

# A raisin in the sun critical analysis



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Walter is frustrated with his current position in life, and every disappointment he has encountered thus far. His position is symbolic of every black male struggling to provide for his family by any means necessary. Hansberry stated in her meeting with Robert Kennedy "the first thing that must be achieved is equal opportunities for Negroes...when unemployment is six percent nationally it is as high as thirty percent among Negroes. Although Walter has a job, it seems inadequate for his survival. As a result, he has become frustrated and lacks good judgement. His frustrations stem from him not being able to act as a man and provide for his family and grasp hold of his ideals to watch them manifest into a positive situation.

Walter wants the best for his family and he thinks the liquor store will provide him the financial security needed to boost them out of poverty. "I'm thirty five years old; I've been married eleven years and I got a boy who sleeps in living room (Hansberry 34). best describes the sympathy and compassion Walter feels for his son. Although his family's financial position is strained, Walter doesn't want his son to see him struggle. Children are very impressionable. Walter displays an unselfish characteristic that is overshadowed by unwise decisions later in the play. In one particular scene, his son Travis asked both parents for money. Walter acts out of pride and little motivation by giving Travis his last pocket change. This symbolizes Walter's willingness to be a good father. In a different situation, Walter wouldn't display his selfish intentions. This behavior can be attributed to working in a degrading, underpaid position and not seeing results. The overcrowded living conditions and lack of privacy in the ghetto help make

people who live there as 'tired' as their furnishings (Carter 45).

Metaphorically speaking, Walter is like the furniture in the small apartment, 'tired and broken in spirit'. Every black male's plight in America is to be regarded as a provider for his family. However, society doesn't afford black males the benefit of feeling secure about providing for their families. It's easy to criticize society and place the blame on America for not affording Walter the opportunities of his white counterparts. The fact is, he does not seem to have control over his own responsibilities. Therefore, if he was given all the resources needed to provide his family his poor judgement and lack of business sense would create further stress on the family. His wife, Ruth, Mama, and his sister Beneatha attack him from every angle about his doubtful ideals. Ironically, those ideals are what Walter needs to shape and justify his manhood. Without ideals and proper resources to obtain them, a man's existence is insignificant. In essence, Walter's determination to open the liquor store can be viewed as means to an end.

As Walter's dreams become bigger and bigger, he seems to neglect the 'smaller' things such as his family." Here I am a giant surrounded by ants! Ants who can't even understand what the giant is talking about (Hansberry 85). Walter has big ideals, but his methods of achieving his goals and ideals are somewhat irrational. Walter is more concerned with becoming self-employed without really thinking about the consequences, which may be imposed on his family. Later in play, Walter learns that he needs to set his dreams aside for the sake of the family. Also, he learns that pride in himself and his family is inseparable and that anything that harms one harms the other. Walter gains our sympathy by his struggle against the economic and

social pressure of a 'oppressive' society(Carter 58). Walter certainly should be applauded for trying to rise above his current condition. Most individuals would have succumbed to poverty and tried unhealthy alternatives for achieving success. Walter's ideal of achieving success through a liquor store should not be thought of as exploiting the hardship of blacks, but as the only opportunity adequate to providing. This situation mirrors the youth of today that's selling marijuana to each other blacks to provide the basic needs for their families. In the midst of us pursuing our ambitions there exist the possibility to behave selfishly. Walter must learn that the quest for manhood is long and tedious. So, sacrifices must be made and responsibilities must be prioritized. Sometimes, people are unwilling to put their dreams aside for a bigger cause. The test of a real man is relinquishing control of his personal ambitions to benefit the whole or in Walter's case the family. Certainly it would be unfair for Walter to give up his aspirations. The issue is whether Walter can distinguish between a fantasy of reality and a dream deferred.

Essentially this play is the story of Walter Lee Young, passionate, ambitious, and bursting with energy and dreams. Walter Lee was a desperate man, shackled by poverty and prejudice, and obsessed with his own sense of success, which he felt would be the end of all of his social and economic problems. Unfortunately Walter had to learn the hard lesson that pride and greed will eventually lead to unhappiness.

#### Work Cited Page

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