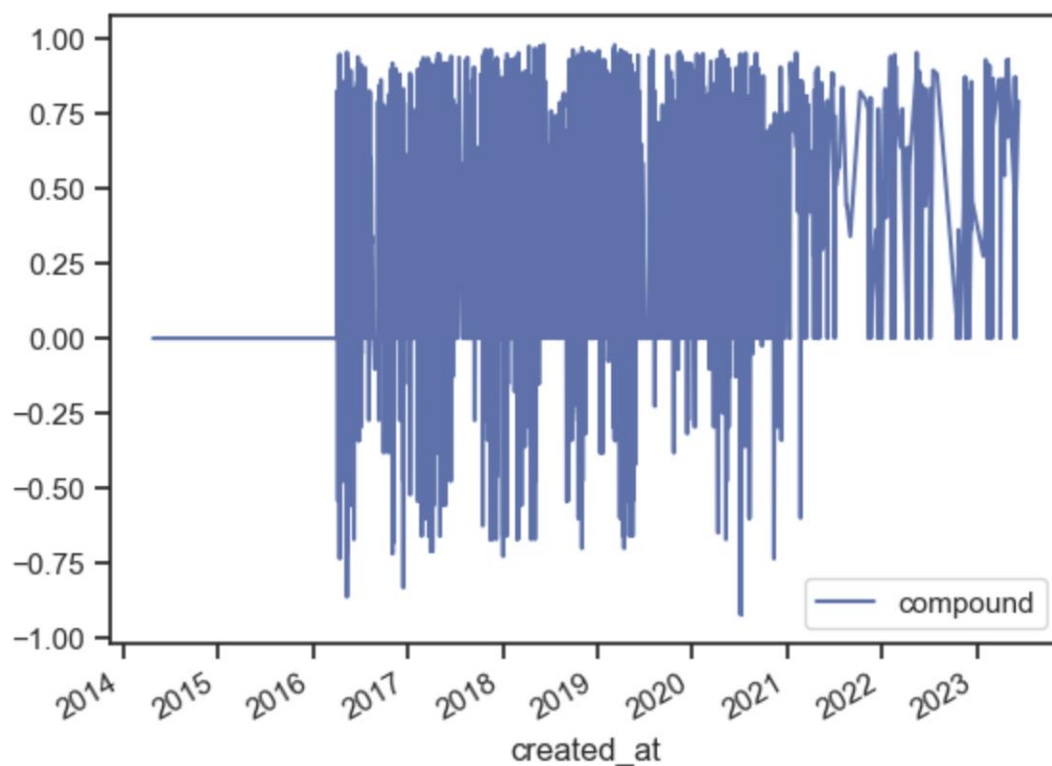


Figure 30: #EduHam - average sentiment score over time

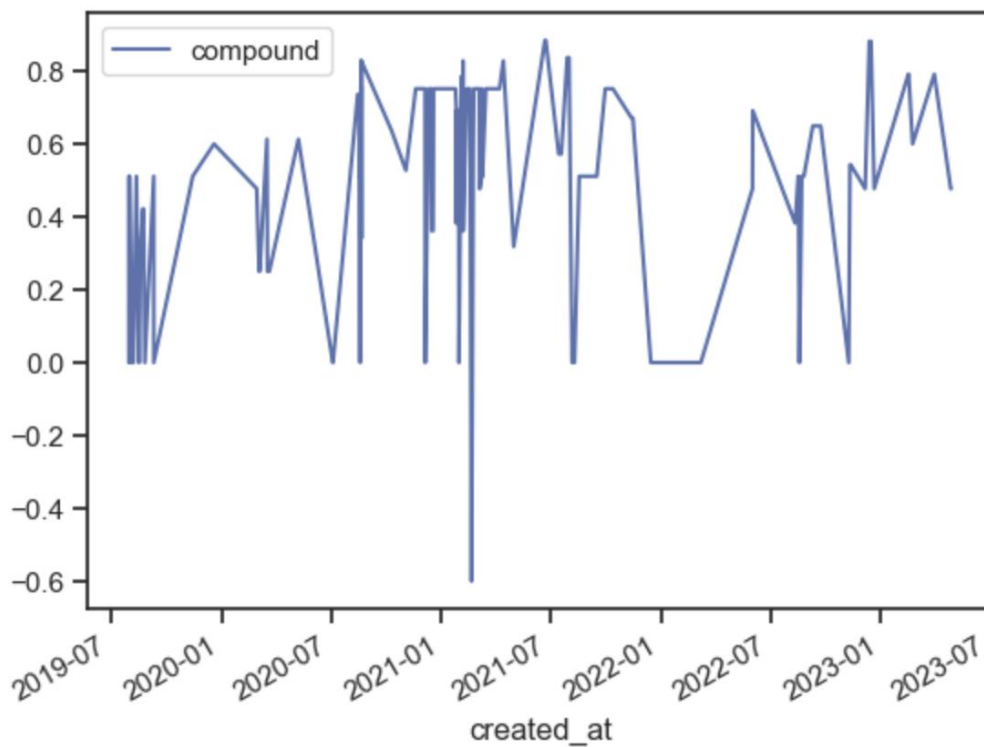


Figure 31: #EduHamOnline - average sentiment score over time

Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has proved a bountiful opportunity to dig into some of the complexities bound up within *Hamilton* as a cultural and pedagogical enterprise. It began with Rodin’s claim that *Hamilton* has the “ability to reshape history,” “redefine race and gender roles,” and “above all else, inspire.” Albeit coming from the Program’s Rockefeller financier, her claims imbued both the show and its educational program with a strong sense of not only mythical status, but tangible, history-based and history-focussed impact across past, present, and future. What has emerged by the end, though, is a more nuanced picture.

By tracing the ways in which the EduHam program has come to exist and be celebrated as part of wider contemporary culture, the chapter has reinforced the importance of seeing *Hamilton* both performatively and transmedially – the performative providing the communicative vehicle for students’ work, and the transmedial providing the framework through which that meaning is made. Ultimately, the scale of the EduHam program *is* unusual for a Broadway show – a testament to at least a perception of truth in *Hamilton*’s capacity to make a difference of some sort beyond mere marketing buzz. But in many ways, the chapter’s discussion traces within EduHam similar tensions to those found elsewhere across the enterprise: between that to which it or others claim of it, and that to which it stands up. EduHam claims a sense of newness in being

‘online’ yet draws upon well-trodden pedagogical vehicles across page and performance. It evidences ambitions beyond the theatrical but seems bound by that original medium in measuring the ‘success’ of students’ historical learning. Tracing Eliza’s inspirational role espouses a clear sense of historical mission, yet the show finds itself so adaptable to varied intent that this does not always come to full fruition. It professes history as belonging to a varied collective but focuses on the efforts of elite individuals and organisations like Miranda, the GLI, and Rockefeller to do so.

The thesis has elsewhere discussed how *Hamilton*’s varied digital presence has had the potential to turn every-day spaces into Broadway stages by listening to soundtracks or watching the filmed Disney+ version of the show. EduHam suggests something beyond this. Even if absent in Miranda’s original vision for the Mixtape several years before (see Chapter One), his show’s departure from Broadway’s century-old legacy of merely performing and navigating American identity (see Introduction) is clear. Its historical work was not only to be carried on-stage by professional actors who give audience members lessons to take home with them in memory, sing-alongs, or on-screen. In collaborating with the GLI and Rockefeller in the creation of the HEP, we see *Hamilton* trying to go further, making every-day spaces into educational *Hamilton* stages.

Whether a marketing extension, branding attempt, or representative of impact-seeking visibility, the Program’s social media extension and ‘online’ veneer still helped the show reach a wider public base in which its reasoning could be accessed. In acknowledging the criticality of encountering *Hamilton* across different spaces, the discussion does reinforce that the show has been technologically involved in the *attempt* to do something more with performance than simply perpetuate commercial success or curate a regular Broadway fanbase. But perhaps more critically, EduHam shows an effort to fundamentally demonstrate the capacity for performance to transform every-day spaces into active, real-world stages not only by technological reach, but by pedagogically changing hearts and minds. In Rodin’s mind, EduHam seems to want to enable future generations to use the past to create their own platforms of active change in everyday life. Musical theatre, then, is not only a fundamental part of American identity by virtue of popular culture, but can be understood as having the reflexive capacity to affect that very identity. To *Hamilton*, it didn’t matter that the students’ work shared on Twitter didn’t necessarily evidence the sorts of deep engagement with the past that a historian might expect. What was important was recognising the power of the performative to engage some sort of historically and nationally-relevant thinking.

Rodin's allusion to the partnership's initial announcement in the previous fall builds upon this point: the HEP was likely underway even before the show hit Broadway. It therefore wasn't *Hamilton*'s initial Hamilmania that led to the HEP, but the sorts of insider, politically and culturally connected knowledge traced throughout Chapter One, which then picked up on the meaning-making power of performance discussed in Chapter Two. This speaks not only to *Hamilton*'s mythos and hints towards some of the mechanisms that might have enabled it but alludes to a potentially wider mythos of performed Americana in which *Hamilton* sits beyond the scope of this thesis. That which enables "the American promise that any kid...can be president" or "receive a standing ovation from the president" is one where founding stories still carry enough weight to inspire future action – where such articulations of American exceptionalism are so well-accepted that they can be celebrated and mobilised through contemporary cultural modes like *Hamilton* and further popularised through educational programs which are portrayed as a success, regardless of what seem like limitations.²⁷¹ Therefore, rather than its lacklustre components only diminishing the capacity for performance to engage complex historical thinking, the HEP seems to suggest a belief in the value of performance being beyond mere entertainment and in the truly mainstream of daily life. *Hamilton* appears as not just about challenging existing public understandings of an all-American past or present, but in looking from the political, cultural, and technological landscape of the past and towards the future, re-orienting public attitudes towards how these understandings should be used in embodied performance that inspires wider action. What this meant for navigating "America now" would soon be challenged. Seemingly unbeknownst to the *Hamilton* marketing team, the day before they shared 'What's your name man?' on Twitter, the murder of another black American had set in motion a chain of events towards a new call to action with unprecedented cultural presence: 2020's Black Lives Matter.

²⁷¹ McCarter and Miranda, *Hamilton: The Revolution*, 15

Chapter Four

“Work!”: *Hamilton*’s #Ham4Progress

Introduction

As Biden campaigned towards his November election against Trump and Broadway remained closed due to Covid-19 measures, *Hamilton* changed its long-term plans for a cinematic release and took its stage to the locked-down Disney+ screens of the world just in time for 4th July. The show had been a sell-out for five years, its core cast had become veritable celebrities, its education program was thriving, and now, millions were invited into that “room where it happens” for America’s 244th birthday party. As a projection of ostensibly American values amidst adversity, *Hamilton*’s sense of agency and ability to act beyond the sum of its parts never felt stronger or more relevant. Yet, this chapter will consider how #CancelHamilton came to challenge the show’s supposed ability to change the way publics viewed their past, present, and future.

It should be noticed that this moment almost overlaps with the temporal framings of Chapters Two and Three: at the same time as the theatrical storytelling vehicles discussed in Chapter Two were made visually accessible, and shortly after the show’s official Twitter account had shared the EduHam outputs assessed in Chapter Three. This means that, though rooted in longer-term developments, Chapters Two through Four collectively centre themselves around a relatively short period. From the very start, this alludes to the complex temporalities which the chapter will suggest are enabled by the digital sphere: fates can not only seem to turn quickly, but public understandings of the past can be rapidly re-articulated in a potentially unstable environment with unpredictable consequences.

Theatre, broadly speaking, is no stranger to criticism. For all the show’s renown, 2020 wasn’t the first time that *Hamilton* had drawn negative critique for its handling of history. Monteiro, for example, argued in both *Historians on Hamilton* and *The Public Historian* that the show’s “race-conscious” approach undermined both the show’s reputation and supposed revisionist agenda: in an age where “women’s voices are no longer silenced and Black Lives Matter,” the lack of historical black people in a show so emphasised for its value to “history” effectively represented “the erasure of the black past.”²⁷² *Hamilton* might have belonged to an era of a black President,

²⁷² Lyra D. Monteiro, “Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black Past in *Hamilton*,” *Historians on Hamilton*, ed. Renee Romano and Claire Potter (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2018): 58-

but it was still pulling on the same “exclusive past” as the discourses it supposedly ‘revolutionised’ through performance: The affective and historical dissonance produced by casting of global majority actors as historically white, slave-owning elites was not provocative but reductive. Critique also hadn’t been limited to ‘academic’ circles. In 2019, playwright Ishmael Reed produced the scathing *The Haunting of Lin-Manuel Miranda* which saw him “visited by manifestations of slaves, Native Americans, and white indentured servants who were conveniently left out of the book upon which he based his musical.” In *The Haunting*, one can see how colleagues across Miranda’s own theatrical industry disagreed with the way that *Hamilton* had come to be fundamentally celebrated as ‘American,’ suggesting that in spite of its popular reputation, on-stage narrative, and educational program, *Hamilton* was a performance project belonging to one man and representative of neither the nation nor its legitimate history.²⁷³ Both issues of absence and responsibility were in spite of not only the show’s overarching mythos, but the efforts of *Hamilton* actors such as Odom Jr in speaking in support of the show, specifying the personal effect it had on him as a black American. This is a tactic to which the *Hamilton* enterprise would return in 2020.²⁷⁴

The chapter responds to two key questions. Firstly, how did the public come to turn on its favourite hip-hop version of history at this moment? Secondly, viewing 2020 as a particular historical and political moment through the lens of *Hamilton*, how were ideas about the past understood, articulated, and transformed through a point of public crisis? Rather than portraying 2020 as the year *Hamilton* first received criticism, the chapter will see this year as the first time that such dissatisfaction would appear to challenge the enterprise and its values on a truly ‘public’ stage. In asking why 2020 posed a new challenge to *Hamilton*’s sense of progressive political work, the chapter will locate significance in not only the active work demanded by Black Lives Matter but the social media contexts which enabled “unprecedented levels of mass protest all over the world.”²⁷⁵ By releasing the Disney+ film amidst #BlackLivesMatter, *Hamilton*’s newly transmedial presence gave bodies to the voices of the cast recording and enlivened action to

69; Lyra D. Monteiro, “Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black Past in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s *Hamilton*,” *The Public Historian* 38, no.1 (February 2016): 89-98.

²⁷³ Helen Holmes, “Playwright Ishmael Reed on why he thinks *Hamilton* is a total fraud,” *Observer*, January 15, 2019, accessed March 29, 2026, <https://observer.com/2019/01/playwright-ishmael-reed-on-why-he-thinks-hamilton-is-a-total-fraud/>.

²⁷⁴ Kathryn Lurie, “Playing the Man Who Shot Hamilton,” *Wall Street Journal*, August 6, 2015, accessed March 29, 2026, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/playing-the-man-who-shot-hamilton-1438896589>.

²⁷⁵ Colin Wayne Leach, Shaunette T. Ferguson, and Cátia P. Teixeira, “Protest now: A systems view of 21st century movements,” *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 27, no.5 (2024): 1188.

stills from marketing photographs. Arguably unrecognised by a *Hamilton* team who would have been expected to take note, this turned out to be a bold move which challenged the nature of change-making in a moment consumed with how to ‘perform’ protest and make social justice manifest.

Within what Samuel seminally termed a “work of a thousand hands,” examination of *Hamilton* amidst #BlackLivesMatter offers the opportunity probe the placement of the impassioned protestor or the casual #CancelHamilton tweeter alongside the ‘Broadway Greats,’ Disney Corporates, and *Hamil*-fans in determining how ideas on the past are used to bring about change in the present – or not.²⁷⁶ History has long been understood as being ‘put to work’ as part of producing change. As James Anderson and Christopher Span explain with reference to black activist movements in America, “[A] deep knowledge of history informs [] activism” as public understandings of the state of contemporary affairs are brought to the melting pot of the Future’s construction site.²⁷⁷ Public history – the field within which this thesis sits – is itself defined by the U.S’ *National Council on Public History* as “the ways in which history is put to work in the world,” centred around “real-world issues.”²⁷⁸ As Denise Meringolo et al note, the public historian might intend to “promote social justice,” “facilitate civic discourse,” or “promote equality” through their endeavours – goals which sound, at least on the surface, remarkably similar to those which have been espoused by, and elsewhere assigned to, *Hamilton*.²⁷⁹ While this is not to blindly ascribe the title of ‘public historian’ to Miranda or his associates, this researcher is reminded that such efforts within the show’s mythos speak towards the long “tradition of social justice activism” which might inform not only the creation of the show under Obama, but public engagement with its historical work.²⁸⁰ Positing *Hamilton* as an activist, public history work around BLM might seem to lean too heavily into its mythos, but offers a critical opportunity to

²⁷⁶ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London: Verso, 2014), 38.

²⁷⁷ James D. Anderson and Christopher M. Span, “History of Education in the News: The Legacy of Slavery, Racism, and Contemporary Black Activism on Campus,” *History of Education Quarterly* 56 no.4 (2017): 646. See also Renee C. Romano, “From Rumblyngs to Roar: Racial violence, historical justice, and the changing public history of slavery in the United States,” *Violence and Public Memory* ed. Marty Blatt (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 79-101.

²⁷⁸ “About the Field,” *National Council on Public History*, 2024, accessed June 21, 2024, <https://ncph.org/what-is-public-history/about-the-field/>.

²⁷⁹ Denise D. Meringolo ed., *Blurb, Radical Roots: Public History and a Tradition of Social Justice Activism* (Amherst, MA: Amherst College Press, 2021).

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

consider how the past becomes part of the change-making conversation, what deployments of the past might be deemed suitable to the task, and by whom.

Aside from common temporal and contextual factors, the chapter re-engages with performance theory and visual analysis to reinforce some of the ways in which both BLM and *Hamilton* have pulled on 'performative' vehicles to make or inspire progressive change. Relying wherever possible on the sorts of journalistic sources available to contemporary publics in different digital spaces, the chapter first traces the development of Black Lives Matter before bringing the movement into conversation with *Hamilton*. While reinforcing the transmediality of both movements, by digging into mutual issues of symbolism and action the chapter highlights some of the challenges faced by both *Hamilton* and BLM in being seen as genuine forms of evoking societal change. In this sense, the discussion considers the extent to which *Hamilton*'s mythos has been understood as genuine – an attribute that matters because of the claims made by both the show (as developed by this chapter) and diverse publics. Looking at calls to #CancelHamilton within this context brings issues of cancel culture and corporate panic uncomfortably alongside *Hamilton*'s sense of progressive 'work'. Drawing out further tensions with the show's supposed success, the chapter considers *Hamilton*'s responses to this cancel culture moment, highlighting not only Miranda's media representation of the show but the unexpected release of *History Has Its Eyes on You*. This was a third and seemingly rushed *Hamilton* documentary released just one week after the Disney+ film as #CancelHamilton began to trend. Focusing on a single 'crisis period' in this way after tracing longer-term changes and public expectations makes visible the strain put onto public understandings of the past in a lightning-fast, transmedial world. The frame of analysis stands in contrast to the chapter's closing glance at *Ham4Progress*, a *Hamilton* program explicitly oriented towards 'social justice' and launched some 6 months after 2020's #BlackLivesMatter protests died down. *Ham4Progress* provides an opportunity to reflect upon how *Hamilton* has come to be seen after the 2020 crack in its mythos, before Chapter Five closes the thesis with how the show's fans have come to see it. Although #CancelHamilton proved limited in comparison to the show's continued widespread acclaim, this project is framed as a new longer-term response to the show's supposed failings as pointed out by the progressive left in summer 2020. While acknowledging the sincerity of *Hamilton*'s sense of wider work, the chapter thus closes with a more nuanced understanding of the extent to which the show has been able to peddle its particular vision of past and present, emphasising the perceived importance of co-creation in identity formation and what it means to (re)make history.

Black Lives Matter

Black Lives Matter (BLM) has become “one of the most recognizable topics in online activism in the last decade.”²⁸¹ The first use of the distinct phrase can be traced to a Twitter-based “Love Letter to Black People” by Alicia Garza in 2013, at roughly the same time as *Hamilton* was being shared at Vassar College.²⁸² Garza was following now infamous trial of George Zimmerman who was found innocent of the murder of 17-year-old black child, Trayvon Martin. As narrated by *The Washington Post*, the tragedy “set off a movement that shaped a decade’s defining moments.” Through the networks of social media “the impact of his death radiated from Sanford, Flo., in a pattern of concentric circles, from his family, to his community, to the country and, eventually, the world” via what would become Black Lives Matter and a “new generation of protests...that would go on to highlight systemic racism in nearly every aspect of American life.”²⁸³

As Zimmerman’s trial received digitally mediated news coverage, the tweet gathered momentum from the online US public. One respondent created #BlackLivesMatter as an emphatic hashtag – both a summary of, and response to, Garza’s ‘letter’. Switching to Facebook, a ‘public’ post was made by previous respondent Patrisse Cullors, outlining their intention of founding a movement to “visiblize what it means to be black in this country. Provide hope and inspiration for collective action to build collective power to achieve collective transformation. Rooted in grief and rage but pointed towards vision and dreams.”²⁸⁴ Though reminiscent of some of the themes Chapter One covered regarding Obama’s original campaign sentiments, at the mid-way point of his second presidency this was not about the incorporation of ‘identity politics’ into ‘big politics’ in order to win an election. This was a collective determined to enable and empower individuals to make change – grassroots momentum seeing itself as operating from the ground-up against systemic

²⁸¹ Samuel Bestvater, Risa Gelles-Watnick, Meltem Odabas, Monica Anderson and Aaron Smith, “2. American’s views of and experiences with activism on social media,” *Pew Research Centre*, June 29, 2023, accessed March 29, 2026, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2023/06/29/americans-views-of-and-experiences-with-activism-on-social-media/>.

²⁸² Samuel Bestvater, Risa Gelles-Watnick, Meltem Odabas, Monica Anderson and Aaron Smith, “1. Ten years of #BlackLivesMatter on Twitter,” *Pew Research Centre*, June 29, 2023, accessed March 29, 2026, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2023/06/29/ten-years-of-blacklivesmatter-on-twitter/>.

²⁸³ Reis Thebault, “Trayvon Martin’s death set off a movement that shaped a decade’s defining moments,” *The Washington Post*, February 25, 2022, accessed March 29, 2026, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/02/25/trayvon-martins-death-set-off-movement-that-shaped-decades-defining-moments/>.

²⁸⁴ Garrett Chase, “The Early History of the Black Lives Matter movement, and the Implications Thereof,” *Nevada Law Journal* 18, no.1091 (2018): 1196.

injustice that had not been resolved by the symbolic success of a black President. Its echo would also be heard in the themes of *Hamilton*'s casting, storytelling, and wider work decisions.

The first major eruption of #BlackLivesMatter occurred in November 2014 following the deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, with 95,000 uses of the hashtag on the Twitter platform within a single day after courts failed to indict Brown's murderer.²⁸⁵ A second major spike occurred in July 2016, where 422,000 tweets in a single day accompanied violent protests that ensued across Texas and Louisiana following the murders of black Americans Alton Sterling and Philando Castile.²⁸⁶ As much as Obama's administration celebrated new-found hit *Hamilton* with its 'goodbye' White House performance, this development of the #BlackLivesMatter movement was a crucial part of the context within which Monteiro had penned their first academic criticism of the show: while Obama's effective sponsorship of *Hamilton* supposedly matched the dominant public opinion, Hamilmania was not homogenous, and the administration had missed some crucial on-the-ground realities.

There were reportedly "eight major incidents" in response to police murder of black Americans prior to 2020 and as the world remained closed under the Covid-19 pandemic George Floyd's death would be the spark to ignite a new scale of action.²⁸⁷ The *New York Times* reported the immediate development of protest in the U.S as follows.²⁸⁸ Action erupted in Minneapolis on 26th May, the day immediately following Floyd's death. By the 27th public outrage had digitally spread throughout the United States thanks to social media and the symbolic catchphrase of "8:46" - the time that Derek Chauvin had reportedly taken to asphyxiate Floyd by kneeling on his neck. Following two days of unrest the National Guard was called to Minneapolis, as outgoing Republican President Trump threatened those turning to violence with a now infamous ultimatum: "when the looting starts, the shooting starts."²⁸⁹ Citing an eventual 20 million in-person U.S. protestors, the *New York Times* labelled BLM as "the largest movement in U.S.

²⁸⁵ Nikita Carney, "All Lives Matter, but so Does Race: Black Lives Matter and the Evolving Role of Social Media," *Humanity & Society* 40 no.2 (2016): 180-199.

²⁸⁶ Bestvater et al, "1. Ten years of #BlackLivesMatter."

²⁸⁷ "George Floyd: Timeline of black deaths and protests," *BBC*, April 22, 2021, accessed May 30, 2024, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-52905408>.

²⁸⁸ Derrick Bryson Taylor, "George Floyd Protests: A Timeline," *The New York Times*, November 5, 2021, accessed May 30, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd-protests-timeline.html>.

²⁸⁹ ""When the looting starts, the shooting starts": Trump tweet flagged by Twitter for "glorifying violence," *CBS*, May 29, 2020, accessed April 26, 2026, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/trump-minneapolis-protesters-thugs-flagged-twitter/>.

history.”²⁹⁰ Over 5,550 affiliated in-person protests took place in the months following Floyd’s death and the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag was used over 22 million times across the world between May and September 2020.²⁹¹ With an estimated 82 million total participants worldwide, the 2020 protests were the fourth-largest protest movement globally since 2006: while not entirely “unprecedented” in terms of numbers, perhaps so in terms of how the digital powered the movement.²⁹² By their integration within the digital sphere, BLM protests “incited a change in public awareness” beyond the mere physical events.²⁹³ In mapping Black Lives Matter, Leach et al place emphasis upon the relationship between the analogue and the digital, with online and offline action existing as part of the *same network* of protest – a network that is reflected in the account given above as ideas hopped from platform to platform, and street to screen.²⁹⁴ This was transmediality at its most potent.

Performing Protest in 2020

Thinking about the extent to which participation within Black Lives Matter can be seen as genuine is important: firstly, for understanding the context within which *Hamilton*’s own apparent capacity for inspiring historically-focused action was received, and secondly, because it is arguably exactly the sort of action to which *Hamilton* called its consumers – for everyone to be able to re-frame present difficulties through the lens of the past and feel enabled to make a difference. Thinking about ‘performance’ as a genuine or pejorative term for revisionist ‘work’ therefore not only helps to explore where *Hamilton*’s mythos might sit as the Obama era is consigned to history but explore why *Hamilton*’s mythos seemed to crack under calls to cancel

²⁹⁰ Megan Ming Francis and Lea Wright-Rigueur, “Black Lives Matter in Historical Perspective,” *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* no. 17 (2021): 441; Larry Buchanan, Quoctrung Bui and Jugal K. Patel, “Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History,” *The New York Times*, July 3, 2020, accessed May 30, 2024, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>.

²⁹¹ “Mapping the Black Lives Matter Movement,” *ARCGIS*, 2024, accessed May 30, 2024 <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/dashboards/6bc361d72b0048068eae2c3d29ac734c>; Bestvater et al, “1. Ten years of #BlackLivesMatter.”

²⁹² Leach et al., “Protest now,” 2.

²⁹³ Zackary Okun Dinivin, Harry Yaojan Yan, Jalani Ince and Fabio Rojas, “Black Lives Matter protests shift public discourse,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, March 3, 2022, accessed June 22, 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2117320119>.

²⁹⁴ Leach et al., “Protest now.”

it. If *Hamilton* represents that era, how have public understandings of the recent past been re-framed or re-mobilised against it?

Collectively, the upcoming discussion of what ‘performance’ or ‘protest’ might have meant in 2020 brings two key standpoints to the rest of the chapter’s consideration of *Hamilton* and public understandings of what the show has, or has not, achieved in terms of historical, political, or social justice ‘work’. Firstly, and important to understanding *Hamilton* as an activist site, is the idea of ‘performed’ activism as holding a range of facets - the physical, the visual, the intent, the understood. These may be deemed at times as incongruous to one another, but this only allows us to dig more deeply into the complexities of history’s presence within such deployments. Secondly, that action is undertaken in the virtual world or is delivered within a ‘performed’ framework does not mean that it has no ramifications for the lived experience beyond. It remains as ‘real’ as the embodied experience precisely because of the effect it has upon creators, contributors and recipients. In this way, the performative helps us to conceptualise not only the ‘affect’ of *Hamilton*’s on-stage work, but the transmediality of phenomena such as BLM and *Hamilton* across medium, time, and context. Examining *Hamilton*’s activity in conversation with Black Lives Matter draws out some of these nuances for the rest of the chapter.

Though Chase claims that Black Lives Matter definitively “made its mark on America’s consciousness” in its own right, he agrees with civil rights scholar Lebron that the movement is rooted within America’s longer histories of racial injustice and impassioned protest.²⁹⁵ Examining how 2020’s protests drew upon ‘repertoires of resistance’ provides an opportunity to bring BLM into close conversation with *Hamilton*’s own supposed message through vehicles of theatrical performance. Building on Chapters Two and Three, this section considers the ‘taking the knee’ as a choreographic element of protest which is both physically embodied and visually observed through digital representation. Following on, the analysis of digital ‘imagery’ such as ‘BlackOutTuesday’ allows deeper consideration of the symbolic: painting the social media landscape with connotations of both blackness and absence in a manner not entirely dissimilar to *Hamilton*’s race-conscious casting and logo, as depicted both on-stage and increasingly across the virtual in the GIF after the Disney+ film release. What emerges is not only performance as a useful vehicle for navigating the enmeshing of social justice efforts over space and time, but the vitality of conceptualising these assemblages as both transmedial and embodied within lived experience and inheritance of difference. This not only reinforces the importance of seeing

²⁹⁵ Joni Schwartz, “Book Review: The Making of Black Lives Matter: A Brief History of an Idea,” *Dialogues in Social Justice: An Adult Education Journal* 5, no.2 (2020): 89-90; Chase, “The Early History...”, 1090.

Hamilton through both lenses, but of using them to challenge where *Hamilton*'s mythos sat in 2020 and the bigger contexts that its diverse presence made visible.

'Taking the Knee'



Figure 32: Picture of Colin Kaepernick 'taking the knee' in 2016 ²⁹⁶

Amidst BLM's earlier traction in 2016, American football player-come-Activist Colin Kaepernick 'took the knee' during relays of the U.S. national anthem as a form of silent, symbolic resistance to systemic racism. Though sports colleagues across America followed his lead and the move received support from outgoing President Obama, it was seen by others as projecting a problematically "unpatriotic and anti-military" iconography.²⁹⁷ In a nation which seemed to see itself as becoming increasingly polarised, Kaepernick's action brought him significant public criticism from Republican nominee Trump, death threats from the far-right, and led to anti-discrimination lawsuits towards the NFL after he later struggled to find new employment. But just four years later, the NFL were the ones apologising.²⁹⁸ Amidst the potential for violent protest, in 2020 Kaepernick's gesture against police brutality became an alternative symbol of the Black Lives Matter movement across the streets, sports pitches, and other stage-spaces of the world where such action was performed to be seen and made meaningful by witnesses and participants alike. On 8th June 2020, U.S Democrats under Biden themselves 'took the knee' within the U.S. Capitol building while promising new legislation on police controls in response to

²⁹⁶ Image taken from: "Colin Kaepernick," *Britannica*, 2024, accessed March 29, 2026
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Colin-Kaepernick>.

²⁹⁷ Steph Doehler, "Taking the star-spangled knee: the media framing of Clin Kaepernick," *Sport in Society* 26, no. 1 (2023): 45.

²⁹⁸ Alex Woodward and Clark Mindock, "Taking a knee: Why are NFL players protesting and when did they start to kneel?," *Independent*, June 18, 2020, accessed March 29, 2026,
<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/nfl/taking-a-knee-national-anthem-nfl-trump-why-meaning-origins-racism-us-colin-kaepernick-a8521741.html>.

the protests. The moment is pictured below in Figure 33. The ‘radical’ act, immortalised in pixels, had not only become ‘mainstream’ but officially endorsed by the political elite in support of the Black Lives Matter cause.



Figure 33: Picture of U.S. Democrats kneeling inside Emancipation Hall at the U.S. Capitol in June 2020 ²⁹⁹

The pose did not originate with Kaepernick. Rather, it belongs to an established choreography of protest immortalised in far older protest media: not only to an infamous photograph of Martin Luther King kneeling in prayerful protest as noted by TIME, but the Wedgwood anti-slavery medallion of 1787. The image was remediated throughout the nineteenth century, with perhaps the most famous example being the 1876 Freedman’s Memorial, where an enslaved person is depicted receiving freedom at the feet of Abraham Lincoln. The medallion has become “the most recognizable piece of antislavery paraphernalia the movement ever produced.”³⁰⁰ The abolitionist use of kneeling slave imagery has been subject to its own criticism elsewhere in literature, and it’s re-deployment in 2020 is significant.³⁰¹ Though the movement depicted by King suggested a quiet ‘power’ in its prayerful, reverent, and almost sacred image when blended with King’s identity as a Christian pastor, it also represented the reclaiming of agency by the

²⁹⁹ News Wires, “George Floyd: US Democrats take the knee, plan to overhaul police,” *France24*, August 6, 2020, accessed March 29, 2026. <https://www.france24.com/en/20200608-george-floyd-us-democrats-take-the-knee-plan-to-overhaul-police>.

³⁰⁰ John R. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-slavery: The Mobilisation of Public Opinion Against the Slave Trade 1787-1807* (Hove: Psychology Press, 1998), 156.

³⁰¹ See Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

oppressed and the re-attribution of justice to the divine. Those countering King's protest were not resisting humanity, but its Creator.

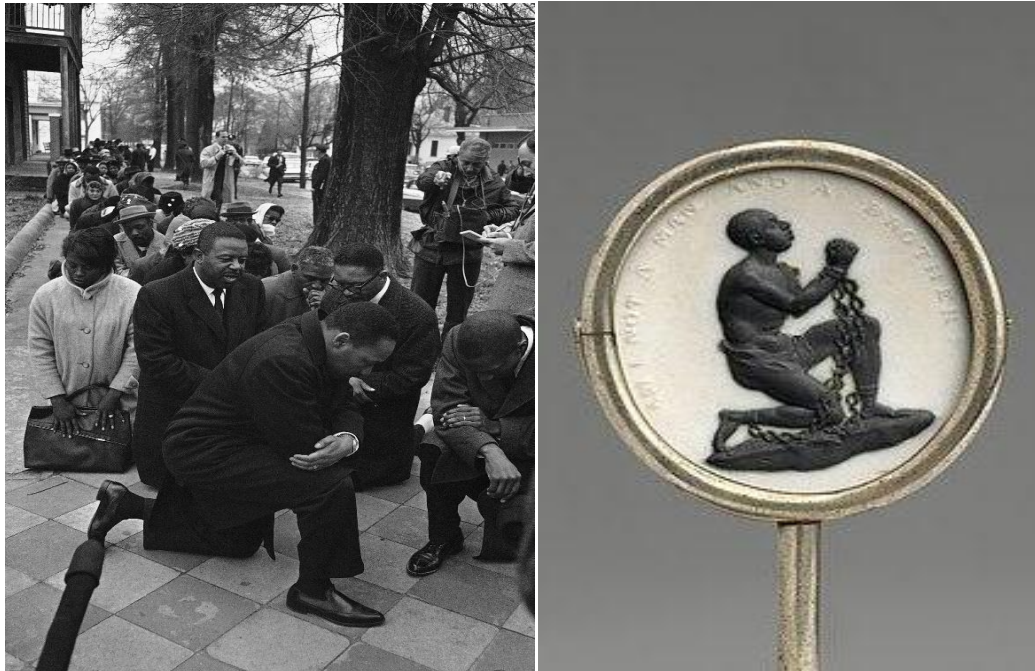


Figure 34 (Left): Picture of Martin Luther King 'taking the knee' in protest ³⁰²

Figure 35 (Right): Picture of the 1787 Wedgwood anti-slavery medallion ³⁰³

In 2020, Black Lives Matter re-mobilised the symbolic act towards the publics, police, and politicians. In doing so, they not only remediated the movement into pixelated form, but positioned it amidst a wider, international discourse of discontent where streets and screens merged and halls of power became sites of submission. Despite centuries of 'work' and societal progress towards racial equality, despite Obama's presidency, and despite *Hamilton's* Obama-n re-write of the founding era where black bodies contrasted deep legacies of injustice, the same issues of prejudice were deemed to be at play. In 2020, 'taking the knee' was no longer something of faith-filled religiosity, but itself represented a sort of religiosity of its own.

³⁰² Image taken from: Maya Rhodan, "This Photo of MLK Kneeling Has New Power Amid the NFL Protests. Here's the Story Behind It," *Time*, September 15, 2017, accessed March 29, 2026, <https://time.com/4955717/trump-protests-mlk-martin-luther-king-kneeling/>.

³⁰³ Image taken from: "File:Antislavery medallion - MET 08.242.jpg," *Wikimedia Commons*, 2020, accessed March 29, 2026, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Antislavery_medallion_-_MET_08.242.jpg.



Figure 36: Silhouette of the *Hamilton* logo, similar to that used on the cover of the *Hamilton Education Program: Student Performance & Study Guide*³⁰⁴

By its opposition, it is also reminiscent of the discussion of the *Hamilton* logo begun earlier in the thesis. Rather than being on one's knees, the anonymous silhouette stands proud as the top of the star – a dynamic, choreographed moment from the stage show frozen in time. The figure points presumably not to God, but to his own destiny, and own determination in getting there. It is strongly reminiscent of another embodied protest symbol associated with anti-racist movements: the Black Power salute taken by Olympians Tommie Smith and John Carlos in 1968. With gloved fists in the air and heads bowed, the stance represented black unity in a space of ongoing civil rights battles following the murder of Martin Luther King and amidst anti-Vietnam sentiment. Unlike the Black Power salute which was condemned by the International Olympic Committee and resulted in the downfall of its actors, *Hamilton*'s use of a comparable position takes these longer legacies of performative protest and uses them to elevate their intentions – both within the *Hamilton* story and throughout its wider mythos. The figure's individuality might seem to contrast Cullors' collective vision for BLM and Obama's old collective election rhetoric, but given *Hamilton*'s supposed historical work, the silhouette perhaps better represents a single, united nation – substituting the 'forgotten Founding Father' for the 'forgotten' of the nation altogether. In this way, the logo "point[s] towards vision and dreams" that ought to be deemed collective and echoes the deeper myth of the individualistic 'American dream' as that very shared collective.³⁰⁵ Before it provides the initiative to #CancelHamilton, what Black Lives Matter

³⁰⁴ Image taken from: "Hamilton logo," *1000 Logos*, September 27, 2025, accessed March 29, 2026, <https://1000logos.net/hamilton-logo/>.

³⁰⁵ Chase, "The Early History of the Black Lives Matter movement."

reminds the study of, then, are some of the ways in which the show was potentially already functioning as a site of transmedial, performative protest long before it was criticised in 2020 – not just radical for its historical mission, colour-conscious casting, historical subject, or musical style, but the ways in which these facets drew subtly on pre-existing frameworks of protest and historical revolution familiar to any American consumer. This could be part of its mythos. *Hamilton* might have been coming to Disney+ in this period, but since 2015 one had not needed to see the whole show to connect it to longer legacies of performing protest: just the logo.

Black Out Tuesday

#BlackOutTuesday allows us to dig deeper into the significance of viral symbolism and the place of the digital in Black Lives Matter’s varied attempts to effect history-making change. In doing so, we not only delve into the transmedial context into which *Hamilton*’s mythos was immersed but draw out more layers with direct relevance to the way that the show was culturally received in 2020.

Starting out as #TheShowMustBePaused, the initiative was foregrounded by two women of colour working in music industry marketing.³⁰⁶ Described by one commentator as an “an ostensible display of allyship,” the challenge to post nothing but the black square and a caption of #BlackoutTuesday on 2nd June 2020 was accepted by “millions” worldwide.³⁰⁷

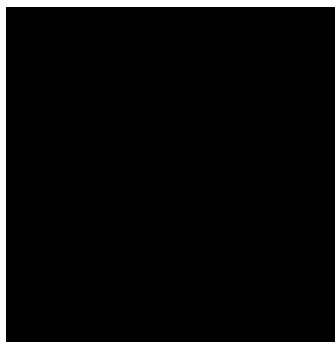


Figure 37: The black squares shared across social media on #BlackoutTuesday

³⁰⁶ Joe Coscarelli, “#BlackoutTuesday: A Music Industry Protest Becomes a Social Media Moment,” *The New York Times*, June 2, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/arts/music/what-blackout-tuesday.html>.

³⁰⁷ Noor Norman, “‘Blackout Tuesday’ on Instagram was a teachable moment for allies like me,” *NBC News*, June 6, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/blackout-tuesday-instagram-was-teachable-moment-allies-me-ncna1225961>; Lanre Bakare and Caroline Davies, “Blackout Tuesday: black squares dominate social media and spark debate, June 2, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/jun/02/blackout-tuesday-dominates-social-media-millions-show-solidarity-george-floyd>.

Raising the profile of black artists who had contributed to the music industry but whose ethnicity was deemed to have been silenced by systemic oppression, the trend was designed to honour and extend the unfolding physical protests: “to observe, mourn and bring about policy change in the wake of the death of George Floyd” within the context of the creative industries.³⁰⁸ Taken up by major artists such as Rhianna, Ariana Grande, and Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson (both white and non-white), Instagram began to ‘go dark’. In the end, some 28 million black squares were published.³⁰⁹ On the 2nd June, these peaked almost as high as the #JusticeforGeorgeFloyd hashtag and higher even than #BlackLivesMatter as “the most viral event on Instagram between May 30 and June 3” and something “purposefully driven” in addition to the other strands of the BLM movement.³¹⁰ Unlike the physical choreography adopted by on-the-ground protests or merely textual contributions of Twitter proclamations, “the most popular images [as] symbols of injustice” were a blank post and the accompanying hashtag that confirmed the user as participating in an act of resistance.³¹¹ Action extended beyond the Instagram world, as MTV “planned to go silent for eight minutes – marking the length of time Floyd’s neck was knelt on” and other channels offered similar gestures.³¹²

As noted by Chang et al., #BlackOutTuesday was “the first time in the history of social media movements that a visual platform—not a predominantly text-based one like Twitter [which has been well-studied] – took centre stage.”³¹³ As much as digital protest allowed the sharing of protest visuals, it also facilitated the very opposite: absence. #BlackoutTuesday became not only about raising the silenced voices of black music artists but disrupting the normative social and economic rhythms of a major digital channel. There is, of course, some irony in this: as much as the black squares can be seen as either blank or black-blanketing of social media, it also raised

³⁰⁸ AJ Willingham, “Why posting a black image with the ‘Black Lives Matter’ hashtag could be doing more harm than good,” *CNN*, June 2, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://edition.cnn.com/2020/06/02/us/blackout-tuesday-black-lives-matterinstagramtrnd/index.html#:~:text=It's%20Blackout%20Tuesday%2C%20a%20day,the%20death%20of%20George%20Floyd>.

³⁰⁹ Paul Monckton, “This Is Why Millions Of People Are Posting Black Squares On Instagram,” *Forbes*, June 2, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/paulmonckton/2020/06/02/black-out-tuesday-instagram-black-squares-blackouttuesday-theshowmustbepaused/>.

³¹⁰ Ho-Chun Herbert Chang, Allissa Richardso and Emilio Ferrara, “#JusticeforGeorgeFloyd: How Instagram facilitated the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests,” *PL ONE* 17, no.12 (2022): 9.

³¹¹ Chang et al., “#JusticeforGeorgeFloyd,” 16.

³¹² Bakare and Davies, “Blackout Tuesday....”

³¹³ Chang et al., “#JusticeforGeorgeFloyd,” 2.

the profile of social media sites as potential locales for protest as much as they had reportedly been responsible for “algorithmically silencing black voices.”³¹⁴

The visual blankness of the post invites further reflection upon the design of the *Hamilton* logo beyond just its pose. Scattered across countless Tweets, memes, and reels, is it a shadow of Alexander Hamilton in his re-purposed narrative, pointing the way forward? Does the blackness signify an absence within American founding histories which the show seeks to tackle through its colour-conscious casting? Or, following Eliza’s role, is the blankness reflective of an anonymity into which any individual might step in order to re-orient how the past, present, and future are seen? Based on exploration of the show a case could likely be made for any, and whichever way it is to be understood, the fashion of the logo’s silhouette also clearly evokes the founding era in the American imagination. This gives additional historical weight to the identity work to which the show lays claim, subtly suggesting that the show’s mythos belongs not only to the Obama period, but that such values belong to the very genesis of what it means to be American.

It would be easier, perhaps, to understand the decision as being made only to be more impactful for marketing purposes – a performative design choice that reflected not an ambition to evoke change but simply enhance the show’s commercial marketability. Looking to #BlackoutTuesday, there’s certainly that potential: not everyone felt that #BlackOutTuesday represented genuine protest work.

Some scholars see the digital as being equal, if not more important, to the physical in terms of affecting social change. As much the digital might feel ‘less real’ to the everyday in a similar way to how a physical theatrical stage might also feel ‘unreal’ to the world outside of it, the use (adoption) of signifiers like hashtags in digital movements allow users to ‘take on’ particular identities and actions. Nikita Carney’s work on the hashtags #AllLivesMatter and #BlackLivesMatter in 2014 showed them as genuine markers of offline belief, allowing publics to participate in and expand meaningful debates.³¹⁵ Such thinking has been elsewhere corroborated by scholars such as Jessamy Gleeson and Breanan Turner, who considered the social media virality of #MeToo in the 2010s as a valid performance of feminist identity and activism.³¹⁶ Thus, whether performed signifiers are physical or virtual is not of the greatest

³¹⁴ Chang et al., “#JusticeforGeorgeFloyd,” 4.

³¹⁵ Carney, “All Lives Matter, but so Does Race.”

³¹⁶ See Jessamy Gleeson and Breanan Turner, “Online feminist activism as performative consciousness-raising: A #MeToo case study,” *#MeToo and the Politics of Social Change* ed. Bianca Fileborn and Rachel Loney-Howes, 53-69 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

significance: what matters is that they are performed and received by a public. Maja Kutlaca and Helena Radke have argued that even genuinely inauthentic allyship can offer assistance and encouragement to movements by influencing “people’s tendency to cooperate.”³¹⁷ This means that even actions which are ‘performed’ in pretence may nonetheless lead to meaningful action elsewhere, regardless of whether the original user is aware of the ramifications of their choice. The ways in which Black Lives Matter spanned virtual and physical protest is testament to this, as physical actions were made possible by digital virality and the resultant creation of a perceived zeitgeist. This literature altogether seems to reinforce Ming Francis and Lea Wright-Rigueur’s contention around how Black Lives Matter functioned in 2020 as an activist movement. Speaking of the protestors, they surmise that “their voices, their bodies, and their imaginations []awakened a sleepy nation to the crisis of democracy and the urgency of addressing deeply entrenched racial injustice.”³¹⁸ Thus emphasising the physical and the imagined as together in the effort to forge a different future, they effectively strengthen the idea of the physical as being neither more nor less performative or genuine than the immaterial – the inheritance, the lived experience, and the dreams. Innately transmedial and innately performative, the digital seems to mediate both the visual and the absent, the actual and the imagined.

On the other hand, however meaningful its originators and early adopters had found it, for its performance style and symbolic toolkit the attempt to #BlackoutTuesday was ‘cancelled’ by others across the digital sphere almost as quickly as it was being undertaken. The apparently self-evident purpose was lost on some, with news outlets feeling the need to explain “why millions of people are posting black squares.”³¹⁹ Emphasising the importance of platforms like Instagram – the same ones used at that time share memes and GIFs of *Hamilton*’s new Disney+ film - other activists argued that the use of the hashtag and associated posts interrupted communication channels vital to making physical protests happen.³²⁰ Some felt that the dialogue became “reductive, self-righteous, and at times hostile.”³²¹ The dominant theme of public debate, though, came to be seen around ‘allyship’ and the authenticity of this performance of

³¹⁷ Maja Kytluca and Helena R. M. Radke, “Towards an understanding of performative allyship: Definition, antecedents and consequences,” *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 17, no. 2 (2022): 1-12.

³¹⁸ Francis and Wright-Rigueur, “Black Lives Matter in Historical Perspective,” 442.

³¹⁹ Monckton, “This Is Why Millions of People.”

³²⁰ Willingham, “Why posting a black image.”

³²¹ Norman, “‘Blackout Tuesday’.”

protest in general: individuals “attempting to make amends” for what was only surface-level support.³²²

As explored by Mariah Wellman, some felt that protests like #BlackoutTuesday risked the “memeification of social justice activism” with “no substantial [tangible] progress.”³²³ Harking back to the definitions work in the Introduction chapter, criticism of Blackout Tuesday relied on a sense of “performative” activism as shallow.³²⁴ Instead of elevating black voices, it reduced their value and drowned them further. Protests like #BlackoutTuesday not only interrupted public dissemination of how to physically protest but reflected illegitimate care for the cause – the adoption of an easy, pixelated ‘mask’ (see Chapter Two) to cover over systemically embodied hardship and don a virtual costume of care over a beating heart of indifference. Paralleling earlier criticism of *Hamilton*’s casting of the Founding Fathers as non-white in an era of a non-white President, by drawing attention to absence through visual un-presence, the #BlackOutTuesday ‘trend’ did not elevate but excluded black representation, agency, and voices. This offers an alternative context for the logo as the emblem of *Hamilton*’s mythos and mantle: Although certain elements – its stance and historical features – would have been recognisable back in 2015, the use of blankness amidst #BlackoutTuesday and #BlackLivesMatter could have drawn pejorative attention to it. Afterall, for many *Hamilton* was now no longer ‘just’ this logo: its global majority Founding Fathers were on the screen for all to see in the Disney+ film, being spoken about on the news, and going viral online in new ways. Having posted a video of a white child celebrating its education program the day after George Floyd was murdered, evidently taken commercial advantage of the general Disneyfication of Broadway in its film partnership, and with Miranda now a Disney star in his own right on other projects, *Hamilton* could easily be construed as a little more than a performative project that elites such as Obama, Disney, and Miranda used to paper over the cultural and political cracks. In spite of the sincerity of how performance was mobilised within Black Lives Matter, for *Hamilton*, the opposite case could have been true.

³²² Monckton, “This Is Why Millions of People.”

³²³ Mariah L. Wellman, “Black squares for black lives? Performative allyship as credibility maintenance for social media influencers on Instagram,” *Social Media + Society* 8, no.1 (2022): 1.

³²⁴ See also A. Freya Thimsen, “What is Performative Activism,” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 55, no.1 (2022): 83-89.

2020: *Hamilton*, history has its eyes on you

***Hamilton's* virtual curtain-up**

Given that *Hamilton* and its showrunners had supposedly committed so much to revising America's story and inspiring others to revise its future, one might have anticipated a weighty response to #BlackLivesMatter from the official accounts. #BlackoutTuesday, being entwined with black musical culture, arguably also provided another engagement opportunity for this hip-hop enterprise. Instead, it was radio silence. What would follow was a rollercoaster of activity that blurred a distinction of activism and PR.

Somehow sensing that the public had come to expect *Hamilton's* involvement, the initial absence of a virtual protest voice from the *Hamilton* enterprise came to be tackled by Lin-Manuel in June. Even though the show's distribution rights were now owned by Disney, Miranda remained its mouthpiece as the person with a plan. Addressing his Twitter followers, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Entertainment Tonight*, and television audiences on *Jimmy Fallon* (all different digital stage sites), Miranda apologised for the "moral failure" "for not pushing harder and faster and speaking those truths under the *Hamilton* banner."³²⁵ He "[had] to own that and make up for lost time in regards to *Hamilton's* efforts," while declaring that people had to "be better allies and have each other's backs" towards a collective "us."³²⁶ Miranda reinforced *Hamilton's* practical proactivity in response to the issues BLM raised: Not only had it represented some sense of revisionism in its colour-conscious casting on stage, but actively pursued diverse back-of-house teams and drawn broad show audiences.³²⁷ It all seemed to be picked up positively by anglophone press: *The Observer* in the UK ran the headline that "Lin-Manuel Miranda and Black Lives Matter Leaders Are Working on the Future of '*Hamilton*'," while *The Hollywood Reporter* described the Fallon interview as an opportunity to "explain the impact of '*Hamilton*' and how it

³²⁵ Greg Evans, "Broadway's 'Hamilton', 'Hadestown' Speak Out Against Racism, White Supremacy: Lin-Manuel Miranda Calls Previous Silence 'Moral Failure'," *Deadline*, May 31, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://deadline.com/2020/05/hamilton-lin-manuel-miranda-hadestown-broadway-racism-protests-george-floyd-1202947582/>; Lexy Perez, "Lin-Manuel Miranda and 'Hamilton' Producer Apologize for Silence on Protests," *The Hollywood Reporter*, May 31, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/lifestyle/lifestyle-news/lin-manuel-miranda-hamilton-producer-apologize-silence-protests-1296597/>.

³²⁶ Helen Holmes, "Lin-Manuel Miranda and Black Lives Matter Leaders Are Working on the Future of 'Hamilton'," *Observer*, June 22, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://observer.com/2020/06/lin-manuel-miranda-hamilton-black-lives-matter/>.

³²⁷ Entertainment Tonight "Lin-Manuel Miranda Talks Hamilton and Black Lives Matter (Exclusive)," *YouTube*, July 3, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WsG9zEF0mg>.

connects to the Black Lives Matter Movement,” suggesting that the show was not only actively responding to BLM, but had already been aligned with it.³²⁸

As touched on previously, the Disney+ release on 3rd July was in many ways a huge public success. Receiving a Rotten Tomatoes score of 98%, the release raked in significant commercial success for Disney as app downloads increased by 72% almost immediately.³²⁹ Perceptions of an altered context brought by Black Lives Matter featured heavily in early reviews of the film. At least initially, this appeared to a largely positive effect in bringing new and important meaning to the musical, rather than denigrating it. In the UK, *The Telegraph* noted that the film “hit[] harder than ever” and *The Guardian* claimed that “watching *Hamilton* now, the revolutionary overtones are clear” – as if suggesting that the weight of the show’s revisionist work had not been previously visible to this British critic in 2015. Back at home, *The New York Times* expounded more acutely that “The problem of slavery isn’t ignored, but it has a way of slipping to the margins... We can’t go back to 1789 or 2016 or any other year to escape from the failures that plague us now. This four-year-old performance of *Hamilton*, viewed without nostalgia, feels more vital, more challenging than ever. Its central questions — “Who lives, who dies, who tells your story? – are staring us in the face.”³³⁰ It’s surprising that 2016, the very end of the Obama era, was historicised as much as 1789 (and more surprising that this given year was that of the French revolution, not the American). What’s interesting is that while *Hamilton* could re-write the nation’s history, the nation could not re-write *Hamilton* – it had to be seen as an artefact of a different historical moment, and this had become part of its active sense of historical work.

³²⁸ Alexander Del Rosario, “Lin-Manuel Miranda Explains How ‘Hamilton’ Connects With Black Lives Matter Movement,” *The Hollywood Reporter*, June 24, 2020, April 1, 2026, <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/general-news/lin-manuel-miranda-hamilton-connection-black-lives-matter-protests-1300120/>.

³²⁹ “Hamilton,” *Rotten Tomatoes*, 2026, accessed April 1, 2026, https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/hamilton_2020; Todd Spangler, “‘Hamilton’ Drives Up Disney Plus App Downloads 74% Over the Weekend in U.S.,” *Variety* July 6, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://variety.com/2020/digital/news/hamiltndisny-plus-premiere-app-downloads-72-percent-1234698795/>.

³³⁰ Alissa Wilkinson, “We got comfortable with Hamilton. The new film reminds us how risky it is,” *Vox*, July 2, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.vox.com/21308627/hamilton-movie-review-disney-2020>; A. O. Scott, “‘Hamilton’ Review: You Say You Want a Revolution,” *The New York Times*, June 30, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/30/movies/hamilton-review-disney-plus.html>; Chris Harvey, “Hamilton, Disney+ review: history retold with a playful, powerful thump,” *The Telegraph*, July 6, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/films/0/hamilton-musical-disney-plus-review-cast-lin-manuel-miranda/>; “‘Hamilton’ Movie Sees Renewed Calls to ‘Cancel’ Show Over Depiction of Slavery,” *Inside Edition*, July 6, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.insideedition.com/hamilton-movie-sees-renewed-calls-to-cancel-show-over-depiction-of-slavery-60533>.

as the key reason for the backlash, the show's colour-conscious casting also came under fire. Still other outlets took argument with the growing outrage itself, dampening down the extent of the issue and citing the toxicity of 'cancel culture' empowered by digital social spaces. The *Los Angeles Times* took the opportunity to again draw attention to the value of the "re-ignit[ing]" the "old debate...about who tells [Hamilton's] story," while the *OnStage Blog* took the opportunity to assess whether this represented a real threat or a genuine opportunity for restorative action.³³² Some social media users likewise found comfort in acknowledging both perspectives - much like the *New York Times*, admitting the "two different worlds" between *Hamilton's* stage and screen releases and highlighting the value of "this conversation [] happening."³³³ It was this quote that Miranda himself cited when he took to the platform in response, accepting that "all criticisms are valid" and summarising some of the difficulties of trying to cram "complexities & failings" into "a 2.5 hour musical."³³⁴ *Hamilton's* mythos seemed to have cracked.

This wasn't the end of *Hamilton's* BLM response. Just one week after the Disney+ film, the *Hamilton: History Has Its Eyes on You (HHIEOY)* documentary was unexpectedly dropped on 10th July.

A New Documentary: *Hamilton - History Has Its Eyes on You*

Recognising public demand for access amidst early Hamilmania, *Hamilton* had been covered by a PBS documentary as early as 2016: the U.S-centric *Hamilton's America* explored "where *Hamilton* intersects with history" supported by behind-the-scenes footage from the stage.³³⁵

³³² Anagha Srikanth, "No, Twitter hasn't cancelled 'Hamilton' — though some are calling for it," *The Hill*, July 6, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://thehill.com/changing-america/enrichment/arts-culture/506012-no-twitter-hasnt-exactly-cancelled-hamilton-although/>; Laura Zornosa, "With 'Hamilton' now a movie, an old debate reignites about who tells its story," *LA Times*, July 10, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2020-07-10/hamilton-movie-critics-lin-manuel-miranda>; Chris Peterson, "Cancel 'Hamilton'? - A Worthy Discussion or Cancel Culture Disruption?," *Onstage Blog*, July 8, 2020, accessed April 1, 2020, "https://www.onstageblog.com/editorials/cancel-hamilton."

³³³ @brokeymcpoverty, *Twitter*, July 5, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://x.com/brokeymcpoverty/status/1279845518227787777>.

³³⁴ Valerie Jones, "#CancelHamilton? Lin-Manuel Miranda speaks out after 'Hamilton' faces heavy criticism for this issue," *Deseret News*, July 7, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026 <https://www.deseret.com/entertainment/2020/7/7/21316112/hamilton-lin-manuel-miranda-cancelhamilton-slavery/>.

³³⁵ Liz Calvario, "'Hamilton's America': Go Behind the Scenes of Lin-Manuel Miranda's Smash Hit Musical With New Documentary — Watch," *IndieWire*, October 22, 2016, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.indiewire.com/features/general/hamiltons-america-documentary-lin-manuel-mirandas-broadway-hit-pbs-watch-1201739387/>; Steph Harmon, "Hamilton documentary to feature unseen footage of original cast performance," *The Guardian*, June 24, 2016, accessed April 1, 2026,

That a behind-the-scenes documentary already been produced for *In The Heights* after its success in years prior suggests that this was part of an existing model for how to foster popular fan engagement, regardless of whether *Hamilton* sought to ‘do’ or ‘be’ anything more than an entertaining show.³³⁶ When the Disney+ film launched, it brought with it a second documentary: *Hamilton In-Depth*. This supposedly added comprehensively to the show’s documentary archive with:

“a wide range of topics, from the origin story of *Hamilton*; the Pulitzer-Prize winning musical’s earliest stages of development; their special connection to the show’s story, characters, imagery, and music; the show’s significance as a ground-breaking pop culture phenomenon; and what the *Hamilton* story means in the context of ongoing conversations about systemic racism and social injustice. They’ll also discuss the origins of and their hopes for the filmed version of the show...The cast of *Hamilton* didn’t come to play. They are accomplished performers who created genre-shifting art, but they also understand this unprecedented time in history and why their voices matter.”³³⁷

If *Hamilton* already had two documentaries and the most recent already emphasised 2020 as an “unprecedented time in history,” it’s strange that the team feel the need to release a third, *History Has Its Eyes on You* (HHIEOY), and in such quick succession. A more cynical interpretation might see *HHIEOY* as a form of commercial PR response to a potential cancel culture crisis. The title not only quotes a refrain from the libretto but suggests a requirement for additional self-reflective ownership from the consumer in an effective deflection of responsibility away from *Hamilton*, while also drawing additional attention to the extent of the societal and racial issues supposedly contended by the original show. With US and UK teaser material released only the day before with no large marketing build up, the release could well be framed as a defensive response to mounting criticism instead of a proactive product to the BLM context that had emerged over a month prior. In a blurring of to whom *Hamilton* belongs, the documentary is even hosted by Robin Roberts, co-host of the cornerstone U.S show *Good Morning America* which airs on the Disney-

https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/jun/24/hamilton-documentary-to-feature-unseen-footage-of-original-cast-performance?CMP=share_btn_url.

³³⁶ “In the Heights: Chasing Broadway Dreams,” PBS, October 11, 2017, accessed April 1, 2026 <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/gperf/in-the-heights-chasing-broadway-dreams-preview-of-in-the-heights-chasing-broadway-dreams/761/>.

³³⁷ *The Undeclared Presents: Hamilton In-Depth* (2020), Disney+.

owned ABC channel. Analysing *HHIEYO* thus offers the opportunity to expose more tensions within what *Hamilton* had become by 2020, and who was expected to “work!” and how.

Good Morning America, it’s your new *Hamilton* teaser ³³⁸

HHIEYO was given a 7-minute preview as part of *Good Morning America* (GMA) under the story title “Cast of ‘*Hamilton*’ discusses show’s enormous popularity and impact.” A recording of the feature, uploaded to YouTube by GMA, underpins this section of the discussion.³³⁹

“Disney+ is owned by a division of Disney, ABC’s Parent Company” so *Good Morning*’s viewers are reminded by on-screen titling, as GMA’s Robin Roberts introduces the upcoming *Hamilton* segment as *her own* endeavour:

“Since the musical first premiered to when it started streaming on Disney Plus there has been a major shift in the world, a new examination of the heroes of our history...In my Disney+ special...I connected with some members of the original cast to discuss the show’s enormous popularity and this new look into the past.”

Though the “major shift” is presumed to be obvious to audiences as an allusion to recent BLM-affiliated events, the allusion to a shift in time at all is interesting: In speaking of the period between when “the musical first premiered to when it started streaming,” it seems to confirm that the existing *Hamilton* documentary material had been deemed insufficient to tackling the challenges post by BLM.

The teaser first and perhaps foremost reinforces *Hamilton*’s mythos of exceptionalism: the exclusivity granted to viewers by virtue of its interview recordings takes them “inside the storytelling” of “the greatest company in the history of musical theatre.” This is almost immediately backed up by the inclusion of Professor Gordon Reed, “an authority on this period of U.S History.” “Virtually every theatre critic...rave reviews, said it’s great theatre. Does it matter that it’s not perfect history?” Gordon Reed is asked; “no it doesn’t matter,” she replies, emphasising that “the really important thing I think is for people, after they’ve watched it, to go out and find out more,” in opposition to “the way it is in a history book.” This immediately defends *Hamilton*’s position and reputation – implied to be in question - before Miranda himself does the

³³⁸ Good Morning America, “Cast of ‘Hamilton’ discusses shows enormous popularity and impact – GMA,” *YouTube*, July 9, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7P3ilkw_2U.

³³⁹ Good Morning America, “Cast of ‘Hamilton’”; Disney’s 30-second version, uploaded to their YouTube channel, can also be accessed at: Disney UK, “HAMILTON: HISTORY HAS ITS EYES ON YOU – Disney+ Trailer – Official Disney UK,” *YouTube*, July 9, 2020, accessed April 2026, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k_r-83SVwlk&t=24s.

same. The show's reputation is not only assumed to be widely acknowledged, but reinforced by history, a 'Professor', a narrator of current affairs, and its own celebrity architect.

This initial impression having been established, the trailer shifts towards the more obviously defensive regarding BLM. Echoing the tweet he had sent three days prior, "I have two and a half hours of your time," argues Miranda. He suggests, in effect, a compromise between this limitation and the importance to "honour the impulse that made [him] think this was a musical - the relentlessness of Alexander Hamilton and the fact that this is an immigrant narrative in the United States before there's even a United States and what that means. You have to pare away a lot." At this point, the viewer may assume that the documentary will be referring to racial politics and directly address societal issues and histories for which *Hamilton* had been criticised. Two alternatives are presented. Firstly, Miranda broadens the context of his comments beyond Summer 2020, suggesting that he "get[s] tweets every day" from fans without giving any specificity as to their content. Secondly, Thomas Kail is cut in to emphasise a transference of responsibility: "I don't think the purpose of theatre or art is to give all the answers" but "to ask deeper questions and different questions that you might have had." The viewer scarcely has time to connect *Hamilton* to the #BLM context so obviously inferred before being reassured that it is, indeed, a successful and worthy product in the midst of it.

The trailer then transitions towards the family values of the show and *Hamilton*'s work, with original Angelica actress Goldsberry locating this specifically within "the Obama administration." This begins a marked nod to a perceived change in political dynamics since Trump took office, making an inferred connection between 2020's context of Black Lives Matter protests and the change in political power away from Obama: the context of *Hamilton*'s birth and first Hamilmania boom. In confirmation, Goldsberry looks nostalgically at "the memory of what it was" during that time and "how beautifully and powerfully" the storytelling became for her young son, who had been helped to remember the halcyon period and thereby "make sense of the world as it is right now." As much as the quote confirms perceptions of political difference, it also virtually attributes participation in *Hamilton*'s ongoing fan communities with looking nostalgically back at the Obama era. Not to discredit the sincerity of the emotion and genuine lived experience of Goldsberry's family, the comment seems to suggest a discord with the idea of the longer-standing racial issues in America to which BLM had supposedly been responding since 2013 during Obama's presidency. This points to the sense of significant change felt by many in the US following the murder of Floyd, and the sense of a 'new' context and audience for *Hamilton*'s 'work'.

The final segment of the teaser trailer emphasises the idea that this was a common feeling. Having claimed that “So many who want to help in any way that they can, want to be an ally,” a child superfan asks the celebrity panel “In this new revolution, what can we as white people seeking to become better allies learn or rather unlearn about our history through *Hamilton*’s more inclusive retelling?” *Hamilton* is positioned as not just about the original “revolution” that defined America’s independence, but fundamentally part of a “new” one. Leslie Odom Jr, the original actor for Aaron Burr, replies. Suggesting that genuine activism or allyship involves work involves a genuine change in vision and understanding, Odom Jr implores the child and other viewers who wish to be “white all[ies]” to “open [the] iris” through which “[they] look at history,” critically approaching both the “rich history and tragic.” Both *Hamilton* and #BlackLivesMatter are rendered valuable as inspiration for individuals to actively change and challenge their perspectives. This proves a concluding point for Roberts, who echoes the need to “Open the iris up, recognise the world we’re actually living in.” *Hamilton*’s famous summary of “America then, told by America now” is recontextualised for the new documentary, which is about “*how* the show sees America then through the lens of America now – *how* the country has changed since *Hamilton* first opened on Broadway” (emphasis mine). Roberts reflects on the trailer and summarises many of its arguments: “a beautiful tribute to a musical that I love, that my family loves, but also it is so interesting to see that the professor didn’t mind that the history in *Hamilton* wasn’t exactly accurate, because that’s something that people point out.” These closing remarks almost feel like a final appeal by the Disney+ network for audiences to re-consider any negative biases they may have collected over recent days. Rather than as something unique to *Hamilton*, the criticisms are softened towards a question of historical accuracy, “a question that often comes up about films and shows based on real events.” *Hamilton* may not be perfect, but it does more than just tell a history story: “*Hamilton* opens a door...challenges us...to find those answers to ourselves.” With intrinsic, exceptional cultural relevance and applicability, the show appears as quite literally “America then, told by America now,” important not so much for its take on the eighteenth century, but its call to action for the twenty-first.

The teaser trailer was shared beyond GMA and YouTube, albeit not extensively. Stateside, *PlayBill* claimed that “the special focuses on how the Broadway musical became a pop culture phenomenon and altered the way people can think about history.”³⁴⁰ In the UK, *Radio Times* noted more specifically that the release “will ask key questions about the show’s creation and

³⁴⁰ “Hamilton: History Has Its Eyes on You special lands on Disney+,” *Radio Times*, July 10, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://www.radiotimes.com/movies/hamilton-disney-plus-reunion-history-has-its-eyes-on-you/>.

cultural significance today, especially with a renewed awareness of racial issues spreading across the globe,” again acknowledging the transmediality of the moment.³⁴¹ Though the trailer’s key elements suggest how *Hamilton* wanted to be understood in response to recent criticism, they also reinforce a more significant point: amidst the ongoing difficult lived experiences of non-white Americans, *Hamilton* and its supposed ‘work’ towards social justice was both news-worthy in itself, and worthy of making the news around Black Lives Matter meaningful. It was becoming a metaphor, a vehicle, for facilitating public conversation about difficult pasts and presents across all sorts of sites and stages.

HHIEOY: The Full Documentary³⁴²

In many ways, the full 47-minute documentary was summarised effectively by the trailer, the first 8 minutes of which read similarly and in a manner typical of American advertisements. However, some key expansions shed light on just how far *Hamilton* itself had come as a musical metaphor for America.

Perhaps one of the documentary’s most significant creative choices is the collaging of protest footage. The work of *Hamilton*’s theatrical director Thomas Kail, contemporary and archival footage of anti-prejudice protest is intersected with snippets from the recently released Disney+ film. By so clearly putting *Hamilton* within the context of not only America’s longer Civil Rights movement but placing its theatrical performance in dialogue with footage of ongoing Black Lives Matter protests, the documentary confirms a common language of what it means to ‘protest’ and act to bring about social change. The documentary becomes a truly transmedial performance in itself. Rather than undermining the worthiness of the ongoing Black Lives Matter scenes, the decision reinforces the sense that *Hamilton*, whether as a Broadway show or as a Disney+ film and with all of its musical bells and whistles, sees itself a form of genuinely affective protest.

This is audibly reinforced. Claiming that *Hamilton* has “gone beyond theatre to become a viable part of our country’s culture,” *Hamilton* openly historicizes itself, claiming that it is not only “one of the most exciting events theatre fans can imagine,” but a “look at history that has become history.” In becoming a vehicle for conversation, the show not only superseded its own ‘revolutionary’ reputation, but almost itself usurped or displaced the “America then” that it supposedly tells, with a blurring of “America then” as both 244 years ago and 5. While Roberts

³⁴¹ Dan Meyer, “Watch a Sneak Preview of Hamilton: History Has Its Eyes on You, Streaming on Disney+ July 10,” July 9, 2020, accessed April 1, 2026, <https://playbill.com/article/watch-a-sneak-preview-of-hamilton-history-has-its-eyes-on-you-streaming-on-disney-july-10>.

³⁴² *History Has Its Eyes on You* (2020), Disney+.

closes out with “as a nation grapples with our failures and our promise, we are re-examining, as the show says, Who lives, who dies, who tells your story? America’s story,” footage of contemporary protests is overlaid with musical excerpts of “may you always be satisfied” from the show’s number, *Satisfied*. It may ‘only’ be a stage show, but *Hamilton* has almost become an apparent answer to America’s future: supported, of course, by the Americans of the future thanks to “their side gig? Education.”

To say that *Hamilton* has such a place in these very big and very real debates – that a musical under criticism has a right to blend the real and the arguably fictional in such a way - makes for a complicated claim. It echoes some of the tensions raised in Chapter Three’s exploration of the show’s EduHam program around how history is handled and its questioning of why an organisation as weighty as Rockefeller deemed the show worthy of attention. Yet, the very fact that *Hamilton* evokes these tensions reinforces the sense in which it has always been seen as capacious to doing and being more than just on-stage entertainment. Furthermore, the overlaying of real protest footage – footage in which ordinary Americans are putting themselves at risk of physical harm to try to bring about societal change – with lyrics from a Broadway show produced within a commercialised industry product leads to a strange blend of performativity: each form of protest is not only posited as equally valid, but they are seen as mutually-reinforcing requisites to cultural and political change. This performativity is also one which could only be made sense of through an understanding of the 2020 political moment around *Hamilton* as transmedial: the boots on the streets and the jazz boots on the stage; the lyrics on the cast recording, and the digital, textual signifier #BlackLivesMatter.

Three key areas of the full documentary reinforce the complexity of *Hamilton*’s place in the American mind amidst Black Lives Matter: work achieved, context, and responsibility.

Work achieved

Hamilton was not the first Broadway show to adopt colour-conscious casting, but it has nonetheless been repeated (and problematised) as a revolutionary component of the show. *HHIEOY* reinforces casting as a revolutionary component of the show but uses the voices of that original cast to do so. Beyond citing Miranda’s own vision for seeing racial representation on-stage through the voices of the show’s original actors, Odom Jr saw the show’s casting alone as “the revolution” that *Hamilton* became, noting that the “image” of four men of colour talking about brotherhood on-stage “rocks you.” The significance of the colour-conscious is not just its existence, but the characters the actors have portrayed: Christopher Jackson emotively recounts his experience of singing as Washington at the White House under the portrait of Washington

himself, marking the significance of this as a black man. The enslaving of black persons by his character's legitimate historic counterpart did not diminish the significance of embodying the American legend from Miranda's new angle.

HHIEOY also alludes to the gendered aspects of *Hamilton*'s representation. Although less covered by this chapter given the prominence of BLM and the contemporary emphasis upon racial issues, this is nonetheless part of the *Hamilton*'s wider social work. Goldsberry talks at some length of the "revealing" of Angelica Schuyler from previous public awareness of the historical record, noting personal gratitude "that Lin had a very specific agenda when he came to this story." In executing this "agenda," Goldsberry is thankful that "[Miranda] didn't have an allegiance to the letter" of "the history that he was reading," "because that in itself is flawed." Instead, Goldsberry gives regard for his alternative "allegiance to inclusion...not only to people of colour but also women." Such words echo parts of the EduHam program and in them, Goldsberry sees Miranda's development of Eliza Hamilton as a historical person as something of particular significance, with something to "learn from her" about listening, advocating, and educating. Yet Goldsberry seems to blur the identities and voices at play in speaking of "her"; is this the historical Eliza, Miranda, actress Phillippa Soo (or others who have played Eliza), or is she speaking of public interpretations of who this person is, or was? This attribution of historical and change-making authority matters in particular because of the issues of context and responsibility raised by the documentary.

Context

The documentary largely ignores the unfolding Covid-19 healthcare crisis and instead emphasises it as an opportunity to write a "big old love letter to live theatre" in the form of the Disney+ film, yet somehow even more significant is the contextual point of the Presidency. Noting that "all art is in conversation with the times in which we're viewing it," this component is led particularly strongly by Daveed Diggs, original actor for Lafayette/Jefferson. He recounts the period under Obama as "a pretty hopeful one" populated with a "sense of ownership" by people of colour "playing the fathers and mothers of the country." Drawing upon his almost idealistic representation, Diggs reminisces that the era – only some few years ago – offered "the most American [he'd] ever felt," arguing that the casting decision "ma[de] perfect sense in an era where there's a man that looks like me who's president." Diggs not only reinforces *Hamilton*'s association with the Obama presidency but emphasises the genuine significance that his premiership had upon some in America. Seeing #BlackLivesMatter trend was a huge contrast to the same media representing a black President. As much as this seemed to provide an apt

background for the show, Diggs admits nuance and realism about the on-the-ground reality even at the time: “it didn’t mean that America was...valuing black life more.” Speaking to his fellow Americans, it seems that for Diggs, Black Lives Matter’s first emergence under Obama was not about criticising a specific president’s failure to address systemic issues, but the enabling of everyday people to ‘do’ something about continued prejudice by virtue of his taking office as a representational figure. Diggs challenges audiences: “if you get a sense of patriotism from watching *Hamilton*, we are the bodies you see performing America, you have a responsibility to make that America exist.” He argues that *Hamilton* has always had a sense of “action implied” through its performative choices and implores audiences to “examine the show to hold your country accountable.” *Hamilton* is seen as not only a revolution on Broadway in its own right, but a tool for furthering the revolutionary work to come. *Hamilton*’s casting choice – far from being merely a performed theatrical ‘mask’ over deeply historical issues of injustice – was an active protest of representation, both historical and theatrical, and pertinent across past, present, and future. In spite of criticism, the show’s casting is placed at the top of its mythos.

This is particularly felt in how the point is developed by other cast members. Odom Jr recounts a conversation with a child who argued that *Hamilton* is “not revolutionary at all, just a bunch of people of colour telling a white people’s story.” This echoed not only the calls to #CancelHamilton, but previous criticism like that by Monteiro or Reed.³⁴³ Odom Jr responds that “Lin wrote the story that was on his heart...that was our leg, now it’s your turn,” imagining that one day, “some kid will write the show that makes *Hamilton* look quaint.” Again historicising *Hamilton* as a product at just 5 years old, Odom Jr saw “protest in it, in its time” with “the language of the streets...the people who have been historically disenfranchised.” Hinting at the ability for “time” and circumstance to change so quickly, he expresses hopes that *Hamilton* would be but a beginning for the next generation to take up, claiming that this was “the most exciting thing to [him] about the EduHam” program and describing the show as “the springboard for the future.” One can clearly see the through-lines from Chapter Three’s discussion of the HEP, but in a way which softens the (potentially dangerously) self-centric historiographical approach into a valuable tool for reclaiming identity.

Responsibility

This already points to perhaps the most heavily emphasised theme of the documentary – responsibility for enacting change. *Hamilton* might have been presented as a performed protest

³⁴³ See footnotes 273 and 274.

rooted in both the past and present, but the future is put firmly into the hands of audiences. Kail summarises the position in arguing that “our job was trying to create something to probe and question,” noting that “none of our text has changed since 2015...but the world has:” *Hamilton* should not change with the times, but should instead be used to change them. Claiming that “the questions...will be fundamentally different” in the future, Kail emphasises the value of thinking “well-beyond the curtain” – the confines of the stage, the limits of where any performance can sit within its ‘present’ moment. Echoing the pleas of Diggs and Odom Jr and pointing to the potential to “get confused about what your actual job is” on social media, Kail observes his status as “an artist...not a politician”. In *Hamilton*’s eyes, it is the “actual job” of audience members to make sure political change happens; as Phillippa Soo argues, “it is important when you see theatre, when you see things on the news” that “your discomfort is the beginning of a learning moment” and “seeing how much they [the Founding Fathers] were flawed can be an inspiration.” *Hamilton* is to be a way for people to take responsibility for their own past, present, and future. This *almost* taps into the post-Brechtian drive over the last 10-20 years for theatre-producers to be seen as co-creating work *with* audiences – if not during the creation process, at least through the vein of post-production discussions within the theatre space.³⁴⁴ But rather than overtly including an official, critically reflective opportunity after each performance of the show as is associated with such productions, *Hamilton* seems to see this critical engagement as always implied within any public engagement with the show. This arguably extends not only to watching the show itself either live or on Disney+, but in *any* engagement with *Hamilton* across its diverse *Hamil*-sphere. It’s a big ask of the audience/consumer, and while a broader sense of an audience’s potential role in the meaning-making process has become well-established from theatre arts to museum studies, little of it considers this with reference to cultural products with such complex transmedial and historical presence as *Hamilton*.³⁴⁵ The meaning of *Hamilton* is not just about those who perform on-stage, but the endless re-creations of it by endless audience members.

Altogether, *HHIEOY* allows us to draw out several tensions in *Hamilton* as of 2020. However much corporate cynicism or political bias could pervade the piece as a potential panic-response

³⁴⁴ See for example: Caroline Heim, “‘Argue with us!’: Audience co-creation through post-performance discussions,” *New Theatre Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (2012): 189-197.

³⁴⁵ See for example: Lynne Conner, “Who Gets to Tell the Meaning?,” *GIA Reader* 15, no.1 (2004), accessed April 16, 2026, <https://www.giarts.org/article/who-gets-tell-meaning>; Nina Simon, *The Participatory Museum* (Beijing, China: Museum 2.0, 2010); Ben Walmsley, “My essential reads: Co-creating value through audience engagement,” *Centre for Cultural Value* (2020), accessed April 16, 2026, <https://www.culturalvalue.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Ben-Walmsley-essential-reads.pdf>.

towards online cancel culture, the documentary clarifies how *Hamilton* wanted to be seen in 2020: as both theatrical art and a genuine catalyst for political and historical change. Making rather radical claims about the extent to which the “world has [changed]” within such a short space of time, the documentary shows some of the ways in which digital media can distort public perceptions of time. It is not just about suggesting that the *Hamilton* team are engaged with the ongoing Black Lives Matter conversation, but showing that they recognise the ways in which everyday people are experiencing and partaking with it, and claiming that *Hamilton* is and should be a vital part of this work. Meanwhile, *Hamilton* as a theatrical product is not to evolve with these temporal shifts but remain the same as its own sense of historical product or representation of the microcosmic “America now” who made it. In this, as much as the show’s meaning has been determined by its original creatives within a specific era, its ultimate meaning is paradoxically left open to the audience. *Hamilton* does not see this paradox as problematic, but as essential to the creation of societal progress – the show, with its Obaman values, is seen as so fundamental to the American conception that it is to be endlessly applicable to the re-creation of that identity. *Hamilton* challenges the public as passive: as they watch the show and its performed representation of “America then,” they unavoidably continue to co-create its meaning and, stepping into Eliza’s shoes (Chapter Two), take responsibility for “who lives, who dies, who tells [its] story.” *HHIEOY*, therefore, might not be so simple as corporate panic, but about reinforcing the value of theatrical performance at the juxtaposition of the temporally fixed and the ever-unfolding, and in a space where publics of any cultural movement are increasingly expected to be critical participants rather than passive consumers. “History has its eyes” on “you,” the consumer, because *Hamilton*’s job is to pass the book and based on an assumed competency with Obama-era values, Founding Father histories, and continued experiences of injustice, it believes it has used both performance and digital media to inspire people to undertake such work. *Hamilton* should not only *not* be cancelled, but is part of the American psyche to stay.

HamilTweet: #CancelHamilton, #HamiltonBLM & #BlackLivesMatterHamilton

It might seem odd to come back to the HamilTweet data for #CancelHamilton after such analysis, but the choice is deliberate. Having seen the word cloud for #CancelHamilton and analysed *HHIEOY*, discussion has seemed to present an enterprise with a genuine fear of being cancelled – of recognising a challenge to its mythos and feeling the need to reinforce its ‘work’ as genuine within the unfolding moment. But what the data suggests is that the production and popular promotion of *HHIEOY* was disproportionate to the actual risk of cancellation.

Looking at the frequencies of the word associations in Figure 39 reveals that the number of people making such claims was tiny compared with the engagement data of other social media content, such as the #BlackLivesMatter figures quoted towards the top of the chapter. Just 2875 tweets used ‘#CancelHamilton’ at all, let alone little more than 1000 Tweets making specifically negative references to the reasons for this – and where the “slave” trade is seen as almost equally as much a reason as that the show is simply “stupid.” Furthermore, the sentiment chart Figure 40 reveals that almost 2/3 of the tweets using it were still deemed overall ‘positive’ or ‘neutral’ in tone. This is particularly noteworthy when bearing in mind that tweets including #CancelHamilton are automatically more likely to be negatively coded by the HamilTweet function given the associations of ‘cancel’ as a sentiment signifier.

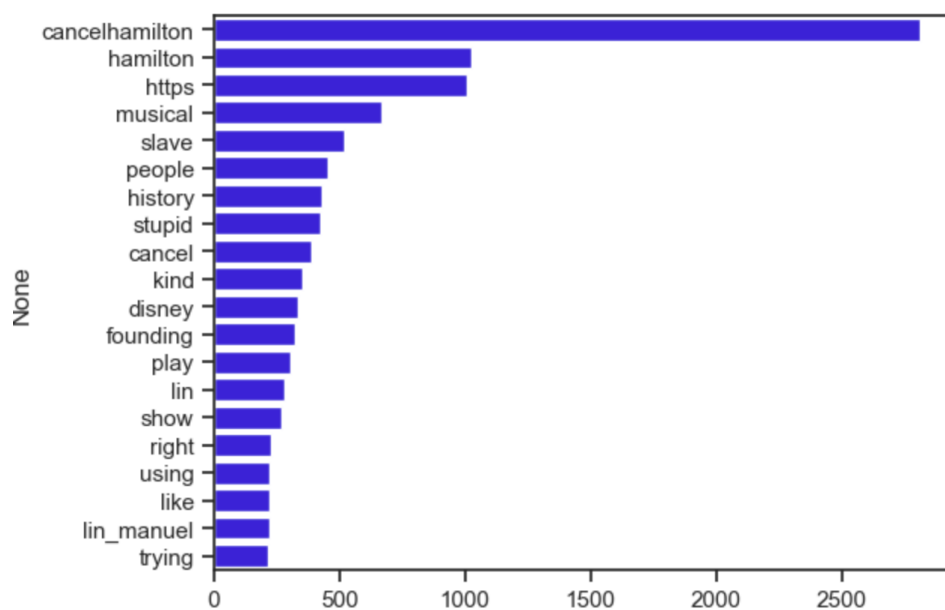


Figure 39: #CancelHamilton - word frequency

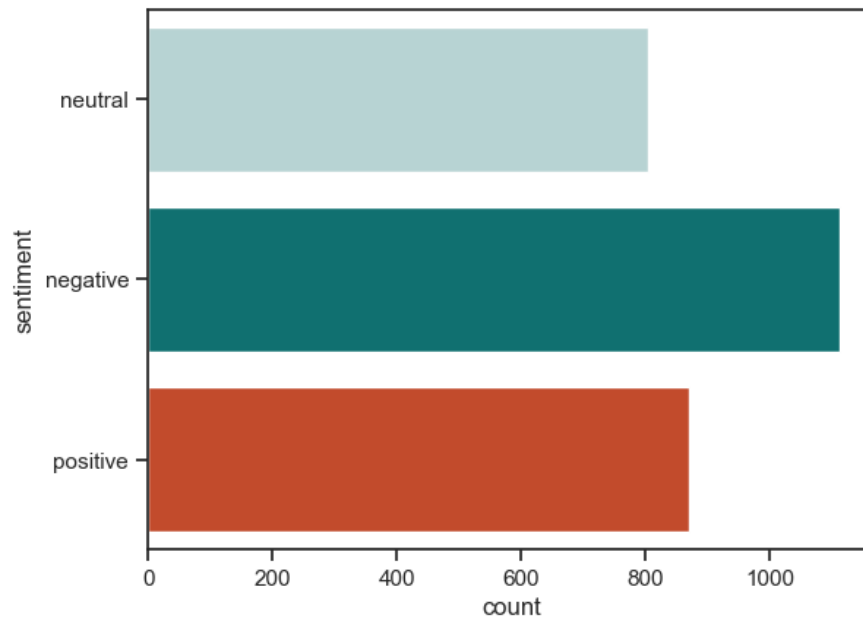


Figure 40: #CancelHamilton - sentiment analysis

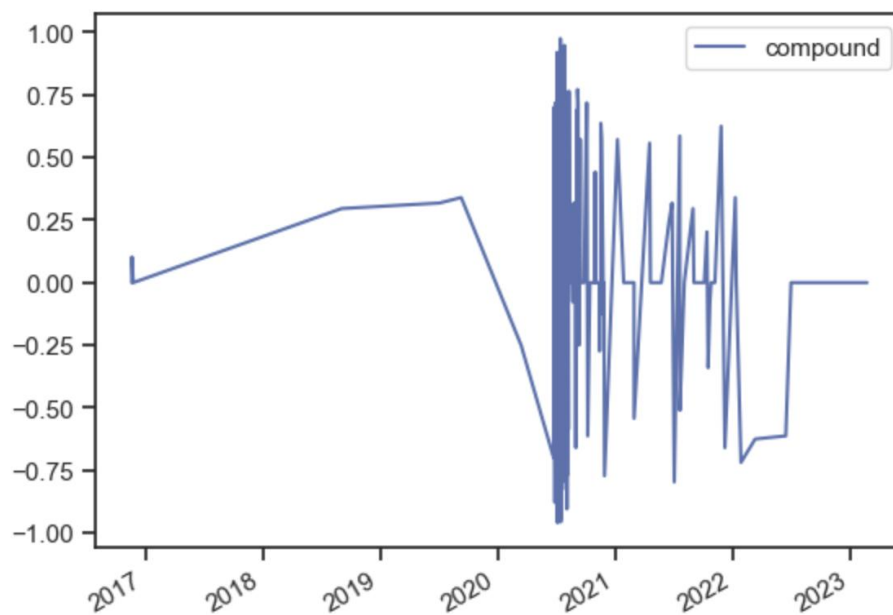


Figure 41: #CancelHamilton – average sentiment score over time

Figure 41 might still visualise the ‘eruption’ of negative sentiment around the show immediately after #BlackLivesMatter begins to trend, but it also confirms that this wasn’t an en masse, enterprise-collapsing movement. The frequency of #CancelHamilton tweets did not represent dense public conversation and while some were negatively-coded, just as many were positively-coded. Indeed, for the next two years, the skew remained in favour of the positively-coded. This could have even been people using the hashtag to defend the show. Altogether, #CancelHamilton is reinforced as a very fringe, progressive left movement.

Although even more modest in number, the HamilTweet data for #BlackLivesMatterHamilton and #BLMHamilton reinforce this cancel culture attempt as a quantitatively insignificant event, while simultaneously reinforcing the public's understanding of the show as attempting to produce genuinely positive effect. Figures 42 and 43 both suggest mostly neutral or positively-charged uses of the hashtags, reinforcing that users connecting *Hamilton* directly to Black Lives Matter generally did not see this in a negative light.

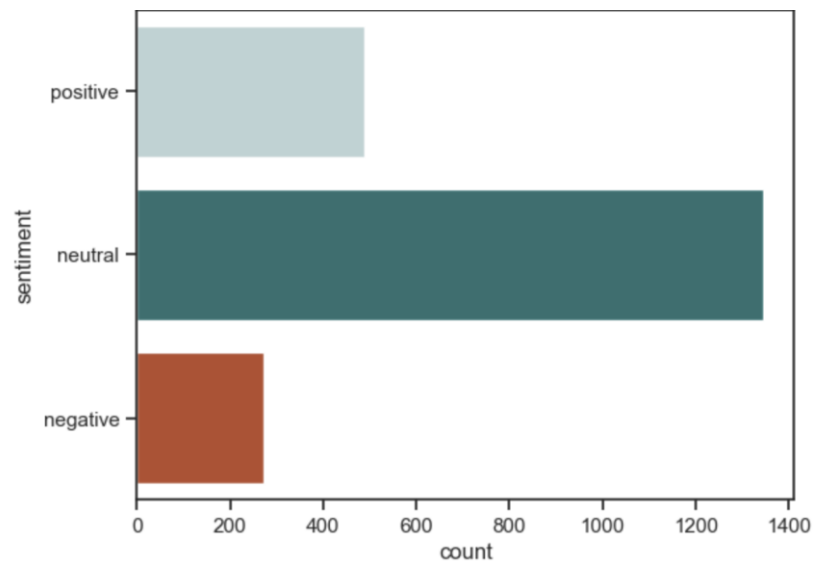


Figure 42: #BlackLivesMatterHamilton - sentiment analysis

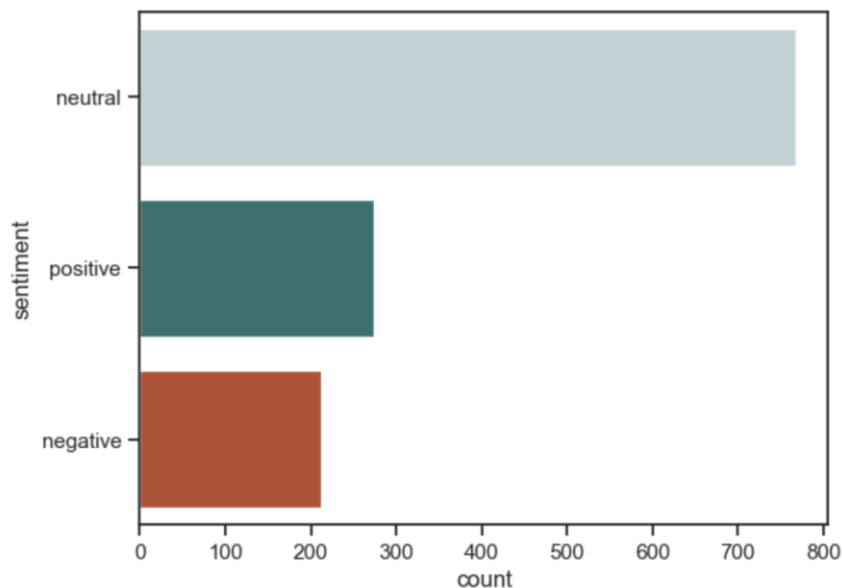


Figure 43: #BLMHamilton - sentiment analysis

Perhaps even more revealing are the two graphs in Figures 44 and 45, again showing #BlackLivesMatterHamilton and #BLMHamilton respectively. Both demonstrate that not only was the use of these hashtags more positive than negative, but that associations between Black

Lives Matter and the *Hamilton* enterprise may have not even been new to 2020, but made as early as 2015 and 2016. Even if usage increased around the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, users aware of both phenomena had already made the connection and value association. They also continued to do so after #BlackLivesMatter had left the mainstream Twitter/X algorithm behind, even when Twitter had turned to X and lost much of its democratically-aligned user base (see Chapter Five). Even if only identified by a small number of social media users, it suggests that *Hamilton* could not only be categorised as part of an effective protest in and of itself, but beyond itself. Though most of the momentum occurred in 2020, *Hamilton* as a cultural product had already been recognised as being in conversation with #BlackLivesMatter, reinforcing *HHIEOY*'s perspectives as part of a genuine display of *Hamilton*'s values and socio-political intent. This wasn't just a cultural product fearing for its commercial success, nor passionately making its case against a sea of opposition. It was sharing attributes of its mythos which were deemed genuine more broadly.

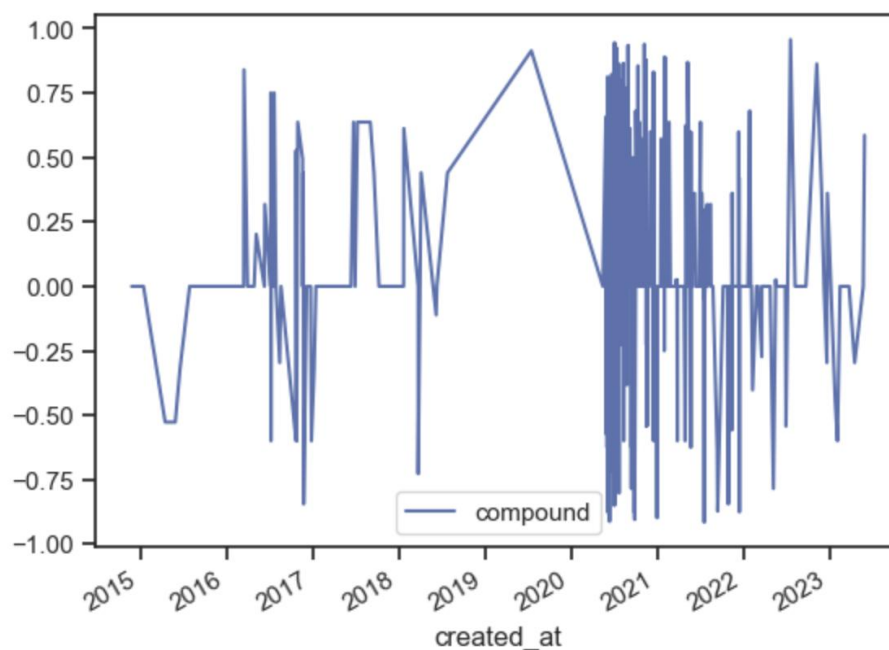


Figure 44: #BlackLivesMatterHamilton – average sentiment score over time

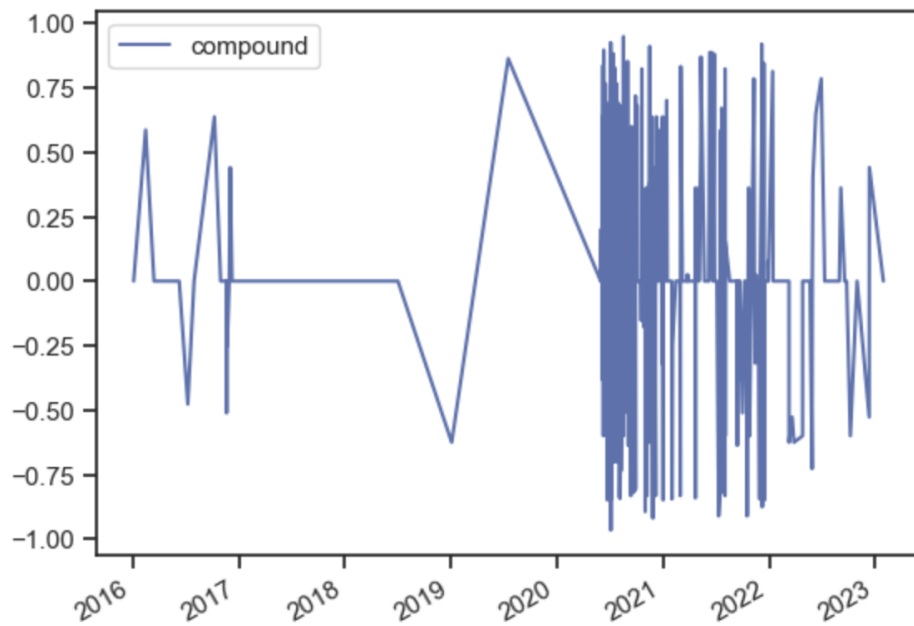


Figure 45: #BLMHamilton - average sentiment score over time

What this begins to ask, then, is why the news reports generated so much apparent ‘fervour’ around the cancellation of the show – reports to which *Hamilton* seemed to respond so strongly in defence. It might speak to something of the media machine of the digital sphere: news reporters, whose journalism relies not only on the work of other reporters but looks out for potential ‘trends’ on social media. Public debate and narrative are not only generated by the signifiers – the posts and hashtags – adopted by people to ‘perform’ or mark their alignments on trending topics, but can be manipulated by both journalists and producers chancing on what might go ‘viral’ and the consequences that this could have. This not only complicates the extent to which we can understand the role of the public in their understandings and applications of the past within protest, but it also reinforces the ways in which the current world is both deeply performative and unavoidably transmedial. Those influencing public discourse – celebrities, enterprises, shows, news reporters, and so on - expect readers to not only engage with current events but be conversant with them across multiple different spaces both online and offline. This also suggests something of *Hamilton*’s place in the mind of not only the American public, but the Western imagination in general: *Hamilton* is reinforced as a major cultural product, whose public ‘fall’ could have been worth writing about for journalists desperate to meet ‘click’ quotas. The mythos has something ‘real’ about it.

Making Moves? Ham4Progress

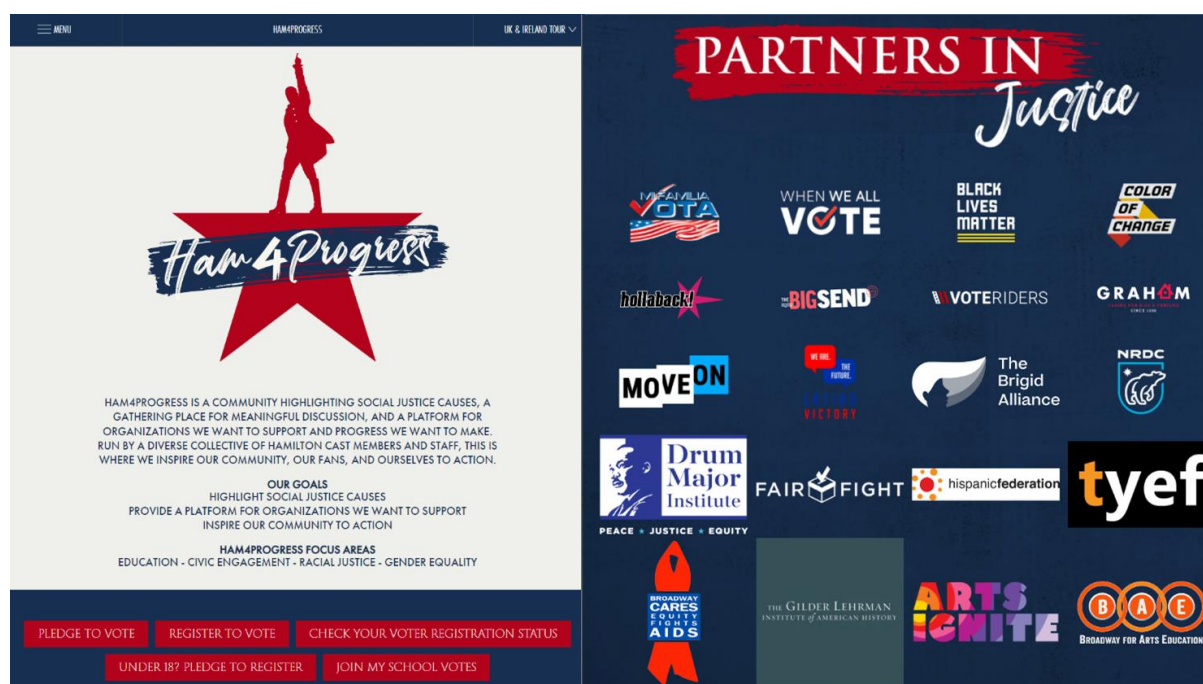


Figure 46: Screenshots from the 'Ham4Progress' webpage ³⁴⁶

Looking beyond 2020, *Hamilton*'s Ham4Progress seems a fitting way to end this chapter on protest and the show's attempts to evoke progress towards a particular vision of societal change. As of 2024, the website defines itself as "a community highlighting social justice causes, a gathering place for meaningful discussion, and a platform for organisations we want to support and progress we want to make." Integrated as part of the *Hamilton* brand, it is "run by a diverse collective of *Hamilton* cast members and staff" with a goal to "inspire our community, our fans and ourselves to action." Focus areas such as education, civic engagement, racial justice, and gender equality all relate to themes represented within the *Hamilton*, *HHIEOY* documentary, and the EduHam program, though the website's design arguably emphasises civic engagement more than anything else with particular emphasis upon buttons pertaining to electoral participation. Though its Instagram following is modest in comparison to the main show's 2.4 million Instagram followers, the initiative has a not insubstantial 20,000 users in tow.³⁴⁷ It posts regularly on issues of political participation, elevating (both visually and textually) the voices and contributions of non-white individuals both historic and present. Crucially, the initiative was launched in February

³⁴⁶ "Ham4Progress," *Hamilton Musical*, 2025, accessed November 10, 2025, <https://hamiltonmusical.com/ham-4-progress/>.

³⁴⁷ @Ham4progress, account page, *Instagram*, as of and accessed November 10, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/ham4progress/>.

2021: just 6-7 months after the #BlackLivesMatter protests of 2020 simmered away from the digital limelight.

As if a civic-duty, less-formally-educational version of the EduHam Program, the Ham4Progress webpage seems to encapsulate much of the complex construction that *Hamilton* and its sense of ‘progress’ has come to constitute. The visual analysis undertaken at the start of the chapter around the ways in which protest and societal action can be represented are highly relevant. The tricolour branding immediately embraces a sense of all-American identity but overall, the website makes an even clearer partisan political bid than other aspects of the *Hamil*-sphere. Initially, the website might appear politically neutral – even the logo is re-painted from the blank outline at the start of the chapter, being filled with Republican red and stamped in Democrat blue. Yet many of the twenty “partners in justice” (note: not ‘crime’) listed on the website’s homepage are clearly Democratically oriented. ‘Mi Familia Vota’ and ‘Colour of Change’ reinforce a sense of political belonging for Latin American and non-White American citizens – efforts typically aligned with Democratic candidates, particularly after Obama’s efforts to engage a diverse electorate back in 2008 (Chapter One). If identifying with ‘Black Lives Matter’ as an official partner was insufficient, partnering with the ‘Drum Major Institute’ which has sought to build upon Martin Luther King’s legacy since 1961 lends *Hamilton* decades of direct, practical association to the Civil Rights movement. Other aptly named partners such as ‘Fair Right’ instead of “Far right” confirm the Democratic orientation. Re-painting the *Hamilton* logo in red and blue and branding the webpage in patriotic red, white and blue, then, reinforces how *Hamilton* sees American identity: these are the sorts of connections and causes which *Hamilton* not only supposedly “stands for,” but what America itself is understood to stand for. The page subverts stereotypically right-wing nationalism and reclaims it for the left, just as the show took traditionally conservative history and re-packaged it in the language of those deemed historically oppressed. Almost nothing about the musical itself is included on the page, being instead left as assumed knowledge and understanding on behalf of the user. *Hamilton* doesn’t just want to be a fun, hip-hop musical about a Founding Father, ‘doing’ history and politics through stage or a filmed version of the stage, or even going viral on social media. Rather, the show intends to serve as a broader statement and an effective call to action towards a particular conception of what “progress” looks like for America. Yet despite the organisation’s clear socio-political purpose, the webpage automatically recognises that I’m accessing the page from the UK and suggests I ought to be on the page for the UK & Ireland tour in the top right-hand corner, leading me also towards the other available options of “New York, North American Tour, London, International

Tour, Australia, Singapore.”³⁴⁸ As much as the adoption of those partner icons and brand colours signified to the user a particular set of identities and meanings, the non-U.S. user is jarred by this commercial and entertainment-oriented interjection. It is not that this must be interpreted as ‘performative activism’, but a reminder that *Hamilton* must be seen as “wide enough” to do both.

Another noteworthy aspect of Ham4Progress’ digital presence is that the Instagram account is not managed identically to the website and has clearly undergone changes over time. Screenshots of the Instagram account are provided on the coming pages. While *Hamilton* as a Broadway musical is (at least to the U.S. user) only inferred on the main landing page, earlier Instagram posts sought to cement the initiative more closely in line with the show itself (Figure 47). This older content pulled strongly on iconography from the Broadway show, from the very logo to invitations to *Hamilton* events, a ‘Hamilton & Black Lives Matter Shirt Giveaway,’ fan-made cookies, performing arts showcases on themes of “hope, inspiration, and community celebrating Black art and artists, starring Hamilton company members and special guests,” and previewed with snippets of behind-the-scenes footage.³⁴⁹ The overlap with the show’s earlier EduHam social media work (Chapter Three) is not insignificant, but more so is the change since the initiative was launched. Newer content (Figure 48) aligns more strongly with the webpage and emphasises raising awareness and education through visual representations of demographics and issues which seemingly to matter to the show. This is unusual given the more participatory approach adopted on Instagram elsewhere in the *Hamil*-sphere (see Chapter Five). What *Hamilton* wants people to ‘do’ with it seems to be dependent upon both the context and mode of connection.

³⁴⁸ “Ham4Progress,” *Hamilton Musical*.

³⁴⁹ Instagram post, @Ham4Progress, *Instagram*, February 21, 2021, accessed June 21, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/p/CLj50XEB3Sm/>.



Figure 47: Content from the @Ham4Progress Instagram account, showing older content from as far back as 2020 ³⁵⁰

³⁵⁰ Account page, @Ham4Progress, *Instagram*, as of and accessed June 21, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/ham4progress/>.

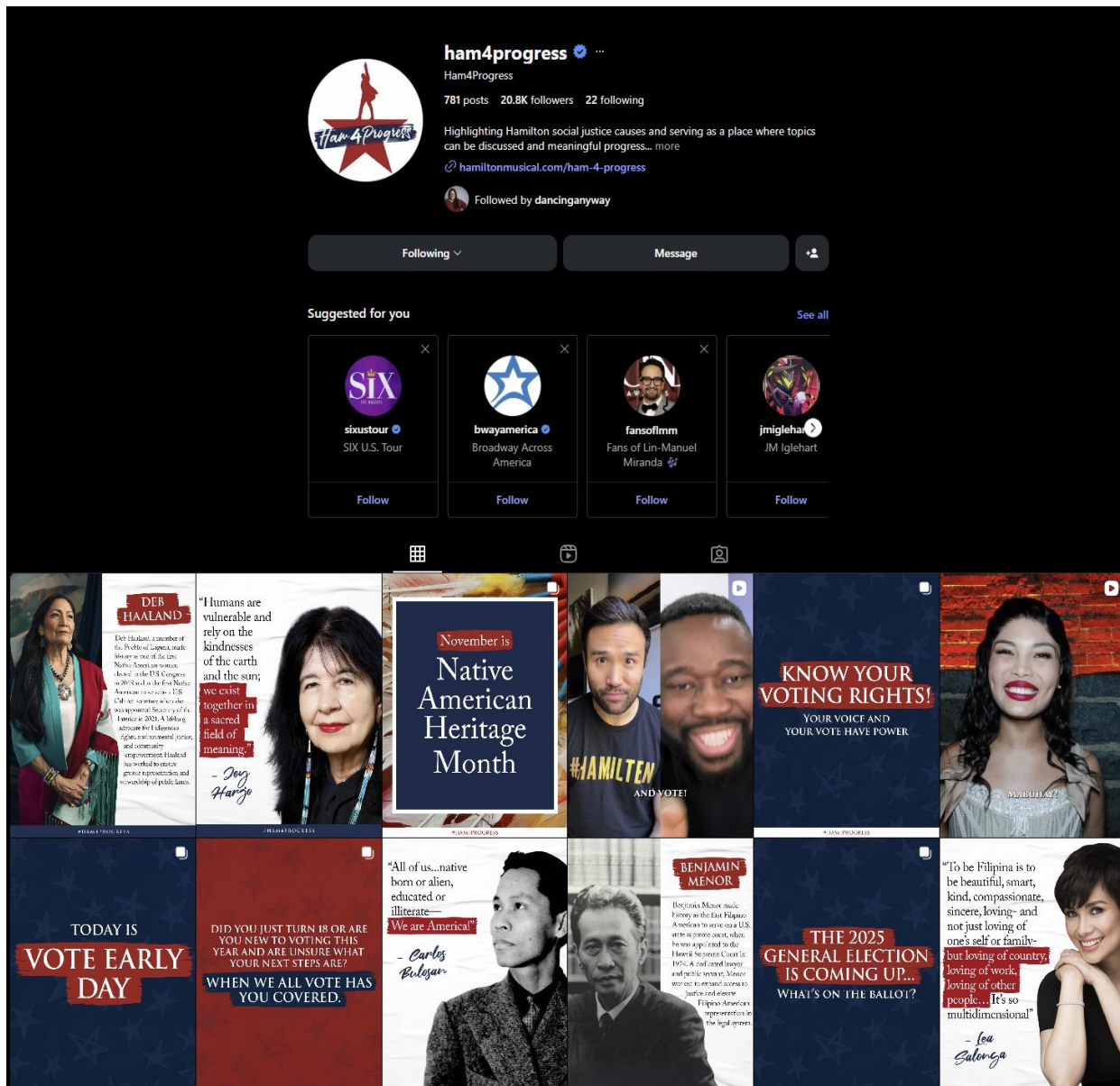


Figure 48: Content from the @Ham4Progress Instagram account, showing content from 2025 ³⁵¹

Much of this thesis has essentially involved drawing out the tensions in the *Hamilton* enterprise, and such work is only drawn out further by Ham4Progress after the seeming reification of *Hamilton*'s mythos earlier in the chapter. At this point in the study, *Hamilton*'s mythos has been well-established as rooted in its on-stage, embodied performance of a revisionist Founding Father tale which borders on a political call-to-arms. Whether on-stage, on-screen, in education, or more broadly across the digital sphere, this cultural product of the Obama era has been persistently deemed capable of fighting for the establishment of lost American dreams and values. In spite of the attempt to cancel the show, coming to Ham4Progress at this point in the

³⁵¹ Account page, @Ham4Progress, *Instagram*, as of and accessed December 10, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/ham4progress/>.

study seems to firmly cement the mythos as legitimate. *Hamilton* seems not a merely a piece of performative theatre, but an active site of history-fuelled activism which relies on a legitimate mobilisation of that performativity. *Hamilton* must be seen as a force with agency, capable of rallying the masses (or at least its fans) towards “pledg[ing] to vote,” “register[ing] to vote,” or “check[ing their] voting status.” Young people, perhaps those who have undertaken the EduHam Program, can “pledge to vote” or “join [their] school votes” on the webpage. *Hamilton* pushes the boundary of Broadway’s ability to engage in mainstream politics, with just enough specificity and vagueness in its current digital presence to encourage particular real world political action on the basis of a successful, assumed piece of musical theatre.

The previous chapter began to think about the significance behind *Hamilton*’s association with organisations like the Gilder Lehrman Institute and Rockefeller. Disney’s involvement with *Hamilton* on its streaming platform and Miranda’s growing association with the company might both complicate and justify the Ham4Progress stance. With Disney as its distribution partner, *Hamilton* could perhaps ‘afford’ to take a political stand with one of the world’s biggest media companies giving it financial security. Meanwhile, Disney could ‘afford’ to invest some of its \$180 billion+ market capital into being seen to be an active, meaningful cultural and political player by vague association.³⁵² At the same time, such logic might invite reflection upon Obama’s original endorsement of the show since Chapter One: while *Hamilton*’s cast and creatives clearly valued the Obama era highly, *Hamilton* was also an acceptable and sanitized version of identity politics which The White House could deploy as a cultural and political signifier of its supposed values. The potential for mutually beneficial marketability might seem to endorse #CancelHamilton as justified, framing *Hamilton* and its mythos as tokenistic, yet each scenario would validate ‘performance’ as not just make-believe on a Broadway stage, but a legitimate means of political participation across the ‘stages’ of the world. Thus by the same stroke, the Ham4Progress’ website, and by extension the endeavours of the wider *Hamilton* enterprise, are somewhat legitimated by their connections to real-world enabling environments: *Hamilton* doesn’t seem to lose its mythical clout either way.

HamilTweet does not help to immediately provide evidence of what Ham4Progress has practically achieved in order to extend the above discussion. Looking at Figure 49, one sees only

³⁵² Marisa Dellatto, “The World’s Largest Media Companies In 2023: Comcast And Disney Stay On Top,” *Forbes*, June 23, 2026, accessed April 24, 2026, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/marisadellatto/2023/06/08/the-worlds-largest-media-companies-in-2023-comcast-and-disney-stay-on-top/>.

a largely positively-skewed selection of just a few thousand posts, suggestive of limited reach and tangible impact.

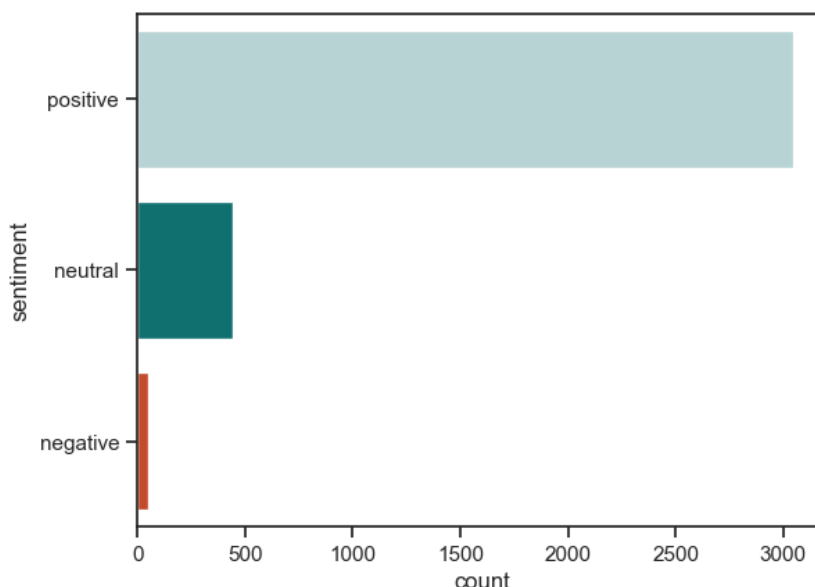


Figure 49: #Ham4Progress - sentiment analysis

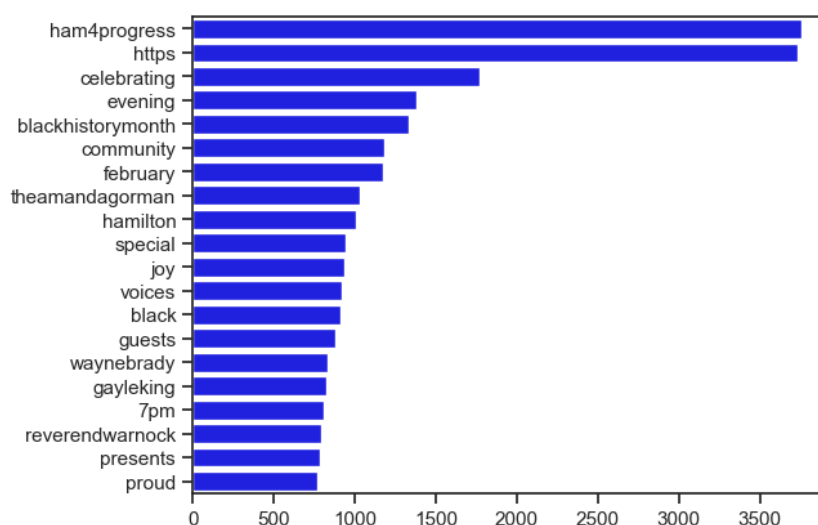


Figure 50: #Ham4Progress - word frequency

Investigating a little further, however, one realises that apparent ‘nonsense’ words such as “gayleking,” “theamandagorman,” or “reverendwarnock” in Figure 50 refer to public accounts on the Twitter platform. Gale King is co-host of chat show *CBS Mornings* and leads Oprah Winfrey’s editorial team, with almost 1 million followers on X.³⁵³ Now a Democratic senator for Georgia, Reverend Warnock’s personal account describes him as “Pastor. Advocate. Savannah Born &

³⁵³ Account page, @GayleKing, X, accessed June 3, 2024, <https://x.com/GayleKing>.

Raised,” and has over 1.2 million X followers in tow.³⁵⁴ Amanda Gorman’s account is no longer active, but she is widely known as a Harvard-educated poet and activist with some 3.7 million followers on Instagram.³⁵⁵ Even if overall Tweet numbers were relatively low, as users would not normally tag themselves in a tweet the prevalence of such names suggests that these individuals elicited viral responses from the public regarding #Ham4Progress, granting Ham4Progress some popular visibility and endorsement in-line with its ‘sponsors’.

Figure 50 also reinforces a number of positively-coded phrases deemed relevant to the Ham4Progress program, such as “joy,” “special guests,” “celebrating black,” “joyous evening,” or “inspiration community.” The fact that words such as “celebrating,” “blackhistorymonth,” and “community” come above “Hamilton” in terms of usage also suggests that the #Ham4Progress project might have enjoyed some attention beyond direct conversation with the original Broadway show.

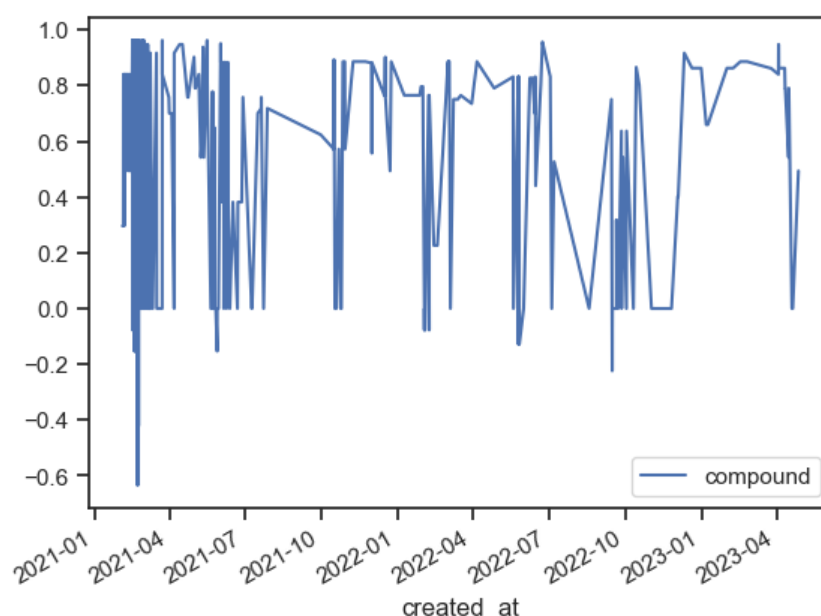


Figure 51: #Ham4Progress - average sentiment score over time

It may be difficult to quantify Ham4Progress’ “exercise of power” or frame it as entirely “disruptive.”³⁵⁶ Yet the sentiment over time chart in Figure 51 confirms not only the positive bias in Ham4Progress being discussed but suggests some continued use of the term beyond the

³⁵⁴ Account page, @ReverendWarnock, X, accessed June 3, 2024, <https://x.com/ReverendWarnock>.

³⁵⁵ Account page, @amandascgorman, Instagram, accessed June 3, 2024, <https://www.instagram.com/amandascgorman/?hl=en>.

³⁵⁶ Leach et al., “Protest now,” 1.

initial launch period in early 2021. *Hamilton* has continued to be seen as working towards the fulfilment of its ‘progress’ in some way.

Concluding thoughts

This chapter has covered a lot of material in its examination of *Hamilton* amidst 2020’s Black Lives Matter movement. It posed two key questions: Firstly, how did the public come to turn on its favourite hip-hop version of history at this moment? And secondly, viewing 2020 as a particular historical and political moment through the lens of *Hamilton*, how were ideas about the past understood, articulated, and transformed through a point of public crisis?

In response, the chapter set up Black Lives Matter as a vital context for the sorts of activist work that *Hamilton* had also ostensibly sought to undertake since 2015. It traced comparable political and historical geneeses, types of history-making work being tackled, and transmedial, performative ways of making ‘work’ present and active. This made 2020’s wave of Black Lives Matter protests an even more significant moment for the re-examination of *Hamilton*’s cultural presence and ambition. In order to do so, the chapter traced *Hamilton*’s apparent responses to Black Lives Matter – both in absence and in action across the immediate, short, and long-terms. This is despite such responses being potentially disproportionate to the ‘threat’ that anti-*Hamilton* protest actually posed according to the HamITweet data. Rather than emphasising the scale of the cancel-culture crisis facing *Hamilton*, HamITweet demonstrated the show’s cultural relevance and validated the sense in which it can be seen as a historical and political actant, while also highlighting the destabilising effect that digital media can have upon the ways in which ‘history’ gets circulated. Consideration of Ham4Progress highlighted a number of remaining tensions within *Hamilton* as an agent for change: while reinforcing the enterprise’s historical and political claims, it also invited further reflection upon the ways in which *Hamilton* and its message might have been used by other cultural and political agents. The show’s mythos survived intact, but open to further questioning.

In response to the first question, by making visible the show’s colour-conscious casting in an era where other American articulations of protest, social justice, and ‘making history’ were being widely debated, visualised, and enacted, the Disney+ film release proved a radical turning point in *Hamilton*’s cultural presence. Vehicles which had, just five years before, excelled *Hamilton* in terms of marketability and artistic innovation – colour-conscious casting, social media virality, an effective re-writing of America’s history towards a different vision – were no longer dependable

indicators of a successful performance. While members of the public brought new forms of progressive-left thinking to the show amidst the BLM protests, what emerged was not necessarily a demand to go further, but a fear that *Hamilton* might be cancelled altogether. This was ironic – such limited publics were arguably processing *Hamilton* in ways not dissimilar to Eliza’s call in the show or in EduHam; reframing *Hamilton* as a piece of historical work of its own era, putting this into conversation with the contemporary context, and calling for better. But while *Hamilton* revises what American identity might look and live like, *HHIEOY* and *Ham4Progress* portray *Hamilton* not as a story to be consigned to re-writing. *Hamilton* is a cultural product which can, and should, be productively historicised from the enterprise’s own perspective as well as by other people. As much as this might serve agendas of bigger cultural and political agents, in this, *Hamilton* might also be framed as a fundamental articulation of the sorts of processes through which the nation’s democratic politics must progress. This not only reinforces a sense of legitimacy to *Hamilton*’s mythos, but pushes it further: *Hamilton*’s cultural, political, and deeply historical relevance is a self-perpetuating one which seeks not only to have agency beyond itself, but in the events to come – subject to historicism, but not to new ways of revisionism. *Hamilton* becomes not so much a call to return to the actual Obama era of American politics, but a vestige of the perceived wins and losses of that era – and a dream to create a better version of it that befits the evolving states of play as they come.

Towards the second question, in understanding social media and protest cultures performatively and conceptualising 2020’s public sphere as fundamentally transmedial, discussion has demonstrated the complexity of how the past is mobilised within contemporary crisis points. Ever adding more *Hamilton*-ian tensions to the thesis, what we are pointed towards is the instability and unpredictability of the environment in which depictions and understandings of history seem to find themselves. Movements like #BlackLivesMatter might embody the same inherited trauma that *Hamilton* supposedly seeks and sought to combat, and both might make use of overlapping repertoires of resistance to draw historical understandings into future-focussed conversations. Yet, the outputs of these endeavours towards achieving social and political change can feel fleeting: From the perspective of 2026, #BLM itself now feels consigned to the public digital sphere’s memory. Protest movements, however supposedly significant and culturally unavoidable, are transient, and the criticism of *Hamilton* that #BLM inspired barely succeeded in bringing marginalised critique into the mainstream. Furthermore, however certain the ongoing difficulties of the past, uncertainties remain in how these come to be handled. The significance of Disney’s marketable, multi-modal response in *Hamilton*’s cultural survival is but one example. On the one hand, the show’s transmedial presence and defence mechanisms may

have re-routed public attention towards wider simultaneous praise of the show's work; on the other, it could be that the show's nature as a piece of Broadway theatre ultimately lends *Hamilton* a different type of authority given its insistence upon the performative mode. This is a theme which will be developed in Chapter Five, as the study surveys the ways in which the show - its representation of the past and endeavours to re-author it - have been adopted into a new normal within America's cultural and political canon. The significance of this remark for Chapter Two and Three's revelations of *Hamilton* as inspiring history to be done by anyone should not go un-noticed.

What we therefore don't find at the end of the chapter are simple answers to either of its key questions. What we do witness is one way in which 'virality' in a transmedial age might facilitate rapid networks of public conversation which encourage widespread re-visiting of narratives about the past. Transmedial networking facilitates a particular type of *public* history: one in which each user, consumer, or protestor truly plays their own parts in forming and constituting a historically-minded moment, while ultimately also allowing it to fade. Yet, the relative unpredictability of the digital sphere, so created by the various authorities whose contributions constitute it - whether anonymous hashtag-ers, impassioned celebrities, tech corporations, cultural giants like Disney, or hidden algorithmic biases (see 'Introduction') - means that all likewise remains subject to this very created nature. This is not to say that such profound issues as historically-rooted national identity or continued legacies of racism are any less significant in their 'trending' nature. Rather, it is an acknowledgement that these seem to be the ways in which such issues of import are tackled. In a world obsessed with political, technological, cultural 'progress', it is the re-performance of, or involving, the past towards which participants still turn in protest, whether on-stage, on-screen, or across both. In spite of the criticisms that might be levelled towards it, this almost reifies, rather than diminishes, *Hamilton*'s 'mythos' as a historically-conscious performance of the past. *Hamilton*'s efforts to see itself as being not only part of "the room where it happens" but as able to actively bring others into the conversation are again reinforced. Enabling such a sense of confidence is not only the show's commercial viability and political connections, but its nature as a theatrical performance and the ability for 'performance' to hold the complexity urged into it.

Chapter Five

“America now”?: Thinking again about *Hamilton*’s HamilFam

Introduction

The mass-exodus from Twitter-come-X in 2022 not only transformed what had become the ‘normal’ contemporary public sphere but put into relief the increasingly political dimensions of social media engagement and what it meant to ‘perform’ online. Between 2022 and 2025, Elon Musk went from wealthy tech magnate to purchasing one of the world’s most powerful public discourse platforms. As Trump entered his second era, Musk found himself temporarily the President’s new “right hand man” to claims of “shadow ruler[ship]” from critics.³⁵⁷ All the while, Meta-owned Instagram continued to soar to heights rivalled only by its Chinese counterpart TikTok, as international allegations of East-West espionage flowed into a digital sphere already swarming with accusations of misinformation, conspiracy, and a perceived rise in the politically far-right. An interplay of technology and politics might have been central to *Hamilton*’s journey since the noughties, but as Obama’s – or, *Hamilton*’s - America was buried ever deeper, the post-2020 period has brought new power dynamics for the show’s articulation of, and mission for, “America now.”

Much of this study’s exploration of *Hamilton* and its history has been with reference to specific facets of the transmedial franchise, from origins and on-stage storytelling, to education work and political engagement. An under-appreciated point of tension has been the interplay of competing voices with different degrees of influence over the ways in which ideas about the past have been applied or understood. For example in Chapter One, 2009 saw digital engagement with *Hamilton* from both the Obama’s White House and a budding Lin-Manuel as social media was just getting off the ground and access to the show remained limited. Chapter Two traced how performance was re-mediated not only to the Disney+ film, but into the GIFs that could be scattered indeterminably across different digital spaces by web users with scarcely a trace. In Chapter Three, buzz around #EduHam and *Hamilton*’s educational outlook was seen as coming from school children, *Hamilton*, and external bodies such as the Gilder-Lehrmann Institute, played out across Web 1.0-3.0 technologies. Amidst the #BlackLivesMatter movement in Chapter Four, #CancelHamilton was promoted by faceless social media users and sympathetic reporters while

³⁵⁷ Ronan Farrow, “Elon Musk’s Shadow Rule: How the U.S. government came to rely on the tech billionaire – and is now struggling to rein him in,” *The New Yorker*, August 21, 2023, accessed March 15, 2025, <https://resources.newhouse.syr.edu/awards/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2024/02/Elon-Musks-Shadow-Rule-The-New-Yorker.pdf>.

the show's mythos was advanced by 'official' voices such as ABC, Disney, the *Hamilton* cast, and supportive newspapers. Throughout have been the #HamilFam, the show's self-identifying fan-following who have arguably underpinned and facilitated much of *Hamilton*'s commercial and cultural success. But in a moment where most of the headline *Hamil*-buzz seems to have died down, what might popular engagement with the critically-conscious show post-2020 tell us about "America now"?

It's an important question to ask of the digital sphere given what *Hamilton* did – or did not – do during the years 2021-2024. As pandemic conditions faded, the show pushed its national and international reach via touring companies and by all accounts the period was one of box office success. North America has seen four touring companies. The 'And Peggy,' 'Angelica,' and 'Phillip' companies resumed post-lockdown: 'And Peggy' finished in Toronto in 2023, 'Phillip' toured until 2025, and the 'Angelica' company is still touring as of 2026. The 'Eliza' company also ran in Los Angeles between 2021 and 2022, having had its initial 2020 launch delayed by the pandemic. Beyond the U.S., the show toured Australia in 2021 and 2024, with Miranda as a guest on Australian ABC TV in 2023.³⁵⁸ In the UK, the West End company re-opened in Summer 2021. A UK and Ireland tour of the "revolutionary musical" launched in 2023, saw an "audience brawl" make the news during its Manchester residence, and finished in 2025.³⁵⁹ A concurrent International Tour covered cities from Auckland and Manila to Abu Dhabi and Singapore between 2023 and 2024. The Manila performance received "the revolution" with a "warm welcome," with one outlet reporting that "the screams of the entire country" could be heard when the tour stop was announced. In spite of the difference in political and cultural context, press here gave space for the show's nuanced presentation of past and present as well as the broad appeal for "music

³⁵⁸ Alannah Sue and Saffron Swire, "It's official: the smash hit musical Hamilton is coming back to Australia," *Timeout*, October 26, 2023, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://www.timeout.com/melbourne/news/its-official-the-smash-hit-musical-hamilton-is-coming-back-to-australia-102623>; Georgia Hitch, "Hamilton creator Lin-Manuel Miranda on the best advice from mentor Stephen Sondheim and the thrill of writing for Disney," *ABC*, November 30, 2023, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-11-14/lin-manuel-miranda-advice-mentor-stephen-sondheim/103043086>.

³⁵⁹ Daisy Jackson, "Hamilton at the Palace Theatre, Manchester – a revolutionary musical that will stay with you for a lifetime," *The Manc*, November 22, 2023, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://themanc.com/theatre/hamilton-palace-theatre-manchester-tickets-review/>; Katie Boyden, "Fight breaks out during Hamilton but cast acted in most professional way," *Metro*, November 27, 2023, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://metro.co.uk/2023/11/27/brawl-breaks-audience-performance-hamilton-19884712/>.

lovers.”³⁶⁰ Singaporean fans were even able to join a waitlist for the show’s visit to Marina Bay Sands, where one of the world’s most prestigious hotels became the scene for the ostensibly “young, scrappy, and hungry” immigrant narrative.³⁶¹ But by all accounts, comparably little digital conversation around *Hamilton* seemed to occur, aside from when one U.S. church went transatlantically viral on social media for illegally producing a version of the show.³⁶² Just as Hamilmania 1.0 appeared to settle down after 2015-16, so 2020’s Hamilmania 2.0 and its digital fervour following the Disney+ film also relaxed. The re-orientated emphasis upon the show’s original, live-performance mode is worthy of note in a world so supposedly obsessed with the digital. It would not be until 2025 that *Hamilton* achieved virtual ‘virality’ once more, as re-enactments of ‘Alexander Come Back To Sleep’ populated Instagram and TikTok around the show’s tenth anniversary. Though prompting Miranda and Soo to do their own version, the trend was ephemeral. The trend also didn’t associate closely with *Hamilton*’s supposedly critical historical work, with one *Forbes* commentator noting that “TikTok loves anything that tells a story in a split second and this trend does exactly that. You do not even need context to be entertained.”³⁶³ Thus, at least as far as social media – that digital plane which we have come to deem so crucial to understanding *Hamilton*’s public presence and opinion – is concerned, the longer-term value of *Hamilton*’s performance seemed to have switched from tweets to tickets.

Meanwhile, the 2020’s have otherwise come to represent a new era of ‘influence’ for public discourse, with physical and psychological affects which significantly alter the dynamics in

³⁶⁰ Total V de Jesus, “Darnell Abraham says ‘Hamilton’ is celebrating history for what it is,” *GMA*, September 21, 2023, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/artandculture/882872/darnell-abraham-says-hamilton-is-celebrating-history-for-what-it-is/story/>.

³⁶¹ Total V de Jesus, “‘Hamilton’ receives warm welcome from Filipino fans ahead of opening night,” *GMA*, November 20, 2023, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/artandculture/882724/hamilton-receives-warm-welcome-from-filipino-fans-ahead-of-opening-night/story/>; Mary Alavanza, “‘Hamilton’ Musical Set To Debut At Marina Bay Sands In April 2024: Don’t Throw Away Your Shot!,” *The Independent*, October 30, 2023, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://theindependent.sg/hamilton-in-april-2024-dont-throw-away-your-shot/>.

³⁶² Bernd Debusmann Jr, “Hamilton: US church apologises for modified rendition of hit musical,” *BBC*, August 24, 2022, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-62663310>; Cassandra Garcia, “McAllen church accused of copyright violations following unauthorized production of ‘Hamilton’,” *KRGV*, August 11, 2022, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://www.krgv.com/news/mcallen-church-accused-of-copyright-violations-following-unauthorized-production-of-hamilton-/>.

³⁶³ Leslie Katz, “TikTok ‘Hamilton’ Trend Has Women Squeezing Out Of Windows And Dog Doors,” *Forbes*, August 13 2025, accessed February 2, 2025, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lesliekatz/2025/08/13/tiktok-hamilton-trend-has-women-squeezing-out-of-windows-and-dog-doors/>; Entertainment Tonight, “Lin-Manuel Miranda Can’t Ge Enough of the Hamilton TikTok Trend,” *YouTube*, September 6, 2025, accessed February 28, 2026, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJUO80y_hm8&t=5s.

which public understandings of the past are authored. Now openly accepted as being architecturally addictive “by design” to “keep the users’ attention,” the physical and psychological act of scrolling through social media has become an “everyday phenomenon” which consumes an *average* 2.5 hours of a persons’ day.³⁶⁴ This physical habit is made more potent by the material being surveyed. It is true that digital technologies and the media populating them have long had capacity to foster deep “emotional attachment,” and this has been alluded to at other points throughout the thesis.³⁶⁵ ‘Parasocial interaction’ theory was coined in 1956 to describe the unreciprocated relationship between television viewers and the media personae they saw on-screen. With so much of each day being taken up by scrolling alone upon a phone stuck to the palm of one’s hand, such technological interactions no longer represent “intimacy at a distance” with an essentially imagined “peer group” of on-screen performers consigned to a timetabled schedule of pixelated presentation.³⁶⁶ Nor are these interactions still dominated by the fan-following of celebrity individuals known outside of that particular digital space, as was more the case in the 2010s when Lin-Manuel Miranda first acted as a “traditional celebrit[y]” associated with a wider pop culture.³⁶⁷ With algorithms in one hand, the influencing industry has “grow[n] exponentially” and now comes with “lucrative full-time career” potential.³⁶⁸ Rather than only looking to the digital presence of political, technical, or cultural elites, ‘influencers’ have become the “trusted tastemakers” as “microcelebrities” who,

³⁶⁴ HK Bhargava, “Infinite Scroll: Addiction by Design in Information Platform,” *School of Management, University of California* (2023), accessed March 17, 2025, https://www.teisworkshop.org/papers/2023/Digital_Addiction_and_Advertising.pdf; Vemund Holmeset, *Addictive UI: The art of Keeping the users attention*, thesis, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (2023); Simon Kemp, “The time we spend on social media,” *Datareportal*, January 31, 2024, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-deep-dive-the-time-we-spend-on-social-media>; Jakub Marek, “The impatient gaze: on the phenomenon of scrolling in the age of boredom,” *Semiotica* 2023, no. 254 (2023): 107-135.

³⁶⁵ Silvia Sanz-Blas, Daniela Buzova and María José Miquel-Romero, “From Instagram overuse to instastress and emotional fatigue the mediation of addiction,” *Spanish Journal of Marketing* 23, no.2 (2019): 143-161; S. Hudson, M.S. Roth, T.J Madden and R. Hudson, “The effects of social media on emotions, brand relationship quality, and word of mouth: an empirical study of music festival attendees,” *Tourism Management*, 47 no. C (2015): 68-76.

³⁶⁶ D. Horton and R. R. Wohl, “Mass communication and para-social interaction; observations on intimacy at a distance,” *Psychiatry* 19, no.3 (1956): 215-229; Mark R. Levy, “Watching TV news as para-social interaction,” *Journal of Broadcasting* 23, no.1 (1979): 69.

³⁶⁷ S. Venus Jin, Aziz Muqaddam and Ehri Ryu, “Instafamous and social media influencer marketing,” *Marketing Intelligence & Planning* 37, no. 5 (2019): 567.

³⁶⁸ Yatish Joshi, Weng Mac Lim, Khati Jagani and Satish Kumar, “Social media influencer marketing: foundations, trends and ways forward,” *Electronic Commerce Research* (2023), accessed March 17, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10660-023-09719-z>; Demetris Vrontis, Anna Makrides, Michael Christofi and Alkis Thrassou, “Social media influencer marketing : A systematic review, integrative framework and future research agenda,” *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 45, no.4 (2021): 617-644.

as explored by Crystal Abidin, shape public opinion through the conscientious calibration of persona on social media. That is to say, while ‘big’ politics has seen the dominance of particular parties and players, ‘influencers’ have proved an alternative way of influencing public discourse by the adoption of particular performance styles which are personally curated to targeted audiences.³⁶⁹ Miranda might have made *Hamilton*, but in the summer of 2025, he seemed to be the one responding to the public re-creators of it.

The apparent randomness by which ‘trends’ come and go is interesting given the wider changes in how celebrity has come to be perceived online. One 2019 study demonstrated the efficacy of the ‘instafamous,’ noting that the activities of Instagram celebrities were deemed “more trustworthy” and “more positive,” with a “stronger social presence” when compared with posts by “traditional celebrities.”³⁷⁰ This is not therefore about seeing ‘influencing’ as being strictly discursive around set political goals (e.g. Obama’s early mobilisation of the digital, see Chapter One), but recognising individuals whose ‘relatability’ and apparent sense of belonging to both the ‘everyday’ and the ‘exceptional’ makes them particularly attractive to scrolling publics searching for meaningful connection and discourse. Rather than an offline reputation and performance of ‘celebrity’ that underlies and authenticates the online, public perceptions of authority have come to centre ‘virtual visibility’. While some personal accounts find themselves ‘accidentally’ going viral, non-‘verified’ or low-follower accounts also readily take up ‘trending’ topics and formats started by those who are deemed ‘influencers’, creating a cacophony of ‘publics’ orchestrating infinite narratives and experiences which break the digital-analogue divide and, potentially, sit discordantly with one another. It is true that the underpinning commercialisation or Silicon Valley values of public discourse (see ‘Introduction’) might have long ‘tainted’ any sincerity within digital content, and certainly, *Hamilton*’s ‘back to bed’ trend in 2025 seemed critically shallow. Yet this environment might not always be entirely to the detriment of public understandings of the past: #BLM (Chapter Four) relied on an emerging sense of this sort of context to gain momentum in 2020 and there never seem to have been so many ‘history influencers’ gaining prominence and undertaking careful, critical work.

Where does this leave *Hamilton*, a show famed for its digital presence, close connection with American politics, and “revolutionary” Founding Father histories? Altogether, *Hamilton* seems

³⁶⁹ K. Freberg, K Graham, K McGaughey and L.A. Freberg, “Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality,” *Public Relations Review* 27 (2011): 90-92; C. Abidin, “Visibility labour: Engaging with Influencers’ fashion brands and #OOTD advertorial campaigns on Instagram,” *Media International Australia* 161, no.1 (2016): 86-100.

³⁷⁰ S. Venus Jin et al., “Instafamous and social media influencer marketing,” 567.

to have found itself at a new contextual crossroads. The *Hamil*-sphere of 2026 has been effectively co-created by at least 17 years of digital action and interaction since Miranda's first Twitter ramblings. Yet, at a time when digital discourse has never seemed more complex nor more politically entwined, *Hamilton* has turned its historical and political efforts toward the physical stage. If it wasn't for the physical tours, it would be easy to assume that "America now" is simply no longer interested in *Hamilton*. But as this chapter will reveal, the answer is a little more complicated.

With a particular focus upon authorship and influence around *Hamilton*-ian narratives across different digital spaces, Chapter Five uses the show's continued popular ('public') presence to re-assess the show's political performativity and sense of historical work. Understanding the post-2020 era as re-contextualising the 'mythos' of *Hamilton*'s work and legacy yet again, the chapter has one key objective: to probe what this perspective brings to our understanding of *Hamilton* as a Broadway product, a cultural product, and as an already-historicised product. This enquiry comes to be subdivided as the chapter considers both how *Hamilton*'s mythos has been challenged and what this means for how we might understand *Hamilton*'s utility as public historians. In pursuit of such questions, the chapter offers two main sections of analysis looking respectively at the platforms of Twitter/X and Instagram.

Each section starts with painting the respective platform's status in the post-BLM years. These draw out some of the complexities of the ever-changing transmedial sphere and highlighting the fresh muddlings of technology, truth, and politicality that have continued to unfold before *Hamilton*'s mythos. The first section turns to HamilTweet against the backdrop of this chapter's opening paragraph and the big politics that has come to dominate what was once *Hamilton*'s favoured digital stage. Analysis of the three remaining hashtags (#HamilFilm, #HamilTour, #HamilFan) along with a surprising revisit to #Ham4Ham from the perspective of 2024 facilitates broad reflection upon the show's assumed publics and communities. Drawing out what remained of the show's previously thriving hashtag-culture post-2020 reinforces the need to trace *Hamilton*'s ongoing journey across other digital spaces. Moving to Instagram, the second section examines the social media feed of mid-level *Hamilton* influencer John Deveraux, an actor on the U.S. *Hamilton* tour circuit whose personal online following grew rapidly after he joined the show in 2021. Though modest in scope, the section nonetheless proves crucial to the study as it comes to a close. Firstly, it gives some insight into how *Hamilton* and its ideas of past and present have both enabled, and are themselves developed by, individualised parasocial engagement within the current transmedial sphere. Secondly, Deveraux brings the potentially disparate elements of the *Hamil*-sphere around one individual 'influencer', thereby reinforcing the

enterprise's transmediality in a way which almost echoes Miranda's personal following in the show's early days. What emerges is a multi-faceted cultural product with a mythos curiously resistant to adversity, ever ready to show the relevance of its past to the twenty-first century.

HamilTweet in Era 'X'

The New Twitter

In what one commentator labelled “the most controversial corporate takeover in history,” Musk's 2022 acquisition of Twitter to “create a digital public square where a wide range of beliefs can be debated in a healthy manner” came at a time of increased fear around digital disinformation and public concerns around censorship.³⁷¹ Regardless of the validity of such fears, they characterised the popular distrust of the technological moment: TikTok came under fire for allegations of Chinese espionage; GitHub users encouraged one another to leave after the purchase of the platform by Microsoft; Reddit users protested increased administrative policies. The performance of ‘power’ had a new form which sat uncomfortably and inseparably as part of the digital sphere's integration within society – at once immaterial and remote, yet physically threatening with perceived concerns about liberties, rights, and privacy. Unlike Chapter Four's #BlackLivesMatter which involved intrinsically embodied dimensions around difficult histories, physical protest, and police brutality, this power play didn't *have* to involve anything offline other than the hands, eyes, and minds of the public. Although critiques of Silicon Valley's values (see ‘Introduction’) might have branded Dempsey and William's ‘free’ public sphere an illusion from the start, by 2022 public opinion was widely claiming to see through the smokescreen.³⁷²

The platform which once, to some degree, facilitated en-masse public conversation and supported ‘trending’, left-leaning issues such as #Ham4Ham or #BlackLivesMatter seemed to be no more. The adoption of a black and white ‘X’ logo in 2023 in lieu of the blue bird was branded as an attempt to “forge an entirely new and unique identity in the eyes of its users,” a move which

³⁷¹ Ben Mezrich, *Breaking Twitter: Elon Musk and the Most Controversial Corporate Takeover in History* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2023); Jana Katsuyama, “Elon Musk Takes over Twitter, Saying It Will Be ‘Digital Town Square’ Not a ‘Free-for-All.’” *KTVU Fox 2*. 2022. <https://www.ktvu.com/news/elon-musk-takes-over-twitter-saying-it-will-be-digitaltown-square-not-a-free-for-all>, cited in Deana A. Rohlinger, Kyle Rose, Sarah Warren, and Stuart Shulman, “Does the Musk Twitter Takeover Matter? Political Influencers, Their Arguments, and the Quality of Information They Share,” *Socius: Sociological Research for a Dynamic World* 9 (2023): 1-15.

³⁷² See Jodi Dean, “Why the Net is not a Public Sphere,” *Constellations* 10, no.1 (2003): 95-112.

seems to have been recognised and acted upon.³⁷³ Some data suggests that Democratic politicians began to withdraw their support for the platform as soon as Musk placed his first offer in 2022 because of perceived antithetical political associations. If true, by the time a successful bid was made, this would have added to the amplification of the political right by the platform's algorithms.³⁷⁴

Within a day of the takeover, one popular news outlet claimed that Musk was “turning Twitter into a haven for nazis.” “Since Elon Musk made Twitter free speech haven, I’ll say this: FUCK NS,” one account tweeted. “Fuck ns and fuck the jews” shared another, alongside a picture of far-right symbol Pepe the Frog.³⁷⁵ With Musk self-describing as a “free speech absolutist,” one [Biden-led] government-sponsored report from the Center for Countering Digital Hate described the rise in hate speech as “unprecedented,” with more than a 3x increase in slurs against Black Americans after the takeover.³⁷⁶ Musk denied the claims outright and later threatened the group with a lawsuit.³⁷⁷ Though some of this content was later removed by the in-house moderation, such would soon no longer be the case. Supporting an alternative perception of ‘free speech’, Twitter/X’s content moderation was removed and banned accounts (including that of Donald Trump) were reinstated. While some branded pre-existing concerns around disinformation as exaggerated, others understood Trump’s return as a particular ‘breaking point’.³⁷⁸ With a

³⁷³ Muhammad Redzi Nurfadillah Muckseni and Rendra Widyatama, “The difference in public perception of the brand name Twitter in the old version and the new version,” *Symposium of Literature, Culture and Communication (SYLECTION)* 3, no.1 (2024): 466-474.

³⁷⁴ Veli Safak and Anish Sridhar, “Elon Musk’s Twitter Takeover: Politician Accounts,” *Cornell University* (2022), accessed March 15, 2025, <https://arxiv.org/abs/2205.08491>; Ferenc Huszára, Sofia Ira Ktenaa, Conor O’Brien, Luca Bellia, Andrew Schlaikjera and Moritz Hardt, “Algorithmic amplification of politics on Twitter,” *PNAS* 119, no.1 (2022): 1-6.

³⁷⁵ David Gilbert, “Neo-Nazis, Antisemites, and the N-Word: Twitter Just Hours Under Elon Musk,” *VICE*, October 28, 2022, accessed March 15, 2025, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/elon-musk-twitter-neo-nazis/>.

³⁷⁶ Sheera Frenkel and Kate Conger, “Hate Speech’s Rise on Twitter is Unprecedented,” *The New York Times*, December 2, 2022, accessed March 15, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/technology/twitter-hate-speech.html>.

³⁷⁷ David Klepper, “Musk threatens to sue researchers documenting the rise in hateful tweets,” *PBS*, July 31, 2023, accessed March 2025, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/musk-threatens-to-sue-researchers-documenting-the-rise-in-hateful-tweets>; Mike Wendling, “Twitter and hate speech: What’s the evidence?,” *BBC*, April 13, 2023, accessed March 15, 2025, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-65246394>.

³⁷⁸ See Paul Levinson, “The Explosive Growth of Social Media: Trump, COVID-19 The Russian Invasion of Ukraine and Elon Musk,” *Studia Humanistyczne AGH* no.2 (2021-22): 9-15; Jorge Rodríguez-Ruiz, Javier Israel Mata-Sánchez, Raúl Monroy, Octavio Loyola-González, Armando López-Cuevas, “A one-class classification approach for bot detection on Twitter”, *Computers & Security*, 91 (2020), accessed March 15, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cose.2020.101715>.

“substantive increase in post engagement” by “potentially contentious accounts,” “hate speech” and “white supremacy” had potentially been left to flourish.³⁷⁹ This was not Dempsey or Williams’ Twitter of 2006 and nor was it *Hamilton*’s Twitter of the 2010s or even 2020.

The ways in which users’ activity circulated and was deemed ‘authentic’ also evolved. Rather than being ‘awarded’ a celebrity status by platform administration teams, users were now able to pay for ‘verified’ accounts. This disrupted what had become a recognised, albeit imperfect, system of signified ‘authenticity’ in a virtual world. One study suggests that those who had previously been given ‘verified’ status as ‘genuine’ celebrities and influencers were those “most responsive to Musk’s takeover.”³⁸⁰ Drawing from data on European politicians in 2023, Haman and Školník surmise Twitter/X as moving into an “unverified era,” where the ‘truth’ of discourse became impossible to ascertain.³⁸¹ It was a far cry from the left-dominated #BlackLivesMatter movement of just a few short years prior. Twitter had started with a vision of an open stage, a site for “transparency,” and “short burst[s] of inconsequential information”: with a re-defining of such terms, the platform was, as phrased by Ben Mezrich, “broken.”³⁸² Discussion of Twitter/X went beyond debates of genuine or non-genuine performance as in Chapter Four: One 2025 report surmised that that X was populated by “substantial hate and no reduction in inauthentic activity,” while a *Rolling Stone* article summarised X as a “social network built on lies” – no mere performative illusion, but grounded in legitimate evil.³⁸³ Diggs had pleaded in *HHIEOY* for publics

³⁷⁹ Christopher Barrie, “Did the Musk Takeover Boost Contentious Actors on Twitter,” *Harvard Kennedy School Misinformation Review* 4, no. 4 (2023), accessed March 15, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.37016/mr-2020-122>; Ramón Salaverría, María-Pilar Martínez-Costa & Clara González Tosat, “Decentralised Networks as a Tool for Fighting Disinformaton and Censorship: The Fediverse and Free, Collaborative and Open Networks,” *Journalism, Digital Media and the Fourth Industrial Revolution* (2024), accessed March 15, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-63153-5_2; Jessie Daniels, “Twitter and White Supremacy, A Love Story,” *Dame Magazine* October 19, 2017, accessed March 15, 2025, <https://www.damemagazine.com/2017/10/19/twitter-and-white-supremacy-love-story/>.

³⁸⁰ James Bisbee and Kevin Munger, “The Vibes are Off: Did Elon Musk Push Academics Off Twitter?,” *PS: Political Science & Politics* 58, 1 (2025): 139-146.

³⁸¹ Michael Haman and Milan Školník, “The Unverified Era: Politicians’ Twitter Verification Post-Musk Acquisition,” *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 22, no.2 (2023): 167-71.

³⁸² David Sarno, “Twitter creator Jack Dorsey illuminates the site’s founding document. Part I,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 18, 2009, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/blogs/technology-blog/story/2009-02-18/twitter-creator-jack-dorsey-illuminates-the-sites-founding-document-part-i>; Mezrich, *Breaking Twitter*.

³⁸³ Miles Klee, “How Elon Musk and X Became the Biggest Purveyors of Online Misinformation,” *Rolling Stone*, August 9, 2024, accessed March 15, 2025, <https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-features/elon-musk-twitter-misinformation-timeline-1235076786/>.

to “open the iris,” but if such reports are to be taken at face value, the eyes of X might have closed.³⁸⁴

***Hamilton* – lost on X?**

With alternative perceptions of performativity and authenticity, the Twitter/X stage no longer felt so set for *Hamilton* and its versions of “America then” and “America now.” Perhaps one could even see the show’s alternative emphasis upon physical touring and analogue engagement in light of this social media space becoming less ideologically hospitable. The HamilTweet data on the coming pages, though, only partially aligns with such an outlook.

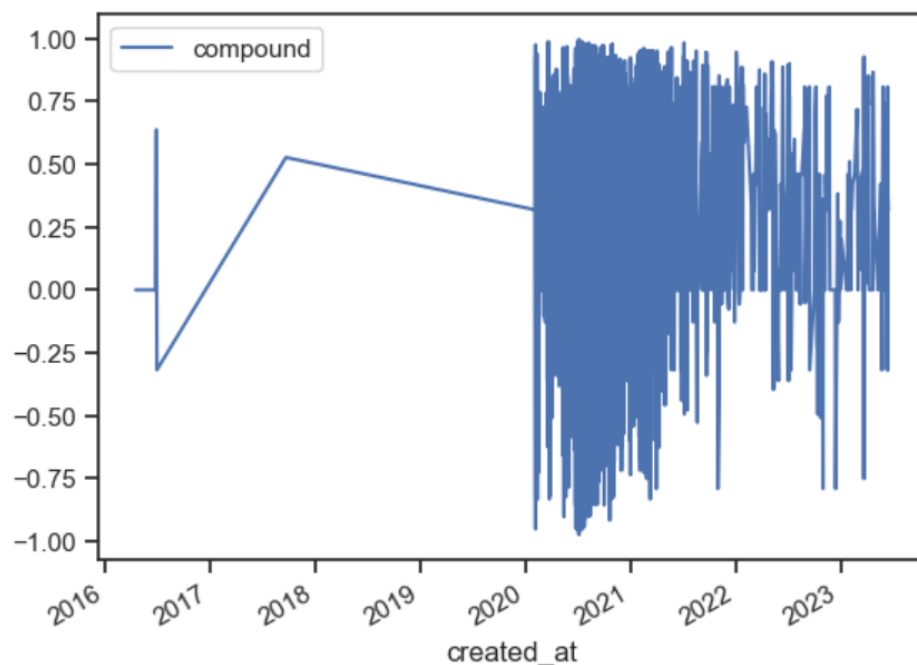


Figure 52: #HamilFilm - average sentiment score over time

³⁸⁴ Brahmani Nutakki, Rosa M. Navarrete, Giuseppe Carteny and Ingmar Weber, “Is there anything Left?: A Global Analysis on Changes in Engagement with Political Content on Twitter in the Musk Era,” *Journal of Quantitative Description: Digital Media* 5 (2025), accessed March 15, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.51685/jqd.2025.004>; Daniel Hickey, Daniel M. T. Fessler, Kristina Lerman, Keith Burghard, “X under Musk’s leadership: Substantial hate and no reduction in inauthentic activity,” *PLOS One* (2025) accessed March 15, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0313293>.

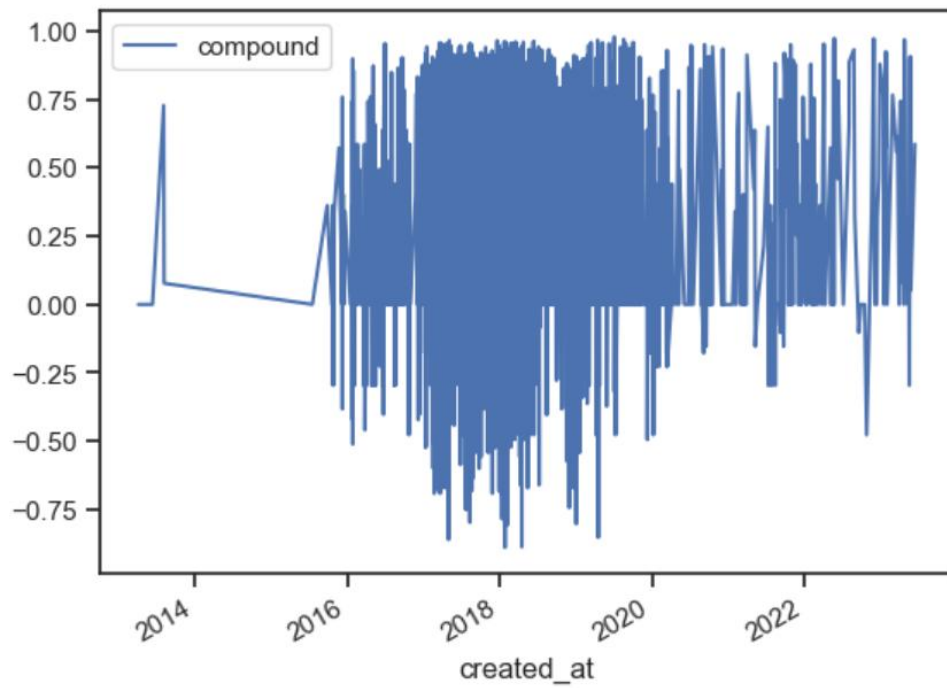


Figure 53: #HamilTour - average sentiment score over time

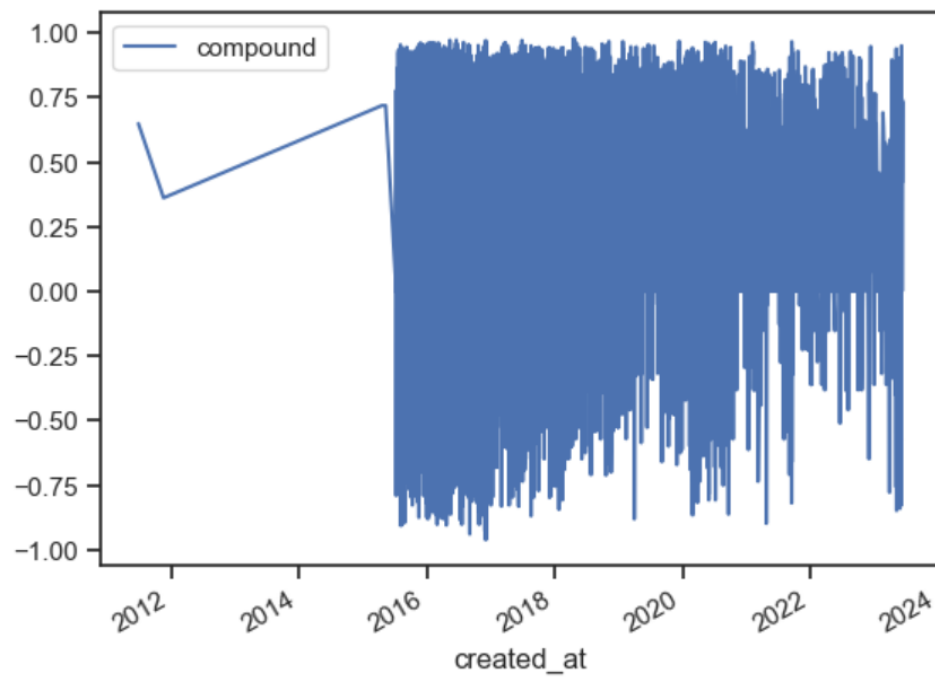


Figure 54: #Ham4Ham - average sentiment score over time

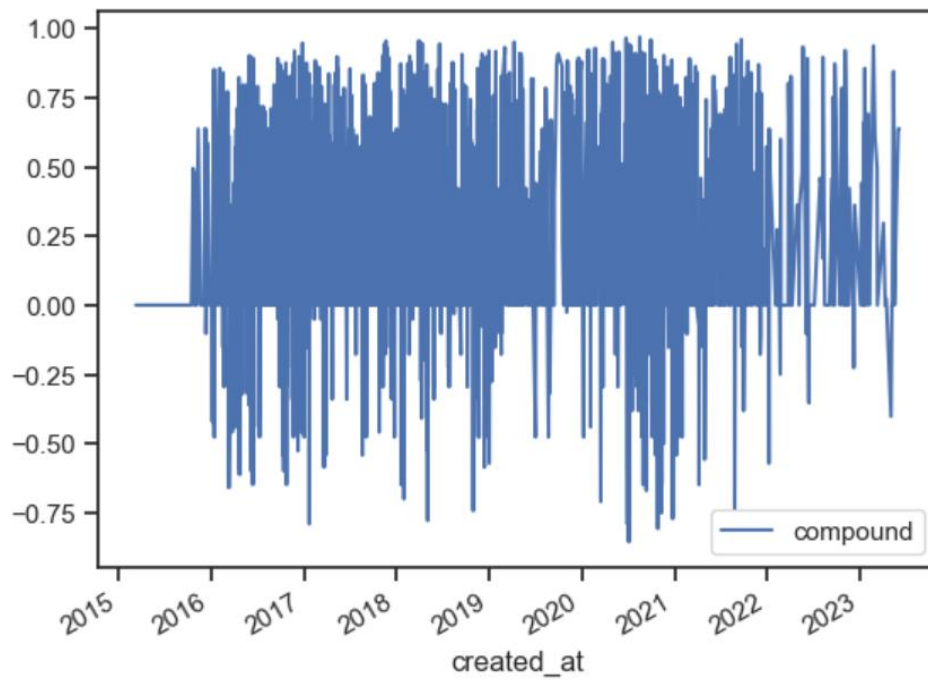


Figure 55: #Hamilfan - average sentiment score over time

In some ways, the above figures do follow the trends one might expect for a digital space with values now so antithetical to those supposedly underpinning *Hamilton*'s mythos. All the hashtags seem to have been used less frequently in the later years and distinct drop-offs in engagement around 2022 across #HamilFilm, #Ham4Ham, and #Hamilfan (Figures 52, 54, and 55) seem affirm to the new-found political affiliations of the Twitter/X platform. This would also reinforce the sense in which *Hamilton*'s mythos is rooted in a left-leaning cultural and political entity in spite of early cross-party appreciation (Chapter One), recent global success, and the ultimately modest attempt to #CancelHamilton coming largely from the political left in 2020 (Chapter Four). This is itself interesting as a way to position the show's work and broader historical presence: despite rhetoric of inclusion, historical narratives might become part of the basis for exclusion from circulation and discussion – even if they come from what is supposedly 'only' a Broadway show. To some extent, the hashtags also mirror the ways in which the show had been most popularly accessed: Use of #HamilFilm (Figure 52) seems to match a pattern of viral exposure amidst 2020's Hamilmania 2.0 before slowly trailing off, and #HamilTour conforms strongly to pre-2020 expectations with a boom in conversation around 2018 just as the *Hamilton* touring companies began to be established and before the Disney+ film was released.

What seems more remarkable, then, is the continuation of *Hamilton*'s presence on Twitter/X at all past 2022. #Ham4Ham was assessed in some detail in Chapter One, so it's appearance at this point in Chapter Five may seem odd. Yet, Figure 54's marked up-tick in both positive and

negative conversation in late-2023 after a steady decline is a specific outlier to the show's Twitter/X presence post-2022. While it is true that *Hamilton* has retained an active official presence on X even into 2026, this burst of conversation suggests more than isolated marketing Tweets into the X-ether. There may have been comparably fewer posts with users identifying as #Hamilfan's at this period (Figure 55), but there was still a community eager to engage with *Hamilton*'s cultural presence – both positively and negatively - despite the new political and technological climate. Although more modest in frequency, #HamilFilm (Figure 53) also retained some attention despite both the tour emphasis, relative lack of novelty, and the potential associations between it and the #CancelHamilton moment a few years prior. In a nod to previous chapters of the thesis, there was evidently still something to be said for *Hamilton*'s ability to make any room the 'room where it [still] happens'. Such is made all the more unexpected given the lack of engagement about the *physical* rooms where *Hamilton* was happening: while *Hamilton*'s touring operations picked up after the pandemic conditions subsided, the use of #HamilTour did not, being consistently sparse after 2020 (Figure 53).

It is difficult data to fully explain. Although one could blame the release of the Disney+ film, conversation on this was diminishing too. #HamilTour had been used from the start to refer to either *Hamilton* touring activities in general or specifically within the U.S. The chart, therefore, suggests that *Hamilton*'s own original audience – those whose history is used, and who are ostensibly given the leading role in re-creating the future of their nation as active participants beyond the auditorium – were no longer as interested in seeing the work in-person, or at least in talking about it on Twitter/X, after the platform's acquisition. It is possible that the proximity of the political associations between X, Musk, and the Trump administration are part of the cause, which would suggest that continued engagement with *Hamilton* across other hashtags X has largely come from either marketing or international publics for whom the politicisation feels less overt. Yet, international tours were generally given their own hashtags (#HamiltonSG – Singapore – or #HamiltonINTL – International), and such circumstances would not explain the upsurge in #Ham4Ham content in 2023. Furthermore, as far as can be determined through other digital sources, the tours over this period were popular in America: as the next section will reinforce through analysis of John Deveraux's work as a cast member on the U.S. tours, *Hamilton*'s performativity retained a sense of commanding presence and influence post-2020. While it's hard to justify how the show's X presence persevered, one thing seems clear: X wasn't the mythos' mainstage anymore.

Deveraux Deep-Dive

Instagram

Quickly snapped up by Zuckerberg-headed Meta in 2012, the Instagram platform is another major social media space led by a wealthy, white, American male deeply connected to Silicon Valley communities. Designed to facilitate “fast beautiful photo sharing,” the app was originally created by Stanford graduates Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger who had worked for Google and Meebo. The concept was simple - to tap into the iPhone’s new-found camera technologies and allow the public to share their photos with the world. As summarised by Hogan, “there were photo-editing apps and social sharing apps. At that time Facebook mobile wasn’t very good...and Twitter didn’t have a way to share photos meaningfully...They [Systrom and Krieger] hit the wave spot on.”³⁸⁵ After reaching 1 million users within “a couple of months,” Instagram hit 110 million users within its first year.³⁸⁶ The platform had half a billion users in 2016 and it’s first billion in 2018, with *TIME* magazine reporting that it’d be “hard to imagine a world without Instagram.”³⁸⁷ Over the next 3 years, another billion would be added. As of 2025, approximately 37% of the world’s internet users hold an account.³⁸⁸

The thesis has already given some consideration to how politics and protest have been performed on Instagram given Chapter Four’s discussion of #BlackLivesMatter in the Summer of 2020. The post-2020 period would provide further opportunities to prove the inconsistency of the platform’s politicality. Following #BlackLivesMatter the platform removed the ‘recent’ tab from hashtag pages, reportedly to “prevent misinformation from spreading” in the battle between Trump and Biden in the 2020 presidential election. Instagram presented themselves as neutral in the matter, rejecting any U.S-based political ads “indefinitely” “to avoid confusion and chaos stemming from potential misinformation and premature announcements.”³⁸⁹ With even the UK’s

³⁸⁵ Gareth Evans, “Instagram: The dog that launched a social media giant,” *BBC*, September 25, 2018, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-45640386>.

³⁸⁶ Kevin + The Instagram Team, “The Instagram Community – One Million and Counting,” *Instagram*, December 2010, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://web.archive.org/web/20111126012133/http://blog.instagram.com/post/8755444024/the-instagram-community-one-million-and-counting>.

³⁸⁷ Raisa Bruner, “Exclusive: Instagram hits 500 million users,” *TIME*, July 16, 2016, accessed March 17, 2025; <https://time.com/4375747/instagram-500-million-users/>.

³⁸⁸ Naveen Kumar, “How many people use Instagram 2025 [new data],” *DemandSage*, January 1, 2025, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://www.demandsage.com/instagram-statistics/>.

³⁸⁹ Shaley Carman, “Instagram nixes the ‘recent’ tab from hashtag pages ahead of election,” *The Verge*, October 20, 2020, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://www.theverge.com/2020/10/30/21541939/instagram-recent-hashtag-tab-election-2020>.

BBC claiming that “Trump primarily uses Facebook and Instagram for memes attacking Biden,” accounts held by “the ex-US president and convicted felon” Donald Trump were suspended after his praising of U.S Capitol stormers on 6th January 2021. Trump’s 2023 return to the platform on the run-up to the 2024 election came with “new guardrails to deter repeat offenses.”³⁹⁰ The accounts were then released from all monitoring in July 2024 shortly before he won a second term because “Americans should be able to hear from presidential nominees on an equal basis.”³⁹¹ Compounded by the knowledge of how X’s owner would soon spend time at Trump’s side, the rules of political performance and morality – and, crucially, how these were understood by the public in navigating the unfolding American identity – seemed to be made by tech magnates as much as by politicians. Where did this leave *Hamilton*, which used its history to make its own claim to active political action?

Social media has changed in more ways than just the political. The potential impact of Instagram’s aesthetic in “chang[ing] protesting” was touched on in the previous chapter’s attention to the visual power of images around #BlackoutTuesday.³⁹² Since then, Instagram has come to offer more than simple image sharing. Instagram launched ‘reels’ in August 2020, just as the #BLM protest surge began to fade. These short-form videos originally held the same 15-second length as TikTok videos. The videos can (but do not necessarily) follow ‘trending’ formats originating on the TikTok platform, potentially elevating (or maintaining) successful creators to influencer-status. Though the association with TikTok is denied by Instagram, it is nonetheless popularly held to be true: Reels were launched around the same time as Meta shut down its “heavily TikTok-inspired” video app ‘Lasso’ and reels’ launch in India coincided incidentally with the nation’s banning of TikTok, hinting at the perennial politicisation of these supposedly public, open-access platforms.³⁹³ The Instagram platform will nonetheless remain the focus of this

³⁹⁰ Tom McArthur, “Restrictions on Trump’s Facebook and Instagram lifted,” *BBC*, July 13, 2024, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4ngj2x5638o>; Nick Clegg, “Ending Suspension of Trump’s Accounts with New Guardrails to Deter Repeat Offenses,” *Meta*, January 25, 2023, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://about.fb.com/news/2023/01/trump-facebook-instagram-account-suspension/>.

³⁹¹ Tom McArthur, “Restrictions on Trump’s Facebook and Instagram lifted.”

³⁹² Erin Corbett, “The Aesthetics of Activism: How Instagram Changed Protesting,” *Refinery29*, May 25, 2021, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://www.refinery29.com/en-us/2021/05/10335757/instagram-activism-aesthetics-impact>.

³⁹³ Jon Porter, “Facebook’s TikTok clone Lasso will shut down this month,” *The Verge*, July 2, 2020, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://www.theverge.com/2020/7/2/21311077/facebook-lasso-shutting-down-tiktok-short-form-video-hobbi>; Jon Porter, “Instagram’s Reels feature reportedly expands to India following TikTok ban,” *The Verge*, July 6, 2020, accessed March 17, 2025, <https://www.theverge.com/2020/7/6/21314370/instagram-reels-india-tiktok-video-editing-15-seconds-brazil-france-germany-lasso>.

chapter over TikTok. This allows the discussion to build more closely upon Chapter Four and keeps it more aligned with U.S, rather than international, contexts.

In some ways, the fit between Broadway and reels is much more natural than Broadway and the text-based Twitter platform. Both rely on a sense of liveness through the capturing of embodied communication, and unlike the GIFs discussed in Chapter Two, reels can incorporate audio and a stronger sense of personalised performance. As will shortly be seen, catchy ‘trending’ audio from the *Hamilton* show can be an ideal accompaniment to ‘trending’ video formats, and the variety of available filters and effects allow users to physically adopt the costumes or settings of Broadway. In opening its digital stage to singing and dancing parts, Instagram fundamentally changed the experience of the platform: what had once been an endless gallery of fixed pictures became infinite portals into ‘live’ worlds of ‘real’ footage and performance snippets.³⁹⁴ Such new dimensions for the parasocial relationship created the perfect environment for the ‘influencer’.

By 2022, what this had all meant for *Hamilton*, though, was a fundamental shift in the sorts of voices and vehicles being used to navigate its cultural presence. If ‘all the worlds a stage’, the theatre for *Hamilton*’s mythos had been re-built. Not only had public perceptions of social media platforms like X – previously so important in constituting *Hamilton*’s popular presence and sense of ‘work’ – been altered by new ‘big’ politics, but text-based representation had given way to potential micro-musicals. With the concurrent rise of the influencer, the voices making use of *Hamilton*’s mythos had also changed. Analysis of John Deveraux’s Instagram reflects the significance of this new-found space for how *Hamilton*’s past and present have come to be performed, deployed, and received.

Introducing John

Deveraux’s identity as a relatively new influencer appears to rest more solidly, and solely, upon his connection with the *Hamilton* show. As a bridge between miscellaneous worldwide fans and *Hamilton* as a ‘big’ cultural product, his work on the show gives him a different level of intervention around the *Hamilton* enterprise to other agencies considered elsewhere in the thesis. Deveraux spent several years as a cast member in one of the three US-based touring *Hamilton* productions, working up from a role in the corps in Spring 2022, through to principal swing covering many of the major roles in the show by 2024. Deveraux’s following on Instagram

³⁹⁴ See for example: Khansa Chemand, Maryam Aziz, Samir Brahim Belhaouari and Raian Ali, “The interplay between social media use and problematic internet usage: Four behavioural patterns,” *Heliyon* 9 (2023): 1-9; Nitin Kumar, Indraja Sharma and Sanjay Gehlot, “Instagram Addiction: the Current Trends,” *International Journal Dental and Medical Sciences Research* 5, no.2 (2023): 879-882.

increased from just 17,000 followers in Spring 2022 to 57,000 as of Autumn 2024, and 119,000 as of Autumn 2025. Given this chapter's previous exploration of the 'demise' of Twitter and the attention paid by *Hamilton* to touring companies, the reader should note the timing of Deveraux's role as a new type of intermediary between stalls and stage. In order to align with the data that could be scoped for HamilTweet, the section will largely focus on John's content until 2024.

Deveraux's Instagram content typically includes short and catchy videos and personal photographic posts. In so doing, Deveraux's content engages with a variety of intersecting fan groups - fans of himself, Miranda, Broadway, and specifically the *Hamilton* show he is part of - as well as appealing to a 'general' scroll-seeking audience. As a connecting point between the often mysterious 'masses' and formally-recognised 'elites', Deveraux's position as a mid-level 'influencer' provides a crucial voice otherwise missing from this thesis which helps to see how different parties have come together around *Hamilton's America*.

Methodology

To get a sense of how *Hamilton* and its history have been mobilised as part of Deveraux's growing community, the study needed an Instagram equivalent of HamilTweet - to be able to work with both qualitative data (e.g. audiovisual, captioned text) and quantitative data (e.g. post metrics, elucidation of posting habits/trends) across the whole of Deveraux's publicly-available Instagram content as of Autumn 2024. Three levels of analysis are followed.

The first level of analysis thinks quantitatively about 'big trends'. It draws across the whole of Deveraux's publicly-available Instagram feed and highlights key changes in Deveraux's posting over time in terms of frequency and type (Reel, Post).

The second level aims towards greater analytical depth with the help of a sampling strategy - Deveraux's 'pinned' items and the first post of each calendar month where possible. The content of the 47 posts (audio, visual, textual, format, comments, key themes, hashtags) was first collected, and this collected data was then subjected to a series of closed questions based on the themes of previous chapters:

1. Is the content linked to *Hamilton*?
2. Do the hashtags mention *Hamilton*?
3. Do the top 3 comments contain a reference to *Hamilton*?
4. Does the content (or public engagement with it) reference elements involving the show's portrayal of history? (lyrics, choreography, fact/fiction)
5. Does the content (or public engagement with it) reference an educational element?

Where previous chapters effectively framed *Hamilton*'s use of history as a series of overtly politicised calls to action, the questions attempt to understand the extent to which the show's use of history has continued to be important to its mythos. This blended approach allows the study to consider not only how Deveraux performed his *Hamilton*-affiliated identity online, but how others in his community might have done likewise. With a tangle of resulting threads, the issue becomes not only whether *Hamilton* was still seen as revolutionary, but whether its mythos – now in the hands of a wider multitude of public actors made visible through Deveraux's account – has been effectively taken up by those claiming association with it. Taken together, the lines of enquiry help to visualise the extent to which *Hamilton* might function collectively across the different facets covered by the thesis' chapters. The data collected for this section of analysis can be found in Appendix Two.

The third level of analysis dives deeply and qualitatively into Deveraux's content. It is divided into two sections. The first is 'pinned' posts. Considering their significance as designated profile highlights and thus key signifiers of how Deveraux's has performed his *Hamilton*-ian identity online, this analysis both cements and challenges the quantitative data, nuancing efforts to make numerical sense out of the affective. The section then closes the chapter with a brief survey of 'outlier' examples which conflate the past, present, and politics, and put previous Deveraux analysis under a new light.

Overall, one not only gains an emerging sense of *Hamilton* as worthy of fan engagement across the digital sphere, but of how the show's mythos as an historical actant might be threatened by an effective 'celebrification' of both every-day performers and the show itself. Even as creatives like Deveraux demonstrate the show's popularity by growing their personal presence from it, this might be built not upon the show's mythos as a sense of active work, but by its general notoriety as a cultural status symbol. Rather than helping the *Hamilton* enterprise further its performance-powered, transmedial work, social media might risk its downfall. This will bring discussion towards consideration of what *Hamilton* and its mythos are most useful for: for public understandings of the past, or of the twenty-first century?

It's worth noting that the Instagram platform has changed over the last few years – as of October 2024, for example, functionalities such as viewing the number of likes or comments on a post became inconsistent (and where available, metrics were rounded to the nearest 100). It is likely that engagement with posts could in the future vacillate outside of the analysis provided here. Under algorithmic influence, old entries into digital archives can also be re-awoken and go 'viral' without any obvious warning. It is also highly likely that Deveraux has (and will again) edit what

he chooses to make visible to his global community of followers. Though this makes it impossible to accurately paint a full picture of the community, it does give us at least a glimpse into what, as of 2024, was deemed to matter to John, to *Hamilton*, and to those engaging with them online.

Big Trends

Figure 56 shows the frequency of Deveraux's posting habits according to what was available in August 2024. It confirms that little effort was made to curate a fan following until at least 2022, fitting into the era of the 'influencer' identified at the start of this chapter and the launch of the new U.S. *Hamilton* tours of which Deveraux was part. Spring 2023 (when Deveraux was first noted as a potential case study for this thesis) represented his second phase of peak-posting. This was followed by a third spike in Spring 2024, corresponding with the considerable uplift in his followers at this time.

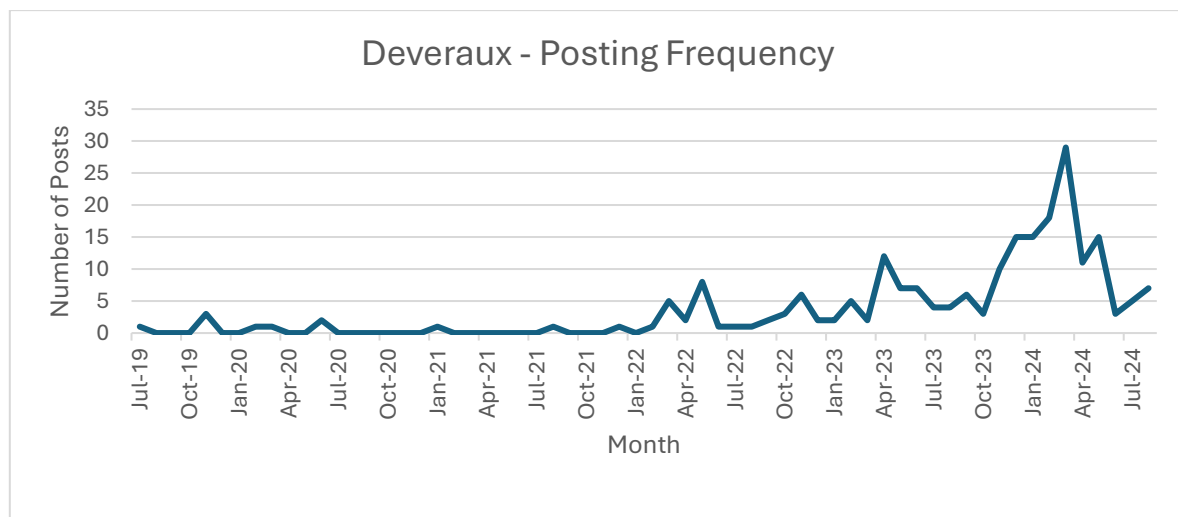


Figure 56: Deveraux – Instagram content - frequency over time

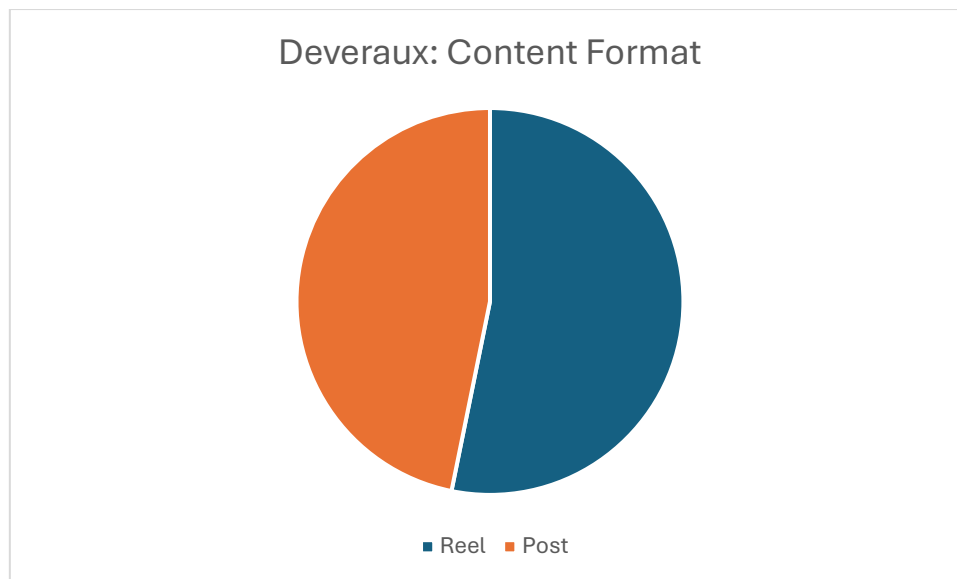


Figure 57: Deveraux – Instagram content - format

Overall, approximately 53% of Deveraux’s content is in the form of Reels – the short, snappy video posts which were usually also shared to his TikTok community. The rest of the posts were categorised as *just* ‘posts’ – still images whether shared in a singular or carousel format. Though this in-part supports the wider industry move towards content which is both audio and visual, it is also suggestive of what might be seen as most appropriate for Deveraux’s community and *Hamilton*’s ability to stay in-touch with new cultural and technological practices: With its emphasis upon music and embodied performance, *Hamilton* as a musical is adept for the reels format, as if an updated moment of reminiscence for the time when *Hamilton* could only be audio back in 2015.

5 Questions

1. *Is the content linked to Hamilton?*

Figure 58 shows that overall 64% of Deveraux’s content could be directly or indirectly related to the *Hamilton* show in terms of its auditory, visual, textual, or caption components.³⁹⁵ Reels were much more likely to seem relevant to the show, with some 73% of reels-based content being linked to *Hamilton* (whether directly/indirectly), as opposed to 54% of posts. This reinforces the potential fit between the new Instagram format and *Hamilton* as a cultural product to populate them, underscoring the potential ramifications of new digital media technologies for the circulation and re-mediation of ideas about the past. *Hamilton* was no longer ‘performed’ only in

³⁹⁵ Here, a ‘direct’ relation is defined as an explicit reference within the main focus of the content, whereas ‘indirect’ defines an implied reference which is an important part of the content but without being the main focus.

GIF snippets from the Disney+ film or EduHam clips shared by the official *Hamilton* account, but could be mobilised independently and actively as part of the curation of an online identity.

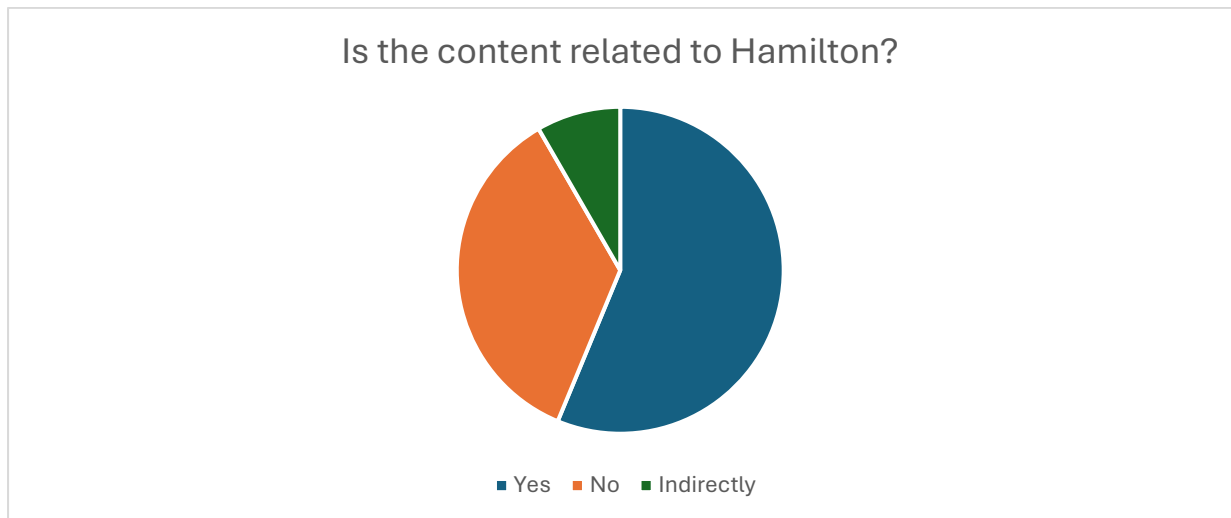


Figure 58: Deveraux - Instagram content – related to Hamilton (all content)

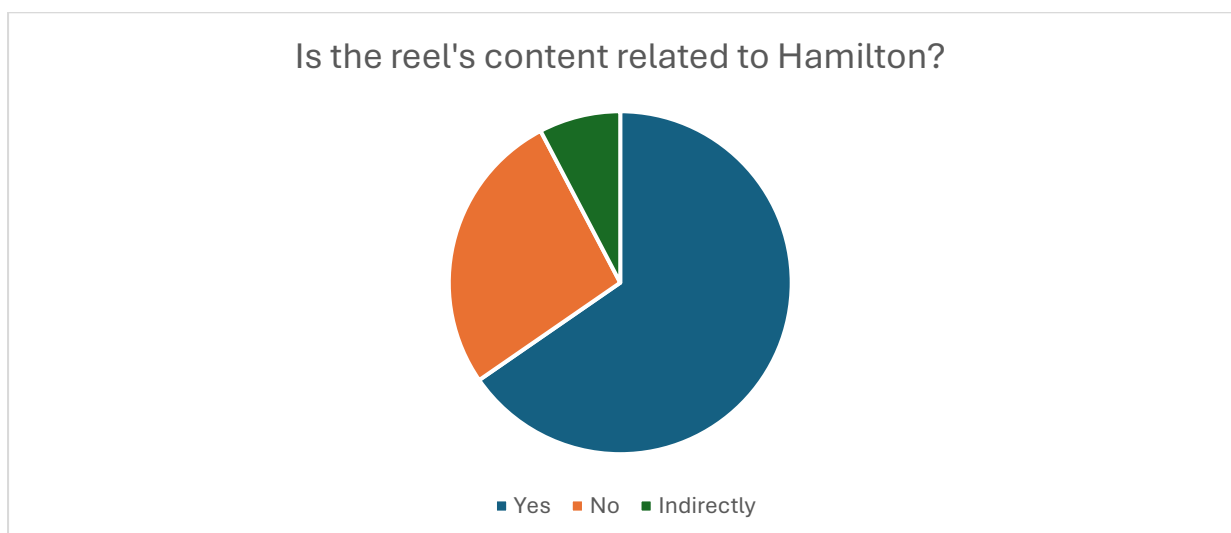


Figure 59: Deveraux - Instagram content - related to Hamilton (reels)

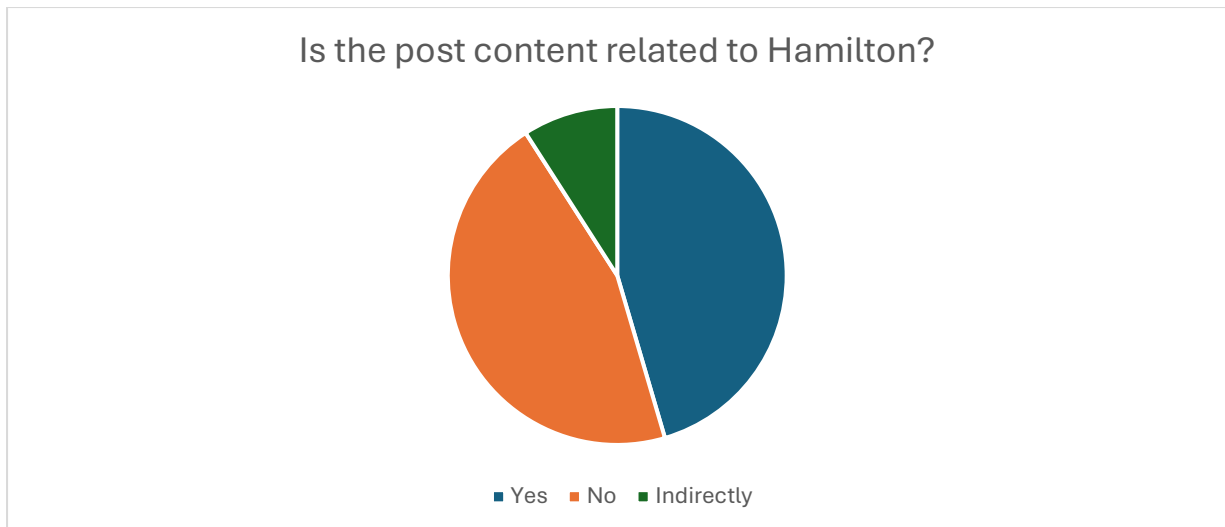


Figure 60: Deveraux - Instagram content - related to Hamilton (posts)

2. Do the hashtags mention Hamilton?

The hashtags used on each post demonstrate the extent to which Deveraux himself felt that the content posted was related to the show, regardless of how the viewer may perceive the connection based on the content alone. Though the (audio-)visual medium is given primacy, hashtags function similarly on this platform as on Twitter in providing a way to link social media content to bigger trends: users are able to ‘follow’ or ‘search’ a hashtag on the Instagram app just by clicking on the hyperlink, with the resulting page being an (almost endless) selection of the top content on the Instagram app which also uses the same hashtag. The use of a *Hamilton* hashtag would therefore suggest that Deveraux wanted to use that specific piece of content to link his online identity and fan community into *Hamilton*’s wider presence and fanbase.

Given that the building of Deveraux’s online community has relied on *Hamilton*, the ways in which he uses the show to construct his identity could also be understood as both re-creating and extending the show’s wider mythos. Overall, around 2/3 of Deveraux’s content was given a hashtag explicit to *Hamilton* (Figure 61). This suggests some disconnect in Deveraux’s self-presentation on Instagram. Although his *Hamilton* connection was the basis of his newfound influencer status and thus by association could make the entirety of his online presence somewhat inseparable from *Hamilton* and its values, this was not to be the sole basis of his online identity. Hashtag use also varied considerably between reels and posts - a reel was not only more likely to be ‘directly’ related to *Hamilton* (Figures 59 and 60), but it was also more likely to be assigned a *Hamilton* hashtag (Figure 62). Whilst this corroborates a relationship between the reels format as a new stage-space for *Hamilton* and musical theatre, it also suggests an attempt to use this to deliberately to curate further networks of *Hamilton*-related community:

publics perhaps expected *Hamilton* to be shared according to this newer, embodied format, rather than being merely visually represented.

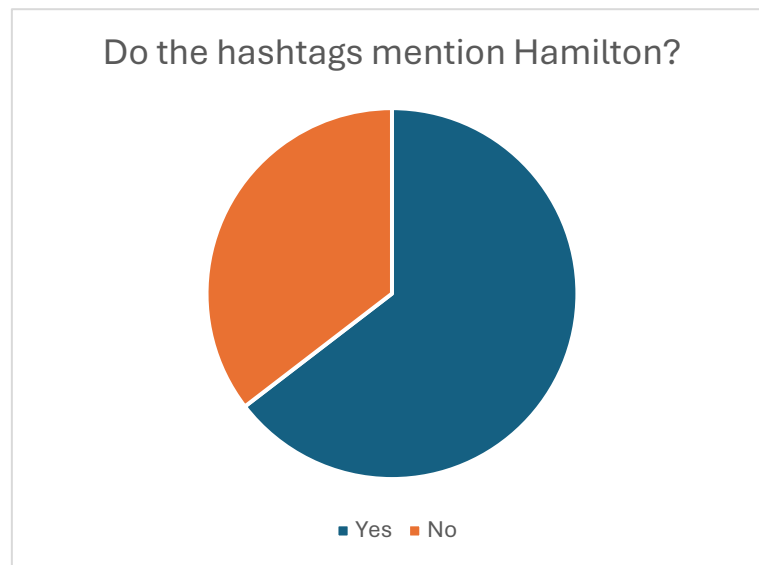
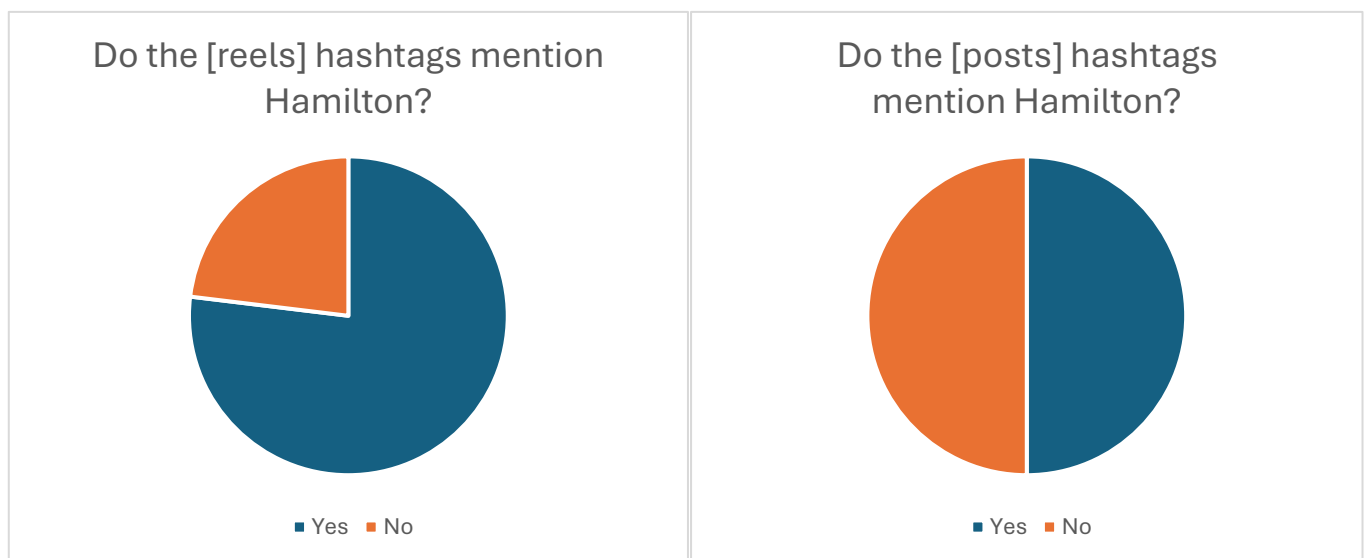


Figure 61: Deveraux – Instagram content – hashtags mentioning *Hamilton* (all content)



Left - Figure 62: Deveraux – Instagram content – hashtags mentioning *Hamilton* (reels)

Right - Figure 63: Deveraux – Instagram content – hashtags mentioning *Hamilton* (posts)

3. Do the top 3 comments contain a reference to *Hamilton*?

This doesn't always mean, though, that *Hamilton*'s cultural presence is actively recognised. The third question sought to uncover whether content related to *Hamilton* generated further engagement specific to this facet of Deveraux's portfolio. This was to help assess the extent to which his curations were engaged with because of their *Hamilton*-ian nature as extensions of the show's enterprise, or whether users were more concerned with being fans of Deveraux himself regardless of how he created his community or the show he was involved with. Although 64% of

Deveraux's content (whether Reels or Posts) related to *Hamilton* (Figure 60), only 46% of the comments either directly (29%) or indirectly (17%) related to the show (Figure 64). This suggests that while a good portion of Deveraux's followers have been interested directly in the *Hamilton* connection that made him an 'influencer', some have latched on to be fans of *him* in a way which might be deemed separate to the *Hamilton* content. *Hamilton* might have a distinct urge to historicise itself and encourage others to be active in their own historical moment, but it can become but a conduit to other sorts of broader engagement. This almost 'blurs' the limits of the show's mythos and the clarity with which the show has been aligned with particular historical and political initiatives: to engage with *Hamilton* does not necessarily signify full alignment with the show's wider ambitions.

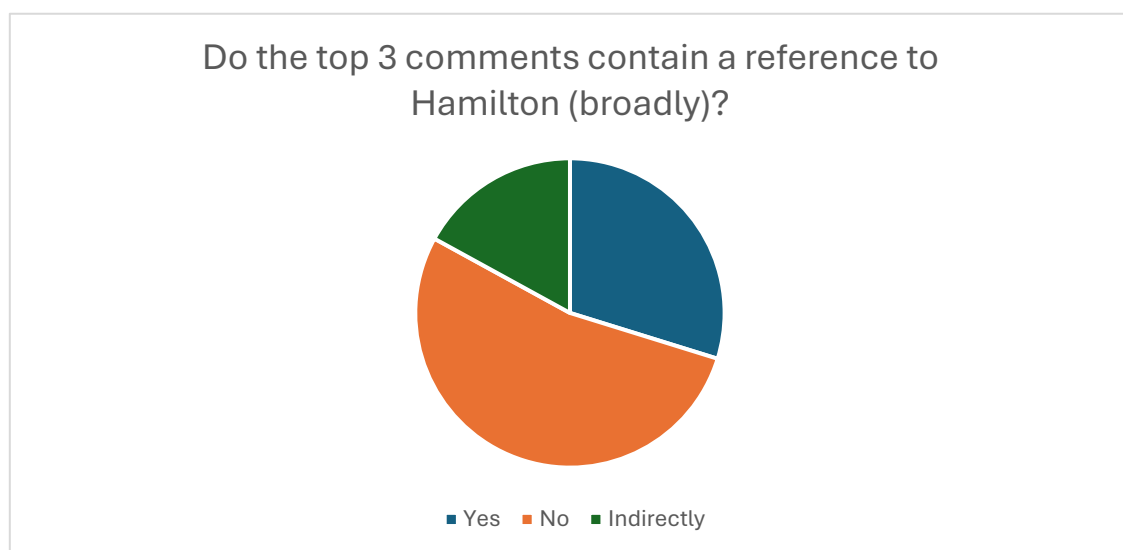


Figure 64: Deveraux - Instagram comments - reference to *Hamilton*

4. Does the content (or public engagement with it) reference elements involving the show's portrayal of history? (lyrics, choreography, fact/fiction)

This penultimate question is perhaps the most incisive when it comes to ascertaining the link between fan communities, the *Hamilton* show, and the ways in which *Hamilton* demands active historical engagement. This thesis has established *Hamilton*'s mythos as inseparable from its historically and politically-oriented calls to action. This not to claim that content involving *Hamilton* must explicitly reference the 'past' in order to be associated with this aspect of the production in some way. From an academic standpoint, the entire premise of the show means that the 'past' and temporal dissonance with it will always be implied in some way, but that does not mean that publics will recognise it at the forefront of their own engagement. The existence of longer-term academic debates around education versus entertainment further blurs the distinction between that which seeks to solely entertain without pedagogical premise, and that

which places the emphasis oppositely. The thrust of the question, though, comes from *Hamilton*'s heavy, direct emphases upon "America then, told by America now" as covered previously by this study, with its use of Eliza's character, the EduHam program, and the show's Ham4Progress work. Deveraux's content gives an opportunity to glimpse whether the enterprise's sense of direct historical intervention has been taken up more broadly across the *Hamil*-sphere. Looking at both Deveraux's posted content and the top public comments upon it suggests that such loaded work might have become only a minority player in *Hamilton*'s cultural presence.

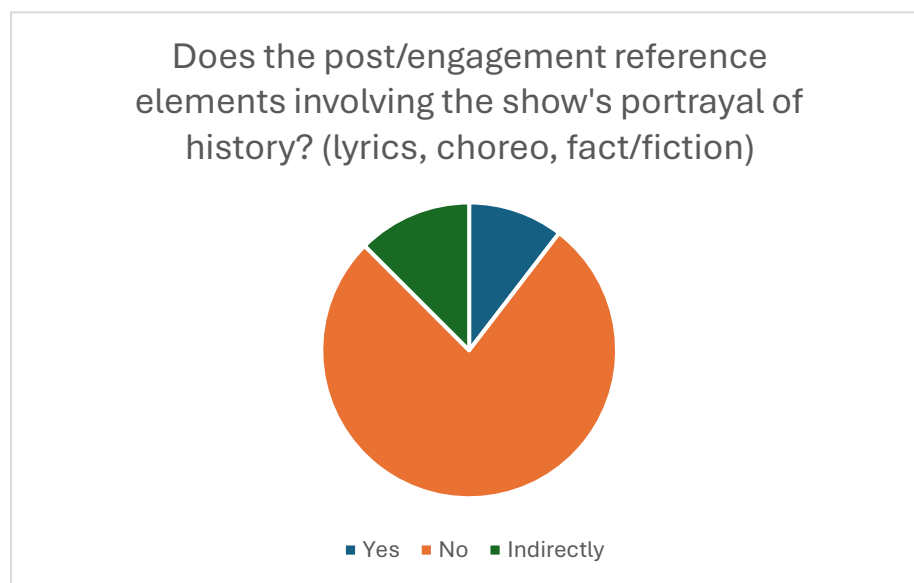


Figure 65: Deveraux - Instagram content - direct reference to *Hamilton*'s portrayal of history

Figure 65 shows that only around a quarter of the sampled content and its respective top-three public comments dealt explicitly with *Hamilton*'s 'history' in terms of lyrics, choreography, or textual discussion of historical fact and fiction. Taken with questions 1 and 2, this would suggest that while 64% of Deveraux's content related to *Hamilton* in some way, only 1/3 of this pertained to specifically historical or historiographical elements of the show. This could indicate that Deveraux believes the majority of his Hamilfam followers to be more interested in *Hamilton* from the perspective of its musical theatre genre, rather than its specific historically oriented contentions. Rather than *Hamilton* being recognised as constantly performing or undertaking active 'historical work' wherever it is applied simply by default of its Founding Father roots, the show's association with the past is perhaps more subtle and, at least in the 'public' mind, can be extracted from it. In spite of how it might have presented itself at other points in the thesis, *Hamilton* isn't *just* history, it is commercial, Broadway entertainment ripe for discussion and identification on the digital stage outside of that history.

5. Does the content (or public engagement with it) reference an educational element?

This final question was initially written to build upon the research around EduHam and consider whether deliberate attempts to learn more about *Hamilton* could have played an explicit part in the show's fan engagement both more broadly across the digital sphere than just Twitter/X and the EduHam website post-2022. It reveals that only a small percentage of Deveraux's content or public engagement with it referenced an explicitly educational element. This may seem to further relegate the mythos' sense of active learning, but it does not have to be seen as undermining the discussion of question 4: if it is to achieve either, *Hamilton*'s popular appeal must perhaps remain broader than its political or educational messaging.

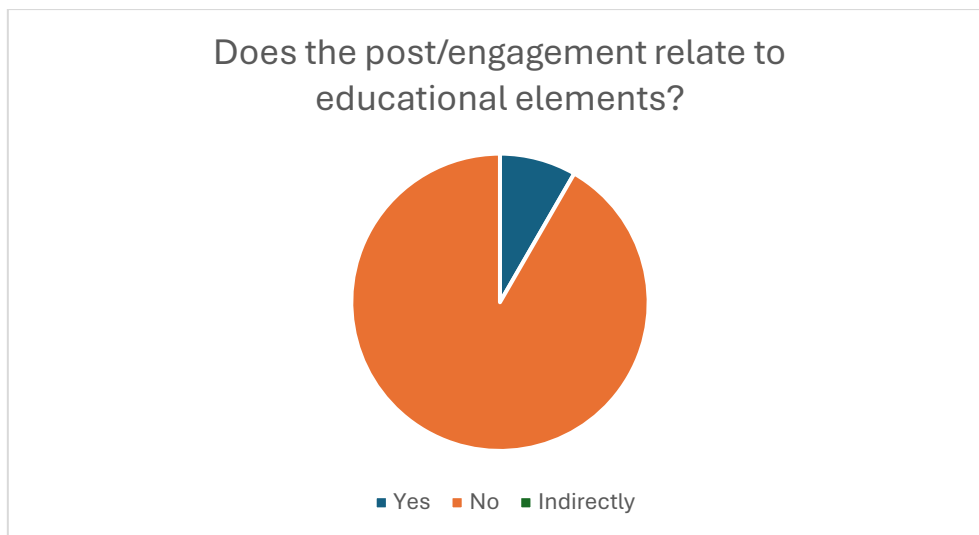


Figure 66: Deveraux - Instagram content - educational element

'Pinned'

Examining Deveraux's pinned content brings more qualitative depth in responding to what the trends above seem to suggest. Each of these posts are reels. It is important to consider the content not just as short pieces for public entertainment or information, but as deliberately curated and enacted 'performances' of Deveraux's specific digital identity. Deveraux might be an actor on the *Hamilton* stage, but his online presence represents a virtual limelight which blends both of his persons as *Hamilton* character and influencing individual. Wrapped up in these pinned pieces are indications of how he wishes to appear to his Instagram community first and foremost.

Glacier Water³⁹⁶

In terms of its immediate narrative, the first pinned post had nothing *directly* to do with *Hamilton* or Deveraux's work on it. Rather, it emphasises Deveraux the influencer as another 'role' as much as his on-stage *Hamilton* job. Though the reel attracted only 671 likes itself, the top three comments attracted a combined 3500 likes.

The video offers a self-critical response to a recording of himself drinking water from a glacier, now sitting warm and dry. He is evidently backstage to a *Hamilton* show, with a branded sign in the background and backstage-style interior design visible behind him. Subverting the 'show-off' culture on social media, Deveraux uses himself as an example of how users should *not* behave – offering, as it were a 'health-warning'. The caption ("dysentery is never a good look; emoji") and hashtags used ("alaska; glacierwater; vacationtrips; actorslife; tourlife") emphasise the video as unrelated to Deveraux's obviously *Hamilton*-ian surroundings. He plays both teacher and fool, with his '*Hamilton*' identity as an actor detached from an apparently ridiculous reality, even though it remains assumed in the background for those in the know. Mimicking each part played by Deveraux, the 'real' John feels somewhere between, or behind, the two. Though *Hamilton* is not placed at the forefront of the upload, the (albeit comical) pedagogical drive of the reel's performance does echo something of the show's sense of lesson-teaching.

Announcing George III³⁹⁷

Deveraux's second piece of pinned content is more directly related to *Hamilton* and its mythos. In the reel, Deveraux speaks to a theatre audience and 'live announces' himself as the actor playing George III that evening. Every *Hamilton* actor playing George III introduces the upcoming performance as "his show" and provides the pre-show health and safety notices in-character, and Deveraux captions the reel with this context. However, rather than simply *hearing* this nugget, we see it – the Instagram audience is invited to be part of the backstage crew, exclusive to the (already exclusive) theatre audience. Deveraux is shown in his George III costume next to the stage manager, receiving encouraging nods from other actors who stand ready to go on as recognisable characters from the show (e.g. Burr). The reel ends with a snippet of the show's opening number as Deveraux shows himself elated post- announcement. With a "whoop" and an "aaah!" to digital fans, the character's limited mask is fully broken. In the background,

³⁹⁶ @thejohndeveraux, *Instagram*, January 2, 2024, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C1mnOg5LdQT/>.

³⁹⁷ @thejohndeveraux, *Instagram*, January 10, 2024, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/p/C17Zljdlfc4/>.

scrollers hear the adoring in-theatre audience as the crew and performers would, interspersed with instructions and over-mic announcements to performers such as “have a lovely show.” With a caption that explains what is happening and points out how rare it is for “the king to make a [cast change] announcement for himself,” the online audience has now become part of the *Hamilton* production itself.

It is every theatre kid or *Hamil*-fan’s dream and clearly aligns Deveraux with not only *Hamilton*, but the way in which access to the “room where it happens” remains special beyond the Disney+ film release: *Hamilton* still has something extra about it beyond the sum of its more evident parts. Though the post didn’t attract quite so many ‘likes’ as the first pinned video (just 385), discursive engagement was considerable. The top comment, a row of four blue hearts, elicited 1500 likes of its own, but it was the second and third comments about the stage manager that really garnered attention: a plea to tag the stage manager attracted 3900, while the third “OKAT BUT MADAM STAGE MANAGER IS EATING” gained 41,300. A post showing something exclusive about *Hamilton* was not popular so much for its Hamilton-ian content, nor for its starring actor and creator, but a side-character who could have been working on *any* theatrical show. Though hash-tagged heavily with *Hamilton*-related phrases, the unique selling point of the video was an accidental inclusion. Unlike Deveraux, the stage manager was actively *not* playing a particular part – simply doing her job. This made the reel a rare picture of life behind the *Hamilton* curtain whether physical or digital, and one arguably more special than simply getting behind the scenes of *Hamilton* for *Hamilton*’s sake. This further complicates the sense of what *Hamilton* does as a cultural product, reinforcing the sense to which the show’s position as part of the cultural canon relies also on broader interest in that very musical theatre mode.

We don’t talk about Hamilton³⁹⁸

Deveraux’s third and final ‘pinned’ piece is a mash-up between two Lin-Manuel Miranda creations *Hamilton* and *Encanto*. The latter is an animated musical film released by Disney in 2021 and for which Miranda wrote the lyrics. Deveraux appears dressed in casual red or blue outfits, apparently in a hotel (tour) environment. He reacts to an audio mash up of ‘We Don’t Talk About Bruno’ which has been edited to say ‘Hamilton’ instead of ‘Bruno,’ using the voice of Lin-Manuel Miranda. Buying into Miranda’s newfound fame across other Disney products, the situation is premised by Deveraux with the idea of accidentally coming across the name ‘Hamilton’ in an unrelated context when not working on the show, and his brain’s crazed reaction

³⁹⁸ @thejohndeveraux, *Instagram*, January 6, 2024, accessed April 14, 2026
<https://www.instagram.com/p/C1xORdALjuK/>.

to having “no escape” from the musical. The Reel therefore expected social media users to be fluent across a variety of pop-culture, musical contexts, linked together by both Disney and Miranda. As well as presenting Deveraux as an actor, it also presented Deveraux as actively *acting* according to the expectations of viral content.

The post attracted 1259 comments. The top comment of “Any time I see the number “1776”” (citing a lyric common to *Hamilton* and *1776*) attracted 400 likes, but the second comment, referencing the same number within a school setting and being asked by a teacher “What happened in 1776?,” attracted 4500. This second comment is suggestive of *Hamilton*’s wider educative impact: though few of Deveraux’s posts in the previous section seemed to hold an explicit relationship with this agenda of the show, the comment nonetheless confirms that *Hamilton* has been connected to learning within its wider cultural presence and amusingly integrated within the school education system – even if unofficially so through just the lyrics “NEW YORK CITY.” The teacher in question could have been asking for anything in the year 1776, and yet it is *Hamilton* lyrics that immediately peaked in this student’s brain and Deveraux’s content where they felt the need to share the experience. *Hamilton* has become a historical lexicon with memetic and mnemonic effect and practical application - not only within the bounds of influencers seeking to make an impact online, but in the offline worlds of everyday life beyond its ‘official’ educational endeavours.

Once again, though, it was the third comment which gained the most traction. Citing the common authorship of the spliced audio tracks (“It’s apparent Lin wrote both these soundtracks by how perfectly they fit together”), this comment attracted around 32,900 likes. Almost 33,000 people not only saw this post but scrolled through the comments and wanted to indicate that they perhaps had thought similarly. Having deliberately tried to engage Miranda’s fanbase with his own by using #Linmanuelmiranda, #Hamilton, and #Encanto, Deveraux seemed to appeal not only to *Hamilton* as a cultural signifier for his own work, but the broader contexts within which the show and its creator have come to sit thanks to Disney. In some ways, we could expect this - Miranda’s significance within the fandom has been well noted and having flourished within the Disney universe since his *Hamilton* heights, his unique musical soundscape has become distinctive across popular culture. Looking again at the content of the reel, it is interesting that Deveraux’s lack of an “escape” relied not on the show’s sense of historical revisionism and empowerment being played out, but the wider commercial contexts inhabited by its creator. Yet, it is tricky to unpick quite what the users see Miranda’s ongoing connection to the show as being. Their approval of the comment indicates approval of his ‘Disneyfication,’ which is particularly

interesting given the historically and politically-loaded work attributed to him as part of *Hamilton* and its mythos just a few years prior amidst BLM.

None of Deveraux's top three posts seemed to engage critically with *Hamilton*'s active historical mission, buying only into the ways in which *Hamilton* can be used to advance personal following. Yet, this does not necessarily signify that all historical work claimed by the show over the course of the previous chapters has been insincere. Hitting at the heart of America's political, historical, and cultural facets, it is arguably the confluence historical and commercial factors which has resulted in *Hamilton* being itself celebrified as part of the popular cultural canon. In this vein, *Hamilton* operates as a diverse identity signifier. Through Deveraux, *Hamilton* is shown as a way for individuals to make themselves seen and heard through the parasocial affordances and networks of social media, ready to be mobilised across an array of positions and applications. It might seem less historically or politically-motivated than the show has elsewhere laid claim, but this does echo other elements of Eliza's call to action – of individuals using the resources at their disposal to make a difference. It also echoes some of the self-centred criticisms levelled at EduHam.

Bucking the trend?

Much of the discussion on Deveraux so far has negotiated the extent and means by which *Hamilton* has operated as a wider cultural signifier in a post-Twitter era. The sampled data has suggested an interesting interplay between personal fan following, followers of the show, and followers of Miranda, but this would so far seem to exist outside of direct engagement with politics. This would risk removing *Hamilton* from the political contexts so central to its history-making record and history-making mission. But such trends don't tell the whole story. On rare occasions, Deveraux also used his *Hamilton* identity more incisively.

Throughout his feed, Deveraux scattered personal messages and slogans of encouragement, with phrases such as "Now is always the time for becoming," "your awakening," "I create what I feel," or even a mocking-take of "how to handle fame" in 2024, perhaps referencing his recently-increased following.³⁹⁹ All could be assigned to a hazily spiritual, vaguely left-leaning agenda without certainty beyond his affiliation with *Hamilton* if not for two key posts.

³⁹⁹ @thejohndeveraux, *Instagram*, May 31, 2024, accessed April 14, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/p/C7pbS4Fv6ky/?img_index=1; @thejohndeveraux, *Instagram*, July 19, 2024, accessed April 14, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/thejohndeveraux/p/C9nwzyZSn45/?img_index=1; @thejohndeveraux, *Instagram*, April 25, 2024, accessed April 14, 2026,

Biden

The most recent at the time of writing is an edit of President Biden stepping down from the 2024 Presidential Race, with Deveraux's facial features comically blended into those of Biden using a common digital video effect.⁴⁰⁰ In response to Biden resigning as Democratic candidate against Trump, Deveraux mimes *Hamilton* lyrics sung by Washington – “I’m stepping down, I’m not running for President.”

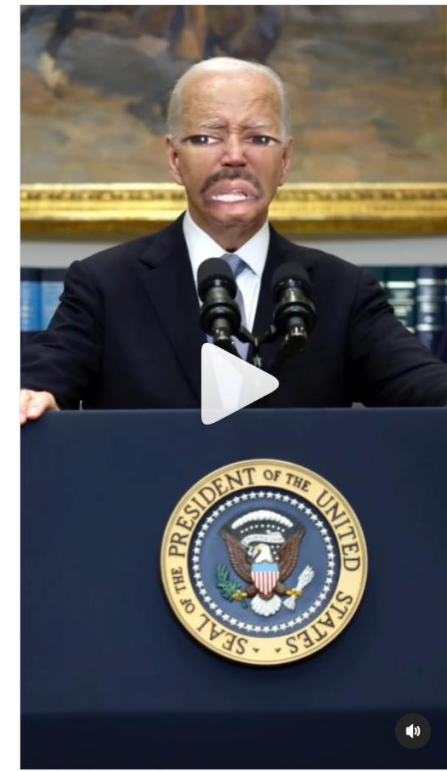


Figure 67: Deveraux - Instagram content - Biden

Captioned with “What comes next? 🤔 #hamiltonmusical #onelasttime,” one sees a somewhat amusing attempt to connect *Hamilton* as pop culture to ongoing politics. Though it may seem like a surface-level connection, the post recognises that, in order to connect trending news stories with the need (and desire) to generate content, *Hamilton* can not only be seen as political in and of itself, but as suitable for political meme. It is interesting to consider that the meme was produced by Deveraux with full knowledge of his ‘target audience’ – those who had some interest in American politics, but inevitably by virtue of interest in the *Hamilton* show. The top comment,

https://www.instagram.com/p/C6L1sWkL-7G/?img_index=2; @thejohndeveaux, *Instagram*, March 1, 2024, accessed April 14, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/p/C3_bzBTlc0p/?img_index=2.

⁴⁰⁰ @thejohndeveaux, *Instagram*, July 21, 2024, accessed April 14, 2026, <https://www.instagram.com/thejohndeveaux/reel/C9sg4NASBos/>.

certainly, showed some amusement at finding out about the *real* announcement in that manner, stating “love that this is how I found out that he stepped down” and received 1300 likes. This might not seem like bold, active, historical work, but in a general sense, it demonstrates how embedded *Hamilton* has found itself: this show about the first presidents, produced under the sponsorship of the 44th, now finds itself ever relevant in the four-year cycles of American politics. Unfolding presidential politics have been intertwined with one revisionist take on those of the past. *Hamilton* is a piece of theatre which could be subject to infinite re-articulation as America continues to look to its future, with the voices of marginalised communities in their ears, regardless of whether they are recognised as such. Regardless of the criticality with which users might do so *Hamilton* is thus recognised as a way to engage with politics, which goes some way towards fulfilling and legitimating the show’s mythos.

This specific re-articulation of *Hamilton*’s own work on the presidency has further layers to it. Even as Eliza’s character criticises his legacy as a slave owner within the show, *Hamilton*’s Washington remains the national father to whom even the protagonist looks up - a stalwart example of what the American identity is or could be. When Washington tells Alexander that he is not running for president again, his response is a resounding disbelief of “I’m sorry, what?” Deveraux’s choice of this particular scene therefore suggests that he, like Alexander Hamilton, responds “I’m sorry, what?” to the announcement, expressing genuine surprise and disappointment. Quite literally using both Alexander *Hamilton* and Biden as a ‘mask’ or ‘costume’ (see Chapter Two), this was arguably Deveraux continuing the show’s history of a clear alignment with the Democratic agenda and responding to the announcement in a way which only true fans of the *Hamilton* show would understand. This would suggest that *Hamilton*’s celebrification as a cultural status symbol was not only dependent upon its ‘mainstream’ success as a Broadway show, but in achieving such a position, the show managed to remain connected to the specific political context within which it had been created.

Black Lives Matter

By way of a second example, further down Deveraux’s current feed are his posts from 2020 amidst #BlackLivesMatter. Posted before he amassed a public following, the choice to keep the posts represents an important statement in how Devereaux wished to be seen and understood by those who find or follow his profile. Re-connecting discussion with Chapter Four, #BlackLivesMatter is not just ‘over’ because it’s no longer ‘trending’ but remains part of an ongoing navigation of black American identity past, present, and future.

Initially, Deveraux joined in with #BlackOutTuesday, posting his own blank square to raise awareness of the #BlackLivesMatter movement.⁴⁰¹ Interestingly, he then chose to break the ‘rule’ and added a second post. This shared details of text conversations with a friend about #BlackLivesMatter between the years 2016 and 2020. It drew openly on themes of allyship, communication, and an awareness of continued racial difficulties, explicitly calling on followers to “CONFRONT....REFLECT...ACT.”⁴⁰² After this, no more posts either remained, or were uploaded, until January 2021, when the new year opened with a post about hair products. Chapter Four raised the problem of how we should understand digital performativity – whether as something shallow, or something genuinely meaningful. Left at the roots of Deveraux’s *Hamilton* influencer identity, we can see his online performance as deeply personal and deeply political. For Deveraux, to perform online and to articulate *Hamilton* online is not merely to participate in a popular fan movement, but to align oneself with the messages of that product, regardless of whether the connection is consistently explicit.

Concluding thoughts

Through its twin approach to sampling *Hamilton*’s ongoing cultural presence, this final chapter has come to consider how a changing digital sphere might have not only facilitated re-stagings of *Hamilton*’s historic performance of history, but altered the ways in which performance helps us to approach public understandings of the past.

With unexplainable fragments of *Hamilton*’s post-2020 performance on ‘X’, the effective loss of the platform has shown not only the different types of authorities and politicalities at work in the contemporary digital sphere, but the need to look towards other types of source materials across *Hamilton*’s transmedial cultural presence. Looking towards Deveraux, what has unexpectedly emerged is not *Hamilton* as significant for only its own complex work with history or American identity, but the show itself as a ‘celebrified’ product. Particularly in an influencer culture, there is potential for *Hamilton* to be made popular not for its call to re-author history but simply be

⁴⁰¹ @thejohnndeveraux, *Instagram*, June 2, 2020, accessed April 14, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/p/CA8BWc_nyOj/.

⁴⁰² @thejohnndeveraux, *Instagram*, June 2, 2020, accessed April 14, 2026, https://www.instagram.com/p/CA8Ruinnep8/?img_index=1.

made popular by virtue of its own virtual visibility as a cultural signifier: a badge of belonging to a broader fandom of musical theatre, history, and other intersectionalities.

In other words, *Hamilton*'s continued presence might immediately seem to rely on a 'mythos' of a distinctive, pop-culture based popularity far more than for the historical or political provocations which supposedly helped to fuel earlier Hamilmania. Taking this line, we might glimpse the show's key historical contention, as developed earlier in the thesis, that history really can be done by 'anyone'. Yet, this breadth and inclusivity - in an exaggeration of the conclusion of Chapter Three's work around the EduHam program - would seem to come at the expense of depth, if the heart of the show's historical work remains unappreciated. Even though *Hamilton* appears to be a 'celebrified' product, examination of Deveraux's content suggests that this celebrification does not have to come entirely at the expense of its action-oriented mythos. *Hamilton* seems to be sufficiently capacious to act across different levels - from generic political meme, to specific political fan engagement drawing on specialist knowledge, to statements of political and historical identity. The show's historical and political work might not seem immediately crucial to all of Deveraux's application of it, but it remains relevant. This 'badge of belonging', then, might owe a good part to its nature as a piece of Broadway theatre, but *Hamilton*'s world is "wide enough" to also hold on to more specialist work beyond the physical theatre. The show's mythos seems curiously upheld.

There's still something to be said of *Hamilton*'s persistence as a way to approach larger periods of change and what we might presume from this around public acceptance of its history-making mission. As traced throughout the thesis, this is a show intimately connected with the re-articulation of both eighteenth and twenty-first century American histories: the founding of America, and a re-founding under Obama. Taking together *Hamilton*'s assumed political identity and its continued presence on Twitter/X as identified through HamilTweet reinforces something of a cultural status against a changeable and challenging techno-political period, suggesting that Obaman-era visions might, however ambiguously, have tracked through to popular acceptance. The show's adaptability in being so readily used on other social media platforms such as Instagram might also tell us something of the potentials of both public history and performance in the present age. Buttressed by the transmediality of wider society, public understandings of the past remain particularly complex, layered, and malleable to the required context - and as suggested by analysis of Deveraux's content, it is the performative that makes this possible. *Hamilton*'s return to the physical stage, then, should be of no surprise, but testament to the ongoing power of making history corporeally present and a reminder that we should not always judge a cultural product by its apparent cultural reception. The show could, after all, prove

indeed more significant to public histories of the twenty-first century than to those of the eighteenth.

Conclusion

“What lives, what dies, what tells your story?”

Summary

First begun in 2021, this study initially set out to use *Hamilton*’s online success to understand the significance of the ever-developing digital sphere for public understandings of the past. Having noticed *Hamilton*’s recent virality in the locked-down summer of 2020, it endeavoured to examine the Twitter platform and use the popular musical as a case study to ‘map’ out the sorts of digital networks facilitating public discourse on history. It assumed that it would thereby illuminate something of the relationship between past and present in the contemporary moment, and the influence of digital technologies within this. Itself rooted in the digitising urge of the 2020 moment, the study deemed existing digital history literature like Steinhauer’s *History Disrupted* inspiring but with limited practical application for a historian trying to understand the show’s rippling discourse as it moved from screen to screen and app to app: or, rather, from stage-space to stage-space. Trying to understand *Hamilton* itself through a public history lens also proved difficult: previous publications like *Historians on Hamilton* were insightful, but generally limited by the immediacy of their response to the first Hamilmania in 2015-6 and confined to period of comparably limited digital engagement in contrast to *Hamilton*’s renewed cultural presence around 2020. Focusing almost entirely on the stage show and the earliest public receptions, *Historians* also didn’t contain the tools with which to explore the show’s work when ‘the room where it happens’ became any room thanks to Disney+, nor the perspective required to critically understand the show as a cultural product amidst and beyond #BlackLivesMatter.

By 2026, after the effective loss of the Twitter platform, several years of pandemic recovery, three U.S. presidencies, and over a decade since *Hamilton*’s Broadway debut, this study has been able to do far more with *Hamilton* than merely use it as a vehicle through which to excavate and make meaningful sense of social media data. Rather, embracing the show’s performing arts origins, the study has sought to get its teeth into the different parts of the enterprise and thereby understand *Hamilton* and its mythos from the inside out.

In its reorientation, the study ultimately settled upon the following overarching questions:

- A) How is our understanding of *Hamilton*’s impact on public understandings of the past shaped by unfolding technological and cultural change?

- B) In exploring *Hamilton* and its diverse manifestations between 2008 and 2025, what do we learn about public understandings of the American past in the contemporary Anglophone world?
- C) How might interdisciplinary frameworks such as ‘performativity’ and ‘transmediality’ help to interrogate public understandings of the past?

In responding to these questions, the work has still shown the value of using cultural case studies such as *Hamilton* to navigate contemporary periods of rapid technological change and notable political polarisation. In pursuit, it has still mobilised what Twitter data was made available. But surpassing the original remit, what has emerged is a Broadway musical deep in conversation across multiple contemporary contexts and with a distinct urge to historicise itself as part of ongoing societal transformation. That is to say, in response to question A, that unfolding technological and cultural change forms not just crucial context for *Hamilton*’s work, but becomes part of that work itself. Examining *Hamilton* from the perspective of 2026 is to observe a famed, ‘revolutionary’ cultural product ride changing tides and survive. Speaking towards question B, contemporary contexts of change are not only witnessed in examining the show’s diverse manifestations, but made tangible through them as the ‘present’ becomes inextricable to the ways in which understandings of the past are constructed, construed, and communicated. The ‘mythos’ of *Hamilton*’s self-historicization is perhaps elucidated best not through reckoning with what is so ‘revolutionary’ about the show or the ways in which it turned the world ‘upside-down,’ but rather in reflecting upon the extent of the historical work to which it has laid claim and how. *Hamilton* has emerged as not just seeking to tell history in a new way, but as challenging what it means to ‘make’ history on-stage, in education, in social justice, and across the physical and virtual avenues in which we live. The irony with which this thesis further historicizes *Hamilton* is not lost on the author.

In undertaking this journey, the study has deployed the two conceptual lenses referenced in question C. The first is that of performativity: the extent and means by which something is deemed as ‘performed’ or ‘authentic’. This has been shown as valuable both by its navigation and exposure of tensions within *Hamilton* as a performed product, and by the questions it asks of representation and process relevant to how ‘history’ might be made. The conceptual capacity of performance to hold and enable dissonance also renders it useful to traverse complex and multifarious cultural phenomena. In short, thinking about *Hamilton* holistically through the lens of performance not only facilitates deep understanding of *Hamilton* and how it gives history a new sense of cultural presence, but supports the navigation of the second conceptual development, that of transmediality. This speaks to the ways in which cultural phenomena are

no longer confined to one medium (e.g. stage show, album record, streaming service, social media content) but experienced simultaneously by the consumer across these different spaces. Though they relate to each other in infinitely complex ways, they likewise create the sum of what *Hamilton* has come to constitute and signify to the wider world. To not acknowledge this interplay would be to reduce the nuance that might be uncovered. With a transmedial conceptualisation, we are able to acknowledge the countless and sometimes competing authorities that influence public understandings of the past, as society's players at all levels seek to prepare for the next Act. Such understandings therefore are nuanced, co-created, and up for re-creation.

Development Overview

By re-tracing the show's journey from the perspective of the 2020's, Chapter One reinforced *Hamilton* as a "metaphor of the Obama era," locating within this the political, technological, and cultural values that would inform the show's sense of work in future chapters.⁴⁰³ Alongside this, tracing the show's production within the Broadway industry began to tease at some of the tensions inherent to *Hamilton*, as a privileged, politically-connected individual sought to not only capture the spirit of the age, but use it to respond to perceived ongoing issues around cultural representation and political participation. While already hinting at the significance of musical theatre beyond the Broadway show, such discussion also laid important conceptual groundwork for understanding the diverse enterprise that *Hamilton* would become. By telling *Hamilton*'s story through attention to the different 'stage spaces' involved in *Hamilton*'s development and the sense of performativity across them, the chapter began to establish the show as a phenomenon in need of further conceptualisation to bring the disparate elements of this zeitgeist together and understand its complex cultural presence.

Diving more deeply into the on-stage action, Chapter Two used costume and choreography to assess the theatrical performance underscoring *Hamilton*'s mythos. In demonstrating their utility as vehicles for complex historical work, the show emerged as neither the exclusive work of the ambitious titular character who proclaims himself to be in charge, nor its apparent narrator Burr, both of whose roles pull on audience pre-conceptions of Founding Father histories. Rather, *Hamilton* presents itself as the result of an overlooked archivist with control over a living and embodied archive – Eliza. In drawing this out, the chapter revealed *Hamilton*'s contention that history is not only up for being re-made by the unexpected, but that how this happens can (and

⁴⁰³ Romano and Potter, "Introduction," 10.

should) be challenged. Looking at the show's wider remediation within GIFs both extended and disrupted this neat historical contention. GIFs have relied on similar costume and choreographic vehicles to scatter *Hamilton*'s presence across the digital sphere, and thus both constitute and contribute to the show's wider mythos. While reinforcing *Hamilton* as an enterprise which has truly blurred the analogue and digital planes, the lack of clarity over how the GIFs have been deployed and the extent to which they truly represent and reinforce the show's historical contention brought nuance to *Hamilton*'s mythos of exceptionalism.

Chapter Three developed the discussion with reference to the Hamilton Education Program (HEP). It reinforced that in order to fully understand the on-stage message covered in Chapter Two, we must look beyond the physical stage to see where and how this message has been otherwise pushed by the Enterprise: we must as researchers think transmedially. Examining the curriculum, problematising the branding of the program as 'EduHamOnline,' and analysing several digital outputs reinforced *Hamilton* as seeing itself as more than 'just' a musical. Central to this analysis was performativity. As the basis for the ways in which the past is to be conceptualised, shared, and understood within the HEP, a performative lens framed history as a process open to interpretation and re-authoring which was sympathetic to the ambitions outlined in Chapter Two. Performativity also seemed to aid in the reconciliation of further tensions around *Hamilton*'s mythos. For example, the show's provenance in being written by a politically-connected member of the new Broadway elite and being sponsored by high-level organisations with national and international influence, seemed inconsequential to the way in which *Hamilton* has seen itself as fundamentally useful in its Democratically-rooted educative mission. The chapter confirmed that Broadway musicals might seek to do more than just entertain or be subjected to a binary of education versus entertainment and seemed to legitimate performativity as a way to meaningfully re-make 'America'.

The remaining two chapters continued to consider the conflicts within *Hamilton* and the enterprise's ostensible ability to rise above them. Chapter Four showed *Hamilton* as not only present but significant beyond Broadway amidst 2020's Black Lives Matter movement. Surrounded by historically-rooted socio-political upheaval, *Hamilton* found itself ideologically tested on the 'real' world stage of unpredictable algorithms and embedded transmediality. The values and sense of mission with which the show was developed had not necessarily taken root more broadly, and as a Broadway musical now distributed by Disney, *Hamilton* found it both difficult and necessary to respond to the unfolding moment. As much as the mythos was 'cracked', the team insisted upon *Hamilton*'s genuine cultural contribution and exceptionalism. Looking back on previous chapters' work around performativity and at what contemporary

performances of #BlackLivesMatter protest looked like, the chapter offered the opportunity to reflect on the nuances of what is 'genuine' in performance as a vehicle. Building upon the capacity entrusted to performance within Chapter Three, this made visible further tensions in how *Hamilton* seeks to 'do' history and affect public understandings of it. Within Chapter Four, performance ultimately became a useful way to navigate not only the complexities of historical process and outcome, but witness in live-action different transmedial stage-spaces and how they might unfold in relationship to one another with relevance to public uses and abuses of the past. Having reacted almost disproportionately to the public demand to #CancelHamilton, what was seen in the 'mythos' of *Hamilton*-ian exceptionalism was a claim to being both an output of previous historical, cultural, and political labour, and part of the established trajectory as the work continues. *Hamilton* saw (and, in *Ham4Progress*, arguably continues to see) itself as being not only part of "the [real world] where it happens," but as able to actively enable others into the conversation by virtue of its position as a Broadway show. In so being, this cultural product was not to be subject to revisionism, as if an ever-relevant, fundamental articulation of American progress beyond its Obaman creation. Enabling such a sense of confidence was arguably not only the show's commercial viability and political connections, but its nature as a theatrical performance and the ability for 'performance' to hold complexity. The show's performative nature seemed to underpin both its mythos and the transmediality that has platformed it.

Having established *Hamilton* as a sort of Alexander Hamilton-like figure supposedly bent upon making a difference to the world around it, the final chapter reminded the reader of those truly in charge of the show's destiny: those outside of the theatre and the inner-work of its world, and who engage with, react to, and connect with the production online. Even when *Hamilton* was no longer in the mainstream limelight between 2021-2024, examination of Twitter/X and Instagram sources suggested that the show still held significance. As a 'celebrified' product, *Hamilton* became a lens for viewing and understanding the broader social moment - both because of how it had itself become a sort of cultural and political signifier, and due to the tensions that it had reckoned with over the last decade. This means that while the chapter acknowledged that *Hamilton* might be important as a piece of popular musical theatre without explicit value-loaded engagement, thanks to its 'mythos', this facet has nonetheless become inextricable from it. Despite significant changes in the digital and political spheres that had aided its 'Hamilmanic' rise and reinforced its cultural capital, examination of social media showed that *Hamilton* still retains an active online community, and one with enough popular recognition that creatives such as Deveraux could build an online 'influencer' career based upon it. Whether expected or not, *Hamilton* found itself once again thriving in reels that echoed its original theatricality, bolstered

by continued online engagement if not virality, becoming engrained if not actively engraving. At the same time, the chapter asked more of the show's mythos. On the one hand, the renewed emphasis upon in-person performances reinforced both the 'online' and 'offline' as important and interconnected when trying to conceptualise what *Hamilton* has become. Given the period of relative social and political calm, this operation can be seen as having relevance beyond just Hamilmania booms of launch-window virality or the #CancelHamilton crisis point amidst contexts beyond its control. At the same time, the reader was reminded that *Hamilton* must still reckon with being 'just' a stage show for some publics: regardless of the value-loaded work explored in previous chapters, followers were not always interested in every nuance of its historical, political, and cultural work. *Hamilton* might have made grand claims and tried to inspire what it has seen as genuine historical change, but the show remains popular partly because of its musical mode. This is the heart of its mythos: the identity-grounded party trick that has allowed it to hold both deep-rooted goals and light-hearted entertainment across all the 'stage-spaces' upon which this thesis has cast its spotlight. Reminiscent of the show's cross-party appeal back in Chapter One, the show's unbreakable association with the Broadway style and brand may have helped *Hamilton* to survive unpredictable political tides such as Black Lives Matter far more than it risked diminishing the extent of the same political, cultural, and historical 'achievements' that have been made possible. Performance is what makes *Hamilton*'s history accessible, transferable, and powerful. By virtue of the performance it gives, *Hamilton* is at least as useful for understanding public histories of the twenty-first century as those of the eighteenth.

Going Forward

The thesis has proven useful in a number of areas pertinent to wider public history research. At the most basic level, the study has provided an example of how one might navigate contemporary anglophone culture and popular politics. Its use of *Hamilton* as both the map and the path has proved useful not only as a focussed way of charting changeable circumstances, but of connecting the different facets that constitute and influence contemporary culture. In making these connections visible through transmediality, the concept is offered as a useful framework for other scholars tackling alternative manifestations of the past within the present-day. The ways in which transmediality itself evolved over the course of *Hamilton* and the thesis in providing a way around the loss of the study's original Twitter-based vision also reinforces the necessity interdisciplinary study and the need for researchers to consciously adopt frameworks

that facilitate inquiry across technological, political, and cultural change, rather than prohibitive approaches specific to one particular technological, political, or cultural ‘state’.

The thesis has also underscored the value of an analytical method that foregrounds performance and performativity. Firstly, in addressing the issues raised previously by David Dean and Christine de Matos, the thesis has highlighted performing arts products as nuanced and complex entities capable of historical work: rather than being left to the theatre scholar, such products are worthy of more rigorous appreciation from a public history perspective. Secondly, the thesis has shown the performative as engrained within the transmediality of the current age. Such a position has proven central to demonstrating how one cultural product can have influence beyond what might be deemed its immediate or expected environs.

Ultimately, the combination of performativity and transmediality has given the thesis a unique pane through which to understand *Hamilton* and its wider mythos: tracing this mythos’ journey, it’s been given a sense of structure, of language, of meaning, and of tension. But these speak to areas in need of greater research.

‘Structure’ is one such area. Though performativity has given *Hamilton* a sense of staging beyond Broadway and transmediality has given these stage-spaces a sense of functional network, the enterprise and its mythos retain a complex sense of in/tangibility which has not been fully addressed. The study has used the term ‘presence’ uncritically and the ostensibly self-evident use of the term prevents a more incisive establishment of what the ‘presence of the past’, as it pertains to *Hamilton*, truly is. In a world grounded in the physical but increasingly obsessed with the virtual from AR to AI, this is a tension that proved beyond the thesis’ scope but which the study nonetheless raises as an essential challenge for both public history and the historical field more broadly. Though this work would require careful engagement with previous and emerging literatures in historical, linguistic, digital, and performance fields, such research is likely to prove useful for scholars grappling with ever-new technological challenges in how history’s in/tangibility and complexity are purportedly made palpable. Such work could not only build usefully upon transmediality and performativity but enhance them as conceptual lenses. More thorough, critical use of ‘stage presence’ as understood within a theatrical lens might also provide a useful means of expansion. Disney’s assumed omnipresence as an agential entity around *Hamilton*’s work is also an area that could benefit from more extensive critical reflection.

The study’s HamilTweet work offers a range of issues to which scholars could respond in different ways. Over the course of just one PhD, what had seemed a staunch and stable base of source material was radically overhauled, recontextualised, and ultimately side-lined. What was once

the way to quantitatively ‘structure’, through discourse and network analyses, how public understandings of the past are made and re-made, found itself re-worked into the qualitative. While transmediality and performativity have proved useful, it would have been interesting to see what could have been possible with a data-focussed approach. While X may be inaccessible for most researchers, other social media platforms might be made accessible to them in time to come. More advanced network analyses of these platforms, undertaken in a timelier manner lest they also be ‘lost’, would be worthwhile. More refined quantitative analysis of the HamilTweet dataset might also be possible, depending on ethical considerations and future data processing routes – though AI was not considered as part of this study, AI-powered analysis might prove worthwhile for others in the future seeking to build upon the limited work possible here.

Ultimately, the thesis also highlights the lack of certainty around what will happen to *Hamilton* in the future. Though physical archives have their own preservation challenges, the digital, ephemeral nature of much of the *Hamil*-sphere could pose its own set of problems for future researchers looking in retrospect as social media posts are lost, news stories are deleted, or apps are made obsolete. Though its journey so far has proved useful to historicise early twenty-first century social, political, and technological cultures, it’s also quite possible that, as suggested by Leslie Odom Jr. in Chapter Four, *Hamilton* will one day “look small” in its value-loaded endeavours. In this, perspectives on the show will continue to shift, but possibly without the ability to thoroughly understand what preceded them. Researchers could take a leaf from Aaron Burr’s – nay, Alexander Hamilton’s – nay, Lin-Manuel Miranda’s – book and “write like [they’re] running out of time”. But unlike in *Hamilton*, any future-focus should not come at the expense of one’s own place in history and historical practice, nor appreciation for the present.

For now, across each of *Hamilton*’s stage-spaces – of film, curriculum, protest, or fan culture – *Hamilton*’s mythos is left riddled with complexities in value and vehicle. Yet these only emphasise the show’s value to the public historian trying to reckon with the place of theatre and performance within the field, the technological changes and digital spaces through which the past moves, and the search for contemporary identity amidst past, present, and future.

Shining brightly across the ‘Great White Way’, Disney’s great white-light screen, or the world’s social media stages, *Hamilton* could seem to constitute a mere evening’s entertainment or the opportunity to scroll an afternoon away on Instagram. Its commercial success could be seen as significant only for the money and profile gained by the show and its originators on the back of a well-worn historical era – certainly, the show has evidenced the continued ‘success’ of the past in securing public interest. Furthermore, *Hamilton*’s petition for an active, inclusive historical

process beyond the stage and its attempts to historicise itself precisely in this moment of broader transformation – both political and technological – might seem incongruent to one another: presenting a relatively recent historical ‘truth’ as ‘timeless’, but in a way which must be popularised as ‘revolutionary’ to be perceived as truly succeeding. As much as *Hamilton* might paint itself as something new in re-discovering the heart of what American identity ought to be, this might also suggest a mere re-articulation of a larger American mythos: a nation which, ever-new and ever-exceptional, is still searching for the meaning of its identity as it approaches 250 years of age.

Yet, the success of this particular re-narration points beyond commercialisation and towards the reality of *Hamilton* as a cultural anchor point which does not necessarily depend solely on the prominence of broader founding narratives. The ubiquity of the digital does not grant significance to all the content that populates it, yet *Hamilton* has succeeded in not only securing digital virality, but thus far, maintaining various forms of cultural presence beyond it. *Hamilton*’s musical theatre form might have lent it cultural credibility, but it’s this very performative nature which has also allowed the show to subvert expectations on how ‘big history’ ought to be done at this very cultural heartland, both on-stage and off-stage. It arguably matters not whether each fan, audience member, or casual swiper fully appreciates *Hamilton*’s message: it’s echoed in each GIF, reel, meme, and cast-recording stream. With *Hamilton* as an earworm, the remains of Obaman-era values and visions are hidden in plain song and sight at a cultural forefront for what it might mean for America to continually re-make its identity.

While cementing the significance of the digital for how publics technologically mediate understandings of the past, the study ultimately does so without falling wholly into the vein of Silicon Valley determinism. Rather, it encourages scholars to look beyond transmission and towards the longer-term structures underpinning the stories we tell and the ways that we do so. Underlying each articulation and apparition of the ‘past’ appears a performance - a representation thereof. *Hamilton* allows one to re-visit the essential value of the performing arts as a way of traversing, communicating, learning about, and fundamentally ‘making’ the past as an ongoing process. The study is therefore not simply about exposing the challenges of what it might mean to ‘make’ history both inside and outside of the ‘academy’, but an invitation to scholars to historicise their own moment and acknowledge the millennia of cultural traditions which both precede, and will doubtless proceed from, it. What lives, what dies, what tells our – or *Hamilton*’s – story? We will have to “wait for it” - after all, “it’s only a matter of time...”

APPENDIX ONE

HamilTweet

With an approved developer account on the Twitter API, I was able to set up a ‘HamilTweet’ project which gave me a series of keys (‘tokens’) granting me access to the entire Twitter archive via suitable software.

For ease of use and the avoidance of common technical issues, I opted to utilise Anaconda command software and the Python programming language. Within Anaconda, I installed the ‘Twar2’ tool which would allow me to search the Twitter archive, providing it with the authenticating keys acquired from my Twitter API. Twar2 then enabled me to search for the use of certain hashtags across the entire Twitter archive to date. I opted for a full archive search as this would better allow me to understand the wider context of my thesis data and sources.

In total I searched for 12 hashtags and hashtag combinations identified as representing different stages in *Hamilton*’s development: #HamilTour, #HamilFilm, #HamilFan, #HamApp, #Ham4Progress, #Ham4Ham, #EduHamOnline, #EduHam, #CancelHamilton, #BLM & #Hamilton and #BlackLivesMatter. In the end I opted not to include search results for #Hamilton given the sheer quantity of data this would likely produce. Given that I was able to access the data for almost 1 million tweets using the other 11 hashtags which were much more specific to my research needs, I was able to appropriately avoid erroneous or excessive data beyond my ability to process.

Although appropriate for the confines of this project, the API collection method did have one key drawback. Being only able to identify ‘relevant’ Tweets through the use of hashtags, it was impossible to include those which failed to use the hashtags, such as could have been the case in replies to those using the hashtag. This does mean that the HamilTweet data will ultimately only be able to represent a snapshot of the entire digital movement around a particular topic. It does, nonetheless, provide some windows into how public conversation operates around a range of important issues pertaining to *Hamilton* and the show’s wider historical work. Furthermore, given that Twitter is only one of a number of social media sites and that not all users or fans could have been guaranteed to participate in these conversations, even a full picture of every relevant Tweet would only ever have provided a partial insight into how *Hamilton* weathered different seasons beyond Broadway.

The HamilTweet databanks were stored securely in the cloud under password protection and in a variety of formats as required by the processing software. Initially, the data provided was in the .jsonl format which is not effective for further processing. These were therefore transformed into .csv format, which was better suited for further analysis and data processing. Importantly, I also saved a ‘dehydrated’ version of the Tweets collected. Each tweet downloaded within the .jsonl and .csv files has a unique identifier in the form of a long string of numerical digits. Although the thesis anonymises Tweets made by non-verified individuals anyway, the dehydrated version of my data allows me to both allude to and share my collected Twitter sources with an added layer of security. In theory under the access permissions that the Twitter API previously had, any user with the correct level of access (e.g. API keys/authenticators) could have been able to ‘re-hydrate’ the data and access the full data profiles of those Tweets, as in my .jsonl and .csv files. Had Twitter not been dramatically altered in its transformation into X, this could have proved a useful resource for future research; as it stands, it protects absolutely the anonymity of the HamilTweet data.

Jupyter notebook was used to run the analysis. In processing the data, I am indebted to the Kirenz guide, which provided comprehensive text mining and sentiment analysis modules that I could action within the Python coding language used to collect the Tweets.⁴⁰⁴ These methods allowed me to pursue a variety of textual discourse analytics on the collected tweet data which relied on the ‘Natural Language Toolkit’ (NLTK). NLTK is an Anaconda package running in the Python coding language which makes datasets more useable for textual or linguistic processing. In my data processing, NLTK allowed me to ‘tokenise’ regular expressions (break them down into useable chunks), identify stopwords (content without significant meaning for computational analysis, e.g. ‘and’, ‘a’), remove infrequent or insignificant words, and lemmatize tweet speech to group together inflections of the same term. Altogether, this optimised the dataset for forms of computerised discourse analysis.

The two key discourse analysis methods that the NLTK facilitates in this thesis are word frequency assessment (word cloud and word distribution) and sentiment analysis through the VADER program. Word frequency allowed me to identify the most frequently used words within a particular hashtag dataset, which has been useful for gleaning key ideas about how different aspects of *Hamilton* have been understood and used by wider publics. Sentiment analysis

⁴⁰⁴ “Text Mining and Sentiment Analysis with NTLK and Pandas in Python,” Kirenz, December 11, 2021, accessed June 15, 2023, <https://www.kirenz.com/post/2021-12-11-text-mining-and-sentiment-analysis-with-nltk-and-pandas-in-python/>

through VADER ('Valence Aware Dictionary and Sentiment Reasoner') took this relatively simple analysis further. VADER used the same NLTK databank and understandings of positive-negative sentiment to assign each tweet a polarity score on a scale of positive to negative. I was then able to map changes in sentiment over time, which allowed me to quickly identify fluctuations in public opinion around *Hamilton* and its 'work'. Identifying when and how changes in public sentiment occurred has allowed me to explore the ways in which *Hamilton* has been connected to wider events across its transmedial web.

VADER compared positively in comparison to a range of alternative tools for rule-based sentiment analysis in a 2014 study but is not without its own complications.⁴⁰⁵ Tweet data is 'noisy' – short, often unstructured and isolated, often containing multiple emotions within a single Tweet. 'Traditional' critical discourse analysis approaches such as 'parsing' do not function effectively in the same way as they would across an extended, single document. As identified by Mulherjee and Bhattacharyya, the downside of "bag-of-words" models such as NLTK is that important discourse components such as conditionals, connectives and modals (which affect the overall sentiment of a Tweet) can be overlooked in prioritising a positive-negative sentiment paradigm.⁴⁰⁶ The role of emoticons and GIFs as indicators of Tweet meaning and significance are also overlooked. While for simplicity this thesis will use only the VADER model, it does nonetheless leave room for potential expansion and modification of this approach in future research, should other platforms other than Twitter/X be available and useful for research practice.

The Programming Historian, founded in 2008 by William J. Turkel and Alan MacEachern, has sought to promote wider understandings of digital methodologies for historical research across the digital infrastructure. With a peer-reviewed journal and wide array of online 'lessons' in digital methodologies, the organisation has been instrumental in guiding my own research. Although this thesis has opted for data analysis within the Python language (in which *The Programming Historian* also originated), others are available such as R. Each language has a range of different analytical options - an alternative word frequency program, for example, could have been TidyText which makes use of the 'R' programming language. Outside the scope of this thesis, there could be merit in effectively comparing other tools for the purposes of public history.

⁴⁰⁵ C. Hutto and Eric Gilbert, "VADER: A Parsimonious Rule-Based Model for Sentiment Analysis of Social Media Text," *Eighth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media* 8, no.1 (2014): 216-225

⁴⁰⁶ Subhabrata Mukherjee and Pushpak Bhattacharyya, "Sentiment Analysis in Twitter with Lightweight Discourse Analysis," *Proceedings of COLING 2012: Technical Papers* (Mumbai: 2012): 1847-1864

The next pages show an example analysis of #Ham4Ham. The Jupyter notebook file has been converted to .jpg in order to include it in this thesis and provides some indication of the analytical process undertaken.

```
In [1]: import nltk

In [6]: from nltk.corpus import brown
brown.words()

Out[6]: ['The', 'Fulton', 'County', 'Grand', 'Jury', 'said', ...]

In [8]: from nltk.corpus import stopwords

In [10]: stopwords.words()
```

```

Out[10]: ['إذ',
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'أَكْثَرُ',
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 'فيفري'
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 'يورو'
 'ين'
 'يوان'
 'شيكل'
 'واحد'
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'beraz',
'beraz ',
'bere',
...]
```

```
In [12]: from nltk.corpus import wordnet
```

```
In [14]: nltk.download('wordnet')
```

```

[nltk_data] Downloading package wordnet to
[nltk_data] C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Roaming\nltk_data...
[nltk_data] Package wordnet is already up-to-date!
```

```
Out[14]: True
```

```
In [16]: nltk.download('omw-1.4')
```

```

[nltk_data] Downloading package omw-1.4 to
[nltk_data] C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Roaming\nltk_data...
[nltk_data] Package omw-1.4 is already up-to-date!
```

```
Out[16]: True
```



```
In [18]: #nltk.download('stem')
```

```
In [20]: #from nltk.corpus import stem
```

```
In [22]: #download nltk.stem
```

```
In [24]: nltk.download('punkt')
```

```
[nltk_data] Downloading package punkt to
[nltk_data]   C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Roaming\nltk_data...
[nltk_data]   Package punkt is already up-to-date!
```

```
Out[24]: True
```

```
In [26]: nltk.download('vader_lexicon')
```

```
[nltk_data] Downloading package vader_lexicon to
[nltk_data]   C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Roaming\nltk_data...
[nltk_data]   Package vader_lexicon is already up-to-date!
```

```
Out[26]: True
```

```
In [28]: import pandas as pd
```

```
In [30]: filename = "Ham4ham.csv"
df = pd.read_csv(filename)
df.head()
```

```
C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Local\Temp\ipykernel_1900\3523916808.py:2: DtypeWarning:
Columns (31,39,41,42,43,49,68,69) have mixed types. Specify dtype option on import
or set low_memory=False.
df = pd.read_csv(filename)
```

```
Out[30]:
```

	id	conversation_id	referenced_tweets.replied_to.id	reference
0	1666834115017031680	1666834115017031680		NaN
1	1666825677331480576	1666825677331480576		NaN
2	1666821908321693697	1666821908321693697		NaN
3	1666801696209530881	1666609403028545539		1.666609e+18
4	1666481221654700050	1666481221654700050		NaN

5 rows × 84 columns



```
In [ ]:
```

```
In [33]: df['text'] = df['text'].astype(str).str.lower()
df.head()
```

Out[33]:

	id	conversation_id	referenced_tweets.replied_to.id	reference
--	----	-----------------	---------------------------------	-----------

0	1666834115017031680	1666834115017031680		NaN
1	1666825677331480576	1666825677331480576		NaN
2	1666821908321693697	1666821908321693697		NaN
3	1666801696209530881	1666609403028545539	1.666609e+18	
4	1666481221654700050	1666481221654700050		NaN

5 rows × 84 columns



In [35]: `from nltk.tokenize import RegexpTokenizer`

In [37]: `regex = RegexpTokenizer('\w+')`

```
<>:1: SyntaxWarning: invalid escape sequence '\w'
<>:1: SyntaxWarning: invalid escape sequence '\w'
C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Local\Temp\ipykernel_1900\2960370331.py:1: SyntaxWarning:
invalid escape sequence '\w'
  regex = RegexpTokenizer('\w+')
```

In [39]: `df['text_token']=df['text'].apply(regex.tokenize)`
`df.head()`

Out[39]:

	id	conversation_id	referenced_tweets.replied_to.id	reference
--	----	-----------------	---------------------------------	-----------

0	1666834115017031680	1666834115017031680		NaN
---	---------------------	---------------------	--	-----

1	1666825677331480576	1666825677331480576		NaN
---	---------------------	---------------------	--	-----

2	1666821908321693697	1666821908321693697		NaN
---	---------------------	---------------------	--	-----

3	1666801696209530881	1666609403028545539		1.666609e+18
---	---------------------	---------------------	--	--------------

4	1666481221654700050	1666481221654700050		NaN
---	---------------------	---------------------	--	-----

5 rows × 85 columns

In [41]: `import nltk`

In [43]: `nltk.download('stopwords')`
`from nltk.corpus import stopwords`

[nltk_data] Downloading package stopwords to
 [nltk_data] C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Roaming\nltk_data...
 [nltk_data] Package stopwords is already up-to-date!

In [45]: `stopwords = nltk.corpus.stopwords.words("english")`

In [47]: `df['text_token'] = df['text_token'].apply(lambda x: [item for item in x if item not in stopwords])`
`df.head()`

Out[47]:

	id	conversation_id	referenced_tweets.replied_to.id	reference
--	----	-----------------	---------------------------------	-----------

0	1666834115017031680	1666834115017031680		NaN
---	---------------------	---------------------	--	-----

1	1666825677331480576	1666825677331480576		NaN
---	---------------------	---------------------	--	-----

2	1666821908321693697	1666821908321693697		NaN
---	---------------------	---------------------	--	-----

3	1666801696209530881	1666609403028545539		1.666609e+18
---	---------------------	---------------------	--	--------------

4	1666481221654700050	1666481221654700050		NaN
---	---------------------	---------------------	--	-----

5 rows × 85 columns

In [49]: `df['text_string'] = df['text_token'].apply(lambda x: ' '.join([item for item in x]))`

In [51]: `df[['text', 'text_token', 'text_string']].head()`

Out[51]:

	text	text_token	text_string
0	hosts with the most! still hamming it up. inc...	[hosts, mosts, still, hamming, incredible, tal...	hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...
1	mentally we're still at last week's #ham4ham. ...	[mentally, still, last, week, ham4ham, tbt, ht...	mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https s6a...
2	mentally we're still at last week's #ham4ham. ...	[mentally, still, last, week, ham4ham, tbt, ht...	mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https s6a...
3	@bwayscho will there be a #ham4ham performance ...	[bwayscho, ham4ham, performance, friday, n, nwi...	bwayscho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...
4	hey, lin. did i do this hi-tech graphic correc...	[hey, lin, hi, tech, graphic, correctly, check...	hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...

In [53]: `all_words = ' '.join([word for word in df['text_string']])`

```
In [55]: nltk.download('punkt')
tokenized_words = nltk.tokenize.word_tokenize(all_words)

[nltk_data] Downloading package punkt to
[nltk_data] C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Roaming\nltk_data...
[nltk_data] Package punkt is already up-to-date!

In [56]: from nltk.probability import FreqDist

In [59]: fdist = FreqDist(tokenized_words)
fdist

Out[59]: FreqDist({'ham4ham': 179656, 'https': 151378, 'lottery': 47231, 'tickets': 40197, 'via': 39641, 'win': 39517, 'hamiltour': 39082, 'lucky_seat': 38094, 'entere d': 37967, 'lin_manuel': 34816, ...})

In [61]: df['text_string_fdist'] = df['text_token'].apply(lambda x: ' '.join([item for it

In [63]: df[['text', 'text_token', 'text_string', 'text_string_fdist']].head()

Out[63]:
```

	text	text_token	text_string	text_string_fdist
0	hosts with the mosts! still hamming it up. inc...	[hosts, mosts, still, hamming, incredible, tal...	hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...	hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...
1	mentally we're still at last week's #ham4ham. ...	[mentally, still, last, week, ham4ham, tbt, ht...	mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https s6a...	mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https
2	mentally we're still at last week's #ham4ham. ...	[mentally, still, last, week, ham4ham, tbt, ht...	mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https s6a...	mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https
3	@bwaysho will there be a #ham4ham performance ...	[bwaysho, ham4ham, performance, friday, n, nwi...	bwaysho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...	bwaysho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...
4	hey, lin. did i do this hi-tech graphic correc...	[hey, lin, hi, tech, graphic, correctly, check...	hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...	hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...

```
In [65]: from nltk.stem import WordNetLemmatizer
nltk.download('wordnet')

[nltk_data] Downloading package wordnet to
[nltk_data] C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Roaming\nltk_data...
[nltk_data] Package wordnet is already up-to-date!

Out[65]: True

In [67]: wordnet_lem = WordNetLemmatizer()

In [69]: df['text_string_lem'] = df['text_string_fdist'].apply(wordnet_lem.lemmatize)

In [71]: df['is_equal'] = (df['text_string_fdist'] == df['text_string_lem'])
```

```
In [73]: df.is_equal.value_counts()
```

```
Out[73]: is_equal  
True    175911  
Name: count, dtype: int64
```

```
In [75]: df
```

24/04/2026, 12:44

Ham4Ham

Out[75]:

	id	conversation_id	referenced_tweets.replied_to.id	ref
0	1666834115017031680	1666834115017031680		NaN
1	1666825677331480576	1666825677331480576		NaN
2	1666821908321693697	1666821908321693697		NaN
3	1666801696209530881	1666609403028545539	1.666609e+18	
4	1666481221654700050	1666481221654700050		NaN
...	...	...	...	...
175906	618850474251395072	618850474251395072		NaN
175907	597046870536519681	597045953795862528	5.970460e+17	
175908	589187100781707265	589185944504369152	5.891859e+17	
175909	136930197399289857	136930197399289857		NaN
175910	84831673337905152	84831673337905152		NaN

175911 rows × 89 columns

file:///C:/Users/essie/Downloads/Ham4Ham.html

25/45


```
In [77]: all_words_lem = ' '.join([word for word in df['text_string_lem']])
```

```
In [79]: %matplotlib inline
import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
from wordcloud import WordCloud

wordcloud = WordCloud(width=600,
                       height=400,
                       random_state=2,
                       max_font_size=100).generate(all_words_lem)

plt.figure(figsize=(10, 7))
plt.imshow(wordcloud, interpolation='bilinear')
plt.axis('off');
```

```
-----
ModuleNotFoundError                                Traceback (most recent call last)
Cell In[79], line 3
      1 get_ipython().run_line_magic('matplotlib', 'inline')
      2 import matplotlib.pyplot as plt
----> 3 from wordcloud import WordCloud
      5 wordcloud = WordCloud(width=600,
      6                       height=400,
      7                       random_state=2,
      8                       max_font_size=100).generate(all_words_lem)
     10 plt.figure(figsize=(10, 7))

ModuleNotFoundError: No module named 'wordcloud'
```

```
In [81]: import numpy as np

x, y = np.ogrid[:300, :300]
mask = (x - 150) ** 2 + (y - 150) ** 2 > 130 ** 2
mask = 255 * mask.astype(int)

wc = WordCloud(background_color="white", repeat=True, mask=mask)
wc.generate(all_words_lem)

plt.axis("off")
plt.imshow(wc, interpolation="bilinear");
```

```
-----
NameError                                           Traceback (most recent call last)
Cell In[81], line 7
      4 mask = (x - 150) ** 2 + (y - 150) ** 2 > 130 ** 2
      5 mask = 255 * mask.astype(int)
----> 7 wc = WordCloud(background_color="white", repeat=True, mask=mask)
      8 wc.generate(all_words_lem)
     10 plt.axis("off")

NameError: name 'WordCloud' is not defined
```

```
In [83]: from nltk.tokenize import word_tokenize
from nltk.probability import FreqDist
```



```
words = nltk.word_tokenize(all_words_lem)
fd = FreqDist(words)
```

```
In [85]: fd.most_common(20)
```

```
Out[85]: [('ham4ham', 179656),
 ('https', 151378),
 ('lottery', 47231),
 ('tickets', 40197),
 ('via', 39641),
 ('win', 39517),
 ('hamiltour', 39082),
 ('lucky_seat', 38094),
 ('entered', 37967),
 ('lin_manuel', 34816),
 ('today', 30342),
 ('show', 23015),
 ('hamiltonmusical', 19944),
 ('amp', 17795),
 ('digital', 17776),
 ('hamilton', 16193),
 ('live', 11955),
 ('love', 9703),
 ('tonight', 7543),
 ('video', 7451)]
```

```
In [87]: fd.tabulate(20)
```

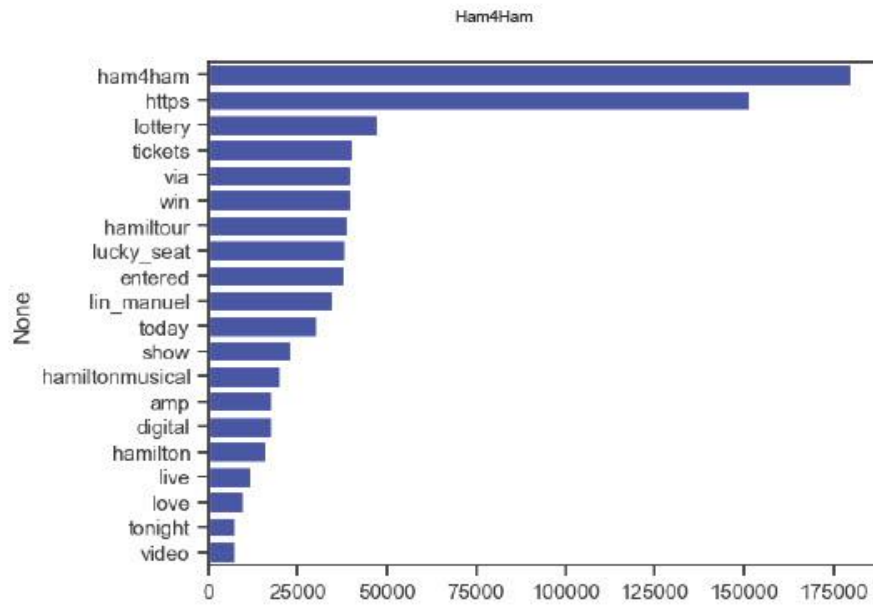
	ham4ham	https	lottery	tickets	via
win	hamiltour	lucky_seat	entered	lin_manuel	tod
ay	show	hamiltonmusical	amp	digital	hamilto
n	live	love	tonight	video	
	179656	151378	47231	40197	39641
39517	39082	38094	37967	34816	3
0342	23015	19944	17795	17776	16
193	11955	9703	7543	7451	

```
In [89]: top_20 = fd.most_common(20)
fdist = pd.Series(dict(top_20))
```

```
In [91]: import seaborn as sns
sns.set_theme(style="ticks")

sns.barplot(y=fdist.index, x=fdist.values, color='blue')
```

```
Out[91]: <Axes: ylabel='None'>
```



```
In [92]: import plotly.express as px

fig = px.bar(y=fdist.index, x=fdist.values)

# sort values
fig.update_layout(barmode='stack', yaxis={'categoryorder': 'total ascending'})

# show plot
fig.show()
```



```
In [95]: nltk.download('vader_lexicon')
from nltk.sentiment import SentimentIntensityAnalyzer

analyzer = SentimentIntensityAnalyzer()

[nltk_data] Downloading package vader_lexicon to
[nltk_data] C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Roaming\nltk_data...
[nltk_data] Package vader_lexicon is already up-to-date!

In [96]: df['polarity'] = df['text_string_lem'].apply(lambda x: analyzer.polarity_scores(
df.tail
```

```

Out[96]: <bound method NDFrame.tail of
\
0      1666834115017031680  1666834115017031680
1      1666825677331480576  1666825677331480576
2      1666821908321693697  1666821908321693697
3      1666801696209530881  1666609403028545539
4      1666481221654700050  1666481221654700050
...
175906  618850474251395072  618850474251395072
175907  597046870536519681  597045953795862528
175908  589187100781707265  589185944504369152
175909  136930197399289857  136930197399289857
175910  84831673337905152   84831673337905152

referenced_tweets.replied_to.id  referenced_tweets.retweeted.id \
0      NaN                      1.664328e+18
1      NaN                      1.666822e+18
2      NaN                      NaN
3      1.666609e+18              NaN
4      NaN                      1.664688e+18
...
175906  NaN                      NaN
175907  5.970460e+17             NaN
175908  5.891859e+17             NaN
175909  NaN                      NaN
175910  NaN                      NaN

referenced_tweets.quoted.id      author_id  in_reply_to_user_id
\
0      NaN                      17895308      NaN
1      NaN                      359704818      NaN
2      NaN                      1522329679599915010  NaN
3      NaN                      1008159428863057920  259502994.0
4      NaN                      1650988957428076549      NaN
...
175906  NaN                      2863488598      NaN
175907  NaN                      320849555      320849555.0
175908  NaN                      320849555      320849555.0
175909  NaN                      284064962      289831085.0
175910  NaN                      296533870      35206553.0

in_reply_to_username  retweeted_user_id  retweeted_username  ... \
0      NaN            7.554239e+17      SullivanTweet  ...
1      NaN            1.522330e+18      ITWBroadway    ...
2      NaN            NaN              NaN            ...
3      BwaySHO        NaN              NaN            ...
4      NaN            1.637560e+08      SeanHayes      ...
...
175906  NaN            NaN              NaN            ...
175907  W6MOQ         NaN              NaN            ...
175908  W6MOQ         NaN              NaN            ...
175909  NaN            NaN              NaN            ...
175910  NaN            NaN              NaN            ...

__twarc.retrieved_at \
0      2023-06-08T21:45:31+00:00
1      2023-06-08T21:45:31+00:00
2      2023-06-08T21:45:31+00:00
3      2023-06-08T21:45:31+00:00
4      2023-06-08T21:45:31+00:00

```

```

...
175906 2023-06-08T23:54:19+00:00
175907 2023-06-08T23:54:19+00:00
175908 2023-06-08T23:54:19+00:00
175909 2023-06-08T23:54:19+00:00
175910 2023-06-08T23:54:19+00:00

...
__twarc.url __twarc.version \
0 https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?ex... 2.14.0
1 https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?ex... 2.14.0
2 https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?ex... 2.14.0
3 https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?ex... 2.14.0
4 https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?ex... 2.14.0
...
175906 https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?ex... 2.14.0
175907 https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?ex... 2.14.0
175908 https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?ex... 2.14.0
175909 https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?ex... 2.14.0
175910 https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?ex... 2.14.0

public_metrics.bookmark_count \
0 8
1 1
2 1
3 0
4 0
...
175906 0
175907 0
175908 0
175909 0
175910 0

text_token \
0 [hosts, mosts, still, hamming, incredible, tal...
1 [mentally, still, last, week, ham4ham, tbt, ht...
2 [mentally, still, last, week, ham4ham, tbt, ht...
3 [bwaysho, ham4ham, performance, friday, n, nwi...
4 [hey, lin, hi, tech, graphic, correctly, check...
...
175906 [announcing, ham4ham, lottery, 2, 5, hrs, perf...
175907 [service, mute, function, sounds, gud, manage,...
175908 [service, imho, mute, function, sounds, gud, m...
175909 [traveytrey, youtube, views, make, 50tyson, fe...
175910 [meganamram, would, parents, accept, large, ha...

text_string \
0 hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...
1 mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https s6a...
2 mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https s6a...
3 bwaysho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...
4 hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...
...
175906 announcing ham4ham lottery hrs perfs submit na...
175907 service mute function sounds gud manage friend...
175908 service imho mute function sounds gud manage n...
175909 traveytrey youtube views make 50tyson feel lik...
175910 meganamram would parents accept large ham base...

text_string_fdist \

```

```

0      hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...
1          mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https
2          mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https
3      bwaysho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...
4      hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...
...
175906 announcing ham4ham lottery hrs perfs submit na...
175907 service mute function sounds manage friends th...
175908 service mute function sounds manage necessary ...
175909     youtube views make feel like justin ham4ham
175910 would parents accept large ham based yes may h...

```

```

                                text_string_len  is_equal  \
0      hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...    True
1          mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https    True
2          mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https    True
3      bwaysho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...    True
4      hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...    True
...
175906 announcing ham4ham lottery hrs perfs submit na...    True
175907 service mute function sounds manage friends th...    True
175908 service mute function sounds manage necessary ...    True
175909     youtube views make feel like justin ham4ham    True
175910 would parents accept large ham based yes may h...    True

```

```

                                polarity
0      {'neg': 0.0, 'neu': 0.781, 'pos': 0.219, 'comp...
1      {'neg': 0.0, 'neu': 1.0, 'pos': 0.0, 'compound...
2      {'neg': 0.0, 'neu': 1.0, 'pos': 0.0, 'compound...
3      {'neg': 0.0, 'neu': 0.693, 'pos': 0.307, 'comp...
4      {'neg': 0.0, 'neu': 1.0, 'pos': 0.0, 'compound...
...
175906 {'neg': 0.0, 'neu': 1.0, 'pos': 0.0, 'compound...
175907 {'neg': 0.0, 'neu': 0.625, 'pos': 0.375, 'comp...
175908 {'neg': 0.0, 'neu': 0.6, 'pos': 0.4, 'compound...
175909 {'neg': 0.0, 'neu': 0.706, 'pos': 0.294, 'comp...
175910 {'neg': 0.0, 'neu': 0.569, 'pos': 0.431, 'comp...

```

```
[175911 rows x 90 columns]>
```

In [100...

```

df = pd.concat(
    [df.drop(['id', 'author_id', 'polarity'], axis=1),
      df['polarity'].apply(pd.Series)], axis=1)
df.head

```

```

Out[100... <bound method NDFrame.head of
plied_to.id \
0      1666834115017031680      NaN
1      1666825677331480576      NaN
2      1666821908321693697      NaN
3      1666609403028545539      1.666609e+18
4      1666481221654700050      NaN
...      ...
175906      618850474251395072      NaN
175907      597045953795862528      5.970460e+17
175908      589185944504369152      5.891859e+17
175909      136930197399289857      NaN
175910      84831673337905152      NaN

referenced_tweetsretweeted.id referenced_tweets.quoted.id \
0      1.664328e+18      NaN
1      1.666822e+18      NaN
2      NaN      NaN
3      NaN      NaN
4      1.664688e+18      NaN
...      ...
175906      NaN      NaN
175907      NaN      NaN
175908      NaN      NaN
175909      NaN      NaN
175910      NaN      NaN

in_reply_to_user_id in_reply_to_username retweeted_user_id \
0      NaN      NaN      7.554239e+17
1      NaN      NaN      1.522330e+18
2      NaN      NaN      NaN
3      259502994.0      BwaySHO      NaN
4      NaN      NaN      1.637560e+08
...      ...
175906      NaN      NaN      NaN
175907      320849555.0      W6MOQ      NaN
175908      320849555.0      W6MOQ      NaN
175909      289831085.0      NaN      NaN
175910      35206553.0      NaN      NaN

retweeted_username quoted_user_id quoted_username ... \
0      SullivanTweet      NaN      NaN      ...
1      ITWBroadway      NaN      NaN      ...
2      NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
3      NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
4      SeanHayes      NaN      NaN      ...
...      ...
175906      NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
175907      NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
175908      NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
175909      NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
175910      NaN      NaN      NaN      ...

public_metrics.bookmark_count \
0      8
1      1
2      1
3      0
4      0
...      ...

```

175906
175907
175908
175909
175910

0
0
0
0
0

text_token \

0 [hosts, mosts, still, hamming, incredible, tal...
1 [mentally, still, last, week, ham4ham, tbt, ht...
2 [mentally, still, last, week, ham4ham, tbt, ht...
3 [bwayscho, ham4ham, performance, friday, n, nwi...
4 [hey, lin, hi, tech, graphic, correctly, check...
...
175906 [announcing, ham4ham, lottery, 2, 5, hrs, perf...
175907 [service, mute, function, sounds, gud, manage...
175908 [service, imho, mute, function, sounds, gud, m...
175909 [traveytrey, youtube, views, make, 50tyson, fe...
175910 [meganamram, would, parents, accept, large, ha...

text_string \

0 hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...
1 mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https s6a...
2 mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https s6a...
3 bwayscho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...
4 hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...
...
175906 announcing ham4ham lottery hrs perfs submit na...
175907 service mute function sounds gud manage friend...
175908 service imho mute function sounds gud manage n...
175909 traveytrey youtube views make 50tyson feel lik...
175910 meganamram would parents accept large ham base...

text_string_fdist \

0 hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...
1 mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https
2 mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https
3 bwayscho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...
4 hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...
...
175906 announcing ham4ham lottery hrs perfs submit na...
175907 service mute function sounds manage friends th...
175908 service mute function sounds manage necessary ...
175909 youtube views make feel like justin ham4ham
175910 would parents accept large ham based yes may h...

text_string_lem is_equal neg \

0	hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...	True	0.0
1	mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https	True	0.0
2	mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https	True	0.0
3	bwayscho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...	True	0.0
4	hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...	True	0.0
...	...	...	...
175906	announcing ham4ham lottery hrs perfs submit na...	True	0.0
175907	service mute function sounds manage friends th...	True	0.0
175908	service mute function sounds manage necessary ...	True	0.0
175909	youtube views make feel like justin ham4ham	True	0.0
175910	would parents accept large ham based yes may h...	True	0.0

neu pos compound

0 0.781 0.219 0.4215

1	1.000	0.000	0.0000
2	1.000	0.000	0.0000
3	0.693	0.307	0.7351
4	1.000	0.000	0.0000
...	...	...	...
175906	1.000	0.000	0.0000
175907	0.625	0.375	0.7184
175908	0.600	0.400	0.7184
175909	0.706	0.294	0.3612
175910	0.569	0.431	0.6486

[175911 rows x 91 columns]>

```
In [101]: df['sentiment'] = df['compound'].apply(lambda x: 'positive' if x > 0 else 'neutral')
df.head
```

```

Out[101]: <bound method NDFrame.head of conversation_id referenced_tweets.re
plied_to.id \
0      1666834115017031680      NaN
1      1666825677331480576      NaN
2      1666821908321693697      NaN
3      1666609403028545539      1.666609e+18
4      1666481221654700050      NaN
...      ...
175906  618850474251395072      NaN
175907  597045953795862528      5.970460e+17
175908  589185944504369152      5.891859e+17
175909  136930197399289857      NaN
175910  84831673337905152      NaN

referenced_tweets.retweeted.id referenced_tweets.quoted.id \
0      1.664328e+18      NaN
1      1.666822e+18      NaN
2      NaN      NaN
3      NaN      NaN
4      1.664688e+18      NaN
...      ...
175906  NaN      NaN
175907  NaN      NaN
175908  NaN      NaN
175909  NaN      NaN
175910  NaN      NaN

in_reply_to_user_id in_reply_to_username retweeted_user_id \
0      NaN      NaN      7.554239e+17
1      NaN      NaN      1.522330e+18
2      NaN      NaN      NaN
3      259502994.0      BwaySHO      NaN
4      NaN      NaN      1.637560e+08
...      ...
175906  NaN      NaN      NaN
175907  320849555.0      W6MOQ      NaN
175908  320849555.0      W6MOQ      NaN
175909  289831085.0      NaN      NaN
175910  35206553.0      NaN      NaN

retweeted_username quoted_user_id quoted_username ... \
0      SullivanTweet      NaN      NaN      ...
1      ITWBroadway      NaN      NaN      ...
2      NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
3      NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
4      SeanHayes      NaN      NaN      ...
...      ...
175906  NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
175907  NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
175908  NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
175909  NaN      NaN      NaN      ...
175910  NaN      NaN      NaN      ...

text_token \
0      [hosts, mosts, still, hamming, incredible, tal...
1      [mentally, still, last, week, ham4ham, tbt, ht...
2      [mentally, still, last, week, ham4ham, tbt, ht...
3      [bwaysho, ham4ham, performance, friday, n, nwi...
4      [hey, lin, hi, tech, graphic, correctly, check...
...      ...

```

```

175906 [announcing, ham4ham, lottery, 2, 5, hrs, perf...
175907 [service, mute, function, sounds, gud, manage,...
175908 [service, imho, mute, function, sounds, gud, m...
175909 [traveytrey, youtube, views, make, 50tyson, fe...
175910 [meganamram, would, parents, accept, large, ha...

```

```

                                text_string \
0      hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...
1      mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https s6a...
2      mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https s6a...
3      bwayscho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...
4      hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...
...
175906 announcing ham4ham lottery hrs perfs submit na...
175907 service mute function sounds gud manage friend...
175908 service imho mute function sounds gud manage n...
175909 traveytrey youtube views make 50tyson feel lik...
175910 meganamram would parents accept large ham base...

```

```

                                text_string_fdist \
0      hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...
1      mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https
2      mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https
3      bwayscho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...
4      hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...
...
175906 announcing ham4ham lottery hrs perfs submit na...
175907 service mute function sounds manage friends th...
175908 service mute function sounds manage necessary ...
175909 youtube views make feel like justin ham4ham
175910 would parents accept large ham based yes may h...

```

```

                                text_string_lem is_equal neg \
0      hosts mosts still hamming incredible talent ha...      True 0.0
1      mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https      True 0.0
2      mentally still last week ham4ham tbt https      True 0.0
3      bwayscho ham4ham performance friday nwill air b...      True 0.0
4      hey lin tech graphic correctly checking see ha...      True 0.0
...
175906 announcing ham4ham lottery hrs perfs submit na...      True 0.0
175907 service mute function sounds manage friends th...      True 0.0
175908 service mute function sounds manage necessary ...      True 0.0
175909 youtube views make feel like justin ham4ham      True 0.0
175910 would parents accept large ham based yes may h...      True 0.0

```

```

                                neu pos compound sentiment
0      0.781 0.219 0.4215 positive
1      1.000 0.000 0.0000 neutral
2      1.000 0.000 0.0000 neutral
3      0.693 0.307 0.7351 positive
4      1.000 0.000 0.0000 neutral
...
175906 1.000 0.000 0.0000 neutral
175907 0.625 0.375 0.7184 positive
175908 0.600 0.400 0.7184 positive
175909 0.706 0.294 0.3612 positive
175910 0.569 0.431 0.6486 positive

```

```
[175911 rows x 92 columns]>
```

```

In [103.. df.loc[df['compound'] > 0].idxmax()).values

Out[103.. array([986781515223715840, nan, nan, 9.866560182382387e+17, nan, nan, nan,
nan, 79923701.0, 'Lin_Manuel', '2018-04-19T01:40:21.000Z',
'the #ham4ham youtube videos were a joy for those of us far away. (i fee
l especially lucky i got to experience one in person as well). i love the remin
der that it is street theatre! love love love this. https://t.co/q10ic5hbxj',
'en', nan, 0, 0, 0, 0, 3, 'everyone', '["986781515223715840"]', 5,
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'{"start": 5, "end": 11, "probability": 0.7474, "type": "Other", "norma
lized_text": "Ham4Ham"}, {"start": 13, "end": 19, "probability": 0.9737, "typ
e": "Other", "normalized_text": "YouTube"}, {"start": 165, "end": 178, "probabi
lity": 0.8165, "type": "Place", "normalized_text": "Street Theatre"}]],
nan, '["#Ham4Ham"]', nan,
'["https://twitter.com/lin_manuel/status/986656018238238720"]',
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on": "Entity Service top level domain, every item that is in Entity Service sh
ould be in this domain"}, "entity": {"id": "781974596752842752", "name": "Servi
ces"}}, {"domain": {"id": "47", "name": "Brand", "description": "Brands and Com
panies"}, "entity": {"id": "10029382357", "name": "YouTube"}}]],
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'2015-08-07T07:17:27.000Z', 'tinkbp', 'Becky Potter',
'Director, performer, scholar, super musical theatre nerd, taking a paus
e from my theatre education gigs to get these 2 daughters up and running. she/h
er',
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'https://pbs.twimg.com/profile_images/1524121091882377216/YEtVg8X1_norma
l.jpg',
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'https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?expansions=author_id%2Cin_r
eply_to_user_id%2Creferenced_tweets.id%2Creferenced_tweets.id.author_id%2Centit
ies.mentions.username%2Cattachments.poll_ids%2Cattachments.media_keys%2Cgeo.pla
ce_id%2Cedit_history_tweet_ids&tweet.fields=attachments%2Cauthor_id%2Ccontext_a
nnotations%2Cconversation_id%2Ccreated_at%2Centities%2Cgeo%2Cid%2Cin_reply_to_u
ser_id%2Clang%2Cpublic_metrics%2Ctext%2Cpossibly_sensitive%2Creferenced_tweets%
2Creply_settings%2Csource%2Cwithheld%2Cedit_controls%2Cedit_history_tweet_ids&u
ser.fields=created_at%2Cdescription%2Centities%2Cid%2Clocation%2Cname%2Cpinned_
tweet_id%2Cprofile_image_url%2Cprotected%2Cpublic_metrics%2Curl%2Cusername%2Cve
rified%2Cverified_type%2Cwithheld&media.fields=alt_text%2Cduration_ms%2Cheight%
2Cmedia_key%2Cpreview_image_url%2Ctype%2Curl%2Cwidth%2Cvariants%2Cpublic_metric
s&poll.fields=duration_minutes%2Cend_datetime%2Cid%2Coptions%2Cvoting_status&pl
ace.fields=contained_within%2Ccountry%2Ccountry_code%2Cfull_name%2Cgeo%2Cid%2Cn
ame%2Cplace_type&start_time=2006-03-21T00%3A00%3A00%2B00%3A00&query=%23Ham4Ham&
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l', 'especially', 'lucky', 'got', 'experience', 'one', 'person', 'well', 'lov
e', 'reminder', 'street', 'theatre', 'love', 'love', 'love', 'https', 'co', 'q1
0ic5hbxj'])),
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e one person well love reminder street theatre love love love https q10ic5hbx
j',
'ham4ham youtube videos joy far away feel especially lucky got experienc
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True, 0.0, 0.368, 0.632, 0.9794, 'positive', dtype=object)

```

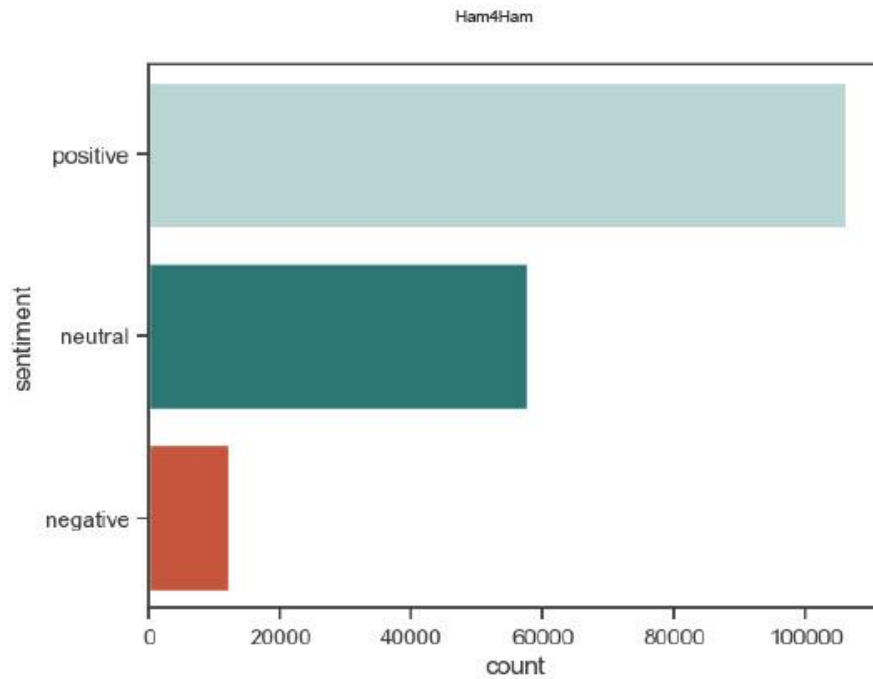
```
In [105... df.loc[df['compound'].idxmin()].values

Out[105... array([804392920807862272, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan,
      '2016-12-01T18:33:11.000Z',
      "burn killed me. i'm dead. @andradaymusic killed me dead. #ham4ham #hami
      ltonmixtape",
      'en', nan, 0, 0, 0, 0, 'everyone', '["804392920807862272"]', 5,
      '2016-12-01T19:03:11.000Z', True, False, nan, nan, nan,
      '[{"start": 58, "end": 64, "probability": 0.5027, "type": "Other", "norm
      alized_text": "Ham4Ham"}, {"start": 67, "end": 81, "probability": 0.3925, "typ
      e": "Person", "normalized_text": "HamiltonMixtape"}]',
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      '2009-03-20T23:43:33.000Z', 'mariinqueerland', 'Mari',
      '❤️ arpace 🍌 gênero-fluid@ (genderqueer) 🌈 ela (she/her/they/them)
      💙 30+ 🖤',
      nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, 'Brazil', nan,
      'https://pbs.twimg.com/profile_images/1618694906955833369/vj-SorWf_norma
      l.jpg',
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      nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan, nan,
      '2023-06-08T23:02:07+00:00',
      'https://api.twitter.com/2/tweets/search/all?expansions=author_id%2Cin_r
      eply_to_user_id%2Creferenced_tweets.id%2Creferenced_tweets.id.author_id%2Centit
      ies.mentions.username%2Cattachments.poll_ids%2Cattachments.media_keys%2Cgeo.pla
      ce_id%2Cedit_history_tweet_ids&tweet.fields=attachments%2Cauthor_id%2Ccontext_a
      nnotations%2Cconversation_id%2Ccreated_at%2Centities%2Cgeo%2Cid%2Cin_reply_to_u
      ser_id%2Clang%2Cpublic_metrics%2Ctext%2Cpossibly_sensitive%2Creferenced_tweets%
      2Creply_settings%2Csource%2Cwithheld%2Cedit_controls%2Cedit_history_tweet_ids&u
      ser.fields=created_at%2Cdescription%2Centities%2Cid%2Clocation%2Cname%2Cpinned_
      tweet_id%2Cprofile_image_url%2Cprotected%2Cpublic_metrics%2Curl%2Cusername%2Cve
      rified%2Cverified_type%2Cwithheld&media.fields=alt_text%2Cduration_ms%2Cheight%
      2Cmedia_key%2Cpreview_image_url%2Ctype%2Curl%2Cwidth%2Cvariants%2Cpublic_metric
      s&poll.fields=duration_minutes%2Cend_datetime%2Cid%2Coptions%2Cvoting_status&pl
      ace.fields=contained_within%2Ccountry%2Ccountry_code%2Cfull_name%2Cgeo%2Cid%2Cn
      ame%2Cplace_type&start_time=2006-03-21T00%3A00%3A00%2B00%3A00&query=%23Ham4Ham&
      max_results=100&next_token=1jzu9lk96gu5npw3iy280b1yz6343ie9qaei4qzf9f99',
      '2.14.0', 0,
      list(['burn', 'killed', 'dead', 'andradaymusic', 'killed', 'dead', 'ham4
      ham', 'hamiltonmixtape']),
      'burn killed dead andradaymusic killed dead ham4ham hamiltonmixtape',
      'burn killed dead andradaymusic killed dead ham4ham hamiltonmixtape',
      'burn killed dead andradaymusic killed dead ham4ham hamiltonmixtape',
      True, 0.815, 0.185, 0.0, -0.9618, 'negative'], dtype=object)
```

```
In [107... sns.countplot(y='sentiment',
                    data=df,
                    palette=['#b2d8d8', '#008080', '#db3d13']
                    );
```

C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Local\Temp\ipykernel_1900\4016490067.py:1: FutureWarning:

Passing 'palette' without assigning 'hue' is deprecated and will be removed in v 0.14.0. Assign the 'y' variable to 'hue' and set 'legend=False' for the same effect.

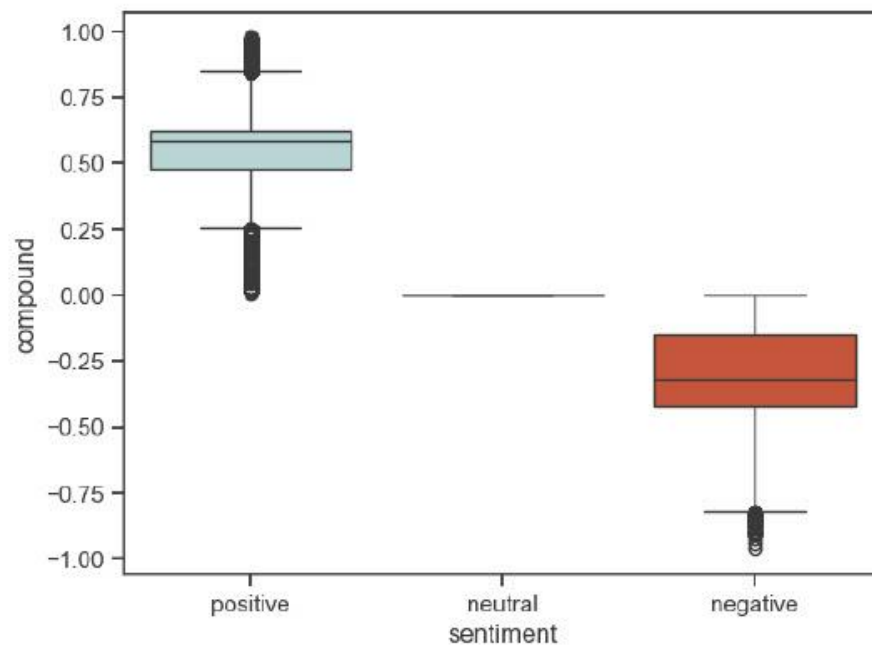


In [109]

```
sns.boxplot(y='compound',  
            x='sentiment',  
            palette=['#b2d8d8', '#008080', '#db3d13'],  
            data=df);
```

C:\Users\Esther\AppData\Local\Temp\ipykernel_1900\2680373653.py:1: FutureWarning:

Passing `palette` without assigning `hue` is deprecated and will be removed in v0.14.0. Assign the `x` variable to `hue` and set `legend=False` for the same effect.



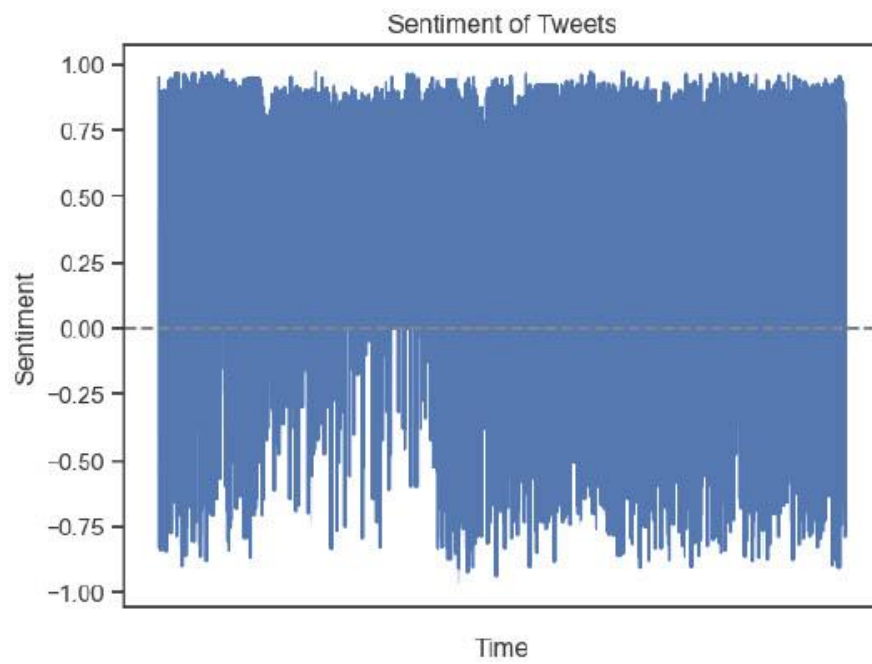
```
In [111] import pandas as pd

In [113] import numpy as np

In [115] g = sns.lineplot(x="created_at", y="compound", data=df)

g.set(xticklabels=[])
g.set(title='Sentiment of Tweets')
g.set(xlabel="Time")
g.set(ylabel="Sentiment")
g.tick_params(bottom=False)

g.axhline(0, ls='--', c = 'grey');
```



```
In [119... plt.plot(df["Time"].values, df["Compound"].values)
```



```

-----
KeyError                                Traceback (most recent call last)
File ~\anaconda3\Lib\site-packages\pandas\core\indexes\base.py:3805, in Index.get_loc(self, key)
    3804 try:
-> 3805     return self._engine.get_loc(casted_key)
    3806 except KeyError as err:

File index.pyx:167, in pandas._libs.index.IndexEngine.get_loc()

File index.pyx:196, in pandas._libs.index.IndexEngine.get_loc()

File pandas\_libs\hashtable_class_helper.pxi:7081, in pandas._libs.hashtable.PyObjectHashTable.get_item()

File pandas\_libs\hashtable_class_helper.pxi:7089, in pandas._libs.hashtable.PyObjectHashTable.get_item()

KeyError: 'Time'

The above exception was the direct cause of the following exception:

KeyError                                Traceback (most recent call last)
Cell In[119], line 1
----> 1 plt.plot(df["Time"].values, df["Compound"].values)

File ~\anaconda3\Lib\site-packages\pandas\core\frame.py:4102, in DataFrame.__getitem__(self, key)
    4100 if self.columns.nlevels > 1:
    4101     return self._getitem_multilevel(key)
-> 4102 indexer = self.columns.get_loc(key)
    4103 if is_integer(indexer):
    4104     indexer = [indexer]

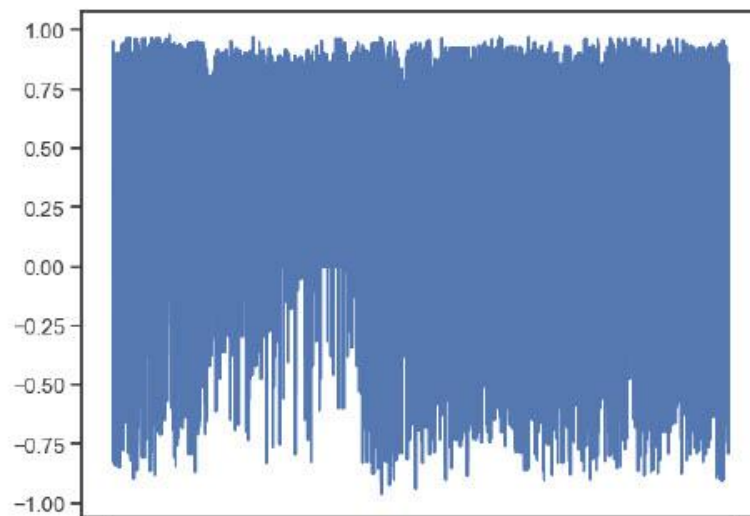
File ~\anaconda3\Lib\site-packages\pandas\core\indexes\base.py:3812, in Index.get_loc(self, key)
    3807     if isinstance(casted_key, slice) or (
    3808         isinstance(casted_key, abc.Iterable)
    3809         and any(isinstance(x, slice) for x in casted_key)
    3810     ):
    3811         raise InvalidIndexError(key)
-> 3812     raise KeyError(key) from err
    3813 except TypeError:
    3814     # If we have a listlike key, _check_indexing_error will raise
    3815     # InvalidIndexError. Otherwise we fall through and re-raise
    3816     # the TypeError.
    3817     self._check_indexing_error(key)

KeyError: 'Time'

```

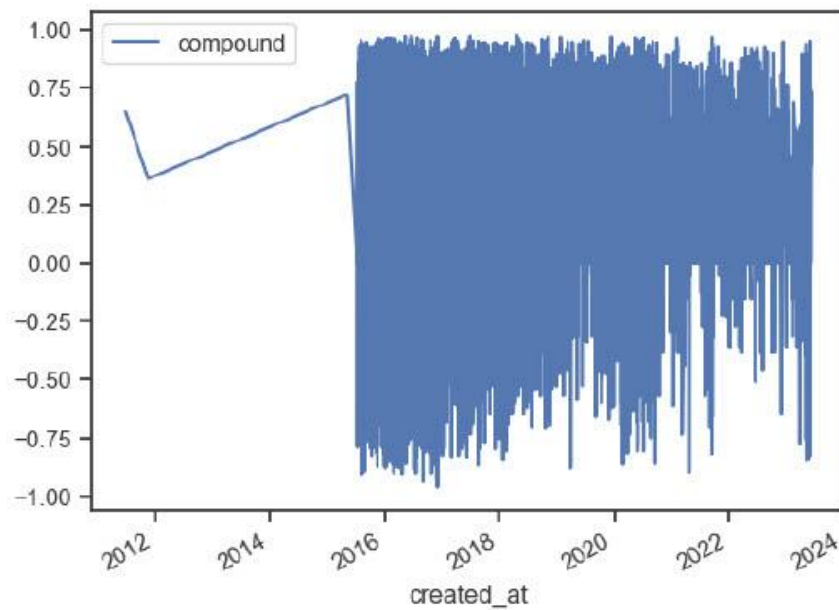
```
In [122] plt.plot(df["created_at"].values, df["compound"].values)
```

```
Out[122] [ <matplotlib.lines.Line2D at 0x1a63d0cbc20> ]
```



In [124... `df["created_at"] = pd.to_datetime(df.created_at)`
`df.plot(x="created_at", y="compound")`

Out[124... `<Axes: xlabel='created_at'>`



In [115... `def cleanup(df):`
`# Every time it says df =`
`# do all the cleanup`
`# extra cleanup`
`return df`

```
In [220]: for filename in [file1, file2]:  
          df = cleanup(pd.read_csv(filename))  
          my_plotting(df)
```

```
-----  
NameError                                Traceback (most recent call last)  
Cell In[220], line 1  
----> 1 for filename in [file1, file2]:  
      2     df = cleanup(pd.read_csv(filename))  
      3     my_plotting(df)  
  
NameError: name 'file1' is not defined
```

```
In [ ]:
```

```
In [ ]:
```

APPENDIX TWO

Deveraux

The following pages contain the dataset of sampled material pertaining to the '5 questions' section of the Deveraux analysis in Chapter Five.

Date	Link	Form	Summary	Key visual features	Key audio features	Key textual features	Themes	Hashtags Assoc	Caption	No. Comments/Responses	Top comment notes	Do the hashtags contain a Hamilton reference?	Is the post related to Hamilton? (Yes/Indirectly/No)	Do the top 3 comments contain a reference to Hamilton? (Yes/Indirectly/No)	Does the post/engagement deal contain elements that could be involved in the show's portrayal of history? (lyrics, choreo, fact/fiction)	Does the post/engagement relate to educational elements?
Pinned, Jan '24	https://www.instagram.com/p/C1mnOg5LdQT/	Reel	Response to recording of him drinking glacier water. Deveraux in a 'Deadpool' T-shirt evidently backstage of a Hamilton performance by setting & presence of a branded sign in the background.	Talking directly to camera; normal clothes; Glacier drinking recording; Deveraux backstage; glacier excerpt label & live captions	Background audio of backstage; (as if) correcting old content; talking to camera. Personal health information as a result. Subverting 'show off' culture on social media.	Label on glacier; captions for speaking to camera	Health warning; 'show off' culture; non-acting.	alaska; glacierwater; vacationtrips; actorslife; tourlife	Dysentery is never a good look; emoji		1. "I was sick for two weeks" "It was the best water I ever had, it was everything you'd expect it to be" Dude do you want me to drink it or not 3200 likes 2. DEAR READER: Just for some prospective, human beings are only 250,000 years old. So drinking 600,000 year old water means this water has pathogens that literally no human being has ever encountered before. ANCIENT BACTERIA, VIRUSES, AND AMOEBAS completely novel to human hosts who'd have zero preexisting immunity. It's actually a great start to a science fiction novel about a zombie apocalypse. 2300 likes	No	No	No	No	No
Pinned, Jan '24	https://www.instagram.com/p/C17ZljdLf4/	Reel	Deveraux backstage speaking to theatre audience, 'live announcing' himself to the audience as the actor playing George III that evening and giving the nightly 'welcome' /health and safety talk. Caption contextualises the announcement within industry requirements.	Deveraux backstage in George III costume, stood next to stage manager in the wing; backstage action off the side of the set; encouraging interaction from actor dressed as Burr; closes with mix down and snippet of opening stage action from the wing; encouragement form stage manager doing	Live theatre audience & their reactions; Deveraux reading 'welcome' script (couple of slight stumbles); stage manager giving notes, cues, tech, "have a lovely show" and other backstage activities; opening notes just after lights goes down	"Live announcing myself for a performnace of Hamilton" [star] in-reel caption	live theatre; backstage; costume; acting	hamilton; hamiltonmusical; kinggeorgeiii; youllbeback; musicaltheatre; behindthescenes; theatre; actorslife; tourlife	Sometimes, I find out less than two hours before showtime that I'm on for the King. When that happens, it means it's too late to add an announcement to the playbill/program so, per union rules, there must be an announcement made before the show begins. The King is the one who makes that announcement, so it's a rare occurrence for the king to		1. [blue heart] [""] [""] 1500 likes 2. "somebody tag the stage manager pls... I need her to start going live" 3900 likes 3. "OKAT BUT MADAM STAGE MANAGER IS EATING" 41,300 likes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

				"3" and "whoop" mannerisms during announcement about his role; at the end Deveraux crazy 'aaah' mannerism to the camera at the end of announcement					make an announcement for himself [king]							
Pinned, Jan '24	https://www.instagram.com/p/C1xORDALJuK/	Reel	Deveraux dressed in casual red or blue outfits in a domestic/hotel room. Audio is a mash up between Hamilton and 'We Don't Talk About Bruno' audios (both written by Lin). Premise is accidentally coming across the name 'Hamilton' in an unrelated context on a day off from working on the show, and how it provokes a 'crazed' reaction against the brain's best wishes.	Hotel room, red/blue outfits, some in-reel captions, sunglasses.	We Don't Talk about Bruno' edit which goes into Hamilton's "My Shot" after "we don't talk about" - "Alexander Hamilton" cuts in instead.	"Seeing the name "Hamilton out of context on a day off", "my brain"	Performing, Disney, Dancing, Tour life	#hamilton; #hamiltonmusic al; # encanto; #wedonttalkaboutbrun o #linmanuelmiranda; #theatre; #musicals; #actorslife; #tourlife	"there's no escape [upside down smiley emoji]"		1. Any time I see the numebr "1776", 400 likes 2. "Teacher: alright can anyone tell me what happened in 1776? Me: 🤔🤔🤔 My brain: NEW YORK CITY!!!!!" 4500 likes 3. "It's apparent Lin wrote both these soundtracks by how perfectly they fit together." 32,900 likes.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
21/09/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/DAKMEXNSFsi/?img_index=1	Post	Gym picture	Mirror selfie in a gym with sweaty, grey top	N/A	N/A	Gym, celebrity	N/A	"bullets? nah I sweat Texas & hearts 🍷"		1. [fire] [fire] [fire] [salsa] [salsa] [salsa] 2. Impressive [applause] [applause] 3. [applause] [heart eyes]	No	No	No	No	No
14/09/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C_6JHUUysrD/	Reel	Part 31 of a series on words Deveraux learned doing Hamilton; Deveraux sat backstage in King costume, pointing& reacting to word/Disney+	King costume, Disney+ film clip, Deveraux responding to added text/content, added text/content.	Siri-voice saying the word 'Intemperate' then excerpt from "My Obedient Servant" using the word ligning up with a Disney+ film	Captions to give meaning to reel (he says nothing verbally, all put over a silent video) "words I learned doing Hamilton part 31", "intemperate", then dictionary definition	Learning, costume, backstage, tour life	#hamilton; #hamiltonmusic al; #theatre; #theatrekid; #vocabulary; #vocabularywords	"and with that, the hamilton words series comes to an end. Thanks for watching, yall"		1. wait this series is over now. 6 likes. 2. Really enjoyed this series but "learnt" as not proper for American English has been driving me nuts!. 2 likes. 3. Please please please keep them coming your series helps people (like me) who need sometimes need extra explanations to completely	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No	Yes

			clip/definitions/ of the word - 'intemperate'		clip imposed over his head						understand.. . No likes visible.					
02/09/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C_a_KgRPJOO/	Reel	Deveraux backstage, switching between the costumed characters of King and Washington, using a costume ring as the point of change. A track 'Switch' plays in the background. Comedy when drops ring.	King costume, Washington costume, backstage	'Switch' audio track	None	King, Washington, Costume, backstage	#hamiltonmusic al; #transition; #broadway; #musicals; #georgewashignton; #kinggeorgeiii	not how I though the ending would go but it kinda eats [laugh cry emoji, open mouth, single tear]		1. See you in LA on Oct. 13th! [kiss emoji, 1 wink]. 1 like. 2. [cry laugh, 2 tears]x5,[heart eyes]x3. 1 like. 3. Oh this was smooth. 2 likes.	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No	No
27/08/2024	See 1st pinned															
20/08/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C5gaCaxFLI/	Reel	Continuation of 'words I learned doing Hamilton' - "faction"	See 14/09/24. Deveraux in King costume, Disney+ film footage	"It must be nice" song from show	"words I learned doing Hamilton part 30", "faction", definition	Learning, costume, backstage, tour life	#hamiltonmusic al; #hamilton; #hamilton; #theatre; #broadway; #vocabularywords; #wordoftheday	so what pro wrestling taught em was...right [cool emoji]		1. I learned it from divergent haha. 30 likes. 2. In brazil we learn this Word very soon In our lives [tear sad emoji]. No likes. 3. [Applause emoji]. No likes.	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
04/08/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/CQuZSpP0LR/	Post	Self-help advice with a rose promoting selflove	Pink rose with luminescent flame, accompanied by text	N/A	"start dedicating love songs to yourself and watch your life change"	self-help, influencer	N/A	this ones for you [mirror]		N/A	No	No	No	No	No
02/07/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C87naCnT406/?img_index=1	Post	Selection of personal photos summarising the month of June	Various pictures with other humans - 2/11 involving backstage in Hamilton costume	'Goodkarma' audio song	N/A	Influencer, personal	#june #dallas #ftworth #tempe #hamiltonmusic al #tourlife	June the most [happy sun]	3	1. Gammage [heart] I tried to message you but do you have specific dates you're on if we wanted to catch you in Tempte? [smiling teeth emoji]. No likes. 2. melanin & muscles [muscle] I live. 1 like. 3. [rainbow] [single eye] [sparkles]. No likes	Yse	Indirectly	Indirectly	No	No
06/06/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C74rCgPvN_D/?img_index=1	Post	Celebrating 5 years of work on Hamilton - 13 associated pictures. Top picture is of a backstage corps outfit, mirror selfie with tongue out.	Corps costume, mirror selfie, backstage	N/A	N/A	Influencer, backstage, tour life	#hamiltonmusic al #theatre #tourlife #actorslife #hamilton #musicaltheatre #broadway #theatrekid	5 years of doing the Ham thing 🌟 On June 6, 2019, I made my debut in Hamilton as M6. While I don't know the exact number, I know I've performed this show well over	26	1. Well said [heart]x3. 1 like. 2. Love love love that you've been on the Hamilton journey for 5 years. aMAzing!!!!. 1 like. 3. How do you look perfect in every role/costume? I have seen teh Philip cast 3 times, but haven't caught you yet. One day! 2 likes.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

									800 times. I've learned innumerable lessons while on tour but if there's one thing that prevails daily is the abundance of uncertainty in life; we don't know what will happen tomorrow, we don't know what others are truly going through, we don't know how we would respond to a moment until the moment occurs. Uncertainty can be frightening and paralyzing; though after this time of moving from city to city, jumping from role to role, and an everchanging routine, I've learned leaning into that uncertainty is what works best for me by practicing radical acceptance. // One of my favorite books is The Four Agreements and the fourth agreement is "Do Your Best". Even if a situation is out of my control, my perspective and effort (which shape my experience) will always be up to me. So shoutout to everybody who									
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

								is uncertain, because, y'all, you are the ONE thing in life you can control and pouring into yourself and your work so you can be a light and do the same for others is one of the most fulfilling prospects of life.								
02/05/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C6btcfuLmNs/?img_index=1	Post	Top picture of "222" in street paint. 10 pictures total, some of which are more clearly associated than others. Meaning of the number is unclear.	Number "222" in white on black background, painted on street.	N/A	222	Unclear, personal	#222	To 222 pt 2, too. [peace fingers]	2	1. #222. No likes. 2. had 2 hit 'em with the 222 & vivienne combo. 1 like. No more.	No	No	No	No	No
02/04/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C5Q1B0GrhPV/?img_index=1	Post	Top picture is of a tattoo, showing a circular shape divided into 4 different patterns. Scrolling through reveals that this is the floors used in sets of Hamilton, and the circle is the turning set floor.	Tattoo, other pictures show design/models of the Hamilton set	'Turntable' audio	N/A	Influencer, tour life, actor life, personal	#hamiltonmusic al #hamilton #davidkorins #setdesign #turntable #tattoos #hamiltontattoos #tattoodesign #newink	5 years ago today, I packed up my life to join the national tour of @hamiltonmusical. (not when I debuted; check back in two months for that post 🥰) That's a good chunk of life so I decided to commemorate this milestone with a physical representation of that journey. I knew I desired a unique yet relatable design specific to my time with the show. // Speaking of time, that's exactly why I chose the turntable set element; while it represents the passing or reclaiming of time, I was keenly inspired by an image	44	1. I can even see the spike marks! Congratulations sir. What an amazing journey. (2 likes. 1 reply, "I think those are my hair follicles...") 2. I want one [fire]. 2 likes. 3. [fire]x4. 1 like.	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No

									that combined the creative stages of @davidkorins design from first draft to final product. For me, this new tattoo represents what can be done with the time we possess; it's a reminder of the work I've finished, the work in progress, and the work that is yet to come. And much like the turntable, it's all happening simultaneously yet at different speeds. // A sincere thanks to @tatu_panda & @houseofathousandroses for bringing this vision to reality with your incredible and indelible gifts44								
01/03/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C3-Yh_LLBNr/?img_index=1	Post	10 photos. Top one is a graffiti cartoon of a man walking in business attire whilst dreaming of childhood fun. Others varied. No obvious links .	Graffiti cartoon	'changes' audio	N/A (top post)	Unclear, personal	N/A	Patching feelings [sewing needle]	0	N/A	No	No	No	No	No	No
01/02/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C2zyalRrzu/	Reel	Reel making fun of the character of John Adams in the show - someone repeatedly referred to in the show but never 'seen'/embodied . Lyric from the show (Cabinet Battle 2, smaller turning point in AH's story)	inserted footage of a black man (poorly cut out of a green screen) and super imposed onto a picture of the Hamilton set, with caption "John Adams in Hamilton: An American Musical".	Voice questioning what someone is doing - "just hanging around". Vital to understanding reel.	Caption vital to meaning of reel.	Hamilton show	#hamilton #hamiltonmusical #johnadams #musicaltheatre #theatrekid #hamiltonmemes #theatre	Siddown, John [chair]	4	1. John Adams? I know him. That can't be. He's that little guy that spoke to me. 31 likes. 2. Welcome folks, to the Adam's administration [laughing cry 2 tears]x2. 4 likes. Both other lyrics about John Adams. 3. N/A	Yes	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No	

			encaptioned, acknowledging Miranda's accent in it's spelling.													
01/01/2024	https://www.instagram.com/p/C1kPJ99LkNK/	Reel	Uses video game footage ('God of War/ 'Kratos', from hashtags) a picture of the Hamilton set and character captions to represent the show's negative attitude towards the character of John Adams. Needs hashtags to make full sense of it - more meaning knowing where the fighters originated from (expectations of multimedia understanding)	Footage of a fight from a video game, superimposed over a picture of the Hamilton set, with captions for what each represents within the reel.	Fight audio, as if from a video game or comic.	Captions "Hamilton: An American Musical" and "John Adams"	Hamilton show	#hamilton #hamiltonmusical #gotofwar #kratos	little guy stay catching strays [pow] [fist]	10	1. I heard he doesn't have a real job anyway. 29 likes. 2. So accurate [crying laughing 2 tears]x4. No likes. 3. We need a Hamilton 1776 crossover. No likes. Use of lyrics and expectation of knowing other historical musical.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No
06/12/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/C0g4fv_LJR9/	Post	Deveraux backstage, dressed as Jefferson in a mirror selfie holding up the number '10'/'01'. From the hashtags, the post's meaning seems to reference Beyonce. Caption amends Jefferson's line to MY HOUSE instead of 'the house' - personal pop culture link	Jefferson costume, mirror selfie, backstage	N/A	10' / '01'	Backstage, tourlife, character	#hamiltonmusical #renaissance #beyonce #thomassefferson	If there's a fire you're trying to douse, you can't put it out from inside MY HOUSE	7	1. "I am in the camibet, I am complicit in watching grabbing power and kissing it. If washington ain't gonna listen to disciplined dissidence this is the difference this kid is out! OH!". 3 likes 2. Still haven't seen your Laf/Jeff!! 1 like. 3. John Jefferson [laugh]. 1 like.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
03/11/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/CzM3z0WLYg5/?img_index=1	Post	Variety of videos and images of Deveraux on holiday from being on tour	Personal pictures of cruise ship, ticket, self, etc.	Some limited audio e.g. first file is a video with 'uh' noises as reveals the sea view from the cabin .	N/A	Personal, holiday	N/A	Took a break from the glizzies & blizzies to get boozy on a cruizy	21	1. Enjoy [blushing smiling] 1 like 2. [cry laugh]x3 this whole album. 1 like. 3. Love that you got our right when the weather was bad. Hoping your accommodations in Chicago are off of the pedway so you can avoid the	No	No	Indirectly	No	No

											awful windy winter weather. 1 like.					
05/10/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx_8xYrs6bu/	Reel	Footage/audio of black professional man meme superimposed over background of Hamilton stage, with caption. Making fun of character of John Adams and his treatment in the Hamilton show. Needs audio, textual and visual details to make sense, furthered by caption and hashtags' mention of memes.	Black professional man, Hamilton set, caption.	"every time I come here, I am abused"	"John Adams when he's mentioned in Hamilton: An American Musical"	John Adams, Hamilton show, meme	#hamilton; #hamiltonmusical; #johnadams; #historymemes; #theatre; #musicaltheatre	I also heard that he's s[hat] the bed?!		61. "John Adams?! I know him, that can't be. That's that Little Guy who spoke to me... that poor man they're gonna eat him alive" 6 likes 2. [laughing crying] x3. 1 like. 3. [laughing crying] x4. 1 like.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No
04/09/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/Cwx0EuZP21U/	Reel	Footage of Beyonce stage show, with edit of someone squatting as if narrating her trying to read a sign at the back of the audience. Unclear if personal or viral reel. Hashtags & caption indicate wider trends/pop culture with which Deveraux is engaging.	Beyonce flying onstage, edited image of person squatting to focus.	Stadium audio of Beyonce speaking to fans	Captions for what Beyonce has said	Pop culture, personal	#happybeyday #beyonce #beyonce[ac] #renaissanceworldtour #mutechallenge	Happy Bey-day! [bee] Aside from her undeniable talent, stunning beauty & global impact, I love when Beyonce is unintentionally hilarious like this!	551. Were you there last night?!. No likes. 2. @[insert user] this is definitely you and JonJon [2 types of crying laughing]x2. No likes. 3. Pea-can. No likes.	No	No	No	No	No	
11/08/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/Cv0kXH0griE/	Reel	Footage of stage/tech soundcheck, no people, with added captions around John Cena playing character of the King for one night only. Expectation of wider pop cultural understanding.	Hamilton stage footage taken from the auditorium stalls, zooming in.	Theatre audio, rough vocal mark-through	"For one night only: John Cena as King George III"	Tourlife, backstage, pop culture	#hamilton #hamiltonmusical #musicaltheatre #kinggeorgeiii #wwe #johncena	"...which you hurl in the sea when you {can't} see me go by" [waving hand]. Adapted lyrics.	1691. I was just at your show this past weekend that was amazing [star eyes]. No likes. 2. COMING TO SEE THIS IN A COUPLE WEEKS!! Super excited to see this group fo talented people [hugs/care emoji with hearts] [red heart]. No likes. 3. I don't get it [skull]. No likes.	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No	No	

			Meaning unclear.													
01/08/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/CuKQ28grBXI/?img_index=1	Post	Modelling image of Deveraux in cowboyinspired attire, on a sofa, under a glowing sign saying 'sinner'. Club-vibes.	cowboy, sofa, club, modelling	N/A	Sinner'	Modelling, personal	N/A	Love, The Sinner [burning heart]	30	1. [fire] [fire] No likes. 2. oh my gawd [fire] lol. No likes 3. [heart eyes]x3. 1 like.	No	No	No	No	No
06/06/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/CUokHggJx/	Reel	Various backstage videos of cast members including Deveraux. Audio unavailable. Seems to be about the Reynolds pamphlet. Likely only understandable by those with lots of knowledge of the pamphlet, or lots of knowledge about the show (more the latter)	Various cast members in costume, backstage, writing props. Seem to be reacting to props of the pamphlet as partly in-character, like a backstage extension of what's seen in the show.	N/A (now)	N/A	Backstage, Hamilton show	#hamiltonmusical #thereynoldspamphlet #nationaltour #angelicatour #theatre #broadway #acting	Have you read this?! [bookmark]. Lyrics.	75	1. "Alexander, rumours only grow; and we both know what we know". NO likes. 2. @[user]. 1 like. 3. They had the checks stubs from separate accounts... 13 likes (note, some lyrics commented with/without ")	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
02/05/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx06hQLE8Ib/?img_index=1	Post	Image of the Hamilton set put through AI tools and adapted around different lyrics from the show. Selection/generation processes unclear but potentially really interesting for AI's conceptions/understandings based on publically-available data.	Hamilton set redesigned by AI in different forms	N/A	N/A	AI, Hamilton show, set design	#hamiltonmusical #davidkorins #setdesign #ai #multiverse #theatre	Got my thumbs on an A.I. tool & dove into @hamiltonmusical set multiverse [galaxy] 1. Original. Inimitable. 2. A Hurricane destroyed my town. It's planting seeds in a garden you never get to see. 4. Daddy! Daddy! Look! 5. We ride at midnight; Manhattan in	61	1. So cool!!! No likes 2. Can I rent the bouncy house for a party [eyes crossed laughing] No likes 3. This is sort of outstanding! The second one floors me. No likes	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No	No

									the distance. 6. I wish I could tell you what was happening in his brain. 7. Blow us all away. 9. Saw his future dirp drippin down teh drain. 9. Guns & Ships. 10. You're a Hamilton (with price), Philip							
05/04/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/Cqp_MvEAR8z/	Reel	Series of spicy/romantic moments from the Disney+ film between Alexander & Reynolds Vs Angelica - Deveraux miming an audio about what people should / shouldn't do - how the show represents morality through movement and acting	Disney+ footage of Alexander, Mariah and Angelica in various intimate moments, with Deveraux miming the audio inserted over it	No audio from the show - replaced by other audio. "everybody's so creative. See how that looks like everybody wasn't supposed to do that? But we did. There's no other reason you'd do it that way. See how it looks like you probably wouldn't wanna see that? But you've seen it here. See how beautiful that looks? It looks picture perfect, paint a perfect picture? That's how it's supposed to look. See how it looks so differently different? That's what we're going for. Aaaah!"	N/A	Hamilton show meme	#hamilton #hamiltonmusical #everybodysocreative #trending #reaction #theatre #broadway	Everyburdy's so creative [salsa dancer]	20	1. Great lighting and acting tells the whole story. 39 likes. 2. Great direction. 10 likes. 3. Spot on. Spot. On. [laughing crying on an angle] [two hands raised]. 9 likes.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
07/03/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/CpfuU15AxNy/	Reel	Reacting to getting 'dream job' and how imposter syndone doesn't go away	Deveraux sat backstage in normal clothes, trying to push away remaining 'imposter syndrome'. Trending format of responding to added overlayed text.	"wee...wee" trending audio.	"when you get your dream job" at the top, with 3 "(most of) your money problems", "inconsistent health checkups" and	Personal, tour life	#impostersyndrome #dreamjob #selfconfidence #successfulmindset #hamiltonmusical #hamiltour #actorslife #tourlife	make it til you feel like you fake it [upside down smile]	6	1. Yooooooo frfr. No likes 2. [exclamation marks]x3. No likes 3. Chile.... . 1 like	Yes	Indirectly	No	No	No

						"imposter syndrome"										
02/02/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/CoK91MDA7px/	Reel	ABC's of Hamilton; letter of alphabet then inserted clips from Disney+ show where lyrics start with those letters, A through N (part 1, unsure if completed)	Snippets from the Disney+ show, with "[letter]" is for captions added	Audio from the Disney+ show accompanying the film snippets, plus narrator of the "[letter]" is for" captions	[letter] is for	Hamilton show, Disney+	#hamilton #hamiltonmusic al #hamiltour #theatre #broadway #theatrememes #theatrekid	the ABCs of HAM (pt 1) [gold star]	21	1. "JoHN ADamS?" 18 likes 2. Brilliant! [red heart] [red heart] 3 likes 3. @[user] @[user] 3 likes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
20/01/2023	https://www.instagram.com/p/CnpFQVvJwaB/	Reel	Celebrity name game part 1' - seems to reference wider digital cultural trend & pop culture. Improv comedy. Members of cast backstage in dressing room playing the game. This one is around Kristen Bell	Three members of the show backstage in own clothes, discussing / playing the game	Adapting Kristen's name to 'Kristen Fell/Bell/Hell/Dell' etc within improvised sentences.	"celebrity name game: Kristen Bell (part 1)" caption over it all, with 'live captions' of audio discussion	Celebrity, pop culture, trending, backstage	#celebrityname game #celebrity #namegame #fungames #kristenbell #dressingroom #backstagelife #theatre #tourlife	it's Kam's gasp after the punchlines for me [shock horror emoji]	94	1. So has @kristenanniebell seen this? No likes 2. We all now know they're ages with tha tNeptune comment lol. No likes. 3. KRISTEN SHELL ISTG. No likes.	No	No	No	No	No
09/12/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/C19iSYAu8p/	Reel	Exerpt from documentary about Deveraux's experience as an actor. 'Lead on Joyfully' - eventually turns out that its by his previous dept, Texas Christian University. Notes about his story. "Something about seeing someone on stage who looked like me". Plethora of previous roles. Praises TCU too.	Footage of Deveraux walking around NYC, previous roles, TCU and TCU staff, theatre settings like lights, seats, stages.	Deveraux talking about his values and journey, TCU staff being encouraging of him.	Lead on Joyfully', 'TCU', captions for audio.	celebrity, higher education, marketing, actor life	#theatre #broadway #acting #theatrekid #tourlife #hamilton #hamiltonmusic al #tcu #leadon #tcu150	"the stage is a platform for joy" -me[drama masks]	5	1. [heart][fire][raised hands] 0 likes 2.[sparkle][raised hands][sparkle] 0 likes 3. Thank you! 0 likes	Yes	Indirectly	No	No	No
01/11/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/Ckb_cuPglrC/	Reel	Celebrity name game around Tom Hanks - him and another actor playing backstage.	Two men in casual clothing talking to camera, backstage setting, captions	The two playing the game	"celebrity name game: To Hanks" plus captions	Backstage, pop culture, comedy	#hamiltonmusic al #theatre #theatrekid #hamilton #fungames	I love this game and I'm never gonna stop playing [shrug]	628	1. [laugh crying]x5[applause]x3. No likes. 2. @user Tom Tacht [laugh crying]. No likes 3. [laughing crying]. 2 likes.	Yes	No	No	No	No

				and title in video				#standby #broadway									
08/10/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CjdfPSMATfg/	Reel	Experience of auditioning well - hiding insecurities through performance. Deveraux acting out/miming audio.	Deveraux in/walking around what looks like a hotel room	External audio: "thank you so much" - Laughing - wicked laughing - "thank you for being so dumb"	"when you leave the audition knowing they actually believed your performance"	acting life	#acting #theatre #auditions #casting #thetarekid #commercialcasting #actorslife #entertainment	finesse the room [cool sunglasses emoji]	51. [Laugh crying on angle] x2. 1 like 2. One day I was performing a monologue of a nervous student during a difficult test. What can I say, me being nervous for real convinced half the class I was good at acting :) 7 likes. 3. isn't that the point of acting????/ to convince people you are the character ie believe your performance???? 8 likes.	No	No	No	No	No	No	
07/09/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CiN8IHpPbjS/?img_index=1	Post	Leaving Angelica Company - selection of photos and videos from the experience - mostly backstage with other cast members	First item is an end-of show video of the cast dancing and partying in costume to Hamilton-themed jazz piano after taking bows as audience cheers.	Audience cheering, Hamilton themed jazz piano	N/A	Hamilton, tour life, gratitude, actors life, backstage	N/A	And just like that it's over. My time with the Angelica company has come to an end. touring has been like being in a reverse hyperbolic time chamber where you train/learn with a dense amount of material but the time passes SO quickly 🤯 I can only give thanks for being able to absorb all the lessons I've learned from observing and connecting with the incredibly talented members of this company. Gratitude and love 1. #angelicatour's first curtain call after	461. Congrats on everything, John!! [heart]. No likes. 2. [fire][trophy][applause] So much more to come! 3. Even seeing the show a second time, I was excited to see YOU specifically perform after falling in love with you here on instagram. [two hearts] My seven year old even recognised you and would tap me and point every time you were on stage. No likes.	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	

									lockdown 2. basking in queen @youknowum oh's beauty 3. on a night where I didn't feel seen, i was somebody's favorite (and was gifted a custom 3D printed Christmas tree topper!) 4. acting up on @dezdance20's final show 5. @kamerondric hardson appreciation post 6. It's always a time in the hair room w/ @hair_ashley @terrance_martin @youknowum oh 7. A news feature in my college town of Ft. Worth 8. A mantra from @willtravis 9. me & @lenceeee_'s comedic chemistry can't be beat (she is the 5 to my 6. I love you!) 10. Onward and Upward 						
13/08/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/ChNs_nFgK4m/	Reel	Why Stay Alive is Deveraux's favourite song in Hamilton - Disney+ film clip with his commentary edited in. Gives additional detail and insight into the song and how close everyone is to death through the presence of the bullet dancer & british guns with how	Disney+ film footage, Deveraux selfie video	Disney+ film audio, Deveraux's commentary	"why stay alive is my favourite osng in Hamiton [star]" plus captions	Hamilton, show insights/unpacked	#hamiltonmusic al #hamilton #theatre #stayalive #linmanuelmiranda #storytelling #scenestudy	and the blue coats during Lee's rap? [crossed fingers into heart]	81. Cried my eyes out watching this part live in Philly last year! No likes. 2. Agree 1000%. The Bullet is my favourite part of this entire msuical. It's brilliant storytelling. 4 likes. 3. The choreography is stunning. There's always something else to notice- always something to make youwatch again, to see tha tmoment you missed. Thank you for this! 14 likes.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

			choreography is used.														
11/07/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/Cf4UACuLTbg/?img_index=1	Post	Various images of time spent in New Orleans	Top image of bright green graffiti about self-confidence and self-reliance	N/A	First post, "Papa May Have Momma May hHave, But God BLESS THE CHILD THAT'S GOT HIS OWN"	Personal, travel	N/A	NOLA, I am full in every sense of the word. [peace hand]		8	1. [laugh crying]x3 that's walking in NOLA any time of year, sha. That humidity hits different. 1 like. 2. I was jus tin NOLA a bit ago and I was literally a puddle of water on the sidewalk [skull]it's so beautiful though!! 1 like. 3. Live at double tree 1 like	No	No	No	No	No
17/06/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/Ce6NuQwgyuE/	Reel	Edited backstage footage to trending audio "nobody's gonna know" with Angelica tour cast responding to Reynolds Pamphlet and Hamilton (played by Deveraux) thinking "nobody's gonna know" as he pens it. Footage later reused to different audio. "Favourite tour collab...for now"	Cast members backstage in costume, with pamphlet props	trending "nobody's gonna know" audio with different characters miming/ responding to different parts	"the bird of the reynolds pamphlet" at start of reel	Backstage, Hamilton show	#hamiltonmusic #hamiltonmemes #theatre #theatrekid #theatrememes #broadway #actorslife #tourlife	my favourite angelica tour collab...for now [smirk]		31	1. [sneeze]x4[laugh cry on angle] No likes 2. Ok so I'm confused why do some people have their mics on the side of their face and others have it at the top 7 likes 3. Fantastic 1 like	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	Indirectly	No
08/05/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CdGcGHJAWF/	Reel	Deveraux in Washington costume dancing away from the camera to circus-style music, "heading to his vine and fig tree", imaginary add-on to lyrics/ character in the show.	Backstage room, Deveraux dancing in final black Washington costume	Circus-style audio	george washington heading to his vine and fig tree after singing one last time	backstage, Hamilton show	#hamiltonmusic #theatre #theatrekid #broadway #theatrememes #hamiltonmemes #broadwaymemes #musicaltheatre #georgewashington	and just like that it's over [peace hand]		24	1. @user Mans marching to sit under his own vine and fig tree no likes 2. Somebody explain pla No likes 3. [laugh cry]x2 No likes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No
10/04/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CdGcGHJAWF/	Reel	Personal record of a meme-	images/videos of Deveraux and others,	Sunroof trending audio	N/A	Personal, pop culture	#partyideas #memes #partytime	everybody understood the		22	1. But most of them are gifs 1 like	No	No	No	No	No

	m/p/CcLCQI qgioO/		themed party Deveraux had	interspersed with their meme counterparts				'partyplanning #memepage	assignment [party face]		2. More on theme than the met gala 2 likes 3. @user 2 likes					
09/03/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/Ca5Et1DA3Ww/	Reel	Selection of footage from Deveraux's international performing career highlights, culminating in 2019 'first time performing on a production contract', overlaid with audio	Captions of each video snippet since 2013, various recordings of stage performances ending in Hamilton at the end of the corps line in curtain call	Trending audio that builds to bassline guitar	Captions e.g. 2019: first time performing on a production contract [paper]	acting life, tour life	#hamiltonmusic al #hamilton #theatre #broadway actorslife #casting #thejourney	and it won't be the last [cool shades]	19	1. [heart][heart] No likes 2. So frikin cool dude No likes 3. [applause] [hands raised] No likes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
24/02/2022	https://www.instagram.com/p/CaXOetZAc0j/	Reel	Deveraux announcing himself as playing King in his hometown - backstage footage of him in costume as backstage activities go on with crew/cast, as part of usual pre-show announcements	Deveraux in King costume, stage manager in backgorund, set in background, cast/crew walking around	Deveraux making announcement backstage, distant audience applause	N/A	backstage, personal, hamilton show, tour life	#hamiltonmusic al #hamilton #kinggeorge #foreveranddev eraux #behindthescen es #theatre #actorslife #casting	live announcing myself for opening night in my hometown? Meta. [rock on hand]	99	1. Well you sure were epic as we Brit's when I saw you just hope you're back to Texas soon so another history lesson you can give but with such musical genius and that wee bit of humour too 1 like 2. DM me [fire]x3 (by 'music_promotion) No likes 3. We saw Hamilton Twice here in El Paso. Second time I bought my friend and said "you got to see this king of England, he kills it. Even adds extra flair in the Reynolds Papers!! It's incredible!!" But then we went and some other dude was playing him. I was like "it must be his understudy" (not taking anything away from Neil, he was great, no question) But he wasn't John Deveraux though. 4 likes.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No
17/12/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CXmTteP4e2/	Post	Picture showing a trophy in style of the Hamilton logo, an encouraging note from an audience member, and a mic pack. Caption about "feeling very unseen".	Hamilton logo trophy, note, mic pack.	N/A	Handwritten note	Personal, Hamilton, actors life, tour life	#hamiltonmusic al #hamilton #hamiltour #theatre #tourlife #broadway #theatrekid #ensemble #sourcemessages	*whew* When I tell you the universe knows exactly what you need to hear WHEN you need to hear it. // Transparent Moment: At times, in my ensemble track, I feel so far 'in the shadows' that the feeling of not even being seen begins to come up. M6 doesn't have	39	1. [heart]x3 [applause] x3 [love eyes] x3 1 like 2. That's awesome [heart] No likes 3. A friend once told me "it's hard to be the glue" and I've always felt that when I've done ensemble work, but I KNOW you bring your all to everything you so. This is so well deserved 2 likes.	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No	No

									much stage time or any features/solo lines. And to be really real, earlier in my hamiltour journey, that used to get to me. If you've been a part of a an ensemble, I'm sure you've felt this at some point. // On a night where I was feeling very unseen, I received a homemade 3D printed Christmas tree topper along with an incredibly inspiring note from an audience member. The note reminded me that it's not about what the role brings to me but what EYE bring to IT; yes, M6 may be 'in the shadows' but the Light that shines through me can't be hidden. // "There are no small roles, only—" well you know the rest.							
12/08/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CSecoEZkHuJH/	Post	Announceme nt of joining the Angelica Tour - paper with Hamilton logo and Deveraux's name on it, meaning made through captions/hashtags	Piece of paper with Hamilton branding/logo and 'John Deveraux'	N/A	JOHN DEVERAUX	Hamilton show, tour life, acting life	#hamiltonmusical #theatre #broadway #broadwayblack #angelicatour #weback	It was only a matter of time [old fashioned clock]	47	1. [fire]x3 so proud of you!!!! No likes 2. Congrats [party popper][confetti] No likes 3. Yes yes yesssssssss No likes	Yes	Yes	Indirectly	No	No

02/06/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CPmGjXSLrVY/?img_index=1	Post	Several pictures. First picture of digital edited post-it-note, faith-based encouragement that things turn out in difficulty of employment/life style as an actor. Other two pictures pull on religious ideas and the US \$1 bill - hashtags and nature of his story/employment bring Hamilton into this picture. Also connects 'pride' celebrations without obvious link (date?)	Mirror selfie with digitally edited post-itnote	N/A	Live righteously and love everyone.	Personal, acting life, tour life, Hamilton, encouragement, influencer, religion, spirituality	#serendipity #seethesigns #coincidence #askseekknock #rightplacerright time #inspirational #encouragement #determination #liverighteously #loveislove #blessothers #happypride #hamiltonmusical	LONG STORY but somebody might need to hear it: // In 2018 when I was living in LA, I was down to my last \$10 bill at one point and praying about specificity in my purpose. I went to Ralph's and bought 4 packs of ramen for \$1 then went next door to dollar store to get some laundry detergent. On the way to the dollar store, I crossed paths with a homeless woman and decided to give her the \$5 bill I had because I needed the singles for laundry. I buy the detergent for another \$1, then go home. I set aside \$2 for laundry, so I have a single dollar bill left. I hadn't really paid attention to the bills I had throughout the day but the one I was left with had "In God We Trust" highlighted on one side and on the other written in pen was "Love" and "Bless Others". I've kept that dollar bill on me ever since as a reminder of my purpose. // FLASH FORWARD to June 2019, it's	12	1. Wow. 0 likes 2. [raised hands]x3 1 like 3. [applause]x2 [heart]x2 0 likes	Yes	indirectly	No	No	No
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									the closing show of Hamilton in East Lansing and we're taking down our name tags in the dressing room. I take my name tag off the mirror and there's a tiny piece of paper stuck on the mirror behind it that says "Live righteously and love everyone." Since I had joined the tour only a month prior, I thought this was like a welcoming thing that everybody							
27/01/2021	https://www.instagram.com/p/CKjjTkLgguv/	Reel	Deveraux mimicking a hair product advertisement, shaking his hair	Deveraux shaking hair	N/A	N/A	Personal	N/A	I've watched one too many shampoo commercials. // Shout out to @brand and @brand though! [raised hands]	21	1. Bouncing and Behaving @thejohndeveraux [heart]x3 No likes 2. Ooo do my hair like that!! Lol! What did you use?? 1 like 3. Curls POPPIN' [fire][100][fire][100] 1 like	No	No	No	No	No
02/06/2020	https://www.instagram.com/p/CA8Ruinp8/?img_index=1	Post	Second post in the day following #BlackoutTuesday - related conversation with a friend from July 2016 about BLM. Then excerpts from a conversation in June 2020 citing "lack of legitimate engagement... from your white friends". Post emphasises the importance of genuine conversation and awareness	Black square with white font about conversation with a friend, followed by the text message conversation	N/A	First: "In 2016 after the police killings of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile, I received the following message from my friend and fraternity brother who is white." Arrow, followed by text screengrabs.	Black lives matter, Blackout Tuesday, politics, personal	#blacklivesmatter #blackouttuesday AND "virtual protest hashtags" #keepamericagreat #nra #armedforces #buildthewall #fitcops #secondamendment #womenfortrump #blueline #alllivesmatter #maga	CONFRONT yourself and others with the racial biases that have been cemented into your personal life experience. // REFLECT on the times where you "shoulda, coulda, woulda" said or did something. // ACT to change and make your voice heard from now on.	18	1. [heart] No likes 2. And he continued to try to grown and open his heart and mind .These are the allies we need. Blessings to him! [strong arm] [high five/prayer] [pink heart] No likes 3. Thank you for having htese conversations. [heart] No likes.	No	No	No	No	No

02/06/2020	https://www.instagram.com/p/CA8BWcnyOj/	Post	Black square for #BlackoutTuesday	Black square	N/A	N/A	Black lives matter, Blackout Tuesday	#BlackoutTuesday #theshowmustbepaused	[solidarity fist]		1. [black heart] No likes	No	No	No	No	No
08/03/2020	https://www.instagram.com/p/B9fDT6H3Ba/	Post	Picture of curtain call at the end of a Hamilton show, accompanied by some lyrics that seem to relate to daylight savings hours and the Hamilton tour - but suggestive of something beyond. Assumption is that Deveraux is in the line.	Picture of curtain call, cast in a line at the front of the stage, holding hands.	N/A	N/A	Hamilton show, Hamilton tour	#hamiltonmusical #hamiltour #hamilton #hamiltonmiami #hamami #angelicatour #philiptour #andpeggytour #andpeggytour #broadway #theatre #broadwayblack #daylightsavings #runningoutoftime	TO the hour we lost: I can't wait to see you again, it's only a matter of time .You may be gone, but we still ain't throwin' away this shot. [timer]	6	1. Thank you for your blood sweat & tears #angelicatour #hamiltonmiami No likes 2. Awesome [raised hands][100] 1 like 3. I wish y'all wer ein the LA cast![crying streams]x3 2 likes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
22/2020	https://www.instagram.com/p/B84SplnHxPn/?img_index=1	Post	Deveraux in corps costume with a cast member in Peggy/Maria costume, praising castmate for their person and performance	Deveraux and castmate in Hamilton costume	N/A	N/A	Hamilton tour, backstage, acting life	#hamiltonmusical #hamiltour #angelicatour #philiptour #andpeggytour #andpeggytour #peggyschuyler #mariareynolds #andpaigey #broadwayblack #broadway #theatre #musicaltheatre	This Queen finally debuted! Only mere hours after doing her put-in for Peggy/Maria, she was going on. Paige is one of my best friends on tour and I am incredibly proud of her for her vulnerability, her poise, and for honoring the beautiful spirit she is onstage and off. Also, the more I look at these pictures, the more I'm starting to believe we might be long lost fraternal twins.	14	1. [heart eyes]x2 1 like 2. Mis syou lots! [winking kiss face][heart] 2 likes 3. [raised hands]x3[heart]x3 You guys are amazing!!!! 1 like	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
01/11/2019	https://www.instagram.com/p/B4UScJrHzNv/?img_index=1	Post	Deveraux showing his Halloween outfit to followers, accompanied by quote from Edgar Allan Poe	Deveraux in elaborate, raven-style costume	N/A	N/A	Personal, halloween, culture	#TheRaven #EdgarAllenPoe #Nevermore #halloween2019 #Halloween2k19	"Other friends have flown before- // On the morrow he will leave me, as my Hopes have flown before. // Quoth the	24	1. [heart eyes]x8 1 like 2. Yas!!!! 1 like 3. [heart eyes]x2 1 like	No	No	No	No	No

								#melanin #asosmen #HalloweenCos tumes #Poetry #thedevilisinthe details #awesomeguysi nsta	Raven, "Nevermore."							
31/07/2019	https://www.instagram.com/p/B0IHn9mHnqw/?img_index=1	Post	Post about debut as Washington on his birthday. Selection of images/videos from the night - top one is cast praying over him before his debut as Washington. Earliest post remaining on his account	Backstage, cast in costumes, cast praying for him with hands on him	Cast mates encouraging him on backstage on #2	N/A	Hamilton, tour life, actors life, gratitude, personal	#HereComesTheJohnneral #thatswordneedsitsownbow #historyhasitseyesonyou #righthandman #onelasttime #hamiltonmusical #hamiltononstage #georgewashingtonton #angelicatour #debut #melaninpopping #touroftheatre #leoseason #goldenbirthday	Along with my birthday, I got to debut my first cover track as George Washington this past weekend! I'm grateful to be a part of such a supportive and generous onstage and off! Oh and I'll get more pictures next go round; I was too busy not trying to hit everything and their mama with that sword sheath. [sword]	72	1. John, I'm so ridiculously proud of you. I remember back in the old Space Station days sitting around and talking about your future as an actor and all those little milestones that led to this. I love you man. Keep killing it. 1 like 2. This is so awesome! 1 like 3. Congratulations superstar 1 like	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

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