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What I Have Learned From "Writing about Plays"

I learned that every successful play writer must understand the main aspects of drama, including the theme, plot, melody, diction, spectacle, and characterization (Gardner et al. 1841). I noticed that playwrights do not write this genre for purposes of passive reading. Instead, they envision how individuals can dramatize the content by performing it in front of a live audience. As a result, I learned that when reading the play, I must pay significant attention to nuances of language and imagine how this aspect of speech could influence the dramatization process. The chapter also enlightened me on the adaption of the plays (Gardener et al. 1846). When adapting their content for film, playwrights might need to tweak several aspects of their original version for performance purposes. Therefore, it is essential to acknowledge the disparities that might emerge from the two versions.

The symbolism of Baseball in *Fences*

Fences by August Wilson explores numerous symbols. Baseball is the primary motif that represents the American Dream. The article "Baseball as History and Myth in August Wilson's *Fences*" analyses Wilson's use of baseball and how it depicts the shattered dreams of African American athletes like Troy. Accordingly, baseball symbolizes the elusive American Dream, especially for African American players who grapple with racism and discrimination.

What Is the Author's Main Idea?

The author's main idea is that baseball has occupied a critical place in the minds of Americans as a symbol of the elusive American Dream. The nature of the game, its rules, and standards provide a motif of what success in the country entails. The article, *Fences* by August Wilson sticks to this representation by using breakthroughs in this sport as a standard of success (Koprince 349). Black Characters like Troy, who could not make it in the sports, live a miserable life. Therefore, the author critiques the idea of the American Dream and views it as a myth, especially for most African Americans. In *Fences*, the readers learn that although Troy was one of the best baseball players of his generation, he failed to achieve any prosperity with the sport. Bono acknowledges this when he says, "Ain't but two men ever played baseball as good as you. That's Babe Ruth and Josh Gibson" (Gardner et al. 1503). Therefore, Troy's failure to secure his future with baseball symbolizes the challenges blacks face in pursuing glory.

Powerful Examples Used by the Author

The author relies on two types of examples. The first example draws from the text *Fences*. Throughout the article, the author draws examples from the original book by focusing on a character like Troy. The use of Troy's character helps the article elaborate on how many African American baseball players failed to achieve their dream due to inherent racism. While speaking to Rose, Troy says, "You are born with two strikes on you before you come to the plate" (Gardner et al. 1547). As explained in the article, this shows how many African American players felt unfairly treated and disenfranchised from their dreams (Koprince 349). Besides direct examples from *Fences*, the author draws from historical data by evaluating the history of black participation in sports and the implications. The article looks at the African American

baseball leagues, including the opportunities and challenges they might have faced.

Accordingly, this exemplification enables the readers to appreciate the struggles of black athletes at the time Wilson wrote *Fences*.

How the Article Has Helped My Understanding of the Play

The article has helped me understand *Fences* much better than I did. Firstly, I now appreciate the play's use of baseball as a symbol of the American Dream. Due to systematic racism and discrimination, many black athletes believed the sport could provide them with a path to success. Secondly, by placing the events in *Fences* into their historical context, I have appreciated how difficult it was for African American players to succeed. More importantly, I now know the nature of struggles that characters like Troy had to go through to survive in the highly racial society.

In conclusion, baseball remains a powerful symbol in *Fences*. Although many African American athletes had a passion for sports, they failed due to inherent discrimination. Troy is a prime example of a character in the book that experienced shattered dreams leading to a life of agony and misery. The article by Susan Koprince contextualizes the baseball motif and places it within 20th-century American history.

Works Cited

Gardner, Janet, et al. *Literature: A Portable Anthology*. 4th ed., Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017.

Koprince, Susan. "Baseball as History and Myth in August Wilson's" *Fences*. *African American Review* 40.2 (2006): 349-358.

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