

Literature review on august wilson's use of rhetoric devices

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August Wilson's use of rhetoric devices

Most plays all over the world feature the work of August Wilson, a great play writer in the late twentieth century, who presented outstanding skills of utilizing literary devices appropriately. He received two Pulitzer drama prizes in two different decades to affirm his position as one of the greatest literary minds (Gamerman 31). Having identified his career early, Wilson had to confront his family to allow him be a writer and not a lawyer as favoured by his mother and other family members. However, his zeal and commitment in writing make his material admirable whenever they come into use at any place. He developed his themes maturely, outlining his ideas in a calculative manner. Most scholars acknowledge his skills of using stylistic devices in the literary work. Wilson asserts himself as one of the best writers in the use of stylistic devices like rhetoric devices and suspense. In most of his writings, the choice of characters and the traits placed upon each of them is awesome. The development of the characters and the way they present their traits depicts the work of a self-accomplished writer. However, the most pronounced style in Wilson's works includes the use of rhetoric devices. The paper evaluates how Wilson used rhetoric devices in his works and their significance.

According to Shaw (29), Wilson utilised rhetoric devices such as rhetoric allegory in most of his writings. Allegory utilises symbolism in which a character, event or art symbolizes an event unexplained on the face of the context. Wilson fondly used figures and symbols to signify real life so that people reading his works could have an extra task of thinking of the real meaning of the implied concept. In his play "The Piano Lessons," he used

allegorical phrases of the learner of the piano to signify how a person navigates through daily life. He shows the need for a person to adapt fast to life so that no tune can go past them. However, the rhetoric in the whole symbolism appears when he fails to expound on the whole process of learning life. He drives the point that learning about life should occur very fast, but he fails to clarify to the reader on the simpler approach of learning about life. However, the rhetoric provides the guide to life even though it does not give the route to it. The essence of rhetorical allegory introduces the reader to the facts of life. Wilson used allegory to prompt the reader to move a step further in search of the true path of learning life easily.

Teachout (51) argues that Wilson utilises transitory rhetoric in most of his works. In transitory rhetoric, a situation or events that lead to a transition are used, but the author never explains the real transition. In "Fences," Wilson outlines the move of people from poverty to richness but never finishes the transition to show how the society received the change. Troy and Cory symbolize the suffering that African Americans faced in the 1950s.

Essentially, Wilson depicts the sawing of boards of wood around the fences as a shadow for the barrier between the two relatives in the future, but does not make it clear to the reader. Later in the play, Troy transforms into his real character, a bold and authoritative person. The reader does not expect such sudden change that is characterized with full transformation of one's behaviour. Wilson shows the hope of the future of the black Americans becoming brighter, but he does not clearly indicate how they would navigate into a platform that would guarantee them the bright future (Shaw 41).

Towards the end of the play, Troy is not aware of the change that he could

have the opportunity of playing football and getting an education in a university which poses to the reader the question of how the change happened without his attention. Transitory rhetoric shows how fast the times can change and gives the reader an insight a readiness motive to encounter any changes that may deem necessary.

In most of his literacy works, Wilson August employed the use of rhetoric quotations and imagery, which show his position of neutrality in most of the Art conflicts that subsisted at the time. Towards the end of the play (*Fences*), Raynell, a seven-year-old girl runs out to check her garden. On reaching the garden, she finds that it has not grown and feels a little frustrated by it.

Wilson uses this image to show how fast the people expected change yet they had done so little. In the contrast, Troy is ignorant that the change gets him unaware (Meyerson and Jim 37). Through this, Wilson leaves the author at crossroads in reference to the fate of African Americas. Furthermore, he uses sports and traditions to show images of the future, but he does not expound on the steps that society would take to attain them. For example, Troy loves soccer and he values education. As a depiction of the future, change occurs so fast that he can play and study at the same time. However, the reader leaves to wonder how Troy will do away with the strong fences that he had constructed. The rhetoric serves as suspense and at the same time, a call of alertness and readiness from the society. Meyerson and Jim (30) argue that Wilson used rhetoric statements in most parts of his play. For instance, when Troy says, "the nigger has a watermelon this big" the reader does not understand the watermelon in reference and one may think that it refers to Rand. Many questions linger in the minds of the readers when Troy

says, " death is nothing but a fastball on the outside corner." The reader can easily think that he predicted the death of the old systems or an old guard in the ancient America.

Questions of uncertainty represent the greatest rhetoric used by Wilson in his works (Gamerman 3). These questions represent the statements whose answers lead to no particular solution to the original problem. In other words, rhetoric questions represent the questions that have no specific answers.

Wilson used rhetoric questions in nearly all his works. According to Gamerman (13), Wilson has extensively used rhetoric statements in his work. Rose says, " If he wasn't the marrying kind, why can't he walk away so that the marrying finds me?" No specific answer determines the ultimate need of the question but it depicts the extent to which she looks disappointed. In most of the circumstances, Wilson used the rhetoric questions to articulate his ideas. The questions mostly have some emotional attachment where the character wants to show the extent to which some situation or act affects them.

Most of the rhetoric devices, acts as complimentary devices to the character traits and emotional placements of the characters. It is apparent that Wilson understands when to utilize rhetoric devices in developing his story. In some of his plays, he used these devices to present the behaviour of the preferred characters. Furthermore, he used the rhetoric devices to show the transition of ideas and the mood that different situations caused among the people.

The use of rhetoric devices in " Fences" depicts some of the best ways that the device can effectively transform literature. In a wider sense, the rhetoric devices enrich literature work.

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