

Review of different themes: the dead, by james joyce vs. a raisin in the sun, by ...

[Literature](#)



James Joyce's *The Dead* reveals characteristics of frustration, restraint, and violence. Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* reveals dreams as the main characters struggle to deal with the oppressive situations that overrule their lives. With these negative aspects of the stories, both authors incorporate the theme of nature in order to tie in metaphors, quotes, descriptions, and statements. Nature as a theme in these stories can include human nature to the green outdoor nature.

In *The Dead*, Joyce's Dubliners are trapped in monotonous lives of frustration and negativity. One of the themes of *Dubliners* is nature. Obviously, Gabriel has been enduring a broken marriage because of the paralysis, a natural condition experienced by most of the characters in the book. Gretta and Gabriel's marriage has decayed, similar to any natural food, plant, or living organism—even human. Many comparisons metaphorically are made throughout the story to symbolize the state of certain situations such as the marriage. Joyce uses natural symbols of snow and ice and also represents the colors yellow and brown. She uses snow and ice as a way to point out that something is frozen and motionless just like paralysis. When Gabriel comes into his aunts' party, "A light fringe of snow lay like a cape on the shoulders of his overcoat and like toecaps on the toes of his galoshes; and, as the buttons of his overcoat slipped with a squeaking noise through the snow-stiffened frieze, a cold fragrant air from out-of-doors escaped from crevices and folds." This theme of nature is reoccurring at the end of the story. The last paragraphs describe a snow blanketing across Ireland.

Even poetry is incorporated in this story when Gabriel quotes a poem by Robert Browning. Gabriel wears galoshes, fashionable in Europe, but <https://assignbuster.com/review-of-different-themes-the-dead-by-james-joyce-vs-a-raisin-in-the-sun-by-lorraine-hansberry/>

uncommon in Ireland. He earned his college degree at Anglican Trinity College in Dublin. In the mind of this character, nature fills his thoughts. The snow-covered monument to Wellington comes to Gabriel's mind when he thinks of going outside; a theme of nature occurring once again. Gabriel's grandfather riding his horse, Johnny over and over again around the statue of William III, conqueror of Ireland on behalf of England is another sign of nature. "The Dead" connects paralysis with the English and with the theme of nature. Gabriel suffers from paralysis, at least somewhat because of his lure to things English. A shocking image in the story is the Trappist monks sleeping in their coffins. This symbol relates to the theme of nature because the author portrays the godliest clergymen as living dead. They are zombies in nature living among the humans.

Nature is portrayed in the story with redolent descriptions like the one of Freddy Malins: "His face was fleshy and pallid, touched with color only at the thick hanging lobes of his ears and at the wide wings of his nose." The senses of sight, touch, and imagination are powerful in short lines as such and give a greater appreciation for the nature of humans and their features, facially and personally. Freddy is defined to be "rubbing the knuckles of his left fist backwards and forwards into his left eye." Visualization using the natural aspects of characters in *The Dead* is the author's main success. Lines are easy to visualize because they incorporate themes of nature, beautiful ones at that.

The story incorporates aspects of nature in many descriptions and quotations, but it is up to the reader to inspect and dissect what is being

read. Bursts of emotion are also reoccurring within the story, a natural aspect of humans. “ One by one they were all becoming shades,” Gabriel ponders about the people he has taken for granted until now. Shade is a natural aspect. “ Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dimly with age.” Here, another analogy to the word “ wither” can be made with plants in nature just as “ decay” can be related to living organisms in nature.

In *A Raisin in the Sun* by Hansberry, nature is presented in many lines throughout the story. The story’s overall plot involves dreams, a natural aspect of humans, as the main characters fight to deal with the depression that surrounds them. The title first off gives the impression of the story centering on nature. Langston Hughes wonders if the dreams he wrote about were forgotten or just put away. Could the dreams have shriveled up “ like a raisin in the sun?” Although the story focuses somewhat on materialistic things, opposite of nature like Walter’s desire for money and Beneatha’s desire to become a doctor, many examples of nature can be found throughout the story. Dreams control these materialistic possessions and goals and in a sense nature controls the physical world. The Youngers go through great trouble to reach these dreams, and much of their happiness and depression is immediately related to whether or not they reach their dreams. When the family is united in the end by the last dream, it is realized that a natural phenomenon, a dream, really does control the outcome.

The phrase “ eat your eggs” appears in the play from Ruth to Walker. This phrase and the meaning behind it define the natural world of man versus

woman. Walter means for the phrase to illustrate how women prevent men from reaching their goals. He claims that every time a man gets excited about something, a woman tries to temper his joy by telling him to eat his eggs. This is a natural competition between men and women; to blame one another for each other's failures, distractions, or letdowns. The theme of nature ties in with the theme of life; they go hand in hand. Being quiet and eating one's eggs represents an acceptance of the hardship that Walter and the Youngers compete with in life. The nature of the eggs represent Ruth's support for Walker, despite what he says about women. The nourishment of Walker by Ruth is symbolized through nature; eggs and life between man and woman.

Yet another symbol of nature or natural symbol is mama's plant, which represents her care and dream for her family. When she first appeared on stage, mama moves straight toward the plant to take care of it. She states that the plant never gets enough light or water, but she takes pride in how it still grows beautifully under her hands. So much nature is composed in this description of the plant and this therefore reveals about mama and how caring she is; a natural quality of any mother. Her care for her plant is parallel to her care for her children. She gives unconditional love and aids in growth. A garden and a yard are also discussed when mama's desire for these things are revealed. She wishes that her gardening skills only became better with practice with this plant. These aspects of nature reveal much about the inner character of mama. Her achievement with the plant helps her believe that she would be a great gardener. Characteristics that these themes of nature bring about in mama is her persistence and dedication as a

person, not only to the plants but to her children and herself- she wants her dream to come true.

Beneatha's hair is a natural symbol. In the beginning of the play, it is straightened and halfway through the play, she cuts it to an afro. The afro, another symbol of nature represents her embracing her natural heritage. It can be seen here that this powerful social statement has been controlled by nature-her natural hair. This is another assurance that nature often controls the physical and social world. It holds more power than materialism.

Dissecting texts like these allow the reader to think beyond the physical natural things discussed or mentioned in a story, like animals or dirt.

Symbolically, the Afro serves as a way to say natural is beautiful. Rather than force her hair to conform to the current society's styles, which dictate so many girls, Beneatha chooses a style that assists her to easily reveal and represent her identity and culture. This again is an example of how natural aspects of characters and of anything described in the story is a representation of the inner self of a character. Beneatha wants to be natural, a sign of being true and humble. " Beneatha's new hair is a symbol of her anti assimilationist beliefs as well as her desire to shape her identity by looking back to her roots in Africa" (cliffsnotes).

The natural family, emotions, and other aspects of physical and social nature appear throughout the course of both stories, *A Raisin in the Sun* and *The Dead*. Although nature in has been discussed in a different way as expected, these aspects of nature found in both stories are a unique way to look at the topic. Rather than discussing nature such as trees, grass, and animals, the

nature of the social world and of the human mind and human roles was focused on. Both stories understand the importance of nature in each and every character and scene. Both had a positive attitude on the aspect of nature, using it in the forms of metaphors, quotations, and statements.