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The street ann petry chapter 1 analysis

"There was a cold November wind blowing through 116th Street." You're alone in an unfamiliar, grimy, and bitter city, just looking for a place to spend the night. The Street by Ann Petry is a novel about a woman, Lutie Johnson, who finds herself in this situation. The relationship between Lutie Johnson and the urban setting is established by the use of personification, imagery, and characterization, in The Street by Ann Petry. In her novel, Petry uses personification in the interest of establishing a relationship between the setting and Lutie Johnson. At the end of the third paragraph, the wind is described as "assaulting" people on the street, "the wind grabbed their hats, pried their scarves from around their necks, stuck its fingers inside their coat collars, blew their coats away from their bodies." (Lines 31-34) Personifying the wind as having "fingers" is enough to create a tense and eerie tone. The wind is described negatively by its actions towards pedestrians further, as driving people off the streets and doing "everything it could to discourage the people walking along the street." (Lines 21-22) By giving the setting human-like qualities, it makes it easier for the reader to compare it with Lutie, and find the relationship between the two. In The Street, Petry uses imagery as a tool to establish a relationship between the setting and Lutie. Most of the imagery included in the novel, such as, "the dirt got into their noses, making it hard to breathe," reveals more about the hostile and nearly uninhabitable environment. (Line 24) READ: King Alfred the Great: Contributions to Education & LiteraryWhile some imagery, "she felt suddenly naked and bald, for her hair had been resting softly and warmly on the back of her neck," gives us hints about how Lutie feels in this new setting. (Lines 36-38) Each piece of imagery that Petry chooses to include in her novel reveals a little bit more about the relationship between Lutie and the setting. Petry descriptively characterizes in her novel, in order to establish a relationship between the setting and the main character, Lutie. The first 34 lines of the novel are mainly focused on describing the environment. Throughout these lines, Petry uses words like "dirt and dust and grime," to negatively characterize the setting and make it seem unappealing to the reader. (Lines 22-23) Along with this, the setting is also characterized as "cold" and harsh, by the actions of the wind, "violent assault." (Line 9) However, juxtaposed, is Lutie Johnson, who when first introduced, is characterized by words like "softly and warmly." (Line 37) The characterization and contrast of the setting and Lutie shows the reader a lot about their relationship. In order to establish this complex relationship between Lutie and the urban setting, Petry employs personification, imagery, and characterization. Through the combined use of these devices and others, Petry is able to make the reader relate to Lutie in this new, harsh, and confusing environment. Help Us Fix his Smile with Your Old Essays, It Takes Seconds! READ: Formalism: Literary Perspective -We are looking for previous essays, labs and assignments that you aced! -We will review and post them on our website. -Ad revenue is used to support children in developing nations. -We help pay for cleft palate repair surgeries through Operation Smile and Smile Train. Related Posts In the novel, The Street by Ann Petry the main character Lutie Johnson, a black woman is a single mother raising her son Bub in 1944 Harlem. Lutie, separated from her husband Jim faces many challenges including poverty, sexism, and racism. Children, like her son Bub, living in poverty in the 1940's cared for themselves while single mothers like Lutie were working; the same is still true today. Lutie was trying to earn a living in order to get Bub and herself out of Harlem, and into a neighborhood where Bub would have a better living conditions including school. Bub was afraid to be alone in their apartment so he spent a great deal of time on the street around external influences that were not the ideal. The street educated Bub instead of the school system. In Harlem, in 1944, poor, black children advanced though the school system whether they were able to read and write or not, the same is true for impoverished children today. In Bub's neighborhood, his schoolteacher was a white woman who was prejudice against Bub and his classmates based on their skin color and their economic situation. Children like Bub, living in impoverished communities, do not have access to good education and miss the opportunity that education brings due to racism and poverty. The author, Ann Petry used Miss Rinner as an example of how people in poverty struggle against the system. Bub's teacher, Miss Rinner, was a white woman who was prejudice against black people and poverty itself; she In the beginning of this novel, The Street, Ann Petry, describes herself as Lutie Johnson also a major character in the book living in New York with racism as well as sexism being all around her. The main theme of the beginning of the novel describes what was going on during the Harlem Renaissance during the late 1940s and how Petry lives her black urban life in Harlem. Lutie describes the wind doing "everything it could to discourage the people walking along the street" (Petry 2). She says this because the wind acts like a torpedo blocking anyone who passes such as the blacks trying to achieve their goals. She personifies the wind as someone who discourages the colored people such as people who are racist. Lutie tries to find a cheap place to stay at with her son Bub because they are living in poverty nor did they want to live with Lil, who is her father's girlfriend because she's a bad influence. This is also a main theme of how blacks didn't have good employment. Lutie finds a ...show more content... Chandler house she sees so many fascinating things she had never perceived before such as having a big room. It's shown when she "looked at the room, thinking there wasn't any way she could say what this bedroom looked like to her when all her life she had slept on couches in living rooms..." (Petry 36). During the Harlem Renaissance, majority of whites lived in huge houses while blacks lived on the streets or in a small apartment such as Lutie did. Moreover, as Lutie makes lunch for Chandler's friend she hears them say that they "wouldn't have any good-looking colored wench in [their] house" (Petry 40). This is when she encounters the fact she is living in a world of racist people. This is implied when "she discovered slowly, a very strange world that she had entered" (Petry 41). These quotes describe that The Street plays an important role in society on how we treat others as well as motherhood being a major theme of this novel Lutie Johnson does everything 'right'. She works hard, struggles to save, puts her son first, tries to protect him from loneliness, discomfort and the influences of the street full of poor, struggling folks. While working for a white family as a live-in housekeeper, she absorbed the philosophy the men espoused - wealth is available to anyone who works for it in this country. She studies, gets a 'respectable' white collar job, and keeps studying so that she can some day get a piddling promotion. 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Living in London, I can relate, but the opening of the book in which Lutie contemplates the horrible living conditions she is about to pay such an extortionate price for showed how much uglier the word looms for people trying to make the frayed ends of small salaries and low wages meet. In such grinding poverty conditions, the motivation to seek any kind of hustle is intense, and affects Lutie's eight year old son, who tries to take up shining shoes like other boys on the street.Lutie's description of the division between her and white people as a wall, erected by them, not her, but visible to her, not them, reminded me of Sara Ahmed's work; she often writes about walls that obstruct some bodies and not others. Lutie is baffled by the fact that white women are worried she might have an affair with one of their "thin unhappy husbands": she wondered why they had the idea that all colored girls were whores". The looks full of contempt and assumptions from white people make her 'never fe[el] human until she reach[es] Harlem'. At the time, formal segregation confined black people to the neighbourhood, though of course, white people own the properties rented out so expensively, as well as the shops. They also take the jobs - one of the voices Petry takes on is that of a disinterested, lazy white teacher who works in a Harlem school, full of hate for her charges, and so ashamed to work in such poor conditions that she keeps her workplace secret. Lutie also sees the neighbourhood as a bad environment, but her attitudes contrast with the white teacher's, who sees black people inherently as the problem. Lutie sees clearly what is wrong; there are no jobs for black men, so the women go out to work in low-paying domestic service, and the men become idle. Why is there no outside work for the men and why don't they take on the burden of house-work and child care? Simple: white supremacist capitalist patriarchy.To broaden the perspective, the other main characters include the superintendent of the building Lutie moves into, who has become malevolent and obsessive from spending too much time living in cellars, and a middle aged domestic service worker who, now that she has found a way of living rent-free, will do almost anything to maintain the situation. These characters have highly developed, idiosyncratic voices; Petry calls them startlingly into being. Mrs Hedges, who sits watching the street and makes an adequate living from the sex workers who make use of her apartment, is a complex, interesting character, seen very differently by Lutie, the super and other people on the street. She is kind and protective, but at times reveals an exploitative attitude to other people that is reflected in her unfeeling eyes.Lutie's attractiveness, to black men who are meant to be helping her (because they have taken on positions that place this obligation on them) and white men who are gatekeepers to all the exit routes from her oppressive situation, has a huge weight in the narrative. At times I felt this was too important, but I started to question my white feminist perspective, and to think that this was deliberate, not just a prop to make the plot work, but important for two reasons, firstly because the attractiveness of black women is maligned by white supremacist media and advertising, which positions the white woman as the ideal of attractiveness and femininity. Here, Lutie is considered beautiful by everyone, and desired by black and white men, belying the trope. Secondly, white supremacist capitalist patriarchy defines how Lutie's attractiveness will function; men long to own her body, and constantly leverage their different forms of power over her to try to fulfil their desire. The reflection 'she wondered why they had the idea that all colored girls were whores' becomes increasingly ironic as the constantly arising pressures, created by the actions or complicity of those whites, pushing Lutie into sex work stack up.As well as being of great social and political import, this novel was nearly impossible for me to put down, despite its simple plot. I just had to know what would happen next. If I were writing the blurb I'd call it 'compulsive and compulsory'. ...more Arts May 5, 2020 5:47 PM EDT Our May 2020 pick for the PBS NewsHour-New York Times book club is Ann Petry's "The Street." Become a member of the Now Read This book club by joining our Facebook group, or by signing up to our newsletter. Learn more about the book club here. Below are questions to help guide your discussions as you read the book over the next month. You can also submit your own questions for Tayari Jones, author of "An American Marriage," on our Google form. Jones will answer reader questions about the enduring relevance of "The Street" which was originally published in 1946, on the PBS NewsHour at the end of the month. WARNING: Spoiler alert on questions further down Why do you think Petry chose "The Street" as the title of the book? What does the street symbolize for Lutie Johnson? Why does the story of Benjamin Franklin resonate so strongly with Lutie? How does her vision of the American dream change throughout the book? What does the coverup of Mr. Chandler's brother's suicide make Lutie realize about the relationship between money, class and race in the U.S.? How does she criticize the white community's emphasis on money? What about the importance of money in American society at large? How do Lutie and Mrs. Hedges each represent a different embodiment of the American dream? Were you critical of Mrs. Hedges' work with Junto, or is she simply looking out for own financial well-being? How does Petry utilize details of place and setting — such as the weather, or descriptions of Harlem and the apartments in Lutie's neighborhood — throughout the book? How does setting play a role in the life Lutie envisions for herself? "I can't see anything ahead of me except these walls that push in against me," Lutie thinks at one point. What sort of figurative walls, or obstacles, does she come up against throughout the book? Lutie experiences racism, sexism and poverty throughout her life. Does she find any one of these forms of oppression more intolerable than the other, in your view? At one point in the book, Lutie thinks to herself that she hates white people, and will always hate them. But then, Petry writes, "she forced herself to stop that train of thought. It led nowhere. It was unpleasant." Why does she have this impulse to stop herself from thinking this way? How do views of masculinity at the time influence the respective identities of Junto, Boots Smith and Jones? Certain parts of "The Street" are told from the point of view of characters other than Lutie, such as Boots Smith and Min. Did this help you to better understand the circumstances of, or sympathize with, these characters? Were you hopeful about Min's life after she moved out from Jones' apartment? Did Bub's fate make you think about the plight of many young men of color who are born into difficult circumstances today? How so? Why does the opportunity to sing at the casino mean so much initially to Lutie? Could you understand why the outcome engendered so much anger within her? Was Lutie's retaliation against Boots Smith justified? Did you read this as a feminist story? Although "The Street" was published in 1946, it feels contemporary in many ways. What themes resonate most strongly with modern day America? "The Street" has been compared to Richard Wright's "Native Son." If you have read this book, do you see similarities in the themes of the two works? Differences? Although "The Street" was a sensation when first published, it has largely faded from the wider American literary canon. Why do you think this is? Left: A tenement block in Harlem, New York City, circa 1948. (Photo by Erika Stone/Getty Images)

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