

LESSON NOTE ON LITERATURE-IN-ENGLISH WEEK 5

SUBJECT: Literature-in-English
TOPIC: Non-African Drama “Fences” by August Wilson (II)
CLASS: SS2
WEEK: 5

THEMES

1. Freedom versus Protection: Rose seeks to build a fence to keep the world out of their lives; Rose's desire for a fence symbolizes the way in which she seems to protect her family, keep the family in and the world out. It is a symbol of protection; the fence on the other hand does not protect Troy but instead keeps him from achieving his ultimate desire for individuality and freedom to do as he pleases.

2. Betrayal: almost every character in the play was betrayed by Troy. He betrayed his wife Rose and their marriage (Rose had given him her entire being and he used her), by cheating on her with Alberta, when Rose finds out, she is angry and felt betrayed that he loved another woman. He betrayed Gabriel by signing for him to be locked up in a mental institution and practically took half of Gabs money.

3. Responsibility: Troy is a man who takes seriously the responsibility of his family. He takes care of his family, providing a home and giving all his pay to his wife. His seriousness also becomes his greatest liability. Troy's sense of responsibility comes from his own father's bitter care for him and his siblings. Furthermore, the pressure he places on himself and everyone around, to behave responsibly drives him to unquestionable acts. Ultimately, Troy becomes his own father.

4. Deception: there are a number of significant deceptions in the play. Cory lies to Troy about quitting the football team and keeping his job, when Troy demands that Cory choose the job over the football team, Cory outwardly agreed but secretly stayed in the team and quits his job. Troy discovers this deception and retaliates by going to the coach and forbidding Cory to play football. Another significant deception is in Troy's relationship with his mistress. He lied to Bono early in the play about the nature of his relationship and hides it from his wife as well. He also

CHARACTERS AND THEIR ROLES

1. Troy Maxson:

Role: Troy is a hard-working, middle-aged family man; he has a commanding presence and a big personality. He is the main character, protagonist of the play; works for the sanitization department as a garbage collector. He is the husband to Rose, father to Lyons, Cory, Raynell and brother to Gabriel. He is a responsible family breadwinner bringing his wages to his wife. To shield his son from heartbreak, he refuses to help him achieve his dream of playing college football due to his past experience. He is a tragic hero, his past mistakes and failures greatly influence his outlook on life and relationship with sons. He died of heartbreak.

2. Cory Maxson: teenage son of Troy and Rose Maxson, a senior in high school. Cory gets good grades in school which shows he is smart. He is a respectful son, a compassionate nephew to his disabled Uncle Gabriel. He is a giving and enthusiastic person, an ambitious young man and determined to achieve his dream. Cory comes of age during the course of the play when he challenges and confronts his father and leaves home.

3. Rose Maxson: Rose is Troy's second wife, whom he married after being released from prison. She is the mother of his second child Cory. She is an African-American housewife ever dutiful. Rose is a loving and supportive wife. She does everything she can to make her husband happy. He request that Troy and Cory build a fence in their small, dirty backyard comes to represent her desire to keep her lived ones close to her love. She has high hopes for her son Cory and sides with him in his wish to play football. After Troy cheats on her, she is broken because she has given all and made sacrifices as his wife.

4. Jim Bono: Jim is Troy's friend, co-worker and drinking partner. The two men met in prison where Troy learns to play baseball, they work together as garbage collectors, throughout the play, Bono tries to steer Troy away from the seductive Alberta, but Troy ignores him.

Symbols used by the playwright

Baseball

Fence

Raynell's garden

Trains

Mr death, etc.

ASSIGNMENT

1. How does Troy's past affects his future?
2. Is Troy a tragic hero, a villain or a combination of these types? Explain