ISSN Online: 3006-4708
ISSN Print: 3006-4694
SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW ARCHIVES
https://policyjournalofms.com

Silenced Voices and Hidden Resistance: A Psychoanalytic Study of Defence Mechanism in Hansberry's A Raisin in the Sun

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v4i1.2389

Abstract
This study offers a psychoanalytic interpretation of Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun (1959),* arguing that beyond its significance as a social drama, the play presents a compelling portrayal of psychological survival through unconscious defence mechanisms. Set within a racially and economically restrictive environment, the play portrays characters confronting deferred dreams, internal conflicts, and emotional strain. Based on Sigmund Freud's theory of defence mechanisms particularly repression, denial, displacement, projection and sublimation, the study explores how these unconscious strategies shape behaviour, silence, and interpersonal conflict within the family. This play depicts characters living under persistent racial discrimination, economic hardship and psychological pressure making it an appropriate text for exploring unconscious coping strategies. Through close textual analysis, it interprets pauses, restrained dialogues and emotional withdrawal as manifestations of psychological defence rather than narrative absence. This research seeks to reinterpret the play by either exposing hidden emotional locations or expanding interpretations beyond simple word usage. The findings demonstrate that silence and emotional repression function as adaptive responses that preserve dignity and psychological endurance under prolonged stress. Therefore, the analysis repositions *A Raisin in the Sun (1959)* as not only a work of social realism but also a profound exploration of psychological survival.

Keywords: Defence mechanism, repression, projection, psychoanalysis, sublimation, displacement

Introduction:

A Raisin in the Sun (1959) presents a nuanced representation of an African American family whose lives are shaped by racial oppression, economic inequality, and intergenerational tensions, creating a rich context for psychological inquiry.The play reveals the internal emotional landscape of the family as the metaphor of racial oppression, poverty, and generational conflicts that covers the external social pressures. Personal interactions are profoundly influenced by unexpressed fears and unfulfilled desires, these emotional processes happening below the surface need a psychoanalytic perspective to be understood. Furthermore, psychoanalysis, especially Freud's theory of defence mechanisms, can be viewed as an ideal interpretive paradigm to explain the way these literary characters unconsciously shield their psyches from despair (Freud, 1961).The essence of this work,

therefore, is to explore the secret psychological aspects of *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) and subsequently to elucidate the characters, themes and their ingenious ways of resistance to be more comprehensively understood.

A Raisin in the Sun (1959) marks a turning point for American theatre by bringing the lived experiences of African American families to the center of the dramatic tradition and challenging the racial stereotypes that had long dominated mainstream stage production. The play is a realistic depiction of the Youngers, a black family in a society segregated by race, who long for a better place in the world. Inspired by the environment of the 1950s, the play is a depiction of the Youngers' aspirations to go beyond their tiny apartment after receiving financial assistance from the insurance pay-out, a concrete expression of a brighter future. Beyond the wish for a better financial life, though, is a more complex, more allegorical narrative, a life of postponed ambitions, repressed emotions, and unsaid words, a scene in which everyday events in a home act as a pressure chamber for sophisticated emotional competitions and great psychological endurance. Hansberry's dramatic approach serves to expose deeper psychological aspects in the play. The drama reveals layers of understanding by using subtle elements of the characters' language, like pauses, interruptions, and restrained tones that express passion instead of fear, as opposed to direct statements.

Definition of Key Terms

The following key terms provide the theoretical clarity through which the inner lives of the characters in Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) are examined.

Defence Mechanism

Defence mechanisms refer to the psychological strategies utilized by the human mind unconsciously to defend itself against anxiety, emotional conflict, and psychological stress. Freud (1961) stated that when people have disturbing thoughts or face harsh realities, their ego will start defence mechanisms to keep their mind safe. These mechanisms, repression, denial, displacement, projection, and sublimation, are performed without the individual's knowledge.

Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis, developed by Freud (1961) is a psychological theory and interpretive approach that investigates the impact of subconscious wants, phobias, and unsolved conflicts on human conduct.

Repression

Freud's psychoanalytic theory identifies repression as a primary defence mechanism which explains how people unknowingly block their painful memories and thoughts and emotions from their conscious mind (Freud 1961).

Sublimation

Sublimation is considered one of the defence mechanisms through which the mind unconsciously transfers unacceptable sexual or aggressive urges to more socially acceptable and productive activities (Freud, 1961).

Psychological Survival

Psychological survival is that mind and heart resource individuals manage even without it, to extract themselves from long, standing stress, trauma or adverse situations. It calls for holding back one's feelings, inner re, adjustment and deployment of such tricks as saving one's self, respect and hope even when one is in bad condition from outside (Eyerman, 2001).

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research is in the efforts taken to deliberately define the emotional relevance of Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959). Although less attention has been paid to a somewhat internal turmoil that robs Hansberry's work of its due, the themes of social conscience, family aspirations, and racial inequality inscribe the play in a sort of enduring significance. This study aims to reinterpret the play by revealing the unconscious emotional processes embedded within the characters' experiences thereby moving beyond conventional textual interpretation. Sigmund Freud's writings about the defence mechanisms (1961) offer insights that may help this study to further the psychoanalytic criticism of literature by revealing how repression, denial, displacement, projection, and sublimation can be the keys to grasp the character's behaviour. Instead of these mechanisms being considered only as theoretical psychological entities, the study identifies them as authentic emotional strategies used by people in order to maintain their emotional stability when their environment cannot give them any support. With such a shift in emphasis, a new perspective of *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) is possible, that it portrays the characters' psychological survival as much as their societal resistance.

Research Questions

This article seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do Mama, Ruth, Beneatha, and Walter in*A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) reflect Freud's defence mechanisms such as repression, denial, displacement, projection, and sublimation?
2. How do silence and emotional repression function as unconscious psychological strategies that reveal inner conflict and hidden resistance in *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959)?

Literature Review

In recent years, psychology has become an important tool for analysing the inner lives of characters, particularly in texts where trauma, marginalization, and inner conflict are prominent. The addition of psychological understanding enables the critics to go beyond the surface level of analysis and explore how characters interact with their environments. By combining psychoanalytic and literary theories, this review will base its analysis on Freud's defence mechanisms, which will influence the application of defence theory to the analysis, particularly in the context of Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) and its application to this study.

Defence Mechanisms as Psychological Coping Strategies

Defence mechanisms particularly repression, denial, displacement, projections and sublimation are unconscious psychological processes that protect individuals from emotional pain and anxiety. They help maintain psychological stability, particularly during stress or feelings of powerlessness (Di Giuseppe et al., 2020). According to Freud, these mechanisms protect the ego by managing distressing emotions rather than confronting them directly. Recent research views defence mechanisms on a continuum from healthy to unhealthy, depending on the situation and their intensity (Vaillant, 2020). While excessive denial may hinder emotional growth, temporary denial can help individuals regain emotional control during difficult circumstances. In *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), the Younger family's silence and emotional restraint reflect psychological coping strategies that help them endure hardship. Their behaviour demonstrates that defence mechanisms can function as tools of resilience and survival in both literature and real life.

Repression and Emotional Suppression in Trauma Studies

Modern trauma studies continue to emphasize repression as an important defence mechanism, particularly in relation to chronic stress and intergenerational trauma. Trauma researchers argue that individuals often suppress painful memories and emotions to maintain daily functioning under difficult circumstances (Kolk, 2016). Repression helps people cope with ongoing stress and is especially common among communities experiencing long-term hardships such as racialized trauma.

Trauma studies also suggest that repression is often expressed through emotional withdrawal and silence. When individuals lack a safe space to express their feelings or fear negative consequences for doing so, silence becomes a coping strategy (Herman, 1992). In literature, repression is frequently represented through silence, interruptions, and fragmented speech rather than direct emotional expression.

In *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), the characters often suppress their emotions and avoid showing vulnerability, reflecting the historical realities of African American suffering and resilience. A trauma-informed reading reveals that these psychological defences are not signs of weakness but adaptive responses to systemic oppression. By combining trauma studies with psychoanalysis, repression can be understood as a key psychological mechanism that helps explain the characters' emotional survival and resilience.

Denial, Displacement and Projection in Contemporary Studies

Denial, displacement, and projection are important defence mechanisms that help individuals cope with painful emotions when direct expression is difficult or unsafe (Cramer, 2015). Denial keeps distressing realities out of conscious awareness, while displacement and projection redirect emotions toward safer targets. These mechanisms are particularly common in situations involving inequality, exclusion, and limited opportunities for self-expression (David, 2013). Contemporary research suggests that emotional outbursts, anger, and conflict often reflect reactions to structural pressures rather than personal weakness.

In literature, displacement and projection help reveal characters' psychological struggles. Conflicts between characters often reflect deeper emotional tensions rather than simple disagreements. In *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), the Younger family's frustrations and misdirected anger demonstrate the psychological effects of racial and economic oppression. Modern psychology views these reactions as adaptive responses to difficult circumstances rather than individual failures.

Contemporary studies confirm that Freud's concepts of the unconscious and defence mechanisms remain valuable in both psychology and literary studies. Defence mechanisms such as repression, denial, displacement, projection, and sublimation are now understood as coping strategies that help individuals manage stress and adversity. These ideas provide an effective framework for analysing *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), where emotional restraint and psychological survival are central themes.

Silence as a Psychoanalytic and Narrative Strategy

Literary criticism has recently honed in on silence and how it is explored using psychoanalytic perspectives and a trauma-informed approach. It has been suggested that silence is a way of accessing feelings that words cannot express, particularly when it involves fear, shame, and imbalances of power (Kurzon, 1998). Using a psychoanalytic approach, silence is a method of shielding oneself against experiencing emotions and thus gives it rhetorical import as a way of exploring narratives with real psychological meaning. More recent studies suggest silence is more proactive and not necessarily something that is absent but is a tactic when speaking could be detrimental (Kawabata and Gastaldo, 2015). Protecting

a character and giving them a say when it comes to exploring internal conflict is a way for silence to be a shield of protection.

Silence, Trauma, and Emotional Survival in *A Raisin in the Sun (1959)*

A Raisin in the Sun (1959) exposes silence as a fundamental tool in the play's organisation to communicate meanings regarding psychological pressure, emotional restraint, and unresolved issues. Critics argue Hansberry uses silence to avoid expressing anxieties denied or future dreams postponed, in addition to internal conflicts and within the Younger family (Kane, 1984). These silences are emotional yet not mere vacuums in the narrative as they reflect the characters' efforts to cover their pain without severing the family ties. Per the psychological interpretation that characterizes the play, silence is a trait of vulnerability. When the inevitable bitter reality proves itself, characters tend to stop, withdraw, or change the subject, which is almost always indicative of their subconscious efforts to avoid considering something rather than being indifferent (Batool, 2026). According to psychoanalytical viewpoints of repression, this relates to all unpleasant thoughts or sensations being thrust or squashed out of the conscious arena for therapeutic emotional status quo (Cramer, 2015). Silence thus becomes active mental process contrary to passive absence of language.

Research Gap

The review of psychoanalytic theory, literary criticism, and African American literary studies highlights growing scholarly interest in the psychological dimensions of literature, particularly those related to trauma, marginalization, and emotional restraint. However, existing studies often examine psychoanalysis, trauma, or race separately and rarely apply Freud's theory of defence mechanisms in a comprehensive literary analysis. While psychoanalytic criticism has contributed to understanding character psychology, emotional suppression is often treated as a metaphor rather than a psychological process (Barry, 2017; Cramer, 2015).

Similarly, research on *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) has primarily focused on racial discrimination, economic struggles, gender roles, and family conflict (Demastes, 1996), with limited attention to the psychological mechanisms shaping the characters' responses. Silence, emotional restraint, and indecision are frequently observed but seldom analyzed in depth (Mendes, 2022). This study addresses this gap by examining the Younger family's emotional struggles through Freud's defence mechanisms, offering a deeper understanding of their psychological adaptation and resilience.

Theoretical Framework

This research is based on the psychoanalytic theory which was first proposed by Sigmund Freud. His studies of the unconscious revealed that people tend to live more deeply in their hidden emotions than in their thoughts. Freud (1961) states that the mind secretly prepares protective reactions when it is scared, frustrated, or conflicted. These reactions are not normally communicated by words; rather, they show up in silence, stammering, changing the topic emotionally, and holding back one's expression. The use of psychoanalysis in literary criticism results in characters being emotionally perceived spontaneous, rather than fixed narrative figures in concept. In *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959), the dramatic world is such that desire, disappointment, and hope are circulating under the surface of everyday conversation, which makes the play very suitable for psychoanalytic interpretation. The Younger family's emotional affairs are visually expressed through glances, silent moments, and displacements of tensions, which implies that their greatest hardships are of the unexpressed psychological type. Hence, psychoanalysis is a tool that this research uses to uncover the hidden structure of

emotions that enable the characters persistence.According to Freud, repression, denial, displacement, projection, and sublimation are mechanisms through which the mind preserves its tenuous balance (Freud, 1961). In this study, the mechanisms serve as a subtle means of survival, going beyond simple mental categories.

Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach, concentrating on interpreting psychological depth, narrative meaning, and emotional complexity. A qualitative study stresses grasping the meaning of a literary text to examine it more deeply. This lets the researcher closely scrutinize aspects of the text like language, dialogue, pauses, silences, and character interactions (Creswell, 2009). Because the literary text shows psychological meaning through small details, hints, and emotional control, a qualitative study offers the needed flexibility to investigate these details without quantifying them as study variables that is why the research is interpretive and analytical. It is not tied to assessing psychological experience, nor does it try to reach broad conclusions. Instead, it investigates how defence mechanisms work on the narrative form of Hansberry's play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) using the ideas of silence and restrained emotional expression.

The choice of textual material is deliberate and directed. Particularly sought are scenes and talks showing emotional ambivalence, uncertainty, hidden expression, and avoidance of unpleasant facts as they expose subtle indications of suppression, denial, displacement, projection, and sublimation. Particular attention is given to circumstances involving family dispute and times of withdrawn emotion to discover defence mechanisms in the shape of silence, opposition, or displacement rather than overt emotional confession. Complementing close reading of the original text, secondary sources pertinent to psychoanalysis, defence mechanisms, and African American literary criticism are consulted to inform the analysis and match the research with current knowledge (Freud, 1961; Herman, 2015; Eyerman, 2001). Using thematic textual analysis, which depends on interpretive reading rather than rigorous categorizing or coding, the data analysis technique aims to detect recurring psychological patterns linked to emotional repression, silence, and unconscious coping mechanisms. While preserving interpretative flexibility, this approach offers a coherent and conceptually based grasp of hidden opposition and emotional survival inside the narrative.

Analysis and Discussion

This section deals with analysis of the selected text from the play *A Raisin in the Sun.*

Repression and Emotional Silence in Ruth Younger

Three textual extracts featuring Ruth Younger have been selected to analyse how her character exemplifies repression and emotional silence, revealing the unconscious psychological strategies through which she copes with emotional distress and external pressures.

Extract 1

WALTER: "That's it. There you are. A man says to his woman, 'I have a dream.' His woman says, 'eat your eggs.' A man says, 'I need to take hold of this world, baby!' And a woman will say, 'Eat your eggs and go to work.'"

RUTH (does not answer. She continues working.) (p, 21)

The exchange introduces Ruth's repression through intentional non-engagement, which exposes silence as an active psychological defence rather than passive withdrawal. The words spoken by Walter are deeply charged, tinged with resentment, disappointment and wounded masculinity. Notably, his references to "a man" and "boss" highlight his struggle to live up to

patriarchal norms of success, supply, and dominance under a racist and condescending societal regimen. It is not a mere plan for his company but his primary goal: to bring back the honour and pride of every man. Ruth holds back her voice, meaning she does not respond with words or feelings because if she speaks out, she would have to admit to her repressed feelings of despair, frustration, and fear of failing. According to Freud (1961), a person represses his or her emotions once they endanger mental integrity. Ruth holds back her voice only because it prevents the development of the very emotions she is not capable of dealing with on the inside or outside level. She translates the raging storm in her emotions into constant and repetitive activities at home. Behaviour change helps retain a feeling of order in a broken home. The regular routines become a refuge—a regulated environment where chaos is literally speedily defeated.

Particularly, Ruth's calmness should not be taken as emotional disconnection or surrender. Rather, it mirrors emotional saturation, a condition in which stamina replaces expression. Her refusal to reply Walter is a denial of emotional unraveling. Ruth perfectly captures what Harris-Perry (2011) defines as the cultural expectation put on Black women to stabilize emotional environments at the expense of their own inner life in this moment. She gathers Walter's ire without reciprocity. At both a psychological and a socio-cultural level, Ruth's repression operates. Hansberry deliberately sets this scene devoid of theatrical conflict, highlighting serenity over speech to reveal the unseen effort of emotional restraint. Though it also worsens Ruth's loneliness, her quietness promotes short-term harmony and uncovers suppression as a coping strategy that sustains family stability but progressively inhibits personal emotional release. Silence is therefore both protection and sacrifice, a silent revolt against emotional disintegration in a world that offers her no safe place to fall apart.

Extract 2

> TRAVIS**:** Travis started eating his oatmeal, but he didn't stop thinking about money. "This morning we are supposed to bring fifty cents to school."
> RUTH**:** "Well, I don't have fifty cents this morning."
> TRAVIS**:** *Travis insisted, "The teacher says we have to, though."*
> RUTH**:** "I don't care what the teacher says. I ain't got it. Eat your breakfast, Travis," said his mother (Chapter 1, p, 14)

This text reveals repression prohibiting the deep motherly instinct of Ruth and her living in poverty. It also shows that emotional silence is a necessary psychological survival strategy. Travis request for fifty cents puts Ruth face to face with the painful truth that she cannot even satisfy the smallest institutional requirement from her child, thus intensifying her feeling of guilt and shame and anxiety. It is a direct intrusion of poverty into her mother role. Freud claims that repression is greater when feelings are connected to one's core identity or social role (Freud, 1961). For Ruth, mothering equals not only love but also responsibility, provision, and protection. To admit that she is not able to provide would be to face a failure which her mind cannot endure. Therefore, she stops the talk straightaway and uses the figure of her power to cover explanation. Her words, "I don't care what the teacher says", serve a protective function and let her regain in a situation where she is vulnerable the share of power that has been lost.

Extract 3

> Ruth put her head on her arms and rested on the table for a moment. Walter walked over to her. "You're tired, aren't you?" he asked. "Tired of everything. Me, the boy, the way we live—this apartment—everything. Aren't you?" (Ruth didn't look up and she didn't answer.) (p. 20)

Ruth's just "tired" falls like a package, a compact unit of all she has been bearing, with all the physical, emotional, and psychological fatigue that has accumulated over the time she has

been with this man. Freud explains that with junk like this that wants to come out, people will have it come out with general statements instead of details, since describing it all would require actually looking the offender right in the face (Freud, 1961). Ruth doesn't have to say exactly what she's tired of, since doing so would expose the fear, the anger, the hopelessness that she's fighting off, all of which she wants kept under control. The demands for more details by the eager Walter offer her an opportunity to start describing, but Ruth holds back, retreating with alacrity. The cleft chin lowered into her chest shows her turning inside, or repression taking back the control she has managed to retain. The sign, explains Cramer (2015), that repressed people give when the time comes for speaking is too much for them is withdrawal. The silence of Ruth is her shield, deflecting all the feelings that would overwhelm her precarious hold on herself. The load she carries as she sits on the couch shows that repression has its effect on the flesh, making the drought of feelings literally felt. The slowness of Hansberry's dialogue choice indicates that Ruth holds on by giving up all hopes for release.

Denial and Projection in Walter Lee Younger

Three textual extracts featuring Walter Lee have been selected for analysis to examine how his character exemplifies the defence mechanisms of denial and projection, revealing how unconscious psychological processes shape his responses to racial oppression, economic hardship, and unfulfilled aspirations.

> **Extract 1**
>
> "This morning, I was looking in the mirror and thinking about my life. I'm thirty-five years old. I've been married for eleven years, and I have a son who sleeps in the living room… And the only thing that I can give him is stories about how rich white people live…" *(p. 21–22)*

This passage shows Walter Lee Younger's denial through a narration that both recognizes and distances him from what is real.Walter's comments regarding his marriage, age, and being a father appear like basic facts. Still, the way he presents them transforms these facts into signs of his own shortcomings rather than exhibiting his real responsibilities. Freud (1961) says that denial sometimes acts by only partly accepting things—knowledge of reality but not actual feeling it. Although Walter says his son sleeps in the living room, he seems not to consider what this implies for him currently. Rather, he begins dreaming and claims all he has to offer is "stories about how wealthy white people live. "This demonstrates that he is denying as well as projecting. Expressing his unhappiness results from how others live rather than from his own feelings, Walter projects his feelings of not being good enough onto the social and economic system. The emphasis on "rich white people" reveals both what is happening in society and how he is protecting himself: racism is true, but projecting allows Walter not confront his concerns regarding inability to protect or sustain his family. Daydreaming replaces acting and lets Walter maintain feeling like a guy with aspirations while delaying accepting accountability for his emotions. Hansberry shows how denial keeps hope alive but also makes Walter feel more alone, trapped comparing himself to others instead of behaving.

> **Extract 2**
>
> Walter was not discouraged. "Yeah. The little liquor store will cost about seventy-five thousand dollars to open…….. "Don't call it that. See, women don't know anything about the world. Baby, nothing happens for you in this world unless you pay somebody off." (p. 19–20)

The extract shows denial via projection and obsessive rationalization, supported by his position as a man. Over-intellectualization, a defensive mechanism, is Walter's attention to the financial performance of the liquor store.Focusing on facts and numbers helps him to handle emotional suffering.Walter rejects the volatility and moral risk by confidently laying out the business plan.Walter rejects the term when Ruth calls it bribery, thereby demonstrating an unwillingness to confront his moral unease.His reaction—women know nothing about the world—is projection, transferring his own insecurity onto Ruth. Walter redefines his behaviour as required rather than accepting uncertainty, so presenting himself as pragmatic.This projection also reveals injured manhood:Ruth's challenge threatens his dominance, so he seeks to control by firing her.

Extract 3

> Walter said passionately, "Because it is life, Mama!" Lena lowered her eyes. She was sad…….. Now, her children only thought about money and big careers. They weren't satisfied with their life. (p. 75)

Walter's nagging becomes emotionally explicit and confrontational in this excerpt. The extent to which his economic success has taken over all other senses of value in his mind is revealed through a statement like "Because it's life, Mama." The notion that one object or idea can be made into an absolute necessity to prevent anxiety is often used as a form of denial, as Freud (1961) suggests. According to Walter, money is now the ultimate measure of security and the essence of existence. In order to break Walter's denial, Mama introduces a new value system that prioritizes survival and dignity over accumulation, while also remaining silent and reflective about the conflict between freedom and money.

Displacement, Moral Authority, and Silent Resistance in Mama (Lena Younger)

Three selected textual extracts featuring Mama (Lena Younger) are analysed to investigate how her character manifests displacement alongside moral authority and silent resistance, demonstrating how these psychological and behavioural responses enable her to negotiate racial oppression, economic deprivation, and the emotional burdens of leadership within the Younger family.

Extract 1

> MAMA: Lena sighed unhappily. "I think if I didn't have all of you, I would just put that money away or give itto the church or something." (p. 70)

This extract shows how Mama employs displacement as her unconscious defence mechanism whereby instead of directly complaining, the emotional distress of the conflict is masked by moralizing the situation. Mama's big sigh and giving the money to the church remarks uncover her inner emotional struggle over the insurance money. Freud (1961) defines displacement as a defence mechanism that helps a person to shift ones negative emotions to a less dangerous or more acceptable person or situation when one is unable to confront the original cause directly. Without uttering her fear of a family quarrel or of going broke, Mama turns her worry into moral issues.

Extract 2

> She said finally, "You aren't satisfied or proud of anything we've done for you. We gave you a home. We kept you out of trouble until you grew up. We gave you a safe and loving home. You're my children, but you are so different from me and Big Walter." (p. 75)

Going back to the past and drawing ethical parallels helps the extract show displacement. Mama never says straight out that she's hurting. She turns emotional anguish into a contrast of how unhappy people now lived in the past. Freud (1961) clarifies that displacement shows itself by means of abstraction when someone's suffering reaches the same degree as their

everyday ideas. Mama's shifting of her view from them, from saying independence was life to emphasizing money now, exposes a secret anguish she does not accept as hers.By discussing what she and Big Walter sacrificed, Mama turns emotional pain into moral disappointment.

Extract 3

> MAMA: Lena shook her head. "Son, I come from five generations of people in this country. First they were enslaved, and then they were sharecroppers. But in my family we have never been so poor to accept money from a man who thought that we weren't good enough to walk the earth. p. 152)

This is Mama's struggle with the wound of history manifest, but she articulates it from within moral principle rather than gut-wrenching emotion. She acknowledges slavery and share-cropping, but she does not spill the symptoms of pain. Freud's concept of displacement is applicable here, as human beings displace painful emotions into one's system of beliefs, keeping one fixed. Mama is not revolving around the incident but is maintaining what has never been yielded—that is, dignity. She refuses money bearing the view of inferiority as anger translocated into moral resistance.

Sublimation, Identity Formation, and Intellectual Resistance in Beneatha Younger

Two textual extracts centered on Beneatha Younger are examined to investigate how sublimation, identity formation, and intellectual resistance operate within her character, illustrating the unconscious psychological mechanisms through which she redirects emotional conflict into intellectual ambition, self-definition, and resistance to prevailing social norms.

Extract 1

> BENEATHA: "I'm going to be a doctor. I'm not worried about who I'm going to marry yet, if I ever get married—" *(p. 43)*

Beneatha's wish to be a doctor reflects the way in which she focuses her energy. Being a doctor is not just a goal for her; it is a way of dealing with the restrictions that are put on her because of her race and sex. According to Freud (1961), sublimation is a process through which individuals transform their negative emotions such as anger or fear into socially acceptable behaviours. Beneatha's statements are a challenge to the stereotypical notion that a woman's identity should be derived from marriage, particularly, for Black women who are frequently regarded as mere homemakers and caregivers.

Extract 2

> Beneatha interrupted her defensively. "So what? I experiment with different forms of expression! People have to express themselves one way or another." (p. 41)

Beneatha suddenly comes back to her defence, saying, "Well, what is the difference? I'm trying out different ways! People have to express themselves somehow." You can recognize the sublimation process here, a psychological shield that keeps her from confronting her inner struggles. The sharpness of her voice is not only a sign of stubbornness, but it also shows that for her, self, expression is not just a matter of choice but a necessary venting of the pressure she is under. Freud (1961) explains here how sublimation transforms the energy of restlessness, frustration, and raw passion by turning them into something socially acceptable. The message by Hansberry, here, promotes Beneatha's words to be more than an opposition to being unheard; they are a means to maintain her inner integrity in a home and a world which can be blind to what she aims to express.

Conclusion

The study explores the psychological processes of silence, repression and unconscious coping

in *A Raisin in the Sun (1959*) through Freud's theory of defence mechansims. The analysis shows that the characters use repression, denial, displacement, projection and sublimation to cope with racism, poverty and social expectations. Their silence, emotional restraint and occasional outbursts reveal hidden psychological strategies of survival and resistance

The findings demonstrate that emotional restraint and silence are not signs of weakness but forms of psychological endurance. Ruth Younger, for example relies on repression and routine to cope with poverty and domestic burdens. Her silence functions as a protective mechanism that help her maintain stability despite continuous hardship. Trauma scholars similarly argue that prolonged stress often results in emotional containment rather than open expression (Herman, 2015).

The study also reveals how other defence mechanisms contribute to psycological survival. Walter Lee uses denial, projection and displacement to cope with frustration and social disempowerment, while Mama channels her sufferings into care, hope and resilience reflecting sublimation together these defence mechanisms help the Younger family preserve their dignity, identity and emotional stability. Ultimately the study argues that *A raisin in the Sun* is not only a social drama but also a powerful exploration of psychological survival and resilience under oppression.

This study recommends a greater integration of psychoanalysis into literary studies to better understand repression, resistance and emotional coping in literary texts. Teaching *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) should move beyond moral and social interpretations to examine the psychological significance of silence, pauses and emotional restraint. Furthermore, future research should encourage interdisciplinary approaches that combine literary studies, psychology and trauma studies to provide deeper insights into emotional resilience and coping strategies particularly among marginalized communities.

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