Student

Mrs. Payne

English 1010

13 November 2017

The Rejected Ones

Lin-Manuel Miranda. K’naan. Residente. Snow the Product. Riz MC. Daveed Diggs. Just a week before Independence Day, these artists came together and released the first song for *The Hamilton Mixtape.* This song captured the attention of thousands, shifting their focus from *celebrating* the Fourth of July to *pondering* the Fourth of July. The song, put together by author and creator Lin-Manuel Miranda, “Immigrants (We Get the Job Done),” aims to recognize the hard work and dedication put forth from the immigrants living in America. The same America that was founded on freedom. The same America that was founded by immigrants itself.

The video begins in a train car – just a simple train car. As the rappers transition, so does the background. One train car changes to the next which changes to the next. All of the train cars are similar in the aspect that they have immigrants working in them. But each car is different. One of the first train cars seen in the video has immigrants sewing American Flags. While this could simply be seen as a typical immigrant job, it’s not. It’s meaning dives much deeper. Flags are used as a sign to show patriotism. However, the flags in this video have been created by the people that are not accepted as a part of the American culture. These immigrants sacrifice their time and pour out their hard work. They are crucial to the running of this nation. Crucial. Yet they are rejected and are seen differently than “an average citizen.” When Americans treat immigrants that way, they hoist their “thin red lines on the flag” and “kill” (Miranda). The irony in immigrants sewing American flags is that while they are seen as a rejected and excluded people, they are sewing the very thing that represents this country and its national pride.

One train car to the next. There are train cars with immigrants working in orchards. There are train cars with immigrants working as meat butchers and with immigrants cleaning kitchens. There are train cars with immigrants working construction and with immigrants working as doctors. The variety is vast and diverse, every immigrant “hustling on every level” (Miranda). If there is one thing Miranda is trying to portray, it’s that there is a tone of straightforwardness. There is nothing subtle about this video, the lyrics, and the images that come with it. Miranda’s words translate to passion and dedication. One rapper repeats the phrase, “it's America's ghost writers, the credit's only borrowed” (Miranda). A ghost writer is a writer, who when hired, receives money but no credit. America’s ghost writers are immigrants who work. And work. And work. They are immigrants who finish their jobs, but do they receive credit? “Not yet” (Miranda). By repeating this phrase over and over again, Miranda is able to add to the abundant tone of straightforwardness, that immigrants simply “get the job done” (Miranda).

We see trains cars. Train cars full of people and train cars with symbolism. But it is not until the last scene of Miranda’s video where these train cars come together and form one meaning. The camera zooms out and we see the earth. Oh the simple, little earth.

But it’s not simple.

Covering every square inch, we see trains. They are traveling up, down, over, and under each other. Each train car displays a different part of immigrant life. It is only due to the hard-working immigrants that the train moves forward. And just like that, this simple image turns into a metaphor for our country. America is moving forward, but it is only because of the work “done by the people that get ignored” (Miranda). The immigrant life within the cars is not perfect. Some immigrants are seemingly trapped or simply overcrowded. In America today, there is so much diversity. There are countless ethnicities, races, genders, religions, and ages. With this said, immigrants are still viewed differently. America is melting pot full of every ingredient imaginable, except for one: immigrants. They sit there on the counter next to all of the other ingredients, yet never get added – never are accepted as a part of the American culture. They are surrounded between all of the other ingredients, yet trapped and unwelcomed. But still, the train moves forward, reminding us that we are all people of movement and travel. We are all immigrants.

The video itself needs no lyrics. The lyrics themselves need no video. But hand in hand, these two create a work of art that showcases the idea that immigrants are valued people too. Miranda doesn’t write this song for people against immigration, but rather for the immigrants themselves. He writes it to remind them of their value and worth even while some would argue otherwise. This video is not just a video. It’s a reminder of the worth of every human. It’s a reminder that immigrants are valued. And they get the job done.