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Relationships in *A Raisin in the Sun* Exhibit Reflection

The large bolded title, “Issues within the Community and Relationships in Lorraine Hansberry’s ‘A Raisin in the Sun’ and During the 1950’s,” immediately drew my focus in. The all-bold title shows the importance and seriousness of the topic. Reading the title got me thinking about what I know about the types of relationships at this time, and made me think that maybe I do not know as much about the topic as I thought I did. I then thought about the relationships I could remember from *A Raisin in the Sun* and remembered that the play portrayed issues between the African American and white communities at this time. Thinking about the main focus of the play, which I originally thought was discrimination, I realized that the play focuses a lot more on the interactions between characters. Then, looking at the design of the first slide, I notice the title is in a white box surrounded by dark grey, which could represent a closed off white community that pushes other races out. The text in the center could show how people started fighting this separation, and pushing into these communities.

 Moving to the next slide there is no title, only text. This makes me think that I am meant to focus on what the text says rather than be distracted by something like a title or picture. While reading the introduction, it becomes clear that the exhibit will be focused on events and relationships in Chicago. Looking at the structure of the exhibit explained in the introduction, I expect to see a flow from the play by Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, to views about segregation in the media, to activism. Reading the last sentence about how broken relationships because of segregation are still present today and need to be stopped got me thinking about examples of this. What immediately came to mind was the current issue between the African American Community and the Police force. I realize that this is a very big issue, and that it has become so prevalent and so much of a part of daily life now that I do not realize how much of an issue it is or how much it needs to be stopped. After reading I felt compelled to look back at the structure of the sentences. The first thing I noticed was that each sentence was a statement. Then I noticed that the sentences go from the topic of the exhibit, to the reason for the relationships in the exhibit, to examples of relationships, to people making a change during the time period, to why we need to make a change today. This flow makes sense in that it moves from background to the events to its relation to current time. As I prepare to go to the next slide, I expect to see details about *A Raisin in the Sun* and how segregation played a role in the relationships in the play.

 On the next side, the first thing I notice is a large white text box with the information for Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun.* I then start thinking about the play, and what I can remember about it. The first thing I remember is the scene where Beneatha is dancing around the living room in Nigerian clothing, and start thinking about how she was trying to embrace her African heritage. The next thing about the play that I remember is the scene where Mr. Linder is bribing the Younger family not to move into the white neighborhood they were looking at buying a house in. Moving back to the text, as I read the first sentence I find it odd that the slide begins by describing the script. Though I then realize that pointing out the newspaper clippings in the script was important because they contained important information about the play. The clippings provide proof that the play made an impact in the community at the time, and also verify that the play’s portrayal of the community was accurate. The next sentence states that “this play is a result of event from Lorraine Hansberry’s childhood.” It explains that events in *A Raisin in the Sun* came from *To Be Young, Gifted, and Black* which I know to be an accumulation of Lorraine Hansberry’s writings. This gets me curious about which events in the play could be real events from Hansberry’s life. The next sentence points out that the scene where the Youngers are being pressured out of moving into their new home was a result of events from Lorraine Hansberry’s life. Then I remember that Hansberry did live in a predominantly white neighborhood when she was young, and had some problems with the white community while living there. Learning that the white community caused problems in the neighborhood for fear that the African American community would cause problems first, made me mad and then confused. I was angry to hear that people were disturbing African Americans living in ‘their community’ for the sole reason that they were a different race than them. I was then confused as to why the white community would do so much to push African American out of the community when they were not doing anything to disturb anyone else’s lives. I completely agree with the last sentence of this slide about *A Raisin in the Sun.* The last sentence talks about how the play reflects preconceptions about African Americans and the issues this caused in the community. I can see this through the example of broken relationships in the Younger family being pressured out of a white community, and this again makes me angry that these types of things went on, but also sad because it was so unnecessary.

 The first thing that stands out about the next slide is the fact that there are many contributors to the text. I thought that *To Be Young, Gifted, and Black* was a collection of Lorraine Hansberry’s work, but then I realize that others may have contributed to the structure, organization, and may have even commented on her work. The description of the book mentions that it will focus on the chapter about Hansberry’s time in Chicago, which is fitting considering the fact that this is the focus of the exhibit. I notice that it is mentioned that Hansberry was surrounded by activists during her childhood, and wonder how this relates to relationships at this time. The next sentence talks about the time during Hansberry’s childhood that she was almost hit by a missile that was fired into her living room. This story is just as shocking and appalling as the first time I heard it. I wonder how someone could do that to another human being, and how someone could put a child’s life in danger like that. Knowing that events like this actually happened makes me believe that *A Raisin in the Sun* is an accurate portrayal of community life in Chicago in the 1950’s. The last sentence of the slide mentions that “other accounts of what it was like in Chicago in the 1950’s can be found in newspaper articles.” This makes me curious about what kind of things were mentioned in newspapers at the time, prompting me to move to the next slide.

 A picture of a newspaper article is the first thing that catches my attention on this next slide. I can only read the title of the article, *Teens Tell Views on School Segregation,* but assume that the main point of the article will be summarized. Reading the title of the article, I find it interesting that the article is about teens views on segregation, but also refreshing since many people only want to know what adults think about difficult situations. My eyes are then drawn to the information about the article, and it is not surprising to see that the article is from a Chicago newspaper. I find the fact that teens were more opposed to integrating African Americans into the school system when it came down to actually integrating them surprising. I thought that teens would be getting used to the idea, and starting to accept other races. This fact makes me think that teens wanted to think that they would be okay with going to school with those from a different race, but when it was actually happening they were nervous about the changes that would happen and did not want to change their lives for anyone. The next sentence brings up the point that these interracial “relationships were forced on each other” by the Supreme Court decision to abolish segregation. This gets me thinking about how this could cause push back in the community, they say they would not mind integrating African American children into the school systems, but they want it to be on their own terms. The last sentence of this description talks about how despite the difficult relationships, African Americans stuck together and fought the discrimination they were facing. This is statement hooked me, and gets me thinking about the many ways African American have fought for their rights over the years. Moving to the nest slide I expect to see some example of activism.

 On the next slide I first notice a picture of five African American individuals standing outside a building holding signs. The information about the picture tells us that they are striking a hospital, and from the first sentence in the description we can tell that they are striking for better pay. This does not surprise me, and it is good to see something being done. The last sentence of the description points out that while they were striking due to issues in the community, people were coming together. I did not think about this aspect, but it is nice to see some good relationships that were forming despite everything else that was happening at the time. This makes me want to see more examples of positive relationships during the 1950’s as I move to the next slide.

 This last slide is similar to the last, and the first thing that stands out is a picture of two African American women standing on either side of and African American man. The first thing I notice is that the two women are smiling at each other, and one of them even looks like she could be laughing. It is not until I read the title of the picture that I notice that they are each wearing March on Washington pins for jobs and freedom. I was so captured by the joy of the two women that I did not even notice that they were together to fight for equality. Reading through the description I notice that the picture serves the same importance as the one on the previous slide, but the last sentence points out that the relationships between African Americans were mostly focused on freedom and equality. I think that it is nice to see people come together like this, and seeing a picture of happy people is a very positive way to end an exhibit.

 Overall, I liked that the exhibit portrayed some new aspects of 1950’s relationships in Chicago that I had not noticed before. I noticed a transition from bad relationships to good relationships which created an overall flow from the negativity to positivity of relationships throughout the exhibit. The most prominent thing I noticed about the exhibit was that it ended on the topic of activism. This makes the point memorable, and gets me thinking about the type of activism that is happening today. It is so different from how things were done in the past, and this gets me thinking about what can be done about this issue.