

A RAISIN IN THE SUN

How is the theme of gender problematized in the play?

To begin your discussion, analyse the characterisation of Walter and Beneatha and read their interactions. Write one paragraph and share with your group mates.

Gender roles play a significant part in the lives of Walter and Beneatha. Beneatha : She occupies a very "head strong" role in the play. She is unwilling to accept the traditional gender roles of woman and instead chooses to be set apart. She dreams big dreams and wants to become a doctor "Listen I am going to be a doctor. Im not worried about who I am going to marry yet. If I ever get married ". She doesn't want to settle down yet in life but rather wants to make something of herself. The men in her life want to exercise control over her but they fail. "Who told you to be a doctor . Be a nurse like other woman or get married. Well it's quite clear that Beneatha isn't your typical "other" woman . She won't accept a weak submissive role of a woman. It is her stubbornness that frustrates Walter and others in the play. Walter : When it comes to gender and power, Walter wants to show that he is held up high and respected. He wants the world to see him as the true definition of a man. Walter has an expectation that a woman should be submissive and supportive of her husband. He believes she should not question him. Walter tries to exercise control over his wife Ruth. When Ruth son asks for money she turns him down but Walter goes against his wife and gives the son money. In doing so he wants to show domination. He feels his wife should know her place ! He believes being a true man means being associated with wealth and richness. It is this very idea that causes him to make a foolish investment with the wrong person. Walter :

Try to analyse other women characters in the play in regard to the theme of gender. This will finally prepare you for essay writing and exam preparation.

Look at Activity 2 in your Study Guide.

The feedback from this activity seems to suggest that Mama Younger is the central/main character in the play. Do you agree with this? Use the feedback on activity 2 to discuss this. What do you think?

Mama is the one who will be receiving the check, the much awaited check. It is for her to decide what happens with the money. Her attitude clearly indicates that she is not in support of Walter Lee's business idea of using the money to open a liquor store.

Mama is the matriarch of the family, and although not always present, the play centres around her, and her decisions. All the family members are dependant on her

for something, even Travis. She is the focal point of the family, so in my opinion, yes, she is the central/main character of the play.

Yes, I think so too. Do you think this adds to the feminist aspect of the play?

Many resources say that Walter is infact the main character, and I think that that contributes to the feminist aspect, like a women cannot be the main part of a play!

I was thinking of one thing that fascinates me. Mama refuses to support Walter's venture to invest in the liquor business. I also believe that experience is the best teacher. Mama had a foresight or sixth sense maybe which told her it would not work hence her refusal. She may have been a good judge of character and making quick money. It's funny the way it pens out that Walter loses the 6500. Imagine if he had been given the whole 10 000 dollar check.