

# Free fences by august wilson essay example

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## **Character Analysis of Troy Maxon in “Fences” by August Wilson**

August Wilson wrote the drama *Fences* in 1983, in which he explores the life of the Maxon's family. Troy Maxon is the protagonist through which Wilson portrays the struggles of the black American people who yearn for justice and fair treatment during the 1950's. Troy also is representative of the black males in that era, who are reluctant to recognize and accept social change. All the characters in the play are African Americans who must live through the trials and tribulations that exist during the time before the civil rights movement. The main character Troy Maxon is a talented baseball player who never had a chance to further his skill and become a professional at the game. Troy's last name signifies the divide between two opposing ideas. He lives between the two divides, one full of hope and one full of disappointment. The previous life of dread that he experienced at the hand of his father will ultimately cost him the close relationship that he struggled to have with his family.

Troy Maxon is like the tragic hero. His tragic flaw was that he could not accept that things were different from his childhood days and he kept on believing that he could not amount to much in a world where whites progressed and blacks were discriminated against. He did not see himself in a new and changing world where he could love and be shown love. Maxon works for the sanitation department and is disgruntled over the fact that no black man drove the garbage trucks, only whites. He complains “Why you got the white man driving and the colored lifting?” (Wilson p. 9). Troy embarks on a self destructive journey and does not see any advancement

because he is black. He allows no one to get close to him and even loses his best friend Bono because of his selfish ways.

Troy selfishly lives in a cocoon and expects all the people around him to live their lives through him. He ruins his son's life by preventing him from gaining a basketball scholarship. He did this because he thought that all whites were racist and would not let his son play. He honestly was trying to spare him the hurt he went through but he did not realize that the times had changed. He thought that they were still living in an era when blacks had no privilege. He stubbornly refused that the world was changing. Troy honestly tries to do his best but his speech and his actions often come off as cold and callous. His admirable qualities cannot be discounted in the way he took care of his family. He is also a genuine friend as seen in the relationship with Bono, however his unchanging ways interferes with the relationship. His family only realized upon his death that this was truly a caring man but he did not know how to show it.

The major theme in Wilson's book is " the coming of age in the life of the black man." This theme is brought out through events in the major character's life. Troy left home after the horrible treatment he received from his father. The only trait he picked up was the responsible attitude of his father who single handedly took care of eleven children. Troy's relationship is reflective of the relationship with his father. His father had one good characteristic which he adopted, and that was his sense of responsibility toward his family. He provides for his family but he could not give them the love that they need from him as a father and husband. Wilson paints the character of Troy as a tragic hero but there are lessons that can be learnt

from this black man. Discrimination caused Troy to lose the opportunity of succeeding at his life's goal. He also tried to make his family happy but his refusal to let go of the past stood in his way.

## **Reference**

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