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I’m a slave also,

Because I cannot escape!



This picture is placed in the Library of Congress. It demonstrates the life of a colored person. This picture shows that an African American person is looking at a parrot. Parrot is chained to a perch, so it cannot escape from there. While in the background, other birds are freely flying and enjoying their life. A critical examination of that picture indicates that parrots are also like African Americans or colored people as they cannot get their actual freedom. Regardless of all the efforts made by African Americans, it was difficult for them to experience the joys of real freedom in American society. Up till now, African Americans are still discriminated by whites on the basis of their color and race. It is critical to determine the hardships that African Americans had faced in American society.

Lorraine Hansberry was an African American writer who wrote *A Raisin in the Sun* in 1959. It is important to consider that this play was written during civil right movements. Many African American authors and scholars took part in the civil rights movement in order to illustrate the hardships and oppression of their community in American society. Hansberry’s play is comprised of various important themes such as “need to fight racial discrimination” and “value and purpose of dreams” (Hansberry). The author demonstrated that an African American family struggled hard to fit into American society. The family got a check of 10,000 dollars from the life insurance of their late father. Each member of the family had different perspectives and wishes that they wanted to achieve with this money (Washington). However, the author presented an idea that all these dreams were interrelated to manage their dreams. Exploitation and oppression of African Americans in American society encouraged the family to have the dream of transcending racism.

Hansberry efficiently used literary elements to illustrate how many characters of the story dealt with the oppressive circumstances in order to get a reasonable status for them in society. The value of money was highly appreciable during that period as could modify the living standards of an individual. Hansberry states that “Something has changed. You something new, boy. In my time we were worried about not being lynched. You ain’t satisfied or proud of nothing we did” (Hansberry). The author illustrated the importance of money with this quotation. African Americans had to experience domination, harassment, and prejudice from whites as they considered themselves low. According to whites, blacks were less civilized on the basis of their color and race (Washington). Whites always considered themselves more superior to blacks, hence they treated them like slaves. In order to get their acceptance, blacks always tried to figure some ways. Hansberry in her story demonstrated that the mother wanted the insurance money to buy a new house to fulfil their dreams. However, her son had different plans regarding that money. He wanted to invest that money in a profitable business as he believed that money would bring back joys in their life. This play is referred to conjecture about the dreams of the family who wanted to fulfil the dreams that were forgotten or put off. It is notable to consider that this play effectively described the hardships of African Americans in society. In this play, each member of the family had a different dream that they wanted to fulfil with insurance money. The author effectively explained that happiness and depression of the African American family were interlinked with their dreams. If the dreams got fulfilled, then they are more likely to attain all happiness and joys in their life (Washington). One must need to understand the fact that African Americans had no choice but to fight racial discrimination in society. Whites always oppressed African Americans by overcompensating their strength and value in society. America as a white-dominated society always preferred whites in any economic, political, or social circumstance.

With the help of insurance money, African American family wanted to move to the white neighborhood. The author illustrated that it was a great opportunity for the entire family to be accepted by whites. However, the governing body of that new neighborhood persuaded African Americans no to move into that place. “LINDNER …most of the trouble exists because people just don’t sit down and talk to each other…That we don’t try hard enough in this world to understand the other fellow’s problem. The other guy’s point of view” (Hansberry). This persuasion illustrated that one must fight against racial discrimination in order to attain equal rights. The family responded to that discrimination with strength and disobedience. The need to fight racial discrimination can be seen during the civil rights movement. African Americans began to pressurize the American government during the civil rights movement with defiance and strength. African American leaders were well aware of the fact that they can only achieve equal rights in the society by fighting for them. Hansberry also delivered the same message in her play.

Hansberry highlighted the importance of dreams and freedom for oppressed and depressed family. “Seem like God didn’t see fit to give the black man nothing but dreams – but He did give us children to make them dreams seem worthwhile” (Hansberry). Here, the author illustrated that the dreams of parents always seem deferred to their children. Parents always wished to provide their family with all the basic necessities and happiness in their life. The dreams of parents are always kept alive by their children. Referring to the picture (I'm a slave also because I cannot escape), it is evident that African Americans faced harsh circumstances in American society. It was extremely difficult for them to escape those circumstances. Still, they are socially and economically struggling to achieve real freedom in American society. The author keenly mentioned about the importance of family to stay united against racism and discrimination (Washington). Lack of social, political, and economic support was problematic for African Americans. The basic reason behind the coercion and oppression of African Americans was related to the lack of having some support in the community. Due to this particular reason, whites began to discriminate African Americans in every aspect of life. At that crucial time, they needed strong social and economic support to prevail in society. In the play, the racist overtures of the governing body were rejected by the entire family together. Through *A raisin in the sun,* the author demonstrated the significance of a family to function together as one unit.

The issues of African Americans critically and comprehensively illustrated by many authors in their literary works. The central focus of this approach is to highlight the concerns of social captivity and negligence faced by African Americans due to the prospect of slavery. The chronic influences of racism against African Americans also greatly depicted by Zora Neale Hurston in her essay, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me.” The consequences and struggle of being a colored individual were greatly presented by the author through this piece of literature. Her primary focus was to depict the struggles she had to face just because she belonged to the African American community. It is noteworthy to mention that originally this essay published in 1928 which was the period of the development of the Harlem Renaissance movement in the country. It was the time when African Americans started considering their basic rights in the form of survival against the calamity of the captivity of slavery. It can be rightly said that the content provided by Zora Neale Hurston in the form of an essay enhanced the level of motivation and encouragement for people of the black community to stay focused and committed to achieving the goal of freedom.

Can you help me?  
Oh oh, can you help me?  
The storm is breaking  
Or so it seems  
We're too young to reason  
Too grown to dream  
Now spring is turning  
Your face to mine  
I can hear your laughter  
I can see your smile

She defined her story as the inspiration for other African Americans that the approach of survival is possible in every condition and efforts to obtain better living standards should not be withdrawn at any cost. Furthermore, it is established by the author that the issues of slavery and racism can be established as the source of strength to successfully embrace better forms of self-acceptance and own pride. She powerfully established the idea that it is important for African Americans to accept their reality and consider it as their strength to explore the ultimate way of self-survival and freedom from all forms of social constraints based on the chronic domain of racism against them.

You're running with me  
Don't touch the ground  
We're the restless hearted  
Not the chained and bound  
The sky is burning  
A sea of flame  
Though your world is changing  
I will be the same

The ultimate lesson delivered by Hurston through this essay can also be significantly connected with the historic image that described the phenomenon of imprisonment for the African Americans. Hurston successfully established this argument that captivity of mind is the main problematic aspect for African Americans that needs to be changed in order to achieve the objective of real change and determination in life (Wahyudi). Furthermore, the strength of mind development is a basic condition for the black community to recognize the impact of existing social racism for them and adopt some significant form of practical movement to meet the target of social change. It is rightly perceived by the author of the selected essay that African American people requires some radical changes in their thinking to understand that slavery and racist behavior are not their fundamental reality and they need to strive to achieve the approach of basic human rights. Undoubtedly, the era of the Harlem Renaissance was the right time for African American individuals to regain their domain of self-identity and use it as strength during the entire procedure of freedom movement (Wahyudi). Discovery of self-pride is the first phase for the community of African Americans to find a possible solution to get freedom from physical and mental captivity.

Zora Neale Hurston in her essay *how it feels to be colored me* illustrated her life circumstances as an African American women. This essay was written in the early twentieth century to give a better understanding of the humiliating and troubles of people of color. The author reflected on her life by explaining different events and how she felt about racism. According to the author, real freedom is only for children as have no experience cruelty of life (Hurston). When the author was in high school, she began to understand how she is different from other students. The concept of racism was prominent in the essay of Hurston as it dealt with the social construct of race and racism. Regardless of making efforts and putting oneself in between white people, one cannot completely incorporate himself/herself. The tone of the author in her essay was very confident regardless of the fact that she was describing her life experiences as a colored girl (Hurston). Despite begin born as a colored girl, she did not criticized herself. It did not make her angry at how people are discriminating her. The author illustrated that African Americans and their culture was seen as a joke in the American community. Maintaining cultural identity was highly problematic for African Americans (Wahyudi). Hurston recalls that she did not face any distinction between white and black people when she was a little girl. She usually gets along with white people and traveler. However, it always surprised her when she was given a penny by these travelers. She thought that it was their way of saying that they like her. However, with the passage of time, she realized that her black color was a tragedy. Hurston effectively illustrated that life is dominated by the powerful (Hurston). Regardless of feeling discriminated, she claimed that power has the potential to dominate the life of weak ones.

Tell her I'll be waiting  
In the usual place  
With the tired and weary  
And there's no escape  
To need a women  
You've got to know  
How the strong get weak  
And the rich get poor  
Slave to love  
Oh, oh, slave to love

Hurston effectively demonstrated that the current freedom of African Americans was the result of the struggles of previous generations. African American suffered as a lot by the hands of whites in the society who did not want these people to get civilized. The author illustrated that African Americans used to work in the farms and lands of whites, who did not want them to get literate. The power of literacy has the potential to pursue the glory of a community (Hurston). In addition to this, the author illustrated that she did not know why people discriminated against her in her entire life. The author illustrated that people should not be discriminated on the basis of skin color and racial identity (Wahyudi). The extensive intensity of issues of racism and slavery for African Americans requires some comprehensive form of a solution in the form of dramatic social change for this community. The efforts by the black community are an essential condition to attain the approach of basic human rights and eradicate option of slavery for them.

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