

## A RAISIN IN THE SUN

### Feminism in the play

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?

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.

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)

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.

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?

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.

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.

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.

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?

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

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 .

### [YouTube Link to play](#)

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>

THE BEST VERSION I WATCHED:

<https://youtu.be/cBUYaL2HvVo>