Alexander Hamilton: His Personality And His Accomplishments

Who is Alexander Hamilton? What has he accomplished during his lifetime? The musical play, Hamilton, puts light on Alexander Hamilton, one of the Founding Fathers, who is not quite known as much as other Founding Fathers. Hamilton is an immigrant and an orphan, yet he becomes a scholar and marks his face on a ten-dollar (Miranda 16). Throughout the play, Hamilton's strong characteristics, unshaken beliefs, and great accomplishments are depicted. Also, conflicts between Hamilton, a federalist, and Thomas Jefferson from the opposite party: Democratic-Republic, are played. There are two big cabinet battles in the play between Hamilton and Jefferson in rap battle settings with bragging, boasting, and criticizing. The first cabinet battle puts the issue of national debt on the table. The song, "Cabinet Battles #1" portrays contrary beliefs, ideas on financial plans, political parties, and experiences between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson.

Hamilton offers a model for national interests, compared to Jefferson, whose interest is focused on his state, Virginia. Hamilton suggests establishing a national bank to reduce the national debt and to form a unity of the states. However, Thomas Jefferson, a Virginian, sees no reason why Virginia should be taxed and help to pay a tax of other states when they already paid off their debts. He does not want the South to be taxed because "[they] got it made in the shade" (Miranda 161). Southern states have a good condition in tax-wise, and Jefferson does not care about other states. By emphasizing his state, Virginia, Jefferson is more interested in his state, rather than the unity of states. Jefferson goes off and alludes to the history of Britain taxing the tea: "when Britain taxed our tea, we got frisky" (Miranda 161) and warns Hamilton to see what will happen if the federal government starts to tax the whiskey. This prompts Hamilton to counter Jefferson by saying that "If we assume the debts, the Union gets a new line of credit, a financial diuretic" (Miranda 161). Hamilton strongly pushes for the federal government to assume or take over the debts because it would lead creditors to the federal government and will help to pay off the debts by selling bonds and borrowing money. The usage of the word, "Union" in the Hamilton line tells that his suggestion is for the nation. He believes that helping each state to pay off debts will make the country as a whole stronger. Also, the word, "diuretic" is a metaphor to support Hamilton's financial plan, which he insists that it will make the wealth of the country flows. Compared to Hamilton, who believes that his national debt plan will help the unity of states, Jefferson is solely focused on his state.

Also, Hamilton considers the future of the nation while Jefferson lists the history and negative effects that the financial plan might bring to him and his people. Hamilton's line in the first cabinet battle starts with this: "That was a nice declaration. Welcome to the present. We're running a real nation" (Miranda 161). Again Hamilton uses the word, "nation" to put the idea of unity as a nation. Hamilton says running a nation cannot be happening by listing the declaration and having hatred emotions toward the opposite party, but with a strategy and plan. Hamilton starts with his line by "complimenting" Jefferson's lines. Thomas Jefferson has a nice declaration, but they need practical plans and values to run a real nation. Hamilton's practical proposal is a national bank, which he believes that eventually leads to the united nation. On the other hand, Jefferson brags about his Declaration of Independence and refers to history to Britain's taxation without any practical suggestions. While Hamilton considers the future nation,

Jefferson still lives in the past. Hamilton proposes the plan with the logical-based evidence, while Jefferson complains about possible costs that he needs to take if Hamilton's plan is passed.

In addition to their different plans upon national debt and care point, Thomas Jefferson is a hypocrite whose words and actions do not match compared to Hamilton who is upright. Hamilton uses slavery as ethical grounds for criticizing Jefferson. At the begging of the cabinet battle, Jefferson alludes to the Declaration of Independence: "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness." (Maria 161). Jefferson is one of the main writers of the Declaration of Independence and he proudly raps about it in the cabinet battle (Miranda 161). However, Hamilton criticizes a slave-holder Jefferson for his words of pursuing the liberty of mankind. Hamilton repeats what Jefferson says and criticizes by rapping back: "Yeah, keep ranting. We know who's doing the planting" (Miranda 161). Hamilton commands Jefferson to continually rant about planting seeds in the South to pay off debts. He mocks Jefferson for being a slaver-holder behind the scene. Hamilton uses the word, "really" in his line to emphasize and to announce Jefferson's real life as a slavery-holder, which contradicts his words. The tense of the verb is a present participle ("-ing"), indicating that slaves are planting seeds, even during their rap battle. Hamilton goes on and "we" as a subject instead of "I" to emphasize that everyone already knows his contradiction action from his writings. "Ranting," "doing," and "planting" all rhyme to highlight the issue of slavery. Hamilton is straightforward and does not have anything to hide. Later in the cabinet battle when Jefferson says the phrase "in the land of the free," his slaves were not freed. By pointing out Jefferson's contradiction, Hamilton undercuts Jefferson's argument against the national bank.

After criticizing Jefferson for being a slavery-holder after writing the Declaration of Independence, Hamilton points out Jefferson's lack of experience in the American Revolution. Jefferson alludes to the Declaration of Independence. Then, he said, "We fought for [life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness]; we shouldn't settle for less" (Miranda 161). The phrase "we fought" makes Hamilton angry since Jefferson was absent in the American Revolution. Thomas Jefferson was in France during the Revolution (Miranda 161). Hamilton makes combative comebacks, saying, "Mr. Age of Enlightenment / Don't lecture me about the war, you didn't fight in it" (Miranda 161). He calls Jefferson "Mr. Age of Enlightenment" sarcastically and criticizes Jefferson for trying to claim a credit for the war that he was never been in. Then, Hamilton commands Jefferson to stop the "lecture" about the war. The word, "lecture," implies that Jefferson's long-winded speech is without content. Compared to Jefferson who lacks war experience, Hamilton fought in the American Revolution as the right hand of George Washington.

Distinct characteristics of Federalism and Democratic-Republican are shown when Jefferson refers to himself as the man of the people who cares about his people while Hamilton wants the unity of the states. Thomas Jefferson says that Hamilton's plan will give the federal government too much power, and it will benefit "the very seat of government where Hamilton sits" (Miranda 161). Thomas Jefferson does not want to give too much power to the federal government but rather wants a strong state government. He uses a specific word, "the very seat" to refer to Hamilton's position in his opposing party – Federalism, next to George Washington. Jefferson argues against Hamilton's plan since he believes that it will not benefit the people, but only Hamilton, himself. Jefferson goes on and raps about how he is the man of the people. He gives his thoughts on the national bank plan for the national debt - "You just wanna move our money around" (Miranda 161). Inclusive word, "our" represents people who are in similar classes as

Jefferson is. The word “just” leads Jefferson’s undercutting Hamilton’s reasons for his financial plan with only one reason, which is to move the money around, specifically the money that people in southern states work to make. He continues to go on, condemning Hamilton’s offer is extremely bad and it is too many pages for any man to read and understand (Miranda 161). Hamilton goes back to Jefferson by criticizing that focusing on the present is important and the states need to become one first to run as a nation. Hamilton, then, mocks Jefferson’s work in his hometown, Monticello, degrading what Jefferson has been done in his state (Miranda 161). Federalism and Republic-Democratic characteristics are shown through the rap battle between Hamilton and Jefferson.

The difference between two major characters, Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, in their beliefs, experiences, ideas, and characteristics can be seen in the song “Cabinet Battles #1.” The song “Cabinet Battles #1” is sung as a rap battle with insulting, bragging, and boasting. Alexander Hamilton, a federalist, focuses on empowering the federal government by uniting the states and suggests to assume state debts, collect taxes from the states, and pay off the debts. On the other hand, Thomas Jefferson, Democratic-Republican, focuses on people and his state over the federal government. Two founding fathers have completely different backgrounds, beliefs, and experiences. However, both of them stick to what they stand for, which leads them to the big battle. The musical Hamilton tells the story of Alexander Hamilton, one of the Founding Fathers, spotlighting his great works and achievement. Also, the musical brings history to alive and helps the audience to reflect and analyze the history of this nation, the United States of America.