**BROOMSTICKS AND BARRICADES: PERFORMANCE, EMPOWERMENT, AND
FEELING IN *WICKED* AND *LES MISÉRABLES***

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between empowerment, feeling, and performance by analyzing the act 1 finales from two Broadway musicals: “Defying Gravity” from the 2003 production of *Wicked* and “One Day More” from the 1987 production of *Les Misérables*. A genre of performance in which feelings, of empowerment and otherwise, are generated and circulated in amplified ways, the Broadway musical provides a productive site to investigate the relationship between empowerment and feeling; moreover, both “Defying Gravity” and “One Day More” are signature numbers frequently associated with empowerment. To complete my analyses, I use an interdisciplinary approach which combines theatre and performance studies, affect theory, and social science-based arguments about empowerment in order to demonstrate how affect theory gives us valuable language to analyze the constellation of artistic elements which contribute to the numbers’ affective power. Building from this work, I suggest that both numbers perform empowerment by emphasizing power and change, two characteristics which have been highlighted as essential in empowerment scholarship. Ultimately, I argue that sensations of empowerment become the primary point of connection between stage and auditorium through performance.

Preface

This thesis is an original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Kelsey Leanne Blair.

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Introduction

The idea of empowerment, how it might be measured, mobilized, enacted, perceived and felt, has generated a rich set of scholarly problems and understandings in a broad range of fields. In “Psychological Empowerment and Subjective Well-Being” Ed Diener and Robert Biswas-Diener argue that “the most important aspect of empowerment is not objective power but feelings of power, and that just because people have objective power does not mean that they will feel empowered or will act” (21). As Diener and Biswas-Diener assert, feelings of empowerment need not be tied to material or objective gains in power¹. Perhaps most importantly for my research here, social scientists have demonstrated that while empowerment is patently *not* an emotion, it is often described as such or otherwise conflated with feeling, and while there has been a range of social sciences’ scholarship which queries the striking tensions between feeling empowered and being empowered, fewer humanities scholars have investigated the philosophical and material tensions at play in empowerment feelings². As Patricia McFadden writes, “While one must of necessity make some conceptual distinctions between gender, empowerment and human rights - after all they are not exactly the same things - I think that it is more important to ask what informs these categories, philosophically and ideologically” (164).

As a theatre and performance studies scholar interested in the conundrum of feelings of empowerment, I have been struck by how often theatre practices have claimed a relationship with empowerment. Further, as the 2004 collection of essays entitled *Theatre and Empowerment* suggests, I am not the first to find these connections. Boon and Plastow’s collection analyses, for example, highlight the work of the Victory Songqoba Theatre Company in South Africa which uses theatre as a teaching tool, Ireland’s The Wedding Community Play Project which brought communities marked by religious and political divisions together, and the Adugna Community

Dance Theatre in Ethiopia which sought to shift economic power dynamics through dance training.³ Boon and Plastow cite the mercurial qualities of empowerment and identify its slippery definition as an essential component of their work. They write, “Establishing just what *may* be meant by ‘empowerment’ is a – perhaps the – key question in this book. Who is being empowered and by whom, and to what end? How can practitioners in the areas prove what they do *is* empowering?” (5). As investigating the full complement of these myriad connections is a major engine of my broader research program, I thought my thesis research would do well to begin by analysing first a kind of performance in which feelings, of empowerment and otherwise, are generated and circulated in bold, amplified ways: the Broadway megamusical. As musical theatre scholar Jessica Sternfeld argues, megamusicals offer a performance where “emotions run high [and] the tears tend to flow both onstage and in the audience” (2).

Thus, within the longer range goal of trying to understand the relationship between feeling, empowerment, and performance, in this thesis I analyse the bold colours and gestures of Broadway musical theatre. I approach this kind of theatre through the lens of performance studies, affect theory and social science-based arguments about empowerment with the goal of understanding how empowerment is performed and felt in this context. I turned to two megamusicals that have signature numbers associated with empowerment. Indeed, critical and popular reception of both examples is redolent with references to the respective numbers’ inspirational feelings of empowerment. The first example, in its very title, suggests an unusual empowerment: “Defying Gravity” from the act 1 finale of the 2003 musical *Wicked*. Frequently described as “show-stopping” (Laird) and “powerful” (Wolf), “Defying Gravity” has been singled out by critics and fans alike as the show’s empowerment anthem. Moreover, it was the number chosen to represent the show at the 2004 Tony Awards. The second song I analyse is the

equally iconic “One Day More” from the 1987 musical *Les Misérables*. This act 1 finale has become deeply embedded in the North American imaginary through platinum cast album sales in the United States, variety and award show performances at events such as the 1987 Tony Awards, and the number’s appropriation by Democratic supporters in the 1994 and 2008 American elections⁴⁵. In other words, both are signature songs that have gained popular appeal as empowerment anthems beyond the confines of the experience of the musical in its entirety.

Through a close analysis of both numbers, I advance two arguments. First, I demonstrate how affect theory gives us valuable language to analyze the constellation of artistic elements that contribute to the numbers’ affective power. Second, with particular attention to the final note and gesture in “One Day More” and “Defying Gravity,” I argue that both numbers perform empowerment by emphasizing power and change, two characteristics that I will show have been highlighted as essential in empowerment scholarship. Of course, the performance of empowerment in both numbers does not necessarily translate into feelings of empowerment experienced by audience members. As Erin Hurley explains in *National Performance: Representing Quebec from Expo 67 to Celine Dion*, “One does not experience another’s impulse, however suggestively its effects are displayed” (121). Instead, she argues that “sensation forms a primary point of connection between the stage and auditorium without reducing them to identity” (*National Performance* 121). Similarly, I suggest that sensations of empowerment, irreducible to any kind of identity-based objective empowerment, become the primary point of connection between stage and auditorium through performance. As my analysis is most interested in understanding the feelings of empowerment in both act I finales, I do not offer my case studies chronologically. Instead, I begin with *Wicked*, which offers a performance of empowerment by one character in a single song and then turn to *Les Misérables* to demonstrate how an ensemble

performs empowerment. Analysing the combination of music, gesture, costume, property, lighting and other scenographic choices in each of these cases, I hope to demonstrate how these combinations function to produce sensations of empowerment, even, strikingly, in the absence of empowerment outcomes in the dramaturgy.

Since this thesis draws from several interrelated areas of research – including empowerment studies, performance studies, musical theatre studies, and affect theory – the first chapter seeks to orient the reader to the key concepts in this project’s primary fields. I begin with an introduction to the area of empowerment studies in the social sciences and argue for the value of relational understanding of power in analyzing empowerment processes and outcomes. Following an introduction to the concept of psychological empowerment, I suggest that affect theory provides a complementary approach to the inquiry of empowerment feelings. Finally, I identify empowerment’s two defining characteristics in its colloquial definition: power and change. The chapter’s second section discusses the “affective turn” in the humanities and social sciences. Here, I argue that theatre studies’ long-standing investment in the examination of feeling makes theatre and performance particularly useful objects through which to study empowerment and feeling. Building from this argument, the third section of this chapter orients the reader to the field of musical theatre studies and argues that musical theatre’s status as a commercial product and its emphasis on the display of spectacle-scale artistic elements makes it a rich site within which to investigate performance, empowerment, and feeling. I conclude by identifying several important commonalities between “One Day More” and “Defying Gravity” that invite connected analysis and demonstrate their particular relevance for my research question.

In *Changed For Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical*, Stacy Wolf describes the final moment of *Wicked*'s act 1 finale "Defying Gravity" as follows: "As the song comes to its explosive end, the citizens of Oz, the ensemble and Glinda below her gaze up in amazement and awe. Elphaba holds the note loud and long in this expression of ecstatic determination. The stage goes black and the audience goes wild" (3). Chapter Two turns to the final moment of "Defying Gravity" described by Wolf in order to examine the performance of empowerment by one character in a single song. My analysis begins with a review of the show's production context and a survey of critical work surrounding *Wicked*. Then, through a close analysis of the number's final note and gesture – an E₃ Flat punctuated by a held raised fist – I demonstrate how affect theory provides useful language to consider the range of artistic elements that combine to produce the sensation of empowerment. Ultimately, I argue that through the performance of both power and change, "Defying Gravity" generates empowerment feelings which become the primary point of connection between stage and auditorium.

In *Unfinished Business: Broadway Musicals as Works in Progress*, Bruce Kirle argues, "*Les Misérables* revels in the misery of its characters, with little promise of any solution" (157). Yet, the show's act 1 finale, "One Day More," is often described as rousing and empowering (Sternfeld). As in my analysis of *Wicked*, Chapter Three closely analyzes the relationship between the performance of empowerment and empowerment outcomes; however, where in *Wicked* I analyze the performance of empowerment by one character within the context of a single song, here I link the performance of empowerment in "One Day More" to artistic elements in the four numbers which precede it and demonstrate how empowerment is here performed by an ensemble. To locate *Les Misérables* within the conventions of Broadway musicals of the 1980's, I draw from musical theatre scholar Jessica Sternfeld to expand on the concept of the

megamusical. This is followed by a first act synopsis which lays the foundation for an analysis of how physical force, financial power, and moral authority as recognized by the church constitute ruling-class power in the 19th century France of *Les Misérables*. I then turn to the performance of empowerment in “Do You Hear the People Sing?” which introduces several artistic elements which are re-performed in the final eight measures of “One Day More.” Through a close analysis of the performance of power and change, I will demonstrate how feeling-technologies amplify feelings of empowerment through performance, despite the lack of empowerment outcomes.

Chapter 1: Affections and Orientations

1.1 Power and Empowerment

One of the difficulties facing those who investigate empowerment is finding a stable definition. As Brian Christens argues, “The term *empowerment* has been used intermittently over the past few decades for various political and ideological purposes. In many cases, it has been vaguely or superficially applied” (“Psychological Empowerment” 540). Thus, technical usage might vary from that of other discourses. In view of these complexities, I will begin by providing a broad overview of empowerment research in the humanities and social sciences to suggest that a relational understanding of power provides a valuable framework for the study of empowerment process and outcomes. In this overview, I will outline the concept of psychological empowerment, which is of particular value here as it emphasizes the measurement of empowerment feelings. More broadly, however, I also hope to show how affect theory provides a complementary approach to existing work in the field of empowerment studies by posing a new set of research questions. Expanding on this discussion, I will provide a close analysis of empowerment’s root word, prefix and definition to highlight the term’s two defining qualitative characteristics: power and change.

We cannot speak of being empowered without speaking of power.⁶ Michel Foucault has played a significant role in shaping conceptualizations of power in humanities and social sciences in the late 20th and early 21st century. For Foucault, power is relational, meaning that it cannot be held or possessed. He argues that “power is not a substance. Neither is it a mysterious property whose origin must be delved into. Power is only a certain type of relation between individuals” (“Politics and Reason” 83). Moreover, since power is always present and “is exercised rather than possessed” (“Discipline” 208), an individual is constantly negotiating with

power forces which both “subjugate and make subject to” (“The Subject” 212). As such, power is a potential which exists between two or more parties and is exercised when these parties interact. In “Women, leadership, and power revisiting the Wicked Witch of the West,” Sharon Kruse and Sandra Spickard Prettyman lucidly delineate this concept:

It is only in the action where power is exercised that the nature of its force can be realized, and in turn, can its measure be calculated. Power then rests in a precarious balance, where the potential of one’s power is assumed, based on one’s position and influence (or another’s proximity to position or influence) rather than known. (454)

While power is exercised by individuals in specific power relations, it is organized in networks and social structures which unequally distribute power – or the potential to exercise power – amongst different groups based on organizational, social, economic, and cultural factors.

There is a significant body of research which considers empowerment, particularly in the areas of community and international development, women and gender studies, theatre and education, and business management (Ibrahim and Alkire; Narayan-Parker). In these fields, the term “empowerment” is typically associated with concepts such as agency, self-efficacy, and self-determination; however, its meaning varies according to author and discipline (Ibrahim and Alkire; Samman and Santos; Narayan-Parker). In fact, leading empowerment researcher Julian Rappaport has argued that it is easier to define empowerment through absence than presence because “it takes on different forms in different people and contexts” (2). A general consensus among scholars is that empowerment is a multidimensional and relational process (Samman and Santos 5). It is multidimensional because it may occur within single or multiple dimensions including sociological, economic and psychological. It is relational since it must always be understood in terms of relationships with others, and it is a process because it tends to be linked with increased agency (Samman and Santos; Narayan-Parker). The relationship between

empowerment and feeling is frequently identified as psychological empowerment, which primarily refers to empowerment at the individual level of analysis (Zimmerman 581).

Researchers who study psychological empowerment examine how to measure empowerment feelings, how to distinguish empowerment feelings from other related concepts, and how the relationship between psychological empowerment impacts other dimensions of empowerment processes.

Though I am interested in feelings of empowerment, my aim here differs significantly from much of the current work concerned with psychological empowerment. Drawing from feminist theorist Sara Ahmed and theatre and performance studies scholar Diana Taylor, my investment in combining performance studies and affect theory is in what these methodologies allow us to do⁷. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed argues that emotions “do not positively inhabit anybody or anything, meaning that ‘the subject’ is simply one nodal point in the [affective] economy, rather than its origin and destination” (46). In other words, affects are relational, a concept I will explore further in the following section of this chapter. Building from this framework, Ahmed is more invested in querying what feelings do rather than defining what feelings are. For example, in her discussion of pain, she argues that “rather than considering how the feeling of pain is determined (by, for example, previous experiences), we can consider instead what the feeling of pain does” (26). Similarly, my project uses affect theory and performance studies to pursue a new line of inquiry: What do empowerment feelings do in performance? What does performance do in empowerment? What is the function of a performance of empowerment? These questions build significantly from psychological studies of empowerment’s processes but also diverge from these to begin considering the place and possibilities of performance within them.

In order to pursue these research questions, it is useful also to consider more common usage of the term empowerment outside social science and other academic discourses. One way to analyze common usage of the term more closely is to turn to its etymology. The *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* notes that “empowerment” was first used in 1849 and is defined as “the action of empowering; the state of being empowered” (“empowerment”). The verb “empower” was first used by Hamon L’Estrange in *The Reign of King Charles* and was synonymous with the concept of authorization (“empower”); the link between “empowering” and “authorizing” is still common in legal and constitutional usages of the term. However, in the 1960s the term moved out of law and has subsequently been used in a range of contexts from business management to commercial self-help literature. As a result, a second definition of “empower” has emerged. The *OED* indicates that empower also means “to impact or bestow power to an end or for a purpose; to enable” (“empower”).

An analysis of the term’s prefix and root word, in addition to the definition outlined above, helps to identify empowerment’s defining characteristics. The prefix “em” means to “put into” and implies an action and a change. To be “put into power” indicates that one was not previously in a position of power. This is further evidenced by the word “impact” in the definition. To have a “pronounced effect” (“impact”) on power means to change one’s relationship with power. This is best illustrated by a simple example; consider the difference between the following phrases: Jane has the power to act; Jane has been empowered to act. In the former, Jane holds the ability to act; in the latter, a change is implied, where hitherto comparatively passive Jane has been given the power to act. As such, we can say that one of empowerment’s essential qualities is a shift or a change from without, and a performance of empowerment will necessarily include an emphasis on this quality. Empowerment’s root word –

“power” – is its second defining characteristic. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines power as an “ability to act or affect something strongly; physical or mental strength; might; vigour, energy; effectiveness (“Power”). Therefore, when a performance is described as “powerful,” the above definition indicates that the term is being employed to capture the performance’s vigorous, strong, or energetic qualities. As such, any performance of empowerment will necessarily include an emphasis on both change and power, with power’s defining qualitative characteristics being vigor, strength, and energy. It is well to remember, however, that common use and other disciplinary-specific uses of the term may not always acknowledge or agree on these two dimensions. Nonetheless, these characteristics provide a useful place to begin analyzing the performance of empowerment.

1.2 Theatre Studies, Performance Studies, and Affect Theory

In her article “The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedicine and Bodies,” Patricia Ticineto Clough coined the term “affective turn” to describe affect theory’s influence in the academy. While there is no single theory of affect, affect theory’s influence across the humanities and social sciences is connected to a renewed emphasis on bodily experience and attention to “intensities that pass body to body (human, nonhuman, part-body, and otherwise), in those resonances that circulate about, between and sometimes stick to bodies and worlds, and the very passages or variations between these intensities” (Gregg and Seigworth 1). While intellectual traditions in theatre and performance studies have frequently queried sentiment, mood, and feeling, affect theory has been particularly generative in contemporary scholarship. As such, theatre provides a rich site to interrogate the relationship between empowerment and feeling.

Following the “linguistic turn” and the “cultural turn,” the affective turn represents an influential methodological and theoretical trend in the humanities and social sciences. As Erin Hurley and Sara Warner explain in the introduction to *Dramatic Theatre and Criticism’s* issue dedicated to affect performance and politics:

This paradigm shift represents the desire to carve out some conceptual space for aspects of human motivation and behavior that are not tethered to consciousness, cognitive processes, and rationality, to validate physical and social dynamics that are inchoate and unpredictable, and to explore impulses and responses that social conventions shape but do not circumscribe. (100)

This paradigm shift has variously influenced different disciplines and led to several different approaches to affect theory across the academy⁸. Scholars (and entire disciplines) often situate themselves within a particular stream of affect theory, but it is common practice to borrow from other interrelated streams, and while I primarily draw on affect theory as it has been employed in theatre and performance studies, this project also builds from the work of feminist cultural theorist Sara Ahmed. As I highlighted in the previous section, Ahmed argues that affects do not inhabit anybody or anything; instead, affects are relational, and it is through affective relations that object and subject boundaries and surfaces are formed. She explains, “I explore how emotions work to shape the ‘surfaces’ of individual and collective bodies. Bodies take the shape of the very contact they have with objects and others” (31). Inspired by Ahmed’s work, this project begins to query the function of empowerment feelings by asking, “What does a performance of empowerment do?”

Theatre and performance studies – with their shared interests in embodiment, transformation, and presence – resonate with affect theory in many respects. However, though the link between the two areas has been generative in contemporary scholarship, it is important to emphasize the long-standing intellectual traditions in theatre, and more recently performance

studies, which have invested in the study of feeling. Hurley and Warren argue that “Aristotle, Bharata Muni, and Zeami were among the first theorists of affects” (101) and their key texts – *The Poetics*, the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, and the *Fūshikaden* – demonstrate the authors’ interest in the danger, relevance and possibility of public displays of feeling. In particular, all three writers were among the earliest scholars to consider the relationship among sentiment, politics and aesthetics, and each text outlines a set of guidelines on how emotions should be used by theatre-makers. In addition to the guidelines provided in each text, each author expresses concerns about what happens to feelings – both those expressed by the performer and those experienced as an audience member – when a show finishes (Hurley and Warren 102). As a result of these concerns, theatre genres have frequently been hierarchized based on feeling. The practice of elevating some theatre genres (tragedy, drama) over others (musical theatre, burlesque) based on the display of particular feelings continues today.

Theatre and performance studies scholars have employed affect theory in a variety of ways. Following the lead of feminist literary theorist Lauren Berlant who argues, “When we talk about an object of desire [in this case affect theory], we are really talking about a cluster of promises we want someone or something to make to us and make possible for us” (94), Hurley and Warren identify three promises that affect theory provides for theatre and performance studies scholars:

On the personal level, it promises a more emancipated and autonomous conception of subjectivity. For performance, it elevates aesthetics of experience over those based in representation, freeing dramaturgy and spectacle from the Aristotelian requirements of wholeness and unity ... In the political realm, affect relocates the barometer of change from collective movements based in commonality to the more intimate (and immediate) registry of intensities that are incremental yet palpable (100).

Hurley and Warren's own work falls into the political realm with their respective books *National Performance: Representing Quebec from Expo 67 to Céline Dion* and *Acts of Gaiety: LGBT Performance and the Politics of Pleasure*. Projects like Jill Dolan's *Utopia and Performance: Finding Hope at the Theater*, Jose Esteban Munoz's "Feeling Brown, Feeling Down: Latina Affect, the Performativity of Race, and the Depressive Position" and Rebecca Schneider's *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Re-enactment* all draw on the three promises of affect and seek to intervene in theatre's disciplinary genealogy to provide a renewed emphasis on the feeling body. Similarly, my work here advocates for an emphasis on bodily experience in musical theatre studies, and as I am primarily invested in popular performance – the second promise affect provides – my research resonates with work which queries the relationship between popular performance and feeling. Other examples of this kind of work include Lisa Merrill's essay, "'May she read liberty in your eyes?' Beecher, Boucicault and the Representation and Display of Antebellum Women's Racially Indeterminate Bodies," which considers how affect theory gives us the language to consider the impact of "mock slave" auctions in the United States in the late 19th century; and Marlis Schweitzer and Daniel Guadagnolo's essay, "Affect, Mimicry and Vaudeville's 'Inimitable' Harry Lauder," which carefully analyzes vaudeville performer Harry Lauder's "infectious" quality. Although they consider quite different kinds of popular performance in distinctive historical contexts at a remove from my own, I am also invested in querying performance to identify the generation and circulation of particular feelings.

This project draws significantly from Erin Hurley's terminology and arguments. In *Theatre & Feeling*, Hurley argues that "questions of feeling have always been central to theatre" (2) and suggests that the "feeling body is theatre's focus: theatre requires a perceiving person in

order to be. The feeling body is the vehicle for theatre's images and execution. The feeling body is, then, both the basis and means of theatre" (36). Like Hurley, I suggest that the feeling body is central to the study of performing empowerment, and her arguments concerning what she describes as the feeling labours and technologies of theatre provide the language to consider how theatre-going impacts the feeling body. Her use of these terms builds in part from the theories of theatre scholar Nicholas Ridout as well as feminist sociologist Arlie Hochschild. In *Stage Fright, Animals and Other Theatrical Problems* Nicholas Ridout argues that theatre is an affect machine (168); provocatively, he suggests that it is not only the intentional generation of feeling which constitutes theatre's ontology but also the accidental feelings which reveal its apparatus. He argues, "Theatre is a machine that sets out to undo itself. It conceives itself as an apparatus for the production of affect by means of representation, in the expectation that the most powerful affects will be obtained at precisely those moments when the machinery appears to break down" (168). For Ridout, theatre's "break-downs" appear in moments where audience members become aware of themselves as consumers of other people's labour, linking theatre with its capitalist production context and identifying the way theatre is a doubled space of both labor and leisure. Hochschild's work differs from Ridout's in that it is focussed on the work place, but it too emphasizes the relationship between feeling and capitalist production. In *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, she argues that emotional-labour is a form of emotional regulation where publically viewable displays of visible and bodily emotions take place within the workplace and suggests that this labor requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others (Hochschild 7). Inflected by Ridout and Horschshild, Hurley defines the terms "feeling-labour" and "feeling-technologies" which are both specifically applicable to theatre and performance studies. She

argues that “feeling-labour” is “the work theatre does in making, managing, and moving feeling in all its types (affect, emotions, moods, sensations) in a publicly observable display that is sold to an audience for a wage” (9) and contends that theatre’s feeling-labours are what draw us into theatre and compel us to return, emphasizing the centrality of feeling in the practice and study of theatre. On the other hand, Hurley defines “feeling-technologies” as the mechanisms that “do something with feeling” (28) and orient the spectator’s experience, such as lighting and set. Hurley’s clear distinctions between terms, especially as they link to theatre’s production and reception contexts, are particularly useful for this discussion, as Broadway musical theatre performances are inextricably linked to capitalism and consumer culture.

In addition to the language provided by affect theory, two theatre and performance studies terms are particularly important for my analyses in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3: ghosting and verticality. In *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine*, Marvin Carlson defines ghosting:

Unlike the reception operations of genre ... in which audience members encounter a new but distinctly different example of a type of artistic product they have encountered before, ghosting presents the identical thing they have encountered before in a somewhat different context (7).

Though several artistic elements accrue meaning through ghosting in *Wicked* and *Les Misérables*, this thesis is particularly interested in the gesture of the held raised fist. Sometimes called the “clenched fist,” the gesture of a held raised fist is associated with solidarity, strength and defiance. As a logo, the image first was popularized by the Industrial Workers of the World in 1917, but has since been used by a number of organizations such as the International Socialist Organization and movements such as the Women’s Liberation Movement and Occupy Wall Street. As a salute, the raised fist has been variously employed in different contexts. In the

United States, the gesture is widely known for its use by Malcolm X and other black civil rights activists in the 1960's. In particular, during the 1968 Summer Olympics in Mexico City, the raised fist was the cause of significant controversy when American medal winners John Carlos and Tommie Smith raised their fists during the playing of the American national anthem. As a result of the gesture, Carlos and Smith were banned from the Olympics. As this diverse and non-exhaustive list of antecedents suggests, through its deployment in popular culture the held raised fist is a gesture which the audience has encountered before in different contexts, so when the audience encounters the held raised fist in the context of a Broadway megamusical, the gesture is imbued with a particular affective force. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, the gesture significantly contributes to the affective strength of both "One Day More" and "Defying Gravity."

In addition to the raised fist, both "One Day More" and "Defying Gravity" employ verticality to increase the performance of power. Verticality has played an important role in Western culture. It is often associated with the divine and other metaphysical notions of the spiritual realm beyond the plane of human existence. It is also frequently used to invoke power and supremacy, as in an athlete's podium or a king's ascension to the raised throne, and is colloquially employed to signal power and ascendance when used in phrases like "climbing the corporate ladder" and "upward mobility." Though he is writing about scenic design, in *The Poetics of Stage Space: The Theory and Process of Theatre Scene Design* Bruce Bergner provides a useful summary of the importance of verticality. He argues, "Elevation allows you to stretch upward. It allows you spatial qualities that cannot be met if you reduce the design to a flat floor," and he stresses that levels might be used to "establish a dynamic of power and weakness." He goes on to note that "elevation allows you to compose dramatic stage pictures as it aids

visibility and clarity of comprehension (37). In Chapters Two and Three, I will thoroughly examine the use of the verticality in both “Defying Gravity” and “One Day More.”

1.3 The Field of Musical Theatre Studies

As a genre associated with commercialism and the “so-called baser emotions” (Hurley and Warren 101), musical theatre has traditionally been relegated to an inferior cultural position in theatre and performance studies. In a “Historiography of the Popular,” David Savran argues that “modern theatre historians ... tend to dismiss twentieth-century theatre that lacks an obviously modernist pedigree, aims chiefly to produce pleasure, and remains too scandalously intimate with mass culture” (212-213). However, the qualities which occasionally result in musical theatre’s dismissal as an object of serious study – its emphasis on sentimentality, the production of pleasure, its inextricable link to commercialism – are also the characteristics which make it a particularly rich site for my investigations of how empowerment is performed.

A relatively new field of sustained and systematic inquiry, musical theatre studies includes work from scholars in musicology, theatre history, and gender and sexuality studies. The field’s earliest projects sought to trace the historical trajectory of the form, offering detailed readings of specific musical productions while crediting composers and lyricists as the primary creative artists⁹. Building from this work, projects such as Mark Steyn’s *Broadway Babies Say Goodnight: Musicals Then and Now* and Mark N. Grant’s *The Rise and Fall of the Broadway Musical* attempted to put musical theatre history into a “rise and fall” narrative, beginning with Rodgers and Hammerstein and ending before the megamusicals of the 1980s. In addition to chronological histories, a number of scholars have offered productive considerations of musical theatre in specific historical contexts with books such as John Bush Jones’ *Our Musicals, Ourselves: A Social History of the American Musical Theatre*, Len Platt’s *Musical Theatre and*

American Culture, and Raymond Knapp's *The American Musical and the Performance of National Identity* which provides an in-depth analysis of the thematic through-lines in musical theatre through the lens of musicology. There is also a breadth of work that employs an identity-oriented approach to musical theatre¹⁰. However, the works from which I have gained the most in terms of this project's methodology are Stacy Wolf's books *A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical* (2000) and *Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical* (2011), as well as Scott McMillin's *The Musical as Drama*.

As a musical theatre scholar writing from an explicitly feminist perspective, Wolf builds a historical and theoretical framework to consider gender in musical theatre. Her detailed exploration of female characters in musical theatre – and in *A Problem Like Maria: Gender and Sexuality in the American Musical*, the performers who play these characters – has been an invaluable resource for the arguments I advance in this thesis. Notably, throughout her work Wolf emphasizes the performance text, arguing that musical theatre's toolbox is constituted by “a constellation of intricately arranged and mutually dependent artistic components” which “all coalesce in the moment that is performance” (5). McMillin's aesthetic consideration of musical theatre also emphasizes the importance of the performance text. *Oklahoma!* is often credited as the first book musical, and one of the show's legacies – and the legacy of its creators, Rodgers and Hammerstein – was integration, where song and dance number were fully integrated into a serious plot-driven storyline. As a result of the influence of the integrated musical, many critics, historians and scholars have evaluated musical theatre productions based on the unity of their artistic elements; however, McMillin usefully dismantles this approach and argues that musical theatre's structure actually emphasizes repetition and difference as its primary formal and functional elements. He writes:

Difference can be felt between the book and the numbers, between the songs and dances, between dance and spoken dialogue – and these are the elements that integration is supposed to have unified. Sometimes, the elements are integrated but I can still feel the difference. (2-3)

Drawing from McMillin and Wolf, who emphasize the interdependence of multiple musical elements and the felt quality of experiencing a musical theatre production, I argue throughout this project that musical theatre benefits from an analysis which emphasizes the form's interdependent artistic elements.

Both *Wicked* and *Les Misérables* are typically classified as megamusicals. The term “megamusical” was originally used by critics and reviewers in the 1970's and 1980's and has since gained currency amongst scholars in musical theatre studies. A megamusical is primarily characterized by a high degree of spectacle across a range of artistic elements. In *The Megamusical*, Jessica Sternfeld argues that a megamusical is “usually sung-through and features an epic, historically situated, but timeless plot staged on a fancy set” (3). While such grandiose elements had previously been featured in musical theatre, megamusicals were distinctive because of their equal emphasis on multiple artistic elements as opposed to earlier musicals which emphasized the score (Sternfeld; Everett and Prece). Megamusicals also feature characters and plots that are “meant to create strong emotional reactions from the audience” (Everett and Prece 250). The combination of emotionally charged plots with a range of spectacle-scale theatrical elements functions as an affective promise for audience members who are primed to expect large-scale displays of feeling. Though *Wicked* was produced fifteen years after *Les Misérables* and therefore exhibits megamusical qualities which have evolved during that time, both productions “fit the definition” of a megamusical” (Sternfeld 349).

Broadway musical theatre is a popular art form and commercial product that is deeply imbricated in its production and reception context. While many have argued that Broadway musical theatre's relationship with consumerism diminishes its status as a serious artistic object for study, its strong commercial ties and consumerist orientation also present rich opportunities for interrogating the relationship between performance, empowerment, and feeling. Historically, scholars have argued that musical theatre's desire to attract mainstream audiences and its emphasis on the circulation of certain kinds of emotions – namely pleasurable emotions which encourage “spectators to tap their feet, sing along, or otherwise be carried away” (Savran 216) – relegate Broadway musical theatre to “entertainment” which does not merit rigorous academic consideration. It is true that Broadway successes are often measured by box office, run-length and commodification potential. The ability to sell t-shirts, cast albums and souvenirs is an important feature of a musical's ability to secure commercial success and public reach. It is also true that because of musical theatre's status as a potentially profitable product, Broadway musicals often target middle-class mainstream audiences, and occasionally feature escapist plots and stereotypical representations of its characters (Wolf; Savran). However, because of the cost of production – and the potential for massive payout upon success – musicals “are in a deceptively sensitive and intimate conversation with their cultural, historical moment” (Wolf 12). As such, the circulation of feeling in musical theatre can reveal a great deal about how feelings circulate in a particular socio-cultural historical moment. If we look beyond surface assessments of mere entertainment value, musical theatre, like much popular theatre, is a rich site for investigating how feeling-technologies manage and move feelings in a particular moment in history.

This project draws from, speaks to, and builds on work in the field of musical theatre studies. For example, it is common practice in Broadway musical theatre studies to emphasize original Broadway productions, and this project analyzes the 1987 original Broadway production of *Les Misérables* and the 2003 original Broadway production of *Wicked*. Through my use of a variety of sources, I attempt to at once acknowledge the inherent tension of identifying a stable object of study while also accounting for the ephemeral nature of live performance. Following experts such as Stacy Wolf and Jessica Sternfeld, my work draws from a number of sources including my own experiences at live productions, reviews from critics, scholarly articles, published scripts and scores, archival footage including video and photography, interviews, cast albums, taped performances, and YouTube clips.

However, while recorded and electronic sources are useful for my work here, it is important to emphasize that Broadway musical theatre performances are also singular events which depend upon bodies – those of actors, technicians and spectators – gathered together in a particular space for a shared specific time. In other words, the live performance experience is a central feature of the musical's cultural place even though Broadway musicals are frequently “recorded, revised, excerpted, and adapted into other formats that allows greater, even mass exposure” (Wolf 12). Historically, songs from musical theatre have circulated on radio and television programs; cast albums have won Grammy awards and top ten *Billboard* chart status; filmic versions of musicals have been released internationally, and YouTube videos circulate widely on the Internet. Moreover, musicals remain among the most performed shows in North America (Savran 215). As such, when talking about *Wicked*, one might analyze a North American touring production, a performance on the television program *Glee* or a community

theatre event, yet all of these have carefully managed ties to an original live Broadway performance.

The case studies which follow aim not to be exhaustive but rather indicative of the ways in which specific performance events help us think about how complex feelings of empowerment are generated, circulated, and experienced in performance. At first glance, the case studies I have chosen are perhaps not obvious: one draws from a famous nineteenth century French historical novel about the French revolution to tell the story of a former convict's redemption while the other tells the tale of two famous witches from another musical and literary tradition who form an unlikely friendship in their early years. While it might seem at first as though *Wicked* and *Les Misérables* are only linked by their ties to Broadway and megamusical form, in the chapters ahead I hope to highlight how each production's act 1 finale ("Defying Gravity" and "One Day More") share several common features. First, power and empowerment are explicitly raised in each story. Second, in both of the numbers, feelings of empowerment are connected to the gesture of a held raised fist and an emphasis on scenographic verticality. Third, both songs are frequently cited by fans and critics alike in terms of the feelings of empowerment they arouse. With greater attention to the details of these shared features as well some striking distinguishing features, I will demonstrate how the common elements of "Defying Gravity" from *Wicked* and "One Day More" make them particularly rich sites within which to analyze the performance of empowerment.

Chapter 2: Fight and Flight: Performing Empowerment in “Defying Gravity”

2.1 From Page to Stage: The Story of *Wicked*

Subtitled “The Untold Story of the Witches of Oz,” the 2003 Broadway musical *Wicked* features two female protagonists and tells the story of their friendship. As a result, both scholars and fans have frequently discussed the musical’s themes of female empowerment (Laird, Wolf, Boyd). In particular, the act 1 finale “Defying Gravity” is often described as an empowerment-anthem¹¹. Yet, while the musical does revolve around the women’s friendship, it concludes on an objectively disempowering note for one of the main characters when she is ostracized from society. In this chapter, I examine the relationship between objective empowerment and feelings of empowerment by investigating how empowerment is performed in “Defying Gravity.” Through a detailed analysis of the number’s final note and gesture – a D_{b4} punctuated by a held raised fist – I demonstrate how affect theory gives us the analytical tools to examine the interdependent artistic elements which contribute to the number’s affective force¹². Building on this analysis, I argue that feeling-technologies amplify the performance of empowerment through an emphasis on empowerment’s two defining characteristics: power and change. Through this performance, a sensation of empowerment becomes the primary point of connection between stage and auditorium.

Wicked, with music and lyrics by Stephen Schwartz and book by Winnie Holzman, premiered on Broadway in 2003 and offers a re-telling of the classic Hollywood film *The Wizard of Oz* from the point of view of the Wicked Witch of the West. Loosely based on Gregory Maguire’s 1995 novel of the same name, *Wicked* offers both a prequel and a sequel to the film with a focus on the unexpected friendship between Galinda, the popular schoolgirl who will go on to become Glinda the Good Witch of The North, and Elphaba, the magically-gifted, green-

skinned outcast who will become the Wicked Witch of the West¹³. The story unfolds as a flashback which first introduces Galinda and Elphaba as teenagers attending boarding school and follows the women through to the Wicked Witch of the West's death.

Wicked opened in May 2003, and the reviews ranged from scathing pans to raves. In the first category, for example, Ben Brantley from the *New York Times* praised Kristin Chenoweth's performance as Glinda but described the overall experience as a "Technocolorized sermon" and argued that it "overplays its hand" while Howard Kissel of *The New York Daily* described the show as a "Wicked waste of talent." However, not all the reviews were negative; *USA Today* critic Elysa Gardner wrote that it was the "most complete, and completely satisfying, new musical I've come across in a long time," and John Heilpern of the *New York Observer* described *Wicked* as a "delightful prequel to the *Wizard of Oz*." While critical reception was decidedly mixed, audience reception was not, as evidenced by ticket sales which helped the show recoup its \$14 million dollar investment in 14 months (*Wicked Broadway*). Moreover, despite the mixed critical reception, *Wicked* won three Tony Awards (2004) and in 2005 the cast album won a Grammy. Since its opening, *Wicked* has consistently played to sold-out houses, and in 2012, *Wicked* out-grossed every other Broadway production for the ninth consecutive year (Brown).

Although *Wicked* is only ten years old, there is a relative wealth of information about the show compared to other contemporary musical theatre productions. *Wicked: The Grimmerie, a Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Hit Broadway Musical* by David Cote, Carol de Gere's *Defying Gravity: The Creative Career of Stephen Schwartz from "Godspell" to "Wicked"* and Paul R. Laird's *Wicked: A Musical Biography*, which extensively details *Wicked* from production through reception, all provide useful production information and analysis. There have also been six scholarly articles written about *Wicked*¹⁴. One emphasized queer readings of the performance

text (Raab) while others offered feminist analysis of the female characters (Boyd). Perhaps most relevant for my purposes here is Kruse and Prettyman's 2008 article "Women, leadership, and power: Revisiting the Wicked Witch of the West," published in *The Journal of Gender and Education*, which provides a particularly useful contribution to the discussion of power in *Wicked*. In addition, feminist musical theatre scholar Stacy Wolf dedicated two chapters of her book *Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Musical* to the study of the production¹⁵. In Chapter 6, "'Changed for the Better': Queer Conventions in *Wicked*," Wolf argues that the conventional structure of *Wicked* positions Elphaba and Glinda as a queer couple, and in Chapter 7 she investigates the role of Internet fans and girl culture on fansites between 2004 and 2006. Beyond demonstrating critical interest in the production, each of these articles has analyzed *Wicked* in order to make sense of how the show makes meaning for audiences.

2.2 *Wicked* Synopsis

It is important to contextualize the key scene in "Defying Gravity" within the show's plot. *Wicked* begins with the citizens of Oz celebrating the death of The Wicked Witch of the West. In a gesture to the film, Glinda the Good Witch of The North enters via a floating bubble and descends toward the stage to address the crowd. After being prompted by one of the citizens of Oz, Glinda is forced to admit she was once friends with The Wicked Witch of the West. Here, Glinda launches into an extended flashback, beginning with her and Elphaba's first meeting at Shiz University. Elphaba was sent to Shiz to take care of her wheelchair-bound sister Nessarose. A smart and outspoken young woman with a talent for magic, Elphaba is initially treated as an outcast. Glinda, on the other hand, is popular with her peers but struggles with the practice of magic. While Glinda and Elphaba begin their relationship as reluctant roommates, they

eventually become best friends, helping Elphaba gain social acceptance from the other students at Shiz.

Meanwhile, outside the walls of Shiz University, Oz is under political threat. The Animals, who can speak and hold jobs alongside other citizens of Oz, are mysteriously losing their ability to speak¹⁶. Elphaba becomes an Animal advocate, and after proving her talents at Shiz, she earns a visit to the Emerald City to meet The Wizard of Oz. Glinda accompanies Elphaba to the Emerald City. At first, the girls delight in the Emerald City's wonders, but upon meeting The Wizard, they learn that he is to blame for silencing the Animals. Here, Glinda and Elphaba take divergent paths. Glinda chooses to become a public figure under The Wizard of Oz's regime while Elphaba rebels, causing The Wizard to brand her as "The Wicked Witch of the West," an enemy of the state. Throughout the rest of *Wicked*, the citizens of Oz remain ignorant to The Wizard's intentions and persecute Elphaba.

In the second act, both women struggle with their chosen paths; Glinda, who is engaged to a distant Fiyero, is torn about her new role as a public figure and Elphaba becomes increasingly ostracized. By the end of the show, Elphaba and Glinda renew their friendship, but Elphaba decides to stage her death in order to keep the peace of the community and allow Glinda to follow her own ambitions. Elphaba runs off with Fiyero to start a new life, and while the audience knows she's alive, Glinda, now the Governor of Oz, does not.

2.3 "Defying Gravity" and the Performance of Power

After learning that The Wizard is not who she believed him to be, Elphaba steals a powerful book of magical spells called The Grimmerie and vows to fight his plan to silence the Animals; as Elphaba and Glinda hide from The Wizard's guards, "Defying Gravity" begins. Laird, Boyd, and Wolf have all analyzed and highlighted the critical significance of "Defying

Gravity.” Building from their work, my aim here is to add a more detailed account of how this scene uses Broadway musical theatre feeling-technologies to amplify the performance of empowerment through an emphasis on power and change. This is most clearly evidenced by Elphaba’s final note and gesture: a belted D_{b4} – a note at the top of the performer’s vocal register – punctuated by a triumphant raised fist with broom in hand. In this section, I trace the web of affective elements that contribute to the number’s affective force, with a particular emphasis on how each element adds to the performance of power.

Created as a mainstage Broadway production, *Wicked* is not just in conversation with the specificity of its historical context; it is also entrenched in the ways it borrows from, relies on, and speaks to Broadway musical theatre genre conventions. In *Conventional Wisdom*, Susan McClary argues that conventions are “what allow cultural activities to ‘make sense.’ Indeed, they succeed best when least apparent, least deliberate, and most automatic” (5). The number’s placement in the show and the final verse’s lyrics rely on expectation generated through musical theatre conventions and cultural memory. The final verse of “Defying Gravity” could not be placed elsewhere in the show. Any earlier and the audience would not know Elphaba well enough to appreciate the stakes of her declaration of independence. Any later and the musical would not have time to resolve the consequences of her actions. Moreover, “Defying Gravity” relies on the affective technology of the two-act musical, where there is an intermission between acts. The final number of a musical’s first act often employs a range of feeling-technologies to heighten its affective strength and compel audience members to return for the second act. As Elphaba soars above the Ozians below, the audience is left to wonder what will happen to her now that she has defied The Wizard. With Elphaba gone, what will happen to Glinda? Will the two friends meet again? Through its placement at the end of the first act, “Defying Gravity”

leaves the audience literally suspended between the questions the number poses and the answers the second act promises to provide.

Beyond its structural importance, the placement of the final verse of “Defying Gravity” is pertinent to its cumulative affective impact because it creates expectation through convention. Stacy Wolf puts “Defying Gravity” in a genealogy of musical numbers which includes “Before the Parade Passes By” from *Hello Dolly!*, “And I Am Telling You” from *Dreamgirls*, and “Everything’s Coming Up Roses” from *Gypsy*, calling these musical numbers “act-1-finales-of-female-self-assertion” (2). While the terms have different definitions – “assert” means to set free or declare one’s right to (“Assert”); whereas, “empower” means to put in a position of power or enable (“Empower”) – both are closely linked to agency, and, in the context of “self-assertion” or “self-empowerment,” acting to increase one’s own agency. One might even suggest that each of the numbers Wolf lists could easily be called “act1-finales-of-female-self-empowerment.” Each of these numbers takes places at the end of act 1, includes themes of declaration, and ends on a sustained final note, features which are also highlighted in “Defying Gravity.” So, while Elphaba may not be aware of the characters who sang before her, many audience members would be. In fact, since all these numbers are well-known and widely circulated through media such as television talk-show performances and musical theatre compilation albums, audience member expectations may be particularly primed for the features of an “act1-1-finale-of-female-self-assertion,” encouraging the audience to sense the impending climax of Elphaba’s final note.

While the placement of “Defying Gravity” sets up expectation through convention, the title and lyrics play with expectation through cultural memory, adding a further layer to the number’s affective force. Schwartz explains his rationale for choosing the title, writing, “I had created a long list of titles for this. And then I finally thought, well, the phrase ‘defying gravity’

seems right, because I like the word ‘defying.’ It’s defiant, but it’s also about lifting off from earth” (Cote 80). Schwartz’s explanation is useful because it emphasizes the importance of the relationship between the word “defying” and the word “gravity.” Given the placement of “Defying Gravity” in the plot, it might have been appropriate to title the song “Defying The Wizard,” but such a title would only capture resistance in one particular relationship, contextually bound by the show’s story world; “gravity” is both more powerful and more universally relatable. Further, Elphaba does not attempt to “resist gravity” or “oppose gravity”; instead, she chooses to “defy gravity,” literally challenging one of the earth’s fundamental physical laws.

The song’s final lyrics further contribute to the number’s empowerment themes:

(As the Guards arrive, Elphaba soars into the air.)

Elphaba: So if you care to find me/ Look to the Western sky!/ As someone told me lately/
Everyone deserves the chance to fly¹⁷

(Elphaba grips her broomstick while waving her arms; Glinda and the Citizens of Oz stare up at Elphaba).

Glinda (Overlapping): I hope you're happy

Citizens of Oz (Overlapping): Look at her/ She's wicked/ Get her!!

(The Citizens of Oz point at Elphaba).

Elphaba (Overlapping): Bring me down!

Citizens of Oz (Overlapping): No one mourns the wicked/ So we got to bring her -

Elphaba (Overlapping): Ahhhh!

(Elphaba punches the sky with broom with her hand tightly gripped around the broom. She sustains the raised fist.)

Citizens of Oz (Overlapping):--Down!

Stacy Wolf argues, “Given that nearly everyone knows *The Wizard of Oz* ... they wonder what will happen to this feisty witch-girl” (4); in fact, the audience already knows what is going to happen to Elphaba: she becomes the Wicked Witch of the West. The pleasure of *Wicked*’s story is not in meeting an unknown conclusion but rather in following a more detailed plot progression to that conclusion. As such, Elphaba’s reference to “the Western sky” and the Citizens of Oz’s declaration that Elphaba is “wicked” are significant. In the song’s first verses, Elphaba primarily sings about her decision to defy The Wizard, but in the final verse, she literally announces her life’s new direction (west), and the Citizens of Oz reappear for the first time since their introduction. Singing as a unified mob, they declare that Elphaba is “wicked.” If it were not for *The Wizard of Oz*, these lines would be relatively meaningless, but in a North American cultural production and reception context where the “green witch” is an iconic fictional villain deeply embedded in cultural memory, they become thick with meaning: Elphaba, the “feisty witch-girl,” is turning into The Wicked Witch of the West.

The affective impact of the cultural memory invoked by the lyrics is supported by the lighting, blocking and props, particularly through Elphaba’s visual transformation into the Wicked Witch of the West. In “Alto on a Broomstick: Voicing the Witch in the Musical *Wicked*,” Michelle Boyd argues that Elphaba and to a lesser degree Glinda need to be understood in terms of the long history of witch figures in society. She suggests, “One must not forget that the witch also has a long, lively, and indelible history as a symbol of innate wickedness” (102). This is true; however, it is also true that Elphaba is not just another character in a genealogy of witch figures throughout history. Baum’s book may have introduced the Wicked Witch of the West, but it was the film that cemented her place in the American collective consciousness through the visual iconography of her green skin, her pointed black hat, her flowing cape and her

flying broomstick. The Wicked Witch of the West's iconography was so influential that *The Wizard of Oz* is often cited as a turning point for representations of witches in America, marking a shift away from the Salem witches and toward the fantastical witch figure (Gibson). While *Wicked*'s initial production and reception context in 2002 included shifting representations of female witches in popular culture with the *Harry Potter* books series and protagonists on television programs like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch* and *Charmed*, Elphaba's transformation into the Wicked Witch of the West – one of the most recognizable witches in the American collective consciousness – imbues her character with yet another resonance which amplifies the powerful final moment of “Defying Gravity.”

Elphaba completes her visual transformation into the Wicked Witch of the West by accruing further iconic property and costume features associated with the character. The broomstick's first appearance in “Defying Gravity” is innocuous. Elphaba seems to find the broom by accident, using it to bar the door of the palace to keep out the guards. However, the broomstick soon reappears. Using the Grimmerie, Elphaba makes the broom float. In doing so, she not only exerts her own bolstered magical talents, she also claims one of a witch's primary magical power objects. Already wearing the pointy black hat Glinda gave her before the dance at the Ozdust Ballroom, Elphaba only needs a cape to complete her transformation. In Elphaba and Glinda's final private exchange before the guards' entrance, Glinda caringly wraps a black blanket around Elphaba's shoulders. Moments later, Elphaba uses her broom to “fly” into the air and the blanket suddenly becomes a cape, feet of fabric flowing from Elphaba's shoulders to the stage. The cape functions technically to hide the hydraulic crane which hoists the actor who plays Elphaba into the air, but it also completes her visual transformation into a “wicked witch.” Furthermore, the cape's fabric extends in a diagonal triangle to the back curtains and stage floor.

This extends Elphaba's body to occupy the full space of the center stage, visually and spatially enlarging her in relation to the other bodies on the stage. While scholars like Stacy Wolf argue that megamusicals of the 1980's marginalized the bodies of female characters through their elaborate scenography, *Wicked* does the opposite. Extended by her cape and lit by streams of blue and purple light to create a magical effect, Elphaba is fantastically larger than life, commanding the audience's full attention and controlling the stage through her enlarged presence as a result of costume.

Costume and props contribute to Elphaba's transformation into the Wicked Witch of the West, and the set design adds force to this transformation through verticality. In Chapter 1, I outlined verticality's longstanding association with power in Western culture. *Wicked's* design uses verticality to put Elphaba in a position of power through the use of vertical space which places her above other characters on stage. In addition to power, the use of verticality also contributes to the theme of magical power. As Bruce Bergner notes in *The Poetics of Stage Space: The Theory and Process of Theatre Scene Design*:

There is also a mystique to the elevated, or vertical space. If you go up, you go against gravity. Anti-gravity is anti-nature (since gravity is a fundamental law of nature). This presents a mystery in the design. If a character or object levitates, it must have a force behind it that exists outside our routine awareness. The mystery of this expands our awareness, because we look closer. (37)

Since Elphaba is a witch, her ability to fly is inextricably linked with her magical powers, and in this case her "flight," one in which the hydraulics used are concealed, is evidence of her magical strength.

The composition and orchestration of "Defying Gravity" contributes to the number's affective force through musical motifs, increases in tempo and volume, and the use of particular instruments. The composition is based on a series of repeating and alternating motifs.

Significantly, the number includes *Wicked*'s two most prominent motifs: the leitmotif of the Wicked Witch of the West and the "unlimited" motif. A leitmotif is a constantly recurring musical phrase that is connected to a specific person or object, and in this case the Wicked Witch of the West leitmotif is attached to Elphaba. It is first heard in the overture but would likely be most recognizable to the audience from its use in the opening number, "No One Mourns the Wicked." Though the melody, harmonies, and rhythms differ significantly, the "unlimited" motif is based on the first seven notes of *The Wizard of Oz* song "Over the Rainbow." Often associated with magical moments in early scenes, the "unlimited" motif would likely be recognized by the audience from Elphaba's first number, "The Wizard and I." These musical motifs are specifically employed throughout the musical in various ways – played by different instruments at different pitches and volumes – to incite different emotional responses, but as a result of their repeated use, their affective value compounds. Because of the number's arrival at the end of act 1, the leitmotifs have had the time to accumulate meaning for the audience who hears them.

The affective potential of *Wicked*'s composition is elaborated by the orchestration, particularly through the inclusion of electric guitars that cut through the performance context to add a defiant aural quality to the number. In musical theatre, composers tend not to orchestrate their own music; instead, they prepare piano/vocal scores while an orchestrator determines which instruments would best support the score. William David Brohn orchestrated *Wicked*, and Laird argues that "the instrumental accompaniment of 'Defying Gravity' revolves around the many power chords in the electric guitar" (237). Power chords were popularized in the 1960's with rock bands such as Black Sabbath and Led Zeppelin and consist of two (or more) notes which are distorted. However, in *Running with the Devil: Power, Gender, and Madness in Heavy Metal Music*, Robert Walser argues that "power chords are manifestly more than these two notes" (43).

He suggests that power chords are often used like the tones produced by pipe organs, which may be employed “to display and enact overwhelming power” (43). While the composition lays the foundation for a more powerful sound through increases in tempo, volume and pitch, the orchestration – which includes keyboards, electric guitars, French horns, and oboes – builds on the composition through the use of power chords.

In the final moments of “Defying Gravity,” the performer who plays Elphaba must sing above the swelling orchestration below, and the virtuosic vocal performance is undoubtedly one of the elements that contributes to the number’s affective power. Music theorist Simon Frith argues that “it is the sound of the voice, not the words sung, which suggest what a singer means” (97). The “sound of the voice” is comprised of several different elements including pitch, timbre, and accent. Combined, these elements form a singer’s unique vocal quality where “through a perceptual process, a listener associates sound with a source reference” (Noonan 86). Notably, musical theatre tends to include influences from popular music, and 21st century musical theatre often features performers who “belt” or produce a loud sound in the upper-middle range of their vocal register. Drawing on Catherine Clément’s article “Through Voices, History,” Boyd describes the significance of Elphaba’s alto register. She argues, “While sopranos most often play the heroine, the lower female voices assume the roles of the treacherous women, jealous rivals, and even witches” (109), and suggests that “while the high voice as heroine is less firmly entrenched in musical theater than in opera ... soprano alto pairs are often used when there is a difference between behaviours of the two principal characters” (109).

Other musicals which feature soprano alto pairs include *West Side Story*’s Maria and Anita and *Jekyll and Hyde*’s Emma and Linda. Glinda is first introduced as a soprano and

Elphaba is an alto. These vocal registers match the audience's character expectations, and they also contribute to the vocal quality Elphaba displays in the final verse of "Defying Gravity." The final two notes require the actor to sustain an "E-flat followed by D-flat at fortissimo" (Boyd 110). This is significant because these notes are at the top of an alto's range, among the highest notes she is capable of singing. The actor is able to powerfully deliver the E_{b4} and D_{b4}, but there is an edgy quality to her voice. Boyd notes that these sustained notes are not ugly, but they are not pretty either. Writing of the original Broadway performers, she argues that Menzel/Elphaba's "belted notes are focused but decidedly edgy and piercing. Whereas Chenoweth/Glinda's high notes seem to float gracefully from her vocal chords, Menzel aggressively tackles them" (112). In fact, at the 2004 Tony Awards, Menzel's voice cracked during the performance of the final note, but Boyd argues this likely "added to the song's affective power" (118).

In addition to the vocal performance of the D_{b4} is the mythology surrounding the note. In Chapter Six of *Change For Good*, Stacy Wolf highlights *Wicked*'s fan culture, with a specific emphasis on female fans and the figure of the diva. Drawing from her previous work in *A Problem Like Maria*, Wolf highlights how marketing, celebrity, and character intertwine to make Elphaba and Glinda (and the women who play them) diva-figures whom audience members can interpret and with whom they identify. Though Wolf emphasizes fan agency in the creation of the diva figure, the diva gains currency both organically and through intentional interventions by the *Wicked* team. One of the elements which contributes to the Elphaba/actor's diva status is her delivery of the final note of "Defying Gravity." Wolf highlights postings written on fansites which discuss the note, and the quotations Wolf pulls from the sites indicate that fans often use words such as "yell" and "cry" to describe the final note. This provides further evidence of the note's powerful affective quality – more of a battle cry than a beautifully delivered pitch.

Speaking of “the cry,” Wolf argues, “In this moment, the diva as character and the diva as actor collide, as girl fans project self-possession onto Elphaba/actor as she sings the last notes of act 1” (226). Fan discussion of the final note is encouraged by *Wicked*’s team, which highlights the link between the diva and the final note in interviews and promotional material, and the combination of marketing, celebrity, and character contributes to the mythology surrounding the final note of “Defying Gravity.”

As Elphaba sings her final note, she dramatically takes her broom and punches the sky, holding her arm straight with a clenched fist, further heightening the moment’s affective force. Because of its charged historical symbolism, Elphaba’s final gesture becomes thick with meaning through ghosting. As I explained in Chapter One, the held raised fist is associated with resistance, human rights, and power; of particular importance here, the gesture was also used by the women’s right’s movement in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s. As such, when Elphaba holds and raises her fist, she performs a gesture the audience has encountered before in different contexts, imbuing the moment with additional force. As I have demonstrated throughout this analysis, the gesture of the held raised fist is one of several feeling-technologies which contribute to the song’s affective force, and from this discussion it is clear that affect theory provides a useful entry point to consider the constellation of Broadway-scale feeling-technologies which manage the circulation of feeling and emphasize the performance of power.

2.4 Power in the Land of Oz and the Performance of Change

In order to understand how change – empowerment’s other defining quality – is performed, one must first understand the circulation of power in Oz. While *Wicked* is undoubtedly a story about friendship, it is also explicitly a story about power, and this analysis provides a reading of the performance text where the friendship story and the power story are

always interconnected and mutually constitutive. Specifically, *Wicked* is a story about political power where several central characters hold or come to hold political positions – Madame Morrible as Press Secretary of Oz, The Wizard of Oz as Head of State, Nessarose as Governor of Munchkinland – and the two main characters finish their journey in opposing political positions, Glinda as Governor of Oz and Elphaba as Enemy of the State. In fact, while the friendship storyline is the emotional core of *Wicked*'s dramaturgy, it is the political story that often drives the plot forward. For example, Elphaba is compelled to leave Shiz University to visit The Wizard in the Emerald City in order to advocate for the Animals, and only when Elphaba and Glinda learn that The Wizard is responsible for silencing the Animals are they separated by their political beliefs. The consequence of these choices sets the action of act 2 in motion, beginning with Glinda's strained public address in the second act's opening number, "Thank Goodness."

At first glance, it may seem as though *Wicked* sets up a political power structure where Glinda embodies the qualities of dominant politics and Elphaba embodies the qualities of alternative politics; however, political power in Oz is more complex than it first appears. Since *Wicked* is a story explicitly about "goodness" and "wickedness," it is important to distinguish between values which circulate *in* Oz and the values expressed by the production *about* the values which circulate in Oz. In his review in *The New York Times*, Ben Brantley notes that *Wicked* "wears its political heart as if it were a slogan button," and critics in this vein have often panned *Wicked*'s overt social commentary. Certainly, there are several moments in *Wicked* when the production expresses its values about events that take place in Oz. The audience is encouraged to laugh at Glinda's superficiality in the song "Popular" and to side with Elphaba when she chooses to rebel against The Wizard in "Defying Gravity." However, while acknowledging the slippery nature of this distinction – the Land of Oz is a fictional world where

all the rules were intentionally created by human beings living at a particular historical moment and therefore cannot be understood as neutral – it is useful to parse the difference between the values which circulate in Oz’s story world and the production’s commentary about those values.

Political power in Oz is achieved through magical power and social power. The importance of magical power is first emphasized when Elphaba arrives at Shiz University, and Madame Morrible, Shiz’s Headmistress, tries to wheel Nessarose away from Elphaba. As Madame Morrible reaches for Nessarose’s wheelchair, Elphaba stands at center stage and flaps her arms. At the same moment, the lighting shifts from an orange-tinted wash to a spotlight, and the orchestration swells as Nessarose’s wheelchair spins on stage before spinning away from Madame Morrible and toward Elphaba. Elphaba has revealed her magical powers. Instead of reprimanding Elphaba for losing control, Madame Morrible offers to tutor Elphaba privately and promises an opportunity to meet The Wizard if Elphaba works on her magical skills. As Kruse and Prettyman suggest, Madame Morrible “is portrayed as a large woman, and while we are not led to believe she necessarily has great physical strength, we do come to learn that she teaches sorcery and has powers that provide her with strength” (455). Not only does Madame Morrible verbally indicate that magical talent is valuable, she also embodies the value of magical talent as an expert who holds a powerful position at the university as Headmistress. More importantly, she suggests that The Wizard – a character the audience has yet to meet, but understands as powerful due to his role in *The Wizard of Oz*- values magical talent.

The importance of social power is hinted at throughout the beginning of the musical and is explicitly addressed in the song “Popular.” After bonding at the dance at the Ozdust Ballroom, Elphaba and Glinda return to their dorm room where Glinda decides to make Elphaba over while singing earnestly about the value of popularity. Affectively, the significance of this scene

resonates through the trope of female makeover scenes in musical theatre, most significantly featured in the 1953 musical *My Fair Lady* when Cockney flower girl Eliza Doolittle takes speech lessons from Henry Higgins in order to “pass” as a lady. Eliza Doolittle ultimately succeeds in “passing as a lady,” and as a result gains increased social agency. “Popular” draws on similar themes and Schwartz uses a bubble-gum sound to “try to characterize Glinda’s shallowness and teen sensibility” (Cote 76). The over-the-top performance that includes giggling, yodeling, and exaggerated gestures such as rolling around on the dorm room bed typically earn big laughs from the crowd. While the number certainly reveals Glinda’s character, it is also partially to blame for descriptions of Glinda which refer to her as “vapid” (Wolf 201) and “superficial” (Boyd 3); however, as Stacy Wolf points out, “Glinda’s interest in her friend is heartfelt and her belief in the power of popularity is genuine, even ingenuous” (211). In fact, Glinda’s thoughts on the value of popularity are more than a belief, they are an explicit and accurate description of the importance of social power.

In the final verse of “Popular,” Glinda sings:

Think of/ Celebrated heads of state or/ ‘Specially great communicators/ Did they have
brains or knowledge?/ Don’t make me laugh!/ They were popular! Please – / It’s all about
popular! It’s not about aptitude/ It’s the way you’re viewed/ So, it’s very shrewd to be
Very very popular. Like me.

At the end of the first act, it is revealed that The Wizard has limited magical power, and maintains his political position through his association with magically talented individuals such as Madame Morrible and through his reputation as being “Wonderful.” Moreover, it is Glinda, not Elphaba, who ultimately comes to hold power. As Kruse and Prettyman note, “Glinda succeeds where Elphaba was unable, armed with the necessary positional and charismatic power to affect change” (461). So, when Glinda croons about the values of popularity, she is not only

revealing her character's values, she is also telling Elphaba and the audience important information about how to gain political power in Oz. Understanding political power in Oz provides the framework to analyze how "Defying Gravity" performs change.

2.5 Elphaba's Empowerment in "Defying Gravity"

There are three key shifts in power relations, linked to Elphaba's empowerment feelings and punctuated by feeling-technologies, which perform change and culminate in the affective intensity of Elphaba's belted D_{b4} and fist pump. Elphaba's first shift occurs shortly after the first verse. After fleeing from The Wizard and Madame Morrible, Elphaba and Glinda arrive at the top of The Wizard's Palace and blockade the door with an old broom. "Defying Gravity" begins with Glinda chastising Elphaba for acting rashly with The Wizard and Elphaba accusing Glinda of being submissive to The Wizard in order to "feed [her] own ambition." Their exchange begins as dialogue but becomes lyric as both women sing, "So though I can't imagine how/ I hope you're happy right now ..." Before they can continue their argument, Madame Morrible's voice interrupts. Communicating via loudspeaker, she announces that The Wizard has declared Elphaba a dangerous enemy of the state. As Madame Morrible growls her final word, calling Elphaba a "Wicked Witch," Glinda and Elphaba stand at centre stage holding hands with frightened expressions on their faces. Though there was orchestration moments earlier, the stage is suddenly silent. Glinda encourages Elphaba, saying, "Don't be afraid." Elphaba hesitates for a moment, and the orchestration begins to play the "unlimited" motif, signalling the important decision that is about to take place. Holding Elphaba's hand, Glinda tries to convince Elphaba to apologize to The Wizard, singing, "You can have all you ever wanted." In response to Glinda, Elphaba sings, "I know – but I don't want it – no I *can't* want it / Anymore ..." As she sings, "I can't want it," Elphaba releases Glinda's hand and steps forward, separating herself from Glinda.

At the same moment, an electric guitar strums a single chord and Elphaba begins to sing the number's first verse. Supported by blocking, gesture and orchestration, Elphaba's first empowerment moment is amplified by a web of feeling-technologies which highlight the shift she experiences in the social power structure and amplify the performance of change. In "Popular," we are told that one of the important elements of being popular is "having the right cohorts," and by moving away from Glinda, who has provided Elphaba with increased social power by association, Elphaba not only separates herself from her friend, she takes a first step toward rejecting social power. Standing with a wide-eyed expression, she sings about the shift she feels: "Something has changed within me/ Something is not the same / I'm through with playing by the rules/ Of someone else's game." As the verse continues, she alternates between facing the audience and facing Glinda, clearly indicating that her feelings of empowerment are generated from the shift she feels in her relationship with Glinda and emphasizing the performance of change.

The second of Elphaba's empowerment feelings comes in the next verse. Glinda continues to try and dissuade Elphaba from defying The Wizard. Suddenly, there is a menacing knock, as the palace guards try to kick down the door. Elphaba grabs the Grimmerie and begins chanting a levitation spell. Afraid of the consequences of the spell, Glinda yells "Stop!" All noise, including orchestration, ceases, and like the moment before Elphaba's first empowerment feeling, there is silence and stillness on stage, emphasizing the change about to occur. Both women wait for something to happen. Finally, Glinda asks, "Where are your wings? Maybe, you're not as powerful as you think you are." Suddenly, the orchestration begins, a deep oboe accompanied by rolling cymbals, and Elphaba sees the broom, floating mid-air. The Grimmerie has empowered Elphaba and increased her already existing magical talent. As in Elphaba's first

empowerment feeling, she expresses herself through sound and movement, giggling and hopping to her feet to grab the broom, highlighting the change that has taken place.

Experiencing shifts in both political and social power, Elphaba feels politically empowered to defy The Wizard, and she tries to convince Glinda to join her. Glinda declines and the two women say goodbye to one another as Glinda wraps a cape around Elphaba's shoulders. The guards break down the door and enter with their weapons drawn. As they grab Glinda, Elphaba makes an important choice: she distracts the guards and claims responsibility for stealing The Grimmerie. Elphaba sings, "It's not her you want – It's me! It's meeeee!" On the elongated "meeee" Elphaba rises into the air, soaring above Glinda and the guards below, amplifying the performance of change through the use of vertical space. Unlike the first empowerment feeling, which was primarily a result of the shift she felt in her relationship with Glinda and social power, Elphaba's final empowerment feeling is generated by rebelling against The Wizard's guards. Exerting her newly found magical powers while simultaneously rejecting the social power embodied by The Wizard's guards, Elphaba is lit by swirling lights and supported by full orchestration while she begins to belt the number's final verse.

The affective power of "Defying Gravity" can certainly be linked to the spectacle provided by lavish Broadway musical theatre production values, virtuosic vocal performances, and themes of female empowerment in *Wicked*'s dramaturgy, but the number's final moment is best understood by examining these elements alongside the constellation of feeling-technologies – such as lighting, scenography, lyrics, composition, orchestrating, blocking, props costume, and gesture – which combine to achieve the number's force. In addition, it is clear that affect theory gives us the analytical tools to examine how these feeling-technologies perform empowerment through an emphasis on power and change. Such an analysis has two important implications.

First, as evidenced by the tension between Boyd and Wolf's interpretation of empowerment in *Wicked*, where the former argues that the story disenfranchises Elphaba and the latter argues for the musical's empowering qualities, the theme of female empowerment is a touchstone topic in *Wicked* scholarship. My arguments here concerning the range of ways that costume, gesture, sound, and props combine to build sensations of empowerment contribute to on-going debates about female empowerment in *Wicked* by demonstrating how dramaturgy is only one of several elements which contribute to the performance of empowerment. As such, the plot may present a story that is objectively disempowering while simultaneously performing empowerment with the support of a host of other musical theatre feeling-technologies. Moreover, the case of *Wicked* helps to address a question posed at the outset of this thesis: What does a performance of empowerment do? In the case of "Defying Gravity," feeling-technologies amplify the performance of empowerment, making the sensation of empowerment the primary point of connection between stage and auditorium. In the following chapter, I will build on the framework presented in this chapter in order to demonstrate how "One Day More" from *Les Misérables* offers an ensemble performance of empowerment.

Chapter 3: Rifles and Raised Fists: The Performance of Empowerment in “One Day More”

3.1 *Les Misérables*: An International Production

“One Day More” is the rousing first act finale from the 1987 Broadway musical *Les Misérables*. Despite the story’s focus on overwhelming disenfranchisement and the death of several protagonists at the hands of the French army, the significant affective impact of “One Day More” is often linked to feelings of empowerment by both critics and scholars. Previous scholarship in the field of musicology has closely analyzed the song’s orchestration and composition to argue for its place amongst other signature numbers from megamusicals of the 1980s. In this chapter, I build from this work to argue that affect theory offers valuable analytical tools to locate choices about orchestration, composition and other aspects of music within the broader context of theatre’s feeling-technologies. Contextualized in this way, we can understand the fuller complement of performance choices that build the feelings of empowerment that have been so widely associated with the number. More particularly, I examine the final note and gesture of “One Day More”: a chorus singing at fortissimo while holding a raised fist. Where in *Wicked* I analysed a performance of empowerment by one character within the context of a single song, here I connect the climactic and iconic performance of empowerment in “One Day More” to the songs and performance choices which precede it and demonstrate how empowerment is performed by an ensemble. Through this analysis, I hope to show how affect theory provides language and models for understanding how the performance of empowerment in this case is shaped by a range of mutually constitutive feeling-technologies organized to emphasize power and change. As a result, despite the striking absence of objective

empowerment of the characters within the narrative, a sensation of empowerment becomes the primary point of connection between stage and auditorium.

Based on Victor Hugo's 1862 historical novel of the same name, *Les Misérables* is a sung-through musical which first opened on Broadway on March 12, 1987. The musical features compositions by Claude-Michel Schonberg, French lyrics by Alain Boubil and Jean-Marc Natel, and an adapted English libretto by Herbert Kretzmer. The music is known for its use of recurring motifs and includes solos such as "I Dreamed A Dream," "On My Own," and "Empty Chairs and Empty Tables"; duets such as "In My Life" and "A Little Fall of Rain," and several ensemble numbers such as "At the End of the Day" and "One Day More." Although I will explain the musical in more detail below, in broad strokes the story traces Jean Valjean's life, a 19th century Frenchman who is sentenced to nineteen years in prison for stealing a loaf of bread. After being protected from the police by a church bishop, Valjean dedicates his life to God. The musical follows Valjean from his tenure as mayor of a small town where he meets prostitute Fantine and her daughter Cosette to the 1832 Paris Uprising where he encounters student revolutionaries Enjolras, love-struck Marius, and the daughter of a gang leader, Éponine. Although the musical includes scenes from Cosette, Marius, and Fantine's storylines, the plot is primarily driven by Valjean's status as a fugitive on the run from the relentless policeman Javert and particular emphasis is placed on events associated with the 1832 Paris Uprising. Also known as the June Rebellion, historically, this is the revolt in which republicans tried to reverse the establishment of the July Monarchy of Louis-Philippe.

In their 2008 chapter of *The Cambridge Companion to the Musical*, Paul Prece and William Everett argue, "*Les Misérables* epitomized the pan-national production of mega musicals" (253). The musical was first developed in France by Boubil and Schonberg. The result

of their work was a concept album which sold 260,000 copies and subsequent stage version directed by Robert Hossein at Paris' Palais des Sports in 1980. Five years later, in 1985, an English-language version opened in London's West End at the Barbican Theatre where it was a box office success as evidenced by its sold out run (Nightingale). Its popularity resulted in the show's Broadway premier in 1987 and "the buzz for the show was perhaps the strongest that Broadway had ever seen" (Sternfeld 190). Partially as a result of its commercial success, *Les Misérables* has been classified as a megamusical by musical theatre theorist Jessica Sternfeld who links it to other megamusicals of the 1980s such as *Cats*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

In her 2006 book *The Megamusical*, Jessica Sternfeld argues that megamusicals of the 1980's shared several unique features. First, megamusicals were usually sung-through, meaning there was little to no spoken dialogue; as a result, the music carried the storyline and decreased the language barrier of spoken dialogue for international audiences. Second, they featured epic plots with universally relatable themes. For example, Sternfeld cites *Phantom of the Opera*, *Cats*, and *Les Misérables* and argues that these musicals "[grapple] with broad, universal issues that audiences tend to relate more to the concepts than the specific location" (2). She cites, for examples, themes of obsessive love in *Phantom of the Opera* and themes of freedom and forgiveness in *Les Misérables* (2). Third, they followed strict production codes for non-Broadway productions. Unlike previous genres of musical theatre, which might be staged differently by directors in cities outside New York, megamusicals of the 1980s are characterized by strict production codes which insist on similarities between productions. As such, a spectator who had attended *Les Misérables* in Tokyo or Toronto could reasonably expect a high degree of similarity with the New York production.¹⁸ Finally, marketing choices at this time were critical

and these shows were pitched as cultural events. As Sternfeld notes, a megamusical “is not just big inside the theatre; it is big outside it as well. New megamusicals, especially in the 1980s, were cultural events marketed with unprecedented force” (3). From its self-proclaimed motto “the world’s favorite musical” to the manipulation of the logo in different production contexts, *Les Misérables* exemplified the large-scale marketing campaign associated with the megamusical. For example, the image of young Cosette featured on the logo was adapted in marketing materials in different countries: in France, she wore a beret with the Eiffel tower behind her; in New York, she held a torch and corona, and in Canada she wore a Mountie uniform. So, while *Les Misérables*’ story is set in France, the producers were careful to link the production with a range of applicable, local icons to suggest the broader relevance of its themes and invite audience members to connect the show’s story with their own national histories. Locating *Les Misérables* among other megamusicals of the 1980s provides valuable context for understanding how the show managed audiences’ feelings and expectations even before they entered the theatre.

Despite its popularity with audiences, there is a relative dearth of serious academic considerations of *Les Misérables*. This is likely due to *Les Misérables*’ classification as a megamusical, a genre which Sternfeld argues has been trivialized by musical theatre scholars (5). There have been no full-length scholarly books or articles specifically devoted to *Les Misérables*, and beyond entries in surveys and encyclopaedias, *Les Misérables* has received very little focused critical attention. In *Changed for Good*, Stacy Wolf does devote a short section of Chapter 4 to an analysis of the diminished role of women in *Les Misérables*. The show also receives passing mention in Bruce Kirl’s *Unfinished Business: Broadway Musicals as Works-in-Progress*, which argues that the show depoliticizes its subject matter through its lack of practical

solutions to social issues. Miranda Lundsager-Nielson's *Directors and the New Musical as Drama* includes a brief discussion of the show's dramaturgy. The aforementioned article "The Megamusical: creation, internationalization and impact" by Paul Prece and William Everett also discusses the show's transnational qualities. The most significant scholarly consideration of *Les Misérables* – particularly in terms of the length – is provided by Sternfeld who devotes an entire chapter of her book *The Megamusical* to a musicological approach to the study of *Les Misérables*.¹⁹ A comparable amount of attention to production details is also available in Edward Behr's fan-oriented *The Complete Book of Les Misérables*. While none of these draws specifically from affect theory, together they provide useful foundations upon which to build an analysis of this kind.

3.2 *Les Misérables*' Synopsis

As my arguments turn on how choices about gesture, music, lighting, costume and scenography amplify feelings of empowerment in a decidedly disempowering story arc, let me begin by clarifying how the musical plots Jean Valjean's story. Connected by his personal journey, plot events unfold episodically and emphasize the relationship between Valjean and policeman Javert. The story begins in 1815 as Valjean is released on parole after serving nineteen years in prison for stealing a loaf of bread. A former convict, Valjean is given a yellow ticket by Javert which identifies him as a criminal, and, as a result, he is shunned by society. Eventually, Valjean is offered shelter in a church by the Bishop of Digne; however, in the middle of the night, Valjean steals silver and attempts to flee. Before he can leave town, Valjean is captured by the police. Valjean expects to return to jail, but the bishop intervenes and lies to the police, telling them he gifted Valjean the silver. Moved by the bishop's actions, Valjean rips up the yellow ticket and vows to dedicate his life to God.

The next episode takes place in 1823 when Valjean has assumed the name Mr. Madeleine and is the mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer. At a factory in town, a fight breaks out between Fantine, a young mother whose daughter lives with innkeepers in another town, and one of her colleagues. Valjean instructs the foreman to solve the issue. The foreman fires Fantine, and she is forced to become a prostitute in order to secure her daughter's continued safety. Just as Fantine is about to be arrested by Javert, who is now a police officer in Montreuil-sur-Mer, Valjean intervenes. Realizing his part in Fantine's downfall, Valjean promises to help Fantine and her daughter Cosette. When Fantine dies, Valjean vows to find Cosette, but before he can leave, Javert discovers Valjean's true identity. Again a fugitive, Valjean departs Montreuil-sur-Mer and saves Cosette from the greedy innkeepers the Thénardiers.

The next episode takes place in 1832 in Paris where General LaMarque, a kind government figure who shows mercy to the poor, is about to die. Here, several characters are introduced: the beautiful teenage Cosette, an idealistic group of students set on revolution, student Marius who instantly falls in love with Cosette, student leader Enjolras, and Éponine, the street-wise daughter of the Thénardiers. After an incident with the Thénardiers, now gang leaders, Valjean is recognized by Javert. Valjean informs Cosette that they must leave Paris, but Cosette and Marius have fallen in love at first sight. Elsewhere, rallied by Enjolras, the students meet. When the students hear of General LaMarque's death, they decide it is time to act and plan their uprising. The act ends on the evening before the 1832 Paris Uprising.

Act II is somewhat less episodic than Act 1, with the majority of the action dedicated to the battle between the revolutionaries (the students) and the French army. Of the students, only Marius survives, carried to safety by Valjean. After several meetings between Javert and Valjean during the battle, Javert commits suicide by throwing himself in the Seine. A few months later,

Valjean tells Marius that he is a former convict who must disappear for Cosette's safety. On Marius and Cosette's wedding day, they discover Valjean's whereabouts. Cosette and Marius find Valjean sitting alone in a church awaiting his death. Valjean dies in the church, guided to heaven by the ghosts of Fantine and Éponine.

3.3 Ruling-class power in *Les Misérables*

Les Misérables features several universal themes such as redemption, love, and spirituality; however, the story also explicitly addresses the division of power. In fact, while Valjean's quest for spiritual redemption inflects his – and, to a lesser degree, Javert's – storyline, the central plotlines in *Les Misérables* are primarily driven by power relations: Valjean gains economic power when the bishop gives him silver and candlesticks; Valjean becomes spiritually empowered when he rips up his yellow ticket and dedicates his life to God; Fantine becomes financially powerless when she loses her factory job; the Thénardiens covet ruling-class power through financial means, and the student revolutionaries seek to shift the balance of ruling-class power by overthrowing the French government. Unlike power in *Wicked*, where characters negotiate with magical power and social power in order to navigate the political power structure in the Land of Oz, France in *Les Misérables* is primarily governed by ruling-class power which is constituted by physical power, financial power, and moral authority as recognized by the church.

The importance of physical force in ruling-class-power in 19th century France is emphasized early in *Les Misérables*' plot. The audience first meets Valjean as he performs manual labour while being circled by armed guards. Gesture and lyrics – which feature the prisoners repeating the phrase “look down” while avoiding eye-contact with the violent guards – not only indicate the brutal conditions in the prison, they also demonstrate that in *Les*

Misérables' diegesis, power is exerted through physical force²⁰. While early plot points emphasize the importance of physical power through Valjean's subordination in specific power relationships, the importance of physical power is best evidenced by the contrast between Valjean and Fantine. Throughout the first act, Valjean's physical strength is emphasized, most notably when Javert recognizes Valjean by the force he displays in lifting a fallen cart from the ground in "The Runaway Cart." As a result of his physical strength, Valjean is able to evade capture on several occasions because he can physically protect himself. On the other hand, Fantine is limited by her lack of physical power. In "Fantine's Arrest," while working as a prostitute, Fantine meets an aggressive client, Bambatois. Responding to Bambatois' advance, Fantine scratches him; however, this only aggravates his behaviour. Larger and more powerful than Fantine, he grabs her by the hair and throws her to the ground. When Javert and the guards arrive, they continue to intimidate Fantine physically, holding her by the arms and dragging her along the ground. It is only when Valjean intervenes that Fantine's safety is ensured. If Fantine possessed Valjean's physical strength, she might have been able to defend herself, and the difference between the two characters highlights the importance of physical strength as a key feature of ruling-class power.

Financial power is first introduced in "The Prologue" where Valjean is imprisoned for stealing bread for his starving family. The dramaturgy immediately establishes the importance of money through Valjean's storyline; however, the role of financial power in ruling-class power is best evidenced by the transition from "What Have I Done?" set at the church to "At the End of the Day" set in Montreuil-sur-Mer several years later. The Bishop of Digne saves Valjean by lying to the police and giving Valjean silver and candlesticks. The bishop's generosity motivates Valjean to dedicate his life to God and break with his identity as a convict. This decision drives

Valjean's emotional and spiritual story; however, Valjean's decision would not be possible without the bishop's gift, which empowers him financially as well as spiritually. The result of Valjean's increased financial power is evidenced by the change it produces; when we meet Valjean in Montreuil-sur-mer, he has become the mayor of the town, a position that would not have been available to him if he had been forced to beg for food and shelter.

Financial power is also emphasized through the Thénardiens' plotline. The Thénardiens are introduced with the song "Master of the House" which features a rousing chorus, bawdy lyrics and gesture, and establishes the couple as duplicitous and greedy, as they dupe and steal from patrons (Sternfeld 203).²¹ Throughout the show, the Thénardiens remain consistently and unapologetically interested in financial gain at any price, and their survival contributes to the show's political commentary which critiques the values of ruling-class power in 19th century France. While the audience is encouraged to view the Thénardiens as emotionally depraved, their story arc also emphasizes the importance of financial power. Like Glinda's declaration about popularity and power in *Wicked*, the Thénardiens may be presented as unsavoury, but their outlook is not wrong in terms of human-scale survival. In fact, unlike many other characters, the Thénardiens' realistic understanding of the importance of financial power is what allows them to survive, revealing important information to the audience: money matters in the ruling-class power structure of *Les Misérables*.

Moral authority as recognised by the church is the final form of power which constitutes ruling-class power in 19th century France. However, it is important to differentiate between spiritual power and moral authority as recognized by the church. Spiritual power – a philosophical framework that suggests how characters will be rewarded and punished after their deaths – plays a key thematic role in *Les Misérables*; however, it is not made manifest onstage.

As such, spiritual power is a power structure separate from, but complementary to, the ruling-class in 19th century France in *Les Misérables*' dramaturgy. This distinction helps clarify how a "good" character such as Fantine can be at once oppressed by ruling-class power in France – where despite the extremely difficult material choices she makes to secure her child's safety, she has no access to moral authority as recognized by the church – yet still be cited for the spiritual power she will obtain in Heaven after her death. Most notably, in the musical's penultimate scene, Fantine returns as a ghost who guides Valjean to heaven. On her deathbed, Fantine was ill and hallucinating, but as a spirit – who has presumably ascended to heaven herself – she is lucid and healthy, costumed in a flowing white gown.

Perhaps the best example of moral authority as recognized by the church may be found in Valjean's interactions with the bishop in "The Prologue." In "Valjean Arrested/Valjean Forgiven," Valjean is arrested for stealing silver and candlesticks. However, when the police officers arrest Valjean, the bishop lies for him, effectively saving him from imprisonment. Respecting the Bishop's moral authority, the police officers assume he is telling the truth and do not question him. As a result, Valjean is released, and the audience can recognize the power associated with moral authority as recognized by the church. As the above examples suggest, power relationships in *Les Misérables* are demonstrated in relation to physical force, financial power and moral authority rooted in the church and tied to a particular spirituality. Understanding these constitutive elements of ruling-class power in the France of *Les Misérables* provides the analytical framework to examine the performance of empowerment in "One Day More."

3.4 *Les Misérables*' Dramatic Gestures and Empowerment in "Do You Hear The People Sing?"

At Café ABC, Enjolras and Marius quarrel about love and revolution while their comrades drink. Suddenly, Gavroche enters, informing the group that General LaMarque has died, and "Do You Hear the People Sing?" begins immediately after Enjolras sings the final lines of "Red/Black." This seamless transition between "Red/Black" and "Do You Hear the People Sing?" begins what Sternfeld has described as a "dramatic gesture." She argues, "The seamless transitions between scenes weave together everything in the show, including songs that can be considered set pieces with somewhat closed forms, as well as the less tidy, more recitative-like or actions-packed material that comes between set pieces (191). She suggests that both of *Les Misérables*' acts can be divided into four or five sections of drama, and that the continuous orchestration links these scenes together in "sweeping gestures" (191). In her analysis, Sternfeld identifies the end of act one as one of these sections. She writes:

[The students'] scene at the ABC Café becomes "Red and Black," which becomes "Do You Hear the People Sing?" Then the attention shifts without an orchestral pause to Cosette's front yard; she is grown and in love with Marius, who appears and begins to woo her. Their love scene includes "In My Life" and "A Heart Full of Love." After the briefest of pauses, which sometimes draws applause, an eavesdropping Éponine spots her father, Thénardiers and his cronies; this is "The Attack on Rue Plummet," which lands breathlessly on the first note of the act 1 finale, "One Day More." Thus, the entire section from the introduction of the students to the end of the act feels like one dramatic gesture. (192)

Framing the final five songs of *Les Misérables*' first act as a single dramatic gesture helps to distinguish the feeling-technologies which build to the act one finale of *Les Misérables* from those in *Wicked*. While each of the final five songs of act 1 in *Wicked* – "Popular"; "I'm Not That Girl"; "One Short Day"; "A Sentimental Man"; and "Defying Gravity" – contribute to the act's dramaturgical and affective conclusion, there is more disjuncture due to the diegetic time

jumps between scenes, orchestration breaks, spoken dialogue, and clearly marked set changes. Whereas in *Les Misérables* the dramatic gesture of the final five act I songs is marked by continuity and a drawing together of different voices into a choral ensemble, in *Wicked* greater disjuncture builds to the singling out of Elphaba's defiant voice and body in "Defying Gravity." For example, the link between "Popular" and "I'm Not That Girl" in *Wicked* differs from the connection between "Do You Hear the People Sing?" and "In My Life" in *Les Misérables*. In *Wicked*, "Popular" establishes Glinda and Elphaba's friendship while "I'm Not That Girl" poses a challenge to their friendship as a result of their mutual affection for Fiyero; however, while "I'm Not That Girl" dramaturgically builds on "Popular," the two numbers are separated by a diegetic time jump from night to day, a set change from dorm room to classroom, spoken dialogue which adds a different dramatic texture from sung lyrics, and an orchestration break which encourages the audience to applaud²². By contrast in *Les Misérables*, "Do You Hear the People Sing?" and "In My Life" each offers dramaturgical developments in different storylines (the former, the revolutionary storyline; the latter, the love story between Marius and Cosette), but the transition between the two numbers is more connected by diegetic chronology where events directly follow one another as well as a rolling set which enters unobtrusively, sung-through lyrics, and orchestration which discourages the audience from applauding. The result is that boundaries between the dramatic blocks of action in *Les Misérables* are less clearly demarcated from one another than in *Wicked*. In both cases, choices about set changes, gestures, chronology of events, flow as well as the kind and number of voices combine in the service of particular affective ends, ends that shape the performance of empowerment.

Thinking about the performance of empowerment as part of a dramatic gesture in *Les Misérables* connects a range of artistic elements introduced in "Do You Hear The People Sing?"

to similar ones that are re-performed and amplified in “One Day More.” The audience is introduced to 1832 France – the setting for “Do You Hear the People Sing” and the final five songs of act 1 – with the song “Look Down.”²³ Sung by street-boy Gavroche, beggars, prostitutes, Enjolras and Marius, the lyrics emphasize the gap between the rich and the poor as the beggars sing, “Look down, and see the beggars at your feet/Look down and show some mercy if you can/Look down and see the sweepings of the street.” The beggars represent one of several groups of The People – such as the prisoners in “The Prologue” and the factory workers in “At the End of the Day” – in *Les Misérables*; however, “Look Down” is somewhat different from the songs which precede it because The People are beginning to show unrest²⁴. The beggars ask, “When’s it gonna end?/When we gonna live?/Something’s gotta happen now or/something’s gotta give,” and Enjolras wonders, “With all the anger in the land/how long before the judgement day?” As Stacy Wolf argues, “the ensemble number presents a community on stage. A creative team’s choice to have the entire cast sing together ... enforces the idea of ‘the people’ through volume of voices and the volume of bodies, the aural and visual space taken up by the group as a whole” (95). Of particular importance in “Look Down,” the ensemble sings to the audience (as opposed to each other). This both invites the audience into the story world and creates a scenario in which The People on stage speak directly to “the people” in the audience, and since “One Day More” ends with an ensemble performance of empowerment, the emphasis on the chorus at the beginning of the dramatic gesture is significant.

The performance of empowerment is emphasized by feeling-technologies which highlight change and Enjolras’ empowerment feelings. In “ABC Café/Red and Black,” it becomes clear that Enjolras has not just been questioning authority; he is ready to lead the students – and The People – to revolution. However, recognizing the high stakes of revolution,

he sings that he “needs a sign” in order to act. The students support Enjolras with cheers, but their dedication to revolution is not immediately clear. When Marius arrives late and insists on rambling about his new love for Cosette, the students are quickly distracted, laughing and drinking while Marius and Enjolras argue about love and revolution in “Red/Black,” and the explicit discussion of the colour red primes the audience for the red flag which will be featured in “One Day More.” As “Red/Black” concludes, the mood becomes raucous and loud with several characters talking at once. While the students argue, the blocking emphasizes Gavroche’s entrance through verticality. Making use of the impressive café set, Gavroche enters from the top of the steps, positioning him above the men below. While the audience’s attention might be pulled to Gavroche’s position in space, the students’ attention is not, and he is forced to yell several times. Finally, Enjolras quiets the crowd and Gavroche announces General LaMarque’s death. For the first time since the beginning of “Red/Black,” there is silence and stillness on stage. In a sung-through musical in which there are very few orchestration breaks, this silence is significant. Not only does it focus attention and change the mood, it also removes the emotional cues provided by the underscore. As such, spectators must interpret the action based on artistic elements such as blocking, lighting, gesture.

The students absorb Gavroche’s news by retreating from the central table and several of the men turn away from the audience. As a result, the audience’s attention is directed toward Enjolras through blocking which positions him as the focal point on stage and lighting which illuminates his features. Facing the audience, Enjolras pauses. Then, he looks up, and his expression changes from downtrodden to determined. Unsupported by orchestration, he sings, “LaMarque is dead.” A piano accompanies his next line, underscoring Enjolras’ shifting feelings. Enjolras continues, “LaMarque! His death is the hour of fate.” LaMarque is a symbolic figure

who embodies both physical power and financial power through his position as an army general, and it is clear that Enjolras has identified General LaMarque's death as the sign he has been waiting for.²⁵ The orchestration swells – continuing to emphasize the shift Enjolras feels – and his lyrics are punctuated by blasts from the trumpets as he sings, “The people's man. His death is the sign we await!” The students rally around Enjolras and they turn toward him and cheer. As he reaches the final lyrics, the blocking draws focus to Enjolras through the use of verticality as he steps up onto the table and sings, “They will come one and all/ They will come when we call!” With his final word, he punches the sky, holding his arm in a fist above his head. This is the first time the raised fist is prominently featured in *Les Misérables*, and the blocking and gesture will be repeated in “One Day More.” Without pause for applause, Enjolras begins to sing “Do You Hear the People Sing?” At first he sings alone, but, one by one, the other students join, demonstrating how empowerment might be performed by an ensemble. Students sing lines individually, but perform the chorus in unison. They sing, “Do you hear the people sing?/ Singing a song of angry men?/ It is the music of a people/ Who will not be slaves again!” Marching to the song's military-style beat, the students leave the café and go to the street, encouraging The People to join them. By the end of the song, the entire chorus sings at fortissimo while Enjolras and Gavroche are wheeled around the stage in a cart, waving a red flag.

Despite the building momentum, “Do You Hear The People Sing?” never reaches a climax; rather, the song fades out, and the aural transition is supported by the blocking. Instead of holding a pose at the number's conclusion – a musical theatre convention – several characters sing their final note with their back to the audience as they walk, roll, or run off stage. The blocking is elaborated upon by set changes. As The People exit, the gate featured in “In My Life” seamlessly rolls in. Without pause, Marius separates himself from the students to meet

Cosette at the gate. The blocking emphasizes continuity as the following scene begins with Éponine's eavesdropping and her father's entrance. Just as the gate rolled in, it rolls out, without pause or fanfare. The blocking and set design contribute to the gathering momentum of the dramatic gesture, ramping up the stakes of the scenes which follow. If it were not for the students' decision to revolt – motivated by growing feelings of empowerment introduced in “Red/Black” and “Do You Hear the People Sing?” – the stakes in the following scenes/songs would be significantly lower: Marius would not be forced to choose between Cosette and the revolutionaries; Éponine would not have to worry about Marius moving to France (though she would still need to grapple with his love for Cosette); Javert would not dedicate himself to fighting against the revolutionaries. In combination with the scenography, staging and orchestration, the dramaturgy contributes to a dramatic gesture which begins with “Do You Hear the People Sing?” but does not reach its climax until “One Day More.”

3.5 The Performance of Power in “One Day More”

“One Day More” takes place out of time, as each individual storyline arrives at its climax. In a number that Sternfeld has noted is frequently described as “rousing,” all the characters from act I are on stage throughout, their multiple perspectives woven together and unified through the theme of anticipation: Marius anticipates the consequences of his decision to either fight with the students or follow Cosette; The People anticipate the revolution, and the Thénardiens anticipate the opportunity to steal from the dead²⁶. As we saw in *Wicked*, act one finales frequently seek to build anticipation and raise the stakes for audience investment in the second act. Both Sternfeld and Replogle have offered useful musical analyses of “One Day More.” Where Sternfeld emphasizes composition and recurring motifs in relation to generic conventions of megamusicals of the 1980s, Replogle highlights the production's spectacle-scale

elements in order to examine its international appeal. This section builds from their work to consider the combination of performance elements which contribute to the song's affective force. How do these combinations amplify both the performance of power and potential for change that set up the performance of empowerment in the number's final eight measures.

Musicologist Susan McClary has argued that "a great deal of wisdom resides in conventions: nothing less than the premise of an age, the cultural arrangements that enable communication, co-existence, and self-awareness" (5-6). In "One Day More" the Broadway musical theatre convention of the combination song allows for the intertwining of multiple storylines which are thematically and musically linked and so contributes to the affective power. A combination song introduces "one or more songs separately and then [joins] them together in counterpoint" (Knapp 208). Gilbert and Sullivan are often credited with the device's early use in musical theatre, but the combination song was developed and refined by others, with one of the most recognizable examples being the "Tonight Quintet and Chorus" from *West Side Story*. Raymond Knapp argues that "Tonight" prolongs "a tableau of intensifying expectation prior to the dramatic events, as seen from multiple perspectives" and differentiates the song's style from combination songs such as "Getting Married Today" from *Company* which presents contrasting perspectives (208-210). As in Knapp's reading of "Tonight," therefore, closer analysis of "One Day More" reveals the combination song's mechanisms of "intensifying anticipation" through its use of tableau, multiple perspectives and a sense of prolongation of time.

Tableau contributes to the affective strength of "One Day More" by pausing the action in a frozen moment in order to extend and describe feeling. Broadly, tableau refers to a vivid scene or description and it has been employed in a range of artistic disciplines including painting, literature and theatre. The frozen moment – and its contemplative and affective effects for the

audience – is a key characteristic of tableau. Speaking of tableau’s use in literature, Peter Brookes argues that “the characters’ attitudes and gestures, compositionally arranged and frozen for a moment, give, like an illustrative painting, a visual summary of the emotional situation” (48). While tableau expands the duration of an emotional moment through a pause, the frozen moment also functions to interrupt the action and create tension between stasis and movement. In “Redressing the Black Crook: The Dancing Tableau of Melodrama,” Bradley Rogers effectively argues that:

Though seemingly contradictory, these two qualities – static, yet also lively and animated – are, in fact, easily reconciled: as tableau interrupts narrative, it is precisely narrative that becomes static; meanwhile, the tableau activates a dynamic affective force. [...] Resisting the inertia of narrative, which serves to defer affective release, tableaux allow the reader to amplify, savour, and metabolize the emotional forces conjured by the text. (483)

“One Day More” capitalizes on tableau to realize the full potential of the number’s affective force. By freezing the action just before the climax of each storyline, “One Day More” vividly details each character’s emotional state: Valjean incorrectly believes that Javert has finally tracked him down and regretfully decides to flee to France with Cosette. He sings, “These men who seem to know my crime/Will surely come a second time.” Cosette and Marius have fallen in love at first sight, but prepare to part. They sing, “Tomorrow you’ll be worlds away/And yet with you, my world has started.” Marius decides whether he should follow Cosette or fight alongside the students in the revolution while Éponine anguishes over her unrequited love for the oblivious Marius, singing “One more day with him not caring.” Enjolras rallies the students for the coming revolution, asking Marius, “Will you take your place with me?” while Javert promises to make the revolutionaries “wet themselves with blood.” The students respond with force, crying out, “One day to a new beginning!” Finally, the Thénardiens sing about the

upcoming revolution – “Most of them are goners/So they won’t miss it much” – eagerly anticipating the opportunity to steal from the dead. The use of a tableau vividly details each character’s individual emotional circumstance and, unlike other numbers which deny affective release through sweeping action, the frozen moment amplifies these feelings by extending their duration.

As I argued in Chapter 2, Broadway act 1 finales often employ a range of feeling-technologies in order to increase a musical number’s affective resonance and encourage audience members to return to the theatre after intermission. In “One Day More,” this feeling-technology is elaborated on by the theme of anticipation, adding to the song’s affective force. The song’s lyrics emphasize characters’ feelings of anticipation by voicing each character’s plans, concerns, and excitement about the next day’s events: Valjean repeats, “One day more”; Marius and Cosette lament, “Tomorrow you’ll be worlds away”; Éponine sings, “One day more all on my own”; Javert declares, “One more day to revolution,” and the students sing, “One day to a new beginning.” All the perspectives are united in the final verse when the entire company (with the exception of Fantine, who is dead) sings, “Tomorrow we’ll discover/ What our God in Heaven has in store!/ One more dawn/ One more day/ One day more!” The song asks: What will happen tomorrow? Will Valjean flee to France? Will Marius decide to go with Cosette or fight with the revolutionaries? Who will win in this uprising? In order to find out what happens in any given storyline, audience members must return to the auditorium for the second half of the show.

While the lyrics express anticipation, the composition and orchestration elaborate upon the song’s affective force through the use of musical motifs. Produced before *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Les Misérables* was the first megamusical to use recurring motifs extensively (Sternfeld 193), and Sternfeld argues that “One Day More” is the “most complex and effective number in

the score” (205). The build up to the final eight measures incorporates “reprises, re-worked references to earlier numbers, new material, and several motifs en route to its rousing climax” (Sternfeld 205). The song begins with a descending arpeggio played by woodwinds and string previously featured in “Who Am I?” and Valjean’s “music begins much the same as that song” (Sternfeld 205). Next, Marius and Cosette harmonize to the melody from “I Dreamed a Dream,” previously featured in the show-stopping number by Fantine, to croon about their love. Éponine enters, picking up the “I Dreamed a Dream” bridge and reaching the “high point in the melodic line” (Sternfeld 205). Here, Enjolras urges Marius to abandon Cosette, still singing to the “I Dreamed a Dream” tune. Javert’s melody is new to the audience, but it is supported by “the arpeggiated figure in the orchestra, expressing his dedication to undermining the student revolution the next day” (Sternfeld 206). The Thénardiens enter, singing an altered but recognizable refrain from “Master of the House.” Meanwhile, the chorus builds, singing to the bridge of “I Dreamed a Dream” in alternating lines, and Marius chooses to stay with the students and fight. The combination of musical motifs contributes to the number’s affective power and sets up the performance of change in the final eight measures.

3.6 The Performance of Empowerment in the Final Eight Measures of “One Day More”

The primary change performed in “One Day More” is Marius’ decision to fight with the students. This takes place just before the number’s rousing final eight measures, and it is here that the affective impact of the dramatic gesture is most evident, as Marius’ choice is directly linked to “Do You Hear The People Sing?” through lyrics, music, and staging. Immediately prior to the final eight measures, Marius announces, “My place is here/ I fight with you.” Here, Marius finally resolves the conflict introduced at the beginning of the dramatic gesture in the seamless transition between “Red/Black” and “Do You Hear the People Sing?” and elaborated upon in “A

Heart Full of Love”: he chooses to fight with the student revolutionaries. Immediately preceding Marius’ line, the chorus sings, “Do you hear the people sing?” While the melody is not the same as “Do You Hear the People Sing?” this moment – which references the song’s title and key phrase – affectively connects Marius’ decision with the events at the ABC café and signals to the audience that the growing empowerment feelings which did not have the opportunity to climax in “Do You Hear the People Sing?” will be resolved in “One Day More.”

The performance of change is elaborated upon by the use of verticality and the introduction of the large red republican flag. In “Do You Hear the People Sing?” tablecloths were used as makeshift flags, and in “One Day More” this performance is amplified through the flag’s colour, its increased size, and the use of vertical space. As Marius makes his decision to join The People, a red flag is waved above the ensemble²⁷. The importance of the colour red was first emphasized in Enjolras and Marius’ argument at the ABC café in “Red/Black.” The chorus sings:

Red- the blood of angry men!

Black- the dark of ages past!

Red- a world about to dawn!

Black- the night that ends at last!

The song and the flag’s broader republican associations prime the audience to recognize the performance of change and the significance of the red flag in this scene. The red flag has long been associated with political revolt and, particularly since its raising in the Champ-de-Mars in 1791, the French Revolution. Moreover, for audiences at *Les Misérables*, through ghosting the flag is affectively inflected with revolution, as the red flag has been the banner of several historical revolts such as the 1848 Revolution in France, the rally for an eight hour work day for

May Day in Chicago in 1886, and the Russian Revolution in 1917. Of particular relevance for my analysis here is the raised red flag's compositional echoes with Eugene Delacroix's famous 1831 painting *Liberty Leading the People*, created the year prior to the June rebellion events cited in the musical. In the *Oxford Companion to Western Art*, Marc Jordan argues that the painting "has since become one of the icons of French republicanism." It depicts a female personification of Liberty holding the tricolour French flag in one hand and a musket in the other as she stands over top of dead bodies²⁸. While the blue and white stripes of the tricolour flag are visible, the red stripe, the colour often associated with fraternity, is the most prominent. As these various antecedents suggest, the use of the red flag in *Les Misérables* creates a powerful image of revolt because it is redolent with associations to iconic imagery, historical antecedents and textually specific explanations of the colour's meaning in the play.

In addition to its colour, the red flag vertically extends the playing space. While he is speaking of scenography, Bruce Bergner's description of the importance of the use of verticality also applies to props. He states, "Elevation allows you to compose dramatic stage pictures as it aids visibility and clarity of comprehension. If some characters and design elements are elevated over others, all of the details come into view. The composition is better appreciated. Sightlines improve" (37). The sheer size of the flag is spectacular and when it is waved over top of the chorus below, it helps focus attention, builds from iconography long associated with the French Revolution and creates a large-scale, powerful composition which is elaborated upon by choreography.

In "Dancing bodies, spaces, places and the sense: A cross-cultural investigation," Andrée Grau highlights the longstanding importance of verticality in Western dance and culture. He argues, "Verticality is therefore seen as representing both higher orders and control: control over

one's own gravity and over other people" (10). The use of choreographed verticality in *Les Misérables*' final dramatic gesture of the first act is, therefore, significant. As I discussed earlier in this chapter, in "Red/Black" Enjolras stepped up onto one of the café tables as he experienced feelings of empowerment. Similarly, in "One Day More," at the same moment as Marius declares "I fight with you," Gavroche is lifted onto the shoulders of an ensemble member. In conjunction with other artistic elements, the choreography functions to support and amplify the performance of change.

The composition which accompanies Marius' decision to fight with the student revolutionaries performs change as well as power. Measures earlier, Fantine, Valjean, and Cosette sang individual melodies over-top of the ensemble, but when Marius decides to fight with the students, the characters' voices unite and sing the final verse together. As a result, individual characters and their accompanying musical motifs are no longer singled out. This performs change by shifting the aural texture of the song and emphasizing the ensemble's performance of empowerment. Moreover, unlike "Defying Gravity," which featured Elphaba's voice singing over the other characters on stage, "One Day More" uses the full force of its large cast to increase the affective strength of the note's delivery. As Stacy Wolf argues:

The force of an ensemble number depends on male and female voices spanning the octaves, singing some sections in harmony and others in unison, coming together and dividing ... In a balance between chaos and unison, voices that break out and then come together create the dynamism and power of the ensemble number. (95)

The result is a sonic quality that uses multiple harmonized pitches – including a C₅ sung by the performer playing Cosette – and vocal registers to perform power.

Les Misérables' spectacular qualities are often credited to its impressive scenography (Wolf); however, "One Day More" uses minimal set pieces, relying instead on choreography and

the volume of bodies on stage to amplify the performance of power and change. Unlike the barricade set featured in act 2, the scenography in “One Day More” is sparse, comprising only a trunk and a trap door. As a result, the bodies on stage command the audience’s visual attention. In the measures prior to Marius’ decision, main characters are scattered all over the playing space. However, characters such as Javert and the Thénardiens slowly join The People, who are arranged in an inverted-v formation, delivering their voices frontally to the audience. As Marius declares his intention to fight alongside the students, he too joins The People, completing the visual shift from individual bodies gathered in space to an organized collective formation. The inverted-v formation, where important figures are placed near the front and others fall into ranks, is an image commonly used in military photography and revolutionary paintings such as *Liberty Leads the People*. The power of the inverted-v formation is supported by a repetitive four step dance, which affectively recalls the strength, discipline, and organization of an army’s march. This unified formation has several implications: it empowers the human body on stage through the control of the playing space; it connects characters with one another through their placement in the inverted-v, and it establishes The People as the dominant character on stage, further contributing to the ensemble performance of empowerment. Further, as the bulk of the ensemble faces the audience frontally, directing their song to the house, audiences are welcomed into the story world. As in “Do You Hear The People Sing?” The People on stage sing to “the people” in the audience, inviting them to connect with the empowerment feelings experienced by the characters.

The gesture of the held-raised fist by two leading characters adds to the ensemble performance of power and change. As in *Wicked*, the held raised fist is a ghosted gesture associated with revolution and revolt. Significantly, the raised fist is evident in many of the most

famous images of the French Revolution, most particularly in the aforementioned painting *Liberty Leading The People*, and the affective force of the gesture is amplified through the use of a prop musket, clenched by Enjolras' raised fist. As Andrew Sofer writes in *The Stage Life of Props*, "Like all props, guns are durational objects whose existence implicitly extends beyond any staged events" (171). A highly recognizable weapon, the musket is both broadly associated with power and violence and more specifically affective linked with French revolutionary imagery and iconography such as Henri Felix Emmanuel Philippoteaux' *Lamartine in front of the Town Hall of Paris Rejects the Red Flag on 25 February 1848*; Hippolyte Lecomte's *Battle at the Rue de Rohan*, and *Battle Outside the Hotel de Ville* by Jean Victor Schnetz, all of which prominently feature muskets. As such, Enjolras' raised fist, which clenches the barrel of the musket triumphantly above his head, accrues meaning through ghosting and contributes to the performance of power.

However, while such antecedents for muskets and raised fists are important, Elin Diamond argues, "While a performance embeds traces of other performances, it also produces an experience whose interpretation only partially depends on previous experience" (2). In this case, the interpretation of the held raised fist is inflected by ghosting, but also generates meaning through re-performance. In "Red/Black" Gavroche enters and informs the students of General LaMarque's death. It is this information that leads to Enjolras' empowerment feelings, and it is Enjolras who first performs the held-raised fist gesture in "Do You Hear the People Sing?" In "One Day More," the gesture is re-performed by both Enjolras and Gavroche, the first two characters to become associated with empowerment through the performance of change in "Do You Hear The People Sing?" However, in "One Day More" the characters are no longer individuals; they are members of a collective. As such, when Enjolras and Gavroche

triumphantly raise their fists in the air and hold them for the number's final moment, the empowerment feelings first introduced in the transition between "Red/Black" and "Do You Hear The People Sing?" finally reach their climax. Unlike the conclusion of "Do You Hear The People Sing?" the characters do not run, walk, or roll off stage. Instead, they hold their final posture, encouraging the audience to applaud and completing the ensemble performance of empowerment.

The final note and gesture of "One Day More" combine for one of the show's signature moments. The number's affective power can, in part, be attributed to megamusical production values and universally relatable themes (Sternfeld). However, the strong associations of "One Day More" with feelings of empowerment are most usefully examined by considering the range of feeling-technologies – such as dramaturgy, lyrics, ensemble vocal performance, blocking, scenography, composition, and gesture – which contribute to the number's force. Moreover, it is apparent that affect theory gives us the tools to investigate how these feeling-technologies perform empowerment through an emphasis on power and change. Unlike the performance of empowerment in *Wicked*, which was inextricably linked to a single character, "One Day More" features an ensemble performance of empowerment.

Through the preceding analysis of this ensemble performance, two important conclusions can be drawn. First, affect theory gives us the language to more clearly articulate the range of artistic elements which contribute to the amplification of sensation. Second, this kind of analysis helps begin to explain how "One Day More" has become associated with empowerment despite the striking absence of empowerment outcomes in the musical's story. As I have argued throughout this chapter, dramaturgy is one of several feeling-technologies which performs empowerment. As in the case of *Wicked*, this suggests that a performance of empowerment is not

dependent upon empowerment outcomes in the story; rather, empowerment can be performed through the amplification of other artistic elements such as composition, orchestration, blocking, or gesture. Moreover, through an examination of the mutually constitutive feeling-technologies which amplify the performance of power and change, it is clear that sensations of empowerment become a point of connection between audience and auditorium. As such, while the ensemble performance of empowerment in *Les Misérables* differs from the single character performance of empowerment in *Wicked*, both function to generate empowerment sensations and create connections in the theatre.

Conclusion

My primary concern in the preceding chapters has been to demonstrate how affect theory provides valuable analytical tools to examine how artistic elements can combine in musical theatre to generate empowerment feelings. Although they do so differently, both “Defying Gravity” from *Wicked* and “One Day More” from *Les Misérables* involve distinctive performances of empowerment. Returning to the questions I posed at the outset of this thesis, I have examined these case studies in light of my broader scholarly interest in empowerment feelings: How is empowerment performed? What does a performance of empowerment do? What do empowerment feelings do?

How is empowerment performed? In *Wicked: A Musical Biography*, Paul Laird writes, “It is obvious to state that *Wicked* empowers women, but this is a difficult concept to quantify or qualify” (296). Is it *obvious* that *Wicked* empowers women? As Michelle Boyd argues, “Neither girl gets the fairy tale ending, but while Glinda is only denied love, Elphaba is denied her homeland, her reputation, and the credit for her life’s work” (114). Boyd concludes, “Indeed, Elphaba even loses her agency in her own story: *Wicked* unfolds as Glinda’s flashback” (114). The tension between Boyd’s interpretation and Laird’s assertion usefully highlights how complex empowerment performance is in *Wicked*. On the one hand, the story traces the political disempowerment of one of the main characters; on the other hand, the show generates a sensation which can be, and often is, described as empowering. My analysis in Chapter Two is less interested in the production as whole than in the final note and gesture of the signature act 1 finale, “Defying Gravity,” a number that has become associated with empowerment both within the musical and beyond. Through an analysis of the feeling-technologies which perform power and change, I sought to illustrate how empowerment sensations form the primary point of

connection between stage and auditorium. Building on this work, Chapter Three analyzed an ensemble performance of empowerment in *Les Misérables* and similarly concluded that despite the absence of empowerment outcomes in the dramaturgy, “One Day More” performs empowerment through notes, composition, orchestration, blocking, scenography, and gesture that emphasize change and power.

Beyond outlining how empowerment is performed, however, the case studies also illustrate how theatre, megamusical theatre specifically, is a potentially rich site to analyze feelings of empowerment. In the preface to *Theatre & Feeling*, Jen Harvie and Dan Rebellato argue:

Theatre has taken its place within a broad spectrum of performance, connecting it with the wider forces of ritual and revolt that thread through so many spheres of human culture. In turn, this has helped make connections across disciplines; over the past fifty years, theatre and performance have been deployed as key metaphors and practices with which to rethink gender, economics, war, language, the fine arts, culture and one’s self.
(vii)

As evidenced in the chapters above, theatre continues to help us make connections across disciplinary boundaries. Because “feeling is the core of the theatre” (Hurley 77), theatre provides a useful laboratory for studying the vexed relationship between empowerment and feeling. In particular, by analyzing these signature numbers through the lens of performance studies and affect theory, I identify dramaturgy as one of several interdependent artistic elements that generate a number’s affective force. Megamusicals have been identified as a genre in which affective technologies combine to amplify the sensations of empowerment performance but future work might build from this analysis to identify additional ways in which empowerment is performed more subtly in other genres of theatre. Studies of the performance of empowerment could also move outside the theatre. As Harvie and Rebellato assert, “The theatre is everywhere,

from entertainment districts to the fringes, from the rituals of government to the ceremony of the courtroom, from the spectacle of the sporting arena to the theatres of war” (vii). As such, it would be productive to query how empowerment is performed for affective ends in a range of contexts.

What does a performance of empowerment do? Definitive conclusions cannot be drawn from two case studies alone; however, both “Defying Gravity” and “One Day More” do provide important clues about the function of performances of empowerment. As my analyses suggest, both numbers employ feeling-technologies to manage and move affect in particular ways. Specifically, both numbers layer several interdependent artistic elements such as lyrics, orchestration, scenography, iconography, and gesture to emphasize power and change, empowerment’s two defining characteristics. As a result, a performance of empowerment functions to make empowerment the primary point of connection between stage and auditorium. This has three important implications for future work. First, it helps us begin to analyze why both numbers have become associated with empowerment despite the absence of objective empowerment outcomes in the story. Second, it de-emphasizes dramaturgy as the predominant artistic element of a performance of empowerment and instead positions story as one of several artistic elements that contribute to a number’s affective force. Third, it helps us formulate new lines of inquiry: if a performance of empowerment does not depend on empowerment outcomes to generate feeling in a theatrical context, then it may follow that empowerment feelings do not depend on empowerment outcomes in other contexts. In Chapter One, I drew on the work of Diener and Biswas-Diener to highlight the complicated relationship between empowerment and feeling. They argue that “just because people have objective power does not mean that they will feel empowered or will act” (21). Future research might invert Diener and Biswas-Diener’s

assertion and ask: Can one feel empowered despite the absence of empowerment outcomes? My arguments here suggest this might be the case, but significantly more work is needed. What are the consequences of feeling empowered and acting when you do not hold objective power?

What do empowerment feelings do? This question is too large to answer fully in this thesis; however, I have tried to take up this question seriously in contexts where some of the elements of empowerment feelings are presented in large scale. Beginning from the premise established by leading theorists that empowerment is patently not an emotion but nonetheless often tied to emotion, I have focused on how feeling and empowerment are related in particular megamusical contexts. Moreover, I have demonstrated that an interdisciplinary approach to empowerment feelings – one which combines social sciences’ based arguments about empowerment with methodologies from performance studies, theatre studies, and affect theory - can productively complement and challenge work in other fields. Further, as the preceding case studies are but two examples of the ways in which the feeling-technologies of theatre can be organized for the performance of empowerment, it is clear that more research opportunities exist to pursue the complex relationship between performance, empowerment, and feeling.

Endnotes

¹ The disconnect between empowerment feelings and empowerment outcomes has also been emphasized by leading empowerment researcher Marc Zimmerman. In “Psychological Empowerment: Issues and Illustrations,” he argues, “One can be psychologically empowered without having the ultimate authority or power to realize one’s objectives” (592).

² For example, in *Measuring Empowerment, Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives*, the third section titled “Subjective Well-Being and Power” includes four articles which study the feeling of empowerment and their relationship to empowerment processes.

³ For more on these productions, see Boon and Plastow.

⁴ In the United States, an album goes platinum when it has sold one million copies.

⁵ “One Day More” was appropriated for Bill Clinton’s 1992 presidential campaign as well as for Barack Obama’s 2008 presidential campaign. Most recently, the tune was used by supporters of Obama’s re-election bid with the song “One Term More,” lyrics by Don DeMersquita.

⁶ In “The meaning of empowerment: the interdisciplinary etymology of a new management concept,” Nicola Denham Lincoln, Cheryl Travers, Peter Ackers and Adrian Wilkinson argue, “In this respect, power is an essential component of any interpretation of empowerment” (273).

⁷ In *The Archive and the Repertoire*, Taylor writes, “My particular investment in performance studies derives less from what it is than what it allows us to *do*” (16).

⁸ Gregg and Seigworth identify eight “orientations that undulate and sometimes overlap in their approaches to affect” (6). These include: the study of human/non-human nature in the Humanities and social sciences; the boundaries of human/non-human (such as cybernetics); philosophically inflected cultural studies; philosophically inflected psychological and psychoanalytic inquiry; cultural materialism in politically engaged work, work which uses affect to turn away from the linguistic turn, discourses of emotions, and finally practices in the science which “embrace a pluralist approach to materialism” (8).

⁹ For example, see: Mast and Swain.

¹⁰ For more on identity-oriented musical theatre studies, see Clum and Miller.

¹¹ For example in his report of the 2014 Oscars, *New York Daily* writer Joe Dizemianowicz describes “Defying Gravity” as an “empowering and lung-challenging anthem.”

¹² In musical notation a “D_{b4}” refers to a D-flat an octave above Middle C.

¹³ Consistent with *Wicked*'s dramaturgy, I use "Galinda" to describe the character before she changes her name midway through the first act and "Glinda" to describe the character after she changes her name.

¹⁴ As of December 2013, there have been six scholarly articles published on *Wicked*. See Boyd, Kruse, Lane, Leigh, Wolf (2007) and Wolf (2008).

Additionally, there have been four dissertations written about *Wicked*. See: Bee, Burger, Malone, and Schrader.

¹⁵ Earlier versions of chapter 6 and 7 were previously published in *Theatre Journal and Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture and Media Studies*. See: Wolf (2007) and Wolf (2008).

¹⁶ In *Wicked*, Animals with a capital A are creatures who are equal to humans. In *Changed for Good*, Stacy Wolf argues that the Animals "stand in for a racialized other" (204).

¹⁷ For the sake of emphasis and length, I have omitted portions of this verse. Elphaba's complete verse is: "So if you care to find me/Look to the western sky!/ As someone told me lately: 'Ev'ryone deserves the chance to fly!'/ And if I'm flying solo/ At least I'm flying free/ To those who'd ground me/ Take a message back from me/ Tell them how I am/ Defying gravity/ I'm flying high/ Defying gravity/And soon I'll match them in renown/ And nobody in all of Oz/ No Wizard that there is or was/ Is ever gonna' bring me down!"

¹⁸ For more on the standardization of Broadway productions, see Burston.

¹⁹ In addition, Holley Dawn Replogle's dissertation dedicates a section to the musical analysis of *Les Misérables*.

²⁰ In *Les Misérables*, characters frequently sing about "looking up" or "looking down." In the spiritual power structure, "looking up" is significant because it indicates that a character is looking to Heaven. In this case, the characters are forced to "look down," limiting their access to spiritual power.

²¹ The song's title, "Master of the House," which is also a key element of the refrain, points to disproportionate power dynamics through references to "master," which invokes master/slave relationship.

²² The difference between sung-lyric and spoken text is addressed *The Dictionary of Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis* by Patrice Pavis, where it is argued that "recitative is an effective way of indicates changes in the texture of dramatic text and performance" (89).

²³ "Look Down" is sometimes titled "Paris: 1832."

²⁴ The tradition of a non-individualized chorus who represents a general population dates back to Ancient Greek drama. Following H.C. Montgomery, who argues that the chorus might be considered as its own character, I am using “The People” to denote the role of chorus in the final five songs of act 1. For more on the chorus in Greek drama, see: Montgomery.

²⁵ LaMarque’s death is not accompanied by empowerment processes; the people have not been given any additional physical strength or money, and in the second act the tragic consequences of acting on feelings of empowerment when they do not reflect processes of empowerment are evident when the majority of the student revolutionaries are slaughtered.

²⁶ The only character from act 1 who does not appear in “One Day More” is Fantine, who is dead.

²⁷ While I acknowledge that the colour red is frequently associated with intense emotions such as courage, love, anger, and passion, I believe it is most productive here to analyze the colour red in relation to the flag rather than in terms of the affective potential of red more broadly.

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