

Raisin in the Sun Review

Title: Raisin in the Sun

Author: Lorraine Hansberry

Period: Modern

Characters:

Mama (Lena Younger): Mother of Beneatha and Walter. Religious and head of house

Walter Lee Younger: Son of Mama, husband to Ruth, father to Travis, brother to Beneatha.

Beneatha Younger: Daughter of Mama, sister to Walter

Travis Younger: Son of Walter and Beneatha

Joseph Asagi: Suitor to Beneatha

George Murchison: Suitor to Beneatha

Plot Summary:

A Raisin in the Sun retells the life of an African American family constricted by the social normalities of the time. The Youngers reside in the south of Chicago and are characters based in the 1950's. At the forefront of the play, Mama is expecting a check from her dead husband in the form of life insurance. This money, \$10,000, serves as a way to renew hope in a family suppressed by their racial background. While the money would be beneficial to their family life, each character foresees themselves utilizing the money in different ways. Walter, Mama's son, wants to use the money to invest in a liquor store and become his own boss that isn't subject to the whims of white men. Beneatha, Mama's daughter, hopes to use the money to pay for college and medical school so she can become an educated woman who helps others in need. Mama, the sole receiver of the money, wants to use the money as a down payment on a house in a different neighbor that can fit their growing family. While each character needs the money for a different reason, the goal of having the money is to reform their current lifestyle. As African Americans in the south, the Youngers experience racial discrimination and are stuck in the poverty circle due to their low paying jobs (Walter is a limo driver and Ruth and Mama clean houses). First, Mama uses a small portion of the money to invest in a new home that is large and in a exclusive neighborhood filled with all white tenants. She then gives the remainder of the money to Walter to split between his sister and him for their future endeavors. Unfortunately for the Youngers, Walter's business partner swindles him out of the money and the family is left with only the prospect of a new house to appease them. During the play, Beneatha is shown to have two suitors, both very different in their ways of life. One, George, represents the American standards black people assimilate to. He is financially stable and successful, but he possesses a sort of white-washed aura that blacks out his cultural heritage. The second suitor, Asagi, comes from

Nigeria and embraces his African American culture. He inspires Beneatha to reveal her true inner self and appreciate the heritage which she is apart of, therefore winning her affections. Later, after the incident in which Walter loses his and Beneatha's portion of the money, they attempt to retract the down payment on the house. However, the neighborhood sends a representative, Mr. Karl Linder, who offers to pay the Youngers to not join their association. While at first this was a consideration for the family, they realize that taking the money would be accepting that they inferior to the eyes of the white population. This upsets Walter and he refuses to succumb to the demands of white men any longer. They pack up their run down apartment and move into the house, hoping to start a new way of life.

MOWAAW: Social criticism of limitations including Criticizes racial discrimination, financial struggles, and issues w/ gender roles

Plot References:

1. Ruth determining whether she should get an abortion because the family can't afford another child
2. Mama's ideology of money vs. Walter's ideology
3. Comparison between Asagai and George and speculation at how this affects their world view
4. Beneatha's individuality and uniqueness (focus on cultural heritage-cutting her hair)
5. Walter's job as a limo driver
6. Walter's breakdown after losing the money
7. Karl Linder offers the Younger's money for the house
8. Walter pretending to be inferior in order to get money for the house
9. The family's realization that they want to move into the house and not take the payment from Linder
10. Vacating the apartment and Mama's goodbye

Quotes:

"Money is life. Once upon a time freedom used to be life" -Mama

"Isn't there something wrong in a house, in a world, where all dreams, good or bad must depend on the death of another man?" -Asagi

"We have decided to move into the house because my father earned it for us brick by brick" -Walter

"In my mother's house, there is still God" Mama

"There isn't any real progress, only one large circle we march in" Beneatha

If I was writing an essay...

If I was writing an essay I would be sure to include important background information of the time, meaning the location of the story and the time period. This would allow a connection between the racial discrimination experienced, and the historical accuracy that helped spur this hatred and inferiority. I would also make sure to include the very prominent foil characters that point to a greater idea of assimilation vs. individuality. The necessity of assimilation in this time can connect to the larger idea of racial discrimination and social issues of the time. Finally, I would make sure to include the influence of money and how having it alters characterization throughout the play. One could create commentary on how socioeconomic status determines individuality and cultural acceptance and could force assimilation.

Literary Techniques:

Symbolism-

A primary example of symbolism through the text is the plant that Mama nurtured throughout the story, posing as a symbol for her beliefs that are held strong despite her children holding more progressive opinions in some areas. Mama is extremely passionate about her religion in addition to societal expectations, & while her children are able to develop newer ideologies, she remains with the more traditional views, & takes them with her through the story as she also brings the plant.

Additionally, an important scene highlights the symbolism of hair within society when Beneatha decides not to treat her hair & allow it to have its natural curls. Treating the hair was common during the time to be seen as more professional & oftentimes to go along with the more Caucasian fashions. Refraining from this practice now shows Beneatha becoming more comfortable with her culture & her natural looks, a direct correlation to her relationship as well.

Rhetorical Question-

- "...then isn't there something wrong in a house - in a world - where all dreams, good or bad, must depend on the death of a man?"

In this scene, Asagai is attempting to reveal to Beneatha the importance of following one's dreams and not being dependent on other people for instruction to find success. As being the later part of an "If-Then" statement, Asagai is reasoning with Beneatha to stimulate her passion for what she wants, and her self-enforced motivation.

Allusion-

- "You still think you can patch up the world. Cure the Great Sore of Colonialism-with the Penicillin of Independence."

Hansberry uses allusions to connect readers more tightly with the characters, giving character a deeper personality as they make characterizing references as seen in this allusion. This allusion is said by Beneatha to Asagai in a mocking tone criticizing his excessively optimistic view especially pertaining to his cultural connection. By utilizing her interest in medicine, Beneatha's references prove to be snarky and witty, thus characterizing her as temporarily as desperate during this drought of hope for her.

Title: Death of a Salesman

Author: Arthur Miller

Time Period: Post Modern (1948)

Characters: **Willy Loman**- Head of the Loman family, works as a salesman, enamored with the idea of being well-liked, is not caught up with the times / **Linda Loman**- Wife to Willy, an enabler and a loyal wife / **Biff Loman**- Oldest Loman son, enjoys working out in the countryside and not in the city, has a problematic relationship with his father / **Happy Loman**- Youngest Loman son, a womanizer who lives in the city, has a better relationship with Willy and works in the city / **Charley**- Neighbor to the Lomans, a good father, a jokester, but also a reliable friend to Willy Loman / **Bernard**- Son of Charley, successful and was a pencil pusher as a kid, much more of a rule follower than Biff / **Ben Loman**- The dead brother of Willy Loman, a busy man who found riches out in the Alaskan frontier, is an inspiration for Willy Loman / **Dave Singleman**- A salesman of which Willy draws inspiration from when choosing the profession of being a salesman, the man dies on the job, but is well liked and many people come to his funeral.

Plot Summary: The setting is New York City in the 1940's. The play features the Loman family during the visit of the Loman sons, Biff and Happy. Willy as of recent has been experiencing frequent bouts of crankiness and psychotic breaks from reality and is looking to make it so he no longer needs to travel for his profession. Willy also has a frayed relationship with Biff and both of them tend to fight with one another. Biff understanding his father needs his help decides he needs to stay at his childhood home in order to help support his parents financially. The big plan that Biff and Happy come up with to make a living in the city is to ask an old time boss of Biff for a loan in order to start up a family-owned sports store. On the day where Biff asks Bill Oliver(his boss) for the loan, Biff realizes he was never someone to have that sort of connection with his boss and runs off in shame, whilst his father gets fired from his job. All the family, minus Linda, go out for dinner which ends in a giant feud. Willy keeps having psychotic breaks into the past and it is revealed that Biff had caught Willy in an affair explaining the rocky relationship between the two. After the tension filled night argument Willy goes to his neighbor's place in order to receive an allowance that apparently has been an integral part of Willy's weekly income. At Charley's workplace he runs into a successful Bernard, who Willy had always undermined due to his simply, "liked", nature. Once at home Willy and Biff have one more fight and Willy comes to an epiphany where he is, "worth more dead than alive", and kills himself after a talk with his now deceased older brother Ben in a flashback. At the funeral for Willy, only his family shows up, being an extremely empty affair.

Plot References:

- “Devoted to work, 50 weeks of the year” -Biff, Act 1
- Biff is upset Linda had grey hair- Act 1
- Willy’s obsession w/ car windshield and the car in general
- “How can they whip cheese?”
- “I just finished paying for the car and it’s on its last legs” - Willy
- “A man who can’t use his hands is disgusting” - Willy
- Willy’s dad makes flutes, never mentions what Willy sells
- “Throwing the family in a wagon and driving them cross country” -Willy
- Howard has a tape recorder, daughter whistling and son listing capitals
- “What could be more satisfying than to be able to go, at the age of eighty four, into twenty or thirty different cities, and pick up a phone, and be remembered and loved and helped by so many different people?”
- “A man is not a piece of fruit”
- “You’re well liked, and the boys love you”-During flashback, Linda
- Willy won’t accept Charley’s job offer.
- Bill Oliver doesn’t remember Biff, Biff steals pen
- In flashback, Biff mocks the lisp of his teacher, Willy asks if he was well liked by the kids because of that.
- The woman from the affair was given Linda’s stockings
- “This isn’t your fault, it’s me, I’m a bum” -Biff
- “Pop! I’m a dime a dozen and so are you!”
- No one comes to Willy’s funeral

Meaning of the Work as a Whole

Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller is a piece that discusses the idea of the American dream and artificial qualities that might be produced from such high hopes. Willy works everyday of his life as a salesman and yet he still falls short of a fulfilling life because of his materialistic ideas of wealth and surface level relationships with his peers.

Literary Techniques

- Narrative (it's a play),
- Symbolism (women's stockings and the rubber hose)

- Mood (depressing, we know what happens right off the start just by the title which sets up this weird things of we, the audience know Willy will die, but how does he get to such a point?)
- Foreshadowing (the title and the rubber hose)
- Timeline (present day but with flashbacks of significant moments)
- Allegory (the idea of the american dream and the emptiness of man)

Quintessential Quote(s):

- “You end up worth more dead than alive” -Willy
- “I am known” -Willy
- “I want you to know....that you cut down your life for spite!” - Willy
- “I know who I am, kid” -Biff

Interesting, Ironic, Important, and Impactful thoughts

- Ironic that Willy expresses how “well-liked” he was, yet no one attended his funeral
- Interesting how Biff left home and made something of himself and became his own individual, yet when he returned home his thoughts and actions became reflective of his past self
- Impactful instance of seeing his father cheat on his mother led Biff to mature from his previously rebellious self and push onto a path toward becoming an honest man that thrives in a positive way

Tartuffe

Author: Molière

Approximate Time Period: 1622-1673 [Neoclassical Era]

Main Characters: Names and Relationships:

- Madame Pernelle- Orgon’s mother
- Orgon- Elmire’s husband
- Elmire- Orgon’s wife
- Damis- Orgon’s son, Elmire’s stepson
- Mariane- Orgon’s daughter, Elmire’s stepdaughter, in love with Valère
- Valère- in love with Mariane
- Cléante- Orgon’s brother-in-law
- Tartuffe- a hypocrite
- Dorine- Mariane’s maid

Brief Plot Summary

- The play begins with the entirety of Orgon's household criticizing the apparent hypocrisy in Tartuffe's actions and Madame Pernelle expressing her frustration in their judgemental attitudes and inability to see his greatness. Orgon returns from his travels and is more interested in the comfort of Tartuffe than his sick wife, Elmire. Cleante attempts to converse with his brother regarding Tartuffe's flaws and inform him of his recent idiocracy, however Orgon disregards these comments because he is infatuated by Tartuffe's charm. Orgon then attempts to get his daughter Mariane to break off her engagement to Valere, and instead marry Tartuffe. Dorine pokes fun at Orgon and doesn't allow Mariane to even consider this offer. Consequently, Mariane and Valere are forced to have a pointless argument about the gossip of her ending their engagement that ultimately ends in them making up and going back to normal. When Orgon hears news that Damis plans to fight Tartuffe he gets angry and disinherits him, giving Tartuffe the rights to his estate. Tartuffe appears and attempts to seduce Elmire, however with an extensive plot Orgon ends up seeing the whole thing and eventually realizes that Tartuffe is a fraud. Although he realizes this, Tartuffe now has rights to his whole estate and documents that could get him in trouble. The King recognizes Tartuffe as a well-known criminal and he is arrested and the documents returned to Orgon.

Handy Plot References

- Orgon paying more attention to the comfort of Tartuffe than the state of his wife's ailing health
- Cleante trying to reason with Orgon regarding his blindness to Tartuffe's failures
- Orgon trying to convince Mariane to marry Tartuffe although she is already engaged and doesn't love him
- Dorine being treated badly by Orgon after making fun of him
- Mariane and Valere arguing about the rumors about her engagement to Tartuffe
- Tartuffe commenting on Dorine's cleavage
- Tartuffe's inappropriate actions to Elmire

A Meaning of the Work as a Whole: Criticism of religious hypocrisy and extremism within society

Relevant Literary Techniques

- Foreshadow
- Rhyming couplets

If I write on this work, I will be sure to mention(what analytical mic drops are you hoping to include)...

- Orgon goes against the Christian expectations of caring for his wife and instead pays attention to Tartuffe
- Cleante is the embodiment of neoclassical reason, places an emphasis on the importance of moderation and is the voice of reason throughout the play
- Orgon demonstrates more religious hypocrisy by trying to break the promise of an engagement
- Tartuffe and Orgon both represent religious extremes
- Dorine adds interesting aspects of humor by pushing Orgon's buttons
- Valere repeatedly coming back into the room after his conversation with Mariane also adds elements of humor

Quintessential Quote(s) [Easy to memorize, sure to impress]:

- Cléante: “Why can you not be rational? You never managed to take the middle course, but jump between extremes.”
- Cléante: “So those whose hearts are truly pure and lowly don’t make a flashy show of being holy.”
- Dorine: “A leg of mutton and a brace of pheasants.” (Talking about what Tartuffe ate)
- Tartuffe: “Hang up my hair-shirt, put my scourge in place” (first words Tartuffe says, ironic because he is wearing them to show how spiritual he is while he asking someone to put them away for him)

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead

Tom Stoppard

Published & First staged August 24th, 1966

Main characters are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the two side characters in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. They are described to be friends, but often get frustrated with each other’s antics — Guildenstern is portrayed as the more intelligent of the duo.

The plot follows the two as they are summoned to Denmark by Claudius to help deal with Hamlet who has, allegedly, gone mad.

Existentialism and humor.

MOWAAW Stoppard presents a philosophical and disturbing existential commentary on man’s lack of control in a post-modern world.

He uses plot techniques that make readers laugh at Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s failures of identity, logic, and communication plus the failure of the fourth wall while also mourning their own lack of autonomy.

Failure of logic and reason:

The coin flipping game and everything coming up heads

All of the syllogism

Mad people talk to themselves— talk sense— a man talking sense to himself is equal to a man talking nonsense to someone

Directions of the wind and sun=where they have come from and where they are going

Failure of Identity:

They can’t remember starting their betting game

They don’t have a backstory

“What’s your name” “Is your name different at home?”

Getting their names mixed up

They figure out their names when they interact with Hamlet (their purpose) but when they stop interacting with him, they relapse into confusion as they are no longer interacting with their purpose

Failure of communication and misunderstandings:

"Aren't you going to come on?" "I am on"

"Shouldn't we do something constructive" "A short, blunt human pyramid"

Guild=Hamlet and Ros=Ros but Ros doesn't understand the role-playing

On Hamlet: "Half of what he said meant something else, the other half didn't mean anything at all"

4th Wall Breaks

The player recognizes that Ros and Guil are artists in the play

"Aren't you going to come on"

Ros and Guil wait for another actor to come on so they have a purpose.

"Fire!" yelled at the audience

Lack of Purpose:

All of their conversations about direction— If they're not interacting with Hamlet, they have no purpose

Generic plot references

Ros speech on Claudius shows exactly why Ham is mad— it mocks Claudius and his power

The boat is fate

When they finally make a decision, that decision is to accept their fate and go to death

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern struggle to tell each other apart to the point that everyone including themselves mixes the two up. This is representative of the inability of Hamlet's audience to tell them apart. This play's insight into the lives of Ros and Guil outside of the actions of Hamlet allows the audience to start to see them as more than supporting characters, but because Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead focuses solely on breaking the fourth wall and the existential dread that comes with the fact that Ros and Guil are nothing more than players for the sake of an audience's entertainment, their lives depicted in the play follows the confusion the audience felt prior to seeing this play.

"My name's G, and this is R. I'm sorry — his name's G, and I'm R."

"I recognized you at once —" "And who are we?" "— as fellow artists."

"I have influence yet." "Yet what?"

"Half of what he said meant something else, and the other half didn't mean anything at all."

"Fire!" "Where?" *Looks at audience* "Not a move. They should burn to death in their shoes."

"He talks to himself, which might be madness." "If he didn't talk sense, which he does." "Which suggests the opposite." "I think I have it. A man talking sense to himself is no madder than a man talking nonsense not to himself." "Or just as mad." "Stark raving sane."

"The old man thinks he's in love with his daughter." "Good God! We're out of our depth here."

"No, no, no — he hasn't got a daughter — the old man thinks he's in love with his daughter."

"The old man is?" "Hamlet, in love with the old man's daughter, the old man thinks." "Ha! It's beginning to make sense! Unrequited passion!"

“All right, then. I don’t care. I’ve had enough. To tell you the truth, I’m relieved.”

CLAUDIUS: Thanks, Rosencrantz (turning to ROS who is caught unprepared, while GUIL bows) and gentle Guildenstern (turning to GUIL who is bent double).

GERTRUDE (correcting): Thanks, Guildenstern (turning to ROS, who bows as GUIL checks upward movement to bow too - both bent double, squinting at each other)... and gentle Rosencrantz. (Turning to GUIL, both straightening up - GUIL checks again and bows again.)
“Audiences know what to expect and that’s all they’re prepared to believe in.”

Hamlet

Author: William Shakespeare

Time period: Elizabethan

Main Characters:

Hamlet

Main character and namesake of the play, Hamlet is the son of Ophelia and King Hamlet and is loved by the people of Denmark. Hamlet is the 30 year old version of an angst filled teenager. In other words he is bitter, depressed, and cynical towards his uncle/new father and the others around him. He is in love tryst with Ophelia, sister of Laertes and daughter of Polonius. Hamlet’s main flaw is inaction.

Claudius

Claudius is Hamlet’s uncle/father in law. He murdered Hamlet’s father, and then married Hamlet’s mom.

Gertrude

Hamlet’s mother. Also the center of Hamlet’s mommy issues.

King Hamlet

Hamlet’s father, also appears as a ghost.

Polonius

Father of Ophelia (Hamlet’s lover) and Laertes. Friend/cohort to Claudius

Laertes

Brother to Ophelia

Ophelia

Hamlet’s lover

Fortinbras

Prince of Norway, and his father (Fortinbras the King) was killed by King Hamlet. This helps to develop Fortinbras as a foil character to Hamlet.

Rosencrantz

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern should really be in the same category, they are childhood friends of Hamlet, but they are recruited by the king and queen to figure out what is up with Hamlet acting so weird. They are eventually killed.

Guildenstern

See above

The Ghost (aka Dead King Hamlet)

Appears to Hamlet and tells him that Claudius killed him via poison.

Various Under Characters:

Reynaldo

Servant to Polonius, was sent to spy on Laertes (again reinforcing the foil between Laertes and Hamlet and Claudius also sent people to spy on Hamlet)

Osric

Court person who summons Hamlet for his duel against Laertes

Meaning of the work as a whole:

- Certainty vs. Doubt
- Fighting Fate vs. Accepting it
- Emotion (Laertes) vs. Reason (Hamlet)
- Inaction vs. Action
- Duty vs. Personal motivation
- Reflects upon the complexities of the human condition
- Truth vs. Deception

“Brief” Plot Summary:

The main character Hamlet experiences an internal struggle when faced with his father's sudden death and the suspicion that the king's brother Claudius was to blame. His suspicions are confirmed when King Hamlet's ghost tells him that it was Claudius who murdered him, and Prince Hamlet must avenge him. Prince Hamlet decided that he should act crazy so that no one will suspect that he's actually spying on his mother and her new husband, tah-dahhhh Claudius (ew). Hamlet starts to doubt himself, which gives us a real look into what Hamlet does most in this play: nothing. After his first existential crisis of many, he tries to hire an acting troupe to replay an eerily similar tale of regicide to see if it makes Claudius guilty. It does, and Ham takes it upon himself once again, to do nothing. However, he does accidentally kill Polonius, the father of his supposed love, Ophelia. After that, he was banished to London, where Claudius saw an opportunity to send his two childhood friends with him to see to his execution. Somehow Hamlet pulls a switcheroo and also survives a pirate attack. Also, because Hamlet has been acting mad and treating Ophelia like dirt, and due to the grief from her father's death, she actually goes mad, sings a dirty song, then drowns herself. Hamlet and her brother, Laertes, also fight literally right above her decaying body. Neat. After all that, Laertes and Hamlet fight for real, but this time Laertes has a shiny poison sword. Ooooooh. Well he drops it and then Hamlet nicks him with it, and his mom thinks he's won, so she drinks from his cup. Surprise! Claudius actually poisoned

that with the intent to kill Hamlet. Whoopsie. Turns out Ham was also nicked by the poison sword, so he's dying too. Hamlet is understandably mad after Laertes tells him what up with his uncle/surrogate daddy's poison cup and he (FINALLY) kills Claudius. Then he dies, but not before claiming that Fortinbras from Norway should be the king, because *clearly* everyone in Hamlet's family has issues, and also they're all dead.

Plot References:

- Hamlet waiting to kill Claudius because he is the middle of praying. His fear being that he would ascend to heaven, because he was in a moment of communication with the Lord
- In one of the few moments of action Hamlet stabs Polonius, when he is hiding behind a curtain to spy on Hamlet to see if he has gone mad. This furthers Claudius to convince Laertes to secretly poison Hamlet during a duel Laertes challenges him to.
- Hamlet sees the player's fake emotion at her dead husband and resolves to, be more active in taking revenge for his father.
- The king uses Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet's childhood friends to lie to Hamlet in order to find out the truth about his madness. The result is their death through their manipulation of Hamlet.
- Ophelia lets her father and Claudius spy on her and Hamlet in order to get information about him. This actually gives insight into Hamlet's character as he tells her to go to a nunnery. For the second time you see his problem with the female gender, the first being his mother.
- In Hamlet and Laertes final moments they ironically switch ideals Laertes becomes logical and apologies to Hamlet and dies. Hamlet on the other hand stab the king as a final rash action before his death.

Mic Drop Moments:

All the foil stuff!! Anything about Laertes, Hamlet and Fortinbras connections.

Quotation:

- "Your bait of falsehood take this carp of truth." -Polonius Beginning of Act.2 Scene.1
- "Thus conscious does make cowards of us all."-Hamlet Act.3
- "That naive hue of resolution become pale with thought." -Hamlet Act.3
- "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below: words without thought never to heaven go." -Claudius during prayer
- "Hamlet thou hast thy father much offended" -Queen
- "Mother, you have my father much offended." -Hamlet
- "What piece of man's work is speech."-Hamlet Act.2 Scene.2
- "What would you do to show yourself your father's son in deeds more than words?"
-King Act.4

Literary techniques:

- Negative imagery of nature
- Ironically uses sons love for his father to kill

Oedipus

Author: Sophocles

Time: Ancient Greece

Major Characters: Oedipus, Jocasta, Creon, Tiresias, Dead Laius

Character Summaries: Oedipus-son of Jocasta and Laius,

Quotes:

Themes/Big Ideas: Inevitability of fate, man is source of his own destruction,

MOAWAAW:

Summary: Before the play, the rulers of Thebes are Jocasta and Laius. When they go to the Oracle of Delphi to find out the fate of their infant son, the Oracle tells them the child will kill his father and marry his mother. In an attempt to avoid this, Jocasta gives the baby to a servant and tells him to kill it. Instead, the servant gives the baby to the rulers of Corinth, who raise him as their own. Years later, Oedipus himself goes to the Oracle to find out his fate, and is told he will kill his father and marry his mother. Believing the rulers of Corinth to be his parents, he moves to Thebes to get away from them. On his way there, he meets Laius on the road and kills him out of irritation without knowing who Laius is. In Thebes, he kills the Sphinx, and is thus made king of Thebes. He marries the old king's widow, not knowing Jocasta is his mother. *(Note; this info is already known to the audience and it is not a surprise when the characters "discover" it.)*

When a few decades later the play actually starts, Thebes has the plague, dead livestock, and other problems. Oedipus gives a pride-filled speech about how he sent Creon (Jocasta's brother) to the Oracle to find a solution. Creon reports that the problems will go away if Laius's murderer is found; Oedipus agrees and swears the killer will be banished no matter who he is (irony). Oedipus consults Tiresias, a blind prophet, who doesn't want to talk, but eventually tells O. it was him. O. thinks Creon bribed Tiresias to say that, and has an (entertaining) argument with Creon about it. Jocasta assures him that prophets are not reliable, using the first prophecy of the Oracle as an example, as her husband was killed by robbers. After pressing her for details, O. relates the second Oracular utterance and the murder he committed on the road to Thebes, as the dead man matches Laius's description. Concerned, he sends for the survivor of the "robber attack," to verify details.

A messenger from Corinth arrives with news of the death of O.'s "father." O. is thrilled that the oracle was wrong, but worries the second part of the prophecy might still happen and won't go back to Corinth. Attempting to reassure him, the messenger tells O. not to worry about that, as the queen of Corinth is not actually his mother. Jocasta puts it together and freaks, runs inside and kills herself(w/o telling O. first). The survivor of the attack shows up and confirms O. killed Laius; the servant who Jocasta gave the baby to also shows up and admits he gave the baby to the royals of Corinth instead of killing it. O. finally gets it just before he learns Jocasta killed herself. He blinds himself with her dress pins and exiles himself.

Interesting Things: eye motif, irony is dependant on knowing the entire plot beforehand (*Note: this was a popular bit of history when Sophocles wrote it, similar to Shakespeare writing about Caesar's assassination*),

Things Fall Apart

Author: Chinua Achebe

Approximate Time Period: Colonisation of Africa, around 1870s to 1900s

Main Characters: Okonkwo -- One of the leaders of Umuofia very concerned with how people perceive him. His lazy father has driven him to be powerful and masculine. Possible foil character to Ikemefuna. Nwoye -- Okonkwo's eldest son who he believes to be weak. After questioning the laws of Umuofia, Nwoye converts to Christianity through the help of missionaries. Foil character to Ikemefuna.

Ikemefuna -- Okonkwo's adopted son from another tribe. He encourages Nwoye's growing masculinity and acts as an older brother. Unfortunately, he is tragically cut down by Okonkwo. Foil character to Nwoye and possibly Okonkwo.

Ezinma -- Okonkwo's favorite daughter and Ekwefi's only child. Okonkwo wishes that she were a boy.

Mr. Brown -- A missionary sent to Umuofia to convert the native population. In contrast to Reverend Smith, Mr. Brown is gentle and respectful of the villagers' beliefs and laws. He is compromising and even becomes close to some of the people of Umuofia. He represents the success of compromising and not imposing a set of beliefs on to others forcefully.

Reverend Smith -- Mr. Brown's replacement. He is rude, disrespectful, and quite strict about the villagers immediately adopting Christianity and rejecting their traditional beliefs. He represents the failures of colonization.

District Commissioner -- A racist colonist who believes he knows everything about the people of Umuofia and their indigenous culture.

Uchendu -- Okonkwo's uncle who takes in his nephew during his seven-year exile. He is a foil character to Okonkwo with his peaceful persona. He has lost five wives and twenty-two children over the course of his life.

Brief Plot Summary: Things Fall Apart follows the life of Okonkwo, an influential clan leader of the African village of Umuofia. Determined to be seen as strong and powerful unlike his father, Okonkwo makes a series of rash decisions. He adopts a boy from another tribe, Ikemefuna, and raises him as his own while his other son, Nwoye, bonds with Ikemefuna. However, Okonkwo disobeys the wishes of the village oracle by killing Ikemefuna and is exiled for seven years. Okonkwo leaves Umuofia and lives with

his uncle in Mbanta, his mother's homeland. At this point, Christian missionaries arrive in Umuofia and Mbanta, building churches and converting indigenous people. Okonkwo eventually comes back to Umuofia but refuses to give up his beliefs even though Nwoye has converted to Christianity. The church is destroyed by the villagers and Okonkwo, along with other village officials, are imprisoned by the District Commissioner. After another encounter, Okonkwo kills one of the colonizers, eventually leading to Okonkwo's suicide.

Handy Plot References:

--NOT A SPECIFIC EVENT: Okonkwo desires to be unlike his father, Unoka, for he viewed his father as a weak and like a coward, devotes his life to dispelling his father's legacy, stems from culture's view of masculinity

--**FIRST MOWAAW:** Okonkwo kills Ikemefuna despite his deep care and love for the boy, didn't want to appear weak

- Oracle states that Ikemefuna must be killed, Ezeudu (old wise man in village) warns Okonkwo not to kill Ikemefuna for he would be killing his own son, Okonkwo disregards this and kills Ikemefuna,
- Okonkwo feels guilty and sad

-- **FIRST AND SECOND MOWAAW:** Okonkwo vows for war against the white missionaries following the maltreatment of native leaders and himself, even suggests murder

- this happens after the burning of the church that landed them in prison and custody of the missionaries,

- Okonkwo didn't want to appear weak and timid and was adamant in adhering to Umuofian customs = vows war and violence

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First MOWAAW: Achebe depicts the tragedy of an individual who rigidly adheres to a belief system with no room for compromise.

Alternate MOWAAW: Achebe reflects upon the damage caused when an external system of beliefs and order is imposed upon long-standing and traditional practices.

Relevant Literary Techniques: 3rd person omniscient point of view, use of native tongue even if there are translations that he could have used instead to give feeling of tradition, Ikemefuna is a foil character to Nwoye because he is physically strong while Nwoye is not, Ikemefuna is a foil character to Okonkwo because he is a happy medium of strength and kindness/gentleness that Okonkwo fails to see the importance of, tone is written objectively without the pushing of emotion onto the reader but rather the reader is left to decide whether the characters are admirable or not, there are many symbols used in this work: folktales represent femininity and silliness according to Okonkwo, yams represent masculinity because they are a labor intensive crop that is harvested by the men, fire represents masculinity and strength that is found in Okonkwo but it also foreshadows his own destruction, ash is the opposite of fire and it is seen as cold and emasculated evidence of this is how we compare his son Nwoye to ash, the Egwuwu represents the culture and independence of the village eventually they are replaced by the white court.

If I write on this work, I will be sure to mention: The cycle of fathers pushing away their sons (Unoka and Okonkwo, Okonkwo and Nwoye) due to their personalities being at extremes, what with Unoka being very lazy and somewhat feminine and Okonkwo being hypermasculine and violent. The possibility that Okonkwo's suicide may have been Okonkwo's last attempt to adhere to his people's traditional belief system by killing someone who is guilty of the "male version" of murder (intended murder of the Christian messenger). The gender roles of Okonkwo's society that esteem the physically

strong males who can farm and shuns the lazy and/or feminine males, which can be seen as a juxtaposition of European societal hierarchy, for the bourgeoisie and lords/ladies in Europe are the dainty and often more feminine citizens that are highly regarded (think *Wuthering Heights*' Edgar Linton). Nwoye's choice of Christian name being Isaac-- which may have been taken in memory of Ikemefuna who was going to be killed by his father due to God's will and a set of beliefs, much like Ikemefuna actually was as he was struck down by Okonkwo, who he called father.

Quintessential Quote(s): "A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness he finds refuge in his motherland."

"If a child washed his hands he could eat with kings."

"Perhaps down in his heart, Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness."

"It is more difficult and more bitter when a man fails alone."

"The world has no end, and what is good among one people is an abomination with others."

"Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down. He was afraid of being weak."

A Doll's House

Author: Henrik Ibsen

Time: Realist

Characters: Nora Helmer: Wife of Torvald, old friend of Linde, friend of Rank

Torvald Helmer: Husband of Nora, (to be) Boss of Krogstad

Krogstad: To be married to Linde, debt collector to Nora

Mrs. Linde: To be married to Krogstad, friend of Nora

Dr. Rank: Friend of Nora, dies

Plot Summary + Plot References:

- Torvald is getting a better position at his job. Nora seems naive and childlike. Torvald scolds her for spending money.
- Mrs Linde comes to visit and it is revealed that Nora is spending her time and money repaying a debt she went into to save Torvald's life. Mrs Linde says her husband and other family died
- Torvald says he can hire Linde. Krogstad is revealed to be the loan's source, and he tries to blackmail Nora so he won't lose his job, and reveals that they both did some forging.
- Dr. Rank is revealed to be almost dead and Torvald sends out a you're fired slip to Krogstad.
- Nora tries to ask Dr. Rank for help with debt but then Rank confesses his love for her so she doesn't.
- Krog gets mad and demands he be rehired and then puts a letter w/ her forge & debt in the mailbox. Nora panics and tells Linde. Linde says that she'll talk to Krogstad and Nora practices dancing the Tarantella for Torvald but not very well.

- It's revealed that Krog and Linde were once in love but then Linde married someone else for their money. Krog says he'll take out the letter but Linde says leave it.
- Torvald reads the letter and calls Nora a liar and a hypocrite and that she ruined his happiness and she can't raise the children. After the forged letter is brought in, Torvald tries to brush it off, but Nora says that they don't understand each other. She says he treated her like a doll to be played with and she leaves Torvald because she needs to make sense of herself and everything around her.

Meaning of Work as a Whole: Marriage, when not built on a foundation of a real relationship, cannot be fulfilling to either partner.

Literary Techniques: Symbolism - letters, No narration because it's a play, Setting - around Christmas, celebrating birth, and New Years, a time of rebirth

I will be sure to mention:

Symbolism: The costume of Nora represents her role in the marriage: purely for show and masking the true person underneath.

Foil: Krogstad and Linde's relationship acts as a foil to Nora and Torvald's. While one may have the advantage of money, time, and surface-level pleasantness, the other is built on a true relationship, so it is the one that lasts.

Dr Rank: I honestly have no idea why Dr Rank is in this play

Quotations:

"One day I might, yes. Many years from now, when I've lost my looks a little... a time will come when Torvald is not as devoted to me, not quite so happy when I dance for him, and dress for him, and play with him." - Nora talking to Linde

"But no man would sacrifice his honor for the one he loves." "It is a thing hundreds of thousands of women have done." - Torvald and Nora

"Our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I was papa's doll-child; and here the children have been my dolls." - Nora talking to Torvald

HELMER: But this is disgraceful. Is this the way you neglect your most sacred duties?

NORA: What do you consider is my most sacred duty?

HELMER: Do I have to tell you that? Isn't it your duty to your husband and children?

NORA: I have another duty, just as sacred.

HELMER: You can't have. What duty do you mean?

NORA: My duty to myself."

