

**Unit 4**  
**Everyday Use for Your Grandmama**  
**Alice Walker**





# I. Background

## 1. Alice Walker's Early Life

Date of Birth: February 9, 1944

Birthplace: Eatonton, Georgia

Parents: Willie Lee and Minnie Lou Grant Walker, who were sharecroppers

Marriage: Mel Leventhal, a Jewish Civil Rights activist/ lawyer

Child: Rebecca born in 1969

## 2. Education:

1961-1963 Spelman, a college for black women in Atlanta

1963-1965 BA from Sarah Lawrence College in New York (once traveled to Africa as an exchange student)



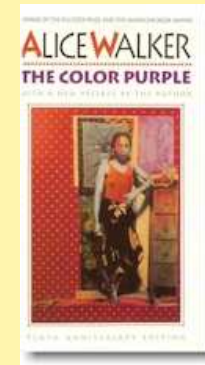
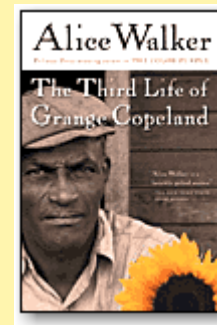
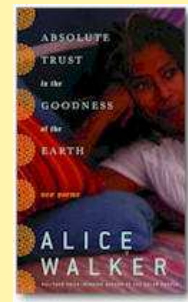
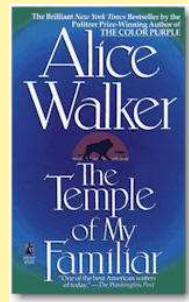
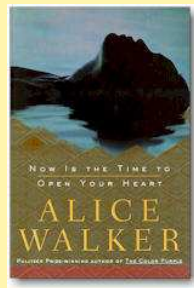
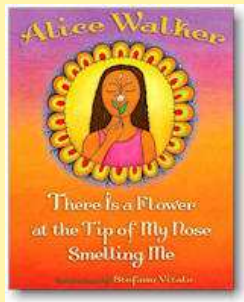


# I. Background

## 3. Career

1983 received the Pulitzer Prize for *The Color Purple* (1982)

1984 started her own publishing company, Wild Trees Press



## 4. Points of View

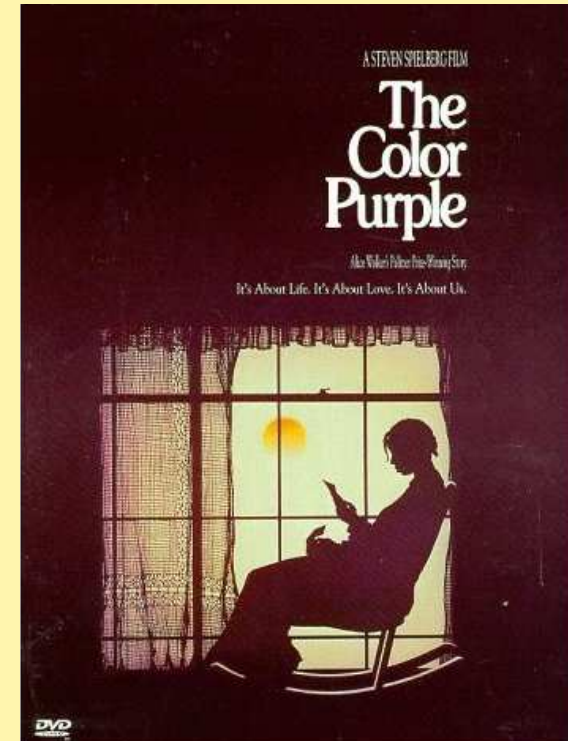
- ➔ the Civil Rights Movement
- ➔ the Women's Movement
- ➔ the Anti-apartheid Movement



# The Color Purple



Based on Alice Walker's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *The Color Purple* is the richly textured, decades-spanning story of Celie, an uneducated woman living in the rural American south. Forced to marry a brutal man she calls "Mr.," Celie turns inward and shares her grief only with God. But she is transformed by the friendship of two remarkable women, acquiring self-worth... and the strength to forgive. The film launched the Hollywood careers of Whoopi Goldberg and Oprah Winfrey and gleaned 11 Oscar nominations including Best Picture.





# The Color Purple

**Oprah Winfrey:** (born Jan. 29, 1954, Kosciusko, Miss., U.S.) U.S. television talk-show host and actress. After enduring an impoverished and troubled childhood, she became a news anchor for a local CBS television station in Tennessee at age 19. After graduating from Tennessee State University, she worked as a television reporter and anchor in Baltimore, Md., where she cohosted her first talk show (1977–83), and moved to Chicago to host *A.M. Chicago* (1984), which became that city's highest-rated morning show. The renamed *Oprah Winfrey Show* was syndicated in 1986, making her the first African American woman to host a successful national daytime talk show. Initially sensationalist, the enormously popular show gradually took on an uplifting and therapeutic tone. In 1986 she also formed her own television production company, Harpo Productions. In 1996 she introduced "Oprah's Book Club" to foster reading by endorsing certain books. She appeared in the movies *The Color Purple* (1985) and *Beloved* (1998).



COURTESY: HARPO, INC.



\* \* \* \* \*

**Whoopi Goldberg:** born Nov. 13, 1950, New York City, U.S. actress. After dropping out of high school, she found work as a summer camp counselor, and in the choruses of the Broadway shows *Hair*, *Jesus Christ Superstar* and *Pippin*. In 1983 the legendary director Mike Nichols saw her perform and, the following year, presented her on Broadway in a one-woman show of her own creation. The show was an enormous success, and brought her to the attention of Steven Spielberg, who cast her in the leading role in his film of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*. Making her film debut in this coveted role instantly established her as one of Hollywood's leading actresses. Her performance in *Ghost* won her an Academy Award. She followed this with memorable performances in the box-office smash *Sister Act*. Her other film credits include *Made In America*; *Corinna, Corinna*; *Star Trek: Generations* and *Boys on the Side*.





## II. Discourse Analysis

### Elements of Narrative

Time: unknown

Venue: Home

Characters: "I", Maggie, Dee (Wangero)

Asalamalakim, Big Dee, Grandma Dee

Plot: Maggie and I are ready to have Dee back



The Relationship between Dee and I



The Contrast between Dee and Maggie



The Climax: Grandma's Quilts

Theme: The Heirloom – Quilts: Display VS Everyday Use





## Brief introduction of the story

- The story is told by the "Mama" (Mrs Johnson), a black woman living in the Deep South with one of her two daughters. The story *humorously* illustrates the differences between Mrs Johnson and her shy younger daughter Maggie, who still live traditionally in the rural South, and her educated, successful daughter Dee (or "Wangero", as she prefers to be called), who *scorns her immediate roots in favor of a pretentious native African identity.*



## Type of literature-- a short story

- Setting: when; where

The story “Everyday Use” takes place in the rural South during the 1960s. Values and ways of life were changing quickly at that time.





## Setting

- "Everyday Use" is a widely studied and much-anthologized short story by Alice Walker. It was first published in 1973 as part of Walker's short story collection, *In Love and Trouble*.



# Civil rights movement

- The civil rights movement was **a worldwide political movement** for **equality before the law** occurring between approximately 1950 and 1980. In many situations it took the form of campaigns of civil resistance aimed at achieving change by **nonviolent forms of resistance**. In some situations it was accompanied, or followed, by **civil unrest and armed rebellion**. The process was long and tenuous in many countries, and many of these movements did not fully achieve their goals although, the efforts of these movements did lead to improvements in the legal rights of previously oppressed groups of people.



## African-American Civil Rights Movement (1955–1968)

- The African-American Civil Rights Movement (1955–1968) refers to the social movements in the United States aimed at **outlawing racial discrimination** against black Americans and **restoring voting rights to them**. This article covers the phase of the movement between **1955 and 1968**, particularly in the South. The emergence of **the Black Power Movement**, which lasted roughly from 1966 to 1975, enlarged the aims of the Civil Rights Movement to include **racial dignity, economic and political self-sufficiency**, and **freedom from oppression** by white Americans.



## African-American Civil Rights Movement (1955–1968)

- The movement was characterized by major campaigns of civil resistance. Between 1955 and 1968, acts of nonviolent protest and civil disobedience produced crisis situations between activists and government authorities. Federal, state, and local governments, businesses, and communities often had to respond immediately to these situations that highlighted the inequities faced by African Americans. Forms of protest and/or civil disobedience included boycotts such as the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955–1956) in Alabama; "sit-ins" such as the influential Greensboro sit-ins (1960) in North Carolina; marches, such as the Selma to Montgomery marches (1965) in Alabama; and a wide range of other **nonviolent activities**.



## African-American Civil Rights Movement (1955–1968)

- Noted **legislative achievements** during this phase of the Civil Rights Movement were **passage of Civil Rights Act of 1964** that banned discrimination based on "race, color, religion, or national origin" in employment practices and public accommodations; **the Voting Rights Act of 1965**, that restored and protected voting rights; **the Immigration and Nationality Services Act of 1965**, that dramatically opened entry to the U.S. to immigrants other than traditional European groups; and **the Fair Housing Act of 1968**, that banned discrimination in the sale or rental of housing. African Americans re-entered politics in the South, and across the country young people were inspired to action.
- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil\\_Rights\\_Movement\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Rights_Movement_in_the_United_States)



## II. Discourse Analysis

### Structure

Para 1 – 2: Maggie and I Are waiting for Someone Important

Para 3 – 16: The Relationship among Dee, Maggie and “I”

“I”: a large, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands

Dee: “No” is a word the world never learned to say to her

Maggie: a homely, weak and shy girl

Para 17 – 82 Meeting with Dee

Para 17 - 20 Dee came with her new boyfriend and new name

Para 21 - 43 The Name: Dee

Para 44 - 82 The Argument on Grandma’s Quilts



# Characters: who

- **Mama:** ( Mrs. Johnson)
- **Maggie**
- **Dee**
- **Asalamalakim**

**Could you sum up what these characters are from the short story?**



# Characters: who

**Mama:** ( Mrs. Johnson)

Narrator of the story

Mother of Dee and Maggie

“always better at a man’s job”

2<sup>nd</sup> grade education (in 1927).

“I never had an education myself”

[without education, but with intelligence and perception]





# Characters: who

- **Maggie and Dee:** appearance, character and personal experiences
- **Maggie:**
  - A shy, different young woman made even more self-conscious by scars she got in a house fire years ago.
  - She hasn't had much formal education but has learned traditional skills, such as quilting, from her family.
- **Dee:**
  - Mrs Johnson's older daughter.
  - She is attractive, sophisticated, and well-educated.
  - She is also very selfish;
  - she may even have caused the fire that disfigured her sister.
  - Mrs Johnson calls her "Dee/Wangero".



## Characters: who

- **Asalamalakim**
- An African American Muslim man who is dating Dee, he drives a nice car and lives up north out of State. Also, if you dissect his name and sound it out, it's a Muslim greeting that means "peace to you."



# Point of View

- “Everyday Use” is told in **first-person point of view**.
- “Mrs. Johnson, an uneducated woman, tells the story herself. The reader learns what she thinks about her two daughters, and her observations reveal her *astute observations about life*”
- Very **honest in her descriptions** of her daughters. She knows them well.
- *“Maggie will be nervous until after her sister goes: she will stand hopelessly in corners, homely and ashamed of the burn scars down her arms and legs, eying her sister with a mixture of envy and awe”*
- The narrative **gives a voice for African-American women**, which had been neglected and silenced by *racism and sexism*.



## Title meaning

- The meaning of the title requires the reader to read deeper within the short story. The phrase "**Everyday Use**" brings about the question *whether or not heritage should be preserved and displayed or integrated into everyday life. "Everyday Use" pertains not only to the quilt, but more so to people's culture and heritage and how they choose to honor it.*



## **Part I**

**Maggie and I are ready to have Dee  
back**



## Foreshadowing the arrival of Dee (1-2)

- I will wait for her in the yard that Maggie and I made so clean and **wavy** yesterday afternoon.
- **wavy**: having regular curves



A wavy line has a series of regular curves along it.

The wavy lines are meant to represent water.

- *Here in the text the word describes the marks in wavy patterns on the clay ground left by the broom.---- impression of ...*



## Foreshadowing the arrival of Dee (1-2)

- It is like an *extended* living room.
- *Extended* means prolonged, continued; enlarged in influence, meaning, scope, etc.
- e.g. *extended care*: nursing care provided for a limited time after a hospital stay
- *extended family*: a group of relative by blood, marriage or adoption, often including a nuclear family, living together, esp. three generations are involved.



*increase, expand, enlarge, extend,  
augment, multiply*

- These verbs mean to make or become greater or larger.

- ***Increase*** sometimes suggests steady growth:

*The mayor's political influence rapidly increased.*

- To ***expand*** is to increase in size, area, volume, bulk, or range:

*He inhaled deeply, expanding his chest.*

*“Work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion”*

- ***Enlarge*** refers to expansion in size, extent, capacity, or scope:

*The landowner enlarged her property by repeated purchases.*

*My knowledge of literature has enlarged considerably since I joined a reading group.*





*increase, expand, enlarge, extend,  
augment, multiply*

- To ***extend*** is to lengthen in space or time or to broaden in range:

*The transit authority extended the subway line to the next town.*

*The baseball season extends into October.*

- ***Augment*** usually applies to what is already developed or well under way:

*She augmented her collection of books each month.*

*His depression augments with each visit to the hospital.*

- To ***multiply*** is to increase in number, especially by propagation or procreation:

*“As for my cats, they multiplied”*

*“May thy days be multiplied!”*



## Foreshadowing the arrival of Dee (1-2)

- **Maggie will be nervous until after her sister goes (why?????)**

**stand hopelessly in corners**

homely: not good-looking, or handsome; plain, unattractive  
ashamed of the burn scars down her arms and legs  
eying her sister with a mixture of envy and awe

- **She thinks her sister has held life always in the palm of one hand**

She thinks that her sister has a firm control of her life.



## Foreshadowing the arrival of Dee (1-2)

- The first paragraph describes the **place** where the story takes place, and the second paragraph introduces **characters** --- the narrator's two daughters. So in the first two paragraphs we have met all the three main characters. In a few words the narrator makes **a contrast** between the two sisters: One is nervous, homely and ashamed of her burn scars and the other one has a firm control of her life and can always get what she wants. **----general picture of the family**



## **Part II**

**The relationship among Dee,  
Maggie, and "I" (3-16)**



## Para. 3 --- a dream

- *You've no doubt seen those TV shows where the child who has "made it" is confronted, as a surprise, by her own mother and father, tottering in weakly from backstage*
- The use of "you" shows the narrator's **personal and informal style** in which she is talking to the readers directly.
- *Brought face to face with her mother and father unexpectedly. In such talk shows, the guest is usually someone who is successful in their career and the host is likely to arrange an unexpected meeting with her parents as a pleasant surprise.*



## sort of vs. of sorts/ a sort

- **Sort of:** in informal English

1) to describe or refer to something that you are **uncertain** about but that is **roughly like** the thing mentioned:

She was wearing a sort of velvet dress...

I heard a strangling sort of noise...

2) to say that something is **partly true or partly the case**, but does not fully describe the actual situation :

I'm sort of fond him...

“Is it a literary thing?” – “Well sort of.”...

3) if you are **uncertain** about what you are saying and **wondering if you are using the right word**:

Mike had it sort of behind him on the window sill...

He was sort of banging his head against a window...

...I mean sort of recently, like, you know, the last five or seven years.



## sort of vs. of sorts/ a sort

**of sorts/ of a sort:** to add **uncertainty and vagueness** to the description, and sometimes suggest that the thing is of a **rather poor quality or standard:**

He was a lawyer of sorts... 蹩脚的律师

A particular sort of person has the character that is mentioned or suggested:

She was a good sort... 她是个好人

what sort of fellow is he? 他是哪种人?

## Para.4---still a dream



- **Out of a dark and soft-seated limousine I am ushered into a bright room filled with many people**
- **Limousine:** a large, luxurious car, especially one driven by a chauffeur who is separated from the passengers by a partition. 豪华高级轿车
- **sedan / saloon** is a car with seats for four or more people, a fixed roof, and a boot (the space at the back of the car, covered by a lid, in which you carry things such as luggage, shopping or tools) that is separate from the seating part of the car 箱式小客车
- **convertible:** a car with a soft roof that can be folded down or removed 折篷汽车
- **sports car:** a low usu. open car with room for only 2 people for traveling high power and speed 跑车
- **coupe** ['ku:pei] a car with a fixed roof, a sloping back, two doors and seats for four people 双门四座小客车
- **station wagon (Am E) / estate car (Br.E)** a car which has a long body with a door at the back end and space behind the back seats 旅行车/客货两用车
- **Meet a smiling, gray sporty man and shakes my hand**
- **Dee is embracing me with tears in her eyes**
- **Pins on my dress a large orchid (tacky flowers)**







# Johnny Carson

**Johnny Carson**, [in full *John William Carson*] (born Oct. 23, 1925, Corning, Iowa, U.S.—died Jan. 23, 2005, Los Angeles, Calif.) U.S. television personality. He worked as a radio announcer and television comedy writer before hosting several television quiz shows (1955–62). As the long-standing host of ***The Tonight Show*** (1962–92), he was noted for his wry monologues, comedy sketches, and genial banter, and the program became a staple for a large and faithful late-night audience.

***The Tonight Show*** has a long, successful history - and it shows no signs of cooling off. It started its run almost 50 years ago, back in 1954. **Steve Allen** was the first host. He was succeeded by **Jack Paar** in 1957, and **Johnny Carson** took over the reins in 1962. Johnny was the "King of Late Night" for 30 years, until he retired in 1992. **Jay Leno** has been the host since then. Over three million people have sat in the studio audience and enjoyed the show.





# Para.5---Reality

<b>What Mama is like</b>	<b>What Dee expects her to be like</b>



# Para.5---Reality

What Mama is like in real life	What Dee expects her to be like
a large, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands	a hundred pounds lighter
flannel nightgowns to bed and overalls during the day	skin like an uncooked barley pan-cake
can kill and clean a hog as mercilessly as a man	My hair glistens in the hot bright lights
fat	with my quick and witty tongue
work outside all day, breaking ice to get water for washing	
can eat pork liver cooked over the open fire minutes after it comes steaming from the hog	
knocked a bull calf straight in the brain between the eyes with a sledge hammer	





## Para.5---Reality

- ***in real life:*** the phrase is transitional, linking this paragraph and the one above, implying that those TV programs are nothing but make-believe and the narrator is very skeptical of them. In reality she has the typical features of a black working woman.
- ***overalls:*** are a single piece of clothing that combines trousers and a jacket. You wear overalls over your clothes in order to protect them from dirt, paint, etc. while you are working  
The breast pocket of his overalls was filled with tools. (工装裤)
- ***My fat keeps me hot in zero weather:***  
Because I am fat, I feel hot even in freezing weather.



## Para.5---Reality

### *hog:*

- a. a pig, esp. a fat one for eating
- b. a male pig that has been castrated
- c. a dirty person

*swine:* (old & tech) pig

*boar* [o:]: male pig on a farm that is kept for breeding

*sow* [au]: fully grown female pig

- ***sledge hammer:*** large, heavy hammer for swinging with both hands, a large heavy hammer with a long handle, used for smashing concrete
- ***Johnny Carson*** has much to do... witty tongue:  
*Johnny Carson* is famous for his witty and glib tongue.  
tongue: the act or power of speaking; manner or style of speaking
- **in terms of tongue, I am far better than he, and he has to try hard if he wants to catch up with me.**



## para. 5 translation

- 在现实生活中，我是一个大块头、大骨架的妇女，有着干男人活儿的粗糙双手。冬天睡觉时我穿着绒布睡衣；白天是一身套头工装裤。我能像男人一样狠狠地宰猪并收拾干净。我的一身脂肪使我在寒冬也保持温暖。我能整天在户外干活，敲碎冰块，取水洗衣。我能吃在明火上烤熟的猪肝，而这猪肝还冒着热气，从刚宰死的猪身上切下来的。有一年冬天，我用一把大铁锤砍到一头公牛，锤子正打在小牛两眼之间的大脑上。天黑之前，我把牛肉挂起来晾着。不过，这一切当然都没有在电视上出现过。我的女儿希望我是这样的：体重减去一百磅，皮肤像下锅煎之前的大麦面饼那样细腻光滑，头发在炽热耀眼的灯光下闪闪发光。而且，我有一口伶牙俐齿，能够妙语连珠，就连乔尼·卡森也望尘莫及。



## Para.6---reality is quite different

- *With one foot raised in flight:*  
ready to leave as quickly as possible because of discomfort, nervousness, timidity,
- *With my head turned in whichever way is farthest from them*  
In order to avoid them as much as possible, also from discomfort, shyness
- *Dee, though---?????*
- *She would always look anyone in the eye. Hesitation was no part of her nature*



## para. 9 Maggie

- **Image of animals for characters:**
- lame animal
- dog run over by some careless person
- *sidle up* to someone --- Maggie's way to walk
- *chin on chest, eyes on ground, feet in shuffle*
- fire...burn...





- ***sidle***: walk as if ready to turn or go the other way; walk in a furtive, unobtrusive, or timid manner, esp. sideways or obliquely. A man sidled up to me and asked if I wanted a ticket for the match.
- ***shuffle***: slow dragging walk  
If you shuffle, you walk without lifting your feet properly off the ground  
He slipped on his shoes and shuffled out of the room.  
If you shuffle, you move your feet about while standing or move your bottom about while sitting, often because you feel uncomfortable or embarrassed.  
I was shuffling in my seat.
- cf: *totter, sidle, shuffle*



## Para. 10 fire accident

- Maggie
  - ✓ Arms sticking to me
  - ✓ Hair smoking
  - ✓ Dress falling off her in little black **paperly flakes**
  - ✓ Eyes stretching open, **blazed open**
- Dee
  - ✓ **And Dee.--** elliptical sentence
  - ✓ Standing **off** under the sweet gum tree
  - ✓ A look of concentration on her face
  - ✓ Watching the **dingy** board
  - ✓ Hating the house that much
  - ✓ Why don't you do a dance around the ashes?  
---rhetorical question



## Para. 10 Dee / fire accident

- *Her hair smoking and her dress falling off her in little black papery flakes*

Nominative absolute construction.

*Papery*: thin light like paper.

*Flakes*: a small thin mass, e.g. flakes of snow.

- *Stretched open, blazed open*: wide open to the fullest extent
- *And Dee*: an elliptical sentence. And there was Dee.
- *Stand off*: stand away, in a distance
- *A sweet gum tree*: a large North American tree of the witch hazel (榛子) family, with alternate maplelike leaves, spiny (多刺的) fruit balls, and fragrant juice
- 美洲金缕梅, 落叶灌木或小乔木. 原产于北美和亚洲. 其分叉小枝从前用为魔杖, 这寻找地下水, 故俗称魔杖.
- *dingy*: dirty and faded  
A building or place that is dingy is rather dark and depressing and does not seem to have been well looked after.  
This is the dingiest street of the town.  
Clothes, curtains, etc. that are dingy are dirty or faded.



## Para. 11-12 Dee

- Being sent to school in Augusta with the money raised by church and me
- Reading books to Maggie and me
- Developing a style of herself



- *raise*: to collect together  
raise an army / raise enough money for a holiday  
His wife raised the money by selling her jewellery.  
We're trying to raise funds to establish a scholarship.
- *Augusta*: city in eastern Georgia on the Savannah River. It is obvious that the family lives in the rural area in Georgia, a southern state in America.





# Reading books to u

•(so as to go) under (sth..)  
The letter was pushed underneath the door.  
Did you find very much growing underneath the snow?

- **Reader (Dee):**
- *Without pity*
- *Forcing words, lies, other folk's habit ... on us two:*

The narrator implies that the books Dee read to them were written by the white people and full of their language and ideas, falsehood and their way of life. Other folks refer to the white people. By reading those books, Dee forced them to accept the white people's views and values.

- *She washed us... need to know:* She imposed on us a lot of falsity and so-called knowledge that is totally useless to us; the words *washed* and *burned* are used figuratively, indicating large quantities of a destructive nature.
- *Pressed us..., to shove us away*

- **Listeners (Mag and her)**
- *Sitting trapped, and ignorant underneath her voice:*

Her reading was like a trap, and we were like animals caught in the trap.

Here it suggests a repressive and imposing quality in her voice.)

- *Like dimwits*

(infml) an ignorant and stupid person  
dim: faint, not bright  
wit: intelligence, wisdom  
at one's wit's end: at the end of one's tether  
山穷水尽、智穷力竭



## Para. 11

- ***make-believe***: a state of pretending or the things which are pretended  
She lives in a make-believe world / a world of make-believe.  
Don't be afraid of monster - the story's only make-believe.  
The little girl made believe she was a princess.
- ***shove***: to push, esp. in a rough or careless way  
There was a lot of pushing and shoving to get on the bus.  
Help me to shove this furniture aside.  
If you shove sb. or sth., you push them with a quick, rather, violent movement.  
He dragged her out to the door and shoved her into the street.



## Para. 11

- 过去我以为她也讨厌玛吉。但是那是在教堂和我筹钱送她到奥古斯塔上学之前。那时她常给我们读点什么，读时毫无同情之心，将文字、谎言、别人的习惯以及整个生活强加于我们。我和玛吉毫无办法，一无所知地困坐在那里，她的声音凌驾于我们之上。他对我们灌输一大堆编造的事物以及我们不需要掌握的知识。她严肃地强迫我们听她读书，又正好在我们俩人像傻瓜一样看上去似懂非懂的时刻把我们挥之而去。







## Developing a style of herself (para 12)

- **Wanting nice things**  
a yellow organdy dress  
black pumps to match a green suit
- **undaunted and strong character**  
determined ; to stare down any disaster in her efforts  
Eyelids not flickering for minutes at a time
- --- a style of her own  
& knowing what style was





- **organdy**: (Br. E organdie) very fine transparent muslin (麦斯林纱, 平纹细布) with a stiff finish (最后一层涂饰), very fine rather stiff cotton material used esp. for women's dresses (蝉翼纱, 玻璃纱)
- **pump**: low shoe that grips the foot chiefly at the toe and the heel (正式社交场合穿的) 女士无带浅口轻便鞋
- **stare down any disaster in her efforts**: face up and defeat any disaster with her efforts  
*stare down*: two people looking at each other persistently until one shifts his eye
- *Her eye lids would not flicker for minutes at a time*: again it shows that Dee was undaunted with a strong character. She would look at anybody steadily and intently for a long time.
- **flicker**: to move backwards and forwards unsteadily  
shadows flickered on the wall  
flickering eyelids
- **Often I fought off the temptation to shake her**: Often I wanted so much to shake her, but I restrained myself. *Usually you shake somebody in order to rouse that person to the awareness of something.*



## Para. 12

- *At sixteen she had a style of her own and knew what style was:*

1) At sixteen she had *a unique way of doing things.*

2) and she knew *what was the current, fashionable way of dressing, speaking, acting, etc.*

Note the different meanings of the two styles in this sentence:

Some expressions with the word style:

*in (grand) style:* in a fashionable and luxurious way.

e.g. The lady lives in style.

*to be in/ out of style:* to be in/ out of fashion.

e.g. Is the long skirt in/ out of style this year?



## Para. 13 Mama- uneducated & working-classed

- ***In 1927, the colored asked fewer questions than they do now:***
  - 1) In 1927, the colored people were more passive than they are now.
  - 2) colored: of a group other than the Caucasoid, specially black.
- ***She stumbles along good-naturedly:*** She often makes mistakes while reading, but never losing her good temper.
- ***stumble:*** to stop and /or make mistakes in speaking or reading aloud to catch the foot on the ground while moving along and start to fall  
She stumble at/over the long word  
He stumbled and stopped reading.
- cf:  
***stammer:*** to speak or say with pauses and repeated sounds, either habitually or because of excitement, fear, etc.  
***stutter:*** to speak or say with difficulty in producing sounds, esp. habitually holding back the first consonant.
- ***good-naturedly:*** naturally kind, ready to help, to forgive, not to be angry  
A person or animal that is good-natured is naturally friendly and does not easily get angry.  
a good-natured policeman



## Para. 13

- ***Like good looks... passed her by:*** She is not bright just as she is neither good-looking nor rich.
- ***mossy:***  
moss: any of several types of a small flat green or yellow flowerless plant that grows in a thick furry mass on wet soil, or on a wet surface
- ***A rolling stone gathers no moss:*** a person who keeps wandering casually from place to place will never enjoy the benefits of a settled life, such as a family, a home, a career, or close friends, but will also avoid the difficult things such as responsibilities, lack of freedom, boredom, etc. 滾石不生苔，逛蕩不聚財
- 流水不腐，戶樞不蠹: Running water is never stale and a door-hinge is never worm-eaten; Moving things are unlikely to go bad. Regular exercises can help a person to keep good health.
- ***Church songs:*** hymns in praise or honor of God
- ***Hook:*** to attack with the horns as by a bull



## Meeting with Dee

Dee came with her new boyfriend and new name (17-20)



- *I stay her with my hand:* I stop her from rushing off with my hand.
- *Stay* (vt.): to stop, halt or check.
- Note that the simple present tense is used in this paragraph and the following five paragraphs in describing actions that took place in the past time. The purpose is to make the story telling more vivid.



## presence of Dee & boy friend

- **Dee:** the first glimpse of foot --- neat-looking// a certain style
- **Boy friend:** a short stocky man, hair all over the head a foot long, hanging from the chin --- like a **kinky** mule tail
- reponse from **Maggie**
  - suck in her breath
  - "Uhhnnh"
  - exact feeling of seeing the wriggling end of a snake





- **kinky**: (colloquial) (esp. of hair) having kinks; full of short, twisty curls, tightly curled  
kink: a backward turn or twist in hair, a rope, chain, pipe, etc.
- **like when you see... on the road**: An elliptical sentence. It's the kind of disgusted response you have when you see the wriggling end of a snake just in front of your foot on the road.
- **wriggle**: to twist from side to side; to move to and fro with a twisting and writhing motion
- **I heard Maggie suck in her breath... it sounds like**:
  - 1) *suck in her breath*: inhale her breath
  - 2) *Uhnnnh*: an exclamation of a strong negative response





## Dee's presence (20)

- **Dee next.** (what elements have been mentioned )
- **flowing dress:** down to the ground;  
loud in color(yellow, orange);  
hurting my eyes;  
whole face warming from the heat waves it  
throws
- **earings:** gold; hanging down to her shoulders
- **bracelets:** dangling; noisy
- **hair:** straight up like the wool on a sheep  
black as night;  
two long pigtails roping about like small lizards...
- **movements:** shaking the folds of the dress out of her  
armpits



- ***Flowing dress:*** The only Africans I have seen in traditional flowing dresses in East Africa are the Muslim women on the coast hiding inside their black bui-buis. Otherwise colorful traditional dresses are made of two pieces such as the kangas in Tanzania or have a distinct waist line with a sash, such as the busutis in Uganda. Of course I have seen and even bought and used long, flowing gowns made for tourists, but they have nothing to do with traditions, only with fashion. .
- *rope:* (of 2 or more mountain climbers) to be fastened together with the same rope

The word here means the plaits or the pigtails are fastened together





# pigtail & ponytail





- ***Wa-su-zo-Tea-o:*** This is a Luganda phrase (卢干达语) showing how the Buganda (布干达, 乌干达中南部一地区) people of Uganda say *Good Morning*. It can be translated as something like "I hope you have slept well". One can wonder why she uses this greeting when she must know that the phrase will make no sense for her mother.
- ***Asalamalakim:*** a Muslim greeting that means "peace to you."



- **What could be inferred from Dee's appearance and greeting firstly?**
- Alice Walker has made Dee embrace **this confusion of misunderstood cultural bits and pieces from all over Africa** on purpose either to let Dee represent anything African or to portray her as a very **shallow and superficial young woman** who does not bother to check her sources.



## photographing with Polaroid (22)

- *Do you photograph back home? What could you indicate from the action of photographing by Dee?*

- **something of a(n)...** : (infml) rather a(n), a fairly good

You use the expression something of in the following ways.

1) If you say that **a person or thing** has something of a particular quality, feeling, etc., you mean that they have it **to some extent**.

2) If you say that a person is something of an actor, something of a poet, etc., you mean that the person can act, write poetry, etc. to some extent

Dr. Mitra, a scholar and something of a philosopher

3) If you say that **a situation** is something of a mystery / a surprise, etc., you mean that it is **slightly** mysterious, slightly surprising

He is something of a book collector / a liar / a musician.

I am something of a carpenter myself, you know.



## Para. 22 acts of photographing

- *peek -- stoop --line up picture after picture --take a shot --snap*
- *House is included in every picture (note the changed attitude toward the house by Dee)*
- **peek:** (infml) to look at sth. quickly, esp. when one should not  
They caught him peeking through the hole at what was going on in the room
- **peep:** to look at sth. quickly and secretly  
It's rude to peep at other people's work.  
He took a peep at the back of the book to find out the answers to the questions.
- *Peek & Peep* are not clearly distinguishable when denoting to see what is concealed, or hidden.
- **peer:** to look very carefully or hard, esp. as if not able to see well  
She peered through the mist, trying to find the right path.  
He peered at me over the top of his glasses.





## Asalamalakim (23)

### *go through motions with Maggie's hand:*

Here “motions” refer to trying to shake hands with Maggie. If you go through the motions, you say or do sth. that is expected of you **without being very sincere or serious about it**. Or you **pretend to do** sth. by making the movements associated with a particular action.

- The doctor was sure that the man wasn't ill, but he went through the motions of examining him.
- I can go through the motions of putting imaginary food into my mouth.
- **as limp as a fish**
- **do it fancy**
- **give up on Maggie**



**Dee --- Wangero (24--44)**



## Wangero

- Dee has **discarded** her given name, Dee because as she says: "*I couldn't bear it any longer, being named after the people who oppress me.*" She fails to understand that the name, Dee, also goes back several generations on the American continent and therefore is more part of her heritage than an adopted African name Wangero which does not even make sense.



## Para. 33 There you are

- ***There you are:*** I told you so.
- There you are. I knew I was right. That's what I expected. I knew you couldn't trace it further back.
- ***There I was not:*** You are not right **[pun]**
- **Literally** the sentence in the text could possibly understood as follows:
  - A:** I was not there before the name “Dicie” appeared in our family, so why...
  - B:** But “There I was not” is obviously a quick, short cut answer to “there you are”.



## Para. 36 *Model A car*

- ***Model A car***: in 1909 Henry Ford mass-produced 15 million **Model T** cars and thus made automobiles popular in the States. In 1928 the **Model T** was discontinued and replaced by a new design - the **Model A** - to meet the needs for growing competition in car manufacturing.



# Ford's Model-T





# Ford's Model-A





## Para. 42 another name

- ream: sl. say it, spit it
- ✓ out of the way: not blocking space for the forward movement of (Here there must be one misunderstanding either by me or by the editor who explains that as: We overcame the difficulty and managed to pronounce it at last)
- ✓ I will move the chair out of your way.
- ✓ He ran through the crowd, pushing people out of his way.
- ✓ Her social life got in the way of her studies.
- **We got the name out of the way: we finished talking about it, we set the problem aside.**  
When we got topic A out of the way, we discuss topic B.





## Para. 42 a Barber?

- **trip:** If you **trip over something**, you knock your foot against something when you are walking and lose your balance so that you fall or nearly fall.

I tripped and fell...

She tripped over a stone...

He put each foot down carefully to avoid **tripping up**.

- Here: **to make a mistake as in a statement or behavior**

This lawyer always tries to trip witness up by asking confusing questions.



## Para. 44 Hakim-a-barber

- ***doctrine:*** A doctrine is a principle or belief, or a set of principles of beliefs, which is thought by its supporters to be absolutely true and therefore the only one acceptable
- ***style:*** The style of a particular person or group is all the general attitudes, likes, dislikes, and ways of behaving that are characteristic of them.
- *Purple* is not my style.
- ***Raising cattle is not my style:*** I am not interested in raising cattle.



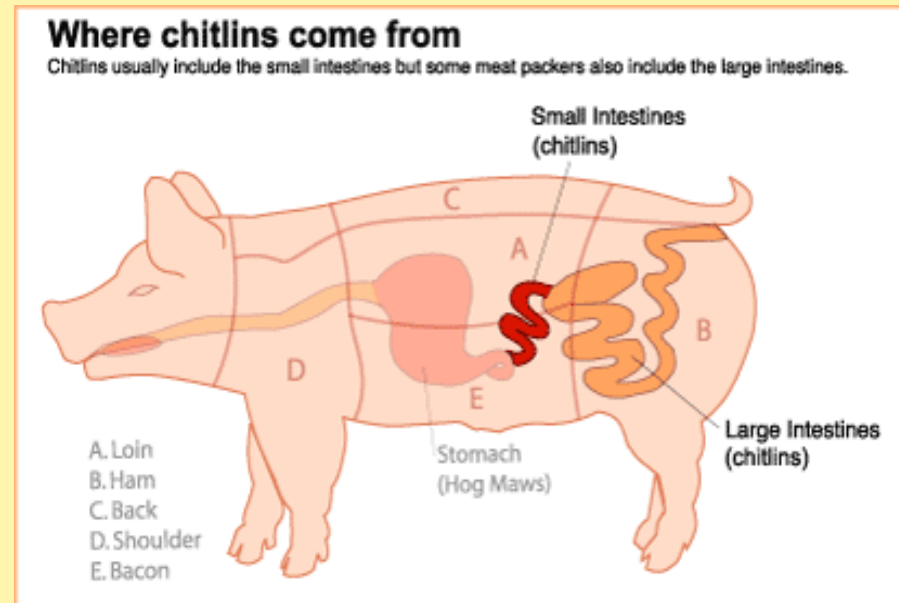
## (44 - 82) The Argument on Grandma's Quilts

- **setting: at lunch (44-45)**
- **desire for a series of historical things at home (46-54)**
- **Conflicts on quilts (55-82)**



setting: at lunch (44-45)

- **Barber:** not eating collards and pork (Muslim)
- **Dee/Wangero:**
  - going on through chitlins ... everything else
  - talking through a blue streak over ...
  - everything delighting her



**What could you infer from it?**



## desire from benches to churn top, dasher...

- **bench:**

- how lovely the benches are/ the rump
- running her hands underneath her ar  
bench

Dee directly shows off her  
desire for any article with  
history in her family.

- **butter dish:**

- giving a sigh and her hand closing over it
- "That's it!"

- **churn top**

- jumping up, going over, **looking at the churn and  
looking at it**
- It is "what I need"
- "Uh huh, I want the dasher, too."



## Para. 46

- **rump**: the part of an animal at the back just above the legs. When we eat this part of a cow it is called a rump steak (后腿部的牛排)  
(humour) of a human being the part of the body one sits on, bottom
- **her hand closed over the butter dish**: A butter dish is a small rectangular container which you can simply put your hand close over
- **churn**: a container in which milk is moved about violently until it becomes butter , Am.E a large metal container in which milk is stored or carried from the farm (搅乳器, 盛奶罐)
- **clabber**: (not found in Longman or Collins) curdle --- to form into curds, cause to thicken



## Desire of items for what?

- Maggie's brain is like an elephant
- churn top as a **centerpiece** for the alcove table
- something **artistic** to do with the dasher
- **Note that the history of every article is mentioned**



# Desire of items for what?

- **centerpiece:** The centerpiece of a set of things that is greatly admired is sth. that you show as the best example of the set

eg. The centerpiece of the navy is the nuclear submarine.

Here it is an ornament which you put in the middle of something, especially displayed on a table or a fireplace

- **alcove:** an alcove is a small area in a room which is formed by one part of a wall being built further back than the rest of the wall, a partially enclosed extension of a room, often occupied by a bed or by seats, 凹室
- **to do with the dasher:** use the dasher to make sth. artistic

**I'll do sth. artistic with the dasher**

I don't know what to do with those books, what to use them for, where to put them

- **Artistic:**
- Someone who is artistic is able to create or appreciate good painting, sculpture.
- Something that is artistic relates to art or to artists. A design, arrangement, pattern, etc. that is artistic is beautiful or attractive





# reluctance of Mother (54)

- *I took it for a moment in my hands.*

--- *Reflections of daily use of those items*

- ***sink***: a depression (part of a surface lower than the other parts) in the land surface

eg. The rain collected in several depressions on the ground.

It's a case of sink or swim. 成败就看这一次了。



## **Quilts (55-82)**



# quilts (5)

**rifle:** to search through and steal everything valuable out of a place

The thieves rifled his pockets of all their contents.

The burglar rifled the safe.

The bad boy rifled the apple tree.

Here in the text,  
the word “**rifle**” means to look thorough  
to see what to take,  
and indicates **that Dee was trying to find sth.  
she did not deserve.**

- *Rifling through my bed*

- *Out came the quilt*

informal name for Texas 孤星州  
(德克萨斯州州旗和州印的图饰中  
都只有一颗星)

- *Historical*

- ✓ *Made by Grandma Dee, Big Dee and me*

- ✓ *One: Lone Star pattern; the other: Walk Around the Mountain*

- ✓ *Material: scraps of dress of Grandma Dee; bits and pieces of Grandpa Jarrell's Paisley shirts; one teeny faded blue piece of Great Grandpa Ezra's uniform in the Civil War*



- ***scrap***: small piece, bit: a scrap of paper

***Scraps***: 残羹剩饭

There was ***not a scrap of*** food left, we've eaten it all: absolutely none of sth.

- ***teeny***: teeny weeny: also teensy weensy (used esp. to children) very small



**climax (56-82)**



# Reactions of three

Dee	Maggie	Mother



# Reactions of three

Dee	Maggie	Mother
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Sweet as a bird</li><li>› Holding the quilts securely in her arms, stroking them</li><li>› Moving back so that I couldn't reach the quilts</li><li>› They already belonged to her</li><li>› Breathing, clutching them closely to her bosom</li><li>› Gasping like a bee had stung her</li><li>› Saying furiously with her temper</li><li>› Looking at me with hatred</li><li>› Turning without a word</li><li>› Putting on some sunglasses hiding everything above the tip of her nose and her chin</li><li>› leaving</li></ul>		



# Reactions of three

Dee	Maggie	Mother
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Sweet as a bird</li><li>› Holding the quilts securely in her arms, stroking them</li><li>› Moving back so that I couldn't reach the quilts</li><li>› They already belonged to her</li><li>› Breathing, clutching them closely to her bosom</li><li>› Gasping like a bee had stung her</li><li>› Saying furiously with her temper</li><li>› Looking at me with hatred</li><li>› Turning without a word</li><li>› Putting on some sunglasses hiding everything above the tip of her nose and her chin</li><li>› leaving</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Moving up to touch the quilts</li><li>› Looking at Maggie hard</li><li>› Something hitting in the top of my head and running down to the soles of my feet</li><li>› I did something I never had done before: hugging Maggie to me; dragging her on into the room; snatching the quilts out of Miss Wangero's hands; dumping them into Maggie's lap</li></ul>





# Reactions of three

Dee	Maggie	Mother
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Sweet as a bird</li><li>› Holding the quilts securely in her arms, stroking them</li><li>› Moving back so that I couldn't reach the quilts</li><li>› They already belonged to her</li><li>› Breathing, clutching them closely to her bosom</li><li>› Gasping like a bee had stung her</li><li>› Saying furiously with her temper</li><li>› Looking at me with hatred</li><li>› Turning without a word</li><li>› Putting on some sunglasses hiding everything above the tip of her nose and her chin</li><li>› leaving</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Sth. Fall in the kitchen, door slammed</li><li>› Standing in the door</li><li>› The sound of her feet scraping over each other</li><li>› "She can have them... I can 'member Grandma Dee without the quilts</li><li>› her bottom lip being filled with checkerberry stuff</li><li>› Her face with a kind of dopey, hangdog look</li><li>› Standing there with scarred hands hidden in the folds of her skirt</li><li>› Sitting on my bed with her mouth open</li><li>› Maggie smiled</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Moving up to touch the quilts</li><li>› Looking at Maggie hard</li><li>› Something hitting in the top of my head and running down to the soles of my feet</li><li>› I did something I never had done before: hugging Maggie to me; dragging her on into the room; snatching the quilts out of Miss Wangero's hands; dumping them into Maggie's lap</li></ul>



# Reactions of three

Dee	Maggie	Mother
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Sweet as a bird</li><li>› Holding the quilts securely in her arms, stroking them</li><li>› Moving back so that I couldn't reach the quilts</li><li>› They already belonged to her</li><li>› Breathing, clutching them closely to her bosom</li><li>› Gasping like a bee had stung her</li><li>› Saying furiously with her temper</li><li>› Looking at me with hatred</li><li>› Turning without a word</li><li>› Putting on some sunglasses hiding everything above the tip of her nose and her chin</li><li>› leaving</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Sth. Fall in the kitchen, door slammed</li><li>› Standing in the door</li><li>› The sound of her feet scraping over each other</li><li>› "She can have them... I can 'member Grandma Dee without the quilts</li><li>› her bottom lip being filled with checkerberry stuff</li><li>› Her face with a kind of dopey, hangdog look</li><li>› Standing there with scarred hands hidden in the folds of her skirt</li><li>› Sitting on my bed with her mouth open</li><li>› Maggie smiled</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>› Moving up to touch the quilts</li><li>› Looking at Maggie hard</li><li>› Something hitting in the top of my head and running down to the soles of my feet</li><li>› I did something I never had done before: hugging Maggie to me; dragging her on into the room; snatching the quilts out of Miss Wangero's hands; dumping them into Maggie's lap</li></ul>



# Conflict in dialogue

Imagine	The truth is ...
“Maggie can’t appreciate these quilts. She’d probably be backward enough to put them to <b>everyday use.</b> ”	I reckon she would... I hope she will.
“But they are priceless”	Maggie knows how to quilt; she can make more
You just will not understand.	What would you do with them?
Hang them.	
	Take one or two of the others
You just don’t understand	What don’t I understand?
Your heritage	
It’s really a new day for us.; try to make something of yourself.	



# Theme:

- **The Heirloom – Quilts: Display VS Everyday Use**
- The modern classic "Everyday Use" tells the story of a mother and her two daughters' conflicting ideas about their **identities and ancestry**. The mother narrates the story of the day one daughter, Dee, visits from college and clashes with the other daughter, Maggie, over the possession of some **heirloom quilts**. The themes center on Mama's awakening to one daughter's **superficiality** and to the other's **deep-seated understanding** of heritage. Walker uses several literary devices to examine the themes and to give a voice to the poor and the uneducated as with many other stories by Walker.



- 美国著名黑人女作家爱丽丝·沃克,在《日常用品》中成功地塑造了代表传统文化的母亲和代表现代风格的女儿的形象,围绕如何理解和继承祖传的被子展开情节,反映了由种族问题引起的家庭矛盾.小说借母女冲突表达了一个十分重要的主题:**继承民族传统文化传统的意义在于深刻地认识理解其文化内涵,而不是浮于表面、流于形式.**沃克运用象征主义的视角,敏感的嗅觉触摸到了非裔黑人在寻根文化、伤痛文化与现代白人文明的冲击与涤荡中的苦痛挣扎和文化身份认同,构拟出一幅在深沉厚重的历史文化遗产面前迷惘和抗争的画面,体现出作者难以释怀的黑人情结和沉重的沃克焦虑,这也是作者自我意识的彰显.



## Para.69

- ***stump***: n. the part of a plant, (esp. a tree) remaining attached to the root after the trunk is cut  
v. put an unanswerable question to, puzzle, perplex  
If something stumps you, you cannot think of any solution or answer for it.

The question has stumped philosophers since the beginning of time.

It's unusual for Jeremy to be stumped for an answer.

You've got me stumped there.



## Para.74

- ***snuff***: tobacco made into powder for breathing into the nose, esp. used in former times
- ***dopey***: [‘doupi] showing dullness of the mind or feelings caused or as if caused by alcohol or a drug, sleepy and unable to think clearly, stupid
- ***hangdog***: (of an expression on the face) ashamed, guilty, cowed, shamefaced, having a dejected or guilty appearance
- ***portion***: an individual’s lot, fate, or fortune, destiny, one’s share of good and evil

Utter disaster was my portion.

What would be my portion on the day the enemy invaded?



## Para.80

- If *something makes something of you*, or if *you make something of yourself*, you are changed into a better or more successful person

The army made a man of me...

If he could only be bothered, that man could make of himself whatever he wanted.

- **heritage**: property that descends to an heir,  
sth. transmitted by or from an acquired predecessor,  
sth. possessed as a result of one's natural situation or birth





## Walker's reflections of the main characters

- Although Dee is portrayed in a negative light in the story, Walker **based both sisters on aspects of her own character**. Like Maggie, she suffered an injury in childhood that left her partially disfigured and very self-conscious. Like Dee, she rose from poverty, got an education, explored her African tribal ancestry, and participated in the Civil Rights Movement. Walker also resembles the level-headed mother, who turns a slight incident into a story, and who is able to show Maggie's hidden worth while casting a sardonic gaze on the glamorous Dee.



## **Walker's reflections of the main characters**

- Walker said about the women in “Everyday Use” that she thinks of these three characters as herself split into three parts.



- ...I really see that story as almost about one person, the old woman and two daughters being one person. The one who stays and sustains - this is the older woman - who has on the one hand a daughter who is the same way, who stays and abides and loves, plus the part of them - this autonomous person, the part of them that also wants to go out into the world to see change and be changed....I do in fact have an African name that was given to me, and I love it and use it when I want to, and I love my Kenyan gowns and my Ugandan gowns - the whole bit - it is part of me. But on the other hand, my parents and grandparents were part of it and they take precedence.



- ...all three women characters are artists: Mama, as the narrator, tells her own story; Maggie is the quiltmaker, the creator of art for “everyday use”; Dee, the photographer and collector of art, has designed her jewelry, dress and hair so deliberately and self-consciously that she appears in the story as a self-creation.



# Literary Devices

- The first person point of view (authentic, the readers' personal presence)
- The traditional African way of story-telling (short and elliptical sentences)
- The use of many symbols (quilt; the different feelings about the quilt)



## V. Rhetorical Devices

1. **Simile:** *a figure of speech which makes a comparison between two different things but having quality or characteristic in common. To make the comparison, words like as, as...as, as if and like are used to transfer the quality we associate with one to the other.*
  - I am the way my daughter would want me to be... my skin like an uncooked barley pancake.
  - Maggie's brain is like an elephant's.
  - Wangero said, sweet as a bird.
  - She gasped like a bee had stung her
2. **Ellipsis :** a figure of speech which omits commonly used words or phrases.
  - Dee, though.
  - Dee, next.



## V. Rhetorical Devices

3. metaphor: e.g. Wangero sent *eye signals* over my head
4. Metonymy: Out she peeks next with a *Polaroid*.
5. Irony: “What don’t I understand?” I wanted to know. “Your heritage,” she said.
6. Onomatopoeia: Like when you see the wriggling end of a snake just in front of your foot on the road, “Uhhnnh”.



## Questions for understanding

- 1 What is/are the symbolic meaning(s) of the quilts?
- 2 Please analyze three characters, Mother, Dee and Maggie from Feminist point of view.
- 3 Could you depict Alice Walker with your own interpretation of her work "Everyday Use"?
- 4 What of the African-American Civil Rights Movement could be reflected in the short story "Everyday Use"?
- 5 Alice Walker once commented on her short story "Everyday Use" as "...I really see that story as almost about one person, the old woman and two daughters being one person." How do you interpret her comments?





## Questions for understanding

- 6 What is/are the theme(s) of the story?
- 7 Who is the narrator? What is the style of the narrator? Does it match her identity and how?
- 8 Was the name Dee given by people who oppressed blacks? How did she get this name?
- 9 Could you compare two sisters, Dee and Maggie from Freud's psychological analysis ?
- 10 The narrator describes Dee in both positive and negative ways. What positive qualities do you see in Dee? What are her negative qualities?