

## ENWR 106

### Small Group Discussion Questions: Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun"

1. The play's title is a line from the Langston Hughes poem that introduces the play (p. 1453) Explain how the context of the entire poem helps to explain the play's title and its major concerns.
2. One of the major themes presented in Lorraine Hansberry's "A Raisin in the Sun" portrays each character's search for their vision of the American Dream. What are the "dreams deferred" by Walter, Ruth, Mama and Beneatha?
3. Hansberry skillfully illustrates through the three female protagonists how women's ideas about their identity have changed over time. Explain how each of these women represents the changes in women's roles and ideas over the three generations that they span.
4. At the end of the play, speaking to Ruth about Walter Lee, Mama says "He finally come into his manhood today, didn't he"? How does Mama appear to be defining manhood? What other possible definitions of manhood come up directly or indirectly in the play? Would you say that the issue of gender is at least as important in this play as race is? Why or why not?
5. Similar to our reading of Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" there is a strong motif of afro centrism throughout the play. Analyze Asagai's conversations with Beneatha and the rest of her family. What does Hansberry suggest about the relations of Africans and African Americans in the late 1950's? What does she also suggest about class tensions within the African American community?
6. The Housing Act of 1949 had only been in place for ten years when the play hit the stage, but the majority of African Americans were still living in poverty. Discuss ways in which integration are presented throughout the play. Was integration the end all answer to America's race problem? Why or why not?