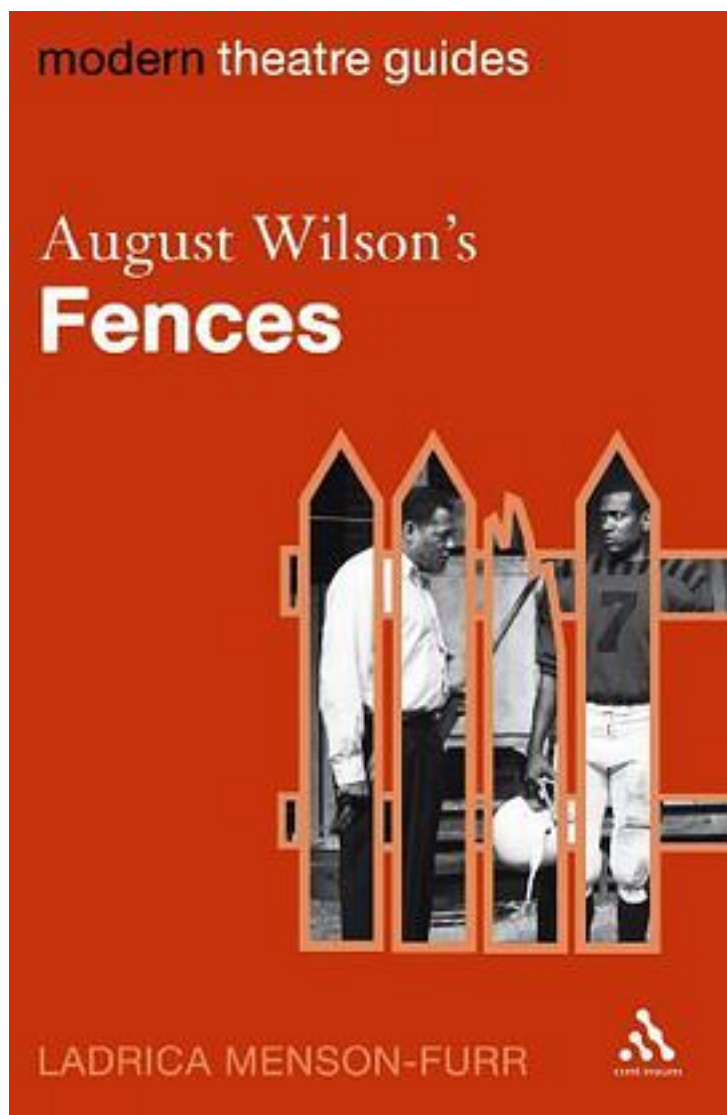


August Wilson's Fences



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This title provides a guide to the political and historical context of the 1950s and to the African American cultural context. August Wilson is generally acknowledged to be the most respected African American playwright. His cycle of plays spanning the decades of the twentieth century have been profoundly influential in the American theatre, and highly acclaimed. "Fences" represents the decade of the 1950s and when it premiered in 1985 it won the Pulitzer Prize. Set during the beginnings of the civil rights movement, it also concerns generational change and renewal, ending with a celebration of the life of its protagonist, even though it takes place at his funeral. Critics and scholars have lauded August Wilson's work for its universality and its ability, especially in "Fences", to transcend racial barriers and earned him the titles of "America's greatest playwright" and "African American Shakespeare." The guide provides a comprehensive critical introduction to "Fences", giving students an overview of the background and context including detailed analysis of the play including its structure, style and characters; analysis of key production issues and choices; overview of the performance history from the first performances in 1985 to more recent productions; and an annotated guide to further reading highlighting key critical approaches. "Continuum Modern Theatre Guides" offer concise, accessible and informed introductions to the key plays of modern times. Each book is carefully structured to offer a systematic study of the play in its biographical, historical, social and political context, an in-depth study of the text, an overview of the work's production history including screen adaptations, and practical work-shopping exercises. They also include a timeline and suggestions for further reading which highlight key critical approaches. This will enable students to develop their understanding of playwrights and theatre-makers, as well as inspiring them to broaden their studies.

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