

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

The object of my research is a play, *A Raisin in The Sun*, which was written by Lorraine Hansberry in 1959. This play was the first drama written by a black woman to be produced on Broadway; it won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award in 1959 and was made into a motion picture in 1961. I choose this play because it contains a problem of racial discrimination toward the black people that still exists until now and I also want to describe the struggle of black people to achieve their dreams.

Now, I would like to give a brief explanation about the author, Lorraine Hansberry. She was born in Chicago, Illinois, an American writer and activist for equal rights for African Americans, and because her parents were prominent in national black cultural and political circles, she met many influential African Americans during her childhood. In 1938 Hansberry's family challenged Chicago's segregation laws by moving to an all-white neighborhood. Hansberry attended the University of Wisconsin but left in 1950 and moved to New York City. She was a reporter and editor for *Freedom*, a progressive black newspaper in New York from 1950 to 1953. In 1959, Lorraine Hansberry writes a play "A Raisin in the Sun". This play won the New York's Drama Critic Circle's Award in 1959 and was made into a motion picture in 1961. Hansberry's second play, "The Sign in Sidney Brustein's Window (1964), concerns a white intellectual in Greenwich Village, New York City. After Hansberry's death from cancer, her husband (a white man), songwriter and music publisher Robert Nemiroff, adapted her letters, plays, and papers into the production "To Be Young, Gifted and

Black" (1969). This compilation was published in book form in 1970. During her career Hansberry also wrote many articles and essays on racism, homophobia, world peace and other social issues. This play is written by Lorraine Hansberry and set in Chicago, which lies in the Southern area. *A Raisin in The Sun* tells the story of a black Chicago family's attempt to find sense in their constrained existence. (<http://www.msn.encarta.com>)

This domestic drama set in the 1950s on the South Side of Chicago, tells the story of the Younger family. Following the death of the family's father, the Younger family awaits for Big Walter's life insurance. For Walter Lee, the money would enable him to open a liquor store and give up his work as a chauffeur for a wealthy white. Beneatha dreams of using the money to attend medical school and work in Africa. Mama realizes that the insurance money cannot fulfill all the family's dreams, so she uses some of the money as a down payment on a house in a white neighborhood. Mama gives the remainder to Walter Lee, but he gives it all to his business partner, who absconds. Destitute, Walter Lee considers accepting money from a group of whites to stay away from their neighborhood. At a crucial moment, Lena tells Walter Lee that he can accept the whites' offer if he is prepared to allow his son to watch the humiliating transaction. Despite his earlier cynicism, Walter Lee resolves to move the family into the new house, to brave the inevitable violence and forego the money, but to keep his family's dignity intact.

1.2 Statement of The Problem

The whites have always dominated blacks. In this study, the inferior, who is the black people, has lived under the representations that are made by the whites.

1.3 Scope and Limitation

The explanation of this study will be in the scope of the white's representation toward black and the struggle of the black people against the white's representation in order to achieve their dreams.

1.4 Goals and Function

This study has three goals:

1. To see how *A Raisin in The Sun* deconstructs the representation of the whites toward the blacks.
2. To show the struggle of the blacks to achieve their dreams.
3. To prove that black people can exist as a racial identity in American society.

This study is composed in order to give a description of white's representation against the blacks and also show the struggle of the blacks to achieve their dreams.

This study is also expected to help those who are interested in literature so that they can have better understanding of how blacks make alternative representation.

1.5 Research Methodology

The method of information collecting is Library research. The sources and other material taken from:

- ❖ American Cultural Center Library or Kajian Wilayah Amerika

It is located in Salemba at Indonesian University. In here, I gain lots of material about black people and the white's representation.

- ❖ The Internet; I also gain many materials about Hansberry's play and the theory of Post Structuralism, Identity (Stuart Hall) and Deconstruction (the method).

1.6 The Systematical of Writing

Chapter one consists of background of the study, the statement of the problem, the scope and limitation, the goal and function, the research methodology and the systematical of writing.

Chapter two describes some related theories that are used in this research such as Representation, Post-structuralism, Theory of Identity, and Deconstruction. It also contains an explanation about the whites' representation toward the blacks such as in job, skin color, education and housing.

Chapter three illustrates the summary of Lorraine Hansberry's play and the analysis in which the blacks are described as the strong, the beautiful, the smart, have a racial identity. In order to support the analysis, some examples of the characters are also given from the play.

Chapter four contains the conclusion of the analysis. The conclusion wants to inform that *A Raisin in the Sun* can deconstruct the whites' representation, describe the struggle of the blacks to achieve their dreams. It also proves that the blacks can exist as a racial identity in the American society.

Chapter five describes the whole summary of this paper in Indonesian language.