

Money and family in 'a raisin to the sun' by lorraine hansberry

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The theme of choosing between money and one's family is a common one in literature and theatre, with the core tension making for great drama time after time.

In her 1959 play *Raisin In The Sun*, Lorraine Hansberry explores this very idea, with protagonist Walter striving for a great sum of money at the repeated potential cost of the happiness of his family. This essay aims to show that Hansberry shows us that family always triumphs over money and financial gain. An early example of how Walter initially chooses the prospect of wealth over the integrity and happiness of his family is when he decides to accept the offer from a white neighbor to buy their new house and move away from the new white neighborhood in which they had recently purchased a home. In accepting the offer for their home, Walter essentially degraded his family by agreeing with the white neighbor that he and his black family were not suitable to live in this 'improved' neighborhood, thus preferring a short term financial boost over the reputation and integrity of both his race and his loved ones. The trajectory of Walter's character is signposted within the play by two different characters - George and Joseph - one of which lives a life of wealth and heritage denial, and the other of which lives humbly but with pride in his race and his situation.

George is a man who is fully assimilated in to 'white culture', almost embarrassed and mocking of his African heritage and a man who denigrates those with no wealth and no status. Joseph, on the other hand, is a humble man who cares little for possessions and status symbols, enjoys learning about his heritage and clearly puts family over money and blood over water.

The inclusion of these two very different characters acts as a pathway for <https://assignbuster.com/money-and-family-in-a-raisin-to-the-sun-by-lorraine-hansberry/>

both the audience and Walter to see that his life could go one of two ways: he could become a man with great wealth but very little integrity and connection to his roots; or he could become a man that while not completely financially comfortable, is at peace with both his heritage and his family, not forcing himself or them to be anyone other than who they really are.

Ultimately, we see that Walter chooses to follow the path of the humble Joseph rather than the wealthy, detached George, as he decides to change his mind and not accept the offer from his white neighbor. Though this decision casts a cloud of uncertainty over Walter and his family, the message that the audience are left with is that it is better to have the love and respect of your family than to create division and upset by following your greed and making damaging decisions solely for the purpose of making money. The play ends with the family leaving for their new home, and though they are uncertain of the future, they are a solid unit once again.