



JOURNEY TO EQUALITY IN AUGUST WILSON'S PLAY SCRIPT *RADIO GOLF* (2005)

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Abstract

The purpose of this analysis is to expose the issue about journey to equality which is done by Black American and to know the contribution of the plot, setting, and character in revealing the journey to equality. This analysis is related to the concept *double-consciousness* by W.E.B. Du Bois that is supported by the text and context based interpretation. The result of this analysis shows Black American do efforts to get the equality that can be seen from their efforts to build good images and careers and works.

Key words: Journey, Equality, *double-consciousness*

A. INTRODUCTION

Human beings are equal since they were born with the same dignity, degree, rights, and duties, although they were born in the different racial or ethnic groups. Since they have different racial or ethnic group, they cannot choose to be born as part of a particular race or ethnicity. In fact, human makes the differences between themselves. Some people think they are better than others. They say they are the strongest and they become the superior, so that they have power to control the weak. As a result, since they are the superior, they marginalize the others. The act of this marginalization is done by White people toward Black people.

White people think they are better than Black. They, as a majority side, think can do everything as they like. Living with the equal right is unusual things for White America; White people do not want to be equal with Black. This causes the endless discrimination toward the Black people. As an inferior, Black people seek for the equality in every aspects of life. According to Black's Law Dictionary (2017), equality means the condition of possessing the same rights, privileges, and immunities, and being liable to the same duties. It is why Black people fighting for, even it is the hardest work for them to get, but they never give up. Skills and knowledge are the main aspects that they have to build and improve to prove that

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they deserve the equality. Although the hardest time for them is the acknowledgement from White, they keep working hard to make their skills and knowledge work.

Black Americans prove that they have knowledge and skills to get an equal life like Americans. They can get the equal treatment and equal life that they never got before, and it becomes a long journey for them. While White said they are nothing, they prove with their hardest works that they are something. They work harder for their life and their career to prove that they are something that can get approval from their society. While they get approval from their society, they build a good image to get more acknowledgment from their environment. And it is described in play script entitled "*Radio Golf*" (2005) by August Wilson. This play script reflects the issue of efforts from Black people to get the equality in their life. Through the two main characters, this play script reveals how Black people put their hardest effort to get the equal life by using their knowledge and skills. They show their knowledge and skill by building good images and building good works and careers.

Playwright August Wilson was born as Frederick August Kittel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on April 27, 1945. Wilson is best known for his 10 plays. Known as *The Pittsburgh Cycle*, each play is set in a different decade of the 20th Century, chronicling the African-American experience. The content in this play is *Jitney* was the first play to publish to the public in 1979. And the following plays are *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (1982), *Fences* (1983), *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (1984), *The Piano Lesson* (1986), *Two Trains Running* (1990), *Seven Guitars* (1995), *King Hedley II* (2001), *Gem of the Ocean* (2003), and "*Radio Golf*" (2005).

Wilson has won several prestigious awards for himself. They are *Literary Lion Award from the New York Public Library* (1998), *National Humanities Medal* (1999), *Heinz Award for Arts and Humanities* (2003), *The Freedom of Speech Award at the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival* (2004), *The 10th Annual Heinz Award in Arts and Humanities* (2004), *Make Shift Award at the U.S. Confederation of Play Writers* (2005), *American Theatre Hall of Fame* (2006). For his play, he has won several awards. They are *Pulitzer Prize for Drama* for *Fences* (1987) and *The Piano Lesson* (1990). *New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Play: Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* (1985), *Fences* (1987), *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* (1988), *The Piano Lesson* (1990), *Seven Guitars* (1996), *Jitney* (2000), and "*Radio Golf*" (2007), and many more awards for his *The Pittsburgh Cycle*.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The analysis of this play script is done through text-based and context-based interpretation. The fictional devices such as character, plot and setting are needed during the process of analyzing. These devices are related each other. Character is used to reveal the journey to equality by analyzing character belief, attitude and behavior or action. Plot is used to acknowledge the conflicts the character faced. Furthermore, setting is also crucial device as it is situation,

atmosphere, and conditions exist in the play script in order to reveal the two main characters seek for the equal life and prove for people in which underestimates them that they can get the equal life and. In addition, these elements are analyzed based on the concept of double-consciousness approach from W. E. B. Du Bois.

C. DISCUSSION

This section analyses the fictional devices such as character, plot (conflict), and setting to reveal *journey to equality*. Journey to equality in this analysis refers to efforts of the two main characters, Black Americans, to get the equality in every aspects of life. Journey to equality in this section can be seen through two ways; building good images, careers and works.

1. Building Good Images

Building good images is one of the strategies to get the equality that is done by the two main characters. In this analysis, they have different ways to build good images. The first character is showing a good leadership toward citizen. He is redeveloping a hospital for citizen. He is having a good manner toward the older people. The second character is showing his understanding about laws and rules. He builds good relations with White people. However, he keeps helping Black people.

To build good images, the first character makes people trust him as a leader. He makes a good relationship with the citizen. It appears in the following quotation:

“MAME: After his speech, some woman who goes to the Annual Breakfast Meeting of the Chamber of Commerce every year said to me that Harmond was the first invited speaker who actually had an idea about developing city commerce.” (p.89)

He left a good impression when he spoke to citizen about his brilliant ideas. It makes citizen believe that he can be a leader that they never get before. Only people who have planned everything before they speak to the audience will left a good impression, and Harmond Wilks done that. He observed the Hill District so he can make a good idea and get a good feedback from citizen. He has a good charisma and he is reliable to be a leader. It also added by his efforts to understand about the situation, condition, and the detail of the Hill District. The setting in this quotation refers to the economic crisis in the Hill District and this is the aspect that everyone expected to be fixed of. The phrase “*developing city commerce*” refers to the economic status of the Hill District. This is even the first aspect that he needs to fix since the first redevelopment made the economic aspect of the Hill District decline, and he has to restore it to their first place where it’s economic aspect in good shapes. The Hill District was a cultural center; and there

were numerous successful entertainment venues. This district was a great source for their economic life.

Another way he builds good images is by redeveloping the hospital for citizen. Redevelop in this analysis refers to his willingness to reform the building and its management. A hospital is important for him since it can save everyone's life. It can be seen in this following quotation:

“HARMOND: What's that? Why is it still called Model Cities Health Center.

ROOSEVELT: Our board hasn't voted yet. We vote on the name change next meeting.

HARMOND: I've talked with most of the board members. I know their vote. They're going to change the name.

MAME: I'm voting it should stay Model Cities Health Center.

HARMOND: Sarah Degree was the first black registered nurse in the city. Naming it after her fits perfectly,

MAME: Model Cities Health Center has been around for twenty two years. The organization has some history in the neighborhood. Nobody knows who Sarah Degree was.

HARMOND: That's why the Health Center needs to be named after her. So we remember.

MAME: I mean that's nice and I understand the sentiment but it's just not practical to throw all that history away.” (p.89)

The quotation states that the first character wants to rebuild the hospital and its management for everyone. Generally, a building is building in the name of the first people who made it or the one who has an important role for that building, thus it could be a reward for their great work. And this is what the first character wants. In this analysis, there is an external conflict between him and his people to decide the name of the hospital. He keeps persuading his people to make them believe that *Sarah Degree Health Center* is the best way to make everything better. He wants everyone respect their first nurse by using her name for the building. It helps them remember that she is a hero that they need to know. He is telling them the fact about the first nurse, and he is not giving up to make it true for the hospital. From the statement by Mame, “*I'm voting it should stay Model Cities Health Center.*” explains that the hospital needs to stay like the way it is since it can be their way to get more vote from citizen. The next sentence “*Nobody knows who Sarah Degree was.*” explains people do not know who Sarah Degree was and her history. The ignorance of citizen about Sarah Degree because people buried her history up and banned everyone who want to talk about her.

This is the history that he wants everyone knows. They need to know about the first nurse and her history since it help them to have some respects toward others.

The last way he to build good images is by having good manners toward the older people. It refers to his social life toward the older people because it is important for him since having a good manner helps him to win older people' heart. This aspect can be seen in this following quotation:

“OLD JOE: You know where I can find any Christian people?

HARMOND: Find who?

OLD JOE: Christian people. I'm looking for some Christian people.

HARMOND: They all over. Look around. Everybody you bump into is probably a Christian.

OLD JOE: I can't find any. They told me to go to the Mission. I went out there and the missionaries were drilling holes in cups. If you broke one of their rules they'd drill a hole in your cup so the coffee run out the bottom. They had a couple men standing around trying to plug up that hole with their ringer. I say, "I'm in the wrong place." You don't mind if I sit do you?

HARMOND: No, go ahead. What can I do for you?” (p.92)

In this quotation, it can be seen that he has good manner when he talks to the older people. The conflict of this quotation is when he breaks stereotypes about the Black people who do not have manners. He tries to release it and show that Black people also have good manners. Even, he offers his hand to help them. He is not nagging too much when he talked to the older people. It shows that he wants to build a good connection with older people and makes them comfortable around him. It also shows his sympathy because the rejection that Old Joe got from the Missionaries. Actually, Missionaries are people who help others without looking their physical appearance, but in this analysis show that they act like others who always see Black people as trouble. The first character shows his manner is better than these Missionaries. Although he is Black people and has a good position, he has good manners toward others.

The second character understands rules and laws. It is his strategies for his equality. He shows that Black people understand about rules and they obey it. It is his way to show to everyone that Black people can be as good as White people toward rules and laws. It is also his way to release his burden about the un-understanding Black people toward rules and laws. When someone does not know and understands about the rules, he keeps explaining the same thing until they get what he wants to talk about. This situation can be seen in the quotation:

“ROOSEVELT: Can you read? That's a demolition order. That say the property' at 1839 Wylie is owned by Bedford Hilts Redevelopment and is slated to be torn down the first of the month. It say it right there. Anybody painting it is trespassing and defacing private property'.” (p.94)

He is the type of person who sticks with laws. He builds good images through rules and laws. For him, laws and rules are the important aspect. The setting in this quotation refers to the constructed idea toward Black people about rules and laws. Since Black people are constructed become a bad people, who do not know and obey laws and rules, he takes this aspect to prove that Black people do understand it, and they obey it. It can help him make an entrance to the equality.

The next way for him to build good image is by building good relations with White people. He proves that Black people can be a good partner for White people to working with. This situation can be seen in the next quotation:

“ROOSEVELT: Hey, Harmond. Guess what? I got a call from Bemie Smith. Invited me in on a round. Wants me to complete his foursome on Friday.
HARMOND: What does he want?
ROOSEVELT: Who cares? This is Bernie Smith. Whatever it is means money. Bernie Smith don't play golf with just anybody. He play with millionaires. I ain't there yet but playing golf with people like Bernie Smith will get me there.” (p.94)

The first target to achieve the equality is the highest class in his environment. The word “*money*” in this analysis refers to the important people that he wants to join. His goal is to make a good relation with important person. For him, having a good relation with White people is his way to get the equality. When he joins White people and works with them, people will see that Black people has a capability to join and work with White people. It also shows that he is helping Black people to get the equality. The setting in this quotation refers to his efforts to get the acknowledgment from White people. Since the highest class is the strongest and powerful people, he needs to build good relations with them. He has opportunity in the term of work and his social life. The sentence “*I got a call from Bemie Smith. Invited me in on a round.*” refers to the result of his effort. When he works harder to achieve his dream, he never gives up. He got approve from the White people, and it shows that his way to equality will be in the good path. It also shows his highest class that he was working on.

In summary, from all the quotations above, it can be seen the two main characters have done many efforts to get equality in every aspects of their life. Although they have the same goal, equality, they have the different ways to achieve it. While the first character shows his good leadership toward citizen, building hospital for citizen, and his good manners toward older people. The second character shows his understanding about rules and laws. Although he builds good relation with White people, he keeps helping Black people. The setting in this analysis refers to the tense atmosphere and unexpected situation that they have to face and fix. The conflict mostly comes from external, which caused they have to work harder. These conflicts make them use their skill and knowledge to achieve the equality.

2. Building Good Careers and Works

Building good career and work is another way to achieve the equality. Although they have same goal, the two main characters have different way to build their career and work. The first character is registering his name as the first Black mayoral candidacy. He is having good partnerships. Meanwhile, the second character is having willingness to get higher position. He is being trusted to manage radio station.

The first character is registering his name as the first Black mayoral candidacy. It shows that he wants to remember his identity as Black people, and his unwillingness to be led by White people anymore. He shows that Black people can join politic and they even can be a leader for everyone. This situation can be seen in the quotation:

“HARMOND: Everybody knows the Democratic Party's looking to dump Gordy. When I announce my candidacy at the groundbreaking ceremony next month you'll feel the ground shift and the wind will start blowing our way. Once the Party's behind me, all the city council will be in line to shake *my* hand. See how fast the Hill District's declared blighted then.” (p.95)

The internal conflict in this quotation is the way he shows to the world that Black people can be a leader. It is his entrance to the equality since Black people rarely have opportunity to prove their cleverness to others. Black people did not have a way to get access to politic. They even cannot join the Election Day. He has to convince White people that Black people can join politic. Thus, White people will acknowledge them and everyone will joins the election and being elected. He wants the acknowledgment from everyone who underestimates toward the Black people. The sentence “*Once the Party's behind me, all the city council will be in line to shake my hand.*” refers to his main target to win the election fairly. When he wins the Party, everyone will see him as a great people since the

Democratic Party is one of the greatest Parties in the America. He cannot make his people disappointed. He has to make sure that he wins the Party, whatever it takes.

The second way, he builds good career and work by having good partnerships. It is the way he wants to use the media to maintain his good image toward citizen. Since his mayoral candidacy becomes one of the main agenda for him and his people, he needs media to make people see how his ideas could changer the Hill District. This situation can be seen in this quotation:

“MAME: I need that copy of your speech to get to the *PostGazette*. They're anxious to publish it, but they need it by Wednesday. They want to run it in Sunday's paper. And they need to take a photo of you on Tuesday.” (p.88)

The setting in this quotation refers to the tense atmosphere of campaign. It shows that the first character needs to manipulate the media partners for his mayoral candidacy. As the mayoral candidacy, he needs media to shows his ideas, and media needs him since it is rare to have Black people in their news, even they are mayoral candidacy. The utterance “*They're anxious to publish it, but they need it by Wednesday.*” explains that the media itself need him. It is can give benefit for both side, citizen will know and understand about him and media will get a good benefit for their production sales.

The second character build good career and work through his willingness for higher position. Position is about who is going to lead something and who is going to be led. He shows his willingness to get higher position to make his own rule and lead everyone in the company he working at. This situation can be seen in this following quotation:

“ROOSEVELT: All I want to know is...when you become mayor can I get an office right next to yours? Make me some kind of advisor or something. I wouldn't mind having an office in Mellon Bank and at City Hall.” (p.89)

He is working for higher position. All he has to do is persuading people that he has capabilities for higher position. The setting in this quotation refers to the way he persuades and makes his partner have faith in him that he is qualifying. His willingness shows that he makes good career since he does not show he is satisfied with his position, he needs to get higher position as high as possible. The internal conflict of this quotation is his tiredness toward the incompetence of Black people. He releases it with working hard to shows that Black people can be competence. He does not want be the one who get advice from others, he wants to

be the one who give advices for everyone. It shows that he capable being someone who gives advices for other people.

The last way he builds good career and work is being trusted to manage radio. Radio was the highest station in the 90s, and working at the radio station shows the cleverness of Black people. His boss trusts him to manage radio station since the second character is perfectly suitable with radio. This situation can be seen in the following stage direction:

“The lights come up on the office. Harmond sits listening to the radio. Roosevelt's voice comes out of the radio.” (p.98)

He is being trusted to manage radio station since he knows so much radio stuff, and he understands how make his project more useful for everyone. He shows that he could join the highest broadcast station. The generation before him did not have a chance to prove that they could join them. This is the prove that they could take a part in the broadcasting radio. The conflict in this quotation is how he keeps doing efforts to prove that Black people could join the highest broadcast station. He keeps showing his hardworking. He does not make his listener bored. He makes radio become a good communication tools for him and citizen since they can share a story and he can give good advices to prove that he is a good radio presenter. He shows that he is the one who can become the announcer.

Briefly, building good career and work makes the way of the two main characters toward equality much easier. The first character shows that Black people could join politic and they even could be a leader. For his candidacy, he could get good media partners. While the second character always shows his hardworking side to get the higher position so he could manage to run radio station. For this analysis, internal conflict is the most happening issue for the two main characters which cause by their external. They solve it by keep working out their skills and knowledge to get more attention on their career. The setting refers to their goals to prove that Black people can achieve the equality in every aspect of life.

D. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Play script *Radio Golf* (2005), written by August Wilson, reflects the issue of the journey to equality. This issue refers to efforts of Black people to get the equality in every aspect of their life. The analysis of the play script deals with the concept of the double-consciousness by William Edward Burghardt Du Bois. Thus, *journey to equality* in this analysis refers to the efforts of Black people to get the equal life with Americans. To achieve the equality, the two main

characters do some efforts in term of building good images and good career and work.

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