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Group #8

Literary Analysis-A Raisin in the Sun

Symbolism

“Eat your eggs”- In the story, as Walter was explaining to Ruth about his dream to own a liquor store; Ruth rejected him by telling him to eat his eggs. Through the heated conversation, Walter mentions how it was necessary for man to change his life but Ruth would just disregard him by telling him to “eat your eggs and go to work”. This shows how despite all the dreams that Walter has, Ruth does not support him in any way. Walter feels that Ruth is not very supportive and how she treats him always in the same, predictable way. (sparknotes.com)

Mama’s Plant- Mama’s deep nurture toward the plant despite its lack of sunlight and energy on its appearance, symbolizes her care towards her family despite the poor condition they are living in. At the beginning of the story, Mama took great care of the plant even though it seems to be useless to other family members because of its lack of sunlight and its appearance already look very much worn out. However Mama knows that the plant will survive through the tough living condition it is in if she continues her deep nurture and care. She never gave up on the plant and puts great hope and care towards it. The way she treats the plant is like the way she nurtures her family in their fragile and rough living condition they are surviving in. Mama knows that just as how she takes great care of the plant and make it survive, she can do the same with her family too. In the end when all of her family are leaving for the new house, she took the plant instead of leaving it behind because she knows that with a better living condition the plant will thrive and blossom more just as how her family will too in the new house. The plant symbolizes hope, in which as Mama took the plant to the new house, it represents how her family will begin to succeed and thrive in their new living condition, a new beginning for them. Mama’s own individual American dream of having her own individual house also serves as a symbolism for the plant. “Well, I always wanted me a garden like I used to see sometimes at the back of the houses down home. This plant is close as I ever got to having one. Through this quote the audience can tell that the plant is small beginning however a big step for Mama of having her own little piece of garden. The plant represents how Mama has endured all these years still struggling to grow/move on despite its rough condition. Just as how the plant is always reaching

for the sunlight from the tiny window, the Younger family is always reaching toward something better despite their limited opportunities. “They spirited all right, my children. Got to admit they got spirit-Bennie and Walter. Like this little old plant that ain’t never had enough sunshine or nothing-and look at it...”- In this quote, the plant symbolizes both Walter and Beneatha who are both strong willed children that are gradually maturing as time goes on. Like the plant that grows even with little sunlight, Walter and Beneatha also show their spiritedness, their potential to flower in the end through their hard work and ambitions. Before, Beneatha seems to go over her own ways while Walter always thought about money all the time but through Mama’s nourishing, they will both grow and fulfill their dream in the end.

Beneatha’s Hair- After the visit with Asagai, Beneatha thinks about her hair and decides to cut it off. Her hair symbolizes how she refused to conform to what society think is beautiful of the seemingly Caucasian hair. It represents her heritage which George cannot appreciate when he sees it for the first time. She says natural is beautiful and wants to be recognized for her identity and not for her assimilation. She wants to refer back to her true identity and cultural ties in Africa.

Fifty-Cents and a dollar- When Walter gave Travis a dollar instead of the fifty cents that he only needed for school activity, it symbolizes how they yearn for more materialistic things in life rather than just on the necessary things they need to survive. The 50 cents represents the legitimate needs money can buy while the dollar represents the desire for material goods beyond these needs. It symbolizes both their hopes and greed of what they want.

Check- The check represents their key of achieving their long term dreams such as the house, liquor store, and medical school. The check symbolizes Walter’s greed and destruction to his own original beliefs and values of what he values the most in the beginning. Also, it represents the realization of the family when they lost the check of what is most important in their lives which are their strong will of integrity and continuation of doing what is right and most importantly to follow their dreams.

Raisin in the Sun- The family’s dreams and hopes for a better life will never dry up despite the intense struggles they are under.

Ruth- Ruth Younger symbolizes the biblical Ruth that is discussed in the bible. Just as Ruth has a close relationship with her mother in law which is Mama, the biblical Ruth is also similar in that she also has a close relationship with her mother in law, Naomi, and is willing to travel with her wherever she goes. (cliffnotes)

New House and Garden- The new house and garden that Mama buys represents courage and hope, since the family is moving into an entirely white neighborhood even after hearing about the recent bombing of a black family. (<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides2/Raisin.html>) The family hopes that through this new house and garden, they will be able to achieve emotional, moral, and economic growth in the future. (<http://www.cummingsstudyguides.net/Guides2/Raisin.html>)

Goodbye Prometheus- George says goodnight Prometheus to Walter because Walter resembles Prometheus. Prometheus is a mythological figure who is punished for bringing fire to the mortals because of that he is chained to a mountain where he must suffer the pain of his liver being torn out every day from an eagle, but his liver re-grows every night. In the end, Prometheus is freed when the eagles are killed. (Cliffnotes) Walter is Prometheus in the fact that the check represents his liver and the eagles represent his family memories. The family members continuously shoot down his dreams (taking out his liver) by telling him to not use the check for the liquor store, but he still believes that his dream can be successful. But in the end, Mama gives him the check to put into the bank but Walter invests his check into his liquor store which turns out the way it shouldn't be. Walter's liver is gone forever meaning that his dream of the liquor store is gone and that he must live on with life just like Prometheus after his release. (Matthew Chun, Curtis Yu, Raymond Lam, and Sophia Tsai)

Characterization

Ruth

Ruth is a very practical person who insists on always putting family matters first and herself last. Her role in the family doesn't seem to stand out compared to Beneatha or Asagai, however as the story progresses, her care for Walter and the financial situation for the family deeply came into a sharper focus of her characterization. When the family lost their check, Ruth realized that they no longer have the financial ability to afford the house that Mama had bought and immediately told Mama that it was okay for her to work extra hours if they can move because she knows the significance for all of their family especially Mama to continue the rest of her life in a house she owns herself for the first time in her life. "Lena-I'll work...I'll work twenty hours a day in all the kitchens in Chicago...I'll strap my baby on my back if I have to and scrub all the floors in American and wash all the sheets in America if I have to-but we got to MOVE! We got to get OUT OF HERE!!" shows the desperation of Ruth on coming out of the small apartment she has been trapped in for so long. In her quote when they finally decided to move out despite their lack of money to pay for it she stated "Well, for God's sake-if the moving men are here-LET'S GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!!" presents a different side of the usual calm Ruth in which audience have come to recognize throughout this story. This became the breaking point of Ruth on coming out of her shell on keeping all her anguish and problems inside

herself like she did at the beginning of the story regarding to her relationship with Walter that has began to sidetrack from their original marriage due to financial problems. The lost of check became a turning point for her on realizing the importance of liberty within one's inner-self and therefore despite the same financial situation the family were in from the beginning, she changed her way of handling a tough situation from being kept in a small apartment not having much to say about life to becoming a woman who stands upon her feet on presenting her strong wills to the family.

Ruth can be described as "weary and worn" like the furnishings of the apartment that her family lives in. She has no hope of her husband, often disregarding his idealistic dream of owning a liquor store every time. Although Ruth is constantly faced with emptiness from her husband, she nevertheless still gives him loyalty and nourishment by asking him what he needs.

(<http://lexy3433.tripod.com/id12.htm>) From her weariness, we see how hardworking Ruth is in living and supporting her family every day. However, from all the stress that she endures, she reveals many struggles such as the thought of abortion and giving up a new life, since she could not handle it. Ruth is a very passive, conservative character that just wants to build a happy family for everyone. (<http://lexy3433.tripod.com/id12.htm>)

"Lena-maybe the woman is just short on cleanser-"Ruth is a very passive character as compared to Mama. While Ruth tries to think of an excuse for why Miss Johnson doesn't have a cleanser, Mama dismisses her by arguing over all the times that she has helped her without asking anything back.

"Oh, let him go on out and drink himself to death! He makes me sick to my stomach!" Ruth feels upset when Walter treats her poorly by not listening to her. She feels like she is in a lot of pressure and gets irritated that her husband never stops to help her but rather always thinks selfishly about himself and his goal to open up a liquor store.

"Yes I would too, Walter. I gave her a five dollar down payment." Ruth finally reveals her inner feelings after holding it in for so long. Her character gradually develops as she becomes more frustrated when Walter fails to understand what she is going through. She becomes more dynamic and her traits intensify as she yells at Walter that she would do anything to support her family.

"I'm all right..." Ruth feels a tremendous amount of stress after coming back from the doctor. She fights hard to suppress a scream from worrying about what to do with the baby that was near two months old in her stomach.

“Ain’t nothing wrong with me to be lying in no bed for. Where did Bennie go?”- Ruth gradually changes from a very passive character and becomes more dynamic by expressing her own thoughts. From the tone of her voice, Ruth’s traits intensify as she feels more irritated over her family situation and the new baby that is ruining her life.

“That’s a whole lot different from having it come and being able to hold it in your hands...a piece of paper worth ten thousand dollars...we ain’t never had none before-OPEN IT!”- There is a transition in Ruth’s character when the check finally arrives. Before, Ruth does not express much emotion and goes along in cleaning the house and doing chores. However, when Travis brings the check, we see Ruth’s character change immediately as she desperately tells Mama to open the check. She is hoping that the money can help relieve all the stress that both she and her family is going through. Ruth defies Mama, an important character that everyone in the family respects, by not listening to her and commanding her to open the check.

“Well-well! All I can say is-if this is my time line life-my time-to say good bye to these Goddamned cracking walls and these marching roaches and this cramped little closet which ain’t now or never was no kitchen! ...then I say it loud and good Hallelujah! And good bye misery! I don’t never want to see your ugly face again!”- Ruth changes significantly in this scene by revealing to the readers her eagerness to leave the house. Regardless of whether their new house is bought at Clybourne Park where all the white people lived, Ruth is very excited that she can finally move.

“Honey...life don’t have to be like this. I mean sometimes people can do things so that things are better...you remember how we used to talk when Travis was born...about the way we were going to live...the kind of house...Well, it’s all starting to slip away from us...”- Ruth feels that her family is gradually falling apart because of financial difficulties. She reminisces over the past when they used to enjoy things together. However, with Walter stressing over his liquor store and Ruth not knowing what to do with the new baby, their economic situation is tearing them apart.

“When we come out of the show it was late and dark and all the stores and things was closed up...and it was kind of chilly and there wasn’t many people on the streets...and we was still holding hands, me and Walter.”- Ruth seems to be happy again after Beneatha gives Walter the money. Life seems to be restored as both Ruth and Walter feel less stressed and even travel to the movies to have a good time.

“I’ll strap my baby on my back if I have to and scrub all the floors in America and wash all the sheets in America if I have to-but we got to move! We got to get out of here!!!”- Ruth desperately tells Mama that the family must leave and move out of their old house. While Mama

readjusts and tells Ruth that they can fix the place up, Ruth panics a lot and constantly screams at Mama, urging her that they must get out of the house. She even says that she is willing to sacrifice all of her stuff and willing to do extra work in efforts to move away from their old, worn out house.

“Well, for God’s sake-if the moving men are here, let’s get the hell out of here!!!”- Emphasizes Ruth’s determination to get away from her old house as possible. She doesn’t care about anything else but the fact that they can finally move into Clybourne Park.

George

George is first introduced in the story as someone that is shallow described by Beneatha. According to the context, George is an extremely rich person who looks good, has a beautiful car, and treats Beneatha well. He is very well liked by all the other family members for his wealth except for Beneatha who feels apart from him. Throughout the story, George does not learn to appreciate the African culture that Beneatha desires for. An arrogant and superficial person who dislikes the liberty of women can be represented as a specific overall generalization about George’s characterization. He is very superficial regarding to education, liberty, woman’s role in society, and his knowledge of the world. “I know it and I don’t mind it sometimes...I want you to cut it out you see-The moody stuff, I mean. I don’t like it. You’re a nice looking girl-all over. That’s all you need honey, forget the atmosphere. Guys aren’t going to go for the atmosphere-they’re going to go for what they see. Be glad for that. Drop the Garbo routine. As for myself, I want a nice simple sophisticated girl...not a poet OK?” This quote displays his superficial views on that woman shouldn’t be outspoken too much about their opinions but to be there to look nice and serve the men as their primary duty. The way George presented his language shows that he isn’t open minded about women’s role and liberation nor does he care much about how knowledge is the key for colored people to come out of the hierarchy in society. He ridicules Beneatha about how the great Songhay civilizations and great Ashanti empires are all “nothing but a bunch of raggedy-assed spirituals and some grass huts.” George is very ignorant and is heavily assimilated into the American culture. His attitude towards the family is disrespectful because every time he talks to family member he uses language that they would not understand and tries to show off his knowledge to them. “Oh, it’s just a college girl’s way of calling people Uncle Toms—but that isn’t what it means at all. ” He is yelled at by Walter with his “faggoty-looking white shoes” but disregards him for his insulting remarks. Ultimately, George wants a stronger relationship with Beneatha and even tries to kiss her several times but constantly gets rejected by Beneatha. For the entire story, George fails to understand what

Beneatha really wants, thinking that reading books and getting good grades is merely a requirement to gain a degree. “It’s simple. You read books—to learn facts—to get grades—to pass the course—to get a degree. That’s all—it has nothing to do with thoughts.” George disrespects Beneatha’s words and language and treats her as if she is nothing rather than someone high class like him as he has a prejudice towards lower class people and disrespects them through the way he talks. “Look honey, we are going to the theatre—we are not going to be in it.. so go change huh?” He does not understand the typical society as he is narrow-minded and only follows the path that everyone else’s follow. He does not have a rebellious character instead he follows what the books say and what is going on in the world rather than disagree with the culture like Beneatha. “Let’s face it, baby, your heritage is nothing but a bunch of raggedy-assed spirituals and some grass huts!” Throughout the entire story, George’s character is revealed through his words and his actions toward the family because in the end he is an arrogant character who believes that he is the top of the social class and disrespect everyone below him.

“Yeah-sometimes we’ll have to do that, Walter”- In this quote, we see a long conversation between Walter and George as Walter discusses about George’s father and how he needs someone like him to give him big ideas and run a business. While Walter tells George about the need to discuss ideas together one day, George looks away with boredom. He disregards all of Walter’s ideas by responding carelessly and not paying too close attention to Walter because he feels as though he is much better than Walter.

“I want you to cut it out, see-the moody stuff, I mean. I don’t like it. You’re a nice-looking girl...all over. That’s all you need, honey, forget the atmosphere...as for myself, I want a nice simple sophisticated girl not a poet ok?”- All George cares about is falling in love with Beneatha and trying to kiss her. He does not care of what Beneatha believes in, and he thinks all of her thoughts of her African identity are stupid. George just wants to stir up a relationship with Beneatha, so that he can kiss her.

Asagai

Asagai is a character that is deeply rooted with his African background in the story. Asagai is very proper as he presents himself to the Younger family with pride and is not embarrassed when people ask him about his culture as he answers those questions with fluency. Asagai does not understand the American culture as he likes to side with his culture in Africa. “Perhaps the things I believe now for my country will be wrong and outmoded, and I will not understand and do terrible things to have things my way or merely to keep my power... but my own countrymen—to step out of the shadows some evening and slit my then useless throat.” He has pride for his culture and does not want to change it. He is willing to sacrifice his own life for

the independence of his country. Asagai's thinking is more sophisticated than the Younger family as his background shows his personality. Every time he walks into the Younger's home he is polite and formal and not disrespectful to their culture. His way of words can be philosophical as when he talks to Beneatha about love "Yes. About how much time one needs to know what one feels." Asagai's philosophy is different from everyone else about money as he questions the Younger's success by gaining money from a misfortunate. "Then isn't there something wrong in a house—in a world--- where all dreams, good or bad, must depend on the death of a man? I never thought to see you like this Alaiyo." By calling Beneatha names like "Alaiyo", we see that he is very traditional and expresses no concern of wanting to assimilate into America. Asagai is originally from the Yoruba tribe in Nigeria. In the story, he tries to bring Beneatha back to the "African past" with his gifts of Nigerian clothes to Beneatha as well as his comments on her "mutilated hair." We see that Asagai is used as a tool to help Beneatha discover her own African background. He is very comforting to Beneatha, providing aid when possible and listening very carefully to all of Beneatha's problems. His ultimate motive is to bring Beneatha back to Africa where she doesn't have to deal with all the problems that Walter has caused her but can live a new life in her new home.

"It's how you can be sure that the world's liberated women are not liberated at all. You all talk about it too much!" Asagai treats Beneatha as if she was like all of the rest of the American girls who were assimilated in their own, unique culture and say the same things all the time. He doesn't treat her very seriously and looks down on her, teasing her from time to time about her hair and her speeches.

"How do you do, Mrs. Younger. Please forgive me for coming at such an outrageous hour on a Saturday." Asagai is very polite to Mama as compared to Beneatha. He treats elders with great respect probably because of his background in Nigeria.

"Then isn't there something wrong in a house- in a world-where all dreams, good or bad, must depend on the death of a man? You can talk about what good is struggle, what good is anything! Where are we all going and why are we bothering!"- Asagai understands clearly that there is more opportunities later on even when Walter lost all the money. He explains clearly to Beneatha that the American dream does not merely depend on the death of a man but from infinite possibilities. Asagai ultimately helps Beneatha in realizing that there is more to her dream than simply a loss of money.

"But I will look about my village at perhaps I will be a great man...I mean perhaps I will hold on to the substance of truth and find my way always with the right course...and perhaps for it I will be butchered in my bed some night by the servants of empire..."- Asagai expresses here his great

nationalism for his country. He looks at Nigeria with great passion and he says that he will even sacrifice himself for the independence of his country.

“Nigeria. Home. I will show you our mountains and our stars; and give you cool drinks from gourds and teach you the old songs and the ways of our people-and, in time, we will pretend that you have only been away for a day.” Here, Asagai asks Beneatha to come back with him to his homeland. We see here that Asagai is in love with Beneatha also and wants Beneatha to feel the same about him. He asks her to come with him, so they may both live a life that supports their African culture and identity.

Diction

George:

In the story, George normally talks as someone with an abundance of knowledge. He feels superior to others by his style. An example was when Ruth was asking what time the show was while George responded “It’s an eight thirty curtain....that’s just Chicago though, in New York the standard time is eight forty.” From this quote, we see how he is trying to show off his intelligence by having more knowledge as compared to others. Also, from the choice of words that George uses, the readers can tell that he looks down on Beneatha and her view of being liberal. An example is when he says “I don’t go out with you to discuss the nature of “quiet desperation” or to hear all about your thoughts-because the world will go on thinking what it thinks regardless”. This shows how he is in a way mocking Beneatha’s liberal ideas of how a woman should be like in society.

Asagai:

Asagai is a character that is very polite and courteous especially to Beneatha. He is very deep in his choice of words especially when discussing about his African heritage from Nigeria. One example that shows this is when Asagai leaves and says “I will call you Monday, Alaiyo.” By using this Yoruba word, it reflects back on how Asagai is deeply rooted to his own African background and culture. He is not like Beneatha in that his choice of words are not of force but is natural to show off how he is connected with his African character while Beneatha tries really hard. Asagai remains one of the most influential characters in the story. He is deeply rooted to his African heritage, and unlike Beneatha who only tries to become connected with her heritage, Asagai knows the true meaning and importance of presenting their heritage truthfully. Unlike George, he is an honest person who always gives Beneatha the support of letting her realize the importance of her goal son becoming a doctor which is rare considering her sex and ethnicity of a colored woman in society during that time. When Beneatha was angry with Walter for

destroying her dreams when he lost the check, it was Asagai who putted her back on track of realizing that just because she doesn't have the money doesn't represent her loss of dreams forever because it has always been there from the very beginning when she doesn't have the check. The fact that the check wasn't hers in the first place became a big epiphany for her from Asagai's reminder that losing her dreams and giving up her hope of becoming a doctor as a colored woman shouldn't be stopped from something that wasn't hers in the first place. This can be seen through the quote "Then isn't there something wrong in a house-in a world-where all dreams, good or bad, must depend on the death of a man? I never thought to see you like this, Alaiyo. You!. Your brother made a mistake and you are grateful to him so that now you can give up the ailing human race on account of it! You talk about what good is struggle, what good is anything! Where are we going and why are we bothering!" From this quote the audience can determine that Asagai is a character of true value who stands on his own feet without depending on anyone for he knows that true success comes from working and accomplishing on one's dream by themselves and not by depending on a check that wasn't the person's in the first place. He knew that important concept and he made sure that Beneatha gets the message so she can continue on with her dreams without ever stopping by blaming on others of ruining her dreams.

"I must go. I will call you Monday, Alaiyo"- Asagai is deeply rooted with his African background. He calls other characters not by their American name but through his own way based off of how he feels. "You didn't tell us what Alaiyo means...No-really it is difficult...it means...it means One for whom Bread-Food-Is Not Enough."- We see here in this quote that Asagai references Beneatha as someone that has not completely found her identity yet. He describes her as someone that is still searching and has not completely discovered her identity yet.

"How much time must there be before one knows what one feels?" Asagai talks in a very sophisticated way, forming complex sentences and speaking very formally all the time. He responds back to simple questions with sophisticated answers like "Canadian" when Beneatha asks "how was Canada." He lightly mocks Beneatha as he recalls his experience with her when she wanted to talk to him in order to search her identity.

Ruth:

Ruth has a soft personality as she doesn't raise her voice or provoke any behavior. She is consistent as she is passive with her decisions. "Honey, you never say anything new. I listen to you every day, every night, and every morning, and you never say anything new." She has simple desires and throughout the play, she has a quiet voice that is never risen, but shows the

most emotion when Mama tells her that they may not be able to move. After that incident, Ruth begins to reveal her ideas and beliefs on the move. “We ain’t never had none before—OPEN IT!” a different side of Ruth when they are going to open the check.” Her language is simple because she has no education but she is willing to go anywhere for money and the house as she almost aborts her child because she thought it would have been a burden to have another mouth to feed.

Irony

There are many examples of irony in the story. One example of dramatic irony was at the beginning of the story when Travis was begging his mother for fifty cents for school activities. Seeing how his mother would not give him it, his dad stepped in and hands Travis the coin while giving him an additional fifty cents. As Travis leaves the room, Walter informs his wife that he needed money for carfare. Another example is when Ruth sings the song “No Ways tired” multiple times throughout the story. At the end of Scene 1 of Act 1, while Ruth was singing, she faints from fatigue of being pregnant. (http://www.cliffsnotes.com/study_guide/literature/A-Raisin-in-the-Sun-Summary-and-Analysis-Act-II-Scene-3.id-150,pageNum-22.html) The irony is that Ruth was singing a song of not being tired at all when really, she was about to collapse.

An ironic part of the story is the fact that Asagai is the only person to really understand the American Dream even though he is from Nigeria. (<http://www.enotes.com/raisin-in-the-sun/q-and-a/there-any-irony-play-act-ii-48939>) In the part where Beneatha is extremely frustrated of his brother losing all the money, Asagai questions and reveals to her that it was not specifically her money that Walter lost. He tells her that she did not earn the money herself and how it wouldn’t make a difference if his father was still alive or not. He asks a very important question which was “Isn’t there something wrong in the house-in a world-where all dreams, good or bad, must depend on the death of a man?” From this, we see how Asagai understands that the American dream was not all about money but about maintaining a strong relationship within a big family. He explains how it was not right for Beneatha to blame Walter but how they must stay strong and endure the struggles together.

There is dramatic irony when George finally leaves with Beneatha after saying “Good night, Prometheus!” to Walter. While Walter does not know, the audience knows clearly that Prometheus was a god in Greek mythology that was known for his great act of stealing the fire and bringing it back to the humans. (<http://www.wisegeek.com/who-is-prometheus.htm>) Prometheus is similar to Walter in that although Walter has many great plans, he is ultimately making situations more challenging just as how Prometheus brought challenge to humans by presenting them with great technology and knowledge. (<http://www.wisegeek.com/who-is->

prometheus.htm) George in a sense is mocking Walter for having so many unrealistic ideas that will prove to be unbeneficial to him in the future.

Imagery

A variety of imagery is used throughout the play. The beginning of the first act introduces us to a small scene where readers are shown what is going on with images and pictures. The author describes the Younger living room as a “comfortable and well-ordered room” that is home to many different people. The description of the worn and weary carpet with its “depressing uniformity, elsewhere on its surface” allows readers to imagine a house that has been cleaned many times but lives on at a really old state. While everything has been polished and washed many times, the overuse of each item shows the struggles the Younger family has in not being able to buy new things and how conservative they are in using them.

Imagery is also used specifically in Act II Scene 1 of the play. During this scene, Walter is drunk, but he joins Beneatha in singing and dancing folk songs from Nigeria. While they dance, readers are specifically captured by what they hear as Walter shouts out and screams many African terms such as “Ocomogosiay and Owimoweh.” Also, when Walter leaps up the table and carries an imaginary spear while acting like he’s the leader of his black brothers, we are brought to the past of the African culture. The imagery of Walter thumping his chest and declaring strong phrases such as “I am much warrior” gives us a sense of what their ancestors’ lives were like before they moved to America.

Syntax

Asagai Syntax- The language of Asagai is mostly formal throughout the whole story. Much of his style of language can be seen through his expressing when he talks about his African heritage. “I LIVE THE ANSWER! In my village at home it is the exceptional man who can even read a newspaper... or who seem strange to the people of my village. But I will teach and work and things will happen, slowly and swiftly....” shows his eagerness of presenting his own sense of values through his background in Africa. Overall his language is strong and concise about what he wants to say especially towards Beneatha. “Three hundred years later the African Prince rose up out of the seas and swept the maiden back across the middle passage over which ancestors had come” displays his flowery language when proposing to Beneatha. His language can be seen as the most formal and educated through his history background of going to college and experience from Nigeria. This can be seen through his quote “It isn’t a circle- it is simply a long line- as in geometry, you know, one that reaches into infinity. And because we cannot see the end- we also cannot see how it changes. And it is very off but those who can see the changes-

who dream, who will not give up- are called idealist... and those who see only the circle= we call them the “realists”. He has come from a different background than Beneatha and shows it when they speak. His words are not southern instead he speaks with pride. He cares for Beneatha. His sentences are complete and not shorten compared to the characters. His language is more formal and not so much casual. He speaks proper English although he is from another country.

“Were you born with it like that?”-1475

“And so to accommodate that—you mutilate it every week?”

“No. Between a man and a woman there need be only one kind of feeling. I have that for you... Now even... right this moment...”

“How do you do Mrs. Younger? Please forgive me for coming at such an outrageous hour on a Saturday”

George Syntax- George is a character of arrogance and always tries to show off his sense of knowledge to others purposely unlike Asagai. So therefore his language throughout the story can be seen as overly concise and unnatural. A specific example would be when Mama asks for the time of the show, he could've simply said the time without much details. However to display his knowledge of wisdom he chose to say “It's an eight-thirty curtain. That's just Chicago though. In New York standard curtain time is eight forty.” Later on of the story as he progresses with Beneatha to the play, he displays his lack of patience and views on the liberties of women especially colored women to Beneatha when she was sharing her strong views about her dreams. “Because this is stupid! I don't go out with you to discuss the nature of “quiet desperation” or to hear all about your thoughts- because the world will go on thinking what it thinks regardless.” Here his language becomes informal compared to his previous conversation with Mama. His overall language can be described as artificial for when he doesn't display much thought into the future nor about his future. “It's simple. You read books- to learn facts- to get grades- to pass the course- to get a degree-That's all- it has nothing to do with thoughts.” He consistently refers to literary analysis such as related Beneatha's dad to Prometheus even though the entire audience does not know what Prometheus is. George's syntax shows that he's prideful being rich and his attitude towards the Younger amplifies his thoughts.

“Thank you—I don't really care for anything.”

“Thanks. Good night. Good night Prometheus!” –pg 1488

Ruth Syntax- The language of Ruth is mostly neutral. Throughout the story Ruth's tone of language can be considered as neutral contrasting with Mama and Beneatha. From the exposition of the story she uses informal language when waking up Travis: "Come out now boy, it's seven thirty! I saw hurry up Travis, you aint the only person in the world got to use a bathroom." Then as the character shifts her attention to Walter, her language became more serious and impatient as if there are some things to be said but was never spoken out by her. She becomes impatient with everyone and opinionated of each person's actions in the house. "Honey, you never say nothing new, I listen to you every day, every night and every morning, and you never say nothing new. So you would rather be Mr. Arnold than be his chauffeur. So- I would rather be living in Buckingham Palace." displays her bitter sarcasm showing how she's so tired of her life in the small apartment and that she would wish for the better if she can. Also she her language shows much helplessness on her situation living in the apartment. She wants to leave and have some space in her life however the financial situation in the family doesn't allow her which makes her sometimes blame herself for being powerless. "Well, being a colored woman, I guess I can't help myself none."

"Well-I guess I might as well go on to bed...I don't know where we lost it...but we have...I-I'm sorry about this new baby, Walter. I guess maybe I better go on and do what I started...I guess I just didn't realize how bad things was with us..."- From this quote, the way Ruth speaks is broken up into very long and spread out sentences. She has lots of mixed thoughts as she struggles to express her inner emotions to Walter. Ruth feels hopeless and discouraged that she cannot communicate well with Walter, since he never listens and always denies Ruth. "Oh, Walter...honey, why can't you stop fighting me?"- Many times, Ruth tries to calm Walter down but he always never listens by exploding on her and complaining about her nagging. She tries to be very passive toward Walter by asking him to calm down such as "Walter, please" or "Oh, Walter Lee..." but he never listens. From this experience, Ruth feels hopeless that she can maintain a strong relationship with Walter and eventually feels that there is nothing more she can do to help Walter anymore.

"Mama I nothing! You're going to get it, boy! Get on in that bedroom and get yourself ready!"- Ruth speaks in simple and concise sentences. From the content, Ruth is very straightforward and strict about having Travis come back home in time. She cares a lot about the safety of her son, and so she gives no exception to Travis when he tries to make an excuse out of it.

Questions From the Book

7. Identify important stage props/ comment on their role in the play. Discuss whether either/both may be symbolic and why?

Even though it may not seem so, the plant is a very big part of this story. The plant represents hope for the younger family while all the other furniture is worn down “everything has been polished, washed... often...” The plant is new and growing it is young just like them. Mama also loves the plant just like she loves her family when Ruth asks “You.. don’t you?”-Ruth pg 1886 6th edition. Mama replies saying that she always wanted a garden. The plant is a symbol for the family because it grows with the family. “This plant is close as I ever got to having one.” – Mama. The plant represents the growth of the family and how that the plant can represent as mama as well. The plant is standstill and grows and grows as the family is growing as well. The family last name can refer that the Youngers are still children and still need to be taught lessons about life and society. So the plant represents the maturity of the family and how it can learn from everything they have been going through and that in the end the family will become like Mama, who understands what is going on instead of whining and complaining. Throughout the story, Mama doesn’t complain about what is happening “I had ‘about buying that house and fixing it up and making me a little garden in the back—And didn’t none of it happen.” She continues to move on with life and just like the plant it continues to live and grow a stagnant life.

We believe that another big prop is the check. Just like little kids, the Youngers are waiting for the check to arrive. Which in the first few pages “Check coming today?” just like a child asking for allowance. When the check arrives, Walter is excited and frantic as he excitedly jumps and down while Mama slowly opens the envelope as if the ten thousand dollars was worth nothing. “WILL SOMEBODY PLEASE LISEN TO ME TODAY!”The Youngers are not as wise as Mama. They believe that the money will be able to make them happy but they don’t know the truth. “No--- it was always money, Mama. We just didn’t know about it.” The check gave the Youngers a power that they never had before and it was hard for them to use it because one had a dream to build a liquor store, one wanted to use it for college, and one wanted to use it to make a down payment a house. The check became another responsibility on how it would be distributed to the family as Walter became obsessed with the check and believe that if he took the entire check he could make a lot of profit with his liquor store. “Sometimes it’s like I can see the future stretch out in front of me—just plain as day.” Walter thought the check was the answer to all their problems but in the end it made things worse as it actually tore him apart. Because in the end he found out that the check was lost he thought that everything was gone and that everyone would suffer, but mama predicted that something like this would happen so she already had money on the house and money for Benetha. The check symbolized an overwhelming power that the Youngers could not control at that in the end the power and greed that the check gave to the

Youngers was going to disassemble their family but in the end it worked out because Mama saved them as she has been the most experienced and that the last name Youngers shows that they are still developing and are still learning the ways of society.

In the end, the props helped the reader establish connections between the character and the props and how each relates to the central theme of Raisin in the Sun. The props all showed that the Youngers are still learning the ways of life and still need experience in order to thrive like the plant and not be consumed by power such as the check and that in the end experience played a big factor as experience was the only reason why the Youngers were able to thrive throughout their economic implications and that they need Mama to help them and show them the ropes before they go into the real world.

11. Hansberry's play is a comment on the Langston Hughes poem by bringing up the topic of the American Dream for the African American society.

Langston Hughes poem "A Raisin in the Sun" talks about the American Dream and how it has been deferred from one generation to another as the American dream has changed. Over the years the American Dream has changed as it went from freedom to greed in over a few years and each generation has changed accordingly. Hansberry's play is a comment to this poem because it talks about how the American Dream is different as it is no longer about freedom instead it is about money and how to improve life in society. Literally speaking when a raisin is in the sun, it means that the raisin was once a grape but over time the grape turned into a dry raisin, this can relate to what the Africans Americans have gone through. The African Americans have gone through a lot through their years in America as they had to fight for freedom and abolition, but not they have to fight to gain respect as it is hard for them to assimilate into society because everyone around them does not understand them and makes prejudice comments about them. Hansberry play takes place in the 1940's as the African Americans had lost everything and shriveled to nothing from riots, slavery, everything they lived. After riots and constant fighting, the idea of the American Dream was greed and money as the goal for most people was to gain a social status that is respected. All the efforts the African American's tried to do to achieve their dream, their efforts have gone nowhere because during the 1960s the Youngsters still live in prejudice society because when they try to move into the white society, white men will try to stop them; Lindner shows that black family will still treated differently from whites even if they are rich and live in their community. During the play this is represented through Ruth's assertion of wanting a house, and Walter's excitement over the check, but one character is stagnant throughout the play as it Mama. "I had 'about buying that house and fixing it up and making me a little garden in the back—And didn't none of it happen." –Mama. Mama represents the raisin in the sun because she has already gone through the stages from the start of abolition in the early 1900's to the point of time where African Americans were finally taking their stand in society as

before she was grape but slowly she became a raisin because she has experienced a lot and has learned from those experiences. There is a misconception about the American Dream, so Hughes' poem talks about what the American Dream can be described as because it changes so frequently that not many people understand what it really is. When Mama talks about moving into a new house, Ruth is overjoyed and excited because there is a shift in social class movement as their new house would be in a higher status than the house they are living in now so her American Dream is social status and wanting to gain respect from others. Along with Ruth, Walter's ideal dream is money and greed as all he thinks about is purchasing the liquor store and hoping that it will be a success. In the end, all their dreams are not the American Dream because their dreams are for their own purpose not everyone else's purpose because when their dreams are crushed their emotions suddenly change and are affected by that, except Mama. Mama knows the American Dream as she is not shaken when the check is lost or when there was doubt if they were going to move into the house. Mama knew that the only thing she wanted was her family to be together and happiness. She did not want anything more because when the check arrived she thought it was just a check did not mean anything else that like Asagai there should be no joy for getting money for someone who passed away. Mama is the raisin because she has lived and stayed with her dreams even with loss and gain of money. She cannot be changed as she'll remain as a raisin because their shape and figure is stagnant as Mama's actions were stagnant the entire play. Hughes' description of the American Dream is accurate and it correctly characterizes what the American Dream has gone through in Hansberry's play. In the end everyone else misunderstood the American dream by thinking it was money and pleasure, but Grandma was happy no matter what the outcome was as the American Dream was happiness and having her family together rather than greed and other needs in life as she was happy the way they were.

Archetypes

Throughout the play, there is one character that changes from immaturity to maturity and that is Walter Younger. Walter Younger begins as an immature and ignorant person who believes that everything revolves around him as he tries to get everyone's attention even from the start. "DAMN MY EGGS—DAMN ALL THE EGGS THERE EVER WAS!" Walter disrespects his wife by ignoring her actions and orders as he later insults his wife. "We one group of men tired to a race of women with small minds." He is consumed with thoughts about his dream that he doesn't consider other people's feelings about the liquor store except himself as he wants to own it and hopefully raise the family from it because all his life he has been a chauffeur for white rich men that he despises. Now, he wants to quit his job because he dislikes it as he has been a driver for an entire lifetime. Walter shows his anger by arguing with his own sister Beneatha as he would slam the door and leave for work every time they argue showing a sign of immaturity

and disrespect. "Who that 'round here slamming doors at this hour?" Instead of facing his problems, Walter avoids his problems by running away from them or by showing his frustration by blaming other family members.

His lack of maturity not only affects himself but also everyone around him as he only wants to get what he wants just like a little child. The last name Younger can refer to Walter because he is still learning the baby-steps in becoming a man. His lack of maturity is shown when he asks "Did it come?" and when no one answers his question he raises his voice to try to get everyone's attention like a little boy crying in his crib. Walter can represent a baby who wants attention from his mother, "Will SOMEBODY PLEASE LISTEN TO ME TODAY!" Throughout the story, his mother nags on him to stop yelling in the house and when she does try to teach him to listen he stares with frustration and ignores the situation. Walter then makes a big excuse and starts walking out the door with frustration without even telling his wife where he would be going. He ignores his mother's commands as his mother has to constantly remind him that he still does not know what he is doing. "Walter Lee—Sit down!"- Mama "I'm a grown man, mama."- Walter's response. Walter continuously ignores his mother's orders and argues with his wife. His actions are selfish and narrow-minded and not thinking of what the money can be used for others in the family as the power of the check has consumed Walter's self-being that money is everything and that money will buy them out of their lives. "Do you know what this money means to me? Do you know what this money can do for us? Mama... I want soo many things." Although he may seem to have good reasons to have the money and invest in his liquor store, Walter wants more and does not appreciate what he has. He disrespects the job he has and wants to have a new job because he is sick and frustrated with it. "I drive a man around in his limousine Mama, that ain't no kind of job... that ain't nothing at all." Walter does not appreciate with what he has and Mama tries to teach him that "you got a job, a nice wife, and fine boy," but Walter doesn't appreciate his job and wants more from it. He has been corrupted with the power of greed that all he can think about is money and money and nothing else and that the future retains to money. Mama asks Walter why he cares about money and Walter's response was "Because it is life, Mama. The power of the check has eclipsed his true soul as all he think about is making profits and making money towards the family even though his mother refuses to do so. After Mama's and Walter's discussion about his job and his work, Walter begins to get criticized by his mother as she is trying to teach him new ways to be a man and trying to become a mature adult but in the end Walter does the usual by ignoring his mother and by ignoring Ruth. Mama exclaims to her son, "You...you are a disgrace to your father's memory." This shows that Walter is a failure and that he should be ashamed to take the Younger last name and that he does not follow his father's footsteps as the old Younger was a good man.

Although Mama is trying to be a mentor, Walter ignores his comments and leaves the house right after Mama yells at him. Walter is afraid to face his problems as instead of facing them face to face he avoids them by going outside and drinking at a place where he feels comfortable. When Walter returns to the house, he is more damaged than he was when he left the house as he is drunk and is not sure what is going on as Beneatha is playing an African American Folk Song called OCOMOGOSIAY. Walter intrudes into the song and begins to dance frantically and has immature behavior like a child playing on a playground. “Yeah...AND ETHIOPIA STRETCH FORTH HER HANDS AGAIN!” He begins to shout and dance with laughter as Ruth notices his behavior and yells at him with disgrace. “Walter Lee Younger, get down off that table and stop acting like a fool.” These actions do not show that Walter is a man and that he is still young because he should be more mature and consider his actions before leaving the house and avoiding his problems. After he leaves to go the restroom, George enters the house to pick up Beneatha, but Walter interrupts and is rude by disrespecting George. Walter is still on the edge of unreality as he makes fun of George’s attire. “Why all you college boys wear them faggoty looking white shoes?” Walter ignores Ruth’s remarks and continues to ridicule George over a short period of time. “Well they look crazy as hell—white shoes, cold as it is.” Even with all this ridicule and laughter, Walter’s image of money is still rolling in his head as he begins to talk business with George. His mind shifts from ridiculing a man to talk about business as when money is involved into a conversation he begins to get more involved and seems to be an expert. “Big. Invest big, gamble big, hell, lose big if you have to, you know what I mean.” This entire scene shows that Walter is immature and is disrespectful to not only to his self but the entire family name as he does not notice the consequences he makes when he makes his radical decisions. Many of the times he comes home, he is drunk and performs actions that are nonsense. From the beginning to now, Walter has been a selfish baby who has been crying out for his own selfish needs not noticing the people around him except himself. He ignores his wife and does not notice that he will be a father to another baby as he does not listen when Ruth was thinking about abortion because of financial issues. Walter was only able to notice these things because of Mama, without Mama Walter would have been running off a cliff because he would be unsure what was around him except himself and his dream.

Later on Walter starts to change a little when Mama and Walter begin to talk again. This time Walter’s voice has changed to a more understanding figure instead of someone yelling and disrespecting his mother. But he has not gone through initiation instead the reader can see signs that he is changing a little. “Naw you ain’t never been wrong about nothing mama.” To test Walter’s attitude and character, Mama gives Walter the responsibility to put three thousand dollars into the bank as now Mama trusts her son as all this time Mama was never mad at Walter; it’s just she had to yell at him with purpose and not for fun. “I ain’t never stop trusting you. Like

I ain't never stop loving you." From those words, Walter realizes that Mama actually cares and considers every decision that Walter makes and by giving this opportunity Walter hopefully can make the right decision. He finally notices and talks to his family giving his son advice about the future. Travis questions his dad and what he could become in the future as Travis says bus driver, but Walter decides that Travis cannot become a bus driver instead that he should become something greater someone who can support a family. Walter in this situation is actually acting like a man and not a foolish boy. Walter believes that he can change the lives of his fail by investing in the liquor despite the negative comments about his actions. "Your daddy's gonna make a transaction...a business transaction that's going to change our lives."

As the story progresses there are slight changes to Walter as he slowly is becoming the man of the house by noticing and talking to not only to his business group but also his family as he begins to notice the important things in life and not just the individual things around him. The reader can tell change is present in Walter that suddenly takes charge when Lindner comes to the house and explains the situation that Lindner has. Walter finally takes the role of the man of the house instead of his mama or sister. When Linden begins to speak about the house, Linden is emphasizing that he can help sell the house that the Younger's just brought and that he tells the Younger family to back off the house because the African Americans are treated like Negros in that area and about just white as some people no understand what was happening during that time till the time Linden ask Walter about the offer. Still immature, Walter disrespects the man but tells him that Linden's offer is radical and that he should "Get out of my house, man." Walter's behavior may seem radical but his actions are appropriate for this situation as he is thinking about his family until the subject of money comes to play.

Although Walter begins to spend more time with his family especially when gifts are passed the mama, he enjoyed the times he had with his family and is transformed completely from a shy people to a person who is loud and able to accompany his family from time to time. But when Bobo comes to the house to tell Walter the news, Walter is broken into pleases and does not believe what I happening. "Man, what are you talking about!" Walter's face is suddenly changed as he realizes that he has lost everything and that everything that was given to him was lost and that his family might be in turmoil, but instead of running away for his problems he speaks to Mama and acts like a man. Walter goes through his threshold and is transformed into someone new as he finally admits his mistake instead of running away and hiding it from people. "Mama, I never...went to the bank at all.." From this point, the reader can see that Walter is a new man and that Walter is not the same Walter the reader saw in the beginning of the story because he finally stands up to his problems and is calm about it rather than be drastic and over exaggerate the problem. After this his mother is the one in disappointment and grief and Walter is calm.

After this incident, Walter comes back with a solution by calling back Lindner. This time Walter is changed and has fully become a man to accept his duties as the man of the household instead of acting weak. "That's right! That's good. I told him to come right over." Walter is not willing to give that offer and that since there is nothing to lose now and the family is in total despair Walter makes on last trail before the entire family disintegrates. As everyone thinks that they are dead, Walter believes that he is the man and that there should nothing be afraid of. "I tell you I am a man." Walter has gone through a transformation that has brought him from a weak mental person to a person with a strong mentality and has the ability to put his family's life on the line. He thoroughly explains to Lindner that "We come from people who had a lot of pride." Now Walter is finally showing his pride as he is not that little kid anymore and that he has come out of his threshold and witnessed a miracle. He realizes that money isn't everything and that he understands what Mama was trying to say as that in the end he declines the offer and says "We don't want you money." In the end of the story, Walter finally lives up to his father's name as he relates to his father with a man with pride and passion and that is what they have. Walter is no longer afraid to face his problems as he is able to stay strong during the difficult situation and that his attitude from a narrow-minded perspective have become an omniscient perspective as he finally understood what was happening in his life from the time he ignored everyone in the family to the time where talked to Beneatha about his actions. At the end of the story, Walter Lee Younger is no longer a boy as transforms into a man. He is no longer a baby boy that is complaining for his wants and needs instead he understands that after he lost all the money that he lost hope for the rest of the family because the entire family put trusts on Walter's shoulders and Walter lost their trusts. To gain back their money and pride, Walter had to call Lindner that they are not afraid of the dangers in the white community and that they are willing to stand and that in the end they move out to the new home and Walter Lee Younger officially becomes the man of the household that all along Mama was the voice that Walter should of listened to, but in the end he still transformed.

Ruth's baby is also an archetype in this story. Although we never see the baby, it symbolizes new life and a new beginning for the whole Younger family. She shows her motherly and fun side at the very beginning of the story when she refuses to give Travis any money for school supplies. She knew that Travis was very mad at her and was about to walk out, however she lessened the mood and changed Travis's anger towards her by impersonating his mind by saying "Oh, Mama makes me so mad sometimes, I don't know what to do! I wouldn't kiss that woman good-bye for nothing in this world this morning! Not for nothing in this world! Now-whose little old angry man are you?" This shows that she cares about her son and shows that she's a good mother by knowing and caring how Travis feels. Also when Ruth tells Travis to come back at a certain time, Travis ignores her, she shows her disciplinary side by telling him in a stern voice "Mama I nothing! You're going to get it boy! Get on in that bedroom and get

yourself ready!” Even when Mama tries to play the nice role by telling her to hear Travis explain himself, Ruth replied back saying “Keep out of it now, Mama.” Ruth presents her tough motherly role by explaining why she was mad at him by saying “A thousand times I have told you not to go off like that”. “Well-he’s a little boy. Ain’t supposed to know ‘bout house keeping. My baby, that’s what he is. What you fix for his breakfast this morning? I feed my son, Lena!”- This quote shows how Ruth is becoming more of a motherly figure by trying to care of her son by always cooking food for him. She takes care of her son really closely and defends herself when Mama criticizes her for only giving him “cold cereal or nothing when he goes out in the cold.”.