CHAPTER – V

CONCLUSION
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Wilson’s plays are a landmark in the American theatre because of their themes and techniques as he has incorporated in his plays. He is a key playwright to show the direction to the black playwrights. While talking about the themes and techniques, he is inimitable in the sense that he has searched out a new cultural dynamics of the African American ethnic group. Hence, it can be said that he is one of the key artists to explore the social, economic and cultural consciousness of the African Americans. In this connection Harry J. Elam Jr. states, “August Wilson stands out as one of the prominent playwrights in contemporary American theatre. He has changed the face of American theatre, and his emergence has enabled other black writers to follow”.

Thus, the contribution of August Wilson in the American theatre and literature is unavoidable.

The polemics of Wilson regarding the theatrical experiments is pivotal in the development of the African American theatre. His dramaturgy to some extent is able to avoid the social, economic and cultural turmoil that was there in the minds of African Americans. He is multidimensional and multidirectional force in the African American dramatic tradition. The intellectual and artistic use of history, memory, ritual and time-space is experimental in the African American theatre. At the outset in the 1980s, contemporary African American dramatists followed his dramaturgy. In this connection, Mario MacClinton rightly observes, “(A) lot of black writers had door opened to them basically because August Wilson knocked them out .... American theatre now looks towards African Americans as visible members”.

The dramaturgy of Wilson is not developed in an air-conditioned atmosphere. The graphics of his life is full of ups and downds. He was the
victim of cultural dilemma. These things are reflected in his plays, as he has used theatre as a weapon against racist practices. John Lahar has rightly pointed out, “[H]is plays are not text books; they paint the big picture indirectly from the little incident of life”.³ It seems that the events and stories Wilson has selected to write dramas are real life experiences of himself and the people of his race. Hence, the sense and sensibility of Wilson’s plays are quite penetrating and momentous.

Wilson has written ten-play cycle, each play is a record of African Americans experiences of each decade of the twentieth century. In fact, he did not decide it with intention to write such planned cycle. In the process of writing, he decided what he wanted to write was a kind of logical sequence. Hence, he decided to write everything in accordance with a logical sequence. Wilson States:

Somewhere along the way it dawned on me that, I was writing one play for each decade. Once I became conscious of that, I realized I was trying to focus on what I felt were the important issues confronting Black Americans for that decade, so ultimately they could stand as a record of Black experiences over the past hundred years presented in the form of dramatic literature.⁴

The specialty of August Wilson is that he operated the Black issues with logical sequence. Therefore, his plays are the collection of events and experiences in the form of dramatic art.

Wilson dramatizes the prejudiced images of the Blacks, like babies and children. They were the slaves, so the property and possession of the white masters. They were subhuman being and did not have their own time but it was the time of the white masters. They were inanimate things
and property of their masters, which could be used and sold as per the will of their masters. In due course of time, the situation is being changed. “The Black time”\textsuperscript{5} would come soon. Time is a suggestive device of Wilsonian dramaturgy. He indirectly suggests the connection between race and time, “[F]or Wilson there is also a particular relationship between race and time and ways in which time becomes racialized in his plays.”\textsuperscript{6} Wilsonian dramaturgy appeals to the Black community that they should wait for their own time. He argued that every race has its own time, now the time of the Black race would come in American and they would get the social, economic and cultural recognition and glorification by other races in the future time.

The social turmoil of the blacks in the past like slavery, poverty and racism brought on the forefront by using the technique as to bring past memories into the present. The memory of the past event initially affected dramatic presentation of Wilson. In addition to this, Wilson strongly propagated the past suppression of the African Americans to transform it into collective memory of them. Harry J. Elam, Jr., writes:

Like Frantz Fanon’s concept of “Sociogeny” outlined in \textit{Back Skin, White Masks} ilson’s dramaturgy demonstrates that the cultural – current social conditions and past oppression – can have an impact on the psychological trauma, the social disease eating at the fabric of black Americans lives. Cultural healing as well as cultural reclamation are critical objectives in Wilson’s dramaturgical project.\textsuperscript{7}

Wilson is critical many issues regarding the Black life. He dramatizes the social, culture and psychological healing of the Blacks. Frantz Fanon is
crucial critic of postcolonial life and condition of the Blacks. He has outlined the social stagnation and many problems of the blacks through his prose work. However, the same thing has been presented through the dramatic art by Wilson.

Memories of the past stored in the blues are significant part of Wilsonian dramaturgy. Memories about past political events, struggles, sufferings and people are artistically and musically incorporated in blues. Blues, for Wilson is an important tool and code to connect the past with the present. The journey of Wilson’s life is a journey from ignorance to the enlightenment. Therefore, he himself is a witness to many social events and predicaments of the African Americans. Hence, his own memory is a pivotal source in his dramatic art. “As he recalls stories, people and memories from his past, in effect he situates himself as a character within his African American cycle.”

The foremost feature of Wilsonian dramaturgy is that he links his own past struggle and experiences with the present through his plays. His struggles and experiences are his collective memories of the past. “.... Wilson’s cycle is a site for reworking his own memories that have both personal and political consequence in the present.” As stated earlier, the music, especially, ‘blues’ is main source of Wilson because expression of black culture is stored in blues. The blacks did not have the rights to express their ideas, feelings, faiths and convictions openly in stagnant white social order. Therefore, they have developed their music to express their cultural consciousness. In this connection It is rightly commented on Wilsonian dramaturgy:

“The music is the messages,” the blues in Wilson’s plays become a space of collective cultural memory, an element in both form and contract, a
conduit for connecting past to present....In Wilson’s dramaturgy the recuperation, the recognition, the reaffirmation of song is critical to reintegrating African Americans with their African past, with their spiritual and cultural roots.\textsuperscript{10}

Music is a code to connect the African Americans with their glorious culture and tradition. They are not rootless, but the whites have uprooted them. However, their culture is still alive in the form of the black music. Wilson has rightly understood the key significance of music and considered it to explore and reestablish the victimized culture through the means of playwriting and theatrical art.

Most of the ideas for Wilson’s plays came from images, snippets of conversation, or lyrics from blues songs captured by his every vigilant writer’s eye and ear. Virtually all of his characters end up singing the blues to show their feelings at key moments during his plays.\textsuperscript{11}

Many characters in Wilson’s plays express their feeling through blues, instead of expressing it through the-day-today language. Wilson has turned musical form of African Americans’ for the theatre by using different dramatic techniques and tricks.

Carrying history from generation to generation is key aspect of tribal culture of the Africans. In many African tribes God \textit{means} their ancestors, they remember and worship the adventurous and glorious deeds of their ancestors. They believe that ancestors secure them from the sky; these beliefs lead them to pray and worship their forefathers. The act of story telling is developed through these beliefs of the Africans. The old man of African tribal family is a source of stories and myths about their
ancestry. These ancestral beliefs and faiths are taught to the child of African tribal family. Although, the African Americans were captured and sold on an auction block in America, they were enforced to accept Christian religion and culture. However, they couldn’t forget their cultural ancestry. It has been kept alive by the art of story telling. “The convention of story telling is critical to Wilson’s dramaturgy, with characters repeatedly speaking their history as they and we consider its meaning within their current circumstances.” Wilson skillfully operated the art of storytelling in his dramaturgy.

In Alex Haley’s *Roots*, the character Kunta Kinte was captured and taken to American as a slave at his early age. Though he was enforced to accept Christen culture, religion and language, he did not forget the art of story telling which was taught to him by the old man of his African family. The oral tradition and ancestry of his African family was handed over to the next generation by the art of story telling. In postmodern age subaltern studies is significant in Humanities and Social Sciences wherein the tools of research are folklore, art of story telling and myths. Many subaltern historians take the support of genealogy to discover the fact about the different ethnic groups around the world. This genealogical study leads genealogists to the roots of the various customs and beliefs of different tribes.

Wilson is well known about the oral history of the African Americans incorporated in art of story telling. He uses the tools like folklores, music, customs, and belief to develop his dramaturgy.

The Black writers and historians have been using folklores, blues, spirituals, swings and Jazz to create history and literature. The performances of different shows, dances and caricatures are important in this oral tradition. Alex Haley’s *Roots* is suggestive instance in this
connection. Haley has studied the basic African culture in the form of oral history. He visited different ethnic tribes of Africa and finally discovered the roots of his Kunta Kinte family. Similarly, Wilson uses the oral history in the forms of music and story telling to develop the plot of his plays. He takes into consideration the past events in tortured life of the African Americans to create the canvas of his plays.

At the outset of the discourse to discover the history and culture, white’s written documents were facts and for Blacks oral tradition of music was a reality of their life. As far as Wilson is concerned, he is a coordinator between oral and written tradition of the blacks. Alan Nadel’s argument is considerable in this context. He argues, “[I]f reality is an authorized for black Americans by performance and for white Americans by text, Wilson’s plays, as both text and performance, mediate between the site of dominant discourse and the practices of black American life.”

Although, in the year 1863 the African Americans got freedom from slavery, they were not liberated from the racist prejudices of the whites. Freedom for the African Americans was a new lease of life; however, they were treated and discriminated as subhuman beings. Wilson says, “Blacks are still treated as marginal human beings.” The social, economic, political and cultural turmoil was yet not clear. At the outset of such predicament, they had started migration from the South to the North for the sake of a new lease of life. However, the North was not their homeland but a foreign land. When they migrated to the North, they were ignorant about the northern culture, religion and political freedom. In addition to this, there were separate ghettos for African Americans. These ghettos were the centers of dirt, muck and waste. Hence, Wilson believes that the North was not their homeland but a foreign land. It is observed that, “Wilson reinterprets the northern movement of Black and
(W) rights African American history by positing African Americans not as “migrants” to the North but as “foreigners in a strong land.”

Rituals are pivotal peculiarity of Wilsonian dramaturgy. Wilson’s rituals function as both ending and beginning in uniting the past and present in a particular African American cosmology. To understand the beliefs and faiths of African Americans, we have to consider them as African as well as American. They believe in their root that is “Yoruba” culture in Africa and simultaneously were forced to accept Christian faiths and African consciousness. Having accepted the cross-cultural encounters by the African Americans, “Wilson sees his own root within the Black Power Movement of the 1960s.” Although, there is cross-cultural encounter and hybridity in African American ethnic group, the question of self-identity is yet fundamental in the dramaturgy of August Wilson. Hence, the Black Power Movement of the 1960s is reflected in Wilson’s some of the plays.

Juba is a kind of dance that is performed to praise the God by African Americans. However, Juba is being worked at two levels: it praised to Christian God [Which is enforced on them] as well as the African God that is their root. ‘Juba’ is significant tool of Wilson’s art of playwriting and performance. Through the performances of ‘Juba’, Wilson’s characters are equipped and enlightened to re-imagine their social, economic and cultural loss and at the same time, they have searched out a new hope of survival of their culture, religion and God. Juba for Wilson is a weapon for theatrical presentation wherein audience is appealed to realize the oppressed voice of the Blacks. Harry J. Elam, Jr., states:

[T]he Juba, a dance performed by African Americans in post slavery times to praise their
adopted Christian God through movements, gestures, rhythms that still hearkened back to African roots and forms of religious observances. Wilson’s meticulous stage direction reinforce the African origins of these Afro-Christian rites.\textsuperscript{19}

Any culture in the world is a by-product of different beliefs and faiths. Accepting many values and codes of conduct, culture becomes rich and multidimensional. As far as African Americans are concerned, they are the result of African heritage as well as Christian faith. At the outset of their arrival as slaves in American, they were forced to accept their master’s language, faiths, beliefs and religion. In fact, that is superficial culturalization of these new people. As a result of this artificial culturalization, they were found in dilemma that is the dilemma of their identity, culture and civilization. The acceptance of God and culture of their masters is responsible for that. Their masters have created discrimination; the God and Church of their masters were different and their own Church and God were different. Naturally they spiritually and emotionally go away from the attachment of their masters’ religion. In addition to this, Black Muslims in American are the product of such dilemma; their radical black nationalism is a result of the discrimination of culture and religion of the white Americans.

African American culture has always involved adoption, appropriation, and hybridity. Consequently, questions of authenticity, purity and ownership are particularly complex and at times contradictory. Culture is always in process, always multidirectional, always about positioning. Culture
is not simply a static set of shared beliefs and customs inherited by people of the same ethnicity. Black Nationalists believe that Christianity is responsible for the loss of their selfhood and identity. Hence, the cultural beliefs regarding any ethnic group across the world are not static. In due course of time, it changes into new religious values and beliefs. One ethnic group dominates another to force them to follow their political, social and religious ideology. For instance the White Americans have created an ideology that black race is a marginal race. Therefore, they should serve the white people, and to support this ideology, they take support of Christian myths. In addition to this, they systematically propagated it in the minds and psyche of the African Americans. Wilson is aware about these foolish myth-making policies of the Whites to create their hegemony over the black race.

Wilson is an artist rather than an ideologue. It is genuine fact that the African Americans are the victims of the Whites’ supremacy and hegemony. However, he believes that the pain and anguish of them should not be presented in the form of destruction. Their protest should be presented in artistic manner throughout the writings and arts. Wilsonian art of characterization does not lose the sense of humanity though his characters are humiliated largely by the established White social order. The plights of the Blacks should be painted artistically rather than in overt fashion in literature. Therefore, it would be easy to pass the message of both sides, the exploiters as well as of the exploited. It is a kind of negotiation between them. Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin are the true artists in this sense. They have presented the pains, suffering and anguish of the blacks artistically rather than in the form of protest.
Wilson, too, as an artist and playwright has tried to great extent to transcend this tradition of writings and arts in his dramaturgy.

Wilson, on the other hand, produces plays in predominantly white theatres and receives positive reception from White critics and audiences. Wilson’s work like black music is multidirectional marked by race, culture and historic context, yet able to negotiate barriers of skin, nationality and language.21

Wilson is a spokesperson of race, poverty and exploitations of the African Americans. However, he has the recognition from the White critics and producers and this is nothing but the result of his own artistic genius. Wilson says:

I would think the white members of the audiences can appreciate my plays because the specifics and the social manners of the characters, while they may be different, can certainly be recognized as part of human conduct and endeavor.22

The white critics and producers accept Wilson because the dynamics he has established as a playwright is absolutely creative and outstanding. He talks about the ideal codes and conducts of human behaviour.

The base of racist practices in American is the color of skin. To support these practices the Whites have created mythology that the Black race is born because of the sin of their ancestors. Hence, they are the creation of the God for the service of the white race. After the enlightenment through the ‘Black Power Movement,’ the African Americans specially the Black Muslims have thrown the imposed and prejudiced Christian beliefs and faiths. They believe that the Black race is
superior, independent and glorious because it is the first race on the earth and all other races are the creation of this. However, the cruel imperialists and feudalists have destroyed it for the sake of human exploitation. In addition to this, they have destroyed glorious language, identity, culture and religion of the Blacks. Hence, to achieve this glorious identity as being the Black, they have activated the Black Power and the Black art movements. The discourse of these movements is to explore the vernacular languages, dialects, names and beliefs. Wilson’s plays are the result of this discourse. He considers vernacular dialect, linguistic structure of language, native beliefs and faiths to develop his dramatic art. Wilson has given attention to the rhythm, logic, linguistic structure of the Black language and dialects to develop the impact of his plays.

Using the mad characters in the plays is paramount characteristic of Wilsonian dramaturgy. These characters are used to highlight the effects of victimization through slavery and other predicaments of the African Americans. They become mad because Whites have inflicted different social, economic and cultural burdens on them. Therefore, it is necessary to understand how Wilson uses these characters to reconnect the lost cultural and spiritual beliefs of the African Americans. The madness plays pivotal and foremost role in his plays. To reconnect spiritual experiences of the past with the present he transforms their agitation and dilemma into the spiritual and cultural harmony.

Wilson himself functions with a kind of creative madness that renegotiates the meaning of the African American past and the madness of race. His theatre calls for a cultural healing of the disease present within social fabric of America. Madmen and children, fools and babes who exist
on the margins of society hold a “key to the mountain” through their special access to God. The social fabric of the American society is based on racism and the Blacks are heavily victimized by it. The Blacks are marginalized on the grounds of culture, economy and politics. The result of this suppression is racial madness of the Blacks. In the process of modern culture and civilization, they are deliberately kept aside from the main stream of society. Hence, they are not as developed as other ethnic groups in America. Wilsonian art of characterization is leading step to point out such cultural and racial madness of the African Americans. In addition to this, Wilson uses theatre as a weapon to present such psychological oppression of the Blacks.

Theatre is an ancient form of artistic performance which entertains and enlightens people among the various cultures and civilizations across the globe. The Greek, African and Indian theatres are the oldest theatres in the world. Although, the American Theatre is not too ancient, it is outstanding on the forefront across the world in order to explore art and culture. Today in the U.S.A., various ethnic groups like European Americans, Spanish Americans, Latin Americans, Indian Americans, African Americans and Native Americans (Red Indians) live together under the ideology of American Nationalism. The American Theatre is a product of Americanization of multicultural myths, rituals, religions, beliefs and faiths.

August Wilson is an outstanding and genuine playwright of the 1980s and his ten-play cycle is remarkable phenomenon in the African American Theatre and literature. He has written ten plays which are called the ten play cycle or Pittsburgh cycle or the century cycle because each of his
play records the social, economic and cultural experiences of the African Americans chronologically about the each decade of the 20th century.

*Gem of the Ocean* is the first play in Wilson’s ten-play cycle which explores the social, economic and cultural milieu of the 1900s African American life. Spiritual salvation of the African Americans is central aspect of *Gem of the Ocean.* Citizen Barlow a key figure in the play has migrated to purify his soul with the help of 287 years old Aunt Ester who is African American soul washer. Barlow wants to purify his soul because he has committed a sin. He stole a bucket of nails, however, instead of he, Garret Brown was victimized. Hence Aunt Ester suggests him magical journey of “City of the Bones” in order to wash his soul. Wilson presents the myths and African American rituals through the present play. *Gem of the Ocean* is a metaphor for the boat which was used to bring slaves in America. City of the Bones was made by the bones of the slaves who died during their journey from Africa to America. In addition to this, *Gem of the Ocean* explores migration, racism, complex men- women relationship, poverty and predicaments of the 1900s African Americans.

*Joe Turner’s Come and Gone* is second instalment in Wilson’s ten play cycle which highlights the African American social, economic and cultural milieu of the 1910s. The play contains mythical and supernatural applications in order to present the African American rituals and culture. Bynum is an African American conjure man who symbolizes the African traditional religion and a vehicle to carry the cultural legacy and heritage of the African Americans. Moreover, Herald Loomis’ wife Martha Pentecost represents the tenets of Christianity; her name Pentecost symbolizes the Christian religion.

In order to connect past with the present, Wilson uses “Bone People” as a metaphor for ancestors of the African Americans. The
ancestors have died in the ocean when they were brought to America as
slaves. Herald Loomis’ vision during his Juba dance leads him to watch
“Bone People”.

Racism is also explored throughout the play because Herald
Loomis is a direct victim of racism. Many characters in the play suffer
from poverty and plight for settlement.

Wilson’s third play, in his ten-play cycle, is Ma Rainey’s Black
Bottom which explores racism in musical industry of the 1920s. Ma
Rainey is a central character of the play who is the victim of white
producers and managers. Although, Ma Rainey is genius blues musician,
the white producers do not give respect and due honour to her. They only
want to use her like a prostitute in order to promote their business.
Sturdyant, the white producer does not consider her as a mother of the
blues because of her black colour. Ma Rainey, Toledo, Cutler and Slow
Drag are the victims of racism in musical industry dominated by the
white producers. The major conflict of the play starts when Levee, Ma
Rainey’s band member, compromises to make changes in the structure of
blues. On the other hand, Ma Rainey preserves the originality of the blues
to respect legacy and heritage. Moreover, the play also exposes the
economic depression of the 1920s America and predicaments of the
African Americans.

The Piano Lesson is the fourth play in August Wilson’s ten play
series which is centralized on the issue of legacy and heritage of the
African American family. Wilsonian dramaturgy appeals to the
community that by accepting family history, culture and faith they can
move further in order to guard their future. If the African Americans
forget their legacy and heritage, they would be found in cultural dilemma.
The central conflict of the play concentrates on Boy Willie and his sister Berniece. Boy Willie wants to sell 137 years old piano which is the legacy and heritage of the family. On the other hand, Berniece wants to preserve it as an heirloom of her family which indicates her legacy with her ancestors.

Wilson's presentation of myths and supernatural aspects are most innovative use in the play. It presents the ghost of Sutter who was master of Boy Willie’s ancestors. When Boy Willie’s father dies in fire, he also becomes the ghost of the railroad.

Wilson also presents the unsatisfied man-woman relationship, plights of the African Americans, migration and poverty of the 1930s African Americans.

Seven Guitars is the fifth play in Wilson’s historical cycle which propagates the 1940s African American experiences in connection with music, racism, man-woman-relationship, memory and identity. All characters of the play are scattered and disordered people and struggle to guard their identity in the racist American society. In addition to this, Wilson also suggests that the economic identity is more important to the African Americans to establish their status in the American society.

The character of Floyd is direct victim of racism like Ma Rainey in Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom. Both want to establish their identity as musicians. However, racist white society does not permit them to do so. Moreover, Wilson’s King Hedley II is a sequel to Seven Guitar. Almost same characters are repeated in both the plays.

Wilson’s Fences is the sixth instalment in his ten-play cycle which is a historical record of the complex racial relationship between the Blacks and Whites of the 1950s. Moreover, it also explores the painful relationship between father and son, husband and wife. The central
conflict of the play initiates with relationship between Troy and his son Cory. Cory wants to do his career in sports. However, Troy opposes him to do so. He believes that blacks do not have career in sports because of the white racist practice. Cory opposes his father pointing out the new opportunities which are available to the blacks in sports and music.

Troy Maxon’s wife Rose represents the African American women of the 1950s, who were absolutely committed to their families and husbands. Although, Troy develops illegal relationship with Alberta, Rose accepts his illegal child and tries to guard her family. In addition to this, *Fence* also carries the issues like separation and migration, poverty and the damaged African Americans in the second World War.

Seventh instalment in Wilson’s ten-play cycle is *Two Trains Running*, which explores the crisis between the Black Power Movement and the Civil Rights Movement, poverty, racism and injustice done to the African Americans in 1960s. Moreover, it also exposes the foolishness of Urban Renewal Movement and rootlessness of the blacks from their selfhood and culture. Almost all the characters who have visited Memphis’ restaurant are direct victims of racism. The threat to demolition of Memphis’ restaurant is a disguised form of racism. Moreover, Wilson also presents the crises between ideologies of the 1960s. Memphis represents the old generation and attracts them to some extent towards the Civil Rights Movement, whereas Sterling represents the new generation which is attracted towards the radical Black Power Movement. Hambone’s exploitation by Lutz (a white meat dealer) exposes the racist practice and discrimination.

The off-stage characters of Aunt Ester and Prophet Samuel show us the religious and cultural need of the African Americans in order to search their identity.
Jitney is the eighth play in Wilson’s ten-play cycle, which carries issues of the impact of Urban Renewal on the lives of Jitney station cub drivers of the 1970s. The disturbed father-son relationship and man-woman relationship is also highlighted by Wilson. Moreover, love, betrayal, violence and the impact of Vietnam war are also underlined by the playwright.

Throughout the play, the main tension of the characters is insecurity in their lives because of the demolition of Jitney station by Urban Renewal council of Pittsburgh city. Becker, the owner of Jitney station, leads his driver friends to fight against the whites to stop the demolition of his station.

The significant issue underlined by Wilson is disturbed relationship between Becker and his son Booster. Booster has murdered a white girl and who is blamed for raping her without any rhyme and reason. Becker argues with his son that he has lost his father’s reputation in the community which cannot be regained. Wilson also explores the immature relationship between Youngblood and his lover Rena. Youngblood deceives her by developing illegal relationship with her sister, Pernell.

King Hedley II is the ninth instalment of Wilson’s ten-play cycle which highlights ruined and harassed life of the African American criminals. The play also underlines the faulty man- woman relationship, mother-son relationship, problem of abortion and mythical beliefs of the African Americans of the 1980s.

King Hedley II, the title character of the play, represents the criminal and worthless life of the 1980s youths. He is most violent and destructive who murders Pernell. King Hedley and Mister sell stolen refrigerators in order to earn money to lead their lives, which shows us the disordered and scattered temperaments of the blacks.
Wilson also explores the problem of abortion. Tonya (a wife of King Hedley II) wants to abort her child because she does not want to grow her child in violent and criminal world; whereas, her husband King wants to grow his child in order to continue the heritage of his family. Tonya rebels against the patriarchal social order which enforces her to follow its rules.

The relationship between King and his mother Ruby is also immature because Ruby leaves him after his birth with her sister. Hence, King does not consider her as his mother.

The religious and mythological implications are also significant aspect of King Hedley II. The death of Aunt Ester who is 266 years African American soul washer dies in the play which indicates the loss of the African American culture and religion. The mystic character of Stool Pigeon is a vehicle of the African American culture and heritage.

The final instalment of Wilson’s ten-play cycle is Radio Golf, which reveals the 1990s oppressive experiences of the African Americans. Moreover, it underlines the issues of American dream, Urban Redevelopment, identity problems, contrast between traditional African American values and the new ones of the new generation.

Golf is traditional symbol of aristocratic whites and their prosperous and wealthy life. Roosevelt and Harmond represent growth of the African American life. Moreover, Golf also symbolizes the American Dream, which fulfills all desires of men.

The central conflict of the play is 1839 Wylie Avenue, a house of Aunt Ester. The Urban Redevelopment council wants to demolish the house in order to renew the city. Harmond and Roosevelt are the officers of Urban Redevelopment project whom Old Joe, an owner of the house, convinces to stop the demolition. He argues that Aunt Ester’s house,
which he inherits, is a legacy and heirloom of the African American community; therefore, it should be preserved. Harmond supports him to do so.

Wilson also highlights the 1980s racist politics. Harmond, an African American businessperson, is a candidate for mayoral election in the city. However, he faces many problems because of his black race.

August Wilson’s ten-play cycle is outstanding discovery of the oppressive and ruined social, economic and cultural experiences of the African American ethnic minority of the United States of America. Wilson is unique and universal playwright because his innovative application to record the social, economic and cultural experiences of the African Americans chronologically through each decade of the 20th century. Because of his unique and genuine discovery in dramatic art in order to highlights African American life of the 20th century, he was honoured by various awards and nominations including the Pulitzer Prize.

There are four Bs influence on Wilsonian dramaturgy. These are Roman Burden, Imamu Amiri Baraka, Jorge Luis Borges and Blues. Burden’s painting influences Wilson’s visual language, which is reflected in his almost all the plays. Mythology and rituals characterize Burden’s art of story telling. The mythological and ritualistic implications throughout Wilson’s ten-play cycle are based on the models of Burgess’s stories. In addition to this, his implication of social structure of the African American society is based on Imamu Amiri Baraka’s writing. Moreover, the use of history, ritual, dance and quest for one’s own selfhood is based on LeRoi Jones writings.

Wilson applies various myths, metaphor and symbols in order to present the African American culture on the stage. The most important feature of his dramaturgy is the use of metaphor like city of the Bones,
Aunt Ester, Bynum, Stool Pigeon, ghost of Sutter, ghost of yellow dog, ghost of miss Mabel, rooster, Chicago and Fences.

The African traditional religion is also explored thoroughly throughout his ten-play cycle by implementing the African God Yoruba. Although Wilson writes like LeRoi Jones and Ed Bullins on the same issues, Wilson’s speciality lies in his art of presentation of African American culture on the stage. Wilson through his plays operates on issues like slavery, poverty, racism, classism, sexism, migration and complex man-woman relationship of the 20th century African Americans which is unique and innovative.

August Wilson implemented the discourse of one hundred years African American history in order to expose the complex social, economic and cultural exploitation of the African American ethnic minority through his innovative dramatic art. Therefore, he is an outstanding, unique and universal dramatist in theatres across the world in general and the African American theatre in particular.

References and Notes:

2. Marion Mcclinton, quoted in, Harry J. Elam, Jr., ix – xviii.


4. August Wilson, quoted in, Harry J. Elam, Jr., ix – xviii.

5. **Black Time**: African Americans faith and trust that their time would come and they would get glorification like others.

6. Harry J. Elam, Jr., pp. -7


8. Ibid, P. 17.


10. Ibid, P. 18.


17. **Yoruba** is the God of African tribes. The African people who captured in America as the salves they were the worshipers of Yoruba.


