Cultures in Conflict: An Interpretation of Alice Walker's "Everyday Use"

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Alice Walker is an African American writer whose novels, short stories and poems are noted for their insightful treatment of black culture. The main theme of her works is the life of Blacks and their battle against society for their equal economical, political and sexual rights. She explores cultural dualities and the tension and ambivalence of post modernism. In her short story "Everyday Use," Alice Walker introduces the conflict between the traditional view of African Americans who emphasize a kind of normative national cultural consensus and an emerging consciousness which challenges such norms and questions the very idea of cultural consensus.

Since its publication in 1973, Alice Walker's short story "Everyday Use" has been acclaimed for its merits. Although "Everyday Use" is widely studied and criticized, no adequate criticism of the story has been undergone. While Mary Helen Washington, Elaine Showalter, Barbara Christian, Houston A. Backer, Jr. and Charlotte Pierce-Baker give the most insightful review of the story, the delineation of the cultural aspect of the story is not clearly central to any of them. In 1994, the story was honored by Rutgers critical edition "Women Writers: Texts and Contexts." Although

the short story "Everyday Use" is clearly central to the edition, the story has not been dealt with neither exclusively nor extensively.

My point in writing this article is to present a thorough discussion of Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" in a larger framework-- culture. Thereby, the study will be devoted to explicate the different notions of culture as it is exemplified by the two daughters, Dee and Maggie. Despite their discrepancies, the conflict can be overcome by accepting both concepts of culture in an attempt to create African American cultural identity.

Alice Walker's "Everyday Use" represents a variety of cultures: the dominant white majority, not directly represented in the story; a black culture in a rural area, which struggles to survive in hostile environments; and the changing and more assertive subgroup that is creating a different culture from the earlier one. "Everyday Use" raises the question of how one finds one’s roots, one’s culture. It is a story of cultures in conflict.

In "Everyday Use," Walker explores two cultures of black people: the old generation represented by the mother and her daughter Maggie who are symbols of the oppressive culture of the dominant majority and the new generation represented by the daughter Dee, who is a symbol of the emergent woman of the sixties.

The story begins with Dee's mother, the guardian of the family, "a large, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands"(46) and the provider who has gone to the people of her church and raised money to send her "light-complexioned" daughter, Dee to college. Her daughter Maggie has remained at home. She has "chin on chest, eyes on ground, feet in shuffle, ever since the fire that burned the other house to the ground"(47). Ten or twelve years ago, both the mother and the sister were waiting for the arrival of "a goddess"(47). "I will wait for her in the yard that Maggie and I made so clean and wavy yesterday afternoon"(47), the mother tells us in the opening sentence of the story.

The sensibilities and costumes of Maggie and her mother have been appropriate for the occasion. The mother dreams of being on a television show where parents and children are pleasantly reunited. The mother, the narrator of the story states that "on TV mother and child embrace and smile into each other's faces. Sometimes the mother and the father weep, the child wraps them in her arms and leans across the table to tell how she would not have made it without their help"(48). In her real life, the mother reflects on her agrarian accomplishments in slaughtering cattle and preparing their winter meal.

Dee's arrival introduces us to a "fantasy" child. She changes her name from Dee to Wangero. She seeks to separate herself from the oppressive culture

of the dominant majority and reconnect with African roots. She has adopted a name that shows her resistance to the socio-economic culture that she calls oppressive. Wangero says, "No Mama. Not Dee, Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo". The mother asks what happened to "Dee", and her daughter answers, "She's dead. I couldn't bear it any longer being named after the people who oppress me"(48). For Dee, her earlier name represents the past, the oppressive culture of the dominant majority, from which she now seeks to separate herself so as to build her identity on African roots as she now sees them.

Moreover, Dee adopts a fashionable and stylish attitude. Her goal is to remain fashionable in the eyes of the world, the world of fashion and television show. In describing Dee, the mother says that "Dee wanted nice things. A yellow organdy dress to wear to her graduation from high school; black pumps to match a green suit she'd made from an old suit somebody gave me…. At sixteen she had a style of her own and knew what style was"(49). But now Dee is following the most recent fashion to acknowledge that "black" is beautiful. She has conformed her own style according to that notion. She wears "a dress down to the ground…bracelets dangling and making noises when she moves her arm up to shake the folds of the dress of her armpits"(46).

In "Everyday Use," Alice Walker blends a multicultural view with a new historical view. No one can read it without confronting history, feeling its influence and experiencing the changes wrought by history. The answer to the mother's question "what happened to Dee?"(46) involves reconstructing the development of the character's individual personality in relation to historical forces that have shaped the migrations of her race, the struggle of her community and the relationships that have developed within her family.

In historical terms, the women of the old generation belong to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the early decades of the twentieth century. The black women of this period carried the burdens heaped upon them by society and by the family, the victims of both racial and sexual oppressions. For such women, pain, poverty, and oppression were the essential content of their lives. In "In Search of Our Mothers' Garden: The Creativity of the Black Woman in the South," Walker explains this state of suspension as caused by pressures in society which made it impossible for the black women of this era to move forward:

> They were suspended in a time in history where the options for black women were severely limited … And they either kill themselves or they are used up by the man or by the children or by whatever the pressures against them. And they cannot go anywhere, I mean you can't, you just can't move, until there is room for you to move into. They had few choices. (1)

There is no person in the story who directly or indirectly represents the white culture, but allusions to it are obvious. The most extended passage comes early in the story—the dream that the mother reports about seeing herself as part of a television show, something she associates with Johnny Carson. In that dream, she would take on characteristics that her daughter Dee would want her to have—" a hundred pounds lighter, my skin like an uncooked barely pancake. My hair glistens in the hot bright lights. Johnny Carson has much to do to keep up with my quick and witty tongue"(47). But she knows that this is a dream, an entry into another culture that will not happen for her. "Who can even imagine me looking a strange white man in the eyes?"(47). This negative sense of seeing the self has its great implications that go far beyond the external facts of enslavement and oppression. Thus the real problem is within. In her short story "Everyday Use", Walker exposes the subconscious of black women. She explores the dreams and imaginations which contain the "accumulated collective reality of the people themselves."[(2)]

Alice Walker speaks of her awareness of and experiences with the lives of black women. In an interview, she repeats that "black women… are the most oppressed people in the world."[(3)] In her essay "The Civil Rights Movement: What Good Was It?" Walker recounts an episode in her mother's life that is parallel to Dee's mother. Walker sees her mother, a

woman of heavy body and swollen feet, a maid in the houses of white women for forty years, turn to the stories of white men and women on television opera to satisfy her yearning for a better life:

> My mother a truly great woman who raised eight children of her own and half a dozen of the neighbors' without a single complaint—was convinced that she did not exist compared to 'them'. She subordinated her soul to theirs and became faithful and timid supporter of the 'Beautiful White People'. Once she asked me in a moment of vicarious pride and despair, if I didn't think that 'they' were jest naturally smarter, prettier, better. (4)

Walker identifies herself with the lives of black women. She gathers up the historical and psychological threads of her ancestors' lives and stories passed on to her by her mother. Her documentation and analysis of the struggle of the black women illuminates the intimate reaches of the inner lives of these women; "the spiritual realm where the soul yearns for what it does not have."(5)

The difference in color between blacks and whites, whatever the psychological explanations are, creates for the white community a prejudice against blacks, and thus ensures a desire for a social system that has stamped the blacks as inferior human beings, unfit for integration and assimilation into American life. This feeling of prejudice is instilled in the societies' cultures and is transmitted to children naturally as they are

exposed to these traditions at home, at school, and among their peers. American children, both black and white, develop behavioral patterns mostly based on color. This feeling of racial prejudice stems from ethnocentrism, the tendency to assume that one's culture and way of life are superior to those of others. Robert E. Washington explains that this image of black American life "emanated from white American ideological perspectives; and its credibility was supported by the prevailing white racial stereotypes about blacks."[(6)]

This is exemplified in the appalling opposition of educating the blacks which stems from the unanimous conviction held by the white community concerning the inferiority of blacks whose status is fixed by birth. Baltzell comments that "the Negro…was definitely an inferior breed and situated at the very base of the evolutionary tree."[(7)] In "Everyday Use" the mother recalls that "After second grade the school was closed down. Don't ask me why: in 1927 colored asked fewer questions than they do now"(49). Dee's mother fought for education. Her radical understanding of literacy and education lies in the fore if they were ever to escape the sharecropping system that kept many black families in debt. For her, education is so crucial because it is the means for liberation that she, as a black mother, would not have been able to articulate—either for herself or anyone else.

In spite of the pressures and obstacles against the ordinary black women who are truly relegated to the narrow and confining lives, they succeed in giving their children a better life. Dee, the protagonist of the story, has got an opportunity to achieve her potential. She is the one selected to go to college because the family could afford sending only one. It is this opportunity that she got from her mother that has enabled her to be part of a different world, a fact about which she seems to be dimly aware.

Dee represents the aspiring developing emergent women. Greatly influenced by the political events of the sixties and the changes resulting from the freedom movement, she is more conscious of her condition and has greater potential—education-- for shaping her own life. She is a black woman who is coming to the beginning of a new awareness and making the first tentative steps into a new territory. In an interview with her, Alice Walker states:

> My women in the future will not burn themselves up…. Now I am ready to look at women who have made the room larger for others to move in….I think one reason I never stay away from the Southern Movement is because I realize how deeply political changes affect the choices and life-styles of people. The Movement of the Sixties, Black Power, the Muslims, the Panthers… have changed the options of black people generally and of Black women in particular. (8)

The new generation challenges cultural bias and fights against racial class and caste. They concentrate on building racial pride, strength and a distinctive culture.

Dee, who is the symbol of the new generation, comes with her dreams and aspirations of a newly better world. She represents a culture quite different from what she left behind. Her Polaroid and the automobile in which she has returned are distinctly different from what her mother and sister Maggie have as their conveniences —a cool spot in the yard, some "quilts," "the benches" used in place of chairs, "the churn," and some "snuff" (48).

The negative images of black American culture reflect the new generation's alienation from their community. It was an understandably extreme reaction. It manifests itself especially in the use of words and names and sometimes in hairstyle and clothing indigenous not to America but to Africa. So we watch Dee and her friend drive up to visit the mother and Maggie. Dee's hair "stands straight up like the wool on a sheep." Her friend has "hair to his navel"(46). Both of them adopt some African names to replace their given names. The names chosen reflect an African pattern.

Revolting against the existing African-American tradition, the new African Americans begin to search for meaning in their roots and traditions. Therefore, they celebrate their historical and cultural ties with the African

continent. They try to find a link between past and present, an effort made to encompass the sense of continuity with the past in order to preserve the cultural heritage. This is considered a crucial aspect in cultural retrieval. They struggle to re-claim their past and to re-examine their relationship to the black community. They are searching for the origin that is lost. David Cowart argues that Alice Walker criticizes "the heady rhetoric of late 60s black consciousness, deconstructing its pieties (especially the rediscovery of Africa) and asserting neglected values."[(9)]

When Dee left for college, her mother had tried to give her a quilt whose making began with her grandmother, but the daughter felt such patched coverings were "old fashioned and out of style"(49). When Dee has returned at the beginning of "Everyday Use," she realizes the value of quilts as works of art. She sees the quilts as priceless objects to own and display. It is only because it has now become fashionable to display the artifacts of African Americans' heritage. As Piedmont-Marton indicates, "Dee views her heritage as an artifact which can possess and appreciate from a distance instead of as a process in which she is always intimately involved."[(10)]

The dramatic conflict of the story that surrounds the quilt shows the striking contrast between Maggie's cognition of quilt as designed basically for everyday use and Dee's perception of quilt as a priceless work of art. "Well,' I [the mother] said, stumped.'What would you do with them?'"

Dee’s answer: "Hang them" Dee continues: "Maggie can’t appreciate these quilts! She’d probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use"(49). Houston A. Baker and Charlotte Pierce-Baker comment: "Quilts, in their patched and many colored glory, offer not a counter to tradition, but in fact, an instance of the only legitimate tradition of the people that exist."[11]

The quilts whose tops have been stitched by her grandmother from fragments of outgrown family garments have a special meaning to the mother. Her lack of education and refinement does not prevent her from having an inherent understanding of heritage based on her love and respect for those who came before her. The quilts were actually made by "Grandma Dee," and "Big Dee"(49). It includes scraps of clothing that belong to her grandparents as well as her great-great grandparents. Walker uses quilts to symbolize a bond between women of several generations. Elaine Showalter, in her essay “Piecing and Writing,” observes that “in contemporary writing, the quilt stands for a vanished past experience to which we have a troubled and ambivalent relationship.”[12]

Maggie is the only daughter who values the family quilts for their sentiment and usefulness. Although she lacks most of Dee's advantages, she is able to carry on family traditions and appreciates the true meaning of the things which Grandma Dee left behind. Maggie learned how to quilt. "It

was Grandma Dee and Big Dee who taught her how to quilt herself" (50). Her mother has been saving the quilts for her as a wedding present. The quilts are meant to be used and appreciated everyday. Maggie hints that she sees the quilts as a reminder of her grandmother and aunt.

The quilts are not, however, the only device Walker employs to show the mother's and Maggie's inherent connections to heritage and culture. Walker also uses the butter churn and dasher to highlight their values to them. When they are discussing the churn, Maggie explains, "Aunt Dee's first husband whittled the dash," and that "his name was Henry, but they called him Stash"(51). Maggie's cherished memory allows her to store these details. It means a lot to her because of the people they represent.

Alice Walker has stressed the influence of mothers on the formation of black woman creativity. Susan Willis comments, "History is a bridge defined along motherlines."[(13)] The black women have worked to inspire their daughters. In "Everyday Use," the mother who represents the African American tradition has always worked with "scraps". The result is a patchwork quilt, which laboriously and artistically transmuted fragments of outgrown dresses into a new creation. This quilt has its own sacred creativity that it is handed down from generation to generation. Houston A. Baker and Charlotte Pierce-Baker comment:

> They [Quilts] are the testimony of ‘mute and inglorious’ generation of women gone before. The quilt as an interpretive sign opens up a world of difference, a non-scripted territory whose creativity with fragments is less a matter of ‘artistic’ choice than of economic and functional necessity. (14)

Alice Walker's realization of herself as a woman and as an artist comes from her awareness that she is linked with women who exercised their creativity through whatever materials society could grant them. Then, they wait "for a day when the unknown thing that was in them would be made known; but guessed, somehow in their darkness that on the day of their revelation they would be long dead."(15) In spite of racism and oppression, the artistic creativity of black women can be shown in several ways. In her essay, "In Search of Our mothers' Gardens," Walker asks: "How was the creativity of the black woman kept alive?"(16) Black women's creativity is manifested by using daily parts of their lives. For the mother, the quilt becomes a legacy passed down from mother to daughter that calls upon her own personal history. Walker states:

> …in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. there hangs a quilt unlike any other in the world. In fanciful, inspired and yet simple and identifiable figures, it portrays the story of the Crucifixion. It is considered rare, beyond price. Though it follows no known pattern of quilt making and though it is made of bits and

> pieces of worthless rags, it is obviously the work of a person of powerful imagination and deep spiritual feeling. Below this quilt I saw a note that says it was made by 'An anonymous black woman in Alabama, a hundred years ago'. [17]

The argument over the quilt symbolizes the black woman's dilemma in confronting the future. Both Dee and Maggie interpret life and culture differently. At the end of the story, Dee comments that Mama and Maggie "do not understand their heritage" (49). The fact is that they "do not understand" but they simply see culture as something different just as they see life. Both the mother and Maggie value the family quilts for their emotional attachment and personal significance. The quilts are meant to be used and appreciated every day. So these quilts have become an integral part of the family. The mother says, "In both of them were scraps of dresses Grandma Dee had worn fifty and more years ago. Bits and pieces of Grandpa Jarrell's Paisley shirts. And one teeny faded blue piece . . . that was from Great Grandpa Ezra's uniform that he wore in the Civil War"(48). The history of these quilts is a history of the family. On the other hand, Dee values the quilts as a priceless object to display. She believes that she can appreciate the quilt more than Maggie. For Dee, the quilt is having historical and cultural values. It is a "priceless" work of art that should be kept alive.

In “Everyday Use,” Walker personifies the different sides of culture. Dee, the representative of the new generation, represents the materialistic modern way of life where culture is to be valued for its aesthetic appeal. The mother and Maggie who are the representatives of the old generation represent a simple content way of life where culture is valued for both its usefulness as well as its personal significance.

At the beginning of the story, the mother has described Maggie in terms which makes it clear that she is disappointed and even ashamed of her, comparing her to her other daughter, Dee, who is portrayed as bright, beautiful and educated. While the mother is proud of her daughter's success and ability of self-realization, she reveals her ambivalence towards Dee's selfishness and egoistic nature. At the end of the story, the mother finally tells Dee "No." It suddenly comes to Mama which daughter should rightfully own the quilt. She now sees something in Maggie that she has not seen before. She can see the entire culture in Maggie's hands. Maggie knows how to quilt herself. She tells Mama that Dee can have the quilts because "I can ‘member Grandma Dee without the quilts"(49).

Alice Walker in "Everyday Use" explores culture on two different levels. On its surface level, Walker clarifies the difference between the old and new African American generations as it is exemplified in the difference between the mother and Maggie who still live traditionally in the rural

south and her educated successful daughter Dee who scorns her American roots searching for a better life. On the deeper level, Walker begins to question the real culture of African American. She argues that an African American is both African and American. They cannot accept one and deny the other. She expresses her gradual realization of the fact that African Americans should reflect the reality of their existence. They should acknowledge and properly respect the African Americans who endured incredible hardship in their effort to survive in a hostile environment. "Alice Walker argues that an African-American is both African and American, and to deny the American side of one's heritage is disrespectful of one's ancestors and, consequently, harmful to one's self."[(18)]

But these young African Americans feel spiritually adrift and disoriented. They desire to break away from the past that has been characterized by economic, social, and psychological hardships. Their preference for appearance over substance, their complete denial of their American heritage, and their egotistical nature are representative of their superficial nature. Instead of confronting their own past to release it from its negativity, they look for an alternative, another past. However, Van Wych Brooks expresses a hopeful remark in seeing the prospect of change in the younger generation saying that "it is a genuine and moving attempt to create a way of life free from the bondage of authority that has lost all meaning, even to those who wield it."[(19)]

Dee, the representative of the new generation, attached herself to a subculture within that new world of African Americans. Her journey to the college is a metaphor for personal growth, and, in a larger sense, historical transformation. She comes back with a different vision of black community, one that transcends enslavement and oppression. It is through education that she can achieve both human materials and spiritual needs. Mary Helen Washington comments:

> From her superior position she can only see the negatives—the silent, fearful, barefoot, tongue-tied, ignorant brothers and sisters. She finds the past, her backward family, unbearable, and though she may have sensed their groping after life, she finally leaves the family for good. She has, of course, been leaving all along with her disapproval of their ways, her precise speech, her preference for another world. (20)

These new generations of African Americans acquire shamefaced rejection of the past with its memories of disparagement. They understand the long history of African Americans, which is associated with racism, white supremacy and slavery. However, they do not need to rehabilitate their past that threatens their growth as well as their journey to self-realization.

It is very difficult to decide which culture one accepts. Neither Dee nor the mother is wholly right or wholly wrong as Dee's friend indicates about not accepting all of "their doctrines"(49). "Rather, it seems more appropriate to

say that what we have is an insight into a fact of late-twentieth century shifts in America."[21]

Dee's visit to her mother and sister articulates the tragic plight between mother and daughter. The wisdom of the mother is measured by what she has lived through. The mother feels that a change has taken place. A new generation has emerged which represents a different culture from her own. Although the mother seems not too eager to participate in that shift, she furthers Dee's participation. Although Dee is the product of her past, she is looking forward to the future. She achieves self-realization, a definition of self that moves her ahead to some spiritual and psychological triumphs. For Walker, the black woman must be in struggle against these two distortions of life—past and present. Barbara Christian comments:

> Walker stresses the interrelatedness of these two obstacles to wholeness, for the struggle against them is not merely a question of replacing whoever is in power; rather it is a struggle to release the spirit that inhabits all life. [22]

Alice Walker goes on to celebrate the future. In her story, she has made an attempt to free the blacks from the oppression forced upon them because they are blacks. As an artist, she feels an obligation to teach "blackness" to small children to see their place in the history of the America. In "Search of Our Mother's Gardens: "The Black Writer and the Southern Experience,"

Walker tries to answer the questions that plagued her: "How do you teach [them] the significance of their past? How do you get them to understand the pathos and beauty of a heritage they have been taught to regard with shame?"[(23)]

In the story, Walker introduces two varied notions of culture—simple and practical as exemplified by the mother and Maggie, and sophisticated and aesthetic as exhibited by Dee. Walker successfully shows Maggie's hidden worth in contrast with the materialistic approach of Dee. Although Walker, at the end of the story, tells how the mother gradually rejects Dee's superficiality in favor of the practical values of Maggie, she does not deny Dee's outlook of culture as a whole. Rather, she is challenging that part of Dee that does not acknowledge and properly respect her African Americans' culture.

In "Everyday Use," the quilt has become the main metaphor of African American culture. The two sisters' frameworks of values concerning the quilts are different. Despite the discrepancy between the two sisters, the two approaches can be seen as the two facets of culture. Accepting one continent of culture does not mean to refuse the other. When Dee returns home, she wants to take the quilts in order to exhibit it as part of her family's heritage in particular and her African American culture in general. She "offers a view of heritage and a strategy for contemporary African

Americans to cope with an oppressive society." [24] The quilt is viewed as a symbol of continuity and support. Donna Haisty Winchell comments: "One of the most valuable gifts Walker gained in discovering her literary ancestors was a sense of continuity with the past, a thread that bound her to a community of black artisans."[25]

Walker articulates the metaphor of quilting to represent the creative legacy that African Americans have inherited from their maternal ancestors. Such activity which transmutes fragments into items of everyday use has ensured a distinctive aesthetic tradition for African Americans. In "Everyday Use," Walker employs quilts "as signs of functional beauty and spiritual heritage that provide exemplars of challenging convention and radical individuality or artistic waywardness."[26] Walker comments:

> For these grandmothers and mothers of ours were not 'saints,' but artists; driven to a numb and bleeding madness by the springs of creativity in them for which there were no release. They were creators, who lived lives of spiritual waste, because they were so rich in spirituality—which is the basis of art… [27]

In "Everyday Use", Alice Walker reveals the mother's ambivalent feelings towards her two daughters. She is not satisfied with her less fortunate daughter, Maggie, who is humble and shy. However, she admires her awareness and understanding of her heritage. She is also uncomfortable

with Dee's selfish and egotistical nature. Yet, she is proud of her success and determination. The mother states that Dee "would look anyone in the eye. Hesitation was no part of her nature"(49). The mother's conflicted feelings towards her two daughters reveal her own internal struggle. She represents the majority of African Americans who are confused about their heritage. They are struggling to create an identity for themselves, and are confused as to what it encompasses. In an interview Mary Helen Washington had with Alice Walker, Walker comments on her short story "Everyday Use" saying:

> ...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. (28)

Thereby, the conflict of the story can be overcome by accepting the two concepts of culture. Alice Walker puts bits and pieces together to form a

unifying whole of African Americans' culture, a promise of creating unity amongst disparate elements.

Notes

(1) Alice Walker, "The Creativity of the Black Woman in the South" in *In Search Of Our Mother's Gardens* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 40**.**

(2) John O'Brien, ed., *Interview with Black Writers* (New York: Liverwright, 1973), 202.

(3) Mary Helen Washington, "An Essay on Alice Walker" in *Everyday Use*, ed., Barbara T. Christian (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 6.

(4) Alice Walker, "The Civil Rights Movements: What Good Was It?" *American Scholar* (Winter, 1970-71), 552.

(5) Carolyn Fowler, "Solid at the Core", *Freedomways* 14 (First Quarter, 1974), 60.

(6) Robert E. Washington, *The Ideologies of African American Literature* (U.S.A.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, INC, 2001), 17.

(7) Digby Baltzell, "Introduction" in *Philadelphia Negro*, ed., W.E.B. DuBois (NewYork: Schocken Books, 1967), xxi.

(8) Mary Helen Washington, "An Essay on Alice Walker" in *Everyday Use*, ed., Barbara T. Christian (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 7.

(9) David Cowart, "Heritage and Deracination in Walker's 'Everyday Use'", *Studies in Short Fiction* 33 (1996), 182.

(10) Elizabeth Piedmont-Marton, "An Overview of 'Everyday Use'" in *Short Stories for Students* (Gale Research, 1997), 2.

(11) Houston A. Backer, Jr. & Charlotte Pierce-Baker, "Patches: Quilt and Community in Alice Walker's 'Everyday Use'" in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, eds. Henry Louis Gates. Jr. & K.A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993), 311.

(12) Elaine Showalter, "Piecing and Writing" in *The Poetics of Gender*, ed. Nancy K. Miller (New York: Columbia UP, 1986), 228.

(13) Susan Willis, *Specifying: Black Women Writing the American Experience* (U.S.A.: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 6.

(14) Houston A. Backer, Jr. & Charlotte Pierce-Baker, "Patches: Quilt and Community in Alice Walker's 'Everyday Use' " in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, eds., Henry Louis Gates. Jr. & K.A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993), 311.

(15) Alice Walker, "The Creativity of the Black Woman in the South" in *In Search Of Our Mother's Gardens* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 233.

(16) Ibid, 66.

(17) Ibid, 65.

(18) David White, "'Everyday Use': Defining African-American Heritage." *Anniina's Alice Walker* Sept. 2002 <http://www.luminarium.org/contemporary/alicew/davidwhite.htm>, 19.

(19) Van Wyce Brooks, "The Literary Life" in *Civilization in the United States*, ed., Harold Stearns (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1922), 149.

(20) Mary Helen Washington, "An Essay on Alice Walker" in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*, eds., Henry Louis Gates. Jr. & K.A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993), 45.

(21) Wilfred L. Guerin & et al, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature,* 4th Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 296.

(22) Barbara Christian, "Novels for Everyday Use" in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present,* eds., Henry Louis Gates. Jr. & K.A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993), 103.

(23) Alice Walker, "The Black Writer and the Southern Experience" in *In Search Of Our Mother's Gardens* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 28.

(24) Susan Farrell, "Fight vs. Flight: A Re-Evaluation of Dee in Alice Walker's 'Everyday Use'", *Studies in Fiction* 35 (1998), 179.

(25) Donna Haisty Winchell, *Alice Walker* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1992), 17.

(26) Houston A. Backer, Jr. & Charlotte Pierce-Baker, "Patches: Quilt and Community in Alice Walker's 'Everyday Use' " in *Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives Past and Present,* eds., Henry Louis Gates. Jr. & K.A. Appiah (New York: Amistad, 1993), 310.

(27) Alice Walker, "The Creativity of the Black Woman in the South" in *In Search Of Our Mother's Gardens* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), 66.

(28) Mary Helen Washington, "An Essay on Alice Walker" in *Everyday Use*, ed., Barbara T. Christian (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1994), 101-102.

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