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Auszug aus:

Hansberry - A Raisin' in the Sun - Continuous Interpretation

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Thema:	Lorraine Hansberry <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> – Continuous Interpretation
TMD: 30734	
Kurzvorstellung des Materials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> belongs to the classic American plays. It deals with a black family in the 1950s trying to improve their living conditions. The ambiguity of hope and resignation is underlining the play. • On the one hand, the play describes their financial, social and personal problems. On the other hand, it shows the range of possibilities to deal with unfulfilled expectations, hope and despair.
Übersicht über die Teile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Die Interpretation gliedert das Stück in Sinnabschnitte und erläutert und interpretiert diese ausführlich.
Information zum Dokument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ca. 4,5 Seiten, Größe ca. 66,5 KByte
SCHOOL-SCOUT – schnelle Hilfe per E-Mail	<p style="text-align: center;"> SCHOOL-SCOUT ♦ Der persönliche Schulservice Internet: http://www.School-Scout.de E-Mail: info@School-Scout.de </p>

Lorraine Hansberry *A Raisin in the Sun* – Continuous Interpretation

A Raisin in the Sun is a play by Lorraine Hansberry, that was first staged in 1958. The American playwright lived from 1930 to 1965. Her own personal experience has had great influence on the plot of the play. Just like the Younger family in the play, her own family moved into a white neighbourhood in Chicago when she was a child. The title evokes the image of the sun as a symbol of hope and future but a raisin, a dark shadow or stain devalues its power. Thus, hope is irrecoverably damaged. This ambiguous image of hope and resignation is underlying the play and the symbol of sunlight is mentioned several times (p.94; 143).

The play deals with the Youngers, a black family living in Chicago “sometime between World War II and the present” (p.22)¹ which means between 1945 and the late 1950’s when the play had been staged for the first time. Ruth and her husband Walter Lee, their son Travis, Walter’s sister Beneatha and his mother Lena are living together. A few months earlier Lena’s husband had died and the family is awaiting money from his life insurance. The check about 10.000 Dollars and what they will do with the money covers majority of their conversations. The money resembles hope and future for the family that has lost both, hope and prospect during the years. They are tired of living under simplest conditions in a small apartment without any private room. Ruth calls their home a “rat trap” (p.44). This expression hints at the apartment’s smallness as well as her feeling of being imprisoned. At the beginning of the play, their home is described as dark and weary. Once they happily moved in, full of dreams and hopes for the future, but now the formerly new furniture is used and widely damaged. Once it was “selected with care and love and even hope” (p.23) and “arranged with taste and pride” (p.23) but they do not remember these times anymore. This section metaphorically describes how the hopes and dreams of the Younger family got damaged throughout the years. There is still a rest to be seen but they are too tired to hope anymore. Although they are all tired and desperate, they are a loving family, just their emotions are buried under financial problems and the everyday quarrelling.

They all handle this situation differently. Ruth has buried all her expectations and tries to make the best out of it. She copes with the everyday life and cares for her family. She wants her son to look proper and to get educated and forbids him to work at the supermarket because he is supposed to have more possibilities in life. Unlike her husband, she strongly tries to keep the money together. Walter Lee tends to having business ideas and wants to invest money in a new liquor store of his own. He wants to improve their situation and is rather frank in dealing with money. Ruth dislikes his friends and ideas and probably fears that he might lose their money. They both work for white families as servants and therefore probably feel humiliated. Walter is a chauffeur and Ruth works at a private household and her employers do not even allow her to take a day off when she is sick (p.42). Beneatha is the only member of the family attending university. She is studying to be a doctor and shows that she is better educated than the rest of the family. For example, she speaks more sophisticated while the others have a black accent. Moreover, she is an emancipated woman and decides for herself what is best for her. She goes out with two men and does not want to bind herself to one of them. Especially Walter does not support Beneatha’s ideas because he has a rather conservative image of women: “We one group of men tied to a race of women with small

¹ Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (New York: Vintage Books). All following quotations are taken from this edition.



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