

## **I: Introduction**

The black American playwright Lorraine Hansberry, in her debut play *A Raisin in the Sun*, presents a story about a black family in a Chicago ghetto whose characters are suffering from different types of socio-economic, racial and cultural issues. Though the characters are facing different types of problems, most of them have exhibited variety of dreams. The protagonist, Walter Lee, has his own dream to buy a liquor store and to become successful personality of society. His sister, Beneatha, conceives dream of becoming a doctor. Along with that she also wants to find her own identity beyond the assimilations revitalizing African culture. On the other hand, their mother Lena Younger wants to materialize her dream by purchasing a decent house of her own with a patch of land where she would grow some flowers for her and her grandson Travis would play freely. Walter's wife, Ruth, wants to keep the family tied, who acts as a co-coordinator of the family. Joseph Asagai, a Nigerian student who is from Yoruba tribe, wants to preserve African culture and persuades Beneatha to go to Nigeria beyond the assimilationist culture of Chicago ghetto to restore her own cultural identity there. But none of their dreams reasonably come true. Why does Hansberry show this situation of post-war American black community? It is the issue; this research paper is trying to focus.

America is associated with dream. Different groups of people dreamed for different things in America. The New Englanders wanted to practice Puritanical values in the Promised Land. But they found later that it was already inhabited land. The slaves, who were brought from Africa, hoped for liberty and Native Americans hoped for equal rights allowed to that of whites. But all groups' aspirations high above the nation could not be tackled. That is why the avant-garde writers of 1950s sought to make a stark statement that America is the nightmare of mistakes. American

citizens still believe in their dream and hope that one day their hopes will be fulfilled. Even Martin Luther King Jr., a black leader, hoped that one day American Dream would come to bear fruits.

The protagonist Walter Lee is obsessed with his dream to buy a liquor store and to become a successful personality but at last he “learns painfully, that being a man is not the same thing as being a success” (Weales 430). Walter is disillusioned by American Dream. Hansberry insists to say that all Americans bear a share of the guilt for the failure of the American Dream. Victory lies not in denying the dream but in playing with it and manipulating it for one’s purpose. The hero does not know how to play with it when he is devoted to make it a success.

Most of the critics join the play with the often quoted and emotionally charged poem of Langston Hughes, “Harlem (A Dream Deferred)” where the latter writer presents the ethos of being a black in America and the overwhelming need for clearly articulated black identity first in the terms of protest, which in most part was a contemporary reality, and second a revolution which the blacks were intending from their cultural capital, Harlem ghetto, New York. In this poem, the poet warns the possible social explosion, if black people are remained under domination of so called superior culture. He has presented possible results if a dream is deferred. In this drama *A Raisin in the Sun*, we find most of the dreams deferred and sudden outburst as reactions but no sign of social explosion but all characters want to forget their failed dream and want to start new life. There is note of hope though they suffered badly from social and racial discrimination.

During the post-war period, black people became conscious towards individuality rather than group identity. Before, freedom was life but now money has been life for them. After freedom, they lost their group identity and group strength.

They forgot that group strength and back force are needed to achieve success or say to materialize dreams. So, disintegration of group identity among black people and within black family caused the failure of their dreams.

### **Hansberry and Her Time**

Lorraine Vivian Hansberry is an American writer and activist for equal rights for African Americans, who are best known for her play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959). Her parents were prominent in national black cultural and political circles, and as a result, she met scores of influential African Americans all through her childhood. She shaped her consciousness along the lines her contemporaries were struggling with, and thus, emerged as a voice she could be discerned in her writings: racial and sexual politics, and the need of the articulation of the black female identity. In 1938, Hansberry's family challenged Chicago's segregation laws by moving to all-white neighborhood, which is reflected in her play.

Hansberry was the youngest of four children. Her parents were Carl Augustus Hansberry, a prominent real estate broker, and Nannie Perry, a schoolteacher who later devoted her life to activism. In 1940, Hansberry's father won a victory in the United States Supreme Court case *Hansberry Vs. Lee*, resulting in the repeal restricted covenants (laws that prevented blacks from buying property in white areas). However, the enforcement did not follow the change in the law, and Hansberry's disappointed father left the United States and emigrated to Mexico, where he later died.

Frustrated by her education at the University of Wisconsin, Hansberry stayed only for two years- long enough, however, to take courses in drama and stage design and to fall under the spell of Irish dramatist Sean O'Casey's play *Juno and the Peacock*: "The melody was one I had known for a very long while . . . I did not think then of writing the melody as I knew it in a different key; but I believe it entered my

consciousness and stayed there”(5). Hansberry wrote in her posthumous collection *To Be Young, Gifted And Black* (1969). After briefly studying painting, she went to Harlem in New York City to work as a reporter and then as an associate editor at *Freedom*, a monthly headed by singer and civil rights activist Paul Robeson, in 1953 she married Robert Nemiroff. Although they divorced in 1964, he was her literary executor after she died.

*A Raisin in the Sun* tells the story of a black Chicago family’s attempt to find sense in their constrained existence. Hansberry set this most famous play, in familiar territory the terrible living conditions produced for blacks by restricted covenants. It opened at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre on Broadway on March 11, 1959. Directed by Lloyd Richards and starring Sidney Poitier and Ruby Dee, it ran for 583 performances. *A Raisin in the Sun* was the first Broadway play directed by a black person in 50 years, and it was the first written by a black woman. Hansberry was the first black woman to receive the New York Drama Critics Circle Award (beating out Tennessee Williams, Eugene O’Neill and Archibald McLeish), and she was also the youngest recipient ever. When the play became a motion picture in 1961, the film received a nomination for best screenplay of the year from the screen writers Guild, and it received a special award at the Cannes Film Festival. The musical based on the play, *Raisin* (1973), won a Tony Award. The play is widely anthologized, and often revived.

A second Broadway play, *The Sign in Brustein’s Window* (1964), received mixed criticisms, but private donations kept it running until the night Hansberry died of cancer at the age of thirty-six in 1965. This play is concerned with the moral problems of a Jewish intellectual in Greenwich Village. In discussing the play, Hansberry wrote: “The silhouette of the Western intellectual poised in hesitation

before the flames of involvement was an accurate symbolism of my closest friends.” Posthumous productions orchestrated by Nemiroff include *To Be Young Gifted and Black* (1969), and *Les Blancs* (1970). Other published work includes *The Movement: Documentary of a Struggle for Equality* (1964), a collection of photographs with text by Hansberry, and articles in the *Village Voice*, *Freedom way*, the *National Guardian*, and the *Black Scholar*. In addition to the protests that her work embodied, she was a committed activist for black and gay rights, involved in the student Non-violent Co-ordination committee (SNCC), and a critic of the House Un-American Activities committee.

*A Raisin in the Sun* is about a poor black family struggling to escape the hardships of a Chicago ghetto. Hansberry creates the story of the Youngers, a struggling African American family whose members deal with poverty, racism, and painful conflict among themselves as they reach for a better life. The Youngers are one of the most unforgettable families in United States Literature. Hansberry balances grim drama, comic moments, and redemptive love as the play unfolds. When Lena younger, the mother, receives an inheritance of \$10,000, the family has to decide how to spend it. Lena wants to buy a house in a safe neighborhood, but her hoity-toity son Walter wants to invest the money in a liquor store. Tragically, they lost the money but the play ends on a hopeful note when the family stands together against racial and economic adversity.

Hansberry told her husband that she wanted to write a social drama about blacks, which was good art. Instead of stereotyped characters that would bear no resemblance to actual people, she invented a situation that was sometimes painfully realistic. The plot revolves around what her characters do who are given opportunity to escape their cramped surroundings.

Hansberry stood a somewhat inexperienced but there was a memorably talented cast and crew (including Sidney Poitier, Claudia McNeil, Ruby Dee and director Lloyd Richards). Still, bringing the play to the stage was a struggle. Because the cast was black, funding the play was considered risky, and it took more than a year for first-time producer, Rose together the money required for production.

Hansberry may not have expected quite so much adulation, but she was aware of the play's significance, especially to Broadway's overwhelmingly white audiences. Not only the play give standard Broadway patrons a glimpse into lives that had previously been hidden by tenement walls, it also brought a whole new audience to the theatre. Richards says that *Raisin* was the first play that black audiences were drawn to a Black people had not been attending the theatre that much previously, he tells Corley, "and here was a play that was about them" (1). The play that "changed American theatre forever," ran for nearly two years on Broadway and has seen multiple incarnations (Weales 430).

### **Critics on *A Raisin in the Sun***

Hansberry's best play, *A Raisin in the Sun* has elicited numerous criticisms from a number of perspectives. It draws on as many criticisms as any other great work of literature. Questions have often been asked by the people why this work soared in receiving the attention of the reviewers, critics and amateur readers as well. On the one hand, it was the debut not only Hansberry's but a black woman's into the Broadway. And on the other, it is evidently clear that the context Black Rights Movement of 1960s played crucial role for this warm reception of the play.

The play includes five scenes divided into three acts making its central focus on a black family, the Youngers, and its members. Most of the critics concentrate on the condition of the characters in their respective situations, especially the condition

that of Beneatha; Ruth, Walter, and Mama who are the central characters in the play. They have also explored the use of style whether it suits the aim of the writer and the theme of the book or not. Most of the critics and the criticisms, as we will see in the coming paragraphs of this research paper, have considerably described the dexterity of the writer in presenting the incentives, and also they have praised her motive to expose cultural environment created out of the fusion of the African and American. The central interest of the play lies in its treatment of the racial tensions apparent in-between African Americans and European American.

Most of the critics join the play with the often quoted and emotionally charged poem of Langston Hughes, "Harlem (A Dream Deferred)", where the latter writer presents the ethos of being a black in America and the overwhelming need for clearly articulated black identity first in the terms of protest, which in most part was a contemporary reality, and second a revolution which the blacks were intending from their cultural capital, Harlem ghetto, New York. The poem needs to be quoted to see a variety of responses the play got to obviate her work along the black protest and then to a revolution it aimed at:

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 curst and sugar over-

Like a syrupy sweet?

May be it just sags

Like a heavy load.

Or does it explode? (1267)

*A Raisin in the Sun*, thus named after a line from a Langston Hughes poem, relates the story of the Youngers, a Southside Chicago family trying to survive in cramped quarters in order to show what the “raisin(s) in the sun” are doing. When Mama, one of the raisins gets a \$10,000 check from her husband’s life insurance, they consider moving to a larger house in a white suburb. The play relates the story of Youngers with the themes like dreams and realities, individual and society, black and white conflicts, female-centred authorial attitudes etc. After it got the New York Drama Critics Circle Award in 1959 with the remark that it was the “best American play of the year, “many criticisms appeared to elucidate the secret of its success (Jacobus, 1106). Most of the views cater on its radical feminist stance secured by Beneatha and other female characters. All the views on the play can be grouped into three major theoretical outlooks: postcolonial, cultural and feminist studies. Apart from these three, some of the critics have seen the play from Jungian Psychology but which is less compatible to the other popular comments and criticisms given below.

Lee A. Jacobus explains about the title of the play which exposes the result of the failure of dream, “The title of her play is from a poem by Langston Hughes, one of the poets of the Harlem Renaissance. It warns of the social explosions that might occur if society permits black to remain unequal and unfree”(1107). Many black



families are living in United States ever since their forefathers were brought there and now they have become citizens of that country but they are deprived of many facilities provided by the state because of their color and race. If this situation is prolonged, there is probability of social explosions.

On the other hand Jacobus explains theme of the play and how it has been treated through out the play:

This play illustrates the American dream as it is felt not just by blacks but by all Americans: If you work hard and save your money, if you hold to the proper values and hope, then you can one day buy your own home and have the kind of privacy that permit people to live with dignity. Yet this very theme has plagued the play from the beginning: its apparent emphasis on middle-class, bourgeois values. (1107)

After independence, black people started to enjoy their freedom which led them to conceive the dream of social and financial success as conceived by many white people. Specially, the middle class people were severely haunted by this dream.

The protagonist Walter Lee is obsessed with his dream to buy a liquor store and to become a successful personality but at last he learns about the failure of his dream as Gerald Weales states: “A play about a black family in a Chicago ghetto, *Raisin* has a protagonist who learns, painfully, that being a man is not the same thing as being a success (430).” After undergoing different kinds of experiences he ultimately shows his black manhood.

Some critics explain causes behind the failure of American Dream among Afro-American community and most of them state the racial discrimination and the lack of unity among black people as the dominant factors. As Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay state:

While the forces that collaborated to create *A Raisin in the Sun* are multiple, Hansberry could not have chosen a more propitious moment to dramatize the role of racial discrimination in deferring the dreams of a black family for decent housing. (1726)

During the post-war period, black people became conscious towards individuality rather than group identity. Before, freedom was life but now money has been life for them. After freedom, they lost their group identity and group strength. They forgot that group strength is needed for success. So, disintegration of group identity among black people caused the failure of their dream. As Jacobus elaborates Hansberry's presentation about disintegration among black people:

Hansberry also admits of the social distinction between blacks. George Murchison is a young man from a wealthy black family and when Beneatha tells Lena that she will not marry George, she says 'The only people in the world who are more snobbish than rich white people are rich colored people.' (1108)

This shows that black people themselves lack unity and there is antagonistic attitude between rich and poor colored people. Rich colored people don't want to be associated with poor colored people because the rich people think themselves to be superior than the poor. This situation has created a deep crevice between the unity of rich and poor colored people.

The first group under postcolonial studies sees Beneatha's quest for Africa as her refusal of the white American culture, and as a learned black her decolorizing effort to cleanse herself from colonial hangover. Nathan A. Scott reviews it as black people's effort to escape ghetto areas:

Hansberry's account of the struggle of the Negro family (the Youngers) to escape the daunting dreariness of the black ghetto on Chicago's South side was not, of course, without its detractors (many of them black) and Cruse's verdict represented one line of argument frequently voiced, that, against the background of the story indifference with which the politicians of the New York theater had for so long faced the Negro playwright, her 'play provided the perfect' model they were seeking. (331)

Just like Scott's reading, Kajet Dacres interprets the shallow nature of the characters and the related theme of the book as "the strength" of the black family with their "values and ability to stick together" (810). The initiation to this end is heralded by the female characters which Dacres defines as a "Unity" in their family. Scott and Dacres both see and understand the play as the outcome of the writer's anti-racial, anti-colonial and anti-imperial stance. Scott Little earlier introduces the play as: "It was however a play by a young Negro writer out of Chicago, Lorraine Hansberry that captivated the public imagination at the end of the fifties as the work of no previous black playwright had quite managed to do" (331). So he finds the play one of the famous and in relation to black writers a groundbreaking success.

Secondly, some cultural readings have been most convincing that the play deals with the horizon of black experiences. It, thus, subverts the traditional hierarchies related to 'high literature', 'high art' and many other aspects of human culture. Still, Jacobus notices the play as the illustration of the black culture and dreams that occupy the horizon of the black minds living in America:

Hansberry's play shows her deepening concern for an understanding of some of the key issues of racial and sexual politics that interested her

throughout her career...[her] themes of blacks pressing forward with legitimate demands and expressing interests in their African heritage were to become primary themes of black culture in the 1960s, 1970s and indeed, to this day. (1106-1107)

Hansberry wants to invite a question to set up an independent African American cultural tradition. From this point of view, many critics view the play that it tries to establish an independent identity of African American world by redefining and recreating their national history, restoring and reinventing their myths and cultural roots. This cultural stance of the writer is readily agreed to be the need of black people's quest for an independent identity and independence.

Still more interesting criticism is made by Gerald Weales. This contemporary influential critic has raised two important issues. The first is related to the tradition it belongs to. Most of the people were talking about the American drama that finds itself divided into decades, each bearing its own identification mark: the psychological 1920's and the political 1930's. But such division is blurred with the arrival of *Raisin*. In Weales' words, this orientation is incomplete:

Such tags are not inaccurate, simple incomplete. Plays do have a family look about them but faced with perennial devices, recurrent ideas, a play may resemble its ancestors or its descendants as much as it does its siblings. Take Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* as an example. It was usual in 1959 to have on Broadway, a play about a black family written by a black playwright. If the Hansberry play is new and surprising on that score, it is very much of its time in its questioning of the favourite American myth, that success is not only possible but inevitable. (397)

Weales is right enough to point out the fact that the American Dream conceived by blacks is not different from that of other Americans which the writer painstakingly portrays in the book. Thus for Weales the following point becomes the second major issue often left aside by the other critics. The Twentieth century literature chiefly twentieth century American literature exposes the archetype of home which was very necessary for American whether one is black or white or what not? This theme of universal appeal that belongs in one way or other to all other major writers of the century needs to be outlined differently so that in the collectively intended matter of social and cultural fact, the ethos of representing the reality in drama which Aristotle long ago had defined appears true. In other words, Hansberry caught the theme common to those of whites and other Americans and brought it with a family of black in the Southern Chicago. Her success lies in bringing common theme of home, need for a home and privacy which was lacking among blacks, and which was ultimately the major setback in black history. This reality as Hansberry exposed and Weales explains is often linked with the suppression of the blacks for they lacked their home and privacy. In attaining this goal, how the society, the racial attitudes and gender issues are playing the roles are therefore forming the crux of the play which is exemplified when the dunce son (Walter) wants to buy a liquor store by spending the insurance money of his father who is already dead before the play starts. This second issue raised by Weales has a very important connection to the black writers and theatre of twentieth century. So he introduces the play as:

A play about a black family in Chicago ghetto, *Raisin* has a protagonist who learns painfully, that being a man is not the same thing as being a success. The play shares themes and its realistic style with much of the rest of the American repertory. Hansberry has deeply concerned with

what it means to be black, particularly to be a black writer, as so many of her letters and speeches attest those in *To be Young, Gifted and Black* (1969), the play-portrait of the dramatist compiled after her death by her black writer did not mean for Hansberry was a limiting of her subject matter. (430).

The point of Weales is obvious: Hansberry though a black brought on the Broadway world an issue often hammered by most of the Whites, for the latter this was “their” subject to write and not for blacks because the blacks do not seem to bother about the home, privacy and security.

The criticisms do not end here. The third mode which this section already states in its beginning calls forth the issues related to being a female of the writer herself. This type or the mode of criticisms has basically two grounds: one is that the writer is a female, and the second is that she has presented her female characters more vivacious, veracious and vibrant in comparison to male ones. Therefore, some critics pave the way to come to the print that she attempts to deal with a black female’s down-to –earth reality. One of the famous 20<sup>th</sup> century critics, Shirley chew, in her essay “Black Literature in English,” views the play and says that it foregrounds the idea of multiplicity of American dreams on various levels in order to resist “the imperialist, racist and sexual view of history according to which the whites ‘define’ blacks” (1184). Similarly Timothy Brennan considers the play, as the product of her black nationalism for all its patches of straight history, meticulously accompanied by “direct illusions to practical policies in the story line” (1). Similarly, the character of Ruth being contrasted with her husband and the character of Beneatha being focused etc. are some of the issues tending towards this mode of criticism. Assaying the

popularity of the play, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Nellie Y. McKay compare this play with some of the modern plays of the twentieth century America:

Since its first appearance, the popularity of *A Raisin in the Sun* with American audience has never been waned, and its impact on modern drama has been consistently noted. The play has been hailed a classic and often placed in that small inner circle of American dramas that include Arthur Miller's *Death of Salesman*, Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*, and Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's Journey into Night*. (1725)

Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* provides an in-depth view of a family struggling to achieve their dreams. It shows how a person's dreams can oftentimes be the only glue that holds a family together. The Younger family lives in a world of poverty in post World War II Chicago. Their cockroach infested home and inability to provide basic funds for the child's education really pull us into their world it seems as if every time the family grows close to escaping their situation, unfortunate events cause their dream to be "deferred" as the opening poem of the novel suggests.

At last, it is clear that none of the critics declares the articulation of the need for black people's group identity and history where they can permanently feel their freedom, independence, equality and security. Most of the critics accept that the determining factors behind the failure of American dream conceived by the black people are racial discrimination, disintegration among black community and over obsession towards success. In order to show Hansberry's efforts to display the failure of American dream, conceived by most of the characters of the play, the emphasis will be given to the cultural contexts.

## **II: Introduction**

### **Puritanism in American Dream**

American literary history is intricately related to American Dream. American Dream is a concept which is based on the Puritans' hopes to find a land where there would be no shattering of desires and hopes. In this scene American Dream began to influence the founders of America even before the first settlement of Europeans came to Virginia, America. The reflection of this American Dream in American literature cannot be understood unless the process of settlement made by the British Puritans in New Found Land is highlighted. After the successful arrival of none fleet of vessels launched from England to Virginia, around AD 1608, Puritans thought that America was a virgin land preserved by God for them. They knitted dreams for their future in New Found Land, and shaped their goals as per to the nature of their needs. The Puritans in England could find no peace of mind and soul even during the Renaissance period because of digressed conflicts within the branches of Christian religion.

America was not an uninhabited land when the Britishers came to the Virginia coast. The Red Indians (Native Americans) of America did not resist the immigration of Europeans to the New Found Land. For them these new people were no threat because the Native Americans believed in Brotherhood. Living in peace and harmony with each other was their actual motto. All immigrants entered America in pursuit of new life, new history and with new dimension of thought. Red Indians and other Native Americans thought that the immigrants would be their brothers and sisters and hoped that they would establish a mutual cooperative relation with the newcomers. But trouble began in Paradise when the new settlers forcefully started to take the land that the Native Americans held as being most sacred to their cultural and religious



norms and values. The first seed of nightmare was sown within the concept of the American Dream without the founders even being aware of it.

Mythical America had long been searched by Europeans in the writings of Medieval to Renaissance period. As hope created necessity, America existed in British-writings long before the actual America was discovered. Navigation power of England helped to shape the Englanders hope into actual reality, where Puritans could begin a new life. The newcomers had thought that settlement and husbandry would be easy to cultivate in the New Found Land. They also had a plan to exercise the Puritan values freely, when they decided to migrate from Britain to America.

There was not just only one group which came to America because a flow of newcomers had begun by the first decade of the seventeenth century. Among these settlers and immigrants there were some who really believed in the new beginning of history and religion- a fresh enterprise toward achievement and success. They were the Puritans who were determined to maintain the purity of Protestant values and virtues.

Richard Ruland states, “The pilgrim fathers who, though hunting for Virginia made Land fall at Cape cod in 1620 to settle Plymouth plantation were following the concept of new beginning, but with an urgent sense of independence” (8). According to this statement the newcomers arrived to that new land to set themselves free from European chaos. As they came there, America became a land for search and experiment of new relations, which could prove it as a New World in itself. In order to change the land into the land of honey, blessed by God, Puritans believed that through hard-work one could achieve the desired fruit. The Puritan imagination was the central focus in their initiation of journey into the dreamland in search of glorious future. In this sense America became third dreamland.

As Puritans believed that they were the inheritor of civilization and messengers of God, and hence the chosen ones to begin a new civilization in paradise. Because of this high spirit of theirs, the thirteen American Colonies occupied by Puritans declared their independence. This became the “first New Nation” (Ruland 9). Slowly the new nation tried to produce things and also writings, which were free from British-influence. The Puritans had difficulty to spread their ideas in England, their own birthright nation but found New Found Land as being very susceptible to their preaching. However, the dream to create a perfect community in the “Promised Land” was not that easy. For Newfound land was beautiful but wild. To create a world of Puritanism, they realized they had to adjust with a new economy, a new community of immigrants from various walks of life and also maintain a good relationship with Native Americans. The ideal vision created about America was based on the idea of Utopian commonwealth where everything exists in perfect harmony. This concept of Utopian hope of newcomers’ as well as that of Native Americans’ is known as American Dream.

Nevertheless in spite of difficulties, Puritans and other immigrants devoted themselves to establish a new order of society, which was based in a cordial relationship between the new settlers and the native Red Indians. The writings also began to take place then after this time. However, whatever was written, produced or aimed at in scientific observations during this period of early settlement in America, was shaped by American Puritan values in Britain was difficult, they understood that Puritan ideals could be practiced through literature, which would create not much problem.

Despite the efforts, which were made by the New Englanders in America to achieve success reality in that new place was not as easy as it was supposed to be.

Gradually, the Puritan new settlers saw that America was not a paradise and it proved to be a place for many trials and difficulties. The hostility between the Puritans and the Native Americans widened further because of the suppression that was imposed upon Indian Americans. Other immigrants from various other groups of people falsified the concept of the American Dream and also tried to impose their own traditions. African blacks were carried as slaves in the New Found Land. This too later turned against the Puritans' ideals and hopes, hence changing the whole landscape into being one of nightmare rather than that of wishes being fulfilled. African slaves were traded like goods. American whites promoted the slave trading business. Because many ethnic groups were transforming themselves into being Americans in the New Found Land, the white men became hostile to these ethnic groups.

At the same time the New Englander began to deprive the Native Americans from opportunities. The high spirits of the Red Indians were shadowed because they were forced to live under white father's control. They were also sent to less fertile land. The gap between blacks and whites became vaster and the blacks were tortured more and more. The voice of American businessman could amplify the sound of call for advancement but it could not call for a sound of justice, equality and impartiality. The puritans could not prove their superiority without suppressing the Native Americans. The dream began to fade because puritans began to be more materialistic and hostile. From then on the concept of American Dream emerged as having little fruits.

### **What is American Dream?**

What is American Dream? Is it a cryptogram for reality or truth about an imagined hope? Is it an aspiration, an imaging of deserts with nothing unrewarded? Or is it a telic formula, a private assurance to heart's longing? These questions are related to one- another. In general sense a dream is termed as a result of unfulfilled wishes. It is shaped by the eidenic promises of American land, as the scriptures presents, before and after explosion of America. What Puritans and the European immigrants thought America as a land of infinite wealth, unrestrained freedom and unchallenged fresh beginning of life in the New Found Land is called American Dream. In this sense American Dream does retain something of the joy and music that belongs to its past. Martin Luther King, Jr. was not the first person to dream for better America. The Puritans too had the euphoric vision of wish fulfillment, soon after landing in New Found land.

The immigrants struggled a lot in trying to liberate themselves from British dominance, they had to undergo various struggles and hardship to achieve democracy and declare America as an independent state and country. They, then, once again aspired for a new fortune as it had been aspired by Puritans at their first arrival to this land.

First of all American Dream was seen as a logo for Puritans, then for whites and finally for all Americans regardless of the color creed or ethnic group. Both the newcomers and Native Americans thought that they would begin a new and prosperous life as well as emancipate themselves from the usual tensions, when America was declared independent from the British colony. No doubt, their expectations became stronger with the advancement of America in various sectors of

life. American experiment has produced positive as well as negative results affecting Americans' lives in various ways.

Three or four decades ago, in Washington D.C., Martin Luther King Jr., told to two hundred thousand civil rights marchers:

I have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in American Dream. I have a dream that one day in red hills of Georgia, sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will sit-down together at the table of brotherhood. (Madden, XV)

King had dreamt for equality between race and colored people, which was dominant at his time. Many slaves who took the underground Railroad way to escape from slavery had also aspired for a society based on no racial prejudice. King only tried to remind others that America still privileged the white colored people to black colored people. Like in this statement by King, a dreamer's dream consists of projection of future and a range of future possibilities of completion of American Dream.

At the earlier phase of American literature—people, novelists and politicians began to think that America was the land of opportunity. Because of that concept many people from Europe, Asia and Africa migrated to America in pursuit of this Dream. Even the revolutionary groups that never aspired to migrate to America and, which neglected to the traditional values of life began to believe in American Dream. They also believed in the concept that America was the land of blessings.

David Madden in the "Introduction" of *American Dream, American Nightmares* argues, "The eidenic promises of American land helped shape aspects of the American romantic vision and idealistic elements in that situation, as it experienced the land, helped produce the American Dream"(XVVII). American Dream, in this sense is more romantic in its nature because of the ideal vision. The

difficulties all seem to disappear easily in such a vision. But the inexperienced Puritans could not imagine what would be the result in new land. That is why they followed the eidenic concept of American land.

American Dream is unique in comparison to other nation's dreams. The settlers fleeing in the Garden of Eden. "Thus Americans became the heirs of all civilizations", because their dream was and is unique" (Madden XVII). The existence of an area of free land and the continuous progression of technology explain the development of American Dream and its fulfillment. The unrivalled production of computer software by Bill Gates itself shows that some Americans have got success. But still a large population denies the fulfillment of the former hopes. According to the advocates of American Dream, America's gradual development and power imposed upon other lesser developed countries show the fulfillment of American Dream. Adheres of this American Dream like Hart Crane, T.S.Eliot, Walt Whitman and Fitzgerald argue that dream cancels dream in the new realm of fact. They argue that the advocates make another sequence of dream, which cancels the former dream because the former problem of Americans is overlapped by another new one.

It cannot be defined that America has achieved a lot of things through technological progress, economic strategy and media networks. But the question is whether this prosperity has been able to reduce the conflict among races, ethnic groups and white oriented society. From the very beginning of Puritans' new settlement there began the partial completion and partial failure of their hopes. At the beginning American Dream was based on facts: the factual results of exploration of the frontier experience, of the invention of the steam engine after the introduction of cotton-weaving machines, of the building of railways and bridges, the perfection of rockets and of the invention of the motion-picture camera and projector, and of radio,

television and many other high technological implements like surgical instruments, computer and robots. Because of these modern equipment and advancement in information technology the world has enabled it to control the world at some point. The advocates bring these facts to prove their logic that American Dream has been fulfilled.

While observing at a deeper level of American society the observers of the American Dream have found other facts which challenge the concept of fulfillment. Madden has quoted James Truslow Adams' statement that says, "America has been the great adventure for millions of immigrants, non all of them understanding the meaning of the American Dreams" (XXXIX). That is why America is still in want of fulfilling the dream. In modern time, the serious fiction has been an indictment of American society for its failure to translate the dream into reality; popular culture, which is not much serious and deep in meaning, has been the multifaceted medium of American sunlit day-dreams.

### **The Source of American Dream**

What has been watering American Dream for more than four centuries? One of the sources is the journalistic nonfiction, which presents America as essentially a land of opportunity. Other sources are the travel books, American's ideological concept of their superiority against people from Africa and Asia. Exploration journals, advertising agencies and some of the novelists present America's vision with exaggeration. The Scripture is the root of American Dream because Christians who were thinking for a sacred place believed that God had preserved a land for them. Like the Christians, who are supposed to be pardoned by God even if they commit sins hoped for their salvation in the Newfound Land. Technological innovation in America furthered the prolonged hope. Gradually, in modern time the haste in

American government's policy, to be the first in every sector and to dominate other nations, either by cultural hegemony or by economic influence has stimulated Americans to think that they are the best people of the best country. But not all Americans share the same sense of pride because they are not white, nor are they economically and culturally powerful.

What is psychological basis for the development of dreams and nightmares? How does a dream fail and turn out to be an actual nightmare? Is it only that nightmare eclipses the Dreams, or can the dream also eclipse dream? To understand these problems one should observe American history, which is thoroughly dynamic:

One of the most powerful psychological sources of energy generating pursuit of Dream and nightmare is 'guilt'. Pursuing their own dreams white men exterminated the Vietnamese in the wilderness, enslaved the black Americans to cultivate Eden and mistreated the Jews who had been driven to refuge in American metropolises by European nightmares. Private guilt can be ... the mainspring for an individual's pursuit of one's particular American Dream. (Madden XXXIX-XXXX)

Guilt feeling is also one way of generating dreams. From these lines by Madden it is seen that men thought America as Eden but they enslaved blacks and excluded other groups from opportunities. The white people wanted to fulfill their dreams at any cost without feeling pain of others. They murdered many Vietnamese people and destroyed many villages out there to show their superiority in the world. On the other hand many Jews who migrated to America to feel its freedom and to materialize their boundless wishes out there ultimately mistreated by the white Americans. The wishes of minority groups were dominated by mainstream American Dream like the



characters of *A Raisin in the Sun*. In order to get salvation from private guilt, the white men watered dream so that they could be forgiven if not by god, at least in their own imagination. They watered it through the process of individual enterprise and cut throat competition in which conditions, guilt feeling never comes to one's mind.

American Dream doesn't affect white men themselves because their hearts are not free from ill desires. In this sense, American Utopias have turned into stimulating Utopias in both technological and cultural levels.

American Dream as accepted by all is something agreeable, that something positive may and can happen in it. What has emerged out however is something disagreeable. This can be due to the positive result of struggle to bring democracy in America. From the outset the faith in democracy and freedom rests on the fact that all Americans are created equal and each citizen has the right to live practicing equal opportunities provided by the state. Does that freedom guarantee the right to a black American? America was declared independent; and many slaves thought that they would also get freedom. But they were not given the opportunity to begin a new life from slavery. They were also dreamers. Then, they were raising questions about the essence of independence around Georgia Mountain where extreme slavery existed. Thomas Jefferson, the third president of United States must have heard the questions raised by the achievement of democracy, political and economic issues became vague but the racism became more obvious.

Despite the high spirit of democratic values, times were shifting into new political and economic bands. Along with the economic development, known as Industrial Revolution in history, a new search was made. This search was not in favor of black and ethno-racial group. Along with the rapid growth of industry, cotton spinning and weaving machines the textile industries boomed. It became necessary

that human resources be supplied to keep up the industrial pace. Whites and rich New Englanders occupied the prestigious posts. The mill owners demanded for the supply of cheap labour. Only the slaves and their descendents were available to supply it. Some other African slaves were brought because slave trading was thought to be a profitable business. Not only did this process awaken the old doubts about how to reconcile slavery with the declaration that all men are created equal, but it also produced the gap living standard between whites and blacks. Who could speak against the reinvestment of the owner- slave relation in the form of master- worker relation? Luella B.Cook and others have raised questions, “Did the party created by Jefferson and his supporters belong to the common people or to the cotton kings who owned the big plantations” (258-60)? Did the former slaves, then workers belong to the nation as respected citizens of America? Cook doubts the motive of Jefferson’s party because declaration of independence could not liberate the slaves, but on the contrary the cotton kings were profiting. Was it the successful outcome of Puritan legacy? Where has American promise for equality gone many authors we find have depicted. Novelists talk about American promise but their characters are victims of the very promise. There is no fulfillment of promises. Thus the failure to encompass all people within the framework of American Dream has led it into being a nightmare.

### **Confutation of American Dream**

American Dream can be like a still unfallen Adam from the Garden of Eden whereas nightmare is the condition where he has lost his chance to regain the Garden. In the later there is no redemption and resurrection. The true observer of American Dream should see it at its depths, not of the innocent state of experience but of bitter reality. The still undiscovered America was different than the explored America because in former state there was no such assumption about possible conflict but after

discovery the land proved not to be the Garden of Eden. David Madden approves that America “has undergone a drastic change from a time of explorers, explored to time of tourists’ snapshots” (XXXI). The explorer found Virginia land very beautiful but it was not an uninhabited Garden. The new Englanders became more lustful unlike their former Puritan values and dreams after arriving to Virginia. Gradually machines were brought from England. The grand scale scientific research replaced manual labour for machines in the Paradise. The state based on democracy practiced authoritarian exercises where color discrimination became very undemocratic.

Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered a speech “I Have a Dream” at the Lincoln memorial at the end of the “March on Washington” in 1963, to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. At the very time King realized the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free because the life of Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and chains of discrimination. According to King Black Americans are treated as subhuman beings. The color discrimination is against the democratic values. King realized that the former promises were not taking place and he still hoped that there would be no segregation. King’s speech reveals that America was still in want of fulfilling the promises, which were made by the advocates of American Dream. At the same time King dreamt another Dream which says that his Dream for desegregation would be successful. When America was growing powerful, the Dream was being less effective but people did not cease to hope. That is why American Dream has been influencing people from one century to another for a long time.

Commitment to false dreams has resulted in indifference, withdrawal and alienation from the path to success. However, the rapid urbanization and the growth of technological advancement have made the world a narrow global village.

Nevertheless the American blacks, the ethnic groups and racially distinct communities have been deprived from opportunities throughout. The pursuits for a new land, a process to liberation and democracy were initial outcomes of American Dream but gradually it has come to produce insufficient good results.

The almost unchallenged power of American military force began to take a jerky path of violence immediately after the two world Wars. The armed violence created by America has furthered criminal actions, racial violence and enmity among the nations. America's interventionist policy in Korean War, in Cuba and in Vietnam threatened the desire for peace. America's adventure of extravagant heroic feats is confined to TV and movies. In practice America has failed to assist human beings either within nation or abroad. Therefore dreams, ideals, Visions and hopes are easily exposed as nightmares and frauds in disguise.

Today "the world looks to the American Dream bed as the place where demons writhe in nightmares of technology- bombs and napalm" (Madden XXX).

What is the major cause of failure of American dream?

Poverty, of course, has always contradicted the dream of success . . . .

For most of the hopeful immigrants . . . America became a nightmare of ironies. Even some of the anarchists, socialist and communist immigrants came to America believing in the dream of freedom, equality and justice. Perhaps they expected, as in a dream, a sudden . . . realization of all the ideals the European nightmare had spawned.

(Madden XXXI)

This statement shows why immigrants came to America and what they found there.

They were motivated by enterprise has ironically resulted into sublimated, selfish and materialistic pleasures.

In *Making America* Luther Luedtke observes:

America as a promised land, based on pride in American government and political institutions, independence and self-reliance accompanied by the hard work and initiative, commitment to communal action voluntarism and ‘organizational democracy’ . . . optimism, rights of others equality . . . a preference for the concrete . . . coping with all sorts of problems were continuous marked conviction of initiatives.  
(20-21)

The Puritans and the Native Americans preferred to look America as it was dreamt. Hard work was needed to achieve success. But hard work, which was done by blacks, could bear no success. The legacies of democratic republicanism, cultural colonialism, ethnic pluralism and hostility among the whites, blacks and Red Indians because of the spirit of superiority-inferiority dichotomy, the myths, and the frontier experience and the codes of the whites- all collapsed into nightmare.

Nightmare then is a gratuitous horror, a distortion of hope and a situation where unforeseen revelation of hideous truth emerges. In order to make life meaningful Americans hope for one thing which seems good but when the hope is shattered by undesired result there comes the nightmare. Though American Dream has failed to achieve the intended goal, people and some critics still hope for the realization of success of American Dream.

There is a young black-American women playwright, Lorraine Hansberry, whom we will be discussing, has presented her play within America’s experience, and we will be discussing her play with various causes to prove the failure of American Dream in Afro-American context.

## **America: A Nation of Diversity**

### Achievement and Struggle

As the United States of America entered its first century of existence, free afro-American group faced a double struggle. One part was emancipation from slavery and an opportunity to use one's talents, while the second part was to achieve social equality. The newly freed slaves tried to organize a friendly society to form a non-divisible state. When the then American president Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation declaring that slaves in states were free, many of the black slaves were in south at that time. For a time many Americans hoped that blacks and whites could live together in a state of equality and tolerance. But the problem was with the local laws and customs. The black Americans were not allowed the voting right. In the most of the former slave states, a system of racial segregation arose and the blacks had to use separate schools, churches, hospitals and many other things. Gradually blacks were allowed civil rights because of their protest against segregation. But everything, which was supposed to liberate the social dichotomy between the whites and blacks, was confined to papers and legal rights. Whites were not able to accept the law because they had been practicing their superiority. Because of whites' unacceptance to adopt blacks as their brothers and sisters, the promise for equality and opportunity for blacks in South seemed further away during the period of first half of the twentieth century. Very few whites changed their mentality after the change in law deletion segregation on terms of color.

Alongside the French Revolution, American movement for independence was promoted to free America from the shackles of British Empire, and guarantee the fundamental rights to the subjects of America regardless what color or race the subjects belonged to. Nevertheless with the onset of independence and emancipation,

there was yet racial discrimination violence and murder. Many Afro-American writers and critics have presented the extreme relationship between the slaves and slave owners in their writings. The incidents, manners and the practice of punishing the slaves all seem unbelievable fiction but slave trading history of United States proves that the slaves were treated very badly because they were black. The slave owners were very harsh and would often and regularly whip the slaves and make them work very hard and plough the fields like oxen.

American Dream is watered by the concept of freedom, equality, justice, liberty and opportunity. But these things are not for blacks. The most powerful race, which dominates the other races, is white. For white American power lies in domination of other races because others would never raise their voice. The blacks are brainwashed by this concept of power of white race. In this sense, the crowning of America's liberty has not been fruitful for blacks and other minorities.

During the period and around AD 1600 slavery existed in almost all colonies of America. It was not unusual for small farmers and traders to own one or two slaves because law was made by the whites. The whites could own blacks as slaves and could also rule the blacks. It was intolerable as well as unbearable for slaves to continue their service in America as slaves, for they were considered as being lesser species than animals. Thus they began to escape toward North and in other countries and started to campaign for their rights staying underground. The movement taken by the blacks is known as Underground Railroad movement. That was the first action taken by blacks to liberate them from severe condition. However, the congress passed a law declaring severe penalties to those who assisted slaves to escape as well as harsh punishment on the recaptured slaves

Frederick R. Karl Argues:

If the postwar era in America is characterized by tentativeness, lack of completion and fulfillment a sense of shivering disappointment, frustration amid plenty, the fear that everything is temporary ( ready either to collapse or disappear), the recognition that while all matters, little counts. (5)

The lack of fulfillment is still continuing in America. The law, Acts or Articles of law are confined to papers and their value is vanishing because they are hardly practiced in a real society. If there was achievement and fruit from America's liberty, who got it? Those who are supposed to be more equal than others got it by depriving the blacks and other ethnic groups and minorities. The achievement became and proved to be a white elephant to the colored people.

### **Crowning of Liberty and Education**

After the declaration of independence in 1776, American Universities designed new syllabus. The constitution and the education policy marked an embrandment of openness regarding the opportunities for entrance to all students. It was supposed not to pay particular attention to the color and race of any group regarding admission into colleges. The greatest enemy was thought to be the king of Britain. Gradually it was seen that the goals were not the same for the white and black. The principles were different for the whites and did not apply to the blacks. Because of that dichotomy the African Americans were still demanding social equality. The insatiable hunger for freedom was invested through the dream which worked as a powerful logo. But at the end it "begins to appear that full freedom can be attained only when there is no such knowledge at all" (Bloom 21). Blacks gradually became conscious about their own situation in white dominant society. When they saw that whites victimized them, they demanded for liberty and freedom in every



sector because they thought that they were also Americans. But the whites were/are not ready to accept blacks as equal to them. Therefore, their only alternate way to disillusion the minorities is to treat them as subhuman beings.

White men regard only one culture that is white as essentially superior to any other culture. Observing white Americans' narrow way of rating other cultures as no culture, Margaret Mead and others suggest:

Not only must we know other cultures and learn to respect them, but we could also profit from them. We could follow their lead and loosen up liberation ourselves from the opinion that our taboos are anything other than social constraints. We could go to the bazaar of cultures and find reinforcement for Puritanical guilt feelings. (Bloom 33)

However, most of the white men are not that much liberal to accept any other culture as a source for interdisciplinary study and accumulate it into a large frame work.

Cultural variation is not unique in any country but it is undemocratic to treat any one as superior and reject others as the breeders of vice. America tells one story: the story of unbroken, the ineluctable progress of freedom and equality. Abraham Lincoln saw the Afro-Americans being despised, slaves being killed and other ethnic groups being suppressed by white race. Therefore he was determined to eradicate the injustice and the law that favored whites. But Lincoln could not survive to impose it not only in law but also in practice. The whites are not mentally prepared to accept the paper law.

However America has generated a race of heroes: Franklin, Washington, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lincoln and many others like Martin Luther King, Jr. who all have contributed something to make the Americans dream more intense. They also worked but could not produce sufficient good results.

Allen Bloom finds a situation where “people sit together, play together, travel together but they do not think together” (57). The first, second and third acts may be imposed but the final one can not be imposed. To think together is necessary to treat all human beings as equal. But there is no such situation in American culture where blacks and whites can think together. Because of lack of co-thinking, the top universities gradually abandoned to admit black students in American newspapers. But it raises voice if certain inequalities are found being practiced in other nations. The honesty to American constitution is confined within the papers. Many people do not practice it. The whites have constant fear that they will have to fall below their standard or miss opportunities if blacks are given equal rights in every sector. They think that the New Found Land was established by their white forefathers and as blacks were brought to their land later on, chained and tied like oxen, they (blacks) can neither be their friends nor sharer of equal rights. Because of this over consciousness of white race to preserve their dignity, American Dream is being pulled down every time.

### **America in Media Network**

American military force has been a leading institution to train the military force of other nations because America is presented as a superpower country through media and publishing houses. For the time being the United States is the unrivaled world power. No superpower conflict is anticipated in the foreseeable future. The CNN of America presents America as a well prepared nation to solve any problems. The war-fictions and other articles also glorify America. America’s dominance over the UNO has not been doubted because many decisions are made in favor of America. But still the country’s vision in international sector cannot conceal the truth that America has not provided the blacks and other ethnic groups what they need to be.

Despite that the whites aren't prepared to neutralize the color segregation of people inside their country. However, the cultural, racial and ethnic problems are always eminently put behind the media screen. Are whites as sophisticated and cultured as the so-called TV pundits present? The answer is debatable. For at times America's bullish nature towards underdeveloped countries and deprivation of ethnic people within the nation prove the fact that Americans are not model figures to be imitated. Furthermore the media is a powerful medium because it is technically equipped.

The hegemony of American media network upon the world has helped people or audience shape false vision of America. The large scale media service is handled by capitalists and white who project the vision of blacks that would produce false concept about the black. The white-operated media presents blacks as essentially weaker and uncultured. Adventurous movies are produced where white men's adventurous actions and talents are shown. Movies also have been used as the medium through which the racial segregation is presented. In many movies blacks are shown as barbaric and uncultured. But when it is observed deeply it is seen that white men are using culture as industry through which they try their best to repress the blacks to prove their (whites) superiority. Minority groups have no access to such media and are deprived from the opportunity to exhibit their talents. As a result American Dream has not been working positively.

The discourse is also a source for media. Who controls discourse? Michael Foucault says that it is power that controls it. Ruling class and group has that power. In American context power is confined within white race. As a result discourse is about whites. The writings and publications all are focused upon the whites and blacks are put on the shelves to catch dust. Though America presented itself as peace lover during the period of World War II, it was the first nation to drop atom bomb in

Japan causing millions of casualties. It proves that America has tried to capture all the power. America was alarmed by the possible socialist influence in Europe because of communist Russia. America wanted to check the influence. America succeeded to some extent in that plan but its power became more interventionist.

America's people were not getting equality when America was talking about to liberate human beings from forced labor. American constitution says:

American democracy guarantees the freedom of its people and the honesty of its government with a system of checks and balances...the two party system ensures the enactment of just laws vigorously debated and openly arrived at. (Lohani,14)

The check and balance has been the check to the blacks and maintaining the balance of superior inferior dichotomy. Law has one thing; practice has been done opposing the paper law. That is why American Dream has withered. Whites are the doers and they have created an apartheid society which is just opposite to American Dream.

### **Ethnic Groups and Minorities**

The United States is a nation of many ethnic groups. Many people came to America from different parts of the world in pursuit of better life and glorious future. An ethnic group is made up of people who share some features different from other groups. Some ethnic groups suffer disadvantages, which excludes them from free participation in professional and cultural life in America. Because of racial prejudice, skin-color segregation and cultural variation they are forced to live and work in narrow sectors of American life. For this matter those ethnic groups, who suffer socio-economic and cultural disadvantages are called minorities regardless the number in counting. They become minorities because they are not included in the

mainstream of national development, however important their indirect contribution may be in the society.

In order to avoid that kind of segregation president Lyndon Johnson declared a “war on poverty” in 1964. He was promoted by a wide protest movement whose aim was to secure full civil rights for blacks and other deprived Americans. But his declaration could not change the heart of white people. The social struggle for equality has been continuing. But unless and until the whites become capable enough to understand the meaning of American Dream it will not be successful. The immigrants who are ethnic in origin have been deprived from opportunities. More than that there is split between poor colored and rich people which has loosen their strength to achieve remarkable success like freedom. Hence American Dream has turned into false hope.

### **Mainstream American Dream and Ethnic American Dream.**

The concept of American dream has its root on the exploration of United States of America. This concept later came into literature with heart-touching effect. It you work hard and save your money, if you hold to the proper values and hope, then one day you can buy your own home and have the kind of space and privacy that permit people to live with dignity.

This very idea made American people more conscious towards their duties to gain financial as well as social success. But during the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, American people became so much obsessed for success, which ultimately led towards tragedy. People just forgot honesty and morality, and they only wanted to become rich at any cost. The society was also blind because it used to worship those rich people without knowing the sources of their uncountable wealth. People wanted to buy everything with money as Fitzgerald’s Great Gatsby: “Gatsby is a dandy of desire who seeks to transform money into love, time into an endless instant of

contemplation, the clock into dream” (Puritanism, 249). This is a tale of the American Dream gone wrong: Gatsby seeks to enjoy the success American society seems to promise; he constructs a dream with woman at his emblematic centre; this dream leads to tragedy and death. Other writers like Arthur Miller, Theodore Dreiser have also exhibited failure of American dream.

Mainstream American dream was especially conceived by the white Americans who were doubtless to follow it. At any cost they wanted financial success even though sacrificing their own life as Willy Loman of Arthur Miller.

On the other hand, being melting pot, many ethnic groups migrated to America, i.e., among them Afro-American groups became dominant in America due to their distinct culture and large population. As they got freedom from slavery, most of them started their own business though they used to be psychologically dominated. Slowly they started enjoying their freedom but it brought disintegration among black people. They lost their unity as it used to be. They also tried to follow the American dream.

But their dream is different from the mainstream dream because their position is in between. They are on the verge of two different cultures: one is their own native culture and other is the charismatic American culture. They want to achieve financial as well as social success but they cannot completely give up their native culture. So, the problem is that the white people do not want to include those hybrid ethnic groups into their mainstream culture because they have fear of degeneration of their high culture and on the other hand native ethnic groups also do not want to assimilate with that hybrid group.

This is the situation Lorraine Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* presents in which we find story of a black family in a Chicago ghetto during the early civil Rights movement. It follows the life of Walter Younger, his family and his mother who is forced to make a decision about what to do with the \$10,000 Mama inherited from her late husband- a decision that dramatically affects the lives of the entire family. Most of the characters of this play are on the verge of two cultures: the dominant white culture and the subordinate native culture. We find conflict between the black adult generation and young generation; the former is inclined towards assimilation with the dominant culture, but the latter one is inclined towards separation. Walter Lee and Lena Younger are more inclined towards assimilation, so they shift from the ghetto to a white community as they want to show their civilized behavior. On the other hand, Beneatha and Joseph Asagai, the young generation, are inclined towards separation because they decide to go to Nigeria to revitalize the African culture.

### **The American Dream Today**

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the American Dream had its challenges. The Depression caused widespread hardship during the twenties and thirties, and was almost a reverse of the dream for those directly affected. Racial instability did not disappear, and in some parts of the country racial violence was almost common place.

Since the end of World War II, young American families have sought to live in relative comfort and stability in the suburbs that were built up around major cities. This led to the rise of the relatively conservative 1950s, when many pursued the "perfect family" as a part or consequence of the American Dream. This period was shattered by a new generation of young people who embraced the giving values of 1960s denying traditional values such as the American Dream. Though the drive to it waned during those years, the dream itself has never fully died out.

### **Criticism of the American Dream**

The concept of the American Dream has been the subject of much criticism by many critics. The main criticism is that the American Dream is misleading. These critics say that, for various reasons, it simply is not possible for everyone to become prosperous through determination and hard work alone. The consequences of this belief can include the poor feeling that it is their fault that they are not successful. It can also result in less effort towards helping the poor since their poverty is seen as a “proof” of their laziness. The concept of the American Dream also ignores other factors of success such as the family and wealth, one is born into and inheritable traits such as intelligence; although proponents of the dream would claim that starting wealth is irrelevant because of the belief that there is no level of poverty one cannot rise from with hard work.

The American Dream is seen by critics as being somewhat superficial or meaning less. Many literary works level exactly that criticism at the American Dream, such as Arthur Miller’s play *Death of a Salesman* such arguments are essentially rehashes of the old adage “Money doesn’t buy happiness”, and that perhaps not everyone’s dream should be to achieve great monetary gain.



### **III: Textual Analysis of *A Raisin in the Sun***

The opening scene takes place at the Southside of Chicago between the World War II and present, exterior and interior images show that we are in a ghetto. More importantly, this is a ghetto of African-American who has few choices in a white society. The play starts with Langston Hughes's poem "Harlem (Dream Deferred)", providing the inspiration for the title: "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?"

The next series of scenes introduces the family whose dreams provide the basis for the play. Lena Younger, the family matriarch, is expecting a \$10000 life insurance check from the estate of her late husband, Walter Lee. With it, she is planning to retire from her maid's job for a white family. Her son, Walter Lee Junior, wants to use the money to buy a liquor store. His wife, Ruth, also a domestic in a white household, hopes to move to a larger apartment. Beneatha, Lena's daughter, dreams of going to medical school.

When the check arrives, the tensions arise within the family. Walter Lee feels he is entitled to it as the rightful head of the family. Ruth and Beneatha counter that it is Lena's money, and she should decide how it is to be spent. Because Lena realizes that her family's survival depends on their escape from the apartment she makes a down payment on a "nice house" in Clybourne Park, an all-white residential neighborhood, without consulting anyone. The family's reactions range from Walter Lee's disbelief and disappointment, to Ruth's joy.

The plans for the move exacerbate the tensions. Feeling his manhood threatened by his mother's authority, Walter escapes to bars. When he does not return home for several days, Lena finally acknowledges his desperate need and finds him in

his favourite lounge. Opening her purse, she entrusts him with the rest of the money, part of which is to be used for Beneatha's tuition, the rest for his liquor store.

The residents of all-white Clybourne Park have learned of their new neighbors and send an emissary to meet with the Youngers to explain the "rules". Mr. Linder, the representative, carefully disguises his racist attitudes beneath neutral terms, "not rich and fancy people: just hard working, honest people who don't really have much but those little homes and a dream of the kind of community they want to raise their children in" (1138). Beneatha immediately realizes he is proposing to buy them out, "Thirty pieces and not a coin less" (1139). He makes the Youngers a generous offer that Walter Lee refuses. His family has a right to a new life, and they will move to Clybourne Park.

The tension reaches a climax on moving day, when Walter Lee receives the worst possible news: Lena's money never made it to the bank. He had given it to Willy Harris, a "trusted" business partner. However, Willy took the money and ran, leaving no forwarding address.

Overwhelmed, the family members react in different ways. Beneatha is furious and totally repudiates her relationship with Walter. Lena starts to unpack, saying they can no longer move. Ruth refuses to give, in believing that with hard work they can make the house payments. In a desperate act to set matters right, Walter Lee sends for Mr. Linder, whose offer could replace the money he has given away. No one supports his decision, feeling contempt for his willingness to sell their dreams so cheaply. In the final scenes, Walter Lee has an epiphany, recognizing not only who he is, but his place within his family and race. As he starts to tell Mr. Linder they will accept the offer, he hears what he is about to say and, instead, refuses it. The moving men are

told to continue, and the family departs for what everyone hopes will be a new and better life.

**Dramatis personae (characters)**

**Lena Younger (Mama)**

**Walter Lee Younger, Jr. (Brother)**

**Beneatha Younger (Sister of Walter)**

**Ruth Younger (Wife of Walter)**

**Travis Younger (Son of Walter)**

**Joseph Asagai (Boyfriend of Beneatha)**

**George Murchison (Another friend of Beneatha)**

**Mrs. Johnson (A visitor)**

**Karl Linder (Representative of Clyborne Park Improvement Association)**

**Bobo (One of business partners of Walter)**

**Moving Men**

**Characters and their Dreams**

*A Raisin in the Sun* is essentially about dreams, as the main characters struggle to deal with the oppressive circumstances that rule their lives. The title of the play references a conjecture that Langston Hughes famously posed in a poem he wrote about dreams that were forgotten or put off. He wonders whether those dreams shrivel up “like *A Raisin in the Sun*.” Every member of the Younger family has a separate, individual dream—Beneatha wants to become a doctor, for example, and Walter wants to have money so that he can afford things for his family. The Youngers struggle to attain these dreams throughout the play, and much of their happiness and depression is directly related to their attainment of, or failure to attain, these dreams.

By the end of the play, they learn that the dream of a house is the most important dream because it unites the family.

### **Walter Lee Younger -**

The protagonist of the play, Walter, wants to be rich and devises plans to acquire wealth with his friends, particularly Willy Harris. When the play opens, he wants to invest his father's insurance money in a new liquor store venture. He spends the rest of the play endlessly preoccupied with discovering a quick solution to his family's various problems.

He is living close to charismatic American society, so he also wants to live the life of American youngsters and become successful. He has a plan to start a liquor business which he thinks will be successful. In the given dialogue we find Walter's obsession towards his bright future:

WALTER (*quietly*): Sometimes it's like I can see the future stretched out in front of me - just plain as day. The future, Mama. Hanging over these at the edge of my days. Just waiting for me - a big looming blank space - full of *nothing*. Just waiting for *me*. But it don't have to be. (*Pause, kneeling beside her chair.*) Mama - sometimes when I'm down town and I pass them cool, quite - looking restaurants where them white boys are sitting back and talking 'bout things . . . sitting there turning deals worth millions of dollars . . . sometimes I see guys don't look much older than me. - (1125)

White people's success is adding fuel in Walter's mind to be successful. Walter wants to copy the life of white American youngsters. He also wants to achieve financial as well as social success like American people without doing hard labour being united. But Walter never ponders over how white people became financial successful. They

have their own history of struggles. On the other hand, Walter thinks plans and dreams of others less important than his plans and dreams. His sister Beneatha conceives the dream of becoming a doctor but Walter discourages her saying, "Who the hell told you you had to be a doctor? If you so crazy 'bout messing 'round with sick people - then go be a nurse like other women - or just get married and be quiet. (1114)". There is no unity even within the Younger family to achieve one another's dreams. Individually, everybody's dream is important.

His plan of starting liquor business has diverted Walter's mind from all general affairs and he is so much confident towards his success that he doesnot lose his chance to share his would be success with his son Traivs:

WALTER: You wouldn't understand yet, son, bout your daddy's gonna make a transaction. . . a business transaction that's going to change our lives . . . . That's how come one day when you 'bout seventeen years old I'll come home and I'll be pretty tired, your know what I mean, after a day of conferences and secretaries getting things wrong the way they do . . . 'cause on executive's life is hell an - (*The more he talks the farther away he gets.*) And I'll pull the car up on the driver way . . . just a plain black Chrysler, I thinks, with white walls - no - black tires. And I'll go inside and Ruth will come downstairs and meet me at the door and we'll kiss each other and she'll take my arm and we'll go up to your room to see you sitting on the floor with the catalogues of all the great schools in America around you . . . . All the great schools in the world ! And- and I'll say, all right son - it's your seventeenth birthday, what is it you've decided? . . . Just tell me where you want to go to school and you'll

go. Just tell me, what it is you want to be - and you'll *be* it . . . .

Whatever you want to be - Yessir! (*He holds his arms open for*

*Travis.*) You just name it, son . . . (*Travis leaps into them*) and I hand you the world! (1136)

It is a version of American Dream which ultimately proved to be failure. Walter is dreaming about uncertain future in which he is also pulling his small son. His son, Travis, is also encouraged to dream for prosperous future. But later, we come to know that his dream has been shattered with the deception of his partner Willy Hariss, who is also black. Black people are deceiving blacks. So, they need communal unity to get success.

As Mama's only son, Ruth's defiant husband, Travis's caring father, and Beneatha's belligerent brother, Walter serves as both protagonist and antagonist of the play. The plot revolves around him and the actions that he takes, and his character evolves the most during the course of the play. Most of his actions and mistakes hurt the family greatly, but his belated rise to manhood makes him a sort of hero in the last scene.

Throughout the play, Walter provides an everyman perspective of the mid-twentieth-century African-American male. He is the typical man of the family who struggles to support it and who tries to discover new, better schemes to secure its economic prosperity. Difficulties and barriers that obstruct his and his family's progress to attain that prosperity constantly frustrate Walter. He regards money as life that we come to know through this dialogue between him and his mother while Mama asks him a question, "Son-how come you talk so much 'bout money" (1125)? Walter replies with immense passion, "Because it is life, Mama" (1125)! He believes that money will solve all of their problems, but he is rarely successful with money.

Walter often fights and argues with Ruth, Mama, and Beneatha. Far from being a good listener, he does not seem to understand that he must pay attention to his family members' concerns in order to help them. Eventually, he realizes that he cannot raise the family up from poverty alone, and he seeks strength in uniting with his family. Once he begins to listen to Mama and she expresses her dream of owning a house, "...But Lord, child, you should know all the dreams I had 'bout buying that house and fixing it up and making me a little garden in the back- And didn't none of it happen" (1116). He realizes that buying the house is more important for the family's welfare than getting rich quickly. Walter finally becomes a man when he stands up to Mr. Lindner and refuses the money that Mr. Lindner offers the family not to move in to its dream house in a white neighborhood. At last Walter replies to Linder, "And we have decided to move into our house because my father- my father- he earned it for us brick by brick" (1148). After failure of his dream, Walter contributes to fulfill his family's dream of a decent house.

### **Lena Younger (Mama)**

Mama is Walter and Beneatha's sensitive mother and the head of the Younger household. She demands that members of her family respect themselves and take pride in their dreams. Mama requires that the apartment in which they live always be neat and polished. She stands up for her beliefs and provides perspective from an older generation. She believes in striving to succeed while maintaining her moral boundaries; she rejects Beneatha's progressive and seemingly un-Christian sentiments about God, and Ruth's consideration of an abortion disappoints her. In Scene II, when Beneatha expresses her unfaithfulness towards god then Mama says to Beneatha, "Now - you say after me, in my mother's house there is still God (1118)". Ultimately Beneatha is compelled to repeat the line. Similarly, when Walter comes to her with

his idea to invest in the liquor store venture, she condemns the idea and explains that she will not participate in such un-Christian business. Money is only a means to an end for Mama; dreams are more important to her than material wealth, and her dream is to own a house with a garden and yard in which Travis can play.

Mama is the most nurturing character in the play, and she constantly reminds Walter that all she has ever wanted is to make her children happy and provide for them.

Mama says to Walter, “When the world gets ugly enough- a woman will do anything for her family” (1125). She cares deeply for Walter and shows this care by giving him the remaining insurance money. She cares deeply for Ruth as well, consoling her when Walter ignores her. Mama respects Beneatha’s assessment of George Murchison as being arrogant and self-centered, telling her daughter not to waste time with such a “fool.” Mama loves Travis, her grandchild, and hopes their new house will have a big yard in which he can play. She is also very fond, though in a different way, of her plant, which she tries to nurture throughout the play.

Mama's dream of owning a house is also eclipsed when Karl Linder, representative of Clebourne Park Improvement Association, comes Youngers' house asking to sell the house to the Association. Later we come to know that the Younger family opposes this deal and decides to move into their house. But there is no certainty of fulfillment of Mama's dream of fixing own house.

### **Beneatha**

Beneatha is an attractive college student who provides a young, independent, feminist perspective, and her desire to become a doctor demonstrates her great ambition. Throughout the play, she searches for her identity saying, “I am not an assimilationist” (1122)! She dates two very different men: Joseph Asagai and George



Murchison. She is at her happiest with Asagai, her Nigerian boyfriend, who has nicknamed her “Alaiyo,” which means “One for Whom Bread—Food—Is Not Enough.” She is at her most depressed and angry with George, her pompous, affluent African-American boyfriend. She identifies much more with Asagai’s interest in rediscovering his African roots than with George’s interest in assimilating into white culture.

Beneatha prides herself on being independent. Asagai criticizes her for being both too independent by not wanting to marry and too dependent by not wanting to leave America. Asagai’s wish that Beneatha be quieter and less ambitious obviously outrages her, and his contention late in the play that she has been far from independent—she has had to rely on the insurance money from her father’s death and the investments made by her brother to realize her dream of becoming a doctor—greatly influences her. When she realizes this dependence, she gains a new perspective on her dream and a new energy to attain it in her own way.

Her dream of becoming a doctor by investing the money of her father's insurance is formally shattered with the transaction made by Walter. She bitterly expresses her misfortune caused by Walter, "Asagai, while I was sleeping in that bed in there, people went out and took the future right out of my hands! And nobody asked me, nobody consulted me - they just went out and change my life (1144)!" Her dream also comes to be failure due to lack of understanding between sister and brother.

### **Asagai**

One of Beneatha’s fellow students and one of her suitors, Asagai is from Nigeria, and throughout the play he provides an international perspective. Proud of his African heritage, he hopes to return to Nigeria to help bring about positive change and

modern advancements. He wants to go to his motherland to teach his illiterate fellow people to change their livelihood. He wants to change the ongoing corruption, anarchy and unsocial activities of his country for which he even does not hesitate to sacrifice his life. Asagai presents his future plan while talking to Beneatha:

ASAGAI (*shouting over her*): I LIVE THE ANSWER! (*Pause*) In my village at home it is the exceptional man who can even read a newspaper... or who ever sees a book at all. I will go home and much of what I will have to say will seem strange to the people of my village. But I will teach and work and things will happen, slowly and swiftly. At times it will seem that nothing changes at all ... and then again the sudden dramatic events which make history leap into the future. And then quiet again. Retrogression even. Guns, murder, revolution. And I even will have moments when I wonder if the quiet was not better than all that death and hatred. But I will look about my village at the illiteracy and disease and ignorance and I will not wonder long. And perhaps ... I will hold on to the substance of truth and find my way always with right course ... and perhaps for it I will be butchered in my bed some night by the servants of empire. (1144)

Asagai has presented the tragic situation of home land. His dream is to change the miserable situation of his village. He wants to become a good personality of his society. He even does not hesitate to be butchered in course of his mission. He tries to teach Beneatha about her heritage as well:

ASAGAI: Nigeria. Home. (*Coming to her with genuine romantic flippancy*) I will show you our mountains and our stars; and give you cool drinks from guards and teach you the old songs and the ways of

our people- and, in time, we will pretend that- (very softly)- you have only been away for a day. (1144)

He stands in obvious contrast to Beneatha's other suitor, George Murchison, who is an arrogant African-American who has succeeded in life by assimilating to the white world. He wants a good friend to achieve his mission. He finds all the qualities in Beneatha he is searching for. She is educated as well as eager to revitalize her old culture. She becomes ready to go to Nigeria but the play does not clearly state whether they went or not and whether Asagai's dream became successful or not.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

*A Raisin in the Sun* named after a line from a Langston Hughes's poem, "Harlem", relates two lines of concern here: first, it can be surmised that the play by the name itself is linked to the black tradition and culture, and second, the play exhibits consequences of deferred dreams story of the Youngers, a Southside Chicago family trying to survive in cramped quarters in order to show what the "raisin(s) in the sun" are doing. When Mama, one of the raisins, gets a \$ 10000 check from her husband's life insurance they consider moving to a larger house in a white suburb. The play relates the story of Youngers with the themes like dreams and realities, individual and society, black and white conflicts, female-centred authorial attitudes etc.

*A Raisin in the Sun* is about an underprivileged black family struggling to break out of the hardships of a Chicago ghetto. When Lena Younger, the mother in the black family has to decide how to spend the money she gets from her husband's insurance. Lena wants to buy a house in a safe neighborhood, but her son Walter wants to invest the money in a liquor store. Beneatha hopes the money would be spent on her studies as she pursues a career of doctor. Tragically, they lost the money because of the short sightedness of Walter, and the dreams conceived by all characters are shattered but the play ends on a hopeful note when the family stands together against racial and economic adversity.

All of the characters in *A Raisin in the Sun* have unfulfilled dreams. These dreams passing in the book involve money. Although the Younger family seems alienated from white middle-class culture, they harbour the same materialistic dreams as the rest of American society. In the 1950s, the stereotypical American dream was to have a house with a yard, a big car, and a happy family. The Youngers also seem to

want to live this dream, though their struggle to attain any semblance of it is dramatically different from the struggle a similar suburban family might encounter, because the Youngers are not a stereotypical middle-class family. Rather, they live in a world in which being middle class is also a dream, and most of them have dreams to become higher class which ultimately proved to be failure.

Mama's plant symbolizes her version of this dream because she cares for it as she cares for her family. She tries to give the plant enough light and water not only to grow but also to flourish and become beautiful, just as she attempts to provide for her family with meager yet consistent financial support. Mama also imagines a garden that she can tend along with her dream house. The small potted plant acts as a temporary stand in for her much larger dream. Despite her cramped living under this intractable morass and the life time of hard work that she has endured, she maintains her focus on her dream, which helps her to persevere. Still, no matter how much Mama works, the plant remains feeble, because there is so little light. Similarly, it is difficult for her to care for her family as much as she wants and to have her family members grow as much as she wants. Her dream of a house and a better life for her family remains tenuous because it is so hard to see beyond her family's present morass.

Beneatha's dream differs from Mama's in that it is, in many ways, self-serving. In her desires to "express" herself and to become a doctor. Beneatha proves a feminist who radically views her role as self-oriented and not family-oriented. Feminism had not fully emerged into the American cultural landscape when Hansberry wrote *A Raisin in the Sun*, and Beneatha seems a prototype for the more enthusiastic feminism of the 1960s and 1970s. She not only wants to have a career but also desires to find her identity and pursue an independent career without relying

solely on a man. She even indicates to Ruth and Mama that she might not get married, a possibility that astonishes them because it runs counter to their expectations of a woman's role. Similarly, they are befuddled by her abomination of the "pretty, rich" George Murchison (1132). That Beneatha's attitude towards him differs from Ruth's or Mama's may result from the age difference among the three women. Mama and Beneatha are, of course, a generation apart, while Ruth occupies a place somewhere in the middle; Hansberry argues that Beneatha is the least traditional of the women because she is the youngest.

Walter and Ruth, who occupy the middle ground in terms of age between Mama and Beneatha, have also tempered their dreams more than Beneatha has. Though Walter and Ruth harbour materialistic dreams, they desire wealth not solely for self-serving purposes but rather as a means to provide for their family and escape the Southside ghetto in which they live. The tension evoked by issues of money when Travis asks for fifty cents. Ruth, the household manager, refuses to give her son the money; Walter, as a father trying to safeguard his son's ability to be accepted and give Travis twice as much as he asks for, Walter does so knowing that he faces the emasculating task of having to ask Ruth for money himself as a result. He holds a patriarchal view towards women when he speaks, "Why? You want to know why? Cause we all tied up in a race of people that don't know how to do nothing but moan, pray, and have babies!"(1129). He thinks that females have no vision and no idea about the life at all.

Mama's down payment on a house reveals her belief that to be a happy family the Youngers need to own space and property. Her dream is a perfect example of the quite essential American dream. Part of her dream is the simple desire for consumer goods. She believes, as did many in the post-World War II consumer culture, that, to

some degree at least, ownership can provide happiness. Therefore, although she means only to find the best for her family, she also succumbs to the powerful materialism that drives the desires of the society around her. Still, her desire is somewhat radical, because African-Americans were largely left out of depictions of the American dream during this period. Only white families populated suburban television programs and magazine advertisements. Therefore, Hansberry performs a radical act in claiming the general American dream for African-Americans.

The radical nature of the Youngers' desire to participate in the American dream does bring along some hardship. Ruth and Walter's concern about moving into a predominantly white neighborhood reflects the great tension that existed between races-even in the Northern states. Their concern foreshadows, among other developments, the arrival of Mr. Lindner, who reveals that the white people of Clybourne Park are just as wary of the Youngers as the Youngers are of white people, which is not an interdict, however.

Here, the writer wants to communicate the hardships of the struggling black lives in-between assimilationism represented by George and the African cultural heritages represented by Asagai. The writer by showing Beneatha in love with both of them exemplifies a greater message. Her choosing of one is not simply a matter of getting one but adoption a line of culture and past, and also of present just opposite of other. Beneatha throughout her actions in the play appears caught by this fact. Her optimistic notes toward African and Asagai and the hatred to George are what the writer gives this young black female the role any black American woman is supposed to play.

These incidents show the fact that the dreams, except owning the house that is clearly of Mama's, either fail or defer due to two reasons: the first is that they are

linked to the racial order of the society, and the second is that there is disintegration among well-to-do and lower class black people.



### Works Cited

- Adams, James Truslow. *The American: The Making of a New Man*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943.
- Bloom, Allen. *Closing of the American Mind*. New York: 1987.
- Brennan, Timothy. *Black Writers and the Third World*. Houndsmills: Macmillan, 1989.
- Cook, Luella B., Walter Loban, Tremaine McDowell, Ruth M. Stauffer. Eds. *America Through Literature*. Harcourt: Brace & Com., 1952.
- Dacres, Kajet. "Hansberry and the Drama of Gravity." *The Sewanese Review*. Vol- 1. Winter, 1970.810
- Gates Jr., Henry Louis and Nellie Y. McKay. ed. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*. 1996.
- Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun*. Jacobus. 1109-1149.
- Hansberry, Lorraine. *To Be Young, Gifted and Black*. (1969).
- Hughes, Langston. "Harlem (A Dream Deferred)". *The Panther and the Lash*. Alfred. A. Knopf, Inc, 1951.
- Jacobus, Lee A. ed. *The Bedford Introduction to Drama*. Boston: Bedford Books, 1993.
- Jafterson, Thomas. *Declaration of Independence*. July 4, 1776.
- Karl, Frederick R. *American Fiction (1940-1980)*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1983.
- King, Martin Luther, Jr. *I Have a Dream*. Lincoln Memorial: n.p., 1963.
- Lohani, Shridhar P., Abhi Subedi, Arun Gupto, P. Chase, Comps. And eds. *American Studies*. 3 vols. Kathmandu: T.U., 1995.

Luedtke, Luthers. Ed. *Making America*. Washington D.C.: The Society and Culture of United States, Forum Series US Information Agencies, Divisions for the Study of US. 20547, 1987.

Madden, David, ed. Introduction. *American Dreams. American Nightmares*. Amsterdam: Southern Illinois UP, 1970. X-XL.

Nathan, A Scott. "Black Literature." *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*. Ed. Daniel Hoffman. New Delhi: OUP, 2004. 287-341.

Ruland, Richard and Malcolm Bradbury. ed. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism*. New York: Penguin Book, 1992.

Weals, Gerald. "Drama". *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*. Ed. Daniel Hoffman. New York: Oxford UP, 1979. 396-430.