



四川外国语大学成都学院

教 案

XX ~ XX 学年第 1 学期

系	英语外事管理系
教研室(组)	大三高英
课程名称	高级英语
授课年级	三年级
授教职称	

四川外国语大学成都学院教务处制

XX 年 X 至 X 月

教 案 (首页)

课程名称	高级英语	授课 专业	英语		班级	
授课方式	课堂讲授（√） 实践课（）			考核方式	考试（√） 考查（）	
课程类别	必修课	公共必修课（） 专业必修课（√）				
	选修课	公共选修课（） 专业限选课（） 专业任选课（）				
课程总学时	72		周学时	4		
学时分配	课堂讲授 62 学时；实践课 10 学时					
教学目标	(一) 扩大学生的知识范围及认知领域、更广泛地接触多学科、多门类的非语言类的知识领域，提升学生的学习兴趣。 (二) 扩大词汇量，以期达到《英语专业本科教学大纲》中所规定掌握的词汇。 (三) 从理论与实践的结合上学习英语修辞学，强化学生在阅读与写作过程中的审美意识。 (四) 传授英语四种基本文体的写作理论与基本构架，从而提高学生的英语写作水平，为今后的外语实践打下坚实的基础。					
使用教材	教材名称	《高级英语》第一册（修订本）				
	编（著）者	张汉熙，王立礼				
	出版社及出版时间	外语教学与研究出版社，1995年				
指定参考书	《高级英语教师用书》（梅毅仁、王礼立编，外语教学与研究出版社，1995年） 《高级英语精读精解》（姚兰著，西南交通大学出版社，2004年） 《高级英语理解与应用辅导》（姚念庚、胡英坤编，东北财经大学出版社，1998年）					

教 案

周 次	第 周, 第 次课		授课时间	年 月 日
授课章节	Unit 4 Everyday Use for Your Grandmama			
本(章)节 授课方式	课堂讲授(√) 实践课()		教学时数	4
授 课 要 点	本 (章) 节 教 学 目 标	1.Learn the effective writing skills of a short story: successful portrayal of characters, using many elliptical and short, simple sentences to achieve certain effects, using languages which suit the background of characters 2.Get to know some black culture background		
	教 学 重 点 和 难 点	1. Pre-reading questions 2. Background knowledge 3. Type of literature 4. Macro-structure of the text		
思 考 题 或 作 业		1)What can you predict about the story by reading the title? 2)Have you ever read any novels or stories by any Afro-American writers?		

教学内容与组织安排

Outline

Class 1-2

I. Background information

II. General introduction to the text

III. Macro-structure of the text

1. Preview: background information

1) Alice Walker and her literary creations

Alice Walker was born on February 9, 1944 in Eatonton, Georgia. Her parents were poor sharecroppers(佃农). As the eighth and youngest child in the family, she grew up in the midst of violent racism, which combined with her family's poverty left a permanent impression on her writing.

In the summer of 1952 Alice Walker was blinded in her right eye by a gun pellet (弹丸) while playing "cowboys and Indians" with her brothers. She was left with permanent damage in her eye and remained facially disfigured.

After graduating high school in 1961, Alice entered Spelman College in Atlanta, Georgia on a scholarship. While at Spelman she participated in civil rights demonstrations and was subsequently invited to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s home in 1962 at the end of her freshman year. The invitation was in recognition of her invitation to attend the Youth World Peace Festival in Helsinki, Finland. She attended the conference and then traveled throughout Europe for the summer. In August of 1963 Alice went to Washington D.C. to participate in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. While there she was able to hear Dr. King's "I Have A Dream" address.

After two years at Spelman, Alice received a scholarship to Sarah Lawrence College in New York, where she became one of very few young blacks to attend the prestigious school. Sarah Lawrence gave Walker the chance to receive mentoring (私人教师) from the poet Muriel Ruykeyser and writer Jane Cooper. Together they helped to stimulate her interest and talent in writing, and inspired her to write poems that eventually appeared in Once (1968).

Unfortunately, by senior year Alice Walker was suffering from extreme depression, likely due to the fact that she got pregnant. She considered committing suicide. She also wrote several volumes of poetry in an effort to explain her feelings. She was able to have a safe abortion with a classmate's help. While recovering, Walker wrote a short story aptly titled "To Hell With Dying." Her mentor Muriel Ruykeyser sent the story to publishers as well as to the poet Langston Hughes. The story was published and Walker received a hand-

written note of encouragement from Hughes.

In the summer of 1966 she returned to Mississippi where she met a Jewish civil rights law student named Mel Leventhal. They soon married and moved back to Mississippi. The couple had to deal with threats of violence due to the inter-racial nature of their marriage and the fact that Leventhal practiced on behalf of the NAACP. Alice again got pregnant (which saved Leventhal from the Vietnam draft) but sadly lost the child.

Even while pursuing civil rights, Alice found time to write. She wrote an essay titled "The Civil Rights Movement: What Good Was It?," which won her a first place in the American Scholar magazine annual essay contest. Encouraged by this, she applied for and won a writing fellowship to the prestigious MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire. She subsequently accepted a teaching position at Jackson State University and while there she published her first volume of poetry, "Once." Her first novel, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland* was published the same week her daughter Rebecca Grant was born. The novel received both literary praise and criticism, with many African-American critics claiming that Walker dealt too harshly with the black male characters in her book. Walker disputed such claims, but her writing would continue to dramatize the oppression of woman thereafter. In 1976 she published her second novel, *Meridian*, a story that chronicled a young woman's struggle during the Civil Rights Movement. On a personal level, she divorced Leventhal in the mid-70s.

In 1982 she finished *The Color Purple*, an epistolary (书信体的) novel about the life of a poor black woman named Celie. This book, easily her most popular novel, won her the Pulitzer Prize in 1983 and the American Book Award. Critics again accused her of portraying black men too harshly. *The Color Purple* was soon made into a motion picture, produced by Quincy Jones and directed by Steven Spielberg. When the movie *The Color Purple* premiered in her hometown of Eatonton, Walker received a parade in her honor. Her sister Ruth even created "The Color Purple Foundation" to promote charitable work for education.

A remarkable feature of Alice Walker's writing is the way it draws on elements of her life and incorporates them flawlessly into her novels. Her disfigurement can be seen in *The Color Purple* via the character of Celie, who suffers from a lack of beauty yet still manages to grow stronger in spite of that.

2) American blacks and its culture

Today American blacks seem enjoy freedom in the Melting Pot , but American blacks still hold their own distinctive features in many social ways---in its history, religion, music, art and literature.

Through the early 1800s, black Arkansans helped shape the pioneer culture. Although they were slaves during this time, many escaped the hard labor of the fields and through their talents and skills became craftsmen, creating frontier furniture, cast iron skillets, plows and locks. Strong group ties, extended families and religion were extremely important. This created unity and was the basis of the cultural enrichment that African-Americans still treasure today.

Religion: they believe mostly African religions and they worship their own God and establish their own community churches. Their God is different from the image in white

people's mind, it is not a tall, white man, but their Gods are those totem) (图腾) in African religions.

Literature: Many great Afro-American writers are worth mentioning, especially the Harlem Renaissances : Langston Hughes's Poetry, Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain*. Some contemporary woman writers like the Nobel Prize winner (1993) Toni Morrison's *The bluest Eye*, *Song of Solomon*, *Beloved* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* ,etc..

Art and Music: Blues—it depicted mostly sad feelings reflecting the difficult lives of American blacks. It is usually played and sung by black musicians, but it is popular with all Americans now.

Politics: Some well-known figures in American history: Martin Luther King, Rice and Powell,etc..

3) The famous TV host---Johnny Carson--master conversationalist

曾经风靡全美的著名脱口秀主持人乔尼·卡森近日因肺气肿不幸去世，享年 79 岁。卡森曾经在 NBC 广播公司主持晚间娱乐节目 Tonight Show，他的主持风格轻松幽默，是美国最受欢迎的节目主持人之一。1992 年，66 岁的卡森退出了当时位居收视率榜首的 Tonight Show。2002 年，卡森被诊断为患有肺气肿。

Carson began his career on television stations in his home state of Nebraska in the late 1940s. His boyish looks won over both audiences and guests on the Tonight Show. He remained popular until his retirement in May 1992, when an estimated 55 million viewers watched him hand over the Tonight Show host duties to comic Jay Leno.

Carson told the audience: "And so it has come to this. I am one of the lucky people in the world. I found something that I always wanted to do and I have enjoyed every single minute of it."

His personal life did not match his career success, however. Carson was married four times, divorced three times, and in 1991 one of his three sons, 39-year-old Ricky, was killed in a car accident.

He choose to let the Tonight Show stand as his finale, withdrawing into a quiet retirement and refusing to become involved in other showbusiness projects.

In 1993, Carson explained his absence from the limelight to the Washington Post newspaper.

"I have an ego like anybody else," he said, "but I don't need to be stoked (烧火)by going before the public all the time."

He was inducted (引导, 就职) into the Television Hall of Fame in 1987 and awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1992.

In 2002 Carson, who often smoked during his show, was diagnosed with emphysema - a

disease associated with smoking. He was surrounded by his family, whose loss will be immeasurable. There will be no memorial service." US TV star Johnny Carson has died at the age of 79, after losing a battle with the respiratory disease emphysema (肺气肿) . .

The legendary former host of NBC's Tonight Show was surrounded by family and died peacefully. Carson retired from the top-rated late-night entertainment show in 1992 after 30 years as one of the most popular TV personalities in the US.

LOS ANGELES - Johnny Carson (news), the "Tonight Show" TV host who served America a smooth nightcap (一天中的最后一场比赛) of celebrity banter9 善意的取笑) , droll (滑稽可笑的) comedy and heartland (中心地带) charm for 30 years, has died. He was 79

2. General introduction to the text

It's a short story ---character, action, conflicts, climax and denouement

Summary of the Story: It is written in 1973 and is included in the Norton Anthology of Short Fiction. It's one of the best-written short stories by Alice Walker, describes three women. The mother is a working woman without much education, but not without intelligence or perception. The two daughters form a sharp contrast in every conceivable way: appearance, character, personal experiences, etc.

The story reaches its climax at the moment when Dee, the elder daughter, wants the old quilts only to be refused flatly by the mother, who intends to give them to Maggie, the younger one. The old quilts, made from pieces of clothes worn by grand- and great-grandparents and stitched by Grandma's hand, are clearly a symbol of the cultural heritage of the black people. Their different feelings about the quilts reveal their different attitudes towards their heritage as black.

3. Macro-structure of the text

The organization

-- introduction

-- development

-- climax

-- conclusion

The whole story can be divided into three parts:

1) Part 1(paras 1-2): foreshadowing the arrival of Dee

2) Part 2(paras 3-15): mama relating her dream, recalls and her views about the two

daughters

3) Part 3(paras 16-the last): happenings during Dee's revisit

教 案

周 次	第 周, 第 次课	授课时间	年 月 日
授课章节	Unit 4 Everyday Use for Your Grandma		
本(章)节 授课方式	课堂讲授(√) 实践课()	教学时数	4
授 课 要 点	本 (章) 节 教 学 目 标	1.Understand the underlying meaning conveyed by simple language 2.Understand and paraphrase the colloquial, non-standard English words or sentences	
	教 学 重 点 和 难 点	1. Words and expressions 2. Detailed Study of the text	
思 考 题 或 作 业			

教学内容与组织安排

Outline

Class 3-6

I. Detailed Study of the text

II. Text analysis

III. Figures of Speeches

IV. Structure analysis

I. Detailed Study of the text

Para.1

1) What can you infer about their living condition from the description in this para?

2) What does the yard mean to mama?

3) What do “extended living room” and “fine sand” mean?

Para.2

1) What can you tell about Maggie’s character?

2) Why does Maggie admire her sister?

Para.3

1) According to mama, what would usually happen when a successful children are confronted by their parents on a TV programme?

Para.4

1) In mama’s fantasy, what does she dream of?

2) What’s the implied meaning in mama’s remark “even though she has told me once that she thinks orchid are tacky flower?”

3) Try to understand the words: usher, gray and sporty.

Para.5

1) In real life, what kind of woman mama is?

2) What kind of woman would Dee want her to be?

Para.6

1) Though she is a strong and brave woman, why does she fear meeting white men in the eye?

2) What can you tell about Dee's character?

Para.7

1) What can you tell about the taste of Maggie by the color of her dress?

Para.8

1) According to mama's narration, what caused Maggie's shy character?

2) Describe the way she walks.

Para.9

1) Why does mama make a comparison between the two daughters?

2) What is indicated when mama says "Why don't you do a dance around the ashes?"

3) What do you think why Dee had hated the house so much?

Para.10.

1) What's Dee's attitude when she reads to her mother and sister? Why?

2) What are the figurative meanings of the verbs 'wash and burn'?

Para.11

1) What else does this para tell us about Dee?

2) What spirit does Dee develop when she was quite young?

Para.12

1) What does Mama imply about the coloured people in 1927?

2) After Maggie gets married, what would mama do? Will her life change? Why?

3) What do you think the author's purpose by mentioning mama's physical condition?

Para. 13

- 1) What can you tell about the conditions of the house?
- 2) What's mama's attitude to the house?
- 3) Why does mama expect that Dee will want to tear it down?

Para.14

- 1) Dee does have a few friends around her, what are they? And why do they attach to her?

Para.15

- 1) Why did jimmy T run away from Dee?

Para.16

- 1) What's Maggie's first response to Dee's arrival?

Para.17

- 1) How could mama recognize Dee without seeing her face?
- 2) What does her companion look like?

Para. 18

- 1) In what way do you think Dee is a fashionable girl?
- 2) What's so particular about the color of her dress in a racial sense?

Par.19

- 1) Why does Dee shouts'Wa-su-zo-Tean-o!', is it irrelevant to the situation?
- 2) Why does Maggie struggle to get away from Asalamalakim's friendliness?

Para.20

- 1) Explain 'it takes something of a push'.
- 2) How do you interpret 'She never takes a shot without making sure the house included'?

Para.21

- 1) Identify the simile and explain it.
- 2) Explain ' but wants to do in fancy'

3) What's so important for Dee to change her name? Do you think it more African than American?

4) Explain 'looking down me like somebody inspecting a Model A car'.

Para.22

1) What can you infer about the beef-cattle peoples by mama's remarks?

2) Why did mama take troubles to se the sight?

Para.23

1) From the way that Dee enjoys everything mama prepares for her, do you think she has changed?

2) What's the figure of speech in "She talked a blue streak over the sweet potatoes."?

Para. 24

1) What do you think the benches and the churn stand for?

2) What does Dee want them for?

Para.25

1) What was the quilts make?

2) What do the quilts symbolize ?

3) Why does mama refuse to give them to Dee?

4) What does Dee want it for?

Para. 26

1) How do you interpret the animal image in this para.?

2) Identify the figure of speech in " When I looked at her.....to the soles of my feet."

3) Explain Dee's remarks: you ought to try to make something of yourself, too, ... You'd never know.

Para.27

1) Comment on the last para.

II.Text analysis:

The style of "Everyday Use for Your Grandma" is a short story. The following analysis is to focus on the main elements of the short story: plot, characters, point of view, setting,

climax, theme and the methods to develop the theme.

1. **Plot:** Dee's coming back to fetch Grandma's everyday use (especially the old quilts) and her changed attitude toward them.
2. **Characters:**
 - 1) Dee — a round character
 - fashionable, rebellious, strong-minded and ill-temped, a sense of vanity
 - a symbol of the modern black women
 - superficial love of black tradition
 - 2) Maggie — a flat character
 - docile, timid, shy, good-tempered, kind-hearted and unselfish, a strong sense of inferiority
 - inherence of black culture, genuine love of black tradition
 - a symbol of the tradition black weak women
 - 3) "I" — a flat character
 - uneducated but sensible
 - physically strong but spiritually weak, a sense of inferiority
 - cherish "grandma's everyday use"
 - a symbol of the black working women: the majority of black women
 - 4) Asalamalakim — a flat character
 - a black Muslim boy
 - a symbol of another kind of African culture
3. **Point of view:** the first-person narrator
4. **Setting:**

Place —“my courtyard”
Time —in the middle of 1960s
5. **climax** —Dee wanted to take away the old quilts but "I" took the back and gave them to Maggie
6. **Theme:** — the relationship among the three blacks women and their different attitude towards the old quilts → How to deal with the black traditional culture.
7. **Methods:** flashback, foreshadowing, contrast

V. Figures of Speeches: personification, metaphor, simile and metonymy

VI. Structure analysis:

This text can be divided into three parts: according to the time sequence.
Part one: before Dee comes, from beginning to ...to recompose herself
Part two: with Dee, from When she comes... to and her chin.
Part three: after Dee leaves, the last paragraph.

教 案

周 次	第 周, 第 次课	授课时间	年 月 日
授课章节	Unit 4 Everyday Use for Your Grandma		
本(章)节 授课方式	课堂讲授(√) 实践课()	教学时数	4
授 课 要 点	本 (章) 节 教 学 目 标	1. to raise the students' ability to appreciate Literature. 2. to analyze the characters, the theme and the methods the author to develop the theme.	
	教 学 重 点 和 难 点	1. Rhetoric devices 2. Follow-up discussion 3. Exercise and Homework	
思 考 题 或 作 业			

教学内容与组织安排

Outline

- I. Follow-up discussion
- II. Exercise and homework
- III. Suggested Reading
- IV. Topics for Panel Discussion

I.Follow-up discussion

1. Discuss the central theme of the story.
2. What's the symbolic meaning of the quilts?
3. Compare and analyze the three woman characters.
4. Comment on the images of animals in the story.
5. Comment on some of the characteristics of mother's use of language in terms of choice of words, sentence structure and grammar.
6. What is the mother's feeling toward Dee? How is it changed in the course of the story?

Everyday use, a story addresses itself to the dilemma of African Americans who, in striving to escape prejudice and poverty, risk a terrible deracination, a sundering from all that has sustained and defined them.

The story praises the simplicity of Maggie and her mother, along with their allegiance to their specific family identity and folk heritage as well as their refusal to change at the whim of an outside world that doesn't really have much to do with them.

The quilts that Wangero covets link her generation to prior generations, and thus they represent the larger African American past. The quilts contain scraps of dresses worn by the grandmother and even the great-grandmother, as well as a piece of the uniform worn by the great-grandfather who served in the Union Army in the War between the states. The visitor rightly recognizes the quilts as part of a fragile heritage

II. Exercise and homework

- 1.Paraphrase on page 68

2.Rhetoric study on page 72

3.Translation on page 75

Writing task:

Write a 200-word essay on the following topic: My views on Chinese traditional heritage

III.Suggested Reading

In “Everyday Use”, Alice Walker tells a story of a mother’s conflicted relationship with her two daughters. On its surface, “Everyday Use” tells how a mother gradually rejects the superficial values of her older, successful daughter in favor of the practical values of her younger, less fortunate daughter. On a deeper level, Alice Walker is exploring the concept of heritage as it applies to African-Americans. “Everyday Use” is set in the late 1960s or early 1970s. This was a time when African-Americans were struggling to define their personal identities in cultural terms. The term “Negro” had been recently removed from the vocabulary, and had been replaced with “Black”. There was “Black Power”, “Black Nationalism” and “Black Pride”. Many blacks wanted to rediscover their African roots, and were ready to reject and deny their American heritage, which was filled with stories of pain and injustice. In “Everyday Use”, 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. She uses the principal characters of Mama, Dee (Wangero), and Maggie to clarify this theme. Mama narrates the story. Mama describes herself as “a large, big-boned woman with rough, man-working hands. In the winter I wear flannel nightgowns to bed and overalls during the day. I can kill and clean a hog as mercilessly as a man.” This description, along with her reference to a 2nd grade education , leads the reader to conclude that this woman takes pride in the practical aspects of her nature and that she has not spent a great deal of time contemplating abstract concepts such as heritage. However, 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. This is clear from her ability to associate pieces of fabric in two quilts with the people whose clothes they had been cut from: 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, about the size of a penny matchbox, that was from Great Grandpa Ezra’s uniform that he wore in the Civil War. “Some of the pieces, like those lavender ones, come from old clothes [Grandma Dee’s] mother handed down to her,?”[Mama] said, moving up to touch the quilts. The quilts have a special meaning to Mama. When she moves up to touch the quilts, she is reaching out to touch the people whom the quilts represent. Quilts are referred to in many of Walker’s works. In The Color Purple, Walker uses quilts to symbolize a bond between women. In “Everyday Use”, the bond is between women of several generations. The quilts are not, however, the only device Walker employs to show Mama’s inherent understanding of heritage. Walker also uses the butter churn to show Mama’s connection with her family. When Mama takes the dasher handle in her hands, she is symbolically touching the hands of all those who used it before her. Her appreciation for the dasher and the quilts is based on love for the people who made and used them.

Mama’s daughter Dee (Wangero) has a much more superficial idea of heritage. She is portrayed as bright, beautiful, and self-centered. Walker uses Dee to symbolize the Black

Power movement, which was characterized by bright and beautiful blacks who were vocal and aggressive in their demands. Many of them spoke disparagingly about their "Uncle Tom's ancestors and adopted certain aspects of African culture in their speech and dress. Mama's descriptions of Dee portray her as this type of individual: "Dee, though. She would always look anyone in the eye. Hesitation was no part of her nature,...She was determined to stare down any disaster in her efforts. Her eyelids would not flicker for minutes at a time...At sixteen she had a style of her own: and she knew what style was." These personality traits, along with her style of dress and speech, establish her identity as a symbol of the Black Power movement. It is important to recognize that Walker is not condemning the Black Power movement as a whole. Rather, she is challenging that part of the movement that does not acknowledge and properly respect the many African-Americans who endured incredible hardships in their efforts to survive in a hostile environment. She uses the character of Dee to demonstrate Dee sees herself as belonging to a higher intellectual and social class than Mama and Maggie, and they should feel honored by (and humiliated in) her presence. Dee's new name, her costume, and her new boyfriend (or husband) are all indicative of her frivolous attitude toward her newly adopted African culture. Dee's ignorance of her adopted African heritage is matched by her ignorance of her actual American heritage. She knew she had been named for her Aunt Dee, but was unaware of how far back the name went in her family. After dinner, she flippantly decides to take the churn dasher, even though she has no knowledge of its history. Later, when she decides to take the quilts, she says, "These are all pieces of dresses Grandma used to wear. She did all the stitching by hand?". The quilts were actually made by Grandma Dee, Big Dee, and Mama, and included scraps of clothing that belonged to both of her grandparents, as well as her great-grandparents and her great-great grandfather. Dee's lack of knowledge concerning her family is symbolic of the Black Power movement's disregard for its American heritage. This neglected American heritage is represented in the story by the character of Maggie. Mama first describes Maggie's nature by saying "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, eyeing her sister with a mixture of envy and awe";. Maggie's scars are symbolic of the scars that all African-Americans carry as a result of the "fire" of slavery. Mama makes about her, Maggie is very aware of her heritage. This is evident from her statement about the churn dasher: "'Aunt Dee's first husband whittled the dash,' said Maggie so low you almost couldn't hear her. 'His name was Henry, but they called him Stash'". It is significant that Maggie knew the history of the dasher because Dee, who knew nothing of its history, and was not even sure what she would do with it, took it with no thought for either Maggie or Mama. Maggie's understanding of her heritage also comes through when she tells Mama that Dee can have the quilts because "I can 'member Grandma Dee without the quilts". Earlier, Dee had expressed her fear that Maggie would "probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use?". It is clear from Maggie's statement that her "everyday use" of the quilts would be as a reminder of her Grandma Dee. Dee's primary use for the quilts would be to hang them on the wall as a reminder of her superior social and economic status. This conflict between the two daughters over who should rightfully own the quilts and how they should be used is central to the theme of the story. Walker is arguing that the responsibility for defining African-American heritage should not be left to the Black Power movement. African-Americans must take ownership of their entire heritage, including the painful, unpleasant parts.

Mama represents the majority of black Americans who were confused as to how to reconcile their past history with the civil rights reforms of the 1960s and 1970s, but were not quite comfortable with the Black Power movement's solution. Mama reveals her

ambivalence toward Dee from the beginning of the story. While Mama is proud of her daughter's success and envies her ability to "look anyone in the eye", she is uncomfortable with Dee's selfish, egotistical nature. Although Mama dreams of being on a television show where Dee is embracing her and thanking her with tears in her eyes, she parenthetically asks, "(What would they do if parent and child came on the show only to curse out and insult each other?) Later, in describing Dee's tenacity, Mama says, 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. She was determined to stare down any disaster in her efforts. Her eyelids would not flicker for minutes at a time. Often I fought off the temptation to shake her. At sixteen she had a style all her own: and knew what style was. Mama seems to admire her daughter's determination, but because it is motivated by selfishness, she wants to shake her. Mama's feelings toward Dee are also expressed through her attitude toward Dee's new name. When Dee tells Mama that she has changed her name to Wangero Leewanika Kemanjo, Mama is clearly disappointed, but immediately starts referring to her as "Wangero" in her narration. Mama's use of the name "Wangero" does not, however, imply respect for Dee's choice. There is a definite tone of sarcasm in Mama's voice, reinforced by her comment "I'll get used to it...[r]eam it out again". As Mama continues the narrative, she gradually changes "Wangero" to "Dee (Wangero)" and in her final reference simply refers to her as "Dee"; These transitions are indicative of Mama's change in attitude toward Dee. Mama does not immediately understand the serious implications of Dee's name change, and is able to make light of it. But as Dee's selfish and disrespectful actions clarify the significance of her choice, Mama loses her sense of humor and finally drops "Wangero" altogether. Just as Wangero had rejected "Dee", Mama now rejects "Wangero". In rejecting Wangero, Mama makes a choice to accept Maggie. Throughout the story, Mama has described Maggie in terms that make it clear that she is disappointed and possibly even ashamed of her. Mama is aware that Maggie's condition is the result of a fire over which she had no control, but she has not recognized the incredible strength her younger daughter has required, just to survive. After Maggie says, "She can have them, Mama...I can 'member Grandma Dee without the quilts," Mama says, I looked at her hard. She had filled her bottom lip with checkerberry snuff and it gave her face a kind of dopey hangdog look. It was Grandma Dee and Big Dee who taught her how to quilt herself. She stood there with her scarred hands hidden in the folds of her skirt. This scenario was foreshadowed in the beginning of the story when Mama said, 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, eyeing her sister with a mixture of envy and awe. She thinks her sister has held life always in the palm of one hand, that "no" is a word the world never learned to say to her. But now, Mama is looking at Maggie "hard" and she sees something in her she has not seen before. She sees her mother and her sister? the two women whose name Dee has rejected. In Maggie's scarred hands she sees a heritage she should be proud of, not ashamed of. It suddenly becomes very clear to Mama which daughter should rightfully own the quilts, and she finally tells Dee "no". Alice Walker is, as David Cowart argues, "[satirizing] the heady rhetoric of late 1960s black consciousness, deconstructing its pieties (especially the rediscovery of Africa) and asserting neglected values. But Walker's main purpose in the story seems to be to challenge the Black Power movement, and black people in general, to acknowledge and respect their American heritage. The history of Africans in America is filled with stories of pain, injustice, and humiliation. It is not as pleasing as a colorful African heritage that can be fabricated, like a quilt, from bits and pieces that one finds attractive. It is a real heritage that is comprised of real people: people who are deserving of respect and admiration.

Instructions: Comment on Alice Walker's "Everyday Use". What are the deeper differences in character between Dee and Maggie, and how do these show up in the differences between what the quilts mean to them? (Or: organize your presentation the other way around. Ask how the differences between what the quilts mean to them lead us to notice how profoundly different the values are that define their character for us.) Conclude by explaining what you think Walker has designed the story to get us to notice about what's ultimately most important, and about ways we might lose sight of this. Which sort of values do you think the author thinks people ought to hold dear? Be sure to include some explanation of how you think the story communicates this.

Caution: don't just read your own personal values into the story. Try to detect what the story seems to be urging us (however subtly or crudely, however soundly or unsoundly) to endorse. Then you can ask, if you want, whether you yourself agree with this perspective -- or whether (as will certainly be the case with some stories) the values you detect to be those of the story strike you as unsound -- sentimental, simple-minded, perverse, even insane, as the case may be.

VI. Topics for Panel Discussion

What is the significance of the title in relation to the central conflict of the story?

Describe Maggie's personality and her feelings toward her sister Dee. How does she deal with Dee's demand for the quilts, and why? Are there any ways in which Maggie is "better off" than Dee?

Discuss some of the positive and negative aspects of Dee's character, focusing in particular on her relationship with her family. What is implied about Dee in the passage describing the loss of their previous home?

Is there anything ironic about Dee's accusations that her mother and sister do not understand their heritage? What are the personal consequences of her efforts to stake her claim to a piece of that heritage?

Describe the narrator's personality and her feelings about her daughter Dee. In what sense is this "her" story?

In the end, where does Alice Walker seem to stand on the issues she raises regarding the characters' sense of their heritage?