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Script Analysis of *Fences* by August Wilson

Given Circumstances Analysis

The physical and psychological environment in which the story takes place; the play world's operative conditions as ordained by the playwright.

I: Who?

- a. Troy Maxson.
 - i. What the protagonist says about her/himself:
 - Troy denies being a liar when accused of one (Wilson 1) [ethical, social, psychological/emotional].
 - Troy is unconcerned about being fired (Wilson 2, 23) [social, psychological/emotional].
 - “I eye all the women. I don’t miss nothing. Don’t never let nobody tell you Troy Maxson don’t eye the women” (Wilson 3) [social, ethical, psychological/emotional].
 - “I bought her a drink! What that mean? [...] I’m just being polite” (Wilson 3) [social, ethical, psychological/emotional].
 - By asking Bono if he knew Troy to “chase after women” since being married to Rose and declaring “[c]ase closed!” after Bono agrees Troy has not, Troy denies being unfaithful (Wilson 4) [social, ethical, psychological/emotional].
 - Troy did not want to marry, but he chose to because it was the only way to keep Rose (Wilson 6) [social, psychological/emotional].
 - Troy believes football is not a viable career (Wilson 8) [social].
 - Troy is not afraid of death because he believes he has seen and “wrassled” with him (Wilson 10) [psychological/emotional, social, physical, ethical].
 - Troy believes in following the Bible by remaining vigilant (Wilson 11) [social, ethical].
 - Troy declares that he will “die and go to hell and play blackjack with the devil” before lending Lyons money (Wilson 14) [social, ethical].
 - Troy says that he is afraid to stop paying the furniture bill he claims he has been paying back for fifteen years (Wilson 16) [psychological/emotional, social].
 - Troy admits that the furniture story is not true when he says “Bono know I ain’t that big a fool” (Wilson 16), which shows that he has purposefully told

untrue things, regardless of whether he thinks others will believe him [social, ethical].

- Troy says that because Gabe has moved to Miss Pearl's he does not have any extra money (Wilson 17) [social].
- Troy tells Lyons that he is careful with his money, not throwing it away in the streets, and that he "done spent too many years without" (Wilson 18) [social, ethical].
- Troy says that he loves Rose and insinuates that he and her will still be engaging in sexual intercourse by the time Monday morning arrives (Wilson 20) [psychological/emotional, physical].
- Troy believes gambling is foolish (Wilson 22) [social, ethical].
- Troy believes in freedom and thinks that Gabe returning to a hospital would be imprisonment (Wilson 28, 65) and later agrees to look after him to avoid Gabe's recommitment to the hospital (Wilson 65) [ethical, psychological/emotional].
- Troy claims to still be in athletic enough of shape to "hit forty-three home runs right now!" (Wilson 34) [physical].
- Troy believes taking care of Cory is his job and responsibility (Wilson 38), which is likely influenced by Troy's father's sense of responsibility that kept him from leaving Troy as a child (Wilson 51) as well as guilt over not being present during Lyons's childhood (Wilson 18) [ethical, psychological/emotional].
- Troy does not want Cory to be like him, which suggests that he desires a better life for his son, even if what Troy thinks is "better" does not align with what Cory does (Wilson 39, 50) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy says that the reason he did not play in the major leagues was that he "wasn't the right color," not that he was too old (Wilson 39) [physical, biological].
- Troy wants to protect his son from the same rejection he experienced in sports: "I got sense enough not to let my boy get hurt over playing no sports" (Wilson 39) [psychological/emotional].
- "I do the best I can do. I come in here every Friday [...] I give you the lint from my pockets. I give you my sweat and my blood. I ain't got no tears. I done spent them. We go upstairs in that room at night ... and I fall down on you and try to blast a hole into forever. [...] That's all I got. Rose. [...] I can't give nothing else" (Wilson) [social, physical, psychological/emotional, ethical].
- In the last scene of Act I, Troy tells Rose that he has been promoted to a driver (Wilson 44) [social].
- Troy sometimes wishes he had not known his father because all his father cared about was that his children grow up and begin working, which shows that Troy is similar to his father, though he does not acknowledge it (Wilson 50) [psychological/emotional, social].
- Troy was one of eleven children (Wilson 51) [biological].

- Troy was abandoned by his mother when he was eight; she promised to come back for him but Troy never saw her again, an event from which Troy likely has emotional damage (Wilson 51) [psychological/emotional].
- Troy left home at fourteen after he and his father got into a physical altercation over work and a girl; Troy was no longer afraid of his father and felt that he became a man, but he lost the fight and felt he could not handle how large the world had become as a result of this experience (Wilson 52-53) [physical, psychological/emotional, social].
- Despite the significant conflict between him and his father, Troy still hopes that he has found peace in death (Wilson 53), which shows that Troy is capable of forgiveness [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Gabe is the only relative Troy has maintained contact with (Wilson 3) [psychological/emotional].
- After leaving home, Troy began stealing, met Lyons mother and had him, stole more to provide for them, and ended up in a lethal robbery that resulted in him being injured by a gunshot and killing the shooter with a knife (Wilson 54-55) [physical, biological, social, ethical].
- Troy is ashamed of his illegal actions that led to him killing and being put in the penitentiary (Wilson 54-55) [ethical, social, psychological/emotional].
- He met Bono and learned to play baseball while in jail for fifteen years (Wilson 55) [physical, social].
- Troy claims that baseball and Rose are the only two things that matter to him, and that baseball is more important to him (Wilson 55) [psychological/emotional].
- Troy loves Bono (Wilson 56) [psychological/emotional].
- Troy claims that he “might just live forever” (Wilson 60), which demonstrates his aversion to death and desire to fight it [psychological/emotional, physical].
- Troy knows his wife loves him (Wilson 62) [psychological/emotional].
- Troy says that he and Rose have been married for eighteen years (Wilson 62) [psychological/emotional, social].
- Troy thinks that Bono insinuates he does not “measure up cause I’m seeing this other gal” (Wilson 63), which is the first time Troy verbally admits to seeing Alberta [psychological/emotional, physical].
- Troy also feels stuck in his marriage; he has tried to “shake [Rose] loose,” “wrestled with it,” and “tied to throw her off me” (Wilson 63) [psychological/emotional].
- Troy says that his heart is the only thing he listens to, that it tells him “right from wrong every time” (Wilson 63) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy says that he loves and respects Rose (Wilson 63) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy says he has been trying to “figure a way to work it out” (Wilson 63), meaning simultaneously maintaining the affair and his marriage to Rose [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy admits to Rose that he has been having an affair and that he is going to be a father as a result of it (Wilson 66) [physical, biological].

- Troy claims that age had nothing to do with his affair (Wilson 67) [ethical, physical].
- Troy believes Ruth has a right to know about the affair; he has an ethical obligation to tell her the truth (Wilson 68) [ethical, psychological/emotional].
- Troy believes he and Rose can “come to an understanding” about the affair, which shows that he does not want to give up on her and their marriage (Wilson 68), but he also cannot give Alberta up (Wilson 69) [psychological/emotional, physical].
- Troy feels like “a different man” when he is with Alberta, that he can be “a part of myself that I ain’t never been” (Wilson 69) [psychological/emotional].
- Troy admits his responsibility for the affair and insists that he “tried to be a good husband to [Rose]. In every way I knew how” (Wilson 69) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy says that when he “found [Rose] and Cory and had a halfway decent job ... [he] was safe” (Wilson 69-70) [psychological/emotional].
- Despite feeling safe with his family, Troy desired to “steal second” with Alberta because he felt he had been “standing in the same place for eighteen years” (Wilson 70) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy tells Rose he has given her everything he has in defense of his affair with Alberta (Wilson 71) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy claims to be doing the best he can, but still insists on visiting Alberta (Wilson 74) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy says he cannot read, so when he signed to have Gabe taken to a hospital he did not know the full implications of what he signed (Wilson 75) [physical, psychological/emotional, ethical].
- After learning of Alberta’s death, Troy promises Death that he will not “fall down on [his] vigilance this time;” he will build a fence “around what belongs to” him and he will be ready for Death when he comes (Wilson 77) [psychological/emotional, ethical, physical].
- Troy does not regret the affair because “[i]t felt right in [his] heart” (Wilson 79) [ethical, psychological/emotional].
- When talking to Raynell, Troy says that he is “a big man. Got these great big old hands. But sometimes he’s scared” (Wilson 79) [physical, psychological/emotional].
- Troy says he has been homeless before, but never with a baby (Wilson 79) [social].
- Troy feels a responsibility to Raynell just as he does to his sons and Rose (Wilson 79) [ethical, psychological/emotional].
- Troy tells Bono that he has not visited him “in a month of Sundays” (Wilson 82), which exemplifies their devolving relationship [psychological/emotional].
- In Act II, Troy says that he has been moved to a Greentree route “hauling white folks’ garbage” (Wilson 83) [social].
- Troy says he has been considering retiring (Wilson 83) [social].

- Troy does not have much faith in the preacher of their church and believes “preachers looking for somebody to fatten their pockets” (Wilson 83) [psychological/emotional, ethical, social].
- Troy says he has spent “the last seventeen years worrying about what [Cory] got” (Wilson 86) [psychological/emotional, ethical].

ii. What other characters say about the protagonist:

- Bono calls Troy a liar (Wilson 1) [ethical, social]
- Bono says he is like Troy because Troy also “ain’t got no time for them kind of people” who are afraid of “the white man” (Wilson 2) [social, ethical].
- A coworker calls Troy a “troublemaker” (Wilson 2) [social, ethical].
- Bono says Troy is “doing a little better than me” with women (Wilson 3) [social, ethical].
- “You been doing more than eyeing her [Alberta]. You done bought her a drink or two” (Wilson 3) [social, ethical, psychological/emotional].
- Bono agrees that Troy has not been unfaithful to Rose, but he also says that Troy has been eyeing Alberta and that he has been “walking up around Alberta’s house” when he was “supposed to be at Taylors” (Wilson 4) [social, ethical].
- Rose says that Troy is “telling a lie” (Wilson 7) [social, ethical].
- Bono tells Troy that no one but Babe Ruth and Josh Gibson played baseball as well as him (Wilson 9) [social, physical].
- Rose says that Troy will “drink [him]self to death” (Wilson 10) [physical, ethical, social].
- At one point Troy had pneumonia while in Mercy Hospital (Wilson 11) [physical].
- Rose says that Troy makes up new details about his wrestling with death story every time he tells it (Wilson 12) [social, ethical].
- Bono agrees with Rose and says that Troy “got more stories than the devil got sinners” (Wilson 13) [social, ethical].
- Lyons calls Troy “Pop,” which shows the audience that Lyons is Troy’s son (Wilson 13) [social, biological].
- Rose again states that Troy is lying (Wilson 15-16, 19) [ethical, social].
- Lyons reveals that Troy was absent during Lyons’s childhood (Wilson 18) [ethical, social].
- Rose says that Troy has “got something to say about everything” the morning after the Inciting Incident and that he “ain’t right this morning” (Wilson 24) [psychological/emotional].
- Rose says that Troy blames himself for Gabe’s situation, but she encourages him by reminding him how long he has cared for his brother (Wilson 28) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Rose tells Cory that his father is upset due to Cory’s absence (Wilson 29) [psychological/emotional].
- Cory claims his father never does anything “but go down to Taylors” (Wilson 29), which shows that Troy’s manner of dealing with his life through short-term absence is not unusual [ethical, psychological/emotional].

- Rose says that Troy “was too old to play in the major leagues” (Wilson 39) [physical].
- Rose also states that “[t]he world’s changing around [Troy] and [he] can’t even see it” (Wilson) [social, psychological/emotional].
- Rose implies that Troy will be angry or upset with Cory if he sees his son’s room messy (Wilson 42) [psychological/emotional].
- When Troy found out he was not going to be hired, he immediately went and told Alberta (Wilson 43), which shows that his first priority was not his family but his lover [physical, psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Not only has Troy been promoted, but Rose claims that he is “gonna be the first colored driver” (Wilson 45) [social].
- Lyons says that Troy cannot read (Wilson 45) [physical].
- Bono says that Troy does not have a driver’s license (Wilson 45) [social].
- Bono mentions that Troy and Rose have been married a little over sixteen years (Wilson 50) [social, psychological/emotional].
- Rose says that Troy told her she would be his number one (Wilson 555) [psychological/emotional].
- Cory accuses Troy of never wanting to listen to anyone (Wilson 57), showing that he is set in his ways and can be unopen to communication [psychological/emotional].
- Bono says in the beginning of Act II that he has seen Troy with Alberta, and insinuates that their relationship is more than what Troy has with others (Wilson 61) [psychological/emotional, physical].
- Bono says that while Troy had the “pick of the litter” when it came to women, he chose Rose (Wilson 62) [psychological/emotional].
- Bono also says that seeing Troy choose Rose proved to him that “Troy knows what he’s doing [...] I done learned a whole heap of things from watching you. [...] You showed me how to not make the same mistakes ... to take life as it comes along and keep putting one foot in front of the other” (Wilson 62) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Bono says that he knows “what Rose means” to Troy and that he does not “want to see you mess up” (Wilson 63) [psychological/emotional].
- Bono reminds Troy that he is “responsible for what you do” (Wilson 63) [ethical].
- Bono does not want to see Troy hurt Rose, and warns Troy that if he tries to maintain both Rose and Alberta, “sooner or later you gonna drop one of them” (Wilson 63) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Rose says she “could have expected” Troy to cheat “ten or fifteen years ago, but not now” (Wilson 67), which shows that her faith in him has grown over time and has been betrayed [psychological/emotional].
- Rose says that Troy does not want to wish the situation of the affair away (Wilson 68) [ethical, psychological/emotional].
- Rose accuses Troy of taking without knowing others give (Wilson 71) [psychological/emotional, ethical].

- Rose says that Troy will have to answer for going back on his beliefs about Gabe going to a hospital in favor of receiving Gabe's money (Wilson 75) [psychological/emotional, ethical]
- Lyons says that Troy knows people that could help Cory get a job (Wilson 81) [social].
- Bono says that since Troy has been promoted, they have not seen each other as much (Wilson 82) [social].
- Cory tells Troy that he isn't scared of him and that Troy "don't count around here no more" (Wilson 85) [psychological/emotional, social].
- Cory says that Troy has held him back and that Troy has been afraid of Cory being better than him (Wilson 86) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Cory tells Troy that he is too old to "whup" him, that he is "just a crazy old man," which shows his lack of respect for his father (Wilson 87) [psychological/emotional].
- Rose tells Cory that Troy "wanted [Cory] to be everything he wasn't ... and at the same time he tried to make you into everything he was" (Wilson 97) [psychological/emotional, ethical].

iii. What the protagonist's actions reveal about her/him:

- Troy is confident; he stands up to his boss, Mr. Rand, and asks him "Why you got the white mens driving and the colored lifting?" (Wilson 2) [social, psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy is also determined; in response to being called to the Commissioner's office he files a complaint about the inequality of jobs (Wilson 2) [social, psychological/emotional, ethical].
- When Troy tells Rose that his discussion with Bono is "men talk" he reveals himself as somewhat sexist by our modern understanding, because he believes there are discussion topics in which women should not engage with men (Wilson 5). This is also a cover because he and Bono had just been discussing Alberta (Wilson 5) [social, ethical].
- Troy cares for and is attracted to Rose: "*Puts his arm around her*" (Wilson 6) "*sneaks up and grabs her from behind*," "*tries to kiss her*," "*attempting to kiss her again*," "*chasing after her*" (Wilson 30) [physical, psychological/emotional].
- While Troy is concerned about money, he prioritizes shopping at places that he feels he has been treated correctly over shops that are more affordable, which demonstrates his commitment to following his ethical beliefs (Wilson 7) [social, psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy's declaration that "[i]f you could play ... then they ought to have let you play" shows that he is bitter about the end of his baseball career (Wilson 10) [psychological/emotional].
- Troy does not trust Lyons's story that he has visited because he was in the neighborhood, which reveals that Troy is wary of Lyons's intentions; he is not naive (Wilson 14) [social, ethical, psychological/emotional].
- Troy is concerned about and cares for his son, Cory; in the past he purchased furniture for their house because "Cory ain't got no bed" (Wilson 15) [psychological/emotional, ethical, social].

- Troy is frustrated with Lyons for not having a job, but still offers to help him obtain one, which shows that Troy has connections and cares enough about his son to help him (Wilson 17) [social, psychological/emotional, ethical].
- At the beginning of the second scene, Troy is defensive: “Why something got to be wrong with me? I ain’t said nothing wrong with me” (Wilson 24) [psychological/emotional].
- Troy loves and is compassionate toward his brother, Gabe; although earlier in the play Troy cites Gabe moving out as a factor in the financial difficulty his family faces (Wilson 8), when Gabe asks if Troy is mad at him for moving out, Troy denies it (Wilson 25, 48, 66) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- When Troy becomes upset about Gabe he leaves, telling Rose he is going to Taylors’ rather than work on the fence (Wilson 28). Given later action described below, Troy is likely going to see Alberta, which shows that he relies on other outlets than his family (whether that be alcohol at the bar or another woman) to deal with his problems and emotions [psychological/emotional, ethical, social].
- When Cory returns home, Troy demands his son address him as “sir,” showing Troy desires and expects respect (Wilson 31) [psychological/emotional, social].
- While arguing with Cory about two hundred dollars for a television, Troy utilizes logic to explain what other, more vital uses that money could have, showing he is rational (Wilson 32) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Even though Troy does not see the need for a television, he still makes the deal with Cory that if he can raise one half of the necessary money, Troy will provide the other, showing that Troy is reasonable, and fair, even when it is about a subject he is clearly against, such as purchasing a television (Wilson 33) [psychological/emotional, ethical, social].
- By arguing with Cory about what kind of job and future he should have, Troy demonstrates that he views trade work as viable and desires for Cory to aspire to that work (Wilson 35) [social, psychological/emotional].
- Troy tries to refuse Lyons when he tries to repay the ten dollar loan from earlier in the play, which demonstrates he is bitter about and wary of Lyons’s habit of borrowing money, and is sure it will occur again (Wilson 47) [psychological/emotional, social].
- Troy “went up to the school and told Coach Zellman [Cory] can’t play football no more” and even told the coach “to tell the recruiter not to come” (Wilson 57), which exemplifies Troy’s determination to have Cory behave the way he sees fit [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy paid fifty dollars to bail Gabe out of jail (Wilson 59), a significant amount of money considering that earlier in the play his paycheck is “[s]eventy-six dollars and forty-two cents” (Wilson 19), and has bailed Gabe out “six or seven times” (Wilson 60), which demonstrates his care for his brother [psychological/emotional, social].
- Troy becomes defensive in response to Bono’s observation that Rose wants to keep her family inside a literal and metaphorical fence, suggesting some guilt and truth to the observation (Wilson 62) [psychological/emotional, ethical].

- Troy says that he becomes involved with Bono and his wife Lucille's business, which validates Bono becoming involved in Troy and Rose's business (Wilson 64). This shows that Troy respects Bono's opinion enough to allow him to speak freely with him [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy hurts Rose while they argue about the affair, which shows that he can be violent and influenced by his temper (Wilson 71) [psychological/emotional, physical].
- Troy's belief that it is "only right" to go and see Alberta and the baby immediately after the birth is evidence of his ethical code and belief in responsibility (Wilson 76) [ethical, psychological/emotional].
- Troy defends Raynell to Rose and asks for her protection (Wilson 78) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy demands Cory say "excuse me" to pass him, which shows how much he values respect (Wilson 84-85) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Even after kicking him out, Troy refers to Cory's old room as Cory's, not Raynell's, which may demonstrate that he misses him (Wilson 95) [psychological/emotional].

iv. How the playwright describes the protagonist in stage directions:

- "*Troy is fifty-three years old, a large man with thick, heavy hands*" (Wilson 1) [physical].
- "*it is this largeness that he strives to fill out and make an accommodation with*" (Wilson 1) [physical, psychological/emotional, ethical].
- "*Together with his blackness, his largeness informs his sensibilities and the choices he has made in life*" (Wilson 1) [physical, ethical, psychological/emotional, social, biological].
- Troy has been friends with Bono for "*thirty-odd years*" (Wilson 1) [social].
- Troy has "*honesty, capacity for hard work, and [...] strength*" (Wilson 1) [ethical, physical].
- He is "*talkative and at times he can be crude and almost vulgar, though he is capable of rising to profound heights of expression*" (Wilson 1) [social, ethical].
- Troy and Bono have "*jobs as garbage collectors*" (Wilson 1) [social].
- In describing how Rose views Troy, Wilson describes his spirit as "*a fine and illuminating one,*" but also acknowledges that he has faults (Wilson 5) [ethical, social].
- Troy has been married previously and has a son from that marriage (Wilson 13) [physical, biological, social, psychological/emotional].
- Troy has a brother, Gabriel, who sustained a head injury during World War II (Wilson 24) [biological, physical].
- Wilson demonstrates the devolving relationship between Rose and Troy by describing "*a long, awkward silence, the weight of which grows heavier with each passing second*" (Wilson 78) [psychological/emotional].
- Wilson describes the way Troy handles his baby as "*awkward indelicateness;*" Troy's "*largeness engulfs and seems to swallow it*" (Wilson 78-79) [physical].

- When he and Cory fight, “*Troy ultimately is the stronger, and takes the bat from Cory and stands over him ready to swing. He stops himself*” (Wilson 88) [physical, psychological/emotional, ethical].
- b. Rose Maxson.
 - i. What the character says about her/himself:
 - Rose says that she does not like talking about death (Wilson 10) [psychological/emotional, social, ethical].
 - Rose believes in God and his judgement (Wilson 16) [social, ethical, psychological/emotional].
 - Rose says she does not gamble foolishly; “I just play a nickel here and a nickel there” (Wilson 22) [social, ethical].
 - Rose tells Troy that she “done tried to be everything a wife should be. Everything a wife could be” (Wilson 67) [ethical, psychological/emotional, physical].
 - Rose never wanted her children to experience a split family like she did (Wilson 68) [psychological/emotional, ethical]
 - Rose did not want to know about the affair; she would rather be blissfully ignorant (Wilson 68) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
 - Rose refuses to leave with Cory or be sent away because she has invested too much of her life in Troy (Wilson 68) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
 - Although she refuses to leave, Rose also tells Troy that he is too late to salvage the “we” of their relationship (Wilson 68); she is still committed to him, but is deeply hurt [psychological/emotional].
 - Rose is afraid that Troy thinks Alberta is “a better woman” than she is (Wilson 69) [psychological/emotional].
 - Rose has given up “dreams and hopes” to be with Troy; she has the same desires as he has, but she has not given into them; rather, she has invested all of them in Troy, demonstrating her strength, love, and commitment (Wilson 70-71) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
 - Rose admits to having doubt that Troy “wasn’t the finest man in the world,” but has chosen to ignore these doubts because she felt she “owed [Troy] everything [she] had” and that was “the only way [she] was gonna survive as [Troy’s] wife” (Wilson 71) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
 - Rose tells Troy that she cannot and will not live never knowing when he will be home; she desires Troy’s commitment to her and requests it by asking him to come home immediately after work (Wilson 73-74) [psychological/emotional].
 - Rose reminds Troy that she is his wife and asks him not to push her away, showing she still has hope for them (Wilson 77) [psychological/emotional].
 - Rose tells Troy that it “don’t matter what time I come back,” and refuses to discuss it with him, which further demonstrates devolution of their relationship (Wilson 82) [psychological/emotional].

- Rose desired to be a mother, and until she had a child she felt she had an empty space (Wilson 97), and says that Raynell helped to fill this void (Wilson 98) [psychological/emotional].

ii. What other characters say about that character:

- Troy says that Rose told him to move out of her way so she can find a husband, demonstrating that Rose was determined to obtain her desire of being a wife and mother regardless of obstacles (Wilson 6) [psychological/emotional, social].
- Rose is the “only decent thing that ever happened to” Troy (Wilson 39) [psychological/emotional].
- Troy says that he loves Rose because she corrects him, and Bono agrees by saying “Rose’ll keep you straight” (Wilson 55) [psychological/emotional].
- Troy told rose that she will always be his number one (Wilson 55) [psychological/emotional].
- Bono says that Rose wants a fence around her yard “to keep people in. Rose wants to hold on to you all. She loves you” (Wilson 61) [psychological/emotional].
- “Rose a good woman” (Wilson 62) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy says that he and Rose have been married for eighteen years (Wilson 62) [psychological/emotional, social].
- Bono reminds Troy that Rose loves him (Wilson 63) [psychological/emotional].
- Bono says that Rose means a lot to Troy (Wilson 63) [psychological/emotional].
- Bono loves Rose as well (Wilson 63) [psychological/emotional].
- Troy says that “[y]ou can’t find a better woman than Rose” (Wilson 63) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy says that Rose is “stuck on for good” (Wilson 63) [physical, psychological/emotional].
- Troy tells Rose that she is not to blame for his affair, that “[a] man couldn’t ask for no woman to be a better wife than [she has] been” (Wilson 69) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Troy accuses Rose of being more concerned with Alberta’s insurance than with Alberta as a person (Wilson 76) [psychological/emotional, ethical].

iii. What the character’s actions reveal about her/him:

- Although she does not drink, Rose still spends time with Bono and Troy, which shows that she is friendly and social (Wilson 5) [social].
- Rose goes between preparing dinner and spending time with the men in the yard during the first scene and offers Gabe food when he visits, which shows that she is prepared and adheres to the traditional expectation of women preparing meals (Wilson 5, 26, 48) [social, ethical].
- Although she adheres to some traditional feminine expectations, Rose also challenges others by devaluing the “men talk” Troy believes is not for her to hear, revealing herself to be a strong and confident woman; “What I care what you all talking about” (Wilson 5) [ethical, psychological/emotional, social].

- By telling Troy to “move out the way so the marrying kind could find” her, Rose shows that she does not give up on her desires quickly to accommodate others (Wilson 6) [psychological/emotional, social, ethical].
- Rose is concerned about money; she does not shop at Bella’s because Bella overcharges, despite Bella treating people well (Wilson 7) [social, ethical].
- Rose defends Cory’s desire to play football, which shows that she cares about her son’s interests (Wilson 8, 39, 49, 57, 59) [psychological/emotional, ethical, social].
- When Rose says that Troy will “drink [him]self to death” (Wilson 10) she demonstrates her concern for him and distaste for alcohol [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Rose defends Lyons from Troy’s scrutiny, which shows that she is loving and wants to believe the best about people (Wilson 13) [ethical, social, psychological/emotional].
- Rose invites Lyons to stay for dinner, which shows that she is caring (Wilson 14) [psychological/emotional, social, ethical].
- Rose encourages Troy to give Lyons the money and hands it to Lyons herself, showing that she trusts Lyons to pay the money back and is loving enough to loan the money (Wilson 19) [social, ethical, psychological/emotional].
- Rose rebukes Troy when he makes a crude joke about her (Wilson 20) which shows that she is dignified above such talk [psychological/emotional, social, ethical].
- At the beginning of Act I Scene two, Rose sings a hymn to Jesus asking for a fence of protection (Wilson 21), which demonstrates her belief in and commitment to God and her desire to protect and maintain her family [social, psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Rose is concerned for Gabe; she offers him breakfast and then, when he leaves without eating it, says that Gabe “ain’t eating right” (Wilson 26-27). This concern is further demonstrated by her arguing with Troy about Gabe returning to the hospital because he eats right there (Wilson 28) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Rose encourages Troy when he feels guilty over using Gabe’s money for their house, which shows that she is reassuring (Wilson 28) [ethical, psychological/emotional].
- Rose admonishes Troy for treating her like a dog, showing that she has self-respect (Wilson 43) [psychological/emotional].
- Rose shares her opinion about Gabe’s situation (that he should be put into a hospital), even though she knows that Troy will disagree, which shows that she is confident and sure of herself enough to speak her mind (Wilson 65) [psychological/emotional].
- Although she disagrees with Troy, she decides to drop the conversation, which shows that she values peace more than being right (Wilson 65) [ethical].
- Even in the midst of her despair about being cheated on, Rose is still reassures Gabe that “[t]hem bad mens is gone now” Wilson 67), which shows that she is

compassionate toward others despite her own situations [psychological/emotional, ethical].

- Rose begs Troy not to hurt Cory and even tries to restrain him herself, which shows that despite Troy hurting her she would rather protect Cory than her own well-being (Wilson 72) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Rose wonders who will bury Alberta (Wilson 76), which may be evidence of her reverence of life despite being wrong, or it may be Rose attempting to move on from Alberta as quickly as possible, depending on the actor's portrayal [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Although Rose originally leaves when presented with Troy's request that she raise Raynell, she eventually decides to take care of the baby because she is innocent and "you can't visit the sins of the father upon the child," but informs Troy that she is not his woman anymore (Wilson 78-79) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- She hushes Lyons when he shouts because he may wake Raynell, which shows she cares for the baby despite it not being biologically related to her (Wilson 80) [psychological/emotional, ethical].
- Rose donates a cake to a church bakesale, demonstrating her commitment to the church and exemplifying her charity (Wilson 80-82) [ethical, psychological/emotional].
- Rose is so overjoyed to see Cory in the last scene that she cries (Wilson 92) [physical, psychological/emotional].
- Rose introduces Cory to Raynell as her brother, which shows that she considers Raynell family despite not being biologically related to her (Wilson 93) [psychological/emotional, biological, ethical].

iv. How the playwright describes the character in stage directions:

- Rose "*is ten years younger than TROY, her devotion to him stems from her recognition of the possibilities of her life without him: a succession of abusive men and their babies, a life of partying and running the streets, the Church, or aloneness with its attendant pain and frustration*" (Wilson 5) [physical, psychological/emotional, social, ethical].
- Rose has a very positive view of Troy at the beginning of the play, despite his faults, some of which she recognizes and others she "*ignores or forgives*" (Wilson 5). This shows that she is a loving and forgiving woman [psychological/emotional, social, ethical].
- Rose does not drink, but "*her presence is an integral part of the Friday night rituals*" (Wilson 5) [ethical, social].

II: What?

- a. Vocational groups represented and referenced in *Fences* include garbage collectors (Wilson 1), Commissioner, garbage truck drivers (Wilson 2), store owner (Wilson 7), store worker, car mechanic (Wilson 8), furniture salesman (Wilson 14-15), hospital laundry worker (Wilson 17), musician (Wilson 18), restaurant owner (Wilson 22), fruit seller (Wilson 24), World War II soldier (Wilson 24), which is specified as the Army

branch later (Wilson 87), house builder (Wilson 34), preachers (Wilson 83), Marine corporal (Wilson 91), and reverend (Wilson 98).

- b. The Maxson family is a working-class family. Troy and his friend Jim Bono work as garbage collectors (Wilson 1), and while Troy is eventually promoted to driver (Wilson 44), any job having to do with garbage is negatively viewed, even by his own son, Lyons (Wilson 17). After being promoted, Troy works four more years before retiring (the last scene takes place in 1965, eight years after the start of the play, and Troy retired about four years before his death) (Wilson 93). Lyons does not have a job (Wilson 17), his wife is a laundry worker (Wilson 17), Troy's son Cory works at an A&P store (Wilson 8) but later quits to play football (Wilson 57) and eventually joins the Marines as a corporal (Wilson 91), Troy's brother Gabe sells fruit (Wilson 24), and a job is never specified for Rose, implying she is a homemaker. None of these jobs (excluding Marine corporal) require specialized skills or extensive training, so it can be inferred that none of these characters are members of high society. The characters' social classes are also influenced by their race. They are all African American, and because of this are treated differently. Troy demonstrates this when he describes confronting his employer, Mr. Rand: "You think only white fellows got sense enough to drive a truck" (Wilson 2). Another example is when Troy describes a man he knew, Pope, who bought a restaurant and treated his white customers with priority (Wilson 22-23). These characters' lives are often influenced by their social class and the economic difficulties that accompany it. For example, in the beginning of the play, Troy and Bono both await Friday, payday, all week, and celebrate by drinking together (Wilson 1). Troy must gather his strength daily to "carry me through to the next Friday" (Wilson 40), and says that his "whole life I ain't done nothing but look to see Friday coming" (Wilson 73). Because money is such a concern, Troy also pressures his son, Cory, to focus on working rather than playing football (Wilson 8) and even values Cory obtaining a trade job over a college education (Wilson 36). Lyons is also motivated by money, as he stops by Troy's house to ask for a ten dollar loan (Wilson 14). Lyons is determined to receive this loan, and does not leave until he does so (Wilson 19). Cory is influenced by money as well, believing that his father should spend two hundred dollars to purchase a television set, while Troy knows that money can be used for more practical purchases such as house repairs (Wilson 32). Although Troy considers himself the head of the household, it is Rose who is in charge of the money. This is demonstrated by Troy saying on the first payday that Lyons "know[s] what I do with my money" and instructs Rose to give Lyons the money, to which she replies that she will "as soon as you turn is loose" (Wilson 19). This, coupled with Troy later stating that "I take my pay and I give it to you. I don't have no money but what you give me back" (Wilson 74) and Rose telling Troy to give her the money on a subsequent payday (Wilson 47) as well as to put his money on the table for her to retrieve later (Wilson 81), implies that Rose is in charge of the household's finances and provides Troy with an allowance.
- c. Due to the time period and location, which are analyzed later, the political system can be inferred to be the American democratic system. The dominant religious system is Christianity. This is evidenced by Troy's references to the Bible (Wilson 7, 11) and his belief that death or the devil is after him (Wilson 12, 13, 77, 89). Rose believes that it is

God Troy will answer to, not the devil (Wilson 16), she sings a song to Jesus in the morning after the play begins (Wilson 21), and she provides a cake for the church's bakesale (Wilson 81). Gabriel "*believes with every fiber of his being that he is the Archangel Gabriel*" (Wilson 24), that he has been in heaven with St. Peter (Wilson 26, 47, 100), and that it is his duty to chase hellhounds (Wilson 47, 67).

d. Troy believes that white men hinder colored men from reaching success; this is evidenced not only by his boss thinking "only white fellows got sense enough to drive a truck" (Wilson 2), but also by his belief that the "white man ain't gonna let [Cory] get nowhere with that football noway" (Wilson 35). Troy thinks that it takes twice as much effort for a colored man to be added to an athletic team, claims "[a]ll them teams the same," and declares that to be the reason he does not want Cory "tied up in them sports" (Wilson 34). He also believes that "Negro leagues" had better pitching than white (Wilson 34). Troy describes the devil as a "[w]hite fellow ... got on good clothes and everything" (Wilson 14) and refuses to think about baseball teams he deems "all-white" (Wilson 33). Troy believes that he was unfairly treated during his days of playing baseball; Rose and Bono try to explain that his difficulty was due to the times, but Troy declares that "[t]here ought not never have been no time called too early" (Wilson 9). Regardless of time, Troy believes "[i]f you could play ... then they ought to have let you play" (Wilson 10). He declares the reason he was not allowed to play in the major leagues was not his age but his skin color (Wilson 39). Troy believes in freedom and thinks that Gabe returning to a hospital would be imprisonment (Wilson 28, 65). Although the economic system results in the characters being driven by money and the pursuit thereof, Troy still holds the ideology that he will only spend his money "where I'm treated right," even if that is somewhere that charges more than one in which he feels he is not treated correctly (Wilson 7). Although Rose's presence is described as "*an integral part of the Friday night rituals*," Troy believes that she should not be present while he and Bono engage in "men talk" (Wilson 5). Troy also believes that a woman should come when she is called by her husband, but Rose declares she "ain't no dog," showing that they have somewhat contrasting beliefs regarding her role as a woman and wife (Wilson 43). Even so, Rose believes that taking care of Troy "was my job, not somebody else's" (Wilson 69) and that even though living with Troy meant giving up some of herself, "that's what life offered me in the way of being a woman and I took it" (Wilson 98). Troy also believes that death is nothing but a "fastball on the outside corner," that death is "part of life" (Wilson 10). Troy tells Lyons that "[l]ife don't owe you nothing. You owe it to yourself," but Lyons feels like music is the only thing that makes him "feel like I belong in the world," that music is "the only way I can find to live in the world" (Wilson 18). Troy believes that gambling is a waste of money and foolish, but Rose argues that "some good things come from playing numbers" (Wilson 22). Troy strongly believes he should be respected as head of the household, which is evidenced by him demanding Cory address him as "sir" (Wilson 31, 36-37), declaring "I'm the boss around here" (Wilson 36), warning that if Cory wants to disobey him "then it's time for him to move on" (Wilson 50), and insisting Cory say "excuse me" when he wants to pass Troy (Wilson 84). He also believes that taking care of his family is his responsibility as a man (Wilson 38). He encourages Cory to make sure people treat him right, regardless of whether or not they like him (Wilson 38) and "make his own way" in the world (Wilson

39). Rose also tells Cory that he must “find a way to come to [being a man] on your own” (Wilson 96) and that he must grow into himself or cut his father’s influence down to fit him, because “that’s all you got to make life with. That’s all you got to measure yourself against that world out there” (Wilson 97). Troy taught Bono “to take life as it comes along and keep putting one foot in front of the other” (Wilson 62). Although Troy lives in a Christian religious system, he believes that preachers are “looking for somebody to fatten their pockets” (Wilson 83). He also believes that if something “sets right in my heart … then I’m okay. Cause that’s all I listen to. It’ll tell me right from wrong every time” (Wilson 63), even though what his heart tells him is to have an affair that results in a child (Wilson 66). Troy believes that “[y]ou’ve got to take the crookeds with the straights” (Wilson 37), and instilled this belief in his son, Lyons (Wilson 94).

III: Where?

- a. There is a reference made to Greentree, Pennsylvania (Wilson 83), implying the play takes place in Pennsylvania due to its proximity to the play’s action. Additionally, in his opening note, Lloyd Richards, who directed the world premiere of *Fences*, asserts that the play takes place in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Wilson vii).
- b. The play takes place in the dirt yard of the Maxson household, which is described as “an ancient two-story brick house set back off a small alley in a big-city neighborhood” (Wilson xvi). There is a tree, a porch, and garbage cans (Wilson xvi). There is also a partial fence and building equipment that is removed before the last scene is shown (Wilson xvi). Other significant locations mentioned include Bella’s store, the A&P store (Wilson 7), Mercy Hospital (Wilson 11), Passavant Hospital, Miss Pearl’s home (Wilson 17), Taylors’ (Wilson 28), a creek near Troy’s childhood home (Wilson 52), the penitentiary, and Greentree (Wilson 83).

IV: When?

- a. The year in which this play transpires is 1957 (Wilson 1). It is football season (Wilson 8), which indicates that it is fall.
- b. Act I scene one begins on “*Friday night, payday*” (Wilson 1). Act I scene one begins in the morning hours of the next day, Saturday (Wilson 21). Act I scene three takes place during that same day, but “*four hours later*” (Wilson 29). Act I scene four begins on a Friday two weeks after the play’s beginning (Wilson 40). Act II begins the next morning, a Saturday two weeks after the first Saturday presented (Wilson 59). Act II scene two takes place in the early hours of a Thursday afternoon six months after the previous scene (Wilson 73). Act II scene three begins late in the hours of a Sunday evening three days later (Wilson 78). Act II scene four takes place “*two months later*” (Wilson 80). It is likely a Friday, because Troy produces money for Rose (Wilson 81). The final scene of the play, Act II scene five, takes place in 1965 on “*the morning of Troy’s funeral*” (Wilson 90).

Plot Analysis

I: Protagonist: The identifiable and basically good character whose actions determine the outcome of the play.

Troy Maxson

a. Identifiable:

Troy is identifiable visually and auditorily because he is onstage for the majority of the play and, even in the final scene when he is deceased, the characters are all gathered together because of him; they are attending his funeral. Troy is identifiable empathetically because he is a friend, husband, father, and brother who has made mistakes. It is these mistakes, such as having an affair (Wilson 63), that humanizes Troy as a protagonist and allows an audience to connect with him, as all audience members have also made mistakes in their lives.

b. Basically Good:

Although Troy insists Cory work at the A&P against his will, he does so out of care that his son get a trade job (Wilson 8). Troy also cares about his father, despite their negative relationship, and hopes “he found some peace” (Wilson 53). Before meeting Rose, Troy was a thief, but he has since grown ashamed of these actions (Wilson 54). Although Troy has an affair, he does so in correspondence with his personal ethical beliefs; he believes he can love Rose (Wilson 63) and still do what “felt right in [his] heart” (Wilson 79), which was to be with Alberta as well. Troy is also basically good because he tells his wife the truth about the affair, rather than continuing to hide it or force Alberta to raise the child on her own (Wilson 66); he believes it is Rose’s right to know (Wilson 68) and acknowledges that he is responsible for the affair (Wilson 69). He also feels responsible for the child who is left motherless (Wilson 79), which demonstrates his goodness because he does not abandon the child as so many other fathers do (Wilson 51). Despite his faults, Troy “meant to do more good than he meant to do harm” (Wilson 97).

c. Actions Determine the Outcome of the Play:

Troy’s actions determine the outcome of the play because it is his decision to throw Cory out of the house (Wilson 87-89) that resolves the Main Action of reestablishing his position of male head of the household and ensuring Cory “make his own way” in the world (Wilson 39).

II: Beginning Stasis: The situation at the beginning of the play; the protagonist’s status quo.

In *Fences*, August Wilson employs an early point of attack.

a. In the beginning stasis of *Fences*, Troy and Bono are engaging in their weekly ritual of drinking and talking on Friday night, which is also payday for their jobs as garbage

collectors (Wilson 1). Rose participates in these weekly festivities (Wilson 5). Although the audience is not aware of it yet, this stasis also includes an affair with Alberta, which is hinted at when Bono says, “I see you be walking up around Alberta’s house (Wilson 4). Troy is head of his household and believes he is in charge of his family members, particularly his son, Cory, which is evidenced by his surprise and anger at learning that Cory has been recruited, despite Troy already telling him he will not get anywhere with football (Wilson 8).

III: Inciting Incident: The event that interrupts and destroys the protagonist’s beginning stasis.

Troy learns Cory has been recruited by a college football team.

- a. While this event seems relatively insignificant, its importance as Inciting Incident becomes apparent when the surrounding circumstances are examined. Because Troy views himself as head of the household, being disobeyed in this way by his son is a challenge of his authority. (Wilson 8). Also, going to college to play football would mean that Cory would not immediately go into trade work upon graduation, as Troy desires (Wilson 35). Cory working is particularly important, both currently and after graduation, because of the economic status of the family (described in the **What?** section about economics). Finally, this event causes jealousy in Troy; he was unable to succeed in sports as Cory now is.

IV: Major Action/Objective: What the protagonist must do to regain stasis.

In response to the Inciting Incident and in effort to regain stasis, Troy must reestablish his position of power as head of the household by demanding respect and must ensure Cory’s future is what he has determined is right by insisting Cory’s focus be making his way in the world through trade work, not playing football.

- a. “I told that boy about that football stuff. [...] I told him when he first come to me with it. Now you come telling me he done went and got more tied up in it. He ought to go and get recruited in how to fix cars or something where he can make a living” (Wilson 8). “That boy scared of work. [...] He ain’t done a lick of work in his life. [...] I got his practice ... running out of here before he get his chores done (Wilson 23). “I’m the boss around here” (Wilson 36). “Yeah, what? [Cory:] Yessir” (Wilson 31). “Nigger, as long as you in my house, you put that sir on the end of it when you talk to me!” (Wilson 37). “They got colored on the team and don’t use them. Same as not having them. All them teams the same (Wilson 34). “Your mama tell me you done got recruited by a college football team? Is that right? [...] I thought you supposed to be working down there at the A&P. Ain’t been around here all day on a Saturday. Ain’t none of your chores done ... and now you telling me you done quit your job. [Cory:] I’m gonna be working weekends. [Troy:] You damn right you are! And ain’t no need for nobody coming around here to talk to me about signing nothing. [...] The white man ain’t gonna let you get nowhere with that football noway. You go on and get your book-learning so you can work yourself up in that A&P or learn how to fix cars or build houses or something, get

you a trade. That way you have something can't nobody take away from you. You go on and learn how to put your hands to some good use. Besides hauling people's garbage" (Wilson 35). "You getting your butt out of here and finding you another job. [...] You go on down there to that A&P and see if you can't get your job back. If you can't do both ... then you quit the football team" (Wilson 36-37). "I decided seventeen years ago that boy wasn't getting involved in no sports [...] He's got to make his own way" (Wilson 39).

V: Major Complications/Rising Action: Any action or event that interferes with the protagonist's achieving his/her goal.

- a. Major Complication One:
 - i. Cory tells Troy that his position at the A&P has already been filled, but he will work weekends.
 - ii. Because Troy believes so strongly that Cory should work, this action not only hinders Troy's main action of Cory working but also of receiving respect, as this action is disobedience against an earlier command of Troy's (Wilson 35).
 - iii. Troy makes Cory the deal that he either be able to both work and play football, or quit the team (Wilson 36-37).
- b. Major Complication Two:
 - i. Cory lies to Troy about maintaining his job.
 - ii. This action breaks the earlier deal that Cory and Troy have made, which exacerbates the issues of both Cory's work and respect.
 - iii. Troy speaks to Cory's coach and forbids him from playing football and does not allow the recruiter to come (Wilson 57).

VI: Major Crisis: The turning point when the protagonist must make a choice that determines the ending of the story.

- a. Cory challenges Troy's authority and tells him, "You can't whup me no more. You're too old. You just an old man" (Wilson 87).
- b. Just as the Inciting Incident can seem insignificant without context, so too the Major Crisis. Troy has already informed Cory that if he wants to be a man he can "forget about this house;" he can "go on and be a man and get [his] own house" (Wilson 86). Cory also has lost respect for his father because he was not allowed to play football and because of Troy's affair; he insinuates he cannot stand his father by questioning how his mother can "after what [Troy] did to her" (Wilson 87). Cory's statement, then, is the culmination of an argument that has been transpiring for four pages of text (and building for almost the entirety of the play); it is blatant defiance and disrespect, which necessitates a response (Wilson 87).

VII: Major Structural Climax: The single moment when the protagonist does something that resolves the Main Action.

- a. Troy tells Cory that he is “just another nigger on the street to me” (Wilson 87).
- b. This action determines the outcome of the play because it is Troy disowning Cory as a son, thus ensuring he will be thrown out of the house as any other “nigger on the street” (Wilson 87).
- c. This action resolves most of Troy’s Main Action, but not all. Troy knows he will not receive respect from Cory, but at least he can prove his dominance as head of the household by being the only man in the house. It also resolves the Main Action of insisting Cory’s focus be on work and make his own way in the world because being thrown out of his home forces Cory to support himself.

VIII: Ending Stasis/Falling Action: The few and relatively insignificant actions that transpire after the Major Structural Climax.

- a. Troy again tells Death that he will be ready when Death comes, and Cory meets Raynell eight years later.
- b. Troy is in a very altered stasis. While he is again head of the household as he believed he was in Beginning Stasis, he has lost his son, wife, lover, and even his connection with his friend. With Cory gone, Troy’s stasis is now living with his estranged wife and daughter while he works as a driver for the next several years until retirement and, eventually, his death.

Scenic Unit Analysis:

The smallest division of a play’s plot; the series of actions are divided into a moment-to-moment configuration.

Scenic Unit 1

Unit Objective: *To compare Bono’s relationship with Alberta to his own in order to convince Bono that their relationship is platonic at most.*

Cause Change: *Bono disbelieves Troy and pries further by saying: “I figure you doing a little better than me” (Wilson 3).*

Scenic Unit 2

Unit Objective: *To target Bono as the conversation topic in order to distract Bono from his questioning.*

Cause Change: *Bono persists in maintaining Troy as the topic of conversation and accuses Troy of “eyeing” Alberta: “I ain’t saying that. I see where you be eyeing her” (Wilson 3).*

Scenic Unit 3

Unit Objective: *To equate his relationship with Alberta to the ones he has with other women and with Bono in order to downplay the significance of his interest in Alberta.*

Cause Change: *Bono denies the accuracy of Troy's comparison and insists that Troy has been eyeing Alberta: "[W]hen you wanna be buying two or three [drinks] ... that's what you call eyeing her" (Wilson 4).*

Scenic Unit 4

Unit Objective: *To evidence his marriage to Rose as faithfulness in order to dispel Bono's doubts.*

Cause Change: *Bono admits to essentially spying on Troy and seeing him near Alberta: "I see you be walking up around Alberta's house. You supposed to be at Taylors' and you be walking up around there" (Wilson 4).*

Scenic Unit 5

Unit Objective: *To defend his right to walk wherever in order to deny the implications walking near Alberta's house has.*

Cause Change: *Bono finally alters the subject slightly from Alberta and Troy's relationship to Alberta herself: "Where she come from anyway? She just kinda showed up one day" (Wilson 4).*

Root Action Statement

A single sentence which synthesizes the plot, capturing the essence of the script's action.

In August Wilson's *Fences*, Troy Maxson, a black, ex-baseball player who is now fifty-three years old and works as a garbage collector, struggles to obtain the respect of his son, Cory, while maintaining his position of head of the household and determining Cory's future as a trade worker, rather than football star, but Cory loses all respect for his father after Troy bans Cory from football and cheats on his mother and blatantly challenges his authority; in response, Troy throws Cory out of his house to demonstrate his dominance and headship.

Thematic Analysis

I: Thematic Topics

- Family power dynamics
- Manhood
- Marital unfaithfulness
- Athletic dreams vs. work realities
- Black culture

II: Thematic Statement: A thematic statement describes the playwright's point of view on a subject and offers interpretation of the story's meaning.

- a. In *Fences* by August Wilson, Wilson addresses the topic of family dynamics; he shows that the struggle to maintain power as head of the household can result in losing the family one tried to control.
- b. While this thematic statement most obviously applies to the devolving relationship between Troy and Cory, it also applies to Troy and Rose's relationship. Troy tries to maintain control of his family, including his new

daughter, by admitting the affair to Rose (Wilson 66) and asking that the daughter be raised as theirs (Wilson 79), which results in the destruction of their relationship.

Central Production Metaphor

A metaphor that stimulates the imagination of the production artists and unifies all elements of production.

- a. *Fences* is a rusty, outdoor water spout with a leaky faucet that drips into a bucket one drop at a time until it overflows.
- b. At first glance, a rusty water spout seems to function well enough to accomplish its purpose, much like a family with silent issues. However, when these issues lead to deterioration and leaks in their relationships, the result can be a build-up that results in overflow. Both the Inciting Incident and the Major Crisis do not seem like much at first glance, mere drops of water, but when added to an entire bucket of accumulated issues and conflict, the Major Crisis is the final drop that releases an overflow of emotions. This CPM has many potentials for design artists, such as including a leaking, rusty water spout with a bucket under it as part of the set design. The director can use this in blocking, as Troy or Cory can wash their hands or drink from the spout during or near times of conflict, and Rose can use the spout to scrub a stain on a piece of laundry, much as she tries to scrub the stains of her family away.

Works Cited

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