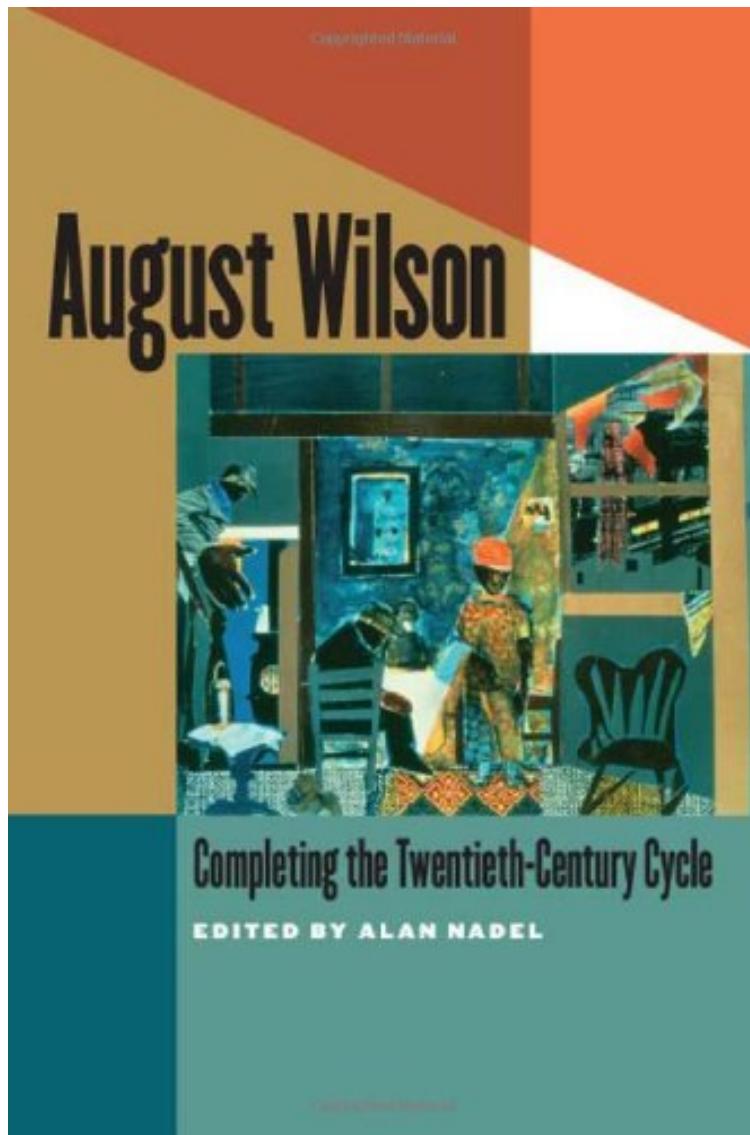


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August Wilson: Completing the Twentieth-Century Cycle

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From University Of Iowa Press : August Wilson: Completing the Twentieth-Century Cycle before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised August Wilson: Completing the Twentieth-Century Cycle:

0 of 5 people found the following review helpful. PedanticBy Charlene BaldridgeAlthough this is in many ways a valuable book to have in one's theatrical library, it is written in an extremely pedantic manner.

Just prior to his death in 2005, August Wilson, arguably the most important American playwright of the last quarter-

century, completed an ambitious cycle of ten plays, each set in a different decade of the twentieth century. Known as the Twentieth-Century Cycle or the Pittsburgh Cycle, the plays, which portrayed the struggles of African-Americans, won two Pulitzer Prizes for Drama, a Tony Award for Best Play, and seven New York Drama Critics Circle Awards. August Wilson: Completing the Twentieth-Century Cycle is the first volume devoted to the last five plays of the cycle individually—*Jitney*, *Seven Guitars*, *King Hedley II*, *Gem of the Ocean*, and *Radio Golf*; and in the context of Wilson's entire body of work. Editor Alan Nadel's *May All Your Fences Have Gates: Essays on the Drama of August Wilson*, a work Henry Louis Gates called definitive, focused on the first five plays of Wilson's cycle. This new collection examines from myriad perspectives the way Wilson's final works give shape and focus to his complete dramatic opus. It contains an outstanding and diverse array of discussions from leading Wilson scholars and literary critics. Together, the essays in Nadel's two volumes give Wilson's work the breadth of analysis and understanding that this major figure of American drama merits. Contributors: Herman Beavers, Yvonne Chambers, Soyica Diggs, Colbert, Harry J. Elam, Jr., Nathan Grant, David LaCroix, Barbara Lewis, Alan Nadel, Donald E. Pease, Sandra Shannon, Vivian Gist Spencer, Anthony Stewart, Steven C. Tracy, Dana Williams, Kimmika L. H. Williams, Witherspoon.

In this companion to *May All Your Fences Have Gates*, we have a timely addition to the growing scholarship on August Wilson's works. The focus on the second half of the cycle presents certain problems, not least of which stem from the fact that Wilson's plays were written "out of order," simultaneously pointing forward and looking back. In less capable hands, this aspect might be ignored and the plays studied decade by decade, in a linear fashion. This volume does not fall into that trap. Instead, Nadel and his colleagues address the location of each play within the larger context of the cycle, for the second half of the cycle and the entire collection alike. As a result, we see that almost any theme or motif within a single text finds echoes and reverberations in other plays, thus affording us a view of Wilson's overall scheme and challenging future scholarship of any single play to embrace this holistic view of the cycle. No longer is it enough to say that Wilson wrote a play or plays: whenever we consider any of his plays we have to acknowledge the cycle. This book ensures that perspective, one that is unique in the history of dramatic literature.—Kim Pereira, author, *August Wilson and the African-American Odyssey*