

A worn path eudora welty

Literature



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A Worn Path – Eudora Welty: (Introduction) Eudora Welty has made vital contributions to twentieth century American fiction. Renowned for her insight-filled short stories, she focuses on women and minority issues in her works. The short story A Worn Path is also about women's issues but but is also about old age and poverty. This essay will argue although A Worn Path is a work of fiction, the issues raised in it are pressing realities in contemporary American life. (Background) One prominent theme in the story is the perseverance of Old Phoenix in crossing so many hurdles on her way to the town hospital. Adding to the dramatic effect of this journey is her very old age (possibly in her eighties or nineties). Despite the physical challenges of the long journey she trudges on with a cane stick as her only aid. The distance from her place to the town hospital is so long that even the young White man she encounters en route admits to the arduousness of covering that distance. The author is hinting that the long journey depicted in the story is a metaphor for the passage of numerous years in Old Phoenix' life. Welty is suggesting that the lives of many people in the country is seldom smooth. And the bushes, snakes, foxes, uphill, creeks and other obstacles that Old Phoenix encounters represent the perennial struggle for life for the average American. (Support 1) It is also true that old people in the country do not get the care and attention that they need. What is termed Palliative care is not within reach of all senior citizens in America, making them endure their old days all on their own. Old Phoenix' case is typical of this condition, where even to avail of government subsidized healthcare through Medicare and Medicaid can be a tedious and cumbersome process. The uneducated Old Phoenix had to travel several miles in unsafe passages to reach the hospital where she can claim a bottle of soothing medicine for her ailing

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grandson. (Support 2) That she is the only care-taker of the boy shows up another problem in American society, namely broken homes. Divorce rates being as high as 60 percent in recent decades, children are more vulnerable than ever before to abandonment and neglect in their formative years. In *A Worn Path*, despite herculean efforts on part of Old Phoenix, the bottle of throat medicine that she gets for her grandson, is probably inadequate in curing his chronic health condition. She tells the nurse that the boy is going to live long years and that he is an exceptional boy, etc. But given the dark realities surrounding his life, it is unlikely that such assessments would turn true. Again, Welty craftily shows the reader this persistent drawback in American society. (Rebuttal 1) But it would be hasty to conclude that *A Worn Path* is a sad story that hints at no promise. If one looks carefully, some signs of optimism and encouragement can be found. For example, arduous though Old Phoenix' journey might have been, she still keeps herself upbeat and lively by constantly talking to herself. She also seems to enjoy her trek through the wilderness and seems to embrace nature in all its forms. These things suggest that she's got the right spirit in overcoming life's obstacles. Rather than looking at her difficulties, if one pays attention to the manner in which she keeps going, there is inspiration to be found. (Conclusion) Hence, in conclusion, there is little doubt that *A Worn Path* is a metaphor for the dark realities of life in American. The issues she deals with such as lack of Palliative care, broken homes, the failings of public healthcare system, etc all find practical resonance in American today. Unless our policy makers heed to the messages within the story and take progressive measures, America will take *A Worn Path* toward social discord and disintegration.