

Anna S. Blumenthal

"More Stories Than the Devil Got Sinners": Troy's Stories in August Wilson's *Fences*

Wilson's 1986 Pulitzer Prize-winning play "Fences," set in 1957, centers on the character of Troy, the Pittsburgh garbage man and former Negro-League ball player to whom the other characters react and to whom the male characters often compare themselves. Troy, married to Rose for seventeen years, and father to the unemployed Lyons and to Cory, a would-be college football player, relentlessly lectures about family obligations to his sons. Both the play's central conflicts, Troy's betrayal of his wife Rose, and his refusal to allow Cory to accept a college football scholarship, turn on the issue of responsibility (Fishman), showing the play's title, "Fences," to be clearly suggestive of the issue of limits or boundaries, which the playwright explores from a variety of angles. What does a man owe to his family, and how much can a man, especially a black man in pre-civil rights America, permit himself