

Abstract

This thesis studies *A Raisin in the Sun* and expects to bring new inspirations of how African Americans develop their own identities confronting social plights and white ideology. With the realistic writing style, Lorraine Hansberry truthfully depicts and reflects African Americans' life in the segregated ghetto in the 1950s. As space carries significant meanings in the enforced segregation laws, Mikhail Bakhtin's chronotope serves as the main theoretical framework of this thesis. The play is interconnected with its contemporary history, so we may interpret the characters by considering their historical background and infer the American blacks' future path by scrutinizing the plot and actions in the play.

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One is an introduction to the author's life, the play, the critical opinions, and the theoretical framework. In Chapter Two, there are two main issues: first, how this play reflects the historical background, and second, interpretation of characters in relation to their specific social contexts. Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* is applied to explain the potential of assimilation of some characters. Chapter Three reveals how African Americans under the white hegemony find their own identities in social, cultural, and family perspectives. The gist is that they must strive for the improvement of their social status, embrace both African and American cultural roots, and stick to their family pride. Stuart Hall's theory on diaspora is useful to deal with the cultural identity which ambiguously covers both African and American essences. Chapter Four is the conclusion of the thesis that sums up the author's belief and intention in writing the play.