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Title: Exploring the Theme of Immigrants in Lin-Manuel Miranda's Musicals

Chapter 1: Introductory Chapter

1.1 Lin-Manuel Miranda

Lin-Manuel Miranda, born January 16, is an American composer, lyricist, playwright, and actor. Miranda is a second-generation Puerto Rican immigrant, who was born and raised in New York City, in the neighbourhood of Inwood, a street away from where *In The Heights*, his first musical, is based. His mother's ancestors include an interracial couple, Sophie, who was black, and David Towns, who was white; from the early 1800s, this couple spent their married life trying to outrun slavery as laws and governments changed around them. Miranda is married to Vanessa Nadal, and has two children— Sebastian and Francisco. Miranda is best known for creating and starring in the Broadway musicals *In the Heights* and *Hamilton*.

1.2 Hamilton: An American Musical

Hamilton is a multi-award-winning musical written by Lin-Manuel Miranda. The musical is split into two acts and tells the story of America's struggle for independence through the life of Alexander Hamilton, one of America's founding father. Born with humble beginnings, Hamilton's ambition and diligence brought him from the position of Caribbean outsider and bastard orphan to an American war hero and George Washington's right-hand man. In the process, Hamilton has showed what it means to truly embrace the American Dream. This musical not only follows the life of Hamilton but also describes the American Revolution, the relationship between England and its colonies as well as the lives of other notable people

Hamilton had established relations with. This musical discusses the personal, political and social struggles of living in colonial America.

1.3 In The Heights

In the Heights is yet another multi-award-winning musical by Lin-Manuel Miranda. The musical is set in the modern day context, in a barrio in the Washington Heights, a largely Hispanic-American neighbourhood. The story of *In the Heights* is set over the course of 3 days, exploring the lives of immigrant characters and the challenges they face to get through each day. The musical depicts the struggle with identity immigrants face as well as the American Dream that manifests in every one of them. *In the Heights* was nominated for thirteen Tony Awards and won four, including the 2008 Best Musical, Best Original Score, and Best Choreography awards. A film adaptation of the musical is set for release in Summer 2020.

1.2 Rationale

This paper analyses the theme of immigrants through the two musicals, namely In the Heights and Hamilton. The idea of immigrants connotes a negative image, particularly in this day and age, with the stereotype being perpetuated with the controversy on DACA in the US, and closer to home, the Rohingya refugee crisis. Immigrants are being misrepresented in our society today by mainstream media. Numerous universities have produced research papers analysing the negative media portrayal of immigrants (University of Kansas, 2016. Western University, 2013. University of Oxford, 2013.) This paper aims to identify how the the musicals influenced people's perceptions of immigrants.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How does Lin-Manuel Miranda's motivations and thought processes influence the way we understand his works?
2. How are the immigrant characters humanised?
3. What and how are the social stereotypes broken in the musicals?

1.4 Thesis Statement

Lin-Manuel Miranda's musicals help to break negative social stereotypes of immigrants and rehumanises them, influencing the audience mindset on immigrants.

1.5 Scope of Research / Delimitation(s)

This paper will only be looking at two musicals- In the Heights and Hamilton, and not the other works that he was involved in, such as Bring It On, 21 Chump Street, and Moana as they did not win any of the EGOTs (Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, Tony).

This paper will focus solely on the issue of immigrants alone and not any other topics like the American Dream or racial and gender equality. This paper will only be using the Social Identity Theory in regards to media discourse of immigrants.

1.6 Significance of Research / Usefulness

By investigating Miranda's musicals, who is a Puerto Rican immigrant and therefore has a first-hand experience of the perception and treatment of immigrants, and analysing how his lyrics and portrayal of respective characters show a side of immigrants that is both different and similar to the idea we have been exposed to,

- 1) This paper aims to contribute to the study of immigrants by showing a side of immigrants different from how mainstream media portrays them. This will help in portraying a more holistic view on immigrants from more perspectives. Narratives are a basic mode of understanding and sharing of experience. By analysing the two narratives in the form of musicals Hamilton and In the Heights, this paper hopes to contribute to the telling of the immigrant story.

- 2) The purpose of this research is to analyse how Lin-Manuel Miranda portrays immigrants in his musicals and to trace the development of his portrayal in his work. This research is a new field of research, that is, critics have not explored this side of Lin-Manuel's works. Thus this research will help to add to existing knowledge and research on Lin-Manuel and on his various musicals.

1.7 Limitations

Not a lot of research has been done on the two musicals regarding how they address issues on immigration as such, thus this research paper will be original and established theories are being applied to these musicals for the first time. Little research has been carried out on musicals as a media portraying immigrants and the issues that arise with their presence.

Due to the lack of resources in ways such as, but not limited to, time, accessibility to interviews with relevant peoples etc. As such, we are unable to expand our scope to apply other theories as well as study other aspects of the American Dream.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Two similar findings produced from the analysis of different works from multiple researchers on immigrant portrayal in the media are that immigrants have been problematised and dehumanised.

2.1 Problematisation of Immigrants by the Media

The media play a large role in framing public policy and discourse about immigrants and refugees. In addition to disseminating policy messages, the media also construct and promote particular positions on these issues. (Fleras & Kunz, 2001) The way the media depicts immigrants problematises them, which can influence attitudes, behavior and decision-making in hiring, policing, health care, education and other policies (Jenkins, 2017). Different portrayals of immigrants contribute to their problematisation in the media. The different ways immigrants are represented stem from and further contribute to the negative stereotypes present in societies about immigrants. These negative stereotypes give host communities the perception that immigrants are threats to their community.

It is clear in the different forms of media that the perceived threats that immigrant communities pose can cause a sense of alarm and suspicion about immigrants. The portrayal of immigrants as threats come from a multitude of negative stereotypical

depictions of communities of colour. One common stereotype is that immigrants are criminals. This negative stereotype causes a perception of immigrants to be a threat to personal safety. An example of this stereotype in the media was when the Tamils living in Canada were shown in the media to be bogus refugee claimants that were potential criminals. A bill was introduced by the Conservative party, described by the Minister of Public Safety to be “cracking down on those criminals who would abuse our generous immigration system and endanger the safety and security of Canadian communities” (Toews, 2010). This example proves that the perception of immigrants as criminals can be taken up by political elites, causing this stereotype to be disseminated even more by the media, causing non-immigrant communities to feel unsafe and insecure. In fact, another research done on other government releases found that 90% of terms used to describe immigrants were negative, including descriptions like “illegitimate, illegal and threatening”. In the same research, print media was also found to have 76% of the descriptive terms of immigrants being negative, similarly focusing on the threats immigrants supposedly pose to communities, with many associating these threats to criminality and terrorism. Such stereotypes are also present in narratives, whereby, in a research done on popular television series, 14% of immigrant characters were directly tied to some form of unlawful activity including murder, human trafficking, and drug dealing (TheOpportunityAgenda, 2017).

Other than potential physical threat to host communities, the media has also depicted immigrants to pose economic threats as well. Stereotypes that exacerbate concerns of such threats include immigrants “stealing” the jobs of locals and competing for housing etc. A controversial example is Trump’s tweets. His unfounded claims of immigrants that “They’re taking our jobs. They’re taking our manufacturing jobs. They’re taking our money. They’re killing us.” His accusations are, however, proven false by research as multiple studies on the impacts of immigrants on the economy show that “the impact of immigrant labor on the wages of native-born workers is low... However, undocumented workers often work the unpleasant, back-breaking jobs that native-born workers are not willing to do” (Vanda Felbab-Brown, 2017). Such research show that immigrants are not stealing jobs but are, on the contrary,

filling up empty spots in the economy. These false claims and misrepresentation of immigrants are not just rampant in government releases but also in other forms of media that are more commonplace like television shows. A research done on popular television programs show that “immigrant characters are underrepresented in popular television shows”. In fact, of the 1,164 leading and minor characters that were examined, only 70 characters were identifiable as immigrants (TheOpportunityAgenda, 2017).

The under representation and misrepresentation of immigrants by the media aggravates the situation of problematisation of immigrants as only a biased, single-sided, negative viewpoint of immigrants is portrayed in the media, not allowing host communities to understand the full picture of what an immigrant is really like. Hence, this paper seeks to do research on other forms of media that show the other side of immigrants.

2.2 Dehumanisation of Immigrants by the Media

One reason proposed by researchers as to why immigrants are problematised by the media is that “by manufacturing a crisis around immigration and refugee policy, a problem is identified that can be decisively solved, reducing anxiety in the process” (Victoria M. Esses and Stelian Medianu). However, according to Victoria M. Esses, “what may result is extreme negative reactions to immigrants and refugees, including their dehumanization” and that “such dehumanization can serve to reduce uncertainty, providing definitive answers as to how immigrants and refugees should be viewed and how they should be treated”.

Indeed, while numerous researchers have attempted to prove that the media dehumanises immigrants, few have managed to produce significant evidences for their claims. However, similarities can be drawn across different frameworks used to identify and determine dehumanisation as well as varying definitions. The definition of dehumanisation can be agreed upon as “the denial of full humanness to others, and their exclusion from the human species” (Bar-Tal, 2000; Haslam, 2006). Different ways have been suggested as to how people are denied of “full humanness”.

In a research done on how others may be denied of full humanness, Haslam et al. (2008) proposed that it could be done in an animalistic sense in which they are seen as not having risen above their animal origins. It is suggested that this happens when others are viewed as less than human, hinting at a lack of characteristics like “refinement, civility, morality, self-control, and cognitive sophistication” (Victoria M. Esses).

In another study done on dehumanisation (referred to as infra-humanisation) by Leyens and colleagues, defined the term as “considering outgroups less human and more animal-like than the ingroup”. He suggested that one way dehumanisation is carried out is to deny that outgroups experience secondary, complex emotions. Leyens says that the infrahumanised are portrayed to experience primary emotions like fear and pleasure, like animals do, but do not experience secondary emotions that are more often associated with humans, like shame, hope, remorse. These secondary emotions are presented in the form of the “Feeling Wheel”, contributed and improved upon repeatedly by various researchers, notably Christopher Cobb (2000), Glori Willcox (1982), Robert Plutchik (1980) and others.

Another indication of dehumanisation has been proposed by Schwartz and colleagues. In an analysis of intergroup aggression, Schwartz suggested that people infer a group’s identity through the group’s values, judging them by the extent to which they have “transcended their basic animal nature and developed their human sensitivities and moral sensibilities”. In the Schwartz Theory of Basic Values, Schwartz defined these values to “reflect a conscious desire to promote the welfare of others” (Schwartz and Struch, 1989). These values include kindness, forgiveness, equality etc. If people perceive a group to be lacking of these values then they will “judge that group to be less human and thus less worthy of humane treatment” (Victoria M. Esses).

While specific modulations of the aforementioned ways of dehumanisation have been proposed, these three are the fundamental indications of dehumanisation.

Dehumanisation, or the denial of full humanness to a group, can therefore be summarised as a process where others are 1) portrayed to not have developed from their primal animalistic form, 2) denied to have experienced secondary emotions that are considered human and 3) perceived to be lacking in values that show their sensitivity and sensibility as human beings. Hence, these will be the benchmark for this paper when comparing how the literary text studied portrays immigrants in a different light and re-humanises them.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Hamilton: The Revolution by Lin-Manuel Miranda and Jeremy McCarter, as well as annotations from *genius.com* will be used to explore the portrayal of immigrants in the two musicals *Hamilton: An American Musical* and *In The Heights*, both by Lin-Manuel Miranda. The book *Hamilton: The Revolution*, provides song by song background, providing a fresh perspective from the director's and writer's point of view.

All 46 songs in *Hamilton* and all 23 songs in *In the Heights* will be used to follow character development as well as to analyse the gradual change of audience perception of immigrants. In the analysis of the songs, Miranda's portrayal of immigrant characters will be focused on. The ways immigrants are problematised and dehumanised by the media are contrasted with the way Miranda portrays his immigrant character to identify the fundamental differences between both portrayals.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Analysis

Lin-Manuel Miranda's positive portrayal of immigrants in his musicals act as a counter narrative to popular mainstream media and help to dispel stereotypes about immigrants. His portrayal of immigrants contributes to the changing of audience perceptions on immigrants. Miranda does this through his cleverly crafted characters, namely Alexander Hamilton and Marquis de Lafayette from *Hamilton* as well as Usnavi de la Vega, Nina Rosario and most of the characters of *In the Heights*. There are primarily three different portrayals that have surfaced from my

analysis. The portrayal of these immigrant characters as:

1. capable individuals who bravely rise up to challenges
 2. righteous people who work hard for success and glory
 3. humans who experience complex secondary emotions and possess human values
- can be seen throughout the two musicals, showing another side of immigrants that contemporary works are unable to represent.

4.1. Immigrants as capable individuals who bravely rise up to the challenge

The immigrant characters in the two musicals face great hardship. Poverty, lack of opportunities and even struggles with identity, Lin-Manuel Miranda's characters face all sorts of challenges. The common stereotype is that in face of all these obstacles, immigrants are powerless, giving rise to the generally sympathetic and pitiful portrayal of immigrants many media outlets give. The misconception that arises is that immigrants are too lost with their own problems to contribute to society and therefore is a burden to the economy.

However, Lin-Manuel Miranda has a different portrayal of his immigrant characters. In *Hamilton*, Alexander Hamilton and his friend Marquis de Lafayette, a french immigrant, both do not conform to this stereotype. Alexander Hamilton is born with his fair share of problems

How does a bastard, orphan, son of a whore
And a Scotsman, dropped in the middle of a forgotten spot in the Caribbean by
providence impoverished,
In squalor, grow up to be a hero and a scholar?
The ten-dollar founding father without a father
Got a lot farther by working a lot harder
By being a lot smarter By being a self-starter
By fourteen, they placed him in charge of a trading charter
Lyrics of Alexander Hamilton, Track #1 in Hamilton: An American Musical

Being born into poverty and without any opportunities, Alexander Hamilton did not resign to fate but instead overcame his challenges by writing his way out. Miranda directly juxtaposed Hamilton's past and future in one song to show how an immigrant is able to achieve despite initial setbacks and even contribute to his country. Hamilton's capabilities can also be seen throughout the entire musical, how he develops from a "young, scrappy and hungry" revolutionary to George Washington's right hand man and finally America's founding father, aiding in the setting up of America's Constitution. Lin-Manuel Miranda emphasises the process of Hamilton's rise to the top rather than the product to highlight the challenges the immigrant overcomes. Alexander Hamilton faced great adversity during his childhood and these problems carried over when he migrated to America. His poverty meant that he started at a disadvantage in America. However, his "top notch brain", his flair for speaking and, most importantly, his mentality to charge at every obstacle head on, enabled his success.

Lin-Manuel Miranda's introduction of Marquis de Lafayette in *Hamilton*, while historically factual, also provided him with a second immigrant character that could represent another group of immigrants. Lafayette was a french immigrant in America but unlike Hamilton, he was not there to stay and had not fully assimilated into the country's culture. Nonetheless, he too has had his fair share of challenges as well as contributions to America. With roots from French, Lafayette could not speak a single word of english, much like many immigrants in our time.

I dream of life without a monarchy

The unrest in France will lead to onarchy?

Onarchy how you say, how you say, anarchy?

Lyrics of My Shot, Track #3 in Hamilton: An American Musical

In Lafayette's introductory song, Lin-Manuel Miranda explained that he wanted to present Lafayette as a hopeful french revolutionary in a foreign city, unfamiliar with the language and unconfident about himself. Miranda added that the slip of pronouncing "a" as "o" is common amongst french immigrants picking up english.

An immigrant you know and love who's unafraid to step in! he's constantly
confusin', confoundin' the British henchmen ev'ryone give it up for America's
favorite fighting Frenchman!

Lafayette!

I'm takin this horse by the reins makin'

Redcoats redder with bloodstains

Lafayette!

And I'm never gonna stop until I make 'em

Drop and burn 'em up and scatter their remains, I'm

Lafayette!

Watch me engagin' em! Escapin' em!

Enragin' em! I'm—]

Lafayette!

Lyrics of Guns and Ships, Track #18 in Hamilton: An American Musical

This song is the fastest set of lyrics in the entire Broadway, boasting 24 syllabus in less than 3 seconds. The character who performed this is none other than Lafayette himself. Lin-Manuel Miranda stated in his book that this juxtaposition was intended to show Lafayette's evolution from a weak English speaker in his first appearance in the show to this point, where his command of English language is the most powerful of anyone in the show. Miranda directly juxtaposes this song to Lafayette's introductory to show his growth as a character and his overcoming of the language and racial barriers to become one of George Washington's best commanders.

Lin-Manuel Miranda presents both Lafayette and Hamilton, the only immigrant characters in *Hamilton*, to be highly capable, as can be seen in track 20, Yorktown, where the revolutionaries are celebrating their victory when Hamilton and Lafayette sing in unison that "Immigrants: we get the job done". Both characters are also very brave in face of daunting challenges that are seemingly impossible to overcome. While Miranda seems to be glorifying the abilities of the two immigrant characters, polishing them up to be flawless and exemplary, the characters are actually crafted with many flaws and mistakes throughout the musical. Hamilton is extremely brash and rash in the musical, often seen to be flaunting his intellect and making decisions

on a whim, not really the image of an ideal immigrant. However, these flaws make the portrayal of the characters historically accurate but also much more realistic and relatable.

Similarly, in *In the Heights*, Lin-Manuel Miranda represents the immigrant braving of challenges through the problems Nina Rosario and her family face.

Sigue andando el camino por toda su vida

Respira—

Y si pierdes mis huellas que dios te bendiga

Respira—

Lyrics of Breathe, Track #2 in In The Heights

The first line translates to “continue walking the path for all your life”. The lines are not sung by any character but echoed in the background. Miranda stated that this was to represent the spirit of the immigrant community, continuously trying again and again regardless of failure. Nina dropped out of Stanford and returned home because she had to work two jobs while studying, not even having the time to read through the books she bought. She goes back to the barrio, not daring to tell anyone of the news especially because everyone “is counting on me (Nina) to succeed”. She is the first and the only one in the community to have made it to college. As she walks home, neighbours sing “Mira, allí esta nuestra estrella!”, saying, “look, there is our star!”. Her scholarship did not cover every cost, hence Nina faced financial problems away at Stanford. The very fact that Nina juggled two jobs while taking classes at Stanford shows how bravely she rises up to the challenge.

Hold tight, Abuela, if you're up there

I'll make you proud of everything I know!

Thank you, for everything I know

Lyrics of Everything I Know, Track #19 in In The Heights

Nearing the end of the musical, Nina decides on going back to Stanford and trying again. However, this is not merely an individual feat but one of the entire community.

Her parents sold their taxi dispatch to fund her education in Stanford. Her father sings, “I will do what it takes, they’ll have everything they need”, referring to his family. The support of the community also helps Nina garner the courage to face her challenge knowing that she is not alone. Hence, Miranda’s portrayal of the barrio and of Nina’s family shows them to bravely face challenges that come their way together as a community.

Lin-Manuel Miranda’s portrayal of his immigrant characters to be capable people who bravely face challenges opposes the media’s portrayal of immigrants that problematises them. Specifically, the perception of immigrants as powerless and weak. While the media takes a sympathetic stance on this, it sends across the wrong message that immigrants are helpless in face of adversity. This false perception propagates into the stereotype that immigrants cannot contribute to the society because they are too lost in their own problems. Miranda’s portrayal of immigrants in his musicals hence, challenge this stereotype and show a different side of immigrants.

4.2. Immigrants as righteous people who work hard for success

Lin-Manuel Miranda portrays his immigrant characters as industrious individuals who endeavour to succeed. This portrayal opposes that of the media as Victoria M. Esses revealed, that immigrants are portrayed to be lazy and resort to crime. Resultantly, immigrants are seen as threats both to personal safety as well as to the economy. In the musicals, Miranda’s portrayal contradicts this, showing immigrants to employ justified ways to make a living as well as the extent of hard work immigrants put in to earn their keep.

In *Hamilton*, Lin-Manuel Miranda presents Alexander Hamilton, an immigrant from St. Kitts and Nevis, to be a tireless worker who toiled away incessantly.

The ten dollar founding father without a father
got a lot farther by working a lot harder by being a lot smarter

Lyrics of Alexander Hamilton, Track #1 of Hamilton: An American Musical

Hamilton was introduced as a character who valued hardwork over anything else. In this song, Hamilton was described to have gotten farther despite every setback every obstacle thrown in his way. Originally, the line “being a lot smarter” was placed before “working a lot harder”. However, Miranda stated in an interview that the swap was intended to emphasise the role of hardwork in Hamilton’s success over his giftedness. Alexander Hamilton once said that “people sometimes attribute my success to my genius; all the genius I know anything about is hardwork”. The crafting of the lyrics as such also reinforced Hamilton’s personal belief.

Even though we started at the very same time
Alexander Hamilton began to climb
How to account for his rise to the top?
Maaaaan, the man is non stop

Lyrics to Non-Stop, Track #23 of Hamilton: An American Musical

During the war, Hamilton wrote letter after letter as the right-hand man of George Washington, persuading allies to send reinforcements, organising the army for Washington and taking up numerous high ranking positions in the army. However, even after the American victory, Hamilton was depicted to be working “non-stop”. In this song, Hamilton is described to “write like he's running out of time”. He was never content and aimed higher, working hard to achieve his goal to set up the New U.S. Constitution. This song recounted him writing 51 out of 85 essays, within 6 months, defending the Constitution. Miranda’s portrayal of Hamilton highlighted that Hamilton’s success came from him working hard to rise up and not by unscrupulous ways, providing a counter example to the media’s representation of immigrants to be criminals.

In *In The Heights*, a prime example of someone who works and fights to prove that she deserves better is Vanessa.

The neighborhood salon doesn't pay me what I wanna be making but I don't mind
As I sweep the curb I can hear those turbo engines blazing a trail through the sky
I look up and think about the years gone by
But one day, I'm walkin' to JFK and I'm gonna fly!
It won't be long now!
Any day...

Lyrics to It Won't Be Long Now, Track #4 in In The Heights

As a hairdresser at Danielle's salon, she says that as "I sweep the curb I can hear those turbo engines blazing a trail through the sky", evoking her desire to escape the life that she had where she struggles with her alcoholic mother. Because of this she struggles to save every penny so that she can afford to move downtown and buy a studio apartment, perhaps eventually even, as she puts it, "walkin' to JFK and I'm gonna fly!" Her dedication and determination, present in her solo song "It Won't Be Long Now", and consistent throughout the entire play, shows that her greatest desire is one that is not merely a dream, but something that she strives towards and working hard to achieve it- which she eventually does at the end of the musical. This attitude of hard work and grit, battling the odds to rise up in society, further illuminates the willingness of immigrants to contribute the very best to their economy, which is completely contrary to the given perspective of many people in the world. Even the less fortunate people in the barrio, such as the Piragua Guy, work hard and fight to compete with franchises like Mr Softy, who attempt to take over the barrio, representing those who may not be as privileged or lucky, but work equally help to contribute to this city that they now call home.

Lin-Manuel Miranda's choice of highlighting the value of hardwork within immigrants is also due to his background. In an interview, he said that he growing up in a hispanic community in Manhattan, the hispanic immigrants worked relentlessly to make a living due to "language and racial barriers". This value of hardwork was instilled in him since young and has carried forward ever since, manifesting in his immigrant characters, reflecting the immigrant way of life. His portrayal of immigrants as hardworking individuals who do honest work break the stereotype of immigrants as criminals, especially the Hispanic immigrants represented in *In the Heights*. On a

deeper level, his portrayal also opposes the belief identified by Victoria M. Esses that immigrants are threats to the society. People believe that immigrants are illegal and criminal, posing threats to their safety, which is debunked by Miranda. Additionally, the perception that immigrants are lazy, wasting resources hence threats to the economy is also challenged by Miranda's portrayal of immigrants to be industrious workers striving for better lives.

4.3. Immigrants as humans who feel complex emotions and possess human values

As identified in the literature review, immigrants are largely dehumanised by the media by being denied of secondary emotions (Leyens et. al) as well as presented to be lacking of basic human values (*Schwartz Theory of Basic Values*, Schwartz 1989 & 2012) that show their sensibility and sensitivity as human beings. Lin-Manuel Miranda's portrayal of immigrant characters to feel complex secondary emotions (love, remorse, hope etc) and possess human values that "reflect a conscious desire to promote the welfare of others" (kindness, forgiveness, equality etc) rehumanises the immigrant.

The main protagonist of *Hamilton*, Alexander Hamilton, is one such character. Miranda presents him to be an honourable character but at the same time equipped with flaws and mistakes.

He aims his pistol at the sky—
Wait!
I strike him right between his ribs
I walk towards him, but I am ushered away
They row him back across the Hudson

Lyrics of The World Was Wide Enough, Track #45 of Hamilton: An American Musical

In the second last song of the musical, Hamilton dies in his duel with Aaron Burr because he chose to do the honourable thing. Hamilton aimed his shot to the sky thinking Burr would do the same. Miranda shows Hamilton to be honourable in other

parts of the play as well. In fact, Hamilton's eldest son died in the exact same way because Hamilton advised his son to aim to the sky in a duel, saying that his opponent will "follow suit if he's truly a man of honour". Hamilton's honour surfaced in duels as he wished not to kill the other party but make the duel a ceremonious thing so that whatever disagreements can be settled through peaceful negotiations. Miranda's portrayal of Hamilton as an honourable person who values human life rehumanises the immigrant image as Hamilton possesses two of ten of basic human values according to Schwartz's theory, which qualifies him as a human.

"The charge against me is a connection with one James Reynolds!
For purposes of improper speculation,
my real crime is an amorous connection with his wife
For a considerable time with his knowing consent.
I had frequent meetings with her most of them at my own house.
Mrs. Hamilton with our children being absent on a visit to her father."

Lyrics of The Reynolds Pamphlet, Track #37 of Hamilton: An American Musical

Miranda also portrays Hamilton to experience complex secondary emotions that are deemed as emotions unique to humans. Hamilton had an affair with Maria Reynolds in song 27 "Say No To This" and its consequences take place in the above song after it has been publicised by his political rivals. His feeling of helplessness and confusion, which are secondary emotions, is expressed through his desperation in his words to Angelica Schuyler, his sister-in-law, begging for her understanding. The remorse, regret and shame felt towards the whole affair are emotions that are unique to humans that other organisms like animals cannot process. Hence, Miranda's choice to include this affair in the musical humanises Hamilton because of the secondary emotions experienced but also because "humans make mistakes". The very existence of mistakes is a human construct, making Hamilton much more relatable and much more human.

In *In the Heights*, Lin-Manuel Miranda rehumanises the immigrant through his portrayal of Vanessa and Usnavi experiencing complex emotions and having basic human values.

And my dearly beloved Dominican Republic I haven't forgotten you!
Gonna see this honey, make a little money
And one day I'll hop Jet
But until that fateful day, I'm grateful
I got a destination
I'm runnin' to make it home

Lyrics of It Won't Be Long Now, Track #4 in In The Heights

This verse, sang by the main protagonist of the musical, Usnavi de la Vega, has both his values and emotions woven inside. Usnavi wishes to go back to Dominican Republic at the beginning of the musical to feel what it is like to be home, but towards the end, he realised that he has been home all along when he sing, "I found my island I been on it this whole time. I'm home". Usnavi feels hopeful as he dreams about returning to Dominican Republic but at the same time is appreciative of what he has now. Gratefulness and hopefulness are both secondary emotions as revealed by the literature review. Miranda also shows Usnavi to have a sense of belonging to the barrio he lives in. According to Schwartz Theory of Basic Values, a sense of belonging falls under the "security" basic value, promoting stability of society. Therefore, Usnavi is humanised as he is given human emotions and prosocial values that show his "rising above one's animalistic origins".

Lin-Manuel Miranda's portrayal of immigrants as humans who experience secondary emotions and possess basic values present them in a more humanised way. The findings in the literature review from Leyens and Schwartz research shows that immigrants are dehumanised by the media because of their lack of such emotions and prosocial values. Miranda's immigrant characters directly opposes the portrayal of immigrants in the media, presenting immigrants to be human, equal to everyone else and hence deserving of equal treatment. According to Victoria M. Esses, dehumanisation of immigrants brings across the message that the only way to treat immigrants is as a lower inferior class. By rehumanising the immigrants, Miranda provides an alternative answer as to how immigrants should be treated.

providing an alternative perception of immigrants, ultimately contributing a different side to the immigrant narrative told by the media.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The portrayal of immigrants in Lin-Manuel Miranda's musicals alters the audience perception of immigrants by opposing negative stereotypes about immigrants that exist in today's world and rehumanising the immigrant experience. Miranda counters social stereotype of immigrants being lazy, weak, powerless, criminal, dangerous, burdensome and useless through his portrayal of them to as hardworking individuals who bravely rise up against challenges, showing them to be capable as well and righteous in their pursuit of success. Additionally, the poor treatment of immigrants in today's society is, in part, due to their dehumanisation in the media. Dehumanisation of the immigrant story excludes them from society's ingroup, showing them to be inferior and deserving of inhumane treatment. Miranda rescues the immigrant story by rehumanising the immigrant experience in his musicals. To conclude, the findings from this paper prove that Lin-Manuel Miranda's musicals are counter narratives to the biased negative portrayal of the immigrant story by the media. Miranda's musicals act as a call for aspiring writers to utilise various perspectives when writing on immigrants. Concurrently, these musicals change public perception of immigrants, influencing others to treat immigrants as equals. The problems arising from the misrepresentation of immigrants by the media identified in the literature review can be alleviated if more works like Miranda's musicals are produced, minimising social inequality and moving towards an egalitarian world.

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