

American Dream and Quest for Identity as the Cause for Racism in Lorraine Vivian Hansberry *A Raisin in the Sun*

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Abstract

God has created the human beings equally and is no discrimination before God, but Blacks are not considered as human beings in the American society as well as in the other parts of the world. They suffer in the hands of the Whites as well as in the hands of the patriarchy. This paper is addressed in African American literature very frequently, it not only focused around history also can be focused around a direct reflection of a society. This paper has attempted to study about the reflection of society on American dream and Quest for identity as the cause for racism in this play *A Raisin in the sun* by Lorraine Vivian Hansberry.

Introduction

All are born equal and should be treated equal says by Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, but still problems of discrimination are more in number among the people on the basis of color, gender, status and sometimes even dreams for future. Most probably Africans are totally marginalized from the society wherever they go. This paper focuses on the issues revolving around the society through the main character in the play.

Tracing The Reflection of Society on American Dream as The Cause for Racism

Racism is a main cause everywhere but for afro American's it affect them much more than any other people. Since the color makes the people to urge the race by naturally, especially Whites are more dominators of Blacks people in order to show their power. The people are not only dominated by their color but also by their hardship (poor) and racial prejudices. In various ways the Whites dominated the Black

people such as oppression of their identity and their dream.

In this play money plays an essential role. Because money is one of the things in the world that a person can become obsessed with. In this world people can become very anxious about money and can treat it as one of the important things in life. One of the first ideas uttered in the play is about the check. The insurance check for ten thousand (\$10,000) dollars from the death of the younger family's father is supposed to arrive any moment and it is on the top of everyone's minds. Because when the Bigger's insurance money arrives or when money is present the main characters feels a certain hope and each of them have different dreams in order to achieve a great life in white's society.

Firstly, Mama who is cares most about in her family, as she is sacrifice anything to help them fulfill their dreams. When her husband insurance check receives Mama's main wish is to use the money to buy a house for the family in a better neighborhood. MAMA: the dream I had 'bout buying that house and fixing it up and making me a little garden in the back--(RIS 502). But when she tells that it is in Clybourne park, Ruth and Walter are shocked. Ruth's stunned response is "Clybourne park? Mama, there ain't no colored people living in Clybourne park" (536).

Secondly, Walter lee who was the protagonist and antagonist, he had a dream to open a liquor store by his father's insurance money. He was very frustrated to work under whites because he feels lower himself in his role as a motor driver for a wealthy, white family. So, his dreams of owing his own liquor store in order to win the whites in society. WALTER: yeah, you see this little liquor store we got in mind cost seventy-five thousand and we figured the initial investment on the place be 'bout thirty thousand, see (RIS 494).

Thirdly, Beneatha who is Walter Lee's sister and Mama's daughter wants to go to school become a doctor because in those times people of color weren't considered being in high position. So, her desire to become a doctor demonstrates, great ambition and to save her race form the ignorance.

WALTER(Senselessly): How is your school?

BENEATHA: (In the same spirit): Lovely, Lovely. And you know the best subject is biology. (Looking up at him) Yesterday I dissected something that

looked just like you.

WALTER and BENEATHA (in unison): “to be a doctor” (RIS 496).

These incidents stand as the strong example for the title of the reflection of society on American dream as the cause for racism.

Tracing The Reflection of Society on Quest for Identity as The Cause for Racism

Quest for identity is about what people have in common with some people and what differentiates the people from others. People are especially made a difference between things expected to be the same and which are closely linked to such as social, physical appearance, personality, nationality, family relationship, gender, occupation and culture.

We all know that racial domination was not only by the whites but also by the blacks themselves. Sometimes people who are the family members or friends could be dominated by the color or attitude and characters. It shows the racial discrimination among the family itself. In a same way, here Beneatha teases Ruth and Walter Lee about their old-fashioned dancing and old-fashioned Negro dancing. This word choice perpetuates the racial distinction and separation between both races; people seem to label themselves by their color.

BENEATHA (regarding them a long time as they dance, then drawing in her breath for a deeply exaggerated comment which she does not particularly mean): talk about—olddddd fashionedd—Negroes!

BENETHA: old-fashioned. (RIS 549).

In this play *A Raisin in the Sun*, Beneatha was search for her identity is a motif carried throughout the play. Even though her family is clearly poor, that the family could use the money spent on Beneatha’s horseback riding, her camera equipment, her acting lessons, and her guitar lessons for other, more financially relevant things. For example Mama and Ruth begin to tease beneath about the many activities that she tries and quits including her last attempt to learn how to play the guitar in order to learn the Africa heritage beneath search her identity, it makes racism among the family by teasing the culture also she claims that she doesn’t flit from one activity to another but she experiments while she said Mama and Ruth laugh

BENEATHA: I may be late. (Enthusiastically) I’m going to start learning

guitar from Madeline from today.

MAMA: what kind of lessons?

BENEATHA: Guitar.

BENEATHA: Because I want to do it.

BENEATHA(Sharply): is anything wrong if I want to learn playing the guitar?

MAMA: No one is trying to stop you. I just wonder why you have to flit from one thing to another all the time. You haven't done anything with that camera equipment you brought home---

BENEATHA: I don't flit I---I experiment with different forms of expression---

RUTH: Like riding a horse?

BENEATHA: people have to express themselves one way or another.

MAMA: what do you want to express?

BENEATHA (Angrily): Me! (Mama and Ruth look at each other and burst into loud laughter). (RIS 504-505)

These incidents also stand as the strong example for the title of the reflection of society on Quest for identity as the cause for racism.

This society is filled with ups and downs. It faces different issues at different times for different reasons. However there are some issue stays through the ages. One such issue is racism and its impact on the society. Under the racism color is a vital problem in Afro-American's life that creates the universal problem wherever they go. Though they alienated by the whites as well as by the society still their color makes big issues among the people. Even though they are dominated and suffered, their American Dream is high. As the result, the younger family won their dream. By the end of the play, they learn that the dream of a house is the most important dream because it unites the family.

Conclusion

Let us all hope that dark clouds of racial prejudice will soon go away, and that in some not too distant tomorrow the radiant stars of love brotherhood will shine over our great nation with all their scintillating beauty says by Martin Luther King. In the same way the racism will soon away from the society. Due to the absence of the conversation among the black and white, they always fight with each other. For

example, when Mr. Linder came to youngers house to give money for to stay away

form whites. Walter Lee said that “We don’t want to make no trouble for nobody or fight no causes-but we’ll try to be good neighbours(he looks the man absolutely in the eye.)” form these words the researcher concludes that whenever the problem comes, especially issues like racism, conversation is the strong medium through which most of the problems could be solved.

Work Cited

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