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**ENTERTAINMENT CRITICISM AND BROADWAY: A
CORPUS-BASED STUDY FOR 2018**
DELIA MUÑOZ BALTASAR

MÁSTER UNIVERSITARIO DE INVESTIGACIÓN EN HUMANIDADES

DEPARTAMENTO DE FILOLOGÍA INGLESA
TUTOR: GUSTAVO ADOLFO RODRÍGUEZ MARTÍN

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this project is to analyse the language used by critics when writing reviews dealing with Broadway plays that were being performed in 2018. Broadway theatre, a combination of music and drama, has been an essential part of American entertainment since the mid-eighteenth century and its relevance has remained until the present day, still being one of the most important forms of entertainment. For decades, critics' reactions to plays have been fundamental in the entertainment industry, for their reviews have helped theatre plays reach a wider audience. Corpus linguistics tools will be used in order to analyse the language of said reviews, which will also be compared to theoretical notions on review writing. The question to be asked, in this project, is: is there a particular writing style that can be identified and analysed when it comes to writing reviews for Broadway plays?

Key words: Broadway, theatre, criticism, corpus-based, journalism

ENTERTAINMENT CRITICISM AND BROADWAY: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY FOR 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

When talking about “Broadway” as a genre, the focus is on plays that are represented in the theatre district of Manhattan, New York. When a play is performed there, it means that it has reached the highest level of success when it comes to commercial theatre. Broadway plays started circa 1750 with the opening of a theatre company on Nassau Street. Eventually, more theatres were built and musicals started being performed as well. It was not until after the Great Depression that Broadway’s golden age began, and this genre’s relevance still remains today (Bruce T., 2019). In Roy Somlyo’s words, Broadway is not just a location in which theatre plays happen, it is rather a concept: “Broadway is not necessarily geographic; it’s not a physical locale. It’s an idea” (Frommer and Frommer, Undated: 33).

According to Jenkins (2007: 190-192), Broadway as a concept began in the year 1900 when a new show called *From Broadway to Tokio* premiered at the New York Theatre in Times Square. Although there had been similar dramatic forms of entertainment for decades whose origins date back to the invention of theatre in Ancient Greece, it was this play that set the ideal for what all the future Broadway plays to come should be. It was after this play that the word “Broadway” became an abbreviation for this kind of entertainment, since that word was part of the title of many of the plays that were produced and performed in New York at the time.

Musical plays in Broadway have always been one of the most relevant sources of entertainment in the Western world. According to Kenrick (2010: 265-266), in the 1950s Broadway became extremely popular, although its popularity dates back to the time of World War I. Working on a Broadway show was almost instant success for musicians, screenwriters and performers. The success of Broadway reached such a point that in the mid-50s Hollywood no longer released original musicals. Broadway musicals were turned into adaptations for the big screen instead.

Although Broadway is still undoubtedly influential and popular, Jenkins (2007: 204) states that it is a decadent industry. In the most recent years, most of the plays that make it to Broadway premiered somewhere else and became big enough to be brought to

the famous New York Street. These days, Broadway theatre, is no longer the peak of musical entertainment, but it has rather become a touristic attraction to people from outside New York that want to be witnesses to a kind of entertainment that has been crucial to the history of the city.

As McNamara (2001: 125-128) points out Broadway, although it is one of the most important forms of audio-visual entertainment in the United States, cannot be referred to as high art. This is due to the fact that its function is almost exclusively commercial. In her own words, Broadway “always has offered *commercial* theatre and always has been devoted to making a profit” (126). The industry of Broadway exists essentially as a business that is created in order to please the audience’s demand, and not entirely as a form of self-expression of the author.

Although all goods in the market are made for consumption, according to Reddy, Srinivas K., *et al.* (1998: 371), the act of consumption is an end itself when it comes to seeing a play, for Broadway shows are luxuries not everyone can access. Because of the uniqueness of every show, “the consumer watches a show and enters into a ‘purchase agreement’ with little knowledge of the particular product; the form may be familiar, but the content is not.” In other words, since Broadway is inherently commercial, the spectator is always at risk when they buy tickets, for they do not know exactly what they will encounter when they enter the theatre.

Broadway’s impact was more evident between the time before World War I and the invention of television and other new forms of entertainment. The interest in songs from musicals and their popularity has definitely fallen since the second half of the 20th century. That is the reason why many of the productions that are currently being performed on Broadway are revivals of classic musicals that had a huge impact in North American culture back in the day. As a consequence, the kind of entertainment that Broadway represents nowadays has had to change in order to match the interests of the audience. For a Broadway play to be successful, it must be sold to as many people as possible (*ibid.*).

Although Broadway’s impact and popularity have declined, its success nowadays, according to Barrera (2017), is due to three main factors: it happens in a physical place; the creation of an atmosphere of storytelling; and the idea of forgetting about one’s own life for as long as the play is running. All of these reasons are interconnected. Spectators

leave their homes in order to access a new world that is being created through the use of lights and special effects right in front of their eyes; the story is being told in real time through songs that engage the audience, who manage to escape their daily routine. The author continues to explain that even though all of these sensations can also be recreated by seeing a film or reading a book, what theatre offers is that the plot is happening in the same place as the spectator, which adds a whole new level of reality to the experience.

According to Oxford (2019), Broadway musicals have become more mainstream in recent years thanks to shows such as *Hamilton* or *Dear Evan Hansen*, that are full of songs written in music styles that are popular nowadays. In his own words, “by writing in the musical language of the masses, composers were able to break away from opera’s traditional upper class audience and connect with ordinary Americans.” That proves that in order to succeed, new musicals must present songs that people in the 21st century can relate to and enjoy, as well as themes and motifs that interest a present-day audience.

The cultural impact of Broadway plays also lies in the fact that many of them have either inspired or been inspired by films. Because seeing a play on Broadway is often not accessible to the audience, for it implies travelling or spending a great amount of money, film adaptations are often made. This way, plays become more accessible to spectators, reaching a larger number of people. Furthermore, the songs from the productions become better known, and, in case of huge success, they may become part of a canonical cultural landscape, in which a great part of the population is familiar with them. On the contrary, making a play out of a film narrows its accessibility to the audience, due to the financial costs.

According to Marks (2002), the cinema industry used to depend on the success of musicals and people used to be really interested in seeing films made out of Broadway musicals (such is the case of *My Fair Lady* or *West Side Story*), but now it is the other way around. This has to do with economic reasons, since when big-budget musicals have been inspired by movies, it is more likely that the audience will be interested in seeing a musical rendition of a film that they have seen and loved in the past. Nevertheless, this has to do with the decadence of the Broadway industry. The fact that the audience will see a musical that is based on something they already know reassures them that they will enjoy it in a way that a completely new product would not.

At the point Broadway was most popular, many of the musicals were based on theatre plays, for drama had been an extremely popular genre. Now, the popularity of drama has also decreased and it has been reduced to a much smaller audience, so musical creators draw their inspiration from the industry of cinema, being much more popular these days in providing new content since it reaches a much wider audience. Musical playwrights' aim is to turn the plot of a film into something that works as a musical, so as to make sure that the audience will enjoy it as they enjoyed the movie (*ibid.*).

Needless to say, since the audience is such an important part of the Broadway universe, criticism is also a fundamental part to it. Through the years, journalists have given their opinions on Broadway plays, also having a great influence on the audience's thoughts, who often decide whether to see or not to see plays depending on the critic's opinions. Nevertheless, there are other factors that influence the audience's interest in a play, and entertainment criticism is only one of the many reasons why someone may decide to go see it or not. Like in any other sort of language, critics have developed a particular style when writing these reviews.

The importance of reviews lies in the fact that they are a key element in helping interested spectators decide if they will buy tickets for a certain play or not. As previously mentioned, the audience does not fully know how the experience of seeing a play will be until they are inside the theatre, so reviews become a fundamental source of information as to whether a play is worth seeing. Journalists write about different aspects of the play such as the cast, the scenery, the plot, the music or the lyrics (Reddy, Srinivas K., *et al*, 1998: 373). The importance of critics is remarked in the following statement:

In addition to providing both experiential and objective information, critics are credible and, therefore, persuasive. This credibility results from the critic's experience with the particular art form and lack of propagandistic intent. Critics have prescreened, evaluated and synthesized the required information in an unbiased fashion. They perform a legitimizing function by identifying shows that are "acceptable." Through their evaluations (both positive and negative), critics serve as gatekeepers and help reduce the risk to potential consumers by identifying shows that are of high quality (Austin 1989, as cited in Reddy, Srinivas K., *et al*, 1998: 373).

The aim of this project is to analyse the language used by journalists in reviews of Broadway theatre plays. This analysis will be carried out through the use of corpus stylistics tools. These computer-based methods allow researchers to analyse texts from a quantitative perspective, focusing on the way that language is used and the meaning of

words within a certain context, as well as they allow scholars to perceive new elements they could not have perceived had they read the text word by word. In fact, corpus software tools offer unlimited possibilities when it comes to viewing and analysing a text. It is possible to analyse a text without using these programmes, but they certainly speed up the process of text analysis and help researchers ask new questions and propose new approaches.

The goal is to look closely at the language used by critics in order to evaluate Broadway plays that were staged in 2018, although some of the productions had not premiered that year. The language used in these reviews will be compared against each other, but it will also be contrasted to theoretical notions about evaluative language in theatre criticism, in order to learn if recently published reviews follow the same canons of writing that academics noted in the past.

The reason why studying this subject is relevant is because journalism has been one of the most important disciplines in relation to writing in the past century and its relevance is still noticeable today. In journalism, entertainment criticism has also gained relevance through the years by bringing about the need to create critical content that applies to Broadway theatre. In the field of Broadway criticism, as much as in any other branch of journalism, a style has been developed. In this dissertation the analysis will be focused on how that style is being used today in reviews of Broadway plays that were staged in 2018.

In fact, by writing this dissertation, a niche is being filled. This subject is quite new to study and as will be seen in the different sections, there is not much information on the topic of evaluative language when it comes to Broadway review writing. This dissertation offers a new viewpoint within the field of evaluative language and proposes a new area of study that is yet to be explored thoroughly.

This project is divided into six different sections. The next section deals with the topic of theatre criticism and style. In that chapter, the importance of theatre criticism will be explained, along with the reasons why it has been a fundamental part of the world of theatre in the last century.

In the following section, the topic of evaluative language will be dealt with. Several definitions will be provided on the topic of evaluation, and other concepts

relevant to understanding it will be explained as well. Some of these concepts are act of speech, stance or appraisal.

After that, there will be a chapter including information on corpus stylistics. A definition for the topic, historical notions about its origins and importance nowadays, different uses of corpus linguistics tools and how corpus stylistics will affect this dissertation will be explained as well.

Following the section on corpus stylistics, there will be a methodology section in which the whole procedure that was carried out while doing the analysis for this dissertation will be explained in detail. This chapter will be followed by the analysis and after that there will be a section in which conclusions will be outlined.

2. THEATRE CRITICISM AND STYLE

The act of criticism undoubtedly affects all arts, and theatre is not an exception. A theatre critic is someone who has the ability to write about a play in order to express their opinion about it. Theatre critics express themselves through writing reviews that are targeted at an audience of readers.

According to Elsom (2009), theatre criticism is one of the great phenomena that were born in the 18th century that are related to the world of theatre, along with the invention of two theatrical sub-genres: the musical and the pantomime. The first examples of modern theatre reviewing are the essays written by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele for the journal that they started in 1713, the worldwide-known *The Tatler*. In those essays, the authors started writing down their opinions about plays, which resulted in admiration from readers, having their essays frequently printed and considered as a model of theatre criticism all through the 18th century. The abolition of censorship led to new small publishers that wrote essays in which they expressed their ideas. In the publication *The Spectator*, the essays were written under a pseudonym, Mr. Spectator, who represented an archetypical man who was not particularly connected to any political or religious ideas, someone who simply observed. In some occasions, this Spectator expressed his opinions about theatre plays as well.

Rosvally (2019) provides the following reasons for the existence of theatre criticism:

1. To provide publicity for the considered production.

2. To trigger conversation about a specific piece of art with the greater theatregoing community.
3. To provide press clips for the actors and designers as a means to ensure future employment.
4. To give audiences a sense of the show, its strengths, and its weaknesses, which in turn allows theatregoers to make more educated decisions about how they spend their time and money.

This means that theatre criticism not only helps give visibility to the production in order to attract an audience, but it also allows theatre enthusiasts to engage in conversation, it provides a space in which theatre workers are given feedback that is useful in their career and informs the audience about the positive and negative remarks about the play and influences them to visit the theatre and see for themselves. It can be said that theatre criticism has a social function, and it triggers an interaction between the writer who expresses an idea and the reader that reacts to it.

On the topic of the role that reviews play when it comes to the economy, Rogoff (1985: 136) provides the following statement. In this case the author refers to Broadway musicals, although it can be applied to any sort of theatre criticism:

Newspapers and magazines sell advertising, part of a chain of 'special interests' that make it desirable to have hits on Broadway and even off-Broadway. These hits, in turn, can provide further commercial nourishment to innumerable dependencies – restaurants, taxis, tourism, and banks – by being recycled for movies and television.

Therefore, according to the author, there are several financial interests that lie behind review writing. It is because of reviews that people can decide to see plays, and in seeing those plays they will also provide money to other businesses in the city, helping the growth of economy. After all, theatre is a purely commercial art that exists with the purpose of attracting as many visitors as it is possible. In this context, theatre criticism plays a fundamental role in letting the audience know which plays are available at the moment.

According to Wagner (2006), a theatre critic plays a much more complex role than a journalist who writes reviews does. In his own words, a journalistic reviewer “is content to focus merely on the merits or demerits of a single production.” A theatre critic’s way of writing a review is much more complex, for they are experts when it comes to every aspect of a theatre play and provide a deeper analysis about acting, singing, staging, performance, etc. It is not only about whether the play is enjoyable or not.

There have been many papers dealing with the characteristics of language in the news, some of them even analysing evaluative language as used by journalists.

Nevertheless, there are not any papers that deal exclusively with the language that is used by critics when writing a review. That means the analysis of review writing that is connected to theatre is a field that is yet to be explored.

In the following chapter, there will be notions about evaluative language, since it is key to understanding theatre criticism from the perspective of review writing. Theatre criticism goes hand in hand with an author expressing their opinion through the use of words, which is the purpose of evaluative language and the object of study of this dissertation.

3. EVALUATIVE LANGUAGE

The aim of this section is to provide a deep understanding about what evaluative language is, how the process of evaluation happens, what is likely to be evaluated and how to analyse an evaluative act. In order to explain the concept of evaluation, different definitions by several authors will be given. Nevertheless, an explanation of the idea of evaluation would not be complete without the explanation of other concepts that are related to it such as stance or appraisal. So as to understand the process of evaluation, the theory of the Stance Triangle will be explained, as well as the concepts of alignment and disalignment. Afterwards, there will be an explanation of the most likely subjects of evaluation, notions about the speaker or writer's attitude when it comes to evaluating something and finally, the proposal of a methodology that serves the purpose of analysing the act of evaluation. Many of the examples that will be provided in this section belong to the corpus that was specifically created for this dissertation.

Hunston and Thompson (2000: 5) define evaluation as the act of speech in which a speaker or writer expresses their attitude, opinions or feelings towards something or someone they are referring to. This definition could easily be connected to the theory of speech acts, a term that was first coined by J.L. Austin in 1955. According to him, when people speak they are doing something, i.e. creating an action. In his own words: "We were to consider (...) some cases and senses (...) in which to *say* something is to *do* something; or in which *by* saying or *in* saying something we are doing something" (1962: 12).

Evaluation therefore, is an action that is completed by someone, that may be outwardly expressed or not (in which case it cannot be studied within linguistics). When it comes to agreement or disagreement in the context of evaluation, it happens in a social

interaction in which a speaker expresses an opinion and the listener agrees or disagrees with the opinion. Additionally, evaluation can be defined by the words, expressions or phrases that hold evaluative meaning. These are the reasons why evaluating something implies certain meanings through the use of several linguistic items, and by writing an evaluative text or expressing an evaluative message, the writer or speaker is turning the act of evaluation into a function of the language; that is, using the language in order to evaluate (Hunston, 2010: 10-11).

Evaluative language is a fundamental part of reviews, for they are written with the purpose of expressing an opinion about something. The content of reviews is read by an audience that decide whether they are interested in buying the product or not, or that position themselves in agreement or disagreement with the writer, in case they have already bought or tried the product. Therefore, there is an indirect conversation that is established between the reviewer and the reader, in which the writer expresses several thoughts about something and the reader reacts to it by showing interest or indifference, agreement or disagreement.

Dubois (2007: 143) has defined evaluation as “the process whereby a stancetaker orients to an object of stance and characterizes it as having some specific quality or value.” In his definition, the concept of “stance” becomes a crucial part in defining an act of evaluation. As defined by Conrad and Biber (2000: 57), stance is “a cover term for the expression of personal feelings and assessments.” In other words, stance is a category that includes a whole range of language resources that are used by speakers in order to express their personal opinions. By taking a stance, speakers metaphorically decide where they stand when it comes to something or someone, showing their sympathy or disdain through their words. This concept may also be related to Austin’s theory of speech acts that was previously mentioned, according to which human beings’ use of words can imply performing actions.

Any evaluative sentence implies taking a stance. If an author says something along the lines of “I had a great time,”¹ they are taking a stance in which they express a positive opinion. That is one of the many ways in which someone can express enjoyment. Readers consequently position themselves as a reaction to the author’s stance.

¹ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/08/theater/mean-girls-review-broadway-musical.html>

DuBois also states that taking a stance is one of the most important things that can be done through the use of words: “Stance has the power to assign value to objects of interest, to position social actors with respect to those objects, to calibrate alignment between stancetakers, and to invoke presupposed systems of sociocultural value.” According to him, stance can be studied as a social action with a meaning that can be analysed within the context of language, and how human beings interact in a specific cultural or social context (*ibid.*, 139).

Bednarek (2010: 16) adds some further information on the concept of evaluation, in regards of how to analyse it: “Evaluation is thus a cover term for evaluative acts made through language – who performs the evaluation, and who is the source of the evaluation, needs to be determined on a case-by-case basis.” That is, that the act of evaluation cannot always be analysed on the same terms, for evaluation is unique to every different circumstance in which it happens, and it always depends on who is criticising something and what or who is the object of criticism.

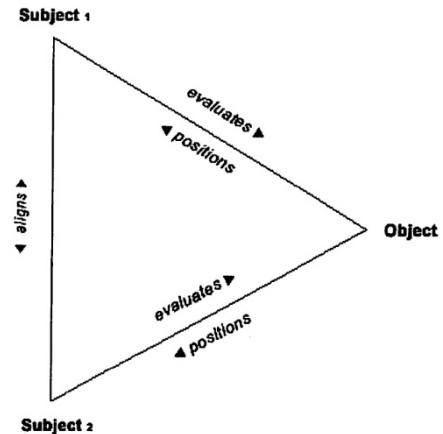
Another important concept that should be taken into account when providing a definition for evaluation is appraisal. This term was defined by Martin and White in 2005 and, according to them, it is related to “how writers/speakers approve and disapprove, enthuse and abhor, applaud and criticise, and with how they position their readers/listeners to do likewise” (42). According to this definition, it seems that appraisal may imply the idea of persuasion, that is, how when someone expresses an opinion within the context of a social interaction, they might wish to convince their readers or listeners to think like them. Either way, the expression of an opinion happens constantly in conversation and it often allows human beings to debate, exchange their ideas and rethink their initial opinions.

When an author praises someone’s performance by saying something along the lines of “he’s as brilliant as ever,”² they are expressing their admiration. The use of the words “as ever” there implies as well that the author definitely thinks that the object of their criticism is usually brilliant and the fact that their performance is good does not fully surprise anyone. This is a way to state that the performer is objectively good, expecting the reader will agree with this statement too.

² See <https://www.vox.com/2018/11/3/18002772/ferryman-review-broadway-sam-mendes>

In order to explain how the process of evaluation happens in the context of writing or conversation, DuBois invented the concept of the Stance Triangle (2007). This triangle-shaped diagram has the function to help researchers understand how an interaction in which an opinion is expressed works.

One node of the triangle represents one speaker, another node represents a different speaker and the third node represents the object that is being evaluated. That is, a speaker/writer evaluates an object and therefore takes a stance in relation to it, which triggers the listener/reader to take a stance as well and express their opinion, which results in both subjects aligning consequently because of their interaction. In the author's own words: "I evaluate something, and thereby position myself, and thereby align with you" (162-169).



The Stance Triangle by DuBois (2007)

So as to provide further understanding to Dubois' Stance Triangle, it is important to understand the concept of alignment and its binary opposite, disalignment. As defined by Martin and White (2005: 95): "By 'alignment/disalignment', we refer to agreement/disagreement with respect to both attitudinal assessments and to beliefs or assumptions about the nature of the world, its past history, and the way it ought to be."

The importance of studying evaluative language lies on certain factors. Within a society, it is important for speakers to express their attitude when it comes to providing arguments or persuading other speakers. As a consequence, it is crucial that when there is an interaction between two or more speakers, they take different or similar stances and may or may not try to convince each other to change their minds about the subject that is being spoken of. All of these positions are natural to conversation and happen constantly in interactions, and therefore, it has become an important area of study in the field of linguistics. Nevertheless, there are some difficulties in the definition of evaluative language, although there are certain kinds of words and expressions that are frequently used with the purpose of evaluation. For example, speakers often use adjectives and adverbs in order to evaluate, but not all adjectives or adverbs are always used for this purpose or indicate an act of evaluation on behalf of the speaker (Hunston, 2010: 3)

On the subject of why evaluation happens, Eklund (2012: 1-4) states that there are certain subjects or facts that human beings usually feel a need to value, that is, express an

opinion that indicates how they feel about the subject that is being discussed. In the same way, there are words and expressions that are used specifically when evaluating a subject. The use of evaluative language is, therefore, linked to the idea of expressing an attitude towards something or recommending, judging, prohibiting or condemning something. The author argues that there are several types of evaluative expressions and that there can be huge differences between them. He divides them into different categories: *thin* expressions (simple, vague adjectives such as “good,” “bad,” “right” or “wrong”), *thick* expressions (adjectives with a stronger meaning than *thin* ones, like “savage” or “indecent”) and *epithets* (words, sometimes slurs, that can be used to degrade someone, such as “fag” or “whore”).

While the author admits that some of these expressions may not always be inherently evaluative, he states that the tone of voice of the speaker may indicate disapproval or disdain towards the thing or person they are speaking of and, therefore, their tone of voice would indicate hints of negative evaluation. A case in which this happens would be using a word that is not inherently degrading or a slur, but that can be pejorative depending on the tone of voice of the speaker. For example, when someone says “black people” they are simply describing a group of people, but if they say “the blacks” with a certain negative tone of voice, they are displaying a racist attitude that is marked by their negative opinion on that group of people. That way, a word that would not normally have evaluative undertones becomes part of evaluative language that is dictated by the voice of the speaker. In the words of the author, “the speaker’s use of the epithet conventionally implicates that the speaker has a negative attitude towards ___s” (*ibid.*, 3).

According to Martin and White (2005), the speaker/writer’s attitude is fundamental when it comes to analysing evaluative language. By attitude they mean a “system of meanings” (42) that are used in English texts. They propose a framework that divides these evaluative words into three semantic regions: affect, judgement and appreciation. Firstly, affect is related to the emotions of the author and how they react to someone’s behaviour or a phenomenon. Secondly, judgement has to do with morals and ethics, and how the writer/speaker feels about the moral aspect of something. Thirdly, appreciation has to do with aesthetic value and whether the author thinks something is beautiful, moving, ugly, tacky, tasteful, etc (42-44).

An example of affect in use would be “as the show went on, it moved me.”³ In that statement, the author is expressing how they felt about the performance from an emotional point of view. In a phrase like “she almost always makes the wrong choice,”⁴ the author is judging someone’s behaviour and disagreeing with it. When an author says something along the lines of “the staging is true magic,”⁵ they are letting the reader know that the staging was aesthetically pleasing, and therefore giving a favourable opinion.

Bednarek (2010) proposed a methodology that would help researchers in the task of analysing evaluative language, starting from the idea that any person that is expressing an opinion through the use of language is evaluating something and that there are twelve evaluative parameters that are used by speakers when expressing their opinions:

1. Comprehensibility: how comprehensible or easy, or how incomprehensible or difficult, does this appear?
2. Emotivity: how positive or how negative does this appear?
3. Expectedness: how expected or unexpected does this appear?
4. Genuineness: how real, true, and authentic, or how fake, false, and artificial, does this appear?
5. Importance: how important or how unimportant does this appear?
6. Necessity: how necessary or how unnecessary does this appear?
7. Possibility: how possible or how impossible does this appear?
8. Reliability: how likely or how unlikely does it appear that this will happen?
9. Causality: what are the reasons and what are the consequences?
10. Sourcing (evidentiality): how do we know?
11. Sourcing (style): how was it said by sources?
12. Mental state: what mental state is attributed to news actors?

The author also states that when it comes to analysing evaluative language, researchers (or simply readers) must also be able to both identify and analyse evaluation (*ibid.*).

So as to explain these evaluative parameters originally listed by Bednarek, some examples from the corpus in this dissertation will be provided. It can be appreciated that some of them show more involvement on the author’s behalf than others:

³ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-is-a-stunning-magical-tour-de-force>

⁴ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/04/on-wednesdays-we-do-two-shows-mean-girls-awarely-onstage.html>

⁵ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-is-a-stunning-magical-tour-de-force>

Comprehensibility: when an author says “Angelica was and is in this production a brilliant woman,”⁶ there is no doubt that they are praising the person’s performance, that is, it is perfectly comprehensible. The phrase “a fan can’t help but feeling a little pride”⁷ is a positive stance, but it is much harder to comprehend. That is because there are no words that indicate evaluation explicitly, such as “great” or “horrible,” so the reader has to look into the meaning of the phrase in order to understand how the author feels about the subject.

Emotivity: in order to explain this parameter, both examples of positive and negative stances are needed. It goes without saying that just like some stances are more positive than others. For example, “Butterworth (...) blew minds on Broadway”⁸ is a far more positive stance than “Fey’s book is very funny and warm.”⁹ In the same way, “the disastrous Spider-Man musical”¹⁰ is a more negative stance than “a movie that annoyingly lacks the ability to jump-cut.”¹¹ This has to do with gradation and how readers naturally know and assume that when something “blows minds” it provokes a much more emotional and impactful response in the spectator than something that is simply described as “funny,” and when something is described as “disastrous” it is a far harsher statement than “annoyingly lacks the ability to jump-cut,” which is an almost euphemistic statement.

Expectedness: it is more expected for a critic to write about the play itself than it is to write about other external elements, although what they will say about it is not always expected. The reason for this is that review writing and the act of enjoying plays are both very subjective. Nevertheless, there are some plays that seem to be more generally loved than others. In order to explain this, examples from reviews in which the play *Hamilton* is mentioned will be taken, since this play has been really loved and successful, even described as the best musical play of all times by some critics. For example, a statement like “*Hamilton* is better than any other musical”¹² is expected because of its success, but

⁶ See <https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/>

⁷ See <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/life/theater/2015/08/06/hamilton-win-hearts-and-minds/31104087/>

⁸ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/10/theater-review-livestock-and-stock-types-in-the-ferryman.html>

⁹ See <https://www.nyl.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2018/04/09/mean-girls-broadway-tina-fey-roma-torre-theater-review>

¹⁰ See <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/could-become-longest-running-broadway-play-harry-potter-cursed/>

¹¹ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/10/theater-review-livestock-and-stock-types-in-the-ferryman.html>

¹² See <https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/>

it is unexpected when a critic says “but revolutionary the show is not”¹³ about the same play, because a huge part of the audience disagrees with this statement and they would have never expected someone would say something like that.

Genuineness: reviews, as has been said before, are some of the most subjective and personal forms of writing, since they deal with the author’s personal opinions and feelings directly, and they are supposed to be completely unfiltered. That is why readers definitely expect them to be genuine, for it is fundamental that authors express exactly how they feel.

Importance: in reviews, the most relevant opinions are the ones that have to do with the world of theatre. That is, what the critics think about the actors’ performances, the scenery, the direction, the staging, the music, the lyrics, etc. Sometimes, authors may mention some factors that are external to the play, but those are not fundamental to understanding the author’s opinion. In that way, it is more important when an author says remarks “the high quality of her soprano singing”¹⁴ than when they say something along the lines of “there are no sequins or tap shoes.”¹⁵

Possibility: although reviews are almost entirely built on subjectivity, some of the statements that authors make seem more likely than others, because some of them appear to be quite objective. An example of this is “the show has no reason to exist beyond (...) a desire to make money by pimping out a familiar property,”¹⁶ which is a negative evaluative statement that accuses the show of being useless, of having only been created because success and money will be obtained certainly. If one takes into account that the existence of Broadway is heavily based on commercial success, this statement is therefore most likely to be true. The aspect of possibility can also refer to how likely the author’s statements are. For example, sometimes critics write some phrases in which they use metaphors or exaggerations that are not literally true, but make the reader understand the greatness of what they are describing, as can be appreciated in the following sentence: “Lerner & Loewe’s magical *My Fair Lady*”¹⁷. The play is not literally magical, but metaphorically, since it provokes a highly positive response in the author.

¹³ See <https://nypost.com/2015/08/06/hamilton-isnt-quite-revolutionary/>

¹⁴ See <https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/my-fair-lady-review>

¹⁵ See <https://www.businessinsider.com/the-bands-visit-broadway-review-tickets-2018-7?IR=T>

¹⁶ See <https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/review-of-pretty-woman-the-musical-starring-samantha-barks-andy-karl-on-broadway>

¹⁷ See <http://nystagereview.com/2018/04/19/my-fair-lady-lerner-loewe-bartlett-sher/>

Reliability: like it was explained before, reviewers' opinions are not objective. It could be said that their reliability does not lie on the information that they give, but on the fact that the audience believes them to be experts on the subject. Although in recent times anyone can write a theatre review because of easy access to the internet and blogging platforms, there are still several newspapers and publications in which readers can find more "official" reviews written by people who do theatre criticism for a living. These people are believed to be more reliable than a simple theatre fan that writes their own reviews on a blog, for example. Furthermore, it is also possible that some authors work for newspapers that are connected economically to certain theatre companies, productions or theatres, and therefore their evaluation will be favoured by this and may not be entirely honest on the author's behalf.

Causality: as has been mentioned before as well, reviews are written for certain reasons and they have certain consequences. The reviewers' job is to give visibility to a product that is available to an audience that probably already has their own opinions and interests. By reading reviews, they decide if they are interested in seeing the play or not, and they agree or disagree with the author if they have already seen it. The cause of writing reviews therefore has a lot to do with economic reasons and how commercial or worth of promotion plays are. The audience are more likely to go see a show about which the reviewer says it is "certainly a show worth watching"¹⁸ than a show in which the author says that "the lyrics can be downright lazy."¹⁹ Readers tend to be more interested in seeing plays with good reviews than plays with bad reviews.

Sourcing (evidentiality): readers cannot fully know how true (to themselves) are the statements that the authors make unless they see the play. This shows that a play can have different interpretations and it can awaken very diverse opinions depending on who is seeing it, on what their cultural background is, on what their interests are, on what kind of music or themes are most appealing to them, etc.

Sourcing (style): this has to do with the language of theatre criticism, and the tendencies that are commonplace to review writers. This is the reason why there are

¹⁸ See <https://www.expressandstar.com/entertainment/theatre-and-comedy/2018/06/13/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-wolverhampton-grand-theatre---review-and-pictures/>

¹⁹ See https://ew.com/theater/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-musical-review/?utm_campaign=entertainmentweekly&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social

several adjectives that appear more often than others (for example, “good” appears 93 times and “amazing” appears 4 times in the corpus), or that word games are frequent too.

Mental state: it is assumed that the author’s mental state is heavily influenced by the way the play has made them feel. Because of this, authors do not soften their praise of the parts of the play that impressed them most and sometimes, they are not afraid to criticise the aspects that they disliked either. The evidence of this is in phrases such as “a flawless cast”²⁰ or “solidly mediocre entertainment.”²¹ As a consequence, the author’s mental state can easily be understood by the words they use. For example, if the critic describes something as “annoying” it is not too hard to assume that they have unpleasant feelings about their subject of evaluation.

On the one hand, when it comes to identifying evaluation, it is not always an easy task. Readers can easily know when a journalist is expressing an opinion if they read clearly evaluative adjectives like “stunning” or “horrendous.” Instead, when reading an objective sentence such as “protesters gathered in the afternoon” it is impossible to know what the writer’s opinions are, even if the reader probably has a positive or negative opinion about the statement depending on their morality or their cultural background, because the sentence is not evaluative per se. The author says that in order to identify evaluation, sometimes it may be necessary to look at words closely and to focus on their meanings e.g. trying to understand if the author is being ironic (*ibid.*).

On the other hand, in terms of the analysis of evaluation, Bednarek states that readers must take into account who is evaluating the situation, the situation being evaluated, which parameters of evaluation are being used, how intense the evaluation is, why the writer is evaluating something, if the evaluation is connected to a certain discipline (review writing, politics, biased media), and the background that either writers or readers come from. All of these questions help readers or researchers question the nature of evaluation (*ibid.*).

In analysing how the language of evaluation has been used by critics in their reviews, corpus analysis tools have become a fundamental part when it comes to looking

²⁰ See <https://deadline.com/2018/10/the-ferryman-broadway-review-jez-butterworth-sam-mendes-paddy-considine-1202486601/>

²¹ See <http://nystagereview.com/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-hit-romcom-musicalized-only-pretty-good/>

through a collection of texts. The functions and key elements of the use of these tools will be explained in the following section of this dissertation.

4. CORPUS STYLISTICS

In this section, the aim is to provide a definition of corpus stylistics and why this technique of literary analysis is relevant to this dissertation. This method of analysis is fundamental when it comes to analysing a large written text or a collection of different texts. Corpus research involves a computer program or programmes that allow researchers to look through bodies of work for key words or phrases in order to establish patterns.

As Ruano (2016: 107-117) points out, although corpus stylistics is relatively new as a discipline in the field of research, computers have been used for a long time in order to carry out processes of literary analysis. The development of corpus linguistics and the polishing of tools have been key points in relation to using computers in order to analyse and study literature. All of this started in the early 60s and, although some linguists did not approve of the use of computers in the field of linguistics at first, soon after these techniques of analysis were embraced by academia and became more relevant. These methods have had influence in other areas of study such as grammar and lexicography.

It was not until the early 2000s that corpus linguistic tools started being used as a support in order to analyse literary texts. In other words, that is when corpus stylistics as such truly began as a discipline. This is how corpus analysis software tools started to be developed and became more popular, too. This method of research allows for a different approach to the results, for it is possible now to look at numbers and data and elaborate much more objective research from a text. Although this method of study is very recent, it has been highly developed in these few years and it has become one of the most important methods for text analysis (*ibid.*).

McIntyre (2017) states as well that methods of analysis through corpus linguistics tools have become more popular in recent times as they have been used in different branches of linguistics such as the analysis of historical texts or the analysis of speech or the words used in the process of learning a language. The popularity of these techniques has come to a point in which all stylistic work for which corpus methods are used is being described as “corpus stylistics.”

Corpus analysis allows researchers to analyse elements that appear in texts from a wider perspective. Taking a look at texts from this more general angle makes it possible to notice certain structures or patterns that are much more difficult to find when reading closely. This is particularly useful when researchers wish to find coincidences, a list of the most frequently used words or patterns in different texts (e.g. an author's whole oeuvre). This way, corpus analysis makes it easier to answer hypothetical questions or to elaborate new ones (Froelich, 2015).

According to Mahlberg (2014: 1-2), corpus linguistics also becomes an extremely useful tool when it comes to the task of describing language, for it focuses on how different language patterns and repetitions of words are used by authors, and what the use of all those different structures means. A corpus, after all, is a collection of texts, and therefore it allows investigators to observe all these characteristics within a text. In her own words:

Corpus linguistics has had a major impact on the description of language. Central to corpus linguistic arguments is the focus on language in use. The availability of corpora, i.e., large collections of computer-readable texts, makes it possible to observe repeated patterns, and the patterns in turn serve as the basis for the description of repeatedly expressed meanings.

Through the method of corpus analysis, texts of different disciplines such as literature, journalism, or law among others can be looked at in a way that researchers have a chance to look at the words from above, without having to read letter by letter, and ask new questions about the use of language as a consequence. Nevertheless, just by using a corpus, writers cannot determine if the language is literary or not, so they must take a deeper look into the words in order to figure that out (*ibid.*).

This idea can be applied to any sort of text, including review writing. In this case, the style of language that is used in reviews will be analysed from the point of view of linguistics by creating a corpus out of different texts.

When a word appears very frequently in a text or in a collection of texts, it means that it is an important word. This is due to the fact that several authors have considered it to be important, and its importance shows when using corpus analysis tools. Once the researcher knows that a word is frequently used and therefore important, it is possible to see every single use of that word in context, why it has been used and how it contributes to the researcher's hypothesis or perhaps proves the hypothesis was wrong instead.

The context of the word provides useful information as well, for it allows the researcher to see each purpose of using that word. That way, it is much easier to find evaluative language next to key words that are most often repeated and it is possible to understand the author's opinion about different aspects of the play. In fact, corpus analysis tools make it possible to see things in a text or collection of texts that one could not really see when reading the texts one by one, for it compares and contrasts them, and shows results that are related to numbers and that involve more than one text, so the researcher is able to look at the object of study from a scientific point of view that is not exclusively literary.

Collocations are words that appear together in a text. Investigating them is useful in this case, because if a collocation are relatively frequent, that means it has been used by more than one author, and therefore that it must be investigated in order to know what kind of information it adds to the research.

According to Amador Moreno (2010: 531-544), using corpus analysis tools on a computer has made it easier to study the development of language through the years and to explore how language has been used at a particular moment in history. This take on corpus analysis, although it refers to literary analysis, can be applied to this dissertation as well, for the object of research is very specific, as it is mostly reviews written in the year 2018 that are being looked at, and the language being used is aimed at a spectator of the 21st century. It would also be possible to study the language used in reviews over time or to focus in reviews written in a certain decade since musical theatre became one of the most important forms of entertainment in the Western world, although that is beyond the scope of this dissertation.

Since this dissertation focuses on the analysis of the use of language in a specific period of time (the 2010s) and for a specific purpose (writing reviews), it follows Amador's ideas that were explained in the previous paragraph. Because of the availability of corpus linguistics tools, the task of analysing this language in detail becomes much easier and effective, providing much more precise results than an analysis in which all reviews are read one by one would. The review texts are compared and contrasted so as to find certain patterns that indicate how evaluative language has been expressed.

The next chapter will be focused on the methodology that will be carried out in writing this paper. After all, corpus stylistics is a fundamental tool to the process of

analysing evaluative language in reviews, but a clear methodology needs to be followed in order to create an analysis that is clear and organised.

5. METHODOLOGY

The goal in this project is to analyse the language used in reviews of plays that were performed on Broadway in 2018, as was previously mentioned. Most of the reviews that have been collected were written and published that same year as well. In analysing the language of Broadway reviews there is an attempt to discover if there is a language style that is unique to this specific branch of journalism and what its traits and characteristics are.

This paper, therefore, could be linked to the field of linguistics, although not exclusively, since language and its features are its focus of study. Besides, this dissertation also presents a quantitative analysis of the language used in Broadway reviews. The project was done with a corpus analysis freeware tool, therefore all the materials needed to do it could be found online and the whole project has been done through a computer, using the internet and computer tools.

It must be noted that although all the reviews that were used in order to write this paper were found in the websites of theatre criticism sites (such as *The New York Times*, *Variety*, *Entertainment Weekly*, etc), some of those website links have been deleted by now. Nevertheless, the texts containing the information from those reviews have been saved in different folders that will be handed in a digital format together with this dissertation.

The first step was to research the most successful plays that were performed on Broadway in the year 2018. For this project, the following ten plays were chosen: *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *Come From Away*, *Hamilton*, *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, *Hello, Dolly!*, *Mean Girls*, *My Fair Lady*, *Pretty Woman: The Musical*, *The Band's Visit* and *The Ferryman*.²²

The corpus is made of 14641 words in total. There are 150 reviews and 10 plays in total, exactly 15 reviews for each play. The reason why there are so many reviews for

²² "Top Grossing Broadway Shows Of 2018." *Broadwayworld.Com*, <https://www.broadwayworld.com/grossescumulative.cfm?year=2018>.

every play is so there is enough contrast between positive and negative stances when analysing examples of evaluative language.

Reviews from different publications (some of them very well-known) were chosen for this project, as was mentioned before. The publications that appear in the corpus are the following: *A2 Central* (1 review), *AJC* (1 review), *ARTSATL* (1 review), *Atlanta In Town* (1 review), *Boston Globe* (1 review), *Broadway Journal* (1 review), *Broadway World* (1 review), *Business Insider* (1 review), *CBC News* (1 review), *Catholic Transcript* (1 review), *DC Metro Theater Arts* (2 reviews), *DC Theatre Scene* (1 review), *Deadline* (8 reviews), *Entertainment Weekly* (9 reviews), *Express & Star* (1 review), *Hollywood Reporter* (8 reviews), *Huffington Post* (3 reviews), *IBJ* (1 review), *Mashable* (1 review), *NBC New York* (3 reviews), *NJ.com* (3 reviews), *NY Mag* (1 review), *NY1* (2 reviews), *New York City Theatre* (1 review), *New York Post* (5 reviews), *New York Stage Review* (6 reviews), *New York Theatre Guide* (5 reviews), *New York Times* (9 reviews), *New Yorker* (1 review), *News Whistle* (1 review), *Now Toronto* (1 review), *Observer* (2 reviews), *On Stage & Screen* (1 review), *Rolling Stone* (1 review), *Simon Parris: Man In Chair* (2 reviews), *Slate* (1 review), *Stage and Cinema* (1 review), *Telegraph* (2 reviews), *The Age* (1 review), *The Daily Beast* (7 reviews), *The Globe and Mail* (1 review), *The Guardian* (6 reviews), *The Know* (1 review), *The Lilith Blog* (2 reviews), *The Spokesman Review* (1 review), *The Stage* (1 review), *The Star* (1 review), *The Village Voice* (1 review), *The Wrap* (6 reviews), *Theater Mania* (1 review), *Theater News Online* (1 review), *Thrillist* (1 review), *Time Out* (6 reviews), *Towleroad* (3 reviews), *USA Today* (1 review), *Vanity Fair* (1 review), *Variety* (8 reviews), *Vox.com* (1 review), *Vulture* (6 reviews), *Wall Street Journal* (1 review), and *Washington Post* (1 review).

The text of each of these articles was saved as a .txt document, for that format makes the text simpler (as in free of images or ads). That is not the only reason, since .txt is also the format that corpus analysis tools are compatible with, and texts cannot be viewed if they have another format that shows texts in a more complex way. In order to collect this data, ten folders were created, one for each play, and in each of them, fifteen reviews for each of the plays were saved as individual files.

This analysis will be exclusively carried out through the computer tool for corpus linguistics AntConc. This freeware tool was created by Laurence Anthony and it makes it easier for researchers to analyse a text from the point of view of linguistics, since it

makes it possible to see the words that are used most frequently in a text, see the context in which they are used, the collocations made with those words, etc.

At the same time, a chart was created in order to gather the sources from where each review was collected. The chart contains the information of the publication the article comes from, the date it was published, the link where the review can be found and its author. This chart has been created in order to easily cite all of the reviews that have been used to write this dissertation and also for reference. This full chart can be found as Appendix 1.

It is important to note that in order to do this project, only the body of the reviews were used, and headlines or subtitles were not included. This is because headlines and subtitles are part of a separate writing style that follows a different tradition with its own schemes and patterns. On a related note, even though Broadway is well-known for its musicals, not all the plays that have been chosen for this paper are musicals. Concretely, all of them are musicals except for *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* and *The Ferryman*. Musical and non-musical plays have been chosen so as to respond to the following question: is the same kind of evaluative language used when evaluating musical and non-musical plays?

The analysis of the reviews will be divided into three parts. First, an overview that will contain a general, quantitative analysis. Second, there will be a detailed analysis of the texts belonging to each play. Third, there will be a general discussion of the results from the whole analysis. In the last part, the aim is to point out all the similarities and differences that have been spotted, the patterns that have been found that are common to the reviews of all the plays, the structures that have been used most frequently, and the kind of language that has been used in order to write these reviews. These parts will be explained in greater detail in the following paragraphs.

In the general overview, all of the reviews have been uploaded on the corpus software in order to find out which words are most frequently used, what they mean in context, and how they are relevant in the context of Broadway review writing. This gives an idea of what is generally of interest to the journalists that write these kind of texts.

For this reason, in order to have better knowledge of the themes and motifs that are repeated by different authors in review writing, the reviews for each play have to be analysed separately. This provides a much more detailed analysis of all the elements that

are discussed for every play and what different authors have in mind when they are writing about the same play. The goal is to find that, despite the subjectivity of review writing, there is a common ground when it comes to writing in that style in order to provide opinions about a play.

As previously mentioned, the first step is to create a word list of the most frequently used words. The tool that will be used on the corpus linguistics software AntConc for this purpose is called “Word List.” This tool makes it possible to quickly determine the most common words in one or many text files. This is the reason why in order to do a general analysis of which words have been used most frequently in these plays, first all of the files that contain these reviews will be loaded onto the software. A stoplist is needed when doing this in order to obtain words that are relevant to the analysis. By doing this, the words that are most commonly used in the English language (a, the, you, ours, etc.) will be removed from the results and so focusing on which relevant words are used more frequently becomes a much simpler task. The word “I”, although it is one of the most frequent ones, will not be in the stoplist for it becomes crucial when analysing subjective language.

The following tools from AntConc will be used:

- Concordance allows researchers to see every single time a certain word appears so as to have a quick view of the context in which it appears every time. This makes it easier to notice how one word has been used in the corpus and the different meanings that it provides in the different texts.

Concordance			Concordance Plot	File View	Clusters/N-Grams	Collocates	Word List	Keyword List
Concordance Hits 4								
Hit	KWIC						File	
1	st because Tony Shalhoub is an amazing actor and I would have						tbv_nw.txt	
2	oy in his voice, coupled with his amazing physicality, makes Bruce						h_dcts.txt	
3	e to the American musical is the amazing score \x97 and what it						h_v.txt	
4	her did not have a song, then an amazing voice broke out in "Wa						ck_bw.txt	

- File View is used to see every text file independently. Thanks to this, more information about the context in which the word is used can be found.

Concordance	Concordance Plot	File View	Clusters/N-Grams	Collocates	Word List	Keyword List
File View Hits	1	File	h_dcts.txt			
than Diggs was in his iconic portrayal. Still, the irrepressible joy in his voice, coupled with his amazing physicality, makes Bruce both a memorable and a fascinating Jefferson.						

- Clusters/N-Grams shows which words appear frequently together. By looking at these collocations it is easier to analyse why these words are together and the meaning that it has in the different texts.

Concordance	Concordance Plot	File View	Clusters/N-Grams	Collocates	Word List	Keyword List
Total No. of Cluster Types	4	Total No. of Cluster Tokens	4			
Rank	Freq	Range	Cluster			
1	1	1	amazing actor			
2	1	1	amazing physicality			
3	1	1	amazing score			
4	1	1	amazing voice			

- Collocates allows researchers to see which words appear close to the word that is being looked at. Sometimes these structures appear multiple times and therefore idioms or coincidences can be spotted in the different texts.

Concordance	Concordance Plot	File View	Clusters/N-Grams	Collocates	Word List	Keyword List
Total No. of Collocate Types:	32	Total No. of Collocate Tokens:	40			
Rank	Freq	Freq(L)	Freq(R)	Stat	Collocate	
1	1	1	0	15.14632	coupled	
2	1	0	1	13.56136	physicality	
3	1	0	1	12.56136	walking	
4	1	0	1	12.56136	bruce	

6. ANALYSIS

6.1. OVERVIEW

When doing this, as it was to be expected, the most frequently used words are “show,” “musical,” and “Broadway,” for these are the main topics that this dissertation and all of the reviews being analysed deal with. These are the words that anyone would expect to find in such reviews (See Appendix 2).

Another word that is used very frequently is “new.” When clicking on this word in order to see the context in which it is being used, it is noticeable that it refers to how many of the plays that were performed in 2018 were either new productions or some changes were introduced to plays that had already premiered. This is the reason why some expressions like “new actor,” “new addition,” “new clothes,” “new cast” or “new band leader” are being used by the reviewers, as well as collocations such as “new Broadway musical,” “new Broadway production,” or “new Canadian cast.” The word “new” implicates a positive evaluation, because it means it has never been seen before. When something is new, it is likely to awaken the audience’s interest and caught the attention of reviewers. On the contrary, something that is “old” could be perceived as negative, something that does not provide anything fresh and should stay in the past.

There are some interesting cases in which the word “new” is used very specifically. For example, the words “new Dolly” refer precisely to the musical play *Hello Dolly!* and the new version of it, as well as the character of Dolly being played by a new actress after the departure of Bette Midler being cast for the main role. The words “new lead” are also used in order to refer to this situation. The word “new” is particularly important in this context as well, since this production of the musical is a new revival, for *Hello, Dolly!* has been performed on Broadway for many decades.

Among all the musicals whose reviews are being studied in this analysis, the one that is mentioned most often is *Hamilton*. This musical, that first premiered in 2015 and is entirely created by Lin-Manuel Miranda, who also plays the main role, is said to be the most successful Broadway musical of the decade. It is based on the life of politician Alexander Hamilton and features rap music and actors coming from very diverse cultural backgrounds.

In the results, the word “Hamilton” is commonly used to refer to both the historical character and the play of the same name. Collocations such as “Hamilton and Burr” and “Hamilton and Lafayette” are also used when different authors describe the relationships between the main character and his contemporaries.

The name “Eliza” is also one of the words that appears most frequently. It mostly refers to the character Eliza Doolittle from the musical *My Fair Lady*, which is loosely based on the 1913 play *Pygmalion*, written by George Bernard Shaw. Nevertheless, this is not the only character with that name, for in the play *Hamilton* there is also a woman

called Eliza Hamilton and reviewers also mention her quite often. This is the reason why it is important to notice, when working with corpus analysis tools, that the same word sometimes may carry different meanings. Therefore, results must be looked into carefully, since numbers may sometimes be deceiving.

The following example is a similar case to what was previously explained. The name “Harry” is also one of the most frequently used words. As it was expected, it refers to the main character in the musical *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*. Just like it happened in *Hamilton*, collocations like “Harry and Hagrid,” “Harry and Hermione,” and “Harry and Draco,” among others, describe the relationships between characters. Nevertheless, the name also refers to actor Harry Hadden-Patton, who has played the role of phonetics professor Henry Higgins in the musical *My Fair Lady*. The use of this actor’s name is used by reviews to describe the quality of his performance in the production being analysed.

It can be said that it is frequent for names to appear often in these reviews, for it is necessary to mention the actors or characters in order to express an evaluation about them. That is not the only purpose of mentioning their names, as was previously mentioned, for they are often accompanied by a description of the plot or their function within every play.

In the same way, the word “woman” appears frequently, but in most of the cases it is a reference of the title of the play *Pretty Woman: The Musical*, based on the 1990 film of the same name. In other cases, it refers to the song ‘(You Make Me Feel) Like a Natural Woman’ from the play *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, based on the life of American singer/songwriter Carole King. The word “woman,” nevertheless, is sometimes used in order to describe female characters from these musicals.

Along the same lines, the word “king” is used in several contexts as well. First of all, when mentioning artist Carole King, be it by herself or describing her relationship with her former husband and musical partner Gerry Goffin. In some reviews of *My Fair Lady*, this word is used to mention the musical *The King and I* in comparison to the musical being reviewed. This is the reason why the musical *The Lion King* is mentioned in some reviews as well. Moreover, this word, in the context of the musical *Hamilton*, refers to King George III of England, who happens to be one of the characters based on real life historical figures. In the same way, when it comes to *Harry Potter and the Cursed*

Child it refers to King's Cross station in England, one of the most important places within the story.

Some of the evaluative words in the texts appear most frequently. "Most" is one of them, appearing 201 times, frequently next to other words in collocations such as "most famous" (6 times), "most expensive" (4 times), "most iconic" (6 times) or "most satisfying" (3 times). All of these collocations have positive meanings.

The word "beautiful" appears 117 times, but is it not always used in an evaluative context, for one of the musicals whose reviews are being analysed is *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*. That means sometimes the word is used in order to refer to its title (for example in "Beautiful boasts an extraordinary catalogue of hit tunes"²³ or "Beautiful is just a celebration of music,"²⁴ both of these phrases including positive stances about the show) and some other times its use is strictly evaluative, as can be appreciated in "beautiful ballad,"²⁵ "beautiful brown polka dot dress"²⁶ or "the beautiful music."²⁷

It is the same with the word "pretty," that appears 114 times in total. It either refers to *Pretty Woman: The Musical* ("the oddest thing about Pretty Woman"²⁸ or "Pretty Woman's songs are so verbally dull,"²⁹ the last one being clearly a negative evaluative stance) or to positive evaluative stances, such as "it is pretty damn funny"³⁰ or "Ambrose has a pretty voice."³¹ The word "pretty" referring to *Pretty Woman: The Musical* is used 84 times. Nevertheless, it is used 28 times in order to express evaluative meanings, 13 of them being positive and 15 negative.

²³ See <https://simonparrismaninchair.com/2018/02/23/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-review-melbourne/>

²⁴ See <https://deadline.com/2018/09/beautiful-review-carole-king-musical-los-angeles-pantages-sarah-bockel-1202465309/>

²⁵ See <https://deadline.com/2017/04/broadway-review-bette-midler-hello-dolly-1202073144/>

²⁶ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic>

²⁷ See <https://www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/reviews/25358>

²⁸ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic>

²⁹ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/08/theater-pretty-woman-and-the-trouble-with-onstage-nostalgia.html>

³⁰ See <http://nystagereview.com/2018/04/08/mean-girls-tina-feys-little-foxes-slay-broadway/>

³¹ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/my-fair-lady-theater-review-1103839>

The word “best” appears 112 times, always expressing positive meanings along the lines of “the thing I like best about Harry Potter,”³² “the best aspects of human nature”³³ and “the best, most astonishing moments.”³⁴

The word “missing” (that appears 23 times in total) sometimes shows information about the plot of a play (“a missing fireman”³⁵) but sometimes it is used in order to express negative evaluative opinions (“it is certainly missing something”³⁶).

When using the Clusters/N-Grams tool, most of the collocations that come up have to do with the name of shows (*Come From Away*, *Hamilton*, *My Fair Lady*). Some other times they have to do with song titles (“I Could Have Danced All Night”) or with songwriters (“Irene Sankoff and David Hein”). There are no exclusively evaluative sentences in these collocations, at least none that are frequent enough to be considered here.

The following chart shows some of the most frequently used words and how many times each word has been used. A chart of this sort will be presented when the reviews of every play are analysed so as to provide clear visual support to which are the most relevant words in every case:

Most frequently used words	Number of times the word appears
“show”	482
“musical”	477
“Broadway”	322
“new”	258
“Hamilton”	253
“woman”	169
“Eliza”	167
“King”	159
“Harry”	158
“beautiful”	117

³² See <https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2018/04/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-broadway-review>

³³ See <https://ew.com/theater/2017/03/12/come-from-away-ew-stage-review/>

³⁴ See <https://slate.com/culture/2018/04/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-reviewed.html>

³⁵ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/review-how-come-from-away-makes-a-broadway-musical-out-of-911>

³⁶ See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/review-the-bands-visit_us_5a134675e4b05ec0ae8444a2?guccounter=1

“pretty”	114
“best”	112
“missing”	23

This section has been an overview of the most frequently used words in all of the reviews for every play, as well as the context in which these words are used and some of the most frequently used collocations. Next, an in-depth analysis will be done for the reviews of every play following the same focus of study.

6.2. *BEAUTIFUL: THE CAROLE KING MUSICAL*

This play belongs to the sub-genre of jukebox musicals. This kind of musical does not have songs that are originally written for them, but the songs used in these productions belong solely to one artist’s or band’s repertoire, and they are connected so that the lyrics are coherent with the plot in order to tell the story. In some cases, jukebox musicals deal with the life of the same artist whose songs are being used (Allwebber, 2010).

This is the case of *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, that has been performed on Broadway since 2013. This play tells the story of the early years of American Jewish singer/songwriter Carole King, and how she became one of the best-known songwriters of the past century, as well as her relationship with her former husband Gerry Goffin, who was also her musical partner, and their relationship with other artists. In order to tell the story, like any other jukebox musical, Carole King’s songs become the motif that keeps the play going.

When looking at the Word List, it can be seen that the word that is most used is “King,” referring to the last name of the woman that inspired the creation of this musical, which is something to be expected. Other words that are very commonly used in these reviews are predictable as well, such as “beautiful,” “Carole,” “musical,” “songs,” “show,” “music,” and “Broadway” among others. This is to be expected for these words have to do both with this one play specifically, being a biographical musical about a singer/songwriter’s life, but also with the field of Broadway musicals in general.

The word “musical” (which appears 65 times in total) is used in order to describe the plot, but it is also used alongside evaluative language. Of course, it must be taken into account that the word “musical” is not inherently evaluative, but that evaluative language is often used when critics write about musicals. However, if one looks at the surrounding

context for the word “musical,” evaluative language is to be found frequently. Some examples of that evaluative language are: “*Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* arrives in pristine form,”³⁷ “the musical is filled with bops and jams,”³⁸ “*Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* is such a thrilling experience for audience members of all generations”³⁹ or “the musical is the type where I did not want it to be over.”⁴⁰ All these positive stances describe how journalists feel about this play in which the music is extremely important. They consider it a beautifully crafted musical that fills the audience with excitement through Carole King’s original songs.

The word “show,” appearing 42 times, serves the same purpose in this context, for it is used when reviewers want to describe their experience. In the same way as “musical,” it is not an evaluative word, but it often serves evaluative purposes because it is qualified by evaluative words and phrases. The following examples indicate as well how evaluative language is used alongside this word: “the new Broadway show emerges as a slick and joyous celebration of female empowerment,”⁴¹ “the structure of the show is nothing radical for the genre,”⁴² “an extraordinary show,”⁴³ “the show remains superficial,”⁴⁴ “a mess of a show”⁴⁵ or “a show worth watching.”⁴⁶ In this case, some slightly negative opinions are revealed: although most of journalists seem to agree that the show is enjoyable and good, some others think that it is clichéd or not deep enough.

Jessie Mueller, the actress that plays Carole King, is also valued by journalists and mentioned only 7 times, sometimes along with Jake Epstein, who plays King’s husband. Looking for this word makes it possible to find evaluative sentences in which the authors express how they feel. Some of their opinions about her (and sometimes his) performance

³⁷ See <https://simonparrismaninchair.com/2018/02/23/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-review-melbourne/>

³⁸ See <https://deadline.com/2018/09/beautiful-review-carole-king-musical-los-angeles-pantages-sarah-bockel-1202465309/>

³⁹ See <https://www.broadwayworld.com/national-tours/article/BWW-Review-BEAUTIFUL-THE-CAROLE-KING-MUSICAL-at-Times-Union-Theater-20180411>

⁴⁰ See <https://www.broadwayworld.com/national-tours/article/BWW-Review-BEAUTIFUL-THE-CAROLE-KING-MUSICAL-at-Times-Union-Theater-20180411>

⁴¹ See <https://www.broadwayworld.com/reviews/BeautifulThe-Carole-King-Musical>

⁴² See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/sep/25/beautiful-review-carole-king-musical-a-hit-thanks-to-stars-earth-moving-performance>

⁴³ See https://www.huffpost.com/entry/ibeautiful-lives-up-to-i_b_4584984?guccounter=1

⁴⁴ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/beautiful-carole-king-musical-theater-670124>

⁴⁵ See <http://nymag.com/listings/theater/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical/>

⁴⁶ See <https://www.expressandstar.com/entertainment/theatre-and-comedy/2018/06/13/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-wolverhampton-grand-theatre---review-and-pictures/>

are: “a winning central performance by Jessie Mueller,”⁴⁷ “the wonderful chemistry displayed by Mueller at co-star Jake Epstein,”⁴⁸ “Mueller is completely believable as King,”⁴⁹ “Mueller knows exactly how to tug at the audience”⁵⁰ or “Mueller’s lovely performance.”⁵¹ This indicates that, even if some do not entirely approve of the show’s structure or storyline, they definitely agree that this actress does a great job at portraying the singer/songwriter.

Both the words “Gerry” and “Goffin” are also frequently used, both together and separately. This is a predictable choice as well, for musician Gerry Goffin is an important character in the story, as he was at the time married to King herself and their relationship was key to the story, since they were a songwriting duo who were responsible for many hit songs in the 1960s and 1970s. Sometimes his name is used in order to provide details about the play, which is the case of phrases like “Carole meets Gerry at college”⁵² or “King falls for Gerry Goffin.”⁵³ Other times his name serves for evaluative purposes, as can be seen in “Andrew Brewer, who played Gerry Goffin, was outstanding.”⁵⁴

Words that refer to the names of songwriters Barry Mann and Cynthia Weil are also used often in these reviews. This is due to the fact that this songwriting duo plays an important role in the musical as well, for they had a sort of playful rivalry with King and her husband back then. Being a duo, it is natural to expect that the collocation “Cynthia and Barry” has been used by many reviewers. In the same way, the collocation “Barry and Cynthia” has also been used. Each of these two collocations referring to the songwriting couple has been used a total of three times. It is important to look at numbers when it comes to collocations like these, because it is frequent for the man’s name to appear before the woman’s because of reasons related to sexism, if the man is taken more

⁴⁷ See <https://ew.com/article/2014/01/16/beautiful-stage/>

⁴⁸ See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/danny-groner/ibeautifuli-lives-up-to-i_b_4584984.html?guccounter=1

⁴⁹ See <http://nymag.com/listings/theater/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical/>

⁵⁰ See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/danny-groner/ibeautifuli-lives-up-to-i_b_4584984.html?guccounter=1

⁵¹ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/beautiful-carole-king-musical-theater-670124>

⁵² See <https://www.expressandstar.com/entertainment/theatre-and-comedy/2018/06/13/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-wolverhampton-grand-theatre---review-and-pictures/>

⁵³ See <https://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-review-timeless-songs-carry-the-show-20180222-h0wi0j.html>

⁵⁴ See <https://www.broadwayworld.com/national-tours/article/BWW-Review-BEAUTIFUL-THE-CAROLE-KING-MUSICAL-at-Times-Union-Theater-20180411>

seriously than the woman is. On the contrary, it would be possible that some writers would choose to place the woman's name before the man's for feminist purposes.

The word "audience" (24 times in total) is often mentioned as well. In the results, it can be appreciated that the audience plays an important role in this musical. Being a jukebox musical, it is more likely that the target audience for this play knows the songs beforehand and will sing along when the actors sing the songs, becoming a much more participative kind of musical, for these songs already have a special place in the target audience's memories. Some examples in which the reactions from the audience are described are the following: "the magnetism to hold audience attention,"⁵⁵ "the audience cheering"⁵⁶ or "thrilling experience for audience members."⁵⁷ One of the results ("the musical's target audience"⁵⁸) refers directly to the people that the creators of the play had in mind when they wrote it, being most probably those who are fans of Carole King and are interested in learning more about her life story or seeing a dramatized version of it in a theatre.

One of the words that is also very frequently used when reviewing this musical is "performance" (appearing 23 times). It is one of those words that are strictly related to the world of Broadway, but in this case the results for this word can give hints on the tone of evaluative language used by journalists. Some examples of this are: "powerhouse performance,"⁵⁹ "lovely performance,"⁶⁰ "understated performance"⁶¹ or "triumphant performance."⁶² Since all of these adjectives that precede the chosen word are positive and appear so often, it is easy to understand that reviews for this play are mostly positive. Most of these adjectives, nevertheless, are used only once. That means review authors do not tend to use the same words when expressing a positive opinion about this show.

In the Word List, it can be appreciated that on two occasions, the word little (that appears 17 times) serves the purpose of negative evaluation ("a little overshadowed by

⁵⁵ See <https://simonparrismaninchair.com/2018/02/23/beautiful-the-carole->

⁵⁶ See <https://www.broadwayworld.com/national-tours/article/BWW-Review-BEAUTIFUL-THE-CAROLE-KING-MUSICAL-at-Times-Union-Theater-20180411>

⁵⁷ See <https://www.broadwayworld.com/national-tours/article/BWW-Review-BEAUTIFUL-THE-CAROLE-KING-MUSICAL-at-Times-Union-Theater-20180411>

⁵⁸ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/beautiful-carole-king-musical-theater-670124>

⁵⁹ See <https://onstageandscreen.com/2018/09/14/theater-review-beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-at-the-pantages-theatre/>

⁶⁰ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/beautiful-carole-king-musical-theater-670124>

⁶¹ See <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/beautiful-carole-king-review-239760321.html>

⁶² See <https://onstageandscreen.com/2018/09/14/theater-review-beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-at-the-pantages-theatre/>

the other actors”⁶³ and “Bront’s New York accent was a little poor”⁶⁴). The word “well” (appearing 14 times) instead is a good example for positive evaluation (“done well and with respect to the artist”⁶⁵).

The Clusters/N-Grams tool does not show any traces of evaluation. All the collocations have to do with the plot and characteristics of the show (“Carole King musical” or “Carole and Gerry”) or with song titles (“Will You Love Me Tomorrow?” or “Some Kind of Wonderful”).

<i>Beautiful: The Carole King Musical</i>	
Most frequently used words	Number of times the word appears
“king”	119
“beautiful”	76
“Carole”	70
“musical”	65
“songs”	44
“show”	42
“music”	41
“Broadway”	35
“audience”	24
“performance”	23
“little”	17
“well”	14

6.3. *COME FROM AWAY*

Having already been performed in smaller venues, this musical premiered on Broadway in 2017. Based on real events, it tells the story of the people of Gander, Canada, who helped people coming from planes find shelter on the day of the terrorist attacks of

⁶³ See <https://www.expressandstar.com/entertainment/theatre-and-comedy/2018/06/13/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-wolverhampton-grand-theatre---review-and-pictures/>

⁶⁴ See <https://www.expressandstar.com/entertainment/theatre-and-comedy/2018/06/13/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-wolverhampton-grand-theatre---review-and-pictures/>

⁶⁵ See <https://deadline.com/2018/09/beautiful-review-carole-king-musical-los-angeles-pantages-sarah-bockel-1202465309/>

September 11, 2001 in New York City. Even if the musical is inspired by a tragedy, the main characters conquer the audience because of their goodness and humanity.

Among the most frequently used words in these reviews, there are words strictly tied to the world of Broadway, such as “show” and “musical.” Following these, some of the words that are most frequently used deal with this musical and its plot in particular. That is the case of words like “Gander” (the place where the story happens), “Hein” and “Sankoff” (authors of the musical), “passengers,” “planes,” “attacks,” “stranded,” “airport,” etc.

In the results for the word “show,” (that appears 66 times) some of the writers’ opinions can be appreciated in evaluative sentences such as “the intentions of the show are so heartfelt,”⁶⁶ “*Come From Away* is the feel-good show of the season,”⁶⁷ “the show’s extraordinary trajectory”⁶⁸ or “Here’s that feel-good show that audiences constantly pine for.”⁶⁹ All these are positive opinions about this play, in which different journalists insist that the show has the ability to make the audience feel good. Some examples of this are: 2 uses of the word “untouched” (“no one will leave untouched by this show”⁷⁰ and “no one who sees this show was untouched”⁷¹), and 2 uses of the word “show” (“feel-good show that audiences constantly pine for”⁷², which was previously mentioned, and “beautiful work that audiences witness in the show”⁷³).

The word “musical” (which appears 61 times in total) serves the same purpose, although it is not an evaluative word by itself, some of the examples being “a heartwarming and thoroughly entertaining musical,” “very fine musical,”⁷⁴ “deftly written musical”⁷⁵ or “the significant success of this new musical.”⁷⁶ All these opinions are positive as well and confirm that *Come From Away* has gained the critics’ praise. There are two cases in which the collocation “groundbreaking musical” is used in order

⁶⁶ See <https://variety.com/2017/legit/reviews/come-from-away-review-broadway-1202007241/0>

⁶⁷ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/come-away-theater-review-985425>

⁶⁸ See <https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/stage/2018/02/20/come-from-away-the-little-show-that-shrunk.html>

⁶⁹ See <https://variety.com/2017/legit/reviews/come-from-away-review-broadway-1202007241/0>

⁷⁰ See <https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/come-from-away>

⁷¹ See <https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/come-from-away>

⁷² See <https://variety.com/2017/legit/reviews/come-from-away-review-broadway-1202007241/0>

⁷³ See <https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/stage/2018/02/20/come-from-away-the-little-show-that-shrunk.html>

⁷⁴ See <https://nowtoronto.com/movies/tv-and-streaming/tv-review-you-are-here-come-from-away/>

⁷⁵ See <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/review-rmtc-come-from-away-1.4482896>

⁷⁶ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/come-away-theater-review-985425>

to express a positive opinion of the show (“David Hein’s groundbreaking musical”⁷⁷ and “intriguing and groundbreaking musical”⁷⁸). Nevertheless, most of the positive adjectives used to describe this musical are only used once.

The adjective “good” (appearing 61 times in total) is also one of the most frequently used words. Since it is an adjective with positive connotations, it could give some clues as to how this play is being reviewed particularly. The truth is, not all the uses of this word have to do with evaluating the play, for some just describe the intentions of the characters, such as “the fellow feeling and good behaviour,” “the gale of good will”⁷⁹ or “the good citizens of Gander.”⁸⁰ Nevertheless, the use of the word “good” seems to be used in a certain collocation used by multiple reviewers, who describe the play as “feel-good,” regarding the effect it has on the audience, indicating that the musical is good for it makes the audience feel good. Moreover, the word “good” is also used as part of evaluative language, for example “Rodney Hicks is particularly good”⁸¹ when referring to performance or in the question “is it that good?”⁸² In the case of that question, the author is reflecting the doubts the audience may have when deciding whether to see a musical or not. The members of the audience have probably heard of this musical and know that reviews for it are mostly positive, but still may wonder if it is worth buying a ticket and seeing it live. The author of that review is acting as a bridge figure between the audience and the musical, being both a spectator and an expert on Broadway who tries to convince the target audience to go see it, assuring that indeed, the musical is as good as some people say. It is possible to say that the question is rhetorical, since other critics and audience members have said the show is good and this author is agreeing with them in order to convince the audience to see the musical.

“Best” (8 times in total) is another adjective with positive connotations that is used frequently in order to take a positive evaluative stance. This can be appreciated in phrases like “the best moments we share”⁸³.

⁷⁷ See <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/theatre-and-performance/theatre->

⁷⁸ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/come-away-theater-review-985425>

⁷⁹ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/12/theater/come-from-away-review.html>

⁸⁰ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/12/theater/come-from-away-review.html>

⁸¹ See <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/entertainment/the-scene/Review-Come-From-Away-Broadway-415948253.html>

⁸² See <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/review-rmtc-come-from-away-1.4482896>

⁸³ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/review-how-come-from-away-makes-a-broadway-musical-out-of-911>

The word “bad” is used 3 times in total, but it only has a negative meaning when the previous work of the authors is described as “bad taste”⁸⁴. No other negative evaluative words are used consistently.

The word “music,” appearing 15 times in total, is also connected to evaluative language, for music is a big part of a musical play and it is a key element for both the audience and reviewers to decide if they liked the show or not. In this case, there are both positive and negative reviews when it comes to the music. The phrases that indicate a positive impression are “music – catchy, ear pleasing,”⁸⁵ “the music is confident and lively”⁸⁶ or “the music proves consistently engaging.”⁸⁷ On the other hand, there are also negative reviews regarding the music, such as “the music is not exceptional”⁸⁸ or “what sounds like music rejected from the last Riverdance extravaganza.”⁸⁹ It is noticeable that even if these statements are clearly negative, in none of them disapproval is explicitly worded, but the authors rather prefer to phrase their negative opinions through euphemisms.

The word “audience,” that can be found 14 times, plays an important part as well, for their reactions are also described and serve for the purpose of writing a good review of this musical. Some examples of this are “so warmly received by the audience,”⁹⁰ “the band stays on - and so does the audience”⁹¹ or “effectively pull the audience in.”⁹² There are also two examples in which the word “audience” is used to describe the spectators’ reactions: “turn a skeptical audience into Pavlov’s slobbering dogs”⁹³ and “scoops everyone in the audience up into its arms”⁹⁴. In the first case, the author is making a reference to Pavlov’s dog, an anecdote in the field of psychology that proved that there is an unconscious yet natural reaction to stimuli (McLeod, 2018). The author, nevertheless, does not need to explain this reference, for it is a well-known anecdote and readers are

⁸⁴ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/12/theater/come-from-away-review.html>

⁸⁵ See <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/review-rmtc-come-from-away-1.4482896>

⁸⁶ See <https://ew.com/theater/2017/03/12/come-from-away-ew-stage-review/>

⁸⁷ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/come-away-theater-review-985425>

⁸⁸ See <https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/come-from-away>

⁸⁹ See <https://www.thewrap.com/come-from-away-broadway-review/>

⁹⁰ See <https://variety.com/2017/legit/reviews/come-from-away-review-broadway-1202007241/0>

⁹¹ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/review-how-come-from-away-makes-a-broadway-musical-out-of-911>

⁹² See <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/review-rmtc-come-from-away-1.4482896>

⁹³ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/12/theater/come-from-away-review.html>

⁹⁴ See <https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/come-from-away>

expected both to know it and understand it. In this case, it is used to add a layer of depth to the description of the audience's reaction to a certain event in the play.

Some slightly negative stances about the lyrics are made in some of the reviews. This can be appreciated in sentences like “the lyrics are indecipherable”⁹⁵ or “the lyrics are often unintelligible.”⁹⁶ Both phrases refer to the fact that the audience has a difficult time understanding the lyrics that are sung by the performers. Again, the words chosen do not show an explicit tendency towards fully negative speech, but they rather express a wish to soften the tone of criticism while still making sure the reader understands the negative implications of the message.

There are no traces of evaluative language in the Clusters/N-Grams tool. All of the collocations that appear there have to do with the show (*Come From Away*), the authors (“Sankoff and Hein”) or song titles such as “Me And The Sky” or “Welcome to the Rock.”

<i>Come From Away</i>	
Most frequently used words	Number of times the word appears
“show”	66
“musical”	61
“good”	61
“Gander”	60
“music”	15
“audience”	14
“lyrics”	10
“best”	8
“bad”	3

6.4. *HAMILTON*

As it has been mentioned before, this musical is undoubtedly the most successful of the decade and, according to some, it is also the most successful musical in the whole history of Broadway plays. Since its debut in the summer of 2015, *Hamilton* has gained popularity and has somehow become a cultural milestone in the US, being frequently

⁹⁵ See <https://www.thewrap.com/come-from-away-broadway-review/>

⁹⁶ See <https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/come-from-away>

referenced in the media. Even though the fact that it is based on biographical facts about the life of politician Alexander Hamilton may not seem appealing at first sight, it has gained the respect of the audience for using urban musical genres such as hip-hop in order to tell the story, as well as a diverse cast. The aim of creator Lin-Manuel Miranda is to narrate the history of America in the past from the perspective of Americans nowadays.

Like in the previous reviews of musicals that were analysed, the words that are mostly used in reviews of *Hamilton* are, again, both words that deal with musical plays in general (“Broadway,” “musical” or “show”) and words that deal with the musical that is being reviewed especially (“Hamilton,” “Miranda,” “Burr” or “Washington”). Other words, even though they are connected to this musical specifically, appeal to its meaning and how the audience can understand this show.

The word “musical” (79 times) is used in the context of evaluative language, although, as mentioned before, it is not an evaluative word. It is used in order to describe what makes this musical special and unique, as well as to make it an object of praise because of what makes it different from other productions. Some examples of this are: “extraordinary award-winning musical about Alexander Hamilton,”⁹⁷ “multiracial rap musical about Alexander Hamilton,”⁹⁸ “a nod of literary and musical appreciation,”⁹⁹ “critics have called *Hamilton* the first hip-hop musical, but it is more than that,”¹⁰⁰ “*Hamilton* is better than any other musical”¹⁰¹ or “the greatest musical ever written.”¹⁰² All these sentences describe *Hamilton* in positive stances, saying that it is the best musical ever written and justifying these words by also describing what makes it so good: having a racially diverse cast, hip-hop music being part of the show which is not common in musicals, or the fact it has won awards and therefore has gained recognition and prestige. There are two cases in which the word “winning” is related to the word “musical,” in which the praise of the musical is supported by the fact it has won several awards (“justly-praised (and Tony-winning) breakout musical”¹⁰³ and “extraordinary award-winning musical”¹⁰⁴). The word “change” is used for the same purpose in two occasions as well:

⁹⁷ See <https://atlantaintownpaper.com/2018/05/theatre-review-hamilton-at-the-fox/>

⁹⁸ See <https://www.wsj.com/articles/hamilton-review-the-revolution-moves-uptown-1438907400>

⁹⁹ See <https://artsatl.com/review-way-hamilton-fox-theatre-lives-reputation/>

¹⁰⁰ See <https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/>

¹⁰¹ See <https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/>

¹⁰² See <https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/>

¹⁰³ See <https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/>

¹⁰⁴ See <https://atlantaintownpaper.com/2018/05/theatre-review-hamilton-at-the-fox/>

“a pop-cultural phenom that really could change musical theatre forever”¹⁰⁵ and “a new musical that may change your tune.”¹⁰⁶

The word “show” (62 times) is also used in the context of evaluative language and has been used in order to express praise, as it can be appreciated in the following examples: “the show does open with a great hip-hop number,”¹⁰⁷ “a show full of standouts,”¹⁰⁸ “the show has been a sellout since the first day,”¹⁰⁹ “the show is entirely original,”¹¹⁰ “the show is just so well-written,”¹¹¹ “this innovative show,”¹¹² “every piece of this show just works”¹¹³ or “a better show than all the rest.”¹¹⁴ In all these sentences, journalists do not hesitate to praise this show using quite big words that show how fond they are of it. There are two cases in which the word “revolutionary” is used in relation to the word “show,” one of them being positive (“the score is far more revolutionary than that”), and the other negative (“but revolutionary the show is not”).

Lin-Manuel Miranda’s work as writer and actor who plays Hamilton is also praised in the results for the word “Miranda” in the following phrases: “the real genius in the room is Lin-Manuel Miranda,”¹¹⁵ “Teachers struggling to interest bored students in the bewigged patriarchs of US history might want to send Lin-Manuel Miranda a thank-you note,”¹¹⁶ “Miranda endows Hamilton with the restless intelligence of an outsider”¹¹⁷ “if not for Miranda, this fascinating figure might remain little more than a face on a \$10 bill,”¹¹⁸ “Miranda’s heady, high-velocity rhyme schemes,”¹¹⁹ “Lin-Manuel Miranda’s

¹⁰⁵ See <https://theknow.denverpost.com/2018/03/01/hamilton-denver-review/178034/>

¹⁰⁶ See <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/life/theater/2015/08/06/hamilton-win-hearts-and-minds/31104087/>

¹⁰⁷ See <https://variety.com/2015/legit/reviews/hamilton-review-broadway-1201557679/>

¹⁰⁸ See <https://atlantaintownpaper.com/2018/05/theatre-review-hamilton-at-the-fox/>

¹⁰⁹ See <https://atlantaintownpaper.com/2018/05/theatre-review-hamilton-at-the-fox/>

¹¹⁰ See <https://theknow.denverpost.com/2018/03/01/hamilton-denver-review/178034/>

¹¹¹ See <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2018/feb/17/theater-review-hamilton-proves-why-its-a-theatrical/>

¹¹² See <https://variety.com/2015/legit/reviews/hamilton-review-broadway-1201557679/>

¹¹³ See <https://dcmetrotheaterarts.com/2018/06/15/review-hamilton-at-the-kennedy-center-lives-up-to-the-hype/>

¹¹⁴ See <https://dcmetrotheaterarts.com/2018/06/15/review-hamilton-at-the-kennedy-center-lives-up-to-the-hype/>

¹¹⁵ See <https://artsatl.com/review-way-hamilton-fox-theatre-lives-reputation/>

¹¹⁶ See <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/theater-art/2015/08/06/political-rivalries-and-rap-battles-broadway-dynamic-hamilton/tnohgXXg2ud9ffjQGrCX5I>

¹¹⁷ See <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/theater-art/2015/08/06/political-rivalries-and-rap-battles-broadway-dynamic-hamilton/tnohgXXg2ud9ffjQGrCX5I>

¹¹⁸ See <https://www.ajc.com/entertainment/arts--theater/theater-review-hamilton-magnificent-tale-triumph-and-tragedy/zzCg6umgd8w8x3hIsIKlsL/>

¹¹⁹ See <https://ew.com/article/2015/08/06/hamilton-ew-stage-review/>

masterpiece”¹²⁰ or “Miranda’s singular gift for storytelling and wordplay.”¹²¹ All these stances about the author and actor corroborate that this musical has been more than justly praised. Miranda is admired for his wit when it comes to composing lyrics, for his delivery of said lyrics, and for his portrayal of Alexander Hamilton. Some journalists even go as far as to say that it is because of Miranda that many young students will now be interested in learning about the of the founding fathers and that the historical figure of Hamilton will always be associated to Miranda’s musical.

The word “nation” (31 times) is used, as the musical itself, in order to speak both about the past and about the present. Because of this, expressions like “the birth of a nation,”¹²² “the foundation of this nation”¹²³ or “the young nation,”¹²⁴ referring to the historical past, are used, as well as expressions like “we are a nation of immigrants,”¹²⁵ which has been taken as a statement against racism. Reviewers try to contribute to spread the moral of this show further, which is for the audience to remember that America was built by immigrants and therefore immigrants nowadays should not be mistreated or disrespected. The musical itself is a call to end racism. The purpose of this musical is manifested in the following sentence, from one of the reviews: “and if you object to calling reggae part of the American songbook, you may be missing the point of the show, which is that America is nothing more than what its immigrants bring to it.”¹²⁶ There is another interesting example in regards to how racism is spoken about in these reviews: “the Founder of America who will rid us of racism has yet to manifest herself.”¹²⁷ This sentence implies that, since *Hamilton* deals with the founding of America and the multiracial cast is a metaphor for the United States being a nation of immigrants although racism is definitely a problem, America as a nation will not be complete until its habitants manage to overcome racism and bigotry. The phrase has a clearly feminist message as well, since the author chose the pronoun “herself” to describe the charismatic leader that is yet to defeat racism in America. This way, that power is placed in the hands of a woman,

¹²⁰ See <https://atlantaintownpaper.com/2018/05/theatre-review-hamilton-at-the-fox/>

¹²¹ See <https://ew.com/article/2015/08/06/hamilton-ew-stage-review/>

¹²² See <https://atlantaintownpaper.com/2018/05/theatre-review-hamilton-at-the-fox/>

¹²³ See <https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/>

¹²⁴ See <https://eu.azcentral.com/story/entertainment/arts/2018/02/01/hamilton-phoenix-asu-gammage-review-touring-cast/1085772001/>

¹²⁵ See <https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/theater-art/2015/08/06/political-rivalries-and-rap-battles-broadway-dynamic-hamilton/tnohgXXg2ud9ffjQGrCX5I/story.html>

¹²⁶ See <https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/>

¹²⁷ See <https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/>

fully knowing that the country has been ruled by mostly men throughout its history and expressing how that needs to change.

As opposed to negative reviews, in which journalists seem to decide to be polite and soften their language in a way in which criticism is not too harsh although they still express disapproval, when it comes to positive reviews they do not seem to feel a need to tone down their attitudes of praise. There seems to be a tendency to tone down negative language but not positive language, for several journalists do not hesitate to describe *Hamilton* as the best Broadway musical they have ever seen or to defend the importance of its message within the current political climate in the United States.

Nevertheless, the word “best” is not used more frequently in the reviews for *Hamilton* (11 times) than it is used in reviews for other plays. For example, it is used 13 times in reviews for *My Fair Lady* and *Mean Girls* and 15 times in reviews for *Pretty Woman*. This proves that the word “best” does not always refer to a description of a musical being the best, and it can also refer to the highlights of the show, to the musical that has won a certain award that year or to the outstanding songs in the play.

The word “good” is used 6 times and also shows traces of positive evaluation. That can be found in phrases like “Hamilton is that good”¹²⁸ and “their voices sound good together.”¹²⁹ Since this is a much loved musical that has received high praise, there are no negative words that have been used frequently.

The Clusters/N-Grams tool shows mostly collocations that are related to the musical, such as Lin-Manuel Miranda (the author of the play), the name of one of the actors (Leslie Odom Jr.) who is positively evaluated in stances such as “the charismatic Leslie Odom Jr.”¹³⁰ or a song from the musical titled “The Room Where It Happens.”

<i>Hamilton</i>	
Most frequently used words	Number of times the word appears
“Miranda”	84
“musical”	79
“show”	62

¹²⁸ See <https://www.thewrap.com/hamilton-broadway-review-the-founding-fathers-never-looked-or-sounded-so-cool/>

¹²⁹ See <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2018/feb/17/theater-review-hamilton-proves-why-its-a-theatrical/>

¹³⁰ See <https://nypost.com/2015/08/06/hamilton-isnt-quite-revolutionary/>

“Broadway”	41
“nation”	31
“best”	11
“good”	6

6.5. *HARRY POTTER AND THE CURSED CHILD*

This play, based on the well-known *Harry Potter* book series written by J.K. Rowling, debuted in a Broadway theatre for the first time in 2016. It is a continuation of the book series but it is set 19 years after the original events, when Harry Potter is already married with three children. The premise for the story is that Harry must come to terms with his past while his son Albus accepts that his future is linked to his being part of a family of wizards.

Once again, the most frequently used words are those that have to do with Broadway in general and those that are connected to this play specifically (“Harry,” “Potter,” “child,” “cursed,” “Rowling,” “Albus”). One would think that the word “magic” (48 times) could be exclusively connected to the theme of the play, but the word is actually used cleverly by journalists in order to describe the effects that this production has on the audience, in order to express that even if the play deals with magic there is also a sort of magical atmosphere being created. This can be appreciated in the following expressions: “the visual magic and stunning direction,”¹³¹ “tangible magic,”¹³² “make audiences believe that the magic is real,”¹³³ “the true magic of great storytelling,”¹³⁴ “the magic of theatre”¹³⁵ or “the staging is true magic,”¹³⁶ among others. The word “magic” is used 18 times in order to refer to magic in the literal sense in the context of the play and 28 times in order to refer to magic as a metaphor (for the special effects, for the illusions being created, etc). The word “magical” is, in the same way, used literally 4

¹³¹ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-is-a-stunning-magical-tour-de-force>

¹³² See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/04/22/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-broadway-review/>

¹³³ See <https://slate.com/culture/2018/04/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-reviewed.html>

¹³⁴ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-review-broadway-1202757827/>

¹³⁵ See <https://deadline.com/2018/04/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-broadway-review-j-k-rowling-jack-thorne-1202367117/>

¹³⁶ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-is-a-stunning-magical-tour-de-force>

times and metaphorically 7 times. This proves a tendency to write about what the show provokes through wordplay and metaphors that are built from the nature of the show.

In the results of the word “play” (68 times) there are some traces of evaluative language that show what journalists think of the production, such as “a genuine play,”¹³⁷ “a worthy play,”¹³⁸ “the play’s clever illusions and gorgeous special effects”¹³⁹ or “a marvel, a shape-shifting play.”¹⁴⁰ This shows that people who wrote reviews agreed that this is a well-made play and they enjoyed the experience of going to see it.

It is the same in results for the word “show” (67 times). The following expressions indicate the critics’ opinions: “it’s another show capitalizing on a known and already popular quantity,”¹⁴¹ “this show feels wondrous,”¹⁴² “the show has a plot that really works,”¹⁴³ “it’s a five-hour beast of a show”¹⁴⁴ or “the acting in the show is sublime,”¹⁴⁵ which are mostly positive although everyone knows a lot of the success of this show is based on the fact it is inspired by a famous saga. There are two cases from different reviews in which the word “wondrous” is used along with the word “show” (“this show feels wondrous”¹⁴⁶ and “the show’s wondrous special effects”¹⁴⁷) as well.

The word “audience” (25 times) is also one of the most frequently used in reviews for this play. This could be due to the fact that this play definitely has a target audience, that is, fans of the *Harry Potter* books who wish to know the continuation to the story. Nevertheless, this word is also tied to positive reviews, with several mentions to the audience gasping from different journalists. From the results coming up for this word, we can also see that the audience has played a fundamental part in the staging of this play,

¹³⁷ See

https://www.nj.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2018/04/harry_potter_cursed_child_broadway_review.html

¹³⁸ See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/04/22/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-broadway-review/>

¹³⁹ See <https://slate.com/culture/2018/04/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-reviewed.html>

¹⁴⁰ See <https://deadline.com/2018/04/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-broadway-review-j-k-rowling-jack-thorne-1202367117/>

¹⁴¹ See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/apr/22/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-review-thrilling-broadway-transfer-is-magic>

¹⁴² See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-review-broadway-1202757827/>

¹⁴³ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-review-broadway-1202757827/>

¹⁴⁴ See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/04/22/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-broadway-review/>

¹⁴⁵ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-is-a-stunning-magical-tour-de-force>

¹⁴⁶ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-review-broadway-1202757827/>

¹⁴⁷ See

https://www.nj.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2018/04/harry_potter_cursed_child_broadway_review.html

for the special effects included creatures that flew into the audience and also they were given gifts, facts that have been considered remarkable by reviewers and that reflect the positive reactions from the people who went to see the play. After all, reviewers only put into words the reactions of the crowd in order to publish them as an “official” opinion. Some examples of the audience’s reactions are the following: “draw gasps from the audience,”¹⁴⁸ “the audience cheered,”¹⁴⁹ “the audience laughs knowingly”¹⁵⁰ or “the intense reaction of the audience.”¹⁵¹

In order to express more positive opinions about the play, the word “effects” (16 times) is used to praise the special effects in the production. Some cases where this can be appreciated are: “the visual effects are fabulous,”¹⁵² “the show is all special effects”¹⁵³ or “dazzling effects.”¹⁵⁴

The Clusters/N-Grams tool does not show evaluative language specifically. Some of the words that appear most frequently together are the title of the play (*Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*), “director John Tiffany,” and the names of other actors from the play.

<i>Harry Potter and the Cursed Child</i>	
Most frequently used words	Number of times the word appears
“play”	68
“show”	67
“magic”	48
“audience”	25
“effects”	16

¹⁴⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/22/theater/review-harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-raises-the-bar-for-broadway-magic.html>

¹⁴⁹ See <https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/review-of-harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway>

¹⁵⁰ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-is-a-stunning-magical-tour-de-force>

¹⁵¹ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-is-a-stunning-magical-tour-de-force>

¹⁵² See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-is-a-stunning-magical-tour-de-force>

¹⁵³ See <http://nystagereview.com/2018/04/22/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-broadways-enchanted-kingdom/>

¹⁵⁴ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-review-broadway-1202757827/>

6.6. *HELLO, DOLLY!*

Of the musicals analysed in this dissertation, all of them having had reviews written about in 2018, this is one of the oldest, for it was first performed in 1964. This musical tells the story of a matchmaker that, in the late nineteenth century, is hired by a man whom she convinces to go to New York with her so that she can find him a date, as well as make two of the man's employees date.

When looking at the results on the Word List tool that gives the most frequently used words in reviews about this play, the most repeated word after "Dolly" is "Midler," apart from the words that are more widely connected to the world of Broadway. That is the surname of Bette Midler, a very well-known American actress and singer who has played the role of Dolly, the main character, but was eventually substituted by another actress (a fact that many journalists recall in their reviews). It is noticeable that this actress' last name appears more frequently than the names of other actors appear in reviews of other plays. This could be due to the fact that this woman is very well-known to the American audience, and her being in a Broadway musical may encourage her fans to go see this production of the play, particularly. Moreover, the fact that she was substituted by another actress may affect the success of the play.

Consequently, the word that is most frequently used right after "Midler" is "Peters." That is the surname of Bernadette Peters, the actress that replaced Midler in the role of Dolly. Being a lesser known actress than Midler, both journalists and the audience compare their performances. The evidence for this is in the following phrases: "for Peters, as for Midler,"¹⁵⁵ "they whooped and applauded Peters as they had with Midler,"¹⁵⁶ "if you saw Midler and are also seeing Peters, comparisons are inevitable"¹⁵⁷ or "Peters equals, even outstrips Midler."¹⁵⁸ All these sentences imply that Peters has had to make an effort to obtain the critics' and audience's praise, and that there was some form of competition since she was taking over a role that had been played by a very well-known actress. In speaking about her performance, several journalists refer to it as "Peters' Dolly," implying that the way a character is perceived depends on the actor in that role.

¹⁵⁵ See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/02/22/hello-dolly-bernadette-peters-broadway/>

¹⁵⁶ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bette-midler-is-a-better-dolly-than-bernadette-peters-review-of-hello-dolly>

¹⁵⁷ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bette-midler-is-a-better-dolly-than-bernadette-peters-review-of-hello-dolly>

¹⁵⁸ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bette-midler-is-a-better-dolly-than-bernadette-peters-review-of-hello-dolly>

Along the same lines, the word “role” (31 times) is also frequently repeated, which did not occur in the analysis of other plays. This could be because in most plays actors do not leave the production, there does not need to be a focus on the fact that roles may be played by different people. Moreover, the fact that in this case the main character was played by a celebrity makes the idea of “role” even more important, for now it relates both to comparisons with the new actress and to the reactions of the audience to the work of the two performers.

In the Word List results for “role,” evaluative language is used in order to somehow provide a negative review for Peters’ performance. Once again, criticism is not too harsh or explicit, but in its mildness still manages to make readers understand a hint of disapproval in how they view the actress playing this role. Some examples of this are: “Peters doesn’t play the role badly, but, for this critic at least, the sense of fun and mischief that should orbit Dolly is missing from her”¹⁵⁹ or “But in this role, Peters’ Dolly feels more skittish and scattered.”¹⁶⁰ From the reviewers’ words, it is easy to understand that, since this musical is a fairly old one that has been on Broadway for decades, it is most probably not the first time that they see a production of it, so they walk into a theatre with a preconceived idea of how this character, Dolly, should be portrayed. This adds pressure on actresses, for they have to prove that they are suitable for playing the role and are able to do it better than their predecessors. In this context, evaluative language plays an important part. Critics use it in order to express their opinion about an actor’s performance, in this case comparing it to someone else who has played that same role.

The word “show” (47 times) is used in the following contexts: “this screwball of a show,”¹⁶¹ “the hottest show in town,”¹⁶² “the show is a riotous delight,”¹⁶³ “the spirit of the show is so infectious”¹⁶⁴ or “complete, resplendent show.”¹⁶⁵ All these are positive

¹⁵⁹ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bette-midler-is-a-better-dolly-than-bernadette-peters-review-of-hello-dolly>

¹⁶⁰ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bette-midler-is-a-better-dolly-than-bernadette-peters-review-of-hello-dolly>

¹⁶¹ See <http://www.nyl.com/nyc/all-boroughs/theater-reviews/2017/04/21/bette-midler-hello-dolly-review-broadway>

¹⁶² See <https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/hello-dolly>

¹⁶³ See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/apr/21/hello-dolly-review-bette-midler-broadway-david-hyde-pierce>

¹⁶⁴ See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/apr/21/hello-dolly-review-bette-midler-broadway-david-hyde-pierce>

¹⁶⁵ See

https://www.nj.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2017/04/hello_dolly_starring_bette_midler_review_an_insta.html

opinions about the show. Perhaps this show receives positive criticism because it is considered a classic since it has been performed on Broadway for many decades.

The word “production” (35 times) has an important role as well when evaluating the show, for when a show has had many productions, the current one is frequently compared to previous editions that stood out. This is the reason why phrases like “the Midler production,”¹⁶⁶ “in the earlier production,”¹⁶⁷ “the real standout in this production”¹⁶⁸ or “the charm of this production”¹⁶⁹ are used. All these phrases hint at the idea of comparison, and would not be used in musicals that have only had one production.

“Musical” (28 times) as a word also provides some clues of how evaluative language is used in order to provide opinions about this production of the show. It is used in the following phrases: “Broadway’s favourite musical comedy”¹⁷⁰ or “Tony-winning hit musical revival.”¹⁷¹ These phrases indicate that this musical is considered a classic, but that is precisely the reason why they can be considered positive stances.

The fact that this musical has been performed and seen by many people for decades is the reason why the word “revival” (25 times) is used quite frequently. Those who are responsible for new productions of old musicals have to provide fresh ingredients and new flavours into every edition of the play so that people still come to see it, for otherwise they will prefer to see the newer plays that debut on Broadway every year. Every new production of the show must be, indeed, a revival of the original with new adaptations in the dialogue and the stage design that adapt to the way people’s mentality and expectations change throughout the years.

The audience, again, is important when reviewing this play, being the word “audience” (15 times) is quite frequently used. Their reactions are what count, for journalists give the audience members a voice to support their opinion about the musical. Both of them, likely having seen either the musical on Broadway or the film adaptation, have certain expectations about the play that should be covered by those responsible for

¹⁶⁶ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bette-midler-is-a-better-dolly-than-bernadette-peters-review-of-hello-dolly>

¹⁶⁷ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bette-midler-is-a-better-dolly-than-bernadette-peters-review-of-hello-dolly>

¹⁶⁸ See <https://www.thewrap.com/hello-dolly-broadway-review-bettes-off-bernadette-peters-takes-center-stage/>

¹⁶⁹ See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/02/22/hello-dolly-bernadette-peters-broadway/>

¹⁷⁰ See <https://nypost.com/2017/04/20/hello-dolly-proves-bette-midlers-genius/>

¹⁷¹ See <https://www.thewrap.com/hello-dolly-broadway-review-bettes-off-bernadette-peters-takes-center-stage/>

the production and the actors. Some examples of this are “the audience applauds her at entrance,”¹⁷² “the audience cannot help but nod,”¹⁷³ “Peters engages with the audience on a more intimate level”¹⁷⁴ or “some in the audience would disagree.”¹⁷⁵

The word “better” (8 times) is used for evaluative purposes, in order to express improvement in the play. Some examples of this are “she moves much better on stage”¹⁷⁶ and “this classic never looked better.”¹⁷⁷

The tool Clusters/N-Grams does not show any explicitly evaluative collocations. Instead it shows names of an actor (David Hyde Pierce) and the creator of the show, Jerry Herman. A song title appears as well (“The Parade Passes By”) as well as the phrase “where she belongs” that is used by several authors in order to explain the plot.

<i>Hello, Dolly!</i>	
Most frequently used words	Number of times the word appears
“Dolly”	133
“Midler”	100
“Peters”	69
“show”	47
“production”	35
“role”	31
“musical”	28
“revival”	25
“audience”	15
“better”	8

6.7. MEAN GIRLS

This musical, based on the film of the same name from 2004, debuted in Broadway in the year 2017, having been performed in some other theatres for the first time shortly

¹⁷² See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/apr/21/hello-dolly-review-bette-midler-broadway-david-hyde-pierce>

¹⁷³ See <https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/hello-dolly>

¹⁷⁴ See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/02/22/hello-dolly-bernadette-peters-broadway/>

¹⁷⁵ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bette-midler-is-a-better-dolly-than-bernadette-peters-review-of-hello-dolly>

¹⁷⁶ See <https://www.thewrap.com/hello-dolly-broadway-review-bettes-off-bernadette-peters-takes-center-stage/>

¹⁷⁷ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/hello-dolly-review-bernadette-peters-1202707835/>

before. Just like the film, its book was written by Tina Fey, so both the musical and the film share the same writer. The story is about a girl that moves to the US and tries to overthrow the mean popular girls in their high school, and therefore has to face the consequences of trying to destroy hierarchy.

This may be a completely new production, but for the audience it is facing the same problems *Hello, Dolly!* did: it has to live up to a pre-conceived idea from those who come to see it, for they are likely to have seen the film. It is possible that some new ideas and concepts must be introduced into the musical, so that audiences will have renewed interest in the story.

It does not come as a surprise that the most frequently used word in the reviews of this play is “girls” (92 times). Girls are the main theme of this musical, not only because it is titled *Mean Girls*, but because it deals with the lives of teenage girls in the US and the idea of hierarchy within high school, and therefore, rivalry between girls. Most of the mentions of the word “girls” refer to the title of the play, but some other times the word is used to refer to the main characters, “girls” being the word that conveys the key to understanding the circumstances of the main characters.

The word “Cady” is also used very frequently (82 times), for that is the main character, who moves to the US and has the purpose of becoming a popular girl in high school. Most of the results refer simply to the events that happen in the plot, but some refer to the performance and provide information about the author’s opinion on the acting in the play. Some examples of this are “Henningesen’s Cady is more broadly naïve than the one originated by Lindsay Lohan”¹⁷⁸ or “Lindsay Lohan made Cady’s descent into ‘bad’ a nervy and genuinely conflict-strewn inner nightmare, here the musical makes the character’s pull of dark and light feel more basically procedural.”¹⁷⁹ It is interesting how there is still a comparison between the two actresses that have played Cady, being Lindsay Lohan in the movie and Erika Henningesen in the musical play. This confirms the idea that both the audience and journalists who are meant to provide their opinions have most likely seen the film before seeing the musical and therefore have a clear idea of Cady’s character in their minds, so comparison to the original source of content becomes inevitable. This is a similar situation to that in *Hello, Dolly!* in which two different actresses had played

¹⁷⁸ See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/04/08/mean-girls-broadway-review/>

¹⁷⁹ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/its-fetch-but-it-could-be-fetcher-review-of-tina-feys-mean-girls-on-broadway?ref=scroll>

the same character. *Mean Girls* definitely is one of the best-known films of the last twenty years, so the target audience (fans of the film) are used to how Lindsay Lohan has played that character and may not be so caught by another actress' performance of the same character. This results in the two performances being compared, both actresses bringing different characteristics into the character. The word "movie" is also used by journalists quite frequently. This does not come as a surprise, for since there is a comparison between the two actresses that have portrayed Cady, there is a comparison between the film and the musical, consequently. Said comparison was explained in the previous paragraph. This comparison can be appreciated in phrases like "the musical is best when it breaks from the movie,"¹⁸⁰ "the musical intends to dig a bit deeper and reflect a wider array of experiences than the movie,"¹⁸¹ "Fey doesn't venture far from the outline of the original movie,"¹⁸² "the forward strides in LGBT acceptance since the movie was released,"¹⁸³ "Janis and Damien are instrumental as they were in the movie"¹⁸⁴ or "as opposed to the movie."¹⁸⁵ From that, what is understood is that even though the musical is faithful to the original premise and tone of the movie, fresh new elements have been added in order to adapt to today's mentality and audience's needs, adding deeper undertones and a new weight on characters that respond to today's expectations.

The use of the word "musical" (66 times) in context provides some of the opinions journalists have written about this show. Some examples are "this bouncy musical adaptation,"¹⁸⁶ "peppy musical,"¹⁸⁷ "the *Mean Girls* musical is fun as hell,"¹⁸⁸ "the tart but sweet new Broadway musical"¹⁸⁹ or "wickedly entertaining *Mean Girls* musical."¹⁹⁰ All these imply positive reviews, but because of the plot and the mean nature of the girls in the show some words such as "tart" and "wickedly" are included into evaluative

¹⁸⁰ See <https://nypost.com/2018/04/08/how-tina-fey-messed-up-mean-girls-musical/>

¹⁸¹ See <http://www.towleroad.com/2018/04/mean-girls-musical-review/>

¹⁸² See

https://www.nj.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2018/04/mean_girls_on_broadway_review_this_show_is_so_not.html

¹⁸³ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/mean-girls-theater-review-1100814>

¹⁸⁴ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/mean-girls-theater-review-1100814>

¹⁸⁵ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/08/theater/mean-girls-review-broadway-musical.html>

¹⁸⁶ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/mean-girls-review-musical-broadway-1202744938/>

¹⁸⁷ See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/apr/08/mean-girls-review-tina-feys-comedy-hits-broadway-with-a-soft-landing>

¹⁸⁸ See <http://www.towleroad.com/2018/04/mean-girls-musical-review/>

¹⁸⁹ See <https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/mean-girls-review>

¹⁹⁰ See <http://www.towleroad.com/2018/04/mean-girls-musical-review/>

language, in an attempt from the journalists to perhaps play along with the plot of the show.

The word “show” (59 times) is used for the same purpose although it is not evaluative by itself, and therefore the following phrases can be found: “this seductively amusing show,” “just a fun, and very funny show,”¹⁹¹ “the show itself suffers from a similar indecisiveness, especially in its structure”¹⁹² or “that make the show so pleasurable.”¹⁹³ These phrases show that the musical was acclaimed and received positively, although there is one critic that does not feel so positively about its structure. It is possible to say that no critics express any entirely negative opinions about the show and therefore, it has been received.

The word “good” (14 times) is not used in evaluative contexts, as it would be expected. Instead, it is used in order to describe the plot. There are no explicitly evaluative words that are repeated significantly, for evaluation is expressed in more complex ways that were explained above rather than by using simple words.

The Clusters/N-Grams tool shows that the collocations that appear most frequently are names related to the show such as Barrett Wilbert Weed (an actress) or North Shore High (the school in the play). The name of another play (*The Book of Mormon*) also appears in this list because that play was too directed and choreographed by Casey Nicholaw, along with song titles such as “Where Do You Belong?” and several mentions to “lyricist Nell Benjamin.”

<i>Mean Girls</i>	
Most frequently used words	Number of times the word appears
“girls”	92
“Cady”	82
“musical”	66
“show”	59
“good”	14

¹⁹¹ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/04/on-wednesdays-we-do-two-shows-mean-girls-awarely-onstage.html>

¹⁹² See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/08/theater/mean-girls-review-broadway-musical.html>

¹⁹³ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/mean-girls-theater-review-1100814>

6.8. MY FAIR LADY

Since this musical debuted in 1956, it is facing the same issue *Hello, Dolly!* did: it is likely that a great part of the audience has already seen either a previous production of it or the film of the same name from 1964, directed by George Cuckor and starring Audrey Hepburn. Audiences may already know what happens in the story and they do not expect any surprises, but still every production of the play must bring in something new so that the musical will keep on being successful.

As mentioned before, the musical narrates the story of Eliza Doolittle, a cockney flower girl that meets phonetics professor Higgins, who tries to teach her how to speak “proper English” and how to behave like a lady. Partly inspired by the 1913 play *Pygmalion* by George Bernard Shaw that was, at the same time, inspired by the Myth of Pygmalion from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, this is one of the most successful and best-known musical plays of all time.

In the Word List results, the two most frequently used words are “Eliza” and “Higgins,” the names of the two main characters. This is interesting for there seems to be a tendency in writing to refer to men by their last name and to women by their first name instead. Petter (2018) states that a study from Cornell University determined that this tendency to call men by their surname and women by first name is strictly tied to the fact that people perceive those who are called by their last names as important and powerful.

Perhaps it has to do with the fact that this story is set in the early 20th century, or that Eliza Doolittle is a younger person that is also less academically qualified than Professor Henry Higgins. Nevertheless, the play itself deals with the idea of a man changing a woman and shaping her into something different, commonly referred to in the play as something along the lines of a “real lady,” so it represents a sexist situation. It is possible that journalists are being unconsciously influenced by this idea when writing reviews for the musical, not realising that they are playing along with this sort of language, for it is certainly and unfortunately ingrained in society.

When looking closer at the results of the word “Eliza” we can see that although the young woman’s name is used to refer to the character, when it comes to describing the actress’ performance the wording used is often “Ambrose’s Eliza,” referring to Lauren Ambrose, who plays Eliza Doolittle in this production. Then, in regards to reviewing the play and the actors’ performance today, many critics seem to agree to call the actress by

her last name. Regardless, it is impossible to know if this word choice is conscious or unconscious.

When looking at numbers, in the reviews Henry Higgins is referred to as “Henry” 17 times, as “Henry Higgins” 19 times and 80 times simply as “Higgins.” Eliza Doolittle, instead, is referred to as “Eliza” 119 times, as “Eliza Doolittle” 17 times and only as “Doolittle” one time. This shows that when writing reviews, at least when it comes to these characters, it is more common to refer to the man by his last name and to the woman by her first name. Although, as it was stated before, this may be done unconsciously, perhaps critics are bearing in mind the context of the play and the status of the characters. In other words, at the time where the play is set, it was more common to call men by their last name and women by their first name, and also, the male character in this case is of a higher status and is better educated than the female character, and therefore is treated as a more important figure and is taken more seriously. That is the reason why their names may appear in this order in the reviews.

When it comes to evaluative language here, reviews of Lauren Ambrose’s performance as Eliza are mostly positive. Some of the expressions which include evaluative language about her performance are: “gritty honesty of Lauren Ambrose’s Eliza; and even if her ‘posh’ accent feels a bit forced,”¹⁹⁴ “Ambrose’s damaged and determined Eliza,”¹⁹⁵ “Ambrose as a feral and then luminous Eliza,”¹⁹⁶ “Ambrose’s Eliza is immensely moving”¹⁹⁷ or “Lauren Ambrose (Eliza Doolittle) is magnetic.”¹⁹⁸ These are mostly positive reviews that not only describe the quality of her performance, but also what the actress adds to it.

In relation to the topic of feminism, reviewers express that there is a need to update this musical in order to adapt it to today’s society in which feminism is a social duty, rather than just a political choice. That is the reason why people would not wish to attend a play about a woman being changed by a man, unless some present-day empowering values were added to it. Still, in the results for the word “Eliza,” it is possible to find some

¹⁹⁴ See <https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2018/fair-lady-review-vivian-beaumont-theatre-new-york-stunning-revival-enduring-masterpiece/>

¹⁹⁵ See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/04/19/my-fair-lady-broadway-review/>

¹⁹⁶ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/19/theater/my-fair-lady-review-lincoln-center-lauren-ambrose.html>

¹⁹⁷ See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/apr/19/my-fair-lady-review-dazzling-broadway-revival-is-a-sweet-treat>

¹⁹⁸ See <https://www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/reviews/25358>

traces of journalists describing Eliza's character development and portraying her as now empowering: "#MeToo era people don't dare laugh at Eliza being called a squashed cabbage leaf,"¹⁹⁹ "taking her chance for social advancement into her own hands, Eliza calls the professor bluff and becomes his student,"²⁰⁰ "We soon learn that it is not Eliza in need of transformation but rather Higgins himself who needs to soften his heart,"²⁰¹ "Eliza is as powerful a woman as her circumstances permit,"²⁰² "Eliza is established as the equal of her teacher"²⁰³ or "Eliza's intelligence is never in question."²⁰⁴ These are all sentences dealing with the plot but in which reviewers noticeably feel a need to not describe Eliza as passive, but to indicate that in this production she is not her professor's puppet, but a self-confident woman that is in charge of her own life and accepts the consequences of allowing Higgins to become her mentor. This attitude is, in fact, closer to the original idea that Shaw had in mind when he wrote *Pygmalion*, that was corrupted when the musical *My Fair Lady* was made by adding a romantic ending in which Eliza Doolittle and Henry Higgins ended up becoming a couple, which did not happen in the play²⁰⁵. The language used, as well, references words or concepts that are commonly used in feminist language nowadays, such as the #MeToo movement, equality between genders, or the need for men to start taking responsibility for their actions.

Feminist discourse is still relevant in the results of the word "Higgins," for some changes must have been made in his character in order for him to fulfil expectations from musical theatre in modern times. That is the reason why many of the reviews write about Higgins from the perspective of gender and his relationship to Eliza, adding a deeper layer to their description that deals with what he represents in this production, instead of making it solely about the acting or the character. Some examples of this are: "it's the class and gender divide between Higgins and Eliza,"²⁰⁶ "before she can take her rightful place in

¹⁹⁹ See <https://www.thewrap.com/my-fair-lady-broadway-review-lauren-ambrose-diana-rigg-harry-hadden-paton/>

²⁰⁰ See <http://www.vulture.com/2018/04/theater-review-an-unaccustomed-new-approach-to-my-fair-lady.html>

²⁰¹ See <https://www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/reviews/25358>

²⁰² See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/19/theater/my-fair-lady-review-lincoln-center-lauren-ambrose.html>

²⁰³ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/my-fair-lady-theater-review-1103839>

²⁰⁴ See <https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/my-fair-lady-review>

²⁰⁵ Further information on this topic can be found in the following book: Reynolds, Jean. *Pygmalion's Wordplay: The Postmodern Shaw (Florida Bernard Shaw Series)*. University Press Of Florida, 1999.

²⁰⁶ See <https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/best-broadway-shows-musicals-plays-nyc>

society and in Higgins' arms,"²⁰⁷ "She sculpts herself, with Higgins as her tool,"²⁰⁸ "Higgins can be a bully and a baby,"²⁰⁹ "Henry Higgins gets just a wee bit woke"²¹⁰ or "Hadden-Patton mitigates some of Higgins' fury by yelling at Eliza in a tone that's more playful than patriarchal."²¹¹ In all these sentences, it can be appreciated there has been a need to emasculate the original Higgins and rid him of traits that are associated with toxic masculinity and sexism. Nobody wants to see a play in which a man patronises a woman, and therefore such a play must be changed in order to satisfy the audience. This is the reason why journalists insist on these changes, so there seems to be a collective need to bring attention to the power imbalance between Higgins and the female character, as well as the fact that his anger has been toned down or portrayed as playful and also that it is important to keep in mind that the decision to become a "proper lady" is made by her and not him, for he is only helping her now, not directing her transformation.

Journalists have also paid attention to the fact that, in earlier versions of the musical, the actor playing Higgins was way older than the actress playing Eliza. Since this only added to the power imbalance and to the audience perceiving Higgins as a patriarchal figure that sometimes feels like a controlling father but also has Eliza as a romantic interest, the age difference between the two main actors is only of three years now, the actress being the older one this time. This choice is no mere coincidence, for there was a need to balance the two characters when it comes to their age as well, in order to establish more equality between them. This is how reviewers have brought attention to this issue: "Tradition has it that Eliza is played considerably younger than Henry Higgins, but here Lauren Ambrose, best known for the TV series *Six Feet Under*, is three years older than her British co star (*sic*), *Downton's* Harry Hadden-Patton,"²¹² "Younger than

²⁰⁷ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/my-fair-lady-review-broadway-lauren-ambrose-1202757772/>

²⁰⁸ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/19/theater/my-fair-lady-review-lincoln-center-lauren-ambrose.html>

²⁰⁹ See <http://www.vulture.com/2018/04/theater-review-an-unaccustomed-new-approach-to-my-fair-lady.html>

²¹⁰ See <https://deadline.com/2018/04/my-fair-lady-broadway-review-lauren-ambrose-harry-hadden-patton-diana-rigg-1202365743/>

²¹¹ See <https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/best-broadway-shows-musicals-plays-nyc>

²¹² See <https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/best-broadway-shows-musicals-plays-nyc>

the typical Higgins (but more the age Shaw imagined),”²¹³ “Mr. Sher instead chose to cast an Eliza who is 40 and a Higgins three years her junior.”²¹⁴

When it comes to evaluative language, the sugar-coated evolution of Higgins for the era of feminism is the subject of very positive reviews: “He brings to Higgins a vitality and vulnerability,”²¹⁵ “Hadden-Patton is a playful and charismatic Higgins,”²¹⁶ “Sher has cast an absolutely marvellous Higgins in Harry Hadden-Patton,”²¹⁷ “Harry Hadden-Patton’s portrayal of Professor Henry Higgins is perfection”²¹⁸ or “Hadden-Patton (...) is in many ways an excellent Professor Higgins.”²¹⁹ By using these expressions, journalists include this Higgins’ vulnerability and playfulness in their praise of the actor’s work. Furthermore, the phrases that indicate praise are not toned down in any way, for journalists chose words and phrases like “absolutely marvellous,” “perfection” or “excellent.”

The word “lovely” (10 times) is also quite frequently used in reviews of this production of *My Fair Lady*. Most of the results that are related to this word have to do with one of the songs in the musical, titled “Wouldn’t It Be Lovely?”. This due to Eliza Doolittle’s cockney accent, for she says “lovely” instead of “lovely,” this being an indication of the fact she is from a lower class. Reviewers take this one word, that is connected to the cockney dialect and this musical specifically and make it part of their own evaluative language, as can be noted in the following examples: “The Lincoln Center Theatre *My Fair Lady* is absobloominutely lovely,”²²⁰ “it was lovely especially when she turned to her mum,”²²¹ “and while she does sound lovely in this revival,”²²² “But what’s especially lovely (or should that be ‘lovely’?)”²²³ and “Wouldn’t it be lovely to

²¹³ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/19/theater/my-fair-lady-review-lincoln-center-lauren-ambrose.html>

²¹⁴ See <https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/review-of-my-fair-lady-starring-lauren-ambrose-on-broadway>

²¹⁵ See <https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/review-of-my-fair-lady-starring-lauren-ambrose-on-broadway>

²¹⁶ See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/apr/19/my-fair-lady-review-dazzling-broadway-revival-is-a-sweet-treat>

²¹⁷ See <http://www.vulture.com/2018/04/theater-review-an-unaccustomed-new-approach-to-my-fair-lady.html>

²¹⁸ See <https://www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/reviews/25358>

²¹⁹ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/my-fair-lady-theater-review-1103839>

²²⁰ See <http://nystagereview.com/2018/04/19/my-fair-lady-lerner-loewe-bartlett-sher/>

²²¹ See <https://www.newyorkcitytheatre.com/reviews/25358>

²²² See <https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/best-broadway-shows-musicals-plays-nyc>

²²³ See <https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/best-broadway-shows-musicals-plays-nyc>

have Lerner & Loewe's magical *My Fair Lady* back on Broadway?."224 All of these phrases use the cockney word in order to make a point about how pleasant the performance was, but the last one specifically paraphrases the song title in order to express a desire regarding this musical play.

This is also a way for the critics to approach the audience and let them know they are spectators too, and therefore they are on the same wavelength. The word "loverly" is easy to recognise for people who are fans of this musical (that is, the target audience). They quickly understand that this is a reference to the musical, which keeps them interested in reading the review. By doing this, journalists put themselves on the same level as the audience, they also become fans who understand the references and who can make clever puns that readers will easily comprehend. This reinforces the previously mentioned idea that critics are the same as any other member of the audience, except that their area of expertise on a professional level is related to Broadway shows and their writing collects the thoughts of the audience as well as it has an influence on those who are indecisive whether they should buy tickets for a show.

Still in the field of evaluative language, there are more descriptive words with positive connotations in the Word List. Some of these are: "smart" ("it's full of smart little gestures"225), "splendid" ("often visually splendid"226), "brilliant" ("brilliant reinvention"227), "emotional" ("the actor stages an emotional meltdown"228) or "good" ("which is fine and good"229). This indicates agreement that all of the reviews of *My Fair Lady* that have been chosen in order to do this analysis are positive. Therefore, journalists have often used these descriptive words that have positive connotations, since they are repeated so frequently.

The word "production" (50 times), just like in *Hello, Dolly!*, is used because this musical has been performed for decades, and therefore, there is somehow a need to compare this version of the play to previous versions, or describe what makes it different. Some of the phrases where those differences between this production and others can be

²²⁴ See <http://nystagereview.com/2018/04/19/my-fair-lady-lerner-loewe-bartlett-sher/>

²²⁵ See <http://www.vulture.com/2018/04/theater-review-an-unaccustomed-new-approach-to-my-fair-lady.html>

²²⁶ See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/apr/19/my-fair-lady-review-dazzling-broadway-revival-is-a-sweet-treat>

²²⁷ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/my-fair-lady-theater-review-1103839>

²²⁸ See <https://www.thewrap.com/my-fair-lady-broadway-review-lauren-ambrose-diana-rigg-harry-hadden-paton/>

²²⁹ See <http://nystagereview.com/2018/04/19/my-fair-lady-lerner-loewe-bartlett-sher/>

seen are: “this makes the new production a slightly more romantic *Fair Lady*,” “the conclusion of this production” or “This *My Fair Lady* is a winsome production.” All of these sentences indicate that this particular production is being described in comparison to previous ones, and therefore one needs to specify which one is being kept in mind.

Nevertheless, that is not the only purpose for the use of the word “production,” since said word can also provide clues about evaluative language, as can be seen in “the well-cast new Broadway production,”²³⁰ “the production continuously and thrillingly keeps us conscious,”²³¹ “smashing new production”²³² or “this production team knows what they’re making.”²³³ All these phrases indicate praise from journalists that value the choices in the cast, the ability of the play to keep the audience interested, or the way everything has been chosen carefully and accurately for the musical. Absolutely all of the results for the word “production” are connected to positive opinions.

The word “musical” (32 times) serves the same purpose, some examples being “a near-perfect musical,”²³⁴ “a lusciously melodic musical”²³⁵ or “a very well-loved musical.”²³⁶ Here, journalists praise the execution of the musical, as well as describe it as one of the audience’s favourites. In this case, the collocation “perfect musical” is used a total of four times in four reviews from four different publications. That means that several authors have chosen similar words to describe the show, being “perfect” a word of absolute praise and admiration for the production. The collocation “beloved musical” is used in two occasions as well, which proves that this show has been performed for decades and has never gone out of fashion, becoming one of the audience’s favourite musicals to see. In the same way, the word “classic” is used in two different contexts (“a

²³⁰ See <https://deadline.com/2018/04/my-fair-lady-broadway-review-lauren-ambrose-harry-hadden-paton-diana-rigg-1202365743/>

²³¹ See <http://www.vulture.com/2018/04/theater-review-an-unaccustomed-new-approach-to-my-fair-lady.html>

²³² See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/apr/19/my-fair-lady-review-dazzling-broadway-revival-is-a-sweet-treat>

²³³ See <http://www.vulture.com/2018/04/theater-review-an-unaccustomed-new-approach-to-my-fair-lady.html>

²³⁴ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/my-fair-lady-theater-review-1103839>

²³⁵ See <https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2018/fair-lady-review-vivian-beaumont-theatre-new-york-stunning-revival-enduring-masterpiece/>

²³⁶ See <http://www.vulture.com/2018/04/theater-review-an-unaccustomed-new-approach-to-my-fair-lady.html>

lusciously melodic musical classic”²³⁷ and “a classic musical”²³⁸) in which the same idea that the fact that several successful productions of this musical have been created through the years has turned into a classic that is usually beloved and revisited both by the audience and critics.

The use of the word “show” (27 times) indicates the same idea that this musical is being perceived both as a good production and as a musical that has a special place in the interests of musical lovers, in phrases like “a beloved show,”²³⁹ “the 1956 show has aged flawlessly”²⁴⁰ or “show with impeccable taste.”²⁴¹ Once again, all of the results shown for this word are connected to positive meanings. All these phrases prove that journalists know the show’s important and irreplaceable position within the world of Broadway.

Again, the results when looking at Clusters/N-Grams have to do with words that appear frequently together because they are names related to the play, not because they are collocations that contain traces of evaluative language. Some of these are actors such as Harry Hadden-Patton or Norbert Leo Butz, “*My Fair Lady*” (the title of the play), George Bernard Shaw (the author of *Pygmalion*), and song titles like “I Could Have Danced All Night” or “Get Me To The Church On Time.”

<i>My Fair Lady</i>	
Most frequently used words	Number of times the word appears
“Eliza”	136
“Higgins”	103
“production”	50
“musical”	32
“show”	27
“lovely”	10

²³⁷ See <https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2018/fair-lady-review-vivian-beaumont-theatre-new-york-stunning-revival-enduring-masterpiece/>

²³⁸ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/19/theater/my-fair-lady-review-lincoln-center-lauren-ambrose.html>

²³⁹ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/my-fair-lady-review-broadway-lauren-ambrose-1202757772/>

²⁴⁰ See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/04/19/my-fair-lady-broadway-review/>

²⁴¹ See <http://nystagereview.com/2018/04/19/my-fair-lady-lerner-loewe-bartlett-sher/>

6.9. *PRETTY WOMAN: THE MUSICAL*

This musical is, like some of the plays that were discussed before, also based on a movie. Therefore, it has a target audience of people who have seen the film and who also have a pre-conceived idea of what the musical should be. Furthermore, in the movie, an old-fashioned idea of relationships between men and women was portrayed, which likely played a role in the conclusions people have drawn from this musical production. The musical premiered in Broadway in 2018, that is, twenty-seven years after the film was released. It tells the love story between Vivian, a prostitute, and Edward, a businessman.

“Vivian,” the name of the female lead, is the word that is used most frequently in the reviews, for she is the main character. It is a fact that this story is not precisely what many people would want to see debuting on a Broadway stage in the year 2018 because of its original sexist undertones, and this can be appreciated for one of the journalists asks “Why would anyone revisit such a funky fable, especially in the #MeToo age?”²⁴² or another refers to Vivian as “the manic pixie dream sex worker.”²⁴³ The idea of the “manic pixie dream girl” was created by Nathan Robin when he realised that there was a trope in fiction according to which a female character only existed for the purpose of helping the male lead and solving his problems, her own story never being developed any further (Miguel Trula, 2015).

This is the reason why the original plot had to be changed and Vivian has now become an empowered figure, not just a woman who is saved by a man. Some examples of how feminism has had a role in changing the plot for this 2018 adaptation are in reviews in which authors choose phrases along the lines of “In the one concession to 2018 self-empowerment, Vivian now fends off her would-be rapist -Edward’s sleazy lawyer-herself, instead of letting her white knight save her.”²⁴⁴ “Vivian has a clear sense of what she wants and what her boundaries are,”²⁴⁵ or “the show makes a few grudging tweaks to its source to accommodate modern sensibilities –Vivian no longer gets punched in the face.”²⁴⁶ This is the proof that by including small changes like this, the audience can be

²⁴² See https://nypost.com/2018/08/16/pretty-women-musical-just-feels-wrong-in-the-metoo-era/amp/?__twitter_impression=true

²⁴³ See https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/aug/16/pretty-woman-broadway-musical-review?CMP=twl_a-stage_b-gdnstage

²⁴⁴ See <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/is-pretty-woman-on-broadway-a-big-mistake>

²⁴⁵ See <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/is-pretty-woman-on-broadway-a-big-mistake>

²⁴⁶ See <https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/pretty-woman-review>

more pleased about seeing the play. Although the word “prostitute” appears 13 times total, some journalists have preferred to use different words instead, since to some “prostitute” may be read as a slur and lately more awareness about sex work has been spread in the field of feminism. Some of the words or phrases that have been used as a synonym for “prostitute” are: “call girl,” “sex worker,” “hooker,” “girl of the streets” or phrases like “Vivian markets herself for \$300 per evening.”²⁴⁷ Nevertheless, most of these words and phrases still very much sound like slurs, and therefore, perhaps these writers were not trying to be politically correct.

The word “woman” is the second most used after “Vivian.” In the results, it can be appreciated that even though many of the uses of this word refer directly to the title “Pretty Woman,” some others describe the condition of the female lead in the play. An example of this is how several writers mention the fact that the theatre marquee flashed phrases such as “funny woman,” “smart woman” or “fierce woman” before flashing the title “Pretty Woman,” as a way to indicate that Vivian is much more than just pretty. This is definitely a consequence of this play being staged in 2018 when feminism is a social duty.

“Edward” is, as well, one of the most frequently used words in the reviews. Most of the times this name is used it is done in order to describe the plot. Nevertheless, in one of them, interestingly enough, the story told in *Pretty Woman* is compared to the Myth of Pygmalion, that was previously mentioned in relation to the musical *My Fair Lady*. According to this author, “Edward doesn’t teach Vivian how to be a lady; he hands her a credit card and outsources the rest to Barney, the hotel manager.”²⁴⁸ There are still some sexist ideas behind this, for the beautiful yet poor woman is granted a life of luxury in exchange for sex, but still she must change her manners and appearance in order to do so, for her original and real self does not seem to be socially acceptable. As another writer describes it, “Edward buys Vivian.”²⁴⁹

When it comes to the order in which the names of the characters are presented, the collocation “Edward and Vivian” appears a total of 6 times, whereas the collocation “Vivian and Edward” appears 3 times instead. This proves the tendency to write the name

²⁴⁷ See https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/aug/16/pretty-woman-broadway-musical-review?CMP=twl_a-stage_b-gdnstage

²⁴⁸ See <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/is-pretty-woman-on-broadway-a-big-mistake>

²⁴⁹ See <https://deadline.com/2018/08/pretty-woman-broadway-review-musical-samantha-barks-julia-roberts-all-dressed-up-no-place-to-go-1202445929/>

of the male lead in the first place and the name of the female lead in the second place most of the time. Nevertheless, both characters are referred to by their first name and in this case the surname of the male lead does not really matter.

There are a few examples of evaluative language in the word “show” (48 times): “Can a big, new Broadway show be both a sure thing and a preordained disappointment at the same time?”²⁵⁰ “has a Broadway show ever had lyrics so utterly, almost senselessly generic?”²⁵¹ “although it is capably staged, the show has no reason to exist beyond, one assumes, a desire to make money by pimping out a familiar property”²⁵² or “the show is best appreciated as a retro pleasure.”²⁵³ All these authors, some of them asking rhetorical questions, seem to agree that even if the show is technically good and well-staged, the premise is so outdated that the only reason why it was adapted into a play is that it would be a financial success. In this case, there are no results in which the show is actually praised, all the reviews, even if they contain positive information, show dislike from the critic as well.

The word “musical” (75 times), nevertheless, indicates disapproval from the writers. Some of the contexts in which it was used are: “Most Unnecessary Musical,”²⁵⁴ “the musical is contentedly stuck in the shallowest grooves of its 1990 cinematic image,”²⁵⁵ “the musical is not a disaster,”²⁵⁶ “the musical manages to screw up all these key moments”²⁵⁷ or “*Pretty Woman* doesn’t quite work as a musical.”²⁵⁸ These sentences seem harsh when compared to other negative evaluative stances in reviews of other musicals, some of them in which quite strong language is used.

The actress who plays Vivian, Samantha Barks, is well-received by critics. The positive attitude can be appreciated in the following phrases: “Barks brings pluckiness,

²⁵⁰ See https://ew.com/theater/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-musical-review/?utm_campaign=entertainmentweekly&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social

²⁵¹ See <https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/pretty-woman-review>

²⁵² See <https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/pretty-woman-review>

²⁵³ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/pretty-woman-musical-theater-review-1135530>

²⁵⁴ See <https://www.villagevoice.com/2018/08/16/the-lyrical-artistry-of-broadways-pretty-woman-musical-wouldnt-pass-muster-in-a-febreze-commercial/>

²⁵⁵ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic>

²⁵⁶ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic>

²⁵⁷ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic>

²⁵⁸ See https://ew.com/theater/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-musical-review/?utm_campaign=entertainmentweekly&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social

grit, self-possession and sensitivity,”²⁵⁹ “Barks is likely to make audiences ask: ‘Julia who?’,”²⁶⁰ “Barks succeeds so convincingly”²⁶¹ or “Barks’ winning performance.”²⁶² Like in other cases in which the musical was first a film, the musical actress is compared to the actress in the film, which in this case is Julia Roberts. Barks is praised by critics to the point that some consider her to be able to play a better and more charismatic Vivian than Roberts did back in the day.

Naturally, the actor who plays Edward in the musical (Andy Karl) is also compared to Richard Gere, who played Edward in the film. In order to do so, reviewers use phrases such as “Karl doesn’t twinkle as Gere did”²⁶³ or “no Broadway show has ever gone wrong by casting Andy Karl.”²⁶⁴ What is drawn from these statements is that, even though critics agree that Andy Karl is undoubtedly talented, his portrayal of Edward cannot be compared to Gere’s original brilliance.

“Cinderella” (13 times) is also a quite frequently used word, being used 13 times in total, which is unexpected. This is interesting, for the play is being compared to other culturally relevant pieces such as *My Fair Lady* (and therefore the Myth of Pygmalion too) and *Cinderella*. Authors often refer to it as a “Cinderella story” or “Cinderella tale,” in order to describe it as a story in which a woman goes from rags to riches because of a man. The use of these words has to do, once again, with sexism. The fact that this story has its roots in other stories with sexist undertones makes people question and wonder if there is any use to keep promoting it or if the changes made improve or help it promote more useful values. Sometimes, new words are being created in order to speak about a cultural phenomenon, in this case that of tales that resemble *Cinderella*. One example of this in the reviews is “on the Cinderella-o-meter, nowhere does *Pretty Woman* rise to *My Fair Lady* level.”²⁶⁵ The word “Cinderella-o-meter” is made up by the author in order to explain about how much *Pretty Woman* may remind the audience of *Cinderella* in comparison to other stories that also resemble the tale (in this case the one being

²⁵⁹ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/pretty-woman-musical-theater-review-1135530>

²⁶⁰ See https://ew.com/theater/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-musical-review/?utm_campaign=entertainmentweekly&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social

²⁶¹ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/pretty-woman-musical-theater-review-1135530>

²⁶² See <http://www.towleroad.com/2018/08/pretty-woman-the-musical/>

²⁶³ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/pretty-woman-musical-theater-review-1135530>

²⁶⁴ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic>

²⁶⁵ See https://ew.com/theater/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-musical-review/?utm_campaign=entertainmentweekly&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social

²⁶⁵ See <http://nystagareview.com/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-hit-romcom-musicalized-only-pretty-good/>

mentioned is *My Fair Lady*. Another case in which *Pretty Woman* is compared to *Cinderella* is the following: “kind of a fairy godfather to Vivian’s *Cinderella*,”²⁶⁶ in which not only Vivian is compared to *Cinderella*, but also other characters are compared to characters from the tale. In the same way, the use of the word “*Cinderella*” is not entirely positive, for the reader might perceive a plot described as a “*Cinderella* story” as readers might perceive these kind of tales as something romantic and ideal, but at the same time old-fashioned or even unnecessary, as can be appreciated in the following example: “how or why *Pretty Woman* made its *Cinderella* trip from rom-com guilty pleasure to cloying, regressive Broadway musical.”²⁶⁷ This is an example of negative evaluative language in which *Pretty Woman* is compared to the tale in order to express that it is a rusty story that does not provide any new insights when presented in the context of 2010s society. This is expressed by the use of words such as “cloying” or “regressive,” stating that even when the film came out in the 90s it was already a “rom-com guilty pleasure,” that is, people already knew back then it was far from being a masterpiece or ground-breaking in any way.

The word “audience” (12 times), as stated before, reflects people’s opinions about the play. In this case, it is used in order to describe two elements: literally, the reactions of the audience, and the target audience of this play. The reactions that come from the audience are described as fairly positive, some examples of this being: “the audience clapped for Vivian’s iconic costumes,”²⁶⁸ “the audience gasped happily”²⁶⁹ or “it defies the audience to laugh at it for being ‘gay’.”²⁷⁰ On the other hand, these are the stances in which the target audience of the musical is described: “I might not be the target audience for *Pretty Woman – the Musical*”²⁷¹ or “moist-eyed nostalgia appears to be exactly what the audience wants.”²⁷² These statements imply that the target audience of the musical is

²⁶⁶ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/pretty-woman-musical-theater-review-1135530>

²⁶⁷ See <https://deadline.com/2018/08/pretty-woman-broadway-review-musical-samantha-barks-julia-roberts-all-dressed-up-no-place-to-go-1202445929/>

²⁶⁸ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/08/theater-pretty-woman-and-the-trouble-with-onstage-nostalgia.html>

²⁶⁹ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic>

²⁷⁰ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic>

²⁷¹ See <https://deadline.com/2018/08/pretty-woman-broadway-review-musical-samantha-barks-julia-roberts-all-dressed-up-no-place-to-go-1202445929/>

²⁷² See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/pretty-woman-musical-theater-review-1135530>

people who were fans of the original romantic comedy or people who have a fondness for strong emotions in entertainment.

Moreover, the lyrics receive some bad criticism. In the results for the word “lyrics,” journalists express their disapproval with phrases such as “stuffed with trite lyrics,”²⁷³ “blunt literalness of lyrics,”²⁷⁴ “the lyrics can be downright lazy”²⁷⁵ or “the lyrics teem with cliché.”²⁷⁶ Even though the words used are, once again, not as harsh as they could be, it is understandable enough for the reader that all of these journalists did not like the lyrics and found them to be sappy or poorly written. There are absolutely no positive stances when it comes to the lyrics in *Pretty Woman: The Musical*.

The word “best” appears 15 times in total and is sometimes used with evaluative purposes. Some examples of this are “all of the movie’s best scenes,”²⁷⁷ “the best are Vivian and Edward’s respective numbers”²⁷⁸ and “doing the best he can.”²⁷⁹ All of these evaluative stances indicate comparison with something else, being the thing talked about better than the object it is being compared to.

The word “little” shows traces of negative evaluative language in phrases such as “uninspired, a little cheesy”²⁸⁰ or “does little to help either of its leads.”²⁸¹ This is unusual, for normally there is a tendency for positive evaluative words to be more frequent than negative evaluative words. It might be because this musical has received rather negative criticism overall, in comparison to the rest of plays whose reviews are being analysed. These phrases prove that the word “little” has rather negative evaluative connotations.

When looking at the Clusters/N-Grams section, the musical title is one of the most frequently used collocations. Along with it, there are song titles (“Anywhere But Here”

²⁷³ See <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/is-pretty-woman-on-broadway-a-big-mistake>

²⁷⁴ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/pretty-woman-musical-theater-review-1135530>

²⁷⁵ See https://ew.com/theater/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-musical-review/?utm_campaign=entertainmentweekly&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social

²⁷⁶ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/pretty-woman-musical-review-broadway-1202905982/>

²⁷⁷ See https://ew.com/theater/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-musical-review/?utm_campaign=entertainmentweekly&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social

²⁷⁸ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/pretty-woman-musical-theater-review-1135530>

²⁷⁹ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/08/theater-pretty-woman-and-the-trouble-with-onstage-nostalgia.html>

²⁸⁰ See https://ew.com/theater/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-musical-review/?utm_campaign=entertainmentweekly&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social

²⁸¹ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/08/theater-pretty-woman-and-the-trouble-with-onstage-nostalgia.html>

or “Something About Her”). There are no collocations that are reminiscent of evaluative language.

<i>Pretty Woman: the Musical</i>	
Most frequently used words	Number of times the word appears
“Vivian”	126
“woman”	106
“Edward”	86
“musical”	75
“show”	48
“best”	15
“Cinderella”	13
“audience”	12
“little”	11
“lyrics”	11

6.10. *THE BAND’S VISIT*

This musical was first premiered in 2016. It tells the story of an Egyptian band that visits Israel in order to play, but because of a misunderstanding, they arrive in the wrong place. This story had been previously turned into a movie that was released in 2007 that was, at the same time, based on a 1977 book by writer Itamar Moses. The plot partly deals with the relationships between Arabs and Israeli people, offering a positive view in times of conflict between them.

Many of the most frequently used words have to do with the area of Broadway and this play particularly. That is the case of “band,” “visit,” “show,” “musical” or “Broadway.” The use of these words helps journalists when it comes to explaining the plot and the technical qualities of this show in particular.

The word “show,” (61 times) for instance, is used in the context of evaluative language. Some examples of this are: “this miraculous show,”²⁸² “this finely detailed

²⁸² See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/theater/the-bands-visit-review-broadway-tony-shalhoub.html>

show,”²⁸³ “the show features a beautiful score,”²⁸⁴ “it all adds up to being a wonderful show,”²⁸⁵ “the show gave me more hope for what Broadway might welcome,”²⁸⁶ “if the show has one failing it is that the large stage almost swallows it”²⁸⁷ or “the show is carefully veined,”²⁸⁸ among many others. All these reviews are mostly positive, for authors largely praise it for its details and music.

The results of the word “musical” (60 times) also bring some insights about evaluative language that can be perceived in the following examples: “the rare film-to-musical adaptation that enhances the source material,”²⁸⁹ “the weak second act of an otherwise good musical,”²⁹⁰ “the musical does, however, provide an endearing slice of life,”²⁹¹ “there is nothing particularly right with the musical either,”²⁹² “this exquisite musical,”²⁹³ “I felt this was the best musical in a season”²⁹⁴ or “Sadly, there also aren’t any memorable songs or major musical leitmotifs.”²⁹⁵ In this case, it can be seen that opinions are divided. Some people praise this musical and consider it to be one of the best they have seen this year, while others say that it is not particularly special, even if they enjoyed it, insisting that it might be nice but it is not astounding.

The word “music” (23 times) also provides more information about the journalists’ opinions. It is used in the following contexts: “certainly there is nothing as clichéd as music being the universal language on display here,”²⁹⁶ “charming background

²⁸³ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/theater/the-bands-visit-review-broadway-tony-shalhoub.html>

²⁸⁴ See <https://deadline.com/2017/11/broadway-review-the-bands-visit-off-broadway-office-hour-1202205240/>

²⁸⁵ See <http://newswhistle.com/the-bands-visit-on-broadway-a-review/>

²⁸⁶ See <http://www.vulture.com/2017/11/theater-the-bands-visit-finds-strength-in-smallness.html>

²⁸⁷ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-bands-visit-is-the-best-new-musical-on-broadway>

²⁸⁸ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/theater/the-bands-visit-review-broadway-tony-shalhoub.html>

²⁸⁹ See <https://deadline.com/2017/11/broadway-review-the-bands-visit-off-broadway-office-hour-1202205240/>

²⁹⁰ See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/review-the-bands-visit_us_5a134675e4b05ec0ae8444a2?guccounter=1

²⁹¹ See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/review-the-bands-visit_us_5a134675e4b05ec0ae8444a2?guccounter=1

²⁹² See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/review-the-bands-visit_us_5a134675e4b05ec0ae8444a2?guccounter=1

²⁹³ See <https://deadline.com/2017/11/broadway-review-the-bands-visit-off-broadway-office-hour-1202205240/>

²⁹⁴ See <https://deadline.com/2017/11/broadway-review-the-bands-visit-off-broadway-office-hour-1202205240/>

²⁹⁵ See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/review-the-bands-visit_us_5a134675e4b05ec0ae8444a2?guccounter=1

²⁹⁶ See <http://newswhistle.com/the-bands-visit-on-broadway-a-review/>

music,”²⁹⁷ “accompanied by beautiful music”²⁹⁸ or “music we can see and feel.”²⁹⁹ When the music is being spoken about here it receives positive reviews for its beauty, but its role in the play is described as “clichéd” and therefore predictable.

Actor Tony Shalhoub’s performance as Tewfiq receives positive reviews as well, as it can be appreciated in the following examples: “a superb Tony Shalhoub,”³⁰⁰ “the wonderful Tony Shalhoub,”³⁰¹ “Tony Shalhoub is an amazing actor”³⁰² or “Shalhoub’s Tewfiq was theatrically bashful.”³⁰³ Again, opinions are divided for some consider him to be an amazing actor, while others disagree.

The word “plot” which appears a total of 6 times, also reveals details of what critics think about this musical and how they evaluate it. In this case, 5 stances are negative: “lacking the complexity of plot,”³⁰⁴ “no major plot events,”³⁰⁵ “the plot is thin,”³⁰⁶ “there is almost no plot”³⁰⁷ and “there’s really no plot to speak of.”³⁰⁸ On the contrary, one stance is positive: “profound eventfulness in plot.”³⁰⁹ This shows that even when most of critics agree in having positive things to say about a show or an aspect of the show, there still might be a minority of journalists that disagree. Variety of opinions is useful for readers, since some of them may not be so interested in the plot being rich as they might be in the music being good.

In this play, as in some others described above, the main character, Tewfiq, has been played by more than one actor. Tony Shalhoub was replaced by Sasson Gabay, who interestingly enough also played the same character in the film, and, as it was to be expected, writers compared their performances. These comparisons can be seen in the

²⁹⁷ See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/review-the-bands-visit_us_5a134675e4b05ec0ae8444a2?guccounter=1

²⁹⁸ See <http://www.thedailybeast.com/the-bands-visit-is-the-best-new-musical-on-broadway>

²⁹⁹ See <http://www.towleroad.com/2017/11/bands-visit/>

³⁰⁰ See <http://www.towleroad.com/2017/11/bands-visit/>

³⁰¹ See <http://www.vulture.com/2017/11/theater-the-bands-visit-finds-strength-in-smallness.html>

³⁰² See <http://newswhistle.com/the-bands-visit-on-broadway-a-review/>

³⁰³ See https://www.theatermania.com/broadway/reviews/the-bands-visit-gets-new-conductor-sasson-gabay_86067.html

³⁰⁴ See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/review-the-bands-visit_us_5a134675e4b05ec0ae8444a2?guccounter=1

³⁰⁵ See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/review-the-bands-visit_us_5a134675e4b05ec0ae8444a2?guccounter=1

³⁰⁶ See <https://observer.com/2017/11/theater-review-broadways-the-bands-visit-is-perfection/>

³⁰⁷ See https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/review-the-bands-visit_us_5a134675e4b05ec0ae8444a2?guccounter=1

³⁰⁸ See <http://newswhistle.com/the-bands-visit-on-broadway-a-review/>

³⁰⁹ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/theater/the-bands-visit-review-broadway-tony-shalhoub.html>

following examples: “much more than Shalhoub, Gabay plays Tewfiq as a musical patriarch”³¹⁰ or “Gabay’s Tewfiq, conversely, is reserved.”³¹¹ There does not seem to be a general preference for either actor, but it is clear that both of them add different traits to the character. That is why the qualities that each actor brings into the role are described by critics.

The lyrics are praised as well, through phrases like “exquisite uncertain certainty of the lyrics”³¹² or “intelligent lyrics.”³¹³ These phrases show approval from journalists. All the other uses of the word “lyrics” refer to who composed them.

The word “beautiful” appears 10 times and in some occasions it presents traces of evaluative language. Some examples are the following: “the show is absolutely beautiful,”³¹⁴ “beautiful music”³¹⁵ or “beautiful score.”³¹⁶

<i>The Band’s Visit</i>	
Most frequently used words	Number of times the word appears
“show”	61
“musical”	60
“music”	23
“Shalhoub”	23
“beautiful”	10
“plot”	6
“lyrics”	5

6.11. *THE FERRYMAN*

The plot of this play, which premiered in 2017, takes place in Northern Ireland in 1981 at the time of The Troubles. Quinn, a former terrorist, lives now with his family on a farm. Shortly after he left the IRA his brother Seamus was killed for revenge. After his

³¹⁰ See https://www.theatermania.com/broadway/reviews/the-bands-visit-gets-new-conductor-sasson-gabay_86067.html

³¹¹ See https://www.theatermania.com/broadway/reviews/the-bands-visit-gets-new-conductor-sasson-gabay_86067.html

³¹² See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/theater/the-bands-visit-review-broadway-tony-shalhoub.html>

³¹³ See <https://simonparrismaninchair.com/2018/04/08/the-bands-visit-a-new-musical-review>

³¹⁴ See <http://newswhistle.com/the-bands-visit-on-broadway-a-review/>

³¹⁵ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-bands-visit-is-the-best-new-musical-on-broadway>

³¹⁶ See <https://deadline.com/2017/11/broadway-review-the-bands-visit-off-broadway-office-hour-1202205240/>

body is found, an influential person from the organisation visits Quinn in order to make sure he will not act against them for their crime.

The most frequently used word in reviews for this production is “play” (95 times). In the results of this word, several traces of evaluative language can be found. Some of these are: “a tremendously noisy play,”³¹⁷ “the delights and thrills of the play,”³¹⁸ “the play as performed on Broadway in 2018 is rich,”³¹⁹ “a mighty play full of magic and poetry,”³²⁰ “the Olivier-award winning play is a stunner,”³²¹ (in fact, the “Olivier award-winning” collocation in order to describe the play is used in two different reviews) “it’s a play of physical and emotional tension,”³²² “*The Ferryman* is the best play of the century”³²³ or “thrilling new play.”³²⁴ All these reviews are positive and describe the play in a good light, some of them going as far as to say that it is the best of the century. On two occasions, the word “many” is used along with the word “play” in order to express its quality (“delights and thrills of the play, and there are many”³²⁵ and “the many merits of this play”³²⁶).

The word “Butterworth” is also quite frequently used, for that is the surname of the creator of the play. His name often goes with mentions to Sam Mendes, director of the play. His last name is used both to describe the play and in order to evaluate his work. Some examples of evaluative language that include his name are: “Butterworth’s armrest-grabber of an ending,”³²⁷ “Butterworth’s heartbreaker of a play”³²⁸ or “Butterworth’s magical, myth-tapping touches.”³²⁹ All these stances offer positive opinions of this play, but nevertheless, praise it from the fact that it is thrilling and heart-breaking.

The word “Carney” also appears very frequently, for that is the surname of the family of the main character and, therefore, many of the characters have that word as a

³¹⁷ See <https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/ferryman-broadway-review>

³¹⁸ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/10/theater-review-livestock-and-stock-types-in-the-ferryman.html>

³¹⁹ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/jez-butterworths-the-ferryman-sets-a-gold-standard-for-broadway-plays>

³²⁰ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/ferryman-theater-1154077>

³²¹ See <https://deadline.com/2018/10/the-ferryman-broadway-review-jez-butterworth-sam-mendes-paddy-considine-1202486601/>

³²² See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/10/22/the-ferryman-broadway-review/>

³²³ See <http://nystagereview.com/2018/10/21/the-ferryman-an-irish-masterwork-from-jez-butterworth/>

³²⁴ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/21/theater/the-ferryman-review-broadway-jez-butterworth.html>

³²⁵ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/10/theater-review-livestock-and-stock-types-in-the-ferryman.html>

³²⁶ See <https://www.vox.com/2018/11/3/18002772/ferryman-review-broadway-sam-mendes>

³²⁷ See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/10/22/the-ferryman-broadway-review/>

³²⁸ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/the-ferryman-review-broadway-1202984735/>

³²⁹ See <https://deadline.com/2018/10/the-ferryman-broadway-review-jez-butterworth-sam-mendes-paddy-considine-1202486601/>

last name. Writers use this word in order to explain the plot and introduce the different characters. This is the reason why the word “family” also appears quite frequently, for it is essential to the understanding of the play’s plot. That is the reason why the word “IRA” is used frequently as well.

The main actor who plays Quinn, Paddy Considine, is target of evaluative language. In the results of the word “Considine,” opinions about his performance can be found, often together with actress Laura Donnelly who plays Quinn’s sister in law: “Paddy Considine, a force,”³³⁰ “the smashing Considine and Donnelly,”³³¹ “led with powerful feeling by Paddy Considine and Laura Donnelly,”³³² “respected character actor Considine”³³³ or “led by the heartbreaking Donnelly and Considine.”³³⁴ All of these sentences definitely praise the main actors, sometimes not only for this play for Considine is also praised for his previous work and described as a “respected” figure in the acting world.

This is the first time in these reviews in which the name of the female actress appears in the first place when used alongside the name of the male actor. The collocation “Donnelly and Considine” appears two times, whereas “Considine and Donnelly” appears one time. “Paddy Considine and Laura Donnelly” appears one time and “Laura Donnelly and Paddy Considine” is never used.

The word “goose” is also used frequently, 24 times in total. This is not a word that is expected to find in the review of a play. When looking at the results, it can be appreciated that journalists are referring to a real goose that appears in the play and that was unexpected for them too. The goose is often listed with other casting choices that were not expected either, such as a bunny and a baby. The goose, for comical effects, is praised by journalists in sentences like “shoutout to the goose as well, which stole the show”³³⁵ and “its main course is a goose.”³³⁶ Other writer prefers to describe the appearance of this animal with a rhyme: “goose on the loose.”³³⁷

³³⁰ See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/10/22/the-ferryman-broadway-review/>

³³¹ See <http://www.theaternewsonline.com/NYTheaterReviews/HARVESTTIME.cfm>

³³² See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/ferryman-theater-1154077>

³³³ See <https://www.vox.com/2018/11/3/18002772/ferryman-review-broadway-sam-mendes>

³³⁴ See <https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/ferryman-broadway-review>

³³⁵ See <https://www.vox.com/2018/11/3/18002772/ferryman-review-broadway-sam-mendes>

³³⁶ See <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/21/theater/the-ferryman-review-broadway-jez-butterworth.html>

³³⁷ See <http://broadwayjournal.com/the-ferryman-is-great-feckin-theater-review/>

The writing, as well as the authors, are praised in the results of the word “characters” (23 times). Some examples of this are: “so rich are its characters and so engaging are its performances,”³³⁸ “a large and splendid cast adds depth to the characters,”³³⁹ “mentally different characters”³⁴⁰ or “the characters read as characters, not as stereotypes.”³⁴¹ All these sentences praise both the writing of the characters, implying that the writer has managed to create extremely deep and multi-layered characters, and that the actors play these characters brilliantly and make them moving and credible.

The word “best” is used 11 times in order to evaluate the play. Some examples of the use of this word are “at his best”³⁴² and “best play of the century.”³⁴³ The evaluative use of the word “good” that is used 10 times in total can be appreciated in “the performances are too good.”³⁴⁴ There are no negative evaluative words that are repeated frequently.

Almost all of the collocations found in the Clusters/N-Grams tool are names of actors or characters. No explicitly evaluative expressions are found, once again.

<i>The Ferryman</i>	
Most frequently used words	Number of times the word appears
“play”	95
“Butterworth”	82
“Carney”	78
“Considine”	25
“goose”	24
“characters”	23
“best”	11

³³⁸ See <https://www.vox.com/2018/11/3/18002772/ferryman-review-broadway-sam-mendes>

³³⁹ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/the-ferryman-review-broadway-1202984735/>

³⁴⁰ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/10/theater-review-livestock-and-stock-types-in-the-ferryman.html>

³⁴¹ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/jez-butterworths-the-ferryman-sets-a-gold-standard-for-broadway-plays>

³⁴² See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/10/theater-review-livestock-and-stock-types-in-the-ferryman.html>

³⁴³ See <http://nystagereview.com/2018/10/21/the-ferryman-an-irish-masterwork-from-jez-butterworth/>

³⁴⁴ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/ferryman-theater-1154077>

6.12. DISCUSSION

In this section, the language and patterns that have been seen in the reviews will be discussed, overall and individually. Each review has its own characteristics, but it is true that a certain style and common grounds have been found, sometimes in a few of them and other times in all of them. To illustrate these patterns, examples will be provided.

One thing that is common to all these reviews is the language that journalists use, which is subjective, colloquial, non-academic, and sometimes, even vulgar. It could be said that the language used in these reviews is quite different from academic language or formal writing, which is defined by the following characteristics: objectivity, grammatically correct sentences, educated language, etc. This can be seen in phrases such as “It’s cool.”³⁴⁵

The use of subjective language has to do with the fact that writing a review is, after all, expressing a very personal opinion, and even if two writers see the same staging of the same play, their ideas and opinions about it may be completely different because of their cultural background or taste in aesthetics and music, among other reasons. One of the main characteristics of subjective language is the use of the first person, which indicates that writers, although they are writing down their opinions, are essentially writing about themselves and how they view their object of criticism, which in this case is a play being performed on Broadway in the year 2018. This is the reason why sentences such as “I did not want it to be over”³⁴⁶ or “the best musical I have ever seen”³⁴⁷ are used.

In this context in which language is so subjective, the word “I” becomes fundamental. “I” ultimately expresses the subjective thoughts and reactions of the authors. In fact, the pronoun “I” appears 549 times in total.

The use of evaluative language is inherently subjective as well, for opinions depend, as stated before, on how a journalist feels about a play, or about a more specific element about it, like the acting, music, lyrics or scenery. Nevertheless, the fact that they define any of the aspects of a play with words like “amazing” or “worthy,” that indicate

³⁴⁵ See <http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2018/feb/17/theater-review-hamilton-proves-why-its-a-theatrical/>

³⁴⁶ See <https://www.broadwayworld.com/national-tours/article/BWW-Review-BEAUTIFUL-THE-CAROLE-KING-MUSICAL-at-Times-Union-Theater-20180411>

³⁴⁷ See <https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/>

different degrees of positive connotations, or, on the contrary, “unnecessary” or “lazy,” that show negative connotations, depends on who is reviewing the play and how they feel about it because of personal circumstances.

It is important to note that, when reviewing a Broadway show, one cannot simply describe it as generally “good” or generally “bad.” There are often several aspects to be taken into account when writing a review of a play. In fact, it is not uncommon that the same journalist may feel positive about one aspect of the play and may have rather negative feelings about another. For example, they may love the acting but dislike the plot. For example, the *Pretty Woman* musical receives good criticisms when it comes to acting (“Barks’ captivating performance”³⁴⁸) but overall it has not been well received by critics in relation to other aspects, such as the songs (“the majority of *Pretty Woman*’s songs are so verbally dull”³⁴⁹). This is why both a quantitative and qualitative study has been needed in order to write this dissertation, for these small differences would not be appreciated otherwise.

The language of these reviews can also be described as colloquial, as was mentioned before. This may be connected to the subjectivity of it, but it is also related to the fact that the people these reviews are aimed at are not academics, but common people who simply happen to enjoy musicals and Broadway plays, so it is not required that the language is extremely technical or formal. After all, Broadway is an industry of entertainment and these reviews are also meant to entertain whoever is reading them, and convince them whether they should see the play on stage or not.

One of the main characteristics of colloquial language is the use of contractions, e.g., “isn’t” instead of “is not” or “I’m” instead of “I am.” According to Chantler and Stewart: “You are *telling* the story; therefore, what you write should use all the normal contractions used in speech” (Undated: 56). Through the use of these contractions, journalists find it easier to make readers understand that they are not part of an inaccessible elite, but that they are also part of the audience too and therefore experience the same emotions as any other member of the audience. It is a way to establish proximity between critics and the audience who read their writing. It was not hard to notice that many contractions were used in these reviews. When looking at the results for different

³⁴⁸ See <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/pretty-woman-musical-theater-review-1135530>

³⁴⁹ See <https://www.vulture.com/2018/08/theater-pretty-woman-and-the-trouble-with-onstage-nostalgia.html>

contractions, it was easy to conclude that this provides readers a sense of proximity and friendship with the writers. They do not feel like they are interacting with an academic that uses inaccessible language, but someone who is on their same wavelength and communicates with them as if they were having a day-to-day conversation.

This idea of closeness between journalists and the audience is also reflected in the use of non-formal descriptive words, such as “fun,” “hottest” or “sleazy.” These words are on the spectrum of everyday language than on the spectrum of formality and academia. Although journalists express themselves in a rather colloquial way in order to make the reading more understandable and amusing for the audience, they still keep their tone fairly educated most of the time without trying to sound academic, in the sense that their use of English is pretty standard, not using slang very frequently, which would be a more specific kind of colloquial language. This makes it possible for a wider range of readers to understand the texts while still being able to relate and be amused by them.

Although the language in reviews is not academic but still attempts some sort of formality, there are times where it can also be vulgar or distasteful. This depends mostly on the theme of the play that is being reviewed and if language of that kind is also being used by the characters, for critics adapt to the theme that is being portrayed on stage and adapt their language to it. This is the case of *Pretty Woman: The Musical*, in which reviewers use words like “hooker” that may sound somehow shocking, or even offensive, to certain audiences in order to describe the plot.

Critics may also employ the use of strong language when they strongly dislike an aspect of a play. This is not typical, for there is a tendency to tone down negative criticism in order to remain polite, while still making the readers understand that they do not have positive emotions about what is being criticised. When evaluating the musical *Pretty Woman*, which was not well received by critics regarding aspects like lyrics or plot, one of the sentences used was “the musical manages to screw up all these key moments.”³⁵⁰ That is a fairly harsh stance, which would not be used very frequently in musical reviews. This shows very strong disapproval on the critic’s behalf.

³⁵⁰ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic>

Although evaluative language can certainly be complex and include a wide variety of shades of meaning, it can generally be classified into two categories: positive and negative.

Positive evaluative language is present in all of these reviews. In fact, it is far more frequent than negative evaluative language is, and it is used in almost every aspect of every play. On a basic level, it can be said that positive evaluative language is in the use of descriptive adjectives like “extraordinary,” “great,” “talented” or “enjoyable,” each of them having their own shade of meaning within the scale of positivity. It is normal, nevertheless, that most of the evaluative language that is used in these reviews is positive, since the plays whose reviews have been analysed for this dissertation have been the most successful that were performed in 2018.

Nevertheless, writers do not only express their approval or interest through adjectives. Sometimes, in order to remark that the play or an aspect of it (like acting or structure) is worthy of praise, they mention the fact that it has received awards. This could be an attempt to bring some objectivity into a mostly subjective review, as a way to say that they agree with the elite that choose who or what is winning awards. Some examples of this are “extraordinary award-winning musical”³⁵¹ or “Tony-winning hit musical revival.”³⁵²

Positive evaluative language can sometimes sound excessive or over the top. Journalists certainly do not hesitate to use words of praise when they feel it is deserved and they do not measure their words or tone down their language when their response is very positive. This can be appreciated in the following examples: “immensely moving,”³⁵³ “the greatest musical ever written”³⁵⁴ or “triumphant performance.”³⁵⁵ It is possible that there are no limits for positive opinions because they cannot hurt anyone’s feelings, so critics never try to tone them down since they may consider that praise is never enough.

³⁵¹ See <https://atlantaintownpaper.com/2018/05/theatre-review-hamilton-at-the-fox/>

³⁵² See <https://www.thewrap.com/hello-dolly-broadway-review-bettes-off-bernadette-peters-takes-center-stage/>

³⁵³ See <https://www.thewrap.com/hello-dolly-broadway-review-bettes-off-bernadette-peters-takes-center-stage/>

³⁵⁴ See <https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/>

³⁵⁵ See <https://onstageandscreen.com/2018/09/14/theater-review-beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-at-the-pantages-theatre/>

When it comes to negative evaluative language, as opposed to positive evaluative language, journalists tend to tone down their criticism and they avoid harsh criticism on most occasions. This could be due to the fact that very negative or harsh reviews can, indeed, hurt someone's feelings so they must keep in mind that there is someone on the other side of the review and therefore avoid an attack as much as possible. Some examples of these toned down reviews are: "Peters doesn't play the role badly, but (...) the sense of fun and mischief that should orbit Dolly is missing from her"³⁵⁶ or "the lyrics teem with cliché."³⁵⁷ In the first example, while Peters' performance is not being described as "bad" directly, the author makes sure to say that it lacks something. In the second example, the lyrics are not described as "boring" but rather as stereotypical and therefore unoriginal.

In all these reviews, the most frequently used words for each one of the plays could easily be divided in two groups: a) words that relate to the world of theatre and Broadway in general and b) words that are related to the play that is being reviewed specifically. In the first group there would be generic words like "musical," "show," "performance," "production," "audience" or "play," while in the second group there would be more specific words like the names of actors (for example, "Ambrose" in *My Fair Lady*) or words related to the theme of the play (i.e. "farm" in *The Ferryman* or "matchmaker" in *Hello Dolly!*).

All these most frequently used words often appear in the context of evaluative language and, by seeing the results of each of them one can draw conclusions of whether critics approve or if they do not. These words describe the main aspects of the play that have to be reviewed, although it also depends on how relevant they are for each play. For example, the word "musical" does not appear or appears less frequently in plays that do not have musical numbers, or the word "audience" is used less often in plays in which there is no interaction with audience members.

In the same way, there is a tendency on the critics' behalf to use word play, references and metaphors that are specific to each of the plays. For example, it is normal that words like "magic" or "magical" are used in the reviews of *Harry Potter and the*

³⁵⁶ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bette-midler-is-a-better-dolly-than-bernadette-peters-review-of-hello-dolly>

³⁵⁷ See <https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/pretty-woman-musical-review-broadway-1202905982/>

Cursed Child because those words are strictly connected to the theme of the play. This way, critics connect with the target audience of every play.

Sometimes, words and clusters that are frequent in the reviews of some plays do not appear (at least so frequently) in the reviews of other plays. By looking at the most frequently used words in the reviews of each of the plays, it is easy to know which are the “key words” that let us know which aspects are more relevant in every play. For example, in musical plays the word “musical” is more relevant, whereas in non-musical plays critics prefer to use words like “play” or “show”. Also, when words like “audience” or “music” are frequently mentioned, it means that several critics have had something to say about those aspects of the play, which marks their relevance. Every play has its own relevant words that tell which elements are important when it comes to understanding how evaluation has been used.

Evaluative language is, of course, also used in order to express opinions about the actors’ performances. Apart from the previously mentioned traces of positive and negative evaluative language in these descriptions, there is another pattern in relation to this: comparisons between actors. This can happen when the musical is inspired by a movie and the musical actor is compared to the actor that played the same character in the movie or when two different actors play the same role in a Broadway play. In both of these cases what is discussed is if one of the actors did it better, the strengths and weaknesses each actor has when playing that role, what each actor brings into the portrayal of said character, and so on. Some examples of comparisons between actors are “Peters equals, even outstrips Midler,”³⁵⁸ “Karl doesn’t twinkle as Gere did”³⁵⁹ or “Henningsen’s Cady is more broadly naïve than the one originated by Lindsay Lohan.”³⁶⁰

In the description of actors’ performances, some patterns can be noted as well. Actors are either referred to by their full name or by their last name, instead of only their first name. This indicates the fact that they are respected and considered important inside the Broadway world. Moreover, when describing the character played by a certain actor, formulas like “Ambrose’s Eliza” or “Peters’ Dolly” are fairly common. This could be

³⁵⁸ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/bette-midler-is-a-better-dolly-than-bernadette-peters-review-of-hello-dolly>

³⁵⁹ See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic>

³⁶⁰ See <https://ew.com/theater/2018/04/08/mean-girls-broadway-review/>

seen as a metaphor of how each actor makes a character their own and brings unique qualities into the performance.

In plays in which the main characters are a man and a woman, the man is usually mentioned first. This can be appreciated in collocations that are frequently used, such as “Higgins and Eliza” or “Edward and Vivian”. Nevertheless, the fact the man’s name is used first sometimes may not be strictly connected to sexism, but to social status.

When the audience is mentioned, it usually happens for several reasons: a) because the audience knows the songs in the musical, b) because reactions of the audience are being described, or c) because the target audience of the show is being described. Furthermore, mentioning the audience in these kinds of reviews is important because it is the audience that has the power to make a musical or play succeed.

When the audience knows the songs in a musical, it is likely to be a jukebox musical or a musical that has been performed for a long time that may also have a film adaptation. In these cases, the audience plays a fundamental part, because they have a very strong preconceived idea of what they are going to see in the theatre and they might sing along. How participative the audience is in this case is crucial, for it helps journalists understand if the response has been positive or negative. This would be the case of musicals like *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, *My Fair Lady* or *Hello, Dolly!*.

When reactions of the audience are described, it means that the play is interactive and makes the audience participate. Therefore, if the audience is amazed or interacts with the actors, that means involvement has been achieved, which is positive. This is the case of *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*, in which most of the audience understands the inside jokes and references and the special effects are well-crafted and impress the audience. An example of this is “the audience applauds.”³⁶¹

Taking the target audience into account is important as well. This is the group of people at which a play is aimed or that could be interested by a play. Broadway is a largely commercial industry in which creators do not often write plays for self-expression, but rather to please an audience, to make critics praise it, and that it is well received and has social recognition. In the long run, they probably wish that the play is performed for many years and has as many productions as possible, because all that contributes to success. In

³⁶¹ See <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/apr/21/hello-dolly-review-bette-midler-broadway-david-hyde-pierce>

this context, playwrights have to keep in mind their target audience. For example, *Pretty Woman* was described as “unnecessary” to turn into a musical by many critics, but still was successful because it had a target audience, mostly made up of fans of the film that were curious about a musical adaptation of the movie.

This is somehow connected as well to the necessity of adapting older plays to new productions, or the plays that are inspired by films, to the mentality of today’s society, for that is part of the audience’s demand as well. Writers know that today, audiences are not interested in inherently sexist plots, and they demand to see sexism condemned, along with racial and sexual diversity. There seems to be a shared necessity among critics to mention these changes and explain how musicals have sometimes been rewritten in order to please a present-day audience. This is the case of *My Fair Lady*, in which Eliza has been turned from an originally passive woman shaped by a man into a powerful female figure that chooses to change herself with his help; or *Mean Girls*, in which LGBT characters have gained more importance than they had in the original film. New musical writers keep this in mind, which is the reason why *Hamilton* being racially diverse and including more popular genres (like rap or hip-hop) has gained so much popularity and recognition. When writing about this, several critics have described this period in time as the era of the #MeToo movement, in which more women have decided to come forward and speak openly about sexism and abuse and the men at fault are finally being called out for their actions. In fact, the #MeToo movement is mentioned 12 times in total in all of these reviews. These changes and adaptations in the plot or in gender roles in the plays are also mentioned by critics because they may be received positively or negatively, as was explained with examples in the individual analysis of every play. An example of this phrase is “more attuned to the #MeToo era.”³⁶²

Sometimes critics also adapt the language they are using to the theme of the play they are describing. In other words, their word choice is meant to match the aesthetic of the play. Some examples of this would be using phrases like “the magic is real” or “the magic of theatre” when reviewing *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*; or using the word “lovely” when reviewing *My Fair Lady*. Those are words that are either extremely specific to the themes of the plays or that are used by the characters. Using these words can come off as catchy, for words like “lovely” tend to stay in the audience’s memory

³⁶² See <https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic>

and also establish a type of mutual understanding between critics and the audience, for the audience also understands the references.

In relation to language used by journalists as well, when a play is very well received and therefore the reviews include a great deal of positive evaluative language, positive adjectives and descriptive words tend to be used by critics so frequently that they make it to the Word List. This would be the case of highly praised musicals like *Hamilton* or *My Fair Lady*. The success of these plays is so undeniable that it is reflected in the language of reviews. In the case of *Hamilton*, some of the positive adjectives that are used in its reviews are “original” (14 times), “best” (11 times) or “brilliant” (9 times). In the reviews of *My Fair Lady* some of the positive adjectives that are most frequently used are “well” (17 times), “best” (13 times) and “perfect” (6 times), among others.

Normally, the actors of the play are the people who tend to get most of the praise and recognition. This is the reason why their names are usually among the most frequently used words in the Word List. It is also noticeable that, the more famous or the better job these actors do in playing the characters, the further up they are in the Word List. This was the case of Bette Midler from *Hello, Dolly!*, whose name was mentioned frequently because of her fame, her portrayal of the character, and the fact she was replaced by another actress whose performance was compared with hers.

Another word pattern that has been commonly used by review writers is that of putting two names together, whether they are names of actors or of characters. This is due to the fact that the relationship between those characters is reviewed in relation to how the actors portray. Some examples of this are the frequent collocations “Considine and Donnelly” (actors from *The Ferryman*) or “Harry and Draco” (characters from *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*).

It has also been found that there are no major differences when reviewing musical and non-musical plays. In both occasions, authors attempt to approach the audience by using colloquial and familiar language that is adapted to the theme of the play. The only difference in the language used is that in non-musical plays, as is expected, the word “musical” is not so relevant. The prominent words when evaluating the show are “play” and “show,” instead, as was previously mentioned. There are no major differences when evaluating either, nevertheless.

It should also be said that the Clusters/N-Grams tool on AntConc did not provide any useful information, for most of the results that came up when using it were names of plays, songs or people who had worked in the plays. This could be due to the fact that a very small corpus was used for this dissertation is very small. In order for this tool to provide more useful results a bigger corpus should be used in order to carry out further investigation.

All these patterns have been detected when deeply analysing the language used in reviews that have been mostly written in the year 2018. The fact that these patterns exist confirms that there is, indeed, a unique style to review writing today and that style is defined by the themes in the plays which are being staged responding to audience's demands. Through this style, journalists communicate with the audience and manage to engage them and make them participate as well in the discourse of approval or disapproval of plays.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In the context of Broadway plays, critics become a fundamental part, for their function is to be a bridge between the show and the audience. These journalists are specialised in Broadway musicals and qualified enough to value them from a professional perspective, but they are also part of the audience that they write for. The audience reads their reviews of musical plays and decide whether they agree or disagree with them if they have seen the play, or if it is worth it to go see it on Broadway if they have not.

In order to write these reviews, a very specific kind of language is needed. The aim of this project was to analyse said language by looking at different reviews of plays that were performed on Broadway in the year 2018. In order to do so, a special focus was placed on evaluative language, which is used by critics in order to express their opinions. This kind of language has certain characteristics that were explored in this dissertation.

After the discussion, the hypothesis that there were certain characteristics that defined the language that is used when writing reviews is confirmed. This dissertation has not only proved that there is, indeed, a specific kind of language that is used by journalists in order to express their opinions about Broadway plays, but also that this language has certain characteristics that can be pointed out and defined, and that there is a reason for their use.

After this research, it was found that not only evaluative words are used for evaluative purposes. Some evaluative meanings can be found when looking at phrases that include words such as “musical,” “show,” “audience” or “lyrics.” In the same way, there are words and expressions that are more likely to be used when reviewing some plays than others, as well as wordplay and metaphors that critics use in order to attract their target audience. Last, there are no relevant clusters due to the small size of this corpus. Perhaps further research with a bigger corpus would allow investigators to find new patterns and more explicitly evaluative collocations.

The standardised use of this evaluative language in reviews of plays also proves the importance and cultural relevance of Broadway. Its place in the entertainment industry in the Western world is so ingrained that it eventually has led to the construction of a new kind of language that connects the spectator’s feelings, opinions and expectations to the essence of the show through the figure of the critic.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

PLAY	WEBSITE	DATE THE REVIEW WAS PUBLISHED	LINK	AUTHOR
<i>Beautiful: the Carole King Musical</i>	<i>Broadway World</i>	11/04/2018	https://www.broadwayworld.com/national-tours/article/BWW-Review-BEAUTIFUL-THE-CAROLE-KING-MUSICAL-at-Times-Union-Theater-20180411	Jordan Higginbotham
	<i>Deadline</i>	16/09/2018	https://deadline.com/2018/09/beautiful-review-carole-king-musical-los-angeles-pantages-sarah-bockel-1202465309/	Dino-Ray Ramos
	<i>Entertainment Weekly</i>	16/01/2014	https://ew.com/article/2014/01/16/beautiful-stage/	Tom Geier
	<i>Express & Star</i>	13/06/2018	https://www.expressandstar.com/entertainment/theatre-and-comedy/2018/06/13/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-wolverhampton-grand-theatre---review-and-pictures/	Kristen Rawlins
	<i>Hollywood Reporter</i>	12/01/2014	https://www.hollywoodreporter.com	David Rooney

			ter.com/review/beautiful-carole-king-musical-theater-670124	
	<i>Huffington Post</i>	12/01/2014	https://www.huffingtonpost.com/danny-groner/ibeautiful-lives-up-to-ib-4584984.html?guccounter=1	Danny Groner
	<i>IBJ</i>	31/01/2018	https://www.ibj.com/blogs/1-lou-harry-s-a-e/post/67301-review-beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-is-one-fine-night-of-theater	Lou Harry
	<i>NBC New York</i>	12/01/2014	https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/local/beautiful-carole-king-review-239760321.html	Robert Kahn
	<i>New York Times</i>	12/01/2014	https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/13/theater/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-at-sondheim-theater.html	Ben Brantley
	<i>NY Mag</i>	21/01/2014	http://nymag.com/listings/theater/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical/	Jesse Green
	<i>On Stage & Screen</i>	14/09/2018	https://onstageandscreen.co	Erin Conley

			m/2018/09/14/theater-review-beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-at-the-pantages-theatre/	
	<i>Simon Parris: Man in Chair</i>	23/02/2018	https://simonparrismaninchair.com/2018/02/23/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-review-melbourne/	Simon Parris
	<i>Stage and Cinema</i>	07/12/2017	https://www.stageandcinema.com/2017/12/07/beautiful/	Lawrence Bommer
	<i>The Age</i>	22/02/2018	https://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/beautiful-the-carole-king-musical-review-timeless-songs-carry-the-show-20180222-h0wi0j.html	Cameron Woodhead
	<i>The Guardian</i>	25/09/2017	https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/sep/25/beautiful-review-carole-king-musical-a-hit-thanks-to-stars-earth-moving-performance	Cassie Tongue
<i>Come From Away</i>	<i>CBC News</i>	13/01/2018	https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/review-rmtc-come-from-away-1.4482896	Joff Schmidt

	<i>Deadline</i>	12/03/2017	https://deadline.com/2017/03/broadway-review-come-from-away-1202041704/	Jeremy Gerard
	<i>Entertainment Weekly</i>	12/03/2017	https://ew.com/theater/2017/03/12/come-from-away-ew-stage-review/	Allison Adato
	<i>Hollywood Reporter</i>	12/03/2017	https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/come-away-theater-review-985425	Frank Scheck
	<i>Huffington Post</i>	12/03/2017	https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/58c56097e4b0a797c1d39dfc?gucounter=1	Steven Suskin
	<i>NBC New York</i>	12/03/2017	https://www.nbcnewyork.com/entertainment/the-scene/Review-Come-From-Away-Broadway-415948253.html	Robert Kahn
	<i>New York Theatre Guide</i>	14/03/2017	https://www.nyorktheatre.com/reviews/come-from-away	Tulis McCall
	<i>New York Times</i>	18/03/2017	https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/12/theater/come-from-away-review.html	Ben Brantley
	<i>Now Toronto</i>	11/09/2018	https://nowtoronto.com/movies/tv-and-streaming/tv-	Susan G. Cole

			review-you-are-here-come-from-away/	
	<i>The Daily Beast</i>	12/03/2017	https://www.thedailybeast.com/review-how-come-from-away-makes-a-broadway-musical-out-of-911	Tim Teeman
	<i>The Globe and Mail</i>	18/02/2018	https://www.theglobeandmail.com/arts/theatre-and-performance/theatre-reviews/review-come-from-away-is-a-story-of-coming-together-on-an-island-in-between/article38018377/	J. Kelly Nestruck
	<i>The Star</i>	20/02/2018	https://www.thestar.com/entertainment/stage/2018/02/20/come-from-away-the-little-show-that-shrunk.html	Karen Fricker
	<i>The Wrap</i>	12/03/2018	https://www.thewrap.com/come-from-away-broadway-review/	Robert Hofler
	<i>Time Out</i>	12/03/2018	https://www.timeout.com/newyork/blog/broadway-review-come-from-away-takes-off-on	Adam Feldman

			broadway-031217	
	<i>Variety</i>	12/03/2017	https://variety.com/2017/legit/reviews/com-e-from-away-review-broadway-1202007241/0	Marilyn Stasio
<i>Hamilton</i>	<i>AZ Central</i>	01/02/2018	https://eu.azcentral.com/story/entertainment/arts/2018/02/01/hamilton-phoenix-asu-gammage-review-touring-cast/1085772001/	Kerry Lengel
	<i>AJC</i>	24/05/2018	https://www.ajc.com/entertainment/arts--theater/theater-review-hamilton-magnificent-tale-triumph-and-tragedy/zzCg6umgd8w8x3hIsIKlsL/	Wendell Brock
	<i>ARTSATL</i>	25/05/2018	https://artsatl.com/review-way-hamilton-fox-theatre-lives-reputation/	Pierre Ruhe
	<i>Atlanta in Town</i>	25/05/2018	https://atlantaintownpaper.com/2018/05/theatre-review-hamilton-at-the-fox/	Manning Harris
	<i>Boston Globe</i>	06/08/2015	https://www.bostonglobe.com/arts/theater-art/2015/08/06/political-rivalries-and-	Don Aucoin

			rap-battles-broadway-dynamic-hamilton/tnohgXXg2ud9ffjQGrCX5I/story.html	
	<i>DC Metro Theater Arts</i>	15/06/2018	https://dcmetrotheaterarts.com/2018/06/15/review-hamilton-at-the-kennedy-center-lives-up-to-the-hype/	Hilary Sutton
	<i>DC Theatre Scene</i>	15/06/2018	https://dctheatrescene.com/2018/06/15/review-why-hamilton-is-the-greatest-musical-yet-written/	Tim Treanor
	<i>Entertainment Weekly</i>	06/08/2015	https://ew.com/article/2015/08/06/hamilton-ew-stage-review/	Leah Greenblatt
	<i>New York Post</i>	06/08/2015	https://nypost.com/2015/08/06/hamilton-isnt-quite-revolutionary/	Elisabeth Vincentelli
	<i>The Spokesman-Review</i>	17/02/2018	http://www.spokesman.com/stories/2018/feb/17/theater-review-hamilton-proves-why-its-a-theatrical/	Carolyn Lamberson
	<i>The Know</i>	01/03/2018	https://theknow.denverpost.com/2018/03/01/hamilton-denver-review/178034/	Joanne Ostrow

	<i>The Wrap</i>	06/08/2015	https://www.thewrap.com/hamilton-broadway-review-the-founding-fathers-never-looked-or-sounded-so-cool/	Robert Hofler
	<i>USA Today</i>	06/08/2015	https://eu.usatoday.com/story/life/theater/2015/08/06/hamilton-wins-hearts-and-minds/31104087/	Elysa Gardner
	<i>Variety</i>	06/08/2015	https://variety.com/2015/legit/reviews/hamilton-review-broadway-1201557679/	Marilyn Stasio
	<i>Wall Street Journal</i>	06/08/2015	https://www.wsj.com/articles/hamilton-review-the-revolution-moves-uptown-1438907400	Terry Teachout
<i>Harry Potter and the Cursed Child</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	22/04/2018	https://deadline.com/2018/04/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-broadway-review-j-k-rowling-jack-thorne-1202367117/	Greg Evans
	<i>Entertainment Weekly</i>	22/04/2018	https://ew.com/theater/2018/04/22/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-broadway-review/	Marc Snetiker

	<i>Hollywood Reporter</i>	22/04/2018	https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/harry-potter-cursed-child-theater-review-1104812	David Rooney
	<i>Mashable</i>	23/04/2018	https://mashable.com/2018/04/22/harry-potter-cursed-child-broadway-review/?euope=true#RB6lbHwIaiq4	Erin Strecker
	<i>New York Stage Review</i>	22/04/2018	http://nystagereview.com/2018/04/22/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-broadways-enchanted-kingdom/	Steven Suskin
	<i>New York Theatre Guide</i>	30/04/2018	https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/review-of-harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway	Tulis McCall
	<i>New York Times</i>	22/04/2018	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/22/theater/review-harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-raises-the-bar-for-broadway-magic.html	Ben Brantley
	<i>NJ.com</i>	22/04/2018	https://www.nj.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2018/04/harry_potter_curs	Cristopher Kelly

			ed child broadway review.html	
	<i>Rolling Stone</i>	23/04/2018	https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/culture-news/broadway-production-of-harry-	Peter Travers
	<i>Slate</i>	22/04/2018	https://slate.com/culture/2018/04/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-reviewed.html	Dan Kois
	<i>Telegraph</i>	23/04/2018	https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/could-become-longest-running-broadway-play-harry-potter-cursed/	Diane Snyder
	<i>The Daily Beast</i>	22/04/2018	https://www.thedailybeast.com/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-on-broadway-is-a-stunning-magical-tour-de-force	Katie Baker and Tim Teeman
	<i>The Guardian</i>	23/04/2018	https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/apr/22/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-review-thrilling-broadway-transfer-is-magic	Alexis Soloski

	<i>Vanity Fair</i>	22/04/2018	https://www.vanityfair.com/style/2018/04/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-broadway-review	Richard Lawson
	<i>Variety</i>	22/04/2018	https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/harry-potter-and-the-cursed-child-review-broadway-1202757827/	Marilyn Stasio
<i>Hello, Dolly!</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	20/04/2017	https://deadline.com/2017/04/broadway-review-bette-midler-hello-dolly-1202073144/	Jeremy Gerard
	<i>Entertainment Weekly</i>	22/02/2018	https://ew.com/theater/2018/02/22/hello-dolly-bernadette-peters-broadway/	Kelly Connolly
	<i>Hollywood Reporter</i>	22/02/2018	https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/hello-dolly-1087158	Frank Scheck
	<i>NBC New York</i>	20/04/2017	https://www.nbcnewyork.com/entertainment/entertainment-news/Review-Bette-Midler-Hello-Dolly-Broadway-Musical-Play-Theater-419543603.html	Robert Kahn
	<i>New York Post</i>	20/04/2017	https://nypost.com/2017/04/	Johnny Oleksinski

			20/hello-dolly-proves-bette-midlers-genius/	
	<i>New York Theatre Guide</i>	27/04/2017	https://www.newyorktheatreguide.com/reviews/hello-dolly	Tom Milward
	<i>New York Times</i>	22/02/2018	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/22/theater/hello-dolly-review-bernadette-peters.html	Jesse Green
	<i>NJ.com</i>	21/04/2017	https://www.nj.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2017/04/hello_dolly_starring_bette_midler_review_an_instan.html	Cristopher Kelly
	<i>NY1</i>	21/04/2017	http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/theater-reviews/2017/04/21/bette-midler-hello-dolly-review-broadway	Roma Torre
	<i>The Daily Beast</i>	22/02/2018	https://www.thedailybeast.com/bette-midler-is-a-better-dolly-than-bernadette-peters-review-of-hello-dolly	Tim Teeman
	<i>The Guardian</i>	21/04/2017	https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2017/apr/21/hello-dolly-review-bette-midler-broadway-	Alexis Soloski

			david-hyde-pierce	
	<i>The Wrap</i>	22/02/2018	https://www.thewrap.com/hello-dolly-broadway-review-bettes-off-bernadette-peters-takes-center-stage/	Thom Geier
	<i>Time Out</i>	20/04/2017	https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/hello-dolly-2	Adam Feldman
	<i>Variety</i>	22/02/2018	https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/hello-dolly-review-bernadette-peters-1202707835/	Marilyn Stasio
	<i>Vulture</i>	20/04/2017	https://www.vulture.com/2017/04/theater-review-and-the-word-on-bette-midler-as-dolly-is.html	Jesse Green
<i>Mean Girls</i>	<i>Entertainment Weekly</i>	08/04/2018	https://ew.com/theater/2018/04/08/mean-girls-broadway-review/	Kristen Baldwin
	<i>Hollywood Reporter</i>	08/04/2018	https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/mean-girls-theater-review-1100814	David Rooney
	<i>New York Post</i>	08/04/2018	https://nypost.com/2018/04/08/how-tina-fey-messed-up-mean-girls-musical/	Sara Stewart

	<i>New York Stage Review</i>	08/04/2018	http://nystagerreview.com/2018/04/08/mean-girls-tina-feys-little-foxes-slay-broadway/	Steven Suskin
	<i>New York Times</i>	08/04/2018	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/08/theater/mean-girls-review-broadway-musical.html	Ben Brantley
	<i>NJ.com</i>	09/04/2018	https://www.nj.com/entertainment/index.ssf/2018/04/mean-girls-on-broadway-review-this-show-is-so-not.html	Christopher Kelly
	<i>NY1</i>	08/04/2018	http://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2018/04/09/mean-girls-broadway-tina-fey-roma-torre-theater-review	Roma Torre
	<i>The Daily Beast</i>	08/04/2018	https://www.thedailybeast.com/its-fetch-but-it-could-be-fetcher-review-of-tina-feys-mean-girls-on-broadway?ref=scroll	Tim Teeman
	<i>The Guardian</i>	09/04/2018	https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/apr/08/mean-girls-review-tina-feys-comedy-hits-	Alexis Soloski

			broadway-with-a-soft-landing	
	<i>The Lilith Blog</i>	12/04/2018	https://www.lilith.org/blog/2018/04/how-feminist-is-the-mean-girls-musical-really/	Aileen Jacobson
	<i>The Wrap</i>	08/04/2018	https://www.thewrap.com/mean-girls-broadway-review-tina-fey-nasty-teens-sing-dance-recycle/	Robert Hofler
	<i>Time Out</i>	08/04/2018	https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/mean-girls-review	Adam Feldman
	<i>Towleroad</i>	09/04/2018	http://www.towleroad.com/2018/04/mean-girls-musical-review/	Naveen Kumar
	<i>Variety</i>	08/04/2018	https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/mean-girls-review-musical-broadway-1202744938/	Marilyn Stasio
	<i>Vulture</i>	08/04/2018	https://www.vulture.com/2018/04/on-wednesdays-we-do-two-shows-mean-girls-awarely-onstage.html	Sara Holdren
<i>My Fair Lady</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	19/04/2018	https://deadline.com/2018/04/my-fair-lady-broadway-review-lauren-	Greg Evans

			ambrose-harry-hadden-paton-diana-rigg-1202365743/	
	<i>Entertainment Weekly</i>	19/04/2018	https://ew.com/theater/2018/04/19/my-fair-lady-broadway-review/	Jess Gagle
	<i>Hollywood Reporter</i>	19/04/2018	https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/my-fair-lady-theater-review-1103839	David Rooney
	<i>New York City Theatre</i>	20/07/2018	https://www.nyorkcitytheatre.com/reviews/25358	Nicola Quinn
	<i>New York Stage Review</i>	19/04/2018	http://nystagereview.com/2018/04/19/my-fair-lady-lerner-loewe-bartlett-sher/	Steven Suskin
	<i>New York Theatre Guide</i>	27/04/2018	https://www.nyorktheatre.com/reviews/review-of-my-fair-lady-starring-lauren-ambrose-on-broadway	Tulis McCall
	<i>New York Times</i>	19/04/2018	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/19/theater/my-fair-lady-review-lincoln-center-lauren-ambrose.html	Jesse Green
	<i>Telegraph</i>	20/04/2018	https://www.telegraph.co.uk/theatre/what-to-see/fair-lady-lincoln-	Diane Snyder

			center-theater-broadway-review-eliza-metoo/	
	<i>The Guardian</i>	19/04/2018	https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/apr/19/my-fair-lady-review-dazzling-broadway-revival-is-a-sweet-treat	Alexis Soloski
	<i>The Stage</i>	20/04/2018	https://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/2018/fair-lady-review-vivian-beaumont-theatre-new-york-stunning-revival-enduring-masterpiece/	Mark Shenton
	<i>The Wrap</i>	19/04/2018	https://www.thewrap.com/my-fair-lady-broadway-review-lauren-ambrose-diana-rigg-harry-hadden-paton/	Robert Hofler
	<i>Thrillist</i>	06/07/2018	https://www.thrillist.com/entertainment/nation/best-broadway-shows-musicals-plays-nyc	Esther Zuckerman
	<i>Time Out</i>	19/04/2018	https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/my-fair-lady-review	Adam Feldman
	<i>Variety</i>	19/04/2018	https://variety.com/2018/legi	Marilyn Stasio

			t/reviews/my-fair-lady-review-broadway-lauren-ambrose-1202757772/	
	<i>Vulture</i>	19/04/2018	http://www.vulture.com/2018/04/theater-review-an-unaccustomed-new-approach-to-my-fair-lady.html	Sara Holdren
<i>Pretty Woman</i>	<i>Deadline</i>	16/08/2018	https://deadline.com/2018/08/pretty-woman-broadway-review-musical-samantha-barks-julia-roberts-all-dressed-up-no-place-to-go-1202445929/	Greg Evans
	<i>Entertainment Weekly</i>	16/08/2018	https://ew.com/theater/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-musical-review/?utm_campaign=entertainmentweekly&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_medium=social	Chris Nashawaty
	<i>Hollywood Reporter</i>	16/08/2018	https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/pretty-woman-musical-theater-	David Rooney

			review-1135530	
	<i>New York Post</i>	16/08/2018	https://nypost.com/2018/08/16/pretty-women-musical-just-feels-wrong-in-the-metoo-era/amp/?twitter_impresion=true	Joe Dciemianowicz
	<i>New York Stage Review</i>	16/08/2018	http://nystagerreview.com/2018/08/16/pretty-woman-hit-from-com-musicalized-only-pretty-good/	David Finkle
	<i>New York Times</i>	16/08/2018	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/16/theater/review-pretty-woman-the-musical-broadway.html	Ben Brantley
	<i>New Yorker</i>	16/08/2018	https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/is-pretty-woman-on-broadway-a-big-mistake	Michael Schulman
	<i>The Daily Beast</i>	16/08/2018	https://www.thedailybeast.com/big-mistake-huge-pretty-woman-the-musical-has-little-of-the-movies-magic	Tim Teeman
	<i>The Guardian</i>	16/08/2018	https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2018/aug/16/pretty-	Alexis Soloski

			woman-broadway-musical-review?CMP=tw_t_a-stage_b-gdnstage	
	<i>The Village Voice</i>	16/08/2018	https://www.villagevoice.com/2018/08/16/the-lyrical-artistry-of-broadways-pretty-woman-musical-wouldnt-pass-muster-in-a-febreze-commercial/	David Cote
	<i>The Wrap</i>	16/08/2018	https://www.thewrap.com/pretty-woman-broadway-review-hooker-musical-samantha-barks-andy-karl/	Robert Hofler
	<i>Time Out</i>	16/08/2018	https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/pretty-woman-review	Adam Feldman
	<i>Towleroad</i>	16/08/2018	http://www.towleroad.com/2018/08/pretty-woman-the-musical/	Naveen Kumar
	<i>Variety</i>	16/08/2018	https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/pretty-woman-musical-review-broadway-1202905982/	Bob Verini

	<i>Vulture</i>	16/08/2018	https://www.vulture.com/2018/08/theater-pretty-woman-and-the-trouble-with-onstage-nostalgia.html	Sara Holdren
<i>The Band's Visit</i>	<i>Business Insider</i>	06/07/2018	https://www.businessinsider.com/the-bands-visit-broadway-review-tickets-2018-7?IR=T	Jen Gushue
	<i>Catholic Transcript</i>	02/02/2018	https://www.catholictranscript.org/arts-media/theater-reviews/5459-theater-review-the-band-s-visit.html	Bernard Carragher
	<i>Deadline</i>	09/11/2017	https://deadline.com/2017/11/broadway-review-the-bands-visit-off-broadway-office-hour-1202205240/	Jeremy Gerard
	<i>Huffington Post</i>	20/11/2017	https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/review-the-bands-visit_us_5a134675e4b05ec0ae8444a2?gucounter=1	Christian Lewis
	<i>New York Stage Review</i>	05/08/2018	http://nystagereview.com/2018/08/05/the-bands-visit-sasson-gabay-joins-the-still-excellent-tony-winner/	David Finkle

	<i>New York Times</i>	09/11/2017	https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/09/theater/the-bands-visit-review-broadway-tony-shalhoub.html	Ben Brantley
	<i>News Whistle</i>	26/03/2018	http://newswhistle.com/the-bands-visit-on-broadway-a-review/	Laura LaVelle
	<i>Observer</i>	13/11/2017	https://observer.com/2017/11/theater-review-broadways-the-bands-visit-is-perfection/	Rex Reed
	<i>Simon Parris: Man in Chair</i>	08/04/2018	https://simonparrismaninchair.com/2018/04/08/the-bands-visit-a-new-musical-review/	Simon Parris
	<i>The Daily Beast</i>	09/11/2017	https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-bands-visit-is-the-best-new-musical-on-broadway	Tim Teeman
	<i>The Lilith Blog</i>	13/11/2017	http://www.lilith.org/blog/2017/11/your-independent-jewish-and-frankly-feminist-review-of-the-bands-visit/	Aileen Jacobson
	<i>Theater Mania</i>	06/08/2018	https://www.theatermania.com/broadway/reviews/the-bands-visit-	Zachary Stewart

			gets-new-conductor-sasson-gabay_86067.html	
	<i>Towleroad</i>	09/11/2017	http://www.towleroad.com/2017/11/bands-visit/	Naveen Kumar
	<i>Vulture</i>	09/11/2017	http://www.vulture.com/2017/11/theater-the-bands-visit-finds-strength-in-smallness.html	Sara Holdren
	<i>Washington Post</i>	09/08/2018	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/arts-and-entertainment/wp/2018/08/09/dont-be-fooled-by-a-gentle-pace-the-bands-visit-is-now-the-highest-performance-vehicle-its-ever-been/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.8c6afed70d29	Peter Marks
<i>The Ferryman</i>	<i>Broadway Journal</i>	22/10/2018	http://broadwayjournal.com/the-ferryman-is-great-feckin-theater-review/	Philip Boroff
	<i>DC Metro Theater Arts</i>	21/10/2018	https://dcmetrotheaterarts.com/2018/10/21/review-the-ferryman-at-the-bernard-b-jacobs-theatre/	Deb Miller

	<i>Deadline</i>	21/10/2018	https://deadline.com/2018/10/the-ferryman-broadway-review-jez-butterworth-sam-mendes-paddy-considine-1202486601/	Greg Evans
	<i>Entertainment Weekly</i>	22/10/2018	https://ew.com/theater/2018/10/22/the-ferryman-broadway-review/	Mark Snetiker
	<i>Hollywood Reporter</i>	October 2018 (?)	https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/review/ferryman-theater-1154077	David Rooney
	<i>New York Stage Review</i>	21/10/2018	http://nystagerreview.com/2018/10/21/the-ferryman-an-irish-masterwork-from-jez-butterworth/	Steven Suskin
	<i>New York Theatre Guide</i>	26/10/2018	https://www.nyorktheatre.com/reviews/review-of-jez-butterworths-the-ferryman-on-broadway	Tulis McCall
	<i>New York Times</i>	21/10/2018	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/21/theater/the-ferryman-review-broadway-jez-butterworth.html	Ben Brantley
	<i>Observer</i>	22/10/2018	https://observer.com/2018/10/	David Cote

			/the-ferryman-review-jez-butterworth-irish-cliches/	
	<i>The Daily Beast</i>	21/10/2018	https://www.thedailybeast.com/jez-butterworths-the-ferryman-sets-a-gold-standard-for-broadway-plays	Tim Teeman
	<i>Theater News Online</i>	October 2018 (?)	http://www.theaternewsonline.com/NYTheaterReviews/HARVESTTIME.cfm	Jeremy Gerard
	<i>Time Out</i>	22/10/2018	https://www.timeout.com/newyork/theater/ferryman-broadway-review	Adam Feldman
	<i>Variety</i>	21/10/2018	https://variety.com/2018/legit/reviews/the-ferryman-review-broadway-1202984735/	Marilyn Stasio
	<i>Vox.com</i>	03/11/2018	https://www.vox.com/2018/11/3/18002772/ferryman-review-broadway-sam-mendes	Aja Romano
	<i>Vulture</i>	20/04/2017	https://www.vulture.com/2017/04/theater-review-and-the-word-on-bette-midler-as-dolly-is.html	Jesse Green

APPENDIX 2

AntConc 3.5.7 (Windows) 2018

FileGlobal SettingsTool PreferencesHelp

Corpus Files

ck_bw.txt
ck_d.txt
ck_es.txt
ck_ew.txt
ck_g.txt
ck_hp.txt
ck_hr.txt
ck_ibj.txt
ck_nbc.txt
ck_nymag.txt
ck_nyt.txt
ck_oss.txt
ck_sac.txt
ck_sp.txt
ck_ta.txt
cfa_cbc.txt
cfa_d.txt
cfa_db.txt
cfa_ew.txt
cfa_gm.txt
cfa_hp.txt
cfa_hr.txt
cfa_nbc.txt
cfa_nowt.txt
cfa_nyt.txt

Total No.
149
Files Processed

ConcordanceConcordance PlotFile ViewClusters/N-GramsCollocatesWord ListKeyword List

Word Types: 14496Word Tokens: 81878Search Hits: 0

Rank	Freq	Word	Lemma Word Form(s)
1	2791	x	
2	482	show	
3	477	musical	
4	425	one	
5	375	like	
6	322	broadway	
7	258	new	
8	253	hamilton	
9	245	even	
10	238	play	
11	238	story	
12	235	also	
13	212	time	

Search Term☐ Words☐ Case☐ Regex

Hit Location

Search Only0

Lemma List☐ Loaded

Word List☐ Loaded

StartStopSort

Sort by☐ Invert Order
Sort by Freq

Clone Results

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