

In Search of Equality: A Dream Deferred for African Americans in *A Raisin in the Sun*

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Abstract—The present study scrutinizes the inner as well as the outer truth of African Americans life under the impact of racism in the prize winning and American classical play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, by Lorraine Hansberry. This study argues that racism makes African Americans end up in unequal economic and social conditions. Therefore, not being first hand citizens, African Americans' effort, services and race are disdained. Integrating Dubois' ideas of racism into Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, this study reveals the belief that Blacks must severely demand their rights and firmly struggle against racial oppressions in order to transcend and eliminate racism. Blacks' insistence on full civil right in their homeland America is what Hansberry masterfully supported to defend the ideas of Dubois. Following Dubois strategy, Hansberry presented that African Americans economic and social conditions will not uplifted unless they get educated and with a wide knowledge insist on their American citizens' rights.

Index Terms—racism, Dubois, Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

I. INTRODUCTION

Racism not a new born issue has haunted civilization early in the history of human beings. There have been always some groups and races that for their benefit disdained and disvalued others. America, the most claimed civilized state suffers from racism and discriminations on a great scale. The minority groups and races in America are neither favored by the same opportunity nor accepted as the first hand citizens. Americans implanted the idea of their superiority over the others so that they could exploit them for their economical uplifts and progress. The most ethnic minority group in America which has been in constant suffering of racism and exploitations is African American. Their ancestors were forcedly sailed to America as enslaved workers and were treated violently and unfairly. They were perceived to be uncivilized and non human so the superior whites can force them to serve them. Many African American leaders and scholars emerged to fight against this illusion and prove their equality with their white counterparts. Dubois is the most eminent African American scholar addressing the prevalent issue of racism and commenting on African Americans situations and conditions in the racist American society. Presenting racism as the profound problem of the twentieth century, he did her best to eliminate it.

As an American sociologist, and historian, his extensive efforts were all toward a common goal, the equality of colored people with white people. As he recorded in *Souls of Black Folk*, his early childhood experience of racial prejudice has been shocking, because as a student, he was refused to be accepted in the play of greeting cards simply because of his blackness (2007, p.2). This made him determined to fight against racism. Afterwards, he put racism as the main target of his attack and long life fighting so he strongly protested against lynching, Jim Crow laws, and discrimination in education and employment and demanded equal civil rights for African Americans. Dubois' policy of demanding and insisting on full civil and political rights for African Americans was differentiated from many other black leaders who guided and advised African Americans. However, following the ideas and policies of certain African America scholars and leaders almost all African American artists represented the struggles and the problems that Africans Americans tackle with. Lorraine Hansberry is an artist that pictured racism under the shadow of Dubois'. Bringing up in a politically and socially active family, Hansberry was in contact with eminent African American intellectuals. One of Luminaries of the day who frequented her home was Dubois. He sparked her young creative imagination and exerted profound influence on her that later he became the artistic and philosophical reference points for her works. Dubois' contact and influence was not confined to Hansberry's childhood interactions with him. She studied African history in Dubois' classes where her awareness of social injustices was heightened subsequently. Furthermore, in New York, her activities as a journalist on the black paper Freedom made her more familiar with Dubois, one of the greatest black literary and political figures of her time. She was so fascinated by Dubois that her "opinions leaned in the direction of Dubois' ideals" (Liu, 2003, p. 142). Dubois' influence was imbedded in the opinion

of Hansberry so that it revealed itself in her literary works. The attribution of Dubois to Hansberry is explicitly and implicitly detectable in her works. However, Hansberry's masterpiece and first play, *A Raisin in the Sun*, is a solid evidence in proving the impact of Dubois as Ashton Liu stated: "Many situations and quests in Raisin make Hansberry pro Dubois opinion evident" (2003, p. 142). Being influenced by Dubois' ideas on racism, she approached to this issue the same as her master did.

II. DUBOIS CRITICISM OF RACISM AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Dubois in "Of the Training of Black Men" referred to the belief of whites that the Negroes were created to serve them. According to Dubois, they believed that Blacks were subhuman because God created a Negro as a simple and "clownish" creature to serve whites. In fact, to the benefit of themselves, whites made the belief that "human races were not just different from one another, but that some were superior to others" (Moor, 2008, p. XI) to exploit and dominate the other groups. Therefore, the ideology of racism is invented to refer to the "unequal power relations that grow from sociopolitical domination of one race by another and that result in systematic discriminatory practices (for example, segregation, domination and persecution" (Tyson, 2006, p. 360). Dubois acknowledged that human beings are divided into races but he refuted the superiority of one over the other.

He was a critical figure in the debate and intellectual discussions about racism and oppression from the late nineteenth century until his death due to his first hand experiences of racial prejudice. He, as a black person, had been the victim of racism and had been familiar with the pain it inflicted on his race. Thus, he endeavored all along his life to fight against racism. He desired an America where Blacks could live freely and enjoy equality. For achieving this dream he perceived that ignorance, the root of racial prejudice, must be eliminated by collecting and spreading knowledge about black life in order to obtain full citizenship and equal rights for African Americans. Over time, Dubois came to believe that knowledge alone would not eliminate racial injustice: "not science alone could settle this matter, but force must come to its aid. The black world must fight for freedom. It must fight with the weapons of truth, with the sword of the intrepid, uncompromising spirit, with organization in boycott, propaganda and mob frenzy" (2011, p. 6).

Dubois resented whites' racial prejudice, and he directed significant parts of his writings to race and racism to criticize whiteness and white supremacy. In *Philadelphia Negro*, he noted the economic and housing discriminations of Blacks. He said that Blacks receive lower wage than usual for less desirable work and because of that work and wage, they are forced to live in less pleasant places than others and pay higher rent for the better ones. He mentioned that through segregation and political and social oppression, white society keeps all African Americans behind a wall of social injustice and presents their development. It is racism that "makes it more difficult for black men to earn a living or spend their earnings as they will; it gives them poorer school facilities and restricted contact with cultured classes; and it becomes, throughout the land, a cause and excuse for discontent, lawlessness, laziness, and injustice" (qtd. in Katz , 2011, p.205).

Dubois other work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, contains more of his powerful statements concerning the state of race relationship in United Nations and his perspective on effects of racism. In this work, he addresses the problem of institutionalized racism which is racist policies and practices incorporating it in the institutions of a society. He referred to the institutionalized racism as a veil that made Blacks almost invisible to whites and kept Blacks from attaining a clear view of their circumstances. There are many examples of this type of racism as housing patterns, segregated schools, discriminatory employment, and inequalities in health care, segregated churches, and educational curricula that ignored or distorted the history of minorities that Dubois referred to them. Dubois mentioned that after the abolition of slavery in the mid-Nineteenth century, the conditions of black people rarely changed because whites emancipated Blacks by passing segregation, or Jim Crow laws. These laws severely limited the interactions between Blacks and whites, as well as limiting the opportunities for the progress of Blacks. Though it was supposed by law that Blacks be provided with separate but equal facilities, in reality, it was a blatant lie that considered Blacks only as second-class citizens; it deprived them not only from taking part in political process but also from the same protection under the law as white citizens.

He described the lack of educational facility as well as the poor conditions of living for Blacks as a reason of segregation and discrimination in the "Of the Meaning of Progress". In the other chapter, "Of the Sons of Master and Man", he referred to segregation that affected all aspects of Blacks' life:

They go to separate churches, they live in separate sections, they are strictly separated in all public gatherings, they travel separately, and they are beginning to read different papers and books. To most libraries, lectures, concerts, and museums, Negroes are either not admitted at all, or on terms peculiarly galling to the pride of the very classes who might otherwise be attracted (2007, p. 124).

Furthermore, he mentioned that Blacks and whites are housing in distinct districts that can draw a "physical color line" in the map to show their separation. Dubois declaimed that in the decimated American society in which African Americans dwell in a complete disastrous social condition; improvement seems not close at hands. Dubois believed that the black race should have demanded equal civil rights before the law until elimination and provision of equal education for Blacks are made possible to promote its social conditions.

III. RACISM IN A RAISIN IN THE SUN

Dubois, resentful of racial prejudice, devoted his whole works to scrutinize the causes and effects of racism in America. He was so obsessed with racism that introduced it as the most problematic issue of the 20th century. Dubois defined race prejudice as:

Nothing but the friction between different groups of people; it is the difference in aim, in feeling, in ideals of two different races; if, now, this difference exists touching territory, laws, language, or even religion, it is manifest that these people cannot live in the same territory without fatal collision; but if, on the other hand, there is substantial agreement in laws, language and religion; if there is a satisfactory adjustment of economic life, then there is no reason (for it) (2007b, p. 184).

He stated that there is no logical reason behind white prejudice toward African Americans due to the fact that they are Americans, by birth and by citizenship as well as their political ideals, their language, their religion. He believed that the discrimination based on color in America is sheer nonsense and should be dealt with. The Negroes are American citizens. Thus, they deserve to enjoy equal civil rights. *A Raisin in the Sun* validates this belief. Hansberry endeavored to encourage African Americans to defend their rights. This is an integral part of the civil rights movement as Amiri Baraka asserted. Dubois was such a prominent figure in the discussion of racism that his seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, has gained the position of the political Bible for the Negro race. And all creative Afro-American literature has been inspired by it in some degrees (Edwards, 2007, p. Vii).

In "of The Black Belt", Dubois portrayed Black Belt, a black district surrounded by the Negro problem. He depicted in "of the Black Belt" Negro's poor economic conditions along with bad circumstances of living as the result of discriminations. Although they were suffering from this prejudice, the government was doing no action for this laborer. Hansberry's work *A Raisin in the Sun* is approximately inspired with this masterpiece. In the same vein, *A Raisin in the Sun* represented the calamities that African-American workers confronted with in Chicago during the years of 1920s to the 1950s. Although the time of the *Souls of Black Folk* is some decades earlier than *A Raisin in the Sun*, the nature of their problem is the same. They were suffering the same discrimination on different scale.

In 1950's society, Blacks and Whites were still separated; there usually existed no interaction between them apart from work. Lena and Ruth are maids who work for white women and, Walter is the chauffeur of a white man. There are no mentioned contact between younger family, a black family, and white members of society except for their work and a visit from Mr. Lindner. Mr. Lindner, representative of white community, arrives to the Youngers' apartment to demand them not to move. He only cares about the feeling and comfort of whites without any sympathy for and thought of black people. Hansberry's depiction of the confined contacts of two races attests Dubois statement that in spite of physical contact and daily intermingling "there is almost no community of intellectual life or point of transference where the thoughts and feelings of one race can come into direct contact and sympathy with the thoughts and feelings of the other" (2007, p.123).

For discussing the impact of labor and housing discrimination on black community, *A Raisin in the Sun* puts forward the experiences of two generations of Younger family. At first, the impact of job discrimination on the life of old generations of the family, Big Walter Lee, who is the deceased father of the family, is depicted. Then, the play reveals the frustrations to be accepted into the mainstream of American society of 1950s as well as labor and housing discrimination in life of members of the family.

In the turn of the century many Blacks like the younger family in search of a better life and work migrated to the north to escape from discrimination and the economic oppression. Mama tells this experience to Walter; she mentions that at the time of immigration they were worried about not being lynched and getting to the north and if they succeed how to stay alive and keep a little dignity (Hansberry, 2011, p.74). However, Many Blacks suffered from and faced house discrimination. As Leonard Dinnerstein notes, "The worst housing in the cities was reserved for the black migrants coming from the South. Owners preferred to rent to white immigrants rather than to Blacks, and the black families sometimes encountered violence when they tried to move outside their growing ghettos" (qtd.in M'Bay, 2009, p. 173). Discrimination and segregation's policies resulted in the emergence of several segregated districts in different cities especially Chicago. These districts, Brandon Coles stated were "overpriced, overcrowded, and poorly-maintained apartments and homes" (qtd. in Khalief Ghani, 2011, p.608).

The Youngers live in a segregated neighborhood in a city that has been remained as one of the most segregated areas in the United States. They like most Blacks who dwelled in Chicago live in the south of Chicago, in a ghetto. Their conditions of living are representative of most Blacks' in the Chicago ghettos. The Younger family lives in a "cramped", "tired," run-down apartment, a place in which the furnishings "clearly had to accommodate the living of too many people for too many years—and they are tired." Saturday morning cleaning task of "spraying insecticide into the cracks in the walls"(Hansberry, 2011, p.19) reveals that their house is roach-infested and in a terrible condition. Like the roach-infested poor living condition of Youngers, living conditions for Blacks in the ghetto were poor, too. The poverty of the neighborhood is revealed when Travis chases and kills a rat "as big as a cat," with his friends. In fact, Hansberry's presentations of the state of living: the rats, roaches, worn furniture, over-crowded conditions, and anti-integration bombs Gordon stated is an evidence of Chicago's political and economic infrastructures of deliberate segregation as well as a help to set the stage for the dramatic action in *A Raisin* (qtd. in Khalief Ghan, 2011, p. 611). Rats and cockroaches are considered by some black writer as the representative of the urban segregation. For instance Wright in the opening scene of *Native Son* depicted the action of killing a black rat "over a foot long" in his family's South Side

kitchenette apartment as well as Hansberry's depiction of bloody killing of "rat Big as a cat, honest!" to portray the reality of black life (Gordon, 2008, p. 127). Youngers are forced to tolerate this condition of living, and Travis must be brought up in this poorly conditioned neighborhood. In spite of abundance of rats and cockroaches, there is little or no municipal sanitation service or landlord upkeep. There is no mention of help or any sort of aid from the government to improve the poverty stricken condition of Negroes. Thus, the rat stands for the negligence of the government and white society to ghettoized communities. Discrimination on housing is also apparent from Ruth observation: "We've put enough [money] in this rat trap to pay for four houses by now" (Hansberry, 2011, p.31). Her statement is representative of the unreasonably high costs of ghetto housing.

Furthermore, mama's response to the question why she bought a home in a white neighborhood reveals discriminations and economic exploitations. She decides to buy a house outside of the black neighborhoods due to the high cost of the houses; houses seem to cost twice as much as other houses in the white neighborhood so she believes buying a house in white neighborhood in which facilities are more, living conditions are better, and the costs are lower is the best choice (Hansberry, 2011, p. 61). In 1950, black people had to pay more for less appropriate places than whites: "While a white family could rent a five-room apartment for \$60 a month in Cicero, for example, a black South Side family of four could pay \$56 per month to live in one half of a two-room flat, infested with rats and roaches, and even well into the 1960s, without electricity or hot water" (qtd. In Gordon, 2008, p. 125). Discriminations trapped Blacks in ghettos and provided no opportunity for them to escape from them. And whenever one tried to run to a white neighborhood, they were attacked by whites and even law.

Hansberry herself had a firsthand experience of this discrimination. At the age of eight, his family moved to a white neighborhood and they faced violence. Every Negro who moved to white neighborhood was treated violently by whites:

On Wednesday, July 27, 1949 rioting broke out in the 7200 block of South St. Lawrence Avenue. Arthur Jordan, a Ph.D. candidate had moved into the block, the first negro to venture south of Seventy-first street in the quiet respectable neighborhood of Park manor. For days the rioting went on. Women cursed, children jeered, teen-agers hurled bricks and bottles, and men snarled angrily, "Burn the b- b- out" (qtd. in M'Bay, 2009, p. 184).

The younger family similar to all other black families faces the segregations that discouraged them from buying a house in the white neighborhood of the clybourne Park. Soon after buying the house, Mr. Karl Lindner, the white spokesperson of the clybourne Park improvement Association comes to visit and negotiate with Younger family. Lindner tries to persuade Youngers not to move to clybourne Park: "it is a matter of the people of clybourne Park believing, rightly or wrongly, as I say, that for the happiness of all concerned that our negro families are happier when they live in their *own* communities" (Hansberry, 2011, p.75). He presumes that a black person moving into a white neighborhood cannot be happy because he knows that they are not only unwelcomed there but also will be treated violently. Furthermore, his statement that "But you've got to admit that a man, right or wrong, has the right to want to have the neighborhood he lives in a certain kind of way," (Hansberry, 2011, p.75) is completely racist because he excludes Blacks as humans and considers whites as only human beings who deserve the right of choosing their neighbors. Lindner is so persistent in his racist policy that he even tries to seduce younger family by arranging a financial settlement, and alter the Youngers' determination to move: "Our association is prepared, through the collective effort of our people, to buy the house from you at a financial gain to your family" (Hansberry, 2011, p.76). This offer reveals that for the C.P.i.A. its racist policies are of great importance that it is ready to use its economic power to fulfill them. Such racist behavior was not rare in reality at that time. The act of buying out the houses of Blacks who are likely to reside in white neighborhoods was very common in American society during the 1950s. it was a racist policy not to let Blacks mingle with whites. When Mr. Lindner is not successful, he threatens Youngers that moving to the white neighborhood will defiantly be dangerous for them." LINDNER (*Folding up his materials*) Well—if you are that final about it ... there is nothing left for me to say. (*He finishes, almost ignored by the family, who are concentrating on* WALTER LEE. *At the door LINDNER halts and looks around*) I sure hope you people know what you're getting into" (Hansberry, 2011, p.94). In fact, Mr. Lindner's ideas represents that whites are too persistent in their racism that they did their best to keep Blacks away from their homes and neighborhood, even if it is possible by violence. It was a common and acceptable way of treating Negroes.

Reading from the newspaper that white folks "set off another bomb yesterday" (Hansberry, 2011, p.20) by Walter Lee Younger, forthwith after the start of drama, implicitly refers to the violence against Blacks who moved to white neighborhood. At the time of 1950s, many Blacks who moved to the white neighborhoods were bombed. Furthermore, Mrs. Johnson also refers to the bombing of Blacks and forecasts the violence towards the younger family: "You mean you ain't read 'bout them colored people that was bombed out their place out there?... "Lord – I bet this time next month ya'll's names will have been in the papers plenty – 'NEGROES INVADE CLYBOURNE PARK – BOMBED!'" (Hansberry, 2011, p. 65-66).

Nevertheless the emphasis on the bombing and violence in denying Blacks the right for choosing where to live suggests that accommodation was yet a crucial issue on which the war of civil rights was to be carried on in the late 1950s/1960s. In fact, buying a house in a white neighborhood is an act of struggle to be accepted in the mainstream of American society, their homeland."The literal home that Mama Younger purchases in Clybourne Park mirrors her family's various psycho-social struggles to attain, secure, and define a sense of place, or "home," in the face of systemic socio-economic racism in Southside Chicago" (Matthews, 2008,p. 557). Hansberry was against segregations because

she believed it refuses to recognize that Blacks are Americans. In addition, she noted that segregations aggravated American racism. Hansberry's portrayal of Mr. Lindner's offer of buying Youngers' house with a fair and tempting price is, in fact, a racist policy in which belittling and depriving the Negroes from their rights as citizens and humans is hidden at the core of it. Thus, the Youngers must be vigilant enough not to be coaxed and duped by money. They must refuse to succumb and must firmly insist on their decision of moving into the white neighborhood so that they could reconfirm their humanity and disclose the color line. Similar to Dubois, Hansberry believed in their right by birth and that all men are created equal so they must demand it and prove that black Americans are appropriate for the benefit of themselves, their nation and their white counterparts. Walter lee says to Mr. Lindner: "we will try to be good neighbors". Dubois also commented in *Conservation of Races* that Negroes not only are capable of evolving individual men like Toussaint, the Saviour but also they have possibilities of cultures that can bestow it to their nation. The Negro race has many things to offer the civilization and American society like their music which possessed the best place in America.

For resistance against racism Dubois demanded the unity and solidarity among Negroes. He proclaimed the solo solution to racism is the striving of the united Blacks against racism. "as a race we must strive .., by race solidarity, by race unity to the realization of that broader humanity which freely recognizes differences in men, but sternly deprecates inequality in their opportunities of development" (2007b, p. 185).

Nicole King described *Raisin* as one of the black literary representations that "saw and Promoted group solidarity against the diverse manifestations of white racism and discrimination" (qtd. in M'Bay, 2009. p. 175). Thus, *A Raisin* supports the later statement and suggests "that the most effective mode of change is a coalition of unique individuals working together to meet a common goal" (Matthews, 2008, p. 556). Hansberry took her play's title from Hughes's "Harlem". Hughes posed the question, "What happens to a dream deferred" and then puts forwards the possible and diverse responses or effects: "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?" (Lines 2-8). Individually the dream deferred has bad effects on Youngers' family. Ruth is "dried up" for she was weary, tired, disappointed, settled, and "older than her years" and her hope had disappeared. Walter's dream "fester[s] like a sore". He is restless and after Willy steals the money, Walter dreams "runs". Mama's clinging to Christianity in time oppression could be interpreted as "a syrupy sweet" that faith and prayer sugar over present realities. If these people unite with this dream deferred, it would function revolutionarily: "Or does it explode?" (Line 11). When Younger family unites or functions as a community, they gain the ability to explode the mechanisms of their oppression. They move to the white neighborhood in spite of the definite danger (Matthews, 2008, p. 568).

Raisin puts the demand of uniting and joining individuals with other voices and the larger community in the center of changing the discriminative and oppressive social system. Throughout the play it is portrayed how the member of younger family battle against each other. Beneatha denies Walter his personhood and calls him a "rat" (Hansberry, 2011, p.91); Walter dismisses Ruth's expression of her views and calls her small-minded (Hansberry, 2011, p.26); Beneatha mocks Mama and her right to believe as she chooses (Hansberry, 2011, p.35). Eventually, when the members of the family recognize the value in each other and evaluate each other right, they pay respect to each other's dignity. It is then that they unite against outside oppressors (Matthews, 2008, p. 567). At the end of the play, in response to Mr. Lindner's offer, Walter lee reveals their solidarity and agreement: "We are very proud. ... And we have all thought about your offer ... and we have decided to move into our house... . We will try to be good neighbors. And that's all we got to say" (Hansberry, 2011, p.93; emphasis added). This "we" refers to Beneatha, Ruth, and Mamas as well as Walter. Dubois stated the importance of confidence in one's ability and worth in fighting against racism and oppression; he was convinced that his race are hated here, despised there, and pitied everywhere. Thus, Blacks must trust themselves and their abilities; they must come to the belief that the only refuge for their race is themselves; if they accept their possible great destiny, then no power on God's heaven can stop the advance of honest, earnest, and inspired black united people (2007b, p. 185).

He believed that for success, Blacks must trust in their abilities and must not disdain their talent. They must get united, and then the success will be at hands. Walter at the end, proudly talks about his family and their achievement before Mr. Lindner. In fact, he trusts his abilities and celebrates their achievements. However, Hansberry aware of housing discrimination and its effect, urged African Americans to get out of ghettos because she believed the ghettos were killing black people's dream and as Mama says their very bodies.

Hansberry like Dubois was militant in spirit. They both believed their full rights should be firmly demanded and must be fought for. "They must not expect to have things done for them—they must do for themselves" (2007b, p. 186). They must not expect an end to discrimination unless they strive to abolish it. Hansberry stated that "I think it is very simple that the whole idea of debating whether or not (black) should defend themselves is an insult. if any one comes and does ill in your home or community-obviously you try your best to kill (her)him" (Barrios,2008,p. 29). Hansberry established the idea of taking action against discrimination which had done and was doing much harm to the Negro race. This statement demonstrates her affinities with ideology of Dubois.

Dubois all along his life was fighting for an America where black folks and their cultural patterns can exist with no discriminations, equals to others. For pursuing this dream he believed they must react to racism consciously and deliberately; they must accept equality or die. He urged Blacks to persist on their demand until disappearance of color discrimination in American life and the preservation of African history and culture come into being. Dubois was so

determined in his fight against racism that he demanded Blacks to continue their struggle against it till they gain equality. He defined only two possible ways for Blacks: to fight to achieve equality, or to die.

Hansberry also believed that Blacks must take action against racism instead of staying static and silent. They must protest and demand their rights because they will not be given to them with taking no action, they must do something to attain it. She represents this belief through the characters. They also revolt against racism and discrimination to present their dissatisfactions and hatred. Walter in response to Mr. Lindner's racist offer reveals his militant spirit: "And my father—My father almost beat a man to death once because this man called him a bad name or something, you know what I mean?... Yeah. Well—what I mean is that we come from people who had a lot of pride" (Hansberry, 2011, p.93). He like Hansberry believes in racism as an insult that must be answered. He stated that we cannot tolerate racism which denies our dignity and pride so we would fight against it.

Lena's character is certainly militant, stated by Wilkerson: "Lena Younger is not the accommodating Mammy who chooses the passive, safe path, but rather the folk figure, the courageous spirit that lends credence and power to the militant struggle. In her own determined way, she gives birth to revolutionaries and is herself a progressive force" (Wilkerson, 1986, p.450). Mama's dialogue with Mrs. Johnson places her in the militant forefront. Mama's response to Mrs. Johnson's foreseeing of Youngers' danger in white neighborhood reveals her determination to take the risk. Although she is aware of the danger, she wants to defend her rights. The struggle is started by Lena when she decides to move with her family to a white neighborhood. As mama continues her conversations with Mrs. Johnson, her militant aspirations are laid bare. Mrs. Johnson addresses Youngers as "one proud-acting bunch of colored folks". For her, Youngers and their aspirations are too much and complicated so she can not perceived them. She presents the idea against upper education; she advocates Booker T. Washington and quotes from him: "Education has spoiled many a good plow hand". Mama surprised by this quotation expresses her disagreement by calling Washington the fool; Mrs. Johnson in a proud tone considers Washington as "one of the greatest men"; she highly regards him a famous black leader, while mama disgusts of his ideas disdains her by expressing her disagreement in: "who said so?"

In fact, Mama's criticism of Booker T. Washington's ideas places her among Washington's intellectual opponent, W. E. B. Dubois. Although Dubois' name and ideas are not mentioned explicitly, the broad hint in mama's beliefs makes her an equivalent to Dubois. Dubois provided much of the legal bases for protesting segregation through NAACP. Hansberry equates Mama's determination with the militant spirit of Dubois's position (Wilkerson, 1986, p. 449-450). Lena younger surpasses the black mammy's stereotype and plays in the African American home as militants rather than as matriarchs. Gerda Lerner in this regard stated:

[It] was hard for colored children to be proud of fathers who were treated like [boys or called that way or any other name in the South] and it was usually the ... mother who had to keep a certain dignity in the family to offset the inferiority the white man inflicted on her husband ... When I hear people talking about communists being behind the colored students, I have to laugh. It's no Communists—it's [Black] mothers who believe it's time for their children to fight for their rights and good education (qtd. In Barrios, 2008, P. 117).

This description is parallel to Lena Youngers. Mama is the one who gives courage to her family to live in a white neighborhood, and persuades them that it is their right to choose where to live and enjoy living in a better condition. She brings her children with dignity and proud and urged them to keep it in racist and materialistic American society. It is mama who paves the way for and inspires the future militants of racism. She is the person who provides the opportunity for her daughter to get educated and have a better future in spite of the difficulties and racial prejudice. Mama implants the anti racist belief and pride in her children and makes them prepared for fighting against racism. She backs Walter and cajoles him to keep his dignity by fighting against racial oppression.

Working conditions for Blacks were harsh in Chicago in 1920s through 1950s as the department of Labor reported that "the average black worker made less than 60 percent of his white counterparts. Moreover, Blacks held the worst jobs; jobs which most whites would find demeaning. Fewer than 7 percent of them had professional or managerial positions, about a fourth of the figure for whites, while about half of black men were unskilled workers or laborers"(qtd. in Khalief Ghani,2011, P. 609). Bad conditions of working are represented through the experience of Big Walter Lee, which is told through mama's voice. She states that he worked himself to death (Hansberry, 2011, p.32). Big Walter's life was a constant suffering from his discriminated hostile economic and social world. He was an unskilled worker that in spite of working doggedly he could not escape the despair and poverty that discrimination imposed on African Americans: "i seen ... him . . . night after night ... come in ... and look at that rug ... and then look at me ... the red showing in his eyes ... the veins moving in his head ... i seen him grow thin and old before he was forty ... working and working and working like somebody's old horse ... killing himself" (83). In fact, Big Walter's situation was a direct effect of the educational, economic, and social discrimination (M'Bay, 2009, P. 175-7).

Not only big Walter but also mama, Ruth, and Walter lee all are victims of job discrimination and relegated to the roles of servants, dependents, and unskilled workers. Mama and Ruth are domestics; Walter lee is a chauffeur. It was common in the north that black worker was confined to domestic and personal service. Walter dissatisfied with his job and situation tells her mother that being a chauffeur is not a job; he is so unsatisfied and disgusted of his job that does not consider it worthy of naming a job. He explained his job as opening and closing car doors the whole day, driving his boss around in his expensive car and saying, "Yes, sir; no, sir; very good, sir;" He disgusts his demeaning job that

discrimination and racism imposes on him and provides no other opportunities. His current job is unacceptable for him and dreams of a better one.

Walter cannot find a better job due to his illiteracy and lack of skill. He lacks basic business skills but he is not aware of its importance. He insists to invest in a liquor store without having any knowledge of the business. When mama says that they are not business people and are only plain working folks, she is in fact referring to the lack of knowledge and business experience for them. On the other hand, Walter cannot perceive it; he ignores the necessity of a skill and knowledge in a work and business. He thinks if anyone gets into a business, he will be successful. He mentions that black people never progress unless they start gambling on distinctive kinds of works in the world like investment. At last, Walter defeated in his business plan because of his lack of skill.

Actually, Job and housing discrimination were derived from educational and economic discrimination against African Americans in Chicago. One who was educated or possessed skill would have more opportunities for advancement. Dubois emphasized the importance of Education as the chief means of making better the problems of race. Dubois in "Of the Training of Black Men" noted the importance of education:

The one panacea of Education leaps to the lips of all:—such human training as will best use the labor of all men without enslaving or brutalizing; such training as will give us poise to encourage the prejudices that bulwark society, and to stamp out those that in sheer barbarity deafen us to the wail of prisoned souls within the Veil, and the mounting fury of shackled men (2007a, p.65).

He believed in the power of education in creating a better world with less discrimination. Also in article he depicted how lack of skills which is interrelated with prejudice and discrimination in the case of African Americans leaves a detrimental effect on their life and he stated:

Young colored men can seldom get positions above menial grade, and the training of the older men unfits them for competitive business. Then always the uncertain but ever present factor of racial prejudice is present to hinder or at least make more difficult the advance of the colored merchant or businessman (qtd. in M'Bay, 2009, p. 180).

Hansberry, too, emphasized the importance of education in improvement of Blacks. Walter as it is explained cannot find a better job due to her lack of education and skill. Ruth, similar to Walter suffers from somewhat similar problems. Ruth has less chance to find a decent job because she has not been to school. Thus, her work opportunities are not hopeful. She can do nothing but scraping the floor to improve her condition: "I work twenty hours a day in all the kitchens in Chicago...and scrub all the floors in America ... if I have to ... but we got to MOVE ... We got to get out of here" (Hansberry, 2011, p. 89). Unlike Ruth and Walter, Beneatha and George who are educated have a more promising future with more opportunities for working. There is the possibility of finding a good job in a hospital for Beneatha. With acquiring education she is able to flee from the demeaning jobs that racism imposed on Blacks. She is not and will not serve as a servant and it is implied in the play when it is mentioned that Ruth and mama work as servants but nothing is mentioned about Beneatha. She is among those none whites who were able to progress in spite of racism due to their education. She surpasses the limitation that racism defines, and proves the capability of black race as well as black females in reaching a good education and position. The Professor Ray marshal pointed out that:

Significant gains were made by nonwhites in the 1955-1962 period in such professional categories as hospital, medical other health services, welfare and religious institutions, and business and repair services. The relative increase of nonwhites in these occupations was 70 per cent, about twice that of whites. Nonwhites also have gained relatively faster than whites in the educational services field and in government employment (qtd.in M'Bay, 2009, p. 183).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Lack of mutual respect for rights of others has always led to the friction and war between different races. African Americans inhabiting in America, are forced to be divided and build a nation within a nation for themselves. Perceiving that Blacks did not deserve the respect of whites causes the maltreating of blacks a common and conventional behavior. Racism seemed an accepted issue in American society, therefore white let themselves to behave blacks as they desired so. African Americans disgusted and exhausted of the unfair treatment of white and racism took action against it. Dubois is an African American leader urged blacks to stand up against racism till its annihilation come to being. Hansberry, in the same vein as Dubois depicted the devastating effect of racism on African Americans in her works and strongly recommended them to take action against it so that they can build a society in which friction existed no longer and they can live peacefully with their white counterparts.

Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* is the story that examines the problems of racism in America through an African-American family and through history. In this work, Hansberry is mainly concerned with the issue of racial discrimination and the responsibility of African Americans to demand equality and to back the civil right movement. Amiri Baraka attested that the play is "the accurate telling and stunning vision of the real struggle" (qtd.in bloom, 2009, p. 13) and is quintessential of supporting civil right movement. Also it was one of the major literary catalysts of the Black Arts movement of the 1960s.

A Raisin in the Sun discusses the impact of labor and housing discrimination on black populations through the experiences of two generations of the Younger family. Mama and Ruth are domestics and Walter and his dead father have been doomed to do demeaning jobs due to the lack of education and economic opportunity that racism provided. It also refers to the housing policies that kept African Americans segregated in ghettos with the least facilities and

opportunities for progress. Hansberry aware of the damage of ghettos on the life of Negroes urged them to escape from this district and endeavor to gain their rights:

... We must come out of the ghettos of America, because the ghettos are killing us; not only our dream, as Mama says, but our very bodies. It is not an abstraction to us that the average American Negro has a life expectancy of five to ten years less than the average white (qtd. In Gordo, 2008, p. 1).

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