

Stephen F. Austin State University

SFA ScholarWorks

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

12-2023

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND REVOLUTION: USE OF LEITMOTIF IN THE FIRST ACTS OF LES MISÉRABLES AND HAMILTON: AN AMERICAN MUSICAL

Mary Katherine Pezzillo

Stephen F Austin State University, marykatepezzillo@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/etds>



Part of the [Music Theory Commons](#)

[Tell us](#) how this article helped you.

Repository Citation

Pezzillo, Mary Katherine, "CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND REVOLUTION: USE OF LEITMOTIF IN THE FIRST ACTS OF LES MISÉRABLES AND HAMILTON: AN AMERICAN MUSICAL" (2023). *Electronic Theses and Dissertations*. 522.

<https://scholarworks.sfasu.edu/etds/522>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by SFA ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of SFA ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact cdsscholarworks@sfasu.edu.

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND REVOLUTION: USE OF LEITMOTIF IN THE FIRST ACTS OF LES MISÉRABLES AND HAMILTON: AN AMERICAN MUSICAL

Creative Commons License



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND REVOLUTION:
USE OF LEITMOTIF IN THE FIRST ACTS OF *LES MISÉRABLES* AND
HAMILTON: AN AMERICAN MUSICAL

By

MARY KATHERINE PEZZILLO, B.S. in Music Education, M.M. in Music Education

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

Stephen F. Austin State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Music in Theory

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN STATE UNIVERSITY
December 2023

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT AND REVOLUTION:
USE OF LEITMOTIF IN THE FIRST ACTS OF *LES MISÉRABLES* AND
HAMILTON: AN AMERICAN MUSICAL

By

MARY KATHERINE PEZZILLO, B.S. in Music Education, M.M. in Music Education

APPROVED:

Dr. Samantha Inman, Thesis Director

Dr. Stephen Lias, Committee Member

Dr. Inga Meier, Committee Member

Dr. Benjamin Morris, Committee Member

Dr. Lorenzo M. Smith, Ph.D.
Acting Dean of Research and Graduate Studies

ABSTRACT

Leitmotif, a recurring musical theme that represents a character, idea, or situation, is a device used in operas, film scores, and musical theater. Accredited to Richard Wagner, leitmotifs enhance storytelling and provide a sense of cohesion to a production. The popular musicals *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* bear many similarities, including the use of leitmotif as a storytelling device. This thesis explores how the two musicals use leitmotif differently, through the lens of the protagonists, antagonists, and supporting characters. Though the leitmotifs in *Les Misérables* generally represent ideas and the leitmotifs in *Hamilton* are mostly character-based, this tool aids the overall narrative in both shows.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am overwhelmed with gratitude for my advisor, Dr. Samantha Inman. Writing this thesis would not have been possible had it not been for her patience, guidance, and expertise. No words will adequately describe my sincere appreciation.

Thank you endlessly to my husband Jesse, who has been my rock for the entirety of this degree. He pushed me to reach for my goals, though it meant significant sacrifices on his part. I am eternally grateful for his love and support.

I would also like to acknowledge my two young children, Autumn and Lincoln. Though they haven't made completing this project any easier, showing them the importance of hard work and perseverance was my biggest motivation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Table of Contents.....	iii
List of Musical Examples.....	iv
CHAPTER I – Introduction.....	1
CHAPTER II – Leitmotifs of Protagonists and Antagonists.....	13
CHAPTER III – Leitmotifs of Supporting Characters.....	62
CHAPTER IV – Act 1 Finales.....	86
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	120
VITA.....	122

LIST OF MUSICAL EXAMPLES

Figure 1.1: The Wicked Witch Leitmotif from <i>Wicked</i>	2
Figure 1.2: Song Selections and Leitmotifs in <i>Les Misérables</i>	9
Figure 1.3: Song Selections and Leitmotifs in <i>Hamilton</i> , Protagonist and Antagonist.....	10
Figure 1.4: Song Selections and Leitmotifs in <i>Hamilton</i> , Supporting Characters.....	11
Figure 2.1: “I Am” and “I Want” Songs in <i>Les Misérables</i> and <i>Hamilton</i>	16
Figure 2.2: Introspection Leitmotif Occurrences.....	18
Figure 2.3: “At the End of the Day” m. 1, Instrumental Introspection Leitmotif.....	18
Figure 2.4: “At the End of the Day” Introspection Leitmotif Transformations.....	20
Figure 2.5: “Who Am I?” Introspection Leitmotif Transformations.....	21
Figure 2.6: “Who Am I?” mm. 24-31, Instrumental Introspection Leitmotif and Valjean singing the melodic Introspection Leitmotif.....	22
Figure 2.7: “The Robbery” mm. 49-55, Instrumental Introspection Leitmotif (Éponine and Marius).....	24
Figure 2.8: Law Enforcement Leitmotif Act 1 Occurrences.....	26
Figure 2.9: “Prologue” mm. 213-217, Law Enforcement Leitmotif (Constables 1 and 2), E Minor.....	27
Figure 2.10: “Prologue” mm. 226-231, Law Enforcement Leitmotif (Bishop).....	28
Figure 2.11: “Valjean’s Soliloquy (What Have I Done?)” mm. 68-77, Law Enforcement Leitmotif (Valjean), D Minor.....	29
Figure 2.12: “Fantine’s Arrest” mm. 28-32, Law Enforcement Leitmotif (Javert).....	31

Figure 2.13: “The Runaway Cart” mm. 58-62, Law Enforcement Leitmotif (Javert).....	32
Figure 2.14: “The Robbery/Javert’s Intervention” mm. 142-150, Law Enforcement Leitmotif (Javert).....	33
Figure 2.15: “Stars” mm. 51-65, Law Enforcement Leitmotif (Gavroche).....	35
Figure 2.16: “Alexander Hamilton” mm. 22-25, Alexander Hamilton Leitmotif (Hamilton), B Minor.....	39
Figure 2.17: “Satisfied” mm. 50-56, C Minor, Alexander Hamilton Leitmotif (Hamilton)...	40
Figure 2.18: “Guns and Ships” mm. 24-29, Alexander Hamilton Leitmotif (Washington)....	42
Figure 2.19: “Aaron Burr, Sir” mm. 6-8, Aaron Burr, Sir Leitmotif (Hamilton).....	43
Figure 2.20: “Aaron Burr, Sir” Act 1 Occurrences.....	44
Figure 2.21: “My Shot” Form Diagram.....	45
Figure 2.22: “My Shot” mm. 3-6, My Shot Leitmotif (Hamilton) with chord progression, G Minor.....	46
Figure 2.23: “My Shot” mm. 11-14, Melodic My Shot Leitmotif (Accompaniment).....	48
Figure 2.24: “Right Hand Man” mm. 86-90, My Shot Leitmotif (Ensemble, Hamilton).....	51
Figure 2.25: “My Shot” mm. 75-78, Secondary Melodic My Shot Leitmotif (Laurens, Hamilton, Lafayette and Mulligan).....	52
Figure 2.26: “History Has Its Eyes on You” mm. 25-28, Secondary Melodic My Shot Leitmotif (Ensemble Women).....	53
Figure 2.27: “Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)” mm. 15-19, My Shot Leitmotif (Ensemble) and Chord Progression in C Major.....	54
Figure 2.28: “Wait For It” mm. 1-4, Instrumental Wait For It Leitmotif, D-flat Major.....	55
Figure 2.29: “Wait For It” mm. 1-4 (repeat), Instrumental Wait For It Leitmotif.....	57
Figure 2.30: “Wait For It” Form Diagram.....	58

Figure 3.1: “I Dreamed a Dream” mm. 17-25, A Dream Leitmotif (Fantine).....	63
Figure 3.2: “I Dreamed a Dream” mm. 33-44, B Dream Leitmotif (Fantine) E-flat Maj.....	65
Figure 3.3: “The Confrontation” mm. 37-45, A Dream Leitmotif (Valjean and Javert)	67
Figure 3.4: “The Bargain” mm. 21-32, A Dream Leitmotif (Valjean), E Major.....	69
Figure 3.5: “The Robbery” mm. 50-55, A Dream Leitmotif (Marius) in mm. 53-54.....	70
Figure 3.6: “Master of the House” mm. 21-28, Thénardiers Leitmotif.....	72
Figure 3.7: “Master of the House” mm. 52-58, Exploitation Leitmotif.....	73
Figure 3.8: “Master of the House” mm. 138-145, Exploitation Leitmotif.....	74
Figure 3.9: “The Schuyler Sisters” mm. 50-51, The Schuyler Sisters Leitmotif (Eliza), D Major.....	77
Figure 3.10: “Helpless” mm. 3-5, Helpless Leitmotif (Eliza).....	78
Figure 3.11: “Satisfied” mm. 73-76, Helpless Leitmotif (Eliza), C Minor.....	79
Figure 3.12: “Satisfied” mm. 95-96, Satisfied Leitmotif (Angelica), C Minor.....	80
Figure 3.13: “That Would Be Enough” mm. 19-22, That Would Be Enough Leitmotif (Eliza), D Major.....	82
Figure 3.14: “History Has Its Eyes on You” mm. 8-14 History Has Its Eyes on You Leitmotif.....	84
Figure 4.1: All Leitmotif Occurrences in “One Day More”.....	87
Figure 4.2: “One Day More” mm. 1-11, Valjean singing the Introspection Leitmotif.....	89
Figure 4.3: Introspection Leitmotif Occurrences in “One Day More”.....	90
Figure 4.4: “One Day More” mm. 56 (beat 3)-58, Introspection Leitmotif (Valjean).....	91
Figure 4.5: “One Day More” mm. 63-68, “Introspection” Leitmotif (Valjean).....	92-93
Figure 4.6: “One Day More” mm. 36-40, Law Enforcement Leitmotif (Javert), A Major...	95

Figure 4.7: Dream Leitmotif Occurrences in “One Day More”	96
Figure 4.8: “One Day More” mm. 9-14, A Dream Leitmotif.....	97
Figure 4.9: “One Day More” mm. 15-20, B Dream Leitmotif (Éponine).....	99
Figure 4.10: “One Day More” mm. 24-29, B Dream Leitmotif (Enjolras).....	100
Figure 4.11: “One Day More” mm. 43-47, B Dream Leitmotif (Ensemble).....	101
Figure 4.12: “One Day More” mm. 54-56, A Dream Leitmotif Cosette and Marius, B Dream Leitmotif (Éponine).....	103
Figure 4.13: “One Day More” mm. 39-44, Thénardiens Leitmotif	106
Figure 4.14: “One Day More” mm. 54-56, Thénardiens Leitmotif.....	108
Figure 4.15: All Leitmotif Occurrences in “Non-Stop”	110

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION

A leitmotif, a recurring musical theme that signifies a character, idea, or situation, is a device used in operas, film scores, and musical theater. Accredited to Richard Wagner, leitmotifs enhance storytelling and provide a sense of cohesion to a musical production. For example, Rodgers and Hammerstein employed this tool in *Cinderella* to connect “Crazy Marie” with the Fairy Godmother, Marie’s hidden identity.¹ She sings the “Fol-de-rol” melody in both versions of the character, as it signifies belief in the impossible.

In *Wicked*, Stephen Schwartz uses the **Wicked Witch** leitmotif (Figure 1.1) to signify the idea of fate, specifically relating to Elphaba. It is suggested that “fate is used in the show as an antagonist against which the characters fight.” Each time the leitmotif sounds in the musical, it “reminds the audience that Elphaba is fated to be seen as a danger to society.”² Figure 1.1 shows the leitmotif in context at the beginning of “As Long As You’re Mine,” before Elphaba expresses fear that her love with Fiyero will not survive her wicked destiny.

¹ Ionela Chiru, “Feminism and Modernism: A New ‘Cinderella’,” *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique*, (1999): 100, <http://dspace.bcu-iasi.ro/handle/123456789/13898>.

² Rebecca K. Hammonds, “(Un)Limited: The Influence of Mentorship and Father Daughter Relationships on Elphaba's Heroine Journey in *Wicked*,” *Theatre History Studies*, (2021): 157. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A710932995/LitRC?u=txshracd2557&sid=summon&xid=72371642>.



Figure 1.1: The **Wicked Witch** Leitmotif from *Wicked*

In *Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music*, Bribitzer-Stull states that leitmotifs are recurring musical ideas that are defined by three central components: they are comprised by both musical expression and an emotional association, are developmental in nature, and contribute to and function within a larger musical structure. Bribitzer-Stull also remarks that leitmotifs are not the only musical idea that has been utilized for dramatic purposes in the past three hundred years. Composers have used tools such as *idéés fixes*, motto themes, cyclic processes, musical symbolism, musical characterization, and recall of overture music. These tools can all loosely be categorized as “associative themes,” but they do not exhibit the music-structural and developmental characteristics stated in the leitmotif definition. The leitmotif is a more specific type of associative theme.³ The popular musicals *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* both use leitmotif to convey meaning deeper than the lyrics; this is one of their many similarities.⁴

³ Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 10, Doi:10.1017/CBO9781316161678.

⁴ Other elements of a musical that convey meaning without words include staging, costuming, and scenery. The importance of these elements within *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* warrants further research but is outside the scope of this thesis.

The *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* Connection

Lin-Manuel Miranda brought *Hamilton: An American Musical* to life on the Broadway stage in 2015. Before *Hamilton* made its Broadway debut, Miranda told the *New Yorker*, “I really got my ‘Les Miz’ on in this score, like being really smart about where to reintroduce a theme.”⁵ He continued to explain that *Les Misérables* (1985), with music by Claude-Michel Schönberg, was the first musical he saw as a child. In 2016, Miranda discussed the power a musical has in shaping young minds. He stated, “I know how deep in the DNA musicals get because they’re deep in *my* DNA.” After mentioning the power *Les Misérables*’ had on his youth, he said, “I know that show like I know my family tree.”⁶ The way Schönberg used leitmotif throughout the musical to build character arcs stayed with Miranda, so much so that he used similar tools to propel the story of *Hamilton*. In both musicals, the characters’ journeys are intricately woven together through the leitmotifs that tell their stories.

Similarities Between *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*

Both *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* tell a tale of revolution with two male leads driven by moral views that oppose one another. Each musical highlights a protagonist who overcomes hardship and is eager to change their life for the better. The music sung by each protagonist is in stark contrast to the music sung by their respective antagonists. The relationship between each protagonist and antagonist pair is complex, as their rivalry spans

⁵ Rebecca Mead, “All About the Hamiltons,” *New Yorker*, February 2, 2015.

⁶ Lin-Manuel Miranda and Jeremy McCarter, *Hamilton: The Revolution* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2016), 160.

many years, and their journeys are closely bound. “The Story of Tonight” in *Hamilton* draws many similarities to *Les Misérables*’ “Drink with Me.” men celebrating their friendship as they plan a revolution over a beverage. The lead characters struggle with balancing the nobility of fighting for a revolution and managing their own personal conflicts. Though the revolutions take place in different countries, and *Hamilton* is based on real people and *Les Misérables* is not, the similarities between the plot of the two musicals are vast.

Additionally, both musicals have captured the attention of the public and have been culturally relevant. *Les Misérables*, in French, first premiered in Paris in 1980. The English version opened in London in 1985, and it is still running in the West End in 2023. *Les Misérables* has had success in theaters around the world, including Australia, Iceland, Canada, Japan, and many cities across the United States, premiering on Broadway in 1987.⁷ It was even adapted into a movie in 2012.⁸

Similarly, *Hamilton* was an instant hit when it premiered on Broadway in 2015. It survived the year-and-a-half-long closure caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, after which many other musicals could not afford to reopen. The tours all over the world also speak to the musical’s success. The fusion of popular music genres with theater has made *Hamilton* more approachable to a wider audience. A musical that tells the story of the founding of the United States, mostly through hip hop and rap, started as an absurd idea. Even President

⁷ Edward Behr, *Les Misérables: History in the Making* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1989), 51, 94, 161.

⁸ *Les Misérables*, directed by Tom Hooper, (Relativity Media, 2012), DVD (Universal Pictures, 2012).

Obama laughed when Miranda first publicly introduced the idea at the White House Poetry Jam in 2009.⁹ This innovative fusion of rap, hip hop, musical theater and history created one of the most successful musicals to ever be written, grossing over a billion dollars less than five years after its first Broadway premiere.¹⁰

Both musicals have made a significant mark on the history of musical theater. Lin-Manuel Miranda is quoted saying that *Les Misérables* made a significant mark on him, and there are certainly links between the two musicals. A primary similarity is the use of leitmotif. These musicals merit further analysis because of their similarities and widespread impact.

Leitmotif in *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*

The recurring musical themes in both *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* follow the Bribitzer-Stull definition of a leitmotif. They are comprised by both musical expression and emotional association; in both musicals, the musical expression of the leitmotif works in conjunction with the plot to enhance the character's beliefs. Bribitzer-Stull expresses the importance of accumulative association, as it is the defining factor of the leitmotif.

Accumulative association is when themes evolve and become capable of modifiers, including changes to the lyrics, pitches, or delivery of the leitmotif. This is an idea that is traced back

⁹ *The Obama White House*, "Lin-Manuel Miranda Performs at the White House Poetry Jam: (8 of 8)," November 2, 2009, video, 4:26, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNFf7nMIGnE>.

¹⁰ "Lin-Manuel Miranda's 'Hamilton' Crashes Broadway's Billion-Dollar Club," *Forbes*, accessed December 1, 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dawnchmielewski/2020/06/08/lin-manuel-mirandas-hamilton-crashes-broadways-billion-dollar-club/?sh=468de465b3cc>.

to Wagner.¹¹ Though the way they develop differs between *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*, leitmotifs in both musicals change in reflection of the character's journey. Additionally, the leitmotifs in *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* function within a larger musical structure. They are not isolated events, but rather contribute to multiple songs. Some leitmotifs are repetitive and are the focus of a song, while some are brief features within a larger song. The leitmotifs in *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* add a layer of complexity to the overall experience of the musical, but the way they are modified throughout is different.

The leitmotifs in *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* also differ in length; this is a result of the primary genres in each musical. Because the music in *Les Misérables* is operatic, the leitmotifs are long, sweeping ideas. Most of the leitmotifs are complete musical phrases. The leitmotifs in *Hamilton* are significantly shorter because the musical is largely inspired by hip hop. Popular music genres frequently use hooks to catch the attention of listeners. They are repetitive and catchy, designed to stay in the listener's mind. A hook is what the artist is selling.¹² Many of the leitmotifs in *Hamilton* are derived from the hooks of songs, resulting in shorter musical ideas that characters repeat throughout the musical.

Though the recurring and evolving musical ideas have key differences, like length and what they signify, the leitmotifs in both works enhance storytelling.

¹¹ Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 10, Doi:10.1017/CBO9781316161678.

¹² Gary Burns, "A Typology of 'Hooks' in Popular Records," *Popular Music* 6, no. 1 (1987): 1–20, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/853162>.

Scope of Thesis

The Act 1 finale of both *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* includes a reprisal of several leitmotifs, highlighting the most prominent ideas and characters thus far in the musical. This thesis will focus on the leitmotifs heard in the Act 1 finales and examine how they evolve during Act 1. Cataloging leitmotifs requires significant work. This process includes identifying what constitutes a leitmotif, determining what each leitmotif portrays, meticulously examining the musical for recurrences, and analyzing how the leitmotif evolves.

Past thematic catalogs span a variety of genres. “Classifying Leitmotifs in Recordings of Operas by Richard Wagner” catalogues the leitmotifs of Wagner’s *The Ring*. This journal serves as a reference for theorists studying Wagner in the future.¹³ Leitmotifs are also often used in film scores, with one of the most prominent examples being John Williams’ music of *Star Wars*. Frank Lehman documents all recurring musical themes in the entire Star Wars universe. His incredibly expansive catalogue is updated to include all musical themes, leitmotifs and otherwise, in not only the films, but the music played throughout “Galaxy’s Edge,” the *Star Wars* land in Disney World.¹⁴ In musical theater specifically, there is significant literature about leitmotifs in *Sweeney Todd*, *The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*. Craig

¹³ Michael Krause, Frank Zalkow, Julia Zalkow, Christof Weiß, and Meinard Müller, “Classifying Leitmotifs in Recordings of Operas by Richard Wagner,” *ISMIR*, (2020): 473-480. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Christof-Weiss/publication/351712758_Classifying_Leitmotifs_in_Recordings_of_Operas_by_Richard_Wagner/links/60a62c12299bf1f7ea31bd60/Classifying-Leitmotifs-in-Recordings-of-Operas-by-Richard-Wagner.pdf

¹⁴ Frank Lehman, “Complete Catalogue of the Musical Themes of Star Wars,” March 19, 2023, <https://franklehman.com/starwars/>

McGill contributes to that space by cataloging orchestral leitmotifs throughout the musical and movie.¹⁵ Like these sources, I have catalogued several leitmotifs in both *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*, as limited literature about their leitmotifs exists.

In “One Day More,” the Act 1 finale of *Les Misérables*, six leitmotifs occur. As shown in Figure 1.2, most leitmotifs are named after the idea they signify.¹⁶ The Thénardiens leitmotif is an exception, however, as this leitmotif is character-based and not idea-based. The figure also identifies which characters sing the leitmotifs throughout the songs in Act 1.

¹⁵ Craig M. McGill, “It Might Have Been Sophisticated Film Music: The Role of the Orchestra in Stage and Screen Versions of *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*,” *Studies in Musical Theatre* 8, no. 1 (2014): 5-26, Doi:10.1386/smt.8.1.5_1.

¹⁶ The leitmotif names are original to this thesis.

Leitmotifs Referenced in “One Day More”

Songs	Introspection Instrumental	Introspection Melodic	Law Enforcement	A Dream	B Dream	Thénardiens
1. “Prologue”			Constables Bishop			
2. “Valjean's Soliloquy”			Valjean			
3. “At the End of The Day”	Instrumental					
4. “I Dreamed a Dream”				Fantine	Fantine	
6. “Fantine’s Arrest”			Javert			
7. “The Runaway Cart”			Javert			
8. “Who Am I?”		Valjean				
10. “The Confrontation”				Valjean Javert		
12. “Master of the House”						Thénardiens Cast
13. “The Bargain”				Valjean		
15. “The Robbery/ Javert's Intervention”	Instrumental		Javert	Marius		
16. “Stars”			Gavroche			
23. “One Day More”	Instrumental	Valjean Cast	Javert	Marius Cosette Cast	Eponine Enjolras	Thénardiens

Figure 1.2: Song Selections and Leitmotifs in *Les Misérables*

In “Non-Stop,” the Act 1 finale of *Hamilton*, ten leitmotifs occur. They are named after the song where they originated. This is because leitmotifs in *Hamilton* generally signify characters, and some characters have multiple leitmotifs. Characters sometimes sing multiple leitmotifs within the same song. Figures 1.3 and 1.4 display which characters sing the leitmotifs throughout the songs in Act 1.

Leitmotifs Referenced in “Non-Stop”
Protagonist and Antagonist

Songs	Aaron Burr, Sir	Wait for It	My Shot	Alexander Hamilton
1. “Alexander Hamilton”				Hamilton Cast
2. “Aaron Burr, Sir”	Hamilton Burr			
3. “My Shot”			Hamilton	
8. “Right Hand Man”	Burr		Hamilton Cast Instrumental	
11. “Satisfied”				Hamilton
12. “The Story of Tonight (Reprise)”	Hamilton			
13. “Wait for It”		Burr		
14. “Stay Alive”			Hamilton	
15. “Ten Duel Commandments”	Hamilton Burr			
18. “Guns and Ships”				Washington
19. “History Has It's Eyes on You”			Cast	
20. “Yorktown”			Hamilton Cast	
23. “Non-Stop”	Hamilton	Burr Cast	Hamilton	Hamilton Cast

Figure 1.3: Song Selections and Leitmotifs in *Hamilton*, Protagonist and Antagonist

Leitmotifs Referenced in “Non-Stop”
Supporting Characters

Songs	That Would Be Enough	Schuyler Sisters	Helpless	Satisfied	History Has Its Eyes on You
5. “Schuyler Sisters”		Eliza Angelica			
10. “Helpless”			Eliza		
11. “Satisfied”			Eliza	Angelica	
17. “That Would Be Enough”	Eliza	Eliza			
19. “History Has It's Eyes on You”					Washington
23. “Non-Stop”	Eliza	Hamilton	Eliza	Angelica Eliza	Washington Cast

Figure 1.4: Song Selections and Leitmotifs in *Hamilton*, Supporting Characters

Thesis Structure

To best compare the use of leitmotif between *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*, the content of this thesis is separated by characters. The protagonists and antagonists are complex while the supporting characters are not as dynamic. Chapter 2 discusses the leitmotifs featured by the protagonists and antagonists: **Introspection** and **Law Enforcement** in *Les Misérables* and **Alexander Hamilton**, **Aaron Burr**, **Sir**, **My Shot**, and **Wait for It** in *Hamilton*. Chapter 3 discusses all remaining leitmotifs which are attributed to the supporting characters. Chapter 4 compares the Act 1 finales in both musicals and how their sections of layered leitmotifs amplify the meaning of each leitmotif. Additionally,

Chapter 4 draws conclusions about the leitmotifs based on each act as a whole: leitmotifs in *Les Misérables* generally signify ideas, while leitmotifs in *Hamilton* primarily signify characters.

CHAPTER II – LEITMOTIFS OF PROTAGONISTS AND ANTAGONISTS

A primary similarity between *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* is the relationship between protagonist and antagonist. The respective protagonists, Jean Valjean and Alexander Hamilton, are both men of humble beginnings but incredible strengths, striving to improve their lives through personal change. Inspector Javert and Aaron Burr are legalistic, rigid men who feel strongly about following the rules of society; Javert and Burr look down upon Valjean and Hamilton, who do not run their lives strictly according to rule and law. Their beliefs and opinions on one another are frequently reiterated in their lyrics.

For example, in “Stars” from *Les Misérables*, Javert sings the following about Valjean: “He knows his way in the dark, but mine is the way of the Lord. And those who follow the path of the righteous shall have their reward.” Similarly, in “Wait for It” from *Hamilton*, Burr sings about Hamilton taking what he wants, as opposed to abiding by the rules and waiting to receive what he deserves: “Hamilton doesn’t hesitate. He exhibits no restraint, he takes, and he takes, and he takes, and he keeps winning anyway.” He continues, “if there’s a reason he seems to thrive when so few survive then I’m willing to wait for it.” Both Javert and Burr observe how their respective protagonist is different from themselves, but both remain set in their ways.

A major catalyst for conflict in both *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* is the difference in belief systems between protagonist and antagonist. The leitmotifs sung by each character

support their beliefs and help communicate their respective conflicts. This chapter compares the leitmotifs that the protagonists and antagonists sing: the **Introspection** and **Law Enforcement** leitmotifs in *Les Misérables*, and the **Alexander Hamilton**, **Aaron Burr**, **Sir**, **My Shot**, and **Wait for It** leitmotifs in *Hamilton*. These leitmotifs emerge within pivotal songs in each musical, some of which are the “I am” and “I want” songs that help explain the lead characters’ beliefs and motives.

“I Am” and “I Want” Songs in Musical Theater

In musical theater, there are two types of songs that most frequently introduce the plot of musical through the perspective of the main characters, the “I am” and “I want” songs. Specifically, an “I am” song “establishes something essential to the audience understanding of character and situation.”¹⁷ The character is concerned with who they are in the moment, not yet looking to the future. “I am” songs usually happen towards the beginning of a musical to give the audience context. Some examples would be “The Jet Song” from *West Side Story* (Riff: “When you’re a Jet, you’re a Jet all the way”) or “My Strongest Suit” from *Aida* (Amneris: “I am what I wear and how I dress”).

An “I want” song also occurs early in the musical, but it highlights the main plot going forward. Kim Kowalke states that an “I want inner-monologue song would function

¹⁷ Martin Gottfried, *Broadway Musicals*, (New York, NY: Karry N. Abrams, 1979), 216.

dramaturgically as an introduction to a character.”¹⁸ Examples of this would include “Part of Your World” from *The Little Mermaid* (Ariel: “I want to be where the people are”) or “Wouldn’t It Be Lovely” from *My Fair Lady* (Eliza: “All I want is a room somewhere”). Examples that do not specifically use the words “I want” but still satisfy the requirements are “The Wizard and I” from *Wicked* (Elphaba: “When I meet the wizard, what I’ve waited for since birth”) and “You and Me (But Mostly Me)” from *The Book of Mormon* (Elder Price: “I’ve always had the hope that on the day I go to heaven, Heavenly Father will shake my hand and say ‘You’ve done an awesome job, Kevin’”). All the examples take place early in their respective musicals, and they are each sung by the protagonist. The protagonist introduces the main plot and states their purpose. Leitmotifs are often built into “I want” songs; when the leitmotif occurs later in the musical, the audience is reminded of the protagonist’s desires.¹⁹

“I Am” and “I Want” Songs in *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*

The “I am” and “I want” songs in *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* (Figure 2.1) follow Kowalke’s definitions with a few notable diversions. “I am” songs typically occur before “I want” songs, but Jean Valjean’s sings them in the opposite order in *Les Misérables*. He expresses his desire to live honestly in “Valjean’s Soliloquy” before he decides to return to

¹⁸ Kim H. Kowalke, “‘Give Me Time’: Sondheim, a Clever Maid and ‘The Miller’s Son,’” *Studies in Musical Theatre* 13, no. 2 (June 2019): 152. doi:10.1386/smt.12.2.151_1.

¹⁹ Kowalke, “Sondheim,” 153.

his true identity in “Who Am I?” Because Javert’s police officer identity is stereotypical, it makes sense that he does not have an “I am” song. In *Hamilton*, Hamilton’s “I am” and “I want” songs occur early in the musical because Hamilton is outspoken and eager. Burr’s “I am” and “I want” songs occur much later because he is hesitant and reserved. Ironically, the second song of the musical that is named after the antagonist “Aaron Burr, Sir” is not Burr’s “I am” song. As is fitting to his character, Burr is initially only known at the surface, and it takes time to understand who he truly is.

		“I Am” Song		“I Want” Song	
		No.	Title	No.	Title
<i>Les Misérables</i>	Jean Valjean	8.	“Who Am I?”	2.	“Valjean’s Soliloquy”
	Inspector Javert		N/A	16.	“Stars”
<i>Hamilton</i>	Alexander Hamilton	1.	“Alexander Hamilton”	3.	“My Shot”
	Aaron Burr	13.	“Wait for It”	28.	“The Room Where It Happens” ²⁰

Figure 2.1: “I Am” and “I Want” Songs in *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*

²⁰ “The Room Where It Happens,” does not take place until Act 2 and will not be discussed in this analysis. However, it is interesting to note that Burr waits until Act 2 to reveal what he truly wants: “I want to be in the room where it happens.” It is unusual for an “I want” song to occur so late in the plot, but it is true to Burr’s character to make the audience wait for it.

These “I am” and “I want” songs are important moments for character and plot development, warranting repetition through leitmotif. Hearing these leitmotifs throughout the musical reminds the audience of the main characters’ primary motives. The leitmotifs commonly sung by Jean Valjean stem from both his “I am” and “I want” songs.

Jean Valjean’s Journey through Introspection

The instrumental **Introspection** leitmotif occurs in moments of reflection, most often for Jean Valjean. This leitmotif appears in four songs during Act 1 (Figure 2.2); this includes his “I am” song, “Who Am I?,” but it is not the first occurrence. It first appears in “At the End of the Day” to foreshadow who Jean Valjean will become (Figure 2.3). The leitmotif consists of a pattern of descending sixteenth notes. In most songs that include this leitmotif, there are three versions; “Who Am I?” is the only song that features a fourth version. The fourth version is the first version transposed down a perfect fourth. The instrumental **Introspection** leitmotif is transposed to fit the key of each song.

Song	Key	Version #	Pitches	Adjacent Descending Intervals
3. “At the End of the Day”	Ab	1	Ab-F-Eb-C	m3-M2-m3
		2	Ab-F-Eb-Db	m3-M2-M2
		3	Bb-F-Eb-Db	P4-M2-M2
8. “Who Am I?”	B	1	B-G#-F#-D#	m3-M2-m3
		2	B-G#-F#-E	m3-M2-M2
		3	C#-G#-F#-E	P4-M2-M2
		4	F#-D#-C#-A#	m3-M2-m3
15. “The Robbery/ Javert's Intervention”	G	1	G-E-D-B	m3-M2-m3
		2	G-E-D-C	m3-M2-M2
		3	A-E-D-C	P4-M2-M2
23. “One Day More”	A	1	A-F#-E-C#	m3-M2-m3
		2	A-F#-E-D	m3-M2-M2
		3	B-F#-E-D	P4-M2-M2

Figure 2.2: **Introspection** Leitmotif Occurrences



Figure 2.3: “At the End of the Day” m. 1, Instrumental **Introspection** Leitmotif

In *Les Misérables*, the protagonist’s story begins in a tragic manner. Jean Valjean is first seen as a prisoner in a chain gang. Valjean, who is referred to as Prisoner 24601, is released and tries to adapt to life with his newfound freedom. The transition is exceedingly difficult for him, as he is turned away when looking for work or shelter. After the Bishop takes him in, Valjean is tempted by his surroundings and steals the Bishop’s silver. It is after

being captured by the Constables, then shown mercy by the Bishop, that Valjean vows to change his life and be an honest man. He professes “Valjean is nothing now, another story must begin” at the end of the third song of the musical, “Valjean’s Soliloquy.” This song introduces Valjean’s desire to become a better man, which will lead his decision-making throughout the remainder of the plot. This is Valjean’s “I want” song, and it fittingly leads into the first occurrence of the **Introspection** leitmotif.

Like all leitmotifs in *Les Misérables*, the **Introspection** leitmotif signifies an idea rather than a specific character. There are two components to the leitmotif: instrumental and melodic. They both occur in important life moments in the plot, the first of which is when Valjean decides to create a new identity for himself and change his life for the better. He realizes that he will continue to be poor and unhappy should he not devote his life to honesty, though in doing so he breaks his parole. The **Introspection** leitmotif occurs in moments where a character is looking within themselves and reflecting upon their place in the world. The first instance is foreshadowing for what is to come for Jean Valjean.

The three versions of the instrumental **Introspection** leitmotif, played in succession at the beginning of “At the End of the Day” (Figure 2.4), mimics the stages of making an important decision. This is often reflected in the corresponding lyrics. In this occurrence however, there are no corresponding lyrics to the instrumental leitmotif.

Mm.	Version #	Pitches in A ^b Major	Adjacent Descending Intervals
1-5	1	A ^b -F-E ^b -C	m3-M2-m3
6	2	A ^b -F-E ^b -D ^b	m3-M2-M2
7	3	B ^b -F-E ^b -D ^b	P4-M2-M2

Figure 2.4: “At the End of the Day” **Introspection** Leitmotif Transformations

Several years later, Jean Valjean changed his identity to Monsieur le Maire, and the **Introspection** leitmotif reappears in the song “Who Am I?” Valjean saves a man who is being crushed by a wagon, and because of his great strength, Javert suspects that Monsieur le Maire could be Valjean. Javert says that he has not stopped looking for the missing Valjean, not knowing that he is talking to the real Valjean. In this moment, Valjean wrestles with his values; should he keep his freedom in a life that he worked hard to create for himself, or does he honor his vow to live honestly and admit his identity?

The **Introspection** leitmotif appears at the beginning of “Who Am I?” and continues in four versions throughout the song (Figure 2.5). The leitmotif is originally played in A^b at the beginning of “At the End of the Day” but is introduced in the key of B in m. 25 of “Who Am I?” (Figure 2.6). It is a minor third higher, and the stakes are higher for Valjean as well as he is making an enormous decision. All three versions of the instrumental leitmotif sound before Valjean enters with the melodic leitmotif.

Mm.	Version #	Pitches in B Major	Adjacent Descending Intervals	Lyrics
25-26 beat 2	1	B-G#-F#-D#	m3-M2-m3	"damned."
26 beat 3-4	2	B-G#-F#-E	m3-M2-M2	
27	3	C#-G#-F#-E	P4-M2-M2	"Who am"
28-29	1	B-G#-F#-D#	m3-M2-m3	"I? Can I condemn"
30	2	B-G#-F#-E	m3-M2-M2	"agony?"
31	3	C#-G#-F#-E	P4-M2-M2	"innocent who wears my face"
32-33	1	B-G#-F#-D#	m3-M2-m3	"I? Can I conceal"
34	2	B-G#-F#-E	m3-M2-M2	"was before?"
35	3	C#-G#-F#-E	P4-M2-M2	"must my name until I die"
36-37	1	B-G#-F#-D#	m3-M2-m3	"lie? How can I ever face"
38	2	B-G#-F#-E	m3-M2-M2	"self again."
39	3	C#-G#-F#-E	P4-M2-M2	"soul belongs to God, I know"
41-42	1	B-G#-F#-D#	m3-M2-m3	"I? Who am"
43	4	F#-D#-C#-A#	m3-M2-m3	"I? I'm Jeal Val"
48	1	B-G#-F#-D#	m3-M2-m3	"I?"
49	4	F#-D#-C#-A#	m3-M2-m3	"Two four six oh"
50	1	B-G#-F#-D#	m3-M2-m3	"one!"

Figure 2.5: “Who Am I?” **Introspection** Leitmotif Transformations

If I stay silent I am damned. Who am

I? Can I condemn this man to slavery, Pretend I do not feel his

cresc poco a poco

+ Gtr, bass

a - gony? This innocent who wears my face, who goes to judgment in my place, Who am

Figure 2.6: “Who Am I?” mm. 24-31, Instrumental **Introspection** Leitmotif and Valjean singing the melodic **Introspection** Leitmotif

This leitmotif dramatizes Valjean weighing his choice. Throughout “Who Am I?” the first version of the leitmotif occurs most often. It sounds beneath the lyrics “Can I condemn this man to slavery, pretend I do not see his” in mm. 28-29, until the second version enters under the lyric “agony” in m. 30 (Figure 2.6). This serves as a transition to the third version in m. 31, where Valjean debates the other side of the argument in the lyrics “This innocent who wears my face who goes to judgement in my place.” The third version is

played when Valjean favors honesty. Changing between the sets of sixteenth notes exemplifies the multiple facets of the decision.

Valjean's contemplation continues throughout the song, as the leitmotif oscillates between the three versions of the sixteenth note pattern. In m. 43, Valjean makes his decision to commit to honesty; the fourth version of the leitmotif sounds as he sings the lyrics "Who Am I? I'm Jean Valjean." Version 4 is lower than the other versions, as Valjean shows confidence in his identity and choices. For the rest of the song, the second and third versions of the leitmotif are not played. The first and fourth versions of the leitmotif share the same descending adjacent intervals (Figure 2.6). This cements Valjean feeling confident in his final decision.

Valjean makes an important decision about his identity in both this use of the **Introspection** leitmotif and the first use in "At the End of the Day." He first decides to change his identity to create a new life for himself, but here he reveals his true self in the name of honesty. However, Valjean is not the only character who is accompanied by this leitmotif in a life-altering moment of self-reflection.

The Return of the Introspection Leitmotif

The next appearance of the **Introspection** leitmotif in "The Robbery/Javert's Intervention" marks a life-changing moment for Marius and Cosette. At this point, the Thénardiens are attempting to steal from Valjean and Cosette while Marius is conversing with Éponine. Madame Thénardier is upset that Éponine is talking with Marius; the music is

dissonant, staccato, and tense (Figure 2.7, mm. 49-51). As Madame Thénardier shoos Marius away while he is still trying to talk to Éponine, he bumps into Cosette. The moment they first see each other is the moment that the **Introspection** leitmotif occurs (Figure 2.7, mm. 52-55).

The musical score for "The Robbery" (mm. 49-55) from *Les Misérables* is presented in three systems. The first system (mm. 49-51) shows Marius singing "Leave me alone." in m. 49, "Why is he here? Hey, Eponine!" in m. 50, and the piano accompaniment. The second system (mm. 52-54) shows Marius singing "I didn't see you there, forgive me." in m. 52, and the piano accompaniment. The third system (mm. 55-56) shows the piano accompaniment. The score is divided into three systems, with measures 49-51, 52-54, and 55-56. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4, with a brief change to 3/4 in m. 50. The piano accompaniment includes the "Introspection" leitmotif, marked with "mf" and "rall." in m. 52.

Figure 2.7: "The Robbery" mm. 49-55, Instrumental **Introspection** Leitmotif, (Éponine and Marius)

The **Introspection** leitmotif's entrance in m. 52 is in stark contrast to the preceding section. The song is mostly in 4/4, but the one measure before Marius sees Cosette is in 3/4. This brief change in meter startles the audience, as Marius is startled when falling in love at first sight. Like the previous iterations of this leitmotif, the first version is heard first for a

longer amount of time, with transformations 1 and 2 following afterwards. When the **Introspection** leitmotif is heard previously in the musical, Valjean looks within himself in a major life-changing moment. This return to the **Introspection** leitmotif signifies how monumental this meeting is for Marius and Cosette. They are not making a decision in this moment, but they are contemplating their immediate and intense feelings. This leitmotif does not only resonate with Valjean's story, but also other characters who face poignant moments.

Introduction of the Law Enforcement Leitmotif

The **Law Enforcement** leitmotif embodies order and lawfulness and is most often sung by Javert, the antagonist of *Les Misérables*. Though the leitmotif is representative of Javert's primary beliefs, other characters sing the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif in moments pertaining to the law (Figure 2.8). The melody remains consistent in each occurrence, but the delivery changes depending on the context. The audience understands each character's view on the law and morality through the different uses of the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif.

Song	Timestamp	Mm.	Key	Character	Variations
1. Prologue	8:25-8:50	213-221	Em	Constables	Staccato and serious
1. Prologue	9:04-9:19	226-231	Em	Bishop	Legato and compassionate Picardy third
2. Valjean's Soliloquy (What Have I Done?)	2:43-3:22	68-77	Dm	Valjean	Slow and reflective
6. Fantine's Arrest	1:15-1:32	29-36	Em	Javert	Staccato and authoritative
7. The Runaway Cart	2:22-2:42	58-65	Em	Javert	Staccato and suspicious
15. The Robbery/ Javert's Intervention	3:25-3:43	142-157	Fm	Javert	Staccato and suspicious
16. Stars	3:09-3:30	51-65	Bm	Gavroche	Bouncy and sarcastic Picardy third
23. One Day More	1:47-1:58	36-40	A	Javert	Staccato and serious

Figure 2.8: **Law Enforcement** Leitmotif Act 1 Occurrences

The first instance of the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif takes place near the beginning of the musical, towards the end of the “Prologue.” During this song, the Constables arrest Jean Valjean for stealing silver from the Bishop. They introduce the leitmotif when they return Valjean to the Bishop to accuse him and have him return the silver (Figure 2.9). The leitmotif is staccato, and the Constables sing in a very precise manner. The Bishop interrupts with compassion for Valjean and the music changes.

CONSTABLE 1

Tell his Reverence your story, You were

CONSTABLE 2

Let us see if he's impressed.

1 lodging here last night.

2 You were the ho - nest bis - hop's guest. And then,

Figure 2.9: “Prologue” mm. 213-217, **Law Enforcement** Leitmotif (Constables 1 and 2), E Minor

When the Bishop references the law in mm. 226-231, he directs his attention to the Constables and presents the leitmotif in a different manner (Figure 2.10). Though the melody remains the same, it is sung slower and connected. The accompaniment is no longer staccato eighth notes, but a syncopated, legato rhythm, with the bass line simplified.

Previously, the bass line ultimately descended but included several ornaments. During the Bishop's use of the leitmotif, the ornaments are removed, and the bass line is simplified. When the Bishop gives his blessing to the Constables in m. 231, the phrase ends on a Picardy third; though the song is in E minor, the G# in m. 231 creates a major V-I cadence to signify the Bishop's blessings and kindness.

So Mes - sieurs, you may re - lease him, for this man has spo - ken true. I com -

mend you for your du - ty, and God's bles - sing go with you.

V I

Figure 2.10: “Prologue” mm. 226-231, **Law Enforcement** Leitmotif (Bishop)

When the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif next returns in mm. 68-77 of “Valjean’s Soliloquy,” Valjean reflects upon the Bishop showing him mercy, and he decides to live an honest life. Valjean begins the leitmotif as it was previously sung, but he does not reach the climax of the leitmotif in the third measure; instead, he isolates the opening fragment,

repeatedly circling scale degree 5 as marked in Figure 2.11. In this moment of contemplation, Valjean describes needing to break out of the whirlpool in which he is trapped. The tonic chord is not reached at the end of the phrase like it is in the previous occurrences of this leitmotif. It abruptly meets its end, as does Jean Valjean's identity as himself. The **Law Enforcement** leitmotif is used here not because Valjean is committing to enforcing the law like the Constables, but because he decides to break his parole and create a new identity, vowing to abide by the law in the future.

The musical score is for a vocal line and piano accompaniment in D minor, 4/4 time. The vocal line consists of three phrases, each with a blue circle around the fifth scale degree (F#) of the D minor scale. The lyrics are: "I am reach-ing but I fall and the night is clos-ing in And I stare in-to the void, to the whirl-pool of my sin. I'll es-cape now from the world, from the world of Jean Val-jean. Jean Val-jean is no-thing now, a-no-ther sto-ry must be gin." The piano accompaniment features a steady eighth-note bass line and a treble line with chords and single notes.

Figure 2.11: “Valjean’s Soliloquy (What Have I Done?)” mm. 68-77, **Law Enforcement** Leitmotif (Valjean), D Minor

Javert's Utilization of the Law Enforcement Leitmotif

It is not until “Fantine’s Arrest” that Javert sings the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif in response to a quarrel between Bamatabois and Fantine. Bamatabois, a nobleman, tries to hire Fantine as a prostitute. When Fantine denies him and strikes him to be freed from his grasp, Bamatabois reports her to Javert and claims that her attack on him was unprovoked.

Javert’s declamation of the leitmotif is square and precise (Figure 2.12), as it was first heard by the Constables in “Valjean Arrested, Valjean Forgiven.” As a rule-follower, it only makes sense that Javert does not introduce the leitmotif that he sings most often but follows the guidelines that have previously been set. Javert’s demeanor and view of the law is like that of the Constables; he is authoritative and strictly lawful. His staccato delivery of the leitmotif contrasts the Bishop’s merciful and legato delivery. Javert continues singing this leitmotif throughout “Fantine’s Arrest.” Fantine interjects, singing of Cosette, her child that sorely needs her. Javert shows no mercy and stays true to the law; his continued use of the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif reinforces his unyielding devotion to following the rules.



Figure 2.12: “Fantine’s Arrest” mm. 28-32, **Law Enforcement** Leitmotif (Javert)

Throughout Act 1, Javert continues to sing the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif, reminding the audience of his strict personality and the looming threat with each iteration. Subsequently, Javert’s sings the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif in “The Runaway Cart,” “The Robbery/Javert’s Intervention,” and “One Day More.” In “The Runaway Cart,” Javert sees Monsieur le Maire lift a heavy cart to save a man’s life. Javert is reminded of Valjean, not knowing Monsieur le Maire’s true identity, as Valjean was the only person he has known with such incredible strength. When Javert begins singing the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif again in the same style which he sung it previously, he sings of Valjean escaping his parole and spending ten years on the run (Figure 2.13). He further references the law, saying he believes the true Valjean was found and will finally pay for his crimes.

VALJEAN Andante $\text{♩} = 80$

Say what you must, Don't leave it there...

Jav
sir, I would not dare... I have

J V

Jav
on - ly known one oth - er who can do what you have done, He's a

coll:

J V

Jav
convict from the chain gang, he's been ten years on the run. But he

Figure 2.13: "The Runaway Cart" mm. 58-62, **Law Enforcement** Leitmotif (Javert)

When Javert next sings the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif at the end of “The Robbery/Javert’s Intervention,” the Thénardiers are attempting to steal from Valjean and Cosette. When the Thénardiers recognize Valjean, Javert interrupts. It is not until moments later that Javert suspects that the man was Valjean. Javert then sings of how it could have been Valjean who slipped through his fingers once again, but he is determined to catch him eventually (Figure 2.14).

The musical score consists of three systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The key signature has two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are: "Could it be he's some old jail-bird that the tide now wash-es in? Heard my name and start-ed run-ning, had the brand up-on his skin? And the". The piano accompaniment features a prominent eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more rhythmic bass line in the left hand.

Figure 2.14: “The Robbery/Javert’s Intervention” mm. 142-150, **Law Enforcement** Leitmotif (Javert)

Gavroche Mocking the Law Enforcement Leitmotif

Before Javert's final use of the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif in "One Day More," Gavroche borrows the leitmotif. After "The Robbery," Javert sings "Stars;" he makes a vow that he will find Jean Valjean and capture him once and for all. After he swears it by the stars, the young Gavroche comically makes his entrance. Gavroche makes fun of "that inspector" Javert and claims that he himself is in charge instead (Figure 2.15). Underneath Gavroche, the woodwinds provide a bouncy, broken chord accompaniment. In mm. 59-65, Gavroche repeats the last three pitches of the leitmotif, adding his own variation. Additionally, there is a Picardy third in the accompaniment of m. 65, ending the section on a lighthearted B major chord instead of B minor. These elements contrast the grand ending of Javert's section of "Stars" and adds to Gavroche's mockery.



Figure 2.15: “Stars” mm. 51-65, **Law Enforcement** Leitmotif (Gavroche)

Though the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif is frequently sung by Javert, several other characters utilize it through Act 1. This leitmotif signifies a character’s view on the law; the lyrics and the way in which they are sung are determined by a character’s perspective. Javert and the Constables believe the authoritarian perspective with a binary view of the law; following it is right, and all who break it are wrong. The Bishop shows mercy for someone who breaks the law and makes decisions based on his own morality. Valjean wants to be someone who abides by the law but struggles with balancing it with his own morality.

Gavroche laughs at the law and believes that it does not pertain to him. The different uses of the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif help the audience understand each character's view on the law and morality; this is an effective use of the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif, rather it being specific to Javert.

How The Protagonist and Antagonist Use Leitmotifs in *Les Misérables*

Though the **Introspection** and **Law Enforcement** leitmotifs are often sung by Valjean and Javert, the leitmotifs express their titled ideas rather than specific characters. Valjean faces many life-changing decisions during Act 1, creating several opportunities to use the instrumental and melodic Introspection leitmotifs. Hearing the instrumental **Introspection** leitmotif when Marius and Cosette meet reinforces the leitmotif's connection to looking within in a pivotal moment, and not its connection to Valjean specifically.

When the law is being challenged, the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif is sung. It is sometimes sung by characters who are not trying to enforce the law, like the Bishop, Valjean, and Gavroche. However, it is because of Javert's strong belief in enforcing the law that he sings the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif most often.

In these ways, both the **Introspection** and **Law Enforcement** leitmotifs show evidence of signifying an idea rather than a character. Though they are heard often from the protagonist and antagonist, other characters in *Les Misérables* sing about the same idea, thus they use the same melody. This is different from how most leitmotifs are used in *Hamilton*.

Introductory Leitmotifs for Hamilton and Burr

Hamilton and Burr carry multiple leitmotifs throughout *Hamilton* that exemplify their identity and their primary personal values. The first two songs of the musical, “Alexander Hamilton” and “Aaron Burr, Sir,” introduce the protagonist and antagonist’s calling card leitmotifs. The leitmotifs that stem from these two songs introduce the characters to different extents, and neither leitmotif would be suited for any character other than their namesake.

Hamilton’s Calling Card Leitmotif

“Alexander Hamilton,” the first song of the musical and Hamilton’s “I am” song, provides significant information about the first sixteen years of Hamilton’s life. In May 2009 at a White House Poetry Jam, Lin-Manuel Miranda introduced his latest project with the following quote: “I’m actually working on a hip-hop album. It’s a concept album about the life of someone I think embodies hip-hop, Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton.”²¹ Miranda was met with laughter from the audience; at this point, the musical was merely an idea with this being the only song written. Miranda quickly summarizes Hamilton’s life for the audience: “He was born a penniless orphan in St. Croix, an illegitimate birth, became George Washington’s right-hand man, became treasury secretary, caught beef with every

²¹ *The Obama White House*, “Lin-Manuel Miranda Performs at the White House Poetry Jam: (8 of 8),” November 2, 2009, video, 4:26, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNFf7nMIGnE>.

other founding father, and all on the strength of his writing. I think he embodies the word's ability to make a difference."²²

Early in Hamilton's life, his father left, his mother died, his cousin committed suicide, and he was left to fend for himself. The people of St. Croix realized Hamilton's talent for writing, so they collected money to send him to the colonies to go to school.²³ Led by Aaron Burr, various characters share these key events from Hamilton's adolescence that led him to New York to start a new life. Normally an "I am" song is sung by the character it is describing,²⁴ but the other primary characters sing the majority of "Alexander Hamilton."

The first line Hamilton sings in the musical is the leitmotif from this song, creating an important moment with his entrance. "Alexander Hamilton" is aptly in B minor, as the story of Hamilton's upbringing is full of tragedy. However, when Hamilton sings his name at the beginning of the **Alexander Hamilton** leitmotif, the pitches are the fifth, fourth, and third scale degrees as shown in Figure 2.16. Isolated from the underlying Bm chord, they sound like third, second, and first scale degrees in the relative major, D Major. The major-sounding melody appears optimistic above a minor chord; the fact that the associated text is Hamilton's name signifies that the tragedy of his youth will not define him. The leitmotif ends on a dominant seventh chord (Figure 2.16); this fits with the lyrics "just you wait" as the cadence sounds unfinished, like Hamilton's story. The lyrics "just you wait" are ironic, as

²² *The Obama White House*, "Lin-Manuel Miranda Performs," 2009.

²³ Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton*, New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2005.

²⁴ Martin Gottfried, *Broadway Musicals*, (New York, NY: Karry N. Abrams, 1979), 216.

Aaron Burr's primary character trait is hesitation.²⁵ However, Hamilton is telling everyone else to wait for all the things he will achieve, as opposed to Burr who waits to make up his own mind about what he wants to achieve. Hamilton makes rash decisions and will not personally wait for anything. The cast echoes the leitmotif throughout the song as well, but they are always directly referencing Hamilton.



Figure 2.16: “Alexander Hamilton” mm. 22-25, **Alexander Hamilton** Leitmotif (Hamilton), B Minor

When the **Alexander Hamilton** leitmotif occurs next in “Satisfied,” Angelica Schuyler is recounting the conversation she had with Hamilton on the night they met. Hamilton uses portions of the **Alexander Hamilton** leitmotif to introduce himself; he continues with the leitmotif, telling Angelica and reminding the audience of his ambition to achieve greatness in the future. Specifically, he sings his name in the same fashion as his leitmotif in m. 51 (Figure 2.17). The lyrics “there’s a million things I haven’t done” in mm. 53-54 are also derived from the **Alexander Hamilton** leitmotif but are different scale degrees in the key of C minor. Instead of using the original scale degrees, Hamilton sings the

²⁵ This is an example of how Hamilton and Burr are foil characters, like Valjean and Javert who also live by opposing beliefs.

pitches normally attached to the lyrics “Alexander Hamilton.” This is a deviation from the norm in *Hamilton*, as the lyrics are part of the leitmotif, unlike *Les Misérables*. The lyrics “But just you wait, just you wait” in mm. 55-56 are the same as they were in original leitmotif. As shown in this example, this leitmotif would only make sense as a reference to Hamilton.

The musical score for "Satisfied" (mm. 50-56) from the musical *Hamilton* is shown. The score is in C Minor, 4/4 time. It features three staves: Angelica's vocal line, Hamilton's vocal line, and the piano accompaniment. Angelica's part (top) includes the lyrics "name is An-gel-i-ca Schuy-ler" and "Where's your fam-ly from?". Hamilton's part (middle) includes the lyrics "Al-ex-an-der Ham-il-ton." and "Un im-por-tant. There's a mil-lion things I have-n't done, but just you wait, just you wait." The piano accompaniment (bottom) features a prominent eighth-note melody in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

Figure 2.17: “Satisfied” mm. 50-56, C Minor, **Alexander Hamilton** Leitmotif (Hamilton)

George Washington sings the **Alexander Hamilton** leitmotif briefly in “Guns and Ships.” He only sings two portions of the leitmotif: both melodies with the lyrics “Alexander

Hamilton” (Figure 2.18).²⁶ Washington is trying to get Hamilton’s attention, as he is calling on him to return to the Revolutionary War. Washington previously would not allow Hamilton to lead any troops, but here he is offering Hamilton a position of leadership in the field. This use of the **Alexander Hamilton** leitmotif is brief, but important; it references what Hamilton will achieve in the future. Between singing the leitmotif, Washington tells Hamilton everything he has been longing to hear (that he will have control of his own troops). Not only is the **Alexander Hamilton** leitmotif a calling card for Hamilton as a character, but this use of the leitmotif provides insight into how Hamilton will earn his legacy. George Washington is known as a great leader in the war and is cautiously giving Hamilton the opportunity to become the same.

²⁶ Washington excludes the following section of the leitmotif: “and there’s a million things haven’t done, but just you wait, just you wait.”



Figure 2.18: “Guns and Ships” mm. 24-29, **Alexander Hamilton** Leitmotif (Washington)

Burr’s Calling Card Leitmotif

The second song in *Hamilton* serves as an introduction to Aaron Burr and provides his calling card leitmotif. It is brief but returns frequently. Burr is hesitant to let others truly know him, so “Aaron Burr, Sir” does not provide much biographical information about him as it is early in the musical. It is not his “I am” song like “Alexander Hamilton” is for Hamilton, which immediately spews Hamilton’s life story.

After the cast states the setting in the first five measures (1776, New York City), Hamilton asks Burr if that is indeed who he is (Figure 2.19). The **Aaron Burr, Sir** leitmotif

solely serves as a reference to Aaron Burr, without stating much information about him. Like Aaron Burr, it is to the point and without frill. Unlike the other leitmotifs, this leitmotif is purely rhythmic. It is not a complicated rap, but it is text spoken in time. In the leitmotif's subsequent occurrences, the rhythm of the spoken text and the direct reference to Aaron Burr stay consistent.

Hamilton:

Par-don me, are you Aa-ron Burr, Sir? Oh sure, sir.-I'm Al-ex

Burr:

That depends, who's ask-ing?

Figure 2.19: “Aaron Burr, Sir” mm. 6-8, **Aaron Burr, Sir** Leitmotif (Hamilton)

In Act 1 of *Hamilton*, excluding the finale, there are three additional references to the **Aaron Burr, Sir** leitmotif (Figure 2.20). Each statement of the **Aaron Burr, Sir** leitmotif uses the spoken text in the same rhythm. In each circumstance, Burr is either introducing himself or is being greeted by Hamilton. This leitmotif is directly connected to Aaron Burr and like him it is clear and succinct. The **Aaron Burr, Sir** leitmotif would not be useful to any other character.

Song	Timestamp	Context
8. “Right Hand Man”	2:59	Amid the Revolutionary War, Burr introduces himself to Washington in the hopes that Washington will see his potential and hire him.
12. “The Story of Tonight (Reprise)”	0:44	Hamilton is celebrating his marriage with his friends. He welcomes Burr as he arrives to the party.
15. “Ten Duel Commandments”	1:16	Hamilton and Burr serve as the seconds in the duel between Laurens and Lee. They greet each other on the battlefield. They quickly realize that they will not come to a peace, and the duel will occur.

Figure 2.20: “Aaron Burr, Sir” Act 1 Occurrences

Alexander Hamilton’s Ambition Shown in *Hamilton*’s “My Shot”

“My Shot,” Alexander Hamilton’s “I want” song, sets the stage for Hamilton’s journey throughout the musical. Hamilton expresses his most grandiose desires during “My Shot,” introducing his main leitmotif. This leitmotif is almost exclusively sung by Hamilton and follows him through the musical; he sings this leitmotif when he is reiterating his purpose. The only time the melodic **My Shot** leitmotif is sung by anyone other than Hamilton is when the cast joins in to further stress its importance (Figure 2.21).

Section	Timestamp	Mm.	Leitmotif Variation	Character	Lyrics
Introduction	Notation only	1-2			
Chorus	0:00-0:09	3-6	Melody, chords, bass line	Hamilton	"I am not throwing away my shot"
Verse	0:10-1:12	7-30	Chords and bass line repeat continuously	Hamilton	"I'ma get a scholarship to Kings College"
Chorus	1:13-1:35	31-38	Melody, chords, bass line	Hamilton	"I am not throwing away my shot"
Verse	1:36-2:10	39-50	Bass line repeats continuously	Laurens Mulligan Lafayette	"I dream of life without the monarchy"
	2:11-2:48	51-66	Chords and bass line repeat continuously	Burr Hamilton	"Geniuses lower your voices"
Chorus	2:49-3:09	67-74	Melody, chords, bass line	Hamilton Ensemble	"I am not throwing away my shot"
Bridge	3:10-3:42	75-86		Laurens Ensemble	"Everybody sing woah"
	3:43-3:51	87-90	Chords and bass line	Laurens Ensemble	"When are these colonies gonna rise up?"
Verse	3:52-4:46	91-110		Hamilton	"I imagine death so much it feels more like a memory"
	4:47-4:56	111-114	Chords and bass line	Hamilton	"I'm past patiently waiting"
Chorus	4:47-5:32	115-127	Melody, chords, bass line	Hamilton Ensemble	"I am not throwing away my shot"

Figure 2.21: "My Shot" Form Diagram

The first statement of the **My Shot** leitmotif (Figure 2.22) occurs at the beginning of “My Shot,” the third song of the musical. “My Shot” follows Kowalke’s definition of an “I want” song, as the protagonist is confessing his inner-monologue and highlighting the main plot early in the musical.²⁷ It is only fitting that “My Shot” is in a minor key, as Hamilton’s life is riddled with tragedy no matter how hard he works. At this point in the story, the audience is aware of Hamilton’s devastating childhood (the first minor i chord) but is not yet aware of how the remainder of the progression will mirror Hamilton’s journey.

not throw-ing a-way my shot! I am not throw-ing a-way my shot! Hey yo, I'm

mf

Gm: i V⁶/III III V⁶/5/iv

just like my coun-try, I'm young, — scrap-py and hun-gry, and I'm not throw-ing a-way my shot! I'm 'a get a

cresc.

iv VI V⁶/5

Figure 2.22: “My Shot” mm. 3-6, **My Shot** Leitmotif (Hamilton) with chord progression, G Minor

²⁷ Kowalke, “Sondheim,” 152.

The lyrics of the leitmotif, first heard in mm. 3-6, show Hamilton's desperation to change his life and will be more than a poor Caribbean orphan. The fast harmonic rhythm mirrors Hamilton's relentless, non-stop nature. The text-painting strengthens the lyrics, referring to Hamilton as "scrappy and hungry." This progression is consistently moving and searching for the dominant; this mirrors Hamilton's ambition. The progression begins with a minor i chord and, like Hamilton's challenging upbringing, it is rooted in sadness despite the perseverance of the lyrics. The following sequence of secondary dominants imitates Hamilton striving for a goal, successfully achieving it, and moving onto the next one. It resembles Hamilton's non-stop nature. The remainder of the leitmotif's chord progression, VI-V^{6/5}, sounds unfinished. This is because the inversion of the dominant seventh chord in the half cadence leaves the unresolved leading tone in the bass line. This mirrors how Hamilton is never satisfied with his accomplishments and is looking towards what is next for him.

The bass line plays a key role in the text-painting as well. Starting on a G1, it ascends stepwise with every chord change. This mirrors Hamilton's journey, as he crawls upwards from the bottom, trying to "rise up," like the lyrics often mention. Like Hamilton's journey, the bass line is on the precipice of reaching a satisfying conclusion, but it is interrupted, ending on the leading tone.

In m. 11 of "My Shot," a new melody appears in the accompaniment. This melody fits with the chord progression and is repeated throughout the song. It is the melody of the leitmotif, as the lyrics themselves are rapped and not set to pitches. The rhythm of the

melody and the chord progression are similar, as the pitch in the melody is often the root of the chord. As shown in Figure 2.23, the leitmotif melody begins ascending the G minor scale, rising to mirror the repetitive lyrics. The final leap in the line creates a tritone and ends on the leading tone without resolution; this dissonance makes the song sound even more haunting. The motion of the leitmotif imitates Hamilton's determination to keep ascending, even when he faces setbacks. In conjunction with the chord progression and bass line, the melodic **My Shot** leitmotif symbolizes Hamilton's persistence and will to achieve greatness.



Figure 2.23: “My Shot” mm. 11-14, Melodic **My Shot** Leitmotif (Accompaniment)

Though the **My Shot** leitmotif resembles Hamilton's character, it also mirrors his journey through the musical. The beginning minor i chord signifies his tragic adolescence. The following chords, $V^6/III-III$, are more hopeful, stabilizing on a root-position major triad. This compliments important benchmarks in Hamilton's story, like fighting for and winning the revolution, Hamilton's wedding, and birth of his son.

The III, followed by another secondary dominant and resolution, mirrors Hamilton reaching a low point in his life with a series of setbacks (being fired from his job as Treasury Secretary, his affair being publicized, and the death of his son). The $V^{6/5}/iv-iv$ chords are a fitting representation of Hamilton unsuccessfully reaching for his next goal. The iv resolution remains for a full measure, as the challenging period of Hamilton's life remains for a large portion of the plot.

The ending of the leitmotif's chord progression, VI-V^{6/5}, models the end of his story. After regaining some political trust, Hamilton's life ends prematurely in a duel. His dreams are never fully realized, and no one will ever know what Hamilton could have accomplished had it not been for his untimely death. Like Hamilton's story, the chord progression feels unfinished. The V^{6/5} of the half cadence occurs on the lyric "shot," the final word of the leitmotif. The irony here is that Hamilton does indeed throw away his final shot, shooting his pistol at the sky in the duel, rather than at his opponent, Burr. The half cadence feels particularly unfinished as the leading tone in the V^{6/5} chord does not resolve to the tonic.

Throughout "My Shot," Hamilton is rapping about how desperate he is to leave a legacy behind, and the **My Shot** leitmotif foreshadows what his legacy will be. If Hamilton was to eventually be successful with his shot, the song might not sound as foreboding, and perhaps would have a sense of closure. Many "I want" songs are in a major key, but Hamilton's "I want" song is in a minor key.²⁸ The continuation of the **My Shot** leitmotif throughout the musical hints to the audience that Hamilton's dreams will not be realized.

²⁸ Examples include "Part of Your World" from *The Little Mermaid* in G Major and "Wouldn't It Be Lovely" from *My Fair Lady* in F Major.

The Return of the **My Shot** Leitmotif

Of all the leitmotifs featured in Act 1 of *Hamilton*, the **My Shot** leitmotif occurs most often; after the original song, it is heard an additional five times in Act 1.²⁹ Because this leitmotif comes from Hamilton's "I want" song, each return of the leitmotif signifies an important moment in Hamilton's journey to reach his goal. The first key moment in his success is when he becomes George Washington's right-hand man.

The song "Right Hand Man" takes place towards the beginning of Act 1, and it informs the audience that the Revolutionary War is not going well for the colonies. General George Washington is introduced, and he asks Hamilton to be his right-hand man in the war, after complimenting Hamilton's strategy, writing, and hunger. After Washington sings the lyrics "we are a powder keg about to explode, I need someone like you to lighten the load," the instrumentation thins and the volume reduces. The ensemble begins the **My Shot** leitmotif at a whisper, then crescendos before Hamilton accepts Washington's offer by echoing "I am not throwing away my shot!" (Figure 2.24). The ensemble enters with the leitmotif during a crucial decision for Hamilton, acting as a reminder of Hamilton's goal to create a legacy for himself. This is a clue to the audience that being Washington's right-hand man is important in Hamilton's journey.

²⁹ The **My Shot** leitmotif is heard throughout Act 2 as well. Perhaps the most poignant reference is in "The World Was Wide Enough" when Hamilton aims his pistol at the sky and throws away his shot in a duel with Aaron Burr. It is here that the sad irony of the lyrics is realized.

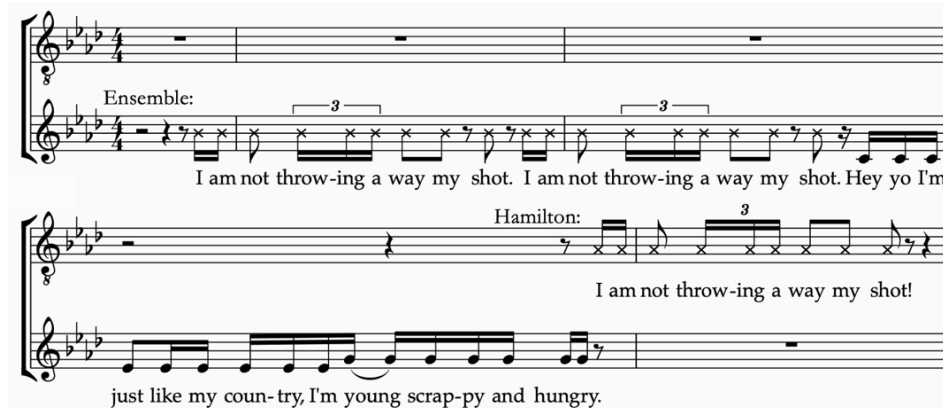


Figure 2.24: “Right Hand Man” mm. 86-90, **My Shot** Leitmotif (Ensemble, Hamilton)

The ensemble reprises the **My Shot** leitmotif halfway through Act 1 at the end of “Stay Alive.” John Laurens wants to challenge Charles Lee to a duel, and Hamilton says to him in rhythm, “Laurens, do not throw away your shot.” Though this statement is not sung or accompanied in anyway, the use of the leitmotif’s lyrics is incredibly important. Using the “My Shot” text, rather than telling Laurens to not participate in the duel through any other language, reminds the audience of what is on the line: the war and their legacies afterwards. Additionally, this moment serves as foreshadowing for the decision Hamilton makes during his duel with Burr towards the end of the musical.

The song “History Has Its Eyes on You” takes place directly before the colonies initiate the Battle of Yorktown. While speaking with Hamilton, Washington reflects on his younger days as a general. He tells Hamilton that he has greatness within him as well. When Washington sings “history has its eyes on you,” he is drawing attention to this next important moment in Hamilton’s story; underneath those lyrics, another facet of the **My Shot** leitmotif sounds in mm. 75-78 of “My Shot” (Figure 2.25).

The musical score for measures 75-78 of "My Shot" features three staves. The top staff is for Laurens, the middle for Hamilton/Lafayette/Mulligan, and the bottom for piano accompaniment. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). Measure 75 is marked with a Gm9 chord. Measures 76-77 are marked with Gm and Bb chords. The lyrics for Laurens are "Whoa, _ whoa, _ whoa! _____ Hey! Whoa! _____". The lyrics for Hamilton/Lafayette/Mulligan are "Whoa, _ whoa, _ whoa! _____ Whoa! _____". The piano accompaniment includes the instruction "drums continue" and "dig in!". Measure 78 is marked with an Ebmaj7 chord. The lyrics for Laurens are "Wooh! Whoa! _____ Ay, let 'em hear ya! Let's go!". The lyrics for Hamilton/Lafayette/Mulligan are "Whoa! _____ Yeah! _____". The piano accompaniment includes a key signature change to C major (no sharps or flats) in measure 78.

Figure 2.25: “My Shot” mm. 75-78, Secondary Melodic **My Shot** Leitmotif (Laurens, Hamilton, Lafayette and Mulligan)

Because this secondary melodic leitmotif does not use the primary lyrics or chord progression of “My Shot” but is still derived from the original song, it is a more subtle way of symbolizing Hamilton’s ambition. This tells the audience that this could be moment for Hamilton to take his shot. An example of this is heard in the Women line in mm. 25-28 of “History Has Its Eyes on You” (Figure 2.26).

eyes on you.

WOMEN:
Whoa, _ whoa, _ whoa... Whoa...

eyes on you.

His - to - ry has its

Whoa...

His - to - ry has its

His - to - ry has its
play if needed

Figure 2.26: “History Has Its Eyes on You” mm. 25-28, Secondary Melodic **My Shot** Leitmotif (Ensemble Women)

On the heels of “History Has Its Eyes on You” is “Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down).” This song narrates the events of the Battle of Yorktown from Hamilton’s perspective. After he converses with Marquis de Lafayette about his appreciation for France and their help with the war, Hamilton turns his attention to the task at hand. The full company joins in singing the **My Shot** leitmotif (Figure 2.27). Though the rhythm and lyrics of the leitmotif are the same as the original version, the tonal aspects of the leitmotif are

different. “My Shot” is in G minor while “Yorktown” is in C Major, changing the quality of many of the chords. The Battle of Yorktown ends positively for the colonies, so it makes sense that “Yorktown” is in a major key. During “My Shot,” the original leitmotif uses several secondary dominants and a stepwise ascending baseline. Those features are not present in “Yorktown,” as this song is not about only Hamilton’s journey. However, Hamilton played a large role in the colonies winning the Battle of Yorktown, which in turn helped propel Hamilton to political success after the war. This is another pivotal moment in Hamilton’s journey to create a legacy for himself. This leitmotif derived from Hamilton’s “I want” song is only fitting for him, as no other character shares his intense ambition.

The image displays a musical score for the song "Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)" from the musical Hamilton, specifically measures 15-19. The score is written for two vocal parts (Soprano and Alto) and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "I am not throw-ing a way my shot. I am not throw-ing a way my shot. Hey yo I'm just like my coun-try, I'm young scrap-py and hung-ry and I'm not throw-ing away my shot. I am not throw-ing a way my shot. I am not throw-ing a way my shot." The chord progression is indicated below the piano part: C: ii IV V vi I ii for the first system and ii IV V vi I ii IV V for the second system.

Figure 2.27: “Yorktown (The World Turned Upside Down)” mm. 15-19, **My Shot** Leitmotif (Ensemble) and Chord Progression in C Major

Burr's Dreams Remain Stagnant in “Wait for It”

A quarter into the first act of *Hamilton*, Burr finally sings his “I am” song, “Wait for It.” This is where his primary leitmotif originates. Miranda chose to use Aaron Burr’s patience as the driving factor of his story. He explains:

The breakthrough for unlocking Aaron Burr’s character came when I learned that Aaron Burr’s wife, Theodosia, is 14 years older, and when he first met her, she was married. She was married to a guy fighting on the other side of the war. And Aaron Burr basically waited for that dude to die or fall out of the picture and I was just like, ‘Imagine Alexander Hamilton waiting for anything!’ And that’s the difference. It’s a complete difference in temperament. Then the challenge became, what song do you write that is the anti-‘My Shot’. How do you dramatize waiting?³⁰

Burr’s leitmotif does just that. The **Wait for It** leitmotif consists of an instrumental idea and a melodic idea that are heard throughout the song (Figure 2.28).



Figure 2.28: “Wait for It” mm. 1-4, Instrumental **Wait for It** Leitmotif, D-flat Major

“Wait for It” begins with a simple arpeggiating melody over a I-vi-iii chord progression in the key of D-flat major (Figure 2.28). In the book *Hamilton: The Revolution*, Miranda recounts his compositional process: “I often write loops. I’ll make eight or sixteen

³⁰ Song Exploder, “Lin-Manuel Miranda – Wait for It,” Volume 1, Episode 4, Netflix Inc., October 2, 2020.

bars of music I think I like, and I sing over it until it feels true. This is how ‘Wait for It’ was born.”³¹ This pattern is on a loop throughout the majority of the song. Though the song is rooted in a major key, the progression lacks a major cadence. It hangs on a minor iii chord for an extended period of time. Much like Burr’s story, this progression never reaches a resolution or positive ending. Because the adjacent chords share common tones, each chord change occurs with minimal alterations. This represents Burr’s ability to wait for small changes, and how he does not make sudden, brash decisions. Like the repeating I-vi-iii progression, Burr is steady, hesitant, and calculated.

Mm. 1-4 are repeated with one alternate pitch (Figure 2.29). This change in the pattern at the beginning of the song mimics Burr mulling over his thoughts. This was an intentional decision for Miranda. “Just having this note be a little different until it settles into what it is... it’s Aaron Burr thinking. It’s Aaron Burr voicing a new thought that he hasn’t really voiced before.”³² This shows how Burr is completely opposite from Hamilton, who will immediately say what is on his mind without a moment to think.

³¹ Lin Manuel Miranda and Jeremy McCarter, *Hamilton: The Revolution*, New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2016. 91.

³² Song Exploder, “Wait for It.”

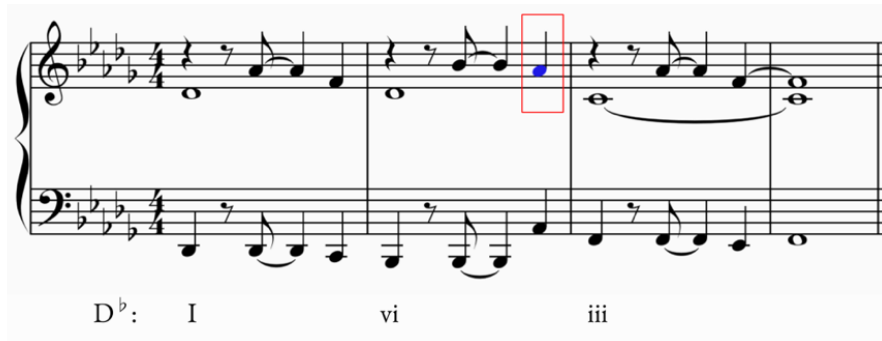


Figure 2.29: “Wait for It” mm. 1-4 (repeat), Instrumental **Wait for It** Leitmotif

The verse begins as Burr sings about Theodosia, the woman he loves who is married to a British officer. His pace is slow and controlled, singing over the same chord progression and melody outlined in mm. 1-4 (Figure 2.30). He is restrained but sings with clear intensity. Burr continues, singing about his parents and his grandfather, all of whom had passed and “left no instructions, just a legacy to protect.” Alex Lacamoire, *Hamilton’s* orchestrator, arranged this song with Burr’s temperament in mind. He explains, “Burr is waiting, just kind of biding his time, but I always envisioned him being like a lion hiding in the bushes. Yes, he’s still, but there’s energy to it, and if he sees what he wants he’s going to go snatch it.”³³

³³ Song Exploder, “Wait for It.”

Section	Timestamp	Mm.	Leitmotif Variation	Character	Lyrics
Introduction	0:00-0:04	1-4	Instrumental		
	0:05-0:09	1-4 (repeat)	Instrumental w/ one altered pitch		
Verse	0:10-0:26	5-18	Original instrumental repeats continuously	Burr	“Theodosia writes me a letter everyday”
	0:27-0:28	19-20		“ ”	“Theodosia she’s mine”
Chorus	0:29-0:43	21-31		“ ”	“Love doesn’t discriminate”
	0:44-0:50	32-36	Melodic	“ ”	“I’m willing to wait for it”
Verse	0:51-1:08	37-50	Original instrumental repeats continuously	“ ”	“My grandfather was a fire and brimstone preacher”
	1:09-1:10	51-52		“ ”	“Just a legacy to protect”
Chorus	1:11-1:25	53-63		“ ”	“Death doesn’t discriminate”
	1:26-1:30	64-68	Melodic	Burr and Ensemble	“I’m willing to wait for it”
Bridge	1:31-1:50	69-75	Melodic	“ ”	“Wait for it”
	1:51-2:15	76-85		Burr	“I’m not standing still”
Chorus	2:16-2:32	86-92		“ ”	“Hamilton doesn’t hesitate”
	2:33-2:38	93-97	Melodic	“ ”	“I’m willing to wait for it”
Chorus	2:39-2:53	98-108		“ ”	“Life doesn’t discriminate”
Chorus	2:54-3:12	109-119	Melodic and instrumental	Burr and Ensemble	“I’m willing to wait for it”

Figure 2.30: “Wait for It” Form Diagram

That exact moment comes in the bridge when Burr realizes that he is in charge of his own destiny, and he expresses jealousy towards Hamilton. Suddenly Burr loses his subdued nature when he is trying to justify his behavior. After a measure and a half of silence, the gentle arpeggiating motif is abruptly abandoned for heavy, syncopated chords in half time. Like Burr, the music is still controlled and thoughtful, even when it is at its most passionate. This section comes out of nowhere, but Miranda reflects on this section of “Wait for It:” “Content dictates form. And to me this is the ideal of content dictating form. Everything about Burr is not only in the lyric of the song but in the melody. Especially when I got to the bridge, and was just like, oh this doesn’t sound like anything Hamilton would do, it just sounded really character specific.”³⁴

“Wait for It” is the moment when Burr starts to see his life pass by him as someone else is getting what he wants. The music that supports this pivotal moment will follow him through the rest of the musical, consistently reminding the audience of how Burr’s temperament is the exact opposite from Hamilton’s. Though the **Wait for It** leitmotif returns several times in Act 2, it only returns once in the Act 1: the finale, “Non-Stop.”³⁵

³⁴ Song Exploder, “Wait for It.”

³⁵ In Act 2, however, the **Wait for It** leitmotif returns several times. It is always sung by Burr, with or without the ensemble supporting him, except for a moment during “The Room Where It Happens.” Hamilton is telling Burr about a deal he made with Madison and Jefferson to establish where the nation’s capital will be, and Hamilton mocks Burr with the following lyrics: “Oh you got love for it, you got hate for it, you get nothing if you wait for it, wait for it, wait.” This pivotal moment drives Burr to declare what he wants, and he takes action.

How The Protagonist and Antagonist Use Leitmotifs in *Hamilton*

During Act 1 of *Hamilton*, Burr and Hamilton each sing two leitmotifs that model their characteristics and beliefs. The **Alexander Hamilton** and **My Shot** leitmotifs are only heard from Hamilton, characters singing directly to him, or the ensemble echoing his thoughts. It would not make sense for these leitmotifs to be sung by any other characters as Hamilton is the only character who possesses his story and intense ambition. The use of the **Alexander Hamilton** and **My Shot** leitmotifs would not be suitable for other characters.

Similarly, the **Aaron Burr, Sir** and **Wait for It** leitmotifs are only sung by or to Burr during Act 1. The **Aaron Burr, Sir** leitmotif does not have a particularly deep meaning, but it refers only to the character it is named after. However, the **Wait for It** leitmotif mirrors Burr's personality and beliefs, which no other characters share. Both leitmotifs follow Burr through Act 1 to help remind the audience of his hesitancy to make up his mind and allow others to know him. Like most of the leitmotifs in *Hamilton*, the leitmotifs sung by the protagonist and antagonist align with their individual beliefs, rather than beliefs of multiple characters in the musical.

Opposing Use of Leitmotifs Between *Les Misérables*' and *Hamilton*'s Lead Characters

In both *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*, the protagonist and antagonist sing evolving leitmotifs that propel the story, but they differ in what they represent. The lead characters sing leitmotifs that draw connections between plot points and are often derived from their "I am" and "I want" songs. In *Les Misérables*, Valjean and Javert sing leitmotifs that exemplify

ideas. Multiple characters share the **Introspection** and **Law Enforcement** leitmotifs, and they sing about different perspectives on the same ideas. Each leitmotif's melody is mostly unchanged, while the lyrics change to reflect the character's perspective.

In *Hamilton*, Hamilton and Burr sing two leitmotifs that follow them through Act 1. The leitmotifs use the characters' names and address their specific values and desires; no other character works as tirelessly to build their legacy as Hamilton does, just as Burr is the only character who acts with extreme hesitance. The protagonist's and antagonist's leitmotifs in *Hamilton* would not be suitable for other characters, thus they signify Hamilton and Burr instead of ideas. In this way, these examples of leitmotifs in *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* are used differently.

CHAPTER III – LEITMOTIFS OF SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

In both *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*, the supporting characters are essential to the development of the plot and contribute to how leitmotifs are used. In Act 1 of *Les Misérables*, the supporting characters introduce two other prominent leitmotifs: The **Dream** leitmotif and the **Thénardiens** leitmotif. Like the other leitmotifs in *Les Misérables*, the **Dream** leitmotif is shared between characters who relate to the same idea or feeling. The **Thénardiens** leitmotif does not signify an idea like the other leitmotifs in *Les Misérables*, but it is reserved for two specific characters. In *Hamilton*, there are five leitmotifs in the Act 1 finale that belong to supporting characters: **Schuyler Sisters**, **Helpless**, **Satisfied**, **That Would Be Enough** and **History Has Its Eyes on You**. These leitmotifs signify specific characters' beliefs. This chapter will explore the differences between leitmotifs in *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* originating from the supporting characters

The Dream Leitmotif in *Les Misérables*

The **Dream** leitmotif, first sung by Fantine “I Dreamed a Dream,” represents a wish for a better life. At this point, Fantine, a mother struggling to provide for her child, has just been fired from her job at the factory and thrown onto the streets. She looks back at the positive moments in her life, and she wonders how her plans went so awry. “I Dreamed a Dream” follows an AABAA form. The A sections are gentle, legato, and in E-flat Major.

The **A Dream** leitmotif is derived from eight measures of the A section, and Figure 3.1 shows its first iteration. The lyrics of the **A Dream** leitmotif occurrences are mostly positive, focusing on the plans Fantine once had for her life. The chord progression for this section is diatonic and anchored with several major chords. The descending bass line models Fantine's diminishing hope, as her life is filled with more sadness as time goes on.

The musical score for "I Dreamed a Dream" (mm. 17-25) is presented in three systems. Each system includes a vocal line for Fantine (Fan) and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is E-flat major (three flats), and the time signature is 2/4. The lyrics are: "I dreamed a dream in time gone by / When hope was high and life worth living, / I dreamed that love would never die, / I dreamed that God would be for-giving. / Then I was young and un-af-".

The chord progression for the first system is: Eb: I 2 vi P₄⁶ IV 2. The chord progression for the second system is: ii⁷ V I 2 vi P₄⁶. The chord progression for the third system is: IV 2 ii⁷ V I 2.

Figure 3.1: "I Dreamed a Dream" mm. 17-25, **A Dream** Leitmotif

The B section begins in m. 33; the lyrics are much darker, as is reflected in the harmony that has drastically changed from the A section (Figure 3.2). During this version of the leitmotif, Fantine is not singing about positive memories, but how her hope was torn apart. The key of F minor is tonicized in mm. 33-35. B-flat Major is then tonicized before highlighting the minor i chord in m. 38. The B section employs both tonicization and mixture, introducing chromaticism in contrast to the diatonic A section. As Fantine sings about shame, the melody and chords ascend into a half cadence in m. 44; this signifies the hope that still exists for the unfinished dreams, even though they are shrouded with opposition.

But the ti-gers come at night, with their voi-ces soft as

thun-der, As they tear your hope a-part,

As they turn your dream to shame

E♭: V V₆ i V ii V V₆ I V₆ i V I ii₄ I Ped₄ V

Figure 3.2: “I Dreamed a Dream” mm. 33-44, Fantine singing the **B Dream** Leitmotif, E-flat Major

Fantine dreams of being with her former love who left her. He is the father of Cosette, the child who is receiving the money Fantine earns. Cosette reminds her of the life she wished to have, and Fantine is desperate to provide for her. Though the original song tells a tragic story of Fantine’s life, the leitmotif accompanies a character’s most sincere goal. Fantine’s goal ultimately was to protect her child. In subsequent uses of the **Dream** leitmotif, it is evident that other characters share the same goal.

Valjean Reprises the Dream Leitmotif

The **Dream** leitmotif first returns in “The Confrontation.” This song takes place after Fantine died in Jean Valjean’s presence, and he vows to find Cosette and care for her like he would his own child. Javert is about to take Valjean back into custody, and Valjean pleads to be released to find Cosette. Javert refuses, and the two argue. In the final portion of the song, the **A Dream** leitmotif returns (Figure 3.3).

Beginning in m. 39 of “The Confrontation,” Valjean restates the promise he made to Fantine with the same melody that she sings at the end of “I Dreamed a Dream” and in the same key. Valjean singing this vow in the context of the **Dream** leitmotif symbolizes his will to fulfill Fantine’s last remaining dream: to care for Cosette. He carries on Fantine’s wishes as he simultaneously carries on the leitmotif that Fantine originated. This moment, coming so shortly after Fantine’s death, is a symbolic passing of a torch.

In mm. 44-45, Javert joins Valjean to sing a fragment of the **Dream** leitmotif and emphasize the dichotomy between their dreams. Though their lyrics are the same, their intentions are quite different. Valjean is making a promise to Fantine and Cosette, while Javert is making a promise to Valjean; Javert vows to find Valjean wherever he may try to hide. Finding and capturing Valjean has been Javert’s dream since Valjean escaped parole many years earlier. He is so intense about his mission to capture Valjean that it ultimately leads to his demise in Act 2.

V
 And this I swear to you to-
 Jav
 Vins
 JV
 - night Your child will live within my
 Jav
 There is no place for you to hide.
 JV
 care. And I will raise her to the
 Jav
 Wherever you may hide a - way
 + Oboe
 JV
 light. I swear to you, I will be there.
 Jav
 I swear to you, I will be there.
 + Cl, Ob. dim.

Figure 3.3: “The Confrontation” mm. 37-45, A **Dream** Leitmotif, Valjean and Javert

Valjean returns to the **Dream** leitmotif in “The Bargain” (Figure 3.4). He finds Cosette with the Thénardiers and offers them money for him to adopt her. The portion of the **A Dream** leitmotif heard here is the same melody that Valjean sang at the end of “The Confrontation,” only in E Major instead of the previously heard F Major. Valjean is telling the Thénardiers about the promise he made to Fantine, and that it is now his duty to raise Cosette as his own. The use of the **Dream** leitmotif here continues to symbolize Valjean living out Fantine’s dream and the loyalty he feels towards her.

The **A Dream** leitmotif occurs when a character discusses hope or fulfilling a dream, and the **B Dream** leitmotif occurs when they discuss hardship or a dream not coming true. When Valjean sings the **A Dream** leitmotif in mm. 22-28, he focuses on his duty to care for Cosette. In m. 29, Valjean changes to the **B Dream** leitmotif as he sings about Fantine’s death; this moment furthers the different uses of the **A** and **B Dream** leitmotifs. The **A Dream** leitmotif returns in m. 38 and continues through m. 45, before the Thénardiers feign sadness as a ploy for more money from Valjean.

“Dream” A

J V 

There is a du - ty I must heed, —

J V 

There is a promise I have made, — For I was blind to one in need,

“Dream” B

J V 

I did not see what stood be - fore me. Now her mother is with

J V 

God, Fantine's suffering is ov - er.

Figure 3.4: “The Bargain” mm. 21-32, Valjean singing the **A Dream** Leitmotif, E Major

Marius Adopts the Dream Leitmotif

Marius, a student who falls in love with Cosette, sings the next iteration of the **Dream** leitmotif in “The Robbery.” In this aforementioned section, as Marius sings the **A Dream** leitmotif above the instrumental **Introspection** leitmotif the first time he sees Cosette (Figure 3.5). Marius sings to Cosette the leitmotif that her mother originated. From this point forward, Marius’ priority shifts to Cosette; he is the next person to assume the responsibility of caring for her. Though his use of the **Dream** leitmotif here is brief, it signifies the beginning of their dream-like relationship and immediate infatuation. This is the final time the **Dream** leitmotif sounds until the Act 1 finale.

The image displays a musical score for a scene from 'The Robbery'. It features three systems of music. The first system includes a vocal line for Marius and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line has two phrases: 'Why is he here?' and 'Hey, Ep-o-nine!'. The piano accompaniment consists of a treble and bass staff. The second system continues the vocal line with the phrase 'I did-n't see you there, for - give me.' and the piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Moderato' at the beginning of the second system. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Figure 3.5: “The Robbery” mm. 50-55, Marius sings the **A Dream** Leitmotif in mm. 53-54

The Thénardiens' Leitmotif

The Thénardiens are always present when their leitmotif sounds, though the other leitmotifs in *Les Misérables* are shared between characters. This is the only leitmotif in *Les Misérables* that follows specific characters, rather than a signifying an idea. The **Thénardiens** leitmotif is first heard when the Thénardiens are introduced in the song “Master of the House.” The Thénardiens are unscrupulous characters who overcharge their patrons for poor quality service. “Master of the House” describes the ways the Thénardiens con their guests while charming them through an upbeat drinking song.

When Monsieur Thénardier introduces the **Thénardiens** leitmotif in m. 21-28 of “Master of the House” (Figure 3.6), the melody is bouncy and sounds cheerful on the surface. The leitmotif is mostly centered around the tonic chord of A Major and is derived from the chorus of the song. It almost masks the lyrics that detail how the Thénardiens are stealing from their customers. When the leitmotif occurs, the characters are either conning someone or being conned.

The musical score for "Master of the House" (mm. 21-28) features Thénardier's leitmotif. It consists of two systems of music. The first system shows Thénardier's vocal line (Th) and piano accompaniment (Ob. and Xylo). The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "Master of the house, Doling out the charm, Ready with a handshake and an op - en palm." and "Tells a saucy tale, Makes a little stir, Customers appreciate a bon vi - veur."

Figure 3.6: "Master of the House" mm. 21-28, **Thénardiens** Leitmotif

In m. 52, the guests of the inn join Thénardier in the leitmotif (Figure 3.7) and describe how wonderful Monsieur Thénardier is. Thénardier is not shy in singing about how great he is; he is thrilled that his patrons are believing his lies. The guests are being conned, as they are unaware that Thénardier is not an honorable person.

Th

Master of the house, Quick to catch your eye, Never wants a passer-by to pass him by.

CHORUS *

Master of the house, Quick to catch your eye, Never wants a passer-by to pass him by.

* Chorus in two groups - Sopranos & Tenors
Altos & Basses.

Th

Servant to the poor, Butler to the great, Comforter, philosopher and life-long mate.

Servant to the poor, Butler to the great, Comforter, philosopher and life-long mate.

Figure 3.7: “Master of the House” mm. 52-58, **Thénardiers** Leitmotif

Madame Thénardier later adopts the leitmotif with different lyrics, mocking how great her husband thinks he is (Figure 3.8). Though she is making fun of him, they are stealing from their customers as a team. The patrons are entertained by the Thénardiers’ relationship, laughing at Madame Thénardier’s jokes. When she joins in, the **Thénardiers** leitmotif exemplifies both characters. Monsieur Thénardier and the ensemble join in for one more joyful chorus, cementing the idea that the Thénardiers are masters of exploitation.



Figure 3.8: “Master of the House” mm. 138-145, **Thénardiens** Leitmotif

In Act 1, the Thénardiens only sing the **Thénardiens** leitmotif in “Master of the House” and the finale, “One Day More.” Though most of the leitmotifs in *Les Misérables* represent ideas rather than specific characters, the **Thénardiens** leitmotif breaks the mold and is only suited for the Thénardiens. During “Master of the House,” the guests of the inn sing the **Thénardiens** leitmotif because the Thénardiens are stealing from them. There are no other characters in *Les Misérables* that behave like the Thénardiens, therefore it makes sense that the **Thénardiens** have their own leitmotif. This is unlike most of the other leitmotifs in *Les Misérables*.

How The Supporting Characters Use Leitmotifs in *Les Misérables*

Both the **Dream** leitmotif and the **Thénardiens** leitmotif are primarily sung by supporting characters in *Les Misérables*, but they differ in what they signify. Fantine originates the **Dream** leitmotif, but it is adopted by other characters as it signifies an idea. Valjean and Marius sing the **Dream** leitmotif later as they both care for Cosette as Fantine did. Additional characters sing the **Dream** leitmotif in the Act 1 finale on the precipice of revolution. On the other hand, the **Thénardiens** leitmotif is exclusive to the Thénardiens. The only time the leitmotif sounds from other characters is when the ensemble raves about Monsieur Thénardier in chorus of “Master of the House.” This maintains the notion that the **Thénardiens** leitmotif is reserved for specific characters and differs from other *Les Misérables* leitmotifs.

The Supporting Characters’ Leitmotifs in *Hamilton*

In Act 1 of *Hamilton*, three other characters originate leitmotifs: Eliza Schuyler, Angelica Schuyler, and George Washington. In most occurrences of the characters’ leitmotifs, they personally sing the melody. In the few exceptions, the characters are directly referenced or part of the conversation. These leitmotifs further support the idea that most of the leitmotifs in *Hamilton* are only suited for specific characters.

The Schuyler Sisters' Leitmotifs in *Hamilton*

As the leading female in the musical, Eliza carries several leitmotifs during *Hamilton*. Beginning as Eliza Schuyler, she grows as a character significantly throughout the musical. Her leitmotifs change as well, but they are consistently representative of her beliefs in the moment. Her sister Angelica plays an important role in her development. The two characters' stories are closely bound, as are their leitmotifs. To better explain how their leitmotifs evolve, I will be addressing Eliza's three leitmotifs (**The Schuyler Sisters**, **Helpless, That Would Be Enough**) and Angelica's leitmotif (**Satisfied**) together in chronological order.

When Eliza, Angelica, and Peggy adventure downtown during "The Schuyler Sisters," Eliza introduces the **The Schuyler Sisters** leitmotif. The sisters know they are not supposed to be "slumming it with the poor" (as Aaron Burr affectionately calls their visit), but they are excited by the revolution happening in New York. In m. 50, Eliza gushes to her sisters that they are so lucky to be alive in the present moment and introduces the two-bar leitmotif (Figure 3.9). Angelica, Peggy, and the ensemble join Eliza at various points in the song. "The Schuyler Sisters" is in D Major; the melody ends on the third scale degree, which sounds unfinished but not out of place. This signifies that Eliza is excited about the current events, but the future is unknown.



Figure 3.9: “The Schuyler Sisters” mm. 50-51, **The Schuyler Sisters** Leitmotif (Eliza), D Major

When she next appears in the song “Helpless,” a smitten Eliza enlists Angelica to help connect her with Hamilton and introduces the **Helpless** leitmotif in m. 5 (Figure 3.10). The leitmotif is short and often repeated. Eliza begins on the second scale degree, rises to the third, then sighs back down to tonic. She, unlike her sister Angelica, is not a woman of many words. Eliza is gentle and sweet, and the **Helpless** leitmotif mirrors her personality well. It comes back often during this song; Eliza sings it ten times while the ensemble echoes it behind her several more. At this point in the plot, Eliza is not only helpless in her infatuation with Hamilton, but she relies on those around her when she wants something (i.e., having Angelica help her first speak with Hamilton).

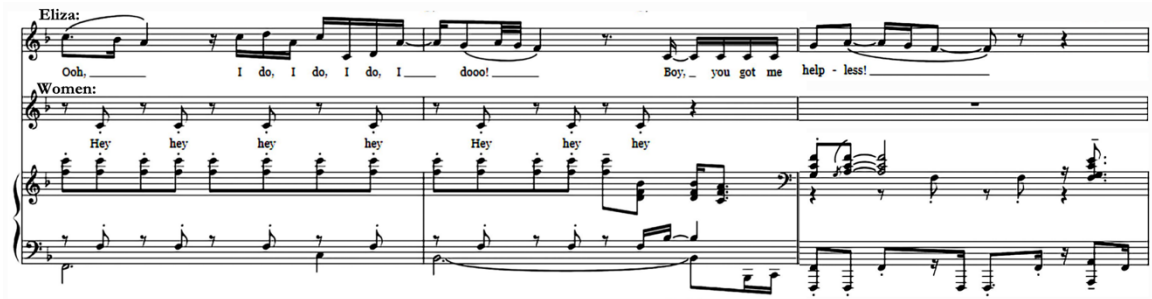


Figure 3.10: “Helpless” mm. 3-5, **Helpless** Leitmotif (Eliza)

In the following song, “Satisfied,” Angelica introduces the **Satisfied** leitmotif as she recounts the night Eliza and Hamilton meet from her perspective. Eliza reprises the **Helpless** leitmotif and begs Angelica to help her speak to Hamilton. When Angelica is speaking with Hamilton, however, she realizes that she is attracted to his intelligence. As they are conversing, Eliza sings a simplified **Helpless** leitmotif (Figure 3.11); when Eliza previously sung the leitmotif, she sighed back to tonic and sounded helplessly in love. In this iteration, however, Eliza sustains the fifth scale degree instead.³⁶ Though the fifth is still within the tonic triad, it does not sound as stable as the first version of the leitmotif. This signifies the other side of Eliza’s helplessness, reaching out to her sister for aid.

³⁶ Because “Satisfied” is in a minor key, the **Helpless** leitmotif sits in a different place within the scale. If “Satisfied” was in E-Major instead, this version of the leitmotif would end on scale degree three, which would still be within the tonic triad.

73 ANGELICA:

And I know _____ she is... And her eyes _____ are just...

ELIZA: ⁵ ⁵

Help - less... Help - less...

mf

Helpless *

Figure 3.11: “Satisfied” mm. 73-76, **Helpless** Leitmotif (Eliza), C Minor

As Angelica realizes she cannot be with Hamilton (her sister would be devastated and her father expects her to marry rich), she escorts him to meet Eliza and presents the short **Satisfied** leitmotif (Figure 3.12). This song’s characteristics are aptly similar to Angelica, as she thinks quickly and values intelligence more than other women do. Angelica is proud of her own mind and is looking for a husband to match. “Satisfied” is in C minor, which is fitting for the outcome of Angelica’s feelings for Hamilton. The **Satisfied** leitmotif ends on the unstable fourth scale degree (Figure 3.12). As the seventh of the dominant seventh chord, it is begging to be resolved.

95 **Angelica:**

Nice go - ing, An - gel - i - ca, he was right, — you will nev - er be sat - is - fied.

Cm: V⁷

Figure 3.12: “Satisfied” mm. 95-96, **Satisfied** Leitmotif (Angelica), C Minor

There is a strong dichotomy between the **Helpless** and **Satisfied** leitmotifs, just as there are in Eliza and Angelica’s personalities. Eliza leads with her heart and is reliant on others. The upbeat **Helpless** leitmotif mirrors her personality and relationship with Hamilton, as the ending pitches fit within the tonic triad. Contrarily, Angelica is clever and self-sufficient. She makes quick decisions and leads with her head. The **Satisfied** leitmotif is a fitting representation of her personality and relationship with Hamilton, as the final pitch is unresolved and unstable.

After Eliza and Hamilton’s wedding, Eliza begs him to value her as much as he values his role in the Revolutionary War in the song “That Would Be Enough.” It begins with the return of the “The Schuyler Sisters” as Eliza reveals to Hamilton that she is pregnant. When she originally sings “look around at how lucky we are to be alive right now,” she is overjoyed to be alive during an important time in history. During the leitmotif’s reprise, she now means that they are lucky to have each other and be starting a family. She

had to beg Washington to send Hamilton home from the war, and she is begging Hamilton to prioritize her and their child.

Like “The Schuyler Sisters,” “That Would Be Enough” is in D Major, and the leitmotif ends on the mediant. Eliza sings in a more subdued manner, both excited about the child and feeling neglected by her husband. This leitmotif continues to exemplify Eliza’s excitable personality, but the object of her joy has changed from the leitmotif’s original iteration.

Within the same song, the **That Would Be Enough** leitmotif reinforces Eliza’s plea to Hamilton (Figure 3.13). It shares lyrics with the **The Schuyler Sisters** leitmotif, as Eliza asks Hamilton to look around and reflect on how far he has come in his personal life. She begs Hamilton to value his family and not risk his life, as he was lucky to live past his childhood. This leitmotif describes Eliza specifically, as there are no other characters who are yearning for attention in the way that she is.

Look at where you are. Look at where you started.

The fact that you're a-live is a mir-a-cle. Just stay a-live, that would be e-nough.

Figure 3.13: “That Would Be Enough” mm. 19-22, **That Would Be Enough** Leitmotif (Eliza), D Major

George Washington’s Convincing Leitmotif

The song “History Has Its Eyes on You” showcases the pivotal role George Washington plays in Hamilton’s journey towards his legacy. As the colonies are preparing for the Battle of Yorktown, Washington needs to convince Hamilton to come back and lead troops in the war after previously sending him home. Through this song, Washington recounts his first bout of power and warns Hamilton of the risk that accompanies the potential reward. In m. 24, Washington introduces the **History Has Its Eyes on You** leitmotif.

Though Washington wants to convince Hamilton to come back and fight, he reminds Hamilton to be cautious, as he will be responsible for many lives. Washington sings about the weight of this opportunity in “History Has Its Eyes on You:” this song is in C minor, and its somber tone is fitting for the lyrics. When Washington first introduces the leitmotif in m. 8, he hovers between the fourth and fifth scale degrees, before descending to the third scale degree (Figure 3.14). He begins to outline the minor tonic triad in m. 9, signifying the serious and somber tone of the mission ahead. However, Washington moves the line up to the fourth scale degree instead of completing the triad and ending on tonic. This gives the effect that there is hope in the future, but that story is not yet finished. Hamilton joins Washington in the leitmotif in m. 12, singing a higher harmony. While Hamilton’s harmony still emphasizes the lowered scale degrees of the minor key, he ends on the tonic. Washington introduces the leitmotif with caution, but Hamilton joins with confidence for the fight and his future legacy.

Washington:

Know-ing his-to-ry has its eyes on me.

Washington & Hamilton:

His-to-ry has its eyes on me.

Figure 3.14: “History Has Its Eyes on You” mm. 8-14 **History Has Its Eyes on You**
Leitmotif

How The Supporting Characters Use Leitmotifs in *Hamilton*

Throughout Act 1 of *Hamilton*, Eliza, Angelica, and Washington sing leitmotifs that describe themselves and their beliefs. The **Helpless** leitmotif and the **That Would Be Enough** leitmotif are both fitting for Eliza, but at different points in her relationship with Hamilton. She is the only character to sing either leitmotif. The **Satisfied** leitmotif signifies Angelica and her relationship with Hamilton. The only other character to sing the **Satisfied** leitmotif is Eliza, but she is singing with Angelica. Eliza and Angelica both sing the **Schuyler Sisters** leitmotif, as this is one of the only leitmotifs in *Hamilton* that more than one character sings. Washington is the only character to sing “History Has Its Eyes on You,” as

he is the only character who is able to give advice about building a legacy. Each of these leitmotifs are indicative of specific characters, rather than overarching ideas that are shared between characters.

Opposing Use of Leitmotifs Between *Les Misérables*' and *Hamilton*'s Supporting Characters

In both *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*, the supporting characters sing evolving leitmotifs that propel the story, but they differ in what they signify. In *Les Misérables*, Fantine and the Thénardiens originate leitmotifs that are tied to ideas. Marius and Valjean adopt Fantine's **Dream** leitmotif, as multiple characters long to protect Cosette. In each occurrence, the leitmotif's melody is mostly unchanged, while the lyrics change to reflect the character's perspective. The Thénardiens are the only characters who sing the **Thénardiens** leitmotif because they are the only characters who justify stealing from others.

In *Hamilton*, five leitmotifs follow Eliza, Angelica, and Washington through Act 1. The leitmotifs exemplify their specific values and desires that are not shared with other characters. The supporting characters' leitmotifs in *Hamilton* would not suit other characters, thus they embody the beliefs of Eliza, Angelica, and Washington instead of ideas. The supporting characters further support the ways in which the leitmotifs in *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* are used differently.

CHAPTER IV – ACT 1 FINALES

The Act 1 finales of *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* interweave the previously discussed leitmotifs and solidify what each leitmotif signifies. In both musicals, the layered leitmotifs direct attention to a pivotal moment or decision and mirrors how leitmotifs are used throughout the musical.³⁷ In the Act 1 finale of *Les Misérables*, many characters reflect upon similar ideas. In the Act 1 finale of *Hamilton*, many characters are reflecting upon their opinion about one character: Hamilton. What the leitmotifs exemplify in each musical assists in the culmination of each act.

“One Day More”: The Act 1 Finale of *Les Misérables*

The leitmotifs **Introspection**, **Law Enforcement**, **Dream**, and **Thénardiens** are reprised in the Act 1 finale of *Les Misérables*, “One Day More,” to exemplify how the characters feel in this pivotal moment. As shown in Figure 4.1, the leitmotifs overlap over the course of the song, converging in m. 57. The leitmotifs occur as the characters contemplate their roles in the impending French Revolution. Characters who share similar ideas share the associated leitmotifs. “One Day More” is derived from the leitmotifs with

³⁷ *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* are two of several musicals that overlap recurring melodies during the Act 1 finale. Other examples include “Tonight Quintet” from *West Side Story* and “Man Up” from *The Book of Mormon*.

little new content. This shows the importance of what the leitmotifs signify as they are woven through the act.

Mm.	Key	Introspection Instrumental	Introspection Melodic	A Dream	B Dream	Law Enforcement	Thénardiens
1-4	A	x					
5-8		x	Valjean				
9-12		x		Marius			
13-16		x		Marius Cosette			
17-18					Éponine		
19-23				Marius Cosette	Éponine		
24-25							
26-32	E-flat				Enjolras Marius		
33-34					Enjolras		
35-36	A		Valjean				
36-39		x				Javert	
40-43		x	Valjean				Thénardiens
44-50					Cast		
51-53	C						
54-60		x	Valjean	Marius Cosette	Éponine	Javert	Thénardiens
61-68		x	Cast				

Figure 4.1: All Leitmotif Occurrences in “One Day More”

The Introspection Leitmotif's Prominence in “One Day More”

The instrumental and melodic **Introspection** leitmotifs hold significant presence in “One Day More,” as they symbolize the characters reflecting before a monumental event. The instrumental leitmotif begins the song in A Major, a half step higher than its original

occurrence in “At the End of the Day,” as Valjean reprises the melodic **Introspection** leitmotif (Figure 4.2).

“One Day More” takes place on the eve of Valjean’s escape to exile. As Valjean is preparing to flee France with Cosette, nervous Javert will catch him once again. In this poignant moment of self-reflection, he sings new lyrics (Figure 4.2). Valjean sings the full leitmotif in mm. 5-9, but he only sings the fragment “one day more” each subsequent time. These fragments are transitions between other leitmotifs, signifying the gravity of the moment for various characters. Though they may be reflecting on more specific ideas modeled by other leitmotifs, the idea of introspection is an idea that many characters identify with in this point in the plot. This is signified by the instrumental **Introspection** leitmotif woven throughout half of the song (Figure 4.3).

VALJEAN

Sua - - - - - sim. - - - - - One day

pp *Staccato, R5, C4, G4, black.*

more, Another day, another destiny, This never-ending road to

lento

Calvary. These men who seem to know my crime Will surely come a second time, One day

MARIUS

I did not live until to - day, How can I live when we are

more,

black

Figure 4.2: “One Day More” mm. 1-11, Valjean singing the **Introspection** Leitmotif

Mm.	Character	Key	Variation
1-16	Instrumental	A	1 (mm. 1-2), 2 (m. 3), 3 (m. 4) 1 (mm. 5-6), 2 (mm. 7-8 beat 2), 3 (m. 8 beats 3-4) 1 (mm. 9-10), 2 (mm. 11-12 beat 2), 3 (m. 12 beats 3-4) 1 (mm. 13-14), 2 (mm. 15-16 beat 2), 3 (m. 16 beats 3-4)
5-9	Valjean		
12-13	Valjean		
35-36	Valjean		
36-43	Instrumental		1 (mm. 36-37), 2 (m. 38), 3 (m. 39) 1 (mm. 40-41), 2 (m. 42), 3 (m. 43)
39-40	Valjean		
53-54	Valjean	C	All the same pitch
54-61	Instrumental		1 (mm. 54-55), 2 (mm. 56-57 beat 2), 3 (m. 57 beats 3-4) 1 (mm. 58-59), 2 (mm. 60-61 beat 2), 3 (m. 61 beats 3-4)
57-58	Valjean		All the same pitch
61-68	Cast		Similar to the end of "Who Am I?"
64-67	Instrumental		1 (m. 64), 3 (m. 65), 1 (m. 66-67 beat 2), 3 (m. 67 beats 3-4)

Figure 4.3: **Introspection** Leitmotif Occurrences in “One Day More”

Valjean continues to modify the melodic **Introspection** leitmotif as the song intensifies. In mm. 53-54 and mm. 57-58, he no longer sings “one day more” on scale degrees 1, 7 and 5 like the original leitmotif; he simply repeats scale degree 5, as labeled in Figure 4.4. Repeating the dominant scale degree shows the anticipation of the next day. This leads to the ensemble singing the **Introspection** leitmotif in mm. 61-68, ending on a perfect authentic cadence on the text “one day more” in mm. 65-68 (Figure 4.5). This grand musical moment underscores the crossroads that many characters face. With the impending revolution, many are unsure of what comes next; however, each character is grappling with

decisions to be made about their own journeys. The frequently recurring **Introspection** leitmotifs in “One Day More” remind the audience of how pivotal this moment is in the plot as Act 1 ends.

The musical score for "One Day More" (measures 56-58) is presented in a standard musical notation format. The score includes vocal staves for the following characters: Ep, Cos, Mar, JV, Jav, and Th's. The piano accompaniment is shown at the bottom. The lyrics for each character are as follows:

- Ep:** — when we are parted. Tomor - row you'll be worlds a -
- Cos:** — when we are parted. Tomor - row you'll be worlds a -
- Mar:** — when we are parted. Tomor - row you'll be worlds a -
- JV:** One day more!
- Jav:** learn their little secrets, I will know the things they know. One more day to re - vo -
- Th's:** dip, There a little touch, Watch 'em run amuck, Catch 'em as the

The piano accompaniment consists of a right-hand part with a melodic line and a left-hand part with a bass line. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor), and the time signature is 4/4.

Figure 4.4: “One Day More” mm. 56 (beat 3)-58, **Introspection** Leitmotif (Valjean)

Ep
heaven has in store, One more One more day, One day

Cos
heaven has in store, One more dawn, One more day, One day

Mar
heaven has in store, One more dawn, One more day, One day

JV
heaven has in store, One more dawn, One more day, One day

Fav
heaven has in store, One more dawn, One more day, One day

Chs
heaven has in store, One more dawn, One more day, One day

8va
a tempo
rall.

PAC

Ep
more.

Cos
more.

Mar
more.

JV
more.

Jav
more.

Th's
more.

more..

a tempo

rall.

PAC

Figure 4.5: “One Day More” mm. 63-68, “Introspection” Leitmotif (Valjean)

The Law Enforcement Leitmotif's Reprise in “One Day More”

While discussing the impending revolution in “One Day More,” Javert sings the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif as a reminder of his dedication to the law. This is the first time Javert’s **Law Enforcement** leitmotif is not about Valjean, but about the students fighting for the revolution. Because “One Day More” is in A Major rather than a minor key, the pitches Javert sings in this evolution of the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif are slightly different, as labeled in Figure 4.6. Previously, the first pitch of the leitmotif was a half-step lower than the second, but here they are the same pitch. This version highlights the major tonic triad (boxed in mm. 36-37 of Figure 4.6), rather than the minor triad sung previously in E minor and D minor. Similarly, the two phrases end on the major third rather than a minor third (bracketed in mm. 37-38 and mm. 39-40 of Figure 4.6). Previously, the second phrase of the leitmotif was higher than the first, but here the pitches are almost identical. This version of the leitmotif sits in a different place within the scale, maintaining the prominent half-step relationship in the melody. Because it features the half-step between the third and fourth scale degrees (originally the fifth and sixth scale degrees in a minor key), this use of the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif still sounds ominous.

One more day to rev - o - lu - tion, we will nip it in the

bud. We'll be rea - dy for these school boys. They will wet them-selves with

blood.

○ - altered pitches from original leitmotif
 [] - altered from a minor triad in original to major triad
 [] - altered from a minor third in original to major third

Figure 4.6: “One Day More” mm. 36-40, **Law Enforcement** Leitmotif (Javert), A Major

Additionally, the previously discussed **Introspection** leitmotif sounds below Javert proclaiming the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif. Though Javert reminds the audience of his views on the law, he also reflects on his beliefs at this point in the plot. Javert also sings the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif during the section of layered leitmotifs in mm. 54-61. It mirrors the same changes to the pitches though the song is now in C Major instead of A

Major. Javert reprising the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif during “One Day More” tells the audience that Javert cares more about upholding the law than supporting the revolution.

Characters Sharing the Dream Leitmotif in “One Day More”

In the pivotal moments before the revolution, several characters sing the **Dream** leitmotif as they contemplate what they wish for the future (Figure 4.7). Characters sing the **A Dream** leitmotif in moments of hope, and they sing the **B Dream** leitmotif in moments of concern. This is reminiscent of Fantine’s change in demeanor when singing the two variations of the leitmotif in “I Dreamed a Dream.”

Mm.	Version	Character	Dream	Key
9-12	A	Marius	To be with Cosette	A
13-16	A	Marius and Cosette	To be together	
17-24	B	Éponine	To be with Marius	
19-23	B	Marius and Cosette	To be together	
26-35	B	Enjolras	To be successful in the revolution	E-flat
27-32	B	Marius	Questioning his dream: Should he choose Cosette or the revolution?	
44-50	B	Cast	Preparing for the unknown of the future	A
54-61	A	Marius and Cosette	To be together	C

Figure 4.7: **Dream** Leitmotif Occurrences in “One Day More”

Marius directs the **Dream** leitmotif towards Cosette in m. 9 (Figure 4.8), confessing how she changed his life, and that he does not want the revolution to separate them. Cosette joins him in m. 13, cementing their feelings for one another. Unlike when Fantine was sad for her unrealized dreams in the leitmotif's first iteration, Marius and Cosette are at the beginning of their dreams; they wish they can continue to be together and positively looking towards the future. The instrumental **Introspection** leitmotif accompanies the pair, drawing attention to this pivotal moment for Marius and Cosette as they balance their dreams and their values.

The musical score for "One Day More" (measures 9-14) is presented in a standard musical notation format. It includes staves for Marius, Cosette, and the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into measures 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14. The lyrics are as follows:

MARIUS
I did not live until to-day, How can I live when we are
more, more, more.

COSETTE
Tomorrow you'll be worlds a-way
parted? Tomorrow you'll be worlds a-way
One day more.

The piano accompaniment includes a glockenspiel part marked "+ Glock" and a horn part marked "+ Hns (colla voce)".

Figure 4.8: "One Day More" mm. 9-14, A **Dream** Leitmotif

Éponine enters as an aside in m. 17 with a reprise of the **Dream** leitmotif while Marius and Cosette focus on each other (Figure 4.9). However, she sings the **B Dream** leitmotif, as opposed to Marius and Cosette highlighting the **A Dream** leitmotif. Éponine's dream is to be with Marius, and she is devastated by his infatuation with Cosette. Unlike Marius and Cosette, whose dreams are within their grasp, Éponine knows that realizing her dream is unlikely. The dichotomy between Marius and Cosette's singing the **A Dream** leitmotif with Éponine interjecting with the **B Dream** leitmotif makes her negative outlook on her dream even more apparent. Marius and Cosette sings the countermelody in alternating measures with Éponine, symbolizing their fear of being torn apart.

EPONINE

One more day all on my

Cos And yet with you my world has started.

Mar And yet with you my world has started.

JV

Ep own, One more day with him not caring.

Cos Will we ever meet a - gain? I was born to be with

Mar Will we ever meet a - gain? I was born to be with

Ob.

Figure 4.9: “One Day More” mm. 15-20, **B Dream** Leitmotif (Éponine)

Enjolras continues the **B Dream** leitmotif as he tries to motivate the other students to help him with his dream, fighting to win the revolution (Figure 4.10). Enjolras' use of this leitmotif cements the idea that the leitmotif signifies dreams, as opposed to just be affiliated with Cosette. He highlights the **B Dream** leitmotif, but for a different reason than Éponine does. He is hopeful, but he knows there will be casualties. The **B Dream** leitmotif mimics the darkness that comes with what Enjolras wishes to accomplish. Marius sings the countermelody in alternating measures, as he and Cosette sang with Éponine. Marius is weighing his dream to be with Cosette with the obligation he feels to fight in the revolution.

The musical score for "One Day More" (mm. 24-29) features Enjolras and Marius. The score is written in F# major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system shows Enjolras singing "One more day before the" and Marius singing "Do I follow where she goes?". The piano accompaniment includes markings for "cresc.", "Timp.", and "Tpt.". The second system shows Enjolras singing "Shall I join my brothers" and Marius singing "At the barricades of freedom.". The piano accompaniment includes a marking for "storm".

Figure 4.10: "One Day More" mm. 24-29, **B Dream** Leitmotif (Enjolras)

The entire cast adopts the **B Dream** leitmotif and its countermelody in m. 44-50, as they declare that the fight for the impending revolution will be honorable (Figure 4.11). The use of the **B Dream** leitmotif rather than the **A Dream** leitmotif serves the same purpose here as it just did for Enjolras: though they are optimistic about achieving their dreams, the **B Dream** leitmotif better models the sorrow that comes with fighting.

CHORUS - 2 groups - A,B

One day to a new be -

Raise the flag of freedom high, Every man will be a

- ginning; Every man will be a king,

Figure 4.11: “One Day More” mm. 43-47, **B Dream** Leitmotif (Ensemble)

Among the layered leitmotifs in mm. 54-61, the **Dream** leitmotifs exemplify how the characters’ hopes hang in the balance. Marius and Cosette once again sing the **A Dream** leitmotif as a duet on the same text they sang in mm. 9-16, hopeful for their dream of being

together, but being separated by the revolution (Figure 4.12). In alternating measures from the duet, Éponine continues her previous **B Dream** leitmotif text with similar rhythm but different pitches. Starting in m. 55, she sings of her loneliness, but the despair she feels is drowned out by the other characters singing simultaneously.

ÉPONINE
One more day all on my own,

COSETTE
I did not live un - til . to - day, How can I live

MARIUS
I did not live un - til to - day, How can I live

JV
more!

JAVERT
I will join these people's heroes, I will follow where they go, I will

THENARDIERS
Watch 'em run amuck, Catch 'em as they fall, Here a little

Piano
Lh. #

Figure 4.12: “One Day More” mm. 54-56, **A Dream** Leitmotif Cosette and Marius, **B Dream** Leitmotif (Éponine)

The extensive use of the **Dream** leitmotif in the finale of Act 1 helps convey many characters' feelings about the impending fight for revolution. On the cusp of revolution where lives will be put at risk, the characters are contemplating if their dreams for the future will come to fruition, specifically Cosette, Marius, Éponine, and Enjolras. The use of the **Dream** leitmotif here reminds the audience what is at stake for the characters, in a manner that would not be achieved if a different melody occurred. The combination of the **Dream** and **Introspection** leitmotifs symbolizes the weight of the moment. The characters are reflecting on their values while thinking of how present events will impact what they hope for the future. The full ensemble singing both the **Dream** and **Introspection** leitmotifs cements how pivotal this moment is in the story. The meaning of each leitmotif is strengthened when shared between characters with similar feelings; this is opposed to the leitmotifs that are only associated with a singular character.

The Return of the Thénardiens Leitmotif in “One Day More”

In m. 38 “One Day More,” the Thénardiens reprise the **Thénardiens** leitmotif (Figure 4.13) and unveil their plan to loot the fallen soldiers and capitalize on the chaos that will ensue during the revolution. The **Thénardiens** leitmotif continues to be the Thénardiens' calling card leitmotif, though is altered since “One Day More” is in 4/4 and “Master of the House” is in 2/4. Monsieur and Madame Thénardier begin the leitmotif on the second beat of the measure in this case, as opposed to beginning on the first beat of the measure like in “Master of the House.” Because of this, the rhythmic emphasis is slightly

different than before. Additionally, the Thénardiens go up to the third scale degree on the last pitch, as opposed to descending to tonic. This is fitting, as the tonic pitch A is not in the chord on the downbeat of m. 43, where the **Thénardiens** leitmotif ends. The instrumental **Introspection** leitmotif accompanies the **Thénardiens** leitmotif, representing the Thénardiens' lack of morals.

THENARDIER & MME. THENARDIER à 2

Watch 'em run amuck, Catch 'em as they

fall. Never know your luck when there's a free-for-all. Here a little 'dip', There a little

'touch', Most of them are goners so they won't miss much.

CHORUS - 2 groups - S, T + ENJOLRAS
A, B

One day to a new be -

The musical score is written for a vocal duo (Thenardier and Mme. Thenardier) and piano. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The score consists of six systems. The first system shows the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The second system continues the melody with lyrics. The third system features a vocal line with a circled note in measure 43, marked with a '3' above it, indicating a triplet. The fourth system is a rest for the vocalists, with the chorus entering. The fifth system shows the chorus melody. The sixth system continues the chorus melody with lyrics.

Figure 4.13: “One Day More” mm. 39-44, **Thénardi**ers Leitmotif

The **Thénardiens** leitmotif sounds for the final time during the layered leitmotifs at m. 54 (Figure 4.14) as the characters express their true identities and values. The Thénardiens interject with fragments of the leitmotif in alternating measures of the Marius and Cosette duet of the **Dream** leitmotif. The **Thénardiens** leitmotif continues to be the only *Les Misérables* leitmotif that exemplifies specific characters, as the Thénardiens are the only characters to sing the leitmotif in “One Day More.”

F
EPONINE

One more day all on my own,

COSETTE

I did not live un - til . to - day, How can I live

MARIUS

I did not live un - til to - day, How can I live

JV

more!

JAVERT

I will join these people's heroes, I will follow where they go, I will

THENARDIERS

Watch 'em run amuck, Catch 'em as they fall, Here a little

Lh. #

Figure 4.14: “One Day More” mm. 54-56, **Thénardi**ers Leitmotif

How “One Day More” Reinforces the Use of Leitmotif in *Les Misérables*

The way the leitmotifs occur in “One Day More” cements what the leitmotifs signify, as the **Thénardiens** leitmotif is reserved for specific characters and the other leitmotifs exemplify ideas. The characters’ primary beliefs and desires are reiterated as they are unsure of what the future holds on the precipice of revolution. At least one leitmotif is present in almost the entire song. The entire cast sings both the **Introspection** leitmotif and the **B Dream** leitmotif in the song; the ideas reflected by these leitmotifs are shared among the community, as they question themselves in this time of hope and concern.

All of the aforementioned leitmotifs appear in mm. 54-61, where the array of emotions the characters feel is displayed in this important moment. The leitmotifs signify ideas and not individual characters, because the lyrics are almost always different with each leitmotif occurrence. The pitches remain mostly consistent, while the characters change the lyrics to fit their specific perspective.

“Non-Stop:” The Act 1 Finale of *Hamilton*

The nine leitmotifs in *Hamilton*’s Act 1 finale, “Non-Stop,” follow the characters who originate them (Figure 4.15).³⁸ The leitmotifs correspond with individual characters and their opinions about Hamilton. In “Non-Stop,” most of the characters reprise only a fragment of their leitmotif; the lyrics are unchanged, and the lyrics of most of the leitmotifs are the

³⁸ No published notation exists for “Non-Stop,” so leitmotifs will be referenced using timestamps.

names of their original songs. Additionally, most of “Non-Stop” does not include leitmotifs; more than five minutes of the song explains what Hamilton was working on after the war ended. The section of layered leitmotifs takes place in the last 46 seconds of the song, while the majority of the song is new content.

Timestamp	Aaron Burr, Sir	Wait for It	'That Would Be Enough	Schuyler Sisters	Helpless	Satisfied	History Has Its Eyes on You	My Shot	Alexander Hamilton
0:01-2:05									
2:06-2:07	Hamilton								
2:08-3:11									
3:12-3:14		Cast							
3:15-3:51									
3:52-4:11			Eliza						
4:12-5:31									
5:32-5:36				Hamilton					
5:37-5:38					Eliza				
5:39-5:42			Eliza						
5:43-5:48			Eliza			Angelica			
5:49-6:03			Eliza			Angelica	Washington		
6:04-6:08							Cast		
6:09-6:14								Hamilton	Cast
6:14-6:15									Cast
6:16-6:18								Cast	
6:19-6:21								Hamilton	

Figure 4.15: All Leitmotif Occurrences in “Non-Stop”

Aaron Burr's Calling Card Leitmotif in "Non-Stop"

The **Aaron Burr, Sir** leitmotif makes a brief appearance in "Non-Stop" to remind the audience of Burr's closed-off nature. At 2:06, Hamilton and Burr greet each other as Hamilton arrives at Burr's house in the middle of the night. Hamilton tries to persuade Burr to defend the United States Constitution and help write the Federalist Papers. Burr, being true to who he is, turns down the opportunity to take a risk. This use of the **Aaron Burr, Sir** leitmotif harkens back to his first meeting with Hamilton when he thought Hamilton was impulsive and overly ambitious, as he still believes that about Hamilton. Though Hamilton speaks this rhythmic leitmotif, it would not make sense to be directed at any other character.

The Return of the Wait for It Leitmotif

The **Wait for It** leitmotif is reprised in the Act 1 finale on the heels of the return of the **Aaron Burr, Sir** leitmotif. Hamilton tries to convince Burr to publicly defend the United States Constitution with him now that the war is won, and Burr states that he is observing the situation before choosing a path to commit to. Underneath this interaction, the ensemble sings the lyrics "wait for it, wait for it wait." The lyrics are all sung on a B-flat, echoing in the background like they originally do in "Wait for It" with the same rhythm. Though the full leitmotif is not present, the reference reminds the audience of the reason for the tension between Hamilton and Burr. Hamilton is angered that Burr will not help build the country they fought for, while Burr is irritated that Hamilton acts so quickly on his thoughts. The

“Wait for It” lyrics are specifically tied to Burr, and this use shows how his hesitancy fuels his tension with Hamilton.

Eliza’s and Angelica’s Leitmotif Reprisals in “Non-Stop”

At the 3:51 mark of the song, Eliza reprises the original version of the **That Would Be Enough** leitmotif. Hamilton is in the midst of writing the Federalist Papers and is throwing himself into his work. Eliza implores Hamilton to look at where he is and compare it to where he started. It is a miracle that he not only survived his childhood but survived the war. She is once again begging Hamilton to prioritize her over his work. This leitmotif could only be suited for Eliza, as she represents the family that Hamilton is neglecting.

Eliza’s three leitmotifs (**The Schuyler Sisters**, **Helpless**, **That Would Be Enough**) and Angelica’s leitmotif (**Satisfied**) all appear in “Non-Stop,” as they try to pull Hamilton away from his professional desires now that the war has been won. The layered leitmotifs are not only used to show how Hamilton is conflicted, but also remind the audience of the desires of the other characters.

In the reprise of the **The Schuyler Sisters** leitmotif at 5:32, Hamilton changes the meaning and uses it against Eliza. In this moment, Eliza tries to get his attention, but he dismisses her and sings “look around, look around at how lucky we are to be alive right now.” He has the same mindset that she had at the beginning of the musical, but with more determination. Hamilton sees the current moment as an incredible opportunity; he is at the forefront of creating a new nation and implies to Eliza that their family is not enough for

him. Miranda specifically notes Hamilton singing the **The Schuyler Sisters** leitmotif in “Hamilton: The Revolution.” He states: “Hamilton takes other people’s themes and flips them to make his own argument. He throws Eliza’s refrain back at her... He will do *anything* to get what he’s after, and we underscore that melodically here.”³⁹

Eliza responds to Hamilton by singing the **Helpless** leitmotif at 5:37, reminding Hamilton that she is dependent on him. She continues with a variation of the **That Would Be Enough** leitmotif immediately after: she changes the lyrics to “look around, isn’t this enough?” rather than “that would be enough,” intensely pleading for Hamilton’s attention for the sake of their family. At 5:42, Angelica enters with the **Satisfied** leitmotif, this time directing it at Hamilton, saying that he will be the person who is not satisfied with the life he is choosing. As she continues, Eliza once again changes the “That Would Be Enough” lyrics at 5:44 to “What would be enough.” Though both Eliza and Angelica are grasping for Hamilton’s attention in different ways, they are both aware that their individual persuasions are not strong enough to pull Hamilton away from his work.

The section of layered leitmotifs begins at 5:49, as the entire ensemble directs their attention to Hamilton. Eliza and Angelica continue pleading with Hamilton with the **That Would Be Enough** and **Satisfied** leitmotifs, respectively. In the staging of the original Broadway production, when Hamilton sings the **My Shot** leitmotif, he rips his arm from Eliza’s grasp, then his other arm from Angelica’s grasp. He is both telling and showing them that he will not allow them to get in the way of his legacy.

³⁹ Lin-Manuel Miranda and Jeremy McCarter, *Hamilton: The Revolution*. 143.

George Washington's Reprise of the History Has Its Eyes on You Leitmotif

The only time the **History Has Its Eyes on You** leitmotif returns in Act 1 is at the end of “Non-Stop” as Washington enters with his point of view. After Eliza and Angelica try to pull Hamilton away from his work with their leitmotifs, Washington interrupts with the **History Has Its Eyes on You** leitmotif at 5:49. As he repeats the leitmotif, the full ensemble joins in with him to signify Washington winning Hamilton’s attention. The leitmotif mimics Washington’s perspective, believing that Hamilton has the potential to create a legacy for himself. The meaning is more powerful with the ensemble joining in, but the leitmotif signifies the weight of Washington’s support.

The Reprisal of Hamilton's Leitmotifs

The **My Shot** leitmotif returns in “Non-Stop” to exemplify Hamilton’s desires, in response to the supporting characters bombarding him with their opinions. Hamilton interrupts with the **My Shot** leitmotif at 6:09, blocking out other characters’ opinions and refocusing on his own goals. The continuous use of the **My Shot** leitmotif keeps Hamilton’s desires at the forefront of the plot. This leitmotif is sung only by Hamilton, with or without the cast supporting him. Because it is exclusive to him, the **My Shot** leitmotif is specific to important moments in Hamilton’s story; many of these moments take place when Hamilton is making a decision that could help or hinder his future.

The **Alexander Hamilton** leitmotif briefly occurs at the end of “Non-Stop” to remind the audience how far Hamilton has come. In between the lyrics “I am not throwing

away my shot,” the ensemble sings the fragment “just you wait” from the **Alexander Hamilton** leitmotif. Together, Hamilton and the ensemble sing a final variation of his calling card leitmotif “Alexander Hamilton, Hamilton, just you wait” before Hamilton ends the act with “I am not throwing away my shot.” The combination of Hamilton’s two defining leitmotifs not only states his identity and what he wants but shows that his ambition to create a legacy for himself outvalues what others want him to do. These character-specific leitmotifs contribute to the clarity of Hamilton’s intentions.

How “Non-Stop” Reinforces the Use of Leitmotif in *Hamilton*

The leitmotifs in “Non-Stop” effectively mirror the characters and their opinions about Hamilton. As their stories all revolve around him, their leitmotifs do as well. Each character has a different relationship with Hamilton, and it would not make sense for the leitmotifs to be shared. The layered leitmotifs starting at 5:49 signify Hamilton being pulled in multiple directions by the characters who sing the leitmotifs. The ensemble joining in to sing both of Hamilton’s leitmotifs at the end of the song amplifies his thoughts as he decides his next move. It is clear that the leitmotifs signify individual characters and not general ideas, because the characters and lyrics they sing are consistent with each leitmotif occurrence.

Comparing the Use of Leitmotif in *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton*

Both *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* effectively use leitmotif to enhance storytelling and better understand the characters. As Bribitzer-Stull states, leitmotifs are recurring musical ideas that are defined by three central components: they are comprised by both musical expression and an emotional association, are developmental in nature, and contribute to and function within a larger musical structure.⁴⁰ The leitmotifs in both musicals achieve these components with a variety of differences.

Musical Expression and Emotional Association

Most of the leitmotifs referenced in this analysis from *Les Misérables* are associated with ideas and are shared between characters; the **Thénardiens** leitmotif is an exception as it is tied to specific characters. The leitmotifs exemplify the characters' motivations and beliefs. For example, the characters sing the **Dream** leitmotif when they have grand hopes for the future (Valjean fulfilling his promise to Fantine by taking Cosette into his care in "The Bargain," and Marius first meeting Cosette in "The Robbery"). These emotions are expressed musically and enhanced through character performance.

The nine leitmotifs analyzed from *Hamilton* are associated with specific characters who feel various emotions. For example, the musical is driven by Hamilton's ambition and feeling that his existence is not enough; he needs a legacy. This is musically expressed

⁴⁰ Matthew Bribitzer-Stull, *Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 10, Doi:10.1017/CBO9781316161678.

through the **My Shot** leitmotif. Eliza feels ignored and abandoned by her husband; this is musically expressed through the desperation in the **That Would Be Enough** leitmotif. No other characters share these feelings, and the leitmotifs remain with their originators. This is a key difference between the leitmotifs in both musicals, as the characters in *Les Misérables* share similar emotions, while the characters in *Hamilton* are defined by their different and specific emotions.

Developmental in Nature

The leitmotifs in both musicals are developmental in nature, but the *Les Misérables* leitmotifs go through more obvious changes. With each leitmotif occurrence, the lyrics are always different. For example, after Fantine originated the **Dream** leitmotif in “I Dreamed a Dream,” her lyrics were not used again though the melody was. While the pitches are mostly the same with each occurrence, some pitches change to fit the character or song; examples of this would be Javert singing the **Law Enforcement** leitmotif in “One Day More” in a major key when it is normally in a minor key, and the Picardy third at the end of the Bishop’s **Law Enforcement** leitmotif in “Prologue.” The leitmotif changes are less obvious in *Hamilton*, but still occur. The pitches and lyrics usually are unchanged, but different fragments of the leitmotifs are used to fit the scene or song. An example of this is Eliza singing the **Helpless** leitmotif in **Satisfied**. She only uses a fragment of the leitmotif, the word helpless, and it is not ornamented like the original occurrence.

Contribute to and Function Within a Larger Musical Structure

In *Les Misérables*, the leitmotifs function so seamlessly with in the larger musical structure that sometimes they are not obvious. Specifically, characters sing the **A Dream** leitmotif so often that it blends into different settings. The constantly changing lyrics contribute to this as well. Some examples of this are Valjean and Javert singing the **A Dream** leitmotif at the end of “The Confrontation,” and Marius singing it during “The Robbery.” The *Hamilton* leitmotifs are much more obvious and play important roles within the musical structure of many songs. Specifically, each *Hamilton* leitmotif is named after the name of its original song not only because it uses the title in the lyrics, but the songs they originate from would not function without them. When the *Hamilton* leitmotifs occur after their original songs, the fragments used blend into the larger musical structure. For example, the **My Shot** leitmotif reminds the audience of Hamilton’s ambition without needing to explicitly say it. It often contributes to the musical structure by finishing phrases as Hamilton’s response to a question. One example is Hamilton answering Washington’s request in “Right Hand Man.”

Final Comparisons

Though in different ways, both *Les Misérables* and *Hamilton* heavily use leitmotif as a storytelling device. When a leitmotif occurs, the audience associates that moment with a particular idea, emotion, or character. The leitmotif is an integral component to the character and plot development in both musicals. Though leitmotifs in *Les Misérables* primarily signify

ideas and leitmotifs in *Hamilton* mostly signify characters, this tool aids the overall narrative in both musicals.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Behr, Edward. *Les Misérables: History in the Making*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1989.
- Bribitzer-Stull, Matthew. *Understanding the Leitmotif: From Wagner to Hollywood Film Music*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Doi:10.1017/CBO9781316161678.
- Burns, Gary. "A Typology of 'Hooks' in Popular Records." *Popular Music* 6, no. 1 (1987): 1–20. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/853162>.
- Chernow, Ron. *Alexander Hamilton*. New York: Penguin Publishing Group, 2005.
- Chiru, Ionela. "Feminism and Modernism: A New 'Cinderella'." *Revue Roumaine de Linguistique*. (1999): 97-109. <http://dspace.bcu-iasi.ro/handle/123456789/13898>.
- Gottfried, Martin. *Broadway Musicals*. New York, NY: Karry N. Abrams, 1979.
- Hammonds, Rebecca K. "(Un)Limited: The Influence of Mentorship and Father-Daughter Relationships on Elphaba's Heroine Journey in Wicked." *Theatre History Studies*. (2021): 157. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A710932995/LitRC?u=txshracd2557&sid=summon&xid=72371642>.
- Kowalke, Kim H. "'Give Me Time': Sondheim, a Clever Maid and 'The Miller's Son.'" *Studies in Musical Theatre* 13, no. 2 (June 2019): 151-68. Doi:10.1386/smt.12.2.151_1.
- Krause, Michael, Frank Zalkow, Julia Zalkow, Christof Weiß, and Meinard Müller. "Classifying Leitmotifs in Recordings of Operas by Richard Wagner." *ISMIR*. (2020): 473-480. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Christof-Weiss/publication/351712758_Classifying_Leitmotifs_in_Recordings_of_Operas_by_Richard_Wagner/links/60a62c12299bf1f7ea31bd60/Classifying-Leitmotifs-in-Recordings-of-Operas-by-Richard-Wagner.pdf
- Lehman, Frank. "Complete Catalogue of the Musical Themes of Star Wars." March 19, 2023. <https://franklehman.com/starwars/>
- Les Misérables*. Directed by Tom Hooper. Relativity Media, 2012. DVD. Universal Pictures, 2012.
- Mead, Rebecca. "All About the Hamiltons." *New Yorker*, February 2, 2015.

- McGill, Craig M. "It Might Have Been Sophisticated Film Music: The Role of the Orchestra in Stage and Screen Versions of *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street*." *Studies in Musical Theatre* 8, no. 1 (2014): 5-26. Doi:10.1386/smt.8.1.5_1.
- Miranda, Lin-Manuel, and Jeremy McCarter. *Hamilton: The Revolution*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2016.
- Miranda, Lin-Manuel. *Hamilton: An American Musical, Vocal Selections*. Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Publishing, 2016.
- Miranda, Lin-Manuel. *Hamilton: An American Musical Original Broadway Cast Recording*. Atlantic Records, 2015, digital.
- The Obama White House*. "Lin-Manuel Miranda Performs at the White House Poetry Jam: (8 of 8)." November 2, 2009. Video, 4:26.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WNFf7nMIGnE>.
- Schonberg, Claude-Michel. *Les Misérables: The Complete Symphonic Recording*, Perf. Gary Morris, Philip Quast, Debra Byrne, Gay Soper, Marry James, Ross McCall, Anthony, Warlow, Michale Ball, Kaho Shimada, Tracy Shayne and Mariisa Dunlop. Cond. Martin Koch. First Night, 2004. CD.
- Song Exploder. "Lin-Manuel Miranda – Wait for It." Volume 1, Episode 4. Netflix Inc., October 2, 2020.

VITA

Mary Katherine Pezzillo began her journey in the field of music education by earning the degree of Bachelor of Science in Music Education from the University of Vermont in 2013. In 2017, she furthered her academic pursuits by earning the degree of Master of Music in Music Education from Boston University. Throughout her career, Mary Kate has specialized in vocal performance, musical theater, and music theory while teaching at various grade levels. Beyond the academic and professional realm, Mary Kate resides in Rhode Island with her husband, Jesse. Together they are proud parents to their two young children, Autumn and Lincoln

The style guide for this document was *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* by Kate L. Turabian (9th Edition), 2018.

This thesis was typed by Mary Katherine Pezzillo