Group #6

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*Raisin in the Sun*

Book Questions:

**5. Explain the roles of Joseph Asagai and George Murchison. Does either character have thematic significance? Explain.**

Joseph Asagai and George Murchison are two characters in the play that seem to have an attraction towards Beneatha, who also seems to be attracted to both of them. However, both of the characters have different important thematic significances and Beneatha are attracted to them in different aspects. George Murchison represents more of the traditional male in the mid-20th century, who stuck to society's beliefs that the male was a predominant figure. He didn't really respect Beneatha for her own personal beliefs and didn't want really want to spend the time to listen to her thoughts. “ George: That's all you need, honey, forget the atmosphere. Guys aren't going to go for the atmosphere-they're going to go for what they see...I want a nice sophisticated girl...I don't go out with you to discuss the nature of “quiet desperation” or to hear all about your thoughts-because the world will go on thinking what it thinks regardless...it [education] has nothing to do with thoughts.” When George saw that Beneatha changed the way she dressed and cut her hair, he didn't think it was “natural” when it fact, was her own cultural identity. “Beneatha: thats up to George. If he's ashamed of his heritage-George: Oh, don't be so proud of yourself, Bennie-just because you look eccentric.” Beneatha didn't really like him because of his reputation, social status, and personality as much. She didn't care that he was rich or had a lot of money. Beneatha understood what class he was in but chose not to really like him, “The Murchinsons are honest-to-God-real-*live-*rich colored people, and the only people in the world who are more snobbish than rich white people are rich colored people.” George Mutchinson represents more of the 20th century male, who cared for his social status and didn't see women as equals.

Joseph Asagai on the other hand represents a strong advocate of the feminist movement. He's the character that doesn't care about the material possessions or one's social status. Instead, he is a very passionate about one's identity, culture, desire, education, and individuality. “Beneatha: Asagai doesn't care how houses look, Mama-he's an intellectual...He's been studying in Canada all summer.” Not only does he support Beneatha's dreams of becoming a doctor, but he also pushes her to embrace her ethnic roots. “Asagai: Were you born with it [Beneatha's hair] like that? Beneatha: No..of course not. Asagai: And so to accommodate that-you mutilate it every week?...You came up to me and you said..'Mr. Asagai-I want very much to talk with you. About Africa. You see, Mr. Asagai, I am looking for my identity.'” Asagai sees that Beneatha is serious about finding her identity. “Beneatha: You didn't tell us what Alaiyo means...for all I know, you might be calling me Little Idiot or something. Asagai: it means One for Whom Bread-Food-Is not Enough.” He is the character that pursues to break out of society's stereotypes. “Beneatha: Independence and then what? Asagai: An end to misery! To stupidity! Don't you see there isn't any real progress, Asagai, there is only one large circle that we march in, around and around, each of us with our own little picture in front of us-our own little mirage that we think is the future...those who see the chances-who dream, who will not give up-are called idealists...and those who see only the circle-we call them the “realists”.” Asagai and George Mutchison are two very opposite characters who represent two different themes. While Asagai represents the fight for individuality and a break from society's stereotypes, George, represents just the opposite, someone who is a stickler for conformity and traditions.

**10. How is Hansberry's play a comment on the Langston Hughes poem that she uses as her epigraph?**

Hansberry’s play is a comment on the Langston Hughes poem “Harlem” or “A Dream Deferred” because Hughes’s poem describes the status of a dream that is deferred or postponed. He states that it can either “dry up, fester, run, stink, crust, sag or explode”. He is saying that a potential dream that is not tended to can be very dangerous and harmful. Hansberry’s play comments on the aspect that everyone has dreams but not everyone’s dreams can come true. At the end of the play Beneatha still needs tuition money for her medical school and Walter stills needs the money to achieve his dream as a liquor store owner. Hansberry leaves the dreams hanging or “deferred” to connect it to the epigraph. “Picking on me is not going to make her give it to you to invest in any liquor stores”.“Ain’t many girls who decide to be a doctor”. Hughes’s poem is also about the low standards of dreams in the African-American dominated area of Harlem. He is stating that African-Americans have a harder time following their dreams than do the white people. In Hansberry’s play the family has to choose between many potential dreams and in the end, decides to move into a bigger place. This decision affects all the other dreams to be postponed and is probably why the play ends without any comment on what happens to all the postponed dreams.

The last three lines, “Maybe it just sags Like a heavy load. Or does it explode?” With the reader left hanging with what happens to a “dream deferred” expresses the main story in *Raisin in the Sun*  as well. In the end even though Beneatha still needs money for her school tuition and Walter wasn’t able to open the liquor store, the Younger family was still able to move into a bigger house, which was Mama’s dream. In this case, dreams were left “sagging”, and dreams were accomplished. However, the story shows that dreams could have so many outcomes, yet dreams could really be constantly changing. When Ruth found out that she was going to have a baby, the family’s dreams definitely changed since the decision to keep the baby also had an influence on whether or not they would move into a bigger house to provide for the child. Langston Hughes’s poem expresses the possible outcomes that dreams could have, which are descrbied in detail in the play *Raisin in the Sun.*

**Biographical Analysis**

This play takes place in Chicago in the 20th century, during the fight for African American rights. Lorraine Hansberry is an African American writer who also lived in Chicago during this time period. In the play, the Younger family decides to move into Clybourne Park, a predominantly white neighborhood, where African Americans aren’t welcomed. “It is a matter of the people of Clybourne Park believing, rightly or wrongly, as I say, that for the happiness of all concerned that our Negro families are happier when they live in their *own* communities.” Just like the Younger family, Lorraine Hansberry moved into Washington Park Subdivision, a predominantly white neighborhood where African Americans weren’t welcomed. Just by living in Chicago, Hansberry can easily incorporate the living environments she saw growing up, into the play. When she moved into the white neighborhood, she could also easily show the readers possible mixed emotions and feelings her family felt before moving in. Also, just like Beneatha, Lorraine was able to get a college education and pursue her dream of becoming a writer. This makes it easier for Lorraine to describe and include specific actions made by Beneatha while she fought for her dream to become a doctor. She relates and reflects her personality, dreams, and ambitions through Benethra. Beneatha’s headstrong, individualistic attitude and her ambitions to become a doctor throughout the play is parallel to how Lorraine skipped college and pursued her dream of becoming a writer, despite the race biases. This play was the first play that was produced by an African American and produced on Broadway. During this time period, women were still fighting for equal rights and still held the “domestic housewife” role in society, subordinate to men. Like Lorraine was able to be one of the few African Americans to create a successful and popular plays, Beneatha was one of the few women who sought for a higher education, despite her family’s doubts. “Walter: Who the hell told you you had to be a doctor? If you so crazy ‘bout messing ‘round with sick people-then go be a nurse like other women-or just get married and be quiet...” Lorraine’s family, when they were told that it would be best if they didn’t live in the Washington Park Subdivision, they fought back. Her father took their case of household discrimination to the Supreme Court. After many trials, the Harberrys won the landmark Harberry VS Lee case. The “man in the house” in Raisin in the Sun also fought back when he told the Karl Lindner that they were going to move into the house. “My son said we were going to move and there ain't nothing left for me to say.”

**Feminist Analysis**

In 20th century Chicago, the African American community was trying to branch out and and create their own legacies in the America. Nonetheless, they faced discrimination and segregation from society. For example, when Mama dropped a down payment for the house in Clybourne Park, Karl Lindner, a representative from the “Clybourne Park Improvement Association”, wanted to make a “financial arrangement” “for the happiness of all concerned...”, “that our Negro families are happier when they live in their *own* communities”. Education was limited to most African Americans because schools were separated. Furthermore, the education system for African Americans were weaker and less prominent than the Whites. Women, both White and African American, received little or no education because women’s role were housewives and education is useless for them. Everyone in the Younger family received little or no education, except Benethra. When Beneatha wanted to take on different interests, like guitar lessons, Mama and Ruth nagged her, telling her that it was waste of time. However, she is also a college student who dreams of someday becoming a doctor, a job that usually belonged a white man. She has bigger dreams and ambition than other women, and this shows the emergence of women into the men’s work field. Because she is the only person in the family with a higher education, her language and actions are more logical and reasonable. Benethra and her mother fought because she questioned God, and does not believed in God’s work. “What has he got to do with anything? Does he pay tuition?” Since she has become more analytical as a person (due to her education), she is a believer in science and reason as opposed to her mother, of whom believes that things happen because God destined it. In response to Beneatha's dissent, Mama slapped her across the face. Beneatha fights for individuality, while Mama chooses to stick with tradition.

When it came to the men’s views in this play, they considered themselves more important than the women. Walter did not seem to respect Ruth throughout the play. In the beginning of the play when Ruth made him eggs in the morning and woke him up, Walter was very rude to her and criticized her, “First thing a man ought to learn in life is not to make love to no colored women first thing in the morning. You all some eeeevil people at eight o'clock in the morning.” When Walter finds out that Ruth is pregnant as well, he doesn’t seem to care as much to say anything to her. “He just closes the door behind him. MAMA sits alone, thinking heavily.” Especially when the play introduces George Murchinson, we are able to see the women’s traditional views on the relationship between men and women compared to Beneatha’s, modern view on female and male roles. “Ruth: Shallow-what do you mean he’s shallow? He’s Rich! Beneatha: I know he’s rich. He knows he’s rich, too. Ruth: Well-what other qualities a man got to have to satisfy you, little girl? Beneatha: You wouldn’t even begin to understand. Anybody who married Walter could not possibly understand.” Mama and Ruth, the women who stick to traditional views of the domestic housewife, contrast with the more modern generation of women like Beneatha, who focused more on other aspects of relationships beside money and material possessions. George Mutchinson also didn’t seem to care so much about Beneatha’s thoughts as well. When Beneatha wanted to talk to George, he got upset since she didn’t want to kiss him and wanted to talk instead. “

Even though the views on both the male and female roles in society are introduced, the author presents the work from within a predominantly male sensibility. Ruth and Mama are the two characters that show up mostly throughout the play, play the characters that are subordinate to men, and chose to not do anything about their situation. Whenever Walter chooses to talk down to Ruth, Ruth doesn’t talk back or do anything to displease him. Also, Mama throughout the whole play, keeps mentioning her husband and how he helped to provide for the family financial and work hard to keep her dream. “mama: I seen...him..night after night...come in...and look at the rug...and then look at me...the red showing in his eyes...the vein moving in his head...I seen him grown thin and old before he was forty...working and working and working like somebody’s old horse...and killing himself...and you-you give it all away in a day-...” When Beneatha does show up in the play, her character enables us to see the different male roles in society with her relationships with George Mutchinson and Asagai. Even though Beneatha enables us to see the feminist movement at the time, her character enables us to see the modern views of men with Asagai and the more traditional views with George Mutchinson.

*Raisin in the Sun*  notes on Figurative Language

Ruth:

· “sleepy as a devil” shows her grumpy behavior in the morning, about life

· “investin’ in things” the use of slang shows uneducated lifestyle, compared to that of Beneatha

· “people be drinkin themselves a livin’ “ talking about how Walter wants to invest money into a liquor store but doesn’t express the same beliefs

Walter:

· “You all are some evil creatures” talking about all the yelling that’s going on around the house

· “chocking on death…” he’s mad about how he isn’t able to have money, to provide a better life for his family, an aspect of life that is most important to you

Mama:

· “getting a little sweet on him, huh?” talking to Beneatha about George Mutchinson

· “you ‘bout to get your fresh little jaw snapped” talking to Beneatha about her views on religion, all the use of her slang shows that Mama’s isn’t as educated as other characters like Beneatha, which also shows that Beneatha uses reasoning instead of religion to strive for education

· “that no make no difference, I ain’t putting no memory of my husband in no liquor” use of slang

* “Something eating you up like a crazy man.” She tells this to Walter when Walter doesn’t want to sit down to talk to Ruth.

Beneatha:

· “You’re a nut” talking about Walter and his stubbornness about Mama’s money, shows that he isn’t able to share other people’s views or learn to listen to them

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**Setting**

- 7:30 scene one, early in the morning, everyone in the family has to get up to work for money, and scramble to use the restroom

- Check is coming sat but it is only Friday, how everyone eagerly awaits for the check, shows how desperate their financial situation is

- Two room apartment with a connected kitchen and living room- small living space, very cramped, shows their economic status compared to the other houses and neighborhoods

- Ruth and walter lee share and room and mama and Beneatha share a room, space is limited and rooms are connected with little private room

- Travis sleeps in the living room on the couch, very close to the kitchen and other rooms

- Their apartment is small and cramped

The setting of the play shows us that the Younger family is not in the best financial situation. The fact they they have to share a bathroom with everyone else in the building and the fact that their house is very cramped, with Travis sleeping in the living room, adds to their troubles they face in the story. In the play, the Younger family have to deal with waiting for the check, Travis begging for school money, keeping jobs, and working late. The whole play’s plot revolves around Mama’s check and what everyone should do with it. The setting from the beginning of the play emphasises their situation and enables us to visually see and sympathize with their troubles.

**Egg Tarts in the Sun Presentations**

Shang: Caroline

Big Mama: Eunice

Big Papa: Arada

Mei: Jessica

Setting: Typical Chinese American home. The house of the Lee family consist of a mother, father, a son, and a daughter. They live in small, fairly middle class sized home. They have a parent’s room, and one room for the daughter and son to share. They have a small kitchen connected to the living room.

*Scene 1: Saturday at five in the morning in the living room. Mei is sitting at the living room table finishing her drawing. The light was dimmed because she’s afraid that she might wake her parents up. She sits quietly and paint in the dimmed room until she hears her parents walk into her room that she shares with Shang. Mei sighs and continues her painting.*

(*Big Papa and Big Mama wake up at 6:30 from the alarm clock. They go into Shang’s room.)*

Big Papa: Shang wake up! You need to study!

Shang: No. Let me sleep. I don’t want to study.

Big Mama: You have to in order to become a doctor. If you want to be a doctor, you need to study. Get up now!

Big Papa: We bought you new books and just enrolled you into two more classes. Your education is the most important right now.

Shang: I don’t even want to be a doctor! Let me sleep.

Big Mama: NO! Get up this instant Shang! Do not disappoint our family and disrespect your elders. Now, GET UP!

(*Big Papa and Big Mama leave Shang’s room, goes into the living room, and sees Mei drawing at the table.)*

Big Mama: What do you think you are doing?! Why aren’t you studying instead of wasting your time drawing?

Mei: Mom, remember I told you, I want to be an artist. I woke up early so I could draw and study too.

Big Mama: You’re wasting your time with this? You need to dedicate all your time studying. Why are you disrespecting your culture??

Big Papa: It doesn’t matter anyways. Let her do what she wants. It’s not like she’s going to get far. Don’t worry, we have Shang to live up to the family name.

Big Mama: Fine Mei, since you’re sooo smart, make your own breakfast and get your own school stuff.

(*Big Mama and Big Papa go into the kitchen to cook breakfast for themselves and Shang.)*

*Scene 2: Mei sits at her desk looking through newspaper for job opportunities and scrolls through the internet to find scholarships for art school, while Shang is on the bed playing video games.*

Mei: Can you keep it down? You know, some people are trying to use their time productively.

Shang: Why? It’s not like Dad and Mom are going to pay for *your* school. And for someone like you, I doubt you can even make it in.

Mei: Just watch. I’m going to raise the money and study for it, *myself*. I don’t need their money. I’m going to work so I can achieve my dream!

(Shang ignores her and continues playing his game.)

**Presentation Analysis**

In our skit, we portrayed Mei and Beneatha, Shang as Walter, Big Mama as Mama, and Big Papa as Ruth. In this skit, we portrayed how Mei, like Beneatha, who wants to pursue a certain dream. How Mei is really motivated to go to art school and pursue her dream of becoming an artist is just like how Beneatha wants to become a doctor. In the play, Beneatha shows her persistence of achieving a higher education by not letting Ruth, Mama, and Walter’s doubts get to her and by consistently going to college. Like Beneatha, Mei doesn’t let what her parents and her brother say to her about her dream. Instead, just like Beneatha, she insists that she will study to achieve her dream and become an artists. When Mei told Shang that she didn’t care that her parents weren’t going to pay for her college, also parallels how Beneatha didn’t want Mama to use her retirement money for her college funds. We also emphasised Beneatha’s persistence even more by pointing out that even though her parents, like Ruth and Mama, were very traditional and wanted to focus only on getting a specific education, Mei still wanted to pursue her dream of becoming an artist. This introduces the feminist aspect of Beneatha, who fought for her individuality, despite social and cultural aspects in society at the time. In the play, Ruth and Mama held the traditional subordinate domestic roles in the family and didn’t really welcome Beneatha’s choice of pursuing an education. Ruth even saw it as a waste of time, while Beneatha wanted to try out guitar lessons and pursue her dream of becoming a doctor. In society, women were still held subordinate to men, and when George Mutchinson was introduced, Beneatha refused to accept the traditional roles of women and marry George just because he was rich. Beneatha symbolizes the feminist movement by embracing her individuality when she shares the beliefs of Asagai, who was carefree and supported Beneatha and her dreams to become a doctor.

**Characterization**

Beneatha is a student trying to become a doctor, which is a very hard dream and goal to accomplish because she is an African-American woman who comes from a low-income family. She has to struggle with not only financial issues, but also with support issues from her family. Most members of the family are not huge supporters of her decision to become a doctor, and sees her dream as something that is far from achievable. Her family also does not support her doing things just for the feel of learning something new. Mama: “How come you done taken it in your mind to learn to play the guitar?” Beneatha: “I just want to, that’s all” In the end of the play, her dream of being a doctor is postponed and it is unknown what happens to her dream.

**Diction**

Beneatha’s education plays a big role in her everyday diction with everyone in the play. Though her family talks in a ghetto, slanged, and uneducated diction, Beneatha chooses to speak very formal, grammar-wise. As opposed to Mama’s diction, very slanged and ghetto (“Ain’t nobody trying to stop you. I just wonder sometimes why you has to flit...”), she is very formal and doesn’t talk like her family members. “I don’t flit! I-I experiment with different forms of expression-”.

**Syntax**

Beneatha's syntax differed from the rest of her family. Her family uses slang and broken english, while she puts her idea into complete, sophisticated usage of english. When she talks, she sounds more trustworthy than her brother, mother, and sister-in-law. When Lindner came into their home and talked about how the people in that committee do not want them, Walter responded with rage, “Nevermind how I feel- you got any more to say ‘bout how people ought to sit down and talk to each other?... Get out of my house, man.” Beneatha, on the other hand, she was upset she did not respond with rage but with sarcasm, “This, friend, is the Welcoming Committee!” Though her brother talks with slang (“you a horrible-looking chick at this hour”), she has perfect verb-subject agreement. “I dissected something that looked just like you yesterday.” Although she mostly speaks with perfect tense and formal english, she sometime uses slang and broken english with incorrect grammar, “Everybody talking ‘bout heaven ain’t going there!”

**Beneatha Quotes**

**Scene 1**

I am going to start timing those people.

Really-would you suggest dawn? Where’s the paper? (her face in her hands. She is still fighting the urge to go back to bed)

Good morning, everybody.

Lovely. Lovely. And you know, biology is the greatset. (Looking up at him) I dissected something that looked just like you yesterday.

*A: The first couple lines gives us a glimpse of Beneatha’s fiestiness. The way she talks to Walter shows her us that she has a pretty sharp attitude. This also shows Benethra’s interest in education, which most women that that time would not be interested in education becaues most women were not educated. It also reveals her interest in becoming a doctor.*

(gaining in sharpness and impatience) And what did I answer yesterday morning-and the day before that?

(still to her brother) And the day before that and the day before that!

(exists to the bathroom and bangs on the door) Come on out of there, please!

(turning on him with a sharpness all her own): That money belongs to Mama, Walter, and it’s for her to decide how she wants to use it. I don’t care if she wants to buy a house or a rocket ship or just nail it up somewhere and look at it. It’s hers. Not ours-*hers.*

*A: Walter wants to use the insurance money to open his liquor store, but everyone was against that idea. Benethra states that this money is not theirs, and they don’t have any rights to use the money. This shows that is fair, she respects her mother, and wants her mother to do what she wants with the money. It also shows that she’s very independent and self driven by her own morals. She wants an education and is going to get one by her own means, without the help with anyone else.*

I have never asked anyone around here to do anything for me!

*A: This shows that she is independent and that she does not depend on anyone except herself. This symbolizes the new type of woman during the century, one that doesn’t rely on the man in the house.*

(with fury) What do you want from me, Brother-that I quit school or just drop dead, which!

*A: Benethra values education greatly and she would rather be dead than quit school. Most women during that time does not see the importance of education and especially for African American.*

(dropping to her knees) Well-I do- all right? thank everybody! and forgive me for ever wanting to be anything at all (Pursuing him on her knees across the floor) FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME, FORGIVE ME!

*A: It shows her frustration towards her family who do not value her dreams. Most of her family looks down on her and said that she can not succeed, so this quote shows her frustration.*

Well-you finally got it said...It took you three years but you finally got it said. Walter give up;leave me alone-it’s Mama’s money.

So what? He was mine,too-and Travis’ grandfather-but the insurance money belongs to Mama. Picking on me is not going to make her give it to you to invest in any liquor stores-(underbreath, dorpping into a chair)-and I for one say, God bless Mama for that!

A: *Beneatha understands that the money is Mama’s money and that it’s Mama’s money fair and square. She idolizes this idea and refused to accept that Mama uses the money for her education. This shows her own morals that she will use what she deserves and it also shows her independence.*

Because you’re a nut.

You-you are a nut. Thee is mad, boy.

And then there are all those prophets who would lead us out of the wilderness-into the swamps!

*A: This shows her questioning religion, which Benethra does not believe in religion, and she questioned God with her mother. Because of this, her mother slapped her in the face.*

In the cleaners

I’m not cold Mama, honest.

Mama, I’m not cold.

It’s not important, Mama (about the fight with Walter)

*A: Benethra is independent and does not want her mother to treat her like a child and baby her.*

What could be so dirty on that woman’s rugs that she has to vacuum them every single day?

(shrugging) How much cleaning can a house need, for Christ’s sakes.

Oh, God!

(a bit of a whine) Oh, Mama-

Well-if the salt loses its savor-

*A: Benetha criticizes her neighbor, Mrs. Johnson. it also shows her that she was annoyed with her.*

How did I manage to get on everybody’s wrong side by just walking into a room?

*A: Because she has a decent education, she’s different from her family. The way she thinks and talk are distinct from her family.*

Ruth, I’m twenty years old.

*A: This shows her frustration towards her sister-in-law because Ruth thinks that she still need to be in the care of her mother and brother. Ruth doesn’t see Beneatha as an independent woman and she doesn’t realized that Beneatha is the only person in the family to receive a decent education.*

Kind of late (with enthusiasm) Madeline is going to start my guitar lessons today.

Guitar.

I just want to, that’s all.

(sharply) I just want to learn to play the guitar. Is there anything wrong iwth that?

*A: Beneatha has tried to learn many things. She is not afraid to change and learn new things. Her other family members don’t understand why she wants to expand on her new education. This also symbolizes the feminist movement since she wants to strive for a better education and isn’t bound by society and traditional views.*

I don’t flit!I-I experiment with different forms of expression-

-People have to express themselves one way or another.

(angrily) me! Don’t worry-I don't expect you to understand.

*A: Because she’s very social and she meets many people at college, she has a different approach towards others. Because of their different lifestyles, her family does not understand her.*

(with displeasure) George Murchinson again.

Oh-I like George all right, Mama. I mean I like him enough to go out with him and stuff, but-

Mind your own business (to Ruth)

Oh, I just mean I couldn’t ever really be serious about George. He’s-he’s so shallow.

I know he’s rich. He knows he’s rich, too.

You wouldn’t even begin to understand. Anybody who married Walter could not possibly understand.

Brother is a flip-lets face it.

Not crazy. Brother isn’t really crazy yet-he-he’s an elaborate neurotic.

As for George. Well. George looks good-he’s got a beautiful car and he takes me to nice places and, as my sister-in-law says, he is probably the richest boy I will ever get to know and I even like him sometimes-but if the Youngers are sitting around waiting to see if their little Bennie is going to tie up the family with the Murchinsons, they are wasting their time.

No I would not marry him if all I felt for him was what I feel now. Besdies, George’s family wouldn’t really like it.

Oh, Mama-The Murchinsons are honest-to-God-real-*live*-rich colored people, and the only people in the world who are more snobbish than rich white people are rich colored people. I thought everybody knew that. I’ve met Mrs. Murchinson. She’s a scene!

Why not? It makes just as much sense as disliking people ‘cause they are poor, and lots of people do that.

*A:Beneatha does not conform to society’s usual views on social and racial standings. She understands the modern views of society. She also isn’t going out with George Murchison because he is rich. She says she doesn’t want to marry him because he is shallow and very materialistic. This also represents how Beneatha is a symbol of the feminist movement. How she actually cares about the love in the relationship and now the traditional, the men are in charge. She sees that the relationships are above how successful they are.*

Get over it? What are you talking about, Ruth? Listen, I’m going to be a doctor. I’m not worried about who I’m going to marry yet-if I ever get married.

Oh, I probably will...but first I’m going to be a doctor, and George, for one, still thinks that’s pretty funny. i couldn't be bothered with that. I am going to be a doctor and everybody around here better understand that!

*A: Beneatha is not going to let anyone stop her from accomplishing her dream of becoming a doctor. This shows her independence and headstrong motivation.*

God hasn’t got a thing to do with it.

Well-neither is God. I get sick of hearing about God.

I mean it! I’m just tired of hearing about God all the time. What has He got to do with anything? Does he pay tuition?

*A: Beneatha questions her family’s faith and beliefs. She is studying to be a doctor who usually has to trust science and she is mad that her fate does not seem fruitful.*

why? Why can’t I say what I want to around here, like everybody else?

Mama, you don’t understand. It’s all a batter of ideas, and God is just one idea I don’t accept. It’s not important. I am not going out and be immoral or commit crimes because I don’t believe in God. I don’t even think about it. It’s just that I get tired of Him getting credit for all the things the human race achieves through it’s won stubborn effort. There simply is no blasted God-there is only man and it is *he* who makes miracles! (mama slaps beneatha. there is a long pause and Beneatha stares at the floor wordlessly. Mama repeats the phrase with precision and cool emotion)

*A: Beneatha feels that her life is not in control when God is in the picture. Unlike everyone else in the family, Beneatha has the highest education and is able to go through life with more principles on reasoning.*

In my mother’s house there is still God.

Yes, ma’am.

I see. (quietly). I also see that everybody thinks it’s all right for Mama to be a tyrant. But all the tyranny in the world will never put a God in the heavens! (she picks up her books and goes out. Pause)

*A: Beneatha understands that her family believes in God but wants them to understand that she doesn’t, especially Mama. When she voiced her opinion, Mama slapped her and told her that there is a god in her house. Any other religious views are unacceptable. Beneatha is angry at her Mama for trying to control her individual views on religion; the reason for her storm-out.*

**Scene 2**

Haylo...(Disappointed) Yes, he is. (She tosses the phone to WALTER, who barely catches it) It’s Willie Harris again.

Brother, where did Ruth go?

(drily) I can’t imagine that it would hurt him-it has never hurt the roaches.

There’s really only one way to get rid of them, Mama-

*A: Beneatha is criticizing the bug spray, but she is also implying it towards Travis. She said that the bug spray should not bother you because it doesn’t affect the roaches. Since roaches are not affected by the spray, then human should be able to endure it.*

Set fire to this building! Mama, where did Ruth go?

*A: Since the bug spray can not get rid of the roaches, Beneatha suggest to her mother that they set the building on fire. This sarcasm shows her resentment towards her mother and how her mother shelters Travis.*

The doctor? What’s the matter? (They exchange glances) You don’t think-

*A: Although Beneatha and Ruth have a strain relationship between each other, they are still family and she still cares about her wellbeing.*

(at the phone) Hay-lo...(Pause, and a moment of recognition) Well-when did you get back!...And how was it?...Of course I’ve missed you-in my way...This morning? No...bouse cleaning and all that and Mama hates it if I let people come over when the house is like this...You *have*? Well, that’s different...What is it-Oh, what the hell, come on over...Right, see you then. *Arrividerci*.

Asagai doesn’t care how houses look, Mama-he’s an intellectual.

*A: Unlike her mother, Beneatha does not feel embarrassed about her house and how their house is.*

Asagai-Joseph Asagai. He’s an African boy I met on campus. He’s been studying in Canada all summer.

Asagai, Joseph. Ah-sah-guy...He’s from Nigeria.

No, Mama-that’s Liberia.

*A: Her mother did not receive a decent education and this shows that her mother can not tell the difference between Nigeria and Liberia. Beneatha was able to correct her mother.*

Well, do me a favor and don’t ask him a whole lot of ignorant questions about Africans. I mean, do they wear clothes and all that-

*A: Beneatha knows that her mother did not receive an education, but she does not want her mother to ask an intellect “stupid” questions.*

It’s just that people ask such crazy things. All anyone seems to know about when it comes to Africa is Tarzan-

*A: The typical stereotypes for African relates to Tarzan. Because most African Americans does not have a decent education; therefore it shows how uneducated they are.*

Why do you give money at church for the missionary work?

*A: Beneatha questions her mother because her mother gives money to the church. Beneatha questions her religion; therefore she thinks it a waste to give money to the church.*

You mean save them from *heathenism*-

A: Beneatha’s criticism about the church is shown through her use of the word “heathenism” which means any other religion other than Christianity.

I’m afraid they need more salvation from the British and the French.

You pregnant?

(Beneatha and Ruth give her (Mama) a hopeless look for this grandmotherly enthusiasm)

How far along are you?

Did you mean to? I mean did you plan it or was it an accident?

Did you plan it, Ruth?

Oh, Mama.

*A: They were happy that Ruth is pregnant, but considering their social status, they are not ready to have a baby.*

It is my business-where is he going to live, on the roof? (There is a silence following the remark as the three women react to the sense of it) Gee-I didn’t mean that Ruth, honest. Gee, I don’t feel like that at all. I-I think it is wonderful.

Yes-really.

*A: Because of their family social status she questioned whether if they were able to raise the child.*

What’s the matter with her, Mama?

Oh, my God-that must be Asagai.

(Beneatha, herself profoundly disturbed, opens the door to admit a rather dramatic-looking young man with a large package)

(holding the door open and regarding him with pleasure) hello...(long pause) Well-come in. And please excuse everything. My mother was very upset about my letting anyone come here with the place like this.

(still at the door, absently) Yes...we’ve all got acute ghetto-itus. (She smiles and comes toward him, finding a cigarette and sitting) So-sit down! No! Wait! (She whips the spraygun off soda where she had left it and puts the cushions back. At last perches on arm of sofa. He sits) So, how was Canada?

(looking at him) Asagai, I’m very glad you are back.

Yes-very.

You went away.

Before-you wanted to be so serious before there was time.

(stalling this particular conversation. Her hands pressed together, in a deliberately childish gesture) What did you bring me?

(eagerly opening the package and drawing out some records and the colorful robes of a Nigerian woman) Oh, Asagai!...You got them for me!...How beautiful...and the records

too! (She lifts out the robes and runs to the mirror with them and holds the drapery up in front of herself)

(turning suddenly) My hair-what’s wrong with my hair?

(reaching up to touch it) No...of course not.

Oh, Mama!...(She picks up the Nigerian dress and holds it up to her in front of the mirror again. She sets the headdress on haphazardly and then notices her hair again and clutches at it and then replaces the headdress and frowns at herself. Then she starts to wriggle in front of the mirror as she thinks a Nigerian woman might.)

Shut up. (She pulls the headdress off and looks at herself in the mirror and clutches at her hair again and squinches her eyes as if trying to imagine something. Then, suddenly, she gets her raincoat and kerchief and hurriedly prepares for going out)

(halting at the door) To become queen of the Nile! (She exits in a breathless blaze of glory)

*A: Beneatha wants to go back to her roots because she feels as if she is more free when she is in tune with her roots. When she thinks of being the queen of the Nile, she feels as if she has power as a woman.*

**Act 2**

**Scene 1**

(emerging grandly from the doorway so that we can see her thoroughly robed in the costume Asagai brought) You are looking at what a well-dressed Nigerian woman wears-(She parades for RUTH, her hair completely hidden by the headdress;she is coquettishly fanning herself with an ornate oriental fan, mistakenly more like Butterfly than any Nigerian that ever was) Isn’t it beautiful? (She promenades to the radio and, with an arrogant flourish turns off the good loud blues that is playing) Enough of this assimilationist junk! OCOMOGOSIAY!

A folk dance.

It’s from Nigeria. It’s a dance of welcome.

The men back to the village.

How should I know-out hunting or something. Anyway, they are coming back now...

(with the record) alundi, alundi alundi, alundi Jop pu a jeepua Ang gu soooooooo Ai yai yae...Ayehaye-alundi...

(to encourage WALTER, thoroughly caught up with this side of him) OCOMOGOSIAY, FLAMING SPEAR!

OWAIMOWEH!

OCOMOGOSIAY! (4x)

We hear you, Flaming Spear-

Nothing-except cut it off.

(looking at George) It’s up to George. If he’s ashamed of his heritage-

How can something that’s natural be eccentric?

I don’t like that, George.

Because I hate assimilationist Negroes!

(cutting GEORGE off and staring at him as she replies to RUTH) It means someone who is willing to give up his own culture and submerge himself completely in the dominant, and in this case *oppressive* culture!

GRASS HUTS! See there...you are standing there in your splendid ignorance talking about people who were the first to smelt iron on the face of the earth! The Ashanti were performing surgical operations when the English-were still tatooing themselves with blue dragons!

(Beneatha enters, dressed for the evening in a cocktail dress and earrings, hair natural)

(tired of the jokes now) I cut it off, Brother.

Ha ha. Let’s go, George.

See you all later.

*A: Beneatha does not want to lose her roots, so she criticizes how her family wants to assimilate to modern American culture. She believes that where she came from is authentic and real while the African culture in America is “fake”. Beneatha feels as if assimilation would mean that she would have no original background. She is also knowledgeable of the social roles of her roots.*

**Scene 2**

I’m *trying* to talk to you.

Yes-and I love to talk.

Why are you angry, George?

Then why read books? Why go to school?

I see. Good night, George.

(George asks why she’s sitting like that) I’m just sitting

No. (Mama asks if she had a good time)

Mama, George is a food-honest. (she rises) Yes.

Yes. (mama asks if she’s sure)

(looks up at her mother, watching her put groceries in the refrigerator. Finally she gathers up her things and starts into the bedroom. At the door she stops and looks back at her mother)

Mama-

Thank you. For understanding me this time.

(She exits quickly and the mother stands, smiling a little, looking at the place where Beneatha just stood.)

(Beneatha comes out of the bedroom in her robe and passes through to the bathroom. Mrs. Johnson turns.)

(crisply) Hello, Mrs. Johnson.

(crisply) Fine, thank you. (she goes out)

(at her door) Mama, if there are two things we, as a people, have got to overcome, one is the Klu Klux Klan-and the other is Mrs. Johnson. (She exits).

*A: Beneatha’s feisty-ness and exaggeration is shown when she compares the KKK with Mrs. Johnson. To a black woman, the KKK should be very terrifying, but when Beneatha compares Mrs. Johnson to the KKK, it can either show Mrs. Johnson’s attitude or Beneatha’s sarcasm.*

**Scene 3**

Hi.

How do you know the window size out there?

I’ll do it.

What?

Get shots at sunrise?

(laughing herself) I guess I always think things have more emphasis if they are big, somehow.

What? (to ruth)

No. (to Ruth asking if the knew the last time Ruth went to the movies with Walter)

Oh, Lord!

What?

You’re killing me. (commenting on Ruth’s night with Walter)

*A: In this conversation, Beneatha and Ruth are packing their possessions for the new house. They are bonding through their girl talk. This shows that Beneatha, underneath her tough mask, can still tap into her inner girl. Ruth was telling her how Walter and she held hands when they went on a movie date (and what she was going to do when she gets to the house).*

(regarding them a long time as they dance, then drawing in her breath for a deeply exaggerated comment which she does not particularly mean) Talk about-olddddddddddd-fashioneddddd-Negroes!

Old-fashioned.

*A: In this scene, Ruth and Walter were dancing to “soulful and sensuous” music.This quote mocks how Beneatha is modernized in thought and tastes compared to the rest of her family.*

Sticks and stones may break my bones but...words will never hurt me!

*A: This show how unphased and headstrong she is. Beneatha doesn’t care for their brothers’ insults.*

(smoothing her hair with slight embarrassment) Oh yes, that’s my mother. Excuse me (she closes the door and turns to quit the other two) Ruth! Brother! (Enunciating precisely but soundlessly: There’s a white man at the door! They stop dancing...Beneatha opens the door...) Uh-come in please.

My mother isn’t here just now, Is it business?

(drily) Yes-and what do they do?

(with appreciation of the two meanings, which escape Ruth and Walter)Un-huh.

Yes-and what are some of those?

Yes.

(With a grand and bitter gesture) This, friends, is the Welcoming Committee!

Thirty pieces and not a coin less!

The Welcoming Committee. They said they’re sure going to be glad to see you when you get there.

(handing card to Mama) in case.

Oh-mama-they don’t do it like that anymore. he talked Brotherhood. He said everybody ought to learn how to sit down and hate each other with good Christian fellowship.

What they think we going to do-eat ‘em?

(laughinglynoticing what her mother is doing) Mama, what are you doing?

Mama, you going to take *that* to the new house?

The raggedy-looking old thing?

(teasingly, from across the room) Everybody talking ‘bout heaven aint going there!

Open it, Mama.

(giggling fiercly) Travis-we were trying to make Mama Mrs. Miniver-not Scarlett O’Hara!

That couldn’t be the movers...it’s not hardly two good yet-

(from her room) we need some more string.

Mama!

Mama-

Mama-

(plaintively) Mama...

A: *Even though throughout the play, Beneatha didn’t express that much love towards her family members. This enables us to see that Beneatha truly does care for Mama.*

**Act 3**

(asagai comes)

Beneatha: Africa!

He gave away the money, Asagai.

The insurance money. My brother gave it away.

He made the investment! With a man even Travis wouldn’t have trusted with his most worn-out marbles.

Gone!

Me?...Me?...Me, I’m nothing...Me. When I was very small...we used to take our sleds out in the wintertime and the only hills we had were the ice-covered stone steps of some houses down the street. And we used to fill them in with snow and make them smooth and slide down them all day...and it was very dangerous, you know...far too steep...and sure enough one day a kid named Rufus came down too fast and hit the sidewalk and we saw his face just split open right there in front of us...And I remember standing there looking at this bloody open face thinking that was the end of Rufus. But the ambulance came and they took him to the hospital and they fixed the broken bones and they sewed it all up...and the next time I saw Rufus he just had a little line down the middle of his

face...I never got over that...

A: *This shows how even a small obstacle can affect Beneatha.*

That that was what one person could do for another, fix him up-sew up the problem, make him all right again. That was the most marvelous thing in the world...I wanted to do that. I always thought it was the one concrete thing in the world that a human being could do. Fix up the sick, you know-and make them whole again. This was truly being God.

A: *This shows that even a small setback, Beneatha was still able to see what she wanted to do with her life and why she wanted to be a doctor in the first place.*

No-I wanted to cure. It used to be so important to me. I wanted to cureIt used to matter. I used to care. I mean about people and how their bodies hurt...

Yes-I think so.

(bitterly) Because it doesn’t seem deep enough, close enough to what ails mankind! It was a child’s way of seeing things-or an idealist’s.

I know that’s what you think. Because you are still where I left off. You with all your talk and dreams about Africa! You still think you can patch up the world. Cure the Great sore of Colonialism. (Loftily, mocking it) with the Penicillin of the Independence-!

Independence *and then what?* What about all the crooks and thieves and just plain idiots who will come into power and steal and plunder the same as before-only now they will be black and do it in the same name of the new Independence-WHAT ABOUT THEM?!

And where does it end?

And end to misery! To stupidity! Don’t you see there isn’t any real progress, Asagai, there is only one large circle that we march in, around and around, each of us with our own little picture in front of us-our own little mirage that we think is the future.

What?

Asagai, while I was sleeping in that bed in there, people went out and took the future right out of my hands! And nobody asked me, nobody consulted me-they just went out and changed my life!

What?

It belonged to all of us.

No.

AND YOU CANNOT ANSWER IT!

A: *This shows that Beneatha understands how society is at the time. She understands that with the social conformities, that society wasn’t going anywhere. She addresses the problem to Asagai and gets upset at the situation. She starts to yell about how people don’t focus on the future and instead just focus on what they want.*

*The martyr!*

Oh Asagai, I know all that.

Do?

What?

(staring at him and crossing away with exasperation) Oh-Asagai-at this moment you decide to be romantic!

(slowly understanding and turning to him with murmured amazement) to Africa?

(unable to play) To-to Nigeria?

(pulling away suddenly): You’re getting me all mixed up-

Too many things-too many things have happened today. I must sit down and think. I don’t know what I feel about anything right this minute. (she promptly sits down and props her chin on her fist).

A: *She is able to stop and resist any temptations. Even though she knows that she would like to go to Africa with Asagai, she is strong willed enough to not accept on a whim, which shows responsibility.*

(hissing) Yes-just look at what the New World hath wrought!...Just Look! (she gestures with bitter disgust) There he is! *monsieur le petit bourgeois noir-*himself! There he is-Symbol of a Rising Class! Entrepreneur! Titan of the system! (walkinger looks for stuff and hurls stuff on floor) Did you dream of yachts on Lake Michigan, Brother? Did you see yourself on that Great Day sitting down at the Conference Table, surrounded by all the mighty bald-headed men in America? All halted waiting, breathless, waiting for your pronouncements on industry? Waiting for you-Chairman of the Board! (Walter finds what he is looking for-a small piece of white paper-and pushes it in his pocket and puts on his coat and rushes out without ever having looked at her. She shouts after him) I look at you and i see the final triumph of stupidity in the world!

Your husband.

who knows-maybe he has an appointment at U.S. Steel.

Bad? Say anything bad to him? No- I told him he was a sweet boy and full of dreams and everything is strictly peachy keen, as the ofay kids say!

A: *How Beneatha gets mad at Walter for worrying so much about money shows how Beneatha is against materialism. She criticizes his dreams of being rich and calls his goals stupid.*

(suddenly) Lindner!

(fiercely, understanding) For what? What do you want to see him for!

Oh God! Where is the bottom! Where is the real honest-to-God bottom so he can’t go any further!

That is not man. That is nothing but a toothless rat.

He’s no brother of mine.

I said that that individual in that room is not brother of mine.

Be on my side for once! You saw what he just did, Mama! You saw him-down on his knees. Wasn’t it you who taught me to despise any man who would do that? Do what’s he going to do?

Love him? There is nothing left to love.

*A: This exemplifies Beneatha’s feisty attitude and how she isn’t afraid to express her opinions about the choices that her brother makes. When she says that “wasn’t it you who taught me to despise any man who could do that?” also shows her independence and how she doesn’t like any sign of weakness, which is shown by her brother’s begging on his knees.*

That’s what the man said.

Mama. Asagai asked me to marry him today and go to Africa-

(girlishly and unreasonably trying to pursue the conversation) To go to Africa Mama-be a doctor in Africa...

To practice there...

A: *This shows that Beneatha is still a very strong dreamer and also always has her goals in her mind. How she says this girlishly and unreasonably shows the effect of Asagai on Beneatha, how she has a little something for him.*

(angrily, precisely as in the first scene of the play) what have you got to do with who I marry!

*George Murchison!* I wouldn’t marry him if he was Adam and I was Eve!

A: *How she says this about George Murchinson highlights how strong moraled she is about her own independence and identity. She knows that George wasn’t able to respect her for who she was and didn’t respect with what she wanted to be. The other women in the family like Ruth and Mama would’ve like Beneatha to marry George Murchinson since they know he will economically provide for her. However, Beneatha symbolizes the feminist movement, which emphasises the indepedence of women. Beneatha believes that she is her own person and doesn’t want to be bound by men who don’t respect her.*