

**The Power of Female Figures in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*
and *Two Trains Running* by August Wilson**

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Abstract

This paper sheds light on the power of female figures in August Wilson's selected plays: *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* and *Two Trains Running* and how the playwright manages to subvert the image of a black woman in the American theatre from prostitutes to powerful female characters in his plays. The playwright manages to present a lot of female characters that have a great effect on the life of men especially in the idea of self-finding and resistance. The skill and ingenuity of Wilson are manifested clearly in the centrality of women in the core of the plots and in the creation of empowered female figures. Wilson subverts the stereotypes of the Mammy and the black matriarch, making maternity a source of power. He represents a woman as an effective person in the play, a powerful leader to her family, and her power and influence increase by the progress of the events in each play.

Keywords: Afro-American Woman, Racism, Maternity, Empowered Female Figures, Discrimination, Resistance.

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1. Introduction

August Wilson (1945–2005) was one of the greatest playwrights of the 20th century. Wilson was born as Frederick August Kittel on April 27, 1945, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Wilson's white German father deserted the family after August Wilson was born, and Wilson's mother, Daisy Wilson Kittel, was forced to support her large family by working a number of cleaning jobs. Daisy married David Bedford, an African American man, when Wilson was a young man. Bedford moved the family to a mostly white suburb, where they experienced extreme racial discrimination. Moreover, the racist treatment which August Wilson received in the formal school system encouraged him to drop out his school but he educated himself in his local library, focusing especially on black writers.

In 1965, at the age of twenty, Wilson moved into a rooming house with a group of black intellectuals, and began publishing his poetry in several small periodicals. Wilson was profoundly affected by the Black Power movement in the 1960s, and cofounded the Black Horizons on the Hill Theater in Pittsburgh in 1968 to show his support to this movement.

He devoted his genius to explore the complexities, contradictions, and possibilities of African American experiences through an approach unique in theater history, he wrote one play for every decade in the 20th century. Wilson has written the following plays: Joe Turner's Come and Gone (1988), set in 1911; Ma Rainey's Black Bottom (1981), set in 1927; The Piano Lesson (1990), set in 1936; Seven Guitars (1996), set in 1948; Fences (1986), set in 1957; Two Trains Running (1992), set in 1969; Jitney (1979), set in 1977; and King Hedley II (not published), set in 1985. With each play, Wilson expresses a slice of African-American life, never losing sight of the ancestors who came before.

2. Literature Review

Many previous studies have focused on August Wilson's plays. The first study bears the title "Reconstructing History and Identity in the plays of August Wilson and Brian Friel". This study attempts to provide a new reading of representative plays written by two of the most distinguished and influential African-American and Irish playwrights; namely, August Wilson and Brian Friel, regarding their role and contribution to the reconstruction and reformation of the history and identity of their nations.

The second study is titled by “Racism in selected plays by Lorraine Hansberry, August Wilson and Bruce Norris: A post racial approach”. This study investigates how American dramatists tackle the problem of racism through their plays. Each play shows how African Americans deal with racism in the Twentieth and Twenty First centuries.

The third study bears the title “The Dramatization of some Aspects of Slave Narrative in August Wilson’s Pre-Civil Rights Movement Plays”. This study deals with slave narratives; the autobiographical records of black ex-slaves as one of the most innovative literary and historical traditions in African American literature and culture.

The fourth study titles “Symbolism in the plays of August Wilson”. This study represents the importance of symbols in August Wilson’s plays. Through these symbols, Wilson manages to raise the consciousness of his people about the history and the culture of their ancestors.

The fifth study is titled by “Identity as a Major Theme in Selected plays of August Wilson”. The objective of this study is to explain the meaning of identity as a major theme in selected plays of the African American playwright August Wilson: *Fences* (1986), Joe Turner’s *Come and Gone* (1988) and *The Piano Lesson* (1990).

3. Theoretical Framework

This study follows the Black feminist approach to examine the role of black women in the American community. As a field of study, Black feminism is distinct from mainstream feminism in that it aims to understand the injustices that Black women face on their daily lives. Although the roots of Black feminism in the United States can be traced to the mid-19th century, the Black feminist movement did not become well-known until the 1970s. One of the first activists to publicly express influential statements from a Black feminist perspective was Sojourner Truth. At the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, Truth delivered a famous speech, known as "Ain't I a Woman?," in which she highlighted inequalities in the treatment of elite white women and working-class women of color.

Black women participated in the Black Power and American civil rights movements in the middle of the 20th century and they founded activist groups such as the National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO), which was formed at the New York offices of NOW in 1973, and the Combahee River Collective, established in Boston in 1974.

In Drama, Black feminism has engaged with issues such as rape, social justice, victimization, abortion, stereotyping, racism, and violence. The famous playwrights are Pearl Cleage, Glenda Dickerson, Breena Clarke, Kia Corthron, Suzan–Lori Parks, Sharon Bridgforth, Shirlene Holmes. Alice Childress, Sonia Sanchez, Adrienne Kennedy, and Ntozake Shange.

4. Analysis

This study aims to examine selected plays by August Wilson in the light of Black feminist theory. Wilson portrays powerful female characters in non–stereotypical roles to represent the positive and real female characters in his Afro–American community. Wilson considered his mother the first person who managed to inspire him for his plays. Any discussion with him in his works would be incomplete without explaining the importance of Daisy in his life. Daisy Wilson indeed influenced her son because she was very strong and very different. He declares to the whole world that he loved his mother by dedicating a page about her in *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*:

For my mother.....I happen to think that
the content of my mother's life—her myths
her superstitions, her prayers, the contents
of her pantry, the smell of her kitchen, the

song that escaped from her sometimes parched lips, her thoughtful response and pregnant laughter—are all worthy of art. (3)

August Wilson was born in 1945 to his father, Frederick Kittel, a white German immigrant, and Daisy Wilson, a black American woman. Frederick Kittel abandoned his family when August was five years old, so August Wilson was influenced by his mother more than any other person. He admired his mother so he linked her last name with his name when he became a writer.

Wilson's characterization of women is not stereotypical as the other writers. Patricia Hill Collins defines the Mammy figure in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* as "the faithful, obedient domestic servant . . . loving, nurturing and caring for her white children.....[she] knows her 'place' as an obedient servant. She has accepted her subordination" (71). Actually, the stereotypical image of black maternity in American theatre is the failed mammy who searches for her enjoyment without looking to the effect of these affairs on her children, this mother has not time for her family and she considers her children as obstacles in her life. Differently, Wilson changes these traditional stereotypes; he converts the roles of women in his plays from trivial characters to key figures.

Joe Turner's Come and Gone illustrates the power of female figures who differ from the stereotypes of black women in American plays and novels. For example, Bertha Holly, an epicenter of feminine power in this play, dominates and controls the activity within the boarding house; she shares her husband every detail in his house. Bertha is a powerful woman, she has her opinion and her husband respects her tends and desires, this is illustrated when her husband. Seth, criticizes Bynum because he performs folk magic in his house, Seth says he doesn't like Bynum but Bertha participates in some of the old rituals and says "It don't hurt none. I can't say if it help...but it don't hurt none." (9) This line implies that she is not submissive to her husband; she has a powerful personality, and her spouse respects and admires her. She shows her adaptability and readiness to accept diverse worldviews. This is the temperament responsible for her easygoing nature and her ready acceptance of people like Bynum and even Herald Loomis, men her husband doesn't trust so Seth accepts her opinion and leaves Bynum and Loomis in his boarding house.

Martha, the other female character in the play, controls the progress of events and the plot, the whole drama revolves around the search of Herald Loomis's wife, Martha. All males in this play work together to find this missing mother, she is considered bad

and stereotypical mother because she left her daughter alone and went north with the family's church searching for safety. Loomis expects that he will find himself when he meets her, but after recognizing his true identity, he knows that his salvation is in his stolen African identity.

Herald accuses Martha of leaving his daughter "motherless in the world,"(81) but Martha insists she never intended to do so. She informs him that their reverend chose to relocate the church north and she left Zonia with the girl's grandmother with the aim of collecting her once she settled in the North because she was unsure of the journey's safety. Herald had already found Zonia before she returned. She says, "I didn't know if you was ever coming back. They told me Joe Turner had you and my whole world split half in two."(81) Actually, Martha doesn't correspond with the stereotypes of black mothers in American theatre who prefer themselves and forget their spouses speedily. Harry J. Elam criticizes this character in *May All Your Fences Have Gates: Essays on the Drama of August Wilson*, stating that Wilson's stereotypical women aren't cruel, but they are driven to carry out ridiculous decisions in this racist society, he denounces:

Wilson presents independent women who assert feminist positions, but who, either through their own volition or as the result of external social pressures, ultimately conform to traditional gender roles. (165)

Wilson focuses on representing the positive characteristics of black women so Harry assures that Martha is a good mother but oppression and racism force her to leave her daughter. The uniqueness of Wilson appears in replacing the stereotypical female figures in almost all of American plays by extremely empowered female figures to change the view of the community.

Martha is a religious person, that appears when Bynum tells Herald that if he can "stand up and sing" his song, he'll finally be free. Martha insists that Herald needs to find God, saying, "You got to be clean, Herald. You got to be washed with the blood of the lamb,"(81) telling him that Jesus bled for him. Even though Martha is still a devoted member of the church, her clashes with Herald show how Herald has changed as a result of his imprisonment in Joe Turner's jail. Herald, who was a deacon until Joe Turner caught him, suggests that at one time in his life he was a devout Christian, but now he can't bear any religious thoughts in his mind.

The third female character is Molly Cunningham. Molly is an independent girl; she comes to stay in Seth and Bertha's boarding house. Molly says that she is happy as a single woman; she loves to live alone without any commitments. Truly, Molly was a normal woman and she had a lover but he left her. After this situation, she decided to live without a husband and a family. Molly's character opposes the stereotypes of black girls in American drama; she refuses sexism even though she is emotionally devastated after leaving her lover. As the play comes to a close, Jeremy becomes drawn to Molly and tries to convince her to go with him to explore the world together without any commitments but she rejects him. This situation is opposed to the prevalent ideas of black young women which represent them as pimps and prostitutes.

The fourth female character is Mattie. She visits Seth and Bertha's boarding house to meet Bynum to convince him to bind her with her lover, Jack Carper. Apparently, Mattie and Jack had two children, but they both died as babies, at which point Jack told Mattie she must have a "curse"(45) on her. He then ran off. Bynum tells Mattie that it is better to be separated. Actually, Jack wasn't bound to her since the death of their babies. He tells her that Jack is clearly bound toward somebody else.

After this dilemma, Mattie remains in the boarding house, where she and Herald Loomis develop something of a romantic tension, he tells her that she is "a full woman" (72) because she tries to help him to find his true identity, she says, "You just start from where you find yourself" (72). When Loomis bolts out the door at the end of the play, having just achieved a sense of "self-sufficiency," Mattie runs after him because she knows that Loomis becomes a shiny man.

Zonia Loomis is one of the most important female characters in Wilson's plays. She is in the verge of adolescence so she feels the changes of her father after leaving the prison. She urges him to regain his true identity by singing blues. Her melodies shift the unusual experience that Africans have in the New World. The following is a part from the song that Zonia sings, "Tomorrow, Tomorrow. Tomorrow never comes. The marrow, the marrow. The marrow in the bone" (27). This song explores Loomis' relationship with his forefathers. She tells her father that he will not live in satisfaction if he does not know his past because the future is linked with the past. She manages to remind him of Africans' horrific journey to America and their experience in this new world.

Media and theatre in America represent the Afro-American women as an ugly thief so Wilson wants to change this view by explaining the real characteristics of the Afro-American women. In *The Dramatic Vision of August Wilson*, Sandra G. Shannon declares that in Wilson's plays, "Black women do have appreciable roles in his dramas; however, they seldom are as developed as the men, who freely commune with other black men"(105). Definitely, August Wilson's Plays are developed by men, but they are inspired by the women. For example, Zonia who has an effect on Loomis' personality, she reminds him of the past and the ancestors when she sings blues. The main goal of Wilson in this play is that African American community must respect and embrace their past.

At the end, Wilson manages to present a lot of female characters that have a great effect on the life of men especially in the idea of self-finding. Thus, examining the stereotypes of Afro-American female characters in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* is very important to understand the difference between the stereotypes of female figures in American media and in reality.

The woman figure, in *Two Trains Running*, is the opposite of the common stereotypes of black woman in American media. Especially, Aunt Ester who is considered the most significant persona of the cycle, she symbolizes the centrality and power of women throughout Wilson's works. She appears in three plays: the

first time appears in *Two Trains Running*, the second time appears in *Gem of the Ocean*, the third time is in *King Hedley II*. In these three plays, she has the same character and the same identity. Sandra G. Shannon says in *August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle: Critical Perspectives on the Plays*:

Aunt Ester who, at 285 years of age, is something of a mythical character. Aunt Ester is part of a long line of African American matriarchs who have been carrying the collective memory of their people right from the time of slavery. (169)

Aunt Ester is a mother but her maternity does not dominate her. Wilson skillfully inserts the detail of her biological maternity in *Gem of the Ocean*. During her second conversation with Citizen Barlow, Aunt Ester mentions, "You remind me of my Junebug he was the only one of my boys that caused me trouble"(14). But this detail is soon forgotten in the shadow of Aunt Ester's larger role as a spiritual mother to all African Americans. Wilson indicates that she is an extremely powerful woman whose power is not limited. The characterization of Aunt Ester overturns stereotypes of black womanhood, she doesn't match any previous black woman in theatre or in media as a whole. Sandra G. Shannon says:

Similar to what happens in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*, the characters in *Gem of the Ocean* as typified by Citizen Barlow and Solly Two Kings are only able to muster their sense of identity and self-fulfillment after Aunt Ester "washes" their souls by having them undertake a symbolic trip to the city of Bones where they are re-united with ancestors who perished during the Middle Passage. (*August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle* 169)

Wilson willfully flouts the historical limitations in his characterization of Aunt Ester; he intends to reverse the prevailing Mammy stereotype who is subservient and submissive. Aunt Ester is an extraordinary powerful woman. The most obvious example of Aunt Ester's power is her role as a very old spiritual advisor for the community. Jackson R. Bryer writes an entire interview with August Wilson in *Conversations with August Wilson*, he says in this dialogue:

Aunt Ester represents the entire 349 years that blacks have been in America. She represents our tradition, our philosophy, our folk wisdom, our hobbies, our culture, whatever you care to call it." (160)

The reputation of Aunt Ester as spiritual leader expands far beyond the limits of the Hill District. She represents the African tradition, the philosophy and the wisdom of the ancestors, the culture of the past. She is considered a spiritual advisor because she saves three centuries of black American history in her memory. Particularly, every mother in this world has an impact on her family, Aunt Ester has an effect on African Americans who search for their selves in this racial society so she is considered the mother of Afro-Americans and she receives much respect from them. Wilson subverts the traditional stereotypes pertaining to black maternity, creating instead an extremely positive and powerful depiction of black mothers.

In *Two Trains Running*, Aunt Ester is an old black woman who signifies the importance of the past and its traditions. Holloway, the philosopher of this play, asserts that she is 322 years old, so she is considered a representative of the black experience in the United States. She gives advice about how to cope with life rather than

change circumstances by force, and she frequently advises black people to be one hand in this racial society.

For instance, Holloway is affected by Aunt Ester's advice and he retreated from killing his grandfather who was disloyal to his race. Holloway knows that he can do little or nothing to make matters better for black people. Sterling has another problem; he feels that poor Afro-Americans don't have any chance to find a good life and a respectable job in this racial community. After visiting Aunt Ester, he becomes morally powerful. Moreover, he is interested in the black power movement and Malcolm X. Memphis also is oppressed in this Racist society, he wants the real price to his restaurant but the state offers less than the forecast price. Once Memphis visits Aunt Ester, he becomes ready to fight for his civil rights in the land where he was born in. Throughout the play, Wilson spreads the sense that without Aunt Ester these individuals can't achieve their aims and can't hold the responsibility of their race in the new world on their shoulders.

In *Gem of the Ocean*, Aunt Ester plays an important role. Citizen Barlow, the main character, goes to Aunt Ester to purify himself. He takes a bucket of nails, which causes the drowning of an innocent guy. He insists on seeing Aunt Ester to admit his mistake so he is considered the confessor in the play. His mother

named him Citizen after the abolition of bondage. Caesar Wilks, a policeman, follows Citizen Barlow. His name means dictator which originated from the original Roman emperor, Julius Caesar.

Caesar Wilks resembles the slave-era plantation managers and represents the black-face authority who acts and speaks for the white world. Caesar enters Aunt Ester's house in an agitated state and Eli tries to remind him that "this a peaceful house"(22). Caesar is up in arms about the mill worker strike and claims that if "they don't go to work tomorrow there gonna be hell to pay"(23). Caesar claims that the mill workers are ungrateful for the opportunity the mill provides them and if they continue striking, they will all end up in jail. He believes that the black community will fall into poverty, for which he blames Abraham Lincoln, and says that some of them were "better off in slavery"(23). After that, Selig enters and announces them that the mill is on fire and there is rumor that the army may be called in if the police cannot handle the situation. At the end, Aunt Ester guides Citizen to the City of Bones to wash his soul.

The end of Aunt Ester is in *King Hedley II* in the 1985, it is a horrible action. When the 366 year old finally dies, it completely interrupts the play, upsetting the audience and characters alike as "Stool Pigeon enters in a rush,"(21) screaming "Lock your doors!

Close your windows! Turn your lamp down low! We in trouble now.
Aunt Ester died! She died! She died! She died!"(21)

In the next scene, the audience learns that this tragedy is not limited to the stage but the lights of the entire city are turned down when Aunt Ester died. Aunt Ester, in the viewer's mind, becomes part of the house and the house part of Aunt Ester, a fact reported repeatedly throughout the play when King and Stool Pigeon comment "KING: Them people still up there standing around her house. STOOL PIGEON: They been up there ever since the word got out about her dying," and when Mister affirms "people still up there on the corner in front of Aunt Ester's house"(20). This act highlights the bond between Aunt Ester and the people.

The Hill District residents are protected by Aunt Ester's house, which is a pillar in the neighbourhood. The house takes its notoriety and power from the notoriety and power of Aunt Ester and it will be open as a source of positive empowerment to all Afro-Americans who want to cleanse themselves. The house, like Aunt Ester, continues to unite the community. Furthermore, it continues to reflect Aunt Ester's calming, nurturing effect. In *Radio Golf*, The tenth and final play in August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle, Sterling Johnson talks about Aunt Ester "I was sorry to hear that she died."(54). This mention about Aunt Ester in *Radio Golf* refers that

Aunt Ester will stay in the memory of Afro-Americans and they will never forget her pure spirit. Moreover, the next generations will respect her because she is unique.

In details, the characters in *two trains Running* go to see Aunt Ester, she never asks for direct payment, but instead tells her visitors to take a leap of faith; they can throw twenty dollars in the river, it will come to her eventually, she declares that her advice is based on the customs and spiritual ideas of another continent and another time. She is able to recover their sense of aim and self-worth by getting in touch with their heritage. Holloway also advises his friend, sterling, to visit Aunt Ester to live in satisfaction, he assures that Aunt Ester has a solution to any problem, Holloway and sterling discuss this topic together in this dialogue:

HOLLOWAY: All he got to do is go see Aunt Ester. Aunt Ester could straighten him out. Don't care whatever your problem. She can straighten it out.

STERLING: You think she can help me find a job? I wanna open me up a nightclub.

HOLLOWAY: Whatever your problem is. I don't make no difference to Aunt Ester. She can help you with anything.

STERLING: Where she live at? What's that address again?

HOLLOWAY: Eighteen thirty-nine Wylie. In the back. Knock on the red door. You can't miss it (23).

Holloway and the others know the secret of their life from Aunt Ester who helps them to live in satisfaction in this racist society. Holloway tells Sterling that he must visit Aunt Ester because she will help him to be a strong African American. Holloway tells Sterling:

Aunt Ester give you more than money. She make you right with yourself.....Aunt Ester got a power cause she got an understanding. Anybody live as long as she has is bound to have an understanding. (24)

Aunt Ester is 349 years old, as she tells Sterling, she would have been born in 1620, one year after the first slaves were brought to America. Aunt Ester is the original African American, who is as old as the black experience. She helps Blacks to know what they can do in this racial society and what they should say in embarrassing situations. Holloway explains her power: "Aunt Ester ... make you right with yourself.... Aunt Ester got a power because she got an understanding. Anybody lives as long as she has is bound to have an understanding" (25). Aunt Ester is the past, and her authority allows characters to recognize their own strength. She advises them to be proud of their ancestors and be loyal to the land where they were born in. Holloway declares:

I go up to see her every once in a while.
Get my soul washed. She don't do nothing
but lay her hands on your head. But it's a
feeling like you ain't never had before. Then
every-thing in your life get real calm and
peaceful. (26)

After visiting Aunt Ester, Memphis and Sterling become new black men like Holloway. They decide to begin a new life filled with challenge and insistence. The transformed black people, such as Sterling and Memphis, are considered the fuel of the fire. Sterling

visits Aunt Ester and becomes powerful morally so he steals a ham to achieve the dream of Hambone.

Memphis, like Sterling, is now willing to engage in action to get what he wants. Aunt Ester says to him " If you drop the ball, you got to go beach and pick it up" (55). Memphis becomes the new African-American man as he goes back to the south, with money in his pocket and a new sensibility about himself. When Memphis reenters the south, he will not attempt to use ineffective legal methods; instead, he will take back what is his. Memphis wasn't prepared to return to fight old conflicts until he meets Aunt Ester and becomes ready to walk through fire. When Memphis first meets Aunt Ester, she cultivates in him the Black Power ideology that will encourage him to return to the south and regain his property.

Memphis also embraces Civil Rights ideology by presenting his problem in the court, once he obtains some advice from Mother Africa, Aunt Ester, he is convinced by the principles of Black Power ideology, which call for its followers to take what is owed to them. Memphis intends to take back his land from Stovall, the first white man in Mississippi, by law and court because he knows that he isn't worthless in this land, he is a man and his great aim in this life is to live without oppression and discrimination as the other human beings in our world. He strongly believes that individuals are born

free and able to decide their own destiny. Because of ongoing racial discrimination, black people are not precisely free in the United States. He wanders what are the institutional forces working against him and his folk.

Memphis' court battle becomes successful and he wins his first issue when the court decides to give him twenty-five thousand dollars for his restaurant. This success encourages him to begin another fight in the south to return his land. Actually, Memphis is able to fight European-American men and be victorious in 1969 because of the social change and civil rights legislation that had occurred in America since 1931. The battle inside the court is not Memphis's real fight. His real fight is internal; he must ask himself what kind of African-American man is he? And what will motivate him to go back to the south, where his actual battle is awaiting. When he visits Aunt Ester, he recognizes that he is responsible for his decision and he mustn't be afraid of Europeans around him, his internal feelings encourage him to be the first courageous person in his society.

Wilson is very clever because he confronts his audiences with their ignorance of black American history. He cunningly assaults his own kind because they don't search for their African identity but they ignore it and live with their weak American identity. He

represents Aunt Ester as African-American memory to remind Blacks of their history and their great past. After visiting Aunt Ester, the characters transform to African American persons who truly become proud of their ancestors and loyal to America, the land of their birth. They become brave to face all forms of oppression and discrimination in this racial society by searching for their civil rights. Memphis says: "These niggers talking about freedom, justice, and equality don't know what it mean. You born free. It's up to you to maintain it. You born with dignity and everything else" (9).

The second female character in the male dominated world of *Two Trains Running* is Risa, who isn't a stereotypical female figure. Risa is an independent woman; she has her ideas and beliefs. Risa cuts herself with a razor in order to focus attention away from her good looks. Memphis says, "She a mixed-up personality. Who want a woman after she done that to herself? I don't want her. I don't know what she might do to me"(32). Holloway says, "She figure if she made her legs ugly that would force everybody to look at her and see what kind of personality she is"(32). Her personality is mysterious and the characters in the play do not know anything about her past. Moreover, she refuses to go into detail about her personal life, possibly because she remains disgusted by the fact that men think of her only as a sex object. She believes in Prophet Samuel and Malcolm X; she admires Hambone and respects his

insistence on his right; she also criticizes the men who waste their money in gambling. She is attracted to Sterling in part because of their shared interest in the black power movement, but she does not want to be his wife because she does not trust him.

5. Conclusion

Finally, Wilson's plays reveal that Wilson does not embrace the stereotypes of women in the prevalent plays and books during his period, so he uses sexuality and maternity to serve a source of empowerment in the events of his plays. The uniqueness of Wilson is reflected in replacing the stereotypical female figures in these two plays by extremely empowered female figures to change the view of the community. He embodies Aunt Ester, the mother of Afro-Americans, and Risa in *Two Trains Running*, Zonia, Mattie, and Bertha in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* to announce the whole world that Afro-American women aren't pimps or prostitutes as it is widespread in American society. Obviously, Wilson is optimistic in his view and fair in his judgment on African Americans women.

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ملخص:

يلقى هذا البحث الضوء على قوة الشخصيات النسائية في مسرحيات مختارة لأوجست ويلسون هما مسرحية (مجيء وذهاب جون ترنر) ومسرحية (القطاران يجريان) ، وكيف تمكن هذا الكاتب المسرحي العريق من تحويل الشخصيات النسائية النمطية إلى شخصيات نسائية قوية في مسرحياته وقدم الكثير من الشخصيات النسائية التي لها تأثير كبير في حياة الرجل، خاصة في قضية البحث عن الذات ومقاومة كل أشكال العنصرية الممنهجة. يستند هذا البحث في تحليله على النظرية النسوية السوداء التي تهتم بقضايا المرأة السوداء وأشكال العنصرية والتمييز بين النساء بأمريكا. تتجلى مهارة ويلسون وإبداعه بوضوح في مركزية المرأة في قلب الحكمة الدرامية وفي خلق شخصيات نسائية متمكنة. نجح أيضا ويلسون في تغيير الصورة النمطية للأم السوداء، وجعل الأمومة مصدرًا للقوة. فهو يمثل المرأة كشخصية فعالة في المسرحية، وقائدة قوية لأسرتها، وتزداد قوتها وتأثيرها مع تقدم الأحداث في كل مسرحية.