

The flowers essay



Alice Walker (1944), an African/American woman was born in Eatonton, Georgia. She won the American Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for her best-known novel, *The Color Purple* (1982). Her short story, *The Flowers*, is from 1973, a time where the Civil Rights Movement was trying to create an equal society, where blacks and whites could live peacefully together. It was also a time, where many African-American people lived in fear of the racism of the white (reportingcivilrights). It is about an African/American girl named Myop, who loses her innocence as a result of stepping on a dead man's skull.

By reading this story, we could have full understanding and acknowledging of the symbolism in it. Alice Walker's story is divided into two parts. The first part is written with positive expression: "keenness" air, the sun is "warm." The second paragraph describe how innocence Myop is, "she struck out at random chickens at she likes (20)." A ten years old girl named Myop, with her knobby stick, skips along singing her song; nothing existed for her but her song, very naive. Walker also tells the readers what season of year it is by describing, "The harvesting of the corn and cotton, peanuts and squash, made everyday a golden surprise".

It is the summer time, time of harvesting. Everyday is beautiful, she feels good in the "warm sun." The third paragraph describes briefly about her family, "sharecropper," They are poor, the sharecropper cabin is made of rusty boards, and the life that she is living in...drink water from the spring where wild flowers grew. The end of the paragraph is the beginning of the negative expression, "Myop watched the tiny white bubbles disrupt the thin black scale of soil and the water rose and slid away down the stream

(Schakel and Ridl, 20). As she begins to explore the woods, " Today she made her own path, bouncing this way and that way, vaguely keeping an eye out for snakes. She found, in addition to various common but pretty ferns and leaves an armful of strange blue flowers with velvety ridges and a sweet-suds bush full of the brown, fragrant buds," (21).

This shows how Myop was constantly watching out for bad situations, symbolized by the snakes, during her happy trip to the woods in search of flowers. At the end of the fourth paragraph, " an armful of strange blue flowers (21). These flowers become the main object of the story; they represent Myop's innocence are lost. The name " Myop," is a subdivision of " myopic," means " shortsighted (dictionary. com). Alice Walker picks the name for a reason; maybe to let readers know that the girl is shortsighted. " She felt light and good in the warm sun. She was ten and nothing existed for her but her song, the stick clutched in her dark brown hand, and the tat-de-ta-ta-ta of accompaniment. " (20) It is a symbol of childhood ideal.

She doesn't have a farther look; she is just interested about flowers, and a beautiful sky around her. She doesn't know what people are capable of doing to and against other. The negative expression seems to be more clearly in the fifth paragraph, " the air was damp, the silence close and deep," comparing to the first paragraph " the air held a keenness that made her nose twitch (20). " Myop doesn't feel as pleasant as her usual trips, she feels a certain strangeness and gloom around her. She decided to return to the peaceful place, her house, but " it was then she steps smack into his eyes (21).

Realizing that her heel is stuck “ in the broken ridge between brow (21),” she reaches down to free herself, and then it was only when she sees “ his naked grin” - skull of a dead man, she cries out surprisingly. People usually don’t let kids stay close to a dead body, but from Walker’s point of view, by the time she sees the man, her innocence is killed. The text states that the man was hung, and all his teeth are broken, we could conclude that he was been beaten and lynched. From the “ threads of blue denim from his overalls (21),” we could tell the man was a worker; and most workers were black at that time.

She takes a closer look at the man, and finds that all the white teeth have been cracked and broken. That could means something was pure and white once has been destroyed by the reality of the world. The last paragraph indicates that she looks around with interest, and picks up a wild pink rose near the head, adds to her bundle. The wild rose represent for Myop’s innocence; she is no longer a young girl with knobby stick skipping round. She probably understands the harsh and cruel reality of the world; it isn’t a golden surprise anymore. There are no more good days in the warm sun.

She also spots the rotted remains of a noose, which starts to blend into the soil. As she wanders around to look for the rest of the noose, “ Frayed, rotted, bleached, and frazzled...but spinning restlessly in the breeze (21). ” She laid down her bundle of flowers beside the body as to respect for the dead. The story started in summer and it ended as: “ Then the summer was over (21). ” The summer symbolizes childhood, Myop’s childhood specifically. At first she was only interested in beautiful things, at the middle of the story,

her eyes are opened by the reality, good and evil, happiness and sadness that she cannot hide from or escape.

She realizes that the world is not as beautiful as she used to see. There are traps, and people have to fight against each other in able to survive. In conclusion, "The Flowers" is like a timeline, telling a story about Myop, a ten-year-old African/American girl, enjoying the beautiful summer, wandering around the wood behind her house, under the warm sun without knowing the reality of the world. She changes from a young, innocent girl, to a girl that has been affected by an event. The story reflects racism in the US, around the world, and it is still remaining today.