

The theme of
liberation from racism
in two plays by
august wilson essay



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August Wilson is a successful author who is known for proper relation of his short stories to reality. Almost all Wilson's plays involve aspects of his life in precision to racism and issues closely related.

The essay will focus in the theme of liberation from racism. Comparison in relation to effects of racism and approaches of liberation between two plays by Wilson will be made. Further, the feasibility and relevance of the short stories in the life of Wilson will be well outlined. The essay will focus on two plays namely; Fences and The Piano Lesson.

The different ways perceived as possible freedom from racism will be discussed in regard to Wilson's perceptions. Further, the essay will highlight instances where the theme of racism liberation is not well brought out in both stories. The discussion will outline the clearer way in which the author could have better presented the theme of liberty and effects of racism. Consequently, the discussion will highlight the different ways in which different characters interpret liberation from racism.

Wilson was born in a poor family that was exposed to racism. Wilson's parents were immigrants and faced discrimination due to inferiority of black race. Poverty was due to racism as blacks were not allowed to work in better paying jobs. His life was greatly influenced by racism and the journey to become an author was subjected to many challenges including that of dropping out of school at the age of sixteen.

Wilson was accused of plagiarism simply because he was black and was not expected to come up with a complicated essay. Wilson hid the issue of expulsion from his mother because he did not want her to feel disappointed.

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In the schools he attended before expulsion he was abused and maltreated because of his race. As a result of racism, Wilson ended up in unskilled jobs due to constant discrimination that was accorded to the black race (Little 8).

Wilson differed with his mother who wanted him to become a lawyer while he dreamt of being an author. Career pressurization was a result of racial discrimination. Wilson thought that when he became an author he would be able to mitigate the effects of racism. His mother on the other hand thought that the effects of racism could only be dealt with by law career development.

The conflict between Wilson and his mother resulted to disunity and Wilson was sent away from home. Wilson joined the United States army and later left it for unskilled jobs. His writing career begun shortly after his father's death and it escalated rapidly (Little 9).

Fences was written by August Wilson in 1983 and has secured so many awards ever since. The play is based on racial discrimination that black Americans survived due to existence of the gap between them and the white superior race.

The essay focuses on the effects associated with racial discrimination and the approaches used in liberating the black Americans. In the play, Troy is the main character who acts as a bread winner of his family which constitutes of Rose and Cory. Troy works in the unskilled jobs industry as a garbage man since black Americans are not allowed to work in well paying jobs.

The menial jobs are very similar to the situation of Wilson after he was expelled from school. Troy cannot work in a better job since black Americans are discriminated. Similarly, Wilson ended up in the menial jobs after he was discontinued from school. Plagiarism accusations were based on black race discrimination. The play illustrates how black Americans like Wilson were discriminated and approaches they used in liberating themselves from effects of racism (Wilson 12).

In the play Troy participated in basketball but was unsuccessful due to racial discrimination. Troy was not allowed to play in the prominent leagues that would open up success opportunities. Racial discrimination has long term impacts as evidenced by the way Troy discourages his son from participation in football.

Corey however, persists and registers with a football club. Troy's persistence secures him a place to work as a truck driver. Troy is involved in an affair with Alberta and they bear Raynell. Alberta dies as she delivers and Troy convinces his wife Rose to accept Raynell. Rose accepts Raynell but promises that she will not be a dutiful wife. Troy sends Corey away from home in the excuse of making him responsible and independent. Corey ventures in the military career and returns home at the funeral of his father (Wilson 8).

The play features the effects of economic instability on African American immigrants in 1930s. The black Americans were discriminated and enslaved by the white race. Enslavement involved forced labor and maltreatment in prisons.

The black Americans were forced to work in the land owned by the white race and were fed in exchange of their labor. The play features Willie the main antagonist who wants to sell a family piano so as to liberate himself from slavery. Notably, racial discrimination leads to slavery which the victims want to be freed from.

The play starts with the arrival of Willie and Lymon in Charles Doaker's home. Willie and Lymon have a track of watermelons that they want to sell. However, Willie is affected by the great gap that exists between black and white races. Willie is stigmatized and wants to sell the family piano so as to liberate himself from racial discrimination and inequity. Willie attributes racism to poverty and slavery that his ancestors endured. According to Willie the piano should be sold so as to own the land that his ancestors worked as slaves (Wilson 4).

Bernice is Willie's sister and main protagonist of the play. She believes that the piano should not be sold since it is the only existing legacy for the family. According to Bernice, the piano should remain intact so as to ensure that their ancestors are constantly with them. The blood and tears shed and rubbed on the piano by Bernice's mother represents the suffering endured by the black Americans during slavery.

Since her parents always played the piano Bernice felt that the legacy of their family should be maintained. However, Bernice did not want to play the piano any more after the death of her parents to avoid waking the spirits. The Sutter ghost is mentioned throughout the play and it represents the white man who owned Charles's family during slavery. Despite the advice of

selling the piano to stop haunt of spirits, Bernice still refuses to sell it (Wilson 10).

Willie is persistent on selling the piano and moves on to find a potential buyer. Charles Doarker and Bernice warn Willie that the urge to sell the piano is a trap set by the spirit of Sutter so as to kill him. Willie disregards the advice and attempts to move the piano. The ghost of Sutter appears and blessings by Avery Brown are fruitless. Bernice rushes and plays the piano as a way calling for help from her ancestors. As Bernice plays the piano the spirit of Sutter disappears and Willie leaves (Wilson 11).

The two short stories are crucial in eliciting effects of racism and different approaches used to mitigate them. In all scenarios racial discrimination led to conflicts and hostility among the black Americans.

Wilson differed with his mother when he wanted him to become a lawyer and was sent away from home. In Fences, Troy sent Corey away from home since he wanted to venture into football, which was against his father's wish. In the Piano lesson, Bernice differed with Willie on the approaches of liberating themselves from discrimination (Little 8).

Poverty was a common effect of racial discrimination that had black race on the receiving end. The parents of Wilson were poor since they were only allowed to work in unskilled jobs. Wilson worked in menial jobs because he could not be allowed to work in high rank jobs. Troy worked as a garbage man for a long time since black Americans could not work in better jobs. Willie was poor because he worked in farms that did not belong to him. The

parents of Bernice and Willie lived in slavery which made them poor (Wilson 13).

The victims had different perceptions as far as coping with effects of racial discrimination was concerned. Wilson wanted to become an author because he thought that it was the best way to deal with racial discrimination. On the other hand, his mother wanted him to become a lawyer.

His mother associated freedom from discrimination with the career of law. In fences, Troy sent Cory away from home due to his persistence in playing football. Troy asked the referee of the football team to stop Cory from playing. Troy actions are based on his experiences of racial discrimination.

The author fails to elaborate on this point intensely. Wilson should have highlighted the interpretation of the different victims who were subjected to racial discrimination. For example, he could have explained the reason for the persistent discouragement of Troy on the participation of his son in football club. Troy could have wanted Cory to adopt a career that would liberate them from effects of racial discrimination (Spradley and Mccurdy 11).

Stigmatization was also an impact of racial discrimination and had the black Americans as the victims. Wilson felt stigmatized due to the fact that he was expelled from school and accused of plagiarism. Due to stigmatization Wilson hid the expulsion from his mother and instead opted to work in the menial jobs.

Further, his family was forced out of a house where they lived together with the white race. Wilson studied in three different schools all of which he was maltreated because of his race. In *Fences* Troy was irritated and stigmatized by the fact that black Americans cannot work in better jobs. Further, Troy was devastated when he was denied the opportunity to participate in prominent basketball leagues.

One reason why Troy discouraged Cory from participation in football team and club was to prevent him from experience of stigma that he underwent during his youth (Little 12). In *Piano* lesson, Willie feels stigmatized by the slavery and is determined to be equal with the white race. According to Willie, racial equity would only be established if he owns land like the white race.

Maltreatment is an effect of racial discrimination. In the two stories Wilson talks of the ways in which the black Americans were maltreated. Wilson left one of the schools because he was being abused. Troy worked as a garbage man because that was the job offered to black Americans.

In *Piano* lessons, slavery is the main theme. Willie was imprisoned to work in a farm that was owned by a white person. The spirit of Sutter shows how the white race restricted and maltreated the black race. Bernice refuses to sell the piano because she feels that it would be like throwing away the legacy that her parents had labored for, all their years in slavery (Burbank 119).

The effects of discrimination and coping strategies adopted by black

Americans are well scrutinized in the short stories done by Wilson. As a

matter of fact, the stories depict the experiences of Wilson in his journey to <https://assignbuster.com/the-theme-of-liberation-from-racism-in-two-plays-by-august-wilson-essay/>

become an author who was free from racial discrimination. The short stories play a significant role in reduction of racial discrimination.

The negative impacts associated with racial discrimination have been outlined so as to discourage its spread. The success by the victims in the end of his stories encourages those who are subjected to any form of racial discrimination. Determination of the victims helped them realize their set goal. Efforts should be directed towards reducing the margin that exists between races.

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