

# Fatherhood and Socio-Economic Responsibilities towards Children as Seen through *FENCES* by August Wilson

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## Abstract

In the making of the United States of America, rights related to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness hits blocs prejudices and society-based realities. Unlike whites, blacks witness cases of highly-ranked socio-economic hardships in settling families, providing the minimum possible for stable households and assuring well-mannered children from one generation to another. Failure to pass on a legacy of well-indicated morals, mores, attitudes and patterns is abundantly highlighted in *Fences* by August Wilson, with Troy Maxson the main character who definitely misses the point the same way his own father does with consequences on kids, wives and the whole living society. Psychoanalysis and Marxist literary theories help to denote and decode how generations of fathers as bread-winners pass on to extended families, principles for living which members of the same family accept or reject through manners in which they choose to live their own lives: unfulfilled responsibilities and generation gaps at stake.

**Keywords:** Fences – father – children – responsibilities - family.

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## INTRODUCTION

The play *Fences* by August Wilson (1945-2005) centers fundamentally on the myth of the failed American dream with special regards to blacks in general about how they are deprived of that nation-wide dream. This comedy-drama tells the story of four generations of black Americans and of how they have passed on a legacy of morals, mores, attitudes and patterns to make stand families with well-mannered off-springs as well as misconducts of their own doing. As referring to the issue of race and family relationships during the transition period of late 20th century, Troy the garbage collector at a company develops a rebellion out of a kind of frustration which sets the tone of the entire play: looking for his rights at the age of fifty-three, having missed many opportunities to get what he deserves and fulfill his dream.

Troy’s mind embedded with bitter past experience impacts negatively on his positions about his kids’ choices for professional life. Because his own burning desire or dream hit the bloc of serious handicaps, he doesn’t see worth backing up, helping to promote or bettering the ones of his children. The father-son relationships remain skeptic in a kind of

bitter-sweetness character between parents and kids of the same family. Consequently, hardships stand on the way long, challenging a good atmosphere within Troy’s family with the permanent notice of strong feelings of pride and independence on both sides of parent and children becomes a permanent task to fulfill. This work of tremendous impacts and entitled *Fatherhood and Socio-economic Responsibilities towards Children as Seen through Fences by August Wilson* reveals feelings, weighs passion and compassion, paint emotions where pains and anger are balanced by humor and common sense. It exemplifies that legendary success of colored people in that land of equal opportunities is not always accompanied by equal chances, and that the same country that deprived blacks asked unbearable sacrifices: color of skin can easily and simply tip the balance. Fight to win little victories leads to assume the proportion of major triumphs. Strength of body and strength of purpose are not enough.

### 1. Theoretical Background of the Study

#### 1.1 Problem statement, purpose and significance of the study

A Father’s socio-economic responsibilities towards his children in *Fences* by August Wilson remains with no doubt the main focus point under study

in this research paper. The reading of the play inspires behind mere horizons, a divine or man-made connection between children and father in face of responsibilities which are not a petty charge to be held even though constant efforts should be devoted to its impactful significance. The problem raised by this topic is to study the relationship between Troy and his father in order to understand the way it influenced perhaps positively or negatively the relationship between Troy and his own children in such play. It depicts the consequences related to acts of fathers on children lives that can be positive or negative as well.

The unseen author's message would be lensed through the outcomes jotted down for father and children relationship mainly among African-Americans at a given time of the socio-economic and even political history of the United States of America. We would first mean to analyze the relationship between Troy and his father one the one hand and the one between Troy and his own sons on the second hand.

## 1.2. Conceptual definitions, methodology and literature Review

Better understand or have a good command of the subject under discussion requires basic clarifications and settings. With regards to *Fences* by August Wilson claimed as among the finest of the American theater, *Fences* is the plural of the word fence that means according to Cambridge dictionary (4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2022, p.254), a structure of wood or wire forming a wall around a house or a piece of land, often to keep people or animals from coming in or going out. It is in fact a complex symbol which pretty well, sums up the whole play contrary to that simple image from the play's title. The American heritage dictionary (pg 492) and Cambridge dictionary (4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2022) respectively define fatherhood as the condition of being father, the state of being father or the mental, emotional and physical condition that a person is entitled to be called and considered father. Being a life-long responsibility, socio-economic difficulties plainly hold a significant place in a man's life to achieve the main for his offspring to diligently and proudly take over the torch.

By the means of both qualitative and exploratory methods essentially focused on the plot of the play, stylistic and structural analysis gear up to decode how ideas raised by the author match up about meanings to make pass the unseen message that shallow readers cannot easily grasp. The psychoanalysis lends hands to get into the right insights about what social psychology instructs about human beings with their responsibilities and the Marxist literary theory lights on social environment, economic obligations and available means to achieve the main.

Beforehand, many authors, both male and female happened to address issues related to responsibilities for Americans of any origin to

implement or to carry out objectives about the well-being of the whole nation mainly in terms of socio-economic achievements. Many contemporary authors like James Baldwin intended in his book entitled *The Fire Next Time* to clearly state a point about the real meaning of the emancipation from the offer or, responsibilities as well as white Americans and blacks as beneficiaries. Still, referring to Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, she openly sheds light on negative sides of Black Americans as people not meant to face responsibilities event though laws grant them privileges in a nation huge racial antagonisms.

Lorraine Hansberry 's *A Raisin in the Sun*, pinpointed by the means of a formal appeal for self-consciousness within black community for, their sense of accomplished responsibility is quite a tool and an invaluable lead to real emancipation. Complying with the critical remark on her novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora genuinely deciphers about the gist around socio-economic roles both blacks and whites should play. She illustrates the case as follows:

...I was writing a novel and not a treatise on sociology.... I have ceased to think in term of race; I think only in terms of individuals. I'm interested in you now, not as a Negro man, but as a man. I am not interested in the race problem, but I am interested in the problems of individuals, the white ones and the black ones. (See Article '*The Hierarchy itself: Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and *The Sacrifice of Narrative Authority*', by Ryan Simmons)

Emancipation grants or allows rights to Americans on paper but implementation lies in the hands of both whites and blacks in their constant efforts to reach the right end of the stick. From generation to generation, the torch handed over should pave the way to success in every domain. The case of Blacks in the United States of America instigates more than a simple hope to be achieved. Family disintegration and his cortège of untamable fallouts remains a harsh cornerstone to pass with bread-winners who in many circumstances fail to put children on track of betterment or accomplishments with flying colors. August Wilson in *Fences* highlights fatherhood responsibilities within black families with a special focus on the relationship between Troy and his father which happened to be more complicated that no one could ever imagine. Quite affected by this relationship, Troy's acts upon his sons reflect perfectly in the way he related to his father when he was young. The following illustration depicts in one way or the other that deplorable or ill-winded though or behavior: "*Sometimes I wish I hadn't known my daddy. He ain't [sic] cared nothing about no kids [...] but I will say this to him... he felt the responsibility towards us*" (Wilson, I, IV, pp52-53).

The following excerpts from the play under study illustrate unavoidable cases of unfulfilled dream shattered from Cory, father and sons cloudy

relationships and emasculation effects on children with results of socio-economic upheavals, hard to handle:

*"I don't want him to be like me! I want him to move as far away from my life as he can get"* (Wilson, I, III, p 44).

*"just because you didn't have a chance, you just scared I'm gonna [sic] be better than you, that's all"* (Ibid. p57).

*"I come by to see you...ask for ten dollars and you want to talk about how I was raised. You don't know nothing about how I was raised"* (Wilson, I, I, p29).

## 2- August Wilson and overview of the Play.

### 2.1. Childhood, early career and full-time playwright

In every thought, action or any kind of behavior both in community or in man-to-man relationships, socio-cultural backgrounds remain with no doubt that gem which provides essence to forces that give birth to acts and reactions from human beings. The author whose play displays societal facts and which inspires insightful analysis, spent a childhood, illustrative of grass-root experiences. Fourth of six children and the oldest son, he grew up in the Hill District of Pittsburgh, a lively poor neighborhood that became the setting for most of his always-eloquent plays. He was raised by his mother, Daisy Wilson, after his father Frederick August Kittel left her and their children. The complexity of Wilson's experience of race and its bitter-related fallouts while growing up would be diversely expressed in his plays mostly in ways of comedy-drama. In fact, his mother was black, his father white and his stepfather, David Bedford, Black: a mixture of race-oriented pattern for socio-economic hardships and a target of racial threats in perspective. He soon turned to self-education, reading intensively in public library and returning to Hill District to learn from residents in order to suit inner tastes for literary endeavors. At the threshold of the Black Arts Movement, Wilson joined a group of poets, educators and artists who formed the Centre Avenue Poets Theater Workshop.

Right in fifteen years, American playwright August Wilson has become one of the most important voices in modern theater. He won acclaim from literary and theater critics for his plays, which portray the African American experience in the twentieth century, one decade at a time. Accordingly, he forwards the following heart-felt testimony:

*"In the Hill District, I was surrounded by all this highly charged, poetic vernacular which was so much part and parcel of life that I did not pay any attention to it. But in moving to St. Paul and suddenly being removed from that environment and that language, I began to hear it for the first time and recognize its value."* (New York Magazine, 1985)

Originally, poet and short story writer, Wilson's first experience with theater was not quite successful until 1968, when he and a friend started Black Horizons Theatre Company in Pittsburgh where he learned to direct plays, but still did not consider writing them. Instead, he gently put people wise about the real beginning of his own career with his work *Jitney*:

*"Before that, I could not write dialog because I did not value and respect the way that black people talked. I thought that, in order to make art out of it that, you had to change it. With Jitney, I decided I was just going to let them talk the way that they talked, and that was the beginning"* (New York Magazine, 1980)

Though he was meant to creative efforts, Wilson sought to strengthen and promote African American theatre with quite valuable initiatives. Wilson wrote many masterful plays among which *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (1984) that is about verbally abusive blues singer, her fellow Black musicians and their white manager. *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (1986), which was about lives of residents of a boardinghouse in 1911. *The Piano Lesson* (1987) that won the "Pulitzer Prize as *Fences* (1985) explores a family's ambivalence about selling an heirloom. *Two Trains Running* (1990), which takes place in a coffeehouse. *Seven Guitars* (1995) is set among a group of friends who reunite in 1948 following the death of a local blues guitarist. *King Hedley II* (1999), which as an account of an ex-con's efforts to rebuild his life in 1980.

### 2.2 Play under study: General conception and characterization.

The destitute of Europe at a given time in the world history and precisely near the turn of the century, sprang on the city with harshly tenacious claws with honest and quite burning dreams to be fulfilled. The city imposes its norms with ground-oriented realities which inspire in one way or the other, a conscious or an unconscious set of a thousand furnaces and sewing machines, a thousand butcher shops and bakers' ovens, a thousand churches and hospitals and funeral parlors and moneylenders. This made the city grow with potential ways and means to reach specific targets. Challenges were many and diverse, accompanied by new drives of opportunities and pitfalls along with time and people witnessed every single day. That new city which nourished itself with both old and new socio-cultural principles, offered each man a partnership limited only by his talent, his guide, and his willingness and capacity of hard work. The best of everyone could be measured or well appreciated in case actions in appropriate circumstances would be well identified by actors and dreams duly achieved.

Unlike, descendants of African slaves were offered no such welcome and participation. They came in and spent a life of strong hopes, eager of gentle fulfilments and searching for betterment in fields of

social stability and economic capacity to meet needs for their own sake. The city didn't book for pleasant living conditions but imposed on them to move from rags to riches in case they are meant to as they were bound to settle along riverbanks and under bridges in shallow, ramshackle houses made of sticks and tarpaper ; collect rags and wood , clean houses and wash clothes and shine shoes. Desperation contrasted with vengeful pride, reinforce their inner will in the pursuit of their own dreams which hit the bloc of socio-economic responsibilities from bread-winners who have no choice than standing to meet life with the force of dignity and whatever eloquence the heart-felt commitment could call upon.

Troy, protagonist and centerpiece around whom relationships gather is in fact husband to Rose, father to Lyons, Cory and Raynell and brother to Gabriel. Tragic-hero with excessive pride for his breadwinning role, his meager progress after long-time hard-working challenges depress him to a great extent. Yet, he often fails to provide love and support which would mean a lot to his loved ones and mostly to his own children. Quite exhausted to an uncontrollable degree, he angrily states to his son Lyons the following as a sign of despair and profound loss of hope: *"You was in the neighborhood alright, nigger. You telling me the truth there. You was in the neighborhood cause it's my payday"* also *"I'll be damned! I'll die and go to hell and play blackjack with the devil before I give you ten dollars"* (Wilson, p26).

Troy is by turns funny, provocative, inspiring and hurtful, but one thing he flexes from developing as a man is silence-keeping in front of situations which need concentration, intuition-led orientations for adequate solutions. Instead, he is very funny with brag and bluster in his speech, as well as flecks of profanity and poetry ; telling tales and busting chops with unflagging energy, at times testing the patience of Rose, Bono, and his other friends and relations.

Though he spent a rough childhood with prison sentence but still an excellent baseball player, he does play within capacities his roles of family breadwinner, bringing his wages home to his wife and other necessities. To shield his son from heartbreak, he proved resentful towards his son Cory's burning desire to become footballer. Troy refuses to help him achieve his dream of playing college football, which only pushes Cory away from him. He says with argument this:

*"I don't care where he coming from. 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 garbage"* (Wilson, p41)

Rose Maxson represents quite an emblematic character as a housewife and mostly in her shoes of mother. Relating to Rose, coupling with flowers, seeds and planting which comprise a motif that Wilson uses in *Fences* to represent nurturing, loving, kindness, and care, such qualities or attributes share common sense with Rose behaviors. She constantly proves in need of nurturing to grow or change, like love and patience and forgiveness. Rose Maxson typically exemplifies these traits of compassion in all of her relationships, especially as a parent for Raynell, the symbol of fence has a protective meaning. She craves for safety and security in ways of peacekeeping but when time happened to reveal her husband having cheated on her, extremely upset she minces no word to express her mind:

*"I done tried to be everything a wife should be. Everything a wife could be. Been married eighteen years and I got to live to see the day you tell me you been seeing another woman and done fathered a child by her. And you I ain't never wanted no half nothing in my family. My whole family is half. Everybody got fathers and mothers...my two sisters and brother. Can't hardly tell who is who. Can't never sit down and talk about Papa and Mama. It's your papa and your mama and my papa and my mama."* (Wilson, p65)

Unlike Troy, Rose is a fair judge of character. She puts her faith in her husband and son and hopes for a better future while not begrudging the stagnant present situation they are in. Rose's acceptance of Troy's illegitimate daughter, Raynell, as her own child, proves in many regards her compassion. As a natural mother, she cannot help but want to nurture and take care of the baby, knowing that he will become somebody tomorrow. Troy has lost the loving wife he once had when Rose says, *"From now on...this child got a mother. But you a womanless man"* (Wilson, p74)

Alberta, Troy's buxom lover from and Raynell' mother, died while giving birth. She symbolizes the exotic dream of Troy to escape his real life problems and live in an illusion with no time. Whereas Gabriel Maxson, Troy's brother, Gabriel was a soldier who came from the Second World War with a head injury that required a metal plate. Due to his physical damage and loyal services he rendered, Gabriel was granted checks from the government that Troy in part used to buy the Maxson's house where the play took place.

**3-Play under study: Panoramic grasp on some acts and facts.**

### 3.1 Insight into some leading ideas and signs of a lovely family

This play *Fences* genuinely written by August Wilson, takes place at the Maxson household: an urban area. Troy, the protagonist and head of the featured African American family in question in the play, connects with different characters about diverse issues in circumstances not the same, all of them help in one way or the other understand core notions. The later ones mainly illuminate about the discussion as related to fatherhood and socio-economic responsibilities with reference to political, social and economic realities of the United States of America at the time where race and recorded consequences appear in any matter linking Americans of any social rank. Friendship, family life and emotional or well-thought viewpoints dominate his connections with others and which fundamentally nourish debates around any aspect of community life as well as family-based interest to protect or discussions to lead and masterfully succeeding for common well-being.

Close friend to Troy, Bono works with him together as garbage-man and they do enjoy meeting up for a drink on payday Fridays. Led by his intuition and sense of equality, he talked to the union for his job because he thinks the African American men should be allowed to drive the trucks, just like the white men do. Toys tells Bono *"Ain't said nothing. He told me to go down the Commissioner's office next Friday. They called me down there to see them"* (Wilson, p18). Bono is worried this complaining is going to get Troy fired asserting, *"He come to me talking about... "Maxson gonna get us fired" I told him to get away from me with that. He walked away from me calling you troublemaker"* (Wilson, p18).

Like father-and-son every day jokes and opposition-like viewpoints in free discussions and which presage good mood within family, Lyons who was thirty-four years old walked one day up to Troy. The later one, immediately thought he was up to him in order to ask for money. he is there to ask for money. Lyons eventually admits that he could use ten dollars. He wittily says: *"[...] Standing there with clipboard in his hand. I ain't had to say nothing. First words come out from his mouth was... "I understand you need some furniture and can't get no credit" I like to fell over"* (Wilson, p26)

Gabe, Troy's brother who received a head injury in World War II, enters carrying a trumpet, firmly believing and even professing or preaching that he is the Archangel Gabriel offers a case of laugh and good tempered jokes Gabe mentions that he has fruits and vegetables that he has been trying to sell. He starts singing this way:

*"Yes, ma'am, I got plums  
You ask me how I sell them  
Oh ten cents apiece*

*Three for quarter  
Come and buy now  
'Cause I'm here today  
And tomorrow I'll be gone"* (Wilson, p33)

After Troy offers Gabe some food, his words of thanks was that he has seen his name in St. Peter's book, meaning he will go to heaven someday. Replying in the place of Troy, Rose tells Troy that she worries Gabe is not eating right and implies that maybe he needs to be in a mental institution, but Troy does not want to lock his brother away proving an inestimable sense of brotherhood and likewise a real sympathy social responsibilities in certain contexts as related to the case under study. Instead of working on the fence, Troy once decides to go off and listen to the baseball game, his lovely game. He intentionally leaves saying *"I'm gonna walk down to Taylors'. Listen to the ball game. I'll be back in bit. I'll work on it when I get back"* (Wilson, p36). House-keeping attitudes, fair-play behaviors, humor, patience and dialogue and love prevail among Troy, his brother, wife and sons whether they are from the same mother or not.

### 3.2 Prospects of disagreement and disdain: Cory, Troy, Rose and Maxson at Stakes

Little loggerheads start up between father and son along with other deplorable events including Maxson's unfaithfulness, Rose's trust betrayal, Cory's departure from home added to Troy's funeral. They all in a moment jeopardize life within Troy family. People lose their normal tempers, viewpoints diverge as long as interest fly away from the main to promote for a well-organized family, disagreements top over issues of consensus, hard to sink differences between members of the same family. A series of events serve as illustrations to shed light on evidence of disdain and situations of family dislocation.

There happens a time when Cory returns home from practice, and Rose instructs him to go inside and start on his chores. Troy then returns almost at the same time, apparently not having watched the baseball game, but nervously tries to hit on his wife and she rebuffs him. Troy voraciously tells Cory then *"I ain't but two seconds off you noway. The garbage sitting there overflowing...you ain't done none of chores...and you come in here talking about "Yeah" "* (Wilson, p38) Thinking that Cory needs to focus on something more realistic, such as working and other responsibilities he asks him how often he is working at the A&P. Childishly, Cory admits that he had to quit his job due to football. He declares, *"I get good grades, Pop. That's why the recruiter wants to talk with you. You got to keep up your grades to get recruited. This way I'll be going to college. I'll get a chance"* (Wilson, p41). Troy is outraged and demands that Cory get his job back. In response, Cory wonders why his father does not like him. Rose comes out and explains that Cory just wants to play football as his father did, but Troy points out

that sport did not get him anything. Troy refuses to admit that he tried to get involved too late and that times have changed since then. Rose insists that Cory just wants his dad's encouragement and love, but Troy says he does not have time for such frivolities. He needs to focus on providing food and shelter for his family; he does not have anything more to give. To these words, Rose says responds vehemently *"Times have changed from when you was young, Troy. People change. The world's changing around you and you can't even see it"* (Wilson, p44).

A friendly discussion between Bono and Troy demonstrates to a certain extent the trust betrayal Rose suffered from her husband whose socio-economic life reveals number of unbearable ups and downs. The following dialogue instructs more about the above-mentioned remark:

*"You saying I don't measure up. That's what you trying to say. I don't measure up cause I'm seeing that other gal. I know what you trying to say."* (Wilson, p61)

*"I know what Rose means to you, Troy. I'm just trying to say I don't want to you mess up."* (Idem)

*"Hell, you know me...I wasn't out there looking for nothing. You can't find a better woman than Rose. I know that. But seems like this woman just suck onto me where I can't shake her loose. I done wrestled with it, tried to throw her off me...but she just stuck on tighter. Now she's stuck on for good."* (Wilson, p62)

Troy complicates life both to himself as a bread-winner to face his responsibilities and to his wife who did her best and within capacity to make reign pride, dignity and hope in her family through sacrifices. Returning home three days later, he showed up with a newborn child in his hands. In a miscellaneous mood of despair, sorrow and apparent humility, Troy asks Rose to help him raise his daughter: unknown to Rose with her body and mind quite upset to the unbearable surprise. He demanded his wife to welcome the baby and take care of it because in his mind, the later one is innocent and more importantly, motherless. He subsequently confesses to her Rose: *"You and them boys is my family. You and them and this child is all I got in world. So I guess what I'm saying is...I'd appreciate if you'd help me take care of her"* (Wilson, p74). Still with compassion and heart-felt sentiment of God's plan for the sake of the newly born baby Rose takes pity on the child, agrees to help take care of her, but makes it clear that their relationship as husband and wife is over once for all.

The meddling behaviors of Troy towards his own family and the unstable life he lives impact negatively on both his kids, friends and wife Rose who couldn't bear anymore nonsensical attitudes from him. Disregards become frequent in opposition to familiar jokes and dialogue which. The following statements

from Troy serve as illustrations to the above mentioned disgraceful insanities from Troy towards Cory his own son as it is the case here:

*"You got to get by where? This is my house. Bought and paid for in full. Took me fifteen years. And if you wanna go in my house and I'm sitting on the steps...you say excuse me. Like your mama taught you"* (Wilson, p78).

*"I ain't asked if you are scared of me. I asked you if you was fixing to walk over top of me in my own house? That's is a question. You ain't gonna say excuse me? You just gonna walk over top of me?"* (Wilson, p79).

Disagreements become higher and higher after Troy's death. Even after the sad news Cory confesses directly to his mother that he is not going to attend the funerals of his father. Subtlety he says to Rose *"Mama...I got something to tell you. I don't know how to tell you this...but I've got to tell you...I'm not going to Papa's funeral"* (Wilson, p86). Rose convinces him to come to good mood which better stands to reason. Amazing that Troy's own kids could rejoice of their father's death or at least directly or indirectly hide something which maybe guessed through facts and actions. In a very comic and disastrous way, Gabriel whispers to Rose *"Hey, Rose. It's time. It's time to tell St. Peter to open the gates. Troy, you ready? You ready, Troy. I'm gonna tell St. Peter to open the gates. You get ready now"* (Wilson, p89).

#### **4- FENCES: Explorations and insightful analysis.**

##### **4.1 Some explorations and critical analysis**

For black communities to meet pressing needs in such an environment of harsh socio-economic upheavals, Troy Maxson's story, an African American father and husband who feels as desperate need to provide for his family represents a living illustration in appreciating the situation under study. Struggling towards this target his sense of responsibility could be noticed as follows: *"It's my job. It's my responsibility! You understand that? A man got to take care of his family. [...] I owe a responsibility to you! Let get it straight right here...before it go along any further"* (Wilson, p 43). Browsing across several years and touching certain key moments in the history of the Maxson's family, Troy the head of the family and a hardworking garbage man, makes a decent living in many ways, feels he has been cheated out of the more glamorous life by bigotry and specific circumstances.

Yet, his intrinsic feelings, pains and mostly regrets, have troubled connections with his two sons Lyons and Cory. Things get especially heated when he lacks jobs and life became quite hectic and tremendous along with challenges to meet. In an ironic twist, Troy prevents Cory from accepting a football scholarship because the garbage collector does not want to see his son let down by the same society that refused to let the older man play professional baseball. Troy diligently

instructs Rose about this discouraged and revengeful sentiment when he says: “[...] *you the only decent thing that ever happened to me. I wish him that. But I don't wish him a thing else from my life. I decided seventeen years ago that boy wasn't getting involved in no sports. Not after what they did to me in the sports*” (Wilson, p44).

Troy's relationship with Rose, Cory's mother appears as a complicated one with fits and starts, coupled with consequences related to Troy's own father's failure in meeting appropriately his kids' needs along their childhood. At the start of the play as it could be easily noticed, Troy and Rose happen to enjoy happy life together with plenty of hopes from Rose side and uncertainty with Troy who simply shows up with idle life as his childhood instills in his mind. Each new scene between the two reveals cracks about their living in unison in well-organized family, crowned by their marriage where each one has to play his / her responsibilities. When Troy finds comfort in the arms of another woman, he seizes the opportunity to the fullest with havocs as drawbacks on the whole family with jeopardy on cohesion, fair-play and heart-felt behaviors for unity and well-being. When Troy reaches out with women he even argues as support or a right to act as such: “*It's just...she gives me a different idea...a different understanding about myself. I can step out of this house and get away from the pressures and problems...be a different man*” (Wilson, p65). His persisting mistakes have drastic impacts on his family and, he and Rose begin to drift apart as years drag on with their own life-experiences. However, crisis could offer family chances to rebuild themselves and actually make peace with their past, prove conscious about the present and plan the future with hope and confidence. Troy and Rose didn't succeed in meeting such a high ranked degree of love, humility and passion for their own sake.

#### 4.2 Troy and his father with Maxon and his sons.

The case of familiar connection between Troy and his father remains a special one with significant impacts on the whole life of Troy, from childhood to adulthood and more precisely along with his unfulfilled responsibilities. The hatred he nourished towards his father naturally acts as a catalyst at frequent moments in Troy's life, more negatively. Unlike most fathers, Troy's father did not leave him with material possessions but instead left him with emotional baggage that crippled the early and later parts of Troy's life. From the beginning, Troy's father was abusive to his mother and all of his siblings. Troy and his family worked hard on their father's farm and endured his bitterness towards being a sharecropper. Troy stated that his father was greedy and would put his own personal needs above the needs of the family.

This in turn, caused Troy's mother to leave him without love from a parent or anymore to show him the correct way to treat females, a sin that affects his

relationship with Rose as an adult and a supposed responsible man. His father's treatment made Troy believe there was no more to his suffering than what was humanly possible. He consciously or unconsciously states that in this excerpt: “*The gal jumped and run off...and when my daddy turned to face me, I would see why the devil had never come to get him...cause he was the devil himself*” (Wilson, p54). This metaphoric picture used by Troy to describe that abominable marital life adds a certain weight of gravity to his situation as teenager. In his eyes, his father was not just cruel but was the devil or the symbol of pure hate and all evil. In fact, the way Troy's father treated him could cause him to run away from home at young age and would force to steal and rob like homeless boys use to do, with boys. Troy describes his own father as a kind of man that would eat two chickens and leave you wings and crumbs to grab.

The socio-economic responsibilities under study in *Fences* written by Wilson expose in fact failure and related consequences African-Americans display in accordance with their sense of bread-winners and degree of consciousness. Being called father and not responding accordingly to responsibilities towards both kids and wife, discredit not only your own family, your living environment but yourself. This certainly lead to understand the street-life their kids live, of grasp a good knowledge about why of black boys and girls hustle to survive with forbidden activities like drug traffic, robbery, burglary and so forth. Troy represents in many regards a living example of this description because right after he has been sent off from his father's house, he spent most of his time hustling on the streets until going to jail for robbery and murder attempt. Troy did live in these conditions and realized that not taking care of one's children could seriously harm children's lives as a whole and their future in particular. He profusely means this when he argues “*sometimes I wish I had not known my daddy. He ain't [Sic] care nothing about no kids. A kid to him wasn't nothing. All he wanted was for you to learn how to walk so he could starts you to working*” (Wilson, p52).

That standpoint brings about figuring out the ways how Troy's father takes care of his children and the way Troy does to his. Troy's father earns salary which is already good for a bread-winner to face some socio-economic challenges. Yet, he spends most of his time spending his money on eating chickens while his children are starving to death at home. Unlike whites' kids who were restricted to social regulations which granted societal well manners to the later ones, African-American kids suffered the opposite. They were doomed to back up with nature and their living environment, catch up with realities of the ground hopelessly clawed in the wings of fleeting destiny for success, but rather with limitless failure.

#### 4.3. Brutal yield between Cory and his father

A good deal of knowledge is plainly shared with readers with sense of moral and ethical lesson in the epigraph of the play *Fences*, genuinely written by August Wilson. Deciphering from the permanent duality of good and evil, he asserts that we do not have to act out the sins of our fathers and adds that it is possible to banish them with forgiveness: a universal reality that not only reinforces our soul and spirit but assures peaceful man-to-man relationships. Wilson provides this piece of advice:

*“When the sins of our fathers visit us.  
We do not have to play host.  
We can banish them with forgiveness.  
As God, in His Largeness and Laws”* (Wilson, p11)

Though Troy may not have forgiven his father, after he marries Rose, he does act on the sins of his father. Troy's father did not directly teach or instill any positive traits to him, instead Troy adopted them in order to forge himself differently and strive to live a better life. Troy did learn and admire the sense of hard work from his father. Within capacity, he takes care of his family because he is fully aware that it counts among those responsible things to do no matter what may stand on the way of good bread-winners way to prevent them from meeting challenges. Troy's father did not care about his children and his wife but Troy does his best for Cory and Rose though difficulties prove frequent and means are not in hands as expected.

Troy and Cory develop difficult relationship just as it stated above because they do not cherish the same vision of life. Troy wants to protect his son from the bitterness he underwent during his youth but do not prove conscious that time has changed and, things should go another way run. It is agreeable to see a father protecting his kids but he does not have to be harsh and abusive as Troy has a always done to his son. By all means, Rose tries turn him to another facet of attitude but unsuccessfully. She freely put him wise about the new drive on things in these words: *“Times have changed since you was playing baseball, Troy. That was before the war. Times changed a lot since then”* (Wilson, p22). Thus, his good intentions were darkened since he failed to meet the burning dream which animate his soul and body because segregation and discrimination stand as cornerstones to fulfill the main about his inner professional motivation. Challenging his father about his lack of support concerning his will to become professional football player, Cory declares:...*“just because you didn't have a chance. You just scared I'm gonna [sic] be better than you, that's all”* (op. cit., p5).

However, Troy takes care of his family as he could because he is quite obligated to, not because he yields any particular affection to them but duties call him upon. He explains this to his son Cory with word full of sensitive meanings:

*“You live in my house...sleep you behind bedclothes...fill your belly up with my food...cause you my son. You my flesh and blood [sic]. Not because I like you! Cause it is my duty to take care of you. I owe a responsibility to you”* (Wilson, p43).

In the shoes of Cory, Troy is creating rivalry between the two, refusing to allow him to play football out of a jealous impulse. Maybe because he could be better than he was at sports. Still harboring the abiding bitterness regarding his athletic career, he feels like attending to Cory's best interests to pull him from the football team and more specifically to sign the recruitment paper His mind was to keep Cory from the same bitter experience of his. This insistent conflict between father and son depicts part of rivalry and part of insistent paternal care. Yet, Troy's failure to communicate love and kindness by the means of daily dialogue to his son, leads Cory to see only the side of rivalry but not the care his father takes and the shelter he offers or provides. It is quite well a mixture of positive and negative sentiments about will or determination. Troy's inability yield affection or softness toward his son could gravely be noticed when to the question *why don't you like me?”* from Cory, he vehemently and wickedly replies: *“Liked you? Who the hell say I got to like you? What law is there say I got to like you? Wanna stand up in my face and ask a damn fool-ass question like that. Talking about liking somebody”* (Wilson, p42).

#### 4.4. Lyons' offenseless reactions towards Troy

Between Troy and Lyons, tempers assure more confidence and a kind of partnership or friendship compared to Cory and their father. As matter of fact, Lyons has spent most of his childhood in absence of Troy. In fact, Troy was in jail and Lyons did grow up without his father near him to take care. Such a context or circumstance helps understand why Lyons and his father show at least an apparent connection for the sake of familiar peace and love atmosphere to prevail between members of the same household. Troy reveals his case of imprisonment as follows *“[...] When he shot me I jumped at him with my knife. They told me I killed him and they put me in the penitentiary and locked me up for fifteen years”* (Wilson, p55).

Yet, The they do have a rough discussion only once when Troy came to ask for a loan of ten dollars from his father on his payday. Like always because known for such reactions, shouts out saying to Lyons that he is broke. With hesitating and urged up by his reaction, Lyons replies by telling to him that he did not know nothing about how he was raised. In a tough and exhausted tongue Lyons adds: *“I come up to see you...ask for ten dollars and you want to talk about how I was raised. You don't know nothing about how I was raised”* (Wilson, p29). As Troy did not have the chance to be near his son during his childhood, he surely doesn't acquire the reflex to assist his kids morally

and/or financially. To a certain extent Troy reacts sometimes like his father even though each character holds his parent's responsibility differently, I mostly mean father and son.

Lyons, Troy's son from a previous relationship was born when Troy was still homeless. Because Lyons's mother moved on to another man while Troy was in prison, Troy has never been that father of Lyons who happens to take care and mind businesses for the sake of his family. All that Troy contributes to Lyons's life is the occasional ten dollars that the later on comes to bum on his payday. Even so, Troy revengefully tells Lyons "Don't you come around my house on my payday" (Wilson, p56). Nevertheless, Lyons does not seem wretched anymore by none of his real father's misbehaviors. He just accepts things as they appear and seizes right the good side of everything to weave on with life with due respect to his father. Lyons and Troy do not have regular father and son relationship and as usual to his way of viewing things, Troy does not support at all Lyons's dreams of becoming a musician. With full disdain to respond to his son he voices the part as follows "I don't like that Chinese music. All that noise" (Wilson, p51). One of the main failures of Troy as a man, father and more importantly bread-winner, remains his non-interest in the choice of his sons' professional leads. For, he definitely lacks to lend adequate support to his kids, with pieces of advice as leading orientations towards success.

## CONCLUSION

Released black slaves and blacks who were supposed to be free from bondage which was set up and dutifully nourished by the institution of slavery, need to face their own lives in light of rights been granted to them on equal grounds with whites. Meeting the challenge of putting down roots, fundamentally based on a well-organized family, requires from them a series of moral values like, creed, determination, courage, anticipation and a good sense of responsibility. The 1950's America exposes undeniable realities which could be turned as both handicaps and opportunities, depending on capacities to face socio-economic responsibilities by whites as well blacks who, in their turn find it as a hard nut to crack: duly taking care on one's family as the potential source of development and success. Revealing the story of some generations within a black-American family on how they have passed on legacy of morals, mores, attitudes and patterns in line with what both fatherhood and fulfilling socio-economic responsibilities towards one's kids mean for society and a whole nation, the play *Fences* of August Wilson highlights the case of Troy's family with a father to be discarded or honored.

Born to a sharecropper father who was highly frustrated by the fact that every crop took him further into debt, serious worries and sorrows but coupled with socio-economic hardships, Troy Maxson took over

from him down to his own family as whole. Because his own father knew himself as a failure, he took it out on everyone at hand including his own and young son Troy and his wives. Meeting family needs with fits and starts, and abandoned for his own sake by both sons and wives, Troy nevertheless learns from his father not only violence but also the value of work and the fact that a man takes responsibility for his family no matter how difficult circumstances may be. He learns respect for a home, the importance of owing land, and the real value of an education because he doesn't have one. Yet, members of the family accept or refute principles for living through the manner in which they choose to live their own lives.

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