



# August Wilson's Twentieth-Century Cycle Plays: A Reader's Companion

*Sanford Sternlicht*

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## **August Wilson's Twentieth-Century Cycle Plays: A Reader's Companion** Sanford Sternlicht

A short literary guide to one of this country's greatest African American dramatists, *August Wilson's Twentieth-Century Cycle Plays: A Reader's Companion* will serve a wide range of students, teachers, theater professionals, and theater audiences. Beginning with an account of August Wilson's life, from his impoverished childhood in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to achieving national acclaim, the book introduces the ten-play cycle—one for each decade of the twentieth century—as a whole, explaining Wilson's goals as a playwright: to depict African American life, primarily in Pittsburgh, during the century, illustrating the hardships, the suffering, the desperation, the small victories, the beauty and the bleakness, and the ultimate triumph of a community. Subsequent chapters place each play in the context of its decade by listing and discussing historical events that influenced and comprised the background to the play. For each play there is a general introduction, a plot summary, a description of each character, and an appraisal of the work. The book also discusses August Wilson's non-cycle plays. Clear and accessible, the text enables readers to move into a deeper analytical exploration of the cycle plays.

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