

Twentieth Century American Drama
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Lecture - 42
Hansberry's Day in the Sun Part 3

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Hello and welcome to today's session where we continue to look at the play a Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry. As indicated before this is one of those rare plays which look at race from a very different perspective altogether. It talks about race in a very mundane way as something which affects the day to day life of the protagonists like we would see when we go through the play.

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PLOT SUMMARY



- The Younger family lives in poverty in a two-bedroom apartment on the South Side of Chicago. Walter, the protagonist of the play and the bread winner of the family, is working as a Chauffeur. He is an ambitious man with the dream of becoming a wealthy businessman.
- At the beginning of the play Walter's father has recently died and his mother was waiting for his insurance pay-out of \$10,000. Walter plans to invest the money in a liquor store business he wants to start with his friends, Willy and Bobo. But Mama, who is religious, is opposed to alcohol. She uses some of the money to buy a decent house for the family in a white neighbourhood, Clybourne Park.

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We did very quickly take a look at the characters and some of the critical ways in which the critical aspects which were foregrounded in the discussion of the play. This is about the Younger family and how they are thinking of moving to an area to a neighbourhood which is predominantly white in nature.

The entire storyline is built around that the drama over here in that sense is all about that crisis the dilemma that this African American family is facing when they are thinking of moving into a neighbourhood where they could come across as very different not the this fear is anxiety that they might not blend in and all these dilemma the plot progresses through that.

When the play begins, we are and we are introduced to the Younger family who lives in poverty and they are also living in a two bedroom apartment on the South Side of Chicago. The city becomes a character here just like we have seen in the other place too in the other Twentieth Century American place too where the city becomes a character this rapid urbanization and the changing dynamics of the society becomes something which defines the way in which different characters behave at various points of time.

Walter is a protagonist of the family he is also the main bread winner of the family and he is working as a; working as a chauffeur. He is also presented as someone who is pursuing the American Dream. This is something that we noticed even when we were

discussing the essay in the last session. He is a very ambitious man and he has got this in some sense reason alignment with the plan of the nation to go ahead.

He dreams of becoming a wealthy businessman. He dreams of material comforts, he make dreams of making it really big in this world wherein that scenario where person can reap success and achieve fame and reputation and make fortune irrespective of his or her background.

When we are introduced to the play, we also get to know that this Walter's father had recently died and they have also about to they are also waiting for this insurance payout of about 10000 dollars. He invests Walter wants to invest this money in a liquor store business and this is something that he wants to do along with his friends Willy and Bobo, but his mother who is quite religious he she is opposed to alcohol.

We find these conflicting value systems being introduced as well just the way we had seen in the other place as well and it was more starkly evident in the glass menagerie where the mother and the son they seem to be inhabiting where they seem to be inhabiting totally different world's altogether.

The worldview is very different based on their rootedness in their beliefs and here religion becomes something which would also play a very important role in determining how they would respond to different social circumstances, how they would make decisions.

We find a certain moral compass operating around religion over here. And though technically they all belong to the all share the same religion in some form or the other we find that the belief systems and the religiosity the investment in religion it makes a whole. It makes a huge difference to how eventually things get played out.

Walter's mother uses some of that money to buy a decent house for the family and that is in the white neighbourhood which is Clybourne Park.

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- Eventually Walter convinces Mama to give him the rest of the money on a condition that he save \$3000 for his sister Beneatha's education. He gives all the money to his friend Willy, who escapes with the money.
- When the family was preparing to leave for their new house, a man named Karl Linder arrives and tells them that the Clybourne Park is offering to buy their new house in order to prevent a black family from moving to the neighbourhood.



The rest of the money is of course, given to Walter on condition that there is we also find a very different kind of economy operating within the domestic space over here which is also an alignment with how the new age economy works. This also fits in very well with the within the framework of the American Dream where money becomes something which is an enabler, but also it becomes something which would reconfigure the relationships.

If we take a closer look at all the plays that we have seen so far we find that the person who is the one who is presented as the bread winner of the family the one who is working the perhaps the hardest in terms of bringing money into the family he or she is seen in the different light altogether.

These different dynamics these different moral equations which are at work when one talks about making money. There are certain ways of making money which is seen is more acceptable than the other ones there are certain ways which are seen as the speedier routes to success than the other two.

So, here this money is being it is within the family, but it also operates in alignment with the new economic condition whether there are conditions where there are certain kinds of bargaining which is happening over there. So, Walter convinces his mother to give him the rest of the money and which is only based on this single condition that he would save 3000 dollars for his sister Beneatha's education.

He gives all his money to his friend Willy with whom he wanted to set up this business and in a very predictable way this friend also escapes runs away with the money. So, when the family is then preparing to.

This is the tragedy on the one hand like we discussed in the previous session, this is also the tragedy which is inherent underneath. This very promising American Dream where when certain roads do not always meet with success on the other hand they make tragic heroes out of these protagonists who have also heavily invested emotionally and otherwise into this dream. So, when the family was preparing to leave for the new house.

There is another character who has introduced Karl Linder and he arrives and tells them that the Clybourne Park is offering to buy their new house because they are also and there is a different social dynamics emerging. It is not as if it is all fine within the domestic space and the confrontation comes only from outside.

From the inside as well as from the outside there are these different conflicts which keep coming in one after the other and it is not like only one individual is affected all the individuals are affected in some form or the other. So, here the Clybourne Park community is offering to buy them house.

Because they also want to prevent a black family from moving into the neighbourhood this ultimately questions the ethos on which American Dream is founded. This questions the spirit of this egalitarianism, the spirit of this egalitarian promotion which American Dream presumably is all about.

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- The Younger family refuses the offer.
- Meanwhile, Beneatha is courting a wealthy and educated man named George Murchison. The Younger family likes him but Beneatha doesn't like him as he willingly assimilates himself into the white culture and denies his African heritage.
- Her Nigerian friend Joseph Asagai, on the other hand, is an intellectual from whom she learns a lot about her African heritage. He sometimes points out that she is unconsciously assimilating herself in the white culture. For example, when Beneatha's straightens her curly hair, he calls it "mutilation".
- When the family was distraught about their condition Joseph visits Beneatha and learns about the situation. He proposes marriage to her and asks her to "come home" to Africa to practice medicine. She accepts the proposal.



The Younger family refuses the offer and there is another line of story which is happening around the same time when Beneathas also quoting a very educated man a wealthy educated man, George Murchison. The Younger family likes him, but Beneatha that does not she is not very fond of him because we also see right from the beginning that she is a very different kind of a character.

Just the way we notice in *The Glass Menagerie* too now within the same family itself there are these different types of characters who have different beliefs in terms of religion who have different beliefs in terms of their economic aspirations their world views are very different and this diversity is something which also in a microwave in a it reflects what the Twentieth Century America is entirely all about.

We find that the Younger family is very fond of him George Murchison, but Beneatha this is not very fond of him at all and does not want to accept him as a partner though he assimilates himself into the white culture because it is very ironic in some form. In there is this twin dilemma of the about what is more important whether assimilating oneself into the white culture is more important or else it more important to stick to the African heritage which might also be very problematic in some sense.

We find that there is a man there is a another he belongs to the same community and his racially ethnically they belong to the same community, but in spite of that there is a difference in which the members of the same family responds to him . So, what is the

right balance to be struck over here? It is very difficult to take sides to whether George Murchison has taken the right decision or whether one has to go with Beneatha.

Towards the end of the play, we find that there is a certain viewer perspective that the play wants to pro and foreground, but it is also about this diversity which is being projected within those communities within those communities which also add to the diversity factor as far as Twentieth Century America is concerned. And there is also Joseph Asagai who comes across as a foil to George Murchison.

He is an intellectual and he is from Nigeria. We find that though culturally they are very different he is not an American and the American way of life is something which is very new to him. But, through Joseph Asagai finds herself learning more about the African heritage which ironically comes across as something very important to the framing of herself to her identity itself.

So, here assimilation is being this distinct identity the distinct need to project ones identity that becomes more important over here that gets celebrated more than this tendency to assimilate which also is seen as an extension of the diversity question of the Twentieth Century America.

We find Joseph Asagai also becoming very critical of Beneatha which eventually she finds are quite enduring to in a certain way because he repeatedly points out to her that she is though unconsciously assimilating herself into the white culture.

The notion of assimilation is being questioned and challenged and that is something perhaps we need to take a closer look at while we are reading through plays like this. In cultures where diversity becomes something its part and parcel of in Twentieth Century America, the diversities in culture the diversity in culture is something which is part and parcel of the social demography.

We find different group's different ethnic group, different cultural group's different religious groups, different nationalities or working together in so many ways. So, here assimilation is being critiqued and its being given a closer critical look in the context of this play.

So, for instance when Beneatha wants to straighten her curly hair which is also in a very in some sense a stereotypical characteristic of her ethnicity and that is being seen by as a guy as mutilation. This tendency to assimilate in order to blend seen as mutilation as well.

When their family is generally distraught the Younger family is distraught about this condition they have this property they have invested in this white neighbourhood, but they also know that it is a bit problematic to move in over here and its during that time that Joseph Asagai visits the Younger family proposes to Beneatha and asks her to join him in Nigeria to ask her to come home to Africa to practice medicine. This is something of a proposal that she easily accepts as well.

There are various ways in which one can dissect this decision.

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- Later Walter decides to agree to Linder's offer in order to save the family from it's financial setbacks. But Lena and Ruth persuades him not to, citing that while money is important, it shouldn't be placed above one's pride and dignity.
- In the climax Walter understands Black pride and chooses not to take Linder's offer. He states that the family is proud of who they are and will prove themselves as good neighbours.
- The play ends with the Younger family happily leaving for their new home while also aware of the dangers of their act and the uncertainty of their future.



So, in this process we find that Walter also decides to and there are a lot of things happening at the home front too and each of them are they are also having their own different ways to deal with the society. There are decisions that they take sometimes, it has an implication on the family and sometimes the decisions that the family takes has an implication on themselves all of them.

Walter also decides to agree to Linder's offer because he thinks his it is also a good way to save his family from the financial setbacks. And it says financial difficulty is at the

heart of almost all the place that we have looked at so far. We find that either these individuals or families they are either pursuing this they are pursuing some kind of a stability or sometimes they adjust pursuing a whole lot of things just to stay afloat like particularly we see that in Millers plays in *Death of a Salesman*.

The more than anything long term it is also about staying afloat on a daily basis keeping oneself alive that it also becomes a challenge given the kind of stressful situations that a person undergoes in this changing scenario. Walter decides to first go ahead with this plan and take Linder's offer and sell the property, but Lena and Ruth they persuade him not to because they say that money is important, but it is also important to take care of one's pride and dignity .

Here, race and class we find that they come together in such difficult ways in the almost an impossible ways too. So, on the one hand there is a need to save the family from an impending financial crisis, but that should not be at the cost of sacrificing ones dignity. Here, dignity becomes not just a family thing it becomes a community thing it becomes something very ethnic and that is where the heart of this play also lies so to speak.

So, towards the end we find that Walter he also begins to understand it is like a coming of age phase for him to he also begins to understand. This black pride is all about what this pride and dignity that Lena and Ruth are talking about and he also in that process chooses not to take Linder's offer.

So, here this offer that Linder makes and the different phases that the family goes through that becomes very characteristic of the fundamental themes that this play is trying to project. Because herein by initially accepting the offer and trying to go ahead with it there is a certain statement there is a certain mindset that Walter is showcasing.

There is a statement that he is making and now in rejecting that there is a very different kind of a statement that he is making. And the movement of the plot is also largely determined by that. The pride and the dignity which gets restored over there in that refusal though it means maybe more difficult times which are there waiting for the family.

But it is still there is a sense of closure in terms of accepting who he is and in this refusal to succumb to the kind of pressures which Linder or the neighbourhood would bring

about. So, they he is also taking this position as a spokesperson for the family. And by extension a spokesperson for the community by saying they are very proud of who they are a very proud of their identity and will prove themselves as worthy neighbours.

We do not know whether this is a decision which would make or madam in the long run because the play ends with the Younger family deciding to move to their new home. But, they are certainly aware of the dangers of their act the risks that they have taken and the uncertainty which lies ahead, but that is the whole point of it.

It is a very radically different way in which the play is looking at the American Dream. There is a sense of tragedy which befalls characters like Walter in that journey, but there is also a certain sense of promise provided one is also willing to take the plunge. So, this plane that a sense it questions a limits of the American Dream.

It questions the limits based on the contours which are drawn by race as well as a class. And here we find that the an entry of a character like Joseph Asagai it is also pointing to the limits of this threshold like sometimes for fulfilling ones identity one needs to go out of those boundaries which are always already a set .

So, we find all of these characters representing different aspects of the American Dream and different world views and while also validating all of these world views in some form of the other which are without getting into any kind of a compromise and if you may choose to see it that way.

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HISTORICAL CONTEXT



- The play is set in the **1950s US**.
- Politically and socially **conservative society**.
- The idea of "**American Dream**" was very popular among the masses. People assessed good life based on financial security and material possessions.

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It is important to look at the historical context of this play. This is set in the 1950s America. So, political and socially American as we have noticed before continues to be a very conservative society even in the 50s. This idea of the American Dream as we have noticed before it is something which is becoming very popular among the masses across classes and here we find across different ethnic communities too.

There is also a way in which two kinds of mindsets are emerging where people are being assessed based on their financial security and the material possessions and two kinds of communities emerge depending on how they choose to look at American Dream, how they choose to engage with the American Dream. This is something which becomes very influential in terms of the culture as well as the counterculture that begins to emerge in America during this time.

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- **Civil Rights Movement (1954- 1968)** – African-Americans, along with their like minded whites, fought for ending legalized racial discrimination, disenfranchisement (Preventing a person's right to vote), and racial segregation.
- **Brown v/s Board of Education case, 1954** – The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (**NAACP**) filed five cases against the unequal status in the law-enforced segregated school system of United states.
- Black and white students were separately taught in public schools as per the "Separate but equal" legal doctrine. NAACP filed the case against the enforcement of this doctrine in schools.



So, if we look at a few other things which were happening around the same time in the 1950s and early 60s we find this is the time and the civil rights movement gains a lot of momentum the African Americans along with and of course, a lot of other likeminded white they are fighting for ending legalized racial discrimination.

This play is also performed at a very critical time in American history where historically the nation is trying to get past these sort of discriminations. There is a momentum which makes which is against disenfranchisement that is and also about to racial segregation. We find a lot of micro as well as a macro movements operating.

We find a lot of individuals who are reclaiming their identity and assimilation as mentioned earlier is beginning to be seen as something that could it be also seen as a threat to the heritage, the native heritage that one should perhaps display with a lot of pride and with a lot of dignity.

So, though while this story while this play is entirely about one family and about the decisions that one or two individuals make its largely a statement about the alternate possibilities that could be held out when a person from a different class or from a different race is engaging in this was participating in this race constituted by the American Dream.

1954 also witnessed this case where Brown versus Board of Education case by the National Association for Advancement of Coloured People they filed five cases against the unequal status especially in those law enforced segregated school system of United States. So, we find a lot of legal movements, lot of social movements, and lot of cultural movements counter culture movements. This time fighting for this to bring legalized racial discrimination to an end.

So, until that point of time it is also important to note that in the black students and the white students were taught separately in public schools. It was also something which was imposed and legitimized and validated in purely legal terms because it was as per the legal doctrine which advocated separate, but equal. There is a lot of momentum that these movements gain around this time and the NAACP does is to file a case against the enforcement of this doctrine in schools.

So, here we find that the historical that the display has a lot of historical significance over here when it is also trying to address how individuals and families would respond to these historical movements how they should also try and capitalize try and mobilize themselves as individuals and its families to take the plunge and do things which were seen as perhaps completely unthinkable in the previous decades.

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- **The result of Brown v/s Board of Education Case, 1954** - the Supreme Court ruled that mandating or permitting public schools to be segregated by race was unconstitutional.
- **Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott, 1955-1956** - on 1955 December 1, Rosa Parks, the secretary of NAACP, refused to give up her seat to a white passenger on a public bus in Montgomery. She was arrested and her arrest triggered African- Americans to organize the Montgomery bus boycott. They demanded a bus systems in which all passengers would be treated equally.
- As a result, a federal lawsuit was filled (Browder v. Gayle, 1956) challenging the bus segregation laws in Alabama. On November 13, 1956, the Supreme Court ordered Alabama to desegregate its buses.
- **The Civil Rights Act of 1957** - President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed The Civil Rights Act of 1957 into law, which allowed the prosecution of anyone who tried to prevent someone from voting. This act was effective in preventing disenfranchisement.



So, as a result of this Brown versus Board of Education case which became quite famous in the 1950s and 54 to be precise the Supreme Court also gives a ruling that it that the

public schools cannot segregate by race that is like prevented almost like forever by treating that as entirely unconstitutional.

This thing about the legal doctrine which in some form permitted the separate, but equal dictum that completely falls flat. And this is certainly a historical verdict which brings an end to at least some forms of legalized, legitimized kind of social discrimination.

The other very famous instance is something which happened in the 1950s again mid 1950s particularly end of 1955 and which went on throughout till the next year 1956, the Rosa Parks incident and the bus boycott and Montgomery. So, on 1955 1st of December Rosa Parks who was the secretary of NAACP.

She refused to give up her seat to a white passenger because that was the practice that was the accepted practice that was accepted legal practice during that time that if black person is traveling and if a whiter person is also there, the black person is supposed to give up the seat for to give preference to the white person.

This happened in a public bus in Montgomery and she refused to give up her seat in a complete act of defiance which we also now find must have come out of such historic rage and anxiety. She was arrested and her arrest triggered a lot of African Americans to organize the Montgomery bus boycott which became a historic event which is still becomes which is still has laid the foundations of the black American history still has laid the foundations of even black feminist movement.

They also demanded bus systems that African Americans in that momentum also demanded for a system which where all passengers would be treated equally. So, we find this change coming about in different institutions; in school, in public transport systems.

It is just natural that the play responds to this historic moment by bringing in a decision that a black American family is an African American family. The decision that the family takes to move into a predominantly white neighbourhood.

As a result of the Montgomery bus boycott we find that by the end of 1956 the Supreme Court orders Alabama to desegregate it is buses. So, the Civil Rights Act of 1957 that is when the president Eisenhower, he signs the Civil Rights Act of 1957. It becomes a law

by then it also what it does is it prevents the prosecution of anyone who tried to prevent someone from voting.

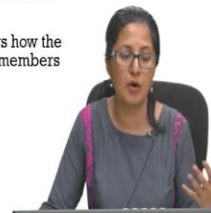
So, this was also quite effective in preventing disenfranchisement. So, we find these movements happening in it various realms and these different and in a political sense in a cultural sense in a public sense we find it operating in multiple ways. So, the players also plugging into these many movements, the many historical movements which is also taking off in so many ways.

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IMPORTANCE OF THE TITLE



- The title of the play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, is taken from the poem "Harlem" written by Langston Hughes. The poem is also known as "A Dream Deferred".
- The title is taken from the following lines of the poem:
"What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?"
- In the poem, Hughes asks what happens to a deferred dream and ponders whether it will dry up like a raisin in the sun or "does it explode?". The poem talks about the hopelessness experienced by the African- American community, whose dreams and aspirations are often interfered by socio-political factors that are not in their control.
- This idea forms the central theme of the play *A Raisin in the Sun*. It portrays how the dreams of an African- American family and the dreams of it's individual members are interfered by the socio-political climate in the 1950s US.



The title of the play is taken from drawn from the poem by Langston Hughes, the poem is called *Harlem* which also had another title A Dream Deferred. So, the title is taken from these lines from the poem what happens to a Dream Deferred, does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?

In this poem, Langston Hughes wonders what happens to a deferred dream and this notion of the dream is also resonating heavily on the American Dream as you would know. So, in the poem Langston Hughes wonders what happens to a deferred dream and he is thinking about whether it will dry up like a raisin in the sun or whether that deferred dream would explode.

We find the volatile way in which dreams are being talked about over here. It is quite outside the boundaries and parameters defined by the American Dream.

So, the poem are coming back to what Langston Hughes was writing about, the poem talks about the hopelessness experience by the African American community and this is in stark contrast to how the American Dream was getting projected as this one way as this a one stop solution to all kinds of challenges and dilemmas of the Twentieth Century.

So, here it is being the dreams of the African American community they are being seen as being mediated heavily mediated by socio political factors which are often not within once control not within the individuals' control. It is challenging the notion that the American Dream puts forward that one is completely the individual is completely in control in charge of one's life which is not the case.

That is something actually we would see in a zoo story as well where we find that class and the financial conditions that one is born into the domestic harmony or disharmony that one grows up with all of these things play a huge role in determining whether the aspirations of a person or an individual or a family or a community could eventually be met with or not.

So, this is the idea which forms a central theme of the play about what happens to deferred dreams. And here the African American community and particularly the Younger family is presented as a prototype of what happen , but the dreams that each individual has the dream of Walter the dream of Beneatha.

And these dilemma that the mother faces and the kind of hope and promise which is held out by the white community on the one hand and also by what the lifestyle that Beneatha eventually chooses by going back home quote unquote home going back home to her cultural roots to where she actually belongs that is how she chooses to see it.

So, this is something that forms a central theme of the play. And here there are no right or wrong answers as we would see. It is all about how one choose to look at it and how it also depends on the kind of decisions that each individual takes. So, it portrays how the dreams of an American African American family and how the dreams of its individual members how it is interfered it is mediated heavily by the socio political climate of the 1950s US.

And here we also find that unless there are these interventions public interventions, cultural interventions and more importantly political interventions, legal interventions unless such interventions are there not much could be done otherwise it is a; it is a; it is a dream which would meet with a dead end .

So, in order to take this dream forward in order to in order to make this deferred dream a reality these interventions are entirely necessary without which it becomes by default a set of system an economic system, a social system, a political system which is entirely inaccessible to certain communities certain individuals due to the it could be multiple reasons and here in this case it is we find that race becomes the predominant reason to which class also the class divide also contributes .

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MAJOR THEMES

- Racial Segregation
- Afrocentrism
- Family Dynamics
- Gender Identity
- Class distinctions
- Criticism of American Dream

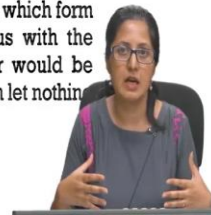


So, looking at this play in such a ways there are these major themes of racial segregation, Afrocentric or family dynamics, gender identity, class distinctions and of course, the critique of American Dream which is central to as mentioned before to most place that we have looked at so far ok.

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■ surviving, not living in the fullest sense.

Unlike his mother, Walter has managed to escape almost completely the crippling inferiority that destroys many Blacks, men in particular. In order to help determine how he managed to acquire the strength to dream his dream, one might examine what is most American about Walter and his thinking, for it is his acceptance of American values, rather than stereotypes, myths, and untruths about Blacks, that enables him to dream and act in a typically American way. As Hansberry has stated, “. . . Walter Younger is an American more than he is anything else” (“Willie Loman” 8). Foremost is his belief in the value which holds that, in the land of opportunity, anyone can become anything he wants to be. While the play contains no explicit evidence to support this conjecture, the fact that this democratic ideal is the most cherished of those which form the American consciousness—indeed, is synonymous with the freedom that America stands for—means that Walter would be affected by it, as all Americans are. Believers in this myth let nothing



So, we will also come back to look at this essay that we have started looking at in the previous session Raisin in the Sun revisited to see how gender plays a major role over here it is not entirely about it is of course, about race. But gender also plays a major role over here because here he finds that Walter as an individual. He has managed to escape the crippling inferiority that destroys many blacks as this I say puts it.

So, in order to determine how he managed to acquire his strength to dream his dream one might examine what is most American about Walter and his thinking for it is his acceptance of American values rather than stereotypes myths and untruths about blacks that enables him to dream and act in a typically American way.

So, here Walter's in some sense comes across as a very balanced view as well. Here and although initially this was not the way in which Walter Younger was uh encouraged to be seen as I mean we would not get into that debate . So, because as Lauren Hansberry she has stated Walter Younger is an American more than he is anything else. So, he is in some sense very pitched in a very perfect way.

He is assimilating with the white culture in a such ways that it does not compromise his identity he is not buying into the he is not letting himself buy to be bought into the many stereotypes and untruths about blacks which heavily actually dictates the way in which his mother leads his life .

So, here we find that he is accepting the American values there is a lot of promise and hope that he finds in that and there is something perhaps about his personality and maybe about this gender which enables him to overcome these. These challenges these things that would be detrimental to most others.

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stand in their way, as he does not. For him, this includes racism, which he barely considers until he is directly confronted with it in Act II, Scene 3, in the person of Carl Lindner, who tries to bribe the family in order to keep them out of his white neighborhood. Even then it has no real effect on his dream or his plans.



Another source of Walter's strength is the fact that he is male. As Lena Younger's world view and range of possibilities are restricted by her femaleness, Walter's are enlarged and enhanced by his maleness. Another source of strength lies in his belief in himself and in his ability to do what other successful Americans have done. He sincerely believes that he is cut out for better things. Near the end of Act II, Scene 2, he describes himself as "a giant—surrounded by ants! Ants who can't even understand what it is the giant is talking about" (76). This strong faith in himself is the basis of his typically American self-reliance and rugged individualism.

Ironically, the influences of his own Black family and the values



So, here why the play contains no explicit evidence to support this conjecture. The fact that this his democratic ideal is the most cherished of those which form the American consciousness indeed is synonymous with the freedom that America stands for means that Walter would be affected by it as all Americans are.

So, it is an interesting way to read the claim when we see Walter as an American and not like no without including his racial profile. When you begin to see Walter as an American his challenge and his difficulty becomes quite similar to perhaps say in Death of a Salesman or All My Sons.

It says that there is certain the ethnicity becomes something the African American identity. Of course, becomes something that accentuates it, but a lot of things become a bit uncomplicated. If we may say it becomes it lot of things becomes quite uncomplicated when we begin to look at Walter as just another American. So, this is how Walter comes across in the first half of the blame where even when Karl Linder is trying to bribe his family in order to keep them out of their white neighbourhood.

It has not much of an effect on his dream or his plans and then he also makes his conscious decision later on to accept this identity to invest himself more heavily emotionally into this identity. And perhaps the other thing is that Walter that there is much that he draws from though inadvertently, the fact that he is male. So, a Lena Younger's world view and the range of the possibilities that even the Twentieth Century America offers to her its restricted by her identity by her gender identity.

But for Walter just by virtue of being male there are lot of more spaces which he can access; so, many more spaces that he can inhabit, so, many more ways in which he can legitimize his existence. And there is also this belief that his another source of strength is in his belief that he as an individual is capable of achieving what any other American has achieved. So, this in some sense it nullifies the racial element over here in not entirely in a negative way.

Because he chooses to see himself as an American first and perhaps an African American later on and this is perhaps something which works for him. This typical American self-reliance and rugged individualism which of course, it does not seem to work with all the other characters over here.

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restricted by her femaleness, Walter's are enlarged and enhanced by his maleness. Another source of strength lies in his belief in himself and in his ability to do what other successful Americans have done. He sincerely believes that he is cut out for better things. Near the end of Act II, Scene 2, he describes himself as "a giant—surrounded by ants! Ants who can't even understand what it is the giant is talking about" (76). This strong faith in himself is the basis of his typically American self-reliance and rugged individualism.

Ironically, the influences of his own Black family and the values they believed in and lived by prepared Walter to accept mainstream American values and to strive to reach his goal; however, he was also influenced by outside forces existing in the



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So, for instance the end of act two in scene two he describes himself as a giant surrounded by ants, ants who cannot even understand what it is the giant what the giant is talking about . Here he finds himself a misfit in both the worlds in some sense perhaps

more of a misfit among the likes of his mother who is bogged down entirely by this inferiority through which they have lived.

So, the influence of his own black family and the values they believed in and lived by it these are the things which prepared Walter to accept mainstream American values and to strive to reach his goal.

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society at large. These delicately balanced value systems both coexist to provide a particular individual and form the basis of the biculturalism which characterizes the Afro-American. At the same time, this fact of biculturalism underscores the two levels of universality inherent in the Black American experience: The dreams, hopes, and fears of the Younger family are universal reflections of those shared by people of all races all over the world, and these are universally American aspirations.

These family influences are of two kinds and produce two significant results. First, the love Walter received from his parents during his childhood led to the development of his strong sense of self-esteem, enabling him fully to accept American values and giving him the confidence to pursue his dream. Second, the example of courage and dignity invested in his parents' valiant



So, what comes across is very positive away enabling in this play is the fact that while the American Dream while the immense possibility of the American Dream and what it holds out is being critiqued. It is also showcasing that it is the American Dream which is it is the possibility of this that is helping characters like Walter to survive and later thrive.

So, there are a lot of these forces coming together in such myriad ways that it becomes difficult to see this as a black and white issue anymore. It is more complex, the identities are more complex and we find that even the way in which these different black characters the African American characters interact with each other they are not very similar. And they are what the way they have drawn from the American culture is also quite different it reflects in the way that they respond as well.

And it also talks about the two levels of universality inherent in the black American experience. The dreams, hopes and fears of the Younger family are universal reflections

of those shared by people of all races over the world and these are universally American aspirations. And this is the generic quality about this play which makes it endearing across different uh I mean even after all these decades.

Because it is also about there is a universal quality over here where the African American identity becomes symbolic of these many marginalized individuals, the many marginalized communities who are trying to fit. There is no one way of making it work Walter is clear very different from Beneatha, Lena Younger is very different from her kids and Joseph Asagai comes across he is also introduced as a kind of a savior who thinks very differently and offers a different kind of a solution.

But we find that this play just like Twentieth Century America, there is a variety of these solutions which could be played around here.

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struggle to overcome adversity, provide for their children, and teach them to be better than ordinary resulted in his love of his race and his pride in his heritage. The stronger of these influences as it relates to his self-esteem is that which came from his mother, although his father's contribution was important as well. The similarity between Lena and her son, which ironically she fails to recognize, is clearly revealed in her words about herself: "Lord, ever since I was a little girl, I always remember people saying, 'Lena—Lena Eggleston, you aims too high all the time. You needs to slow down and see life a little more like it is. Just slow down some.' That's what they always used to say down home—'Lord, that Lena Eggleston is a high-minded thing' " (133). Walter's father also played a meaningful role in his life, as seen in Lena's statement that Big Walter "sure loved his children. Always wanted them to have something—be something. That's where Brother gets all these notions . . ." (29).



So, here what place like these doing is offering this possibility of critique? Offering it says helping us see the layered nature of the American society during the 1950s and 60s and to dig deeper into it to see the alternate possibilities, the alternate histories and the alternate identities and memories which are emerging.

So, we would begin to wrap up by just highlighting this aspect about the family influences. So, there are two kinds of family influences which this play talks about and these two incline two kinds of influences also deliver two different kinds of results.

Suppose the love the Walter received from his parents during his childhood that was primarily responsible for making him into a helping him to grow and grow into and a person with a strong sense of self esteem.

And while his mother continues to feel a bit apprehensive about this, there is absolutely no doubt of the fact that this is something that he learnt and imbibed from his family. And this is what enabled him to fully accept the American values and what gave him the confidence to pursue this dream. And secondly, there is also this example of courage and dignity invested in his parent's valiant struggle to overcome adversity to provide for the children and to teach them to be better than ordinary.

And this is something which resulted in his love of his this race to race towards this American Dream and also the pride in his heritage. So, both of these things need not necessarily be divorced from one another. And we find that it operates very differently perhaps in Joseph Asagai who is Nigerian and Beneatha who is finds herself a better misfit in some form. But, in Walter we find that there is a possibility of both of these existing together and almost simultaneous space as well.

So, the stronger of these influences is this notion of the self esteem which came from his mother. And we find that there is a lot of similarity between Lena Younger and Walter Younger and this in some sense we can also notice a slight difference over here compared to the other place where the father son relation is more celebrated more foregrounded. And here it is a mother son relation just like glass menagerie though in a slightly different way all together.

So, just what in Lena's own words. Lord, ever since I was a little girl, I always remember people saying Lena-Lena Eggleston, your aims too high all the time. You need to slow down and see life a little more like it is. Just slow down some.

That is what they always used to say down home – Lord, that Lena Eggleston is a high minded thing. Walter's father also played a meaningful role in his life, as seen in Lena's statement. He always wanted him to have something be something that is where brother gets all these notions.

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... struggle to overcome adversity, provide for their children, and teach them to be better than ordinary resulted in his love of his race and his pride in his heritage. The stronger of these influences as it relates to his self-esteem is that which came from his mother, although his father's contribution was important as well. The similarity between Lena and her son, which ironically she fails to recognize, is clearly revealed in her words about herself: "Lord, ever since I was a little girl, I always remember people saying, 'Lena—Lena Eggleston, you aims too high all the time. You needs to slow down and see life a little more like it is. Just slow down some.' That's what they always used to say down home—'Lord, that Lena Eggleston is a high-minded thing'" (133). Walter's father also played a meaningful role in his life, as seen in Lena's statement that Big Walter "sure loved his children. Always wanted them to have something—be something. That's where Brother gets all these notions . . ." (29).

Because he is "high-minded" and wants to "be something,"



So, here we will wrap up with this I know by foregrounding this aspect that there are a lot of similarities that we can find over here in these aspirations that parents have for children. That is also something which defines perhaps the late 40s, 50s and 60s of in the American society where there are lot of aspirations high hopes with which ambitions with which families look at children. They are also meant to fulfill certain things.

The parents are also dreaming for the children and there is this burden of ambition which could operate in in either way. We find that that there is certainly a sense of the family esteem a sense of the worth of the individual is deeply rooted in how he or she imbibes it from different family circumstances.

We find that there is a way in which a quality of aspiration the quality of ambition it is there is an intergenerational quality about it where its being handed over to the children from the parents and which is what contributes to these interesting dynamics in the father son relation or in the mother-son relation.

The expectations are also in largely rooted largely determined by what the American society of those times expect.