



Walter Lee Younger, The Hero or Anti-Hero in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*

M. Rohini, MA, M.Phil,

Abstract

A Raisin in the Sun gives great fame to Lorraine Vivid Hansberry, the first black women to write a play to produce on Broadway. She even received New York Drama city Award for her work. The play was given the title *The Crystal Stair* at first and *A Raisin in the Sun* later which she adopts from the Poem "A Dream Deferred" by Langston Hughes. Lorraine being the creator of the play *A Raisin in the sun* carefully created the characters in order to impress, to motivate her black audience as well to move her non-colored audience to make them feel what a black life will be and she succeeded in that. Even the side characters like Mrs. Johnson and Karl Linder provide the audience ample amount of examples to feel how a life will be for Africans in America. *A Raisin in the Sun* is all about a poor African family in South side of Chicago.

On May 19, 1930 one of the famous female Afro-American playwright Lorraine Vivian Hansberry was born to a successful real estate broker Carl Augustus Hansberry and driving school teacher Nannie Louise Perry. She was the youngest of Hansberry's four children, in Chicago, Illinois, United States. As a colored in racial America Hansberry's family has faced many racial discrimination. She mirrored her experience of living under segregated racial American society in her writings, one of it was the play *A Raisin in the Sun* in which she exposed her own life incidence of Buying a house at whole white area by her farther Carl Augustus Hansberry when she was 8 and forced to move from the house by their rich racial American neighbors which provoke as case Hansberry v. Lee in Supreme court. Hansberry along with her father Carl Hansberry was the activist of civil rights. As an activist she has many common and popular black visitors like Professor W.E.B. Dubois, Poet Langston Hughes etc.

Lorraine Hansberry attended University of Wisconsin where she became politically active. She left the university to move to New York in two years, at 1950. She worked as a writer for Paul Robeson's black newspaper *Freedom*. Hansberry also exposed her view on Lesbianism and homophobia. The themes Lorraine writes was on racism, color discrimination, homophobia, lesbianism and world issues. She married Robert Nemiroff a theatre producer and songwriter in 1953 and got divorced in 1962 but remained friends and worked together. On 1965, 12th of January Lorraine died at the age of 34 for Pancreatic cancer which she suffered for 2 years. After her death Nemiroff collected her writings, letters and interviews publishing into a play *To be Young, Gifted and Black*.

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A Raisin in the Sun is all about a poor African family in South side of Chicago. The major characters of this play Walter and Ruth Younger along with Travis their son, Mama Lena Younger and Benetha Walter's sister living in poverty dreaming to have a decent life. Walter being the eldest son of Lena Younger a widow of Big Walter Young who is awaiting for her deceased husband's insurance money of Ten thousand dollars which is a big amount for Youngers family, dreaming to have a better life by opening his own Liquor shop along with his friends Bobo and Willy Harris whom Ruth refers as good-for-nothing-loud man.

Ruth. Oh no he ain't going to be getting.....crazy a bunch of good-for-nothing clowns (30)

Walter doesn't fail to seek the help of Ruth who is mama's favorite than her two children to ask the insurance amount to invest in his business deal. Ruth in her inner wants to help her husband but neglects because she herself feels helpless, tired of life, in her second month of pregnancy but feels no happy and has an idea for abortion since she knows there no place for her new baby not only in her house but also in Walters heart which is filled with dreams he inspired by his white employers.

WALTER. I got a boy who sleeps in this living room – and all I got to give him is stories about how rich white people live (38)

RUTH. Well, being colored woman, I guess I can't help myself none. (39)

Walter keeps his family off for his business deal but for sure he has time to plead mama to invest the amount in his liquor shop.

WALTER. I can talk to her later – Mama, look- (73)

He quarrel with his sister Benetha for her idea of becoming a Doctor, he ask her to change her mind by considering Nursing or getting married since studying for doctor will cost them more money which he can invest in liquor deal knowing that Mama will keep a part of the insurance amount for Benetha's medicine fee. Here the audience sees the selfishness in Walter Young Lee who expects others to sacrifice their dream for his own. Though he behaves odd to others in the family he never fails to love his son Travis.

WALTER. *Bitterly* Now ain't that fine! You just got your mother's interest at heart..... but if mama got that money she can always take a few thousand and help you through school too... (41)

WALTER. Who the hell told you you had to be a doctor? If you so crazy 'bout messing with sick people – then go be a nurse like other women- or just get married and be quiet... (42)

This may make audience to think Walter feels jealous of Benetha but the repeated study on Walter's psyche will make the readers to understand his hurry to settle his family. According to Walter a colored woman is safe if her Man is secured who has decent income. Walter being helpless rely on his mother to invest in his liquor business which he believes will give him good income. He even ask Benetha to marry George a rich African who is dating Benetha, on concern that she will have a good life but Benetha unlike Walter respects her race and proud of her race neglects George because of his idea on Africa, wishes to Marry Asagai a man from Africa who helps her to identify her cultural identity by teaching her the pride of her race.

BENETHA. Mama, Asagai asked me to marry him today and go to Africa- (150)

WALTER. Girl, if you don't get all them silly ideas out your head! You better marry yourself a man with some loot...(150)

WALTER. Plenty. Now I think George Murchison- (150)

By repeated study the reader may note that Walter has not sensed the taste of Responsibility which makes him way to think stupid.

WALTER. What you need me to say you done right for? You the head of this family. You run our lives like you want to (97)

He is kind of innocent guy who believes his friends and their words. He fake himself as an entrepreneur without any entrepreneur skills. He cherished when mama give him remaining Sixty-five hundred dollar and ask him to deposit three thousand dollars in savings account for Benetha's medical tuition fee which he later invested in his liquor deal.

It is appreciable that he never failed to react when a threat comes to his home through Linder, chairman of Clybourne park welcoming committee, when they decided to buy a house at Clybourne park which a place with no coloured people. He stays stable at the plan of shifting to their new house which was not welcomed by white Americans their new neighbors and Walter ask Linder to get out of the house.

When Walter lost all his invested money to Willy Harris who cheat him and took away Walter and Bobo's money, the audience spitted fire balls of anger towards Walter and feels pity for Mama and Benetha questioning how Benetha will do her Medicine and hates Walter to the core. But the irony happens when Hansberry decided to give her play character Walter Lee another chance to learn what a family is also make her audience to know how a black family respects their identity, to forgive and to love each other and thus feel guilt over his actions through mama. Mama , Benetha, Ruth and Travis forgive his flaw. Now speaks to Linder proudly and bravely about their race how his family's sixth generation is proudly living in the Racist America and how his father beat a man to death for calling him a bad name which frightened Linder. He too conveyed that he is proud of his sister who will soon become doctor. Through Walter, Hansberry speaks to public how she feels proud of her race who are the first people in earth holds

lots of pride. Walter Lee Younger the true protagonist in antagonist way. The true hero from anti-hero. The true man from toothless man.

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