

Ex-basketball player
analysis
argumentative essay



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Conflicting Attitudes In “ Ex-Basketball Player” by John Updike and “ To an Athlete Dying Young” by A. E. Housman, each author has a different attitude toward his character. John Updike’s attitude toward his character Flick is of disappointment and pity. “ Flick stands tall among the idiot pumps-“(1). He believes that Flick should not be employed at a gas station because his talent with basketball is so much better than pumping gas. He does not believe that he blends in at the gas station; he believes that he belongs on the basketball court, putting his talent to good use.

The author states that he stands tall, meaning that his expectations are higher than what he is making them. “ He never learned a trade, he just sells gas, /checks oil, and changes flats” (1). The author is disappointed in him because he never learned anything in school except how to play basketball. He passed in his classes easily with the help of teachers because he was the star player. Now that high school is over, he does not have basketball to rescue him, which is why the author is disappointed in his decisions that he made in the past.

He believes that he should live up to his potential. A. E. Housman’s attitude toward the character in his poem is more positive than Updike’s attitude. He looks up to him and is proud of him. “ Smart lad, to slip betimes away/From fields where glory does not stay” (1023). The character died a champion and Housman looks up to him for that reason because his title as a champion will never fade. The fact that he died a champion means that everyone will remember him with the winning title instead of someone else replacing his title over time. Now you will not swell the rout/Of lads that wore their honors out” (1024). He also looks up to him in the way that he quit while he was on

top. Sometimes the greatest winners are stubborn and will not quit when the time is right and they end up warring out their title; Housman's character will not ware out his title and he is very proud of that fact. The fact that he died when he was the best of the best makes the author look up to him greatly.