

A RAISIN IN THE SUN

[Characters in "A Raisin in the Sun"](#)

by [R BEHARI](#) - 27 Feb 2017 @ 14:13

What do you think of the characters? Who do you relate to?

I would like you all to think about what the characters represent. Take for instance the three main women, Bennie, Ruth and Lena. Lena represents the old fashioned life where women should marry and have kids and not aspire to anything else. Bennie, wanting to be a doctor, represents a new type of woman: educated, enlightened, trying to discover the world and wanting to make something of herself. And Ruth is somewhere in the middle of both of these. Can you expand on this thought?

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[Re: Characters in "A Raisin in the Sun"](#)

by [J JANSSEN](#) - 2 Mar 2017 @ 9:53

Hi etutor. i will look at all these questions and answer soon. i wanted to know why we are unable to submit assignments? I have compelte both assignments. they were open but now say not open yet

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[Re: Characters in "A Raisin in the Sun"](#)

by [R BEHARI](#) - 3 Mar 2017 @ 6:18

Hi. I will check on this.

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[Re: Characters in "A Raisin in the Sun"](#)

by [J JANSSEN](#) - 2 Mar 2017 @ 17:38

The three characters mentioned above are the absolute perfect examples of what stereotyping has been, was and is now in this day and age. Lena is the mother of the house and is very old fashioned i agree very much with your analysis here. She likes to tell everyone what to do and how to do it. Since her husbands passing she took control. The play goes on to show how she relents this title to her son. Ruth is a typical over worked underpaid, working woman. She falls in the middle of the stereotype that is laid out for woman because we see she has to cook and clean, yet she still has to go out and work. Bennie, has a completely different belief of what woman are capable of. However, she still has a fight her own identity, with regards to her heritage. She is living in a colonial time and is following the westernised ways. She goes out with George who is very modern westernised. Then there is Asagai who directs her to her heritage. So here we see a modern woman that still has a longing to know where she came from. All three woman are very different and come from different generations. Therefore, they all have different opinions.

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[Re: Characters in "A Raisin in the Sun"](#)

by [R BEHARI](#) - 3 Mar 2017 @ 6:20

Yes, you seem to really understand the characters. Well done.

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[Re: Characters in "A Raisin in the Sun"](#)

by [P DOVALE](#) - 9 Apr 2017 @ 14:51

I can relate to aspects of all three of the women in this play. Lena, because I am a mature woman, on the brink of turning 50 and I often feel as though my way is THE way and wish that my daughters and sister would see things from my point of view. Like Lena, I too want what is best for my family. I can also identify with Ruth because I do not think that her life turned out quite the way that she had hoped it would. I think that she has experienced many disappointments and has lost hope and confidence in her husband's ability to improve their situation. However she does seem to have the ability to see the upside of things and has not totally given up. She is resourceful and will make the most out of whatever situation she finds herself in. As for Beneatha, she is not content to live the sort of life that her mother and sister-in-law have lived and is keen to do things differently. She is ambitious but also eager to learn about heritage. I relate to Beneatha's spirit to embrace change and take steps towards creating a more fulfilling life for herself.

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[Re: Characters in "A Raisin in the Sun"](#)

by [R BEHARI](#) - 10 Apr 2017 @ 19:11

I think that is what makes this play so timeless. We can all relate to the characters on some level, even though it is removed in time and place and even gender and race. It is a very human and relatable story.

[How is "A Raisin in the Sun" an example of colonial and postcolonial literature?](#)

by [R BEHARI](#) - 27 Feb 2017 @ 14:14

In keeping with the title of the course, how do you think the play fits in with the topic of colonial and postcolonial literature? Use quotes from the play to illustrate your point.

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[Re: How is "A Raisin in the Sun" an example of colonial and postcolonial literature?](#)

by [C CHIGWESHE](#) - 22 Mar 2017 @ 23:45

I think A Raisin in the Sun fits in with colonial and post colonial literature because Walter still looks down upon women. He just feels that a woman's duty is to uplift a man. Hansberry L p19 "that is what is wrong with coloured women....don't understand about building their men up 'em feel like they they somebody." why don't the men build up women too? Walter even believes women are small minded. Men still believe there are jobs that women can not do. It's a belief that a woman should get married. Hansberry L pg 32 "....but first I am going to be a doctor, and George, for one, still thinks that's pretty funny." The people of Clybourne Park are not welcoming to people who don't belong to their race. Hansberry L pg 90 "....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 area communities." the residents are willing to pay back three times what was paid by Mama for the house just to keep them out of Clybourne Park.

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[Re: How is "A Raisin in the Sun" an example of colonial and postcolonial literature?](#)

by [T VAN ALTEN](#) - 28 Mar 2017 @ 13:23

I would also argue that the conversation between George, Ruth and Beneatha is a clear indication of post-colonial effects. Beneatha was saying that "I hate assimilationist Negroes!" (p60), and then she explained to Ruth that "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!"(p60). Beneatha wants to become a doctor, something that would not have been possible in her African context. She dreams of the idea becoming a doctor, making use of the advantages from the "oppressive culture". Yet she is looking for her identity in her African heritage. My argument would be that due to post-colonialism we are dealing with a confused teenager, Beneatha, who is unsure about her identity.

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[Re: How is "A Raisin in the Sun" an example of colonial and postcolonial literature?](#)

by [R BEHARI](#) - 29 Mar 2017 @ 15:46

That is completely true. I think you could even relate this idea to other set works in this course. Do you think that this is also a problem many people face in South Africa today?

There are three central female characters in *A Raisin in the Sun*, each with different issues and representing different phases in life. Here are a series of questions for you to think about:

1. Go to a dictionary and look up the word up the word '**feminist**' (or look on page 27 of your Study Guide). Would you consider the play to have a feminist perspective? How and why? Think of Bennie: how do the male characters see her? How do they react when she says she will be a doctor?
2. Now look at page 27 of your Study Guide. Read the note on feminism and then read the note on **gender**. Which character in the text is restricted by their traditional gender role, and why do you think this is so?
3. Do you think Walter Younger feels pressure as a male to provide for his family? He is the breadwinner for a large family - surely that cannot be easy. Do you think he is also restricted by his traditional gender role as provider?

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [C CHIGWESHE](#) - 22 Mar 2017 @ 23:50

An interesting book indeed.I just read it in passing but will now read it in detail.Most people who hear that Bennie wants to study medicine do not take her seriously even her boyfriend as well as his brother.they do mock her.I think her mom believes she can do it that's why she even keeps part of the pension money for her studies which Walter loses.Walter is not the sole bread winner because both his mum and wife do contribute to the upkeep of the family.He fights to be recognised to be the head of the family not his mum but he is not responsible enough to fill that role.He easily succumbs to pressure goes to drink and absents himself from work for three days.He does not even do some research to find out if the liquor business is viable. I like the fact that at least in the end he rises above the occasion by refusing to be intimidated from occupying the house his mum buys.

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [T VAN ALTEN](#) - 28 Mar 2017 @ 12:51

I think the person most restricted by their traditional gender role is Bennie. She is mostly restricted by her brother, Walter, who doesn't support her wish becoming a doctor. He thinks she should that she should "just get married and be quiet..."(p22). Throughout the book he did not support her wish to become a doctor, only at the end when he had changed, he started to support her when he tells Mr. Lindner, "that's my sister over there and she's going to be a doctor - and we are very proud -" (p117)

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [T VAN ALTEN](#) - 28 Mar 2017 @ 12:57

At first Walter associated masculinity with wealth, was capital driven and saw himself as the family provider. Since he associated wealth with masculinity, he was always unhappy with himself. Mama on the other hand associated masculinity with pride, good choices, freedom and dignity. Since she didn't see that characteristics in Walter, she was the matriarch in the house, she did not allow Walter to make the decisions in the house. Once he learned how to change his association with masculinity, that's when mama made him the patriarch of the house.

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [T VAN ALTEN](#) - 28 Mar 2017 @ 13:06

I'm not sure where can I place questions I have about this book. My two questions are: when mama said "to find the nicest house for the least amount of money for my family", does that mean that housing was cheaper in "white" areas? It confuses me, since my impression is that housing would be more expensive in "white" areas, making it harder for the black people to buy there.

The next question is about the heading of the book. The poem writes about dreams that can "dry up like a raisin in the sun, or fester like a sore". Are these two examples opposite from one another. My understanding is that if a dream dry up like a raisin in the sun, it can be a good thing, since a grape that turns into a raisin, is still just as tasty, and can endure must longer. That is how I would like to see this book too, through hardship the end result was good with long lasting effects. Do I understand it correctly?

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [E TAGER](#) - 29 Mar 2017 @ 18:44

African Americans were stopped from purchasing homes in white areas through racial restrictive covenants. Realtors took advantage of this and so housing in areas that they were allowed to live in were more expensive. It was racial rather than class discrimination.

I think a raisin in the sun is not a good thing. The raisin is a good thing but it has already been carefully dried. Put it in the sun and it dries up completely and becomes brittle. A dream is carefully cultivated but if it takes too long to realise then it too becomes brittle. Perhaps this effect is the reason that the Youngers chose to move despite losing their money, afraid to defer their dream for fear that it will never materialise. The play ends on an emotionally and psychologically positive note but it is by no means their happy ending - they close one chapter but embark on a new one which will be fraught with difficulty. They will be the only black family in a hostile, white community. They will be harassed, threatened and likely victims of violence.

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [T VAN ALTEN](#) - 30 Mar 2017 @ 7:34

Thank you, it's clear now.

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [L COLLINS](#) - 4 Apr 2017 @ 16:50

Dear R BEHARI Thank you very much for all the information posted on the online discussions. I am learning so much. I have been so busy with all the assignments of the 5 modules I have registered for this semester and currently studying for the exams which starts the 3 May. Kind regards

[Reply](#) [Mark as Unread](#)

[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [L COLLINS](#) - 4 Apr 2017 @ 16:53

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[Reply](#) [Collapse](#) [Mark as Unread](#)

[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [R BEHARI](#) - 5 Apr 2017 @ 8:16

Great to hear! Let me know if you want anything in particular covered.

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [L COLLINS](#) - 5 Apr 2017 @ 10:02

Thank you. Will do. Kind regards.

[Reply](#) [Mark as Unread](#)

[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [T ROBERTSON](#) - 10 Apr 2017 @ 8:28

I have been very down lately like some of the characters in "A Raisin in the Sun" I believe that we sometimes get so caught up in the negative thing that we often forget about where we are not to where we have been. I do think that there is a bit of feminist play happening on this play but it is not as strong as some other plays.

Walter has also become a victim in the way he is letting his emotions and pressure of wanting to provide for his family overwhelm his rational thinking. This to me is why he takes all the investments, so that he can earn a bit more and provide more things for his family.

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [R BEHARI](#) - 10 Apr 2017 @ 19:09

Where do you think the feminist aspects of the play occur?

Yes, with Walter, it is also a very natural and human (and perhaps masculine?) thing to want to do - provide for a family.

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [C BRESLER](#) - 5 May 2017 @ 14:16

Hi there,

The main themes of the play are:

- * Feminism and Gender issues
- * The American Dream
- * Racism and Inequality
- * Inherited poverty

Are there other themes I should take note of that do not fall into these categories?

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [R BEHARI](#) - 8 May 2017 @ 17:16

I would say also, Heritage and connecting with one's roots. Do you agree?

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[Re: Feminism in the play](#)

by [T MBONWA](#) - 11 May 2017 @ 15:38

yes because we see how Assegai embraces his culture and proud of his roots and also the way Bennie despise the other suitor because he had forgotten about his roots .

Mama Younger is a strong and proud woman. She is defined by her role as a mother (is she called Mama Younger more often than Lena). She is also old-fashioned and religious.

1. Can you find examples of this from the play?
2. What do you think of Mama? How does she interact with each of the characters?
3. What does her plant represent? How does the symbol of her plant evolve over the course of the play?

Look at activity 2 for help.

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Re: Lena Younger

by [Z WATSON](#) - 1 May 2017 @ 4:56

1. Her encounter with Beneatha when she slaps her and says there is still god in this house then again when asked about the check early in the morning she says its not christian. Her mother side comes out when making Travis's bed after he has gone to school basically always cleaning up after him. Those are just off the top of my head

2. I think Mama is a very strong willed woman she has a good heart and cares for those she loves and are closest to her, her ability to be selfless with the money and buy a house putting the family first shows the kind of person she is. Even though she doesn't agree with Walter's ideas of buying an alcohol store she keeps trying to bring out the best in him and tries to get him to make the right decisions, this is clear when even after he lost the money she gets him to rise to the challenge and make the decision for the family when Lindner comes, he does rise to the occasion as we find out.

3. The plant is a metaphor for the Younger family and it may also be a symbol of Walter. Like the family the plant starts out in a bad shape, down and out as they would say. But as the play moves on and so does the plant with some love and caring both the family and the plant move away from their disagreements and problems of race and struggle, they become strong together as one as a family.

Unfortunately, links to the movie versions of the play have been removed from YouTube due to copyright issues. I will keep checking to see if it has been uploaded again. If any of you come across the play online, please share the link here.

And here is something I found called Thug Notes. It's a synopsis of the play followed by an analysis. The guy who does it is very funny and is actively challenging stereotypes (there is a buzz word for you put into action). He presents himself visually and with his language and speech as a thug, but then he discusses literature and goes quite in depth with themes and imagery.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VoCY2nYVQNg>