

A NOISE WITHIN PRESENTS

A Raisin in the Sun

BY
LORRAINE HANSBERRY

A Raisin
in the
Sun

A Play by

Lorraine Hansberry



"Hold Fast to Dreams"

STUDY GUIDES FROM **A NOISE WITHIN**

A rich resource for teachers of English, reading arts, and drama education.

Dear Reader,

We're delighted you're interested in our study guides, designed to provide a full range of information on our plays to teachers of all grade levels.

A Noise Within's study guides include:

- General information about the play (characters, synopsis, timeline, and more)
- Playwright biography and literary analysis
- Historical content of the play
- Scholarly articles
- Production information (costumes, lights, direction, etc.)
- Suggested classroom activities
- Related resources (videos, books, etc.)
- Discussion themes
- Background on verse and prose (for Shakespeare's plays)

Our study guides allow you to review and share information with students to enhance both lesson plans and pupils' theatrical experience and appreciation. They are designed to let you extrapolate articles and other information that best align with your own curricula and pedagogic goals.

More information? It would be our pleasure. We're here to make your students' learning experience as rewarding and memorable as it can be!

All the best,

Alicia Green
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



Pictured: Donnlia Hughes, *Romeo and Juliet*, 2016. PHOTO BY CRAIG SCHWARTZ.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Characters	4
Synopsis	5
Playwright Biography: Lorraine Hansberry	6
Lorraine Hansberry Timeline	7
Lorrain Hansberry: A Trailblazer	8
Timelines:	
African American Theatre	9
Civil Rights Movement	10
Lorraine Hansberry: Civil Rights Activist	11
Escalation of activism and militancy	12
Structural Racism Near and Far	13
The Great Migration	15
The Black Belt	16
The Persistence of Structural Racism:	
Income Gaps in Chicago	17
Income Gaps in Los Angeles	18
Segregation in Chicago and Los Angeles	19
Langston Hughes: "Harlem—Dream Deferred"	20
Themes	21
Q&A with Set Designer	24
Director's Thoughts about <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	25
Actor Interview: <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i>	26
Glossary and Colloquial Terms	28
Essay Topics & Activities	29
Resources and Suggestions for Further Reading	31

A NOISE WITHIN'S EDUCATION PROGRAMS MADE POSSIBLE IN PART BY:

AMC	The Jewish Community
Ann Peppers Foundation	Foundation
Employees Community	Kenneth T. and
Fund of Boeing	Eileen L. Norris Foundation
Capital Group Companies	Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
Michael J. Connell Foundation	Rotary Club of Pasadena
The Dick and Sally Roberts	Pasadena
Coyote Foundation	Community Foundation
Edison International	Steinmetz Foundation
The Green Foundation	Dwight Stuart Youth Fund
	Wells Fargo

Special thanks to our 25th Anniversary Gala donors who kept the arts thriving this year by supporting our Student Matinees (SMATs):

SMAT PRODUCTION SPONSOR (\$10,000+)
 Heather & Paul Haaga
 William &
 Priscilla Kennedy
 James & Trevea Terrile

SMAT PERFORMANCE SPONSOR (\$5,000+)
 Kathleen &
 James Drummy
 Rebecca & Stuart Bowne
 Sharon & Rick Ellingsen
 Alan M. &
 Sheila R. Lamson
 John K. &
 Barbara Lawrence
 Roger &
 Gloria V. Mullendore
 Richard & Sally Roberts
 Ellen & Charlie Steinmetz
 Lyn Spector
 Bill & Rebecca Woods

SCHOOL SPONSOR (\$2,500+)
 Mr. & Ms.
 Roger Engemann
 Barbara Henderson
 Mark & Louisa Nelson

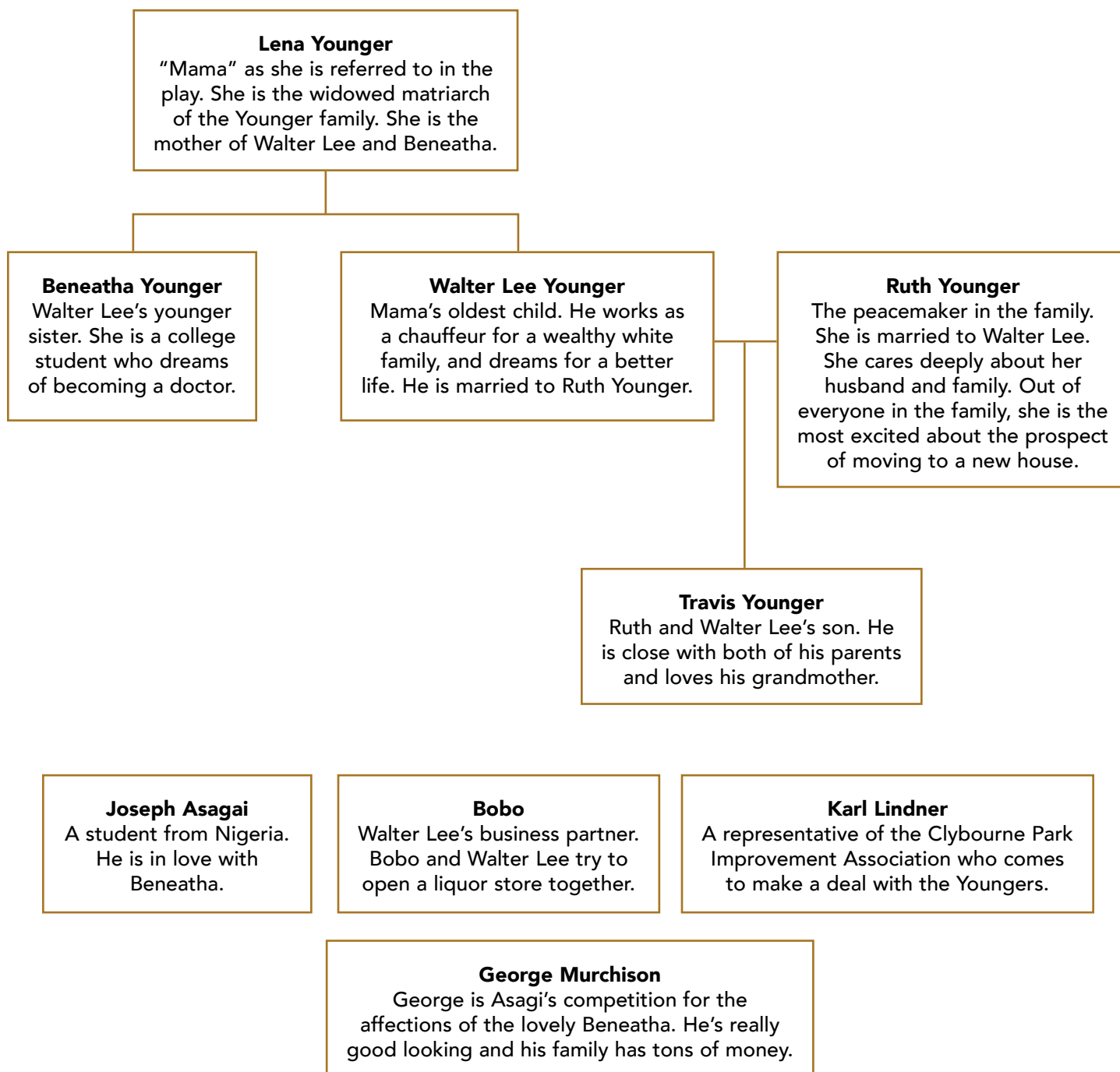
CLASS SPONSOR (\$1,000+)
 William & Sasha Anawalt
 Peter & Molly Bachmann
 Bill & Claire Bogaard
 Dennis & Susan De Pietro
 Pat & Sandy Gage
 Craig Gilmore &
 David Crocker
 Armando Gonzalez &
 Brenda Berg
 Shiela Grether-Marion &
 Mark Marion
 Pat Hoppe
 Elyse Klein
 Valerie & Bruce Merritt
 Terri Murray
 Cynthia J. Nunes &
 Barbara Nye
 Daniel Rothmuller
 Margaret H. Sedenquist

WORKSHOP SPONSOR (\$500+)
 Mads & Susan Bjerre
 Martin & Nancy Chalifour
 Angela Conner &
 Kevin Speaks
 Jack & Becky Doody
 The Dutka Family
 David Dwiggin &
 Clare Baren
 Patrick Garcia
 Kathleen Gilmore
 Diane Glatt & David Holtz
 Ryan & Denise Jay
 Molly Joseph
 Theodore Krontiris &
 Sue Parilla
 Kathy & John Kurfess
 Deborah Smith &
 Carole Lambert
 Gloria & Tom Lang
 Joe & Denise Lumarda
 Gene & Joanne Masuda
 Emily & Finnian Murray
 Barbara &
 Anthony Phillips
 Vickie & Alex Taylor
 Betsy & Frank Ulf

BUS SPONSOR (\$350+)
 Bill & Susan Boyd
 Meg Huntington Cajero &
 Paul Cajero
 Mr. Laurence Eggers
 Katherine James &
 Alan Blumenfeld
 Jim Kelly
 David & Bridget Prince
 Louise Mayeri Spillman
 Rhonda Stone
 Craig & Carolyn Watson

ADDITIONAL DONORS
 Marcelino Miyares
 Linda Dozier
 Elsbeth Collins
 Bob Novell
 Janet Suzuki
 David Briden
 Angela Howell
 Mayor Terry Tornek
 Bill Ukropina
 Kate Austin
 Greg Derelian
 Patrick Ross

CHARACTERS



SYNOPSIS



The "Hansberry House"

In a cramped apartment on the south side of Chicago, the Younger family waits for a \$10,000 life insurance check after the death of Mr. Younger. As they wait, differences arise as the members of the family try to decide how they should spend the money. Each adult family member has something for which they would like to use the money, whether it is education, a business investment, or a house to call their own. Dreams compete as each character pursues his or her vision of what life could be. What will happen when the possibilities of the money cause rifts in relationships? How will the family react when given a chance to compromise their dignity for their dreams? Where will they find their roots? In America or in Africa? In their apartment or a new home? Alone or together?

Throughout the play, a number of important events occur: First, Lena decides to use a large portion of the money to buy a house in Clybourne Park, an all-white neighborhood in Chicago. Lena then gives the rest of the money from the insurance check to Walter Lee, and advises him to save a large portion of it to pay for Beneatha's education. However, instead of saving the money, Walter uses his share of the insurance check to try to open a liquor store with Bobo and Willy Harris. Only later does Walter Lee realize that he has been scammed, and that he has lost all of the money from the check that he invested in the store.

The family struggles to remain optimistic, especially when Karl Lindner, a spokesperson from the Clybourne Park community, comes to make a deal with the Youngers. In an attempt to keep the family from moving to Clybourne Park, he offers to buy them out of their new house. This offer sends each member of the family into a whirlpool of mixed emotions and reactions. Walter Lee figures that giving in to "The Man" is the only way to get some money for his family. In the play's climactic moment, Walter must choose between standing up for his family's rights and standing up for his ego and role as the breadwinner. Ultimately, Walter Lee courageously stands up for civil rights and refuses Karl's offer. The family will move into their new home. ■

Edited from: https://actorstheatre.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/PlayGuide_RaisinInTheSun.pdf

ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT **LORRAINE HANSBERRY**

Lorraine Hansberry is best known for her work, *A Raisin in the Sun*, a play about a struggling black family, which opened on Broadway to great success. Hansberry was the first African American playwright and the youngest American to win a New York Critics' Circle award. Throughout her life, she was deeply involved in the Civil Rights Movement. At the young age of 34, Lorraine Hansberry passed away from pancreatic cancer.

EARLY LIFE

Lorraine Vivian Hansberry was born on May 19, 1930, in Chicago, Illinois. Hansberry's father was a successful real estate broker, and her mother was a schoolteacher. Her parents contributed large sums of money to the NAACP and the Urban League—organizations dedicated to advancing social, economic, and legal equity for African Americans. In 1938, Hansberry's family moved to a white neighborhood where they were violently attacked by their neighbors. They refused to move until a court ordered them to do so. However, their case made it to the Supreme Court as *Hansberry v. Lee*, and the Supreme Court's decision in this case ruled restrictive covenants illegal. Hansberry broke her family's tradition of enrolling in Southern black colleges and instead attended the University of Wisconsin in Madison. While at school, she changed her major from painting to writing, and after two years, decided to drop out and move to New York City.

COMMERCIAL SUCCESS

In New York, Hansberry attended the New School for Social Research and proceeded to work for Paul Robeson's progressive black newspaper, *Freedom*, as a writer and associate editor from 1950 to 1953. She also worked part-time as a waitress and cashier, and wrote in her spare time. By 1956, Hansberry quit her jobs in order to write full time. In 1957, she joined the Daughters of Bilitis—one of the first organizations for lesbian civil and political rights in the US—and contributed letters to their magazine, *The Ladder*, about feminism and homophobia. Because of the nature of these letters, she wrote under her initials, L.H.N., for fear of discrimination. During this time, Hansberry wrote *The Crystal Stair*, a play about a struggling African American family in Chicago, which was later renamed *A Raisin in the Sun*, a title that comes from a line in a Langston Hughes poem. The play opened at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in New York on March 11, 1959, and was a great success—it ran for 530 performances. It was the first play produced on Broadway by an African American woman. The film version of *A Raisin in the Sun* starring Sidney Poitier was completed in 1961, and received an award at the Cannes Film Festival.



Lorraine Hansberry

In 1963, Hansberry became active in the Civil Rights Movement. Along with other influential people, including Harry Belafonte, Lena Horne and James Baldwin, Hansberry met with then attorney general Robert Kennedy to test his position on civil rights. In 1964, her second play, *The Sign of Sidney Brustein's Window*, opened on Broadway to an unenthusiastic reception.

PERSONAL LIFE AND LEGACY

Hansberry met Robert Nemiroff, a Jewish songwriter, on a picket line, and the two were married in 1953. Hansberry and Nemiroff divorced in 1962, though they continued to work together. In 1964, the same year *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window* opened, Hansberry was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She died on January 12, 1965. After her death, Nemiroff adapted a collection of her writings and interviews in *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, which opened off-Broadway at the Cherry Lane Theatre and ran for eight months.

A Raisin in the Sun is considered one of the hallmarks of the American stage and has continued to find new audiences throughout the decades, including Emmy-nominated television productions from both 1989 and 2008. The play has earned accolades from Broadway as well, winning Tony Awards in 2004 and 2014, including Best Revival of a Play. ■

Edited from: www.biography.com/people/lorraine-hansberry

LORRAINE HANSBERRY TIMELINE

May 19, 1930

Lorraine Vivian Hansberry is born in Chicago, Illinois. She is the granddaughter of a freed slave, and the youngest of four children.

1938

Hansberry's family moves to a white neighborhood and is violently attacked by neighbors. They refuse to move until a court orders them to do so. The case surrounding the attacks makes it to the Supreme Court as *Hansberry v. Lee*. Because of this case, the Supreme Court rules that restrictive covenants are illegal.

1950 to 1953

Hansberry attends the New School for Social Research in New York and then works for Paul Robeson's progressive black newspaper, *Freedom*, as a writer and associate editor.

1953

Hansberry meets Robert Nemiroff, a Jewish songwriter, on a picket line, and the two are married.

1956

Hansberry quits her jobs and commits her time to writing.

1957

Hansberry joins the Daughters of Bilitis organization and contributes letters about feminism and homophobia to their magazine, *The Ladder*.

March 11, 1959

Hansberry's play *The Crystal Stair* (changed to *A Raisin in the Sun*) is about a struggling African American family in Chicago, opens at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre in New York and runs for 530 performances. It was the first play produced on Broadway by an African American woman, and Hansberry was the first black playwright and the youngest American to win a New York Critics' Circle award.

1961

The film version of *The Crystal Stair* is made into a film and renamed *A Raisin in the Sun*, starring Sidney Poitier. The film receives an award at the Cannes Film Festival.

1962

Hansberry and Nemiroff divorce, however, they continue to work together.

1963

Hansberry becomes active in the Civil Rights Movement. Along with other influential people, including Harry Belafonte, Lena Horne, and James Baldwin, Hansberry meets with general Robert Kennedy to test his position on civil rights. This same year, Hansberry's second play, *The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window*, opens on Broadway to unenthusiastic reception.

1964

Hansberry is diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

1965

Hansberry dies on January 12.

1969

Nemiroff adapts a collection of Hansberry's writing and interviews in *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*, which opens off-Broadway at the Cherry Lane Theatre and runs for eight months.

Source Material: www.biography.com/people/lorraine-hansberry-9327823



LORRAINE HANSBERRY: A TRAILBLAZER



Lorraine Hansberry was the first African American woman to write a play performed on Broadway. Hansberry's family struggled against the injustices of segregation in their Supreme Court case, *Hansberry v. Lee*, which challenged the restrictions imposed on African Americans to only lease or purchase homes in certain neighborhoods. *Hansberry v. Lee* is now cited in law classes as an example of how civil cases can be tried a second time as long as it is brought to the court by a new plaintiff who was not represented in the first civil action.

Hansberry recalls her family's case: "Twenty-five years ago, [my father] spent a small personal fortune, his considerable talents, and many years of his life fighting, in association with NAACP attorneys, Chicago's 'restrictive covenants' in one of this nation's ugliest ghettos. That fight also required our family to occupy disputed property in a hellishly hostile 'white neighborhood' in which literally howling mobs surrounded our house... My memories of this 'correct' way of fighting white supremacy in America include being spat at, cursed and pummeled in the daily trek to and from school. And I also remember my desperate and

courageous mother, patrolling our household all night with a loaded German Luger [pistol], doggedly guarding her four children, while my father fought the respectable part of the battle in the Washington court."

A Raisin in the Sun, which addresses issues surrounding race and housing in Chicago, premiered on Broadway in 1959. It became a film in 1961, and a musical in 1973. It was revived on Broadway in 2004 and again in 2014. New film versions also came out in 1989 and 2008. *A Raisin in the Sun* also inspired the play *Clybourne Park* by Bruce Norris, which was awarded the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, as well as *Beneatha's Place* by Kwame Kwei-Armah.

This play undeniably influenced the American theatre and its relationship to the Civil Rights Movement. See the timeline on the next page to compare important milestones in the Civil Rights Movement with the development of African American Theatre. ■

Images and Material used with permission from Seattle Repertory Theatre: https://www.seattlerep.org/Plays/1617/RS/DeeperLook/RS_Playguide.pdf



AFRICAN AMERICAN THEATRE TIMELINE

1816 William Henry Brown starts the African Company in New York. This company attracts white patrons and serves as a training ground for some of the first African American Shakespearean actors.

1823 William Henry Brown writes and produces *King Shotaway*, the first play publicly produced by an African American. The play is based on a slave rebellion on the island St. Vincent which, at the time, was under British rule. The production starred James Hewlett and Ira Aldridge.

1848 Blackface minstrel shows become popular, translating formal art such as opera into more popular terms for a general audience. Minstrel shows portray African Americans as dim-witted, lazy, buffoonish, superstitious, happy-go-lucky, and musical.

1916 *Rachel*, by Angelina Weld Grimke, is considered the first successful African American play for its protest of *The Birth of a Nation*—a film famous for its technical achievement and infamous for its overtly racist message.

1921 *Shuffle Along* is the first musical written, produced, and performed by African American theatre artists on Broadway.

1935 Langston Hughes' play, *Mulatto*, debuts on Broadway. It is the first African American musical on Broadway to be a commercial success.

1940 American Negro Theatre (ANT) and Negro Playwrights' Company (NPC) are established as an outgrowth of the Federal Theatre Project (FTP). NPC members include Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, and Edna Thomas.

1944 The Library Theatre, located in Harlem produces *Anna Lucasta* by Philip Yordan with an all-African American cast on Broadway.

1955 *Trouble in Mind* is produced at the Greenwich Mews and wins the Obie Award for best Off-Broadway play, making playwright Alice Childress the first African American woman to be awarded the honor.

1959 Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* debuts on Broadway. Hansberry becomes the first African American woman to have a play on Broadway. The play reveals the struggles associated with black identity and the related roadblocks to achieving the American Dream.

1965 Amiri Baraka (originally LeRoi Jones) establishes the Black Arts Repertory Theatre in Harlem. He inspires artists like playwright Ed Bullins to create a strong "black aesthetic" in American theatre.

1969 The Langston Hughes Performing Arts Institute is founded in Seattle, serving as both a neighborhood youth recreation center and an artistic space for black poets, dancers, and actors to train and perform. Seattle's first black theatre company Black Arts/West is founded.

1983 August Wilson receives the Pulitzer Prize for his play *Fences*. This honor is awarded to him again in 1990 for his play *The Piano Lesson*.

1990 Suzan-Lori Parks wins her first Obie Award for her play *Imperceptible Mutabilities in the Third Kingdom*. Her subsequent awards include the 1996 Pulitzer for *Venus*, the 2002 Pulitzer for *Topdog/Underdog*, and the 2014 Obie for *Father Comes Home from the Wars Parts 1, 2, & 3*.

2006 The Hansberry Project is officially launched in Seattle as an African American theatre lab, led by African American artists and designed to provide the community with consistent access to the arts. ■

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT TIMELINE

1816 The American Colonization Society (ACS) is formed as a “gradual attempt” to end slavery. This group proposed sending free African Americans to Liberia. ACS supporters saw this as the solution to racial tensions in the United States. The ACS sent 12,000 African Americans before its formal dissolution on 1964.

1827 Slavery is abolished in the state of New York.

1849 Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery and becomes one of the most effective and celebrated leaders of the Underground Railroad.

1852 Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* is published. It becomes one of the most influential works to stir anti-slavery sentiments.

1861 The Confederacy is founded when the deep South secedes, and the Civil War begins.

1865 The Civil War ends. Lincoln is assassinated on April 14th. Thirteenth Amendment is created prohibiting slavery in the United States.

1870 The Fifteenth Amendment is enacted, guaranteeing the right to vote will not be denied or abridged because race. At the same time, however, the first “Jim Crow” law is passed in Tennessee mandating the separation of African Americans from whites in most public spaces.

1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* rules that states requiring separation of the races are within the bounds of the Constitution as long as equal accommodations are made for people of color, thus establishing the “separate but equal” doctrine.

1909 The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is founded in New York by W.E. B Du Bois.

1920 The Harlem Renaissance flourishes in the 1920s and 1930s. This literary, artistic, and intellectual movement fosters a new black cultural identity.

1934 The National Housing Act is created, which establishes the Federal Housing Administration—a government agency that insures residential mortgage loans. While informal discrimination and segregation had existed in the United States, these agencies initiate the official practice of “redlining”—the method of denying services to residents of certain areas based on the racial or ethnic makeup of those areas.

1947 Levittown, America’s first planned community specifically for white people, breaks ground.

1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, Kans declares that racial segregation in schools is unconstitutional.

1955 The Montgomery Bus Boycott was a civil-rights protest during which African Americans refused to ride city buses in Montgomery, Alabama, to protest segregated seating. The boycott took place from December 5, 1955, to December 20, 1956, and is regarded as the first large-scale U.S. demonstration against segregation. Four days before the boycott began, Rosa Parks, an African-American woman, was arrested and fined for refusing to yield her bus seat to a white man.

1964 President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act, the most sweeping civil rights legislation since Reconstruction. It prohibits discrimination of all kinds based on race, color, religion, or national origin. Sidney Poitier wins the Best Actor Oscar for his role in *Lilies of the Field*. He is the first African American to win the award. Martin Luther King receives the Nobel Peace Prize.

1965 A pivotal year in the Civil Rights Movement. The march from Selma to Montgomery takes place to protest the suppression of the black vote. The passage of the Voting Rights Act follows, effectively ending literacy tests and a host of other obstacles used to disenfranchise African Americans and other minorities. Malcolm X, a key Civil Rights leader, is assassinated.

1968 Martin Luther King, Jr., is assassinated in Memphis, Tenn on April 4. President Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1968, prohibiting discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of housing.

1976 February is declared Black History Month.

1983 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day is established on January 21, Dr. King’s birthday.

2001 Colin Powell becomes the first African American U.S. Secretary of State.

2008 The United States of America elects its first African American president, Barack Obama.

2012 The Black Lives Matter movement is formed by three African American women (Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi) in response to George Zimmerman’s acquittal for the murder of Trayvon Martin. Today, BLM continues to fight against police brutality towards people of color. ■

Used with Permission from Seattle Repertory Theatre:

https://www.seattlerep.org/Plays/1617/RS/DeeperLook/RS_Playguide.pdf

Additional Materials: Brunner, Borgna. “Timeline: Key Moments in Black History.” Black History & Civil Rights Movement Timeline, www.factmonster.com/timeline-key-moments-black-history.

LORRAINE HANSBERRY: CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVIST

It has been over 50 years since Lorraine Hansberry, a renowned playwright and political activist, died on Jan. 12, 1965. Only 34 at the time of her death, she had led an active life and intervened in many of the significant developments in the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s.

During the late 1940s, Lorraine Hansberry attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison and joined the Young Progressives of America (YPA) and the Labor Youth League (LYL). These organizations were committed to ending the Cold War as well as working for world peace and racial equality.

All three of these organizations—the YPA, LYL and the Jefferson School—had been established by the Communist Party in the US, and had close links to its activities.

While taking a class at the Jefferson School, Hansberry met legendary artist, actor, social scientist, and activist Paul Robeson. During the early 1950s, Hansberry joined the staff of *Freedom* newspaper, another CP-oriented initiative based in Harlem and headed by Robeson. She began work at the paper as a subscription clerk, receptionist, typist and editorial assistant, and was quickly promoted to associate editor.

According to the website of Columbia University's Social Justice Movement, Hansberry was *"regularly in contact with Robeson and DuBois and used the opportunity to expand her understanding of race, politics, and culture. She authored several articles for Freedom. Within its pages she celebrated victories of newly independent nations against their former European colonizers, explored the origins of American political economy, delineated the expression of the American political economy in its maintenance of racially-based ghettos, dealt with cultural structures and institutions that preserved racism, and defended colleagues under ideological attack from the FBI and anti-communist Senator Joe McCarthy."* *Freedom* newspaper, like other progressive and left institutions, came under attack during the Cold War and was eventually forced out of existence. ■

Material used with permission and edited from Seattle Repertory Theatre: https://www.seattlerep.org/Plays/1617/RS/DeeperLook/RS_Playguide.pdf

**"THE COST OF LIBERTY
IS LESS THAN THE
PRICE OF REPRESSION."**

—W.E.B. DU BOIS

Hansberry also developed an interest in African affairs. She later studied African culture and history with W.E.B. DuBois—a civil rights activist and co-founder of the NAACP—at the Jefferson School for Social Sciences in New York. She wrote a paper for the course she took with DuBois on the Belgian Congo, illustrating her burgeoning consciousness related to African affairs and anti-colonialism.

ESCALATION OF ACTIVISM AND MILITANCY



Lorraine Hansberry Speaking at 'Village Rallies for NAACP'

After 1963, Hansberry moved further to the ideological left, joining the Civil Rights Movement. In 1963, she participated in a meeting with U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy and questioned the administration's commitment to racial equality.

At a public meeting in New York on June 15, 1964, she encouraged "the white liberal to stop being a liberal and become an American radical," adding that "some of the first people who have died so far in this struggle have been white men."

Hansberry tragically died of pancreatic cancer in early 1965. Her works during this period, later consolidated into other productions by Robert Nemiroff, her former spouse, included *Les Blancs* (1970) and *To Be Young, Gifted and Black* (1968-69).

Hansberry made a significant contribution to the artistic and political expression of the African-American people in the struggle against national oppression and economic exploitation. Her writings and social activism will inevitably be studied by generations to come. ■

Edited from: <http://www.workers.org/2015/02/28/lorraine-hansberry-political-activist-artist/#.WTJlJmjvIU>

"Bobby Kennedy" taken from: <http://ireland-calling.com/robert-kennedy-quotes/>

Image taken from: <http://lhlt.org/gallery/lorraine-hansberry-speaking-%E2%80%9Cvillage-rallies-naacp%E2%80%9D>

STRUCTURAL RACISM, NEAR AND FAR



Fifteen decades after abolishing slavery, America is still a slave to its racist past. In a country where all are equal, why would we still need movements like Black Lives Matter? The truth is America has not really come to terms with its ugly, racial bigotry and injustices. Whether it's police brutality towards individuals of color, or the sideways glance of a store owner when a black youth enters their business, racism is still an ever-present aspect of society despite the progress that has been made. Whether it's police brutality towards individuals of color, or the sideways glance of a store owner when a black youth enters their business, racism is still an ever-present aspect of society in spite of the progress that has been made. With the prevalence of social media, many incidents of racism are being documented and disseminated on a mass scale—spurring a national dialogue about race. As we navigate this communal conversation, it is important to differentiate between individual and structural racism as well as examine how social structures designed to oppress African Americans persist to present day.

According to the Aspen Institute, **structural racism** is defined as “a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with ‘whiteness’ and disadvantages associated with ‘color’ to endure and adapt over time.” Whereas the direct

utterance of a racial epithet or the outright dismissal of a person of color is easier to identify as an indicator of **individual prejudice**, it is really a manifestation of a subtler system of oppression that was designed to limit the agency of an entire race. A prime example of structural racism is the public education system. Much of the funding for public schools comes from taxes received through property valuation. Property values in predominantly African American neighborhoods are usually low, thereby leaving predominantly African American school districts with less money to buy books, hire teachers, upgrade facilities, and provide resources to students with special needs.

There is perhaps no greater example of structural racism than the Jim Crow South. Jim Crow Laws were statutes enacted during the 1880s by Southern states in response to the abolition of slavery after the Civil War. These laws legalized segregation between blacks and whites. Though enacted in part under the rationale of being a “protectionist” policy wherein African Americans wouldn’t be subjected to the rancor of disaffected whites, the practice not only relegated African Americans to the lower class of society by limiting their economic opportunities, but also perpetuated the notion that they were second-class citizens. African Americans were expected to adhere to a certain social etiquette that showed deference to white supremacy. Legally, African Americans were free, but they were denied the dignity of freedom.

STRUCTURAL RACISM, NEAR AND FAR CONTINUED...

To escape the scourge of the Jim Crow South, millions of African Americans moved north in search of true economic opportunity. This massive movement is known as The Great Migration, and took place from the 1910s-1960s. Instead of being concentrated in the South, the African American population spread throughout the rest of the country. As a result, African Americans were not restricted to work the land or in the kitchens of plantations. They had occupations befitting a nation moving into the "modern age."

Civil Rights changed the attitude of acceptance in the African American community. Emboldened by the fact that many African Americans built ships in Naval shipyards and died in service for America during World War II, the Civil Rights Movement began to take hold during the 1950s. African Americans were no longer willing to be second class citizens as they had made enduring contributions and sacrifices to the war effort.

In the play, Walter Lee's ambition is rooted in the Civil Rights Movement. Others from his generation led the movement, so it's not surprising that he views himself as a man who will no longer be bound by the customs of the Jim Crow South. Young African American adults like Walter were children when their parents decided to move north in search of opportunity during the Great

Migration. They saw the indignity with which their parents were treated in the South. Walter Lee's desperation is understandable when you look at his life through the context that his father and mother lived in the Jim Crow South. He has resolved to no longer be a victim of social systems designed to oppress him, and when he realizes that his eagerness to ascend the social ladder has inhibited his business sense, he is overwhelmed by the fact that all he has left is to be subjected once again to the blight of structural racism.

After WWI, racial exclusions were written into property deeds, and real estate agents and lenders used "**redlining**" to draw racial boundaries. Redlining is the practice of denying services to residents of certain areas based on the racial or ethnic makeup of those areas. After the Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* that desegregated schools, many school districts and communities experienced an exodus of white residents, which instilled a sense of de facto segregation in the communities and made it difficult to integrate schools. Lorraine Hansberry sheds light on how structural racism impacts the African American psyche and limits opportunity for upward social mobility. ■

Used with Permission and edited from Seattle Repertory Theatre:
https://www.seattlerep.org/Plays/1617/RS/DeeperLook/RS_Playguide.pdf

Map taken from: www.wps.ablongman.com/wps/media/objects/2661/2725147/atlas/atl_ah5_m002.html

THE GREAT MIGRATION

The Great Migration, or the relocation of more than 6 million African Americans from the rural South to the cities of the North, Midwest and West from 1916 to 1970, had a huge impact on urban life in the United States. Driven from their homes by unsatisfactory economic opportunities and harsh segregationist laws, many blacks headed north, where they took advantage of the need for industrial workers that first arose during the First World War. As Chicago, New York and other cities saw their black populations expand exponentially, migrants were forced to deal with poor working conditions and competition for living space, as well as widespread racism and prejudice. During the Great Migration, African Americans began to build a new place for themselves in public life, actively confronting economic, political and social challenges and creating a new black urban culture that would exert enormous influence in the decades to come.

GREAT MIGRATION: LIFE FOR MIGRANTS IN THE CITY

By the end of 1919, some 1 million blacks had left the South, usually traveling by train, boat or bus; a smaller number had automobiles or even horse-drawn carts. In the decade between 1910 and 1920, the black population of major Northern cities grew by large percentages, including New York (66 percent) Chicago (148 percent), Philadelphia (500 percent) and Detroit (611 percent). Many new arrivals found jobs in factories, slaughterhouses, and foundries, where working conditions were arduous and sometimes dangerous. Female migrants had a harder time finding work, spurring heated competition for domestic labor positions.

Aside from competition for employment, there was also competition for living space in the increasingly crowded cities. While segregation was not legalized in the North (as it was in the South), racism and prejudice were widespread. After the U.S. Supreme Court declared racially based housing ordinances unconstitutional in 1917, some residential neighborhoods enacted covenants requiring white property owners to agree not to sell to blacks; these would remain legal until the Court struck them down in 1948.

Rising rents in segregated areas, plus a resurgence of KKK activity after 1915, worsened black and white relations across the country. The summer of 1919 began the greatest period of interracial strife in U.S. history, including a disturbing wave of race riots. The most serious took place in Chicago in July 1919; it lasted 13 days and left 38 people dead, 537 injured and 1,000

black families without homes.

IMPACT OF THE GREAT MIGRATION

As a result of housing tensions, many blacks ended up creating their own cities within big cities, fostering the growth of a new urban African-American culture. The most prominent example was Harlem in New York City, a formerly all-white neighborhood that by the 1920s housed some 200,000 African Americans. The black experience during the Great Migration became an important theme in the artistic movement known first as the New Negro Movement and later as the Harlem Renaissance, which would have an enormous impact on the culture of the era. The Great Migration also began a new era of increasing political activism among African Americans, who after being disenfranchised in the South found a new place for themselves in public life in the cities of the North and West.

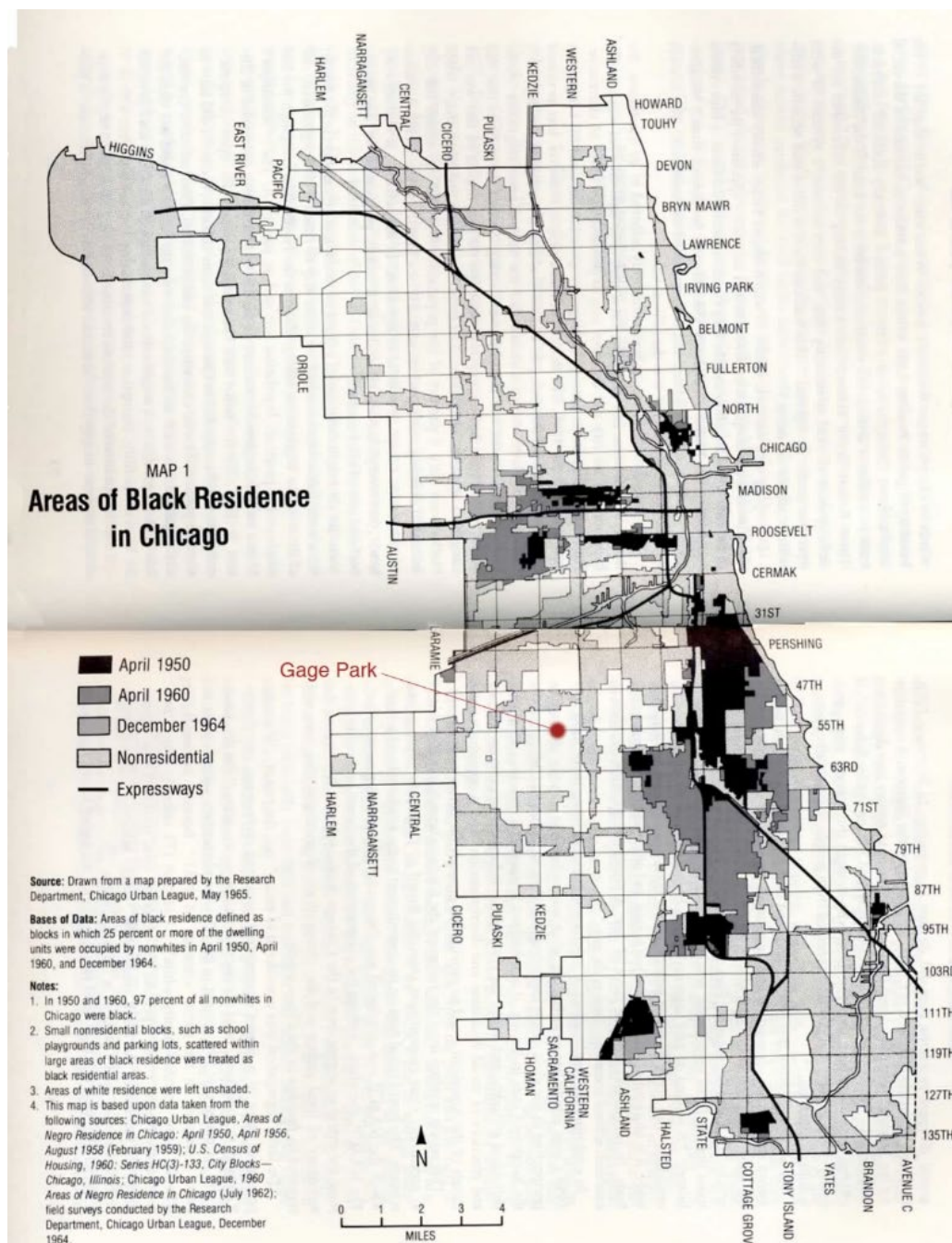
Black migration slowed considerably in the 1930s, when the country sank into the Great Depression, but picked up again with the coming of World War II. By 1970, when the Great Migration ended, its demographic impact was unmistakable: Whereas in 1900, nine out of every 10 black Americans lived in the South, and three out of every four lived on farms, by 1970 the South was home to less than half of the country's African-Americans, with only 25 percent living in the region's rural areas. ■

Source: History.com Staff. "Great Migration." History.com, A&E Television Networks, 2010, www.history.com/topics/black-history/great-migration#section_1.

THE BLACK BELT

During World War II, there was a significant shift in Chicago's demographics. Mobilization for the war effort created an unprecedented amount of industrial jobs which created opportunities for African Americans and women to enter the workforce for the first time. Because Chicago was a hub for industry, and because there was a high demand for industrial workers at this time, Chicago saw a great increase in the number of African American residents living in the city. Approximately 60,000 African Americans moved from the South to Chicago from

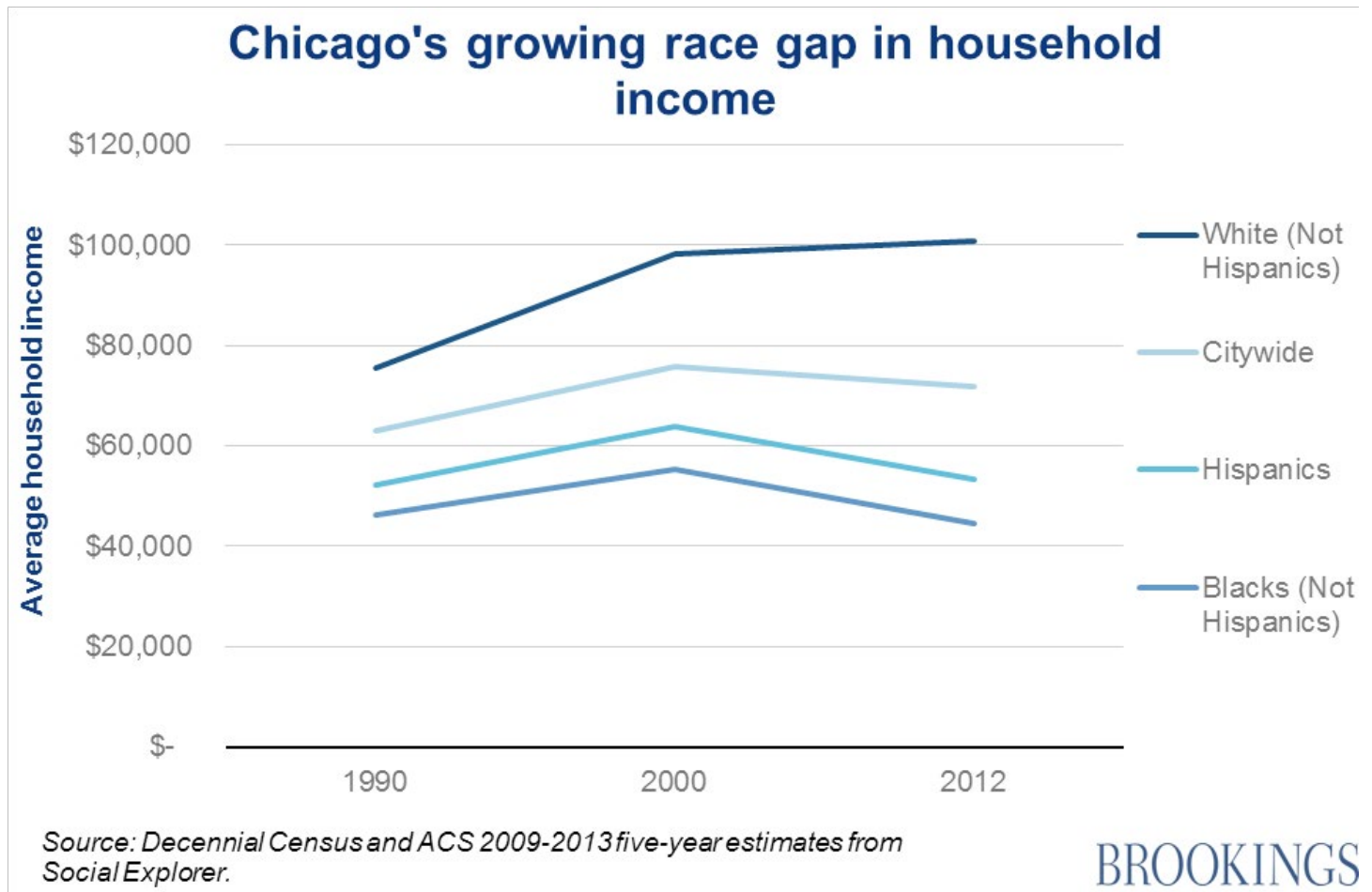
1940–44 in search of jobs. However, in an effort to keep the newly arriving African Americans out of certain neighborhoods, white residents began implementing "restrictive covenants," legally binding contracts that specified that a house's owner could not rent or sell to people of color. These restrictive covenants coupled with racial tensions restricted the areas in which African Americans could live to an area called "The Black Belt." ■



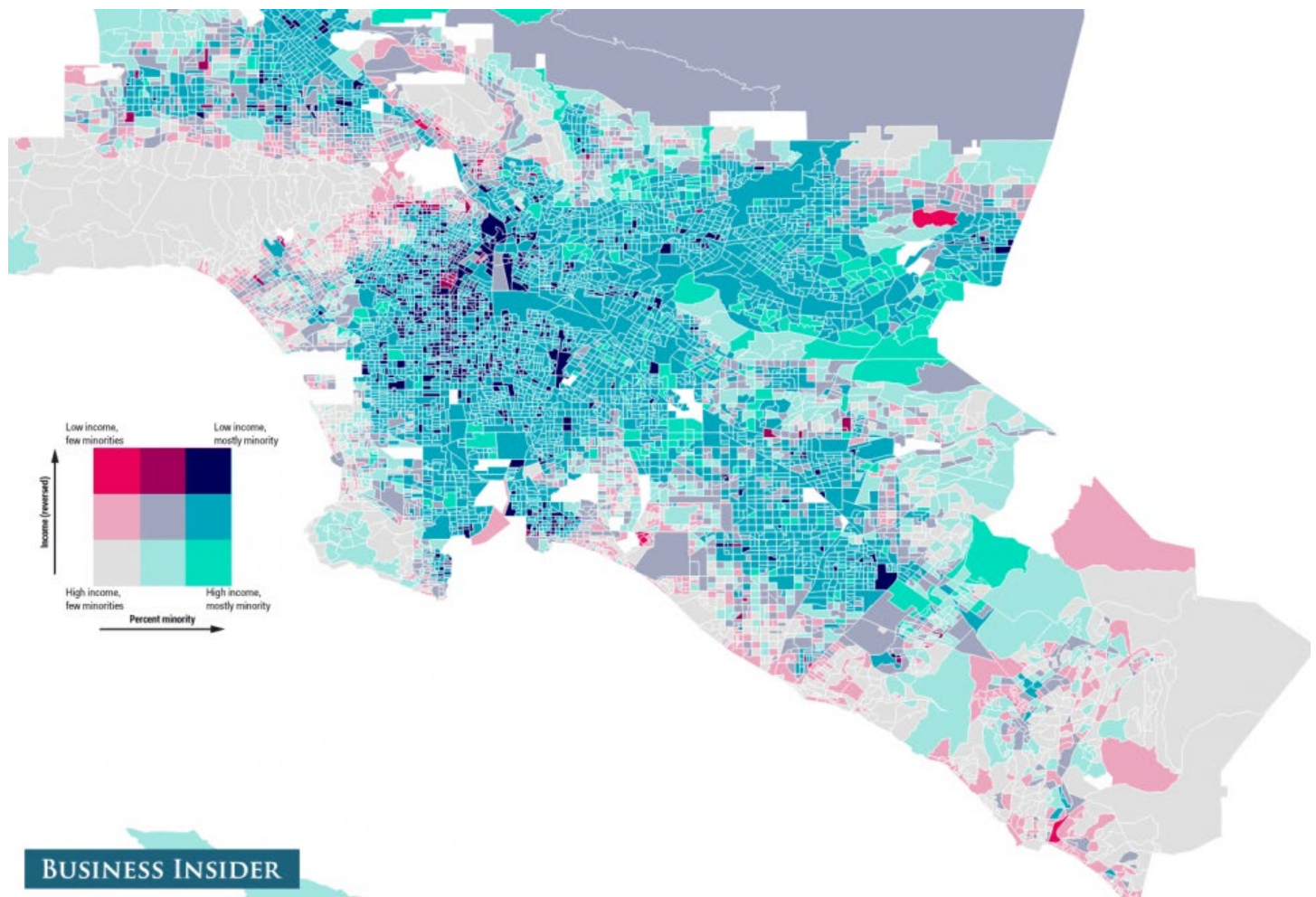
Edited from: <https://www.chipublib.org/housing/>
 "The Black Belt" image taken from:
<http://www.prrac.org/projects/Chicago96/GageParkMap.jpg>

THE PERSISTENCE OF **STRUCTURAL RACISM**

INCOME GAPS IN CHICAGO



THE PERSISTENCE OF **STRUCTURAL RACISM** **INCOME GAPS** IN LOS ANGELES



Graphics taken from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/social-mobility-memos/2015/12/21/the-most-american-city-chicago-race-and-inequality/> and <http://www.businessinsider.com/income-and-racial-inequality-maps-2015-5>

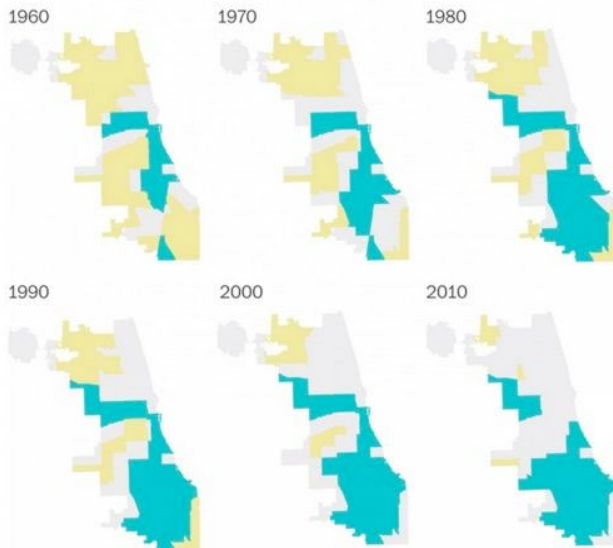
THE PERSISTENCE OF **STRUCTURAL RACISM**

SEGREGATION IN CHICAGO AND LOS ANGELES

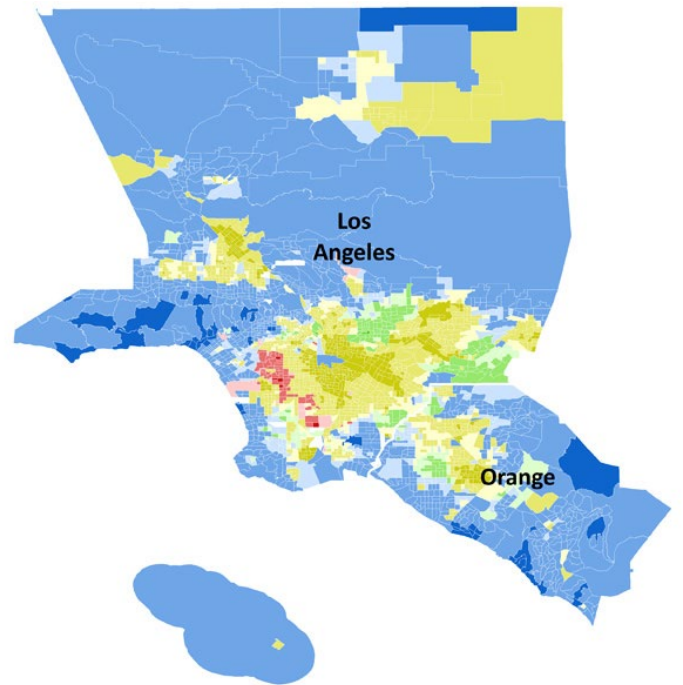
The persistence of segregation in Chicago

All-white neighborhoods in Chicago have largely disappeared, but predominantly black areas have stayed that way for decades.

● Less than 1% black ● More than 50% black



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and Robert J. Sampson, Harvard University
THE WASHINGTON POST



American Indian	Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
50.0% or less	50.0% or less	50.0% or less	50.0% or less	50.0% or less
50.1 to 85.0%	50.1 to 85.0%	50.1 to 85.0%	50.1 to 85.0%	50.1 to 85.0%
85.1% or more	85.1% or more	85.1% or more	85.1% or more	85.1% or more

Map Images taken from: www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/the-obama-administration-just-declared-war-on-segregation-across-the-us-10377845.html and http://www.salon.com/2011/03/29/most_seggregated_cities/slide_show/1

LANGSTON HUGHES



Langston Hughes

Langston Hughes was one of the most important writers and thinkers of the Harlem Renaissance, which was the African American artistic movement in the 1920s that celebrated black life and culture. Hughes's creative genius was influenced by his life in New York City's Harlem, a primarily African American neighborhood. His literary works helped shape American literature and politics.

Both Langston Hughes' "Harlem (A Dream Deferred)" and Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* focus on the

Harlem, Dream Deferred by Langston Hughes

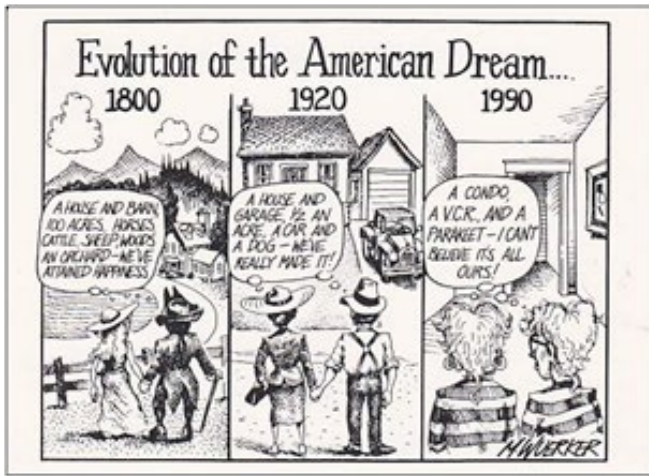
What happens to a dream deferred?
Does it dry up *Like a raisin in the sun?*
Or fester like a sore—And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar
over—like a syrupy sweet?
Maybe it just sags like a heavy load.
Or does it explode?

effect of racism on African Americans. In both cases, the focus of the authors is not merely to document incidents of racism and show its practical effects—although many details of the economic effects of racism surface in both works—but also to analyze the psychological effects of racism on its victims. ■

Image taken from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/peter-dreier/langston-hughes-birthday_b_6592054.html



THEMES

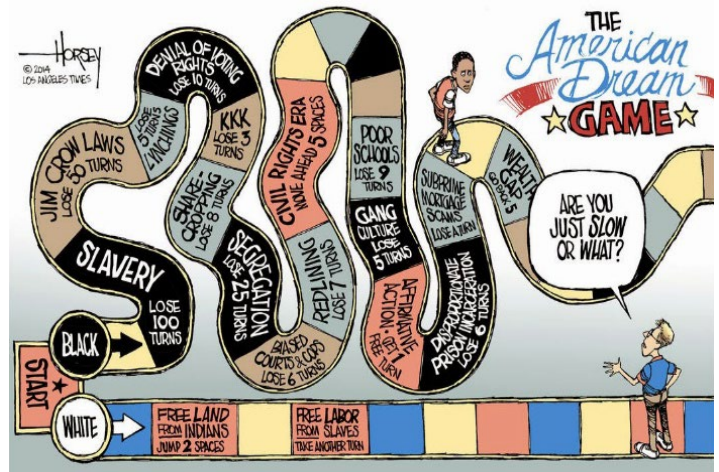


DREAMS

The American Dream began with the onset of the Industrial Revolution, which allowed a common man to dream about a better life for himself and his family. *A Raisin in the Sun* is about such dreams, as the main characters struggle to rise in status and improve their quality of life in pre-Civil Rights America. Hansberry gave the play its title in reference to a poem written by Langston Hughes in which he infamously wrote about dreams that were forgotten or put off. Hughes (and then Hansberry) wonder whether forgotten dreams shrivel up "like a raisin in the sun." Every member of the Younger family has an individual dream. For example, Beneatha dreams of becoming a doctor, and Walter Lee dreams of providing a better life for his family. Unfortunately, the Youngers are decades ahead of their dreams becoming a reality, for segregated America is not yet ready for the American Dream to be a dream for all.

"Dream Board" taken from <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/topoftheticket/la-na-tt-history-hinders-black-americans-20140908-story.html>

"Evolution of the American Dream" taken from: www.playle.com/listing.php?i=SCVIEW96804



Examples of the role dreams play from the text:

"I want so many things that they are driving me kind of crazy."
—Walter

"I got me a dream. His woman say: Eat your eggs. Man say: I got to take hold of this here world, baby! And a women will say: Eat your eggs and go to work. Man say: I got to change my life, I'm choking to death, baby! And his women say, your eggs is getting cold!"
—Walter

"I'm going to be a doctor, and George, for one, still thinks that's pretty funny. I couldn't be bothered with that. I am going to be a doctor and everybody around here better understand that!"
—Beneatha

"God didn't see fit to give the black man nothing but dreams -- but He did give up children to make them dreams seem worthwhile."
—Mama

THEMES CONTINUED...

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

Many external powers in *A Raisin in the Sun* conspire to destroy the dreams of the Younger family. What ultimately keeps their eye on the future and their hearts full of hope is the commitment that they have to the well-being and support of one another. Family love is sometimes harsh, confrontational, direct, and demanding. However, what comes from the love and support of one another creates the backbone and strongest message of the play: stay true to who you are and those you love.

Examples of the role family plays from the text:

"There is always something left to love. And if you ain't learned that, you ain't learned nothing. Have you cried for that boy today? I don't mean for yourself and for the family cause we lost the money. I mean for him: what he been through and what it done to him. Child, when do you think is the time to love somebody the most? When they done good and make things easy for everybody?"
—Mama

"Your wife say she going to destroy your child. And I'm waiting for you to talk like him, and say we a people who give children life, not who destroys them. I'm waiting to see you stand up and look like your daddy and say we done give up one baby to poverty and that we ain't gonna give up nary another one."
—Mama

DIGNITY

The prejudice and discrimination the Younger family faces is a microcosm of how African Americans were treated post-Civil War and pre-Civil Rights. In the face of such turmoil, it is important that a family stands proudly together in defiance of any opposition. The Youngers stand up to their opposition by calling upon inner strength and dignity as they refuse to be bought off. Social change is a slow process, and it is difficult to confront discrimination head-on. However, Mama insists that the family stand as one, knowing their value and worth even when they face prejudice.

Examples of dignity from the text:

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

"Son—I come from five generations of people who was



"Presenting presents to Mama" taken from: <http://www.performingarts.vt.edu/events/view/a-raisin-in-the-sun>

slaves and share croppers—but ain't nobody in my family never let nobody pay em' no money that was a way of telling us we wasn't fit to walk the earth. We ain't never been that poor. We ain't never been that—dead inside."
—Mama

TRUTH VERSUS DECEIT

Who and what to trust in a world filled with discrimination causes one to be wary, weary, defensive, and protective. The members of the Younger family are not strangers to this hostile type of environment: as hard as they work to get ahead of the game, they are constantly surrounded by prejudice, lies, and deceit. Sometimes members of the family must tell lies in order to protect one another from the painful truth. Other times, the lies result in deep betrayal and deceit. It is only when Walter decides that he can no longer live in the face of oppression that he begins to break the cycle and live in the truth. It is in his truth that he discovers how he can lead his family into a better life.

Examples from the text:

"Man, what are you talking about!" -Walter
"I'm talking about the fact that when I got to the train station yesterday morning—eight o'clock like we planned... Man—Willy didn't never show up."
—Bobo

"Oh Walter--Ain't you with nobody!"
—Ruth

"Cause ain't nobody with me! Not even my own mother."
—Walter

THEMES CONTINUED...

RACISM AND SEGREGATION

Just as the Younger family represents one side of the fight for civil rights, the character of Mr. Lindner represents the racist views of white America. When Lena puts a down payment on a house in a primarily white part of town, the area's neighborhood association tries to buy the house back to keep the Youngers out. Karl Lindner visits the Youngers on behalf of the Clybourne Park Improvement Association pretending to seek a compromise between the Youngers and the Association. However, he has no understanding of the fight against racial injustice the Youngers constantly endure. Mr. Lindner confronts the Youngers head-on with a demonstration of racial discrimination in asking the Youngers to not move into their new home. Ultimately, the Youngers stand up to this discrimination with strength and dignity as they refuse to compromise with Mr. Lindner and the Clybourne Park Improvement Association.

Examples of racism and segregationist attitudes from the text:

"Well – it's what you might call a sort of welcoming committee, I guess. I mean they, we – I'm the chairman of the committee – go around and see the new people who move into the neighborhood and sort of give them the lowdown on the way we do things out in Clybourne Park [...] I want you to believe me when I tell you that race prejudice simply doesn't enter into it. 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."

—Karl Lindner ■

Q&A WITH SET DESIGNER

BY STEPHANIE KERLEY SCHWARTZ

What character of *A Raisin in the Sun* do you relate to the most?

I would say Ruth. As a mother of two sons myself, I know how much one wants for their children's lives to be purposeful, fulfilled, and secure. I admire how she keeps going even on her most difficult days and holds the family together. Also, I feel for Walter Lee because he wants so much, however, every day it's extremely hard for him to get any closer to his dream. The whole family is full of aspirations. I'm so confident that Beneatha will achieve her dreams, but I'm much more worried about Ruth and Walter Lee.

Have you ever designed for *A Raisin in the Sun* before?

No, but I'm very excited about it. I did Lorraine Hansberry's *Les Blancs* last season, and I've become such a fan of her work. It's inspirational how she achieved such a great deal at a very young age. It is tragic that the world lost her so young.

What are some inspirations for the set design?

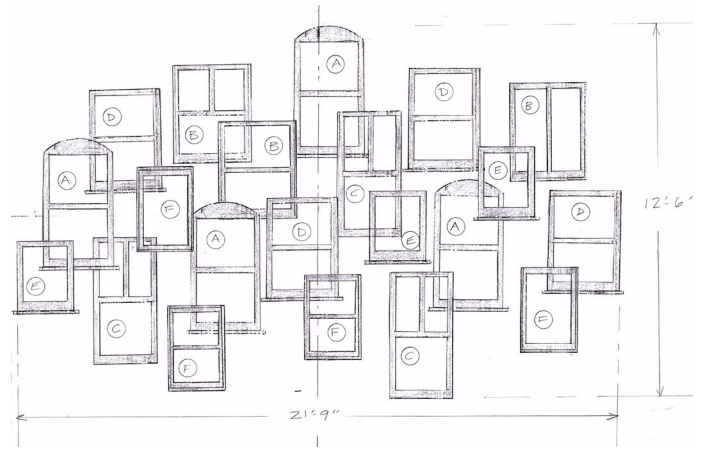
Gregg Daniel and I delved into South Side Chicago at a somewhat generic mid-century time for some details, but we didn't want to do just a straight period box set. We also looked at prisons and urban textures. We rejected photos that were too specific to aim for the feeling of this world instead of literalness.

What do you want the audience to see with the set?

We are hoping the audience will get a sense of how the family feels trapped. We want the audience to see how much they have compromised their dreams in hopes of finding something better. We hope the set will help the audience understand their struggle and the pressure they have had put on them.

What is the challenge with designing a classic play?

One of the challenges with designing a classic play is the audience comes in with expectations, as many will have seen another production of the same play. They think they know what they will be seeing. This story requires certain things- a kitchen with a window, a front door where everything comes in and goes out, and the Youngers sleeping places that have been carved out of living spaces. But we also wanted to lift it out of the



nostalgic "dipped-in-amber" quality by magnifying the hard city surrounding them, and remind them of the housing crisis. Hopefully we stay true to Miss Hansberry's intent and make the audience feel that this is a timeless story. No flowered wallpaper!

Is there anything different with this show compared to other shows?

I try to approach every project with fresh and specific solutions to the physical aspect of storytelling. I do feel there is some heavy freight connected to such a well-known play, and I want the audience at A Noise Within to go on the journey with us as if they don't know how it turns out!

How does that collaboration among designer's work? Is it ever difficult?

Collaboration is the best part of a working life in the theatre.

Have you ever designed a show with ANW before?

No, and I'm excited to work with this wonderful staff! Also, it'll be great to see the audience's response!

How do you know at the end if the design is successful?

I don't necessarily believe that design should be invisible, but I do believe that it should feel inevitable - that every element makes sense (even the surprises). The audience and the actors should feel transported into a world that has a full, deep sense of logic. This is true for somethings as illogical as *Alice in Wonderland*, as it would be for a non-traditional Shakespeare. It just feels right, and hopefully a little magical.

Anything else you would like to share?

I love lighting designers- they make us all look good! ■

DIRECTOR'S THOUGHTS ABOUT *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*

A Raisin in the Sun is arguably one of the greatest staged plays of the 20th century. According to *American Theatre* magazine, *Raisin* was one of the 10 most produced plays of the 2017-2018 theatre season. This is not to suggest the frequency of the play's viewings is proof of its value, rather it poses the question, how does one explain the durability of a play written by a young African American woman in the 1950s, which in the words of one critic, "changed American theatre forever"?

Clearly, there are a myriad of answers why *Raisin* continues to resonate with modern audiences. The work is notable for its insightful and sensitive depiction of an African American family at a time when the impact of "Jim Crow" laws and the "Separate but Equal" doctrine were soon to be repudiated in the United States. Thousands of formerly disenfranchised blacks were hoping to grasp a piece of the American Dream. Our protagonist, Walter Lee Younger, is one of the blacks who dares to dream. Walter struggles to create financial independence for himself and to find a better life for his

family. However, he soon learns that unwritten laws are as powerful if not more so than written ones. Stuck in what he considers a menial job, Walter lashes out at those he remains closest to, his family.

What inspires me about this work is the sheer courage, imagination, and intelligence it took to write it, how the mind of a 29-year-old "Negro" playwright was driven to confront issues of Pan Africanism, feminism, and economic, gender & racial equality in such an eloquent and powerful manner.

It appears that intolerance, bigotry, and racial prejudice has once again found a hideous, contemporary voice in the American consciousness. While much has changed since discriminatory practices were the law of the land, the pull to return to a time of blaming "the other" remains forceful. I believe Hansberry appeals to us to be respectful and supportive of others' dreams, indeed all types of people. After all, ours is a nation founded on the dreams of many. ■

ACTOR INTERVIEW: *A RAISIN IN THE SUN*

Our education team had the chance to sit down with some of the actors from ANW's production of *A Raisin in the Sun*. We asked them questions about the process of creating this play, and they had some amazing answers!

What is your process to get into character?

Bert Emmett (Karl Linder): While it's true that sometimes an actor may merely try to just get the words out, the character will take on a more realistic and integral part of the production if the actor answers these questions. Often, we just try to sound natural or get through the line, so we can rest while the other character is speaking, but there needs to be a reason for everything! Like why you're sitting and when and where and how. This may seem tiny when we have seen so many great performances that involve lofty speeches or heroic moments, but it is in these tiny little details that a character can really come to life, and by consequence allow the play to become something for the audience that begins to happen within them. Specific choices about each move, gesture, or inflection come from understanding, which can only be reached when the actor has the little answers to that big ol' question: why?

Ben Cain (Walter): I read the script as many times as possible. I put the quotes from the play about my character on a board and I like to divide them into certain categories related to the play, so I can see a blueprint of who they are from the mind of the writer. I also like to find music and pictures from the time period of the play. I do this to picture people and things from that time for my own mind. I research the time of the play so that I can fully understand the atmosphere. Finally, I put anything that I believe relates to the play or my character on a wall in my home, so that I can look at it as much as possible.

Toya Turner (Ruth): My process to get in character? I read the script a lot. I normally don't concentrate on memorizing because it ends up happening automatically when you become so familiar with the world. I always pay attention to what the script tells me: what people say about me, what I say about others, what I say about myself, the facts, my dream/fantasy, what am I wanting/fighting for etc. And period pieces are my favorite because I get to listen to the music, and read books and watch documentaries of that time. And sometimes I must get physically prepared whether that's leaning out or putting on some weight especially depending on what type of work my character does. Does my character walk to work, is she sitting in a car all day and then in an office all day? It's so much. I could talk about the process all day.

How is the character you are playing like you? How are you different?

Toya Turner (Ruth): I think Ruth and I are both lovers not fighters. But we have our limits. Ruth and I are different mostly because of the times we live in. Also, I'm a single woman, no children that just packed up and moved from Chicago to California 6 months ago. She has so many people she's responsible for, meaning she can't just pick up and go anywhere.

What do you love or hate about this character?

Saundra McClain (Mama): In her zeal to protect her family, she tends to hold them back.

Ben Cain (Walter): There is nothing I hate about him. I can't hate anything about him. I must embrace it all and process it in a manner that either make me come to terms with it or fix it. As humans, we fluctuate between these two actions everyday depending on what is happening in that moment.

What's the biggest challenge about taking on this role?

Toya Turner (Ruth): The challenge with becoming Ruth will be not telling Walter to go to hell and smacking him upside his head.

How does it feel to take on such a well-known play?

Toya Turner (Ruth): Geez. To take on this play the pressure is on. I worked with Ruby Dee and I have always adored her. And to know I'm playing a role she originated and brilliantly so, I can't even begin to explain how fast my heart is beating. And the play and characters are of course so well written. I'm so excited to finally be in *A Raisin in The Sun*, which has been on my dream list. And for this to be my first show in California, it's a dream come true.

Is *A Raisin in the Sun* still relevant to a modern audience? If yes, why?

Ben Cain (Walter) It sure is. Many people in these modern audiences are still struggling with several of the themes in the play. Death, life, money, family, bigotry, betrayal, dreams, the possibilities and uncertainty of the future, the past's ability to hold you back or give you hope, being unheard, being misunderstood, etc.

ACTOR INTERVIEW: *A RAISIN IN THE SUN* CONTINUED...

The play begins with Langston Hughes' poem, "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?" What does this question mean?

Saundra McClain (Mama): When a race of people has been beaten down with as many road blocks that were designated to hold them back, they tend to lose sight of their goals and go into a survival mode.

What is the American Dream mean to you?

Toya Turner (Ruth): The American dream to me is simple. Everybody created equal. Especially all the people of color, women and lower class who have been oppressed, and put down for so long. People who don't get the same opportunity, the same fighting chance to be their great, brilliant true selves.

What is more important, going after one's dreams, or keeping your feet on the ground? Why?

Toya Turner (Ruth): Oh, come on you know I'm going say going after your dreams is way more important than keeping your feet on the ground. You owe it to yourself to use your wings and fly even if its once, before you force yourself to walk. Chase that dream baby whatever it may be.

This play takes place in south side Chicago, an area that is still embroiled with violence and segregation today. Is change possible?

Ben Cain (Walter): Anything is possible. It will take a great deal of work from all sides. As well as a level of reprogramming that would be historic. But yes, it is possible.

What dream is being differed by the Youngers? What happens to that dream; does it dry up, fester, sag, or explode?

Toya Turner (Ruth): The Youngers' dream is to have something of their own. Some property. And not live on top of each other. To have room to move around and have space. To be able to breathe easier.

What do you do when you're not doing theatre?

Toya Turner (Ruth): When I'm not doing theatre: Professionally - I'm writing my own series which begins shooting Spring 2018 in Chicago and I do voiceovers. Personally - I'm a victim of binge watching TV like I'm getting paid to do it, I love visiting my family (especially my grandmother), dog (Groot) and horse (Gandalf) in Chicago. And I'm really into boxing right now. And it is kicking my butt. ■

GLOSSARY AND COLLOQUIAL TERMS

TERM

DEFINITION IN CONTEXT OF THE PLAY

Indictment

A formal charge or accusation.

Ashanti

The Ashanti (or Asante) people live in central Ghana. During the late 19th century, the Ashanti Kingdom resisted colonial powers, but eventually came under British rule in 1901 as a part of the Gold Coast Colony. This colony achieved independence in 1957.

Bantu

Bantu refers to a group of Niger-Congo languages that are spoken in central and southern Africa.

Benin

A country in West Africa that was the former site of the Dahomey Kingdom. George Murchison mentions Benin in reference to the important works of art that have come from the country.

"the best little combo in the world"

"Combo" here means "band." Walter Lee says this in reference to a band he admires.

Booker T. Washington

Booker T. Washington was one of the most influential African American intellectuals during the late 19th century. He founded the Tuskegee Institute—a school devoted to training teachers. Washington was a strong proponent of vocational training: he believed that the best way for the African American community to enter into the workforce in the period after the Civil War was to learn occupation-specific skills.

Chaka

Chaka (or Shaka Zulu) was a powerful warrior and founder of the Zulu Empire in southern Africa.

Ledger

A book of records. Lena uses this word in reference to the book that she believes is kept in Heaven that lists all the good and all the bad deeds that a person does in life.

Make down bed

A couch that also used as a bed: it is made up with sheets and pillows at night when it needs to function as a bed.

Mrs. Miniver

An Oscar-winning film directed by William Wyler that premiered in 1942. The film tells the story of a middle-class English housewife who represents England's hope and strength during the World War II.

Crackers

This term refers to bigoted whites.

Cap pistol/ cap gun

A children's toy that was popular in the 1950s. The toy resembles a gun, and makes a firecracker-like sound and a puff of smoke when it is "fired."

Peachy Keen

This is a reference to racial differences in slang. When *A Raisin in the Sun* opened in 1959, the expression "peachy keen" and "swell" were common among white teenagers. These two terms meant referred to something "good". In African American communities, "boss," "zany," and "bad" were used to refer to something "good."

Ofay

A slang word with a negative connotation used to refer to a white person.

Prometheus

A figure in Greek mythology. Prometheus was chained to Mount Caucasus where he had his liver torn out by an eagle every day only to have it grow back at night as punishment for having brought fire to humankind.

Scarlett O'Hara

The protagonist of *Gone with the Wind*. In *A Raisin in the Sun*, Travis gives Lena a large hat that resembles a hat that Scarlett O'Hara sports in the film of *Gone with the Wind*.

Thirty pieces and not a coin less

Thirty pieces of silver is an allusion to what was the considered the standard price of a slave as mentioned in the Bible.

"You don't have to ride to work on the back of nobody's streetcar"

This is a reference to the segregation laws that were particularly present and enforced in southern states prior to the Civil Rights Movement. According to these laws, African American patrons had to sit at the back of public buses. ■

Source: "A Raisin in the Sun." Full Glossary for A Raisin in the Sun,
www.cliffsnotes.com/literature/r/a-raisin-in-the-sun/study-help/full-glossary-for-a-raisin-in-the-sun

ESSAY TOPICS & ACTIVITIES

1. Describe the setting of *A Raisin in the Sun* and consider its relevance to the action of the play.
2. How would you characterize the relationship between Mama and her children? Use examples from the text to support your argument.
3. Consider the changes that Walter undergoes as the play progresses. What do those changes indicate about his character?
4. Discuss the title of the play. How does it relate to the dreams of each of the characters?
5. Discuss how minor characters such as George Murchison, Willy Harris, and Mr. Linder represent larger ideas and themes in the play.

Essay Questions included with permission from: California Shakespeare Festival: http://calshakes.org/v4/media/teachers_guides/2014_RITS_TeachersGuide_final.pdf

FAMILY PORTRAIT: This activity will allow students to explore the dynamics of family relationships.

Have students break off into groups of four or five. Each group will then brainstorm a situation that involves an entire family—something with conflict would work best. (For example: a sister is upset at her brother because he stole her cellphone to play a game. The mother wants the kids to stop fighting, and the father would like everyone to get in the car because the family is running late to an event.) Each character in the group should have a specific objective and be performing an action to obtain that objective.

After the students have come up with their scenario and their characters, they should arrange themselves into a tableau that tells the story of their scenario.

Once students are ready, have each group share their tableau with the class.

Discussion:

How did this activity help you understand the complexities of a family dynamic? What was the most challenging part of the activity? Why? Were there any groups with clear stories? What about their portrait made their scenario clear? How do you think this activity related to the play?

DESIGNER'S CHOICE: In this activity, students will discover how design elements help tell the story.

Split your students into groups and have them fill in the role of the designers (costume/set/sound/light) for a production of *A Raisin in the Sun*. Encourage them to use pictures they find online or in magazines/newspapers (as well as their own artwork, if they are so inclined) to represent their vision. Have the groups compile their images into a PowerPoint presentation or poster and have them pitch their ideas to the class. Make sure the students are backing up their choices using examples from the text.

THE AMERICAN DREAM: In this activity, students will develop their own definition of "the American Dream," while engaging with the historical context of the play.

Guiding discussion question:

How does the play *A Raisin in the Sun* mirror the social, educational, political, and economic climate of the 1950s and how does the play illustrate the impact this climate had on African Americans' quest for "the American Dream?"

What is the American Dream?

Lead students in a succession of questions that engages them with this topic. Ask students:

1. When we talk about "the American Dream," what do we mean? What are some of the obstacles to achieving the American Dream?
2. Which groups of people have had trouble attaining this dream?
3. Is the American Dream as valid today as it was in the 50's? If so, which groups still fight for it?
4. Given the obstacles that some Americans must overcome, what makes the "American Dream" appealing?

Have students write out their own definitions of "The American Dream." Allow students to read their definitions aloud and elaborate on them as they see fit.

Ask the students to then write a diary, blog, or journal entry from the point of view of a character in *A Raisin in the Sun*, describing a moment when that character is not seen onstage.

Think about a specific offstage moment referenced in the play. Examples: The moment when Mama is out buying a house in Clybourne Park; when Walter Lee is out planning

ESSAY TOPICS & ACTIVITIES CONTINUED...

to set up a liquor store with Bobo and Willy Harris; when Beneatha is dressing to go out with George to the theater. Consider the following: What is happening when the character is in this offstage situation? What is the character thinking and feeling?

Reflection:

Name one thing you had to imagine about your character that you think is interesting.

Was it easy to imagine beyond the play?

Do you feel the play provided you with enough information? Why or why not?

Edited from: http://www.calshakes.org/v4/media/teachers/guides/2014_RITS_TeachersGuide_final.pdf

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Black History Month – Lorraine Hansberry <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48hCiYODCKs>

Hansberry vs. Lee - <https://blackthen.com/%E2%80%8Bnovember-12-1940-hansberry-v-lee-is-decided/>

The Civil Rights Era - <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aaohhtml/exhibit/aopart9.html#0915>

Interview with Lorraine Hansberry – 1959 - <https://archive.org/details/lorraine-hansberry-talks-with-studs-terkel-1959.GXPHGp.popuparchive.org>

A Raisin in the Sun – The Quest for the American Dream - <https://edsitement.neh.gov/lesson-plan/raisin-sun-quest-american-dream>

TEACHING RESOURCES BOOKS RACIAL PREJUDICE

NONFICTION

Hacker, Andrew. *Two Nations: Black and White, Separate, Hostile, Unequal*. New York: Scribner's, 1982.

West, Cornel. *Race Matters*. New York: Random House, 1994.

FICTION

Carey, Lorene. *Black Ice*. New York: Random House, 1991.

Walter, Mildred. *The Girl on the Outside*. New York: Lothrop, Lee, and Shepard, 1982.

Not Separate, Not Equal. New York: Harper and Row, 1987.

FAMILY STRENGTH

Comer, James P. *Maggie's American Dream*. New York, NAL, 1989.

Haley, Alex. *Roots*. Garden City: Doubleday, 1976. Taylor, Mildred.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry. New York: Puffin Books, 1991.

Let the Circle Be Unbroken. New York: Dial Press, 1981.

DREAMS DEFERRED

NONFICTION

Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*. New York: Random House, 1970.

Gather Together in My Name. New York: Random House, 1974.

Hansberry, Lorraine. *To Be Young, Gifted, and Black: Lorraine Hansberry in Her Own Words*. New York: NAL: Dutton, 1970.

FICTION

Lipsyte, Robert. *The Contender*. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982. DRAMA Branch, William B., editor. *Black Thunder: An Anthology of Contemporary African American Drama*. New York: NAL, 1992.

Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun*. New York: Random House, 1959.

To Be Young, Gifted, and Black (video). PBS Great Performances, 1972.

Miller, Arthur. *The Death of a Salesman*. New York: Viking, 1949.

Williams, Tennessee. *The Glass Menagerie*. New York: NAL, 1990. Wilson, August. *The Piano Lesson*. New York: NAL, 1990.

TEACHING RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET

There is a very large body of work on Lorraine Hansberry and *A Raisin in the Sun* available on the Internet, including many guides to productions of the play around the country in recent years. These guides tend to be grade-level specific, have wonderfully engaging activities listed for a variety of learning styles, and contain complete units on various historical and cultural aspects of study that the play may inspire for your classroom. Here are a few to start you off:

A Teachers' Guide to the Signet and Plume Editions of the Screenplay Lorraine Hansberry's A Raisin in the Sun, by Diane Mitchell, Ph. D
www.us.penguingroup.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/raisinsun.pdf

Play Guide to *A Raisin in the Sun*, presented by Actors Theatre of Louisville: http://actorstheatre.org/wpcontent/uploads/2010/10/PlayGuide_RaisinInTheSun.pdf

InsideOUT, a guide to the 2009 Denver Center Theater's production of *A Raisin in the Sun*: http://www.denvercenter.org/Libraries/Study_Guides/A_Raising_in_the_Sun_Study_Guide.sflb.ashx

Center Theater Group Educator Resources for the Ebony Repertory Theater's 2012 production of *A Raisin in the Sun*: https://www.centertheatregroup.org/uploadedFiles/raisin_DG.pdf

ABOUT THEATRE ARTS: KEY THEATRICAL TERMS

Today, movies and television take audiences away from what was once the number one form of amusement: going to the theatre. But attending a live theatrical performance is still one of the most thrilling and active forms of entertainment.

In a theatre, observers are catapulted into the action, especially at an intimate venue like *A Noise Within*, whose thrust stage reaches out into the audience and whose actors can see, hear, and feel the response of the crowd.

Although playhouses in the past could sometimes be rowdy, participating in the performance by giving respect and attention to the actors is the most appropriate behavior at a theatrical performance today. Shouting out (or even whispering) can be heard throughout the auditorium, as can rustling paper or ringing phones.

After *A Noise Within's* performance of *A Raisin in the Sun*, you will have the opportunity to discuss the play's content and style with the performing artists and directors. You may wish to remind students to observe the performance carefully or to compile questions ahead of time so they are prepared to participate in the discussion.

blocking: The instructions a director gives his actors that tell them how and where to move in relation to each other or to the set in a particular scene.

character: The personality or part portrayed by an actor on stage.

conflict: The opposition of people or forces which causes the play's rising action.

dramatic irony: A dramatic technique used by a writer in which a character is unaware of something the audience knows.

genre: Literally, "kind" or "type." In literary terms, genre refers to the main types of literary form, principally comedy and tragedy. It can also refer to forms that are more specific to a given historical era, such as the revenge tragedy, or to more specific sub-genres of tragedy and comedy such as the comedy of manners, farce or social drama.

motivation: The situation or mood which initiates an action. Actors often look for their "motivation" when they try to dissect how a character thinks or acts.

props: Items carried on stage by an actor to represent objects mentioned in or implied by the script. Sometimes the props are actual, sometimes they are manufactured in the theatre shop.

proscenium stage: There is usually a front curtain on a proscenium stage. The audience views the play from the front through a "frame" called the proscenium arch. In this scenario, all audience members have the same view of the actors.

set: The physical world created on stage in which the action of the play takes place.

setting: The environment in which a play takes place. It may include the historical period as well as the physical space.

stage areas: The stage is divided into areas to help the director to note where action will take place. Upstage is the area furthest from the audience. Downstage is the area closest to the audience. Center stage defines the middle of the playing space. Stage left is the actor's left as he faces the audience. Stage right is the actor's right as he faces the audience.

theme: The overarching message or main idea of a literary or dramatic work. A recurring idea in a play or story.

thrust stage: A stage that juts out into the audience seating area so that patrons are seated on three sides. In this scenario, audience members see the play from varying viewpoints. *A Noise Within* features a thrust stage.

ABOUT A NOISE WITHIN

A NOISE WITHIN produces classic theatre as an essential means to enrich our community by embracing universal human experiences, expanding personal awareness, and challenging individual perspectives. Our company of resident and guest artists performing in rotating repertory immerses student and general audiences in timeless, epic stories in an intimate setting.

Our most successful art asks our community to question beliefs, focus on relationships, and develop self-awareness. Southern California audiences of all ages and backgrounds build community together while engaging with this most visceral and primal of storytelling techniques. ANW's production of classic theatre includes all plays we believe will be part of our cultural legacy. We interpret these stories through the work of a professional resident company—a group of artists whose work is critical to their community—based on the belief that trust among artists and between artists and audience can only be built through an honest and continuing dialogue. Our plays will be performed in rotating repertory, sometimes simultaneously in multiple spaces, and buttressed by meaningful supporting programs to create a symphonic theatrical experience for artists and audience.

In its 25 year history, A Noise Within has garnered over 500 awards and commendations, including the Los Angeles Drama Critics' Circle's revered Polly Warfield Award for Excellence and the coveted Margaret Hartford Award for Sustained Excellence.

More than 40,000 individuals attend productions at a Noise Within annually. In addition, the theatre draws over 15,000 student participants to its arts education program, *Classics Live!* Students benefit from in-classroom workshops, conservatory training, subsidized tickets to matinee and evening performances, post-performance discussions with artists, and free standards-based study guides. ■

STUDY GUIDES

A Noise Within creates study guides in alignment with core reading, listening, speaking, and performing arts standards to help educators prepare their students for their visit to our theatre. Study guides are available at no extra cost to download through our website: www.anoisewithin.org. The information and activities outlined in these guides are designed to work in compliance with the California VAPA standards, The Common Core, and 21st Century Learning Skills.

Study guides include background information on the plays and playwrights, historical context, textual analysis, in-depth discussion of A Noise Within's artistic interpretation of the work, statements from directors and designers, as well as discussion points and suggested classroom activities. Guides from past seasons are also available to download from the website.

CREDITS

Alicia Green	Education Director and Editor
Craig Schwartz	Production Photography
Teresa English	Graphic Design
Sheila Silver	Author
Rachael McNamara	Dramaturg
Michael McClain	Education Associate
Rebecca Wilson	Education Intern



Geoff Elliott & Julia Rodriguez-Elliott
Producing Artistic Directors

ADDRESS 3352 E Foothill Blvd
Pasadena, CA 91107

TEL 626.356.3100

FAX 626.356.3120

EMAIL info@anoisewithin.org

WEB anoisewithin.org