



# A Critical Discourse Analysis of Feminine and Masculine Identity in August Wilson's Pittsburgh Cycle

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## Abstract

In his collection of ten plays, *The Pittsburgh Cycle*, August Wilson (1945-2005) presents the social dynamism of African Americans through the ten decades of the twentieth century America. In his plays, many newly freed African slaves move to the North, hoping to shape their identity as respectable citizens of great worth. Therefore, they are invariably reckoned as foreigners in a new habitus, and because they have lost contact with their past heritage and do not have access to the social codes through which they could gain power, they search for means through which they could concretize the song they carry within themselves which is their true African heritage.

In this paper, I apply the critical discourse analysis, with a special focus on Michel Foucault's theory of discourse to study, analyze, and compare the discourse of male and female characters of Wilson's ten plays in the context of twentieth century America. According to the age-old western tradition, male discourse represents power, assurance, and certainty in contrast to female discourse imbued with characteristics opposite to the mentioned ones. I will explore how Wilson subverts the male and female discourse to create a non-gendered African soul who embodies characteristics of both sexes because it is through this view that not only these people, but human beings from each culture and social group can play their effective role in society.

**Key Words:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Identity, Gender, Culture