

Theatre plays that classically dramatize human conditions and human concerns essa...

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Agamemnon, Hamlet, A Raisin in the Sun, and A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof: Four Theatre Plays that Classically Dramatize Human Conditions and Human Concerns

Four of the most classically previewed theatre plays that existed in the visual and performing arts are Agamemnon, Hamlet, A Raisin in the Sun, as well as, A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. These four theatre plays visually and sensationally mirror the happenings that affect people during specific time and event. Agamemnon specifies more on Greeks in a myth that features the kingdom of King Atreus of Mycenae.

He is the son of King Atreus to Queen Aerope, the brother of Menelaus, and the husband of Clytemnestra (Agamemnon, 2009). Hamlet, on the other hand, focuses more on a certain prince that is the son of a king who has been murdered by his uncle Claudius. It is a tragedy, which William Shakespeare wrote in the 16th century.

As of A Raisin in the Sun, it is a play that mirrors the life of the black Younger family during the 1950s in Southside Chicago. Lastly, A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is more on a couple's life in the '60s: Brick who possess an "archetypal masculinity" (Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, 2009), yet is a broken man, and Maggie (the cat) who is "a hysterical, dissatisfied woman left prostrate before a brick of a man" (Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, 2009). All these project human condition, emulating concerns through music, dance, and dialogue.

Main Body Agamemnon, Hamlet, A Raisin in the Sun, and A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof are four theatre plays that dramatize and mirror human conditions and human concerns. These four plays, in a way, create an impact to the writer, which could be described as educating and enlightening.

There are some important aspects that are alive in the themes of the four plays. Agamemnon Major characters. Agamemnon is the king of Argos and the husband of Clytemnestra. Being the commander of Greek armies and the older brother of Menelaus, a war starts when his younger brother, Menelaus had his wife stolen by a Trojan prince. Thus, Agamemnon offers his daughter Iphigenia, so that they could obtain favor from the gods and have the Greek fleet sent in order to attack Troy.

Clytemnestra is the main protagonist who is the queen of Argos and wife of King Agamemnon. Convinced that her husband should be punished for the injustice of offering their daughter and helping out Menelaus opening up a war, Clytemnestra sets up a plan of killing her husband despite her sympathy. Cassandra is a Trojan princess whom Agamemnon captures and sends to Argos where she becomes his slave.

Being Apollo's lover, she was given the gift of prophecy; yet when she fails to bear him a child, he punishes her by giving her a curse that people would reject in believing all of her prophecies. She sees the affliction in Agamemnon's family, predicting of his death and the vengeance of the queen, Clytemnestra. Aegisthus is the cousin of Agamemnon and the lover of Clytemnestra. His father was the power rival of Agamemnon's father, who kills and boils two of Aegisthus' brothers. Since is being put in exile, he waits for his chance in seeking out his revenge for the crime. Chorus is the elder citizens of Argos who serves as advisers to Queen Clytemnestra.

They provide speeches in the background of the play, picturing the king's death, as well as, the events of Trojan War as an end product of human pride. The Watchman is the man on the rooftop of the palace of Troy. He watches and signals the fall of Troy and watches the king's return. The Herald is the man who brings news of the king's return. He is thrilled to see the king safely home again, but gives descriptions of the horror against Troy.

Themes. Agamemnon is a story of doom that is "perhaps the greatest Greek tragedy" (Agamemnon: Overall Analysis, 2009). The basic theme here is the use of language and characterization in a play that enacts the impending doom and disaster that is about to impend on both kingdoms, especially on Troy. Using a magnificent, moving style of poetry that Aeschylus uses in his plays, this play centers more on the tragedy that is about arrive as seen either on the kingdoms themselves or on each person like Agamemnon. It renders certain acts of violence, which carries the entire scene because it proceeds to an action that is moving, intense, and severely damaging it even leads to death itself. At the end of the play, the three acts of violence—the theft of Helen, Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter, and Atreus' boiling (cooking) of two sons of his brother—display tragic scenes that could reflect the greatest disaster ever to have entered the mind of the reader. How it reflects human condition and concerns.

This play reflects human condition, as it pertains to the lives of communities in the past. It reflects tribulation, danger, theft, rivalry, and death, which are all realistic in life even to the present time. The play displays justice and

how people should exercise the use of it during certain occasions that may affect a cluster of people, such as the killing of Agamemnon. It displays love and hatred, peace and war, and calmness and anxiety.

It reflects the human condition of the greed for power and revenge. It mirrors the cruelty of man in the most besetting and merciless manner ever imagined. Its impact to the writer. The play Agamemnon creates an impact that can be described as enlightening because it displays true-to-life scenes that can still be applied to the present world today. Despite the fact that the scenes picture life of the past, the themes and subject matters reflect things that are still applicable, such as Helen's abduction by Paris for example, which led to a deepening war between Argos and Troy, which reflects that life is simply reciprocal. Conversely, this play also creates an impact that can be pictured as educating, since there are scenes for which the writer has not imagined to have existed in the past.

Hamlet Major characters. Hamlet plays as the prince of Denmark, the thirty-year-old protagonist who is the son of Queen Gertrude and late King Hamlet (Hamlet: Character List, 2009). He feels bitter for Claudius, his uncle and brother to the late king, for the schemes that are being carried out for the sake of power and greed.

Claudius is the king of Denmark and Prince Hamlet's uncle who takes the role of the antagonist in the play. He appears to be "a calculating, ambitious politician, driven by his sexual appetites and his lust for power" (Hamlet: Character List, 2009). Gertrude is the queen of Denmark and

mother to Prince Hamlet. She recently marries King Claudius for whom Hamlet has deep resentment, but her shallowness makes her a weak woman, despite her affection for her son and her love for Claudius.

Polonius is the Lord of Chamberlain in the court of King Claudius, as well as, the father of Laertes and Ophelia. Horatio is one of the closest friends of Hamlet, who studied with the prince in Wittenberg. Loyal and helpful to Hamlet, he tells Hamlet's story after the death of his friend.

Ophelia is Polonius' daughter for whom Hamlet has had relations with. She is obedient to her father and usually obedient to the dictations of men. She spies on Hamlet under the scheme of Polonius until she grows mad and dies after drowning in the river. Laertes is Polonius' son and the brother of Ophelia. He spends his time in the play being a thwart to Hamlet in vengeance for his father's honor.

Fortinbras is another thwart to Hamlet, as the former seeks vengeance for the late king of Norway, which the late King Hamlet has killed in battle. The Ghost appears to be King Hamlet who claims to have been killed by King Claudius. He calls on his son to avenge for him.

Hamlet has had second thoughts on whether it is really his father or a mere devil that tempts him to murder the king. Until the end of the play it has not been mentioned on whether the spectacle is really the late King Hamlet. Themes. Hamlet is a story of vengeance and hatred, while reflecting on actions (instead of characters) that identify some discontinuities and irregularities, with no strong subplot but Hamlet's

struggle for guilt and revenge (Hamlet, 2009). The theme is being centered on Hamlet's struggle in balancing his love, respect, and honor with that of his hatred, contempt, and shame, especially to his uncle. According to T. S.

Eliot, The grounds of Hamlet's failure are not immediately obvious... [T]he essential emotion of the play is the feeling of a son towards a guilty mother: tone is that of one who has suffered tortures on the score of his mother's degradation... The guilt of a mother is an almost intolerable motive for drama, but it had to be maintained and emphasized to supply a psychological solution, or rather a hint of one. (Eliot 6) How it reflects human condition and concerns. This play also reflects human condition, as it mirrors true-to-life happenings between mother and son. The feeling of a son towards a guilty mother is one that reflects difficulty and intricacy—something that is close to tortures. Hamlet appears to be in a difficult situation, and for this he resolves to kill Claudius in one instance, and then suddenly resolves to be patient towards his uncle at another instance.

The play's theme centers on the condition and stroke of the subconscious. Its impact to the writer. The play Hamlet creates an impact that can be described as educating, since it mirrors how the mind works over certain situations that render the stroke of the subconscious. From here, it is being made evident that decisions are made as a result of the conclusions that are formed in the subconscious mind. Thus, it appears that, whatever decision people make over the course of time, there is a need to reflect over the environment and what made the person arrive at such a

decision. Claudius' actions can thus be blameless. A Raisin in the Sun

Major characters.

Walter Lee Younger who is the protagonist of the play is a dreamer. Through the help of his friends like Willy Harris, he dreams of becoming rich, affluent, and famous. He plans to do an investment concerning his father's insurance money in a business that centered on a liquor store. In the play, he is always seen busy thinking of ways that would quickly solve their problems.

Beneatha Younger is the daughter of Mama (Lena Younger) and the sister of Walter Lee Younger.

She is a college student and “better educated than the rest of the Younger family” (A Raisin in the Sun, 2009). She dreams of becoming a doctor one day, and tries her best to retain her identity as a well-educated black woman. Lena Younger (Mama) is the mother of Walter and Beneatha.

She is the matriarch of the family—a religious, moral, and maternal mother of the clan. What she wants in the money is to use it as down payment for a house that has a beautiful backyard.

Ruth Younger is the wife of Walter and the mother of Travis. She takes care of the apartment, and tries to rekindle her love with Walter. She is weary of all the trouble that they have been experiencing; yet she continues to be an emotionally strong and tough woman. Travis Younger is the young son of Walter and Ruth.

He earns some money by helping out in the grocery store. He spends time playing outside with other children. He has no bedroom and sleeps on sofa

in the living room. Joseph Asagai is a Nigerian student in love with Beneatha (A Raisin in the Sun, 2009). As a Nigerian student, he is proud of his African legacy. He proposes marriage to Beneatha, so that she could go to Africa and learn more of their heritage. George Murchison is a wealthy African-American man in the story.

He courts Beneatha, and most of the family chooses him to be Beneatha's husband. However, Beneatha does not like his character of submitting to the white culture in America. Themes. This play, which is more of an autobiography created by Lorraine Hansberry, is being centered on a few weeks in the life of the Youngers, which is an African-American family living in Chicago sometime in the '50s. The theme centers on the relationship between the blacks and the whites, mirroring how each one struggles to retain their standing as a family and as a community.

The story mirrors how the Youngers planned to use the insurance money of Walter's father, as they are about to receive a check total of \$10,000 (A Raisin in the Sun, 2009). As each of the members creates an idea on how to use the money, it displays control, self-efficacy, self-identity, and freedom, which are the four things being questioned in the '50 when concerning African Americans. Each of these four is being mirrored (and questioned) in the community of African Americans as a whole. With the help of characters like Joseph Asagai and George Murchison, the topics on control, self-efficacy, self-identity, and freedom are being stressed out. How it reflects human condition and concerns.

This story centers on the author's experiences in the black communities of Chicago. It is more of a portrait of the life of an African American in the United States. When viewed objectively, it is evident that the play creates a realistic approach, reflecting the struggles of the African Americans in gaining independence from colonialism. It is also evident that the story reflects human condition or concern because, aside from being an autobiography, the story relates to problems that concern finance and the economy, which are both very pertinent even up to the present time. The play reflects human condition and concern that is still being lived up to the present time.

Its impact to the writer. The story *A Raisin in the Sun* creates an impact that could be described as enlightening because it pictures true-to-life actions and experiences, indicating that nothing is more important in a democracy than being able to live with control, self-efficacy, self-identity, and freedom. These four appear to be the basic things vital in a fruitful democratic system.

As the story reflects the struggles of other families, it gives the impression or idea that other people in the community could be living our lives as well... or even worse. After reviewing the play, the writer arrived at the conclusion that freedom from the clutches of political power or greed is the one of the best assets in a democratic world. *A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* Major characters.

Margaret plays the role of the cat. She's more of a hard, nervous, and bitchy woman as an effect of Brick's refusal in making her his desire. She

constantly poses in the mirror, a woman “ desperate in her sense of loneliness, who is made all the more beautiful in her envy, longing, and dispossession” (Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, 2009). Brick possesses almost an archetypal masculinity, but is actually a broken man because of his “ repressed homosexual desire for his dead friend Skipper” (Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, 2009). He possesses a charm that is the personification of a “ self-possessed, self-contained, untouchable, and phallically intact man” (Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, 2009). Big Daddy is Margaret’s father and an old-fashioned plantation millionaire who believes he has actually returned from the grave. He is large, brash, and vulgar. His most significant role in the play is his part in convincing Brick to face and act upon his desire.

Big Mama is Margaret’s mother and a “ fat, breathless, sincere, earnest, crude, and bedecked in flashy gems... woman embarrassingly dedicated to a man who despises her” (Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, 2009). She considers Brick to be her one and only son. Mae is a mean and an agitated monster who, together with her husband Gooper, schemes on Big Daddy’s estate by appearing to have had children with the latter.

Gooper is Big Daddy’s eldest, least favored son. A successful corporate lawyer who deeply resents his parents’ love and high opinion of Brick, he relishes in Big Daddy’s illness, and then callously plots a scheme in order to secure control of the estate. Themes. This play centers more on manliness and homosexuality, as pictured in the personification of Brick.

It is this homosexual desire that has left Brick broken as a man, and wrecked as a partner. The coolness of repression appears to be the key to Brick's endurance and stability, making him the brick of a man who lives by keeping his desire at bay. It says, Brick is an alcoholic who cannot avow the desire in his relationship with his dead friend Skipper. Turning from his desire, he has depressively distanced himself from the world with a screen of liquor. He is reduced to the daily, mechanical search for his click... [of] peace. (Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, 2009) From this statement it is evident that the theme centers specifically on mendacity and pretense.

It reflects human experience by rules of dictation, on how people should feel, look, act, and live in a society or community, and how the loneliness of a man teaches him to live being a brick for the purpose of struggling against unavoidable crisis. The human feeling of the fear of death, as well as, the feeling of helplessness because of great desire of loving life as it is, and turning from guilt and insecurities... all these pushes a man to be human. How it reflects human condition and concerns. This story centers on human condition and concern in the sense that it emotes human feeling and apprehension. The dramatic helplessness, as reflected in the words of Anna Hassapi, allow man to be free. Since the characters appear to have problems in terms of open communication and loneliness, then the crisis have something to do with disintegration of the family, as well as, the need for change of social values, especially at the time of globalization when man live life to be exceedingly free. It reflects the human condition that to live is to grow and evolve by being free. Its impact to the writer.

This play creates an impact that can be described as educating because it offers a deeper value of the human feeling and condition. It reflects freedom, reflecting that helplessness leads one to be free despite problems and the sense of helplessness. Disintegration sometimes can proceed to something more helpful and significant. As Hassapi says, "It is natural to grow and evolve but the product of this change is unpredictable and often negative" (1). To put it the other way around, it is sometimes natural not to grow and not to evolve because the product of this change is predictable and often positive. Negativity could lead to positive results, such as being free.

Conclusion Theatre play is a form of storytelling that has existed since the dawn of man.

It is the utilizing of speech, sound, gesture, music, dancing, and other spectacles while presenting the roles of other people. An artistic form that combines visual and performing arts, theatre plays typically mirror events of human conditions and the typical human concerns. By performing these onstage, people are able to embellish the exact sensation that happened on that instance. As for the four plays that are Agamemnon, Hamlet, A Raisin in the Sun, as well as, A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, all these project human condition that can be described as both educating and enlightening, while emulating concerns through music, dance, and the use of dialogue. In the end, it created an impact on the writer of this paper by displaying true-to-life scenes, mirroring how the mind works in certain situations, indicating that nothing is more important than being able to live freely with deeper value to

human feeling and condition. Negativity can lead to more positive results, so that helplessness and disintegration can be helpful if viewed more positively.

In all these, the most important value in the world—money—should be included at all times, for the world nowadays would be incomplete without this mania. With this in mind we ask, would human condition and concern revolve around this mania as well? The answer would take different views and standpoints. Works Cited Agamemnon. 2009. Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. 25 April 2009

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