**A feminist reading of A raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry**

Student name

Institution Affiliation

Submission Due Date

**A feminist reading of** **A raisin in the Sun**

A raisin in the sun study focuses on black feminist theory and practice. The word "womanism" will be used in this article. Its expression was first used in print by Alice Walker in 1983. Womanism derives from womanish, which means "a child acts like a woman." According to Walker (1993), the only difference between feminism and womanism is "the added component of color/race." Black women face extra oppression because of their race and have a unique position emphasized by womanism. Because of their gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnicity, Black women are subjected to several forms of persecution and bias. Although "sexist victimization" affects women of all races, black women were "subjected to oppression no white woman was obliged to undergo" and are consequently inherently seen as less valuable than white women.

**Changes in Society**

Despite "standing difficulties such as sexism, patriarchal ideology, and gender stereotypes," Hansberry writes from a black feminist viewpoint while tackling abortion, female liberation, and sexuality in A Raisin in the Sun. She initiates a study on critical problems confronting black women today. As she puts it, "female autonomy, self-definition, and the capacity to choose" are crucial. The concept of "the right to choose" is central to black feminism. In her unique style, Hansberry articulates what it means to be a woman from the South who also happens to be black. A Raisin in the Sun explores how racism contributes to the social isolation of black women (Hansberry, 2014). Critics have focused on whether or not the play reinforces harmful gender and racial stereotypes. One of the main characters in the play, Ruth, faces discrimination because of her gender. Unlike Walter Lee, Ruth is a grounded realist who is trapped by the several forms of oppression she faces as a black, low-income woman (Terry, 2018). Ruth argues that the idea that "a black woman in America may justly be considered as a slave of a slave" (she quotes Toni Cade Bambara and Frances Beale here) is an artificial restriction placed by capitalism "on black femininity." Thus women of color have been repeatedly victimized.

**Role of Ruth in the play**

Due to their biology, black women can only focus on raising a family. "Being a dark woman, I suppose I can't help myself none," Ruth says when Walter Lee blames her for not letting him develop (Hansberry, 2014, page 34). Ruth tries to be critical of Walter's recommendations for black women. According to Walter's essentialist worldview, every black woman serves to worsen the plight of black men. He tries to persuade Ruth of his point of view. As a result of being "within the socioeconomic system and the structure of her family," Ruth's attitude demonstrates a resignation to her helplessness. Ruth becomes "a ghost of her former self" when she cannot meet Walter's high standards. Hansberry uses reproduction imagery to break through the taboo subject of "black women's bound economic position" since women's labor is how labor forces are formed, and capitalism depends on women's work.

Thus, their economic system props up their own rule. Since there is nowhere for black women to go but patriarchal culture, they are effectively locked inside it (Hansberry, 2014). Compared to Walter Lee, Ruth has more reasonable expectations about the free market. Since she is pregnant, she is contemplating abortion as a serious option. She is self-aware enough to know that having a kid would eliminate any hope of improvement for her and her family. It's true that "a mother would do anything for her family when the world became painfully horrible," as Lena put it. The portion is currently functional (Hansberry, 2014, page 75).

Finally, "the first American drama to bright light the problem of abortion" is undoubtedly A Raisin in the Sun. Considering this option, Ruth demonstrates that she is a strong and independent woman. Despite being the play's least potent female character, she insists on using her extreme "prerogative," the "right to choose" whether or not to have an abortion. This invokes the power black women exercised during the era of the slavers. Ruth is mature enough to know that she must give up the life of the child she is carrying for the sake of her family. It's too much for her to keep to herself, so she tells Lena about it. Since she is hesitant to tell Lena the truth, Lena is left to assume that she is pregnant.

**References**

Hansberry, Lorraine. "A Raisin in the Sun." African American Scenebook. Routledge, 2014. 57-62.

Terry, B. (2018). The power of a stereotype: American depictions of black women in film media. https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc\_theses/3709/?

Walker, A. (1983). In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens. https://gacbe.ac.in/pdf/ematerial/18BEN54C-U2.pdf