



Jim Crow Laws and Postcolonial America: Colonial Continuity in August Wilson's *Fences*

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Abstract

The discrimination exercised based on the color of one's skin is the cornerstone of apartheid, as Nelson Mandela accurately characterized the system as a "crime against humanity". Every individual is born a social being who can reach his/her fullest development only through interaction with his/her fellows. The denial of any point of this social bond between two individuals brings disintegration with it. A primary symptom of this denial is 'racial' prejudice. The problem in human society, even in modern times, is the failure to establish the human ties on the basis of the integrity of individuality of the self, which allows only one alternative: the adoption of attitudes that seek to justify this failure. 'Racial' prejudice or the adoption of classified hostilities is one of the methods of trying to satisfy or complete the constellation of needs springing from this failure. In this paper, August Wilson's play *Fences* has been dealt with as the primary text, and reviews on the play have been used as the source of data for the purpose. The play has been studied so far as the presentation of hostility between the two races, Whites and Blacks. His emphasis on the need

for cultural reclamation, resistance, and psychological liberation offers a powerful framework for analyzing the enduring legacy of segregation and the ongoing fight for racial justice in a so-called post-slavery American society. This paper argues that racial prejudice and racial segregation are prevalent even after the declaration of emancipation and civil rights ensured in the constitution in postcolonial America, which hinders the development of humanity to its fullest. The concept of fences built as social barriers is relevant in societies where discrimination is still in practice after the declarations made and legal provisions promulgated against the discrimination that is practiced on the basis of race, caste, gender, or any other form.

Keywords: Capitalism, prejudice, racism, segregation, slavery-

Introduction

August Wilson's *Fences* is a powerful and deeply moving play that explores the complexities of African American life in the 1950s. The play centers on Troy Maxson, a former Negro League baseball player, who struggles to navigate the shifting social and familial dynamics of his time. Through

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Troy's personal battles— with racism, regret, and his role as a husband and father—Wilson sheds light on the larger issues faced by African Americans in a racially segregated society.

At its core, *Fences* is a story about literal and emotional barriers that individuals build to protect themselves or keep others out. The fence Troy builds in his backyard becomes a powerful symbol throughout the play, representing both division and connection. Wilson's lyrical dialogue and richly developed characters reveal the deep emotional struggles beneath the surface of everyday life. By examining the impact of racial injustice on personal identity and family relationships, the play offers a poignant reflection on responsibility, legacy, and the desire for dignity in the face of limitation.

Jim Crow, derived from a demeaning caricature to characterize dim-witted buffoons, was used to represent African Americans which had become a pejorative epithet by the late 1830s in the US that rationalized the denial of equity and access as the heart of racial segregation. The practice of racial discrimination is a social construct and a recent one in human history, especially between Whites and Blacks in the US and Africa, because racial prejudice is so deeply embedded in that society. It did not emerge until the early days of capitalism when the institution of chattel slavery was introduced. The merchant capitalists of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries needed massive quantities of labor power in the New World – more than they could get from just utilizing white indentured servants or from the indigenous populations of the Americas brought from Europe. These days, the concept of race has taken on a political stance, and racism is understood as 'racial hate' or 'racial prejudice' as Doug Jenness argues, "The myth of a black race that is inferior was developed to rationalize the institution of enslavement of blacks from Africa" (304).

Here, for Jenness, the concept that blacks are inferior beings is a construction of the Whites to rule over them in different facets of their lives.

The concept of race was introduced in America when the White settlers required a workforce for their development projects. First, the Indians (the indigenous people) and then the Blacks were enslaved in America. The Whites justified this slave system on the basis that Blacks and Indians were not Christians and that they were infidels. One of the big tasks of the Christian world was to convert the non-Christian people to Christianity, thereby integrating them into and making them part of the Western Christian world. This ideological rationalization did not stand the test of time because, as Indians and Blacks became Christians, it could no longer justify keeping them in bondage. A more insidious and long-lasting edifice was built in its place: the concept of race. The blacks were identified as a biologically inferior race, one naturally suited to slave labor. A whole different set of behavioral patterns was assigned to Blacks, such as temperament or ability to withstand hard work and heat that suited them to slave labor.

The emerging capitalist class needed a rationalization that made the Blacks not only temporarily inferior but also inferior for generations to come. Skin color was the physical characteristic singled out to brand an entire part of the human race. It made it hard for the blacks to escape from the captivity of their owners. In this regard, Jenness again claims, "Everyone in society knew that if you had black skin, you were a slave, or could be enslaved" (306). In this instance, Jenness illustrates that the Blacks were considered to be slaves to their masters. They did not have their own identity. The Blacks could only be identified through their masters' or owners' will.

The capitalists, the White politicians, the preachers, and even the academics rallied their efforts behind this justification.

After Charles Darwin presented the theory of natural selection for the evolution of species in 1859 – a gigantic conquest in scientific thinking – a raft of (so-called) scientists were brought in to give the notion of racial inferiority even in a 'scientific' veneer. This spurious effort attempted to prove that it was through natural selection and evolution that the Blacks were closer to the apes in the evolutionary chain and, therefore, they argued, the Blacks were inferior to the Whites.

'Jim Crow' is a system of racial segregation and discrimination that was practiced during the heyday of the Industrial Revolution and still exists in the United States, primarily in the South, from the late nineteenth century until the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. These social practices became the customs that enforced the racial hierarchy by denying Black Americans equal rights in education, housing, employment, and public facilities. Rooted in White supremacy, Jim Crow laws were upheld by both legal rulings and violent intimidation, including lynchings and voter suppression. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 are supposed to have dismantled these oppressive policies. However, their legacy continues to shape American society even today, in an invisible way, as the caste system prevails in Hindu society.

It was believed that the Negroes should learn how to do hand-labor jobs well in order to support themselves as free men. As the young generation did not want farming and the older generation did not know anything other than farming, they planted cotton in the rented land of the landowners. In this way, the condition of the Negroes after their emancipation was not truly good. They were subjected to "Jim Crow" by the Whites, creating certain Jim Crow Laws that they had to obey. The laws were enforced upon them to put them in a lowly position. The World Book Encyclopedia (1981) defined "Jim Crow" as:

Jim Crow refers to practices, institutions, or laws that result from or support segregation of Negroes from Whites. The term came into use in the 1880s and originally referred to a Negro character in an old song. In the 1820s it was the name of a popular dance. *Jim Crow Laws* in certain states required the separation of races in public places. But several Supreme Court decisions in the 1950s and 1960s, and the Civil Rights Acts passed by Congress in 1964, made most of these laws invalid. (103-4)

The Negroes had to fight for an extended period to put an end to the practice of the system. The Jim Crow, therefore, still exists in some way or another to date despite the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The invasion of civil liberties, though, prevails in different forms in American society, and the Negro culture has yet to rise up to its fullest strength. August Wilson shows this situation of Black Americans in "Fences". The drama was written by a playwright directly involved in the Black Power Movement of the 1960s. Wilson had not only seen but also suffered the evils of the system.

The system was in practice against African Americans in America for ages. It is the central issue of inquiry and struggle against it in Wilson's *Fences*, As Dhungel quotes:

Giving the example from street crime, Stuart Hall comments that journalists reproduce the racist assumption that street crime is the work of young Black men. This type of comment from the media evokes the feelings of the public. They form the general idea that all Black youths are criminal in nature. This leads the judges to justify harsher sentences. The police activity increases into the areas where young Black men live. (34)

The Whites in America blamed the Blacks for whatever crime took place there, and Black Americans were regarded as if every Blackman was a criminal by birth. Despite

the anger of the Southern Democrats, Truman issued an executive order barring discrimination in federal employment, ordered equal treatment in the armed forces, and appointed a committee to work for an end to military segregation. Although the last military restrictions ended during the Korean War, Jim Crow laws prevailed until 1964. Howard Cincotta expresses this kind of idea in the following lines:

More than one million black soldiers fought in World War II, but those who came from the South could not vote. Blacks who tried to register faced the likelihood of beatings, loss of job, loss of credit, or eviction from their land. Lynchings still occurred, and Jim Crow laws enforced segregation of the races in the street cars, trains, hotels, restaurants, hospitals, recreational facilities, and employment. (99)

August Wilson's "Fences" characterizes the peculiar nature of Jim Crow that existed at that time against African-American lives. The invasion of their civil liberties was a result of the Jim Crow system spread everywhere. The principle of segregation by race in the North was minimal, though it existed in every area of Southern life. Any area that was not legally segregated was segregated by customs and practices. In the words of Ira Peck:

These laws kept the white and Negro races separated as much as possible. Negroes were kept out of "white" schools, parks, theaters, hotels, and eating places. They had to sit in separate sections in trains and buses In some cases, Jim Crow separation was a custom rather than the law. Negroes and whites went to separate churches, even when they were of the same religion. Negro and white doctors, lawyers, and teachers rarely meet together, either. (11)

Faced with pervasive discrimination, many African Americans supported the program. Booker T. Washington, the most prominent

Black leader of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, counseled them to focus on modest economic goals and to accept temporary social discrimination.

Others, led by the African-American intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois, wanted to challenge segregation through political action. However, with the complicity of two major parties, calls for racial justice attracted little support, and segregationist laws remained common in the South well up to the second half of the twentieth century. Many sectors of Black American lives were segregated from the Whites. Wilson shows the separation of the races in his play "Fences." The fence is used as a symbol of separation between Black and White people. As Regmi opines, "From a critical point of view, 'Fences' can have plural meanings according to post-structural / post-modern understanding. Troy Maxson's life is full of several fences. He is surrounded by several fences during his life like a dog is surrounded by the flies" (323). The 'Fences' in Troy Maxson's life can be interpreted in three ways: 1) the White people who do not promote him easily, 2) his poverty that hinders his progress, and 3) his sons, who never assist him in household and other activities. The main argument of this article is that even though these kinds of problems are faced by several people in their lives, it is a political case that happened that colonialism was practiced against the colored Americans even after colonialism was over.

Postcolonial Theory as a Critical Approach

Postcolonial theory, while traditionally applied to nations emerging from colonial rule, is equally relevant to studying racial segregation in the United States after the Emancipation Proclamation, particularly in understanding the persistence of systemic inequalities and cultural marginalization. Although slavery was formally abolished and African Americans were legally declared free, postcolonial theory helps

reveal how racial hierarchies, economic disenfranchisement, and social exclusion continued to operate under new forms of control, such as Jim Crow laws and institutionalized segregation. These structures maintained the dominance of white culture and suppressed Black voices, echoing colonial dynamics of power and resistance. By examining the psychological and societal consequences of this ongoing racial oppression, postcolonial theory highlights how African Americans were forced to navigate a "post-emancipation" reality that was still shaped by the ideologies of white supremacy and cultural imperialism.

According to Leela Gandhi, "Postcolonial Study is mainly the study of relationships of the dominance of the colonizers and the pain of subordination of the colonized and long history of colonial consequences" (3). In this context, Edward Said has argued that colonization is a fate with lasting, indeed grotesquely unfair, results (Representing 207). According to Said, the colonial aftermath does not yield the end of colonialism; as Jean-Francois Lyotard has argued, "... it is both possible and necessary to break with tradition and institute absolutely new ways of living and thinking" (90). Gandhi highlights, "... the postcolonial dream of discontinuity is ultimately vulnerable to the infections of the residue of its own unconsidered and unresolved past" (7).

According to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the postcolonial study has blossomed into the garden where the marginal can speak and be spoken, even spoken for" (Outside 56). The postcolonial theory supports other revolutionary and political theories as Gandhi asserts, "Feminism and postcolonial theory alike began with an attempt to simply invert prevailing hierarchies of gender/culture/race, and they have each progressively welcomed the poststructuralist invitation to refuse the binary oppositions upon which

patriarchal/colonial authority constructs itself" (83). "Colonialist ideology is based on the colonizers' assumption of their own superiority, which they constructed with the alleged inferiority of native (Indigenous) people" (Kandel 115). He adds that post-colonial writing "... resists colonialism's oppressive ideology by depicting the misdeeds of the colonizers, the suffering of the colonized, or the detrimental effects of colonialism on the colonized" (116). Homi K. Bhaba adds in this context, "As the aftermath of colonialism, undergoing of cross-currents of fantasy and phobia of colonial power, the person feels. ... displacement, guilt, aggressivity" (169). The consciousness of self, according to Franz Fanon, "is not the closing of a door to communication- National consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the anything that will give us an international dimension" (199). The Black Americans were treated as the subalterns in their own homeland as Spivak asserts, "Women, as the people regard those of inferior rank, she asked, "Is there an "unpresentable subaltern class that can know and speak itself" (Spivak, Can the Subaltern 285). Therefore, the main objective of postcolonial theory is, according to Benita Parry, "... the constitution of politically conscious, unified, revolutionary Self, standing in unmitigated opposition to the oppressor" (30) that has been practiced in different novels written after the end of the Great Wars.

This paper is based on Frantz Fanon's idea, in particular, that explores the psychological and cultural effects of colonial domination on the oppressed, particularly the internalization of inferiority and the struggle for identity under racist systems. His concept of the "colonized mind" is crucial to understanding how African Americans under Jim Crow laws were subjected not only to legal and physical segregation but also to a deep sense of dehumanization and alienation. Fanon argues: "There is a zone of nonbeing, an extraordinarily sterile and

arid region, an utterly naked declivity where an authentic upheaval can be born. In most cases, the black man lacks the advantage of being able to accomplish this descent into a real hell" (10). The Whites in America designed the social barriers in such a way that the Blacks would not be even permitted to go to the same hell as that of the Whites. The Black Americans are forced to develop their mentality in such a way, according to Fanon, "In spite of this, it is apparent... that the effective dis-alienation of the black man entails an immediate recognition of social and economic realities. If there is an inferiority complex, it is the outcome of a double process: -primarily, economic; -subsequently, the internalization-or, better, the epidermalization--of this inferiority" (12-13). Fanon, thus, explains that the colonial subjects are often forced to see themselves through the eyes of the colonizer, mirroring the experience of African Americans who, even after emancipation, were still defined and constrained by white supremacist structures.

Wilson's *Fences*: Critical Analysis ***Jim Crow and Wilson's *Fences****

Despite the anger of the Southern Democrats, Truman issued an executive order barring discrimination in federal employment, ordered equal treatment in the armed forces, and appointed a committee to work to end military segregation. Faced with pervasive discrimination, many African Americans supported the program of Booker T. Washington, the most prominent Black leader of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, who counseled them to focus on modest economic goals and to accept temporary social discrimination. led by the African-American intellectual W.E.B. Du Bois, wanted to challenge segregation through political action. However, with the complicity of two major parties, calls for racial justice attracted little support, and segregationist laws remained common in the South well up to the second half of the

twentieth century. Many sectors in Black American lives were segregated from the Whites. Wilson shows the separation of the races in his play *Fences*. The fence is used as a symbol of separation between Black and White people.

August Wilson wrote his plays to exhibit the condition of African Americans in America, and *Fences* is no exception. The events in the play were the real ones that the Black community faced in the 1950s, and *Fences* has the setting of 1957, when most of the play's actions occur. The last scene is set in 1965, and nothing happens except the funeral of the main character, Troy Maxson. The playwright shows the characters' segregated and unequal conditions, mainly in Act One, starting right from the beginning of the scene. The Jim Crow practices at that time treated African Americans unequally to whites when America faced many efforts and struggles. The struggle finally succeeded in the 1960s through different Acts and decisions made by Congress and the Supreme Court. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was a significant achievement for African Americans that made most of the Jim Crow Laws invalid. The time of the play recalls the miseries of the Blacks a few decades ago, and the new generation had hopes of equality with the Whites for their bright future.

The play's first conversation between Troy and Bono depicts the characters' sufferings due to Jim Crow. Troy is telling the truth but Bono refuses to believe such a minor thing that a Negro, their co-worker had tried to hide a watermelon as he was afraid the White man will see him carry it home.

BONO: Troy, you ought to stop that lying!

TROY: I ain't lying! The nigger had a watermelon this big.

He indicates with his hands.

Talking about.... "What watermelon, Mr. Rand?" I liked to fell out! "What watermelon, Mr.

Rand?"....And it sitting there big as life.

BONO: What did Mr. Rand say?

TROY: Ain't said nothing, Figure if the nigger too dumb to know he carrying a watermelon, he wasn't gonna get much sense out of him. Trying to hide that great big old watermelon under his coat. Afraid to let the white man see him carry it home. (Act one, Scene one)

This implies that the White man embarrass the Negro even to eat a watermelon as was done in caricature, drawings and minstrel shows, where the Negroes were depicted as lazy, child-like people who enjoyed nothing more than eating watermelons all day or stealing watermelons for pleasure. Minstrel shows were the plays that were the most popular form of American entertainment, which portrayed stereotypical Blacks played by White men with blackened faces (White Face Black Mask).

They change the topic of their talk to Troy's complaint to Mr. Rand, his boss. He asked Mr. Rand why he gives the Blacks only the job of lifting the garbage and the Whites the job of driving the truck, since everybody can drive a truck, even though they are not allowed to drive. Troy is not satisfied with his job as a garbage collector and wants to drive the truck, but there are not any Negroes driving trucks. They are the victims of the system.

TROY: I ain't worried about them firing me. They gonna fire me cause I asked a question? That's all I did. I went to Mr. Rand and asked him, "Why? why you got the white men driving and the colored lifting?" Told him, "what's the matter, don't I count? You think only white fellows got sense enough to drive a truck. That ain't no paper job! Hell, anybody can drive a truck. How come you got all whites driving and the colored lifting?" He told

me "take it to the union." Well, hell, that's what I done! Now they wanna come up with this pack of lies. (Act one, Scene one)

Troy wants to end the segregation between the Blacks and Whites in their job and finally achieves success as he becomes the first colored driver to drive the garbage truck. This implies the Negroes' gradual uprising from their inferior status due to Jim Crow. They talk about different topics of their concern. Rose talks of Cory being recruited by a college football team. However, Troy has a different opinion:

TROY: I told that boy about that football stuff. The white man ain't gonna let him get nowhere with that football. 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. (Act one, Scene one)

He is afraid that the White man will not let him play football, even though he has been recruited. Troy cannot recognize the change in time even though he gets promoted to become the first colored driver because he was so profoundly shocked by the White men, who had not allowed him play baseball in the Major Leagues despite his ability to play excellently or he cannot believe that the change in time is going to provide the Black players with equal status, though there are lots of colored boys playing baseball and football, their status is different.

TROY: Selkirk! That's it! Man batting 269, understand? 269, what kind of sense that make? I was hitting, 432 with thirty-seven home runs! Man batting. 269 and playing right field for the Yankees!

ROSE: They got a lot of colored baseball players now. Jackie Robinson was the first. Folks

had to wait for Jackie Robinson.

TROY: I done seen a hundred niggers play baseball better than Jackie Robinson. Hell, I know some teams Jackie Robinson couldn't even make! What you talking about Jackie Robinson. Jackie Robinson wasn't nobody. I'm talking about if you could play ball then they ought to have let you play. Don't care what color you were. (Act one, Scene one)

Troy tries to show the pitiable condition of the family of the Black players, but White players are living in a good position, even though they are not as qualified as the Blacks. He stresses that the inclusion of only a few players will not simply do anything or much because there are many good Negro baseball players who are not getting chance to play in the Major Leagues. Their conversation progresses, and Troy's elder son, Lyons, comes to borrow money from Troy. Troy talks of the time fifteen years ago when he was in need of some furniture but could not get any credit even if he was working every day.

At that time, Cory had no bed and was sleeping on a pile of rags on the floor. Troy refers to the White man as the devil, who is dressed in good clothes and stands bigger than life for him. Troy lies about how he still pays for the furniture he bought because he does not want to give money to Lyons, who does not work but wants to be a musician in the clubs. Lyons tells Troy that he will repay the money to Troy when his wife Bonnie gets her payment from the hospital where she has got a job in the laundry. Troy gets angry to hear "Bonnie working" and asks:

TROY: What that mean to me?" Bonnie working." I don't care if she working. Go ask her for the ten dollars if she working. Talking about "Bonnie working." Why ain't you working?

LYONS: Aw, Pop, you know I can't find no decent job. Where am I

gonna get a job at? You know I can't get no job.

TROY: I told you I know some people down there. I can get you on the rubbish if you want to work. I told you that the last time you came by here asking me for something. (Act one, scene one)

This conversation explains that the old generation that served the White community and earned a living by working wants the new generation to work whatever kind of work is offered to them, but the young generation has developed a sense of resistance, even if they fall short of money and suffer.

LYONS: Naw, Pop ... thanks. That ain't for me. I don't wanna be carrying nobody's rubbish. I don't wanna be punching nobody's time clock.

TROY: What's the matter, you too good to carry people's rubbish? Where you think that ten dollars you talking about come from? I'm just supposed to haul people's rubbish and give my money to you cause you too lazy to work. You too lazy to work and wanna know why you ain't got what I got. (Act one, Scene one)

It shows that the older generation of Black people have internalized the segregation and they have adopted it as a part of life because they needed a job, however degrading it was. In an arena of conflict and struggle by Negroes where Jim Crow is deep rooted, it is difficult to find a decent job by the African Americans. Despite the growing challenges and aspirations, the young generation either has to accept the jobs the Whites do not want to do or remain idle. The play has signaled that Troy and Bono do not have the kind of job they like and the remuneration is not appropriate to the nature of the job. The young generation finds it challenging to bear themselves in a segregated position at the choice of their jobs as Lyons cannot find a decent job and does not want to work in

the rubbish.

The result is that he has to ask his father for money frequently and depends on his wife's salary. This may be the cause of his bad relationship with his wife a few years later, which ends in a split-up that he tells to Cory on Troy's funeral day in 1965. It is evident that neither Cory could make his career in football nor Lyons in music. The group dynamics justify that the Negroes seize their will to go restaurants where they are neglected and instead gather together to play numbers.

Although Rose and Lyons are very interested in spending money in numbers, Troy sees it as foolish to throw away the money that way. Rose defends by saying how she gets money when she is able to hit the numbers. Troy is against her argument and says if he had all the money the Negroes throw away on numbers for one week, just one week; he would be a rich man. An example is how the game helped Pope buy him a restaurant, which seems to attract Rose to gamble. Troy argues:

TROY: I can't stand niggers like that. Man ain't had two dimes to rub together. He walking around with his shoes all run over bumming money for cigarettes. All right. Got lucky there and hit the numbers. . .

ROSE: Troy, I know all about it.

TROY: Had good sense, I'll say that for him. He ain't throwed his money away. I seen niggers hit the numbers and go through two thousand dollars in four days. Man bought him that restaurant down there ... fixed it up real nice ... and then didn't want nobody to come in it! A Negro go in there and can't get no kind of service. . . . Ain't done nothing but make a worser-fool out of him than he was before.
(Act one, Scene two)

Troy's remark shows that the Negroes are discriminated from the Whites in restaurants which belong to their own race other than

Whites. He is really upset that the poor Negroes spend their money in numbers and if they get lucky occasionally then even the benefit is not for their people but for the Whites. The limited opportunities and options available to Negroes has pushed them back further and segregated in many ways.

Colonial Oppression in Postcolonial America

Jim Crow, in the play, surrounds Gabriel, who was injured in World War II and has a metal plate in his head. He had fought for his nation and lost his half-sanity. However, his contributions are not well recognized, as he is frequently arrested by the police and set free when they pay them. He had received a lousy sum of three thousand dollars for his maintenance by the government. History has examples of Jim Crow treatment against Black Americans who were segregated in the military services even during World War II, and Gabriel is an example in the play to prove this, as Troy remarks:

TROY: Don't nobody wanna be locked up, Rose. What you wanna lock him up for? Man go over there and fight the war. . . messin around with them Japs, get half his head blown off. . . and they give him a lousy three thousand dollars. And I had to swoop down on that. (Act one, Scene two)

The poverty due to Jim Crow has raised more troubles within the family structure of the Negroes. Among other fences (problems) of the Maxson family, an inability to raise two hundred dollars to buy a TV seems to hurt. Their life status, even within the circle of the Negroes could not have been met by Troy while some of their friends of Cory already have a TV. The priorities to repair the roof and build a fence around the yard are far ahead of considering other recreational facilities in the Maxson family. The following conversation illustrates their status of living at that time:

CORY: Hey, Pop...why don't you buy a TV?

TROY: What I want with a TV? What I want one of them for?

CORY: Everybody got one. Earl, Ba Bra ...Jesse!

TROY: I ain't asked you who had one. I say what I want with one?

CORY: You can watch it. They have lots of things on TV, baseball games and everything. We could watch the World Series.

People desire to enjoy the facilities that other people enjoy, and they want to have the luxury fixed in their homes; however, what causes obstruction in installing even a TV is money that does not come from nowhere.

TROY: Two hundred dollar, huh?

CORY: That ain't that much, Pop.

TROY: Naw, it's just two hundred dollars. See that roof you got over your head at night? Let me tell you something about that roof. It's been over ten years since that roof was last tarred. See now . . . the snow come this winter and sit up there on that roof like it is...and it's gonna seep inside. . . it's gonna be leaking all over the house. Then the wood rot from all that water and you gonna need a whole new roof. Now, how much you think it cost to get that roof tarred?

New electronic gadgets are costly in the beginning, as they cost a good amount of money to have them, sometimes more expensive than a substantial property or shelter one can add or build with that amount of money. There is a gap between the generations that the older generation wants to spend money on substantial property or something that saves their life, while the younger generation, however, has a desire to have an experience of the new innovations. Choosing between the roof over your head and a TV screen is an important matter.

CORY: I don't know.

TROY: Two hundred and sixty-four dollars...cash money. While you thinking about a TV, I got to be thinking about the roof. . . and whatever else go wrong around here. Now if you had two hundred dollars, what would you do...fix the roof or buy a TV?

CORY: I'd buy a TV. Then when the roof started to leak. . . then it needed fixing ...I'd fix it.

TROY: Where are you gonna get the money from? You done spent it for a TV. You gonna sit up and watch the water run all over your brand new TV. (Act one, Scene three)

Wilson has attempted to exhibit the actual condition of the Negroes of that time. It depicts that the income was very low, which was insufficient for them to cope with the growing needs of the generation. Troy is unable to fulfill his son's wants and desires. Their house is in poor condition and has not been tarred for over ten years. Troy would not have been able to buy the home only from his income without the money Gabriel received from the government for his maintenance.

The next issue in the play is focused on games and players on the team. The professional players earned their living and prestige at that time; therefore, Troy himself devotes his career in baseball. The Jim Crow fence keeps him from his ambition again, so Troy does not want his son to get involved in sports. Troy cannot understand the change in time, which finally leads him to go to the school and tell the coach that Cory cannot play football anymore. He also asks him to tell the recruiter not to come. It is implied that Troy wants Cory to lift some of the financial burden on the family by working at the A&P rather than getting involved in a profession with bleak prospects.

Cory stresses the opportunity in sports as a career, while Troy talks of discrimination between the colored and the Whites in the major leagues. Troy says that

the colored players need to be twice as good as the Whites to play in the major leagues, and even then they do not get equal chances to play the game. The following dialogue between Troy and Cory enhances the same concern:

CORY: The Pirates won today. That makes five in a row.

TROY: I ain't thinking about the Pirates. Got an all-white team. Got that boy That Puerto Rican boy ... Clement. Don't even half-play him. That boy could be something if they give him a chance. Play him one day and sit him on the bench the next.

CORY: He gets a lot of chances to play.

TROY: I'm talking about playing regular. Playing every day so you can get your timing. That's what I'm talking about. (Act one, scene three)

There are fences regarding the Black players. The Whites are given ample chances to play the game, even if one gets recruited to the team. Firstly, Black players shall have to be twice as good as a White player to get recruited, and Blacks are kept as the spare players.

CORY: They got some white guys on the team that don't play every day. You can't play everybody at the same time.

TROY: If they got a white fellow sitting on the bench. . . you can bet your last dollar he can't play! The colored guy got to be twice as good before he get on the team. That's why I don't want you to get all tied up in them sports. Man on the team and what it get him? They got colored on the team and don't use them. Same as not having them. All them teams the same. (Act one, Scene three)

These are the primary reasons Troy does not allow his son to play football. There is

also another problem that stands as a barrier against Cory, and that is their 'poverty.' The discrimination and poverty of the Negroes are the two sides of a coin. They are discriminated against in every aspect that causes poverty, and their poverty causes them to be unequal to the Whites.

The characters in the play are poor because they are not given equal status jobs as the Whites. This is the major factor that motivates Troy not to let Cory play football, as he needs to work after school. If Troy had enough money to provide for his family, then there would be no need for Cory to work, and he would be able to play football even if sports were not his career. However, to make a living, Cory must work. In order to back up Cory's interest in football, Rose insists that Troy sign the paper, considering that an honor.

ROSE: He ain't talking about making no living playing football. It's just something the boys in school do. They gonna send a recruiter by to talk to you. He'll tell you he ain't talking about making no living playing football. It's an honor to be recruited. (Act one, Scene one)

Troy does not see the recruitment as an honor and wants his son not to be involved in sports where the White men can come and take away his dream to be a successful player and earn a good living. He wants Cory to do some good job besides hauling people's garbage, as he says, when Cory asks him to talk to the recruiter coming from North Carolina, to get sign the Permission papers:

TROY: 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's garbage. (Act one, Scene three)

Troy repeatedly forces Cory to get a job because he does not want Cory to be like him or to get hurt by playing sports. He had decided seventeen years ago that Cory would not be involved in sports when he was not allowed to play in the major leagues despite his ability, because he just was not the White color.

Rose is conscious of the changes in time, people, and the world, and asks Troy to cope with the changes from when he was young. Troy cannot see a slight change because he is illiterate and uneducated. This is another problem that affected the lives of African Americans at that time. Troy was deeply victimized by the Whites in sports; being uneducated, he failed to cope with the times. The lack of education and poverty due to Jim Crow are the causes of the relative backwardness of Black people, which affects Cory's generation as well. He is restricted by Troy's decision from joining the sports team and becoming a player. Although Troy has no intention of sending Gabriel to the mental hospital, Rose argues that she has seen the paper where he signed. Troy refuses to confess that he had signed the papers to send Gabriel to the hospital. When the police arrest Gabriel for disturbing the peace, he signs the paper, thinking it to be the release form.

TROY: I told you I ain't signed nothing, woman! The only thing I signed was the release form. Hell, I can't read, I don't know what they had on that paper! I ain't signed nothing about sending Gabe away. (Act two, Scene two)

The curse of illiteracy, poverty, and the perception of Whites against African Americans in social, economic, educational, and political life has hindered

their development. The play in itself is a vivid portrayal of the Jim Crow condition of the African Americans of that time. The playwright has shown the gradual uprising perception of Negroes in the younger generation.

August Wilson has subtly yet powerfully portrayed the persistent effects of Jim Crow practices through the life of Troy Maxson, whose experiences reflect the limited opportunities and systematic racism faced by African Americans in mid-20th-century America. Though slavery has ended and the right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness declared, Troy's inability to advance in professional sports due to racial barriers and his struggle for promotion in his job as a garbage collector illustrate how Jim Crow laws and attitudes continued in practice to shape Black lives, confining the African Americans to the margins of society, denying them equal access to economic mobility and social respect.

Conclusion

The Blacks are treated with contempt and hatred by the Whites. The prejudiced and biased Whites always try to impose their mastery over the Blacks, treating them as slaves all the time. Blacks are doomed to bear inhuman treatment even if their labor is valued as important for the survival and development of Whites. Blacks never get the same treatment as fellow human beings from Whites. Thus, Blacks have experienced exploitation, oppression, and violence. Due to these offensive manners, the relationship between the Blacks and the Whites has become bitter and disharmonious, which has ultimately led to inter-racial hostility. On the other hand, economically improved and richer Blacks have started to feel superior to the poor Blacks. In this way, a sense of hatred and prejudice within the Blacks has led to a state of split within the Blacks themselves. The most dangerous thing that has happened in America is that, gradually, intra-racial hostility among Blacks has been

developing, and more affluent and forward Blacks practice Jim Crow against the poorer and less fortunate Blacks. The practice of Jim Crow is prevalent in different names and different forms in other societies as well, which has been an obstacle to the development of a just human society.

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