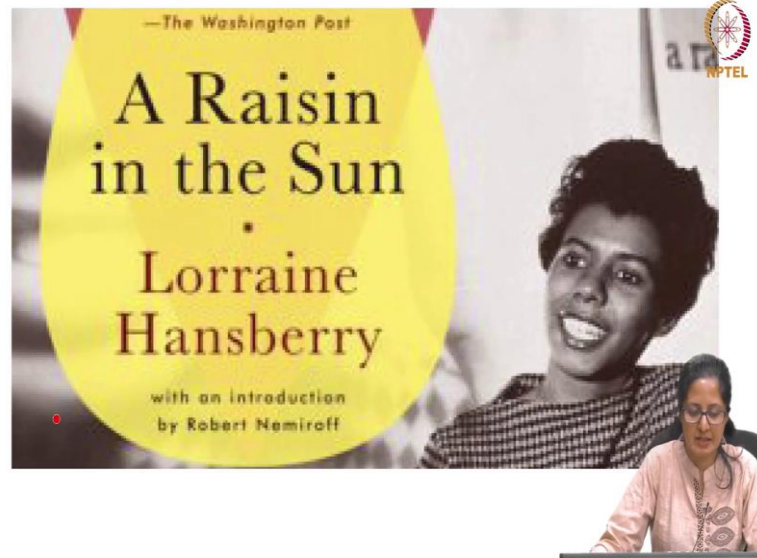


Twentieth Century American Drama
Prof. Merin Simi Raj
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Lecture - 43
Hansberry's Day in the Sun Part 4

(Refer Slide Time: 00:17)



We are now beginning to closely look at some of the sections in this play *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:25)

What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up
Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat
Or crust and sugar over—
Like a syrupy sweet?

• Maybe it just sags
• Like a heavy load.



As mentioned earlier the title is drawn from Langston Hughes poem – “What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore - And then run? Does it stink like rotten meat or crust and sugar over - Like a syrupy sweet?”

(Refer Slide Time: 00:35)

Like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat
Or crust and sugar over—
Like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
Like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

LANGSTON HUGHES



“Maybe it just sags like a heavy load or does it explode?” So, as we had been discussing in the last couple of sessions this is a very different take on the American Dream, the alternate possibilities, the challenges of assimilation, the challenges of trying to fit in and the struggles which come not from the perspectives of gender and class, but also from the vantage point of race.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:06)

passages staged for the first time in twenty-third anniversary revivals and, most notably, the Roundabout Theatre's Kennedy Center production on which the television picture is based.

"The events of every passing year add resonance to *A Raisin in the Sun*. It is as if history is conspiring to make the play a classic"; "... one of a handful of great American dramas ... *A Raisin in the Sun* belongs in the inner circle, along with *Death of a Salesman*, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, and *The Glass Menagerie*." So wrote *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* respectively of Harold Scott's revelatory stagings for the Roundabout in which most of these elements, cut on Broadway, were restored.



The introduction to this play also draws attention to a remark made in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, which says "the events of every passing year add resonance to *A Raisin in the Sun*."

(Refer Slide Time: 01:24)

Night, and *The Glass Menagerie*. So wrote *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* respectively of Harold Scott's revelatory stagings for the Roundabout in which most of these elements, cut on Broadway, were restored. The unprecedented resurgence of the work (a dozen regional revivals at this writing, new publications and productions abroad, and now the television production that will be seen by millions) prompts the new edition.

Produced in 1959, the play presaged the revolution in black and women's consciousness—and the revolutionary ferment in Africa—that exploded in the years following the playwright's death in 1965 to ineradicably alter the social fabric and consciousness of the nation and the world. As so many have commented lately it did so in a manner and to



It is as if history is conspiring to make the play a classic, one of a handful of great American dramas. *A Raisin in the Sun* belongs in the inner circle, along with the *Death of a Salesman*, *Long Day's Journey into Night* and *The Glass Menagerie*. So, this is a

very stellar tribute at this play as one of those plays that deal with the core issues that Twentieth Century American Drama begins to talk about.

This play has a very universal appeal; universal in the sense that it challenges, the dilemma, the struggles, they have a quality about it which would fit in any circumstance, any situation, any economic condition despite the distance in terms of time and space.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:15)

restored material, but much else that passed unnoticed in the play at the time, speaks to issues that are now inescapable: value systems of the black family; concepts of African American beauty and identity; class and generational conflicts; the relationships of husbands and wives, black men and women; the outspoken (if then yet unnamed) feminism of the daughter; and, in the penultimate scene between Beneatha and Asagai, the larger statement of the play—and the ongoing struggle it portends.

Not one of the cuts, it should be emphasized, was made to dilute or censor the play or to “soften” its statement, for everyone in that herculean, now-legendary band that brought *Raisin* to Broadway—and most specifically the



This play produced in 1959 is seen as one of those very rare plays where the revolutionary spirit not just in terms of race but in terms of gender. In some sense, it begins to say envision the struggles, the consciousness of Black American woman in particular, we find gender in that sense, playing a very significant role in foregrounding the issues of African American families in the context of 1950s – 1960s America.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:50)



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[Title Page](#)
[Copyright](#)
[Dedication](#)
[Epigraph](#)
[Introduction](#)
• [Acknowledgments](#)

[Act I](#)
[Scene One: Friday morning.](#)
[Scene Two: The following morning.](#)

[Act II](#)
[Scene One: Later, the same day.](#)
[Scene Two: Friday night, a few weeks later.](#)
[Scene Three: Moving day, one week later.](#)

[Act III](#)



We will begin to see how the play has been structured. There are three acts. In the Act-1, there are two scenes. So, first scene happens on a Friday morning and the scene two is on Saturday morning, the following morning. Act 2 happens on the same day and that is Saturday, later the same day.

Scene two happens on Friday night a few weeks later and scene three happens on the moving day, one week later and we do know that this play is also about African American family trying to move into a neighborhood they bought a property over there.

(Refer Slide Time: 02:53)



[Epigraph](#)
[Introduction](#)
[Acknowledgments](#)

[Act I](#)
[Scene One: Friday morning.](#)
[Scene Two: The following morning.](#)


[Act II](#)
[Scene One: Later, the same day.](#)
[Scene Two: Friday night, a few weeks later.](#)
[Scene Three: Moving day, one week later.](#)

• [Act III](#)
[An hour later.](#)
[About the Author](#)



Act-3 happens an hour later on the same day on the day of the moving week which is one week after scene two.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:33)




CAST
(in order of appearance)

RUTH YOUNGER	Starletta DuPois
WALTER LEE YOUNGER	Danny Glover
TRAVIS YOUNGER	Kimble Joyner
BENEATHA YOUNGER	Kim Yancey
LENA YOUNGER	Esther Rolle
JOSEPH ASAGAI	Lou Ferguson
GEORGE MURCHISON	Joseph C. Phillips
MRS. JOHNSON	Helen Martin
KARL LINDNER	John Fiedler
BOBO	Stephen Henderson
MOVING MEN	Ron O.J. Parson, Charles Watts



This is the list of characters Ruth Younger, Walter Lee Younger, Travis Younger, Beneatha Younger, Lena Younger that is the Younger family; Joseph Asagai is the Nigerian man who courts Beneatha; George Murchison – George Murchison also has a romantic interest in Beneatha Younger, but she fails to reciprocate it for the reasons which we also discussed earlier.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:57)



JOSEPH ASAGAI	Lou Ferguson
GEORGE MURCHISON	Joseph C. Phillips
MRS. JOHNSON	Helen Martin
KARL LINDNER	John Fiedler
BOBO	Stephen Henderson
MOVING MEN	Ron O.J. Parson, Charles Watts


Directed by Bill Duke
Produced by Chiz Schultz
Executive Producer Robert Nemiroff

<i>Co-Producer</i>	<i>Production Design</i>
Steven S. Schwartz	Thomas Cariello
<i>Lighting Design</i>	<i>Costume Design</i>



Mrs. Johnson, Karl Lindner who has this proposal that he places before Walter, Bobo and the moving men.


(Refer Slide Time: 04:05)



SCENE ONE

The YOUNGER living room would be a comfortable and well-ordered room if it were not for a number of indestructible contradictions to this state of being. Its furnishings are typical and undistinguished and their primary feature now is that they have clearly had to accommodate the living of too many people for too many years—and they are tired. Still, we can see that at some time, a time probably no longer remembered by the family (except perhaps for MAMA), the furnishings of this room were actually selected with care and love and even hope—and brought to this apartment and arranged with taste and pride.

That was a long time ago. Now the once loved pattern of the couch upholstery has to fight to show itself from under acres of crocheted doilies and couch covers which have



Let us look at the description of scene one. We will find that this is resonating very well with the earlier discussions that we have had with Miller's plays and Albee's plays. So, the Younger living room would be a comfortable and well-ordered room if it were not for a number of indestructible contradictions to the state of being.

Its furnishings are typical and undistinguished and their primary feature now is that they have clearly had to accommodate the living of too many people for too many years – and they are tired. Still, we can see that at some time, a time probably no longer remembered by the family except perhaps for Mama, the furnishings of this room were actually selected with care and love, and even hope. It brought to this apartment and arranged with taste and pride.

There is a sense of decadence over here. There is a sense of being overcrowded over here. It is also a marker of their identity. The living rooms in all the place most of the place that we have discussed so far we find that the living room is described with great detail because it shows the character of the family.

It shows how they have either blended in or how they are different in *You Cannot Take It With You* if we recall that play, we find that the description of the living room shows the

erratic nature of that family – how they do not fit in, how they do not care, how it is a very different, a narrative that they are following though they are living in the heart of America.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:28)

rooms were actually selected with care and love and even hope—and brought to this apartment and arranged with taste and pride.

That was a long time ago. Now the once loved pattern of the couch upholstery has to fight to show itself from under acres of crocheted doilies and couch covers which have themselves finally come to be more important than the upholstery. And here a table or a chair has been moved to disguise the worn places in the carpet; but the carpet has fought back by showing its weariness, with depressing uniformity, elsewhere on its surface.

Weariness has, in fact, won in this room. Everything has been polished, washed, sat on, used, scrubbed too often. All pretenses but living itself have long since vanished from the very atmosphere of this room.

Moreover, a section of this room, for it is not really a room unto itself, though the landlord's lease would make it



That was a long time ago. The once loved pattern of the couch upholstery has to fight to show itself from under areas of crocheted doilies and couch covers with which have themselves finally, come to be more important than the upholstery. Then, here a table or a chair has been moved to disguise the worn places in the carpet, but the carpet has fought back by showing its weariness, with depressing uniformity, elsewhere on its surface.

We do find signs of decay, this is also depressing in some sense. It is also showcasing the economic condition that the family is going through. Weariness has, in fact, won in this room. Everything has been polished, washed, sat on, used, and scrubbed too often. All pretenses, but living itself have gone long since vanished from the very atmosphere of this room. Moreover, a section of this room, for it is not really a room unto itself though the landlord's lease would make it seem so.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:23)



seem so, slopes backward to provide a small kitchen area, where the family prepares the meals that are eaten in the living room proper, which must also serve as dining room. The single window that has been provided for these "two" rooms is located in this kitchen area. The sole natural light the family may enjoy in the course of a day is only that which fights its way through this little window.

At left, a door leads to a bedroom which is shared by MAMA and her daughter, BENEATHA. At right, opposite, is a second room (which in the beginning of the life of this apartment was probably a breakfast room) which serves as a bedroom for WALTER and his wife, RUTH.

Time: Sometime between World War II and the present.

Place: Chicago's Southside.

At Rise: It is morning dark in the living room, TRAVIS is asleep on the make-down bed at center. An alarm clock sounds from within the bedroom at right and presently



Slopes backwards to provide a small kitchen area, where the family prepares the meals that are eaten in the living room proper, which was also serve as dining room. So, we do begin to see what this description is doing. The single row the single window that has been provided for these two rooms is located in this kitchen area.

The sole natural light in this family may enjoy and the course of a day is only that which fights its way through this little window. This is something that we noticed in *Death of a Salesman* as well, describing the cramped living conditions.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:57)



Place: Chicago's Southside.

At Rise: It is morning dark in the living room, TRAVIS is asleep on the make-down bed at center. An alarm clock sounds from within the bedroom at right, and presently RUTH enters from that room and closes the door behind her. She crosses sleepily toward the window. As she passes her sleeping son she reaches down and shakes him a little. At the window she raises the shade and a dusky Southside morning light comes in feebly. She fills a pot with water and puts it on to boil. She calls to the boy, between yawns, in a slightly muffled voice.

RUTH is about thirty. We can see that she was a pretty girl, even exceptionally so, but now it is apparent that life has been little that she expected, and disappointment has already begun to hang in her face. In a few years, before thirty-five even, she will be known among her people as a "settled woman."



At left, a door leads to a bedroom which is shared by Mama and her daughter Beneatha. At right, opposite, is a second room which in the beginning of the life of this apartment was probably a breakfast room which serves as a bedroom for Walter and his wife Ruth. Time: sometime between World War 2 and the present.

So, we do understand the present conditions of those times. It is set in a there is no specific date or that really does not matter. And, whenever the specifics are being given to us, it is largely in terms of time and in terms of the day and the year becomes immaterial because a number of decades after the war, before the war they had a certain similar tragic nature about it.

It was not did not quite matter whether it happened in 1949 or 1950 or 1953 because the conditions fundamentally did not really change and that is something which a play like this is trying to foreground as well that it really does not matter which year or which season it is. It is a Friday, it is a Saturday and that is the best of those sort of details would suffice.

The settings are given over here Chicago Southside and we find that even in *A Zoo Story*, we find these sort of directions becoming useful in terms of describing the streets, in terms of describing the culture in particular neighborhoods and in for this play that is very pertinent too because it is entirely about it is a territorial nature which the play also tries to showcase as well as defy in some sense.

So, at rise: It is morning dark in the living room. Travis is asleep on the make-down bed at center. An alarm clock sounds from within the bedroom at night, and presently Ruth enters from that room and closes the window sorry closes the door behind her. So, there are lot of such details and Ruth is being described.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:52)



her. She crosses sleepily toward the window As she passes her sleeping son she reaches down and shakes him a little. At the window she raises the shade and a dusky Southside morning light comes in feebly. She fills a pot with water and puts it on to boil. She calls to the boy, between yawns, in a slightly muffled voice.

RUTH is about thirty. We can see that she was a pretty girl, even exceptionally so, but now it is apparent that life has been little that she expected, and disappointment has already begun to hang in her face. In a few years, before thirty-five even, she will be known among her people as a "settled woman."

She crosses to her son and gives him a good, final, rousing shake.

RUTH Come on now, boy, it's seven thirty! (Her son sits up at last, in a stupor of sleepiness) I say hurry up, Travis!



Ruth is about thirty. We can see that she was a pretty girl, even exceptionally so, but now it is apparent that life has been little that she expected and disappointment has already begun to hang in her face. So, the mood of the play is in some way and already set with the description of the setting the living room the different furniture or the almost eroding nature of that house.

The emotions that the first character who enters here the character is being described as a character who almost wears disappointment on her face. In a few years, before twenty five in a few years before thirty-five even, she will be known among her people as a settled woman. She crosses to her son and gives him a good, final, rousing shake. So, she is trying to wake up wake the boy up.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:50)

want to talk about with my friends just couldn't be important in your mind, could they?

(He rises and finds a cigarette in her handbag on the table and crosses to the little window and looks out, smoking and deeply enjoying this first one)

RUTH *(Almost matter of factly, a complaint too automatic to deserve emphasis)* Why you always got to smoke before you eat in the morning?

WALTER *(At the window)* Just look at 'em down there ... Running and racing to work ... *(He turns and faces his wife and watches her a moment at the stove, and then, suddenly)* You look young this morning, baby.

RUTH *(Indifferently)* Yeah?

WALTER Just for a second—stirring them eggs. Just for a



It starts on a very mundane note, it is the morning hour rush and she is trying to wake up her son as well as Walter, the husband.

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(He rises and finds a cigarette in her handbag on the table and crosses to the little window and looks out, smoking and deeply enjoying this first one)

RUTH *(Almost matter of factly, a complaint too automatic to deserve emphasis)* Why you always got to smoke before you eat in the morning?

WALTER *(At the window)* Just look at 'em down there ... Running and racing to work ... *(He turns and faces his wife and watches her a moment at the stove, and then, suddenly)* You look young this morning, baby.

RUTH *(Indifferently)* Yeah?

WALTER Just for a second—stirring them eggs. Just for a second it was—you looked real young again. *(He reaches for her; she crosses away. Then, drily)* It's gone now—~~you~~ look like yourself again!



We do find that it is not as if they have a very turbulent kind of a family life, but there is a matter of fact a matter of fact quality about their exchanges too. She also comes across as someone who is seen as a nagging presence Walter, but we cannot entirely blame her either for instance here we see.

Almost a matter of fact, a complaint too automatic to deserve emphasis: Why you always got to smoke before you eat in the morning? Walter just look at them down there, running and racing to work, you look young this morning. So, this we find that this very little coherence in the way they are talking to they are engrossed too engrossed in their own worlds.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:40)



WALTER (*After him, pointing with pride*) That's my boy.
(*She looks at him in disgust and turns back to her work*)
You know what I was thinking 'bout in the bathroom this morning?

RUTH No.

WALTER How come you always try to be so pleasant!

RUTH What is there to be pleasant 'bout!

WALTER You want to know what I was thinking 'bout in the bathroom or not!

RUTH I know what you thinking 'bout.

WALTER (*Ignoring her*) 'Bout what me and Willy Harris was talking about last night.

RUTH (*Immediately—a refrain*) Willy Harris is a good-for-nothing loudmouth.

WALTER Anybody who talks to me has got to be a good-for-nothing loudmouth, ain't he? And what you know about



Let us come to this section where Walter is beginning to talk about Willy Harris.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:52)



RUTH (*Immediately—a refrain*) Willy Harris is a good-for-nothing loudmouth.

WALTER Anybody who talks to me has got to be a good-for-nothing loudmouth, ain't he? And what you know about who is just a good-for-nothing loudmouth? Charlie Atkins was just a "good-for-nothing loudmouth" too, wasn't he! When he wanted me to go in the dry-cleaning business with him. And now—he's grossing a hundred thousand a year. A hundred thousand dollars a year! You still call *him* a loudmouth!

RUTH (*Bitterly*) Oh, Walter Lee ...

(*She folds her head on her arms over the table*)

WALTER (*Rising and coming to her and standing over her*)
You tired, ain't you? Tired of everything. Me, the boy, the way we live—this beat-up hole—everything. Ain't you?



Ruth immediately refrained Willy Harris is a good for nothing loudmouth. So, Ruth immediately responds with Willy Harris is a good for nothing loudmouth. So, we find that apart from what we see in the superficial level, there is a lot of history in this family, the perceptions which by which maybe Walter is governed the perceptions that Ruth has which also she uses in order to warn Walter now.

Walter responds anybody who talks to me has got to be a good-for-nothing loud mouthing is not he. And who is just a good-for-nothing loudmouth? Charlie Atkins was just a good-for-nothing loudmouth too. What was not he? When he wanted me to go in the dry-cleaning business with him and now-he is grossing a hundred thousand a year. A hundred thousand dollars a year. You still call him a loudmouth.

This is also about a lot of resonances with *Death of a Salesman* over here where the characters over there also they are always wondering about what could have happened if they had joined something or they had tried out something else, but instead what where they are placed in the present it seems to be the least promising compared to the prospects that the past could have offered.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:11)

that long for nothing, could you:

RUTH Walter, please leave me alone.

WALTER A man needs for a woman to back him up ...

RUTH Walter—

WALTER Mama would listen to you. You know she listen to you more than she do me and Bennie. She think more of you. All you have to do is just sit down with her when you drinking your coffee one morning and talking 'bout things like you do and—*(He sits down beside her and demonstrates graphically what he thinks her methods and tone should be)*—you just sip your coffee, see, and say easy like that you been thinking 'bout that deal Walter Lee is so interested in, 'bout the store and all, and sip some more coffee, like what you saying ain't really that important to you— And the next thing you know, she be listening good and asking you questions and when I come home—I can tell her the details. This ain't no fly-by-



This play has a very different kind of an ending than the Miller's plays, but nevertheless we find that this is a quality this critique and the disappointment with the American Dream. That is the quality which also makes the play sit along with the inner circle plays as one of the commentators would put it, .

(Refer Slide Time: 12:36)

... *(In utter anguish as he brings his fists down on his thighs)*
 —Your eggs is getting cold!

RUTH *(Softly)* Walter, that ain't none of our money.

WALTER *(Not listening at all or even looking at her)* This morning, I was lookin' in the mirror and thinking about it ... I'm thirty-five years old; I been married eleven years and I got a boy who sleeps in the living room—*(Very, very quietly)*—and all I got to give him is stories about how rich white people live ...

RUTH Eat your eggs, Walter.

WALTER *(Slams the table and jumps up)*—DAMN MY



We do see over here he is talking about this getting into the liquor store business which the others do not entirely approve of.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:45)

... *(ironing and then rolling them into tight fat balls)*

WALTER *(Mumbling)* We one group of men tied to a race of women with small minds!

(His sister BENEATHA enters. She is about twenty, as slim and intense as her brother. She is not as pretty as her sister-in-law, but her lean, almost intellectual face has a handsomeness of its own. She wears a bright-red flannel nightie, and her thick hair stands wildly about her head. Her speech is a mixture of many things; it is different from the rest of the family's insofar as education has permeated her sense of English—and perhaps the Midwest rather than the South has finally—at last—won out in her inflection; but not altogether because overall it is a softening



We are introduced to Beneatha. She is about twenty years slim as slim and intense as her brother. She is not as pretty as her sister-in-law, but her lean, almost intellectual face has a handsomeness of her own. She wears a bright-red flannel nightie, and her thick hair stands wildly about her head. Her speech is a mixture of many things; it is different from

the rest of the family's insofar as education has permeated her sense of English and perhaps the Midwest rather than the South has finally—at last—won out in her inflection.

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pretty as her sister-in-law but her lean, almost intellectual face has a handsomeness of its own. She wears a bright-red flannel nightie, and her thick hair stands wildly about her head. Her speech is a mixture of many things; it is different from the rest of the family's insofar as education has permeated her sense of English—and perhaps the Midwest rather than the South has finally—at last—won out in her inflection; but not altogether, because over all of it is a soft slurring and transformed use of vowels which is the decided influence of the Southside. She passes through the room without looking at either RUTH or WALTER and goes to the outside door and looks, a little blindly, out to the bathroom. She sees that it has been lost to the Johnsons. She closes the door with a sleepy vengeance and



But not altogether, because over all it is a soft slurring and transformed use of vowels which is the decided influence of the Southside. She passes through the room without looking at either Ruth or Walter and goes to the outer door outside door and looks a little blindly, out to the bathroom. She sees that it has been lost to the Johnsons.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:40)

crosses to the table and sits down a little defeated)

BENEATHA I am going to start timing those people.

WALTER You should get up earlier.

BENEATHA *(Her face in her hands. She is still fighting the urge to go back to bed)* Really—would you suggest dawn? Where's the paper?

WALTER *(Pushing the paper across the table to her as he studies her almost clinically, as though he has never seen her before)* You a horrible-looking chick at this hour.

BENEATHA *(Drily)* Good morning, everybody.

WALTER *(Senselessly)* How is school coming?

BENEATHA *(In the same spirit)* Lovely. Lovely. And you know biology is the greatest. *(Looking up at him)* I



She closes the door with a sleepy vengeance and crosses to the table and sits down a little defeated. “I am going to start timing those people and Walter is saying, you should get up earlier, and Beneatha: really would you suggest dawn? Where is the paper?”

We find that it is also about this the current living conditions are not entirely suitable to them for various reasons and that is a reason why they are looking out looking forward to move into this neighborhood which has other complications as we would very soon learn.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:10)

BENEATHA (*In the same spirit*) Lovely. Lovely. And you know, biology is the greatest. (*Looking up at him*) I dissected something that looked just like you yesterday.

WALTER I just wondered if you've made up your mind and everything.

BENEATHA (*Gaining in sharpness and impatience*) And what did I answer yesterday morning—and the day before that?

RUTH (*From the ironing board, like someone disinterested and old*) Don't be so nasty, Bennie.

BENEATHA (*Still to her brother*) And the day before that and the day before that!

WALTER (*Defensively*) I'm interested in you. Something wrong with that? Ain't many girls who decide—

WALTER and BENEATHA (*In unison*) —“to be a doctor.”



They are also having this discussion about the future, about the career that Beneatha would pursue and says there are not many girls who decide to be a doctor.

(Refer Slide Time: 14:21)



BENEATHA (*Exits to the bathroom and bangs on the door*)
Come on out of there, please!

(*She comes back into the room*)

WALTER (*Looking at his sister intently*) You know the check
is coming tomorrow.

BENEATHA (*Turning on him with a sharpness all her own*)
That money belongs to Mama, Walter, and it's for her to
decide how she wants to use it. I don't care if she wants
to buy a house or a rocket ship or just nail it up
somewhere and look at it. It's hers. Not ours—hers.

WALTER (*Bitterly*) Now ain't that fine! You just got your
mother's interest at heart, ain't you, girl? You such a nice
girl—but if Mama got that money she can always take a
few thousand and help you through school too—can't
she?



There is all of a sudden they start talking about this money. We also know how the context of these discussions since we have had some critical observations since we have already made a few critical observations before we started reading the play.

Beneatha the money belongs to Mama, Walter, and it is for her to decide how she wants to use it. “I do not care if she wants to buy a house or a rocket ship or just nail it up somewhere and look at it. It is hers. Not ours – hers. Now, is not that fine. You just got your mother’s interest at heart, are not you girl? You such a nice girl – but if Mama got that money she can always take a few thousand and help you through school too – cannot she?”

(Refer Slide Time: 15:00)



girl—but if Mama got that money she can always take a few thousand and help you through school too—can't she?

BENEATHA I have never asked anyone around here to do anything for me!

WALTER No! And the line between asking and just accepting when the time comes is big and wide—ain't it!

BENEATHA (*With fury*) What do you want from me, Brother—that I quit school or just drop dead, which!

WALTER I don't want nothing but for you to stop acting holy 'round here. Me and Ruth done made some sacrifices for you—why can't you do something for the family?

RUTH Walter, don't be dragging me in it.

WALTER You are in it— Don't you get up and go work in somebody's kitchen for the last three years to help put clothes on her back?



“I have never asked anyone around here to do anything for me.” We find that there is a very different way in which Walter and Beneatha are looking at this money. It is this inheritance the insurance pay up which has come to them and they both choose to see this money very differently while Beneatha sees her mother as a sole owner of that money who can decide whatever she wants to do with that money.

Walter sees this as an opportunity to rescue the family that she should ideally use this money to help the family in either in pursuing a career or in starting a business as she would see it. “No and the line between asking and just accepting when the time comes is big and wide – is not it. Beneatha, with fury, What do you want from me, Brother – that I quit school or just drop dead, which there is this underlying struggle over here the stress which we cannot, it is quite palpable here.

I do not want nothing but for you to stop acting holy around here. Me and Ruth had made some sacrifices for you – why cannot you do something for the family?” So, family here we find that in most of the place that we have looked at so far, family is a very big deal here, family is at the core, family is at the center, the decisions, the indecisiveness, the mistakes even that they make in this process it is all for the family.

It has a twin purpose too, it validates some of those mistakes and it also legitimizes some of the actions that they choose that it justifies the inaction as well as in some form. “Do

not be dragging me in it. You are in it – Do not you get up and go to work in somebody’s kitchen for the last three years to help put clothes on her back?”

(Refer Slide Time: 16:39)

RUTH Oh, Walter—that’s not fair ...

WALTER It ain’t that nobody expects you to get on your knees and say thank you, Brother; thank you, Ruth; thank you, Mama—and thank you, Travis, for wearing the same pair of shoes for two semesters—

BENEATHA (*Dropping to her knees*) Well—I do—all right?—thank everybody! And forgive me for ever wanting to be anything at all! (*Pursuing him on her knees across the floor*) FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME!

RUTH Please stop it! Your mama’ll hear you.

WALTER Who the hell told you you had to be a doctor? If you so crazy ’bout messin’ ’round with sick people—then go be a nurse like other women—or just get married and be quiet ...

BENEATHA Well—you finally got it said ... It took you three years but you finally got it said. Walter, give up; leave me



“Ruth is beginning to feel a bit bad about that, Walter – that is not fair. It is not that nobody expects you to get on your knees and say thank you, brother; thank you, Ruth; thank you, Mama – and thank you Travis for wearing the same pair of shoes for two semesters.”

We find that money and the kind of choices that people make with their life is the is at the heart of this play already right in the in act in scene one itself we are introduced to these tensions over here. Beneatha is going very dramatic about this and she responds by dropping her knees and asking for forgiveness, .

(Refer Slide Time: 17:16)



years but you finally got it said. Walter, give up; leave me alone—it's Mama's money.

WALTER *He was my father, too!*

BENEATHA So what? He was mine, too—and Travis' grandfather—but the insurance money belongs to Mama. Picking on me is not going to make her give it to you to invest in any liquor stores—(*Underbreath, dropping into a chair*)—and I for one say, God bless Mama for that!

WALTER (*To RUTH*) See—did you hear? Did you hear!

RUTH Honey, please go to work.

WALTER Nobody in this house is ever going to understand me.

BENEATHA Because you're a nut.

WALTER Who's a nut?

BENEATHA You—you are a nut. Thee is mad, boy.



“Walter says, who the hell told you had to be a doctor? If you so crazy about messing around with sick people – then go be a nurse like other women – or just get married and be quiet. Well – you finally, got said. It took you three years, but you finally, got it said. Walter, give up; leave me alone – its Mama’s money. , he was my father too. So, what? He was mine, too.”

We also find the missing father figure who becomes a bone of contention over here just like in *The Glass Menagerie*. So, what he was mine too and Travis grandfather, but the insurance money belongs to Mama. “Picking on me is not going to make her give it to you to invest in any liquor stores – and I for one say, God bless Mama for that.

Did you hear? Did you hear? She is he is telling Ruth – Honey, please go to work. Nobody is in this house is ever going to understand me because you are a nut. Who’s a nut? You are a nut. This is mad, boy.”

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WALTER *He was my father, too!*
BENEATHA So what? He was mine, too—and Travis' grandfather—but the insurance money belongs to Mama. Picking on me is not going to make her give it to you to invest in any liquor stores—(*Underbreath, dropping into a chair*)—and I for one say, God bless Mama for that!
WALTER (*To RUTH*) See—did you hear? Did you hear!
RUTH Honey, please go to work.
WALTER Nobody in this house is ever going to understand me.
BENEATHA Because you're a nut.
WALTER Who's a nut?
BENEATHA You—you are a nut. Thee is mad, boy.
WALTER (*Looking at his wife and his sister from the door, very sadly*) The world's most backward race of people,



The worlds and Walter is saying the world's most backward race of people.

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and that's a fact.
BENEATHA (*Turning slowly in her chair*) And then there are all those prophets who would lead us out of the wilderness—(*WALTER slams out of the house*)—into the swamps!
RUTH Bennie, why you always gotta be pickin' on your brother? Can't you be a little sweeter sometimes? (*Door opens, WALTER walks in. He fumbles with his cap, starts to speak, clears throat, looks everywhere but at RUTH. Finally:*)
WALTER (*To RUTH*) I need some money for carfare.
RUTH (*Looks at him, then warms; teasing, but tenderly*) Fifty cents? (*She goes to her bag and gets money*) Here—take a taxi!

(*WALTER exits, MAMA enters. She is a woman in*



Then, there are all those prophets who would lead us out of the wilderness into the swamps. “Bennie, you always got to be picking on your brother? Cannot you be a little sweeter sometimes?” There are these discussions we will not get into those details.

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RUTH Bennie, why you always gotta be pickin' on your brother? Can't you be a little sweeter sometimes? (Door opens, WALTER walks in. He fumbles with his cap, starts to speak, clears throat, looks everywhere but at RUTH. Finally.)

WALTER (To RUTH) I need some money for carfare.

RUTH (Looks at him, then warms; teasing, but tenderly) Fifty cents? (She goes to her bag and gets money) Here —take a taxi!

(WALTER exits, MAMA enters. She is a woman in her early sixties, full-bodied and strong. She is one of those women of a certain grace and beauty who wear it so unobtrusively that it takes a while to notice. Her dark-brown face is surrounded by the total whiteness of her hair,



But, we find that here there are there is a family who is trying to make a living trying to foreground a very distinct identity the son Walter is trying to get into business and the daughter Beneatha she is trying to become a doctor they both would like to leave their mark in the society.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:47)



Bennie, why you always gotta be pickin' on your brother? Can't you be a little sweeter sometimes? (Door opens, WALTER walks in. He fumbles with his cap, starts to speak, clears throat, looks everywhere but at RUTH. Finally.)

WALTER (To RUTH) I need some money for carfare.

RUTH (Looks at him, then warms; teasing, but tenderly) Fifty cents? (She goes to her bag and gets money) Here —take a taxi!

(WALTER exits, MAMA enters. She is a woman in her early sixties, full-bodied and strong. She is one of those women of a certain grace and beauty who wear it so unobtrusively that it takes a while to notice. Her dark-brown face is surrounded by the total whiteness of her hair, and, being a woman who has adjusted to many things in life and overcome many more, her face



They would want to come out of this status where as he himself says one of the most backward races, they want to come out of that identity and embrace something that the

new age America is offering, but there are also these economic tensions, the family tensions that they are also trying to grapple with.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:006)



3. FAMILY DYNAMICS

- Family and the associated conflicts are a central concern in the play.
- There are three main types of conflicts in the Younger family : internal, interpersonal, and social conflicts.
- Interpersonal conflicts in the Younger family happens mainly when one member of the family feels like the others are neglectful of their individual dreams.
- Walter has a sense of entitlement on the insurance money and he is unhappy with Mama's decision to put a portion of the money on a new house and on the education of Beneatha. He believes that is unfair as it interferes with his business ambitions.
- Beneatha is the educated member of the family who wishes to become a doctor. And her conflicts with the family happens due to her ideological difference with the rest of the family members as well as her brother's constant condemnation of her ambition.



We will also take a very quick look at the family dynamics in this play as we have seen so far. So, we find that right from the beginning family and the associated conflicts are a central concern in the play. There are three main types of conflicts in the Younger family is internal, it is interpersonal and social conflicts also feed into this family dynamics.

The interpersonal conflicts happen mainly when one member of the family feels that the others are neglectful of their individual dreams that is what it begins with that. To begin with Ruth and Walter they seem to be going in very different directions and Ruth think and Ruth thinks that he is jumping into lot of risky things and he is hanging out with the loudmouths as she refers to them.

Walter thinks that Ruth has not been supportive enough and Ruth and Walter also thinks that Beneatha has had it a bit more easier than him and Beneatha thinks that Walter is being extremely unreasonable in expecting the insurance money from their mother.

We find that the family is a site of conflict over here where each character feels that the others are neglecting their dreams. They are all pursuing a dream, they all want their family and even their community to do well, but they also realize that they are not at least in a very visible since not getting enough support from within the family.

Walter we find that there is a sense of entitlement that he has about the insurance money and he is very unhappy with their mother's decision to put a portion of the money on buying a new house and also on supporting Beneatha's education, while he wants his community to and for himself to where he wants a very good life and he wants to make the best of the circumstances.

We will find him in a very ironic sense we find him not being very supportive of Beneatha's education. Like we just now saw he is advising her in a very a condescending way in a very unhelpful way to ask it just to be a nurse and then just get married and then do not interfere with these things.

He thinks that in an all fairness what he entirely believes is that the others are being very unfair to him because this arrangement with the money which looks quite fair because mother is the sole inheritor of that and she can decide what she wants to do with it.

But he thinks it is interfering with his ambitions and he sees a lot of unfairness and lack of support from everyone around him. So, Beneatha is the most educated one who speaks in a very different way, who behaves in a very different way, whose ambitions are also configured in such very distinct terms.

She wishes to become a doctor again without much support from her brother though her mother is determined to support her financially and her conflicts are largely due to the ideological difference. Because her brother constantly condemns her ambition and her worldview, but we find that the fundamental difference in this case it is not entirely about money it is also about the world views, the perspectives, .

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- Walter discourages Beneatha's aim of becoming a doctor because he thinks spending a large sum of money on a woman's education is unnecessary. "Who the hell told you you had to be a doctor?...go become a nurse like other women- or just get married and be quiet".
- another example of interpersonal conflict in the play is between Walter and his wife Ruth. Ruth is worried that her marriage is strained due to Walter's constant quest for financial success and Walter thinks Ruth is not supporting his ambitions enough.
- Aside from fighting with each other, the characters also struggles from internal conflicts.
- One example is the internal conflict of Ruth. Ruth is unable to decide if she should keep the newly formed baby or abort it. She considers abortion for the benefit of the family as she knows that the baby would be an extra burden. But she also knows that aborting the child would create more problems in her already strained marriage as Walter is against it.



Walter discourages Beneatha like we just now saw in scene one itself because he thinks spending a lot of money for supporting a woman's education is entirely unnecessary. "It may not yield the kind of returns he also has a business mind over here which he uses to totally condemn this act of spending money on Beneatha's education – who the hell told you that you had to be a doctor?"

Go become a nurse like other women or just get married and be quiet." Another example is between Walter and Ruth as we saw right now their marriage is getting increasingly strained because of these Walter's constant quest for financial success even to the point of getting into businesses which Ruth and it is not approve of, .

They also struggle from a lot of internal conflicts a lot of psychological dilemma and Ruth for instance we will very soon see as the play progresses, she is unable to decide whether she should keep the baby or abort it. And, because she thinks the abortion would be a wise choice for the benefit of the family because one more baby is also means additional financial burden.

But, she also knows that, that would all create more problems in their already strained marriage because Walter is entirely against it for moral reasons, for religious reasons and we find all of these things becoming adding to the pressure various kinds of pressures that the family is dealing with.

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- Another example of the internal conflict is that of Mama. Mama is unable to decide what to do with the money. She wants to invest the money on a new house and save some for the education of Beneatha. But she is concerned that a decision like that would stand in the way of Walter's business ambitions.
- But Mama is the character that holds the family together. She tries to sort all of these conflicts in a peaceful way and succeeds in the end.
- Her dialogues reflect the theme of importance of family. When Beneatha says there is nothing left in her brother for her to love him, Mama says to her:
"There is always something left to love. And if you ain't learned that, you ain't learned nothing. Have you cried for that boy today?... when do you think is the time to love somebody the most?... It's when he's at his lowest and can't believe in himself because the world done whipped him so!"
- The Social conflict happens when Walter decides to take Mr. Linder's offer and Mama is against it. Finally she succeeds in convincing Walter about the importance of putting family and dignity above money.
- Towards the end of the play the family comes together to oppose Mr. Linder and moves to their new home unitedly, with the courage to face an uncertain future.



Mama is also unable to decide what to do with the money. She wants to invest on a new house and we do see the conditions are entirely suitable for them to have a very modern life and she wants to invest in a new house, but she also wants to save some for the for supporting Beneatha's education.

But, she also knows that this decision might be very unhelpful when it comes to supporting Walter, but nevertheless till the end she tries to hold the family together and we can say that to a very large extent she succeeds as well. Because there are certain kinds of detours that personal their personal lives also take in this process making this entire exercise easier in some form.

The mother continues to highlight the importance of family. For instance, when she says to her daughter there is always something left to love and if you are not learn that you are not learn nothing. "Have you cried for that boy today? When do you think is the time to love somebody the most?" It is when he is at his lowest and cannot believe in himself because the world done whipped him so.

So, now moving on to the social conflict, so, for instance when Walter is being offered with offered by Mr. Linda to buy the house because they also do not want this black African American family to move into a White neighborhood. So, when Walter decides to take up on take that offer we find that the mother is entirely against it.

So, we find the roles being reversed over here, the ever ambitious, the adventurous Walter comes across is a bit more conservative and regressive when it comes to a decision like this. But, eventually mother succeeds in convincing Walter about the importance of saving their dignity and there the pride of their family more than anything.

Though Walter continues to perhaps believe in this equation of success that he has found working out in many cases in the American dream and how the American dream works out if we find that he also begins to see sense in this need for putting the family above everything else because that is what holds them together as individuals.

So, we do see in that sense towards the end of the plane the family coming together to oppose Mr. Linda's proposal. They also unitedly decides the unitedly deciding to move into this new home, which is perhaps in a very unfriendly neighborhood. It is a very uncertain future.

Things are not really resolved or settled, they have not finally, arrived, but it seems alright because they are they have decided to face it together.