

Comparing a rising in
the sun by
l.hansberry and
fences by a.wilson
essay



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This paper analyses family matters and power relations in Angela Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* and August Wilson's *Fences*.

These two stories, even though they tackle different issues, relationships between and among family members and power relations, come out clearly. In comparing these two stories, the paper analyses the use of plot and symbolism employed here as elements of drama.

The plot in literature refers to the structure of a story to bring out exposition, complication, climax, and resolution. The plot in these two stories compares strongly for it is similar in many aspects. They are both divided into different acts each with several scenes.

The issue of family matters sets in immediately as the stories begin. In *A Raisin in the Sun*, the story opens by lives of an African-American family by the name Youngers.

As the story opens, each person in the family is thinking of what to do with the money they are about to get from an insurance firm as compensation of Mr. Youngers' death.

Mama, wife to Mr. Younger plans to spend the money by buying a dream house that she dreamt of with her late husband.

On the other hand, Walter Lee, a son, prefers to invest the money in a joint bar business with his friends because this investment would put their financial woes behind their backs. Ruth, Walter's wife shares Mama's dream of buying a house.

On her side, Beneatha, a daughter wishes to pay her tuition fees using that money. This is the exposition of the story.

On the other hand, Fences has a similar exposition. The story begins with tackling family issues especially money. It is on a Friday and Troy, and Bono has received their pay after which they have gone to drink at Troy's place.

The element of power also sets in, as Troy cannot understand why blacks cannot drive garbage trucks.

However, Troy is cheating on Rose, his wife with whom they have a son, Cory. Rose reminds Troy of a fence that he was to build. The exposition in these two stories share something; that is, family issues.

As the stories progress into complication, the Youngers in A Rising of the Sun, Ruth realizes that she is impregnated; however, Walter does not say anything concerning the issue of abortion. Mama goes ahead to pay a down payment of the house.

However, people living in Clybourne Park, do not want to live close to this family. Therefore, they offer some money to Youngers not to move in that neighborhood. Walter losses his money to Willy Harris; whom they were to open a joint liquor store.

Events in Fences take a similar route of complication. Cory quits his job; something his father will not hear of, and this makes them be at loggerheads.

Bono, Cory, and Troy continue building the fence, and Bono posit that they have to make the wall for Rose because she loves her family. Bono promises to buy his wife a fridge because he loves her. Troy confesses a clandestine affair with Alberta.

Rose is infuriated about this affair, and he brands Troy “ a selfish man concerned more in taking than giving” (Wilson Para. 26). Troy tries to attack Rose, but Cory attacks him; however, Troy wins.

In the climax, the Youngers hold on their dream to live in their new house beneath dumps George Murchison for Joseph Asagai. In Fences, Troy visits Alberta in the hospital where she had a stillbirth. It hurts, and Troy tells death to come for him if it can, but after finishing the fence.

The tension between Troy and Cory boils out, and Cory is kicked out of the house after a physical confrontation.

Finally, in resolution, the Youngers move in their dream house. They realize their future is uncertain but draws courage to move on from strong family ties. They vow to stay together and stop clashing over their different dreams and aspirations. Asagai is to pay tuition fees for Beneatha.

In Fences, Cory comes home after eight years to bury Troy who died from cardiac disease. However, upon reaching home, Cory decides not to show up in the funeral; however, this makes him a lesser man according to Rose. He finally agrees to show up.

Gabriel, Troy’s brother, who was in mental asylum shows up, it is not clear whether he has escaped or not. However, he tries to play the trumpet, but it <https://assignbuster.com/comparing-a-rising-in-the-sun-by-lhansberry-and-fences-by-awilson-essay/>

fails to produce sound. He resorts to dancing, and as the play closes, he says, “ That’s the way that goes!” (Wilson Para. 26).

The two stories employ different symbols. In drama, symbolism refers to the use of images or logos to express certain information (DiYanni 966). In *Fences*, the fence is used symbolically. Bono observes that Rose wants the wall because she loves her family.

The fence here represents the ties that bind this family from breakage. Even after Troy confesses of his affair with Alberta, the marriage does not break up because the ‘ fence’ holds the family together. Troy is unfaithful, he lacks love, and that is why he cannot complete building the fence in time.

Rose has to remind him from time to time. This lack of commitment to finishing the wall symbolizes how Troy is unwilling to love his wife and family, no wonder he has an affair with Alberta.

On the other hand, Mama’s plant in *A Rising of the Sun* is used symbolically. As the play opens, she is greatly concerned about taking care of the plant. This plant symbolizes her family and her care to the plant parallels her love and care for her family.

She says, “ This plant never gets enough light or water, but I take pride in how it nevertheless flourishes under my care” (Hansberry Para. 3).

It is true that her family is not satisfied with the love that she shows it and this is why they have different dreams and want to use her husband’s money in their ventures.

Nevertheless, just like her tree ailments under her care, this family still goes strong, and this explains why they finally buy her idea of buying a house.

The issue of family matters and power relations come out clearly in these two stories. The Youngers go through issues like the death of a loved one just like Troy's family in *Fences*.

Family clashes are prominent in these stories and even though the clashes of different nature, the bottom line is, they exist. Power relations come out clearly. Troy notices that blacks are cannot drive garbage trucks, not that they cannot learn, but because it is not allowed.

On the other hand, The Youngers are not wanted in the Clybourne Park neighborhood. All these results from the fact that they are blacks. Use of drama elements is similar. The plot is the same starting with exposition, complication, climax, and finally resolution.

Use of symbolism is also outstanding. However, there is a difference in the way these drama elements are used.

While symbolism comes out clearly in *Fences*, the same is not strongly reflected in *A Rising of the Sun*. Family matters and power relations are two themes shared in these two stories.

DiYanni, Robert. "Literature: Reading Fiction, Poetry, and Drama." New York: McGraw-Hill Companies Inc, 2004.

Hansberry, Lorraine. "A Rising in the Sun." Web.

Wilson, August. "Fences." New York: Penguin group, 1986.