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The Absurdity of the American Dream in Black Theater between The 19th century and 20th century

Case Study *A Raisin in the Sun* 1959 by Lorraine Vivian Hansberry

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DEDICATION

I express my gratitude to *Allah* for giving me strength and the ability to finish this
dissertation among such sensitive conditions

To my unique parents: *SALIHA* and *BRAHIM* for guiding me and pushing forward to reach my
goals and fulfill my aims

To the memory of my beloved brother: *IMED* and my precious uncle: *NABIL. C*

To my precious and faithful sister and Twin Flame: *CHAIMA* for always supporting me and
hold my back

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CAVE WOMEN, SOUHA, ASSALA, AMEL, and all the good people who consider me a friend
and taught me the real meaning of being who I am*

To my sweetheart: *ABIR* with her extraordinary and positive spirit that will always be
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Abstract

This dissertation is a thematic study of the correlation between the American dream and the African American people. It is an examination to prove the reliability of the American Dream for the colored people in the American society through Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*. The raised problematic of this research comes as a result of the racial discrimination that colored people pass through in America. So, one thinks whether the American Dream is manifested in Hansberry's play or it is an absurd concept when it comes to African Americans. This study aims to investigate the idea that the American dream is a mythical ideology and absurd for African American people. Furthermore, it follows an eclectic approach basing heavily on the psychoanalytic approach to understand how does characters think and behave concerning their dreams. Lorraine exposes a cycle of a Black family which is adopted from a real story event that represents most of the Blacks in the 1950s. Finally, the analysis demonstrates that racial discrimination still exists in American societies, and *Raisin* is a heavy account to unveil the hidden truth that dreams, promises, and safety are not fulfilled in America, the world is a witness of the brutality and the victimized side in order to confirm that the American Dream is Absurd for the African American people.

Key terms

African American Theater, *A Raisin in the Sun*, African American society, Black Theater, Brutality, Lorraine Hansberry, Racial Discrimination, Social Injustice , The American Dream

List of abbreviations

National Black Theater Festival: **NBTF**

Black women playwrights group: **BWPG**

Raisin in the Sun: **Raisin**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication	I
Acknowledgment	II
Abstract	III
List of Abbreviations.....	IV
Table of Content	V
General Introduction	8
Chapter One: Historical Background.....	12
Introduction.....	13
1. Historical Overview	14
1.1.African American Theater and Black Theater	14
1.1.1. Historical Overview of African American Theater.....	15
1.1.2. The Relationship between <i>Black Theater</i> and <i>African American Theater</i>	16
1.1.3. Characteristics of Black Theater(Africa American Theater).....	17
2. African AmericanCompanies and Series of Black Theater.....	18
2.1.Broadway Theater.....	19
2.2.Minstrel Shows.....	20
2.3.African Grove Theater (AfricanCompany).....	20
2.4.Lorraine Hunsberry’s Theater.....	21
2.5.Black Women Playwrights’ Group.....	21

3. The American Dream.....	22
3.1.The Negro and the American Dream	23
Conclusion.....	26
Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework	27
Introduction	28
1. The Life of the Author.....	29
1.1.Hansberry’s Orientations in the 19 th Century	31
2. About the Play <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	33
2.1.Synopsis of the Play.....	34
2.2.Major Characters in the Play.....	36
2.3.Lorraine’s Inspiration for the Play Script.....	39
3. The Audience’s Reaction towards the Play.....	41
3.1.The Celebrated Themes in the Play.....	43
Conclusion.....	45
ChapterThree: The Manifestation of the Ideology of the American Dream in Lorraine Hansberry’s Play	46
Introduction	47
1. The Psychological Analysis of the Physical Appearance	48
1.1.Beneatha Younger.....	48
1.2.Walter Lee Younger	50
2. The Psychological Analysis of the Characters.....	51

2.1.Beneatha Younger	53
2.2.Walter Lee Younger	54
3. The Eric-Erikson's Theory and the American Dream Traumas.....	55
4. The Hansberry's Dialect in the Play.....	59
Conclusion.....	62
General Conclusion	63
Works Cited List.....	66
Abstract in Arab.....	71

General introduction

The struggles of the African Americans from the Harlem Renaissance (1918-1925) to the Civil Rights movement (1954- 1968) demonstrate how the existence of the non-white people is explicitly rejected. Many scholars, activists, and writers carry out the duty to explain what is going on with Black people in America. They argue that African American literature is shaped through revolutionary literary movements. Furthermore, they try to express and visualize it in the forms of plays in order to draw a clear image of injustice, cruelty, and racism that the black people are exposed to. Black people consider the theater as an immune shelter for them from the intrinsic racism of the world. Therefore, they rely on the African folk traditions like storytelling and traditional kinds of dance movements . . . etc Moreover, this research is relying on Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) for its in-depth in social circumstances of Black people and its view of the contradictions that lie between the real situation of black people and the American epithet of the dreamland. This contradiction raises an important question concerning the reliability of the American Dream in relation to black people. Thus, how does the American Dream manifest in Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*? In order to answer this question, some subsidiary questions need to be answered. First, how did black theater begin in America? Second, what is the importance of demonstrating black theater in America? And finally, how did the play exhibit the absurdity of the American dream?

The study seeks to investigate the dilemma of the African American racial discrimination that is visualized through Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*. The play is performed as a living entity and embodiment; therefore, it is considered as a window to introduce the black theater that portrays black characters, themes, and experiences realistically among the American

community. Finally, this study is conducted to Show whether the American dream is manifested in the play or it is just a mythical idea concerning African Americans.

Moreover, the research would be a foundation for more academic researches concerning African American studies. It also can determine a framework for researchers to investigate the situation of African Americans in a certain period. Also; the presented study manifests the rich cultural heritage of African Americans as human beings like Europeans. The recognized cultural heritage in this study comes from the identity base that most African Americans are still unaware of or they are just sightless.

This research is going to rely on the qualitative method in order to have a reliable analysis. For the sake of examining the selected theme in this study, it is going to use the eclectic approach which is a combination of two or more approaches. The used approaches are, first, the historical approach because there are historical events concerning Black Americans. Second, the descriptive approach, it is used to describe the situation of Black Americans at the time. Third, the psychoanalytic approach, it is concerned with psychological analysis to some characters of the play. Furthermore, this thematic study used even the language as a tool to have access to study the psychology of the characters. Finally, this dissertation will follow the MLA style relying on the eighth edition.

Furthermore, the conducted study is divided into three chapters starting with a general introduction and ending by a general conclusion. The first chapter is devoted to be a theoretical framework to define the African American theater, its elements, characters, importance and how did it emerge as well as defining the Black Theater that *A Raisin in the Sun* belongs to. The second chapter is going to be a historical overview of the play, the author, the main themes, the

characters, and the way the play was accepted in society. The third chapter will be devoted to the analysis of the play in which the characters take place.

Literature Review

Today's critics, writers, and scholars acclaimed that *Raisin In The Sun* is the first African American play that made a change in American theater. It was written by a black writer, performed by black people and it has been translated into thirty languages. James Baldwin confesses "never before in the history of American Theater had so much truth of black people's live been seen on the stage". Since then, this play became an international dramatic classic play. Moreover, Baldwin's view was supported by Bassad Maher Mhyal's dissertation under the title *That is the Dream*. Furthermore, the College of Science for Women, University of Baghdad, Iraq professes that

Through this play, Hansberry created a careful and complex study of human nature. In many ways, she offers the belief that the dreams that can urge on our ambitions can also destroy our psyche if not properly achieved. The human psyche needs dreams because they represent one's active search towards self-improvement which is necessary to continually reconsider the status and values of one's existence.

It means that they found that as dreams can be the first step of one's ambition, they can be also destruction for one's future and existence. So, they examine the importance of dreams in the play and the way it affects someone's life.

Moreover, fighting stereotypes was the central problem that gained a lot of support as in Halina Filipowicz's book *Black Theater and Drama: Lifting A Veil*, in contrast, with Lauren Willson, a certified educator, concluded that Lorraine Hansberry challenges stereotypes

of African American people in the play by making the characters people rather than caricatures and by giving them qualities that stereotypical African American people at the time would not have demonstrated.

Thus, while the above studies concerning Hansberry's play are tackled from different perspectives and by using different approaches and they found different conclusions; this study also tackles Hansberry's play from another angle. It studies to what extent the American Dream is manifested and fulfilled in the play. Besides, it seeks to discover whether or not Black Americans are allowed to dream or to achieve their dreams, or the American Dream is just a mythical slogan for black people.

Chapter One:

Historical Background

Introduction

This chapter attempts to give an overview of the historical background of the African American theater and Black theater. Since this study examines the relationship between African Americans and Black theater within the American Dream, this chapter will start by defining the African American Theater and stating its characteristics. Then, it will introduce the different points of view concerning what has been discussed about the African American theater from different scholars, theorists, and playwrights. It will trace back its beginnings in history through emphasizing the word Black and how it was associated with the theater in America; it also, highlights the period when the African American identity paradox emerges in the American society. After dealing with the African American theater, it is also necessary to clarify the relationship between the African and the Black Theater and state its characteristics. Moreover, there are different types of African companies that pave the way for a better understanding of the multiple Black theaters in which they seek to show the true self of the Black individual. Furthermore, they give a deep interest to whether the American Dream, which has been a central theme of American literature since the early nineteenth century, is fulfilled for African Americans or it is a mythical ideology. Besides, this chapter will deal with the misconception of the phony relationship between Black Americans and the American Dream. It is the stereotypical image of the American Dream that leads to the Black theater in the first place.

1. Historical Overview

Black theater as a social protest belongs to African Americans. It was adopted to manifest their rights as it was permitted. In his definition of Black theater, W.E.B. Du Bois said “theater [is] about us, for us, by us and near us” (Hill 29). He gives an explanation in which theater is a central part of African American history. The theater is not something new for African people because they used to have their oral traditions and rituals. That is why they aim in their specific theater to express their legacy over generations and to exchange cultures. Such traditions consist of dramatic performances that reveal the real emotions of the indigenous Africans and revive their spirit in the future (Festival357). So, the relationship between the African American and the Black theater is an integral relationship which it is considered as one entity. Hill Errol demonstrated “For one example, the very fact that a majority of black plays are written with a type of proscenium stage production [...] is most appropriate to a theatrical presentation of the black experience” (Hill 29). The theater, therefore, considered as an essential part of the black society (Hill 29).

1.1. African American Theater and Black Theater

In the recent years, the theater was concerned only with a stage to entertain or to express and reveal visual views of societies. It takes place under a roof or in an open air; and its performances sometimes has to include all human creative activities by using physical interactions among the actors, speeches, music, and designs. In the African conscious, there is a small area for performance that creates the intimation between the theatre and Black people especially African-Americans. So, the theatre of colored people is a reaction to what the white societies consider the word “Black” (Festival234).

1.1.1. Historical Overview of African American Theatre

Africans lived in slavery for 244 years and more until they were apparently "freed" by the Declaration of Emancipation (1863). This compulsory servitude has created a racial gap between blacks and whites which has been never resolved despite the civil rights movement of the 1960s. This has shaped the efforts of African Americans to integrate in the American Theatre. Recent efforts have been rebuffed but, with blacks being more educated, economically more reliant, and with increasing pride in their heritage and community, few attempts have been made to integrate in theatre (Hill and Barnett 34-35).

The spectrum of African folk traditions includes storytelling, myths, religious practices, music, song, and dance with ancestor worship from ancient times to the present. It has given a spiritual gold mineral to black artists to celebrate what an African American was like. The book *Historical Dictionary of African American Theater* stated:

African American Theater has started its pursuit for legitimacy emulating mainstream American theatrical traditions at the African Grove in 1821 and from there to Minstrelsy, to William Wells Brown's play *Escape; or, a Leap to Freedom*, to the musical comedies at the turn of the century, to the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, to the Negro Unit of the Federal Theatre Project of the 1930s, to the American Negro Theatre and social dramas and musicals of the 1940s, to the avant-garde and off-Broadway movement of the 1950s, to the new Renaissance and Black Power Movement of the 1960s, to the feminist movement of the 1970s, to August Wilson's 10-play cycle for every decade of the 20th

century, and to the array of plays presented at Larry Leon Hamlin's National Black Theatre Festival (NBTF) (Hill & Barnett 34-35).

Many producers, actors, directors, theatre companies, choreographers, artists, and award winnings helped to develop the famous tradition of minstrels, the first pure form of entertainment in America. They helped to establish and shape America's musical comedy style. Furthermore, they introduced the extensive heritage of theater and cultural traditions to the American stage and captivated the American and European audiences with their Charleston dance and rhythms (Hill and Barnett 34-35).

The African American theater movement that started in the middle of the twentieth century has shaped its path to the renowned reputation in the theatrical world under the name "black theater movement". It has gradually improved with concepts of pride, dignity, community, history, and social achievement until it creates its vital entity with a set of specific characteristics (Hill and Barnett 34-35).

1.1.2. The Relationship between *Black Theater* and *African-American Theater*

The expression *Black Theater could be African American Theater* alludes to the plays and musicals composed and performed over the past 200 years ago by African-American experiences. Black theater's roots start within the early 19th century, in particular, with the foundation of the African Grove Theater moving to Minstrelsy then followed by Federal Project Theater to the American Negro Theatre (Hill & Barnett 348). Anthony D. Hill with Douglas Q. Barnett in their book *Historical Dictionary of African American Theater* stated:

Black theater began its quest for legitimacy emulating mainstream American theatrical traditions at the African Grove in 1821 and from there to Minstrelsy, to William Wells Brown's play *Escape; or, a Leap to Freedom*, to the musical comedies at the turn of the century, to the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s, to the Negro Unit of the Federal Theatre Project of the 1930s, to the American Negro Theatre and social dramas and musicals of the 1940s, to the avant-garde and off-Broadway movement of the 1950s, to the new Renaissance and Black Power Movement of the 1960s, to the feminist movement of the 1970s, to August Wilson's 10-play cycle for every decade of the 20th century, and to the array of plays presented at Larry Leon Hamlin's National Black Theatre Festival (NBTF) (Hill & Barnett 348).

The term *Black* was a significant trend in the theater's culture of the late twentieth century until 1990, with the emergence of *The Living Theater* and other exploratory groups that sought to revitalize the language of theater. To conclude, according to what has been mentioned in the historical overview of the African American theater and in the above quotation it appears that, the terms African American theater and Black theater are the same. Thus, they are considered as one unit following the same path for the sake of manifesting the dark theater as a social protest (Hill 29).

1.1.3. Characteristics of Black Theater (African American Theater)

The theater as oral literature has been associated with performance since the beginning of human life. The West considers themselves *self-disabled* compared to the expansion of other nations in literature. Frequently, the same belief is applied to the theater as a literary work. The

Black Theater differs from the White Theater because it was a response to the injustice and social devaluation of the whites against the African American people. It is summed up from W.E.B. DuBois' works that the Black Theater ought to be for black people to uncover the African American real-life experiences; and it is by black people which suggest black writers with black characters on-screen. And they are near black people since black neighborhoods are dismissed and isolated from the white areas (Filipowicz). Ron Karenga stated that dark theater should be functional, purposeful, beneficial, and gives moral lessons to change the audience's way of thinking towards the colored people. Moreover, black theater should be collective, it means group-oriented, centering on collaboration instead of individuality, and be better committed to one perspective. Hence, to solve the freedom dilemma of blacks and to manage the stereotypes that are applied only to non-Americans. This leads actors to permit the audience to participate in the performance. Therefore, it might cause brainstorm in the audience's minds to rethink on the possible changes that could be made after watching a play like *Raisin in the Sun*. It also entertains people from all over the world not only black people. Finally, this may show to the world how much black people are talented and creative in their acting (Karenga).

2. African American Companies and Series of Black Theater

This element is intended to present a series of Black Theater, produced companies, and performances of individual shows or festivals. Black Theater is an independent art and premier talent agency for African Americans in the United States. The African companies made a great impact on American society. Therefore, it takes a step beyond the restricted boundaries that white people made to limit Black people. The followings are the major companies and theaters which are conducted by African Americans and continued to expand for a long time but, some of which end up forgotten.

2.1. Broadway Theater

Forty one Broadway houses located from 41st street to 54th street and between 8th and 6th avenues plus the Vivian Beaumont at Lincoln center. Those theaters have been deemed as Broadway house by the Broadway league, the national trade association for the Broadway industry in New York and across the North America. It Holds 500 seats or more and each Broadway Theater is a home to one show. The productions are being repertory with a typical schedule of evening performances on Tuesday through Sunday and matinees on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays (Araujo and Jelani).

Broadway was built in 1924 by B.S Moss and designed by Eugene De Rosa, architect. One of their first films was the animated Disney character *Meki Mouse* by Steam Boat Willie in 1928. *2011 Sister Act* was based on the movie *Whoopi Goldberg Sister Act* in 1992. Through its early history, Broadway moved back and forth between showing movies and presenting Life Theater. In 1938, the Broadway was taken by the Shubert Brothers J.J Shubert and Lee Shubert, and became a legitimate theater (Bobbie and Beverly). Then, in 1942, it was a spot of history production when Iving Berlin presented *This Is the Army*, a play with musical reviews that rises money for the army of the Second World War. Moreover, in 1957, an other African American play was produced which was *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry and Directed by Lloyd Richard, an African American director. In 1959, the Broadway presented *Gypsy*, a classical of the American musical theater. Furthermore, in 1979, the British invasion of Broadway began with *Evita* then, it was followed by the French revolution which was depicted in 1987 through *Les Miserable*. Over the next two decades, the hits continues to succeed in Broadway stage from movie palace to premier musical house yet, the Broadway remains to grow in drama and literature world (Bobbie and Beverly).

2.2. The Minstrel Shows

The Minstrel shows were a form of entertainment, a series of traveling shows across the united state. It began in the 1830s and it was highly popular between 1850 and 1870. The Minstrel shows feature white actors from the middle class. Their roles are to mark black people and imitate black musical and dance shows in combination with a savage parody of black Americans by stating the stereotypes and prejudices of African Americans in the United State. They painted their faces with black color; therefore, it is forbidding, nowadays in the US, to color faces any more with dark colors because of the history of the Minstrel Show (Bird).

2.3. African Grove Theater/ African Company

The African Company changed into the first acknowledged black theatre troupe. In 1816, William Henry Brown (1815-1884), a retired West Indian steamship steward, received a house on Thomas Street in lower Manhattan, New York. He offered a lot of instrumental and vocal entertainments on Sunday afternoons in his tea garden, attracting a tremendous target audience from the five boroughs of New York City. In 1821, Brown rapt to Mercer and Bleeker Street into a two-story house with a spacious tea garden. He rearranges the second floor into a 300-seat theatre and renamed the enterprise The African Grove Theatre (Hill and Barnett 6).

Henry opens the season with the success of *King of England* on September 21, 1821. The company mounted productions from the playwright to the pantomime, to the farce. Brown performs *Tom and Jerry*, *Life in London*, *The Poor Soldier*, *Othello*, *Don Juan*, *Obi*, and *Three Finger'd Jack*. In such mysterious circumstances, the company lasted three years until it was burnt down in 1823(Hill and Barnett 7).

2.4. Lorraine Hansberry Theater

Located in San Francisco, the LHT is one amongst some of the black theaters that are alive for over twenty-five years, celebrating its day of remembrance in 2006. Over the years, the LHT has figured out four complete different locations, and has mounted over than one hundred plays from such playwrights as *Ifa Bayeza* and *Shakespeare*. It had been supported in 1981 by creative directors like Stanley Williams and Quentin Easter whose goal was threefold; first, to determine a high-quality theater able to present America's foremost black playwrights; second, to produce opportunities for native actors and technicians; and finally, to foster youth development through workshops and stretch programs. One of all its biggest successes was the 1999 production of Marcia Leslie's play *The Trial of One Short-Sighted woman versus Mamie Louise and Safreeta Mae* (Hill and Barnett 310).

2.5. Black Women Playwright's Group

Black women playwrights group is a professional theater that supports the African American playwrights. BWPG is an organization that represents Black communities and gives an artistic voice for women who write their first works. They help playwrights by criticizing their works and through seminars, conferences, and presented productions. BWPG appreciates being a keystone of colored people at native universities within the DC public schools, residents of cluster homes, and programs for spouses and kids of the incarcerated. The various groups of women with whom BWPG works are bound together by a common fundamental sense of self within the family, culture, and the world (Hill and Barnett 49).

BWPG was established in 1989 and consolidated in 1993. The mission of BWPG is to support and advance the work of their members as well as give authority and promotion on basic

issues inside the theater world. BWPG work's program consists of monthly meetings that are the center of their group. Community ventures are moreover an imperative of BWPG programming. As a result, it has gotten programming awards from the Neighborhood Venture Support, the DC Commission on the Expressions and Humanities, and the DC Humanities Chamber with other establishments (Hill and Barnett 50).

3. The American Dream

The term coined in 1931 by James Truslow Adam in his landmark book *Epic of America*. Adam defines the American dream as a belief that supports individuals to attain their version of success in life, regardless of whom they are or where they were born, and even what class they were born into. He stated that "life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement", in other words, the American Dream is not taking by chance as everyone thinking, yet it is gained through hard work, personal sacrifice, and risk-taking that prevail the way to be richer and get a more secure living situation (Adams 214).

After 1920, there was a presidential notion of freedom concepts in the US including President Franklin D. Roosevelt in which he amplified equal rights opportunity to homeownership by making Fannie Mae and Federal National Mortgage Association for insure mortgages. His financial charge of rights supported good housing and helps to create a proper educational system besides the capability of earning more financial sources to supply a better average living situation including the health care associations for the public concerns ("State of the Union Message to Congress").

Moreover, after the Second World War, President, Harry Trauman, George W.Bush, Bill Clinton, and Obama all created the accessibility for everyone to have affordable health care besides many other interesting profits concerning the American individual. In this regard, the sociologist, Emily S.Rosberg identified, in her book *Spreading the American Dream*, five components of the American Dream that marked a trend of progression for other nations (Rosenberg 3-7). Thus, the book alludes to the American advancement that should be imitated by other nations as well as a free market to support the free trade agreement with inner foreign investment, also the ability to exchange data and culture and allowing the governmental security of the private enterprise. Therefore, the American Dream was valid in all united state's factors that lead to competitive advantages over other countries. It is no wonder that all these factors promote the American Dream to gain its repercussion in the world (Rosenberg 63-122).

3.1. The Negro and the American Dream

The American dream means different things to different people in the U.S. For most Americans means a good job and financial security. Unexpectedly, it turns to be a notion of freedom for African Americans which is the biggest concern to achieve back then. The African Americans were treated under the logical circumstances that any individual could handle while the white society was celebrating his promised dreams. A new notion came up which is the right to make choices without the restrictions of their skin, race, color, or the place they were born in (DAMON 153).

When slavery was abolished in 1865, and after the civil right movement in 1960s, Black Americans had no right in law protection as a component of the American society. However, the meaning of the American Dream changed according to social and political circumstances. For

example, the terrorist attack on 11 September made most of the Americans seek safety and after the Iraq invasion, most people changed their perspective towards the dream itself. However, it was the same for African Americans to seek warmth and safety because they were already humiliated and had no right to speak. Therefore, this freedom notion was, gradually, promoted and accepted for the reason that most Americans were aware of the social discrimination that black people fighting against. In this part, the African American people had to choose whether they should bring back their African identity or integrate within the new one as American citizens (Putnam 205-206).

Moreover, in the Bible as what their Christianity offers, black preachers say that Jesus Christ died for all human kind, no color differences or region roots as Martin Luther King clarify in his speech *I Have a Dream* “one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers” (“Martin Luther King I Have a Dream Speech - American Rhetoric”). It means that the black recognition was never held for all. They are living in fake promises just to prevent the African Dream to be revealed that is why the president Obama conducted, in his book *The Audacity of Hope*, “thought on reclaiming the American dream” and “This isn’t to say that prejudice has vanished. None of us—black, white, Latino, or Asian—is immune to the stereotypes that our culture continues to feed us, especially stereotypes about black criminality, black intelligence, or the black work ethic” (Obama 134).

In a way or another, Gambino’s video *This is America* has a big influence in 2018 and considered to be a criticism against the American system. From the pants that represent America to the man playing the guitar that Gambino killed at the start of the video that represent Trayvon Martin’s death that, it all seeks to demonstrate the black matter theme again. Gambino’s stand

while shooting the guitarist is an imitation to the pose of T.D Rice as the origin of *Jim Crow character* that essentially creates a minstrel scene, a white man with a black colored face. In addition to other symbols as the violent scene of people's death in church, the destruction of the media, and moving to the dance of GwaraGwarab which was originated in South Africa as well as the white horse in the back that represents the Lynched African American in the south (Gambino).

Furthermore, the way of carrying the gun after each shoot and the group of people recording everything using cellphones means a double representation, as if the cellphone can be used as a weapon also as a way of victory for blacks. The final scene is a similar description to what Michael Jackson demonstrated in his video in 1991 *Black or White* to the man who is throwing the money for everyone in the back while Gambino dancing carelessly with a group of young teenagers (Gambino).

Finally, Gambino running as fast as he can to survive from the American curse as if he found a way to escape the horrifying reality of African Americans inside America (Gambino). In this regard, the frame of African Americans is still doubtful in which the black person remains suspended between the contradictory propositions unable to assert his dreams, questioning the demonstration of his hopes whether they are fulfilled or they are just phony manipulations to shut them down ("Martin Luther King I Have a Dream Speech - American Rhetoric")

Conclusion

Through the historical overview about the African American theater and the American Dream, this chapter extracts that there is a relationship between colored people and the ideology of Dreams in America. And the theater was a tool to reveal how society shapes its content of that relationship through multiple acting movements and musical shows which helps to recognize the components of each social group. Moreover, The fact that only the whites who are allowed to express themselves through theater leads Black theater to refutes this reality and pave the way for African Americans to protest in a more cultivated way for their right as Americans. Furthermore, the idea of such theater has traditional roots in the African culture but it needed time to be observable, acceptable, and then famous in America. Although America is known by its notion of freedom in all aspects as the whole world defines it, America does not consider the black's dreams as important as the white's one even though the colored population represents more than the white population.

Chapter Two:

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

When it comes to real-life experiences, white playwrights attempt to portray blacks in a negative description. In her writings, Lorraine Hansberry was trying to explain how the differences that cover each community can be measured through the lack of understanding of that specific community itself. Different from many African American playwrights, she was unique in her way of exposing real black life events. Besides, she offers a smart use of materials to American literature ignoring color differences. All these respectful manifestations helped Lorraine to build a well-known career in a short period. *A Raisin in the Sun* was one of her successful plays that helped to praise her future. It is considered the first play written by African American woman and performed in Broadway Theater. Vivian questioned the perverse hegemonies of the white Americans with disclaiming for the Black individual's contributions in the white society especially as a woman who is living in a world run by men. This chapter is going to tackle all the previous items in detail and will explain Lorraine's orientations in the 19th century. Moreover, a synopsis of her work *A Raisin in the Sun* will be presented in this chapter. Also, it will discuss some of the celebrated themes in the play for more understanding of her true self as a Black woman playwright.

1. The Life of the Author

Lorraine Vivian Hansberry is an African American playwright. She was born in Chicago on May 19th, 1930. She was the last girl among four brothers in an Independent, politically active, and republican family of Carl Augustus Hansberry, a broker, and his spouse Nannie Louise Perry, a school teacher. Lorraine Hansberry was born in the period of the Great Depression (1930-1933) when the average officialdom of American people kept in a challenge; that is why Lorraine said in the First Conference of Negro Writers (James 02)

I was born on the Southside of Chicago. I was born black and a female. I was born in a depression after one world war and came into adolescence during another. While I was still in my teens, the first atom bombs were dropped on human beings and by the time I was twenty-three years old my government and that of the Soviet Union had entered actively into the worst conflict of nerves in history—the Cold War(Lorraine Hansberry Literary Trust).

Hansberry's family remained wonderfully solid for being rich, compared to the majority of Chicago's Blacks who hardly survived until the crisis is over. When Hansberry was born, she was identified as a Negro because of the racial identity notion of the newborns. Then, it was, undoubtedly, replaced by *Black* by her parents, following the Afrocentric ideology which became a heritage to Hansberry's generation (James 02). Vivian had a close look over the situation of the low classes even though she was never obliged to live in such a common situation. That is why she never admired her current situation as a rich girl instead of being one of those poor children from the black neighborhood. As a result of her anti-racist sense and

childhood comparison, she was a fan of their vulgar spontaneous attitudes, and she was trying to imitate their behaviors like wearing *House keys* to be recognized as one of them. (02)

When Lorraine's family moved to a white neighborhood, an exclusive Chicago neighborhood that no other black man lived in before, they faced a huge rejection from multiple sides, in which we can mention the Supreme Court decision against integration and the white racist neighbors. Despite all these difficulties Lorraine's father owned a house in the Washington Park subdivision on the south side of Chicago. Further, Lorraine, herself could be killed by a brick attack through a window by angry whites. Moreover, in her interviews, Lorraine mentioned how her mother was protecting her family with a loaded gun from the angry whites' aggressiveness. Although she was born in a comfortable middle class, she preferred the depicted social class in *Raisin in the Sun* and she clarified that it is the social class that she cares about. (02)

Furthermore, Hansberry was supposed to graduate from Wisconsin Madison University but her obsession with art and writing led her to stop after two years before graduation to join the staff of the black newspaper *Freedom*. At that period Vivian started her artwork *Raisin in the Sun* and completed in 1957 (James 03). Then, Lorraine got married to her spouse Robert Nemrof in 1953 whom she shared the same interests like writing and discussing political issues. Hansberry passed away at the age of 34 after a humble struggle with pancreatic cancer on January 12th, 1965. However, she left many poems, essays, and articles as a cultural heritage. She also attended many conferences for the black movement call of rights (Nemiroff 14).

1.1. Hansberry's Orientations in the 19th Century

Lorraine did not reveal her dual personality or her sexual orientation for the public readers even though she wrote anonymous letters as a reaction to THE LADDER, a lesbian publication in the United States. It was published by *The Daughter of Bilitis*, a lesbian organization started in 1955 until 1972 in San Francisco, then it spread all over California and the rest of the United States (Ladder). In part, Vivian was glad of such feminine rebel as she conducted in her reply to THE LADDER:

I'm glad as heck that you exist. You are obviously serious people and I feel that women, without wishing to foster any strict separatist notions, homo or hetro, indeed have a need for their own publications and organizations. Our problems, our experiences as women are profoundly unique as compared to the other half of the human race. Women, like other oppressed groups of one, kind or another, have particularly had to pay a price for the intellectual impoverishment that the second class status imposed on us for centuries created and sustained. Thus, I feel that THE LADDER is a fine, elementary step in a rewarding direction (Katz 425).

This sense of feminist heritage as a black woman put her in a suspicious mold of being lesbian or homosexualal though she was married then she had divorced in 1965 (Bloom 11).

Moreover, Vivian sent another reply connecting the anti-homosexuality and antifeminism trying to approve the ethical reasons for such sexual activities. On top of that, her feminist exaggeration brought her to skeptical situation away from her creativity as a young professional playwright. Hansberry was the fifth African American influential woman at a young age. She took a place in the American civil rights movements to relish her womanhood as a black far

away from the European colonial rules. It is not only for women but also for all blacks in America (11).

Vivian wrote more than 60 letters, poems, magazines, and newspaper articles. She also wrote speeches for the movement seeking for equality like the one in Carnegie Hall, NYC in 1963, laudation for the honor of W.B.E Du Bois, where she said: “Never, never again must the Negro people pay the price that they have paid for allowing their oppressor to say who is or is not a fit leader of our cause” (Lorraine Hansberry Literary Trust). It means that they should consider their selves as free human beings, and they should not surrender to the brutal behaviors which were addressed only for the colored people. Moreover, Lorraine was against the principle of paying for black people’s freedom. Further, Hansberry was publicly active as well as in the writing field with some musical tendencies. Nina Simon, the African American singer, said that she kept looking at Lorraine’s picture, and then she got her inspiration to play a song on her piano *to be young gifted and black* inspired by her book *To Be Young Gifted and Black*(Nina Simon Channel). Back then, the song was recorded after Vivian’s death in 1965 to honor Hansberry’s memory. The song broke the hit in 1969 when it was considered as an influential Jazz song at that period (Cohodas 223). Besides, many African American artists were inspired by Lorraine’s status as an African American woman who made the change in time, in heart, and in the whole world. All these advantages prove that she deserves to win the Drama Critic Circle award after her famous work *A Raisin in the Sun* (Bloom 11).

2. About the Play *A Raisin in the Sun*

A Raisin in the sun was produced in 1959. It is considered as a part of the classical drama. It is divided into three Acts. Lorraine was inspired by Langston Hughes' poem *Harlem* that is why she took the title of her play *A Raisin in the sun* from 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?

Maybe it just sags

Like a heavy load.

Or does it explode? (Hughes, ET al.426)

The play is the first play that is portrayed by real black characters on stage with real social, economic, racial, feminine, and political black people's issues that are produced and performed on Broadway Theater. This reveals that the struggle could be faced by any African American family in the 1950s. Furthermore, the play describes the African American community in its real terms from an African American point of view. It was produced in 1959 and performed in Broadway Theater at the Ethel Barrymore; New York. Even though *Raisin* faced financial problems, yet it was produced at the Adelphi Theater, London, under Lloyd Richards and

Starring Earle Hyman (Cofield 17). Moreover, in 1961, the film was directed by Daniel Petrie and Starring Sidney Poitier then it won the award in the Festival de Cannes Prix Gray Cooper. Besides, in 1973 the play turned into musical performance under the name of *the musical Raisin* until 1975 the musical play was performed for 847 performances. It won the Tony and the Grammy awards for the best musical play. Also, there was a special day proclaiming the day of the show called *Lorraine Hansberry Day*. Finally, *The Musical Raisin* was directed and choreographed by Donald McKayle and the starring was by Joe Morton (17).

2.1. Synopsis of the Play

A Raisin in the Sun's plot is typically about 10.000\$ life insurance check after the father's death. The events run smoothly to tackle multiple issues related to the dreams of each one of the family members. The thread is rooted in the African families' principles and that appears when the Mum proved her point that the importance of dignity and solidarity within the family is more precious than the money and some foreign values that were adopted from the white society in the 1950s (Hansberry 07).

ACT One

The family is about to receive ten thousand (10.000\$) insurance check and according to such family living in the poor Southside of Chicago, Mama wants to buy a house in a white neighborhood; However, her son Walter has other plans. He has a dream of investing the money in a liquor store but Mama refuses as a result of her religious convictions. After a while, Ruth, Walter's wife, discovers that she is pregnant but she is attempting to commit an abortion. Also, Beneatha is a college student who is waiting for the insurance to fulfill her Nobel dream of

becoming a doctor. In addition to the Nigerian Joseph Asagai, the teacher in Beneatha's college, who brought her a Nigerian dress as gentleman attitude (Hansberry 19-50).

ACT Two

Beneatha came back with George Murchison, her rich college mate while Ruth and Walter were trying to reconsider their relationship as a young beloved couple. Suddenly, Mama returns with huge warming power announcing that she gave more than half of the money in a white neighborhood house. That brought great joy to the whole family except Walter because he merely lost his chance of investing in his small liquor project. Mama tries to make a stand for Walter and decides to give him the money as long as he deposits 3.000\$ for Beneatha's education.

One week later, Karl Linder, the representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association, comes with such resistance offer to stop Mama from buying the house in that white neighborhood. Immediately, they refused the offer and beat him out of their house when unexpectedly Bobo, Walter's friend, knock the door telling Walter that Willy loots their money. The whole family felt ashamed and disappointed especially Mama and Walter, while Beneatha was in a storm of anger, because of what Walter did (Hansberry 51-83).

ACT Three

Considering the looting situation, they needed a warm-up again so, Beneath accepted Asagai proposal of marriage as long as she will continue her medical studies in Nigeria since Walter made her lose her opportunity by losing the money. Furthermore, Walter finally realized the importance of being united within the family; as a result, he decided to fulfill his mother's wish. Walter refused Karl Linder's proposal and the whole family moved to live in the white

neighborhood which they considered to be the first black family living in the white people's place (Hansberry 84-95).

2.2. Major Characters in *A Raisin in the Sun*

Lena Younger (Mama)

She is a spiritual old woman with strong religious convictions. She was trying to hold the family members together and offer them a suitable living condition with her husband's death 10.000\$ insurance. Her treatment to the rest of the family members emits from her bleeding heart and selfishness and her heed attitude. This appears through her pursue to buy the big house in a middle-class white neighborhood (Bloom 15; James 05)

Walter Younger

Lena's husband, the father of Beneatha, and Walter lee Younger. His death before the first act nudges the play events upside down because the family was going to receive a check of 10.000\$ insurance for his death. However, the chaos spread all over the house when Walter lee greediness breaks down the peaceful realm of the family (James 05).

Walter Lee Younger

Walter Lee Younger is a thirty-five years old married man. He is the husband of Ruth and the father of Travis, a ten years old child. The big brother of Beneatha and the son of Lena and Walter Younger. His ambition to have an independent workshop, a liquor store, appears when his Mum was about to receive the ten thousand dollars (10.000\$) insurance of his father's death.

He works as a chauffeur and almost a toper. That is why his Mum did not trust his intentions for the independent work (Bloom 15; James 04).

Beneatha Younger

She is a college student. She dreams to be a doctor. She is a very intellectual black woman and she acts according to that principle. Beneatha is the only one inside the Younger family who got the opportunity for higher education. She is considered as a pride of her family as a black woman who was capable of crossing her path among white people by sharing the same conditions as human beings (Bloom 15; James 05).

Ruth Younger

Walter's wife and the mother of Travis Younger. She is the peace campaigner inside the house with passive reactions towards her marriage issues. Her strength reveals when Lena (Mama) decided to buy a new house, a bigger one. The new house for Ruth represents the wealth and the radical change from a poor family to a middle-class family that lives in a white neighborhood (Bloom 15; James 04).

Travis Younger

He is the ten years old child of Walter and Ruth younger. He is a smart child and spoiled by his grandmother Lena. Since he is living in a poor family, he sleeps in the living-room's sofa. These conditions did not prevent him from enjoying great love and affection from his grandmother and his parents. (Bloom 15; James 04).

Joseph Asagai

He is Beneatha's suitor from Nigeria. He is a very conservative man concerning his African heritage. Asagai is accepted by the whole Younger family because of his well-behaving cultural attitudes. He loved Beneatha and he proposes to marry her then move to Nigeria (Bloom 15; James 05).

George Murchison

He is Beneatha's college boyfriend. He is an arrogant and supercilious black young man from an upper-class family; However Ruth, Walter's wife, is the only one from the Younger family who foolishly cares about his miss-conceptual mentality. Beneatha dismisses his dissociation as a black man within the white society (Bloom 16; James 05).

Karl Lindner

He is the representative of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association of the white neighborhood. He was sent to persuade the Younger family to retreat their decision of moving to the white neighborhood (Bloom 16; James 05).

Bobo

He is a friend of Willy and Harris. He appeared in the second act to inform Walter that Harris loots their money (Bloom 16; James 05).

Willy Harris

He is the one that abuses Walter and Bobo for his aims and runs away with their money. Harris was not a living performed character; He was only a hidden character (Bloom 16; James 05).

Two Moving Men

They are speechless characters. They existed only to help the Youngers when they were about to move their baggage to the new house (James 05).

Mrs. Johnson

She is the Younger's neighbor next door. She is responsible for the negativity in the play and she was trying to underestimate Lena's decision of moving to the white neighborhood (James 05).

2.3. Lorraine's Inspiration for the Play Script

Lorraine Hansberry's intelligence helps her to produce a masterpiece like *A Raisin in the sun* that is considered a universal stand play for the black people in the 1950s. Even though such play has to be conducted under very specific reasons for its deep-rooted meanings and values, in 1959 in an interview, Lorraine said:

I believe that one of the most sounds and ideas, dramatic variety, is that in order to create the universal, you must pay very great attention to the specific, (...) not only this is a negro Family specifically, definitely and culturally but it's not even a New York family or Southern Negro family, it is specifically Southside Chicago; that kind of care ,that kind of

attention to the detail of reference and so far,(...) I think people will accept them and believe them, who they suppose be to the extent that can become everybody (Hansberry).

This means that her intention in writing such play is because the Whites kept representing the black Americans in a different way far away from who they are. As a result, Lorraine in *A Raisin in the sun* described the real black life experiences to all the Americans with true measurements of the events inside the play, as she replied in a meeting when she was explaining the necessity to reveal the hidden spirit of the blacks that "anticipating something which is not true".She means that Whites do not set the same black characteristics as they really are in real life (Hansberry).In addition to her argument about the need to write the play she said "it was not sloppy play, (...) what that sensitive about it is the material that used in it obviously"(Hansberry).It means that the small detail that reflects her life within the play is as much important as the rest of the whole play (Hansberry).

Vivian mentions a lot of her life events in the play because she wants to visualize the real struggle of the black people using specifically the Southside Chicago area. Also, she focuses on the middle class that she used to observe in her childhood. Besides her father's death that affected her personality and her psychological health, which was similar to what happened in the play when the father dies in the first act (Cofield).

Another reason for writing *A Raisin in the sun* was to explain how much it is hard for a black American to achieve her dream, by referring to her own experience as a black young woman who suffered to find a job. Furthermore, the title of the play *A Raisin in the Sun* is adapted from Langston Hughes' poem *Harlem* that started with a specific question about the credibility of dreams in America *what happens to a dream differed?* (Hansberry).

3. The Audience Reaction towards *Raisin in the Sun*

The problem with black Americans in the twentieth century is that most of the plays of black Americans were known in the American theater but with no specific details, and most of the producers were whites. Those plays were mostly about political protests, economical and social conditions. Also, there were funny plays during the 1930s (James 28). In 1959 the play that breaks up what might be presented as usual in the American theaters is *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry and the New York Drama Critic's Circle Award-winning. Lorraine was the first woman that cracked the norms of Broadway Theater with her exceptional, detailed, and determined play script. The play was produced, directed, and performed by Black people on the stage for the first time in Broadway history (James 28). It eventually became clear that creativity in such play is inspiring for many black and white Americans. It means that it affects the audience in both extremes, Whether they would start acting according to what has been seen in the play, or it can be considered as an open door for other black producers to produce other works similar to what Lorraine produces. James Baldwin, her dearest friend, said:

What is relevant here is that I had never in my life seen so many black people in the theater. And the reason was that never before, in the entire history of the American theater, had so much of the truth of black people's lives been seen on the stage. Black people ignored the theater because the theater had always ignored them (Nemiroff 12).

James demonstrates that Lorraine was opposing the way blacks were presented, so she was trying to disprove the fake images related to African Americans in America. In 1983, Frank Rich, a writer in the New York Times said "It was 25 years ago that a 28-year-old black woman from this city changed American theater forever with her first produced play. The woman was

Lorraine Hansberry, and the play, of course, was *A Raisin in the Sun*”(THEATER: 'RAISIN IN SUN,' ANNIVERSARY IN CHICAGO).

Frank's article opened the edges for new criticism about her special work. Furthermore; it means that the play was hitting the numbers in the drama world even after her death. In addition to that, the play creates a great impact during and after its production, and this gives it a good reputation. Moreover, the high school teacher Rebeca Delarosa, in her published exploration of social change through literature, illustrates that Lorraine Hansberry's *Raisin in the Sun* affected the social norms in America and dealt with many unspoken subjects with professional way and the highly cultivated way by saying that “Raisin was a watershed piece that not only broke color barriers, but also emerged as an important political and social document that quietly but poignantly protested the social injustices in the housing industry” (DeLaRosa 148).

The accurate work *Raisin in the sun* is a half autobiographical play about Lorraine her self because of the similarities and common details between the play and her real-life as James said “the black people crowding around Lorraine, whether or not they considered her an artist, assuredly considered her a witness”(Nemiroff 12). It is what brought her a huge amount of love and appreciation from both whites and blacks in America. After her great success, Lorraine had a short period of time in her life; however, she left a lot of inspirational ideas that could revive her soul as Martin Luther king sadly proclaimed in her funeral “Her creative ability and her profound grasp of the deep social issues confronting the world today will remain an inspiration to generations yet unborn”.Luther meant generations like ours now (Cofield).

Many authors, essayists, producers, and writers like Seymour Baldash, Ruby Dee, Howard Hausman, LangstonHughes, Nina Simon, Paul Robeson, Malcolm X, and RobertNimrof

who was her ex-husband and friend before marriage and published her work *to be young gifted and black*, they all express their profound love to Lorraine's works and also as a special entity (Cofield). Additionally, in the early years, specifically in 2010 Bruce Norris wrote a play named *Clyborn Park*, and he depicts a white family that sold their house to a black family who is the Youngers family in Lorraine's play. He discusses the situation of the white family that moved to Chicago and raises the question of whether the same ethnic dependency still exists in America after 50 years or not (Rugg and Young 02). In part, *Raisin* is a universal play that would be discussed at any time for the sake of human rights. Many future writers especially playwrights consider the play as an idealistic model for describing the real outside world for its thematic treatment (Cofield).

3.1. The Celebrated Themes in the Play

A Raisin in the Sun celebrates different subjects as a result of all that was happening in 1959. First, the theme of Dream represents hope and plans for change. Second, themes like Race, Discrimination, and Injustice are themes which are contending the struggle of the Afro-American in literary and civilized play scripts. The third theme that celebrates women's freedom accumulation in a society ruled by man is Feminism and Gender Differences; this appears in the character of Beneatha as a feminist member (*Raisin in the Sun* Themes). The fourth theme is Human Pride and Family Dignity. This can be noticed through Lena (Mama) when she was trying to protect her poor black family by buying a house in the white neighborhood, and when Ruth was intending to make the abortion as a sign of the importance of the family correlation. Finally, Money is the other theme which is the source of the dilemma since the start of the play. This represents the need for the materialistic structures to attain dreams in America for black Americans, unlike what happens with white citizens. Thus, there are many other themes that the

individual can realize after reading or watching the play, and this is related to the time conditions and the circumstances that someone is experiencing (Raisin in the Sun Themes).

Conclusion

Through the historical feed about the writer and her background that is related to the ideological way of thinking as a playwright, this research seeks to reveal the fundamental principles that existed in Lorraine's way of writing through a brief biographical study of the playwright and her work. There is an assumption that some black writers write about their personal experiences and describe their real-life events and this is depicted in "*Raisin in the Sun*". The relationship between the play events and Hansberry's personal life is quietly similar, and this leads her to be universal. The criticism of this play helps to unveil the real meaning that affects the audiences which lead to a change in the black Americans' life because the performance was describing and analyzing what was happening in 1959.

Chapter Three:

The Manifestation of the Ideology of the American Dream in Lorraine Hunsbury's Play

Introduction

The third chapter focuses on the above-mentioned play as a case study. It will study the pursuit of dreams in America in Lorraine Hansberry's play *Raisin in the Sun* by studying the characters' physical and psychological forms using the descriptive approach and the psychoanalytical approach based on Eric Erikson's theory of identity. Moreover, it will describe Erik Erikson's theory that targets the issue of the individual's situation in a specific society. The theory portrays how the American dream affects black Americans by causing them psychological traumas as a result of maltreatment received in many disciplines. Furthermore, this chapter studies the language used in the play in order to emphasize the true soul of the blacks in America through language. The dialect used in Lorraine's play is a special recognition to prove the credibility of African Americans' real-life experiences. Finally, this chapter will be a practical and analytical part that studies the stereotypical attitudes and the gender differences that lead to a social categorization in American society.

1. Psychological Analysis of the Physical Appearance

The present materialistic world and especially in the 1950s considers the outer form as more likely to be the factor that reveals the individual's recognition in society. Moreover, it appears that people also gain recognition from their jobs which may reveal an overall description of their personality. Although the book cannot be judged by its cover, the physical appearance may function as a sign to understand people's mental parts. In addition to the studies in social psychology, the field proves that there is a link between personality and physical appearance (Lewis). However, it can make a difference in the level of attraction, social meetings, and which social category they belong to which was portrayed in the play. Lorraine's way of dressing the characters reveals their social status that is related to their inner way of thinking. Her smart use of details is the main factor that created her universality. The psychological impact that she attempts to produce through her characters' behavior and their way of dressing was a remarkable aspect to enhance the play's style and to present it as a play that is made for blacks (Baughman and Smith 1-2).

1.1. Beneatha younger

Beneatha is portrayed as a rebellious character inside her black family and this is apparent from her bright-red flannel nightie in the first Act, scene one (Hansberry 26). The red color nightie unconsciously reveals her rejection of her current situation as a black female in a poor family. Also, she expresses her active and negative spontaneous attitude towards her black family. Besides, she has a sense of adventure as a teenager who wants to live in different norms far away from what she used to live (10 Colors & the Personality Types Behind Them).

Nevertheless, she attempts to imitate the white society to fit in, and that is clear in her straightened haircut at the beginning of the play. Then, it seems that her resistance seems to rise

when she moves to a Caucasian hairstyle as an Afrocentric reaction. Her reaction was a result of Asagai's ironic criticism when he brought her the African robes "Yoruba" as a gift, and she was trying them on her mutilated hair in Act one, scene two. Further, Beneatha's hairstyle could emphasize the periodization in the play from the first scene until the last one (Beneatha's Hair Symbol in *A Raisin in the Sun*).

Asagai: I shall have to teach you how to drape it properly. Ah—Oh-pay-gayday, oh-gbah-mu-shay. (A Yoruba exclamation for admiration) You wear it well ... very well ... mutilated hair and all.

Beneatha: My hair—what's wrong with my hair?

Asagai: Were you born with it like that?

Beneatha: No ... of course not.

Asagai: (Smiling) How then?

Beneatha: YOU know perfectly well how ... as crinkly as yours ... that's how.

Asagai: And it is ugly to you that way?

Beneatha: Oh, no—not ugly ... (More slowly, apologetically) But it's so hard to manage when it's, well—raw.

Asagai: And so to accommodate that—you mutilate it every week?

Beneatha: It's not mutilation! (Hansberry 41)

Lorraine expresses explicitly the desire and the necessity of identifying the black people in a modern way by using symbolism. The red color, the dress, and the Yoruba robe in Beneatha's characters are substantial shreds of evidence of how much the black culture is excluded in America. Furthermore, Beneatha's physical appearance is quietly a remarkable sign to represent the classification of humans even inside one family, the Younger's family, in which

they live in poor conditions (Baughman and Smith 13-14). Unlike her mother, who has a religious background and spiritual convictions of an old woman in her sixties with proud white hair, and Ruth, passive woman in her thirties who accepts the reality, she throws her future responsibilities in another one's hand. So, she has to worry only about her son's future and dissolve the difficulties inside the family (Baughman and Smith 13-14).

1.2. Walter Lee Younger

Walter as a chauffeur is merely obliged to wear a suit as a kind of respectful representation to the ambitious worker. However, his laziness and irresponsible attitudes make him untrustworthy, this is identified when he gave fifty cents to Travis in the first scene, Act one (Psychology of Lateness), "Walter: (To RUTH only) What you tell the boy things like that for? Here, son—(He hands the boy the coin, but his eyes are directed to his wife's, TRAVIS takes the money happily)" (Hansberry 28).

His primitive way of thinking is derived from his nervous movement and rush attitude this leads him to ask Ruth for the fifty cents back. Eventually, he had no more than what he gave to Travis, a double fifty cents at ones, "Walter: (To RUTH) I need some money for carfare" (Hansberry 28). Walter's lateness represents his fear and hesitation. He rejects the fact that white people could fulfill their dreams to create their business works, and companies unlike black people, who should surrender to the low circumstances of life (Psychology of Lateness). And this is an example of Walter's thoughts, "Walter: 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 and all I got to give him is stories about how rich white people live ..." (Hansberry 25).

The social pressure and the strong desire for change lead Walter to fall in a whole of selfishness, greediness, and low self-esteem. A character like Walter manifests a true sample for some black people who forget their humanity just for the sake of change. As a result, they lose the true bonds of relationships with others; so, they end up disappointed like what happens with Walter when William loots his money. Yet, he expresses an honest human need that follows a wrong path (Baughman and Smith 37).

2. Psychological Analysis of the Characters

The Psychoanalysis field and the psychoanalysis approach were criticized for being subjective and prejudiced when it comes to cultural differences. Mental health professionals of color in the US determined that the field was dominated according to specific measurements. First, it has too much focus on the individual without any adequate attention paid to the patient's attachment to the family or the cultural group. Second, it does not pay attention to the socio-cultural and political context of colored people. Third, it is racist and oppressive "because of the power of the medical establishment to label people as "crazy" or "sick" without differentiating behavior that is reactive to oppression from behavior that is culturally normative"(Abney). In his book *Childhood and Society*, Erickson analyzes the identity of blacks and he explains how the black individual is corrupted traditionally in his simple daily actions within the society proclaiming that "Negro babies often receive sensual satisfactions which provide them with enough oral and sensory surplus for a lifetime, as clearly betrayed in the way they move, laugh, talk, sing". Therefore, migration turns out to be a prison for colored people who seek freedom and independence (Erikson 217).

Lorraine was, probably, aware of such paradox in that period. This is why she tries to explain that the problem is not how to manage the racial issue in society but, what matters the most is revealing the nature of the problem, and understanding the triggers of such a social

dilemma. The guilt of white people towards the colored ones unconsciously created a sense of fear for being in the position of the black people; so, Whites do not consider colored people as normal human beings. However, Negroes have nothing to do with being white or black because only God makes that choice (Abney). The play is a black's view towards the white society and it is considered the real view of black society in which it appears through the characters and the materials used in the play script as W. E. B. Du Bois says:

This theory of human culture and its aims has worked itself through warp and woof of our daily thought with a thoroughness that few realize. Everything great, good, efficient, fair, and honorable is “white”; everything means, bad, blundering, cheating, and dishonorable is “yellow”; a bad taste is “brown”; and the devil is “black.” The changes of this theme are continually rung in picture and story, in newspaper heading, and moving picture (Roediger 194).

Raisin is an asset for developing independent cells and making them work together as one. The characters' representation, the play script, and the time of releasing the play are factors to attack the systemic corruption against Black Americans. Fairly, this is clear when Lena says:

Mama: Well, let her have it. I'll just call her up and say you got the flu—

Ruth: (Laughing) Why the flu?

Mama: 'Cause it sounds respectable to 'em. Something white people get, too. They know 'bout the flu. Otherwise they think you been cut up or something when you tell 'em you sick (Hansberry 30).

This chart of speech explains the profound amount of using details in the play which illustrates the scarcity mindset of the white people. The critic Jordan Miller illustrates that *Raisin* transcends the racial issues and comprises the whole society problems that is why “He refuses to

discuss Hansberry's work based on any form of racial consciousness or in any niche of social significance and insists instead on the critic's obligation to judge the dramatist's work as dramatic literature quite apart from other factors" (Bigsby 161).

2.1. Beneatha Younger

Beneatha is the most educated in the Younger's family and that permits her to be an independent individual. She refuses to surrender to the traditional context. This is detected through Walter's attack in the following extract (Erikson 220) "Walter: Who the hell told you you had to be a doctor? If you are so crazy 'bout messing 'round with sick people—then go be a nurse like other women—or just get married and be quiet" (Hansberry 27).

Beneatha's dream is to become a doctor and overcome what colonial civilization drops in her mind as a black disrespectful who should not have a dream in America. The sense of pride from the common perspective between her and her mother, besides her poor situation, lead her to a different way of thinking especially when Asagai comes into the house when it was not well-ordered (James 25), as she says: "Beneatha: Asagai doesn't care how houses look, Mama—he's an intellectual" (Hansberry 38).

Beneatha has a big interest in her heritage as an African. Asagai is the motive to get her closer to her true nature. Furthermore, her intensive knowledge of African content enhances her self-esteem. Moreover, when her Nigerian suitor brings her a Yoruba dress, she expresses a huge joy of that gift, and that emphasizes Lorraine's appreciation of the African heritage. Beneatha wants to prove that the black legacy has existed inside every Black person in America (James 25).

Beneatha is a reflection of Lorraine in the play due to the shared desires and the way they both want to approach the world. The free spirit that Lorraine and Beneatha share is the result of an unconscious ego that made Beneatha go through many things such as horseback riding,

playing guitar, and camera equipment just to find her identity (James 25), as she says: “Beneatha: people have to express themselves one way or another” (Hansberry 33).

The strength she has is nothing more than a resistance to the dismissal thoughts around her. This is a representation of the resistance of the black society as a whole. However, her relationship with the rest of the family is often a sort of conflict and confusion despite her love for her mother. This is depicted when she hugs her even after she has a slap in the face and thanks her for her support when Beneatha decides to choose Asagai over the supercilious Goerge. This kind of family bond shows the kind of true black family they are. The love relationship is not that difficult, but for Bennie, it takes more than someone rich. She does not want someone who underestimates her mental aspect and takes her beauty as a priority to create an intimate relationship. She accepts Asagai’s proposal and moves to Nigeria for a sense of unity. She moves to a community that shares the same ideals and love of heritage (James 25).

2.2. Walter Lee Younger

Walter Lee is an ambitious black man. He wants to be treated as the man in charge of the family, but he does not do match until Mama gives him \$6,500 to invest in his liquor store. The gender conflict between Mama and Walter is due to Walter's immaturity. Eventually, mama has never expressed her rejection about the concept of investment; however, she is against the liquor store itself. She is persuaded that watching people drinking is better than selling those drinks in accordance with her religious values (Character Analysis for Walter Lee from the Book Raisin in the Sun - 940 Words | Essay Example).

Walter's greediness restrains his affection and love for his Ruth. He praises his wife extensively and promises her, Travis, and Beneatha a rich life. But, stubbornly, he misses the fact that mental treatment and support are required for a successful life. He is disrespecting his family

members like the way he speaks to Ruth saying “Shut up” while he is drunk, or even when he carelessly ignores his wife while she is about to talk to him about the newborn child (James 26) by saying: “Walter: (Without thinking) Who’s fighting you? Who even cares about you?” (Hansberry 57).

The bad temper, the nervous attitude, and the erratic way of talking express Walter's desire for change through the whole play. This is what affects his view to use the money for another project rather than keeping insisting on that store. His character is a reflection of Langston Hughes' dream deferred. Yet, Walter does not dry up like “a raisin in the sun” but he repudiates his remarkable change in the last Act of the play. His family is the reason for his maturity foundation, especially, when he strongly rejects Linder's offer even after losing the rest of the money. When it comes to manhood in the third Act, it is the last captive version of Walter's realization that money is not life as he believed before, but it is the human pride what makes the dreams come true (James 26), this appears in the following extract

Walter: And we have decided to move into our house because my father—my father—he earned it for us brick by brick. We don’t want to make no trouble for nobody or fight no causes, and we will try to be good neighbors. And that’s all we got to say about that. We don’t want your money (Hansberry 93).

3. The Eric Erikson’s Theory and the American Dream Traumas

Erik H. Erikson (1902-1994) is one of the prominent psychoanalysts and psychologists. He is the father of the stages of psychosocial development theory that was introduced within the 1950s. Erikson’s analysis is considered to be an assumption of human life from infancy to adulthood. Essentially, it is built from Freud’s theory of psychosexual development in parallel to

childhood stages which have been extended to incorporate the impact of social flow as well as the expansion of psychosocial development into adulthood (Scheck 03).

The theory consists of eight stages of human improvement that are affected directly by the biological, psychological, and social components. It involves the individual's mental needs in conflict with the social needs that would create a sense of devotion to find the true self through a whole life span theory. This theory has influenced many different fields of psychosocial, psychoanalysis, and psychological studies including gerontology, identity improvement, personality arrangement, life cycle development, and more in such fields that relate the social factors with the mental status. Erikson makes it clear that the eight stages are extremely related and the failure in one of the stages can cause trauma or might affect the other stages by creating a gap in the individual's process of growth. Therefore, unhealed personality might be the main reason for the lack of self-consciousness (Scheck 03).

Stephanie Scheck wrote an essay in 2005 concerning psychology development about the nine stages. She explained the stages of Erikson's theory according to his categorization that consists of a division of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood into periods rather than specific ages (Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development - StatPearls - NCBI Bookshelf). Stephanie classified the stages as follows: first, Trust vs. Mistrust; it conveys the Freudian Oral Stage (Scheck 04). Second, Autonomy vs. Shame; it conveys the Freudian Anal Stage (Scheck 06). Third, Initiative vs. Guilt; it conveys the Freudian genital stage (Scheck 08). Forth, Industry vs. Inferiority; it conveys the Freudian latency stage that was divided into four other items (Scheck 10). Fifth, Identity vs. Role Confusion; it conveys the Stage of adolescence (Scheck 12). Sixth, Intimacy vs. Isolation (Scheck 14); Seventh, Generativity vs. Stagnation (Scheck 16); Eighth, Ego Integrity vs. Despair; it conveys Stages of adulthood (Scheck 20). And the ninth stage which

was included by Erik Erikson's spouse, Joan Erikson ("Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development - StatPearls - NCBI Bookshelf").

In this case of study, the focus is on the effect of social factors on the individual itself. Therefore, the main stage that takes a part of the analysis of this study is the fifth stage which is Identity vs. Role Confusion. Moreover, Erikson's identity crisis focuses on the transformation process from childhood to adulthood. In particular, it is a significant stage to separate between the eight stages. Children are becoming self-independent and they require new recognition for everything around them. The individual then starts to manage the future more selectively in terms of profession, family, relationships, home, and mostly his value inside that society according to his role as a part of a specific community. So, the individual wants to find his identity and fits in as Erikson assumed that two personalities are included the sexual and the occupational (Scheck 12-13). This illustrates that Beneatha's character attempts to try multiple activities to find her true self as she said "find my identity". Erikson claims that the adolescent might feel uncomfortable towards his body until the dynamic change and the attainment in this stage would result in a sense of devotion towards society in terms of accepting himself and others regarding the ideological differences (McLeod).

Erikson's theory of identity crisis might be the psychological explanation of Hansberry's play. It manages the status of how the individual could be betrayed by himself as well as by the society that stands against his will to achieve his dreams (McLeod). As it is already mentioned in the first chapter, the American Dream is a concept adopted by Americans and how is the relationship between the American dream and black Americans ("Negros").

Undoubtedly, the American dream is included in the play as one of the major themes. As a result, there is a relationship between Erikson's theory and the American dream that is

manifested in the character's inner self traumas that are caused by society. The Younger family consists of five generations that live together and share the same circumstances. The remarkable age difference and periodization between the family members is in parallel with the stages of the psychological development of Erikson. Further, it is similar in terms of matching the play events with the theoretical concepts of Erikson (Abney).

The individual childhood and his cultural history are the factors that would cause identity confusion. Walter is unsatisfied by his black heritage and affected by the white modern society that considers money the word of pride, unlike Black people who worship freedom and the moralities (Erikson 179).

Mama: Son—how come you talk so much 'bout money?

Walter: (With immense passion) Because it is life, Mama!

Mama: (Quietly) Oh—(Very quietly) So now it's life. Money is life. Once upon a time freedom used to be life—now it's money. I guess the world really do change... (Hansberry 49).

The recognition of Walter changes when his wrestle grows within himself when he sees what society pushes him for. This kind of struggle shaped his personality according to what he has been through during his childhood as a Negro. In his study of negro child, Erikson demonstrates that " The Negro's unavoidable identification with the dominant race, and the need of the master, race to protect its own identity against the very sensual and oral temptations emanating from the race held to be inferior (...)" (Erikson 217).

It means that the black individual is like in a race competition to prove his existence and that is what Walter was suffering from implicitly in which he fights his inner self and his Ego. So, his

awkwardness to fit in within the society offends his dreams, and he thinks that he loses his chance to achieve it any more (Erikson 218).

4. The Hansberry's Dialect in the Play

Every society has a special way to socialize together as one community. However, the black people are notably remarked about their different way of talking. In Lorraine's play, the special dialect used as a proof that the black family she demonstrates is a southern uneducated family, especially, when Walter thinks that the word "Prometheus" is made up for Goerge as a poor-spirited way of defense, and that is the result of the ignorance of Standard English. Yet Beneatha is the only educated member in the family, but she, continuously, overuses the articles as a sense of cultural values (Baughman and Smith 83-84).

In the same way the African slaves, mostly from the west, attempt to recreate their linguistic structure according to their masters. The special grammatical structure that is far away from Standard English resulted in what linguists call "Black English;" They also consider the blunders in speech as special features to exhibit the color distinction. Furthermore, the overuse of the verb "to be" is very common in the black dialect. Lorraine must be aware of this linguistic structure even though she was born in a family where everyone spoke Standard English (James 35). The following extracts can explain the articulation as follows:

Walter: I can't be bein' late to work on account of him fooling around in there
(Hansberry 21).

Ruth: Oh, no he ain't going to be getting up no earlier no such thing!
(Hansberry 21)

Ruth: Walter, don't be dragging me in it (Hansberry27).

Another feature in the black dialect is moving from the subject directly to the adjective misusing the importance of any verb like in those extracts (James 35).

Walter: You tired, ain't you? Tired of everything . . . (Hansberry 24).

Walter: We one group of men tied to a race of women with small minds . . .
(Hansberry 26).

Mama: But [Beneatha] you so thin . . . (Hansberry 29).

Mama: We ain't no business people, Ruth. We just plain working folks
(Hansberry30).

Mama: Ruth honey--what's the matter with you--you sick? (Hansberry 40).

Ruth: You think you a woman, Bennie--but you still a little girl (Hansberry 36).

The past participle of the verb to be “done” means something diverse from the Standard English. It represents the word “has already” or “have already” as the following extracts (James 36).

Ruth: You done spoiled that boy so . . . (Hansberry 29).

Mama: What done got into you, girl? Walter Lee done finally sold you on
investing? (Hansberry 30)

Mama: And all that money they pour into these churches when they ought to be
helping you people over there drive out them French and Englishmen done taken
away your land. (Hansberry 43)

Mama: Much baking powder as she done borrowed from me all these years, she
could of done gone into the baking business. (Hansberry 45)

Mama: [The check] . . . you mean it really done come? (Hansberry 45)

Ruth: Girl, you done lost your natural mind? (Hansberry 53)

The excessive use of the negative form in the black's dialect is a common feature all over the world. The abbreviation "are not" as "ain't" is widely used even if it is not necessary. This is observed in various scenes in the play (James 36) such as:

Mama: Now here come you and Beneatha talking 'bout things we ain't never even thought about thardly . . . (Hansberry 49).

Mama: I'm waiting to see you stand up and . . . say we done give up one baby to poverty and that we ain't going to give up nary another one . . .(Hansberry 50).

Bobo: Willy didn't never show up . . . (Hansberry 81).

Ruth: Walter, that ain't none of our money. . . (Hansberry 25).

This analysis is an account of the typology study of the black community. For instance, the categorization of the whites towards the colored people can be wild proof of the stereotypical treatment against African Americans. Therefore, Hansberry takes the charge to distinguish between the real black dialect and the transformed black individual way of speaking in order to unveil the true prejudice within the American community. Thus, comparing her prosperous language in her description before the first act to the character's dialogue is a quiet representation of the differences established in America (Baughman and Smith 83).

In part, these tremendous symbolic details in Lorraine's play *Raisin in the Sun* assert the dominance of Whites over the Black community in terms of physical, psychological, moral values, and even cultural considerations that contain the normal human needs. Therefore, the racial struggle is a demand that every black individual signed for to manifest their dreams. In his book, *Epic of America*, James Truslow distinguishes what the American dream should be and should not be by stating that "The freedom now desired by many is not freedom to do and dare

but freedom from care and worry". In a way to say that the individual might grow in a place where he could live unstressed by the social order (James 215).

Conclusion

The profound use of details in Lorraine's play is systematically one of the measurements of her work. It consists of a clear description of African American society. In this analytical study, there is an attempt to highlight some of the physical and the psychological aspects to develop an objective overview of the celebrated theme in the play and the modern world as well which is "the American Dream". Moreover, Through Erikson's psychoanalytic theory of the characters and their speech, Lorraine could manage different issues concerning racial discrimination in the 1950s such as illegal treatment against the black community and the prejudices in economic, political, and cultural aspects. This prejudice influences African Americans' status and prevents their will of having a respectable life or to fulfill their dreams as part of American society. Furthermore, Hansberry's poetic way of writing in parallel with the character's dialogue emphasizes the cultural level differences which represent the dynamic pressure used against the colored people. In order to pull them apart from the white citizens and to maintain their noble heritage, *Raisin in the Sun* made a change in history in favor of Black Americans. It reveals the truth underground and wakes up the buried rights. Yet, the colored people still pay the price for being not as white as if the white color is the ideal principle to be a human. So, for the Americans whiteness is what should be the real definition of a human if it is measured by color and not by an inner living entity.

General Conclusion

The question of race is a central theme in many studies all over the world and especially the color prejudice that has not been resolved yet. This content is a study of the social injustice that Lorraine Hansberry took the charge to demonstrate its characteristics. Through her universal play *A Raisin in The sun* it targets the middle classes of a colored family that seeks to maintain the crisis of race and to protest against the systematic ideologies applied on the black individual in the 1950s. Therefore, she relies upon real Black life experiences and true events resulted from her observation in her childhood that is represented in a form of play.

This research is conducted as an attempt to display the history of the African American theater and illustrates its emergence in the United States. So, there were an allusion for the Black theater over the past two hundred years through plays and written musicals by African slaves in order to represent their status as a marginalized community. After that, Black Theater came as minstrel shows in the 1830s. Minstrel shows were written, produced, and performed by white people with black-painted faces as a form of entertainment that is considered to be cruel and brutal activity. In the 1920s during the Harlem, Black Theater gained its reputation, besides many African American companies that flourished in the same period. Moreover, the 1950s was replete with stereotypical plays including Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun*. Finally, in the 1970s, and the late 20th century, a series of Black Theaters held by National Black Theater to express black views.

Due to the fact that the number of Black people is enormous compared to White Americans, they have to operate and socialize as a part of the American society. They participate in many fields' including theater, Literature, and Drama. From the perspective of Lorraine, Black

people are quietly sensitive human beings. They are the kind whom are swallowed by their pride and morals which are related to their African heritage, and that is apparent in the play events. She also intensified that migration did not affect their religious beliefs; however, psychologically, they must consolidate their relationship among the new environment they belong to, no matter how much different they are in color, dialect, or origin because eventually, she wants to prove that being different is what creates the balance in this universe.

The important feature of American exceptionalism is the American Dream that is derived from international and local success, also the tendency of wealth and happiness. Lorraine's play tackles the American Dream from different spots of focus. For example, she tackles it from an oppressed black family point of view. It seeks to reach the American notion under the name "Dream" because they want to be recognized as Americans.

The play analysis represents the difficulties that the Black people could face in terms of achieving the Dream. For example, besides the father who died before achieving his dream; Walter and Beneatha too could not make their dreams real. The play expresses the grief and the sorrow of Walter comparing his harsh conditions to white Americans whom are not obliged to wake up early in order to catch a place in a shared residential toilet or face difficulties to find a simple job just because of their skin color. Occasionally, it is the same dream but according to the harsh circumstances and the poor living conditions, it becomes impossible to reach that dream when it comes to African American people.

The analytical part of the dissertation examines the play in a practical method using the psychoanalytic theory of Erik Erikson as an academic reference. Also, it analyses the character's mental side in contrast with the social conditions to prove the credibility of the American Dream

from a Black's perspective. This analysis unveils the shade out of the corruption methods of the Americans like Mr. Linder with his agreement that insists on leaving the white neighborhood, the Clybourn Park. He considers the Youngers as a threat and social disturbance. Besides, Beneatha who lost her opportunity to achieve the medical studies because of the expensive payment in parallel with her poor conditions. So, the American Dream is just something not real concerning Beneatha. Also Walter who was offended and loses his chance to achieve his dream. Thus, Hansberry could not manifest the American Dream even for Walter. Finally, Lorraine Hansberry's portrayal of the stereotypical attitudes towards black people and her assertion of the discrimination imposed on black people in her *A Raisin in the Sun*, concludes that the American Dream is not manifested in the play. And the demonstration of the American Dream is not something possible for the most of black people if not all of them.

In conclusion, the analyzed data through the play is a material to prove the harmful qualities in America. Lorraine's deep attention to the details among the play which are mentioned in various sections in the study process considered as a verification of her huge profound comprehension of the features of American society. Her grasp of details of the typical relationship between Blacks and the American Dream ideology, blaze the trail to the realization that the American Dream is possible for some black individuals. Not only that, but it was and it is still absurd for most of them. And this is portrayed by Goerge and Walter Lee through the play. Lorraine, before her death, hangs the Negro's traumas in a universal gallery to contemplate the people's consciousness as a matter of change.

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ملخص دراسة

تعد الدراسة عبارة عن دراسة موضوعية للعلاقة بين الحلم الأمريكي والسود الأمريكيين، حيث عملت الدراسة على الحلم الأمريكي لذوي البشرة السوداء داخل المجتمع الأمريكي الذي جسده في مسرحية لورين هانزبيرري *الزبيب في الشمس*، حيث يتناول البحث التمييز العنصري الذي يمر به الأفارقة في تلك الفترة، لذلك عملت لورين على الدحض في مصداقية الحلم الأمريكي ولا يعتبر ذو قيمة بالغة حيث يتعلق بالفرد الأمريكي والأسود ومنه تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إثبات أن الحلم مجرد أيديولوجية من الخيال وعبثية للشعب الأمريكي من الأصل الإفريقي، حيث اعتمدت هذه الدراسة على النهج الانتقائي الذي يعتمد بشكل كبير على تحليل النفسي لفهم نمط تفكير الشخصيات حين يتعلق الأمر بأحلامهم وهذا ما عبرت عنه لورين في مسرحيتها عن العائلة الإفريقية الأمريكية التي تنطبق أحداثها على وقائع حقيقة. وفي الأخير يظهر التحليل أن التمييز العنصري لا يزال موجودا في المجتمعات الأمريكية وأن المسرحية *الزبيب في الشمس* تعتبر كمرجع دراسي معمق لازالت الغموض عن الحقيقة المبهمة بأن الأحلام والوعود وحتى الأمان لا تتحقق في أمريكا بصورة خالية من العنصرية والعالم شاهد عن الوحشية والجانب المظلم لتأكيد بأن الحلم الأمريكي عبثي بالنسبة للشعب الأمريكي الإفريقي.

كلمات المفتاحية

الحلم الأمريكي، المسرح الإفريقي الأمريكي، المسرح الأسود، مسرحية لورين هانزبيرري *الزبيب في الشمس*، المجتمع الإفريقي الأمريكي، الوحشية، التمييز العنصري، التفرقة الاجتماعية.