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The Broadway of War

How Theater Remembers the American Revolution

Campbell Loeber '18

Give My Regards to Broadway: An Introduction

“The Broadway musical defines our culture, and is in turn, defined by it,” wrote Laurence Maslon in the introduction to his book, *Broadway: The American Musical*.¹ The author contends that Broadway plays (and to some extent musical theater in general) represent a uniquely American art, built on the backs of immigrants. Maslon further posits that American theater and American history have always been uniquely intertwined. Not only has the theater maintained a position of import in the stories of many national icons (Abraham Lincoln, for example) but it has also served as a platform for such stories. Broadway shows, in particular, have a certain aptitude for reflecting the “different social and political forces” that characterize specific generations.² Due to this nature, productions can often become valuable primary sources, especially when they attempt to remember history. Such shows tend to reflect the time they were written in than the period they were intended to describe. Thus, Broadway productions can be used to assess both change and continuity in our nation’s history. Attempts to remember the American Revolution onstage are perhaps the most interesting applications of Broadway as a primary source. The plays aspire towards democratic ideals of the period, while also introducing contemporary issues such as women’s rights or foreign affairs. Productions such as *Dearest Enemy*, *The Patriots, 1776*, and *Hamilton* (written in respective decades of the twentieth century) thus witness a distinctly American art form collide with the defining moments of American history. As such sources offer unique insight into two time periods at once, scholars should better recognize theater as a unique tool for the historian’s craft.

Literary Liberty: The Unlikely Origins of American Drama

The origins of American theater as a primary source can be traced back to December 1829, when the first play based on American history was performed in New York. It was set during King Phillip’s War, a conflict which took place a century before the Revolution (two before Russian-born Irving Berlin would step off a boat and onto Broadway). *Metamora*; or, *the Last of the Wampanoags*, is a tragedy centered on

¹ Michael Kantor and Laurence Manslon, *Broadway: The American Musical* (New York: Bulfinch Press, 2004) 4.

² *Ibid*, 4.

the eponymous Indian Chief (also known as King Phillip). After its premiere, the show gained widespread popularity in the young country; performances did not cease until 1887. Historian Jill Lepore claims that much of the play's appeal had to do with the talent of Edwin Forrest, the actor who played Metamora. In the role, he was described as both "distinctly American" and "wholly Indian."³ Audiences in the 1800s were excited by a native history belonging only to the Americas. Forrest's iconic portrayal of the figure was inspired largely by his love of history and his patriotic view that "Our [American] literature should be independent."⁴ The play thus marks a revolution because it signified the birth of an American form of art.

The production *The Last of the Wampanoags* shows the birth of an American theater separate from the history of Europe. It also indicates a discrepancy between history and memory. The "aboriginal heritage" depicted in the production (though painfully reductive) established America as its "own nation, with a unique culture and ancestral past."⁵ But the production is also chronologically connected to the presidency of Andrew Jackson, who declared his policy of Indian Removal just a week before the play's debut. The production was popular for its espousal of independent American history at a time when the very Native Americans who forged it faced systematic discrimination. Despite this tragic historical irony, the play is notable for its patriotism and aspiration towards Revolutionary American ideals—a recurring theme in American theater. This idealism would both unite the American people and inspire the inclusion of previously marginalized groups on and offstage in the twentieth century.

Republican Mother Murray: The Great War, Suffrage, and *Dearest Enemy*

The first Revolutionary War play of the twentieth century did not focus on a Founding Father, but instead, on the concept of republican motherhood. The comedy appropriately highlighted women's contributions to the Independence effort. Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart's musical, *Dearest Enemy*, is the tale of Mary Lindley Murray, a New York widow who distracted British General William Howe "with her tea and her charms."⁶ The play is based on a story from Revolutionary period folklore. Both the play and the original story credit Murray with preoccupying Howe and his troops long enough for General Washington to cross the state to meet reinforcements. The play embellishes the original tale by introducing an extended cast of young women to aid in the effort of detaining the British troops. Rodgers and Hart also suggest unlikely romantic relationships between several of the Patriot women and the redcoats. Despite these enhancements, the musical does indicate the

³ Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Philip's War and the Origins of American Identity* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), 200.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 194.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 205

⁶ Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, *Dearest Enemy*, produced and directed by Max Liebman, 1955.

changing perception of women's role in American society following the Suffrage movement and World War I.

Dearest Enemy premiered on Broadway in 1925, ten years after an initial suffrage bill in the House failed to reach the required two-thirds majority to pass. But the decade between this failure and the debut of *Dearest Enemy* was one of immense change for American women. By the time the musical opened in New York, "Americans were setting new standards for themselves— what their homes should look like, how they should dress, and even what it meant to be an American."⁷ Women redefined their status in the democracy by continuing to fight for and ultimately gaining the right to vote in 1918. The Nineteenth Amendment was partially made possible by American involvement in the Great War. Women served as nurses, clerks, and volunteers in the army. The Suffragettes collected war bonds and rationed food. President Woodrow Wilson pointed to the female contribution during the conflict as evidence of the need for equality, stating: "We have made partners of women in this war... Shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering, sacrifice, and toil and not to a partnership of privilege and right?"⁸

Rodgers and Hart's production asks the same question from the audience that President Wilson asked. The creators purposefully characterized their British soldiers (the only male characters) as exceedingly patronizing to the American women they encounter, thereby associating the Old World to an oppressive order. In one exchange, General Howe asks his scout whether the house he has discovered belongs to Whigs or Tories. When the scout tells him that the house is full of women, Howe chuckles and replies, "Oh, it doesn't matter then!"⁹ The two male leads (Howe and Captain Sir John Copeland) never suspect that their hostesses are in communication with the Patriots. An audience in 1925 would have recognized the sexism associated with the British characters as a symbol for the patriarchal society that only recently granted the fair sex the right to vote.

In choosing this narrative of the American Revolution, the creators of *Dearest Enemy* celebrated progress while also portraying enduring expectations of the feminine. Lorenz and Hart, like most performance artists of the 1920s, "reflected for the country an image of its most refined ideals of female beauty, an image that still exists, a century later."¹⁰ The musical underscores that the women's greatest weapons are twofold— their beauty and their cooking. To keep the attention of the British troops, the female Patriots flirt. In a pivotal moment, the ladies capture a British spy. In order to extort information from him, they tie him up in the kitchen and bring in

⁷ Kantor and Manslon, 18.

⁸ Andrew Glass, "Woodrow Wilson Endorses Women's Suffrage in 1918," *Politico*. Accessed via: <http://www.politico.com/story/2007/09/woodrow-wilson-endorses-womens-suffrage-on-sept-30-1918-006071>.

⁹ Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, *Dearest Enemy* (film).

¹⁰ Kantor and Manslon, 20.

trays of rich food. The soldier, surviving on his meager rations, cannot resist the feast and divulges his information. It is a comic moment emphasizing a traditional female role; “Only women could think of this torture!”¹¹ Considering the many female contributions to World War I outside of the kitchen, the forward-thinking musical still shows an evident generational bias.

Liberty Must Be Refreshed: Premiering *The Patriots* While Fighting Fascism

The next musical set during the Revolutionary War did not appear for another forty-five years. But during World War II a straight play gained recognition for its focus on a specific Founding Father. On April 13, 1943, Franklin Delano Roosevelt stood up to address a crowd in Washington D.C. The president began: “Today, in the midst of a great war for freedom, we dedicate a shrine to freedom. To Thomas Jefferson, Apostle of Freedom, we are paying a debt long overdue.”¹² The dedication of the Jefferson Memorial was held on his two hundredth birthday. At the time of the ceremony, the United States had been actively involved in the Second World War for nearly two years. One soldier, in particular, was invited to sit in the President’s box at the inauguration of the memorial. Sergeant Sidney Kingsley was honored not for skill in combat, but rather for crafting his play, *The Patriots*, which centered on Thomas Jefferson. The writer of the Declaration of Independence proved to be an appropriate hero for the generation facing Adolph Hitler and European fascism.

Unlike its predecessor, *Dearest Enemy*, Kingsley’s play is not a musical. *The Patriots* is darker in tone than the escapist production of the roaring twenties. The playwright believed the Founding Fathers to be enlightened philosophers, and thus depicted them as such. Premiering on Broadway in June 1943, the release of *The Patriots* coincided with the Allies’ strategy of Island Hopping in the Pacific arena and attacks on German industrial centers in Europe. Seventy-three percent of U.S. military personnel (which consisted of approximately nine million Americans by 1943) were deployed overseas.¹³ Audience would thus likely associate with a characterized Thomas Jefferson, who is looking forward to being reunited with his family at the start of *The Patriots*.

The play opens in 1790 with Jefferson’s return from France. The politician’s plans to relax at Monticello are interrupted by the call of duty when George Washington asks him to become the Secretary of State in his new administration. Jefferson acquiesces and leads a force against the advance of monarchism abroad. His crusade against the rise of European monarch could easily

¹¹ Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, *Dearest Enemy* (film).

¹² Franklin D. Roosevelt, 37th Address at the Dedication of the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, April 13, 1943.

¹³ Statistics courtesy of NOLA World War II Museum. Accessed via: <http://www.nationalww2museum.org>

be likened to the American campaign against European fascism. The vengeful British crown and failing French Monarchy might have been analogous to Nazi Germany for viewers of the 1940s. The play culminates in Jefferson's election in 1800, marking the first presidential victory of the Democratic-Republican Party (from which FDR's Democratic Party descended). Roosevelt pointed to these similarities in his dedication speech, saying: "Our generation of Americans can understand much in Jefferson's life which intervening generations could not see as well as we."¹⁴

Despite the parallels between Jefferson's life and the American situation during World War II, Kingsley claimed that he did not initially set out to create a play highlighting Jefferson. In a 1988 interview at his home, the playwright reflected on his work in the context of the American atmosphere during the war:

At that time democracy was being challenged and questioned, and was a good party of thinking that it couldn't stand up to the single mind of fascism and or communism. And so I determined to write a play about it to see if I could find out for myself what it [Democracy] really was. I didn't intend to write a play about Thomas Jefferson, it just happened that way.¹⁵

As the playwright claims his work was based on national sentiments, the naturally occurring focus on Jefferson speaks to the link between the generation and the specific Founding Father. This connection between America in the 1940s and Thomas Jefferson is solidified by the quote on the Jefferson Memorial. The site is marked with the words: "I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man."¹⁶ The impact of Jefferson is most direct in the post-war years. After the atrocities of World War II, the language of the Declaration of Independence and its assertion of inalienable rights became more applicable and desirable for people around the world. In subsequent years, Jefferson's rhetorical influence would extend to the newly formed United Nations' paramount document—the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Sit Down, Johnson: 1776, L.B. J, and Congressional Consent

"I have come to the conclusion that one useless man is called a disgrace. That two are a called a law firm, and three or more become a congress!"¹⁷ So begins a theatrical John Adam's iconic number "Sit Down, John," in the musical, *1776*. While the line initially seems to be a humorous insight into the strident historical character, it takes on a greater meaning in the context of contemporary events in the late 1960s.

¹⁴Franklin D. Roosevelt, 37th Address.

¹⁵ Sidney Kingsley was interviewed by Mike Wood in February of 1988. Interview segments are courtesy of the William Inge Center for the Arts in Independence, Kansas. Accessed via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C4njrNqevOE>

¹⁶ Franklin D. Roosevelt, 37th Address.

¹⁷ Peter Stone and Sherman Edwards, *1776: American Musicals 1950 to 1969*, ed. Laurence Manson (New York: Random House, 2014), 6.

Peter Stone and Sherman Edwards's play debuted on Broadway in 1969, the year after the general election. President Johnson had just left the White House after six years. He had opted not to run for reelection in 1968, though he had overwhelmingly won the popular vote in 1964.¹⁸ Johnson was as unpopular as ever. The war in Vietnam continued. Cold War tensions ran high, while national pride was at an all-time low. The patriotic production appeared at a moment when the ideals of the Revolution would have been particularly appealing. Analysis of the play in its historical context shows protagonist John Adams as a sort of foil for Lyndon B. Johnson.

According to *Time Magazine*, L.B.J had the potential for greatness. In 1965, the president was named "Man of the Year" by the publication for the first time. The cover story narrates a story of a teacher turned politician who became president of the United States by chance. Due to his southern roots, Johnson did not have the support (though *Time* claimed he had the political acumen) to win the presidency. He was put on the Kennedy ticket as a vice presidential candidate, unaware that an assassination would eventually catapult him to the role of Commander-in-Chief. The article depicts Johnson as a humble man, carrying "the torch of continuity" for his beloved predecessor.¹⁹ The president was also characterized by his exceptional work ethic, as illustrated by his initial eagerness to converse with congress. But the magazine admits that Johnson is not without his quirks. Like President John Adams, he was found to be extremely temperamental, compared to "a geyser at perpetual boil."²⁰ Johnson was a progressive, though not a radical. He desired harmony between the three branches of government as he tackled domestic issues of Civil Rights and education.

Three years (almost to the day) after the original article, *Time Magazine* once again featured President Johnson on its cover. But this time, the stoic pastoral profile of Johnson was replaced with a political cartoon. Johnson was caricatured as William Shakespeare's King Lear—an English monarch in the process of going mad. "The Prudent Progressive," had become a theatrical parody.²¹ Americans were dismayed at Johnson's use of executive power, which earned him a new nickname ("King Lyndon").²² The war in Vietnam was the nation's most unpopular conflict to date. By 1967, it was also a war without specific congressional consent. It would seem that Johnson considered Congress to be as useless as 1776's Adams asserts. This lack of endorsement encouraged public disapproval. The war already stood out as an anomaly amongst a series of American victories in the name of freedom.

¹⁸ Staff Writer, "Man of the Year: Lyndon B. Johnson, the Prudent Progressive," *Time Magazine*, January 1, 1965, p. 20.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²⁰ "The Prudent Progressive," 20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

²² "Man of the Year: Lyndon B. Johnson, the Paradox of Power," *Time Magazine*.

Furthermore, as Vietnam was considered a fight against encroaching Communism, it would seem as though L.B.J faced a foreign threat to American democracy which might be linked to the reign of King George III.

Enter John Adams, stage right. At a time of “depressed national spirit” this particular Founding Father became an appropriate hero.²³ Adams and Johnson both started as vice presidents to their legendary predecessors. They both left office significantly less popular than when they were elected. The two had exceptionally loving relationships with their wives, exhibiting unconventional equity in their married lives (a departure from the dually unequal duo of Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings). And both politicians garnered a good deal of criticism from their supporters and opponents alike. But unlike Johnson’s inhibiting, impetuous personality, Adam’s brazen approach led to many political successes. His conviction is depicted by Stone and Edwards as the force behind the American Declaration of Independence. He is portrayed as the ultimate protector of American interests. This image would have resonated with an audience that had just emerged from the Johnson years (and would soon experience the scandals of the Nixon administration).

An audience in 1969 was treated to a performance in the classic style of American musical theater, which was typical of the fifties and sixties. *1776* is set in the summer of the titular year. Action takes place at various spots around Philadelphia. The musical numbers are often punctuated by Church bells—evoking images of Philadelphia as a shining city upon a hill. John Adams is usually at the center of attention, pushing constantly for the Congress to vote for independence. Through musical numbers, Adams’s relationship to his world is effectively established. His aforementioned opening number “Sit Down, John,” presents his character’s objective (his push for American independence). Through song he exchanges letters with his beloved wife, Abigail. Even amidst the sexual revolution, this female character epitomizes a domestic colonial life. Once the vote is finally cast in his favor, John oversees the drafting of the declaration by a young Thomas Jefferson. Though the situation looks bleak, the Congress validates the document. The play closes with the signing of the Declaration as the Liberty Bell is rung.

John Adams is presented as the very antithesis of Lyndon B. Johnson. In these select months of 1776, he is pictured as the meticulous politician who reached his potential. Adams is characterized by his passionate attempts at persuasion, possibly linking him to an early Johnson (who was once praised for his ability to negotiate).²⁴ Yet, Adams never acts without the consent of his fellow representatives, despite his frustrations. On a subtler note, Adams is always connected to the cosmopolitan. For instance, at one point in the play, he becomes appalled at Virginian Thomas Jefferson’s apparent intimacy with his wife in the afternoon. To this Benjamin

²³ *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁴ “The Prudent Progressive,” 22.

Franklin humorously responds, “Not everybody’s from Boston, John!” According to *Time Magazine*, many Americans interested in urbanization were disappointed that a Texan had taken over for another Bostonian—John F. Kennedy. These factors might have revitalized interest in John Adams.

The play and its protagonist were met with widespread acclaim. By 1972, a movie adaptation was released. Whether or not it was through a conscious association, audiences loved *1776*’s John Adams for what they viewed was lacking in President Johnson. This point is most accurately illustrated in November 10, 1972 issue of the *New York Times*. Vincent Canby’s film review provides insight into the theatrical merit of *1776*. Canby negatively rates the music, lyrics, and playbook, but claims the movie is nonetheless quite notable:

... [It] insists on being so entertaining, and at times, even moving, that you might as well stop resisting it. This reaction, I suspect, represents clear triumph of emotional associations over material.²⁵

The review goes on to explain that the accomplishment of the Founding Fathers gave a certain weight to the play. It is American exceptionalism, an idea lost with Vietnam under Johnson, which permeates in this otherwise unexceptional piece of theater. It is likely that this concept inspired feelings of nostalgia for a generation raised on politicians and war heroes like Franklin D. Roosevelt and Dwight D. Eisenhower. John Adams was a refreshing reminder of the national resolve. Since the Revolution, Americans had fought through civil war, world wars, and even ideological wars. It is hard to imagine that folks leaving the theater in 1969 would not be reassured that Uncle Sam could also handle Victor Charlie.

Who Tells Your Story? *Hamilton*’s Multiple Perspectives

In December of 2008, *Time Magazine* once again featured an American president on its cover. The same publication that once praised Lyndon B. Johnson for his policies regarding Civil Rights was now reporting on a president who truly embodied the movement. Barack Obama made history when he was elected the first African American president of the United States. A few weeks later he was named *Time*’s “Person of the Year.” The self-evident truths of equality championed by the rhetoric of the American Revolution had finally manifested in the highest echelon of American politics. Despite the cultural significance of the election, which “ushered the country across a momentous symbolic line,” Americans faced financial troubles that threatened the most cherished national concept of “boundless opportunity.”²⁶ According to *Time*, Obama faced the most difficult first year in the Oval Office of any president since Franklin Roosevelt. The American economy was in the middle of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Cue Alexander Hamilton,

²⁵ Vincent Canby, “1776 Comes to the Music Hall Screen,” *The New York Times*, November 10, 1972.

²⁶ David Von Drehle, “Why History Can’t Wait,” *Time Magazine*, December 17, 2008, 1.

the Father of American Banking.

One year after his election, President Obama invited a young composer to perform at the White House. Lin-Manuel Miranda was expected to showcase a segment from his Tony-award winning musical *In the Heights*, a cultural homage to the barrios of New York City. Instead, Miranda proceeded to rap about the life of Alexander Hamilton. Manuel's piece would later become the opening number to *Hamilton: An American Musical*, the 2015 show based on a biography by Ron Chernow. The concept of the musical was to promote inclusivity in American history—issues of remembrance and storytelling are major themes. The plot follows Alexander Hamilton from the earliest days of the Revolution until his death (in a duel against Aaron Burr). Through song, *Hamilton* provides perspectives of many actors in Hamilton's life—from his female family members to his murderer. The show details Hamilton's various contributions to the young nation he helped to establish. Though still the representative of Wall Street, Hamilton appears in an unfamiliar form.

Arguably the most groundbreaking choice in Miranda's adaptation is the casting. In the original production, the composer (who is of Puerto Rican descent) played the title character. The rest of the cast was mainly comprised of "talented actors and actresses of color who joined him onstage to portray other long-dead white people."²⁷ The summer following *Hamilton's* debut, Miranda was interviewed in his dressing room at the Richard Rodgers Theater (named for the lyricist of *Dearest Enemy*). He told *Rolling Stone* that the casting of the show reflects the current image of the nation, making history more relatable for viewers. Miranda's perspective is a far cry from Franklin Roosevelt's desire to memorialize Thomas Jefferson in pale white stone, as he believes: "The people we call Founding Fathers are these mythic figures—but they were people. I think the casting of the show humanizes them, they're not these distant marble creatures."²⁸ Just as *Dearest Enemy* put the only male cast members in redcoats, the only Caucasian actors play King George and his loyalists. For an audience that witnessed and participated in the election of the first African American president, *Hamilton* is an experience that embraces all backgrounds.

Alexander Hamilton became the face of this project because of his background, which Miranda details in the opening number:

How does a bastard, orphan, son of a whore and a
Scotsman, dropped in the middle of a forgotten
Spot in the Caribbean by providence, impoverished, in squalor
Grow up to be a hero and a scholar?
The ten-dollar Founding Father without a father
Got a lot farther by working a lot harder...²⁹

²⁷ Simon Vozick-Levinson, "Revolution on Broadway," *Rolling Stone*, August 6, 2015.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton: An American Musical*, Original Soundtrack.

Starting as an immigrant with nothing but his untapped potential, Alexander Hamilton would go on to found institutions of finance in what would become one of the wealthiest nations in the world. For a public facing a depressed economy, this ascent would be particularly appealing. Hamilton's status was often questioned; his fellow Federalist John Adams even referred to him as a "Creole bastard" (to which Miranda's Hamilton stridently responds: "Sit down, John you fat mother—").³⁰ But the Founding Father's unique origins and the story also allow the play to address two modern issues that the composer calls America's "Original Sins"—the legacy of slavery and gun control. Miranda states that memory of the slave trade is integrated into the show starting in the third line, "Every day while slaves were being slaughtered and carted away..."³¹ In addition to the aforementioned casting, *Hamilton* highlights lesser-known founding figures like John Laurens, a vocal critic of slavery, to comment on issues of race. Miranda also claims that contemporary audiences are made painfully aware that "guns are responsible for all of the deaths" onstage.³²

The female perspective provides another link between the life of the Founding Father and the modern day. The show often (somewhat humorously) points to the unequal status of women; "Its eighteen hundred, ladies, tell your husbands, 'Vote for Burr!'"³³ *Hamilton* also features two leading ladies; both Elizabeth Schuyler Hamilton and her sister, Angelica Schuyler, are given multiple solos that promote them as individuals while speaking to women's history. The most notable example of this comes when Angelica is admiring the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all men are created equal, and when I meet Thomas Jefferson, I'm a compel him to include women in the sequel!"³⁴ Her character is constantly seeking an intellectual partner. Eliza, too, is portrayed as more accomplished than the women of *Dearest Enemy* or even *1776*. After her husband's death in 1804, she went on to live another fifty years. The show credits her for her "proudest accomplishment"—the first private orphanage in New York City. These influential female roles debuted on Broadway just as the first female candidate won a presidential nomination. It seemed that Obama's historic election was to be followed by that of another pivotal politician—Hillary Rodham Clinton.

By November 2016, Mike Pence, a vice president-elect was attending a performance of *Hamilton* in New York City. Unbeknownst to Pence, the vice president-elect was going to have an audience with the actors. At the end of the production, one of the performers went off script to address the politician. Brandon Victor Dixon, the African American actor portraying Aaron Burr, addressed Pence

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Simon Vozick-Levinson, "Revolution on Broadway." 16

³² Ibid., 24.

³³ Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton* (Soundtrack).

³⁴ Ibid.

as a concerned citizen:

We, sir, are the diverse America; alarmed and anxious that your new administration will not protect us and uphold our inalienable rights. We truly hope that this show has inspired you to uphold our American values and to work on behalf of all of us.³⁵

In the wake of the divisive 2016 election, Dixon's speech vocalized the plight of many citizens in the United States. Donald J. Trump had been elected president after an unusually contemptuous campaign cycle. Trump's platform for immigration reform, trade reform, and tax reform combined with his outlandish rhetoric alienated many of the individuals that Miranda's production hoped to include. But it is perhaps most interesting that this speech came from the actor portraying a most flawed statesman, and the killer of Alexander Hamilton. In the musical *Burr* is characterized as an opportunistic politician. Throughout the play, he repeats the line: "Talk less, smile more. Don't let them know what you're against or what you're for," emphasizing his crookedness.³⁶ *Burr* is a complicated figure, filled with remorse by the finale of the show (which marks the end of Hamilton's life). Though coincidental, perhaps this connection between *Burr* and modern politicians is an indication that the country can survive and thrive even in the face of adversity.

The Collective Memory: In Conclusion

"Characters are the masks worn by moral philosophies," quotes Andrew J. Bacevich in his book on American warfare, *Breach of Trust*, "They describe those social roles which provide a culture with its moral definition."³⁷ Similarly, in the book *Democracy in America*, author Alexis De Tocqueville claims, "The effect of democracy is generally to question the authority of all literary rulers and convention; on the stage it abolishes them."³⁸ The characters from the American Revolution who have been brought to life on Broadway *do* describe the philosophies of the age in which they were created. And, as evidenced in the analysis above, they also espouse different aspects of the American Revolution. Broadway does have a unique capability for challenging authority, but it does not abolish this authority. If anything, the shows can more adequately bring marginalized groups into the fold of American history. The interpretations offer a solution to a longstanding problem in the study of history: no longer is history solely written by the victors. Collectively, Revolutionary War plays on Broadway are a useful and effective memorial, juxtaposing a variety of perspectives to remember America's resounding democratic ideals.

³⁵ Patrick Healy, "Hamilton Had Some Lines for Pence," *New York Times*, November 19, 2016.

³⁶ Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton* (soundtrack).

³⁷ Andrew J. Bacevich, *Breach of Trust: How Americans Failed their Soldiers and Their Country* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2013)

³⁸ Oscar G. Brockett and Robert R. Findlay, *Century of Innovation: A History of European and American Theatre and Drama Since 1870* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice-Hall).